

# ORGANISE 101







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Each name on this list is a child which was born in Gaza since March 2024 and has since been killed.

This is taken from the March, 23, 2025 dataset released by Gaza's Ministry of Health, which is widely regarded as an accurate source by international agencies. There are **50,020** names on this list known to have been killed in Gaza since October 7, 2023 and it keeps growing.

The list is incomplete. These are only the documented. The actual number of dead is likely to be much higher. They are overwhelming civilians. The list contains the names of thousands of children.

British spy planes have facilitated this slaughter and they continue too do so on a regular basis. Our industries continues to fuel the Israeli state's war machine with the instruments of death and the supporting materials and resources to maintain their genocidal war.

**Are you not ashamed?** Enough with the *"it's not my state!"*, *"I don't support that company!"*, and *"we'll I'm not in the army am I!"*, stop waxing lyrical about how it's *"nationalism"* to stand beneath a flag of solidarity of even say the word *"peoples"*.

If these babes were murdered in Liverpool, we would do more. So do more.

The silence,  
The inaction,  
The capitulation,

It has to stop.

Take direct action against Israel's arms trade in Britain. If you're not able to take it yourself, support those who do. **Fight back.**

Organise is a project of the Anarchist Federation [AF]. It is composed by the Organise Editorial Collective [OEC].

As Anarchist Communists we fight for a world without leaders, where power is shared equally amongst communities, and people are free to reach their full potential.

It is our aim to provide a clear anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues and to initiate discussion on ideas not normally covered in agitational papers.

With this in mind we positively solicit contributions from our readers regardless of their political tendency and host a variety of media relating to anarchism alongside broader anti-authoritarian and autonomous analogs.

As a result, the contents of this magazine do not represent the collective viewpoint of the AF unless stated as such.

Revolutionary ideas develop from discussion, they do not merely drop out of the air!

We hope this publication will help that discussion take place and light a fire in your heart.

“... an Anarchist society, a society which organises itself without authority, is always in existence, like a seed beneath the snow, buried under the weight of the state and its bureaucracy, capitalism and its waste, privilege and its injustices, nationalism and its suicidal loyalties, religious differences and their superstitious separatism.”

- Colin Ward *Anarchism in Action* (1973)

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You can find the list of Palestinian dead here:  
[data.techforpalestine.org](https://data.techforpalestine.org)

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# EDITORIAL: CURSE YOUR SUDDEN BUT INEVITABLE BETRAYAL!

The moment the policy shifted, the corporations, the state bodies, society groups, they all crumbled.

Their saccharine solidarity painted over proverbially and literally. Websites erased people. Memorial signs removed. History revised. It happened within days. We all watched the book burning and the liberals, with all their promises of assimilation and acceptance. They did nothing.

The trans community, victims of a manufactured discourse at the hands of the populist right, now the spearhead of the oppressive assault. Right along with them, gay people, black people, women, disabled people, indigenous people. Decades of civil rights and riots, erased. We are bleeding, we are bleeding and we are doing nothing.

There are some who say “*oh it’s always been this way*” so sit idle.

There are some who say “*oh it’s not really that bad*” so sit idle.

I hear aggrieved liberals say things like “*only three years*”. Elsewhere more radical minded peers regurgitate the all powerful affirmation “*you can’t kill an idea*”.

Together: “*We will survive this!*”

Meanwhile, masked ICE gestapo have kidnapped 100,000 and counting, executive orders and state bills rain down in their hundreds. Activists and organisers, civil and subversive, drowning under the barrage.

**“*We will survive this?*”**

In 1993, The San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus took a deeply haunting photo to represent how many members they had lost to AIDS. Seven members wearing white face the camera, the rest of the chorus some hundred, are in black, facing away. Just 3 years later the obituary was 47 names longer than their roster.

When the infrastructure and policy was weaponised to erase and eradicate, it did just that. The further we get from those days, the less the nightmare feels real.

Totalitarian autocracy, built upon conservatism, traditionalism and hate. It came with direct intent and seemingly benign policy both. It killed people in their thousands and causing horrific harm to countless more.

This is what “*we will survive this*” looks like. I am sorry, but He-Man lied.

The good guys don’t just win.

The UK is swiftly following suit.

The Overton window has shifted so far so quickly, heads are still spinning and the new state of things still hasn’t set in.

There was a brief moment when the liberal establishment gave assimilationists all the promises and platitudes. In the space of a couple of years, a few figureheads changed and the Labour Party scum (you told us we were traitors for not voting for) now keenly weaponise racism to appeal to a far right who couldn’t give a damn for them.

Island of Strangers? Kier Starmer playing up the part of a budget Enoch Powell. If the British people are strangers to each other it is because of generations of capitalists tearing our communities apart.

To appeal to the xenophobes, despite facing 100,000+ care home vacancies and they just announced a reduction in international care workers, “*Less dark people, promise! Vote Tory-lite!*” It’s a vile pantomime.

Sickeningly, as they do this, they push through an obscene euthanasia policy so reductive and poorly laid out that it is a death warrant for the poor and infirm, who they intend to robustly promote it too.

As our would-be political saviours commit open warfare on the working class, they help distant fascists drop endless bombs on innocent families. Half the country watches horrified, each night they scroll past bodies burning in Palestine and overwhelming tremble in inaction, powerless against the might of the state, unable to beg and plead *how many bodies is will be enough?*

We all know the answer.

There is a cold truth here, we’re at war and anarchism is in it’s nadir. We need to get our shit together, stow these divides and get back to making ourselves an existential threat to the state and capital machine once again.

When the fight starts, the anarchist doesn’t leave the room. Unfortunately it feels like we’ve been half out the door for years.

Be real with yourselves, if you’re ready this, you’re probably deeply passionate about building a better world.

Aren’t you bored of resting easy on the peripheries of the left occasionally being rolled out for a demo, bookfair, or finger wagging about who was right all along? Aren’t you bored of the divides of doctrine, the petty sniping, point scoring and beef?

I know I am. If we can’t heal the rifts between us, how can we help the wider working class come together and rally against the bosses and bastards suffocating us?

I can’t watch another genocide. Can you?

So I’m asking you, fellow anarchists: let’s stop chirping at each other and start building solidarity. It is only then we will find the revolutionary moment, as beautiful and terrifying as it may be.

If we don’t. We will not survive this.

We need to converge. We need to step the fuck up. Make anarchism a threat again.

In Solidarity.  
**Peter Ó Máille**



**IAF-ИФА-IFA**  
**March 2025**

# **AGAINST WAR, AGAINST POWER.**

## **THE IFA CALL FOR ALL ANARCHISTS TO STAND AGAINST NATO**

The 2025 NATO Summit will take place at the World Forum in The Hague, Netherlands, from June 24 to 26. As the war machine gathers thousands of delegates from its 32 member states to orchestrate the next great wave of military expansion, we must not meet it with silence. We must raise a banner of defiance and resistance.

NATO does not exist to protect us. It serves the interests of states, corporations, and the oligarchical few at the expense of the many. The state, NATO, or any other multi-national alliance, does not bring us safety, it bring us control seeking only our obedience, compliance, and capitulation. Whether it's the endemic police violence in our communities to the blood-soaked battlefields of Ukraine and oceans of debris in Gaza, we have a single enemy.

Since its inception in 1947, NATO has only acted as an enforcer of imperialist violence, a tool of repression, and an engine of war. It is no protector of peace. It is our class enemy and a direct threat to the lives and well-being of each of us. Our struggle is not between nations—it is between the ruling class and all of us who resist. This continues to be true, even during the brutal realities of war.

Under the guise of European and national security, NATO governments are

funnelling billions into military budgets while slashing vital social services. As they build armies, they leave us to fight for basic survival. They impose austerity while they hoard resources for war. They build armies while we struggle for healthcare, housing, and basic dignity.

We watch daily as they every more turn to the next generation and prepare for them to take up arms, stripped of opportunity, see no option but to sign up to become cannon fodder in conflicts not of their making, sold on adventure, fraternity and patriotism. When they return, maimed and broken, they are discarded, useful only as symbols for empty parades. A small few banded around day time shows the propaganda never ending.

We call on anarchists, anti-authoritarians, and all those who oppose war to gather, to organize, and to resist. NATO and its warlords will meet, but so will we. We will take to the streets. We will disrupt their displays of power. We will forge networks of solidarity and we will stand in direct opposition to their wars, their militarized police, and their repression of our movements.

We anarchists fight for a world without borders, without states, and without the armies that uphold their rule. We call

for international solidarity against NATO and every manifestation of militarized oppression—whether the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Peninsula Shield Force (PSF), the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), or any other so-called “collective security” pact. By any name, they serve the same purpose: to uphold domination through force and to perpetuate suffering across the world.

The weapons they use to secure resources today, will be turned on us tomorrow.

We call upon all anarchists, anti-authoritarians, and anti-militarists by whatever framework, tendency, or school of thought to take action on these days in The Hague and around the world in solidarity.

Let the specifics of our plans grow together.

Organise together and prepare your actions, together we will let them know: We reject the false choices of nationalism. We reject the false idea, that NATO is there to protect. We reject the brutality of their militarism and the martial doctrines of war and we reject their proposed budgets which will starve the coffers of the working class.

No war among peoples.  
No peace among classes.

**TAKE ACTION.**

**Commission of Relations of  
the International of Anarchist  
Federations (CRIFA)**

*Marseilles - March 2025*

# **THE 2025 NATO SUMMIT WILL BE HELD AT THE WORLD FORUM IN THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS, FROM 24 TO 26 JUNE 2025.**



László Molnárfi  
Trinity College Dublin  
March 2025

# ANOTHER LOST FUTURE

It was May 3rd 2024 when we set up the Free Trinity encampment for the cause of Palestine. On that eve, 70 students with about 40 tents descended on campus, making our physical mark, a call to action to put an end to suffering, for a people who we have never met, on a land in which we have never stepped foot in. It was in the midst of the university closing down, having heard of our plans, and our rush to outpace them elicited an immense excitement. At the meeting prior held in a cramped room filled to the brim with tension, arguments were made for and against rushing to set up the camp that eve. Standing at the trembling brink of a catalyst moment, the forces of push-and-pull were at play; an action always seems out of reach until it is done, forever a seed of doubt in the overcoming of capitalism's desire to keep us helpless. In the end, it was stressed that our actions, as the world is watching, will reverberate across Ireland and the globe, being the first of its kind domestically. It was thus our responsibility to give history a push, and so fortune favours the bold, we raised our hands in unanimity to push ahead.

It was the most peculiar timing, as the action was originally planned for the day after, had it not been leaked to the far-right press. By nightfall, our camp was set up, and coincidentally, it was an

awards ceremony that night on campus for members of sports clubs and their acquaintances. As we stood in the dark, with the clear skies, the trickling of students from our university's bar, to the club, to home, to the afters began to take place, walking from there straight across the encampment.

They were all chanting for a Free Palestine, in unison with us, and they were wearing suits and ties and dresses, emanating a radical belief in the good of humanity that stood in stark contrast to the bourgeois formality of their attire. Within this new generation, thus, stood a seed for revolutionary transformation, as the ideas of the ruling elite have clearly found no root within, if only to play-along. When the ideas of the ruling class are ridiculed, satired and unrecognised, paradigms break down and new ones are established, the foundations of society are rocked. It felt as if revolutionary politics was making a comeback, as if this immense energy was waiting to explode out onto the social field, overtake it, grapple with it, and overturn present social relations and bring about new ones.

It was our finest moment, a light shining through the dark tunnel of neoliberal dominance, and for a glimpse, it seemed like another world was possible. It was

trembling - yet so calm - as if one was standing on the edge of the precipice of a better future, to echo the words of Bobby Sands in 1981. It made us feel insignificant, as the momentum of history was driving us, and the fate of our protest now firmly in its guiding hand, a brief experience of the sublime. Before being snapped back to reality - someone was shouting that we need to film this - we were standing in awe at the procession of thousands of students. This camp was a protean force for change that was able to evade the capture of institutional mechanisms of control, and hence resist capital. This strikes terror into the hearts of the ruling class.

The return of the revolutionary horizon after decades of paralysis has been hinted at by political commentators, that the end of history is in fact no nearer, and that our struggle to topple all despotic signifiers, blockages and restraints on human activity is not over. The last time that such a project was attended, hence the historical comparisons in popular culture, was over 5 decades ago, but ended in failure. In this way, there is a parallel between 'May 68 and April-May 2024, that of a lost future.

Jacques Derrida coined 'hauntology' in *Specters of Marx* (1993), where he described how the ghost of Marxism lingers in the post-Cold War world. History never truly disappears; instead, unresolved ideological struggles continue to haunt us. This was taken up by Mark Fisher in *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (2014) which expanded on the idea of a 'lost future'. The participants of 'May 68 reported feeling haunted by the uprising, not just by its unfulfilled promises but by the way its revolutionary energy lingered in the margins of political life. In a similar fashion, the April-May 2024 upsurge

in political organising has left us grappling with the lost future imagined by the encampments - a future of radical solidarity, direct democracy, and post-capitalism.

Without a doubt, the encampments were successful in universities to various extents. The Free Trinity encampment lasted 5 days, with the university folding to the protestors' demands swiftly, securing divestment from Israeli entities. While this is symbolically significant, it is but a drop in the ocean in terms of economic power. We have moved only inches, not miles, towards a Free Palestine. The end of the encampment, despite our hopes, did not catalyse a broader movement towards radical change. The subsequent weekly march for Palestine passed as every other one, in liberal complacency. The hopes of a workers' strike, an encampment at Shannon Airport or intensified, simultaneous and mass-based targeting of state buildings with direct action failed to materialize. The rest of the movement lagged behind, and the students had achieved their aims, so it seems that there was nothing else to do.

Some disagreed. There was a hardline faction at the encampment that advocated for transforming our demands for university divestment into a national campaign. This would have led into conflict with the state forces, and would have provoked an attempted eviction by Gardaí. The idea was that this would catalyse a defensive reaction, and subsequently a mass movement. Those advocating for this were in the minority. The majority of students did not agree with this programme. Yet, it is possible that in the sudden opening of the horizon for radical politics, had leadership advocated for it, this would have marked a bifurcation point. A divergence in world-history. When it was

proposed in a meeting at nightfall, it was voted down. Did we commit a mistake of world-historic proportions?

It is hard not to wonder about the possibility. Many of us, when looking at what is, are haunted by what could have been. Frantz Fanon wrote in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961): “Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it”. A historic moment comes once in a generation; a heavy responsibility to bear, and not all the facts are readily available to leadership to make an informed decision on what to suggest to the student body as the way forward. The days of the encampment went fast, rushed and erratically, as is the case with historical moments, waged with heated passion, but often unclear communication between those with differing views. History can only be lived forwards, but it must be understood backwards. Was it a premature departure? Should we have stayed? Should we have dreamt bolder?

Such judgements are based on informed intuition, behind which lies a probabilistic calculation of the selected course of political action’s success, reflecting the contingent nature of history, taking into account various on-the-ground factors, as the subject relatively approximates objective reality.

It seemed that the historical moment had exhausted itself after the compromise agreement between students and senior management. Unlike in the case of ‘May 68 in France, the working class and its organizations, having been co-opted by the neoliberal establishment, failed to mobilize. This is equally true for the rest of the world. In many countries, students faced state repression outright, and the

working class did not rally to their defence. Since students operate as a subset of the pro-Palestine campaign and the rest of the movement was not ready to escalate, nothing could have been done to break the impasse. On top of this, students who were actively involved numbered hundreds, not thousands. Ultimately, even within the student movement, mass politics has been non-existent since the failure of the November 2010 anti-austerity protests. It is, in turn, not possible to conjure up thousands of additional students out of thin air, despite our best efforts. This gives credence to the argument that our lost future was foreclosed before it could even begin. If the material conditions are not ripe, leadership cannot intervene towards revolutionary ends. From this angle, students would have left and the encampment would have fizzled out had we voted to change the scope of our movement. This is bolstered by the fact that throughout the year, the demands were locally-focused, thus the subjective attitudes of students were path-dependent on this prior structuring of the campaign. Yet, the feeling that more could have been done is pervasive. The hardline faction’s argument for taking on the state, in any case, was not without merit.

During the 5 days of the Free Trinity encampment, students were the vanguard of the movement. We held sway over the movement. In this, there was hope. The Irish context differs widely from other countries in the West, insofar as Palestine enjoys passive support amongst the majority of the population. It had been the case that for South Africa, the Dunnes Store strike in the 1980s led to an explosion of support for boycotting apartheid, eventually leading Ireland to ban the country’s imports, sparking

a worldwide shift. The protest called at a day’s notice during the encampment had an energy unlike anything we have seen before, with thousands of attendees. The encampment should have exploited the opportunity and appealed directly to the working class. Overlooking this was a colossal mistake. The university was of strategic importance in the political sphere, and media attention abounded, increasing the chances of triggering upheaval. The fight between students and state forces could have spilled onto the streets and then it could have taken but a single action, outside of campus, to trigger a path-dependency of a mass movement’s confrontation with state repression, leading to revolutionary conditions. Was another ‘May 68 a mere brick throw away? We will never know, because no one threw a brick. The pages of history remain half-turned.

If not a premature departure, it was certainly a ‘traumatic departure’ for students whether they left by will or were removed by force, as subsequent events of demoralisation have not been adequately re-inscribed into the symbolic order of our movement. This is one possible interpretation of the April-May 2024 events relying on Cathy Carun’s framework in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996). Meaning is necessary, so that the movement can understand its next steps. If unanswered questions linger, irrationality takes root.

On the one hand, the demoralisation is evident in the strengthening of adventurist factions within the pro-Palestine movement that prioritize direct action by an already-radicalized core over mass politics. This shift naturally follows a perceived failure of a movement. At the core of it, there rises

a distrust of mass politics, justified by conceiving of the masses as fundamentally reactionary in the imperial core.

On the other hand, the prevailing attitudes of liberalism take hold within leadership. Radical organizers are burnt out, leaving a vacuum. In this environment, there is a turn towards seeking legitimacy within institutional frameworks rather than challenging them outright. Thus, the movement risks being co-opted, reduced to symbolic gestures rather than sustained political struggle.

As the world descends into fascism, it begs the question, whether the rise of radical politics in the 2020s is a mere dead cat’s bounce of progressivism. The intensity of our mass movements have steadily decreased across the decades; in all of it, this is the outstanding issue, that participation has dwindled even during times of political crisis. It could be, rather than the start of popular politics, an ultimate foreclosure, as humanity embarks on a dark journey. It is history folding unto itself as a series of defeats in dénouement, from October 1917, to ‘May 68, the anti-austerity movement of the early 2010s and then April-May 2024, as we slowly wake from our dreams of emancipatory politics to the harsh realities of contemporary capitalism. This is not the emergence of popular resistance, but its unwinding. Intellectually, we might turn to pessimism, but at heart, we must feel hope. We have a responsibility to not give up. With the lessons learned from our past struggle, we can reignite the movement once again. All progressive forces should mobilize to turn the tide, relying on deep organizing and mass politics.

**László Molnárfi**

*Student activist at Trinity College Dublin.*





## BRIGHTER FUTURES

We anarchists are dreamers. We dream of a beautiful idea that feels so impossible that most people can only dismiss it as absurd.

This is not due to any willful ignorance or conscious propaganda of course. No, the grim truth is that of our fellow workers are consumed with the individualistic poison of greed. The authoritarian order of the state makes sure, freedom is a fantasy.

***“You’d have to be mad to think we’ll ever get rid of capitalism”***

You’ve heard it. Everyone wants to escape, they just don’t care to hope. Aspirational marketing helps to silence it. The constant barrage of medias perverting us into believing that our luxuries are liberties.

Should we question this, the threat of abject poverty keeps most in check, if not well, it’s the horrific punitive response should we break out into illegal freedom.

Few accept just how much of the world around us is designed from its core to ensnare us into a life of endless economic servitude and obedience.

However, our beautiful idea, our dream, is in fact, pretty simple.

We wish to develop autonomous communities of various scopes which are organised from the grass root upon principles of liberty, solidarity and equality; where the social paradigm is that of collective wellbeing and individual liberty, a classless society utilising non-monetary means of exchange and distribution.

Whatever you call this, and whatever political vehicle you feel is best to get there, whether you base your arguments on ancestry, politics, philosophy, the abstract, objective, or emotive, wherever the call is towards freedom, this is the goal.

So what does that actually look like?

We are going to begin placing more focus on these questions from here on, through fiction and theory, guides, history, interviews, and reports. A better, brighter world is possible and we’re going to help all of us dreamers hone in on just what that looks like so that we are better armed. This is not just for the future, but the immediate moment, our prefigurative work, our thoughts, and our deeds, now.

**Anonymous**  
**Puget Sound Anarchists**  
**February 2025**

# A CALL FOR DECENTRALIZED ANARCHIST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSEMBLIES

*What is an anarchist assembly?*

An assembly is simply a set place and time for anarchists to come together and discuss issues and ideas with other anarchists. The purpose is not to just form a larger organization, or any sort of decision-making body, but to provide an open forum to announce events, present projects, and find other people to organize with outside of the assembly space. It's also an opportunity to stay informed and connect with other anarchists.

*Why the neighborhood?*

Neighborhoods have been sites of resistance throughout history. Neighborhoods are where the real work of political organizing begins. Neighborhoods are the places we know best, where we can make direct connections with people who face the same immediate issues. Constant displacement in a rapidly gentrifying city like Seattle can be alienating, and it's not always possible to organize with people who live nearby, so our neighborhoods might be where we work, or go to school, or wherever we have built a relationship with the land and the other people living, working, and learning there. The intention is not to organize around a traditional model of the neighborhood when it doesn't make sense, but to provide an opportunity for people to organize in the communities they are most connected with.

*Why anarchist?*

We are calling for anarchist assemblies because we need our own spaces where we can be intentional about some of our baseline political and ethical commitments. Calling for specifically anarchist assemblies does not negate the value of organizing outside of our political milieu, but authoritarian leftists, electoral leftists, and liberals are firmly entrenched in many aspects of organizing in this city, and they have a long history of exploiting and abusing anarchists. We don't need them, and we don't need to share space with them.

*Why now?*

Assemblies have always been a valuable form of organizing, but the growing threats of climate disasters, ICE raids and mass deportations, state sanctioned far-right violence, police violence, and the constantly escalating war on homeless people are just a few of the urgent issues facing us and our neighbors right now. The situation is undeniably extreme, and it may seem overwhelming and hopeless, but that's all the more reason to connect with and support each other in spaces where we have more control, and can be most effective. We have seen many valiant efforts to respond to every sweep and far-right threat, no matter how far away, but this can be a huge

drain on resources, and there can be misunderstandings about what those other neighborhoods really need. What if there was a basis for communication and mobilization with the people we see every day? Would it be more efficient and effective to explore the ecology of mutual aid projects, organizations, and crews that are closest to us?

**The Call:**

*Plan the space:*

Find a space that works for the number of people you expect to attend. Smaller assemblies have more flexibility about where they can meet, but larger groups should make the effort to find adequate space. Get creative, but don't forget about the basics like seating, and bathroom access. Accessibility is essential. This includes choosing an accessible location, masking, mobility requirements, transit access, and language translation, as well as general safety and security.\*

*Do the promotion:*

Be intentional about promoting the assembly. Whether its a flyer, a zine, or a website, remember that your medium limits who can see it, so multiple formats can be more inclusive. Put a poster up in the cafe, but also bring handbills to your local mutual aid distro, and share the graphic on a signal chat.

*Agree on some ground rules:*

It's good to discuss people's expectations at the first assembly. What are your goals? What can you do? What won't you do? Although assemblies are not a decision-making body as such, they are a container for decisions made outside of that space. There might be many different topics to be discussed, so some basic procedural

agreements can help keep the conversation focused, respect people's time, and give everyone an opportunity to participate. Consider setting an agenda, and roles like facilitator, or note-taker.

*Be clear about who is welcome...*

*...and who is not:*

Anarchists are not afraid of a little confrontation. Of course it's essential to confront and remove anyone with non-negotiable values, i.e. fascists, racists, abusers, cops, etc. but all too often, anarchists have set aside core principles in an effort to include everyone who could possibly be included on the broadly defined left.

This stifles the conversation, and allows political opportunists to take advantage of the group. It's ok to ask that those coming have a vested interest in what happens in the neighborhood, and aren't showing up because they think it's a new venue for selling papers and winning votes. It's also ok to exclude people based on their interest in hierarchical, electoral, statist, and authoritarian political structures. They have nothing to offer us anyway.

*Report Back:*

People want to hear about your assemblies! What has been working, and what hasn't? Are there other people working on projects of interest in your neighborhood? Write down what you can and share it widely. We learn collectively from each other's successes and failures.

*What's next?*

Plan the next assembly. How often do you need to meet? Once a month? Every two weeks? It will be different for each assembly, and it can change in the future.



It's also ok if people can't make it every time. Assemblies don't make ongoing decisions, so a quorum is not required.

### Anonymous

#### *\*Notes on Security Culture:*

Anarchists are frequently targeted for state repression, and many of us are vulnerable in other ways, so we don't have to make it more dangerous for ourselves by revealing personal details, or talking about projects in too much detail. Assemblies should be treated as public events, not niche spaces limited to discussing the details of specific organizing efforts among a select group. Continue to practice general safety around what you say publicly to others, and move to exclude anyone who refuses to respect the boundaries agreed upon. If you have the capacity for printing, zines and handouts about security can help new people acclimate to a culture of security and safety, and we can all use reminders and updates. We have to keep ourselves safe so we can keep each other safe.

### Puget Sound Anarchists

*Puget Sound Anarchists aspires to provide a space for anarchists and anti-authoritarians in the Pacific Northwest to share ideas, reflections and critiques in order to support struggles and revolts against all forms of domination. Our goal is to contribute to the proliferation of anti-authoritarian ideas and practices on the street and in movements more broadly. To this end, we publish report-backs, communiqués, analysis and other written work as well as announcements for events, protests and demonstrations. We accept both signed and anonymous submissions.*

*Original piece: [pugetsoundanarchists.org/a-call-for-decentralized-anarchist-neighborhood-assemblies](https://pugetsoundanarchists.org/a-call-for-decentralized-anarchist-neighborhood-assemblies)*

**Katja**  
**Transform Social**  
**March 2025**

## HOW TO ORGANIZE THE ECONOMY IN POST-REVOLUTIONARY SOCIETIES NEIGHBORHOOD ASSEMBLIES

Here we are, as members and friends of anarchist federations, of prefigurative anarchist structures, thinking about post-revolutionary societies and communities, while living in a reality of climate crisis and rising fascism. Rising temperatures and freezing social connections. Is this really a good time to think about future anarchist societies? Yes. Future anarchist societies are needed as a perspective out of this mess and yes, anarchist societies also work under harsh conditions and scarcity. This text describes some economic aspects. Yes, the economy is not the only thing that needs to change during a revolutionary transformation. However, it is one of those things we should figure out before if we want to avoid supply bottlenecks during and after the revolution.

The economy is about how and what to produce and how to distribute. Everyone is affected by this. Thus, there should be the possibility for everyone to be part of economic decisions. As anarchists, we want to distribute to each according to their needs. Basing an economy on needs is too complex, they told us. Needs are too subjective, they told us. The market and prices are the only solution for getting information on needs, they told us. Free markets are nicely decentralized, you anarchists should love that, they told us. Nope.

Anarchism is not only about freedom, it is about freedom and solidarity. About finding the balance between both. Markets, no matter how “free” or “social” they are, are missing the aspect of solidarity: The market logic requires active participants, “norm-humans”, who are able to work in a normative way, which will get them some coins, for which they can get the things they need in return. Market logic, is quid pro quo logic, exchanging one thing for another thing. Excluding those that don't have the one thing, the coins in the first place. Excluding those who can't work in a manner that is deemed acceptable to receive coins in exchange. Excluding those who work in areas for which you don't even get coins, like most care work. Okay, these “non-norm” humans don't get fully excluded, they get some solidarity coins from the state. Confirming that they are the exception from the norm, that they are dependent on the paternalistic kindness of others. This is an ableist exclusion mechanism. We should strive for a needs-based economy that does not need to define a norm. On top of that, prices are quite distorted and not a good representation of needs. Also, markets are unstable and chaotic, often leading to crashes. Markets are not “the only” solution. There are better ones. Calling something “the only” solution is a red flag, a warning sign for authoritarians, anyway.

Needs are subjective? Oh, yes, and they should be. We should not allow any institution to define what our needs are. Needs vary from region to region and from person to person. Needs need to be subjective and diverse. That's nothing to fear and not too complex. Handling the complexity of the needs of everyone is not only what can be loved about anarchism but also what anarchism is perfectly capable of achieving. Anarchist bottom-up organization patterns are ideal for handling diverse needs and complexity. Without being chaotic, fickle, and prone to crisis like markets are and without being ignorant like authoritarian communist central planning.

So how exactly can needs-based anarchist economies that reject markets, money, and wages work? (The following ideas are not meant to be dogmatic, they can coexist next to other anti-authoritarian societies.) Let's start bottom-up. When starting with individual people, we have to remember that while everyone has needs, some people might have difficulties expressing them. While some people might be able and willing to fulfill their own needs during the periods in their lives in which they are healthy, all of us require support doing so at least in the first years of our lives. Basing an economy on autonomous individuals means ignoring the need for care work. Let's thus start from the basic unit of a community while not being dogmatic about it: Individuals can still live an isolated self-sufficient life, it's just not for everyone.

