


# ORGANISE 102



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“We abhor war, which is always fratricidal and damaging, and we want a liberating social revolution; we deplore strife between peoples and champion the fight against the ruling classes. But if, by some misfortune, a clash were to erupt between one people and another, we stand with the people that are defending their independence.”

- Errico Malatesta

*The War and the Anarchists (1912)*

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.

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We make no profit from Organise. It doesn't even cover it's cost and we give the entire content away for free across our online spaces. Anarchists make poor capitalists :]

## EDITORIAL: GET INVOLVED.

This edition is late. as the deadline came and went a few articles were yet to be submitted, I was still dicking about with my own and then life happened, then some politics, and then another project needed sorting and all while surviving capitalism and trying to to enjoy life.

It is what it is. One of the blessed joys of Anarchism is that in most circumstances, deadlines are loose and no ones is going to stress about them.

I usually use this space to wax on about some current political event or go on some didactic rant. The edition has a mild focus on war and conflict and I suppose something pithy is meant to be said. Alas, with a single side left, I talk in brief about a couple of things in in our imminent future which we hope you'll get involved with.

Black Ink is a project we've been cooking up for a while now to provide a curated Anarchist newswire and copyright free media source. The aim is to encourage the establishment of more local rebel medias, increase media sharing across borders, and removing the issues around generating news medias in what is almost always a small bubble of personal and organisational relationships.

We're in the alpha testing stage of this, if you're involved with an anarchist (or analog) publication and you'd like to get involved, or better still, you're a anarchist

looking to make a zine, magazine, news site but lack the content, give us a nudge.

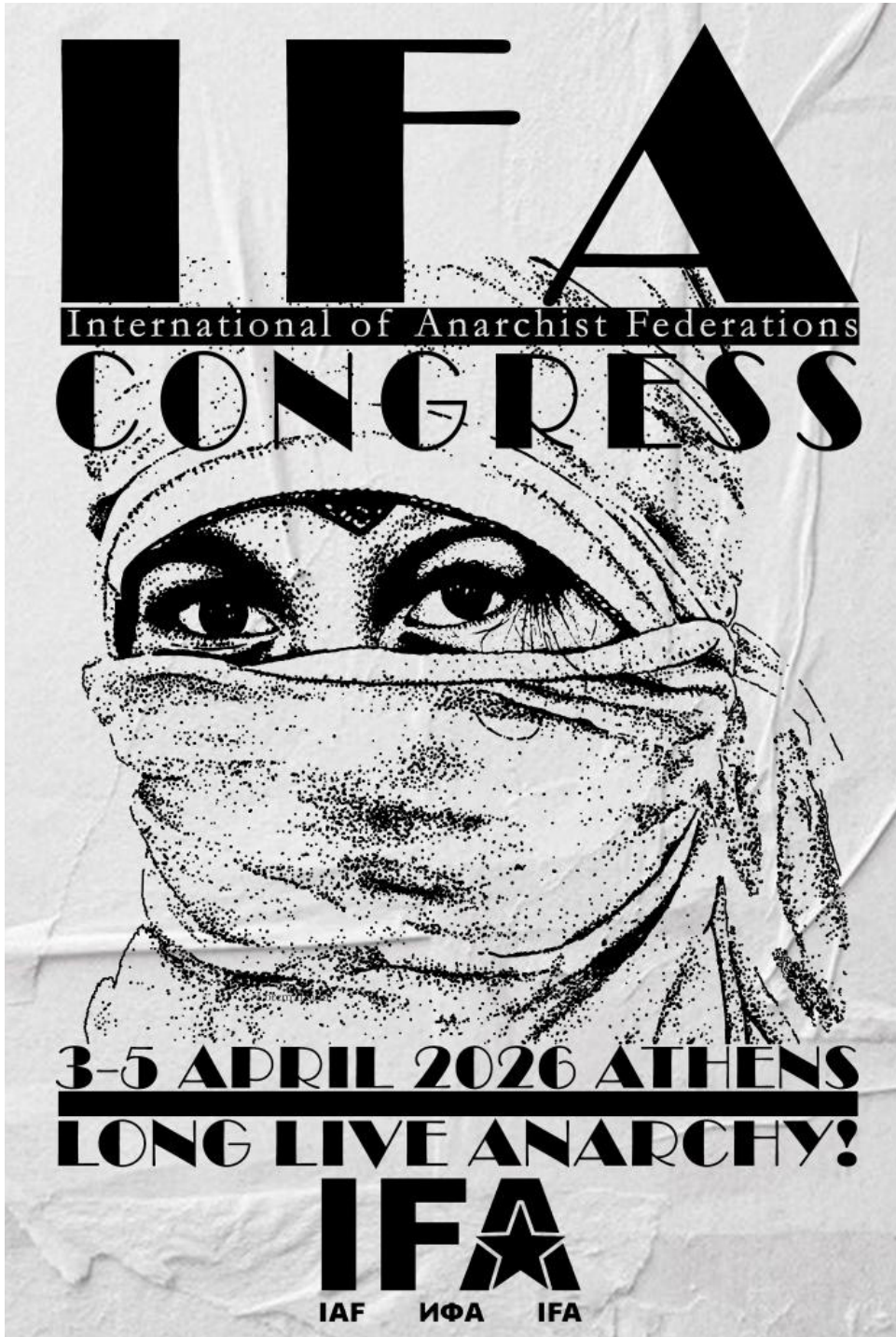
Secondly, let's talk about Organise, we'd like to expand our collective and we're looking for people who want to get involved with both editorial but also admin and logistical work. We're also looking for more writers who are looking to cut their chops with researching and reporting for a rag such as ours.

Rebel medias help drive discussion, share the history of the class, and light the fires of movements yet to come. Organise is a small part of this and we're looking to shake up house and pitch in even more, plans we have, it's people we need.

Some of this is voluntary, some of this is paid a nominal fee, which we're able to do with the generosity of the subscribers. It doesn't matter where you stand on the anarchist spectrum, or if you're a fellow traveller. If you've the time, capacity, and inclination to light some revolutionary fires. Give us a nudge, get involved.

For the readership, just want to say we appreciate your support! we're going to be cooking up some changes and this will mean regular posting, international news, more arts and fiction, and occasionally we might even be make it to print on schedule... maybe.

In Solidarity.  
**Peter Ó Máille**



**Anna Keyes**  
**April 2026**

## **THE 13TH CONGRESS OF THE IFA-IAF**

The 13th Congress of the International of Anarchist Federations (IFA-IAF) took place in Athens on the weekend of 3-5 April 2026, hosted by Αναρχικής Πολιτικής Οργάνωσης Anarchist Political Organisation, APO). Amongst the other federations which participated were Federazione Anarchica Italiana (FAIt, Italy), Fédération Anarchiste (FA, French-speaking), Federazione Anarchica Siciliana (FAS, Sicily), Federación Libertaria Argentina (FLA), Federacija za anarhistično organiziranje (Federation for Anarchist Organizing, FAO, Slovenia & Croatia), Федерация на анархо-комунистите в България (FACB, Federation of Anarchist-communists in Bulgaria), Anarchist Federation (AF, Britain), with guests from observing individuals from Brazil (Aurora Negra & Terre Livre) and Serbia (Klasna Solidarnost). Federation members and associated groups from Mexico, Brazil, Czech-Slovak, German-speaking and Kurdish Anarchist Forum did not participate, the later due to concerns about the situation in the Middle East. Cuban comrades were also invited but contact has been increasingly difficult during the economic blockade.

To make the conference run smoothly the Congress was hosted at a single venue, the squat Lelas Karagianni 37 (LK37), an impressive long-standing apartment block, the oldest squat in Greece. Lunch and dinner were provided by comrades in the squat and some accommodation was made available to visitors. Translation equipment was hired to provide live translation, although the main

language was English. LK37 was also the venue of a public meeting 'The position of anarchists on military conflicts and the threat of generalisation of war', on the Saturday evening, hosted by APO.

The IFA Congress takes place every three to four years with intervening delegate meetings (CRIFA) being used to connect the federations and plan agendas and activities, to develop documents for discussion and consensus building. The decision-making is bottom up such that federations initially propose items for the agenda and then produce their papers and positions on those topics to be presented to the congress. The congress was structured with plenary sessions with all federations present, for example, on the subject of anarchist perspectives on worldwide insurrections (such as the uprising in Iran, areas of the Mediterranean, Madagascar, Indonesia and Nepal). In addition, participating federations to the congress co-organised a series of workshops on the following topics: Sudan, the far right, education struggles, environment, patriarchy & gender violence and the digital world (online materials and cybersecurity) and some administrative aspects of IFA were discussed.

The first plenary 'Against modern totalitarianism of State, Capitalism and War' shared perspectives on anti-militarism. Themes included opposition to NATO air bases or planes (Italy, Sicily, Crete) and NATO expansion in Eastern Europe, reintroduction

of military service/draft (Croatia, France), state suppression of Palestine solidarity activity (such as the terrorism law used against Palestine Action in UK), increased military spending including dual-use investments such as airport, sea port or rail system expansions that workers could intervene in.

Whilst it is not always possible to reach consensus, the congress made significant progress on a number of issues. In particular the Italian and Greek federations had both produced detailed positions on gender struggles with documents approved by their federations with insights on systemic gender violence (APO) and transfeminism (FAIt), for example from FAI Italy: “The rooting and expansion of transfeminism and queer movements is increasingly indispensable in the face of the intensification of patriarchal oppression in the current phase, in which, in various parts of the world, its link with religious oppression is increasingly strong. In Italy, the Meloni government has produced specific legislative acts of a patriarchal and familist character to support the birth rate within the traditional family. Familism and the defence of the traditional, sexist and hierarchical family, however, are not only the heritage of the reactionary right, because there is also a familism in the tradition of the left.” The FAIt also linked increased militarisation to a rise in macho culture.

APO focussed on patriarchal violence, “In a period in which modern totalitarianism is mobilized to suppress the peoples who revolt and nationalist and fascist voices are increasing, women, in every part of the planet, and especially those of the plebeian [working class] strata, are faced, beyond the risk of death, displacement, hunger and disease, with the daily threat of gender-based violence, sexual torture and executions, as tools of conquest and subjugation.” APO highlighted attacks on abortion rights in USA, and the systematic use of gender violence as a weapon of war in Sudan and Palestine, but also similarly to that in Italy,

nationalists’ turn to ‘female nature’ to assert a role for motherhood in the national interest. The ‘Rise of the Far Right, and Anti-fascist Response’ workshop was presented by the AF and FA. AF used the context of the rise of Reform UK to discuss cultural aspects of far right ideologies and activity. There was great interest in the use of public order laws in Britain to limit protest. Whilst pre-emptive arrest via conspiracy charge is not new in the UK, this appears harder for the state to justify in countries where there has been a history of dictatorship or where anti-fascism is even mentioned as part of the constitution. In Italy and Greece the roots from fascist dictatorships run deep. But culturally fascist themes such as ‘God, Country and Family’ are coming back, and now anarchists and their locales are being specifically targeted by the police during the far-right leadership of Meloni in Italy. Although the heyday of Golden Dawn in Greece is in the past, in part due to their suppression by the state after their murder of an anti-fascist singer, their members’ links to the more media friendly ‘soft face’ far right have not disappeared.

Whilst it may be possible to appeal to history in some countries, in Brazil, Bulgaria and Serbia the threat of neo-nazi violence on the street is still today a big threat because they operate and meet or put on events openly, as well as directly attacking and sometimes murdering anarchists on the streets. Anarchists have in turn found creative ways to combat them such as encouraging mass self-defence classes in neighbourhoods, such as in Brazil favela communities.

The education workshop was an important opportunity to understand the changes in Greece where private partnership models are being imposed on high schools and teachers who are resisting privatization and the increased use of intensive evaluation of pupils across the age range are being victimised. There is also increased threat to anarchist organising in universities. Therefore the need for strong base unions is vitally important. On the encouraging side

of things Congress heard about a free high school Escuela Libre de Constitucion (ELC) in Buenos Aires, Argentina that is aimed at using anarchist methods of schooling with 16-18 year olds and also the Anarchist Education Laboratory (LEA) in São Paulo, Brazil at the Social Culture Center (CCS). The LEA initiative, carried out by the Terra Livre Library, aims to study, produce, and experiment with pedagogical practices for children, including their use at anarchist bookfairs to facilitate meaningful input of children at those events.

The workshop session on ‘Plundering of Nature’ was introduced by APO focussed on political, cultural and social problems surrounding the climate crisis and the plundering of nature and local communities by the state and capital. The session included discussion of popular oppositions to resource extraction, ‘green’ capitalism and control over nature and local communities. The session also discussed increased urbanisation, commercialisation and gentrification. Strong links were made to anti-militarism regarding protests against infrastructural development. Problems with the \$IT UN ‘2030 Agenda’ climate change investment were highlighted.

At the end of the weekend the 13th IFA congress produced a joint statement ‘Against

Global Dictatorship of State and Capitalism, against War and Fascism’ focussed on anti-militarism, linked to the plenary session. It also produced a solidarity statement for the Cuban anarchists. Both will be ratified by the IFA federations before publication. Great applause was heard as Klasna Solidarnost (Serbia) announced their intention to apply to join IFA as an associated group (a status that is used for groups who have the intention of growing into a federation). A venue for the next congress was proposed whilst the FA agreed to take on the Secretariat role after the good work of FAO over the last few years. A plan to hold another meeting in the Mediterranean was agreed as was a forthcoming issue of the IFA journal on anti-militarist perspectives, where IFA member federations will present articles. Following the informative workshop on Sudan by FAS and FA at the Congress, a new solidarity poster was presented, highlighting Sudanese anarchist struggles. After the weekend a Sudanese migrant solidarity meeting was held in Athens which gave an opportunity for those staying longer to learn more about the situation. IFA comrades were also invited by FAO to the next Balkan Anarchist Bookfair in Skopje, Macedonia in September. The congress concluded with a noisy tribute to FA comrade Jean-Marc Raynaud – founder of Libertarian Editions and the anarchist school “Bonne Aventure” – who died at the end of March.



**IFA-IAF**  
**April 2026**

# **AGAINST GLOBAL DICTATORSHIP OF STATE AND CAPITALISM, AGAINST WAR AND FASCISM**

## **ORGANIZATION INTERNATIONALISM SOCIAL REVOLUTION**

The member federations of IFA are meeting in Athens at a time when the global situation is becoming increasingly critical for the exploited and oppressed classes. The general rearmament and the spread of war policies across various regions of the world, as well as growing authoritarianism and the rise of autocratic and reactionary models of government, is directly affecting the oppressed and is designed to maintain the capitalist and state system amidst a crisis of the dominant order.

### **Empires in collision**

The decay and complete bankruptcy of the world of the state and capitalism marks the limit of its era of global integration, while simultaneously driving the intensification of inter-imperialist contradictions and the consequent rise of the threat of war. The state-capitalist system carries its contradictions within itself. The competition among bourgeois elites for better positioning on the chessboard—for the plunder and division of precious and limited natural resources, for the expansion of their “spheres of influence”—is what makes the sirens of war echo again and again. For as long as societies remain captive to the so-called “national interest”, to private profit, and to capitalist accumulation, war will remain the only path for empires in collision.

This is what is revealed in the most tragic way in the war slaughterhouse in Ukraine following the Russian army’s invasion four years ago, in the genocide of the Palestinian people by the state of Israel and its allies, in the brutal military intervention of the United States in Venezuela, the arming of militias in Sudan, and in the continued strangling of the people of Cuba.

### **US-Israel attack on Iran**

Within this context, on February 28th, the US-Israel military operation against Iran was launched with intense bombardments, with the indirect support of NATO infrastructure, and continues to this day. The people of Iran, having first been drowned in blood—once again, as so many times over the years—by the regime following the popular uprising that erupted in January 2026, now find themselves facing the bombs of Western imperialism, responsible for so many military operations around the world.

The hypocrisy of Western regimes knows no bounds: at the very moment they collaborate seamlessly with all the monarchical, authoritarian, and theocratic regimes of the Middle East—Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, and others—they instrumentalize the Islamic Republic regime in Iran to cloak their crimes in a supposed “liberating” guise, crowned by the cold-blooded murder of more than 168 children in bombardment of Minab.

### **Fortress Europe and increasing global repression during continuous crisis**

The victims of imperialist, predatory, and neocolonial wars and interventions are always the people themselves, who are butchered in this global slaughterhouse or forced to take the road of migration only to meet death at the land and sea borders of a Fortress-like Europe. The murderous “push back” policies of the EU are reflected in the thousands of dead refugees at land and sea borders, in those trapped in modern concentration camps, and in those imprisoned under a special racist state of exception. The “walls” being raised serve not only to keep “surplus populations” out, but also to lead Western societies toward the consolidation of internal fascism, creating a social condition of fear and hatred.

Today, at a global level, we find ourselves in the midst of a historical phase of continuous reconfigurations, accelerating events, and intensifying rivalries that signal a violent transition toward a new historical period—one in which the preexisting order is in crisis, attempting to preserve its bloodsoaked gains through the intensification of repression, military escalation, and the deepening of exploitation.

### **Multipolar realignments and the generalization of authoritarian state power**

In the dominant discourse of international politics, the “multipolar world” often appears as a more balanced and therefore more just form of global organization and hierarchy of states—a new condition of equilibrium. From the standpoint of the oppressed, and consequently from the standpoint of anarchists, the term does not describe a decentralization of power for the benefit of societies, but rather a realignment of the hierarchy of states and capitalist elites who are on a collision course. A multipolar system means that global power is distributed among multiple poles: the United States, China, Russia, the European Union, Israel, India, Iran, and other regional powers—none of which

can any longer impose the rules of the game alone. This is not, therefore, a matter of less power or some retreat of power blocs, nor of a more just distribution of power. It is a matter of competition among more rulers who are vying for their places at the same table of exploitation.

The basic characteristics of such historical periods are multiple poles of power, asymmetric forms of strength, dynamic shifts in balances, and the challenging of traditional notions of sovereignty—all of which take on a different meaning when viewed through the class lens of those below. For movements and peoples, these poles are not neutral centers of influence but mechanisms of imposition and war machines, economic empires, technological surveillance systems, borders, and camps. Each power paradigm promises protection and development, demanding in return discipline, markets, natural resources, and cheap labor.

The present historical conjuncture is characterized by a double and seemingly contradictory movement: on the one hand, the attempt to transition to a multipolar world without a stable hegemonic center; on the other, the generalization of authoritarian, fascist, and totalitarian forms of governance. These two movements do not contradict each other. On the contrary, the second is a condition for stabilizing the first. Multipolarity, as has been said many times, does not give birth to peace but to generalized competition, and this competition requires disciplined, fearful societies ready to accept sacrifice as normality. Fascistization no longer manifests as a mass movement with a unified ideology, but as an everyday administrative practice. Borders that kill, police forces that function as armies of occupation, a state of exception that becomes permanent, the criminalization of poverty, migration, and solidarity. In this context, the concept of necropolitics no longer concerns only zones of violence, but the overall organization of the world. Power no longer merely manages life—it actively organizes death, whether

directly or indirectly, through famines, sanctions, economic embargoes, blockades, and perpetual precarity. Death ceases to be considered as a failure of the politics of “the era of development and capitalist prosperity” and becomes its instrument for overcoming crisis conditions.

Western powers would like to force a hegemony which is not expressed simply through the political-military system. Today’s “unipolarity”, which violently unifies the planet, manifests through global capitalist integration, which expresses across different geographies the same unified logic of capitalist exploitation and state repression, incorporating within it different cultural, religious, and local particularities. While the rival blocs may seek their ideological identity on the basis of these particularities, in opposition to the dominant Western paradigm, this in no way signifies the transcendence or challenging at any level of the unified state-capitalist mechanism of power, exploitation, and oppression.

### **Anarchist rejection of selective anti-imperialism and opportunism**

Today we are living through a period of distortion of meanings and values, and the need is even more urgent for the anarchist movement to construct its political, ethical, and ideological framework—both for the awakening of consciousness among those below and for the defense of its positions against attempts to impose foreign conceptions regarding the anarchist struggle and internationalist solidarity. These attempts are rooted in authoritarian tendencies, primarily of the left-winged politics, and are expressed through support for totalitarian state formations, condemnation of popular uprisings, alignment with power blocs, consciously false binaries, emotional blackmail, slander of militants, and threats—all dressed in the superficial cloak of anti-imperialism.

The logic of “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” always leads to the same dead end: silence about the crimes of the new and opportunistic ally, justification of their violence, and dismissal of the struggles they suppress internally. Thus, anti imperialism is transformed into a geopolitical tool, losing all its libertarian content and analytical substance.

From an anarchist perspective, this is unthinkable. There is no imperialism without the state. There is no imperialism without internal repression. The same structures that expand outward also discipline inward, within class-stratified societies. The same mechanisms bomb, imprison, torture, and exterminate—and whoever pretends not to see this is not practicing anti-imperialism but political coverup.

Proletarian internationalism does not choose states, flags, or poles through opportunistic alliances—though this does not mean it will not use the internal contradictions and cracks in the system. It chooses a side in social struggles: it stands with workers, with refugees crushed at the borders, with conscripts and deserters, with prisoners, with the insurgents—with all those who pay the cost of imperialist rivalries, wherever they are. It does not pass through foreign ministries or geopolitical calculations. It passes through internationalist solidarity from below.

In a world where new regional or even central powers are emerging, the challenge is not to choose the “right” or “oppositional” imperialism. It is to reject them all. Not to baptize the realignment of power as liberation. Not to confuse a crack in unipolarity with a rupture with the system. A rupture with the system occurs when we deepen these cracks, make them more profound and insurrectionary.

Our position is clear: against every pole, against every state, against every war of the masters. With those from below, without

taking sides or accepting false choices. This is the only anti-imperialism that does not betray itself.

### **Appeal for internationalism and deeper connections**

The dynamic changes and upheavals that the rulers pursue demands the rapid reorganisation of the anarchist current at an international level. The urgent need to expand the network of contacts and communication among anarchists internationally is proven by the facts themselves—with the primary aim of exchanging experiences, sharing information about how the politics of domination are taking shape in each geography, and about the social resistances emerging at every point of the planet. Furthermore, discussion at the international level regarding the war condition and the generalized threat of war is critical, as deepening this discussion—along with the corresponding cooperation of anarchists internationally—are basic prerequisites for strengthening the struggle, that is, the social and class resistances themselves that can protect societies from the threat of war and the intensification of exploitation and repression.

