

ANATHEMA

VOL. VI ISSUE IV

FREE

MAY 2020

LOCKDOWNS & INCARCERATION

People for the first time are getting a small glimpse into our reality. My name is John Bramble of the Vaughn 17 and I'm currently being held hostage at SCI Rockview in Pennsylvania for standing for what I believe in. I'd like to acknowledge all my comrades who know and understand what it's like to have to actually live their lives through involuntary social distancing and quarantine. Also known as incarceration and solitary confinement.

I know it's wild to compare the two to incarceration, but they're very similar, and the negative effects they have on the mind, body, and soul are similar as well. Depression, anxiety, and anger are just a few ways the mind is affected, and when the mind is affected in those ways it can very easily destroy you. I mean just getting out of bed could become a full-blown task.

But what I really want to talk about is, how is it that through all this the prison officials are still able to acknowledge incarceration and solitary confinement as a useful tool for rehabilitation? Now that everyone on some level has witnessed the effects of incarceration, I think we can all agree that it only makes people worse. Just look at the protests we've seen over the last few weeks, where protesters have been pushing to reopen the economy. Most of those protesters are middle-class citizens, so it's safe to say it's completely out of their norm to openly break laws or to stand against any form of authority. Now the argument could be made that they're acting that way out of fear of losing money, business, etc, which is probably true. But we could also argue that their behaviors and fears have been magnified because of the depression, anxiety, and anger caused by social distancing.

To support that claim, just look at the oppressed classes and how they're handling all this. We could say they're at an even greater risk of loss because the majority of them don't have much if anything to fall back on. But due to the system and how it's designed, they've been subject to these kinds of conditions before, either personally or through family and friends because of the institutions that continue to recycle them.

It's wild how I turn on the television and on every channel

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FREE THEM ALL



PRISONERS OF THE STATE

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CHAPTER REPORT ON THE S.D.S. REGIONAL COUNCIL OF MARCH 10

A Molotov cocktail
Is a bottle filled with
Three parts kerosene
And one part motor oil.
It is capped
And wrapped
With cotton
Soaked with gasoline

To use –
Light cotton
Throw bottle
Fire and explosion occur
On impact with target

A “white radical”
Is three parts bullshit
And one part hesitation.

It is not revolutionary
And should not be
Stockpiled
At this time

Respectfully submitted,
Up Against the Wall
Motherfucker

WHAT WENT DOWN

April 1 - West Shore Rent Strikers begin a rent strike against Constellar Corporation.

April 10 - Car caravan protests outside of City Hall demanding the release of people imprisoned in jails during the covid-19 pandemic.

April 11 - According to a police report, a man in a construction helmet got in a backhoe at a construction site in Bridgeton, NJ and rode around the site, smashing an electric utility pole, breaker box, an office trailer and the backhoe itself.

April 15 - Car caravan protests outside City Hall and Philadelphia House of Corrections demanding the release of prisoners.

April 15 - Hunt For The Wilderpeople is screened online to raise money for Food Not Bombs Solidarity.

April 23 - A Citizens Bank is robbed by a masked individual using a demand note and a fake bomb.

Late April - An OCF car and a Comcast van have their tires slashed. “As what is ‘normal’ is changing rapidly, it’s important to think about how power will use our fear to keep us subdued. Shelter-in-place or not, are our lives really that free?”

April 24 - RAM Philly hosts an online reading group of Boman Shakur’s writings.

Late April - “Bingo Bandits” slash the tires of two school police cars and scratch their windows, the windows of an under-construction condo, and a doorbell camera. “Did you know that school is mandatory in the United States of America? wtf right? School here has a really nasty history if you think colonialism totally sucks.”

Late April - Anti-prison graffiti as a “humble nod to all prison rebels fighting for their lives. Not just the ‘innocent’ or ‘vulnerable’. Until all prisons are empty and destroyed!” “BURN THE PRISONS!”

April 27 - Philly ABC hosts an online letter writing night for political prisoner Joy Powell.

Late April - “Bingo Baller” slashes the tires of thirteen luxury cars in a rich neighborhood. “Tons of Mercedes, BMWs and a brand new Range Rover (heart eyes). Cover up, use an awl for quiet flattening, and make sure to scan the surrounding cars, as people like to hang out in their cars these days.”

Late April - A banner is dropped over I-95 in solidarity with political prisoner Boman Shakur. “No More Death By Incarceration Free Boman FREE THEM ALL”

Late April - Anarchist slogans painted in Center City. “LOOT THE WHOLE FOODS FREE THE PRISONERS (A)” “DONT COUNT ON THE STATE COUNT ON EACH OTHER (A)”

Late April - An anonymous group takes responsibility for sending letters to prisoners, stealing American flags, getting rid of Ring cameras, moving a friend into a squat, and expropriating groceries from Amazon as “contributions we made toward our bingo card.”

May Day - Comcast cables outside the Real Time Crime Center are cut. “No way to confirm or deny the impact, but we hope it poked them in the eyes and blinded them to the life-affirming actions that anarchists may or may not have taken that night.”

May Day - “Bristling Badger Brigade” set a cell phone tower near the Navy Yard on fire in solidarity with Italian anarchists facing repression and UK fugitive anarchist “Badger.” “It should also be a reminder that no one is untouchable if you have the appropriate determination. And this particular act was quite easy.”

May Day - A car caravan demonstration drives around for May Day.