In a community, most people know each other, understand the needs of others, and communicate face-to-face in case of conflicts. From an economics perspective, I envision three types of structures: There

can be consumer councils discussing what is needed for a good life for everyone in the neighborhood. In production collectives, in which people interested in similar ways of working, come together to decide what they can produce or provide as a service. Coordination committees are called to action when the needs don't match the available resources. A coordination committee is not an authority but a facilitator, it collects the required information, processes it to make it more understandable and accessible, mediates between consumer councils and production collectives, and suggests possible solutions, which can then be decided upon by everyone affected by it.

A community can quickly react to changing conditions and needs. Think of climate crisis catastrophes like flooding or forest fires as an example. A community can provide basic care infrastructure like community kitchens, and places where children and elderly people can thrive. A community can detect if the mental or physical health of members deteriorates and act on that. A community can act if someone starts over-using scarce resources or stops contributing to the production collectives. People will ask what's going on, how the person is doing, if there are unmet needs or a conflict that needs to be resolved. In a community, there is some transparency. There might be some social pressure. There might also be some culture or common project that holds the community together. In case of unresolvable conflicts, people might decide to leave the community and look for another one that better fits their needs.

All of this can happen without any currency, markets, labor wages, or someone owning the means of production.

At the community level, this is easy. Let's now look at larger levels of the economy, in which local communities interact and cooperate in similar patterns as individuals interact on the local level.

While there might be self-sustained communities which produce everything they need, this model does not work for most of us. We want e.g. food, technology, and health care that can't be provided by an isolated community because it involves complex production, supply chains, and specialization. Like a hospital shared by multiple local communities, a specialized regional health care facility, regional public transport, a regional food processing factory, or a continental electronics factory. Any structures at the larger-than-community-level, come with the danger of developing into power structures, bureaucracies, or technocracies. They should thus be transparent, only installed for a specific purpose, and dissolved when the purpose no longer exists or the structure is overstepping its space of action.

So how can this work without markets and without a central plan? Also considering that one element of freedom is planning security: The security of knowing that my needs and the needs of my community will be fulfilled today and in the future gives me the freedom to make plans of my own, to enjoy life without existential worries. This includes the security that we handle the environment in a sustainable way and counteract the climate crisis. This clearly needs supralocal structures. How do we achieve this planning security in an anarchist economy? With decentralized plans and long-term supply agreements.

Local communities reduce the complexity of the needs of the humans living in them

by fulfilling many of them locally (e.g. care needs, some local food production, housing, basic education) and aggregating the needs that can't be fulfilled on the local level so that they can be communicated to other communities. This aggregate of needs also gives the members of the community some privacy, as people outside of the community won't need to know which individual consumes what. The aggregated community needs can be communicated via a transparent communication medium. Ideally, neighboring communities have resources to fulfill the need, e.g. agreeing to constantly deliver food or a service. Without expecting anything in return. If resources are not that plentiful, coordination committees can be instantiated to facilitate and mediate, similar to the local level. Still, the coordination committees don't decide, those affected by the decision decide.

The fact that the means of production are not owned but used and maintained by those working with them, prevents producers of critical infrastructure from sliding into a pattern of favoritism where they decide whom to give the scarce resources. The transparency of the communication of needs and supply agreements allows for some insights into distributional justice.

And what about the bananas, you asked. Why would a banana-producing region agree to supply other regions without anything in return? Once the money logic is gone and the focus is more on the needs of the people and those of the environment, we might decide that importing food from far away should be reduced by various measures. Still, we would love some bananas from far away. The needs of the continent can be aggregated and



communicated to the banana-producing regions. They will say how much of these needs they will be able to fulfill, agreeing on regular monthly deliveries. With nothing in return. They might have needs of their own, like e.g. volunteer workers for banana picking or other foods they can't get locally or regionally. This is not an exchange logic, the needs are independent of each other. They might look at the transparent visualizations of distributional justice and if they feel like the fulfillment of needs and human happiness is unjustly distributed across the regions and continents, they might communicate this to a coordination committee as a conflict that should be resolved.

The decentralized planning will thus be a network of long-term agreements of deliveries, with the network being more dense in local areas, preferring local distribution over long-distance transport. Why do I emphasize long-term agreements? Aren't needs and conditions changing? Yes, some aspects will change, like emergency support in regions affected by climate catastrophes, resources becoming scarce, production methods changing, needs evolving. However, without capitalist advertising and planned obsolescence, needs might not change as quickly as they do now. And with open collaborative research and transparency, production processes might also be less often. Planned changes can be transparently communicated in advance and plans and supply chains adjusted accordingly.

But what about scarcity, they asked. You need to have a unit to count in order to distribute fairly. Yes, for scarce resources it is good to track the distribution transparently. But money or some other universal unit of account does not help

with that. It hides too many important details like the production conditions and the environmental impact. We need key figures that might vary from application area to application area that inform the interested people and coordination committees about everything relevant.

I won't argue that the above-described anarcho-communist economic structures will work because they are "natural" (what is that anyway?), because they make sense from a computer science way of handling complexity, because they are effective according to some complex systems theory, or because they match the viable system model from organizational cybernetics. These theories might be reassuring and might give us some insights, but we need prefigurative praxis and concrete plans on how to organize the coming anarchist economies. Like Marie Goldsmith wrote in "The Issues of Tomorrow" in 1919: "La Voix du Peuple opened a column in which unions were invited to write what each one would do after the victory in order to ensure continuous production in their domain [...] We can no longer just say that something is desirable, or even try to prove it: we must show practical measures which can be immediately put into practice with the means we have at our disposal."

**Katja**

*Katja has also written an FAQ on anarchist economics you can find here: [transform-social.org/en/texts/economics\\_faq](https://transform-social.org/en/texts/economics_faq)*



## TUESDAY EVENING

Nothing out of the ordinary ever happened on a Tuesday evening. I wasn't really sure why. Was it because nobody worked on Wednesdays? Who knew ...? After all, the same applied to other days, as nobody worked on Sundays either and only rarely on Saturdays. Also ... What did work mean anyways? Opinions differed wildly on this topic. For some, any movement that went beyond involuntary bodily functions, such as opening one's eyelids in the morning, was definitely hard work. For others, work only began when an activity was carried out for the benefit of other people, other beings or the environment as a whole.

Of course, it was not true that there were days when absolutely nobody worked. In some communities, the declared aim was to work every day. And there were also activities that could not simply be left to rest for a whole day, especially not for three days a week. This included, for example, direct care for other people or beings, supervision of time-critical experiments or being on emergency standby. And let's not forget continuous processes that were always kept running, tasks where many people fulfilled their annual industrial quota. But on the whole, this model prevailed: Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays could be characterised, let's put it this way, by reduced workload. Instead of the usual average of 3-4 hours a day,

most people worked a maximum of 1 hour.

The doorbell rang. I frowned involuntarily, but still had to laugh briefly. The damn doorbell! I didn't look up from my tablet. Someone was about to receive a visitor. Last month, a history nerd in our community had installed a doorbell at the entrance and thought he was being extremely imaginative. He said we should experience what life used to be like. So pointless! There were no locked doors anywhere in the city, so there were no doorbells anywhere. But apparently enough people in our community thought it was a funny idea, which is why it hadn't been dismantled already. And anyhow: It would never have been used if there hadn't been a large sign above the bell: 'Press here to wake up the community.' Of course, no one needed to be told twice.

As is so often the case, however, the visit was not aimed at a single person or a small, clearly defined group of people, but at everyone in the community. This did not mean that everyone felt addressed. However, those who practically always felt addressed were the children, which is why they immediately surrounded the visitor, Marla, and asked her for a story. There was certainly curiosity behind this, but the children were also well aware of the magical effect of such a request: one of the few unwritten laws of the new

society was that new arrivals could be asked for a story, a request people usually were not supposed to refuse. At this point I was sitting in the open square under a tree and saw that Marla had agreed. The children went from shouting loudly to singing in a way that might seem strange to people outside our community, turning onomatopoeic noises into a kind of wolf howl - clearly announcing to everyone that a story session was about to begin. Before that, however, it was time for dinner.

There were several hundred communities in our town and there were around 500 people in our community. A large buffet was always organised for everyone in the morning, snacks at lunchtime and there were a handful of different sized dining options in the early evening. Some people usually ate at the same place, while others decided where they wanted to eat the evening before at the latest so that the crew could estimate the number of participants. An option was also to eat at some other community. Some venues functioned exclusively as participatory kitchens, while others actually exuded the flair of old-fashioned restaurants. At least that's what older people told me who, unlike me, had consciously experienced the time of upheaval. On Wednesdays and Saturdays, on the other hand, the surpluses from the previous days were creatively re-utilised, reflecting the reduced workload theme. Sundays were usually festive days when everyone socialised with each other in one way or another.

After the meal, the large dishwashers were filled everywhere and people from different kitchens streamed onto the main square. In the end, around 80 people had gathered. The youngest was probably Mika, aged three, and the oldest was

Karim, who was an impressive 93 years old. Some, especially those who were sitting far away from Marla, our visitor, took a small receiver. We sat down in a large circle so that everyone could potentially see each other. A handful of people of different ages took care of organising the round. For this month, they had agreed to accompany such events and introduce our community. The person who spoke held a red microphone in their hand, which also indicated who was speaking. How long a person introduced themselves depended entirely on their own wishes. In our case, it took almost an hour until everyone, including Mika, had had their say.

Then it was Marla's turn. She came from a town about 30 kilometres away. Her comparatively small community of around 100 people ran a thermal spa there. But we hadn't had any direct contact between our communities for many years. And that was precisely the reason for her visit. In order to break the ice and also to ensure a more direct exchange between the communities, Marla had brought a gift with her: Her community invited ten people from our community to an all-inclusive wellness weekend. We immediately issued a counter-invitation, which had nothing to do with the offer itself, but with the fact that we felt the same way. We also wanted to be in closer contact, and nothing could strengthen such bonds more than personal visits.

However, Marla had not forgotten the desire for a story, expressed by the children before the meal. The story began sadly, because it was about an accident in a mountain region where many people had died in an avalanche more than fifteen years ago. Everyone, including the children in the group, listened intently. Some of the



older ones among us had heard about the accident back then. What we didn't know, however, was that Marla's community, in co-operation with psychotherapists, had spent several weeks looking after a group of children and adolescents who had been most affected by the deaths. Marla herself had been part of this group, and today she lived in the community that had helped her back then. And a friend of hers was now involved in developing avalanche warning systems.

After the story, the group dispersed. Many of the children went to bed, some people stayed and talked to Marla. I also had a lively chat with her. Someone was playing the violin softly in the background. I realised that I really wanted to visit her. So, I told her about one of my jobs, where I worked with a team to critically

scrutinise and help optimise statistical data collection for production planning. Personally, I wasn't particularly interested in the wellness programme. But in any case, I was confident that together we would come to an understanding who were the people most suited for this.

There was a guest room for Marla, where she retired to after a while. I sat down again under the big tree and read a few more pages until my eyes fell shut. At some point, someone brought me a blanket. Those around me knew only too well that I tended to fall asleep under the tree. As I said, nothing out of the ordinary ever happened on a Tuesday evening. But that didn't mean such an evening couldn't still be very nice and interesting.

**Juan Tramontina**



**Katja**  
**Transform Social**  
**June 2023**

## **ANARCHIST ECONOMIC IN TIMES OF SCARCITY**

### **A STORY TO STIMULATE THE IMAGINATION**

20 years after the revolution and the start of serious action against the climate catastrophe, the region where Bo lived was still experiencing high temperatures and increasing water shortages. The regional assembly of delegates had classified drinking water as a scarce resource and recommended that consumption be better statistically recorded and reduced. Also, a drinking water coordination committee should be formed with a defined scope of action. After some discussions and improvements, the residents of the region agreed to these measures by a large consensus. Of course, the committee could be dissolved at any time if it did not adhere to the agreements or the conditions had changed.

Bo had been appointed to the new committee and was keen to take on the organizational challenge. Water meters on house distribution pipes had been repaired where necessary and monthly readings had been requested from the work coordination committee. No one had paid any attention to the water meters for a long time - after all, water, like everything else, was freely accessible and metering was therefore irrelevant. Public discussion of the issue, transparency of consumption and social pressure also played a role in reducing consumption. In some cases of excess consumption, Bo and Bo's colleagues

called in the conflict committee to find agreements with all parties involved to reduce consumption. The common goal was to reduce drinking water consumption through various measures in such a way that it would not be necessary to switch from the usual needs based distribution to rationed distribution, which would be much more annoying.

Rainwater retention basins and unsealing were within the scope of action of the committee, which did not need any further decisions. Nevertheless, they were announced to the public a little in advance so that everyone could stop the process. This happened from time to time, but it was no big deal, as solutions could then be found in a joint discussion. Measures such as rainwater collection or wastewater treatment plants, which were more time- or material-intensive, required the broad agreement of everyone in the affected region before implementation. As not all construction ideas could be implemented due to limited time and energy resources as well as other scarce resources such as copper and tin, there had been an independent scientific analysis as well as a public discussion in various media about the different options.

After a short time, there was a broad consensus for the combination of a few

water-saving drip irrigation systems for agricultural production and numerous decentralized rainwater collection systems, from which the water would be shared in the community. The idea of a supra-regional water supply pipeline did not meet with sufficient approval, as the weather data from previous years showed that it was extremely unlikely that neighboring regions had significantly more or less drinking water available than others and that it would have made sense to smooth the distribution. However, they wanted to discuss this option again at a supra-regional level in a few years' time, as it could offer greater safety of supply in disaster situations.

The materials required for the agreed measures were deducted from the region's quota in case they were classified as scarce and therefore recorded statistically. Tin, for example, which was needed for rainwater collection, was scarce and five years ago there had been a planetary agreement in the spirit of intergenerational justice, which limited consumption per person and year, resulting in an annual quota for each region according to the number of inhabitants. The consumption of all regions could be viewed on the Internet. There were no penalties for exceeding consumption, but there was a minor public scandal, at least if the region had no acceptable justification for doing so.

The work coordination committee was responsible for distributing the activities required for the agreed measures, at least when this did not sort itself out organically. For example, the regional construction collectives temporarily needed a few extra workers to dig all the water pits for collection tanks and

infiltration. The working committee also made sure that Bo was assigned other, less popular activities such as street cleaning in addition to the exciting work in the drinking water committee, for which Bo used about 10 hours a week. Work allocation was not compulsory and the committee took personal preferences into account. However, as the rotation of unpopular activities was considered a sensible and fair arrangement, hardly anyone opposed it.

It had been two years since the establishment of the drinking water coordination committee. Consumption had been significantly reduced, but the supply situation was still critical. Bo was keen to get involved in another work-field that was less affected by shortages and the rotation of responsibilities suggested that another person would take Bo's place on the committee anyway.

Today, Bo had the day off and strolled through the largest clothing distribution center in the region with Finn, a friend, to look for summer pants and new shoes. They quickly found a pair of suitable pants in the corner with used clothes. Because of Bo's special foot shape, Bo preferred to have the shoes made to measure. So they had Bo's feet re-measured and looked for a suitable model online. The order would be ready for collection from Bo's local distribution center in two weeks.

Finn worked in a smartphone factory that manufactured repairable devices and repaired defective ones. The factory met the needs of the entire continent, which had fallen sharply compared to before the revolution due to the greater longevity of the devices on the one hand and the scarcity of raw materials on the other. The

factory collective closely monitored the statistics of new orders and repair requests in order to estimate demand for the coming months and years. This was also important for the supply chains, as the production required many parts from other factories, which in turn relied on parts and raw materials from other collectives spread across the continent.

Bo listened with interest to Finn's stories about the supply chains: Basically, supply chains work in such a way that suppliers initially assume that demand will remain roughly the same, unless production facilities announce changing demand due to changing quantities or changing products or production processes. Changes in the assessment of the scarcity of raw materials and the associated quotas can also influence supply chains. All this information can be viewed transparently by everyone involved. This open communication means that supply chains are well coordinated. Supply chain transparency also has the advantage that the fair distribution of scarce goods to the regions can be reviewed and adjusted.

Like Bo's colleagues, Finn also noticed that Bo was a little depressed. Bo thought it could be due to the long period of dealing with the scarce commodity of water. They immediately went to a nearby health center together. In a conversation with a person there, it was decided that Bo would be relieved from work assignments for now and would receive weekly visits from a psychotherapist. Bo didn't have to worry about anything else. The weekly visits, as well as the cure and the therapy group that the therapist had organized for Bo, helped. After a few months, they found a new job in a vegetable garden, where Bo helped

out twice a week. Bo enjoyed supporting the growth of the plants.

During the time in cure facilities, Bo had not even noticed that in the region's annual perspective discussion, it had been decided to equip the regional research center with new technology and additional people in order to participate in long-term planetary cooperative research into environmentally friendly wastewater treatment plants. Bo was pleased that good decisions were made even without the own involvement.

**Katja**

*Translated for organise from the original German, the text of which can be found at: [transform-social.org/texte/knappheit](https://transform-social.org/texte/knappheit)*



## KING'S DAY

The flag featured vibrant red and green colours against a backdrop of a cartoon bandana-wearing cartoon woodpecker, pointing a revolver. The words read “1871” and “Antifascist Hooligans”. Archie watched it swirl hypnotically with the other flags while he applauded the supporters, his arms raised above his head. After each game they would go over to the fans and have the same exchange before they returned to the dressing room. Tonight they had won so they would stay longer than some nights, and listen to the fans songs about all sorts; the club history, the supporters, the players, the trophies, and the local area.

There were only about 600 people in the ground in total, and at this level it was one of the few clubs with many supporters, but it was an old club, older than the revolution. One or two of the players were really good, and had come to play for the club with the aim of transforming it to former glories.

The end of game rituals were by now routine, nevertheless he felt nervous. It meant that the next game now was the big one, the rivalry with a team that had renamed themselves after the ancient memory of the empire. It had been a while since anyone had died at one of these games, but they still carried the reputation; besides which Archie had never played in the fixture.

His phone was buzzing, a call from his mother. Shit he muttered to himself and scooped into a quiet corridor to take it. He hadn't told his family that he was playing for Arkadia, and truth be told he had never planned to. He wanted to play for the team of his commune, and it shouldn't have been a big deal, but it was. Some of his team mates were shouting and whooping as they went into the tunnel behind him, and he waited for them to pass. He prayed to God first and then he took the call. She wanted to know how he was, and he said he was good. She wanted to know what he done over the weekend and he said he had played football with some friends. She asked him when he was going to meet them at Hamilton Hall for King's Day. Shit, of course.

As he shuffled to his place in the team's changing rooms the conversation was already onto the next match. There was a nervous energy. They're going to talk about this forever Archie realised, as they started to argue about the Accords of the Revolution. He stuffed his kit into his bag and took a very quick shower. The debate was ongoing, but the discussion had moved on to the more practical matter of preventing the fash from entering the ground. Thankfully he was able to bail out of the dressing room without too much hassle on the excuse of a “family thing”.

It took him only twenty minutes to drive to Hamilton Hall, a one-hundred year old relic of Babylon's glorious industrial past. The pub was a pillar of his childhood and their community, and in spite of any resentment he felt the familiar warm glow as he entered. There were sixty or so people here, all familiar faces. The tables were arranged around the central stage, with the bar in the central island and accessible from all sides. They were taking it in turns to make speeches and sing songs to the piano. A man with an alcoholic's belly and swollen features was speaking. He had been close friends with Archie's dad, but they had fallen out because he'd stolen from his uncle, or something.

“Before this country went to the dogs, people worked for a living!... Some of us”

Archie vaguely remembered being scared of this man as a kid. His joke about the Catholics got a laugh.

“Not that lot from across the road!” his whiskey sloshed into the air. Archie was stood next to the bar and found a whiskey had been placed beside him. The lady behind the bar winked, a friend of his aunt's... Sophie. Archie gestured thank you and took a sip.

“Long time no see” Sophie remarked, in a hush voice to avoid disturbing Iain's speech. “Yeah!” Archie agreed awkwardly.

“When was your last meeting?”

“Oh... I dunno. Feels like yesterday though!” he lied.

“In spite of everything, of all the attempts to shut us down” she said, passion heavy in her voice. “We survive!” They toasted.

And it was true, Archie was genuinely proud of some of what they had done together in the church, what his parents had done. The feeling of holding your own produce in your hands, aubergine, tomatoes, courgette and lettuce, or of eating a meal you helped cook for a hundred people, all the work they had done to help recover and protect the local countryside and adapt it to changing climate... filled him with an immense pride. On the other hand there were the Orange marches, the King's Day race riots. The arson attacks. Seeing his uncle getting beaten up.

His eyes wandered to the portrait of the emperor, in his youth some forty years ago, the now long-lost crown still on his head. Archie had gotten to sit on the throne once, but a lot of people had. He got the impression that the man in the portrait was grinning at him.

“To the King!” went Iain's toast.

“The King!” echoed sixty voices, glasses raised high above their heads.

The last toast was the brick that flew through the window.

### Calmac

*Calmac publish his stories and articles on [parisblackstar.com](http://parisblackstar.com). He also makes videogames, and is working on using some technologies to make a “Games Commons” located at [gamescommons.com](http://gamescommons.com).*

*“I've come across a number of people interested in this and there's a bit of a scene developing. The dream is that one day we arrive at something between ‘Wikipedia’ and ‘online game’ ”.*

## A SHORT Q&A WITH NAMNAM SPACE

AN ANARCHIST QUEER COMMUNITY SPACE IN TOKYO

**Q:** Heya Nadina thanks for taking the time to talk to us about NamNam Space, you mentioned you were a scouser while we were setting this up, how did you end up being an organiser in a social space in Japan?

**A:** Divine timing, I guess? I'll try to give you the bullet points but I've been a community organiser for over 10 years now, beginning as a community admin for Japanese fashion meetups in the North West of the UK.

I initially took a one year working holiday to Japan right before COVID. Stuff for the LGBTQ community in Tokyo is really centred around nichome (the gay quarter) - it's very nightlife based and very cis-gay man oriented for the most part.

My friends and I felt that didn't reflect our lives, and COVID really emphasised the lack of other options - so we started doing meetups for queer people that offered something different. Book exchanges, picnics, art fairs etc. We would often host them at Cafe Lavanderia in nichome, which was an anti-fascism & music themed venue. When that was shut down due to gentrification, we kinda thought 'hey, there's a need for this, and we're capable of doing it, so fuck it let's do it.'

**Q:** ... and what is NamNam space? How did it come together?

**A:** NAMNAM Space is a queer space in Koenji, Tokyo, that runs on anarchist principles. Thanks to our connection with Cafe Lavanderia and a very successful crowdfunding campaign we were able to fundraise to rent and furnish a venue, and we're entirely volunteer run. We have various aims that are best summarised as lowering the barrier of entry on opportunities for queer people, as well as those who support social justice and leftist thinking. We've given a lot of people their "firsts" such as first art exhibition, event-organizer experience, first audience for their poetry etc. It's a space for the community that might not find space anywhere else.

**Q:** How many people run the space and how many people use it?

**A:** Right now we have a core team of 9 very dedicated members, and a wider network of occasional 'volunqeers' and helpers. People really care about it, I'm constantly humbled by that. It's hard to say how many people use it, we have a bunch of regulars who come for the chill open days we do on Friday & Saturday, but when we have a big event the place gets packed out.





**Q:** *What's the political make up?*

**A:** We operate from an anarchist framework but do not demand that staff, volunteers, or community members adhere to any specific political ideology. Of course there are shared values at the heart of our project, including but not limited to anti-capitalism, transnational solidarity, queer liberation, etc. The methods to which individuals work towards those aims are not the exclusive purview of our space. Rather, we seek to provide a gathering place where groups and individuals pursuing these political aims can strategize, educate, and connect with one another.

**Q:** *Practically speaking, how did you go about forming a collective and how did you find a space?*

**A:** It wasn't a formal procedure - just a lot of conversations with aligned thinking, opportunism and knowing a guy who knows a guy who has a place to rent. A lot of "wouldn't it be funny if..." followed by doing the thing we said would be funny. Right place, right time.

**Q:** *What is the local history with Queer autonomy and Anarchism like?*

**A:** Japan has a robust leftist history and a robust queer history, but these movements have not been linked in a significant way until fairly recently. The Palestine Solidarity Movement in Tokyo since October 7, 2023 has brought together the queer community and the existing left in an unprecedented way.

**Q:** *How you found is difficult to organise as a Queer Anarchist community?*

**A:** Many of the challenges we face are not unique to queer community or to anarchist organizing, but rather to the practical challenges of managing a physical space (e.g. paying rent, cleaning, making nice with neighbors, etc.). Beyond these challenges, we have yet to encounter existential challenges or obstacles. Minor challenges have arisen, unsurprisingly, from the heterogeneous community we serve who do not share uniform needs or opinions about what we do. We receive ample feedback, not all of which is delivered in good faith. Criticism is natural and healthy, and even when the critiques border on unreasonable or hateful, we are able to handle them as a team.

**Q:** *What is your relationship like with other groups in the area?*

**A:** To get into Koenji you kind of have to have good relationships in the area. We are particularly lucky to have many close friends around us, with special shout-outs to Andhika at Substore, Sacco + Sophie at Uptown Records and Daizo at TKA4. If we're not just talking about Koenji, there's so many other groups and individuals to thank we'd be here all day.

**Q:** *What does an average day at NamNam look like?*

**A:** For most of us an average day takes place on our laptops and phones. For me, I slip NAMNAM work in whatever moments I can find around a full time job, studying Japanese, doing my own creative work, buying groceries, going to protests, trying to remain sane while the world burns etc. I manage a lot of our digital infrastructure because I have those skills; running our Instagram posts & DMs, website and file

storage, updating discord. I do a lot of our design. I guess you'd call it all marketing.

The best days are the ones where we run an event and get to spend time with the community that has given us so much love. Or someone tells us that what we do is meaningful to them. When we're not running an event, the atmosphere is pretty chill; we open up, clean out the coffee machine, put on some tunes. Our spiritual leader Kinako will be there, eating dog treats, and people will slowly come in from all over. We hang out, talk about current events, chill on the balcony. It's homey. People come in as strangers and leave as friends.

**Q:** *What are the current aims, what's next on the agenda?*

**A:** Right now we're working to reach a point of comfortable financial sustainability. Rather than worrying about rent, we want to invest our talent and energy on doing impactful work. We don't wanna think too much about money, but we'd also like to be able to run as a cooperative model and be able to provide more financial support for our organizers and the wider community. One of my personal little dreams, aside from sustainable running of NAMNAM, is also to begin running as a mutual aid fund - I wanna be able to help support homeless queer teens in Tokyo, contribute to people's top surgery funds, send money to families in Gaza etc.

**Q:** *What are you looking to achieve long term?*

**A:** Art, anarchy and queerness, baby.

**Check them out:**  
[instagram.com/namnam\\_space](https://www.instagram.com/namnam_space)





## A SHORT Q&A WITH LESNES OCCUPIERS

**A short Q&A on the practicalities of organising with the campaigners supporting the protest occupation of London's Lesnes Estate.**

**Q:** *What is the aim and objective of Lesnes Estate Resistance?*

**A:** The aim of the Lesnes occupation is to support Lenses Resistance (LesRes), the resident-led campaign which opposes Peabody's planned demolition and the dispossession and dispersal of a multi-ethnic community.

In addition, by occupying empty social homes, the campaign is also drawing attention to the shameful fact that Peabody are keeping hundreds of social homes boarded up and long-term empty, when there are thousands of people waiting on the register just in Bexley and innumerable families living in overcrowded temporary accommodation who could benefit from these rare 3 and 4 bedroom social houses – the most needed type of accommodation in London. Meanwhile, in the neighbouring Borough of Greenwich, which has also ceded land to Peabody under the new regeneration scheme, families in need face a 55 year waiting list for a social home.

The campaign also wants to draw attention to the practices of a supposed charity such

as Peabody, of the council, and of the guardian agencies who operate on site, particularly Bow Arts which also passes off as a community arts group funding cosy events and artist shows around London, and the estate's maintenance contractor T Brown. In fact the multiplication of agencies is intended by design to create a climate of unaccountability in which no one is responsible for the intentional decay, the estate has gradually been filled with toxic waste created by Peabody's contractors who we've witnessed throw furniture out of windows which is then left to rot in front gardens. Rubbish collections are irregular and bins routinely left overflowing by the council, and maintenance contractors have harassed the population and taken months to respond to urgent issues such as broken boilers during winter.

**Q:** *How did you first come together as a group?*

**A:** A group of homeowners from the estate has been rallying to oppose demolition since 2015. These homeowners, now styled LesRes, formed alliances within London's wider anti-demolition and anti-gentrification movements, inviting Housing Rebellion to support their campaign. This led to an initial protest occupation of an empty house on the estate for a few





days in the summer of 2023, as well as protests at Peabody central offices and alliances with Public Interest Law Centre to explore options for legal action. The current occupation, which began in April 2024, was initially imagined as a short-term action, but it also promised to continue until John Lewis, Peabody's Thamesmead Director, deigned to engage with the Lesnes Residents. Since Peabody have continued to ignore the residents and the campaign, the occupation is ongoing and will continue until the population's concerns are heard out and offered satisfaction.

