

“The necessity of insurrection. Not in the sense of inevitability (an event that must take place sooner or later), but in the sense of a concrete condition of possibility. The necessity of the possible. Money is necessary in this society. Yet a life without money is possible. To experience this possibility it is necessary to destroy this society.” - AT DAGGERS DRAWN

Every President of the United States (POTUS) has perpetuated innumerable oppressions including, but not limited to, class, race, gender, and progress*, despite whatever reforms that may have made the millstones more tolerable around our necks. We have been frequently reminded in our media that the first black POTUS even authorized more deportations of migrants than others before him, weighing heavily on communities of color. The latest return to past conventions, of course, will institute the most outrightly bigoted president elected in quite a long time, making him and every aspect of government and economics that buoys his rule (that is, every aspect of government and the economy) a more obvious and necessary target than before.

This is especially the case given what seems to be a growing consciousness of the root causes and mechanisms of structural oppression by those experiencing it. Whatever limitations “stay woke” or “black lives matter” sloganeering may impose on themselves, they are well known and popular phrases that suggest a potential backing of increasingly intersectional and radical actions against diverse forms of oppression. For all those waiting for the historical conditions or populist backing to act, the time has grown as ripe as fallen fruit.

Opposing the totality, as many of us see it, we also see fewer limitations on the time to act. As such, this a moment to continue if not increase and escalate our attacks; blanketing the market, banks, work, economy, and much of the infrastructure that surrounds us with a suffocating potentiality by the time this already unpopular president takes office on January 20th.

Leave it not to the so-called professionals, those (so far) absent and acrimonious guerrillas — though they too have their strengths. Take even the smallest actions regularly against the web of wires surrounding our very homes. Every visible act further inspires others, and the more easily reproducible it is, the more likely adoptable each action is to become.

For those too fearful to attack, or otherwise doubting their strength, consider composing sanctuary for those reveling in revolt. Have conversations with your neighbors about keeping the cops’ law and order out of your neighborhood so that when we throw down with the pigs, the neighbors won’t rat us out and the police can’t get in. Gather knowledge and prepare properties that can become shelters for refugees, medical clinics for women and/or trans people, or safe houses for fighters, if you actually care about these plights.

Because if you really have a new world in your heart, then you must excise the ruins that haunt your imagination and choose to live your life. Meanwhile, I intend to conquer my timidity with teeth bared, tearing at the belly of this civilization that already appears as ruins to me. Mine is a life whose meaning has begun to dwindle so long as it lacks full-fledged confrontation with impositions, meeting them as they are presented. If I do begin to live waves of fire then I will accept a viking funeral upon a boat built of the stinking, unbleached bones of fascists.

“So how can I possibly live free in this world? If freedom means utopia, a world with no more domination, then it’s a hopeless quest. By now we know that no god, no great revolution, is going to appear and take us to the promised land.

“Instead, living freely can only mean living fighting. It means seizing what moments and cracks of freedom I can. It means attacking and uprooting as much as I can the forces of domination around and within me.

“And again: I want to live joyfully. I have had enough of sadness, fear, and despair.” - NIEZSCHE & ANARCHY by Shahin

*Progress - whether basic industrial, the larger technological, or in the politically liberal sense meaning reform that recuperates previously ‘othered’ populations into more palatable governance. ★

REVOLUTIONARY LETTER #14

are you prepared
to hide someone in your home indefinitely
say, two to six weeks, you going out
for food, etc., so he never
hits the street, to keep your friends away
coolly, so they ask no questions, to nurse
him, or her, as necessary, to know
‘first aid’ and healing (not to freak out
at the sight of torn or half-cooked flesh)
to pass him on at the right time to the next
station, to cross the canadian border, with a child so that the
three of you
look like one family, no questions asked
or fewer, to stash letters, guns, or bombs
forget about them
till they are called for, to KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT not to
‘trust’
even your true love, that is,
lay no more knowledge on him than he needs
to do his part of it, a kindness
we all must extend to each other in this game
—

