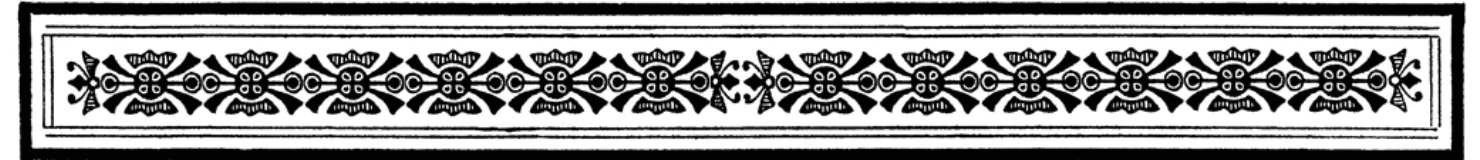


ANATHEMA



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FREE

JANUARY 2020



FOR SAUNDRA

i wanted to write
a poem
that rhymes
but revolution doesn't lend
itself to be-bopping

then my neighbor
who thinks i hate
asked - do you ever write
tree poems - i like trees
so i thought
i'll write a beautiful green tree poem
peeked from my window
to check the image
noticed that the school yard was covered
with asphalt
no green - no trees grow
in manhattan

then, well, i thought the sky
i'll do a big blue sky poem
but all the clouds have winged
low since no-Dick was elected

so i thought again
and it occurred to me
maybe i shouldn't write
at all
but clean my gun
and check my kerosene supply

perhaps these are not poetic
times
at all

Nikki Giovanni

PHILLY ENERGY SALE

On Friday, January 10th, several "community organizations" protested outside the semi-dormant Philadelphia Energy Solutions (PES) refinery on West Passyunk Avenue, in anticipation of the upcoming January 17th auction of the property in NYC. Citing environmental racism that subjects particular populations to the brunt of the pollution known to contribute to asthma and cancer, the proximity of 1.1 million Philadelphians to a potential blast zone, and the structural contributions to class divides and poverty (when the refinery went bankrupt after the dangerous June explosion last year, executives got bonuses and more than 2,000 union workers were laid off without severance), protesters blocked the entrance of the plant on Friday afternoon. The refinery has been maintaining since bankruptcy with an 80+ person skeleton crew, and the future of the grounds may lay in the hands of auction front-runner (and former PES chief executive) Phillip Rinaldi, with his new company Philadelphia Energy Industries (PEI).

PEI's formation was announced last August with the express intention of buying the property to restart it as a conventional fuel-manufacturing facility, but a possible partnership with RNG Energy Solutions has also thrown words like "renewable" next to pollutants like jet fuel. In any case, protests will continue at the NYC auction on the 17th and back at the refinery with a youth "climate strike takeover" on the 25th.

Continued on the next page

2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

Overall 2019 felt like a relatively quiet year. There were no big campaigns or strings of actions that anarchists participated in. There were less anarchist actions and demonstrations, and less explicitly anarchist events and discussions. This makes sense in a certain way. The period immediately following Trump's election through 2018 was more intense than usual and unless a culture, networks, and infrastructure are developed, that level of activity cannot run on enthusiasm and outrage alone. The normalization of Trump's presidency has also meant that some who took up actions we often associate with anarchists have fallen into socialist organizing or simply given up on radical organizing in favor of subculture, romance, or normal life. How can we make the most of these quieter times? As popular rage waxes and wanes, how can we keep our eyes set on anarchy without necessarily isolating ourselves or watering down our ideas?

Some things have stayed pretty much the same in 2019 as in years before. There is a certain regularity in the Philadelphia anarchist space that is held together by annual, monthly, and weekly events. Anarchy Afternoons at the A-Space continued to provide a weekly space for people to meet, read, discuss, and watch movies with other anarchists. The various Food Not Bombs chapters around town have kept up their weekly cooking and serving schedule for yet another year. They keep people

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WHAT WENT DOWN

Early December - Fare strike graffiti around Philly.

December 6 - An unknown individual robbed a Citizen's Bank using a threatening demand note.

December 8 - Frank Rizzo statue tagged and stickered. "FASCIST"

December 16 - An unknown individual robbed a PNC Bank by using a threatening demand note and threatening to blow up the bank.

December 28 - An unknown individual robbed a Santander Bank using a demand note.

December 29-31 - Most of the windows at Millcreek Tavern are smashed out and a Drexel bus is sabotaged with an awl and paint by "a weary, happy, gay anarchist crew." "Rapid gentrification by universities can be combatted; all it takes is creativity, small crews, and some easily fucking procured tools."

New Year's Eve - An anti-prison march and noise demo lights fireworks, writes graffiti, and makes noise at the Federal Detention Center. "Happy New Year Fuck the System!"

Early January - Condo construction site sabotaged. "Hope they're mad when they realize all the work they did was for nothing."

Mid January - Locks glued at construction site. "Even small attacks, especially if consistent and continual, are great ways to cause hiccups in the flow of progress."★

PHILLY ENERGY SALE (CONT.)

The air quality surrounding the plant continues to be declared safe by officials, even after the blast that occurred on the Summer Solstice, and even according to city-monitoring sites when you could smell the refinery's output from the gauge at 24th and Passyunk. A final report on the explosion was issued in November declaring that, after using information provided by PES, models were constructed to replicate the blast. These models were "broadly consistent" in suggesting that the dense concentrations of dangerous hydrogen fluoride and various hydrocarbons that were released dissipated below dangerous levels before exceeding the boundaries of the plant itself. Still, stating that "significant HF was unlikely to have crossed the facility perimeter" has not relieved much apprehension.

During the blackout of 2003, Species Traitor No. 4 ran an excerpted report of an air quality monitoring flight run by the University of Maryland that was diverted to Selinsgrove, PA – a town in the middle of the blackout area and downwind of more than 100 power plants in the Ohio River Valley. The unique opportunity afforded researcher Lackson Marafu significantly "bigger-than-reported" results of a "chemical cocktail that people in the Northeast inhale every day."