May Day - An anti-prison banner is hung over I-676. “INCARCERATION IS MURDER EMPTY THE CAGES (A)”

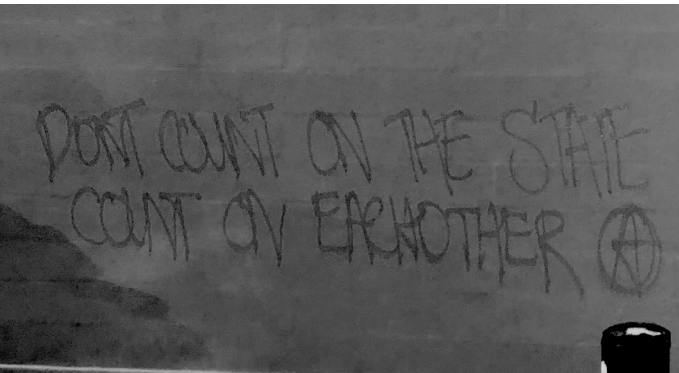
Early May - A banner is hung from the viaduct of Spring Garden St in solidarity with prison rebels and Amazon workers. “OPEN SQUATS LOOT THE WHOLE FOODS FREE THE PRISONERS #MUTUALAID (A)”

May 5 - Housing activists prevent the eviction of two people squatting Philadelphia Housing Authority property in Center City. “In our version of a “Service Day”, we showed to actually support the people that need it by standing up to the cops, gentrifying cop callers, and city workers who were about to forcibly evict our neighbors.”

May 8 - Heavy winds cause a new house under construction in Point Breeze to collapse into the street. :-)

May 9 - A Reopen Philly anti-quarantine protest is met by a counterprotest that blocks their way. Proud Boys who planned to hold their own Reopen Philly rally did not show up.

May 21 - Six fires were set along Broad St and Lehigh Ave in North Philly, including a burning dumpster and several piles of trash. Cops later arrested someone at the 69th St train station who they allege set the fires.★



	B	I	N	G	O
1	GIVE MONEY TO A PRISONER	ATTACK A SYMBOL OF THE STATE	STEAL FROM YOUR JOB	MAKE A ZINE	ATTACK A LUXURY CAR
2	(CAR) NOISE DEMO	STEAL A FLAG	VANDALIZE A SYMBOL OF COLONIALISM	OPEN A SQUAT	WRITE A LETTER TO A PRISONER
3	DOXX AN ICE AGENT	BANNER DROP	FREE SQUARE (HAPPY MAY DAY)	GRAFFITI	SABOTAGE SECURITY CAMERAS
4	DUMPSTER FIRE	PRISON SOLIDARITY ACTION	HACK SOMETHING	SABOTAGE PARKING METER OR TRANSIT KIOSK	PHONE ZAP
5	LOOT A STORE	FUCK WITH A FASCIST	BILLBOARD IMPROVEMENT	ATTACK A NEW CONDO	PASS OUT HYGIENE SUPPLIES

During the month of April a bingo board graphic circulated on anarchist social media accounts and counter-information websites. The board had actions instead of numbers. The messaging accompanying the graphic encouraged different cities and regions to try to accomplish the actions on the bingo board to make a line before May Day. In Philly by May first the combined efforts of different groups and individuals achieved a triple bingo! This kind of playful competition between rebels can open space to further motivate and push ourselves to creatively confront the oppressive society around us. Much love to everyone who helped check off squares on the board.★

CHAPTER REPORT BACKGROUND

Up Against the Wall/Motherfucker aka the Motherfuckers were 1960s anarchists best known for popularizing the concept of the affinity group in North America. The Motherfuckers promoted the small, autonomous, affinity group as an alternative way to engage in demonstrations and occupations— independent of the leadership of the mass organizations like Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). At the same time, the Motherfuckers also became the first non-student chapter of SDS, entering into the organization to – in their words – destructure it.

The Motherfuckers traveled to SDS conventions to push SDS to destructure itself from a mass organization to a network of affinity groups. They believed this destructuring could both resist police repression and authoritarianism within SDS. Rather than sincerely participate in SDS convention procedures, the Motherfuckers staged a series of disruptive and entertaining interventions: they demonstrated their karate skills by chopping a brick in half, announcing SDS must smash the State in addition to capitalism; they held a mock wedding between students and workers to ridicule SDS’s current objectives; and nominated a trashcan to run against

future Weather Underground leader Bernadine Dohrn. According to at least one former SDS member, the trashcan “did pretty well.” Their proposal that SDS “drink more wine and do less talking” in support of California grape strikers actually passed. But their main proposal to destructure the organization – a proposal that also advocated students destroy the university, “the buildings are yours for the burning” – was predictably not accepted by SDS.

The Chapter Report was a poem written in response to the Motherfuckers’ frustrating engagement with SDS. The report simultaneously parodies the bureaucratic procedure in verse, criticizes SDS’s intentions, and offers some instructions useful for future actions. The Motherfuckers’ attitude in this report brings them closer to their contemporaries in the Black Panther Party than SDS. In fact, you can hear the Panthers make the exact same contrast between a Molotov cocktail and white radicals in the film Zabriskie Point. The Motherfuckers turned down appearing in the film.

On the day-to-day, the Motherfuckers were far removed from mainstream pop culture and formal organizations like SDS or the Panthers. Based in New York’s Lower East Side, they focused mainly on building a mutual aid network with the growing number of dropouts, runaway hippies, and draft dodgers that were affectionately known as the “street people.” Their shared lifestyle involved regular small riots against the police. These demonstrations were codenamed “Henry” (which was also their name for the top-hatted skel-ton now best known in the “Be Gay Do Crime” meme). Besides Henrys, they also frequently organized “light shows.” A former Motherfucker explains that a light show was their private name for a fake demonstration: the Motherfuckers would give the false impression they were holding a demonstration and then watch the flashing lights of the police cars dispatched to the bogus location from nearby rooftops. The light show audience would throw bottles and other projectiles on the police cars below.

