anathema

WHAT WENT DOWN

August 21 - Anti-prison graffiti reading "Abandon Prisons" and "Free Them All" goes up around West Philly.

August 22 - Center City bank robbed at gun point.

August 25 - Two area banks robbed by one person this afternoon.

August 27 - "Bucket Hat Bandit" robs two banks in neighboring Montgomery County.

August 30 - Police likely wounded 3 and killed an eight-year-old child after a football game in Sharon Hill, just outside of Philly. They allege there was other gunfire, and that one bullet may have been fired toward them.

September - Four children arrested and charged for a fire that destroyed a vacant church in the Tacony neighborhood last May.

September 3 - Police officer stabbed at convenience store in Coatesville.

September 9 - Several dozen hold a noise demo outside the Juvenile Justice Center in West Philly. Demonstrators shot fireworks, distributed fliers, lit flares, and read a speech by a member of the Vaughn 17.

September 12 - Philly ABC hosts the fourth annual Running Down the Walls 5K run. Gathering over 200 people and raising over $10,000 for political prisoners, the run featured speeches from various speakers on anti-prison and political prisoner organizing.

Mid-September - Anarchist take down and burn a banner commemorating dead January 6th rioter Ashli Babbitt along I-76. "We just couldn't allow that shit to fester in our town and following the proud anti-fascist tradition decided to take matters into our own hands."

September 27 - Alt-right musician and anti-choice activist Julie Green -- aka "Mama P" -- of Philly suburb Wallingford, is doxxed by Anonymous Comrades Collective. ACC used information leaked following the data breach of Epik.com by hackers associated with Anonymous. ★

BY THE NUMBERS

4 former Minneapolis cops plead not guilty to violating George Floyd's civil rights by participating in his murder.

Over **50%** of police killings go unreported, police kill Black people at 3.5x higher rate than whites.

Nearly **100** Philadelphia Police cars were damaged in 2020 as a result of attacks.

At least **7** US military installations already exist in Australia, prior to the AUKUS deal meant to grow U.S. presence in the South Pacific in addition to arming Australia with nuclear submarines. The attempt to curb Chinese economic growth in the region is expected to inflame tensions to the point of war.
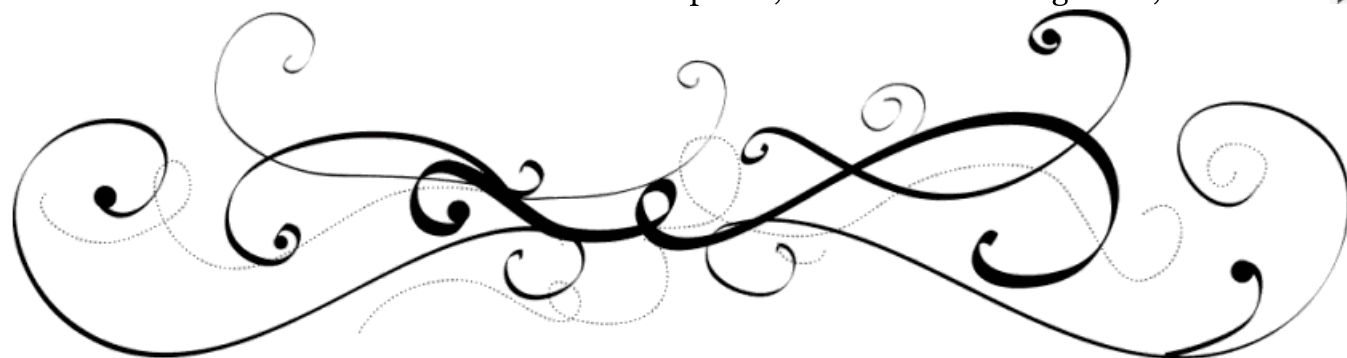
OUTLAWS RISING

Hedonistic outlaw cultures seem to be on the rise in Philly. Since the loosening of Covid-19 restrictions, I've observed more people doing illegal things together for fun. It's not one hundred percent clear to me why but street racing, renegade raves, sideshows, bike and dirt bike rideouts have become more common. These ways of coming together have already existed here, but they do seem to be happening more often and in bigger ways.

It could be that after a wild time last summer people are chasing the good times in other ways. Or it might be that with the pandemic putting so many of us out of work, many of us are realizing that we don't have to prioritize work above all else. The out-of-control moments from last summer showed us the police can't control everything all the time. Whatever the reason, it's very refreshing to see someone doing donuts around a cop car.

Police report that on Saturday night into Sunday morning they broke up several sideshows. Sideshows are festive gatherings where people come together to do car tricks, show off their rides, be together, often blocking streets to do so. They have been taking place in Northeast Philly, and Center City according to social media and police reports. Although police have been breaking up these gatherings, so far no one has been arrested from them.

Dirt bike and four wheeler rideouts have long been a part of Philly culture. Recently police have been cracking down on illegal dirt bikes. The PPD has been encouraging Philadelphians to report anyone storing dirt bikes and four wheelers and has increased efforts to confiscate them. This, of course, has yet to actually stop individuals and groups from doing wheelies down major streets in broad daylight and I certainly hope it stays that way.

These kinds of illegal cultures normalize ungovernability, help people learn to outmaneuver the police, and create a fun night out, all at once! ★

10 civilians killed by precision US air strike in Kabul, including an aid worker and seven children. Zero combatants were killed.

More than **1,500** gigatons of CO_2 released by humans since the industrial revolution, resulting in measures of earth's health now being at its worst on record according to the NOAA.

23 previously endangered species moved to be marked as extinct by US Fish & Wildlife service.

Only **3** seconds' worth of global emissions are predicted to be negated by the world's largest carbon removal plant in a year's time. ★

WHY WE HAVE TO DESTROY ALL THE 5G TOWERS

While 5G has been billed as a faster internet, in reality its installation worldwide is part of a major technocratic shift that aims to entirely reshape our lives in the interests of capital. In response, hundreds of 5G and other cell towers have been deliberately burned down across the world over the past two years, reminding us that we still have the power to intervene in their plans for us.

Studies over the past year have shown that 5G is actually no faster than 4G, and common sense might already indicate that the tech industry would not put billions of dollars into

new infrastructure simply in order to increase the people's download speeds. What 5G is actually about is enhanced data collection, which will be used for increased surveillance and artificial intelligence as well as profit.

