ANARCHY IN THE 🔥 BURBS
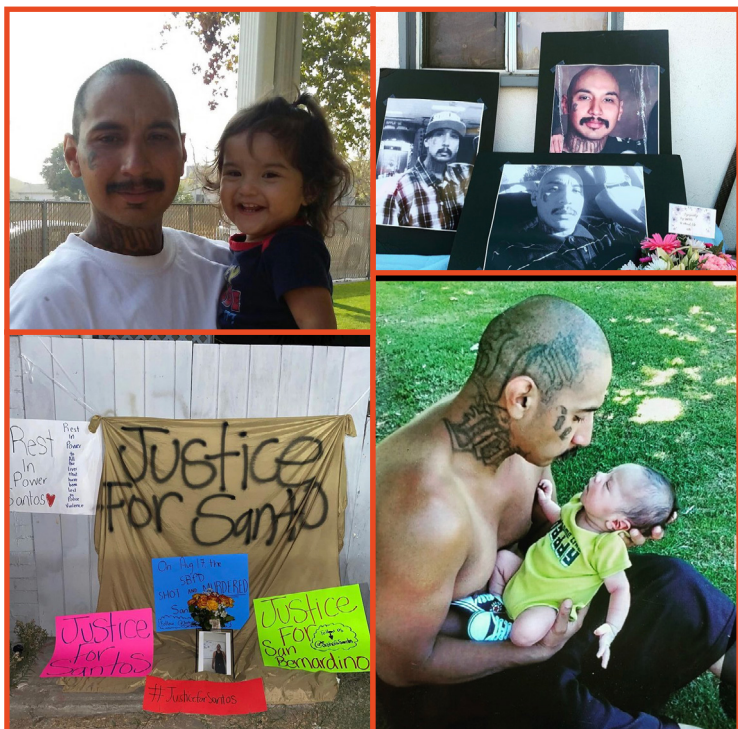

2020 WRITINGS COMPILATION

how-to's, practice, critiques, original
pieces on building autonomy in
the Inland Empire, & more

In Memory of
Santos Anthony Villegas

Vengeance for all those taken too
soon by the murderous police
and state violence.

ANARCHY IN THE BURBS

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🔥

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Dear Readers,

We are excited to present to the world our very first zine! But before we tell you about how this zine came about and its contents, we want to share a bit about ourselves and our aspirations for resistance in the region known as the Inland Empire.

Anarchy in the Burbs began as a project aiming to become a source of collaborative information and resources, by and for IE locals. We initially got the ball rolling with i.e.uprising as an informal news source providing information on - you guessed it - the IE uprisings. We also wanted to provide some political education from a radical, autonomous angle and encourage our community to cultivate agency over our living conditions. We seek to share knowledge and resources for people interested in building a strong base for future liberatory movements in the occupied Inland Empire region.

A Call To Action:
The Inland Empire Will Breathe By Any Means Necessary!

Summer 2020 saw hella people from our hometowns taking the streets in opposition to the police and white supremacy. The fire and fervor also revealed that there are many people in the IE who all envision a world beyond exploitation, prisons, borders, or oppression. In recent years, our communities in the IE are starting to confront another huge problem. Poverty has plagued this region for decades and has become a direct gateway to the logistics beast that's taken root in our community. Mega-companies such as Amazon and other logistics companies feed off of our people by taking advantage of our economic desperation and precarity. The lack of opportunity in the IE is no accident; we are only wanted as cheap, disposable labor for the wealthy's profits. We all know that the warehouses and logistics sector have forcibly imposed themselves onto the lives of every resident of the Inland Empire, but it is much more than that: we are confronting a system that is organized in such a way that it literally deprives us of our ability to breathe clean air. We all live within this system that is designed to suffocate life, not nourish it.

Racial capitalism in the Inland Empire is suffocating us all. The encroachment of logistics development is transforming these indigenous lands into large warehouses, changing our communities into diesel death zones where residents struggle between life and death. San Bernardino County residents suffer from a range of illnesses, all of which have been linked to poor air quality caused by the warehouses and the logistics sector (for sources on specific stats related to this claim, check out this article by Grist). Breathlessness is a fundamental feature of this white supremacist, settler-colonial system that constantly imposes harm and violence upon Black, indigenous, Latinx, and non-white communities. The Black struggle against police brutality and institutional racism has been teaching everyone about this system's violent mechanisms, and it is summed up by the Black Lives Matter movement with one phrase: "I can't breathe." Racial capitalism's link to the state continues to primarily oppress Black people, and the anti-Blackness that these systems are built on have constructed the blueprint for all other experiences of systemic suffocation, which includes the environmental racism and mass exploitation that we are experiencing in the IE.

In the face of systemic suffocation, we now have to collectively re-assess the meaning of life and move away from the violent system that continues to cause rampant death and the suffocation of our communities. We cannot wait for the good will of our leaders: why would we wait for their good will when we are running out of air to breathe? The time has come for us to become self-determining communities. We all deserve better and we must believe in our ability to reorganize our society in ways that nurture life, not suffocate it. We do not need to have all the answers right now in order to recognize the urgent importance of abolishing the existence of the warehouses and logistics sector that poison our communities. As we can clearly see, life cannot continue this way, and breathing will become impossible unless capitalism and its warehouses are abolished as a whole. Let's navigate the unknown together and put our minds together to create a better reality than the one that has been imposed on us. As the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacion-

al, EZLN) movement once said, we learn by walking, and by walking we will learn.

Ultimately, we cannot be hesitant any longer: we must begin a collective departure away from this present civilization of death and its mechanisms of suffocation. Let the IE show the world that we can throw down hard. Let's combat breathlessness with the fresh air produced by revolt. In the closeness of our bodies and minds in struggle, let us find ways to pass the air that we have left to more of our communities and to other generations. We must attack the foundations and institutions that deprive us of the sacred air we breathe and construct a new reality that does not commodify and exploit the planet and our people. We just want to breathe: this is not a demand but a threat. We will not ask for permission anymore. We will breathe by any means necessary.

Let's Hit The Streets Now:
How this zine came about

In the wake of the George Floyd uprisings as well as movement organizing in the time of COVID-19, we tried to consolidate useful, consumable information for the IE locals who were beginning to take the streets and organize for the first time in their lives. We centralized information for actions until street demos died down, at which point we decided to focus on providing an informal and introductory political education. We broke down what we felt were useful organizing concepts and theory as well as addressed common questions and concerns in an effort to welcome folks new to this scene, analyzing with an IE lens so that anybody could use these findings in a local (or similar) setting when the time comes. Simply: there isn't enough writing on suburban-based and small city autonomous organizing (especially for new folks coming into it), so we tried to remedy that.

Of course, for COVID and non-COVID reasons, there were limits to organizing (especially social media organizing), but the webpages have been a starting point for many faceless readers as well as for the working relationships we've made since then. Although organizing in the IE has obviously existed prior to summer 2020, there was a palpable invigoration of interest and mutual aid following the uprisings in memory of George Floyd, and we're grateful for the

projects and communities borne of or multiplied by it. Our contribution is small but hopefully significant to somebody, and so we've compiled this zine in memory of the wildfire George Floyd produced and the ensuing history made in the Inland Empire. We hope that the lessons and advice offered in this zine can help push movement organizing in the IE to new, unseen levels in the future.

Get Up To Speed:
What you will find in this zine

A lot of our thought processes and writing interventions center around addressing common obstacles that get in the way of increasing our autonomous capabilities. Our writings address these issues by attempting to unpack - and thus, remove - those obstacles that get in the way of increasing our collective power, removing them one by one. Below is an outline of some of the information we have compiled, practical advice, and critiques of common organizing logics that we felt were important to address and unpack. We hope that y'all find some of these arguments relevant and timely, and that they lend to making our movements stronger. We hope that you can share this zine and discuss it together in community, only by collectively discussing and seeing each other will we figure out the ways to set our communities free at last.

Part I. Info Hub
An informal directory of Inland Empire projects and groups that readers can plug into. This section also contains further readings and resources on abolition and autonomy.

Part II. Practice
Introductory (but crucial) concepts and practical information for folks interested in autonomous organizing.

Part III. Critique
Various critiques of common obstacles seen in left organizing spaces, including criticisms of 1. rigid ideology and political labeling, 2. symbolic protest, 3. representation, 4. non-violence, and 5. electoral politics.

Part IV. Know-How
Some brief resources and guides on essential skills, from the digital to the streets to general survival.

We hope y'all make the best of our first zine, comrades! Peace.

The Spirit of Rebellion Takes the Streets of the California Inland Empire: A Summer 2020 Reportback
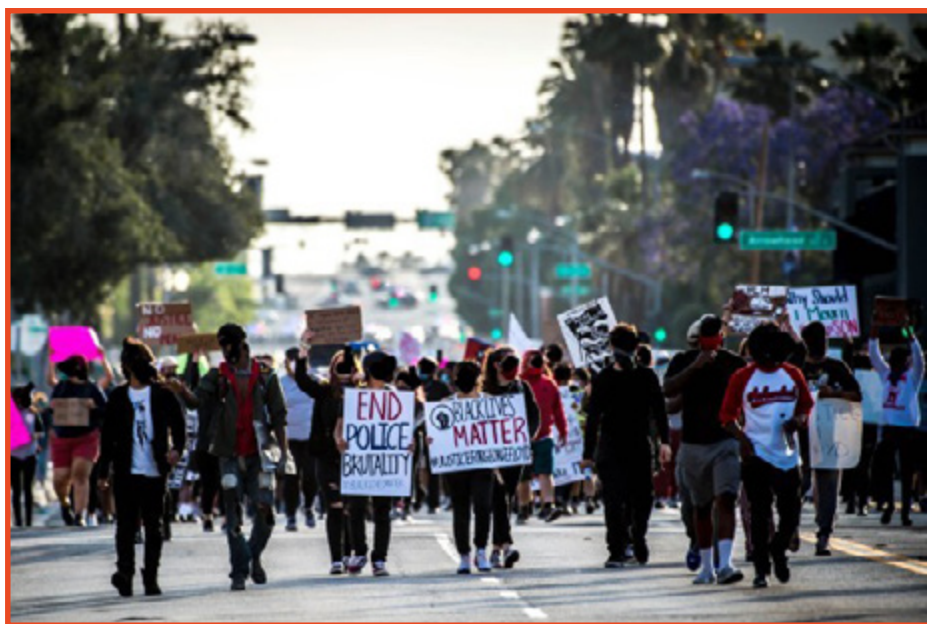
The rebellions have arrived in the occupied Native lands now known as the Inland Empire, a largely forgotten region that encompasses San Bernardino and Riverside counties in Southern California. This text is a report-back from autonomous individuals who were on the ground during summer 2020. This report-back remained in our drafts since June 2020, and so it is a combination of our initial reactions to the uprisings, as well as our reflections on the mobilizations (as we complete this writing in January 2021).

Reports of manifestations had been found in almost all cities of the region, a phenomenon without precedent in this area's history. Documentation of demonstrations in the IE occurred in the following places: San Bernardino, Rancho Cucamonga, Fontana, Rialto, Yucaipa, Redlands, Riverside, Moreno Valley, Highland, Upland, Chino, Chino Hills, Montclair, and others.
The legibility of these manifestations had yet to become clear to both people within and outside of the Inland Empire. For many, this was the first time they had taken the streets. Some of us had yet to find the language to describe the days and nights of uprisings in the IE as we processed our experiences, feelings, and thoughts. For those of us that joyfully participated in the uprisings, common feelings and affinities had become clear between strangers in the streets. Drawn together by a passion for Black liberation and abolition, new communities were taking hold in the Inland Empire.

Even so, we want to push back on the tendency to come up with some grand narrative or final word on the events of summer 2020, with respect to the IE. We tell only one story — among many others' stories — and do not believe ours is the most "legitimate" narrative or assessment of the uprisings. It is a white supremacist, colonial tendency to cut up historical moments into objective "periods" or to pretend to provide the "official account" without paying attention to power dynamics or erasure. We tell only a partial, unfinished story of the revolutionary possibilities of the place known as the Inland Empire, and hope that you find some of what we have to share as inspiring as we feel about it.

Setting the Stage:
*On the Significance of
the IE Uprisings*

Speaking truthfully, some of us thought that the scale of IE mobilizations during summer 2020 would take years of work on the ground to cultivate. Instead, it began to organically self-organize almost overnight, beginning in the last days of May. We are not arguing that there was no "leftist" activity or base-building occurring before June 2020, but a considerable amount of autonomous activity began to sprout in unforeseen, visible ways. We are also not arguing that we should always depend on spontaneous self-organization, mostly because spontaneity "versus" organization is a false dichotomy. We are merely pointing out that living conditions are fucked up out here: there is a considerable weight of oppression on the lives of people in the IE, and we have

all had enough of living in complacent silence.

Inland Empire residents live with the burden of unique problems, such as the emergence of the racial-logistics sector and its ensuing warehouse gentrification, among many other issues. With a working-class burdened by debt, the high costs of living, low-paid labor, and racist state violence, the boiling point has arrived and we aren't taking this system's shit anymore. The more fucked over that people are, the more we will be seeing of emergent, rebellious self-activity against this shitty system. In our opinion, the Inland Empire is one of the most strategic areas for resistance against racial capitalism because of the system's hyper-dependence on this region for cheap labor and the movement of goods to the rest of the country. Our resistance has and will look like hundreds of burnt down warehouses (such as the one from Redlands, June 2020) and the proliferation of hundreds of gardens from the ashes.

The uprisings in the California Inland Empire were connected to the greater national upheavals that occurred in the wake of George Floyd's murder. We will

say, however, that in most cases, there were no riots or large-scale revolts in our region. Nevertheless, we want to propose that insurrection did in fact occur in the IE, although it is not the mainstream image of an "insurrection" that most people are familiar with. What took place in the IE after the initial George Floyd demonstrations was the eruption of unprecedented activity, abolitionist initiatives, autonomous direct actions, and newly cultivated affinities. We want to counter the grain of mobilization culture by expanding the notion of the insurrection: imagining insurrection as the event that catalyzes routine proliferation of new affinities and projects that are able to then create the wide-scale movement base from which future uprisings can form from.

The manifestation of anarchy from the (predominantly working-class and BIPOC) suburbs is dynamically different from the mainstream image of anarchy that many are acquainted with. Anarchic activity in the Inland Empire must grapple with unique formations of oppression, such as warehouse gentrification, alienation and individualism in working class suburbs, the hyper-invisibility of the rac-

ist state and patriarchal violence, and so on. Modern day revolt in the belly of empire, then, has been taking place in unpredictable places, such as here in the IE. The explosion of affinities that emerged from the 2020 protests are what we understand as the true nature of our insurrectional summer. What we took away from the 2020 uprisings is that relationship-building might be a key point of emphasis for abolitionist, autonomous movements, with a particular focus on having the capacity to move in coalition and handle conflicts. If affinity is the glue to any insurrection, then we are well on our way as people in the IE continue to find each other and build connections in the community. We must nourish emergent communities and the feeling of co-ownership in the formation of our power so that everyone can participate and stoke the flames with us. Building in the community now can serve as the catalyst for the future insurrections to come in the IE.

Situating the Uprisings:
On the Importance of Centering the IE's Ungovernability

The uprisings in 2020 have shown social movements the importance of learning from the antagonistic methods created and cultivated from revolts in overlooked and forgotten regions. In particular, organizers could benefit from learning about the methods of self-organization and self-activity initiated by working-class/ proletarian BIPOC predominant communities, especially from areas in the outskirts that rarely ever make it onto the map of visible resistance in the US. When we shift our attention to the creative modes of resistance and militancy in these overlooked communities, our tactical and strategic repertoire will continue to grow

and expand our collective ability to foment revolutionary situations. As we saw in the Inland Empire, all of the established leftists and non-profits were left in the dust as primarily Black and Latinx insurgents took the streets. While the old Left is caught up in attempts to hold officials accountable, spending energy on social democratic laws, and wasting their time with petitions, IE proletarians led the insurrectionary initiative. The insights from comrades Shemon and Arturo on the 2020 uprisings also ring true for our context (taken from their article "Cars, Riots, Black Liberation"):

"In the United States, black proletarians are constantly refining and sharpening forms, tactics, and strategies of struggle…
The fact of the matter is that leftist organizations are simply not prepared to deal with the illegal nature of the revolutionary struggles and politics that are taking place in the present moment. The black proletariat continues to show a practical commitment to fighting the police, setting fire to carceral infrastructure, and looting the commodities of this dying capitalist system."

We can learn a lot from BI-

POC-centered struggles emerging from otherwise overlooked non-urban places:

"Organizational, tactical, and strategic clarity is emerging for the first time since the 1960s, but it is not coming from the left – it is coming from the practical initiatives and strategies of the black proletariat. Leftists [and Marxists] run their mouths about organizational questions in abstract and antiquated terms, regurgitating a played out formula modeled on Russia or China that has been repeated ad nauseam for many decades now, but which has produced little more than sects and cults. They ignore the concrete forms of revolutionary organization that are already taking place in the uprising."

Shemon and Arturo elaborate further on the significance of this autonomous BIPOC self-activity in the United States context:

"Revolutionary organizations are not built in the abstract, but are expressions of the real tactical and strategic challenges raised by the proletariat in the class struggle. The fundamental organizational question that revolutionaries face is how to contribute and relate to the uprising, specifically in terms of street fighting, looting, and other riot tactics. Those who are truly committed to revolution will have to push past the stale organizational forms of the past and begin to account for the diverse, illegal, and creative organizational forms that the black proletariat is developing in the present, the use of cars being one of the most innovative and effective tools in this emerging tactical repertoire."