Diane di Prima ★

ANATHEMA

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EYES ON PRISON SOCIETY

2017 begun with the announcement that Pennsylvania will close two yet-to-be-announced state prisons by June 30 to help offset a projected \$600 million revenue shortfall in this year’s budget. The state is also facing a \$1.7 billion structural deficit next fiscal year. Governor Tom Wolf, whose efforts to raise taxes have failed since he took office in January 2015, has vowed to close the deficit through cuts and savings. Meanwhile, the originally estimated \$400 million SCI Phoenix in nearby Graterford, PA has yet to announce its completion after a couple of years of delays. This is, of course, the same prison that came under scrutiny by the public as its construction was announced concurrently with the closing of 23 Philadelphia public schools and laying off thousands of teachers in 2013. The construction of SCI Phoenix is managed by Hill International, whose world headquarters is located on the 17th floor of 2005 Market here in Philadelphia.

The rest of the country has seen increased discussion on detaining immigrant populations since June 2014, when the Obama Administration announced its detention-as-deterence plan to send large numbers of families from Central America seeking asylum into immigration detention. Families detained at what used to only be three detention facilities — Dilley, Karnes, and the local Berks Country Family Detention Center — have suffered the detrimental effects on their physical and mental health associated with being detained, lengthy detention stays, and lack of access to legal counsel. Some have suffered further abuse, including a 19-year-old mother who reported being sexually assaulted by a staff member and an eight-year-old girl who witnessed the assault at the Berks facility early in 2015.

After 15 years of operation, the state of Pennsylvania may let the Berks license expire if they continue to hold families, instead of just children, as it has been licensed as a Child Residential Facility. Currently children and adults are imprisoned in these facilities together. Despite relatively low obvious security, those held are threatened with federal charges if they defy the orders of the authorities there as simple as walking off campus, and suffer bed checks every 15 minutes [continued next page]

RESTRUCTURING & RIOTING IN MEXICO

Mass mobilizations, widespread looting, blockades, gas seizures, sabotage, arson, and other assaults on law and order broke out across Mexico in early January in response to the government’s deregulation of gas prices and the resulting nationwide spike in prices. Around 2000 people have been arrested so far amidst ongoing and spreading rebellions that local sources are calling potentially “uncontainable.”

A series of spontaneous mass mobilizations began after new policies that ended government subsidization of fuel prices took effect on January 1. Prices immediately shot up by 20%, creating an unbearable situation for most Mexicans, those of whom earning minimum wage would now have to work for twelve days in order to buy one tank of gas. The purchasing power of the average Mexican has shrunk by 11.1% since President Enrique Peña Nieto took office in 2012. President Nieto currently holds the lowest presidential popularity ratings in modern Mexican history.

The resulting nationwide rebellion has been especially notable so far for its targeted disruption of the gas industry, coupled with people directly taking back resources that they need for survival, via looting and sabotage. On January 2, at least 21 highway blockades halted traffic across Mexico, with tens of thousands of people in the streets. In addition to blockading the circulation of fuel and other commodities central to the economy, protesters occasionally hijacked fuel tankers and took gas directly from them. These events have received almost no media coverage in the United States.

Over the following days, truckers and protesters blocked eleven Pemex (Mexico’s oil company) processing and distribution centers. Pemex also reported pipeline sabotage. On January 5, 14,000 bus, truck and taxi drivers began a strike in the oil-producing state of Veracruz. In Acapulco, taxi drivers were reportedly encircling Pemex oil trucks, forcing them to stop and taking turns siphoning gas from the tankers. When confronted by soldiers, the drivers threatened to light the tanker on fire if soldiers intervened, and were allowed to continue. [cont. pg. 3]

ACTION REPORT

DEC 27 + 28 - Teens cause disturbances in Mills Mall for two days in a row, rioting and fighting police.

DEC 31 - People celebrate the new year with fliers, fireworks, drums, and banners at Federal Detention Center during an anti-prison demonstration.

JAN 2 - BB&T Bank branch located at 12051 Knights Road was robbed at gunpoint.

