

# ANATHEMA

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## GLOBAL INSURRECTIONS

Chile, Ecuador, Hong Kong, Sudan, Haiti, Iraq, Lebanon, Venezuela, La Reunion, Kurdistan, Catalonia: it seems like right now all over the planet people are rising up against some misery of hierarchical society. This moment feels reminiscent of the “era of riots” that lead us from the “Arab Spring” through to the riots that shook the USA in 2014 and 2015 following police shootings. How can we connect our struggles in Philly to what’s happening worldwide? How can we push the tensions here toward insurrection? What can we learn from this wave of uprisings?

Earlier this month, a protest in Brooklyn against police and the public transit authority made connections to the uprisings in Chile. While the Brooklyn protest came as a response to video of police attacking a black man on the subway for allegedly beating the fare, along with a spate of recent police killings, during the protest signs of solidarity with the revolt in Chile also shone through. Stickers and graffiti in the subway referenced the fare evasions that kicked off the Chilean riots. Texts in Spanish and English were written about the protest, allowing rebels in Brooklyn and Chile to share ideas and have dialogue. Even the mention of struggle elsewhere within our own struggles is a sign of solidarity. Opening up conversations with people fighting across the world lets us hear directly from them what they need, how they’re struggling, and what they’re up to. Those of us who can translate texts from Arabic, French, Spanish, Chinese, and other languages are uniquely posi-

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## PINK WAVE

Queers in town are responsible for recent a wave of vandalism and sabotage. Four attacks have taken place over the course of about two weeks, targeting everything from gentrification and technology, to fascism and colonialism. The attacks have been accompanied by a communique signed by such groups as “Deviant Dykes,” “prison abolitionist queers,” or “a transsexual, and an anxious wreck, both anarchists”. Some of the communique accompany small sprees of radical actions such as a stroll up Broad St with cans of spray paint or combinations of graffiti and sabotage while others tell of more singular acts like the smashing of a window or slashing corporate car tires. Slashing Indigo bike tires seems to be especially popular among queers this season.

November also saw two speaking events by members of Pinko, a revolutionary gay communist magazine exploring the limits of sexuality, family and other topics of interest to queers. Additionally West Philly has seen a rash of graffiti proclaiming “Gay Chaos” sometimes accompanied by a circle-A or a negation symbol.

These occurrences may seem like something out of (post-) left field, but there is a long history of radical queer struggle. The riots against police and queerphobia at the Stonewall Inn in New York and Compton’s Cafeteria in San Francisco in the 1960s are considered by many to be jumping off points for the modern LGBTQIA+ movements that

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in a non-emergency in this day and age can result in criminal charges — even a felony, should it be not the first offense or if it results in an injury or property damage — and one can imagine how much more seriously authorities treat a bomb hoax in an increasingly terrorized world. ★



## END THE ABATEMENT?

It’s a hot-button, controversial issue in Philadelphia — a ten-year reduction of taxes on properties for pre-existing buildings has, more recently and controversially, come to also encompass new construction. Officials are said to have supported it, ultimately, to boost that construction and thus the local economy. Critics say this lost revenue disproportionately affects schools and certain civil service salaries, and that the new development will contribute to the further displacement of residents. In the meantime, the fight seems to be occurring primarily in City Council as developers and building trades unions square off with community members and activists concerning reforms to the nearly twenty-year-old law that could come about any day now.

So what does this have to do with a pursuit of liberation?

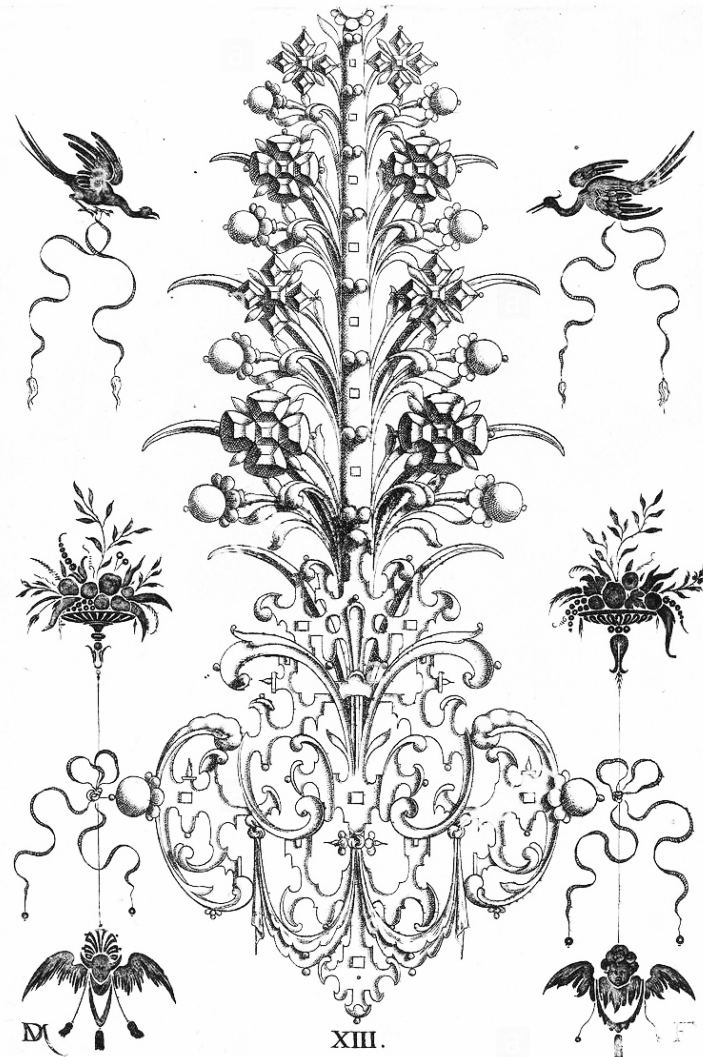
Nothing.

