

# AN ANARCHIST PRIMER

ITSGOINGDOWN.ORG

FOR THE DAYS OF TRUMP  
& THE 'NEW NORMAL'



“NOT ALL VIOLENCE IS EQUAL. THERE IS THE VIOLENCE THAT IS PERMITTED. THIS IS THE VIOLENCE THAT COMES FROM ABOVE, THAT ARRIVES IN POLICE BULLETS AND DRONE STRIKES. THERE IS THE VIOLENCE THAT IS ENCOURAGED, THAT COMES FROM BELOW AND IS AIMED AT THOSE **EVEN MORE** BELOW IT, AND WHICH SEEKS TO STRENGTHEN THOSE ABOVE.

THEN, THERE IS THE VIOLENCE THAT IS EXCEPTIONAL. THIS IS THE VIOLENCE THAT COMES FROM BELOW AND IS AIMED AT THOSE ABOVE.

**THIS IS THE VIOLENCE  
THAT CAN NEVER BE PERMITTED.”**

anarchists and those who seek to build up a movement against the world that gave birth to him. We have to be prepared for this.

The Left will always attempt to sell us out in exchange for a seat of power. *Never forget that.*

Let's keep this in mind as we continue to organize, push forward, protect each other, and build our movement.

demonstrations in the hopes that this in itself with somehow make a new society or get rid of the old one.

Our task before us is to combine *living and fighting*. We must find new ways of living that allow us to fight. That grows our power while becoming powerful and in turn, fight for something that is ours: neighborhoods, territories, affinities, bioregions, relationships, and physical *forms of life*.

This means making no go areas for fascists. It means developing alternative means of dealing with problems where we live other than calling the police. It means creating alternative infrastructure to the existing ones. It means organizing everything from childcare to food on our own terms that benefits ourselves; taking ourselves outside of the apparatuses that exist and producing our own networks and means of existence.

## IN CONCLUSION

Trump is a laughing stock.

Even the mainstream mocks him and laughs at the naked orange emperor who wears no clothes. But not let us forget that this disdain is not because many within the existing institutions wish to see the established order done away with. Far from it, they simply see Trump as an extremely unstable manager who threatens the fragile social peace. But Trump is also useful. As this civilization breaks apart, he can be the whipping boy of the ruling class while ushering in a new period of resource extraction and repression.

Keep in mind that many of the people who will become the most vocal in their condemnation of Trump will also be the strongest critics of

The riots that took place during Trump's inauguration as well as in Berkeley, California against Breitbart editor and Alt-Right troll Milo Yiannopoulos, have rocked the political establishment, created a collective *gasp* of disdain from liberal and leftist leadership, and generated a wave of blowback from both within the State and the mainstream press. Beyond the pillars of both media spectacle and the government, it seems that if there's one thing that can bring reactionaries on both the Left *and* the Right together, it's the demonizing of autonomous, collective acts of resistance and refusal by everyday people.

Those on the Right call for blood. Some have started petitions that seek to get the Trump administration to label anti-fascists a terrorist organization while also claiming that we are all funded by pro-Democratic billionaire, George Soros. Those on the Left simultaneously repeat similar conspiratorial positions that those who flooded into the streets to put their bodies and lives on the line and now face trumped up charges are both paid police agents and are "fully subordinated to the Democratic Party and the capitalist system."

Everywhere, the ghost of combative autonomous self-activity scares both those in power and those waiting to *take power* as both the Left and the Right seek to defang resistance movements and overall, paint anarchists and anti-fascists as "outside agitators," a term that has lost none of its original purpose since police first used it to describe freedom

riders in the South.

The question remains: will we normalize resistance to the regime, *or the regime itself?*

## ON THIS THEY CAN AGREE

Across the political spectrum, at time when millions of people are starting to take seriously punching Nazis, blockading airports, and rioting as a vehicle for both self-defense and as a means of collapsing the regime by creating a state of crisis, there is predictably by the State, the media, and the Left, condemnation of these tactics. *Why?* The answer is as easy as it is simple: for these are the tools that are at the disposal of *all* poor and working people. And to be able to demonize in the minds of millions not *even* ideas, groups, or organizations, but moreover *tactics* – this is the real goal of all apparatuses of control. To make evil and wrong what is possible for human beings to be able to accomplish with their very bodies en masse in offensive capacities that further their interests and in defensive ones that protect them. If a State can do this inside the minds of its subjects, *it can do anything*.

