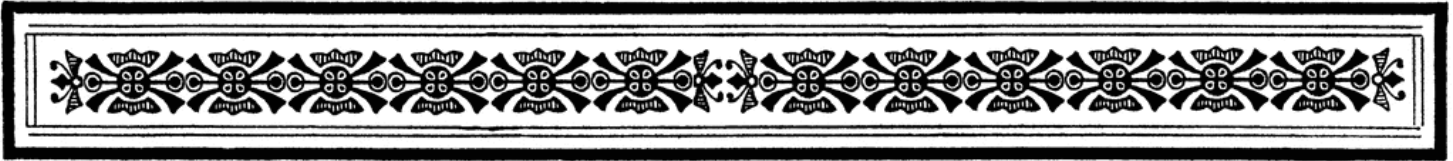


# ANATHEMA



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FREE

Black December 2018

## **CASH BAIL & THE LIMITS OF IMAGINATION**

Last February, Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner announced that his office would no longer demand monetary bails for many misdemeanors and nonviolent felonies. “End cash bail” was part of the platform on which he was elected, and for which prison abolitionists and other radicals joined his campaign, with the intention of keeping unconvicted suspects out of jail. Pennsylvania has more pretrial inmates than most other states, and many proposals have been surfacing nationwide on the subject of bail reform.

This is not an uncommon stance, however, as a federal Third U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals opinion in 2016 even called cash bail “a flaw in our system of justice” and a “threat to equal justice under the law” because of the inequity posed to those who can’t afford to post bail, subsequently missing time from work (for which many are fired), and can’t cover their bills in that absence. This frequently leads people to accept plea agreements for things they might be innocent of just so they can get out of jail – as was the case of one Joseph Curry who was accused of shoplifting \$130 in items from Walmart, and spent 88 days in jail before taking a plea because he was unable to afford the \$20,000 bail.

And ultimately, regardless of what is requested

*Continued next page*

## **YELLOW VESTS FROM AFAR**

For the past month, France has experienced the greatest disruption of its socioeconomic order since 1968. Beginning with protests on November 17 that have reignited on each subsequent weekend, the confrontation intensified on November 24, with 280,000 people mounting blockades on around 2,000 roads in France. A more solid anti-capitalist and anti-fascist front emerged with the increasingly massive riots on December 1.

Crimethinc’s commentary credits the protesters’ “extreme mobility, diffuse organization, and determination” as the reasons that the police, who were tasked with defending specific places, were unable to

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## **WHAT WENT DOWN**

November 9 - Bank robbed on Frankford Ave. in Northeast Philly by an individual threatening to use a gun.

Mid-November - White power graffiti crossed out, covered and transformed in South Philly.

November 16 - Local Proud Boy and “We The People” rally organizer Zach Rehl has his home vandalized; a brick was thrown through a window and graffiti was found saying “Nazi.”

November 17 - “We the People” rally organized in conjunction with the Proud Boys draws a small crowd on Independence Mall that is far outnumbered by anti-fascist counterprotesters. Some scuffles between fascists and anti-fascists and police and anti-fascists occur throughout the day. Two anti-fascists are arrested; one is hospitalized due to head injuries from police. One week later, two more people were arrested and charged with assault and robbery for allegedly attacking Marines later in the day.

November 20 - The jury in the first Vaughn 17 trial finds Dwayne Staats guilty of two murder charges, kidnapping, assault and conspiracy, and not guilty of intentional murder. Jarreau Ayers was found not guilty of murder, but guilty of kidnapping, assault and conspiracy. Deric Forney was found not guilty on all charges. Dwayne Staats had taken responsibility in court for planning aspects of the uprising, but denied planning or participating in the murder or assaults.

November 21 - Three people stole \$30,000 worth of jewelry from a kiosk at the Philadelphia Mills mall in Northeast Philadelphia.

November 22 - Columbus monument at Spruce Street Harbor doused in red paint in solidarity with national day of mourning. “We will continue to paint, topple and toss into rivers all statues that glorify oppressors.”

November 28 - Protesters disrupt holiday tree lighting ceremony to protest policing.

Early December - Gate of Red Belly autonomous garden is re-opened.

Early December - Tire slashed on OCF Realty vehicle. ★

## **OMISSIONS**

First of all, our apologies for mislabeling our last issue October 2018 when it came out in November. Time is just a social construct.

