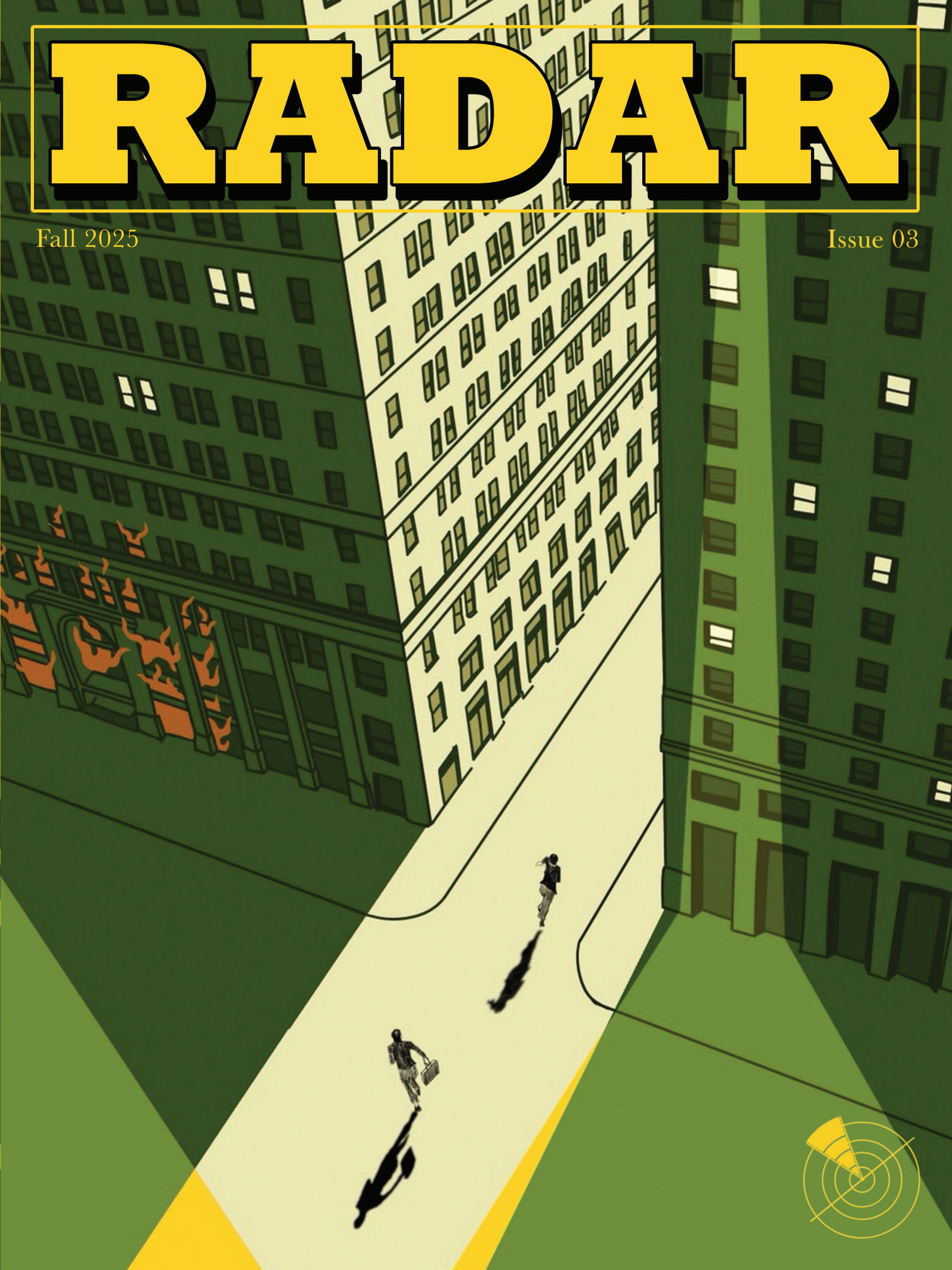
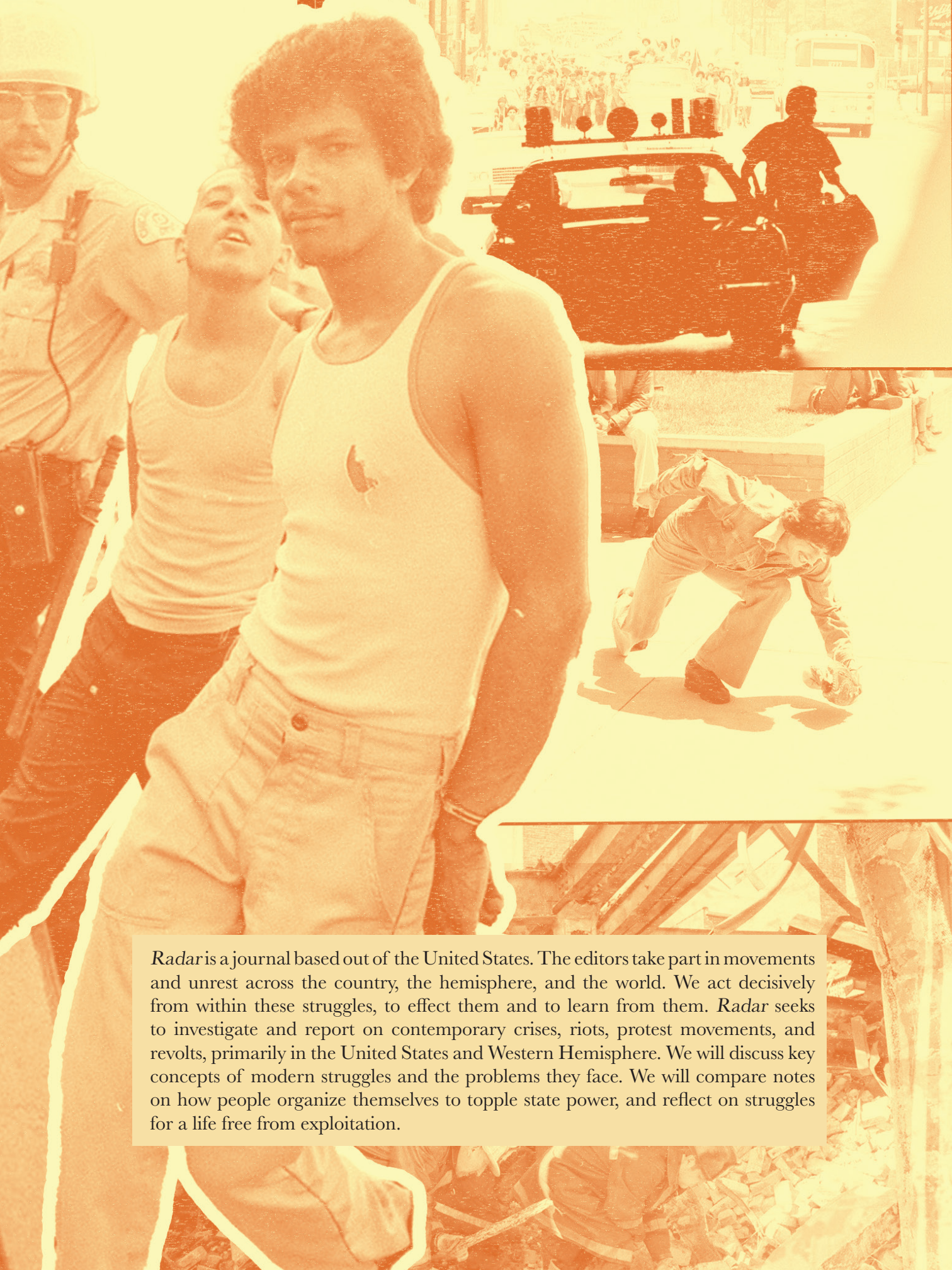
RADAR

Fall 2025

Issue 03





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 effect 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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RADAR JOURNAL

RESONANCES

Across the world, behind the headlines, creative, desperate, and angry people navigate a world of growing tension and uncertainty. Here at *Radar*, we have tried to keep tabs on resistance, innovations, and setbacks for struggles at home and abroad. This issue takes stock of a critical moment—the clashes, crackdowns, and conflicts that mark our time. Uprisings in Turkey, Serbia, Argentina, Indonesia, Nepal, Peru, Ecuador, Morocco, and Madagascar point to the persistent creativity and courage of people across the planet, struggling against police brutality, economic violence, and rising authoritarianism. The boundaries between international and national politics grow increasingly blurred.

In February, the Trump administration labeled eight drug cartels "foreign terrorist organizations."

On May 6, the United States declared the end of Operation Rough Rider, a disgraced military campaign involving over 1,000 airstrikes on Yemen. The operation bombed ports and facilities across the north, targeting Ansar Allah, also known as the Houthi movement. They remain among the strongest allies of the Palestinian resistance, enforcing a blockade in the Red Sea that has stopped all cargo except humanitarian aid. Donald Trump admitted Operation Rough Rider failed to destroy or discredit Ansar Allah. It gave "operational readiness" to US forces, positioned military assets near the Strait of Hormuz, and signaled to Israel that the United States was prepared to expand support. Israel remains one of the few places on Earth the US ruling class can still dominate outright.

On June 9, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth ordered 700 Marines to Los Angeles. This light infantry battalion joined nearly 2,100 federalized National Guardsmen. They deployed to intimidate the then-active anti-ICE revolt, where thousands threw stones and fireworks at police and federal agents.

On June 17, four detainees escaped New Jersey's Delaney Hall ICE facility during an uprising inside. Outside, protesters clashed with police, faces covered in keffiyehs.

This summer, immigrants, activists, and community groups took to the streets in dozens of cities, denouncing the Trump administration's roundups and fearmongering. Riot police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at rallies and marches across the country. Like the 2024 Gaza solidarity encampments, which faced pre-emptive Biden-era attacks, police went after all anti-ICE protesters, no matter their tactics or rhetoric.

Repression scattered the resistance but didn't resolve the contradictions that sparked the riots. The confrontation between immigrants and federal agencies will continue,



Destruction in Yemen's capital, Sana'a, in April 2025



Israeli airstrikes in Tehran, Iran, June 2025

and it will escalate. Cracking down on "crime" and "illegal immigration" will justify the endless expansion of control and the permanent militarization of civilian government.

The Los Angeles revolt was the first nationwide challenge to the new authoritarian administration of any real proportion. We applaud those who fought police, vandalized cruisers, built barricades, ran jail support, and provided food and aid in the streets. We thank the rebels, anarchists, abolitionists, and grassroots organizers who continue to block deportations through popular, distributed action. The revolt still inspires across the country.

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On June 13, Israel bombed dozens of Iranian civilian, energy, and military sites in Natanz, Fordow, Tehran, Esfahan, and beyond, killing top scientific and military leaders. Iran responded with airstrikes in central Tel Aviv, targeting Mossad headquarters. On June 22, the United States bombed three sites in Iran, launching Tomahawk missiles from submarines near the Strait of Hormuz and dropping bunker busters celebrated for days on NPR and other US outlets. Two days later, the US and Israel declared a unilateral ceasefire, ending the war immediately.

On July 28, the UN reported that one-third of Gaza residents had gone several days without food. UNICEF said 93 percent faced acute food insecurity, with 244,000 suffering from catastrophic hunger.

On August 7, the State Department placed a $50 million bounty on Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, accusing him of drug trafficking. US war hawks now speak openly about bombing or invading Mexico, Venezuela, and Haiti.

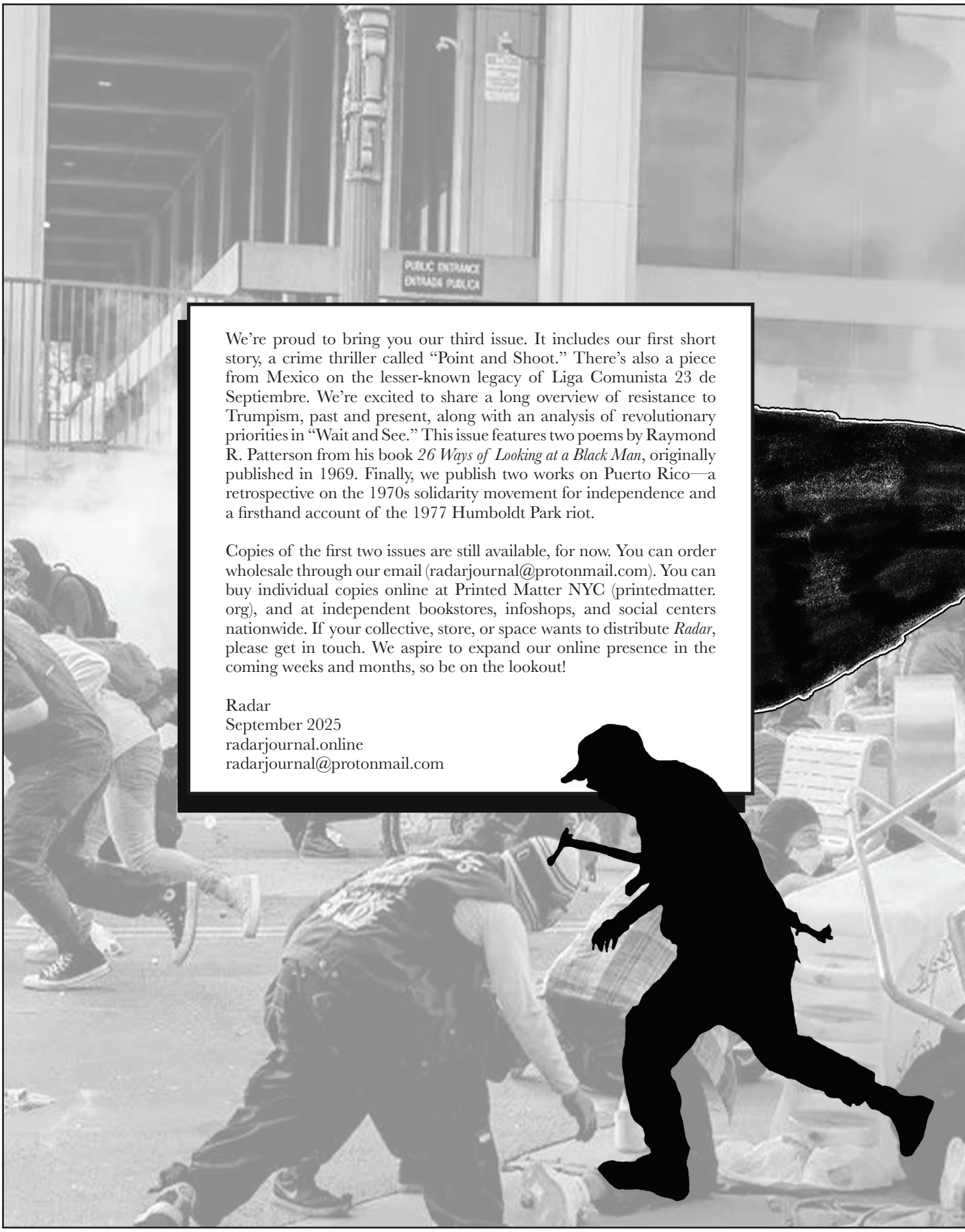
As of late August, Palestinian resistance groups and guerrillas continued to fight the invasion, carrying out ambushes and asymmetric attacks. Against all odds.

On August 25, mass demonstrations roiled Indonesia after reports that nearly 600 Parliamentarians had taken home large salaries while most of the country suffered under deindustrialization and tariffs. The black bloc clashed with police, launching fireworks at government buildings. Three days later, Jakarta police ran over and killed a 21-year-old food delivery driver named Affan Kurniawan. Captured on film, the killing spread the rebellion nationwide. Huge crowds gathered, burning cars, trashing government buildings, and laying waste to police stations, shopping districts, and government zones.

US overreach continues to break apart the post-WWII global order. Universal tariffs, sanctions, and threats can't stop the slow collapse of American rule. As the ruling class fails to impose its will in Venezuela, Bolivia, Mexico, Canada, China, Russia, and beyond, it turns inward. It escalates attacks on communities inside its own borders. Domestic instability brings military tech and infantry into American cities for policing and repression.

The past months expose the deep fractures beneath global and domestic power. They show a ruling class shrinking from external challenges but tightening its grip at home. The future will demand resistance that matches this scale—a fight against militarized states, eroding freedoms, and rising authoritarianism. This is no longer a distant threat. It is the reality unfolding on our streets and across the world.

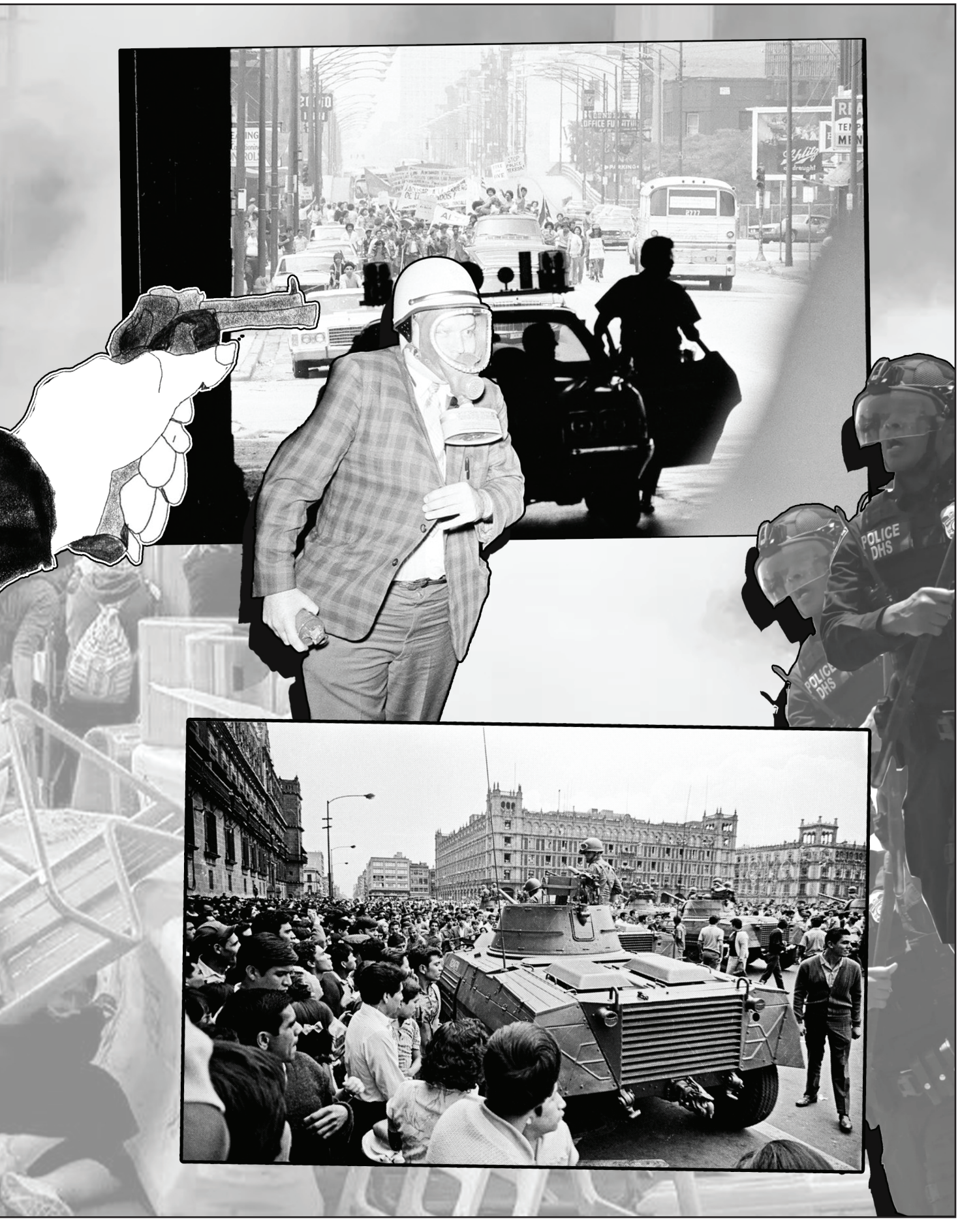
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We're proud to bring you our third issue. It includes our first short story, a crime thriller called "Point and Shoot." There's also a piece from Mexico on the lesser-known legacy of Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre. We're excited to share a long overview of resistance to Trumpism, past and present, along with an analysis of revolutionary priorities in "Wait and See." This issue features two poems by Raymond R. Patterson from his book *26 Ways of Looking at a Black Man*, originally published in 1969. Finally, we publish two works on Puerto Rico—a retrospective on the 1970s solidarity movement for independence and a firsthand account of the 1977 Humboldt Park riot.

Copies of the first two issues are still available, for now. You can order wholesale through our email (radarjournal@protonmail.com). You can buy individual copies online at Printed Matter NYC (printedmatter.org), and at independent bookstores, infoshops, and social centers nationwide. If your collective, store, or space wants to distribute *Radar*, please get in touch. We aspire to expand our online presence in the coming weeks and months, so be on the lookout!

Radar
September 2025
radarjournal.online
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POLICE
DHS

POINT & SHOOT

a short story
by M.R.

You've never been here, but every city feels the same when it's on fire. For now, you feel calm. It's always like this at the beginning, before the action kicks up. The briefcase is light. An extra pair of socks, some dark slacks, a dress shirt, a pair of gloves, and a camera. The more significant piece of luggage is a piece of paper, folded up and shoved into your sock. Even if someone stops you, no beat cop is likely to find it.

Outside the terminal, the stench of piss almost covers up the lingering smell of tear gas and gunpowder. The streets are calm, but it's still early. For the pedestrian, mid-morning is always boring.

Two blocks east, you let yourself onto the patio of a small cafe. The barista leans on the back counter, bored. The Breeders plays from a bluetooth speaker. This must be like classic rock to her, you think to yourself.

"Hey! Marshall here. Mind if I join you?"

"By all means," you gesture to the chair he pulled out for himself. He brushes off his jacket, a luxury duck canvas hunting coat. Stolen, most likely. He passes a paper cup with trembling hands. "Marshall" lights a cigarette and takes 3 or 4 desperate puffs, followed by a sip of coffee.

"Don't look around. It's fine," you tell him. Nodding, he leans forward, and looks over his shoulder anyway.

In a low voice he begins, "So I'm not exactly sure—" You raise your hand. The coffee tastes good. An elderly man rides by on a commuter bicycle. This is going to be a long day. Someone has to protect this moment of peace. A dog is pissing on the telephone poll across the street. It's owner wears a long duster, sunglasses. Her left shoe is coming untied.

"Is it in a bag?" you ask without looking.

"I was told it should be."

"Good. Finish your cigarette. Go to the bathroom inside. Throw it away in the trash can. I'll come get it. Don't wait for me."

You feel a hand on your shoulder and look up. He pulls his hand back and looks down. His lips tighten at the edges and he gives a small nod. It's hard not to smile back.

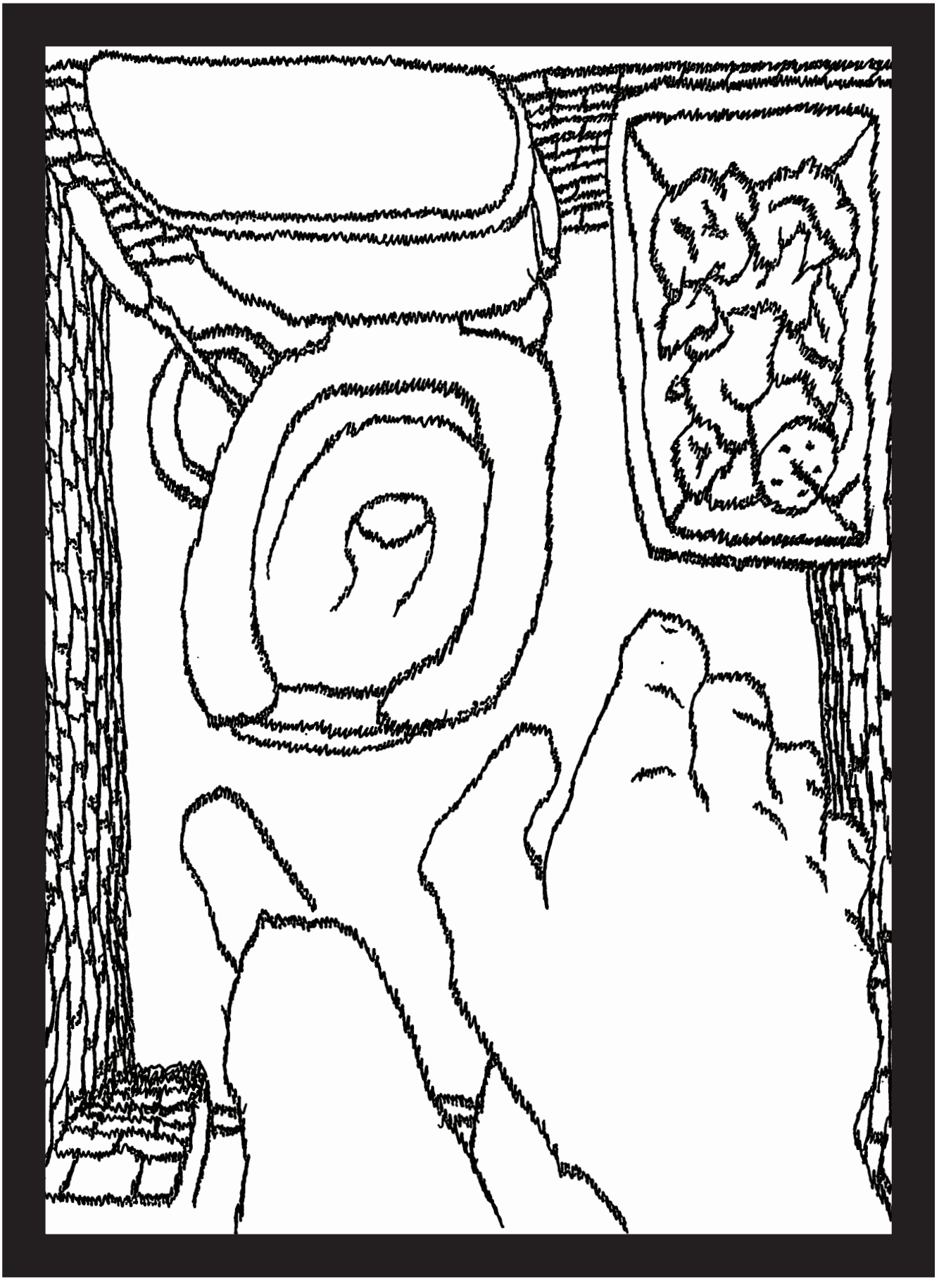
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You open the door and latch it behind you. The bag is right where it should be. Inside, you find your tool. A micro compact. Beretta 21A Bobcat with a threaded barrel. Less than five inches long. The mag holds seven .22 rounds. You put the extra magazine in your back left pocket. The suppressor you slide into the inside breast pocket. The pistol you shove into your waistband.

Before heading out, you sit on the toilet to remove your right shoe. The floor is cold beneath your foot. The note falls. You memorize the address and throw the paper into the toilet. You take out a cell phone and type in the address. Half an hour walking, 18 minutes by bus, 7 minutes by taxi. Walking it is.

***

People begin to gather outside. In the parking lots and sidewalks. Hooded teenagers huddle in 3s and 4s, trying to seem innocuous. It isn't working. You can hear the helicopters circling overhead, but you can't see them. It must be in the next neighborhood over. It's difficult to tell neighborhoods apart in a place like this. The city is more of a dense suburb. A network of stores. Store fronts, anyway. Parking decks.