For the Right, the current wave of autonomous resistance is a danger because it threatens the legitimacy of the State as it seeks to become an auxiliary force that helps the police, normalizes Trump's power, and uses extra-legal violence to attack the perceived enemies of the regime. For the Left, from the heads of the Democratic Party to the socialist vanguards in waiting, they see autonomous organizing as a threat to their potential power as it offers an alternative to both electoralism and party building.

Trump himself has also been quick to weigh in, calling those who shut down Milo's speech where he planned to out undocumented students

In order to survive under the Trump regime, we are going to have to learn how to defend ourselves from a variety of threats.

We must defend ourselves from attacks by the mainstream press. We must defend against denunciations by the socialist Left. We must defend against the Alt-Right attempting to doxx us. We must defend ourselves against reactionaries attempting to physically kill and harm us. We must defend ourselves from the State attempting to slap us with horrific charges, grand jury summons, and worse.

This means not only getting fit and learning to defend ourselves, but also learning counter-surveillance techniques, installing the right software, and learning how to move as a group at demonstrations.

But overall, we must build capacity in our communities to engage in self-defense in order to prevent violence before it breaks out. This means stopping the far-Right from attacking people and those that are most vulnerable. It means developing rapid response networks to potential attacks and threats from the police and the State. It means developing our means of communication on a wide scale, so we have the tools that are needed to protect against a wide variety of assaults, on multiple levels.

We must prepare a defense that responds to the threats we and others face, at all costs.

## REBUILD

Our epoch demands of us not just simply a different way of living; there is nowhere to run and escape what is unfolding.

We also cannot simply resign ourselves to riot occasionally at large



created him, we owe it to ourselves to leave these failed strategies behind in the dustbin of history, and continue with an autonomous and anti-capitalist form of politics.

## DISRUPT

We must disrupt the ability of the regime to govern.

This means taking what has happened with the airport #MuslimBanProtests and applying its logic to all aspects of resistance. How can we apply this logic to support those that the State might attempt to deport en masse? To those the State might attempt to repress. To programs that the State might shut down. To pipeline and resource extraction projects that it is attempting to ram through. *To everything.*

But this also means we have to get organized. We need ways to bring people into our movements. We need spaces where people can come together and discuss and plan. We need materials to read, think about, and learn from. We need both small level affinity groups that can carry out basic actions, as well as larger forms such as mass assemblies for the coordination of bigger actions. We need people proficient in a wide variety of skills to offer themselves to the resistance: from childcare to legal services, from web design to community organizing, from online security techniques to self defense, *we need it all.*

We must also realize that overall what is needed is not just the proliferation of struggles, but the connecting, networking, and generalizing of them.

## DEFEND

“paid protesters” and “professional anarchists,” in a dog-whistle to his far-Right base. He would later go as far as to threaten to defund UC Berkeley, as a form of collective punishment against the protest and in support of Milo. A day later, when asked by the press as to who these militant groups were, Steve Spicer replied that the State knew who was to blame, as if to normalize potential repression that lay just on the horizon.

And in many ways, that repression is already here. Currently, people arrested on January 20th are facing up to 10 years in prison and felony riot charges as the State attempts to harvest their phone and social media data. This includes even members of the press and people that were caught up in the police kettle on DC streets.

To add to the repressive mix, in the last few days according to the Associated Press:

**The North Dakota House has endorsed four measures spurred by the bitter dispute between Dakota Access protesters and law enforcement, Jane King at the Nasdaq reports.**

**The Republican-led chamber on Monday approved a measure that makes it a crime for adults to wear masks in most cases. The House also approved bills that increase penalties for rioting, trespassing, and causing damage to personal property.**

Meanwhile:

**Over the past few weeks, Republican legislators across the country have quietly introduced a number of proposals to criminalize and discourage**

protest.