**Q:** *Why did you decided to occupy buildings as a strategy, what other methods did you consider?*

**A:** Occupation was in some ways a last resort. The Lesnes Resistance has been an ongoing struggle since 2015 and prior to the occupation we sought out discourse with Bexley Council, Peabody and City Hall, to no avail. Bexley Council does not manage or own any of its social housing stock, having transferred it to Gallions housing association and subsequently to Peabody in 2014.

For this reason, the council now maintain that residents' concerns fall outside their remit. Meanwhile, Peabody has been decanting residents from the estate and keeping hundreds of social housing units long-term empty, and much of the remainder let under slum landlord conditions via guardian agencies Dot Dot Dot and Bow Arts, who charge tenants forcible charitable donations, threaten those who query them with denial of their right to repairs, and use punitive and intrusive tenancy agreements that allow them to evict anyone without reason on a 21-day notice.

As well as starting the occupation we created a TRA to represent the population with issues such as the maintenance contractors; we have built relationships with the likes of Corporate Watch, who have written a report about the estate in addition to the investigative work they'd already done on Bow Arts and Peabody; we started legal work with PILC regarding the planning application that Bexley already approved and which is now awaiting approval by the Mayor.

Having the occupation on site has allowed outside activists to build closer ties with the local population and also expand the local base of support, doing activities and events like parties and picnics as well as door-knocking drives and exhibitions. We have built ties and created events with allied voices in the housing movement such as Anna Minton and Nick Bano, as well as organising walks e.g. with Docomomo, the modernist architecture appreciation group, the highlight the value and quality of the estate as architectural heritage.

We are also working with ACAN to produce community-led plans to retrofit and demonstrate that there is an alternative to Peabody's plans to demolish, slash the number of social homes by a tenfold factor from 600 to 60 and replace the existing environment with third-rate tower blocks for investors. We think it is important to explore all avenues to resist demolition and build support and awareness within as many constituencies as possible.

**Q:** *How did you go about securing the space?*

**A:** Legal notices about protest occupation, changing locks, bolts inside every door. Asking who is coming in. always having

someone in the occupied houses. Keeping watch for Peabody and private security and scrappers around the estate, particularly in the courtyards we occupied.

**Q:** *Did you need to take any special preparations?*

**A:** We did not use criminal damage to get into buildings. We discussed risk of arrest and each person's willingness to be arrested or not as part of the initial move to occupy. This risk has substantially decreased now since neither the police nor housing association have wanted to intervene. The PCSO and then the Met, have accepted the protest as a civil matter between us and Peabody, both confirming no evidence of criminal damage. Any legal endeavours from Peabody remain unknown to us.

**Q:** *How does the group self administer and share roles?*

**A:** A community agreement gives us a formal route for decision making, and roles are discussed in meetings or in more informal settings between activists and residents, after which decisions are enacted by whoever wants to implement them. As the long-standing members of the occupation are not large in number, organisation remains mostly informal with the community agreement sought or supplied when mission creep has occurred. Members of the campaign who aren't occupying but are involved often come to assist during events.

**Q:** *How did you secure funding?*

**A:** Financing takes a variety of means.

Day-to-day expenses are usually personal or in the form of generous donations by residents (for food and printing, as examples). The campaign has also been financed by donations, and crowdfunding is used for specific goals (for example, to create a resident-led retrofit strategy for the estate).

**Q:** *Have you had any difficulties finding a balance between immediate housing and political aims*

**A:** The campaign is first and foremost a protest against the demolition and displacement of the estate. The provision of housing has not been the occupation's goal, and explicit understanding of the legal situation must be held by all who participate.

The ultimate instability and temporality of a protest occupation may have moments where momentary stability gives the impression there could be housing solutions for people in need, but understanding of the context of the occupation and the legal wording that protest occupations rely on makes it difficult to extend housing to those whom it would make the most sense to open up the estate to, i.e. families etc.

Further, bear in mind that the occupation is happening on the doorsteps of people who have already faced decades of managed decline, and at their invitation and for their benefit, we have taken a firm line that the occupation exists primarily to advocate for preservation of the estate and of the existing residents.

# ART, AUTOMATION AND YOU

*It is easier than ever before to produce visual media, but what does that mean?*

Since my previous piece two years ago, artificially generated material from LLMs has only become more visible. To the point that it's difficult to avoid an advert shilling for the newest ways to turn armies of expensive graphics cards into money. In that light I believe it's time to take a second look at the relationship between AI and creativity.

As an artist, or someone who requires art, what do these services mean for you? It is undeniable that these services can provide a quick fix if you need 'content' for a project you are working on; Almost like magic you can have something polished within mere seconds. If you need to impress and have few resources to hand then it can be incredibly tempting to reach for an AI tool.

However I would argue that in most cases these generative outputs are likely to hinder your project, especially if not used very carefully. The presence of this material will, ironically, only make your project more forgettable off putting and bland. You may also find in many cases that automating the creative process runs counter to the notion of creating in the first place. Finally, the hidden costs of AI might be prohibitive to you – depending on your priorities.

For the sake of focus I'm going to lead with the visual arts, but these arguments are still generally applicable to the other mediums.

## Can LLMs make art?

Quoting a previous version of myself:

*As with most areas of philosophy the definition of creativity is hotly contested. Though there is an emerging consensus that for something to be creative it needs to satisfy two conditions. Firstly it must be 'novel' – meaning a new combination of elements, original in some form. Secondly it must be 'valuable', though value in this context could be replaced with 'exemplary' or 'notable'. It must have something to make that originality of wider interest – though this has been contested. Whilst there have been studies on AI and creativity, the limiting factor in current research is in-domain knowledge (to allow researchers to assess creativity within a medium), and valuation of results (the ability to judge the creative worth of the output). The complexity of the task of evaluation cannot be stressed enough – and alongside definitions of creativity, these tend to rely on factors like emotional response, motivations, lived experiences, shifting tastes, values and more. This is a running theme for researchers of creativity, alongside aspects of self*

*expression, expression of ideas, and a blending of them between the conscious and unconscious mind.*

*What I'm getting at is that theory of creativity tends to be connected to theory of mind and theory of consciousness. I propose that creativity has a direct causal relationship with consciousness. It is my personal belief that to be able to create in the way we understand true creation, one has to have a conscious mind.*

This is why if you should choose to use AI services to create your own work it won't be bringing any new ideas to the party. The lack of ability to generate ideas is why the only 'value' AI can bring to a work is brought by you and the context you bring to it.

Having said that, I do believe it is possible to derive value from AI generated work. As LLMs are trained on data siphoned from a biased society, the results are indelibly coloured with the strata that already exist in society. LLMs are a great resource for highlighting bigotry and various assumed truths – especially as western culture has a tendency to dominate the online sphere and is disproportionately represented in AI output. In this sense it can be used as a mirror, to look at ourselves. Having said that it is incredibly unlikely an AI image on its own will have enough artistic weight to be considered to have 'true' value.

## Originality, and lack thereof

Something you've likely already noticed is that it is exceedingly easy to make painfully mediocre material using LLM's, whether that's midjourney, DALL-E, Stable Diffusion, etc. Facebook (for those who still use it) has become a ghost town dominated by boomer-bait 'fake'

memes pumped out by pages dedicated to disseminating artificial images, and other social media sites aren't far behind. You'll notice that this AI slop tends to have a distinct look. To pick a random example:



Quite often the output has a hyper-glossy lighting treatment and has a tendency to look like an advert. The easiest way to understand why is to think of AI art as the result of taking ridiculously huge quantities of text and images, chucking them in a blender, and reconstituting that into output like the above. Fundamentally, an AI algorithm is unable to create or innovate – it is a very well designed mimic. It takes a request and pieces together a vast ocean of visual works to create a kind of hyper detailed exquisite corpse – a mish mash of concepts squashed together to make an impressive approximation of 'content'.

Many argue that there is no difference between an AI algorithm using references to create art and a person using references to make art – but in my opinion this is



a dishonest comparison. A human takes inference from reference material to create work that exists in dialogue with the reference. Through context and concept the reference material is used as a point of inspiration to make an entirely new work. In most cases, all of the actual mark making of the final piece is derived from the artist's own hand. In contrast, the algorithm simply recycles the data of the original work into a new configuration – there is no interpretation because an LLM only has relational connections made during training, and no ability to create anything but a predictive guess at what the desired outcome of a text prompt should be.

This lack of context, awareness, ability to create a dialogue, imagination in short, is what makes AI content simultaneously so arresting and so forgettable. It recycles what has been popular before to predict what would be popular now.



Suhail  
@Suhail

...

There's no doubt in my mind that making AI art is real art.

I spent about 1.5 hours tweaking things to produce these visuals. The hair, perfect red lipstick color, focus, eyes, wrinkles, theme, reflections, clothes. It was a joy to achieve a result I couldn't have previously.



12:56 AM · Sep 28, 2022 · Twitter Web App

Notice how Suhail focusses on details but there is no context or meaning here. Sure, there is an obligation for some art to be 'beautiful'. But for art to truly speak to someone it usually needs to be imbued with some kind of meaning. And I think this is where AI highlights something important.

### The Medium is the Message

The advent of AI art is not the first time a new medium has impacted the creative community. The advent of the printing press re-contextualised calligraphy – no longer pure communications technology but an expressive medium. The camera re-contextualised painting; taking it from a medium for stuffy portraiture to, once again, a tool for self expression. De-prioritising realism. How does AI art re-contextualise art? Or any other application it is turned to?

In a similar way I think it re-contextualises the very act of creation in the first place. It refocuses the creator's act from 'how' to 'why'. If you simply require something as opposed to nothing, and the actual material itself doesn't matter then sure, it may fit your purposes. It simply allows you to create more – as long as the 'more' looks an awful lot like something you've already seen.

It will always trend toward the average – the most common avatar of the concept you've requested, the archetype. It is an engine for derivative, 'good enough' work.

This means that, in the creative sphere, the primary distinguishing factor – especially as the quality of AI outputs improve, will be intent and imagination. Why are you making this? What are you trying to achieve or convey? What are you trying to say? Is detail required to say it?



Heyheymomo is a creator of high quality eyebleach – aggressively wholesome webcomics. They are simple both in content and execution. They effectively convey incredibly human situations. In short they are infused with a sense of humanity that can only be created from a perspective of understanding humanity. It communicates on an instinctive level. In Spanish term word "Duende" is used to denote art that has life – a kind of soul imbued to it. Art with duende provokes an emotional response in the audience. Art that is alive. By comparison generative 'art' is inherently dead, zombified even.

### So can I use AI to help me make art?

Until an algorithm understands the qualia (i.e. the innate nature) of existence, it will not be able to impart true imagination to work – and in that sense never truly be able to 'create' anything. If the aim of what you are making is to say something new or specific to you, using AI will always be a guiding force steering you toward mediocrity. Of course, you can always use AI material as a starting off point, but still know that that starting point will always come from an average, rather than extraordinary place.

This might be acceptable for your purposes, though it will be difficult to use the master's tools to demolish the master's house. And considering what LLMs make is essentially a vertical slice of peak neoliberal culture, any direction you're likely to want to go in is probably away from the centre. Unless you like beige, of course. I recently had to condense a piece of writing down from 5k+ to under 750 words and out of curiosity passed it through a chat bot. So much of the essential meaning of the piece was lost, and so individualised did it portray the problem, that in the end I rejected it entirely in favour of redrafting the piece myself. The scanner sees darkly, and if you choose to take on this vision, so too will it alter your perception.

So yes, if it's a useful tool for you, then feel free to use it. But remember a real reference will always be more useful than something an LLM sticky taped together – and will give you greater cultural context because you will know where it came from.

### The Cost of Entry

Aside from reasons around art theory and nebulous notions of creativity, there are other reasons you may decide against using AI to automate your creative process. Or parts thereof. The most widely covered aspect being the debate around intellectual property and theft. You may have certain feelings around whether 'Intellectual Property' should even exist in the first place – in a perfect world I certainly wouldn't argue in its favor. However in a world of IP hoarding mega monopolies and asymmetric enforcement of those rights, copyright law may be the only line of defence against the wholesale stealing of innumerable artists' work. As mentioned before – these services analyse

petabytes of data, largely taken wholesale from the internet without obtaining consent from their creators. In fact, because of the way AI works, any output it generates is ultimately a kind of plagiarism.

Aside from this, the environmental cost of generative AI is staggering. Creating a new version of a model requires the equivalent power of a small nation to train – around 11twh and expected to rise significantly before 2026. On top of which, the power required to run these data centres adds even more power requirement, and many of the datacentres running the hardware use evaporative cooling – placing huge demands for water on the areas surrounding them. Some estimates suggest as little as 5 queries processed by GPT-3 can consume half a litre of water, and even suggest its' successor (GPT-4) can consume the same amount for generating as few as 100 words of response.

There's also the human cost of the AI ghost workers who are employed en masse ensure the proper functioning of these service in what are poorly compensated effectively digital sweatshops. AI output can be unreliable and reproduce darker elements in the training data. People are employed en masse to act as a human crumple zone to ensure the output is sanitised – leaving these precariously employed people responsible if something goes wrong.

### What Now?

I hope I've managed to convey the complex relation the AI economy has with the arts. If you still so choose to employ the outputs of these systems then hopefully you do so with full awareness of context.

I would like to leave you with one final thought though.



*A view of the interior of Elon Musk / X's new AI server farm*

We live in an attention economy. Part of the reason the lure of AI is so strong is because it helps wrung out creatives produce more in a shorter time span – which is a demand made by our social media driven culture. If you don't create often and in a certain way you lose visibility because you aren't creating what the algorithm is looking for. As suggested in an article by Jason Koebler, AI is being used to brute force social media algorithms. To chase trends and spike visibility with whatever is popular at this exact point in time. And that does have power – it can be, and is, exploited.

There is a careful balance to be struck between achieving a goal and hitting a target. In the modern era the target increasingly seems to simply be 'more'. But creating without intention, without taking pause to reflect on who you are, what you're doing, and why, it can become empty. Especially if you stop enjoying it. Take it from someone who's been there (and still is, to some extent). Don't turn your passion into a job. Don't kill your interest for the sake of the grind. Don't destroy yourself in pursuit of an unattainable goal. And above all think. Make your creations out of passion and enjoyment. Create because if you don't you'll go mad. Create from the heart – however you do that, employing AI tools or not.

But beware.

He who fights with monsters might take care lest he thereby become a monster. And if you gaze for long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you.

Don't lose yourself along the way.

**Gaffen**

*Gaffen is a programmer and musician with an interest in the creeping advance of tech-enabled authoritarianism, and permaculture.*

*He occasionally writes thoughts on this down at <https://gaffen.co.uk/>*

*His previous piece on AI can be found on my website It delves further into ideas of creativity and machine consciousness and has a heavier focus on philosophy.*



# DIGITAL NOSEBLEED: THE FIGHT FOR THE SOUL OF THE ART

When I was a kid my dad borrowed a computer and on that computer there was a programme called “Dazzle”. Dazzle used mathematics and procedural randomness to create patterns in motion, it was little more than a screensaver but it was the first time I was able to experiment with software like this. Sure, I enjoyed splashing paint about as much as any kid but now I was able to put in a few prompts and see this beautiful vibrant dance. It was art and it inspired me to pursue digital art as a vocation. The latest tool of this medium is the post-conceptual “generative art” or what we’re now colloquially calling “AI Art” - a term I object to as little more than reductive branding but none the less what we’re all calling it.

For years now, I’ve been fascinated with the various projects that sought to map out brainwaves and align them with concepts and images. These projects have mostly been research into “dream recording” or communications systems for disabled peoples but it’s the idea of manifesting the image in your mind without the barriers of physical skill or resource intrigues me the most.

For me this technology, much like any automation can and should be used to liberate us from toil and servitude.

However, we live in the capitalist system and it is a sick poison that obfuscates truth and sows divide rather than liberate the working class. The technology is under the control of the state, capital, and fascistic propagandists, presents a clear and present threat to labour, social welfare, and the collective political and cultural health of everyone on the planet.

The the discussion on AI is broad and sweeping with many positive and negative arguments, but where I find a critical objection is how people respond to generative art, even when framed entirely in some utopia socialist vision. I am told, “anything involving AI is not Art”. This line of reasoning then driven home with absolute hostility.

The train of thought seems to be to scumbully people into not using it, so we see each and every piece of artwork even suspected of involving AI Art in it’s creation being barraged with the kind of hostility we usually save for Tories and Nazis.

These digital vanguards of the pencil, are quick to barrage anyone they can find with the most abusive antagonism and for what, someone used AI to mock up a reference to a classic poster for their event? It is frankly absurd and I hate these absolutist positions, counter to any logic or

acceptance of reality. If we act this way, we reduce our capacity to respond in a serious manner and protect ourselves both industrially and culturally.

Now automation should liberate. For twenty years, I've been using various bits of software that do just that. Whether that's Illustrator or Procreate, we have been systematically creating packages, processes, and toolsets that mean you can create in moments what used to take a team days. I firmly believe that this is the democratisation of art, albeit existing dubiously within capitalism at the expense of labour. *(You don't need the type pool or a team of draftsmen if you've got Open Office and Gimp.)*

Artists have been toying around with "AI Art" since the advent of the technology back in the 50's and 60's, sure, by the late 90's the procedural Dazzle I was amazed by as a child was replaced with Electric Sheep a collaborative abstract artwork founded by Scott Draves, which leans a

little bit towards pseudo-spiritual sacred geometry and fractalism of Alex Grey for my tastes but is none the less deeply curious bit of self-developing AI which would use user input to generate "sheep". It was, *(and remains)* a captivating exploration of artificial "consciousness".

By 2017, AI Art is become more commonplace, with a variety of software and tools springing forth. Neural style transfer (NST) systems allow used to blend art styles into their own photographs and while a novelty for some, for others it quickly becomes a tool or creation. Outside of a small crowd, no one cared.

Even by 2020 if you spoke to anyone about "AI Art", the attitude for *"never going to happen"*, despite the ever increasing artistic works from around the world. The present reality was still, for the vast majority of people, some distant whim science fiction. Then in January 2021, OpenAI's DALL-E was launched, at first, generative art was a curious toy, on the



A "sheep"

consumer level there were a few websites that offered a sample and overwhelmingly they created a near surreal dream-like image. At the start of the following year in February Midjourney launch their self-titled software, in August 2022 Stability AI launched Stable Diffusion and suddenly people began to see the possibilities.

It was a difficult time, global pandemics, war, corporate profiteering, the quick pace of technology caught the vast majority of people unaware. They simply were not ready for a world where automatic systems could source complex data for you or that drones would be children's toys and a most horrific trauma inducing weapon of war.

In September Dall-E 2 launched, and was specifically highlighted for using public data. "AI-Art" now looked the business and tho people were torn between whether it was a toy or threat, that it used public data without consent or compensation of the artists was fucked to say the least.

In November 2022 Tencent launched "Different Dimension Me" *(most likely on the back of Stable Diffusion)* and suddenly all the artists who did "Manga of you PFP" art commissions lost their entire market. This coincided with the launch of ChatGPT, which blew up instantly.

This for me was the point at which I noticed AI-Art was growing beyond the tech and art spaces. DDMe and ChatGPT were everywhere and for all of their bugs and failures they changed the generalised perception of AI overnight, from your average Joe and corporates both.

By December the "Anti-AI Art" protest began to ramp up, tho silent when automation saw tens of thousands of blue

collar jobs vapourise, suddenly now the artists were threatened it was time for swift action! Sure, initially somewhat built upon some shakey understanding of the tech but ultimately fueled by some genuine concerns. essentially:

- *The lack of consent and respect for copyright in the repositories.*
- *The lack of compensation for usage and generative art using someone's style.*
- *Corporations will employ less artists and/or expect high volumes of output, probably of a lower standard.*

Fair arguments in my mind, but also...

- *It's can't do hands. It will never be good enough and it lessens us all.*
- *It's not art, but a technical toy and insulting to see it posted alongside things art that took effort.*
- *It's not Art because it is not created by a human with intent.*

Now these, these arguments I find iffy and I'm going to start with them.

I want to say very clearly here I am neither "Anti-Ai" or "Pro-Ai", what I am is aware that it is a tool, and that as a tool, it is what we use it for, but I've encountered a slew of "Anti-Ai" talking points which I feel it's important to address, which I will do so in as concise a manner as possible.

Now I don't address every point, and fly paste the ones I do. I am quite aware people are going to take the worst possible reading of any hazy element of this but that is on you, not I.



### It can't do hands...

It can't draw hands, and that's OK, but for this infant technology to have such a failing for enough to condemn it and laugh with all the self-esteem of any elitist vanguard and preserver of the righteous path.

Then the models improve.  
Literally months later.

Suddenly *"it can't do hands"* became ah look at the indiscriminate lighting, lack of focus, uniform textures, flat angles, and so on. Hyper critical examination of what was usually just some silly meme image or event flyer. Like have you no idea how absurd your hostility and faux-art criticism sounds?

Please for the love of god, look at the artistic merit of your average meme, shitpost, or rave event through the 00's. No one gives a fuck that it can't do hands, especially when it can, much better than me at least.

The other counter to this argument is people laying this accusation out as a broad sweeping cheapening of art. That if we tolerate this low quality result in our precious beautiful field, we allow in the soulless, the sterile, in inauthentic. We are reduced! It's just a technical toy and cannot and will never be used for real art!

### It's not art...

These days, we understand the photograph to be an art form, very few would question this.

However from 1839 to 1930's it was overwhelmingly seen as a vulgar toy, a technical curiosity at best, later developing into tool for documentation. "Art", No. That's paintings, something with some human effort and purpose. Not merely just pointing a camera and pressing a button. That's just

lazy, where is the skill. Even the stunning works of Pictorialist Léonard Misonne were seen as little more than mimicry.

Alfred Stieglitz and F. Holland Day, two deeply artistic photographers sought to change that. They meet with derision from even amongst their photographic fraternity. Amongst a small peer group they developed new photographic techniques to expand their art even tho it would be sometimes before it would be appreciated by society en-masse as such.

Henri Cartier-Bresson, Edouard Boubat and Robert Doisneau, changed this, and changed it they did due to a development of technology. The 35mm camera allowed them to wander the streets and capture moments of joy and develop what we now call "candid photography" and "photo-journalism".

It was the same story for film.

Film, for some thirty years of it's infancy was seen less as an art form and more as a vulgar novelty, just some cheap entertainment. This started to change with News Reels and Actuality films and tho there were some attempts to portray art in film through the 1900's -20's it was only with the works of Fritz Lang and Alfred Hitchcock that the relationship began to change.

Yet "art"? No, this is just in today's parlance, content and slop, we couldn't possibly consider it as something as noble as "art".

It wasn't until "The Miracle" a segment of the film "L'amore" was banned by New York, which led to a Supreme Court case in 1952 that established film as legally protected art.

My point is this, art is more than the medium, it is the purpose, the form, the

viewpoint, the technical skill, and the emotive driver. "Art" is more than our little bastions, how many times do we have to do this?

I remember keenly being told that my *"little cartoon doodles are not art"*.

### Just pick up a pencil...

Telling someone to go *"pick up a pencil"* is like telling an electronic artists to pick up the violin. Stop being a snob with your art mate, it's all just pretty colours and lines to express hearts and minds.

To highlight my objection I'mma pull up three pretty well known quotes.

*"It's not my fault you can't doodle"*

The Tiktok artist and influence says from his New York loft apartment, denouncing people who use AI art. The sheer liberal elitism of it is galling. I first saw this video a couple of days after a friend shared with me the artworks his class had made. He teaches neglected children, and tear aways. The kind of kids that linger outside Premier and who you are afraid to make eye contact with. They've just had a hell of a day, creating for the first time in their lives. These kids have never made anything more than a doodle and for the first time they are able to translate what they have in their heads onto the canvas.

This is the democratisation of art. Art should be for everyone, not just those with innate talent, the time to develop the skill sets, or the finances to support a luxury hobby. You need to get rid of your romantic vision of the struggling artist and just let the kids make some art with whatever tool they can, let it inspire them to become more and more hands on.

Every time a child discovers they can create it's fucking beautiful, regardless of the medium they use.

*"If you're using it to cosplay as an artist..."* says another who views it as quick, cheap and soulless, as she uses software on her tablet to fill in the colours, straighten her mark making, reduced hours of painting to twenty minutes work. Her medium is digital art, and more love to her, here work is beautiful and valid but in my ear I remember when I was first studying art, I told my teacher I was into the artwork of Autumn Whitehurst (a digital artist) and I was told that "real art doesn't use computers, that's cheating".

It's just the same regurgitated ire. Heck this is like Bob Ross being denounce as a cheap trader of speed techniques, painting "soulless", "formulaic" and "thoughtless" images as he brought the joys of painting to millions who would never of thought "is art for me?" Well it is! and however you discover that, it's great!

OK, There are important questions to ask ourselves around the degree of human authorship and the nature of our separation from the processes we replicate with our digital methods. Whether you're using Halftone filters and Riso overlays, Brush packages and all manner of toolsets to make your workflow easier and better, what you are in fact doing is reducing the labour time, material assets, and skill set development time, in order to create the vision in your head or the image for the client.

Please note, rather than destroy the traditional arts, the opposite has happened. More people paint now than ever, they create with physical and digital medias, while some might use generative

art as a quick toy, others have made it their medium and they are artists.

*“It’s an insult to life itself...”*

Hayao Miyazaki said this after viewing some early AI artwork. Only it wasn’t AI but a completely different technology and the animation in question was of a zombie monster, this shortly after he recently buried a good friend, he later gave an interview where he expressed clearly that he felt the animation in question was insensitive to those living with disabilities.

I can’t speak for Miyazaki (*who as far as I’m aware hasn’t said anything about AI Artwork since*) but I do know that Studio Ghibli developed Toonz, the premier bit of software that helps animators improve their workflow and they utilise 3D modelling and computer generated animations in their work. Sure there are distinct scenes that the

team labour on for over year, but this is not the entirety and like any sensible creator of media they use the tools at hand, more to the point they innovate away from “picking up a pencil” mentality, especially when it can improve the workflow and ultimately the lives of the staff.

Pick up a Pencil? Break free from your romanticised visions and return to Earth.

**It’s not art because it’s not created by a human with intent.** I’ve never heard an artist say this until recently and it is the most absurd notion.

“Art” is all around us. It can be found generated through natural processes over aeons or the rusting of barrels on wasteland over decades as much as it is can be Helen Chadwick’s *Piss Flowers*, or Klien’s *IKB*. There are entire art movements that



*Don't worry instead of taking seconds it took me hours.*

seek to remove human consciousness from the process or add in elements of universal chaos, order, physics, pattern and discord. From Automatic drawing to motion painting, “Art” cuts through as something more than a classical depiction of the world around us of some deliberate emotive style. “Art” has been found in political manifestos, documentive works, in reflection of technical drawings, in old advertisements, and captured moments of deep pain. Life stuff.

People have given art brushes to dogs, pigs, elephants, the wind, robotic automatons, and digital programs. They have found great beauty and wonder in the results. We have the work Jakob Grosse-Ophoff, Patrick Tresset, Sougwen Chung and So Kanno who all use automation to manifest powerful works and this is before we look at the procedural artists such as Soham Sona, Liza Daly and Ryoji Ikeda.

I find this an appalling lack of depth, to me, artists find a deep fascination with every device and tool, when photo-copiers became commonplace artists experimented and placed with them, creating fantastic collages, people like David Carson, Tibor Kalman, Stefan Saigmeister, and Peter Bil’ak all took the technology around them, ever changing as it was, and played with it, toyed with it, sometimes to sell a moment, sometimes to sell a product, but always enriching us with “Art”.

As the digital age came upon us, thousands of new artists became obsessed with the the liminal spaces between the analogue and the digital. We went from ASCII artwork to glitch moshing, from the sound of trackers to the democratisation of sequencers with *Music 2000*. Long before *Midjourney* and all that, “AI” artwork

was already becoming a point of interest for artists. Heck even in the infant years they were noticing the hallucinations, dream states, Moebius-like landscapes and Cronenbergian nightmares and began exploring this. It’s what artists do.

What would be a passing toy for some, would for others become obsession.

Pretty soon we have works like *Mosaic Virus* by Anna Ridler or *The Entropy Gardens* by Refik Anadol. Go look them up, follow up some other names. Deep dive.

Challenge your conception of “Art”.

**It’s just a few prompts.**

Sure, ok. Sometimes. I think a good analogy is how Instagram gave people the capacity to create complex filters with a few button clicks and stole weekend funds of a million student graphic designers with hooky copies of Photoshop.

“AI Art” can make a passable image pretty quickly. It can be used as a content mill. Sure. For passing users, this is all it is, a quick toy, similar to “mememaker” or any of those old sites that apply a filter to your photographs.

For others not so much, it’s a tool and one they use to hone their work. Let me take you through the creation of a short reel such as this piece by the artist Hari Ren.

First they researched locations and imagery to suit, a combination of local knowledge and crowd sourcing ideas. Having found a location suitable to lay the back drop he digitally painted the 20 layer matte base, utilising photo-composition and over-painting. These



layers were then cut up with someone of them being given seamless textures to aid the flow of the animation. For this they used Photoshop, Firefly, and Rebelle.

For the bird they took footage of a blackbird and exported some 250 frames and gave them a unified painted look using a batch process using a single seed Stable Diffusion Forge. The eyes were hand painted and added to each frame using Photoshop. The scene was then layed up using Pixijs, the artist taught themselves Object Movement Sprite Animation, Displacement Maps and Particle Animation and used some 400 lines of code. Finally they recorded the scene down in OBS and synced up the score to marry up.