The more we come to rely on "smart" devices like cell phones, computers, cars, Apple watches, and any other wirelessly interconnected technology, the more we allow the tech industry to gather and profit off of our personal information, expanding capital's totalitarian reach into the most intimate aspects of our lives. This is not simply an issue of privacy, but a question of the extent to which we are willing to allow capital to shape our relationships to others and to our selves, a restructuring powered by the hyper-exploitation of people and land overseas to extract the minerals that make up these devices.

Smart phones in particular tend to engulf us in dopamine-based addictions that constrain our cognitive functioning. We all know this and joke about it, but few have actually taken steps to stop using these devices. According to Anna Lembke, author of the book *Dopamine Nation*, binging on pleasurable things on our phones reduces our use of parts of our brains that deal with future planning and problem-solving and are crucial for personality development. Lembke writes, "We're losing our capacity to delay gratification, solve problems and deal with frustration and pain in its many different forms." Such effects are only the latest in the long historical process of domestication of most of the human species, a process that reshapes our brains and bodies and continues to take away many of our capabilities, while enhancing our dependence on the way things are.

A spring 2020 article in German anarchist publication *In der Tat* describes 5G's role in a much broader eco-industrial expansion. The German federal government's 5G plan, the authors report, shows how the new technology is intended to pertain to literally everything: "From industry and its logistics to agriculture and 'farm management systems,' to 'intelligent networks' like smart meters and all sorts of smart grids and smart utilities [...]; the media of the future like Augmented and Virtual Reality and finally Smart Cities with their intelligent street lamps and traffic lights, smart rubbish trucks and buses." When we understand the scope of this new technological plan as well as its role in capitalist accumulation and expansion, we can see that the fight against telecommunications, often dismissed as a standpoint particular to "primitivist" tendencies, is also, as *In der Tat* argues, fundamentally "a struggle against work and exploitation."

How to destroy cell phone towers

Recipe: Standard size cell phone tower, used by two or three cell carriers. Usually at the installation there will be a sign noting the companies.

Ingredients:

2-3 comrades

Entry tools (Boltcroppers, Wiresnips, etc)
Gloves, Mask, Clean Clothes, Hat, Cap or Hood (for DNA traces)
Fuel (500ml, White Spirit or Kerosene preferred instead of Benzine/Petrol)
Fuel (100ml of Benzine/Petrol)
Firelighters, Several Lighters, Long Pole or Stick (up to 15ft)
Thick Rags/Towelling (to absorb the fuel)
Small Tyre which is easy to fit in a rucksack (from Wheelbarrow, Quad Bike, Moto etc)

Stage 1. Recon the target. Locate the weak point in the installation, which is where the network cables depart from the mast vertical and enter horizontally or similar into the electrical source, which is usually either a small reinforced building or box. The exposed cables may be located at ground level or up to 15ft up the mast for example. Note estimated timings, entry and exit points, security cameras, motion sensors, lighting etc. Aim to execute the action within 15 mins.

Stage 2. Check and enter the site, climb the mast if needed, cut the cable ties that bunch the wires together at the weak point you located earlier. Wedge the tyre in between the cables securely and stuff the tyre with rags and wrap some rags around the cables climbing up the mast from that point. Soak the rags inside the tyre and up the mast with fuel. Take care not to cover yourself with fuel traces, prevent unneeded forensic evidence and do not set yourself on fire. If you are using a pre-made timed incendiary device place it inside the tyre and set it. Climb down.

Stage 3. If using a timed device, leave the site immediately. If not, check the site and your exit points quickly. This second check is to prevent any detection, unnecessary injuries or death due to the extended nature of the action.

Stage 4. Light the fire using a pole or stick wrapped with fuel-soaked rags, Benzine is better here as the wind can get very strong where these mast are located usually. Light the rags inside the tyre from a distance, getting as far back as possible. If the tyre is small, then the fire is smaller, and detection is lessened. Practice operating in windy environments to get used to using fire at altitude and in difficult circumstances. Leave immediately.

Security: Dispose of all materials used in the sabotage action and do not return to the site. Police scientific teams will extensively search the target's area, entry and exit points, and routes to and from, for any trace of material they can use as evidence.

This recipe is open to be adapted and developed for use wherever it is needed, larger and more complex targets and systems need more developed plans of attack. Trial and error are the guide.

Against 5G & the world which needs it

Technological systems are just as vulnerable as the kings of the past. In Europe, there have been more than 288 arson attacks on antennas since early 2020. Many of the attacks on 5G towers result from conspiracy theories that the technology is causing coronavirus. Anarchists, however, have also claimed responsibility for many of the attacks, including in the U.K., Toulouse, Grenoble, Bath, Rome, and Barcelona. In Belfast, 5G arsonists were reported as shouting "viva la revolution!"

In January, the French National Intelligence Coordinator claimed that "ultra-leftists" in France were responsible for at least 170 acts of sabotage

over the past year, with 60% of the attacks targeted at telecommunications infrastructure. This past February, French anarchists claimed responsibility for a double attack on towers in Brezins and Grenoble, noting that the action was taken not "to protest against 5G in particular but in a broader context, fighting against the techno-world."

Closer to home, anarchists in Quebec claimed the sabotage of a telecommunications network during the G7 summit back in 2018. In May 2020, Philly anarchists reported burning down a cell tower for the second year in a row, writing in a communique posted on Philly Anti-Cap: "We don't know the difference between 4G and 5G. All we know is we want none of it."

Meanwhile, repression is underway for French anarchist Boris, who in burning down a 5G tower in April 2020 put major telecom operators, as well as the police and other organs of the State, temporarily out of service and cost corporations between 750,000 and one million euros. He was sentenced this year to 4 years in prison.

According to anarchist publication Rumoer, the investigation into Boris's case is notable in that after finding his DNA at the site of the arson, subsequent state surveillance included stake-outs and tails run by the special elite police from the French capitol, installing a camera outside a residence, GPS devices placed in the cars of close contacts, attempts to install microphones in an apartment and in a public square, IMSI-Catchers, and raids at three residences (see Rumoer #4, "A 5-G Thing").

In July, a fire in Boris's cell left him with life-threatening injuries and since then he has been in an artificially-induced coma. According to Lille Indymedia, he was released from prison in late September and his trial appealing his sentence has been postponed due to his condition. In early September, anarchists set a telecommunications vehicle on fire in downtown Grenoble in solidarity with Boris, and others did a banner drop.