The Chapter Report reproduced on the next page was written in this broader context of rebellion. On the one hand, it represents the Motherfuckers’ confrontational – if ultimately failed – attempt to engage with and transform the Left. For us, it could conceivably be taken as a model – one option or way to creatively respond to Leftist organizations, without falling into their bureaucratic routines. On the other hand, it could be taken as a warning or reminder not to bother. Instead of engaging contemporary equivalents of the SDS (like the DSA or, more locally, the Philly Socialists), the Chapter Report marks out a point of departure. This poem is an artifact taken from a crossroads.★



with each other (you know, non-essential, like work). Yes, if you're feeling sick don't get in a subway (isn't it strange that only now close physical proximity is coming into question?). Nope, not me nor you but rather the current manifestation of society. Civilization and its entrails have created a Petri dish context ripe for a pandemic and any critique or analysis that does not question cities themselves (and all that is necessary to sustain them) is extremely lacking. The state deems certain jobs essential and others non-essential and somehow people just blindly buy into it!? Grocery store workers are not heroes: they're hostages. Let's not support them by our praise but by breaking them the fuck out!

We cannot forget the importance of our own and our loved ones' mental and emotional health – isolation is devastating! And let's not kid ourselves in thinking that “sheltering in place” and “isolating” are for the self (any self) at all but rather understand them as ways to continue society. And I am going to lose my damn shit if I or a friend gets scolded again for hanging out while you order food to go, go grocery shopping, get gas and order from Amazon. It's absolutely maddening to think that hanging out with a few friends around a fire is somehow more irresponsible or dangerous than going into a store! More importantly, voluntary self-isolation is only possible because other people – often already marginalized folks – are putting their own health at risk. I understand that we are all inconsistent and I always think it's worthwhile to explore our contradictions (especially as anarchists, who inhabit a space of tension) but cut this policing shit out. It's fucking infuriating. These are scary times and I am in no way attempting to invalidate any feelings of fear. That's real. But we can't control the world and the last thing we want is to become police who, with paranoia, fear each individual as a possible suspect - which is exactly the state's logic. That's terrifying. Let's get together, and respect each other's boundaries. It's a great way to check in with each other about comfort and needs – something we should all practice getting better at anyway! And no, don't give me this rhetoric of personal responsibility of protecting the vulnerable. Society has never given a shit about the most vulnerable. If this was really your concern, then how about turning your attention to prisons, jails, and detention camps right now? How about you help create a strike at your local grocery store? How about helping break a squat with some folks who currently need housing? The truth is that you just don't want to get sick. And that's perfectly fine. I don't either. But don't hide behind the ideology. This shit is scary and I would be hard pressed to find someone who isn't closely removed from someone who is sick or has succumbed to the disease. But can we be honest with ourselves and our fears? Oh yeah, and it's not like any of us really have an understanding of what's going on – and clearly, the so-called experts don't either. It's disturbing to see, in this very real and scary time nonetheless, anarchists swallowing whole the state's rhetoric. Don't wear a mask; wear a mask; 6 ft, 12 ft, 50 ft distance? Airborne, fecal borne, genetic, 5g? Immune, eternal return? We don't actually understand the coronavirus and that's really not different from everyday, so let's not lose our ability to be critical. And for the love of fuck, no I am not a “liberate the states” person – why would I ever want to open the economy back up? Imagine not working and getting to spend all this time together?! ★

EXPROPRIATIONIST ANARCHY IN CRISIS TIMES – RANSOMWARE “COVID-19”

Call for action

Attack with Covid-19

Expropriationist anarchy in crisis times

Strike capital in cyberspace, where is it structured

Panic surrounding Covid-19 has created ghost towns, empty streets, military law, stopped industries, slowed down production and reproduction of capital... more than any strike ever managed to do.

With workers/consumers being stuck between 4 walls most of capital flows are moved to cyberspace. Cyberspace is not parallel or outside of this world, it is an extension of this world. Capital which is circulating and accumulated in cyberspace is an extension of afk capital.

Expropriations are made very difficult during lockdown.

Most of the shops are closed, most of the cash registers are empty, cops everywhere, everyone who is walking outside is automatically suspicious, there is not enough people to run and blend in into the masses...

On the other hand everyone is online now.

Ransomware is malware (computer virus) which compresses and locks all of the user files and is asking for ransom in bitcoins in order to get them unlocked. Famous examples of ransomware are Wannacry and Petya.

Basically all the user's files are kidnapped, and the user has a time limit until when they need to pay in order to get their data back. Payment is always done in bitcoins.

Ransomware “Covid-19”

We have a list of Btc addresses where to receive ransom funds From each victim \$2000 will be demanded and 35% will be given to anarchist political prisoners

We can supply you with ransomwares. With raw .exe files and the executable files which are hidden (fud) inside of Pdf files and doc files.

Also we can supply you with stuff needed for opsec like Vpns, socks5 proxies, ssh botnets and we will explain to you basic linux opsec.

You choose enemy targets yourself

Whether you want to do email spamming, putting drive by exploits in backdoor sites, spamming fascist forums...

be creative

You can upload the ransomware pdfs to your local fascist forums, you can spam on social media your local fascists, cops, pimps or other enemies

You can pretend to be a serious reporter and send it to official mails of companies and media.

If you need as middleman device some stolen social media accounts, only as medium to reach enemies, we will supply you, together with vpn, cookie sessions and opsec explanation.

Sabotage flows of capital, both online and offline

Steal ruthlessly, share selflessly

Death to all which stands in the way of freedom

Long Live Anarchy

For contact information and PGP encryption key visit: <https://actforfree.nostate.net/?p=37094> ★

there's something about the negative effects that this lockdown is having on people. Mostly about the psychological toll it's having. But the wild part about it is, people are acting like this is some new discovery. This isn't something new; for over a decade, I've witnessed firsthand people losing their minds because of being locked down.

At the beginning of this, I said people are getting a small glimpse into our reality. I called it a small glimpse because our reality is much more severe. Not only does the incarcerated population deal with the psychological issues that the world is now experiencing, but we also undergo all forms of torture, whether it's physical, emotional, or mental, and it's because of this that we need to do away with these institutions and plantations.

