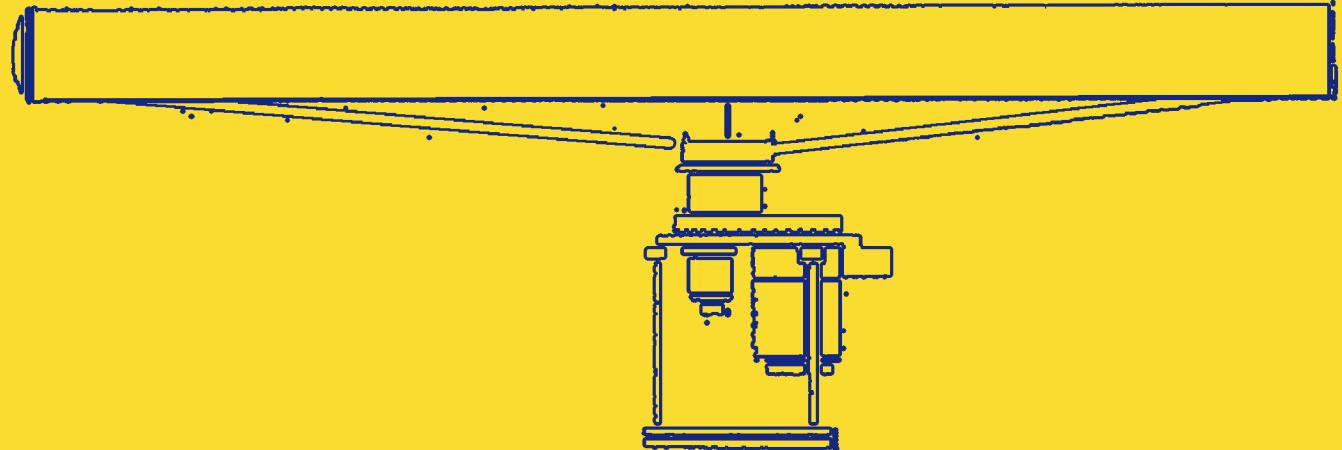


# RADAR

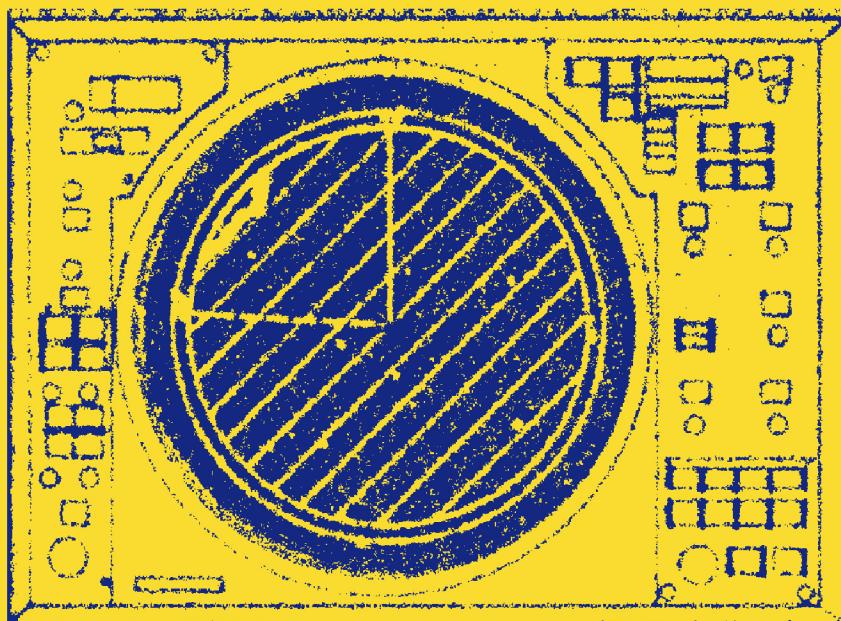
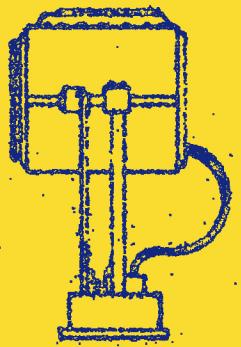
FALL 2024

ISSUE 01





Radar is a journal based out of the United States. The editors take part in movements and unrest across the country, the hemisphere, and the world. We act decisively from within these struggles, to affect them and to learn from them. Radar seeks to investigate and report on contemporary crises, riots, protest movements, and revolts, primarily in the United States and Western Hemisphere. We will discuss key concepts of modern struggles and the problems they face. We will compare notes on how people organize themselves to topple state power, and reflect on struggles for a life free from exploitation.



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# A GLOBAL SEARCH

Insurrections, uprisings, unfulfilled revolutions, and coups d'états are constants in world history. Since the earliest days, human beings have resisted their own debasement. Whenever and wherever the questions posed by the great masses of human beings cannot be adequately answered by the official power structure, the spectre of revolution looms large. We are in one of those periods. For 32 years, and especially the last 15, fiery struggles and mass movements have shaken every corner of the Earth. With the transformation of the global geopolitical apparatus following the collapse of the USSR, these conflicts have often adopted slogans and ambitions of local, ethnic, or religious character. They are the consequence of contradictions within globalizing capitalist modernity. They have taken place in a backdrop of ethnic chauvinism, rising inequality, climate catastrophes, and aggressive wealth consolidation.

The struggles of the past decade and a half have not yet culminated in the kinds of political, economic, and social transformations their protagonists strived for. They have occasionally played a role in the unfolding history of regional affairs, as competing powers operate within contentious and uncertain terrain. Where heads of state have been toppled, where business as usual has been abruptly halted in the flames and smoke of revolt, it is thanks to the pride and courage of rebellious people everywhere.

• •

The 2010 Tunisian revolution blew open the doors of history in a maelstrom of popular and combative activity in all of North Africa and the Middle East. Those doors, through which the hopeful millions of the region lurched, were soulnered shut when the Egyptian army staged a coup against the Muslim Brotherhood government in 2012. As a direct consequence of the "Arab Spring," some of the oldest military dictatorships on the planet were torn asunder and new parties consolidated

influence for themselves, often under the guardianship of the International Monetary Fund. Libya and Syria have devolved into wide zones of chaos, drug smuggling, black markets, and despair. In these countries, the spirit of an entire age is caught in a cycle of permanent gestation.

As the "Arab Spring" revolts stalled, protest movements continued to spread across the planet, to Spain, Greece, England, the United States, Montreal, Brazil, Turkey, and Ukraine from 2010-2014. The planetary crisis, then and after, seemed to move from the margins to the center, with the wretched and downtrodden peoples of the Global South setting out to change everything, and their contemporaries in Europe and North America tailing just behind them. Looking back, these later movements do not seem so different from the Spartacist Revolt of 1919. In that uprising, German workers sought to spread the Russian Revolution to the very core of Europe and they paid a very high price for their failures. The 2010-2014 protests also remind us of the failed revolutions in Latin America and the Caribbean following the Cuban revolution of 1959. One after another, brave students and guerrillas sacrificed everything in pursuit of a new future for the western hemisphere, free from Yankee imperialism and control.

Although the experiences of protesters and aspiring revolutionaries are global, the outcomes of the recent insurrections remain depressingly contingent on national characteristics, and on the position of each society within the planetary rule of economic and military interests.

• •

Don't let anyone tell you that lightning doesn't strike twice. From 2018-2021, another wave of mass action swept the planet. One generation, two uncompromising global risings.

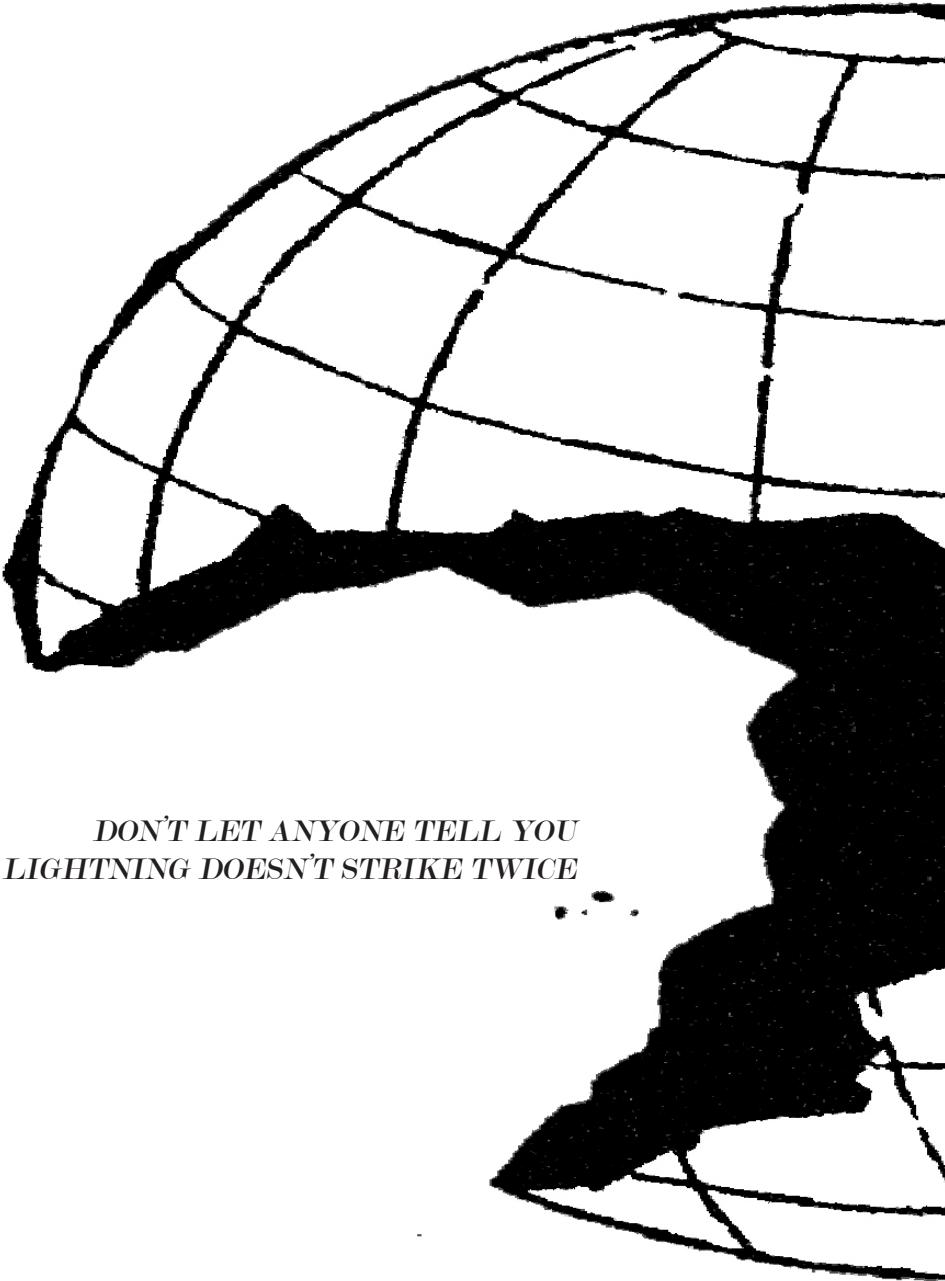


In Haiti, Sudan, France, Catalonia, Chile, Hong Kong, Lebanon, the USA, Nigeria, Belarus, Nicaragua, Iran, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, and Kazakhstan courageous masses of people flooded urban centers, smashed storefronts, burned barricades, and cried out for serious and urgent social transformation. Rarely in history do so many people rush to the barricades, breaking up sidewalks, lobbing stones, innovating methods and tactics. Many of us joined these shocking insurrections ourselves, eager to participate first-hand. We also studied these revolts loyally from afar, reading each new dispatch from the frontlines, attempting to make contact with those pushing ahead wherever they lived.

One after another, these revolts were defeated. We watched the euphoric videos of the Almaty insurrectionists looting the national armories, just to see CSTO tanks rolling into the city streets the following day to restore order. We have watched in horror as Western puppets and regime-linked strongmen drown out the choruses of resistance with the rat-at-at of machine gun fire. In Chile, fare-hoppers and the primera linea prompted the president to resign, but failed to overthrow the Pinochet constitution. In Sri Lanka, the entire parliament fled, and they were replaced by the International Monetary Fund. The revolution in Sudan managed to topple the Omar Bashir dictatorship. And now, just a few years later, the counterrevolutionaries led by the Rapid Security Forces are conducting ethnic cleansing in every corner of the country. Nowhere have the aims of the unruly masses developed into a revolutionary program; nowhere were their implied or sloganized ambitions fulfilled.

In order to properly understand these uprisings, it is not adequate to comment only on general trends across the world from 2010 to the present, as if the global correlation of forces did not have local considerations and uneven distribution of potentials. Commentary on the 2010 general strike in Greece and its catastrophic aftermath for the class struggle in that country will not be enough for free thinkers to understand ongoing guerrilla operations in the jungles of Myanmar.

Nobody serious thinks that the overthrow of Norwegian social democracy and the breakdown of Bahraini monarchy could follow the same formulas or rules of engagement. On the other hand, legal borders are fictions; their walls are not fireproof. Zones of the planet facing common repressive alliances share common resistance dynamics, even across national boundaries. Protest movements in southern Europe can all expect to face the same volleys of tear gas and baton charges should they threaten the cosmopolitan elites dining at the Champs Elysees, in the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, or in the snobbish plazas of Kolonaki. In Latin America, the US Marine Corps looms large, now in El Salvador, now in Peru, now in Haiti, ready to reimpose the decrees of the IMF in the event of an uprising, or even an excess of democracy. Across Africa, the competition between Egypt, the UAE, and the Saudis governs half of the continent, while the dictators of Brussels and other racists in the European Union seek to dominate the rest. Regions of Asia not overseen by neo-Ottoman fanatics and the CSTO are subject to the deadly adventures of the United States and their CIA-backed warlords.



***DON'T LET ANYONE TELL YOU  
LIGHTNING DOESN'T STRIKE TWICE***

As a decade of insurrection threatens to fade into the pink mists of war, genocide, and regional collapse, nothing seems less possible than a real social revolution, toppling authoritarianism and exploitation both at once. For that reason, nothing is more necessary.

A number of theoretical detours and strategic errors have frustrated the development of such a revolution. This is not only the consequence of incorrect thinking. Material limits

shape and contain social struggles. It is from out of those limits that our experiences grow, and from out of those, our theories, hopes, and dreams. To correct course, aspiring revolutionaries must grab hold of the correct questions. They must contribute to the proper conversation and mentality for the most difficult task in the history of our species. And they must change the world.

Radar is a humble contribution toward those ends.

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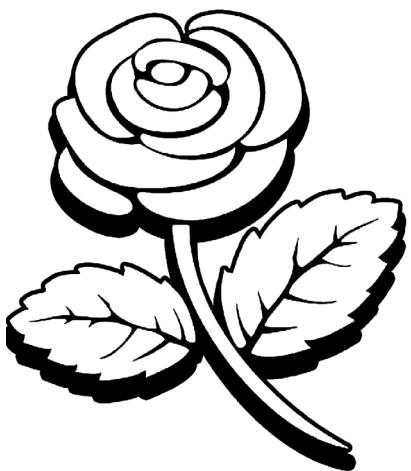


# FOR THIS FREEDOM

by Fayad Jamis

For this freedom to sing beneath the rain  
we'll have to give everything  
For this freedom to be tightly tied  
to the firm and gentle heart of the people  
we'll have to give everything  
For this freedom of a sunflower open in the dawn of lighted  
factories and shining schools  
and rustling earth  
and waking child  
we'll have to give everything  
There's no alternative to freedom  
There's no other road than freedom  
There's no other fatherland than freedom  
There'll be no more poem without the violent music of freedom

For this freedom that is the terror  
of those who have always raped it  
in the name of vain miseries  
For this freedom that is the oppressors' night  
and the final dawn of the whole people now invincible.  
For this freedom that lights the way for sunken eyes  
bare feet  
riddled roofs  
and the eyes of children who wander in the dust  
For this freedom that is the empire of youth  
For this freedom as lovely as life  
We'll have to give everything  
if necessary  
even the coolness of shade  
and it will never be enough.



# POR ESTA LIBERTAD

Por esta libertad de canción bajo la lluvia  
habrá que darlo todo

Por esta libertad de estar estrechamente atados a  
la firme y dulce entraña del pueblo  
habrá que darlo todo

Por esta libertad de girasol abierto en el alba de fábricas  
encendidas y escuelas iluminadas  
y de esta tierra que cruje  
y niño que despierta  
habrá que darlo todo

No hay alternativa sino la libertad

No hay más camino que la libertad

No hay otra patria que la libertad

No habrá más poema sin la violenta música de la libertad

Por esta libertad que es el terror  
de los que siempre la violaron  
en nombre de fastuosas miserias

Por esta libertad que es la noche de los opresores  
y el alba definitiva de todo el pueblo ya invencible.