Second of all, we cropped out C.M. Wode’s name from their poem “Coup des Lumières,” which we retrieved from their zine “Sleepless Dreams of Attack,” released in 2017.

And finally, we neglected to include in What Went Down an incident on October 8th in which the Columbus Statue in Marconi Plaza on South Broad Street “was defamed” and the Columbus monument at Penn’s Landing had red paint thrown on it. ★

## **CASH BAIL CONTINUED**

or not requested by the DA, decisions regarding cash bail rest with the judge – or, in an increasingly cash-less bail system, the decision whether pretrial defendants spend

that time in prison or not rests with the judge. A curious course of events that results from allegedly radical perspectives.

Washington, DC has been lauded as largely avoiding cash bail for decades; New Jersey mostly did away with it last year and California is in the process of ending it, and several counties in Pennsylvania have been leading the call for the rest of the state, which might make a radical begin to reconsider why local prison abolitionists chose this as a platform. In fact, in addition to the financial sense it makes for the state, in a post-Black Lives Matter world this is the kind of recuperation strategy that keeps black activism from becoming black liberation.

When Philly's city council issued their request to Krasner to entirely eliminate bail last February, Councilman Curtis Jones estimated that such a move would reduce inmates from 7,500 to 5,000 annually. Substantial, but by no means the elimination of incarceration. More to the point, these folks still advocate for capital and the state, as then-City Controller Alan Butkovitz spelled out the bottom line by releasing a study in October that found the city could save as much as \$75 million annually if cash bail is eliminated here (and that incarceration would be reduced by around 28% instead of the councilman's proposed 33%).

In an increasingly digital world, this further empowerment of judges also involves risk assessment tools in the form of computer-generated algorithms that many find suspicious for more than the inhuman characteristics. This system is already expected to be reviewed by Philly officials at a public hearing on Wednesday, December 12th; opponents intend to pack the court because "judges will have the legal authority to lock up young Black men (and others) not just for a crime they have committed in the past – but also for a crime they MIGHT commit in the future."

Since New Jersey all but did away with cash bail in January 2017, they say that 85-90% of defendants are being released under their own recognizance, but those retained by the computer systems are still often people of color and/or impoverished. As poverty is often a catalyst for crime, it shouldn't be surprising that poor folks (who are disproportionately people of color) are more prone to recidivism. Additionally, this doesn't mean the defendants will stay out of prison either, as this trajectory for keeping people out of jail in the interim still relies on the court not convicting them – a path that, maybe unintentionally, still attempts to restore faith in the fairness of an inherently oppressive system – and given this country's incredibly high incarceration rates, will still likely keep more people locked up than worldwide averages. In fact, the United States and the Phillipines are the only countries in the world with commercialized bail systems (appropriately, profiteering bail bondsmen appear to be the only significant opposition to ending cash bail outside of the Fraternal Order

of Police).

As George Mason University law professor Megan Stevenson says, "you're not going to get dramatically lower incarceration rates without some increase in failure to appear."

Now there is a strategy. We've heard the liberals talk about sanctuary cities for migrants, but how many have actually considered the new underground railroad that was proposed by the Radical Abolition Movement, to keep people out of the prison plantations? What would it look like to actually create space for those fleeing the threat of imprisonment and communicate that accordingly? While we're at it, what would it look like to literally burn a prison down? To make your neighborhood so hostile to the police that they don't return, or if they do they are run out? What would it look like to visit a prison during an intense storm, when staff (but not prisoners) have been evacuated, armed with the means to open the cells and transport prisoners out? What would it look like to authentically attack the police (personally, infrastructurally, etc.) so as to actually prevent them from performing their duties in the first place?

These sound like radical strategies; they are not without their flaws or limitations, but they do not invest further faith in or advocate maintenance of state power (whether through judges or anyone else). They do not advocate for more state interventions into our lives through "housing, public education, living wage jobs, harm reduction, and mental health treatment," as a coalition against imprisonment in Philly has suggested. This keeps the power within the hands of the state to not only grant such accommodations, but also deny or take them away, without even challenging their unnecessary existence in the first place. How are the communities organized into such a coalition supposed to make that jump against the existence of the state if it is not inherent in that organizing? The new census of Philadelphia tells a story of incredible poverty and wealth gaps, with a discrepant inequality of \$75,466 per household, suggesting a preexisting disenfranchisement with the looming structures of authority – so why try to lead people back under their shadow?