It is literally a matter of life and death—for the movement, for societies, and for the oppressed—to develop and adopt the most coherent possible anarchist stance toward militarism, the threat of war, and resistance to global domination. We believe this can be achieved if comrades all over the world manage to recognize that while there are visible historical, political, social, and even cultural differences among particular societies (and therefore among movements)—which are necessarily formed under the shadow of the nation-state and which must be respected—at the same time, it must be noted that today’s anarchist analysis identifies a unified state and capitalist condition that dominates and oppresses the entire planet.

Against this condition we must stand in unity—whether it is expressed through the warmongering hegemonic Western coalition of the USA-NATO-Israel, through bellicose Russian authoritarianism, through the oppressive obscurantism of Islamic regimes, or through bureaucratic Chinese state totalitarianism.

### **Solidarity with struggles across the globe**

For our part, based on our principles and values as organized anarchists, we intervene and act in the fields of social and class struggle, aiming for class and social emancipation against every form of tyranny—not to serve one or another tyrannical regime, state, or interstate bloc. We stand in solidarity alongside every people fighting for survival, dignity, land, and freedom against the global dictatorship of the state and capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism. We draw inspiration from people struggling across the entire world who, facing the monster of fascism, state and capitalist barbarism, rise up, strike, demonstrate, and fight the brutality of power. These are the elements of struggle we wish to highlight as anarchists: the ability of the conquered to counterattack against the all-powerful conqueror, the capacity of the poor and excluded to revolt under even the most barbaric conditions. We want international solidarity to create ruptures within the attacking rulers, bringing to the forefront our own history—the history of the struggles of those below who, against all times, create the living reality of freedom and solidarity, constituting the only real bulwark against the advance of modern totalitarianism.

Until the total liberation of all people from the chains of the state and capital—until the Social Revolution for a world of equality, solidarity, and freedom.

**International of Anarchist Federations (IFA-IAF)  
April 3–5 2026 Athens, Greece**



**Marin Scarlett**  
**April 2026**

## **THE NORDIC MODEL IS AN EXPANSION OF POLICE POWERS.**

Earlier this year, sex workers in Scotland secured a hard-won victory. Ash Regan’s “Unbuyable” bill was voted down in the first stage, although by a margin of just ten votes. The bill was the latest effort by a left-leaning politician to introduce client and third party criminalisation laws – also known as the Nordic Model – across Britain, Northern Ireland having already adopted it in 2015.

Sex work – and which laws should govern it – is a divisive issue among Anarchists and the broader left. Support for the Nordic Model is widespread, including among those who identify as communists. Sex workers find ourselves in the unenviable position of having to battle against those who should be our allies, and who suddenly abandon anti-carceral and borderless ideals to support a model that represents a massive expansion of repressive policing and state surveillance.

Communist opposition to sex work is generally linked to a fundamental opposition to commodification – the process of turning human life and activity into objects to be bought and sold. This is something we can all get behind. We all experience the profound dehumanisation of a culture that treats us as consumers and labourers rather than human beings, not to mention the soul-destroying process of monetising what might once have simply been a treasured skill or hobby.

Obscenely rich people aside, engaging in any kind of labour for profit can never be a free choice under capitalism. This is not unique

to sex work; none of us have full agency when the alternative is not having a roof over our heads or food on the table. Ask any commuter on the tube at 7:30am whether they’re headed to their office cubicle out of sheer free will, and I think we all know the answer.

Where I get lost is casting sex work as somehow unique; the ultimate frontier of capitalist intrusion, where the most intimate parts of human existence are turned into a market product. “Labour Power” and “Personhood”, believed to be separate in other areas of work, are here deemed indistinguishable, making sex work a particular violation of human life and dignity. These strangely romanticised depictions of sex are at odds with the reality of human behaviour – people regularly have sex for deeply unromantic reasons, and there’s nothing wrong with that. The naivety of this perspective hints at a lack of much lived experience here, and I struggle to engage with it seriously.

Regardless, this shouldn’t matter. Even if you insist on holding sex work to a unique standard here, anyone on the left should still oppose the Nordic Model for what it actually does. It may claim to be about abolishing sex work. However, it does not address any of the key drivers of sex work – primarily poverty and financial need, as well as discrimination against queer and trans people, inaccessible workplaces, insufficient welfare support, and those with no recourse to public funds. Instead, it simply aims to

punish and disrupt people's lives enough that they'll stop doing it.

For obvious reasons, this doesn't work. No one can ever be criminalised enough that they will stop needing money to survive. But the Nordic Model is so much worse than ineffective; it's cruel. The repercussions will affect sex workers and non-sex workers alike. Here's the reality of what these forms of criminalisation mean.

The systems required to enforce client and third party criminalisation laws are inherently those of mass-surveillance. As such, the introduction of the Nordic Model would herald an enormous rise in digital monitoring and surveillance of private communications, as police attempt to ascertain where paid transactional sex is being arranged. This means all of us will face greater online intrusion than ever into our private correspondence and online activities.

It won't just be online. Police will stake out the locations from which people are suspected of selling sex, while they wait to catch and fine those involved. This means increased resources for undercover policing, CCTV and other covert filming or recording, and general mass intrusion into people's personal lives. And tools built ostensibly to catch clients are easily repurposed for monitoring any other activities that law enforcement doesn't like. Once the state has the power to monitor your movements, private transactions and messages for the crime of purchasing sex, they can also monitor them for political dissent or "illegal" protests.

This surveillance will also be applied at the border, where individuals even suspected of sex work can be barred from entering the country – essentially providing a gift-wrapped excuse for those who want to see borders policed more aggressively. In Norway, Nordic Model laws were used to deport migrant sex

workers after they approached the police to report assault. In Sweden – which pioneered these laws – sex workers are deported on vague and unsubstantiated claims of "public order", and new amendments to the Aliens Act are set to remove settled status from those not supporting themselves by "honest means".

Perhaps the most cynical aspect of the Nordic Model is its calculated destruction of collective safety. The criminalisation of third parties sees peer support treated as criminal conspiracy. If a sex worker shares their earnings with a partner, a parent, or a child, those loved ones are viewed as profiting off of sex work. If a worker shares the details of their booking with a support network or a safety buddy, that person is criminalised as facilitating her sex work. This is a state-mandated dismantling of mutual aid and collective care. By criminalising the networks we build to protect ourselves, the Nordic Model effectively mandates isolation – the most dangerous condition for any worker.

In short, the Nordic Model is a massive expansion of police powers, creating a perpetual state of surveillance and intervention to enforce these laws. This will affect all of us, but will be disproportionately used against already marginalised communities: those who are racialised, queer, trans, migrants and disabled. No one should claim to be on the left while supporting this.

If you don't like people selling sex, fine. Plenty of sex workers don't really like it either. And if you want to talk about fewer people doing sex work, then great – let's talk about an actual living wage. Let's talk about affordable housing. Let's talk about tackling soaring energy prices and food costs. Let's talk about giving migrants full working rights and recourse to public funds. Let's talk about better support for mothers and people with disabilities.

Not liking sex work or wanting to see fewer people doing sex work should never be

grounds to support the Nordic Model. We are all doing our best to survive capitalism. Sex work and sex workers are not unique in this regard and our ranks are comprised of society's poorest and most vulnerable, sometimes acting in desperation to survive. The response should never be criminalisation. The Nordic model is breathtaking not just in its scope, but in its cruelty.

Victory in Scotland has for now been won, and I hope Scotland for Decrim's members are taking time to rest and heal after an inspiring but no doubt draining campaign. Unfortunately, this won't be the last battle against the Nordic Model that sex workers in the UK have to fight. Anarchists and the entire political left wing need to get on board, before we all find ourselves at the mercy of an ever expanding police state.

Marin Scarlett

*Marin is a sex workers' rights activist and can be found on social media here @marinscarlett\_.*

*The featured artwork is by Krime an anarchist artist and propagandist based in the South West of England, you can find more of their work on krime.uk.*

*Both Marin and Krime donated their commissions to S.A.F.E. (who work to ensure abortion access to the people across Europe who have been abandoned by governments and healthcare systems) and SWARM (a sex worker led collective based in the UK) respectively. You can support these organisations directly here:*

*supportingabortions.eu/donate  
swarmcollective.org/get-involved*

*Additional image is artist unknown, if you know them, give us a nudge.*





**Peter Gelderloos**  
**17 March 2026**

## **THE FOURTH ISRAELI WAR**

### **AGAINST IRAN, PALESTINE, LEBANON, SYRIA, YEMEN...**

Sixteen days into the US and Israeli war against Iran, which Israel has used as a cover for a major invasion of Lebanon and another acceleration of genocidal policies against Palestinians, this is where things stand:

- The US and Israel have killed 3,040 people in Iran, at least 1,300 of them civilians and 1,112 military personnel, as well as dozens of government leaders, and their family members, including children and spouses completely uninvolved in affairs of state (599 deaths that have not been classified might also be civilians).
- They have wounded over 10,000 people, many of whom will be disabled or in chronic pain for the rest of their lives. Their strikes, which have hit over 10,000 civilian sites including 25 hospitals, have displaced 3.2 million people from their homes.
- The US bombed a girl's school in southern Iran, murdering between 165 and 180 civilians, at least 110 of them small children.
- Israel has launched a major invasion of Lebanon, invading the south of the country, bombing cities and towns from the capital to the Bekaa Valley to the north of the country, killing 826 people, including 106 children and 31 paramedics, while injuring around 2000, and displacing 830,000 people from their homes.
- Hezbollah, in Lebanon, has launched about 850 rockets and drones at Israel since March 2, though none of their attacks inside Israel have killed anyone.
- Hezbollah's attack came in support of Iran and also as an act of defense after repeated Israeli violations of the ceasefire.
- Israel has also taken advantage of the war to occupy more territory in southern Syria. In December 2024 and early 2025, Israel invaded and occupied the rest of the Golan Heights, a fertile and strategic 1,200 square kilometer (460 sq mile) region in southwestern Syria, an adjacent area of 500 square km, and part of Syria bordering Lebanon. Around the beginning of their new attack on Iran, Israel also began new incursions against Syria. The Israeli government has announced this land theft will be permanent.
- In just the first week of the war, Israeli settlers murdered at least 8 Palestinians in the West Bank and wounded many more, with the support of the Israeli military according to an Israeli human rights group.
- In the first two weeks of the US and Israeli attacks on Iran, the Israeli military killed at least 40 people in Gaza.

- The US has mostly knocked out Iran's navy and air force, but Iran is still able to launch missile and drones, and still controls the vital Strait of Hormuz.
- Missile and drone attacks by Iran have killed 19 people in total—6 soldiers and 13 civilians—in the Gulf States that have been supporting the US attack. Six people were killed in Kuwait and in the UAE, three people killed in Oman, two people were killed in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. There have been injuries but no deaths in Qatar, Jordan, and Syria, in the latter case due to missiles shot down by Israel.
- Most of the civilian deaths in the Arabic countries listed above were hyperexploited “guest workers” from south and southeast Asia, as most of the Gulf States allied to the US (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait) constitute an Arabic version of white supremacist, segregated societies where labor and profits and racially divided, similar to the white supremacist apartheid system in Israel.
- 13 US soldiers have gotten themselves killed and around 150 wounded in the course of their war against Iran (the fatalities occurred in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq). Only 8 (as of five days ago) were severely wounded, and over 100 quickly returned to duty. US soldiers, like US cops, report minor injuries like sprains or bruises in conflict situations they bear the blame for, in order to present themselves as victims and to access paid time off or other forms of compensation.
- 12 people in Israel have been killed by Iranian strikes. I can't find any info on how many were settler paramilitaries, which the media incorrectly label as civilians. Two Israeli soldiers have gotten themselves killed invading Lebanon.
- Another front of the war is opening in Iraq where 46 people have been killed, including one French and six US occupation soldiers, 35 Iraqi fighters allied with Iran, at least five Kurdish militants and a Kurdish airport guard, and a civilian in Baghdad.
- Kurdistan has been occupied by Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkiye, all of which have carried out brutal repression and genocide. Most Kurdish organizations are allied with the United States and do not openly support groups oppressed by the US or its allies. The US alternates between arming these Kurdish groups and abandoning them to major massacres. It is unclear whether the Kurds will trust this alliance again to fight for the liberation of Iranian-occupied Kurdistan.
- In the first 12 days of the offensive against Iran, the US spent around \$16.5 billion. Between October 2023 and September 2025, the US has given Israel \$21.7 billion in military aid. In the same time period, the US spent about \$12 billion to fund its military operations against Yemen and Iran, leading to a total expenditure of around \$33 billion in just two years. The US has also agreed to sell Israel tens of billions of dollars in weapons over the coming months and years.
- If similar spending levels continue, that \$33 billion military budget in support of genocide would make up for 20% of the money the US government is taking out of Medicaid, depriving millions of its own citizens of healthcare even as they create health emergencies on the other side of the world, including in their attacks on Yemen, which by some measurements is the second poorest country in the

world, under assault by the US, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf states.

- So far this century, the US has spent an estimated \$5.8 trillion on its wars against Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Pakistan, Somalia, Libya, Syria, Venezuela, Nigeria, and Iran. (Every single US president in history has invaded other countries. The US is, like Israel, Australia, Argentina... a country founded on genocide.) None of those countries attacked the US. Afghanistan harbored some people who attacked the US, but US-ally Saudi Arabia financed those people with no consequences, and in revenge for fewer than 3,000 deaths, the US directly killed 240,000 people in their invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, and created conditions of poverty, disease, and famine that killed hundreds of thousands more.
- Looking at the entire US War on Terror through 2023 (before the current war), the US directly killed 940,000 people in five Muslim countries, and indirectly killed another 3.6 – 3.8 million people.

To get beyond the statistics, read this article from The Guardian, “*Entire families wiped out and towns emptied as Israel's war on Lebanon intensifies*” this one from Al Jazeera, “*How Many Times Has Israel Violated the Gaza Ceasefire?*” or especially this one from CrimethInc., “*History Is Repeating Itself.*”

In this article I'm going to be looking at:

- *Antisemitism and Islamophobia*
- *A Fourth Israeli War?*
- *Geopolitics in West Asia*
- *Geopolitics for the Rest of the World*
- *Geopolitics for the US and Israel*
- *The Resistance*

If you have a good grasp of the history of the various wars the state of Israel has participated in, feel free to jump down to the sections on geopolitics where I discuss the impacts of the ongoing war and how this might affect the world in the coming years.

### Antisemitism and Islamophobia

Since the US and Israel began the current war, there has been an increase in antisemitic attacks in Europe, North America, and Australia, such as attacks on synagogues. Conflating Jewish people everywhere and anywhere with the state of Israel is definitionally antisemitic and wrong, though it must also be said that Israel itself frequently promotes this conflation to say that it is antisemitic to criticize the genocidal policies of the Israeli state. At the same time, that state supports antisemitic but Zionist politicians and political movements, from the rightwing Viktor Orbán in Hungary to the MAGA movement in the US. Why? Because they're settler state politicians, every bit as racist, murderous, and dishonest as the leaders of the US.



Despite the manipulations of Netanyahu and Trump, we need to be unwavering in condemning and discouraging antisemitism. But we also need to be clear that Islamophobia and anti-Arabic racism is more widespread and more underreported, from New York to Berlin. And the tiny anti-war movement in Israel, expressing solidarity with Palestinians and Iranians, faces extreme violence from police and settlers. Prison guards threatened to carve a Star of David into the face of one 19-year-old Jewish solidarity protester.

It has gone almost entirely unreported that the US and Israel chose to begin their war during Ramadan, the holiest part of the Muslim calendar. The entire war is a deliberate act of Islamophobia.

That context is important. It's also important, for example, to know that the Lebanese-American who attacked a synagogue in Michigan on 12 March did so just one week after Israel murdered four members of his family in Lebanon: his two brothers, a niece and a nephew—children—all died when Israel bombed and destroyed their house.

Israel defended the attack saying that one of the adult brothers was a member of Hezbollah. To be crystal clear, if other people used the standards of war that are routinely employed and defended by Israel, it would be acceptable to murder every single member of the Israeli government, every single member of the IDF (past and present), every single armed settler in the West Bank or in the Negev Desert, and every single family member of theirs, from babies to great grandparents. This is why an anarchist ethics is so important: we must never, ever use the methods of those we fight against, or otherwise we become our own worst enemies.

Antisemitism is indefensible and it is a real, present form of harm in our society. However, any sincere discussion of this must also acknowledge that Zionists currently instrumentalize antisemitism to cover up or justify what is currently a far more lethal and more widespread form of hatred: Islamophobia and anti-Arabic racism.

Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Iranian state are all oppressive and brutal, but little is said about the systematic torture and sexual assault in Israeli prisons and black sites or their widespread practice of taking hostages or disappearing dissidents. When it comes to forcible evictions, land theft, and the invasion and occupation of other countries, there is no comparison: Israel is the clear aggressor. Israel's kill count tends to be at least 100 times higher than that of Hamas or Hezbollah and they regularly kill children, shoot (Palestinian) protestors, and target hospitals and media. The whole of Israeli society is legally structured along lines of apartheid or segregation. Arabic and African Jews are second-class citizens. The relatively small number of Palestinians who attained Israeli citizenship are a third-class citizens who enjoy fewer rights and face systematic discrimination. And all the other Palestinians whose lands were stolen for the creation of the Israeli state have no rights at all. Israeli settlers and soldiers slaughter them without consequence. They kill them and laugh about it and put it on social media.

In the face of this oppression, fighting against the Israeli state is valid and necessary.

#### **A Fourth Israeli War?**

I want to put the ongoing attacks against Iran in a broader context, connected as it is to the ongoing genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, to Israel's attacks

on Iran in June 2025, its attacks on Yemen and Iraq, and its ongoing invasion and occupation of southern Lebanon and Syria.

I also want to break with the colonial tradition of naming wars after the countries or peoples that are invaded or wiped out – the Arauco War, the Shawnee Wars, the Korea War, the Vietnam War, the Iraq War. Those were all unprovoked wars by, in the above cases, Spain, France, or the US against the people of Arauco (the Mapuche), against the Shawnee and their allies, against Korea, against Vietnam, against Iraq. And if Spain, Britain, France, Germany, Russia, or the US end up appearing in the names of hundreds of wars, maybe it would be a little harder for people to ignore the true nature of these states.

So why name the current war after Israel when the US is the one bringing the most force to bear against Iran? Because the attacks against Iran are just one theater in a larger regional war in which Israel is the primary aggressor, and because they are a continuation of Israel's attacks against Iran last year. Those attacks were ultimately unsuccessful, so Israel has called in its main ally, the US.

The US and Israel instrumentalize each other, neither is a puppet, both are powerful, both strategically use the other. The US is of course much more powerful on a global level, but Israel has much greater continuity of policy whereas the US has an ideological attachment to Israel that doesn't always serve its long term strategic interests. Also, the US is currently ruled by one of the most idiotic and easy-to-manipulate presidents in modern history.

Days after I started writing this essay, US Secretary of State Rubio admitted that the US attacked Iran due to Israeli pressure rather than as its own strategic initiative, and most

analysts agree the war is in Israeli interests and not in US interests.

So, if this is the Fourth Israeli war, and it combines what the media often present as separate wars and "conflicts," since, well, they're absolutely connected, what were the first three?

**1.** The first war started with the Naqba, the massive ethnic cleansing that Zionist paramilitary organizations carried out in 1947 and 1948, displacing half the Palestinian population and depopulating over 500 towns and neighborhoods, often at gunpoint. After murdering or disappearing over a thousand people in around 70 different massacres, the newly created state of Israel gained control of 78% of what had been the British colony of Mandatory Palestine. In 1917, when Britain declared its support for Zionism, only about 5% of the population was Jewish, and nearly all the rest was Muslim.

The First Israeli War continued with the Arab-Israeli war (against Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq) of 1948 when Israel created its own borders by continuing to evict most of the inhabitants of that territory and occupying substantial territory from neighboring countries. If this war had a postscript, it was the temporary invasion of Sinai (in Egypt) with secret support from UK and France in 1956, strengthening Israel's western border and largely ending reprisal attacks from Palestinian fedayeen in exile in Egypt. The result of this war was the invention of the state of Israel on the basis of massacres, evictions, and land theft, and the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, turning them and their children into permanent refugees.

**2.** *The 2nd Israeli War* combines the Six Day War of 1967, against Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and

Jordan, the low-intensity War of Attrition that continued until 1970, and the Yom Kippur War of 1973, against Egypt and Syria. These wars were sparked by growing hostilities as Israel sought to defeat the Palestine Liberation Organization, to expand beyond its 1949 borders, to seize the flow of the Jordan River in a water scarce region, and to steal strategic terrain from Syria (the Golan Heights) and Egypt (the Sinai Peninsula). Israel won, though pressure from the US and other allies eventually succeeded in forcing Israel to return the Sinai Peninsula.

**3.** Not content with the new 1967 boundaries which ceded most of Palestine to Israel, reserving only the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Israel began asserting increasing control over both, as well as attacking Palestinian refugees and resistance groups in southern Lebanon between 1978 and '86. Through intense levels of repression, Israel was able to condition and ultimately capture the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which had been a revolutionary coalition and which they later turned into a corrupt proxy that would help them manage Palestinians. During and after this time period, Mossad and the IDF also gave clandestine support to Hamas and other fundamentalist, antisemitic groups, preferring an enemy that would be less likely to win support and sympathy in the West or from the USSR.

**4.** The 4th Israeli War started as a response to the Second Intifada. Sick of living under a racist regime, the gradual encroachment of Israeli settlers stealing their lands, burning their orchards, harassing or killing them, constant repression, kidnapping, torture, and killings by the Israeli military, the refusal to allow Palestinian refugees to return to their homes, the coöptation and corruption of the PLO, the political shift of neighboring states as they abandoned the Palestinians and

allied with the US, and the apathy of the rest of the world to their plight, the Palestinian people rose up from 2000 to 2005, fighting primarily with rocks, with their voices, their bodies. Some actions were organized by militant groups like the al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigade (associated with the leftwing secular Fatah party), but a great deal of the intifada, or uprising, was spontaneous.