EARLY JAN - Anti-Trump wheatpastes blanket the city in Mount Airy, Germantown, Fishtown, North Philly, Center City, West Philly and South Philly.

JAN 12 - Windows of a University City District building smashed for Feral and Denalda, anarchists who recently passed away in Oakland. ★

PRISON SOCIETY CONTINUED: with flashlights shined upon them. Berks is a state-run facility, as opposed to the privately run facilities that have come under fire in Texas for the operational methods and neglectful tendencies that have resulted in a history of questionable deaths and substandard medical care, according to Mother Jones. In fact, these facilities are said to not only be incapable of protecting the lives of the inmates, but also incapable of protecting the lives of the personnel — to say nothing of the multiple new facilities in that region.

Yet business is good for these private facilities, despite last year’s announcement by the state department that private prisons contracts with the federal Bureau of Prisons would be suspended or reduced in this country. This is apparent in the immediate surge in the two biggest private prison firms’ stock prices after the announcement of Trump’s election, as Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities do not fall under the domain of the BOP.

Resistance is occurring though, from the successful closing of a privately run ICE facility in San Antonio over the needlessly cruel banning of crayons for children to the nationwide prison strike that began on September 9th, last year.

During said strike, prisoners took action in 46 prisons. Of those facilities, 31 experienced a lock-down, suspension, or full strike for at least 24 hours, affecting around 57,000 people. By not showing up for work, prisoners shut down the regular operations of prisons like Kinross in Michigan and Holman in Alabama. By rioting and through other combative tactics, they disrupted normalized routines and operations for even longer. It was the largest action ever taken by prisoners in the United States, and anarchists took part both inside and outside the prison walls.

The strike has primarily been framed as a battle against prison slavery, an institution codified into law “as a punishment for crime” in the 13th Amendment to the Constitution. Prisoners are often employed for pennies per hour, performing not only the various tasks that keep the prison running, but also sometimes producing commodities such as Starbucks cups or even putting out wildfires in California. Anarchist and prisoner Joshua “Zero” Cartrette has articulated a greater breadth of what prison imposes, in addition to writing about the repression he and his^[2]

affinities have faced for their strike, which has included months of solitary confinement. Local actions also included targeting the diffuse drop-off points for UPS, which benefits from prison labor. Others, like Michael Kimble and the recently hunger-striking Sean Swain, have also made valuable contributions to this dialogue.

Some of those involved in organizing the prison strike will be moving their attention toward prison contractor Aramark beginning January 14th in DC. The \$8.65 billion food services company is one of the country’s largest employers and provides meals for more than 500 correctional facilities across the country. They have been the subject of complaints about maggots and rocks, sexual harassment, drug trafficking and other employee misconduct. If you haven’t noticed their distinct impression on the local skyline, Aramark’s corporate offices are currently located at 1101 Market in Philadelphia, though they have plenty of operations through the city and beyond, easily identifiable by their labeled vehicles parked outside.

Local initiatives against prison society have also included the recurring New Year’s Eve noise demos and the upcoming January 22nd day of solidarity with trans prisoners (that will manifest this year at LAVA with a letter writing night). From the most recent NYE noise demo:

“On new year’s eve a crowd of people gathered outside the federal prison at 7th St and Arch St to show love for those kidnapped by the state.

“People brought banners, drums, a speaker, fireworks, whistles, and airhorns to get it going. Everything turned into a drum; signs, trashcans, walls, and bike racks were all kicked and banged to make sound. Fliers explaining the noise demo were passed to passersby and thrown around. Coffee and snacks were shared, as slogans against police and prisons were shouted through the megaphone. The night was fun and prisoners flashed their lights as we made a racket.

“Police arrived toward the end as the energy was dying down, but didn’t intervene. The demo ended with a short march to a nearby park where everyone was able to disperse without incident.

“Prisoners to the streets! Burn down the plantation!”