In a city over-run with gaudy, gentrifying developments, we understand the reason for concern, and in fact we are fighting many of the same opponents on different terrain — but there is no benefit to a struggle for anarchy in advocating for anyone to pay higher taxes. In fact, it muddles our perspective by advocating for state-mediated solutions to our problems — in advocating for a bigger, better-funded government.

“Anarchists must say what only anarchists can say” — this phrase has been ringing true yet again. Our ongoing contestations that schools are among the earliest means of domestication and state indoctrination, that firefighters put the condo fires out, hold true. Neither are the incredible rates of new development and gentrification in major cities the result of one city’s tax incentives — it is an issue in most

major cities across the country, and in many throughout the world. It is a sad truth that being a sanitation worker is more dangerous than being a cop, but a higher salary does not fix that either. We have more to gain from an infinite strike of such civil service positions than we do from them, and the rest of society, becoming slightly more comfortable — and both positions on this topic still treat the economy as something worth keeping.

Again, do we want to be civil or subversive? ★



We would like to remind our readership that Anathema welcomes submissions. We are interested in publishing your Philly related anti-authoritarian writings. Send us your reportbacks on actions and events, responses to articles in the paper, drawings or other visual art, photos of graffiti or vandalism, your thoughts on the state of the anarchist movement in Philly, poetry, or something else you want to see printed in the next issue of Anathema.

Send your writing or a pitch to: [anathemaphl@riseup.net](mailto:anathemaphl@riseup.net) ★

## WHAT WENT DOWN

Around Columbus Day - Anti-Colombus graffiti over a Mural Arts mural in South Philly. "COLUMBUS WAS A CHUMP (A)"

October 22 - Memorial graffiti for David Jones, killed by the police on a billboard by the Greys Ferry bridge. "RIP DAVID JONES"

October 26 - Two unknown persons break into a McDonalds at 7800 Germantown Ave, broke into a safe and left with \$4000.

October 30 - New development in West Philly hit with paint.

November 20 (Trans Day of Remembrance) - "A transsexual, and an anxious wreck, both anarchists" smashed a window at Millcreek Tavern in response to Proudboys tabling there. "This action was intentionally taken on Trans Day Of Remembrance, in loving memory of an antifascist trans woman who's body was found in the schulkyll earlier this year."

November 20 - Protesters march in Center City against a proposed migrant youth detention center in nearby Devon, disrupt a gala hosted by Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health (a contractor for the project), and block parking access for the event.

November 24 - "Deviant Dykes" sabotaged three ATMS, dropped an anti-capitalist banner, tagged the Frank Rizzo mural "FTP (A)", and slashed the tires of five Indiegogo bicycles in response to the call to SMASHBLACKFRIDAY. "We're having so much fun and I hope y'all reading do as well. Get creative, get rowdy, and protect each other."

November - Three GoPuff vehicles have all their tires slashed in complicity with recent attacks by queers. "GoPuff solidifies an all encompassing reliance on technology by extending the digitalization of everyday life, isolating us from each other and our environment."

November 28 - "Prison abolitionist queers" go on a tagging spree up Broad St, capitalist and government buildings are targeted. Twenty-four Indiegogo bike tires are also slashed. "Fuck this colonial holiday, super fuck Black Friday, fuck those who would have us feel shame around mental illness and lack of perceived productivity under this coercive capitalist structure, when the real people who deserve to feel shame are those bulldozing and developing land that used to be wild and beautiful, banks that collaborate with ICE, and fucking army recruiters!"

November 29 - "In solidarity with striking amazon workers in Europe this Black Friday, a small crew of anarchists popped around 20 indiegogo bike tires, sabotaged 10 ATMs, tagged a macy's and several other stores, the Rizzo mural, and sabotaged an Excavator being used in a development project."

Early December - A Comcast van is spotted with its logo crossed out and circle-a painted on its side. ★

## GLOBAL INSURRECTIONS CONTINUED

tioned to share perspectives across borders and language barriers.

In Turkey and parts of Europe, fighters are showing solidarity with the Kurdish struggle by targeting complicit capitalists. Politicians supporting and companies providing supplies for the Turkish war machine are seeing their offices, storefronts, and vehicles sabotaged. In the U.S., protests against the repression of the Kurdish struggle in Rojava have disrupted flights by complicit airlines by picketing in airports. A dossier of suppliers of the Turkish state aimed at helping U.S. anarchists was recently published online on the website Anarchists Worldwide.

For those interested in learning more about these uprisings around the world, some starting points online are @black\_autonomy and @edcns\_ineditas on twitter and anarchists-worldwide.noblogs.org. These twitter accounts and website focus on rebellions around the world and often have translations from participants involved. ★

## PINK WAVE CONTINUED

have gone so mainstream today. The Bash Back! network of the late 2010s was an explicitly anarchist manifestation of queer rebellion. Initially responding to the RNC and DNC, queers across the country (and in Canada) organized riots, criticized the mainstream LGBT movement, opened squats, commemorated those killed by queerphobia, and explored a criminally queer way of life. Although it's been almost a decade since the disbanding of Bash Back! attacks like the ones that took place last November are keeping the spirit of queer liberation alive and kicking (literally).

To read the mentioned communiques visit [phlanticap.noblogs.org/category/queer](http://phlanticap.noblogs.org/category/queer)

To learn more about the recent history of queer anarchy this author recommends "Queer Ultraviolence: A Bash Back! Anthology" and "Be Gay Do Crime" ★



after the more famous treachery on behalf of titans of industry, they are economically tied to the unrepentant reputation and also caught up in their own acts of class betrayal. In fact, they share the same office at 123 South Broad Street, in addition to another local office at 625 West Ridge Pike.