Legally a person is considered insane if he repeats the same action and expects a different consequence. But isn't that exactly what this system does? It recycles people over and over again through the same institutions with the expectation that people will change. Maybe we should be asking what are their true intentions? Because I personally refuse to believe that the whole recycling process isn't intentional. To me I see it as capitalism at its best.

Day in and day out, our captors do everything in their power to break us down and force us into submission. Those of us that refuse to submit are isolated and subjected to all levels of abuse. They try to force us to become dependent on the system so we can't function without it. When you combine the laws and how they're designed with that dependency, it becomes virtually impossible to break the recycling process I referred to earlier. It's because of combinations like this that doing away with just one part isn't enough. Everything must go!

Now I'd like to share with you a little about my own personal experience with incarceration. I've been in and out of institutions for the majority of my teenage and adult life. I've seen it all and been a part of most of it. These places do whatever they want, whenever they want, however they want to, to whoever they want. Everyone here has either witnessed someone being victimized or been a victim themselves. Truthfully most people don't even know they're being victimized because they've unconsciously accustomed to it. It's so aggravating because I have to listen to people complain regularly about our captors and conditions. Honestly, the complaining is just annoying, the aggravating part is witnessing and knowing the power to change everything is ours.

Now I understand being naive to what's happening, but from my experience most of the time that's not the case. People usually are either so institutionalized that they've forgot what it's like to be treated fairly, or they're so fearful of what might happen they'd rather put up with the abuse than stand against it. The issue with people being institutionalized is they don't see anything wrong with the treatment inside these places. It's sad, I've seen grown men that consider themselves successful because they become lead

cook in the kitchen making around 30-50 cents an hour. As to the fear, that's hard to speak on. People have a legitimate reason to have fear, I just wish everyone knew they fear us more than anything. All in all though, I've come to the conclusion that there's no way to fix this system.

So in my opinion, to talk about solutions is a waste of time. The discussion needs to be about how can we destroy it. I know that's much more complex than it sounds and honestly I don't have a complete answer for that. I do know though whatever the collective decides, we can't stop once we start. But until then, please remember rules and laws are meant to control us. They are not meant to keep us safe, they're meant to keep the “system” safe. Without control, the system/State/government cannot work. So I encourage whoever reads this to do whatever they want with no regard for rules or laws. #WEWONTBETAMED ★

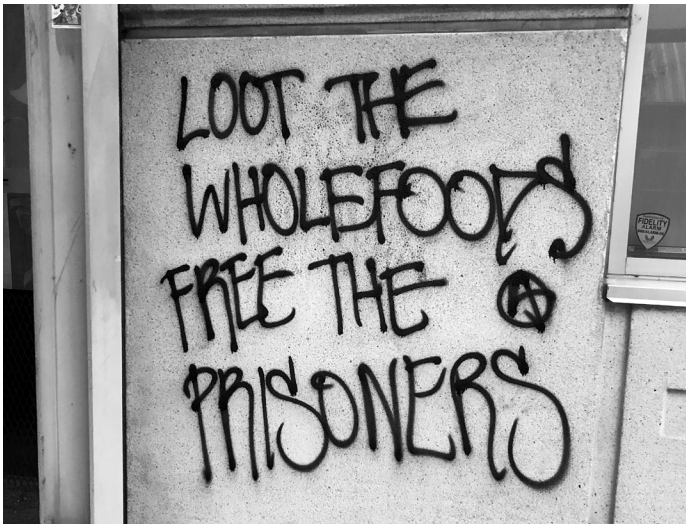
ROUGH SLEEPERS

Philadelphia city officials and police collaborated in forcing homeless people out of an encampment at the Convention Center and into shelters in late March. Acting directly against the protocols of the Centers for Disease Control, it's said that they contributed to Covid-19 outbreaks in eight of the forty-one city shelters. There has also been one casualty reported about a month after his death, but only ten days after the city's raid – on April 2nd, a forty-six year old man died from Covid after 36 people developed symptoms in his shelter.

Since then, many without shelter have also been forced to the periphery of the city. Whether they came from closer to the city center or were “dumped” there by suburban county departments, as one city official phrased it, the mostly vacant airport has served as a shelter for an increasing number of homeless folks. One man, originally from Kentucky, was even found aboard a parked airplane without a ticket when the crew boarded to prepare for a flight. Unfortunately he was arrested and charged with criminal trespassing. As of May 22nd, only passengers and employees will be allowed in the terminals, forcing approximately 150 people out.

Advocates for houseless populations have been busy, with some even halting the eviction of two people living off of Ionic Street downtown, ironically at one of the older Philadelphia Housing Authority offices that has remained vacant for many years. Protestors also gathered outside the private home of the city's Managing Director, Brian Abernathy, in Mt. Airy.

Meanwhile, off-duty 17th District police officer Jason Santiago shot a sixty-year-old homeless man for allegedly threatening him with scissors on the 2500 block of South 7th Street this month. The man was shot four times and was last reported in critical condition, while Santiago has been taken off of active duty pending an Internal Affairs review. ★



RESOURCE EXTRACTION UPDATES

Last month Judge Paul Diamond ruled that Sunoco had not violated the Clean Water Act in their construction of the Mariner East 2 pipeline, contrary to the claims of a lawsuit by the Delaware River Keeper Network. The judge elaborated that the pipeline had “been subject to the fullest regulation.”

We also reported last month on the resumption of that pipeline’s construction near Philadelphia prior to this ruling, as leaks and fines related to the project seem to play an everlasting game of leapfrog. Relatedly, a record \$30 million fine was just issued to ETC Northeast Pipeline LLC, a subsidiary of Energy Transfer/Sunoco, for the 2018 explosion of the Revolution Pipeline in Beaver County. This particular 40 mile pipeline has recorded 680 violations since the beginning of this year alone, and has only been in operation since 2018.

