

# Black Seed: Issue 3

Various

Spring 2015

# Contents

Welcome to Issue 3 . . . . .	4
Childhood, Imagination, and the Forest - by Sever . . . . .	5
Don't Worry, You Can Sleep at Night ... and being able to sleep functions as a symptom of a greater problem – by Hunter H . . . . .	9
Revolutionary In-Crowd . . . . .	10
An Interview with Corrina Gould: On Disappearing to Survive – by A! . . . . .	12
Collision of Worlds: the pause between wilderness and civilization in California . . . . .	23
Accomplices Not Allies: Abolishing the Ally Industrial Complex . . . . .	26
Accomplices Not Allies . . . . .	26
Salvation aka Missionary Work & Self Therapy . . . . .	27
Exploitation & Co-optation . . . . .	27
Self proclaiming/confessional Allies . . . . .	28
Parachuters . . . . .	28
Academics, & Intellectuals . . . . .	28
Gatekeepers . . . . .	28
Navigators & Floaters . . . . .	29
Acts of Resignation . . . . .	29
Suggestions for some ways forward for anti-colonial accomplices: . . . . .	30
If you are wondering whether to get involved with or to support an organization: . . . . .	31
A Few Notes on the Social Machine – by Xander . . . . .	31
The old, and the new – by AJ . . . . .	36
Memories of the ZAD . . . . .	38
On Site . . . . .	39
Timeline of the ZAD . . . . .	42
Transmission from the ZAD de Notre Dame . . . . .	44
Prison News . . . . .	50
Technical Authority: Ideology, the Social Construction of Technology, and Technoc- racy - by Jason Rodgers . . . . .	50
It's All Falling Apart: Dispatches From The End of the World . . . . .	53
The Nameless Raccoon – by aragorn! . . . . .	56
Blank 8 – by Noah Bernes, age 11 . . . . .	56
Chronicle for Black Seed . . . . .	57
The Bear vs. The Mob – by aragorn! . . . . .	62
Wild Interventions . . . . .	63
Meeting At The Dead End: Nihilism, Green Anarchy and the Desire for Immediate Revolt – by Riflebird . . . . .	65
FROM ENSLAVEMENT TO OBLITERATION . . . . .	66
COMMON THREADS . . . . .	66

KNOW-IT-ALLS AND NO-HOPERS . . . . .	67
THE FAILURES OF PRIMITIVISM . . . . .	68
MEETING AT THE DEAD END . . . . .	69

## Welcome to Issue 3

On once woody branches, translucent tendrils and the softest of leaves emerge. Even the most reluctant of trees are budding out. The days are getting longer and some of us can lift our heads a little higher. Despite small signs of life's persistence, something is gnawing at us that we can't ignore.

As the scope of social and biological devastation has broadened, the tactics employed to bring this destruction about have diversified. The margin for creative self-expression has decreased as threats to populations and landbases have expanded, limiting dialogue and action around these issues. The response generated in both mainstream and radical narratives only seems to create a negative symbiosis with the expanding devastation. The call and response between the dominant culture and radical narratives moves us very little. We find ourselves looking for inspiration.

People look for meaning, spirituality, and guidance in a myriad of ways. Some of these attempts are obviously fulfilling, while others are not. Why does it make some of us so uncomfortable when people wholeheartedly try to reconstruct "a European indigeneity?"

Another way people – including some of our anarchist friends – try to make sense of history is through anthropology. It outrages us that people who have been torn from their culture have sometimes had to reconstruct stories, customs, and languages with the superimpositions of academia. Anthropology is a tragic byproduct of capitalist colonialism which we don't want to reproduce here. We want people to tell their own stories because we know objectivity is a farce. In a world where anthropology's truth is a given, we want to make space for something different.

In this issue of Black Seed, Sever's "Childhood, Imagination, and the Forest" discusses the importance of a search for one's own spirituality and talks about what a relationship to a landbase can actually look like. The author writes about the pitfalls of falling back on Pagan traditions, which had their own ties to colonization.

This issue also continues with themes of autonomous, land-based, lived anarchy, stressed by Sever in Black Seed Issue #1's "Land and Freedom," with a section of the paper devoted to the ZAD in France and an interview with Corrina Gould, wherein shares her experiences at the spiritual occupation of Sogorea Te and the differences she sees within indigenous and anarchist approaches to occupations. We will continue discussion on these themes in issues to come.

This project, as we've stated already and will continue to reiterate, is an experiment with time and conversation. We are alarmed that something as basic as conversation is being stripped away. Our relationships are mediated by lit screens and character counts, just the latest tools of domestication, making further demands on our time and removing the wonder that human animals once enjoyed through experience and experimentation.

When we say, time and time again, that this is a conversation, whether you are an anti-civ old timer or you are reading about these ideas for the first time, we are looking for your thoughts on these topics and others close to your heart.

We print our publication twice each year and, while this can result in a stilted dialogue, it's a dialogue worth having. We encourage readers to savor the slowness and contemplation of storytelling, of letting ideas mull over and become new ones over time in the context of face-to-face conversation. And so we carve out a small hole and plant some seeds, dreaming that this experiment may germinate into new ideas, because alone and disconnected, we are lacking.

*Until the leaves fall,*

*-Scealai*

*-Cedar Leighlais*  
*-Aragorn!*  
*-Pietje*  
*Zdereva Itvaryn*  
*-Madrone*

## **Childhood, Imagination, and the Forest - by Sever**

One summer when I was about thirteen, I decided to live for a week in the forest near my house. I had read up on edible plants, but pretty early on I took on raiding my father's garden. In retrospect, I suppose my experiment in rewilding was a perfect success, since raiding the garden is exactly what the deer and gophers did.

I spent a large part of my childhood in that forest. I watched it assailed by progress. My family was among the first wave of profaners. Every year a new parcel of farm, orchard, or woodland would be converted into ugly, poorly made houses. The very ground was scooped up by bulldozers, contoured to fit the look the subdivision's developers were projecting.

I noticed the effect on the creek I always played in, wading miles upstream in the summer, walking dangerously on a cracking sheet of ice in the winter, crossing fallen logs, catching crayfish, giving chase to the deer since they didn't have any wolves to run after them anymore. The more woods were replaced by subdivisions, the worse the floods became, swelling the creek, brown and gorged, washing away its banks year after year. An island I once could leap to, gone, ancient tulip poplars that towered overhead, undermined and knocked down, the rocky bank where I let my pet garter snake go when I realized it wasn't happy, silted over. An old railroad bridge where years later I learned they had executed an abolitionist preacher and a black militia man had been wounded and escaped, swept away.

My forest, though, the greater part of it, remained, protected by some law or another. In most places it was a long strip, just wide enough that I could ignore the houses on either side, walking from cliff to marsh to pine hill without ever coming in sight of what I recognized for civilization. And the length of it... I never got to the end. On some summer expeditions I would go for hours, albeit at a snail's pace perhaps, until I reached some glade that I imagined humans had never set foot in before. Only later would I learn to distinguish first or second generation forests from old growth. In the meantime, how perplexed I would become on discovering a rusted length of barbed wire or an old junker in the midst of what I was sure was pristine forest.

The wild is often characterized as pristine. One element of the myth of the pristine is changelessness. In books, the intellectually rigorous will mention how nature is always changing, how even when it finds stability it cycles. They write the same thing about acephalous societies that are not properly "historical" in the Marxist sense. I had read these texts and understood them, but the idea was meaningless, or at least unactualized, until I took in all the intimate changes in one particular forest over a span of decades.

The concept of pristinity conveys a certain fragility. Wilderness is not wild unless it is untouched. I see it reflected in the tendency of post-modernists not to talk about freedom, to read any kind of influence as a form of corruption and thus a circumvention of liberty. So close, yet so far, they have deconstructed the self, and found liberty meaningless because they still use the rationalist, Enlightenment concept, based on sovereignty, a naturally endowed lord over his do-

main. Another kind of freedom dwells in the world where the self only exists through its relations, and the freedom of one does not end but begins with the freedom of another.

I find another echo of pristinity in the thinking of the primitivists, who believe that freedom and wilderness ended with one invention or another. It also stalks the thinking of the back-to-the-landers, who think that nature does not exist in the cities, nor capitalism in the countryside.

My bedraggled, polluted, eroded, young, bounded little forest saved my life. While my year-mates were learning about how to be popular, dress well, and play football, I was learning about life. This whole horrible farce never would have been worth it for me without that. And the wilderness that taught me had probably grown up in the space of a mere seventy years, since the Depression I reckon, on what had previously been farmland, clearcut by the English at least two hundred years before.

The wild is everywhere, ceaselessly pushing back. The only thing it needs from us are cracks. In the city, in the countryside, all of it impoverished by centuries or millennia of progress, wildness and freedom are active forces. Those who say there is no outside to capitalism never talk about crab grass or sparrows. They are almost right, there is one tiny, infinite thing they forget, and it is the most important thing of all.

The purpose of anarchists is to destroy. We don't even need to destroy all of it. Confounded by words, we will have a hard time figuring out what exactly is meant by all of it. We only need to destroy enough of it, make enough cracks that sunlight and rain filter down to whatever poor dust is left beneath, enough so that the machine can't reassemble itself, and nature will do the rest.

If we still wish to live after all this horror, we can also worry about cultivating what grows back, the way beavers or even deer shape their habitat. We can do that as gardeners, as humans, and beings who choose to live. The anarchist tradition also suggests a passel of marvelous future worlds, each of which are worth talking about it. But anarchism is the bastard child of civilization, the umbilical cord hanging ragged, another purpose in mind for the dagger clenched between its teeth. Anarchism's destiny is to murder a certain future. To be tasked with destroying and replacing would convey an awful lot of power, even to a vocation that foreswears power.

Games of imagination came naturally, unbidden, while I wandered in the forest. The other kids played video games, and while I never kept myself entirely pure from this pursuit, I quickly noticed an inverse relationship between imagination and the consumption of imaginary worlds. I always preferred computer games to video games, the more open-ended the better, and especially those that allowed character development and the exploration of other universes. Nonetheless, they had a numbing effect. I found that with just a stick, and perhaps a friend or two, in the woods I could accomplish so much more, and afterwards I felt exhilarated, alive, kept up at night thinking about what adventures the next day would bring.

One of the greatest blocks of cement that we anarchists must crack is that which has been poured over the faculty of the imagination, with more being poured every day. People who cannot imagine other worlds are dead. They are zombies, they will never be revolutionaries. Anarchists who cannot imagine other worlds might as well roll over and rot. All of their words are moribund, fetid things. The nihilists who willfully confuse the drafting of blueprints with the exploration of imagined futures have to resort to pyrotechnics to cover up their fundamental frailty.

And while everyone had their own method of surviving repression, I find that imagining other worlds can disrupt the hegemony of this one. When I face a line of riot cops, sometimes I have to laugh, because what I see are corpses. I love the politicians in their pretty suits, because those

are the same suits they are wearing as they are forced at gunpoint to clean up Superfund sites. And when I'm sad about friends in prison, I look out my window and see gardens where roads had been, and I know our fight is worth it.

The anarchist imagination has a lot to offer. But imagination rooted to place is even more potent, more alive. All the games I ever played in my forests are there waiting for me. And all the people who live in a place, though they do not dare to be anarchists, can imagine changes in their surroundings that could never be born from an ideology, and that the cleverest of all the anarchists would never think up, unless she were also from that place. One of the contributions of an anti-colonial, anti-rational anarchism is the importance it gives to the particular, against abstract schemes and universalities. There can be some benefit in anarchists debating levels of technology, one vision of the world versus another, but only if they realize that all they are doing is playing a game. For the winner of that debate to impose its vision on the world would be the cruelest violence. It is a million specific places that human communities must relate to, each of them different. Freedom will triumph when everyone actively imagines their own surroundings, and remakes themselves within the specific place that holds them up.

The forest also calls on our spirits to exult and express themselves, against the confines of a world that is rational and materialist, both in its dominant expressions and in the theories of its dissidents. Clumsily, like a baby first learning to swing its chubby fist, I began to pray in my forest. I would light candles, meditate, and feel the other living beings around me. Completely lacking guidance, I didn't know anything about Daoism, Wicca, and Native American spirituality. I didn't know anything about cultural appropriation (I think I still don't), but the books on European paganism seemed the most appropriate to me. (And being on stolen land, "appropriate" is not the word I would use today).

I am reminded of the recent controversy in the Pacific Northwest, with a couple of Green Scare prisoners and their immediate circles dabbling in Norse neo-paganism and its attendant, crossover white supremacist iconography.

It's curious how some white people look to Scandinavian pagans for a link to authentic, eco-centric European traditions. I could claim a line to that myself, if I wanted. Some of my ancestors were Vikings who became farmers. When I was a teenager I carved my own set of runestones and laid them in my little forest shrine. Since then it had occurred to me that what's most interesting about the Norse is not their funny alphabet or their Prometheus-Christ god hanging from a yew tree, but all the ways they became what I hate most about this world. Why lie and see them as pure earth children when their brand of paganism made them so susceptible to statism and ecocide?

Nowadays, I cherish my ancestors for all their ugliness, their mistakes, their horrors. I cherish my ancestors for their puritanism, their involvement in genocide, the KKK, in clear-cutting one continent and then another. I cherish these things I hate, because this is all they gave me, and if it does not serve as a positive compass, it serves as a map of a minefield, warning me of a hundred possible missteps.

Why would so many white children, who in general despise their parents and ignore their grandparents, want to emulate their ancestors? Trauma is always the first hand-me-down, and I'm pretty damn sure our shit did not start with the Industrial Revolution.

The European pagans, at least those who populated or neighbored the Roman Empire, cut down their forests and created many more states than they overthrew. Turning to them might be better than mining the remains of colonized societies to manufacture spiritual models, if those

were the only two options, but the truth is, there already is an unbroken spiritual connection between the ancestors of the West, and its forlorn modern children, and it isn't to be found in any book, for it's writ large across the world. Our heritage is ecocide, patriarchy, monotheism, the State, alienation, along with a hundred half-forgotten stories of rebellion against these forces.

I understand the need for authenticity, but everyone who feels it should understand it as a red flag, warning us away from the inherent artificiality of a search for the authentic.

The recent anarchist children's story, *The Witch's Child*, provides a sort of negative history of the West. Instead of proletariat and bourgeoisie, the classes it posits are the uprooted and the rootless ones, which I read as colonized peoples fighting to reassert their way of life, and people who have been colonized so completely and so long ago that even the memory of it has been obliterated. This last category certainly includes me and most people I know. We have no remaining spirituality, only the need for it.

It occurs to me that most comrades who attempt to fulfill this need fall into some rationalist assumptions about self and victory, namely that a person is simply one body and one lifetime. In fact each of us is the nexus of a million beings and the inheritor of a thousand generations, whose lives will play out in many lifetimes to come. What kind of idiot would think that life ends with brain death? It would take years of education to make a person so ignorant.

Facing the problem of spirituality, all of us rootless ones assume that we must and we can come up with a solution in a single generation, in a single body. But how could that be? If an old growth forest, by definition, cannot spring up in a single generation, how could a single generation in a human community create a healthy, earth-centered spirituality?

I don't trust people – at least not white people or westernized people – who talk about spirituality. I think that's a healthy impulse. Perhaps those of us who are starting, not from scratch but from the misery that our ancestors left us, shouldn't ever talk in public about spirituality, nor shamelessly make collective rites. Maybe we should feel ashamed of our spirituality, and only talk about it in whispers. Maybe it's not strong enough to come out into the open yet. Perhaps we should only attempt the most timid of steps forward, trusting that if we suggest a vague outline, the next generation will be able to fill in some darker shades, to talk about their nascent spirituality a little louder, and on and on until eventually we have something robust that can be passed on with confidence.

I might talk about the times the deer woke me up in the middle of the night, snorting and stamping at me as I lay in my sleeping bag, or the night I felt the contours of the land for a half a mile in every direction as an extension of my own body, as I listened to gust upon gust of a powerful wind rush over the pond, past the cliff, through the marsh, up the hill, and then suddenly crash all around me, rocking the trees back and forth then leaving us in silence until the next gust. But I am not good at talking about those things. They were very private moments.

I know that many of my friends have moments like that too, that they have never shared with me. I also know that when I'm holding a friend's baby or taking care of a toddler, there is no limit to the stories I can tell or the songs I can sing. It's funny the way adults will talk about magic with children but with no one else. They're not simply taking advantage of the youngster's gullibility to tell a tale no one else would listen to. What's actually happening is they are confiding in these children a part of themselves that they need to exist, but don't have the confidence to nurture on their own. The cycle becomes endless when we are taught never to learn from what children do best.



This time around, we can do it differently. We can tell our secrets to our children, tell them about magic and spirits, share in the private knowledge of the other worlds that so many people are ignorant of, and as they grow, have their backs rather than beating them down, honor their wisdom and lend them our confidence, so as they grow, they might trust their experiences, and speak a little louder, dare to go places where we could not tread.

## **Don't Worry, You Can Sleep at Night ... and being able to sleep functions as a symptom of a greater problem – by Hunter H**

No longer do the ideological extremes function as the ultimate threat to our livelihoods, yet many within the so-called anarchist milieu (or other radical-leftist currents) remain focused on defending themselves from such extremes as central tenets of their praxis. How do we prevent ourselves from structuring ourselves as scarecrows – mere shells of humans existing only as a response to a threat, perched in place against crows, against the Other?

Certainly, fascism (an ambiguously used and degraded term) is horrible, along with nationalism in its many forms (racialized forms of nationalism, cultural Marxism, glorification of the nation-state, etc.), but this distaste for fascism is not popularly contested. In our post-Cold War era, political extremism and ultra-nationalism lack the ideological traction they once held, with the neoliberal politics of globalization guiding the nature of capitalist relations. The rhetoric of anti-fascism is not all explicitly anarchist and has served as fodder for the mobilization of countless ideologies, be it the justification of the Atomic Bomb in Japan or the creation of the Berlin Wall (which was officially referred to as the “Antifaschistischer Schutzwall” or the “Anti-Fascist Protection Rampart”).

European anti-fascist demonstrations draw out supporters by the thousands, but serve as no attack on any actual forces of power. Rather, these demonstrations merely vocalize a popular moral position while glorifying the dominate structure in place that stands in contrast to the dark centers of extremism, fascist or otherwise. Witness the freedom of the anti-fascist demonstrators to exercise their rights to protest, a true victory! But the victory goes to the interests of the state and capitalist enterprises, which understand the value of concessions towards public interest for the sake of self-preservation. Power in the 21st century is articulated more effectively through pacification and social control than through explicitly violent brute force. Rights, equality, and freedom are synonymous with assimilation into global markets and legal recognition by the state. The momentary material gains promoted by civil rights are delivered as a Trojan Horse, with pacification emerging from its bowels... What is to be done?

There are so many activists, radicals, militants, guerrillas, revolutionaries, entrepreneurs, politicians, businessmen, philanthropists, scientists, strategists, and other experts who know the answers – who know which crops to plant and how much water to add – and yet their crops continue to fail, season after season. If action is better than passivity, it hasn't worked so far, and all we have to show for it are more and more farms of failed ideology; progress stacked upon progress, leaving the land overworked and barren, our planet destroyed, and ourselves socially and culturally bankrupt.

This is the logic of revolutionary optimism (or dogmatism), a logic that says that any push is a push in the right direction, even as the knot of industrial civilization and post-modernity tightens and tangles in the same direction. The decomposition of civilization into endless frag-

ments is accelerating as each gesture that opens up the possibility of change in turn opens up the range of civilization's dominion as it acquires new avenues for growth and expansion. Nihilism acknowledges that draining puss from an infected blister leads to a good chance of worsening the infection, and that there is no sterile incision that can be made into the flesh of the catastrophe that is post-modern civilization<sup>1</sup>. The screw of progress tightens and deepens into the depths of the future, with the torque of neoliberalism stripping away at its head.

## Revolutionary In-Crowd

Politically active so-called revolutionaries, social anarchists, militants-taking-action, and other optimistic political actors frown upon what they call hipster nihilism. The hipster is an exemplary case of the Other in the context of idealized post-modern commodity relations, subsumed to the construction of an identity-via-commodity relationship to the ownership of goods. A hipster's defining characteristic is their relationship to aesthetics as determined by popular capitalist production, in that they are seemingly hop or up-to-date with their fashion and clothing. Their taste for aesthetics is molded by ideological precedents laid forth by clothing manufacturers and marketers founded on the concept that clothing and the ownership of other consumer goods composes one's personal identity.

Unfortunately, this dynamic is a two-way street, and gives progressive or radical-minded individuals the notion that negating popular aesthetics somehow leads to a more genuine form of fashion or self-expression. While a variety of aesthetic tastes certainly sounds more interesting, there is nothing that inherently removes counter-cultural variations of aesthetic preferences from their ideological roots (e.g. believing that dressing differently makes me different; that dressing like a crust punk makes me not a yuppie; that utilitarian aesthetics represent the true modern subject of the working class, etc.).

Those who mockingly shrug off alleged hipsters as lacking authenticity continue to exist, live, and dress themselves in the context of post-modern global capitalism, putting their superficially chosen pants on one leg at a time, just like the rest of us. Both conformity and non-conformity serve different gods of ideology, and capitalist production not only benefits, but thrives from the ebb and flow of both. There is no revolutionary cotton-polyfiber blend of fabric, no proper way to wear a black beret as an armed urban guerrilla. Nothing you can wear that will bring you closer to some mythical state of righteous commodity relations within the context of the world we exist in today, or for any foreseeable future. "Breaking out of the box" only means creating new markets for profitable expansion.

Abstention from commodity relations (veganism, dumpster diving, D.I.Y. movements) have no devastating effect on the targeted economic growth (and the subsequent economic devastation) – yet such trends are firmly entrenched in dictating group morality within the radical milieu, often serving no purpose beyond the social buffer of initiating new members into the group setting. Group stature is revoked upon the dismissal of group ideology. Breaking vegan within an anarchist scene? Betrayal towards the movement! But no one can explain why consumer politics are essential to the anarchist project or how creating or supporting alternative, "agreeable" markets is more ethical within the scope of anarchist thought. The overwhelming influence of leftist and often liberal ethics – which say that positive change can take place in the form of endless reform, awareness, consciousness, and righteousness – pervades the self-proclaimed anarchist scene but does not escape the realm of neoliberalism, which utilizes the implementation of reform and "im-

proved” comfort of the masses as a weapon with which to maintain the power of state-commerce and social control.

What may have begun as counter-cultural trends have been recuperated and sold back to the next line of willing consumers looking to further devoid the aesthetic qualities that the trends were promoting of meaning, leaving any sort of “punk” or “queer” aesthetics to be just as economically subversive as a fashionable Abercrombie & Fitch wearing “yuppie.” Recuperation is the process of decomposition that begins with the ’77 style punk-rocker and streamlines it into stores like Hot Topic; that turns rioting into a glamorous subject of mainstream music videos. Every notion of change and progress is prey to state or capitalist forms of recuperation, be it sex, drugs, violence, anarchy as ideology, images of AK-47s, or rock & roll. Anti-capitalist and even former anti-state politics are targeted for recuperation by the state, which makes the necessary reforms and concessions, tightening and re-arranging the framework of civilization while greasing the gears of progress ad infinitum.

The “hipster nihilist” vs. the “genuine militant” dichotomy parallels the “fashionable hipster” vs. “ethical consumer” dynamic in that the latter in both cases claims to be ideologically superior to the former. The hipster modifier implies an inauthentic position, apparently derived from the notion that nihilists aren’t organizing or taking revolutionary action and are therefore only interested in the social acceptance provided by a political orientation within a scene. Thus, the subject of the hipster also carries over to other theory-based or intellectually-driven (as opposed to action-oriented) milieus (e.g. hipster Marxism).