TICKETS
ALERT:
MANDATORY CURFEW IN EFFECT 9PM

Beneath the coat, your shirt sticks to the small of your back. Across the street, two men sit in lawn chairs in front of a tire shop. High noon. You don't trust anyone. You know better. Meeting up with an unknown, unvetted, local contact? You'd rather be shot. Still, you can't pull this off without help. Your mouth is dry. You unzip your coat.

To pass the time, you wander into a movie theater and buy a ticket for the next showing: an action thriller. When you hand over the $20, the teenager working the desk trades you for a slip of paper. The paper reads: "ALERT: MANDATORY CURFEW IN EFFECT 9PM." The crest of the city stamped on the bottom of the slip. You leave the flier at the register. The theater is empty, aside from a couple sitting all the way in the back. They leave as the movie begins. You manage to fall asleep for a bit.

***

The cashier follows you to the exit, locking the door behind you. Closing early, it seems. Outside, a cool breeze feels crisp on your skin. The sun peaks out behind some of the buildings, casting a cold glow onto the ashen streets. You continue east, turning left out of the theater and immediately left again on the next block. Instinctively, you cross the street as you continue forward. Turning right at the next corner, you look over your shoulder. A large man turns the corner on the far side of the road, from the direction you had just come. He takes a long drag from a cigarette as he walks, trying to appear aloof. At the next intersection, you cross without waiting. A sedan heading north slams its break, you can see the driver inside yelling. He refrains from honking. Maybe that's considered rude in this town. Pretending to look back at the car, you glance down the avenue and see the large man on his cell phone. Is it this bad here already? Nothing even happened yet.

You don't wait to find out what this guy is up to. You don't have the time. Or the patience. The next business you pass is a donut shop. You open the door without making eye contact with the cashier. In the back, someone charges their cell phone. You walk straight past them into the service hallway.

"The bathroom's up here!" yells the cashier, annoyed but unsurprised.

In the kitchen, three people crowd over a screen. They don't notice you walk out the back door, or they don't care. The lid to the dumpster is open, so you close it and jump up onto it in one motion. Something sticky coats your right hand. After jumping the fence, you jog for a few seconds down the alleyway. You turn right and then cross the street into a small park. On the far side, behind the swingsets, lies a row of bushes and a bicycle path. You sit on the bench and catch your breath. 7 o'clock. The contact will be ready in an hour, but you plan to be early. On the other side of the bike path, a women walks by carrying a small child on one hip. She smiles at you. You smile back.

***

The local contact, as far as you know, is a young man, code-name "Task". He will have an empty carabiner attached to his left side belt loop. You find a staircase a half block away from the meet up spot, at the base of an apartment complex. No camera. The concrete is cold, but tolerable. A quarter of an hour passes. Few cars drive by. None of the buildings' windows face the far side of the street. Your mind wanders, your stomach growls.

Someone on a bicycle rounds the corner, passing by without looking your way. You strain your neck to look around the corner without standing up. It's him. You come to your feet. A kid, as you figured. Behind you, someone closes their apartment window. You look up. An older man makes eye contact with you. He closes the blinds.

The kid runs his fingers through his curly hair after locking up his bike. He stands for a moment, both hands resting on his cross-body bag, as he looks up and down the street. A real tweaker. Nervous. No subtlety. You hope the organization is right about him. A few minutes pass. By now, you are three minutes late. You always like to know what you're working with. How does he respond to uncertainty? He is chain smoking, pretending to use his phone, looking left and right every ten seconds. This is mean. You feel guilty. You start down the stairs one foot in front of the next. Just then, he straightens up, shrugging his shoulders back.

Pulling his pants up higher on his waist, he makes for the opposite direction. With a quick glance over his right shoulder, he reaches down his pants with his left hand and pulls something out: a ski-mask. You see something shining in his right hand. What is it?

He reaches the end of the block and clasps his hands together, waving both arms in unison up and down. Lighter fluid. "Jesus christ," you mutter. Your feet are on the pavement now, the upper part of your left leg is numb from squatting for so long. Before you reach him, the office, whatever it is, explodes in flames. You falter, bringing yourself to a stop, unsure of what to do next. The fire is warm.

To your right, in the shadows, you sense a movement. A few feet ahead of you, two men are circling behind a parked car, a hatchback. They are wearing matching navy jackets, black pants, ankle-high boots. They break into a dead sprint.

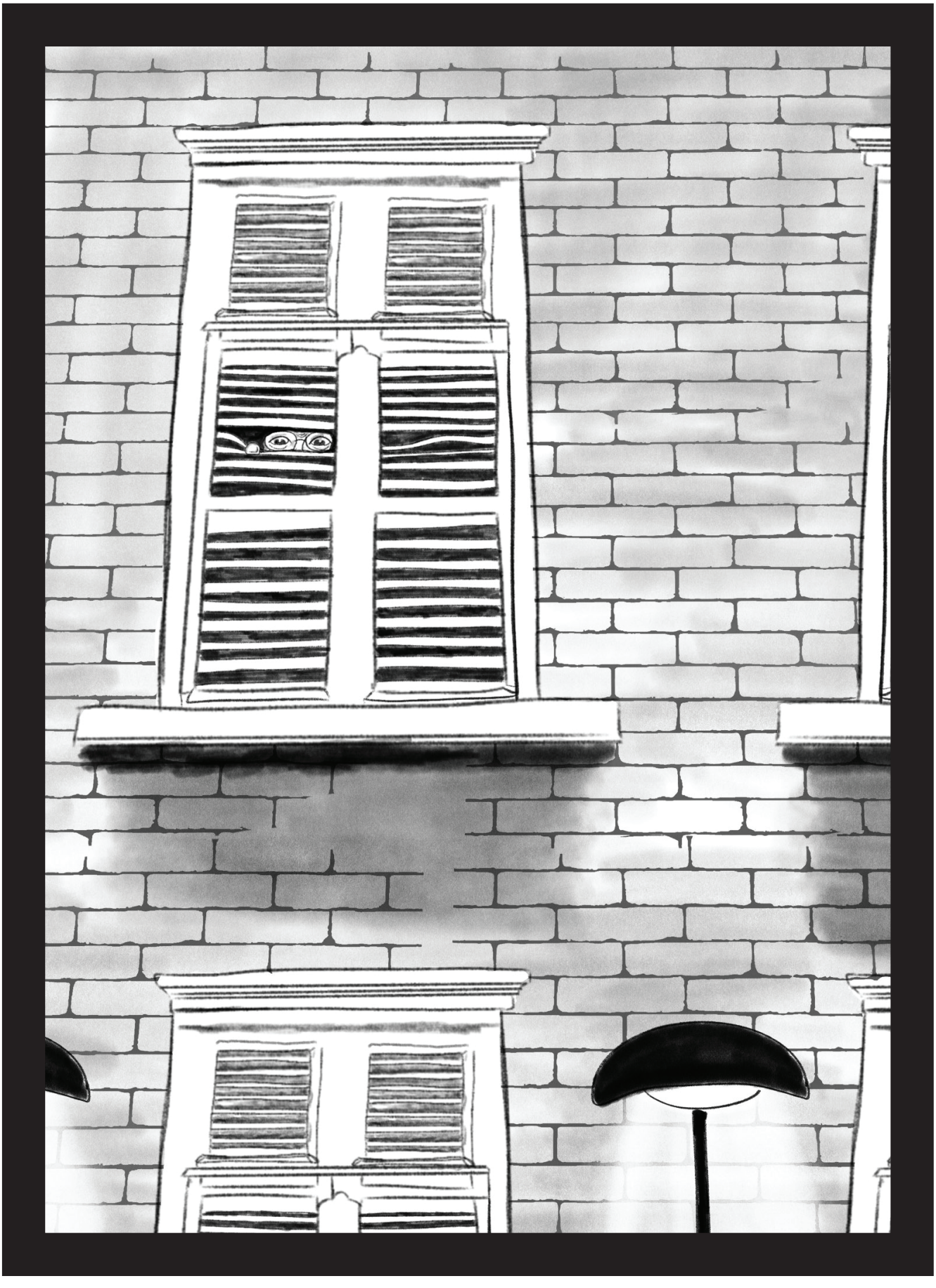
"Police! Freeze! Get on the fucking ground!" Spinning around, the kid instinctively takes two steps backward. He drops whatever is in his hand. It's still another 60 feet to the boulevard behind him. A shot rings out. The glass of the burning storefront explodes. The kid crouches and runs toward the line of parked cars across the street. Another two shots. The back windshield of a pickup truck. A hissing tire. You're running, reaching for your strap.

One of the agents stops in the middle of the road, right in front of you, oblivious. He poses with both hands forward, his feet shoulder width apart, leaning forward. He is disgusting already. This is more than enough exercise for him. Especially after the last few days. You don't wait. With one hand extended you put three rounds into him. A red mist sprays out of his gut. He crumbles to his right knee. One arm bends behind him as he twists down to the asphalt. With his other hand, he shoots again straight into the sidewalk. His mouth fills with scarlet foam.

The other cop turns your way, eyes wide, mouth open. He drops to one knee instinctively, making himself smaller. Harder to hit. He opens fire. You fall onto your back. Hot fire runs down your left arm. You are still holding the gat. Everything spins. Your vision blurs wildly.

"Drop the gun! Drop it now!" He trains his gun right at you, running as fast as he can while half-crouched. You let go of the Beretta. Laying on your back, you don't know what else to do. He stomps on your hand and kicks you in the ribs. He is cursing, panicked and wild-eyed.

"You fucking bitch motherfucker! You are lucky I don't blow your fucking brains out! I swear to god. Don't move!" He reaches for his back pocket. Probably looking for handcuffs or zip ties. His hand is tangled in his jacket. He looks down for a second to clear the fabric so he can reach whatever he is looking for.



Your vision explodes in crimson. Gasping, the taste of iron fills your mouth. You roll over and start vomiting.

"Oh my god, oh my god. We have to go, get up!" You don't recognize the voice, but you know it's not the cop. You wipe your eyes with your sleeve while blinking repeatedly. You use your fingers to wipe away the warm liquid from your face. The ski-mask. Behind it, a pair of watery brown eyes. You look down. A broken piece of brick. Next to it, the agents face, squirting blood. His tongue is hanging out of his mouth. Like a perverse cartoon. Parental Advisory.

The kid grabs your jacket. You shrug him off and pick up your .22. You grab the gun from the officer too and put it in your pocket. You look at the kid.

"Well? Go get his." You point to the other cop, face down on in the middle of the road. You don't wait for him. You start down the road in a slow jog.

***

After a few blocks, you dip into a short alley between some houses. A helicopter passes overhead. It's not for the two of you.

"What is your name? What were you doing? And what is wrong with you?" Your voice is low, but sharp. He seems surprised. He takes off his mask. He tells you his name and begins to explain.

"When you were late I wasn't sure. Like if things had changed."

"Nothing has changed. You are on a mission."

"OK. I understand." He licks his lips.

"Do you?" you ask, tilting your head to the side. Your left arm tingles as it hangs limply by your side. The bullet clipped your shoulder. It is a shallow wound. Passed straight out the other side. Have to deal with that later. You clear the automatic you nabbed off the cop. 9mm. 14 rounds left in the mag. You could feel Task's eyes on you.

"Do you know what we are doing?" you continue.

"Yes. We will hit them hard. I know that." He seems sure of himself.

"Wrong." You put your hands in your pockets. "They are already being hit hard. We are hear to bury them. We aren't taking out the trash. We are burning down the house. Do you understand me?" He nods and sniffs his nose. The gas in the wind is starting to sting your eyes.

"Specifically," you put down your briefcase, and crouch down to the ground, "we are here to take pictures." You pull the camera out of the case and hand it to Task. He looks down at it and looks back up at you, confused.

"Pictures?" he pauses. "You really think that's going to make a difference?" He raises his eyebrows. "You think those people—"

"Pictures. We clean up. You take me to this address. We take the pictures, and I'm gone. You will probably never meet me again."

"I mean, why? To expose them?" He is incredulous, judgmental. "That's not really my thing, I really am more into, like—"

"Stop." Your voice is heavy. "No more improvising. No more flying by the seat of our pants. I need your help for the next," you look at your watch, "hour and a half. After that, I don't care what you do. You join the rest. I get the hell out of here." He shifts his weight, crossing his arms behind his back.

"OK. Anyway, you literally saved my life."

***

He has a scooter. He hands you a helmet while he puts one on himself.

"Easier to get around. Quiet." he offers, although you hadn't said anything. You ask him if he knows where you are going. He says he does. He works in the same neighborhood.

The scooter roars to life, and you're off. The night air cuts through your

jacket like a knife. It's a good distraction from your arm. The damn thing is still bleeding, you can feel it run down your sleeve. A few more hours. You clinch your jaw.

"Who are these people anyway? Like, the ones we are going to photograph." He is nervous. Talking to take the edge off. You need him relaxed. You sigh, and your voice comes out sharper than you intend.

"It's all of them. They've been meeting to figure out how to wrap this all up." You're not supposed to give up the whole plot. He already knows what he needs to know. Still, the uncertainty probably freaks him out. "They just want to make sure they come out alive and on top."

He nodded. Maybe he understood. Maybe not. Doesn't matter, you figure, as long as he gets you there in time.

The headlight reflects off the air ahead of you. The smokey haze hangs thicker the closer you get to downtown. The streetlight LEDS reflect off the street in a haunting blue glow.

"How much further?" you ask. Task doesn't look back.

"Just a few blocks. This is the long way. No cops."

"I'm starting to think the cops could be the least of our worries."

In the distance, the sound of muffled explosions and crackles. A quiet roar. The pulse of the city quickens.

***

He pulls over into an unlit parking lot and cuts the engine. He takes off his helmet and nods, indicating a screen door on the other side of a short, waist-high fence. "That's it?" you ask. He whispers yes as he pulls out a cigarette from his bag. There's no sense in waiting. You check your watch: 9:05.

Stepping back onto the pavement, you wordlessly pull the suppressor out of your breast pocket and screw it onto your micro-compact. You take one of the 9s you got off the cop and hand it to Task.

"I'm out in 2 minutes. Maximum. One minute, maybe. No matter what, do not leave until I come out that door." The kid nods without saying anything.

"It's just a few pictures," you add. Who are you trying to convince? You choke down some spit. Try to clear your throat. The kid rearranges the bike so that it's facing the road again.

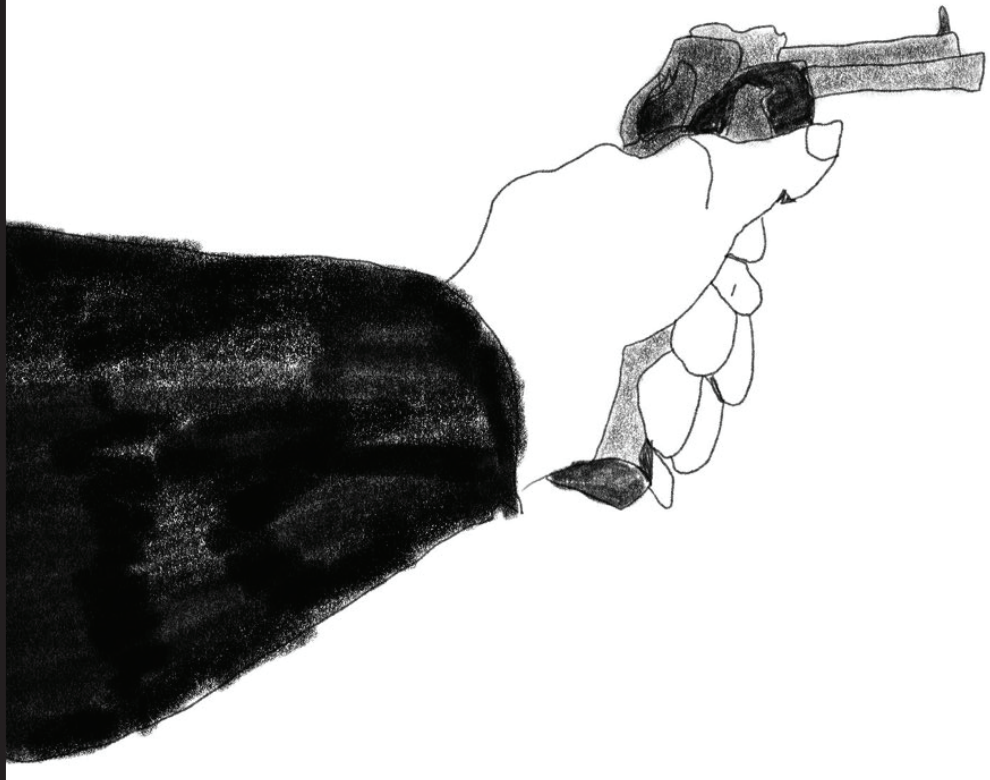
"You really sure about this?" he asks. You turn on the point-and-shoot and put it back in your pocket. You shrug.

"Either way, it's already too late. I'll be right back."

Walking through the screen door, you honestly have no idea what you will find. What you do see does not surprise you. Four cooks and a dish washer, Mexicans or central Americans. You make eye contact with each of them. They only nod. One of them looks to the door next to the walk-in. You look around and notice the swing doors, beyond which the rest of the bar glows and teems with life and rowdy conversation. You return your eyes to the kitchen. One of the cooks nods his head at the door to your left. You open the closet. Aprons, shirts, and baseball hats, each with the name of the bar emblazoned in a corny red typeface. You remember your arm. No way you can get this jacket off without blowing the entire thing. The pain is a dull ache, like a pot of water set to low simmer. This is basically over. Fifteen minutes from now, you can take a look at this thing in a bathroom somewhere.

You pull the apron over your coat and put on one of the baseball hats. By the looks of the kitchen guys, who have mostly returned to work, you can tell it's not very convincing. It will have to do.

***



"And so that's how it has to be. Our guys aren't just gonna take nothing. Like, gimme something. Something." The man in the beige polo shovels lo mein into his mouth with a fork. "Like, I don't really think this is just gonna blow over, clearly," he gestures outside. His eyes dart across the room, scanning the bar. He isn't paranoid. He needs a place to drop his guilt.

You are exposed. Like a hunted deer. The fluorescent overhead lights the room, bright and harsh. This place has no class. Certainly not a place you expect to find these people meeting. Flat TVs mounted on the walls, playing images of disorder. Burning dumpsters. Overturned cars.

Near the entrance, a couple of teenagers play games on their phones. You shuffle over to their table and pretend to observe their progress. Like you work here.

"Mr. Bellums,"—you look up. One of the other men at the table is talking, this one in a tight-fitting suit—"what is going on is terrorism. Are you ready to admit that? This isn't some kumbaya-everything's-hunky-dory situation. My men are out there in this madness, putting their lives on the line. For us." He's holding his beer, glancing occasionally at the television. He adds, without taking a sip: "I'm offended that you want to talk about concessions or agreements right now. This has nothing to do with politics."

You don't know who the man in the sunglasses is, but you notice his Rolex. He sips from a coffee mug and returns the ceramic to the table, enveloping it with both hands. The bartender ignores you as you shuffle over to the end of the bar, just outside the kitchen. Now is the time. The camera is out, by your side.

The air fills with the smell of beer and cheap cleaning product. Someone brushes behind you, both hands holding plates. You snap a picture. Just like that. Your vision is turning white on the edges. You click a few more times, for good measure. Lowering your arm again, you turn left. It's the bar. You pivot clockwise, back toward the kitchen. The food runner stands just before you.

"Um... are you ok?" His hands are up by his shoulders, still holding the plates; his eyes are looking down at your feet. Blood drips onto the tile floor, like coffee onto the heating element beneath the glass pitcher. Your arm. The kids by the door pause to look up. The one facing you stands up in a startle.

"Oh," is all he manages to say. You hear clanking behind you and spin around.

"What the hell is going on?" yells the man in the beige shirt. He wears a badge of some sort on his waist band. The other patrons stare at you. Stepping back toward the kitchen, your right foot slips on the blood. A bar stool almost catches you, but the bottom slips out. You land on your ass. The man in the sun glasses takes a step away from the booth. He pulls an automatic from his overcoat and aims directly at you. Everyone gasps. He fires.

The floor is cold. But it holds you as you crawl backward, staying as low as possible. The overturned bar stool drapes over your shins. The disorder blankets the room for just a moment. A bullet ricochets off the floor. Another detonates the bar stool, sending shards of cheap wood in every direction. Plates and glass explode as diners scramble beneath their tables and booths. Sitting up, you shoot back. Your gun is quiet because of the suppressor, which serves no real function at this point. The shooter, whoever he is, ducks. Laying on your back, you shoot again. You hit the man in the beige shirt. His left shoulder shatters in a mist of blood, bone, and polyester.

You resist the urge to unload the gun. To shoot wildly into the bar. You don't want to hurt anyone, but you want to kill the fear, which is bearing down like a wild animal. You scramble to your feet, remaining hunched over next to the bar. The man with the ill-fitting suit throws his plate. His eyebrows are upturned, like he is trying not to cry. Bizarrely, the plate lands directly on your

knee without breaking. The pain shoots down your shin. You pull the trigger and miss, breaking the fluorescent bulb above him. Across the bar, the man with the sunglasses fires more rounds. A bullet grazes your neck. The powerful sting frightens you. You curl behind the edge of the bar. The man with the tight shirt jumps forward, trying to catch you by surprise. He knocks you back, clinching both sides of your jacket with his pale fingers. Without thinking, you blow his face off. His body collapses into your lap, spraying blood in a small fountain onto the tile, into the kitchen. You join the chorus of screams.

The shooting stops for a second before a bullet slams into a picture frame mounted on the wall. Someone grabs you by the back of your coat and drags you into the kitchen.

"Are you OK? We have to go right now!"

"There's still one more! Agh—" Task drops you. You collapse backward onto the tile. Your head bounces lightly off the floor, which is lukewarm. You hear Task's sneakers squeaking on the tile in the dining area. You open your eyes. The kitchen is upside down. A pot of boiling water steams unattended. The back door wraps lightly on the frame, blowing back and forth.

"I didn't see anyone. He must have left? We need to go, now." The kid runs behind you and picks you up with surprising ease. He grabs a rag off a countertop and hands it to you. In your pocket, you can feel the camera. Task stops when you shift your weight back onto your feet and dig the point-and-shoot out of your pocket. Wordlessly, you shuffle back into the dining area. Wreckage everywhere. You snap photos of the bodies. The man with the sunglasses and watch managed to escape.

***

The parking lot is full of people now. The scooter is surrounded. A small group doubles-over, coughing, spitting, gasping for air. Someone is squeezing water bottles into the eyes of an older man, who sits patiently on the curb, hands next to him, face turned up to the dark sky. Near the street, a dozen people slam paving stones down onto the asphalt, breaking them into smaller chunks. They fail to build a reserve. The hunks are continuously passed forward to those who are willing to throw them. An explosion around the corner. You can't see it, but you know what it is. As you straddle the back of the scooter, you duck. Someone is shooting a revolver directly into the sky, forcing the helicopter above to swing wildly in the direction of downtown. As the two of you roll out to the curb, you crane your neck to the left. Lines of riot police behind a row of burning dumpsters. The streets are littered with broken glass. On the near side of the dumpsters, hundreds of people wearing hoodies crouch down. Two people are taking 1 liter glass bottles out of Ikea bags and lining them up for anyone to use. You wince. Your head feels like it is being crushed on both sides.

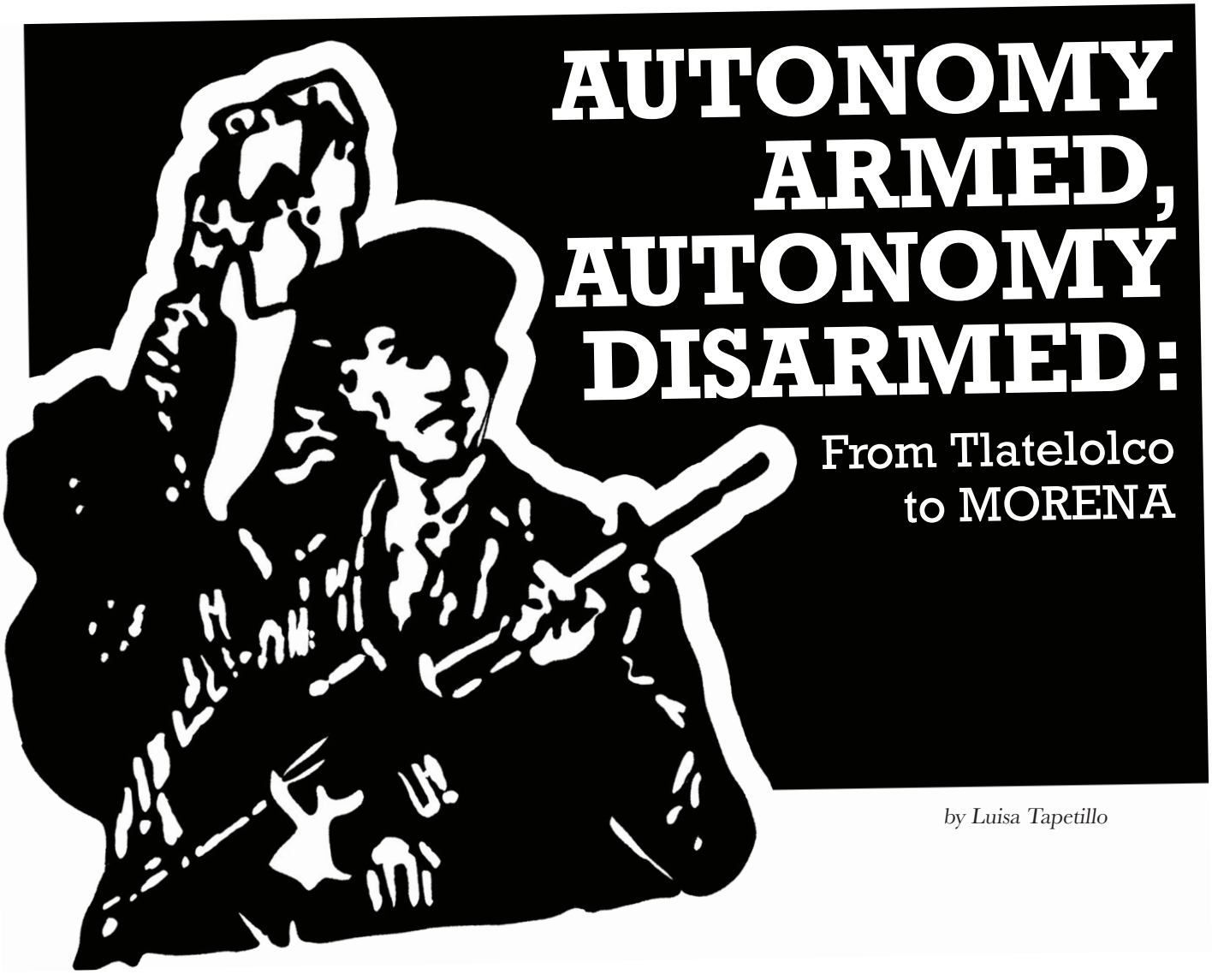
You realize someone is watching you. You jump off the bike, reaching for the Beretta. You stop. Two people in respirators are walking toward you cautiously with their palms facing you. You can barely make out what they are saying. Everything is muffled. You look at Task, who is already nodding at them and dismounting from the scooter. They repeat themselves:

"You are bleeding. We are medics. We'd like to help you. Can we bring you somewhere else?"

You look down the street, away from the line of police. Some kids are smashing an empty shopping cart like a battering ram into the glass doors of an insurance office.

"I mean," you say without looking back at them, "I just need to get the hell out of here."