In early 2006, the last time the Palestinians were allowed to hold an election, they overwhelmingly voted in favor of Hamas over the longtime ruling party of Fatah – a secular leftist party connected to Yasser Arafat and the PLO, but long since pacified and corrupted. (Here is a good article explaining the relationship between Fatah, the PLO, the Palestinian Authority, and Hamas.)

Israel, realizing that all their brutality still didn't keep them safe from their victims, launched a series of military operations against Gaza between 2006 and 2009, and began building the Apartheid Wall, a "security measure" that formed part of a transparent policy to gradually divide, annex, and ethnically cleanse the entirety of the West Bank, with illegal settler paramilitaries, the Israeli military, and the Israeli government working in tandem. The war became hot when Hamas launched its 7 October 2023 reprisal for accelerating levels of ethnic cleansing. From there, as we know, the war spread to Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, and Iran, with multiple civil wars, bombing campaigns, and invasions.

The connecting thread between all these wars is Israel's inability to accept any boundaries and the belief of its ruling class and most of its population—whether secular or fundamentalist—that their right to other people's land and their right to prosperity trumps other people's right to basic survival.

In the First Israeli War, Israel broke its 1947 borders, which it had accepted in the Israeli Declaration of Independence. In 1949, Israel signed an armistice agreement establishing new expanded borders—the Green Line—but it broke that promise in 1967 with another aggressive war. Now, in its Fourth War, Israel is openly declaring the total liquidation of Palestine, from the highest levels of government down to the heavily armed settler "civilians" doing much of the killing and land theft in the West Bank. It is also occupying more areas of Lebanon and Syria, going beyond its earlier, self-declared boundaries that were already in violation of an international agreement – an agreement that favored Israel by accepting their earlier campaigns of territorial growth through warfare (which goes blatantly against one of the basic tenets of international law).

What is the immediate background to the 4th Israeli War?

A highly unpopular president facing corruption charges and possible prison time, in 2023 Netanyahu was a rightwing politician who allied with far Right parties to stay in power. (He also grew up in the US, and spent some years in the IDF conducting raids into Jordan and Lebanon.) In order to stay in power and avoid prison, he kept a majority by bringing together secular parties, parties representing different currents of Judaism, and even a party comprised largely of antisemitic Russians who had immigrated to improve their living conditions, taking advantage of the Israeli Birthright Program (a program designed to build up a strong white majority by granting citizenship to anyone who could claim a Jewish grandparent). The only thing these parties had in common was their hatred of Palestinians and Muslims and their support for an aggressive Israeli nationalism.

I would not be the first person to suggest that as his legal troubles grew, Netanyahu deliberately provoked war to give Israeli citizens an external enemy. It has worked out. In the summer of 2023 or late in 2025, Netanyahu would have lost an election by a landslide. Now, two weeks into the latest phase of his war against Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and Palestine, he has a 74% approval rating and pro-war Israeli patriotism is on the rise, with support for the war polling at over 80%.

Starting in June 2023, the Israeli government approved the construction of 13,000 new houses for illegal settlers in the West Bank, accelerating the ethnic cleansing. Settlements in Israel involve the military supporting heavily armed settler paramilitaries as they harass and attack Palestinians, destroying gardens, cutting down orchards, and demolishing houses. When Palestinian families finally move out, the settlers steal the land, encroaching one mile at a time, year after year. The Israeli government does not allow Palestinians to build new houses in the West Bank, and countless times they have openly declared their intentions to remove all Palestinians using any and all means.

Hamas responded by attacking Israeli military posts around the Gaza Strip and seizing as many hostages as they could from the surrounding settlements, also killing many noncombatants. As they returned to Gaza with their prisoners, the IDF opened fire in line with their policy of killing hostages and hostage-takers to deprive the enemy of leverage.

As Israel was completing its invasion and occupation of Gaza and expanding its occupations in Syria and Lebanon, it launched a major assault against Iran to try to wipe out Iran's nuclear program. The

operation set Iran back but did not fully succeed, and around the same time Israel realized that Iran's missile capabilities were an equal or greater tactical threat, and one they would have an even harder time getting rid of. So they enlisted the US.

Israel's constant violation of the ceasefire agreements with Hamas in Palestine, and with Hezbollah in Lebanon and Syria, is also necessary context and a further reason for considering this a single, continuous war. In the first four months of the ceasefire, 10 October 2024 to 10 February 2026, Israel violated the ceasefire agreement at least 1,620 times in Gaza alone, killing at least 640 Palestinians and injuring 1,730. Israel justified its continuing campaign of genocide by claiming Hamas was violating the agreement by not returning all the bodies of the last Israeli prisoners. The reason Hamas had not returned those bodies was because Israel had bombed the tunnels where they were being held, killing captors and captives, and heavy excavation equipment was required to find the bodies. In other moments, Israel has maintained its unofficial policy of murdering at least 100 Palestinians for every Israeli killed. After a small gunbattle in Rafah (Gaza) claimed the life of a single Israeli invader, Israel killed 109 people, including 52 children, which Trump subsequently justified as "retribution."

Throughout 2025, during a ceasefire, Israeli forces were carrying out almost two attacks a day against Syria. In Lebanon, those violations were daily, with 7,500 documented airspace violations and 2,500 ground violations, a technocratic term for small scale invasions and operations against the people of Syria and Lebanon. In the first year of the ceasefire, Israel killed at least 127 civilians in Lebanon as well as many soldiers and Hezbollah fighters, despite Hezbollah disarming south of the Litani

River, as agreed. Israeli attacks killed at least 13 children and injured another 146. The UN Special Rapporteur describes Israel as having a "total disregard for the ceasefire agreement." Israel continues to hold dozens of Lebanese hostages—both civilians and fighters—and refuses to release their names, meaning they have been effectively disappeared.

Now that we have a precise view of the threads of continuity between these wars and the primary motivations of the Israeli state, let's look at the geopolitical impacts of this war and what that means for the future.

Why should anarchists think critically about geopolitics? After all, geopolitics is the question of competing state strategies within the capitalist world system, a system that is antithetical to liberation, to the commune, to life itself.

Here are a couple examples that might show the importance of understanding our enemy.

- During and after the first Trump administration, many US anarchists spread alarmist and inaccurate warnings of an imminent fascist takeover which made it much easier for the growing wave of anti-racist, anti-police rebellions to be pacified and coöpted by the Left in 2020. In many ways this came down to a misunderstanding of fascism, of democracy, of the Left, of a democratic far Right, and of the history of leftist and particularly antifascist coalitions recuperating and pacifying rebellions.
- Anarchists in Ukraine, perceiving the likelihood of a Russian invasion in the early 2020s, gave themselves an opportunity to debate the relative merits of going into exile, shifting to a clandestine struggle under Russian occupation, or

finding ways to fight off the Russian invasion, and to prepare.

- Revolutionaries elsewhere, from Sudan to Kurdistan, can and do use geopolitical analysis to understand the interests and strategies of the major powers that fund and shape the bloody conflicts they are subjected to.

### Geopolitics for West Asia

I put together a chart of the 15 countries of West Asia, plus Egypt, to help us look at the global, interstate competition for power and position. Let's start with the economies. The list below is ranked from the wealthiest countries to the poorest. To capitalist technocrats, "wealth" means the average amount of monetary value produced per person. Let's keep in mind how pathological a notion that is, since a wealthy country like the US (#1 GDP) can be full of poor people.

To help illustrate that, on the right hand column I listed each country's ranking in

country	<i>gdp per capita</i>	<i>oil/ (gas) production rank</i>	<i>quality of life</i>
<b>Qatar</b>	12	14 / (6)	27
<b>Israel</b>	17	--	58
<b>UAE</b>	23	9 / (14)	13
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	39	2 / (9)	49
<b>Kuwait</b>	43	10	53
Bahrain	46	37	48
Oman	62	20 / (18)	52
<b>Turkiye</b>	64	49	80
<b>Iraq</b>	115	7	134
Lebanon	118	--	129
Jordan	121	--	76
<b>Iran</b>	131	8 / (3)	132
Egypt	134	21 / (16)	104
Palestine*	152		125
Syria	180	48	**140
Yemen	192	54	**174

see the very bottom of this essay for notes on sources and explanations of \*, \*\*, and --

a "quality of life" index that measures 45 factors related to things like legal rights, healthcare, political and economic stability, costs vs. income, and safety. Clearly, the supposed wealth of a country often doesn't line up with its quality of life. Israel, second on the list by GDP, is second to last for quality of life in the first tier.

What emerges from the GDP ranking is a list clearly divided into two different groups. The first tier all belong to the top third of wealthiest countries in the world. Then between Turkiye and Iraq there is an immense gap, as the GDP ranking plunges from 64th place to 115th place.

The middle column in my chart shows each country's global ranking in oil production. Since natural gas makes up a smaller portion of the world energy market, I only included gas production if the country is in the top 20. A quick fact: in terms of total fossil fuel production (oil, gas, and coal) Iran is 3rd place in the world, Qatar is 6th, Saudi Arabia is 9th.

It helps to mention that Turkiye, Israel, and Iran probably have the most dynamic economies of the sixteen countries on this list, meaning they have multiple economic sectors that can generate significant revenue rather than being fully dependent on fossil fuels. Countries like the UAE, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia are doing their best to use oil profits to jumpstart a significant tech, manufacturing, or finance sector.

I put the country's name in bold if it is an energy superpower or a significantly dynamic economy. What jumps out now? There's only a moderate correlation here. One of the three most dynamic economies is in the bottom tier, and the greatest energy superpower is also in the bottom tier.

Guess what?

That top tier consists exclusively of US allies. Countries in the region allied with the US and non-belligerent towards Israel are the wealthiest. The countries that had an oppositional stance towards Israel until after the 2nd Israeli War (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan), and the countries that Israel currently sees as enemies are the poorest.

Iraq might have had as dynamic an economy as Iran, but the US has waged two wars against it since 1990, heavily bombing all its cities and killing well over a million people. With control of the Suez Canal and significant oil reserves, Egypt might have good economic prospects, but it faced neocolonial invasions by Britain, France, and Israel in 1956 and has been ruled by US-backed dictators or military juntas since 1981, putting it in a perpetual state of conflict with its own population and isolating it from regional Pan-Arab networks. Lebanon was once an international tourist destination with a high standard of living and decent

economic prospects, but Israel has pounded it into the dust.

This next chart is much simpler: which countries have powerful militaries capable of offensive action against other countries in the region?

1. Turkiye +
2. Israel +
3. Iran +
4. Egypt -
5. Saudi Arabia -
6. Iraq -

The + marks a country that might choose to start or expand a war because their military/political power has a relatively stable basis. Countries with a – are extremely unlikely to start a war and probably don't want major wars anywhere near them because of a major economic vulnerability (Saudi Arabia) or because their populations are highly divided (Iraq) and/or potentially rebellious.

It's safe to say that Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia are dependent on military aid, military cooperation, and arms sales from the US (and from Germany, in the case of Israel), whereas Turkiye benefits from NATO membership, which includes access to US military technologies.

So let's get to the point: to have a strong geopolitical position in West Asia, a ruling class needs US backing and it needs to avoid any hostilities with Israel. Any country that borders Israel is shit out of luck, since Israel will steal the territory it has a self-declared right to and then organize destabilization operations to keep that country weak.

Key questions that will impact events in West Asia over the following decade are:

- Will the gov. in Iran remain in power?
- Will the Erdogan government in Turkiye remain in power, and in either case, will it choose a more proactive role in the rest of West Asia that goes beyond preventing Kurdish independence and supporting fundamentalist groups from a distance?
- Will Syria or Iraq develop unified, stable governments capable of exerting pressure on the region, and if so what will the ideology and strategy of those governments be?
- Will Egypt, Saudi Arabia, or the UAE improve relations with China, allowing them to act with more independence from the US, and if so, will they stop protecting Israel?
- Will a new direction emerge in the Kurdish independence movement? What alliances will they seek?
- Will the European Union or some alliance of powerful players like Germany, France, and the UK, gain the capacity to apply unified and effective strategies on the world stage in a way that gives Israel more security but also places a limit on their genocide and aggressive actions?

For more on the calculations facing West Asian governments, read "Asia and the Iran Conflict" from the Middle East Council on Global Affairs. [And please keep in mind I will often link to or recommend articles from the enemy press, from institutions fighting to protect colonial capitalism and the State. I do so to help spread an understanding of how they are thinking and operating.]

## Geopolitics for the Rest of the World

However:

Alliance with the US and complicity with Israel are also a major liability for governments beyond West Asia.

Why?

- By attacking Iran, Israel has wrecked the oil-dependent economies of its longtime enablers Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Qatar.
- North America is still the top oil and gas producing region in the world. The US doesn't depend on West Asian oil.
- East and South Asian countries do. 80% of the oil and gas that, until February 28, shipped through the Strait of Hormuz went to countries like China, Japan, South Korea, and India.
- The Philippines, Japan, and Pakistan get over 90% of their crude oil from the so-called Middle East. For China that figure is just over 50%.
- International oil prices have been fluctuating wildly, which adds risk factors to economic investment everywhere. Crude oil prices have been staying over \$100 a barrel, marking at least a 30% increase.

The US and Israel are wrecking the world economy and probably speeding up a huge global recession that has been in the forecast for a while. The top competitor to the US for the position of global leader is China. As I've written in several past essays, that doesn't mean China conquers the world. It means that China plays the key role in launching a new, functional, architecture for governing

global capitalism, the way the US did with the UN and IMF after WWII.

China will likely do that, and is already trying to do that, by becoming a center for investment and a chief global investor, making money and guiding capitalist development in other parts of the world, while also strengthening political and economic networks with non-aligned countries like Brazil, India, and South Africa.

How is this affected by the 4th Israeli War? Here's a partial list of countries that are politically, militarily, or economically dependent on the US, but are also being hurt by the war:

- Japan
- South Korea
- Taiwan
- Philippines
- Saudi Arabia
- Qatar, UAE, Bahrain...

Every single country on that list now has another reason to see US power as a liability. They may push to decrease support for Israel, to diversify their economies and energy supplies, to ease out of their dependency on the US, or to look for major investors elsewhere. All of those moves improve China's geopolitical position relative to the US.

Countries that enjoy a medium level of power on the world stage, like Turkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Iran in West Asia, and elsewhere South Korea, Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam, or Brazil, will put themselves in a better position by not falling into open hostilities with the US while also not being beholden to it. Their goal, from a ruling class perspective, is to attract investments that will allow them to diversify their economies and decrease their vulnerability to rising

global instability, and to become important nodes in the production or supply chains for strategic growth sectors in the economy (like processor chips, and Taiwan). Unlike Taiwan, they would also need domestic military capabilities that would dissuade any invasions or aggressive military action by neighbors, rather than relying on a powerful ally that might suddenly withdraw its guarantees of protection.

Let's come at this another way:

With the fragmentation of NATO, chronic stupidity on the part of the US, a historical period in military technology that gives the default advantage to the defender rather than the invader, and growing Chinese power, it's a geopolitical situation in which mid-level powers (like Saudi Arabia, as well as Turkiye, Iran, Brazil, etc.) have more options for patronage. They don't need to make permanent pledges of allegiance to one bloc or another, as during the Cold War. Their allegiance is a more valuable commodity, they can give it and retract it on a case-by-case basis, meaning there is a much richer strategic game they can play.

In other words, the defensive advantages of current day warfare, the political fragmentation of NATO and the USSR, the emergence of China as another contender, and the shift of investment to the Global South means that "non-aligned countries" are in a much better position than they were during the Cold War. I don't say this in any kind of romantic or optimistic way. Their chosen tools are the State and capitalism, meaning any outcome will be steeped in oppression and extraction. I also think the political and economic leaders of all these countries know and embrace that, whereas in the '60s and '70s and least some leaders—from Cuba to Ghana to



*Flames consume a building after an Israeli strike on Iran*

Tanzania to Indonesia—truly believed in political proposals that were supposed to be emancipatory, from pan-Africanism to state socialism. These days, I think the only people who believe that the State can be a tool for good are academic Marxists, First World cults like the PSL, or people anywhere who believe someone needs to come and save them.

### **Geopolitics for the US and Israel**

Let's get back to Israel. Writing shortly after the beginning of the war on Gaza, I predicted that Israel's aggressiveness and hubris would damage its own interests, leading to capital flight, war damage, and political instability. In the short-term, I was wrong: I didn't imagine the effectiveness of Israel's covert operations that decapitated Hezbollah, and I didn't predict the sudden collapse of the Assad regime in Syria, followed by a new regime that has increased intra-Muslim and intra-Arabic conflict while, for now at least, enabling Israeli belligerence. Israel suddenly

went from being hemmed in on all sides to having a single armed opponent: Iran.

But by trying to finish off Iran with US support, we're again seeing the limits of Israeli power. As long as a couple bombs and missiles are still landing in Israel, it becomes a less attractive site for capitalist investment. Eventually, the US economy will collapse and eventually an administration that is not pro-Israel will win an election. I'm not optimistic enough to believe that Germany will ever stop being German (i.e. pro-Israel and pro-genocide), but sooner or later Israel is going to lose a big chunk of its military budget while it continues to make more and more enemies. Those who are shocked by torture and genocide will be concerned by the unending atrocities, whereas politicians and investors wring their hands over the destabilizing effects of Israeli government policy.

Political support for Netanyahu's government, inside Israel, had been

decreasing—not because of opposition to genocide but because of Netanyahu’s corruption and the economic costs of the war—but the assault on Iran has led to a resurgence of patriotism, signalling that the country may be locked into a geopolitical strategy that will hurt their own interests. That is a larger pattern: rightwing governments and rightwing societies, even though they wave the flag the most, tend to get confused by their own ideologies and enact strategies that actually undermine the basis of their power. It’s certainly happening to the US under Trump. And Israel’s version of white supremacy will continue to make Israel its own worst enemy. Tel Aviv needs greater regional cooperation to crowd out actual competitors like Turkiye and Iran, and it needs to put the brakes on settlers in the West Bank to attain a minimal semblance of concern for human rights and international law, but the entirety of Israeli society ensures a racist, Islamophobic, anti-Arabic government that is either Right or far Right, continuing to make enemies and destabilize the region.

As for the US, boy oh boy. I get the feeling no one in the higher levels of the Trump administration even knew what the Strait of Hormuz was when they launched this war.

Numerous US troops have been reporting that their field commanders have been instructing them to view the current war as a religious war against Christianity’s longtime foe, Islam. Likewise, a small but significant number of US billionaires like Peter Thiel espouse Christian fundamentalist beliefs. This is bad news for the US state and capitalists. Fundamentalists usually carry too much ideological baggage to be effective state planners, and capitalists on the whole definitely prefer democracy to some kind

of fascistic or religious dictatorship. Currently, there is little risk of an imminent fascist takeover in the US, but as those low and mid-level officers become high-level officers, gradually replacing the current leadership of the US military, that risk increases. It’s also bad news for Israel because the majority of Zionists are antisemitic Christians who only want a Jewish state in Jerusalem because of obscure prophecy. In their minds, as soon as Jebus returns in the Second Coming, all Jews go to hell. Not a great ally.

I’ve said it before in more detail: the US came out of World War II on top, with the strongest alliances, the best geopolitical position, the strongest economy, and having suffered the least damage. That allowed them to engineer the next world system, especially since they had the full cooperation of the UK, the architect of the world system that ended with the chaos of World War I.

After winning the Cold War, the US had the entire world on a platter to exploit or “develop” as it chose. Bush II threw the entire thing in the garbage by invading Iraq and since then every administration in the White House has contributed to the systemic chaos that is breaking apart the world system that benefited the US the most. Democrats have contributed by being mediocre intellectuals with no coherent strategy. Republicans and at least half of the billionaire class have accelerated it by being absolute morons and psychopaths with the egos of Gods but neither the power nor perspective to pay the piper.

This could be a good thing. Fuck all of them to hell and back. The problem is, without strong revolutionary movements, all that will happen is a new constellation of power will arise, imposing a new global architecture.

And smart of stupid, to rule, one must be evil. And I don’t mean that in the Christian sense of a tainted soul. Just that they are willing to cause massive suffering to do what they want, whether they believe it’s right or they’re just looking to enrich themselves. That’s the inflexible nature of the State.

Given this total inability to develop meaningful strategy, it doesn’t make so much sense to analyze their geopolitical possibilities. What comes next will be mostly determined by the strategies and successes of China, non-aligned countries like Brazil and India, and the European Union; and by the pace and exact course of an ongoing ecosystemic breakdown which has the potential to destroy capitalism in the coming decades, but not to liberate us from the State, which is something we have to do ourselves.

### The Resistance

And that is the final factor, our revolutionary movements, which currently barely appear on the map the way they did in 2020 and 2010. Our first task is to understand what happened? What were our weaknesses? What strategic mistakes did we make that caused us to lose so much collective power?

The answer will be different everywhere, and we will only find the answers by looking, reflecting, and conversing, but there will be some patterns. In many places, an answer might be that we didn’t actually have any strategy at all because we never dared get together and talk about a revolution, and we probably don’t even know how to imagine revolution outside the tired false solutions of the authoritarian or reformist Left.

Next, we need to look at the strengths we have that we might not be fully conscious of. We need to think about how to help cultivate

these into tools and weapons of liberation, which means education, collective care, defending or rediscovering the commons and making ourselves a part of them, community self-defense, sabotage, hitting back, and international solidarity.

The first steps we each have to take as individuals, always, but so much of this can only be done in groups that extend beyond friendship circles, beyond single countries or demographics, and even beyond humankind. Find your people. Not online: in the real world. Map out your battlefield. Choose your strategies. You don’t all have to agree—unity, in fact, is the enemy of freedom—but you do need to be able to give and receive critical feedback in a spirit of solidarity.

Then, go beyond who you currently trust. Invite others into this subversive conversation. Cancel your discomfort, find what might bring you together across all the differences, and go for it. Be brave.