But the hipster modifier also highlights a prominent misconception about the nature of current themes within nihilist thought – specifically of the distinction between passive and active nihilism. The proto-typical hipster would fall into the former category, a willing passenger in the rollercoaster of history, unaware that they are buckled tightly to their seat. The active nihilist is on the same ride, but is aware of the straps and buckles, can see the gears and wheels, and braces for the blind turns accordingly. Alejandro de Acosta describes:

*...the difference between active nihilism and passive nihilism as an awareness. I do think that awareness matters in terms of how one might live beyond resentment and beyond the spectacle of society.* (216. The Impossible, Patience. History as Decomposition).

Active nihilism serves as a microscope to analyze claims of truth, severing ideological claims from their alleged metaphysical roots and exposing their folly.

There is a prominent current within the anarchist milieu, where one gets the sense that everyone has a plan. They know which action will bring forth the one true revolution, the Good and Right thing to do. In a formally structured socio-political environment that functions within the vacuum of causality, where one could coordinate and execute a strategic plan for political action towards some sort of global revolutionary framework (e.g. Marxist fields of thought), precise, persistent, and calculated action indeed seems to be the ethically responsible position. Indeed, if there was an end to the rope that could be pulled to untie us from this mess, most would likely pull it. But the knot only tightens.

Ideological disputes against fascism and nationalism aside, the strategy and tactics implemented by contemporary anti-fascist movements are mostly reduced to spectacular displays of territorial control – which is to say they aren’t seeking to destroy the idea of fascism as much as they are creating a uniform ideological space within the milieu. Any visible trace of fascist elements must be erased from common sight, steering them further into the extremes of the political spectrum and fundamentalist ideologies. The realm of extreme difference thrives from this

interplay between the pro- and anti- forces, with nationalist and fascist-oriented political actors thriving from the necessary existence of the radical Other- the Other which justifies the very basis of their political agenda!

Anti-fascist groups, in the wake and tradition of post-WWII Germany, insist on the cultural censorship of fascist elements, insisting on a purity of ideas and aesthetics. This conservation of “problematic” concepts and imagery upholds the essence of the ideological source behind the imagery, which would otherwise lose its metaphysical power to time and the decomposition of its idealized forms. Musicians and artists that satirize or evoke Third Reich imagery are labeled as neo- or crypto-fascist, despite any actual political adherence to or support of fascist ideals – only blatant satire and formal critiques are deemed acceptable.

This maintenance of pristine imagery and ideology is more than fine for the professed practitioners or believers in the far-right. Ultranationalist street gangs cheer upon stumbling into anti-fascist groups to rumble with, with street gang politics providing a great way to perpetuate the platform of each group ad infinitum. Parallel to the moral War on Terror, the struggle for supreme ideology is self-replicating; with sides battling for righteousness eternally as ground troops (e.g. U.S. Military, ISIS, Anti-fa members, or racist skinheads) toss themselves into the meat grinder of war. This is the tainted hamburger meat of the political, which causes the anti-political stomach of the nihilist to wretch in distaste.

Nihilism should not be mistaken for apathy, lack of interest or ethics, or as some simple or shallow perspective disconnected from reality. It is a question, a different way of understanding, reacting to, and situating ourselves within or against our times. Against ideology, against the flow of history, and against civilization!

## **An Interview with Corrina Gould: On Disappearing to Survive – by A!**

*Corrina Gould is a Chochenyo and Karkin Ohlone woman, born and raised in Oakland, CA- or the ancient village of Huichin. She works at a drug and alcohol program for Native women and children, she and her close friend Johnella LaRose started the Shellmound Walk and the yearly Shellmound protest that happens at the Emeryville mall on Black Friday. Here, she talks about the history of indigenous people in the bay area, the shellmounds, and the spiritual occupation at Sogorea Te.*

**Aragorn! (A!):** Can you talk a little about why you thought about doing the shellmound walk, the history of shellmounds in the bay area, and focus more on people finding them and celebrating them (instead of just paving over them).

**Corrina:** Yeah, there are over 425 of them that ring the entire bay area, wherever fresh water meets salt water; they’re these huge mounds, and there are always burials inside of them. Folks have to have fresh water. And our ancestors ate lots of fish, lots of clams... This is why they’re called shellmounds, because when archeologists came from other places they called these mounds “midden.” In Europe, midden means a dunghill or garbage heap, right? But then they realized that they were all burial sites. So, since they were known as midden already, people were like “So, you just throw your ancestors in the trash?”

It’s asinine... These are all spiritual places. People were buried, and then layers of shell would be put over them, to keep them safe of course, because there were large animals in the bay area, you know, grizzly bears lived here. These were places where people came together to have ceremony,

people lived on our shellmounds, they were vantage points because people could see, and send signals to each other across the bay. They were needed for survival.

A!: How tall were they, and was the land around them usually cleared?

C: The one in Emeryville was one of five; they fingered out (like your hand). The one in the middle is central, and then smaller ones radiate out around it. The one at Emeryville was three stories high. You can imagine, that's pretty tall. And it was three football fields in diameter. So you can get a visual, kind of, right? That was the largest of all of them. The oldest one was the one in Berkeley. That was around 4th Street, by Spenger's parking lot, under the railroad tracks and under Truitt and White hardware store, that's the oldest according to their carbon dating. But Strawberry Creek, which we can't see at all, is under there and went right into the bay.

What we found was the issue of how to talk about these things in the bay area when one, even Ohlone people amongst Indian people, were nonexistent really, which happened because of the relocation laws. The Relocation Act was in the 50s and 60s, I'm not sure of the exact date... Their rationale was to take Native people out of the reservations because there was so much poverty, which of course was true, right? But there also their desire to get the Indians off the reservations so that the U.S. government could go into the reservation and use the resources that were there.

The whole assimilation process was really building on the idea of wiping out Native people in America. Which is why the 1978 Longest Walk happened, because there were bills that were going through Congress that were going to allow the US to say that American Indians no longer existed.

A!: It's interesting to think in these terms of... where was the intentional genocide, and where was the unconscious motivation of genocide. I'm comfortable using the word, because I feel like... whatever, I don't think it's too harsh of a word.

C: I don't think so either.

A!: I think a lot of people feel nervous about... 'oh, it just happened'.

C: Well, it's "progress." It's "just how things are." The interesting thing is that California Indians are talking a lot about genocide right now because Junipero Serra is about to be canonized. What does that look like? We talk about the mass genocide of California Indians that happened with their first colonizers. And I think that's one thing, that folks in the bay area don't realize the history of where they're at. That was one of the main reasons that we really needed to do the shellmound walk, because so much is invisible here. So I started talking about even Indian people not even knowing that Ohlone people still existed in the bay area, right? And you can't blame them, nobody knew that, right? And even then it was really scary for Ohlone people to come out.

A!: And we could think of the missions as city states?

C: There were 21 of them, started in 1767 and lasted 98 years, starting from the bottom of California to San Rafael. My ancestors were enslaved in Mission Dolores in San Francisco, and Mission San Jose in Fremont. So Junipero Serra started the first nine missions with one of the first being Mission Dolores in SF. And, of course, his idea was to conquer the Indians, to use them as slave labor, and to kill them if they didn't cooperate and become Catholic... to civilize, but it was really about having free slave labor to create these missions and to look at the land in a different way.

It's still true that Native people look at land in a different way from non-Native people. Folks look at land and say, "look, there's all these thousands of acres and the Indians aren't using it, so they don't need it." While the Indians have been tending to the land for thousands of years,

harvesting in ways that they can get their basket shoots straight, burning stuff off so that the vegetation that they ate came back in a good way, ways that they brought animals in to the land so that it's not destroyed, and how they take care of the acorns and the fish in the area, so there was a natural process of care-taking the land, tenuring the land.

When other people got here they said, "There's all this land and there's so much rich soil," ('cause the natives had been tending it) "that we could put all these orchards up." And that 's exactly what happened; they put these orchards up and kept pigs and goats and all these animals that we know as food. And giving those foods to my ancestors made them sick, as anybody eating food that they're not used to will get sick, so they got sick and died. The animals came with diseases that folks here had never seen.

A!: If you were going to talk about the stages of genocide of California natives, how would you do that? Was there a stage prior to the founding of the missions? perhaps with the initial contact with whites?

C: So Native people were free to go after the missions closed, right? And the state of Mexico was here for a while, right. What was supposed to happen was that Native people could apply for land tracts for land that used to be theirs. The problem was that folks were illiterate.

A!: Not to mention the traditional world view about land.

C: Right. so how would they have done it? they didn't think about it like that for one, and two, so they're posting stuff up with words on it, so what do the words mean? It means nothing, and who's gonna tell you that it does mean something? "Well, none of these Indians came forward and got this land that they could've gotten, so..." So, Mexico had it.

Then there was the Treaty of Guadalupe, where Indians were supposed to get land back, but that didn't happen. Then the state of California was created and the state of California created laws specifically for genocide, for example a law stating basically that it was illegal to be Indian: that any white man could take you to a court of law and say that you were vagrant, and say that they would take care of your food and your clothing for the next 40 years, if they could use you for work, and the court would find in favor of that. They could take people's kids away.

This is in to the 20th century. They could take your children and say they were orphans. And they could shoot you, as the parent, to make the children orphans. You didn't have any rights because you couldn't say anything in a court of law if you were not white. So children were taken from their parent(s) and sold into indentured servitude. People were hunted down because the state of California paid over a million dollars for the scalps, heads, and ears of Native american people.

A!: This is after Mexico.

C: Yeah, after Mexico. So this is Gold Rush era. Everybody flooded into the state, and of course there's not enough gold to go around, but on the weekends, there'd be these black sundays, people would get on their horses, shoot a couple of Indians, have some money to get through so they could continue panning for gold. So it was all of these things that created the genocide of Natives in California.

A!: Sounds like you're now talking about Natives who would've lived closer to the Sierras, while obviously San Francisco and the bay were already a different environment, with cities, etc. But also it is where the missions were.

C: Right. Yeah, there weren't missions up there, they were all on the coast. It was still illegal to be Indian, even though you were in San Francisco or Oakland, so people could still kill you and get a bounty... this was the case anywhere in the state of California. They were trying to exterminate

the Indian. There was no reason to have us here; we were an inferior race. They called us diggers, here. We were not even human. Not even just in the state of California, in the US, Indians did not get citizenship until 1924. So my great grandparents were not even born with citizenship. It wasn't until 1978 that we had our own right to religion. So all of this forbidden stuff had to go underground. My particular family survived all of those ways of genocide by pretending to be Mexican. They worked on a ranch in Pleasanton, and survived. But the interesting thing is that they all intermarried with other Ohlones and other mission Indians who were close by.

A!: There was still some language.

C: There was still language. My great grandfather was one of the last speakers of Chochenyo language. This crazy... JP Harrington, and he was absolutely nuts. (I think the ancestors had something to do with it.) But he went... not just California languages but all these languages in Mexico, he'd seen all these languages disappearing and he just went and wrote notes and had people talking to wax cylinders and recorded them and got all of this information and that's how we're bringing our language back. Because he did that with my great grandfather. It's really amazing that those things happened. Nels Nelson, who worked in Berkeley in 1909 knew then, over a hundred years ago, that all these shellmounds were going to be desecrated or removed, and he made a map of them, over a hundred years ago, and that's what we used for the shellmound walks. It's not just Ohlone people who were invisibilized, all Native people were invisibilized in the bay area for a while, even after Alcatraz and stuff. They kind of went away, you know?

A!: Yeah. And the problem with Alcatraz is that it's sensationalism: it's not "Natives exist in daily life" it's "Natives exist in a circus."

C: Right. I agree with that. So we decided that was important after Emeryville was such a debacle...

A!: That mall that opened in 2003?

C: 2002, I think. We decided to protest it. So we protest it every year...

So we walked all the shellmounds that we could find, superimposing our bay area map on Nels Nelson's map and trying to figure out roadways and reading old newspapers that had stories about when ancestors were pulled out. We just figured out where they were, and we stopped and prayed at these places that were under buildings, under railway tracks, under bars, under schools, under all this stuff. And one of our main reasons was that if we didn't recognize the ancestors from this land, we couldn't do the work to be recognized. People work for recognition in different ways...

A!: For the audience, you're talking about federal recognition of your tribe, and the complicated process, and the value of that recognition, pro and con.

C: Right. There are folks that work on federal recognition and I think it's a farce. It was set up in a way that has never been for Indians or about Indians, it's about preventing us from being recognized.

A!: It's about genocide. Why don't you talk about Sogorea Te. Since you're talking about the end of the chapter of the walks, and there were a bunch of other things too...

C: In 2011, after twelve and a half years, we've been going and helping Wounded Knee, SPIRIT, that's the group that worked to get the city of Vallejo and the Vallejo Restoration District not to build a park there. It's 15 acres of open land on the Carquinez Strait. It's the last 15 acres right there in Vallejo that's open land, and folks have been going to city council meetings—the city council is actually separate from their park district; their park district holds a lease on the land and are the caretakers.

So, we had to go through their board, and their board was super racist, and didn't want to hear anything about holding on to that piece of land and leaving it as open space. There was an old abandoned house that was on top of it before, it would be overgrown all the time, there was a little creek that ran through it, and fishermen would fish there regularly, and people walked their dogs there. It was just open space and no one basically went there and there was a big huge housing development that was butted right up against it and actually a lot of the cremations had been removed when they built that development, and put onto Sogorea Te space, right? So, twelve and a half years going to board meetings, impact report meetings, having letter writing campaigns, all of that to have them say "we're gonna do it anyway." At that time the city of Vallejo was going bankrupt, people can look that up. So, they decided in all their wisdom to give the Greater Vallejo Park District \$40,000 in free permitting to go ahead with the park.

We decided there was nothing else we could do. On April 14, 2011, we called folks up to go up there and hold it down. We figured we'd be there for a weekend, we ended up being there 109 days. We set up camp, we set up a sacred fire first of all. That was the first thing we did. And Fred Short was the one who put that together for us, he got the sacred fire going, and it stayed burning for 109 days. That was one of the biggest fights.

A!: So I've heard you speak about this as prefiguring the Occupy moment, especially as figuring out how a big pile of people shares a small space that is not where they normally live, so can you talk about some of the decision making, and some of the ways it mirrored and didn't mirror Occupy, which happened later that same year.

C: Yeah, we actually came and welcomed Occupy that first day [in Oakland]. Sogorea Te, for a lot of the people who were there, was a spiritual awakening, and also caused a lot of post traumatic stress. I think at some point we need to get all together, because there's pieces of the experience that are missing somewhere. I forget a lot of stuff. But, there was a group of eight of us, four Native and four non-native people, that got together to figure out things like how we were going to deal with the media, how we were going to do messaging, how we were going to deal with the police when they got there, who the security was gonna be, who was gonna be in charge of food, etc.

Each of us took our own place, but as we noticed people coming in to the land, the one thing that was centralized was the sacred fire and people who had never been there were greeted (by security or people there from the beginning) to tell them that when they walked in there they were walking on sacred land, and to come in a respectful way, and that if they wanted to stay there they could. And then they were told that we didn't care what religion they were, but whatever they believed in, to say a prayer to whatever it was, and to put tobacco on that fire to help to keep this strength. The fire was a central place for having conversations with the entire group that lived there at the time, it helped focus us when the police came, everyone gathered around (children and women inside, men outside, security outside of that)... it was the central place we would meet when anything happened.

It was our place of spirituality, we would stand there in the morning and pray before we ate breakfast to welcome in our ancestors. There were ceremonies there; people from all over California, different tribes, people from the Pacific, came and brought ceremony there. It became an ongoing spiritual ceremony, we knew that there was something else besides us. So it took a lot of ego out of stuff, by doing it that way. Also we kept the space. There was no cussing when you were around the fire. No alcohol or drugs of any kind on the premises at any time. It was set up that way and everyone was in agreement about it.



People ask us how we kept it together, and it was because everyone had the same mind set; we were there to hold down this land for these ancestors, and that's what our lifework was and we didn't have time for that other stuff. So everyone found a place within there. Some people were good at cooking, some people were good at cleaning up trash, some people were good at watching people's kids, some people were good at going and making copies so that we could flyer. Everyone had something they could do that would help the community.

A!: So that's the strength. What were the weaknesses, compared to, in the context of, Occupy.

C: I think those were the strengths of Sogorea Te and the weaknesses of Occupy. I think that there's some amazing things that happened at Occupy... I think the leadership was lacking in a way.

A!: Helps to have a specific mission.

C: Yeah. that helps. I don't know. I traveled to different occuppies, and some of them were just a group of folks hanging out in front of a post office. Some of them were big like Oakland. It was different. I think because... maybe it was because of how Sogorea Te was positioned.

I think the idea of occupy was great. the idea of people coming together and learning how to live together again is an amazing idea and it has to happen again. I think if I was to build up an Occupy in Oakland, not nationwide but in Oakland, then I would ensure that there was representation of all people, in the leadership, and that was not true of the Occupy in Oakland. There was a lot of education, but people were still stuck in their ideas of how things should be.

Sometimes in leadership folks have to make unpopular decisions, and stick by their guns, and sometimes they need to step back and let someone else shine for a while. And I think that is what happened at Sogorea Te. When you're doing something that is so big, you're not on all the time, you just can't do it, so allowing yourself to back up and let someone else take the face, for a while? is good to do. It allows other people's ideas and inventions to come in and you can see different things happen.

A!: So you're using the word "leadership," which is very loaded word for anarchists. Can you talk about it in a way that we can understand what you mean? A leader is not a boss, or a ruler?

C: No, not at all. Although sometimes people in those positions need to make harsh decisions. Let me back this up a little bit. I don't know what Occupy had in place to make sure that everyone stayed safe and people were asked to leave. In the time we were at Sogorea Te, we asked four people to leave. It came from the group of people, and then it came to the leadership group, and then we talked to the people, and then they usually just left, in a quiet way. It wasn't something where people had to be dragged out or anything like that. There were specific reasons for it. I don't know if that happened at Occupy. I think there were some particular protocols that need to be in place when people are living together like that.

That said, for me leadership is not about people appointing themselves as the group head, but someone who follows what needs to be done. And I think whatever community you live in, mainstream or anarchy, there are certain people who make themselves available to regular folks, who have ideas that get grabbed onto by other people and gone with, and I think that's happened with Sogorea Te. We had built relationships with folks, "you've been walking with us for four years, you know the work that we are doing here, you know what Wounded's been doing for twelve and a half years, we're now calling on you to help us." So, folks showed up, and then folks who hadn't met us before showed up, and folks who they knew showed up. So it was like that.

The Native people who were in the group that invited people had been doing the work for so long, people respected them and shared food with them and talked with them and they made

themselves available and showed up at each others' funerals and...we shared a life before. The non-native people who came had been involved in some way in grass roots organizing, and also had some kind of skill to share with folks and were willing to take direction from the Native folks and from women. And vice versa. So a leadership role comes from the people within, not from self-appointment or winning a popularity contest.

A!: I just talked to a friend who is in the bay area purely to go to school here. When he's done with school he's going back to the rez. He's Dineh. It's a little surprising to me that he is associating with the decolonize crowd in Oakland. Decolonize as far as I can tell is has amorphous definition, it's not a clear, coherent, singular kind of thing, but it's become weaponized before it's become coherent. I talk about this moment from Occupy Oakland as sort of a central moment of this diffusion of the term decolonize. In talking to my friend last week, it was striking to me when he said that for him decolonize is the direct spiritual practice of reclaiming this land. Which is a very powerful thing to say, and what I really appreciate about him is that there was no guile. There were no political machinations in what he said. What he said is exactly what he meant, and I almost can't even imagine someone in the bay area saying this and really meaning it, and backing it up in practical terms. Because decolonize is such a political movement, post Occupy. So maybe we can start this by talking about your sense of decolonize prior to the confrontation in 2011 and then since.

C: So, he can say that the way he said it because he comes from a place that is more traditional. So it's not decolonize the way that the bay area looks at things. Where he comes from, it makes total sense to me that he would say that, think that, believe that. For me, I don't think I really thought about decolonize before the whole movement or whatever it is. At that point, I was trying to re-acclimate myself into this world, because when we were at Sogorea Te, when we were left there, it left this huge void in a lot of us...

A!: Did you call it an occupation?

C: It was a spiritual occupation, yeah. We used that terminology. And it being a spiritual occupation made it different from a political one. But I think that—well, ok this is what I know—when people left Sogorea Te they were devastated because they were leaving a community they had built, a family that they created, and they were going back to this world that doesn't care about anything that we care about.

I went back to my kids and I didn't know how to be a mom to them the same way I was a mom before. I couldn't watch tv for six months, or read a book. I couldn't even concentrate... so going back to work full time was just getting through the day. I asked other people if they felt the same thing and they said yes; it was just so difficult to get back in our own bodies and to be in this kind of...I don't know what it is. What society is today. It took a long time to get back.

Then we were asked to be at the Occupy thing, and did the welcoming folks to Occupy. Then pretty soon I started getting emails from folks about hey, we should change the name to decolonize, and I thought "Ok, I can jump on board with that." So what does that mean? I started asking people, well, what does that mean to you? Cause there were a lot of groups, people were having teach-ins about various things including indigenous stuff. I was asked to do one but I was not there in my mind yet, I just couldn't do it, but I started thinking about what does decolonize mean, and I decided that it does mean that people need to be educated about where they are, whose land they're own, and to be adjusted to that place and space in their life. To me that's the first part of decolonizing, is to realize you're not from here. I don't even care if you're another Indian, you're not from here. Folks really need to know that, that America was a creation. It's

not real. So what is reality, and how do you go back to these things... and then it just started to be a joke. After the whole decolonize thing happened in Occupy and screwed up, it was like “decolonize your food,” “decolonize your water,” you know what I mean?

If you start using a word frivolously like that, then it loses its original meaning, and that’s what happened. And I think that happens in the bay area a lot. That people take on the new fad, “let’s decolonize everything...” Like, if you have white privilege then find out about that, own up to it, and do something about it. But it’s not our job to teach you about that.

My friend Johnella says, we can’t teach all these folks about how they need to be in this world. Sometimes they need to figure it out themselves. It’s kind of like teaching your kids, you know? For a while I babied the heck out of my kids. They never knew we were poor, although we were. But then that stunted their growth, going into young adulthood. When people start to ask those questions, it’s because they already have a mindset that something’s wrong in this world. If they start to think about decolonizing, or going to rallies, or reading things about anarchy and different theories, then their mind is already there and they need to have conversations with people and not expect people to have all the answers for them.

When I think about decolonize now, I think it’s about re-educating ourselves about who we are, as human beings, and what our connection is to specific places, and once you figure that out you have the ability to see other human beings as other human beings, and to work together on bigger issues. I always say yes, I have this little tiny group of Ohlones who are left here, and we have this little tiny thing called shellmounds that are mostly paved over, and why should anybody give a shit about this issue when there’s global warming, all of this stuff, right? I always ask that, why should people be interested in this? Because what it comes down to is when we all have people we bury, those spaces should be sacred. When you can’t respect people’s sacredness around their burial sites, then you can’t respect a lot. That’s why I ask people to do the work, or to join me to save these places. If we don’t then after this generation we will be annihilated. We will only be a street sign. [pause] Save an endangered species...me [laughs]

A!: There’s a ton of places I’m tempted to go that are so theoretical and abstract that I don’t want to go there. One thing I do want to ask you about (which I think was one of the strengths of Occupy) was the idea of no demands. Have you heard of this?

C: Remind me.

A!: The concept is that as a way to fight the politicians, who of course will try to take over any movement or any sign of life... You know, there are always these people who predate on that sort of energy, and usually how they leverage it, how they succeed in politicizing these moments, is by nailing down the movement to a set of demands and they become the spokesperson for the demands, they become the most fluent in talking about the demands, and when they win, that becomes the tool belt that they use to justify how necessary they are for future activity along this issue.

