

RETURN FIRE

wide-ranging anarchist anthologies, submissions, translations & editorials since 2013, from the British Isles & beyond

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VOLUME 6, CHAPTER IV

SUMMER 2022

ANARCHY IS IN THE
DOING
& NOT
THE
ARRIVING



A CLOSED FIST TO THE
ENEMIES OF LAND &
FREEDOM

AN OPEN HAND TO OUR KIN IN
MANY FORMS

ONLY WE TAKE CARE OF US



'PLENTY TO DO & LITTLE TO PROVE'



[ed. – Extracted from the art collage zine 'Trying to Fix a Broken Spirit', which you can view at archive.org/details/trying-to-fix-zine (printing to read is recommended). Our apologies to the author for any changes from the original spelling that occurred during our transcription.]

We all feel very alone at times.

My tears were not just for me, but for those lives lost and the ones who suffered in the struggle [ed. – see **R.I.P. Taylor**], I could see the faces and expressions were those of my comrades and myself, the fight out of the darkness continues, but the feelings of frustration and joy that I relate to still exist.



Some piggy-backed on rebels' lives like leeches, a made-up world with fantasies of exciting adventures and happenings, things that didn't happen to them, but they need them including their part because the dullness of their past wouldn't get them through the present, it almost reads as a comic-strip but reality is nothingness

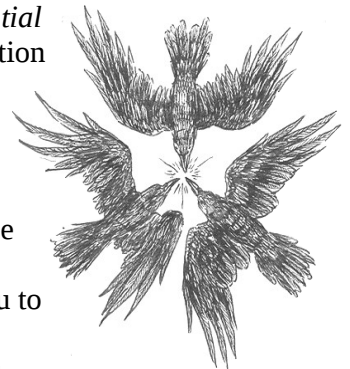
is too harsh to bear, better folklore with a pint around the campfire.

We feel there is no need to put a face or a signature to our words because they are so intrinsically woven into our actions and lives, that the fabric has holding strength leaving little point in searching out the lime light, we have plenty to do and little to prove.

[...] Not everything is nicely out in the open, some things are best kept under the table, there are folks that carry concealed weapons, pistols in their pockets, there's those who wear sunglasses to hide the daggers in their eyes, life can't always be above-board. Some hang-out amongst the galley-slaves below deck but only wrapped in broken chains, mutiny is **always** a possibility.

AN INVITATION TO DEFLATE THE SYSTEM

As the walls of control close in it's hard not to feel a sense of despair. As an anarchist inside the Great British Prison Island, with apathy and inaction the main pillars of the anarchist ghetto, its hard not to feel deflated. Daily humiliations tend to extinguish your burning desire to attack the system. Every time you try to get a fire going another excuse puts it out. *Too much risk for that action*
This action is inconsequential
The atmosphere of trepidation is paralyzing.



You end up stuck between a fantasy of burning the whole edifice down and the reality of your limited abilities which seem to you to offer very little. But this is where you are wrong. **You already have everything you need to begin.** Besides, you can't do anything with what you haven't got. You can only do something with what you have got. **Inabilities become abilities along the way but only if you take that first step.**

Be realistic about your situation! The targets for attack are everywhere and within reach. The simple weapons needed can be found in shops on every high street. Alone or with others, all you need is the will to put one foot in front of the other. So what if you can't get your hands on an Amazon server or some other privileged target yet? The infrastructure of control is also sustained by simple and ungarded technology.

As well as wanting to demonstrate this point, we are sick of feeling deflated. **So over the last few days we went out and deflated the system instead.** More than 30 vans that maintain the network of online communication, surveillance and data mining were put out of action [*ed. – in London, early 2022*]. These vans are necessary to service the system and to fix glitches in the matrix of control. Without these vans, disconnection proliferates. These vans are parked in streets up and down the country, unguarded and easy to attack. You can identify them by the various corporate logos (Virgin, Vodafone, BT, etc.) that have been conveniently painted as targets.

We invite you to join us in deflating the system.

How many decommissioned vans would it take to seriously disrupt the system? We have seen recently how power outages, downed servers and broken apps can have unpredictable and detrimental effects on the system. When disconnection is liberation, its not just about financial losses but also about a loss of control. What if, in a particular area, the internet connection goes down the same night a significant number of vans are put out of use? How many hours in delayed repairs equals how many millions wiped off the stock market? What chain reactions can be set off by the most modest of actions? The answers are unclear but that's not the point: the joy is in discovering and overcoming the limits of the questions.

Insurrection never happens tomorrow. Neither is it something done by others. It is what you do tonight before the dawn. It is a journey into the unknown, a journey that begins right now where you are. There is no such thing as a predetermined future and there are no limits that can't be overcome. There is no need to calculate outcomes. **When every thing is increasingly connected to everything else, every attack reverberates beyond itself. As you watch the sun rise you know yourself a little deeper.** The quality of your affinity with your co-conspirators is richer. As old limits are overcome, new possibilities emerge organically. There is no need to worry about what you don't know or can't do. Start simple and the rest will follow.

– Anarchists



BUT WHY ARE YOU RUNNING?

*[ed. – Another valuable tactical reflection anonymously posted to Montreal Counter-Information, about the street momentum in demonstrations in that city (see **Leaving the SPVM Behind to Attack a High-Tech Hub**). Police tactics will vary in other countries or cities, but some basic principles of what's offered here would probably be useful for confrontational demonstrations more generally. Enjoy.]*

The anti-capitalist MayDay 2022 blatantly showed the limits of our offensive demonstrations. It's a good thing that comrades were able to hit certain symbolic targets, but it's a real problem that these attacks signaled the end of the demonstration instead of rekindling its momentum. We must therefore reflect on our means, our tactical choices, and our collective capacities.

To start off, let's be clear that it is not the attacks that cause the demonstration to disperse. Some people will always leave an event when it starts becoming more offensive but this is not so much the case here, or only very marginally. We can assume that most of the comrades present know what they are getting into, and what to expect. In the same way, the massive police presence, sometimes sticking very close to the crowd, does not prevent the event from taking place (cf. the last COBP [*Collective Opposed to Police Brutality*] demonstration). **The fateful moment arrives with the use of tear gas.**

For some reason, the stinging smoke seems to instill a nameless terror in the Montreal milieu. Gas is certainly very unpleasant and can become a real problem for some people who are more sensitive to it, but this is certainly not the case for everyone and its use in other countries does not provoke the same reactions. In other places, the gas is often more concentrated and used more generously. So the problem here is most likely a lack of training and collective solidarity. I think we can identify several interrelated factors; fear of the gas and its effects, fear of arrest, collective panic/mob movement, and local culture.

I Run Because You Run...

The fear of gas and its effects seems at first to be quite rational. It is normal to try to get out of a painful or uncomfortable situation. However, this fear of pain or discomfort is largely disproportionate. The problem with this phenomenon is that it acts as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Everyone knows that the effects of gas tend to worsen with fear or stress, especially for people who are not used to it. The act of trying to get

out of the gas at all costs paradoxically reinforces its effects by contributing to collective panic phenomena. Moreover, when desperately trying to get out of the area, we are more likely to make bad tactical choices, individually or collectively. Some people choose to leave the demonstration in small groups, under the illusion that they will be able to rejoin later. In fact, the behavior spreads and the random calls to gather elsewhere only serve to camouflage the chaotic dispersal. It seems to me that this state of affairs must be radically changed.



First of all it's good to draw the attention of the demonstration to what the police are doing, but shouting "they are gassing" seems to have the opposite effect of what is desired. Even before seeing the pucks bouncing on the ground, a wave of panic runs through the group and those with less experience already start to run. A solution should be found so as not to indirectly reinforce the effectiveness of the police attacks. Perhaps it would be good to punctuate these calls with encouragement not to panic, to stay together, and not to run.

When the capsules are on the ground, rather than trying to get away from them, it should be common practice to move them away from the demonstration, or even to return them to the sender (the cops on bicycles did not have masks on May 1st and seem to have been quite inconvenienced by the gas). When some people did try to move the capsules away, most of the observed attempts were to kick the capsules towards other parts the demonstration, even if this was not the objective. The intention of these comrades is good, but their initiative is made very complicated by the fact that the demonstration is already starting to break up, that the area to protect is becoming blurred, and that they risk finding themselves isolated.

Once the gas starts to spread, let's invite the more panicked among us to take a second to analyze the situation. **Is the gas really that bad? Are the police really getting too close? Does it look like they are targeting people or preparing to make arrests? Does it look like they are trying to set up a trap?** If none of these conditions are met, running will only make the situation worse. Instead, we can stick with our buddy, stay with the group, follow the front banner, and try to remain calm to not to worsen the effects of the gas. To escape in small groups is an individualistic solution to a collective safety problem.

Of course, sometimes it is necessary to run, but again, there is no need to start a panicked sprint if the cops are not on your tail. In most cases, it is

enough to jog a few dozen meters to get out of a dense cloud or to get out of the riot squad's reach. Not running too fast also contributes to maintaining the coherence of the demonstration, prevents slower comrades from falling behind, and avoids the targeting of isolated individuals.

But... I Run Because YOU Run...

The risk of arrest has been discussed above, but it seems important to return to it in more detail. This fear is much more legitimate than just the fear of gas. Getting caught can have serious consequences for the lives of comrades, especially if they have carried out

offensive or criminalized actions. Again, it seems that the solution everyone chooses is to try to get out alone, or with their small group.

It should be remembered that currently the cops are trying to target certain people from the demo, but rarely the crowd as a whole. By running around unreasonably, we make their work easier; individuals and small groups are isolated, changing as best they can, without any protection, with the omnipresent risk of being arrested, especially for the slowest or least discreet. This provides opportunities for the police, whether the person has done anything or not. **Most of the time the riot police charges are just to make us run or back up.** Due to their heavy equipment, they will not try to follow us for long; their tactic is essentially to scare us by shouting "Boo!".

However, there is no simple solution for how to resolve this issue of fear of the police and the lack of trust between comrades. It is a matter of learning to work together to develop the solidarity that is sorely lacking. It is also necessary to train collectively and to participate as groups so that there is a critical mass of people who know each other and are familiar moving together, to prevent our demonstrations from descending into "everyone for themselves".

Should We Stop Running Then?

It is therefore necessary to speak here about the question of collective panic and crowd movements. We have seen that these demonstrations exhibited patterns of irrational behaviors (fear of gas, arrests etc.) which provoke a form of collective panic. **In my opinion this is the main danger in our demonstrations, before the police and their weapons.** We should not be surprised by police brutality, arrests and trials. All revolutionary militants know these risks or have experienced them.

Nevertheless, most of us began our involvement with the idea that collective force was the way to make change. But these moments of individualistic breakdown are a blow to the beautiful myth of

solidarity in our movements; when the going gets tough, it's every person for themselves and then we'll see each other afterwards. For new people, this can put them off organizing with us for good. This problem on its own should encourage us to find solutions but unfortunately it is not the only one.

A crowd movement caused by panic can be particularly dangerous and difficult to stop. The size of the demonstration makes the danger limited in our case and should not cause any deaths. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to imagine that serious injuries could be caused by the movement of people trying to escape from the gas and/or the police; pushing and shoving making people fall down, trampling of people who have fallen on the ground, not to mention the inherent dangers of traffic.

It is very difficult to stop these kind of panicked movements once the phenomenon spreads through the group. Everyone has experienced it, it starts with a few people running or shouting and soon the panic spreads like a wave through the group to the point that even cool-headed people are forced to run or become isolated (thus participating in the reproduction of the phenomenon). It is essential to try to nip this panic in the bud. We must calm our panicking comrades and make them come to their senses. We must refrain from running as long as possible and regularly call on everyone to remain calm, grouped, and united.

...I'm Lacking Trust...

Here we must point out the underlying problem of everything that has already been raised; the lack of a culture of collective resistance that encourages united behavior. It is still incredible that, in a city that has so many revolutionary militants, better coordination is not possible. The lack of practice is definitely a factor, as offensive demonstrations are not so frequent throughout the year, but the problem remains. The work carried out by certain groups to organize these moments is disproportionate in relation to the duration and impact of the event. It is the responsibility of everyone to make the best use of these dates that we impose on the calendar of our enemies; 20 minutes of attacks in the city center should not be enough to satisfy us, nor should the disconcerting ease with which the police are able to stop the problem. Far from coming out of it energized, I am instead assailed by a feeling of great collective weakness. Comrades should forgive this conclusion which contrasts with the usual post-demo self-congratulations, but this text does not seek to play the role of a press release. There are clearly problems, and it is important that we address them collectively.

'A NEW RELATION WITH SOCIAL CONFLICTS'

[ed. – What follows is taken from Distri Josep Gardenyes' essay 'A Wager on the Future: anarchist organization, the Islamic State, the crisis & outer space', already some years old at this point but no less prescient. Since the arrival of COVID-19, some of the "techno-socialist"-leaning proposals mentioned below for how to manage the emerging stage of capitalism – such as Universal Basic Income – have risen in prominence. The same era also gave rise to a renewed anarcho-populism in some quarters (whether in an 'anti-lockdown' or 'pro-lockdown' variant). While the Islamic State no longer holds the Western media attention as the central boogey-man of the day (see **Return Fire vol.3 pg5**), as used as a parody in the text, we could in some ways substitute them for conspiracy theorists as the figures absolutely demonised by the State and media – while, to be clear, not racialised or policed like Middle Easterners or others seen as Muslim – and yet evidently holding large appeal in various sectors of the population perhaps over and above anarchism in any one of its forms. Other trends that have continued include the decline of US hegemony on the world-stage; including, according to Peter Gelderloos' 'The Invasion of Ukraine', being a likely outcome of Russia's most recent war on the borders of the European Union.]

At a moment when anarchism is growing worldwide, we also find, curiously, a waxing feeling of cynicism, loss, or existential crisis, experienced individually as much as collectively, which is stronger, it seems to us, than the cycle of generational burnout typical of the last decades. Many anarchist tactics of destruction and confrontation – for example ways of rioting and attacking with covered faces – have been adopted by many people outside of anarchist circles, and in places such as Egypt, Greece, the US, Brazil, or Spain, we know that the passing on of tactics has been in part direct. The silence in which society tried to bury anarchism for decades has been definitively broken. In countries from Greece to Chile to the US, anarchism has become a political force, capable of influencing social discourses and unmasking at least some of the discursive defenses that democratic states use to achieve their goals. And here in the Spanish state we have seen the phenomenon of #yotambiensoyanarquista [transl. – #iamalsoanarchist], by which masses have positioned themselves on the side of anarchists who have not only been repressed but also labeled by the State as "terrorists".

Meanwhile, the positive ideas and practices of anarchism have not kept pace. And it is not due to a

lack of familiarity. On the contrary, in many social movements that created important experiences and conflicts, practices of decision-making in assemblies, consensus, and a rejection of political parties and representatives, have been momentarily generalized, only to be abandoned. **Self-organization spreads more and more, but distancing itself from a revolutionary horizon, championing instead financial feasibility, productivity, alternative currencies, and other capitalist tools, disguising this blind path with a false sophistication,** as we can observe in the most dogmatic sector of the Cooperativa Integral Catalana (which, to be clear, also includes many important and radical projects). Ever more comrades in ever more countries have lived through surprising conflicts in which all the sacred lies were questioned, new complicities and broad relations of solidarity were opened up, and the forces of order lost control; but afterwards, everything went on as before, perhaps with a change in the configuration or the disguises of power.

It is true that struggles, as with everything in nature, are cyclical, and we must learn to abide this cyclicity.¹ In that vein, the comrades from CrimethInc. have made a compilation of texts about what to do “After the Crest,” recently translated to Spanish. But the current loss of morale goes much further. We believe we are on the brink of losing our chance of

1 ed. – “Many activists empowered themselves by scheduling their own lives but still they sought to fit the chaos of life within a box. A little machine can never liberate itself, and a body that acts like a machine will forever devour and choke on itself. The radicals will understand that the struggle also hibernates. It does not accumulate force like the pressure in a steam engine. Most places on the planet have their season where life must change its pace: the monsoon, the summer too hot, the winter too cold. Who could trust a revolution that does not retire a few months every year, that does not fully exist within the world? The struggle never stops. On the contrary it must constantly change forms, and one of these forms is hibernation, when it dreams, when it talks, when it mends, knowing that when the weather changes it will come back with more fury than before.

Also, each little cell, gang, and affinity group has its own rhythm that ebbs and flows with the moon or the tragedies of living. While our revolt needs a consistency, it does not need constance. It is good that we respond to each new aggression by the capitalists, to every environmental disaster so horrifying it sticks its ugly head above the unending horrors of the daily economy, to every murder by the police. But we cannot set ourselves a formula – that if the police murder and no windows are smashed, it is evidence of our weakness and apathy. Remember that the Barcelona squatters eviscerated themselves with the promise that “Evictions = Riots.” Some evictions move us less than others. Where would we get the energy to respond to all of them the same? Such is an energy of measured output, and only machines can make such a promise” (Here... at the Center of a World in Revolt).

intervening in the conflicts underway and frustrating the attempts of capitalism to adapt itself to the new crises, that flash out worldwide and trans-thematically, crisscrossing the arenas of the ecological, economic, ideological, political, technological, and cultural.



With urgency we must analyze the shortcomings of an anarchism on the rise in the last years. Why is there so little complicity with anarchism's positive practices?

We cannot blame a lack of dissemination, although more propaganda always comes in handy. The mechanisms of anarchist propaganda have improved greatly in the last decade. And outside of our own activity, as concerns the reactions of official society to our presence, many academics and celebrities have mentioned and even adhered to anarchist ideas. Today, radical books can become bestsellers, as *The Coming Insurrection* proves [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.3 pg58**]. I don't mention this to celebrate it, but to prove that in many countries at least, anyone who wants to get to know anarchist ideas, can.

The Islamic State

Neither can we blame media distortion for spreading an erroneous idea of anarchism. The press fabricate their defamations and their police narratives constantly, and they have to be countered, but it would be victimistic to hand them the responsibility for our isolation. We can make use of a comparison to put the problem in perspective: in the media, no one gets worse coverage than the Islamic fundamentalists. They are portrayed as the most extreme terrorists and monsters. Nonetheless, a large percentage of marginalized youth in Europe sympathizes or even directly support jihadist movements. Of course they tend to be immigrants from Muslim countries, but many of them were born here and were not convinced by “democratic Europe”. There is also an important margin of converts. In fact, it is a very significant phenomenon for our age that the most attractive *antisystem* movement is jihadism. **Or more precisely: attractive for some and totally**

repulsive and horrifying for others.

How do the jihadists recruit? Largely through Twitter and chatrooms, media that anarchists have been using for years, without achieving similar results.

If a comparison between the propaganda of the Islamic State and that of anarchism comes off as absurd or morbid, if it recalls the pseudo-intellectual operations of rightwing journalists and academics trying to connect different species of subversives, it is because its purpose is satirical. Today, the system comprised by the police and media once again oblige anarchists to play the part of terrorists, at least in some countries. But it is a casting that ridicules the very director, because in the spectacle of terrorism we anarchists can't keep up with the competition: we are not on par with the jihadists. It's as though Chuck Norris, after defeating an alien invasion of three-meter insects armed with lasers and chainsaws, had to beat a delinquent pizza delivery boy. It doesn't make a good sequel.

The specter of anarchist terrorism also ridicules those comrades who put great emphasis on the practice of *atentados* [transl. – *attentats, attacks that function as "propaganda by the deed"*] – in an age when the State is ever more capable of absorbing and taking advantage of the shocks caused by *atentados* much more devastating than our own – and those comrades who imagine themselves the unbreakable enemy of the State – in an age when the war is ever more unilateral. Perhaps our attacks need to take on a new symbolic meaning and a new relation with social conflicts. They are not the most important blows in a dramatic war,² but a sort of *antimachine* that we introduce into the breaches opened by social conflicts, so that they generalize and sabotage the materialization of the relations of power.

However, the satire is above all directed at those populist comrades who try to reproduce the propaganda successes of any entity, no matter how distant it is from anarchism, such as leftwing parties or marketing companies. They would never dare to copy the recruitment formula of the Islamic State, not for any critique of the incompatibility of anarchist and authoritarian methods (which would also bar their

2 In fact, it is necessary to underscore the fact that since the Second World War, wars no longer consist of battles between armies, but of the production of metamachines that mobilize destructive and organizational forces. Their field is none other than statistics. To those readers who take this for empty verborrhea, I recommend an analysis of the methodological contributions of Robert McNamara, previously of the Ford Motor Company, to the Office of Statistical Control and the US Defense Department; or of the management by MI6 of the intellectual production of the mathematicians of Project Ultra.

copying of marketing techniques and the recruitment organized by political parties), but out of an acritical impulse to flee from the things that generate bad press, the same way that they flee from those anarchist practices that are also stigmatized by the media.

The success of the Islamic State disproves any attempt to blame the failures of anarchism on defamation, ignorance, or bad press. [...]

The Crisis

Capitalism is in a profound crisis. It is not the first time and it won't be the last, but it is the first time in which its crisis of accumulation overlaps with a planetary crisis, the unfolding failure of the ecosystems that sustain life on this planet. And it is also the first time that a crisis of accumulation occurs in a world with nuclear weapons, in which it is unclear which will be the next political power to organize the world system [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.5 pg11**] and in which the power that has passed its zenith still has the military might to liquidate any competitor that seeks to replace it. Little by little the United States loses its hegemony, incapable of imposing its will in Southeast Asia, in the Middle East, in South America, in Eastern Europe. Nonetheless, it maintains the force to ensure that no other authority can impose a new hegemony. If they don't reach an accord to share power in a new world system, half a dozen countries have the ability to blow up the entire planet to make sure that no one gets any of the pie.

The industrial expansion led by the United States after World War II reached its conclusion in the '70s, and since then the financial expansion has generated so much surplus value that there is nowhere to put it. Most economic activity has migrated to countries like China, South Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, Turkey, and Brazil. But the structures and institutions of economic management belong to North America and Western Europe. And several of these structures were hit hard by the bankruptcies and scandals related to the 2008 crisis. The supposed world leaders can no longer offer a safe home for capital.

A recession and collapse of the magnitude of 1929 has only been avoided, for the moment, by the massive immigration of capital to the real estate markets – the fittest for speculating and absorbing great quantities of capital – of China, Turkey, and Brazil. The bubble is about to burst.

What could prevent it from bursting? **If the pattern in force in the global economy since the 15th century continues, only a new industrial expansion. Where could such an expansion take place, and with what materials? It is not clear.** Is there a new process of industrialization able to

absorb the greatest quantity of liquid capital in history and turning it into profits? The runaway production of smartphones and similar gadgets doesn't come close, and these products are already reaching the poorest corners of the world. And what new territories can be developed? Africa seems to be the only continent that could still host an intense process of capitalist development, but it is not big enough – neither in population nor territory – to absorb the unimaginable quantity of liquid capital that is currently seeking investment, nor do we imagine that being invested in Africa would allow it to produce immediate profits.

It must be understood that with each expansion, the quantity of capital in play grows exponentially. In contrast, the world population is not growing as fast and the planet isn't growing at all, in fact the energetic and biological capacity of the planet to sustain the economic processes of its most ungrateful species is decreasing.

Logically, the only country not conquered by capitalism, the only terrain able to host the next expansion of capitalism is outer space [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.5 pg8**]. We say it with complete sincerity: it must take the path of asteroid mining and the terraforming of Mars. Capitalism runs into a problem here, and it might be the only hope that we have to turn the present crisis into a blow that topples the world system rather than serving as impetus for another restructuring: for the first time in history, it may be that the crisis of accumulation has arrived before the technologies necessary for the next economic expansion. A few years still remain before a profitable colonization of outer space can be feasible.³

3 ed. – A couple of years after this was written, 'Diagnostic of the Future' somewhat updates progress in this direction: "Incidentally, the technological sectors – planetary, biological, chemical, and social – that would need to advance to open up the territory for another industrial expansion are the same sectors that would need to advance to enable a subsequent extraterrestrial expansion of capitalism and the effective colonization of outer space. A major feature of these technologies, in contrast with the chief techniques of production and accumulation that characterize the cycle that is now ending, is their decentralization. Likewise, the colonization of Mars, to take one example, would require small-scale, decentralized technology. They can't fly over large industrial compounds; the mission would only be feasible with nanobots, 3D printers, and self-replicating machinery. Made-to-order nanomaterials would be crucial for constructions able to withstand extreme environments, and cloning combined with greenhouse agriculture in totally contained, controlled environments would be necessary to jumpstart food production and biosphere production. What's more, effective terraforming would be

But here we see where the State has put us in check. Over the course of several decades, it has killed the popular capacity for imagination. A hundred years ago revolutionary imaginaries were alive. We insist that such imaginaries are indispensable for a revolution, that no insurrection can grow and overcome its internal obstacles without widely shared revolutionary imaginaries and without a popular imagination capable of adapting imaginaries, in a decentralized way, according to the needs of the struggle.

unthinkable if the State did not already have experience with effective climate control here on Earth.

As for the social technologies, they might well be the linchpin. Decentralized technology, such as would be necessary in extraterrestrial colonization, can aid political decentralization. Any capitalist ventures, scientific associations, and state agencies that one day collaborate to colonize Mars or another celestial body will undoubtedly address, along with a thousand other matters of technique, the question of how to keep control of the colonies. Exerting military and bureaucratic leverage on a population that is located one or several months of travel time away is no easy feat. Five hundred years ago, European colonizers accomplished this through the social technologies of Christianity and whiteness, though not without a few major mutinies and defections.

Again, it makes more sense to analyze the situation through the optic of social control than the optic of capital accumulation. Capitalism has long favored far more inefficient, centralized techniques of industrial production because the State lacked the techniques to maintain control over a diffuse production. Rather than the mere organizing committee of Capital, the State supersedes and encompasses Capital, for territory effectively disciplined by the State is the only territory in which capitalism can function. Thus, the diffuse control enabled by new social technologies (that *internet of things* in which we are the primary *things*) is a vital component of extraterrestrial colonization.

[...] The "American century" saw the intensification of the capitalist relationship within the entirety of territory brought under the control of capital during the British cycle, which was basically the whole world. There is no other terrestrial geography for a future cycle of accumulation to expand to. Sure, the Indian economy is still growing, and Chinese state capitalists are going through Africa, Oceania, and the Caribbean, engaging in the kind of predatory lending to acquire infrastructure that the World Bank pioneered in the 1970s and '80s, while Google and a couple other companies are making tepid inroads into Africa to encourage a functional high-tech economy there. But these so-called underdeveloped populations are smaller, not larger, than the populations of North and South America, Europe, Asia, and Australia, where capitalist development is reaching a saturation point. To simplify grossly, the next terrain for capitalist expansion would have to be larger to accommodate another cycle.

This conundrum is what led to the prediction in "A Wager on the Future" and "Extraterrestrial Exploitation" that the next territory for capitalist

'WE HEARD THEM BOASTING' [France]

In the department of Val-de-Marne [southern suburb of Paris], the firm OMMIC, one of the European leaders in the sector of semiconductors and integrated circuits, can be found.

We heard them boasting about their circuits, which accompany the emitters and receivers of phone repeaters.

We heard them boasting about being specialists in the conception and production of integrated circuits III-V, in arsenide and gallium nitrate, components used mainly in telecommunication equipment, army radars and aerospace satellites.

We heard them boasting of being the first to produce components specially conceived to address frequencies comprised between 28 and 32 Ghz for clients in the space and military sectors.

We heard them boasting about being one of the rare world companies to possess this technology and about having signed contracts with numerous international builders in order to supply the market of base stations and small-cells, necessary to the development of 5G [ed. – see *The 5G Net*].

We heard them boasting about the fact they are developing the technologies for the next 10 years.

Recently, we heard them congratulating their partners Thalès [ed. – *notorious arms manufacturers*], CNES [transl. – *Centre national d'études spatiales, National Centre of Space Studies*] and NASA, after robot "Perseverance" landed on Mars. They want to persevere in the conquest of space. **We are among those who want to persevere in the struggle against the technological conquest of the world and of our lives.**

On the contrary, we didn't hear them after, on Saint Valentine's night on the 14th of February [2021], when we set fire to one of their buildings, which hosts laboratories where they elaborate and build their precious magic objects.

For freedom

– A few Martians passing by

The revolutionary imaginaries died, drowned in blood on the battlefields of the First World War, a morbid drama that demonstrated the fatal weakness of the proletarian class, and suffocated by Bolshevik cynicism after their Russian Counterrevolution, another fetid affair that demonstrated that the institutions of power are stronger and more determinant than class, and that proletarians can easily be educated to serve as oppressors.

Ultimately, imagination – the capacity to generate new imaginaries – has atrophied to the brink of death thanks to the techniques of the Spectacle, the entertainment

expansion was offplanet, on the moon, the asteroid belt, and eventually, Mars. Many of the smartest capitalists today are engaging in serious investment and design to make that possible. But we can thank our lucky stars here on Earth that over the last two years, they have not been making advancements fast enough to save capitalism from its impending collapse.

SpaceX's reusable rockets and drone recovery system provide one of the most important pieces for a potential extraterrestrial cycle of accumulation – cheap access to space – but none of the next pieces have come into place yet. Those would include a luxury passenger service into orbital space and eventually to the moon, which would never constitute a major industry in its own right but would help inject cash flows at a critical stage in the development of longer-distance capabilities, as well as selling the mega-rich on the desirability of space in order to win more financing. The second, more important piece is asteroid and lunar mining. Japan and NASA are currently in the process of landing robotic probes on asteroids to carry out the chemical analysis that will facilitate future prospecting, among other things, but those probes aren't due back until 2020 and 2023, respectively, and there are still other missing steps before commercial mining could begin. Without those other pieces, cheaper rockets only contribute to the profitability of a fully geocentric economic activity, the launching of ever more satellites."

industry first modeled in Hollywood and more recently in the new technological devices: **the computers, video games, and game apps that so few revolutionaries have pointed out as being among our fiercest enemies** [ed. – see *'The Audience Surrenders'*].

With the death of imagination, who could resist when capitalism offers us new worlds? The moment it achieves its self-interested dream, revealing it to be yet another step forward for exploitation, perhaps many revolutionaries will regret their foolish, lazy, acritical, populist, and cowardly postures in favor of technology. But it will be too late.

Collapse or Technosocialism

If capitalism does not manage to resuscitate itself and ignite an industrial expansion before the speculative bubble pops, we will be faced with a poverty much deeper than the one we already know. Are we prepared to resist emigration and hunger, the break-up of our fragile communities by an extreme misery? Or are we not even thinking of it? Are we not betting on a violent and catastrophic rupture with the capitalist system that currently feeds us? Were we

imagining that we could keep on eating from the supermarkets, that there would be a smooth transition between the system of money and businesses and a total self-organization, that after a general strike or similar event, we would take down some barricades, fix a few damages, and continue living as before, only without laws or bosses?

There is another possibility: a controlled collapse into a *technosocialism* worse than the most horrifying work of science fiction. The destruction of infrastructure and value has always been an important activity for capitalism. The devastation produced by a war or the deterioration which constitutes the first stage of gentrification are key to facilitating the posterior economic growth. In this sense, new technologies being developed by Google and Apple present a chance of clearing the way for a currently stagnant capitalism.

The *internet of things* [ed. – see the supplement to **Return Fire vol.3; Smarter Prisons?**] could merely be an unprecedented augmentation in the level of



technological control; the achievement, finally, of the panopticon society [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.4 pg8**]. But it could also evolve into a sort of *technosocialism*, which is to say, an extreme rationalization of economic processes, ultimately superseding the shortterm interests of the bourgeoisie (of the earlier epoch of capitalism) and of the multinationals (of the current epoch which might be coming to its end). **To understand this more clearly, we can take the example of the new smartcars.** Understood

within the prevailing logic, this would just be another product: an automated, electric car that drives itself; a more expensive car model, more fetishized, available for wealthier consumers; another invention that would give the patent-owning company an ephemeral advantage in the market.

“The ’60s anti-authoritarian revolt against the constraints of any overly bureaucratic managerial society led to a strange bi-product: capitalists saw the increasing costs of keeping unhappy and unfulfilled workers tethered to an assembly line, so they looked around to see what sector of the workforce was better adjusted and caused less problems. It turns out that artists, cultural workers, and freelancers made much fewer demands on the system than the labour in more organised workplaces, and seemed happy to give up things like pensions and job security in trade for an affective sense of freedom from the constraints of “the grind”. This insight relatively quickly helped in the transformation to a much more precarious work-on-demand economy, to the point that I now regularly see subway advertisements showing happy Black and Brown “mechanical turks” proclaiming that they are entrepreneurial Do-ers and don’t need things like company health-care plans, pensions, or even regular paychecks, dragging them down. Meanwhile, merry ’60s and ’70s anarchist experiments like Provo white bikes, hippie crash-pads and communes, Digger free-stores, and alternative economic experiments have been weaponised by technological developments and venture capitalists. Airbnb, corporate city bike programs, co-worker development schemes, ZipCar, Groupon, Task Rabbit, and Uber are not simply built on the ruins of our utopias, but quite literally out their very fabric. While the counter-culture built their projects out of the exploration of new and exciting ways to build communities and push the boundaries of what can be accomplished through collectivity and sharing, the gig-economy empties out the very ontology of these ideas, invisibilising relationships (and exploitation) in order to extract profit, all the while maintaining the skin of liberatory activity, or freedom.”

– Radical Posture

But if the approach – especially by Google – that seeks a transformative rationalization via new technologies is realized (and at the moment the only obstacle is the uncertainty as to whether states will support or impede this transformation, because the technology already exists), we will find ourselves faced with another possibility. The *smartcar*, to take this one example, would not be another product bought by individuals in accordance with the logic of private property until now in force. New technologies would permit *smartcars* to function as alienated-collective property deployed in the most efficient manner possible (as an example we have the very primitive *Bicing* model in Barcelona [transl. – subscription-based collective bicycle service distributed throughout the city, like the Provo’s “Yellow Bikes” program without the anticapitalist element]). Via an app, you would reserve a voyage and the *smartcar* would come to pick you

up. You'd pay a subscription, as the car would not belong to you, but would be a facet of the city itself.

So what would be the consequences of such a techno-economic organization? Beyond the disappearance of the taxi companies, it would mean the end – or at least a critical reduction in – the most important capitalist enterprises of the post-war period: the automobile makers and the oil companies. **It would permit a significant “degrowth” as a path for capitalist expansion.** For the first time, the systemic destruction that forms a part of cyclical capitalist expansion would not be the semi-uncontrolled result of a process of war or deterioration, rather it would arise from a rational restructuration *par excellence*. Alienated-collective property and the algorithms that manage it would permit the most efficient utilization and deployment of the totality of vehicles so that they would always be in use or recharging. This would allow a great reduction in the total number of vehicles and in the transport infrastructure. Put another way, we are faced with a model of capitalist expansion (the production of new technologies, the total transformation of cities) that is completely compatible with precarity (any consumer can be transported without having to own a vehicle, every person can get by with less consumption) and with the ecological crisis. What's more, the same concept of alienated-collective property, with hyper-rational management, can be put into effect in matters of housing, education, and other fundamental pillars that bind exploited people to the economy.

Just as Jason Radegas and Lev Zlody (2011) predicted, socialism was not made possible in accordance with the evolution of productive forces, but in accordance with the forces of social control. Collective property has always been feasible, but only now can alienated-collective property be a reality: property deployed according to a collective logic, shared property, but which is designed and controlled by the power structures. [...]

Next Steps

To have any possibility of destroying this prison society and averting the horrible destiny that is unfolding around us, it is indispensable: *to stop conceiving of our weakness in terms of dissemination; to abandon the practice of recruitment and the delirium of mass organization that it represents; and to energetically criticize those currents that make use of marketing and populism.* But much more than attacking our errors, we have to mark out other paths to follow, with actions more than with words.

To start with, it cannot be a single path. No one

practice is capable of including all the activities necessary for a revolution. We must think of revolt as an ecosystem. If we try to be the only species, we kill the revolution.

But, in whatever form, we must all start posing **the question of survival**. This means that the projects and activities we encourage and amplify through organization should concern themselves with the self-organization of life; that they should be useful for us as well as for other people; that they should support and augment our capacities of struggle, understanding struggle as a basic aspect of survival for people who desire liberty; and that they should take into account the possible changes in the capitalist system, from collapse to a profound transformation in the architecture of the world system.

We should also seek out initiatives of synthesis, which confuse the categories of capitalist alienation and join distinct forces in order to overcome the typical divisions that the dogmatic anarchists, from the populists to some of the antisocial anarchists [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.5 pg39*], only reinforce.

To speak concretely, this synthesis might take the form of a network of social and antisocial comrades, of artists and theorists, of those with a propensity for care and those with a propensity for the attack, who admire the skills and capacities of the others, who don't insult one another behind their backs, who use their talents not to boost egos or achieve personal advancement but for the benefit of all, who conceive of themselves as a community of struggle and search for a complementarity in their actions, not always agreeing, but maintaining a basic feeling of solidarity, mutual aid, and respect.

Projects that increase our capacity for struggle might take the form of a healthcare group that offers its skills to people injured in protests or comrades coming out of prison; of rural projects (those that often end up isolated) that act as spaces for gatherings, for rest, and also for physical work for the urban assemblies that maintain an unsustainable rhythm; of combative comrades who risk their bodies and their freedom not to target enemies who are often symbolic (also a necessary activity, albeit limited), but to defend a garden, a clinic, a house or a social center against eviction; of a group specialized in propaganda and dissemination helping to spread the most radical, provocative, and marginalized

ideas; of networks of people who manage to meet ever more of their needs without recourse to monetized, commercial relations, not running from conflict with capitalism but inviting more people to join them in their mutiny.

'LET'S DESTROY EVERYTHING THAT IS CALLED TESLA!' [Germany]

Against the progress of destruction – we put sabotage

Climate strike for a different world!

“[W]e behold and hear a world whose social life is sick, fragmented into millions of individuals who are strangers to each other, convulsively striving for individual survival, but united under the oppression of a system that is ready to do anything to quench its thirst for profit, although it is clear that this path is contrary to the existence of the planet Earth.

[...] The aberration of the system and its stupid defense of ‘progress’ and ‘modernity’ shatters on a criminal reality: the femicides. The murder of women has neither a color nor a nationality, it is worldwide.

[...] And it seems that ‘civilization’ says to us original peoples: “the proof of your underdevelopment lies in the low rate of femicides.

Make your mega-projects, your trains, your thermoelectric plants, your mines, your dams, your shopping centers, your appliance stores – including TV channels – and finally learn to consume. Be like us. To pay the debt of this progressive aid, your lands, your waters, your cultures and your dignity are not enough. You will have to pay the rest with the lives of women.” [...] We see and hear nature wounded to death, which in its agony warns humanity that the worst is yet to come. Each ‘natural catastrophe’ announces the next one and makes us forget that it is caused by the action of a human system. [...] Yes, the roads must be reclaimed, but to fight. Because as we said earlier, life, the struggle for life is not an individual matter, but a collective one.

Now we see that it’s not a matter of nationalities either, but encompasses the whole world.”