AUTONOMY ARMED, AUTONOMY DISARMED:

From Tlatelolco to MORENA

by Luisa Tapetillo

In February 2025, the US Secretary of State Marco Rubio designated six narcotrafficking networks "foreign terrorist organizations." In *Radar* Issue 02, we published an essay titled "Fue el Estado" by Rami Cami. That essay lays out, in great detail, the history of the US-led "War on Drugs." As the US continues to pressure Mexico with the designation of the "cartels" as terrorist organizations, readers would benefit from reviewing "Fue el Estado," or from reading the book "Drug Cartels Do Not Exist," by Oswaldo Zavala.

On May 22, 2025, US Marshalls raided the $9.1M Utah estate of James and Kelly Jensen. The DEA accuses the couple, living lavishly in the Salt Lake City suburbs, of funneling millions of dollars to the New Generation Jalisco Cartel. Reportedly, the Jensen's pay smugglers to illegally traffic crude oil and narcotics across the US-Mexico border. Their arrest barely reached headlines and quickly fell out of the news cycle. This story should inform our broader understanding of the global drug trade, who benefits from it, who organizes it, and who takes the blame for it.

As the Trump administration saddles Mexico, the number one US trade partner, with tariffs, it also flies drones over the border. It appears the administration is preparing to conduct airstrikes in Sinoloa and other parts of northern Mexico. Mexican president Claudia Sheinbaum, in turn, appears now to US leftists as some kind of anti-imperialist hero. We wanted to know more about this dynamic, and to maintain a healthy and consistent conversation with autonomous organizers in Mexico. We are happy and grateful to publish the following essay, which details the political development of Mexican electoral politics in the last century, and the lesser-known (in the US) history of a significant armed social movement of the late 1960s: the Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre.

PRI-PAN: TWO PARTIES, ONE SYSTEM

From 1929-2000, and again from 2012-2018, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) governed Mexico. Laying claim to the legacy of the great Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), the PRI sought to build a left-wing, social democratic, country. They nationalized oil, electricity, rail, and steel. Under the leadership of socialistic leader Lázaro Cárdenas, the PRI conducted land reform, giving poor campesinos and indigenous people access to farms and homes. Competing with the influence of the Communist Party and the powerful Confederation of Mexican Workers, the PRI built a free, universal education system.

During the Second World War, sections of the PRI favoring a laissez-faire, pro-business ideology, split off from the quasi-socialist politics of the party majority, forming their own right wing organization: the Partido Accion Nacional (PAN). In the following decades, PAN curried favor with intellectuals, the petite-bourgeoisie, and sections of the Mexican ruling class. While remaining a minority party, their open support of US-aligned economic policies and free markets posed a serious challenge to the classical social programs and state-led economic developmentalism favored by the PRI. In order to preserve a winning majority in elections, the PRI drifted to the right, eventually losing control of oil, corn, education, and healthcare to businessmen and entrepreneurs.

Since the 1990s, Mexico has integrated itself into the US-led neoliberal order, especially since signing the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). As the short-term benefits of free trade championed by the PAN created, temporarily, an economic boom for the white and middle classes, the influence of the PRI retreated. In 2000, Vicente Fox of PAN won the presidential elections, overturning the long rule of the PRI. As promised, he aggressively liberalized the Mexican economy. Under rapid transformation and turbulence, especially in the rural and agrarian parts of northern Mexico, Fox relied increasingly on the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and the FBI to contain and dominate the countryside. By 2003, the PAN government was conducting joint operations with US law enforcement inside of Mexico. This paved the way for the 2006 election of Felipe Calderon, also of the PAN. Calderon launched the "War on Drugs," on behalf of his US sponsors [Ed: discussed at length in *Radar* Issue 02 "Fue el Estado" by Rami Cami]. The "drug war" allowed the pro-business government to terrorize campesinos and their communities in a cycle of unceasing violence and militarization, pushing them off their land and, in many cases, into the US where they would be abused as a source of cheap labor. In the six years of Calderon's presidency, 60,000 people died in clashes between drug traffickers and soldiers. With the return of the PRI in 2012, many hoped the violence and privatization would end. They did not. The death toll continues to rise. To date, the drug war has killed over 300,000 people, with nearly 70,000 more missing.

In 2018, a prominent social movement came to power. The Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional (Morena), won the presidential election in a landslide, after years of organizing against the Mexican system of government, long characterized by the competition between the PRI and the PAN (just as US politics has been characterized by competition between the Republicans and the Democrats).



Armored cars at the Zócalo Plaza in Mexico City, 1968







Morena has campaigned around policies similar to the Cardenista, socialistic, era of the early PRI. They have attempted to institutionalize key sectors of the autonomous movements in Mexico, just as the PRI sought to institutionalize the leading forces of the Mexican Revolution. But what are those movements? How are they fought, and by whom?

To understand Mexican autonomous movements, we first need to recognize that Mexico has remained mostly moderate over the past hundred years. The country has shifted between moderate left-wing and moderate right-wing governments, but it has avoided extreme polarization. This sets Mexico apart from much of Latin America, where political extremes are more common. Mexico's relative moderation likely stems from its proximity to the United States and the influence the US exerts over it.

For about a decade in the middle of last century, this facade of political unity was burned away. Young people in and around college campuses grew their hair long. They passed out fliers, they listened to rock music, they sought to change their lives, and the lives of everyone around them. Facing great obstacles, some of them robbed banks, blew up buildings, and tried to build an insurrection from the ground up.

LIBERATION THEOLOGY AND THE RE-EMERGENCE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT

Mexico's political moderation contrasts sharply with the revolutionary fervor seen across the rest of Latin America through the mid 20th century.

As Marxist movements gained traction across Latin America during the 1950s and 1960s, the international far right grew alarmed. The Vatican, through organizations like Opus Dei and the Legionaries of Christ, heavily funded private schools to train conservative leaders and priests.

Regardless, even in Mexico, resistance movements erupted on college campuses and workplaces.

By 1968, a cultural rebellion swept Latin America. The counterculture movement, widespread media access, and the rapid expansion of university education exposed young people not just to literature like Magical Realism but also to radical political ideas, many inspired by the Cuban revolution. Within the Catholic Church, a progressive faction began to embrace the radical egalitarianism espoused by many young people across the continent. This faction, and their practice, came to be known as Liberation Theology. Founded in 1968, this movement blended Marxist thought with a class-based interpretation of the Bible.

What Giorgio Agamben describes in The Highest Poverty —the connection between monastic rules and a "form of life"—echoes what Latin American Liberation Theology described in Por una Iglesia Sierva y Pobre in 1965. In the early 1970s, over 80 priests publicly supported socialist Chile, forming the Christians for Socialism network. This group provided a key link between the region's guerrilla movements, offering a radical reinterpretation of Christianity, one deeply connected to Black Theology and emancipatory readings of the Bible. This revolutionary theology came half a century before the Italian radicals — Tronti, Agamben, and Tarí — articulated their own theories.

Liberation theology inspired leaders across the continent: Camilo Torres in Colombia, Óscar Arnulfo Romero in El Salvador, Ernesto Cardenal and Gaspar García Laviana in Nicaragua, Jorge Adur in Argentina, and Rubén Jaramillo in Mexico. Faced with brutal state repression, including the massacre of 400 students in 1968 and another 300 in 1971, many young people saw armed struggle as the only viable path forward. For some, their religious conviction itself legitimized resistance to oppression.

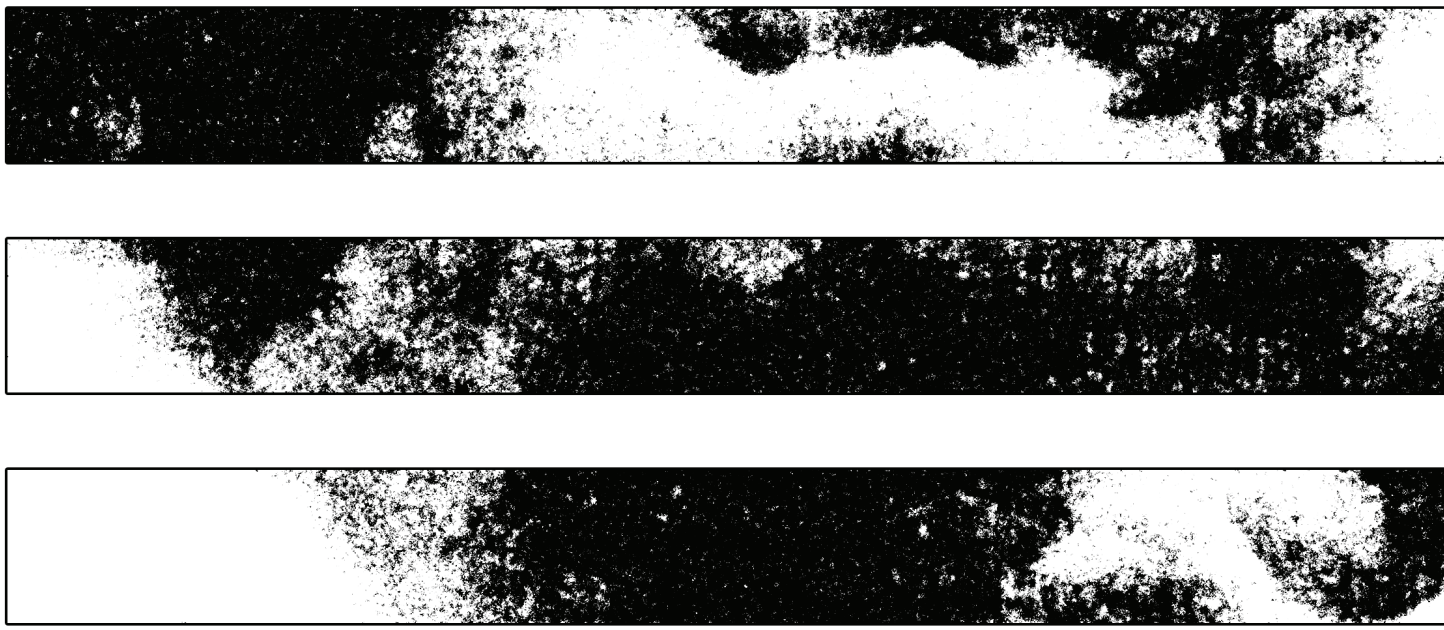
The Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre (LG23S, or simply Liga from here on) emerged in this atmosphere.

LIGA COMUNISTA 23 DE SEPTIEMBRE AND THE ARMED STRUGGLE

Founded in Guadalajara on March 15, 1973, the Liga ("league" in English) was Raúl Ramos Zavala's answer to the repeated massacres of student by police (1968 and 1971). The Mexican Communist Party refused to construct an armed security force capable of defending resistance movements and demonstrations. Rather than abandon the fight, Zavala and others sought to build a new kind of armed movement in Mexico, inspired by autonomous armed groups across the world.

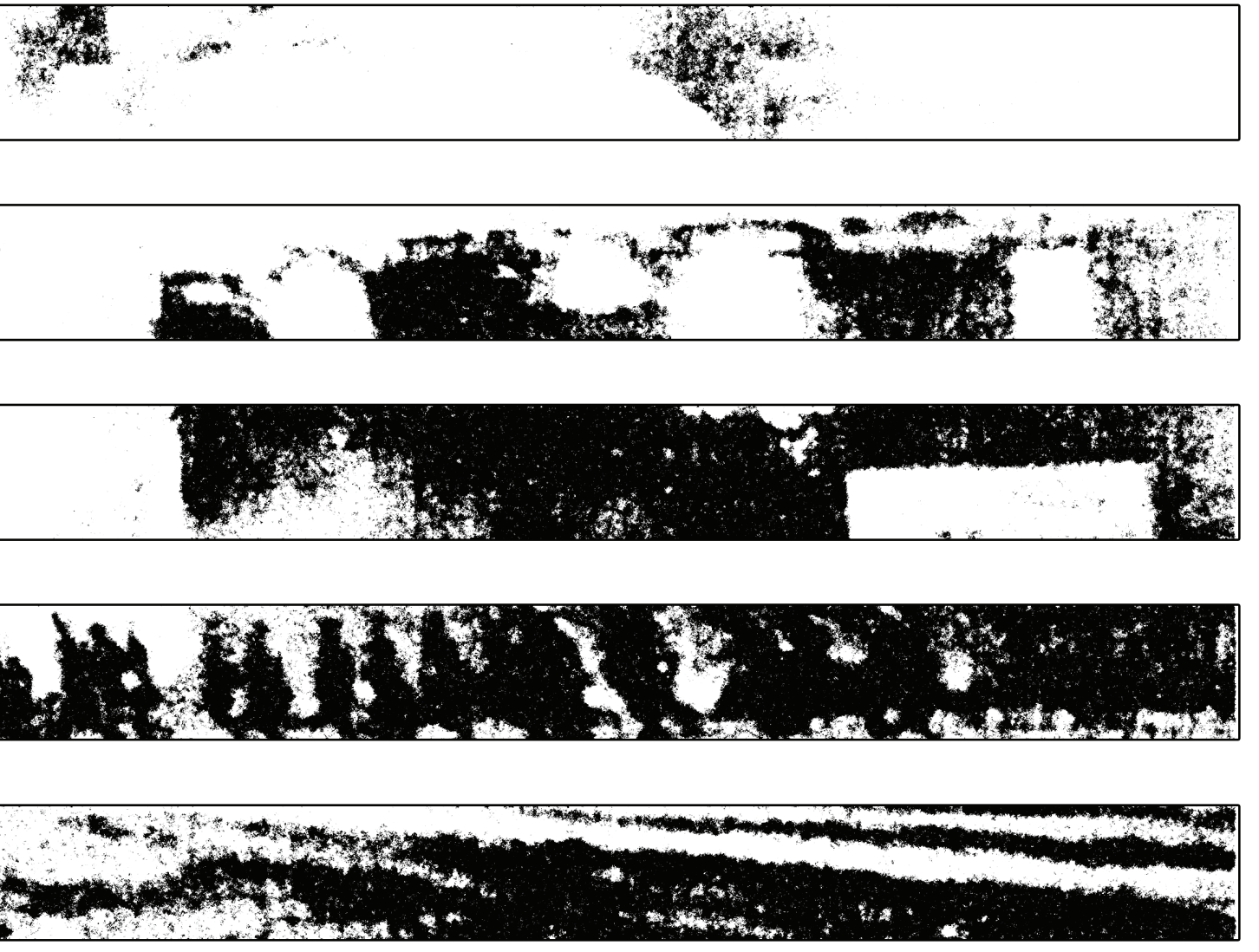
The Liga brought together several Marxist-Leninist groups from across the country: Los Procesos, Los Guajiros (Baja California), Los Enfermos (Sinaloa), Los Feroces (Guadalajara), Los Lacandones, the Brigada Roja (Mexico City), the MAR 23 de Septiembre (Chihuahua)—which had sent 53 members to North Korea for military training— and Los Macías (Monterrey). At the start, the organization counted about 250 young militants, most of them in their

In *Madera*, the group's underground newspaper, they defined their mission clearly:



THE BOURGEOIS STATE, AND, IN PARTICULAR, THEIR COPS AND SOLDIERS."

“ THE PERMANENT HARASSMENT OF THE BOURGEOISIE,



mid-20s. The name itself commemorated the failed assault on the barracks in Madera, Chihuahua by the Grupo Popular Guerrillero on September 23, 1965.

The mission of the Liga: to unite the Mexican proletariat into a single revolutionary class, outside the bounds of the Stalinist-controlled Mexican Communist Party. To achieve this, they trained militarily, engaged in direct combat with police and soldiers, stole weapons, and carried out illegal actions to fund their operations. Through kidnappings, they demanded and secured the release of numerous political prisoners. In Madera, the group's underground newspaper, they defined their mission succinctly: "the permanent harassment of the bourgeoisie, the bourgeois State, and, in particular, their cops and soldiers." They continuously reanalyzed their theory, seeing their newspaper and ideology as their primary weapon in the class struggle, even above firearms. In their final years, from 1977-1981, they embraced a form of council communism as their main ideology, opposing Soviet "state capitalism," labor unions, and political parties as dead-ends obstructing the revolutionary capacities of the working classes.

Inside their safe houses, where they trained with weapons and prepared for combat, Liga cadres followed strict, unwritten rules. Everyone, regardless of gender, shared cleaning duties. They banned drugs, alcohol, parties, and any noise that could attract attention from neighbors. For better and for worse, group discipline structured their lives, especially when it came to the serious and systematic study of Marxism.

The Liga often recruited new members from Normales—teachers' colleges like the one in Ayotzinapa, where 43 students disappeared in 2014. They organized Marxist reading circles at these schools, using them to identify the most committed and capable students. The best recruits were invited to join the underground armed struggle.

The Liga organized its first operations in 1973, but they were not the first to begin armed actions. On May 4 of that year, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias del Pueblo (FRAP) kidnapped Terrance Georges Leonhardy, the US consul in Guadalajara. Their demand: the release of 30 political prisoners linked to various armed movements. Within two days, all were freed and sent to Cuba. The Liga, meanwhile, spent the following months recruiting and conducting political education. Members handed out copies of Madera outside schools, factories, and working-class neighborhoods in Guadalajara. Soon, they had over a hundred brigades, 10-15 members apiece, siezing or stealing weapons from police and security guards across the city.

In Sinaloa, the Liga clashed not only with the state but with leftist factions that rejected armed struggle. They assaulted scholars and even the leader of the Juventud Comunista. The university tried to expel them, but failed. The Liga embedded itself deeply in the student movement, enjoying widespread support among its activists.

In July 1973, in Chihuahua, the Movimiento de Acción Revolucionaria held a meeting to explore building a legal, national leftist movement. Police raided the meeting, arresting 27 of the 30 attendees. Even with setbacks like these, the Liga surged in popularity. At its height, the organization brought together around 1,500 members, concentrated in Mexico's central and northern cities.


Golpe de Guerrilla Urbana

Fue Abatido Eugenio Garza Sada, Creador de Centros de Trabajo en Toda la Nación

TRIBUNA

El Cortejo Partirá del Tecnológico

THE KIDNAPPING

On September 17, 1973, just two months after the police raid in Chihuahua, and four months after the FRAP kidnapping of the US consul in Guadalajara, the Liga attempted its first high-profile operation: the kidnapping of Eugenio Garza Sada, director of the prestigious Tecnológico de Monterrey. One of the most powerful men in Mexico at the time, Garza Sada was a symbol of the conservative elites ruling the country. He funded anti-communist media, supported repressive policies, and backed figures like Salvador Borrego, one of the most notorious fascist writers of 20th-century Mexico. In his time as director of the school, he banned all activism on campus for the 80,000 students. Garza could not have known that many of the jesuit priests running his school were radicalizing the student group Movimiento Estudiantil Profesional (MEP), exposing them to Liberation Theology and revolutionary politics.

Ignacio Salas Obregón (aka "Oseas"), the first commander of the Liga, led the operation to kidnap Garza. Like many guerrilla leaders across Latin America, including Argentina's Montoneros, Colombia's M-19, and El Salvador's FMLN, Oseas came from a middle-class Catholic background. Like several other members of the Liga, he was radicalized by his time in the MEP. In other words, he intended to lead a kidnapping of the president of his own school.

On September 17, 1973, a Ford pickup truck cut off the black Galaxie carrying Garza Sada and two of his security guards. Four armed men stepped out of the truck. The Liga commando numbered just six people. In just a few moments, two of the rebels—Javier Rodríguez and Bernardo Martínez—were shot dead by the guards. Garza Sada and his two security detail were killed when the businessman reached for a gun in the car.

The assassination sparked outrage within the Mexican bourgeoisie. 200,000 people attended the funeral. The upper and middle classes blamed President Echeverría for the incident. In retaliation, the Mexican government launched a brutal crackdown on the LC23S, as well as on other radical groups like FRAP and MAR. This marked the beginning of an all-out war against Mexico's guerilla movements, backed by American-funded counterinsurgency efforts. Torture, forced disappearances, and state violence became commonplace—a grim chapter in Mexico's history. Prior to 1973, such measures were rare, but in the aftermath of this assassination, they became a regular feature of the Mexican state's response to dissent.

In early October, 1973, police raided a Liga meeting in Mexico City. Elias Orozco, one of the organizers of the Garza Sada kidnapping, was arrested. During the raid, police killed an activist named Arturo. A few days later, on October 10, 1973—just one month after Richard Nixon's coup that overthrew socialist Chile—the Liga executed a double kidnapping in Guadalajara. They captured Anthony Duncan, the British consul, and Fernando Aranguren, a young businessman.

The media paraded Orozco as the man responsible for Garza Sada's death, hoping to shield President Echeverría from criticism. In response, the Liga demanded $350,000 and the release of 51 political prisoners in exchange for the October 10th hostages. The government wasn't willing to negotiate anymore. No more deals with armed groups. The result was brutal: the Liga released Duncan, the British consul. They executed Aranguren, the businessman, with nothing gained in return.



THE REACTION

In October of that same year, the cops published the names of 17 members of the Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre, calling them terrorists in the news. Next month, the Red Brigade (a membership group within the Liga), guns in their hands, stole nine firearms from cops in a northern section of Mexico City. The government sought revenge. Police kidnapped Salvador Corral and Ignacio Olivares Torres, two Tecnologico de Monterrey students who, like Oseas, embraced Liberation Theology. Both were summarily executed. Their destroyed bodies appeared on February 7, 1974. Corral in Guadalajara, without nails, with broken shoulders, and his brain exposed. Ignacio, also with broken bones, dumped in Monterrey.

As part of the government's first wave of reprisals, Oseas was forcibly disappeared on April 26, 1974. According to Excélsior, one of Mexico's largest newspapers, the police were investigating a gunfight involving a Liga member, Santiago Juan de Dios Martínez, who had reportedly shot at police cars. While the cops surrounded the area in search of Santiago, someone hid in a Dodge Dart. When the cops exited their patrol cars, a

shootout ensued. Santiago managed to injure three officers before fleeing. Police were not the only ones injured.

Excélsior reported that, during the search, the police discovered a notebook containing the names of political prisoners, dates, a Lenin book, and a copy of Madera, the Liga's underground journal. Two other Liga members later identified the injured occupant of the car: Ignacio Salas Obregón, aka Oseas. He was taken to the hospital, then moved to Campo Marte, a military detention center. After that, he vanished—never to be seen or heard from again. To this day, the fate of the Liga's most prominent leader remains a mystery.

By 1974, the Mexican government's crackdown fractured the unity of the organization. One faction began to advocate for a legal route, which would later evolve into the Corriente Socialista, while the other—following the Red Brigade—continued its armed struggle in the streets. 1974 holds the record for most political kidnappings in a single year in recorded Mexican history.

As the robberies and kidappings mounted, President Echeverría shifted from simple repression to full-scale counterinsurgency. Operation Condor-inspired CIA operations used the pretext of fighting drug trafficking to justify US funding for Mexico's war on communism [Ed. See "Fue el Estado", *Radar* no. 2]. With this backing, Echeverría raided over 800 homes without warrants and disappeared hundreds—mostly students and young people. Echeverría blamed the families of the Mexican revolutionaries, accusing them of facilitating the radicalization of their children.

As repression mounted, the Liga escalated its attacks. In 1974, 20 bombs exploded across Guadalajara, Oaxaca, Mexico City, and Puebla, targeting banks, PRI buildings, shopping malls, and multinational corporations. These actions challenged the legitimacy of the government at a time when conventional protests and demonstrations seemed too risky and ineffective. They were not strong enough to stop the repression, because they could not, by themselves, topple the government. By the end of the year, police had disappeared around 400 more people.

REBUILDING THE LEAGUE, EXPANDING THEIR BASE

The Red Brigade worked to rebuild the Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre, focusing on education, internal organization, and military training. They resumed printing *Madera*, established new safe houses, and secured more funds and weapons. They also took in four children, the offspring of disappeared comrades. By early 1975, about ten brigades — each with 5 or 6 full-time members — were dedicated solely to strengthening the organization.

The Liga shifted its focus. Their new priority was building armed brigades in factories, among rail workers, and across industrial zones. As prescribed in The Student Intifada and the Revolution to Come [Ed: see *Radar* Issue 01], the Liga was no longer just recruiting students and young people. They planned to organize workers for self-defense in order to broaden their base. In *Madera*, they published an essay entitled "Some Experiences on Military Tactics and Techniques," where they criticized spontaneism and rejected isolated acts of violence. Their approach was strategic: any action had to benefit the Mexican proletariat and be organized outside the traditional party system.

In this article, the Liga outlined a serious approach to revolutionary warfare. They proposed study groups focused on works by Che Guevara, Lenin, Mao, Engels, and others, intending to educate themselves on guerrilla tactics, military leadership, and civil war strategy. They studied intelligence gathering on their enemies, how to procure weapons and ammunition, and the manufacture of homemade bombs. They openly aspired to support large-scale uprisings with tightly-knit, well-organized small groups. This approach mirrored the tactics that had helped win the Mexican Revolution sixty years earlier, in the spirit of Flores Magón and the revolutionary journal *Regeneración*.

Despite printing 10,000 copies of *Madera*, the Liga faced a major obstacle: most workers never read it. The journal's content was too complex for the average person, and merely possessing a copy was enough to land someone in jail, or worse. By this time, the labor movement was organizing strikes across the country, winning significant labor rights through legal channels. Part of the Liga, operating as the Corriente Socialista, aligned with this movement as the legal and visible faction. They were both social democrats and revolutionaries —straddling the line between reform and revolution.

Within the Liga, there was no rigid separation between these two approaches. The members didn't cling to political or theoretical purity, despite their serious commitment to studying politics and theory. They resisted dogma, much like the previous revolutionary leaders of Mexican history (Lucio Cabañas, Rubén Jaramillo, etc). They didn't fit neatly into ideological boxes. Regardless, the average person wasn't interested in reading *Madera* or joining the Liga. The media portrayed them as terrorists, and that image kept the broader population from engaging with their cause.





IGNACIO
ARTURO
SALAS
OBREGON
(OSEAS)

"La participación de "Oseas" en el movimiento revolucionario estuvo caracterizada por una lucha abierta y despiadada contra el oportunismo, contra toda la influencia burguesa en el seno del movimiento obrero y en particular en el seno de la Organización Revolucionaria, al mismo tiempo se caracterizó por impulsar el desarrollo de la teoría revolucionaria, por su difusión y asimilación en el conjunto del movimiento proletario...

"Su obra revolucionaria sin duda perdurará a través del tiempo, la mejor prueba de ello es que a pesar de los enormes esfuerzos que la burguesía hace por impedir la difusión de la propaganda revolucionaria y en especial de "LA BANDERA" -que dicho sea de paso también "Oseas" fue su fundador- los obreros la acogen con gran simpatía y a pesar de las amenazas y represión burguesas se incorporan activamente a su discusión".

("Cuestiones fundamentales...").

On April 26, 1975, a group of 8 men and 4 women, armed with pistols and submachine guns, robbed a bank in Villa Coapa. They shot their way through the robbery, yelling and firing for twenty minutes, making off with $15,000. A high-speed chase ensued, with 38 police cars and 2 helicopters in pursuit. In the firefight, the Liga commando killed 8 cops and accidentally shot 3 innocent bystanders.

Two Liga members were wounded and captured. Police shot them in the legs and denied them medical care until they gave up the names of their comrades. That summer, the authorities intensified their crackdown, attacking Liga committees on the outskirts of Mexico City. Authorities captured 7 guerrillas. Police raided seven houses across the country. They published the names of 40 more underground members. El Universal published photos of 15 of them. Just one week later, the police apprehended another 14 members, including much of the editorial team of *Madera*. The main printer, David Jiménez Fregoso, the father of one of the captured comrades, was disappeared.

