

# **Ten Theses on Anti-(((Tiqqunism)))**

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Recently a handful of people, likely a very small group associated with the Ungrateful Hyenas, who live thousands of miles from Atlanta and do not participate in the struggle against Cop City, have posted long tracts critiquing “Tiqqunism” on a platform dedicated to hosting communiques of sabotage against Cop City. If thoughtful, capable people come to believe the writings of the hyenas, it is not because they have posed interesting ideas or demonstrated any impressive capacity to act individually or as a group. Rather, their claims resonate only on the basis of their banality. The stories they are bandying out, the pseudo-debate they are attempting to conjure, and the odd slogans they are peddling on the internet magnify the same generalized timidity, powerlessness, and repression that all counter-revolutionary forces strive to produce.

Many of us who have witnessed this same pattern for over a decade, who are frequent targets of this hostility, and who have experienced it via online insults, whisper campaigns, and actual threats of personal violence, have long chosen to ignore the bickering and focus on participating in real struggles against our real adversaries. However, when these online critiques and whisper campaigns take direct aim at social struggles and implicitly threaten violence against autonomous infrastructure, it becomes critical to confront those who are more concerned with policing the purity of their ideology than with the civilizational crises that we face in this century. Thus, we would like to share a few ideas with those who have had the misfortune of reading this genre of unhelpful, dishonest, poorly-written, and odd Francophilia posted on this site or elsewhere.

## **A Brief Summary of Hyenaism**

The “Ungrateful Hyenas” and their running dogs believe that a vast intercontinental conspiracy of so-called “Tiqqunists” centralize power in movements. These conspirators are a shadowy, manipulative cabal. They look like anarchists, they talk like anarchists. They may even call themselves anarchists, or communists, or abolitionists, or something else. But you cannot trust them, because their name is not their real identity. Every struggle that emerges, from the George Floyd Uprising to mass ecological struggles taking place in France, to the struggle against Cop City, is simultaneously the result of an organic upwelling of resistance in which no organized force could or should play a decisive role, and in danger of being coopted by these so-called “Tiqqunists.” Their conspiracy proceeds according to the following logic:

1. “Tiqqunists” exist as an organized political force, distinct from and opposed to anarchists. Since they will never identify themselves, anyone might be a Tiqqunist. Because Tiqqunists present the greatest possible threat to anarchists, the latter must constantly be vigilant for their presence. It is not possible to articulate what Tiqqunists believe in, but, like obscenity, “we know it when we see it.”
2. These (((Tiqqunists))) are secretive and manipulative, and exert control over finances and media without identifying themselves. They are part of a global conspiracy of shadowy figures who bring dangerous ideas. They have secret meetings, but not as legitimate affinity groups with the right to privacy, rather, as something sinister and bad. They participate in local events, but they secretly answer to foreign contacts and networks.
3. Since these Tiqqunists represent such a great threat to anarchists, wherever they are hiding, they must be exposed and confronted through whisper campaigns, doxxing, or di-

rect violence. When a movement faces repression, as in the extreme violence and judicial repression visited upon both the defenders of the Atlanta Forest and the participants in Les Soulèvements de la Terre, it is more important to blame the shadowy cabals of the (((Tiqqunists))) than to support those repressed, or to intervene materially in the struggle in any capacity.

4. Anarchists should not “tolerate” the presence of Tiqqunists within movements, but should engage in “principled conflict” with them, up to and including arson attacks on autonomous infrastructure as well as conducting investigations into their networks. Tiqqunists are so adept at hiding themselves and manipulating readers that many people might be falsely convinced by their ideas, so it is up to principled anarchists to purge Tiqqunists from their milieus, and to stigmatize their platforms online. Ideas are dangerous, and these ideas are so dangerous that they must be purged by any means necessary. They are so manipulative that it is impossible to engage in reasoned debate with their ideas; deplatforming “Tiqqunist” speakers and ideas is the best way to protect innocent activists who might otherwise be hoodwinked into believing the wrong things.