As the article "Spring Smoke Signals" points out, an individual acting alone is already unacceptable to power, but the attacks of the past year also form part of a "diffuse and multi-faceted" struggle, which threatens power in additional ways. And while isolated attacks are crucial, the effectiveness of such attacks could be significantly enhanced if coordinated with additional attacks on infrastructure, or taken up in moments of widespread upheaval, or both.

Such acts here and now, then, can also be undertaken as practice and preparation for future moments of unrest, in which how we deal with the infrastructure that keeps this world in motion will have critical strategic importance.

"I simply retort that it is time to learn to live with each other, what society has taken away from us by isolating us behind machines, with screens making us blind, blinders making us deaf to the atrocity of this world, which exploits, poisons and kills living beings, human and non-human. I then give a personal example, about the fact that I myself grew up without a cell phone and that there was certainly more mutual aid and support between people, a time when we didn't need an application to talk to each other, to meet each other, to kiss each other..."

from Boris's statement, "Prison of Nancy-Max-eville, France: Why I burned the two antennas of Mont Poupet,*" June 2021* ★

ON SABOTAGE
AS BOYCOTT/STRIKE SUPPORT

What is the point of a boycott as strike support?

To hurt the profits of a company whose workers are on strike in order to help force workers' demands.

How does this work?

Ideally, if you don't buy something (or use a service) you usually buy, then that product will not get sold and either the company will directly lose profits, or third parties that buy and stock the product will not place more/as many orders due to an inability to sell them (make profit).

What is a limitation to success here?

Well, for instance in the current (10/5/21) Kellogg's Factories Strike, and more generally with mass produced goods, is that stores, especially mega-chains like Walmart or Acme, can probably sit on supplies for a while, and many of the products might even have long enough shelf lives to wait out the strike/boycott without even having to reduce orders.

Also, if you do not already buy the product, your "boycott" will not have any effect.

Also, many people, through innocent ignorance or active opposition to the boycott/strike, will continue to buy the product and help clear shelves, especially if stores discount boycotted products as we had seen during the Nabisco Strike and boycott (Aug 10 2021-Sept 18 2021, which was nonetheless fairly successful, winning workers pay raises, increased 401k contributions, and a $5000 bonus as negotiated by their union.)

How can the principal tactic behind boycotts - hurting a company's profits by making it harder to move/sell products - be extended to cover some of these shortcomings?

Sabotage is one possibility that carries some added risk for participation, but can reap higher rewards per participant.

To, say, paint on, cut open, or otherwise damage a cereal box for instance might for a store to take the box off the shelves or sell at a discount - my mother was a master at finding damaged packaging at supermarkets in order to appeal for a discount, and it often works and often stores are even proactive or have explicit policies in place for damaged packaging.

One person can damage multiple packages of a brand's highest selling products (like Corn Flakes or Special K) in one quick walk through an aisle. Where a boycott might mean one product not getting sold to a person who usually buys it, sabotage might mean multiple items not getting sold or being discounted to not just someone who would have bought it before, but even to people who were not intending to boycott in the first place.

What are some potential drawbacks or complaints of sabotage?

Risk. This can lead to arrest whereas boycotting - usually, nowadays - can not.

Food waste? I have seen this complaint, but it belies ignorance and greater structural faults of the companies and their profit motives: The ultimate result of an extended boycott, if it is sustained long enough, would also be food waste. But, the food will only be wasted if the company does have a reckless, wasteful policy of throwing out damaged items instead of giving them for free to anyone who knows the potential risks, let alone re-bagging the goods in a makeshift way. Obviously they would never do this as it would hurt profits, but I'm positive any local Distro or Food Not Bombs group wouldn't balk at getting a box of unexpired cereal with a hole slashed in the side. The waste on this front is entirely the fault of the companies and profit motives, so long as the food is not actually spoiled with chemical or toxic agents like fucking dousing them in anthrax or bleach.

Stealing might also be ideal to directly avoid waste and profit, but again, this carries an even greater risk and also might not affect as many items at once as sabotage could.

Optics might look bad here to the more moderate-minded. I think this infantilizes the strikers.

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They know what their strike does - it hurts profits. They plainly and openly want to hurt profits and know that boycotts can be of significance. This is simply an extension of the logic of boycotts. If it hurts profits, it helps the people on strike.

Many anarchists might already not buy these factory-produced, corporate-brand products, but if supporting striking workers is seen as a useful tactic to you, there are more ways to support than joining a boycott. ★

RETURN TO NORMAL?

"Only by upsetting the imperatives of time and social space will it be possible to imagine new relations and surroundings. The old philosopher said one can only desire on the basis of what one knows. Desires can only change if one changes the life that produces them. Let's be clear about this: rebellion against the organization of time and space by power is a material and psychological necessity."

– At Daggers Drawn

The vested interests of capital are desperately seeking a return to normal economic conditions, but crisis is the new normal. Authorities have begun pushing children back into physical classrooms, despite their under-vaccinated status and increasing infections from the Delta variant, to allow more of the workforce (their parents) to be in their proper place. Many employable people are reluctant to return to menial jobs, forcing corporations to bump the wage on offer to what labor groups suggested was a living wage ten years ago; others are quitting once they're asked to return to their physical offices. The federal government too, struggles to pass funding to maintain and expand their infrastructures of oppression. But have we broken with their organization of time and space?

Three weeks into the school year in Mississippi, where the school year begins a bit earlier than the rest of the country, there was a large outbreak among the children, some of whom died. Then Miami administrators made the news with their infections and deaths. Soon, the news turned from individual outbreaks, to renewed outbreaks; doubling and tripling numbers from the previous week in each location, and closing schools across Chicago, Detroit, Colorado, and elsewhere.

The rush to put students in schools reflects the earliest impulses toward mandatory schooling in this country. When child labor laws prevented children from being occupied with work, authorities sought some way to not only occupy their wild impulses toward freedom, but curb them entirely. The education industry imposes a particular indoctrination, hoping to better its future workforce for their exploitation, while also unburdening increasingly concerned parents so that they may work more themselves. Despite many efforts during the Covid pandemic, administrators and teachers realized that it was not possible (or even appealing) to make all education remote. Small children, more often resistant to the confines of the school walls and the state's indoctrination, won't always sit obediently in front of a screen. Their parents don't have time to constantly supervise them, either, especially among the lower classes whose work is less transferable to a "remote" digital age.

