



ISSUE
1

RADICAL IDEAS AND ACTION IN THE SOUTH-WEST



awaken from
the dream



-And rebellion is a cold hand turned inward,
Rebellion is a dream of commodification,
Of success, of transition, because ours is the desperate generation,
Rebellion is the recovery of the rich resources of a ruined world,
Rebellion is the recuperation of capitalist marketisation
with a radical phrase to twist it
Rebellion is work, rebellion is a duty,
Rebellion is a failure, the internal invalidity of its own name.

Rebellion is turning away from the given towards the unknown
Rebellion is mixing orthodoxies to create a new love potion,
Rebellion is the lonely desolation of diversity,
The lost wanderings of the Deleuzian mystic guerrilla,
The absence of a language to talk in,
Rebellion has no position to stand on and call home
Rebellion is the siren song of the inconsolably weird

And rebellion is turning away from everything,
Rebellion is the cold hand - your own hand - around the throat
Rebellion is not getting up in the morning, or the evening,
Rebellion is dropping out and forgetting,
Rebellion is telling your mother you're fine,
Rebellion is dreaming of the end,
Rebellion is rebelling against rebellion itself, rebel for death!
Rebellion is deeper than any new existence,
Rebellion rejects the oppression inherent
in the demands of any political stance

But rebellion is also the half-held breath as the hand reaches out
To break a law or touch another's skin
Rebellion is breaking the invisible barriers we're encaged within

And there is a world outside this word I have chosen
Of home, and trust, and the glorious forgiven
Rebellion is not, let it never be, everything

And there is an emptiness to this word I have chosen
A disregard, a directionlessness,
a too-easily appropriated aspect to this subject-position
But rebellion is a building block in the foundations of my escapism -



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EDITORIAL:

The text included here was written by one person. The central three articles were written by me this summer, while travelling. The poem *rebellion* and the short story *she stopped, abrupt* were composed in late autumn '22 for a university unit.

The art has a more complex origin. The drawing of Redvers Buller under attack on page 6 was made by Pete Loveday in 2019, as a commission for the Devon Anarchist Party, of which I was a part. That group ended in unhappy circumstances, and Pete passed away this April. I include it here as a small piece of south-west radicalism from the past.

The art on this page, the back cover, and page 8 is by Doodedubz (as is the photo of stickers on page 18), and that on pages 14 through 17 is by Conifer. It is included with permission (and my gratitude). The drawing on page 4 is from the pamphlet *how to revolt intelligently*, as cited in *Walls of Freedom* (2013: 27). All other photos were taken by me.

As I write, the genocide in Gaza has been ongoing for just under 10 months. Mainstream politics is sickening across Europe and North Amerika, and the climate crisis worsens daily. The situation is urgent, but clarity remains valuable even under these circumstances.

I believe contemporary anarchism must accord - at the very least - intersectional feminist and decolonial ideas equal significance to its own. For that reason, the term 'radical' is used in place of something more exclusive.

I don't expect to make much money off this, but anything that doesn't go to costs will be donated, either to the Bristol Palestine Student Encampment fundraiser, or to Bristol Defendant Solidarity (BDS).

If you're interested in seeing another issue and would like to contribute, please email content or ideas, along with any conditions to: anarchistlearningexe@proton.me.

Solidarity!

- DG

SOURCES:

Front cover:

Die-in protest: photo by Totnes Friends of Palestine. Used with permission. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C9QcgB3OmDR/>.

Screenshots of the Guardian, theintercept, Al Jazeera, +972, middle east eye, democracy now, Declassified UK and opendemocracy taken by the author, 17th-18th July, 2024.

Protester, page 8:

Hardy, B. (2013) *Walls of Freedom: Street Art of the Egyptian Revolution* Berlin: From Here to Fame Publishing.

Inside front cover:

Portrait: photo by woodysmedia, source: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/tattooed-man-smoking-cigarette-near-a-window-4394807/>

Pool: <https://www.saharapoolbuilder.com/12-factors-to-consider-when-considering-how-deep-to-build-your-pool/>

Inside back cover:

Portrait: photo by Arsham Haghani, source: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/close-up-photo-of-a-beautiful-woman-with-red-lipstick-4298629/>

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ANARCHISM: A BIASED INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This isn't an attempt to write an academic piece. Certain terms are undefined, and some nuances go unexplored. In some places it's deliberately simplistic. The idea is to outline a contemporary formulation of those perspectives that inspire me. I've spent some time writing about anarchism and power in an academic context. This piece draws heavily from ideas outlined in David Graeber and David Wengrows' *The Dawn of Everything* to sidestep some of the problems of those discussions.

I use examples a lot. These aren't meant to be exhaustive, and lots of other things could be said in their place. My choices aren't so much about excluding other possibilities, as investing political theory with those lived realities which move me most.

Anarchism is a political ideology. I mean politics in its expansive sense; that is, a set of ideas about how people can, and should, organise their lives. That it is a theory of what people *can* do, implies it is an economic system; that it relates what is socially possible to the physical world. That it is a theory of what people *should* do, implies it is also a philosophy of ethics, that is, it contains judgements on what is good or bad.

People have defined anarchism in a variety of ways. The root of the word is the rejection of government: 'an' + 'archy' = no rulers. Definitions, then, revolve around who, or what, is considered a ruler, and who in turn is considered to be a political subject, and therefore capable of rejecting domination.