"Within 24 hours of the blackout, sulfur dioxide levels dropped 90 percent, and ozone declined by 50 percent. Both chemicals are linked to global climate change, lung disease and increased mortality rates. Daytime visibility in the region during the blackout increased nearly 25 miles due to the 70 percent decrease in light scattering particles. Tall smokestacks, built to alleviate pollution close to power plants, may contribute to the regional air problem by causing emissions to stay suspended long enough to react and produce other, more harmful pollutants." – *Scientific American*

Marafu concluded, "If these plants were shut down, results would be immediate."

Fires like the one at PES are not isolated incidents either, as just last month the Kinder Morgan chemical plant at 63rd and Passyunk (right down the street from PES) caught fire and leaked ethanol, after which the city again declared the air safe. Certainly, there haven't been reports like those from similar situations in Houston – when a 1998 Sterling Chemical leak hospitalized hundreds, a 1994 leak that prompted 9,000 personal injury suits, or a March 2005 British Petroleum explosion that killed 15 people. But the problem of our air, to continue to focus on one aspect of a refinery's threat, persists beyond these particularly spectacular mentions in Alan Weisman's *The World Without Us*.

Weisman explains that as of his 2007 publishing of the book, it would take more than 100,000 years for the oceans to "absorb all the carbon we have mined from the Earth and put into the air" – which has only grown significantly worse since then, due to the exponential growth of human

BLACKROCK

Business as usual was disrupted in asset management firm BlackRock's Paris headquarters in early January, featuring blinding flares and angry voices. Healthcare workers and teachers joined striking railway workers there on the strike's 29th day, making it the longest rail strike in French history. They briefly occupied BlackRock's offices in a continued protest of the new French pension legislation – and particularly, in this case, BlackRock's profiting from the new plan. As this is written the strike continues, with street clashes at today's demonstrations making the news, but who profits when workers make less – who is BlackRock?

The biggest asset management firm in the world, New York City-based BlackRock (with local offices at the Cira Center, 2929 Arch St. Philadelphia) is essentially a bank without the same regulation or federal guarantees of its investors' money – what some call a "shadow bank." Their managers' goal is to make money by investing for clients in, well, pretty much anything – but most notably, by investing in money.

Financialization, the term that's come about to describe this investing strategy, has been cited in *Forbes* magazine as the "growing scale and profitability of the finance sector at the expense of the rest of the economy and the shrinking regulation of its rules and returns." It is often critiqued for encouraging debt by investing in it, destabilizing the economy, failing to create jobs, and of course contributing to the growing wealth gap between classes.

While none of this destabilization and its related results are beneficial to day-to-day human survival (but great for life in general, arguably), it does signal a general destabilization of the status quo, part of the ongoing failures of capitalism and democracy.

Automation has actually been a much greater detractor from employment than financialization or even globalization (e.g. NAFTA). This suggests that the problem is bigger than any reformer would argue – systemic economic and political failure that so far have been characterized by increasing far-right power grabs and large-scale social revolts. Economies and their imposition of work are a primary means to subjugate people, and they are struggling to maintain themselves. The financialization of the economy can be seen as an increasingly desperate grasp at keeping commerce (and thus profit and growth – the most basic needs of capital) afloat, while nation-states attempt to restructure their power.

As such, asset managers like BlackRock are hedging their bets and diversifying their investments in uncertain times. Working with "activist" investors, they have encouraged gender diversity in Russell 1000 companies, have offered Exchange-Traded Funds that exclude gun manufacturers, and are promoting "sustainable investing" in exclusively "green" portfolios. They have even gone so far as to be involved in a shareholder resolution for ExxonMobil to act

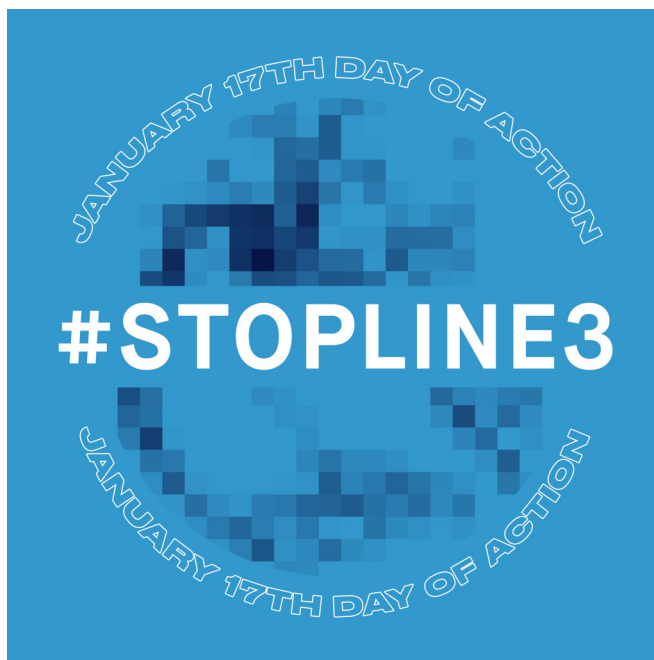
on climate change. Simultaneously, they are listed as owning "more oil, gas, and thermal coal reserves than any other investor with total reserves amounting to 9.5 gigatonnes of CO2 emissions – or 30 percent of total energy-related emissions from 2017." BlackRock is also known to be "the largest investor in weapon manufacturers through its iShares U.S. Aerospace and Defense ETF."

BlackRock, along with local asset managers The Vanguard Group (headquartered at 100 Vanguard Blvd in Malvern, PA), are also the biggest investors in GEO Group. GEO Group is the Florida-based private prison enterprise that runs immigrant detention centers across the country as well as the nearby George W. Hill Correctional Facility (the only private prison in Pennsylvania).

This is the sort of investment strategy they use to benefit their clients, so maybe it isn't surprising that they would play both sides in uncertain times in an attempt to stay profitable and on top in the future, but it certainly serves to emphasize that neither side will benefit us. In fact, we should remember that there are more than two options available – and maybe more to the point, that left and right are only two sides of the same coin.