This is the abolitionist logic that Alfredo Bonnano warns of in “Locked Up,” one that favors medical treatment to imprisonment. Besides the particular torture of that medical imprisonment, he speaks to the ease with which re-empowered authority figures can diagnose those opposed to the status quo as ill. Let’s acknowledge that even medical health professionals have called into question how easy it is to diagnose someone with Oppositional Defiant Disorder, for instance – you need only push back against the hand that pushes against yours enough to maintain their equilibrium in the air – and maybe that is an apt metaphor for the way activist strategies of pushing back only keep imposed authority aloft.

In “Diagnostic of the Future: A Forecast,” Peter Gelderloos highlights a historical path through the ongoing crises of democracy and capitalism that illustrates how radical attempts at populist interventions only serve the state – if only its left wing – which begins by discrediting the misconception that anarchists are leftists, as the left describes a particular embrace of state and capital that surfaced during the French Revolution. Single-issue antifascist strategies serve this; environmental campaigns that don’t support Marius Mason, Joseph Dibee, and Indigenous water protectors serve this; opponents of police racism who don’t support those imprisoned for rising up in Ferguson, Baltimore, and Oakland serve this. “That’s why it makes sense for anarchists to highlight the prisoners’ strike and to bring the question of solidarity with detainees from anti-pipeline struggles and prisoners from anti-police uprisings into the heart of any coalition with the left” – if one cares

to coalesce with the left in the first place. Rather than pursuing projects that move towards freedom from capital and the state, prison abolitionists in Philly have instead chosen compromise in the interest of mass community organizing.

In addition to his takedown of technological solutions to our problems regarding climate change and pursuing freedom, Gelderloos also offers an economic analysis that predicts that the ongoing, and accelerating, crises will soon result in a change in capital accumulation – a change from the American-led cycle that began after World War II, which “represented an intensification of capitalist and interstate relations that had obtained under the previous cycle, as colonies liberated themselves, politically, in order to participate more fully in Western capitalism and global democratic structures.”

This conclusion posits that even the material conditions favor revolution, in a world already brimming with revolt. So why not really speak to what we want to do, and not squabble over piecemeal reforms that are already in play all over the country? Why aid the restructuring efforts of the state to effectively incarcerate us when we could be empowering each other to live without their recourses in the first place? Let’s invest our energies in those strategies that actually favor freedom and desire, rather than those limiting strategies that we’ve arbitrarily been convinced are actually attainable. Demand the impossible, or better yet, demand nothing at all while creating and destroying as we see fit. ★



## **BROSNAN SECURITY IN CHICO**

In the wake of the so-called “Camp Fire,” which was at least partially sparked by down electrical lines and was exacerbated by climate change in early November, an autonomous encampment was organized in the parking lot of a Walmart in Chico, California, called Wallywood. It is yet another example of decentralized mutual aid organized in response to the ongoing, and escalating, climate crisis.