This was ten hours work, perhaps seven of them spent researching and skill up on the techniques they wanted to use.

So let's say about three hours for a solo project such as this, stripping off all the additional labour. If he were to do this ten years ago, this would have been days of work. Thirty years ago more like three weeks.

The AI here, is used here as a tool to aid the artist. It's no different from using any of the plethora of settings, tools, filters, or scripts found in any piece of software.

No one lost their job and no one was forced to spend weeks of their life on a small project. Saying "AI is just a few prompts" is like saying La Charité is just a few brush strokes or Susie Smoking was just pointing a camera. We shouldn't strip away the consideration, intent, and skill of digital creatives simply because lay persons can get a nice passable piece with a Insta filter, paint a nice ombre, toy with the presets or, dare I say, type in a few prompts.



*A still from Häri Ren's animation found at  
instagram.com/reel/DG\_1AWDIrur*

### **Support real artists...**

In my personal, professional, and political lives I commission art regularly.

I am a graphic designer and a publisher by trade and I make my own art and help empower others to get theirs out there.

I absolutely believe in supporting my fellow artists and put my words, action, and finances behind that.

Saying this, have you ever tried to commission a piece of artwork?

Let's take the situation of my friend who has spent years working on his card game only to hit a road block, he isn't an artist. He's using a card template we've built together, my time given out of mutual aid but if I was charging would

have been around £200 at a living wage.

He requires artwork to populate his game.

If he was to go to Artstation, he would first have to pay them over £500 a year for the pleasure of looking for a freelance artist, who then, would be looking at charging hundreds if not thousands per piece of artwork.

Ok so perhaps Artstation is a bit too professional. Let's look at Deviant art. It is, frankly, a sea of low quality, manga and furry fandom slop, generally catering to fan art or NSFW of your OC that very often looks at around £50 to £100 for a single full body in colour.

I have years of experience using these and other platforms and generally I've paid around £100 to £200 for A3 sheets of concept art and between £500 and £1000 for final pieces and I'll be honest with you a good 25% of the time, the artist has just ghosted me halfway through the job. He can't afford to take that risk.

There is absolutely no way he can ever afford to make his game. I don't believe that is right, especially with the tech right there.

It might be uncomfortable to hear but it's the truth, there are huge barriers to access for the vast majority of people, let alone those who consider themselves "in" the art space.

Some of the leading voices of "Anti AI-Art" movement wouldn't look at you unless you waved thousands at them, but hey you can sure as shit go spend £50 buying a print from a vanity press or grab their stickers from Red Bubble, Inkthreadable, or any number of commercial ventures.

They don't even hate AI-Art like they want you too, they hate that corporates mined data without paying them and to balance this out we've reduced ourselves to some reactionary natalism and technophobia.

It's got to the point we're screaming at people trying to bully them into not using AI. No nuance, no critical concern, just venom and absolute aggression, 0-1.

The other side and frankly the main body of the most actively antagonistic on social medias, and any AI artist can confirm this, are "Anti AI Art" people are those who are trying to trade of low-tier commodity illustrations. It is they who had to most to lose when you could just make some pseudo-private software make salacious pictures of your OC.

I imagine the past two years have been very difficult for my fellow workers in the low-tier fantasy porn market and frankly I couldn't care less. They have cut a uncomfortable and temporary market niche reaping the rewards of commodity generation on the back of fellow workers who never had the time to learn or make. The same can be said of the "Draw your pet/gran/kids in anime" artists tho funnily enough, much like the professional freelancers, are fewer and further between when it comes to firebrand replies on social media posts.

The means of production should be all of ours and we can't break from capital as we actively reject the tools that would liberate us from the cannibalistic frenzy that is survival economics.

The solution to this? Compensation. That's right, those freelancers and professionals driving this ire, they wanted

to get paid. They want libraries to give them royalties when their art style is used. The result? Services like “Tess”, an Generative AI Artwork service which compensates the artists. So want access to art for that one off project without having to spend 5 years developing the skill sets but don’t want everyone moaning at you on the internet? For \$80USD a month you get 600 generations. Woo.

Have you got \$80 a month?

### What about Copyright?

I’ll be honest with you, I couldn’t give a fuck about copyright.

Saying this, I believe that an artist’s personal style is a finger print, it is vital and important on a deep level. Truly.

When we reflect that style we should pay homage to those that inspire, but we do this out of consideration and peer ship, not because of capital.

It’s bemusing to see the leftists and Anarchists who gleefully endorse stealing from local businesses and the petty bourgeoisie suddenly spitting rage if you make a picture in the style of Ghibli.

Man, fuck Ghibli, They are richer than Captain Kirk, you are entirely within your rights to steal their style.

Overwhelmingly, despite being great lovers of art and creativity itself, our milieu did not give one diddly shite about copyright and IP prior to this loaded discussion on AI Art. It’s obnoxious to suddenly find ourselves gatekeeping horizontal exchanges under quasi-fascistic attitudes of security and property. There is a difference between

big corporates sacking staff to be replaced by automation, and your mate Iolo making a fun poster of a unicorn and a raccoon decking a Tory in the style of Vermeer, Stop being so reductionist.

Sure it’s not nice when people you don’t like use your stuff but that’s the nature of a liberated playing field. Fuck commercial elements praying upon the working class, but that is a problem with capitalism and we shouldn’t pursue liberal assimilationist solutions to this threat, we should take revolutionary action both defensively and offensively.

Still, corporations are trying to find the solve like with Adobe’s “Firefly” which obstenstible sources it’s data ethically without undermining anyone copyright. ... with questionable success.

### ... no one will paint ever again!

It used to be that there was perhaps a few hundred artists, working for the patrons and guilds. For almost every last one, it was a vocation, not expression. Slowly this changed, our relationship with art became more purposeful. Tho it would later become the linchpin of commercialisation and propaganda, it would first flood our hearts and tell our stories.

As more people were freed from the terrible suffering of industrial labour, the more they would take to pencil and brush and express. Eventually technology would start to fill some of the gaps and allow us to do more and in new ways, and each step on the way, some technological marvel has changed the game, and now with have this most powerful tool of automation and it threatens liberty and oppression both, the opposite should be true!

Automation can/should serve the community and liberate us from excess labour, a tool to make life easier but this is the opposite of what it is in fact being employed to do, we shouldn’t be ignorant of this. The techno-fetishists appeal for a better world by undermining our capacity to face the imminent realities and threat to labour. Still, this shouldn’t lead us to knee jerk absolutes.

They threaten, AI will replace the artists! Did industrial bread manufacture replace the Baker? No. The artists will be fine.

What it will do is change our relationships with the artists we support and the nature of the artistic field to one built not on commodity generation but relationships.

I don’t know how much you interact with artists but I’ll tell you this, the digital era has been hell. Back what when if you wanted an artist for your product you would buy a copy of CONTACT or similar that had profiles of all the artists in their books, sort of like an Argos catalogue of creatives. You’d find one, commission your Christmas cards or whatever and pay them, usually a pretty decent amount.

With the digital age came saturation and the commodification was rife. Whether it’s Deviant Art, Art Station, Fiver, or a variety of industry sites, you can be sure to have a feeding frenzy of desperate artists, bots, disappearing labour, international labour exploitation, middleman job farming, and an absolute lack of quality.

Since AI came about, a huge amount of that has disappeared. There is no profit to be made as the market for “content art” has dried up. People can quickly make content, so they do. What you will find now is greater and stronger community building around

artists. There are fewer of them but the relationships, even within capital, are more more equitable and mutually beneficial.

For graphic designers, for all of the AI poster makers and business card makers there are, the real threat to our livelihood came with the automated design makers, things like Wordpress and GoDaddy allowing you to make your own websites in minutes, and Canva essentially gutting much of the jobbing work for editorial designers.

You know what, forgive me fellow designers... this is a good thing.

Canva gets nearly a million downloads a month. That’s a million people getting in touch with graphic design.

A million graphic design jobs that don’t happen sure, but heck, maybe these users are just using the tools for a presentation or a one off birthday card, maybe they’ll fall in love with it and try out different tools.

It’s wonderful, and it’s immensely liberating for our communities they they can access such a resource without having to pay some web designer or graphic artists thousands for the pleasure.

Now, even within capital, creatives are having to stop relying on their gate kept skill sets and have to actually work on their relationships with fellow workers and exploring their specific passion and artistic form. The result it that people support people more.

Yes of course, fuck these corporates and I truly feel for those struggling to survive under capitalism, I’m right there too, broke as fuck, but our concerns should



be building up free and open source alternatives not barriers to access. What we need to work for here is practices which are beneficial to the artists and user both, and we do this through organised labour and counter-development of open source toolsets, both defensive and offensive in the struggle against malpractice (such as Glaze and Nightshade) but also in developing toolsets, repositories and software built on egalitarian principles and for egalitarian purpose.

Stop engaging with capitalism, stop using their platforms, stop allowing yourselves to be used as a tool for commodity. Future repository building should be built on a socialist principle with consent and recognition at the heart of it. Breaking free of capitalism and all of its nastiness would allow us to treat AI Art as the novelty and/or tool it is depending on usage. In the mean time Meta data and digital watermarking can be used not only to safeguard and limit malinformation but also to share inspiration points. I'd love to be able to click an image and see "This artwork uses to style of XYZ" and discover new people.

Artists shouldn't have to survive by commodifying their existence and output and the sooner we can manifest a space liberated from this the better.

### AI is killing the planet.

I've heard it suggested multiple times with varying figures that "Each AI image uses the petrol it takes to drive 100 miles" and when I question this I've been barraged with accusations of being a tech-fetishist, anti-human, anti-art and even racist and classist. This is a sick poison to reason. The "bully them into silence" mentality mixed in with the weaponised use of loaded

language. I find the whole thing reflective of the fascistic manner and pretty vile when I find it in Anarchist spaces.

So let's ground ourselves a little.

The numbers for water and power usage of "AI" data centres varies wildly depending on the specific task, the age of the facility, and it's supporting infrastructure.

However a pretty generally agreed upon figure GPT-3 places it around 1 litre per 10-100 queries. Chat GPT estimates a typical query uses .0003Kwh while Google AI operates around. 0.0029 kWh, some x10 the power usage of a standard search at around .0003kWh (*which is suspicious since they've been saying the same for 20 years.*)

Something like Stable Diffusion generating a single image (*less efficient than batch processing which is the overwhelming use case*) uses 0.0001–0.0005 kWh per image at home or 0.01–0.05 kWh per image using data centres. Water usage something like 0.05 and .5 litres.

Now let's put that into perspective:

My computer probably uses in the region of 3 to 5 kWh a day.

Your average burger with the trimmings uses some 3,000 litres of water.

In the UK, water companies leak a trillion litres per year due to faulty pipes.

A piece of A4 copy paper has an average around 10 litres of water and some 0.9kWh.

A single socket server running Minecraft might easily run at 20kWh

The original Shrek movie required five million rendering hours, probably drawing about 70 - 100 kWh; Shrek Forever After, consumed over 45 million rendering hours

Here is the rub, these corporate giants are already investing in a variety of technologies to reduce their cooling needs, water usage, and renewables for power sources, not out of any ethics but profit. These extracts of data sourced across 2019-2024 are probably old hat.

Meanwhile artists are still using paper, we're still using acid baths, we're still using spray glue, lino for prints, endless inks and paints of dubious provenance and of course our computers, usually running high end graphics cards and powered by who knows what.

We absolutely have a problem the way in which we allow corporates to generate power and cool data centres, but if you have a problem with AI based on this, but absolutely no issue with 3D artists spending 30 hours making a model and then spending yet more time rendering it your reasoning is highly dubious and malformed. Especially when we consider that much of these objections occur online using platforms which consume ridiculous levels of power and when considering the large position of at home consumer use of Stable Diffusion which doesn't come with any of the aforementioned concerns.

### It's just slop.

Sure, people you don't like can now make images you don't like easier. Sure people have a new toy and they are playing with it. I read the other day that AI has taken just one and a half years to produce 15 billion images, the same as it took Photographers 150 Years.

No wonder so much of it is "slop", a term popularised by the AI Art community btw to identity the tendency for low effort, soulless content, that people would popularise as they played with the new toy. Those numbers are huge.

Mind you, we now take 1.8 trillion photos are each year. The vast majority of this is uploaded to social medias, right alongside all the memes, edits, stitches etc. According to Facebook's estimates, the company processes around 500 terabytes of data every day.

This is one of the core issues of the day, but it's one that has existed long before the advent of AI, Trump rode to victory on a wave of photoshopped slop and Zero Punctuation was moaning about a "sea of shit" on Youtube back in 2007 as he stepped away into a curated space.

Ultimately this is what happens when billions of people go from near isolation and a lack of the materials to generate and share their thoughts, beliefs, and arts, to having the entire world as a stage. It occurred long before Web 3.0 and it's sinkhole concentrations of web traffic, back in the 90's with Geocities and Diary-x, Faceparty and Myspace, a thousands little spaces where each of us, alone in the digital void called out trying to find each other and pursue the promises of the digital age.

It can make everything so busy, and often feel like a corporate void of noise, but this is why it's important for us to create bastions of curated spaces across the digital ether. Reclaim cyberspace and reject social medias, that we're not doing that is more on us than anything else, the corps ain't gunna do it for us.

This saturation of content is something artists have explored for some 80 years at least, I have no simplistic philosophic answers for you there really.

### AI Art is inherently evil

Do you agree with everything that's ever been printed? Some of the most obscene things have been photographed, there are endless propaganda reels, each wave of technology has provided liberation and oppression in increased volume. We live within capital and the early days of any technology are wild and heedless, particularly that which has a quick route to market and profit to be found is giving the consumer the capacity to generate no renditions. Recent examples would be drones, e-cigs and 3D printing. The free market spews faster than state regulations and industry leaders can impose "best standards and practice" and we all have to collectively decide what the new paradigms are, and where best to balance our liberties with our well being and securities

Fascists, (*entirely ignorant of the Futurist Manifesto which gave birth to their movement*) are overwhelmingly in favour of simplistic reductive saturation, they fucking love AI Art. For the first time ever they don't have to rely on a few pissant cartoonists, they can make whatever nonsense they like and boy do they.

*You don't have to spend years being a liberal artist, feminised by the Jewry of the world and their globalist post modern interests, you can stay a real man defending traditionalist masculine virtues and make a pretty picture that argues your position more than your monosyllabic brain ever could. Oorah!*

More sinister than congruent, the paedophilic, perverted, and patriarchal throngs have used this technology, and especially the two-year window of sans-regulation to produce the obscene, particularly highlighted in Korea and India, the same is true the world over. Disgusting images of family members, work colleagues, and celebrities have filled the hard drives of men and boys the world over. These sick sons of bitches mind you were making Photoshop fakes, 3D Models, computer games and cartoon drawings long before AI.

I'm pretty sure it's a near universal truth that each technologic marvel humanity has ever manifested has been used by the powerful to abuse the weak, on a governmental, corporate, and personal level.

Still, by January 2021 we had the groundwork of the Coalition for Content Provenance and Authenticity and by 2024 a solid chunk of the generative art programmes are digitally watermarking generations. Legal and civil bodies will ultimately deal with the ramifications of people using technology to create abusive content or misinformation, and our generalised tech literacy will help us with the rest. Government and industry regulators round the world are spooling up their legal frameworks to deal with the new menace and make sure it does what they want it too. There are more "anarchistic" solutions to such criminality and social harm but we're far from that, and really when it comes to art, given we still live in a capital age, the concern of most is really about intellectual property and who is getting paid.

Is there percentage of human-authorship that over-rides the machine? If artistic styles can be licenced, what does that mean for the wider art world? If you generative an image using your own performance but with a Makoto Shinkai prompt, should he

get royalties? What about if you develop a model using your own artwork, does Stability AI have sui generis rights or perhaps even co-authorship on everything generated using Stable Diffusion?

These are complex questions we have to ask ourselves, the answers unlikely to be simple. Tess and similar projects show us that arts community is quite happy with Generative Art once there is adequate consent framework and financial compensations and artists are already making packages for people to use. Similar to photography and cinema, the legal framework depends on society's willingness to consider it within popular understanding of art practices and while we reduce ourselves down to a basic understanding, equating Generative art, in its entirety to some reiteration of an Instagram or Photoshop filter, we remove the very real human authorship from countless more. I don't think we should undermine their artistic agency.

### To Sum up

The long and short of this of this is that capitalism is a disease that is profiteering of the labour of the working class and continues to do so with the benefits of the latest technological developments. We should be conscious of this and considered in how we respond.

I see absolutely no utility in these absolutist positions and the "bullying" manner of the conversation. We need to consider the different usages cases, purpose, and method of artworks various and avoid reductive tones. Berating artists for using AI in their workflow because you don't like how MAGA cultists use it, well I can't help but feel this is reductive collective response,

similar to how the state appeals for our liberties to be restricted based on the mere idea of a security threat. It's banning all guns because someone did a shooting.

I'm not keen on exchanging liberty for security and I don't think we should replace the democratisation of art with this human essentialist rot. Doing so you undermine your fellow workers and you create a social paradigm that removes this fantastic tool from us, but keeps it in the hands of the state and capital. If anything, what we should be doing is taking it and making it better. Seize the means of production, and generation. There are very real concerns, I didn't even get to the need for a just transition for my fellow workers but ultimately it's like this:

Worried about jobs?

Your problem is Capitalism.

Worried about fascist messaging?

Your problem is Fascism.

You say, "it has no soul" and I ask since when does the hammer have to have soul?

Concerned about the resource usage? Check your figures and confront our movements failings and work harder towards more egalitarian and renewable infrastructure.

I believe in us. I know this isn't going to happen with the immediacy we require. The revolutionary moment little more than smoke in the wind, I get it, but it's with objectivism and truth, not reactionary hyperbolic rage and political absolutes and dogma that we lay the foundations for a better world. Whether you like it or no, generative art is here to stay, so learn to confront its misuse earnestly and effectively.

**Peter Ó Máille**



Anna Keyes  
April 2025

# FASCISM IN AMERICA

In the intervening time between today, the 22nd of November 2024, and the election of Donald Trump earlier this month, on the 5th of November 2024, much has been said and written about what is to come. From policy proposals which read as so comically evil as to seem dreamt up by the maddest of satirists, to potential Cabinet appointments which might as well have been lifted directly from a bad high school play on the death of historic republics, there has been little room to breathe and less so still to express the feelings which this barrage of horrifying news invokes. It has been only a little over two weeks now, and already the shape of the coffin of the Republic has started to make itself known through the fog of the future.

It is true that I would term myself an anarchist whose political ideology is best described as an amalgamation of Bonanno and Malatesta, of Goldman and Graeber, of some of our earliest examples in the Diggers and some of our latest in our non-anarchist comrades in Rojava and Chiapas, and yet I find myself swirling in a pool of despair at this manner of death with which the Republic, in which I grew and found myself, has come to suffer. It is hard to take joy in the death of that which you oppose when what will arise in its place is most similar in color to the “Republic” of Sulla rather than the Free Territories of Ukraine.

Perhaps it is a vestige of reactionary, for our time, republicanism that remains in me and twinges with sadness at its passing; perhaps it is a harsh twinge of fear at the retribution that will, undoubtedly, be paid to those who have bravely risen up, albeit without arms, in opposition to the policy of murder which this country has enacted at home and abroad. At the moment I cannot say for sure. What I can say is that my heart weeps blood for those among us who, so reliant upon the minuscule social safety nets, will suffer and perish when those safety nets are destroyed in totality by the oncoming regime.

It weeps for those of us who will again know the fear of the threat of kicked in doors for being where we shouldn't be according to those who wield the baton. It weeps for those who will, as the tariffs take hold, be forced to labor less as workers and more as indentured servants for their bosses without even the slightest whimper of remediation available to them, though that as it stands barely exists now. Most of all, however, it weeps for whomever this new regime decides it is most politically expedient to lash out at at any given moment: the Migrant, the Queer, the Indigenous or Black people who do not meet the expectations of the reinforced white supremacist structure.

Let me run down what it is that people within the United States now face: a militarized mass deportation of up to some ten million; the revocation and outright annihilation of the many hard fought and won gains of queer people; the unhindered violent suppression of dissent, which heretofore had been at most met with “less than lethal” munitions (excluding the murder of Michael Reinhoehl); the confiscation of land and the destruction of free expression broadly, but with a particular eye to universities; and the construction of new concentration camps on a scale not yet seen in this century, with undoubted expansion to the currently existing network.

Already 1,402 acres of land has been offered expressly for the purpose by the State of Texas to the President-Elect, and already he has said that deployment of National Guard units, under the guise of a “national emergency,” from Red states to Blue states will occur to ensure that his program of genocidal deportation is carried out without hindrance.

That is to say nothing of the promised purges of the military structures of those deemed “disloyal” in a country where the military's command is explicitly meant to exist separate of the political structure so as to prevent this exact case from occurring. I say again that this election, whose results cyber security and data experts already have raised alarms about, reeks of an electoralized version of Sulla's capture and purge of Rome.

Where are those who cannot fight meant to go? To whom are they meant to turn? In this country all forms of effective left wing organization have been forced so deeply below the surface as to be less

than trivial in their ability to oppose a security state so thorough as to know when you sleep. Are we to expect them to turn to cultist organizations such as the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), or to parties so riddled with Feds that it is now a common joke such as that CPUSA? If they flee, where to? Canada and Mexico, the only countries which border the US, will slam shut their borders as soon as the flood of refugees begins.

The conservatives succeeded in freezing the Constitution in time, and they, abetted by a craven opposition more beholden to norms than actual opposition, opened wide the door for a truly fascist regime to take power. While the “communists” in the various parties and their splinters decried the United States as already being fascist, they blinded themselves to the actual fascist creep that began long ago and grew decadent on the donations of those they fooled while doing nothing to organize any actual resistance or revolutionary action.

The anarchists, few in number and separated by vast distances in rural areas, organized support systems and methods of fighting back only to, out of necessity, ally themselves with said parties and find their projects co-opted while they became sidelined and pushed away. The urban anarchists have done much better, by virtue of being greater in number and closer together, but still we are too few to do more than perhaps raise hell and be a minor inconvenience.

2020 showed us the necessity of resilient, lasting, methods of organization and infrastructure, and yet in four years what have we to show for it?

**April, 2025**

It has been nearly six months since I last touched this document. Honestly, I never intended to finish it, and I am still questioning whether I want to or not. The situation here has developed rapidly and in several previously unexpected ways. Where to even begin?

On the international front, the Trump regime has burned centuries old alliances and begun an economic war with the rest of the globe. He has threatened military action to seize Greenland, he has stated he wants to annex Canada, and he has declared the cartels in Mexico to be international terrorist organizations to give his government carte blanche to conduct military interventions in our southern neighbor. At home, he and Elon Musk have ravaged the existing bureaucracy to the point that even if the departments remain, it will be in name only. Those social safety nets mentioned in the first portion are either dying or else being threatened with death. The poorest and most vulnerable among us now stand facing down the combined barrels of isolation, forced autarky and inflation, disease, and the culmination of forty years of austerity.

This is to say nothing of the work of the rest of his administration, even. Pam Bondi, the United States Attorney General, has openly defied court orders, sparking conversation among the politically neutered of constitutional crisis; she has also openly stated that the Federal prosecution will be seeking the death penalty for Luigi Mangione, likely as a tactic to poison the jury during interviews as they will have to unanimously not be opposed to that sentence. ICE has continued black-bagging and disappearing people, though now with alarming publicity, gall, and

results, acting more and more every day like what they truly are: American Geheim Staatspolizei. They don't even need to make use of the aforementioned 1,402 acres offered the administration by Texas: they can simply send you to El Salvador, where you have zero recourse or ability to return as the courts have no jurisdiction there. Just yesterday it became a national headline that ICE finally admitted to "accidentally" deporting Kilmer Abrego-Garcia, a man whose claim to asylum under international law had already been upheld by one of Trump's own judges in 2019.

This is just one more in a series of abductions by ICE, though particular attention should be paid to the fact that international students are also being abducted, oftentimes in broad daylight, because they are accused of using their "guaranteed rights" to voice opposition to the Israeli genocide of Palestinians in Gaza.

Eggs, whose price Trump famously ran on, have continued to balloon in price as Robert Kennedy Jr. has allowed, purposely, for the bird flu epidemic to burn its way across the country completely unmitigated. Tuberculosis is back in style and so is the measles, both of which have had large scale outbreaks across the country from North Carolina and New York to Texas. Then again, it's a miracle we know that much considering the administration has gagged the CDC and DHHS from issuing alerts or news about disease outbreaks. Children have died of the measles and their parents have publicly said they were thankful they didn't vaccinate their child. I have no words that would accurately explain my disgust and horror.

In Florida, a devoutly Catholic transgender woman was arrested and sent to a men's jail for using the women's restroom in the state Capitol to pray the Rosary; that same Rosary the police then seized from her. She could not even keep an item of her faith as they took her to be humiliated and abused for using the correct bathroom. Stories like this, often without the explicit religious element, are more and more common every day. Waking up and looking at the news is like watching a newsreel from a horror movie; as a trans woman myself, I am increasingly feeling the urge to flee, but there is no where to go. We are alone.

You want to know what fascism in the United States would look like? Put down the fucking alt-history novels, put away the manifestos, and turn on the news. When I first started writing this piece I mourned the death of the Republic, not out of any actual love for it but for fear of what would come next, and every day we goose step closer and closer to the actual death thereof. The skies seem greyer, the people are tired and hungry and angry and beaten down, even the uninformed are starting to crack. Your run of the mill liberal, the voter of norms and checks and balances, now openly speaks that there will be civil war. This isn't merely the death of a republic, it is the outright collapse of an empire. Shouldn't I feel some form of satisfaction in the death of empire? It feels like I should, but all I feel in fear and sickness.

I cannot afford to eat. I cannot afford rent, or my car payment anymore. I work as much as I am able, and still I am hungry. I cannot openly be who I am, and if I am I am made all the more alone in the real world, off the message boards and outside of the chats. If my situation is this dire,

I cannot even begin to imagine how dire it is for those who have been laid off or else had their benefits abruptly stolen out of their hands by robber barons and fascist ghouls. This piece came with an offer of \$50, which I have declined and asked be given to someone without a roof. I still have that, for now at least. I am not a model anarchist, I am no great organizer of workplaces or speech giver or even that good of a fucking person. I am just a trans college student who has watched the walls close in for years, who tried to make people aware, and who will now suffer the consequences for their inability to listen.

To the rest of the world, I am personally sorry for what this country has done and is doing. I hope that my apology will be enough as I fear there is not much else I will be able to give much longer.

I won't let these bastards take me without a fight. You shouldn't either. Cheers.



## SITUATION ROJAVA: THE GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT

The context of Rojava, western Kurdistan, can't be understood without talking about Syria but also about the other parts of Kurdistan. We won't extend too much on the past, but we need to start with European powers reorganizing what became known as middle east after first world war. Kurdish people, divided in 4 newly created nation states, became the largest people without state. The French protectorate of Syria lasted until the end of second world war, followed by short lived governments and military coups on 1949, 1954, and 1961. On 1963 the military committee of the Ba'ath Party that led the coup of 1961 overtook the government, and on 1970 Hafez al-Assad took the presidency of the Syrian Arab Republic. After his dead in 2000, his son Bashar al-Assad was brought from UK, where he studied medicine, to take over the presidency of the country. After some hope of democratic reforms, soon he continued the despotic and authoritarian practices of his father.

In 2011, in what became known as "arab spring", a wave of protests spread from north Africa to middle east. In Syria, the Sunni Muslims that make the majority of Syrian population lead the protests against the government of al-Assad, who belongs to the Alawite minority aligned with Shia Muslims. Al-Assad responded to the

protests with military repression, sparking a spiral of violence that unleashed the Syrian civil war. The regime brutally repressed the opposition protests, forcing a military escalation of the conflict. Democratic and liberal protesters suffered the most, with the Muhabarat (secret police) and the inhuman prisons of the regime ending hundreds of thousands lives. Those that survived were forced into exile, wiping out their demands and revolutionary aims. Militarized Islamist groups, backed by different Arab states and even some western powers, thrived in the war scenario, growing their ranks and becoming the main opposition to the regime on the battle fields.

In the north, Kurdish people forced a negotiated withdraw of Assad regime military personnel, declaring an autonomously administered territory. The YPG (People Defense Forces) and YPJ (Women Defense Forces) evolved from popular militias to a consistent military force, ensuring the military defense of those regions. They limited their field of action to military defense, making space for the social and political Kurdish liberation movement to promote communes and councils to take care of the civilian administration. This became the largest experiment to put in practice the ideas of "democratic confederalism", a compilation of ideas proposed by Abdullah Ocalan, imprisoned leader of the Kurdistan



Workers Party (PKK). The main principles that guide this political project are women's liberation, social ecology and stateless democracy, that are in many ways similar to what Murray Bookchin proposed as libertarian municipalism. This is not a coincidence, since Ocalan was partly inspired by Bookchin's ideas of "Ecology of freedom".