So one anarchistic way of dealing with that is to no longer be a movement or a moment to nail itself to demands like “better education, we just want x, y, and z”. That defeated the politicians, but that tactic also allowed Occupy to come through people’s lives, and other than the people who were devastated by it (similar to your experience with Segora Te), for many people Occupy just passed right through their lives. This is sort of the criticism of it, especially when compared to the Civil Rights Movement, we can all point to this wonderful law, that’s you know greatly improved our lives... Civil Rights exist! And we can use it in conversation. But for people who are not fluent in these kinds of conversations, they didn’t come away with much from Occupy.

C: Right. I think people say the same thing about Segora Te, and we had demands. That's interesting. I think that people look at the world in such a materialistic way, that they think there has to be a goal that you can grasp onto, to come away with. That you can say "this law exists because we did this," or "35,000 other people didn't get arrested because we did this." We stopped hunger in America, or at least Oakland, for one day.

I think when you do something with a bigger idea behind it, you have to be ok with saying "I got some kind of awareness, there's some kind of spiritual awareness now, there's some kind of human contact that I had, that now I'm a different person. Because of Occupy, because of Segora Te, when I walk in this world, that walking still makes change, because it impacts the other people in our lives, and we have to continue having that impact on each other's lives. Just like this guy who I visited today, he made an impact on my life. And vice versa, and we talked about that, just by being there and talking to each other. Children who experienced Occupy will be able to talk about that, and there are kids who come every year and say, "Mom, you remember when we slept here, in the teepee... how come our tent's not here anymore, what happened to this place?" and we can continue to tell those stories.

A!: Is there an annual event?

C: There is an annual event, around April 14th, that's the day we began the occupation, so either the weekend before or after. People come from all over the place back there, and people who weren't there now want to come and see what it is.

A!: Can you talk a little about how it fell apart? Because it was a little different from Occupy, it wasn't the cops storming in...

C: Yeah, it wasn't the cops storming in, although we were ready for the cops storming in at any time... but at the end of the day [the city of Vallejo] worked with the Native American Heritage Commission and got the area designated as a tribe that is not from that area's land. And Yocha Dehe, Cache Creek Casino, is the tribe that said that this was their land. We were gonna fight that because we know it's not their land and we decided against that because we know that it's my ancestral land, but coming into it, what Yocha Dehe did was to become a partner with them, with the city and the park district. By creating that partnership the city and park district became owners of the land as well. So it created the first... what's called a cultural easement, within a city and park district and tribal entity. The first one ever created.

So, for \$35,000 (I think), they bought into this, to create this cultural easement, and called us, telling us they were going to take care of it, that they were basically going to follow what we wanted. They were going to make sure that the structure was taken down in such a way that it didn't have any heavy machinery on it where the shellmound was, that they weren't going to grade the hill that had the cremations in it, that there would be no overhead lighting or bathrooms, and that the parking would be down to two spaces for handicapped people. There's hundreds of parking spaces there because we had hundreds of people on that land for many different ceremonies, and none of them ever needed to park on the land. They ended up creating six parking spaces, putting in a water fountain, no overhead lighting and no bathroom, they did put these big cement benches and tables on it and they got rid of the housing structure but they did use heavy machinery on top of the mound without protecting it, they did grade down the area that had the cremations... So they got what they wanted by using other Native people.

A!: So they made a verbal agreement with you, everyone left, and then you discovered...

C: Yes. They made a verbal agreement with us, everything was written down, we looked at it, it basically gave us what we wanted. And it said we had to leave the premises by July 31, which

is why we left on that day. And we figured, because it was a tribal entity, that they would do the right thing, so we were very naïve about that, figuring that Indians weren't going to... So in retrospect we were like, "we could've done this ourselves." We could've created a land trust, and a land trust could've done the exact same thing the tribal entity did, so that's the tool we were missing...

So yeah. I think we had to be there, so we could learn these lessons. So for me, that's what it is. For Occupy, that's what it is... People who were involved in Occupy, did the medic stuff and did the kitchen and all of these crazy, fun, wild ideas, and brought life to themselves and other people, that's what they walk away with. So, in the material world, whatever, maybe it's a loss. Just like Segora Te, which was a loss to some people.

This is what I tell people, it gave us how to be a human being again. And I think that's the same with Occupy. People learned how to be human beings again, and share with each other, oh my gosh, and talk to each other.

A!: There's a thing you brought up earlier that I would love to hear your deeper thoughts on, which is this idea of disappearing to survive. That is a really interesting idea, and I know that other people have experienced this... I'm just curious about your thoughts about what that looks like in this world, where it's so hard for people to be visible at all.

C: I still see it in Indian kids, 'cause I work in the public school district. That it's easier to kind of mask yourself as something else, so that you don't get those questions asked of you. I go around to the schools and track all the Indian kids in the Oakland Unified School District, and sometimes I find one kid in an elementary school. He's the only kid, he's in fourth grade, and they're doing stuff on gold rush and the missions, and he definitely does not want to be asked, "what does it feel like to be Indian?" Even as adults we don't want to be asked those questions by people who...I have no idea why they would ask that. But kids, and teachers, ask that still to this day.

In a city like Oakland, it's easy to just kind of hide and invisibilize yourself so you don't have to do that. A lot of the kids who we work with who are in afterschool programs, are mixed with African-American. So it's much easier to fit in with the crowd, you know? And then when they come to us, and start talking about their traditions, and how their family still goes back for ceremony, there is a different part of them that lights up, and they're able to leave the other folks behind for a while. It's the popular culture that really kills us, you know. I think that's what it is. I think it's hiding to be whole, in some kind of way. My ancestors hid so they wouldn't be killed. Then they hid so they could hold on to our songs 'cause they were against the law until '78. And they hid for their kids to have an easier life—in California it was easier to be Mexican, even, than Indian.

It's my generation that's saying, ok, we don't have to hide anymore. It's ok for us to come out and talk about this stuff, but even with my kids going to elementary school with a bunch of Native kids (it was one of the schools with the largest populations), they still had a hard time in their classroom with their teacher. It's the education system and society as a whole that makes you want to hide, still.

A!: Almost impossible to change it at all unless you change the whole damn thing.

C: Yeah. I often think that. It all needs to change. People need to figure that out sooner than later. So, I'm thankful that my ancestors hid in the way they did. And I'm thankful that whoever the crazy people were in the past, wrote down stuff and left those clues so I could find those things. I think having a voice in today's society allows the next generation to pop up and say, "hey! I've

got something to offer too, and we're still here." I think hiding is a good way to survive; like you say, people do it all over the world. They hide in different kinds of ways. I think sometimes we're just tired of hiding.

A!: So the last question I have for you is one I brought up earlier and you may not have any particular thoughts about it, but... it's the idea of what makes a good ally. Who have been people you've worked with who you've enjoyed working with, and what do you think of the accomplice vs ally, that is sort of the flavor of the month terminology. It's the new decolonize...

C: Yes, the new decolonize... [laughter] I think that... gosh it's hard to say.

A!: To approach it from a different direction: most of this bureaucratic nonsense that you're trying to do, are you mostly doing it with other Natives or are you getting much help from people who are not native? And what have your collaborations looked like. 'Cause it sounds like a lot of what you're doing has Native people as the driving force, but I'm sure that's not entirely true, especially financially.

C: Well, we had a small two-year grant from a foundation to start the land trust. We got one year of funding and don't know if we'll get the second year, which is what I hate about foundation stuff. I've had people who were at Segora Te with us, who provided herbal stuff, supplies, who said that they want to be this next step, this next journey, where we're going with this... Because I think all folks came away wanting that community, loving that community, wanting to be a part of something like that. I haven't utilized folks in a way that probably I should. People have come to me, but I think that...for me, there hasn't been enough conversation to move this forward in a way that I feel comfortable with. Part of me is afraid to do this, what is it gonna look like, how is it gonna change my life...

A!: Are you gonna jeopardize what you have...

C: Yeah...yeah. I guess that's it. Sometimes you get scared when you're trying to do those kinds of things. Folks who are my allies are the ones who have walked with me from the beginning and haven't left, and want to stay and offer help and also know when to back off and let me do what I gotta do. Who bring me information, so I can use that for the work. And are willing to stay on the line with us. And I saw a lot of people who were ready to do that, at Segora Te. I really have a lot of respect for and honor those people.

Accomplices. I don't know. I think of my friend Johnella, who has been there and created IPOC with me, as my accomplice. She is the one that... we dreamed this stuff together. She's gone off to school, but is still working on this landtrust. We live in different places, she lives out in the country mostly and I live out here in the city still but we're still dreaming those ideas together, we both have that relationship with the land, because we're both Native, we're both mothers and grandmothers, and we've gone through all these years of work, doing this stuff and trust each other. For me that's what an accomplice is, somebody who I would lay my life down for, who I trust.

So Johnella, I trusted her before, she was the one who came up with the idea of these walks. I had no idea what a walk was like. I had no idea. I trusted her. We sat down at that little cafe down the street with the maps and wrote it all out, and then drove the things, and it looked like, hey, we could drive this so easy, 18 miles, it's nothing, right? We could do this, no big deal [laughter], but walking every step of that with all these people behind us, really counting on us to have food at the end of the day, counting on a floor to sleep on. That's an accomplice. I appreciate the people who help me sit at the table and be an equal, that's an ally. That's somebody who says, your work is bomb, and people need to hear this, and I want you to share this with other

people... but it's not the same as having someone who does that work with you like that. An accomplice is more rare. I have a cousin, who grew up with me and helped me raise my kids, she's my accomplice in that part of my life. I have a friend who went to all of our events, every single thing, and was kind of like my shadow to make sure nobody messed with me, until her health got bad, she is an accomplice, and we raised our kids together too, so it's like that. So I have those folks. Wounded Knee, who has gone out of his comfort zone on all that kind of stuff and drove all over the world, all over the country, talking to people about Segora Te and why it's important, he's an accomplice. Fred, who lit the fire, and teaches us, someone who prays with my kids in the sweat lodge. I have lots of friends who are not native, and they do great work, and they support us, but on the weekends I don't see 'em. So, there's different kinds of relationships.

A!: Any last thoughts?

C: I do have something. One of the things I really want to talk to people about is coming back to the land in a way that nourishes them, and feel whole again. I was talking to people over the weekend and they were saying, "oh yeah, there's parks in the bay area and stuff" and I said, yeah, but do you know there's kids living in the flatlands of Oakland that never get to the hills of Oakland and never are able to see that, and wouldn't it be nice to have a plot of land in the middle of east oakland bottoms that kids could go to and feel safe in and have ceremony there. People could come and share food. Because people are so stuck in these boxes that are apartments, that have no land attached to them and don't know where they come from, and don't know where they're going. We need to become interdependent again, and that's part of the dream of the land trust, for people to become human again.

## **Collision of Worlds: the pause between wilderness and civilization in California**

This is an introduction or review of the chapter "Collision of Worlds" by M. Kat Anderson, from her book, *Tending the Wild* (2005). Originally published with the chapter, it is available in zine form if you write to [loosedogs@riseup.net](mailto:loosedogs@riseup.net).

*"The white man sure ruined this country. It's turned back to wilderness..."* – James Rust, Southern Sierra Miwok elder

"Viewed retrospectively," writes Max Oelschlaeger, "the idea of wilderness represents a heightened awareness by the agrarian or Neolithic mind, as farming and herding supplanted hunting and gathering, of distinctions between humankind and nature. As understood today is a mélange of competing philosophies, ranging from resource conservation to so-called deep ecology." Wilderness, the wild, therefore names a loss. It names that from which we have actively separated ourselves in order to survive. The indigenous peoples of California did not distinguish between civilized lands and wild lands, as we do. In fact, both "wilderness" and "civilization" are missing from native vocabularies. This is language created by the colonizers and later conservationists. Instead of cultivating distinct tended plots that had been separated out from a wild nature, natives tended the lands around them. They altered those lands, sometimes drastically, so as to generate resources for their use, but never to such an extent that this distinction was produced: the wild, the civilized.

When European colonizers arrived in California, they found what they mistook for a particularly pristine wilderness. Henry David Thoreau saw California as "a foreboding wilderness, a

place to do God's work, a giant unmapped storehouse of wealth, and a place of raw, unspoiled beauty." Euro-American nature enthusiasts wrote beautifully about valley grasslands, thick with wildflowers and wildlife, about dark redwood forests with bearing soil. Their writings, like their inspiration to preserve and control what they found, was misguided. It never occurred to them that the grass they walked on had been annually beaten by baskets constructed in such a way that the seeds they hit fell into the earth instead of being carried away into the wind.

What the Europeans had found was actually a cultivated forest, the product of thousands of years of care by individuals in native tribes: "Through coppicing, pruning, harrowing, sowing, weeding, burning, digging, thinning, and selective harvesting, they encouraged desired characteristics of individual plants, increased populations of useful plants, and altered the structures and compositions of plant communities." Where fire was to be avoided they protected it; where fire was necessary, it roared – including, later on, through the homes of colonizers.

The text, "Collision of Worlds" by M. Kat Anderson, is just one chapter of a much larger book, *Tending the Wild* (2005). It tells the story of colonization, of the renaming and transformation of lands. It is about what happened when one world was imposed on another, altering it in such a way as to destroy the intimacy thus separating and so destroying the natives themselves. See, there was no way to combine the way the two cultures lived. Their daily practices were antithetical to one and other. Californian natives had "an intimacy unmatched by the modern-day wilderness guide, trained field botanist, or applied ecologist," developed through successive generations. They did not only grow food for themselves to eat. They worked with the landscape to harvest enough materials for food, for construction, and so on, while maintaining relationships with plant populations that went beyond production and consumption. They tended the organism, the population, the plant community, and the landscape. Where a surplus was accumulated among them, it was shared. Land that had been used intensely for a time was left to develop from altered states, for decades.

That collecting sites were left untouched for generations was precisely what suggested to colonizers that much of California had never been touched, that these lands were wilderness and therefore available for the taking. Such taking did happen without intense struggle and rebellion. Regardless, a major factor in the vulnerability of this land (and its peoples) was that it had not been permanently claimed by nomination but by tending over long periods of time.

Colonization obliterated the work of thousands of years by tending. Destruction came swiftly. In 1868 the transcontinental railroad was completed – bisecting and connecting the shores. Indigenous people on this land described a barreling noise that started out faint and then grew louder as it came closer. The first time they saw a train they questioned its origin. "Is it of the stars? Or from the afterworld? A monstrous beast of the white man?" The iron rails were a message from a future that was so clumsy and loud it did not know how to whisper.

"Collision of Worlds," as well as the larger work of which it is a part, tells the story of Europeans' destruction of Californian plant communities, as well as of the human communities that lived among them. But it is important to remember that *Tending of the Wild* does not tell the story in order to advocate for a more careful preservation of the California wilderness. Anderson corrects the misconception that there are only two choices: one the one hand, private property, the destruction of the wild in preference for the civilized, and on the other hand, foraging, the preservation of nature as against small tribes who hardly alter the landscape by their activity.

The modern era has overseen and undertaken a long process of separation, which encourages us to see these two extremes as our only choices. We think of ourselves as nature outside of



itself. We distinguish man from nature not only in our words, but in our world: our houses, our national parks, our supermarkets – we re-enact this separation daily. We then rely on this very separation in order to critique our world and our world-destroying ways of life. For, in the face of this enormity (and the constant boredom) that is man’s attempt to subdue nature, it is so tempting to declare oneself a partisan of nature, against man.

How often do we find ourselves pining for a faraway past, in which man was too weak to damage nature? We apply musical concepts of “harmony” or mathematical notions of “equilibrium” to imagine nature as something that remains ever the same, as perfect in itself, in a word, as natural. We forget that nature is also something terrible and cruel, something constantly subduing itself – as the ant subdues the aphid to collect the fruits of its labor, or as the hawk subdues its prey, tearing the nutrient-rich organs from still living and screaming flesh, then shitting them down into the soil that birthed man. Mountains crush their way onto shore and crumble down again. Super volcanos collapse and simmer into meadows. Change is inevitable. And so, man, too, partakes in this beauty and cruelty, as they were found here a part of it, in the organic process of dirt and sun, in the work and leisure of natural life, in the suffering and ceaseless transformation of a world that bears in side within itself no progress, no regress, no moral law. We partake in these things whether we tend the wild, or burn it down to make way for pastureland.

If the ambivalence of nature – of ourselves as nature, absorbed in nature as water is in water – is obscured, it is constantly separated out into good and bad objects, that is no accident. Whether we are wildcrafting for herbal medicine to heal us or fracking for natural resources, the same impulse that sends an anthropologist out to field work to find the “good” native, who lives in harmony with the earth, who uses, as they say, all parts of the animal. The role of anthropology – or as Agamben terms it in *The Open* (2004), the anthropological machine – is to draw and redraw the lines distinguishing us from “nature”.

This machine does not draw lines because it knows what the human is; rather, it is always trying to distinguish what the human is not: to distinguish the liminal figure of the inhuman man or the humanized animal, and thereby preserve man from his own animal nature, to save man from a confrontation with his natural nature. Here is a machine that must be brought to a halt: “To render inoperative the machine that governs our conception of man will therefore mean no longer seeking new – more effective and more “authentic” – articulations, but rather to show the central emptiness, the hiatus that – within man – separates man and animal, and to risk ourselves in this emptiness: the suspension of the suspension, Shabbat of both animal and man.”

What would it mean to risk ourselves in this emptiness, to suspend the suspension – of man and animal, of man and nature – within man? *Tending the Wild* gives us some idea. We may never get a chance to see a world like the one Anderson describes, a world in which the hiatus between wilderness and civilization has been suspended in favor of a different mode of existence. Our own version of that world would have to somehow preserve some of the immense extension of human possibilities that civilization claimed, over thousands of years, while ending the massive suffering and destruction of so much life that it bore within itself. – **Chloe**

## Accomplices Not Allies: Abolishing the Ally Industrial Complex

*This provocation is intended to intervene in some of the current tensions around solidarity/support work as the current trajectories are counter-liberatory from my perspective. Special thanks to DS in Phoenix for convos that lead to this 'zine and all those who provided comments/questions/disagreements. Don't construe this as being for "white young middle class allies", just for paid activists, non-profits, or as a friend said, "downwardly-mobile anarchists or students." There are many so-called "allies" in the migrant rights struggle who support "comprehensive immigration reform" which furthers militarization of Indigenous lands.*

The ally industrial complex has been established by activists whose careers depend on the "issues" they work to address. These nonprofit capitalists advance their careers off the struggles they ostensibly support. They often work in the guise of "grassroots" or "community-based" and are not necessarily tied to any organization. They build organizational or individual capacity and power, establishing themselves comfortably among the top ranks in their hierarchy of oppression as they strive to become the ally "champions" of the most oppressed. While the exploitation of solidarity and support is nothing new, the commodification and exploitation of allyship is a growing trend in the activism industry.

Anyone who concerns themselves with anti-oppression struggles and collective liberation has at some point either participated in workshops, read 'zines, or been parts of deep discussions on how to be a "good" ally. You can now pay hundreds of dollars to go to esoteric institutes for an allyship certificate in anti-oppression. You can go through workshops and receive an allyship badge. In order to commodify struggle it must first be objectified. This is exhibited in how "issues" are "framed" & "branded." Where struggle is commodity, allyship is currency. Ally has also become an identity, disembodied from any real mutual understanding of support. The term ally has been rendered ineffective and meaningless.

### Accomplices Not Allies

*ac-com-plice/noun: **accomplice**; plural noun: **accomplices***

*a person who helps another commit a crime.*

There exists a fiercely unrelenting desire to achieve total liberation, with the land and, together.

At some point there is a "we", and we most likely will have to work together. This means, at the least, formulating mutual understandings that are not entirely antagonistic, otherwise we may find ourselves, our desires, and our struggles, to be incompatible. There are certain understandings that may not be negotiable. There are contradictions that we must come to terms with and certainly we will do this on our own terms. But we need to know who has our backs, or more appropriately: who is with us, at our sides?

The risks of an ally who provides support or solidarity (usually on a temporary basis) in a fight are much different than that of an accomplice. When we fight back or forward, together, becoming complicit in a struggle towards liberation, we are accomplices. Abolishing allyship can occur through the criminalization of support and solidarity.

While the strategies and tactics of asserting (or abolishing depending on your view) social power and political power may be diverse, there are some hard lessons that could bear not replicating. Consider the following to be a guide for identifying points of intervention against the ally industrial complex.

## Salvation aka Missionary Work & Self Therapy

Allies all too often carry romantic notions of oppressed folks they wish to “help.” These are the ally “saviors” who see victims and tokens instead of people.

This victimization becomes a fetish for the worst of the allies in forms of exotification, manar-chism, ‘splaining, POC sexploitation, etc. This kind of relationship generally fosters exploitation between both the oppressed and oppressor. The ally and the allied-with become entangled in an abusive relationship. Generally neither can see it until it’s too late. This relationship can also digress into co-dependency which means they have robbed each other of their own power. Ally “saviors” have a tendency to create dependency on them and their function as support. No one is here to be saved, we don’t need “missionary allies” or pity.

Guilt is also a primary ally motivating factor. Even if never admitted, guilt & shame generally function as motivators in the consciousness of an oppressor who realizes that they are operating on the wrong side. While guilt and shame are very powerful emotions, think about what you’re doing before you make another community’s struggle into your therapy session. Of course, acts of resistance and liberation can be healing, but tackling guilt, shame, and other trauma require a much different focus, or at least an explicit and consensual focus. What kind of relationships are built on guilt and shame?

## Exploitation & Co-optation

Those who co-opt are only there to advance self interests (usually it’s either notoriety or financial). As these “allies” seek to impose their agenda, they out themselves. The ‘radical’ more militant-than-thou “grassroots” organizers are keen on seeking out “sexy” issues to co-opt (for notoriety/ego/super ally/most radical ally) and they set the terms of engagement or dictate what struggles get amplified or marginalized irregardless of whose homelands they’re operating on. The nonprofit establishment or non-profit industrial complex (NPIC) also seeks out “sexy” or “fundable” issues to co-opt and exploit as these are ripe for the grant funding that they covet. Too often, Indigenous liberation struggles for life and land, by nature, directly confront the entire framework to which this colonial & capitalist society is based on. This is threatening to potential capitalist funders so some groups are forced to compromise radical or liberatory work for funding, others become alienated and further invisibilized or subordinated to tokenism. Co-opts most often show up to the fight when the battle has already escalated and it’s a little too late.

These entities almost always propose trainings, workshops, action camps, and offer other specialized expertise in acts of patronization. These folks are generally paid huge salaries for their “professional” activism, get over-inflated grants for logistics and “organizational capacity building”, and struggles may become further exploited as “poster struggles” for their funders. Additionally, these skills most likely already exist within the communities or they are tendencies that need only be provoked into action.

These aren’t just dynamics practiced by large so-called non-governmental organizations (NGOs), individuals are adept at this self-serving tactic as well.

Co-optation also functions as a form of liberalism. Allyship can perpetuate a neutralizing dynamic by co-opting original liberatory intent into a reformist agenda.

Certain folks in the struggles (usually movement “personalities”) who don’t upset the ally establishment status quo can be rewarded with inclusion in the ally industry.

### **Self proclaiming/confessional Allies**

All too often folks show up with an, “I am here to support you!” attitude that they wear like a badge. Ultimately making struggles out to feel like an extracurricular activity that they are getting “ally points” for. Self-asserted allies may even have anti-oppression principles and values as window dressing. Perhaps you’ve seen this quote by Lilla Watson on their materials: “If you come here to help me, you’re wasting your time. If you come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.” They are keen to posture, but their actions are inconsistent with their assertions.

Meaningful alliances aren’t imposed, they are consented upon. The self-proclaimed allies have no intention to abolish the entitlement that compelled them to impose their relationship upon those they claim to ally with.