Whether or not ExxonMobil acts on climate change, it will remain a powerful energy producer for profit, so long as economies remain. It has already perpetrated a great deal of the environmental destruction that has pushed the earth beyond many irreversible thresholds. Whether or not strict gun control measures pass, or manufacturers stop producing for private individuals, the same murderous governments that enforce such developments will be armed to the teeth militarily. Whether or not workplaces become more equitable, it still means control of the populace for the benefit of nation-states and their economies, as enforced by policing and imprisonment. Enforcement, in turn, which will continue to target marginalized or "threatening" (real or imagined) populations, no matter who makes up the leadership of the police and prisons – and we should only intend to grow as a threat.

BlackRock and other investment companies are the financiers of the world we live in. Physical infrastructure that we oppose can be targeted directly, but its source of funding is also an important aspect of its existence. Despite asset managers being diffuse and difficult to impede, Parisian workers recently illustrated their very offices can be a common meeting ground for so many we find affinity with, and we can simultaneously make it more difficult for any such company to operate – affecting its very bottom line.★



tle out of control, break the social peace, and experience the impossible.

But many anarchists' choice to orient themselves towards a perpetual, everyday insurrection is also a reaction to activists' uncritical hopefulness and the delusional conviction that we are "winning." Having decided instead that we cannot and will not win, some anarchists instead take insurrection solely as a guiding concept of daily life instead of a thing that we're trying to move toward in the future. I want to challenge that reaction, while also being clear that I do not ~believe we will win~ and think people who do are very annoying. As a reaction, it seems to me like it simplifies reality just as much as the idea of revolution as a one-and-done deal does — it makes it seem like everything is insurrection and we have no further projectuality and the destruction of the state is no more of a desirable event than an ordinary weekday stealing stuff from work.

So part of the context I'm responding to is that as the forecast for the future has gotten increasingly darker, it's become more popular for insurrectionaries to say they take action for the joy of it, with no (or few) further goals. I would never say that every action people take needs to clearly lead to insurrection, or that anyone must have that as a projectuality. But for those who do, I want to pose the question of how to get there from here.

If we mean to make a direct impact on the functioning of the state and all authority, there are so many moves we could be making to approach that goal. And this doesn't just mean illegal actions; there are so many different approaches to robbing the state of its legitimacy and power.

Individualist anarchy teaches us to learn our own desires, and I still desire the destruction of institutions of power and I want the impossible lives me and my friends and many others before us have dreamed of. No matter how out of reach, I would like to keep posing the question to myself — how do we get there from here? While the specific "here" and "there" is perpetually changing as our terrains, selves, positionalities, and dreams shift, the question itself remains one we could be asking about anything related to our desires for anarchy — for destruction of oppression, for freedom, autonomy, empowerment, belonging. This is not a call for plans or programs. I just want to encourage people to imagine how they personally might move towards what they most deeply desire.★



TRIAL OF 22 COMRADES IN GREECE FOR OCCUPATION IN SOLIDARITY WITH US PRISON STRUGGLE

via Abolition Media Worldwide (amwenglish.com)

On Friday, January 10, at 9:00 am, the trial of 22 comrades for the occupation of the Hellenic American Union continues at the First Three-Member Court of Appeals (1st floor - room D70B). The occupation took place in 2016 in solidarity with the US prisoners' struggle.

The appeal continues - after an interruption - and concerns 22 comrades-in-arms arrested during the occupation of the Hellenic American Union on September 26, 2016.

This occupation was initiated by the "Solidarity for Prisoners of War and Trial Fighters" assembly together with solidarity companions / members in the context of solidarity with prisoners in American prisons. At that time, we had carried out actions, interventions in multinationals such as Bayer, radio station occupations, etc. as a sign of solidarity with the US prisoners' struggle.

It is noteworthy that Solidarity actions for the 'fight against slavery' that took place in US prisons resulted in at least 3 cases of mass kidnapping and mass arrests.

In court we defended our intervention in the Hellenic American Union by political statement on September 26, 2016 while we were sentenced to 14 months with a three-year suspended sentence.

A / A from the west ★

population and industrialization (further delaying a future ice age). The chain reactions those larger groupings set off across the earth in turn resulted in their own exponential damages — profound extinction rates and a real threat to our own existence. He also reminds us, though, that if all industry stopped today, the ozone would repair itself in decades, ultraviolet rays would subside, and the earth would begin to heal itself.

Weisman writes: "Within centuries, as most of our excess industrial CO2 dissipated, the atmosphere and shallows would cool. Heavy metals and toxins would dilute and gradually flush from the system...Rivers would again carry nutrients to the sea." This would begin to solve the problem of the dead zone larger than the size of New Jersey in the Gulf beyond the Mississippi River.

Some predict the buyer of the PES property isn't likely interested in maintaining a traditional refinery, due to business trends moving toward other industries, and the smaller size of this location compared to revamped and competing refineries in the Gulf. Still, the survival of human and non-human beings, bound up and reliant on each other, may also rely on such significant halts to industry, as Weisman imagined — meaning the fight is much bigger than what's in any protester's backyard.★

YEAR IN REVIEW CONTINUED

fed while offering anti-capitalist analysis of why hunger and poverty exist in our society. Philly Anarchist Black Cross's monthly letter writing to political prisoners has made prisoner support a normal part of the anarchist space (in addition to creating another visible entry point into anarchist organizing). Philly ABC also organized the annual Running Down the Walls benefit run; this year proceeds went to MOVE prisoners. June 11th - a day of solidarity activity for long-term anarchist prisoners - saw graffiti and a barbecue fundraiser. May Day also saw graffiti and a couple attacks, less than other years. As has been the case for the last six years, the new year was rung in with a noise demonstration outside a prison with a lot of noise. How can these regular events further strengthen anarchist struggle rather than fall into repetition? What kind of traditions do we need to create for the kind of struggle we want to see?