With the rise of ISIS in 2014 and their advance over Syria and Iraq, YPG and YPJ fought back to defend their land. After the historic resistance of Kobane, the Kurdish fighters of northern Syria became the main partner of the international coalition against the caliphate. Many Arab regions newly freed from the fascist theocracy of ISIS joined their ranks, and the liberated areas got integrated in the system of the self-administration. The confederal system expanded, with many local and regional councils following the example of Rojava self-administration, becoming what today is known as the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES). This model has successfully integrated Arab-majority regions from Raqqa to Deir Ezzor, making also space for different ethnic and religious minorities like Assyrians, Armenians or Yazidis to build their own councils.

But the most important development is the women's revolution, with autonomous women's organizations like Kongra Star and Zenobia congress leading an extraordinary political process. Women have also their own military forces, with YPJ becoming not only as symbol of the war against ISIS, but also as spearhead for women rights, reclaiming a central role in the political and military developments of society. A system of co-chairs, with a man and a woman leading all social and political structures has been established.

Women cooperatives are promoted to ensure economical autonomy for women. Even a women's town has been built, Jinwar, where widows, young women or any women who don't want to be bound to men can find shelter. They are challenging the patriarchal systems not only of the Kurdish and Arab societies, but of the entire world.

In 2015 Russia entered the war to support Bashar al-Assad, and together with Iran they managed to retake control of most of the country. Islamist rebels were confined to a small territory on Idlib, where an Islamist government ruled over a small region that became densely populated, with refugee camps hosting people from all Syria. Turkey also got involved in the conflict, supporting different Islamist forces in opposition to al-Assad and even organizing military operations on Syrian soil. The neo-Ottoman ambitions of Erdogan, his dreams of expanding the Turkish borders over Syria, combined together with the long term war of the Turkish state against revolutionary Kurds. With the excuse to fight terrorism, the Turkish army invaded Afrin in 2018, a Kurdish region of north west Syria. Another invasion followed in 2019, when a long strip of land between Serekaniye and Gire Spi was occupied by Turkish backed Islamist groups. Today, once again, a new occupation plan is ongoing since December 2024.

### **The offensive that changed Syria**

At the end of November 2024 a new offensive of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) against the Assad regime took almost everyone by surprise. This new branding of militant salafists in Syria presents itself with a moderate face, trying to take distance from organizations like ISIS or even al-Qaida, from where they all sprouted. Their renewed military

campaign started on November 27 from the front lines of Idlib, their stronghold. They rapidly overran the regime lines with their blitzkrieg attacks, aided by locally produced Shaheen kamikaze drones. These attacks were done in coordination with the Turkish proxy forces re-branded now as Syrian National Army (SNA), sometimes called Turkish Free Syrian Army (TFSA). These are the same Turkish proxies that occupied Kurdish areas in northern Syria, a collection of Islamist groups trained, armed and supplied by Turkey, including not just salafist organizations but also documented ex-fighters of ISIS. They started their own offensive, but instead of targeting regime territory as HTS was doing, they charged against regions under control of the DAANES. Turkish army has been aiding them in every step they've made, using artillery fire and air support not only of the (in)famous Turkish drones, but even standard NATO F-16s.

HTS moved fast towards Aleppo, the second biggest city of Syria. The regime army, mostly young conscripts with barely enough food to survive their long imposed military service, didn't have much will to fight. With the Russian army swamped in Ukraine, and Iran focused on its proxy war against Israel in Gaza and Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Army crumbled. People in Aleppo celebrated the withdrawal of the regime, toppling down Assad statues and symbols. HTS took control of most of the city, except the traditional Kurdish neighborhoods of Sheikh Makhsood and Ashrafiya. These northern neighborhoods have been an important part of the Kurdish resistance since the beginning of the revolution in 2012, when they fought to repel attacks of salafist groups. When the regime took control of the city in 2016, YPG and YPJ forces resisted against

their advance, affirming their autonomy and alignment with the Autonomous Administration. After brief negotiations HTS accepted their autonomy, promising to not attack them and to respect the historical presence of Kurds in Aleppo. Since then, they continued resisting and defending their neighborhood, expectant of how the situation in Syria will unfold.

While this was happening, Turkish proxies took control of the region of Shehba and the city of Til Rifat, few kilometers north of Aleppo. In Shehba refugee camps were a shelter for more than 150,000 people since 2018, when the Turkish invasion of Afrin forced them to leave their homes behind. Once again, more than 100,000 people had to pack the few things they had in a rush, escaping the Turkish bombs for second time. This sparked a new humanitarian crisis in the cold nights of December, with long convoys on the road to save their lives. But their escape route was blocked by the Turkish proxies, who were conducting raids, kidnappings and even summary executions on the field. Those who managed to escape made their way to eastern areas of the DAANES, where local committees and humanitarian organizations like Heyva Sor have been doing all they can to receive them. Primary needs like shelter, food, blankets and medical attention are organized on the spot, sharing the already scarce resources to the region, due to the economical embargo.

Turkish proxies continued their offensive towards Manbij, an Arab-majority city that has been part of the Autonomous Administration since 2016, when the SDF liberated it from ISIS. After expelling the caliphate from the city 8 years ago, the Manbij Military Council has been



defending the region as part of the SDF. But the current attacks of SNA came with Turkish armored vehicles, drones and war planes, making very difficult for SDF to stop their advance. After several attacks and counter-attacks, an agreement for a ceasefire was negotiated between US and Turkey, evoking a 2016 agreement where Kurdish forces were not to go west of the Euphrates river. The SDF withdrew from Manbij and Turkish proxy groups occupied the region, stealing and looting whatever they could.

But that was not the end of their attacks. Turkish proxy forces tried to push forward threatening to invade Kobane. The SDF repelled their attacks on Qereqozah bridge and on the Tishreen dam, both strategic locations that connect Manbij and Kobane regions over the river. In a move to deter further conflict, some US soldiers returned to Kobane, from where they left 5 years ago before the last Turkish invasion. The international coalition against ISIS, with US and France as currently the most involved members, are warning Erdogan to stop their attacks on SDF, which is the main force in the war against the resurgence of the caliphate. The collapse of the regime army created a window of opportunity for ISIS insurgent groups, that assaulted weapon depots from the disbanded Syrian Army expanding once again their influence over Syria and Iraq.

After the HTS offensive captured Aleppo they moved fast towards Hama, the next big city. Regime soldiers were running away without much resistance, and soon the city was under control of insurgents that started moved towards Homs. The same pattern repeated and insurgents started moving towards the capital. On December 8 Bashar al-Assad left Damascus to

Moscow, pressured by the offensive that started encircling the capital city. Together with the HTS offensive in the North, armed groups in the south also started attacks on military positions of the Assad regime, getting dangerously close to Damascus from the south. With Assad gone, these groups continued advancing facing no resistance, and soon some people took control of the national television studios to read a statement announcing the end of the Assad regime. Many people went to the streets and celebrated such historical time, toppling down numerous statues of Bashar al Assad and Hafez al Assad all around Syria.

Abu Mohamed al-Jolani, leader of HTS, who had a very prominent role making videos and speeches during the offensive, made a life recorded entering in Damascus. He went to a historical mosque of the capital with his followers and announced the end of the regime, positioning himself as the central figure to fill the power vacuum. Soon he stopped using his “nom de guerre” and started using his legal name, Ahmed al-Shara, instead in all international media. The regional government that HTS had in Idlib, there called the Syrian Salvation Government, was transported to Damascus and started taking control of what was left of the Syrian State structures. They appointed ministers and promoted military commanders of the successful insurgence to become the new generals and colonels of what is becoming the new Syrian army. The US department of justice removed al-Jolani from their list of wanted terrorists as western powers visited Damascus and reopened Syrian embassies. Those diplomatic moves were often mediated by Turkey, strong support of HTS and key actor on legitimizing their power grab. Turkey was the first to reopen

their embassy and keeps deep and strong ties with the new government in Damascus.

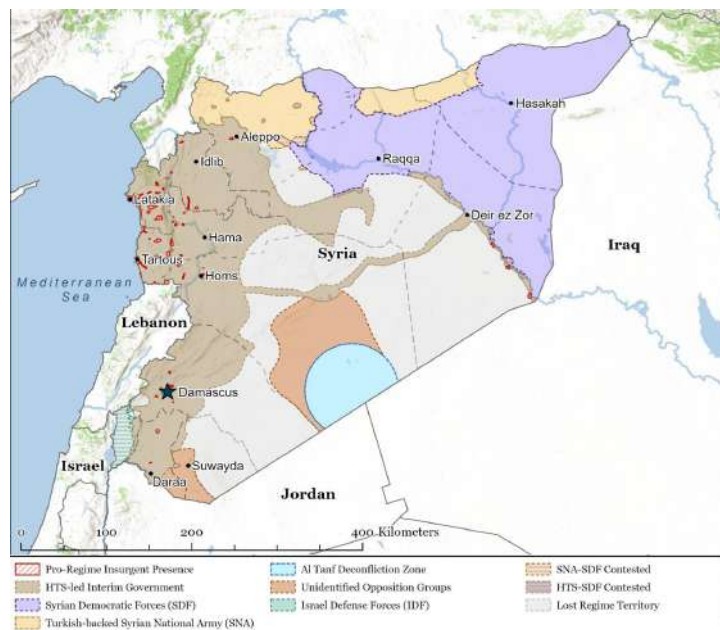
Israel started a massive air campaign targeting more than 400 positions and destroying 90% of Syrian military capabilities, as well as research and technical infrastructure. After that, the IDF started expanding their occupied areas in the southern Golan high, expanding their control of territory on Syrian ground. Those moves were criticized by many international powers, including UN, but Israel continued their advances and air attacks, claiming that the new provisional government was a threat for Israel. Russia and Iran, key allies of the collapsed regime, started withdrawing their forces while negotiating with the new authorities to salvage what they can of their interests in Syria. ISIS tried to take advantage of this moment of chaos, organizing raids to capture weapons from the collapsing regime and looting what they can, often killing even kidnapping civilians to exchange them for ransoms.

As thousand of exiled Syrian are returning to their country, partly on their own will and the desire to return to a Syria free of Assad, and partly pressured by the growing anti-migrant policies gaining traction all around the globe, they are faced with a collapsed country after almost a decade and a half of war. Their dreams of freedom and democratization of Syria still give hope to some of them, mainly those who kept alive the embers of the revolutionary spirits of 2011. But the reality on the ground is far away from their revolutionary dreams. Many Syrians struggle to safeguard the asylum status and residency permissions that allow them to work in western countries, allowing their children to access education that offers

better perspectives than the crumbling schools and impoverished universities of Syria. The fundamentalist origins of the provisional government certainly don't help to create much trust for those who found shelter in European countries, getting more or less got assimilated by the liberal lifestyle that is so appealing for those who witnessed the brutalities of the Assad regime.

But not everyone is happy with the recent developments. Together with the kurds in the north, the Druze community in the south also resisted the authoritarian rule of al-Assad. This two communities support the change of regime but with mistrust for the new government of Damascus, calling for a federal Syria. Christian communities had certain privileges during the Assad rule, partly inherited from the French colonial rule, and are also cautious on the ongoing developments in Syria. The Alawite minority of shia Muslims, to which the al-Assad family belongs, suffered strong repression from the sunni Muslim forces that ousted the regime. In March 2025 a wave of insurgency in the western coastal province of Latakia, which was the stronghold of the regime, ambushed and killed several fighters of HTS, triggering a heavy escalation. Forces of the provisional government were deployed in big numbers, conducting extensive security operations aiming to neutralize high ranking figures of the old regime. Ethnic tensions escalated the situation as civilians were killed in those operations. Calls for revenge and jihad against the Alawite population from islamic fundamentalist groups spread on social networks. After few days of violence, with more than 2000 people killed, several regime soldiers arrested, and thousand of Alawites escaping to Lebanon, the situation got under relative control again, even if insurgent attacks continued at lower scales.

Map of the present situation compiled by the Institute for Study of War



### North-East Syria adapting to the changes

With those events unfolding, the SDF made some movements to take control of the areas that the regime soldiers abandoned in southern Raqqa and in Deir Ezzor, to prevent further expansion of ISIS. After negotiations with the Damascus provisional government, the SDF withdrew from those areas in coordination with the arrival of security forces connected to the Damascus provisional government. This coordination was followed by formal negotiation talks between al-Shara, as provisional president of Syria, with Mazlum Abdi, commander in chief of the SDF. Agreements between both forces have been signed in March 2025, ensuring cooperation and rights the kurdish people and other minorities in Syria as well as the integration of the SDF in the new Syrian army. Committees to follow up on those agreements are now starting to work, expecting to implement such steps before the end of 2025.

Turkish proxies continued their attacks against the regions of northern Syria, aided by the Turkish air force that continued their drone strikes and bombing all along this time. Turkey hurried to strike a deal with the provisional government after they took control of the capital, promising to integrate SNA, Turkish proxies, in the new Syrian army. This gave Turkey more leverage and they managed to install several SNA commanders on important military positions. This made the negotiations to integrate the SDF in the new Syrian army more difficult, since heavy clashes between these two forces were ongoing. The Druze community, who played a relevant role in challenging the regime power in the south, also entered negotiations with the provisional government with similar aims as the SDF, accepting integration on the new Syrian state structures in exchange for a certain degree of autonomy.

The provisional government, securing their position with Turkish unconditional support and with western powers accepting their position as new rulers of Syria, focused on a campaign to lift the economical sanctions that still loom over Syria. The US and EU made steps in that direction, with big numbers (billions of dollars and euros) flowing to Syria as aid relief. Arab countries also made big efforts to support the provisional government, with Qatar and other Arab states formalizing their support in economic aid. The tensions in the coastal regions raised concerns about the capacity of the provisional government to handle Syria, but western powers are willing to overlook some bloodshed if it comes with an acceptable degree of stability that enables them to further their interests. The new image of moderate Islamist that al-Shara is projecting won't hide his fundamentalist past, but for now he is able to navigate the situation. He soon changed his military green shirt for a black suit and a tie, imitating the

powerful men he wants to be accepted by, playing the role that they want him to play to integrate Syria in the global capitalist system and in the current regional order of middle east. How long he will be able to do that, how much he will manage to establish himself as the new ruler of Syria, is something that only time will tell.

The newly presented provisional constitution, even if calling for Islam as a base for the rule of law in the new Syria, is written with well adapted language to the current times. The document drafts a centralized presidential model, conceding nearly total power to head of the state. It is far away from the revolutionary proposal of the social contract that guide the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES), a living document that until today is still being updated every year to incorporate new lessons learned. But the calls for a federal Syria from Kurds and Druze among other minorities are not being accounted, with





the provisional government making some concessions with public speeches of inclusivity and plurality of Syria, but also finding support in narratives that frame minorities as “traitors that want to divide Syria”. “A strong man to rule a strong nation” seems the mantra that European states imposed in their reorganization of middle east after the first world war, making easier for western powers to control the highly centralized systems, and of course to exploit their abundant energetic resources of gas and oil...

The DAANES navigates the situation as best as they can. Harvesting the diplomatic connections with the International coalition on one hand, and highlighting the efforts and support from many Arab-majority areas that joined the self-administration as they were liberated from ISIS on the other, the stability and strength of the democratic confederal system provides a strong argument to negotiate with Damascus. With a conciliatory tone and openness to integrate in the new Syria, together with the diplomatic experience the self-administration acquired during more than a decade of existence in very harsh conditions, important agreements and negotiations are being hammered out today. Even when pressured by the threats of the Turkish government, eager to annihilate any trace of the kurdish liberation movement, The revolutionary structures of north-east Syria are able to hold their ground in the negotiation tables. Those agreements are for now nothing more than statements of good will, formal expression of the intentions to cooperate to rebuild a new Syria together, without legal mechanisms or clearly defined terms on how to bring those agreements into practice. Diplomacy is an important tool to overcome war situations, but military force

social organization are the main element that guides the political negotiations.

Of course, all this is always encompassed by the most important development of this social system: The women’s revolution. Women in north-east Syria are leading this process with autonomously organized structures that act at all levels of society. Women’s liberation as foundation for social liberation is the pillar on which this revolution is built. From women’s cooperatives and women’s co-chairs in all political structures, to the autonomous military structure of the YPJ. The revolutionary ideas of the kurdish womens movement are the foundation on which the social and political system is built. Their anti-patriarchal values and lessons are put in practice, not just in the harsh guerrilla lifestyle of the kurdish mountains, but also in the arid lands of north-east Syria. This also means that it is not anymore a kurdish women movement. As Arab women develop and lead their own organizations, as well as Ezidi, Assyrian and Armenian women, together with many internationalists that came from abroad to join the revolution, a world-wide wave of anti-patriarchal and revolutionary new generations make even more clear that the revolution will be feminist or won’t be.

### **The role of anarchists in North-East Syria?**

All this is just a glimpse of the incredibly complex network of events and forces unfolding in Syria. The collapse of the al-Assad regime closed a cycle opened in 2011 with the Arab spring, but more than a decade of war left new conflicts and old wounds that are still open, and won’t heal easily. We are witnessing a new Syria, with incredible challenges and difficulties, but also with exciting developments and revolutionary potential. Hegemonic power, regional and global ones, are trying to take

advantage of the chaotic situations that unfolds during transitional periods. Local groups and communities were forced to organize and fight for their survival, with hope and dreams of a better future. The revolutionary process of North-East Syria is an extraordinary example of social transformation, with principles of libertarian socialism put into practice on a big scale.

Talking about an anarchist revolution won’t do justice to their claims for democratic confederalism, but it is important to notice how, on an ideological level, there are so many things we have in common. Their criticism on Marxism and state socialism, their focus on social ecology and the communalist ideas of Murray Bookchin, their focus on anti-patriarchal struggle beyond liberal feminism, focusing on the relation between male dominance and the inherent logic of domination of nation-states, their efforts to develop people’s self defense capacity as the only way to build autonomy. All those are point that we, as anarchists, can clearly find ourselves in.

Anarchists have played a critical role in solidarity with Rojava, joining internationalist committees, organizing campaigns and even traveling to defend the revolution. The kurdish movement welcomed us, sharing their bread and their guns with us as we took part of the resistance on the frontlines. We became a part of this revolution, allowing us to see how much we have to learn from it. We came to support this revolution, but we also came to learn, hoping that the experience from here will allow us to strengthen our movements and organizations. In doing that we found friends, we found comrades, and we experienced extraordinary glimpses of what a free society and a free life can be. This is something that will influence ourselves and our movements not just for this revolution, but also for the many revolutions that are yet to come.

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# TEMPI. TRAIN TRAGEDY. TWISTED POLITICS.

On Friday, February 28 a demonstration happened in the center of Athens, Greece, which is considered to be the largest of all time. Estimates range between 700.000 and 1 million people. The epicenter was Syntagma Square, where is the Parliament, and from then on the crowd was stretching very far, in three main directions.

To the East, all the way to Evaggelismos metro station, to the North/North-West, all the way to Omonoia Station and to the South, all the way to Acropolis station. The trains were running every few minutes, all of them packed to the brim. Many people waiting in the platforms were even giving up the option to try to enter one of those trains that were overflowing with passengers, and made their way on foot, walking several kilometers in many instances. Syntagma and Panepistimio (the closest to Syntagma) metro stations were both closed on that day, by decision of the police. At the same time, similar demonstrations happened in 386 locations all around Greece and the world. In many Greek cities the locals reported that these were the largest demonstrations of all time as well.

It was the second anniversary of the deadly train crash in Tempi, which has since been labeled “the Tempi Crime”. What is explicitly claimed by this label is that this was a State crime, and there is a plethora

of devastating evidence to back this claim. There are clear political responsibilities, and very possibly criminal responsibilities of high rank politicians, of different governments, since at least 2016.

What has been particularly damning about the current government, however, apart from the fact that they’ve been in power for the last six years, is that three weeks before the crush, rail unionists were specifically warning with certainty that a serious accident is imminent, only to be ignored. And on top of that, a mere eight days before the crush, the Minister of Transportation was reprimanding his colleagues of the Opposition in the Parliament for daring to imply that there are security issues in the Greek railways.

All of this had subsided as a topic of public discourse after some months. Members of the cabinet had even made arrogant statements implying that their election victory had “closed the subject”. The relatives of the victims, however, were never gonna let this pass. Organized through their association they kept pushing the investigation, hiring their own people to that end. The evidence that kept coming into light had everything to do with their perseverance.

As said evidence was accumulating, in the recent weeks there was a breaking point



of public anger, partly triggered by the release of some audio files that contained the last moments of some of the victims, who didn’t die in the crash, but were then burned alive, due to (by all reasonable accounts) to the illegal cargo.

Given this culmination a first mass demo was called on many locations January 26. It was very large and heavy clashes took place between the protesters and the police in Athens. When another mass demo was called on the two year anniversary, and a general strike was also declared for that day, it was expected that its size would be immense.

By 11 am the whole center of the city was crammed with hundreds of thousands. Half an hour later the speeches from the stage and podium set right opposite the Parliament had concluded, with Maria Karistianou, the president of the Relatives’ Association, giving the last poignant speech. By noon, as many people were trying to leave, but the crowd was still very dense, the (predictable) violence begun. Several hundred people had been preparing to attack the Parliament and were determined to have a bitter fight

with the riot police, targeting it, as the personification of State violence. A large group of protesters with gas masks, hoods, balaclavas etc, had started amassing in front of the anarchist blocks. Some of them were even instructing some of the other demonstrators to open a corridor between them and the police.

The mixture of the crowds that fought the police on that day contained all sorts of people, albeit mostly youth. There was a couple of specific social groups, however, who were more distinct, organized, experienced and predetermined.

Anarchists, as usual in Greek demonstrations, but also, as is the case in some particularly mass mobilizations like this one, a lot of football hooligans. A proliferation of certain equipment, some tactics seen, as well as some rhetoric and gestures, made that somewhat evident to the experienced eye. What ensued once the first charge was probably the most ferocious attack the Greek Parliament has sustained during a demonstration.

**Yavor Tarinski**



# RIOT IN SYNTAGMA SQUARE

On 28th of February 2023, a head-on collision occurred between two trains in the Thessaly region of Greece, killing 57 people and injuring close to 200 more. This made it the deadliest rail disaster in Greek history.

The reaction on the side of society was immediate – already on 1st of March 2023 protests took place in Athens and Thessaloniki, the two largest cities of Greece. In the following days protests and clashes with the police followed and expanded beyond the two major cities, engulfing all of Greece. Solidarity protests were organized also in European cities like Berlin and Copenhagen. The climax of this first wave of protests took place on 8th of March 2023, when a 24hour strike coincided with the feminist demonstrations on the occasion of the International Women's Day, with both putting. In Athens alone over 100,000 people gathered in the center of Athens on that day – the largest demonstration since the Movement of the Squares of 2010-2012.

Protest demonstrations, big and small, continued to take place throughout 2023 and 2024, but nothing could have prepared the government and the general public for the scale of the demos that took place in the first months of 2025, with most notable being the two-year anniversary of

the collision (28 of February, 2025), when hundreds of thousands filled the streets of the city center of Athens - with a general consensus that it was the biggest protest in the country to date - while huge demos were simultaneously taking place in over 262 cities and villages throughout Greece. The State forces responded with police batons and tear gas, but the multitude refused to leave the area surrounding the parliament. Thus, until late that day Athens's city center was dotted with different smaller clashes between protesters and police forces, with large crowds gathering in front of the parliament again and again.

The response of the Greek State to the ongoing popular mobilizations was as it could be expected - the ruling party and its media lackeys did their best to put the blame solely on individual employees or on bad chance, rather than on the fact that the railroad system, along with other crucial public services, has been severely crippled by corruption, as well as by years of crushing austerity, enforced by EU technocrats, the IMF, and the Greek political elites (including the New Democracy party that is currently in power). Contrary to what the government and its media lackeys would like the public to think, there are several significant systemic components that led to this disaster, rather than given individual



mistake at a bad moment. On the one hand, there was the partial privatization of Greek railroads by the private operator Hellenic Train. On the other, there was the corruption and sluggishness of the Greek state bureaucracy that, even after said privatization, retained management of the infrastructure through the state-owned OSE. These factors led to years of decay of the infrastructure and decrease in employees (which in turn led to increase in workhours for remaining workers, overburdening them with exhausting shifts). It was later discovered that the railroad did not had (and still does not have till the moment of writing of these lines) of telecontrol safety system that could have automatically prevented two trains from moving toward each other on the same tracks.

It is important to mention that the unions of railroad workers for years have been signaling for the bad condition of the system and the looming danger of a deadly incident. They have been taking different actions to prevent the forthcoming tragedy, such as going on strike to demand safety improvements. But to no avail, as the management was not prone to listen, as it had only one thing in mind - making profit.

Furthermore, people were further enraged by the actions undertaken by the authorities immediately after the collision. All protocols for such scale of disaster were violated. The scene of the collision, rather than left intact for investigation, was rushed by trucks, sent by the authorities, to gather the debris and transfer them to another place. Moreover, the area was covered in gravel and concrete (or mpazoma), so as to completely alter the scene, leaving very strong suspicions that the government was in such a rush in order to cover something up.

All these elements have led the general population to refer to the Tempi tragedy as a State crime. It was a disaster that could have been prevented: the danger was known for a long time in advance but those with power had other priorities. And this is the main problem of all spheres of modern life – they are structured in such a way that decision-making power is transferred away from those directly concerned and affected, on both a social and ecological level, to small managerial elites that only care for making a profit and maintaining their privileged position. If anything, this case of the railway collision shows us that if the workers could take and implement decisions – without the approval of managerial bureaucrats or private investors – then the tragedy was most probably going to be avoided.

This is what frustrates the Greek society and has been taking hundreds of thousands of people to the streets all over the country for the last two year. They have come to see the State as a predator, an entity that seeks to extract power and wealth from the commoners, without providing even basic services and safety. This is one of the reasons that one sees so few Greek flags in Tempi-related demonstrations, as opposed to the large demonstrations a decade ago against the austerity measures. Back then, the enforcement of harsh austerity measures by EU technocrats and the IMF awakened memories of the Nazi occupation during the WWII in Greek society, and there was a general feeling of reliving a struggle for National Liberation. This time however, there is not an external enemy. Instead, it is the very Greek State that is recognized as the one responsible for society's suffering. There is a generalized feeling of insecurity, in the sense that public services are run down

and unsafe, while the ruling class appears untouchable.

At this moment, there is a break within the popular imaginary with the illusion that identifies the State with society. There is now a clear demarcation line between the two and a general feeling that there is a clash between the two. The question is what can move this justified rage against the powerful and wealthy.

One place protesters can look for alternatives is the ongoing demonstrations in Serbia, against their government. There too last November in the city of Novi Sad a deadly railway-related incident took place, when a canopy of a railway station collapsed over the heads of waiting passengers, taking the lives of 15 people and severely injured 2 more last November in the city of Novi Sad. Since then the country has been engulfed by mass demonstrations demanding justice from a system that puts profits over lives. Amidst these demonstrations a hopeful dynamic emerged among the student movement, with students organizing themselves on the basis of plenums, where people can directly participate in the organizational process and demands to be raised. It was the students that have been articulating their direct-democratic method of operation as a potential alternative to replace the rotten system in the country.

This could be a source for inspiration for the ongoing demos in Greece as well, since no justice can come from a system that prioritizes the interests of a narrow elite over the lives of everyone else. No party can radically alter the situation, and people seem aware of this as no oppositional force has seen its electoral percentages exceed those of the ruling party. This is so

because it is not just specific individuals that are guilty of the current state of society - as the guilt for this lays in the hands of the current government, as well as the preceding ones - but the very system that vests small cliques with unchecked power. And electoral processes have proven as too insufficient tools for keeping those in power in check. The only realistic solution is that power is radically decentralized among all the population, so that people can take care of their communities and public services. It is the only way for a just society to be set forth. And it is in the hands of all those who participate in the mass demos for Tempi to manage to loudly and clearly articulate the need to replace the Capital-Nation-State complex with a system of multi-layered direct democracy. And who knows, with movements like the one that has currently occupied the streets of Serbia and demands that all citizens form popular plenums, we can even see the seeds of a Balkan Federation of Communes being planted. But the arm ourselves with patience, be present at the demos and not be afraid to point at the systemic features that inevitably lead to injustice.

**Alexis Daloumis**

*Guerilla Filmmaker and Independent Journalist who has covered events around the world from Greece, to Ukraine, Poland to Syria.*

*Support his work here:*  
[patreon.com/alexisdaloumis](https://patreon.com/alexisdaloumis)



# INDONESIA STRIKES BACK

Drive back armed domination!  
Kick the military out of civilian affairs!  
Take back control over our lives!

No Masters, No Slaves!  
Solidarity, Freedom, and Justice for All!

These are just some of the calls to arms spreading like wildfire throughout Indonesia this past week as revolutionists, democracy protestors, students groups and working class rebels from across the political strata hit the streets to stand against a plague of amendments being brought in which will once again see Indonesia exist under a near-junta authority, with military officers occupying civil positions.

Vast protests have occurred across many islands of Indonesia seeing major demonstrations, riots and, militant action in Jakarta, Malang, Surabaya, Manado, and Yogyakarta, with smaller demonstrations in Sernad, Sukabemi, Bandung, Purwokerto and many other locations. Diaspora communities around the world have also taken actions in solidarity, most prominently in solidarity Berlin, New York City and Melbourne.

## Some background

Indonesia has since its independence been a country government with the

military order. Initially under President Sukarno autocratic state which committed acts of genocide against political leftist, ethnic and religious opposition, active and perceived, then President Suharto who consolidated the authority of the state into a Junta government branded the “Orde Baru,” or New Order, a 32 year long military dictatorship which kept the 17,000 islands and some 600 ethnic groups in check, imposing a brutal colonial might on separatists and autonomist movements.