Indeed, like Henry Clay Frick was once targeted for assassination for his actions at Homestead by anarchist Alexander Berkman — and perhaps more practically in its repeatability — Securitas vehicles have been the subject of numerous arsons for various aspects of bolstering the surveillance state.

Monitoring prison populations, nuclear plant construction sites, and so many aspects of public surveillance has put Securitas squarely in the cross-hairs of the *Informal Anarchist Federation — International Revolutionary Front*. As a contribution to a "subversive May," some "free foxes" in Germany most recently acted in such a way so as to express their solidarity with many of the imprisoned and fallen anarchists around the world — to "rid ourselves of the feeling of regret that can overcome us at any time." ★



## BOMB SCARES

Fifteen years ago last October, traffic along Interstate 76 in and out of Philadelphia was halted by authorities for three hours in the midst of evening rush hour. A suspicious metal box with the letters "ELF" was seen by a Norfolk-Southern Railroad employee suspended from a PECO Energy high-tension line tower near the Belmont Avenue/Green Lane exit. Members of the state and Montgomery County bomb squads were brought in to take care of the package by first blasting it with a water cannon to open it. This tactic failed, so the bomb squads deposited it in a steel explosion containment vessel to detonate it at an undisclosed location. The FBI stated that they were investigating if there was a connection to the Earth Liberation Front, who were said to have an interest in bringing transmission towers down and had been active throughout the state in the previous two years.

In searching the internet for this suspected ELF action, for which no claim was issued and no one was arrested, you might find mention of many false bomb threats in Philadelphia. Over just a few years, such threats led to the evacuations of schools, hotels, and an airplane. Whether these were explicit threats written on walls or spoken anonymously spoken over a phone line, a movie prop left by film-makers on a college campus, or just a car battery left on Penn's campus (where I guess they have never seen a car battery first-hand?), the effect was the same — shut down and evacuate. In a post-9/11 world, this also happens on so many occasions when someone leaves a box or piece of luggage alone for too long in many a train station or other transportation hub — especially when there are a few stray wires sticking out.

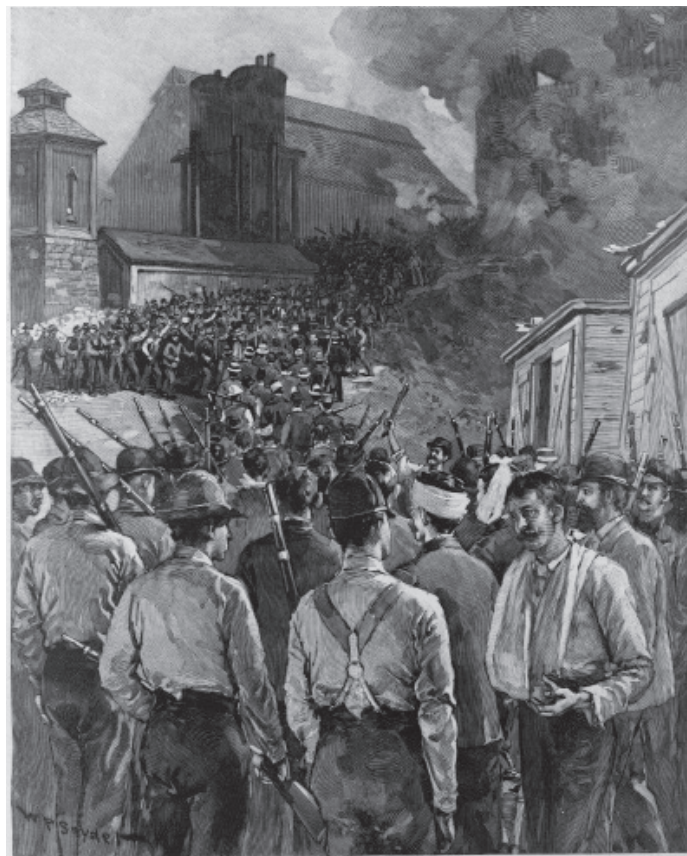
In terms of intentional hoaxes with political intent, a claim was issued this past October for an "attack" on branches of the Turkish bank *Işbank*, across Europe, after Turkey began their assault on autonomous regions of Syria. Using the Network of Revolutionary Cells' (SRB) guide for "How to Start Evacuation," they followed a simple but thorough guide to anonymously issue bomb threats against bank branches in Berlin, London, Sofia, Amsterdam, and Paris.

The substantial concern about the very real threat of terrorism (from authoritarian to liberatory) has lent itself to hoaxes being treated as credible threats — until found out for certain to be otherwise — which has been known to temporarily paralyze many an industry and its flow of capital. Correspondingly, pulling a fire alarm

Pennsylvania, just outside of Pittsburgh, was being managed by Henry Clay Frick while Carnegie was in Europe. Frick decided to reduce the workers' wages and break their union. He built a fence 3 miles long and 12 feet high around the steelworks and topped it with barbed wire, adding peepholes for rifles. When the workers did not accept the pay cut, Frick laid off the entire work force. The Pinkerton detective agency was hired to protect strikebreakers.

Although only 750 of the 3,800 workers at Homestead belonged to the union, three thousand workers met in the Opera House and voted overwhelmingly to strike. The plant was on the Monongahela River, and a thousand pickets began patrolling a 10-mile stretch of the river. A committee of strikers took over the town, and the sheriff was unable to raise a posse among local people against them.

On the night of July 5, 1892, hundreds of Pinkerton guards boarded barges 5 miles down the river from Homestead and moved toward the plant, where ten thousand strikers and sympathizers waited. The crowd warned the Pinkertons not to step off the barge. A striker lay down on the gangplank, and when a Pinkerton man tried to shove him aside, he fired, wounding the detective in the thigh. In the gunfire that followed on both sides, seven workers were killed.