Por esta libertad que alumbría las pupilas hundidas  
los pies descalzos

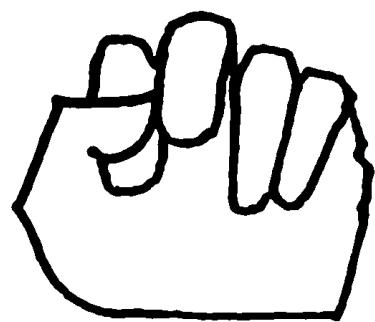
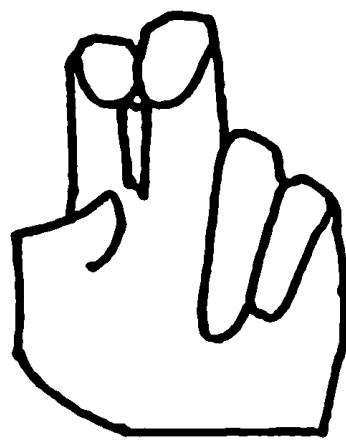
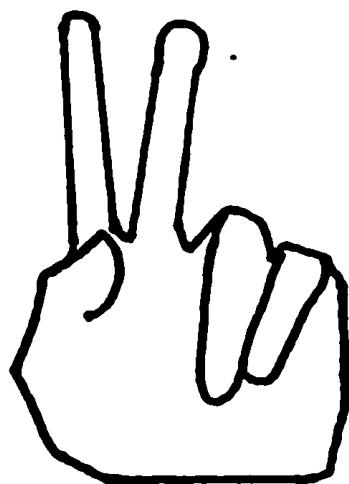
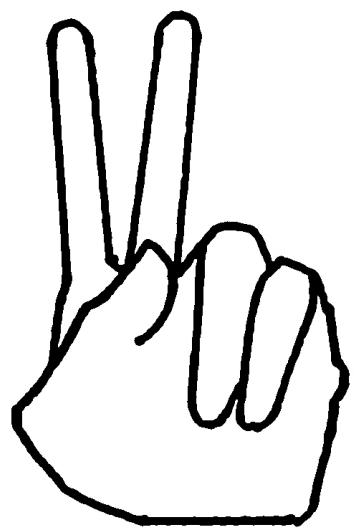
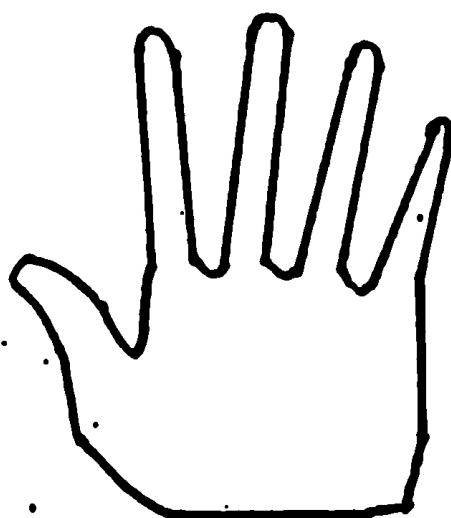
los techos agujereados

y los ojos de los niños que deambulan en el polvo

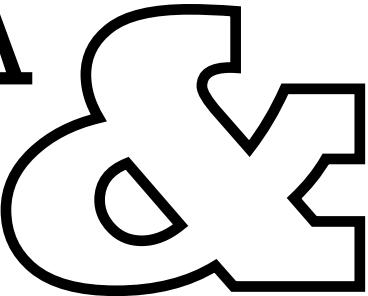
Por esta libertad que es el imperio de la juventud

Por esta libertad  
bella como la vida  
habrá que darlo todo  
si fuere necesario  
hasta la sombra  
y nunca será suficiente.





# THE STUDENT INTIFADA



# THE REVOLUTION TO COME

by Revolutionary Intercommunalism Research Group

On October 7, 2023, guerrillas from Palestinian resistance organizations, led by *Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya* (transl. “Islamic resistance movement”), or Hamas for short, launched a coordinated attack on the Israeli border along the Gaza strip. Using drones, firearms, and vehicles, these guerrillas (who are mostly armed civilian volunteers) overwhelmed the border fence on the anniversary of the 1973 October War. As the fence was breached, many young Palestinians flooded across the borders of the camp and into settlements alongside the wall.

What followed is subject to much debate, and will continue to be for some time. Many people, soldiers and civilians, were killed in the ensuing uprising. In July 2024, Haaretz revealed

that the Israeli Defense Forces gave a “Hannibal directive” to soldiers in the vicinity of the breach. With this directive, Israeli soldiers were ordered to establish a “kill zone” in the area, to bombard and shoot anyone moving west toward the Gaza strip, including Israeli soldiers and civilians, in order to limit the number of hostages taken by the guerrillas or the spontaneous rebel insurgents acting in concert with them. Regardless of what is proved or disproved in the coming years, it is adequate for now to say that the events of October 7 constituted the most serious attack on the colonial occupation of Palestine by the US-backed Zionist state in several decades, and it irreparably upset the balance of forces in the region established since the end of the Second Intifada.

In the immediate aftermath of the October 7 raid, Israel (with US support) launched an indiscriminate attack on the Gaza Strip. In the ensuing months, the US-Israeli intervention displaced nearly 2 million people. As of early July 2024, Lancet estimates around 186,000 people have been killed in this Second Nakba. Unspeakable war crimes have been visited upon the Palestinian people by the occupational forces, including the willful destruction of every single school and hospital, and the intentional use of starvation and deprivation as methods of war. In the face of this gut-wrenching tragedy, for which the International Court of Justice seeks to arrest Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu, Palestinian guerrillas have maintained an unprecedented guerrilla war using miles of underground tunnels as well as improvised devices from all sides of the Strip, from the West Bank, and even from southern Lebanon.

Across the world, in the United States itself, Jews, Arabs, Muslims, and students have been gripped by a deep moral crisis. Since October, tens of thousands of people have marched, demanding that the US sever military aid to the Israeli war. American Jews, especially in New York City, have spear-headed a relentless campaign of civil disobedience; sitting-in and disrupting train stations, bridges, highways, and meetings over and over again, facing beatings and arrest to obstruct the bloodbath taking place in their names. Muslims and Arabs in the diaspora have mobilized by the thousands for demonstrations and rallies time and again to oppose the unrelenting barbarism unleashed upon their families and communities in Palestine since October. In some instances, activists and rebellious groups vandalized or sabotaged the offices of banks or arms manufacturers supporting the war. On multiple occasions, shipping ports were blocked from sending arms to Israel.

Despite their moral clarity and relentless mobilization, the war continued unabated. If a US-based protest movement hoped to pressure the Biden-Harris administration to withhold financial and military aid from Israel, it could not only mobilize the friends and families of those embroiled in the conflict, especially considering that those communities do not constitute a major bloc within the US population.

The Arab American Institute reports that ethnic Arabs (registered as "White" on the US census from 1944-2024) account for 3.7 million people in the US, roughly 1.1% of the population (with 1/3 reporting as Lebanese and just .08% reporting as Palestinian.) Three quarters of Arab-Americans live in just twelve cities; over 95% live in one of 6 major metropolitan areas. According to the Pew Research Center, there are roughly 7.5 millions Jews in the US (including people who do not identify as Jewish but who have at least one Jewish parent), roughly 2.4% of the US population, with Jews accounting for no more than 8.5% of New York City, and a significantly lower percentage everywhere else. Another Pew study shows there are about 3.5 million Muslims in the country, accounting for 1.1% of the overall population. Combined, that is 4.6% of the country. If every single person from one of

those groups aimed to demonstrate or resist the war somehow, that would be around 15 million people, certainly enough to catalyze a state of emergency within the US.

According to a YouGov poll conducted on May 3, 75% of US Muslims support the protests against Israel, and only 18% of US Jews. If every single Muslim and Jew that supported the anti-war protests in theory showed up to demonstrations, that would be just 4 million people (1.1% of the population), spread across a small handful of cities. Numbers don't exist for Arab support for the protests, but it's probably a fairly high percentage. If it was also around 75% sympathetic, that would bring us to 1.9% of the general population, in the same handful of locations. Assuming that only a very small percentage of any group is likely to march in the streets, even those who sympathize with protests abstractly, this provides a very small cohort of potential opponents to the war indeed, if we expect resistance to colonialism in Palestine to come from Jewish, Arab, and Muslim communities alone. But who else would join in the resistance to the war? Who could realistically be expected to do so, and when?

The answer, finally, arrived in Spring 2024: university students.



What follows is an essay divided into three parts. In part one, we analyze the Spring 2024 Gaza solidarity protests on university campuses, the so-called “student intifada.” We offer the context of other recent protest movements, look closely at tactical decisions, and identify political impasses that the campus-based movement ultimately failed to overcome.

In part two, we rewind a few decades to re-asses the student anti-war protest of the 1960s-70s, and its relationship to Black liberation movements of the time. We believe that the alliance of those two movements created a political context of near-revolution in the United States, or at least had substantially greater transformative potential than any social movement since. We look to this creative relationship as a model for activists and aspiring revolutionaries today.

Finally, in part three, we analyze the students as a bloc of social power, and the potential they may or may not have to build a revolution. We place the Gaza solidarity encampments in dialogue with the anti-police protests of the last decade, and the Defend the Forest/Stop Cop City movement.



# PART ONE: **FIRST, WE TOOK COLUMBIA**



On April 17, 2024, at 4:30 am, students and faculty at Columbia University and Barnard College erected 50 tents on the East Lawn of campus. Protesters hung banners and signs denouncing the US-backed Israeli war. New York police sealed off most of the perimeter of the camp, blocking access to non-students/faculty on 116th Street. As nightfall approached, preliminary negotiations between Columbia President Minouche Shafik and the Jewish and Muslim-led encampment stalled. Several hundred protesters picketed campus from the surrounding streets as rain trickled down on them. Threats to raid and clear the camp did not materialize.

The following day, April 18, Columbia administrators sent in a large number of New York police officers to brutalize and clear the encampment, made of scarcely a few dozen tents and some folding tables. By 10am, drones hovered overhead. Public-facing campus organizers began receiving notifications on their phones: they had been suspended indefinitely for their participation in the protests. At mid-day, scores of police, accompanied by some university staff, entered the East Lawn and began destroying tents and dragging away students.

Social media exploded with shock and outrage. The raid lasted several hours while hundreds of supporters arrived on campus, angry and chanting, but still without tactical direction. A small group climbed over a fence onto the West Lawn, enjoining others to follow them. It was simple, and it worked. Students

built a new camp on the Columbia University West Lawn, now with several hundred participants.

Rather than looking on in sympathetic indifference, people across the country were stunned and motivated to act. Student organizers, activists, anarchists, abolitionists, socialists, and anti-war groups held meetings, made phone calls, and prepared to launch “Gaza Solidarity Encampments” of their own. These protesters demanded that schools disclose their financial investments and sever all ties with the apartheid regime of Israel.

## Can Students Start a Revolution?

In the weeks that followed, solidarity protests took place at around 140 universities, according to a tally maintained by the BBC. These protests were not conducted by students alone, and contained many faculty members and other “non-students.”

Regardless of the size of the crowds or the tactics they deployed, police used batons, mace, pepper balls, rubber bullets, flashbang grenades, and in a few instances, tear gas, to disperse the camps. In Bloomington, Indiana, campus administration called police onto the rooftops, armed with sniper rifles. Faculty, college freshmen, and journalists everywhere were



clubbed, maced, and dragged down stairs. While people from all generations participated, the overwhelming majority of protesters were 18-25 years old. Horse-mounted police were deployed to multiple campuses. In Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and Seattle, Zionists and their far right allies attacked protesters directly, hitting them with sticks, throwing fireworks, and attempting to run them over. All in all, this was not similar to other recent US-based protest movements. The images circulating on television and social media resembled scenes out of the 1960s.

Demagogues and politicians from the right and left alike repeated ad nauseam that it was the protesters who were instigating violence. The camps were denounced as “antisemitic.” Aside from a few regretful exceptions, such as one instance in Berkeley when a protester painted “[Star of David] = [swastika]” on a building, this was an opportunistic lie. While suspending students, abusing protesters, and reprimanding faculty, the Board of Regents and school Presidents worked overtime to present the victims as the culprits, and to paint themselves as the true champions of social justice. University authorities did not hesitate to suspend chapters of Jewish Voices for Peace, or to unleash riot police on their members, ostensibly to keep them “safe” from the

very protests they were helping to organize. Negative media representation seemed important to authorities across the country, and appears to have truly damaged the perception of the protesters by potential sympathizers across the country. For these and other reasons, the majority of the protests brought together just a few hundred participants.

Those who did mobilize used a range of rapidly evolving methods and tactics, which are worth a closer look in their own right.

## Debates on Tactics

Debating tactics and attempting to popularize them is one of the primary forms of ideological struggle within contemporary protest movements and the Gaza solidarity protests were no different. Participants in social movements will be familiar with the yelling matches, tears, and gritting of teeth that sometimes accompanies these debates. On campuses, participants primarily debated about whether or not to link arms or to build barricades; whether to listen to those who were carrying megaphones, or those wearing masks; whether to resist police violence, or to avoid it. Even the method of



deliberation itself became a battleground for rival factions. Some sought to generate support for their theories with call and response declarations (the “People’s Mic” popularized in Occupy Wall Street), some called for meetings with formal facilitation and leadership, some preferred one-on-one deliberation, others formed clusters or break-away groups. Often the political content of the debates was drowned in the muck of “personal experience”, “student leadership”, and ad hominem attacks relying heavily on the presumed privileges of competing groups.

These debates are necessary, as they determine the next steps forward for real-existing crowds and groups. Insofar as movement protagonists judge methods abstractly, according to transhistorical claims or universally-applied dogmas, they can only be correct by accident. Regardless of the specific proposals, this approach to political ideas itself is incorrect. Tactics cannot be judged in abstraction, because there is no abstract balance of forces or battlefield.

## Defending the Camps

The prospect of the Columbia encampment spreading to schools across the country formed the horizon of activity. All debates on tactics took place within this strategic possibility and limit. Campus protests sought to defend the “Liberated Zones” from police and Zionists, while simultaneously turning the camps into centers of mutual aid, group deliberation, political education, and chanting. It is not clear why, since the “negotiations” between student bureaucrats and university

authorities were a gross and demoralizing ruse, but the protesters seemed to believe that establishing encampments would give them leverage against their respective authorities on the question of support for the Israeli war against Gaza. Students and their allies thought that universities form a central pillar of the Israeli war in Palestine, or at least attempted to foment widespread resistance under that premise.

The political meaning of the protests was clarified by the clashes between protesters and police; not only by the slogans, statements, and demands produced by the students. Everywhere that protesters failed to engage in active or passive physical confrontations with the police, we can say that nothing really happened, even where protesters had developed coherent and interesting statements and goals. The real question posed by the events focuses us on the role of American civilians in opposing US imperialism in Palestine. What could they do, and what would they risk to do so?

Most encampments were short-lived, facing police attacks and violence in an hour or less. This had a serious effect on what protesters could do or imagine, and locked them inside a framework of defense. As squads of helmeted riot police ambushed camps in the early morning hours with clubs and mace, the Gaza Solidarity Encampments defended themselves in almost every way an unarmed movement could. Most camps opted for passive resistance to arrest by linking arms and constructing barricades. Some were more active; they shoved the police, threw objects, or blocked the cruisers taking arrestees to jail.

Many did not stop at grassy fields and plazas. Courageous people occupied school buildings, barricading and/or locking themselves inside. These were polarizing actions because they disrupted the ability of the University function as normal. Those who took this route circulated tactical guides and reports from student protesters in New York and California of 2009/2010, who repeatedly occupied classroom buildings in militant struggles against budget cuts. Moving the arena of protest from outside to inside substantially confuses the logistics and potentials for a police incursion. The decision to take over buildings delayed the question of direct clashes and was often done in anticipation of a raid or in retaliation for one.

Social media timelines and news coverage were occasionally filled with images of tear gas, flash-bang grenades, broken windows, fireworks, and bottles flying through the air. These are the images one should hope to see within a country that is arming and funding a genocide.

Clashes with police aside, there was very little property destruction on campuses across the country, despite the insistence by protesters that the schools were directly responsible for the war. There are a few exceptions: at UC Berkeley, a police car was burned, and a building was attacked via molotov cocktail (justified actions for which an anarchist named Casey Goonan is accused, following a multi-house raid in the Bay Area in mid-June); at CSULA, the administration building was trashed; at Portland State University, the library was ransacked; at Cal Poly Humboldt, most of the campus buildings were taken over and extensively redecorated. All of these actions took place on the West Coast.

In the long run, passive or active resistance to sweeps yielded the same results: camps were evicted and the protests and marches subsided once again. This is not because the protesters lacked bravery. It is because they were trapped in a defensive cycle, unable to reclaim the initiative.

## Can Self-Defense Work?

Self-defense as a framework has been liquidated by the real march of events. The 2011 Occupy Wall Street-inspired protests, the huge resistance camp to the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock in 2016, the small but militant Occupy ICE encampments in 2018, the “autonomous zones” of the 2020 George Floyd uprising, and to a lesser extent, the wooded-urban stop Cop City encampments, have all demonstrated, exhaustively and irrefutably, that as long as the police are permitted to retreat, they will eventually surround and destroy place-based resistance. The Gaza Solidarity Encampments can be added to this beautiful albeit tragic list of defeats for “territorial” US protest movements.