On June 19, 1,000 people attended a dog show at the UNAM Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. Gunfire erupted in the event, as plainclothes officers chased five Liga brigadistas through the crowd. One was captured, while the others ran toward the nearby Architecture Faculty. The unmarked cops continued shooting as they pursued the members, and two fell to the ground. The crowd erupted in pandemonium, screaming and stampeding in every direction. Cops shot Adolfo Lozano and Teresa Hernández in front of hundreds of witnesses. They shot a copy of *Madera* laying on the ground, and then left the scene. The two bodies were left on the UNAM esplanade, a stark reminder of the violence that had overtaken the streets.

Despite the American-backed counterinsurgency efforts, the Liga struck back again. They shot three police officers and two inspectors at the Ignacio Zaragoza market. In September 1975, the FRAP also reacted. Four men captured Carlos Ramírez Ladewig, a notorious opportunist within the student movment, as he was leaving his Mercedes Benz in Guadalajara. Ladewig, having become a prominent figure in the Mexican healthcare system and a candidate for governor of Jalisco, was executed by the FRAP in retaliation for his role in orchestrating the violent repression of students in Guadalajara.

At the beginning of 1976, the Liga devised a daring plan to free some of their comrades imprisoned in Oblatos jail. After two months of preparation, one of the groups managed to break a massive hole in the wall. To distract the guards, a couple staged an erotic performance on the streets in front of the prison while the comrades escaped. A third group kept watch nearby, ready to warn of any approaching cops or trouble.

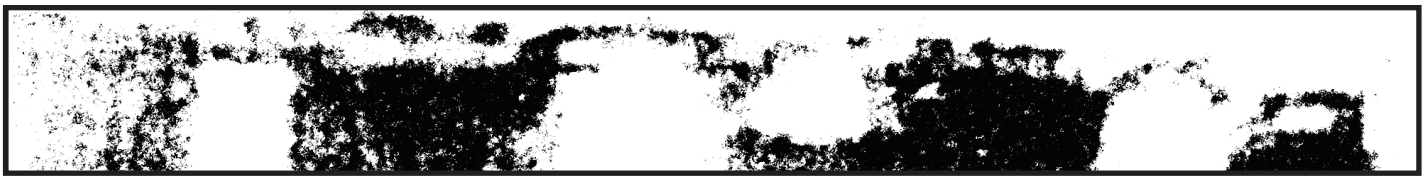
Six brigadistas successfully escaped in what became a legendary guerrilla operation. The audacity of the mission — using an erotic performance as a cover — made it infamous. Performances aside, three guards were killed and one was injured in the course of the escape. Guards tortured several prisoners in an attempt to extract information, but none had anything to give. In a desperate move, the authorities ordered the detention of the families of the six escapees. Around 80 people were unlawfully captured and held for three days. No useful information came from them, and they were eventually released.

REFORM/REVOLUTION AND THE COLLAPSE OF UNITY

In 1976, the LC23S published their first Plan Nacional de Trabajo (National Work Plan). They set out to establish underground armed workers' committees in key sectors — rail workers, metalworkers, and bricklayers. These committees, often led by women, focused on distributing *Madera* outside large industries in urban areas, primarily in Northern Mexico. However, the Plan Nacional de Trabajo was not a public, mass-distributed, newspaper like *Madera*; it was meant strictly for the comrades, an internal revolutionary blueprint and program.

The Plan claims that, much like in Cuba and Nicaragua, the revolution would begin in the highland regions, where revolutionaries had a strong presence. It would gradually move toward the big cities where their influence was weaker. Their strategy aimed to combine multiple tactics in concentrated weeks of action, escalating quickly and decisively to a national level.

In 1976, a year after the shooting at the dog shot at UNAM, a Liga member, disguised as the mother of a newborn baby, walked near a police station. As she got closer, she brandished a submachine gun. She opened fire, killing six cops and injuring four more. Throughout the year, the Liga split again. Two groups from Monterrey decided to abandon the armed struggle and pursue legal avenues instead. One group called themselves the Liga Comunista Internacionalista 23 de Septiembre, while the other published an article in Oposición, the official journal of the Mexican Communist Party. In that article, seven Liga members, some of whom were founders, openly supported the communist national presidential candidate, Valentín Campa.



With this article, the two factions severed their ties. This division reflects a key theoretical mistake made by these seven founders. Much like the Magón brothers and the anarchists who helped ignite the Mexican Revolution, they adhered to a rigid, quasi-Leninist framework that pit reform against revolution. They viewed it as an either-or scenario. But sometimes reforms require revolutionary tactics, and revolutions need structured programs—essentially, reforms. The Magón brothers, like these seven founders, believed the two could not coexist. History may suggest otherwise.

In August 1976, police killed Carlos Gorostiola Toriz, the military strategist for the organization. A few days later, on August 11, brigadistas attempted to kidnap Margarita López Portillo, the sister of the newly elected president, José López Portillo. However, the guards protecting her killed David Jiménez Sarmiento, the leader of the LC23S Red Brigade, during the operation. That summer, police captured twenty more brigadistas. Despite the continued leadership of figures like Luis Miguel Corral, Miguel Ángel Barraza, and Alicia de los Ríos Merino, the government and media declared the LC23S was utterly defeated. They were exaggerating, but these events did send the group in a new direction, once again.

The Liga began to split their groups into smaller units, reducing their teams from six to three members each. In this new structure, they kidnapped Isaac Duek, a wealthy clothing factory owner, and secured a ransom of $250,000 for his release. With the money, they continued to build underground committees, focusing primarily on North Mexico's industries and bricklayers.

On March 30, 1977, the Liga kidnapped Antonio Fernández, a high-ranking executive at a major beer company. They demanded millions in ransom, the reinstatement of 133 recently fired workers, the retirement of 92 others, and for their statement to be published in mainstream media. Just days later, the beer company published the names of the workers, who were all rehired and paid. When Fernández was released, he claimed that the Liga had treated him well, and he did not ask for any reprisals against them.

A month later, in May 1977, the Liga killed Alfonso Peralta Reyes, a Trotskyist professor who had exposed the identities of their comrades. Meanwhile, the police captured numerous Liga members and raided safe houses across Sinaloa, Guadalajara, Cuernavaca, and Mexico City. Amnesty International reported that by the end of the year, 200 activists were jailed and tortured in secret prisons throughout Mexico.

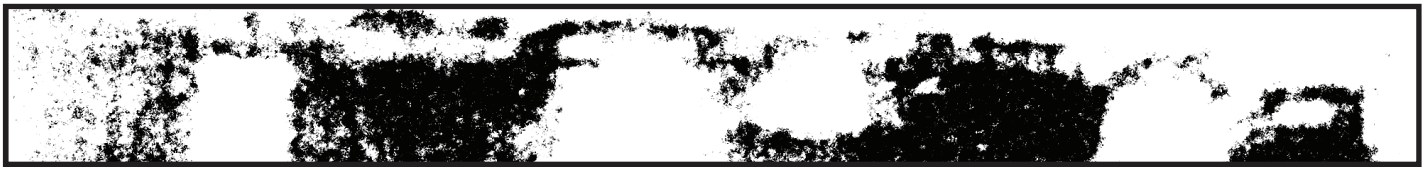
By 1978, with most of the groups founders and leaders were either captured, killed, or disappeared. Amnesty International documented 600 political prisoners, 357 forced disappearances, and 52 comrades in exile in Cuba, Italy, and France.

DISSOLUTION

Throughout the late 70s, LG23S conducted numerous high-profile kidnappings and robberies, with mixed results. Their ideological shifted continuously away from Leninist dogma, as they came to reject the, in their words, "so-called socialist countries, the prototypes of which are Russia and China; countries in which... there is no socialism, nor are they 'societies in transition,' but under the protection of the State capitalist monopoly, capitalism has been restored." (*Madera*, No. 43)

By this time, Mexican President López Portillo had donated two million dollars, an airplane, and a car to support the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua. When the Sandinistas overthrew Anastasio Somoza, López Portillo welcomed them as heroes in Mexico's main square. Yet, at the same time, under pressure from the Vatican, the United States, and Mexico's far-right, he carried out a brutal campaign of persecution within Mexico. Hundreds of young people were jailed, tortured, or disappeared simply for possessing a pamphlet, reading a journal, smoking marijuana, or dressing and acting differently.

The Liga's downfall came with the death of Miguel Ángel Barraza, known as El Piojo Negro, in 1981. He was the last of the founding leaders and only 29 years old. Over the course of their struggle, the Liga published 58 issues of *Madera*. Despite their efforts, they never received international support. China, Cuba, Yugoslaia, the USSR, and even Allende's Chile did not back them. They each saw Mexico's social democracy as left-wing and chose to engage with the Mexican government instead, just as today many western leftists praise the clientele state run by the progressive Morena party instead of the revolutionary autonomous movements in the cities, on the farms, or in the jungles of the country.



RESOLUTION

The Liga's Plan Nacional de Trabajo mirrors the type of revolutionary program needed in the US today, as outlined in the first issue of *Radar* [Ed: the author is referring to the essay "States of Siege," *Radar* Issue 01]. This kind of practical proposal, in the Mexican context, draws inspiration from the earlier Programa del Partido Liberal Mexicano, written by the legendary Magón Brothers. In 1906, the Magóns printed half a million copies of their program, distributing them across Mexico, Latin America, Europe, and the US, ensuring their message was heard, defending the narrative around their actions—just as the EZLN would later do from 1994 onward. The first point of their program, aimed at overthrowing a 30-year-old dictatorship, called for "no re-election." Despite the political back-and-forth of the past century, the Mexican constitution still bans presidential re-election.

In "States of Siege," the anonymous authors claim that a clandestine militant movement, while necessary, cannot conduct a revolution by themselves, arguing that "it is the conscious actions of... millions [of people] that determines everything." This mentality was reflected clearly in the writings and practice of the Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre. If they were going to reject the Mexican Communist Party, they needed to build cadres and armed committees among common people—regular workers, not just young students. They conducted kidnappings, ambushes, and robberies in tandem with strikes, walk-outs, and workplace accidents, often echoing the demands of independent or spontaneous working class resistance movements. The Liga had their share of victories and failures; they were a large, underground, youth-led movement, struggling against capitalism in the face of repeated massacres and disappearances on university campuses. Like the Magón brothers in the Mexican Revolution, the LC23S wrote and followed a clear revolutionary program, accomplishing many of their goals. Reading, writing, and sharing reflections with intellectuals, students, and the creative movements of their time were essential qualities of their organizational culture and practice. Still, the Liga didn't find a way to write *Madera* in a way that connected with regular people. As middle-class organizers, they maintained a sophisticated theoretical rejection of Stalinism and authoritarianism, but the theory written in *Madera* mainly addressed socialists and social democrats, rather than workers and other poor people. They spent more time fighting with the petty bourgeoisie than learning from the working class, uniting everyone against the upper class. The Magón brothers didn't make that mistake in *Regeneración* with their Programa del Partido Liberal Mexicano. They created simple and effective propaganda, a program of generalized disorder with specific aims and demands, a plan that allowed participants from many backgrounds to take their lives into their own hands, and fight back against the incredible odds stacked against them. That is how most of the revolutionary movements in the Global South operate. We should re-dedicate ourselves to that method today.

Luisa Tapetillo




you
are
the
brave

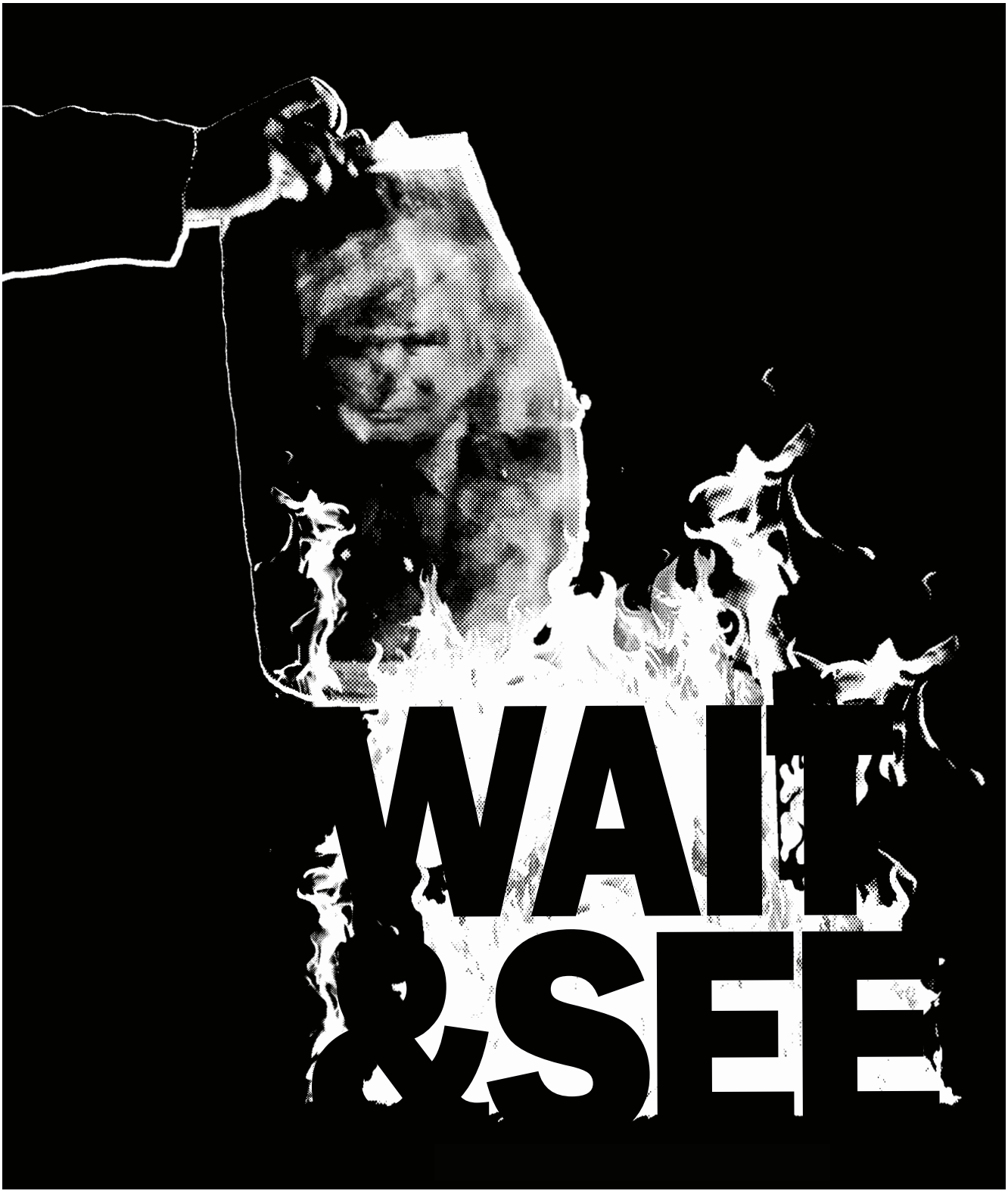
YOU ARE THE BRAVE

by Raymond R. Patterson

You are the brave who do not break
In the grip of the mob when the blow comes straight
To the shattered bone; when the sockets shriek;
When your arms lie twisted under your back.

Good men holding their courage slack
In their frightened pockets see how weak
The work that is done; and feel the weight
Of your blood on the ground for their spirits' sake;

And build their anger, stone on stone;
Each silently, but not alone.


WAIT
&SEE

Donald Trump returned to office on January 20. He brought with him the wealthiest cabinet of all time, including 14 billionaires. The Left is spiraling in a confused and anxious mess. The Democrats have done precious little to counter the blitzkreig of revanchist reforms passed via executive order, a strategy Trump advisor Steve Bannon calls "flood the zone." For their weakness, the Democrats lost the favor and support of millions of their once-loyal voters. The Party for Socialism and Liberation coordinated hundreds of marches and rallies across the country. While this is more than most have managed, these demonstrations seem unlikely to provoke the necessary unrest.

Until thousands of people flooded the streets in Los Angeles on June 6, spreading riots and confrontations across the city and then country, the first five months of the administration advanced almost completely without resistance. Missing a serious grassroots movement, some Federal and state-level judges, a handful of lawyers, even directors of private universities, positioned themselves at the front of resistance to the administrations reactionary reforms. Vice President JD Vance and Stephen Miller (presidential advisor, former roommate of fascist organizer Richard Spencer), openly contested the right of the judicial branch to challenge or check the power of the Executive.

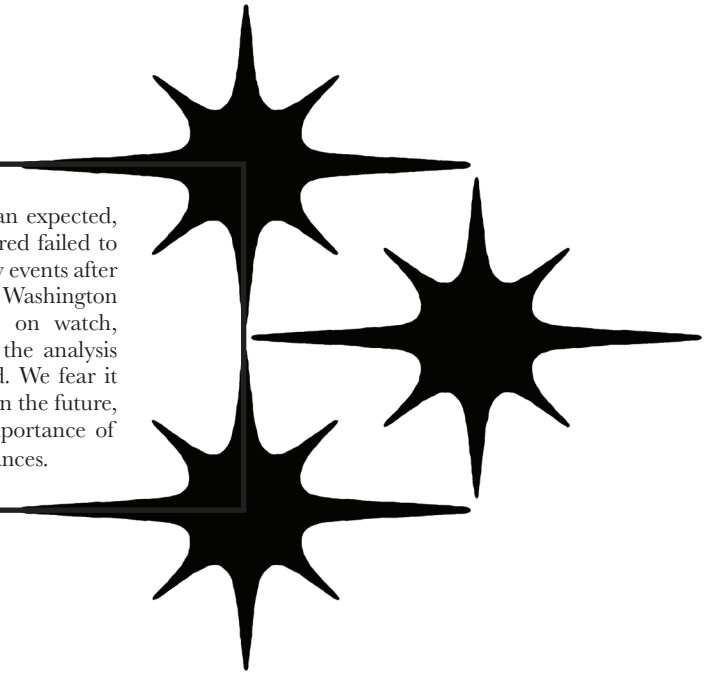
The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), led by Elon Musk, the worlds richest man, fired 200,000 federal employees. By subcontracting the austerity measures to an unelected and powerful elite, the Oval Office hopes to insulate itself from the "administrative state" that it needs to gut in order to establish its unitary power over the government. The better to serve the faction of capital that has forced its way into the grants and contracts markets it has long envied: tech oligarchs like Peter Thiel, Mark Zuckerberg, Elon Musk, et al.

In April, 2025, the administration initiated tariffs on every country in the world. For several days, global markets plunged. US Secretary of Treasury Scott Bessent, founder of macro investment firm Key Square Group, assured Trump that the tariffs would lower the rates on Treasury Bonds, giving the White House greater ability to negotiate the federal debt. This is the opposite of what transpired. European markets, entire nations, sold their US bonds, plunging the Treasury market and spiking the interest rates, signifying a global collapse of confidence in the long term stability of the United States and its currency.

Just three months earlier, at Scott Bessents confirmation hearing with Congress on January 28, police arrested a woman named Riley English at the Capitol. English admitted that she was in posession of multiple Molotov cocktails and a firearm, and that it was her intention to assassinate the "nazi" appointees Scott Bessent, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, and House Speaker Mike Johnson. There are many stories like English's.

If riots and rebellions against deportations, budget cuts, layoffs, imperialist wars, and police brutality will continue under the second Trump administration, which we think they will, then we need to understand what that means for the revolutionary process. To do so, we want to analyze some of the differences between resistance to Trump's first presidency and the cautious "wait and see" mentality of anarchists, abolitionists, radicals, and others in the present era. It is not the proper role of revolutionaries to wait for revolts to fall from heaven. Rather, it is our role to help precipitate and escalate them, bringing them to the heights of their potential, learning what we only can by taking our ideas to their logical conclusions.

08.20.2025 Editors Note: This essay took us longer to write than expected, because the chaotic events of the period in which it was authored failed to pause for us. For the sake of brevity, we decided not to include any events after mid-July 2025. Last week, Trump deployed National Guard to Washington DC. Texas Republicans placed their Democratic colleagues on watch, assigning them "security" escorts. Perhaps, hopefully, some of the analysis contained herein will seem outdated by the time it is published. We fear it will be helpful for comrades, nonetheless, at times and in places in the future, when a great many people inevitably fail to appreciate the importance of doing something concrete in the face of overwhelming circumstances.



RESISTANCE TO FIRST TRUMP PRESIDENCY



A protester kicks in a windshield during a demonstration in Washington, Jan. 20, 2017, after the inauguration of President Donald Trump.

PRE-ELECTION

Compared to the groundswell of resistance in 2016, ongoing efforts inspire little.

On March 11, 2016, 10,000 protesters converged on a Trump campaign event at the University of Chicago. Trump was still honing in on his central campaign message: "Build the Wall, Make American Great Again." This framing brought thousands of Chicago-area residents to his event, aiming to disrupt the gathering before it took place. It worked. Protesters blocked steets, fought with Trump supporters, and clashed with police. Images of bloody protesters, struck with police batons, spread virally online. Organizers cancelled the rally.

On April 23, hundreds of protesters assembled in Stone Mountain, GA under the moniker "All Out Atlanta." They aimed to halt a Klan rally and march at the historic park, which was deceptively organized under the banner "Heritage, Not Hate." The racists regrouped in preceding months in the context created by the Trump campaign. A gang truce brought hundreds of people to the park to fight them: Gangster Disciples, Black Disciples, Black P. Stone Rangers, Bloods, and Crips. Anarchists assembled a black bloc of around 150 people. The mobilization shut down the park by throwing stones and fireworks at riot police, burning tires and barricades on the roadways, and physically attacking Klansmen and their friends.

Five days later, April 28, hundreds of Chicano protesters gathered outside a Trump campaign event in Costa Mesa, California. They broke windows of police cruisers, threw stones at the convention center, briefly blocked an interstate highway, and fought Trump supporters in hand to hand combat. Police arrested 20 people. A month later, in Albuquerque, a large gathering of Chicanos once again attacked a campaign event. They smashed the glass doors of the convention center, threw stones at police, and set barricades alight.

On June 18, 2016, a British man named Michael Sanford reached for the gun of a police officer, hoping to assassinate Donald Trump at a campaign event in Las Vegas.

Throughout his first campaign, Chicanos, students, anarchists, and leftists organized resistance with protests, disruptions, and even riots. His first campaign sought to garner support from middle class whites with xenophobia, blaming Mexican immigrants for the collapse of living standards over the last 60 years.

He won. Protests erupted immediately. In Oakland, more than 5,000 people gathered three nights in a row, many wearing black hoodies and masks. They set cars on fire, broke windows at corporate retailers, and threw rocks at police. Similar unrest rocked the Pearl district of downtown Portland, where thousands of people broke windows and threw traffic flares at police, who responded with pepper balls and flashbang grenades. This was just the beginning.

POST ELECTION

On January 20, 2017, hundreds of black bloc protestors smashed storefronts before clashing with police in Washington D.C. at Trump's inaguration event. Police formed a kettle, eventually arresting 200 people, but not before a number of people escaped by charging directly into their lines behind an opened umbrella. Rioting continued through the afternoon and evening. Groups of anarchists and youth from the D.C. suburbs continued breaking windows, throwing rocks at police, and burning barricades. Flames billowed from the windows of a burning limousine. Canisters of tear gas bounced back and forth between lines of helmeted police and hooded rioters.

Nearby, thousands gathered for peaceful protests, setting up barricades, delaying the inauguration itself. Inside the actual ceremony, protesters shouted over the new President. At a protest in Seattle, a supporter of hard right troll Milo Yiannapolous shot a leftist in the stomach.

The next day, January 21, the Women's March in D.C. brought hundreds of thousands of people to protest the misogynist platform of Donald Trump. Women's Marches spread across the country, catalzying the participation of millions of people.

A week later, on January 28, the administration issued Stephen Miller's Executive Order 13769, the so called "Muslim Ban." This travel ban aimed to establish a universal ban on all travelers coming from six Muslim-majority countries: Iraq, Iran, Libya, Syria, Sudan, Yemen. Within 24 hours, 375 people were trapped inside of international airport terminals, having been mid-travel when the order passed.

A group of thirty protesters rushed to the John F. Kennedy International Airport in Queens, New York. They stood outside, holding cardboard signs, demanding the release of the detained travelers from police custody. Within a few hours, 2,000 people joined them. As news spread on social media, huge crowds descended at O'Hare International in Chicago, at Los Angeles International, San Francisco International. By the end of the day, blockades spread to Baltimore, Seattle, Detroit, Cleveland, Portland, Austin, Indianapolis, Boston, Denver, Albuquerque, Hartford, Newark, Albany, San Diego, Atlanta, Las Vegas, Orlando, Greenville, Philadelphia, Raleigh. In some places, crowds breached the terminals, shoving police officers and throwing objects. In San Francisco, anarchists built a temporary encampment inside of the airport.

We defeated the Muslim Ban.

In August 2017, protesters rioted outside of a Trump speaking event in Phoenix, Arizona. Inside, Trump blamed the violence on "antifa." This was the first time he spoke the phrase, giving name to popular forces opposing his agenda.

Over the following months and years, antifascists, police, and hard right activists (including Neo-Nazis, white nationalists, anti-leftists, and misogynists) clashed in recurrent cycles of violence all over the country. In the Pacific Northwest, armed confrontations frequently transformed city centers into pitched battles.

In June 2018, anarchists and abolitionists in Portland built a large encampment outside of the ICE field office after news articles reported that over 1,300 immigrant children had gone missing. Millions of citizens recoiled in horror as footage and documents leaked to the public exposing the Obama-era family separation policy, which many wrongly credited to Trump. The following month, activists led demonstrations across the country to reject family separation. Pictures of children sleeping on floors in chainlink cages spread across the internet. Radicals set up occupations and blockades of ICE detention centers in Philidelphia, Tampa, Atlanta, Louisville, Detroit, in New York City, and elsewhere.

A year later, Trump vowed to initiate a blitzkrieg of ICE raids across the country. He claimed the agency would arrest hundreds of thousands of people in a concerted push. On July 13, 2019, just one day before the planned raids, an anarchist named Willem Van Spronsen carried a a rifle, propane tank, and traffic flares to the ICE detention center in Tacoma, WA. Van Spronsen had been arrested at the "Occupy ICE" encampment a year prior while trying to de-arrest a fellow protester. The 69 year old antifascist determined he would keep fighting, even alone if need be. Police opened fire when Van Spronsen began lighting an incendiary device near some trucks at the facility. The ICE raids were cancelled, "for the safety of immigration enforcement agents."

After years of such confrontations, the 2020 George Floyd Rebellion destroyed social peace for months, opening up a new timeline in US history. As a result of the rebellion, in which millions looted stores, burned cars, fought police, and generally destroyed the status quo, law enforcement strategies changed. We do not yet know much about the current strategic paradigm of the ruling class; the specific watchwords, justifications, and wagers will emerge in the next few years in declassified reports conducted by the RAND corporation and other think-tanks. What we do know is that after the 2020 uprising, things changed.

NEW ORDER

All indicators point to a stronger response to protest movements after the George Floyd rebellion. The Biden presidency faced but one serious protest movement, the Defend the Forest/Stop Cop City movement. Police killed one person, and have charged over 100 people with felonies, including 61 people with racketeering. They accuse the bail fund of being a mafia. Just as the administration defunds its international "soft power" agencies such as USAID, they will continue mobilizing federal agencies to repress opposition domestically with brute force.

In the spring and summer of 2024, police across the US targeted pro-Palestine protests. They gassed, maced, and clubbed demonstrators. University authorities cracked down on activists, suspending anti-war groups and expelling their members. Campus authorities allowed zionists to intimidate and dox those opposing the US-backed invasion of Palestine.