Meanwhile, the Environmental Defense Fund released a report by scientists that the Pennsylvania shale gas industry has leaked seven times more methane than the state had reported in 2017. The same group released a report in 2018 similarly stating that PA had leaked five times the amount of the same greenhouse gas as was reported in 2015. The newest report also found that even larger amounts of methane were leaked by non-fracking natural gas industries, “despite producing a mere 2 percent of the state’s gas.” PA is the second largest natural gas producer after Texas in the country.

Air pollution, such as this, has been linked to human life spans being shortened by an average of three years, according to an Oxford Academic report – surpassing the impact of smoking, HIV/AIDS, vector-borne diseases such as malaria, and physical violence. The study focused on air pollution’s contribution to cardiovascular disease, specifically, and does not factor in related industrial pollutions (i.e. water).

In related air quality news, Scientific American printed pro-

jections that the worldwide pandemic-related lockdowns will only reduce global climate emissions by 5% this year. A reduction of 7.6% is widely considered necessary each year (for the next ten years) to stem severe climate catastrophe. These paltry projections are partially because shipping and manufacturing by the largest companies has mostly been maintained during these lockdowns, and economies are expected to rebound before year’s end, despite personal transportation by car and airplane having declined significantly.★

THE STATE OF SURVEILLANCE

Some anonymous soul located the Eye of Sauron for us in nearby South Philly, and attempted to temporarily poke it blind for May Day. Having cut Comcast (TV/Internet provider) cables outside the Real Time Crime Center (RTCC), located with the Delaware Valley Intelligence Center (DVIC) at Quartermaster Plaza, they appear to have tried cutting off some flow of information into the facility. For many of us this is the first we’ve heard of that facility – so we may begin to wonder, what is the state of surveillance in the city?

The expansive Quartermaster Plaza, featuring two different concentrations of retail commerce straddling Oregon Avenue – many failing, or otherwise recently moved due to renovations and new condo construction – also has a gated section of government facilities south of Oregon Ave, between 20th Street and the retail stores beginning at approximately 22nd Street.

Presumably it is within these gates that the DVIC is located, serving as a regional fusion center for federal, state, and local authorities – intending to predict, prevent and respond to criminal and terrorist threats. Their “community engagement strategies are designed to serve as a clearinghouse for information-sharing, situational awareness, critical infrastructure protection, topical briefings and sector specific support” – and is responsible for twelve counties across four states. The fusion center is supposed to allow for a faster sharing of information between the agencies within, in addition to the local business community.

Also within the DVIC is the local police’s Real Time Crime Center, in which they monitor city, SEPTA (city transit), and independent business cameras, scan license plates, and process tips. A photo on the RTCC’s website reveals a large multi-screen display, with additional computers set before it, that resembles a similar monitoring system that was located in the Philadelphia Housing Authority’s Police Headquarters just across I-76 from the more western part of the Quartermaster retail plaza (3100 Penrose Ferry Road).

In a February editorial for a notorious Philly rag, Christine Speer Lejeune tells us there are around 800 city-owned cameras, more than 27,000 SEPTA cameras (of which 2,000 are actively monitored), and many thousands of pri-

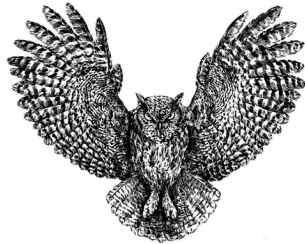
and thusly accelerating the destruction of those lives.

In between those acts, in December 2002, is when we see a little action in Philly – the claim attributed to the ELF based on the graffiti left behind at a luxury home construction site on Rhawn Street in Northeast Philly. “Middle-aged, long-time residents of Philadelphia/the suburbs,” according to their communique, thoroughly trashed construction vehicles and a model home in defense of the earth and its inhabitants – particularly those which once lived on the site that had since become little more than a mud pit.

Combating this kind of sprawl in defense of the earth was a prevalent strategy of East Coast cells around that time, from Charlottesville to Long Island. We can certainly see echoes of that sentiment in actions against development here (and pipelines) in more recent years, too, however inadvertent that might be. Known or not, we have a heritage that isn’t long gone. We should consider this when evaluating our actions, particularly in potential efficacy and repression. There was a terrible tendency for many during the Green Scare to roll over on their co-defendants, and we should really evaluate our rigor under duress for the sake of our co-conspirators and ourselves. That being said, those who maintained a principled stance are all the more heroic. If we had an authentic community, I would like to think we would hear more of these stories from people active in those eras – strength before persecution – and the principled resolve necessary for weathering repression would be better ingrained in each of us.

On a related note, we cannot attribute alleged declines in this level of action to the strictness of prosecution alone. Heavy sentences may have dissuaded some but, as recent years in Philly alone have demonstrated, unrepentant attacks continue. While repressive regimes from Germany to Nicaragua once threatened death for something as small as graffiti, resistance maintained. The ongoing struggles by comrades despite being disappeared by the Russian state, the increasingly draconian sentences for minor offenses from Greece to Chile, or the ever-ongoing round-ups and incarcerations in Italy, demonstrate anarchist strength worth emulating – taking care to prepare ourselves and consider our actions as carefully as possible, without dissuading ourselves from acting entirely.

If we are to bear witness to indigenous groups that continue to fight while their kin are straight-up assassinated for opposing logging operations throughout South America, for that matter, we should consider inaction a non-option. Our situation, that climate the ELF previously cited in their reasons for action, has not improved. In fact it has only gotten worse.★



LOVING ANARCHY (LA)

Anarchists in Los Angeles have been turning up this year and we love it!

In January, the Northeast Militia spread menacing anti-gen-trification graffiti all over the Highland Park neighborhood. In February, the Anarchist Insurgency Cell of the Informal Anarchist Federation vandalized the seating area of a Whole Foods and disabled an Amazon locker due to the parent company’s government contracts with surveillance agencies and ICE, as well as the grocer’s greenwashed capitalist agenda. In March, the Anarchist Water Polo Club flooded the offices of Northrop Grumman Sperry Marine due to their government contract to develop military-grade biometric technology to be used by various agencies. They did so by putting a garden hose through their mail slot following the previous example of a similar action in Portland, OR. And this month:

For autonomous, decentralized May Day, we torched an Amazon van in Los Angeles County.