In a defensive framework for action, groups do not avail themselves of their strongest tools: mobility, omnipresence in society, the element of surprise, etc. Static bases of resistance surrender the initiative to the police, who have all of the time they need to plan a counter-attack, to be carried out when it

most suits them. Courage, militancy, and numerical superiority can not change this dynamic. So why does this form of protest reappear continuously in the United States?

Urban encampments recur because they solve political problems for those who fight. Participants of social movements in the US generally are not members of organizations, do not have access to an active community or base, and do not have material aid or experience taking action. In other words, they have no “rear” to retreat to or rely on in the course of their correct and creative disruptions of the status quo. They do not have a reliable network of people to think through and reflect on political action with. Camps, “occupations,” and other protest sites solve these problems by bringing motivated participants together with the time and space to solve these issues on the fly. Without enduring and flexible grassroots organizations, cultural movements, collectives, affinity groups, organizing hubs, social centers, or bookstores, mass struggles will continue to rely on this form of protest. Those who hope to move the paradigm of strategic defense to strategic offense will have to develop 21st century organizational proposals that allow large numbers of angry people to coordinate resources without having to build an ad-hoc “headquarters” amidst the front lines.

This conundrum is not transhistorical. It is a problem that belongs to our era. The George Floyd protests did not require this kind of convergence until they were already in decline. When protagonists of social change can call on a great cross-section of society alongside communities that possess collective assets and gathering spaces, they can readily embrace offensive strategies. They do not have to also defend their shared assets while they are marching, chanting, blockading, or rioting.

The Gaza solidarity movement found a way to solve some political problems by mobilizing students. Now those students face challenges they must resolve if they aspire to pose a serious threat to the war.







## PART TWO:

# STUDENTS NEED ALLIES: A LOOK AT THE OLD STUDENT MOVEMENT

In the US imaginary, the identity of movement protagonists is a uniquely significant factor for the perceived legitimacy of struggles. More than elsewhere, the social position of protesters determines whether and how people will support a movement, and what means can be reasonably brought to bear against participants without provoking further acts of resistance. The compositional question (i.e. “who are the protesters?”) is at least as important to determining the perceived legitimacy of a movement as its stated goals or methods.

Although all social movements in the US contain students in high percentage of overall participation, the description of the campus protests as a “student movement” is instructive. Students are widely believed to have the right to protest and the right to make their voices heard, to act out, to express themselves. This is especially true on university campuses. Insisting that events were the efforts of “outsiders” is how detractors hoped to discredit the protests. Even though in some places the majority of arrestees were community members (so-called “non-students” or “outsiders”), this did not significantly impact the perception of these protests as “student-led” by those who were already primed to support them.

Some right wing commentators have insisted that the protests were the logical consequence of “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” policies, of “critical race theory,” and the supposed “marxist” leanings of the official intelligentsia. They hope this framing will position them better to censor books, blacklist

free thinkers, and purge the American higher education system of all persons and programs critical of the status quo. If the suppression of independent and subversive ideas are under attack in public schools across the country, it is because students are among the most undomesticated and rebellious layers of class-based societies, and the need to confuse and demoralize them is particularly strong among certain layers of the ruling class. The need to isolate them from other insurrectionary layers of the population is also strong, thus the “outside agitator” trope.

This double-bind, between the pro-“student movement” camp and the pro-“outside agitator” camp, formed a subtle but devastating trap for the protesters, most of whom opted to assert the “student-led” nature of the protests. By continuing to invest their creativity and energies on campuses, and by legitimizing the protests on the basis of their real or imagined “student leadership,” protesters missed some chances to build the participation of rebellious social layers that are systematically excluded or marginalized within higher education and city centers, including poor people and Black people. Decades of budget cuts and tuition hikes have insured that Black students and other racialized student groups are not usually from the same class as their historic forbearers, and are more likely to be from the same middle-income backgrounds as some of their white classmates. Racialized students also joined the conservatizing factions of the recent protests.





Every existing form of legitimacy excludes just as it includes. In the case of “student protests,” often what is excluded is exactly what is needed in order for struggles to succeed. A look at the student movement in the 1960s-70s illustrates most clearly what can be accomplished when students build movements that protagonize non-students just as much as they protagonize themselves.

## A Shared History

In the 1950s, amid a groundswell of independence movements in Africa, rapid post-war economic expansion, and the *Brown v. the Board of Education* ruling (which ruled against the segregation of schools), the US Civil Rights movement grew. Many influential student organizers and groups of the following decades had their earliest political experiences in pickets and sit-ins, voter registration drives, and armed confrontations with mobs of white racists within the context of that movement.

The global left wing movements underwent a serious political and cultural paradigm shift in the 1960s. The factory-centric ideas and the parties of the old Left were ignored or rejected by the new generation of activists, who turned instead to the anti-colonial movements abroad, and the Black movement at home, for influence and leadership. US involvement in Vietnam was escalating, embroiling many American households in serious crises and debate. The enduring successes of the Cuban and Algerian revolutions catalyzed new theories of action and organization in the global far left, confused or demoralized as many were by the state capitalist administration of the Soviet Union, which had embraced a

geopolitical policy of “Peaceful Coexistence” with the US-led capitalist bloc.

The Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) were both founded in 1960. In the years that followed, these two groups would become the leading organizations of a nationwide movement. Even those developing their ideas, theories, and plans outside of the meeting minutes cannot deny the influence these two organizations had on our society. These groups expressed and cultivated the new ideas developing across the country.

Some Black SDS members at Ohio Central State College came together to form a splinter organization on their campus, which they named Challenge. In 1962, through student organizing efforts, Challenge decided to take over the student government at Central State and to dissolve itself into another organization, which they called the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM). Through the influence of various anti-colonial thinkers, RAM developed a revolutionary Black nationalist politics and worked to develop the connection between the Black struggles in US and the anticolonial struggles for independence around the world. According to RAM, Black people in the US constituted a “captive nation” and an “internal colony” within the United States. Because of this, they have a unique task in world history: to overthrow the white supremacist state from within it.

In the Summer of 1963, confrontations between civil rights protesters and white southern police forces escalated. Riots against racist police brutality, white-nationalist attacks, and



segregation broke out in Alabama, North Carolina, and Georgia. In August, the famous march on Washington brought out 250,000 people who peacefully demonstrated for labor and civil rights, organized by Martin Luther King Jr., the Southern Christian Labor Conference (SCLC), SNCC, CORE (Congress of Racial Equality), and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In 1964, riots again spread across the country, in New York, New Jersey, and then back across the South, in Florida and Jackson, Mississippi. Black people, lead by Black students, were quickly moving to the center of national attention in politics, as a consequence of their participation within these revolts.

In 1965, after the “Gulf of Tonkin” incident, the number of Americans drafted into the Vietnam war doubled. The student anti-war movement grew. As it grew, it also developed a more radical line, mirroring and referencing the new and militant frameworks developing in the Black struggle. In April of 1965, SDS called for the first national anti-war demonstration in Washington, DC. 20,000 people came. The organization’s popularity boomed. By the end of Summer, there were over a hundred chapters.

On August 11, 1965, the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles exploded. A week of rioting, armed clashes with police, arson, and looting crossed the city. The entire world looked on, stunned by the scenes of destruction and revolt. Many compared the events in Watts to urban guerrilla warfare. RAM encouraged Black people in the US to identify with the Vietnamese National Liberation Front. Police officials reported on the Watts riots similarly, comparing the rioters to the Viet Cong. There were reports of sniper fire in the streets, helicopters were reportedly shot at, and hundreds of buildings were destroyed.

RAM, comprised at the time of mostly students and artists, participated in the Watts rebellion. Members from LA met up with members from as far away as New Jersey in the smoldering streets. In the period that followed, membership in their secretive organization grew to 3,000, according to founding member Muhammad Ahmad. They still needed a way to interface with the public however. In 1966, the Black Panther Party was conceived of in Harlem, NY, inspired by the Lowndes County Freedom Organization, operating in Lowndes County, Alabama. Unlike RAM, the Party was intended to be a mass organization, open to the public. Through public organizing drives, this New York organization grew to 300 members. Later that year, through their participation in Soul Students Advisory Council (a RAM front group) on Merritt College campus, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Oakland-based Black Panther Party for Self Defense. In the following years, it grew to 5,000 full-time members.

The Columbia University chapter of the Students for a Democratic Society was founded in 1966, the same year as the Panthers. It was an outgrowth of a group called the Independent Committee on Vietnam. At least three of the

founding members, David Gilbert, Ted Gold, and John Jacobs, later joined the Weather Underground. At the time, student activism at Columbia took aim at the Institute for Defense Analysis program on campus, a Department of Defense program on counter-insurgency in Vietnam and its potential relevance to US police departments. When Marines came to Columbia in 1967 to recruit, the Columbia SDS chapter organized a demonstration to stop it. When demonstrators confronted the Marines, they were attacked by a group of reactionary students. Fighting against racism and imperialism pitted white activists in conflict with white reactionaries, forcing them to clarify their position with respect to the relative privileges their skin color afforded them: to embrace those privileges by remaining docile, or to challenge them by toppling the system that administers them.

## A Long, Hot Summer

On April 1 1967, riots broke out in Omaha, with Black teenagers fighting police and looting stores. The next day, Stokely Carmichael was censored at Tennessee State University in Nashville, and rioting commenced immediately. In the days, weeks, and months that followed, riots spread to over 160 cities in a sequence known as the “Long, Hot Summer.” Censorship or scandals surrounding or involving SNCC were frequent precipitating factors. No part of the country was spared: Black youth, very often students, fought police in Tampa, Waterloo, Atlanta, Des Moines, Lansing, Dayton, Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco, Houston, Minneapolis, Hattiesburg, Tucson, Cairo, Poughkeepsie, Seattle, Pasadena, and far beyond. Only the 2020 George Floyd rebellion can claim a more widespread distribution of rebellion.

In July 1967, the moment reached its climax. In Newark and Detroit, the riots became authentic armed insurrections, pitting the Black proletariat against the National Guard. Hundreds of thousands of people participated in these risings, mostly without formal membership in any organization or association. Revolutionary groups like RAM participated in an organized way, using urban guerrilla tactics and mobilizing military cadres in coordinated initiatives. In Newark, more than two dozen people were killed by authorities; 8,000 state troopers and National Guardsmen were called to contain the conflagration which had spread to more than 10 nearby cities, including Middlesex, where an arms factory was looted by insurgents. In Detroit, 43 people were killed. The insurgents controlled nearly the entire city, using sniper fire and ambushes to repel and even to kill National Guardsmen. Resistance spread to at least 9 surrounding cities, with Guardsmen receiving clearance to “shoot to kill.” Over \$45 million in damages was reported (modern equivalent of \$411 million) in Detroit alone.

The next year, in 1968, Robert F Williams, as International Chairman of RAM, visited Hanoi. There, he offered a toast of congratulations to NLF General Vo Nguyen Giap on the success of the Tet offensive, in which 85,000 NLF guerrillas launched surprise attacks on US bases in over 100 cities

in southern Vietnam. General Giap, toasting him back, congratulated Williams saying, "We learned from Detroit to go the cities."

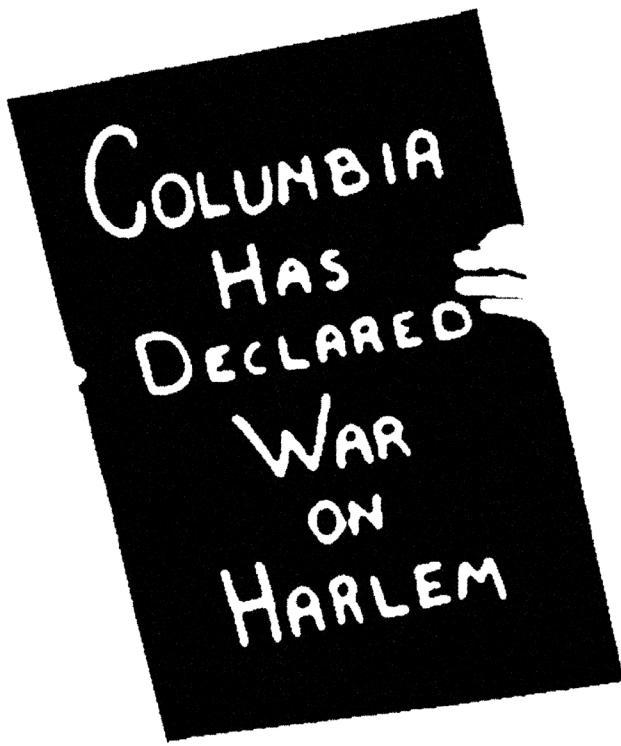
On February 8, 1968 clashes broke out on South Carolina State College's campus where students protested against racial segregation at a local bowling alley. Police fired on demonstrators, killing 3 Black students and injuring dozens more. This marked the first time in US history university students were killed by the police on a college campus. Tragically, it would not be the last.

Returning to campuses for the new semester, student organizers met frequently to plan their next moves in the climate of nationwide Black rebellion. On March 27, SDS members staged a sit-in at the Low Library on Columbia campus, demanding the abolition of the Institute for Defensive Analysis program. Six of them were later suspended for violating campus rules. The National Council of SDS met and decided to convene coordinated anti-war actions in April at as many campuses as possible. SDS Columbia at the time represented the biggest faction at the National Council meeting.

Then, unexpectedly, on April 4, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated.

## Holy Week Uprising

In the wake of the tragic killing, riots again engulfed more than 100 cities. The murder of King was a serious tide-shift for the



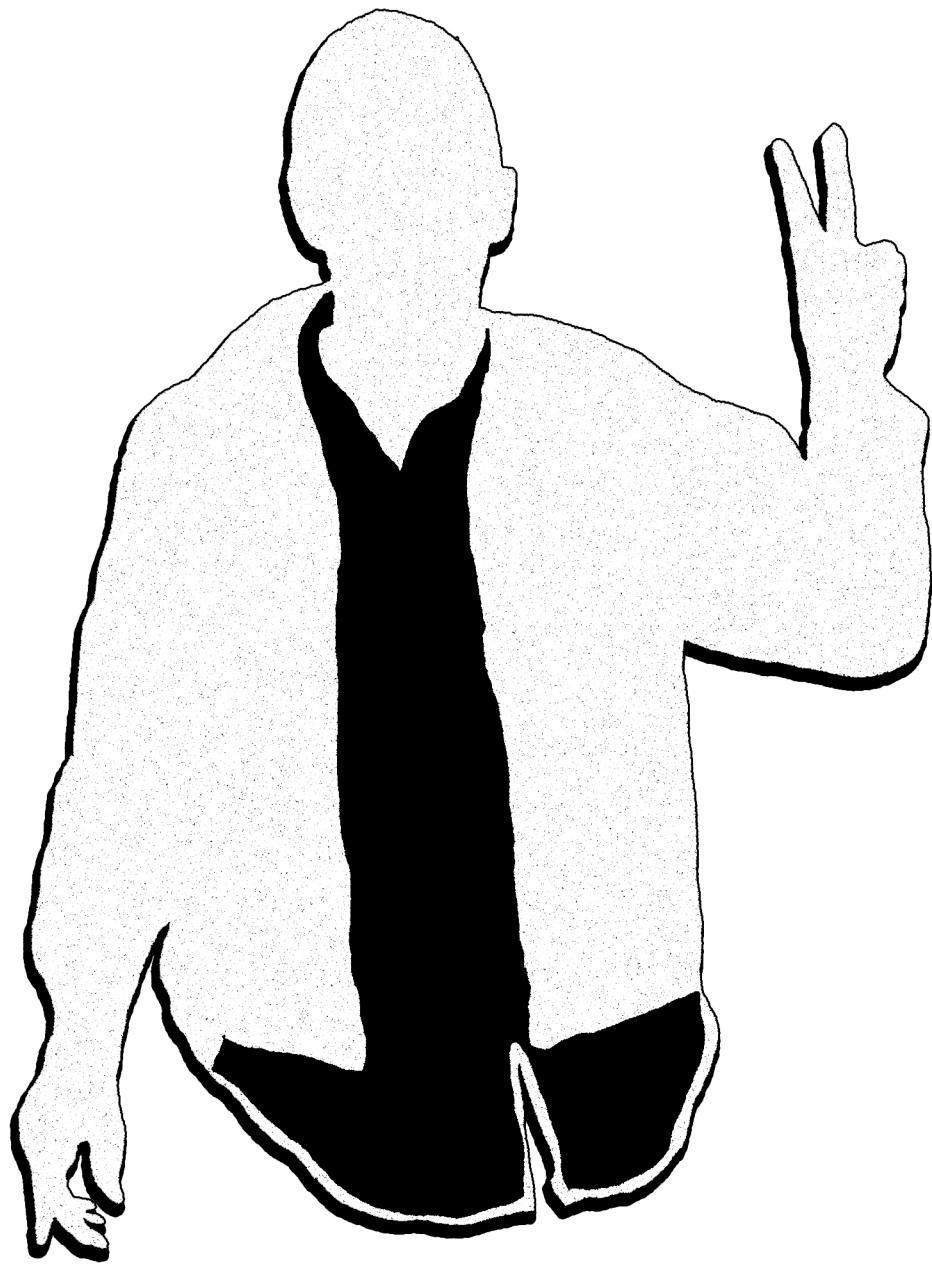
US public, Black and white alike. The response was clearest in the Midwest, South, and East Coast, though notably there was no major upheaval in New York City. All in all, 40 people were killed and over 20,000 were arrested. SNCC members called for demonstrations around the country. In Washington DC, following a SNCC-led rally, tens of thousands of people began breaking windows, setting fires, looting stores, and clashing with police. The Marine Corps was called in to guard the Capitol. The Army 3rd Infantry was mobilized to defend the White House. Not since the Civil War had scenes of such great unrest rocked the nation's capitol. 1,200 buildings were burned to the ground. In Chicago, 5,000 soldiers were deployed to assist the 10,000 police and 6,000 National Guardsmen. In Baltimore, H. Rap Brown, then-chairman of SNCC, was seen driving around urging crowds of people to take desperately-needed action. The resulting uprising caused tens of millions of dollars in damages.