The breadth of possible rulers and subjects in European anarchism has expanded through its history, as radical thinkers and activists challenged established forms of discrimination. Most contemporary anarchists consider the domination of men over women through domestic violence or control of shared finances, the industrial murder and exploitation of animals in factory farming, and the persecution, abandonment, and deportation of people without citizenship, to be just as wrong and unnecessary as the economic power of rich over poor.

As the possible manifestations of anarchism have shifted, the underlying meaning of the term has changed. Anarchism no longer means the abolition of kings, priests, and landlords. Instead, for some anarchists - perhaps unintentionally - it has come to mean an opposition to any and all hierarchy, and even power itself.

In the process, something has been lost. Power, conceived broadly, is what makes life worth living. It's what lets us get up in the morning, or make someone laugh, or eat a decent meal. We have to be able to separate small, sometimes beneficial inequalities, from the forms of domination which are robbing and destroying us and our world.

Domination

These forms of domination can be described in general terms as control over violence, information, and charisma.

- i) The role of violence is manifested in the global arms trade, as well as in the ongoing killing and torture perpetrated by police, armies, and individual - bigoted, or sociopathic - men. It is present in the mechanised destruction of animal life and the despoliation of the natural world.
- ii) Control through information operates via the manipulation of the housing and stock markets by the rich, the bureaucracy attending necessary resources, such as healthcare, refuge, or citizenship, and the mystification of the system through conventional experts and media, official secrets, and gagging orders.
- iii) Domination through charisma can be seen in the construction of political and business celebrities and brands, through expensive public relations management, advertising, and cosmetic manipulation. In our personal lives, it operates when individuals invest themselves with grandiose capabilities and importance, thereby excusing their disregard for shared ethical standards.

Anarchists seek to abolish these three forms of domination.

i) They struggle against violent domination by contesting it. They fight to end colonial occupations such as that of Palestine, redistribute resources to poor communities, and deconstruct gendered expectations of male dominance, female passivity, and compulsory heterosexuality. They oppose cycles of neglect, criminalisation, and violence, and de-escalate

and disarm social conflicts. They directly oppose the international trade in arms and sabotage the activities of companies that profit from killing.

ii) They undermine control through information by sharing it; from media and books passed around digitally or in person, to do-it-yourself →



healthcare solutions produced by professionals and distributed illegally, to peer-support groups for accessing services, understanding the law, and caring for each other. By writing and speaking in plain language, they spread an understanding of society that emphasises all our power to change it.

iii) They oppose domination through charisma by rejecting and disregarding celebrity. By damaging advertising and poster-boards, by heckling politicians and narcissists, and by listening to the accounts of those abused by powerful, seemingly attractive people. They also oppose the power of charisma by being creative, engaging in discussion, and supporting those around them who are struggling to be part of their communities.

Freedom

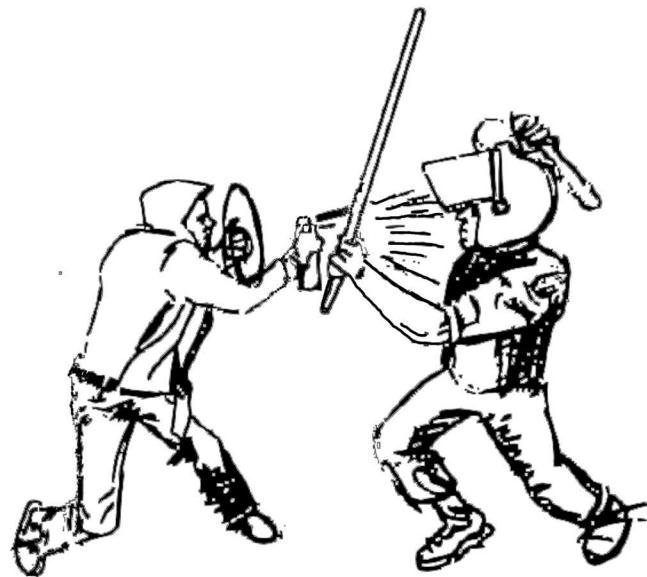
Anarchism is not only a rejection of these forms of domination, but a form of collective governance by mutual consent. The capacity for this consent is composed of three freedoms.

- i) The freedom to leave or move away.
- ii) The freedom to disobey demands or orders.
- iii) The freedom to change the way we live.

Most of us do not have these freedoms.
Anarchists seek to establish them in their own circles.

- i) by organising groups on a voluntary basis, by offering - as much as possible - unconditional support, and by challenging sectarian, isolating, or abusive behaviours.
- ii) by rejecting any form of coercive authority, by organising spaces for constructive criticism and debate, and by challenging unreasonable expectations.
- iii) by engaging in collective democratic decision-making, by questioning, discussing, and experimenting with these processes, and by encouraging sharing and rotation of key roles.

A social group cannot be isolated from its environment. Anarchists seek to establish these three freedoms more broadly through a variety of actions.



- i) By challenging border controls, abusive family dynamics, and the growth of urban environments and industrial pollution, anarchists seek to nurture peoples' freedom from, and freedom to leave, toxic situations.
- ii) By spreading alternative perspectives and resisting censorship, as well as by supporting those who reject military conscription or powerful expectations to conform, anarchists seek to promote the capacity to refuse unjust demands.
- iii) Through union organising and public campaigns, and by opposing all authoritarianism and far-right ideology, anarchists try to extend everyone's power to change the way we live.