– From a greeting from Zapatista indigenous people in Latin America to us in the Global North

We successfully interrupted the power supply to the construction site of the Tesla Gigafactory in Grünheide by fire during the night of May 25-26, 2021. To do this, we set fire to the power feed via six high-voltage cables (110,000 volts) within a construction fence corridor 250 meters from the Tesla

factory in the immediate vicinity of the A10 motorway at the level of the Freienbrink exit. Since an interruption of the cables, which were temporarily laid above ground exclusively for the factory, cannot be carried out in isolation from the regional power grid, we could not completely rule out power outages in the surrounding area either. It was our intention to hit the construction site of Tesla, to complicate the work at the site for a day, to interrupt the construction of the manufacturing facilities. Since the local population cannot succeed so easily in stopping the construction because of the unequal balance of power (capital, politics and authorities versus interests of residents, climate protectors and ecologists), we hereby contribute our sabotage in solidarity. Should our action have been successful, the richest man in the world will compensate the interruption of the construction work financially – but the political damage is certain.

Why Are We Sabotaging Tesla?

A car factory is being built in Grünheide near Berlin. Tesla is building a “gigafactory” there. As grandiose as the name and the project are, so is the actor: Elon Musk. His patriarchal fantasies of omnipotence are supposed to save the world? We could laugh about this if it weren’t so serious: the production of supposedly “clean, climate-friendly” battery-powered vehicles is just a new contribution to the further destruction of the planet.

Our action shows the vulnerability of this project, it undermines the supposed “omnipotence” with which Musk haunts Brandenburg. There he sets building-law conditions like a feudal lord and ignores, for example, all objections due to the threatening water shortage in the region. On the one hand, he wants to strategically position his factory close to the Polish workers, and on the other hand, close to Berlin, which may soon be governed by the Green Party, and the buyers located there. Politicians, the administration and individual press agencies, which are bowing to Musk because of new jobs and the anticipated economic location advantage, will strongly condemn our action and defame us as terrorists. This is a distortion of facts – our attack destroys property, sabotages work processes and destroys money, but not livelihoods. We have ruled out the danger to human life in the action. But we understand the action as a flaming statement against the lie of green capitalism. We oppose the further destruction of our livelihoods locally and globally and the exploitation of people through expansive technological madness. **Our attack is a call to attack the Green New Deal.** In support of social struggles worldwide. For ecological reasons. For anti-colonial reasons. For

feminist reasons. For class struggle reasons. For ultimately revolutionary and anti-domination reasons.

Propagandistic lies as a sales strategy with simultaneous soothing of conscience.

Ecological illusion here, colonial reality elsewhere.

The Green New Deal is Based on Theft, Exploitation & Predation

Talk of green capitalism, the Green New Deal, is nothing but propaganda. The Green New Deal means establishing climate protection as the green continuation of neoliberalism. It too makes the rich richer at the expense of others. Individual electric mobility does not stop the ecological devastation, it continues and expands it. We are witnessing a technological offensive that also continues the economic colonialism of the imperial age in the form of the unabated mass exploitation of millions for luxury in the global North. In addition to material goods, it is now the luxury of clean air. Yet we know that this is an illusion: we all live on the same planet, breathe the same air.

The switch from cars with internal combustion engines to smart electric cars will not have a single positive effect globally. The air will be better where e-cars are driven, but non-renewable raw materials will be consumed in huge quantities to generate this renewable energy and to build the cars. Copper, in particular, is needed to build the new power lines, charging stations and electric motors. Much of it comes from South America. There, people work hard for little money to get the metal out of the ground. Landscapes are destroyed. Large amounts of electricity are consumed to operate the mines and process the copper. The power plants are almost exclusively powered by coal, which is transported from China by ships across the Pacific. The ships are powered by dirty marine diesel. In Chile, for example, people are getting sick in large numbers from the exhaust fumes from the coal-fired power plants, and ecosystems are being degraded. What is ecological about coal mining in China or Australia? How ecological is the shipping of copper out into the clean world of the electric car good guys? How small can the “ecological fingerprint” be of a

dirty heavy industry producing clean cars?

A lot of lithium is needed to build car batteries. In the next 9 years, the consumption of lithium is expected to increase 20 to 30 times. This means a corresponding increase in energy consumption for extraction, transport and processing. In the extraction areas, expulsion and land theft from the indigenous population are commonplace, for example in Argentina. There, the land is sacrificed to the eco-conscience of those who want to continue to live as expansively as before; there, livelihoods are destroyed so that financially well-padded parents here can continue to take their children to kindergarten or private school in their SUVs with a good eco-conscience.



13.12.21, Colomiers, France: INDIGO forced to indefinitely withdraw its electric scooter & self-service bike fleet from Toulouse city after lithium battery stocks (along with 3,000m² warehouse & several hundred vehicles) mysteriously burn

Even without cobalt, no battery installed in e-cars works at present. But cobalt is rare. To illustrate: if Audi were to build one of its production models, the A4, purely electrically, the car factory managers would have to buy half the world market's supply of cobalt. VW has calculated that it would need 130,000 tons of cobalt for e-car production. World production currently stands at 123,000 tons. That doesn't include Tesla or any other car company. The battery in a Tesla

Roadster alone consists of

6831 cells. There is a reason that Tesla is working on the cobalt-free battery: it couldn't even build the intended quantities of e-cars because there aren't enough raw materials. But that also means that the available resources will be scraped out of the earth without



The Juukan rock shelters in Puutu Kuntj Kurrama & Pinikura lands, western so-called Australia, destroyed in mining blasts May 2020, despite containing cultural heritage stretching back through the last Ice Age such as ancient pounding & grinding stones, 28,000-year-old kangaroo bone tool & 4,000-year-old human hair belt

'AN OPENING'

From the first moment automation has never been 'labour saving'. As the machines are faster, more efficient, more automatic, 'smarter', we are simply forced to work at the increased speed and intensity the machine is now capable of.

The first fully 'automated supermarkets' have begun appearing in the UK. Like many other invasions of the urban landscape, which in London particularly is already a fortress under constant surveillance, they are greeted with further indifference. Constant crisis has a wearying effect, every further incursion has a ready-made justification, for further 'efficiencies', 'monitoring', for a 'smarter city' [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg31*].

In fact these supermarkets 'without checkouts' are a clear image of things to come, of a hyper controlled, hyper-exploitative restructuring we are only in the beginning stages of. These places where the small illegalities [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.5 pg13*] – which become increasingly necessary as economic punishment and discipline in the form of hyper-price rises in essentials, as well as normalised shortages – are made almost impossible to get away with.

Their appearance on the urban scene works to exhibit artificial intelligence, facial recognition, and to CAPTURE AND HUMILIATE, those who shop there, as much as those who 'work' there, now in conditions more competitive, and surveilled on camera all the time, optimising 'productivity': **total policing of 'workers' and 'consumers' alike!**

In the early hours of Monday the 28th of February, a decision was made to make a dent in the glittering spectacle these laboratories of social control use to advertise themselves. **In Greenwich [London], a recently opened fully-automated Aldi supermarket was targeted.** With rocks, hammers and paint, the entire glass facade was smashed and defaced.

It is hoped that this presents an opening through which the next phase of government by technology can be revealed as something to be grasped with both hands, with easily reproducible methods, in an anarchist framework of attack.

– some nocturnal rebels x x

regard for people or ecosystems. We can be sure of that.

Rare metals and minerals are also needed, consumed, mined, processed, shipped, etc. for what is called "sustainable" energy production. This applies to the wind turbine as well as the tidal power plant. All efficient electric motors need these metals and minerals. They come mainly from China and Africa and are mined and processed there under the same bad conditions as in South America.

The resource consumption, the social exploitation conditions and the ecological damage are enormous. In addition, most batteries are ready for the scrap heap after a few years. As scrap-worthy as the ideological idea of progress, which is linked to expansion and creation of surplus value – and not to social and solidarity conditions for all people.

The Patriarch & His (Nightmarish) Dream

Elon Musk, owner and patriarch of Tesla, is for us only a representative of a caste of men who are united in their aggressive capitalist-technological will to modernize and their delusion of world domination. As egomaniacs, they see themselves as the center of a world they believe they own. They are characterized by extreme irresponsibility and antisocial behavior.

But Elon Musk is also the richest person in the world and the founder of many companies, the prototype of the economic patriarch. In his companies, everything is strictly prescribed. Anyone who doesn't work efficiently is fired. Musk believes in limitless technical-capitalist progress – he also believes that we are very likely living in a simulation. Someone like that could not care less how many corpses he walks over. It's not for nothing that he plans the colonization of Mars. That is only logical, if life on the earth will become the hell for most people, if it goes on as before.¹ And he will know it.

1 ed. – Amazon, under direction of Jeff Bezos, was another major capitalist player in the new sectors to heavily promote this direction: "MARS [Machine Learning, Automation, Robotics, & Space] Conference has been held since 2016, and at each opening Jeff Bezos has done something cringe-worthy: in 2017, he piloted a massive robot and flexed its arms, while in 2018 he went on a stroll with a [robotic] war-dog from Boston Dynamics. [...] His space company, Blue Origin, has successfully launched eleven of its reusable New Shepard rockets, paving the way for its first human crews. Over the years, Bezos has pumped billions of dollars into this space-colonization effort while ruthlessly exploiting his workers down here on Earth. As he makes plans to charge millionaires \$300,000 for a few minutes in his spacecraft, his warehouse workers can barely afford to pay their rent. [...] Faced with mounting pressure from all sides, Bezos

It is well known that his company, SpaceX, is the world's leading commercial provider of rocket flights. His SpaceX Dragon spacecraft powers the International Space Station (ISS), and another spacecraft called Crew-Dragon takes people there, too. **Musk is currently working with "success" to make space flight the tourist norm for the rich. He is putting the money he makes from the supposedly clean electric cars into expanding his fleet of rockets.** Thus, every purchase of an electric car from Tesla is nothing more than a contribution to the further ecological destruction of the biosphere – there is probably no need to say anything about the ecological balance of rockets. As a symbol of his potency, years ago he had a Tesla convertible, complete with a mannequin in a spaceman's outfit at the wheel, launched into space on one of his rockets. Since then, the thing has been circling the earth, empty of meaning.

The fairy tale of the ecologically and politically correct big investor is a neoliberal lie spread by those who want to believe it. Tesla builds mainly top-of-the-line models and SUVs; now also a passenger car that can go over 300 km/h. The Saudi sovereign wealth fund, under the control of the crown prince, holds Tesla shares worth up to \$3 billion. The dictator is building and making money in Brandenburg.

Musk is also a patriarchal visionary. He wants to network the human brain with machines and founded the company Neuralink for this purpose in 2016.

Elon Musk's earthly dream is automated driving

reluctantly agreed to pay his US fulfillment center workers \$15 an hour in October 2018, although this seemed to piss off the tyrannical sociopath. Over the next months, he secretly accelerated his plans to fully automate the Amazon fulfillment centers by bringing more robots into the facilities. [...] Jeff Bezos then went on to attend his very own invite-only event in Washington DC on May 9th, 2019, where he unveiled Blue Origin's first lunar lander, signaling his intentions to use the moon as a stepping stone to colonize outer-space. As he described his colonial vision, Bezos said "you're going to have whole industries. There are going to be thousands of future companies doing this work. A whole system of entrepreneurial activity, unleashed. Creative people coming up with new ideas about how to use space. Earth ends up zoned residential and light industry. It'll be a beautiful place to live, it'll be a beautiful place to visit, it'll be a beautiful place to go to college, and do some light industry." While admitting that the limitless growth and toxic pollution of capitalism are incompatible with a healthy planet, Bezos concluded that humans simply needed to extend that same limitless growth into space. As he asked the audience, "do we want stasis and rationing or do we want dynamism and growth? This is an easy choice. We know what we want" (Destroy Amazon).

based on artificial intelligence. Many functions in Tesla cars are already controlled by app. The new models film the interior of the car non-stop and also the external environment. This data is sent directly to the Tesla cloud. Anyone who buys a Tesla makes themselves part of a dystopian surveillance apparatus. In 2020, Tesla received the Big Brother Award, which is given for particularly drastic technical control. The reason given was that data is permanently evaluated and stored. It was said that Tesla cars are "surveillance systems on four wheels."



This resource-wasting surveillance mobility is supposed to secure the future of individual transportation and integrate it into the social context of exploitation and surveillance. **This has also been the case in the car industry so far: assembly line work was enforced by Ford on the automobile so that it could be produced more cost-efficiently. But above all, to isolate the workers through the fragmentation of the work steps and to undermine their unionization.** One only has to read what Mr. Ford [ed. – see *Return Fire* vol.5 pg98] wrote about this. Just as seriously, we see how Musk wants to shape the world. He unabashedly dreams the patriarchal dream of domination over earth and space. With such men enough experiences were made in the last 5,000 years. Let's make sure that time has run out for him and his kind.



Grünheide

Grünheide is to become Elon Musk's second large factory producing electric cars. He calls it the "Giga-factory" for a reason. Its dimensions are monstrous, like those of the other giga-factories. The first one builds batteries in Nevada (USA). In order for it to be built, laws were changed at Musk's request and 1.3 billion in taxes were waived. Giga-factory 2 builds photovoltaic systems. Giga-factory 3, Shanghai (China), builds cars. Number 4 in Grünheide will be the same. Starting in the summer of 2021, around 12,000 workers will build 500,000 cars per year there. Later, 40,000 people are to build 2 million cars per year there. That would be about 5500 cars per day.

Land prices in the area are already rising. The gentrification known from Berlin will take hold of the area around Erkner with an expected 35,000 newcomers. This will be at the expense of financially weak households and will lead to major displacement of the population from the region. The uncertainty and anger is correspondingly great.

Tesla is also a disaster on the ground. In addition to the clearing of forest land for the construction of the factory and the massive increase in local and interregional traffic, the high water consumption will be the most ecologically serious consequence for the region. The board of the Strausberg-Erkner water board even warned of drinking water shortages. For the initial operation, Tesla predicted the consumption of 3.3 million m³ of water per year. Only after heavy criticism did Tesla change its estimate to 1.4 million m³ for the beginning. Later, it will be 2.15 million m³ of drinking water. In the long term, there is already talk of more than 15 million m³ of water required per year. According to ecologists, this will have a negative impact on the water balance of the region and the nearby landscape and nature conservation areas. From 2022, with the estimated water consumption of the factory, there will no longer be sufficient water pumping reserves to develop the region. In addition, pumping large amounts of water exacerbates the problem of falling groundwater levels, which is a consequence of the climate disaster. None of this concerns the head of the Potsdam State Environmental Office. Hearings of Tesla opponents leave him cold and he approves one environmental mess after the next. Now even undeveloped drinking water reservoirs are to be exploited.

In Brandenburg's politics, Daimler's investment of 50 million euros for the production of E-Sprinters in Ludwigsfelde celebrates the region as a "mobility location".

And Tesla brazenly advertises that it is the "most advanced factory in the world." But Tesla has so far used technology in its factories (e.g., in the paint shop) that is older and more regressive in terms of environmental protection than that used by conventional carmakers in Europe. Water consumption and emissions are significantly higher. It's like building a chemical plant in a drinking water protection area.

Tesla's payment record is poor, despite favoritism from local licensing authorities. One can just afford it. Tesla did not pay the water bill for the construction site. Only when the water was turned off in October 2020 did the money come. People are used to laws being changed and structures being adapted for them. The Brandenburg University of Applied Sciences is setting up an "electromobility" course of study so that the necessary next generation of engineers can also be bred, the nearby highway is being renovated especially for factory operations, and the L38 is being expanded.

This is the continued normality of the destructive industrialization of the 19th century, which is now riding the wave of green capitalism into the 21st century. In which, without regard for people and natural resources, vast landscapes, almost the entire continent, almost the entire world, are being subordinated to industrial, marketized production.

Consumption & Individual Traffic – or: Another World

For what is motorized individual transport, raised to a fetish, used? To get people to their jobs in a totally flexible and totally monitored way, to let them consume all the time, to be able to transport people as fast as possible – so that they work more and consume more.

Is an electric SUV an improvement on anything?

In order to be able to lead a life with which we do not destroy vital foundations of the earth, electric mobility is not needed. What is needed is less mobility overall, less individual transportation, and above all less consumption, the benefits of which and the associated promises of happiness are hammered into us every day. We need free public transportation. We need progress in social coexistence, a future without exploitation of our labor. Only the maintenance of colonial relations of exploitation makes it possible to produce electric motors that make people here believe that the cars are ecologically clean.

And asked about the social aspects: do the wealthy Tesla buyers with eco-conscience want the mines for their “eco” car next to their “cottage garden”? Do they want to see the power plants that supply them with electricity from their condo roof terrace? Do they want to see the huts of the maltreated workers next to the eco-kindergarten where they send their children?

No. These people and their working conditions should stay outside the EU. They don't want to see the misery. Because they probably simply don't care that others have to pay the blood toll for their “privileges”. There is no lack of knowledge about the global context. One can decide which side one is on. One can buy an SUV or resist. We recommend the latter – without getting caught, of course.

There is enough experience with the promises of capitalist-technological progress. 200 years ago, there were hardly any forests left in Central Europe because they were consumed for mining, industry, warships, heating and building. The clearings were replaced by the industrial extraction of coal. We all know what the subsequent burning of coal has done.

We know that the digitization of the world has led, and will continue to lead, primarily to new forms of domination. Tesla will always know who else is in the car, what is being said, and where the journey is going. The data does not belong to us, it is sold and forms another basis for the possibilities of totalitarian surveillance.

Climate Catastrophe & the Logic of Revolutionary Sabotage Actions

Among other things, the unbroken belief and adherence of all prior market-dominated social forms to technical progress has undoubtedly caused the climate catastrophe that can no longer be prevented. Sabotage cannot replace great social struggles, but it can support them or set courageous accents to force space for reflection and perspectives.

Why then do we still engage in sabotage actions if we believe that climate destruction can no longer be stopped? Because we want to minimize the extent of the coming catastrophes. Because protest and resistance against the destruction of the climate through profit-oriented exploitation of the earth's resources can have as its goal a revolutionary future outlook. Because with the destruction of expansive free-market economic policies, there is a chance to establish a fundamental solidarity-based and social way of life that will show us paths to a different

society. When the devastation of ecosystems is well advanced, a new society can better deal with the consequences of these legacies when the relations of domination are fundamentally destroyed. It is only in resisting the existing destructive relations that the possibilities of change become apparent.

The rich men who drive these processes of ecological devastation are also only results of social processes, and thus to a certain extent interchangeable, but it is precisely these men, not by chance, who represent a politics of modernization through destruction. Let's destroy everything that is called Tesla!

People all over the world are fighting against their destructive belief in progress. For us, many of these struggles belong together. They are united by the resistance against an aggressive push for modernization. When in Argentina indigenous women shout that one should stop conquering their bodies and their lands, then we also place ourselves with this action at the side of these struggles.

The struggles in the Hambacher Forest [*ed. – see Return Fire vol.3 pg91*], in the Dannenröder Forest² and other forests of resistance were and are points of hope for us, as well as the radical sabotage actions of others in the coal mines, who no longer fall for the lies of the proclaimers of progress.

By the way, the insanity of individual transport and electromobility can easily be further attacked: in September, the International Motor Show (IAA) will take place in Munich. We hope that there will be

2 ed. – Site of a fierce occupation in west Germany blocking a new highway. “Almost everyone who has been there has learned to love the Dannenrod forest. This place has done something with many people. But what is special there, what is different? It is a different feeling to be out of the confinement and noise of the city, to be on the road without cell phones, this surveillance and communication technology that manipulates and controls us incessantly. Instead, in the forest, in nature with friends and companions. But it can't only be the beautiful landscape. So what else is it? Real resistance happens in Danni! Not the blurred and lazy compromise that we constantly have to experience in life and political struggle in the city/system. Instead, a clear line of separation with the enemy, people who enter into resistance with their bodies, their existences, and a collective spirit of “You have to go through us before you can go through this forest!” The resistance lives permanently in a collective moment. It lives in the cooking and the campfires, in the erection of structures and barricades, in the organization inside and outside the forest, in taking care of and supporting each other and in solidarity with the prisoners, as well as in the recurring occupations, blockades and attacks on the cops and the sabotage of machinery and infrastructure that has been used” (An Autonomous Reflection on the Continuation of the Struggle in Dannenrod Forest).

enough resistance locally, decentrally and also subversively on the power grid to make this a fiasco.



– Volcano Group:³
Against the Progress of Destruction

3 ed. – “We remember that this is not a first for this Berlin group who already in 2020 sabotaged the cables of the Fraunhofer Institute for Telecommunications responsible for developing the State tracking application for smartphone on the Covid-19, and in March 2018 set fire to two large fibre optic links and electric cables situated under the Mörschbrücke bridge (at Charlottenburg) belonging to various big civil and military operators, causing substantial damage. The first attacks of the Volcano Group against electrical or fibre optic infrastructures dates back to May of 2011 at Ostkreuz station, causing disruption of train traffic for several days, plus in May 2013 against a cable duct at Zehlendorf, again disrupting the rail traffic.” (note from Sansnom, counter-information site hosting a French translation of the claim). Additionally, the day before the inauguration of the gigafactory (with Musk in attendance), a 6am arson of trainline cables in Berlin by another group took down the service for the 3,000 commuters on their way to work at the facility (as well as affecting the airport). In addition to attacking Tesla – who they note have recently opened a showroom in the capital of Xinjiang (see **Hong Kong: Its Relevance for the Rest of Us**) where the Chinese Communist Party “systematically enslaves the Uyghur population in order to exploit them economically in labour and re-education camps” – this aimed to damage train company Deutsche Bahn, the largest German public company, “against the war in Ukraine with the delivery of Russian oil and coal to Germany via tanker cars, and in solidarity with the opponents of the construction of the Tren Maya in Mexico (a 1,500 km long railroad line that will cross the Yucatán Peninsula), with which this same Deutsche Bahn is associated.” The architecture of social control afforded by the company is also cited: “Recently, the Deutsche Bahn made a pilot test with the Ministry of the Interior at the Berlin-Südkreuz station using facial recognition software to control the population. Digital check-in, online payment without cash, and personalized QR code in tickets should be seen as a technological attack. The pandemic is and has been used to impose surveillance and (self)control. The railroads, as the largest public company, are not only leading this technological attack on their customers, they are also playing a pioneering role.”

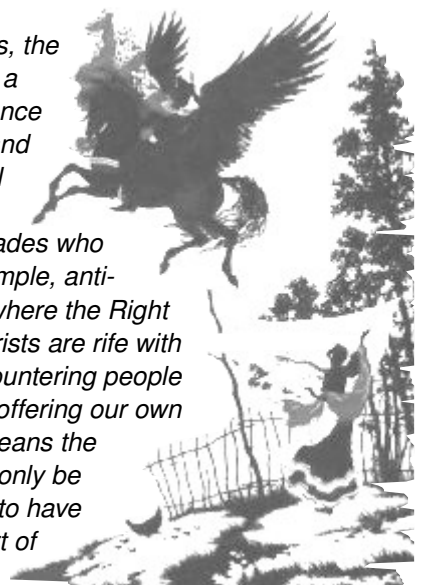
ABOUT THE REACTIONARY DRIFT OF SOME “COMRADES”...

[ed. – This notification was sent last year in the run-up to a gathering that summer in Italy. The gathering had an explicitly international dimension; including scheduled participation from the UK, such as the 325/Dark Nights Collective. Beyond this event alone, we think this speaks to the fact – however marginal – of other anarchists drawing themselves into shady alliances in recent years (often justified through a crass and acritical populism), here like in other countries: we hope not irretrievably.

Regarding the situation the text below addressed, the exposure of these toxic elements at the base of the *Resistenza al Nanomondo* project (in English, *Resistance to the Nanoworld*) and their likes in other places is deeply saddening here at *Return Fire*. Some of these people and their activities (see **Return Fire vol.4 pg73**) were great inspirations to our project a decade ago when we read about them. Others of them seemed ready previously to defend an anarchism that was techno-critical and in defense of the earth against against ‘(eco-)fascist’ incursions (mostly far away and exotic), only to now rub shoulders with them on the continent...

A thread running through each chapter of this volume of *Return Fire* is on the place and application of our critique of the Left, and really this cannot be separated from our critique of the Right: or rather, of the whole stupidity of splitting the complexity of life into a binary between the two, where criticising one draws you closer by default to the other by the idiotic logic of “my enemy’s enemy is my friend,” the same principle that has led anarchists through the history of such marriages of convenience to be stabbed in the back by their republican, Soviet or democratic “allies,” often in short order. Have we really still failed to escape this cage, just swapped costumes?

It’s important to emphasise that for us, the result shouldn’t be a purity and total distance taken from messy and contradictory social struggle. We have respect for the comrades who try to enter, for example, anti-lockdown protests where the Right and conspiracy theorists are rife with the intention of encountering people as individuals and offering our own analysis, which means the engagement can only be critical: this seems to have been an effective part of the eventual



exclusion of fascists from much of the Yellow Vests anti-austerity movement in French-speaking parts of Europe where they had previously enjoyed acceptance and influence, as opposed to the comrades who just refused to engage. For this reason it disturbed us to hear other anarchists "in Wales & England" recommending they just be obstructed "as far-right mobs" in a way that corners us into supporting State measures, rather than pressuring them to reject the far-right elements themselves, and projecting our own ideas into the spaces they recruit from. (Some hints of this possibility emerged during the resistance in Trieste, Italy, to the COVID Green Pass: see **Capitalism & Electrification**.) But inviting not grassroots participants but principle ideologues of precisely the bigoted element that needs combating in those spaces, and hosting them at our own events, is quite another thing: it only seems possible by a certain obscuring of our own perspectives, or perhaps not (or no longer) holding those perspectives.

Of other broadly anti-system currents – some of which we will surely share something with, and others almost nothing – we can read widely and engage widely, but critically: and interpret them through an anarchist lens (and not just an anarchist techno-critical lens), refusing to just parrot others or give them our platform. Otherwise we end with complete incoherency such as (previous?) anarchists rightly noting the eugenicist root of the trans-humanist project – see **Return Fire vol.4 pg43** – only to then join with conspiracy theorists who promote a eugenicist attitude to COVID-19 and not only, because the latter "at least" cry freedom and criticise the technological network such as 5G... often for starkly different reasons than do anarchists (see **The 5G Net**). And when it comes to the starkly reactionary gender essentialism described below, perhaps they forget the eugenic feminism of the English women's movement efforts to impose a colonial "hygiene" in India and Africa last century ago against some of many societies that did not sufficiently conform to their binary system...

As things heat up, and anarchists are sometimes on the back foot, temptations will always be there to abandon some of our principles to feel included in another current that seems rebellious in aspects that might ultimately prove false. The graves of our comrades of days gone by, and those of the marginalised that those '(tecno-)rebels' hatefully collude with the dominant system in persecuting then and now, stand by to warn us of this error.

We thank the comrades who wrote this and submitted it to us (evidently who share our techno-critical perspective), and we now publish it in the spirit of solidarity with the rebellion against restriction of abortion access under the States defiling Turtle Island on the other side of the Atlantic; most recently in the so-called United States, as, before it, in so-called Mexico; weapons in hand. The groups Terza Posizione, Fronte della Gioventù, Political Movement Ordine Nuovo, and Casa Pound (see **Return Fire vol.4 pg62**) named in what follows are all post-Second World War fascist organisations in Italy.]



We write this text to warn against the umpteenth worrying reactionary drift of some well-known characters who still find accessibility within the anarchist scene, in Italy (less and less) and abroad, despite the fact that in recent years they have accumulated a series of alliances and embarrassing speeches, tending to the most extreme populism and increasingly close to the right-wing world.

We are talking about the organizers of the Three Days against Technoscience, also involved in the website Resistance to the Nanoworld, the magazine The Cry from the Earth and in the documentation space La Piralide in Bergamo.

For the three international days against technoscience that will be held in Alessandria (for the third consecutive year), characters such as Maurizio Martucci and Daniela Danna are invited to speak this time.

Maurizio Martucci, spokesperson and founder of "Alleanza italiana Stop 5G", wrote a few years ago an article¹ to commemorate the history of Meridiano Zero: a fascist group born in 1991 by the will of exiles from Alemanno's Fronte della Gioventù, inspired by the Political Movement Ordine Nuovo and Julius Evola,² and dissolved two years later. On October 4, 1991 the first group of militants of Meridiano Zero became the protagonist of violent incidents with members of the student collectives of the extreme left in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Rome.

The group Meridiano Zero proposed itself as projected into the future, "beyond right and left" (inspired by Terza Posizione), but we know that these expressions are often used as a strategy by neo-fascist groups, as is clear from these words:

- 1 Here's the article: ultimavoce.it/meridiano-zero-solstizio-tecnoribelli/
- 2 ed. – Evola was an Italian fascist 'dissident' to Mussolini's regime, whose 'apolitical' veil covers his extensive elaboration of an esoteric cultural fascist project (including the reactionary side of perennialist philosophy) influential through the rest of the 20th Century and today.

"commemorative neo-fascism is alien to us. Fascism and Nazism are of interest to us as historical phases representing ethical values, but we are concerned with the future: we are just a group of young people not homologated to the masses". **It is no coincidence that the group Meridiano Zero will then inspire the birth of Casa Pound.**

In the mentioned article, Martucci praises the fascists of Meridiano Zero as being "against genetic manipulation, in defense of all that is natural, against uncontrolled technological development". The term they coined "tecnorebels" is still used by Martucci as a slogan and also appears in the text of the presentation of his speech at the Three Days Against Technoscience.

Maurizio Martucci's book on 5G ("# STOP 5G Health, environment, geopolitics, privacy, transhumanism and social control") was also presented on July 22, 2021 at La Piralide in Bergamo, a "radical ecologist" space run by the same people behind Three Days Against Technoscience, Resistance to the Nanoworld and The Cry from the Earth.

Need we say more? Isn't it enough to say that in the past that the organizers of this three-day event wrote articles in the ecological magazine *The Cry from the Earth* that to an unobservant (it would be better to say unempathetic) eye may be critical of technologies but have a transphobic and essentialist basis? Yet the attacks in the articles of this newspaper have been exposed for long time, articles where, in order to talk about transhumanism, technologies, feminism, they fall into transphobic, anti-queer and essentialist discourses that would be worthy of being included in catholic and fascist magazines.

Since a long time it has been highlighted (also because they are not hidden at all) the disconcerting alliances between Silvia Guerini and groups like Arcilesbica, transphobic lesbian women groups, as well as her articles and books that besides being against technoscience (and we are too!) point the finger on trans people as if they were promoters of transhumanism [ed. – see **Nicolas Casaux, *Transphobe, is Lying to You***]. Without ever forgetting, and we don't want to forget, that Silvia Guerini wrote in the past homophobic leaflets and a book against abortion (to be correct we point out that Silvia has distanced herself from this book, revising her position against abortion and asking not to spread the book anymore – which however remains available in the catalog of Arkiviu-Biblioteka T. Serra editions).

Of the same tone is the increasingly close collaboration between Silvia Guerini and Daniela Danna, an academic sociologist who in recent years

has adhered to TERF (trans-exclusionary radical feminist) positions, writing texts and publishing translations on her website that reproduce verbatim the worst arguments of the American TERF wave: the alarm about the "trans lobby" that would be taking over the world, the denial of the concept of gender identity, the denial of the existence of trans children, the claim that trans people are nothing more than gays and lesbians who do not accept themselves as such, the description of trans women as "men" who invade women's spaces with the intention of raping them, and so on. **Daniela Danna's transphobic book "The Little Prince" was presented at La Piralide a couple of years ago, accompanied by controversy, and the sociologist will be speaking again this year, as she did last year, at the Three Days Against Technoscience. On July 3, 2021 Daniela Danna and Silvia Guerini also participated together, with speeches, in a conference with the title "A world without mothers?" in which maternity is described as a "natural destiny linked to the identification of the woman with the mother" and the modern freedom of choice and the consequent choice of many women not to become mothers is lamented.**

Last year, at the Three Days Against Technoscience, among others the French ecological collective *Pièces et Mains d'Oeuvre [Parts & Labour]* was invited to hold a lecture, whose racist, misogynist, homophobic and transphobic as well as politically ambiguous positions have already been abundantly highlighted.³

3 This website PMO from Grenoble – home of the Minatec (see **Return Fire vol.4 pg38** and from former researchers of which come some of the sites' collaborators) and also of significant anarchist techno-critical action (see **'From Fringe Prophecy into Voguish Ideology'**) which PMO stand tellingly in contrast to – as well as poaching revolutionary ideas to present as 'anti-industrial guru' only to empty them of their content, has spewed insulting texts, morbidly provoking like they were still in the lab setting up guinea pig fights... Despite some relevant contributions on technology – though far from the only or best source even on this – the joke's on them as they reveal their ignorance by taking what they have heard in ads or tabloids as queer or feminist ideas (while claiming to critique spectacular society!), deploying neo-masculinist tropes of men as victims of competition caused by women who also emasculate them, of "hetero-phobia" and "anti-white racism"... As André Dréan (among many others!) noted already in 2009, PMO "distills the ideology of fear, denigrates all attempts to radically challenge this world". Yet they were published in the UK's 325 anarchist magazine: whose 2020 issue also hosts texts by Resistance to the Nanoworld, along with Greek anarchist prisoner Dino Giagtzoglou railing against "queer theory and trans-feminism adherents" (as, more recently, does The Acorn web bulletin of UK's Winter Oak – regarding the degree to which these currents are as "postmodern and liberal" as Dino reduced them to, see **Memory as a Weapon**;

The TERF positions of the collective Resistance to the Nanoworld have also been made explicit, not only in the collaborations with Daniela Danna, Arcilesbica and with the contents of several articles they have published, but also in the space they have given on their website to presentations of transphobic feminist authors, such as the presentation of Sheila Jeffreys scheduled last March in Italy and focused as well on the defense of the true "woman" in front of the alleged danger brought by the trans movement.

To mention another episode, again in the space of documentation La Piralide of Bergamo, recently was presented the book "Il giallo del Coronavirus" by Sonia Savioli published by the Arianna publishing house, which "boasts" in its catalog books written by Alain De Benoist, founder of the movement called Nouvelle Droite (The New Right) in France, as well as anti-Semitic books and articles published on their website regarding the alleged "Jewish world conspiracy", pro-Trump articles, conspiracy theories and other garbage. We don't have much information about Sonia Savioli, but we wonder how it is possible to present a book edited by a right-wing publishing house in a space crossed by anarchist individualities. And we also wonder how it is possible to include the presentation of the book against 5G by Maurizio Martucci.

Where are the organizers of this three-day international event attended by anarchists from all over the world going? What is not yet clear in front of these choices of the group of La Piralide, the magazine The Cry from the Earth, the website Resistance to the Nanoworld and the organizers of this three-day event against technoscience?

Among other things, if the speeches and collusions with sexist, transphobic and right-wing people, groups, publishers were not enough, there is also very little anarchism in the fact of establishing alliances and collaborations with people linked to the world of institutions and media, such as with associations linked to parties (as is the case of Arcilesbica with the Democratic Party), mainstream journalists (Martucci), academic sociologists (Danna), and others, not to mention the embarrassing "Appeal for the abolition of any artificial reproduction of the

Mutant Identities in the Middle Ages). Countering this poison is necessary, even when those responsible are behind bars; despite prohibitions to the contrary in some anarchist scenes, *critical* solidarity is possible to combine with challenges to bigotry, as we hope these anarchists are not beyond the point of no return; as opposed to PMO, who simply consider humanity an error of nature and disregard all attempts at liberation. No comrades of ours.

human", signed by Resistance to the Nanoworld together with Parts & Labour and others, which among other things asks the "national and international authorities" that any artificial reproduction of the human and any genetic modification of it be qualified as a "crime against the species". Since when, for the anarchists, are the authorities of any kind considered interlocutors for their demands?

We think it's time to start holding these characters accountable for their positions, people who until a few years ago were anarchists, and whose writings continue to find space even in anarchist distros, between a fanzine that hurls stones at patriarchy and an analysis on how trans people do not promote transhumanism, to detailed fanzines on the new and old right-wingers disguised as ecologists and anti-speciesists [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg98*].

We think that the group Resistance to the Nanoworld has an urgency to fight this world impregnated with technologies and faith in science, but to this aim you can't give voice to everyone, overtaking divergences as if they were small obstacles to the struggles that we carry on with passion; this is the argument that is made by the new right-wingers, who say they have overcome the right and the left, to be something else, and who in this period of pandemic took to the streets shouting "freedom!" (often allying themselves with restaurateurs and bartenders - thus defending the interests of the bourgeoisie) and making us cringe.

Giving Maurizio Martucci the chance to participate in the Three Days against Technoscience, as well as presenting a book by Arianna editions is not an oversight, no, it is no longer possible to believe that. These characters know very well what they do and write, proof of this is the fact that they continue undaunted on their way despite having been warned several times about the type of collaborations they were establishing.

We believe it is time that even those who continue to give them space, to participate in their events and to distribute their materials ask themselves some questions and give themselves some answers about how and with whom they are carrying on the anarchist struggle against science and technology.



Post-script

Following the publication of the text "On the Reactionary Drift of Some "Comrades"", which

exposed the worrying queerphobic and transphobic discourses as well as the increasingly explicitly reactionary and right-wing political alliances of the 'Resistance to the Nanoworld' collective (and related projects), we received numerous additional reports that underscore the points made in our original text.

Here are some of the most significant of these updates:

Regarding Maurizio Martucci, and his fascist connections... (Martucci is the founder of "Alleanza italiana Stop 5G." He was invited to Bergamo by the group La Piralide and by Resistance to the Nanoworld to talk about 5G at the "Three Days against Technosciences"):

– Gianni Alemanno – the former neo-fascist mayor of Rome, son-in-law of the mass murderer Pino Rauti – wrote the preface to Martucci's book, "*Cuore tifoso*" (*Fan Heart*).

– In the interview below (also notable for his disdain for "foreigners in the stadium" and his references to "stateless globalism"), Martucci discusses his experience with the Lazio Ultras [*football fan*] group "Irriducibili," which he helped to found. This context is useful in understanding who Martucci is and what scenes he was involved in during the 90s:

sportpeople.net/rivoluzionari-maurizio-martucci-ricorda-i-primi-irriducibili-del-1987-intervista-allo-scrittore-dei-casi-sandri-paparelli-e-re-ceconi-sulla-nascita-degli-ultras-lazio-di-30-anni

Combined with his Wikipedia page,⁴ this gives a good picture of his last 20 years .

It becomes clear that this is the political trajectory of an unrepentant post-fascist.

Note: the Irriducibili disbanded last year, and they are now they called "Ultras Lazio." The last banner they displayed in Rome is from a few days ago. It says, "Hysaj worm, Lazio is fascist," a response to a Lazio

4 it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maurizio_Martucci



“What the [U.S.] Right is seeking in earnest isn’t so much the elimination of abortion access per se (although it should be painfully obvious that this is part of it) but rather the total denial of bodily autonomy and the expressions of self-sovereignty that it demands; what is sought is the imposition of a certain totalizing system of relation to ourselves, each other and our environments articulated by the most narrowly reactionary elements of white civil society. It should come as no surprise that those in alignment with this most recent reactionary turn have now taken to expressing that their work isn’t over yet and that “this is only the beginning.” In the Supreme Court’s concurring opinion written by Clarence Thomas, court decisions protecting contraception access and same-sex marriage, as well as a case striking down the validity of anti-sodomy laws, were all called into question. The same logic that pushed legal abortion access into uncertainty now seeks to do the same to a growing list of other expressions of self-creation that fall outside of a certain totalizing worldview. [...] It should be understood that what is being debated in the halls of power is not whether or not abortion – or any of the other hot button issues – should be protected or denied. Rather, what is being debated is the precise shape that the expropriation of life will take in a specific territory within the monstrous system that devours our bodies.”