For the second summer in a row, poor Black people, often led by Black student groups like SNCC, had initiated nationwide insurrections and armed revolts all by themselves. In both cases, they had failed to overthrow the government, or to institute a revolutionary program by other means. What was clear beyond a doubt, is that the death of King meant the death of nonviolent resistance.

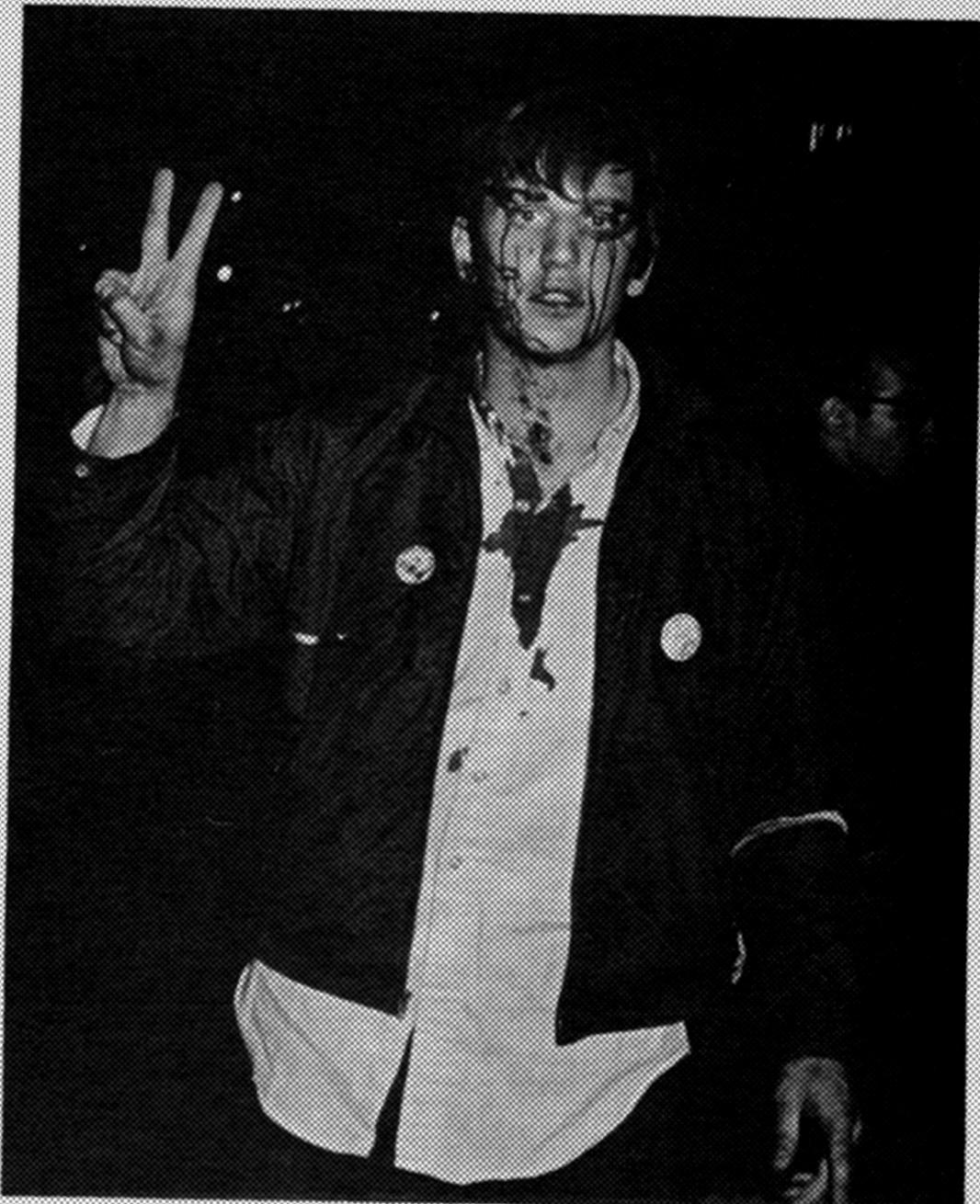
## Sit-in at Low Library, Occupation of Columbia

In the context of the King assassination and subsequent revolt, Columbia students gathered on campus, determined to take action. SDS organizers handed out leaflets at an administration-sponsored event commemorating Dr. King, denouncing the hypocrisy of the administration for continuously refusing to recognize the rights of Black and Puerto Rican cafeteria staff to unionize. SDS planned a demonstration on April 23 alongside Students' Afro-American Society (SAS) and CORE to oppose the construction of a new university gymnasium in nearby Harlem. The April 23 protest also demanded that the university drop the sanctions against the 6 protesters who sat in at the Low Library a month earlier, just before the Holy Week Uprising.

Hundreds gathered at the Low Library, where they were blocked by police and reactionaries. They switched directions, marching towards the new gym in Harlem. Clashes with police broke out as demonstrators tore down fencing at the construction site. When police reinforcements arrived, demonstrators again changed plans, making way for Hamilton Hall. They stormed the building, flooding into its atriums, hallways, stairwells, and classrooms. Dean Henry Coleman was taken hostage by students, announced by SDS organizer and future Weatherman Mark Rudd. Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers!, an armed group based in the Lower East Side, took over the Mathematics building. Others occupied the Architecture building. Black students retained sole occupancy of Hamilton Hall, so that participants with different aims and tactics could operate without stepping on each other's toes.



# WHY WE STRIKE



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A week later, on April 30 1968, 1,000 police officers gathered and assaulted the campus. The SAS students in Hamilton Hall negotiated through lawyers to be released without violence. The other buildings were raided. NYPD arrested over 700 students, faculty, and “non-students” alike. They fired tear gas onto campus and beat protesters with clubs.

Despite the arrests, the occupation of Columbia was a success. The Institute for Defense Analysis was kicked off campus, and the plans for the gymnasium in Harlem were cancelled.

The recent eviction of the Hamilton Hall occupation of 2024 took place on the 50th year anniversary of the 1968 eviction.

## After King, After Columbia

In the fall of 1968, there were around 41 bombings on college campuses. In the 1969-1970 school year, there were 5,000.

The attitude of young people continued to change. The majority of youth claimed to desire a “revolution” to correct American society’s many ills. In the context of repeated uprisings by the country’s Black working classes, and the rising militancy of the student anti-war movement, the federal government escalated its repressive campaign, deploying a counter-revolutionary operation against leftists known as the Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO). As SDS sought to urgently clarify its relationship to Black nationalism and the Vietnamese national liberation struggle, its members split into rival camps, eventually breaking down completely in 1969. The segment that sympathized most aggressively with anti-colonial and Black nationalist theories and movements became known as Weatherman. Other factions, including a faction known as Revolutionary Youth Movement II, also sympathized with the Black uprisings, but differed significantly with Weather on the role white people could or should play in the course of the revolution, advocating an integrated and unified movement, contrasting with Weather, who aimed to build a “white fighting force” against racism.

SNCC, the other leading student organization of the 1960s, was in a terminal crisis at the same time. Following the resignation of Carmichael and then Brown from national leadership (both advocates for Black Power and closer integration with the Panthers post-Watts), the organization could no longer resist the recruitment of its remaining leadership into the Democratic Party or other middle class groups. With the radical flank gone, and the liberal wing in retreat, SNCC was over by the end of 1969.

The dissolution of these two mass student organizations did not end resistance to oppression and war in the US at first. When students were killed by National Guardsmen at Kent State University on May 4, 1970, a wave of riots, demonstrations, occupations, and bombings shook the country. A student strike involving more than 4 million people spread across more than 800 schools. Over 100,000

people filled the streets of Washington, DC, burning cars and fighting police, prompting President Nixon to evacuate the White House from a scene he described as a “civil war.” The president was being hyperbolic, however. In just a few days, the rebellion was over.



Black radical organizations and anti-war activists of the 1960s, both of which relied heavily on the activity and leadership of university students, constructed a near-revolutionary movement by joining forces. By the time of the Kent State Massacre in 1970, revolutionary nationalist organizations inspired by the Black Panther Party and national liberation movements across the globe had formed around the country. Days of rioting after the raid of the Stonewall Inn gave shape to the gay and trans-liberation movement that had been growing since the mid 60s. Revolutionary feminist organizations sprouted across the US and informed the character and ideology of existing radical groups, like the Weather Underground Organization, the George Jackson Brigade, the Diggers, and more.

In the end, these movements, uprisings, and groups were unable to overthrow the US racial state, to curb US imperialist adventures, to topple capitalism, or to root out machismo and patriarchy. They did manage to initiate forms of struggle that would later be imitated by workers, students, and women across Europe in the later half of the 1970s. For us, they have shown the necessity of forming alliances and working hard to build unity between different subversive and confrontational segments of society.

The 1960s saw a higher level of militancy and participation than our contemporary struggles and on that basis were closer to initiating a veritable social revolution. Knowing this, we can still look to that period for lessons and cautionary tales. Still, participants of more recent protests have learned all of their own lessons. To understand what to do next, we need to also metabolize those lessons. We have to judge them with rigor and clarity, without the nostalgia sometimes grafted onto the distant past, or the dogma often applied to our own experiences.



# PART THREE: **WHO WILL FIGHT WITH THE STUDENTS?**

In recent years, protests lead by students have had an outsize influence on social movements in general, often preceding them by about a year. The 2009-2010 campus occupations movement in New York and California is widely regarded as the tactical predecessor to the Wisconsin Capitol occupation, and the subsequent Occupy Wall Street movement, which brought together millions. During the Trump presidency, many serious confrontations between far right wing agitators and antifascists took place on college campuses. In both cases, and there are certainly more examples, the strength of the student protests was determined by the extent to which they could mobilize additional layers of society outside of universities.

The Palestine solidarity movement has so far not made the relevant connections to other layers of society that could help it to grow and sharpen. Why not?

How is it that struggles broaden to begin with? Specifically, how can participants of social struggles protagonize groups they are not a part of, or populations that are not spontaneously drawn into a given fight? Just as mostly white students joined and augmented the Jewish, Muslim, and Arab anti-war protests of October-March, we might ask what the student protesters can do to drive participation from anarchists, Black people, and angry people outside of the campuses in general. To answer this, we should place the “student intifada” in the context of other US-based protest movements.

## Twilight of the Organizers

When we think of “relating” two struggles together, we cannot describe a purely formal affiliation, a kind of joint-action and sympathy that exists in a coalition of organizations and collectives. Aside from the undeniable fact that most rebellious people are not members of any activist groups or organizations, most of those who are have hardly helped to advance struggles toward a revolutionary horizon. In the protests and riots between 2010 and now, these organized groups had no clear way of participating in spontaneous movements; if they did, they usually constrained, misdirected, and repressed them. Many groups, especially the large NGOs, tailed the riots completely, being “caught off guard” by them, year after year. Opportunists of one sort busied themselves “base building” :passing out fliers and knocking on doors, staging photo-ops for their donors. Opportunists of another

sort introduced tactics and trainings that could in no way advance the unfolding disarray. We have seen with our own eyes as activists lead die-ins just blocks from riots. We have also seen breakaway marches lead dozens to break a few windows while huge mobs of young people loot stores and shoot guns at police.

In nearly every case we can think of, left wing groups did not meaningfully insert a revolutionary ideology or program into the movements just as they have not pushed their tactical or strategic development. Many groups do not even believe that doing so is valuable, possible, or ethical. As a matter of course, many activists, organizers, socialists, anarchists, and others believe they do not have the right to push movements, and incorrectly believe that their chronic tailism is an asset or testament to their moral uprightness.

Most of the leading forces in these revolts are spontaneously and informally organized groups of friends with no name or joinable structure, street gangs, or DIY cultural spaces. These informal or apolitical groups generally haven’t pushed a revolutionary program, even if they popularize insurrectional tactics. They have regularly asserted themselves at the frontlines of clashes with police, and thus formed the tactical avant-garde of social struggles: collectively taking the biggest risks and determining the direction of the revolts as a result. Over and again, these layers were themselves overwhelmed in the course of events, failing to retain tactical or strategic leadership after a few days or weeks. As the left-wing groups and large non-profits re-oriented themselves to the new balance of forces, especially after the most courageous are arrested or injured, they have consistently found methods for regaining control or influence over events, advancing conciliatory proposals, slogans, frameworks, and tactics. It is the fault of aspiring revolutionaries that this recurs continuously, for it is our duty to develop the autonomous forces required to build the revolution. We cannot satisfy ourselves by blaming the opportunists, the reformers, and the cowards.

So why do protest movements spread? Why do new groups join protests? If the organizations do not lead the spontaneous mass movements, but rather smother them; if the informal groups do not consolidate their leadership, even as their methods attract public attention, then this question is more complicated than it seems. If inviting some groups to a meeting or developing shared plans is not enough to assure that movements grow, then aspiring revolutionaries in the

Gaza solidarity movement will have to consider how and why the students came to participate in the first place, given that they were not all invited individually, and were not primarily participating in organizing structures operating “in coalition” with one another.

From our vantage point, it seems that struggles spread insofar as they give people a way to channel their frustrations into meaningful collective action, to use the skills and relationships they already have, and to participate in meaningful historic events. In essence, most people participate in spontaneous mass movements because in them we feel powerful. We feel that with our own actions we can change the world, and change our own lives. It is not easy to measure or provoke this feeling with banners, slogans, or planned disruptions. When it comes to empowering others, we must admit that there are many factors outside of our control. Despite the certainty and calculations of some, to spread resistance is more of an art form than a science, and it requires as much creativity and tact as precision and focus.

In recent years, only one moment blew open the lid on self-activity, pulling together an enormous cross section of the public in an episode of popular unrest and radical action at a scale appropriate to the rottenness of our times.

## The Fighters

The George Floyd Rebellion announced a new chapter in US history. According to the New York Times, 25 million people participated in protests against the racist killings of Black people by law enforcement. For the first time, several million white people joined Black people in riots and clashes with the police. In some places, including Portland where the revolt endured the longest, the majority of the rioters were white. This kind of participation is unprecedented. This did not happen in the 1960s, when Black people fought with few allies against racist mobs and the National Guard, occasionally counting on the support of hundreds or maybe a few thousand white revolutionaries for support. This did not happen in the 2014-2016 Black Lives Matter riots in Ferguson or elsewhere. While many white people participated in marches against the killing of Michael Brown, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, and Kimani Gray, the poor Black people resisting the volleys of teargas could only count on a small number of white anarchists to join them. In fact, the correct and justified participation of white insurrectionists in those riots was often denounced, rejected, and policed by leftists.

The Defend the Atlanta Forest/Stop Cop City movement represents the intentional consolidation and organization of the George Floyd uprising into an enduring common sense, as far as the left is concerned. It is the culmination of lessons, skills, networks, and efforts of the radical environmentalist movement and the anti-police protests of the last decade. In the Stop Cop City movement, white militants have demonstrated that they are still willing to take great risks to attack and destroy the racial state, even outside the context of mass spontaneous upheaval. A cursory glance of the arrest records from that

movement makes clear that of the 100+ arrests in general, and of the 61 facing the most serious charges of Racketeering, scarcely a small handful are not white people.

Militant protesters in the Gaza Solidarity Encampments came disproportionately from the ranks of the Defend the Forest/Stop Cop City movement. Even those who did not participate in protests in Atlanta drew on its legacy symbolically when they aspired to militant action. Direct participation and symbolic inspiration alike funneled slogans, tactics, and insights from one movement into the next, indirectly connecting the Palestine protests with the George Floyd revolt, with the Cop City movement acting as a discursive bridge between the two.

Chants of “Stop Cop City” could be heard in tandem with pro-Palestinian chants. A banner with a portrait of Tortuguita decorated the facade of Columbia University during the encampment there. At Cal Poly Humboldt, where protesters took over the entire campus, a long dedication to Tortuguita was painted on a wall. In Tucson, where a “Week of Action” against Nationwide Insurance, the company providing insurance for the construction of Cop City, took place in February of this year, University of Arizona students chanted “Stop Cop City” as they threw bottles at police during the raid on the Gaza Solidarity Encampment. Multiple acts of nocturnal sabotage and vandalism across the country have been accompanied by claims of responsibilities that reference both the Cop City resistance, and the war on Gaza.

