

Moving Anarchy away from Eurocentricism

**a compilation of writings and spoken words, in the hope that anarchists will
turn away from the dogmas of the West**

compiled and edited by rob los ricos

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Contents

Indigenous Resistance and Anarchism	4
Not Our Borders	7
The Intensification of Independence in Wallmapu	11
Glossary	11
Introduction	12
The Community	13
The Anarchists	14
The Project	16
Affinity and Difference	20
What Made This Project Possible	24
When the Line between Self-Sufficiency and Sabotage Becomes Fine	25
Revolutionary Solidarity: Rojava and the International Struggle	27
A Shared Struggle: Revolutionary Solidarity	27
International Engagement	28
Until the last drop of our blood: Shingal and the future of Kurdistan	30
The PKK and power politics in South Kurdistan	30
Implications	31
You Will Learn A Few New Words In Resistance	33
Failed Mexican Narco-state's assessment of "anarchist" groups, 2016	36
The insurgents	36
Attacks against universities and research centers	37
The <i>coup</i> that is being prepared against the Arabs	38
Insurrection in middle country	38
National security: rise of anarchism	39
From boycott to armed confrontation	39
Contra Aztlán: A Critique of Chicano Nationalism	41
¿Aztlán Libre?	42
Against All Nation-States, Against the Police	43
But we have to, so we do it real slow	47
Anti-Work / Anti-Capitalist: An Introduction	47
Mexican-Americans & Work	48

II	50
¿Pero Cómo Resisteremos Por Mientras? / How Can We Resist Right Now?	50
EZLN: in this war the enemy is all of us and everything.	53
Critical Response to Frantz Fanon's 'The Wretched of the Earth'	55
Bibliography	58
Eritrea: National Liberation? National Disaster?	59
Amilcar Cabral's revolutionary anti-colonialist ideas	63
Culture and the reclamation of humanity	64
The re-emergence of resistance	68
John Trudell's 1980 Thanksgiving Day Address	71
For america to live, europe must die!	76
The Pathless Quest: Creative Mythology	84

Indigenous Resistance and Anarchism

An interview with Gord Hill

How do you perceive the relation that can be made between anarchist and indigenous resistance?

Well, I think – starting from the basis of solidarity – understanding that we have a common opponent in the terms of the state.

As indigenous people, their anti-colonial resistance is directed against the state, the settler state, the colonial state. And anarchism is against state authority. I think that is the psychological base for solidarity and unity.

In terms of indigenous society, a lot of them are fairly egalitarian and had anti-authoritarian principles that are shared with anarchists and the anarchist movement. So I think there's a strong basis for solidarity, and I think over the last couple of decades, the anarchist movement – especially in Canada – the development of an anti-colonial perspective has really helped. And the anarchist movement has been one of the more solid allies that indigenous peoples have had, in terms of solidarity campaigns, support, and resisting a lot of the things – like the anti-olympic movement we had here – was one of the first times a national, across the country...a slogan like “no olympics on stolen, native land” was really carried out. Anarchist groups helped facilitate that, and helped to spread that message, so I think in terms of that type of stuff it's very important, alliances are very important. Indigenous people are only like five percent of the population, so they need to find allies within the settler population in order to expand the struggle. And I think that when you make those kinds of alliances within the settler population, you divide the settler population, and you gain more alliances and resources that you take away from the settler society. It's a strategic idea that should be perceived by indigenous peoples.

One of the problems I see is the concept of white guilt, and I think that solidarity coming from that kind of place is kind of weaker, and is vulnerable, too. Because, as we saw during the G20, and the infiltration of the anarchist groups at that time. I think a part of their strategy was exploiting white guilt, so they were using undercover police who were people of color. So, that is an obstacle or challenge that needs to be overcome.

Weighing and pursuing the difference between indigenous people, if you work with indigenous people and you're working with some people, you're networking with indigenous as a general concept.

Yeah, because the indigenous people are not a homogeneous group. And because of colonialism, we have all kinds of divisions within indigenous communities.

You have economic divisions through capitalism, you have class divisions now, so you have an aboriginal business elite whose business interests are not the same as the grassroots people, but are more connected to the capitalist ruling class.

And then you have other divisions, like some natives are hardcore Christians now. There are all these differences now.

On the other hand, the indigenous people need to see the anarchist movement isn't a homogeneous group either, so there are different elements of the anarchist movement, some of them are more stronger allies to make within the anarchist movement. So indigenous people also have to understand that the anarchist movement – or any resistance movement they are going to make allies with – is not a homogeneous group, so you're always going to try to make alliances with groups you have more affinity with.

How did you make the relation as yourself, as an anarchist, and indigenous people in struggle?

As a child, I grew up on and off reserve, so I have that kind of exposure and experience with that kind of lifestyle or whatever, but it wasn't until I was in my late teens that I became more politicized, and my politicization came through hardcore punk exposure to anarchist ideas, and then I became active in the anarchist movement at the time. I mean, this was about 1987, I became active. And then, it wasn't until 1990 – the Oka crisis – that's when I became more aware of indigenous resistance, indigenous struggles, because Oka was very inspiring, and it showed the spirit of resistance of indigenous peoples. So, after that I began to look more at indigenous resistance, and also at my own indigenous roots – ancestry and that. so, over the years, my politics were basically anti-colonial and anti-capitalist, it's the convergence of the two concepts of indigenous resistance and anarchist resistance.

What do you think the anarchists can do best to support or be allies of indigenous people?

Well, if you go back to the concept of solidarity, you understand that it's struggle against colonialism and capitalism is bound up with indigenous resistance to colonialism and capitalism, and to act on that basis of solidarity. It's not just charity work, it's not just support work, to carry out resistance to this colonialist/capitalist system, based on that.