By shifting our attention to creative modes of resistance and militancy within new sites of struggle, we can see new horizons and points of intervention that radicals and communities can begin to tap into. For example, a common tactical innovation that sprung up from uprisings in the outskirts - and that we also observed in the IE - is the strategic use of cars in reclaiming space and the streets. In Shemon and Arturo's words:

"What we see from Ferguson to Philadelphia is the growing use of the car as a weapon of mass struggle. In Ferguson cars were used for defensive purposes, while in Chicago, Louisville, Philadelphia and elsewhere cars were used for offensive pur-

poses: for looting, for attacking police, and for spreading the geography of the uprising. We should expect cars to continue to play an important role as riots continue to unfold and the uprising potentially mutates into other forms of mass struggle: blockades, strikes, and occupations. Undoubtedly, the state will respond with new forms of surveillance and repression, but how it will do that is unclear. In the meantime, black proletarians will probably take advantage of the state's lack of capacity to deal with widespread car-looting."

By honing in on new forms of self-organization from places such as the IE, we can better strategize ways to fuel the fires next time.

IE Uprisings
Notes on Insurrectional Possibilities in the IE

What follows is a loose collec-tion of our experiences and observations in a few of the many uprisings that have oc-curred since late May. In sum, the conditions in the Inland Empire allow for the emergence of extremely effective autonomous movements, but the lack of experience, infrastructure, and its overall nascent organizing are currently hurdles that hold back autonomous potential and must be intentionally overcome. The following are our preliminary notes on the IE uprisings.

On the invisibility of state, economic, and police violence in the Inland Empire:

- The IE leads in cases of police violence statistics for the state of California, yet police violence in the IE is not really discussed or documented.
- The staggering poverty rates and forms of exploitation in the IE are almost unheard of, especially given the high relevance of warehouse and logistics sector labor in this region.
- The IE is on average predominantly BIPOC, working-class, first and second generation, and younger. The millennial discontent and frustration are especially prevalent here with the suburban structure of the

area and enclosure, creating conditions for a potentially unruly and fed-up population of young people.

- San Bernardino police was almost nonexistent vs Fontana or Riverside Police.
- The magnitude of police presence and force was contingent on the size of the city budget.
- Helicopter and other aerial surveillance were greatly prevalent.
- Police encouraged white supremacist vigilantism in predominantly white places like Yucaipa and Redlands.
- It's clear that in places like San Bernardino, the police force has never seen these types of gatherings before. How could this inexperience possibly affect future protests? What about in cities with more seasoned officers, like Riverside?

On the presence of white supremacists at protests:
- Guns were pulled out in Upland.
- Man threatened to run protestors over in Redlands.
- Trump supporters and white supremacist vigilantes bru-

tally attacked outnumbered protestors in Yucaipa.
- Violent men in Highland aggressively tore down Black Lives Matter banners and posters in front of protesters.
- (CW: anti-Black violence/ lynching) A young Black male was hung from a tree in Victorville and although the perpetrators have not been caught, there was speculation that supremacists might have done this. Assumptions stem from the high number of white supremacists and conservatives living in areas bordering outer regions of the Inland Empire, such as the High Desert where this took place.

Unique sightings and tactics discovered at the uprisings:
- In the initial days following the Minneapolis uprising in late May, spontaneous actions emerged in places like Fontana and Rancho Cucamonga, which have never experienced protests before.
- Most of these initial uprisings were youth-led and composed mostly of hood Black and brown youth/ young adults.
- There were hella smaller scale marches coordinated and organized by local high

schoolers and youth.

- As the weeks passed, a few reformist/ liberal minded protesters tried to monopolize the momentum, with varying results across cities and contexts. For the most part, none of these self-appointed leaders co-opted most of the power.
- Actions were still relatively autonomous and self-organized, and as time had passed, the momentum had surprisingly not ended just yet (as of June 20th, 2020).
- The lack of non-profit and leftist specialists truly created a unique protest context.
- Lack of leadership/ organization is both good and bad: the movement is harder to contain when there are no organizations or leaders as the "face" of it, but there is also a lot of inexperience in the streets and a vacuum in the organizing scene that can be filled with anything (another double-edged sword).
- Car caravans in San Bernardino followed the demonstration in support and also served as a barrier between cop cruisers and protestors.
- Respectability for protestors in the San Bernardino area: There was a big concern with

being perceived as "ghetto" and a strong attempt to prove wrong the classist (and racist) stereotypes of the Inland Empire. People here are very conscious that we already have very little resources, leading to folks guilting rioters and looters with calls for respectability and "morality."

We want to end off on a few words by James Baldwin from "The Fire Next Time":

"Neither civilized reason nor Christian love would cause any of those people to treat you as they presumably wanted to be treated; only the fear of your power to retaliate would cause them to do that, or seem to do it, which was (and is) good enough."

See y'all in the streets again next time.

PART I.
Info-Hub
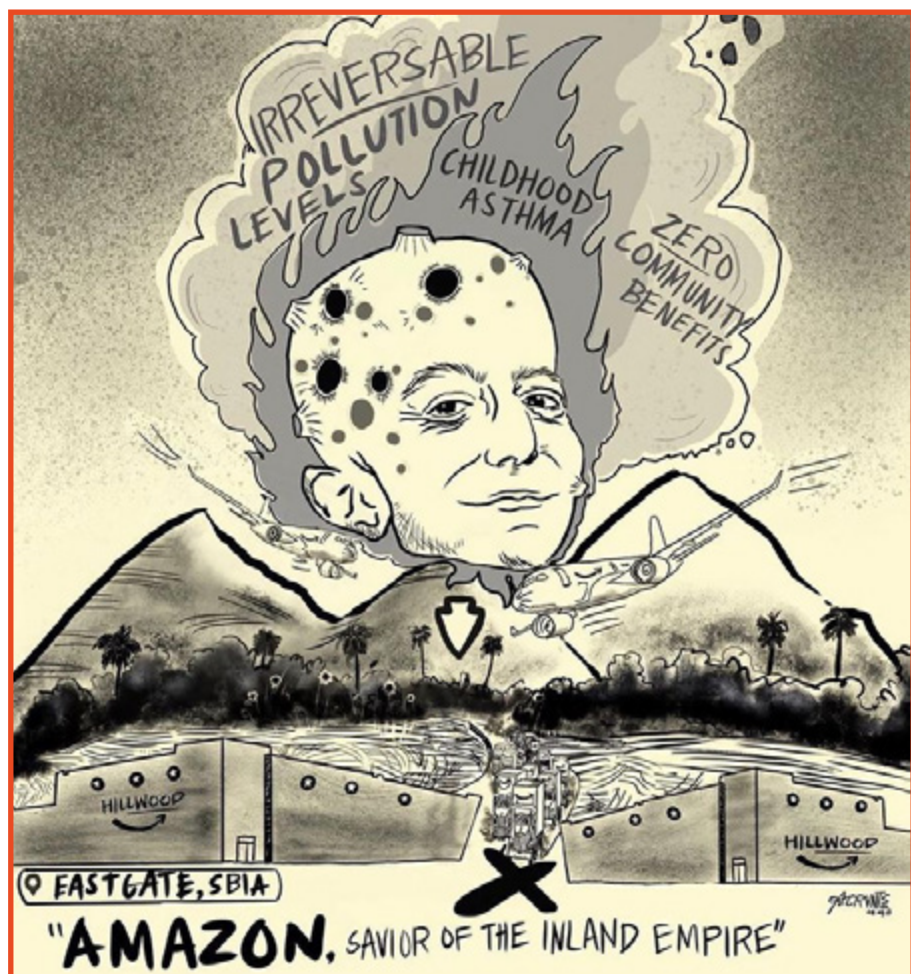
Anarchy in the Burbs Info.

ARE YOU READY TO FIND EACH OTHER
AS ACCOMPLICES IN THE FIGHT FOR LIBERATION?

First, be sure to check out the Anarchy in the Burbs project! It is a new autonomous initiative that seeks to circulate crucial knowledge, resources, and information for people who seek to take action and build the basis for future social movements in the Inland Empire region. Hit us up on social media or via email if you would like to get plugged in to autonomous organizing to make a better future for our IE communities!

To Get In Touch:
Email: ieuprising@protonmail com

On The Web:
anarchyintheburbs.noblogs.org

Our Twitter:
@909time

Our Instagram:
@i.e.uprising

We wanna highlight and provide ways to materially aid local Inland Empire projects. If you have learned anything from our project or this zine, please consider contributing to the following links! The following are hella important up-and-coming local community infra-structure projects:

The Black and Brown Underground Community Space

O.G. Foods So. Cal. People's Farm Co-operative

A Lofty Standard: The People's Supermarket Co-operative

In addition, please show some material support to those who do much needed mutual aid on the ground in the IE:

Four Directions Mutual Aid IE:
Venmo @ie4directions
Feed the Block mutual aid:
Venmo @FeedTheBlockOnta
More Hope Project mutual aid:
Cashapp $MoreHopeProject

Inland Empire, CA based projects and their Instagram handles:

- The Black Power Collective — @blacklivesmatterie
- Feed the Block - Ontario — @feedtheblock_ie
- Liberate the IE — @ltie846
- More Hope Project — @morehopeproject
- Take Action IE - Moreno Valley — @takeactionie
- Inland Empire Right Watch — @we.see.ie
- IE Collective — @iecollective
- High Desert Mutual Aid — @highdesertmutualaid
- ECV No Se Vende! — @ecvnosevende
- Wielding Active Power — @wapcollective
- IE Migrant Abolitionists — @iemigrantabolitionists
- Desert Communities United — @d.c.u
- IE Brown Berets — @iebrownberets
- The Spoonie Uni Project — @spoonieuniproject
- Four Directions Mutual Aid IE — @ie4directions
- Inland Empire Mutualistas — @iemutualistas
- OG Foods So Cal — @ogfoods_so_cal
- Liberate Ontario — @liberate_ontario
- Mountain Mutual Aid Network — @mtnmutualaid

Other relevant social media handles to keep up with:

Instagram

- roar_ara
- abolish_time
- frontlinemedics
- blackpowderpress
- possumkratom69
- decolonialatlas
- projectunsettlement
- abolition.memes
- thecomradecloset
- anarchipelago.ko
- copwatch_santaana
- blackrose_rosanegra
- bbyanarchists
- listenleft

Twitter

- iosolidarity
- black_autonomy
- AbolishtheUC
- AbolitionF_ists
- IAF__FAI
- confrontacion_s
- media_action
- IGD_News
- Abolish_Time
- AshAgony
- NOT_INTO_IT
- ztsamudzi
- mutualaid815
- RP_PLWC

Autonomous, Abolitionist Resources & Readings

Books

The main two books we want to highlight are:

- "Beyond Survival: Transformative Justice" by multiple authors
- "The Master's Tools" by Tom Nomad

Other strong suggestions:

1. "Burning Down the American Plantation" by Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement
2. "Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis" by Katherine McKittrick
3. "To Our Friends" by the Invisible Committee
4. "Our Enemies in Blue" by Kristian Williams

Podcasts

First and foremost, we want to recommend these two podcasts (both are available on spotify):

- "On Resistance"
- "Black Autonomy Podcast"
  Other Dope Podcasts
1. Resonance Audio
2. Channel Zero
3. The Final Straw

Video

- SubMedia -- Sub.Media

Useful Websites

An introductory article that we strongly recommend:

- "The Challenge of Autonomy: Prospects for Freedom Going Into 2021" found at bayareaintifada.wordpress.com

And also check out the resources complied at this list, especially the "Digital Resources" section:

- https://linktr.ee/FugitiveDreams

Fellow Travlers

1. trueleappress.com
2. thisisbobbylondon.com
3. neversurrender.noblogs.org
4. blackautonomynetwork.noblogs.org
5. indigenousaction.org
6. iaf-fai.org
7. prolewave.noblogs.org
8. puraacracia.club
9. confrontacionesblog.noblogs.org
10. haters.noblogs.org

Other Helpful Websites

1. sproutdistro.com
2. amwenglish.com
3. Theanarchistlibrary.org
4. Itsgoingdown.org
5. Libcom.org

PART II.
Practice

Four Fundamental Frameworks for Organizing in the IE:

MULTIPLICITY — INITIATIVE — AFFINITY — CONFLICTUALITY
As more and more people take to the streets in the Inland Empire, we want to break down a few frameworks to inform action and strengthen our movements. Given that the IE has experienced few social movements in the past, and with revolutionary lessons learned from other historical contexts, we feel that these frameworks can facilitate the transformations we wish to see in our communities. In particular, anti-police brutality uprisings and Black revolt in the 21st century have taught us that social movements cannot ever compromise with any kind of authority: we cannot settle for petty reforms, defunding of the police, or crumbs of justice. Our movements must exist in constant struggle against the entire system until we are completely liberated from all forms of authority and hierarchy, or else they are doomed to be crushed. These four frameworks are meant to orient folks new to grassroots street movements in order to foster long-term and sustainable autonomous movements for abolition.

1. Multiplicity
Definition: the state of existing as or with multiples; the characteristics of diversity, range, and variety

Unity has historically suppressed real differences within movements — such those of class, race, gender, ability, etc. — and has itself become a form of oppression. The dream of unity is, in reality, a nightmare of compromise and suppressed desires: it is only a dream for those who wish to impose their experiences and desires at others' expense. Intentions, beliefs, and motives will always be different; this is out of anyone's control and not anyone's fault, nor is it anyone's responsibility to contain. This should be acknowledged as a matter of fact before you ever hit the streets.

As opposed to the illusion of unity, multiplicity is a closer approximation to the real experiences encountered in the streets and at actions. The reality of multiplicity translates into a diversity of tactics and strategies, given the diversity of people and their motivations. The tempta-

tion of unity must be resisted at all times because it lends itself to burnt-out authoritarianism: people are not a monolith, and so the diverse reasons and desires for which they fight in the street must be conserved and not channeled for the ends of any so-called "leadership."

Multiplicity in Action:
The late May protests in San Bernardino are a good example of multiplicity in action. People of all backgrounds showed up in the streets with very different goals. This manifested itself in the different actions that took place, ranging from the mask/water distribution, graffiti tagging, looting, and peaceful marching that took place interdependently.

All these things are just a matter-of-fact and they took place independent of anyone's control or idealized images of protest. Multiplicity as a strategy allows for movements to become harder to be attacked by the state or repressed by the police. It also prevents state collaborators from taking over our movements: a diversity of methods and intentions for direct struggle will be too difficult to completely co-opt for their ends.

2. Initiative
Definition: the quality of displaying self-motivation and capacity at one's own discretion; acting out of one's individual will or collective volition

Initiative — as opposed to following others' orders — is how true uprisings begin: they are usually spontaneous and self-organized. Uncritically waiting for the right conditions is a constant deferral of action when it matters most: now, instead of tomorrow. This self-activity also functions as a balance of power to other formal organizations, vanguards, and self-appointed movement leaders.

For uprisings to become irreversible, anti-authoritarian initiative must be fought for and kept alive, free from the constraints of elitist leaders and other power-hungry actors that otherwise kill any movement's diversity and spontaneity. Instead of following the commands and peer pressure of "recognized" or "legitimate" leaders, initiative is derived from within a community's own impulses for self-determination. Initiative begins from trusting in one's own truths and propensities. Our active powers are the key to our self-liberation. The

secret is simple and it is to just begin from wherever we may find ourselves. From initiative, we find autonomy in the capacity to act for ourselves and with community who hold common truths, such as those of Black liberation and decolonization.

Initiative in Action:
After the first night of the Minneapolis uprisings, there were spontaneous protests happening in Downtown Fontana. The people present were primarily Black and brown youth, and reports show that they were mostly young people who lived around the block. Most of them learned about the gathering by word-of-mouth and through their friends' Instagram stories.

The unruly, self-organized gathering happened organically and without direction, and its autonomous qualities were so surprising to everyone that Fontana PD brutally attacked the protestors that night. Autonomous initiative revealed the police's fear of power so vividly. It takes the creativity of movement participants to keep the initiative to attack authority. Strategizing for the longevity of anti-authoritarian initiative brings community closer together, creating unforgettable moments and bonds

between each other.

3. *Affinity*
Definition: a relationship existing by chosen kinship or natural connection; the fundamental basis for all inter-personal bonds and relations

Given the reality of people's diverse desires and the existence of many autonomous initiatives, it is impossible to impose only one method or approach of achieving liberation. In contrast, affinity groups decide for themselves what they wish to do; they manifest the diversity of community truths. The bond and connection you feel to the people closest to you — and your collective desires — already hold the key to how you wish to collectively make your dreams of freedom into reality.

The common truths that we hold with those around us carry the meaning of our lives and are the basis of actualizing our own worlds. The affinity group allows for an unbreakable cohesion that has historically created the basis for powerful movements and revolutions. Because the affinity group acts of its own initiative and decides for itself how it wishes to make real their liberation, the creation of your

affinity group — and coordination with other autonomous affinity groups — is foundational for social movements. Affinity resolves the problem of "how liberation must be done," leaving behind the outdated question of "what is to be done." The former emphasizes that the means of achieving liberation are already in our midst, while the latter emphasizes a pre-determined formula for struggling against oppression and a pre-determined outcome for such a struggle. We must pay attention to process and to our interpersonal dynamics and relationships as we fight for self-determination to ensure that we do not replicate oppressive habits and structures.

Affinity in Action:
Almost every action and demonstration in the Inland Empire was visibly composed of small crews of homies, siblings, neighbors, couples, and childhood friends that decided to roll up to the street together. Each crew had their own reasons for being in the streets and their own goals for the night. These things are discussed prior to and decided upon through affinity, whether or not folks are aware of it.