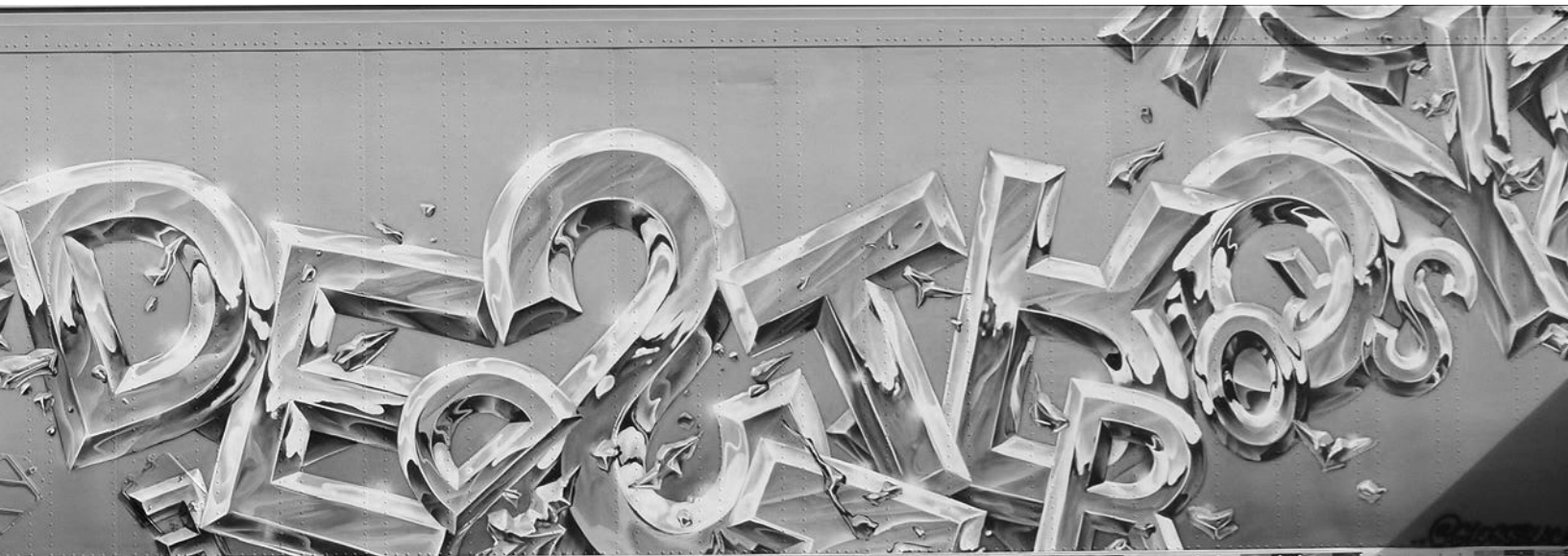
A call to support the camp, published on It’s Going Down in late November, explains: “As a squat and a contested space, Wallywood is precarious because the land owner wants to remove the people living there. Walmart has hired Brosnan Security, a private security firm to patrol and police Wallywood. They have intimidated, harassed and threatened community members and have stolen their tents and supplies and thrown them away. They regularly lie and spread misinformation to people at the camp as a way of wearing them down over time in order to get them to leave. There is a well known story of a man who was reduced to tears upon returning to the tents he had set up for his family after being displaced by the fire and finding them gone — thrown in a dumpster by Brosnan. There should be no confusion over what interests the Brosnan agents are there to serve (they literally have the words “Asset Protection” in large letters on their clothing) as they are the same security firm that Walmart hires to protect their stores from looters in disaster situations.”

Brosnan Security’s website reveals that they also

provide security services and guards in Philadelphia. Brosnan describes itself as a “full-service investigative, protective and intelligence firm to a global network of clients. Headquartered in New York City, with branch locations in multiple states, Brosnan is one of the largest privately held providers of technology-driven security services. With more than 500 years of law enforcement experience, Brosnan understands the law, and more importantly, law breakers. We protect your people, property and assets for aggressive risk mitigation strategies and technologies. Brosnan is a technology-driven best-in-class security provider.”

Brosnan works with a wide range of businesses, including many with locations in this city such as Walmart, Gilbane, TD Bank, and Party City. Perhaps most pertinently, though, they have offices located at 4811 Germantown Ave, Suite 203 and 204, here in Philadelphia (Phone: (215) 550-6900). Their headquarters are located at 1 Blue Hill Plaza Suite 1538 in Pearl River, NY 10965 (Phone: 800-590-2180, sales@brosnanrisk.com).

This kind of information is always important to acknowledge and share as we are internationalists that recognize no borders — whether of states or nations — and the neoliberal style of exploitation has proliferated in a way that has encouraged corporations to transcend those same borders to further their destruction of the world and its inhabitants. This makes those same exploiters increasingly susceptible to internationalist attacks in solidarity with those populations that are resisting their capitalist effect. ★



## WELCOME TO THE FUTURE

We are living in a dystopian future. We haven't been sold bottled air en masse, yet, but there are masks being sold to reduce our inhalation of "smog, emissions, viruses, bacteria and other dangerous airborne particles" in a world where all these things seem to proliferate and get stronger, because "the city is your playground." Driverless cars are expected to proliferate and increase congestion on roadways, according to worried traffic commissioners. Recent United Nations emissions reports confirm our fears about just how far behind we are on not even slowing down the utter destruction of the planet. A Chinese scientist that claims to have genetically modified twin girls to be HIV resistant, but with unintended genetic consequences and no consideration of either those physical or emotional consequences. The doublespeak of those in power, likely to be indicted or impeached, serves as comedic fodder and the potential reaffirmation of the democratic process and party – demonizing one party for the sake of another's governance under a system that has never not relied on slavery (all the way back to its birth in Ancient Greece). And if the party doesn't restore faith in governance, then reformists propose that technology will.