## Ten Theses on the Pervasive Reaction

### 1. These “critiques” are not genuine sectarianism, but function primarily as horizontal repression.

“Decompositions” was published a month after the assassination of Tortuguita, which was followed by an avalanche of domestic terrorism charges against forest defenders, and less than two weeks before another Week of Action in Atlanta. “Breaking Ranks,” a supposed “exposé” of the secret authoritarian agenda of Les Soulèvements de la Terre, was published only a couple weeks after the French government violently rounded up over 30 alleged organizers with Les Soulèvements de la Terre, while officially banning and criminalizing the movement as a whole.

In the midst of some of the most combative and creative struggles against climate devastation and the police, while participants were laying in comas, in graves, or rotting in jails, these “comrades” deemed it timely to intensify ideological attacks, attempting to isolate those enduring repression from their allies and support networks. Somehow, the “Tiqqunists” are reformist manipulators who cooperate with the state *and simultaneously* constitute such a threat to the state that entirely unprecedented juridical instruments must be deployed to combat them in both Atlanta and France.

In their latest critique of Les Soulèvements de la Terre, the conspiracy theorists explicitly celebrate an arson attack against a movement space described as a “school of the earth” at the ZAD, demonstrating that their primary motivation is not insurrection, nor confrontation with the state and the capitalists destroying the planet — it is nothing other than vengeance and petty personal score-settling, plain and simple. It is a serious mistake to assume political affinity with, and extend solidarity to, people who are dedicated to the destruction of autonomous spaces and whose response to repression is to further attack those repressed. They are almost certainly not part of a CIA or DGSi operation—*but their impact is the same.*

## **2. The Hyenaist critique is little more than grist for the content mill.**

In the content factory, we're all forced to act as journalists, pretending to discover a new outrage each day, while forgetting whatever we were concerned with the day before. Ultimately this is an internalization of contemporary repressive and economic conditions: disposability, precarity, surveillance and self-management. We internalize these repressive logics, then parrot them back. By assuming the form of "content," our position of confinement, alienation, impotence and fear assumes the false guise of righteousness and lashes out against anyone who does not conform.

The Hyenaists, it seems, have decided to play their part. In a last ditch effort, a couple lonely bloggers are cleaving to their collapsing identities, which emerged from a political paradigm that is now completely outmoded. Nobody likes confronting their own distorted reflection in the mirror.

## **3. The Hyenaists present no substantial critique, only a counter-insurgent "anti-strategy", that offers condemnations designed to justify attacks and spread confusion.**

While their denunciatory rants are fixated on identifying "who" might be a "Tiqqunist" in the hopes of discrediting them, they don't even pretend to engage with the ideas of the US or Canadian militants who they are attacking. Their most bombastic criticism consisted of a collage-like mish-mash of various snippets pulled from texts over the past decade. If they have any theoretical critique, it's unclear what it is. According to their logic, anyone who forms connections with others, discusses strategy, and participates as though the stakes are historical and civilizational may be a "Tiqqunist".

While at first pass this murky thinking seems like a failure, in fact it is part of their strategy: by remaining *deliberately* vague and divisive, their denunciations are able to target an entirely nebulous grouping of people as enemies, legitimizing bad faith attacks on movements, organizers, and revolutionaries. Their mentality is that of a micro-Cheka, aspiring towards a purge to protect their party line. However, having rendered themselves hyper-marginal, their primary power lies in sowing doubt and confusion, which succeeds to the extent that they demobilize people and deter them from participating in struggles. The modes of social control they complain about—secretive conspirators silencing the true anarchists—are in fact the modes of social control they are most adept at employing. Because they have nothing substantive to say, they rely on whispers and smear campaigns. It is they who are the closet authoritarians, their blog posts little more than a projection.

## **4. The Anarchist Thermidor?**

Ultimately, these critiques are rooted in an older political paradigm, in which militants either betray their ideals or get betrayed. In the month of Thermidor (July 1794), the Jacobin French revolutionaries were betrayed by conservative forces, and all of their allies were arrested or guillotined. For the next two centuries, discourses and attitudes on this perceived pattern or "inevitability" characterized significant camps in the world socialist bloc.