All that said, 2019 was not simply a less extreme version of the year before; new things have started to take root and others have come to an end. A chapter of the Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement has formed here with a focus on black and anti-colonial anarchisms. They have organized a discussion, co-organized a demonstration against police corruption, and plan to take their ideas around the country. After years of organizing, the Vaughn 17 trials (prisoners in Delaware accused of participating in a prison takeover) came to a close. Most of the accused were found not guilty or had their charges thrown out, and two prisoners took full responsibility for planning and taking part in the uprising, using their

court appearances to denounce the prison system and the liberal approaches to reforming it. Even though the trials are finished, many of the Vaughn 17 still face retaliation, punitive transfers, loss of property, and support efforts are still ongoing. Some anarchists have taken to organizing social events for anarchists to build and strengthen their networks across different tendencies; this has mostly taken the form of potluck events. What can new projects bring to anarchist struggle in 2020? As different struggles open up or come to a close, how can we carry forward the lessons we've learned and the momentum we've gained?

Insurrectionary and combative actions continued to take place in 2019 with less intensity than previous years. Anti-gentrification actions continued to target developers, construction sites, and new properties. Attacks against gentrification have become a consistent presence in the Philadelphia anarchist space. A few attacks against ICE related targets took place, most notably an attack against the home and personal car of a leading ICE agent. Bhaskar Sunkara, the founder of Jacobin magazine, was attacked with either a pie or yogurt (depends on who you ask) during a socialist speaking event in response to anti-anarchist and pro-prison statements he published online. Many attacks took place during the last few months of the year accompanied by communiques; most were claimed by queers and some focused on disrupting the celebration of Black Friday.

Despite tensions between fascists and anti-fascists not being as visible as in past years, 2019 saw a good amount of exposure and confrontation of fascists and the far-right. The Proud Boys (a group of self-described "western chauvinists") were particularly targeted; individual members of the local chapter were thoroughly doxxed online. Many other white supremacists in Pennsylvania were doxxed, including members of Identity Evropa (now re-branded as American Identity Movement), Keystone United/Keystone State Skinheads, and other racists. Candace Owens of Turning Point USA was picketed while giving a talk at UPenn. A couple attempts were made by bigot trolls to disrupt protests but none were successful. A pro-USA rally by nationalists and fascists was held in Old City with a tiny turnout and a large counter-protest in August. Millcreek Tavern, a bar owned by a former police officer, was vandalized multiple times after hosting the Proud Boys.

Two anarchist spaces had conflict in 2019, one more severe than the other. The A-Space was the center of a conflict between the collective and people upset with the collective's decisions regarding the space. The issue seemed to be around kicking out a popular person who repeatedly broke the rules of the A-Space. It's unclear to this author if the conflict was ever resolved but it definitely seems to have died down. More controversial was the hostile takeover and re-acquisition of LAVA Space. A member of the LAVA collective known to not share in the principles of the space was able to force the rest of the collective out and use the space to make money, culminating in the building being fraudulently sold to developers. The LAVA collective responded by using the legal sys-

tem to attempt to evict those who took over the space, and eventually was able to regain control of the building from the developers it was sold to. Needless to say, as anarchists we should find ways of defending and legitimizing our spaces outside the legal system and capitalist notions of property. What do we want to see happening in the anarchist spaces around the city, and more importantly what will we do to make those desires a reality? How can we ensure that our actions in our spaces are consistent with the anti-authoritarian values that founded these spaces? How can we grapple with issues of property and resources while being coherent with our anarchist (anti-)politics?

Interpersonal conflicts between anarchists (and our fellow travelers) seemed to have plagued 2019. More so than other years, conflicts between individuals seem to have been especially prominent, sometimes to the point of slowing or hindering efforts to organize. In a way it is normal for us to squabble more now that struggles are less intense (as has been illustrated in the “After The Crest” zine series), yet as anti-authoritarians we also know that we are responsible for solving our problems ourselves. It’s in our interests to develop the skills that allow us to have conflicts among companions while also being able to have or create collective power together. How can we move through interpersonal conflicts in ways that increase our individual and collective capacity, or at least, hinder us less? How can we address our conflicts in anarchist ways that don’t rely on legitimacy, cancelling, passivity or subtle forms of authority?

We saw a few false starts last year. A few times attempts were made to organize actions or activities that didn’t (to this author’s knowledge) have the follow-through, results, or continuity they could have. Specifically, the Christmas eve fare strike, the call for a demonstration in memory of Willem Van Spronsen, and beginnings of a city-wide anarchist network all started with strong exciting energy and seemed to dissipate. What happened to the enthusiasm and planning that brought the beginning of these initiatives together? How can we encourage creativity and experimentation while accepting that some of our projects won’t succeed? How can we channel our collective knowledge into new initiatives so that they have more chances of achieving their goals?

In March, police officer Kevin Pfeifer shot Kaleb Belay in Cedar Park. Kaleb is an immigrant from Ethiopia and many Ethiopians and Eritreans came together to demand justice for Kaleb, help him recover from being shot, and defend him legally as he faced criminal charges. The anarchist response to such a gross display of policing in a neighborhood with a history of anarchist activity felt disproportionately tame. A few vandalized buildings should be just the beginning when police shoot someone. It is understandable that the activity organized at the Ethiopian Community Center, which sought justice through the legal system, felt incompatible with anarchist understandings of dealing with the law. Organizing against police violence does not need to be limited to the immediate network of the victim; anarchists could have taken any number of steps to make it clear that police violence will not go unanswered, especially in a neighborhood with so

many anarchists. How can we respond to policing in a way that feels true to our values and anger? What would it look like to respect the efforts of a victim’s networks — that we do not agree with politically — without abandoning our own struggles against police?