Anarchists do not wish to impose their ways of life on others. There are many people all over the world who do not cause the harms that anarchists oppose.

Western anarchists tend to envision futures organised along certain lines. These include:

- i) The organisation of economic and social affairs by neighbourhood committees, who would delegate members to organise at larger scales only where necessary.
- ii) The minimisation of environmental damage by reducing the production of disposable products, localising work and trade, and reusing and repairing wherever possible.

iii) The development of communities with the resources and will to care for their members and wider society, through mutual trust, respect, and the capacity for boundaries.

Is it possible?

People who are born into wealth and status live without these forms of domination, and with these freedoms, already. Many poor people who live outside of cities and war-zones also have some elements of them most of the time. Many large societies have lived in this way, for relatively short periods during the 20th century, and for much longer times prior to the colonial era.

Whether we can transform our societies as a whole towards this way of living today is something we will have to find out through practice. Ideas contribute plans and possibilities, and those with experience of more free ways of life can predict pitfalls and pass on skills. But our time is - like any - unique, and so our problems have to be figured out as we go.

Why it matters

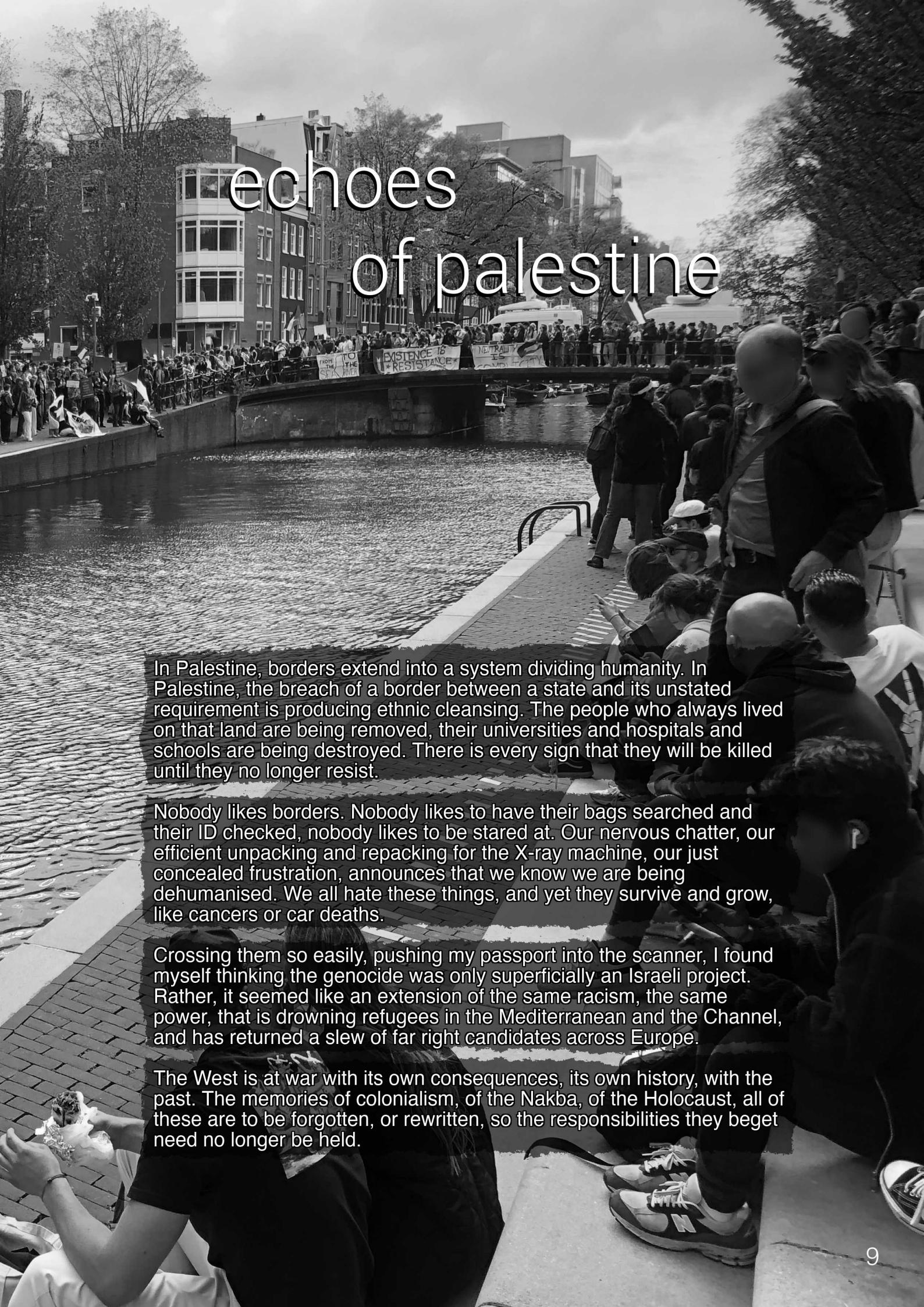
As should be clear, anarchism includes significant elements of other ideologies. Socialism, feminism, anti-colonialism, radical green perspectives, and queer liberation have all inspired contemporary anarchist thought. So is it really important to hold a space for anarchism itself?

Anarchism is important because it is about all of us, and about how we relate to each other and the world as a whole. This makes it less incisive in some ways than more precise strains of thought. But it also means it offers something unique to all of us; a broad foundation for living together.