We could not sit idly by and watch the spread of COVID-19 turn ICE detention centers into full blown death camps Amazon provides the cloud servers that hosts the Investigative Case Management system, the database utilized by ICE and other Federal agencies to compile public and private data to track and deport immigrants. Amazon plays a role in every raid; every family separation; and every death at the hands of ICE. It was the goal of this action to raise the stakes for companies like Amazon that provide critical border enforcement infrastructure.

In solidarity with with migrants currently on hunger strike in ICE facilities throughout the country. In solidarity with warehouse and grocery workers engaging in wildcat strikes on May Day.

Against the imposition of borders and the proliferation of the surveillance state

Anarchist Fire ★

A QUICK RANT ON COVID

Is it not possible for me to take the Coronavirus and its negative impacts seriously while critiquing the state’s response to it? (not in “the state’s not doing enough” kind of way – fuck is that disturbing to see). Is it not possible for me to understand the threat of COVID and continue to spend time with loved ones responsibly? Is the current anarchist imagination so deprived of creativity that it’s either a “liberate” the states or a full lockdown situation? My ire is mostly directed towards the everyday policing of other people’s behavior as potential disease vectors.

The spread of COVID is NOT my fucking fault - nor is it yours. Yes, we should all do our best in avoiding unnecessary contact

isn't a nationwide or even citywide data bank of who a bicycle belongs to, and this allows for a relative anonymity that can be increased by wearing a mask (which is a good idea these days anyway). Bikes are also easier to dismount and lock up, not nearly as difficult as trying to parallel park in a tight spot while cars rush by. Bikes are also a lot cheaper than cars.

There are also downsides to biking together. Not everyone has a bike or can ride one, and while the same can be said about cars, this still limits participation. While bikes are more anonymous than cars, they still may have recognizable features that could later be used to identify a bike or cyclist. Bikes are vulnerable to angry motorists in the same way that walking demonstrations are. Some of these obstacles can be overcome, others may have to be accepted as a necessary risk.

Now more than ever is a moment to experiment. The new normal is solidifying around us with every passing second. The opening of squats and gardens, collectivizing public well-being on a small scale through the distribution of resources, carrying out attacks against authority, and moving away from the mediated ways of life this society offers are all ways for us to experiment and create a normality more suitable to our needs and desires in the present. The proposal to hold demonstrations is one exploration, hopefully among many others.★



All of the heroic power of iconoclastic rebellion is resting in dreams and promises. I want to believe so! Because no one who has a heart that is fertile soil for generosity and solidarity can keep silent, or sleep, or squander herself in inactivity.

Severino Di Giovanni

GIVE FLOWERS TO THE REBELS CAGED
JUNE11.ORG

A SHORT TIMELINE OF PA ELF ACTION C. 2002-03

Unrepentant conflict with the powers that be is often written out of our histories, as it's neither safe nor recuperable (terms often inclusive of each other). Activists attempt to delegitimize such acts, and those most successful clandestine actions have no known personalities to gather around (which is for the better, of course). Those that sang the praises of such actions were often imprisoned or harassed (i.e. by grand juries and federal monitoring) into their corners. Post-Green Scare, there are significantly fewer claims by Earth Liberation Front cells in the United States, even compared to the Animal Liberation Front – the ALF being a sort of parent to the ELF, as well as sometimes co-conspirator/crossover group that has suffered similar levels of repression (i.e. terrorist enhancements). This has not stopped small, diffuse ELF cells from proliferating across the globe, however, often under the simultaneous banner of the Informal Anarchist Federation – and neither does it mean that similar actions have not continued to be carried out in the United States. While today we mostly remember such epic conflagrations as the Vail Ski Resort arson, there was a great deal of smaller actions happening in various bioregions across the continent (from the late '90s through the early '00s) that bear resemblance to actions that continue today.

While arson as an anarchist-associated tactic has only seemed to be reoccurring in Philadelphia since maybe 2017, there was a similar reoccurrence of it across the state little more than a decade earlier.

The ELF made its presence known within PA state lines in March 2002 when it burned down a sixty-ton crane worth half a million dollars in the city of Erie, in opposition to a highway project there. “We are not just making a stand against ecocide and developers, but the growth of civilization, as well as the demise of our existence and the biodiversity that comes with it,” the communique read. What followed the big debut was a similar caliber of actions, mostly around the same area.

In August 2002 a U.S. Forest Service research station was torched in Warren County, PA. due to ongoing timber sales, oil drilling, and “greed-driven manipulation of nature.” Having caused \$700,000 worth of damage in this fire alone, this particular ELF cell went on in their communique to claim that “we'll no longer hesitate to pick up the gun.”

In November 2002, the ELF claimed responsibility for destroying some genetically modified crops in the same area and, in a joint action with the ALF, “a series of powerful and effective actions against the fur industry,” according to Green Anarchy magazine. Following that, the ELF brought in the new year with the popular tactic at the time of torching new cars at a dealership, again in Erie. In their communique, they note how dire the situation is for most life on the planet, and condemn activist strategies for compromising

vate CCTV cameras (of which 11,000 are registered with the PPD SafeCam program). Despite acknowledged allusions to 1984, The Patriot Act, data that is admittedly inconclusive (at best) as to whether cameras prevent or deter crime, and a stated opposition to facial-recognition software, she uses her platform to advocate for even more cameras throughout the city. Her stated reason is that privacy is dead anyway, so we should embrace the surveillance state for our safety, if only outlawing the facial recognition software that is already in use by state and corporate entities.