**The proposals, which strengthen or supplement existing laws addressing the blocking or obstructing of traffic, come in response to a string of high-profile highway closures and other actions led by Black Lives Matter activists and opponents of the Dakota Access Pipeline. Republicans reasonably expect an invigorated protest movement during the Trump years.**

Further still:

**The Indiana state legislature is considering an authoritarian bill that would essentially allow police to kill protesters with zero accountability.**

**Republican senator Jim Tomen introduced Senate Bill 285 in January, though it was given its first committee hearing on Wednesday. The bill authorizes city officials to use “any means necessary” to break up a group of 10 or more protesters blocking traffic, “even to the point of costing lives.”**

In short, when coupled with laws passed during the Obama and Bush administrations, you have a recipe for a broad crackdown on protest, popular mobilization, and dissent in general that gives sweeping power to the police and the State but moreover protects the government and industry from the threat of disruption much to the applause of Trump’s far-Right base.

Regardless of if Trump is swept away in a year due to a CIA-backed coup or perhaps one by his own party, it doesn’t matter. The legislation and build up of the security-state apparatus will already be in place, ready to,

But also, what all of these strategies miss is quite clear and plain: *this is simply not what people are doing.*

People in the tens of thousands are blocking freeways, ports, and airports, not forming third parties. People are forming communes en masse to block pipelines and are creating new worlds in the process across the US, not waiting for Communist or socialist cadres to do it for them. People are fighting for their neighborhoods in riots against the police, not hoping that someone elected to the city council will somehow make things better for them. But beyond the big upheavals, uprisings, occupations, riots, and more; people are organizing on a real grassroots level, and not to form some distant ‘revolutionary government.’

People are forming self-defense organizations and teaching each other how to heal wounds, how to fight, and how to respond to things happening in their communities. Neighbors are getting organized in city wide assemblies, workers are pooling resources to take care of each other, people are coming together to take over land and create housing, and much more.

While the Left in *theory* supports all of this, it still by and large declares that where these struggles fall short of is that they lack representation in the field of established politics, or in the creation of a ‘genuine’ cadre leadership that can create a new ‘revolutionary’ State.

Most people want nothing to do with this. However, with the threat of Trump, much of the Left wants to use people’s genuine fear of the regime to regain much of the base that the Left has lost over the last several decades. In the face of autonomous politics and horizontal organizing, they would put in place bureaucracy and top down leadership.

If we truly want to take on Trump and the systems of domination that

## ET TU, COMRADE?

Lastly, there is the Communist Left, which includes groups like the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) and their latest front group, Refuse Fascism. Again, by and large these groups have the same strategy that they always did. While socialists focus more on building local cadres, attempting to participate in elections, and in general being to the left of progressives, groups like the RCP instead focus more on protests and demonstrations, trying to become a vanguard in the streets and funneling people into their organizations that way.

While this at times makes for more agreeable people to bump into during a rowdy demonstration, in reality they simply are seeking to take the experience of social struggle and turn it into a vehicle for *political capital*. Thus, what progressives and socialists want to do in the field of politics: to turn anger into votes, the Communist Left simply wants to skip the voting part. To turn anger into a new *government*.

To pick apart why the ideas of progressivism, social democracy, socialism, and Marxist-Leninism in all its varieties is a dead end for the working-class and the planet would require a whole other essay. But our task here today is simply to analyze the hour of the day and begin to think about what is needed in the current period, but moreover, why all of these strategies, which by and large don't much vary, are bankrupt.

## ALL YOU LIBERALS BOUND TO LOSE

The problem with all of these strategies is that first *they are not working*, they haven't worked, and moreover these strategies lead to the creation of social movements and ultimately a world – that is equally alienating and authoritarian as this one.

be put to use for decades to come as this civilization continues to break apart due to its own internal contradictions.

Meanwhile, the far-Right which has spent the past 8 years calling for Obama's blood and for violent revolt against 'globalism,' slaughtering people in churches and abortion clinics, carrying out an armed occupation of federal land, and attacks on Black Lives Matter protests, couldn't be happier. *Finally an administration that gets things done!*

Meanwhile on the Left: progressives, Democrats, and socialist cadres wring their hands: *the proles are restless*.