The Pennsylvania National Guard and Amazon corporation's mutual interest in Philadelphia's recent pleas regarding their bus transportation of school children lends a great deal of imagery that doesn't require much imagination. As Amazon continues to expand its facilities into the region – incorporating thousands more local workers into their notoriously abject regimentation – and following the National Guard's suppression of nationwide revolts last year, we are once more reminded how schools resemble factories, factories resemble prisons, and so forth.

The presidential administration just released a six point plan for fighting the highly contagious Delta variant, two of which don't actually have anything to do with fighting rising Covid infections: "Keeping schools safely open" and "Protecting our economic recovery." The massive Covid outbreaks in schools illustrate their failure before they've even begun, and the latter shows the governments'

real motivations for what they are. The lapse of Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, too, in a period of rapidly rising infections brings home the point that profit is more important than people to those in power – thrusting many millions, including over 600,000 in Pennsylvania, further into precarity.

This should not be news. Economists estimate 40% of the world's human population live on less than $2 a day, leading to the conclusion that this industrial experiment, less than two centuries old, has not only been a complete detriment to life on earth, but – anthropocentric though it may be – civilization has also made the lives of half the human population quantifiably worse. Since the economic downturn of 2008, too, we've entered the twilight of the economic and governmental systems familiar to us. That "progress" championed by so many, after very quickly initiating the first man-made great extinction event on earth, has begun to collapse.

This increasing instability affects us materially – in the way we're able to feed and house ourselves – but also mentally, emotionally and spiritually. There has long been an increase in apocalyptic cinema, but a physical result can be seen in the major jump in gun violence during the pandemic, as people increasingly turn on each other. Sometimes less pointed is the simultaneous increase in vandalism. Some of us have tried to utilize vandalisms to target the problems of society, and we are beginning to see an increase in guerrilla-style attacks elsewhere as insurrections fail to maintain and people begin looking toward other methods of insurgency (perhaps best chronicled by the website Abolitionist Media Worldwide, a.k.a. AMWEnglish). Those that turn up their noses at these attacks as a means to liberation should feel pressured to manifest further social upheavals against the existent, or else be faced with more people turning to increasingly clandestine and violent actions to undermine these existential threats. This could begin with "mutual aid" endeavors, but must in some way support attacks on society or we will be left with the same problems.

Famous decolonialist theorist Frantz Fanon wrote in *The Wretched of the Earth* that liberatory/decolonial struggles were necessarily violent – since those societies of control were imposed by way of incredible violence – and pointed to interpersonal violence as a sign of that fight bubbling beneath the surface. The uprisings in 2019, and again in 2020, also convey this. The tendency of his case studies to develop authoritarian and conservative theological rules, however, should be noted as a result of its primary actors being of those politics, their insisting on taking the place of the ruling European colonizer, and possibly related to their indiscriminate violence. His criticism of the parties and unions are still relevant too, and even in the so-called first world, some of our natural accomplices can be found among the indigenous traditionalists within these settler-colonized lands. We could very well find them at ongoing blockades of infrastructure, much like we find new accomplices in the course of a riot; all of whom have something to teach us.

Meanwhile, little labor is fully automated at this point. Scientists are needed to figure out how to irrigate the poisonous run-off from our landfills, or extirpate the other waste it generates. Miners are still needed to extract lithium and rare earth magnets to create digital technology, even if this is largely outside our immediate purview (as it occurs in other colonized terrain). Closer to home, where mining and other industrial endeavors employ far fewer overall, the service industry is king. In what economists have dubbed "The Great Resignation," however, many are considering other options before thrusting themselves between a cash register and a deep fryer. We find ourselves somewhere between an uncoordinated, large-scale sick-out and an informal strike – as many bars and restaurants are having difficulty getting restaffed. Lending credence to the anonymous point of "Abolish Restaurants," people are looking to do almost anything else than return to that "miserable place." Still, even many office workers have been quitting when their employers call them back into the physical office, but it's many an officials' hope that the end of the unemployment assistance will force the workers' hand. Unfortunately though, many workers are not so interested in refusing work entirely, on the path to abolishing it and the class structures that bind us.

Cops are murderers.
We burned their cars.
You can too.[†]

For a world without the police and the white supremacist order they defend.

Solidarity with Black insurgents and everyone else who fights back.
— *Anarchists*

So much of this lack of revolutionary fervor is due to the expert framing of the totality of this society as a given – we can't even ask the questions we want to without a long preface – and the incredible growth in misinformation has all but handcuffed relevant political action with conspiracy theories. This terrible combination of authority's self-sustaining narrative and grassroots subterfuge is impossible to compete with on their platforms, from major news networks to social media. The bottom line of these advanced technologies not only assumes maintaining that status quo, but necessitates it – and is willing to impose complete totalitarian rule to maintain it despite (and because of) the ongoing collapse. This is a big part of the rise in far-right movements, and their clear associations with conspiracy theorists. Thusly, it is only with the demise of these mediations that we can really begin to communicate with each other.

Much of the infrastructure governments maintain, along with jobs and schools, are nothing but a series of targets of different priorities. Most people are not into a wholesale refusal of society, and only abandon state reliance after it has totally failed them – and then will return to it when it revives (just look at how any major disaster plays out). States are the standards and people fear change. We too, as Serafinski criticizes in Blessed is the Flame, "identify ourselves within society even though we strive for its destruction."

Nothing is permanent, though, and change is inevitable. The question is whether we operate in ways recuperable by power, enabling its further adaptation and persistence, or act in ways that enable attack and destruction of their order. For this reason it's important to remember that we oppose the totality of this society, from left to right. If we fought liberalism as hard as we (claim to?) fight conservativism, we might actually create opportunities for experiments in freedom or otherwise expose liberals' reactionary and repressive tendencies to a broader swath of the population. We also remember that any mandate is an oppressive imposition, and that dismantling advanced transportation infrastructure can also halt the spread of potential pandemics, for instance.