### **Parachuters**

Parachuters rush to the front lines seemingly from out-of-nowhere. They literally move from one hot or sexy spot to the next. They also fall under the “savior” & “self-proclaimed” categories as they mostly come from specialized institutes, organizations, & think-tanks. They’ve been through the trainings, workshops, lectures, etc., they are the “experts” so they know “what is best.” This paternalistic attitude is implicit in the structures (non-profits, institutes, etc) these “allies” derive their awareness of the “issues” from. Even if they reject their own non-profit programming, they are ultimately reactionary, entitled, and patronizing, or positioning with power-over, those they proclaim allyship with. It’s structural patronization that is rooted in the same dominion of hetero-patriarchal white supremacy.

Parachuters are usually missionaries with more funding.

### **Academics, & Intellectuals**

Although sometimes directly from communities in struggle, intellectuals and academics also fit neatly in all of these categories. Their role in struggle can be extremely patronizing. In many cases the academic maintains institutional power above the knowledge and skill base of the community/ies in struggle. Intellectuals are most often fixated on un-learning oppression. These lot generally don’t have their feet on the ground, but are quick to be critical of those who do.

Should we desire to merely “unlearn” oppression, or to smash it to fucking pieces, and have it’s very existence gone?

An accomplice as academic would seek ways to leverage resources and material support and/or betray their institution to further liberation struggles. An intellectual accomplice would strategize with, not for and not be afraid to pick up a hammer.

### **Gatekeepers**

Gatekeepers seek power over, not with, others. They are known for the tactics of controlling and/or withholding information, resources, connections, support, etc. Gatekeepers come from

the outside and from within. When exposed they are usually rendered ineffective (so long as there are effective accountability/responsibility mechanisms).

Gatekeeping individuals and organizations, like “savior allies,” also have tendency to create dependency on them and their function as support. They have a tendency to dominate or control.

### **Navigators & Floaters**

The “navigating” ally is someone who is familiar or skilled in jargon and maneuvers through spaces or struggles yet doesn’t have meaningful dialogue (by avoiding debates or remaining silent) or take meaningful action beyond their personal comfort zones (this exists with entire organizations too). They uphold their power and, by extension, the dominant power structures by not directly attacking them.

“Ally” here is more clearly defined as the act of making personal projects out of other folk’s oppression. These are lifestyle allies who act like passively participating or simply using the right terminology is support. When shit goes down they are the first to bail. They don’t stick around to take responsibility for their behavior. When confronted they often blame others and attempt to dismiss or delegitimize concerns. Accomplices aren’t afraid to engage in uncomfortable/unsettling/challenging debates or discussions.

Floaters are “allies” that hop from group to group and issue to issue, never being committed enough but always wanting their presence felt and their voices heard. They tend to disappear when it comes down to being held accountable or taking responsibility for fucked up behavior. Floaters are folks you can trust to tell the cops to “fuck off” but never engage in mutual risk, constantly put others at risk, are quick to be authoritarian about other peoples over stepping privileges, but never check their own. They basically are action junkie tourists who never want to be part of paying the price, the planning, or the responsibility but always want to be held up as worthy of being respected for “having been there” when a rock needed throwing, bloc needs forming, etc.

This dynamic is also important to be aware of for threats of infiltration. Provocateurs are notorious floaters going from place to place never being accountable to their words or actions. Infiltration doesn’t necessarily have to come from the state, the same impacts can occur by “well meaning” allies. It’s important to note that calling out infiltrators bears serious implications and shouldn’t be attempted without concrete evidence.

### **Acts of Resignation**

Resignation of agency is a by-product of the allyship establishment. At first the dynamic may not seem problematic, after all, why would it be an issue with those who benefit from systems of oppression to reject or distance themselves from those benefits and behaviors (like entitlement, etc) that accompany them? In the worst cases, “allies” themselves act paralyzed believing it’s their duty as a “good ally.” There is a difference between acting for others, with others, and for one’s own interests, be explicit.

You wouldn’t find an accomplice resigning their agency, or capabilities as an act of “support.” They would find creative ways to weaponize their privilege (or more clearly, their rewards of being part of an oppressor class) as an expression of social war. Otherwise we end up with a bunch of anti-civ/primitivist appropriators or anarcho-hipsters, when saboteurs would be preferred.

## Suggestions for some ways forward for anti-colonial accomplices:

Allyship is the corruption of radical spirit and imagination, it's the dead end of decolonization. The ally establishment co-opts decolonization as a banner to fly at its unending anti-oppression gala. What is not understood is that decolonization is a threat to the very existence of settler "allies." No matter how liberated you are, if you are still occupying Indigenous lands you are still a colonizer.

Decolonization (the process of restoring Indigenous identity) can be very personal and should be differentiated, though not disconnected, from anti-colonial struggle.

The work of an accomplice in anti-colonial struggle is to attack colonial structures & ideas.

The starting point is to articulate your relationship to Indigenous Peoples whose lands you are occupying. This is beyond acknowledgment or recognition. This can be particularly challenging for "non-federally recognized" Indigenous Peoples as they are invisibilized by the state and by the invaders occupying their homelands.

It may take time to establish lines of communication especially as some folks may have already been burnt by outsiders. If you do not know where or how to contact folks, do some ground work, research (but don't rely on anthropological sources, they are euro-centric), and pay attention. Try to more listening than speaking and planning.

In long-term struggles communication may be ruptured between various factions, there are no easy ways to address this. Don't try to work the situation out, but communicate openly with consideration of the points below.

Sometimes other Indigenous Peoples are "guests" on other's homelands yet are tokenized as the Indigenous representatives for the "local struggles". This dynamic also perpetuates settler colonialism. A lot of people also assume Indigenous folks are all on the same page "politically," we're definitely not.

While there may be times folks have the capacity and patience to do so, be aware of the dynamics perpetuated by hand-holding.

Understand that it is not our responsibility to hold your hand through a process to be an accomplice.

Accomplices listen with respect for the range of cultural practices and dynamics that exists within various Indigenous communities.

Accomplices aren't motivated by personal guilt or shame, they may have their own agenda but they are explicit.

Accomplices are realized through mutual consent and build trust. They don't just have our backs, they are at our side, or in their own spaces confronting and unsettling colonialism. *As accomplices we are compelled to become accountable and responsible to each other, that is the nature of trust.*

Don't wait around for anyone to proclaim you to be an accomplice, you certainly cannot proclaim it yourself. You just are or you are not. The lines of oppression are already drawn. Direct action is really the best and may be the only way to learn what it is to be an accomplice. We're in a fight, so be ready for confrontation and consequence.

## If you are wondering whether to get involved with or to support an organization:

- Be suspect of anyone and any organization who professes allyship, decolonization work, and/or wears their relationships with Indigenous Peoples as at badge
- Use some of the points above to determine primary motives. Look at the organizations funding. Who is getting paid? How are they transparent? Who's defining the terms? Who sets the agenda? Do campaigns align with what the needs are on the ground?

Are there local grassroots Indigenous People directly involved with the decision making?

## A Few Notes on the Social Machine – by Xander

*No matter how different, or even opposite the purpose: whether it be that of punishing the incorrigible, guarding the insane, reforming the vicious, confining the suspected, employing the idle, maintaining the helpless, curing the sick, instructing the willing in any branch of industry, or training the rising race in the path of education: in a word, whether it be applied to the purposes of perpetual prisons in the room of death, or prisons for confinement before trial, or penitentiary houses, or houses of correction, or work-houses, or manufactories, or mad-houses, or hospitals, or schools.”*

*-Jeremy Bentham, Panopticon Letter I [1787]*

Make no mistake about it, we are being consumed. This eating and digestion of life – human and nonhuman – is perpetuated by a complex and diffuse system of inculcation and complicity that has been referred to as the social machine.<sup>1</sup> Comprised of states and their economic systems, their statistics, institutions, sprawling urban and sub-urbanism; it is the university system, it is the police, and it is you and me. It is the machine that tries to harness and ingest everything it touches.

The social machine preserves itself by consuming, reconfiguring life by establishing and proliferating the colony system. The social machine is the heart of colonization and is not limited to a particular place or time, but is the projection of a specific relationship and vision that seeks to integrate and consume all life, past and present. Colonization needs loyal adherents, managers, and the continuous manufacturing of the timeless Other – as the object of charity, fear, or a combination of the two. This othering takes the form of the classic dichotomies: civilized/savage, legal/illegal, proletariat/non-proletariat, and the state's favorite : criminal/citizen. These divisions are important. They form the rhythm of this machine and the intensity of monotonous suffering that conditions both our mentalities and the ground beneath us. The social machine, meanwhile, manufactures a system of perpetual double-binds, leaving nearly no room for escape, only endless rearticulations of freedom.

Discussion of the social machine raises the centuries-old question, phrased differently over time: how is colonial rule – or the industrial state – established, maintained and continuously able to grow? Here are a few notes from a perspective that seeks to challenge the positive social investments of this machine; investments that seek to confuse, implicate, and create self-identification in people through its colonizing processes.

The heart of the social machine is industrialism: the material form of capitalism in all of its divisive variants including liberal, planned, command, and neoliberal economies. All of these economies are a substantial part of this amorphous machine operated by “developed” and “developing” countries and people alike.<sup>2</sup> The social machine is big, it's everywhere, and it is trying to

implicate and consume all of us into its gears. However, this is not to say it is omnipresent – it can be destroyed. This destruction requires intimate personal reflection on the structures around us and on the quality of life that the social machine enables; finding friends<sup>3</sup> that want to take on a joyfully anarchist praxis; and, at the least, reflecting and conversing on the failures of organizing (it is often the reproduction of oppressive state organizational forms and relationships in organizing work that leads to activist burn-out). This might look like people adopting a different set of values (possibly anarchist) that will enable them to fight where they stand on their terms against the multiplicity of continuous attacks by the machine, its appendages, and its army of lemmings.

The social machine formed with Civilization and advanced with the mechanical philosophers and their utilitarianism that sought to create an “ideal perfection” for society.<sup>4</sup> Jeremy Bentham, among others, articulated an obsession with a utopian order of geometric and moral perfection.<sup>5</sup> Bentham’s solution to social “disorders” was the Panopticon, a guard town with blacked-out windows. More importantly, it was to be God’s eye making people feel they were under constant surveillance by the guard tower, the doctor, the factory foreman, or the teacher. Inspired by military planning from previous centuries, the Panopticon or more accurately panopticism is a technology that possesses the values and logic at the center of the social machine. As Bentham outlined, “the person to be inspected should always feel themselves as if under inspection,” and “the underkeepers or inspectors, the servants and subordinates of every kind, will be under the same irresistible control with respect to the head keeper or inspector, as the prisoners or other persons to be governed are with respect to them.”<sup>6</sup>

The crucial point is this: in what other instance as in this, will you see the interests of the governor and the governed in this important particular, so perfectly confounded and made one? – those of the keeper and the prisoners – those of the medical curator with those of the patients? Clean or unclean, safe or unsafe, he runs the chance that they do: if he lets them poison themselves, he lets them poison him. Encompassed on all sides by a multitude of persons, whose good or bad condition depends upon himself, he stands as a hostage in his own hands for the salubrity of the whole.

While a liberal ideal, panopticism is trying to create a system and social terrain of mutual dependency – a hostage-making system in which everyone is implicated and brought under the system’s order. Never forget, this internal control was introduced to people through abduction and overt violence. The emerging police apparatus would abduct anyone it saw as a vagrant, idler, or social enemy of the church, state, and its growing economy; an economy that would abduct and torture people into working. This process required the division and commodification of people and, with the rise of enclosures, the land itself.<sup>7</sup> Bentham, among others, knew very well that this could only be sustained with dependency: “What other master is there that can reduce his workmen, if idle, to a situation next to starving, without suffering them to go elsewhere?<sup>8</sup>” This is what propels the social machine.

After abducting people, beating them, and burning or seizing their homes, the social machine needs to create enchanting and pleasant carrots after the stick of repression. These carrots could come in the form of new homes, sewage systems, education, computers, or even social relations. The rise of what are now known as counterinsurgency warfare techniques – attempts to turn relationships into levers, to transform flirtations, touch, and charismatic personalities into weapons of integration and pacification – has allowed the social machine to deepen its hold. The general point of this conquest and colonization is to create a situation of dependency. Dependency must



also install addiction.<sup>9</sup> What could be better for the industrial order than people's perceived need for and addiction to its sweets? What keeps the corporate careerists, police, and doctors going other than the mythology of their own importance, their complete and utter dependence on work, and the cheap and expensive drugs ranging from donuts – hydrogenated oils, high doses of sugar, salt, etc – to mind numbering pharmaceuticals, to favorite television shows? In the social machine we are all rendered hunkies and prostitutes and our jumping between these roles is what keeps us and this machine going.

The social machine needs you to learn to endure and even like your work. Bentham knew that creating the possibility to allow work into the prison or workhouse that was not completely miserable could reinforce the positive lure of self-management. He writes: “But I neither see the great danger nor the great harm of a man's liking his work too well; and how well soever he might have liked it elsewhere, I should still less apprehend his liking the thought of having it to do there.<sup>10</sup>” Once you can accept the work introduced to you and even better identify with it, and more so learn to derive meaning from it, you have been assimilated into the social machine and maybe there is room for your comfortable survival managing and policing others to keep with the perfection of things. Isn't this the lesson of society and our personal goal of survival? Isn't this how thoughtful and dangerous people end up cogs in the university system? Often, ‘we’ – individuals – fail to find the space or alternatives we need, especially if the alternative is a circle of people who talk past each other and establish informal group hierarchies with any number of techniques to cut down and guilt each other, until we eventually integrate full-time into these gears – at least temporarily. So, I anticipate the droning mumbles and squeals as I challenge my own and everyone else's pleasures and social identities intertwined in this machine, is this assimilation all bad?

Dependency, addiction, and self-management seek to establish what has been called “administrative decentralization,<sup>11</sup>” or the decentralization of hierarchical systems. It is the epitome of self-identification and belief in a particular often unspoken, set of values that spread the consumption process of the social machine. Many libertarians and anarcho-syndicalists fall into this trap. With the right ingredients (roughly one part captured imagination, two parts addiction, and one part dependency) one can flip the slogan: “There is no authority but yourself” on its head to entail managing our own slavery with self-identification, no longer requiring intense coercion. Panopticism seeks, by any means necessary, to have people internalize a particular kind of authority that uses dependency and addiction as the criteria for punishment and reward. Administrative decentralization is the autonomous set of complex gears (social processes of consumption and production) that operate in synchronization with other complex gears within the framework of the state, while providing degrees of autonomy, feedback, and a sense of real and imagined freedom.

Once people have internalized this logic and are dependent on the colonial system, they have drunk the Kool-Aid of acquiescence and their pastimes, hopes, dreams, and discourse are pre-determined, propagated by the media-industrial complex. On the other hand, if an individual is to take up an insurrectionary or anti-civilization disposition then they are faced with a series of double-binds. I do not mean to suggest these two camps – drinking Kool-Aid and insurrectionary dispositions – are mutually exclusive. They are all part of the same tumble dryer.

Double-binds are the way this machine protects itself and holds everyone hostage. The entire social machine is an elaborate system ready to integrate and implicate everyone, by any means necessary. It makes layer upon layer of double-binds that send the message to those that are

colonized and being colonized that “if you act against this machine in part or in whole in a tangible and material way then you will not make a single difference and you will be imprisoned or killed.” While the other side of this double-bind is: “yes, things are really bad; people are dying, species extinct, and collapse looming, but you can change this machine, make it friendly, more efficient and representative of the people.” And of course there is the “who gives a shit” discourse. In short, this double-bind tries to capture the hearts and minds of people. It captures their hearts by “persuading people their best interests are served by [the social machine’s] success” and minds by “convincing them that [the social machine] can protect them, and that resisting [it] is pointless.<sup>12</sup>”

To engage in the political system formally is to accept the systematic double-binds that prolong this social machine of death – Obama or Romney? – the machine continues. This is why anti-politics is advisable, this is why despite our formal and informal degrees in political science we need to destroy power and reclaim our own. We must take back our colonized hearts and minds and see past the clever trick of administrative decentralization, present even in some attempts at decolonization, which only maintains the social machine despite its rotten racism/patriarchy/classism/industrialism.

This double-bind could not be made more apparent than in humanity’s total integration and dependency on cybernetics and logistics. Logistics are the veins of the social machine and the life blood of humans as we shuffle from box to box – house to bus to work to bar to park to supermarket to restaurant to movie. Almost the entire existence of the modern industrial human is resigned to a series of boxes that are completely dependent on logistics. The more this machine grows, the more vulnerable it feels, the more it wants to take, the closer it mixes our lives with its own structures, making us dependent on transportation, lights, air, food, sanitation, internet, the list goes on, but after all this machine serves us, right? That is why we are paralyzed by traffic, work, television, junk food, expensive hobbies, and booze. It is through logistics, the third order of the art of war, that dependency and addiction merge into one. Proliferating sicknesses that come in the form of entitlement, narcissism, insensitivity, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, industrial poisoning, elaborate drug habits and crippling dietary concerns – this machine is war, subtle and permanent.

This extreme dependence is making us needy, legislating and enforcing helplessness to spread the social machine, if we let it happen. On the other hand, this dependence creates mind-boggling entitlement and self-identification with the thing that is killing us. If it’s not directly and immediately to the point at which our reference to health is completely distorted, there are more of us ill than healthy, and emulation takes hold. Likewise, modern idleness takes the form of poison, insecurity, and dependency on machines that require specific and specialized modes of work. Either way and no matter what your take on these issues, the more we attack the logistics that propel this machine, the more we are attacking ourselves and our comforts – a double-bind, to say the least.

The social machine has a place for rich and poor, criminal and citizen, woman and man, black and brown, and any variety of sexualities. Some positions in this machine are less miserable than others, but that is exactly what keeps us eating each other while this machine is eating all of us. This machine loves it when we love our work, especially after five hundred years of disciplining us into loving it. Add some technophilia/techno-addiction to this work, and it appears unstoppable, but to maintain this regime of work, this particular order of perfection, it is bleeding us, our values, and our ways of life.

Let's not forget that cable television was developed for three principle reasons in the 1960s:

1) to act "as a medium for citizen participation,"

2) "citizen-government communication," and

3) "violence prevention" against widespread urban rebellion and race riots.<sup>13</sup> These three rationales had one endgame: to secure internal state economic interests in developing a technology that would promote social integration through constant propaganda for national politics, manufactured debates and options, and, later, enchanting entertainment that served the overall purpose of social domestication and pacification. We have been taught not only to take the carrots, but to fight for them, and see them as our own. When we work to create or obtain these enchanting carrots, it is within an architecture that has built-in trap doors – or double binds.

If people are to ever going to begin to uproot this thing and begin to genuinely decolonize – acknowledging the rotten form of architecture and organization – it means not taking the bait, or at the least holding a tension against these technologies that are so good, so sweet and so pleasurable, so amazing it makes magic look like an outdated joke. It means seeing the social machine for what it is: a colonizing machine that seeks to consume everyone on its altar of progress – for its continued growth and development – turning hearts and minds into junky consumers whose agency is corralled into some form of prostitution. In short, maybe the only carrots we should eat are the ones we grow ourselves, and with our friends.

Soylent Green<sup>14</sup> demonstrated one way industrial humans could start eating each other, but the social machine is designed to consume and perpetuate itself using every facet of our being – our spirit, our sexuality, our desires, and our actions. This negative set of concerns is not intended to be righteous or helpless, rather it intends to recognize the extent to which we are all being formed by this machine, some in much worse positions than others, but all of us still in it, taking its prescribed roles, scrapping for assimilation and work that is bearable if not pleasurable,<sup>15</sup> searching for dignity in its architecture. Worse still, we may be forgetting how to live without this machine's services and style of work, how to enjoy free time without the insane plethora of "modern" conveniences.

This is a quandary I face and symptoms I experience and I share these notes:

1) The social machine is consuming all of us in different intensities.

2) It has been building an architecture over the centuries to keep people dependent and addicted.

3) It wants to induce the feelings of pleasure and positive investments.

4) Furthermore, it likes it when we enjoy our work.

5) Finally, we are a technology of this colonial process, rebuilding and spreading its mentality. One way to think about this latter point are those scary robots in sci-fi movies. Once they are blown, destroyed, and shattered into hundreds of pieces, people think they've won the struggle against the machine. They begin to talk, celebrate, and relax, and then the camera pans over to these shattered pieces on the ground. Slowly, they begin to wiggle, pieces start moving together, and wires start poking out and connecting back to one another to rebuild this super robot. It is this wiggle and piecing back together that the industrial human has been conditioned to serve, acting as the social machine's reproductive technology and its feedback that will work out the kinks, improve growth, and reassemble it back together.

It is in these terms I think we should revisit the failed practice to take back our values and destroy the reproductive capacities of the social machine that we have been made to serve. Let's loot

the social machine, take what we can, burn the rest, and be conscious about what will constitute its reproduction.

## The old, and the new – by AJ

Having articulate and thoughtful politics about something that is currently ongoing is hard. Sacred truths that anarchists hold in common are rarely grasped immediately. Now-popular critiques become canonized in anarchist thought after the dust has settled, zines have been read, and books have been written, but not until then.

Technology is always uncharted territory. Having an analysis of it involves not only acknowledging that it produces anti-social behavior, something anarchists are overly-proficient in already, but theorizing specific ways it impacts our thoughts, behavior and perceptions. Experiencing new technology leaves impressions, which sit raw in the mind, producing vague emotions and thoughts, but rarely resulting in something which is easy to articulate. It usually takes many years for such experiences to settle in and become normalized before an understandable critique finds circulation through radical circles. By the time anarchists can explain the new alienation, it's become the old alienation of two Apple press conferences ago.

Combine this with the fact that in liberal democratic society it is easy to adopt popular rhetoric which, by design, appears to be consistent with our (and everyone else's) views. This sloganistic, talking-head rhetoric impedes thoughtful analysis and engulfs us in the empty marketplace of ideas which acts as a revolving door for stale critiques. Usually this occurs in the context of media-packaged 'issues' that are falsely presented as having two sides to them. In the past, this might have looked like something that NATO versus the Eastern Bloc, or North Vietnam against the United States. Maybe today it's gentrification versus impoverished inner-cities. Essentially meant to reflect the eternal "are you a liberal or a conservative?", these questions serve to hide perspectives that are hostile to the foundation on which the system stands. When we surrender to the pluralist mandate, we subsequently end up arguing on terms that are contrary to our radical values and goals.

Of particular interest to anarchists who read this publication is the debate over smartphones and how they impact our lives. To an anti-civ anarchists' initial delight, there exists in mainstream discourse an anti-tech position. This rhetoric is not very well articulated, and can most easily be summed up as disgust over perceived images of vain teenagers taking selfies, people immersed in their phones in public settings, and the urge to taking pictures of magnificent situations instead of directly experiencing them. Anarchists might hear these talking points and repeat them because they seem to be anti-tech.

The trap we're falling into here is that this is simply a pluralistic generational conflict, nothing more. It's the millennials versus the 'old-timers,' whose fetishization of their times is completely knee-jerk. It's one of the most enduring and least productive arguments of modern times. In consumer society each generation has new trends, fashions, and commodities that they define themselves by. This fuels a distancing between generations due to how quickly such things become outdated and irrelevant by a new set of cultural artifacts that always targets the next generation of young people.

To take up the anti-tech position in these arguments is just to pick a side in this pluralistic divide. As the shiny new toys increasingly colonize more of daily life, younger generations con-

sider them defining of themselves and their identities. They cling to them and defend them the same way every generation defends themselves against their elders. The same people who criticize selfie-vanity were likely called out by their parents decades ago for listening to music on headphones during time meant to be spent with family. They likely don't have any problems with seeing headphones worn in public.