But in terms of, specifically, to identify indigenous struggles that are paramount, that are resisting colonialism and capitalism, and to find areas where that solidarity can manifest and where you can not only make alliance, but you identify ways you can contribute to an overall resistance.

Define what of the anarchism...define what are the parts of the anarchists who are more sympathetic, or who you can work with? Can you more define this?

Well, certainly the anarchist groups that have developed more of an anti-colonial analysis. That would be the kind of alliances you'd want to make within the anarchist movement, is those who've developed an anti-colonial perspective and engage in that kind of resistance. And the anarchist groups largely based in the urban areas can be very effective in, not only gathering resources, but also in propaganda, spreading out information about different campaigns and struggles and that. But also, you know, a lot of indigenous people in the movement – I don't think their analysis is all that sharp, it's not that developed, especially about movement, resistance movements.

Some native people have the attitude that all non-native people are just here to be supporters in the struggle, and are therefor sources of money and material items and stuff like that. But, I think they need to develop the idea that there should be anti-system resistance spread throughout the population, and that there are a lot of elements in the population that are looking at indigenous peoples for this resistance, for inspiration, for models of resistance to show a path or whatever, so there's two different elements, two aspects to it. And if indigenous peoples are just looking at non-native people as sources of money or material items, it's just going to create a

situation of exploitation, and that's not a healthy relationship for solidarity. It's not solidarity at all, in fact; it's just exploitation. You can take it to the level of it's just hustling, it's just a hustler attempt to get money. I think that's something that needs to be addressed, because a resistance movement against the state needs to encompass as many parts of the population as possible.

And in terms of anarchist groups, they have a lot to offer. They have a lot of experience in organizing this type of resistance. not only organizing protests or information campaigns or whatever, but also the tactics of resistance, which have been developed over many decades. Decades that a lot of indigenous communities, they just do not have the experience in organizing.

When you look at some aspects of the anarchist or the anti-capitalist resistances and very, very large mobilizations of people — Quebec City 2001, the Toronto G20 — these kinds of campaigns, you're talking about major logistical infrastructure structure that was established; media, medical, housing, convergences drawing in thousands of people to come to a location to carry out resistance. These are things that indigenous people can learn a lot from. But some of them are just arrogant, they think their movement is the center of the world, and that's an attitude that needs to be overcome if the resistance is to spread, and to be truly anti-colonial and anti-capitalist, and involving as many parts of the settler population as possible.

And it's the same thing for the anarchists. Sometimes the anarchists think they're the center of everything.

Certainly, anarchists who are developing anti-colonial resistance can learn a lot from indigenous people, that indigenous peoples have a lot of strength, in terms of their community. They have stronger communities, they have stronger family networks. And these have always been the basis of indigenous resistance wherever it's occurring, it's from these strong community and family networks.

And also the level of resistance that native people engage in when they do engage in resistance is at a lot higher level, for various reasons; economic conditions, cultural, and history, these kinds of things form indigenous resistance, so that when they do fight, it's at a higher level, as you can see at Oka, even uwash or gustafson lake. I don't just mean armed resistance, I mean the fighting spirit, the spirit of resistance that indigenous people have, and that's an inspiration to anarchists movements. There's a lot to learn from this, and some anarchist groups need to overcome this concept of non-violence, passive resistance and that kind of stuff, because when you look at people who are oppressed, colonized people, that's not the only form of resistance they are engaged in. because they do have this warrior culture that's embedded into — it's a part of who they are as a people.

So, there's things to learn both ways. Both groups, indigenous and anarchists, have to learn from one another and see that their struggles are combined. That's what solidarity means, that you have a common enemy that you have to come together to fight against. It's not one group exploiting the other, or one group just being supporters of another.

I mean, this is what the movements went through in the 60s and 70s. The white movement was trying to be supporters of the black liberation movement. The black liberation movement wanted the white people to go out and organize their communities and get them into resistance movements to fight the system. You're not supporters or cheerleaders for resistance, they have to go and engage in that resistance as well.

There was a lot of discussion three or four decades ago about what does it mean to be an ally of repressed, colonized peoples. It think what they learned was that you need to fight the system, and you need to organize your people, in your communities, into that resistance.

Not Our Borders

Transcribed from The Final Straw radio program, Red Warrior Society Tour and Defending Water Protectors

thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org

so for some listeners hearing that you're speaking on behalf of indigenous struggle at standing rock, with an accented english that someone might place from a spanish speaking majority country, can you talk about your scope of indigeneity that you are addressing?

of course, this is really simple, and this is part of the construction of what it means to be indigenous people, what it means to be people of the land, what it means to be native. because honestly, i consider myself native, i always say i'm native, but not american. and this is really important to understand.

and this is still not a political equation to a lot of people. and the way we as indigenous people, coming from northern area of the homeland, of the whole territory, we often are displaced as an unique people, have been labeled in a kind of way that the people and the government have been calling us for a long time. first, this is another example of cultural violence, and i'm always clear with everybody about that.

i'm not from this continent, i came from south america. i came from this country called peru. but even that — i don't even recognize that country as my country. i came from a people. i came from one of the many indigenous nations of the amazon basin region of this place called peru. the name of the nation is the guara nation. my clan is the japia clan, the ramakow clan. but the question is 'what are you doing in the united states,' right?

well, the same reason that a lot of my people coming from the south of the colonial border are also here. a lot of us, we move to this country as a political refugee, we've been displaced by civil war, political turmoil, violence, poverty. the fact like the united states intervention in our homelands, you know? it is something that is really clear. a lot of people don't even think about it. nobody wants to leave their own homelands, but we've been displaced by violence. and the fact that we are here, in this country, the country responsible for the violence in our homelands — a lot of the civil wars, the political turmoil, a lot of the violence in south america has been caused by US intervention. there have been massacres committed against millions of people, with guns, with money, with training coming from the united states. you've probably seen about the school of the americas, right?