This is a valuable contribution, and one - I think - we should nurture.



echoes of palestine



In Palestine, borders extend into a system dividing humanity. In Palestine, the breach of a border between a state and its unstated requirement is producing ethnic cleansing. The people who always lived on that land are being removed, their universities and hospitals and schools are being destroyed. There is every sign that they will be killed until they no longer resist.

Nobody likes borders. Nobody likes to have their bags searched and their ID checked, nobody likes to be stared at. Our nervous chatter, our efficient unpacking and repacking for the X-ray machine, our just concealed frustration, announces that we know we are being dehumanised. We all hate these things, and yet they survive and grow, like cancers or car deaths.

Crossing them so easily, pushing my passport into the scanner, I found myself thinking the genocide was only superficially an Israeli project. Rather, it seemed like an extension of the same racism, the same power, that is drowning refugees in the Mediterranean and the Channel, and has returned a slew of far right candidates across Europe.

The West is at war with its own consequences, its own history, with the past. The memories of colonialism, of the Nakba, of the Holocaust, all of these are to be forgotten, or rewritten, so the responsibilities they beget need no longer be held.

On my second night in Amsterdam, me and a friend headed to an Arabesque event at the Paradiso. Imagine a cross between a club night, with all its sweaty promiscuity, and a pro-Palestine protest, with its pride, exoticism, and emotion. Something like this is what I experienced. Rhythms and lyrics that I didn't quite understand, an intensity of feeling that could not be separated from the context of ongoing genocide, and the whole thing bathed in thick, dry-ice smoke and red and blue spotlights. The lyric *fellastini* echoes romantically in the air, the song repeated, chanted by the crowd. Digital screens display the Palestinian flag overlaid on its historical territory above and around the stage. I just danced.

On Monday morning we began to hear about plans for a protest camp at the University of Amsterdam, but I was still trying to have the tourist experience, so it's not until the next morning that I hear the bad news. The encampment was attacked in the evening by Zionist counter-protestors throwing smoke flares. The media calls it 'violence' and after they leave, the university calls in the police to evict them. Riot cops and bulldozers clear them away around four-thirty in the morning.

At four that afternoon, a demonstration gathers outside the university, angrily denouncing the administration and the police. Transforming into a march, and growing significantly, it moves through the centre of Amsterdam, engaging the support of passerby. Arriving at another part of the campus, members of the crowd call out for building materials and their voices are amplified by those around them. A barricade is rapidly constructed around a new encampment. A protester chants 'we will not desert them, by being here we make them safer.' A beautiful sentiment.

Amsterdam

Early the next afternoon my friend's flatmate forwards my friend a picture; about fourty police in riot gear backed by a bulldozer. We have been sitting around the house, doing washing, pecking at food, playing music, and talking about politics. When she says she is heading into town to support the occupiers any way she can, it's a no-brainer that we should join.

We arrive to find small groups of bedraggled leftists chanting at the edge of the police lines. After waiting there, and wandering around for a while, we receive a message telling us where to go. The police have arrested the occupiers, but have in turn been surrounded by protesters, who've emptied the cop vans' tyres. Arriving, we find a larger, more boisterous crowd chanting 'these are heroes, let them go.'

For a time, the atmosphere is like a street party. Food and water is passed around, chants make fun of the police and shout anger at Israel, and occasional rumours the cops are releasing occupiers provoke ecstatic reactions. Then the mood hardens. Someone at the front shouts back to link arms. We try to push the police back, and the police hit out with batons, then open up to let masked cops through with dogs. Three people deep into the crowd, I see the front line turn and start to run. We make it a hundred metres or so, before someone shouts 'stop, they are not pushing anymore.' The fencing of a nearby building site is repurposed for building barricades and a deceptive feeling of security settles in.

We wait. At one point, someone shouts 'the riot police are coming! Link arms, stay strong, and fuck the police!' We drop back. There is a half hearted attempt to set up new barricades behind the demonstration to prevent the inevitable encirclement. It doesn't work. When they start to move, we run into the nearest alleyway. I can hear the dogs bark as they charge with the riot cops towards the crowd. From out of nowhere I find myself shouting 'fucking pigs' at the top of my voice.



Berlin

The morning I leave Amsterdam, we watch the news. The bombardment of Rafah has begun, and people are once again moving. Politicians are, once again, lying. Parents are mourning lost children. Water desalination plants cannot meet the needs of the population. In between, a white woman advertises the glorious ruins of past Turkish civilisations.

Later, in Berlin, I cross into the Tiergarten past John Foster Dulles allee and walk through the huge, quiet park. The six lane road through its centre is empty except for bicycles, and a single unloaded lorry. The population of Berlin has never recovered to its pre-WW2 level, despite its immense geographical size. The resulting quiet in the midst of majesty gives me the sense of an open air memorial.

On public transport, people look directly at one another in a manner that is not quite romantic, not quite disinterested. I find myself wondering if the sparsity of others, so rare in an urban place, creates in Berliners a drive for intimacy, for connection. Or if - as Sara Ahmed might have it - the failure of the nation constitutes in its people a desire to reproduce, expand, cover over the history.



My host says he's been avoiding the Palestine demos because he doesn't like the way they've divided the scene. There is a niche leftism here which glories in the defeat of Germany and sympathises with Zionism, believing it protects the Jewish people. These *anti-deutsch* rigorously critique anti-semitism in pro-Palestinian narratives, uncomfortably demanding purity in resistance. At the same time, support for Palestine is widespread, and many express anger with those who hold the movement back.