Taking the "old-timers" argument may seem rational in that, as time passes, it appears technology colonizes more of our daily lives. One might say that the older generations' perspective could be a basis for more critical conversations about civilization, since their technology was less invasive and colonizing. The problem with this premise is the false assumption that anti-civ anarchists share similar motivations regarding the present generation's obsession with advanced technologies. Older generations long for 'the good ol' days' before smartphones, and by doing so reify the cliché rose-tinted glasses phenomenon. In these critiques of present-day technology, the technology and lifestyles of the past are celebrated nostalgically and without critique. This is something the younger generation points out, and they're justified in doing so. Instead of glancing at their smartphones on the bus, old-timers want walkmen and newspapers. They deplore people interacting on the internet in their own rooms and miss when the family would sit mindlessly around the television in the living room. Essentially, they don't have a problem with the public-private shift, or how increasingly the private is invading the public, just how the instruments of alienation have changed. The old-timer perspective is basically a combination of confusion of new mores, and disdain at being considered irrelevant. Nothing radical here.

Most situations that people experience in modern Western societies are boring and useless. The landscape of the world has been shaped in such a way that everything is efficient in making us consumers/workers/citizens, and as such the roles we find ourselves in do not promote social interaction or engagement. For example, in the supermarket waiting line one is separated from others by shopping carts, facing forward, with impulse purchase items to our right and left. There are so many commodities and hobbies marketed to us that there is few and few overlap in our interests as time goes on. If they do have something in common, it is their experience consuming the same spectacles like the newest season of a Netflix series. Social life has very little potential for meaningful interaction. We are in our own private worlds at home, and in public we have little to say to each other, if we are in a situation that facilitates us saying anything at all.

As products of western philosophy, we think that the things themselves must be the cause of anti-social behavior, but that's not getting to the root of why screens and the internet are so enticing. Like most things, smartphones are a cause, but they are also a result. Taking the above example, I think we can say with certainty that the uninteresting and meaningless situations of modern life, such as waiting in line at a supermarkets, helped create the smartphone. The smartphone is an improvement (from a capitalist perspective) on experiencing this miserable and mundane world. What was before merely boring can now be somewhat interesting. If we apply that formula everywhere and in every situation, then we can grasp the true purpose and meaning of the smartphone. It is this society's alleviation of the boredom and social atomization that it creates.

Asserting new technologies as the cause of modern alienation is only half of the appropriate critique. Technology in a consumer society comes into existence as an attempt at reforming an otherwise dreary or unappealing aspect of the form of life it creates. Smartphones are meant to relieve the boredom of late capitalism. Instant access to information and one's friends in addition to games and other entertainment means that one can now "live without dead time."

Maybe social life is now at the point for many people where the smartphone experience is more interesting and desirable than talking to people in real life. Maybe our culture is no more or less alienating than it was before, but new technologies merely make it more apparent – giving form to our anti-social conditioning. The interests, hobbies, and values that people have are becoming increasingly diverse, while the form-of-life prescribed to us under capitalism remains just the same. The internet is again both a cause and result of this fracturing. If the people on your Tumblr are just like you and you become just like them, then the people you are physically around lose their appeal. The internet is where you find people who share your interests, more than the physical world.

I agree with those who critique smart-phone society, but we need to approach these questions with a broader perspective. Civilization itself, with all its shiny new toys, should be destroyed. But lamenting over how alienating they are is pointless at best, especially if it takes the form of arguments and positions that actually affirm the real-life alienations that modern society throws at us every day. We should remember that the problem isn't just that people look down at their screens, but that there is increasingly little value in looking back up.

## Memories of the ZAD

Quite briefly, the Z.A.D. is a struggle concerning the building of a dam in southern France, near Toulouse. Its construction would flood the valley to irrigate industrial farmers' land, growing large amount of corn for animal agriculture. This also implies the destruction of 13 acres of wetlands supposedly protected by law and would affect the ecological system of the valley. The dam was over-evaluated.

The contestation starts to build in 2011 with the creation of the Collectif pour la sauvegarde de la zone humide du Testet (Collective to save the wetlands of the Testet) that will end up playing an important role on the legal field. In 2012, a few legal institutions give an unfavorable opinion about the project, and as they're only consultative, no one cares. Surprisingly, the minister of Ecology cares, and refuses to sign the ministerial amendments. Unsurprisingly, the minister is dismissed, and the project revives. In October 2013, an informal group named "Tant qu'il y aura des bouilles" (literally, 'Til there'll be faces) joins the Collective. The occupation starts in the valley in different forms of squatting. In February, the place is evicted. End of August 2014, the valley is reoccupied, as deforestation starts. Machines cut, uproot, smash everything, and annihilate life on the surface and below.

I arrive on the 22nd of October, three days before the big manifestation that was called for on site:

*AGAINST THE SIVENS DAM: Let's enroot the resistance! BIG MEETING Saturday 25th, October 2014 at midday. Let's bring back life to the Tester: constructions, workshops, plantations, debates, concerts... For more information: [tantquilyauradesbouilles.wordpress.com](http://tantquilyauradesbouilles.wordpress.com)*

It is the first time I come. Many friends have arrived here before I and would share their stories and frustrations once we would reunite. I'm familiar with the atmosphere and the life at camp as I've spent most of the last 2 years at Notre Dame des Landes (NDDL).

So all I know on the struggle at this point it what I've been reading, and what I've been told.

## On Site

There was a strong divergence on site about what methods should be employed to counter the works: strong enough to discourage a few to come here again or to set actions. There was a rich diversity of people composing the struggle, going from the young barricade holder to the mother of a 5-year-old and all you could imagine. This diversity, which was part of our force, was also a weakness. It brought a lot of debates, fights, and frustrations. We had to face the cultural, ideological, generational gaps between everyone. Not everybody was familiar with ecological resistance, political struggles, whatever we call the situation we were in, but many were full of certitudes and would try to convince others the way they think was more appropriate and should be followed by everyone. Pacifism and citizenism had a strong influence all along the struggle. Friends that preferred different methods got pointed out as “turbulents” and “dangerous”. During actions, some people even denounced them to the cops as potential trouble. Insane situations that prevented me from coming, because friends couldn’t be discreet in this situation, and cops could easily target them.

So once again come the questions: How do we compose together? How do we coordinate our differences. I believe we must find unity in diversity for it is one of our best weapons. With determination, then nothing could stop us.

So, as some would reject violence or more radical actions, as it would “only bring more violence,” some others would reject “pacifists” and spit on their methods too. Only a few would consider that who cares what you are, pacifist or violent, ‘cause we’re all on the same fucking side. Amazing how this divides us and how everybody jumps into the trap it sets. Why don’t we rather focus on how effective our actions are?

If indeed certain situations require certain more appropriate methods, it seemed that the way the struggle went until now was quite ineffective. The participation of THFS, the actions, and all that has been done brought positivity and brought a lot of individuals and the collective, but still, the situation was not in our favor at all. Machines continued to work, and trees continued to be cut.

There were about 30 to 50 people for the last two months. A lot of people started to arrive before the days of manifestation. Frustration grew into those who’d like to actually do something about the machines working less than two kilometers away. In camp, you could hear the machines, and see the dust flying as they would move. But so many trees had already been cut, that probably a lot of those on the site were exhausted. Cops illegally evicted camps, tents and squats, burning personal and collective belongings, IDs, instruments, tools, all kinds of resources, even piercing the water bottles and containers. CS gas, beatings, observing the destruction and being powerless about it. This is all that the life in these places involves. It takes a lot of resources. It is more intense than anything I’ve lived through before.

So the atmosphere was very exciting. Those working on the event were very busy and positive. Lots of good things going on, from writing signs to building toilets with bamboo, from delimiting the humid zone and raising awareness on what plants and what protected species lived there, to cooking, welcoming newcomers, playing music, and all the activities it suggests.

The “Préfet,” meaning the chief of police in the department, representing the state, announced that no police would be on site during the manifestation.

There, a kind of fort had been built, digging 10 to 15 feet deep with 100-foot long moats, with a fence and a portal to prevent an easy access to the machines. And so, on Friday afternoon, all

the machines were brought somewhere outside the site. All that was left was only a generator and a construction site cabin, all guarded by three security personnel.

During the night, a group of thirty people came to the fort, and set the cabin and generator on fire without harming any of the guards. This event played a great role into what happened next. As lots of us felt that something had to happen with the construction site and the machines, that night, something did. There were no machines, and the construction was not compromised in any way. But we were not powerless anymore. We were determined. We were together, and we were a force.

So it's now Saturday, and more people arrive onsite. The weather is sunny and the mood is high. A lot of the newcomers don't know much about the situation on site, aside from what they've been reading on the website or the newspapers. So it's kind of strange to see this mass of supporters to the cause, mostly only here for 48 hours.

The riot cops, probably because of the night's event, are back on the construction site, close to the Fort, and now their presence raises a few questions. There was strictly nothing to protect, nor any risk to prevent. Nothing. Also, the Préfet had announced that no police would be here, so what were they doing onsite? I guess he didn't like the message that was sent.

And so, there were hundreds of riot cops, dozens of trucks. The police commander will later say that 2000 people were protesting passively when "100 to 150 anarchists, masked and dressed in black, threw incendiary devices" at the police.

The situation was extraordinary. On one part of the site, where the camp was, there was the "big meeting" happening. Hundreds of people bringing food, construction material, tools, tents, any kind of resources. People smiling, people chanting, reuniting, chatting, dancing, welcoming others and whatnot. But resonating into the whole valley, we could hear the detonation of the grenades being thrown two kilometers away. A really deep roar. A noise that you're not familiar with, something strong and terrifying. And so from where I was (meaning the camp), I was wondering what the fuck was happening to the other side of the site, wondering if my friends were OK. So I got some stuff and walked all the way to the "combat zone." Along the way I was crossing people that would go there, a beer in their hand like tourists, and others would come back, some a bit shocked, some a bit amused.

As I had lived through similarly extremely-tense situations before in Notre Dame des Landes, something was happening in my inner-self. As I was walking, all these half-forgotten feelings were merging back to the surface. Fucking war. Grenades, spray gas, rubber bullets, charges, helicopters flying over, recording everything. Anarchy in the valley. There were people, carefully standing away from the cops and the situation, just looking at it, while others were trying to... I don't know what they were trying to do. Bow they were there, as hundreds of people were gathering against this fucking dam and the world that comes with it. The police come with this world, so let's fight it! Something like that. I don't know, I wasn't there when the fight started. There's loads of recordings of the moment on the internet. Type "Affrontments Testet" for riot-porn. There's people talking to the cops, people throwing random shit, people clowning, people being ineffective, people trying to be effective but wondering how to, people standing and watching...

I'll see only a single Molotov cocktail, the one that was necessary for the media to justify the violence of the police, only "replying to the extreme violence of the protestors." 700 grenades of all kinds will be thrown all along the afternoon and during the night, OF. The OF grenade is the kind of grenade that killed Rémi. I had experienced them before at NDDI, but I don't recall the cops using the grenade launcher to throw them. Now I still doubt about it, but what I had learned



at NDDI is that it was forbidden to launch them, so they were compelled to throw them manually, shouting “F4” before. So you could expect them and you’d better run if you didn’t want to get harmed. This time at Le Testet, cops would just launch them as they would launch spray gas. That was new to me and set a whole different atmosphere in the fight. You could only hear the grenade launcher “pop” as it would for any kind of grenade, but if the grenade didn’t explode in the air and spill its five-spray pucks (like hockey pucks) whatever, it meant it could just fall between your legs and explode. These grenades, while exploding, spread dozens of pieces of plastic or metal, that get stuck into your legs, genitals, wherever it can get. It’s painful, hard to take out, and can seriously harm your tendons.

It was during the night that it was the most impressive. They would explode and provoke a mini nuclear-shroom-like-explosion. Again, the sound was terrible. Resonating into the whole valley. What did the birds think? According to the official report, during the night of the 25th to the 26th, in three hours, 298 grenades and 41 rubber bullets were shot. One is enough to lose your eye. A friend got shot in the genitals during fights in the summer. He’ll never be a father. During the day, with the media and all, the rules are different than the night. The situation always differs, but those who carry the “flashball” like to aim for the head, the genitals, the knees and plexus, right where it hurts the most. However violent and impressive it was, it is far from the repression other countries are submitted to. I reckon that. I guess you could just get accustomed to it.

During the night, the police will never move from their positions. Little groups would try to worry the cops, but they were quite ineffective. Why were they so ineffective? I’d say because the majority of the people present would do nothing. They would just assist the situation, safely shouting back from the front, where only other protestors would hear, but not even the cops, to which the message is addressed. People far from being serious, returning to the camp once they got bored and continuing “the party”.

No one thought about collecting rocks, bringing food and water, walkie-talkies, bring up gasoline, motivating those in front of the sound systems, not minding that grenades explode a kilometer away from the base. I think one reason to this is that a lot of “protestors” were not familiar with such a situation, they kept on being passive. I get that you don’t want to risk yourself too close to the cops, because you could get arrested or get hurt by a grenade. But there were a shitload of things to do outside of that perimeter, and because no one was doing shit but only a determined few, these few were ineffective. The cops never really got worried, even though they must have been scared at some point. It must be strange to be in a valley of people hating you, throwing rocks at you, howling like wolves, lighting fires all over the valley, insulting you constantly, but it was more of a spectacle, otherwise we would have made them leave the site. I’m being very critical now, because I’m frustrated to see how powerless we generally are in these situations. I might develop that when I’ll talk about my experience at NDDL in a future writing.

I wasn’t on the same side where Rémi died, maybe I wasn’t even there anymore, maybe I had left the combat zone. My memory’s pretty confused. I can’t remember the events chronologically very well. I can picture the grenade that killed him, but maybe I just dreamt it. Anyway, it’s Sunday morning, I’m at the camp site, it’s about 11 AM. Someone shares a rumor, someone might have died yesterday night. No way, no fucking way. I try not to keep it in my head before being sure. There’s no reason to give it importance while it is not confirmed. An hour passes, and we get the confirmation. Someone died. He was 21 years old. It could have been me, it could have been any one of us. It is us they killed. We decide to spread the word all over and meet at 1 PM, under the biggest tent. Before this I had to go into the woods. The intensity of the last 48 hours

was a lot to process. Emotionally a mess, I walked among the trees, sat down and got some time for myself. Then I got back up, and went back to the valley. Everything had changed. Nothing would be the same anymore. They killed a man.

Right after the grenade exploded and took Rémi down, cops equipped with nightvision ordered to stop the use of OF grenades. They sprayed gas all over, turned the spotlight to where Rémi was, and for the first time in the night, got out of their perimeter and brought the body back to their trucks. A cop says “the guy is dead... this is way serious...”, and adds “they must not know.” Ten minutes after, a blue light appears, the ambulance. Total blackout, the cops turn all lights off. This lasts for 20 seconds. They turn the lights back on. The ambulance is gone.

Since Rémi died, all further construction work has been stopped. An inquiry was made to examine all details leading to his death. The police remained vague about how he died, even suggesting that he was carrying some bomb device in his bag that suddenly exploded, just so that they didn’t have to admit that they killed him. They said “a protestor died yesterday night at Sivens.” To us there was no doubt who was truly responsible.

So, the media repeated the cops’ statement, that someone had died, so suddenly everybody heard about the dam construction and started considering it, but the cops had managed to lighten their responsibility in his death.

We were only a few hundred in the streets of Toulouse, one of France’s biggest cities, to claim our rage. I got sad facing how few we were. How few we were, actually realizing how important this was. The last protester that died in France was Malik Oussekiné, in 1986.

He was killed by a group of cops named les voltigeurs (the acrobats), those who rode motorcycles. One had a bat, the other drove, and they beat up protestors after a demo. They beat Malik up so hard that he died. This no longer officially exists in the image that the police present to the public eye, although it does still exist in a different form. They don’t ride motorcycles anymore.

So the project is off the record for some weeks. An E.U. commission opens an infraction procedure against France for neglecting the ecological consequences of the dam on the wetlands. The ecology minister claims that the project is a mistake, and that it should differ from the initial project to satisfy both parties involved. The most recent update we got is: there’ll never be a dam where Rémi died. That they will not build what they first expected to. They’re currently working on the procedure to evict the site. There’s still pressure from those in favor of the dam.

## **Timeline of the ZAD**

**1970** - Inhabitants of Notre Dame des Landes (NDDL) and surrounding villages learn in the newspaper that there is an airport project planned for their area.

**1972** – ADECA created, a local farmers association against the airport, project put on hold.

**2000** – Project re-started.

**2001** – ACIPA created, local people’s association against the airport.

**2007** – Les Rosiers squatted, first political anti-airport squat on the ZAD.

**2009, August** – Climate action camp, week of actions, debates, a group of locals, “the resisting inhabitants,” invite people to stay and occupy to fight the airport. Ten people stay, squat “la Gaite” and start the occupation as a conscious strategy.

**2009, Late** – During a picnic at a worksite to protest drillings and earth samplings, a farmer and a squatter find all the earth samples, two weeks of work, and dump them on the ground. They are arrested and charged with “stealing the earth.”

**2010, August** – First general assembly in NDDL, starting a period of more interaction with locals outside of the ones we knew already.

**2010, Fall** – VINCI named as contractor for the airport.

**2010, November/December** – Public inquiries in Notre Dame, a time for discussing with locals and also trying to block the inquiries from happening.

**2011, February and All Year** – Blocking Biotope (environmental studies company) at least a couple times a week, to take their equipment or make them leave etc, then people started doing actions at their offices, like daytime raids.

**2011, May** – Occupation of the Sabot (farm), first big collective public-callout-type occupation, made in conjunction with the Reclaim The Fields Network. People were encouraged to bring pitchforks.

**2011, June** – Earth sample drillings at the Rolandiere, whole crazy week of actions, the first time that it was like war. Big meetings in a barn lasting all night.

**2011, July** – Occupation of the airport in Nantes with a couple hundred people, fighting in the airport, first time the police really started hurting and arresting people.

**2011, August** – Socialist party (in power) caravan attacked in the afternoon while they were campaigning, caravan destroyed, 4 arrested.

**2011, September** – Tree occupation in a park in the middle of the city to “bring the ZAD to Nantes” and be able to discuss with people. Violently evicted, 35 arrests.

**2011, Fall** – Radio Klaxon created, the pirate radio of the ZAD, (squatting the radio waves of VINCI) operates out of a treehouse a couple nights a week. It becomes a vital mode of communication during the evictions, and is emitting all the time, only to be destroyed by internal conflict in the radio group in the spring of 2013.

**2012, March** – Biggest demo in Nantes until then, 8-10,000 people, collective organization between different parts of the movement. ACIPA, squatters, Greenpeace, political parties, etc.

**2012** – Repression! At least one trial every month, and at the demo outside the trial at least one person arrested every time, meaning always more trials and less energy for more offensive things. Lots of people questioning if they would stay or not.

*“Remember when the judge used to come every Tuesday? Oh yeah that was 2012. And the Action Samba would always go play? Yeah, and just kind of chase him around, annoy the police a bit. But I feel like we used to talk about it every Monday, like ok, what are we going to do for the judge tomorrow?”*

*“It’s funny to imagine the police driving down the road. I remember getting pulled over on my bike and harassed all the time.”*

*“I remember building my treehouse and getting pulled over with my bike trailer full of beans, and they passed all the time in la Saulce, like you would say, oh yeah, there’s a cop car passing again. You would see them almost daily. Now it’s unimaginable.”*

**2012, Summer** – Lots of international meetings/convergences, there was an intersquat, a skillshare, that got interrupted in the middle to go squat a house that was getting boarded up and then I don’t think there were any more discussions.

**2012, October** – Noise Fest. The party them was to have everyone dance on the ground, to flatten it to build a new cabin. *“Ah yeah, where everyone was on LSD?” “I think so, I mostly remember that everyone was fucked up but me. LSD is not a good drug for stompy dancing.”*

**2012, October 16th to November 7th** – Evictions.

**2012, November 17th** – Reoccupation demo, 40,000 people come to rebuild and build a village (la Chateigne) in a day.

**2012, November 24th** – Military police come back for a final eviction and stay, occupying all entrances, exits and crossroads, 24/7 until April, asking for ID several times a day, randomly beating and arresting people, forcing everyone to walk around the crossroads through the mud while being followed with spotlights. They are ambushed from time to time.

*“The first Thursday meeting – which one? The first one after evictions, that huge messy meeting when we were like, right, ok this is a Thursday meeting, and it was kind of horrible but also a turning point, when we decided that we were going to re-establish some kind of stable idea of what the ZAD was. Because there were so many people coming and going all the time, it just seemed crazy to have an inhabitants meeting.”*

Post-eviction wave of successful and united actions of any attempts to further the airport project, strong period when we could do actions with hundreds of people, including local farmers, at night, cause lots of damage, and not face very much legal threats.

**2013, April** – Seme ta ZAD demo to start new agricultural projects on the ZAD (all the old gardens and collective fields having been bulldozed). The police leave the crossroads for the first time, there is a huge party with all kinds of different people for two days in the crossroads, then people find the police one kilometer away and go attack them. They immediately take back the crossroads with extreme violence, some cops get beaten or set on fire, lots of comrades get hurt.

Agriculture becomes an important part of everyday life and also of political organizing. Most agricultural projects operate out of Bellevue, a house squatted by local farmers.

**2014, February** – Demo in Nantes, 50-60,000 people, the police block the path of the demo and it turns quickly into a riot. Giant paper-mache tractor puppet of a Mohawked Salamander (endangered species that is one of the legal reasons for protecting the ZAD). Police station set on fire, tourist and public transport offices destroyed.

**2014, April** – Disagreements between people who want forest to grow back and people who want to harvest hay in the fields to support other struggles. Several long days of meetings, with the people of “the East” making a “non-motorized zone”, effectively dividing the ZAD. Maybe there are too many nuances to put in a timeline, but it was definitely a turning point.

**2014, June/July** – Repression and trials following February demo.

**2014, October/November** – Remi Fraisse killed by the police at the ZAD due Testet, followed by three demonstrations/riots in Nantes over the course of 2 weeks.

## **Transmission from the ZAD de Notre Dame**

*What follows is the transcript of a conversation between Ana, Moonbeam, Sarah and Gaia, four participants in the ZAD de Notre Dame reflecting on their experiences within that struggle.*

**G:** Ok, lessons learned – it’s really easy to be united when the police are evicting us.

**All:** Yeah, surprisingly so, yeah.

**S:** Yeah, it’s really easy to be united with each other but also to get people on our side, generally. Like the media’s a lot more sympathetic with us...

**G:** That you get local farmers saying things like “come and get us.”

**A:** And with this kind of support, and especially local support during evictions, I found it quite surprising how unpredictable it could be, the support, and not only local but farther away, networks of comrades, etc, and how also it was partly years and years of building up commu-

nications and stuff, of preparing for evictions, alarm lists, reoccupation demo... And we felt so unprepared before evictions, but partly it was due to the work that was done before, and partly things you can't really anticipate so much, like how many people are coming from the villages around, and how much it really does touch people, and you never realized before, you thought it could be great. But you do some general assemblies and put invitations in everyone's mailbox but not many people come, and then if evictions are happening or a strong moment like this, for me that was really... Wow.

And for me that was something that you couldn't really count on before, but then you can't totally exclude it either. That this is possible... and also a lesson it's actually putting lots of energy into things, even if you don't really feel they're working out so well, or trying to imagine the scenario of evictions and thinking, "*Whoa there's so many points where it can fail...*" For example, at the end the communication thing worked so super good, and there's lots of things that got put together last minute also, and it could have not worked if they decided to completely cut radio and mobile signals, and it could have not been possible, but at the end it was possible, and worked super great.