"Facebook has connected more than 2.2 billion people, a global nation unto itself that reshaped political campaigns, the advertising business and daily life around the world. Along the way, Facebook accumulated one of the largest-ever repositories of personal data, a treasure trove of photos, messages and likes that propelled the company into the Fortune 500." – New York Times

Because of their lofty aims "to make the world more open and connected," it has been long acknowledged that Facebook's platform of toxicity had become an "instrument of government propaganda and ethnic cleansing" – reports which the company largely ignored, as they reasonably saw themselves as nothing more than a platform. They didn't want to be a censor. But this begins to describe the drawbacks of a digital platform.

Facebook is a digital nation that affects real-world situations. In lieu of presenting your papers, you sign in to be a participant in that nation, which moves the world closer to becoming one united despotic regime. The choices seem either to suffer the consequences of the toxicity that proliferates on the long-proven depression-inducing platform, without much in the way of real-life recourse against the bullies and despots, or else advocate the censure that ultimately seeks to neutralize differences of opinion and fact into some sort of ster-



ile monotony of control. Or else you could refuse to participate.

Non-participation, of course, is increasingly harder to do, as we should have long ago learned that rather than liberate us, new and advancing technologies become a requirement that demand sacrifice to attain and maintain their use. Herbert Marcuse speaks of the marginalized person who works real hard to buy a nice car, as though they have achieved some sort of liberation by coming up, when in fact they have further entrenched themselves in the logic of capital. Theodore Kaczynski uses the same example of an automobile, this time tracing it further back to its invention while illustrating the means by which "technology is a more

powerful force than the aspiration for freedom.”

This technological advancement of motorized transport appeared liberating at first to the few that could afford it, taking leisurely drives through the world, but soon became a requirement that demanded more people to purchase vehicles and reshaped the surrounding world to accommodate them while also restricting one’s freedom of movement. We see speed limits, traffic lights, registration, licensing, insurance, highway barriers, and



more dictating how we are to move and exist in the world. Consider the demands of activists for accessible public transportation as a right to be part of this logic, as well.

So now we have employers, especially those willing to pay anything near decent wages, becoming distrustful of people who don’t have social media accounts like Facebook to monitor your behavior and assess your character. It’s also a prerequisite for most employers to apply for their jobs online, or at least have your resume on Linked In. And it’s not a stretch to imagine the criminalization of those who don’t participate in social media by the state, as suggested by the Invisible Committee, who acknowledged that “there are no Facebook

revolutions.” The advancement of such technology is now the means by which we are governed.

In fact, resistance to technological advancements is at least enough to suspect someone of criminality, according to the United States government, since during their prosecution of anarchist Eric McDavid in 2006, the United States government used the fact that he didn’t have a cell phone or social media accounts to defame his character. He served nearly 10 years of a 20 year sentence on a conviction of conspiracy before the government revealed that they had withheld exonerating information, largely because the green anarchist ideas he held were dangerous.

All this is to say that we are not just trying to reverse the PR campaign to praise Facebook and detract from its tech-sector competitors that the Republican opposition-research firm hired by Facebook pushed in order to discredit activist protesters, anymore than we are trying to advocate for a new rise of the Left from beneath a flourishing Right. We want none of the above.

The recent New York Times exposé tells us just how much Facebook executives knew of targeted influencing of elections, via the data gathering inherent to digital existence, and their resulting advertising campaigns, fake news, and deceitful “groups.” Their response was initially to ignore it, and then to hire Washington-savvy public representation and litigation outfits to defend them, as many a politician and executive has done before. The details of this outraged much of the world for about as long as our technologically-reduced attention spans were allotted by the strobe-light news cycle, but it is not (and will not be) anything but par for the course of advancing technology, and thus advancing governance. ★



let's talk about splitting, splitting is an art frequently called upon in revolution retreat, says the I Ching, must not be confused with flight, and furthermore, frequently, it furthers