To some degree Lejeune is right about our lack of privacy, as even most anarchists carry a combination wire-tap/tracking device that is the camera-equipped smart phone in their pockets. We know from many an exposé that nearly every smart device is actively listening to us, sharing our conversations with advertisers so that they may better target us, without beginning to address the National Security Agency and warranted wire-taps – or even what we willingly post on corporate-owned social media accounts. Of course, Lejeune might not mind her Alexa device eavesdropping on her, her husband, and her two kids in her 1,200 square foot porch-front property at 860 N. Woodstock (or maybe even that we can share her home address as a result of the state of things), but some of us are trying to opt out. Still, her position on surveillance is not even terribly uncommon.

Meanwhile, every cell phone is more or less constantly screaming in radio waves. Every time a phone gets within range of a carrier's antennae it connects – and when there's a call, text, or opening of an app, it sends that connection down the fiber-optic line to the corresponding relays and returns with the requested information. As 5G begins to be installed around the city, with more numerous antennas closer to the ground (largely on top of telephone poles throughout our neighborhoods thus far), it's not hard to imagine how easy it is to triangulate a cell-user's position and accurately track their movement – even if their “location services” were turned off to thwart GPS tracking.



The immensity of the surveillance state should begin to illustrate the benefits of larger targets and the need for a cultural shift – at the very least within anarchist circles. Leaving your phone at home more often, creating precedents of unplugged times beyond action times, and games of Camover are immediately beneficial to many aspects of our lives. Yet if we have any interest in changing the terrain in which we live and fight, we have to recognize the severe limits of what amounts to personal, almost lifestyle, choices as well.★

INTERVIEW WITH A WEST PHILLY RENT STRIKER

What was your housing/work situation coming into the pandemic and what led you to go on rent strike?

I was living in a West Philly house with two other people and doing okay financially. I think altogether we were probably bringing in just a bit more income over the level of “rent burdened”, meaning 1/3 of a household's income goes to rent. Over half of Philly renters are rent burdened. Once the pandemic came to Philly and non-essential businesses were shut down, nearly all the renters that we've been in touch with in our neighborhood saw severe reductions in income. For some of us that meant getting outright laid off or fired, for some people it was reduced working hours or trouble maintaining freelance work. But an overwhelming majority of us very quickly found ourselves in worse financial situations. This was before stimulus money or unemployment were getting to anyone.

When did you begin to take steps to strike?

Our neighborhood was fairly uniquely situated to start coordinating a strike for a few reasons. It's fairly dense as far as West Philly goes and is geographically discrete, about four or five residential blocks boxed in by thoroughfares and railroads. The neighborhood is more or less split between homeowners who've lived there their entire lives or most of their lives and renters, some of whom are students but I think slightly more skewed toward working class adult households. So, these things together made for a situation where there are a lot of relationships that go back a long time, and many more that go back at least a handful of years.

So, when the virus hit, there were existing networks and relationships in place for people to start figuring out what mutual aid would look like. One neighbor got a contact list together so that we'd all have each other's phone numbers, people would let each other know if they were doing grocery runs, making sure that elderly neighbors especially would have whatever they needed. And out of that came conversations specifically between renters about the potential for coordinated activity on our part.

Did you organize your strike with neighbors?

So, most of the rental houses in our neighborhood are owned by the same landlord/management company. And there's been plenty of history of tenants from this company communicating with each other about issues we'd have with them, mostly around maintenance problems and such. None of that had previously led to any sort of collective organizing or activity until now, when it came together remarkably quickly.

Using the contact list of all the neighbors, a couple people just started calling or texting everyone who was a tenant of this company asking if they'd want to be in touch about what our needs re: rent were. A text loop came out of that, and it grew based on more outreach like that and also flyering houses. A friend from outside the neighborhood did research and compiled a list of pretty much all properties owned by this landlord throughout the city, most of those got flyer'd eventually also, and there was some amount of outreach on social media.

Following initial communications we'd follow up either via Signal or on Zoom meetings. There's a lot to be said here about using communication tools that people with disabilities have been pushing for for a long time and the need to recognize that it's always been possible, just deprioritized. We need to maintain and expand these kinds of accessible infrastructures in the future, even if/when in-person meetings become viable again.

I think from the beginning a surprising number of people were outright on board with a rent strike. And there's been consistent agreement that the sort of "payment plan" proposals coming from some people were something we want to reject outright. Everyone's been on the same page that that'd just set us up for more debt while we're out of work, debt that won't be plausible for us to pay off even if/when we go back to low-wage work.

So we first reached out to the landlord collectively around the end of March, with houses signing on to a letter that had some intentionally open wording, asking about "rent forgiveness." After that we publicly announced the strike, but without signing that declaration with our names. Since then the landlord has tried being in touch with individuals who've signed on to collective communications, but refused to communicate with us as a group.

As of now there are about a dozen houses on strike who have no paid rent for April or May, and we're in some sort of contact with probably a dozen more houses who aren't on board with striking at this time. That's in terms of tenants with this one company, mostly just in this specific neighborhood. All of this has also led, though, to putting tenants from other landlords in touch with each other through our various networks.

Beyond the people striking against your landlord, what connections do you have to other strikers, citywide or beyond?

We've been in touch with a larger number of people organizing under different landlords/management companies. We're in direct, regular contact with at least 2-3 other efforts. There are lots more that we're not connected with directly. Someone working on coordinating efforts told me they were in touch with over 20 projects in West Philly alone. That was a while ago though. Personally, I've only been in touch with people actively striking here in Philly, but have also spoken with people nationally who are taking related actions.

There seems to be several activist groups or formal organizations involved in Philly, the most vocal being the Philly Tenants Union (PTU). How do you understand the relationship between rent strikers and these groups?

Predictably enough, this is a thorny subject! To start off, gonna be clear that I'm only speaking for myself, and also trying to be relatively pragmatic when criticizing others (at this point). So, at the very least since early March, PTU's stance as an organization was discouraging of any outright rent strikes. That was made clear both in private communications as well as public statements put out either by PTU or by people who work closely with them. They regularly recommended individual negotiations between tenants and landlords to, I don't know, presumably figure out the sort of payment plan debt schemes that we'd already decided to reject. Which seemed like a strange course for a union to recommend!