so that's our reality, in every single latino country we see the same phenomena reproducing, during the 80s, during the 90s, and even today. every time there is a civil war, every time there is political turmoil, every time there is two factions fighting against one another, the ones who are trapped in the middle are, for the most part, are indigenous tribes, indigenous nations, indigenous people. because as indigenous people, we know better than anyone who's taking sides, it will be the end of us. as indigenous people, we know that we are all sacrificed for the economy, by the

government. we know that even until today, that this is really close for us. it is really important to us.

and also i want to emphasize that a lot of the people that came from south of the colonial border are also indigenous people, are also people that belong to different indigenous nations, from mexico, to what we call south america, from what we call central america, and that's something at the red warrior camp, we always have in mind from the very beginning, we've always have been really intentional about that. we don't believe in these political borders, we don't believe in these colonial borders that separate our people. we don't believe in the fact of a border in the southwest, between mexico and the united states divides us as a people, divides us as a nation, divides us by culture. also we rely on our traditions as indigenous people, we always have been unseparated, we always have been moving, we always have been doing that for multiple reasons: for trading, for exchanging information, for ceremonies, for festivities; for different aspects of life.

now in the 21st century, we have all these borders that completely define and enforce in the worst way possible for a lot of our people that are coming from the south, have been called called latinoes, hispanic, illegals, undocumented, aliens — multiple names, when in reality I'm no latino, I'm no hispanic, I'm no peruvian, i'm not south american — i'm giawa man, and indigenous person from the giawa nation. that's who i am, that's my identity.

but you know what? also, as an indigenous person, i relate with the issues of all indigeous folks — who sometimes, for the most part, we call migrant folks. i believe in migrant justice, i believe in migrant rights, but at the same time, i view those people as my people, as indigenous folks coming from other homelands. People that have been displaced for multiple reasons. people that are moving to this country because sometimes it is the only way to be safe, the only way to provide for your family. and it's the same thing that i mentioned before, red warrior camp completely understands from the very beginning. so in this camp, the shipe shekowey camp, we have different camps. and in this camp we are forming, we are creating according people's own tribal affiliations. and that was really good, i don't criticize that, i completely agree with that. as indigenous people, you want to be with your own tribe, or your own nation. you want to be with people you know, coming from your same homeland, coming from your same ethnical region.

at one point, we had — for example — the sakwith camp, it was mostly dine people living in this camp, and we had another camp called pueblo camp that was pueblo and zuni people from the so-called new mexico.

we had the haudenashone camp, that it was the people from the six nations from upper new york and so-called canada. we had the native hawaiian camp that was mostly from the islands, from hawaii. other people don't see that, you know? people don't even know that there are indigenous people in hawaii. and these people, they understand this conflict. that no matter where you walk in this hemisphere, from the continent to the islands, you are walking on indigenous lands. no matter how many times we try to change the names of the lands, no matter how many times we want to sign contracts and agreements over this land, from what i care, i would rather go to red warrior family camp. all the same, indigenous familys' there. all this land, from the north to the south, is indigenous lands.

so, at the red warrior camp, we always understand that why we start a camp, we are gathering together according to our won tribal affiliations. We sataer gathering together, coming together according to our relationships, way before we sarterd coming down this road. so when we formed red warrior camp, we were people that, we already know each other, we already have our rela-

tionships. so we have people fighting for, like for migrants, for example. people that were fighting pipelines. people that were fighting fracking, uranium mining. people that were engaged in land rights, and treaty rights, and water rights, and people who were doing a lot of migrant justice. different people fighting different issues, we already know we have a relationship between each other.

but the uniqueness about red warrior camp is, like, in our camp we have representatives of 27 indigenous nations, from 10 different countries, all over the hemisphere. so that was the uniqueness and the beauty of red warrior camp. having all these indigenous people, from all over the hemisphere, from the north to the south. that was a powerful thing to see, to experience for me.

and also recognize that even in what we call the united states and what we call mexico, there is a border that these diverse communities have. and when i'm talking about communities, i'm talking about nations that are divided by these borders. like, for example, the o'okam nation is one of those, and yaqui nation is one of those. lipan apache nation is another one, and the kickapoos — and different nations from all over the colonial borders of mexico and canada, with the united states.

and the reality is that the ho'okam nation is divided by these borders. they have communities living on american side in the so-called arizona, and they have communities living on the mexican side, in the so-called sonora. and everytime the people living on the mexican side, when they are trying to cross the border to see their families, their relatives, to go to the other side, the american side, for ceremonies, for festivities, for multiple reasons. everytime people are trying to do that, they are harrassed, they are being detained, they have been called illegals, they have been harrassed by the border patrol, and by eyes. and that's something that really blows my mind. we are telling indigenous people that they can't cross their own land, the land of their ancestors, and land where they have been living since the beginning of time, according to their own story. and it really blows my mind how ironic that it can be, and how entitled this government, to basically decide who is indigenous and who is not. so it's a little bit about my feelings about that, and the feelings of a lot of my red warrior family.

yeah, i have a really strong accent. and the reality is that my accent is part of my identity. i shouldn't be speaking english. i shouldn't be speaking spanish. i should be speaking my own indigenous language. colonization. and colonization is violence, not a thing from the past. genocide is not a thing from the past. those things have been going forward under capitalism right now. the fact that we have borders, the fact that our indigenous people have been coming from the south who have been treated like criminals, have been detained, have been seperated as people, as communities, is one more proof that these things are happening right now.

and it never ends.