The IE has never seen so many people in the streets until now. This is because we all secretly had an affinity in common the whole time that we have only now begun to actualize: our desires for freeing our loved ones and communities. The affinities and community that we build right now are the entire reason for why we struggle against oppression in the streets at all. For this reason alone, we must be intentional and as communicative with each other as possible, especially if there is conflict between our truths or experiences. Our ability to uproot hierarchy and authority is only as good as the relationships that make such struggles possible in the first place.

4. Conflictuality
Definition: an ongoing state of conflict or opposition between opposing forces; an irreconcilable and permanently antagonistic situation

Affinity groups' active initiative and the ensuing autonomous measures they circulate could instigate permanent conflictuality, or permanent revolution. Struggles should never turn to mediation, bargaining, or compromise with authorities. Our liberation must constantly be

regained by taking initiative and maintaining momentum. This perpetual conflict means that our movements must be prepared to make quick decisions and not get tied up by rigid structures. The self-organization, then, has to take on an informal character because it can't be determined by recognized organizations or pre-determined answers. Waiting for others to represent you ensures that initiative gets lost.

The concept of the affinity group is the basis of this initiative-based, flexible, and informal association of determined communities. Permanent conflictuality means that self-determining communities should not wait for orders from leaders or organizations who — by nature of their role — aim to control our rebellion and thus, alienate or extract our active powers for other ends that we may not consent to. Affinity groups and networks must spread the initiative and methods for self-liberation instead of trying to lead communities themselves. The ability for everyone to attack the system and achieve true liberation is contingent on the autonomy of all of the most oppressed groups. Thus, conflictuality is a constant and effective struggle

towards cooperative aims mutually decided upon by autonomous networks and clusters of coordinated affinities.

As social movements in the Inland Empire remain at a nascent phase, we have yet to see if or when this cycle of uprisings will transform into an irreversible, sustainable conflict with the powers that be. Right now is the time to create affinity groups and link up with other crews in the area who are interested in keeping the momentum alive.

By going to the protests and getting to know other autonomous groups who are present — as well as by organizing more actions, creating long-term projects and community infrastructure — we can establish the networks needed to keep the fight going. By refusing to vote for crumbs or bargain with politicians, we can eventually realize strong autonomous movements that will accomplish our wildest dreams. *-- June 2020*

Postscript 1 - The Politics of The Streets: A Clarification on the Four Frameworks

We had a hard time trying to come up with a title for the original post. Alternative titles were considered beforehand, such as '4 helpful tips for new IE actions' or '4 things to know before protesting,' etc. However, we must argue that these are not necessarily "frameworks," rather dispositions and mentalities. This means that they function as ways to get your head in the game for the reality of the streets. In other words, we were suggesting alternative ways of moving in the street.

Language is a limiting way to understand reality and we all know that. For example, how hard is it to describe things like love and joy? Precisely because they are more than language; they are felt and lived in moments and events. Likewise, getting a feel for moving at protests and tapping into the collective power of the streets requires that you be there, present, and active in the disruption of power. You can only get a sense of what these posts are about when you are on the ground, by witnessing and participating.

In that post, we suggested 4 different things that can help people tap into the realities of the politics of the street. These 4 "frameworks" were: multiplicity, affinity, initiative, and conflict-uality. To summarize it, we were suggesting to folks who were showing up to the streets to re-spect and participate in diverse ways of being together in the streets. After seeing the influx of actions labeled as "peaceful" and the enforcement of such stan-dards by protestors themselves, we opted to encourage folks to respect and defend each other against the common enemy and not shoot each other down for acting in ways they might not agree with (except for said people acting like the cops they were "protesting").

After the initial uprisings in the IE in the wake of George Floyd's murder, we have since then reflected and want to give a few clarifying points on the 4 frame-works:

- We must recognize the dif-

ference between autonomous street insurgents, and the Left/leftists: we must recognize the different dynamics that these two groupings bring into the streets, and how they tend to conflict and contradict with each other.

- The post itself was more about an approach to moving within protests and street actions rather than our view of the ultimate method for organizing (i.e. multiplicity, affinity, initiative, conflictuality).

- No modes of organizing are universal, which means that organizing methods can look differently across different places, contexts, and timing.

- The frameworks themselves are just ways of orienting new folks to the streets and it sought to push for a non-organization-centric mode of organizing (because a lot of people still think they need to "join" an organization to participate in social change, and that is just not true!)

- Non-organizational movements are inherently organic and street-made. As we saw in the IE, almost none of the professional and recognized activists were out in the streets, or if they were, were

extremely outnumbered.

- The framework we proposed can be reduced down to this one statement: Trust the streets! The streets always fight back, and their people (youth, hood folks, everyday peoples, etc.) will ALWAYS be there independent of political movements or the presence of organizations.

- A lot of the times, these same political cliques and "leftist" organizations usually become ends in themselves as opposed to doing the actual work of cultivating the conditions for organic and spontaneous street uprisings to emerge. (As an example, look up the history of Germany's Spartacist uprising to see what social democratic organizations always end up doing in revolutionary moments: co-opting and betraying)

- Multiplicity is real, and we just have to learn to coordinate across our differences and desires. What this means is that we should creatively build bridges with people who face different struggles and set common boundaries and expectations as we move in coalition.

- Affinity and autonomous initiative allow us to find

our place within the streets or in the community. We need to continue to link up with others in our area not as an organization, but as people with similar material needs, common oppressors, and through bonds that are stronger than rigid ideological lines.

- As we have seen recently through the brutal repression of BLM protestors in San Bernardino and Yucaipa, we must learn methods of self-defense to protect our growing power against the reactionary forces that wish to keep us down. This is because conflictuality will always be a fact of the streets, both against state actors and non-state enablers of oppression (i.e. the Nazis and fascists in Norco, San Jacinto, Hemet, etc.)

- To that end, we need more folks in the streets and more folks doing the work of affinity-group building in order to create a community safety net against repression so that our people do not get lost in the system. The more folks we bring into the fold of our community-organizing, the more we can weaken their ability to repress us and the harder we can struggle

against the state knowing that we have community that has our back through the thick and thin.

In the end, revolutions are made by the people in the streets who usually do not belong to organizations, formal groups, or informal minorities. The revolutionary communities are always already in existence, not as some "mass" waiting to be organized by leaders; they are just there, and we need to be present with them. We know now from movement in the IE and across the so-called United States that the power of the revolts has primarily stemmed from affinity-group based action, suggesting the power of small crews with lots of initiative.

Because the momentum is dying down slowly, and street actions have limits, we must think about steps for sustaining a movement for liberation in the IE based on the realities of street politics as well as our relationship-building and presence in our everyday communities.

-- August 2020

Protests or marches are not ends in themselves and we tend to forget that in our organizing; this is especially the case when spectacular forms of resistance are the most idealized or publicized. As we have seen with the final wave of the summer's George Floyd uprisings, we cannot always depend on mobilizations to sustain beyond a certain period of time. Building the basis for the liberation of our communities requires a lot more than just the ability to mobilize or attack. As necessary as these capacities are, they are only sustained and made possible by the work that we do outside of and beyond the protest or march. This is what we mean by cultivating movement infrastructure: our ability to disrupt the system and escalate conflictuality is only possible when we have strong material bases that can sustain the capacity to mobilize. We should devote as much time, if not more, to the construction of new realities as we do to the destruction of this reality. In fact, we argue that the ability to mobilize and attack structures of oppression is inseparable from the building of community infrastructure and affinities. We'd like to open up a discussion on moving beyond the hyper-emphasis and fetishization of mobilization culture.

It is true: there will never be a "right time" or "sufficient numbers" to attack the system and so, we must act now regardless of existing conditions. But we must not confuse strategic patience with the constant deferral of acting. There is a difference between these two things and we must move accordingly: if we cannot realistically attack or mobilize right now (without getting killed or repressed), then maybe we should not act right away. Confidence is not the same thing as courage. We can act and mobilize with more confidence when we have created strong community bases and cultivated movement infrastructure, such that we can consistently attack and have a movement to hide within. We can attack viciously knowing that we have dependable mate-

rial support and a large community that has our backs. Courage would imply that action is taken without a larger movement infrastructure so that only the "fearless" or "brave" are able to attack or participate in conflictuality, but that just creates other hierarchies (i.e. between militant and "non-militant"). In contrast, confidence-based action against this system would signify a larger social backing and material backbone from which many actors can participate in and feel included.

Courage-based attacks and responses are not necessarily the same thing as collective confidence because they are not always embedded within a larger movement context (although it is not always necessary or possible). In addition, overreliance on courage-based responses can sometimes be easier for the state to repress without proper planning, hence why confidence is a key factor in struggle. This is why, for example, many people are not attending protests locally: there is an overreliance on "getting numbers" based on "liking" an Instagram image of a protest flyer (whether it's posted by CrimethInc. or some other local org) rather than on the ability to mobilize with offline communities and networks. We can mobilize and attack on our own terms - because it is within everyone's autonomy to do so - but we can get many more people mobilizing if we build the collective confidence that can come with patiently building strong bases and movement infrastructure. Examples of movement infrastructure can include: community defense trainings, people's mental health/healing hubs, land projects, political education initiatives, food sovereignty networks, free medical clinics, legal support/anti-repression committees, and so on.

It is a public secret that the militant uprisings of the last few decades have all been doomed in part to the fact that social movements have not created bases and autonomous power outside of the state. Even recent abolitionist movements are not able to fully escalate conflictuality because of this unspoken dependence on the state for the means of survival. For example, we are all still dependent on the state's infrastructure, such as its agriculture, its medicines, its educational systems, etc. Thus, in addition to finding ways to mobilize and outmaneuver the state's attempts at total control, we must also devote time and

energy to being able to autonomously self-reproduce and sustain ourselves. We must reclaim practical skills and the ability to heal, to grow, to build, and so on. We can begin this by taking an inventory of our collective skills, capacities, and connections, and by pooling our resources together. Fleshing out our material autonomy will be urgently necessary when the time comes not only to provide for ourselves outside of the system, but also sustain community self-defense against the state and fascists.

Toward that end, material autonomy will only come by when we continue to devote time to building strong relationships with each other and the communities that we belong to. We do not need to recruit people into organizations or build new social contracts: we need to spread concrete practices, knowledge and resources to take self-determination into our own hands. We have talked about affinity previously before, but the point stands that almost all the relationships that we encounter in our day-to-day have the potential to become political accomplices. However, the logical next step once we find our community is to live

and struggle together; some have called this the "commune." The uprisings create the space in which diverse communities and affinities come into contact, but we must maintain the initiative and continue building our collective power even after the events of struggle. If we are all over-worked by capitalism, we will never be able to sustain mobilizations or attack the system on our own terms. We must become intentional about meeting each other's material needs or else we are doomed to default to getting our needs met by the current hellscape we live in. We must put our minds together and really scheme it up: what are ways we can pull in community together to provide for each other so that we do not become hyper-dependent on working a job or become over-reliant on money at all?

As we saw in the summer of 2020, decentralization is one of the strongest features of any social movement. The state has a much harder time repressing a multiplicity than it does one large mass; this also applies to a strategy for building communes. The decentralized construction of communes and hubs can help us defeat the curse of surviving the horrors of capitalism on our

own: collectivizing with others will help insurrections endure past the first stages of riot and revolt. We all know the importance of having the capacity to address our material/emotional/mental/spiritual needs so that we can all sustainably remain active in the struggles against oppression. Collective care is a prerequisite for any revolutionary activity. Communes can eventually displace our material dependence on the institutions of this society, too (such as the family, employment, citizenship etc.). However, we should not become insulated in our comfortable commune communities, cut ourselves off from locals, or become complacent with mere lifestyle politics. The point is to become materially autonomous enough to sustain an offensive, abolitionist attack on this system and spread the capacities for communities to self-determine. Devoting time and intention to building material complementarity between diverse communes and hubs can give our movements strength in the long-term coordination of struggles.

We have a few other last suggestions on building movement infrastructure that provides for a long-term fight against the state and capital:

1. As we fight off the settler-colonial state, the ultimate goal is decolonization and pushing police control off of stolen native lands. The colonial state tries to control the territory and map it out in order to keep it under control. Beyond the riot or protest, we must contend with not reproducing settler-colonialism in our organizing. In addition to the protest, we must spend time and be intentional about cultivating meaningful relationships and affinity with native people, increasing their own capacity and power to liberate the land.

2. Local self-organization allows space to be used outside of its designated or official use, such as when barbershops or strip malls or empty properties are used outside of their economic function; it is a matter of spreading the complicities between existing relationships in a given area or place. We must subvert the imposed and given environment. We must remain opaque and invisible to the state as much as we can, using space and places as cover to hide in and cultivate our bases (i.e. by building squats, occupying buildings, liberating public parks, constructing the underground). Avoiding visibility will allow us

to gather force in the shadows, and when we become visible we will be stronger and ready.

3. We should all get to know comrades from other struggles: reach out, link up with folks, and make the efforts to travel and communicate consistently with them. Learning from others experience and techniques they've learned is great for our movement beyond what only enclosed self-criticism could offer. Social media has been great for this but must be done with security culture procedures in mind. Although social media has been helping people link up, it is ultimately the oppressor's tool and we must use it with that in mind. We can start the conversation online and use encrypted communications tools to keep the conversation going and the affinity growing.

4. Speaking of the social, interpersonal skills and conflict resolution are absolute prerequisites for any movement for abolition of the state and negation of all oppressions. We all come into movements with a lot of personal traumas and baggage: how can we learn to tune in to our own desires, needs, and personal struggles and have them inform - while not negatively impacting

- our participation in collective spaces? This is an important issue because when we fail to be accountable to our community, our movement is weakened. We would make a call for everyone to continually check in with themselves, a trusted homie, your affinity group, and the spaces that you are a part of to make sure that conflict, harm, and traumas are not perpetuated in liberatory organizing. We should devote as much time to our relationships, engage in our own healing, and build our interpersonal skills as we do to any other kind of self-education or movement infrastructure.

5. Community self-defense is extremely taken for granted and we must continually have it in our sights. We must treat self-defense as an obligation of social life (i.e. through consistent self-defense trainings and community mobilization responses to abuse by individuals or the state). We cannot reconstruct our movements each and every time we encounter police violence and state repression. Instead of becoming outraged after some offense from capitalist relations or police murders, we must stop this culture of denouncing-then-mobilizing ritual when we may not even

be physically prepared for such fights. Confrontation will be an inevitable aspect of our attempts to build power outside of the system. We must be prepared for counter-attacks from the state and non-state agents. If we do take the streets, there must be a means, an intention, and a goal to the action. If we train and take defense seriously, the police will not be as efficient to respond. As decentralization has shown, pigs cannot act rapidly enough to a moving multiplicity that can strike a number of targets at once and that tries to always keep the initiative. The spread of our autonomous initiative must be both militant and social. We are, after all, ultimately embedded in a social war. We must make authority's attempts at repression ubiquitous so that they are ultimately effective nowhere through multi-frontal conflictuality.

Let's continue to expand our bases of power so that we can continue to escalate conflictuality, to end oppression once and for all!

-- December 2020

Why is it important to talk about affinity groups?

Well the whole point of life is to enjoy it with the people that make up our lives. When it comes to fighting for our liberation and self-determination, we can accomplish revolutionary change by working together in our affinity groups. The affinity group is just another way of saying your crew or squad. All it takes is rounding up your homies and loved ones, cause everyone has a role to play within the radical change we are trying to create. We only exist as people embedded within communities, not as lone individuals in the world: every person on earth has contact with others. Contact with another body is, then— at the same time— contact with our own selves. Affinity is the foundation of autonomy.

What is autonomy and autonomous organizing?

Autonomy is based on the love for and mutual respect of individuals that does not seek to gain power-over their lives or trajectories. Autonomy is synonymous with horizontal (i.e. on equal grounds/power-with), and can be contrasted to other forms of life that are vertical (i.e. top-down/power-over) such as the authoritarian, capitalist, gendered, and racial hierarchies that we see in the world. Consequently, autonomous organizing is based on the collection of desires, friendships, and projects that seek to disrupt those forms of oppression. This form of organizing is different from and opposed to other models of organizing that are based on leadership or bureaucracy. Instead, autonomous organizing is based on consensus, mutual aid, and affinity. It is based on the affinity group model, and it has historically been the organizational basis that have popped off the wildest revolts, insurrections, and uprisings for the last few centuries.

What is an affinity group?

An affinity group is a small group of 5 to 15 people who conspire together autonomously on direct actions or other projects. Your life is already filled with many people that you have affinity with, and that's the point: these groups are ultimately based on closeness and trust. Affinity groups challenge

top-down decision-making and organizing, and empower those involved to take creative direct action. Affinity groups allow people to "be" the action they want to see by giving complete freedom and decision-making power to the affinity group. Affinity groups by nature are de-centralized and non-hierarchical. Affinity groups can exist for a long time or form temporarily to accomplish one task, it all depends on everyone checking on each other's intentions. The label "affinity group" makes it seem more formal than it actually is: a more fitting name would be "crew" or squad. An affinity group doesn't even have to be political: reading groups and art circles are other examples of everyday affinity groups.

What can an affinity group do?

Literally anything! They can be used for mass or smaller scale actions. Affinity groups can be used to blockade a road, do street theater, organize local food kitchens, confront the police, strategic property destruction, legal aid support, create community art spaces and events, change the message on a massive billboard, etc. There can even be affinity groups who take on certain tasks in an action or project. For instance, there could be a roving affinity group made up of street medics, or an affinity group who brings food and water to people on the streets. What makes affinity groups so effective for actions is that they can remain creative and independent and plan out their own action without an organization or person dictating to them what can and can't be done. Thus, there are an endless amount of possibilities for what affinity groups can do.

How do you start an affinity group?