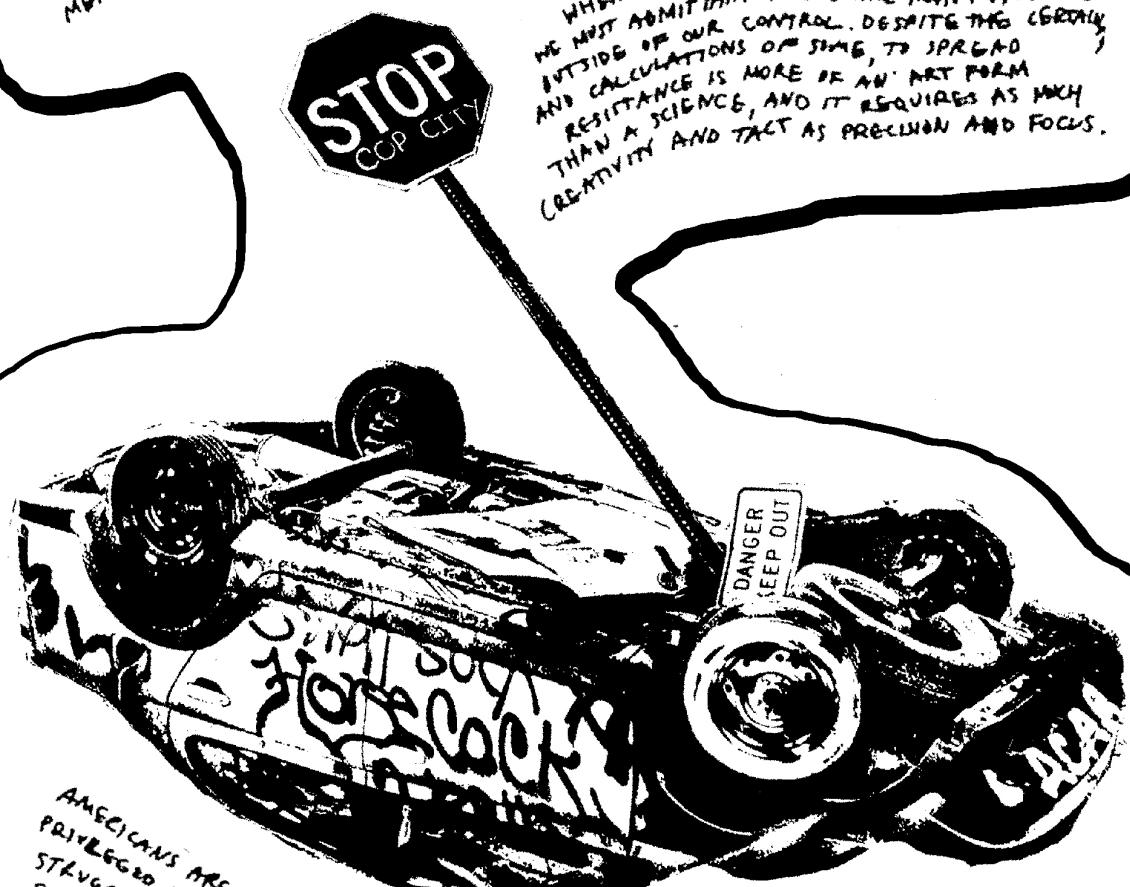
If student anti-war protesters hope to continue playing a decisive role in US history in general, and in fighting the US-backed genocide in Gaza in particular, they would do well to legitimize participation of exactly these forces. Campus organizers should chase that participation and work hard to create a situation in which these forces, most of whom are not students, would be welcome, rather than smugly chase them off campus. Similarly, those of us who are not enrolled in universities would do well to consider fighting alongside students on campus, rather than in obscure industrial or logistical corridors. It could make just as much sense to open vortices of subversion within the campuses themselves, welcoming “non-students,” anarchists, abolitionists, poor Black people, migrants, and others onto the campuses for carnivals of refusal and action. If these institutions are developing the weapons, if they are conducting the research, if they are training the personnel, if they are manufacturing the consent, then it is not the privilege of students and faculty alone to challenge them. In fact, it is the right and obligation of all people of conscience to swarm the universities, and to stop the war where it is cultivated before it is dropped on the heads of the Palestinians in Gaza.

## Bringing the War Home

The tactical and strategic framework of the students allowed the Palestine solidarity movement to grow, while also preventing it from spreading further. In order to end US imperialism in Palestine and elsewhere, a program of generalized disorder may be the only option. If these protests require participation

MOST PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN SPONTANEOUS MASS MOVEMENTS BECAUSE IN THEM WE FEEL POWERFUL. WE FEEL THAT WITH OUR OWN ACTIONS, WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD, AND CHANGE OUR OWN LIVES. IT IS NOT EASY TO ~~CHANGE~~ MEASURES OR PROVOKE THIS FEELING WITH BANNERS, LOGANS OR PLANNED DISRUPTIONS.

WHEN IT COMES TO EMPOWERING OTHERS, WE MUST ADMIT THAT THERE ARE MANY FACTORS OUTSIDE OF OUR CONTROL. DESPITE THIS CERTAIN AND CALCULATIONS OF SOME, TO SPREAD RESISTANCE IS MORE OF AN ART FORM THAN A SCIENCE, AND IT REQUIRES AS MUCH CREATIVITY AND TACT AS PRECISION AND FOCUS.



AMERICANS ARE NOT IMMUNE FROM RESISTANCE. WHITE PEOPLE, STUDENTS AND OTHER PRIVILEGED PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO STAND BY "IN SOLIDARITY" WITH LIBERATION STRUGGLES HERE AND ABROAD, CHEERING THEM ON WITHOUT SHARING ANY OF THEIR RISKS. STILL WE CANNOT CHIDE AND RIDICULE THOSE WHO HAVE YET TO EMBRACE MILITANT STRUGGLE. FIRMS OF RESISTANCE MUST BE ARRANGED TO PROTAGONIZE TODAY'S BYSTANDERS, SPECTATORS, ONLOOKERS AND FENCE SITTERS... IN ORDER TO DO THIS, ORGANIZERS WILL HAVE TO... EMBRACE STREET FIGHTING, PITCHED BATTLES, BARRICADES, ROCK-THROWING, AND HIGHWAY BLOCKADES AS THEIR GENERAL STRATEGY. THESE ARE NOT THE ONLY FORMS RESISTANCE CAN TAKE, BUT WITHOUT THEM, NO OTHER METHODS CAN RETAIN THEIR MEANING OR DIGNITY ANY LONGER.

among poor Black people, anarchists, and angry people in order to succeed, it is not clear how else those alliances can be formed, since the organized groups and organizations alone cannot be trusted, as previous protest movements have already made clear.

This is a similar dilemma confronting radical campaigns and localized revolts elsewhere. In the current globalized capitalist world, few movements are able to apply the leverage they need to win, since the bosses of the world are able to continuously flee direct confrontation with those they exploit. With few exceptions, only the lightning action of angry and fierce crowds have been able to win serious reforms, or to topple local governments. What does not advance, retreats; since there are no ellipses in history, no pauses in the global confrontation of forces. Activism, coordinated actions, and planned initiatives are not by themselves able to advance the Gaza solidarity protests any further.

On the other hand, to embrace “mass resistance,” “mass revolt,” and generalized disorder as discrete concepts is essentially worthless. The world does not need any more people who comfort themselves with the deferral of real action by appealing to hypothetical aspirations and dreams. Activist groups, aspiring revolutionaries, and organizers can only solve problems of a certain scale, questions which can be resolved by a coordination and unity of will, inspiration, and dedication. The question of the mass, spontaneous, rebellion is a good general orientation when imagining tactics, but is not helpful when resistance is difficult or unpopular. Intentional groups can take over buildings, destroy property, and stage disruptions, but they cannot open the floodgates of insurrectional action similar to the George Floyd uprising.

So what can be done? Already, revolutionary journalists and writers are working around the clock to shift public perception away from the jingoistic and racist support for the war. Tacticians and anarchists are introducing technical sophistication into the movement; methods best suited for crowds and riots as well as forms of sabotage and clandestine action. The onus to apply pressure on university administrations by constructing protest camps on quads and plazas of schools has exhausted whatever usefulness it may have had. This does not mean others will not attempt to do the same thing again once school starts back up this Fall.

The revolutionary politics of the 1960s gives an example of a productive interrelation between anti-colonial revolution, Black resistance, and student anti-war activism. The world today may not be so different. Angry and aspiring people must look to struggles in places like Bangladesh, where student protesters have resorted to burning police stations, looting armories, and turning campuses into barracks for new popular organizations. We must look to the strategies and needs of Burmese students, who have turned to the national liberation armies in the Myanmar hinterlands for training, education, and alliances against the military dictatorship. We must articulate the structural links connecting counterrevolution overseas and at home, and find ways to turn awareness of those links into a revolutionary fighting force capable of basic, if difficult, tasks.

Doing so requires that aspiring revolutionaries disabuse themselves and others of exceptionalist and chauvinistic ideology. Americans are not immune from resistance. White people, students, and other privileged people do not have the right to stand by “in solidarity” with liberation struggles here and abroad, cheering them on without sharing any of their risks. Still, we cannot chide and ridicule those who have yet to embrace militant struggle. Forms of resistance must be arranged to protagonist today’s bystanders, spectators, onlookers, and fence-sitters. While they may not form the core of any serious resistance, and they may not be relied on to conduct necessary tasks and roles within a revolutionary organization and movement, it is from their ranks that an insurrection will actually recruit and depend. In order to do this, organizers will have to reject frameworks that require ongoing informed consent among participants, ultra-democratic orientations which divide action into “risk-based” roles and segments, and other forms of scripted and organized activist choreography. They will have to embrace street fighting, pitched battles, barricades, rock-throwing, and highway blockades as their general strategy. These are not the only forms resistance can take, but without them, no other methods can retain their meaning or dignity any longer.





# APPENDIX



*Sandinista rebels ride a small tank in the main square of Managua on June 20, 1979*

## NICARAGUA

In the late 1950s, Student-led opposition to the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua was most concentrated at the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua in Leon. Protest activities and agitation were spear-headed in part by students Carlos Fonseca, Tomas Borge, and Silvio Mayorga. Frustrated by the continuous and bloody suppression of campus-based resistance, they eventually founded the Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional (FSLN, or “Sandinistas”) in 1961. In 1979, after years of clandestine insurrectional action,

the FSLN toppled the dictatorship and established a socialist-aligned independent republic. In 2018, after nearly 30 years of corruption and capitulation to neoliberal restructuring, students across Nicaragua rose up once more against the autocratic rule of former-revolutionary Daniel Ortega. They failed to topple the Ortega government, which is almost completely dependent on US-based capital and loans. Nearly 1,000 of them were gunned down in the streets.



Students on a burned-out bus, July 28, 1968

## MEXICO

In 1959, the Rebel Army in Cuba had successfully overthrown the US-Backed dictator, Fulgencio Batista. The influence of the Cuban Revolution spread across the hemisphere and globe. When the CIA and US backed counter-revolutionaries invaded Cuba in 1961, the infamous Bay of Pigs, 15,000 Mexican students marched in Mexico City in solidarity with the Cuban people. In Chihuahua in 1963, after years of failed peaceful endeavors to facilitate agrarian reform, a small group of students, teachers, and campesinos organized themselves into a military formation calling themselves the “People’s Guerrilla Group.” In 1965 they attacked the Madera military Barracks, hoping to catalyze a broader revolt. The assault was a failure but the heroism of their efforts would inspire other guerrilla experiments in the preceding years, most notably, the Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre.

In 1965 thousands of medical students demonstrated in Mexico City. Normalistas organized strikes against austerity and demanded more resources for rural schools. On July 26, 1968 tensions came to head when students celebrating the anniversary of the Cuban Revolution converged paths with students from the National Polytechnical Institute, who were demonstrating against police repression. The crowd flipped over buses, erected barricades, and began rioting. Hundreds of thousands of people were drawn into the struggle that came next, including workers, campesinos, artists, the urban poor, political parties, and labor organizations. By August, university

students sought to defend university autonomy via occupations and the coordination of democratic assemblies, creating organizations such as the National Strike Council (CNH) to organize a national movement.

The Summer Olympic Games were slated to happen in Mexico City in October of that year and the PRI (the ruling party of Mexico at the time) escalated its repression as the games approached. The army was sent in to occupy university campuses. They arrested students indiscriminately. Some were tortured in holding. On October 2, 1968 during a demonstration attended by over 10,000 students against the PRI and Olympic Games in Tlatelolco, protesters were surrounded in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas and fired on by the military. Upwards of 500 students, journalists, passersby, and children were killed. The Tlatelolco Massacre marked the beginning of the end of the student movement in Mexico City but the movement against repression and the PRI’s policies continued elsewhere in the country. In order to advance the struggle it was deemed necessary to adopt different forms of organization. Urban armed struggle groups like The Lacondones, the Revolutionary Action Movement, and the Revolutionary Student Front were formed in response to the escalating State tactics. In 1969 the FLN (Forces of National Liberation), the precursor to the EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation), was formed in Monterrey where the student movement continued on.

## GREECE

In February 1973, Law students at the University of Athens launched a strike against a military conscription law passed by the military junta and hated tyrant Georgios Papadapolous. After more than 6 years of autocracy, this was the first mass resistance to the Regime of the Colonels. Students from the Law School were arrested and some tortured. The seal on resistance was broken and the waters of social rage rushed forth. On November 14, 1973, a student strike at the Polytechnic detonated social peace under the junta for good. Thousands of people filled the area around Exarcheia and Syntagma Square. Students took over the university and launched an uncensored radio program. For the first time since the WWII, molotov cocktails exploded in the streets, as pitched battles between police and demonstrators escalated for three days. On November 17, the military sent tanks into

the Polytechnic. 24 people were killed. The protests ended, but the junta was mortally wounded. Attempts to reform the dictatorship provoked hardliners to the right of Papadapolous to stage a new coup d'etat. It was already too late. A year later, civilian rule had returned to Greece, and the old junta was standing trial.

In 1975, an urban guerrilla organization calling itself Revolutionary Organization November 17 began conducting armed attacks against authority figures associated with the dictatorship who remained in power under democracy. To this day, angry and commemorative demonstrations take place every November 17 across Greece, especially in the area surrounding the Polytechnic.



Tanks roll in to crush student movement at the Polytechnic

## IRAN

Opposition to the Shah cut across all of Iranian society but when police raided a poetry reading on November 19, 1977, organized and attended by thousands of students, the movement gained a revolutionary momentum. Clashes ensued and one student was killed. Demonstrations and rioting followed, causing the main universities of Tehran to close. Strikes occurred across universities on Azar 16, Student Day, to commemorate the lives of three students who were killed on December 7, 1953 during protests against the visit of Richard Nixon. In the final days of clashes against the Shah's government, thousands of

weapons were brought to Tehran University and distributed to children as young as 10 and to adults in their 70s.

The guerrilla organizations across the Left opposing the US-backed Shah of Iran were overwhelmingly made up of college students. After the Shah was deposed and the Ayatollah Khomeini came to power, a number of these groups came out in opposition to the newly formed Islamic Republic, bringing thousands into the streets with them.



Protesters celebrate the overthrow of the US-backed Shah



Protesters in Yangon, Myanmar, in March 2021

## MYANMAR

In 1988, students in Myanmar launched a mass movement against General Ne Win, who had ruled the country for 26 years. In 1987, students demonstrated against new fiscal policies making it harder to pay tuition. In 1988, student demonstrations took a dramatic turn after a young student was killed by the police. Demonstrations followed at the Rangoon Institute of Technology (now Yangon Technological University) and Rangoon University (now Yangon Technological University) leading to military-led raids and closures of campuses. On March 16, soldiers abused student demonstrators, shooting at them and drowning them in Inya Lake.

When campuses reopened in the summer of 1988, protests resumed. On June 20, Yangon University was closed down again but it was too late. Thousands of workers, monks, and students joined in the streets. Police fired on demonstrators who fought back, resulting in casualties on both sides. On July 23, 1988, General Ne Win stepped down. Hundreds of thousands marched across Myanmar in August calling for democracy. The army was deployed against them. Soldiers routinely fired on demonstrators, killing thousands. As a result, government offices and personnel became targets for the resistance. "People's Committees" were formed to take over local administration and distribution of goods. Committees built barricades in towns across the country, manned by

volunteers with homemade weapons. Student organizations adopted armed struggle as a part of their program. Some fled the cities to pursue military operations in the countryside. Workers brought the economy to a halt. Student groups, veteran politicians, and popular Myanmar figures made bids for political power in the midst of the movement but after elections in 1990, the military refused to cede power. They retained control of the government until 2012.