M: And even if they cut all the communications, everyone was walking back and forth all the time, I mean it would have been a big problem if they cut the communications, but there were people crossing each other all the time on foot in the fields, and then there was E [local woman] on a horse... ah that was the best part of the forages [June 2011], E on a horse making the rounds and yelling at the cops.

G: Methods to successfully resist an eviction include: having loads and loads of people, being spread out across 8 kilometers by 2 kilometers, having police that don't come with that many people, having years to prepare and knowing the date beforehand...

M: The mud helped a lot though, because they couldn't run in the mud, and would think twice before chasing us through the mud.

S: Maybe that's one thing we learned, gendarmes; not very equipped to run in mud. (*laughs*)

M: And afraid of the forest – like one time with a couple of people making animal noises hiding behind trees and they felt unsafe and left. Oh, maybe that was against Biotope1... And also during evictions, a few people with slingshots in the big forest making noises and the cops just fucked off because they weren't comfortable... they got more comfortable though.

S: I think they got a lot more comfortable when there's 1,000 cops in the forest. They weren't good at walking in the forest though, they fell over a lot.

A: I think it played a lot into our advantage that in the beginning of the evictions, for weeks they were more in this thing of not really arresting people, not really being super offensive, like hurting people. It more started with the attack on the Chat-teigne and the eviction of the big forest, the last eviction of the forest, and before that I don't think they really hurt people badly...

G: But did that help us?

A: Well, it helped in the way that a lot of things were possible, like at the Sabot and around that area, people fighting back against the cops, it would have been still possible with the arrests, but I think it was this thing of OK – you throw all kinds of stuff at them, and they shoot back tear gas grenades and flashballs, well maybe flashballs came later. I don't remember exactly, but mostly teargas, teargas, teargas and then feeling like they hold their position (the police) and don't actually come and get anyone. Like they already have trouble in other parts of the ZAD, just keeping their line, and in that way I think it helped that lots of people joined this quite offensive resistance around the Sabot. And same with other places, like the barricade situations

that were getting quite a lot of people on board. I don't know if it changed in the moment when there were cops disguised in black-bloc that arrested people on a barricade, it was in a time when there were less (manned) barricades but there were still some near the far west and Sabot and stuff.

S: Yeah and also I feel like they chose that tactic, going for two places at once, so there wouldn't be loads of people in one place, so if they've got people in the Sabot when they're not really trying to evict it then they can evict the big forest more easily.

M: And when people tried to leave the Sabot like to make a demo to the Planchettes or go to other places, they were violently and quickly pushed back, which showed that keeping people stuck in the path of the Sabot was to distract them.

G: And anyways, once they started using force, well maybe not arresting, well that was good for them in that it got people scared of being on barricades, but once they started using stronger weapons and more scary eviction tactics, that got loads of bad media and loads of public support for the struggle.

A: That was probably the turning point in evictions.

G: Yeah, why they gave up.

A: And then they couldn't get it under control, the area.

M: And I still think that the mud played a big role, like the machine that was destroying my house, and V's house, it got stuck in the mud several times, and they had to have another one come pull it out, and I heard of other houses where the same thing happened. And places like the Far West and the Gare were protected because they didn't want to lose their machines, have them bubble under the surface, never to be seen again.

Evictions for me changed how I saw... well I was always really anti-journalist, because I felt like whatever we had to say that was important, they were never actually gonna print, they would only print what was possible to recuperate. Like they're gonna print how we eat communally and how we compost our shit.

And they're not gonna detail the political positions that we hold, or our critiques of hierarchy or capitalism. And so I was always anti-journalist, because I felt that if we used them to pass a message, they wouldn't be able to transmit it because what we had to say was directly threatening to their job and social position, so what was the point? And then in evictions, well, I still have the same opinions about journalists, but seeing the difference that they made in publicizing what was happening, made me re-think the utility of talking to them. Also because most of my comrades felt similarly towards journalists and so it was the people that I had the least political affinity with talking to the media, presenting an image that I felt was boring and liberal and lifestyle centered, so I figured if people are gonna talk to them, I might as well do it too.

A: But partly it was us talking to them, and partly it was just them coming, filming, and putting it in the newspaper. And it did change public opinion or whatever, and it's seen as a danger. What I think they wanted to avoid in the beginning with evictions was that it becomes such a big thing, but also the fact that there were so many people that were there and they kind of had to make media coverage on it, and also so much was happening that you could make daily headlines with it, pages and pages in the newspaper, and even without us talking to them, they already made a big media coverage.

But there were actually places for different ways of doing, like I had a urinary tract infection and was feeling super tired for two weeks, and it was possible to still do things even being down or sick or tired, and have a place, like a role – not necessarily a warm nice sleeping place, I mean

I was still sleeping in the hay in the barn with everybody else, but that there was space for not being full-on every day, and knowing there are still all these people around, and everyone gives what they can when they can. It was only ten people, and so you have the feeling that you have to be full-on, if not you can't be there. And maybe it's a fucked up logic and we should put it into question anyway, but the fact that there were so many people and the infrastructure worked so well, it made it possible to step back sometimes.

S: I feel like when we had debriefings after evictions that the thing that nearly everybody said was *"I felt really bad because I wasn't being useful enough," "This was happening somewhere else and there was nothing I could do," "I didn't know what I could do to be useful,"* and all the people that I thought were the most on it, and feeling bad that you were not doing as useful things as them, were in this meeting saying "I felt bad because I wasn't being useful" and it was really telling.

G: And so what other lessons did we learn... [*in ironic voice*] that diversity brings conflict...

M: Oh we didn't talk about the hay. Like the field of disagreement.

G: Well we learned that it's really difficult to organize when you're a completely fluctuating group of people that never show up to the same meetings.

S: Especially when half of them hate meetings...

G: And are in political disagreement with the act of organizing. But that's kind of obvious, maybe it's not a useful lesson to many people.

But in a way, I think it showed that we weren't really in agreement on the main things, that we agreed upon...some people were like "But I came to save nature, and to save nature we need to turn this field back into a forest," and some people said "We came to resist an airport, and to do that we need to support the farmers in struggle as much as possible," and other people said, "We see the ZAD as a possibility, and a place for doing social experiments, including cultivating the land and trying to feed ourselves," and there were all these perspectives that weren't compatible.

S: I think it's also that all of our conflicts are in the open, like I don't think we have more disagreements than you would expect from a group of people that all came together for kind of a common objective, but for lots of different motivations... I feel like, the way that it happened and the way that it is, living here, with the ways of communicating between people, even if we think that we don't communicate that much, I feel like compared to a village with the same number of people, we actually know each other and our points of disagreement quite well, and I feel like that's got something to do with it, that you actually know what everyone else is doing, you hear about it, you react to it, people shout at each other in the street about it, rather than muttering about it to their families in the evenings.

G: Also, a lot of it had to do with really strong emotions, people feeling "I have fought for this, I spent a month defending this place" and even though we say that the evictions were a period of really strong unity in the movement, a lot of people, especially around le Sabot, felt like they were abandoned by the rest of the ZAD, that they fought off the tear gas and police while thinking that the rest of us were safe and comfortable. And after having fought for something, I think there were vague agreements on the eastern barricades as to why they were there, and just the barricades in general, the ZAD didn't care and were getting on with their lives, having meetings, knitting, rebuilding... While they were there on the barricades waiting in case the police came back. And both felt like they had fought for something, so they weren't gonna give it up just like that, and people were saying *"We stopped the police coming to destroy this area, and now we're not gonna just let you come destroy it by driving a tractor down the Chemin de Pinky."* And the idea of,

*“We’ve spent a lot of energy, risked our health, went through a shit period, to gain control over this area, and we won’t just give it back because you say you’ve got something important to do with it.”* A lot of people felt also like the farmers had abandoned them, that this was their struggle (the farmers) originally, but they didn’t come regularly to the barricades, so why should they hand it back...

M: I feel like part of that view, at least what I understood from people that I spoke to in the east and who were at those meetings, came from the fact that they arrived after what I would consider to be the period of evictions. And so yes, they were on the barricades, but they didn’t really have the same experience. And so for people that were here for the evictions, or what I would call the evictions, saw it as being very improbable with the political climate that they would re-attempt to evict right after, and saw it as not being strategic to spend 24/7 on the barricades. And so people decided to do different things with their lives and go about the struggle in other ways, and the people who had just arrived found it strategic to be on the barricades. And so they felt like they had been abandoned, like they had never seen the farmers, didn’t even know who they were, when my experience of eviction was that the farmers were highly present, were making barricades with their tractors, even leaving farm machinery or tractors to protect houses, like in front of the Rosiers, when the cops slashed all the tractor tires, that they definitely put themselves at risk.

G: Yeah, but for the amount of time that people were at Sabot, it was only one time. And there was always a new place being evicted, so the new people and new energy was getting dispersed but never going to the Sabot. I feel like most of the people at Sabot arrived during evictions but weren’t there before. And so they felt like it was really important to do barricades because they felt like that was what the ZAD was all about, and they’d seen it as successful during evictions.

M: I found it hard in the hay discussions and for the non-motorized zone, like that there had already been an agreement the year before, that wasn’t respected, and I found it really strange that people would make an agreement with a farmer, break it, then say, “We want all we’ve taken and more,” and I found it hard to take them seriously because they didn’t really have any bargaining power, and they weren’t enough people to have a rapport de force, so the only thing they had was their word, and they broke it, and then expected people to trust them to make a new agreement. Like, how do you make an agreement with people that break the only agreement you’ve ever made together?

A: Yeah, but a lot of people had totally different ways or ideas of organizing (or not organizing), and so on one side there are people that are used to having meetings and making decisions together, and we count on everyone respecting what we’ve agreed on together. Or at least people who are concerned, or who were there, and also that it’s passed on to those who arrive, and we expect them to respect it too, because we just spent all this time talking about it to find something we can agree on, and on the other hand there are people who don’t want to organize like this at all, who say, “We do as we feel and we decide for ourselves.”

S: I think a lot of it depends on how long people have spent on the ZAD, and I don’t mean it in a patronizing way, like “Oh, you don’t know, you’ve only just arrived.” But it does have an effect, because it depends on where people were before and what they were doing before, but I feel like the idea of being in a place where we’re supposed to be non-hierarchical or there’s like all of these things that you’ve felt oppressed by or all of the rules that you’ve had put upon you for your whole life, and you dream of having a place where that doesn’t happen. And then you come into the ZAD, and somehow you feel like there are rules being imposed upon you, because



there are people having meetings and things are being decided, that you haven't been able to get involved in or you can't find your place in it, and I can totally imagine that people would feel restricted and have the need or desire to rebel against it and get pissed off, and say, "But no, fuck you actually. I'm here because I don't want to be involved in long boring meetings or listen to other people."

Or like taking the piss out of the "ZAD-Elders" because they are rolling their eyes in meetings, saying "*We've already talked about this before,*" but at the same time we've seen it happen really often after being on the ZAD for a while, when someone sees that actually, it is really annoying when there's no rules, and that it is really annoying when everyone does what they want without talking to each other, it's not a good strategy, just for getting on and having nice relationships with each other because you have to have some kind of guidelines about how the way you're living stops other people from living the ways that they want to. I feel like we have more of a stable population now, and it helps because we learn to live together and the things that we disagree on, and that actually it's quite selfish to think you can arrive and do whatever you want, and refuse to talk to people about it.

A: And I do understand, this thing of arriving on the ZAD, and this wish to finally be in a place where there are no rules, where you can supposedly be really "free" and decide "freely" what you want to do. I understand that there is a longing for this place, and a vision that people put into it, that there is a place where all your dream can be coming true, like this is a utopia. But it pissed me off so many times, the attitude that comes with it, especially coming and expecting that it is that way, and maybe not even moving around enough to realize how things work, and how they came to be put into place, and coming and seeing how it is now but not how it came to be, and seeing it as a "liberated area" in some ways, at least for the moment. Or a temporary autonomous zone, or however you want to see it. But not seeing that there was lots of work preceding it, lots of work to put the structures into place, like lots of people who struggled and had many disagreements before you came. But also, it's not easy to come new.

A: For me, it's also on the ZAD where I became the most sensibilized towards this whole idea of nature, and how twisted it is.

S: Well, you can twist it to whatever you want. It's THE argument against vegetarianism – that it's natural to eat meat. And then you're like [*smacks fist into forearm*].

M: Or as an argument against homosexuality.

S: Exactly. I think one thing that upset me about the discussion around the non-motorized zone, in loads of discussions actually, was the territorial aspect. Like during and after evictions I felt quite criticized for concentrating all of my energy into the forest and not really being involved in other ZAD-wide structures. And when I say criticized, I mean by other people, but also by myself. Before but especially since the evictions I've had this feeling of a "ZAD-ness," of wanting things to be available for other people on the ZAD. I don't care if we don't ALL talk about things, I don't think people should have to talk about things they don't want, but I like that there are things that are available to everyone on the ZAD, or things that everyone on the ZAD is invited to, things that we can all share, and for me that's a really important thing, because we're all living in the same place. And in a lot of meetings, like in the "grand moment" meetings, I found myself talking to mainly people in the East. Like when this question was brought up of what decisions do you think are relevant to you, what kind of decisions do you want to be involved in, they were like, "Well it depends where it happens."

If it's a decision that's gonna affect where I live, then I wanna be involved, but if people are gonna do things where they live or in their houses then I don't care, they can do what they want. And it just made me so sad, because for me that's like no longer all thinking of it like a community or an area where we share things or whatever, because if I don't care at all what people do in their homes, then that means I don't consider their home to be my home and that I consider it to be completely separate. That there's some kind of weird border, so I don't care. So people in Bellevue can raise animals, and I don't know, beat their animals and have some kind of weird factory farm, and I won't care because it's not my house.

A: I feel like it's just more rich, it makes more sense politically to see the ZAD as a whole. When we have the non-motorized zone, it's like dividing it up, it takes away from us all sharing land and discussing together how we use it, and what we want to happen here.

M: And it's like, "No, I don't want to leave you alone" (the East) like you do your thing and I do mine. I want to organize together, because we live together, we're in a struggle together. And maybe we don't want the same things, but that's kind of the point. Like we stand to gain so much from each other, from exchanging ideas, like with permaculture I don't want to be in this confrontational standoff of tilling vs. permaculture. I think there's a lot to discuss and learn, but there's just a block. It's like we have to fight someone, so we went from fighting the police to fighting each other.

## **Prison News**

### **Amelie, Fallon, & Carlos Released From Prison**

After just over a year of time spent in prison in Mexico for the alleged involvement of a Molotov attack on a Nissan dealership and an office belonging to the Department of Transportation, the three comrades were released after their charges were dropped due to an appeal process. On April 10th, a letter from Carlos was published in 325.nostate.net declaring his decision to go on the run to defy his conditions of release. Our hearts go to them in a celebration of their release from enclosure.

### **Eric McDavid Released From Prison**

After 9 years spending time in prison after getting set-up by FBI informant "Anna", Eric McDavid was released on January 8th, 2015, 11 years earlier than his original sentence mandated. He's ecstatic and extraordinarily thankful for people's support and the work that people continue to do in supporting prisoners. We are incredibly overjoyed to hear this news, and to be able to publish it far and wide.

## **Technical Authority: Ideology, the Social Construction of Technology, and Technocracy - by Jason Rodgers**

Technology reproduces the ideology of the totality. As a technology proliferates, it changes the people and communities that use it, in subtle but total ways. This point should not be confused with technological determinism. Technology is socially constructed. Technology doesn't produce society. Society produces technology, and technology then produces society. Wolfi Landstreicher argued that technology "always develops within a social context with the explicit aim of repro-

ducing that context. Its form, its purpose and its possibilities are determined by that context, and this is precisely why no technology is neutral” (Landstreicher 250).

This is not an argument that computers are evil. Morality does not play a part in this critique of technology. My primary point is that technology is not neutral, and that the notion of neutrality obscures and mystifies its influence. This is an influence that I find particularly negative in regards to freedom and autonomy.

It is often argued that a technology, such as the Internet, is just a tool. Well, certainly the Internet is a tool, but tools are also not neutral. Tools are also a product of the culture in which they develop, also a social construction. Tools reflect the values of these cultures. Cultures with different value sets create profoundly different tools. Kirkpatrick Sale said:

“Tools come with a prior history built in, expressing the values of a particular culture. A conquering, violent culture – of which western civilization is a prime example, with the United States as its extreme – is bound to produce conquering, violent tools. When U.S. industrialism turned to agriculture after World War II, for example, it went at it with all that it had learned on the battlefield, using tractors modeled on wartime tanks to cut up vast fields, crop dusters modeled on wartime planes to spray poison, and pesticides and herbicides developed from wartime chemical weapons and defoliants to destroy unwanted species” (Sale 262).

I would like to imagine that in a culture not based on domination that a whole new set of tools might develop, vastly different than most that we use today.

Media theorist Marshal McLuhan is often portrayed as a cheerleader for technological change, but actually he had a more nuanced viewpoint. To him, any technological change has at least two aspects, that “Any invention or technology is an extension or self-amputation of our physical bodies” (McLuhan 45). A person does not merely use a tool, the tool uses them. The object changes a person as they use it, allowing them to do certain things and eliminating the need to do others.

Technology causes changes over the entire social terrain. For instance, in technocracy the meaning of words changes. Take the word “expert”, which Neil Postman characterized by saying that “technopoly’s experts tend to be ignorant about any matter not directly related to their specialized interest” (Postman 87). Knowledge is broken down to such a degree that expertise in any facet requires systematic ignorance of all other aspects. With high tech devices, there is the additional dimension of being a product of massive divisions of labor. In a technological society, it becomes impossible to live autonomously. Every aspect of society is broken down and each person builds an isolated aspect. The process of manufacturing these tools remakes the world, through strip mines, economic slavery, and manufacturing processes which release highly toxic chemicals. Green tech is no exception, requiring the same manufacturing processes and alienating labor as any other industrial product.

A certain mythology has built up around technology, a mythology which serves an ideological purpose. Critics of technology are portrayed as being conservative, even as high technology has often been the underpinning of totalitarian regimes. James Carey wrote, “Instead of creating a ‘new future,’ modern technology invites the public to participate in a ritual of control in which fascination with technology masks underlying factors of politics and power” (Carey 195).

The very notion of objectivity, of being able to look at pure data and understand reality, contains a sort of mystification. This mythology has a highly authoritarian basis. It is perfectly compatible with, and even complimentary to, totalitarian regimes. “Information smacks of safe neutrality,” wrote Theodore Roszak, “it is the simple, helpful heaping up of unassailable facts. In that innocent guise, it is the perfect starting point for a technocratic political agenda that wants as

little exposure for its objectives as possible” (Roszak 19). Information is presented as being discrete bits of which one can gather enough to understand reality. Actually, these pieces of data are discovered by cutting the world into certain grids. There are an endless variety of ways that raw existence can be divided. It may be impossible to escape this, but it is important to remember this process and realize it is not some simple objective truth.

Guy Debord said, “Isolation underpins technology, and technology isolates in its turn” (Debord 22). Through technological systems, more and more of our lives are separated from other people. Individuals gradually lose their ties to others. What ties a person has are through the consumption of media. A key point of the anonymous book *Test Card F* was that the problems of media are intrinsic to the technology, not due to content:

*“The media is integral to the maintenance of hierarchical social control. The external models of experts have supplanted our own lived experience. With social life mediated by a bureaucracy of image technicians, communal life has been disrupted and denied; a surrogate, supervised community is the replacement. Under these conditions, a small elite makes the rest of the people dependent on its tutelage [sic] for survival” (anonymous 78).*

This is not individualism. The fact that leftists can characterize capitalism as individualistic demonstrates the poverty of language. The individual is reduced to an isolated component of a collectivist system. The breakdown of community in favor of a massive state corporatism is not individualism.

The reason I often target computers and the Internet is because they are probably the most omnipresent and prevalent of technologies. Computers absorb everything they touch. Other forms of media become computerized. Gradually, more and more goods are digitized. “As the price of computing and bandwidth has plunged,” wrote Nicholas Carr, “it has become economical to transform more and more physical objects into purely digital goods, processing them with computers and transporting and trading them over networks” (Carr 122). Social relationships are also digitized. Lee Siegel wrote, “This new world turns the most consequential fact of human life – other people – into seemingly manipulable half-presences wholly available to our fantasies. It’s a world controlled by our wrist and finger” (Siegel 17). Computers are the dominant technology in everyday life.

Not only are computers the dominant technology, they are the technology of domination. “Unlike most machines, computers do no work; they direct work,” wrote Postman, “They are, as Norbert Wiener said, the technology of ‘command and control’, and have little value without something to control” (Postman 115). Computers allow surveillance and data gathering at a level that would otherwise be impossible. Wolfi Landstreicher wrote, “Cybernetic technology’s ability to process, record, gather and send information nearly instantaneously serves the needs of the state to document and monitor its subjects, as well as its need to reduce the real knowledge of those it rules to bits of information-data-hopping, thus, to reduce the real capacities for understanding of the exploited” (Landstreicher 39). The most boring sorts of computer programs, like a database or a spreadsheet, are the core of effective surveillance. This reveals the utter banality of totalitarianism. The countless uses of technology for authoritarian ends should dispel the utopian mystification surrounding it. It seems clear that, as Nicholas Carr wrote:

*“Computer systems are not, at their core, technologies of emancipation. They are technologies of control. They were designed as tools for monitoring and influencing human behavior, for controlling what people do and how they do it. As we spend more time online, filling databases with details of*

*our lives and desires, software programs will grow every more capable of discovering and exploiting subtle patterns in our behavior” (Carr 191).*

Looking at the origin of computer systems may help to explain why this is the case. The Internet finds its origin in cold war military systems, such as SAGE, a network of radar centers built across the US connected by “some 1.5 million miles of dedicated phone lines” (Lubar 148). Computers and the Internet replicate the ideology of the military-industrial complex from which they arose. As they spread, they transform society more and more towards this regimented form.

None of this is meant to outline what anyone should do, how they should live, or what technology they should use. Most people live directly within the technological society, and survival will require some use of its technology. However, by critically examining technology, it is possible to determine which are personally distasteful and unpleasant, through which one could refuse them to increase the quality of their life. Furthermore, this will hopefully contribute to the development of tactical anti-media and an awareness of pressure points on which to focus resistance.

Should we ever be lucky enough to see the toppling of authoritarian society, technology would go with it. Without coercion and social control, there would be no one willing to do the alienating and demeaning labor required to maintain industrial society. Without wage slave shit workers and literal slave labor, it cannot be maintained. The society that would arise would certainly have some sort of tools and technology, but it would not be the sort one would generally call “tech”. It would most likely be low tech, the sort of objects that could be created by individuals and individual-scale communities.

## **It’s All Falling Apart: Dispatches From The End of the World**

*Civilization is the sum of many parts, the culmination of a series of different processes (for example, mediation and domestication), which have brought us to this point. Its end will likely be the same. As much as we might wish to, we won’t see it all end with a heroic struggle in which some version of “we” emerges triumphant and returns to the land. These stories are symptoms of a world stepping quickly towards the void of a humiliating and boring existence, enhanced by each new gadget sold to us as some miracle cure for the all-encompassing dread of daily life. Occasionally, the land and its inhabitants cry out, but for the most part, it’s a slow slog. Civilization is a morass: there are no easy ways out. If one takes the time to look, the signs that something is amiss are all around.*

### **First Man-Made Biological Leaf May Carve Path for Colonizing Space**

*www.dezeen.com, July 25th, 2014*

A synthetic biological leaf has been developed which absorbs water and carbon dioxide to produce oxygen just like a plant, potentially enabling long-distance space travel. The “leaf” consists of chloroplasts suspended in a matrix made out of silk protein. Like the leaves of a plant, all it needs to produce oxygen is light and a small amount of water.