– *Reflections on the Setting Sun*

player who sang Bella Ciao [*ed. – song of the old Italian anti-fascist partisan struggle*].

At the Three Days against Technosciences, on Friday July 23rd 2021, the documentary "Bioethics and the new eugenics" by James Corbett was screened:⁵ Corbett is an "anarcho-capitalist"⁶ who is most noted for running a website which promotes far-right conspiracy theories... He is a supporter of Pizzagate...⁷ and also of various anti-semitic

5 m.youtube.com/watch?v=6HqBK9ACo7k

6 corbettreport.com/teaching-children-about-liberty-solutionswatch-video

7 corbettreport.com/reddit-bans-pizzagate-investigation-the-corbett-report-continues-it – a predecessor of the Qanon

conspiracy theories, including that the "Jewish lobby" was responsible for 9/11.⁸ Among other bullshit, he also claims that "global warming" is a conspiracy...⁹

In 2016, Maurizio Martucci reviewed a book by Alan de Benoist (theorist of the French "new right") for "Arianna Editrice", a publishing house that publishes right-wing, anti-semitic, and conspiracy texts.¹⁰ He also reviewed a book by Enrica Perucchiatti, a fascist Catholic who espouses gender essentialism and anti-queer positions.¹¹

Silvia Guerini has continued her commitment to Arcilesbica (as can be seen by browsing the Facebook page of the latter association). Guerini defends an essentialist and biologically determinist conception of "woman" and rejects outright the notion of gender self-determination. These positions translate into explicit attacks on trans people.

Recently, Silvia Guerini published an article on this topic on the website, Rad Fem Italia.¹²

The ideas on abortion and gender transition expressed in this article all already quite striking. However, in addition to this content – which speaks for itself – it should be noted that Guerini also praises the minority report of two MEPs: the Spanish De la Pisa Carrion of the Francoist Vox party, and the Polish Wisniewska of Law and Justice, a populist, extreme-right party...

Another article exemplifying Guerini's current positions is "Gender Neutral Revolution" published in July 2021 in The Cry from the Earth #9 and on their website.¹³

This article, along with the contents of the Rad Fem Italia site (which hosts Guerini's other article), can be counted as within the conspiracy cauldron. It makes little sense to engage rationally with the "arguments" of these text, because they are really nothing more

theory, but more obviously bipartisan against the US Democratic Party; likewise hinging on theories of elite paedophile rings 'discovered' via a Washington pizzeria.

8 corbette-report.com/dancing-israelis-guido-deflated-bayersanto-troubles-new-world-next-week

9 corbette-report.com/the-ipcc-prepares-to-release-more-hot-air

10 ariannaeditrice.it/articolo.php?id_articolo=53052

11 ariannaeditrice.it/articoli/il-progresso-ci-spinge-a-rinunciare-alla-liberta-che-futuro-ci-aspetta

12 feministpost.it/magazine/primo-piano/metic-report-leuropa-spinge-sullidentita-di-genere

13 resistenzealnanomondo.org/necrotecnologie/rivoluzione-gender-neutral

than a jumble of conspiracy theories about how the "trans lobby" (inspired by the Jewish one), thanks to funding from various Jewish billionaires (Soros et al), has joined forces with transhumanists, biotech multinationals, and eugenicists in order to control the world. All of this is topped-off with absurd fear-mongering about the concept of gender identity and the predatory potential of trans people. Guerini implies that trans people endanger the lives of cis women, while distorting the trans experience through fanciful psychological interpretations that deny its legitimacy. She aligns herself with legislative proposals to prevent trans people from transitioning or to convince them to de-transition (similar to what certain Catholic groups do with respect to homosexuality!), the psychological terrorism that focuses on children. The text is full of paranoid talk of the "transhuman project of replacing sex with gender", which would go hand in hand with an alleged "gender-neutral" revolution whose goals are to erase biological sex along with the symbolic order of the mother... As in all conspiracy theories, the data and news cited in support of these theses are the most biased and mystifying [ed. – see **Nicolas Casaux, Transphobe, is Lying to You**], coming from other conspiracy circles, from fascist and/or Catholic hate groups, or from mainstream media articles whose contents seem to have been invented from scratch or rewritten and twisted to suit the purposes of propaganda.

These arguments closely resemble those that the Vatican has promoted for several years now concerning the dangers of the alleged "gender ideology" [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg60**]. The Vatican claims that this "ideology" will undermine the traditional roles of men and women as well as the social order (god, country, family) that they are based on. **But isn't this precisely the social order that we want to destroy?** Heterosexism affects people with a variety of experiences: not only cis women, but also trans people and the whole spectrum of individuals encompassed by the term "queer." Yet these kinds of feminists try to make out as if trans and queer people are rather part of the enemy front. Feminists whose positions are closer to those of Forza Nuova than to those of anarchists refuse to see that the critique of patriarchy must necessarily be accompanied by questioning the content of gender categories and their binarism. Without this perspective, such critique will only rearrange the hierarchies, preserving their substance, instead of destroying them.

Let's keep this reactionary garbage out of anarchist circles! Our ideas of freedom have nothing to do with this trash!

'WE LAUGH HARDER THAN THEM'

[ed. – Drawn from a longer collection of personal stories collated at the CrimethInc. website, of which we reproduce the below introduction and first three accounts.]

In Atlanta, Georgia, [so-called United States,] the city government intends to destroy large swaths of what remains of the South River Forest – also known by the Muskogee name for the river, Weelaunee. In place of one stretch of woods, they aim to build a police training compound; they have sold the neighboring part to Blackhall Studios executive Ryan Millsap, who intends to build a giant soundstage. Yet for more than a year now, activists have protected the forest against their plans. In a previous article,¹ we chronicled how this campaign² got started and the strategies that have driven it; in the following collection of narratives, participants in the movement describe their experiences and explain what makes this fight meaningful to them.

The fight to defend the forest brings together locals whose neighborhood will be gentrified by the developments, environmentalists who recognize the importance of the forest in mitigating the impact of climate change, forest defenders who have been occupying the trees for months, abolitionists who oppose the expansion of racist policing in Atlanta, and young people who desperately need a free space to build community outside the high prices and profit imperatives of Atlanta corporate nightlife. These are not discrete issues, but aspects of a coherent whole.

The destruction of the tree canopy and the gentrification of neighborhoods are stages in the same process: the former paves the way for the latter. Forcibly displacing Indigenous peoples, carving up the natural world into private property, burying the fertile earth under concrete, and terrorizing the inhabitants with police violence are all expressions of the same logic. Catastrophic climate change is the large-scale consequence of a series of smaller steps that are no less catastrophic in the lives of individual human beings.

1 crimethinc.com/2022/04/11/the-city-in-the-forest-reinventing-resistance-for-an-age-of-ecological-collapse-and-police-militarization

2 defendtheatlantaforest.org

The defense of the forest in Atlanta is only one of many such struggles over land and housing across the continent, including People's Park in Berkeley, Echo Park in Los Angeles, and the camp defending

the UC Townhomes in Philadelphia.³ As investment capital floods the real estate market, it has become increasingly difficult for to afford housing, let alone maintain collective space in which to experiment and build a common context. These movements have responded by defending a shared space of life and struggle.

Most of the following accounts describe the events of the week of action at the end of July 2022, when people from around Atlanta and other parts of the United States gathered for a week of discussions, protests, and concerts. The week of action culminated with a festival during which DJs, bands, and speakers performed, showing how the forest serves as an autonomous zone beyond the constraints of the capitalist economy.⁴

The forest is not just a particular concentration of trees; we can also understand it as a network of relationships between living creatures of all species. Life flourishes when it is liberated from



3 ed. – Unfortunately not listed here but doubly important are the multiple indigenous land reclamation camps spanning from coast to coast of that continent, often with fruitful collaboration by anarchist or other settler accomplices; for example, see **Update on Recent Direct Action Against the Coastal Gaslink Pipeline**.

Significantly, reports claim that this struggle for the Weelaunee Forest sees meaningful participation by the peoples who gave it that name, the Muskogee stewards of the land who were forcibly displaced in the early 19th century. At least two recent Muskogee summits in the forest have brought hundreds back to their ancestral lands.

4 ed. – Especially since the pandemic (though also due to gentrification), the dearth of DIY cultural spaces in the city led to many concerts and parties happening in the forest, away from police or landlord interference.

control. This was palpable in the festival at the conclusion of the week of action. In a club, a breakdown or a breakbeat functions as a kind of lubricant to grease the gears of exploitation, bringing in business and (at best) advancing the career of a particular DJ or band. In a liberated zone, the collective experience of music can signify shared power, the joyous realization of potential, showing how each person's creativity can contribute to the liberation of all.

The South River Forest is not an old-growth forest. If anything, this makes the movement to defend it more inspiring. This land was already brutalized – yet, given a few years of peace, it became a wilderland capable of sustaining spaces of freedom. **Any patch of flowers growing out of the cracks in the concrete could become a forest if we defend it.** The possibility of freedom awaits all around and within us, even in the most repressive environments.

The forest – which is to say, the web of life – extends beyond the bounds of any designated park, into each of our bodies. This web is what sustains our lives, not the extraction industries that are currently destroying the basis of existence for countless species.⁵

Two decades ago, the authors of *Fighting for Our Lives* suggested that “The best reason to be a revolutionary is that it is simply a better way to live.” As state violence accelerates the catastrophes resulting from capitalist industrialism, it may turn out that it is also the *only* way to live.



5 ed. – A part of the resistance stems from the fact that the 3,000 acre forest (adjoining the city itself, which it turn has the most tree coverage of any urban centre in the so-called United States) directly mitigates the flooding becoming endemic to the South – see **'It Depends on All of Us'** – as well as shielding against the urban heat-island effect, cleaning the air, etc. However beyond these typical environmental claims, it is also a space with a large amount of engagement and interaction from residents of the city, from trail bikers to teenage delinquents, and hence as well as the biological there is a well-rooted social aspect to the resistance, resulting in high levels of popular participation. Even when arrested people do turn out to be from out of the region, police narratives of 'outside agitators' (see **Eric Laursen Owes Me a Lamp**) have unraveled faced with vociferous local denouncement of the repression. This is also hampering police efforts to clear the forest, as they don't know if any particular group them come across – excepting when they are directly attacked with stones, molotovs, etc. – are occupiers or “simply” unhoused or youth who also spend time there.

“The Forest Within Me”

The forest is a breathing barricade. Like any breathing mechanism, the boundaries continuously undo themselves. Inputs and outputs collide – between the city and the woods, the feral and the tame, the safe and the dangerous. What qualifies as violence becomes murky in the woods. Violence as negation manifests itself in the form of the state, helicopters flying overhead and cops on the edge of the barricade to arrest the forest dwellers, sometimes they dare to enter, with their machines and their armor. Violence as creation manifests in the destruction of this negation: playful sabotage and joyful tricks. Anarchic violence becomes a productive flux of becoming. For the police, the inputs and outputs are far clearer and qualifications are far more rigid: the forest is a dangerous place, unknown territory understood in opposition to their cosmopolitan terrain.⁶

For us, the forest is a haven. The threat of the state is different than the peril of the woods. Stumbling upon a decaying coyote carcass feels like a blessing – to witness a transformation of flesh into soil in the soft fallen pine leaves is nothing like stumbling upon a clear cut where the limbs of trees lie severed, their torsos hacked up into discarded bits. The severing of trees is the precondition for the construction of the dystopian simulators through which the apparatuses of power will perpetuate their orgiastic fantasies of violence and capital. But this will not happen, because the forest is an ungovernable, indestructible, breathing barricade.



30.06.22: Blackhall Studios executive (considering it his private property) sends a tow truck to steal cars of people in one way or another occupying the forest; resisters chase the driver away, loot & destroy the vehicle, defend camp

6 ed. – 06.07.22, Atlanta police and municipal authorities erect a 40ft wooden pole for a surveillance tower near the forest; within hours 'The Beaver Gang' reports felling it, leaving it “on the side of the road in what also appears to be a mounting pile of broken surveillance cameras...”

In the forest, the boundaries lapse between the content of space, how things were constructed – by machine or by hand or, often, a combination of the two – and to what degree things become consumed and consumable. But there are also lapses between different kinds of time. The time it takes to walk from one patch of woods to another may take minutes or hours. It's easy to get lost under the trees, to lose yourself in movement and return to the slimier flows of collective being within the barricade. To lose yourself intentionally or try to make yourself unlocatable – from the helicopters overhead and what lies beyond the barricade.

Yet the barricade does not delineate a concrete edge.

The edges of the forest do not indicate an end.

The forest is indestructible because it is ever-expanding and constantly transforming. The forest here is a node that connects to many nodes and has many nodes within – including our bodies. The boundary of the body slowly erodes here. A viral outbreak reminds us we are perforated bags of water within perforated bags of water, including the forest.

Find ticks burrowed in your skin and you slowly become a deer. In our camouflaged garb we cosplay trees. It is something erotic to live in trees and to dress like them. We multiply ourselves through pseudonyms and costumes. We multiply ourselves by becoming deer, becoming tree, becoming decaying matter and waste. Eventually, in our deterioration and deterritorialization, movement and occupation, gathering and dispersal, taking up of space, and place taking us up, we become forest. We become barricade. Forever ungovernable and infinitely becoming.

“The Forest Is a Portal”

The forest is a portal. The concrete blocks spread wide, allowing entry into the graffiti-filled lot. Anarchist sprites and other mischievous spirits have painted, scratched, stapled, pasted, singed signs everywhere conveying our welcome, our allegiance to this new world that calls to the depth and courage of our hearts. As I walk the liberated path, purple swirls form messages that guide me like breadcrumbs. My fae kin appear around me in gauze, denim, and metal, resplendently eschewing gender. Entering the wild, I return to my stirring self: this intimate green.



12.05.22: 80-strong masked attack on contractors in Atlanta, whose other office in Birmingham (Alabama) is smashed up the next day; actions also in California, New York & Columbia

“Letter from a Treesitter”

I've been preparing myself for what feels like the inevitable: a raid, an attempted extraction – or will they choose to siege?

I've become attached to my treehouse, thinking of it almost as an extension of myself. I found myself questioning this, questioning the connection I feel to a temporary structure. But I realized that what I was feeling was beyond that. From my feet high above the canopy to the roots buried deep in the ground, I could feel it. I wondered if this energy was spiteful, a land so scarred and blood-stained, never given a moment to heal. **Was I here because of spite? Yes. But the spite I feel toward the police is also born of love: love for the land and all of my friends here and beyond.** This forest is not something I am going to give up without a fight.

Every delay opens up more possibilities. Every contractor that backs away brings us closer to victory. Each of our moves keeps them guessing.⁷ Whether or not they choose to destroy our homes, I'll be here keeping up the struggle. I'll be here for as long as I can, for as long as it takes. They can try to evict us, but they will never be able to make us stop fighting.

There's joy in our fight. This spirit, this forest, will never be able to be contained. Everywhere you look, the police are trying to shrink our worlds, shrink our lives.⁸ But we have chosen to say no. Our fight extends beyond the borders of this forest – it extends through our expressions of collective and individual joy, incomprehensible to the narrow imaginations of the police and the ruling class that they protect. We laugh harder than them, we feel more pleasure even in the midst of their assaults. Falling in love with these woods has meant falling in love with one another and with the possibilities of this world – a love that the police will never understand, and therefore cannot crush.

7 ed. – Right from the start resisters have set the pace during the opposition, encouraging people to circulate and hold events in the forest before the city even approved the lease to learn the lay of the land: also the instant appearance of arson of machinery has helped it be more accepted as part of the movement. No mass cutting of trees has yet been achieved, police too busy finding encampments to destroy.

8 ed. – The Atlanta facility (the nation's largest) would train cops from across the 'U.S.' with simulated urban conflicts.

'THE ATLANTA WAY'

[ed. – Interview with a local resister.]

The Final Straw Radio: Can you talk a little bit more about the Police Foundation. Is that a collaboration between some of the counties around there and the city police? Or is that just the Atlanta Police as this huge entity that that would be holding this facility? Would it just be local police that are training in that facility? Or are there like bigger implications to that?

Tony: The Atlanta Police Foundation is a slush fund. It's run by private companies. Basically, it's a way for private companies in the city and state to have kind of influence and say over city operations. So, the project is actually being built by the Atlanta Police Foundation, which is actually companies like Bank of America, Home Depot, Waffle House, even. The project is estimated to be about \$90 million, and \$60 million of that project is coming from private donors.

TFSR: What makes it a profitable venture? If these companies are pouring in this amount of money, it's probably not just out of the fact that they love the cops. Where's the money making for that part of it?

Tony: Of course. Atlanta, is really structured around these kinds of backdoor clientelist deals between private companies and the city. I think it's a pretty straightforward way that these companies can buy influence and buy protection in the city. Ultimately, I think the city really has no other plans to mitigate some of the problems that it faces other than investing in police activity. I can say more about that, too. **[A] big justification for this project is explicitly tied to the movement and 2020 [ed. – see *The Siege of the Third Precinct in Minneapolis*].** So there's plans for

here in 2020, if listeners don't know, the movement here was particularly strong.

[...] In Atlanta, an unarmed black man named Rayshard Brooks was killed by the police later on into the movement after the kind of initial phase of rioting and looting all over the country. That led to more clashes in the city, and nightly demonstrations at the third precinct here in Atlanta. Throughout the movement, there was internal strife between the police, mass sick outs, roughly 200 police quit their jobs during this time. So the 'Cop City' project is among other things, is meant to explicitly address this kind of loss in morale amongst the police here [ed. – copsofcopcity.noblogs.org offers chances to further track and demoralise the local cops listed...].

TFSR: That makes sense as a recent need for the city to feel like it needs to do some sort of urban combat. Can you talk about how the police interact with the city, like the population of the city? Sort of like a brief history of recent events. Do the police do a lot of raiding of homeless encampments? Are they going in and doing 'no knocks' in neighborhoods? What does it look like, the policing of Atlanta?

Tony: I'm not exactly sure how to address this, but maybe it makes sense to talk about the recent development in Atlanta. Especially since 2008, the city's been pretty rapidly gentrifying. So that's led to an unprecedented amount of evictions. Basically, the police play the same role here that they do everywhere else, which is to

this project as early as 2017. But throughout the movement

protect the interests of the wealthy, to protect the interests of the business owners here.

Atlanta kind of has a unique relationship to the police and to the business class here. There was an intense amount of activity concentrated in Atlanta during the Civil Rights and Black power movements of the 60's. Out of this struggle grew a particular model of social management that's colloquially referred to as 'The Atlanta Way,' which entails cooperation between white corporate power structures and the Black business class [ed. – indeed, the only area of the forest so far cut – that which Black Hall Studios wants to swap with the city and turn into a park – they intend to name Michele Obama Park, in reference to the wife of the United States' first black president...]. After the 60's, the majority of the police department became Black, city council is majority Black, so on and so forth.

Since 2008, Atlanta has seen unprecedented gentrification and development due to investment from the tech sector, from the film industry, specifically, and that's resulted in unprecedented amounts of evictions and repression of kind of low level criminal activity to make space for luxury condos. [...] I mean, from our perspective Black Hall Studios, action movie production, and police activity is kind of the state's idea of the future. It's like, people should sit at home and watch Netflix. And if they don't, then we have a massive militarized police force to make sure that they do.



'THE PRINCIPLE OF RECIPROCITY'

Many of the defeats in the globalized Western lineage of resistance can be located in the extension of our historical memory to the Paris Commune [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.5 pg48*] and no further. But at this point, the last free peoples of the world were already facing the guns of a society whose lower classes had long since been colonized and recruited. May Day, 1886, draws its greatest strength not from what it began but from what it inherited [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg87*].

What we have forgotten, in all these years of deprivation and exile, is that there is a real world and an imaginary world, and the latter is no less vital or true than the former [ed. – see *Necrophilic Logics & the Revolt of the Imagination*]. The Machine, with its ideological hegemony, military arsenal, and monopoly of legitimacy, has the upper hand in the real world. But in the imaginary world it must pay tribute to us: only thus does it survive. This tribute is understood by many radicals as recuperation, but to equate what the Machine is forced to do to appease the forces arrayed against it in the imaginary world with its clever strategy for controlling insurgents who have not achieved a radical rupture with reality is to exaggerate its power and misunderstand its nature. The understanding that reality is the product of the Machine is inseparable from the fact that the real world is the only one the Machine really understands. One of the primary functions of reality is to establish a hierarchy between the two worlds and insulate one from the other. In a sense, reality is nothing if not the religion of the one world alienated from and set above the other.

But when the mathematicians are trusted to study the Word to its ultimate conclusions, allowed to operate independently so that they will not be impeded in the discovery and expropriation of new tools, what they prove is that the real cannot exist without the imaginary. Meanwhile psychologists and neuroscientists show that memory is reconstruction, while physicists run up against the discovery that perspective fundamentally affects what are considered to be objective criteria. **This heresy has**

been disarmed and left with the relevance of mere trivia, because heresy as a category of control has been made obsolete by the alienation of information from experience. Nothing we may discover about the world will refer to our place in

it, because the Machine has removed us from the world; we are suspended, hanging above it, taking notes. In this position, no truth can provoke rebellion because the condition in which we receive truth, our relationship to the space through which truth enters us, is predicated on alienation [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg48*], on our status as exiles.

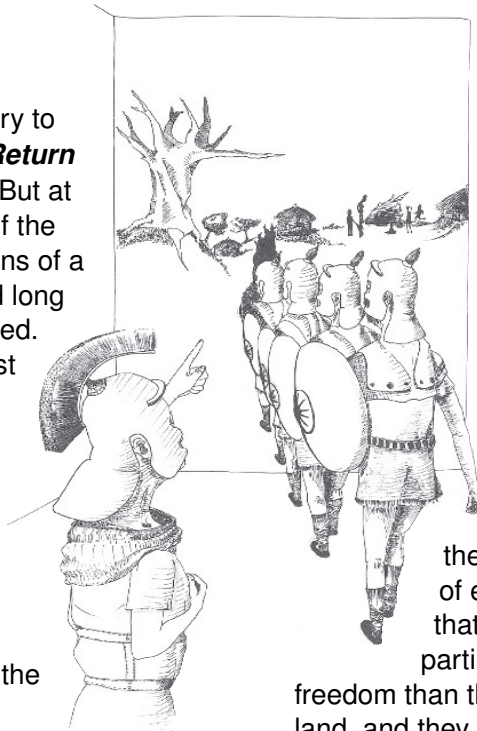
The Commune in Paris was an echo of the peasant imaginary during the Middle Ages. Under Roman rule, people were slaves or they were rebels existing at the margins of empire. The rebellions and invasions that brought down Rome accomplished a partial liberation. The serfs enjoyed more

freedom than the slaves, they had direct access to land, and they fed and sustained themselves with their own activity, unlike slaves or workers, who each are chained to only a part of a dependent productive process, and rely on a hierarchical system of distribution to receive back a part of their product in a usable form. Because the serfs were tied to the land, they were the polar opposite of the precarious worker; a landlord was loathe to dispose of them for insubmission because they could not easily be replaced.

The land was divided into three categories. That belonging to the lord (ecclesiastic or aristocratic), which the serfs had to work periodically. That adhering to the serf, which was worked and passed down by individual families. That which was the commons, and was the site of festivals and the source of firewood, timber, fish, game, medicinal and magical plants.

The imaginary of communism, within the occidental trajectory of thought, finds its roots here.

Few peasants lived in and of the commons. But they touched, and this contact was enough. It was in the commons that the peasant imaginary took root and thrived, and towards the commons that the peasants' rebel desires always pulled them.



Villeins ran away for the high heath. Rejecting the religion of their masters, they were called “heathens.” Robin Hood and his merry thieves lived in the forest. The Bogomils, demonized as “buggers” for their heresy, lived in the Balkans, the Cathars in the foothills of the Pyrenees [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.5 pg47*]. The independent towns formed by runaway serfs and free artisans reflected this identification: they were called communes. When the Machine enclosed the commons, cast out the Diggers and Ranters from their Edens,¹ and colonized the rest of the world, these dreams of freedom had to retreat, until the only safe ground for the resistance was in the imaginary world.

The expansion of the Han Chinese state, which in another century or two could easily have accomplished what the European states did, albeit with a different methodology, fomented a similar process. The annihilation of the Miao rebellion was even bloodier than the eradication of the German Peasant Rebellion [ed. – see *23 Theses Concerning Revolt*], and led to an even more enduring diaspora of rebel imaginaries, feeding the development of dozens of new stateless societies peopling the highlands with mythologies of revolt and tyrannicide.

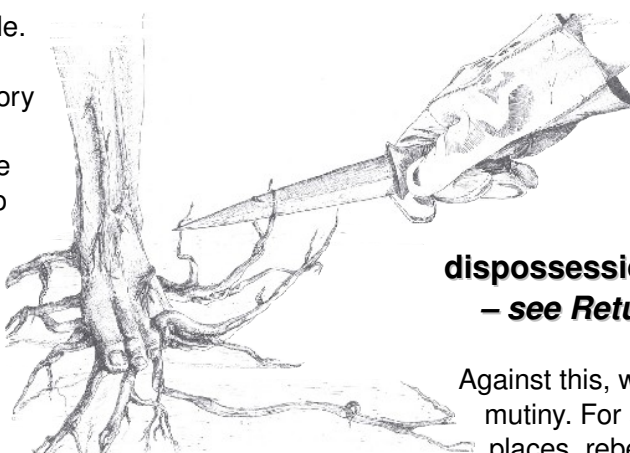
The rebel imaginary has no obligatory center. The tale of May Day and commoning is only relevant to those who trace their legacy of struggle to one of a thousand roots of rebellion. It is valuable precisely because it is arbitrary, because we choose it over and against the sameness and amnesia democracy foists on us. **The stories of Europe feature so centrally in the present narrative not for any objective reasons – after all, capitalism developed at its own margins – but solely because its authors trace their defeat to those lands.** To one who feels his roots go back to the Niger watershed, rebel history and the development of the Machine do not pass through the Roman Empire, the Peasant Rebellion, and the beginnings of mercantilism. Perhaps they unfold in a tale of expansion, a tension between town and forest, between Islam and animism [ed. – see *Return Fire*

1 ed. – Radical Christian heretic groups who attempted to mount communes and other subversion, including in the context of the English Civil War: sometimes cited as a shifting point from the leader-prophet orientation of medieval heretic movements and the more leaderless 'inner light' principle of these movements and the Western anarchism that they influenced.

vol.4 pg41], the slow ascendance of kings suddenly accelerated by a new bargain brought by the seafaring foreigners: guns for captives. Then the illusion of the powerful state depopulating its neighbors suddenly replaced, after a conference in a faraway city, with total colonization, borders, and an intensification of genocide, cutting the link with those who had been spirited away to work on plantations, mixing with other nations, fermenting religions and conspiracies, slowly subjected to new disciplines, segregated, policed by those who had been fellow outcasts.

All of the histories are different, but in all of them we can find a tension between categorization and memory, dispossession and blending. The first term in each pair is violently imposed, in one case to segregate, in the other to mobilize. The second term is an act of resistance, in one case to not lose one's roots, and in the other to build an expansive solidarity with other dispossessed in the new circumstances.

Lacking a healthy imaginary, many rebels have defended their own categorization or insisted on their dispossession as progress [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg11*].



Against this, we look to the history of mutiny. For a time and in certain places, rebels could run away to live among those who were still outside the Machine and fighting against it, such as the Seminole,² the Maroons [ed. – see *'All That*

2 ed. – “Scholars inform us that the word Seminole comes from the Creek Indian “simano-li,” meaning “fugitive” or wild. Furthermore, although later it would apply to an entire ethnic group, originally – get this – it was used by Creeks to describe fugitive or runaway enslaved Africans, in particular, those Africans escaping through Creek country to reach the “sanctuary” of Spanish held Florida in the 1700’s. By then, a section of the Creeks were breaking off from the main body and also making their way there. The African Seminoles (who the Spanish dubbed Negro Seminoles) were already there — so the ethnic name is as much rightly theirs as the Amerindian Seminoles. Thus, it’s totally wrong to see Seminoles as Amerindians who befriended and mixed with Africans. Instead, they are the result of a coming together of the two to form the ethnicity. They eventually came together in

Wildness Names'], or the Kru.³ But as these were quarantined or crushed, what was left? Those who remembered their own world before the arrival of the Machine could pass on these stories and traditions until they were again strong enough to rise up and reclaim their lands. But those who did not remember, those who could no longer speak of any lands they belonged to?

When the commons were crushed on dry land, such outcasts turned to piracy as the principal insurrection of the day [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.5 pg107**]. And when piracy was crushed as a major threat to transatlantic commerce, the myth of pirates continued to grow, far in excess of the continued appearance of occasional mutinies or sea robbers. The spirit of those pirates in the imaginary world became a carrier of the dream, the Idea, the commune. The pirates were not a model of total freedom; nonetheless, the romanticization of pirates was a part of piracy from the very beginning – their own contemporaries made them a refuge for the idea of a free community.

Hundreds of years later, the imaginary pirates and the dream they carried appeared unharmed, immortal, on the banners of the anarchists in Gulyai-Polye,⁴ in the same way as the workers of Paris rebirthed the commune the peasants had dreamed of and passed on in the tales of old wives.

And what is May Day if not a relic pagan festival of mockery, debauchery, and resistance, brought by immigrant workers to the United States, and called upon to bring strength to an unprecedented struggle against the established order. The disciplined strike did not exist in the imaginary of the cowed American workers. But perhaps they could make the streets like to a village festival in the Old World, with everybody dancing and disobedient, and no one working. What is paganism if not a reconstruction necessitated by a starved imagination?

What we know of actual paganism in Europe, contemporary to the beginning and rise of Christianity, has little reflection in what was taken from it by rebellious traditions. **Though they are not**

Florida because they both needed the help of the other in defense from slave catchers and other Creeks not content with the separation" (The Real Resistance to Slavery in North America).

3 ed. – Of West Africa; fiercely resistant to being enslaved, historically they nonetheless often allied with European slavers. Also known for rising against the attempt by US white abolitionists and freed slaves to colonise their lands.

4 ed. – A centre of the peasant-anarchist insurgency in Ukraine during the Russian revolution against Czarist autocracy, and then against the Bolshevik counter-revolution: see **Return Fire vol.2 pg46**

the only specimens, Greek and Norse paganism both demonstrate striking similarities to Christianity, which should be no surprise as the one had a hand in creating it and the other in modifying it as it spread through Europe. But these religions also contained other elements that became attractive once they turned subversive, and in this way they rose to the top – nature worship, disobedience, bacchanalia, sexual freedom, magic, warrior women.

Paganism and witchcraft were reinvented as part of the struggle against domination under Christianity, barely surviving the rationalism adopted by later proletarian struggles, which finally, and unknowingly, inscribed their roots in their ongoing history by choosing May Day as the pivotal day for a battle they would not soon forget.

It is no coincidence that rationalism and the idea of progress repeatedly set these proletarian movements against their indigenous contemporaries, and ultimately against themselves. The existence of a proletariat is predicated on genocide [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.5 pg11**]. Marx's socialism requires first that people lose their roots, in order to avail themselves of a greater productive force that will solve the problems of scarcity that only ever existed in the Machine's imaginary [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.5 pg9**]. It makes perfect sense, then, that the Sandinistas oppressed the Miskito [ed. – see **Memory as a Weapon; Indigenism & its Enemies**], or that the communards exiled on New Caledonia turned on the Kanak [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.5 pg49**].



Aymara anarchist Yawar Nina [*ed. – see **Yawar's Story***] speaks of the imagination as a field that is constantly bearing fruit, sustaining us and provisioning us for the future. **Our origins are not lost because we are constantly recreating ourselves from our imagination; therefore we are deicides and anarchists. Against scientific rationalism, he champions poetic thinking as an inseparable part of the struggle to recreate the grammar of the world and to destroy the map his people have been forced into.**

Japanese anarchist Osugi Sakae emphasized the importance of meditation during his time in prison. Today's Mapuche prisoners call on their *machi* to help them survive long hunger strikes [*ed. – see **Return Fire vol.3 pg59***]. Yet most anarchists in the West have been aspiritual, proudly atheist. What they don't realize is that rationalism is the religion of the Machine.

It might help to acknowledge that what we have been told is possible is a mere noon shadow of everything that exists. Magic was cast away not because it does not exist – so many societies could not have been so stupid to dedicate themselves for so many centuries to something that brought nothing in return but some partial peace of mind. Rather, magic was cast aside because it is not reproducible, and because it demands reciprocity. It always reconditions a relationship with the world; therefore it is useless to the Machine.

Even under the most skeptical of gazes, something as fantastic as dancing to bring the rain is undeniably rich in accomplishments. Leaving aside a statistical analysis of whether the frequency of rain correlates to the presence or absence of rain dances, which presumes the rain dance to be a mechanism designed to produce a result, what do we find? **The act of asking for rain opens up a conversation with the world. If the rain comes, the relationship between the conversants is revealed to be in a healthy condition. But if the rain does not come, the magic has not failed (whereas if a well does not deliver water, it most certainly does fail). The lack of rain also communicates something between the community and the world, reconfirming their relationship.** If there isn't enough rain, they need to make some sacrifices, they need to restore a balance. In the short term, according to the skeptical gaze, the rain dance does not bring the rain. But it does condition a relationship of mutuality, love, and respect between the community and the world. And this in the long term shapes a community that is sensitive to the health of its ecosystem. Capitalism, on the contrary, is only

interested in producing mechanisms that take, never giving except with interest. After so much taking, in many parts of the world water is in fact becoming scarce. Thus, it is not at all false to say that the rains are lacking for want of rain dances.

However, science itself should not be dismissed wholesale, the way heretics typically burn away every trace of the former hegemon when they rise to power. The empirical method is a useful tool whose primary harm lies in the social relation and the mythical framework it is attached to [*ed. – see **Return Fire vol.5 pg33***]. Having destroyed the framework, we can still learn from the method of inquiry. It is better, after all, to survive a disease than to never suffer it. "Immunity" means you keep the germ "inside your walls," you incorporate it and use it, so it can never threaten you again.

We also cannot uncritically take up the Devil's cause because magic and imagination are not unproblematic fields. The Confucian rationalism of the Han state tolerated the magical practices of the I Ching as Chinese folk magic was developed into a spiritual corollary of bureaucratic practices. The divine hierarchy mirrored the political one, and the process for requesting rain mirrored the process for requesting a reprieve on taxes. Magic, in this reality, served as metaphysical legitimation and training for worldly power. Meanwhile, fairy tales in the European tradition served to reinforce contempt for witches and unmarried women, fear of the forest, and reverence of the nobility, while the magical tradition of the Renaissance alchemists was a mystified movement towards the results-focused practice of Baconian science [*ed. – see **Return Fire vol.3 pg27***].

And the Renaissance tradition owes much to Christian spirituality and Judaism before it. Whereas in a mutual paradigm, sacrifice means bending to another's needs and therefore respecting the other, the practice of sacrifice in Judaism and contemporary religions elaborated an instrumental relationship to the deity that would prefigure capitalism. It was not the supplicant, but the ram or heifer with its throat cut on the altar that was making the true sacrifice. The one holding the knife was benefiting from the spiritual labors of his animals, who through this ritual he transubstantiated into property. **In a word, he had become an investor.** The Catholic praxis postulated a specific number of Hail Marys recited or candles lit to cancel a sin or save a soul from purgatory. This view of magic not only trained its believers in operations of price and purchase, it also paved the way for the abolition of God, by profaning Him as a party to contracts in which the supplicant paid a price and expected results. **To the annihilating equality of the contract, an earth-based magic**

counterposes the sustaining mutuality of balance.

But the naïve realism of the contract has triumphed and proliferated, and magic has been forgotten or infantilized. In a great assault on our most important line of escape, an entire industry of interactive video games, internet games, and movies has set itself the task of routinizing our imagination and colonizing the imaginary. The genre of fantasy, disseminated by *The Lord of the Rings* more than any other work, has been most faithless to its progenitor in its portrayal of magic. Gandalf's magic exists as charisma, cleverness, and strength of will. Quite the contrary, the mages of *Dungeons and Dragons* and the spin-off products learn spells like techniques, perform the requisite gestures, expend the proportionate quantity of mana, and produce an eerily mechanical magical result. Gandalf's "You shall not pass!" is more the invocation of the spirit of '36⁵ than a precise incantation, predictable and reproducible, for some spectacular fireball.

Fortunately, the imagination industry relies on participation, and even those who do participate may protect themselves subconsciously, the way dreams bend and warp to hide and reveal what is most precious. The memories of what we think we lost are still there, in the imaginary world, resisting the attempts of the Machine to twist or belittle them. We can continue to ignore them only at our own risk: whether or not a rebellion defeats itself has much to do with its ability to travel between the real world and the imaginary, to see through reality to the Machine behind it. [...] **Our resistance must not be mechanical, but magical.** We must never forget that magic was denied not because it does not exist but because it is of the world, because it operates on the principle of reciprocity, because it is not reproducible. The scientific caricature of magic frames a magician who chants out a precise spell for a determined result – a fireball or transformation into a frog. This is the sort of magic, obviously enough, that does not exist. **What does exist is the fact that all laws can be broken.** The one who becomes powerful in magic is the one who embraces this chaos. Who heals, who destroys, who reads minds, who turns invisible, by offering whatever of herself the world demands, assured of her own ultimate destruction and the sublime beauty thereof.

Time and again the Machine has opted for what is inferior but reproducible over what is superior and unique. We can only win by choosing otherwise.

5 ed. – Reference to the slogan of the anti-fascist partisans of the Spanish Civil War, "they shall not pass!"

'THE AUDIENCE SURRENDERS'

In one of the important philosophical debates of the 5th Century BC, idolization was attacked in part because it fixed divinity in a bounded, concrete image. A counter to this argument is that the attempt to universalize divinity as an amaterial abstraction is to alienate the physical world and to flatten an array of places that had been defended from their subsumption to any rational, administerable grid through the exceptionality of localized relations of worship.

Curiously, both abstraction and idolization serve to substitute an active practice of spiritual commoning. Spiritual interaction with a boundless world requires one to take imaginative initiative in forging the intangible relationships they feel a need for. Interaction with an idol requires merely ritualized appeasement (which, it should be noted, is easily taxable – probably why the Catholic Church brought idolization back). Interaction with an abstracted divinity requires obedience to commandments. In this latter case, one no longer even chooses their relationship with what has become an omniscient higher power.

Once the abstraction of the divine had alienated the world of its divinity, free relationships take refuge in the imaginary. As the State advances, our imagination takes us to increasingly distant worlds. These worlds also need to be enclosed.

In the movie theaters, *The Hobbit* was preceded by an advertisement for tourism to New Zealand that tantalizes viewers with images of mystifying mountains, spiritual journeys, and constructions from the film itself, open to visitors. Just as an authentic hobbit village is constructed on fixed ground, the geography of Middle Earth is fixed to the film's shooting locations. In a perhaps unconscious, perhaps inevitable twist, Tolkien's explicitly European imaginary is imposed on colonized land.

In an alienated world, idolization becomes the process of fixing the imaginary, bringing the many flights of fantasy back into contact with the commodity form. **But it's not about making money.** The reason the State is busily sending its apparatuses into the imaginary goes far beyond a vulgar economism or any simple need to take advantage of the success of Tolkien's oeuvre and make some money off of it. The present enclosure is every bit as much a measure of social control as the "strategic hamlets" set up in the Vietnam War.¹ Even when

1 ed. – Built to move peasants (provided protection and economic aid) into to isolate them from the communists.

imagination is used as nothing more than a harmless form of avoidance, apparatuses will arise to bring it back into the fold. Capitalism permits no escape.