The Hyenas belong perhaps to that same socialist tradition quite a bit more than they might think.

When the organized authoritarian Left was a real force, it made a convenient foil for purists to project their fears onto. Rather than building actual capacities, like the long and dedicated organizing of Spanish anarchists prior to the revolution of 1936, small parties, cults, and reading groups could instead constitute themselves with scarcely more than projected risks and anxieties alone. Now that Stalinist and Trotskyist parties are even more irrelevant than in the past, these purists need new scapegoats to blame for their failures. The “Tiqqunists,” whoever they are, are that scapegoat. Unfortunately for them, what they call “Tiqqunism” does not exist. Only anti-Tiqqunism exists — as the sad mask of its own impotence.

## 5. The conspiratorial thinking about “Tiqqunism” is structurally rooted in antisemitic conspiracy theories.

Anti-semitism is the ur-conspiracy theory, deeply baked into the narrative structures by which people apprehend notions of sinister groups, secret plots, internal enemies, etc. Popular narratives about hidden cabals, double allegiance, or sinister forms of power and control draw conceptually from anti-semitism.<sup>1</sup> The formal structure of these accusations about “Tiqqunism” relies on tropes drawn from anti-semitic narratives, and also specifically targets a perceived informal network which happens to include quite a few Jews and is inspired by a Jewish theological concept, *tikkun olam*.<sup>2</sup>

*Tiqqun* was a short-lived French philosophy journal from 1999–2001, associated with the milieu that later produced *The Coming Insurrection* and other texts by the Invisible Committee—an association later used as evidence by the French state in prosecuting the Tarnac 9. The title of the journal “Tiqqun” is derived from a Jewish theological concept, *tikkun olam*, or “repairing the world.”<sup>3</sup> While no one identifies as a “Tiqqunist” and the journal itself has been dead for over 20 years, it is worth noting that these Hyenaists have fixated on the dog-whistle name “Tiqqunist” to describe their enemies, who they claim control movement finances, manipulate movement media, and participate in a global conspiracy. If you replace (((Tiqqunist))) with “communist jews” this exact “critique” would be indistinguishable from right-wing conspiracy theories about a “Jewish world conspiracy,” right down to their conviction that mass collective action is impossible without a shadowy group of manipulators pulling the strings for their own sinister purposes.

In France, where this conflict is more entrenched and from whence these US and Canadian Hyenas derive the central categories of their critique, their friends at least had the good sense to lightly mask the structural antisemitism of their theory by describing their enemies as “*appelistes*.” This term derives from a text titled “*the Call*” (in French, “*Appel*”) which was published

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<sup>1</sup> Unlike other forms of racism, where some tangible quality of the other forms the basis for separating them out from the group (i.e. black skin, a kind of language, a particular shape of one’s eye, etc.), anti-Semitism is a unique form of racism that depends on the absence of any discernible quality or feature to mark the otherness of the other. As a consequence, this kind of racism is marked by a constant vigilance of and suspicion towards everyone and anyone, while at the same time constantly demonstrating – usually through the virulence of one’s own anti-Semitic or racist views – that one is not one of the others. See Moishe Postone’s interview on, “Zionism, anti-semitism, and the left” for one of many summaries of this dynamic <https://www.krisis.org/2010/zionism-anti-semitism-and-the-left/>.

<sup>2</sup> The irony in all this is that the historical denunciations of sabbateanism within Judaism itself were themselves a form of internal structural anti-semitism that raised many of the very issues that fascinated Gershom Scholem, Walter Benjamin and the writers of the journal *Tiqqun* itself.

<sup>3</sup> Walter Benjamin was a major reference for that milieu (“Invisible Committee,” for example, is a reference to his book, *The Arcades Project*), and they attempted to rescue the radical character of his messianic Jewish and anti-state communist thought.

anonymously in 2003, but which is presumed to have been written by people involved in both the journal *Tiqqun* and later the Invisible Committee. It is significant that the insult “appeliste” or “appelista” was often used in a North American context a decade ago, but has been replaced by another term, “Tiqqunist,” that emphasizes the Jewish references and background of many of the thinkers and militants who are thus smeared.