### ONE TO HAVE SOMEWHERE TO GO

i.e., know in advance  
the persons/place you can go to  
means to get there  
keep money (cash) in house for travelling  
an extra set of i.d., Robert Williams  
was warned by his own TV set when the Man  
was coming for him,  
he had his loot at home, his wife and kids  
all crossed the country with him, into CANADA  
and on to CUBA

it's a good idea  
to have good, working transportation 'wheels', one friend  
has two weeks stashed in his VW bus  
food, water, matches, clothing, blankets, gas, he can go  
at least that long, before he hits a town, can leave  
at any time  
something to think about . . . ★

## ON SPLITTING

There are other ways to split. Diane di Prima outlines a way out but there are also multiple ways forward. Below I will outline a few ways where splitting makes sense. At first glance, these examples might seem obvious but, in the heat of the moment, sometimes all we can hear is the refrain "keep together, stay tight."

You get the call out: come tonight in your affinity groups, stick together, stay safe. Once upon a time, your affinity group might have been your closest friends, your collective house, your commune. But you have since learned that you should come with the people who want to stay when you stay and split at the same time as you. You used to just

show up with your group and find more friends waiting under the black flags but now you might not make it into the crowd without your group being recognized/stopped/searched. Remember you formed this group to keep your secrets, to be in secret, but now your togetherness betrays you. Next time, you split up, go separately. Now, your group is held together by a secret affinity across a crowd: an affinity group in superposition. You move as if by an invisible gravitational pull only observable through furtive glances, your shared pace and direction, until the moment comes to act together.

We are at a demonstration and hear the chants and shouts: stay together, don't get split up. We have spent so much time trying to convince people to come out, to stay when the riot cops arrive, to face them down that we forget to think about anything else. We tell ourselves that, like a fist, we are stronger together. Then the bike police form a line that no single fist can break. What if we spread out like fingers momentarily—several people on the right and the left distracting their attention when suddenly a third group wedges down the middle? You might get split up, but another group makes it through to confront the Blue Lives Matter march.

You get left behind in a breakaway and you overhear the activists grumbling: it's a strategic mistake to split up, we need to stick together! We need to hold a meeting with everybody to reflect on these mistakes! You know you will never be invited to this meeting; you are not a part of this everybody. Neither is the breakaway group that separated at the first opportunity like oil and water. If there was a mistake, maybe it was joining up together rather than having a secret meetup while the main march distracted the police? But that's not always the best idea and sometimes a breakaway is just a breakaway. The breakaway requires the larger group to find each other but when the moment comes, they split off. Now there are two fronts to confound the police. This is especially useful when the police are standing between you and a destination or target (ex. the fash).

You hear the police charge and see people running past you while others try to maintain calm: you need to make a decision. Maybe there is no



need to run but many people already are. How many people are left? When there are hundreds in the first place, you have seen that running doesn't mean it's over. You split for now but then regroup blocks away from the teargas. It is rare even in large groups that the only choice is to face a police line head on. This time there were few people to start out and fewer now. It's time to split but just for the day. No need to leave the country, just this street. Sometimes you shouldn't even wait for the police to attack: you finished what you came for, everyone is out of fireworks, and you know it's over. You can tell people are wandering the Philly streets just because it's nice to be together. But sooner or later, you'll find yourself in a kettle.

In the heat of the moment, people will come together like a chemical compound, binding together into masses. We can always count on that. But we also need to know how to split up. There are major and minor splits—even scales of splitting. Not all splitting is a retreat and not all retreats are lasting. Sometimes it's simply a matter of recognizing a crowd as a constraint, recognizing that splitting has its own power. A split threatens to dissolve a crowd, but split correctly and it threatens to explode. ★

## **LIBERALS, POLICE & FASCISTS ARE ONE PIECE**

*Stolen from somewhere*

So, to be clear: the numbers that came out in Philly to counter protest the Fash was inspiring and powerful, and I want to thank everyone who came out. The fash didn't win today. They lost. But the feeling amongst many of our comrades was: so did we. We didn't win. The pigs did.

Many organizers were happy to stay in a police free speech pen, and on (at least) two different occasions directly led and encouraged separate formation marches into the pen across the street from the protest: a “socialist” organizer literally started a physical fight with a comrade who was just arguing against marching into the police pen. And while their numbers were small, they managed to have three full hours of (embarrassingly poor but nevertheless) speeches.