On the first night, we are sitting on the pavement, drinking with a friend of my host, and they exclaim 'I just feel like I'm living in fascist Germany again,' over the intense repression of Palestinian activism. He replies 'Hamas is fascist too.' Later, he clarifies to me that he doesn't disagree with her, or with our broader condemnation of Israel.

Coming from England, with an unbroken governmental continuity since, approximately, 1649, what is most shocking about much of Berlin's history is how recent it is. On the way out of town, I glimpse a government building celebrating *seventy-five years* of democracy; and this isn't even on the Eastern side.

I like it. It is beautiful, wild, and intense. The birds call in the trees and parks, the roads are wide and straight like they lead directly into the heart of Europe, and the demonstrations and squats seem unbroken, even if the attrition is increasing. But at the same time the traumas to which this city has been exposed can't help but leave a mark. I don't feel the hope here I've felt elsewhere, but rather, a political exhaustion, a sense that everything has been tried.

Here the emperor has no clothes, but imaginations struggle to consider a world entirely without emperors. Maybe I'm missing the point. Maybe I'm just tired. Or maybe the traumas cannot be imagined or wished or kissed away from Berlin.

Malmö and Lund

After three days of exploring, I'm not sure that Sweden exists. I was trying to leave Malmö on Tuesday, cycling north towards a small beach town called Lomma, and I felt like I was pushing towards an area the game developers didn't want me to see. A constant headwind slowed my movement to a crawl. The landscape, for a long time, was built only for cars. Industrial buildings on either side were quiet. The bike chain came off and I had to pull over by a five-lane road and fix it. On the other side, a public worker quietly painted over graffiti.

Experience feels curated here. There are exceptions, and these are Malmö's best parts, areas of the centre and the edges where people are just living their lives. But most of the time, the wide streets and beautiful parks, the peaceful rivers and the artistic public architecture seem to be designed to a purpose. A certain feeling is intended from this view, that pontoon, that canal running parallel to the road. The trickle of passersby vibe like regulars at the gallery, adjusted to and subtly shaped by the artwork around them.

People don't really look at you, and if they do, and you look back, they look away. I've taken to doing stupid things just to get attention. I jumped a four-foot fence yesterday and was stared at like I was wearing a Hannibal Lecter mask. I carried one of the little rental bikes up an escalator that was being used in both directions and the travellers on the other side pulled their bags to them and tutted, staring pointedly forward.

In Lund - which is also a very pretty place - the only people who talk to me are someone asking for money, a guy at the Palestine encampment, and a cop. It's a strange feeling, to be glad someone is begging from you in another language, just because they are smiling and making eye contact.

I waited around to join a small pro-Palestine demonstration, which seemed to go well. For twenty minutes or so it blocked a road in the centre of town, as busses lined up behind it. The energy is decent, and I'm glad I'm there, but I feel kind of like an intruder. After the cop speaks to me, I frustrate myself by telling him I'm not from here, for no reason except that he is asking me directly if I know what's going on. I get a rush of paranoia that I'll be pegged as an outside agitator or something and ditch out back to the train station.

They have posters in Lund on the electricity boxes, showing the street as it looked a hundred years ago. Except for the carts being horse-drawn, it's the same. Malmö is generally more recently built, but this is not somewhere that was bombed, not somewhere that had revolutions, and - apart from a few small islands - not somewhere that had a colonial empire.



Peace is unquestioned, so when the demonstrators chant 'no justice, no peace', no answering attack on the state comes in response. Just 'no justice, no peace' again; a negotiating position, rather than a battle cry.

On the notice board for the botanical gardens, a strange phrase catches my eye: 'half of the kingdom is yours'. A deal has been made, and it would be wrong to question it.

On Malmö beach, the white sand blows up a thin dust as the sun goes down. Couples sit holding each other, watching the wind ripple across the tideless sea. As I leave, I notice a single cigarette butt, stubbed out at the top of the dunes, waiting to be cleaned away.

Lyon

We made it to a demonstration on my third day in Lyon. We metro over and pop up next to it, get in and join the chants, and I'm looking around, taking everything in, understanding more than I did elsewhere. There are no cops in sight, and a decent few hundred of us. Some of the chants are in English, some in French, and I watch the faces, noting which unite all of us, and which some stay silent for.

A placard over to my right reads 'I.D.F.: Inhuman Demonic Forces', which makes me uncomfortable, but the emotion fills my chest, too, and we chant until we're out of breath that we support Palestinian resistance, that Israel is killing children, that Macron is complicit. Someone is crying near me.

After about half an hour, we begin to walk, out of the square where we are stood and into the street, near the bank of the river.

On the last night, we were out drinking with friends and three of us headed home together. On our way back, we are stopped by a man as we stand near the posters for the European parliamentary elections.