[I]magination is precisely what the movies kill as they provide stimulation through an almost mechanical milking of the viewer's adrenal gland, offering up stimuli at the most basic reactive and chemical levels: a vision of falling, the image of pursuit, raised voices and gestures of anger suddenly reconciled. Why the atrophied adrenal glands, when most viewers have lived far less adventurous lives than Bilbo Baggins even before Gandalf carved a sign on his door? He at least gardens, an exercise in hope and suspense foreign to the most veteran players of video games.

Tolkien's storytelling creates an intense *longing* to visit the magical place he has constructed. This longing is a special feeling, as it can never be satisfied. **The reader will be enticed to imagine themselves a bridge to that world, but the visit cannot be definitive.** The tension caused by uncertainty encourages further imagination, and the longing causes discontentment with the lack of magic in the present world. The sounds and images of the movie, convincing in their fullness and even backed up by a *real* hobbit village awaiting *exploration* in New Zealand, provide the illusion of visiting that unreachable world. Their effect is to extinguish longing. Just like a commodity, whose value is extinguished in the moment it is possessed, the movie appears to satisfy the desire to know a fantastic world when in reality it kills it. While this is happening, the viewer is overwhelmed by stimuli. **But when the film is done, they are numb.** The fantastic world has proved to be hollow. There is nothing left but to seek another fix. One more year until the sequel, and in the meantime, there seem to be some good apocalypse movies coming up, and of course, the video game.

The mechanical milking of the adrenal glands the movie accomplishes with its frequent use of the fake-out clues us to the fact that this imagination-destroying act is in fact a productive process. The apparatus of the movie theater uses its power to reproduce an unreachable world, and thus gives the audience the simulacrum of the appeasement of their longing, to create an emotive bond. This is a case of power/affect. By allowing themselves to be enticed by the idolization that is accomplished within the theater, relieving themselves of the need to formulate their own relations with the imaginary, the audience surrenders their fantasy world, they turn their imagination over to the proper authorities, allowing its enclosure and alienation.

HOW DID BELARUSIANS COME TO REBELLION AGAINST THE DICTATORSHIP?

*[ed. – This report is now two years old. Most recently in that intervening time, focus in Eastern Europe has understandably become monopolised by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but we wanted to recall a moment in that region when (compared with war, that place that insurrection goes to die) a powerful revolt offered glimpses of other possibilities. The text might shed additional light on the complex relation of a revanchist post-Soviet Russia with its neighbours, that the latter still considers its backyard of 'Greater Russia'... which has since drawn Belarus back closer to its influence, compared with the former's previous flirtation with the West. Additionally, it is interesting to note -- recalling anarchist debates at the time about the usefulness or reformism of mutual aid initiatives during the first part of the COVID-19 pandemic -- that in Belarus some of these initiatives ended up adding back-bone to the revolt that followed: as, half a world away, similar groups did in some cases during another anti-police revolt (see **The Siege of the Third Precinct in Minneapolis**), treating injured rioters etc.*

*But the parallels can be taken a step further: this text speaks of the desire for democracy among the people in the streets in the Belarusian context, just as in the so-called United States the rebellion was recuperated most successfully by the Left, and funneled into the 'democratic renewal' from the supposed 'state of exception' during the Trump years; and it was the Left who then went about hurriedly re-writing the meaning and context of the rebellion, or denying that there even was one... (see **Eric Laursen Owes Me a Lamp**). Whereas in Belarus, the dictator rode the wave and came out still holding power, albeit only just; and was aided in this by his own liberal opposition, and the lack of imagination once the police had been defeated – even many from the secret services fleeing or attempting to defect to save their hides – on what the next steps would be in lieu of the liberal myth of popular protest magically transforming society, with squares and key buildings neither occupied nor destroyed. The account 'Belarus: "When We Rise"' is recommended on this.*

Some of the questions that a variety of struggles across the world, then, before and since, have brought into focus -- perhaps most obviously in Belarus in the democratic challenge to long-standing dictator Alexander Lukashenko, although it's said that everyone knew what the ballot results would be announced as in advance (and most anarchists participated by calling for a boycott) – can be raised again here. Beyond the necessary anarchist presence in street battles and anti-repression structures,

how to differentiate our project from recuperation into that of democracy, often in its 'direct' clothes, when speaking of the horizon of our struggles? How to do this without wasting the opportunity of multitudinous encounters and collective experiences that such moments afford? In an era of revolts characterised by decentralisation, how to subvert the newly centralised mythic space of the decision-making assembly, the 'people's will', etc., from extinguishing more anarchic outcomes, as it has in uprisings for at least the last decade since the Spanish 'movement of the squares' (see **Return Fire vol.5 pg48**) tamed the insurrectionary flame spreading over the Mediterranean from the African side (see **Return Fire vol.2 pg87**)? Still, the authors of the aforementioned account still "believe that these sprouts of decentralization will survive this wave of repression, and also – the regime itself."

The article below was written during the revolt and released by the Belarusian anarchist collective Pramen ('The Ray'). In summer 2021, Aliaksandr Bialou, Jauhen Rubashka, Artsiom Salavei and a fourth also named Artsiom Salavei (all already previously detained by the authorities and held for short terms for participation in the 2020 events) were re-arrested: during the investigation Pramen's website and social networks were categorised as an 'extremist formation', and this April the arrested were sentenced to 4.5-5 years for 'promoting extremist activities' on its behalf. Another anarchist, Mikalai Dziadok, also got 5 years for publicising protests on his blog. In just three days of the initial revolt, over 6,000 were detained, many tortured and raped in the cells, and a handful murdered by the State. Many anarchists have fled the country after the regime smothered first the smaller town mobilisations, the organised workers who'd tried to build up protest momentum in the factories by strikes, then 'cleaned up' in the capital Minsk. When autumn came, the second wave of COVID also was inflicted on almost all detainees due to detention conditions. Collective punishment is common, targeting neighbourhoods with arbitrary detentions. The cost of allowing the enemy to re-group, while the movement was drunk on its own supposedly-inevitable victory (applying an imported liberal democratic lens in a completely different context) and celebrating a turn to peaceful rallies and 'peace policing', was huge.

This December, the harshest sentences so far in post-Soviet Belarus were handed down: 18-20 years each for veteran anarchist saboteurs Siarhei Ramanau, Ihar Alinevich, Dzmitry Rezanovich and Dzmitry Dubousky, who were arrested crossing the border into Ukraine with arms and explosives after arson of the State Committee of Forensic Examination, cars at the Soligorsk prosecutor's office, and a traffic police department building. (Dubousky, like the rest, was extensively tortured and as a result initially gave testimony against himself and the others; but the rest continue to stand in solidarity with him without condemnation.) This March, anarchists threw a paper bomb (like a powerful firecracker; card casing with gun-powder inside) against the Belarusian Embassy in Rome as a gesture of international solidarity with them and against the war now in Ukraine. Information in English on how to support the prisoners can be found at abc-belarus.org

If you had asked people in Belarus how long the dictatorship of Lukashenko had left in early 2020, they would have looked at you like a fool. In a respected dictatorship, such questions are not asked, because you know what can happen. And in general, it so happens that the reign of the great leader is timeless. But the situation has changed so radically over the last 8 months [ed. – published 11.08.20] that Belarusians took to the streets and for the first time in the new history of Belarus **they fought back the police in at least 33 different cities of the country.**

Today Belarusians have woken up in a new country. In it, people openly talk about hatred for the government and prepare for a violent confrontation with the police and state. They discuss online and live effective methods of struggle. Several factories went on strike the day after the elections.

And although the electoral commission reports about the victory of the dictator once again, objectively speaking, Lukashenko lost the election. He lost the election not to some certain candidate, but rather to the Belarusian people, who said that 26 years was enough.

How has Belarus turned from a stable dictatorship, where the most peaceful people live, into a protest center in Europe?

Economic & Political Crisis

Economically, Belarus is not an independent country. For many years, the Belarusian economic miracle has been able to survive only at the expense of cheap oil from Putin and direct money transfers from the Kremlin. Contrary to the fact that Lukashenko and Putin are not friends, this scheme worked a relatively long time while the Russian government was bathing in oil money.

With "black gold" prices falling, the Russian government was faced with the question of redistributing resources.

Officials began to look at where the money invested was yielding some kind of result. Belarus did not give any special results. Contrary to all investments,



Placard reads; 'Proud to be an anarchist, in solidarity with detained anarchists'

Lukashenko extended his hold on power and hindered Belarus' integration into Russia – a process launched back in the 90s during *[the term of post-Soviet Russian President]* Yeltsin.

The instability of Lukashenko over the past 10 years has shown that the Russian authorities cannot rely on him much. A turn to the West in 2015 added wood to the fire of discord between Moscow and Minsk. By early 2020, Lukashenko found himself in a very difficult situation. New oil and gas contracts have become much more difficult to conclude. The Belarusian authorities wanted at least some minimal concessions, but Russia was ready to give these concessions only when activating the project of the union state, with the joint currency and other points for the absorption of Belarus by Russia.

Political difficulties with Russia traditionally lead to economic problems in the country. During the last 5 years Lukashenko tried to neutralize this dependence by working with the West, but Western grants and loans cannot pull the Belarusian economy alone. In early 2020, the Belarusian ruble started to fall heavily against other currencies. Over the past 20 years, Belarusians have managed to survive several waves of such a fall, the largest being in 2011. The fall of the Belarusian ruble means, for many Belarusians, including the fall in their real earnings. In addition, problems with the payment of salaries at state enterprises began to arise.



Fighting Coronavirus with Tractors

Lukashenko explained that it is due to economic problems that that Belarus can't afford any quarantine measures against the coronavirus. If at the beginning of the epidemic the dictator was still shouting that the Belarusians would be able to avoid getting infected by work in the field and visiting the sauna, a month later he had to admit the real reasons for the lack of quarantine.

The coronavirus proved to be one of the most serious challenges for the Belarusian dictatorship, which it failed. Instead of typical populism and care for their

people the authorities left the population to rely on self-sufficiency.

Medical care in Belarus is nominally free of charge, but many services have to be paid for, as there is not enough money from the budget for drugs and medical equipment. It was impossible to test for coronavirus in many cases. Many could not afford to stay home and go to work. It is difficult to assess the real scale of the Coronavirus epidemic in Belarus. The state is the only institution that has real figures, and these figures are kept secret. In addition, many cases of coronavirus were labelled as pneumonia, including fatal ones.

In order to maintain medical care, small businesses and a large number of ordinary people have, in fact, engaged in decentralized support of medical staff. Some restaurants and bars prepared food for the medical staff from the donations made by city dwellers. As in other countries, grass-roots initiatives produced protective masks. Taxi drivers transported medical personnel without payment.

A few months later, many people had the feeling that the state had abandoned them. But, on the other hand, there was a sense of solidarity, the certainty that neighbors, friends and even strangers from the Internet would not leave you in trouble. This feeling has restored to Belarusians the importance of the public as opposed to the state. Solidarity has become not just a word, but a direct practice.

And if in many countries which were under the impact of coronavirus, with the fall of the number of infected, solidarity began to fall, in Belarus the structures of solidarity continued to work in other spheres as well.

For example, in June, half of Minsk lost access to clean water. And while officials insisted that there was no problem with water, residents of the districts with water were organizing and delivering water to the neediest parts of the city.

Thus, one of the most important results of the coronavirus (the epidemic did not end in the country) was the growing awareness of the collective strength and the results that can be achieved through joint actions.

Elections During the Virus

It was a mistake for Lukashenko to decide to announce the elections in the midst of the coronavirus: in early May, they announced that the elections would be held in August. The moment of maximum dissatisfaction with the authorities was

chosen. Thanks to this, the election campaigns of his opponents literally began to gain a huge amount of support from the very first days. One of the presidential candidates, blogger Sergei Tikhanovsky, began holding rallies with an open microphone at the place of collecting signatures. This format attracted a huge number of people across the country, who were given a platform to express their discontent. A few weeks later, Tikhanovsky himself and many other major opposition politicians were detained and charged in far-fetched criminal cases.

Instead of extinguishing the protest and dissatisfaction with the authorities, the repression provoked even more organization around another candidate – banker of Belgazprombank (daughter of Gazprom [*Russian oil and gas giant*]) Viktor Babariko. Unlike other candidates, Babariko was not engaged in political struggle and for many he looked like a “moderate” candidate who called for fair elections and did not plan illegal demonstrations across the country. Contrary to this, Babariko’s popularity was also growing among the more moderate part of the population.

As a result, the authorities decided to arrest Babariko and his inner circle on corruption charges. This step provoked another wave of discontent, the final stage of which was the announcement that the two largest opposition candidates would not be registered in the race for presidency. This decision resulted in major protests across the country with the first clashes with the police in Minsk: the demonstrators repulsed the detainees and saw that the OMON [*riot police unit*] was absolutely unprepared for a violent confrontation with the people.



The clashes with riot police in July this year were a turning point for many in society. The dictatorship, which for 26 years had been built in part on its indestructibility through the support of the security forces, was suddenly extremely fragile. Videos of the confused OMON riot police quickly spread over the Internet and showed that one doesn't have to train for 3 years in camps in Russia or the EU to fight the police.

Lukashenko did not deny registration to only one serious opponent, Sergei Tikhanovsky's wife, Svetlana Tikhanovskaya. Tikhanovskaya originally planned to run for president in order to give her husband and other opponents of the regime a voice. But after the majority of politicians were arrested, she remained the only candidate around whom voters could unite.

Tikhanovskaya is not a politician and is not trying to become one. The main requirement of her entire election campaign is new elections. She openly says that she has no plans and does not want to stay in power. After the victory over Lukashenko, she planned to announce new fair elections, which should have changed the country.

Such a simple demand has united many political groups. Activists from the staffs of the imprisoned politicians got involved in her election headquarters. Tikhanovskaya's very election campaign relied

heavily on the self-organization of the population in various parts of the country. **Meetings with the candidate were officially registered in many places in the country where the candidate herself had not visited. Instead, there was a stage for speeches and an open microphone. Again, the microphone was rarely picked up by career politicians who feared reprisals, but rather by the working population and small businesses. In some cities, anarchists also spoke on stage.**

Tikhanovskaya's popularity soared in just a few weeks. In July, she managed to gather one of the largest rallies in the history of the country – 50,000 people in Minsk. In other cities, she gathered from several hundred to 8,000 people. For a long time the authorities did not take any measures and allowed people to gather. Perhaps the role was played by the sexism of Lukashenko, who never viewed women as serious opponents of the authorities. The top of Tikhanovskaya's team were women. Tikhanovskaya also came on stage with two coordinators of her campaign.



Just a few days before the election, the authorities suddenly came to their senses. Instead of banning the gatherings, the decision was to play fools – all the venues declared open for rallies began to hold government events or repairs. The ban on assembly has provoked the next wave of discontent, but in active stages of protest has not turned out, as there were only a few days left before elections.

At the same time, during the last week the Belarusian police started actively detaining bloggers. Such tactics are not new and have been used by the authorities for many years – before any protests there are constant detentions of journalists and bloggers, who can cover these protests online.

Terrorist Organization “Anarchists”

Before we proceed directly to election day, I would like to make a short introduction to the anarchist movement in Belarus.

Anarchists have reappeared in the country after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the early nineties, some groups made a significant contribution to the formation of the workers' and environmental movement. Anarchists played one of the key roles in extending the moratorium on the construction of the Belarusian nuclear power plant in 1999 (in 2009 anarchists and environmentalists lost the fight).

During the entire period of the dictatorship, anarchists have been involved in major political events, be it new re-elections, the movement against the construction of the nuclear power plant or protests against the Laws on Parasites.¹ And in most cases, the

population perceived the anarchist agenda very positively. Perhaps, somewhere they did not fully understand but accepted it.

Starting from 2013-2014, anarchists have become almost the only political force still engaged in street agitation. Most opposition parties have stopped fighting actively against the dictatorship after Maidan 2014 [ed. – in neighbouring Ukraine;

see *Return Fire vol.5 pg108*] in fear of Russian occupation. Today, some opposition politicians still stand on the position “better Lukashenko than Putin”. Part of the opposition was drowned in repression. It was much easier to do so, as repression against the leaders could have stopped the movement.

Due to their activism, anarchists are constantly attracting the attention of law enforcement agencies. Some activists are now in prison for symbolic actions, others are on the run. There are initiatives to help the poor and an anti-capitalist freemarket. **Repression against anarchists rarely produces the desired result.** They are written about by the opposition media and thus attract new attention and energy to the movement again.

Today, the popularity of anarchists in certain youth circles is quite high due to the fact that apart from anarchists there are no political movements left.

Re-election

Even before the beginning of the election campaign many people expected major protests in Belarus precisely because of the economic crisis and the coronavirus. It was logical for many to concentrate their protest efforts on election day and the following days. For instance, large media platforms in social networks and groups on Telegram called for protests on election day several weeks before the elections.

Both protesters and authorities were preparing for these elections. There were pictures of military and police equipment on the Internet. Lukashenko attended training of riot police to disperse the protests. It was clear that the authorities would not try to bring down the degree of discontent, but rather to repress the population by force.

It's not surprising that in the evening of August 9th thousands of people came out all over the country.

¹ ed. – A law forcing the unemployed to pay an additional tax ; anarchists were at the forefront of the struggle.

Only according to the reports of the authorities themselves, the demonstrations took place simultaneously in 33 cities of the country. More than 50,000 people took part in those protests. The largest demonstrations were held in Brest, Baranavichy and Minsk. Several thousand people went out in the other regional centers.

To resist the demonstrators in Minsk, internal troops and police from all over the country were collected. The day before the election, transport columns were moving from the regions to Minsk. On election day, the city was cordoned off. Buses without license plates drove around the city and randomly detained pedestrians or journalists. Internet access was turned off or severely restricted throughout the country.

By evening, the situation had changed radically. Crowds of people started going out into the streets and moving towards the center. The same situation was observed in smaller cities of the country. Towards evening, the first clashes with OMON began, as the people tried to free the detainees. The riot police themselves ran around the city at first, wearing T-shirts and batons with no special uniforms. The attacks on OMON quickly made it clear that the situation on that day would not be normal, with people being pulled out of the crowd and simply detained.

Just an hour after the first clashes, the center of Minsk began to resemble a combat zone. Czech noise grenades, Canadian water cannons, Belarusian MAZs [*military armoured vehicles*] – all worked to disperse the protesters.² For the first time in the country's history, people began to erect barricades, as well as directly clash with law enforcement agencies. A huge number of people were liberated from the hands of law enforcement officers at night in various parts of the country.

2 ed. – 'Belarus: "When We Rise"' also notes in the aftermath that "[e]quipment from the American firm Sandvine, Inc. was used to restrict access to the Internet. Israeli Celebrite equipment was used to hack mobile devices. Experts from China came to support the Belarusian regime in the censorship and monitoring of online activity.

The regime actively used SIM card cloning to hack into Telegram accounts. The de-anonymization bug in Telegram made it possible to create lists of participants in certain Telegram chats, and subsequently to link specific comments to certain people and initiate criminal proceedings against them. [...] The regime has been cooperating for several years with the private Belarusian company Synesis, which develops facial recognition technology; just days after the protests began, it became known that the cops were using automatic facial recognition systems to identify protesters and locate activists."

Solidarity during the protests again showed the incredible power of collective opposition to the dictatorship. The crowds paralyzed any action by OMON and the military, contrary to all preparations. The lack of the Internet only played a negative factor for the regime – people went out to the streets to find out what was going on.

For two hours in the center of Minsk and other cities people were fighting against the Belarusian authorities. They fought with great energy, which they had been saving for so many years. The successful confrontation shows once again the fragility of the Belarusian dictatorship.

The movement itself today is not the traditional political parties that lead the Belarusians to a bright future. Protests are organized through media platforms and have no clear leaders. Groups of people gather in the streets and decide on the way to go. The lack of a clear plan may hinder the effectiveness of the protest, but the lack of clear leaders makes it impossible to suppress easily.

The repression last night was brutal. There were so many victims. In rage, riot police threw noise grenades right at people. At least once a police truck rammed a crowd in the center of Minsk and killed one man. According to human rights defenders, at least three people were killed by the regime that night. The first blood was spilled, but people do not plan to stop. The plan is to take to the streets every day at 19:00 before the fall of the dictatorship.

There are calls on Telegram for direct democracy in the country on major channels. And although some fear that such calls exist due to misunderstanding of the concept, Belarus has rebelled and many demand the end of the dictatorship and the beginning of the era of direct democracy.



Riot shields with electroshock power, imported from Russia

R.I.P TAYLOR

– *rage is our weapon*

Content warning – suicide (graphic), prison, violence, self harm, abuse, homophobia, transphobia

July 13, 2022

Taylor is dead. He was pronounced dead in prison at 10.37pm on Saturday 9th July after cutting his neck. He was meant to be on suicide watch but the prison failed him. We were informed by the prison governor at 3.30am on Sunday. His cell has been sealed by police and we await news of the autopsy. We will announce news of his funeral in the coming days and weeks.

His story is one of abuse, injustice, transphobia and tragedy. **It didn't have to be this way. He was murdered by the state.** His death should trigger resistance and rebellion inside and outside of prisons everywhere. We have no investment in his inquest, or that the state can deliver any kind of justice. This is a call to arms to abolitionists and anarchists all over the world.

With rage in our veins and love in our hearts, until every prison turns to ash. Taylor: you were our best guy. Our queer family will forever miss you. You will never be forgotten and the state will never be forgiven.

Who is Taylor?

Taylor was a trans prisoner trapped in the UK prison system for over 14 years. He was an IPP prisoner, who had served **10 years longer in prison than his original sentence.** He was a beloved friend to anarchist comrades who met him in prison. He had ACAB on his knuckles and an anti-authoritarian spirit and a deep love for animals. He was a working class 'old school' prisoner who knew which side he was on. He hated the system with every ounce of his being.

Taylor was one of the first prisoner members of the IWW via the Incarcerated Workers Organising Committee (IWOC) that was founded in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland in 2015. He was also active with Smash IPP, contributing to the newsletter and encouraging other IPP prisoners to join the group.

IPP Death Sentence

IPP (Imprisonment for Public Protection) is a type of sentencing that was introduced in 2005 and meant



that people would be sentenced to an initial 'tariff' (minimum time that must be served) and, after that point, their release would be decided by the parole board. This means that IPP prisoners have NO definite release date.

It is effectively a life sentence for minor crimes. After huge public pressure, IPP sentences were abolished in 2012, but not retrospectively, which means there are still more than 3500 people in prison with no release date. **The uncertainty is a living hell. This sentence led to the UK having one of the highest rates of prisoner suicide in the world.**

At least 243 of the UK's IPP prisoners have died in prison, **72 of them took their own lives.**

For Taylor, the IPP was a death sentence. He was given 4 years for burglary but served 14 years before he died. The long-term imprisonment with no end-date totally destroyed Taylor's mental health. He attempted suicide multiple times, including slitting his own throat and taking an overdose that led him to being in a coma twice. It eventually killed him.

No End Date

The IPP works by a prisoner first serving an initial tariff, after which they have a Parole Board hearing. The Parole Board decides whether to free that prisoner, or to recommend them for 'open' (category D) conditions, psychiatric imprisonment or a rehab, for example. They can also decide if a prisoner must stay in prison for longer and recommend certain things, like courses for the prisoner to complete. The outside Probation Service and Offender Managers within the prison create reports that make recommendations and prisoners are also often subject to various risk assessments or psychological reports.

At each board hearing, new 'hoops' can be created that the prisoner will need to then jump through. For

example, a prisoner might do everything the Parole Board directs and then two years later at the next hearing, the Parole Board might say “you still need to address X behaviour and therefore do X course.”

This leads to a continual process of imprisonment where goal posts are repeatedly moved. The uncertainty, frustration and lack of power leads to prisoner behaviour deteriorating, whether that is increased drug use, self-harm or kicking off in protest.

This behaviour then becomes the justification for their continuing imprisonment, because that person is not ‘safe’ for the community or has not ‘addressed their offending behaviour’. The cycle continues.

We have 14 years of catalogued evidence of impossible parole hearings and prison failings. Taylors suicidality was the reason he was kept in prison, yet his suicidality was caused by prison. There is only so much one human can take. **Death became the only option for Taylor as all legal doors to freedom closed again and again.**

Transphobia: pathologised, hospitalised & imprisoned

Taylor gave his consent in 2018 to share more about his life story to help raise awareness of trans prisoners and what happens when the medical system pathologises trans people.

Growing up, Taylor was subject to years of physical, sexual and psychological abuse from his mother and step-father. He managed to escape and be adopted by his grandparents as an early teenager, however, he would often return to visit his family desperate for love and validation, but was met with neither. This intense pattern of trauma has followed him forever. Unfortunately, during his sentence, both his adopted parents died and as a result he lost his main support network. The grief was insurmountable and was unable to heal due to being locked in a cell and unable to visit their graves or process his grief fully. *We know he is with them now.*

Taylor always knew he was a man. He went to a local doctor as a young teenager and expressed his feelings and issues with his assigned gender. The doctor pathologised Taylor as ‘unstable’ and denied any access to hormones or any surgery. This was over 30 years ago and access to hormones online or other support groups was nigh on impossible. Before prison, Taylor had never met another trans person.

The combination of childhood abuse and gender dysphoria led to drug and alcohol abuse, as well as a

long-term pattern of self-harm. Taylor became an addict, and as a working class person with no financial means, “crime” was the only option to sustain his habit. This led Taylor to a very self-destructive life, including many abusive relationships and actions that he deeply regretted. Taylor accessed many mental health services, however, none of them affirmed Taylor’s gender identity or needs and he was repeatedly pathologised, hospitalised and imprisoned.

In the judges’ summing up of his case whereby he was given an IPP sentence, he recognised it was Taylor’s ‘gender issues’ that led to his imprisonment.

Taylor experienced transphobic abuse in prison from officers and other prisoners. Once he was attacked by a girl on his wing in a courtyard. Thankfully, our Taylor was a fighter and defended himself. He spat back on her and said “here’s some of my gender fluid”.

Officers throughout his sentence would target him with insults, deadnaming and repeated misgendering. In HMP [*Her Majesty’s Prison*] Eastwood Park Officer Lorde deadnamed [*ed. – see **Ghosts***] him repeatedly in order to ‘wind him up’ and try to provoke him into acting out and therefore sabotage his parole.

When admitted to a psychiatric hospital after a spate of suicide attempts, Taylor was assigned a psychiatrist. During sessions, **Taylor was repeatedly dehumanised and encouraged to see himself as a woman.** They said that relationships were a core part of his ‘offending behaviour’ and discouraged him from being with women or in relationships at all. During this intense time of vulnerability, Taylor believed the only way to ever be released from prison was to pretend to be a woman and to not have romantic relationships with women.

Fortunately, once he had left the hospital and stopped having sessions he realised what a horrific transphobic act of institutional violence this was. One that trans people worldwide have experienced, pathologised by psychiatric authorities.

Taylor was blown away by letters and cards he received from the trans community. Despite the prison’s best efforts to stop him obtaining a binder, including claiming they didn’t recognise if the binders sent in were “for the top or for the bottom” and refusing to issue them, he eventually experienced the euphoria of making his chest align more closely with his gender. He would speak with excitement about getting top surgery when he was out and running

around half-naked on the beach and swimming in the sea. **Now he will never have the chance.**



2022 Mad Pride in London; Taylor was also honoured there

Homophobia in Prison

Relationships were constantly considered a 'risk factor' for Taylor and his attraction to women was ongoingly pathologised and criminalised in prison. Over the 14 years he was behind bars, he had been separated from many people he had loved. Including one long term relationship that lasted over 6 years whereby he was violently separated from them and the prison service intentionally kept them apart, never allowing them to meet until recent years.

In prison, physical relationships are met with punishment – you can be given an IEP (enough of which lead you to basic or full segregation). This happened many times throughout Taylor's sentence. The constant policing by officers and separation between him and people he cared about also contributed to destroying Taylor's will to live.

Should Taylor have obtained parole at his next hearing, one condition was that he refrained from all romantic and intimate relationships. His own lawyer said he would need to comply, although we all know that closeness to other humans is a deeply necessary part of survival. We often spoke with Taylor about how the state was acting like an abusive controlling partner. He felt powerless to challenge it.

In the last week of his life, Taylor was nicked for kissing another prisoner. This was one of the trigger events that led to his death.

HMP Eastwood Park Hell Hole

HMP Eastwood Park is a 'women's prison' in Gloucestershire, not far from Bristol. Horror emerges from its wall regularly – 3 prisoners have died there within the last month. One woman, Kayleigh, died two days before Taylor on the same wing.

People get violently attacked by officers regularly and sexual abuse is prevalent. On a recent visit with Taylor he shared how women had been forced to give oral sex to officers in exchange for drugs being brought from outside.

Taylor was so close to freedom and HMP Eastwood Park took it all away. What triggered Taylor's latest spiral of suicide attempts was completely preventable. He had finally been getting his ROTLs (release on temporary license) whereby he could leave the prison for a day with an officer as a way of 'working towards release' and demonstrating to the parole board that he was 'safe'.

On the 20th May, Taylor was in Cabot Circus in Bristol, when the Officer responsible for supervising him abandoned him. Taylor tried to find her, but he was unable to. He had no phone or way of finding her despite looking continuously around the city. Taylor managed to report it to the prison. Instead of taking responsibility for losing Taylor, the officer who escorted Taylor into Bristol lied and claimed he went missing for a number of hours on purpose.

Taylor became angry and pushed over a plant in reception. Prison Officers then attacked him. They kicked the shit into him and dragged him to a new cell with none of his belongings. We saw Taylor days after and could see bruises all over him. Taylor was awaiting surgery for a hernia and being 'bent up' by officers was a life-threatening act of violence.

An action alert was launched that 544 people sent to the prison warning them that Taylor's loved ones are seriously worried about his wellbeing and that this abusive treatment is only going to exacerbate his serious mental and physical health conditions after years of incarceration. This incident triggered the three suicide attempts and the final one that killed him. What if thousands had taken part in the action alert? How could we have MADE Eastwood Park take notice? These are the questions that will always haunt us.

Class War

Everything about Taylor's life was shaped by class. We do not want this to be erased. It is not rich people who use drugs who end up in prison. It is poor people oppressed by our economic system who end up in prison, and they stay there to keep a class-stratified society in existence.

Lessons for Our Movements

"The state is permanent violence"

– Errico Malatesta

We write 'our movements' but we don't always know who 'our' are. We want to acknowledge there were a small number of amazing close friends and comrades in our networks who supported us over the years. You know who you are <3 Who were on the end of the phone after harrowing visits, or who completed action alerts that we posted online. Who sent cards to Taylor and who came to noise demos.

But mostly, we felt alone. Taylor was alone.

Comrades went through years of hell and more often than not had to beg for support. One person supported Taylor for 13 years, 9 of which were almost completely alone despite her best efforts to bring up his case in groups and write about him online. Some anarchist websites would not share our action alerts or calls for support because Taylor was not a 'political prisoner'. Even though an understanding of class and gender oppression is a core of anarchism.

Taylor's death could have been prevented. If there was more support, more resistance. If our movements were a fucking threat. If prison authorities feared us and our calls to action. **We need to fight like hell for the living.** We need to fight like hell for those still inside.

Abolition Means Prisoner Support

Abolition became flavour of the week for a short time. Yet the unsexy and unglamorous work of prisoner phone calls, visits, action alerts, relentless fundraising etc does not attract many people. We were told we did this work 'unsustainably' yet no practical support to take the load from our shoulders was given. We refuse to abandon our friends in prison.

Yes, a diversity of tactics is needed. But this can't be used as an excuse not to engage with the unglamorous work where getting a transfer to a prison with marginally less white supremacist screws – that reduce your loved ones chances of racist attacks – takes a year and is as good as it gets.

What would have helped prevent Taylor's death? People writing to Taylor and building trust with him so that he had a more expanded circle of friends. Help travelling for visits. Legal advice and support for his parole paperwork. People helping with and sharing our action alerts. People offering counselling or support for the ongoing traumatic stress (or even fucking acknowledging how much this was for us). People coming on demos where we called for support (and us not being humiliated begging people to show up). People with privilege accessing their

networks to help get Taylor out (media work, legal work etc). Giving money to his top surgery crowdfunder and for visits costs. Trans prisoner letter writing events. Helping host info nights for Smash IPP or IWOC. Doing banner drops. Re-posting our statements and graphics.

We needed everyone's rage. We needed to not feel alone. We wanted to feel solidarity in practice. We wanted people to understand that abolition means prisoner support. That this should be a huge part of the movement and that keeping our friends alive in prison is part of resistance.

We need people to recognise that prisoners are not projects. They are not 'casework'. They are not a fascinating object of study to write your Masters dissertation about. They are not the same as organising a bookfair or running a campaign. They are human beings and the stakes are fucking life or death. People need consistency. They need care and friendship. They need to be treated like fucking human beings. Taylor loved us not because we are anarchists but because we are his fucking friends. We are his family. Because we love him with passion and kindness for who he is and not because he is a prisoner.

Abolition Means Revolution. No More Fucking Reading Groups. Where is Your Rage?

Nothing can describe the feeling when you receive another phone call saying your friend has been airlifted out of prison in a helicopter because he has sliced open his own neck because he cannot take the abuse in prison anymore. The rage against the prison systems moves through your veins. You want to destroy the whole world. But you turn to your comrades and where are they?

Somehow, it feels like even amongst prison abolitionists, the violence taking place within prisons themselves is so often ignored and prisoners are forgotten, erased, patronised and tokenised. Yes, abolition requires us to burn down the whole state, the borders, the education system. As well as not instead of prisons. **The state disappears people so we have to work twice as hard to ensure people are not erased.**

Our loved ones are tortured and the response is starting reading groups about abolition. Writing statements for the transphobic Guardian. We would get told time after time people don't have 'the capacity' to do a demo right now. We cope with the silence of signal group chats when we ask for support. Where is your fucking rage?????? Why are

we not burning these places to the fucking ground? The 'abolitionist movement' in the UK is passive and docile. It is not angry enough. You cannot learn about abolition just from a book. Learn from prisoners, learn from loved ones of people in prison. There are fucking thousands of us, ask anyone their experiences and you will hear stories of neglect, abuse and violence. That is enough motivation to fight.

Revolutionary abolitionists in the so-called United States would risk death to liberate people from slave plantations. They started the Underground Railroad to free their families and comrades. Where is the direct action to free our friends from cages? Where is the rage when they die inside? How do we push our movements beyond canvassing for fucking Jeremy Corbyn *[ed. – previous Labour Party leader, who shamefully many 'radicals' supported in the 2019 UK election as the 'real socialist alternative' despite him explicitly running on a campaign of expanding the prison system and police]????*

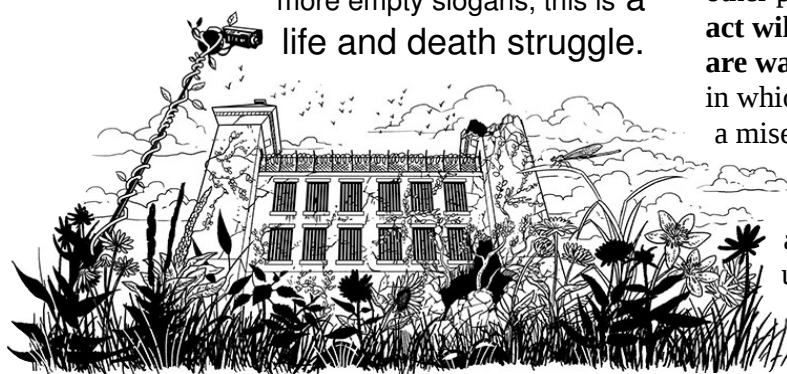
Abolition means **revolution**. It means **destroying the state**. It means **direct action**. It means putting the war into **class war**.

We know Taylor was one of millions of people around the world kept in a cage. We know thousands of people are murdered by the state in wars – like in the invasion of Ukraine. We know the state kills people on it's borders, in detention centres, in prisons, in psychiatric hospitals. We know it's those harmed by white supremacy, ableism, poverty and transphobia who face the sharpest end of this violence. Every single incarcerated person is a political prisoner.

The inquest and the Prison and Probation Ombudsman's report will not achieve 'justice'. Prisons are working exactly as they are designed to. This horror is no accident. It is intentional.

Pools of Taylor's blood covered his cell where he died alone. His blood covered the hands of HMP and they will face no repercussions. *Unless we make them.*

We call for rage everywhere. Remember Taylor. Fight with everything you have for those still in prison. No more empty slogans, this is a life and death struggle.



We call on comrades to honour Taylor in every way they know how.

*Against prisons, against the state.
For friendship, for freedom, for revolution.*

HMP BRISTOL STAFF WE ARE WATCHING YOU... [UK]

[July 2022]

We have been monitoring staff at HMP Bristol for a while now. The following vehicle registrations belong to screws and prison officers (we have seen people getting into them, and can confirm that they are definitely not visitors, solicitors or doctors, but are definitely screws and higher ranking officers): XX08JMC, LO13DUE, KK57CTF, VK67FFV, A65AHZ, OU14UCT



Unfortunately these vehicles were absent from the car park on our chosen day, but we did pay a home visit to 36 York Avenue, Ashley Down (another prison officer we have been monitoring). We left them a poster on their door: *"HMP Bristol Staff, we are watching you. This one's for all those who cannot act. The ones you incarcerate then target with your discrimination. We are watching you. Fire to the prisons!"*

We visited these people and HMP Bristol because screws and prison staff there are racist. We are not saying the people we targeted are worse than the other people in the prison. **But we hope our random act will show that just as the state watches us, we are watching you...** you and the whole rotten barrel in which you incarcerate people and make their lives a misery.

HMP Bristol has a long history of racist abuse towards prisoners. "Rotten" was a phrase used by someone inside HMP Bristol. Reports over the last few years have shown how at least 3 screws have denied people of colour

basic “rights” like access to the yard and gym, and how the ‘Incentives and Earned Privilege’ scheme is totally open to abuse. **It has been used specifically to discipline Asian prisoners for no reason other than the fact that they aren’t white.**

All screws are scum. The ones we know of are the tip of the iceberg. There is no such thing as “good” or “bad” in this context; they are all rotten to the core.

In 2020 a Somali Muslim man was attacked by a known racist inmate, and beaten so badly he was left disabled with brain damage... An “independent” report commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and published recently– stated that “insufficient priority was given by the prison to addressing racism, inadequate risk assessments were carried out and the unit was poorly managed.” The report, made 54 findings and 31 recommendations, and called for additional scrutiny through an independent public hearing.

We do not care about their risk assessments. But recent knowledge of HMP Bristol has shown that the racist and fascist attitudes of the screws continues to be rife and unchecked, and doesn’t surprise us at all.... so we took matters into our own hands.

Racism is inherent in all aspects of the prison system, and it’s not just in adult jails. A report published by National Audit Office recently stated that 97% of young people in custody are “boys”; and 53% of young people in custody (i.e. YOIs [Young Offender Institutes] and “Secure Training Centres”; i.e. youth prisons) are from “ethnic minority backgrounds”. **As ever, the “minority” are the majority in custodial institutions and the prison industrial complex.** The report references the Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Bill as a reason for this. The PCSC Bill was only passed on the 28th of April; so expect these statistics to get even worse..... But as long as there is repression, we will be fighting.