What will we bring to 2020? We have the momentum of liberal election energy to contend with, the continued devastation of the living environment, the possibility of another war in Western Asia, the ongoing gentrification of our neighborhoods, and the continuing existence of a hierarchical society to look forward to. How we confront these and other forms of social control in the new year is up to us. How will we learn from our past experiences of struggle in 2020? How will we spread, intensify, and experiment with anarchist struggles in the year to come? ★

ELECTORAL FORECAST

What’s up bootlickers! So despite the Democratic Party’s best intentions, it now seems likely that “socialist” candidate Bernie Sanders will become the party’s next presidential nominee. It also seems likely that more and more radicals will become enamored with Sanders’ or another Democrat’s campaign, spending more time promoting it on social media than pushing for a break with the system itself. But the question is, Why? The impracticality of the U.S. presidency as a path towards freedom should be obvious by now based on 500 years of very consistent examples. But the system is designed to suck us back in without realistically considering the longterm consequences, so let’s try to break some of those down.

If we harken back to Barack Obama’s 2008 presidential run, we’ll see some striking similarities to Bernie Sanders’ current campaign. Obama capitalized on the polarizing effects of George W. Bush’s hyper-nationalist, racist, and repressive presidency to pose the possibility of what seemed at the time like a radical alternative. His campaign set new precedents for grassroots organizing and small donations, which helped hype him up as a genuinely progressive candidate. By January 2008, he had 600,000 individual donors. Unfortunately, statistics are not available on how many anarchists and other radicals his campaign funneled into campaigning for a presidential candidate, but it was a lot.

Obama’s presidency then proceeded to create the conditions for Trump’s candidacy. I mean this partly in a literal sense — he helped set up the current infrastructure for migrant concentration camps and deportations, increased the military budget by \$2 billion a year (dropping at least 26,171 bombs on seven majority-Muslim countries in 2016 alone), and militarized domestic policing (his administration also ended up brutally repressing Black resistance in the U.S.). Even more importantly, his failure to do anything substantive to change the misery of most peoples’ lives set the stage for Trump to succeed in the next race. Once Obama’s “progressive” regime had come to nothing, Trump was able to use a more extreme and right-wing angle to promise greatness once again to an increasingly dissatisfied population.

I think we all pretty much know at this point that this is what

Back in the states, the more symbolic electoral conventions will be happening this summer as well. The Democratic National Convention is scheduled for July 13-16 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and the Republican National Convention is scheduled for August 24-27 in Charlotte, North Carolina, rounding out the summer. Charlotte was the only city to submit a bid for the RNC and local opposition began to organize itself shortly thereafter.

Given the significant displeasure so many massive populations of people seem to express about the state of the world, and this particular nation-state, clashes of some kind seem possible — particularly around the RNC, as is usually the case. Whether organizers develop the expansive networks of disenfranchised groups that enable large attendance (not to be confused with the largely recuperative, specialized activist groups), and agree to the sort of principles among those involved that don’t reduce revolt to resistance, will of course remain to be seen. Additionally, the militant support that Trump has garnered also contributes to the likelihood that RNC protesters will have more than just the cops to contend with — pre-emptive infiltration, arrests, attempts at entrapment, doxxing, and excessive charges after the fact are becoming par for the course, and likely without the large class-action payouts of the former “summit hopping” era after the fact.

It is interesting to note, though, that since Charlotte was the only city to offer to host the RNC, it could be difficult for the committee to move elsewhere should a revolt take off there — but that should almost be an afterthought, as inhibiting the largely symbolic event wouldn’t likely stop the presidential election, and the practical on-the-ground gains of a city-wide revolt would be far more notable. Still, the prospect of a Republican incursion into the city might be the sort of impetus to begin such a revolt, and Charlotte was actually recently active in such a way after Keith Lamont Scott was killed by police in 2016. The resulting occupation of an 8 lane highway and burning of a tractor trailer upon it meshes well with the sort of tactics that have been used to prevent delegates and convention attendees of all kinds from making their way to a convention center — in fact, we’ve seen attempts to coordinate on-ramp blockades around these types of events to do exactly that in the past, to various degrees of success. Should such successes occur, of course, we would hope that the tactics carry over into a period separate from the convention — much like the Chilean revolt began with fare evasion and carried over into daily life — and things would build from there, rather than recede back into business-as-usual.

As many a strategist of insurgency has noted since the summit-hopping era, however, anarchists and other radicals often fail to successfully evaluate our terrain or have a longer-term strategy — particularly in protest, and particularly of the large-scale summit variety. Beauty may be a brick to the head of a cop, as the saying goes, but that doesn’t mean we must rush to the site of highest police concentration for conflict — nor does an absence of police mean there is less to be done. Whether that means finding holes in police coverage, anticipating the slowness of a large armored force con-

trolled by a few leaders, assessing the limits or weak points of their communication and supply lines, or even anticipating areas entirely outside of the city or state that may be under-policed as a result of the draw of law enforcement into one particular center — for those interested in a summit or convention as a point of conflict, there are many options to be considered. That’s not to say that areas will be entirely unpoliced, but imagining something different than smashing windows in a city center could be beneficial.★

RESPONSE TO RESPONSE TO “PROPERTY DESTRUCTION IS NOT ENOUGH”

Thanks for your response — it gave me a lot to think about. I really have no answers to some of the important questions you posed, but I hope they challenge us to be more real with each other about what it is we’re doing and where we think it’s going (or isn’t). And where it could go.

I’m mostly writing this because I realized from your response that some of the questions and critiques in the original article were vague enough that they might need clarification. I think struggles against authority and domination should probably involve all kinds of weapons (and in some cases already do), but what I had in mind was not necessarily a proposal for “armed struggle” in the traditional sense. The context I’m writing in is the United States; right now, the most destructive or negative anarchist practices are in most places limited to minor instances of property destruction. I wanted to invite people to be more ambitious and creative. Maybe for some that will lead to involvement in armed struggle; it could look like experimenting with more social organizing projects that challenge the state’s legitimacy; it could also mean intensified property destruction. After all, a bunch of people acting together could probably do a level of damage to state infrastructure that would have the potential to bring it down. There are a lot of great reasons not to try this (death, imprisonment), but I am surprised that it seems like so few people seem to even have this in their minds as an option. We are not as powerless up against this system as we tend to think; nothing is impossible.