THE HOMESTEAD STRIKE.—DRAWN BY W. P. SEYMOUR AFTER A PHOTOGRAPH BY DANNO, PITTSBURGH.—(SEE PAGE 678.)  
THE PINKERTON MEN LEAVING THE BARGE AFTER THE SCRAMBLE.

The Pinkertons had to retreat onto the barges. They were attacked from all sides, voted to surrender, and then were beaten by the enraged crowd. There were dead on both sides. For the next several days the strikers were in command of the area. Now the state went into action: the governor brought in the militia, armed with the latest rifles and Gatling guns, to protect the import of strikebreakers.”

The Gatling gun, as has been previously mentioned in these pages, had been marketed by its creator Richard Gatling as a means to mow down anarchists and labor activists. I came across this fact in a modern gun magazine that drew the parallels between this early machine gun history and the modern popularity of “truck guns” — that is weapons (often AR’s) stowed in ones truck to “defend” oneself from the sort of highway protest blockades that were popular during the height of the Black Lives Matter movement.

If you’d allow me another short tangent, the protest of “assault weapons” previously only resulted in the banning of certain modifications of those assault weapons, a ban now expired, and has since done little more than convince manufacturer Colt to cease the sales of AR-15’s to civilians while continuing to supply the military and police. There are plenty more sources on the ways gun control was used to keep marginalized populations unarmed through advocacy by racist groups at different points in history (i.e. NRA, KKK, the Reagan governorship), and the incredibly high rates of racialized and domestic violence perpetuated by cops should only provide the *straw to break the pigs’ back* regarding arguments for armed self-defense.

Anyway, today’s Pinkertons pride themselves on continued service to the ruling class, and against our interests, “from strategic advisory to tactical implementation...in over 100 countries.” Their tag-line, “*we never sleep*,” suggests some discordant balance between an Orwellian “Big Brother” and a profound insomniac’s remorse for murderous, strike-breaking cruelties, and the like.

Their coffers are likely all-the-more full after an undisclosed settlement between the corporate video game entities behind *Red Dead Redemption* and *Securitas AB* this year — the security company that acquired the still independently-operating Pinkerton in 1999 — and so the plot sickens.

Securitas is likely familiar to anyone who’s seen a security guard in downtown Philadelphia — they are ubiquitous. Although Securitas acquired Pinkerton well

## RING & THE NEW POLICING

In November, The Intercept reported that internal documents at Ring, the home security company owned by Amazon, reveal that the company is planning to create automated neighborhood “watch lists” by incorporating facial recognition technology into its increasingly vast network of “smart home” doorbell cameras. The feature would alert camera-owners via smartphone when someone deemed “suspicious” pops up on their cameras. Like the old-fashioned “neighborhood watch” that Ring wants to replace, the feature would extend the power of the police and as well as make certain areas of town more dangerous for anyone Ring camera owners deem “suspicious.”

Ring’s documents do not define what “suspicious” means. In practice, this will likely be defined by gentrifiers and cops, whose systemic racism is well documented. At its core, the watch list would identify people who “don’t belong” in certain areas; this means black and brown people, poor people, and anyone whose appearance deviates from social norms. Ring’s Neighbors program — an online discussion forum between camera owners — is already well known for its aggressive racism and for generally heightening distrust and paranoia within neighborhoods. For many people, Ring’s new feature would make it dangerous to be in certain neighborhoods at all — a victory for the forces of gentrification everywhere.

Ring doorbell cameras have already allowed police to significantly expand their operations, simply by appropriating private citizens’ technology for no additional expense. The technology therefore has immense “value,” not only for the company, but for the state. For decades it’s been steadily expanding policing in order to keep its increasingly immiserated people under control, while struggling to balance its own budgets.

More than 600 police forces across the country have now partnered with Ring, including six departments near Philadelphia (the PPD is not officially partnered with Ring but has been using its footage to target suspects). The watch lists of “suspicious people” would presumably be shared with the police. The Washington Post has reported that Ring “aggressively pushed to secure new police allies,” flying company representatives to law enforcement agencies to sell them on the surveillance technology. Vice recently reported that Ring hosted private parties for police at the 2018 and 2019 International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) conferences.

Local AI-driven watch lists would be yet another step in expanding the reach of Amazon, which appears to be quietly building a surveillance state in collaboration with the federal government. Amazon has been the CIA’s cloud computing supplier since 2013. In selling web services to Palantir, the data analytics company partnered with ICE, it has been called the “invisible backbone” of ICE’s operations. Amazon already has a separate facial-recognition software called Rekognition that is now used by police nationwide. Despite several exposés of the program’s failures and racial biases, Amazon announced improvements this past August that include Rekognition’s ability to identify, in the faces it scans, the emotion of “fear.”



The wide network of surveillance that Ring has already established makes it harder for criminally-minded anarchists and anyone else attempting to attack the socioeconomic order to do so. Ring and other “smart home” technologies should thus be resisted in any way we can think of.

For those of us who want an end to policing and all authority, and those who want to push back against ever-increasing gentrification and techno-progress, Ring’s cameras offer a relatively easy target. In the spring of 2017, this newspaper reported that Philly anarchists played a game of Camover in which over 40 security cameras were disabled. Other communiques over the past year have reported specifically targeting Ring cameras as part of an underground campaign against Amazon. ★

If you would like to take direct action against crime in your community, [this is a great opportunity](#). By choosing to share your Ring videos, the Merriam Police Department will receive the videos you elect to share, along with your email address and physical address. Please note that upon receiving this email, none of your information has been released to law enforcement.