## **6. The Hyenaist “critique” is ultimately an expression of Christian morality and an obsession with purity.**

The hyenas belong in the company of moralists and liberals. Their framework is undergirded by a pervasive Christian morality: the world and humans are unsalvageable, revolution is impossible, so the best one can do is to make oneself as pure as possible, declare oneself righteous, speak correctly, and cleave to one’s own “pure” party line. It is more important to demonstrate adherence to the correct ideology than to participate in collective action (which necessitates association with strangers) in order to repair the world (*tikkun olam*). Seeking personal salvation through purity is more important than the messy reality of engaging in politics. If nothing else, there may be self-actualization through the “joy” of taking action, purging the unclean thoughts through the rites of the holy sacrament. Thus one may participate in a riot but may never think about how to move from riot to insurrection, nor how to contribute to struggles in ways that involve more people and open up more possibilities.

## **7. Whining and sectarianism always emerges after the crest of uprisings.**

It is no mistake that a near-identical brand of self-described “nihilism” took hold in the US in the wake of the Occupy movement, when thousands of militants who participated in bold action found that even the highest extreme of dedication and self-sacrifice does not guarantee a revolutionary transformation of the world. Many of those who today are denounced as “Tiqqunists” were, in fact, a part of that crashing wave of negativity and pessimism. Similarly, after the George Floyd Uprising “failed” to abolish the police, being unable to overcome a violent reaction from the far right and a reassertion of control from the center, it is understandable that burnout and disappointment would produce some degree of resentment and a conviction that revolutionary change is impossible. Many people stopped struggling altogether and returned to their lives; others understood the uprising as a high point in a much longer cycle of struggle, and began to ask themselves how they could sustainably continue the struggle as the insurrection faded; some have co-constructed the movement to stop Cop City; a small handful decided to turn on other comrades, in a sad and weak repetition of the internecine violence of the old Left.

## **8. The greatest condemnation of the Hyenaists is their own weakness.**

If comrades are unhappy with contemporary struggles, they should participate, take action on their own terms, and prove the vitality of their ideas through their impact on the world and their ability to attract other participants. At a minimum, they could compete to precipitate the most destruction against their actual enemies. Instead, some would have us believe that the 30,000 people who participated in the sabotage at St. Soline, France, were manipulated by “Tiqqunists.” This claim is laughable. Ideas demonstrate their vitality by inspiring people to act on their own terms. Good ideas spread and initiate practical responses. Either the (((Tiqqunists))) are master

manipulators and so thoroughly control movement resources and media that other theories of revolution are somehow “starved” of oxygen and repressed, or the Hyenas and their ilk simply have no real ideas to bring to the table, and as a result, are unable to convince others to participate in their suicidal drive towards a performative liberal militancy.

In their denunciation of St. Soline, they demonstrate their own function as a repressive apparatus. Farmers, environmentalists and militants fought bravely at St. Soline and faced unthinkable violence. There were consequences, and there has been substantive reflection and self-critique to help avoid the same traps in the future. The “critique” from the Hyenas is essentially limited to the theory that 30,000 people participating in mass sabotage of infrastructure for corporate water theft were actually liberals and not doing “real” sabotage, and, moreover, that they were manipulated by sinister plotters who are responsible for the state violence visited upon them, and finally, that those same plotters are secret reformists working hand in hand with the state. The logic is so impressively byzantine, that it’s unclear what exactly the motives of these sinister plotters could possibly be.

In this framework there is no room for experimentation, failure, reflection, learning, and more experimentation—only a conviction that nothing is possible, and then a circular firing squad when things go sideways. If the Hyenaists are convinced that large-scale uprisings against the destroyers of life on this planet are impossible, they should do something else with their lives than attack people trying to fight.