One of the major questions you brought up had to do with an assumption in the original article that there’s a particular goal — what are we referring to when we say property destruction isn’t enough? Enough for revolution? Insurrection? I think history has pretty clearly shown the problems with orienting oneself towards a “revolution” — for most people, this means a single event, a takeover of the government that establishes a new regime. Instead of revolution, many anarchists orient themselves towards an insurrection, meaning a major uprising in which control is not restored. But other anarchists have sought to further correct the problems with revolution as a single event by proposing a kind of perpetual, everyday approach to revolt. This makes sense — at this point it should be obvious that the transformation we’re looking for is not fully achieved when the latest monarch is killed. And unlike some revolutionary event that is unlikely to ever arrive, insurrection is a process we can strive to experience glimpses of here and now, when we get a lit-

Being attentive to the dynamics of capital means there will be millions of people fighting capitalism at various historical junctures. Capitalism produces escalated crisis. These crises will cause tumultuous unfolding political transformations over time that are fundamentally unpredictable. Any real defeatism is not attentive enough to how much capitalism produces crisis. I do think that fascism is the most likely outcome of these crises but not an inevitable one.

In terms of people wanting to revolt without winning, if that helps them feel alive and be kind to other people, then more power to them! ★



In therapy.

2020 SUMMITS

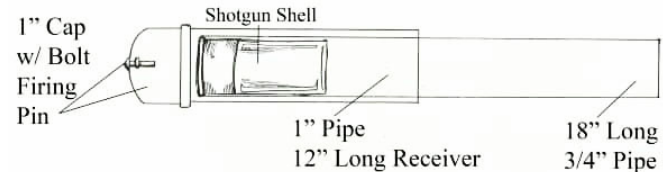
The passing of the 20th anniversary of the seminal Battle in Seattle – exceptional in that it actually shut down the World Trade organization meeting it opposed – led to an interview elsewhere in the paper that elaborates on important lessons and some of what has changed, since. As a result of those changes, such protests may seem a relic of the bygone anti-globalization era. Still, the annual procession of summits and conferences, stacked with heads of state and industry leaders we oppose, rumble onward with anarchists and others trying to figure out where and how we stand against those figures and their plans – and if the summit is the place to do it.

The upcoming Group of Seven meeting will be held from June 10-12 at the Camp David government retreat in Northwest Maryland in 2020, featuring the heads of state of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. This follows the trend of holding such con-

ferences in remote, self-contained places so that opposition can't get near it, making it difficult for any kind of protest to interfere with transit to the meeting, and even prevents gathering any significant numbers. The 2012 G7 was held in the same location quite successfully. The only aberration in this trend seems to be the G20 in Hamburg, Germany, a few years ago which indeed became a riot – but for which the international radical community is still suffering repression. Urban terrain lends itself to riot, which in Seattle contributed to an official State of Emergency that shut down the city and the '99 WTO conference, but Hamburg still wasn't as successful as its predecessor – in part due to the change in policing such events.

The exponentially increased number of cops on the ground, their increasingly militarized gear and strategy, and their advancing technological-savvy, exhibit reasons why protests fail. These police tactics can also be observed in less international affairs, such as the party-nomination conventions in the States that will also be occurring in 2020.

Though different in a number of ways from other events we discuss, it is very much worth noting that the COP25 United Nations meeting on climate change in November of last year did not happen in Chile as was planned. The ongoing revolts there, that began with calls for fare evasion, escalated far beyond the initial scope into large-scale social unrest preceding the event. Not being a protest of that particular summit, as such, it still led to the entire meeting being moved to Spain. The unified Spanish-Chilean production met with a unified resistance, with calls from Chile to Spain declaring that “all bullets will be returned.” This of course is not entirely hyperbole, as Chilean protesters have been shot in the streets, and more often disappeared – while a new group of anarchist guerrillas have engineered a simple device resembling a metal pipe that can fire a single shotgun shell at a time, which has been used on police forces in Chile. Meanwhile, the meeting was still able to occur in Madrid.



An example of an improvised pipe gun and diagram 8

happened, and that at best Sanders' presidency will provide limited damage control on our way to an even more extreme conservative administration. Yet people still seem to be engaging with the Sanders campaign as though this time things will be different. Before we get swept up one more time by more promises of hope and change, let's talk about what the effects of having a “socialist” in office will actually look like.

In his first two years in office, Sanders will be unable to pass any of the major life-changing reforms he campaigned on, but this will be blamed on the makeup of the Congress and Senate. This will again urgently redirect our attention to the midterm elections of 2022. Whether these succeed or fail, Sanders would still be the president of the United States, which depends on global capitalism to maintain itself. Neither he nor any other president will be able to address the root causes of peoples' misery, which are capitalism and hierarchy.

For that, we need an insurrection – in which we all get ourselves out of the control of the state, and out of any other types of coercion that might get offered up in the process. As president, Sanders will have to undermine and repress real resistance to capitalism and hierarchy because, as usual, it will be against the law. This will be disappointing for his radical supporters, but right on time a new fascist candidate will show up and we will be blackmailed once again into voting for the lesser evil.

As you can see, at no point during a Sanders presidency will the system give us an opportunity to reflect and say “wow, that did NOT work! I should go back to plotting the destruction of the state and spreading the joy of insurrectionary anarchy while I grow food and medicine to share with my friends and neighbors and prepare for economic and ecological collapse.” This conclusion is perpetually delayed by the constant need for rapid responses to the disaster that is electoral politics.

In 2020, let's dare to dream of paths to freedom that could actually work. Tell people who try to guilt you into caring about elections that they're being unrealistic and irresponsible. As hopeless as things are, the reason a candidate as “radical” as Sanders is being offered to us right now is because the system is on the rocks and dissatisfaction with it is at an all-time high. It's up to us to point towards another way of life than what this system gives us, and not fall for the false alternative of socialism that the system is offering us in order to get us to calm down and compromise. Instead of accepting this offer, let's encourage each other and those around us to explore projects that take power away from the system. ★

ATT. GEN. DENIES PAROLE

Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro is a progressive who has backed marijuana legalization and supported lawsuits against the state of Arkansas' abortion restrictions – but as part of the Pennsylvania Board of Pardons, he regularly opposes clemency for the imprisoned. The board, which requires a unanimous vote of the five members in order to grant a pardon, only freed two of the hundreds of applicants last month.