### Peter Gelderloos

*\*in many lists of ranking by country, Palestine does not have an official ranking because it is occupied by Israel. To get around this, I list the ranking of the country that comes closest to Palestine in each particular category.*

*\*\*Syria and Yemen are so poor and war-ravaged, no reliable data exists for a quality of life ranking. Instead, I have placed their global ranking for life expectancy.*

*-- marks the countries that have no significant fossil fuel production*

*Here are two pages on fossil fuel production, from this year and 2019, for comparison:*

*- [www.visualcapitalist.com/chart-where-the-worlds-oil-comes-from-by-region](http://www.visualcapitalist.com/chart-where-the-worlds-oil-comes-from-by-region)*

*- [www.weforum.org/stories/2019/06/mapped-fossil-fuel-production-by-country](http://www.weforum.org/stories/2019/06/mapped-fossil-fuel-production-by-country)*

## CLAREMONT ROAD REMEMBERING THE STRUGGLE.

93 year old Dolly Watson loved number 92 Claremont road, she was born there and had lived there all her life. One day the government decided it wanted to build a link road to the London Orbital, it took 20 years for them to get to work but when they did her entire community was soon torn apart, given mandatory purchase orders and eviction. Soon, she was the only one to remain on the street.

She was soon joined by hundreds more, an autonomy was declared, and moments of beautiful freedom flooded out. Starting with the struggle to defend an ancient tree In 1993.

The state had declared it's intention to cut down a 250-year-old chestnut tree in George Green in Wanstead. The community was outraged and following a local Lollipop Lady Jean Gosling efforts to rally local school children to stage interventions to raise awareness of the tree's impending destruction. There was public outcry and many actions by protesters and conservation groups to save it took place.

The Battle of Claremont Road in 1994 formed part of a wider wave of anti-road protests in the UK during the late 20th century. These protests emerged in response to an expanding road-building programme, particularly schemes such as

the M11 link road in East London. While often framed as environmental campaigns, they also involved broader conflicts over land use, urban space, and state authority.

Claremont Road, Leyton, became a focal point of resistance. The street had been designated for demolition to make way for the road. Residents were gradually displaced through compulsory purchase orders, after which activists, squatters, and campaigners occupied the remaining houses. Over time, the occupation developed beyond a defensive effort to prevent eviction and demolition.

Bunkers, Treehouses, Barricades, walkways in the sky, lock ons and of course "Dolly's Tower" which was built high above,

Participants altered the physical layout and use of the street. Houses were interconnected, structures were built on rooftops, and obstacles were placed along the road.

According to accounts archived on libcom, the street was effectively transformed into a continuous occupied space, challenging the intended function of the road as a transport route. The boundary between private and public space became less distinct, as both houses and the street itself were used collectively.



Tactics employed during the occupation included treehouses, scaffolding towers, tunnels, and lock-on devices designed to delay eviction. These methods were intended to increase the time and cost required for removal. The occupation was not centrally organised; rather, it consisted of a loose network of individuals and groups, including environmental activists, anarchists, travellers, and some former residents.

Within these movements, there were internal tensions. Accounts on libcom note differences between participants regarding commitment, organisation, and lifestyle. Some emphasised sustained resistance and political objectives, while others were more transient or focused on the social aspects of the occupation. These differences affected the cohesion and effectiveness of the campaigns.

On 27 November 1994, They held a massive party, knowing what would soon fall upon them.

On 28 November 1994, the eviction of Claremont Road began.

Hundreds of cops and Bailiffs rolled in. Dance anthems filling the air from a sound system in the tower. While the defenders were almost entirely committed passive resisters, the police held no such principle. As the hours ticked on, and the frustration kicked in, so did their penchant for violence.

You can find the details elsewhere, it's well worth reading up on the stories from those who were there, from the hilarious to the horrifying.



Dolly had fallen ill before the gestapo made their final pushes and cleared out the street, leaving her to rot in a old people flat, dying in February 2001, a few months shy of 100. She is forever remembered at the “Queen of the Street” by those who knew her.

The anti-road protests of this period were not limited to Claremont Road. Similar actions took place at sites such as Twyford Down and Newbury. For many the active resistance continued on through into June 1995 at “Munstonia” on Fillebrook Road and then ultimately the birth of the Reclaim The Streets movement, which took to occupying streets, holding raves, before disappearing into the night.

Remember these moments, read more about them, learn the lessons, and make more happen, no one else is going to rescue you, get to causing trouble.

*Many thanks to Gideon Mendel for sharing these wonderful photographs with us. You can find these and many more on their website: [gideonmendel.com](http://gideonmendel.com).*





LLD  
17 March 2026

## FAIRY DUST AND TOXIC WASTE AGAINST THE SPECTACLE OF “ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE” AND THE WORLD IT SERVES

### Are My Eyes Still Bleeding

It is April 2026. The U.S. is once again escalating its violence against the people of Iran through continued bombardment of population centers, notably including a school for young girls. The bombing of this school killed 168 people at best estimate, over 100 of them children. The depravity of this violence is matched only by the stupidity of the Trump administration’s incredulousness that a country under bombardment and threat of invasion might use what leverage it holds to enact

economic harm on their enemy, namely that Iran would choke the strait of Hormuz. Within the brutality of the present moment, there is a grim humor to watching U.S. officials stumble around in the dark looking for explanations for how they might have vastly miscalculated their militaristic strategy.

The moments of grim humor are short lived, replaced by images of Israel taking advantage of this war to expand their ethnic cleansing further into southern Lebanon (as they



remain equally committed to their genocidal project against the Palestinian people within their borders and without). Colonial projects are wont to foment and act upon their colonial ambitions whenever possible.

Amidst this ever-expanding offensive, multiple massive tech companies have been in the news for their collaboration with the U.S. military in its project of massacring school children, specifically OpenAI and their competitor Anthropic. This is far from the first time such companies have made headlines as of late, given how desperate their CEOs and billionaire investors are to justify their valuations and secure their path towards becoming vital infrastructure of modern capital and the modern state. Those who stand to gain incredible sums of wealth and power if “AI” were to truly be mass adopted speak endlessly of the inevitability of this technology infecting all aspects of daily life. They sell the vision of a utopic future ever approaching on the horizon while the tools they claim will build that utopia burn the world around us, send bombs into children’s schools, and enable the expansion of genocidal apartheid regimes. The hype of what “AI” might one day do for us is used to choke out all criticism of what these technologies are doing in the present, including eroding our ability to think for ourselves, to think critically writ large.

But the imposition of these technologies onto our daily lives is not inevitable. We don’t have to sit back and passively watch as a handful of egomaniacs consolidate their wealth by expanding the already incomprehensible brutality of the state and racial capitalism. We don’t have to swallow the shit they are forcing down our throats with every dollar, every gallon of water, every stick of RAM they can get their hands on. But if we are to meaningfully fight against this imposition, we

must be able to articulate the types of violence these technologies produce and expand.

I am taking the time to write the following observations down, not because my thoughts on the topic are somehow unique. I write because, in a world where our very ability to construct a language of meaningful dissent is actively being stolen from us, I believe it is vital to contribute whenever possible towards the preservation of antagonistic positionalities to the world as it is. As with everything I write, my goal is not to change minds, but to carve out space, to light a small beacon in a vast (and often frighteningly dark) sea. My hope is that such a beacon may proliferate, in word and more importantly in action. I leave the decision of that proliferation up to you.

### Machines and Intelligence: Against the term AI

Before I attempt to outline the various horrors enabled and expanded by the technologies that have come to be known colloquially as “Artificial Intelligence”, shortened to “AI”. I want to argue against the use of this term. First, this term is purposefully vague so as to collect disparate (albeit related) technologies under one umbrella. This collection allows the developers of individual technologies (say the Large Language Models powering ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, etc.) to evade meaningful critique by hiding what their product actually is behind a billboard covered in the science fiction of what it may or may not become. It is hard to hit what you cannot see, harder still to strike against what is purposefully obfuscated.

For the purposes of this zine, I will be focusing mostly on Large Language Models (LLMs), the technology powering the chatbots primarily sold as the “Artificial Intelligence” science fiction has long promised. I put

“intelligence” in quotes because to call these technologies “intelligent” is, too, a purposeful obfuscation as to what mechanisms are working behind the scenes. The companies peddling LLMs desperately want you to believe that they have created sentient, genuinely thinking (and perhaps even feeling) beings. They want you to believe that the machine with which you are interfacing is actually just like you, maybe even more like you than any existent physical person. They need you to believe this to hide the fact that they expect you to base your life around a glorified (proprietary) calculator, albeit one that has the ability to adapt its algorithm based upon the data fed to it (a process known as machine learning that has been used in computational research for decades).

At their core, LLMs take input, word or image, and assign numerical values to those inputs. Through a complex statistical algorithm based upon all of the data that the model has been trained on, the LLM then iteratively produces a numerical output by determining the likelihood of a given number sequentially following the last. This numerical output is then translated back into words or images depending on the context. LLMs do not think, they employ an incredibly intensive statistical algorithm that identifies and amplifies patterns in massive data sets and utilizes those patterns to engender the illusion of conversation.

I will not go into the details of the history of machine learning or LLMs specifically here but I highly recommend you take the time to learn a bit about that history. The conceptual framework of LLMs has existed for over a century, and the first machines making use of the machine learning that would enable LLMs came about in the 1940s and 50s. These are not new technologies or ideas, they have just finally found enough data (thanks

mostly to the internet) to be trained well enough so that the smoke and mirror show holds up under scrutiny (anyone who tried to ask ChatGPT to multiply two, three-digit numbers back in 2023 knows how quickly the illusion of intelligence can be broken).

The more insidious reason “intelligence” is so painstakingly used to describe LLMs is in order to justify the incredible costs of the technology by likening the machine to some set of human characteristics, and in turn objectify the human as machine. Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, frequently refers to humans a no more than complex machines so as to insinuate that if you wish to criticize the environmental impact of ChatGPT you must first criticize the energy wasted training humans who aren’t even as efficient as his beautiful machine.

Given the above, I will try to avoid using the terms “AI” or “artificial intelligence” throughout the rest of this piece, opting instead for the specificity of LLM when necessary or simply “machines” when I’m more willing to let my luddite nature shine through. The sections that follow will attempt to offer a brief glimpse into the numerous violences enacted, enabled, and expanded by LLMs, either in their production or in their utilization.

### **Forest Fires and Poisoned Wells: Environmental Destruction**

The criticism most frequently brought up regarding LLMs is their environmental impact. I wish to address this first due to its prevalence but also because of how easily it is often handwaved away by the proponents of LLMs. This handwaving is often done when deflecting criticisms of how much energy is used in an individual query of their machine. This deflection works because an individual query, in the grand scheme of things, doesn’t

use all that much energy. The rule of thumb is that a ChatGPT query uses about 10 times more energy than a google search. Even though an order of magnitude increase in energy consumption is meaningful, given how little energy a single google search uses, this implies that the energy used by a single ChatGPT query is also relatively small.

The obvious counter to this deflection is this ignores the fact that something small on an individual basis may have an outsized impact when scaled out on the order of world populations. This holds especially true within the context of an industry attempting to force LLMs into all aspects of daily life where it is expected that an individual may make hundreds of queries in a given day. This deflection is also undermined by the fact that companies like

ChatGPT do not serve as simply a public utility where their primary customers are individuals seeking to perform a few queries a day, but rather corporations or governments seeking to use LLMs to streamline massive projects or initiatives. These entities are using LLMs constantly, at mass volume, to perform much more complicated tasks than the average individual, meaning the energy consumption is much higher.

All of this is just the energy cost of utilizing the published version of an LLM which pales in comparison to the energy cost of training these models. It is the training that is driving the construction of thousands of data centers around the world because it takes an incomprehensible amount of computing power to plow through every single post ever written, image uploaded, video recorded, etc

The most immediate cost of these data centers is their water consumption. Running millions of CPUs necessitates cooling systems requiring

millions of gallons of water daily. A large data center can use as much water in a day as a town of roughly 50,000 people. To make matters worse, these data centers are often built in areas where water is already scarce, meaning that the water they are wasting is even more desperately needed by the people actually living there. Here is where I would like to remind you that people need to drink water in order to survive. At best, this water is wasted in order to train ChatGPT to make a more accurate ripoff of a Studio Ghibli film, and at worst making for more accurate drone strikes on school children.

It has been estimated that by the end of 2026, data centers will account for nearly 6% of total energy consumption in the U.S. In order to counteract this energy consumption, many areas have turned to increased fracking to access natural gas. The costs of living near fracking sites have been well documented but the highlights are undrinkable water, increased rates of cancer due to air pollutants, and other adverse health effects. Aside from the link to fracking, data centers contribute to local air pollution directly via their backup generators primarily running on diesel. A less studied, but increasingly common complaint of those living near data centers is noise pollution. This noise pollution causes chronic migraines, disrupted sleep, chronic nausea, chronic vertigo and numerous other adverse health effects. With little surprise to anyone familiar with the foundational principals of racial capitalism of the U.S., data centers are much more likely to be built in poorer and predominately Black and targeted nonwhite communities, meaning these adverse health effects are borne disproportionately by the racialized poor.

Proponents of building more data centers will also attempt to sell you the myth that these centers are only being built in areas

that were not previously being used. This is a myth that maintains the colonial relation built into the bedrock of this country from inception that if land is not being utilized in the name of racial capitalism that land is useless and must be transformed. This is seen most clearly in how developers speak of deserts or of swamps or marshland. Because such areas resist attempts at development, they are often treated as hostile territories in need of conquering. The terraforming of an existent ecosystem into a concrete slab is sold as a victory for human progress, with the cost to native plant and animal life rarely worth a passing mention.

In a world already bearing the scars of more frequent and more powerful wildfires and hurricanes, this explosion of demand for more fossil fuels and more pollutants flooding the atmosphere can only accelerate the already existent catastrophe of climate change. Unfortunately, those who stand to gain from these data centers are able to insulate themselves (or at least they believe they can) from this catastrophe via the incredible wealth such data centers help them extract.

There is a danger in focusing too tightly on the environmental cost of LLMs, however. When we speak almost exclusively of fossil fuels, of energy consumption, of water wasted we cede rhetorical ground to those arguing for the mass adoption of LLMs. We unintentionally cede that if there were some way to curtail the pollution and the energy waste then the mass adoption of LLMs might become a neutral or even a positive act. Because of this danger, it is vital that we become adept at articulating the many other violences of LLMs that cannot be so easily dreamed away.

### **Every Camera Is a Prison Guard: Mass Surveillance**

Beyond environmental catastrophe, the companies behind the most prominent LLMs are deeply enmeshed within the systems of mass surveillance running rampant around the world. Companies like Flock Safety utilize these technologies to offer law enforcement agencies real-time direction as to how better target the subjects of their brutality. The most visible of this phenomenon is ICE utilizing Flock Safety systems to determine what neighborhoods to target for raids, when to target them, what type of resistance to expect, and specifically who might put up a fight.

For their partnership with ICE, Flock has caught considerable flak. Unfortunately, many who criticize Flock fail to see the dozens of other companies (Pushpak, Deep Sentinel, hell even Motorola is getting in on the action) offering similar services, but with a bit more discretion. These companies sell the dystopic fantasy of a world without crime, a world in which everyone is so aware of their being observed, that no one would dare move against the status quo. The goal of these companies is to turn as much of globe as possible into a minimum-security prison.

In fairness, this has always been the goal of surveillance systems. An aggregated, searchable database of all surveillance footage is the wet dream of any police precinct or district attorney. However, until recent advances in LLMs there was simply too much data for a group of people to effectively comb through manually. No team of investigators could possibly identify all of the relevant cameras which may have captured the footage they need, attain the necessary warrants to view that footage, and actually spend time carefully reviewing that footage all within the timeframe necessary to either bring a charge against their target or present evidence at trial.

But with companies like Flock, suddenly that disconnected constellation of individual surveillance apparatuses becomes a single interconnected web. All of the data collected by that web is aggregated into a navigable database, and with the aid of LLMs that database becomes easily searchable for precisely the information that suits the cops in a given instance. Maybe they need all surveillance footage in the vicinity of a demo that they anticipate might involve activities deemed illegal. Or maybe they want to map the social network of an entire community, see who spends time where and with whom, understand the weekday driving habits of an individual so as to be notified when those patterns break. Based on your spending habits, your driving habits, the top stories in the current news cycle, they can predict what actions you might take and how best to police you.

Such capabilities are frightening enough even if one believes in a system of law, but for those who understand that the forces of policing and imprisonment have always acted at their own discretion in service of racial capitalism, these capabilities border on catastrophic. The prison (in the traditional sense) populations will grow, and they will grow in the racialized, gendered, and classed ways they are always growing. Those who exist in ways deemed unproductive within, or antagonistic to, the regime of racial capital will be more easily targeted and captured.

For those who understand themselves to be part of the project of unmaking this world built on carceral logic, the present is grim, but it is not lost. At the moment, it is people who need to actually carry out the violence of policing, capture, and imprisonment. So long as that remains the case, there will always be cracks to exploit in the process of sending every brick from every prison and border wall to the bottom of the ocean.

For those who have not considered themselves a partisan in the social war for, or against, imprisonment up until this point; know that there is no way out of this hellscape of mass surveillance that does not root itself in a politic (or anti-politic if you prefer) against prisons in their entirety, be they brick and mortar, or the web of surveillance equipment and LLM supported databases. We are where we are because the logic of incarceration is a dominant paradigm, and so long as it remains such a dominant paradigm, we will always end up back here one way or another.

Every detention center is a prison, and every prison is a concentration camp.

This web of surveillance expands with the inclusion of data sets aggregated by the likes of Oracle or Palantir, which work to combine the infinite scraps of data we leave behind everywhere we go. What cell towers did our smart phone connect to. What websites have we given our email address to. What do we buy, how often do we buy it, how do we pay for it. Nearly every point of interaction with capital leaves behind a footprint that two decades ago would have been a waste of time for anyone to take note of. But when collected in mass and fed to a machine specifically designed to highlight minute statistical trends these scraps sharpen into nodes that, when connected with other scraps, offer both jailer and salesman a more intimate profile of us than previously conceivable.

The implicit threat (though increasingly explicit) of these webs of surveillance is not only that transgressions of the status quo will be more easily punished through legal systems but also in the financial systems. Rental management companies could reject your application because they used LLMs trained on the rental history of every person in your city to predict your likelihood of being late

on rent, of breaking your lease, of submitting more maintenance requests than the landlord cares to service. Any potential employer could make similar assessments associated with your likelihood to request time off, to get sick, to move slower than they want. The grocery store you frequent could use these technologies adjust the prices of your food right to the limit of what their choice of LLM predicted you'd be willing to pay.

Given the trajectory of all aspects of our lives moving into the domain of speculative finance, any place where additional profits could be squeezed out of us will see the adoption of predictive technologies to maximize those profits. The web of surveillance we find ourselves tangled within ensures those with the necessary purse the most accurate predictions.

### **The Machine Doesn't Give a Shit About Consent: Sexual Violence and Bodily Autonomy**

Tied into the web of mass surveillance capabilities enabled by the proliferation of LLMs are expansive and terrifying new domains of attacks on bodily autonomy. The most prolific of such attacks is how xAI's Grok was weaponized to mass sexually harass and intimidate women on Elon Musk's X platform. With a simple query users could prompt Grok to generate sexually explicit images of any user at any time, making the platform (already in a league of its own for misogynistic vitriol) a hub of sexual violence, often targeting children.

It is not surprising that LLMs would be most readily adopted and utilized by individuals who have always been searching for an entity they have total domination over, that they can bend in whatever way they need to fulfill their desire of the given moment. The proliferation

of sexual violence on X is but the logical expansion of a world built on misogynistic violence. While this violence is foundational, the ways in which LLMs enable its expansion cannot be overstated.

Even when not wielded directly against specific women, LLMs serve to reinforce misogyny (and every other system of domination) through their sycophantic nature, casually deferring to the pre-existing beliefs of their users. Combine that sycophantic nature with an explicitly sexualized chatbot and you have a recipe for encouraging a dopamine-trained reinforcement of any number of violent predispositions towards the target of a user's sexual desire. The concept of consent becomes increasingly foreign as the user's sexual desire grows increasingly alienated from either a genuine exploration of self and/or a consensual exploration with (and of) another who is understood as an autonomous being, not simply an object of desire. Consent is already something most men have only an incredibly surface-level grasp on, these technologies only erode from there.

This alienation and associated enforced-disregard for consent is not unique to sexually explicit chatbots, a similar line of critique can (and has been made) of how the majority of pornography is produced and consumed. However, through its being a much more interactive process that simulates actual conversation, the alienation and disregard experienced is more intensely reinforced.

Entire books can, and likely will, be written on the collision of misogyny, sexual violence, and Large Language Models. Perhaps I will try to write more extensively about this dynamic myself in the future, but at present I'm still struggling for a foothold into just how to articulate all of my thoughts on this collision. Unfortunately, this is far from the

only way in which Large Language Models undermine the bodily autonomy of those most frequently targeted by misogynistic (and more specifically) transmisogynistic violence.

As stated previously, LLMs rely on increasingly robust and extensive data sets on which to train. One area that has yet to be fully tapped is medical data. Companies such as Oracle are trying to test the waters of how they might be able to profit by leasing or selling such data to companies like OpenAI to train their LLMs. Proponents of such deals wish to sell you on the idea that by selling such personal data they will enable the future of medicine, perfectly attuned medical care for each individual backed by the most powerful statistical algorithms known to man.

Ignoring the obvious fact that the vast majority of people in this country struggle to afford medical care to the point of not getting it at all, the U.S. is actively waging simultaneous wars against the individual's reproductive autonomy and gender identity. In both of these contexts, the use of personal health data to train LLMs would likely have dire consequences for those seeking medical care. There have already been instances of women being arrested for crossing state borders seeking to terminate a pregnancy given the proliferation of bans on abortions in state legislatures. Similarly, many states are drafting laws to punish parents who take their children across state lines to receive gender affirming care.

Think back to the last section in which we discussed the utilization of LLMs in mass surveillance technologies. Consider the effects of such models being able to predict the likelihood of an individual being pregnant, tracking that individual across a state border from a state in which abortion is banned into one in which it is not, and then

determining that an expected pattern (if the individual were in fact still pregnant) had been broken. For a state in which abortion is illegal, this would likely be enough to trigger an investigation into that individual. The same scenario could easily be imagined for the parents a trans youth seeking gender affirming care.

Given the trajectory of this country, if these scenarios are not bleak enough for you, we could expand them to ever more grim magnitudes, however I will leave that expansion to you. I already live in a country of concentration camps, I will assume I do not need to name one for each marginalized group for you to decide whether you fight for or against them.