We know the police are intimidating, scary, overwhelming and powerful, and it's scary to confront them. But if we want to actually shut down fascism we can't let the police win, because the police winning IS the victory of

fascism.

We need to be bold enough, and not just the small minority that is blocked up and doing antifa work everyday, but everyone, to try and break a police line—to fight the fascists both in an out of uniform.

The street far-right (in the US exclusively, for the moment, in this current manifestation) is undeniably weaker right now than a year ago. But they will grow back stronger if we don't turn against the police fearlessly and analyze the way liberalism, police and fash are one piece. ★

## **FROM CHILE: FOR A BLACK DECEMBER** *via 325*

December is still a month marked with the insurgent memory of anarchic ones who rise up in open antagonism against any form of authority.

December 2018 will be the 10th year since comrade Alexandros Grigoropoulos was taken from the streets, assassinated by police bullets in Exarchia, Greece, in 2008.

It is also the month during which, 5 years ago, comrade Sebastian Oversluij died, killed by the bullets of a mercenary of capital during a bank expropriation in 2013 in Chile.

Because the memory of our dead is fuel to stoke the flames of our lives in permanent revolt, Black December is again a meeting point of multiform action and reflection on ourselves and our strengths as a combative minority, and upon the current faces of the totalitarian enemy: authority and its world of hierarchies, fascism, patriarchy, speciesism, and the many expressions of the desire for the supremacy of some over others.

Once more, Black December remains an invitation to insurgent communication via the wild heat of offensive action against power.

In iconoclastic memory of our dead.

Offensive solidarity with the companions facing repression in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Russia, Italy, Greece and all the world.

For a Black December, see to it that anarchy lives!! ★

## **YELLOW VESTS CONTINUED**

contain the rioting on that day. Around 378 people were arrested and put in custody; a total of 249 fires were set (including 112 cars and six buildings). This forced France's technocratic centrist government to not only finally acknowledge the movement, but to concede on its original point of contention — on December 4, President Macron announced that the proposed consumer tax on fuel that ignited the revolt would be suspended. Despite this concession, the rioting continued the following weekend. On December 8th, the police in Paris were once again (through a tremendous exertion of force including water cannons, armed vehicles, and hundreds of rubber bullets) able to protect the Champs Elysee from concentrated protests, but in doing so pushed diffuse groups of rioters to other areas of the city, where damage significantly escalated from previous weeks. Following that weekend, Macron announced that he would institute a raise in the national minimum wage by 7%, as well as a number of other concessions to the rioters.

The insurrection was instigated by a mostly white and right-leaning population and dubbed the “gilets jaunes” after the yellow vests worn by protestors. Drivers in France are required to keep these yellow vests in their car; wearing the jackets indicates that the protesters are drivers who will be impacted by the government's tax on fuel. The struggle has since been partly overtaken by greater involvement from anarchists, leftists, and racialized populations from the suburbs, as well as by an apparent taste for destruction that has far exceeded any particular ideological leanings or the government's attempts at concession, recuperation, and repression. The right wing, whether white supremacists in the streets or fascist politicians looking to replace France's current government, has not succeeded so far in exerting control of the struggle or capturing it for electoral political objectives.

The Gilets Jaunes are a multi-class movement, composed of mostly middle-class white people reeling from the ongoing economic downturn as well as by impoverished people who were never included in the economy in the first place. These are some of the country's least “politicized” populations — that is, people who are seemingly uninterested in gaining status as legitimate political actors, whether through forming a political party, dialoguing with politicians through representatives, or even through replicating political representation within the movement by forming something like an official assembly or other decision-making body. While some elements of the movement have attempted to create

official representatives for the movement, most participants have resisted this move and the attempts to have the movement enter into dialogues with power seem to have failed. The “yellow jacket” that is the identity marker among protestors also signals that this struggle is not based on the affirmation of any particular identity factor, whether worker, racial, or national (despite adherents of all those tendencies being involved in some capacity). Once again, we see major insurgent momentum emerging not from the tired organizational traditions of the Left, but from enraged and immiserated sectors of the population whose goals do not seem to be “political.” For the most part, the Gilets Jaunes are not fighting for improvements to a political and economic order that does not include them, but seem by their actions to be seeking its destruction.