### **Death Of Northern White Rhino Leaves Only Six in Existence**

*www.thinkprogress.org, October 19th, 2014*

Suni, a northern white rhino at a wildlife conservancy in Kenya, has died at 34-years of age. Suni was the first-ever of his kind to be born in captivity, and while his father died of natural causes at the same age, the death of Suni is yet to be determined, “The species now stands at the brink of complete extinction, a sorry testament to the greed of the human race,” said the Ol

Pejeta Conservancy, which houses four of the rhinos left in the world. From the story: “Formerly found in central countries in East and Central Africa south of the Sahara, the northern white rhino was decimated by poaching, with their wild population reduced from around 500 to 15 in the 1970s and 1980s. In Asia, rhino horn was used as a traditional medicine and is often now used as a status symbol of success, especially in Vietnam. It can sell for more than gold or platinum.”

#### **Couple Dies While Trying To Take Selfie / Man Dies While Taking Selfie with Gun**

*www.huffingtonpost.com, August 11th & 14th, 2014*

A couple stepped past a protective barrier along a Cliffside in an attempt to take a picture of themselves, only to fall 260 feet into the ravine below and ultimately, their death. Their children, aged 5 and 6, witnessed the fall. Four days prior, a 21-year-old man from Mexico City died while taking pictures of himself with a loaded gun.

#### **Tanzania Is Evicting the Maasai so Dubai’s Royal Family Can Hunt Lions and Elephants**

*www.salon.com, November 17th, 2014*

40,000 Maasai people will be evicted from their homeland in Tanzania, because the Dubai royal family has bought it with the intention of using it as a reserve to hunt big game. Last year, the Tanzanian government had resisted the purchase, proposing instead a “wildlife corridor” dedicated to hunting near the Serengeti national park. However, the deal will still reportedly go through, and the Maasai will have to leave by the end of the year. There is a stall on this now, but the threat is still hanging over the Maasai’s heads.

#### **Facebook Argument Spurs Pickaxe Attack**

*www.mlive.com, December 17th, 2014*

A 21-year-old Holland Township, MI man was hospitalized after getting into an argument on Facebook over a former girlfriend. The suspected assailant and a friend drove to the man’s home armed with a pickaxe and baseball bat, delivering facial and head injuries.

#### **3-D Printer Now Prints Food**

*www.cnn.com, December 31st, 2014*

From CNN: “Currently, the device only prints food (squeezed into stainless steel capsules), which must be then cooked as usual. But a future model will also cook the preparation and produce it ready to eat. Users will also be able to control the device remotely using a smartphone, and share their recipes with the community. “This is real food, with real fresh ingredients, it’s just prepared using a new technology.”

#### **Newsflash! Humans Are Destroying the Earth**

*www.news.vice.com, January 16th, 2015*

From Vice: [...] “In 2009, a group of 28 scientists from around the world came together to create the “planetary boundaries framework,” which identified nine processes that need to be monitored in order to maintain life on Earth. The processes were ozone depletion, biodiversity loss, chemical pollution, climate change, ocean acidification, freshwater composition, land systems change, nitrogen and phosphorous flows, and atmospheric aerosol loading. Crossing the recommended thresholds for any of these processes could generate abrupt and possibly irreversible environmental changes. Humans have surpassed the safe threshold for four of these boundaries, researchers say.

#### **Mother Calls Cops On Son Who Won’t Stop Playing Xbox**

*www.usatoday.com, January 16th, 2015*

A mother who couldn’t get her son to listen and turn off his video game called local Post Falls, ID police, who sent an officer to have a chat with the child. The son eventually turned off the

Xbox after a conversation about respecting his mother. The officer hopes the interaction “left a lasting impression.”

#### **Kenya Police Tear-Gas Children Over Playground Protest**

*www.cnn.com, January 22nd, 2015*

School children and social-justice activists held a protests against the removal of their playground by a powerful politician and were inevitably met with violence from police. The private development company who has the title to the land now plans to build a parking lot for a hotel on the land. The protestors tore down sections of the wall that had been put up around their playground, and were later shot at with teargas by police.

#### **Measles Outbreak At Disneyland**

*www.news.vice.com, January 22nd, 2015*

Disneyland in California was ground-zero for a measles outbreak earlier this winter, with forty-two out of the fifty-nine total cases being linked to the so-called “Happiest Place On Earth,” five of those cases which were employees. After the United States had supposedly eliminated measles in 2000 after a 40-year-long vaccination campaign, the re-emergence has resurrected the debate on vaccines, which have proven to have devastating effects like causing brain tumors. According to the National Vaccine Information Center, the federal government has paid out more than \$3 billion in settlements to people who claim injuries from vaccines over the past 25 years.

#### **A Tiny Mussel Is About To Destroy The Amazon River’s Biodiversity**

*www.news.vice.com, February 7th, 2015*

The golden mussel, native to China, arrived in Argentina in the early 1990’s via ballast water ships use to stay afloat, and its population soared within two years from five organisms per square meter to 82,000 per square meter. From ViceNews: “...Attempts to kill the mussel with chemicals carry environmental risks and aren’t guaranteed to solve the problem. The mussels can sense the toxicants in the water and slam their valves shut, remaining in a high-stakes game of hide-and-seek for weeks at a time.” Demetrio Boltovskoy, who has studied the golden mussel for 20 years, told ViceNews, “I think the solution is to learn to live with the mussel, and get used to it and try to fight it in plants, in industrial plants, in power plants, where it’s truly powerful,” “In the wild, we have lost the battle.”

#### **Woman’s Hair Gets Eaten By Robot Vacuum Cleaner**

*www.theguardian.com, February 8th, 2015*

52 year-old South Korean woman takes nap on floor after taking a break from household chores, including running her robot vacuum cleaner. The vacuum cleaner came upon the woman’s hair while she napped on the floor, and began to suck it up. Firefighters freed the woman from further agony.

#### **Toxic Orange Cloud Spreads Over Catalonia After Chemical Blast**

*www.theguardian.com, February 12th, 2015*

From The Guardian: “More than 60,000 residents in north-eastern Spain have been told to stay indoors, after an explosion at a chemical warehouse sent a dense orange cloud into the sky that hovered over their municipalities for hours. As the cloud settled over of six municipalities in central Catalonia, including Igualada, Jorba and Odena, Spain’s emergency services told residents to close their windows and seal off any means of ventilation. “This is not a game,” they tweeted. “Don’t put yourself in danger to take pictures of the cloud outside.”

#### **Robot Teacher Helps Students At Grand Rapids School**

*www.woodtv.com, March 18th, 2015*

Every day, teacher Amy O’Neil commutes to high school in Michigan and two other states... via Internet chat and a robot. O’Neil helps students one-on-one using a \$6,000 robot that moves on wheels from student to student, and classroom to classroom. Student Maddie Hoffman said, “When I first saw her coming right here, I was kind of like, ‘Um, OK, what is that?’” However, in the end, she said it’s actually “pretty cool... because you get more one-on-one time with it instead of a big classroom.”

## **The Nameless Raccoon – by aragorn!**

As important as donning the cloak, coat, or hat that makes one as of the Raccoon people (and separate from the gray) is the process of taking a name. Unlike the world of the gray where you are inflicted with labels that come from horrible stories of sacrifice and vengeance, the self-naming of the Raccoon people is a time for celebration and game. Usually names are taken from favored things and can tell a short story of an accomplishment or friend.

There was one Raccoon person who was so broken by the gray that this person refused to take on a new name. They knew that the gray would come one day and wanted to guard against that by being untraceable. If you have no name you have no shadow, and in a world that remembers everything only those who live in, as opposed to have, shadow will be free. Or so our nameless friend believed.

As it turns out, having no name can be a real challenge. You cannot be referred to, you cannot be called to dance or sing, and while the gray may not find you, neither can any of the Raccoons, Bears, or people outside of a very small group. This may be the best way to live in a world so very gray, but it is also a way that hasn’t much room for spark, dissonance, and the loving chaos that the Raccoons are known for.

The nameless Raccoon became referred to as just that. A wave of the hand and everyone knew who you were talking about. A nod, wink, and a ‘one-who-must-not-be-named’ foretold the nameless one’s arrival. A hug and an ‘until we see you again’ their departure. In a world without gray, it could be that none of us have names, but until then there is the Raccoon-with-no-name.

## **Blank 8 – by Noah Bernes, age 11**

*The forest is everywhere but now.  
A stark contrast to where I am is where I was,  
The difference of today is yesterday.  
Birds chirping is where I was,  
Steel and glass is where I am.  
The trees, like a beacon of life, shooting into the air,  
Are now the smoke, a beacon of technology and automation.  
Wolves are replaced by rats, and life by steel.  
The sky at night now holds not stars, but planes.  
The city is everywhere but then.*



## Chronicle for Black Seed

I have something to say about my father and the rest of us. Given our context, who I imagine you are, what I imagine our context is, I suppose a lot of you hate your fathers. Or never knew them. Or both. Or that others of you have fathers that love you or treat you well enough, but you can find no way to translate your life to theirs, so there is just a communication gap between you. Asshole fathers, conservative fathers, liberal fathers, absentee fathers. In any case, I get along well enough with my father, and that is how this example moves me, because I am that rare case, getting along well enough with him, feeling able to say so, to write this out; maybe sharing something with him that he and I don't share with a lot of others, a way of speaking, a sense of humor. Look, in the last ten years though, something's happened to him. As long as I can remember, he has been concerned with the doings of the world's governments, and this concern has led him to stay informed. A lot of people do this, read the news. If you are old enough you might remember this gesture: someone's face hidden behind the newspaper as they read silently, then, still holding it open, folding down the top half to make some sort of comment – a lot of people did this.

This had to do with a way of responding to what he was taking in: he would read, and when something was bad in a glaringly-obvious way, sometimes upsetting but usually egregiously wrong, hypocritical, or transparently propagandistic, he would fold down the top of the paper and say something. He would usually read out loud the part that really set him off, and make sure you knew what was going on with the world and with him. One thing about this behavior is that it is one-way. At least in my place there was only one newspaper, only one World or Nation section to get mad about, and he had it. What was it all about? As I recall, the informational content was very low; it was mostly a kind of moral lesson. It's difficult now to know how I heard it. I suppose that in some ways I learned the lesson.

Given who I imagine who you are, and what I imagine our context is, this remembered scene I'm narrating is now strange to us both, because it was staged as outrage, and it is as outrage, not as morality, that I ultimately inherited it. You might ask how. By learning it too well, passing through a hyper-moral phase of denunciation. I got stuck there for a while. Of course, one can get stuck in the outrage as well as the hypermorality and the denunciation. By stuck, I mean having no other form of understanding what is happening, no other way of being by oneself or with others, dwelling in hyperbole and exaggeration. Communities form like this, communities of outrage, of hypermorality, of denunciation, of course, united in their forness and againstness, though not really united at all, and so maybe not communities at all in the end.

So what I am trying to say, first, is that whatever kind of fathers you did or did not, do or do not have, I don't think you are so distant from my story. Though we – you, and me at some times – have managed to hide such proximity by being against, denouncing. We have denounced, for example, something someone (not us) called patriarchy, which has to do with fathers but at a certain remove of abstraction – the remove making the denunciation functional. Anyhow, one could say that in my case, and maybe in your case, what defined us against real and imaginary fathers, and what brought us together as people so defined, was first of all a moral lesson learned and expressed as hypermorality and denunciation. In my case, the moral lesson eventually transformed, decoded almost, into outrage. The second thing I will say, then, is that this memory is not an entirely-bad one, that there was some againstness in his moral lesson that I am ok with having inherited, though my style – my style is quite different.

All of that for background. Now here's what happened; it didn't happen all at once. Slowly, he began lengthening his interventions. I didn't live at home anymore, and I would call to say hello – and because I thought it would make them happy, my father and my mother, to get the call. And when he and I would be on the phone, he would ask me some trivial question or another about what I was doing – always what I was doing and not what I was thinking – and after a pause, he would launch into a lengthy monologue. My father is not an asshole, and so I cannot call it a rant, a vicious rant. It was not an irrational thing, at least not from within the monologue, which was like his newspaper outbursts of old but engorged, entirely engorged in terms of the informational content. He was no longer reading aloud; rather, he was condensing, rehearsing fact after fact, and then interpretation after interpretation, gleaned from books, television, newspapers, and, as the years passed, the internet as well. The moral outrage was there as well, but it was entirely channeled into the recitation of facts and interpretations, which he would discharge at me with no regard for my interest or perspective. If I so much as suggested that I differed from him, he would respond by increasing the volume, both the volume of his speech and the volume of facts. It was easier to let him go on, and go on he did, for hours at a time. It was exhausting and confusing, even more so because I had long since abandoned the attitudes of hypermorality and denunciation.

I understood still that my father had taught me a moral lesson, a moral lesson that I had applied to non-moral ends by studying its technology in moments of hypermorality and denunciation (also I just wanted some relation to my father that was less constrained, less ridiculous, but that may not matter much to you). So if at first I learned the moral lesson and then exaggerated it into hypermorality and denunciation, then afterwards I maybe taught myself how to grasp what in it was sheer outrage (for example, from anger at this or that government to hatred of all government, and from that to... well, I suppose you know this story). Now he too had changed. I was inclined to see my self-teaching as voluntary, but I couldn't see what changed in him that way. The moral lesson and the outrage hidden within it were, whatever else they were, lively, seeking engagement. This new speech was more mechanical, and it didn't seek anything except an ear to hear it – a jack to be plugged into, as it were.

I'll begin again and tell you about a dream I had, in which my father confessed to me that he believed in UFOs. The nightmarish element was his fear, the fear in his voice and the contortion of his face as he told me about something he had secretly held onto for his whole life. There were no UFOs in the dream, as there are no UFOs in this world, not for me and not for him; at least, I mean no archetypal flying saucers from space with alien pilots who are inexplicably interested in some or all of us. That was not the nightmare. The nightmare was that this reasonable man turned out to be less than reasonable, and realized it, and to tell me was frightening in itself, frightening to both of us. I remember this dream now and then. Maybe it was a way of telling myself something about him, a sort of dream analysis in which it is not the dream that is analyzed, but the dreamer who is the analyst. It happened years before the shift I explained above, from the shorter outraged remark to the lengthy mechanical monologue, but in some way it came to explain that shift to me. The dreamer that I was analyzed him ahead of time, and concluded that after the shift he would be speaking out of anxious fear. I don't mean the fear of being hurt or seeing something horrible, but something more diffuse: the fear of having your world unravel before you. UFOs meant, first of all, a world-shattering reality flying overhead. There are still people who believe in UFOs in the flying saucer way, so let me be clear about this part: it is of little interest for someone who is already paranoid in their thinking to add one more suspicion,

one more superstition, one more fantasy explanation to their hoard. It certainly has a lot to do with certain marginal political circles in this country and how they form, communities united in their paranoia, which also tears them apart, so that they are maybe not really united at all in the end. United maybe in listening to some radio show or visiting some website, and placing their bumper stickers on their truck and feeling it's brave to do that, imagining an FBI agent taking a picture of the bumper that includes their license plate in the frame; yes, all this is done in concert but there is no chance for any unity in it, and it is another form of sadness. I am more interested in my father's case, which is to say two things, first, what I already wrote, that in the moral lesson I learned something, something that does not authorize but in some sense allows me these analytic words; second, that I do care about what happens to him, who he was, who he is, what he is becoming. I think depending on who reads these pages the paranoiac's story or my father's maybe be more appropriate, but I have almost nothing to say to the paranoiac other than a dim and quiet good luck, good bye. I am wondering if my father has become someone to whom I have nothing to say, and I am wondering that in part for reasons that concern us all, those of us stretched between analysis and outrage. In my father's case, what the dream analyst in me decided is that the shift came when his world unraveled, and the fear overtook the outrage.

For my father, outrage was not the capacity to act; he ceased to act politically, at least in any sense you or I would care about, long before I was born. But intelligent speech and outraged comment, fatherlike though they were in genre, were still effective actions in the sphere of family, and that is how I learned their lesson, unfatherlike and nonfamilial though I may be. I mean that his speech referred back to a situation where friends, not relatives, would gather and discuss events for the purpose of taking action. Analysis. I suppose I heard the echo or the memory of all that in his tone. After the shift, though, the tone changed. As I said, it became more mechanical, as recitations from memory can be; it also became more desperate, as though the only thing that could be done against the outrageous is to recite and repeat crimes and transgressions. Maybe you can understand what is so disturbing for me in all this, because it is not that my father would be unraveling and becoming more paranoid. He would have to have had that tendency to begin with. No, I think he is realizing, as rationally as he can, that his world is unraveling, that, as some say, the world is unraveling. That there is no analysis to be done, or that analysis is useless. But he realizes this unconsciously, or at least silently, privately, and the only interpretation that the few of us he talks to get to hear is the lengthy fact-filled monologue. The facts and interpretations float freely, as though awaiting an analysis that would give them a form and orient one to outrage, and of course, action; but the analysis never comes, as though the horizon of meaning had fallen away entirely. As though it had silently been acknowledged that analysis is useless in the end, and that we were closer to that end than we might have thought, or wanted to think; that what we were doing, then, was happening in a space of denial, denial of that uselessness, of the catastrophe of sense...

The unraveling of his world; the insistence of fear when outrage and analysis failed to coalesce, the denial of it all... Which comes first? Is one the cause of the other? Are they both the cause of the third? Or vice versa? I have no idea how to answer these questions; I need another dream image, but I have no yet had one come to me. The dream analyst is out. So I will set them aside, the questions, and write some about the rest of us. Here is an image: picture a meeting, people gathered in a circle or semicircle in a small room. Someone is speaking there, at length, and the others react and sometimes respond, attentively or not so attentively, acknowledging the too-long speech and making plans. Now subtract the speaker: simply make the figure disappear, leaving

the rest of the people at the meeting. Picture everyone still gathered there, still doing just what you had them doing before, looking in the same direction, now at nothing – still acknowledging, still making plans. Or inattentively ignoring nothing, inattentive now to no one.

For my father, the world is unraveling in the only sense that matters to him since his newspaper days: geopolitically. His outrage was based on a sense of shared values and expectations, on the reality of morals and the transmissibility of the moral lesson; on a horizon of meaning, then, about what sensible people do, what is after all possible, or desirable. If the web of relations that seems to hold the world together geopolitically is so corroded that there no longer seems to be any sensible people, the sensible people are a tiny or powerless minority, the world is unraveling. Or if those relations are so corroded that the moral lesson, or the aesthetic or mathematical lesson for that matter, are no longer transmissible, then the world is unraveling. This is fearful and, unable to admit it, he holds out facts and interpretations in hopes that they will be caught up in a more distant, or future, or virtual web. Or perhaps it is far worse and he is in some sense more gone from the scene, just feeling himself speak to echo the old scenes of analysis and outrage with friends and family, talking to me not because he thinks I will inherit the moral lesson but because it feels good to remember, feels better than to admit what's happened to the world.

And the rest of us? For some of us, the planet is unraveling in the ever-present sense we have of the destruction of animals, plants and places. For others, it is social life or social hope that is unraveling in past and present genocide, extermination, ultraviolence, all these relentless ways humans have of hunting other humans. There are also some among us who might say that they never had a planet or a world, never inherited or assembled one, and so what is unraveling or unraveled for them is the very idea, the social part, communicating with others who hold that there is something shared. And even for those of us in this place, we had a childhood, we had illusions. That we never had a world is a retroactive realization. So there are many of us, the rest of us, and we might share this sense that the world is unraveling. It is a metaphor, of course: unraveling, a simple enough image, but with the planet the metaphor is materialized, as what cuts into the webs of relations are manufactured things, things that break apart eventually and, in their breakdown, pollute the webs of relations that make up the planet. This is why, for me, there is an echo, sometimes dim, sometimes deafening, of the shift that affected my father in all of our doings, if it's true that between analysis and outrage we stretch our actions and our lives. I saw something of myself and the rest of us in all of that, so I made my father the case in a clinical sense; I studied him here with you to get a sense of a pathology that's also ours. A little bit of neurosis (obsessiveness) on his side, and maybe a little bit of psychosis (paranoia) on yours.

A simpler way to put some of this, though, would be to say that the monologue comes from loneliness. My father had a political speech once, with his friends, maybe comrades; later, he had morally driven remarks for his family; now he gathers facts and interpretations largely in solitude, registering the world's unraveling. I wrote that when he begins speaking to me, I only get the dimmest sense of moral outrage; it's rather the fear, the obsessiveness over facts and interpretations disguising the fear. Now remember that this was happening over the phone, nowadays over the computer in real-time streams. When it happens face-to-face the technological mediation is still there to be felt, in the improbable quantity of facts and interpretations, and in the disconnection that barely lets the fear be felt as it overcomes, overshadows what's left of the moral outrage that presumably motivated all of this to begin with, back with his friends. I said that his outrage used to be about the propagandistic element in the news, the shitty lies so transparently reprinted as if to see if anyone noticed or cared (because even then it was less about

convincing through lies than seeing if anyone would ask a question or contest the lie) – so there was always this healthy skepticism in his performance with the paper. And now after the shift it is not as though that is gone and he has become propagandistic. It is so much stranger, the loneliness is absolute. The facts and interpretations, the obsessive recitation: there is no propaganda in it. He never spoke in slogans, still doesn't ( I view that as something I learned from him, difficult to understand and retain like all negative lessons, which is why part of my apprenticeship was to try on slogans for size in moments of hypermorality and denunciation). He still won't speak in slogans, but it's clear that the data stream is one-sided; I mean that it has a small set of sources and echoes their terminology, their paradigms, their limits, their placement of the facts in the space of their interpretations. He is telling their story not through ideology and propaganda but through information, through being informed. And because information is not a story, not even that skeletal story we call analysis, and so neither creates nor nourishes bonds, in all that the fear also comes through. It's a solitary fear mutated into fear of being misinformed, his fear about himself and others being misinformed (this being one nominal reason for his expression of all this in my direction, another being habit) – all of that as the armature and structure of denial, the impossible, pathetic response to the unspeakable world-catastrophe.

Analysis and outrage have always needed something like information, probably just perception and awareness, but you know very well what I mean when I talk about this other sense of information, its panic or overload. Information that accumulates endlessly and evades your attempts to analyze it. If you want to be outraged about something there are endless examples, endless real and even endless fake examples. If you are already outraged there is plenty to be outraged about... but that is where the fear comes in, the sense that this is all entirely out of control, and thus the unraveling. Out of control hardly means free, hardly means liberated or liberating. My father is indeed free to gather endless facts and interpretations as you are free to endlessly photograph yourself, or briefly express your clever opinions on multiple platforms. You may also liberally add facts and interpretations as you propagate your images and opinions. So freedom means little here, that freedom is the right word, although maybe you prefer liberation because it sounds less American, or qualify freedom with total so as to mark a real difference.

It is easy enough to say that my father is not an elder, since I have not presented him as one and since in our context, what I imagine our context to be, there are generally no elders. So, with or without me this silent fearful cry may go unheard. And it is easy enough to describe the fear, the almost panic behind the hoarding of facts and interpretations as something generational and technical, as someone of a newspaper generation responding to the internet. Something like that is of course at stake, and here I am discussing it in the pages of a newspaper, published by people who presumably think there is something to this sort of paper media. It would be where analysis and outrage are expressed in a way that also encompasses gestures such as forming a pile, getting passed out, being tucked under an arm or in a bag, and of course being spread open and read. Maybe even the remark over the fold I was referring to earlier. All these gestures amass and around or through them people amass. Communities form this way, communities of outrage, of hypermorality, of denunciation, of course. United in their for-ness or against-ness, though perhaps not really united at all and so maybe not communities at all in the end. I wonder about this not just because I think the technical means are failing us, not merely because we have so little serious analysis of the media we obsessively return to, but because there is also this thing I refer to when I write that my father's world is unraveling, or that fear has overtaken outrage.