It all starts off like anything else in your life that you're involved in: find each other and get to know each other well. An affinity group could be a relationship among people that lasts for years among a group of friends and organizers, or it could be a week-long relationship based around a single action. It could be about hitting old friends, new friends, family, neighbors, or people you've met at school or the gym. Either way, it is important to form an affinity group that is best suited to you and your interests. If you are forming an affinity group in your area, find interested friends or other organizers who have

similar issue interests, and thus would want to go to collaborate on similar projects or actions. When you find each other, ask yourselves: what are our common interests or skills that everyone can bring to the table in the fight for liberation?

Friendships are inherently political even we do not always realize it. Friendship is not neutral, like the systems of patriarchy and individualism mislead us to believe. Affinity is held together by common truths and values. By putting on display your own truths, you will never know who around you in your routine life is ready to conspire by your side, wherever and however possible. Friendship does and will carry more of a material impact as struggles continue to unfold and escalate everywhere. Look around you, and start there—every aspect of our social lives is a potential field of accomplices. When you find each other, decide on a common path. The strength of the internal ties of affinity groups are the key driver of their activities—make the time to go for hikes, talk about your histories and personal struggles, get to know each other well and kick it tough.

With the COVID-19 pandemic and surveillance, finding like-minded people to form affinity groups may be difficult, and this requires us to flexibly and creatively solve this issue. It is important to converse with the people all around us in our regular lives: you do not know who may be down or have a creative idea for addressing community issues. Take advantage of meetings, hang-outs, socials, and events where like-minded political people may be at, but it won't always be other "leftists" who may be people you want to form affinity groups with. That's because there is an overemphasis on organizing other politically involved and leftist-minded people, when we should be including everyone into our projects and community spaces, regardless of their labels or political identifiers. Sometimes, the best projects come out of very unlikely encounters and friendships: affinity is sometimes found in the most unexpected places.

What is autonomous initiative?

As opposed to following the direction and desires of leaders or hierarchical organizations, autonomous initiative stems from the mutual meanings and intentions put forth by affinity

groups. You and your crew decide on what projects or actions that you would like to begin or become a part of. We all know that the IE faces so many problems, and thus there are so many community solutions that autonomous affinity groups can address, such as: hunger, COVID-19 issues, homelessness, lack of transportation, poverty, etc. Honing in on what drives us, and meeting others half-way in what drives them allows us to mutually build common projects through consensus. From initiative, we find autonomy in the capacity to act for ourselves and with community, and no politician or cop can ever take that away from us.

What is a cluster?

Once you have your own affinity group and help facilitate the creation of other groupings, we can start to group the scale of autonomous organizing and initiatives through the creation of other autonomous structures, such as: networks/hubs, clusters, and spokes-councils/assemblies. A cluster is a grouping of affinity groups that come together to work on a certain task, initiative, or part of a larger action. Thus, a cluster might be responsible for blockading an area, orga-

nizing one day of a multi-day action, or putting together and performing a mass street theater performance. Clusters could be organized around where affinity groups are from (example: Inland Empire cluster), an issue or identity (examples: immigrant issues cluster or anti-warehouse cluster), or action interest (i.e. street theater or black bloc).

What is a spokes-council?

A spokes-council is the larger organizing structure used in the affinity group model to coordinate with others in the community. Each affinity group (or cluster) empowers a spoke (representative) to go to a spokes-council meeting to decide on important issues for the action. For instance, affinity groups need to decide on a legal/jail strategy, possible tactical issues, meeting places, and many other logistics. A spokes-council does not take away an individual affinity group's autonomy within an action; affinity groups make their own decisions about what they want to do on the streets. These assemblies allow for people and groups to meet each other, build common interests, and share vital information useful for folks/groups to further form new autonomous initiatives (not

necessarily to make big decisions/plan actions).

Find each other, build affinity, link up, coordinate, and multiply our power!

All power to the affinity groups!

Moving at the Speed of Trust: Autonomous Community Agreements

We all want to live lives outside of the hardships imposed upon us by oppressive, violent systems of power. However, as we seek to break away from these violent systems, we must be careful in not reproducing the dynamics of systems of power — such as those of patriarchy, ableism, and so on — within the spaces we navigate and the new realities that we create. In order to do so, we must pay attention to the means that we use in our abolitionist movements and not just towards to goals we aspire to.

What we propose is that, as we build our power and capacities to liberate ourselves, we must move at the speed of trust; what this means is that our movements are only as strong as the relationships that constitute them. We cannot assume that individuals are immediately trustworthy when they claim to be against the police, capitalism and so on, if they replicate oppressive behaviors. In addition, working in coalition or with other organizations must also move at the speed of trust: we cannot know every detail of the internal politics or agendas of other groups or organizations, so we must coordinate together on the basis of autonomous community agreements. By assembling and linking up together in community, we can actively achieve specific goals through temporary formations that emphasize material concerns and affinity, instead of abstraction and ideology.

The practice of autonomous community agreements must not be confused with points of unity, party line, or political program. Community agreements are a contextual, flexible, and "formal" informality of practices that individuals and groups consent to in their collective organizing, with special care for process and means. We must embody today the new realities that we aspire to and wish to see actualized. What we have here is a rough set of boundaries and agreements that others can model off of. They are not rules nor are they principles; they are meant to be community truths and modes of conduct that are never to be set in stone or policed. They can be subject to change given the dynamic

situations and community needs that folks can face at any given time. Those who cannot abide by the agreements must create their own spaces on their own preferred terms. Ideally, there should not be harm nor personal beef that stems from this because of reference to the dynamic collection of agreements. Conflict can be generative and can help proliferate multiplicity and autonomy when certain alliances are no longer useful. Autonomous community agreements are meant to facilitate the growth of power and groups that can eventually create self-determining communities that move at their own terms and set their own priorities in their fight for self-liberation. In the end, proactive trust and attunement to each other's needs and conflicts is the foundation for autonomy and abolitionist praxis.

Loose Blueprints for Autonomous Community Agreements:

1. First and foremost, we acknowledge that we are on occupied native lands and must keep that in mind in all of our organizing.
- We could inadvertently recreate settler-colonialism in our organizing if we don't prioritize native people's plight and acknowledge that this land is stolen in the first place. For example, autonomous land projects — such as the purchase of land to build a commune — must be considered through this lens to prevent said projects from recreating colonialism. This can happen when we continue to ignore native people's ancestral ties to the land being "purchased" and reinstate smaller scale settler-colonial relationships to land and natives.

2. This space is run horizontally, meaning that: everyone will have a voice at the table, there is no one single leader or shot caller, we proactively delegate tasks and rotate roles, and we ask for each person to actively contribute to the best of their ability and capacity.
- Vertical or top-down organizing means that orders come from the person in charge and trickle down to bottom ranks; this happens in any group or organization with a hierarchical leadership structure, such as CEO to manager or manager to laborer. Instead of enforcing hierarchical relationships, horizontal organizing is a practical way to encourage autonomy and self-representation in our spaces. Furthermore, it's safer to be a

leaderless organization or group because you can be incognito from and untraceable to the state and state collaborators.

3. This is a space that is actively building power outside of the state and its institutions: if you are a fed, cop, snitch, abuser/ abuse apologist, non-profit, mainstream media, or state collaborator (i.e. reformist or politician) you will be asked to immediately leave the space.
- The purpose of autonomous organizing is to build power beyond the state, its institutions, and its style of relationships. To do that, we must push back against and remove those who collude with the state directly and indirectly. This includes removing literal agents of the state (feds and cops), state collaborators (snitches, mainstream media outlets, and reformists/ politicians), and those who recreate oppressive interpersonal behavior (abusers/ apologists, nonprofits, and reformists). There is no way to work with these kinds of people without risking state repression or liberalization of our movements and spaces, and attempting to change their minds is a waste of resources.

4. This is an autonomous space, **meaning that we are trying to empower ourselves and our communities to liberate themselves: this is not a space for recruiting, centering ideological debates, or for cliquey behaviors. We should not be concerned about trying to persuade people to follow one ideology over another or argue with each other: we are more concerned about working towards a material change in our lives, not necessarily in abstract ideas.**
- In continuation to the above point, we should be cognizant of our limited resources and energy. If we focus on working together to create material changes in our communities, we will naturally be less concerned with people's exact placement on the political compass and why ours is "better," recruiting people for some other organization or event, canceling and shunning people who haven't exhibited harmful behavior just because we don't "like" them, and other inane issues that just waste time, take up space, and create further unnecessary divisions.

5. Please respect the privacy and security of others in the space: what is said in Vegas stays in Vegas, and do not record participants of this space without their consent.

- For the sake of security culture, it is imperative to make sure the information said in any anti-state organizing space stays within that space and the folks in communion. Otherwise, sensitive and even incriminating information can fall into the wrong ears. Dry-snitching is also a very real threat, and a recording of people at a secret meeting or even at a protest can help the feds build a case against someone. Don't be that person who accidentally collaborates with the state!

6. As we continue to work in community together, we do not want to reproduce cycles of harm to ourselves or each other while building power. No anti-Blackness/transphobia/ queerphobia/sexism/classism/ racism/fatphobia/ableism/will ever be tolerated in the space.
- Similar to other points regarding the need to build power outside of hierarchical, colonial, and state relations/ institutions, we need to also make it a priority to prevent all oppressive and harmful behavior in our interpersonal relationships. If we are to be intentional about our liberation, we must treat one another with respect and be mindful of the way we may recreate harmful dynamics in our

personal spaces. After all, the micro scale is just a reflection of what already exists at a macro scale, meaning that the way we socialize at a small, personal level will be influenced by the systems and dynamics at play in greater society.

7. Although this is a BIPOC-centered space, we still have to acknowledge the privileges between certain identities and proactively work to center the most oppressed voices, such as Black, indigenous, and trans voices.
- Just because we work together does not mean everyone has the same experiences, and we shouldn't reduce people's identities and experiences to such just because they are BIPOC. In fact, it's damaging to treat all BIPOC as static or identical because that can recreate harmful dynamics and ignore important intersections within already marginalized identities. It's important to listen to the most affected voices and center them when organizing.

8. On Democrats and Liberals: Being a democrat is not radical since liberals play respectability politics and prioritize capitalism over BIPOC communities. Any person that comes to the

space with these kinds of views will be removed.

- It's a waste of time and energy to argue with Democrats and liberals, and people with shared values should be prioritized for the sake of conserving resources and maintaining the integrity of our spaces. Point 3 stated that collaborating with reformists posed a risk by liberalizing our goals and our spaces; working with Democrats and liberals functions similarly. Ultimately, although many "nice" people may be Democrats or self-proclaimed liberals, they are ultimately moderates who in reality, seek to reform instead of radicalize the world. The DSA and nonprofits already exist.

9. We all agree to keep these agreements open to adding and editing as we continue to share space.

- In the spirit of horizontal organizing and collaboration, it's necessary to listen to our comrades' input when making decisions and setting agreements to make sure that we aren't merely imposing our will against others'. Similarly, people and life itself are fluid, and the adaptability of our community agreements should reflect that.

PART III.
Critique

Towards Autonomous Solidarity — Beyond Leftism, Ideology, & Rigid Political Labels

Summary:

In this piece, we discuss the ways in which certain practices within Leftism, rigid ideologies, and political labels become roadblocks to our movement organizing. We argue that political institutions and ideologies do not capture or fully address what is most at stake in our liberation struggles: the fight to materially dismantle hierarchies of race, anti-Blackness, class, and gender. Many Leftists tend to push away people that are different from them—this reproduces the "good citizen, bad citizen" model of organizing that seeks to measure people's "commitment" to an organization or cause. In addition, many forms of street self-organization tend to be opaque or illegible to mainstream leftists and organization-centric activists. In the end, this piece is a call for autonomous solidarity— the proliferation of diverse tactics and reciprocal community support needed to finally dismantle oppressive hierarchies. Autonomous solidarity functions by focusing primarily on meeting each other's material needs, rendering ideology as secondary.

We want to discuss "leftism" and the widespread usage of political labels in this post. We argue that people should not be afraid to link up and get organized just because they haven't figured out their "label" or "political identity" yet. As we fight for liberation, we must recognize that abolition and revolution are not necessarily about political institutions or ideologies. The fight is ultimately about race, anti-Blackness, class, and gender. Our lived experiences of oppression will NEVER become legible to society's political institutions and - a lot of the times - political ideologies prevent us from seeing these lived experiences as autonomous struggles of their own. In other words, we are not concerned with politics, but with materially dismantling the oppressive structures that shape people's lives.

Just because someone self-identifies as part of a certain ideology does not mean they do the work of dismantling the hierarchies of race, anti-Blackness, class, gender, ability, etc. To reiterate earlier points, we are ALL

learning to dismantle these interpersonal oppressions and no one is truly free from repeating these behaviors. We should be centering people's intentions to learn, grow, and engage in transformative change as opposed to assuming they are "down" just because they identify as part of x, y, or z political ideology. There are entire systems to be abolished and very significant work begins at home and in our communities. We must all (re)assume collective responsibility to each other by undoing inter-personal forms of oppression: this will never be achieved through political institutions, and most political ideologies overlook said inter-personal dynamics.

Identifying as certain political labels, in fact, is part of the problem. A lot of the times, we feel that if we do not know the entire theoretical positions or histories of certain political ideologies, that we are not able to engage with "politics." Fighting against oppression does not require us to sign up for some organization or forcibly identify with a political tradition. The issue is the act of taking up an identity: it is an exclusionary way of existing, and it pretends to be free of all differences or deviations. For example, we all

know how adhering to any kind of identity (i.e. ethnic, political, cultural identities) is almost impossible because everyone has different (sometimes contradictory) expectations and definitions of said identities. Most importantly, we can engage with liberation struggles without having to "identify" as anything in particular because liberation transcends political institutions and ideologies.

We should not be concerned with "the battle of ideas" when our community's lives and well-being are at stake. More times than few have "leftist" cliques and their "in-groups" competed for clout or attempted to display the best analysis or practice. We gotta stay humble and keep it real with each other. Beef between different "leftist" ideologies, usually grounded in abstract debate and speculation, has almost ZERO correspondence to the needs and realities of regular people in real life. No one in the IE really cares about what theoretical beef Kropotkin and Marx had back in the late 1800's; what matters most are material needs right now! Likewise, we should not be concerned with persuading or converting people to follow one abstract ideological line

over another, but instead with collectively building a MATERIAL line of autonomous power. Ideology and labels should not be obstacles in the way of our self-determination.

Ideologies have preconceived notions of the world and its workings. When taken too literally, they try to scientifically explain the mechanisms of the world under their framework. However, social reality does not obey laws like in physics--it is complex, messy, and fragmented, so that every idealized formula for radical change will always be imperfect. Ideology tends to prevent a proper analysis of concrete situations or moments that do not fall under the scope of the ideology's concepts or frameworks. For example, the over-fixation on the category of the worker/working-class does not access the positionality of Blackness or the lived experiences of disability. In fact, the best people to organize with are those who are not entrenched in a rigid ideology: ideology lays out only one way of seeing the world and only one way of engaging in action, instead of inhabiting multiplicity as it exists.

Rigid ideology tends to generate certainties and fixed answers

that close off the potential for experimentation. However, these certain tendencies can harden into stifling patterns, especially when spaces become purist or dogmatic about their way of doing things - such as believing that politics can only happen by adhering to a set program or party line. As the foos from CrimethInc. put it:

"If the hallmark of ideology is that it begins from an answer or a conceptual framework and attempts to work backward from there, then one way to resist ideology is to start from questions rather than answers. That is to say— when we intervene in social conflicts, doing so in order to assert questions rather than conclusions. What is it that brings together and defines a movement, if not questions? Answers can alienate or confound, but questions seduce. Once enamored of a question, people will fight their whole lives to answer it. Questions precede answers and outlast them: every answer only perpetuates the question that begot it."

The problem is the history of Leftism™ itself; to be clear, we are not right-wing or some "centrists." But leftism attempts to manage and opportunistically

seize moments of rupture when in reality, people take to the streets on their own terms and without managerial direction. Leftists take up too much space and ritualize a meeting-voting-recruiting-marching pattern without strategic reflection. The left in the US has been a nebulous, outdated, distracting, and, at key points, historically counter-productive force (i.e. 'the left-wing of capital'). For example, just because some non-profits might be "leftist" does not mean that they won't attempt to set their own self-serving agendas or seek out power. Instead, we should pay attention to the people and the streets, and not efforts made at recuperation by leftists. We can align and act "left," but not rigidly identify as a dogmatic Leftist™.

To bring it back, we want to call for autonomous solidarity in place of leftism, the marketplace of ideologies, and rigid political labels. Autonomous solidarity could allow for the proliferation of diverse tactics and reciprocal community support needed to finally materially dismantle the hierarchies of race, anti-Blackness, class, and gender.

A few last suggestions:
- Learn to commonly respect group difference, heterogeneity, and multiplicity (EXCEPT if one group tries to overpower all the other groups, is an oppressive group with known abusers, etc.)
- Move away from only organizing with other leftists; also organize with regular folks. (The isolation of being "the only Marxist-Leninist" or xyz ideology in your town is, in part, addressed by doing this.)
- Stop adhering so rigidly to your ideological position and meet people halfway. (Twitter is not real life.)
- Trust in people's ability to solve their own problems and take collective responsibility. Be responsive and attentive to others rather than prescribe how they should do it. (This is the basis for autonomy.)
- Encourage others to ask questions and listen sincerely to responses because new potential and openings emerge from these honest exchanges. (Since ideology tends to prevent growth.)

We might all have idealized images of how social change happens or occurs, and we must be honest about the times we en-

counter our own errors, frustrations, and mistakes. We gotta keep it real with ourselves and each other, and come to accept the inevitably imperfect nature of revolutionary processes.