Direct action? lol

## DURING THE QUIET

Things in Philly seem quiet right now. Although around the world revolts are going off, over here things haven't quite matched the pace. Some might see this as a failure on our part (and in a way it is) but other perspectives can be more useful for furthering revolt. We can look around us and ask what's needed for revolt to blossom here? Is this lull part of the hot/cold cycle that often characterizes revolt or is it us hitting a dead end? How can we use this time to strategize and look forward? Now is a great time to experiment while the stakes are low! Below are a few thoughts on what we can do to further struggle while things are feeling low key. Striking while the iron is hot is great, but what better time to learn to strike than when the iron is cold?

We can sharpen our skills and create the infrastructure we hope to rely on in more intense moments of struggle. Whether it's how we move in the street, communicate with those around us, or the ways we heal each other, the skills and structures we use in struggle can be developed now. Getting better at what we do is never a bad thing. Around the world when insurrections heat up it's a combination of new skills and structures alongside long-practiced ones that seem to make the intensity possible. We can develop skills and build infrastructure that feel immediately relevant with the foresight that if things pop off we can scale them up or push to spread them among a growing number of rebels. What can we do now that will be that much more useful in insurrectionary times?

Our social connections, whether to each other as companions or to the rest of society, are what keep us from falling into the atomization and isolation that encourages us to rely more and more on hierarchy. Developing affinity, working through interpersonal conflict, learning each others' strengths and weaknesses, living well together, and generally exploring each other as companions is how we form the bonds that make struggling together possible and pleasant. Without bonds between companions, we not only foreclose on being able to make meaningful interventions during insurrectionary upheavals, we also close the door to everything beyond individual activity in the here and now. On the more social side, learning to hold non-condescending and honest conversations with strangers, breaking out of our echo chambers, and carrying oneself in a socially open manner are all skills that certainly won't make things harder if we find ourselves in crowded streets fighting alongside strangers.

Just because things are not flying off the handle locally doesn't mean conflictual activity needs to stop altogether. For ourselves or rebels the world over, attacks and direct actions are always appropriate. They can keep our minds and wits from leaving us. They remind us (and others) that despite circumstance the people and mechanisms of power are always vulnerable and within reach. Even though horrible things happen every day, it seems that revolts come together

when someone takes it upon themselves to fight back against the horror of daily life, and any attack can be that initial spark.

Supporting prisoners and those facing repression is an activity that should be ongoing. By supporting prisoners we fight the isolation of the justice system and its prisons. We remind those facing repression (and those who may risk repression) that prison is neither the end of dialogue nor the end of struggle. Understanding repression as a part of struggle alongside the occasional big uprising helps us keep things in perspective. Sharing the writings of prisoners, keeping up correspondences, and sending resources to companions on the inside not only helps the companions inside deal with the difficulty of being locked up, it reminds those on the outside that should they be captured by the state, there is a culture of support for the repressed.

Moments of relative social peace are a great opportunity to reflect! When time and chill seem abundant we can look at how we are fighting and struggling and discuss what is working and what isn't. We can look at ourselves and our companions without the urgency or pressure of constant activity and imagine how we can do better. It can be difficult to really analyze our own struggle when we are constantly focused on planning the next demo, action, or meeting, and these more peaceful times are a chance to really imagine how we can do better. ★

## GETTING LITTY WIT LASERS

As insurrections burn across the globe, rebels are developing new ways to undermine dystopian surveillance technologies. In Chile, Iraq, and Hong Kong specifically one can see many people using lasers during demonstrations. Why are protesters using lasers and what should would-be rebels in Philly know about them?

Lasers are basically light that's amplified using radiation. Lasers are categorized into a four class system with Class 1 being the weakest and safest and Class 4 being the strongest and most dangerous. Laser color is also an indicator of strength; red lasers are the weakest, green lasers (as seen in demonstrations) are more powerful, and blue lasers are the strongest. Laser output can be measured in milliwatts (mW). Anything over 5mW is no longer considered a laser pointer, and is usually marketed as a handheld or personal laser. Eagles fans might be amused to learn that in January a man in Kansas City shone a laser on notorious Patriots quarterback Tom Brady during a football game (the man was fined \$500 and banned from the NFL).

So why are protesters around the world using lasers? Lasers are being used to blind surveillance cameras and drones, to harass police, and even to disrupt police helicopters. A study by MTS Intelligent Security Solutions found that all lasers can temporarily blind surveillance cameras, and that more powerful ones can damage or permanently blind cameras. The study noted that damage could range from temporary

asserted projectuality onto the world, with the world, within the world.

I raise these questions in good faith as I haven't found satisfying answers for myself. Often, I end up needing a different motivation: not to act to win or as a means to an end of being enough but rather one of a smaller scale. And honestly, most of the time I am not sure what this means. I accept I cannot act in a way to create a revolutionary future yet I have the desire to create a different life with others, now: a desire to destroy civilization and its oppression. I think we must act, that resistance is important — a way to affirm life. But with no real belief in a liberatory future, with what measure am I left with?

I interpreted this piece as suggesting that armed struggle may be enough. This is concerning to me as I see almost nothing coming out of armed struggle, except for politics (this is not intended as a sweeping critique of using weapons or violence). Can armed struggle really occur without politics? Without representation? Without hierarchy and without individuals falling prey to roles and specialization? How can we combat what we find abhorrent in this world without falling prey to an "us vs them" framework? (A framework in which I think the current manifestation of antifascism in this country is entrenched, and one that I can only imagine armed struggle likewise creating.) Property destruction is indeed not enough but is armed struggle? I have no compassion for white supremacists (and as you pointed out — this includes all those whom the internet doesn't call "real Nazis" aka the state, police, etc.) but is armed struggle the path to defeat white supremacy in all its forms? Disregarding the practicality of an armed struggle, is armed struggle a desirable form of resistance?

And if it is not desirable, can we imagine it as a necessary form of resistance? Can we fight an armed struggle while remaining critical of ideology? Can an armed struggle ever be anti-political? Can it ever lead to a world that doesn't mirror what it set out to attack? My answer to most of these questions is no. But I absolutely reject the claim that a critical position towards armed struggle amounts to resignation.