My father accumulates facts and interpretations and the rest of us accumulate something as well. For example, we take action and document our actions in little notes, more or less secret notes, written in a special code. We write these notes mostly to each other, and find many platforms ready for the uptake of these notes, so we go on writing them, and often enough it seems the actions are done so the note can be written. And the note is written so the community may be united, though now I wonder if it is bound in this way, and so whether it is a community in the end. I know more than one person troubled by this kind of unraveling who studiously avoids the word community as a result, replacing it with a synonym whose similarity they avidly deny. Are you, are we, gathered together in the hope that this is all going somewhere worthwhile, united in for-ness and against-ness, or at least in agreement occasionally enough to pretend that we have made or found a community of outrage, of hypermorality, of denunciation (though not really united at all, and if it is pretend, then maybe not a community at all in the end)?

If the elder my father could speak here, if he could rid himself of his fear, he would say: train yourself in the suspension of belief. If the elder I may become could speak now, he might say: rid yourself of fear; first of all, see the sadness in your compulsive repetitions. But here and now are world events and maybe what I am saying is that the world we share is unraveling, though we act in denial of that fact. The dream analyst is still out, so here is a final image: there are bodies in the street, not corpses, but active, militant bodies, so this is the site of action. They are lined up against something, it is a barrier, a wall or fence, and they've brought tools, sledgehammers and boltcutters, to attack it, to tear it down, to get at whatever or whoever is on the other side. I need you to picture this as a smoky scene, there is a lot of dark smoke everywhere, so you can barely see the barrier. Mostly, you see the bodies going at it, and you hear their work, their destructive labor. A chaotic noise. Now, in your imagination, subtract the barrier – this shouldn't be hard, it was barely there. Leave them all there, let them keep attacking the nothing left where the barrier was. Picture that. And now, one more step: remove the noise, watch it all happen in silence.

## **The Bear vs. The Mob – by aragorn!**

In the not so distant past, there was a day that will live on in memory and song. It is still talked about today as if it happened only yesterday. During this amazing day, the air was very crisp, a whisper of the first winter breeze. The day is remembered because of a tragedy. This tragedy was a tragedy for the gray, and has since been inflicted upon the people as the justification to end all justifications. But on the day itself, it was difficult to distinguish between something that should terrify the gray, and something that should scare people too. The people didn't help matters much. Always wary of the gray, they sent up a great alarm, that we were next, that the end was nigh, and that much more was coming for us and for others. A gathering was called of all the people in the area. On the agenda was the hope that we could turn this day into a chance to work together on a common project, to use this opportunity for ourselves, rather than to just run and hide. The gathering worked out as many do. The people were in full regalia, Raccoon, Bear, Beaver, and Salmon People. People were there who you almost never see, except for during special occasions, like when gray attacks. While there was a happy atmosphere because of seeing each other, it was tempered with the fear of the gray.

The people are generally of two minds regarding the gray. They either believe that the gray is watching their every move and therefore they must take every precaution to seem innocuous, or

they believe that the gray, out of ambivalence, ignores the people entirely. Either way, the people tend to both over-and under-estimate the gray. The people tend to respond to the gray, rather than to put the gray into the situation of having to respond to them.

“What should we do?” asked the Beaver person who sat in the center of the room. Simple questions often have unforeseen consequences, and this one was no different. Just as the people were of two minds regarding the gray, they were of several minds regarding the role of the people in defeating the gray. The question was never whether or not the gray should end, but how. Simple questions often hide not-so-simple things. And talking about not-so-simple things isn’t easy, and is usually avoided, even by the people. This is where the Bear People come in. In times of difficulty they can be relied on to make one thing very clear. It may not be the thing that they intend, in fact often the Bear-person-who-speaks-truth is blamed for it, rather than celebrated, but in times of difficulty Bear People roar and everyone listens. During this meeting the Beaver people were confused about what to do, but knew that something had to be done; something had to be built, to block the torrent of the gray, but they were wrong. The gray both couldn’t be stopped, it was only capable of running itself down.

When our friend the Bear Person roared that day, no one wanted to hear it. They chased the Bear out of the room. They proceeded to holler that the Bear should be ignored, that their confusion was actually far more coherent than the Bear’s protestation. But they didn’t end up building anything new. They didn’t stand in front of the gray as it rolled over anything in its path, and eventually, the gray slowed down and found something else to do.

## Wild Interventions

*We share the following events not as an attempt to speak for our non-human friends or the earth, but rather in recognition that we are not alone. There are those who have been against civilization from the start. We share their passion and howl alongside them in rage. We do not aim merely to celebrate these acts of violence, and certainly do not wish to condemn them. When “wild animals” attack campers, they do so because their homes and being are under pressure of annihilation. These stories function as an acknowledgement of the ongoing war of the civilized versus the wild, sometimes spectacular and sometimes mundane, but always a war.*

### **Selfies With Bears Prompt Warning From Park Rangers**

*www.npr.org, October 31st, 2014*

Photographs of people posing with a bear in the background have started to appear on social-networking website Instagram, and have prompted park rangers to issue warnings specific to the new phenomenon. “Wild bears are unpredictable and could attack.”

### **Unidentified Feline Loose Near Disneyland Paris**

*www.foxnews.com, November 14th, 2014*

A large cat that was mistaken for a tiger was spotted in the neighborhood of Montevrain, about 25 miles east of Paris, and sparked a search that involved 200 police and military soldiers, including a helicopter. Police and soldiers were armed with tranquilizer guns for the hunt, which was reported to have lasted two days. There have been no reports of the feline’s capture.

### **In Russia, You Don’t Ride Plane, Plane Rides You**

*www.rt.com, November 26th, 2014*

Freezing temperatures in Igarka, Russia kept a plane's wheels stuck frozen to the ground and prevented it from lift-off, until the 74 passengers voluntarily got off the plane to help lush it down the takeoff runway.

#### **Fascist Man Mauled By Lions At Zoo After Entering Enclosure**

*www.mirror.co.uk, December 7th, 2014*

A 45-year-old man in full fascist regalia entered the lion enclosure at a zoo in Barcelona, Spain and was consequently attacked by a lion and two lionesses who pulled him into the service tunnel. He was rescued by zoo staff, firemen, and police who were able to push the animals back with water hoses and fire extinguishers, and then rushed to the hospital.

#### **Deer Attacks Man After Being Shot With Arrow**

*www.fdlreporter.com, January 2nd, 2015*

A 72-year-old man was injured when he was attacked by the deer that he had wounded with an arrow. While going through some thick brush, the deer leaped out and went after him, striking him in the leg with her head. He was transported to the hospital via ambulance.

#### **Snowstorm Causes Massive Car Crash in Michigan**

*www.cnn.com, January 10th, 2015*

A whiteout and slippery roads caused a huge pile-up on Interstate Highway 94 in Michigan, involving nearly 200 vehicles in a chain-reaction crash. Visibility was so bad that drivers could not see already-stalled out and crashed vehicles, building on the wreckage. A truck carrying fireworks was involved, causing a fire, and another truck carrying formic acid also crashed and damaged part of the highway, due to its contents.

#### **Sperm Whale Engulfs Divers With "Poonado"**

*www.vice.com, January 23rd, 2015*

A group of divers found themselves swimming in a sea of poop, as a sperm whale they were swimming close to decided to crash their photo-opportunity. The divers were on an expedition to photograph whales, when the subject of their pursuits released what one of the divers called a "poonado", not stopping until a 100-foot-die cloud of its feces had coated the divers and their equipment. From Vice: "Some believe the torrent of rusty nuggets was a little-known defense mechanism, triggered by the proximity of the divers. On the other hand, it could have just been a spastic, diarrhetic beast – that's how little we understand about whales and their insane, magical shits."

#### **Coyotes Attack Horses At Lapeer County Sherriff's Mounted Department, Killing One**

*www.abc12.com, January 30th, 2015*

Over the last week of January, coyotes attacked horses at the County Sherriff's Mounted Department in Lapeer County, Michigan twice, killing one of the horses and badly injuring the other. One of the horses suffered a two-foot gash on her side. "The owners of the farm said they saw the horses running around startled Friday morning. They went outside to see what was going on, and said they saw coyotes chasing their horses."

#### **Groundhog Bites Wisconsin Mayor On Groundhog's Day, Confusing Weather Prediction**

*www.weather.com, February 3rd, 2015*

As the Wisconsin Mayor bent over to "listen" to the groundhog's weather forecast pertaining to an early spring or long winter, the groundhog (named Jimmy) took a bite out of his ear. This unprecedented act of hostility between the mayor had properly translated Jimmy's prediction for the arrival of the coming Spring. The futility in attempting to understand all of the underlying



factors in this incident seems boundless, yet let us celebrate our comrade's brave attempt at freedom. Viva la Groundhog.

### **Drought Forces Brazil To Cancel "Carnivale" Celebrations**

*www.news.vice.com, February 5th, 2015*

Droughts across the region have brought cancellations of Carnivale throughout Brazil. Traditionally, there are large water fountains and displays, yet the seriousness and longevity of the drought has caused some of the festivities to cancel those parts of their program, or cancel the entire party altogether. The BBC reported on the effects of the drought on Sao Paulo all the way back in November, as a severe drought that had been going on for months.

## **Meeting At The Dead End: Nihilism, Green Anarchy and the Desire for Immediate Revolt – by Riflebird**

*We are not autonomous, we are everywhere and everyone. We are looking to set an invisible trend that is already here, that abandons the shackles of subculture, identity and ideology, and finds comfort in the revolutionary discomfort we all feel. The suicidal are in control, destroying the land that feeds us, mediating our relationships with each other and all life on this planet, and establishing a global reality that efficiently forces all life to survival as opposed to living. There is unity in our cynicism, skepticism, and common contempt. There is unity in our neglected passions, malnourishment, and feared temptations. While there is also a division set in their very existence, there is a unity in these feelings. There are those who share these feelings, and those who look to silence them, deceive them, or murder and imprison those feeling them. 'Fire to the Prisons'*

The conversation regarding nihilism in anarchist circles has been almost impossible to tune out in recent years. This article has come about from my own recent reading, personal experiences, and talking to those that read nihilist-influenced literature. Not many of these folks would identify as a nihilist of course, because they usually have a strong aversion to labelling themselves and are working toward 'a negation of political identities'. There are innumerable articles, books, and lengthy theses on nihilism, published around the world. I don't profess to know about even a fraction of them, I am simply trying to scratch the surface.

The nihilistic literature I have come across can be deep and convoluted, often deliberately contradicting itself. The level of theory makes some articles dense and nearly impenetrable at times, alienating those that don't appreciate the philosophical tone and the now-generic writing style. Some of the articles I attempted to read just did not hold my attention, even if they were designed as a preliminary reading. Some were overly poetic, contrived or just simply resigned and pessimistic. In other cases, however, I was totally on board and felt like I could relate to the sentiment.

Throughout this piece I will mostly refer to green anarchy and green anarchist theory but also will touch on (anarcho)primitivism which I see as closely related and a necessary inclusion in the topic. As it did with basic anarchist theory and green anarchist ideas, it would take a few years of contemplation to really familiarise myself with the vast array of nihilist-influenced material that's out there. Oftentimes too, I think it is unclear where nihilist influences end and insurrectionary anarchist ideas begin, or vice versa. I am merely dealing with the material I have read and found relevant to my own exploration. A preoccupation with internalising theory and

regurgitating ideas, at the expense of dialogue and experimentation, is not something worth striving for anyway.

Much green anarchist writing resonates with me, and nihilist tracts and journals may speak deeply to somebody else- it's all personal and subjective. I have felt from my interactions with nihilists a definite sense of kinship and trust, and I wanted to uncover why this is so. Part of my curiosity is that within nihilism there is often an expectation of a much sharper and deeper critique, which I have felt challenged and confronted by. I see this as a positive. Another pattern I have noticed is the willingness to go further in both theory and action.

## FROM ENSLAVEMENT TO OBLITERATION

*“The current nihilism amongst the youth is not arising from nothing. It is a reflection of the total failure of both resistance and capitalism. Many see no alternative and want nothing else other than the complete destruction of the beast that feeds them: the city.”*

*Uncontrollable : Contributions to a Conscious Nihilism.*

As aforementioned, I have tried to find commonalities with nihilist thought and green anarchist viewpoints because I do sympathise with both. I came to green anarchist beliefs the long way around, starting from a destructive and nihilistic streak that showed up earlier in my life. I was originally guided almost solely by boredom, depression, and frustration, then inspired by crappy punk and hardcore music, situationist ideas, art, and existential philosophy via Crimethinc, I'm not ashamed to admit. This led to a rejection and abandonment of the values of mass society, far before I had any serious interest in the natural world, environmentalism, or anthropology.

By this point I believed I should question everything, and attempted to start this process, finding many smokescreens and lies that had clouded my vision. During this process I developed a deep distrust of society and authority in general terms, way before extrapolating this out to the entire phenomenon of civilisation. This is contrary to many other green anarchists I have since met; many had a direct experience with some form of remote, wild place early on, which shapes their anti-civ perspective. I realised that I was against civilisation, but at the time was living in an urban environment with almost no connection to my bioregion, no comprehension of the annihilation of the ecosphere, and no understanding of life outside the industrialised bio-dome.

Like many friends I saw little meaning in anything and wanted revenge on society. This manifested in varying small-scale, non-threatening ways, such as petty larceny and vandalism. At the time there was a generalised refusal of what was 'on offer'; work, careers, shopping, morality and the spectacle. It was not until the literature of Derrick Jensen, Chellis Glendinning, Ward Churchill and Jerry Mander came my way that I specifically critiqued civilisation. These are lesser discussed nowadays by myself not because they say nothing of worth but are not anarchist, and they don't delve quite as deep as I would like to go.

## COMMON THREADS

*By interrupting the apparent consensus and social peace, confrontations make injustice visible and legitimize the rage others feel as well. When the fog of apparently universal submission is dispelled, those who wish to fight can finally find each other—and readiness to fight is a better basis for allegiance than merely ideological agreement.*

*'Say you want an Insurrection'*

The similarities of green anarchist thought and nihilism start where they discuss ‘civilisation’ as a specific enemy and target of attack. This belief is non-existent in workerist and leftist thinking. I also have noticed that domestication is named as an enemy in several (what I would describe as) nihilist influenced publications and communiqués, and the term is discussed extensively within the pages of magazines such as 325 and Baedan. Domestication is not usually referred to or recognised as a part of the problem (these days). It has been ‘off the table’ in most discussions and accepted as inevitable. Alongside green anarchists, nihilists appear to have it in their sights, along with all the other techniques of control and domination that mass society imposes.

A conscious level of self-reflection appears to be key and common to both green anarchy and nihilism, at least in theory if not always in reality. By remaining critical of all social institutions both seek to tear down internalised structures of morality, repression and leaving behind the guilt-driven ineffectual activist mentality that accompanies and characterises so much of broader anarchism. This extends to vehement criticism of politics in general, embracing and referring to a stance of antipolitics, sustaining a critique of the left and traditional ideas of revolution. This is a step in the right direction in my eyes. It should be obvious, but by encouraging critique I am not referring to ripping other peoples’ efforts to shreds, meanwhile contributing nothing useful to the conversation. Nonetheless, this phenomenon seems as widespread as it is infuriating in anarchist ‘communities’ and literature.

The schism seems to begin where green anarchists will outline what they are fighting for and oftentimes nihilists will not. Nihilism deeply opposes any blueprint and seem to favour attack, sabotage, and rupture for its own sake without a specific outcome in mind. This is probably stemming from the failure of leftist ‘programs’; and therefore an understandable reluctance to carry on in this tradition. Instead, nihilists emphasise the sensation of liberation which comes from a direct confrontation with a target. In this way it is similar to the way green anarchists express a desire for immediacy and, in my opinion, possibly comes from a similar place.

Both green anarchists and nihilist reject activism and organisationalism. There is a focus on the subjective experience in both, and a desire expressed for direct sensory experiences, whether in a forest, ocean or cityscape. An overarching premise common to both nihilism and green anarchy is that one should never wait around or ask permission to be liberated or feel free.

## KNOW-IT-ALLS AND NO-HOPERS

*“Some contemporary insurrectionism affects a nihilist posture, proposing in an offhand manner that everything that exists must be destroyed. To indigenous or environmentalist ears, this project of universal destruction can sound suspiciously like the program industrial capitalism is already carrying out.”*

*-Say you want an Insurrection*

*“Does nihilism mean that pretty much everything must go for a decent life to be possible? If so then I’m a nihilist. It’s safe to say that nihil-ism isn’t literally nothing-ism or one couldn’t be both a nihilist and an anarchist. If it means the politics of desperation or hopelessness, no thanks.”*

*-John Zerzan*

As John Zerzan, prominent anarchoprimitivist writer, has pointed out, his problem with nihilists is not what they stand for but what they rule out. I have noticed this too, but would say it is generally relegated to the soul-sucking vortex of the internet where ‘know-it-alls’ and contrarians find their miserable home. However, I have come across plenty of articles and personal

examples where nihilists have not ruled out everything, and find joy and celebration within destruction. Indeed some nihilist-influenced writing and themes I find genuinely intriguing and seductive, inciting the desire to act like few others. The concept of ‘passionate friendship’ (as mentioned by the nihilist/egoist writer Wolfi Landstreicher), and a steadfast commitment to solidarity are concepts that are embraced by many nihilists. These are principles that are certainly more meaningful than whether or not you are in political agreement all the time. On the other hand, some pieces on nihilism and individualist anarchism emphasise the pitfalls of being attached to anything, so commitment or long term alignment with people or groups can be more difficult, or ephemeral.

My own interpretation is that there is an elitist streak present in some nihilist circles that is irritating. Of course, that claim has been levelled at green anarchists and primitivists plenty of times too. It would be wise to remember and focus on the fact that intellectualism, leftism, and the academy are the enemy and have always drained energy away from any struggle or threat to mass society. That said, in terms of practical, tangible direct action and regular attacks on the infrastructure of civilisation, I am inclined to argue that an awful lot is motivated by a purely nihilistic influence, rather than a belief that such a tactic will ‘bring it all down’. It has to be said that if the nihilists are an observable phenomenon (which they would probably argue against) they have been more inclined than most groups to engage in risky and sustained direct action, predominantly fuelled by anger, hatred, and revenge.

*By all means, explode with rage. Refuse to reduce your raw anger to demands or suspend your emotional responses to the tragedies around you. Turn your years of pent-up anguish into a fearsome instrument of revenge. Don't translate your grievances into the language of your oppressors—let them remain burning embers to be hurled from catapults. Attack, negate, destroy.*

*But if it's rage you're feeling, why quote philosophy professors?*

*-Say you want an Insurrection*

## THE FAILURES OF PRIMITIVISM

Coming from a green anarchist, anti-civilisation background, and heavily primitivist-leaning myself, I can say there is a significant section of primitivists that are essentially eco-activists that enjoy being outdoors. There is therefore significant crossover with the realms of green activism, student organising, drum circles, and pacifism, and as a result, often, more militant anarchist folks get frustrated. I have witnessed instances whereby folks advocate to ‘drop out’ of civilisation and not give it any ‘energy’, as a primary mode of resistance. Obviously, this does not go deep enough or address the crisis seriously. It is important to recognise how dire the situation is and what level of resistance would be necessary to disrupt the onslaught of techno-industrialism. An acceptance of practical resistance has usually been a major facet of primitivism but I would say this has been dwindling of late, in its place a deluded idea that knowing traditional skills will miraculously heal the entrenched pathology of civilisation. I disagree. A level of philosophical support and solidarity for attacks on civilisation, at the least, should go with the territory.

This is not the case, perhaps due to the co-option/dilution of terms like rewilding and the ongoing campaign of greenwashing by environmental groups, have had the effect of making primitivist concepts palatable to moderate and fluffy hippy activists. I wish it wasn't so, but I have to concede that it has been an observable phenomenon at gatherings and primitivist encampments I have attended. Conversations around primitivism seem more common but fighting

back against the ever-growing tendrils of civilisation is less frequently discussed. Much of this could be self-censorship, attributable to the green scare and the rise of the surveillance state, so the conversations may take place elsewhere. But in many cases it appears some folks just don't see the point to fighting back and have given up any hope for personal or collective liberation and action. Others pursue change via the mundane, reformist and futile channels of activism and politics.

It is a fine thing to tell stories, foster community, pursue spirituality or magic, and enjoy the fire and stars, and 'drop out' of civilisation so that it does not poison one's psyche. I would argue that all of this can be helpful. Without the flipside of a generalised antipathy towards mass society and decisive strategic self-defence component though, this can be a frustrating waste of time for those genuinely fed up with civilisation. An over-reliance on positivity, hope and magic is absurd. A degree of anger, resentment, bitterness, and a desire for destructive change is a healthy sign and should be encouraged and supported. Without this balance, a paralysing sense of morality tends to take over, and a regression to milder 'green/eco' politics. This soon becomes the default setting; and broader, unauthorised actions are condemned as 'jeopardising all we have worked for', and careerist eco-activist politicians hijack any struggle for their own purposes.

## MEETING AT THE DEAD END

*The nihilism I am advocating would pit itself against all those who wish to manage the potential of the present, not against the people who are managed. Our enemy is not society, our enemies are the people who maintain and create society.*

*-Uncontrollable: Contributions Toward a Conscious Nihilism*

*'The dumb or elite try to pass us off as hoodlums. In some ways they're right. As we mention we are "for nothing" and in this we look to create a trend that desires to destroy "everything". We are not a political party, but we are a party; one that celebrates tension, conflict, and attack. Not against each other, but to everything that is everything as we know it.'*

*-Fire to the Prisons*

The uncompromisingly militant perspective of many nihilist-influenced articles offers a counterpoint to this current failure of primitivism – it primarily advocates and supports property destruction, direct action, attack and sabotage against the mechanisms of society. On the far end of the spectrum are groups like ITS and Wild Reaction, from their communiqués it is clear they have no qualms about killing folks. Other nihilist-influenced texts seem more measured, and offer messages of friendship, community, and favour attack against the machine to facilitate a move toward something better. This aligns well with green anarchist ideas, which encourage the dismantling of the infrastructure of civilisation to slow the assault on our planet, bodies, and psyches and allow us to heal.

In my personal dealings with those who have a more nihilistic outlook they have shown themselves to be quite reliable, solid friends and have shown consideration of my thoughts regarding green anarchy and primitivism. Much more so than other 'radical' friends who jump to the defence of civilisation, and lecture me about activist causes I should be supporting more. In general I have found them to have a stronger and deeper critique of mass society, and a willingness to form bonds rather than fight all day about our differences, particularly as many of them are sick and tired of urban existence and what is on offer. This has been a welcome antidote to the waves

of anarcholeftist social justice ‘experts’ who revel in the banality of iphones, popular culture, modern ‘life’ and act as apologists for the techno-nightmare engulfing the planet.

*‘While many of us feel the specific analysis of institutions, dynamics and origins of civilisation is a necessary project, as well as the investigation of our true desires and their separation from manufactured ones, nihilism may also be an important element to integrate into our deconstructive process. It is actually a liberatory process to be freed from the restrictions of thinking within the confines of conceiving of another world. That responsibility should be left to individuals and their communities of affinity. It cannot be fully dreamed, let alone realised, until all power is destroyed!’*

*-A Morefus – Nihilism as a healthy influence*

If, in the fine words of Klee Benally, it is preferable to be ‘accomplices not allies’, I see a possible and potential relationship with some nihilist-leaning individuals. These folks support the sabotage, destruction, and permanent dismantling of civilisation, which would force civilisation to retreat and wildness to flourish. There may still be a rift between nihilists and green anarchists, and sometimes are goals will not be the same, but oftentimes I think the targets and the enemies will be closely related.

Anarchist library  
Anti-Copyright



Various  
Black Seed: Issue 3  
Spring 2015

Editor.

[en.anarchistlibraries.net](http://en.anarchistlibraries.net)