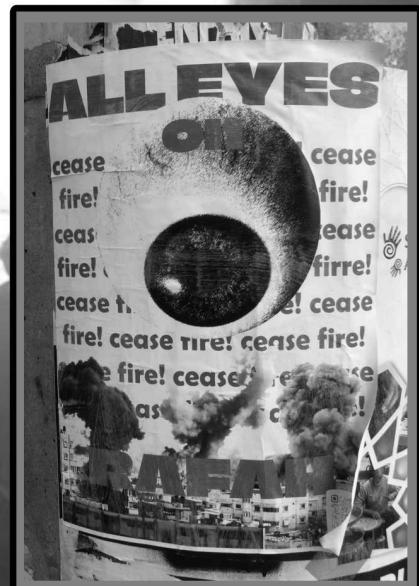
I can't follow, but afterwards, they tell me he was without papers, talking about the babies without food in Gaza, the destruction and the pain. Interspersed with it all, he blamed the Jews. He started to cry at one point, and I reached out and touched his shoulder. Some things are easier without words.

We fill the road, still chanting - *Israel, assassin, we are children of Palestine* - and the people in the demonstration are of all different kinds: parents with toddlers, students in keffiyehs, young Arab men, someone in a wheelchair.

A young woman in a mask spray paints each bus stop *free Palestine*, and someone with a megaphone follows nearby, keeping an eye out. We cross down into a tunnel under the road, and the darkness and the echoes multiply our size by a hundred.

When we reach the slip road onto the highway, they meet us with tear gas. The front lines, overshot by the canisters, turn and run towards us as the smoke billows back. We climb through a railing and take a right, now in narrower streets, between apartment buildings on either side, our chants echoing up and off the windows.

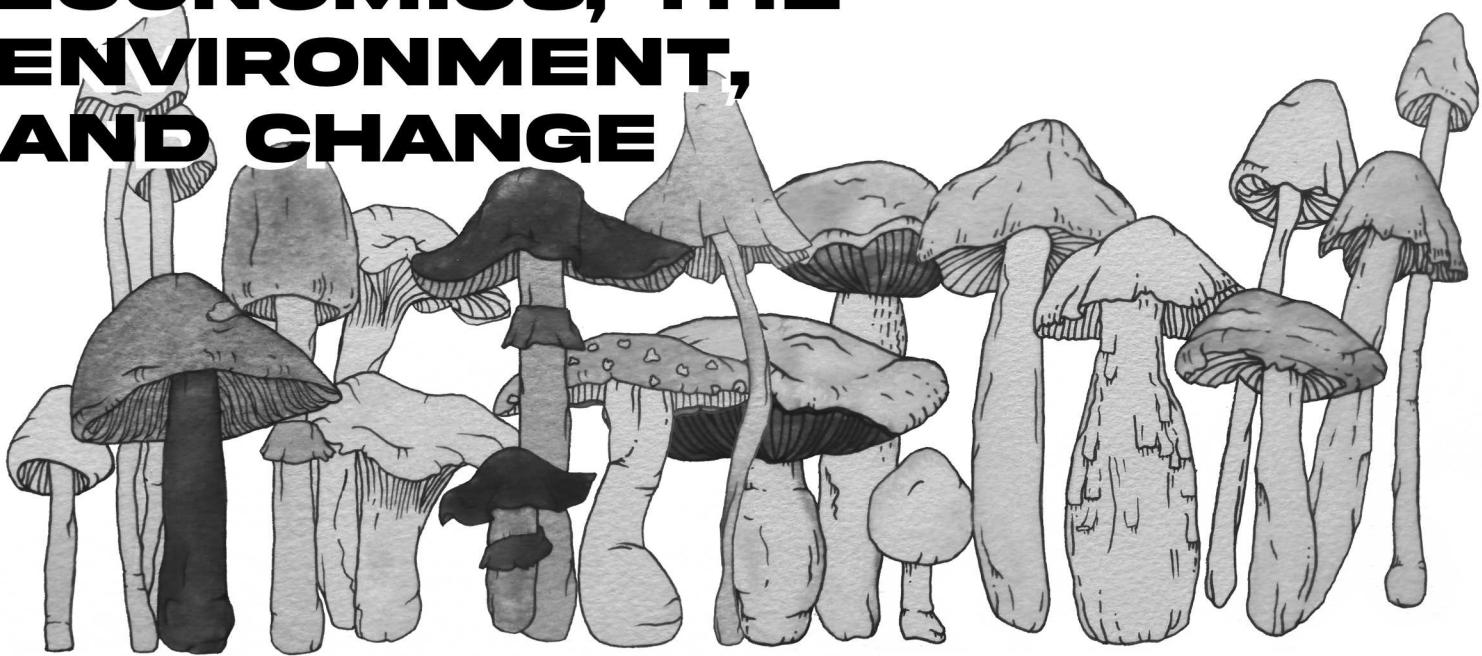
Tear gas floats down each of our alternative routes, closing them off, like a ghostly fog. We march further, and I notice there are still parents with children in the crowd. We reach a square, and in the far entrance, I see a few riot cops - no more than five or six - in front of their vehicles, watching.



He's holding onto our friend's shoulder in the way that certain men do to women when they're a little out of control. She seems to be okay, and after a while, we extricate ourselves and say goodbye. 'I wonder what he would think if he knew my last name was Friedman*', she comments, as we board the metro home.

Tear gas canisters arc up above us and into the middle of the crowd, which scatters. My friend and I end up in the middle of the square, briefly separated by the smoke before I grab his arm. 'Don't run,' he says, as we walk to the metro entrance. 'We could go now? That's the protest over, I think.'