This period would come to an end in 1998 during following the global financial crisis which hit Asia hard, Suharto was seen as culpable and corrupt, as political tensions rose, mass student demonstrations broke out. The police would murder several of them, which resulted in an outburst of revolutionary direct action ultimately leading to the Indonesian Parliament being occupied by countless thousands who pitched in on the grounds and roof, demanding he resign. The political elite seeing which way the wind was blowing did the rest, and something resembling a active liberal democracy would follow with the usual ebbs and flows of the state.

Under Suharto Indonesia was ran on a doctrine of dwifungsi or “dual function” which gave the military a powerful role in civil society. Much of this was put into



check by the 2004 Indonesian Military (TNI) Law which was fought for in the streets and in the halls of government. It was seen as a powerful step away from the remnants of the Junta governance and dictatorship and an important pillar of power resting with the people.

Since 2014 Indonesia has been in the grasp of President Joko Widodo, also known as Jokowi. Initially he represented the centre-left secular national “Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle” (PDI-P) but would soon stray right wards and during the twilight of his second term he would begin openly leading his support to Prabowo Subianto, leader of the rival “Great Indonesia Movement Party” or “Gerindra” Party, which is a populist, nationalist right wing party similar to those making ground around the world. His running mate was even Gibran Rakabuming Raka, Jokowi’s

son, and the pair would win the elections and take power last October.

Subianto, a former Commandant General of Kopassus (Indonesian Special Forces), with a long legacy of being connected to the kidnapping of democracy activists and using military and criminal elements to pressure political rivals, immediately set to work restoring the old terror. Armed with a ream of legislation that would cut the to the very core of the liberty Indonesians have fought the past twenty years for, the months since he took office have been deeply painful for the people of Indonesia.

There is a great piece by the folks at CrimethInc which goes much deeper into the contemporary and historical struggles in Indonesia which I highly recommend taking the time to digest. You’ll find that piece here.



## 2025 – The Uprising Begins

This most recently wave starts in Surakarta on 14 Feb and anti-government protests under the moniker “Adili Jokowi” or “Try Jokowi” protest, demand investigation of cases involving him, specifically around corruption, money laundering and extortion.

This protest was quickly following on 17 Feb in protests against Presidential Instruction Number 1 of 2025, (a series of massive budget cuts) and be given the moniker “Indonesia Gelap” or “Dark Indonesia”. Spearheaded by the student movement, in particular the All-Indonesian Students’ Union (BEM SI) there was a massive surge in overt and clandestine political agitation, demos of thousands took place across dozens of cities in town squares and outside regional government offices.

Typical of Indonesian wit and humour an early series of demand took an acronym spelling the name of a popular meatball snack **PENTOL**.

Polisi diberesin

*The police must be fixed*

Energi buat rakyat

*Energy for the people*

Naikkan taraf hidup rakyat

*Increase the people’s well-being*

Tunaikan tukin untuk guru, ASN dan dosen

*Pay allowances for teachers, state*

*employees, and lecturers*

Output MBG diperbaiki

*Fix the output of the free nutritious*

*meal program*

Lawan mafia tanah dan lengserkan

pejabat tolol

*Fight the land mafias and topple down*

*stupid officials*

The various groups formal and otherwise would issue lists of demands and aims, the above pretty much sums up the meat of the issue and remained a driving call. Prefigured networks of community and solidarity spooled into action and started implementing pipelines of food, water, and medical provisions to support the students. This even extended to fandom communities and similar otherwise apolitical social spaces. Beautiful working class solidarity spilled forth.

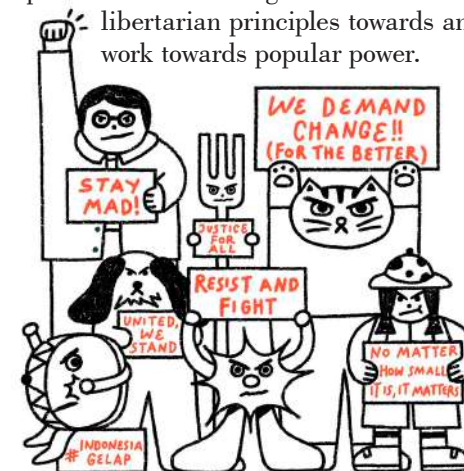
Police responded with violence.

The state responded with censorship.

Corporate News Medias responded with disinformation.

Out of this storm has come many new affinities, groups, and co-ordinations. One such formation of particular note is a nascent Anarchist Federation for Indonesia, Perhimpunan Merdeka.

At the start of the month, 16 participants, delegates from 5 locals, 3 non-locals and 2 observers came together over a few days as a “pre-congress” and now work towards a First Congress, to establish a Specific Anarchist Organisation built up libertarian principles towards and work towards popular power.





## The Second Phase

From 11 March, a new wave of rebellion would ignite under the moniker Tolak RUU TNI in opposition of the Draft Law on the Indonesian National Army. Tolak means to reject, RUU refers to the draft law, and TNI is the Indonesia National Army.

In Yogyakarta, numerous groups band around a handful of demands.

1. Demand that the Government and DPR cancel the revision of the TNI Law, which lacks transparency, is rushed, and disregards public opinion, as it constitutes a constitutional violation.

2. Demand that the Government and DPR uphold the constitution and remain committed to the Reform Agenda by preserving the principles of civilian supremacy and equality before the law, while firmly rejecting the dual function of the TNI/Polri.

3. Demand that the TNI/Polri, as state institutions, undergo internal reforms and enhance their professionalism to restore public trust.

4. Urge all academicians across Indonesia to take a firm stance against actions that undermine democracy, violate the constitution, and deviate from the reform agenda.

5. Encourage and support civil society efforts to safeguard the Reform Agenda by actively monitoring and holding the Government and Parliament accountable.

These are subsequently refined by the students themselves and became.

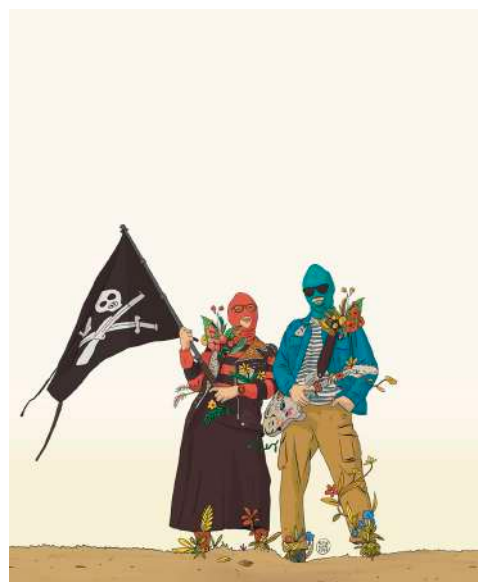
1. Reject the entire draft revision of

the TNI Law which is considered to weaken civilian supremacy and open up opportunities for the return of the dual function of the TNI.

2. Urging the removal and termination of active TNI-Polri officers from civilian positions to prevent abuse of power and corrupt practices in the military.

3. Achieve civilian supremacy and stop the neglect of the reform agenda to ensure that the military remains in the corridor of its main task as the guardian of national defence.

4. Reject all forms of militarisation in civilian government and demand the government's commitment to safeguard democratic values and human rights.



*This artwork relates to the Sukatani Band from Purbalingga whose song Bayar Bayar Bayar, with its anti police message, caused such a stir they were forced to unmask themselves and apologise to the police. The song has since become an acapella hit at protests.*

Demonstrations continue, the international community begins to stir. On 20 March, the drafted amendments to the 2004 Indonesian Military (TNI) Law were passed in the House of Representatives by unanimous vote. #TolakRUUTNI becomes #TolakUUTNI.

The government has said the bill requires officers to resign from the military before assuming civilian posts at departments such as the Attorney's General Office, but everyone knows what the truth and realities are. Dwifungsi is back and it presents a critical threat to every Indonesian who doesn't collaborate with the military state.

Driven by the passion and energy of the student body, whose future has just been gutted via bureaucratic paper signing, in short, said fuck this. They hit the street en-masse and hard.



*A lone candle in a block of tofu celebrating a child's birthday has become a popular icon amongst artists following the mass layoffs and false promise of a nutrition programme. It reads "We get free lunch, but not dinner."*

## Now is the fight for the future

The police rolled out in the their armed gangs, backed up by water cannons, ready to wield their great capacity for violence. The people do not pause but continue to descend on the halls of authority, not just in the Capital, not just in the seat of regional authority but everywhere. Far from allow this intimidation to stand, and knowing what is at stake the Indonesia. They marched.

The students do not stand alone. Communists and Anarchists alike, keen and driven, not stalled by fart sniffing debates of the merits of popular uprising, civil democracy or the political niche of the person next to them on the riot line have been active components of the protests on the streets and in the organising. Cells of militants taking the front line on the offensive and the beating on the defensive. Trade unionists, shop workers, alma maters, street rats, punks, renegades, salarymen, family... they are not alone.

Away from the police lines, networks of mutual aid, pitch stakes in the ground and keep people, fed, hydrated, and patched together, give them a place to rest, recover, charge devices, check messages, tell mum you're all right, play a game, kiss, smoke, breath for a moment before heading back out.

The police have of course been using all their dirty tricks, from using under cover snatch and grab gangs, agent provocateurs and disrupting spy cops, and using underhanded tactics such as forcing ambulances to redirect injured protestors to police stations for arrest without treatment. They've also been caught using "stingray" tech to intercept phone

information, specifically phone numbers, which they are then using to attempt to join organiser chats on various IM services. There have been multiple instances in which people have been removed from messaging groups after their number has been spoofed.



*The text informs the user that their number has been disconnected from services and it is use on another device.*

Of-course their obscene violence doesn't just exist on the openly on the streets and behind closed doors as they deliver "justice" in the cells, they've also been proactively attacking community spaces, water/food storage points and medical outposts, making a point to destroy all of the materials they can find.

None of this has done much to sour the temperament of the community who have continued to organise and take the fight to the state en-masse.

In situ, on the physical peripheries, online... solidarity flows. This beautiful attitude to forward art and culture, unrestrained from finger wagging and nursed restraint and similar to the Hong Kong uprising. This is in-part driven by a healthy decentralised network of connections, and keen arts and meme culture which has been taking iconic moments are making legends within hours of the footage being shared. Pick your platform and look up Indonesia and you'll see a wealth meme, shitposting, manga drawings, comics, illustrations and high art, across the spectrum of technical ability and tone.

It's fucking beautiful.

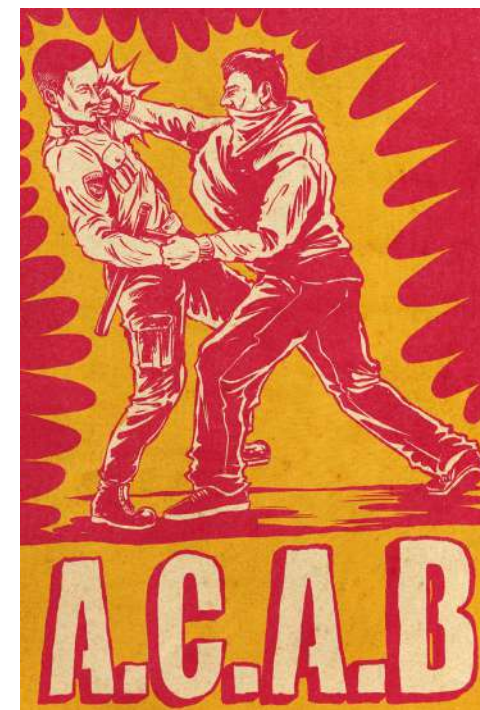
Take one such moment, when a protestor in Manado climbs up on the riot van and spars with a cop, dropping him to his knees as all his fellow jackboots try and jump up. Instantly iconic and Indonesians revel in sharing the moment with delight and solidarity. There are countless moments in the storm that will live forever,

In Surabaya, where a thousand people confronted police, forcing them into a defensive shield around their water cannon, pelted with rocks and Molotovs.

In Malang militants battle through the night against riot police armed with improvised weapons make from street furniture.

Away from the spectacle of violence, people are cared for and supported. Collectives forming. Friendships and comradely relationships formed in the fire.

They fight for the future.





### The struggle will continue.

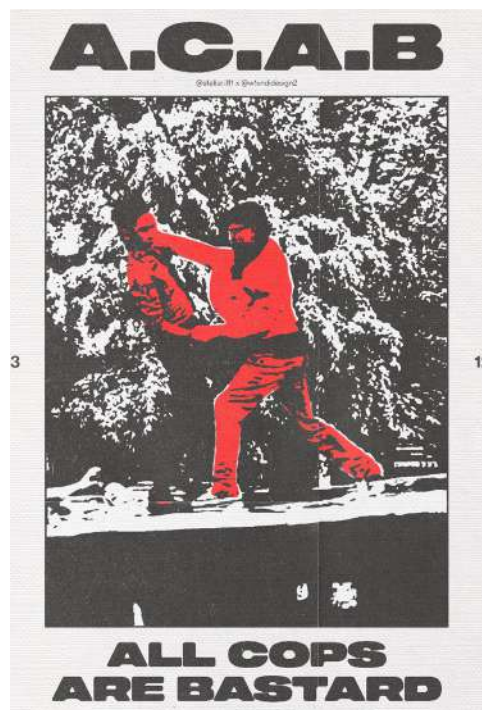
I write this over the 26-27 of March, I've avoided looking at the news and checking contacts and points of information least I lose myself further to updates, this was supposed to be an "In Brief" report simply to outline the context behind the dramatic often context-less footage across social media. It's expected that with Eid there will be a subsidence from both sides but this struggle has far from ended, and soon they'll be back out on the streets carrying on the struggle for the future, especially due to the looming revisions to the National Police (POLRI) law.

This is an ongoing situation and we hope to provide a deeper analysis and review of these events in due course. However for now, I encourage to look up further information where ever you access it and show you're solidarity in any means accessible. Let

our comrades in the fight know they are not alone and the world stands with them against the terrible threat of the Dwifungsi and Junta government by any name.

Knowing what is happening, sharing solidarity is vital right now. Let them know we see them and stand with them. If you're able to provide material aid below photo of lads playing footie to keep the spirits up you'll find some fundraisers. I'll add to this as I come across more. The lack of numerous established links speaks poorly to our internationalism but we should ever aim to improve these links, across our respective tendencies and the many thousands of milies. Solidarity is Critical. If you can send over material aid, do.

**Peter Ó'Máille**



*Material fundraisers are somewhat thin on the ground due to the ongoing nature of the things and the language barriers. We will list those we are able to confirm below.*

An International Fundraising Campaign in Solidarity with our Indonesian Anarchist Combatants.

Support the anarchist combatants in Indonesia who are fighting against state repression, capitalism, and all forms of authoritarianism! After the passage of the TNI law and the planned passage of the POLRI law, a wave of large demonstrations erupted in various cities. The state further solidified its grip by militarizing civilian spaces, silencing resistance with violence and criminalisation. In the midst of this situation, international solidarity becomes crucial.

The funds collected will be used for urgent needs such as survival equipment, logistics costs, evacuation costs, as well as the needs of the safe house. Any contribution, no matter how small, is a real step towards strengthening the resistance and ensuring that the fire of freedom is not extinguished. Solidarity knows no bounds. Show your support now!

You can make donations via paypal at; [einzinel6@gmail.com](mailto:einzinel6@gmail.com) (sending for friends and family)

Love Live Anarchy  
Death To The State!  
Solidarity Means Attack!

*Here is a fundraiser for a community kitchen (dapur warga) and street paramedic (paramedis jalanan) crew in Yogyakarta.*

Their call out:

Hello friends good afternoon!

As we know the action to reject the TNI bill is moving simultaneously in several cities including Yogyakarta. we are opening the need for a public kitchen for the needs of several days during camping at the DPRD (local parliament building).

Bank name: BCA

Bella Antika

037 415 6817

Swift Code for the Bank Central Asia (BCA): CENAIJAXXX

*The Free Sadiq Campaign.*

*Sidiq is an anarchist, illegalist and an individualist. On the 12th of July 2024, state authorities had arrested him for cannabis use and possession. He contributes to anarchist publishing and street libraries, involvement in soccer hooligan club, clashes in protests and a passion for writing poetry. Sidiq is looking at a possible 10 year prison term.*

His support group are taking donations via paypal at; [einzinel6@gmail.com](mailto:einzinel6@gmail.com) (reference Sadiq and mark for friends and family)

You can write to Sidiq;  
Muhammad Ilyas Sidiq  
Lapas (prison) Kebonwaru, Kec.  
Batununggal, Kota Bandung, Jawa Barat  
40272  
Indonesia

*I'll sign off with this translation of a leaflet distributed by anarchists as part of the movement in the city of Makassar on March 20th. It was originally published on [perhimpunanmerdeka.wordpress.com](http://perhimpunanmerdeka.wordpress.com) and is shared via Global May Day.*

The TNI (Indonesian Military) Bill is Not Just Another Law—It's a Declaration of War Against the People's Freedom!

This ARMED OLIGARCHY REGIME seeks to restore military dominance over all aspects of life, repeating the New Order era when the army was a tool of oppression!

Backed by numerous political parties, former activists, influencers, and opportunistic intellectuals, they are eager to embed the military into civilian institutions, ensuring total control over people's lives. From the Attorney General's Office, ministries, and civil agencies to the distribution of rice and fertilizers, even matters of farmland and free meal programs—everything is designed to secure oligarchic interests and keep the people submissive under military boots!

They talk about "Military Operations Other Than War," but their real intention is clear: to free the military from parliamentary oversight, giving them unchecked legitimacy to act as they please!

This means we can expect more enforced disappearances, land grabs from citizens and indigenous communities, destruction of forests and oceans, and open repression against those who dare to resist!

Even worse, the military is now meddling in food supplies, LPG distribution, and national projects! This is the true face of state capitalism—

The military as the enforcer of capitalists, ensuring the people remain below a decent living standard and powerless

The TNI Bill Must Be Resisted! We Do Not Need the Military in Civilian Affairs!

Build people's power from below through local councils, factory councils, workplaces, campuses, villages, cooperatives, and economic networks to replace this corrupt social structure!

Organize grassroots resistance through autonomous action committees!

Drive back armed domination!  
Kick the military out of civilian affairs!  
Take back control over our lives!

No Masters, No Slaves!

Solidarity, Freedom, and Justice for All!



## INTERVIEW WITH AN INDONESIAN COMRADE

Greetings, thank you for this valuable opportunity. Hello my fellow anarchist and non-anarchist friends around the world. You are unique, valuable individuals, and you have rights to be free wherever you are and in whatever conditions you are currently facing. Let me introduce myself, I am an individual (possibly an anarchist) living in Indonesia.

### Personal statement

Through this interview, I want to convey that I consensually want to share information, stories, and various events happening around me. I do not represent any organization, collective, party, association, alliance, federation, or any other form of group. I represent myself and my own consciousness. Everything I write is based on my experiences, small-scale research, and my concern for humanity oppressed by dominant parties.

In the real life, I am indeed part of, growing and developing together with an alternative group that actively distributes knowledge about what anarchism is and social movements that might shape and influence my perspective. But all forms of decisions and intentions ultimately return to my own consciousness. Most of the social sciences that support me primarily come from the distribution of knowledge, which I have self-taught through zines,

books, and online media. I will explain it in more detail during the interview.

### Technical

I will write this interview in two languages; Bahasa Indonesia and English. I was inspired by the book titled "Anarcho-Transcreation" by Mirna Wabi-Sabi, Bahasa Indonesia edition (2024).

As far as I can conclude from the reading, this book discusses transcreation, which is not merely a translation process but uses anarchist, decolonial, feminist, and anti-capitalist approaches. This book encourages embracing the use of local languages (decentralization), preventing the dominance of international languages (English), and minimizing the loss of meanings from original languages. That is why I use two languages so that many local meanings do not become lost or ambiguous.

My ability in English, especially in grammar and vocabulary, is very limited and may be confusing. However, in this translation effort, I will do my best to convey the information using the most relevant context and language curation. Due to these imperfections, I invite friends who have more energy to learn and grow together. I welcome all criticism and suggestions regarding this interview article. If anyone can speak Indonesian and is



able to translate it into a more appropriate language, I would be very happy.

A little additional information about the Indonesian language is that there are some differences with English. One of the differences is that the third-person singular pronoun only has one form, which is “dia,” that can mean female, male, or non-binary. Meanwhile, for animals or plants, “itu” is usually used, which means “it” in English. But in English, I will certainly specify according to the related gender (if any).

*Last*

Let's start the interview.

**Q:** *Hello, thank you for taking the time to answer a few questions. Can we start with an introduction and perhaps you can tell us your personal viewpoint and anarchist perspective?*

**A:** Hello, Organise! Thank you for this valuable opportunity. Greetings, my name is Pick (pen name). I am a student and also a worker. I am a cis hetero woman. English is not my mother language and I am not really fluent in English. Honestly, I am having a little problem to identify what kind of anarchist I am. Although I studied some of anarchism discourse, I still not sure to call myself an anarchist because there are so many books that I haven't read and to learn yet hahaha.

I know the word “anarchism” from an online forum in 2022. I talked to someone and he learns a lot into the topic. We talked a lot and from that conversation he saw that I was an “anarchist” while at that time I didn't have no idea about what he was telling me. Then I looked

up the term, I found the meaning of the philosophy of “living without a country”. Isn't that impossible? That's what I thought. Because since I was born, I have lived in an “ultranationalist” country with all the pride in the national symbol and everything in it. It is very difficult to imagine life without a country as it is to imagine life without capitalism. Maybe it is easier to imagine the apocalypse in heaven than to imagine both of those things actually happening. My curiosity made me explore more. Starting from reading several things from the internet such as e-books, articles, journals and videos on Youtube. Along with my exploration on the internet, in the real world I met an alternative group that discussed a lot about anarchism. Long story short I often visited that place to gather, discuss, read books, and do activities together. The people in that place eventually became my friends. I grew and developed in that place until finally in 2023, I realized that I felt suited to the concept of anarchism.

I agree that no one deserves to be subordinated to their oppressors in any way. Whether it is because of who they were born from, the color of their skin, the country they come from, or whether they decide to be a gender other than the sex chromosome they were born with. I completely agree that non-consensual domination will always end badly and is the root of long-term suffering that leads to today's structural problems. I condemn any form of oppression, no matter how small, that occurs around me.

Later on, how do I see myself in Anarchism? As far as I know and have been identified from various types of anarchism honestly, I am confused about choosing which category I fall into.

Because I can be a feminist, I can also be a mutualist, or someone who cares about the environment (anarcho-green). It could even be that anarcho-individualism has more similarities to what I have been doing so far. I personally prefer not to label myself as an anarchist. Classification can sometimes turn into a fascist label, which restrains the identity of a fluid individual. That definitive restraint can hinder how individuals respond to the environment with the creativity they have. I believe that anarchism can go beyond existing labels.

The flexibility possessed by an individual can make him/her/they a mutualist, syndicalist, transhumanist, or feminist at the same time. How in the end when the individual can freely become flexible in controlling his/her/their own life free from the shackles of existing domination, I think that is something anarchistic. Rather than being a label, I personally want anarchism to be positioned as a comrade in struggle, a comrade in learning, a comrade to grow and develop together for individuals towards their liberation. For now, I am a person who has an anarchistic spirit, I am a person who agrees with anarchist things, and I like to study anarchism even though I do not explicitly say that I am an anarchist.

**Q:** *Can you describe the current state of anarchism and anarchist organising in Indonesia these past few years?*

**A:** In the past two years ago I started exploring anarchism, there are many understandings and social movements that I have seen so far. Most of the information I get through reading and discussions with my friends. Sometimes I also stop by the point of agrarian conflict with my friends to accompany local people who are evicted

by the state. Maybe two years is a short time to be able to monitor how the anarchist situation in Indonesia is very heterogeneous and complex. But through experience, distribution of knowledge and what I have learned, there are several things that I can convey about how the anarchist movement and organization in Indonesia;

**1.** Indonesia has a very diverse cultural and social pattern due to its geography. Unlike capitalist countries such as the United States (US) where almost all sectors are controlled by the state and capitalists, in Indonesia there are still many indigenous communities that are very decentralized. This is indicated by the continued discovery of gender diversity, local alcohol production, rich regional languages, diverse arts, and indigenous beliefs outside the 6 “legalized” religions. This diversity of indigenous tribes has existed even before Indonesia existed and still survives today. The presence of the state hypocritically intervenes in this diversity.

**2.** On the one hand, they campaign for “cultural preservation” and then capitalize on the culture but also cruelly commit ethnocide. The most obvious ethnocide committed by the state is seen in agrarian conflicts on indigenous lands that the state is now trying to capitalize entirely. One of them is the ethnocide that occurred in Papua. Finally, these oppressions gave birth to decentralized resistance. Although these indigenous people do not yet have an understanding of what anarchism is, the pattern of resistance of these oppressed indigenous tribes has an anarchistic spirit. Different tribes have their own way of fighting which is very decolonial. Some indigenous tribes that currently look anarchistic in my

opinion are Samin, Dayak, Kajang, Papua, and Tanimbar.

Outside of the indigenous tribes, initially the seeds of Anarchism emerged during the Dutch East Indies government. One of them was influenced by Max Havelaar in his book entitled “Multatuli” in 1860. The left-wing movement in Indonesia also began to colour the independence of Indonesia after World War II when the PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) was formed. In the following years, Anarchism literature entered along with the development of punk culture in Indonesia and exploded during the resistance against the New Order in 1998 when many anarchists gathered in the FAF (Anti-Fascist Federation) group. Furthermore, literature on the dynamics of the anarchist movement in Indonesia is widely discussed in the book entitled “Blok Pembangkang” by Ferdi F Putra (2022) and “Perang yang tak pernah Usai” by Bima Satria Putra (2018).<sup>[1]</sup>

**3.** As the ease of access to physical and digital literacy, and the formation of collectives, the emergence of independent libraries and printing presses, the understanding of anarchism has developed to a higher level. The distribution of knowledge in Indonesia has discussed a lot about the classification of various types of anarcho (syndicalist, individualist, feminist, and so on), figures, organizing, and anarchistic studies of phenomena that occur in Indonesia (for example, discussions about anarchistic indigenous tribes, art, to discourses on patriarchy and rape culture in Indonesia). As far as I know, most anarchists prefer to categorize themselves as anarchists in general or not anarchists even though what they believe and practice is an anarchistic spirit.

Anarchists in Indonesia do not create many collectives that openly call themselves “anarchists or anarchos”. Some anarchist collectives use the Circle A symbol, the black flag, or other anarchist symbols to attract people who have similar thoughts. There are several reasons behind how selective these collectives are and why not many labels themselves as anarchists. The first is how the media frames the use of the word “anarchist” which has a negative connotation identical to actions that trigger riots, troublemakers, and are closely related to violence. The second is about the security culture. Now anarchists are widely known and marked by intelligence as a collective that disrupts state sovereignty and is as “dangerous” as communists who are banned by the state. It is easier for the apparatus to identify and it is legal to commit violence against individuals who label themselves as anarchists. On this basis, I will not explain much about which collectives are classified as anarchists as an anticipatory step to protect friends and communities who are anarchists.

If summarized about the anarchist situation in Indonesia, the ecosystem of anarchism in Indonesia is very diverse and its regeneration always exists and occurs sporadically, naturally, and decentrally. Almost every city always has its own anarchist community, although not all of them are easy to reach. Even in the same city there are many anarchist communities with their own characteristics. An anarchist community could define itself as “anarchist”, anarchists who merge with other communities (be it populists, with feminists, farmers, workers, non-anarchist unions, prisoners and indigenous peoples), or alternative groups that do not call themselves anarchists but have

an anarchistic spirit. Every movement in every corner of the city without command naturally comes down and gets angry and organizes what can be organized in response to the situation that occurs. For example, taking to the streets to accompany populist demonstrations or organizing their own demonstration, posters bombing, graffiti, food not bombs, or distributing free reading materials online and physically through independent non-profit libraries.

In the last three years, especially this year, in the massive demonstrations towards the destruction of the country, anarchist comrades are often involved without command, sporadically spreading out organizing many things to respond to various national issues and local issues in the city. The anarchist movement in Indonesia has always existed, developed, although most are not visible underground as a form of grassroots movement.

**Q:** *How would you describe Indonesia Gelap and the current protests.*

**A:** Indonesia Gelap (Dark Indonesia) is a phenomenon about the massive systemic destruction that occurred in Indonesia. This was caused by the accumulation of reckless policies regulated by fascist governments that harmed civilians and reduced the function of many national sectors. This phenomenon occurred after Prabowo Subianto was elected as president of the Republic of Indonesia. Before becoming Dark Indonesia, it was initially an increase in the hashtag #PeringatanDarurat (#EmergencyWarning) which occurred due to the decline of democracy in Indonesia. The #PeringatanDarurat symbol comes from an analog horror meme created by an X user before the

#PeringatanDarurat issue occurred. However, unexpectedly, the analog horror clip eventually became a symbol of national resistance to the emergency of democracy and became the beginning of Indonesia Gelap.