The Intensification of Independence in Wallmapu

critical reflections on a solidarity trip to generate electricity to one mapuche community in struggle.

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[ed. –The Mapuche, which means “people of the earth,” are Chile’s largest indigenous group. They resisted the Spanish conquistadors for more than 300 years, and ultimately won treaties with the Chilean state, recognizing their right to everything south of Bío Bío river, roughly the southern half of Chile. But in the late 19th century, a new wave of European settlers arrived, and the treaties were broken, with Mapuche lands seized in violent takeovers. Even with the return of some lands in recent decades, the Mapuche hold a small fraction of what they inhabited until the late 19th century. Revolt continues in these quarters, often joined by anarchists. Parts of Argentina are also Mapuche, where they also struggle for land and against the oil industry and similar. We found this text very insightful as to the nature of anarchist solidarity as a practice. However sceptical one might be of ‘independence’ as we know it, here are experiences of comrades navigating those tensions on the ground in a nonideological manner.]

Glossary

Bío Bío — a river that runs west from the Andes and empties into the Pacific at the modern day site of Concepción. For hundreds of years, this was the treaty-guaranteed northern boundary of the Mapuche territories.

che — person or people

gringo — European or North American **lamuen** — sister or compañera

latifundistas — major landowners, a holdover from the colonial system of production **lof** — a Mapuche village community

longko — the closest translation is chief, although not a coercive figure and only one of several vocational authorities at the community level

machi — medicine man, a spiritual leader and healer (can be man or woman) **mapu** — land, earth, territory, or space

newen — force or strength, of the kind that flows from nature **peñi** — brother or compañero

presismo — prisonerism, a deadend practice of obsessively or ritualistically supporting prisoners, often in a fetishizing way

rewe — a voluntary aggrupation of lof in a contiguous local territory **Wallmapu** — the Mapuche territories, or “all the lands” **weichafe** — warrior

werken — literally a messenger, a community authority responsible for working on behalf of the community and maintaining connections with other communities

weupife — a person in a community responsible for maintaining and transmitting the collective historical memory

winka — literally “New Inca,” meaning white person or non-indigenous person

Introduction

In the last decade, an increasing number of Mapuche communities have carried out the “productive recovery” of their lands. Using direct action to take back their traditional territory from whomever has usurped it – usually logging companies or *latifundistas* – the Mapuche take this land out of the capitalist market and put it to a traditional use for local needs, either through farming, grazing, or forest commoning.

While this line of struggle has been hugely successful, inspiring other communities to begin forcefully taking back their own lands, those that have ejected the usurpers and asserted their claims to the land have often faced new problems.

After a community successfully reclaims its lands, repression usually decreases and quality of living improves, leading to a different atmosphere in which the struggle is less conflictive. In this new, more comfortable atmosphere of struggle, certain recuperative ideas can sneak in. One of these is the temptation to put newly acquired lands to economically productive use, out of a desire to achieve a higher standard of living along Western lines.



Closely related to the infiltration of a capitalist worldview, principally seen in the desirability of jobs and money, is the influx of evangelical Christianity. Evangelical churches are recruiting aggressively in South America, and their presence is always accompanied by a decrease in solidarity, an extension of the capitalist worldview, and a greater vulnerability to resource extraction and other development projects. Specifically in Wallmapu, evangelicals often work as snitches and they aggressively demonize the Mapuche culture. Communities in which the Chris-

tians have not yet taken root have a clear and effective solution – burn down the churches – but communities with an already significant Christian presence have lost their togetherness after the more conflictive moments of struggle passed and Christians could begin pushing for a successful reintegration into **winka** society or simply ignoring the earthly reality of social conflict.

Another major problem stems from the lack of access to electricity and water. Most Mapuche communities steal their electricity from existing power lines. But in the depths of the forestry plantations that occupy the greater part of Mapuche lands, there are no power lines to pilfer from. What's more, the exotic, genetically modified pine and eucalyptus planted in straight rows in a nearly endless monoculture (the World Bank labels these as "forests" in its development statistics) dry up the water table. In other words, many Mapuche communities have successfully kicked out the logging companies or big landlords, only to find that they could not have electricity and water in their newly reclaimed lands. Taking advantage of the vulnerable situation, logging companies and NGOs used charity to discourage resistance, building infrastructure projects to reward non conflictive communities.

To overcome this obstacle, some Mapuche communities in struggle have begun looking for ways to set up their own water and electricity infrastructure. In the furtherance of this goal, one community invited a handful of **gringo** anarchists with the necessary skills and resources to help them set up an electricity generation system that could subsequently be recreated in other communities. This article is about that collaborative project.

The Community

We can call the community where the project took place Lof Pañgihue. The people of Lof Pañgihue lost their lands, along with the rest of the Mapuche, in the 1880s during the surprise invasion by Chile and Argentina. As with other **lof**, many **che** were killed, and others became refugees, eventually moving to the cities. A few were able to remain in the **lof** and rebuild, though their herds and the best of their lands had been stolen from them. The **rewe**, **ayllu rewe**, and **fütal mapu** with which the Mapuche had traditionally come together for ceremonies or defensive warfare had disintegrated.

The Chilean government was giving away Mapuche lands, and many **gringos** came and set up large estates on which the Mapuche had to labor as peons. The struggle in the early years was focused on survival, retaining their language and spirituality, and resisting the landlords. In the days of Allende [*ed. – Socialist president of Chile in the 1970's*] and Pinochet [*ed. – the military dictator who overthrew him with the backing of U.S.*], the Mapuche linked their struggle with the leftist anticapitalist movement in force at the time, often joining armed struggle groups like MIR and MapuLautaro.