This is not to say that the Gilets Jaunes are an exemplary insurrectionary movement, or even that they're a sign that the global cycle of radical struggle that began in 2008 in Greece and exploded with the Arab Spring has regained its strength. After several years of fascist reaction worldwide, the pendulum has not simply swung back to radical insurgent power, but rather to an uncomfortable meeting of the two tendencies in the streets once leftists and anarchists eventually intervened in the Gilets Jaunes' protests and helped them develop into a much broader insurrectionary moment against authority.

Over the past several years, as various alt-right and fascist tendencies have intensified in the U.S., questions over how to address this threat here have illuminated ongoing tensions among radicals — especially the question of how or whether to intervene in populist movements whose racial politics are either questionable or straight up racist. Many of those debates here have centered on how much we should compromise in order to “meet people where they're at” and not leave a massive amount of people's discontent to be channeled into fascist reaction. The Gilets Jaunes situation, though, shows the additional danger of the right-wing mimicking insurrectionary as well as activist and community organizing tactics; it is possible that this signals a new era of fascist street violence.

While many insurrectionaries in Philly often eschew involvement in major public demos at which fascists take the streets, this might be a reminder that if we don't want struggles in the streets to be overtaken by fascists, we might have to dedicate more energy to intervening in street struggles and/or supporting those who do. It seems that anti-authoritarians in France have been do-

## **NEVER TURN OFF THE PHONE: A NEW APPROACH TO SECURITY CULTURE**

*via 325*

ing this not only by confronting and fighting fascists in the streets, but also by taking actions that obviously transcend right-wing and liberal agendas. Pushing the populist response beyond nationalism can happen by targeting things our rivals wouldn't. Due to the ambiguity of the *Gilets Jaunes*, any actions that happen in that context will be rightly attributed to that movement; anarchists can take advantage of this and redefine what the struggle means in a way that escapes capture by nationalists.

On December 8, 1,723 people were preemptively taken in by police for questioning and 1,220 were thrown in jail in advance of planned protests in France. Around 8,000 people still took to the streets in Paris, along with tens of thousands more across the country. France's finance minister announced that the unrest was causing a "catastrophe" for the country's economy. As of Monday, December 9th, France's central bank cut its fourth-quarter growth forecast to only 0.2%, a fraction of the 0.8% growth they say the country needs.

The *Gilets Jaunes* have also been discussed as a riot responding to climate change and its attendant economic and nationalist consequences. We can expect to see more of these popular reactions as governments like France make lackluster attempts to address escalating ecological catastrophe by offsetting the costs onto its citizens through austerity measures such as the fuel tax.

The ways in which this movement will end are hard to predict but important to consider, since in this case the possibilities include not only recuperation by current government, but also the ousting of Macron's government by the far-right, who have been able to position themselves as rebels to his liberal leadership. This should again caution those in the U.S. still hoping that reinstating the rule of liberals and/or democratic socialists will lead us in a better direction in the long term. While Trump's leadership has certainly encouraged the fascist grassroots in this country, the election of a liberal or democratic socialist president would push forward fascist momentum just as much, or further. The reason for fascism's current rise is not who is in power, but economic misery stemming from the long global economic downturn, coupled with the structural white supremacy that is foundational to the existence of the entire socio-economic order. It will likely only get worse; as the economy continues to struggle and climate change produces further migration across borders, heightened nationalism poses one of the only available strategies for already racist industrial nation-states attempting to preserve themselves. ★

In the 80s, an anarchist who wanted, for example, to burn some building, developed his/her plan and at the same time looked to see if there were no listening devices in his/her 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 on 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 special services, regardless of whether you are suspected of something.

**Templates:** Whether you realize this or not, your metadata has a template. If you have daily work, you can have a very consistent pattern, if there is no such work, your template may be more flexible, but you have a 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 band 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, but there are no other clues. You are using a traditional safety 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 in 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 are not the first here.

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 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 vacation, people who are in the hospital, people who have lost their job, etc.);
- Would 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 safety culture will not protect us as 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 your phone. We look suspicious when we do this.

This is just one idea on how we could update our safety culture. Perhaps there are other people with different, better ideas about updating our safety culture. If we start a conversation, we can get somewhere.

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 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 safety 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.

Also, feel free to distribute and redo this text without references. ★