**9. Paranoia about “composition” is a mirage<sup>\*\*\*</sup> rooted in the Hyenas’ own fear of working with strangers outside of an insular milieu<sup>\*\*\*</sup>,<sup>\*\*\*</sup> and their own resistance to change.**

Next to “Tiqqunism,” the other buzzword repeatedly employed by these paranoiacs is “composition,” which they adamantly oppose because they don’t like some people in France who also use that word, but which they never define nor engage with theoretically (aside from a ridiculous suggestion that the people currently accused of terrorism in France are dedicated to opportunistic unity with the ruling class at all costs). Composition is simply one anti-authoritarian idea among many about how to move and collaborate with diverse others in a fragmented era. It is a way to think collective joy and power across difference and without centralization, starting from the premise that it is both impossible and undesirable to control movements in authoritarian ways. Not all who have been decried as “Tiqqunists” even agree with this proposal. If the Hyenas have such a taboo against the word, they should propose another strategy for how to bring together high numbers of extremely distinct individuals, cultures, and subjectivities, through diverse forms of participation, at a scale sufficient to actually win social struggles. If they have no interest in working with anyone aside from other self-described anarchists, then they are not revolutionaries and should stop pretending to be. If they are not revolutionaries, and they are not open to being changed by participating in struggle, and they are not interested in winning, it is bizarre that they are so obsessed with policing the acceptable theoretical boundaries of their milieu. It appears as though their primary interest is the preservation of their group or subculture.



## 10. There is no debate between “insurrectionalism” and “Tiqqunism.”

There are only those who seek to make the truth of the global uprisings the new common sense, and counter-revolutionaries on the sidelines who are content to revolt every now and then, while dedicating the remainder of their time to crushing possibilities and spreading sad passions. Those who don't concern themselves with victory against capitalism, who only content themselves with sporadically attacking things, are not extremists at all.

May the real nihilists come forward at long last, that we may destroy the world system for good, instead of just toying around with it!

## Onward

No doubt the hyenas will continue their yipping and ankle biting, and will write some bombastic retort to this piece. It will likely include more pieces translated from French trying to import personal conflicts from another continent. It will take the existence of this retort as proof of the existence of a “tiqqunist” conspiracy, instead of the natural response of individuals subject to repeated slander and attacks. They will repeat accusations of a secretive, authoritarian, milieu. They will likely mention some outrage that some people perpetrated against some other people in France, and use it as proof of guilt for everyone in Canada and the US who they do not like. They will try to convince you—just as the media does every day—that the world is fucked and that having a hot take on who's really to blame is the most one can do. They might say that the most radical position is to assume we cannot win but that we should fight for the sake of fighting. They will argue that the ability to change one's mind and develop new ideas in response to new information is a trait of shape-changing opportunists. They will tell you exactly what real anarchists should believe and how they should act, and they will argue in favor of hunting down apostates and heretics to their faith. Perhaps they will take inspiration from their friends across the Atlantic and attempt to burn down some autonomous project that they think is ideologically impure.

We don't particularly care, and we have nothing to say to people whose only conception of struggle is to compete for ideological supremacy within a tiny milieu. We do, however, want to extend an invitation to all readers to participate in struggles, to survey the conditions on the ground before making up one's mind, to formulate hypotheses with trusted friends about what form of intervention or action is most likely to weaken enemies and build power outside and against the state, to take those actions, and then to formulate new hypotheses. Meet new people, assume good faith, be willing to change, be genuinely interested in different ideas. People have been fighting for liberation since the first states and the first empires, and there have been more ideas and words for this struggle than there have been cultures and civilizations. It is the height of hubris for anyone to believe that they, and they alone, have unlocked the true key to liberation.

If we fight, if we truly take ourselves seriously, there will be failures and missteps—this is a sign of vitality and experimentation in an era that desperately needs both. We experiment, we encourage others to experiment, we fail, we learn, we try differently. The only thing that can truly kill a fighting spirit is a conviction that it is impossible to win. There is room for everyone to take bold action, there is room for everyone to put their skills and their passions to use in repairing the world. For those who disagree with the theses in this piece, we issue a good-natured challenge:

develop your own hypotheses about how to expand the struggle and act accordingly. If your actions are effective, we are excited to be inspired by them.

Cop City will never be built.

—some anarchists

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