*Before Dark*

*(Pre #PeringatanDarurat)*

Before the hashtag Indonesia Gelap went up, civil injustice had actually occurred a lot in the Jokowi era (the Indonesian previous president). However, at that time the demonstrations that occurred had not touched many people, most of the demonstrations were dominated by students and labor union groups, and some anarchist. Ahead of the election, the law on the minimum age for vice president was passed. Jokowi Widodo's son, Gibran Rakabuming, who is not yet 40 years old, can now be nominated as vice president because of the nepotism of his uncle who is the chairman of Mahkamah Konstitusi (the Constitutional Court). The requirement for vice president, which was originally a minimum age of 40 years old, became 35 years old. It turns out that election fraud did not stop there and was compiled in a documentary made by Watchdog entitled “Dirty Vote” which tells about election fraud, dirty strategies and the role of the Jokowi and his family to win the Prabowo-Gibran candidate pair.<sup>[2]</sup>

*First Wave of #PeringatanDarurat (Blue)*

After the victory of the President and Vice President in the election, the nepotism of Jokowi, his family, and his affiliations spread to the general election of DKI Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia which will hold regional head elections. There was the same fraud on Jokowi's second son, Kaesang Pangarep. That's



where #PeringatanDarurat first appeared in public on August 21, 2024. However, civil anger and demonstrations decreased slightly when Kaesang failed in election.<sup>[3]</sup>

#### *Second Wave #PeringatanDarurat (Black/Indonesia Gelap 1)*

The second wave of #PeringatanDarurat occurred when there was a shortage of LPG gas, which is the main household energy in Indonesia. This hashtag was raised on February 3, 2025, shortly after the controversial regulation on increasing VAT by 12% which had sparked public anger but subsided at the turn of the year because it was canceled. One of the actors who played a role in this LPG gas regulation was Bahlil Lahadiah as the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources of Indonesia who was part of Prabowo's Red and White Cabinet.<sup>[4]</sup>

#### *Third Wave #PeringatanDarurat (Red)*

The third wave occurred during Prabowo's 100th day as president, on February 12, 2025. The Free Nutritious Meal Program (MBG) was implemented carelessly, consuming large amount of national budget. The government made massive budget cuts in various sectors. Such as the education sector, the budget for the disabled, office energy efficiency, the Smart Indonesia Card (KIP) budget and performance allowances (TUKIN) for lecturers and educators. Along with massive fund efficiency, on the one hand, Prabowo Subianto's Red and White Cabinet was very wasteful and there was a massive increase in the budget such as in the military and police. Some minor problems that occurred in this third wave of increase were the construction of a very private sea fence (PIK), the enacted Minerba (Minerals and Coal) Law, and

agrarian conflicts on active land in Bekasi housing and many place in Indonesia. Many regulations and problems occurred, dividing citizens in media distractions that increasingly drained citizens' mentality.<sup>[5]</sup>

#### *Neo Orba (New Order) Revival (Indonesia Gelap 2)*

Shortly after the emergency warning about the third wave of "Dark Indonesia" was raised, the TNI Bill appeared in various media, sparking anger, fear, and civil trauma towards the 1998 incident. Mass resistance began. Several resistances occurred such as KONTRAS (Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence) which inspected the TNI Bill meeting which was held behind closed doors in a luxury hotel ballroom and many people took to the streets.

The peak of anger was how the DPR passed the TNI Law and resistance broke out everywhere. Added to this was the presence of the TNI Bill, Broadcasting Bill, Police Bill, and Criminal Procedure Code Bill. The current protests are much more tense than previous protests because intelligence officers dare and openly use firearms, several demonstrators were seriously injured, police and soldiers attacked journalists, medical teams, motorcycle taxi drivers, and civilians who did not even participate in the protest but were around the location of the action. Hacking of demonstrators' accounts occurred everywhere. Asset confiscation and threats against journalists.

The President also openly stated in the press his xenophobic stance that today's demonstrations were ridden by foreigners. No local media outlets broadcast live coverage of today's demonstrations, indicating that the regime is extremely civilphobic.

**Q:** *What are the collective aims of the movement and wave of protests?*

**A:** The goal of the movement and the closest wave of protests is civil supremacy and striking back against the arbitrariness of the authoritarian government. The demands put forward by various demonstrations in various cities are very diverse, but for now there are several main demands that have been raised, including:

- 1) Reject the Police Bill,
- 2) Revoke the TNI Law,
- 3) Reject the Criminal Procedure Code Bill,
- 4) Reject the Broadcasting Bill,
- 5) Reject the Prosecutor's Bill, and
- 6) Civil Supremacy.

Apart from the 6 demands, there are also other demands that have emerged and have not been resolved in the previous three #EmergencyWarning waves such as reshuffling the fat cabinet, protecting indigenous peoples, asset confiscation laws, and many more.

**Q:** *What involvement have anarchist had?*

**A:** If you ask about how anarchist comrades respond to Indonesia Gelap, they sporadically organize many things. Both joining the populist demonstration, organized non-populists protest, to accompanying local oppression when national oppression occurs simultaneously.

The forms of demonstrations vary from graffiti bombing, giant posters and banners, consolidation, insurrection and occupation of DPR offices, to marches using DJ sets to attract ordinary masses to join the march to guard this issue together. Outside of Indonesia, several anarchist

communities or collectives routinely hold various activities in each region. Starting from street libraries, discussions, reviewing books, food not bombs, free markets, organizing non-profit gigs, occupying public spaces, squatting by doing some exhibiting art in abandoned buildings, and many more.

**Q:** *Are there many organised groups or are they ad hoc affinity groups?*

**A:** There are many anarchist groups in Indonesia. Spread almost in every city. Both those that appear on the surface and those that are underground. There are organized groups that also often hold free online classes that discuss anarchist issues in different state outside of Indonesia, anarchist groups that are also locally organized, there are also sporadic anarchist groups that specialize in specific fields (for the example anarchist art collectives or anarchist book clubs).

**Q:** *Practically speaking, how are these Protest being organised? Via social media? Publica all outs? Are there specific groups leading the way?*

**A:** Usually most of the consolidation and populist protests are sparked by students and assisted by LBH advocacy. Calls to take to the streets are broadcast and disseminated in various independent media and social media. In some of the previous actions, they were indeed commanded by students, but lately in Indonesia Gelap more and more elements of society have come and accompanied them. There are even groups of mothers who have joined in voicing their protests and rejection of the TNI Law.

**Q:** *What is the relationship between anarchist groups and the more liberal groups and student networks?*

**A:** It is very diverse. There are anarchist groups that prefer to organize themselves and are less compatible with liberal groups and there are also those that merge but in a limited way. Meanwhile, regarding student networks, it usually depends on the tendencies and ecosystem of the student network. Some members of the anarchist collective are students who are members of the student network. Sometimes the student network is greatly influenced by their seniors who turn out to be members of parties that support the regime's performance. So not all members of the student network can be trusted and become friends who can work together with friends of the anarchist collective.

**Q:** *What would an average protest day look like, if you could give us a time line?*

**A:** Well, regarding the timeline, to be honest, because there were many protests that occurred in various cities in Indonesia and everything was like a spark that exploded everywhere, it was quite difficult for me to trace all the protest times that occurred. The form of the protests has probably been explained a lot in your previous article. More or less in 9 days after the TNI Law was passed (after 20 March 2025), every city simultaneously held protests, even in small cities, occupying the DPRD (parliament) building, holding parades wearing black clothes, and unfurling giant banners. Almost all the actions agreed to wear black clothes as a form of "security culture" and to symbolize how "Black" Indonesia is. However, in general

in question [#3] I have explained a little about the timeline of the "protests" from where #PeringatanDarurat transformed into #IndonesiaGelap which is now increasingly tense and the resistance is increasingly massive.

**Q:** *Have you seen much de/radicadicalisation or people moving to/away from anarchist viewpoints?*

**A:** Yes, there are and there are many. One of the most common causes is how activism/alternative communities/grassroots movements or generally called radical movements are not places that are always progressive or seen as something morally "good". Ironically, many radical movements become unsafe spaces for many people.

In radical movements, there are people who have dominant tendencies and subtly intimidate people in their groups. I prefer to call these people microfascists. Microfascists usually join radical groups because they feel they do not have a place and opportunity to oppress others in more public spaces because of the presence of giant fascists. When these microfascists get a safe space for themselves, they have the opportunity to oppress vulnerable people in the community. Microfascist cases often cause social movements to be hampered because they have to re-deconstruct the space, hold restorative forums, repeat many discourses, and end up with cancel culture. Unfortunately, the efforts made often take a lot of energy and ultimately have an impact on the burnout of people in radical movements. In many cases, microfascists benefit greatly and then develop into manipulative people who spread serious diseases. Infecting

naive people, causing fragmentation, and causing deep trauma for survivors and other affected members.

The trauma and internal damage caused often kills the movement and makes people reluctant to accompany the movement. Finally, many decide to enter the corrupt system scheme because both the radical ecosystem and the state are look the same for them. Even the state and capitalist system look "better" because they still make them more economically stable than the alternative ecosystem. The existence of this microfascist ironically becomes the "small state" that should be abolished in the radical movement. In the end, why until now it is difficult to create a movement that is equally strong against the oppressive state and capitalism, is how the radical movement has not been able to be completely "clean" and safe from what they are fighting against.

**Q:** *Thank you for your time, is there anything you'd like to add as an epilogue?*

**A:** Maybe that's all I can say. In the complexity of the issue of anarchism, protests, and chaos that occurred in Indonesia, of course I can't convey everything. I apologize for any shortcomings in terms of language, translation, and how I convey the information.

For friends who read, both anarchists and non-anarchists in Indonesia and around the world. Through this reading, this is what happened in Indonesia, and maybe it happened anywhere in the world. Stay strong to live the day even though the following days feel like endless hell. But believe me in every oppression there is always resistance that grows. One death

multiplies. Life goes on, sometimes just keeping yourself alive is a meaningful form of resistance.

I hope that through this opportunity one day we can still always be emotionally connected and strengthen each other. I hope I can be involved in organizing and fair mutual cooperation, creating a better life. Even though maybe today has not been achieved or has not been answered when. Keep living for yourself. You are free and unique individuals as you are. Resist. Agitate. Organize!

#### **Notes:**

[1] *History of Anarchism in Indonesia*  
[anarchiststudies.noblogs.org/article-sejarah-singkat-anarkisme-di-indonesia](http://anarchiststudies.noblogs.org/article-sejarah-singkat-anarkisme-di-indonesia)

[2] *Dirty vote*  
[youtube.com/watch?v=RRgLZ66NCmE](https://youtube.com/watch?v=RRgLZ66NCmE)

[3] *#PeringatanDarurat 1*  
[tirto.id/makna-peringatan-darurat-garuda-biru-1991-viral-sejarah-gambarnya-g2XF](https://tirto.id/makna-peringatan-darurat-garuda-biru-1991-viral-sejarah-gambarnya-g2XF)

[4] *#PeringatanDarurat 2*  
[bbc.com/indonesia/articles/c17e2w84nyko](https://bbc.com/indonesia/articles/c17e2w84nyko)

[5] *#PeringatanDarurat 3*  
[suara.com/lifestyle/2025/02/13/201729/peringatan-darurat-dengan-garuda-merah-trending-apa-arti-alarm-ini](https://suara.com/lifestyle/2025/02/13/201729/peringatan-darurat-dengan-garuda-merah-trending-apa-arti-alarm-ini)



Ashes  
IWW  
March 2025

# THE MISSING STORY OF BRIGHT CHIKEZI AND THE IWW IN SIERRA LEONE

The history of the Industrial Workers of the World is primarily remembered for its significance to American labour history. Founded in Chicago in 1905, the IWW's reputation for internationalism is usually viewed from the perspective of European migrants who joined the transient workforce who helped to build America, and resisted exploitation by the capitalist barons through strikes, sabotage and songs. However, the IWW (both today and in the past) also spread the ideas of industrial unionism and the One Big Union overseas as far afield as Russia, Japan, South Africa and Turkey.

Several short zines, essays and a handful of books have begun to uncover some of the stories of the IWW on the African continent. These texts have mainly focussed on the IWW's most breakout project, the IWA (Industrial Workers of Africa). Founded in 1917, IWA the first union for Black Workers in Africa. The union was primarily based in Southern Africa and its motto was Sifuna Zonke! ("We want everything!"). The union lead several strikes but was short lived, replaced in 1919 by the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union of Africa (ICU) founded by Clemens Kadilie.

Even less has been written however about the IWW's other more recent attempts at organisation in other parts of Africa.

With the founding of the Pan-African Workers Association in 2022 (an organisation primarily focussed on organising African migrant workers in the UK) which formally affiliated to the IWW in 2025, there is a renewed interest in the history and potential of the IWW in Africa itself.

To these ends, I wanted to shed some light on the little known IWW branch that formed in Sierra Leone in 1997.

Sierra Leone, on the West Coast of Africa, is a nation with many contradiction. Listed by the 'Human Development Index' as one of the poorest countries in the world, Sierra Leone is a land rich with diamonds, minerals, and oil. The capital of Sierra Leone, Freetown, was established by British Abolitionists in 1787 to resettle freed slaves from the trans-atlantic slave trade. Sierra Leone became an official Crown Colony of the British Empire in 1808 and would remain under colonial rule until the 1960's. Under the British empire, while many of the settlers were freed slaves from America, domestic slavery in Sierra Leone persisted until 1927, only following a mass slave revolt to free themselves. Britain's occupation of this land developed new exploitative ambitions following the discovery of vast quantities of diamonds in the 1930's.

Britain developed a highly exploitative 'wage slavery' in Sierra Leone as the low paid and precarious workforce were directed into the diamond mines in order to unearth one million carats of diamonds (worth many billions) annually. British companies, mainly the De Beers mining consortium which at the time controlled 90% of the world's diamond supply, grew rich as the wealth of the country was extracted leading to a lack of development.

Following independence from British rule in 1961, the diamond mines were nationalised and the De Beers company was eventually pushed out. Corruption and mismanagement within the state led to an increase in illicit diamond mining, often linked to violence.

Destabilised by a civil war in the neighboring country of Liberia, which lasted from 1989-97, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) started a rebellion in Sierra Leone in 1991. While the RUF claimed to have some desire to socially and economically reform Sierra Leone, such as with their slogan, "No More Slaves, No More Masters. Power and Wealth to the People." The RUF would be responsible for many atrocities against civilians, the conflict costing the lives of over 200,000 people by its end in 2002. A primary target of the RUF was the seizure of the nations lucrative diamond mines. This economic warfare by the RUF, leading to a financial collapse and starvation throughout the country, would spark a military coup by the army in 1997 in support of the RUF.

An international intervention force entered the country to oppose the RUF and achieved an initial peace agreement in 1999.

Very little is known of the origins of the IWW in Sierra Leone, IWW sources<sup>[1]</sup> suggest the group formed in 1996 and official government records show that in 1997, there were 3,240 members registered in Sierra Leone. The IWW in Sierra Leone existed mostly independently of the unions international General Administration in Chicago, without the official issuing of membership cards or taking of dues. However, we know that the union there had an official delegate, Bright Chikezi<sup>[2]</sup>, who was in communication with both the IWW in North America and the UK.

The Secretary of the IWW in the UK at the time was fellow worker Kevin Brandstatter. In 1997 Brandstatter shared the following bulletin about the situation in Sierra Leone:

*"Dear Comrades and Friends,*

*You will most likely know of recent military coup in Sierra Leone. For those of you unaware there is a report at the end of this bulletin.*

*What many of you will not know however is that the IWW has a small but growing presence among diamond miners in the country. The union internationally has been trying to supply money and materials (stationery etc) to the unions delegate, Fellow Worker Bright Chiekiezie, in Freetown, Sierra Leone.*

*The IWW has found favour with workers in Sierra Leone for specific reasons:*

*1. Its adherence to industrial unionism, particularly important*

*in the cut-throat diamond mining industry; and*

*2. Its international One Big Union structure, again important given the isolation of Sierra Leone and its recent troubles.*

*The union is organising itself to prevent widespread cheating and blatant theft practised by the mine owners. For example workers [often sub-contracted rather than employed labour] are paid by weight but the workers have long held that the employers underweighed the product of their labour and therefore underpaid them. The IWW is establishing an office and providing worker controlled scales to ensure that proper weighing is undertaken.*

*Just before the military coup members of the IWW in Britain had decided to mount a fundraising drive among other unionists. Leaflets are in preparation. The military coup has prompted us to take matters forward a bit earlier than we had anticipated. One of the first casualties in any coup is freedom and we certainly consider our small organisation in Sierra Leone under some threat.*

*At this point in time we are limiting our activities to fund raising. If you can make a donation, either individually or through your union please do so. No amount will be considered too small."*

We know that of the 3,240 member in sierra Leone most were employed as

diamond miners, as registering this information was a requirement under local labour law. However, with the confusion in the country during the conflict, and only limited communication via fellow worker Chikezi, it is difficult to get a clear picture of what this organisation meant in practice within the diamond mining industry. The examples given, of establishing an office (which would be based at 22 Wellington Street, Freetown. Now the site of a Bauxite mining companies office) and providing fair scales to challenge the bosses wage-theft practices, does suggest that the union was well organised and fully utilised the creative flair so often associated with IWW direct action tactics.

Fellow Worker Brandstatter certainly placed their hopes in the ability of the Sierra Leone group to overcome the challenges, claiming that "potentially it could be the biggest thing to happen to the IWW in the last 45 years."

In response to the call by fellow worker Brandstatter for the union to send funds in support, Bright would confirm receipt of some money and resources, although the gesture was well received, although this probably fell far short of what the IWW should or could have provided in solidarity. Especially it could be argued from fellow workers living in the country that had historically already taken so much wealth from Sierra Leone.

Bright Chikezi later writes back to Brandstatter...

*"I received 20 Scottish pounds from the IWW Edinburgh. The IWW Wales sent books. Bill Runacre wrote us offering to print our posters... Please thank all these people very*

*much on our behalf while we promise to make use of every resources given to us to uplift the status of the IWW in Sierra Leone...*

*Due to the level of education of the miners we are finding it difficult to translate the literatures we received from the IWW Wales and other material. Our membership increases daily and we hope to send a representative to this year's conference."*

While the initial outlook in 1997 may have seemed positive, it is clear that the situation after the military coup deteriorated rapidly. The trade union movement as a whole resisted the coup by the RUF and military, through a 9 month civil disobedience campaign and general strike.

The July edition of the Industrial Worker included this entry by the Secretary-Treasurer of the I.W.W. in Chicago:

*"Fellow Worker Bright Chikezie called from Freetown Sierra Leone.*

*A lot of us had been very worried about him in light of the recent coup, killings and lootings.*

*He's ok, although he says he lost practically everything he owns to the looting government soldiers. He seemed in good spirits. I guess when people are getting killed, getting looted is not so bad by: comparison. He needs money, to both to replace his lost possessions and to help with plane fare to attend the IWW General Assembly over Labor Day weekend in St. Louis. Calls to San Francisco and Seattle confirmed*

*that fundraising is underway. In the U.S. it's being coordinated by the Seattle Branch.*

*Money from the U.S. is being combined with that collected by Fellow Workers in the U.K. and forwarded from there."*

Bright's closing comment before he hurried home to beat the 10pm to 10am curfew was

*"as long as the union exists, i'm I.W.W!"*

*Government workers have been on general strike since the army ousted the elected government in Sierra Leone, and the entire labor movement is united in opposition to the military regime. WW. organizer Bright Chikeize reports that looters destroyed his office, stealing practically everything."*<sup>[3]</sup>

This brave resistance by trade unionists led to an intensification of targeting of workers by the RUF, as demonstrated by the sacking of the IWW's office in Freetown. Whilst we don't know how much of a role the IWW took in this overall movement, fellow worker Bright Chikezi and other IWW members were soon forced to flee to neighboring Guinea.

Another bulletin by fellow worker Brandstatter explained the following.

*"He [Chikezi] and some other Wobs were transported to Guinea by U.S. marines, they are strongly in opposition to the military dictatorship, which probably makes it very wise that they've gotten themselves out of harms way.*



*Bright had a meeting scheduled for Friday evening to talk to someone about organizing among metal workers in Guinea. So the military coup might have done the IWW a small favour by spreading union organisation in West Africa.*

*If it is possible to raise the money to send someone over there to see what's going on, assess their needs, we will do this...*

*Meanwhile, FW Chikezie was looted during the military takeover and has nothing. Our GST will be speaking to him in Guinea this week and I will post a further report."*

It is sad to hear of the persecution and difficulties Chikezi and other fellow workers faced, having to flee their homes and getting robbed, but it is heartening that in true Wobbly spirit they were soon immediately looking for the next organising opportunity. There may be an even more hidden history of the IWW metal workers union in Guinea buried within this investigation. It does not appear that the IWW in the UK did end up sending another organiser to Africa to assist with this project but Brandstatter's revolutionary optimism of viewing these events as doing the union 'a small favour' in spreading industrial unionism to more parts of the continent is both mad and inspiring. This steadfastness to the IWW is reflected in a later, final message from fellow worker Chikezi also.

While I have not been able to verify the date it was initially sent, fellow worker Bright Chikezi wrote an update to the union, published in the Industrial Worker at the end of 1997, from exile in Guinea.

The letter indicates that Chikezi was expecting to be able to return to Sierra Leone and continue his organising efforts there with the mine workers.

*"I am very sorry for not communicating for as very long time. It was due to the peace process that has been signed now by the government forces and the rebels to end the four years senseless killings in Sierra Leone. Since there is absolute peace now all the provinces are accessible. We are trying to rehabilitate those displaced by the war. We are starting mining very soon to finance our activities.*

*We still remain part of the One Big Union.*

*Solidarity,*

*Bright Chikezi"*

It is currently unclear what happened to fellow worker Bright Chikezi or any of the other thousands of IWW members in Sierra Leone after this communication. The peace process that he mentions most likely refers to the Conakry Peace Plan, signed in October 1997. This would not be the absolute peace that Bright hoped for as it was quickly broken by the RUF and fighting continued.

Bright would have to flee the country once more and would end up this time in Nigeria, where the Industrial Worker listed that the Sierra Leone branch and Bright operated a temporary office until this was delisted in 1998.

The available records of contact between the Sierra Leone members and the IWW headquarters ends there.

In January 1999 the RUF initiated what they called 'operation no-living-thing'. Thousands of civilians were indiscriminately murdered in Freetown. The manner of killing was especially cruel. The horrendous acts committed, especially those targeted towards women, are beyond the scope of this essay and I don't want to tokenistically mention these, however it is important to identify that almost anyone living in Freetown at this time would have either been a witness to, participant of, or victim of war crimes. Such acts became notorious for the wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia, generally fuelled by drug use, patriarchy, and committed mainly by very young men or even child soldiers.

The Lome Peace Agreement, was eventually signed on 7 July 1999 and while this formally marked the end of the civil war, some fighting continued until 2002.

The following years saw a slow process of rehabilitation, the return of over one million refugees to their homes, and the start of healing the physical and psychological scars of the war, which is still ongoing for many a quarter of a century later. One of the main challenges was the mass psychological impact that the civil war had on the population, particularly women. Throughout the war women and children in particular were systematic raped, killed and abused. Any women captured by the RUF were almost certainly raped and salvery, forced marriages and mutilations of women were common. The UN estimated that there was up to 250,000 victims of rape during the conflict. Child soldiers were used on both sides of the conflict and many suffered from mental health and drug withdrawal problems after the war.

While there is no records available to further explain fellow worker Brights escape to Nigeria or if he ever returned to his home in Freetown after that, my hope is that fellow worker Bright Chikezi and all our other fellow workers remained safe and well, and were able to return home, and that even if the IWW did not survive the civil war that they still consider themselves a part of the One Big Union.

Diamond revenues are the highest they have ever been in Sierra Leone.

A new dawn for the working class approaches once more.

#### **Note:**

1. F.N. Brill, "A Brief History of the IWW outside the US (1905 - 1999)"
2. Bright's surname is spelled Chikezie or Chiekezie by Brandstatter in several communications but Chikezi by himself.
3. Industrial worker, July 1997

David Nicholl  
The Commonweal  
May 1891

## VITAL READING: PRACTICAL ANARCHISM

It may be well for us to consider whether we can by any means carry our principles into execution in the ordinary course of propaganda. Our opponents are very fond of taunting us with being “unpractical,” because we do not believe in Eight Hour Bills, or trust for salvation to Governments or Parliaments. Still, we must remember that if we confine ‘ourselves purely to abstract propaganda, without attempting in any way to carry our principles into practice, we may countenance this vile slander, and the people may say with our enemies, that Anarchists are excellent people, have splendid ideas but they are not “practical”; they are content to preach, but not to practice

Now I, for one, fully acknowledge the importance of educational propaganda; but we must remember that, if all schools of Socialists had confined themselves purely to educational work, Socialism would not now be a common subject of conversation among rich and poor, alike in the street and in the drawing-room, and educational propaganda might still be confined to the study of philosopher or the student’s lecture room. Note at once the effect of single acts of revolt. Some starving workmen sack a few shops at the West End of London. London rings with it for a few days. What has caused all this disturbance! Socialism: certain Socialist orators made “violent speeches;”

result — riot and sack of shops. What dreadful them to people, says the average man. What can be the ideas that lead them to incite people to violence? and the average man is anxious to find out, and, as the writer of this article well remembers, he was mobbed in Hyde Parl, on the Sunday following the February riots, by an excited throng, all anxious to obtain a copy of that wicked publication, the Commonweal, who, a week before the riot, would probably not have accepted one as a gift. We can all call to mind similar instances of quickened public curiosity in our agitation arising from various causes, from the historic bomb of Chicago down to an ordinary free-speech fight. And there is one thing specially worth noting, and that is, that action on the part of the people themselves; for instance, a big strike or riot attracts far more attention from even the capitalist press, than the sittings of a labour commission or the return of labour representatives to vestry, County Council, or Parliament. An eternal dullness broods over all that is connected with governments; dull as a Parliamentary speech or a blue book, might pass into a proverb. But how different with spontaneous action on the part of the people. Any man will read an account of a riot or revolt among his own class, though he might shrink from perusing a report of Parliamentary debate or a Government inquiry. Is it not a fact that the more Parliamentary and “constitutional” the

“leaders” of the people become, the less influence they have upon them. Bradlaugh, Arch, and Broadhurst to wit. Why is this. Is it not because the people are warned by a just instinct, that as these worthy men grow dull and respectable, so they lose that revolutionary instinct, which once made them fervent in the fight for Freedom?

Therefore, it seems to me, that we Anarchists, have a splendid field for action, far better than that open to any Social Democratic party, and that in future we should teach the people, both by speech and action, to defy the law and to attack in every possible way the monopoly of the capitalist classes in the means of life.

Already, to some extent, this has begun, though hitherto it has been chiefly confined to individual cases. For instance, comrade Barker, of Brighton, has preferred to undergo the risk of fine or imprisonment to answering the inquisitorial questions of government officials in the census paper, and, when he was prosecuted, has seized the opportunity to make propaganda by distributing Anarchist leaflets among the crowd in the Court. Creaghe\*, of Sheffield, has refused to pay tribute to landlords in the shape of rent, and made it warm for policeman and bailiff with a poker. As it appears that the minions of the law were acting illegally, the magistrate did not fine our comrade heavily for the assault. A young, comrade of ours, in the army, has been sentenced to two months imprisonment, for acting up to his principles as an Anarchist-Communist, and is now to be discharged from ‘the army, as of no further use in Her Majesty’s Service, which means, of course, that a man professing Anarchist-Communist principles is not likely to be of much “Service “ to Her “Majesty” in the army, though he may be very useful to the

people in that position. Then again, the action of our Leeds’ comrades, at Bradford who by holding a meeting and distributing revolutionary leaflets, in defiance, of a police proclamation, produced a serious outburst of revolt in a town which up till then was certainly not a stronghold of any form of Socialism.

All this work is good, and our friends should be encouraged everywhere to follow the bold example of these brave men. Remember that it was in a year like this when one form of revolutionary agitation -the unemployed movement of ‘87 - was dying out, that Mrs. Besant and a few other comrades started the present labour movement, by the propaganda which led to the strike at Bryant and May’s. Today the labour movement is in a similar state of decadence to the unemployed agitation of those days. Is it not possible that we Anarchist-Communists, might initiate a new form of revolutionary agitation, by starting a No-Rent Campaign in the slums. We need not begin by action, let us preach the idea first by speech, handbill, and placard; and then, if the people show themselves ready for action, let us throw ourselves into the battle with them, not as “leaders,” but as comrades in the fight. I am sure that by it, if we could stir, up a revolt on the part of the slum dwellers in a single slum it would do far more to spread our ideas than by any amount of ordinary propaganda. I only make this as one suggestion, many other methods must occur to all our comrades of doing something to reducing Anarchism from theory to practice.

Propaganda in the army, taking part in strikes and riots, in order to guide them in the way of revolution, by pointing out to the people how easy it is in times of riot and tumult to seize the wealth stored up in the shops and warehouses of the middle classes, and



individually refusing to pay rent\*\*, taxes, or submit to any governmental inquisition, are all equally good. Let each man choose the method best suited to him, there is no need to quarrel as to which is best. Only it must be our aim, as Anarchists, to stir up revolt on every possible occasion, and to bring to law and its officials into derision and contempt. Individual assaults on the system will lead to riots, riots to revolts, revolts to insurrection, insurrection to revolution.