We can benefit from *expanding possibility through attack*, and from recognizing *targets that exist everywhere*. As each of the italicized titles suggest, we can compound the effects of our attacks when we recognize common interests and weaknesses of multinationals, piggybacking on previous attacks without even needing profound coordination. We are against the horrorshow that is war, but can benefit from integrating consistent tactics akin to non-linear warfare. Rejecting "frontal conflict" and holding ground, guerrilla warfare has always been the beneficial strategy to smaller or less-armed opponents – and often their only chance of success. Charging at the police at a demonstration or occupying a public square will usually prove more costly than less spectacular insurgencies, whereas the latter can only hope to be useful for meeting new people, at best – especially if one can surmise how to *hit where it hurts*. We look toward the Conspiracy Cells of Fire who said, "we have become another aspect of the asymmetric threat. The war to the end, has already begun." ★

ONE YEAR LATER:
EVICTION DEFENSE & HOUSING STRUGGLES

On Wednesday August 18th the city of Philadelphia dissolved two encampments in the neighborhood of Kensington. The sweep occurred under the watch of Mayor Kenney, OHS, law enforcement, city-services and "outreach" workers. An eviction defense network and other autonomous & grass-roots housing advocates hoped to halt the eviction, most notably through filing an injunction. However, city officials backed by aggravated Kensington residents pushed ahead in clearing out the camps. In the past year, encampment & other evictions have continued despite an influx of radical eviction defense networks. The Covid hotels, PATCO encampment, and Reading Terminal Market encampment, were some of the larger, more publicized evictions carried out despite resistance.

Sweeps and encampment evictions are certainly nothing new, but radical & anarchist involvement in direct resistance to evictions has grown considerably since last summer. The uprising following the police murder of George Floyd, in conjunction with the growing fears of and attention towards pandemic-related joblessness, eviction and homelessness created a ripe environment for the occupation-style housing protests that popped up in multiple cities. In Philadelphia, the largest protest/occupation/encampment took root beside the Ben Franklin Parkway & lasted over 100 days. Housing-related support, defense, and attacks became more widely publicized, known and understood. The conflictuality of responses to housing struggles increased significantly. Confrontational resistance efforts gained exalting momentum, as well as a remarkable number of new participants. A year later, the numbers and momentum have dropped off significantly, but autonomous & affinity-group organizing has continued in the context of housing struggles within & alongside anarchist networks. The continuation of eviction defense networks is encouraging, but the question "are we effective" deserves attention.

For those involved in these struggles, as well as anarchists even vaguely paying attention to their efforts, it's difficult to ignore that attempts to halt larger sweeps frequently fail. Occupying buildings in large numbers isn't happening at all. When our goal is to maintain a community and stop a sweep, and the area is cleared out, we undoubtedly come away with our heads low, hearts heavy and blood boiling, while the state leaves satisfied at maintaining power and property. What can we do differently? Can we resist, house and occupy more effectively? What are we not doing? While it's beneficial, I don't think that providing material resources is the answer to preventing sweeps, nor is showing up with cars and carts ready to move evicted-residents and their belongings elsewhere. These efforts are positive in their own right, but they're technically not forms of defense. Often following an eviction/eviction notice we see asks being made even by anarchists for people to contact city officials. Why?

The following questions/opinions are meant to be viewed through a tactical lens. Does giving people material resources like food, tents and bedding take power away from the city? In small ways I think it can. It supports people in maintaining unlawful shelter, it creates alliances between housed anarchists, unhoused anarchists and people living on the street. Relationships and affinity with others is one of the most valuable forms of protection we have. Offering and sharing resources also has the potential to strengthen people's trust in autonomous & anti-government solutions. Is providing resources preventing sweeps? No. While it mitigates harm, providing resources is not undermining the city's ability to carry out sweeps or resulting in successful resistance. If we can set up squats & liberate property, this is where providing resources becomes a form of direct government-resistance.

Is contacting city officials by phone/email taking power away from the city? No. Calls and emails are an attempt to appeal to city officials' empathy. We already know their priorities are in direct conflict with ours. Calls/emails/tweets don't get us meaningfully closer to any form of liberation. Is contacting city officials preventing sweeps? No. Asking the city to allow people to illegally live outside, in occupied buildings or squats isn't effective because it isn't in the city's interests and never will be. There are valid reasons many anarchists bemoan this category of tactics entirely. It may have temporarily effects, but as a strategy on its own it maintains, if not increases, the state's control of situations. The government will never abolish itself. Involving government officials in housing struggles via negotiation requires validating its existence & continuation. It is the antithesis of demonstrating our ability to destroy and create on our own. How can we find and widen cracks in the system instead of asking it to work differently?

Are having peaceful demonstrations taking power away from the city? Probably not significantly – and definitely not in isolation. Non-conflictual demonstra-

tions publicize grievances. They showcase individuals invested in a struggle in a particular manner. However, being visible & noted is doubtfully in our best interests. Peaceful protests can at times distract/spread-thin law enforcement and therefore support conflictual direct action in occurring, but it has to occur. Demonstrations may introduce people to on-the-ground organizing. If some of them grow tired of lawful & predictable protests, and abandon them for more clandestine and direct action, then maybe they contribute to resistance indirectly. Are peaceful demonstrations preventing sweeps? No. I don't think peaceful protests are accomplishing anything on their own, nor are they pressuring city officials to make drastically different choices. The government doesn't willingly make self-destructive decisions. Peaceful protests may display solidarity, but they deny us opportunities to resist laws & make autonomous choices. They rely on our inaction and depend on an active response from the government. It's confusing when anarchists find satisfaction in this dynamic.

How can we participate in housing struggles in ways that allow us to maintain our footholds, increase our autonomy, and damage the systems we hate? Direct action that threatens the city and creates consequences for the city making choices we don't like seems to be infrequent. The city will protect its assets above all else. Turning those assets into targets, either directly or indirectly puts more meaningful pressure on city government to surrender to our demands or, even better, leave us alone. The type of tactics that take decisions away from the government don't, at the moment, seem to be popularly utilized in the context of housing struggles.