On July 13, 20-year-old conservative Thomas Crooks shot Donald Trump at a campaign event in Butler, Pennsylvania. He clipped only the ear. He was killed by Secret Service. Two months later, on September 15, police arrested a Trumpist-turned-Bernie Sanders-supporter in West Palm Beach, FL after a brief shoot-out with Secret Service. Authorities accuse him of carrying a Soviet-era SKS onto a golf course in order to kill Trump. He escaped the golf course, and the town. Local police arrested him on the highway, pulling him over on account of his erratic driving.

As trade unions, celebrities, media, and Democrats condemned the protesters and defended barbaric airstrikes on hospitals and schools in Gaza, they set the stage for a wider erosion of free speech in the US among 2020 Biden voters who abstained in 2024, the primary reason (29%) was the US-Israeli war on Palestine (YouGov). In November, Donald Trump won the presidential election. He won in the electoral college and the popular vote.



On January 1, ultra-rightist Matthew Livlesberger turned a Tesla cybertruck into an IED. He detonated the carbomb outside of the Trump Hotel Las Vegas. In a written statement, he called on others to mobilize for paramilitary enthusiasm and support of incoming President Trump. The same day, a Houston man named Shamsud-Din Jabbar crashed a pickup truck into a crowd of pedestrians on Bourbon Street, in New Orleans. He killed 14 and was subsequently killed during a shootout with police. FBI discovered two coolers filled with homemade explosives on a sidewalk two blocks from the car attack. Jabbar affixed an Islamic State (ISIS) flag to his truck before the attack. Both he and Livlesberger fought for the US in the War in Afghanistan. Both of them were stationed at Fort Bragg.

If the events of the day indicate a broader trend, the months to come would be confusing, indeed.

In the days ahead of the inauguration, anarchists and their friends organized "Festivals of Resistance." The events coincided with the Day of the Forest Defender (January 18), which commemorates the killing of Tortuguita by Georgia State Patrolmen in the Weelaunee Forest, on January 18, 2023. Events in some two dozen locations brought together thousands of participants. In Olympia alone, over 1,000 people marched together downtown. In Richmond, 500 people participated in autonomous local assemblies, hoping to organize grassroots resistance to whatever was coming next. 600 people gathered in Sacramento to hear presentations and to attend workshops. In Oakland, 150 people broke into an abandoned municipal building, using the reclaimed space to host conversations and meetings. Impressive, but a far cry from the riots and unrest accompanying the first Trump election.

The incoming President began announcing appointments and staff for his new administration on social media. The bombast and arrogance of the government reached new highs. His deeply propagandized base celebrated fanatically, assembling at quasi-religious events, worshipping images of the man, sobbing hysterically. They prayed hopelessly to their false messiah.

In his first weeks in office, Trump signed executive orders rescinding anti-discrimination policies targeting LGBT people, women, and ethnic minorities in federal workplaces. He ended federal funding for elective abortions. He signed an order seeking to end birthright citizenship. Birthright citizenship is enshrined in the Constitution. Signing the order may have been more of a loyalty test of the new administration than anything else. It certainly frightened millions of people.

As the administration ramped up calls for "shock and awe" against immigrants, targeted communities worked hard to prepare themselves to defend one another, and to fight back.



A store in Little Village neighborhood in Chicago, Illinois, closes its doors amidst amidst anti-ICE protests, February, 2025

DAY WITHOUT IMMIGRANTS

There are around 62.5 million Latinos in the United States. More than 37 million of them are Mexican by ancestry. Although communities from all over the world are targeted by policing and regulations at the border, workers and refugees from Latin America are the primary targets. While those workers and refugees come from all over Central and South America and the Carribbean, it is the Mexicans who form by far the largest bloc. A considerable population in the Mexican-American communities possess US citizenship. While people of all legal status fight back against their own debasement, it is Chicanos specifically, perhaps on account of their unique stability afforded by their US passports, who have spearheaded militant resistance to the new administration. This should not surprise anyone who remembers the riots and clashes during the first Trump campaign in 2016.

On February 1, thousands of people gathered in National City, a San Diego suburb. They came responding to the call for a "Day Without Immigrants," coordinated online. They waived flags, and chanted slogans, while holding anti-ICE banners and signs. Corridos tumbados blared from car speakers, as hundreds blocked Highland Avenue. By nightfall, some shot fireworks while stunt-driving their cars. When police fired smoke canisters and teargas at the crowd; some threw items back. This was the first major confrontation in the new Trump era.

The following day, February 2, thousands of people converged in Downtown LA. They came waiving Mexican and Salvadoran flags, with signs denouncing the new administration. The crowd marched onto the 101 Freeway from the Alameda Street on-ramp. They blocked all lanes of traffic. Some used spray paint and markers to write anti-ICE graffiti on walls and buses. Traffic snarled for miles, bringing the entire city to a standstill for four hours. Lines of riot police eventually cleared the crowd, pushing it toward City Hall. Protesters smashed the windshield of a police cruiser. Around 10pm, officers formed a skirmish line and dispersed the crowd.

That same night, over 1,000 people, chiefly Chicanos, gathered in Glendale, Arizona. As police began to antagonize the crowd, youth fought back. Participants lobbed rocks, bottles, fireworks, and hunks of concrete at local police. Police fired pepper spray and tear gas at the crowd. Protesters burned a corporate storage container. They broke windows of five police cruisers. Police arrested two 16 year old boys, accusing them of stealing a cop car.

On February 4, a large crowd assembled in the north side of Austin, near the interesection of West Rundberg and North Lamar. They rallied for hours, sharing food and music, before riot police and Travis County sheriffs arrived. A few people in the crowd threw stones at the police, hoping to defend the crowd from their aggression. In response, authorities fired pepper balls. In the confrontation, only two people were arrested.

The same day, a large crowd gathered in Las Vegas at Charleston and Lamb Boulevards. As night fell, participants threw bottles and rocks at police officers as they attempted to arrest "disruptive individuals." SWAT joined local police to form a skirmish line. They arrested five people. Steve Grammas, President of the Las Vegas Police Protective Association, told the Las Vegas Review Journal that the 2020 George Floyd rebellion taught them that "we as a

police department cannot sit down and wait for something to happen."

Across the country, in the first weekend of February, Latinos staged work stoppages, sick-outs, strikes, rallies, and protests in dozens of US cities. The unruly clashes and disturbances in the southwest, where Latino immigrants live in great proportions, received little support or notoriety among the grassroots left. Even anarchists and other aspiring revolutionaries, for the most part, largely ignored these events. In the early weeks of February, students of at least 5 high schools in Los Angeles county walked out of classes for a week, enforcing a kind of strike with few recent precedents in US history.

Serious people cannot ignore these events. When marginalized and desperate people rise up, revolutionaries must react. That is, if we believe that it is the poor and angry who can bring the system to its knees.

FLOOD THE ZONE, TESLA TAKEDOWN, 50501

Meanwhile, the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), a private enterprise founded by Elon Musk, conducted sweeping audits of federal offices and departments. While Musk himself benefits directly from billions of dollars of federal contracts, he works with the administration to conjur the image of austerity and fiscal conservatism in order to appeal to right wing voters nostalgic for Reagan-era economic governance. He stands to gain many billions of dollars by replacing public services with private contracts for himself and for tech oligarchs like Peter Thiel. In short order, resistance to the new authoritarian arc of the administration, at least for some, took the form of resistance to DOGE, Elon Musk, and his car company Tesla.

In March, protesters gathered outside Tesla dealerships and showrooms in hundreds of locations, collectively know as "Tesla takedowns." The protests brought together dozens or hundreds of participants each. Most of those who assembled belonged to the class of white collar workers under direct threat of budget cuts and lay-offs in the public sector. Some turned to vandalism and arson. Anonymous people burned seven charging stations in Boston, four Cybertrucks in Seattle, and a dealership in Las Vegas. They burned a charging station in Charleston, two Cybertrucks in Kansas City, and placed unlit incendiary devices at a showroom in Austin. Opponents of the Musk-Trump agenda attacked a dealership in Loveland, CO repeatedly, firing bullets and throwing Molotovs at the facility. In Mesa, AZ, Lacey, WA; in Meridian, ID, Cascade, MI; in Bloomington, IN, Menlo, Park, CA, Gwinnett County, GA; in places large and small, the showrooms and dealerships have been trashed, busted up, shot at, and burned. Anonymous people vandalized 80 Teslas in Ontario and burned 16 cars in Rome. Those responsible do not release statements. They do not, by and large, seem to come from the subversive militant grassroots of anarchism, nihilism, or autonomous communism. Tesla stock lost half of its post-election gains.

The administration responded quickly to the groundswell of anti-elitist rage. Donald Trump tweeted that those caught could end up being sent to prisons in El Salvador. On March 11, he claimed that attacks on Tesla vehicles were a form of "domestic terrorism." On March 14, the FBI created a task-force to investigate the attacks.

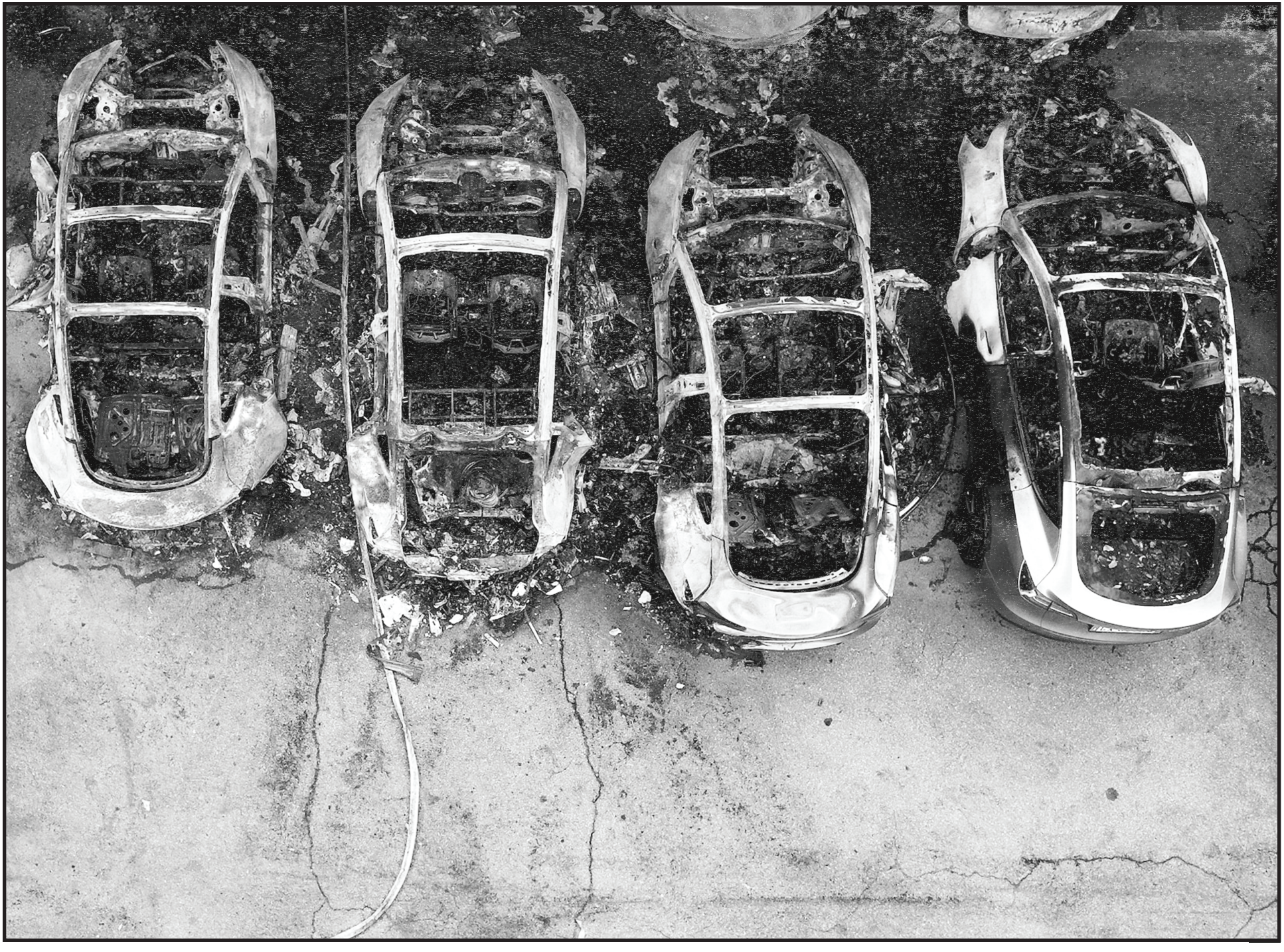
The administration claims these saboteurs are foot soldiers in a broad conspiracy. We do not know if they actually believe this, or if they only hope to exploit the extensive privileges afforded to them against dissidents in conspiracy and racketeering cases. None of the individuals arrested so far in connection with any of these attacks apparently coordinated with one another. Radical groups and revolutionaries have not yet developed the kinds of networks capable of conducting this kind of action at a large scale, despite the claims of the authorities. Without a mass subversive context and real subversive infrastructure, individual attacks and actions will remain sporadic and ineffectual, justified and courageous as they may be.

Public opinion of Elon Musk's role in the administration fell quickly. Tensions between Musk's private interests and Trump's tariff and economic policy initiatives led to conflict between the two. On May 28, Tesla Takedown's "Global Day of Action against Tesla," Elon Musks birthday, and the end of his 130 day designation as a "special government employee," he announced that he was leaving the administration. Conflict between Donald Trump and Musk escalated in the following weeks. In early June, after a conflict between the two over a NASA appointee who worked with Elon, Trump threatened to cut billions of dollars in contracts to Musk's ventures. Musk said Donald Trump wouldn't have been elected without him. He pointed out that Trump was in the Epstein Files, and that the real reason the files couldn't be declassified is that it would prove the President was a pedophile. DOGE remains, without Musk. Without a hated figurehead, resistance to the agency wained.

THE STUDENTS MEET THE BORDER

In early February, Marco Rubio traveled to El Salvador where he met with President Nayib Bukele. In discussions there, Bukele suggested that El Salvador incarcerate deportees from the US, to "outsource part of the United State's prison system."

Bukele entered politics in 2011 as a member of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front party (FMLN). The FMLN formed in 1980 during the revolutionary armed struggle in El Salvador. In the 1990s, after peace accords marked an end to the armed struggle and the beginning of a new era of politics in the country, the FMLN became a legal political party. Throughout the 90s and early 2000s, the FMLN suffered a number of splits due to shifting political lines and allegations of corruption. In 2017 while acting as the Mayor of San Salvador—a position he won with the help of gangs, as revealed in a recent El Faro video interview—the FMLN expelled Bukele. After his explusion, his popularity grew and, in 2019, he was elected president of El Salvador.




CLOSED
Please Call Again
WILL RETURN

Since Bukele took office, El Salvador has attained the highest incarceration rate on Earth, even higher than the United States. Across Latin America, people and politicians celebrate Bukele's draconian state of emergency, which brings austere safety to the streets of El Salvador. He has expanded executive powers over the military and police after this power was curtailed by the 1992 Peace Accords. In order to lower murder rates, Bukele collaborates with gangs, including with the Marasalvatrucha (MS-13), the Barrio 18 Revolucionarios, and the Barrio 18 Sureños.

On March 12, ICE arrested Kilmar Abrego Garcia. On March 15, Trump invoked the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 and Garcia was put onto a plane along with many others, without due process. The flight headed to El Salvador's Terrorism Confinement Center, better known as the CECOT (Centro de Confinamiento del Terrorismo) superprison. Kilmar's deportation to CECOT and the invocation of a rarely-used wartime act spread panic about what the implications for others might be. Judges challenged the arrests immediately. The Supreme Court unanimously ordered the administration to return Kilmar to the US. The administration defied the order, brazenly claiming they have no jurisdiction in El Salvador, despite paying Bukele $8 million to incarcerate deportees.

César Humberto López Larios was deported on the same day as Kilmar Garcia. César López is a high-ranking member of MS-13. Before deportation, he awaited trial at a jail in Brooklyn for charges related to his involvement in the street gang. The court expected him to cooperate with the state's attorney, revealing information about the relationship between top political officials in El Salvador and MS-13. Now that he is in El Salvador, he cannot testify. According to the US ambassador in El Salvador, William H. Duncan, Bukele requested that Duncan, Rubio, and other Trump officials return top MS-13 leaders to El Salvador as a part of their agreement to accept US deportees. The Bukele government seeks to eradicate all evidence of it's well-known and, thanks to El Faro, well-documented collusion and dependence on narcotics traffickers and street gangs. The US is happy to oblige.

On March 27, Secretary of State Marco Rubio stated that he revoked the visas of over 300 students for criticizing or protesting against the US-backed genocide in Palestine. In the following weeks, federal agents arrested students in their dorms, on the street, on their way to migration hearings. Authorities quickly smuggled them to migrant detention facilities in Louisiana, where reactionary judges seem likely to rule in favor of deportation.

Since the inauguration, the Trump administration has taken aim at higher education. Since his first presidential term, his administration advocated the theory that universities and some high schools had become overrun with Marxists and radicals. In reality, these institutions form deeply reactionary bases of military research, teaching neoliberal ideology to millions of people while allowing military contractors to recruit openly on campuses. Now, the administration cynically claims that the institutions are governed by antisemites, or at least people willing to tolerate "antisemitism." The Biden administration laid the groundwork for this kind of cynical accusation.

Protests on campuses have shrunk, but they have not stopped. On May 5, at the University of Washington, students took over a university building in protest of the war. They hung banners, barricaded entrances, and renamed the building in honor of Sha'ban Al-Dalou, a 19 year old Palestinian killed in the bombing of a hospital in Gaza last year. Following the building take over, students in black bloc burned barricades outside the building. At Columbia University, students took over a library on campus and renamed it in honor of Basel Al-Araj. Police arrested 100 people.

As graduation ceremonies commenced across the country, graduating students spoke out against the war in Gaza, defending the actions of their fellow students. At Columbia, students chanted "free Mahmoud" over the university president's speech, in reference to Mahmoud Khalil, a Palestinian student at Columbia University arrested by federal agents in March. In late June, a judge ruled Khalil's detention unconstitutional and he was released.

Also in June, Kilmar Abrego Garcia was finally brought back to the US from El Salvador. A federal court charged him with "conspiracy to unlawfully transport illegal aliens for financial gain and unlawful transportation of illegal aliens for financial gain." Court transcripts detail that while he was at CECOT, US-funded guards tortured him and others. When he arrived in El Salvador, he was greeted by a guard who told him, "Welcome to CECOT. Whoever enters here doesn't leave." The Justice Department stated that, pending his immigration hearing, they plan to deport him again, "to a third country."

"Sanctuary" Means Attack: Rapid Response Riots

On May 30 in San Diego, CA, ICE agents entered two Italian restaurants, seeking to execute "search warrants of businesses that knowingly hired illegal aliens in San Diego..." In the process, a crowd of over 200 people gathered to document or physically stop and harass ICE agents from making any arrests. The federal agents made two arrests but when they tried to leave, the crowd blocked them in. Officers in military fatigues fired teargas on the crowd and clashes ensued.

A few days later in Minneapolis, MN, at least 11 federal agencies, including ICE, raided a Mexican restaurant. Other agencies involved incuded the US Attorney's Office, FBI, IRS-CI, DEA, ERO, ATF, USMS, DSS, US Border Patrol, US Coast Guard, and the TSA. These organizations together make up the Homeland Security Task Force, established by executive order the second day of Trump's second term. Hundreds responded, some as legal observers, others to stop any arrests that the agencies may have been trying to conduct. Federal agents shot pepper balls at the crowd. Several people threw objects back at police. Hand to hand fighting broke out. The raid ended as agents fled the area.

The next day, in Chicago, ICE sent alerts to dozens of people, urging them to respond to a federal monitoring system request. When respondents arrived to the designated office, as ordered, they were arrested by ICE. A crowd formed. Some came to document the officers and others to obstruct their vehicles from leaving. The crowd was small. Federal agents shoved people back and dispersed the crowd before leaving with 10 people who showed up to the check-in. Activists across the country sought out new tactics to respond to the shifting landscape, in which even law-abiding immigrants were subjected to cruel and unpredictable forms of intimidation and control.

On June 6, one week following the clashes in San Diego, ICE conducted raids across the city of Los Angeles. In one location, a crowd trapped ICE inside a building, refusing to let them leave, shouting legal advice to those detained inside. Federal agencies in armored trucks and riot gear intervened to break up the crowds, shooting pepper balls and flash bang grenades. By afternoon, ICE held dozens in detention from the days' raids.

That evening, protesters amassed at the Metro Dention Center downtown. They fought federal authorities for hours. Hooded people threw back tear-gas canisters at authorities. Some used traffic cones and water to trap and neutralize the canisters, a method popularized in the Hong Kong and Chilean insurrections of 2019. Masked rioters broke pieces of the sidewalk to throw at police. Others used barricades to protect the crowd, while others still painted graffiti on the federal building.

When Los Angeles Police arrived, the crowd dispersed, overwhelmed by the forces assembled against them. New crowds regrouped later that evening, as information circulated that ICE was gathering in another part of the city. At 10:00pm, a new round of clashes broke out at a parking lot in Chinatown. This time, demonstrators forced the police to scatter, breaking their windows, lobbing fireworks at them as they retreated.

The next morning, June 7, ICE agents arrived at a Home Depot in Paramount, CA, a working class town in greater Los Angeles, east of Compton. Day laborers and community members fought back immediately. Area residents set about attacking ICE vehicles and agents with bricks, bottles, and fireworks. One person fired a handgun directly at agents. By early afternoon, federal agents left, replaced by Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Thick black smoke, pluming out of burning Waymo cars, filled the sky. Riots spread to Compton. By nightfall, Molotovs and fireworks lit up the streets. Downtown, protesters gathered again at the Metro Detention Center. Trump announced plans to deploy the National Guard. This was the first time a president deployed National Guard without the request of a state governor since 1965, when president Lyndon B. Johnson deployed them to quell riots in Alabama.

On Sunday, June 8, National Guardsmen lined the perimeter of the Metro Dentention Center. A crowd marched from Boyle Heights to meet them. Talk of ICE vehicles spotted at a hotel in Pasadena drew some people there.



Police fired teargas into the crowd at the Metro Detention Center, prompting thousands to block the US 101 across the street, just as they had in February. When police confronted the crowd there, protesters hurled stones, scooters, and anything else they could find from the highway overpass. The crowd trapped police on the interstate below. Organizers called for another protest at City Hall. Waymo cancelled service, claiming that many riders had summoned driverless vehicles only to burn them upon arrival. Outside City Hall, riot police confronted demonstrators, who defended themselves with makeshift barricades built from public park chairs and benches. The design firm behind the pink benches and chairs—featured prominently in viral online images—publicly admired the "versatility" of their design.

Amidst the rioting, ICE conducted at least 5 raids around the city. Rioting downtown failed to stop raids in the neighborhoods across town. The Department of Defense announced the mobilization of hundreds of US Marines.


PUBLIC ENTRANCE
ENTRADE PUBLICA



PROTESTS SPREAD

After several days of heroic street fighting, activists and community groups called for anti-ICE protests in New York City, Atlanta, Chicago, Austin, Sacremento, Washington D.C., New Orleans, Philadelphia, Tampa, and Pittsburgh. By mid-week, protests spread to dozens of cities.

Omaha

In Omaha, Nebraska, ICE conducted a raid at a meat processing plant called Glenn Valley Foods. During the raid, a crowd responded, fighting back against federal authorities. The crowd attempted to stop the detentions, blocking and then attacking ICE vehicles by throwing projectiles at them. Authorities detained 76 people.

San Francisco

Solidarity demonstrations in the Bay area started early. On Sunday, June 8, hundreds gathered at the ICE Field Office in San Francisco on Sansome Street. Demonstrators vandalized the building, drawing riot police to the scene. The crowd clashed with police before scattering to other parts of the city. Anarchists smashed windows out of SFPD cruisers, a Chase bank, a Fendi storefront, and at least one Waymo. Waymo cancelled their services to San Francisco. SFPD arrested 140 people.

The next day, 9,000 people gathered for a rally organized by the PSL at the 24th & Mission BART Plaza. The PSL led a march through the Mission District before circling back to starting point without clashing with police, or directly obstructing ICE operations.



The United States Appraisers Building in San Francisco, which houses ICE offices, is covered in graffiti following an anti-ICE protest on June 8, 2025

New York



In New York, daily demonstrations in the second week of June led to cat and mouse skirmishes with the NYPD. Police aggresively fought to quell protests but demonstrators repeatedly broke police lines, spilling into the streets. Some threw bottles at officers, dragging trash cans and newspaper stands into the road. On June 12, protesters in Manhattan gathered outside of the Federal Immigration office and the NYC Immigration Court. That night, anarchists claimed responsibility for burning 11 NYPD cruisers in Brooklyn. Six days later, anarchists claimed to have burned another police car, this time in Williamsburg.

Atlanta

In Atlanta, over a thousand demonstrators gathered for a PSL rally at a strip mall off Buford Highway. PSL organizers tried to keep the crowd on the sidewalk. When police moved to make an arrest, protesters rushed to stop it. PSL organizers stepped in between them and the cops.

By nightfall, the crowd thinned to a few hundred. Chants faded as lowriders rolled into the lot, music playing from open windows. Dozens danced in the parking lot while members of PSL announced the end of the march and told people to head home to avoid arrest.

Police declared the gathering an unlawful assembly and fired tear gas at those who stayed. Black, white, and Chicano youth fought back. They threw bricks and fireworks, soaked officers with water guns. Tear gas pushed the crowd deeper into the lot. Some smashed abandoned police cruisers as they fled. By night's end, police made several arrests.

Austin

"These were no small pebbles," an Austin police officer said about the rocks thrown during the demonstration on the 9th. Hundreds gathered downtown that evening for a rally organized by the PSL. Marchers moved from the Texas Capitol to the J.J. Pickle Federal Building, a US Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility. There, the crowd started spray-painting slogans and smashing windows.

PSL organizers tried to steer the march back toward the Capitol but only partly succeeded. The crowd splintered. Police fired tear gas and tried to make arrests, pushing people back. The march regrouped, broke apart again, then returned to the federal building. Protesters smashed more windows, dragged makeshift barricades into the street, and clashed with police before finally dispersing. Four officers were reported injured.

The riots have quieted down, but the Trump administration continued the mass deportations. On July 4, Trump's "One Big, Beautiful" bill passed into law. The bill allocates over $170 billion to ICE, making it the largest law enforcement agency in the country. Indeed, ICE now controls more resources than most modern armies.

So far, only widespread rioting has shifted the administration's position on ICE, and only briefly. If the current direction continues, activists will need to outmaneuver a better-funded, more militarized agency. It will take new tactics, greater resolve, and a scale of resistance not yet seen.

We don't know exactly what will bring angry crowds back into the streets. We believe the forces active in the past year will determine the texture and worldview of the coming confrontations, wherever and however they emerge.

FINDING THE TIME

The causes of a revolution are usually sought in objective conditions—general poverty, oppression, scandalous abuses. But this view, while correct, is one-sided. After all, such conditions exist in a hundred countries, but revolutions erupt rarely. What is needed is the consciousness of poverty and the consciousness of oppression, and the conviction that poverty and oppression are not the natural order of this world. It is curious that in this case, experience in and of itself, no matter how painful, does not suffice. The indispensable catalyst is the word, the explanatory idea.

—Ryszard Kapuściński, Shah of Shahs

In the uncertainty and panic of Trump's re-election, many have embraced a wait-and-see orientation. After the Stop Cop City and Palestine Solidarity movements, anarchists, abolitionists, and other autonomous groups have ceded the iniative to the state, waiting—hoping—for better conditions to arise. Some wait for others to spearhead militant resistance.