In sum, my real questions here: how are we to measure what is enough, when, firstly, an anarchist "victory" is incredibly vast (and I would argue, both impossible and undesirable — as in ever reaching an "end"), and secondly, individuals' desires and goals are incredibly diverse. If efficacy is measured by a "does it lead to insurrection" then we are all horrible failures. While in-

deed, I think there is some humbling truth to that, I think we are often better than that. Lastly, how can we resist while resisting the temptation to measure?

Thanks for putting Anathema together and I look forward to hearing your thoughts! ★

## PINKERTON - "WE NEVER SLEEP"

I was recently perusing some merchandise in my local corporate book store for the alarm-enacting RFID stickers, when in walks a security guard. My immediate thought was that he worked for the store, until I saw the patch on his jacket: "Pinkerton Private Security."

It was different from the uniforms of the usual security, yet at once recognizable. *Pinkerton*, the infamous former "detective agency" that used to violently break strikes and protect scabs in and around the turn of the 20th century, had also recently come across my radar for having sued a video game company for their portrayal. The video game *Red Dead Redemption 2*, set in the "old west," had them listed among the villains of the game, as they were also known for hunting down famous and heroic criminals of that era such as Jesse James, Billy the Kid, and their associates.

Having shortened their name to just Pinkerton since the 19th Century, their website elaborates on their local activity:

*"Located in the 5th largest city in the United States, Pinkerton's Philadelphia office recently opened in the fall of 2014. Philadelphia, like Pinkerton, has rich, historical roots and once served as a major industrial center and railroad hub."*

Based out of Ann Arbor, Michigan, their local operations are directed by former Philly cop Logan Johnson, out of suite 1020 at 123 South Broad Street, in downtown Philadelphia (19109, 215-205-8446). They also pride themselves on being "the first security company in the world."

From here, I'll let Howard Zinn explain a relevant portion of their history:

*"After Haymarket, class conflict and violence continued, with strikes, lockouts, blacklisting, the use of Pinkerton detectives and police to break strikes with force, and courts to break them by law..."*

*"In early 1892, the Carnegie Steel plant at Homestead,*

ties to see each other in the streets. Opportunities like “oh, people are taking shit, I can take shit too.” And there’s a lot to be said for informal planning too, sharing ideas, past experiences, knowledge.

In a way the financial crisis was so big it broke your reality. Same thing with the tuition increase: you couldn’t ignore that and absorb that as part of your daily slog of bullshit. You have to confront it. You don’t want that, it’s awful but it can take something like that for an equal confrontational reaction. But those things didn’t come out of nowhere. People have to build up their willingness, ideas, skills – research into those institutions. I think that helped a lot. People did an immense amount of research and laid out how fucked up they are. The information is out there but you need to publicize it, make it available, and frame it, share it. Build those informal networks and be willing to share through them. ★

## RESPONSE TO “PROPERTY DESTRUCTION IS NOT ENOUGH”

I have affinity with many ideas expressed in the piece, “Property Destruction is not Enough,” but I am also left with many familiar questions I often grapple with.

Property destruction is not enough...not enough, though, for what? This is a question that often occupies me especially as I increasingly realize that my desires are vastly divergent from others’. Not enough for liberation? For “stopping this system of power – or at least parts of it...?” For revolution? For the abolition of the state? While I find no acts of resistance pointless, and indeed celebrate them, I am left asking, is there a potential aggregate of acts that could be enough? Enough, again though, for what?

But really this comes to a question of measurement – how to measure our actions. What is the metric being used when we ask ourselves, “Is this enough?” Can we act without measure? Live without measure? How can we resist the temptation to attack the world of measurement without measuring this attack? It’s hard for me to escape this mindset – especially when it pertains to a lofty desired goal, like insurrection. This question and critique is equally as appropriate to me as it is to anyone else I direct it towards. How do we act without reproducing the miserable society we come out of? It’s hard to imagine a method of resistance that doesn’t reproduce what I’m intending to attack, except, perhaps, in what most would consider small acts of resistance. I think that questioning the necessity of measurement in itself is important but what follows almost ignores this question, and rather, reinforces the concept of measurement.

For sure, property destruction or more serious acts of sabotage can be enough to put someone out of business, to delay building, delay deforestation, etc. In short, it may be enough to attack one particular issue. But as it is said, “the issues are not the issue” (ah, another form of measurement). I do not feel that those actions are a waste but I do think it is of utmost importance to be honest about the actual effects particular actions can have. A bail fund is not liberating someone from prison just like a banner drop isn’t the commencement of capitalism’s demise. That being said, both can be important. So I absolutely agree that property destruction is not enough...when someone claims that it is for, say, revolution. What would happen if these actions weren’t followed by, often, grandiose claims? Or is not relating every single act one takes to building the insurrection understood as an acceptance of failure?

I agree, the ramifications of the violence necessary for insurrection are not discussed by the milieu enough – seemingly it’s either ignored outright, to be discussed at a later time when revolt is imminent, or is dealt with through a combination of machismo and posturing – perhaps, a perverse inversion of violence as something to always be celebrated. (To be clear, my feelings on violence are contingent to context.) However, I do think there are practical responses – namely, self-defense classes, fight and firearms training, and the popularity of armed self-defense as a concept for communities (and as a friend pointed out – why is there a distinction between practical and affective? A distinction I reproduce constantly.) Also, I think another reason for this neglect is not only because some people no longer believe in revolution but really because they don’t think a revolution is desirable. Perhaps, a familiar line, “revolution which has historically meant authoritarian and bourgeois rule, and today means new innovations in technological capitalism: that this is still discussed in seriousness among anti-authoritarians is astounding.” I couldn’t agree more. But I also cannot ignore my desire to see a different world – to combat white supremacy, capitalism, civilization etc. To me I see a contradiction: can the horrors of mass society be attacked by mass society within mass society without reproducing it? Can a strong enough movement be built that can effectively (affectively) destroy white supremacy without creating its own new police force? Its own new prisons and death sentences? Can we “(over)look hard enough” to find enough people to pose a real threat to the existent? What does it look like to “win” – to be enough – in a way that maintains an anti-political and anti-social framework? I feel uncomfortable with the language of “winning” – does this connote an end? A utopia reached? Rather, my interest lies in a constantly