Around that time, several thousand people were living in **Lof Pañgihue** on just about a hundred acres of land. A large amount of land was nationalized by the Allende as part of a program to eventually give it to poor people (Mapuche and **winka**) on an individualized commodity basis. The Pinochet government, however, gave this land to the logging companies, and **Lof Pañgihue** was soon surrounded by plantations.

In the early '90s, many Mapuche embarked on an autonomous line of struggle, increasingly rejecting the leftist mode of struggle that had footsoldiers, or the Marxist analysis that insisted

on branding them as peasants who had to join the international proletariat in order to advance and liberate themselves.

The people of **Lof Pañgihue** occupied about a thousand acres that had been usurped by various **latifundistas**, using sabotage, attacks on police guardians, and constant pressure to eventually get the landlords to give up their claims. They also built houses and began farming or grazing on the recovered land. More recently, they began recovering another thousand acres currently usurped by a logging company.

They have been cutting down pine for use as firewood and replanting native trees. With the return of the native trees, mountain lions, native birds, and other forms of life have also started to come back, including medicinal plants that the machis gather for traditional cures.

Multiple members of **Lof Pañgihue** have been imprisoned, and others face an array of minor and serious charges, in retaliation for their struggle. The police maintain a constant level of repression against the community, and they have also destroyed houses, stolen tools, tear gassed babies, shot rubber bullets at the elderly, and beaten, harassed, and arrested their **weichafe**, **werken**, and **longko**.

In the face of the repression, a neighboring community gave up on land recovery actions, even though many in the community still did not have any land. In another controversial decision, they also accepted a charity project from the logging company that brought water to the village. But after just a couple years, the pipes broke, and the community has neither the know of how to fix them, nor the money to pay for replacement parts. That enforced dependence is a built-in part of charity.

The logging company rewarded the community for giving up its struggle, but it was not so stupid as to hand out a reward that would permit any degree of independence. They did not involve the community in building the infrastructure, nor did they use cheap local parts that could be easily replaced.

The major obstacle faced by **Lof Pañgihue** is the lack of water. Thanks to all the pine plantations, the middle of the valley where they and the other community are located goes bone dry in the summer. No water for drinking, no water for the animals, no water for the crops. There are year-round streams at the edge of the valley, but no power lines to steal electricity from. They don't need a lot of electricity, since they are not pursuing a Western model of development, but having radio and telephone is not only a major convenience, but a way that different communities stay in contact and spread the word about repression. And, let's not romanticize, the occasional washing machine is seen as a big plus. If they can relocate their homes and gardens to the riparian side of the valley, leaving their current site for grazing, and if they find a way to generate power, then they will have land, electricity, water, their dignity, and a way forward in the struggle, whereas the community that accepted charity and made peace with the State will only have electricity and half the land they need.

The Anarchists

We got the invitation through a Mapuche friend we had worked with on our previous trip to Wallmapu. Having been their guest, and having collaborated on land recovery, translation and diffusion about their struggle, prisoner support, and other projects, we had a personal basis of

trust, solidarity, and friendship. Without that, they never would have thought of contacting us when they learned that a nearby community needed to find a way to generate its own electricity.

The next step was finding comrades who were interested in the project and had the needed skills. We prepared for several months making arrangements, getting resources together, and practicing techniques for the fabrication of different generation systems. We also talked about our expectations and desires for the trip.

A clear priority for everyone involved was a total rejection of charity. We did not see ourselves as privileged people going to help underprivileged others, nor as allies to the Mapuche struggle. The only reason we considered going was because the Mapuche were struggling for their freedom, and we as anarchists were involved in a distinct but interconnected struggle for our own freedom. This was, in a sense, the “community of freedoms” Fredy Perlman writes about.

Connected to the Mapuche success in supporting their prisoners and resisting heavy state repression, at least in my mind, is the long-term view that the Mapuche typically take. One can often hear the phrase, “We have been struggling for over 500 years, and we may have to struggle 500 more.”



The purpose of the project was to deepen the relationship of solidarity between different people in struggle. We were being invited because of specific skills some of us had, but we had no illusions about being unique in that regard. Only because the Mapuche had created such a potent, insightful struggle was this project even possible. It is no coincidence that none of us had ever set up an electricity generation system before; never before had doing so held revolutionary implications. We wanted learning on this trip to go both ways, and we knew that it would. Speaking for myself, the conversations and experiences I had on the previous trip to Wallmapu, the worldview and the vision of struggle I encountered, forever altered my own practice as an anarchist.

Because it was impossible to communicate directly with the people in the community until we arrived, when planning the trip we decided we should begin with a conversation about our goals, motivations, and expectations. We would not get distracted by the technical details, as important as they were. We were not going to set up a generation system in a village, we were going to deepen our relationships.

The material infrastructure was an anchor that would permit the intensification of anticapitalist relations, and a point of leverage for the liberated social relations to push back against the imposed capitalist social relations.

As such, success for the project could be defined as the following:

1. forming relationships that would enable mutual solidarity
2. working together with **peñi** and **lamuen** in a collective process to install one or several models of electricity generation using local materials, with an emphasis on passing on skills, such that the model could be recreated without external aid and set up in other communities in struggle.

In other words, if we effectively set up an electricity generation system in a community and left, and the people there did not know how to make another one on their own, the project would have been a failure for us.

The Project

Solely on a technical level, the project was fairly complicated. The plan was to fabricate one system that would use wood chips to create power, and one or two run-off-river systems that would use pressurized water to turn a drive shaft and generate electricity.