Until all are free.... fuck HMP.

ASAB Cell



ON SEXUAL MURDER & POLICE SADISM



The reaction in the UK to the murder of Sarah Everard, a 33-year-old white woman, by Wayne Couzens, an off-duty specialist-firearms cop, has shown the usual mixture of lightning-rod rage and Spectacular media-trance. Anarchists have quickly suggested that people like Couzens are all over the police, that the police as a whole are the problem. Yet the police themselves quickly arrested Couzens and the courts convicted him – virtually unknown in Britain in cases of police murder. The main new information which has been released after the trial is that this was carried out as a bogus arrest. Sarah Everard was breaking lockdown, and submitted to handcuffing, believing she was being arrested – at which point, she lost any chance to fight or flee. **The case is horrifying, as people (especially white women) become suddenly aware that police might kidnap them off the street for purposes of rape and murder.** Likely the number of people resisting, fleeing or arguing an arrest will increase greatly, just at the time such “offences” are being more severely criminalised.

The impact has been progressive in the sense that it has discredited the police, made white women warier about police powers, and contributed to the lifting of a protest ban during the most recent lockdown. There have been two main types of reaction: the conservative-moralist response, in which Couzens himself is an evil individual and the death penalty should be brought back, or where calls are made for harsher punishing of exhibitionism; and the identity-politics response, in which the main “lesson” is that police suffer institutionalised misogyny which is rectified by political correctness training and by arresting more men for sexist behaviour. **Both these responses help maintain and strengthen the**

institution of the police, just when it is most threatened.

In fact this case draws attention to the real nature of arrest. If a gang was to grab someone from the street, forcibly restrain them, take them to a safe-house and hold them for several days, this would be termed a kidnapping – a serious offence. If anarchists or other political actors did the same, it would probably be described, even more sensationally, as a hostage taking. In their everyday uses, these terms carry connotations that the victim will suffer considerable trauma, and that there is serious additional risk of beatings, torture, rape, and murder. But people turn a blind eye when this is done, hundreds of thousands of times, by police. **“Arrest” is today normalised to a point where a different word is used, and treated discursively as a very minor thing.** This partly stems from a cultural assumption (accurate at least for middle-class, white, minor offenders, and in the letter of the law) that arrested people will not be murdered, raped or tortured. (Beatings and psychological abuse seem to be tolerated, but only against hated outgroups). However, for all but the most serious crimes, we are already dealing with a greater evil. If policing is meant to be a lesser evil, then it is noticeable that arrest/kidnapping is often used in cases of far less serious offences, which carry much lighter sentences than kidnapping itself.

Cases appear periodically in which a person subject to arrest, or reacting to a situation of harassment, uses (or attempts) lethal force against a cop. In the media, these cases are paraded as evidence of the horrors police are subjected to when “just going about their work”, and as inexplicable events which are put down to hatred and evil. However, a traumatised person expecting life-ruination or death at the hands of police will react in panic and desperation to what they experience as a life-threatening situation. Even when the victim of police harassment merely argues, or fights non-lethally, or runs away, there is often outcry: everyone buys into the police account where this makes them a fair target for sadistic abuse by police, where “noncompliance” amounts to threat. This is an example of a wider problem: **the dominant culture demands the impossible of the poor, racialised, psychologically troubled, homeless, refugees, and other groups routinely targeted by police.** They demand submission to a kind of temporary slavery, whenever a cop gets it into their head to wield their power.

As they already did with COVID-19, statist and their cheerleaders are currently trying to repress and criminalise their way out of a social problem. The

measures taken by the state will be applauded (somewhat critically) by supporters of identity politics and by liberals, though they are if anything counterproductive and reactionary. Most of this activity is of a bizarre, goal-displacement type, where the surplus unresolved tension which is not solved by jailing Couzens is taken out on anyone “polluted” by association or similarity. For example, there is an investigation underway into colleagues with whom Couzens shared a Telegram group – a process reminiscent of the Chinese social credit system [ed. – see *Hong Kong: Its Relevance to the Rest of Us...*], where individual guilt also contaminates one’s social media associates. There are new measures for earlier interventions against exhibitionists, on the basis that Couzens may have progressed from exhibitionism to murder. Most exhibitionists do not go on to murder.

Also, police are told to take crimes against women more seriously, and to deploy undercover officers in nightclubs to detect sexual assault. It is true that the police don’t take most crimes against women seriously, but they take sex-murders extremely seriously: this is partly why they threw Couzens under the wagon. Any such undercover policing would doubtless increase the number of on-the-spot arrests carried out by lone plainclothes police. **Couzens has been jailed, sidestepping the usual police impunity and resultant outrage. This restores the reputation of the police-state, reinforcing the view that he was a lone criminal individual on the other side of the law and morality compared to the police.** He has been given the maximum sentence (life without parole), a move which will doubtless make it easier in future for police to obtain such sentences against their enemies.

The obvious anarchist solution is to get rid of the police. This would solve the immediate problem, and a lot of others, although an anarchist society would also have to deal with sadism somehow. There are in fact a lot of things reformers could do, which might reduce the likelihood of similar police atrocities in the future. They could ban the stops, searches and controls that so often escalate into warrantless arrests. They could disband the specialist paramilitary police units. They could reduce the number of arrests by making minor offences non-arrestable (as was the case in Britain until the 2000s). They could insist that only women arrest women, or ban the use of handcuffs in various circumstances. They could insist that arrestees have a right to be accompanied throughout, or they could simply ban arrests prior to conviction. They could legalise resistance to arrest, or demand the recognition of panic when arrested as a reasonable excuse to fight or flee. Or they could rescind their widespread

support for lockdowns and other “emergency” police measures. **They do not, of course, do any of these things: the police-as-gang is much too influential to challenge in these ways, and the right would cry anarchy or cop-hate the moment they were proposed. This failure of liberals and radicals to propose countermeasures is a sign they are not even trying to reform and humanise the police.** They are trying to misuse police excess to extend the scope for police excess. Such reforms are not contemplated, because they are incompatible with the current regime of pervasive police-state rule. Without a “compliant”, docile population, states have to spend some of their power or money on bribes and concessions – something they now absolutely refuse to do.

In the medium term, unrestrained police sadism should extend to entire populations the distrust, fear, and hatred of police which is already common in countries and communities where police abuses are already common. One would expect to see entire areas become no-go zones, which police cannot enter except as a full-scale invasion; civilians



April 2021 riot in Bristol, UK, with police vehicle arson and extensive trashing of the Bridewell police station; see 1 May 2021...

increasingly reluctant to call the police or interact with them at all; sympathy for “criminals”, who have the virtue at least of fearlessly defying the police, and for “rioters”, whose temporary suspension of an unjust order will be endorsed as obvious. So far, there are few signs of any such permanent trend, although there were revolts on the streets of Bristol not long after the murder.

Part of the

reason for this is that the sadistic structure of normal policing is not recognised. People focus their gaze either too narrowly – on Couzens as a sexually and criminally deviant individual, distinct from other police – or too broadly – on men, masculinity, and the vague category of police “culture”.



Police are a Gang

Anarchists often claim (often to the perplexity of everyone else present) that the police are just a gang. It seems to non-anarchists that the police, “the law”, is the opposite of a gang, or “crime and disorder”. For anarchists, it is logical: if authority has no legitimacy then the activities of police must be treated as exactly analogous to those of any other group. Any other group who did the things police did would be termed a gang. But the anarchist view is also easily verified. Most of the world’s police forces are thoroughly corrupt. Nearly all of them break the letter of the law on use of force/violence, and mostly get away with it. There are innumerable cases of overlap between police and gangs. Sometimes gangsters infiltrate and take over local police; sometimes individual police turn gangster for profit. Sometimes entire branches of the police – like the Mexican Zeta cartel, formerly of the counterterrorist command, or former police who joined the Nicaraguan Contras – turn gangster when state demand evaporates or when it’s more profitable. Other times, like in DR Congo, entire gangs (particularly warlord-led factions) are absorbed into the police or the army; or a gang captures state power, and its members become the new police and army. **Where a state and its laws have low legitimacy, there are generally only two reasons to join the police: out of sadism towards the population, or for material gain.**

Someone with a policing skill-set can transfer it almost immediately into gang activity. This is one of the reasons “security sector reform” has proven so difficult for liberals in poorer countries, and one of the reasons police are so grossly overpaid. The same situation emerged historically, during the Hundred Years War.¹ States then fought each other mainly with mercenary bands, but the demand for mercenaries wavered, they took up banditry. And there are many armed groups worldwide which engage both in gang-like activities and in political conflict. Indeed, the

1 ed. – 1337–1453, initially between the English and French crowns: warfare in Europe professionalised from then on.

removal of political causes seems to increase other kinds of banditry and sadism. When civil wars end, and the political outlet for aggression is removed, there are often big increases in violent crime, including attacks on women. When the police invaded certain gang-controlled favelas [*ed. – ghettos (principally of Afro-descendents from the vast historic slave estate of Brazil) in cities such as Rio de Janeiro; often drug fiefs, sometimes autonomous*] prior to the Rio Olympics (territory they rapidly lost again a few years later), violence against women increased.

There are cases, both in the US and in Latin America, of “police powers” being used to commit private crimes. The perpetrators may be rogue cops, or simply gangsters dressed as police. Using roadblocks for extortion is the most common example, though kidnappings, rapes and murders also occur. In one case, the British police hired Somali gangsters to kidnap someone wanted for a cop-killing in Britain, who had fled to Somalia. The gangsters disguised themselves as local officials and kidnapped the victim at a false roadblock. The British courts turned a blind eye to this outright gangsterism, only caring that they got their man, and not how.

So what’s wrong with police being a gang?
Gangsters and bandits aren’t necessarily bad people; joining a gang is often a survival strategy, just like working for a corporation. An affinity group, says one pamphlet, is “a street gang with analysis”. The problem with police is that they’re a gang which has managed to establish dominance over large areas, based on coercion; and in their very nature as an organisation, they are sadistic and dominating. Millions in each nation-state are then living at risk of whatever arbitrary violence this gang might decide, or be ordered, to commit. This risk becomes more and more blatant as the will of the parliaments or courts to try to rein in the police is weakened. Across populations diversified in terms of how far they are already subject to police violence, there are a series of outcries and wakings-up. Real atrocities show the risk which is already embedded in an extreme imbalance of power between the police and everyone else. Everywhere, states try to manage such crises in such a way as to save face for police while also maintaining mass docility.

Sex-Murders & Rapes

In a certain sense, however, what emerges from this case is that the sadistic nature of police is not yet fully accepted by “public opinion”. Indeed, mainstream commentary has focused on drawing a line between sex-murder and the various forms of violence routinely committed by police. It seems the police

decided very quickly to throw Couzens under the bus. The police could have done a lot more to cover for him, such as trying to frame someone else for the murder, or dragging their heels on the investigation. Nobody’s very surprised that the police for once “did their job” and arrested one of their own. **But bear in mind that police nearly always defend their own, and that it very often works.** In the UK, police got away with the murder of Jean-Charles de Menezes [*ed. – racialised and wrongly suspected of terrorism*], who was shot several times in a public space when already pinned-down; they got away with the murder of Ian Tomlinson, who suffered a fatal head wound as a bystander at a demonstration; they got away with cold-bloodedly gunning down Mark Duggan in front of witnesses [*ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg61***]; they get away with dozens of other killings in the UK, and 1500+ in the US, every year. In France, a cop got away with anally raping a man with a baton in the street. This general pattern of police defending their own is a definite limit to accounts focused on police culture or individual guilt.

Sex-murder is not far from the normal run of police sadism. Rape in police custody is common in countries or situations where police also use torture. For example, many police rapes have been reported in the aftermath of unrest in Zimbabwe, and Palestinian women in Israeli jails are usually sexually assaulted. Mexicans “illegally” entering America apparently see the risk of rape by border guards as so great that they take precautions against pregnancy before crossing. Femicide by death squads linked to police, or composed of former police-auxiliary paramilitaries, is a longstanding problem in Central America. **The pattern involves targeting women deemed nonconformist to conservative gender norms: sweatshop workers, homeless women, sex workers, women deemed to be dressed improperly. This generally happens, not during ongoing civil war, but once it ends: it is as if women become a substitute target for political adversaries.** The same actors’ modus operandi as paramilitaries was often to massacre, rape and torture civilians on vague suspicions of aiding the enemy – so it’s not that big a change.

Sex-murder involves similar desire-structures to those of the police. But it is also part of the category of crime/threat/disorder against which police pose as protectors. Femicide and rape are relatively common. **About 1 in 3 murders in the UK are recorded as domestic/intimate-partner. Sexually motivated murders by strangers are very rare. However, killings of this kind are a staple of popular fiction and have an imaginary reach far beyond their prevalence. The entire ideology of police**

legitimation is built on the idea that they are the last line standing against truly evil and dangerous people. Femicide in contexts of ongoing abuse is common and not taken seriously relative to other kinds of murder. But sex-murder by strangers is both extremely rare and extremely feared. News cases of this kind receive blanket coverage, and such murders are vastly overestimated across several genres of films, TV shows and novels. The Hollywood stereotype is unhelpful and reactionary. A typical Hollywood sex-murderer is a larger-than-life, monstrous individual easily differentiated from “normal” people, driven by an all-consuming force (sex, aggression, or both); they are finally stopped by a heroic cop or a victim-avenger, though often with the sense that this isn’t the end, they or someone like them will be back shortly. This is an image based on a misanthropic model of desire: what is acted-out on the screen is mainly viewers’ fears of their own desire, pleasure, or aggression, projected into the figure of the murderer, and contained by the cop in the role of their own self-restraint. If we let our desires out, we’re all sex-murderers.



The Hollywood sex-murderer is basically the same creature as the supervillain or the horror-movie monster, rendered in a pseudo-realist form compatible with naturalistic presentation. Sadly, this realism makes even more likely the already-prevalent process of projecting such complexes onto real people and situations; the average TV viewer doubtless lives a real-life sex-murder saga in a manner identical with how they live a sex-murder movie. That the fictional murderer turn out to be a rogue cop or ex-cop is a familiar plot twist in these stories, though of course they are finally busted by the good cop who is the point-of-view character through most of the action.

The poststructuralist-feminist theory of rape and femicide is well-known: men benefit from structural privilege and use strategic violence to keep women (as a group) in line, in the same way the KKK used

lynchings. It is based on an earlier theory, articulated by 1970s radical feminists, that binary gender relations are always sadomasochistic and that rape is a tool used by men to control women on a social scale (for instance, generating fear of being alone in public places). This is doubtless a simplification. Rapists generally claim if asked to have acted on sexual desires, not on any desire to defend a particular gender regime. They do not “feel entitled” to rape, and believe it is wrong in principle, though they try to justify their own actions in various other ways. They usually target victims of opportunity, and flee if the victim fights back. They do, however, have a sadistic model of desire which makes rape appealing to begin with, and this is why they view it as a sexual rather than an aggressive act. Historically, many rapists assumed that women have masochistic desire-structures and invite rape in various ways. This sadistic model of how sexuality

works is fairly common, but is not identical with penetrative sex. The idea of mutual sexual enjoyment is utterly distinct from the sadistic model, and some sadists obtain little sexual enjoyment. They do not experience genital or full-body orgasms and instead are mainly aiming for the ego-satisfactions of dominating and humiliating someone else (which can be traced back further to identification with someone

who dominated and humiliated them, or to a desire to turn the tables on such a person and do the same back). They seem to seek or enjoy others’ suffering or degradation (often of a kind they can identify with); they do not simply cause suffering as a side-effect of satisfying their sex-drive.

Sex-murderers are mostly similar. They have sadistic personalities, lack intimacy, tend to act impulsively, and engage in repetitive thrill-seeking because of a pervasive inability to feel. They do not feel guilt or remorse in the normal sense, but seem to have a moral sense in which both they and the world are always-already guilty and deserve to suffer. They commit crimes/atrocities under the influence of an impulse which is not particularly strong or unified, but which overrides weak defences against it. There are some indications that this impulse is a type of inverse conscience, a quasi-moral impulse to do prohibited or “evil” things. **This is not just “normal” sexuality and aggression overflowing its usual bounds, but nor is it some kind of radical evil distinct from ordinary personality-structures. They believe the**

world is such a dark, evil place that everyone is under an obligation to fight for themselves and grab enjoyment wherever they can. There are also indications that they feel a moral duty to commit great evils, because they have internalised a self-image as evil, or are doomed to repeat some previous abuse which was done to them. They have a masochistic element and often make mistakes which lead to capture. Some talk as if a dissociated self-state has committed the crimes, which they themselves condemn and would never do. Some talk as if they believe they are driven by God or History or some other all-encompassing spook. There are indications rapes and sex-murders are carried out in an altered state of consciousness, similar to dissociation. There often seems to be a masochist element, with sex-murderers making few attempts to evade capture, quickly admitting guilt, and showing considerable self-hatred once arrested. (Everard's killer evidently said he deserved everything he got; he was hospitalised twice after arrest, presumably either for police beatings or self-harm).

There are thus two, rather paradoxical conclusions as to how to prevent rapes and sex-murders. Firstly, the less desire flows specifically down the sadistic path, the fewer sex-murders there will be. Rape and murder were almost unknown in the Trobriands when [Bronislaw] Malinowski [ed. – *an early anthropologist*] was there; the indigenous people had both intimate social relations, and high levels of oral and genital eroticism. Secondly, the more sadism is channelled into consensual channels, or released in conflict among equals or against bosses, the less it will be expressed in sex-murder. Directing aggression to the right targets, or using it consensually, prevents its being used against the wrong targets.

It is true that sex-murderers and rapists are mostly men; it may well also be true that they are mostly misogynists, especially since the entire dynamic in both cases involves a displaced violence against a lower part of the self. However, the main motive is sadistic enjoyment, not misogyny, and its operation is libidinal, not directly political. Sadistic desire-structures and so-called psychopathy may arise more frequently among men than women in modern societies. Possibly the encouragement of intense muscular activity as the main masculinised work-activity encourages trends towards muscular sadism. **Sadism certainly seems to overflow easily from military, paramilitary and policing formations.** And sadism may be more compatible with codes of masculinity than is masochism. However, the feminist idea that rapists and sex-murderers are somehow acting-out political hatred of women is superficial. It ignores the fact that such emotionally-invested

actions have to pass through the field of desire and the unconscious. The extent to which contemporary feminists naturalise the desire to dominate raises concerns that their politics also takes place within a sadistic view of the world. I suspect that, in rapes and sex-murders, there is a general sadistic worldview, a sadistic sexual drive, and also a kind of moral impulsion or obligation to "be evil" operative. Misogynist beliefs may function more as rationalisations than motives, particularly since such acts seem to be committed in a quasi-dissociative state.

Microfascist Desire in the Police

There are many ways Couzens is typical of sex-murderers, but he is also typical of police. Reports from Couzens' acquaintances indicate a cowardly bully whose propensity to domination long preceded his joining the police. No doubt he gained considerable gratification from taking part in armed police activities in the post-9/11 era, which probably included holding people (both "guilty" and "innocent") at gunpoint, violently "restraining" people deemed "dangerous", and carrying out terroristic military-style raids on civilian homes. He is probably typical of the kind of person attracted to these wannabe-action-hero units: someone with a sadistic personality, and a desire to dominate and humiliate others who are in a subordinate position; someone who would like to be a "hero", but only if he can remain safely in control of the situation.

He spent most of his career in specialised armed protection units deployed to protect high-value targets (British police are not routinely armed). What is the structure of desire in these kinds of paramilitary formations? The accounts in [Klaus] Theweleit's *Male Fantasies* indicate that fascistic paramilitary organisations attract and sustain people with a particular psychological make-up. [Erich] Fromm refers to the make-up as "necrophilia", or an "exterminatory" variant of anal sadism. **Broken-in by viciously authoritarian schools or families, these people come to fear feelings of pleasure, to confuse abuse (initially by their superiors) with love, and to respond to any tinglings of desire, fear, or shame, as if to an existential threat. This is not an illusion: stirrings of desire do destabilise the rigid character-armour which dominates their personality. They respond by becoming rigid, a breaker against the storm, and by attacking, eliminating the threat.** The threat is gone when the living thing is replaced by something dead – an unrecognisable mess of body parts or else an empty or frozen space lacking its own agency and "life". This hatred of life can sometimes be contained



Shortly after Sarah's murder, the same force's officers brutalised London protestors at a Clapham Common vigil leading to much anger; protests spread to New Scotland Yard and parliament Square, highlighting over 200 women, trans- or gender-non-conforming-people in the UK dead after contact with the police or in prison since 1980, as the government announced 500 new female prison places

if life can be reduced to a grid of meanings and contains nothing unexpected. The closest they come to sexual pleasure is in the moment of killing or dehumanising someone else, at which point they experience their own death-and-redemption in the other person. They hate and fear women, but in a differentiated way in which a subset of virginal, asexual, role-conformist women are immune to hatred and often idealised. Their patriarchal fear and hatred of erotic, socially deviant, and marginalised women is a subset of a wider fear and hatred of anything involving desire, life, pleasure, or the unknown.

It takes little stretch to see this complex is central to securitised thinking, as the driver of the ideologies now prevalent in counterterrorist and counterextremist bodies, and as the generator of lockdowns (and the rest of contemporary policing). The idea that police exist to investigate crimes is already rather archaic. Today's police are trained to manage "risk" and "threats". Life as such is a security risk. Only "compliant" lives are considered safe. A life is "compliant" if it is already in a death-like state without being dead (one can compare here the institution of slavery as a functional equivalent to massacring prisoners-of-war). Unfortunately, with suspicion, profiling and "red flags" being gradually redefined to cover the entirety of possible activities, this situates civilians – even docile civilians – in a category similar to an insurgent or occupied population. Security risks pervade the environment, overwhelming the police capacity to suppress them. It is hard to know how widespread the assemblage theorised by Theweleit has disseminated in today's police, or whether it has become more frequent. It seems likely, however, that it is very strong in precisely the kind of counterinsurgency paramilitary units where Couzens spent most of his career.

It is also pervasive in militarised policing. The role of police is to prowl the streets looking for threats. Signs of life – particularly of life which is different, thus not part of the known grid, as well as defiant life – register as threats. A twinge of the spider-sense in the mind of a cop is taken in police ideology as intuitive awareness. The police then perform acts of harassment (stops, searches, ID controls) at any sign of life, i.e. of something which falls outside their grid. These initial acts of harassment have proven resilient as practices, in spite of their negative "public relations" impact and negligible impact in detecting "criminals". The victim of police harassment is expected to become "compliant": utterly docile and penetrable to whatever tools the police are permitted to use, or chooses to use whether permitted or not. This docility is the proof, in a sense, that they are already dead, death-like, safe, lacking in the flows of desire and will which might be a threat. Historically, swathes of the population were protected from such harassment for reasons like class and race. Only particular hated minorities were deemed "police property" who could be harassed and abused. Increasingly, however, police abuse exceeds all its former restraints.

If for whatever reason someone won't or can't "comply" – they have too much dignity, they panic, they erupt in rage, they're frozen in fear – the police escalate to aggression, sometimes even to lethal aggression. (This also happens if "SWAT" or "counter-terror" methods are deemed justified, in which case the target is assumed already to be a "threat"). If the victim defends themselves, this registers to the police as an attack on them, because in their minds they were never harassing anyone to begin with, just "doing their job". (The stake in this disagreement is whether the cop's spider-sense is a true knowledge or a form of hostility). These are the most common circumstances in which cops will murder. But if life seems to be teeming out of control, if entire areas are "thumbing their noses at the law", are controlled by a rival gang or are in a state of active life, police will start to feel an urge to murder and mutilate everything in sight. This is when police death squads and rogue police femicides start appearing.

The Elephant in the Room: Lockdowns

The emphasis on either patriarchy or random targeting ignores another important factor in the case. Sarah Everard is not an “innocent victim”. She is a lockdown-breaker. Might this affect why she would be singled out for murder by a cop? There was intense dehumanisation of lockdown-breakers in the early periods of the COVID-19 crisis. People defying lockdowns were depicted as killers, security threats, irrational “idiots”, an underclass, and more. Bigots in online forums would often give voice to sadistic fantasies about police shooting, beating or torturing “covidiot”. This kind of rhetoric was far more widespread and socially condoned than either murderous misogyny or advocacy of sex-murder. Might this not, therefore, create an environment where a cop might kidnap, rape and murder a member of the demonised group? The outcry, however, like the general flow of complaints about police overreach during lockdowns, indicates that the British middle-class are not yet ready for such a wide casting of the police net. They might have cheered for the nonsense of a permanent state of emergency, but they do not cheer for its real consequences.

States of emergency encourage sadism. Police in states of emergency immediately get an addictive taste of power. They feel like they are in a war, and the gloves are off (if they were ever on to begin with) against anyone falling foul of the new control regime. This may even cause them sexual excitement: Belgian police were caught having an orgy during the Brussels lockdown in 2016 [*ed. – after Islamist attacks there not long after the notorious 2015 Bataclan massacre in Paris; see Return Fire vol.3 pg5*]. After 9/11 and Bataclan, gangs of police raided thousands of Muslims on slim or no suspicion, ransacking homes, torturing suspects and no doubt engaging in sexual molestation. In New Orleans during Katrina, police disrupted mutual aid and support work, and treated disaster survivors like criminals. Reports circulated of rapes in detention centres. During the Christchurch “emergency” [*ed. – following an earthquake*], police brutalised an autistic man who was trying to rescue physical items from abandoned buildings. **Cases could be multiplied; the model, no doubt, is colonial retaliatory raiding, in which an uprising or other rupture is punished by massacres and razings of villages. In their imagination, police are turning back a tide of chaos, and the atrocities are both necessary and proportionate. A state of emergency encourages police to believe such reactions are endorsed by their superiors and by “society”.** Anyone falling foul of the “emergency” is deemed a fair target: the automatically belong to a class of people (such as “terror suspects” or “looters”) from

whom public concern has been removed.

Lockdowns turned the usual police war on signs of life into almost a parody of itself: now anyone who is outside or not “at home” was legitimately suspect. Even if exceptions were allowed, police fired-up with “emergency” zeal would often act as if they did not exist. There have been many lockdown-related murders by police worldwide. In India, on the first day of the surprise national lockdown, police went on a rampage, beating anyone they caught on the streets. This caused instant plaudits from the usual bigots, like the tabloid-readers in the UK. For weeks afterwards, one found comments online that India had the right idea, that western police are too soft and civil-libertarian whining should be ignored. In India meanwhile, the vicious policing – which echoed earlier aggression against protesters from the Dalit [*ed. – so-called 'untouchables' in the Brahmanist Hindu caste system*] and farming communities – caused an immense backlash. One man was beaten to death – his family claimed he was queueing to buy food at the time, a legal reason to be outside. After this, police were reined-in and the lockdown became unenforceable (as always seemed likely in India).

Indian police also managed to abduct and beat a woman doctor on her way to work. This was clearly a misogynist arrest: police questioned why a woman was out at night, and suggested she was actually visiting her boyfriend. She was eventually freed on orders of a superior – apparently right before she would have been tortured and possibly raped in custody. This is remarkably similar to the Sarah Everard case, but far more explicitly linked to lockdown enforcement. Mention can also be made here of a massacre by police at a nightclub in Peru. The club was breaking lockdown, but its real crime was failing to pay a large enough bribe to be ignored.

At one point Kenyan police had killed more people in lockdown enforcement than had died of the virus in Kenya. They had an entirely foreseeable habit of shooting into crowds to “disperse” them. French police, meanwhile, managed to shoot a child in the face.

There is nothing inherently sadistic about male desire or male identity. Conventional masculinity encompasses sadism in preference to masochism, but does not preclude other types of desire. In the case of police, however, some degree of sadism comes with the territory. Police have generally been trained to replace direct sexual sadism with muscular sadism, with the act of beating, restraining or dominating an adversary replacing (not preceding) sexual satisfaction. (One survey found that half of all police beat their partners). They also engage in the kinds of routine and control-freakery which reflect the

controlling type of sadism, which aims to preserve but dominate its antagonist. Conservative, liberal and radical statists generally seek to channel, direct and moralise these types of sadism, without changing their nature. The liberal reform agenda apparently aims to eliminate annihilatory sadism, restricting the police to the controlling type of sadism. **Police are meant to be “only doing their job” and not motivated by sadism at all – ergo the idea of proportionality (which seems today to permit grossly excessive retaliation for minor deviance, provided it is justified as necessary to get the job done). But even a “professional” cop still needs a lot of muscular and controlling sadism to “do their job” without being overwhelmed by moral qualms, or simply the desire to be doing something more interesting.**

Identity politics is a moralistic ideology, in which the redistribution of power is meant to occur via sadistic-retaliatory naming, punishing and excluding. But this is unlikely to reduce sadism; at most it channels it in less harmful directions. At the same time, identity politics advocates are prone to demonise what they take to be “masculine”, “narcissistic” or “violent” character-structures. But as we’ve seen, the dynamics involved in sex-murders make them unlikely to be influenced in this way. If someone believes they are evil or have a duty to be evil, if they are acting outside ordinary consciousness and even have a desire to be punished, then the threat to punish them has no effect. Also, the fact that something is sadistic doesn’t make it bad; consensual BDSM is often subversive of real domination. Muscular sadism is easily channelled into martial arts, brawling, or even political resistance. But policing is effectively a system of nonconsensual sadism. There is thus a close family resemblance between policing, rape, and sex-murder **which cannot be ignored.**



The former Cavendish Road police station (the closest to where Sarah last seen alive) squatted, also as part of the 'Kill the Bill' protest wave; see 1 May 2021...: a solidarity action was taken against the British embassy in Den Haag, Holland, and in eastern England a mass trespass on a hunting estate left many traps sabotaged and crows released

LET THE FEAR CHANGE SIDES



01.08.22, Val-de-Marne, France: *Several black-clad figures attack the police station during the night, throwing molotovs first at the back of the building and at the police officers who were outside, then shooting firework mortars at the facade, and damaging vehicles. Police attempting to exit the parking lot in pursuit discover the gate blocked. Cops use tear-gas grenades as they pursue on foot, but again receive mortar fire.*



05.11.20, Leipzig, Germany: *During the raiding of three apartments of anti-fascists under court orders, the officers come under attack: "While one of the house searches was still in full swing, we threw stones at the car of the plainclothes cops at work. When at the entrance to the house, a hooded cop in civilian clothes and with a bulletproof vest, wanted to run to the aid of his car, we decided to dedicate the remaining stones to him, throwing them through the glass door of the entrance. It turns out that the vest protected from bullets, but not from flying stones and the asshole in uniform decided not to expose himself further. [...] With this, we want to make it clear to them that they cannot break into the neighborhood and enter our homes undisturbed, with the illusion of being able to carry out their job with all the calm they want." Combative demonstrations and multiple attacks on the Connewitz police station follow.*

29.10.20, Yogyakarta, Indonesia: *Anarchists ambush military police, smashing their private cars with rocks and leaving one with a head-wound.*

07.11.19, Athens, Greece: *"At a time when the government of New Democracy has unleashed a man-hunt against anyone who fights, at a time of evicting migrant's and political-social spaces of struggle, at a time of the concrete abolition of the university's asylum and the invasion of MAT [ed. – riot cops] and OPKE [ed. – Crime Prevention and Suppression Team]*

cops into the universities – at this time we chose to ambush the scum of the MAT and the lackeys of the DIAS forces [ed. – *motorbike unit that often harasses protests*] and attack them from both sides with incendiary devices, destroying their motorbikes, injuring three of them, and simultaneously trying to burn the van parked on Eressou street. This action took place inside the area of Exarchia [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.5 pg16**] so as to make clear that the continuation of the State's repressive policy's aggravation will receive equivalent answers. The result of our action just confirmed the validity of our act to – successfully – fight against the torturers of the Greek police: their random prosecutions, their attempts to invade the café on the square, their torture of combatants, their filling the neighbourhood with tear-gas."

09.07.19, Piranshahr, Iran: *Revolutionaries ambush a patrol car; three dead, one injured.* "Since the beginning of the totalitarian Islamic regime of Iran, the anarchists, communists and socialists have taken part in many actions of armed struggle against the regime – sometimes they did it together and sometimes alone."

03.07.17, London, UK: *A patrol car in Walthamstow closes in on youth on mopeds; they toss what's thought to be an acid through the window and the cop's uniform is burned by it.*



21.08.16, Bure, France: *The day after the military withdraw from supporting gendarmes trying to quell opponents to a proposed nuclear waste dump (see **Return Fire vol.4 pg63**), the Lejuc woodland is occupied and the work site for the dump has the wall destroyed with iron bars and pickaxes; the police helicopter gets half-a-dozen fireworks aimed in its direction, and has to execute a risky maneuver to escape, and withdraws.*

10.06.16, Brussels, Belgium: *Report from comrades during the lockdown due to Islamist attacks: "Around 19h, a police patrol goes to rue des Quatre-Vents near the police station in Molenbeek following a call reporting arson. When the police get out of their vehicle to inspect the arson, their car is set on fire. It is completely destroyed. [...] People are fed up with the militarization of Brussels. Rather than suffer, let's attack on all fronts."*

August 2015, Notre-Dame-des-Landes, France: *Police gendarmes accompany the bailiff tasked with eviction of a rented house near the ZAD occupation (see **Return Fire vol.1 pg81**). A vehicle arrives with five masked assailants, firing on the cops with pellet guns then as the police retreated with their wounded, smashing out the cop car windows and burning it with a distress flare. Fifteen more then emerge from the woods to fight the police with poles and sling-shots before dispersing.*

09.05.15, London, UK: *An anti-Tory Party demonstration ends up outside Downing Street. From a report-back the next day: "The cops rushed the crowd with batons, and sent snatch squads to grab and arrest people. The people fought throwing street furniture, empty water bottles, smoke bombs and whatever objects came to hand. Five cops were injured, two badly enough to be taken to hospital. One of the hospitalised coppers, hit in the face apparently by a road cone and seen*



20.11.14, Mexico City: *molotov rain for cops guarding the National Palace from rage over 43 Ayatzinopa student rebels abducted by police then handed over to a drug cartel, adding to 25,000 people 'disappeared' during those years*

bleeding profusely from the mouth, was a photographer from the hated "FIT" (Forward Intelligence) surveillance team. [...] It was particularly good to see many young kids on the street yesterday. Some have pointed out that, while Labour governments in this country typically mean increasing prison numbers [ed. – see **R.I.P Taylor**] and genocidal wars of aggression, Tory governments mean more riots and more open social conflict on the streets. Here's to new generations of Tory-hating street fighters."

16.04.15, Santiago, Chile: *In the poor neighbourhood of Parinacota, police checkpoints lead to the arrest of two women carrying molotovs and flammable liquid. Soon after around 20 shots are fired into the police station. When the Minister of the Interior visits the station the next day in outrage, the neighbours don't hesitate to tell him that the barrage was due to the violence with which the police keep the area besieged.*

March 2015, Warsaw, Poland: *After police suffocate a youth trying to swallow a single gram of weed during a search, riots erupt in the Legionowo suburb: 6 cops injured. Soon after, anarchists report the following: "We wanted to check if it's possible to lock up a cop without court sentence. It is. All you need is a chain, padlock, and some pyro thrown inside for additional fun, let them get suffocated too. That's the fun we had last night in Wilcza, the probably most screwed up cop station in town."*

26.07.11, Anshun, China: *Hundreds riot after 'urban management officers' (para-police for low-level crime and disorder, including clearing away unlicensed street vendors) reportedly beat a disabled street vendor to death. Riot cops are stoned, local officials bricked, ATMs and police posts vandalised; similarly with riots a month before (after officers had beaten another street vendor to death and manhandled his pregnant wife).*



COMMENTS ON 'POLYAMORY?'

[ed. – Here's a reply by 'Birds of Fire' to a Topic of the Week (TOTW) posting by the Anarchist News Collective. The site's original provocation: "Free love has been a tenet of anarchism since at least the turn of the 20th century. Today free love is usually called something like polyamory, non-monogamy, or some other term that either vibes woo or player. What remains true is a central concern with relationships and sex.

In a near Victorian era this seems like a meaningful conversation to have. When all of social life was proscribed by the very small box that family, work, and school provided people the idea that freedom meant social freedom and the freedom to have sex outside of the lines was important. Today we live in very different times. Social mores around sex are permissive (generally) and part of the attraction of anarchist circles is the promiscuity of the space. On the other hand a kind of polyamory has become a central concern for a kind of urban bohemian culture that uses it to focus conversations about consent, parenthood, and feelings around sex and intimacy.

Our topic concerns anarchism and polyamory. Whereas in the past anarchism was associated with the kind of freedom that polyamory could entail but today that freedom is readily available as an item in the cultural marketplace. Does that say that anarchism has generated good ideas but doesn't know what to do with them once created? Does that say that the joy that people feel in hyper-mediated, internet focused, intellectualized polyamory isn't valid? Is free love still an important anarchist principle or is it irrelevant in the context of the struggles we are otherwise engaged in?"

Another (anonymous) contributor made a point we feel is vital to keep in mind during such discussions: "Criticisms of polyamory that can't transcend generalizations are boring. Yes, most people that attempt polyamory fail at achieving healthy, committed bonds with others. Yes, many polyamorous relationships are attempts at control, manipulation and the accumulation of social capital. Yes, polyamory causes drama within and splits scenes. In which of these statements can you not replace the word "polyamory" with "monogamy" and have it not be an equally accurate statement? Most people I know who believe polyamory to be more inherent to their nature than monogamy don't make the broad, romanticized claims that I'm hearing here. Most that I know still struggle with jealousy, manipulation, issues of insecurity, etc. and don't claim that polyamory "solves" these things. We are all socialized into this shitty authoritarian culture and this infects us regardless of the manner we choose to conduct ourselves in our romantic life. Most proponents of polyamory acknowledge this. Now, I have critiques of the ways we talk about, conceive of and act on polyamory in radical circles, definitely, but getting past these generalizations would a prerequisite to this type of discussion."

'Free love' is a concept still weighed down by the baggage of 1960s counterculture and its attempt to break with the post-Victorian moralism of mid century America. The correlation of sexual liberation with the rejection of monogamy, new styles of dress, and a less inhibited discourse around sexuality which was radical to many in those days was exactly what capitalism needed for its expansion and commodification of new areas of life. Half a century later, we are still mired in these reductive notions of 'free love', which today are expressed in the meat-market sociality of apps like Tinder and the cringeworthy lyrical pronouncements of pop music.

This superficial mode of libidinal liberation not only continues to allow capitalism to colonize and commodify our subjectivities more invasively, it has gotten us no closer to more genuine forms of love and friendship which we so desperately seek out.

In other words, love and friendship as we conceive of them today have next to nothing in common with the interpersonal connections that were integral to community before modernity. The abstract, idealized notions of these concepts we have inherited from enlightenment thought are, in practice, largely expressions of our despair and alienation in a world of increasingly compartmentalized individuals with no shared experience of life within their community [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg47**]. Le Garçon Dupont made this point well in the fourth edition of the journal *Letters*:

In more human societies, friendship and love and death were part of a system based on the living conditions of those who were part of their community. They did not exist in the way we view them now. That is, the notion of friendship and love were different in the past; they were concepts based on relations inside a community, whereas today friendship and love are only signals of our despair... Under present conditions we are free to love, free to have friends, free to grieve and celebrate in any way we choose. Under present conditions we do not understand love, or friendship, or how to cope with sudden loss and catastrophe. Love, Friendship, Freedom; these terms, like individualism itself, are the highest ideological fruits of bourgeois individualism, an ideology which emerged to effectively justify and to cope with the new economic force sweeping Europe.