On February 1, 2021 after general election results confirmed that the National League for Democracy (NLD) would hold on to power in the government, the military launched a coup. Labor strikes including health workers, teachers, transportation workers, and miners spread across the country. Thousands marched through the streets of Yangon and other major cities, banging pots and donning red ribbons, red being associated with the National League for Democracy party who the military obstructed from assuming office. Crowds sang songs from the 1988 Uprising. A number of students have fled the cities, taking clandestine routes to join military organizations in the mountains and countryside. Medical students now operate makeshift clinics for rebel groups and teachers find themselves in the ranks of guerrillas, using YouTube to learn the art of bomb making. As of August 2024, half of the country is under the control of the guerrillas.

# WITH \$41,500 PER DAY, THE POLICE SECURE THE PERIMETER

by Ezra Allen

While the floodlight blues  
the leaves, the wisteria's

seeds do not scatter  
like cracked porcelain

against the glass. Maybe  
tonight, the rivercane and rye

will not, like the leather  
seat of a car on Peachtree

begin to burn, quietly at first,  
as the county's wastewater

sliding along the creek bed  
or a copperhead sleeping

in a red beam behind the cane.  
But the floodlight—

the men make an island  
of themselves around it;

all night they'll listen to the dark  
water the grass is rise.

# ADDRESSING COMMENTS, PRO AND CON, ON THE ESSAY STATES OF SIEGE

*States of Siege* has been misunderstood by a number of people. These misunderstandings veer, at times, beyond the bounds of semantics or minor details. We say “misunderstandings,” not to arrogantly discredit the comrades who disagree with the thoughts contained in this small essay, but to assert that some of these “disagreements,” are based on erroneous or unfounded claims that are not proposed within *States of Siege*.

Below we summarize and respond to the strongest or most common feedback from comrades. We want the substance of our disagreements to be productive in our shared ambition to build a revolutionary movement in this lifetime.



1

**“States of Siege represents the departure of some comrades from mass organizing, participatory politics, and open engagement. It represents the hardening and closing-in of the comrades, to their own detriment.”**

SoS does not argue for the refusal or abandonment of mass organizing. It states that doing so would be “an elitist outrage, doomed to certain failure.” SoS acknowledges what most participants, considering the true facts of the last 3 years, should admit: the movement against Cop City is simply not a mass movement. The ability to mobilize a few hundred, even a few thousand people, is not what is typically understood by “mass.” Even if those numbers were increased by an order of magnitude, regularly pulling in 10,000 participants, it could hardly count as a mass phenomenon. The phrase “mass movement” should refer to political events involving at least hundreds of thousands if not millions of participants. Given the overall population of the United States, this should not be controversial. If a movement is not a mass movement, than

it is incumbent on its protagonists to figure out what they can possibly do with just a few hundred or perhaps a few thousands accomplices. We are not happy about it; we wish it was a mass movement.

The remarks related to “hardening” or “closing-in” are energetic reflections, not theoretical ones. Through frustration and rage, people develop a distaste and even elitist attitude toward society, to strangers, to organizations, etc. We do not agree with this perspective, but we understand it. The insurrections since 2010 have mostly all failed, despite the fact that they were indeed mass movements. Without bitterness, we know that these events have not lived up to their/our ambitions. This does not mean they have accomplished

nothing at all. This does not mean that “horizontalism” is to blame, as some academics like Vincent Bevins rush to assert. We are not among the opportunists who believe that insurrectional moments can be judged by the extent to which the capitalist system reforms, asserting itself in “stages” or in a progressive accumulation of “partial victories.”

As we said, “the people will rise up.” We are certain of it. This is hardly the claim of those who are closed off to mass action. Tens of thousands of students and their friends confronted police officers and administrative staff at universities across

the country after we wrote this. US support of Israeli crimes against Palestinians has aggravated a serious and unrelenting panic in the American public. We asserted that the police we have come to know would soon introduce themselves to rebellious people across the country, and that clandestine organizing strategies would become absolutely imperative to address the coming crisis. In less than a month, students across the country passed through the stages of political education required to reach our same conclusions, thanks to the most effective teacher in modern times: the billy club.



2

**“States of Siege is a proposal to engage in urban armed struggle in the vein of the Weather Underground, Red Army Faction, or similar groups from the 1970s.”**

The insurrection (society in arms against the state) is an essential moment in the revolution because privileged social classes do not “whither away” automatically; they must be smashed. The modern democratic state does not hesitate to unleash fascism at home or war overseas if its interests are seriously imperiled. This is not controversial to say. Everyone who is willing to break police lines or throw stones already understands these points.

The ruling classes defend themselves from the revolutionary potential of the masses with armed forces, police officers, prisoners, and borders. If the popular classes cannot arm themselves, they must ally themselves with a section of the armed forces of the modern state, with narcotraffickers, or with foreign armies of some kind. We believe that the protagonists of the revolution against capitalism are the poor, the marginalized, and the disenfranchised of all social ranks. They must assume responsibility for, among many other things, building their own armed forces, accountable to their

own social and universal needs as an alliance of lower classes. They cannot rely on bandits, mercenaries, or a company of Army-men to defend them. The realities of mass armament in the western hemisphere, including the United States, makes this question even more pressing for revolutionaries like us, who do not desire bloodshed (and who actively fear it).

We have not advocated, in *SoS* or elsewhere, that anarchists, communists, abolitionists, or others should begin launching armed attacks against the police, bankers, or industrialists. While it must be admitted that, from the perspective of the jailers, the use of Molotov cocktails and time-delayed devices already constitute acts of armed violence, we do appreciate that specific cultural norms surround firearms. And they should, because firearms are serious things. But the point cannot be raised to the level of a taboo.

We advocate for groups to familiarize themselves with firearms in order to generalize knowledge of them, so as to avoid

“isolating the militant vanguard factions.” We do not believe in forming such factions ex-nihilo. It is the self-organized actions of millions of people that determines the successes of the insurrection. It is not a contradiction to assert that people who dedicate themselves to this process must accept responsibility for certain political and technical tasks. This is already something that all activists, bail funds, and saboteurs know in their hearts, but do not often openly state. Similar to the Weathermen and RAF, we do not believe that small and dedicated groups can be counted on to advance the priorities

of the social revolution all by themselves. This requires more people to become familiar with secret meetings, bone-setting, and basics of gun safety.

The more that this knowledge is taboo and specialized, the more likely it is that future movements, under high stakes and dangerous circumstances, will call on the services of designated “security” teams and militias, as they did (disastrously) in the 2020 George Floyd uprising.



### 3

#### **“States of Siege overemphasizes the role of subjective factors and activism, and underemphasizes the role of crises in social transformation.”**

Some are attracted to the arguments of the article because they want to fight fiercely against the status quo; without waiting for a crisis to induce mass action. We share that feeling of urgency but we do not believe that the revolution is a coup d'etat. Without the conditions of crisis and mass mobilization, the insurrection can only be victorious by way of an authoritarian clampdown and top-down administration. If the population does not directly participate in the articulation of its own future it will not be sympathetic to the insurgents. This is not what we are fighting for. Sadly, some self-styled anarchists (with whom we identify the most) advocate for anti-social and

elitist principles of minoritarian vanguard action, mocking the idea of mass resistance and decrying popular organizations in general (which they refer to as “vanguardist” groups). If they ever found themselves on the winning end of a conflict with the state, they would be forced to run a brutal dictatorship, since the majority of people would not be organized in popular structures, and would not feel ownership of the revolution. This is not possible in the modern era, so we should not dwell on it longer. The revolution cannot be made by sheer force of will, by secretive groups, or by acts of heroic destruction, even if it does in fact depend on all of those things in some respects.

4

**"States of Siege is just about forming affinity groups and doing sabotage. I agree/disagree with it, but it is not really anything I haven't heard before."**

In one section, we advocate the formation of intentional small groups to develop skills and analysis with. The purpose of those groups is to ensure that as struggles develop, they are made up of many mobile, skilled, and courageous "semi-professional" groups that are experienced with fighting and familiar with combat care. Those groups would also function to prevent the isolation of individuals and groups who are dedicated to acts of sabotage or armed attacks on the state. Without a robust ecology of small groups, emerging organizations and movements will be built by people who are not invested in combative outcomes and don't know how to precipitate them. Many participants in recent Gaza solidarity protests on campuses ran directly into this problem, finding themselves in a rich social context devoid of experienced crews or groups to collaborate with.

Radicals today tend to disavow their real influence if they are anarchists, and inflate it if they are socialists. The essay

acknowledges the special and unique role played by that small layer of society that joins masked demonstrations, studies struggles around the world, and attempts to bring the situation to a boil. It does so not in order to place that layer above everyone else, but in order to imbue a sense of responsibility on them/us, that social struggles reach a higher level of clarity and potential.

We must take responsibility for the success of the insurrection and the victory of the revolution. That means we need to be organized. The humble proposal to form small "semi-permanent" groups is preliminary and inadequate, but it could be a good starting point. Insofar as these groups should study together, acquire skills, and give one another feedback, they could be something in between a classic action-based affinity group and a cadre organization.



5

**"States of Siege far exaggerates the stakes or significance of the current situation. We should not be entertaining the question of the insurrection in the current juncture."**

For revolutionaries, the overthrow of the social order is an actual occurrence, and it is the measure against which political events, proposals, ideas, and aspirations are judged. It is not a catch-all phrase to refer to all drastic changes within a society or administration. Because it is an actual process, it occurs within the balance of forces between specific classes, groups, and interests. Those forces can be analyzed, organized,

disorganized, demoralized, and empowered. And it is up to us to do all of those things, if we hope to see serious changes in our lifetimes.

It is not out of arrogance that we place our situation in conversation with history, or with the revolution. It is because we cannot afford to lose sight of what we really want.

# **STATES of SIEGE**

*by anonymous*



This essay was originally published February 19, 2024 on [illwill.com](http://illwill.com)  
It has been lightly edited in this re-publication.

I prefer peace. But if trouble must come, let it come in my time,  
so that my children can live in peace.

— Thomas Paine

The present, due to its staggering complexities,  
is almost as conjectural as the past.

We must prove our predictions about the future with action.

— George Jackson

On February 8, 2024, a combined task force of Atlanta Police Department, Georgia State Patrol, ATF, SWAT, and FBI conducted simultaneous pre-dawn raids at three houses. One person has been arrested on a first-degree arson charge, while another was taken in for eight hours before eventually being released.

In the early morning of February 10, anonymous saboteurs burned a police cruiser parked in front of a home just blocks away from two of the homes raided twenty-two hours earlier. This action shocked everyone, authorities and activists alike. The timing and location of that action are breathtaking, regardless of the immediate consequences.

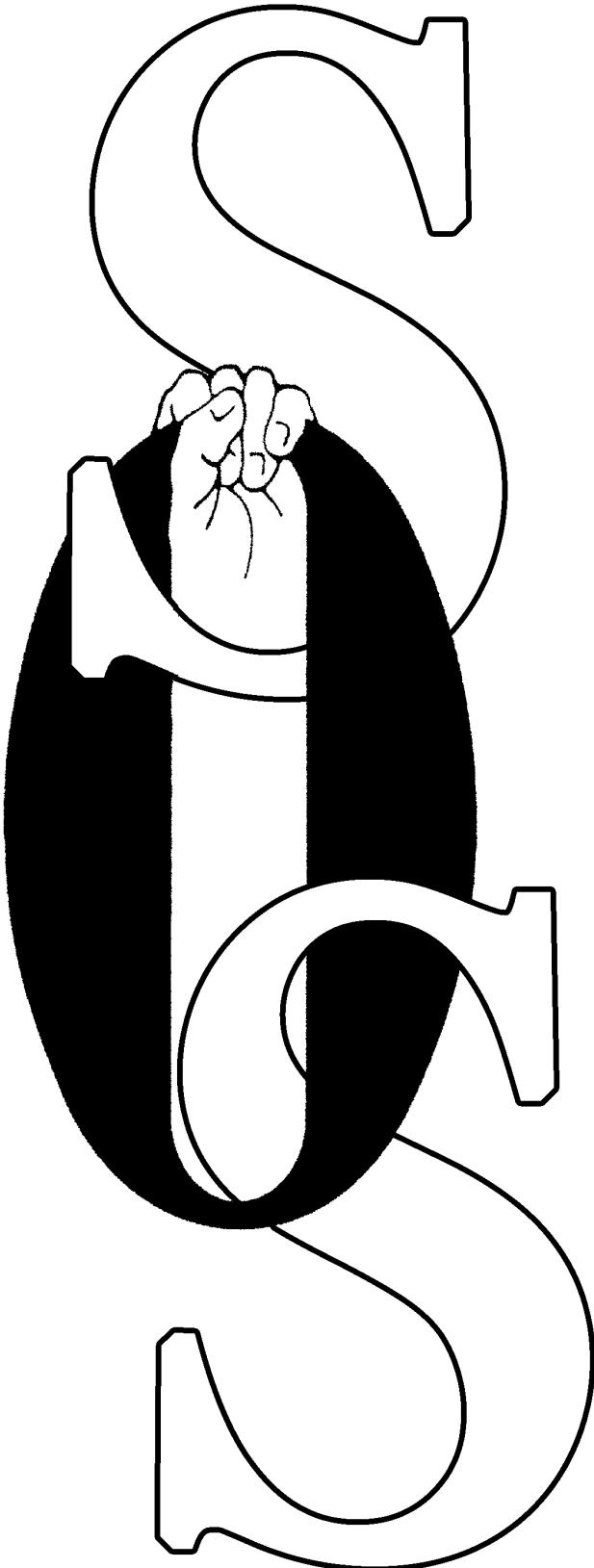
Georgia Bureau of Investigations, the ATF, and Atlanta police spread out across the area. They combed the neighborhood for suspects, knocked on doors, pulled over random cars, while digging through bushes and trash cans. Around 6pm on the 10th, the APD, GBI, ATF, and FBI raided another home. Nobody was home, which did not prevent officers from trashing the house. This final raid was conducted under

especially dubious pretexts, and was functionally little more than a team-building exercise for the new coalition of forces, which now includes the federal agents.

It is hard to exaggerate the exhaustion of the administration after nearly three years of continuous setbacks. The mayor's office has taken to extreme lies about the progress of the construction, recently claiming that work was 70% done despite the non-existence of utilities, foundation, or any vertical structures.

What comes next will require careful consideration, because the balance of forces is not what it appears at first glance, nor is it likely to persist indefinitely, as both sides gear up for serious confrontations in the coming months.

We condemn the raids and all those agencies responsible. However, beyond merely asserting the innocence of those involved, we wish to provide a political frame for these events and to emphasize the stakes of the repression for the prospects of revolution.



## WHY DID THIS HAPPEN NOW?

On January 26, 2024, several machines belonging to the Brent Scarbrough Company, a subcontractor working on Cop City construction, were burned at a job site on Boulevard Drive in southeast Atlanta. This is the first time this job site has been subject to vandalism, although the Brent Scarbrough Company has been subject to recurring acts of sabotage, including the March 5, 2023 raid on the Cop City construction site. On February 5, the Atlanta City Council, disgraced worldwide for their subversion of popular will, passed a resolution to codify the local referendum process, hitherto informal and ad-hoc. The new process includes repressive clauses that make future referenda even more unlikely and difficult to attain. Nonetheless, it moves the current petition process forward.

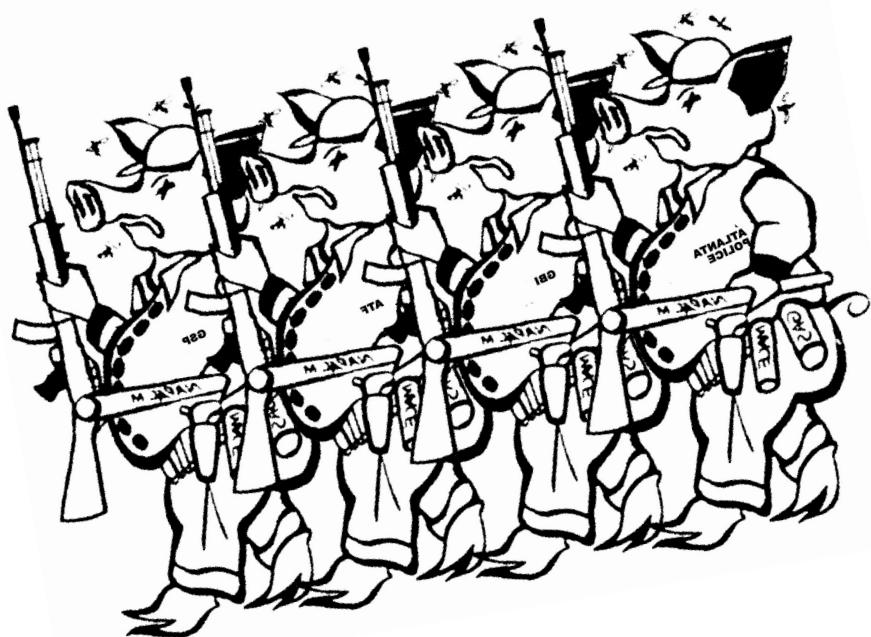
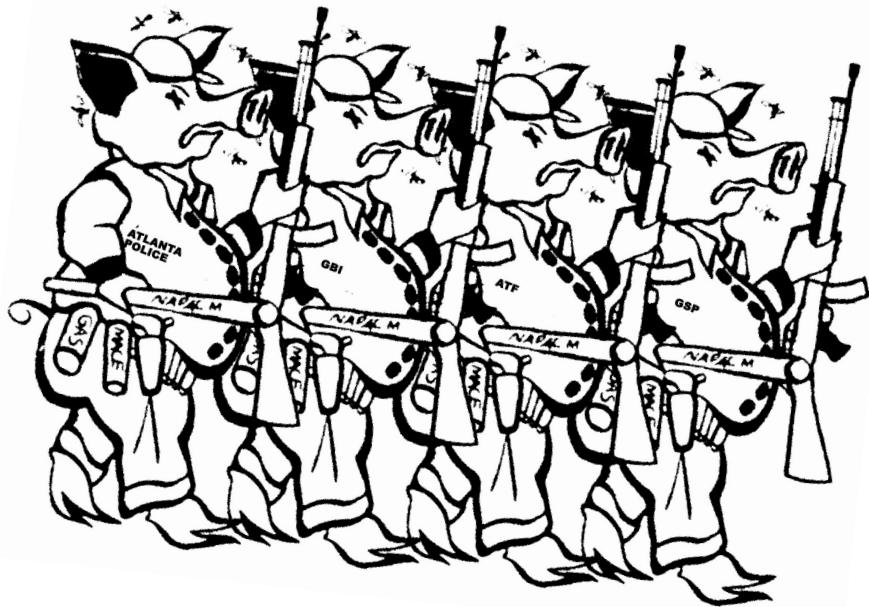
On February 6, the Georgia House of Representatives passed SB63, a bill that expands the number of charges requiring cash bail while simultaneously criminalizing not-for-profit bail funds, such as the Atlanta Solidarity Fund. On February 23-26, activists from around the country will converge in Arizona for a summit against Nationwide, the insurance provider of the Atlanta Police Foundation.