Logistically, it became even more complicated. We needed to get a workshop space, an arc welder, a gas welder, an angle grinder, a drill, a metal lathe, a dozen hand tools, and a hundred other items that would constitute the primary materials. We had to get the materials as cheap as possible, in local stores and junkyards, so we could be sure that the **peñi** and **lamuen** could replicate everything after we had left. Then we had to build everything with Mapuche comrades so that they would learn the process. And we had to do all this in a context of constant repression, with new arrests and raids happening every week, some of them directly impacting on the project. The possibility of being arrested, deported, and banned from Chile hung over us throughout the entire project, should the state decide to define what we were doing as a political activity. The Chilean constitution prohibits foreigners from participating in political activities, and the state's repression against the Mapuche specifically aims to isolate – one community from another, and all of Wallmapu from the outside world. To us, the project was not at all a “political activity,” in fact it went far deeper, and precisely for that reason we had to be extremely careful and low key.

A couple of friends took us out to **Lof Pañgihue** for the first time. The police seemed to know we were coming and controlled [*ed. – I.D. checked*] us near the entrance to the community, but that was hardly unexpected, given the level of surveillance they use against the Mapuche struggle.

The initial conversation between us and the **longko** and several **werken** and **lamuen** of the community went as well as we could have hoped. They explained their struggle to us, and the history of their community: the loss of their land with the Chilean invasion, further losses during the Pinochet dictatorship, the manipulations of their Marxist allies, the autonomous path of their struggle, the beginning of forceful land recoveries, the repression, the lack of water, the dependence on state electricity infrastructure.

Then we explained why we were there, that we were anarchists fighting against the State, that we respected the Mapuche struggle and wanted to create stronger connections of solidarity, that we came to help them set up a system for generating electricity but it was absolutely important for us not to create dynamics of charity. We recognized that we would be gaining a great deal from them, and learning things that would be helpful for our own struggle.

They thanked us for coming and asked us what models we were proposing to build. The only models for ecological electricity generation that they had had contact with were wind and solar, which in their region were only ever used by rich landlords.



We explained the two systems and their benefits. They were much better suited to the region, geographically and climatically, than wind or solar. They were more discreet, harder for the police to find and destroy during a raid, and cheaper to replace should they be broken. They would not hurt the land: the wood system only released as much carbon as the trees serving as fuel had taken out of the atmosphere, meaning as long as they weren't deforesting their land there would be no net pollution. The only other waste product was charcoal which could serve as fertilizer. And the water system only required a small stream running down a slope. The stream would not have to be extensively dammed or diverted, and all the water taken from it would be returned to it. Both systems could be made with materials available in the stores and scrapyards of the nearest city.

We told them we had raised the money for all the costs of installing an electricity generation system, but to expand that system to meet the needs of the whole community, or to set one up in another community, they would have to meet those costs. However both models were designed to be highly economical and durable. The most expensive, inaccessible part was the alternator in the water system and the generator in the wood system, but the cost was not too great for a whole community to assume.

They liked the proposal, and they took us out to the site to make sure the geography and the available water supply were adequate. Then we had lunch together and talked a while about our respective struggles. In the evening we made ready to head back to the city, where other Mapuche comrades were looking for tools and a workshop. The *werken* from *Lof Pañgihue* said they would hold an assembly for the whole community to decide on our proposal, but he was sure everyone would be excited about it, as they had been talking about the need for such a project for some time. They would call us soon with confirmation and measurements from the site so we could start getting materials, and then they would arrange to send some people to the city to work alongside us and learn how to build these systems.

The day could hardly have been more fortuitous, but we encountered an early problem that would later create serious difficulties.

Although we had been preparing on our end for months, because of limited and insecure communication, preparations in Wallmapu had not been able to move forward. The community had been able to send out its request, but had not been able to get detailed information about the specific proposal in order to start preparing. The logistics on this project were far more complicated than on the project three years ago, requiring local knowledge and very specific skills, and we did not have the direct connections to begin organizing those logistics until we arrived in Wallmapu. But as they say, sometimes you need to do something before you can get the skills and resources you need to be able to do it. This was definitely the case with our project.

But initially, back in the city, things went fast. Other Mapuche comrades who were friends of the friends we made last time helped us find the cheapest shops and the best junkyards. It helped immensely that several of them were welders, mechanics, or other technical workers, so they had all the necessary tools and knew where to get things we never could have found in a month.

Shortly, we got confirmation from the community that they wanted to work with us to realize this project, but they had to delay a bit before they could come to the city. So we waited. Days turned to a week before they told us they would not be able to come. Repression clearly played a role in this, but it also made us worry that the project would not be fully participatory, that it might slip across the line from solidarity to charity.

We had not wasted the entire week, since we continued getting to know the comrades in the city, sharing meals with them, learning the local histories of struggle, sharing stories about our own battles. But there was no way around the fact that our time there was limited, and with one week less, we were beginning to lose the chance at the nice leisurely pace we had originally envisioned.

Discussing it with everyone involved, we decided to start fabricating the systems with a couple *peñi* from the city who were already experienced welders or builders. They would then be able to show others how to make the systems. Still, we had vastly different rhythms. The *peñi* worked full time, and sometimes on weekends too, and they also had a completely different concept of punctuality. It soon became clear that to get done in time, we would have to do a lot of the fabrication ourselves, and then on our relatively short time together focus on practicing vital techniques and explaining the overall process of fabrication. It was far from ideal and all the delays and time alone made us entertain serious doubts. Were we giving more importance to this project than our Mapuche comrades? Was the shared participation we were striving for a lie? So we (this being the reduced group of *gringo* anarchists) talked it out and decided that if the promised participation was not forthcoming, we would leave the two generation systems half-finished and head for home. It was neither an ultimatum nor a surrender, just the recognition that letting solidarity devolve into charity would be the worst possible outcome of the trip. It was far better, from the perspective of anti-state struggle, to leave half-completed systems rather than fully completed systems, because that meant that the generation systems would only ever be more than semi-expensive junk if the people they were intended for learned how to finish making and installing them.