From the book 'Joyful Militancy':

"To ward off ideology is not finally to see clearly, but to be disoriented, allowing things to emerge in their murkiness and complexity. It might mean seeing and feeling more, but often vaguely, like flickers in one's peripheral vision, or strange sensations that defy familiar categories and emotions. It is an undoing of oneself, cutting across the grain of habits and attachments. To step out of an inherited ideology can be joyful and painful."

In place of leftism, autonomy!

Further Reading:
1. "Joyful Militancy: Building Thriving Resistance in Toxic Times" by carla bergman and Nick Montgomery
2. "Post-Left Anarchy: Leaving the Left Behind" by Jason McQuinn
3. "Why Leftism – All the Way to Anarchism – is the Last Colonial Project" by Peter Harrison

For Material Disruption & Subversion, Against Performance & Symbolism

Summary:

What follows is another analysis that breaks down common political discourses that lead to weaker movement-building. This piece is a combination of the following written pieces that share a common analysis: "Breaking Down Common Myths About Resistance", "A Critique of Performative Politics & Symbolic Protest", and "Our Movements Should Not Make Demands".

These pieces reveal limitations of outdated forms of thinking about social change: particularly of symbolic, appearance, and demands-based activisms. Systems of oppression are not dismantled by appeals to emotion, logic or ethics; they're dismantled by material action. Power operates mechanically and logistically, not symbolically. To power, we must speak to only in the language it will ever understand: the language of subversive actions. We should be gauging our power in terms of our material capacity to shut down material systems of oppression. We need to creae a material shift in our communities, not change rooted in symbolism or shallow appearances. Dismantling power materially has to directly affect our lives and disentangle our communities from the material strongholds of capitalism and white supremacy. If we seek structural change, we need to set our agenda outside the discourse of those who hold power. We need to stop presenting demands and start setting our own objectives because making demands only reinforces this system's authority. We can only get rid of these systems once and for all when we shift away from symbolism and performance and instead, towards material disruption and abolition.

Making demands and symbolic forms of resistance have historically led to the dampening of insurrections and mass revolts. We want to drive home that the critique of all of these frameworks is inter-related: these are all outdated frameworks that have historically co-opted and stifled movements of the past. Of course, this is NOT meant to be an absolutist argument that pretends to know all the answers or belittle others' organizing

efforts. These pieces are meant as a moment of reflection and learning in order to better our organizational intentions and practices. Take what is applicable to you and leave behind what is not, since we all organize in different contexts.

Breaking Down Common Myths About Resistance

"In order for nonviolence to work, your opponent must have a conscience. The United States has none." -- Kwame Ture

- *Negotiation does not work*; this is proven by simple, accessible histories. Look at the endless efforts that non-profits, "leaders," activists, and other organizations make in order to negotiate with the oppressive system and its agents. There have been endless city council meetings attended, petitions signed, calls made, and emails sent to try to get those in power to listen to the needs of the people. Few material gains have been made for such large efforts. Negotiation will only work when we can leverage MATERIAL power that originates from our own terms, instead of engaging on the field of their terms (i.e.

demands, respectability, law, etc.).

- *Shaming officials goes nowhere.* Politicians, mayors, and other officials obey the logics of capitalism and white power; they have no other mandate than making sure these systems operate efficiently. Yelling "Shame!" at cops or guilt-tripping politicians does nothing because they have no conscience: they only go through the motions set in place by capital and white supremacy. Feelings belong to humans, not to agents of the state; they don't care about us, the state only cares about itself. Systems of oppression are not dismantled by appeals to emotion, logic or ethics; they're dismantled by material action.

- *Accountability will never exist.* Every large city or metropolitan area in this country has spent decades attempting to get officials to be accountable to their demands and needs. Accountability will only exist where authority is abolished: we can only hold others accountable when we share a reciprocal, horizontal relationship with them. By nature, state officials have authority and vertical power over us, and are only account-

able to the needs of capitalism and white supremacy. If holding the state accountable was a reality in the first place, then it would have radically changed a long time ago. Obviously, the police prevent this from happening.

- ***Visibility is a trap.*** Many times, we think that "shedding light on this community" or "finally getting the representation that this group lacked" are forms of liberation. In fact, becoming palatable or assimilating into the power structure (and its forms of representation) is counter-productive. We end up being shunned, fetishized, and ostracized in the spaces where we see "Black and brown faces in high places." In fact, the same people who "represent" us typically end up reproducing the same violent white supremacist structures that they vowed to undo (see, most recently: AOC voting in favor of a generous military budget). Visibility is a trap because it is all about appearances: the surface of the power structure changes but underneath, it runs just the same way it always has.

- ***Existence is not resistance.*** We have all heard this cliche before: to take up space and proclaim your position,

usually in an environment where your presence is not welcomed. However, this falls into the same issue of visibility and appearances: your presence in a white, upper-class, or prestigious space is not a sign of radical change but is rather the recuperation and re-legitimization of the space itself. Instead of questioning the validity of such spaces in the first place, this position assumes that the presence of marginalized people in these spaces signifies freedom for all marginalized folks. This is not true because the space co-opts your unique existence, continues to take on a material life (i.e. individualism, capitalism, etc.), and does not care about our collective existence.

- ***You cannot speak truth to power.*** Similarly, your actions are not a "voice" for the "voiceless." A lot of the time, we may think that well-thought-out and convincing arguments will cause a shift in power relations. But power operates mechanically and logistically, outside of the will of bureaucrats. Discourse works to help communities themselves to create meaning for each other and communicate needs, but attempting to use discourse to disrupt power is like screaming into an emp-

ty void. In fact, those in power like to parrot the same words and discourses that people in social movements create, such as Sanders or AOC who shout "Abolish the Police" only to vote in favor of its funding. To power, we must speak to only in the language it will ever understand: the language of action, of disruption, and destruction.

- *My struggle isn't your struggle* (or "mi lucha es tu lucha"). We all have very different experiences and even if we share the same identities with others, this does not translate into the same kinds of politics or desires. Black experience in the US is a struggle of its own and non-Black people should not try to make it seem like your experiences are entirely relatable, even if you are a POC. This also extends to the lived experiences that vary across gender, skin color, ability, class, etc. We can find common ground not by homogenizing communities, but rather by identifying the common enemy and attacking it simultaneously. The different experiences that we live through all share the same, material source: let's start there, because solidarity means attack, together.

- *We do not need white allies.* White accomplices are preferred, but white people should not be at the forefront of our movements or at actions. We are the only ones who can and should be liberating ourselves from white supremacy, fascism, and capitalism: this puts self-determination directly into the hands of the most oppressed. When we learn the methods to fight back against oppression, we do not need to rely on benevolent white people to stand up for us. In fact, we should never rely on them; instead, we should learn to have each other's backs as non-white communities. We have talked about autonomous initiative before and want to expand on that by arguing that white folks should ideally direct their energies towards helping initiatives that are both by and for BIPOC. Typically, white-led formations tend to reproduce the white power relations that exist at large: autonomous white power is still just white power. White initiatives should therefore materially aid already existing or needed projects that support BIPOC communities.

- *Peaceful protest is not effective.* Peaceful actions DO NOT grant us any moral leverage or mainstream acceptability. For example, many people

still think that the Civil Rights Movement was peaceful when it was, in fact, not. It only made partial gains because of the threat of Black militancy and armed self-defense. Actions must be about material effectiveness, not morality or an ethical "higher ground". Explore the histories detailed in the following books: "This Nonviolent Stuff'll Get You Killed: How Guns Made the Civil Rights Movement Possible" by Charles E. Cobb Jr. and also "We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement" by Akinyele Omowale Umoja. Abolition will not be peaceful.

A Critique of Performative Politics and Symbolic Protest

We believe in healthy, constructive critique, and we think that movements and the individuals that make them should be self-critical in order to improve practice and thought. But too many times, our community actions try to replicate the most visible or publicized forms of actions, and try to follow models of organizing that carry the most social capital. Most of the time (there are some exceptions), this ends up reproducing ineffective political positions and actions. In particular, we want to point out the issues of performative politics and symbolic protest.

Performative politics are exactly what they sound like: taking action through superficial performances. One of the definitions of performance is "a musical, dramatic, or other entertainment presented before an audience." Similarly, performative politics are a politic rooted in recycled scripts and uncritically repeating prescribed roles. By the nature of performance, people tend to not think for themselves and let others dictate their moves. This politic detracts from the autonomous potential that lies outside of pre-ordained or "acceptable" political and protest norms. By "symbolic protest," we mean the ways certain types of actions mostly (not always) implement a performance that does not materially disrupt systems of oppression. These include but are not limited to: taking a knee, yelling at cops, hashtags or Instagram "Blackout" posts, letters of opposition, taunting officials, parades, voting booths, etc. All of these things are about symbolism and are more about "making a point" than actual disruption.

We want to center our main argument here: we should be gauging our power in terms of our material capacity to shut down material systems of oppression. We want to say, Keep the actions and momentum going! This is NOT a diss to organizers who are new or folks who have just started taking the streets; everyone is still learning, and this is a lifelong experience. We also do not want to diss previous protest actions that were peaceful or youth-led initiatives for voting, etc. In fact, to qualify what we are saying about what causes changes, we'd like to mention that we will never know what effect these actions truly have because inspiration is not something tangible that can be calculated. However, we do know, based on decades of performative actions and symbolic protests, that those methods do not and have never dismantled systems of oppression. Otherwise, we wouldn't be where we are now.

We acknowledge that certain actions can be labeled performative or symbolic AND may still have been inspiring for some folks, and that's perfectly fine. That is all valid, and we appreciate the bonds and connections made through past actions because that is what liberation is all about. HOWEVER, we do want to be clear that we must abandon performative and symbolic action when we feel ready to take part in direct action or be a part of autonomous initiatives.

Imagine how many more people could be inspired if ALL of our protests and actions materially disrupted capitalism and state violence; how many more people could be inspired by a MATERIAL shift in their lives. Our main point is that symbolic action will never accomplish that material shift, even when it feels better than doing nothing; that's the difference. We want to push for folks to get involved in projects that really disrupt oppression. Dismantling power materially is not just inspiring, but also directly affects our lives and disentangles our communities from the material strongholds of capitalism and white supremacy. We can only get rid of these systems once and for all when we shift away from symbolism and performance and instead, towards material disruption and abolition.

A few other points that we want to reiterate:

1. We want to push back on the predictability of protests and marches. If there is no element of surprise or an assessment of local power relations to act upon, these actions become easy to repress by cops and fascists. Instead, how can we intentionally channel these demonstrations to attack material targets of oppression (i.e. condos, warehouses, police precincts, frat houses)?

2. What does actual material subversion look like? We suggest looking up and learning these methods (look them up using DuckDuckGo search engine, on a Tor Browser, or on CrimethInc.'s website): sabotage, blockades, squatting, black blocs, monkey-wrenching, occupations, tree-sitting, expropriations, and other direct actions and autonomous projects.

3. We should stop over-directing community resources on bail funds for non-impactful "intentional arrest" actions. Let's save that for Black/queer/trans funds, where they are really needed.

4. If there's no foreseeable direct, material change as a result of the work being done, we should question its effectiveness. A good rule of thumb to gauge

performativity is to ask yourself who the action is for and whether it directly benefits them. For example, posting a black square in honor of #BLM but not doing any other work for Black lives does not benefit the Black community. (We are NOT equating relevant, behind-the-scenes work to useless, performative work. Keep educating yourself when no one is looking, joining reading groups, having low-key meet-ups with comrades, etc. even if the effects of these aren't immediate.)

5. Keyboard warriors would benefit from putting their phones down more often and meeting real people. Tweets and statements are valuable only when accompanied by action and change, and when they're written by people who are actually doing the work. The oversaturation of commentary online based on theory and opinion detracts from relevant anecdotal evidence and analysis provided by people who are actually on the ground. Practice is the best teacher.

6. Asking celebrities and people with accolades (i.e. doctors, lawyers, legislators) to co-sign your action literally does nothing except display an attempt to

be palatable to the public. We don't need "distinguishable" acceptance for our demands to be valid and, instead, need to reject respectability in all forms.

7. Petitions do NOT guarantee anything because they appeal to legislators and politicians who already don't empathize with our struggles. Like statements, petitions are only useful when they're accompanied by other actions to legitimize them. In fact, online petitions (such as those Change.org petitions that have been circulating) can instead document/publicize your information (name, zip code) if you forget to sign anonymously.

8. As mentioned previously, things like sit-ins, group-chaining, op-eds, etc. are purely performative. We'd also like to reiterate the problem with labeling protest actions as "peaceful" and the effects of the enforcement of peace at these actions. Demonstrators will lose interest if they see a call to action that does not result in material change. When an action is just a street performance that asks for political leaders to empathize, we should question who we're doing this for and why. (People who aren't ready to get rowdy should not feel forced to, but a protest should be a place that allows rowdy protestors AND peaceful ones. The absolutism and enforcement of the "peaceful" label is the problem here; P.L.U.R. is cool for music festivals, but not for shutting down the system.)

9. Create a power-map of your area and/or conduct a tactical terrain analysis with your squad, and share it with others in an assembly or discussion. These two methods of outlining local power relations allows communities to identify key material targets, suitable for subversive actions that lead to material disruption. Look for the openings where you can attain maximum rewards with minimal consequences.

Towards abolition and nothing less!

Why our Movements Should Not Make Demands

"I do not demand any right, therefore I need not recognize any either."— Max Stirner

If we seek radical change, to need to set our agenda outside the discourses of those who hold power, outside the framework of

what their institutions can do. Our movements need to stop presenting demands and start setting objectives. Our collective power must be assessed by our own effectiveness at being able to cause material change, not by what politicians believe is possible.

The main argument presented here is the following: making demands puts you in a weaker bargaining position!

Limiting a movement to specific demands results in:
1. Stifling of diversity, setting it up for failure
2. Undermining movement longevity
3. Creating the false impression that there are easy solutions to problems that are actually extremely complex

In addition, making demands...
1. Presumes that you want things that your adversary can grant
2. Legitimizes the power of the authorities you are demanding recognition from, which centralizes agency in their hands instead of ours
3. Can prematurely limit the scope of a movement, shutting down the field of other possibilities
4. Establishes some people as representatives of the movement, which creates an internal hierarchy and gives them an incentive to control other participants

Instead, our challenge is to create spaces where people can discuss and implement solutions directly on an ongoing and collective basis. Rather than proposing quick fixes, we should spread new practices. We don't need to follow manifestos or rigid programmes, but points of departure. In fact, our desires and dreams will never be accepted by those in power. By making demands, we minimize and distort our abolitionist desires in language and terms that are suitable to those in power. When we become legible to the state, we lose our autonomous potential and fall into the trap of visibility and reformism. When demands are made, suddenly, our dreams of liberation encounter a reduction in the face of the bureaucracies and re-legitimization of the state.

From this vantage point, we can see that choosing not to make demands is not necessarily a sign of political immaturity. On the contrary, it can be a savvy refusal to fall into the traps that

disabled previous generations of movements. Let's learn our own strengths, outside of the cages and queues of representational politics — beyond the politics of demands.

In the words of James Baldwin: "Perhaps, however, the moral of the story (and the hope of the world) lies in what one demands, not of others, but of oneself."

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Further Reading:

1. "We Demand Nothing: On the Practical Necessity of Demanding Nothing" by Johann Kaspar
2. "What is Policing? and Tactical Terrain Analysis: a How-To Guide" by Tom Nomad, published by Leveller Communications
3. "Defend the Territory: Tactics and Techniques for Countering Police Assaults on Indigenous Communities" by Warrior Publications

Enabling Community Self-Liberation, Not Representation

Summary:

What follows is another critique that deconstructs the true nature of what is known as "representation". This piece is a combination of the following written pieces that share a common analysis: "A Fanonian Critique of Representation," "Against the Politics of Safety, Privilege, and Allyship," "Activism Must Be Abolished: Abandon Old Activist Models," and "An F.A.Q. on Local Protests."

It is well documented that— in the events of uprisings and movement-building— different kinds of players will try to hoard power for themselves, often times in the name of "the people." We must push back against this authoritarian tendency. Every time a so-called "community leader" tries to speak in the name of a community, or when an organization tries to control and sherpard the momentum generated by people in the streets, or when an Instagram live-streamer tries to build clout by incriminating militants engaging in direct action, we must push back and check these dynamics. Representation oc-curs when a group or individual attempts to manage or govern others' power, ability, and efforts for other (usually self-interested) ends. This piece identifies several dynamics that reveal the pitiful attempts that some people and groups use when they try to appoint themselves as movement representatives. When we relinquish our power and autonomy to representation, we lose the vital contact with our own power to self-determine. We must cultivate the ability for communities to fight on their own terms and their own capability to self-emancipate—not to infantilize or "lead" them. To all activist careerists, non-profit leaders, social media clowns, celebrity culture followers, clout chasers, movement opportunists, party vanguards, and representatives, we must say: fuck off! The longevity of our movements depends on our collective ability to remain ungovernable.

A Fanonian Critique of Representation: Against Compromise with and Recuperation by Elites

The insights provided by revolutionary theorist Frantz Fanon allow us to see the different ways that movements in the Inland Empire carry a unique advantage: the lack of domination by mass organizations or movement representatives allows for truly ripe conditions of self-sustaining autonomous organizing. This situation contrasts the realities of large, metropolitan cities where liberal politicians, non-profits, and social democratic organizations tend to dominate and battle for control over social movements. Without seeking to become a new representative or hierarchical force, movements in the IE have a strong and unique potential to develop power in never-before-seen ways.