So, we just went ahead and organized without much input from PTU. April rolls around and there's a story in The Inquirer about one of the strikes, and sure enough, PTU is getting interviewed in there still saying they don't recommend a strike. So, literally publicly undercutting people who are actively rent striking. There's just not any other way to interpret that. This was also on the heels of a local socialist who works with PTU putting a tirade on twitter attacking those pursuing a rent strike as irresponsible, adventurist, ultra-left, all that sort of thing. Which is not a good way to build good-faith relationships with people who you want to be part of your "base," in my naive and uneducated opinion.

There were some other projects that I was in touch with around this time whose work I was really excited about - aiming specifically to just help network different organizing efforts, get people put in touch, help coordinate so we could all expand capacity, collaborate, all that. Unfortunately, those projects seem to have been absorbed into PTU once they finally put out a "call" for a citywide rent strike. (Which did not mention or reach out to ongoing, public strikes already rolling.) So, that's disappointing.

Those dynamics speak to the general culture in Philly activist land where any given single issue is "claimed" by one formal organization. So, if there's talk of a rent strike, you get referred to PTU, it's assumed that they're the mecha-

nism for carrying something like that out. If you act on an issue outside of this framework, it more or less just gets wholly erased. A friend put it well, something like "First they try and recruit and fundraise. If that doesn't work they denounce and belittle." If something gets pushed to a point where it can't be ignored, the organizations step in to take credit like it was their idea all along. So, now PTU has "called" for a rent strike, but I think that the socialist space already did a lot of damage, stunting the momentum that was there in March.

What are your aims as a rent striker? What kind of action do you think would be necessary to achieve these aims?

I'd identify as one of the unreasonable strikers. I do not want to pay rent in order to have access to shelter, and I don't want anyone else to have to either. Not in the context of the current pandemic, nor in any other context. Full stop! Lately I've been thinking of the potential held by a rent strike in the absence of a squatting movement. It's been made clear that, in the U.S., the state draws a severe line at taking over property - we can see that in the repression of squatting movements during the 1990's, the reactions during Occupy when some cities starting moving in that direction (Seattle, Chapel Hill, Oakland). Taking over buildings or housing is one of the points where the SWAT teams start coming out straight away. Moms For Housing in Oakland recently was able to overcome this to an extent. I wonder if the mass refusal to keep paying rent could start to move towards, functionally, a mass takeover of housing that we're already in, all at once. When I'm feeling optimistic, anyway.

We need to prepare for immediate, physical eviction defense. I know some projects nationally, particularly the LA Tenants Union, were (pre-pandemic) doing eviction blockade trainings, and were doing them just totally openly. I'd love to see that sort of preparation here in Philly, and everywhere, and can imagine that taking forms that are both totally, uncompromisingly public, as well as informally and more security-oriented. Both need to happen.

Right now, that obviously runs into concerns about social distancing. I'm not sure how to resolve that problem. My inclination for now is that we need to defend (and expand) our access to housing, the tools we have/know how to use revolve largely around (well-prepared) people congregating in large groups, and the alternative is not safe either.

Do you have advice for others who may be moving toward a rent strike this summer in Philly or elsewhere?

Build relationships with neighbors. Then do that more. Make contact with other people who rent from your landlord. Explore communication options that can help us be in touch as securely as possible, while recognizing that *broad communication builds networks to keep us safe*. Consistent communication tools that are actually accessible. Look into squat and community garden defense efforts that others

have carried out in other times and places. Practice jogging while carrying two pallets at a time. Go ahead and change the locks right now, one less thing to worry about later. Be humble while trusting and believing in yourself and those you have affinity with. Spread anarchy, live anarchism, ★.

WHEN THINGS GET ROUGH WE RIDE TOGETHER

Abandoning the streets would be a huge mistake if we don't want the new normal to be more authoritarian and passive than before. What can we do in light of the fact that walking through the streets in huge crowds is pretty much out of the question? With our health to worry about, and for our struggles to continue, we will have to innovate. Across the continent, people are experimenting with rallies where people stand six feet apart and demonstrations with participants moving around in cars. Each of these approaches has its strengths and weaknesses.

Here's an experiment that hasn't been tried many times by anarchists recently: bicycle demonstrations. In the '90s and 2000s, Critical Mass bike rides were common, but these well-attended group rides have since fallen out of style. Twice during 2018, anarchists and their fellow travelers held demonstrations on bikes. Both times were memorial rides for Pablo Avendano, an anarchist cyclist killed by a car while working delivery. Each of these rides were fairly successful. Neither had any arrests, both were able to disrupt traffic, open space for direct action, and let the city know that Pablo mattered to his friends and companions.

In a time where any gathering of people can have a ripple effect on the health of our friends and families, we can envision new ways to be together socially while keeping our distance physically. Gathering and moving together on bicycles leaves us able to go places together while allowing us enough room to lessen the spread of the virus among each other. This compatibility with our new collective practices makes biking together more suitable than large crowds would be in this strange time. While socially distanced rallies have trouble moving and becoming safe marches, and car caravans continue to experiment with coordination and communication, bicycle demonstrations allow for the spontaneity and impromptu decision-making of marching without needing to give up mobility or communication.

The benefits of gathering on bicycles to demonstrate are numerous. A mass of bikes is mobile and can move around the city quickly, even if the streets are congested with car traffic. Bikes can go through spaces that many cars cannot: parks, paths, up curbs, and potentially even up or down stairs. This combination of speed and mobility can mean that the police have a difficult time keeping up with and keeping track of a biking demonstration. Talking to each other while riding bikes is a lot easier than trying the same while driving, since bikes are quiet and we can hear and see each other a lot more easily when we aren't enclosed in a metal and glass box. Bicycles, unlike cars, do not have license plates, there