**The Machine Cannot Disobey: Militarism**  
In many ways connected to the misogynistic drive for an entity entirely submissive to the commands of its user, LLMs have been readily adopted by the U.S. military. Both Anthropic and OpenAI have had various agreements for their technologies to be utilized by the Department of Defense (though Anthropic is now trying to save face by claiming Claude was used in ways the violated their agreement with the DoD). These technologies have already advised military strategy in the bombing of Iran and the kidnapping of Maduro.

The appeal of LLMs from the perspective of the military is obvious. The promise of a machine that can accurately predict the outcomes of various military operations depending on employed strategy is incredibly enticing, made even more enticing by the machine's inability to refuse an order. At its core, the military already treats the majority of those within its ranks as machines to be deployed at the discretion of their superiors.

Unfortunately for those superiors, no matter how well you beat the individual will out of the majority of soldiers, they are still not perfect machines and they can snap, they can fail, and on rare occasions they can find a conscience and object. Look no further than the frequent acts of sabotage that have been occurring on U.S. Navy ships over the last few years.

But LLMs have no conscience, that do not think, they do not feel, they are merely the illusion of sentience. They are the idealized soldier. While still taboo for many of the primary players in the LLM space, it feels inevitable that these technologies will be incorporated into automated weapons. Honestly it feels naïve to believe this isn't already taking place. No longer does the general need to fear his troops refusing to fire on civilians, risking the success of a given mission, he simply needs to give his turret chatbot the proper description of an "enemy" such that anything resembling that description is killed on sight. Again, this has always been the idealized soldier and many have people have made themselves into such machines, if often requiring some conditioning to fully remove any remaining reverence for the lives they would be ordered to take. But the advent a genuine machine that can understand a command as well as any human soldier and carry out that command without any risk of faltering due to conflicting ethics (however flimsily held to) streamlines the process of military conflict, makes war more clinical, less costly for those who already wield the most wealth and power.

The adoption of LLMs into military strategy offers a paradoxical cognitive distance between the individual and the violence that occurs due to the order he has given. It enables this individual who by all means holds the responsibility for the violence carried out under his command, to claim that

he too was simply following the advice (or the orders) of the LLM. If the LLM offers the most sound strategy based on all available data, who would he be to disobey, to decide against it. And so LLMs offer this prism through which it appears (to those interested in maintaining that cognitive distance) that no orders were ever really given and yet the violence of those orders is still carried out. But because only non-orders were given to non-beings there isn't really anyone responsible for the violence carried out, and certainly nobody to be held accountable.

For those of us who reject the military on its face, who reject the mass death that such an entity necessitates the previous paragraph likely borders on absurd. Of course, orders were given, of course they were carried out, and of course there are specific people responsible. However, I fear that as LLMs become more and more prevalent in our daily lives this fact will become less and less obvious to the majority of people. As more and more people hand over more and more of their lives to these technologies, as more people relinquish their decision making to these machines in hundreds of small mundane contexts, I sense that their fear of being judged as complicit in the violence of these technologies will prevent them from being able to meaningfully identify who is responsible whenever and wherever that violence manifests.

#### **If It Is Hard, Why Do It Myself: Critical Thought**

I want to end with the harm of LLMs that may trouble me the most, despite the genuine horror I feel when thinking too long about any of the above harms. I want to end with a discussion of how the mass adoption of LLMs into our daily lives would likely affect our very ability to reason, to imagine, to think for ourselves at all.

In the three and a half years that ChatGPT has been easily available, it has become near ubiquitous among high school and college students. While I have no love for the existent educational system, I did not envision its collapse coming from the proliferation of a technology that makes learning near impossible. While this might seem alarmist, especially given the amount of genuflection towards LLMs seen in many academic settings, I cannot find a softer way to put it.

For many, young and old alike, it is becoming second nature to "ask Chat" (meaning ChatGPT) whenever a decision needs to be made. Anecdotally, I once asked a coworker how she felt about a movie she had seen recently and she responded by asking ChatGPT to summarize why it was a good movie and I'm still haunted by this exchange more than I can express. But, specifically among those still in school, the lack of any identifiable incentive to actually learn for oneself (mathematics, writing, reading comprehension, anything) means that any inconvenience encountered in the process of trying to learn something begs for immediate relief. Why struggle through your homework when you don't give a shit about understanding it anyway and ChatGPT can now provide reasonable answers to most questions you'll encounter in just about any high school or early college class?

While papers in education journals constantly hedge their criticisms of LLMs by claiming they just know there must be some way to utilize these tools to help students learn more efficiently, studies are already showing that frequent use of ChatGPT is resulting in students suffering setbacks in writing proficiency and reading comprehension. A major issue is that reliance on LLMs in an academic setting is incredibly difficult to

undo once that reliance has been established. If you used ChatGPT to write your first essay or complete your first homework assignment, it isn't going to suddenly become easier to write or complete the second, in fact it is going to explicitly be more difficult.

The frequent use of LLMs in the academic context also acts as a sort of ice breaker to using them more intimately throughout the day. If you're constantly querying ChatGPT while doing your homework why not also ask it what movies are out and which are worth going to see? Why not ask it for recommendations for what you should add to your grocery list? Pretty quickly a user who initially just wanted to skip doing their math homework has now built a certain amount of reliance on LLMs to perform daily tasks.

There is a phenomenon known as cognitive offloading that goes a long way to explain why this is likely happening. Cognitive offloading is the freeing up of mental energy that occurs when utilizing a tool in the process of completing a mental task (such as trying to understand a new concept). Proponents of LLMs will point to cognitive offloading as a positive effect of their utilization and mass adoption, suggesting that when using their chosen chatbot you clearly have more mental energy to complete other tasks. The issue with cognitive offloading is that sometimes you actually need to experience cognitive or mental strain in order to build your capacity and ability to complete more rigorous mental tasks.

In the context of academics, if a student desires to learn the complexities of classical mechanics, but relies on ChatGPT throughout their introductory physics courses, they will have never developed to necessary mental capability of working through the more difficult concepts they would encounter in that more complex course. Their reliance on

ChatGPT early on necessitated their reliance on it going forward.

Now I'll admit I don't really give a shit about academics, but I do care about learning and more specifically I care about our aiding one another to develop the critical thinking skills necessary to meaningfully articulate the ways this world causes us to suffer and find potential paths towards meaningful strikes against that world. This is largely why I care about zines and tabling and distributing literature and encouraging others to do the same. But that project of developing meaningful articulation and analysis is directly opposed by the mass adoption of a tool that explicitly limits and undermines one's ability to critically analyze for themselves.

We already exist in world in which the majority of people are predisposed to accept the narrative of the world around them as power dictates, to bury one's head in the sand only every poking an eye out when things become so obviously horrific that the sand is not enough for most to hide within. But even when one does begin to question why the world is this way, without concerted effort to analyze, discuss, articulate, reexamine many remain trapped in the same frameworks they believe they are escaping. One needs to look no further than the clockwork phenomenon of liberals speaking of centuries long violences as though they are newly emergent and believing that if only the purveyor of the violence changes than it isn't really violence at all.

Combine this predisposition towards accepting the world as it is with the mass adoption of a tool that prevents the growth of critical capabilities and you have a recipe for an ever more predictable populace. Easier to surveil, easier to police, easier to sell shit to, easier to keep entertained just enough

to ignore the genocides and war crimes and ecosystem collapse.

I don't know what the answer is to this unease, I'm not sure there is an answer (and certainly not a singular answer) but my first thoughts are the carving out of social spaces in which there is some common understanding of the harms of these technologies from which we can build or strike out. Beyond that, I believe it is vital that the criticism of these technologies is couched within a broader critique of state and capital that is able to articulate how the development of these tools is necessitated by forces that exist in service of racial capitalism. Stop worrying about whether "AI is going to take your job" and begin to question why you have to have a job in the first place.

As I said at the outset, my intent with this piece is to light a beacon, send up a signal flare that there exists at least one other who looks out into the world and abhors what they see. I do, to my core, believe that the mass adoption of LLMs and the violence inherent to that mass adoption is not inevitable. So long as there exist those of us who refuse this world of death machines there will be a struggle against the tools and systems that maintain and reproduce that world. So long as that struggle continues nothing is inevitable.

If anything in this piece was useful, I thank you for reading. If you found it lacking, I encourage you to use that lack as a springboard for your next writing exercise or discussion with friends. There are so many necessary directions in which to expand these critiques if we are to clearly identify what exactly we're up against. I ask that you help me with that task.

**Andrew Sage**  
**10 March 2026**

## **Q: HOW WOULD INFRASTRUCTURE GET BUILT AND MAINTAINED IN AN ANARCHIST SOCIETY?**

Before I explore how anarchism might resolve this question, bear with me as I lay some definitional groundwork.

"Archist" society—capitalism and government—is built on **authority**, which is the recognised right above others in a social relationship to give commands, make decisions, control resources, and enforce obedience. Authority leads to exploitation and alienation. **Exploitation** happens in the hierarchical relationship between workers and their capitalist or government employers. These authorities have the right to appropriate and command the collective contributions of the workers, thereby depriving them of autonomy and control over their own labour. **Alienation** is the feeling that comes from this exploitation: being cut off from your work, your peers, and yourself.

**Anarchism** is opposed to authority and hierarchy. As both philosophy and practice, anarchism proposes the unending pursuit of **anarchy**, a world without the rule or enshrined privilege of some over others. A world where autonomy, mutuality, and free association form the basis of our society. An anarchist society would be so identified by its commitment through practice to pursue anarchy. A commitment to the art of relating freely as equals.

With definitional groundwork laid, let's establish first principles:

- 1. Human needs are basic and universal.** People need food, clothing, shelter, transportation, utilities, and so on.
- 2. Meeting these needs requires collective labour.** In all human societies, whether archist or anarchist, we are **interdependent**. That means we rely upon each other to meet our needs. No individual can build a railway or power grid alone. Such projects demand collective labour. It is collective labour which builds our infrastructure, whether exploited by authority or organised by free association.
- 3. Collective labour requires coordination.** Most projects require the cooperation of different people doing different tasks. These tasks must be divided, resources allocated, and efforts aligned to achieve success.
- 4. Coordination does not require authority.** Authority may be one way to coordinate activity, but it is not the only way. The task of ensuring that the moving parts in an activity work together smoothly simply requires effective communication. This can be accomplished without stratification or authority.

5. In fact, **authority distorts priorities.** Infrastructure should serve the people who actually need and use it. But when such projects are directed by governments and capitalists, their own elite interests take precedence, often resulting in projects that are inaccessible and/or plagued by corruption.

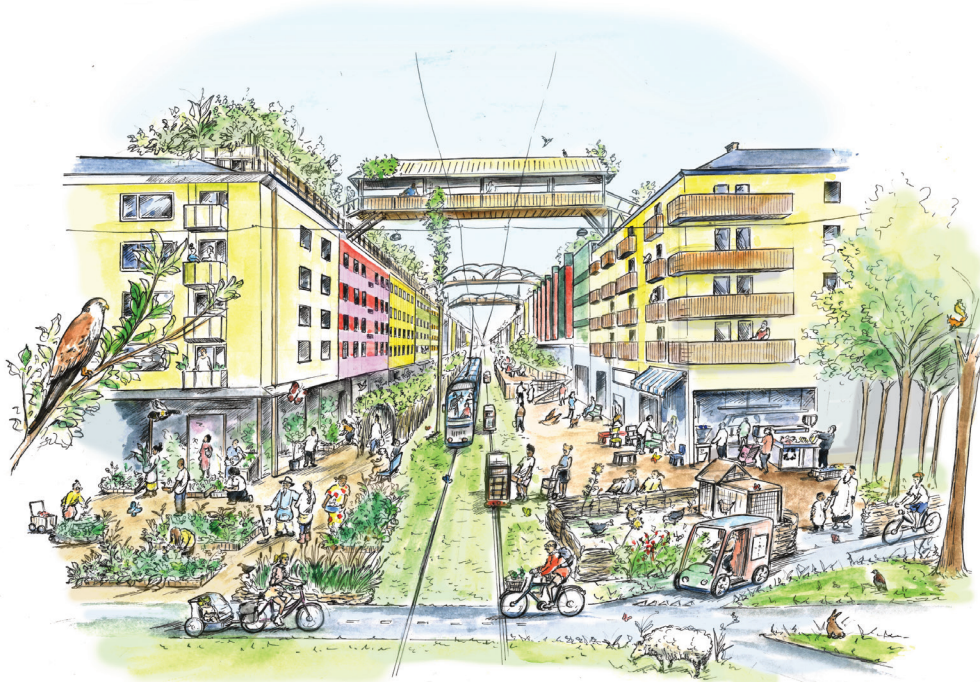
Returning to the question—How would infrastructure get built and maintained in an anarchist society?—the short answer is that in order to meet our needs in the absence of authority, infrastructure is built and maintained by collective labour organised through free association.

So how does free association work?

As the organising principle of an anarchist society, free association refers to the ability of each individual to associate (or

disassociate) with others based on their interests and needs. Thus, the ability to accomplish anything in anarchy is proportional to the will of free people to get it done, associating on the basis of their will. Groups may form, split, merge, and dissolve. People may come and go. Associations may stretch across time, lasting for hours or decades, and stretch across distance, so that people who have little in common with their neighbours beyond their shared space may be more involved in associations that touch every corner of the globe.

If people want housing, electricity, or anything else, they must organise to build it or associate with those building it. Free association creates a direct relationship between desire, decision, and action: the deciders are the doers, and the doers are the deciders. There is no authority in place to dictate what must or must not be done, nor private property restricting access to common



resources. Just groups existing for as long as the people involved find them useful.

Associations may form around the desire to build and maintain roads, housing, or energy infrastructure. These groups are all free to pursue their interests. But interest alone is not enough. To ensure that they can accomplish their goals smoothly, they will need to survey available resources, connect with the necessary supply chains, coordinate with other groups, and consult with those who may be impacted by their efforts. They may federate with other groups of similar interest and develop shared standards: picture long distance rail networks, healthcare associations, or enmeshed energy infrastructure. Through this continuous process of consultation, association, and negotiation, projects are accomplished on a truly horizontal, collaborative basis.

Naturally, there will be **conflict**. In anarchist societies, conflict is either suppressed or manifests in really harmful ways. But in a world based on free association, conflict can be embraced because it is approached differently. When it's not entangled with authority and forced uniformity, conflict and the process of its resolution can be generative. It can help people clarify differences, identify space for difference to coexist, and find mutually beneficial compromises.

Agreements in anarchy are non-binding; there is no authority to impose or forbid actions. This creates a strong incentive to negotiate fairly and find resolutions that are mutually satisfactory. Since the only way to achieve the desired outcome (whether a health clinic or an apartment complex) is through sustained collaboration, people are motivated to resolve conflicts constructively. The absence of authority transforms cooperation from a moral ideal into a practical necessity.

I won't go into too much detail here, as I am still working on a more exhaustive future critique, but I want to highlight that this anarchist, free association model of organisation is distinct from the anarchist, direct-democratic model of organisation. The latter is based on the transformation of a group into a static polity, often tied to territory, and invested with the authority to make decisions through formal procedure which are binding upon its individual members. In the name of "the Community," it enforces the will of the majority upon the minority.

But anarchy rejects the idea that anyone, individual or collective, has a right to command others. There's no governing authority, nor mechanism for enforcement. When organising on the basis of free association, we don't start with abstract groupings, we start with real interests. Rather than asking what "the Community" decides, the focus is on respecting individual autonomy, identifying common interests, ever-adjusting mutually satisfactory agreements, and establishing workable compromises.

This is, as I see it, anarchy in action.

#### **Andrew Sage**

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*The first piece of art is "Railbus" by Jacob Coffin, and second is "Nurnberg" by Dustin Jacobus. Both are shared with permission via Story Seed Library, a library of Solarpunk art and story seeds - helping people imagine a better climate future in which humanity learns how to sustainably live on Earth. [www.storyseedlibrary.org](http://www.storyseedlibrary.org)*

**Peter Ó'Máille**  
**April 2026**

## **PATHWAY TO ANTIMILITARISM**

I am not against war in abstract. There is nothing insubstantial about my opposition to the endless rivers of blood orchestrated by our ersatz masters for their own greed and hegemony. Following this line, my antimilitarism is a concrete resolve, one I have held since the closing days of March 2003 and have revisited and readdressed on a yearly basis since. For this principle I have put my liberty and wellbeing on the line at many points since and have spent countless organisational hours working towards a better path.

There are very specific reasons why I feel this way. I do not have any particular moral obligation towards universal peace governed by a spiritual or philosophical practice, nor do I have any particular belief in the sanctity of human life. If you have a clear “murder is wrong” framework to your moral code, believe in conscientious objection, or are a pacifist through and through, I respect and admire this. I am not such a good man as this.

My position is born of my experience at the window of slaughter, and a rationalism which favours an egalitarian outlook rooted in the autonomy of the anti-authoritarian. I believe keenly that doctrine is the death of solidarity, something of a parasite in our objectivity and one to be confronted through regular earnest self analysis via both comradely discussion and individual reflection.

British society has benefited from a scale of brutality that is hard to get your head around. It is one we have inflected directly and via layered proxies on a good portion of the rest of the world. Tho, I live below the poverty line, it is nonetheless in porcelain comfort, shielded from the reality of the gun. I want to make clear that I know my opinions on war are worth a fraction of those of the victims of the bombs, gunfire, and worse. These are just the condensed thoughts of thoughts of a random British anarchist and his relationship with this most disgusting flex of the powerful.

If you're reading this thinking “psh, I have always known exactly what I think about war” that's fantastic stuff. More love to you. Not everyone can say this. Some repeat the right jargon and anti-jingo without understanding why it is they feel that way. I say this with, no judgement or condemnation. We're all at different stages of our self-education and there is no shame in this. I'm writing for a single reason. I want you to take your antimilitarism from a vague abstraction, to a concrete position in your heart, mind, and actions. One which acts as a driver for solidarity so I hope in sharing these errant thoughts, I can give rise to a deeper introspection.

This text is a heavily condensed train of thought from a larger volume I have been working on here and there for a spell. If it is disjointed at times, I ask your forgiveness.

### **... the Indoctrination.**

Many of my earliest memories are battlefields. Blood, guts, shit and all. Whether it was out on the backies armed with sticks, on the lake with makeshift rafts, or in the garden making dioramas of trench lines with little green army men on top of pasteboards in the garden. War stories formed the majority of television, video games, and board games we'd play. War, and by extension a society built upon a militarist framework, was woven into the fabric of our society. It was -and remains- simply always there, a constant drumbeat, the background noise for young lads who are asked “are you going to sign up” and “what would you do during war?”. It was years before I discovered that kids of liberals and counter cultural types didn't have this and invariably don't even understand just how all consuming this is. Often such conversations result in a crass type of chauvinistic classism, and the reduction of a lifetime of conditioning into a failing of character, of which of course, they've never felt. They make slick remarks about “war fever” and nationalism, but seemingly struggle to understand how disaffected youth are relentlessly pushed and programmed to build tiny factions we would die for, how a desire for community is manipulated into a sense of “brotherhood”, and how a desire to be just is perverted into a duty.

I first started to cotton on as teachers moved on from fantastic tales of knights and castles to how fantastic the British Empire was and that its army is the most noble and civilised, exploring the world and discovering so much wealth to bring home. We coloured in red coats and stuck them on the wall alongside cut out shapes of countries the one with the most red coats around it became the theme for the afternoon's lesson. This way for our afternoon lessons, we travelled the world

together learning all about how we opened up trade in the “orient”, how we stopped slavery, how we raised India to a modern civilised society and then set it free because Mr Gandhi did a peaceful protest, and how traders in Mounties kept everyone safe in Canada, and they were our vehicle to learn about the Commonwealth. Here I discovered my lifelong interest in flags and first encountered The Great War, (which started inexplicably and ended just the same) where all the subjects of the commonwealth came to fight the (arbitrarily) evil, the Kaiser. We were told about the Battles of Verdun and the Somme, and made sure we understood that it was utterly pointless and horrific... but it was fantastically noble and all the Tommies were keen to fight for “king and country”. Hey kids let's sing “It's a long way to Tipperary” and that's us marching in circles in the quad.

A few days later we're given a talk by some bloke all gussied up in his DPM, he's from the local cadets, here to sell us on how much fun they have on weekends camping. The trio of Cadet clubs (Army, Navy and Air) were all pushed, constantly and consistently. Fliers stuck on the reccie notice board, in the chippie, and in the school itself. Come fire a gun, fly a glider, go kayaking, the military is a fucking buzz mate! There were few options (less today), for us it was either them or the weird Christians, coz you know there ain't no fucking youth centre and the Scouts charge £2 a night. In our alienated societies, here you will find brotherhood and camaraderie, for Queen and Country eh? Just like the movies. In every space, the military was sold to us. You could climb all over a truck at the community fayre and all the dads spewed with open gleeful admiration for any serving lad or vet, we'd all climb on the roof as the Spitfires would buzz the estate during the air show, and the sheer almighty roar of the things thrilled every fibre of my being. It's intoxicating.

I was aware that the poverty I existed in meant only a few possible futures. I could piss away my life working in some shithole factory or losing my mind behind an inshops counter, I could do some crime, or I could join the army and be a hero. A hero yes, because that is what each and every soldier is, a hero. Shit life of grind, Shit life of crime, or Be The Best. I was maybe eight when I decided quite firmly that I wanted to drive tanks. Rather amusingly, in some ambiguous UN Peacekeeping unit as I had a nascent anti-monarchist streak and keenly hated the queen.

It was around this age that a bat was first put in my hand and I was told to follow a group of older lads to the park as they were expecting a group from another bit of Manc to rock up. They didn't turn up that day, but a few weeks later there was a massive brawl on some brown land, and everything got tense for a while. The concentric circles of nationalism expanded from "bottom end of our road vs top end" to "our estate vs their estate". These petty fiefdoms loosely defined but passionately defended. I couldn't express why but I would have fought keenly for my street, my school, my ends, my city. These are my people, and in the militarist society, what should be an expression of love and celebration, is a protectionist bastion, the scale ever expanding until the most useful degree whether that's a city, country, continent.