"Involving government officials is the antithesis of demonstrating our ability to destroy and create on our own"
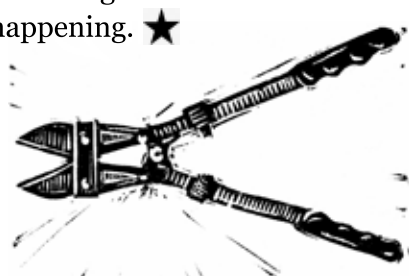
Pressuring the government to make a different decision may temporarily benefit people actively struggling and be relevant, but it's incomparable to the state backing down. Gains are dependent on their response. They have the power in this situation. If the city sweeps an encampment and the next day people "throw down" or take over buildings, it's going to have an effect. We don't know what kind, but if we want different results we have to try different things. Many of the tactics we aren't noticeably utilizing fall into the categories of threatening the city, refusing to obey, taking what's ours and creating consequences/ getting revenge. The city has no interest in building

productive, amicable relationships with anarchists. We are enemies. Does it do us any good to act otherwise?

If direct action like property destruction, looting, disruptive demos, and taking over property doesn't occur in relation to housing struggles, I think we will continue to be met with the same results. At the parkway encampment, the city backed down from planned evictions multiple times. What occurred in that process that's lacking from current eviction-defense efforts? People showing up in bloc prepared to guard a perimeter with their bodies, shields & stolen barricades; political graffiti covering an affluent area; holding down a no-cop zone. Tactics like these have not continued to be consistent, visible aspects of eviction defense efforts since then.

We can engage in housing struggles without offering/ agreeing to tame our convictions, abandon our tactics, appeal to the media, or yield to "activist" leaders. This doesn't mean we show up ready to fight for the sake of being disagreeable. It just means we don't allow ourselves to be co-opted. We intentionally show up (or participate in parallel settings) autonomously. At times it may be wise to agreeably strategize, but we can and should be distinguishable from people cooperating with or involving (/seeking to involve) themselves in city government.

You can't supinely convince anyone aligned with government to make choices that don't ultimately benefit capitalism, state power and its wealthy benefactors. Conflictual action, unlawful acquisitions of resources/ property, and a "tug-o-war" of power are our playing fields. If we play by their rules, they're going to win. If we lean more heavily into our ability to be autonomous, disobedient, and damaging to their assets, the game may change. There's no guarantee that it will be effective in realizing specific goals, and there are ethical questions related to other people's well-being wrapped up in these decisions. However, even when there is no situational way to "win," we can still undermine state power by disrupting, damaging, taking away, shutting down, instilling fear, and revealing weaknesses/ vulnerabilities. Movements neglecting illegal and destructive aspects of resistance have a long history of defeat and co-optation. Right now I think we can learn from what's not happening. ★
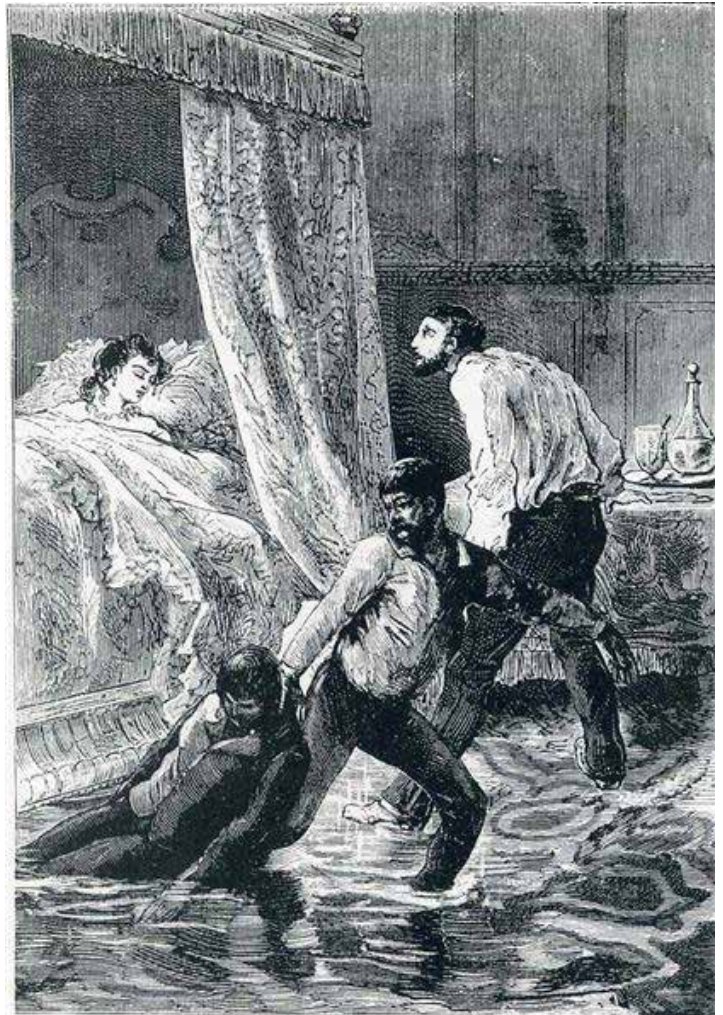
Following the hottest month ever documented (in July) and a summer of scorching heat waves and devastating wildfires that scientists say was "virtually impossible without human influence," we again contend with massive flooding. A recently circulated photo of firefighters standing waste-deep in flooded streets, surrounded by flaming homes and hills, has been called a picture of the future – but we should remember it is literally a photo of the present.

Hurricane Ida may have downgraded to a tropical storm by the time it hit the Philadelphia region, but it still packed a punch. Massive flooding, power outages, seven tornadoes, and several deaths can all be attributed to the powerful storm, the likes of which are becoming more common and frequent within the changing climate. That Interstate 676 was transformed into a river drew comparisons to the sinking city of Venice – like the many malls and airports built on (and smothering) wetlands throughout the United States, the city loses at least a millimeter a year. Many took to diving and swimming in the new Philadelphia waterway despite the obvious warnings – in addition to the dangerous debris that such intense flooding carries, all flooding (and even just a heavy rain) tends to dramatically increase sewage levels in local waterways as sewers back up into them. We would do well to remember that these waterways are also where we get our tap water.