sunbursts to burned out pixels/blind spots to complete image blowout. The CCD and CMOS chips -- which turn light into electrons in cameras -- were destroyed by Class 3 lasers. The study also found that lasers damaged ambient light sensors in cameras causing the footage to be either over-bright or over-dark, footage from these cameras would need to be digitally edited to be viewed correctly. Rotating cameras proved difficult for researchers to target because of their constant movement.

Drones have also come under laser fire. Although only a very powerful (and expensive) laser could burn a drone out of the sky, drone cameras are vulnerable to lasers in the same ways as surveillance cameras. Drone operators trying to take photographs or film above a crowd of laser-wielding protesters will have a hard time get much of anything useful.

Police and their helicopters have also been seeing a good amount of green light in both Hong Kong and Chile. Lasers aimed at the eye can be disorienting and even cause permanent damage to the retina. The blink reflex is enough to protect the human eye from Class 1, 2, and 3R lasers, but even a few seconds of exposure can do spot damage. Pointing a laser into someone’s eye for even a few seconds straight might seem like a daunting task, but it’s important to remember that during these insurrectionary moments many people are pointing lasers at the same time. Even if the lasers are not steady enough to burn someone’s retina, the constant lasers to the face are sure to cause a disorienting amount of blinking. Red lasers cause little more than discomfort but green and blue ones can create blind spots in the eye that can take months or longer to clear up.

Most protesters seem to be using green handheld lasers, but it’s possible to create even advanced setups. Both protesters in Hong Kong and researchers for the study mentioned above have combined lasers with scopes for better accuracy. Photos can be found online of rebel youth in Hong Kong carrying DIY laser rifles, although one might want to think about carrying anything gun-shaped around US police. The researchers also described combining a laser and scope setup with a tripod to increase the stability of a laser, allowing to steady precise shining that could more easily damage a camera.



There aren’t too many regulations around lasers in the US. Pennsylvania has no laws around possession of lasers other than for laser light shows and laser hair removal. Federal law allows anyone to possess any laser under 500 mW, although Class 3A and higher need to have a two second delay on the

“on” switch, a lock and key, and a bunch of safety stickers. In 2012 Obama signed the FAA Modernization and Reform Act -- making it illegal to shine a laser at or in the path of an aircraft, punishable by up to 5 years in prison and a huge fine -- thanks Obama. A quick internet search will reveal that across the country many people have been arrested for shining lasers at police helicopters, and some were given prison sentences.

It’s pretty hard to be safe around lasers beyond keeping your eyes closed and not aiming for your friends. Workplace safety laws require that eye protection be used for Class 3B lasers and higher. Goggles are available to protect the eyes but most pairs are designed for certain light frequencies and can’t protect against more than one type of laser. The kinds of goggles that can handle multiple frequencies are rarer and more expensive. There’s a silver lining to this for the laser-wielding rebel; police and surveillance cameras are unlikely to be protected from more than one type of laser if they are protected from lasers at all.

Lasers in the hands of rebels fighting the government might seem like something out of a movie, but it’s only one of many tactics we can learn from. Around the world people are gluing bricks to the street to slow cops, anonymously sending encrypted files, and wrapping RFID chips in foil to prevent tracking. Each rebellion we witness is an opportunity to learn to better struggle and imagine new tactics and strategies. ★

## R.I.P. SEAN BONNEY

*In the last issue, we published a poem by Sean Bonney, “ACAB: A Nursery Rhyme.” In a sad coincidence, that issue appeared just weeks before he unexpectedly died. In memory of him, we are printing the final poem he posted on his blog Abandoned Buildings. He will be missed.*

“CONFESSION 2”

while people are starving, wealth is a crime. I am not willing to argue. if you are hungry, no laws apply. glass breaks easily. weapons can be made from anything. crime should not go unpunished.

*the meaning of royalty it too can be killed*

October 20 2019 ★



## 10 YEARS AFTER THE UC OCCUPATIONS an interview

It's been 10 years since a wave of occupations swept through the University of California (UC) system. We talked with a former UC Davis student involved in these struggles. At UC Davis, students began the first of several occupations of buildings in late November, 2009. In this interview, we reflect back on what led up to those events, how they impacted later developments, and what we can learn from them today.

1) What was the context or mood that made the occupations possible?

We were under austerity measures: There was a tuition increase (32%) and cuts to various departments while, at the same time, building large buildings. A year earlier was the housing crisis and the bank bail outs. So, there was an increased interest in what was going on in the financial system. People were hurting financially, and the financial crisis changed the world students would enter into. I think people were very disillusioned.

I wasn't a very political person. I was generally cynical about political action. But the financial crisis was a whole different level of disillusionment and with the tuition increase you can't help but feel very angry.

The people I was around socially who were into music or art scenes knew what was going on. Occupations at Santa Cruz had already happened. They had a manifesto that friends at the UC Davis radio station read on air. At Santa Cruz, they had barricaded and were holed up there for a while. They were the people who had contacts with the New School Occupation (in NYC) and people in Europe who were doing similar things too. Writing about occupations and the general state of things was circulating online.

Santa Cruz, Berkeley, Davis were schools that were geographically close. There was some planning between schools (sounds kind of conspiratorial). Ideas passed around from person to person. People were friends, knew each other, maybe lived in the same city despite different affiliations.