This isn't a plea for the archaic. It's a criticism of those who seem to believe that practicing polyamory is a path to 'the revolution' (another

'THE WAY THAT WE FAIL EACH OTHER & LOVE EACH OTHER'

In our experiments abstaining
from the couple
We also encountered the difficulties of
non-coupley kinship
The way that we fail each other and
love each other and fail to love
each other.
People, groups, are never one thing
Never a pure "fuck this" or "love this"
Letting the sadness seep up.

You have to be enlivened by the
disappointments
Or you will die before you are actually
dead.

[...] We've also come to notice the way
in which denouncing the
couple-form is a defense
A crutch, an alibi, a means of hiding
From the challenges, the dangers, the
vulnerabilities of being close
Of saying what we are thinking and
feeling
Being willing to ask for what we want
Relationally, sexually, interpersonally.

We are still sick of couples and coupley
people.

We think you are boring and pathetic
Every time you relinquish an
opportunity to show up for
your friends and comrades

In the street, at the party, at the police
line.

For the rowdy and sexy and scary
moments. All the juiciness of
the social totality.

So that you can seclude yourself,
couple down behind the locked
doors of the world.

Infinite eye roll.

We have a venom cocktail ready for
you.

We know that that this seclusion

emerges from the unease that
this world generates in us
The fear of being defenseless, alone,
without aid
Without the simple, calming sensation
of burrowing into another's
body
And also the exhaustion, the strain of
being misunderstood,
invisible, without witness
That drives us towards the pseudo-
insurance policy of coupledness

And it's not simply coupling
We have invented so many ways of
hiding from the horrors of this
world
And from the ways we inhabit them
daily, hourly.

The couple is one form of hiding
among many.
This is the tone and mode of (not)
engaging with the social that
disgusts us.

We feel the pull to be in a couple
because everyone else is
And this is the same pull that convinces
us that

We have to pay rent because everyone
else does

Or work for money because everyone
else does

Of course, history can swerve abruptly
Such that we don't know what
landlords, bosses, or husbands
are anymore.

We're into this. We want this moment
to cum.

Certain modes of relating can crack us
open.

I didn't know I wanted to go up to the
roof till you asked me.

I didn't know I wanted to be fucked in
public till you asked me.

I didn't know I wanted to set a million

dollars alight till you asked
me.

What we have found within our
interactions with lovers
The practice of paying attention to what
quickens our breath
Of noticing what arouses us
Naming it, cultivating it, pursuing it

[...] And we think an emotional
reflexivity, intelligence, and
tenderness – what am I
feeling? how can I describe it?
how do my feelings affect how
I interact with those around
me? –

Will be necessary for trusting each
other
Building the type of bonds that can pull
us out of this world.
Bonds long enough to sustain the
growing of carrots and the
expropriation of armaments.

We've received some inquiries about
the role of sex in struggle
against the couple.

We would like to clarify our position:
We want to be slapped in the face when
we cum

To be penetrated in several orifices
simultaneously

To be fucked also by the intoxicating
prose of women

By the colors of the sun setting on this
city.

We would like to spend years touching
every other part of your body
besides your genitals.

To spend years becoming intimate with
our own physical dexterity

Readying ourselves for the love, the
riots that arrive unannounced.

Under our breath, you can hear us
humming:

without god

without law

without husband

free beautiful and crazy

fraught concept, even if it is only a deeply personal, or interpersonal, revolution). **Without a communal way of life to underpin them, without a shared sense of being, without ritual centered around the greater whole to orient these flows within a larger context, love and friendship devolve into economy.** They become an exchange of affects, a plea for another's assistance in extricating yourself from the lonely, alienated condition of modernity [ed. – see *Retun Fire vol.2 pg31*]. These exchanges are closely monitored and when one party is perceived

as giving or taking more than the other, resentment breeds and an attempt is made to 'balance accounts'. It never becomes more than an assemblage of isolated individuals seeking to be a part of something larger, but ultimately only reinforcing their isolation; for the simple reason that there is no community to orient and align these groupings within the larger whole.

Moving a bit deeper, we arrive at the institution of the Family, an essential mechanism for the reproduction of repressive social regimes and relationships of

domination, as well as one of the most pervasive structures responsible for forming the assumptions that predicate our ways of interacting with each other.

Polyamory can play an important role in rejecting the repressive qualities of monogamy, but unless it goes further to challenge the Family as a supposedly sacred institution, as well as the assumptions that derive from it, it has no teeth.

We tend to think of the Family as a reinforcement for things like domestication and economy, but even in simply looking at the etymologies of these words, it becomes clear that it is the other way around.

Baedan, a series of journals contributing some of the deepest and most profound ideas I've ever encountered on this subject [ed. – see **Return Fire**

vol.3 pg35], makes this clear when they write:

Whereas in vernacular English, 'house' almost exclusively refers to a residence or dwelling, historically the term has meant a family, especially one that can trace its lineage. It has also referred to a temple and a seat of government. And so, we have invested in one spatial figure: god, state, family. It is further worth noting, relating to investigations in the previous two issues of Baedan, that the term 'domestication' is derived from the Latin domesticatus, literally 'dwells in a home' - and by extension under the laws of god, state, family. Domestication then names the violent process of capture and subsumption within this home. Finally, we'll point out that the modern term 'economy' is derived from the Greek oikonomia, or 'management of the house'. And so when we speak of economy we are always already talking about those economies concerned with the ordering and reproduction of the Great House and its order: libidinal economies, racial economies, spiritual economies. Many will argue that the Family is the sphere of

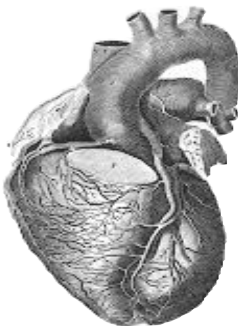
'reproduction' in service to the means of production, but don't get it twisted: economy is at the service of the Family.

To bring this back to the TOTW, this conversation goes much deeper than simply *'is the joy people get from polyamory in its contemporary manifestations valid?'* Of course these forms are valid and for some they can bring joy and perhaps even a superficial sense of liberation. But this aspect of our anarchist projects should be something far deeper than getting laid as an expression of our ethics. It needs to be an assault on the repressive sphere of the Family in the myriad of ways it manifests (monogamy, patriarchy, Oedipus [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.4 pg55**], gender, etc) as well as a rejection of the alienated conditions of existence which has been sold to us as bourgeois individualism.

Polyamory can be an important part of this struggle. Our passions, loves, friendships can play a crucial role in building new forms of life built around community; giving us a shared basis to make these relationships something more than expressions of our own alienation from each other and the world of flows of which we are an inseparable part. **Anything from orgies in the street to collective child care to group houses (along with many other examples) can contribute to the destruction of the**

repressive institution of the Family. By itself,

taken as both means and end, polyamory becomes little more than a facilitation of the domestication and commodification of our lives. But as a part of a larger project of building new, communal forms of life and rejecting institutions that reproduce old, domesticated forms, polyamory can be a powerful force for transformation, transgression, and becoming.



“The appearance of monogamy is very important in our culture, and we generally feel the need to maintain a certain monogamous decorum in view of friends and acquaintances (in addition to the actual partner). The purpose of this decorum is to avoid gossip, scorn, scandal, and possibly exposure to the partner. (In my experience, the social group is often more critical than the monogamous partner.) The actual level and manner of imposed self-restriction varies greatly depending on the social circle and situation, but our culture attaches sexual or romantic meaning to a whole host of actions that are not explicitly sexual or romantic. Some of these actions are: traveling with a person, spending a lot of time with one person at a party, helping someone financially, talking about someone when they are not present, spending time alone with someone, meeting their parents, holding hands, and of course flirting, touching, or smiling too much. All of these actions are signifiers of a possible sexual relationship in our culture, and this is what makes them socially dangerous. In order to avoid a sexual subtext, a person in a monogamous relationship must act carefully if they are with someone of an attractive gender who is not their partner. Through this mechanism, the social control of monogamy escapes the bedroom and inserts itself into everyday situations, by policing not just sexual activity but any activity that symbolizes the possibility of sex. Monogamy is thus a locus through which social power is exercised, one of a number of such loci which are ostensibly based in the body but really act almost entirely through social discourse.”

– *The Power Dynamics of Cheating: Effects on Polyamory & Bisexuality*

REBELS BEHIND BARS

– text by prisoners & repression news

Rounding up the Munich Raids (Germany)

On Tuesday April 26 coordinated raids were carried out against anarchists from Munich, on charges of forming a criminal organisation (§129). Four apartments were searched (two had no suspects living there), as well as several basement rooms (in some cases including those of neighbours), a printing shop and the anarchist library Frevel.

Coordinated by state security service K43 (Criminal Department 43, dealing with left-wing political crime), a bunch of hooded USK cops (the bash squad) came with battering rams, some weapons drawn and even in chain mail (yes, whether this cop lost a bet or whether it was just a knight-themed week hasn't been determined so far) stormed into the apartments at 6am. The notorious bundles of testosterone even rammed a door which had its key in the lock. In some cases, they or their colleagues from K123 (digital forensics/telecommunications surveillance) must have logged into the local WLAN network beforehand, at least they seemed to know exactly which devices were currently logged into the local network. The USK were swiftly followed by K43 investigators who disclosed the search warrants to those affected and presented any pseudo-witnesses they had brought with them from local city authorities.

Then it started. For around six-and-a-half hours the pigs rummaged around looking for the usual things like computers, storage media, mobile phones, but also printers, anarchist publications, "documents and/or files that provide information about the occupants' left-wing extremist anarchist ideas," personal notes, financial data, "documents and/or files that provide information about any attack plans," as well as "plans, tools and/or raw materials for the production of bombs, incendiary devices or other objects suitable for perpetrating a terrorist attack" – everything. Above all, they confiscated storage media, computers (including from people subject to no accusations), printers, personal notes, correspondence, and several hundred anarchist publications in various languages. They also searched intensively for contracts for rented premises and likely also demanded these from the landlords of the basement rooms.

At the same time, the searches in a printing works, several basement rooms and the Frevel library must

have taken place, but search warrants and seizure reports are missing. Here, too, the cops broke in and then swapped out the locks or left the rooms open.

At Frevel the cops only took individual publications, posters, stickers and the like, and also stole the space's printer.

Things looked different in the fully-equipped print shop. Here the cops had a truck and crane approach and simply confiscated everything: from the risograph printer and its drums to the cutting machine, from the sorting machine to the gluing machine, even a historic letterpress and its lead type all went to the evidence room. But that's not all. The cops also took thousands of books, brochures and newspapers, from the words of Malatesta and Kropotkin to those of Bonanno, alongside many current brochures and newspapers, as well as around 50,000 sheets of blank paper, ink and much more. Finally, as a sign of respect, they dumped the coffee in the sink and made off with their loot in a 40-ton truck.

But Why?

Three people are being cited as suspects to justify the raid, on the ground they have forming a criminal organisation. Two were arrested and have since been released. The justification of this is twofold. First, that they are "members of the left-wing extremist anarchist scene ... [who reject] the existence and value system of the Federal Republic of Germany and any form of state order ... [and use] violence, especially such against things and/or police officers as a legitimate means of enforcing their views." Second, and more specifically, they are said to have produced, published and distributed the anarchist weekly publication *Zündragen*. This is followed by a list of a total of 15 quotes from various out of a total of 85 editions of *Zündrag*, each of which is said to be "criminal content". Here are a few quotes from the search warrant:

On April 10, 2020, the accused published the short message "Brenn, E-Scooter, burn!" on the Zündlumpen website at zuendlumpen.noblogs.org/post/2020/04/10. They reported on the fire in two such vehicles on April 4th, 2020 in the Munich district of Freimann and on April 6th, 2020 at the edge of the English Garden in Munich. They described the companions as a "plague" that must be sabotaged. With the headline, the accused approved the arson attacks by unknown perpetrators on April 4th, 2020 and April 6th, 2020.

[...] In issue 61 of April 13, 2020, the accused in the comic article "Rebellion against the curfew" called for stabbing the tires of police vehicles, setting police vehicles on fire and

setting up road blockades from burning garbage containers. The drawings act as precise instructions. The accused thus called for anti-constitutional sabotage, property damage, destruction of important work equipment, arson and breach of the peace.

[...] In issue 62 of April 21, 2020, the accused published a threatening message to the Bavarian Minister of the Interior, Dr. Joachim Herrmann as follows: "Dear Joachim, ... I for my part have learned from the experiences of other subversives with people like you. Arguing with a tyrant? You have to know that historically I am on the side of those – purely intellectually, of course – who would rather let tyrants bite the dust before their time. And one thing should be clear to you, police chiefs have always been held in high esteem – even higher than emperors, tsars and kings." The accused at least accepted that the injured party took this threat seriously.

A DNA sample was ordered against the three suspects.

Broader Context

Since the constructed crap on the Bavarian Central Office for Combating Extremism and Terrorism (ZET) at the Munich Public Prosecutor's Office, and information for the underlying investigation, is said to have come from the Bavarian LKA (Ministry cops) and the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, its clear that there is more at stake here than a few quotes from an anarchist newspaper that had closed down six months prior to the raids.

Of course, one might wonder if the State's security forces and attorney general (ZET) are just bored or feel they need to prove to themselves that they are still useful for something, if only annoying anarchists, but possibly that would fall a little short.

After all, proceedings based on §129 and 129a (aimed at breaking up mafia-type groups) have recently experienced a real renaissance. In more and more cities, cops have been initiating 129 proceedings against anarchists or anti-fascists, but only rarely are any charges actually made. Rather, these methods are a popular pretext for snooping extensively in the respective scenes and environments. Raids, which are also being directed against people accused of no crimes, are only one element of the structural police investigations. Observation, surveillance of telecommunications, the installation of bugs, cameras and other equipment for spying on and monitoring people are commonplace in such procedures. It is therefore reasonable to suspect that in this case, too, a specific environment is being spied on.

And then there is the brazen and long-planned robbery of an entire printing plant and thousands of publications! An obvious attempt to smash an infrastructure for the public dissemination of anarchist ideas. If it is supposed to be about a certain newspaper, the *Zündragen*, why have other newspapers and publications been confiscated in large numbers? Why is blank paper, ink, and all the equipment used to make books, brochures, and newspapers being taken away?

Obviously, the cops and the ZET have more in mind. They are trying to prevent the spread of anarchist ideas and stir up paranoia, for example when they confiscate entire archives of anarchist texts and possession of (single copies!) of a newspaper. They take the opportunity to rob them as well as all sorts of technical equipment, and all sorts of other anarchist publications.

We are not surprised. Anarchist ideas have always been beyond as well as against all law, and consequently there is a long history of anarchist ideas being persecuted. The recent raids in Munich will certainly not quench the flame in our hearts! Just as they will not prevent others from grabbing a printer and reprinting whatever the cops have confiscated.

If fighting for freedom is a crime, innocence is the worst!

*Freshly razed and still there,
– a few anarchos from Bavaria*



The above article was posted to Indymedia Germany. In mid-June, it was also made known that the cops have also put pressure on the landlord of the Frevel library and succeeded in intimidating him into terminating the lease, so that the library will lose its premises at the end of the notice period, i.e. in early December. Until then, they welcome visitors.

THE G7 COPS SMELL BURNING

From June 26 to 28, the next G7 summit will be held at Elmau Castle, a luxury hotel located at the foot of the Bavarian Alps. Munich, the capital of this German region, is of course already full of cops (18,000 are expected), especially since tens of thousands of demonstrators are also expected.

All the preparations for the summit were going well,

except that on Wednesday June 22, around 3 am, in the Hochstrasse district of Munich, a few days before the visit of the state executioners, eight riot police vehicles, lined up one behind the other, went up in flames, while they were waiting patiently to do their job. **Some of their equipment also went up in smoke with them (shields, riot helmets, bulletproof vests etc.), while the material damage amounted to several hundred thousand euros.** A helicopter and nearly twenty patrols were immediately deployed in the vicinity to try to find the unknown people with warm hands, but in vain.



As for the citizen scum of the “Stop G7 Elmau” Action Alliance, who are organizing the large-scale peaceful demonstration against the summit of heads of state, they have found nothing better than to distance themselves from this beautiful attack in a statement that is worth its weight in peanuts: “We consider such actions to be politically incorrect and counter-productive. Burning police cars is not an appropriate form of protest against the G7. It only adds fuel to the fire of hardliners who want to undermine and eliminate the rights to protest.” But when you know that “Stop G7 Elmau” is also under the banner of “against global warming”, then you foolishly think that they must have had a small slip of the tongue in their democratic manifesto: surely they intended to write “against police warming” and “for the right of the powerful to ravage the planet in peace”...

Francisco Assumes His Part in the Charges Against Him (Chile)

[continued from Return Fire vol.6 chap.3]

From the comrade's declaration in court (excerpts):

In November of 2017, our idea was to distance ourselves from the great cities, mainly from Santiago, due to its frenetic way of life, and to start a self-sufficiency project. Even though I opted for that lifestyle, I didn't stop thinking that the most adequate way to fight against an enslaving system based on

authority and depredation, is by means of violent revolutionary action. Only through it, it's possible to achieve moments of destabilization; despite these being fleeting instants, they reveal the vulnerability of power.

Mid 2018, I began to consider undertaking these type of actions[...] Once I made that choice, I began to think of a target, keeping in mind that if I would be taking a big risk, the action ought to be potent. I thought of carrying out an action as a response, as revenge against people involved in repression and entrepreneurial power. **Both characteristics were fully met by Rodrigo Hinzpeter**, who was the manager of the Quiñenco group *[ed. – one of the holding companies through which Chile's richest family controls the Bank of Chile, media and colonial forestry]* in 2019, whose president is Andronico Luksc, and before that, Hinzpeter was Minister of Interior of *[Chilean President]* Piñera's first term, during which he left a trail of repression that will be hard to forget. He brutally repressed social and student protests, attempting to bring about a law prohibiting all kinds of things, known as The Hinzpeter Law. As Minister of Interior he was politically responsible of the assassination of the young Manuel Gutiérrez *[ed. – shot at 16 years by the Carabiniers unit during student rebellion]*; he brutally repressed the social protests in Aysén *[ed. – see Return Fire vol.4 pg17]* and Freirina *[ed. – over a contaminating industrial pig farm]*; he militarized the Mapuche territory *[ed. – see Return Fire vol.3 pg59]*, which caused hundreds of wounded, many of them children, and countless arrests.

On August 2010, a group of thirteen, including me, was the target of Hinzpeter's repressive delirium. In his obsession with ending with the bombings that occurred mainly in the eastern sector of the capital since 2005 *[ed. – see Return Fire vol.1 pg73]*, he imprisoned us by fabricating evidence, paying prisoners who were willing to testify in favor of the thesis of the prosecution, a thesis that referred to the existence of an illicit terrorist association.

It was for these reasons that I decided to attack Hinzpeter, for finding that he represented a completely legitimate target. I began to research about Hinzpeter [and] I went to see the Itaú building to see the flow of people, who entered, who exited; I tried to enter the 14th floor, where the offices of the Quiñenco Group were, and I couldn't due to the strict controls that were in place at the entrance [which] is why I thought that the best thing would be to send a parcel bomb addressed to Rodrigo Hinzpeter's office, to make sure he was the one who opened the package.

At this point it's important to point out that indiscriminate attacks have never been a part of anarchist practice; our targets are clearly defined and point to those responsible for oppression and repression. Since my intention was to carry out an action of significant magnitude[,] I chose to use dynamite.

The year of 2018 and the start of 2019 was marked by police brutality against students who protested against the Safe Classroom Law [*ed. – allowing easier expulsion of rebels*] and for various demands. You would often see images of cops with rifles beating up the students who got in their way and even dragging students out of their classrooms to take them to the precinct. It's important to point out that this fight against the Safe Classroom Law was the direct antecedent to the call to fare-evade that students made facing the rise of the cost of the Metro pass, which was the trigger of the revolt that started on October 18 [*ed. – see Return Fire vol.6 chap.1*].

Without the perseverance of the students, maybe none of what happened after that date would have occurred, therefore, I decided to respond to that police brutality by attacking the cops in their own facilities; my idea was to attack them as an institution, for what they represent, for their history of blood, torture, and death. I decided to attack the 54th precinct of Huechuraba as a gesture of vengeance for the assassination of our comrade Claudia López on September 1998 [*ed. – see Return Fire vol.3 pg51*].

While I'm well aware that the functionaries that worked on 2019 in that precinct weren't the same ones who murdered our comrade, that was the place that served as base of operations at that moment, and it continues to do so for each protest. With this I wanted to send a warning that no one and nothing is forgotten.



My intention was to wound just one cop, the highest ranking one. That was major Manuel Guzmán. Since my intention was to wound just one cop, the explosive should not be of high power, which is why I used gunpowder inside a steel tube. [...] The intention of that action, of sending a warning – against police brutality and against a former Minister of Interior renown for his repressive features, currently the manager an economic group that practically owns all of Chile – was fully accomplished.

[...] About the so-called 2nd Attempt (Tánica), I can contextualize. The revolt that began on October 18, 2019 was kept alive in the last months of 2019 and at the first of 2020, many were the protests that happened day after day despite heavy repression by police. March was a key month, when many things could happen, among them even the resignation of Piñera, it was in this context that I decided to contribute to this revolt with the placement of two explosive devices.

The eastern sector of the capital had been target of some protests which caused the disapproval of those who lived there, afraid that it threatened their privileges. We saw how people that protested peacefully in La Dehesa were insulted and even assaulted, we also saw how the Army and the police reinforced those neighborhoods in a clear complicity between the forces of repression and the wealthy class, therefore I decided to strike these sectors, one neighborhood in specific, Santa María de Manquehue, the location for El Mercurio newspaper, which has been the historical mouthpiece of the most conservative segments of this country. I'm emphatic in pointing out that my intention was not to harm people, instead my intention was to disrupt the normality of that neighborhood, proof of that is that I first thought of placing the explosive devices inside the restrooms of Kant Café, located inside the Tanica building, but I discarded it due to the risk of harming people, choosing to place the explosive device in the parking lot of the Tánica real estate agency,

specifically under a concrete bench that would cushion the blow.

This *attentat* [ed. – see '**A New Relation to Social Conflicts**'] also included another target, which was to attack the police GOPE (special operations group) by detonating an additional explosive device, which would be set-up in such a way to explode a half-hour after the first one. [which] would explode while the GOPE ran their errands in the vicinity, with the only objective of giving them a good scare. [...] I chose to attack the police because besides being the historical enemies of us anarchists, the cops had by then tallied the mutilation of hundreds of eyeballs [ed. – with so-called 'non-lethal' rounds during the uprising] [...] I also decided to attack cops because of multiple counts of tortures, beatings, creation of torture centers, like Metro Baquedano [ed. – at one of the central sites of the protests, before police were forced to relinquish it and it was turned into a memorial], that even though the authorities have denied it, we all know that it was so.

Since the start of the revolt I was part of the different protests that were lived day after day and I saw a few meters in front of me how young people fell bloodied due to rubber bullets and tear gas grenades aimed at them by the cops. This is why the revolt identified cops as one of its main enemies, therefore, an attack against them was indispensable and completely justified.

'NOT JUST WORDS'

Cavaillon (France): Stormy night 19/9/2020. We claim the attack on a research centre of the industrial group Saint-Gobain in Cavaillon. Saint-Gobain is a giant of French industry.

Moreover, the group develops products for the defence sector and produces equipment for helicopters, fighter planes, submarines, warships, military vehicles...

For a number of years, a major shareholder of Saint-Gobain is one of the wealthiest families in Chile: the Matte family.

We destroyed the ventilation installations on the roofs of their laboratories in Cavaillon with fire, as well as their main storage warehouse.

Solidarity with the prisoners of the revolt in Chile!

Freedom for Monica and Francisco!!

Solidarity between anarchists is not just words.

(A)

Anarchist and Migrant Detainee Struggles Intensify Once Again (Greece)

[ed. – The following is a leaflet given out during an intervention at London's Greek Embassy in July's action-wave of widespread international solidarity with Giannis.]



FREEDOM TO HUNGER STRIKER GIANNIS MICHAILIDIS

SOLIDARITY TO MIGRANTS IN GREECE

Giannis Michailidis is an anarchist prisoner on hunger strike since 23/5. He has served 8.5 years in prison and, while he fulfils all formal conditions for his release, he is kept in preventive detention. The Greek judges backed by the Greek state refuse to release him on the pretext that he does not meet the substantive conditions of release. This additional detention is being used at will to punish him for remaining unrepentant and maintaining a militant stance within the prison walls. This is not the first time Michailidis faces the vengeance of the Greek state. His heavy prosecution began in 2011 when an arrest warrant was issued against him for

involvement in the Conspiracy of Cells of Fire, for which he was later acquitted. He chose the path of illegality and was arrested in 2013 in Velvento Kozani [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg74**], after expropriating a bank together with 3 other anarchists, where he was tortured by the police.

He was forced to escape in 2019 from prison [ed. – re-captured seven months later with Dimitra Valavani and anarchist fugitive Konstantina Athanasopoulou, all charged for arms, 'criminal organisation', cop and bank robbery] due to a fabricated prosecution for participation in the uprising against the violent abduction of the then hunger striker Dinos Yatzoglou from Korydallos prison. This prosecution was brought against all political prisoners in order to restrict their rights and prolong their time in prison.

Michailidis' hunger strike is taking place at a time when the Greek state applies a 'zero tolerance' doctrine against all opponents and 'others'. This is especially true for migrants who are actively killed or left to

die at the Greek borders and mainland. On July 8, a refugee woman was found dead from starvation, as she was hiding to avoid being pushed back to Turkey. On July 7, Greece was convicted for violations concerning the right to life and the prohibition of torture for the shipwreck at Farmakonisi which cost the life of 11 people. **Amidst violent pushbacks at the borders and daily racist policing in the cities, residents at Eleonas camp in Athens are mounting an important fight.** On June 15th, following a fire at the camp that left a 15-year old in critical condition, the Greek authorities decided to disperse residents to remote camps, dismantling their communities, disrupting children's education and denying them the right to the city. Migrants refused the future determined for them. Since 15/6 they have been blocking their transportation, organising demonstrations, opening the doors of the camp to migrants with no papers, and building their collective resistance through daily residents' assemblies and meetings with the local radical movement. They are refusing to be devalued and invisibilised. They demand their right to housing, health, education and papers for all.

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF
HUNGER STRIKER
GIANNIS MICHAELIDIS**

**IMMEDIATE FULFILLMENT
OF ELEONAS CAMP'S
RESIDENTS' DEMANDS**

**UNTIL THE ABOLITION OF
PRISONS, BORDERS, AND
STATES**

STATEMENT ON THE MELILLA MASSACRE

Many of us woke up [26.06.22] to seeing the horrific images of bodies surrounded by armoured police officers at the gates of the Spanish enclave of Melilla. It's believed that 27 migrants have been killed, although the number could be as high as 90, with many more injured. This is a **massacre**. The only response so far from the president of the Spanish state Pedro Sanchez, who leads a supposedly left-wing coalition currently in power, has been to congratulate the police involved in this horrible act for "stopping this violent assault". Such rhetoric would be expected of the far-right, but we all know that when it comes to borders and immigration in European countries, all pretensions of progressive tendencies are abandoned. After all, this is very much the intended consequence of **Fortress Europe**: to intimidate migrants and asylum seekers from primarily the Middle East and Africa, and to paint every refugee as a violent invader.

Others have defended the Spanish state by claiming that they only penned the migrants in, and it was the Moroccan border guards who did the physical act of killing. This is not only a misunderstanding of how borders work, but a disgusting attempt to dismiss the whole incident as merely "non western cruelty" and nothing to do with Europeans despite the export of this violence away from mainland Spain to Morocco is itself a **colonial act**, not, as many would like to paint it as, regular global south violence that slips naturally to excess.

This situation, far from being an isolated incident, is becoming the norm all over Europe, such as with the push-backs in the Greek and Polish-Belarusian border, the Rwanda deportations in the UK and many other examples.

In this way, today borders are being used to continue and expand the **white-supremacist** and **colonialist** agendas of the European states. And with the ever-increasing economic, social and ecological crises making their internal situations even more unstable, we can only expect them to continue expanding these **genocidal border regimes** to distract and isolate themselves from the consequences of these catastrophes of their own creation. At the same time, with the governments pushing anti-immigration rhetoric, we can see the **extra-parliamentary far-right and fascists** try to capitalise on it to grow and push for even stronger border policies; as well as taking matters into their own hands through direct violence against immigrants and their supporters. In this way, governments and the far-right will feed on each other in a downwards spiral towards brutal **ethno-nationalist border violence**. Already the far right has celebrated the massacre and called for it to go further in public and internal spaces.

This is why in LAFA [*London Anti-Fascist Assembly*] we condemn the massacre in Melilla and lay blame directly on the hand of the governments of Spain, Morocco and all other European countries that for years have knowingly and intentionally created the conditions for this and many other atrocities to occur. But at the same time, we cannot see this as the fault of a particular government or another, but rather as the direct result of the **logic of borders and nation-states** that divides, dehumanises and kills people based on arbitrary lines on a map. This logic is not only implemented in the physical borders of a country, but on many levels of society, with unequal access to healthcare, housing, education and employment, criminalisation and persecution by the authorities and the spread of anti-immigrant rhetoric that turns everyone into a potential border guard. A border is an act of violence. A border guard is an agent of violence. We must not allow ourselves to become mobilised as auxiliaries in a genocide.

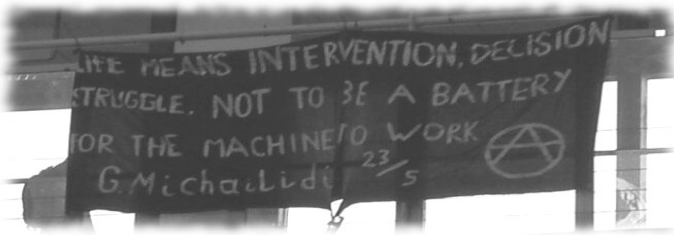
In order to stop this, we must undermine borders at every level of society: helping people arriving in the coast to reach shore safely, stopping deportation flights, providing migrants services where the state won't, intervening in immigration-raids [*ed. – as was recently done across the UK, preventing detention*], welcoming anyone demonised by border regimes into our communities, pushing back against anti-immigrant rhetoric and fighting the far-right everywhere they organise and by any means necessary.

All of these things are already happening, but it's not enough. Anti-fascists, pro-immigration activists, police abolitionists and everyone else horrified by these atrocities must work together until every border is abolished. Immigration is a fundamental fact of all life. So we all have to choose: Either we fight on the side of life, or we allow death to reign.

'FROM CRISIS TO CRISIS'

This morning 25.7.22, some anarchists interrupted a commuter train on the Docklands Light Railway, connecting the (rapidly transforming) ghettoised districts of Newham and Lewisham to London's financial centre.

Words from the heart were sprayed on the exterior of the train, especially the name of Giannis Michailidis. A banner carrying a quotation from his public letter from 2013 ('Tracking my journey in the world of insurrection resistance and solidarity') was hung from the rail bridge over the central junction of Deptford.



The following text was distributed by throwing hundreds of flyers into the train carriage and off the railway bridge:

Freedom is not an array of consumer choices and 'experiences'. It consists in the living choice to take your life into your own hands in the struggle.

We can see what happens when, for years, each project of power is left to expand its tentacles over us.

– **Neighbourhoods are wrecked** to construct vacuum-sealed palaces for the pleasure and profit of the beneficiaries.

– **"Economic Strategies", like raising the prices of food and fuel to discipline everyone back to work post-lockdown,** are greeted meekly like a natural law and, accordingly, accumulate astronomical profits for global corporations.

– **We are taught through the authority of 'emergencies' to accept charity as a way-of-life,** queuing patiently for 'benefits' or food banks, accepting the same blackmail of those the system still has room to exploit by the crime of 'work': blunt

your edges, put on a fake smile and shut up, in order to keep receiving.

These projects of power, and many more, ensnare us because we allow them to. Because we have accepted the role of spectator over our own existence. We live in a technologically gilded prison, shuttled from place to place, from crisis to crisis, in the grip of noise and spectacle, of a panorama of screens, tracked and traced into oblivion.

For those who still make the choice to exit this dreamworld and conquer space and time in which to act for freedom, no punishment is sufficient. **In Greece, the anarchist Giannis Michailidis is over 60 days into a hunger strike.** He has been an intransigent enemy of the totalitarian-democratic regime for many years and carries that free spirit into this struggle now for his immediate release, as the state's own laws demand. He has publicly stood by his choice of rebellion on countless occasions. This refusal to betray his ideals is being used to keep him captive indefinitely.

Today, Monday the 25th of July is the final day of the court's deliberation. Continuing in the logic of their perverse structures, their deliberate death penalty [ed. – he is close to irreparable organ failure] will not end in tears but continue to ignite passions all over this defiled planet which is not yet totally pacified and sold out. The flames of life know no borders – and unlike the routine infernos of capitalist devastation, these liberating flames do not spare the fortified islands of privilege. They express a world without any precedent in – or deference to – this old regime, by and through their virulent spread.

Where there is dignity there is rebellion!

Giannis Michailidis to the streets!



Stop press: On the 67th day of hunger strike, Lamia council appeal court ruling still denied the release of Giannis. He has announced that he is suspending – but not terminating – the hunger strike, and that "everything continues..."



MEMORY AS A WEAPON

turning back. The rise and imposition through a true system of terror of the Catholic Church marks a rather dark period in our

Mutant Identities in the Middle Ages

"I am *hic* [*he*], *et haec* [*and she*], *et hoc* [*and it*]. I declare myself, I am a man, I am a woman, I am a third party that is neither one nor the other, nor is it clear which of these things it is. I am the land of those who, like a horrendous and strange monster, consider me sinister and bad omen, let everyone who has looked at me know that it is another me, if that person lives feminised." – Moral Emblems, Sebastian de Covarrubias Orozco, 1610

We will never know how many people during the Middle Ages decided to defy all the social, political and religious structures of the time to live with identities contrary to the gender assigned to them at birth. We are talking about people assigned women who adopted masculine roles and clothing to live and develop certain professions that were reserved for men, but also about those who were assigned men who did the same in feminine worlds. Or people who inhabited certain parts of both worlds. Recovering these stories, naming them, contributes to creating our history; the one that we may never write in capital letters but in which many of us can recognize ourselves and feel a little more at home.

These types of identity practices have existed for millennia. A few years ago a tomb was found in a neighborhood of Prague (Czech Republic) belonging to a person who lived around 2900-2500 BC. The curious thing about this finding is that this person – identified, according to the researchers' cis-sexist view, as a man – was buried as women usually were [*ed. – in that place and time*]. Their head was facing east and their body was surrounded by household utensils. There is not a single one of the objects that generally accompanied men, such as weapons, stone battle axes and flint knives.

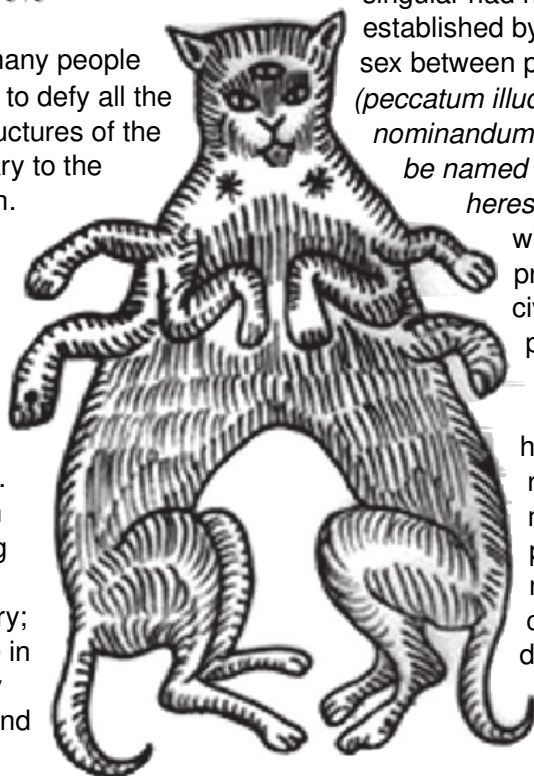
In ancient times homosexual knowledge and practices were accepted. There are plenty of stories and mythologies that show that it was a known and accepted social phenomenon. **The Middle Ages mark a point of inflection with no**

history. We have all heard of the witch hunts, of the *Autos-da-Fé* [*ed. – "acts of faith": public penance rituals for heresy*], of the bonfires where the different, the "deviant", were tortured and murdered. These practices of destruction and death were obviously replicated in the continents plundered, destroyed and massacred by the European colonizers.

The advent of class divisions, the acquisition of wealth and power, and property ownership fueled a transition to patriarchal rule in which the puzzling and singular had no place. The "dictum of silence" established by Christian morality conceptualized sex between people of the same sex as sodomy (*peccatum illud horribile inter christianos non nominandum* [*ed. – "that horrible crime not to be named among Christians"; an ultimate heresy rendered as cultural death*]),

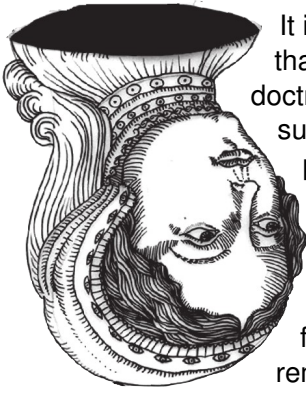
which generated the subsequent prohibition through personalized and civil laws. The mere act of publishing novels in which the central theme was the universe of sodomy, sexual deviation, homosexuality, intersexuality, was a real scandal, despite the fact that many of these stories were often presented with grotesquely negative overtones. and always in connection with the underworld, delinquency, depravity, crime and perversion. **The Catholic Church provided much of the impetus for defining and**

eradicating sexual deviance, but it wasn't the sin itself that frightened church officials; rather, Church officials feared the negative publicity created by scandals because such scandals diminished their authority and prestige.



"['Effective' history] deals with events in terms of their most unique characteristics, their most acute manifestations. An event, consequently, is not a decision, a treaty, a reign, or a battle, but the reversal of a relationship of forces, the usurpation of power, the appropriation of a vocabulary turned against those who had once used it, a feeble domination that poisons itself as it grows lax, the entry of a masked 'other.'"

– Nietzsche, *Genealogy, History*



It is curious and contradictory that within the same Catholic doctrine there are several stories such as that of Saint Wilfrida, a princess of Portugal who did not want to get married despite the fact that her father wanted to force her to do so. She prayed, begging for all her beauty to be removed and her prayers were heard; God gave her a lush beard

and attributes historically associated with masculinity. Regarding Saint Onofre, a local legend tells in Cappadocia, that she was a beautiful widow; bothered by the sexual advances of the men in the area, she prayed to become a man. The next morning she woke up with a thick beard covering her face.