## THE VIOLENCE OF EXCEPTION

This system deems some violence as part and parcel to its own maintenance; its own *functioning*. Other forms of violence, when they come from below; when they threaten the ability of the regime to function: to police, *to govern*, these forms of violence are always seen as *exceptional*. This exception thus requires an exceptional response. It requires the media to explain to the everyday person why this has happened, for if the system didn't do so, *who is to say it wouldn't happen again?* This is already a story we know quite well; it's the plot to every

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*Hunger Games* movie and *V for Vendetta*, yet we can't seem to grasp it happening in real life, all around us.

Thus, it is the task of those whose job it is to explain to us how and why things happen, to suddenly paint a picture not of a crowd stopping a fascist event from happening; from stopping a fascist speaker like Milo from attacking their undocumented, trans, or non-male friends; but instead to transform those resisting and taking real risks because they need to do so into outside agitators. Into paid police agents. Into people even working in league with the far-Right.

To understand why these lies are popularized, we have to first understand that when it comes to violence, to the powers that be the real question is: who gets it, and who dishes it out. Luckily, recent history has been kind enough to present us with a clear examination of exactly this.

## THE NEW NORMAL

On the evening of January 20th, a Trump and Milo supporter shot and almost killed an anti-fascist protester during a demonstration against Milo in Seattle. Later that night, someone driving a pickup truck was arrested after they shot out windows in downtown Olympia while screaming "Hail Trump." In the weeks that followed, a series of attacks occurred in the US against various Mosques, with assailants breaking windows, setting fires, slashing tires, and even leaving strips of bacon on door handles. Then, on January 29th in Quebec City, a far-Right supporter of Trump and the French National Front open fired inside of a Mosque, killing 6 people and injuring several others. At around the same time, in Yemen a drone strike killed the 8-year daughter of American citizen Anwar al-Awlaki, who was killed in a drone strike ordered by the Obama administration along with his son and many others in 2010. In all of these events, the media by and large pays little mind.

for a third option.

In the end, *it didn't fucking matter*. The DNC crushed Sanders, the electoral college did what it was designed to do, and nothing was done about millions of voters of color who were kicked off the roles by the Republican CrossCheck program. You want a third party? Great. You just have to figure out how you're going to move forward in this democracy. If we ever had the mass upsurge needed to put a third party into place, let alone protect it from attacks by the ruling elite that would shut it down, we wouldn't even need to bother with parties to begin with.

## THE SOCIALIST BLOC

For the socialist Left, their position is much the same as the progressive Left, however instead of a 'progressive party,' they instead call for the creation of a strictly anti-capitalist and 'working-class party.'

This strategy can best be articulated by those within groups like Socialist Alternative, a growing reformist-socialist group that includes Kshama Sawant, an elected city council person in Seattle. This position isn't anything new and it's the same thing these groups have been saying forever. Build. The. Party. Vote. For. Me. Hang. In. We'll. Get. There.

Many of these groups are hoping to engage the many young people that were excited about Bernie and instead funnel them into *their* various organizations, as well as tap into the potential pool of recruits that have been activated by the Trump election and provide them with a strictly *political* solution.

For these groups, *everything* that they do revolves around building their group, and their party. Without it they say, *nothing* can get done.



far-Right. The mass struggles of today are marked by their horizontal and autonomous nature, their desire to create new worlds, as well as to destroy and obliterate colonial and gendered hierarchies in their wake.

The Trump era for many on the Left represents a possible turning point from this. Finally, both progressives and the socialist Left are in a position to make a comeback and potentially cash in on whatever Bernie bucks still linger in wider society. Meanwhile, the Democratic Party is losing its shit experiencing their former base undergo an extreme radicalization. How could they not, as a majority of voters who supported both Bernie and Hillary are now seeing the DNC becoming a rubber stamp for the Trump regime and a force for its normalization.

But while unions attempt to play nice with Trump and Democrats wring their hands about how to get people to vote for them again, the other segments of the Left see much more golden opportunities. However, the visions that are being articulated by many within the Left, even the anti-capitalist Left, generally are simply the same strategies that we've heard time and time again, but this time tailored to a present reality under Trump.

Meet the new protest march, same as the old protest march.