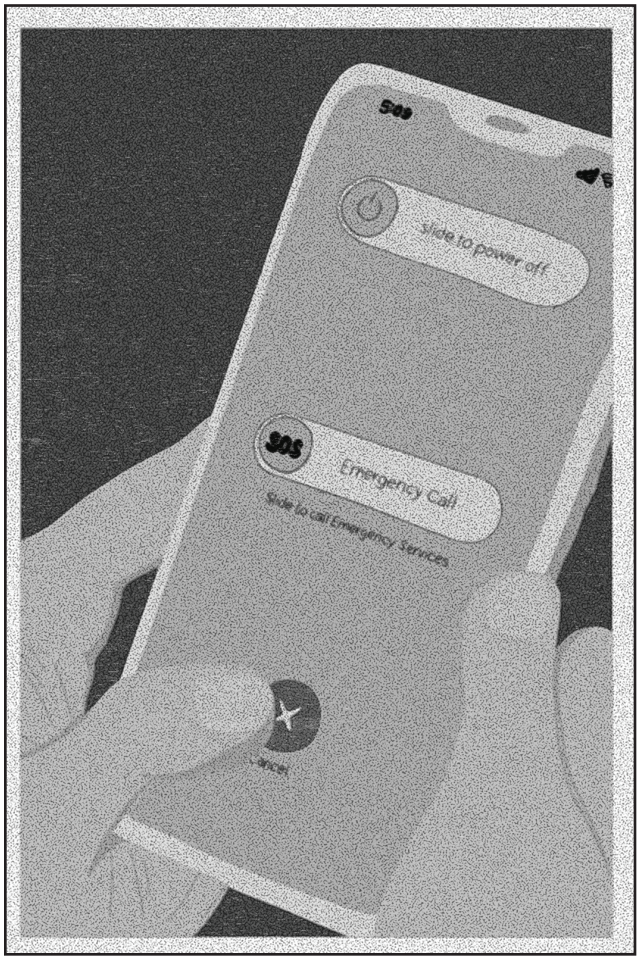
We don't believe better conditions will arrive on their own. We don't believe state overreach automatically produces revolt. We don't believe that economic immiseration, hunger, warfare, or any kind of deprivation lead directly to struggle, upheaval, or revolution. We believe that self-organized resistance helps shape the political landscape and conditions. Thus, passivity is a grave strategic danger.

Aspiring revolutionaries must take the necessary steps to build a mass movement despite hightening conditions of repression. Moreover, we must make the conditions we need, or try our best to do so.

This entails risks. Nothing worthwhile comes easy. Our sharpest insights and strategies were born beneath blankets of tear gas. Today's repression reintroduces us to our weaknesses and blind spots. The state teaches us through baton charges, raids, and ambushes, all of our failures as a liberation movement. To advance, we must face those inadequacies soberly. The oasis recedes from those who shelter within it.







INADEQUATE THEORY

During Trump's first term, many anarchists and anti-fascists prioritized tactics over vision. They believed that escalating militancy and confronting the state directly would spark a broader inferno. From the experiences of resistance, an adequate theory and movement might emerge, many hoped. Alas, without a broader program, no sustained revolutionary movement took shape. Those who did draft programs had precious little influence among those who built barricades. Those who built barricades, who blocked airports, failed to substantially advance their theories or ideas.

Some groups built networks, infrastructures, survival programs. But few prepared to fight the army or hold ground. Few imagined how to feed a city or defend a neighborhood under siege. Few organized the labor or logistics any real rupture would demand. Without that rupture, ideas remain inert. Without ideas, action dissipates into mist.

Who thinks must act. Who acts must think. Revolutionaries must make clear to all angry people that the resolution of their particular sufferring can only come about with the destruction of the central power structure (i.e. the state). If revolutionaries fail to articulate this principle in clear and convincing language, than reformers and opportunists will fill the void. They'll wrap their frameworks in the language of struggles, praise grassroots efforts, and channel rage back into the institutions. In this way, opportunists replace the agency of everyday people with the alleged influence of think tanks, non-profit groups, humanitarian aid workers, and the Democratic Party. That this dynamic recurs continuously is the fault of aspiring revolutionaries, who have yet to take adequate responsibility for this essential task.

This names just one problem for those already fighting. Whatever problems they face—and there are more every day—they can still resolve political problems and dilemmas. They face the future directly. In contrast, many others seem to hold back simply because they don't know what to do. Instead of seeking to resolve this confusion through concrete participation in the riots, assemblies, and protests underway, they wait. Day after day, month after month.

The waiting never ends. For the patient, cautious observation becomes its own pseudowisdom and reflex. Certainty becomes the prerequisite for action. Since nothing is certain, and everything changes, the world evaporates around them. The moment of real decision vanishes. The first of the month alone tethers their experience to concrete struggles.

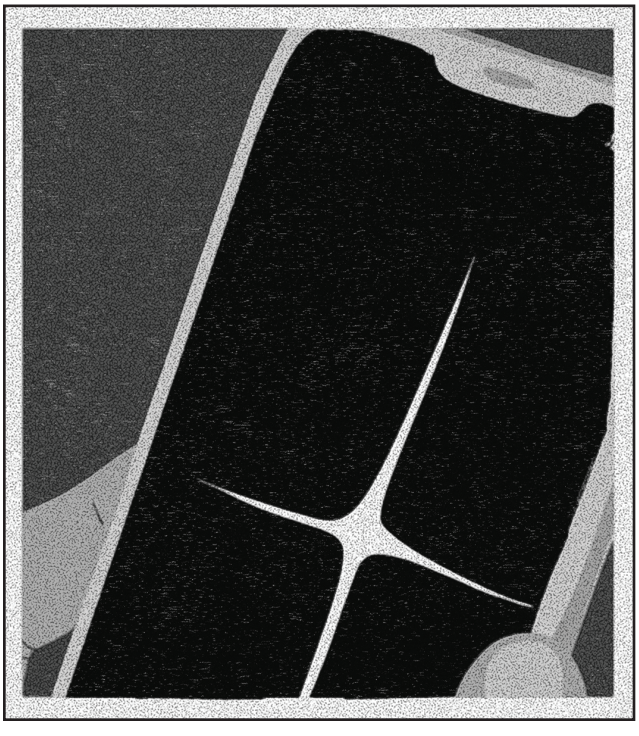
BEING TOO LATE

So how do our ideas impact our interventions? When do we use our ideas in practice? How do we learn from our practice to develop new theories?

The answer to these questions come to us more clearly from a more direct and practical question: Where does a revolutionary movement come from? The answer, we believe, is comedically intuitive: From both inside and outside of mass uprisings.

The organizations, networks, slogans, tactics, strategies, etc that emerge in the movements always seem to appear just a moment too late. They organize themselves, their resolve is sharp, but they stand alone. Consider the "frontliners" who fought boldly in June and July 2020—toppling monuments, trashing courthouses and police stations—just weeks after millions had already vacated the streets, scattered by tear gas and state-orchestrated conspiracy theories. Consider still the militant Black youth who coordinated car caravans, fighting police across the country (in Atlanta, Louisville, Kenosha, Lancaster, Philadelphia, Minneapolis, etc.) well into January 2021—a full half year after the murder of George Floyd. Committed to the fight that brought them together, they innovate a strategy for a moment that is already evaporating. The kind of people they have become are the first of a new breed, but the evolutionary context has already vanished. Consider finally the hundreds of young people who have spent the last year breaking windows, burning cars, breaking police lines, in the context of ongoing resistance to the war on Gaza. What would it have meant to burn a dozen police cruisers during the eviction of the Columbia encampment? Something else entirely.

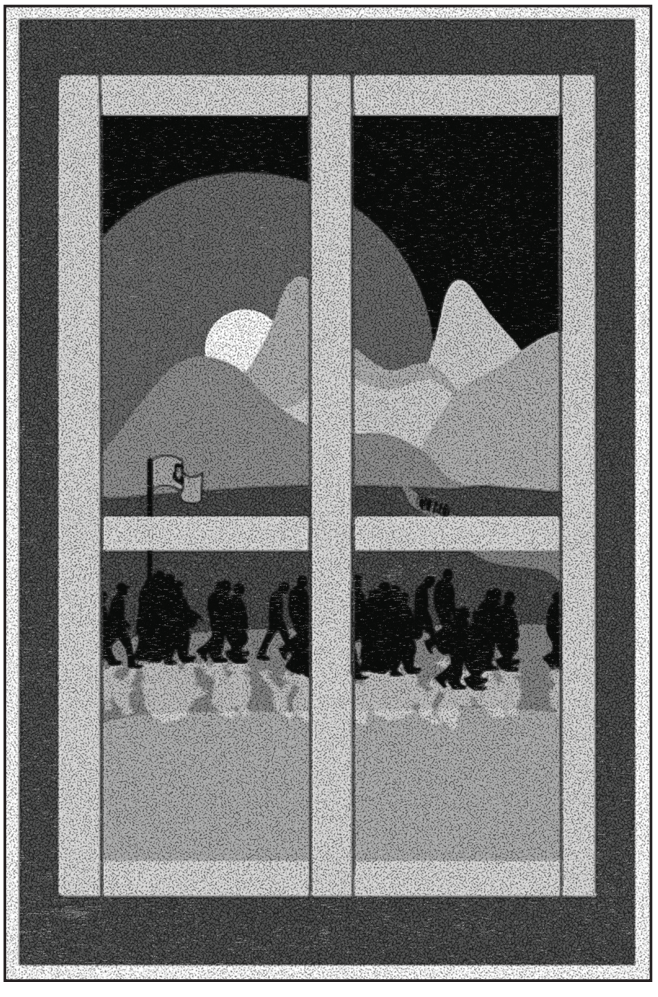
These aspiring revolutionaries are like a trigger with no gun.



BEING TOO EARLY

On the other side, those who organize outside of mass uprisings often find themselves speaking into a different kind of void. They hesitate to risk the fragile chemistry of their internal culture, or the inertia of their long-term campaigns, in the chaos of spontaneous revolt. But the refusal to step into that chaos is a refusal to shape it. Their strategies grow sharper in the abstract, but dull in the real terrain of struggle. Detached from the unpredictable surges of mass resistance—the only force capable of cracking the foundations of capitalist life—they become spectators to the very history they claim to prepare for. Consider the hundreds, thousands, of groups and collectives across the country. Consider their indifference, their confusion, or their malevolence with respect to the heights of open struggle of just the past five years. How many of these circles—affinity groups, nonprofits, militias, "revolutionary parties"—actually oriented around the prospect of serious autonomous power in riots, occupations, encampments, blockades, etc.? Not enough.

Revolutionary groups of whatever size must learn to hold their shape in quiet seasons, but rush into the streets when the moment calls—staking everything to join the surging crowds who decide, for reasons no theory can fully explain, to fight back. These are the groups that don't just survive history. They bend it.



REVOLT AND REVOLUTION

Rebellions erupt almost by accident, whenever two people declare that they've had enough, and two others agree with them. Revolutions do not quite work that way. They don't emerge automatically from historical laws moving in the background. They also don't only emerge from the resoluteness and courage of a dedicated few. Still, at the present crossroads, it is that resoluteness and courage that is lacking.

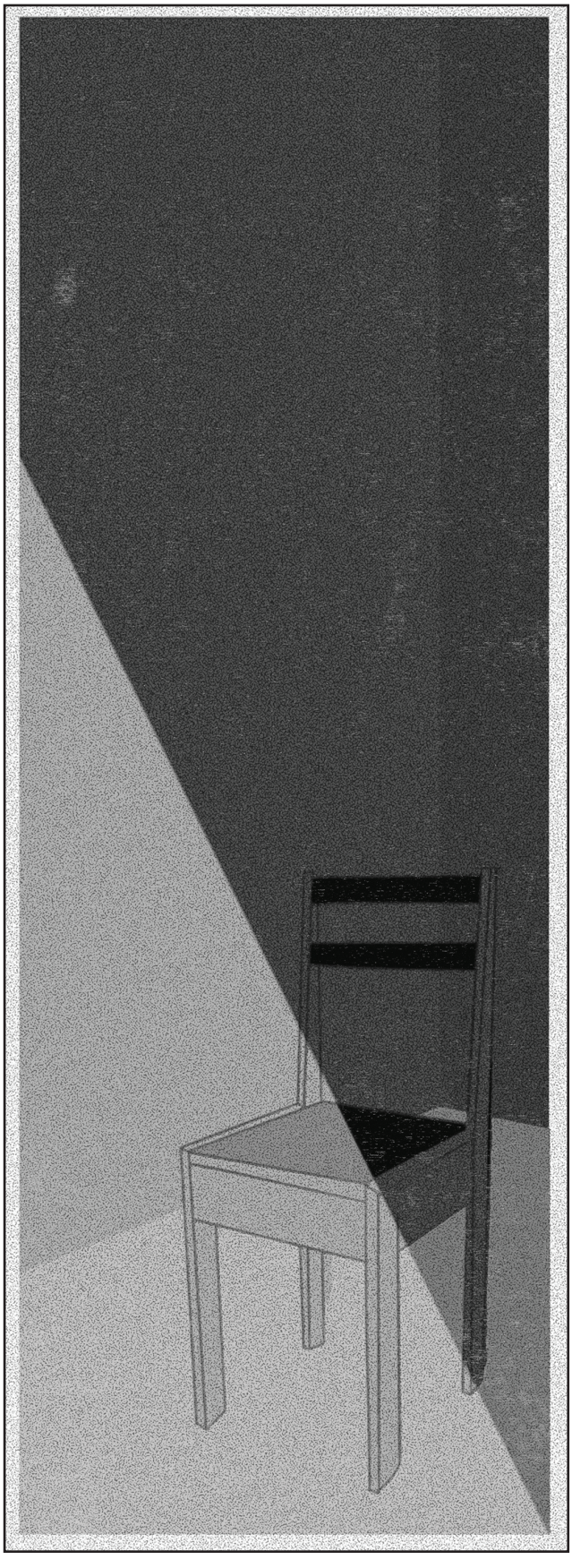
The United States isn't resolving its border crisis. It's escalating it. More agents, more funding, more cages. The same is true across every frontline. In Washington DC, federal agents block the intersections in the Black areas of town, harassing pedestrians and motorists day and night. The administration jokes continuously about running Trump for a third term, and the Democrats have only themselves to blame after two centuries of helping to consolidate power into the hands of the executive branch.

60% of Americans struggle to pay for rent, food, healthcare, bills (according to the so-called "Minimal Quality of Life Index"). We have already detailed, at length, the difficulties facing our society today. The "objective" conditions seem overripe. We lack a plausible framework for abolishing those conditions. Why?

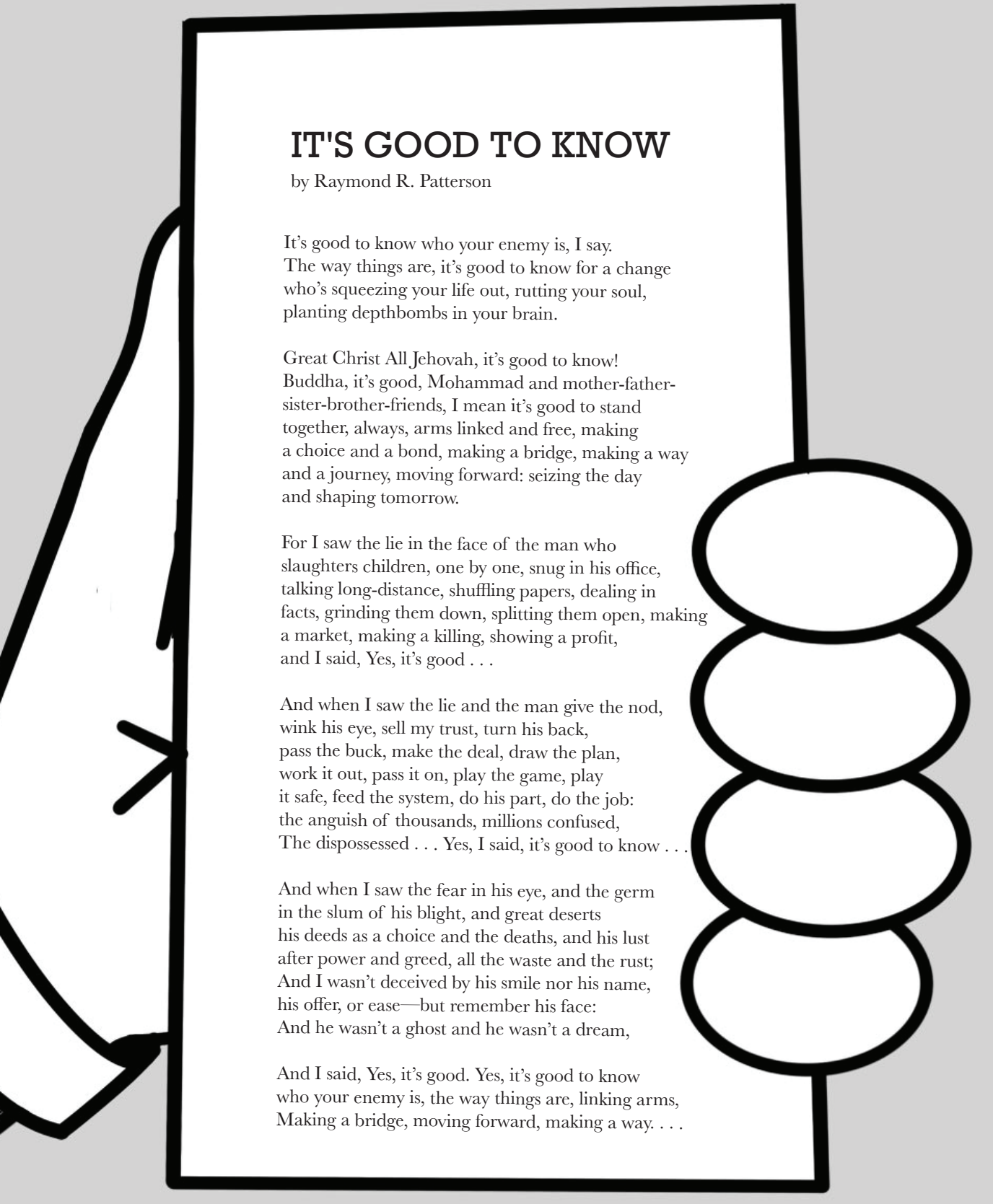
Many people hold correct ideas incorrectly. They see the challenges ahead but miss the openings. They confront the reality of defeat but fail to draw out its lessons. They record the brutality of the enemy, but not the panic that drives the state to trade legitimacy for short-term control. Many organizers mislead people when they say a powerful movement only grows by winning. This may be true for activist campaigns. But the kinds of movements capable of abolishing the system root-and-branch only grow in a sequence of defeats. Since the enemy is so strong, we must build our strength around our weaknesses. We cannot deal death-blows to the system. Not yet. But we can build the kinds of groups, communities, and movements capable of failing without dispersing, of losing without quitting, of taking heavy blows, one after another.

Revolutionary movements aren't built by chasing easy victories. They're built by refusing to disappear. That means learning to lose well, to fall back without falling apart, to regroup and strike again. Endurance, stamina, agility—not brute strength. The kinds of groups we need will know how to fight, how to retreat, and how to return. Again and again, until something gives. "Getting away with it" may be, for the moment, the most important task.

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."







IT'S GOOD TO KNOW

by Raymond R. Patterson

It's good to know who your enemy is, I say.
The way things are, it's good to know for a change
who's squeezing your life out, rutting your soul,
planting depthbombs in your brain.

Great Christ All Jehovah, it's good to know!
Buddha, it's good, Mohammad and mother-father-
sister-brother-friends, I mean it's good to stand
together, always, arms linked and free, making
a choice and a bond, making a bridge, making a way
and a journey, moving forward: seizing the day
and shaping tomorrow.

For I saw the lie in the face of the man who
slaughters children, one by one, snug in his office,
talking long-distance, shuffling papers, dealing in
facts, grinding them down, splitting them open, making
a market, making a killing, showing a profit,
and I said, Yes, it's good . . .

And when I saw the lie and the man give the nod,
wink his eye, sell my trust, turn his back,
pass the buck, make the deal, draw the plan,
work it out, pass it on, play the game, play
it safe, feed the system, do his part, do the job:
the anguish of thousands, millions confused,
The dispossessed . . . Yes, I said, it's good to know . . .

And when I saw the fear in his eye, and the germ
in the slum of his blight, and great deserts
his deeds as a choice and the deaths, and his lust
after power and greed, all the waste and the rust;
And I wasn't deceived by his smile nor his name,
his offer, or ease—but remember his face:
And he wasn't a ghost and he wasn't a dream,

And I said, Yes, it's good. Yes, it's good to know
who your enemy is, the way things are, linking arms,
Making a bridge, moving forward, making a way. . . .

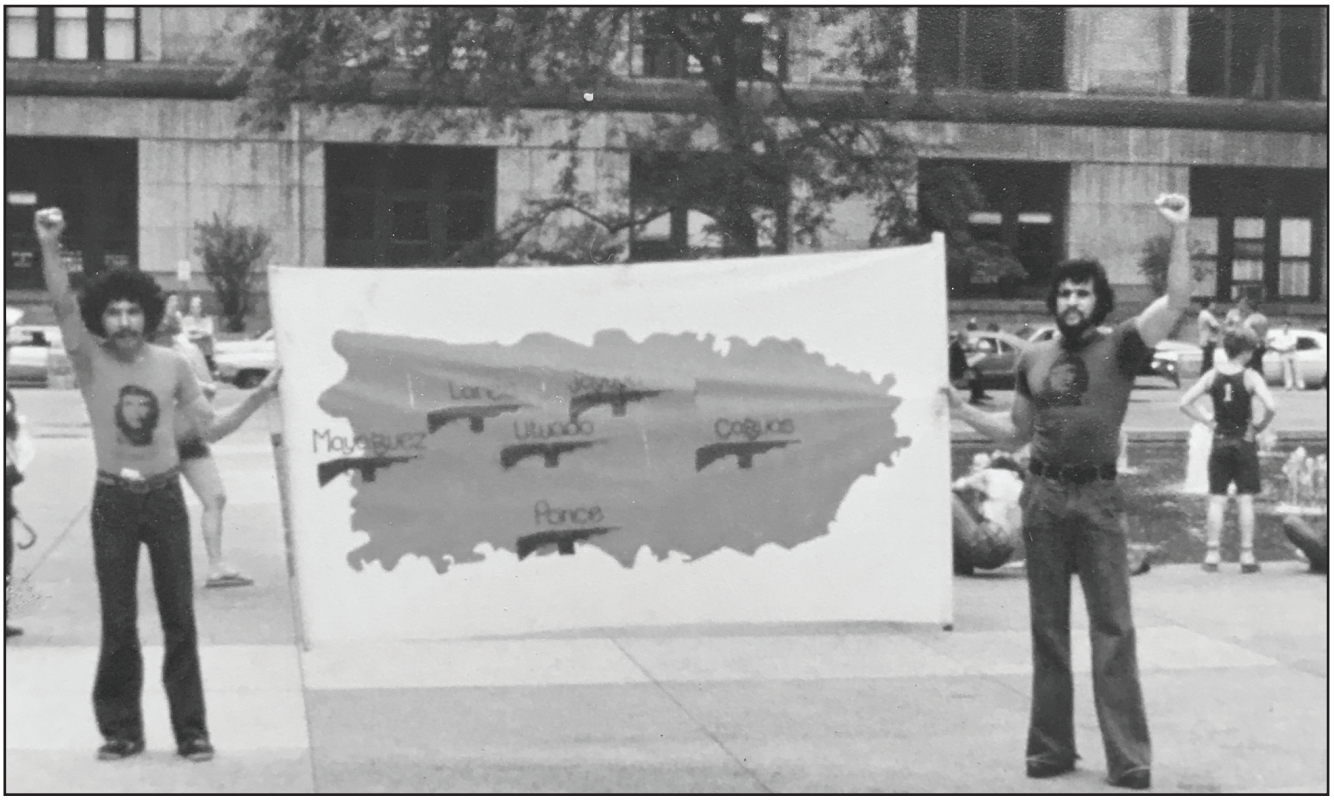
SLAPPING THE FACE OF GOD

&

NO LONGER SILENT AND INVISIBLE



We are excited to publish two submissions about the Puerto Rican independence movement. "SLAPPING THE FACE OF GOD" centers on the the actions and ideas of the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN), the Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (MLN), and a number of revolutionary solidarity groups who worked alongside them. The author traces how the Puerto Rican struggle took shape in Chicago and examines the challenges it faced."No Longer Silent and Invisible," is a first hand account of the Humbolt Park riots in Chicago in 1977.



FROM COLONY TO "ASSOCIATED STATE"

In the 1940s and 50s, the heart of the anti-imperialist struggle in the Western Hemisphere pulsed just off of the southern shores of the US (see "Looking Back on Looking Back", *Radar* Issue 01 for more on this history). The Cuban revolutionary movement turned a small island into the center of global attention. The Caribbean preoccupied the global ruling class long before then. Napoleon Bonaparte considered the sea to be a vitally significant center of his empire—significant enough to send legions to fight, and die, against the heroic revolutionaries of Saint-Domingue in 1802.

Following the world historical slave revolt, the Spanish monarchy tightened control over its Caribbean colonies: Cuba and Puerto Rico. Not until the end of the Spanish-American war in 1898 did the islands—alongside Guam and the Philippines—attain freedom from Spanish rule...only to fall under US domination. The early Cuban nationalist movement, strong from a decade of war with Spain, earned the small island nominal independence in 1902. Not so in Puerto Rico, where the US established a permanent military occupation.

In the 1940s, after decades of humiliation, the Puerto Rican nationalist movement grew; so too did repression of the independistas. By decades' end, US law criminalized even waiving a Puerto Rican flag. In 1950, Harry Truman signed into law the Puerto Rico Federal Relations Act of 1950, giving Puerto Rico status as a "free associated state." This nominal freedom within the US system actually increased dependency on the colonial state for the islands' population.

AN ISLAND AMONG OTHERS

Following the overthrow of the government of Fulgencio Batista in 1959, Cuba faced many problems. Colonial domination turned the country into a single-product economy. The revolution struggled to transform the economy. A series of economic plans mobilized the entire population into a dramatic reorganization of production. Cubans simultaneously prepared for US invasion. The *yanquis* staged their troops in Guatemala and Nicaragua, planning to crush the revolution in Cuba. When this failed, they surrounded Cuba, establishing a naval blockade of the independent republic. The example that Cuba set—much like Haiti more than a century earlier—could not be allowed to take hold elsewhere, especially not in the countries immediately surrounding the US.

To break the naval blockade, and to cultivate the social and economic transformations demanded by the revolutionary process, the Cubans needed to expand the struggle against US imperialism. They sought connections across the world to defend the revolution from US intervention, including with the USSR.

In 1966, 500 delegates from liberation movements of 82 Asia, Africa, and Latin America met in Cuba for the first Tricontinental Conference. Conference organizers hoped to create a common strategy to defeat US imperialism. "Peaceful coexistence," the Soviet strategy, was rejected as an outright impossibility. Tricontinental delegates resolved to confront imperialism directly, through all means, including armed resistance.



At this time, the US State Department took particular interest in Puerto Rico. The island's popular nationalist movement, and its proximity to Cuba, caused many to worry Puerto Ricans would embrace communist theories. Their anxieties were confirmed. Following the Tricontinental meeting, the Puerto Rican struggle entered a new phase of militancy. The legacy of the Haitian and Cuban revolutions loomed large in the Puerto Rican imaginary.