There is no freedom in a society of governance, but estimates state that 1,200 people in PA “who never took a life are condemned to die in prison.” Taking the decisions for both parole and pardon out of the hands of the Department of Corrections has just put it in the hands of another bureaucratic, authoritarian element. Notably, though, Shapiro is essentially single-handedly responsible for keeping the following people in prison:

- Philadelphia brothers Dennis and Lee Horton were offered 4-10 years to admit their guilt, but they have served 26 years for second-degree murder while maintaining their innocence as accomplices in a shooting. The killer was only charged with third-degree murder, and he was paroled in 2008. The Horton brothers have zero juvenile record. Zero adult record. Zero prison misconducts. Either they're innocent, or they have flawlessly impersonated innocent men their entire lives.

- Pedro Reynoso has one of the strongest cases taken on by the Pennsylvania Innocence Project. He has maintained that he was out of the country for his son's baptism at the time of a double homicide for which he has been in prison for 23 years. Ten people, including the priest who performed the baptism in the Dominican Republic, corroborated his story. Family members of the victim have agreed that Reynoso was not the killer. He's a Stage-3 cancer survivor in declining health.

- Edward Printup killed his sadistic stepfather, who viciously beat Printup four or five times a week for 12 years, in self-defense. His sister testified Friday that their stepfather sodomized her when she was 8 and raped her throughout childhood. Printup has been in prison nearly 40 years. The Department of Corrections calls him an exemplary inmate.

- 57-year-old Francisco Mojica Jr., who now walks with a cane, is an exemplary inmate who poses zero public safety risk. He never took a life, but he has been in jail for 27 years for being present and hiding a gun after his brother shot and killed a man. Mojica's brother, the killer, was released more than a decade ago. He wrote to the judge, pleading to trade sentences with his brother, who is now likely to die in prison.

- Henrietta Harris has Department of Corrections' full support for commutation after having served nearly 40 years for her role in a family tragedy. She has reconciled with her troubled past, including extensive abuse at the hands of the man she killed. She will now likely die in prison.

- The Evans brothers, Reid and Wyatt, carjacked a man nearly 40 years ago using a nonfunctioning weapon as a prop. They never intended to kill him, and they hadn't realized he had a heart condition. He died from a heart attack hours after they dropped him at a pay phone to call for help.

Like all politicians, progressive or otherwise, Shapiro trades on granting limited rights to people in exchange for their continued subordination. When one steps out of line, of course, we are summarily confined, with any chance of escaping incarceration left entirely up to the state-apparatuses – lest we escape, ourselves. That, of course, is the lesson – governments never grant freedom, they only restrict it.

With offices in Harrisburg, a post office box in Philadelphia, and a home in neighboring Montgomery County, PA AG Josh Shapiro can never be too far away. ★

20 YEARS AFTER THE BATTLE OF SEATTLE: AN INTERVIEW

For the 20-year anniversary of the 1999 Seattle WTO demonstrations, we talked with someone involved in the anarchist space in the period. In this interview, we reflect back on summit-hopping, the introduction of black blocs to North America, and the “anti-globalization” movement. We consider the dynamics in which these events took place, the common patterns and trajectories that followed, and what they might mean for anarchists now.

It’s been 20 years since the Seattle WTO protests. From your perspective, how did it come together?

I think it’s helpful to parse the protest in November ’99 in Seattle in terms of three different sets of tactics coming together pretty effectively, complementing each other. One was a very large march by the AFL-CIO that really drew a huge crowd to the city. The second was direct action blockades (organized by Direct Action Network). Affinity groups would be assigned to blockade the conference center. Thousands were involved in that and they were successful blockading the conference center. The third piece was the black bloc: militant anarchists often with a critique of nonviolence interested in using black bloc tactics to destroy property, fight police, be disruptive, etc.

In a lot of ways there was more solidarity between these three tactics than one might expect. There was a lot of antagonism and a lot of hostility, but they really ended up relying on each other. Like, the black bloc in Seattle was effective precisely because the streets were shut down and the police had lost control of the entire situation. The three tactics together created a situation that the police were grossly unprepared for and led to the success of the protest.

I wasn’t unaccustomed to direct action tactics. I had spent roughly the six months prior living in Europe and spent a couple of months traveling in anarchist/communist squats on the continent. There I attended many protests. I remember in Rome being in a huge march against the state funding of religious schools and meeting up with this group who were like “we are going to attack your embassy; do you want to come?” And I was like “I would love to.” We hopped turnstiles, got off in this bourgeois shopping neighborhood, linked arms, charged the police vans, rolled them over, and destroyed the McDonald’s on that block.

Only in Germany was the black bloc used in that visual style, where everyone would wear matching clothes. The German antifa was widely regarded as the scary dogmatists of the European anarchist scene. In the autonomous scenes of Greece, Italy and Spain, many of these tactics were really used by everyone, effectively preventing the police from controlling the crowd, isolating and arresting people. They were tactics like link arms, charge police when you see them, be prepared to run, keep moving. These were not part of the street culture in the US at this time, but they were being imported.

My first exposure was June of ’99. I grew up in Eugene, Ore-

gon, which was a concentration of a certain anarchist scene. I was a social anarchist, class-struggle anarchist, and the scene was veering off in a different direction. I attended this protest in Eugene and they were confrontational. One young man, Rob Thaxton (Rob los ricos) threw a rock at a cop and got 7 years in prison.

The anarchists used some of these tactics and they were gearing up to use them in Seattle. When I went to Seattle, I was with a videographer crew, wearing black and masked up on-and-off. We were mostly oriented to the street blockades, but we were not hostile to the black bloc. In the April 16th, 2000 protests in Washington DC against the IMF, I was part of a very substantial black bloc and had a good time in DC. One of our favorite things was moving cars into the middle of intersections.