What follows are a few quotations from the book "The Wretched of the Earth" by the Black, decolonial, revolutionary theorist Frantz Fanon. They are quotations that center his insightful criticisms concerning acts of representation. In his analysis, we see that elites (political, economic, racial, and social classes with power) use representation (via political parties and organizations) to exert control over the oppressed and colonized underclasses ('the people'). The quotes that follow reveal the problems that occur when parties, organizations, and other vanguard groups sought to "represent" the colonized masses.

In a nutshell, Fanon observed that colonizers impose representation on otherwise autonomous peoples so that the colonizer can negotiate with said elites and representatives in order to co-opt and control the colonized masses. What Fanon spoke about are the limitations of political parties, organizations, and other groups that sought to "represent" the colonized masses, which is an inherently impossible project. His analysis points toward the dynamics of mass organizations during revolutionary movements and how they hinder true liberation at times.

In these historical lessons and analysis, Fanon reveals a variety of mechanisms that led to the reproduction of the vicious cycles of power: domination by elites and leaders that replicated colonial structures in the name of nationalism and 'decolonization.' As opposed to a true decolonial and anti-capitalist liberation, there was a rotation

of leaders who hi-jacked the truly revolutionary activity and energies of the peasants and the oppressed. We must heed these warnings and protect our autonomous power from those who seek to represent us. We must always act in our own name and push away anyone who insists on compromise or liberal recuperation.

Representation is an impossible project that centers the intentions and desires of leaders and "representatives." Among the representative measures that Fanon discusses in these quotes, there are: self-appointing leadership, compromise, calls for unity, recuperation, and other vertical power dynamics. Representative elites, through their parties and organizations, attempt to make it seem as if their desires are the same as those they attempt to represent. They will ask for us to unite with them; we must insist otherwise. Revolutions and insurrections from-below must reject the top-down agendas pushed by authoritarian groupings and refuse to compromise with any authorities.

'The people' are always invisibilized by their 'representatives':

"The peasantry is systematically disregarded for the most part by the propaganda put out by the nationalist parties. And it is clear that in the colonial countries the peasants alone are revolutionary, for they have nothing to lose and everything to gain. The starving peasant, outside the class system, is the first among the exploited to discover that only violence pays.

For them there is no compromise, no possible coming to terms; colonization and decolonization are simply a question of relative strength. The exploited person sees that their liberation implies the use of all means, and that of force first and foremost." [p. 61]

Non-violence is a method of recuperation that keeps the elites in control:

"At the decisive moment, the colonialist bourgeoisie, which up till then has remained inactive, comes into the field. It introduces that new idea which is in proper parlance a creation of the colonial situation: non-violence.

In its simplest form, this non-violence signifies to the intellectual and economic elite of the colonized country that the bourgeoisie has the same interests as they and that it is therefore

urgent and indispensable to come to terms for the public good." [p.61]

Reject compromise with all elites, ward off hierarchical representation:

"This idea of compromise is very important in the phenomenon of colonization, for it is very far from being a simple one. Compromise involves the colonial system and the young nationalist bourgeoisie at one and the same time. The partisans of the colonial system discover that the masses may destroy everything. Blow-up bridges, ravaged farms, repressions, and fighting harshly [to] disrupt the economy. Compromise is equally attractive to the nationalist bourgeoisie, who since they are not clearly aware of the possible consequences of the rising storm, are genuinely afraid of being swept away by this huge hurricane..." [p.62]

Organization is just a means to other ends, elites use it as an end in itself:

"The elite will attach a fundamental importance to organization, so much so that the fetish of organization will often take precedence over a reasoned study of colonial society. The notion of the party is a notion imported from the country. This instrument of modern political warfare is thrown down just as it is, without the slightest modification, upon real life with all its infinite variations and lack of balance, where slavery, serfdom, barter, a skilled working class, and high finance exist side by side." [p. 108]

The will of 'the people' will always exceed the will of the 'representatives':

"In certain circumstances, the political party political machine may remain intact. But as a result of the colonialist repression and of the spontaneous reaction of the people, the parties find themselves out-distanced by their militants. The violence of the masses is vigorously pitted against the military forces of the occupying power, and the situation deteriorates and comes to a head..." [p. 63]

Representation is an undesirable game that the elites will always win:

"... Those leaders who are free remain, therefore, on the touchline. They have suddenly become useless, with their

bureaucracy and their reasonable demands; yet we see them, far removed from events, attempting the crowing imposture—that of 'speaking in the name of the silenced nation.' As a general rule, colonialism welcomes this godsend with open arms, transforms these 'blind mouths' into spokesmen, and in two minutes endows them with independence, on condition that they restore order." [p. 63]

We want to add to and contextualize these critiques of representation within contemporary movements. Everything in a social movement or revolutionary situation is decided on the ground, in real life. Sometimes, rigid principles (particularly those that never bend or that are decided upon *a priori,* or before the fact) get in the way of the dynamism required on the ground. In fact, the hyper-emphasis on principles within organizations is influenced by the western Judeo-Christian culture of adhering to "eternal" laws. Sometimes, a lot of organizations or vanguard parties impose principles upon individuals that prevent their own political growth or insurgent experimentation. We are not arguing that people should not engage with organizations; the point is that everyone should

decide for themselves their own rules of engagement with other groups. The point of our argument against representation is to encourage non-organizational formations for liberation. Organization should never become an end in itself; it is always only ever a means because when it becomes an end, it will only exist to repoduce itself and encroach on the autonomy of others with/for its power. We must cultivate other kinds of collective gathering points and containers (such as community assemblies, neighborhood councils, etc.) so that many people can plug in and actively participate in resistance.

In the end, Fanon's historical analysis allows us to see beyond the ploys and schemes of representation. His lessons point towards the need for movements that must become non-organization-centric and non-representative. This can be done by working together, instead through autonomy and affinity. We must always center the most oppressed groups in society and the methods that they prefer to use for securing their liberation. The people's unruliness and disorderly methods will always exceed the measures put forth by organizations and parties. Al-

together, we must learn from the pitfalls of past revolutions that centered representation over the people.

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Against the Politics of Safety, Privilege, & Allyship

We have all heard it before:
- "Black people and POC should not be at the frontlines, it is too dangerous for them."
- "The role of white people is to do the riskiest tasks, BIPOC are too at risk!"
- "Only white people destroy things and agitate, BIPOC know not to do those things!"
- "I am an ally to this struggle and will only do the things that the leaders of the struggle say to do."

All of these misled statements and widely held beliefs result in the following:
- Erasure of Black, Indigenous, and POC militants, risk-takers, and revolutionaries
- Belittle and infantilize the struggles of marginalized people by telling them how to NOT resist
- Gaslight and mislead marginalized people into thinking that directly fighting back is counter-productive
- Upholds savior complexes and allows clout-seeking individuals to become representatives of a struggle by centering respectability, pacifism, and legibility to those in power

When (typically white) people say that others cannot militantly resist their own oppression, they minimalize the harm that the oppressed endure, patronize the oppressed by insisting on how they should be receiving help from their "allies," and establish a false binary between those who can versus those who cannot "properly" resist.

We are told that resistance lies in "speaking truth to power" rather than attacking power materially. We are told by an array of non-profit-certified "white allies" that the very things we need to do in order to free ourselves from domination cannot be done by us because we're simply too vulnerable to state repression. To these things, we must say, Enough bullshit! We must refuse this idea of privilege: the idea that only a select exclusive few can take up action against systems of oppression.

The privilege theory model of activism has weakened movement organizing by confusing identity categories with solidarity, thus reinforcing stereotypes about the political homogeneity and helplessness of "communities of color." However, many self-appointed leaders tend to weaponize the concept of "the community" in order to wield it for their (usually liberal and reformist) ends. Uncritical adherence to the use of the word "community" tends to hide the power moves made by clout-seekers. We should push back against the habit of deferring to the concerns of so-called "community leaders."

It is a well-worn activist formula to point out that "representatives" of different identity categories must be placed "front-and-center" in struggles against oppression. But this is meaningless without also specifying the content of their politics. For example, the US Army is simultaneously one of the most racially integrated and oppressive institutions in American society. "Diversity" alone is a meaningless political idea which defines agency as inclusion within oppressive systems and equates identity categories with

political beliefs.

These models of privilege and allyship politics relinquishes power to political representatives and reinforces stereotypes of individually "deserving" and "undeserving" victims of racism, sexism, and homophobia. A vast nonprofit industrial complex and a class of professional "community spokespeople" has arisen over the last several decades to define the parameters of acceptable political action and debate. However, we must challenge all and every group's attempts at trying to become the most "legitimate" actor against oppression. Ultimately, "legitimacy" has more to do with hoarding social, cultural, and material capital rather than the subversion required to undo all forms of capital.

This politics of safety continually projects an image of powerlessness that keeps BIPOC, women, and trans/queers "protected," confining them to speeches and mass rallies rather than active disruption. This kind of politic defers to palatable, white middle-class cultural values, such as respectability, legitimacy, or legibility. When we are considered too "rowdy" or "defensive" by liberals and reformists, they

are ultimately making us LESS safe by diluting the true nature of resistance. As oppressed peoples, in order for us to be TRULY safe, we needa get rowdy and violent towards this dangerous system against the wishes of respectable "activists" or "community leaders"!

When activists argue that power "belongs in the hands of the most oppressed," it is clear that their primary audience for these appeals can only be white activists, and that they understand power as something which is granted or bestowed by the powerful. Appeals to white benevolence to let BIPOC "lead political struggles" assumes that white activists can somehow relinquish their privilege and legitimacy to oppressed communities and that these communities cannot act and take power for themselves. Allyship is treated as an identity, but it is not true solidarity: solidarity is based on action, not on opinions or by superficially "leaving your privilege at the door."

BIPOC communities are not a single, homogeneous bloc with identical political opinions. White allyship both flattens political differences between whites and homogenizes the popula-

tions they claim to speak on behalf of. The absurdity of privilege politics re-centers anti-racist practice on whites and white behavior, and assumes that racism (and often by implicit or explicit association, anti-Blackness, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia) manifest primarily as individual privileges which can be "checked," given up, or absolved through individual resolutions. Privilege politics is ultimately completely dependent upon precisely that which it condemns: white benevolence.

In seeking oppressed groups to take direction from, white folks of¬ten end up tokenizing a specific group whose politics most match their own. "What does the NAACP [or Critical Resistance, or the Dreamers] think about this?" Likewise, they may latch on to the most visible "leaders" of a community because it is quicker and easier to meet the director of an organization, minister of a church, or politician representing a district than to build real relationships with the people those leaders purport to represent. This approach to dismantling racism structurally reinforces the hierarchical power that we're fighting against by asking a small group to represent the views of

an entire category of people with radically different lived experiences.

Being an ally has come to mean legitimizing a political position by borrowing someone else's voice— always acting in someone else's name without questioning the principle of appropriating others' struggles. It's a way of simultaneously taking power and evading personal accountability.

The idea of allyship obscures the fact that hidden choices are being made about who is being listened to, inculcating the idea that there is a single "community of people of color" that share common interests that could be properly represented by leaders, rather than a heterogeneous mass with both overlapping and sometimes deeply contradictory ideas. This repositions the white ally to wield the power of determining who are the most representative and appropriate black and brown voices. And, most importantly, who are white "allies" to determine who/ what is the most appropriate anything?

We must abolish the ally-industrial complex, and all of the components that make it possible: non-profits, whiteness, infantilization, representation, individualism, legitimacy, respectability, and the fear of truly disruptive revolt.

In place of the politics of allyship and privilege and their forms of activism, we suggest:
1. Warding off any and all attempts of local actors that try to seize the title of "community leader," "local organizer," "representative/ voice of xyz" - such moves are hierarchical power grabs and should be checked as such.
2. Building relationships with community as accomplices, not allies, which are relations realized through mutual consent and built trust.
3. As accomplices, being compelled to become accountable and responsible to each other.
4. Not waiting around for anyone to proclaim you an accomplice. You certainly cannot proclaim it yourself; you just are or you are not. The lines of oppression are already drawn.
5. Direct action is really the best and perhaps the only way to learn what it means to be an accomplice: we're in a fight, so be ready for confrontation and consequence.
6. Recognizing that we inhabit

multiplicity, which means that we live in a diverse world with communities that vary significantly between and within themselves. So, as we build power, we must acknowledge that we can only ever speak and act for ourselves.

Activism™ Must Be Abolished

This is a short guide on abandoning outdated (but popular) activist models for folks new to organizing in the Inland Empire. Take the time for this important read. It is a breakdown of what so-called "activism" is, how it stifles true community building, and what can be done in place of that model. Note that this is a critique of Activism™ as a particular brand that people take up and the dynamic it creates, and NOT criticism of organizing against oppression itself. We are all for the proliferation of autonomous activities, but not for using movement organizing for clout-chasing or celebrity culture. Abolish Activism™!

Have you ever had these fears before entering new organizing spaces?:

- Concerns about not being radical enough in others' eyes?
- Being shut off by others, or having your ideas rejected and dismissed?
- Feeling like you constantly have to prove your self-worth and commitment?
- Fears about not having the "right" politics or the "best" analysis?
- Hyper-awareness of oneself and of others that constantly looks for errors?

You are not alone if you have ever felt these feelings and all of those feelings are valid. Not only is engaging in a new environment anxiety-inducing on its own, many of these feelings and fears come from the ways a particular model of "activism" has taken over community and organizing spaces. This model approaches organizing as though it has all the answers, which is rooted in an ideology that believes liberation can only be engaged in one particular type of way, which then invalidates all the other ways that groups and individuals engage with organizing and community-building. Much of the more popular, self-proclaimed, and highly visible "activism/ activists" model behaviors and ideas

that, in reality, do more harm than good in organizing spaces, creating a model for newcomers to follow who then perpetuate that same dynamic.

We encourage folks to do the work without worrying so much about labeling themselves or their work as "activists" and "activism," respectively. After all, whether you're anonymous or simply unlabeled, your work will show for itself if it's good work.

What else does the model of activism consist of?

- The activism model needs people who are deemed "activists," and these people who call themselves "activists" usually try to set the terms and agenda for all the right and wrong ways that other people ("non-activists") can engage with social change.
- Usually, these activists are people with a lot of social capital, visibility, and popularity, and they self-appoint themselves as representatives of a particular struggle, usually seeking to profit off of it (see: DeRay Mckesson).
- Activism then tends to consolidate itself into scenes and cliques, which are exclusive in-groups that exclude

people who are deemed not "worthy" or "smart" enough to engage with the political struggle that they are trying to control.

Where does the model of activism originate from?

Fundamentally, the problem with activism (and activists) is that it tries to tell you what is right and wrong, robbing you of the ability to think and act for yourself.

Historically, activist mentality can be tied to the histories of institutional religion and its morality. The building blocks of activism can be traced to a Christian current of moralism and the way it instilled fear and hostility towards a sinful world. Through practices like confession, Christianity taught its subjects to internalize their own sinfulness and guilt (for more on this point, check out the book titled Joyful Militancy"). Another historical building block that leads to the emergence of activist mentality is the institution of schooling. The educational system crushes the openness to new ways of doing things. For example, traditional schooling replaces curiosity with instruction, memorization, and hierarchical evaluation, so you do not

get to think for yourself.

Together, morality and schooling (as well as many other social institutions) affect the way we think that organizing must be done. They impact and create the image of activism that restricts other ways of thinking and doing.

What are the problems with the model of activism?

- It puts you in a box and closes off all kinds of other potential ways of doing things.
- It becomes the only legitimate way to engage, so it becomes condescending toward new organizers who do not fit into the activists' ideals and protocols.
- It has made toxic in-groups and out-groups, each with their own specialized languages and habits.
- It is dismissive towards non-activists and discourages autonomy.
- Its ways of doing things become very cookie-cutter and performative, with preset ideas of how to act properly at all times (as opposed to what may be needed in a particular moment or setting).

How can we move beyond the model of activism?

Ultimately, the activist mentality is full of tendencies that seek to fix, govern, discipline, and control other people. Activist practices are based on suspicion and distrust towards the capabilities of others, constantly pitting people and groups in competition with each other. Activism prevents us from thinking about our liberation in deeper ways; it entrenches us in only one way of doing things as opposed to living dynamically.

Instead of trying to control others, we should learn to remain curious and open to newness. Instead of dismissing our community members, we should embrace and work across our differences and open the possibilities of invention, experimentation, and creativity. Instead of creating a cliquey and unwelcoming social scene, we should find ways to build trust and community because liberation will always be a collective effort.

A few suggestions for organizing instead of using the activist model:

1. Abolish that "activist" mentality. We should be centering people and communities first, not activist cliques

and their desires to control others.

2. Push for a proliferation of different kinds of activity, and not conform into just one type of activism. (Again, we are critiquing the label instead of the work.)

3. Measure action by its local effectiveness (in terms of materially dismantling oppression), not by how it measures up to the ideals and standards of activist cliques.

4. Proactively create warm and inviting social and community spaces so that no one feels like they are unable to contribute to the struggles for our freedom.

In conclusion... Activism™ must be abolished.

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An F.A.Q. on Local Protests for IE Folks

We want to address a few common concerns regarding the growing movement for abolition in the Inland Empire. Since we are trying to promote unrest and social change in the IE, we get a lot of questions about protests and actions. We put together this post for folks who are new

to protesting and commonly asked the following questions. These perspectives can give us a sense of how to orient ourselves in our growing social movements. It is still only the beginning!

Who are the organizers? 95% of the time, this does NOT matter. We all know the stories of well-known and prolific organizers whose names were publicized and became targets of white supremacist, police, and FBI harassment. Knowing names and faces of those who organize actions not only puts them at risk, but has nothing to do with the REASONS people should be turning out to actions in the first place. If you agree with the need for social change, you don't need to know who the organizers are because you are showing up for the what you believe in and not showing up for some social media celebrity with clout. In the almost non-existent cases where the protests may be organized by cops or sus people, still show up. Be cognizant of your surrounds and simply stay on the outskirts of the demonstration or in the back of the march if you are wary of who is there or who organized it.