MAINLAND RESISTANCE

On September 30, 1967, bombs exploded at four US-owned department stores in San Juan, Puerto Rico. In the following 26 months, the Comandos Armados de Liberacion, Movimiento Independentista Revolucionario Armado (MIRA), Liga Socialista Puertorriquena, and others detonated more than two dozen bombs at police stations, army bases, resorts, and department stores owned by US capitalists. In the fall of 1969, thousands of students at the University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras assembled, burning US flags and chanting illegal pro-independence slogans. On December 11, 1969, two members of MIRA staged an armed takeover of the WUNO 630 AM radio station. They enjoined listeners to stage an armed uprising against US imperialism. The pronouncement coincided with bombings at five luxury resorts owned by US capitalists in Puerto Rico. Ten days later, on December 21, three bombs exploded in New York City. The anticolonial struggle had spread to the mother country.

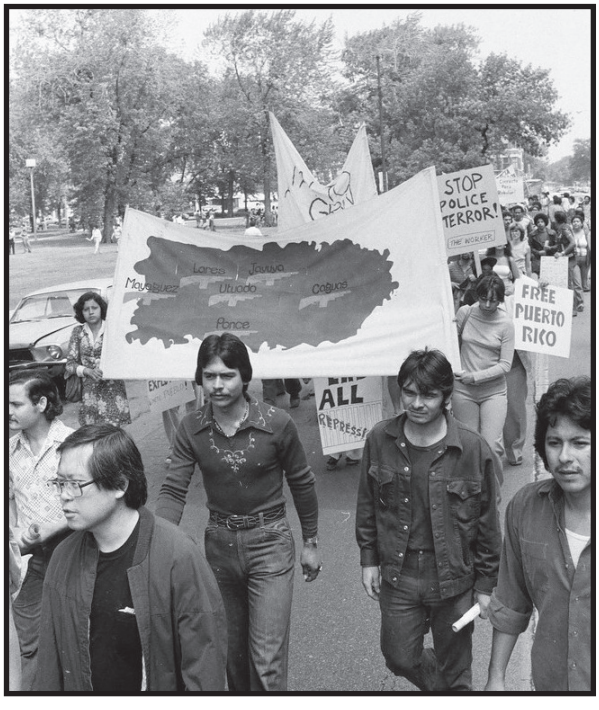
In the following years, the scale and militancy of resistance inside of Puerto Rico expanded tremendously. Armed confrontations, bombings, strikes, riots, and occupations spread across the island. Inside of the US, Puerto Ricans live in large numbers only in a few cities. Only in New York City do they number several hundred thousand. Naturally, this is where their mainland resistance was strongest. In January 1970, MIRA activists firebombed 35 department stores in the city. In the following two years, independistas organized and strategized around the growing crisis on the island: workers, students, socialists, and organizers engaged in increasingly militant, large-scale, confrontations with soldiers and police officers at universities and factories across Puerto Rico. Bombings, the preferred method of the independence movement at the time, recurred consistently throughout 1971.

By fall 1972, US-based Puerto Ricans seemed to establish a solid basis for action. On August 19, 1972, 2,000 people marched for Puerto Rican independence outside of the United Nations office in Midtown Manhattan. Simultaneously, anonymous saboteurs used incendiary devices to torch four major department stores in the area. More bombings and incendiary actions followed throughout the year. Still, this remains something of a pre-history of Puerto Rican struggle on the mainland.

On October 26, 1974, a new group calling itself the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional (FALN) sought to open a "second front" for Puerto Rican independence—inside of the US. Major explosive blasts set off at Rockefeller Center, the Chemical Bank, Exxon, the Banco de Ponce, the Marine Midland Bank, the Lever House, and the Union Carbide Building, all in Manhattan. In November of that year, the National Guard deployed to Puerto Rico, directly occupying the island, which was in near-open revolt. In the following months and years, as the domination of the island by the US reached bloodier heights—including air strikes in Mayaguez, deadly raids, massacres, and torture— independistas, including the FALN, retaliated across the island and within the US mainland. A year later, in October 1975, the FALN staged coordinated bombings in New York, Washington DC, Chicago, and Puerto Rico—the first intervention of its kind, showing the breadth of the movement at that time. Despite the continuous riots, sabotage, arson, and bombings, the independence movement found itself with few allies. The anti-war movement disappeared following Vietnamese victory. The Black movement, student movement, labor, feminist, and gay liberation movements all faced considerable impasses, as economic crises, repression, political restructuring, and ideological struggles hamstrung the potential for mass mobilization at a crucial moment for the Puerto Rican movement.

TWILIGHT OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLE

Throughout the 1970s, the Puerto Rican independence movement met the full weight of the US counter-insurgency apparatus. The FBI Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) took aim directly at independistas, just as it undermined one of their closest allies: the Black Panther Party. The repression made public, legal, organizing difficult and dangerous. The movement responded militantly to the challenges thrown up before them, which was followed by still greater repression. Could a strong independence movement be built in clandestinity? The author of SLAPPING THE FACE OF GOD argues "no," that militancy pushed the independistas further and further from organizing a mass movement. The conditions of the struggle put the solidarity movement at odds with itself, and with the Puerto Rican organizations it was in solidarity with.



"National liberation" provided billions a framework to understand their oppression, and gave them a strategy for overcoming it. That the United States is the main obstacle to a life free from poverty and exploitation seemed logical to a great many peasants, workers, students, and intellectuals across the planet, especially in the decades following the Second World War. By the close of the 20th century, socialist movements and independence struggles were defeated or in active retreat. Whether at the hands of CIA-backed coups and US intervention, or by the weight of their own dependencies as national struggles within an international system, these movements found themselves back within the global capitalist market. Many called the framework of "national liberation" into question; some rejected the idea outright. Throughout the 80s and 90s, activists across the world have sought new ideas to explain the global arrangement of power in order to establish basis for overthrowing it.

AUTONOMOUS RESISTANCE TODAY

As the author of "Slapping the Face of God" notes, the US continues to dominate Puerto Rico. Since 2006, Puerto Rican GDP has slowly declined while unemployment has steadily risen. Islanders import 85% of their food. Budget cuts, privatization, and other neoliberal reforms in the early 90s have plunged the country deep into an engineered "debt crisis." The island suffers from dilapidated public infrastructure, especially its energy infrastructure. The entire island (3.4 million people) lost power after Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017. Thousands of Puerto Ricans died as a consequence of neglect and abandonment.

Resistance to domination of the island did not disappear. It is impossible to quickly summarize autonomous resistance to colonialism throughout the last 40 years in this short introduction. In 2013, teachers across Puerto Rico occupied the Puerto Rican senate in defense of their pensions. In 2017, thousands of university students occupied 11 campuses, barricading themselves into buildings and courtyards, to protest a $450M cut to school funding. In the face of the hurricanes, popular mutual aid centers (centros de apoyo mutuo) coordinated the voluntary efforts of literally thousands of residents, desperate to assist one another through the emergencies.

In June 2019, homophobic and sexist text messages sent by Governor Ricardo "Ricky" Rosselló leaked. Nearly 900 pages of documents circulated online revealing a multi-billion dollar corruption scheme, in which the Governor allowed public contracts to flow only to his personal associates (a form of politics endemic to the US and the rest of the capitalist world.) At the time of the leaks, Ricky was vacationing in Paris. Some of his messages contained callous and hateful jokes about Puerto Ricans who died in the hurricanes, and those who struggled to survive in the wake. When he returned to the island from Europe, women from the Colectiva Feminista en Construcción met him at the airport. Riots exploded across the island. Hundreds of thousands marched in the streets and clashed with police who fired rubber bullets and tear gas into the crowds. On August 2, 2019, the governor resigned. The prospect of statehood, autonomy, and independence continues to structure the politics of Puerto Rico.

US-based left wing, autonomous, and anarchist movements remain largely indifferent to or ignorant about the popular and militant movements taking place in Puerto Rico. US citizens can travel to Puerto Rico without a passport.

Today, recent developments in the Palestinian struggle have brought questions of self-determination and the role of US-based solidarity movements back to the forefront for American youth. We hope the reflections below offer some insight.

SLAPPING THE FACE OF GOD:
PUERTO RICAN CHICAGO IN THE 1970s

"Cuando la historia no se puede escribir con pluma,
se debe escribir con el rifle.

(When history cannot be written with a pen,
it should be written with a gun.)"

-Farabundo Martí,
Salvadoran Revolutionary.



The author was a member of the Sojourner Truth Organization during the mid-to-late 1970s when the group focused on solidarity with national liberation, particularly the Puerto Rican independence movement in Chicago. She lived in an independentista commune near Division Street for a year.

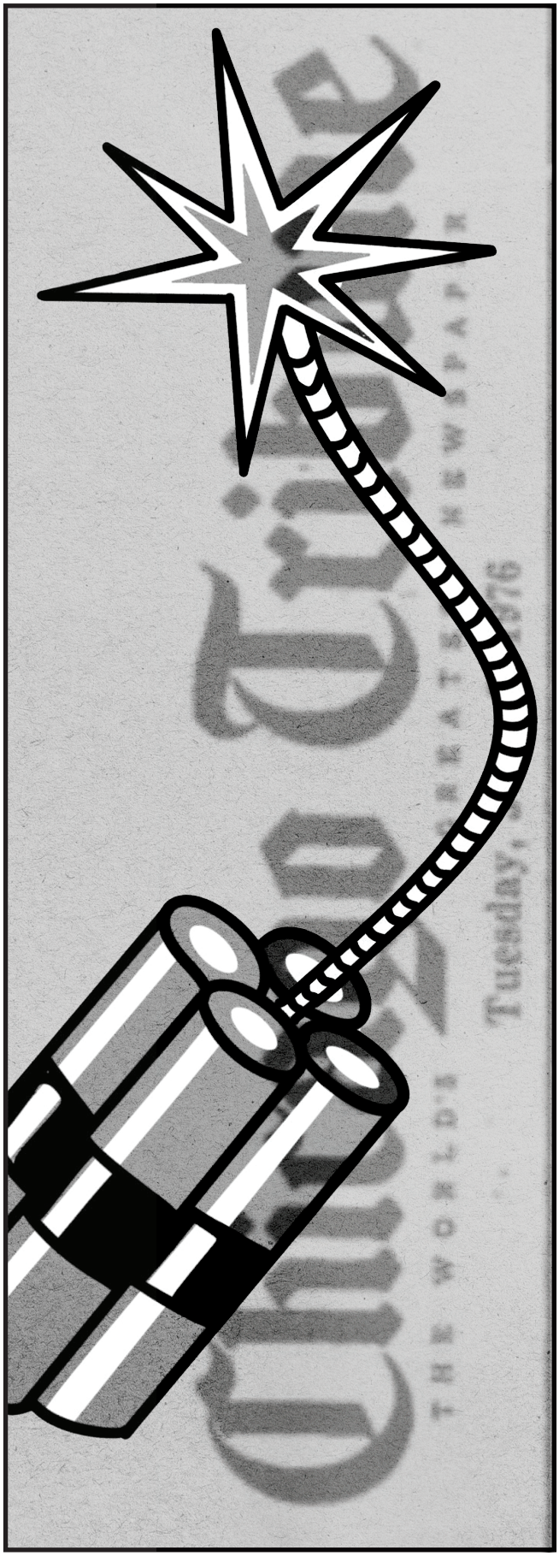
Puerto Rico is a small island at the gateway to the Caribbean, close to its sister island, Cuba. Like Cuba it was first conquered by Spain who almost exterminated the indigenous Taino people and brought in African slaves. By the nineteenth century Puerto Rico and Cuba shared a fierce independence movement. They were on the eve of achieving sovereignty when the United States won the Spanish-American War and seized them as war booty. Cuba gained independence but Puerto Rico remains a US possession to this day. One-third of its farmland supports military bases, English is its official language, and its people serve in the US military but are prevented from voting in presidential and congressional elections.

In 1950, the Nationalist Party coordinated an armed uprising throughout the island that was suppressed when the US bombed the town of Jayuya. Two Nationalists attacked President Truman's residence in Washington, one was killed. In 1954, a commando led by Lolita Lebrón fired into Congress, shouting "¡Qué Viva Puerto Rico Libre!" The campaign to Free the Five Puerto Rican Nationalist Prisoners became a focus for the movement until we won their release in 1979.

After World War II, the US renewed its industrial plant by moving it from insurgent workers in the crumbling northern cities to the Global South. In 1947, the Puerto Rican Legislature established the Industrial Incentives Act, which offered generous exemptions from licensing fees and all taxes, including income and excise taxes. This initiative became known as Operation Bootstrap and shifted the economy from sugarcane to capital-intensive industry. Agriculture was sacrificed to industry, croplands were turned into pasture. Subsistence farmers fled to the cities, where the minimum wage in 1950 was one-third that of the mainland. The profits generated by those industries flowed directly out of Puerto Rico, while the contamination they produced remained. Puerto Rico became a place that consumed what it did not produce and produced what it did not consume.

Unprecedented numbers of Puerto Ricans came to New York in the 1940s and 1950s, taking factory jobs just before they disappeared. They arrived in Chicago in the '50s and '60s, and settled into barrios that were redlined and slated for urban renewal. At the same time, colonies around the world were producing armies and expelling the masters: India, Algeria, Vietnam. The 1959 revolution in Cuba had a heartening effect on the independence movement in Puerto Rico. It emerged with renewed vigor as a component in the New Left alongside the Black movement and the battle against the Vietnam War.

In 1973, the United Nations General Assembly voted to recognize Puerto Rico's right to self-determination. The Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP) were the leading independentistas; they promoted the two goals of independence and socialism. Their followers among university students and labor unions supported a daily newspaper between 1974 and 1977. In 1974, they organized a Day of Solidarity with Puerto Rican Independence at Madison Square Garden in New York for 20,000 people. Speakers included Angela Davis, Jane Fonda,



and Piri Thomas, author of the pioneer Nuyorican novel, Down These Mean Streets. Portraits of the Five Nationalist Prisoners formed the backdrop to the stage. It was an optimistic beginning to several decades of Puerto Rico as a prominent issue for the US left.

The board of the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee (PRSC) included luminaries: the lifelong civil rights activist Ella Baker; Clyde Bellecourt, a founder of the American Indian Movement; Chicano organizer Corky González; and the Black poet Amiri Baraka. They also included the Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee (PWOC), who were among the proliferation of New Communist groups that sprang up during the 1970s.

The night before the Madison Square Garden gala, five bombs exploded in New York City, targeting banks and corporations with interests on the island. The Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN) left their first communique, calling for Independence and Freedom for the Five Nationalists. They explained, "We are not pure militarists. Therefore we do not oppose those parties or people who believe in mass organization. However, to be truly revolutionary, a party must educate and organize the masses for the seizure of power by way of an organized and disciplined vehicle, a Peoples Revolutionary Army."



The FALN eventually took credit for more than 100 bombings in NYC and Chicago, most against government or corporate targets, causing four deaths. They were called "exploding press releases" by one observer. They forced the movement into fierce debates and then splits over armed resistance, elections, and community organizing. In 1980, eleven purported members of the FALN were arrested and brought to trial. They invoked the nationalist tradition of retraimiento, refusal to cooperate or recognize the authority of the courts. They were sentenced to lengthy terms for conspiracy. The campaign to free them joined the campaign for the original Five.

The Young Lords formed in Chicago in the wake of the 1966 Division Street riot, when police shot a man and then set dogs loose on the crowd during Puerto Rican Week celebrations. On Puerto Rican Day, 1977, the Humboldt Park riot unfolded in the same neighborhood after the police again shot into a crowd and killed two young men. Truculent battles at the local high school led to its changing its name to Roberto Clemente, the Puerto Rican baseball hero, and to the founding of the Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School, La Escuelita. The school celebrated its fifty-year anniversary in 2022.

In a city where urban high schools face an astounding drop out rate, La Escuelita stands out. The school and the associated Puerto Rican Cultural Center have been central to a wide range of neighborhood concerns, from teaching building skills through constructing low-income housing to culinary and greenhouse projects to programs aimed at teenage parents. La Escuelita has lasted because it is anchored to the community, who participate in all aspects of teaching and learning. The building that houses the school and the Cultural Center occupies the better part of a city block and is covered with murals. For a colonized people exiled from their land, the occupation of physical space is a resounding metaphor.

The school took up the cause of the political prisoners and kept it front and center, its walls are covered with their faces and names. The logo is still a shrill and exhortative Don Pedro, founder of the Nationalist Party, with the star in the flag behind him surrounding his head like a crown. And yet the school stands as proof that public—not necessarily legal—means of struggle have never been exhausted.

Continued FALN bombings throughout the 1970s provoked a split in the movement. The Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (MLN) emerged from people in and close to the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, allied with La Liga Socialista on the island, the successor to the Nationalist Party. A new solidarity grouping, the New Movement in Solidarity with Puerto Rican Independence and Socialism, emerged to work directly with the MLN, and included members of STO, Prairie Fire, and May 19 along with some independents. Our initial debates were published as "Arguments and Proposals for the PRSC conference," and signed March 1 Bloc.

On the island, sabotage accompanied strikes, students battled ROTC on campus, and protesters clashed with the national guard. Bombs rained on corporate and financial targets. The Macheteros, the machete-wielders, engaged in a series of assaults on police and US military and government targets on the island. They robbed seven million dollars from a Wells Fargo warehouse in Connecticut in 1983, some of which they spent in a Three Kings Day giveaway in a poor neighborhood in Hartford. They had a policy against civilian targets. On the Fourth of July, 1978, Nydia Ester Cuevas and Pablo Marcano occupied the Chilean consulate in Old San Juan, demanding the cancellation of the Independence Day parade and the release of the Nationalist prisoners. Cuevas and Marcano joined the growing contingent of political prisoners. The battle to drive the Navy from Vieques lasted decades and involved repeated militant direct action. They finally succeeded.

The government convened grand juries to investigate the FALN in Chicago and New York. The FBI went door-to-door with photos of activists and issued subpoenas for school and

other records. Puerto Rican activists and several members of the National Commission on Hispanic Affairs of the Episcopal Church were subpoenaed in New York. In Chicago, another grand jury subpoenaed six independentistas. The MLN formed the National Committee Against Grand Jury Repression.

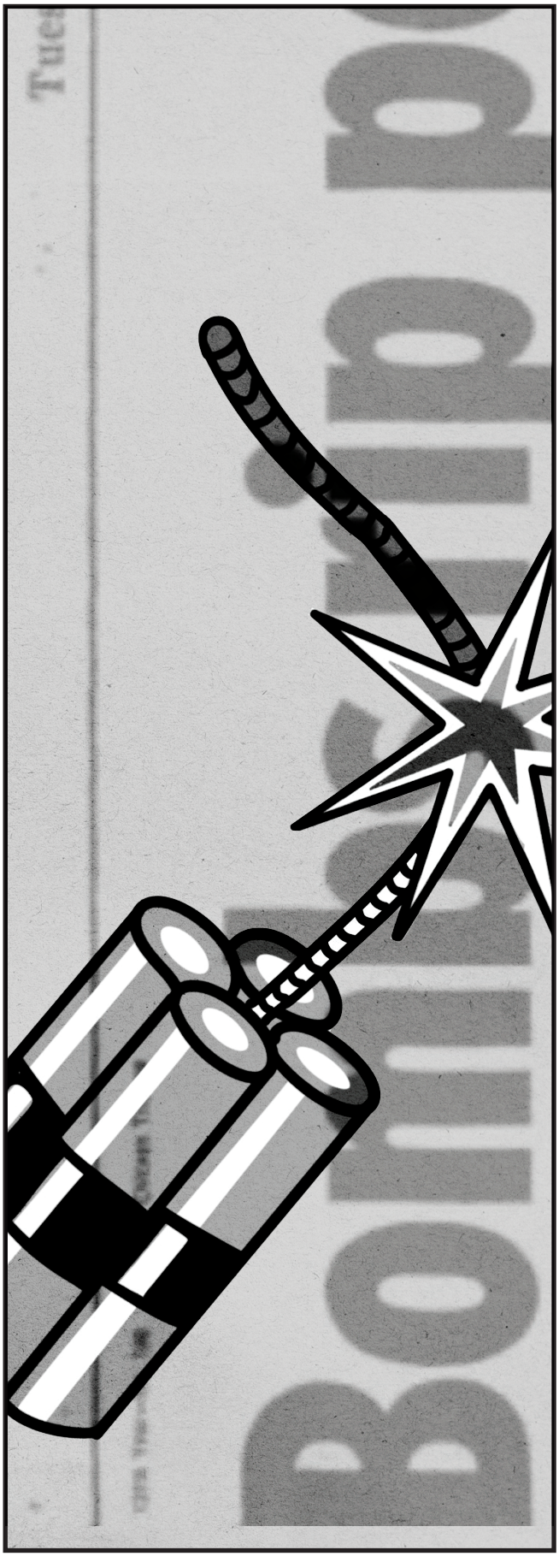
The initial debates that split the solidarity movement were with the Guardian newspaper, its editor, Irwin Silber, and the PWOC. The PWOC characterized the March 1 Bloc's intervention as "ultra left" and "a denial of the leading strategic role of the working class and… an uncritical endorsement of armed struggle that would commit the solidarity movement to supporting adventurism and small group terrorism."

In response, we argued that "from the history of the international struggle against imperialism, that armed force is both inevitable and essential" and that "elements of revolutionary struggle are visible now" and that the cutting edge for solidarity work was support for armed and illegal struggle "in the forms in which it is actually occurring, small and episodic actions(...)" We argued that "ruling class propaganda is deliberately focused on the deeply rooted pacifist and constitutionalist prejudices in North American people (particularly white people). It is not possible to win people (...)without confronting and neutralizing these prejudices" (Urgent Tasks, Spring 1978, no. 3, pages 6, 19–26).

We further argued the necessity of confronting US workers' "privileges from the hegemonic position of 'their' imperialism which obscure their class interest." We advocated for a fundamental understanding of the colonial relationship and to pose a direct challenge to the disparate life and working conditions between whites and others. For us, how to win white workers was the central question for the entire movement.

After the split in the PRSC, there were endless debates with Prairie Fire and May 19. The Prairie Fire Organizing Committee (PFOC) began as the aboveground of the Weather Underground; May 19 was a split from PFOC. Chicago was the only place where both were active. They based their analysis on a world divided into oppressed and oppressor nations and a final conflict between the Third World and the colonial powers, including Black and Brown nations within the US. They saw white workers as members of the oppressor nation and did not see the battle within white workers as important. They prioritized anti-imperialist struggles, while ignoring nearby factories and neighborhoods as arenas where we could confront white supremacy in day-to-day struggles.

Because we attached ourselves to the part of the movement that supported the armed struggle, we were bound to allies who did not share our commitment to working with white workers. Our agreement with the MLN was also limited, but they represented gathering forces that should be supported despite our differences. If revolution was going to emerge from nationalist movements in the US, then their growth was more important than ours.



STO's position was one of unconditional support for Puerto Rican self-determination, including the use of armed force. This position carried certain complications and contradictions, first since we had to choose which independentistas to ally with. Our decision to support the MLN and not the PSP was interference in the internal affairs of the independence movement, since it was impossible to support the movement as a whole. Our lives were made up of these paradoxes.

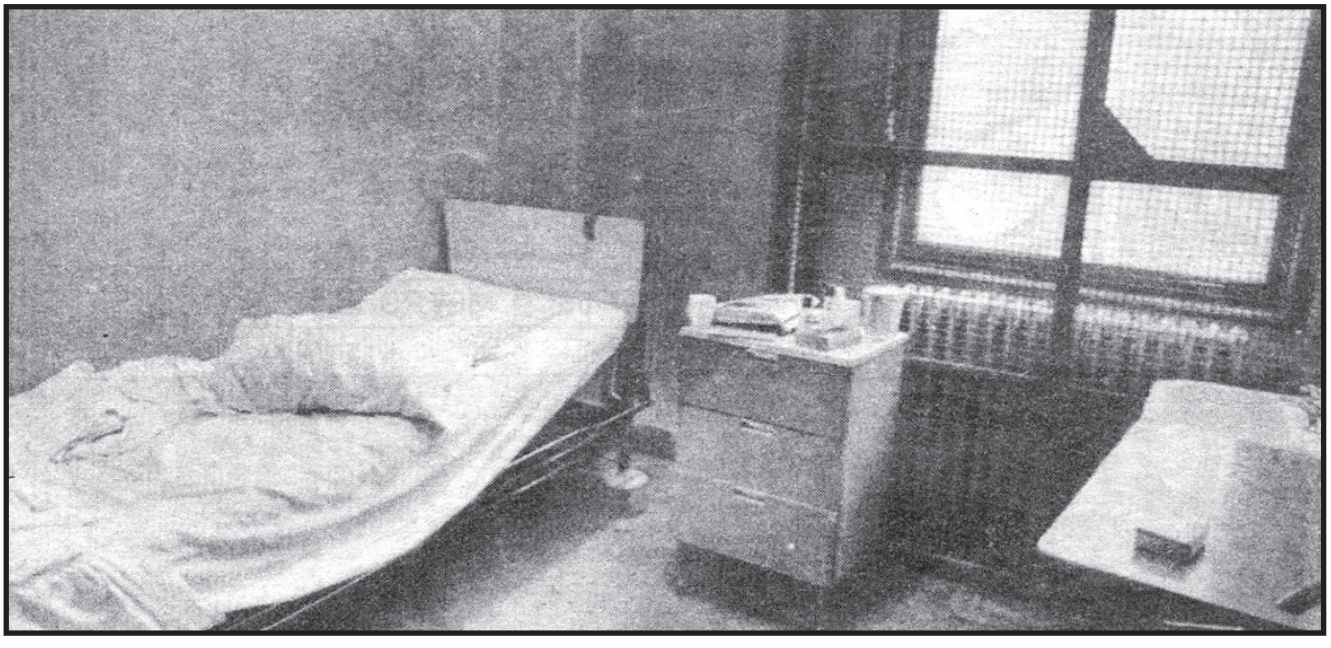
> (...)the movements of national liberation are the main component of the international class struggle and decisively influence the class struggle within the imperialist states(...) identification with national liberation is the central element in the emergence of the proletariat as a revolutionary class(...) The political leadership of national liberation movements must be followed on questions concerning the form and content of the movements they head, not because this leadership is always right, but because it is the social force whose correct and incorrect positions 'matter.' This has nothing to do with any attribution of infallibility and omniscience. We do liberation movements no favor by disguising disagreements, or, still worse, by evading questions which must be of concern to all revolutionaries.
> (Urgent Tasks, Number 6, Fall 1979).

STO placed an emphasis on internal education propelled by sharp debate. This was an article of faith for us, its value self-evident, but it was routinely ignored by the MLN. The MLN remained critical of our emphasis on theory and regarded it as a diversion that would introduce confusion and narrow their base, while we found the existing base already intolerably narrow. We argued that the MLN should allow the debate about organizing white workers in the solidarity group, not to convince Prairie Fire, but to clarify the issues for the handful of independent activists around us and to the MLN themselves.

They wanted solidarity in the form of financial contributions and sponsorships, they wanted us to turn out, all of us, every time, at every court hearing and demonstration. They were under fire and wanted a shield.

We debated among ourselves. Some members of STO were explicitly against our alliance with the MLN and argued for returning to a focus on the industrial workplace. STO members were sometimes successful in bringing the two together. Students from La Escuelita turned out on a picket line for a strike at Chicago Shortening after a delegation of workers attended an event in the barrio, although some of the rhetoric left the workers bewildered.