In the months since the Attorney General Chris Carr initiated RICO charges against dozens of local activists, bold and unprecedented actions against Cop City have continued apace. Punitive prosecution and collective punishment have failed to stop the movement.

Every month, local, statewide, and national law enforcement agents prostrate themselves in front of news cameras, bemoaning a new round of clandestine sabotage against construction machinery. Police Chief Darin Schierbaum carefully threads together two styles of discourse. On the one hand, he projects a triumphalist the-police-always-get-their-man narrative in the face of an invisible threat operating, in his words, “on borrowed time.” On the other hand, he implies that a nationwide conspiracy of antagonists is overwhelming his resources and that he needs both civilian assistance and federal resources in order to stop the chaos. With few arrests or serious leads, one can only imagine that the pressure behind the scenes has become intolerable.

This is why over 100 agents coordinated a multi-house raid on February 8 and 10.

These raids were not a legal intervention. They were a media stunt. They were not conducted to collect evidence. They were conducted in order to justify a press conference. And it was this press conference, the projection of competency and strength, that was the real police action of the day, for it mystifies the public about the state of the movement and the vulnerability of the project to continuous and unrelenting action.



## A BATTLE FOR THE HEART OF AMERICA

The movement to Stop Cop City, to Defend the Atlanta Forest, and to end the racial tyranny of the police has pursued every conceivable means of peaceful protest. There have been marches, community meetings, the involvement of school children and retirees. 116,000 people signed a petition to have a direct say in the construction of Cop City – which, mind you, is more than double the number who voted for Mayor Andre Dickens in the 2021 election. The clerk’s office published the names of those signatories alongside their addresses. City Council has not only refused to authorize the process, they have been party to a general retreat in the democratic balance of powers in our society. Mobilizations at City Council in Fall 2021, and then in May and June of 2023, exceed any previous participation in public comment in Atlanta history. The direct pleas of thousands of Atlanta residents to defund and to reverse the decision on Cop City were baldly rejected by the Council.

Cop City stands as proof that democratic institutions can shift seamlessly into bureaucratic dictatorships wherever the democratic process threatens the political and economic interests of those in power. When this happens, only direct intervention by ordinary people can assure popular mandates.



Theories of popular action generally encourage the public to foist demands onto the ruling elites, sometimes even militantly. Too few understand the need for the public to take power from the government and to make decisions for themselves. Dismantling the local authorities could be simpler and more attainable than stopping Cop City within the rule and order constructed by City Hall, the Mayor’s office, State Senate, the office of Georgia Governor Brian Kemp, and their corporate bosses in the Atlanta Committee for Progress.

The actions of the prosecutor’s office, the attorney general, and all the repressive shock troops they command, are not simple legal actions. They are political decisions enforced by a military apparatus. They must be responded to with political decisions enforced by popular action and serious deeds.

## FURTHER INDICTMENTS

Although modern society is not maintained by symbols or monuments alone, all historic confrontations orient themselves around specific and concrete embodiments of the ruling order. During the French Revolution in 1789, this was the Bastille – a prison that held political prisoners. During the first days of the revolution, protesters stormed the Bastille and tore it down – brick-by-brick, wall-by-wall – and with its fall, an unstoppable chain reaction was ignited, culminating in the death of King Louis XV, and the collapse of the French monarchy itself.

Cop City is our Bastille – a fortress for the worst injustices of our current system. This is why intelligent people chant, “If you build it, we will burn it.” This is not militant hyperbole. It is a dedication to freedom itself.

At times a situation is so clear that it is viewed coherently from all sides of social contestation. The movement to fight Cop City and the ambition to build it at all costs, represent in embryo the broader polarization of our society at large. For the system, the armament and investment into carceral infrastructure and policing is a central pillar of the near future. Without this police training facility, the articulation of a common social code cannot even be imagined by those in power. For free and creative people, human flourishing and social harmony cannot coexist with this project. What began as an activist campaign has evolved into a paradigmatic conflict within our country.

On January 18, 2023, Manuel “Tortuguita” Paez Terán was murdered by Georgia State Patrol during a multi-agency raid at Intrenchment Creek Park. Up to that point, many different kinds of participation flourished together. Art-shows, neighborhood meetups, ecological events, dance parties, tree-sits, protests, direct action, and community outreach spread awareness and vocalized discontent over the project. By the end of 2022, the City and State governments decided – prompted by Magnus Miller Gorrie and other Police Foundation stakeholders – that they would no longer respect any opposition to the project. Domestic Terrorism charges were handed out indiscriminately to protesters. Much of the land is now clear-cut. The construction of Cop City is underway.

In Fort Benning, Georgia, the US federal government once ran the School of the Americas, where aspiring dictators, counter-revolutionaries, and contract killers were armed and trained for covert action and paramilitary violence across the hemisphere. Former Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young sent municipal resources to killers in Guatemala in the 1980s. This history is harrowing and it is robust. Cop City represents a further investment in, and extension of, that history.

In October 2023, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) launched a deadly assault on the Palestinian communities of the Gaza Strip and West Bank, refusing to distinguish between targets, killing over 12,000 children (as of mid-February 2024). The IDF has its own history of brutality, and that history overlaps with Georgia police. The Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange (GILEE) Program places Atlanta Police and international forces in training exercises together. This allows regional police and international death squads to share tactics and theories of counterinsurgency and state terrorism.

The ongoing genocide taking place in Gaza is demoralizing millions of people in our country, as the Israeli government is a proxy force for US interests in the Middle East. The

intransigence of the Biden-Harris administration in the face of public outrage is radicalizing millions, who intuitively and correctly connect the onslaught to the struggle against Cop City.

What does this mean for the struggle moving forward? What remains possible for aspiring revolutionaries operating within this increasingly fraught context?

## THE GUERRILLA MENTALITY

After the attacks on Atlanta police infrastructure in July 2023, a group calling itself the “March 5th Movement” (M5M) released a statement. This group took responsibility for coordinated attacks on police vehicles as a response to the new repressive strategy confronting the movement. In so doing, they also asserted that the shifting terrain of the struggle would be met with a revolutionary guerrilla struggle.

After burning a police cruiser outside of a private home on February 10, 2024, an anonymous group issued a communiqué echoing this sentiment, referencing the M5M statement directly.

What does it mean for the movement to develop into a guerrilla struggle? This is not merely an organizational consideration, but also a political question. If city, state, and federal police have closed off all possible resistance to the project, the movement should adopt an organizational and tactical framework appropriate to this atmosphere, a framework that allows resistance not only to continue, but to grow.

Presently, it would not be true to say that all avenues of resistance aside from clandestine action are impossible. The persistence of non-violent direct actions, public rallies, fundraiser events, and lawsuits proves that many tactical frameworks and approaches are still possible, strictly speaking. Although there may soon come a time in which it is illegal or life-threatening to do public organizing — there are many precedents in our country and others for such circumstances — we are not currently in one of those times. Although the atmosphere is tense and dangerous, we need not resort to hyperbole.

We should not ask ourselves if other forms of action remain possible, but whether or not they are effective. This can be judged in terms of direct consequences, observable in the short term, by analyzing the effects of specific actions on particular social forces or institutions; effectiveness can also be judged politically, by the degree to which the consciousness and self-activity of the people has increased as a consequence of inspiration, or decreased as a consequence of resignation or spectatorship. Finally, in order to consider the proposal to embrace a guerrilla struggle, we must assess our options as they are determined by the State, by asking how soon will clandestine organizational practices and structures be required of us, regardless of our specific ambitions or preferred tactics?

The history of guerrilla experiments across the world offers many lessons.



## A LATENT TENDENCY WITHIN THE MOVEMENT

Guerrilla tactics have been present, and even determinant, in the movement to defend the Weelaunee Forest and Stop Cop City from its earliest days. It is not accurate to say, as some might be anxious to claim, that the retreat of the “mass” movement corresponds to the ascendance of the clandestine movement. At least, not in this case. It is rather unambiguous that the efforts of small clandestine groups have driven the public acclaim of the movement, and have been the small motor driving all approaches, continuing apace in a steady hum month after month, through the ups and downs of popular morale, participation, or focus.

The movement in Atlanta is composed of various groups, each of which operates its own media strategies, meetings, outreach plans, and protests. The independence of the respective segments of the movement has lent the overall struggle an incredible flexibility with respect to tactics, since no one group or collection of groups aims to consolidate influence for itself by denouncing or marginalizing others. Groups allow one another the space to creatively oppose the project by their preferred means, on their preferred terrain, alongside their preferred base of support. Initiatives such as canvassing drives, protest encampments, campus organizing, or weeks of action are able to carry themselves out without seeking the legitimacy of any higher authority or “coalitional” approval. At their best (with a few unfortunate and mistaken exceptions), movement participants have not indulged in sectarian battles, and have not pointlessly associated their political line or ethics with specific aesthetics, slogans, or tactics.

The Stop Cop City movement has the sympathy of millions of people, but it is not a mass movement. It cannot be compared to spontaneous uprisings, nor can it be compared gracefully to local activist campaigns or civic initiatives. It is a multi-year struggle with specific aims and demands. It is the focus of the struggle that has facilitated the participation of different groups, since it is built around concrete concerns, and not abstract ambitions or political lines. It is the sabotage and vandalism that have underwritten this participation, generating controversy as well as obstructing construction timelines. On February 8, 2024 pro-referendum organizers from Atlanta held a press conference at the Atlanta Police Foundation Headquarters. The APF shut down the office for the day, as a result. One organizer, an above-ground Black activist associated with the Cop City Vote Coalition, was asked if she condemned the arson targeting Cop City contractors. She replied “Hell no. And if I’m being honest the City deserves more than that...I cannot take that kind of risk. But those who can: bless them.” If they wish to combat the prospect of isolation, the clandestine elements and groups within the movement will need to ensure that their practices continue to express the general will of the movement and garner support from its cultural and above-ground organizers. Clandestine groups must not only express this will, but also take responsibility for concrete and necessary tasks even if they are unpopular. Squaring this tension with creativity and tact is the responsibility of the revolutionary minority operating within the movement.

## THE FUNCTION OF THE MILITANT MINORITY

The idea that a dedicated guerrilla strategy or movement could somehow substitute for mass, participatory, protest phenomena is an elitist outrage, doomed to certain failure. Nobody knows this better than those who fight from the front lines, armed with the lessons of historical experience. When Che Guevara died at the hands of Bolivian rangers and their CIA advisors, an entire generation of cowards, idiots, and opportunists sighed in relief. The Cuban revolution and its consequences was a disaster for cafe theoreticians, pro-Moscow party-builders, spontaneity-only fundamentalists, and social democrats the world over. Throughout the 1960s, rural guerrillas in Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Guatemala, Bolivia, Argentina, and elsewhere each confronted their own national dilemmas and limits. They also faced common threats and obstacles they could not overcome. Their political (and geographic) isolation from mass struggles on campuses, in mines, and in urban centers assured their military downfall in the face of national armies and CIA-backed strongmen. The mass struggles were defeated in turn, often by the same North American torturers and spies confronting the armed romantics in the mountains and jungles. The two lungs of popular resistance — the mass and guerrilla organizations — collapsed one after another, neither strong enough to oxygenate the body of the revolution on its own for very long. The real lessons of these incredible struggles, which were influenced by and also influenced successful and failed struggles on every continent of this planet, have been hidden or misrepresented by those who judged them from afar, and by the misinformation campaigns conducted by the US State Department and its agency-aligned media industry.

From the Division del Norte to the Sandinistas, from the July 26 Movement to the Front de libération du Québec, one thing the guerrilla campaigns of yore teach us is that, under the right conditions, the actions of very small groups — all of these groups started with just a small handful of members — can seriously influence social reality. The deeds of dedicated groups can stimulate the consciousness and sometimes provoke the activation of millions of people. In the final instance, it is the conscious actions of those millions that determines everything. While many Trotskyist, left-communist, and anarchist theoreticians diligently militate against the supposed risk that an active minority “substitutes” itself for mass self-activity, the real practice of insurrectionists and aspiring revolutionaries in the past decade and a half has illustrated the productive effect that careful and creative groups can have on a society.

## WHAT EVERYBODY CAN'T DO

The stunning and romantic uprisings of the past thirteen years, uprisings we have taken part in, have disproved our spontaneist theories beyond any reasonable doubt. If we consider political retreat and dispersal to be setbacks for the theories of activists, and not a strictly “tactical” question, it could be said that almost no revolutionary theory in history





has ever been so unsuccessful — and, thus, untrue — as those created by mass movements in the past two decades. Of the hundreds of uprisings since 2010, only a very small few can be considered successful, at least according to the aims and aspirations they set for themselves.

Spontaneous, disorganized, leaderless, mass resistance movements, whether armed or unarmed, cannot both topple an entrenched ruling clique and reorganize the economic reality of a society. In other words, they cannot make a social revolution. Without a specialized detachment of intellectuals and creative thinkers, popular movements do not generate transformative slogans and theories. Rather, they augment ruling ideologies, simply turning them on their heads or otherwise satisfying themselves by exposing the “hypocrisy” of the reigning system. It should not be controversial to say that this same dilemma expresses itself tactically as well, and that without special efforts, mass struggles — which are more or less all urban struggles of the poor and lower middle classes — exhaust themselves marching, occupying public space, blocking roads, striking temporarily, breaking windows, and looting retail businesses. Nothing can stop these incredible events from happening, because they express the objective contradictions of our age and the accumulated intelligence of angry and disenfranchised people across the globe. While they express the most cunning and ambitious dreams of a society, insofar as they fail to topple the state and reorganize human affairs, they are also a part of the dominant system.

The people will rise up. This is a law of mass society, indeed, of organized human culture. The revolution is determined 90% by the results of tactics and confrontations taken up by crowds of regular people against the repressive forces of the state. From Egypt to Myanmar, the interventions of the black bloc, organized ethnic fronts, religious groups, soccer hooligans, armed militias, and other organized sectors have proven that the unique interventions of organized sectors and semi-secretive organizations play a disproportionate role in the insurrectional phase of struggles, specifically in times of advanced repression, when popular tactics have become ineffective or too dangerous to continue. The interventions of these intentional groups are not organic to mass struggles, and they do not express the spontaneous consciousness of the mass movements.

Shocking and necessary interventions must be organized in advance by groups who study world affairs, uprisings in diverse contexts, retain and transmit experiences from one movement to the next, and who are prepared to push movements beyond their “natural” aspirations or reflexes. The revolution is determined 10% by the results of organized, specialized, detachments and groups, “professionals” who innovate tactics and advance strategies that are not always intuitive to large crowds or sectors of society.

So what does this mean for those fighting outside the context, indeed, before the next episode of popular unrest?

## WHAT EVERYBODY CAN DO

In the movement against Cop City, guerilla and clandestine actions have not immobilized the above-ground organizers or cultural support networks, but neither have they mobilized people into a more robust guerrilla framework. If a guerrilla strategy is to work, it will have to incorporate people into the framework of clandestine organizing and training within the highly securitized urban spaces that contemporary struggles spring from. This will be the measure of its success, and not simply the economic damage done by attacks, in spite of the undeniable moral encouragement one feels reading about the losses incurred by the adversary. The guerrilla movement in Atlanta is undoubtedly in an embryonic phase in this respect. The struggle against Cop City is pregnant with unrealized combative and organizational potentials. Aspiring revolutionaries are the midwives of social transformation, and must take responsibility for nurturing these unrealized potentials into existence.