This has been the course of revolutionary movements in the past so history tells us, and I feel convinced that it will be the same in future. Then let every man who strikes a blow for the new ideas, feel that he is following in the steps of the old revolutionary heroes and thousands of others in modern days who have not feared to sacrifice ease and comfort, aye, and itself for the Cause.

#### D. J. NICOLL

*\* John Creaghe was on trial for libel after calling his landlords solicitor a "petty-fogger at law" and "little licenced thief", he was found guilty and find £25 and ordered to pay the costs of the prosecution.*

*\*\* The rent strike alongside a general strike were major calls of socialists of the period.*

**David Nicholl** (8 Dec 1859 - 2 Mar 1919) took on the role of Editor of the *Commonweal* (replacing William Morris) in 1890. He wrote in defence of the Walsall Anarchists and served eighteen months for "seditious libel" after highlighting their framing by the agent provocateur/spycop, Auguste Coulon on behalf of special branch's Insp. William Melville, in which he questioned whether Melville, and the trial's Justice

Hawkins were "fit to live".

This was something the prosecution felt was incitement to murder and the middle class jury agreed. His final words to the court:

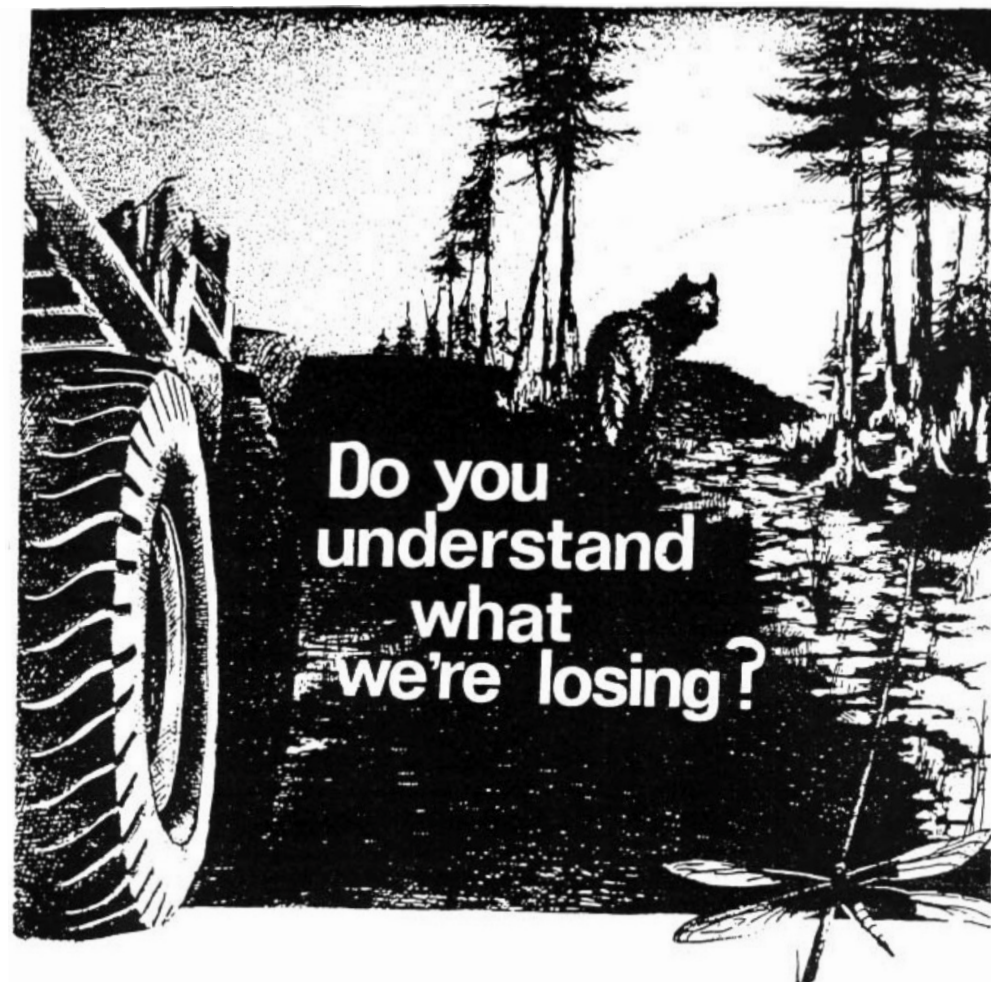
*"For my part, I am willing to suffer for my ideas, knowing full well that our friends increase with persecution and I am quite willing to suffer in a good cause. I only tell you that you will not crush the movement by repression. You will only make it more revolutionary and dangerous"*

He was then disappeared into Pentonville to start his sentence before being taken to Chelford gaol. Upon his release he was greeted by his loving wife, and take to a crowd in good cheer. This celebration turned into a riot when the police rocked up.

He had suffered both physically and mentally during his time inside dearly. After attempting to be re-instated as editor of the *Commonweal* only to loose a vote against firebrand Henry Samuels who had replaced him, he began to draw distance from his companions. He would at times publish periodicals such as *The Anarchist* and an intermittent return of *Commonweal* some years after it's initial run ended. Ultimately his mental heath would decay and he distanced himself from his companions. He survived his later years selling pamphlets, working as a street vendor and as Guy Aldred recalls, on the "small sums given to him by comrades who recalled his past services to the movement, or had learned of them."

He died on the 2nd March 1919.

He is buried in Islington and St Pancras Cemeteries in an unmarked grave No 26, off Viaduct Road in the cemetery.



**At some point we must draw a line across the ground of our home and our being, drive a spear into the land and say to the bulldozers, earthmovers, government and corporations, "thus far and no further." If we do not, we shall later feel, instead of pride, the regret of Thoreau, that good but overly-bookish man, who wrote, near the end of his life, "If I repent of anything it is likely to be my good behaviour."**

**- Edward Abbey**

# How to... Make your own Book Bloc Shield

If you're going on a demo, whether you are facing fascists from the public or private sector, it is absolutely vital that you prepare some defensive measures. Now a good thick road-wide banner is pretty good, and at a pinch some bin lids will do the job, but really there are three opinions for the fashionable Block Bloc on the go.

1- Buy/Steal manufactured public-order shields. You'll want to smaller round ones, or at a push the older medium sized ones. These are however expensive and quite heavy.

2- Foam shields, made famous by the summit-hopping protests your cool auntie used to go to. These are somewhat unweildly but stack them up on the front line and they are grand and look mint.

3- Light weight, multi-layered short shields. Simple and elegant, very demure. very mindful. they can also be stacked and parked behind the sofa. **Let's make one!**

Now bear in mind, your first one is gunna be a bit messy, but make a dozen of them and next time you go to a demo, you can gear up the squad and not only look sick but keep yourselves protected from the scum, baton waving, and the odd missile.

## Gear:

Drill/hand-drill.

Scissors/knife.

6 x clothespins/pegs.

Spreadable glue/wheatpaste.



## Ingredients:

2x 75x100 cm of good thick cardboard.

1x 75x100 cm card or paper.

1x 75x100 cm of a solid core material. (Polycarbonate, foamcore, plexiglass or even wood. Aim for at least 2-3cm thick)

6x 300mm cable ties.

1x old inner tube. (clean and slit in half)

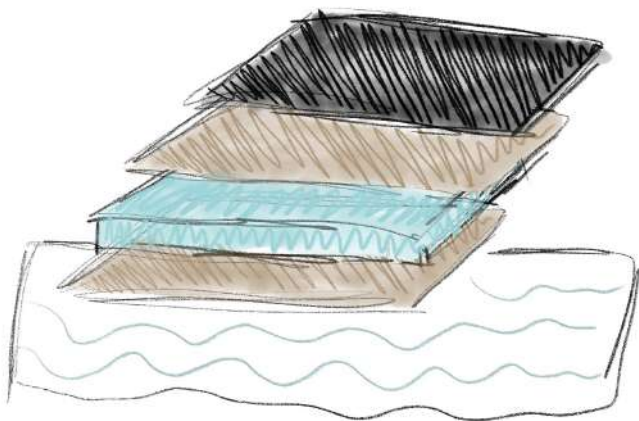
100cm of parcel string, or sisal if you're middle class. (Bungee is also good)

Your box of paints, paintbrushes, markers, stencils, stickers, tape, glue, glitter, etc.

1 x large sheet of clear plastic wrap, tarp or gaffer tape for weather proofing.







### Directions:

Prepare your workspace, layout an old tarp or newspaper. Stack your sheets into a stack: Cardboard - Core material - Cardboard with the Paper on what will be the front.

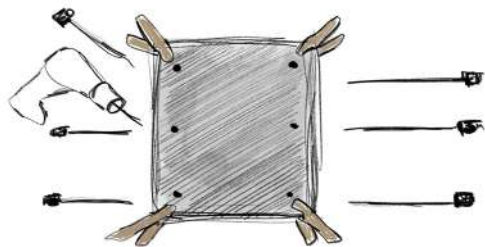
Starting with the paper cover the back in the glue, apply the next layer and so on. When you are done, peg the corners down and put something heavy on top and leave to set overnight.

When it's ready, measure out points 3cm from the edges at the corners and mid-way. Drill a hole through each one. Then put a cable tie through each one and secure it as tight as you can. Try and finish it so the nub is pointing inwards on top of the hole.

On the inside you want to layout where you'll want the handles and arm brace. Ideally you'll be wanting to use your off arm and I'd line it up at a 45 degree angle. Feel free to experiment and practice your arm position to find what works best.

Mark out holes on either side of your palm and mid-way up your forearm. The want to be as tight to your material as possible.

Use the inner tube for your fore-arm as it will be most comfy and a few wrappings of string (or bungee cord) for the handle. Ideally the handle should be on the tighter side with the arm strapping being looser. This will give you balance between control of the shield, mobility, and comfort.



Then it's time for ART ATTACK!

Cover that bad boy in your org's ident, a pithy quote, your favourite book, logos, flags, zentangles, whatever.

Finally when the paint is dry wrap clear plastic around the shield. cover it in the wrap or tape or what have you. You want to make sure that the holes and edges especially are covered so the train would wreck it and make it moldy after a few outings.

Finally, make a few with your affinity and practice using them in the garden or at the park. There are many different "methods" to organising yourself but with a shield such as this your role is mobile defence. Organise in teams of 6 with someone being the designated

shot caller, a role that you should all learn and which can be assigned ad-hoc. Come up with fun names for formations and practice!

When you go to a demo, form up with over Shield Blocs, bring spare shields and run new people through the drills. When things get going, flank any march and put yourself up front when it gets lively.

Stay safe out there and remember that is we who keep us safe!

**Many thanks to Tiny for the art!**

*Tiny makes art on intersectional anarchist themes, mainly for protests, propaganda and supporting pals in prison. See more of their scribbles on instagram: @tiny.anarchist.rat*





## BACKXWASH ONLY DUST REMAINS [UGLY HAG RECORDS, 2025]

Only Dust Remains is a confrontation, ending in an assault on the senses, the lyricism pulls no punches and takes no prisoners.

Backxwash aka Ashanti Mutinta is a Zambian-Canadian rapper & producer based in so-called Montreal, Quebec. Backxwash describes herself a Rapper / Producer / Cryptid and this album Only Dust Remains contributes to a back catalogue that bristles with evocative and challenging projects in leftfield hip-hop, industrial music or whatever label you feel like giving it all.

This album, the fifth full length in the catalogue of this project, carries on where the previous trilogy left off.

The album features appearances from, interestingly, several RnB, Pop and Shoegaze artists like Chloe Hotline, Michael Go, Ora Cogan, Fernie, Magella, Pet Wife along with neoclassical artist Morgan Paige. To illustrate its depths, I want to highlight my two favourite tracks. Black Lazarus and Undesirable.

The album's opener, Black Lazarus's instrumental opener is two intertwined rhythms of vocals and a drum beat. Together they evoke in my mind the image

of the body as an instrument, like a sole Hamboner using every limb and orifice to produce sound, alone, with no ensemble to support them.

The lyrics start seconds later, a guitar riff simmers below the lyrics as Backxwash begins a story of crumbling in a world where the idea that someone's response to "you okay?" is anything other than "yeah I'm good" is a threat and an obligation, a tiresome one.

With the next, powerful set of verses.

*My brother would have found me  
slumped out  
On a round couch in a dark house  
With my bloated body and my lungs  
drowned  
With my twisted fingers like I'm  
thugged out  
I'm beside the table where the drugs  
found  
But I'm in euphoria like I'm up now If  
he...pray for me  
But ain't nobody here saving me  
And the only death I fear is painlessly  
And I've made it out of clear agency If  
he...prayed for me  
The only way to live is dangerously  
Cause for every second chance*





*Angels wave their hands  
Devils make their dance I just feel like*

At the end of this section with its nihilistic refrain, powerful drums and throbbing synth crash through the temporary silence as the lyrics seem to stop mid sentence for a breath of air.

A section later, a sample of choral vocals from (what sounds like a) classic gospel record, plays back in fourth in canon with the drums. In the lyrics she lashes back out at the dark forces that drag her under

*They keep hyping me up in the  
wrongest ways  
Said "Tonight is the night" they  
were sort of waiting  
Screaming back at the shadows  
like go away  
Bitch I might lose the battle but  
not today  
And for every second chance I just  
wave my hands  
The devils make their dance  
Fucking hypocrite*

Then, she talks about how often, suffering here in the west, despite various proximities to social death experienced by the maligned and marginalized, can feel hypocritical when you can quickly watch deliberate and indiscriminate death waged against people elsewhere in the world. Citing Gaza, South Sudan and the DRC.

The final verse begins, a piano creeps into the instrumental.

*As they...pray for me,  
But ain't no anybody here saving me*

*And the only death I fear is painlessly  
And I've made it out of clear agency  
As they...pray for me  
The only way to live is dangerously  
Cause for every second chance,  
Devils wave their hands  
Angels make their dance,  
I just feel like it's fucked*

The word "fucked" echos and throbbing synths kick in, conjuring an almost angelic soundscape, before the looping chorus.

*Nobody pray for me  
(Nobody pray for me)  
Nobody's saving me  
(Nobody's saving me)*

The track then fades to oblivion.

Undesirable starts on an entirely different footing, the beat is cut from what sounds like a Hindustani folk record, Backxwash's instrumentals have always been off-kilter and always been refreshing. I'm drawn back into her back catalogue. Her 2018 albums like F.R.E.A.K.S and Black Sailor Moon feature a lot of guest producers and the instrumentals leaned towards a very leftfield set of trap staples combined with a strong video game soundtrack / chiptune influence, but my favourite track from those two projects is the track Aesthetic from Black Sailor Moon, as it's \*Just\* Britney Spear's Toxic and it goes hard as fuck.

You can see the clear development of Backxwash as a project into the 2019 record "Deviancy", which both names one of the lyrical themes but also shows her deviate into a sensual combination of hip hop, hardcore punk and industrial inspired

instrumentation styles. The groove of tracks like 'Burn Me At The Stake' and the pulsating synth of 'Bad Juju' set the pace for her later albums, the mood gets more sinister, the occult influences simmer to the surface and the stage is set for her trilogy.

The opener for the first album in the trilogy God Has Nothing To Do With This Leave Him Out Of It Black Sabbath's own eerie title track of their cult first record. The second record in the trilogy I Lie Here Buried With My Rings And My Dresses deepens and meditates on the stylings of the previous one, a highlight for me being the track 'BLOOD IN THE WATER' produced by Clipping.

The third record HIS HAPPINESS SHALL COME FIRST EVEN THOUGH WE ARE SUFFERING carries on this unrelenting, thundering style until the crescendo in MUKAZI which flips this all on its head with a nostalgic closer to the autobiographical trilogy.

So yeah, when I heard Undesirable I instantly smiled. The lyrics nod towards this obvious development and progression.

*Look, I appreciate how far I've come  
And don't you think I don't  
appreciate all these albums?  
My point of view is sort of pixelated,  
the vision's fading  
I'm more in tune? I think that shit's  
degrading  
Weak and dangerous  
But I'm just saying*

The lyrics hit hard, the bittersweet notion of turning that chemical weapon made of

broken dreams into art that's appreciated by many but still is the by-product of your own suffering.

*I should have kept my flame in the  
pyre  
I didn't mean to win this battle  
It's like Dave and Goliath  
But look at me  
Don't you see me with this pain  
that I ire?  
It's just—It's not important  
Maybe it's time you should cut  
your losses*

Stepping away from the album, I'm left feeling hopeful, which to be honest, might have sounded out of place on her previous records. The progressive nature of Only Dust Remains and its blending of what has been Backxwash's well established style of thundering, monstrous instrumentals on tracks like WAKE UP and this new embrace of the only previously hinted at melody which shines through on tracks like History of Violence and 9th Heaven has me in an entirely different place when digesting the hard hitting lyricism of this project.

If you're looking for an album this year that's not only going to challenge you and the constraints of labels like Industrial or Hip Hop but also challenge you to look into yourself, at your own trauma, in your own times of emotional purgatory then I couldn't recommend this album more.

**Mutt.**

*Only Dust Remains is available now  
on Bandcamp or via your preferred  
streaming service, the entire album is on  
their Youtube.*

# SPYCOPS

**Please note this piece contains mentions of abuse, rape and police violence.**

**It also contains mild content spoilers for Spycops.**

They reckon it's around twenty five, at least.

That's at least twenty five spycops that squirmed their way into relationships.

They raped and lied.  
They ruined peoples lives.  
Four of them have kids.

The state has granted most of them a protective mask of anonymity.

You don't hate cops enough.

We've just came out of Tranche 2 of the "The Undercover Policing Inquiry" with Tranche 3 starting in October looking at deployments of SDS through the 90's and early 00's and the British media having somewhat put the disgraceful Post Office Horizon scandal to bed, are now tuning in with the weight which they should, some 15 years after the story first broke. The "Spycops" Inquiry started in 2015 to investigate the the Metropolitan Police's Special Demonstration Squad (SDS) and

the National Public Order Intelligence Unit (NPOIU), two units which stand at the end of a long legacy of "Spycops" and who themselves were responsible for infiltrating over a thousand organisations, overwhelming those focused on progressive and egalitarian politics.

I have very little faith in such officiality, but where it bring public attention, we can atleast hope that for the victims there is some resolution, compensation and answers found where possible and dare I say perhaps the infrastructures change with some mild but meaningful reform, at the very least, the veneer of the police, out kindly protectors, gets to slip in public and we're all forced to confront the awful truth.

Following on from last years "We Did Not Consent" by The Guardian, tonight begins The Undercover Police Scandal: Love and Lies Exposed (ITV 1 at 21:00 tonight and then online), it seems that public awareness and pressure is mounting once more to confront the sheer horrific abuse of women at the hands of The Met, an organisation we know has a history of rampant casual misogyny and sexual violence, rape, and murder, seemingly both in and out of uniform.

Elsewhere the papers have been jumping on the story across the board from the

broadsheets to the red tops and while this is an important focal point for the media and if it is anything like Mr Bates vs The Post Office it will do immense legwork in bringing the sinister actions of our would be protectors to the consciousness of millions. It is all, unfortunately, somewhat on the surface, concerned with the specific injustices rather than the fundamental infrastructure which allows these actions historical and contemporary.

These stories are at the very tail end of decades upon decades of the most odious and villainous actions by the state and its jackbooted police forces. For most of us, diving any deeper into the truth behind the shadowy world has meant scrawling through old newspapers and political ephemera, near indigestible and forgotten for most people, only occasionally brought forward and palatable for a bit of mid-season spice in Peaky Blinders or some other show which weaves the narrative for screen but leaves everything feeling adrift in fantasy.

The reality isn't so fanciful, it's not Hollywood, there are no Brian O'Conner's here, just some 30 year old cunt manipulating 19 year olds to bed before becoming a conservative councillor. There are fresh faced cops, given an attaboy and pat on the back for years as they bullshit their way through reports and straight up ruin peoples lives leaving them with lingering trauma and pain.

These are your boys in blue, signed off by the brass, approved by the state, whoever was in power, both shades of blue, and mostly ignored and forgotten about by the very people whose consent they are supposed to require.

The legacy of the "spycops" is brutal, disgusting, and now neatly packaged in just a few dozen packages wonderfully and evocatively illustrated.

"Spycops: The Graphic Novel", self published and released last month by it's artist and author Glenn Hustler, it a 68 page exploration of this most horrific act of abuse, not only taking us through the history of the secret police unit set up in 1968 to infiltrate and disrupt movements which presented an existential threat to the hegemony of state and capital, you know, such horrific organisations as the Quakers, Family Justice Campaigns, and trade unions.

The book is split into five digestable sections to help guide you through this most horrific reality.

Part One is an introduction. Who are the "Spycops", What is it they are even meant to do? Who were their targets? How did they operate? Especially highlighted here is how they stole the identities of children, and how much of what we know today came to the light, not with beaurcracy and good conscience of the stat, but by the hard work of the women they took advantage off.

Parts Two and Three run us through the history. Firstly we're given a concise dive into the social history of the working class and the formation of "The London Corresponding Society" and early victim of the governments intelligence networks which would then take to more direct means to ensure their will was done, defiance met with brutal reprisals such as the Peterloo Massacre. Part Three carries on this exploration of history with a special focus on the Police themselves, from the "Bobbies" of the 1800's through to the



establishment of “Special Branch” to deal with “The Irish Threat” and eventually... other targets.

Part Four takes us into the “Birth of the Spy Cops”, taking us on from the movements historical such as women’s suffrage and spies within the Communist Party and The Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, into the the present day... and a graphic novel exposing us to what they hoped would never be known, the fifth section, The Tradecraft Manual, some twenty pages bringing to light the operational method and mentality of the Spycops as lifted from a document written by new recruits to the unit, an insidious, banal existences of deception, paranoia and paperwork.

Glenn has been writing and illustrating comics for a good few years now and has a minimal but frenetic style, the monochromatic pallet is a fantastic choice which only adds to the complex scenes depicted beautifully conveying their emotional weight and importance. There isn’t a panel gone to waste and I expect over the next few years we’ll see a vast number of them filter their way into the visual lexicon of the Anarchist scene in stickers and memes.

Despite taking on such a vast history, and covering so much, the pacing is absolutely spot on, changing from a quick sprint through years and then slowing down for a deeper exploration of numerous historical flashpoints and important notes. You’ll probably finish it in a single sitting, not due to it’s brevity, as it’s actually pretty dense, but due to it’s “one more page” flow which will keep you turning. For 68 pages, it’s packed, the author takes on so very much and conveys it all with a flourish both in the words and art alike. It is a master class that’s going to be right there with Breakling

Free and The Super-Happy Anarcho Fun Book as classic anarchist comics.

As well as watching the show on ITV tonight, please also consider picking up and following the work of Tom Fowler. Mentioned in the book, this Anarchist from South Wales has been documenting the Inquiry from the start providing an ongoing Podcast and reporting from the inquiry itself, step by step. Find him on social media (<https://x.com/tombfowler>) and better still support his work on Ko-Fi (<https://ko-fi.com/tombfowler>), much of his dilligent work documenting countless hours of frankly the most mind numbing procedural bullshit alongside moments of the ridiculous has come at his own expense and if you have the means I’m sure he’d welcome a bump in his supporters fund, especially with years more work ahead of him.

His work and that of groups such as Campaign Opposing Police Surveillance, Police Spies Out of Lives, Blacklist Support Group and the Undercover Research group amongst others has been absolutely vital and cannot be commended and supported enough.

To conclude, this is five star material. The subject matter and the stories within will leave you tamping. Whether you buy, borrow, or steal it, get a copy in your mits and then pass it on, everyone show read it and be confronted with what these bastards did and in all certainty carry on doing today.

*Spycops is available to buy here: <https://ko-fi.com/s/e8649c46b3> for £10 (+p&p)*



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stasia rice  
Freedom News  
March 2025

# JOHN COUZIN (1934-2025)

## REST IN POWER

### THE GLASGOW ANARCHIST POET AND PROPAGANDIST WAS A SEEKER OF PEACE

One of the leading lights of contemporary anarchism, John Couzin, died at home in Glasgow, Scotland in his partners arms aged almost 91.

Active in Glasgow, and deeply interested in social history, John was angry that the lack of preservation of anarchist history played to the power of the State and was easily exploited by other political parties, because it was also the denial of our existence.

John started to gather names and events, produced the online Strugglepedia wiki and researched Clydeside Anarchists in his book Radical Glasgow which led to the set up the Radical Glasgow History Project. Eventually he was the main driver behind the co-founded Spirit of Revolt Archives of Dissent and uploaded almost all of it online.

John ran a blog (including radical map and local events list) under the pseudonym AnnArky for 20 years reaching around 2 million hits. The blog lent itself to a free street paper format thus the birth of – the Anarchist Critic. He founded Voline Press under which he self published his 5 poetry books.

John played chess daily to a very high level and tried to start a club last year but ill health slowed him down as it did over the years from time to time.

John was known in the family as Jack but by his comrades as John. He was born in 1934 before WW2 in the notorious Garngad Glasgow slums, so bad the City Council demolished it and renamed the area. The family moved to Balornock.

Johns father William was a coal miner and mother Lizzie mostly a factory worker, he had two older sisters Sadie and Margaret and a younger sister Betty. It was a deeply loving and supportive family. He was a tall quiet boy, talented pianist and very keen on chess from age 11.

He was evacuated out of Glasgow with his sisters to a farm, treated there like a son and remembers the joy he witnessed from the old horse, kicking and frolicking as it was let out to the grazing field on its last day of toil.

He refused University which the Miners' Union would have paid for and instead took up an engineering study course followed by apprenticeship at the Fairfield's Shipyard.

He enjoyed his time, discovered Anarchist ideas and was vocal and active there, taking part in the Apprentices strike 1952. He was also exposed to asbestos later developing pleural plaques and saw his best friend Ian, die of mesothelioma. He witnessed the drowning of his young



friend Archie, a riveter who fell from ship scaffolding, an event which deeply disturbed him his whole life. He saw first hand government contracts and the waste of public money swishing around the Defence Industry by being employed to build ships that got decommissioned after their launch.

He was refused a contract there and moved to Vickers where he soon realised the different pay structure of piecework was responsible for the backstabbing race to finish first for bonuses at the expense of health and safety.

John left engineering and got a job selling round the doors in slum areas. He sold furniture, TVs and insurance, returning weekly to pick up the payments. He saw the worst things that haunted his mind, cold hungry unwashed children, families burning

floorboards to heat and cook, babies sleeping on bundles of coats for a bed.

He eventually left it and moved into shop retail as by now he had met Ann and they had two children, Brian and Corinne to support. He succeeded at retail working his way up to manager, breaking records for profits because by default he gained bonuses he needed to keep the family. They moved to Pollokshaws and he grew roses, the kids settled at school and made friends. He bought a boat which the whole family enjoyed.

By the time he was in his 50's they had left home and he joined Amnesty International which John regarded as a useful way to raise awareness and denounce injustices at the hands of the powerful everywhere. He was the Urgent Action Coordinator for Scotland, reading daily bulletins of torture victims



and trying to promote these in the Scottish Press to establish support campaigns. After three years he found it too painful to read another one and he moved on to SACRO, volunteering to drive prisoner's families for visits across Scotland.

He retired from sales aged 59 and increased his time in the gym as well as his long distance road cycling regular 90 miles, with overnight stay and returning home the next day. In his 70's he had established the AnnArky blog, he had completed the book Radical Glasgow selling it at book fairs, and he had started to produce the Anarchist Critic street paper which ran for 20 years from 2002-22. It was an anti-capitalist paper exposing the flaws and contradictions of Capitalists; multinational corporations, empires, clubs, States and Borders, IMF, European Central Bank, World Bank and Davos Economic Forum. The Anarchist Critic was anti-war, anti-

authoritarian, anti-imperialist protest literature but not pacifist, as John believed self-defence is an immutable right. He was a very well known face in Glasgow giving out his paper.

His Depleted Uranium feature was published in Freedom.

His family was now expanded by Stathis his new son-in-law and Stavros and Stefania two lovely grandchildren. In 2005 he met Stasia a fellow activist and soulmate, and they very happily fell in together as a deeply loving couple for 20 years. In 2011 he co-founded with others the Spirit of Revolt Archives of dissent, both online and publicly accessible at the Mitchell Library.

John also tried to establish the return of May Day to Glasgow Green, the gathering place, execution site and historical location



for voicing political agitation in Glasgow for hundreds of years. Over recent years the city council under-invested in the People's Palace museum running it into closure and the March organisers have diluted May Day's impact, rerouted it, dissociating it from the Glasgow Green site thereby actively diminishing the importance of the event, deeply significant to Anarchists.

In January John's son Brian died very suddenly which shook the whole family and broke his heart.

John was an avid reader and poet throughout his life and produced 5 books of powerful poems now being translated into French.

We are all grieving for John now, he may have left us but his work for Anarchism in Scotland raises our profile, legitimises

our existence and paves the way for future generations to build upon as he had wished. His big hearted love for everyone has left a deep impression upon us all and the memory of John Couzin's own spirit of revolt will forever remain a source of inspiration in our lives.

**stasia rice**

*Originally posted to Freedom News here: [freedomnews.org.uk/2025/03/20/john-couzin-1934-2025/](https://freedomnews.org.uk/2025/03/20/john-couzin-1934-2025/)*

The Organise crew never had the pleasure to meet John but many of our comrades knew him and spoke highly of him. A poet, fellow anarchist and fighter for peace, a loss to us all. Rest In Power John!











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