Will it be peaceful?

This question also misses the point of actions and demonstrations, mostly due to the fact that this is impossible to guarantee. The only people who guarantee this are the police themselves which, in this case, are the very institution that people are protesting against. All other people who attempt to guarantee peace at actions are known as "peace police" because they replicate the actions of police themselves. They tend to be annoying people with vests and megaphones and should be ignored. Most importantly, the only way to guarantee your safety is for you and the homies you're with to have each other's backs because only we keep us safe. If you disagree with the abolitionist actions of property destruction, simply move out the way, but don't act like the same police that you claim to protest - DON'T SNITCH.

Is this a permitted march?
This is also a question that misses the point: we roll out to the streets with the intention of shutting down this white supremacist system and all means are needed to accomplish that. Sometimes this means that actions transform and change moods, and actions are reflections of that. If the protest has the appearance of illegal-ity - such as if people march without permits or begin to walk on the streets instead of sidewalks - these are only superficial appearances. Police act in illegal ways all the time and even following all of the "rules" at protests does not guarantee that the police won't turn violent. The safety of those around you depends on your own boundaries, limits, preparation, and flexibility to respond to changing situations. Freedom is always risky and only your homies will ever have your back, not protest "leaders" or cops. The protest is ultimately about getting in touch with our own autonomy.

I don't like how others are doing it, can I just organize one myself?
Yes! The more actions the better. There is a role for everybody in our movements. Accessibility is key to freeing our communities and so, invention is also needed to figure out ways to fully involve everyone. The more people who organize projects and actions, the more people who will be pulled into the inspiring work of liberation and abolition. It is within everyone's autonomy to take action for themselves and their loved ones, and you don't need to be a celebrity or experienced activist to do so. The

point is to begin anywhere with those around you; all we need to free ourselves is already in our midst.

Further Reading:
1. "Anarchism and the Crisis of Representation" by Jesse Cohn
2. "Revolutionary Solidarity: A Critical Reader for Accomplices"
3. "Who Is Oakland: Anti-Oppression Activism, the Politics of Safety, and State Co-optation"

Burn Your Ballot — Political Theatre Does Not Represent Us

Summary:

Consider this comprehensive piece as the final word on the topic of voting. Voting for better politicians, mayors, police commissioners, policies, or presidents will never set us free. By voting, we surrender our own autonomy by recognizing the legitimacy of this shitty system through participation in it. We must refuse our involvement in the games of reforms or bargaining. What is most at stake in our participation in this settler-colonial, anti-Black political system is the issue of capture: if we participate and vote in this system, we are embedded even deeper within this decaying system (even if it is for "good" reforms), instead of separating ourselves from it. Only through a collective departure— or, mass non-participation—will we ever be able to become autonomous and self-determining. In the end, every vote for a politician is a vote for increasing state power: the politician's power only comes from the barrel of a police officer's gun. Are we trying to set our communities free through abolition, or increase the legitimacy of this police state? We must heed the words of Martin Luther King Jr. when he rightfully observed that political participation is just "integration into a burning house". It will be on us to create the infrastructure and alternatives needed for us to finally desert this sinking ship.

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126 million people do not care about political theatre.

There has been a lot of discourse over the upcoming presidential election this coming November. All kinds of people have had deep arguments revolving around the following concerns: "Why should we vote?" "What are the downsides of not voting?" "Reasons why we should never vote." "Why voting is anti-Black and colonial," etc. In the end, debates about all of these positions around voting re-center the American political machine, whether or not people feel sympathetic or apathetic towards the political institution itself. However, there has been very little discussion that mentions the large mass of people who do not vote.

Here are a few basic statistics:

- There are about 330 million people living in the US.
- There are about 16-20 million people who cannot vote because they are undocumented, felons, or ex-convicts.
- There are about 246 million people who are eligible to vote in the US.
- There were only about 136 million people who turned out to vote for a president in 2016.

So, these numbers and some simple math show that there were about 126-130 million people in the US who did not vote in 2016.

We argue that these people will never be fully absorbed into the system and its political institutions, and we should explore the potentialities that underlie this reality. In particular, we want to ask some questions about all the debates regarding voting: Who's having these conversations about voting in the first place? Are we speaking to educated, college degree audiences? Are all of the debates on voting – whether defenses for or rebuttals against – even relevant to the over 126 million people who do not vote? If we all know that the political system is failing and dying, how can we side step and move beyond the need to center the political institution in the first place? **If there are at least 126 million people who frankly do not care about politics or the nation's political theatre, what can this mean for autonomous movement building?**

The debates around voting tend to be very saviorist, which imply a desire to "save" others from acting "improperly." This is a form of paternalism. We hope that we can one day render all political institutions (and the police that underlie them) irrelevant to our lives, and maybe that begins with the 126 million who are apathetic about politics – as we should all be.

Autonomy will never be achieved at the voting booths.

Time and time again, we see and hear the argument about privilege in regard to voting: the people who **do** vote are privileged and selfish, and the people who **don't** vote are somehow also privileged and selfish. This argument is tired and premised on shaming people into action through condescension and guilt. So, who are these people who aren't voting, and why don't they vote, anyway?

Despite the opinions claiming that non-voters are the "privileged few" who have no critical stake in politics:

- Voting trends in 2016 and 2018 both show that almost half of nonvoters are **non-white**, even though these communities compose only one-fourth of the voting population.

- 56% of nonvoters are quite **poor** – making less than $30,000 per year – even though that income group constitutes just over one-fourth of the voting population.

People who abstain from voting do so because they are so misrepresented or entirely ignored by electoral politics and policies to bother voting. The solution to a corrupt system can't be to just register these people to vote and provide information on candidates or policies, because the problem isn't whether they have the capacity to vote. They *choose* not to vote because electoral politics have not substantially changed their lived realities. There is a correlation between those who choose not to vote and those who belong to the most vulnerable communities – people who are indigenous,

Black, undocumented, queer, poor, and so on.

One of the most common arguments for "voting blue no matter who" is the fear of mass deportations and further xenophobia from the Trump administration.

- 409,849 undocumented folks were deported under Obama in 2012.

- A little over 265,000 undocumented folks were deported under Trump in 2019.

- Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act states that law enforcement (local) can partner with ICE (federal) to deport people in a local community. This means that cities and counties can become subject to **federal** jurisdiction regardless of more benevolent **local policies** – and/or local elected representatives.

These local representatives and local elections are, on a smaller scale, comparable to "voting blue no matter who" when it comes to presidency. At the end of the day, local and federal electoral politics are just electoral politics, and this is just one snapshot demonstrating the neglect of **one** vulnerable group of people.

In San Bernardino, local elected

officials are making six-digit salaries while the city recovers from bankruptcy for the past five years, and while most members of the community aren't making even close to that salary range. How can it be argued that electoral politics and elected officials are designed to listen to and protect vulnerable communities, when these communities are the first to be exploited – even at the local level?

"… We must recognize how [these] systems have evolved to the point where you hardly have to keep someone from voting to keep their vote from having effect. The system evolves to protect itself, and privilege is the opposite of giving up on the belief it will self-rectify" – Hari Ziyad.

We can do more – and better – for ourselves than voting.

Flint, Michigan is still without clean water. Continuous accounts of state violence are being (badly) mitigated by Democratic promises of reform that will give more funding to police. Joe Biden himself has explicitly stated that he does not – and will never – support Medicare for All. The last post included deportation statistics under Obama vs. Trump; there is a reason Obama was labeled "deporter in chief" despite being a Democratic president. These problems don't start or end with blue vs. red, and they won't end just by flipping the White House. Even when Obama ran under a campaign that promised "change," the most vulnerable populations still suffered and were placated by empty promises. Now, Joe Biden himself has assured Americans that "nothing [will] fundamentally change."

For younger, self-identifying "leftists," Bernie Sanders' first presidential campaign was an initial exposure to "leftism." If his 2016 – and his most recent – defeat should have taught his supporters anything, it's that the two-party system is designed to maintain the status quo, and that even the threat of capitalism-lite (Sanders' Democratic Socialism) is **still** threatening enough for Democrats to end it themselves. The 2016 email leak revealed correspondence between DNC officials stating that the Democratic National Committee (DNC) "tried to aid [Hillary] Clinton and hamper [Bernie] Sanders," as well as discussed ways they could sabotage Sanders' campaign and smudge his public appearance. Not only did

this demonstrate the monopoly that the two-party voting system has over the United States, it also explicitly revealed that even the "progressive party" will refuse to move further left if it threatens the hierarchy.

That all being said, it's safe to say that most of us are not represented or protected by electoral politics and politicians, even locally. When you trust the government and its legislation instead of yourself and your community, you unintentionally reinforce the need to appeal to the moral judgement of those in power. Voting cannot be our survival strategy when so many colonized and oppressed people won't survive, even after they vote. We don't need to ask permission to exist safely and live dignified lives. **We deserve more than the crumbs of politicians and reformist legislature.**

Many of the people who are up in flames about non-voters are people whose "activism" ends at voting and getting people to vote. A lot of these people condescend non-voters and sarcastically ask leftists, "Well then, what do you want me to do?" Which begs the question… What *can* you do instead of voting?

"White Democrats who are pushing for Black folks to save America from itself have demonstrated our relative unimportance by refusing to help us strategize around safety during participation in electoral politics." – Brittany Lee Frederick.

White voters, what are y'all doing to ensure the safety of Black voters and the follow-through of white politicians? What are y'all doing to ensure the safety of BIPOC *period*? There's more work to be done than just voting on the ballot and never doing any other work. Still, we don't want to encourage defeatism or inaction by overwhelming people with the amount of work that needs to be done; that's the opposite of what any of us should focus on.

It's when we renounce electoral politics and **also** refrain from doing other work that we feel most defeated and eventually, guilted into "at least" voting… and the cycle continues. That guilt and impotence that stems from inaction is diminished when we get involved in our communities and see our power first hand. We can't invalidate the work people are doing outside of the system just be-

cause they didn't bubble in their ballots; that's just one action in their lives as opposed to many. Even if we all bubbled in ballots, the real change will come from doing the labor and building support networks within our own communities. So much attention is focused on voter registration and information, especially with the upcoming elections.

But how different could things be if we reallocated our resources and numbers from politics and **directly** into the community? The refusal to participate in this system comes after divesting from the system itself, a slow process that comes after the realization that no politicians will come to your rescue because they simply don't care. Instead of letting that instill fear and hopelessness in you, let it radicalize and empower you. Choosing not to vote isn't fatalistic, as some believe; in fact, there's more hope in trusting that our communities can fend for themselves without relying on puppets. When we redirect our idealism and hope from the system and into ourselves, there is a higher likelihood that our needs and the needs of our communities will be met.

The reality for most is that we don't have the resources to fully invest in electoral politics and **also** resist them. The truth is that with jobs, school, families, and downtime to account for, most can't fully invest in phone banking for politicians and still have the time and energy to commit to organizing in their community. When we talk about dismantling and defunding and abolishing, it's easy to get lost in the commitment to destruction and forget that we also need to build and nurture. **A big part of the fight lies in how we build support networks outside of the structures we hope to destroy.** There are already people and projects across the IE getting involved and helping their communities.

Do you have clothes you never got rid of during spring cleaning because we got stuck in quarantine? Consider putting together a clothing drive or clothes swap with some friends. Do you have a space in your yard and like to garden? Plant some herbs and veggies and distribute produce around your block. Do you like crafting and working with your hands? Make some face masks and hand sanitizer to give out to the houseless population. Anything from skill sharing –

cooking classes, financial literacy courses, political education, translation services, and more – to providing services – childcare, ride sharing, community gardening, running errands for the elderly (especially during COVID) – is useful.

Everyone has a skill, an interest, a talent. We can all build on what we already have and share it with our community instead of waiting on politics to save us.

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Further reading:
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2. "Socialist Faces in High Places: Elections & the Left" by Black Rose/Rosa Negra
3. "Seven Reasons to Hate the Season" Haters, Issue 1: an anarchist journal from north texas

In Question of the "Peaceful Protest" (and in Defense of "Violence")

Summary:

This essay was released as a chronicle over time during the summer uprisings. At the time, some local organizers insisted on describing self-organized protests as "peaceful" and blasted "peaceful protest" flyers on social media. This piece contextualizes the rhetorical value of the word "nonviolence" and questions the use of the adjective "peaceful" when describing protest actions. Ultimately, violence versus non-violence is a false binary— every situation and context requires a diversity of strategies, and we should not shoot down certain actions or marches just because we do not agree with their "violent" or "nonviolent" appearances. Appeals to "nonviolence" are based on a holier-than-thou morality, and such appeals deter the ability for our movements to effectively shut down oppressive systems. Do you choose justice, or this system's "peace"? In the end, peace upholds this oppressive status-quo.

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1. Introduction

The latest public discourse surrounding methods of nonviolent and violent protest pits these two strategies against one another, but fails to acknowledge what each truly means. Definitions of either are non-specific and have typically led to the condemnation of violence in all its forms. In particular, rioting and looting have been denounced as methods that supposedly counteract the initial message that the "peaceful protest" hopes to accomplish. The riot is often seen as "the voice of the voiceless" and as a *symptom* of political injustice when in reality, the "voiceless" are consciously articulating their sentiments.

Structural change necessitates conflict: *effective* change is dependent on how debilitating the conflict is to the institution. When people's peaceful protests are *ineffective*, people come not to expect justice from nonviolence, and rightfully so. In fact, even the success of the "peaceful protest" is dependent on the possibility of violence against the institution. Is the threat of violence not a violent act in and of itself?

2a. The Rhetoric of Nonviolence

Shon Meckfessel defines nonviolence as "a rhetorical strategy in which the very definition relies on calling violence into the speakers' mind even as the speaker disavows it." In other words, for nonviolence to exist effectively, violence also has to exist, even if just in theory. Nonviolence is not, however, an aversion to conflict. It is also obviously not an armed struggle. Instead, what makes nonviolence so powerful is the *potentiality* of violence.

Nonviolence advocates seem to confuse the dismissal of nonviolence with a commitment to direct force no matter its legitimacy, like the instilment of an illegitimate authoritarian government after a coup. The phrase "Fuck the police" has become inherently violent and has led to fear in those who oppose it, including peaceful protestors. But even if language is read as violent, does it deserve to be met with brute police force? The issue is that "violence" is harder to define than "armed."

The term "strategic nonviolence" has been replaced by "unarmed insurrection," but this creates a false dichotomy between "nonviolent" and "armed," which further perpetuates a dualism and unnecessary revulsion towards "armed" conflict. People often confuse that false dichotomy of violence versus nonviolence by associating violence with revolution and nonviolence with reform when in reality, violence is congruent with action and nonviolence with inaction. The choice of violence versus nonviolence is actually a choice between action and inaction.

There is no set definition for "violence" and "nonviolence." As mentioned before, words with no action can still be read as violent. We do, however, know that nonviolence does *not* mean passivity, and as such, a nonviolent protest at least demands intervention — crowd control, defusing of counter-protest, the list goes on — even if it does not demand being armed or physically violent. Violence and nonviolence are actually interdependent and can work together to achieve a set goal. If this is the case, then why do people insist on labeling protests as "peaceful" from the get-go? It's important to look at the way language is being used in these conversations.

2b. The Function of Language in Rhetorical Strategies

The language used to describe rioting is sometimes similar to that used to describe warfare. In reality, the privilege of true "war" is given only to the elites whereas the riot is associated with the poor and otherwise powerless. If we look at labor movements in America, even these have used coercion to persuade, this being the "brawl" (another term for the riot). A cornerstone of American society has been to limit government, often by street revolt. This allows for checks and balances by the American people on their own government, simultaneously expressing people's agency. What is this, if not the contemporary "riot and looting"?

Unfortunately, democracies have institutionalized protest and persuasion, so these methods alone — that is, without violence — may not be enough to counter the state, and this is a current dilemma being seen with the spread of "peaceful protests." Labeling and enforcing peace at a demonstration detracts from and attempts to purify the sentiments that precede the protest itself.

The focus should be on the *reason* why people take action instead of *how* they are doing so, as this further demonizes protestors, especially Black ones. Mass media is also complicit in the perpetuation of anti-Black messaging by focusing on protest tactics instead of police tactics. All protest actions are inherently conflictual once the police arrive: the police arrive with the sole purpose of neutralizing resistance – physically, morally, and psychologically – and repressing protesters.

In the words of folks from the Youth Justice Coalition in Los Angeles: "Showing up to a conflict with the mentality that you're labeling protesters as 'peaceful' totally *erases the power dynamic* between a **militarized force** and **unarmed residents of color**. AND even if people at protests are doing things that are deemed '*not peaceful*,' it's either as a *response to systemic violence* OR they're *police/agents themselves*."

3a. Debunking Negative Connotations of Violence

Just as anyone can participate in nonviolent strategies, the riot is easily accessible: small amounts of violence by a large group of

people seems to be most effective. Obviously, it is non-white people that are most at risk of state violence following a riot, but if the program becomes focused on not risking vulnerable populations, the only answer is reform and retreat. Similar to the need for ongoing conflict, there is a need for risk in order to foster a sense of urgency. On the other hand, when there there is a total avoidance of risk, the option of nonviolence becomes condescending: nonviolence becomes a performance rather than an effective strategy.

For nonviolence to mean something, the subject must already be strong but *choose* nonviolence. By doing so, the subject negates the oppressor's idea that they are weak and *must* choose nonviolence because of that weakness, instead displaying nonviolence as a form of self-restraint: the subject is strong enough to be violent but chooses not to. When there is no structural power to wield, adherents of nonviolence and the contemporary "peaceful protest" must hope for their oppressors' benevolence. This is a strategy that puts these folks at the mercy of the institutions they already know lack mercy and conscience.