This is especially so in the semi-feral realities of piss poor working class youth. X hate Y, Mancs hate Scousers, the North hates the South, Bri'ish lads hate Eurotrash... heck stick another ten years onto my life and it's Moshers vs Scallies. Always a division. Always an us, always a them. This is sold to us as human nature rather than nurture. As you grow up, the susurruration gets louder and louder and you either accept it and find

your place, waving the flag of your various arbitrary cohorts (almost always developing chauvinistic values masquerading as "pride") The more you live with it, the more it becomes essential to your self identity, the message constantly re-enforced, to question it, is to betray who you are and all of your people. The more you give to this self-identity, this macro-definition of yourself, the more it becomes near impossible to tear yourself away and the more reactive and defensive you become. The autochthonic mythology around "native British" never really fitted me, I was aware I was "half Irish" and like I say, innately hated the Queen, but still, I can't deny how all encompassing the pressure is.

I was saved from sinking into this false-belonging by another innate tendency: being a mouthy shit when being told what to do. I'm no one's skivvy and it was clear that the younger lot were pawns for the older kids who were what, king shit of the estate coz they were older and give me a belting? Worse, they used your mates who had bought in against ya. Do what "I" tell you or you betray us "all". I lacked the language to express just how much that pissed me off, but I recall the feeling immensely. I can't remember the specifics but one of the 'ard lads ordered me to fetch pallets of wood for something, telling me to do some shit I didn't want to do on threat of communal excommunication. I told him he can go fuck himself and got jumped for it. I was nine when I was first called a traitor.

### ... the childhood shift.

On 15 June 1996, I was 10, enjoying an eternal summer in which we were mostly playing Rambo in the woods and down the brook and the IRA parked a Lorry outside Marks and Sparks, gave a 90 minute warning, and blew up my city. I didn't understand the details but there was

a new us and them in the mix. I suppose that it had already been there but only now did I become aware of it. I felt attacked, Britain felt attacked, Manchester needed protecting, my family and friends are here. Why would people be so evil as to just bomb us?

A month later the last Mosquito smashed into the woods during Barton airshow. Shortly after with money from my tenth birthday, I bought an Airfix kit of the De Havilland DH.98 Mosquito. I would go to sleep vividly dreaming about fighting and dying in the Battle of Britain. I was not afraid to die and I'd die like a hero for my people. I was not a morbid child, but I was an indoctrinated one, dying for your country seemed about as much a good way to go out as any other. It was a summer in which Britishness was driving into us like stakes and that presented itself in these ways I suppose.

Part of this was the resurgence in the repeated truism. The IRA are terrorists. Sometimes this was extended to "The (Northern) Irish". That's the repeated line. For months. Come the new school year Ireland is now the second thing the teachers wouldn't talk about alongside AIDS. Which was odd, like we can learn all about the Kaiser's Huns murdering millions but we can't learn about some Irish terry's?

Asking questions and having an answer refused has always frustrated me so off I went to the library in Jubilee park to read about Ireland, it's a mish but it's opposite the oldest pub in Britain and they generally had good beer mats.

This might surprise you but there ain't no DK Eyewitness book for the occupation of Ireland (tho Horrible Histories put out "Barney British Empire" in 2002, buy a copy for ya kid!) so I had to read some "proper" books.

The more I went on the sicker I felt.

I was confronted with the simple truth that each and every one of us had been lied to. There were 800 years of British presence in Ireland and there is barely a stretch of time where some atrocity or another wasn't visited upon the Irish people. All for appeasing some fuck nobs with gifts of land and via industrial farming, devastating the land and the people for profits to be sent back to the coffers. I read about the great hunger, and how the first proper police force, the Irish Constabulary, kept the merchants and shipments safe from the starving, enforced evictions on the jobless, and viciously put down protesting few. I learnt about the Ribbonmen, the Land League, James Connolly, and the Easter Rising.

I began to understand life in Ireland under British rule and as I read on I self educated on Colonial Africa and India, on the transatlantic slave trade, the treatment of Aboriginal peoples of Australia and the First Nations of Canada. It broke me. Literally everything was a lie.

The British Empire is a knife gash across the soul of the world, endless tears, endless pain, all done for "Queen and country", all done more honestly, for profit and power. The empire bought the collaboration of the British working class with injected national esprit de corps alongside a facade of philanthropy, egalitarian benevolence, and charity. As we swung into the era of nationalist self-identity and patriotism, marvelling at our own might living in a floating world of splendour, sailing merrily on a river of blood.

I could not wrap my head around it. Why isn't everyone ashamed of what we did and were still doing? We raped, pillaged, and torched half the fucking world, and I'm supposed to

think that amazing? God Bless Britannia? I love this country of mine, a connection to homeland gives us space and place, but I am horrified at its past and deeply disturbed by now just how casual everyone around me is with this, but how keenly we lie to ourselves and mythologise the past and present, worse the injection of chauvinism and supremacy we constantly repeat to ourselves, the reassurance we are a “civilising” force for good via our hegemonic order, the Pax Britannica.

What we have built a myth around our collective self imagine and more specifically our military. It is a fucking lie. I have nothing but pity and sympathy for the poor bastards who ate it up. The state will tell you everything you want to hear, tell you they’ll make a man out of you, you’ll be the best, drown in the aesthetics of supremacy, and powerful machines and the moment they are done with you, they’ll spit you out and forget about you. They will use you to murder random people around the world, protect despotic nobs and they leave entire countries broken... but you’ll get a pat on the back and a medal pinned to your chest? They’ll fuck you up and forget about you so much, it takes a dozen charities to try and help you through the rest of your life and more pitiful than that, the indoctrination, the sunken costs, the need for it to mean something will mean you’ll still have pride in it, tell yourself you did something noble, terrified of asking yourself “what was it all for? Knowing that the answer is some toff’s profits.

I was coming to understand the game. That long before they’ve got you beasted and broken, trained you to be a “killing machine” and to find pride in it, years before the endless drills have you ready to ram a bayonet through the guts of some other stupid lad in the wrong colour uniform, they have you dividing the entire world into an us and a

them. Our crimes and actions forgiven, theirs pasted up and repeated time and time again.

In living memory our army had callously mowed down innocent people and we’re supposed to cheer when they walk in the pub? Why are we lying constantly? By the end of the year I’d get sent to my room when I raged at Dambusters on the telly. I refuse to wear a poppy and get screamed at by the teacher. I’m asked if I love Britain. I’m fucking done with it. I hate bullies, I hate liars, and we’re the fucking worst of the bunch, maybe not individually, but as a society. I knew this, I tried to explain this, I lacked the words, and no one would have given a fuck even if I did. So I raged into the void.

### ... tearing myself free.

Over time I decided that although I am British and Irish, I was no longer part of this country. The people and the government are not the same thing. I did not (and do not) feel like a lone individual, devoid of connection. I can love my people, our stories, heritage, and culture but refuse be part to the death and the bullshit. I am a person of the world now, a child with no country. I made a point of breaking the soft shell of my existence, this meant library books at first but was later somewhat facilitated by moving when I was twelve to the multi-cultural heart of Manchester.

My friends now, are émigrés from the world over and for some of them, war is anything but an abstract. Amongst them are kids who spent their childhood in Palestine, Kashmir, and Darfur, whose stories were immediate and personal, they illustrated the realities of the theatre I had been acting in. As the years click on, the television blasts sanitised narratives of the Chechen war, the Congo civil war, Kosovo, Liberia, Abkhazia... how many others. I begin to read and read about

wars both as a grand political narrative, but also from the soldier’s perspective. I’m consuming the same endless media but now through a critical lens of my own construction. I am politically uneducated and still very much tabula rasa in my own sense of identity and sense.

I feel so utterly lost. I have no country. No home. Just me and mine. I call it “The bubble” and long before I had ever heard words like “Anarchism” and “Antimilitarism” I write them them down as ugly, ill formed concepts in a notepad I had titled “personal policies”. I’m building up cohesive ideas about myself, my space in this world, and how we might live better. I am also living on the peripheries of social groups, living a careless and reckless life. It takes years of cycling over the same ideas for the principles to become solid and worth standing up for.

Chief amongst these ideas is that there are those who want more violence (and to gain from it) and those who want less violence (and to live in peace). You’ll find a good amount of both in any group, in any political party, peoples, religion, or whatever. I’ve found this simple math true across every tier of British society, from the halls of government to the street rats I’m pissing away the weekend with. Twenty-eight years later and I still think it’s accurate. This is the core principle that comes before everything else. My autonomy, my economic viewpoint, my solidarity, everything.

One day I’m on the 135 facing the back of the bus watching a bunch of scally lads eyeing up a young orthodox Jewish kid, they are tossing crisps at him and making snide comments about curly hair about some shit that had happened in Israel and it’s been all over the news (I think a school bus had been blown up and Israel had responded

hard I’m not sure tbh). There is tension and it’s obvious it’s about to go down. The pretty packed bus can feel it and no one is looking round. I’m trying to steel myself, hoping I’ve got the bottle, when three Asian lads maybe late teens, get on and as they walk past me one of them sees the young ‘un in his little suit and shouts “Fucking hell...” everyone takes a gulp thinking some Jihad shit is about to go down, or at least this kids gunna get a kicking in, and like me they are wondering if they are going to do anything “... it’s my little Jewish mate!” and beams a smile and a laugh. The three of them sit in the rows in front of the Jewish lad, side on so he’s part of the group. There is a good four or five years age gap so I figure they live near each other or something. The Jewish lad is visibly not happy so they ask what’s up, he doesn’t say but they cotton the vibe and pretty soon they are eyeing up the lads at the back who have now shut the fuck up. Everything simmers down, the little pockets disappear into their own conversations. The scallys get off, bus carries on. I’m not particularly listening in when the Asian lads get up to leave and the one lad says “It’s not your fault you know” as they book it out the rear doors.

“It’s not your fault you know”.

I think about these words all the damn time.

We, as individuals, are not responsible for the things done by groups or states we share a common identity with.

“It’s not your fault you know”.

Over the next few days I accept that the legacy I have inherited, that lens others may view me by, that others may want me to cherish. It’s not my fault as a person.

It’s not my fault, but I am none the less

responsible for it, I decide keenly and deeply that I am a man of peace, and further, the bullies, the predators, the men of violence, they are my enemy. I begin a lifelong process of learning about and owning the past and actively fighting for a better future for all.

I am however, still convinced that the best way forward is intervention, preferably at the hands of the UN but anyone stepping in to end violence is worthy and just.

### ... the Profiteers of Death

A year later some dickheads fly some planes into some buildings and the entire western world decides every Muslim is at fault, tho before we get to solving that one, Saddam isn't keeping up his deal with a new pipeline so he needs murdering. We'll use his internal authoritarian suppression and violence (which we haven't given a fuck about until convenient) as the excuse and just to double down on it with some bullshit about WMDs and threat to Britain (Iraq 2003, not Iran 2026).

The "shock and awe" campaign to suppress Iraq started on the 19th of March. On the 21st I was off to see The Mad Capsule Markets, along the way there was a SWP Anti-War demo in Piccadilly gardens, I (like the obnoxious fuck I was) wrote "Pro-War" on my face and went into the crowd, stopping people and asking them what their alternative was. No one could give me an answer, just the endless mixture of "sanctity of life" and "Imperialist West is bad", they seemed so detached from the realities of the horrors which were already happening, war was already there and we were sitting to the side letting his government mass murder innocent people.

As I wrote elsewhere recently "I believed that intervention was needed. If a war to remove him (Saddam) was needed then sure, I'd rather it was some fantastical notion of

the UN Peacekeeping forces I held at the time, but heck, I was positive our boys were professionals, diligent, and driven by a sense of justice. I was wrong."

I went to my gig, had a wild time, went to the same club as always. I had a night of carefree capricious degeneracy. I rocked up home at silly o'clock to sit and stare at the live streamed atrocity that was the intervention I had been so keen to support. This was intervention at the hands of the self-interested and powerful. A noble idea perverted as it always is. Fires light up central Baghdad as people braved the raining down terror to get home to loved ones. In the daylight we were treated to fawning reports from the men being sent in to mass murder and as twilight came once again, the fire.

As the days and weeks carried on, we all watched the furious display of a state imposing its will at the cost of innocent lives it considered collateral damage. The civilian death toll simply now acceptable losses of the enemy. Gotta keep this war on budget. I had by this point developed a nascent internationalism formed from the rejection of governments, by in celebration of the vast variety of peoples. In my view whether you are from Wigan, Brazzaville, Tokyo, or Baghdad you are equal. These borders that divide us are the fantasy of would-be masters, entirely meaningless. As such the bombing of one city disgusts me as much as the bombing of my own.

It pissed me off that this was being done by some self-interested nation states and not the UN Peacekeepers. Like where were the UN, what was even their deal? so I took to reading up on them. Far from my idealisation as a Humanitarian Intervention force, they exist, quite explicitly to further the colonial intentions of the major states of the UN. It's

capitalism and not compassion which drives them, and they are entirely uninvolved in peace when it doesn't suit profit, purpose or political hegemony. This betrayal was on me, and by this time I had already started lore-crafting a "UN from the ground up" as my go to internationalist solution to the violence committed by authoritarian might.

Throughout the following weeks the screen of a sanitised BBC feed was replaced by on the ground footage. They never do show you the bodies. Iraq and subsequently Afghanistan were the first wars to see an uptick of informal media spilling out through the internet and I was the right age, tech level, and mindset to see it all. I don't believe a person can have an ounce of empathy in them and watch these things and call it just.

I love my country, I also despise the state, and I am deeply ashamed of our history of global brutality. I was now also deeply ashamed of it's present. This period following the invasion of Iraq and the endless violence in its wake had a final lesson for me. I could mentally exile myself from being part of the British state all I wanted but in truth, I was still benefitting from their actions and I wasn't doing a damn thing about it.

I had to take responsibility for it, for my inaction. That war and the subsequent occupation served those who would have me call them master. Their "Intervention" was an excuse for occupation, rape, and murder on a scale I find hard to frame in my mind. There is no other truthful viewpoint. This was a war in service of the singular enemy of us all, the bosses, both state and capital. The profiteers of death.

I was still years out from recognising myself as an Anarchist but I knew now keenly, that I am

a person who abhors war and the militarism which facilitates it. These are the weapons of authority, used by the greedy, the power hungry, the hate filled, and the indoctrinated. These are the weapons of the oppressor and they must be resisted at every turn.

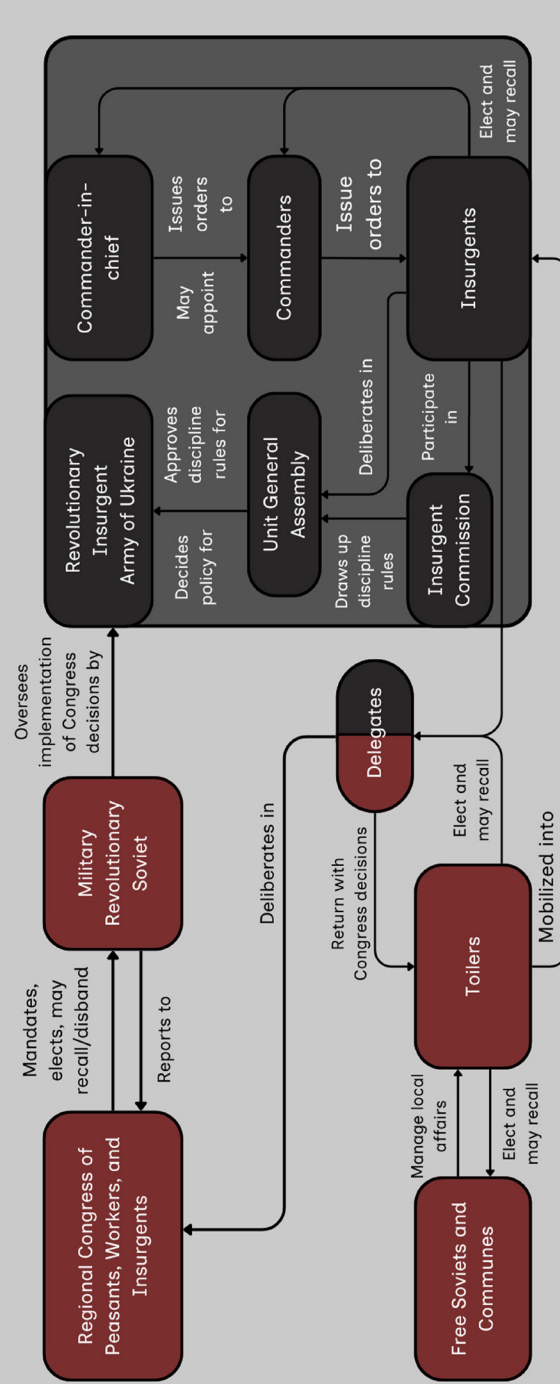
### Peter Ó'Máille

*This journey I went on, only a portion of which I have written here for the sake of brevity, it is one I suppose most have gone on and it's something that has been a living breathing entity in my head for over two decades, from the moments I spoke to fellow children who had gone through some of the most objectively disgusting experiences it has been a constantly loop. Along the way having spoken with people who fled conscription in Isreal, joined militias in the states, fought in conflicts in Rojava, Ukraine, and Myanmar, British vets who long for peace, and those who still believe the lies, with people who have been innocent victims of terror and who have partook in the most horrendous violence on behalf of a state.*

*Each time I am reminded of this pathway and I find myself facinated by those of others. Especially those who fight for a better future. Right now we have folk young and old who are taking a stand against imperial invasions, who are fighting active genocide, who are rallying against Junta forces. Some of these people fight with weapons, some with lock ons, some with marches, some with firebombs. These are all antimilitarists.*

*Marrying this juxtaposed desire for peaceful existance with the apparent necessity of violece in the name of defence was the next period of my (self) eduction and subject of the next meandering passage I will put together.*

## Organization of the Makhnovist Movement (*makhnovskoe dvizhenie*)



## THE ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN ORGANIZATION OF THE MAKHNOVIST MOVEMENT

### Preface

The Makhnovist movement (popularly and semi-pejoratively referred to as the *makhnovshchina*) was a relatively short-lived peasant and industrial worker anarchist insurgency in Ukraine that existed from 1917-1921. The popular history of the Makhnovist movement is lacking, which has led to the claim that the Makhnovist movement constituted, in fact, a centralized state with a centralized military in complete contradiction with anarchist theory. This idea serves the defeatist, statist narrative that bottom-up control of society by the working masses is a pleasant idea, but ultimately impossible. Adherence to this narrative justifies the utmost centralization and makes true revolution impossible. A deeper look into the organization of the *makhnovskoe dvizhenie* reveals its flawed, yet deeply libertarian character.

### Free Soviets and Communes

The February Revolution established soviets (councils), which delegates were elected to by the workers to handle organizational and administrative matters. These delegates were recallable, as a mechanism to keep them accountable to those they represented. Like the Bolsheviks, the Makhnovist movement established soviets as well as communes. According to historian Michael Malet, "... the peasants heard about the idea as anarchist propagandists spread it into the villages ... They respected and admired Makhno, and

were quite willing to go along with his ideas, which, being based on local units such as the village, made sense to them."<sup>1</sup> And according to Voline, an influential anarchist participant in the Makhnovist movement, "... the communes arose from the workers themselves ... The Makhnovist partisans never exerted any pressure on the peasants, confining themselves to propagating the idea of free communes. The latter were formed on the initiative of the poor peasants themselves."<sup>2</sup> The Makhnovist soviets differed significantly from the Bolshevik soviets. As Malet notes, "... for the insurgents the Soviets were the vital base of their ideal society, for the Bolsheviks they became increasingly cyphers covering party rule."<sup>3</sup> This difference can be further seen in Nestor Makhno's account of his meeting with Lenin in 1918:

"... all power, in all areas of life, must be identified with the consciousness and will of the working people. The peasants understand that the soviets of workers and peasants ... are neither more nor less than the means of revolutionary organization and economic self-management of working people in the struggle against the bourgeoisie ..."

... 'Well, then, the peasants of your region are infected with anarchism!'"<sup>4</sup>

Makhno essentially states that power must rest with the toilers, and that the soviets are their organ of self-management to make decisions and coordinate action on a local level. Lenin's dismisses this; a startling admission for someone claiming to represent the workers and peasants. The Makhnovists later published a pamphlet articulating their conception of the soviets in further detail: "... the Soviets should be absolutely independent of all political parties; they should be part of a general economic system based on social equality, their members should be real workers, should serve the interests of the working masses and obey only their will ..."<sup>5</sup> Malet notes that the exclusion of parties was not the same as banning them;<sup>6</sup> It was a given that toilers from different political parties were free to participate in and be elected to the free soviets. Regarding the communes, Voline states that they were created "... for the purpose of providing the necessities of life for the working people."<sup>7</sup> The communes were to handle labor and distribution of resources for and by the people in the commune. Voline compared the Bolshevik equivalent unfavorably: "[They] did nothing but waste grain and ruin the land ... they lived off the labour of the people while pretending to teach them to work."<sup>8</sup>

The free soviets and communes were intended as the organs of local self-governance, but we should appraise how they actually functioned. According to historian Colin Darch, as news of Kornilov's counter-revolutionary coup spread, Makhno seized "seized deeds and certificates of ownership from landowners and kulaki [(rich peasants)] ..."<sup>9</sup> What to do with this was to be determined by the peasants: "[a]t a meeting of the local soviet, the peasants decided that the listed land and livestock should be divided equally, and kulaki and pomeshchiki [(landowners)] should be permitted to keep a share."<sup>10</sup> Soon

thereafter, according to historian Michael Palij, at the recommendation of the Petrograd Soviet, the local soviet "... organized a Committee for the Defense of the Revolution ... the committee decided to disarm all the bourgeoisie ... as well as 'to expropriate its rights to the people's wealth ...'"<sup>11</sup> This is sufficient to demonstrate the basic idea of the free soviet as the organizing mechanism of the toilers to drive forward the revolution.