## THE PROGRESSIVE REACTION

For progressives, best articulated in the Green Party, their strategy remains the same as what was attempted during the 2016 election: to build a third party that can run in local and national elections. But with the push to defeat Trump going to be even greater in 2020, there will most likely be even less of an impetus to build something like the Green Party, and even still, the Green Party got less than 1% of the vote in 2016 at a time when many thought that it was 'more safe' than ever to vote

*And why should the media report on it?* This uptick in violence, either coming from and sanctioned by the State, or from white nationalists and fascists is nothing new. In regards to the far-Right, it has been building in the United States in reaction to the Black Lives Matter movement for several years and went into high gear with the electoral victory of Trump in early November. For the media, such violence is hardly newsworthy simply because it happens all the time. This violence, it is not exceptional.

This, is the *new normal*.

Trump himself refused to even mention the growth of far-Right violence once he entered office, while those on the Right went on to invent new fears such as the "Bowling Green Massacre," to justify the State's massive Muslim ban. As the *Muslim Times* wrote:

**Trump, while reportedly offering condolences to Trudeau [for the Quebec City massacre], didn't respond by publicly warning about the threat of white supremacists plotting violence against Muslims or other people of color. But on Friday morning when a machete-wielding man in Paris allegedly attacked soldiers while yelling "Allahu Akbar," Trump immediately took to Twitter to bring attention to "radical Islamic terrorism."**

All of this is counterpoised to the reaction to anti-Trump actions as well as the riots that broke out in the Bay Area on February 1st against Milo. For the established political order, *these* events were exceptional. *Why?* These events were exceptional simply because they saw not only the Trump regime as the enemy but moreover the entire political system, along with the auxiliary far-Right forces which seek to uphold and strengthen the sovereignty of the State. But overall, because these actions were disruptive and not symbolic; that they sought to shut down,

not enter into a dialog. This is why they were singled out as a key threat to the entire system, and thus targeted for demonization.

Moreover: they were actually effective; *they shut Milo down*. What could they shut down next, the State worries? *The entire government perhaps?*

The State *can* allow a passive protest; what it cannot let pass is large masses of people refusing to allow the machinery of the State to function. It cannot allow people physically shutting things down and rioting; refusing police orders and taking over space. It cannot allow people stopping the flow of capital, energy, and commodities. For this, it must make an *exception*.

In order to ensure that people don't do this, it has a variety of tricks up its sleeve, which includes criminal charges, a militarized police force, and the threat of extra-legal far-Right violence. But it also seeks to demonize the most combative elements that make up resistance struggles. It seeks to paint them as outside agitators and instigators of random acts of violence or even in league with some foreign or outside body; not emanating from a community of support that social struggles are always borne from. If the State can successfully do this: demonize the combative agents within social movements that are willing to physically fight, then a key victory has been won by the regime.

Thus, the message becomes clear: spray paint a swastika on someone's house, beat up an immigrant, be an elected Republican official and openly call for another "Kent State" to put the youth in their place, shoot an anti-fascist at a Milo event, chant "Trump" as a coded racial slur at your school, vandalize or kill people at a Mosque, and the State could give a fuck. *Why should it?* Such violence always stabilizes a regime because it reinforces the very same hierarchies it seeks to uphold and defend.

However, if you shut down an airport against the State's executive orders, a pipeline it is trying to ram through your land, shut down a fascist rally by an editor of the website your chief advisor used to run, well, *we've got a problem*. That's the exception.

Not all violence is equal. There is the violence that is permitted. This is the violence that comes from above, that arrives in police bullets and drone strikes. There is the violence that is encouraged, that comes from below and is aimed at those even more below it; and it seeks to strengthen those above.

Then, there is the violence that is exceptional. This is the violence that comes from below and aimed at those above.

*This is the violence that can never be permitted.*

## MILITANT REFORMISM

But if all of this is true, then why do resistance movements cling to old strategies that don't work? Are our only options really just voting, building a third party, building a 'workers party,' or marching around in circles?

For the last 8 years, resistance movements have by and large rejected electoral politics, become more hostile to non-profit and political party leadership, top-down authoritarian organizing structures, as well as a strict commitment to non-violence. From the student occupation movement to Occupy, to the explosion of black insurgency that we saw from Ferguson, to Oakland, to Baltimore, the #NoDAPL fight in North Dakota that spread to Texas and Florida and beyond, and the #PrisonStrike that broke out inside prisons across the US, and the growing anti-fascist struggle which led to massive clashes with the