The MLN wanted a broad movement, including folks who were not full-time militants, which required the exploration of new avenues of recruitment and then patient, sustained attention to potential targets. Instead the bombings diverted, distracted, and deflected the movement from the community and threatened to devour us. We mobilized for one action after another, on an emergency basis. We called it Big-Eventism—also Big-Emergency-ism. As the FALN campaign continued, so did the repression, not only against militants but against the community. Grand juries began picking off individual leaders and the demands on our time and fund-raising exploded, leaving space for nothing but short-term organizing and causing supporters to burn out and disappear. The solidarity work became alienated labor, raising money for lawyers and printing and turning out the same fifty people for forums, rallies, postering, picketing, and court hearings. We never had time to reach beyond ourselves. We lost control of the pace of it. The demands were not susceptible to argument, we could not refuse, but they submerged us. We did a tremendous amount of work over which we had "little voice and no vote" and much of which we considered pointless. People dropped away.



Bellevue Hospital ward from where Morales escaped out the window in 1979

In 1978, William Morales was arming a pipe bomb in his apartment in Queens when it exploded, taking one of his eyes and nine of his fingers. Morales tried to make the debacle look like a gas explosion and managed to destroy a stack of papers before police arrived. Arrested, he declared himself a prisoner of war. Ten months later, with the help of May 19, he escaped from the Belleview Hospital prison ward, after cutting the bars of his window and shimmying down the wall on elastic bandages. Juan Antonio Corretjer, director of La Liga Socialista, saluted him as the "handless hero who had slapped the face of God."

The fibiolas (FBI) prowled around the barrio, ambushing people when they were alone, accosting their families, friends, workmates, and schoolmates, looking for someone to talk. No one did. One day they took away the son of Doña Petra because he had studied at La Escuelita. She stood by the open window screaming about the Ponce Massacre of 1937, when police fired on a Nationalist parade.

The FALN bombings continued, followed by communiques explaining the choice of target and demanding the release of the Nationalist prisoners. The Grand Jury continued as well. Nobody talked. Every Friday, a group of us went to the federal lock-up downtown and marched around in a circle, chanting, always the same family and friends. None of the grand jury resisters served more than a year in jail.

Rebeldía (Rebellion) was an anonymous, bilingual, underground newspaper, with the masthead slogan: "When the people rise, the tyrants kneel!" and the price of 15 cents. *Rebeldía* accused the movement of being afraid to risk their comfort and arguing that the conditions for revolution had not been met and the people were not ready.

> "During the last decade, hundreds of actions have been undertaken by the progressive elements of the Puerto Rican movement, in Puerto Rico and in the US. The progressive elements of the Puerto Rican Liberation movement have shown the feasibility of armed action both in Puerto Rico and in the US. Although these actions have not pleased the petty bourgeois elements within the Independence movement, they cannot deny that such actions have actually happened… The progressive people in Puerto Rico and in the US. have supported such actions." (ibid.)

I question "the feasibility of armed action." Hundreds of small-scale acts of property damage took place, but they did not matter in economic terms. They were a matter of nerve—of showing our side with a moment of power—of grasping for an Event, a moment of ungovernability, a rupture in the normal order of capital. They were an attempt to break with the everyday and create new possibilities. I am not convinced that the FALN opened new possibilities. I saw an effervescent public movement that became mired in its own self-defense, a closing and not an opening.

There were a number of FALN bombings in department stores and other densely populated locations which I do not believe were legitimate targets, whether or not warning calls were made.



Participation in clandestine maneuvers took important leaders out of public work, legal or illegal. The movement had grown through transformative public actions, sit-ins and occupations that not only got results but provided participants with the practical experience of living together, of ordering daily life by another rhythm. Now the direct actions that had mobilized neighborhood women were put aside. The community work that had drawn us in was reduced to legal defense, fundraising, and propaganda. The bombings were non-participatory, the armed actions were inaccessible.

Clandestine work was a suicide mission, ending in prison or death or disappearance from family life and the movement. Successive waves of activists became inoperable in public work when they were forced underground or arrested. After the first- and second-tier leadership were compromised, there were not enough cadre to fill the ranks. Most candidates were unsuited to clandestinity by temperament, others were too well known. We sacrificed leaders who were charismatic, rooted in the community, aggressive, and proven.

The loss of cadre was multiplied when the defendants took retraimiento to its strict conclusion and declared themselves prisoners of war and refused to defend themselves. This meant that individuals who might have gotten off were convicted without a fight and the courtroom could not be used as a forum. STO and a number of others, including the legal team, argued against this decision. In contrast, when eleven members of the Macheteros were put on trial on the island in 1985, they filled the courtroom with lawyers and constitutional scholars, including celebrities, and prepared a "political/legal" defense that included a history of US involvement with Puerto Rico. Nevertheless, defendants received harsh prison terms.

The clandestine movement demanded security procedures which kept us from analyzing the situation, since nothing could be said aloud. Democracy requires transparency, but transparency threatened the safety of underground cadre. The need for discretion trumped the need for debate and the worst tendencies came to the fore. We were militarized: we could not disagree, we were supposed to obey war-time discipline and to bend to a hierarchy that only became stronger as more participants were pushed aside. There was no discussion of errors, no learning from them, no questioning the overall direction. The work became mired in its own self-defense.

With the first FALN detonations came a parting of the waters. Everything that came after was a new world. Underground is what clandestine work is called, which makes it seem dark, but it was vast and brightly lit and thrown into sharp relief. The FALN came along at the last moment when we could believe in revolution in the Third World. That ecstatic May Day of 1975, when we marched down Eighteenth Street under red banners, dancing for joy, felt like a dawn, but it was almost midnight. We came too late, the same way Puerto Ricans arrived too late in the North, just as the industrial base was vanishing.

It was the last moment when we could believe that national liberation would bring human liberation, that women in arms could win against their "own" patriarchs, that workers could win against their "own" bourgeoisie. We were proven wrong, not in the specific arguments outlined here, but in believing that national liberation would bring freedom from global capitalism. As Toni Negri said, "The state is the poisoned fruit of national liberation." That is another story.



"NO LONGER SILENT AND INVISIBLE": THE HUMBOLDT PARK RIOT OF 1977

June 4, 1977, Chicago. It was a Saturday that felt like a Sunday, Puerto Rican Day. Cars began to cruise the barrio early, hung with flags and honking. We were out buying milk when we saw the headline: a bomb explosion at City Hall, claimed by the Lolita Lebron Fighting Cells of the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional. The bomb failed to completely detonate; no one was hurt.

We raided the newspaper box on the corner. A photo of a smashed window appeared on the front page; the damage seemed minimal. We threw the papers on the table. Our roommate read the article and announced, "Mucha mierda de la prensa capitalista (A lot of shit from the capitalist press). My friends, you have brought me a big pile of shit. This paper is lying, there was damage. It was a serious bomb."

The parade was still downtown; a year later the protest contingent would inaugurate their own People's Parade down Division Street in the barrio. We marched with the Independentistas, behind a squad of students, girls in front, dressed in the black shirts and white trousers of the Nationalist Cadets in the revolts of the 1950s. They carried non-firing drill rifles. We came after the Princesa Boricua and her court, after the soccer teams and salsa bands, the nightclubs, and El Club de Aguadilla and El Club de Ponce. We carried two banners: Free the Five Nationalist Prisoners and a map of the island in red, with rifles marking the sites of armed insurrections: Jayuya, Mayaguez, Ponce, Utuado, Caguas, and Lares. ¡Boricua, Escucha, El Pueblo está en Lucha! (Puerto Rico, Listen, the People are in Struggle!)

Some Boricuans have not stopped struggling for sovereignty since the US seized Puerto Rico as a spoil of war in 1898. Pedro Albizu Campos was the leader of the Nationalist Party, founded in 1922. He grew up poor on the island and began his schooling at age twelve, then sped like a comet through the local public schools, got a scholarship to the University of Vermont, and was recruited to Harvard Law School. He returned to the island to practice poverty law among sugar cane workers and took part in a number of strikes in the fields.

Albizu was an electrifying presence, intransigent in his hatred of colonialism. He tried to awaken his people to overthrow the US. While most of the island yearned for independence, they were afraid. He attacked Santa Claus, a bloated white man who should be pricked like a balloon for replacing the Three Kings. He coordinated the attack on Truman and the 1950 uprising throughout the island, a revolt with no hope of success. He had open FBI and police surveillance all his life and was imprisoned off-and-on for years. He was tortured. There were twenty US military bases on the island. Albizu died in 1965, his health broken.

As we marched in the parade, some folks cheered us, others booed, but everyone reacted and many joined in. When others chanted, "¡El pueblo unido jamás será vencido! (The people united will never be defeated)," we answered, "¡El pueblo armado jamás será aplastado! (The people armed will never be smashed)." After so many picket lines at downtown courthouses, yelling at marble walls and blank office workers, here was a demonstration that touched a nerve, here was an action that connected.

We carried coffins for the children killed by arson. Our neighborhood was being gentrified through landlord-set fires that burned through homes, many of them brick six-flats built in the 1930s. Not everyone got out in time. The lots were cleared and remained vacant, the landlords collected insurance, and families were left homeless and grieving. Sometimes we gathered while the fires were burning, offering support and naming landlords. We picketed landlords' homes and attacked them in community papers, distributed before dawn, tucked into doorways while people slept.

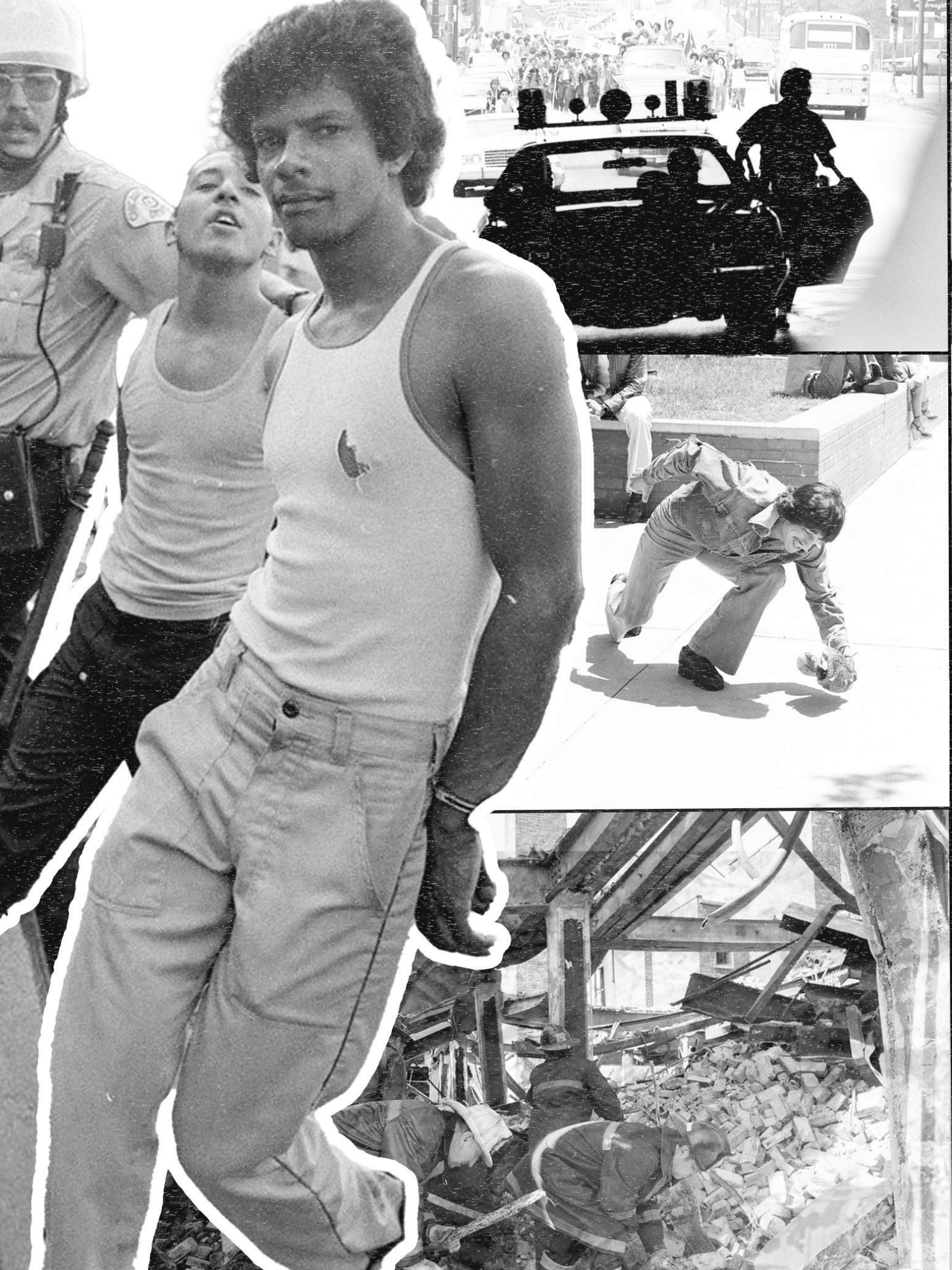
We drove home slowly, through the neighborhoods. Today the whole world was Puerto Rican and partying. There were families out on the stoops, radios blasting, grilling meat on the sidewalks. Humboldt Park was already a mass of people and the gangs were out in their colors, stalking each other and drawing imaginary lines. Cannabis perfumed the air. Police and tactical squad, in helmets and riot gear, were gathering on the outskirts, stopping and questioning young men about gangs. We later learned that there were 800 cops on active reserve, monitoring the park.

Late in the day, a fight broke out. Instead of letting it die out on its own, the police moved in and opened up with live fire. They attacked in military wedges, with helicopter support. Eleven years before, police had ignited the Division Street Riot of 1966 when they shot and wounded a young man. This time, they shot two teenagers in the back and killed them: Julio Osorio and Rafael Cruz, who was crippled and fleeing on crutches. Both were unarmed. People ran while others picked up rocks and began pelting police cars.

We went home. The streets were empty but for a line of men, watching from the sidelines, no women or children, no whites (except us). There were cars overturned and burning. Noel Ignatiev, a comrade from STO, came by the house and told me to grab my camera. We drove into the park, cleared and full of deserted blankets. I got a shot of a cop car overturned in a pond. The crowds had moved to Division Street so we followed. People were lined up on the sidewalks, taunting the police, while the cops raced up and down. We were on foot—I forget why—and there was a sound like popcorn and Noel pulled me out of range of a speeding car firing live ammunition. There was an answering hail of small arms fire from across the street. Police in riot gear were forcing their way into homes and beating people as they dragged them out. They arrested hundreds. They stopped cars and smashed windshields. They burned a Puerto Rican flag.

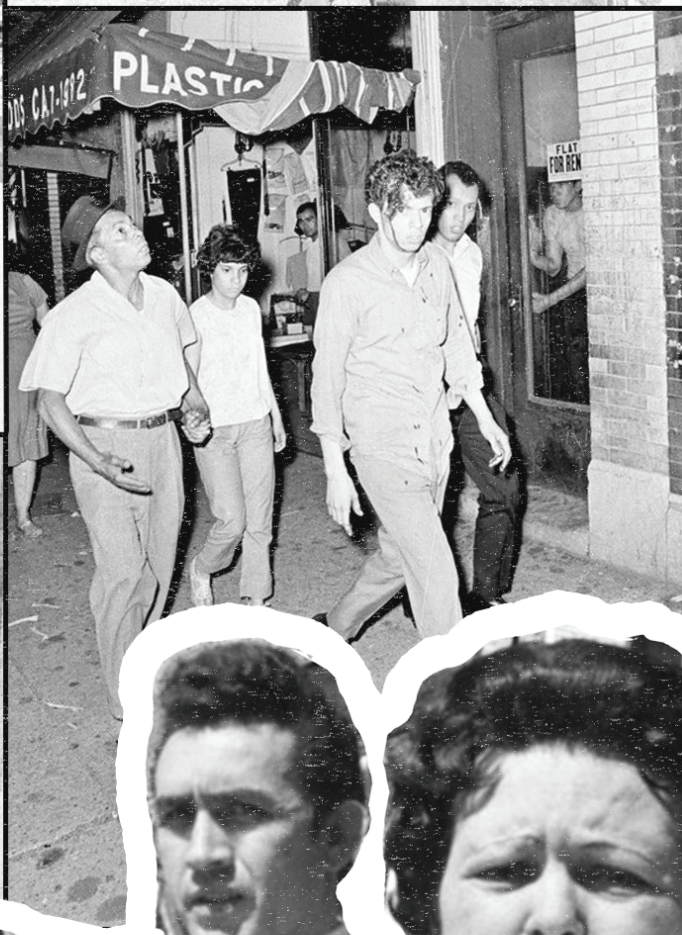
We were hailed by a brother in a red beret with the skull and crossbones of the Latin Kings tattooed on his chest. "The people control the park," he announced, although it looked empty to us. He told us the fight was between the Latin Kings


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EL GRITO

COMITE PRO-ORIENTACION COMUNAL

2403 West North Avenue Chicago Illinois 60622 384-8644

Comite Pro-Orientacion Comunal LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN AGAINST COVER-UP OF CRUZ-OSORIO CASE



The Chicago Police Department is using a Grand Jury investigation in a attempt to cover-up those responsible for the deaths of two Puerto Ricans in Humboldt Park (Parque Cruz-Osorio) on June 4th 1977.

On June 4th,1977 the Chicago Police brutally attacked the Puerto Rican Community in Chicago. The aftermath of that premediated assault left three persons dead, one hundred fifty (150) wounded and over two hundred (200) arrested. This act of repression against the Puerto Ricans will not be forgotten, even though the policemen who

and the Insane Unknowns, two local gangs, as the long day came to a close with nothing to celebrate but a return to factory or warehouse, or the smelly little underworld of small time dealing and heroin addiction. And the pigs reacted by shooting into a crowd of families.

We drove to the corner of Division and Western, where a man was scaling a telephone pole to hang a Puerto Rican flag. Bare-chested, in cutoff jeans, the flag held in his teeth, he shimmied up the pole. Then we raced to the nearest hospital, where the emergency entrance was blocked by cop cars and we could see someone with blood streaming down his face being dragged to a paddy wagon. I took a shot at a distance and the cops whirled and came after us. We took off.

I had a rudimentary darkroom for film developing and proofing at the house but no way of enlarging. I made a proof sheet showing the ravished park, the overturned cop car, some distance shots. I turned the film over to someone from the MLN. People credited me with the emblematic photo of the day's events: a young man, shirtless, his arms twisted behind his back by the cops, but someone else took that shot.

The next day the intersection of Damen and Division was blocked by barricades. We went through the side streets and found Division Street deep in broken glass. The currency exchange and big stores were looted, while the small ones, the barbershop, the market where we bought cilantro, were intact. There was a smashed-up tricycle in a doorway to apartments upstairs. It was a battlefield without corpses. We stepped back into the shadows as a cop car went by slowly, with shotguns pointing out the windows.

I worked at Stewart-Warner, a local automotive parts factory. On Monday, I went to work with a Puerto Rican flag drawn on my fist.

From then on, through the suffocating summer heat, the harassment continued. The police broke up street corner gatherings, patrolled every alley, busted drivers for insignificant infractions, and trampled on previous agreements. The jails filled up with Puerto Ricans and so did the hospitals within the jails. Cops beat Puerto Ricans on the street, in the back of squad cars, in their own homes.

The police were an occupying army. Workers who were accustomed to step out back and enjoy a doobie on their breaks were busted and fired. Shopkeepers were cited for selling loose cigarettes or alcohol to minors or for no reason but to demand the day's earnings. In the evenings we strolled the alleys, peering into homes through open back doors: fans, TVs, and sweating, exhausted, half-naked people who worked and had nothing, or didn't work and had less of nothing, whose moment of flaming rebellion brought on months of systematic punishment.

The Movimiento de Liberación Nacional formed the Comité Pro-Orientación Comunal (Committee in Favor of Community Orientation) and convened a neighborhood tribunal to investigate the police. Witnesses testified to the unprovoked attack in Humboldt Park and the use of lethal force. Hundreds had been wounded. We organized a legal team and took statements.

We speculated that the brutality was part of "revitalizing" West Town through Chicago 21's urban renewal plan.

More than one hundred people had been killed by cops between 1975 and 1978 in Chicago. El Grito (The Cry), an underground community newspaper, published the names of the six youth gunned down by police since Cruz and Osorio died and gave their ages: 14 to 18.

We called for a march from the barrio to the civic center downtown and made a banner that read, "Down with Police Repression, Police Out of the Community." The Revolutionary Communist Party showed up with their own bullhorns, their own slogans, and a banner that read, "Black, Brown, Red, and White, Workers of the World Unite!" We were furious. Someone demanded to know where they'd been the night of the riot. "We organized this community, you did not organize this community. Go home! You do not belong here."

"But we are revolutionary communists and we bring you greetings from the working class. Our comrade here is from the Steelworkers Union, this comrade is from—"

We cut them off. "We called this demonstration and we decide what the slogans will be."

They offered to march at the rear and refrain from selling their papers. Someone else grabbed the bullhorn to address them. "All you outside agitators, stay behind. You are not welcome. I repeat, You are not welcome!" How irritating and dispiriting it was. They called us bourgeois nationalists and we called them parasitic lunatics. They finally left and the march was us and several hundred of our closest allies.

"CIA, FBI, Out of Our Community! ¡Despierta, Boricua, Defiende Lo Tuyo! (Wake up, Puerto Rico, Defend What's Yours!)" We marched up Division Street while people turned to watch, or hung out of windows, silent, alert, uneasy. No one joined in or waved a flag. In these faces, you could read the failed revolt. Sales of heroin, controlled by the cops in alliance with the gangs, tripled after the riot.

The march was so small that I felt as if we were exposing our weakness. We wanted to be thousands strong and take possession of the streets. Instead we marched like a clenched fist, defiant, thirsty, and afraid to break ranks. Then we acquired an honor guard of bikers, dressed in black leather and hung with chains, who rode slowly alongside us. They came on their own, uninvited, and melted away before we reached downtown. We were touched by their solidarity. The police too gave us an escort and the plain clothes detectives stood on the side taking photos. Tall, well-built, and white, they had faces like computers. We hid our faces and stuck out our tongues. "Take one for my mama, pendejo!"

The 1966 Division Street riot was the first Puerto Rican riot on the mainland and marked the beginning of militant organizing in the barrio. The mid- to late-1960s had been years of mass protest by urban uprising: Harlem and Philadelphia in 1964, the Watts Rebellion in 1965, Detroit in 1967, and explosions throughout the country following the murder of Martin Luther King in 1968.

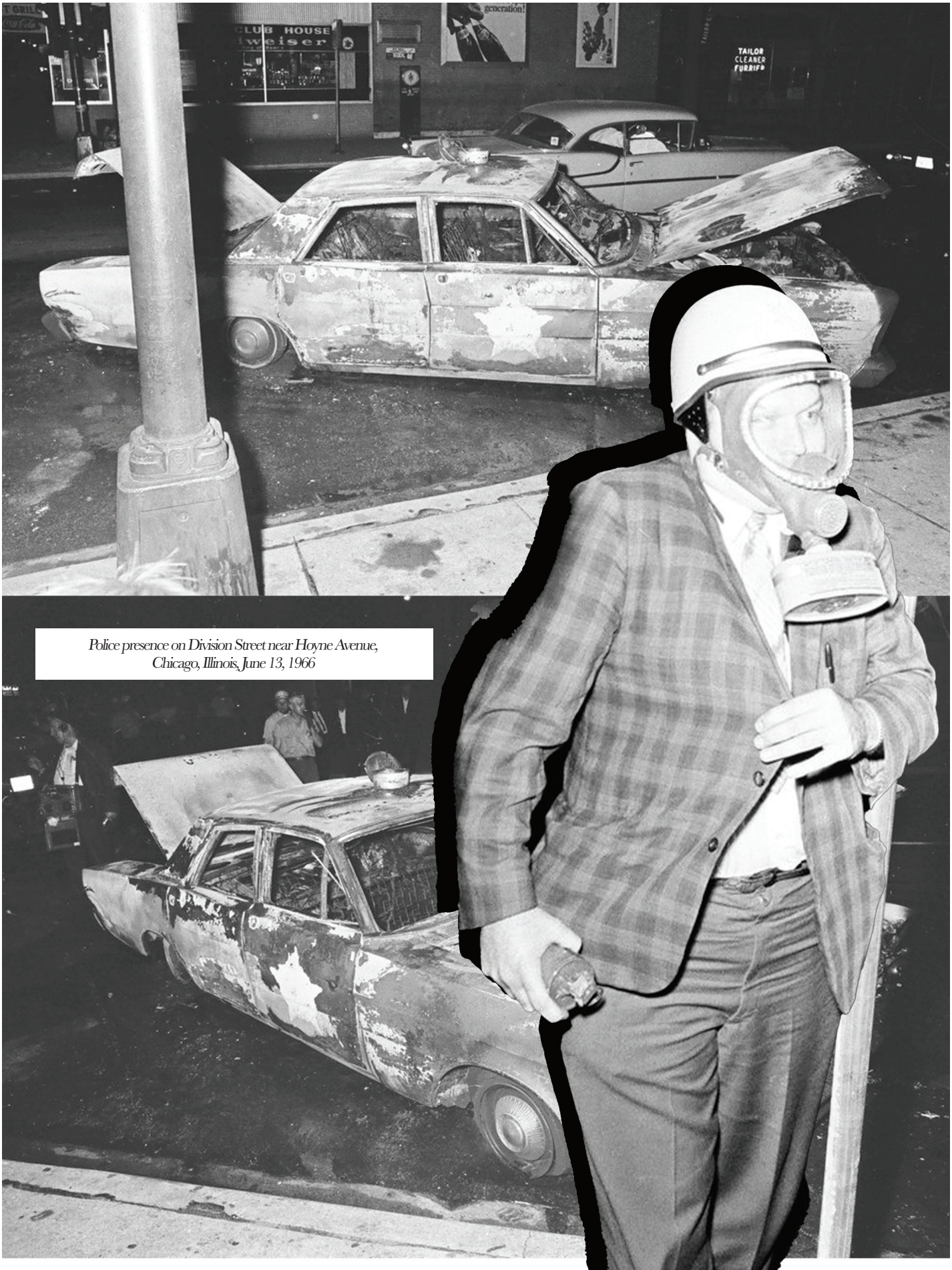
In 1966, in recognition of the growing diaspora, Chicago authorities had permitted the first Puerto Rican Day parade to march downtown. Afterwards, folks gathered in the neighborhood and a fight broke out. The police showed up with German shepherds and in the melee, a white cop shot a young man in the leg, and officers turned dogs loose on the crowd. Years of rage exploded; crowds took over the streets and disrupted the usual workings of the city for three days and nights.

When Oscar Lopez returned from Vietnam just afterwards, he saw the difference. "Something I could feel immediately was the radical change that had occurred in the community.

It was no longer the silent and invisible community I had left behind when I left for the army. Even in the way that Boricuas walked, you could see the positive impact the riot had on our community. But it was in the youth that I saw the biggest change. They were becoming organized and radicalized. And it was these youth who gave the driving force and energy to the struggles that emerged after the riot."

After 1966, the Young Lords made themselves over, from a street gang to a revolutionary organization that allied with the Black Panther Party in Chicago's Rainbow Coalition. The Latin American Defense Organization (LADO) emerged and organized welfare recipients into the Welfare Union Project. Most importantly, battles over the local high school led to the founding of the Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School, La Escuelita, in a church basement.

The collective insistence on respect embodied in the two riots bore fruit in several innovative and enduring community institutions. The school and the Juan Antonio Corretjer Puerto Rican Cultural Center have endured; the school celebrated its fifty-year anniversary in 2022.



Police presence on Division Street near Hoyne Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, June 13, 1966


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