In 2015, Decarcerate PA estimated that some 80% of jailed persons in Philadelphia are simply awaiting trial, and that policy change would prevent this. But there are never any guarantees from petitioning politicians, not that we could ever rely on reforms for freedom, and legislation can be reversed through the very same system in which it was introduced. If you want to destroy prison society, stronger inspiration can be found in the likes of the previously mentioned prison strike, frequent prison riots, the Attica uprising, groups like Os Cangaceiros, The George Jackson Brigade, the third generation of the Red Army Faction, and even Jacque Mesrine’s famous armed raid on a penitentiary in Quebec. ★

MEXICO CONTINUED: At least 250 stores across the country were looted within the first few days of the rebellion, with apparently relatively strong public approval and participation. Protesters occupied gas stations across the country for days. A communiqué from a cell of the FAI/IRF (Informal Anarchist Federation) announced that they had burned down a gas station in Tultitlán, proclaiming: “Burn what must be burned!”

As global capital, in its attempts to find new sources from which to squeeze out profits, has restructured the sphere of commodity circulation, struggles against capitalist exploitation have likewise increasingly targeted the sphere of circulation. In the U.S., blockades of facilities and highways have spread over the past few years from ecodefense campaigns to anti-police uprisings, becoming a standard tactic that clearly disrupts a crucial mechanism of the economy — the flow of commodities.

The current uprising in Mexico involves some of the most successful and widespread instances of this trend to date. As of January 10, Pemex reported that its ability to supply gas stations around the northern border city of Mexicali had reached “critical levels” due to a blockade at one of its storage sites. This success may be due to an approach to blockades that sees them not just as a temporary disruption that conveys a message, but a point of material damage that should be sustained as long as possible while other resources that people need are expropriated. The protests in Mexico have specifically targeted central nodes of production and distribution, while spatially extending expropriation and economic disruption across the whole country, functionally redrawing the map of how resources are distributed.

Rebels have also taken advantage of structural problems with Mexico’s oil production and distribution system; these have been exacerbated by protests and have led to widespread fuel shortages. Because Pemex’s refineries do not process Mexican crude oil quickly enough, Pemex also imports oil and its imports have been frequently delayed at overcrowded ports. Gas is already regularly stolen from pipelines — more than \$1 billion in gasoline every year is expropriated by criminal networks. As one industry executive in Mexicali commented on the uprisings, “The assembly plant industry is at risk, and the operations of the whole productive sector.”

Mexico’s current industrial production system originated in order to serve the U.S. and global capitalism. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), another attempt to shore up global capital through colonial land grabs and state deregulation of industry, violently restructured Mexico’s landscape and turned areas like Mexicali into a giant industrial plant sprawl to supply the U.S. market with things Americans need, like smartphone chips and jet airliner parts. Mexico also accounts for a fifth of all automobile production in North America. It would basically be economically impossible to repurpose Mexican production for exports to markets other than the U.S.

With the rise of Trump to power in the U.S., though, the U.S. is turning to protectionist measures internationally in order to bolster its own declining economy — Trump is very vocally planning to leverage tariffs on Mexican imports and bring production back to the U.S. This has led to several American automotive companies already discussing withdrawing production from Mexico, and for the Mexican peso to spiral into a disastrous devaluation.

On the whole, though, Trump’s seemingly irrational foreign trade policy is in the interest of global capital and perhaps even necessary for its survival. Financial markets have already reacted well to Trump’s election. But capital can only survive by increasingly crushing the people who work for it, and Trump’s policies clearly benefit some people while destroying most others. This is where the tension comes in, from the point of view of capital and the state — a tension between sustaining itself through intensified violence and avoiding the consequent public unrest that might actually threaten its existence.

Deregulation and austerity are the main strategies currently available to the Mexican government in order to keep its economy afloat. After years of declining production, Mexico had to move in 2013 to denationalize its oil and gas industry and open it up to foreign exploration and investment. This strategy has begun to pay off — in November, international oil companies paid billions of dollars to the Mexican government for rights to drill in the Gulf of Mexico. But the price of such strategies is that they’re so violent and exploitative for its population that they produce widespread discontent and rebellion. In the case of Mexico, this tension may finally become unsustainable, as these rebellions seem to be getting out of the state’s tenuous control. ★