Some of us have previously joked about the rising sea levels projected to swallow up New Jersey, saying Philly will become oceanfront property. The reality is that some 44% of the world's population (and almost 40% of America's) lives within 100 miles of one shoreline or another. According to C40, a network of international megacities concerned with climate change, more than 570 coastal communities around the world face a projected sea level rise of more than a foot-and-a-half by 2050. From New York City to Buenos Aires, from Shanghai to Bombay and beyond, extensive populations are expected to be displaced. Most of the cities on this list are addressing impending flooding with projects to protect their coastlines by erecting sea walls and barriers, among other strategies. "Whether these measures will be sufficient, and be in place in time, remains to be seen." Yet more people are said to be moving to cities and suburbs than returning to land-based living than ever. Some adage about rearranging deck chairs on the titanic seems appropriate.
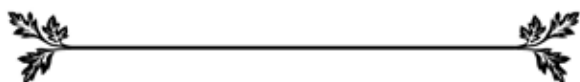

Just prior to this storm, many were killed in sudden flooding in Tennessee. A "once in 400 year storm" hit Germany, and is expected to become more common because of "human-caused climate change." A recent study also "urged Kenyan officials to prepare for a future in which once-rare floods, such as those in 2019 and 2020, are going to become regular occurrences." High flooding from the Nile River in 2016 was preceded by drought, setting a cyclic precedent that increases the devastation of each – and illustrates the interdependency of our world in that these results were brought about by cycles in Pacific temperatures that affected weather patterns from El Niño and La Niña.

Dams, pavement, and other aspects of civiliza-

tion both increase the likelihood of droughts and flooding, even as rising sea levels swallow up inhabited islands from Louisiana to the South Pacific. Interfering with natural flows and absorption redirects water in overly-concentrated ways, prioritizing industrial and consumer processes over the earth, while killing off plants that would normally absorb a good deal of run-off through their roots – both destabilizing soil and encouraging more run-off to be carried down roadways to increasingly concentrated areas of flooding.

The sinkholes that are common in Philadelphia also largely occur where creeks are buried under pavement – like the Mill Creek that once fed a lake in Clark Park and is now only discernible as a drainage pipe emptying into the Schuylkill River (alongside Woodlands Cemetery and beneath train tracks and powerlines). The headwaters of the much beloved Wissahickon Creek, too, has long been entombed beneath a shopping center in the suburbs.

The scale of the problem is certainly much bigger than prying up a bit of asphalt or demolishing a dam can solve, but such actions are a necessary part of mitigating the ever-increasing flooding. It should seem beyond pressing, in fact, when we note that Syrians and Pacific-Islanders were already among the first climate change refugees, from drought and flooding specifically. The wave of Afghan refugees fleeing the US's destabilization of the region and the Taliban's takeover is not unrelated either. Not only is the US Military one of the largest polluters and drivers of climate change, but every major institution of control (and their infrastructures) are the primary creators of this climate catastrophe. As the wealthy flee to their yachts from the pandemics and disasters of today and tomorrow, we fondly remember those in southern France and Turkey who burned those kinds of boats only a couple of years ago. We don't care which cinematic dystopia our world comes to mirror either, looking only for accomplices with which to deindustrialize this world, while also preparing for the task of "blowing up the final ark with bomb explosions and the final dictator with Browning shots." ★

IT COULD HAPPEN HERE: A REVIEW

While only charlatans confidently predict what will happen, it's always interesting to explore what *could* happen. This is especially true if the *coulds* being explored are pertinent to the unfolding of struggles against the State and Capital. In the past couple of years, the podcaster Robert Evans has become known for this kind of exploration in his popular podcast *It Could Happen Here*. Podcasts, especially non-anarchist podcasts, do not normally get much attention in anarchist newspapers like *Anathema*. A review of Evans's podcast could seem out of place in these pages.

But *It Could Happen Here* has gained a lot of popularity for good reason. The series maintains a consistently engaging combination of speculative fiction, investigative journalism, and political analysis. Each episode is filled with sharp storytelling and smart ideas. The first season has also proven to be politically relevant, almost prophetically so. Airing before the start of the pandemic, season 1 explored the possibility that social conflicts and economic pressures could set off a decentralized civil war. When things began

to escalate in 2020, I, like many others, returned to this podcast to consider possible trajectories and outcomes.

The second season is currently ongoing and, with daily episodes, there is a lot of new material. For the sake of space, I want to focus on the first five episodes of Season 2. In these initial episodes, Robert Evans (the principle host with an enviable podcast voice) lays out the theme of the season and explains his main ideas. Whereas later episodes have various guests and co-hosts coming from different perspectives, these early episodes act almost like a manifesto, giving Evans a chance to be explicit about his politics. Relevant to our interests, he discloses his anarchist affinities. Specifically, he argues that the coming disasters that the podcast will explore in Season 2 can best be countered through the classic anarchist strategy of mutual aid. The fact that Evan's reveals his anarchist leanings on a popular podcast is not the only reason for the attention he will receive here. Rather, I will review *It Could Happen Here* as a starting point to discuss the relationship between mutual aid and insurrection.

Insurrection is not Evans' main focus. This season is about environmental disaster. Still, we might catch glimpses of potential insurrections within and in response to the cascading effects of broader climate collapse. These cascading effects that Evans, borrowing a term from a friend, calls "the crumbles" will break down supply lines, drive mass migration, and, accordingly, usher in an authoritarian reaction. Evans foresees "crumbles" that combine climate change with authoritarianism and disinformation campaigns, which he believes could break down the current social order.

In Evans's image of the future, mutual aid groups could step in to somewhat avert this disaster with the promise of an alternative social order. I think we can appreciate that Evans relies on a non-hierarchical, anti-authoritarian solution like mutual aid, which places an emphasis on caring for one another. A kind of "disaster relief" anarchism has evolved in recent catastrophes like Hurricane Katrina and the ongoing pandemic with relatively positive effects. At the same time, I think it's important to criticize the limitations of a vision of anarchism that divorces mutual aid from other, more conflictual, tactics.

What follows is a response to Evans's vision of anarchism in Season 2. To narrow it down further, I specifically have a bone to pick with the final episode of his 5-part introduction, "Refuse Dystopia." It is in this episode describing how mutual aid programs could produce a general strike that I would expect an insurrection to, likewise, emerge. And it is in that moment that it is most noticeably absent — and intentionally excluded. As a result, Evans bypasses the opportunity to speculate on the relationship between mutual aid and insurrection.

"While that might sound fun, Evans is not down."