Fortunately, we were able to have a heart-to-heart with a couple of the *peñi* in the city, both of whom helped set us straight. Having a heart-to-heart conversation about the possible failure of a major project is no easy matter, especially when there are huge cultural differences and the other people involved, while friends of friends, were total strangers until a few weeks earlier. The outcome underscores the importance of good communication and solid relationships based on friendship. The “dead time” we had spent waiting for the chance to get to work, and instead hanging out with new friends and getting to know one another, was more important in the end than the technical work on the systems, as the latter would have failed without the former, and the former – the good relationships – opens a whole world of possibilities and other projects.

The comrades we spoke with clarified for us how little detailed information had gotten through before our arrival, making it impossible to prepare in advance. They told us how enthusiastic many of them were about this project, and how such a project constituted an important and needed step forward in their struggle. They reiterated how they had limited time, and while they were fully committed, could not help out more than a few days a week, which just didn’t mesh with our schedule of coming for a month and working every day. And they clued us in that Mapuche from the countryside operated on a completely different calendar and there was absolutely no way around that. While those who lived in the city might say 8 and arrive at 10, the Mapuche from the countryside would say Monday and arrive on Wednesday.

Being told that it was a question of different rhythms helped us understand the difficulties we were having and feel good about the time that had gone by, since we had no desire to impose our pace. The local rhythm will always take precedence over whatever expectations of rhythm outsiders may bring with them. In short order we saw ample proof that the Mapuche comrades in no way lacked commitment, and in fact it was still their initiative.

But the fact that we so closely faced defeat, in my mind, was perfect. It forced us to draw a line, to define victory, and we decided it was better to accept failure than to declare a false victory.

Shortly thereafter, a couple *peñi* from the community arrived, helped us get a few more materials that had so far eluded us, and took us and the equipment back to the *lof*. We worked feverishly the next few days, as we had pushed back our timeline considerably and our return dates were approaching. But the work in *Lof Pañgihue* was incredibly inspiring. We woke up every morning while the stars were still out, the *lamuen* set up a cooking fire, we discussed the day's work together, and some of us cooked or acquired materials while the rest of us labored together along the river bed, speaking in a mixture of Spanish, English, and Mapudungun, digging, building frames, reworking the turbine, and the electronics. When it got dark, we would stop, but the conversations about the project and about our larger struggles would go on over supper and until midnight.

At the end of it all, seeing the pulleys connected to the alternators begin to turn, that unassuming circular motion was one of the most beautiful sights.

Affinity and Difference

When working together with anarchists from another country, you typically find that you speak the same revolutionary idiom and share an overwhelming affinity which is put into sharp relief by certain cultural and historical differences, which often prove useful for self-reflection by the contrast they provide.

Working together with Mapuche who are struggling for full independence, the gulf is even wider. Our histories share few common reference points (though these are of extreme importance), our worldviews are different, and we communicate within distinct idioms of struggle. The strong points of affinity capable of bridging this difference have all the more meaning, and reflect on anarchist ideas about decentralized global struggle.

Neither the Mapuche nor their struggle are homogenous; however in general they have chosen to frame both of these as unified entities. Some Mapuche believe in political parties, in NGOs, or in Marxist dogma about economics. But one aspect of their shared framing of the struggle is a focus on the communities and the land.

This is the center of the Mapuche struggle, where communities are regaining their land, and it is precisely where leftists, NGOs, and political parties have the least hold. The former are all given a niche by the institutions of the State, whether the media, the universities, or the development funds, meaning they tend to only have a presence in the cities.

Among the Mapuche in the communities, or those in the nearest cities who focus on aiding the rural struggle rather than leading it, there is a clear tendency to reject the State, capitalism, Christianity, and the entire Western worldview, including the pernicious narrative of progress.

Many *peñi* and *lamuen* we met had a crystal clear view of what was going on in Bolivia and how much it represented what they wanted to avoid. The "plurinational state" of the indigenous [President] Evo Morales had recognized various indigenous peoples within Bolivian territory, putting their rights down on paper, and this had changed absolutely nothing. Legal recognition meant nothing as long as they did not have their land. But "having their land" in the Western sense was also meaningless, because it would only imply individualized title to a commodity that had to be put to productive use on the market in order to be maintained.



The Mapuche are the “people of the land.” In their idiom, as with many other indigenous peoples, “having land” is interchangeable with “belonging to land.” It cannot be just any land, divided into parcels. It must be the land with which they have a historical, spiritual, and economic connection. Mapuche land recovery is an assault on authority at the most fundamental level, because it destroys the very meaning of the capitalist idiom, denying the Western construction of the individual, and insisting on the inalienability of person and environment.

This is a more fleshed out, studied view of what anarchists were going for when they first took up the call, “land and freedom.” It is no coincidence that anarchists, open to the possibility of learning from other struggles rather than imposing a unifying dogma, adopted this slogan in part from indigenous people fighting in southern Mexico in the days of Zapata and Magon [ed. – see **A Flourishing Movement & a Laboratory of Repression**]. Marxists, meanwhile, declared such a posture to be reactionary, believing that agriculture had to be industrialized and taking for granted, therefore, the alienation between person and land. A couple of the people we got to know in *Lof Pañihue* were remarkably upfront with their criticisms, though they made it clear that those criticisms came from a place of respect. They praised Chilean anarchists for their consistent, disinterested solidarity with the

Mapuche struggle, and noted that they were piqued when they saw that anarchists were fighting against the State, placing bombs, and going to prison; clearly these were committed enemies of the established order. However, they did not have a clear idea of what the anarchists were fighting for. Those who had spent time in the city had seen anarchist social centers and libraries, but what were the anarchists actually trying to create?