We shall now examine the operation of the free communes. Palij notes that soon after, "[s]ome of the idealists among the anarchists formed a number of free agricultural communes consisting of volunteer peasants and workers where an elected committee of elders would allot the work alongside their fellow farmers."<sup>12</sup> This supports Voline's general characterization of the communes: "They were based on real material mutual aid and on the principle of equality. Everyone ... had to work, each to the extent of his ability. The organising functions were confided to comrades who could fulfil them adequately. Their task accomplished, these comrades rejoined the common work ... These, sound, serious principles were due to the fact that the communes arose from the workers themselves ..."<sup>13</sup> For more detail on what the work looked like, Darch refers to Makhno's account due to a lack of other sources: "Work in the fields, as well as such domestic tasks as preparing and cooking meals, was undertaken communally, but Makhno claims that individuals could absent themselves whenever they wanted, provided that they informed their 'nearest workmates'.<sup>14</sup> Ultimately, the communes were self-organized: members delegated the task of organizing to those they trusted, and all members worked together in service to the collective good. The attitude of the communes can be summed up by the resolution of one peasant congress: "... land belongs to no one, and only those who work it may use it."<sup>15</sup>

Now that we understand how the free soviets and communes operated in more detail, it is necessary to establish how prevalent they were. These organs could only be fully implemented during "periods of relative peace and territorial stability, as in the spring of 1919."<sup>16</sup> Voline offers us a more specific time frame: "... from December 1918 to June 1919, the peasants of Gulai-Polya lived without any political power ... they created new forms of social organisation: free workers' communes and Soviets."<sup>17</sup> Anarchist historian Alexandre Skirda gives us an idea of the scale involved: "The largest of these communes ... housed 40 families as of May 1919. By May 1st it was to boast a population of 285 (adults and children) and would have 125 hectares under crops."<sup>18</sup> After the free soviets had been destroyed by the Red Army, Malet notes that "[i]here was a brief revival of free Soviets in the short peace of October-November 1920."<sup>19</sup>

### **The Regional Congress of Peasants, Workers, and Insurgents**

The Regional Congress gives off the impression of statism, not helped by how historians tend to characterize it: Skirda stated it was the "supreme authority of the movement",<sup>20</sup> and Darch claims it was the "highest form of democratic authority in the political system of the Makhno movement".<sup>21</sup> Already anarchists reading this may be instinctively wincing at the mention of "authority" being involved in an anarchist movement.

Malet also provides a general description of the Regional Congress: "... [it] was the most democratic and representative way of deciding the questions of the day. Where the local people would directly elect their delegates to the local free soviet to deal with local matters, equally would they elect delegates to the larger bodies. The

possible conflict between the federation of Soviets and such congresses did not arise."<sup>22</sup> The decisions made at the congress would be returned to local assemblies for implementation.<sup>23</sup> The Regional Congress can be thought of as a "Regional Soviet": essentially a free soviet on a larger scale, complete with the election of delegates at general assemblies<sup>24</sup> to represent the local toilers' positions and concerns. At the congress, these delegates would deliberate and make decisions, much like the free soviets. The key difference was in scale: the congress made decisions for the whole of the movement. However, scale does not factor into how authoritarian an organ is. Rather, the crucial factor is where any given organ's power derives from: the party center, or the working masses?

Like with the free soviets, there existed the concern that the bottom-up nature of the congress could be undermined by party politics. Voline made clear that "[i]t was important, above all, that this congress should be different from those called by the authorities of a political party ..., who would submit to the congress ready-made resolutions, destined to be adopted docilely ... and imposed on the so-called delegates ..."<sup>25</sup> The Makhnovists aimed to make the congresses the genuine expression of the working masses' chosen delegates (to the extent possible under the conditions of war). Voline expands on the specific measures taken:

*"1. ... The Makhnovists confined themselves to notifying the villages, organisations, etc. that they should elect and send a delegate or delegates, to a workers' congress ... Thus the population could designate and instruct their delegates in complete freedom.*

2. ... a representative ... would explain to the delegates that the [congress's] ... deliberations and decisions would be absolutely free from all pressure ...

3. ... the delegates should themselves elect the board of the congress, and modify to suit themselves the agenda which was proposed to them ..."<sup>26</sup>

The concern regarding the stifling nature of party politics was not unfounded. As Voline recounted, "... [the delegates] expected to see on the platform men with revolvers in their belts who would manoeuvre the delegates and make them vote for resolutions which had been prepared in advance ..."<sup>27</sup> The Makhnovists' policies mentioned above improved the ability of the elected delegates to freely participate in the congress and fulfill their role as true representatives of the toilers who elected them. In this way, the makhnovtsy established non-party congresses in the same vein as the non-party soviets.

However, the Regional Congress was not without flaw. Malet states that "[f]or the fourth congress, the scale of representation was to have been: one peasant or worker delegate per 3000 people, insurgents and Red Army men one delegate per unit, regiment, division, &c: plus staff and political party delegates. This was biased in favour of the military, most of whose units were less than 3000."<sup>28</sup> Ideally, the proportion of the delegates would be on an equal basis, or even weighted towards the purely civilian population to counterbalance the military's obvious power.

Let us look to the Fourth Congress for examples of the type of decisions the congresses made: "The congress resolved to strengthen, organize, and prepare supplies

for the army ... Each new regiment was to include a staff and an economic-judicial organ .... the congress resolved to organize local free social-economic organizations and commissions ... to obtain "contributions" from the bourgeoisie .... The congress recommended that the Revolutionary Military Council take strong measures against drinking, including the execution of offenders ..." The Regional Congress's decision-making scope was virtually unlimited. It could reorganize the army, decide policy and discipline, create new organizations, and more.<sup>29</sup> But remember that the congress was made up of delegates chosen by working people. As far as these delegates could effectively represent those who had elected them, the congress was the self-organization of the working masses in the same vein as the free soviets. This was an institution structured from the bottom-up on the basis of entrusted commission. The congress was hardly an "authority" in the anarchist sense of the term, with a self-legitimizing mandate to rule over the populace, but rather, an attempt at the total inverse: the working people managing their own affairs.

### Voluntary Mobilization

The Regional Congress' policy of "voluntary mobilization" is controversial; there remains historical debate over whether this constituted conscription. Skirda, likely the historian most favorable to the Makhnovist movement, supports the view that this was not conscription: "... it meant that an appeal was issued to the revolutionary consciences of all concerned so that they might defend their rights and freedom by force of arms, without their being obliged to do so, as was the systematic practice among the Bolsheviks, Whites and Petliurists."<sup>30</sup> Palij provides a relevant proclamation from Makhno: "Why are you not in our ranks? Are you waiting for a Commissar to come with a punitive detachment

to take you by compulsory mobilization? Do not deceive yourself that he will not find you, that you could hide, escape. The Bolshevik regime already proved it would stop at nothing ..."<sup>31</sup> Malet argues the mobilization was not voluntary, but he provides contradictory evidence, the first of which comes from the Makhnovist newspaper *The Road to Freedom*: "Some groups have understood voluntary mobilisation as mobilisation only for those who wish to enter the Insurrectionary Army ... This is not correct .... The voluntary mobilisation has been called because the peasants, workers, and insurgents themselves decided to mobilise themselves ..."<sup>32</sup> This excerpt appears damning, but Malet immediately offers evidence to the contrary: "Surviving leaflets of 1920 are in the nature of appeals to join up, not instructions ... Trotsky had a go at the Makhnovists on this score also: Makhno does not have general mobilisations, and indeed these would be impossible, as he lacks the necessary apparatus: but the partisan who enters the detachment is not at all free to leave. Anyone leaving voluntarily is considered a traitor and threatened with bloody vengeance ..."<sup>33</sup> 1920 was a desperate year for the Makhnovists, a time when one might expect conscription to ramp up; but surviving evidence from that time was in the form of appeals. Additionally, Trotsky, then commander of the Red Army, presents a middle view: the Makhnovists did not practice conscription, because they lacked the "apparatus," but that insurgents could not voluntarily leave. His view is likely the most accurate; there is no record of a specific mobilization organ. Voline supports this, claiming that, "[o]nce the resolutions of this Second Congress were made known to the peasants of the region, each new town and village began to send to Gulai-Polya, en masse, new volunteers ..."<sup>34</sup> According to this, the mobilizing apparatus was the local towns and villages themselves.

Furthermore, as Trotsky states, desertion was punished harshly, but these desertions were of a different character from the mass desertion of conscripts. From the book *Kontrrazvedka*, by Vyacheslav Azarov, punishment of desertion is only mentioned a few times: "After the Starobelsky Soviet-Makhnovist agreement ... Makhno's staff sent an order to all Makhnovist units in Ukraine to cease military activity against RKKA ... Many local detachments refused to carry out this order ... Desertion started from ... the Special Group of the SRPU(m) ... But its commander, the old insurgent Matyazh, was arrested and shot on October 16 by order of KAD .... Yatsenko and Savchenko, who issued appeals on behalf of Wrangel, were shot by order of KAD."<sup>35</sup> In these examples, it's the commanders being punished; contrast this with the widespread desertion endemic to the conscript armies fielded by nearly all other forces in the civil war. Malet notes that in general, the Makhnovists tended to receive deserters from the conscript armies.<sup>36</sup>

What definitive conclusion can we draw from all this? It's clear that the makhnovtsy strongly implored people to join the military. The local peasants most likely took on the task of mobilization themselves, but leaving the army without permission was not allowed. The point was largely rendered moot by the fact that "... arms were scarce in the region ... They had to turn away ninety per cent, of the volunteers who came to enlist."<sup>37</sup>

### Military Revolutionary Soviet

The Military Revolutionary Soviet (VRS or RVS) is another organ that appears authoritarian on its face. Historian Paul Avrich described it as such: "... the Military Revolutionary Council, acting in conjunction with the Regional Congresses and the local Soviets, in effect formed a loose-knit government ..."<sup>38</sup> However, it was similar to

the Regional Congress and the free soviets as an organ made up of elected delegates, according to Skirda: “The congress finally elected a regional Military Revolutionary Soviet which became its executive organ in the interval between its sittings.”<sup>39</sup> Later, when discussing the RVS’s “famous reply” to Dybenko, he writes: “The authors of this reply then set out how and why the Military Revolutionary Soviet with its 32 members, one delegate from each district ... had come into being ...”<sup>40</sup>

Voline explains its origin and purpose in detail: “As a kind of general directing body for the fight against Petlura and Denikin, to maintain and support ... the economic and social relations among the workers themselves and also between them and the partisans, to take care of the needs for information and control .... It was supposed to carry out all the economic, political, social and military decisions made at the congress. It was thus, in a certain sense, the supreme executive of the whole movement. But it was not at all an authoritarian organ ... It confined itself to carrying out the instructions and decisions of the congress. At any moment, it could be dissolved by the congress and cease to exist.”<sup>41</sup> While the Regional Congress was the supreme decision-making body, the RVS was the supreme decision-executing body. This is what Voline means by “supreme executive,” which today carries the implication of unilateral decision-making. The particularities of the RVS can be further seen in its message to Dybenko: “The congress ... was convened in order to lay down the future policy line for activities of the Military Revolutionary Soviet ...”<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, the agenda for the Fourth Congress read: “(a) Reports from the executive committee of the military revolutionary soviet ... (d) reorganization of the regional Military Revolutionary Soviet ...” The Regional

Congress created the RVS, limited its activities, had it report to the congress, re-organized it, and could dissolve it. The RVS made decisions on how to implement policy, which is why the congress needed to hold the RVS accountable. The RVS was undoubtedly powerful, but it could only be considered authoritarian if it strayed from the mandate of the Regional Congress.

A Bolshevik official named Yefimov weighed in on the nature of the RVS’s power: “There was no central organ of government: there was only the Military Revolutionary Soviet which was at once a sort of parliament and central military agency dealing with both military and civil matters. This agency had a wide range of functions, but in performing these, it presented itself only as steering body and had no rights of its own, all power being vested in the local organs. Everything boiled down to each village and each district directing itself with complete independence. Nevertheless, the structure of this illusory power was along soviet lines: there were executive committees, soviets of deputies, where elected individuals would come together and grapple with various, though not fundamental issues.”<sup>43</sup> Yefimov appears perturbed by the idea that the toiling masses should attempt to realize the slogan, “All power to the soviets!” This can be seen in practice around November 1919, where the RVS rendered financial assistance to the impoverished. The following testimony of an Ekaterinoslav resident was printed in a magazine: “We’re only an insurgent army,” said the Military Revolutionary Soviet’s secretary ... “We only came to defend you against violence from any authorities, be they Bolshevik or Denikinist. The rest is up to yourselves, up to your own actions. Organize yourselves as you wish!” The Military Revolutionary Soviet expressed the same viewpoint in an appeal to the populace to

summon a conference that would take charge of the running of the city.”<sup>44</sup> While the RVS and the makhnovtsy in general understood that they would need to organize defense and provide the basis for self-organization, they invited the toilers to take over local affairs as soon as possible. We can see that the RVS was more than a mere advisory board, but it also attempted to reduce itself to that position as soon as possible to allow workers’ self-governance to flourish.

### Revolutionary Insurgent Army of Ukraine

The Revolutionary Insurgent Army of Ukraine (RIAU), numbering around 40,000 insurgents at its peak,<sup>45</sup> is the most obviously centralized organ, with commanders and a chain of command. It was also fundamentally a federal democratic peasant (“rural proletarian”<sup>46</sup>) army. Despite the tribulations of war, the Insurgent Army never lost its class character, according to Malet: “We should not forget the bond of common origin between rank and file and leadership ... They greatly lessened the need for the iron discipline necessary to weld together the disparate elements of the Red Army ... [The RIAU] was a proletarian army at all levels, unlike the Red Army, where it can hardly be said that the proletarian element predominated at a senior level.”<sup>47</sup> Voline describes its federative formation: “... Makhno became the rallying point for all the insurgents [in his region] ... Many detachments of partisans ... joined his groups seeking coordinated action. The need for unity and activity on a general scale was recognised by all the revolutionary partisans ... In this way the unification of the detached units of partisans in the southern Ukraine into a single insurrectionary army under Makhno’s supreme command came about naturally, through the force of events and the will of the masses.”<sup>48</sup> This federal union was still a

hierarchical one: “Although the commanders had local initiative, in over-all operations they were subordinated to the main staff of the partisan detachments of Bat’ko Makhno and to Makhno directly.”<sup>49</sup>

Peter Arshinov, influential anarchist and Makhno’s mentor, laid out the following principles the Insurgent Army operated on: “... voluntary enlistment, the electoral principle, and self-discipline. Voluntary enlistment meant that the army was composed only of revolutionary fighters who entered it of their own free will. The electoral principle meant that the commanders of all the units of the army ... were either elected or accepted by the insurgents ... Self-discipline meant that all the rules of discipline were drawn up by commissions of insurgents, then approved by general assemblies of the various units; once approved, they had to be rigorously observed on the individual responsibility of each insurgent and each commander.”<sup>50</sup>

Each of these principles is worthy of examination. The volunteer nature of the army, at least early on, is well-documented by historians. We have also already made the argument that “voluntary mobilization” entailed the self-mobilization of the peasantry, but that insurgents were not free to leave the army whenever they wished. The volunteer principle of the army was made possible by the popular support the makhnovtsy enjoyed.<sup>51</sup> This popularity allowed them to use unique tactics: “[Makhno’s] cavalry could cover from eighty to one hundred versts a day ... This speed was maintained by exchanging horses with peasants .... he would strengthen his lines by summoning peasants from the villages, on foot and mounted, carrying sticks and scythes to create panic among the enemy by their number .... the partisans would disband, bury their weapons, and mingle

in the villages as peaceful peasants, only to reassemble again when the enemy had passed ...”<sup>52</sup> In general, the presence of the makhnovtsy did not inspire peasant rebellions against them, as with the Red Army. In fact, the Insurgent Army was the peasant rebellion.

Voline corroborates Arshinov’s explanation of the army’s principles, but regarding the electoral principle, he adds the caveat that positions were either elected or “... accepted without reservation (if they happened to be appointed in urgent situations by the commander himself) ...”<sup>53</sup> Malet acknowledges that “[t]his reflects not only anarchist ideals, but the practice of soldiers’ and sailors’ committees in 1917 ...”<sup>54</sup> However, Trotsky rebuked this as a mere pretense: “The command staff and its closest associates are chosen by Makhno himself. It is true that commanders from platoon to regimental level are put up for the approval of the units concerned, but this is a mere formality. In case of disagreement, the final say rests with the senior command, who can appoint whom they see fit. One should add to this that the men have to accept the commanders Makhno gives them.”<sup>55</sup> Palij expands on this criticism: “Like the commanders, [RVS] members were elected, but some were appointed by Makhno ... Makhno and his top commanders made decisions without taking account of the council’s opinion, while other problems were decided by the top commanders themselves.”<sup>56</sup> Voline, a harsh anarchist critic of Makhno in the wake of the Makhnovist movement’s defeat, pointed to the formation of a “warrior clique” around Makhno: “It lost its sense of proportion, showed contempt towards all those who were outside it, and detached itself more and more from the mass of the combatants and the working population.”<sup>57</sup>

However, Skirda defends the democratic nature of the Insurgent Army, ironically citing the Soviet historian Kubanin and Bolshevik official Yefimov: “... according to Kubanin ... ‘Neither the overall command of the army nor Makhno himself truly ran the movement; they merely reflected the aspirations of the mass, acting as its ideological and technical agents.’ Yefimov is of much the same opinion; the detachments as a rule had every confidence in their elected commanders who ... ‘... never reached any decision without consideration of the advice or position of the detachments ... All military matters were debated in common ...’ The highest positions of responsibility ... were subject to rotation and were filled on a rota basis by the most capable and renowned of the insurgents.”<sup>58</sup> We have at least one direct example of the insurgents being directly consulted on a major decision, regarding the final military alliance with the Bolsheviks: “A general assembly of insurgents was called and after lengthy deliberations came out in favor of a compact.”<sup>59</sup> It is difficult to discern exactly how democratic the army was among these competing narratives, but it gives us something of an upper bound for its rank-and-file character. One thing is for certain, in Malet’s words: “It is difficult to see how deterioration in the operation of democracy could be avoided, given the worsening of the military situation ... and, in consequence, the rarer opportunities for exercising the rights of election and control.”<sup>60</sup>

Regarding the principle of self-discipline, Malet paints a strict image: “Exhortation played a large part in discipline, self-discipline being emphasised. Where this failed, shooting was common, and was carried out without fear or favour ... Such decisions leave little room for democracy, but do show a measure of rather severe discipline.”<sup>61</sup> Malet misunderstands the

Insurgent Army’s conception of “self-discipline” to some degree. In this context, self-discipline means the self-discipline of the army. As established earlier, the army collectively decided upon the disciplinary rules, and then strictly enforced them. The rules the insurgents agreed upon arose out of the army’s class character: “Another commentator, Lebedev, took the line that: ‘... Makhno and the Military Revolutionary Soviet strove to preserve the army’s ‘popular insurgent saintliness’; insurgents were shot for looting; and it was forbidden to ‘seize goods, seize flour from mills or change horses in the absence of the peasants ...’”<sup>62</sup>

What should we make of the Insurgent Army? It was definitely an army made up of the working masses at every level; one that maintained a mostly respectful relationship with local civilians. There was a libertarian element, though it was likely eventually compromised due to the needs of warfare. It could be compared to the early worker militias of the Red Army, before the latter was centralized. By comparison, the Insurgent Army’s insistence on voluntary enlistment, elective command, and self-discipline, appears almost shocking. Taken altogether, we have a picture of an army with democratic aspirations; but still, it was an army, with all the power and possibility for abuse that implies.

The authors of the “Organisational Platform of the General Union of Anarchists” addressed the concept of an “anarchist army” well: “While the revolutionary army must of necessity be structured in accordance with specifically anarchist principles, it should not be regarded as a point of principle. It is merely the consequence of military strategy in the revolution, a strategic measure which the process of civil war will inevitably force the workers to take.”<sup>63</sup> Though an army

may be necessary, it is necessarily evil, a point which Voline articulated well: “... even a free and popular army, composed of volunteers and dedicated to the defence of a noble cause, is by its very nature a danger. Once it becomes permanent, it inevitably detaches itself from the people and the world of labour ... it becomes a collection of idlers ... who acquire also a taste ... for the use of brute force even in cases where recourse to such means is contrary to the very cause it purports to defend ... It is in this way that all armies which have become permanent have tended in the last resort to become instruments of injustice and oppression. They end by forgetting their original purposes and come to feel that they are ends in themselves.”<sup>64</sup>

A workers’ army inevitably poses a contradiction between accountability to those it serves and military effectiveness. Defending the revolution requires walking a fine line between both. Fail to be an effective fighting force, and the revolution will be snuffed out. But should the army become sufficiently detached from the working masses, it will then be counter-revolutionary.

We don’t need to speculate on how this might occur. We need only look to the historical practice of all who have claimed the mantle of Lenin.

*Note: the footnotes for this piece can be found alongside the online presentation at [www.organisemagazine.or.uk](http://www.organisemagazine.or.uk)*

**ISAC**  
**MAY 2026**

## **SUPPORTING PEOPLES' RESISTANCE IN MYANMAR**

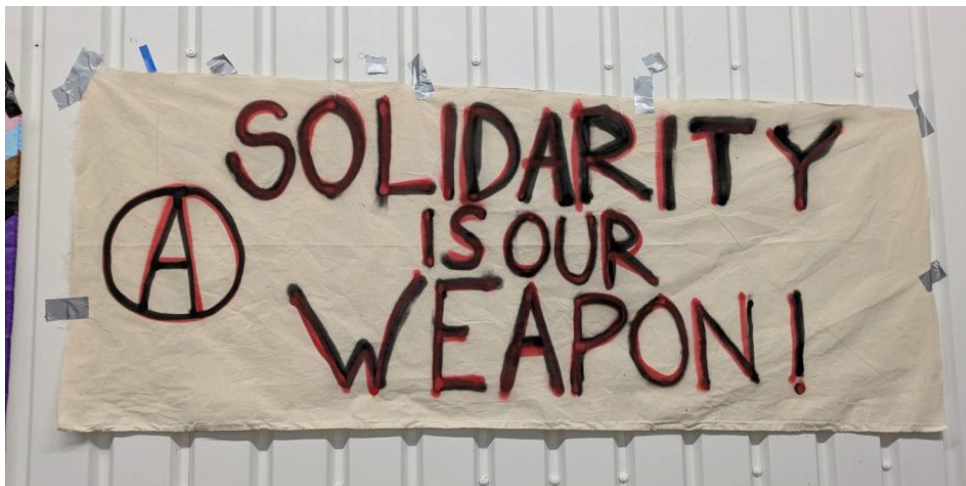
*This piece, written by members of ISAC, was recently in Freedom press and we believe vital to share as wide as possible.*

The conflict in Myanmar is often called the “forgotten war” due to the lack of international attention it receives. To raise awareness, we organised the gig and have also made a zine of interviews with local militants and members of the AIF about revolutionary struggle in Myanmar.