At the present juncture, directly disabling police infrastructure to such a degree that they are unable to carry out raids or to conduct investigations, thereby forcing them into a position of strategic defense or retreat, is not possible. Tactical offensives are always possible, but the balance of forces that makes broad-based attacks on the state possible can only be attained by the mobilization of critical social sectors in great numbers.

If organizers do not articulate frameworks or build groups capable of subverting and confronting repressive forces and reactionaries, social movements can only survive by preserving the umbilical cord linking them to the progressive sections of the ruling elites. If movements aim to challenge the core principles of our society, they cannot only rely on humanitarian and constitutionalist outrage to restrain the forces of violent reaction. Rebellious movements must also prepare to defend themselves from repression, and also to outmaneuver, exhaust, demoralize, confuse, and overpower the repressive might of the state. Those who do not believe this is possible do not believe that the revolution is possible.

In order to seriously rearrange the balance of forces in our society, popular groups will have to be organized to withstand repression, and to orient mass sentiments around revolutionary slogans and proposals. The correct and courageous actions of the saboteurs have not built this organization, but organizations must be baptized in the pools of real subversion, or else they will tend to accrue participants who do not understand the real stakes of the movement, or who are too fearful to ask the correct political questions posed by the objective situation. How can those working underground against the construction of Cop City join forces with the thousands of people feeling the effects of inflation in the city? Or those displaced by the multi-national real estate firms developing Atlanta? How can organized political groups and collectives around the country join forces with the underground movement in Atlanta?



Many people have already embraced elements of clandestine guerrilla organization: meeting in private, using encrypted communications, handling cash, practicing operational security and discretion. Without making a qualitative rupture, there is much more that can be done immediately to prepare our movement for the coming months and years. All serious people should be solidifying semi-permanent groups of four to seven highly trusted associates, synchronizing watches, and expecting stricter punctuality. Such groups must have a way to learn together, and to give and receive feedback, to develop ideas, and to make decisions. These groups should be coordinating simultaneous interventions or actions. These small groups should increase their technical proficiency, not as an abstract imperative, but by attaining specific skills they are not likely to learn in the course of normal political organizing: learning to set broken bones, to stop bleeding, to field-strip and reassemble a firearm, and to hide at-risk people. These specific skills will allow movements to withstand much greater repression without isolating the militant vanguard factions. Moreover, groups that aspire to learn these things together will relieve themselves of unserious people who will

be hesitant to make collective commitments of this nature. Whether they plan to sabotage infrastructure, lock-down to construction equipment, organize on college campuses, coordinate childcare, or to disrupt press conferences, a serious revolutionary organization, if one existed, would demand that all activists learn these skills, and that this be done with a serious but lighthearted temperament. Although anger and resentment are the common feelings of popular rebellions, a real revolution requires humility, tenderness, and love.

### BIRDS OF THE COMING STORM

The crisis of democracy taking shape in Atlanta will soon swallow the entire country. Attacks on reproductive freedom and healthcare, consolidation of a reactionary and partisan Supreme Court, suppression of electoral freedoms and the independence of trade unions, cuts to public assistance for the poor, rent hikes and increased taxes on small property owners and farmers, militarization of the US-Mexico border,



imperialist quagmires in the Middle East and elsewhere — in order to pose definitive resistance to all of these phenomena, it will not be enough to maintain a permanent alliance between popular movements and the Democratic Party. It will not be adequate to rely on public, civic, organizing either. It will also not be possible to address the revanchist wing of the Republican Party unified around Donald Trump and his inner circle without a popular alliance between urban intellectuals, students, poor Black people, rural agricultural workers from Latin America, and some layers of the white middle class. Organized and aspiring rebels will need to increase their organization as well as their specific capacities to withstand repression without making political compromises. In order to avoid bureaucracy and timidity later, the most dedicated should construct the building-blocks of a combative tendency and organization with the utmost urgency. If the language of cells and guerrilla units is off-putting, these formations could be thought of as semi-permanent affinity groups.

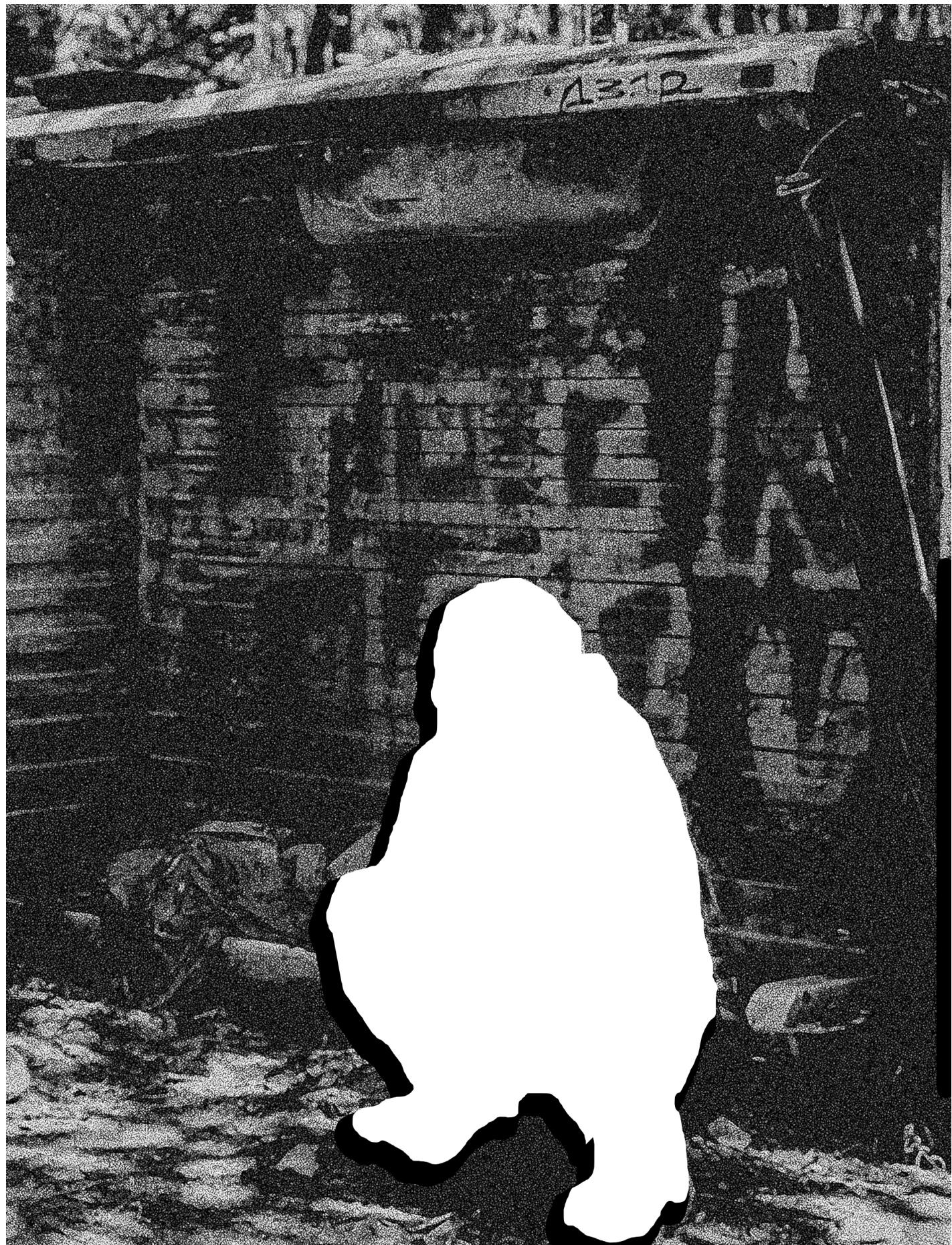
In order to arrange a preponderance of forces for the coming tumult, we will eventually need a revolutionary program and

organizational schema. The guerrilla mentality will soon become the dominant organizing attitude for enduring and sincere people, one way or another. If the Atlanta police, GBI, FBI, and associated forces continue to attack protests, to intimidate and harass organizers, to raid and abuse community members, then preserving a loose and open organizational model will not be possible, because individuals will feel great pressure to think, plan, and assess their risks on an individual basis. In this difficult period, we will have to consolidate our networks in order to advance as a subversive social movement. Do not waste any time.

What is spontaneous does not need to be prepared. But victory cannot rely on improvised means alone.

*Every day is March 5th.*





# MY MISSION AS WE AND CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE FROM MOMENT TO MOMENT

by I.S.

said, you were born  
said he was born to do this  
said, we were put on earth to end capitalism  
said, I was born to end it

said, I was put on earth for you  
I was born to be your everything  
born to help you through this  
I dedicate my life to what is to be done  
it is all I can do  
everything I do I do for you  
said, we fight for life, which we love  
I said I was born to do this  
said I was born

I was born  
said, I was born to ride  
I ride hard for that  
said, I am holding on  
said until victory forever!  
until death do us part  
said, we have no other devotion  
said, we were there as she was born  
said, I was born to be with you  
said, I would do anything for you  
said, I will do whatever it takes  
said, I'll be there with you  
said she was born

I celebrate my birthday  
I said, we were put on earth to make revolution  
I said that after you said it  
said this because you had said it to me

I'd do it all again for you  
Live Free Or Die on each arm  
said, if you have to run for Venezuela  
I will take you there myself  
said, there are worse lives you could live  
said that you are loved  
said, you were not born alone

Called to say I will be there soon

I am on the first flight

said, I will take care of it

said, I knew you would need it

said, you can keep it

It is meant for you

I was born

said, I do not regret it

said it's really something else

said it really does hurt that bad

said I would keep going

said, I wouldn't discourage you

Said she wants to do it again

Said she could use the support

said, I did not plan for it

said, I committed

said I would do it again

said, I would do anything for you two

my baby

said, I won't be the one to have your baby

that won't be me

she was born

said, I would be anything for you

said I could tell you anything

said that you love me

said, I hate the police

they are my enemy!

said we must win

said, we will fight them

said we put up a fight

said they discharged a weapon

said, you fucked up your own

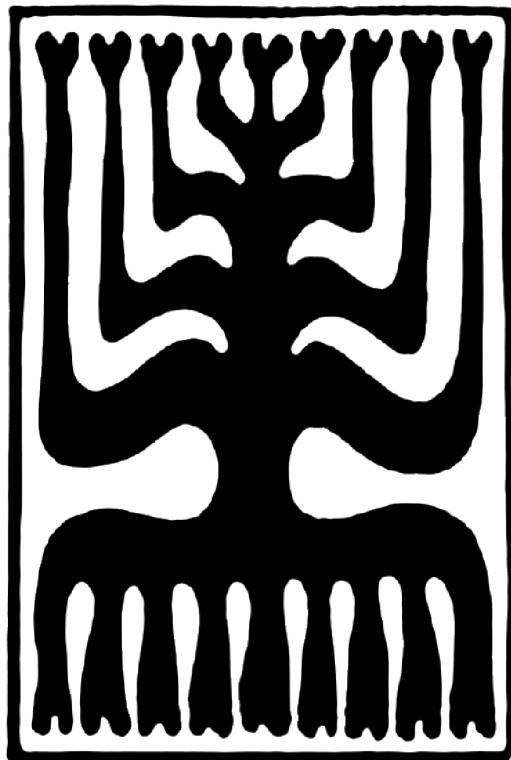
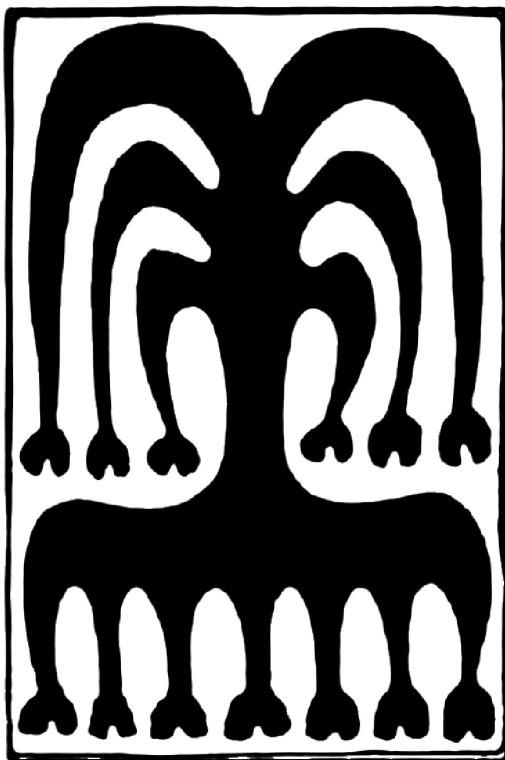
said, I would never do that to you

said I wouldn't dream of it

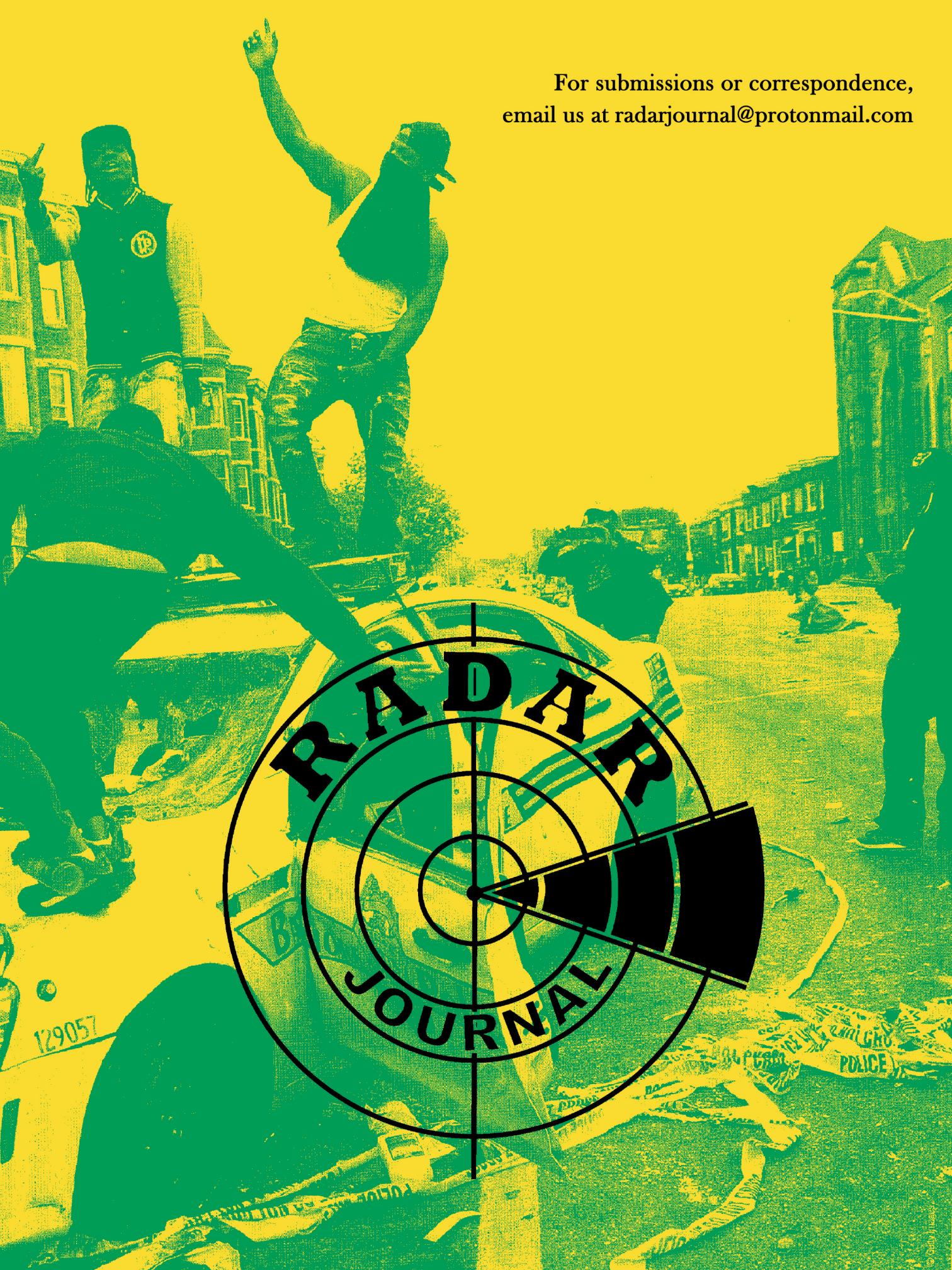
We were born

Said, improvised incendiary device

Said it happened again  
Said I can handle it  
Said, let's wait five more minutes  
Said, I should just come there  
Said, I am a revolutionary!  
Said, I'm a soldier of love  
Said, to the end of the earth  
Said, let failure be my springboard  
Said what happened to you  
Said, we would have to wage war  
Said what you thought would happen  
Said, you know what you can do for me!  
Said, love will be done  
Said things had changed  
Said, I am sorry for that  
Said, I would let you know when I know more  
Said they had the plan, ready to go  
Said, this isn't a mass movement  
Said, we need millions of people  
Said, you can call me star  
Said, I am right behind you  
Said, that's a lot of blood







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email us at [radarjournal@protonmail.com](mailto:radarjournal@protonmail.com)