As has been iterated before by people such as Jackie Wang and others, the innocent versus non-innocent binary not only serves to uphold anti-Black frameworks, but also convolutes the reality of situations. The rhetoric of guilt in the context of protest situations reaffirms the anti-Black structure of policing, preemptive policing in particular. When protests affirm their alleged innocence and peace, they are in reality whitewashing themselves and attempting to render themselves legible and credible to white civil society's psyche. In other words, the distinction between peaceful and non-peaceful protests, grounded in anti-blackness, are made for the white supremacist body-politic. The rhetoric of innocence forces protesters to label their actions in accordance to white-supremacist standards.

3b. The Validity of Rioting as an Effective Strategy

In reality, violence against state property does not equate to the presence of torture and crimes against humanity, as opposed to that caused by institutions and regimes. Armed dissent has become less popular due to the increase in surveillance brought

on by the neoliberal age, but militancy has not vanished. In fact, counterhegemonic militancy is explained by describing two forms of militancy: one can be labeled "The Party" and the other, "The Riot." The Party is a top down approach where orders come down the chain of command to execute violence, similar to the guerrilla, terrorist groups, and the like. The Riot, on the other hand, is a bottom up strategy that is spontaneous, decentralized, and does not rely on hierarchy.

An analysis of revolts throughout history shows that it is mass defiance that works rather than formal organization. Lower-class people respond to the underlying force of insurgency, not organizations; this is especially noticeable in labor strikes. Disrupting institutions means withdrawing a dependable resource – like labor – and that capacity for withdrawal becomes a natural resource. When considering contemporary examples of the political riot, we see that there is a clear connection between the initial dismissal of the public's concerns and the ensuing property destruction. After Mike Brown was murdered by a pig in Ferguson, Missouri, there were riots and looting to demonstrate the exhaustion and pain the Black community faced; this was not their first or last time. When the grand jury refused to bring Mike's killer to trial, the demonstrations went national; this was the reach of the initial Black Lives Matter movement. When Freddie Gray was violently killed in Baltimore, Maryland, the riots in his name were largely ignored by media and political figures until the massive burning of a CVS pharmacy during one of these riots.

Similar to the way workers withdraw labor during a "labor strike," the withdrawal of passivity from a marginalized community is interpreted by some as a "social strike." The more nuanced version of this, however, would understand the riot as a collective force that manifests material antagonism to police and property relations; a "social appeal" instead. Unlike a strike, the social appeal by riot is not a refusal to participate entirely but is instead a refusal to act tame by participating in a "respectable" fashion. When the public creates immediate material consequences, such as property destruction and looting, there is a subversion of power that begs the institution to follow public opinion or perish. It is not

necessarily the property damage that is highlighted here, but the willingness to engage in it. The riot occurs when there are limited conditions, leading people to desperate measures. There is a sense of condescension and racism when (specifically Black) rioters are likened to mindless animals rather than humans consciously expressing grief and anger through violence.

In a similar vein, Frantz Fanon wrote: "The existence of an armed struggle shows that the people are decided to trust to violent methods only. The native of whom they have never stopped saying that the only language the native understands is that of force, decides to give utterance by force. In fact, as always, the settler has shown him the way he should take if he is to become free. The argument the native chooses has been furnished by the settler, and by an ironic turning of the tables it is the native who now affirms that the colonialist understands nothing but force. The colonial regime owes its legitimacy to force and at no time tries to hide this aspect of things." (82-3, Wretched of the Earth)

4a. The Illusion of Property Rights as a Capitalist Tool

If violence is consistently defined as harm or threat on *living beings*, why do we keep having conversations likening violence to burning buildings and broken windows? This gears the conversation towards philosophy and theory, but nonetheless has material manifestations. Massino De Angelis calls this the "value struggle," in which the antagonism that was previously hegemonically forced is made present, calling into question the values of the opposing groups. If the oppressed group does not value what is a "fact of life" for the oppressor — for example, the white oppressor's acceptance that racism and police brutality are merely a "fact of life" versus the oppressed's desire to subvert the system that makes this possible — then there is a value struggle.

By applying this theory to greater society, we can see that marginalized groups are rendered speechless in the face of dominant relational modes; that border line between opposing groups is the line of conflict. The value struggle only exists by questioning what was previously thought to be unquestionable. Any time dominant structures are questioned, there is a strug-

gle of values between opposing groups.

In the "Second Treatise of Government," philosopher John Locke - whose thoughts formed the basis for some of the United States' most foundational values - explains that the law protects bodies and their commodities, inextricably linking people to their property. This equivalence of human rights to property rights is capitalist in nature and yet, self-proclaimed liberals' own ideology finds this admittance too embarrassing to mention, which is why people are so quick to defend property even while acknowledging that property damage hardly subverts the institutions it symbolizes. Riots serve to illuminate this painfully embarrassing equivalence and the ensuing value struggle. The consequential denial of the capitalist superstructure is second-nature to anyone who has not yet divested from capitalist ideology.

Capitalism is deeply entrenched in the fabric of the country, but questioning and re-inventing meaning is necessary to bring change. People must have their core values challenged to then challenge the system they say needs to be changed. Post-struc-

turalist thinkers have agreed that the "subject" and "subject position" are a socially-constructed process and position, respectively, by which an individual can speak and be understood as a speaker. The agreement that these are socially-constructed inevitably verifies that they can also be socially-challenged and thus, changed. Forming new subjects and abolishing old ones necessitates violence because none, especially those with the greatest power, will relinquish that power without violence. Frantz Fanon explains that violence on the colonizer's body is required to disprove its inviolability; the post-colonial subject is thus borne of violation.

To defeat capitalist social structures, one must defeat what is at the heart of capitalism: the value of property over life.

4b. Property Damage: A Symbolic Liberation from Capitalism

Public non-injurious violence, such as property destruction, creates new subjects without adhering to the dehumanization that is a cornerstone of capitalism: the subject inevitably unlearns their submissiveness. Violence then becomes the inte-

gration of trauma into unity.

Property destruction is not just violence against inanimate objects; it is violence against what that property is used for, those who get to decide that, and what property represents. The verb "profane" describes the process of transforming the sacred into something mundane again, to be used by humans, and that is exactly what property destruction attempts to do: give back what rightfully belongs to the public. Property destruction targets not only the institutions that own the property, but also the relationship to property. The destruction of personal property during riots is minimal and never the goal of anticapitalist property destruction.

The way some bystanders choose to physically defend property by hurting protestors shows the way some people actively choose property over life, even when the property does not belong to them. In the United States, protestors attacking property is synonymous to them attacking the only thing this country sees as sacred, and this is why targeted property destruction is so powerful: it breaks the myth surrounding the sacredness of private property and becomes a

tool for liberation.

References--
This piece was inspired by Shon Meckfessel's "Nonviolence Ain't What it Used to Be: Unarmed Insurrection and the Rhetoric of Resistance." You can find the full work at akpress.org.

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Further Reading:
1. "How Nonviolence Protects the State" and "The Failure of Nonviolence: From the Arab Spring to Occupy" by Peter Gelderloos
2. "Pacifism" by Tom Nomad
3. "Concerning Violence: Fanon, Film, and Liberation in Africa, Selected Takes 1965-1987" based on the documentary film titled "Concerning Violence"

PART IV.
Know-How

The central principle of all security culture— the point that cannot be emphasized enough— is that other people do not need to know sensitive information that they do not need to know. Don't get too distracted worrying about whether people are infiltrators or not; if your security measures are effective, it shouldn't even matter. Don't ask others to share confidential information you don't need to know. Don't brag about illegal things you or others have done, or mention things that are going to happen or might happen, or even refer to another person's interest in being involved in such activities. You can say no at any time to anyone about anything. Don't ever turn your friends over to your enemies-- never snitch! Don't make it too easy for your enemies to figure out what you're up to. Develop methods to establish the security level of a group or situation. Be aware of the reliability of those around you, especially those with whom you might collaborate in underground activities. Security culture is not institutionalized paranoia, but a way to avoid unhealthy paranoia by minimizing risks ahead of time. Security culture involves a code of silence, but it is not a code of voice-less-ness. Balance the need to escape detection by your enemies against the need to be accessible to potential friends. When you're planning an action, begin by establishing the security level appropriate to it, and act accordingly from there on.

Treat your technology like an eavesdropping stranger. If you wouldn't discuss it in front of a stranger, don't talk about it online, on your phone, or better yet, at all. How we show up in the fight to abolish the current world isn't for clout or social media likes anyway. In some cases, private or crucial information must be communicated by technological means, but always remember there are risks and this should only ever occur between trusted individuals. Talk to your homies and your family members to create a culture of awareness, so everyone knows their rights if the feds or the pigs knock on someone's door. When you go to the protest, what are you wearing that might be traceable back to you? Are your tattoos showing? What alias will you use so people aren't shouting your name for all to hear? What agreements have you made with people around you so that they do not accidently dry snitch? **Protecting ourselves is also protecting our loved ones.**

Strategies & Tools:

- Before anything: Threat Modeling! (see EFF site below)
- Secure Messaging: Signal Private Messenger (texting), ProtonMail (emails), Jitsi Meet (video calls)
- Safe Web Browsing (for both phones/computers): Tor-Browser, Firefox, ProtonVPN or Mullvad VPN
- Other apps/tools (for phone and/or computers): Privacy Badger, HTTPS Everywhere, DuckDuckGo, Riseup Pads, Cryptpad.fr, Jumbo
- Security Culture conduct & agreements (see site below)
- Other strategies: know-your rights, anti-doxing, social media, ephemerality tactics, & crypto-parties!

Key websites & Further reading:

- PRISM Break -- prism-break. org/en/
- Electronic Frontier Foundation: Digital Privacy (see "Tools") -- https://www.eff. org/pages/tools
- EFF's Surveillance Self-Defense -- https://ssd.eff.org
- Security in a Box --https:// securityinabox.org/en/

Helpful Articles and Videos:

- "What is Security Culture?": https://crimethinc. com/2004/11/01/what-is-security-culture
- "Your Phone is a Cop 2" (search up on): https://its-goingdown.org
- "Anti-Doxing Guide for Activists": https://medium. com/@EqualityLabs/anti-doxing-guide-for-activists-facing-attacks-from-the-alt-right-ec6c290f543c
- TROUBLE Episode 5 on Doxing and State Surveillance: https://sub.media/video/trouble-5-you-are-being-watched/
- "Quick Tip: How to Mask up": https://vimeo. com/183849378
- "30 Day Security Challenge": https://www.operation-al-security.com/catego-ry/30-day-security-challenge/page/3/

Other things to keep in mind for movement defense:

Do not open the door if agents are at your door, you are not legally obligated to. Do not spread or act on rumors or conspiracies. If the feds visit your door, ask for their card and they should go away. Immediately notify your community and networks of what you said/what was asked, verbatim; then put out a statement publicly. We keep us safe.

In sum: Do not talk to law enforcement! Not at your house, at the protest, never. The only thing you should ever say to pigs is "I am going to remain silent. I want a lawyer. I do not consent to a search. Am I free to go?" Literally practice and drill this statement out loud with a partner!

Scenario:
What to do if you are stopped by the police while protesting

Your rights
(taken from the ACLU website):

- Stay calm. Make sure to keep your hands visible. Don't argue, resist, or obstruct the police, even if you believe they are violating your rights. Point out that you are not disrupting anyone else's activity and that the First Amendment protects your actions.
- Ask if you are free to leave. If the officer says yes, calmly walk away.
- If you are under arrest, you have a right to ask why. Otherwise, say you wish to remain silent and ask for a lawyer immediately. Don't say anything or sign anything without a lawyer.
- You have the right to make a local phone call, and if you're calling your lawyer, police are

not allowed to listen.
- You never have to consent to a search of yourself or your belongings. If you do explicitly consent, it can affect you later in court.
- Police may "pat down" your clothing if they suspect you have a weapon and may search you after an arrest.
- Police officers may not confiscate or demand to view your photographs or video without a warrant, nor may they delete data under any circumstances. However, they may order citizens to cease activities that are truly interfering with legitimate law enforcement operations.

What to do if you believe your rights have been violated:

1. When you can, write down everything you remember, including the officers' badge and patrol car numbers and the agency they work for.
2. Get contact information for witnesses.
3. Take photographs of any injuries.
4. Once you have all of this information, you can file a written complaint with the agency's internal affairs division or civilian complaint board

Essential affinity group questions to ask yourselves before actions:

1. Are you able to and willing to be in situations that may involve a risk of arrest and or police violence?
2. Are there any reasons why you CANNOT go to jail? Do you need meds/medical attention if incarcerated, people others not incarcerated that you think should be notified/called/emailed?
3. What is our plan, what are our goals, and how do we do our exit strategy?

Essentials:

• Bandannas soaked in vinegar in plastic baggies • Shooting glasses/sunglasses, googles • Fresh shirt in a plastic bag • hella water! • Cloth, and gauze for chemicals • Gas mask/ chemical and or gas respirator for hazardous gases • Heavy duty welder's gloves for throwing tear gas canisters back at pigs • Snacks, cash, maps optional

Clothing:

• All black, and/or dark colors • Good running shoes • Cup/sports bra • Layers! • Cover logos with duct tape • Water repellant everything if possible • Hammer, paint, rocks, bats, brass, fireworks, lighters

Other Recommendations:

• Use the buddy system, move in a group • Disposable gloves, no DNA traces • Don't all carry your phone at demo • Emergency phone numbers and contact info written multiple times on your body • No contact lenses• Hide piercings, hair, tattoos, etc.

Important Notes:

• Check up on your and your squad's stress levels leading up to an action • Rendezvous if split up • Never run when the police use anti crowd devices • Comfort levels before during and after should always be vocalized • If disagreements arise break up into smaller groups of at least 2 • Discuss plans for possible scenarios • Don't carry identification • Do not resist arrest or touch an officer • Identifying safe spaces • Always have exit plans in mind• Embrace crowd dynamics/mood and tune into the local police force's personality • Send scouts to scope the area—a communications team • Don't act on rumors—if you did not see it, it did not happen • Assume that the pigs may be coming • Keep 360 degree view with your team • Prepare to maybe be photographed/filmed • Keep others calm • Never let the police snatch your friends, learn to de-arrest others! Police tactics: • Dispersing crowds • Surprise attacks and sporadic arrests/force • Surrounding, isolating and dividing crowds • Blocking entrance and exit, kettling crowds • Snatch squads secretly target leader-like individuals from the crowd • If caught do not make sudden movement and keep your hands in view

Good luck. Stay dangerous.

DIY: Building a Short-Term Emergency Bag

The following is some suggestions, resources, and items think about when building an emergency short term bag. Depending on your location and situation, you might want to add more things. Add what you want and feel that you will need, but these items will be a base idea of important items to add.

There is a general guideline of thought to think about in a survival situation to stay alive called the Rule of 3: 3 hours without shelter, 3 day without water, and 3 weeks without food. Depending on your location and your activity, these can lower significantly. Another general guide line for items to add your emergency kit is called the 5C's: 1. Cutting tool, 2. Combustion device (i.e. to start a fire), 3. Covering device (i.e. shelter, something to keep you warm or block the sun), 4. Container (i.e. preferably a single wall metal one; can also be used to boil water), and 5. Cordage.

The following are some items that you can add that follow these guidelines. It is good to carry items that can be used for multiple things; some items are good to have multiple of.

For Shelter:
- Tarp, military poncho (can also be used to protect from rain, blanket, gather rain water), thick trash bag (cheap and you can stuff leaves in it to make an insulated matt), reflective blankets

For Water:
- Single wall metal container to boil water, water purifier filter/tablets

For Fire:
- lighter, Ferro rod, matches, cotton balls covered in petroleum jell (cheap and simple to make fire starters)

Basic first aid, IFAKs, and trauma kits are important to carry but you also need to learn how and when to use these items. When you are able to expand your knowledge of being able to make things out of your surroundings, the less items you will have to carry (being light and mobile is hella important). However, it can still be more convenient to just carry extra items. Making things takes a lot of time and energy, and—depending on the situation—you might not have the time or recourses at hand.

Medical supply websites:
- Rescue Essentials and North American Rescue
Survival/self-defense websites:
- Self Reliance Outfitters, Optics Planet and the People's Armory

Further Resources on Learning Essential Skills

We highly encourage everyone to explore the skills outlined in the "Skills for Revolutionary Survival" series hosted by the Indigenous Anarchist Federation website (you can also look up these categories into the Duckduckgo search engine or a Tor Browser to find other resources in order to be well-rounded and informed on these topics):

1. Trauma Medical Gear/IFAKs
2. Basic Personal Protective Equipment
3. Ballistic Protection
4. Primary Firearms
5. Communications Equipment for Rebels
6. Secondary Firearms
7. Tertiary Firearms
8. Cutting Tools for Field Craft
9. Basic Wilderness Field Craft

Other important topics to explore:

- Introduction to physical conditioning for insurgents
- Beginner's Guide to Guns
- Military Science
- Insurgent Strategy
- Pods and Pod Mapping Worksheet
- Planning for a Disaster
- First Aid/Medical information (accounts on Instagram with further resources/links): @doc_opfor, @bootleg_medics, and @ guerilla_tactical (guerrilla-tactical.com)

WE DON'T WANT BIDEN—
WE WANT REVENGE!

FOR POLICE MURDERS · IMPERIALIST WARS · AND FASCIST MASSACRES

WE ARE THE EMBERS THAT WILL SET THE SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION ON FIRE.

Pictured: an Amazon warehouse reduced to ashes in Redlands, California around June 2020.

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anarchyintheburbs.noblogs.org