ECONOMICS, THE ENVIRONMENT, AND CHANGE



The "modern name for necessity is, as everyone knows, 'economics'" writes Alain Badiou (2001: 30), and global warming haunts the economics of our time. As Oreskes and Conway put it, climate change "stems from how we produce and use energy... in all economic activity" (2011: 254). Adaptation, then, demands a vast restructuring of the global economy. As anarchists, we must envision an alternative which could:

- i) Be capable of supporting the global population in transitioning to equal *standards* of living while maintaining diverse *forms* of everyday existence.
- ii) Operate within the ecological limits on human activity, while protecting and re-establishing wild and complex non-human life.
- iii) Avoid offensive violence or authoritarianism, while provoking change of the necessary urgency and scale.

This is a major task, and one several other authors have engaged with. This article is too short - and my expertise is too limited - to elaborate such an economy in detail. Instead, I will limit myself to outlining some of the problems we must face, and questions we must answer, to approach it.

Theory

Anarchists have long been uncomfortable with visions of revolution. They have argued that:

- i) They constrain and oversimplify the situations of future actors.

- ii) Their grandiosity is inappropriate to a niche, primarily Western political subculture.
- iii) The language of science, planning, and prediction disempowers its subject.

These critiques, while reasonable in limited forms, rest at their extremes on a refusal to theorise social and individual value. If accepted fully, they deny us the capacity to shape our world in accordance with our principles.

However, while most natural scientific theories - such as climate models - reflect a scientific consensus and can make accurate predictions within reasonable boundaries of error, contemporary theories of human social behaviour do not meet these standards.

In practice, anarchists commonly engage in limited predictions and theories of change. For example, we contend that fascism *is always bad*, or that a protest or direct action *will* impact police, politicians, or observers in a useful way.

At present, Western anarchists tend to strategise pragmatically by comparing their own and others' experiences. These develop into rules-of-thumb, shared approaches, and agreed principles.

The necessity for an anarchist model of economic and environmental relations rests on two claims:

i) Environmental and economic systems are both non-localised and non-linear. That is, actions here effect places far away and identical actions may not always have the same effect. *This means our actions within them need to be theorised.*

ii) Existing social behaviours (things we're already doing) and systems of coercive control (which might force us to behave differently) will accelerate, rather than prevent, catastrophe. *This means the status quo will not resolve our problems for us.*

Methods

A common thread in the radical movements of this century has been *coming together*. By this, I mean not only the act of gathering in a space, but the spontaneous, democratic organisation that comes with it. This has taken both internal and external forms, and of course also shapes that are neither, or both.

i) *Internal* coming-togethers might include the movements of the squares, student encampments, occupations, and autonomous zones. These are processes of community self-organisation. They force us to examine the contradictions within and between our ways of being.

In *Ideas to Postpone the End of the World*, Ailton Krenak says:

"If there is such a hunger to consume nature, there is a similar hankering to gobble up subjectivities - our subjectivities. So let's live them with all the freedom we can generate; let's not put them on a supermarket shelf." (2020: 20)

ii) *External* coming-togethers might include mobilisations for police abolition, against tuition fees, or against colonial and capitalist power around the world. These are attacks on the systems that control and destroy us. They do not have to be sustainable forever. They only have to overcome what they oppose.

In *Stage of Recovery*, Georgia Sagri writes:

"I think democracy should not be conflated with voting and making collective decisions. In the current context, a disruptive march or a building takeover could be more 'democratic' - increasing the power or potential power of the people - than reaching consensus" (2021: 73).

Some of the questions I want to ask, then are:

i) **Is it possible to pragmatically imagine an anarchist environmental-economy as a coming-together of certain people, places, and groups?**

ii) **Which cooperatives, which unions, which indigenous peoples, which farms, which communities, which scientists, which activists, are already answering the question of how to live?**

iii) **How can these practitioners and their ideas, and the discussions that emerge from between them, be aided in transforming the way human beings relate to their world?**

Another set of questions relate to external actions:

i) **Which infrastructures present the greatest threat to our ongoing existence, and what are the deadlines for action against them?**

ii) **Which politicians, which media organisations, which businesspeople are most significant in maintaining our current patterns of behaviour?**

iii) **How can we undermine the power of these actors and structures, as well as their ideas?**



Change

We begin by rejecting the ideas of taking leadership through violence, or of using violence on those who do not have power over us.

But we still have to face the problem of how to change human behaviour. Today, we have to answer it more urgently than ever.