I saw the black blocs as a combination of militant tactics used in Europe, that really should be used by all street protesters in all contexts, and on the other hand, this really particular aesthetic of looking “scary.” I think the aesthetic was a lot harder to defend—it’s justified by trying to be anonymous. But for people not in it, it is kind of terrifying. Those were the clothes I wore; I wore black Carhartts and a black hoodie everywhere I went in those years. I didn’t mind those aesthetics (I was mildly critical of them) but really it made the proper defense of it harder to mount because of the implicit fear. After Seattle, I organized anti-crowd control workshops in Minneapolis. Our intent was to generalize those tactics and I stand by that as the political intervention that needed to get made.

As for property destruction, I strongly defend that morally. I am not sure if it was strategically essential. It ended up falling into an aesthetic. Looting, for example, is much more strategically essential. Or really effectively destroying a target.

So, you are making distinction between an aesthetic, the spectacle, of the black bloc and the tactics. When you say these tactics needed to be more broadly generalized, I wonder how they began to generalize in the specific subculture that was using them?

There was a large milieu of anarchists with a few big convergences. There was a subset of fierce anti-capitalists in the Earth First scene. Thousands of kids were coming to the anarchist scene, either through the animal rights scene or a punk scene. At this point, Leninist parties were not effective at recruiting anyone, but anarchism was very compelling to a lot of us. People engaged in various actions, developed analyses, argued with each other over time and slowly an overlapping consensus emerged that escalating street fights against police was a necessary and integral tactic. And this was shared with “civilization-destroying” anarcho-primitivists and more solidaristic social anarchists.

I was in Europe when a lot of this was happening in the US, from summer of ’98 to the fall of ’99, and missing out on the discussions happening about the black blocs. But I was around after Seattle. There was no question we saw a continuous escalation of militancy in the context of social crisis, producing

circumstances somewhat like “protracted revolutionary civil war.” This was our vision of how things were unfolding. The level of incapacity the police faced in Seattle marked a new phase of being on the offensive. We really thought that would continue. That’s certainly not what happened in the 2000s but that was our vision.

How did so-called “summit-hopping” fit into this?

We recognized that you need a critical mass of people using militant tactics to have a decent demonstration. That might be riots of black youth like we had in the late 1960s or the anarchists in the late 1990s. Very few cities had a critical mass in-and-of themselves. If you wanted to have the police on the defensive you needed to converge militants from around the continent into one place.

There was a sense that you were always getting ready for the next big protest. You mobilized as many people as possible and also coalesced a smaller group that you travel with, allied affinity groups. This was denounced as “summit-hopping” in some circles. It was very effective as a means for fucking with police.

Why did this ultimately fizzle out?

There were three important factors: one is the police stepped up their tactics. Something that leaves the police “flat-footed” at one time, in another moment, they’re much more prepared. There has to be a continual innovation of tactics when you are up against the State. In each subsequent protest after Seattle, the police knew better what they were up against and circulated tactics.

The second is the people involved in the black bloc were affected by the critiques of it: that it was masculinist, that it was racist, that it was alienating to people, that it was divorced from any kind of sustained organizing. Some of which were true and some of which were not true. There was real genuine aspiration to anti-racist/feminist/anti-oppression organizing; identity politics was not a dirty word at the time. They were ambivalent about what they were doing and didn’t have a clear vision strategically of how the black bloc fit in.

The third thing and by far the most important was the September 11th attacks. There was a huge militarization of the US State and the complete collapse of the broader anti-globalization movement that had provided the supportive context for black bloc tactics.

A lot of people reoriented to different kinds of organizing, fragmenting the anarchist scene in different directions.

I came out as trans in 2000, which dramatically altered the way strangers related to me in the anarchist scene. In the 90s, I could move around the American and European anarchist scene and be taken very seriously everywhere I went. People really listened to what I said, and I had a lot of strategic thoughts. That completely evaporated when I presented as a woman or as transfeminine or gender nonconforming. I had a

few comrades but, I had a much harder time seeing myself in the bigger scene.

Eventually I got a job in Philadelphia doing social service work with very poor trans women, working with people whose survival really tied up with relationship to the State, kind of called on me to have a less one-dimensional analysis of the State. I kind of drifted into socialist politics and eventually led me into spending a few years in post-Maoist milieu, where community organizing was the chief priority.

I did that for a while and then I started thinking a lot more about the failures of social movements since the ’70s and drifted into a communization framework. I moved away from anarchism and a little back toward anarchism.

How do you think this history could be useful to anarchists now?

I think we have a lot of critique that is quite accurate of labor unions, of NGOs, of Marxist-Leninist organizations, of these political forms with deep, deep problems. But the idea that these forms necessarily lead to political containment or to de-escalation, I think, limits our grasp of how things can unfold over time. What happened in Seattle was one example where less militant organizing actually provided the context for more militant organizing.

How different is your current model for escalation or insurrection from the model of “civil war” you had in 1999?

Revolutions are made by millions of people, they are not made by thousands of people. If all the activists and militants in the entire country, if they were all to get on board with the same strategy and they were to work really hard on that, chances are we would all get killed. We would lose.

In that context, the fundamental question for militants is how to be attentive to the dynamics of broader movements and figure out how to relate to them. As anarchists in the 1990s, we imagined ourselves as front-line guerrilla soldiers in a people’s war. But there’s no way we will defeat global capitalism through our own activities. That goes for a revolutionary party, a mass union, a collective prefigurative project. The kinds of confrontations that could actually cast the State into crisis are ones that would completely dwarf our activities. If we can figure out how to not get in their way and contribute something to them, then we would be doing better than most Leftists have done historically.

I think that readers of *Anathema* would agree with your assessment of the Left historically and even agree that their own activities will not produce a revolution. The difference is that many anarchists now don’t see “revolution” as achievable or revolutionary anarchism as tenable. They still desire revolt even if they don’t imagine winning. Do you have anything to say to them?