In the mid-16th century, a mestizo person [*ed. – i.e. mixed European and non-European*] was born who at some point in their life took the name of Eleno de Céspedes. They lived in different cities of the [Iberian] Peninsula and worked various trades such as tailoring, hosiery (specific to women), herding, farming and surgery (specific only to men). During their life they had spent some time in jail for homosexuality. Despite the fact that for a long time, the people who knew them accepted that Céspedes was a man and a woman at the same time, the fact that they married another woman was not seen favorably by some and was denounced to the court of the Holy

Inquisition. . During the trial, they testified that, during their first labor, due to their efforts, a membrane tore and a penis sprouted; the same penis that, while incarcerated, they stated that they had to cut off little by little due to a disease. **Eleno is accused of dealing with the devil for having managed to deceive the doctors and surgeons who certified that they had the genitals expected by the doctors in order to marry a woman named María del Caño.** Found guilty of having mocked the sacrament of marriage, of implanting an artificial member and corrupting with it the body of his former wife (and of other women, all being told), they were forced to parade with a crown of thorns and dressed in penance in an *Auto-de-Fé* in Toledo, sentenced to two hundred lashes and ten years in prison in a



hospital curing the sick without pay and of course, abandoning their self-determination of dress.

In the humble neighborhood of Cheapside (London), a person known as Eleanor worked as a prostitute. One day at work, she is caught by the authorities with her client while they were having sex. Eleanor was locked up in the city jail where they discover to their surprise that in the official documents she was John Rykener and that her genitals were not what they expected. In her trial statement, Eleanor recounts how she entered the world of prostitution and explains that she had relationships with all kinds of men, including priests, monks and even students, but also slept with women including nuns and married wives (she said the sexual encounters with women were free). During her confession, she explained how in her past she had been the wife of a man and that she had carried out different jobs typical of women, such as embroidery or as a waiter in different taverns. **Even during a good part of the judicial process where her origins came to light, Eleanor continued to be recognized in her experience, since it is indicated that she was brought before the court dressed 'ut cum muliere', that is, as a woman.** There are similar cases in other parts of

Europe. Another of the stories is that of Rolandino/Rolandina Ranciaia, a prostitute from the mid-14th century who worked in the city of Venice. Despite the fact that in her official documents she was listed as a man and this was certified by her marriage to a person assigned a woman at birth, it is thought that she had relationships with numerous men without any of them noticing. **Ranciaia was captured and executed at the stake.**

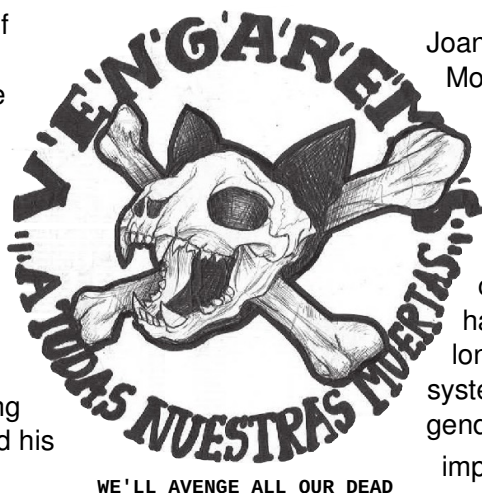
The importance of the Church in controlling the sexuality of society in the Middle Ages and in the modern age is reflected in the fact that the majority of these cases were tried in ecclesiastical courts, often initiating severe trials based on simple rumours, false accusations or self-interested confessions. This control was even more repressive over women, since the Church always had that unstoppable obsession to control their desire and their sexuality, which is why reports about defamatory behavior of



women were much more frequent than about men. It is for this reason that Eleanor was surely brought to court as a woman, and not as a man, since it would be easier for people to accuse her of any type of crime.

In the fifteenth century, Margarida Borrás is executed by hanging for being a woman who had been named Miguel at the time of her birth. Margarida had been "in many houses in Valencia" in women's clothes. As soon as this was discovered, she was denounced, imprisoned and tortured by the Cort de Governació or by the Criminal Justice (the Inquisition did not arrive in Valencia until 1484). Margarida was forced to wear men's clothes, with shorts, so that her genitals would also be exposed when she was hanged.

Another case is that of Catalina de Erauso, whom we know as the "Lieutenant Nun", who escaped from the convent in which he was confined, he dressed as a man so as not to be recognized and to be able to continue his existence without being caught. He maintained his identity as Francisco Loyola [ed. – as well as Antonio de Erauso] all his life and only at the end did he confess that he had escaped and that he was designated female at birth. However, we do not like this story so much, because he participated in what some Afro-descendant comrades have called colonial robbery and we are not proud of this. ¹



capitalism, at various times the leaders of these rebellions were people who today could be described as transvestites or transsexuals. [ed. – see **A New Luddite Rebellion**].

One of the most famous stories is that of Joan of Arc, an illiterate peasant teenager who had visions that prompted her to join the army of the King of France and recover the territories occupied by the English as a result of the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453). The young maiden went to Chinon, where the court of Charles VII was located, equipped with armor and carrying a banner, led the troops and forced the English to lift the siege of Orleans, defeated the British general Talbot in Patay and, that same year, Charles VII was crowned king in Reims, on July 17, 1429. A year later, and after the failure of the offensive against Paris, she was taken prisoner and handed over to the English, who accused her of heresy and sentenced her to die at the stake. On May 30, 1431, she was tied to a stake and burned to death in the Old Market Square of Rouen, northwestern France, and her ashes were thrown into the Seine River.

Joan of Arc is not the only case. In 1645, in Montpellier, France, there was a revolt started by women that was led by a person known as La Branlaire (a virago, a masculine woman they called her in her day).

For now, we leave this topic here, with the certainty that there have always been people who have challenged the structure of sex and gender long before anyone talked about sex-gender systems and that people who live according to gender identities that do not correspond to the imposed biology and are not part of a trend of postmodern feminism and transfeminism.



The so-called Philippines; hundreds of years since first the Spanish then the American Empires brought the bible, the gun and the pox (having to overcome indigenous resistance often involving '3rd gender' spiritual figures of different regions like the asog, bajasa, bantut, babaylan, katalonan, etc.), the struggle continues

¹ ed. – Like many Basques, he set out for the so-called 'New World', serving as merchant, settler, soldier and petty criminal in lands colonists went on to name Venezuela, Ecuador (where he held at least three Afro-descendant slaves), Peru, Chile (where he partook of the massacre of the Mapuche – see **Return Fire vol.3 pg59** – and even among the other soldiers his cruelty to them was noted during the scorched-earth campaign), Mexico... He even petitioned the Spanish Crown for reward for his "account of merits and services" in their overseas conquests.

NICOLAS CASAUX, TRANSPHOBE, IS LYING TO YOU

Shortly before embarking on my recent [2019] trip to France to present the translations to my books, *How Nonviolence Protects the State* and *The Failure of Nonviolence*, I received some distressing news. The translator of the first of these books for Editions Libre (there is also another, collective translation), Nicolas Casaux, had published transphobic articles, and together with people from Editions Libre, had founded an offshoot of Deep Green Resistance [ed. – see *What is Insurgency?*] in France. DGR in the US is known for its transphobic as well as authoritarian positions, and all the anarchists and other anticapitalists I know refuse to have anything to do with the group. This includes people for whom the struggle against ecocide or industrial civilization is their primary struggle.

I was able to talk with people from Editions Libre in Paris and I felt they listened to my criticisms. I was happy to learn that Editions Libre does not hold a transphobic position, that DGR in France is trans-inclusive and acknowledges the oppression of transgender people, that they were releasing a statement clarifying that position, and that Nicolas Casaux had left the organization.

Though I feel satisfied with the response by Editions Libre, I also know that I don't speak for anyone else, and everyone has to make up their own mind.

I do still feel the need to address the position espoused by Nicolas Casaux. I will be dealing particularly with the following article: conscienceansobjet.blogspot.com/2017/12/les-enfants-transgenres-et-quelques.html

In this article, Casaux starts by summarizing how industrial civilization is destroying the planet and exploiting all life, human and otherwise.

This is a view I share wholeheartedly, though of course I tend to express myself in different terms. **Then Casaux makes an astounding leap. Who is the technological vanguard of the State's war against the planet and all its inhabitants (a war, I might add, that has been going on for thousands of years)? Queer and transgender people, he**

argues, saying “the political and corporatist leaders of industrial civilization found a an ally and an asset in the trans and queer current” who will help them “in order to achieve their assumed goal of liquidation of the human race”.

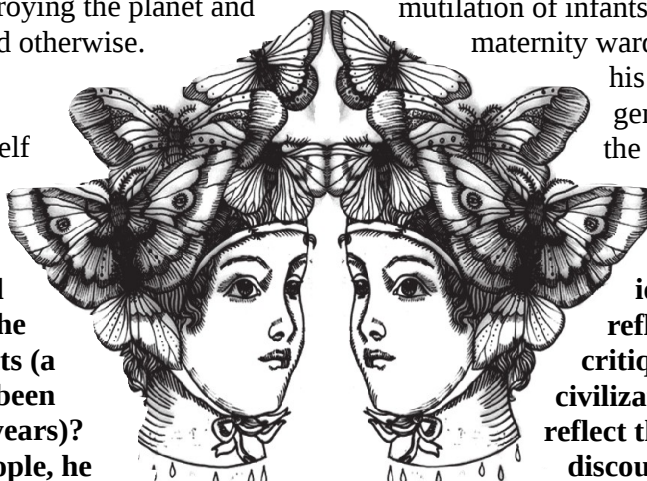
There is so much wrong with this statement, it's going to take some time to unpack. Let's start with Casaux's horrendous view of queer and transgender people.

Both in the title and in the paragraph I have quoted, Casaux attempts to conflate “transgender” with “transhumanist.” This is a manipulation. Though there are transgender transhumanists, the two words don't necessarily have anything to do with one another, except for the prefix they share. Transgender is not a “current.” It is simply a very broad, imprecise, and imperfect word describing the tens of millions of people on this planet who do not accept the gender they were assigned at birth, or who cannot be defined within a binary or biological definition of gender. Gender is a social construct, and in the West, a binary one. The meaning attached to a gender changes from one culture to another, and from one decade to the next. A huge number of babies every year are given operations, obviously without their consent, to make them fit better into one of the two supposedly “natural” gender categories. Many of the non-industrial cultures that Casaux supposedly admires includes a place for two-spirit and other non-binary individuals, or officially recognizes and legitimizes people who transition from one gender to another, while others don't assign gender until after puberty. Archaeological evidence exists that multiple non-city-based and non-industrial societies practiced sex reassignment surgery, just like they practiced dentistry.

Casaux doesn't recognize any of this. The only medical intervention he worries about, puberty blockers, is consensual and relatively benign in terms of harmful effects (more on this later). He doesn't dedicate a single word to the non-consensual mutilation of infants carried out in every

maternity ward in the West just to uphold his supposedly natural view of gender, nor does he recognize the gender diversity of the non-Western cultures he idealizes in a tokenistic, borderline racist way. **His**

ideas on gender do not reflect a well developed critique of industrial civilization; on the contrary, they reflect the essentialist biologicist discourses of the 19th century.



There are myriad trans identities and expressions, and only a very small number of these are being assimilated in Western capitalist countries. On the whole, trans people face extremely high rates of violent assault, harassment, murder, and economic and cultural exclusion [ed. – see RIP Taylor].

Neither is there any justification for claiming trans people have a special affinity with a technological capitalist vanguard. Trans people have been a part of every important movement and social struggle, including the struggle against the destruction of the planet. **In the US, one of the longest serving anarchist prisoners, Marius Mason** [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg70*], is a trans man convicted for multiple arson attacks against the very kind of genetic research laboratories Casaux claims that trans people support. Marius risked his freedom fighting for the earth and all its people, and he underwent his gender transition while immersed in the violence of the US prison system [ed. – *Marius recently secured his long-fought-for transfer to a men's prison, likely being the first trans man to achieve such a transfer in the US federal prison system*]. He exemplifies a level of bravery and principles Casaux cannot even imagine.

Casaux is equally ignorant when it comes to the meaning of “queer”. There is not a single, homogeneous queer current, and if there were, it absolutely would not be an ally of the political and corporate power structures. Historically and today, queer struggles have opposed the assimilation of Othered sexualities. In the US, one of the most vocal radical queer publications of the last decade, *Baedan* [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg35*], is fully anticapitalist, energetically anti-assimilationist and anti-civ, and critical of technology and transhumanism. A later queer publication, *Otherworlds Review* [ed. – see *Ghosts*], is – to put it briefly – largely dedicated to nature worship. And where I live now, in Catalunya, queer and trans people form a major and autonomous current within the “neo-rural” movement of people who are developing more ecocentric ways of living, often recovering traditional agricultural practices, in the countryside.

Nicolas Casaux either has NO IDEA what he is talking about (yet nonetheless felt entitled to pass

judgment on a huge group of people), or he is deliberately trying to manipulate his readers.

As with most transphobes, Casaux adheres to an essentialist view of nature and bodies (referring, for example, to “the essential realities of the human body”). As described in *The Unquiet Dead*, essentialism in both of these forms was a key component of fascism and especially of the *Völkisch* movement that evolved into Nazism; body and nature

essentialism have also tended to be features of racist and transphobic versions of feminism, such as that of Mary Daly, whereas anti-racist and anti-colonial feminism has tended to problematize or completely reject essentialist views of the body. Surely we can all think of more alarming aspects of fascism than essentialism, but the fact that Casaux also uses some of the same argumentative structures of the far Right – and shares their transphobia – makes his essentialism more worrisome. And beyond Casaux, there is the question of who might use his misplaced arguments, given how European fascists have long been recruiting in environmentalist circles [ed. – see *On the Reactionary Drift of Some “Comrades”..*].



Casaux provides only one single example of an evil transgender CEO – Martine Rothblatt, who clones pigs and advocates eugenics – to support his ridiculous conspiracy theory that “the transgender and queer current” is an important ally of “the political and corporatist leaders of industrial civilization”. In order to give added weight to his lone example, lest readers suspect he is making a sweeping generalization on the basis of the smallest possible amount of evidence, Casaux claims that Rothblatt was the highest paid female CEO (according to figures from 2013 included in an article from 2014).

It took me thirty-five seconds to discover that it was a fluke. Rothblatt had never held this position before and has not held it since. Marissa Meyer, chief executive of Yahoo!, was the highest paid female CEO in 2014, making \$42 million, almost 10 million more than Rothblatt. Three of the five highest paid CEOs work in the tech sector. Martine is the only transgender one, and SHE (not “he,” asshole) was only the 24th overall highest paid CEO (men and women combined). **Suddenly, Casaux's evidence doesn't seem so significant anymore.** Which is probably tried to make Rothblatt more important than

she is, hoping to manipulate readers into believing there was actually a substantial connection between transgender people and capitalism's evil plans for the future.

If we look at the top ten highest-paid CEOs in 2013 or 2014, we find that all of them are men, none of them are trans or openly identify as queer. In 2013, 3 lead media, entertainment and telecommunications companies, 1 runs an investment company, 1 runs a rail company, 5 run tech and medical companies, including number one Elon Musk [*ed. – see 'Let's Destroy Everything That is Called Tesla!'*], a much larger transhumanist than Rothblatt, and a heterosexual cis-man... In 2014, 4 run media and telecommunications companies, 2 investment companies and 4 technology companies. **In other words, the tech field is highly represented, and it's not being led by any trans or queer conspiracies.** What about the pharmaceutical and medical industries? There are in fact three such companies higher on the list than Martine Rothblatt's United Therapeutics. But in fact, how much money a CEO makes is not the best measure for how important a corporation is. Let's look at the ten biggest pharmaceutical companies in the world. Nope, United Therapeutics isn't on the list, and none of the Top 10 have transgender or openly queer executives (nor do any of the Top 10 tech companies). In fact, I couldn't find United Therapeutics on any list of big pharmaceutical companies. Number 25, Labcorp, made over \$11 billion in revenue in 2018, whereas United Therapeutics didn't even make \$390 million. It turns out, it's not an important company.

In other words, what Nicolas Casaux did was to take a random transgender person who makes a lot of money directing a relatively obscure company, and turn her into a bogeyman and the symbol of a vast and nefarious conspiracy. Antisemites use the exact same pseudo-logical structure when they take one rich Jewish person and turn them into an example for all Jewish people. It doesn't work at all if your audience is interested in logical arguments: it only works if they are willing to believe anything that justifies their hate and fear.

Let me give you a comparison to Casaux's quality of reasoning: "French people are neoliberal assholes conspiring to take away everybody's unemployment benefits and healthcare! Can anyone forget the example of Emmanuel Macron?" Or, "People named Nicolas are manipulative liars! Who doesn't remember the example of Nicolas Casaux?" Casaux

hopes his readers forget that there are hundreds of millions of transgender and queer people, they don't have any one ideology, and they are just as diverse as any other group of people. He is relying on a fear of the Other to portray transgender and queer people as a homogeneous group that poses a threat to nature.

Attacking trans and queer people is an affront to solidarity in our movements against capitalism and patriarchy, it is a way of directing more violence against some of the people in society who are already the most marginalized, the most likely to be assaulted or murdered in the streets, **it is stupid, it is unjustifiable, and it makes us weaker.** Transphobia and homophobia, just like racism, are weapons of capitalism and the State.

Finally, I want to address the titular topic of Casaux's article, medical interventions for transgender youth. Casaux doesn't actually talk about this issue, he just links to a documentary he claims to have been suppressed by the "transgender lobby," once again copying far Right tactics by pretending a highly marginalized group somehow controls the media.

The issue of gender reassignment surgery, hormones, puberty blockers, and other medical interventions for trans people is much more complex than Casaux suggests. There are trans people who celebrate these interventions, who are favorable to some of them and critical to others, and there are those who experience them as violence. Many trans people undergo surgery to avoid the far greater violence that cis people unleash on them in public places, to be able to "pass," to be able to get jobs, to avoid harassment. One trans friend told me he was very sad to get a mastectomy, he liked his breasts, but the surgery was easy compared to the looks and comments he got every time he went to the beach or the swimming pool and took his shirt off. This is a violence that people like Casaux only contribute to with their ignorant remarks.

It is obvious that Casaux and people like him don't give a shit about trans people or the violence they face. **Why are they concerned about trans adolescents getting puberty blockers? They aren't. They just use the topic because it can be an effective way to generate disapproval of trans people more generally.** They present us with defenseless, helpless children, taken advantage of by older trans ideologues (implicitly affixed with the older homophobic stigma of perversion) and a mercenary medical establishment.

I am no friend of the medical establishment, but I will say that there is a great deal of misinformation circulating on the web about puberty blockers and other procedures (generally spread by people with

right-wing ideologies). The procedure is misrepresented – for example, puberty blockers are called “hormones” even though they are not – and the danger is exaggerated, while trans people are denied any agency or victimhood, they are only presented as victims or victimizers.

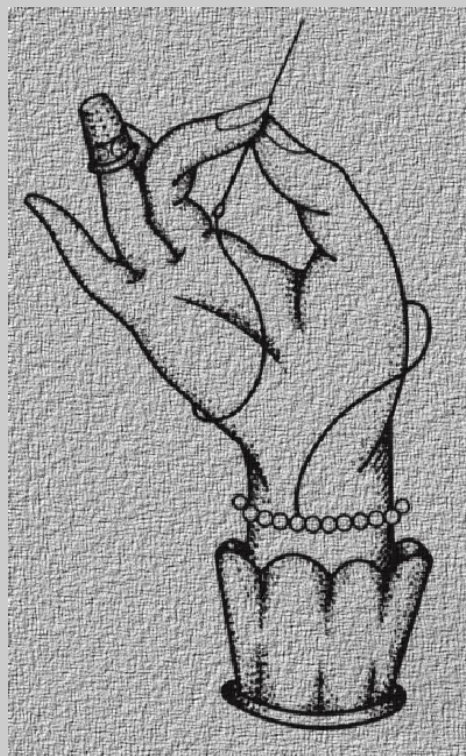
I remember what it was like being an adolescent. At that age, no one was better qualified to make decisions about my body or my gender identity. Only an authoritarian could deny the physical autonomy of adolescents. Life doesn't start at 18, when the State grants us the legal rights of adulthood. We have to make decisions regarding our bodies before then, and no one should be able to take those decisions away from us.

I won't enter further into this debate, because the medical options of trans people should not be decided by cis people. **My goal is to show that Casaux's position does not have the least bit of legitimacy.** When someone expresses opinions regarding that which they can never personally experience, they are speaking from ignorance. When it is someone in a position of social power or normality speaking about those who are marginalized by society, that ignorance is also an exercise of authoritarianism, and when the opinion being expressed seeks to limit the activity or spread negative generalizations about that marginalized group, then we are dealing with an act of oppression.

Let us conclude with what has become obvious: Casaux knows nothing about trans people, Casaux doesn't care at all about trans people, Casaux is spreading false and hurtful things about trans people. He needs to shut up and listen to the people he is trying to marginalize. Maybe he will learn something, but in any case, his silence will be a favor to us all, because the **only thing coming out of his mouth is shit.**



Sincerely,
Peter Gelderloos



“For some of us, gender is a living terror. Not an idea, a topic for debate, a transactional ‘identity’, but a daily lived terror. For those of us who have been offering support to our friend, in small and imperfect ways, for a year and more, it has been a lonely, conflicted and compromised process. All of us must engage with how we practice solidarity every day, with those around us who are experiencing the terror of gender and gendered violence most acutely. It is our personal opinion as improbable combatants and improvised ‘care-workers’ that solidarity must translate as attack. Attack on and flight from the system that sustains prisons and gender, what we call ‘the gendered prison’ of this society. We are convinced that the present circumstances illuminate this only more starkly.” – *Free Prisoner J! Fight the Terror, Stop the Torture!*

[ed. – Above from a 30.08.19 call-out to a demonstration outside Pentonville men's prison, UK, where 'Prisoner J' – a trans-woman who the authors had been supporting – was remanded while undergoing extreme dissociative states and was on hunger-strike (with the prison are treating her as having “behavioral problems” rather than any medical need). The demo is lively, with fireworks, percussion, shouts, chants, smoke, banners & two soundsystems were used at every point where the demonstrators might be heard or seen inside the prison. The authors pledge to “keep sharing information, hoping to reach others who share the same struggle – anyone who doesn't see life as one big “behavioural problem” to be contained and managed.”]

POEMS FOR LOVE, LOSS & WAR

Spiders

I saw you
Enthralled in the centre of it all
Barely standing up
Any minute now you'll fall
But nothing stops a spider kid
Nah, nothing at all
Too gone to walk?
I guess it's time to crawl
From sticky webs I saw you crashing
From sticky webs I've seen you
hanging
Sticky webs
East and West
Fuck the rest
All those insects?
We'll eat them next

Once we're done with this
Six day straight stretch
Stupid insular quest
Where you stink and you retch
Try not to think or reflect
You'll just sink and elect
Thoughts that are tangled

The webs wrecked
Your mind's blank
Just mangled
Wait for the next next

Because I saw you when you hit the
nest
Scurried back
You run rampant with eggs on that
scummy track
I seen the liquor dripping through
every crack
You ain't sipping it
You're knocking it back

You always had a knack for fuckery
Even at dawn when you see it
And it's ugly.
You're wild
But live life like a pet
stuck tied to a post
Life seems to be a shiny cycle at
most

Absurd themes overtaking
Your dreams

Trying to boast
You got a handful of consumables
And messy encounter with
Someone you hardly know

Feet run too slow
To keep up with the pace
Of your particular case

You were always bright
These days it's like the lamps are
kinda dulling inside
Passions get replaced with
responsibilities
Wrinkling fingers in the dirty
dishwater
Working in the splinters
And every day I fought her
Until the spider said;

"Fuck this routine they've given us.
As long as they're tryna enslave
I ain't gonna behave.

I'm done being bitter.
I want explosions of glitter
leave a litter of confetti
Confuse everyone else
We're ahead of them all
We just shout words at them all
Dance
Shout
Raise that sorry ass town to the
ground
Til you finally think you found the
unfindable

Every wall's climbable."

He laughed.

I saw every broken tooth in that
smiling mouth.
He told me he smoked all his sense
Chopped it up into lines
Climbed up the vines
Spider kids are like
Modern jack and the beanstalk, see:

"I got magic beans and that fucking
giant ain't ready to see my
crew get incredibly free
I been contorting the skies and I
been boiling the sea
Warping the world closer to
something I want it to be
At least for a night
Let 'em strike that feeling from inside

A feeling like maybe they've already
died

Coffee
Cigarettes
Punch in your number
Ever felt enslaved awake or mid-
slumber?

Spiders aren't supposed to be
slaves they're supposed to
create

So the spiders all drank up a six
pack of beer
Drowned out their fear
Took their eight legs
Broke them in half
Running through a city cold under
no stars
Just flashing lights of drones
The poor half die
Working to feed the rich on their
thrones

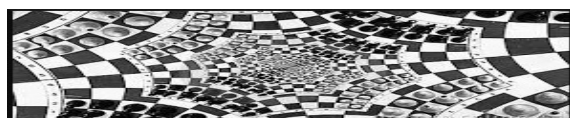
I've got my six eyes on them
I know they did this before
They're doing it again
Artificial, hypocritical horoscope
Of common folk not bothering
Not enabling ourselves enough,
Because our ways are too rough
and our minds are too
small?

Fuck it
I can't wait for your kingdom to
topple and fall
But I've got no power
None.
Not at all

So I just numb the fury
Forget the sense
Build up a powerhouse pretence
You can't take this misbehaviour
from me
I got every right to get incredibly free
Warp the world closer to something I
want it to be

And he's looking at me
Eyes all wrong
Sense all gone
Enthralled in the centre of it all
Barely standing up
Any minute now you'll fall
But nothing stops a spider kid
Nah
Nothing at all.

Sophie Macaroni



ERIC LAURSEN OWES ME A LAMP

[ed. – A timely response, through the means of this review, to (among its other topics) the accusations that our actions – or even entire uprisings of diverse social groups – are merely 'false flag' operations or playing into the enemy's hands. While this focuses on the other side of the northern Atlantic from here, in the UK too this was a pretty stock response from certain Leftist commentators during a wave of anarchist attacks in the south-west of England (see **Return Fire vol.3 pg51**) until around 2014. In the Chilean revolt of 2019-2020 (see **Rebels Behind Bars; 'This Latest Chapter of This Story'**), the same widespread paranoia lead to one protester being beaten by others and hung from a bridge as a suspected 'provocateur'. Unless noted otherwise, the photos we've included throughout this review are from significant damages caused during a complex and ingenious raid this February on the construction site preparing to drill under Wedzin Kwa sacred river for a Coastal GasLink (CGL) pipeline imposed by the Canadian State, in the context of the decade-long indigenous resistance to multiple of such projects in their territories (see **Return Fire vol.2 pg42**). It followed a blockade and 59-day occupation of the same work-site.

Around 20 masked people in camouflage used grinders to cut locks, accessed the site and drove away the Forsythe guards (former cops and military) with axes, smashing their vehicles and shooting flare-guns after them. The fighters disabled lighting and surveillance systems on-site, downed trees and placed caltrops (see **The Fight in Catalunya**), wires, lit fires, an old school bus and other obstructions on the only access-road to slow down police response by hours, then destroyed vehicles and portable buildings comprising the site (using its own heavy machinery for it, then also trashed) while cutting hydraulic and fuel lines. When police arrived to clear the first access-road barricades they were attacked from the woods with smoke bombs and flaming branches; "When the police gave chase," mourns the Chief Superintendent, "it appears as though they might have lulled us into a trap"... No arrests.

Needless to say, damage ran into the millions. Conspiracy theories immediately began to circulate social media that it was an 'inside job' by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), or by the pipeline company, or by people with foreign funding (in the words of the Canadian Premier of Alberta), or, or... Anything except what some "anarchist individuals living in the North who are supportive of struggles in defence of the land and against ongoing colonization" pointed out as obvious: that "After years of trespassing and violating consent, after three militarized RCMP raids at the service of CGL, after years of harassment and intimidation of land defenders by CGL's Forsythe security and after more peaceful methods had failed to stop CGL's continuing violence against the land and indigenous relationships and laws some unknown individuals struck back with an impressive act of sabotage and destruction against corporate property."

Wet'suwet'en land defenders: neither despair nor hesitate.]



*An anarchist review and critique of
The Operating System: An Anarchist Theory of the
Modern State, by Eric Laursen.*

It feels safe to say that contemporary anarchists have a pretty poor understanding of the State. We are not alone in this: some part of this leviathan-monster is implied a thousand times a minute in "public" discourse, but the State is rarely named *as such*. This opacity filters down to everyday conversations in our daily lives, making opposition to this or that State policy or program easy, but opposition to the form itself particularly difficult. It can be hard to name the forest for the trees.

It's alarming that this opacity persists even in anarchist-involved struggles. Yet here we are, able to describe why we are opposed to this or that institution by citing this or that specific example of oppression, but often struggling to declare and describe a thoroughly anti-State perspective and trajectory with our words and actions. Compared to many of our revolutionary ancestors, we've lost the confidence of our desire, to even be able to describe our desperate hunger for a stateless world as a justifiable end in and of itself.

This inability opens doors for others who are more than willing to impose their own visions. Nowhere is this more frustrating than in the constant patterns of co-optation and recuperation of anti-State movements by the Left. Most recently, an uprising that continued a revolutionary tradition gesturing



towards the actual abolition of slavery, white supremacy, police, and prisons, was continuously translated by self-imposed leaders into Abolitionism™ [ed. – see ***'Everything is Sanitised, But We are Constantly Wringing Our Tired Hands'***], a “radical” non-profit-sponsored redirection into the world of politics and the (colonial) State form. The possibility of revolution one day becomes gradualist “defunding” the next. They transcribe our dreams onto paper and read them back to us as nightmares.

This is my take, anyway. And it feels like one way for revolutionaries to guard against this inevitable tendency of the Left to impose the State-form on our imagination, alongside a proper rationing of ammunition, bricks, and a restlessly communal and creative spirit, might be to educate ourselves a little more clearly on exactly what the State is and how it got here.

So, for this reason, I was particularly excited to get a copy of Eric Laursen’s new book, *The Operating System: An Anarchist Theory of the Modern State*, in the mail a couple of weeks ago [ed. – in 2021], which attempts to help solve this very problem.

The book begins with a concise, accessible, and introductory summary of different classical definitions of the State, from [Max] Weber’s emphasis on the monopoly on violence and Marx’s primary determining emphasis on economic interests [ed. – see ***Return Fire vol.5 pg9***], to [Gustav] Landauer and [Michel] Foucault’s emphases on power relations and the need for the State to always reproduce itself. (Laursen also provides a helpful summary of six different versions of the modern State that have existed over the last 500 or so years, from the monarchical and commercial to the social-democratic and neoliberal.)

This all works as a kind of jumping off point for the author’s own defining of the modern State above all as an “operating system.” The term is used figuratively but approaches the literal:

Like a computer operating system, the State manages relationships between government, capital, nonprofits, and other entities to make them work together easily and efficiently, many parts operating at the same time. Like an operating system, it lets us do things – make computations, write, communicate, learn play, create art, make a living – but

always within boundaries that it prescribes and manipulates.

I appreciate this as a metaphor, and, if you have about the remarkably scant level of computer skill that I have, you might particularly note the way a well-designed operating system almost recedes into the background, happy to exist behind the veil of ignorance of its user. Again, it is difficult to name the forest for the trees, even while it is nigh-impossible to imagine using your computer without its OS. Unfortunately, Laursen offers this framework but spends relatively little time defending it in contrast with other writers’ theoretical propositions; a pretty strange fact given that it provides the title of the book.



Beyond this brief conceptual offering, the rest of the book goes on mainly to assign a series of characteristics to the modern State: a kind of “if you see this dangerous animal in the wild, here’s how to identify it!” This is again short and accessible: things like, “the State is an instrument of violence and war,” “the State is male,” “the State is above the law,” “the [modern] State is European in origin, and remains so culturally,” “the State claims the right to determine who is a person,” et. al. Most of these sections are useful but remarkably short; some are reinforced with a barebones historical discussion or anecdote, but mostly they exist as a very rough sketch across an incredibly wide range of time and geography. **I found his way of illustrating the blurriness of the lines between State and capital, which in many ways are virtually indistinguishable, to be a particularly useful offering of clarity in a world whose political science mythologies so heavily insist on treating the two like foreign adversaries.**

Few of these descriptions will ruffle many feathers though. Unfortunately, few of Laursen’s descriptions of the modern State make it clear why his “operating system” metaphor is particularly needed or useful (though I do think it could be). I like the metaphor, but I’m left wondering, what is specific about this metaphor for the State that goes beyond the basic summary of its parts?

One of the characteristics of the State that Laursen identifies is the tendency of all individual states to establish and reproduce cultural hegemony in the territory under their control [*ed. – see **Return Fire vol.5 pg123***], by propping up a “Core Identity Group”, as the book terms it, in a privileged position of access and power:

In the United States, it's people of European stock and Judeo-Christian religious background; in China, Han Chinese; in Indonesia, Javanese; in the Russian Federation, ethnic Russians; in India, Hindus....The closer one conforms to these groups, the more easily one can access education, opportunities, and, above all, the trust of the regime.

True enough. And perhaps it's a worthwhile reminder that this aspect of State formation plays out in different, localized ways across the globe under different individual states – a corrective to the way that American radicals often end up mimicking American exceptionalism in an “inverted” form, by projecting our own familiar racial and ethnic hierarchies onto social struggles elsewhere.

But there is a giant problem here, which is specific to this section, but nevertheless belies a problem of the book as a whole in its somewhat surface-level and ahistorical approach. Given that the book's focus is not really on the formation or aspects of individual states *per se* but on the nature of (and global order of) the modern State form as a whole, it's strange to suggest that all of these examples of Core Identity Group hegemony exist in more or less equivalency. It is true that the formation of Indonesia as a State relied on establishing the cultural hegemony of the Javanese, as early modern France privileged white Roman Catholicism, but none of these processes were particularly or uniquely responsible for the making of the modern State and capitalist system on a *global* scale.

That role lies with the Atlantic Slave Trade, a process that was *uniquely* responsible for the formation of numerous individual states and, more relevant to the book, the entire modern State system, including the trade and banking networks that helped that system come into being. The book's 200 pages makes scant mention of the Atlantic Slave Trade in its specificity, and when it does so it is in a passing way that at times pairs it merely with the role of serfdom, at other times as another example of cultural hegemony. In no place is this process given a specific and adequate historical discussion.

I am not arguing that there aren't a myriad of other factors and processes that allowed the modern State

to emerge and continue to reproduce itself, and that those don't also need attention and scrutiny. However, the slave trade and accompanying forms of bondage crucially helped erect states from the southern tip of South America all the way to Canada, which provided the corresponding wealth that solidified the economies and banking networks which funded the nation-states of Europe, which then proceeded to impose their version of the State upon the world at large. This process of genocide and social death eventually *recreated the entire modern world on a global scale*, in a way that is fundamentally unique. It probably deserves more than a couple passing mentions in a book about...the modern State.

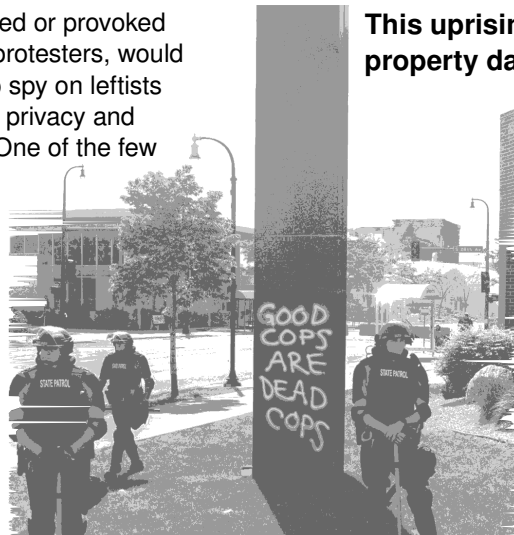
A generous reading here might suggest this oversight is just the result of the minimalist and bare approach that the book takes – there just wasn't space! But that just means the approach is wrong. A book can be brief and accessible – the best ones often are – but a book like this has to find a way to use history in a way that is both general *and* specific. Understanding the modern State in its specificity requires more than a sprinkling of historical anecdotes from across the globe. It needs to be able to access and propose narrative.

In particular, there is a tremendous and ever-increasing amount of scholarship that's relevant to the global role of the slave trade's unique role in the formation of the modern state system, often from an explicitly anti-State perspective: from Saidiya Hartman's *Scenes of Subjection* and Frank Wilderson's writing on civil society and prison, to Edward Baptist's *The Half Has Never Been Told* and Eduardo Galeano's classic *The Open Veins of Latin America*, among dozens and dozens more. **It is a huge missed opportunity for an anarchist text like this to not absorb and digest the wisdom in this scholarship and explicitly incorporate it into his concept of the State “operating system.”** This failure stands out all the more so, given that we all just went through a multiracial, nationwide uprising led by Black youth against the modern-day slave patrol of the police [*ed. – see **The Siege of the Third Precinct in Minneapolis***].

But that merely leads to the most damning, or at least embarrassing, observation. In his closing section titled “Why We Are Against the State,” Laursen finally sees fit to mention the uprising which took place last year. He does so in the context of discussing how the State instrumentalizes right-wing non-State violence, but his words are telling far beyond this:

The violence that took place at many of the demonstrations and marches, the vast

majority of which was instigated or provoked by police or far-right counter-protesters, would be used as another excuse to spy on leftists and anarchists, violating their privacy and further criminalizing dissent. One of the few major arrests following the marches in late May, ironically, was of “three alleged members of a militarized far-right movement” who were accused of “plotting to bomb government property and to stoke violence at a Black Lives Matter protest using Molotov cocktails,” according to the Wall Street Journal.



29.05.20: State Patrol perimeter up around Minneapolis' Third Precinct before curfew

This uprising caused at least \$2 billion in property damage, the “highest recorded damage from social unrest in US history,” and forced more than 200 cities to impose curfews and mobilize 96,000 national guard troops in 34 states. These stats are not a Fox News pundit trying to fear-monger a right-wing audience with hyperbole, but rather come from an authentic attempt on the part of a State and capitalist funded think tank to internally study what happened for reasons of its own self-preservation. They are undoubtedly a low estimate.

“Populist” violence may bubble up from below, but seldom without encouragement from the State.

I’m sorry. What?! I can’t lie – when I first read this paragraph I threw the book across the room, knocking a lamp off the table. **Eric, if you’re reading this: you owe me a lamp. I liked that lamp.**

Now, I’d like to give him the benefit of the doubt here and believe that while he was away from his computer making coffee, some CNN journalist broke into his place and slid into his seat to interject this piece of center-left denialist garbage, and that it somehow managed to slide past the editors at AK [Press]. Better yet, because I really like the work that the editors do at AK, maybe a Russian hacker cracked into the computers at the printer and changed the manuscript ten minutes before printing.

But that doesn’t seem to be the case. And there’s so much to unpack here, so many CNN style hot-take falsehoods packed in one small insignificant paragraph, that I’m almost not surprised that this has gone unnoticed in anarchist media featuring Laursen in the last month or so.

So let’s start here by quoting the preface of Shemon Salam and Arturo Castillon’s excellent book *The Revolutionary Meaning of the George Floyd Uprising*:

At least 28 people died in the wave of social unrest that rocked the United States from late May until July in 2020. In this 10-week period, there were 574 riots; 624 arsons; 2,382 incidents of looting; 97 police vehicles set on fire; and 12,241 people arrested for protest-related activities. In addition, at least 13 police were shot, 9 were hit by cars and 2,037 were reported injured in the riots, mostly because of the tossing of rocks, bricks, and other projectiles.