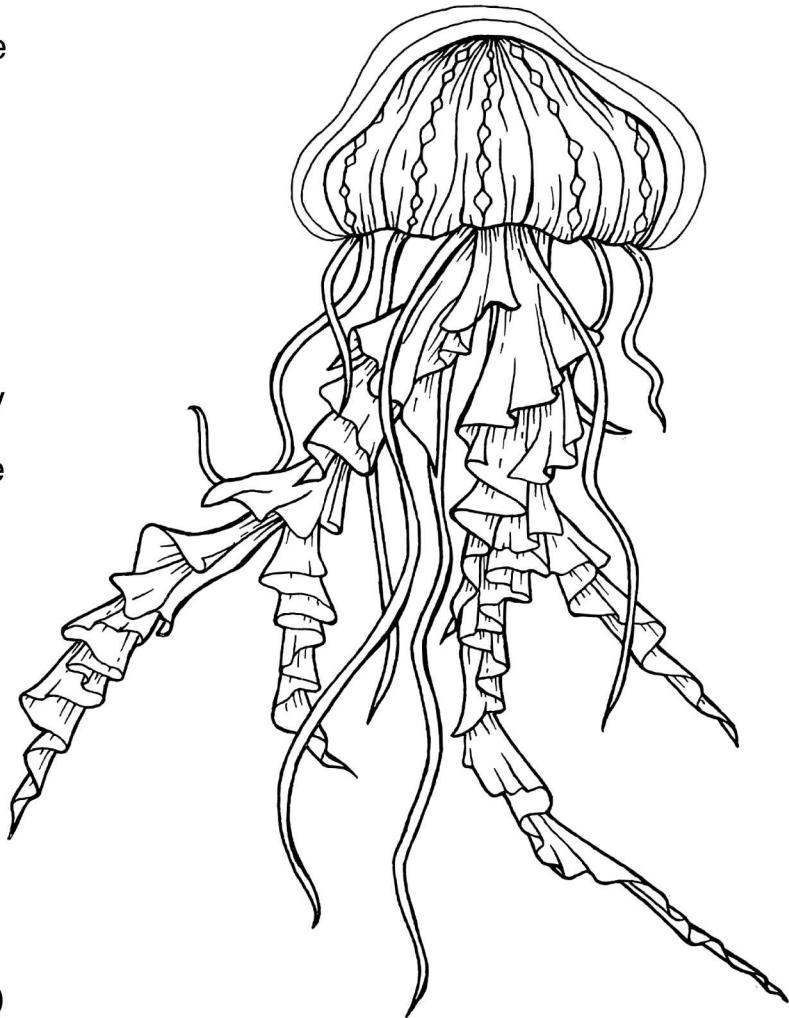
As Andreas Malm writes in *How to Blow Up a Pipeline*:

“...global heating will only become progressively worse until the moment greenhouse gas emissions cease and drawdown of CO₂ from the atmosphere commences” (2021: 3, italics removed).

The earlier ideas of internal and external coming-together are similar to the strategies of prefiguration and insurrection.

i) *Prefiguration* seeks to achieve change in the world by creating a lived example of what it might be like. By showing it can work, we hope to encourage others to emulate it.

ii) *Insurrection* directly attacks those people and structures that harm ourselves and others. Rather than trying to organise people, it (mostly) relies on spontaneous mobilisation.



Marxist Theories of Change

Over the last two hundred years, Marxists have tried to construct a theory of human behaviour and how to change it. Three forms of power emerged as centres of Marxist ideas and practice:

i) *Economic relations*. For Marx, economic forces were the foundation of society. Through the price system, individuals' behaviour was restricted, formed, and communicated to others, creating class identity and the potential for unified action.

ii) *Violent force*. For Lenin, the capacity for violence was key to revolution. Instead of organising the working class to lead society, Leninists sought to take that place and use it to promote the workers' development.

iii) *Cultural hegemony*. For Gramsci, narratives, ritual, and traditions were fundamental to authority. Keeping traditional manners and roles would ensure the failure of the revolution; breaking them was key to its success. Mao later acted on similar ideas with tragic consequences.

These forces did not operate as expected. Economic relations failed to generate unmanageable crises for property owners, or to unify the global working class. When Marxists seized state power, excessive violence undermined the legitimacy of their ideas. Alternative manners failed to radicalise populations in the West, and produced injustice and genocide in China and Cambodia.

In *The problem with infoshops and insurrection*, Joel Olson - who sadly died in unexplained circumstances - writes:

"Divorced from a social movement, the strategy of building autonomous zones or engaging in direct action... assumes that radicals can start the revolution. But revolutionaries don't make revolutions. Millions of ordinary and oppressed people do." (2009: 41).

The problem with prefiguration is that it talks at society, rather than with it. If we are already creating the world we want, why should we listen to those outside?

By contrast, insurrection doesn't talk to society at all. It acts against the enemy and hopes others sympathise.

The final questions I want to ask, then, are:

- i) As a movement, how *should* we communicate with other people?**
- ii) In what ways can we learn from those who are disadvantaged in our society?**
- iii) Which groups are already acting in ways we sympathise with and can support?**

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She stopped, abrupt, before the writing on the wall. A thousand tiny stickers, each with their message to a world that disregarded them. Each another colour, another tiny picture, another demand. She paused for a second, overwhelmed by ephemera, before carrying on.

Back in the meeting room, each took turns, mapping wild thickets of theory, instrumentalising disillusion, projecting in all directions a dream. She paused to sip her drink and her brain chemistry tipped from mild pleasure to observation, depression shadowing the horizon.

These beautiful words that played on the surface of their minds rested on something, a constitutive possibility, a history, a darkness in deep water. She felt a creeping feeling of loneliness before this silence that was not silence, that was both more and less, that silenced and spoke in everything around her.

The great lie of language is that nothing should be forgotten, nothing lost for ever. To live is to die; to speak is to silence; but the great lie calls longer and deeper than mere disillusionment. The great lie sings the songs of all who never sang, and will never sing, as its own.

She knew, even as they spoke of a world without violence, they could not turn away from this. It structured their dreams, and their negation. It structured their acceptance, or rejection. In horror she turned inward, but saw it lurk in her, as granddaughter, as inheritor.

She left, later, to walk home. The night sky was weighted, the air full of mist. Cars moved in and out of the silence. As she walked, she thought how every word was but the attempt to hope. She wandered how many laboured in its absence. She thought of the hope that pain could bring. And she turned a corner-

don't desire the end





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