At Davis, there was a rally at the quad, the main gathering area. There was a teach-in and I decided to go to that. I think that helped solidify things for me. I was trying to figure out what was going on and I learned more about how universities were run and what would incentivize them to act this way. That was the first step.

Once I was more radicalized, I thought beyond how the school worked. There was a clear connection between what had happened in the financial crisis and what was happening in the schools. That was capitalism. That was clear to me and I was vaguely anti-capitalist.

I was down from the very beginning to do a bunch of stuff. I feel like that puts you with the people who were also willing to do things. I don't know how I was "vouched for." People

would ask "who wants to paint banners" and I would be like "I'll be there." Also, when you are in the space of the occupation things would become clear.

Initially there isn't an immediate division into camps. But there's a way people talk and act at the occupation. One simple thing is: are you willing to negotiate with the administration? So, if you're not or you are like "I see through that," after a while you notice who is in that camp. I found myself splitting with friends like that. If someone says something like "we should all wear suits to protests", and you think "I don't agree with that" then you start to feel yourself differentiate.

So you fall into a group of people that's smaller and smaller. But then you also meet more people through that. It's both that you lose people and then you also find people at the same time.

For us, the protesters, something about the occupations opened up a sense that we could use whatever we want on campus, it doesn't belong to them. It was like a lot of people were waiting for something like this, they had all these skills, and others learned from them. It felt like an experiment but an experiment that was important. You're at a school and then an occupation in a school. You are insulated from certain forces in the world. It's very concentrated version of what could happen, a microcosm, or almost lab conditions.

There's ways that people behave that are very particular to being at a school: the way school administrators treat student protests are different than how a city government treats random protesters. There is a floor of how badly they can treat you because they see you as part of their assets of the school. This is something we used to our advantage.

Eventually, the admins tried to paint occupiers as non-students. Outside agitators. In a kind of precursor to Occupy, we had a tent city and that was met with "these people are from outside." But the majority of who organized were people within the UC system (students, faculty, grad students).

The admins and UC police also spied on us. They used people from student housing, LGBT center, Ethnic Studies, advisers, therapists—which was threatening. Davis also used cops from the surrounding rural area. They were willing to

be brutal, and that was palpable in our confrontations. The parameters of what they could not do to us as students crumbled.

2) How did your experiences in the occupation affect your engagement in following events like Occupy Oakland?

I had met a lot of people I would know in the Bay (S.F., Oakland) through the occupations. People would visit and I met people who came to help with our occupations, especially the library occupation, since it was pre-planned. It was less confrontational, but we had a lot of downtime to get to know people. I would also go to the Bay for various actions, and then moved there.

Things were happening in the Bay and it seemed like a seamless thing to do to move from the student stuff, which wasn't dead but was dying down. The state had made concessions in terms of budget cuts, and the Regents made their own concessions. It was clearly because of the protests.

I would also say that the Oscar Grant riots (2009) had a huge impact on lots of people. People became more serious after that. It was so much more than occupations. We were like "we also want to fight that, we also hate the police." A lot of people in the occupations went there/were there. All of these events were so concentrated. Between 2009 and 2012, a lot happened. People who were involved in both the occupations and the riots were definitely involved in Occupy.

Whatever friend network we had was much larger than the formal groups involved in Occupy Oakland (OO). Informal networks build upon each other — friend of friends. In a formal organization, friendship doesn't mean they're in the group.

Some people debated whether anarchists should get involved in what seemed to be a more liberal-left movement against Wall Street. I was always like yes, there's no reason not to be involved; you just have to get in early to make sure you can help shape it to something that's cool. Maybe this is something that we took from the student occupations: the earlier you are involved the more people trust each other.

er. One early decision anarchists argued for at OO was the ban against cops.

The conflicts in OO weren't usually with formal groups; the conflicts weren't usually ideological. For example, the conflict over the name of Occupy, everyone at the camp was against renaming it "decolonize." It was really obvious who was outside and who was inside. You just see people and then know who was there. So, when people who haven't really been there come and tell people what to do, they don't like that. It's not the content.

Later things would ramp up again at UC Davis when the Occupy Movement began and there was the pepper spraying cop scandal. It was a natural extension of things that were already happening—people had been camping out in the quad before Occupy. It was the same tactic. The connections are not usually that nebulous—it's literally the same people. I remember going from OO to Davis and seeing five thousand people on the quad, where only months before there was a tiny tent city.

3) what can these events help us think about 10 years later and across the country in Philadelphia?

I probably have more to say about pitfalls. I don't know if they can be avoided, but maybe recognized, bad patterns that you recognize as bad patterns: radicals are painted as outside agitators, some people want to take leadership roles to negotiate with the state, people are frustrated and disengaged by the bureaucratic nature of meetings, etc.

Among occupiers, there were debates about things like violence and nonviolence. Once you have that debate, having it again is infuriating. It's good to recognize bad arguments and not get sucked into them. It creates a lot of bad blood between people when they could end up doing the same thing in the street. I believe people learn more from actions and, like, direct confrontations than a meeting or a panel. Much more important than the debates is that people trust each other. If it's a new debate, I welcome that.

For Philly, I don't think I am the right person to answer the question of whether this is viable here, but I do have some observations about the way Philly is set up. There are these huge schools with huge police forces. They're not just schools; they are real estate companies. UPenn is the number one employer. In a similar way to the UC system, they're huge economic engines. Even more so than UCs, they are police stations. They should be a huge target; there is so much motive. Yet, from within the schools, there is not much action.

At Philly universities, it seems to be mostly formal orgs (ex. Stadium Stompers); I think that can't lead to the rapid growth of informal actions as they are designed for specific controlled events. And there's always a ceiling to what that can be. There are informal networks but they're not along lines of political experience because there's less opportuni-