The conflict between free peoples and ethnic groups against assimilation and supremacy, currently a struggle against the fascist “State Administration Council”, has existed since Myanmar’s colonial borders were drawn up in 1948. Since then, various indigenous groups have struggled for their independence from the nation state—not without their

own complex ethnic tensions. Four years ago, however, in 2021 Myanmar’s military seized power in a coup after detaining democratically elected leaders, sparking an unprecedented level of armed resistance.

What started out as peaceful protests rapidly turned into self organised groups of people using sticks, hard hats and sling-shots to fight the regime, and with the pre-existing infrastructures for armed struggle and sheer innovation, transformed into a full scale revolution. A revolution which is closer than ever to toppling the historic power of the military, a power that has been present ever since the British colonisation of Burma in the 1800s. If the movement for freedom wins in Myanmar, we can use it as the inspiration in the fight across the whole world against rapidly intensifying fascism.



The Juntas brutal tactics include sexual violence, mass killings and torture, as well as the relentless bombing of civilian sites. Recently, the Junta carried out air strikes in villages just hours after they were decimated by the recent 7.7 scale earthquake even after resistance groups declared a ceasefire to focus on helping the people, and has interfered with aid distribution and rescue attempts in the aftermath of the earthquake.

There are estimated to be over 21,000 political prisoners in Myanmar including more than 4000 women; as prisoners they face abuse, solitary confinement and sexual violence; some are pregnant and raising newborns behind bars, and some are sentenced to the death penalty. Reports have come in of captured revolutionaries being tortured to death in horrific ways only expanding the state’s regime of fear.

Despite the Junta’s violent repression, the armed revolution which comprises various armed indigenous and ethnic groups and factions including the AIF have made significant victories including most recently last week taking back the city of Falam, the historic capital of Chin State in western Myanmar, where the AIF have been positioned for the majority of the last year.

The creation of the Anti-Fascist Internationalist Front last year follows a long tradition of anti-fascist internationalism from Spain to Rojava. Upon seeing the people’s war in Myanmar, internationalists took it upon themselves to form an front against the fascist government just as they did in 1936 and 2014. Since then, the revolution has brought together all sectors of society, urban and rural, Burmese majority and ethnic minorities, old and young. This revolution has been started, maintained and soon may be won entirely by

normal people, most who had never fired a gun and many who’d barely left school.

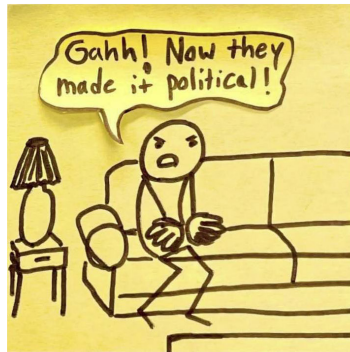
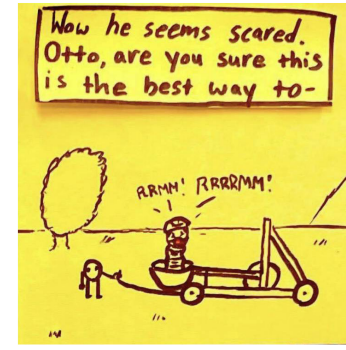
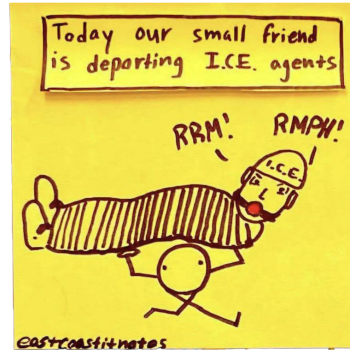
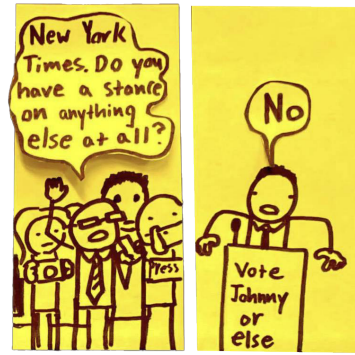
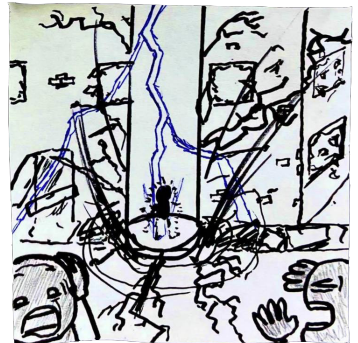
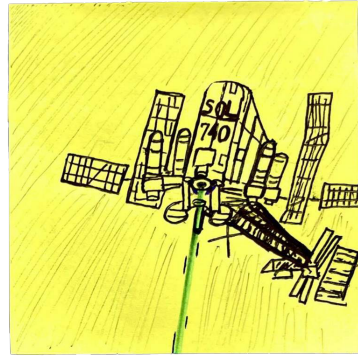
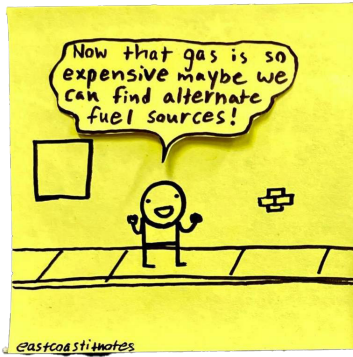
The revolution is being fought ruthlessly by the fascist regime, in the battle for Falam over 1,500 bombs were dropped on the town as the battle took place up both land-mined, forested mountainside and urban streets for 6 months. A member of the AIF told us the bombing from the sky was relentless with airstrikes crashing down to earth within 50 metres of AIF positions on multiple occasions. Such a struggle is both a hope to peoples everywhere as well as putting fear in the hearts of fascists and dictators. Most notably the largest ally of the dictatorship in Myanmar is Russia, much of the ammunition used in the invasion of Ukraine was manufactured in factories in Myanmar and the Russian military actively sends technicians to teach and support the air forces’ bombing campaigns across the country.

The AIF is openly Anti-fascist and has been welcomed with open arms by the revolution in Myanmar, anarchist patches are seen fighting side by side on the frontline with the patches of the People’s Defence Force, Chin Brotherhood and a variety of revolutionary militias. It’s important Anarchists in Europe view this revolution as a real chance for liberatory victory and support just as we would a revolution in Europe or the “west”.

Although the politics of the revolution is not rooted in a clear anti-capitalist worldview, the aim of many fighting is to wrestle back control of their life from the oligarchs that have run their lives since birth and to return power directly to communities who often view village councils as far more important in their day to day lives than governments, police or politicians.

**Members of International Solidarity  
with Antifascists Collective**

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## **LA LUTTE CONTINUE**

### **TRIBUTE TO JEAN-MARC RAYNAUD OF THE FÉDÉRATION ANARCHISTE**

Jean-Marc Raynaud wasn't always a troublemaker. He started out as a troublemaker in his youth. From high school onward, he and his friends from the Café de la Paix formed a discussion group focused on secularism; a theme that would stay with him throughout his life. His rationalist commitment as a freethinker was undeniable. With this group of friends, he also became involved in the anti-nuclear movement, opposing the Braud-et-Saint-Louis power plant and a harmful highway construction project. Few people know this, but when he enrolled in law school in Bordeaux, his intention was to become... a police commissioner! Fortunately, a wind of emancipation was blowing through the spring of 1968, and Jean-Marc became friends with Sanchez and Jean Barrué. The 1970s would be the decade in which his libertarian commitments were solidified. It was during this period that he joined the Anarchist Federation, held regular meetings in Rochefort, and campaigned for male contraception in general and vasectomy in particular. At the same time, he joined the cremationists' union and their newspaper, "La Flamme" (The Flame), promoting the practice of cremation. He wasn't ahead of his time; his time was behind him.

Once the ball was rolling, he would theorize and put into practice a life of continuous struggle, dedicated to creating concrete alternatives to the world he refused to accept. Uncle Bakunin's summer camps, the self-managed daycare center, the Bonaventure libertarian school, and other such activities filled the time of this committed educator who, not content with simply taking action, also wrote numerous

texts—more than 600 cataloged to date—for various activist newspapers and magazines.

"I always wanted to be a publisher," Jean-Marc confided to his longtime friend, Jean-Claude Richard. On the advice of the latter, and after managing the publishing house Le Monde Libertaire, he founded Editions Libertaires, which published over 250 books and awarded the prestigious Ni Dieu Ni Maître prize for many years. This publishing house still exists and is a benchmark in French-language anarchist publishing. Many authors join us in expressing their sadness.

Despite the great failure of his life—namely, achieving unity within the libertarian movement—Jean-Marc did not give up and tirelessly continued to defend a non-negotiable humanism. Thus, when the despicable Manuel Valls put the stripping of citizenship on the agenda during Hollande's presidency, he publicly asked to have it revoked himself. The local press still remembers it.

Jean-Marc had his card. His citizen of the world card, which he never failed to show to the police. always quick to suppress the freedom of peoples.

Today, a great man leaves us, but his struggles and convictions will neither be forgotten nor abandoned.

We are all fierce Raynauds!

**Fédération Anarchiste**





**Ariel Uessler**  
**May 2026**

## **LIFE IN REBELLION**

### **BEN MOREA: REST IN POWER**

*On Saturday May 2, 2026, Ben Morea, a lifelong revolutionary passed away near his home in Colorado while preparing a ritual for his incarcerated son. A prominent rebel born of the revolutionary fervor of the 1960's he best known for his work with into the Black Mask group and "Up Against The Wall Motherfucker" tho his politics and action continued until his death.*

*As final production of this volume is underway we've decided instead to echo Ill Will's sharing of the preface from the Japanese translation of Full Circle: A Life in Rebellion (Detritus, 2025). No permissions were sought or given, nor would be expected but we thank all those who take the time to compile and distribute such vital media.*

*Regardless of where you find yourself on the Anarchist and Revolutionary spectrums, there is much to learn from Ben's life and his passing is a loss to us all.*

*Ben Morea, Rest In Power.*  
 -Ed

I first learned of Ben Morea from a zine. Authored anonymously and titled simply Black Mask and Up Against the Wall Motherfucker: The Story of a Small, Underground 1960s Revolutionary Group in New York City, this obscure artifact was circulated through anarchist

scenes around the country when I was a teenager. At the time, in the early 2000's, this 8-page zine was the only existent record of the group's activities. In breathless prose, it told the story of a "tightly-knit guerrilla unit" whose essential quality was its militant yet creative oppositionality to almost everything: capitalism, authoritarianism, the Vietnam War, government and police, consumer culture, emotional and sexual repression, white supremacy, imperialism and indeed Western civilization, generally speaking. Deploying every tool at their disposal from psychedelics and street theater to organized crime and guns, their war against the existent mounted along with the mass revolutionary impetus of the late 1960s. The three years from the beginning of Black Mask in 1966 to the end of Up Against the Wall in 1969 were a perpetual festival of riotous activity: they shut down the Museum of Modern Art, cut the fences at Woodstock, broke into the Pentagon, helped to occupy Columbia University, and forced the Fillmore East to give them weekly use of the theater for free — to name just a few of their more audacious actions. Meanwhile their everyday struggle was two-fold: (1) to communalize life among the diverse underclass of the Lower East Side vis-a-vis crash pads, free stores, community defense street patrols, and

dinners feeding hundreds of people multiple nights a week, all while (2) taking every possible opportunity to fight with the police. Then in 1969, they suddenly disappeared, presumably forced underground by the growing heat from both the local police and federal agencies. Or perhaps, as cryptically hinted in the final paragraph of the zine, they left the city for disparate locales around the country to explore new forms of revolutionary organization, dissolving their core group into “an occult network of resistance” beyond the scrutiny of the State, media, and indeed, the records of history.

Today, dozens of historical accounts and scholarship in multiple fields attest to the influence of *Black Mask* and *Up Against the Wall* and their radical interventions in the art, culture and politics of the 1960s. But for my friends and I in our teenage years, the only reference was this mysterious zine, and its subject was not a part of history, but rather a living legend, exciting our imagination and compelling us with their story. In the pure radicalism of our youth, it seemed to express the limit of what was possible for a small group of revolutionaries to achieve — in the words of the zine — “to join together to combat the whole of reality.”

At the time that I first saw the name “Ben Morea” in print, it never crossed my mind that he was a real person, still living his life — much less that we would eventually meet and work together to bring his life story into writing. I knew nothing of the turns his life took after 1969, when his notorious group disbanded and he himself apocryphally disappeared. Nor could I have realized that this moment marked the beginning

of a whole new story, involving an extraordinary transformation even beyond the purview of what I had imagined as “revolutionary.”

In 1969, Ben and several of his comrades left New York City for the wild country of northern New Mexico, to join forces with the Chicano insurgents of *La Alianza Federal de Mercedes* — but that’s another story. For Ben, this was the last stand before going totally “off the radar,” disappearing into the wilderness of the *Sangre de Cristo* Mountains where he lived for five years with his wife and two horses, surviving off the land by hunting and foraging. As Ben says, it was this way of living which ultimately saved his life, not only from detection and assassination by the State, but also in the positive sense that it allowed him to reorient as a revolutionary. At that moment he was at a dangerous crossroads: he was armed and ready to die, but the revolution on which he’d staked his life was no longer possible. To continue the same militant struggle would be suicidal; he had to find a way to continue to fight, yet in another dimension. And what grounded him and kept him from a more self-destructive course was his life in the wilderness, struggling to survive in relation with the elements while enduring extreme deprivation and exposure. It was an experience of life pared down to its essential meaning: what do you need to live?

At the same time, what also saved Ben’s life was that he was open to allowing his life to radically transform. When he left New York, he says that he was searching for something, that was missing from the struggle in the city. He didn’t know what it was, but he felt that it was necessary,

and he was drawn to Native American cultures and understandings. Then when he went out west, he encountered another world, which he entered not as a hardened militant, but as a child, ready to learn. Regarding this, Ben is very guarded about what he shares, determined not to expose that world to public scrutiny and exploitation; suffice it to say that he was welcomed into a Native community and ceremonial tradition, which he has continued practicing until today. Over fifty years later, Ben is now an elder in this tradition, one of very few who can still remember the old people and their ways, passed down in turn from their elders since the beginnings of the ceremony. Originating during a critical phase of Native resistance, at the moment when many tribes in the southwestern and central regions of the present-day US were finally forced to give up their ancestral lands and ways of life and move onto reservations, the ceremony has been a lifeline for generations of Native peoples around the country — both as a vital communal spiritual practice, and as a mode for the continued survival of Native life and spirituality. After several years in close contact with Ben, observing his conduct in the role that he plays as part of this powerful living tradition, I learned that, in a poetic way, the revolutionary had become a steadfast traditionalist, committed to passing on what he had learned from his elders, precisely without change.

It is not that Ben has lost the fervor to change the world. Today, at 84 years of age, he is still a total radical, not only in terms of his thinking, but in his whole way of living. It is not an exaggeration to say that Ben is as pure a revolutionary as anyone I’ve ever known

— equally sincere as he is intense. I came to understand that, within him, the conjunction of revolutionary and traditional is no contradiction, but a matter of conflicting worlds: of which social reality is to be overturned, and which ways of life are to be fought for, to be upheld.

After disappearing into the wilderness, Ben remained in intentional obscurity for decades, working as a lumberjack while homesteading in the mountains of the Southern Rockies. As he says, many people from his former life assumed that he was dead, and he wanted to keep it that way. But eventually, he decided to reemerge. As he puts it, the situation in the world was only getting worse, and he wanted to share something from his experience to contribute to the struggle today. And so, sometime around 2006, he returned to New York City to speak publicly for the first time in nearly forty years. It is largely thanks to his return that more and more interest has gathered around *Black Mask* and *Up Against the Wall*; whereas, when I was a teenager, our only reference was a zine, now there are entire books written about them. Meanwhile, Ben has been meeting with people as much as he can, and he has become a beloved elder to a new generation of young people. When he holds events, they crowd into the room, eager to speak with him and hear his perspective on the potential for revolutionary struggle today. I recognize in them an intensity which is at once familiar, yet markedly different from that of myself and my friends at their age, just twenty years before. Having grown up under the premise of the end of the world, they speak with a gravity which corresponds to the insanity of

this moment in human history. Ben doesn't claim to have any answers; in fact he is insistent that he can't tell anyone what they should do. But he full-heartedly shares their feeling. In my experience, these conversations are invariably somber, and yet at the same time, emboldening. They create a space to collectively bear the weight of the present reality — both the despair that the situation has never been worse, and the realization that the time to act is now, because there is no time to waste.

This book is the result of a long collective effort. It was a special collaboration between multiple generations. It came about organically; in the beginning, when we started meeting, we had no plan for publishing our conversations. But the more we sat and talked with Ben, the more we felt we had to learn, and we grew eager to find a way to share what we had learned from him with others. Together, we sought to create a medium for transmission, to draw insight and inspiration from Ben's lifelong engagements as a revolutionary, and pass it on for the generations to come. And so what began as a visit to interview an old comrade turned into a four-year process to make this book.

Respecting Ben's principled silence, we have edited the text to avoid identifying specific Native communities and traditions. Instead, the discussion is presented in general terms, revolving around what Ben calls "revolutionary animism." According to Ben, animism is the understanding that all of creation is alive and interconnected, and that the human is a part of it — not above it or in control of it, but part of it. In this sense, he says, all Indigenous peoples were once

animists, living ways of life founded on recognition of this connection. And the grave challenge for us today is to recover the essence of that awareness, or at least to move towards it, to begin to repair our relationship with life in the cosmos and on this planet. It is a problem which is not only urgently political and material, but metaphysical and spiritual, involving the whole of existence.

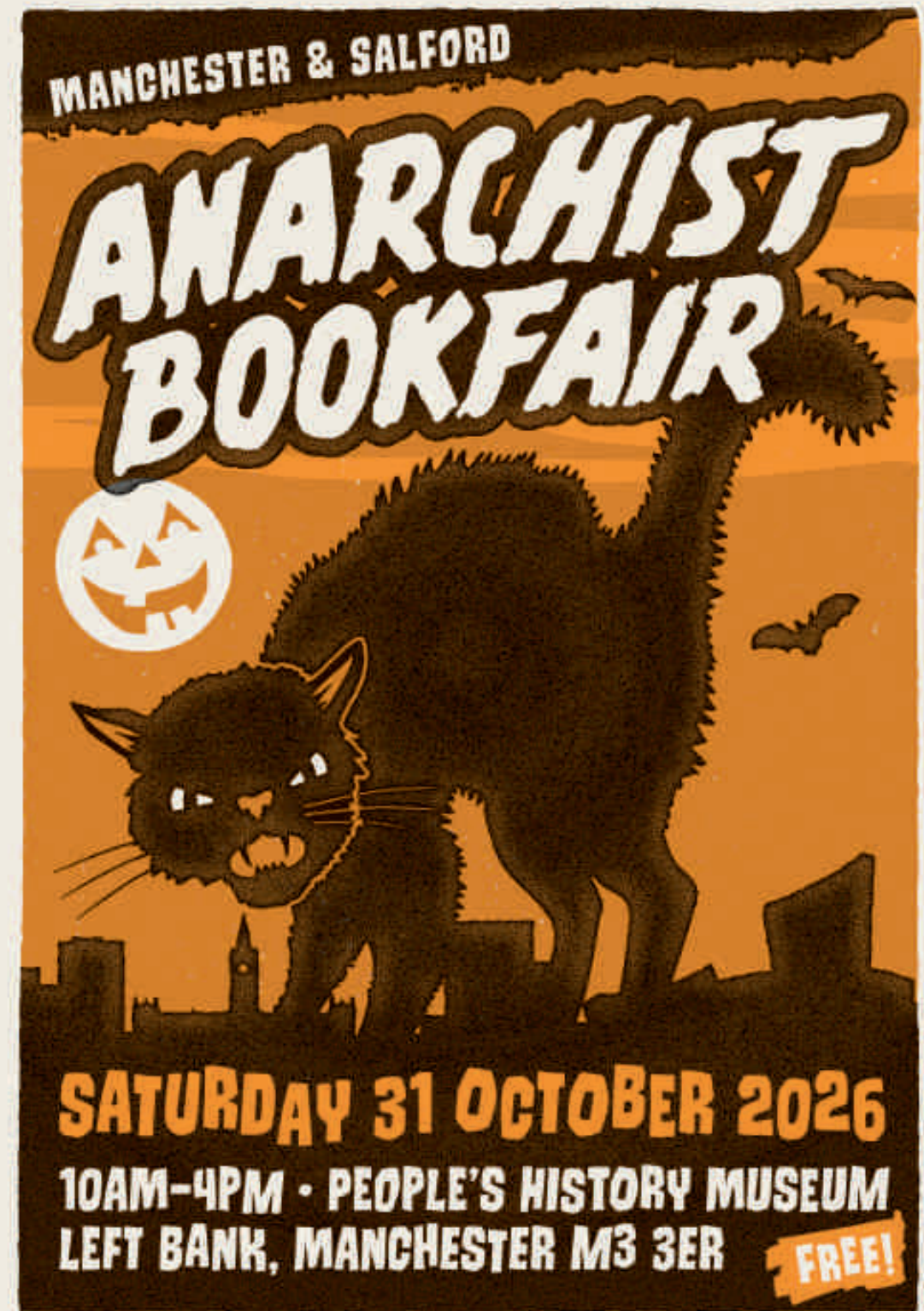
However removed the reader may be from the Indigenous ways which are everywhere today facing mass extinction, we believe that Ben's story shows that there is still the choice to be made, or the question of how far you will go — to fight for life on Earth against the world-destroying forces of colonialist capitalist civilization, and to reestablish kinship with all living beings, to honor our role as part of creation.

This book aims to contribute to that struggle. It is shared with love, for the coming generations, in the spirit of total rebellion.

**Ariel Uessler**

*Full Circle: A Life in Rebellion is available now through Detritus Books.*

*We also recommend taking time to read interviews "The Ultimate Dilemma" on Ill Will and "Ben Morea: An Interview" on Libcom also side "Pancho Villa Syndrome" on the former.*



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