Thousands of hours of video footage, mountains of arrest data, and hundreds of personal stories and narratives all demonstrate conclusively that this attack on capitalist and State infrastructure was proactive, massive, widespread, popular in nature, and done by large crowds of oppressed peoples acting in coordinated and intentional rage. So yeah, literally every element of Laursen’s paragraph is dead wrong.

For Laursen to say that there were “few major arrests” is objectively absurd and deliberately misleading – there were thousands upon thousands of documented arrests, many with very serious felonies.¹ Those of us who were arrested, or are still doing legal and prison support, or are the families and friends of these folks, all know this. To invisibilize these arrests is a disgusting spit in the face to all of us who fought back, but particularly to the Black teens and 20- somethings who risked so much and made up a large portion of the early arrests. These youth were not tricked into doing so, which is pure racist paternalism, and their arrests were not the unwitting collateral damage of outside agitators hell bent on adventurist destruction. That so many of these brave people are still behind bars or facing time just makes Laursen’s statements that much worse.

It’s also just cringe-worthy for Laursen to center repression against “leftists and anarchists” in his (rare) mention of the uprising. It’s absolutely true that we have faced repression, and that anarchists have been used as a kind of scapegoat or “boogeyman” by the political establishment, to then also justify repression of everyone else. And it’s worth saying that anarchists were relevant in this rebellion well beyond our small numbers. But the uprising was not some State-contrived scheme to justify spying on a tiny

1 ed. – see UprisingSupport.org

fringe minority of ideological radicals, and to center this minority in Laursen's briefest of discussions about the uprising does a huge disservice to the popular, Black-led, and revolutionary character of the rebellion. We were part of all this, *but it wasn't about us*. (I'd also like to point out that, at least in my town, the average charges and sentencing of your typical lefty/activist type, even when they're Black, has been far less severe than that faced by the majority of the less "politically connected" Black folks, who led the efforts in both the rioting and holding of space against police aggression. **There's a lesson here to be drawn about modern strategies for counter-insurgency and the weaponization of political capital, especially in liberal controlled cities, but Laursen's position renders him unable to do so.**)

In the words of the martyr Willem von Spronsen [ed. – see **'Freedom For All'**], "don't overthink it." The State does not need such a complicated conspiratorial scheme to carry out mass violence on a routine basis upon Black people, and certainly not upon Black revolutionaries; rather, it relies on the kind of liberal, everyday good protester vs. bad protester respectability politics that Laursen himself has fallen prey to perpetuating.

Idris Robinson already addressed the line of thinking that Laursen suggests many months ago and much better than I can, in his piece *How It Might Should be Done*, so I'll quote it at length:

A militant nationwide uprising did in fact occur. The progressive wing of the counter-insurgency seeks the denial and disarticulation of this event. The obvious is not always so obvious.

We all saw it. We all saw what happened after the murder of George Floyd. What occurred was an extremely violent and destructive rebellion. It was a phenomenon the likes of which we have not seen in America in 40 or 50 years. Very few of us have experienced anything of this magnitude: a precinct was immediately torched in Minneapolis, after which entire cities went up in flames – New York, Atlanta, Oakland, Seattle... Despite all of this, the reformers have had the audacity to claim that all of this never actually happened. They are trying to make the burning cop cars disappear, to extinguish from memory the police stations on fire, as if it didn't happen. Again and again, I hear the same script: someone comes on the news, a political activist gives a talk, and we hear them say something like, "the protests were peaceful and non-violent, they stayed within the bounds of law and order."

No: cops being shot at in St. Louis is not within the bounds of law and order.

They're doing their best to make the event disappear. One has to wonder what planet they are on that a torched police station appears within the bounds of civility.

This delusion is something that we need to think about. Ultimately, it's more than a delusion. It unites veritably all the progressive liberals who chatter on about what's been going on over the past summer. From the Biden democrats to virtually all of the mainstream media not affiliated with Fox News, to the Black Lives Matter™ people, the agenda pushed by all these groups is the claim that the insurrection did not take place...What is at issue is more than just a momentary lapse of sanity: it is a strategy of denial, a counter-insurgent strategy of reform *par excellence*.

Unconsciously, liberals do recognize that an insurrection occurred. They can't ignore the shattered glass that occurred in the streets of Seattle yesterday. But what they want is to downplay the significance of these events that mean so much to us, and that we are continually trying to push forward.

The progressive Left is stuck between a rock and a hard place: it obviously cannot outright condemn the uprising as does the far-Right, but is also tasked with disciplining the uprising's more militant participants out of any kind of power that doesn't fall within the realm of non-profits, elections, and non-disruptive protest. Laursen claiming that the (massive, proactive, organized, proletarian) violence of the uprising was primarily just "instigated" by police or right-wing actors is another form of denial, a way to disarticulate the event while locking us into a trap of pure, powerless victimhood.



It's worth tracing the chronology of this general line of thinking, much of which relied on a re-hash of the old racist "outside agitator" trope. It was initially pioneered by Democratic governors in states like Minnesota, who were grasping at straws in their attempts to slow down and divide the unified ferocity

of poor people in their city streets, and thought blaming white radicals and antifa might do the trick. It was then taken up by mainstream media and also liberals and radical activist-types on Twitter and Instagram, who were all too eager to spread absurd conspiracy theories about a struggle that went beyond their comprehension. **Anyone remember the idea that police departments were leaving out piles of bricks to “trick” unwitting protesters into committing crimes, thus “undermining the respectability” of “our” movement? Lol – nope, that was (obviously) just standard road construction, some fact-checkers admitted months later. (But thanks for the bricks J).** Pretty soon, Trump joined in on the outside agitator trope, *also* blaming it all on “antifa,” which forced liberals to pivot to pinning it all on right-wing boogaloo boys instead, who are in fact real, but so disorganized and insignificant that they have about as much as chance as meaningfully influencing a rebellion with millions of participants as I do of running a four minute mile.



Some of the notorious “white outside agitators” of the 2011 Occupy/Decolonize Oakland movement

The chronological evolution of this conspiratorial denialism was a key part, in fact maybe the *only* successful part, of the State’s counter insurgency strategy in the early weeks of June. Long before the National Guard regained the streets, we were drowning in a sea of lefty social media conspiracies and CNN articles about white outside agitators, false flag ops, and boogaloo boy trickery. We were often able to overcome this nonsense with authentic conversations in the streets, but at times the confusion it introduced was a serious challenge to the internal unity and trust of multi-racial crowds already struggling to find common language and desire in our hatred of the police. There were myriad moments last summer, all across the country, where the mistrust introduced by these narratives directly prevented us from defending ourselves, from forming new relationships, or from pushing the rebellion further. These narratives preyed on our perception of

ourselves as weak and the State as invincible – the idea that if we pushed the police back or destroyed their tools of violence, it must somehow be because they wanted it that way all along. How could we be anything but pawns?

And now that the windows have been (mostly) boarded up, the glass and ashes brushed away, CNN reminds us on a weekly basis that “93% of the protests were peaceful”, a deceptive piece of spin that erases the *nature* of the rebellion. The translation of “uprising” into “series of protests” is a discursive sleight of hand that brings everything back into the realm of performative politics and speaking truth to power. We’re no longer doing and creating – now, we are asking.

So why is Laursen, an anarchist, parroting this narrative, and, above all, what does it have to do with the larger project of his text? The book takes such little serious consideration of the uprising that it is difficult to say, but I suspect the key to understanding his bananas-ass garbage take on last summer has something to do with this line: “Populist’ violence may bubble up from below, but seldom without encouragement from the State.”

Again, what are you smoking Eric? What history are you (not) reading? The State did not “encourage” the uprising. It was not “happy” that this violent uprising happened, and the internal discussions between police departments, military generals, National Guard centers, and think-tanks – which an analyst of the modern State should be reading! – make this abundantly clear. Police did not intentionally provoke 2 billion dollars worth of destruction on crucial capitalist infrastructure, they did not relish the prospect of losing their legitimacy, and the technocratic, neoliberal sector of America’s ruling class was not itching to be brought to the precipice of a second civil war that it could not control. The State was desperate, scrambling, at a loss. None of this was accomplished through a series of “peaceful protests,” which themselves would not even have happened were it not for the fires of Minneapolis and dozens of other cities.

Laursen’s line here locks us into a perpetual victim cage of his own making: either a conflictual and violent rebellion did happen, but was the pawn of an all-knowing State’s devious plans, or it was really just a bunch of peaceful protests made out to be violent by those mean talking heads on Fox News. Either way, we’re forever hapless innocent victims, righteous but toothless.

None of this goes to say that every individual act of violence in the uprising was liberatory, that every act of escalation serves a strategic purpose, or that had the uprising gone further it would necessarily have resulted in “anarchist” ends. A “civil war” very well could have happened – and still may – and such a conflict could go in numerous directions and would have at least three sides. One possible outcome of such a conflict is abolitionist and anti-State in nature, but there are other fascist and neoliberal outcomes as well. This can be said though: *to achieve even the possibility of emancipation [ed. – of US chattel slaves] a century ago required a civil war.* There is no determined historical process, no inevitable freedom if we walk through that door to the outside air. But the house is on fire, and we are suffocating.

Simply stated, Laursen is wrong. Violence by the oppressed against their masters is a constant fact of history, ever since the dawn of the modern State (and, for that matter, well before its emergence). Indeed, there is not a single instance in which the oppressed have obtained even the tiniest sinew of freedom or relief without violence, or, at least the threat thereof. It is true that on occasion the State will seek to entrap young militants with violent schemes, or instigate a “false flag operation” of one kind or another, **but these are relatively targeted and rare, and certainly cannot explain mass uprisings by millions of people who do not know each other.**

A far more effective and broad form of modern-day counter-insurgency has been the kind of respectability politics championed by radicals like Lisa Fithian, who Laursen praises – a persona whose domineering, riot-shaming, and pacifism-championing presence all of us anarchists from the anti-globalization years learned to resent. There are a number of great texts on how this ideological promotion of the harmony of civil society continues to work in the service of counter-insurgency [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg5*], but why not just draw on our own experience this past summer? Let’s just remember the self-deputized do-gooder leftists who saw fit to put their hands on young kids to protect capitalist and State property and thereby save the “optics” of (what they think) the movement should look like. This is the “cultural hegemony” of activism that the democratic State imposes upon its dissidents, and not only does Laursen not identify this as an important characteristic of the State for his readers, he appears to be all too willing to join in. He may not actually say he is opposed to rioting or popular violent rebellion when it occurs long ago in a galaxy far far away, but he certainly makes an extraordinary leap to deny its existence or legitimacy as soon as it appears too close for comfort.



This denialism-as-counter-insurgency works because it goes beyond the political: it resonates with those who suffer a *spiritual* deficit. That is to say, those who turn away from these moments of cathartic rebellion do so out of spiritual poverty. Or perhaps, more generously, we might attribute this abhorrent lack to a fear response that has been conditioned by deep trauma. The uprising calls us to live up to the historical task of our generation, but we turn away out of fear of repression, violence, prison, losing our friends or family. And then we deny the rebellion happened at all, or we deny it had any “legitimacy,” to avoid the shame of our own failure.

It is ok to be afraid, and it is ok to fail, and it is ok not to throw the brick, and it is necessary to make *strategic* critiques of specific actions and choices as we proceed. A social revolution needs all kinds of souls and all kinds of participation, and it even needs failure. But to not at least rejoice when the brick is finally, finally thrown, after so much pain and fear and silence, is to announce one’s own spiritual death. “Our fears don’t stop death, they stop life,” my old coach used to say. And in turning away out of fear, we rob ourselves of the opportunity for life: the joy of participating in, influencing, and, perhaps most importantly, being changed by these moments, *of losing the baggage of terror that we all carry throughout our normal quotidian lives.*

What’s more, we lose the opportunity to learn from the experiments that engender the ever-evolving wisdom of the dispossessed-in-motion. For there is a deep ancestral wisdom contained in the ingenious ways that a crowd assembles a barricade, dispatches a team of medics, finds fuel to spread the fires, and distributes looted goods, as each of these collective activities amount to the most hallowed of spiritual offerings.

The fact that Laursen does not recognize or consider these lessons of the most broadly effective and affective anti-State rebellion in the United States since the late 1960’s, if not the 1860’s, and then goes on to (ever so briefly) perpetuate some of the same tropes that the State and its media wielded against



03.08.22, Schrobenuhausen, Germany: after Bauer corporate involvement in the CGL is exposed, 3 super-heavy machinery arsons in their main office yard cause huge damages

us, is profoundly disappointing. It deeply undermines what, in other sections, could be a helpful text for anyone trying to better understand the modern State. Personally, I'd just suggest folks do their best impression of Robin Williams in the *Dead Poet Society* with regards to the last chapter of his book and keep the rest. "Excrement. That's what I think of Mr. J. Evans Pritchard."

In the meantime, I'd love it if he reimbursed me for the lamp he made me break, or better yet throw that amount of money (it was \$14.99 plus tax) onto the commissary fund of one of the hundreds of real people who will get real time for doing some beautiful real shit that *really* did happen.

A LOVE LETTER TO THE WET'SUWET'EN (AND THEIR ALLIES) WHO FIGHT FOR THE LAND

We heard some Wet'suwet'en Chiefs were visiting Six Nations territory [ed. – site of historic Haudenosaunee resistance, most recently as the 1492 Land Back Lane re-occupation of a housing construction site] Tuesday. We appreciate the energy and determination the Wet'suwet'en have shown towards defending the land and lives of their people. **We wanted to welcome them to the area.**

We cannot be out west with you, but we are with you from here.

In the night of July 31, 2022 several small groups enjoyed the cool evening and – where opportunities presented themselves – took small actions against local rail infrastructure. We see rail as a colonial imposition, forced upon the territories of Turtle Island [ed. – so-called 'North America'] (and beyond) to expand colonization – and eventually industrialization and destructive extraction. An attack on rail is an attack on those things, and rail is everywhere and indefensible – so it is also an opportunity that is available to most.

Using various methods such as connecting copper wire between fish plates, smashing hot wheel equipment with hammers, and kicking large rocks into track switches we had ourselves a low stress evening which ultimately endangers no one but ourselves, but does create several annoyances for operators.

You, dear reader, can do any of these things too!

We can slowly erode this system, as water will do even to rock.

We remember the rail blockades of 2020 [ed. – sparked by a police raid of Wet'suwet'en land, spreading all across the nation and joining Mi'kmaq, Secwepmec, Algonquin and other struggles, seriously damaging Canada's economy; leading one mining company to scrap a tar-sands application]. We remember the slow build. The energy. We remember people stepping on to railways and wanting to know what was next: wanting more. They were ready to take a stand for the Yintah [ed. – traditional territory]. For its people. And against our genocidal government and corporations.

We think it will look different – but believe we can get there again. The same way in which the hottest of fires can overwinter in a tree trunk only to burst forth when the time is right, making way for new life and a new world.

We stand with the Haudenosaunee taking back their land.

We stand with the Wet'suwet'en defending their land.

Welcome to the territories of the Haudenosaunee, Mississaugas, Huron-Wendat, Chonnonton, Erie & Petun people.

Signed,
some people.

NEVER TURN OFF THE PHONE

*– a new approach to
security culture*



[ed. – First hosted by the Russian anarchist site a2day.net;
see compiled international documentation of actual
surveillance operations
against anarchists at
earsandeyes.noblogs.org/]

In the 80s, an anarchist who wanted, for example, to burn some building, developed their plan and at the same time checked that there were no listening devices in their house. In the late 90s, the same anarchist turned off the phone and used encrypted traffic on the Internet. In the 2020s, we need to reconsider our strategy: intelligence gathering has improved and we must also take this into account.

To begin with, let's see how big data analysis is used. To do this, we need to talk about 3 things: metadata, templates and networks. It seems boring and difficult, but I am not a technician,

and I will not bore you with technical language, I will make it as simple as possible.

Metadata

In the context of online activity, “content” means “the message you sent”, and “metadata” means “everything except the content”. So, for example, if you send a text about lunch to your friend, the content may be “Let's go have lunch”, and the metadata may be “Message sent 01/04/2018 11.32 from 0478239055 to 079726823 using Signal”.

This information is recorded by your phone, even if the application encrypts your actual message. Your metadata is very poorly protected by technology and very poorly protected by law. No matter what country you are in, the majority of your metadata is freely available to secret services, regardless of whether you are suspected of something or not.

Templates

Whether you realize this or not, your metadata has a template. If you have daily work, you may have a very consistent pattern; if there is no such work, your template may be more flexible, but you still have a

'BUT IT DID NOT STOP'

[ed. – One of the host of brave Russian anarchist sabotages within a country under quasi-dictatorship (often including torture for those captured). Since the war started, arson of army recruitments centres has also been repeated, from one side of the country to the other, by a variety of Russians. Anti-war demonstrations face severe anti-protest measures; the anarchists Anton Sergeev and Vladimir Zhuchkov upon arrest carrying molotovs at one this March in Moscow took lethal doses of methadone they had with them for the purpose of 'escaping' the ordeal they knew awaited them, though tragically in vain as they were intensively treated, survived, and once awake jailed awaiting trial for 'terrorism' (you can support them via ABC-Moscow). This claim (from the BOAK-Slobozhanshchina anarchist group) is for destruction of a mobile antenna in April, 30km from the Ukrainian border by Kharkiv: a majority-Russian-speaking city where, contra to Ukrainian (or Russian!) nationalist propaganda, many Russians 'civilians' – including anarchist exiles – fought hard against the invading Russian army, outside of the Ukrainian military units.]

The cables that ensured the operation of the relay antenna were set on fire using rags soaked in an incendiary mixture.

The attack on mobile phone towers in border areas not only causes economic damage to Russia as a whole (especially significant due to sanctions and difficulties in purchasing new equipment), but also disrupts communication between police and military forces. Since the war in Georgia in 2008 (when a Russian tank column heading to Gori was at a standstill, and was only able to move forward because an officer with a mobile phone reached it in a vehicle, as the army's communications were not working), it is no secret that in view of the victorious optimization and plundering of military budgets, these budgets often have to be covered by civilian budgets.

It was not without complications, in particular, with taking pictures and shooting a video. The preparation and execution of the action was analyzed, and decisions were made to improve the effectiveness of actions in the future. Stay tuned, there will be many more interesting things to come :)

We would also like to note that the action was carried out during the yellow terror alert regime, which is in effect on the territory of Belgorod Oblast, but it did not stop the guerrillas.

template. If someone wants to know the rhythm of your day, they can do it very easily, because your template is in metadata.

For example: Maybe you use Wi-Fi in your favorite bar on most Sunday nights until midnight, you wake up around 10 am and check your Signal, you use your public transport card to get to class every Monday afternoon, and you spend an average of 1 hour per Tumblr twice a day. All this is part of your template.

Network

You have an online network. Your friends on Facebook, the people in your phone's address book, the dropbox you are sharing with your colleagues, everyone who bought online tickets for the same punk gig that you attended, people using the same WiFi points as you. Take your networks, combine them with the networks of other people, and the clusters will manifest themselves. Your working community, your family, your activist scene, etc.

If you are in the anarchist community, it is likely to be quite obvious from all of your small network connections, such as visiting one band and knowing the same people as other anarchists. Even if you have never clicked on an anarchist Facebook page or didn't click the go button on the anarchist Facebook event, your network is hard to hide.

Now, let's say you committed a crime, one that would lead to a serious investigation.

Suppose that on Sunday at 3 am, you and your friends go out and burn the house of the Nazis. (Of course, I would never advise any of you to do something like this.) Obviously, the anarchists did it, but there are no other clues. You are using a traditional security culture: you burn records, you try not to communicate your plans near technology and you leave no physical traces.

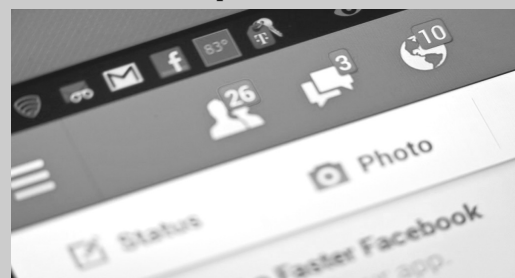
But since you committed a crime that night, your metadata will be very different from your usual rhythm: you stay in your usual bar until 2 am to wait for your friends, you will not wake up at 10 am and check your Signal or you will Tumblr only for an hour of the day. You do not go to class. Your metadata template is very different from your regular template. Your friends' metadata models are different too. If one of you is clumsy, they can generate a super-suspicious metadata signal, for example, the phone turns off at 2.30 at night and is activated at 4 am. You wouldn't be the first.

If I wanted to solve this crime using data analysis, then I would do the following:

- allow a piece of software to analyze the patterns of

“Security culture refers to a set of practices developed to assess risks, control the flow of information through your networks, and to build solid organizing relationships. There are countless different possible security cultures, but the important thing is that they come from clear, explicit conversations about risk that are ongoing and respond to change. [...] When we talk about security culture, people tend to have one of two kinds of experiences. The first is of building walls and keeping people out, the second is of being excluded or mistrusted. Both of these come with negative feelings – fear and suspicion for the former and alienation and resentment for the latter. I would say that they are two sides of the same coin, two experiences of a security culture that isn't working well. I want to be welcoming and open to new people in my organizing. I also want to protect myself as best I can from efforts to disrupt that organizing, especially from the State but also from bosses or the far-Right. That means I want to have the kinds of security practices that allow me to be open while knowing that I've assessed the risk I face and am taking smart steps to minimize it. Security culture should make openness more possible, not less. This proposal for security culture is based on reframing – on shifting our focus from fear to confidence, from risk-aversion to courage, from isolation to connection, and from suspicion to trust.

It makes sense to feel fear – the state is very powerful, repression is common, and it has the power to crush us and all our projects. But I don't want to stay in that fear, and with accurate information and good plans we can begin to transform fear into confidence, knowing we have security practices that are up to the risk we face. In fact, without transforming fear, it's hard to imagine how we could manage to take action at all in face of the power of our enemies. I don't want to be risk-averse. I want to decide on my actions based on effectiveness, appropriateness, my analysis, and my ethics. Good security culture lays the groundwork for us to show courage in our tactics collectively, since we know we can handle the risk. When we don't transform risk-aversion, we self-police and stay narrowly in the space for symbolic opposition that is provided to us.”



– Confidence, Courage, Connection, Trust:
A Proposal for a Robust Security Culture

the local anarchist scene to identify the 300 people most associated with the anarchic scene;

- allow the second piece of software to analyze the metadata samples of these 300 people in recent months and identify the biggest metadata changes on Sunday evening, as well as any very suspicious metadata activity;
- exclude variations of the pattern with an obvious reason or an obvious alibi (people who are on holiday, people who are in hospital, people who have lost their job, etc.);
- conduct a more in-depth study of those who remained.

That's right, from the huge number of people I could not listen to at the same time, I can quickly identify a few in order to closely monitor them. So I could find and catch you.

And Now What?

If a traditional security culture will not protect us like before, how do we adapt? Well, I have no answers, but for a start I would say: know your network + know your template.

In the case of the example above: leave the bar at midnight, go back home and put the phone on the bedside table. Check the apps you usually check before bedtime and set the alarm for 10 am. Return to the bar without a phone. Wake up at 10 in the morning and check your Signal. Drag yourself to class or ask a friend to travel with your travel card and do not use technology in your home while a friend travels with your travel card to class. Stick to your template. Never turn off the phone.

You can also manipulate your network, but it is much more difficult to do. Do not use the smartphone in general and abandon all social activity on the Internet – this requires serious motivation. Knowing your data template and making sure that it looks ordinary is much easier.

Some of the old rules will still apply: do not talk about crime around devices with microphones, do not brag after successful actions, etc. Other rules, such as “turning off the phone when planning illegal actions”, need to be changed because their metadata looks too unusual. No one else disconnects their phone. We look suspicious when we do this.

This is just one idea on how we could update our security culture. Perhaps there are other people with different, better ideas about updating it. If we start a conversation, we can get somewhere.¹

1 ed. – “Security culture” should always be understood as

Finally: We Need to Continue to Adapt



As technology changes, more information emerges, including data that we have very little control over. Smart-TV and advertising in public places that listen to every word that we speak, and the tone of our voice when we speak, these are examples. Currently, data analysis projects use license plate reading software to compare vehicle traffic patterns. It says a lot that they may soon be ready to do the same with facial recognition, after which the presence of our face in the public space will become part of our metadata. Additional information means more accurate data analysis. Our metadata may soon be

a strategic race against enclosure rather than a technical elaboration of rules of behavior, because the latter is a practice based on the imperative of keeping people out of prison. In individual cases, this is perfectly sensible. In the big picture, perfectly absurd. Wherever there is effective struggle, the State will make arrests, whether or not they can find the people responsible for specific crimes. The proposition of keeping people out of prison is, in the long run, conservative and idiotic.

Notwithstanding, by perfecting techniques of security, we force the State to fall back on collective rather than individualized forms of punishment. If they cannot find the specific criminals responsible for an attack, they must attack the community of struggle and arrest scapegoats singled out for clearly political reasons, which belies the narrative of democratic peace, destroys the discourse of criminality and the alibi of the justice system, and reveals the fundamentally collective nature of all struggle.

Partisan movements, urban guerrilla groups, and Native land struggles have all produced technical manuals focused on counter-surveillance that rebels and insurgents today can make use of to obstruct State efforts to gather intelligence. The urban guerrillas in particular communicate a mythology of clandestinity which requires the reader to separate the technical knowledge from the strategic. The real trick is not to professionalize these techniques but to generalize them among a larger community. A broadly shared suspicion of communications technology, academics, journalists, and police, in the hands of an entire community, will be far more effective at blocking State intelligence-gathering than a sophisticated array of counter-surveillance techniques in the hands of one affinity group; but the one need not and should not exclude the other” (Here... at the Center of a World in Revolt).

too extensive, which is too difficult to fully reflect and mirror. This means that we will need to adapt our counter measures if we want to hide something.

How do we keep all this under the radar? I don't know. But let's try to understand this shit. These are some first thoughts on how a security culture should look like in an era of modern analysis of large data sets, and I would be very happy to receive additions from comrades who have thoughts on this.



'FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE' [UK]

WARNING!

*To state-agents... we collect intelligence too!
Message to Simon Chapman*

As a free-lance photographer in a careless rush to make a fast buck, you snap images that expose people's identity, when it's totally possible to shoot from a different angle which doesn't show the face. This inconsiderate funding of your lifestyle has earned you a reminder to take this as a warning!

There have been many demonstrations recently [ed. – posted late July 2021, on the heels of *Kill the Bill*; see *1 May 2021...*], and Simon Chapman has been out making a name for himself (and some money) at most of them. Because of this, we paid him a visit... 40 Stafford Road, St. Werburghs, Bristol

We sprayed 'Simon Chapman Photo-Cop' on his house and 'is Big Brov' on his door. We hoped to attack his car too (Grey Ford Focus registration DE53 XZS) but it wasn't there when we visited him.

Chapman is the Bristol Branch Secretary of the National Union of Journalists. He has sold images of people to both the Daily Telegraph and the Mirror; and regularly sells his photographs to the Bristol Post (who have a long history of publishing police photographs; encouraging people to snitch, and report on the whereabouts of 'persons of interest'). Chapman's images often show people in

incriminating situations. In his thirst for fame and money, he is effectively an evidence gatherer for the state, and is profiting from putting people at risk.

The history of direct action in Bristol has always been of interest to the mainstream press (especially the Bristol Post). Now, more than ever, self-styled experts, activists and freelancers create careers for themselves out of interpreting the actions of others. **Acts of rebellion are passively packaged as click-bait, used as cultural capital in some edgy form of gentrification, and utilised by the state as evidence and leverage in the tired (but sadly enduring) discourse around "good" and "bad" forms of action/anarchism.**

Like many others, Simon Chapman has made a career out of gaining credentials within activist circles; before using this as a way to launch a career with the main-stream press.

We don't have a photo of Chapman; but he is medium height, no facial hair, always wearing neutral clothes. Always has a ridiculous telephoto lens on his camera and often a large rucksack with a waterproof cover.

He nearly always wears a bucket style sun hat, and walking boots, and behaves very confidently while strutting around taking photos. Maybe now he will look around him a bit more; rather than always pointing the attention on to others.

Times have changed since the Bristol riots of 2011 [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg61*] and the surveillance state is more pervasive.... Though not omniscient. This action is to remind anyone who assists the police in their investigations by documenting moments of rebellion, that we have eyes too... and we are watching you.

Chapman is one individual in a city filled with self-styled media experts, "alternative" journalists and media outlets... but remember, surveillance works both ways, and we are on to you.

*We refuse to be mediated
or mis-represented.*

*We speak only for
ourselves.*

See you on the streets!



IN PRAISE OF THE DANCING BODY

The history of the body is the history of human beings, for there is no cultural practice that is not first applied to the body. Even if we limit ourselves to speak of the history of the body in capitalism we face an overwhelming task, so extensive have been the techniques used to discipline the body, constantly changing, depending on the shifts in labor regimes to which our body was subjected to. Moreover, we do not have one history but different histories of the body: the body of men, of women [ed. – and of the rest of us; see **Memory as a Weapon; Mutant Identities in the Middle Ages**], of the waged worker, of the enslaved, of the colonized.

A history of the body then can be reconstructed by describing the different forms of repression that capitalism has activated against it. But I have decided to write instead of the body as a ground of resistance, that is the body and its powers – the power to act, to transform itself and the world and the body as a natural limit to exploitation.

There is something we have lost in our insistence on the body as something socially constructed and performative. The view of the body as a social [discursive] production has hidden the fact our body is a receptacle of powers, capacities and resistances, that have been developed in a long process of co-evolution with our natural environment, as well as inter-generational practices that have made it a natural limit to exploitation.

By the body as a ‘natural limit’ I refer to the structure of needs and desires created in us not only by our conscious decisions or collective practices, but by millions of years of material evolution: the need for the sun, for the blue sky and the green of trees, for the smell of the woods and the oceans, the need for touching, smelling, sleeping, making love.

This accumulated structure of needs and desires, that for thousands of years have been the condition of our social reproduction, has put limits to our exploitation and is something that capitalism has incessantly struggled to overcome.

Capitalism was not the first system based on the exploitation of human labor [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.5 pg120**]. But more than any other system in history, it has tried to create an economic world where labor is the most essential principle of accumulation. As such it was the first to make the regimentation and mechanization of the body a key premise of the accumulation of wealth. Indeed, one of capitalism’s main social tasks from its beginning to the present has been the transformation of our energies and corporeal powers into labor-powers.

In *Caliban and the Witch*, I have looked at the strategies that capitalism has employed to accomplish this task and

remold human nature, in the same way as it has tried to remold the earth in order to make the land more productive and to turn animals into living factories. I have spoken of the historic battle it has waged against the body, against our materiality, and the many institutions it has created for this purpose: the law, the whip, the regulation of sexuality, as well as myriad social practices that have redefined our relation to space, to nature, and to each other.

Capitalism was born from the separation of people from the land and its first task was to make work independent of the seasons and to lengthen the workday beyond the limits of our endurance. Generally, we stress the economic aspect of this process, the economic dependence capitalism has created on monetary relations, and its role in the formation of a wage proletariat. What we have not always seen is what the separation from the land and nature has meant for our body, which has been pauperized and stripped of the powers that pre-capitalist populations attributed to it.

Nature has been inorganic body and there was a time when we could read the winds, the clouds, and the changes in the currents of rivers and seas. In pre-capitalist societies people thought they had the power to fly, to have out-of-body experiences, to communicate, to speak with animals and take on their powers and even shape-shift. They also thought that they could be in more places than one and, for example, they could come back from the grave to take revenge on their enemies.

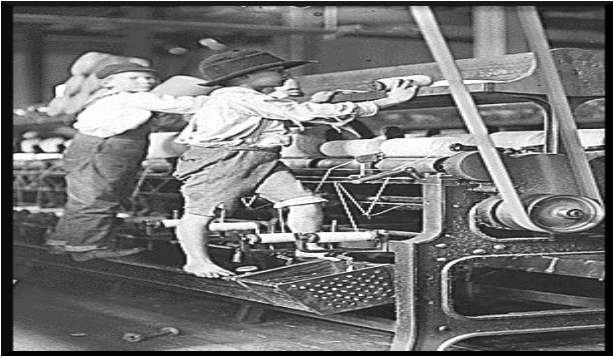
Not all these powers were imaginary. Daily contact with nature was the source of a great amount of knowledge reflected in the food revolution that took place especially in the Americas prior to colonization or in the revolution in sailing techniques. We know now, for instance, that the Polynesian populations used to travel the high seas at night with only their body as their compass, as they could tell from the vibrations of the waves the different ways to direct their boats to the shore.

Fixation in space and time has been one of the most elementary and persistent techniques capitalism has used to take hold of the body. See the attacks throughout history on vagabonds, migrants, hobo-men. **Mobility is a threat when not pursued for work-sake as it circulates knowledges, experiences, struggles.** In the past the instruments of restraint were whips, chains, the stocks, mutilation, enslavement. Today, in addition to the whip and the detention centers, we have computer surveillance and the periodic threat of epidemics as a means to control nomadism.



Mechanization – the turning of the body, male and female, into a machine – has been one of capitalism’s most relentless pursuits. Animals too are turned into machines, so that sows can double their litter, chicken can produce

uninterrupted flows of eggs, while unproductive ones are grounded like stones, and calves can never stand on their feet before being brought to the slaughter house.



I cannot here evoke all the ways in which the mechanization of body has occurred. Enough to say that the techniques of capture and domination have changed depending on the dominant labor regime and the machines that have been the model for the body.

Thus we find that in the 16 and 17th centuries (the time of manufacture) the body was imagined and disciplined according to the model of simple machines, like the pump and the lever. This was the regime that culminated in Taylorism [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg28*], time-motion study, where every motion was calculated and all our energies were channeled to the task. Resistance here was imagined in the form of inertia, with the body pictured as a dumb animal, a monster resistant to command.

With the 19th century we have, instead, a conception of the body and disciplinary techniques modeled on the steam engine, its productivity calculated in terms of input and output, and efficiency becoming the key word. Under this regime, the disciplining of the body was accomplished through dietary restrictions and the calculation of the calories that a working body would need. The climax, in this context, was the Nazi table, that specified what calories each type of worker needed. The enemy here was the dispersion of energy, entropy, waste, disorder. **In the US, the history of this new political economy began in the 1880s, with the attack on the saloon and the remolding of the family-life with at its center the full-time housewife, conceived as an anti-entropic devise, always on call, ready to restore the meal consumed, the body sullied after the bath, the dress repaired and torn again.**

In our time, models for the body are the computer and the genetic code, crafting a dematerialized, dis-aggregated body, imagined as a conglomerate of cells and genes each with her own program, indifferent to the rest and to the good of the body as a whole. Such is the theory of the 'selfish gene,' the idea, that is, that the body is made of individualistic cells and genes all pursuing their program a perfect metaphor of the neo-liberal conception of life, where market dominance turns against not only group solidarity but solidarity with own ourselves. Consistently, the body disintegrates into an assemblage of selfish genes, each striving to achieve its selfish goals, indifferent to the interest of the rest.

To the extent that we internalize this view, we internalize the most profound experience of self-alienation, as we confront not only a great beast that does not obey our orders, but a host of micro-enemies that are planted right into our own body, ready to attack us at any moment. Industries have been built on the fears that this conception of the body generates, putting us at the mercy of forces that we do not control. Inevitably, if we internalize this view, we do not taste good to ourselves. In fact, our body scares us, and we do not listen to it.



We do not hear what it wants, but join the assault on it with all the weapons that medicine can offer: radiation, colonoscopy, mammography, all arms in a long battle against the body, with us joining in the assault rather than taking our body out of the line of fire. In this way we are prepared to accept a world that transforms body-parts into commodities for a market and view our body as a repository of diseases: the body as plague, the body as source of epidemics, the body without reason.

Our struggle then must begin with the **re-appropriation** of our body, the **revaluation and rediscovery** of its capacity for resistance, and **expansion and celebration** of its powers, individual and collective.

Dance is central to this re-appropriation. In essence, the act of dancing is an exploration and invention of what a body can do: of its capacities, its languages, its articulations of the strivings of our being. I have come to believe that there is a philosophy in dancing, for dance mimics the processes by which we relate to the world, connect with other bodies, transform ourselves and the space around us.

From dance we learn that matter is not stupid, it is not blind, it is not mechanical, but has its rhythms, has its language, and it is self-activated and self-organizing. Our bodies have reasons that we need to learn, rediscover, reinvent. We need to listen to their language as the path to our health and healing, as we need to listen to the language and rhythms of the natural world as the path to the health and healing of the earth. Since the power to be affected and to affect, to be moved and move, a capacity which is indestructible, exhausted only with death, is constitutive of the body, there is an immanent politics residing in it: the capacity to transform itself, others, and **change the world.**



**English-language
anarchist news &
information exchange**

Act For Freedom Now! (Greece
& global) actforfree.noblogs.org

Anarchist Library (multi-lingual, open-
source catalogue of print-ready texts)
theanarchistlibrary.org

Anarchy, Secession, Subsistence
(rejoining rebellion with the land)
anarchysecessionsubsistence.blogspot.ca

A-News Podcast (weekly curation of
selected posts and topics for those
without time to read anarchistnews.org)
podcast.anarchistnews.org

Autonomy News (UK & global)
autonomynews.org

Bad News (collaborative presentation
every month from audio shows across the
world) aradio-berlin.org/en/tag/badnews

**Counter-Surveillance Resource
Center** (multi-lingual)
csrc.link

Earth First! UK (direct-action,
leaderless eco-defence)
earthfirst.uk

Enough is Enough 14 (global)
enoughisenough14.org

Indigenous Action (radical perspectives
from occupied homelands)
indigenoussaction.org

Knowing the Land is Resistance
(re-enchantment and reconnection)
knowingtheland.com

The Local Kids (compiled translations
from international voices in struggle)
thelocalkids.noblogs.org

Montreal Counter-Information
(Canada, bi-lingual)
mtlcounterinfo.org

Non-Fides (France & global, multi-
lingual) non-fides.fr

Oplopanax Publishing (a cache of
handsome and engaging printable zines)
oplopanaxpublishing.wordpress.com

Resonance Audio Distro (various
readings as MP3s plus source files)
resonanceaudiodistro.wordpress.com

Segadores (multi-lingual, anti-colonial
anarchist analysis and translation)
segadores.alscarrers.org

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warriorup.noblogs.org

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'R.I.P Taylor'

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– @critic

**'The Way That We Fail Each
Other and Love Each Other'**

– from 'Suturing the Split',
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Clémentine

**'Mutant Identities in the Middle
Ages'**

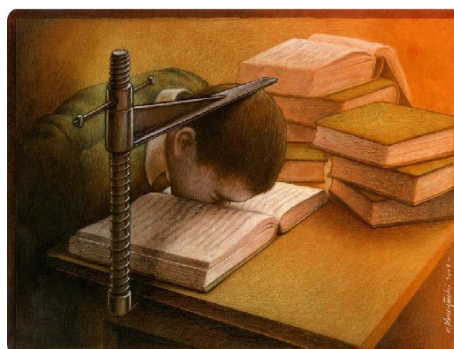
– from Jauria #3

'In Praise of the Dancing Body'

– by Silvia Federici

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.

This chapter of Return Fire comes with
two supplements; '**Violence, Non-
Violence, Diversity of Tactics**', an
interview between Green Anti-Capitalist
Media and Peter Gelderloos, and '**A Web
of Relations & Tensions**', an interview
between No Path fanzine and Return
Fire. If not included with this magazine,
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