To be clear, Evans is not a pacifist. He also recognizes that mutual aid is not enough and his podcast doesn't entirely rule out confrontation. He just makes hard lines about what he considers generative conflict. On the one hand, he promotes a conflictual strategy to supplement mutual aid: the mass strike. On the other hand, he denigrates a nihilist tendency that he imagines will appear within the coming disaster only to recklessly "light fires and break things." While that might sound fun, Evans is not down. The distinction he makes between the positive projects of strikers and nihilists appeals to the contemporary fashion that divides everyone into two camps: good protesters and bad protesters.

It also fits snugly within contemporary sectarian battles in anarchist scenes. It is strange to me that Evans can't envision a future without splits between a nihilist faction and a social anarchist response. Even in this science fiction scenario, the lines of the fragmented anarchist scene remain unaffected — as if these divisions were permanent and transhistorical. It is conceivable to imagine a future uprising where strikers shut down workplaces and rioters light fires simultaneously. Evans just doesn't try, even though it seems to be a more likely scenario than a false dilemma between mutual aid and breaking things.

Evans, following the current intellectual trends,

wants to isolate mutual aid from other anarchist practices. To do so, the practitioners of mutual aid are juxtaposed to the "nihilists," broadly understood to include insurrectionaries taking part in destructive actions. We can see this process of purifying mutual aid from its historical ties to insurrection in how he describes the Black Panthers' Breakfast program. He rehearses the now-popular idea that the FBI saw the Panthers' free breakfast as so threatening — even more threatening than the Panthers' infamous armed patrols — that they set out to destroy the organization.

The only problem with this version of events is that, when you actually read the FBI documents, it is clear that the FBI didn't separate the Breakfast Program from (let alone contrast it with) an insurrectionary strategy. The FBI's problem with the program was that it gained the Panthers support and, as a result, aided them in their "ultimate aim of insurrection." Contrary to popular belief, it was the threat of insurrection — not mutual aid — that led the FBI to set out to destroy the Panthers and, along with it, the Breakfast Program. That being said, the Breakfast Program should be understood as part of the Panthers attempt to generate an insurrection. An insurrection requires rebels to share resources, not just lob Molotov cocktails. But the Breakfast Program was only one element in this insurrectionary strategy and not a separate strategy that the FBI found more threatening. The insurrectionaries of the past understood this symbiosis of mutual aid and insurrection and, I would argue, they still do.

Much of the looting during the George Floyd Uprising *was mutual aid*. The past year has witnessed an explosion of both mutual aid and other insurrectionary actions. Generally, the term "mutual aid" has been almost exclusively used to describe the many DIY disaster relief responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. While anarchistic responses to the pandemic have been encouraging, mutual aid in this form can all-too-easily be contrasted to the reactions to the other momentous event of last year — the burning of the 3rd precinct. In this context, the uprising that followed appeared to be something altogether different from mutual aid. But how is freely handing out sneakers and

food through broken windows of stores not mutual aid? As a mass action of free resource sharing, it should be understood as a paradigm of mutual aid. To me, the looting, sharing, and other forms of cooperation that took place in the riots more clearly evoke the vision of mutual aid than many of the projects using the name. Not only does the riot restore mutual aid to its place in the rebellion against authority, mass looting creates the conditions — at least temporarily — where commodities can be shared without cost.

So why doesn't *It Could Happen Here* consider this more destructive form of mutual aid in its vision of future uprisings? Is it a failure of imagination? The podcast, if anything, shows Evans to be imaginative and perceptive. He seems to imply that when the tactics of insurrectionaries generalize, as they briefly did in the George Floyd Uprising, they are quickly crushed through State repression. Why the same thing wouldn't happen to scaled up mutual aid projects--which he admits are sometimes viewed as terrorist threats--is anyone's guess. I can only speculate as to why he singles out nihilists or wants to exclude destructive tactics from future uprisings.

It sounds to me like he has taken the familiar sectarian debates of today, his scene's current disputes, and projected them into the future. He might even privately (or in a later episode) imagine breaking things in the name of mutual aid or a mass strike followed by fires. After all, a fire can keep a business closed as well as a picket line. But not every action needs to be funneled into a particular strategy or vision of the future. Nihilists or whoever will want to take action, whether or not anyone else has deemed the time is right. An anarchist vision of the future should be at the very least open to unpredictable and autonomous action. And anyway, not everything needs to be shared through a mutual aid project. Some things just yearn to be lit on fire. ★

krishna o los deseos

I

No deseo la victoria.
La victoria es siempre pasajera,
no queda después sino la muerte,
el regocijo, el gozo falso de la vida:
una hierba caída sobre el hombro,
un refugio que aguarda su retorno,
un escondido llanto después de la
batalla y la victoria.
Un vaso palpitante,
un cuerpo en perpetuo movimiento,
un cenicero vacío eternamente
son más efímeros quo la victoria,
efímera y vana, cansada y agotante.
Difícil es remar a remo suelto,
difícil llenar el vaso lleno,
difícil cambiar el tiempo ajeno.
No deseo la victoria ni la muerte,
no deseo la derrota ni la vida,
sólo deseo el árbol y su sombra,
la vida con su muerte.

II

No deseo los reinos.
Un reino es siempre mensurable:
tantos metros y distancias,
tantos bueyes y caballos lo
separan de otros reinos pasajeros.
No deseo ningún reino:
mi único reino es mi corazón cantando,
es mi corazón hablando,
mi único reino es mi corazón llorando,
es mi corazón mojado:

mi reino es mi seco corazón (ya lo dije)
mi corazón es el único reino
indivisible,
el único reino que nunca nos traiciona,
mi reino y mi corazón,
(ya tengo el corazón)
no deseo los reinos si tengo mi
        pecho y mi garganta,
no deseo los valles ni los reinos.

III

No deseo los placeres.
No existe el placer sino la duda,
no existe el placer sino la muerte,
no existe el placer sino la vida.
(El mar lavará mi espíritu en las arenas,
lo lava todos los días en el recuerdo,
lo ha lavado con palabras,
el mar no es un placer sino una vida).
El mar es el reino de la soledad y el naufragio.

IV

No deseo sino la vida,
no deseo sino la muerte.

V

Descansar en el valle
que baña el río todas las tardes,
en las arenas que cubre el. mar
todas las noches,
en el viento que sopla en los ojos,
en la vida que alienta ya sin fuego,
en la muerte que respira el aire lleno,
en mi corazón que vive y muere diariamente.

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Javier Heraud Pérez
(1960)