All the major leftist anticapitalist groups in earlier decades had used the Mapuche as foot-soldiers and “the Mapuche conflict” as a mere source of discontent. It became clear to many that should the Marxist guerrillas ever win, they would only impose a new Western order on Wallmapu, as had happened to every other indigenous nation when Marxists had taken over. For them, independence specifically meant not being subordinated to a state.

The anarchists had only been around for a short time in Chile, eight years in their estimation. Because it was not clear what the anarchists wanted, they were cautious that they might also be fighting for power. Should they ally with anarchists and win, would the anarchists accept that they did not have any say on what happened in the lands south of the Bío Bío river, or would they also try to impose on the Mapuche territories? Did the anarchists have an answer for the “Mapuche conflict” or would they respect Mapuche autonomy?

They did not understand why solidarity events at the anarchist social centers often turned into parties. What did the parties have to do with the struggles or prisoners they were supporting? Mapuche solidarity events often focus on letting people know why they are struggling, and the rightness of their struggle, or on holding a ceremony that would bring *newen* to their prisoners.

They also asked why so many anarchists were vegans, not seeing a connection between respecting animals and not eating them. Fortunately, most of the anarchists they had met, in addition to being vegans, held strong criticisms of civilization. I worry that, had their prior experience been with leftist anarchists who believed in the narrative of civilization and progress, they might never have reached out to us. As it was, none of us were vegan, and all of us were critical of civilization, so we got along just fine.

Then there were a couple specific grievances they had, both relating to Chilean anarchists. One was an occasional imposition of rhythms, as when a group of masked anarchists started smashing banks at a Mapuche solidarity demo in Santiago. The Mapuche were not opposed to smashing banks, quite the contrary, but they did object to what seemed like anarchists trying to speed up their struggle.

The other grievance related to a video they had seen on TV of a Santiago anarchist transporting a bomb which blew up prematurely. The surveillance video portrayed the anarchist catching on fire, and his comrade running away and leaving him there. The Mapuche would never abandon a comrade like that, they said. They attributed it to inexperience on the anarchists¹. One question they asked us frequently was how long we had been involved in the struggle and what had made us become anarchists.

A Mapuche friend who was close enough to not have to worry about politeness chided us anarchists for not having *newen*. This will be an especially difficult difference to explain, especially since the closest analog to *newen* among North American anarchists is “woo” or “magic,” and the concepts seem completely different in practice. Suffice it to say that a comparison would be misleading. In my experience the Mapuche are very matter-of-fact about *newen*. Beyond

¹ ed. – *We feel it important to mention the words of the comrade himself (Luciano Pitronello, known as ‘el Tortuga’ or Turtle) on this matter, addressed to his accomplice in his very first open letter from prison: “Hermanx [ed. – little sibling], I want you to know that although I could never imagine the horrible things that have played with your mind or your heart [...] I am never going to have to reproach you for anything, because that night it was my turn, just like in past times it had been your turn, if something happens the second person flees, so we had agreed and so it had to be, because although you might many times feel like a traitor, you are not, in this war that we decided to take on there are no words to understand us. I may never see you again, if so, good luck in everything that comes.” He lost a hand, but is now finally free.*

simply rejecting a mechanical, scientific view of the world, as do many anarchists, the Mapuche live out a different worldview that is firmly anchored in the totality of their economic, spiritual, and physiological life, and therefore they do not relate to *newen* as a performance in an alienated spiritual sphere.

I will point to a few other differences pertaining directly to the Mapuche vision of struggle that I think can be instructive for anarchists.

The Mapuche in struggle are far from pacifist. On the contrary, sabotage, direct action, self-defense, and the attack are assumed as an integral part of their struggle, and the topic of burning things down is a constant source of mirth and laughter, exactly as it is with anarchists (which is surprising, given that humor is often the first thing not to translate). The similarity ends there. Not every Mapuche is expected to be a *weichafe*, or warrior, and the *weichafe* are not the central participants in the struggle. The *weichafe* are not more important than the *machis*, the *werken*, or the *weupife*. On the contrary, the *weichafe* are at the service of the community, and their activity is in a certain sense meant to complement and be guided by the activity of the rest of the community.

The Mapuche have a lot of prisoners, and they do an excellent job of supporting those prisoners. But they do not fall into *presismo*, or a detached focus on their prisoners, an activity that certain anarchist circles present as the most radical. On the contrary, their focus remains on the struggle that resulted in people falling prisoner in the first place. The assertion that a powerful struggle supports its prisoners can be taken in two directions, after all. Supporting prisoners so that the struggle will be stronger, or strengthening the struggle so that the prisoners will be supported.

This is interesting because the historical referent that frames this view – colonization – should be equally important to people of European descent and to anarchist theory itself. The State swelled exponentially with the early beginning of capitalism. What the Spanish state tried – and failed – to do to the Mapuche had already been done across Europe [*ed. – see **Memory as a Weapon; The Witch's Child***]. The alienated worldview that anarchism has struggled with for its entire history, sometimes discarding it, sometimes reifying it, comes down to the separation of land and freedom which is the essence of colonization and all the political movements against colonization that have won freedom without land and land without freedom.

The same long view that could allow us to make historical sense of this alienation can also give us the patience to weather repression. As urgent as a particular case of repression may feel, we will not answer the broader questions of repression in our lifetimes, but we also do not face them alone: we have gone through all of this before.

A common criticism that anarchists might have of the Mapuche struggle has to do with gender. But this criticism should be put into perspective. As a friend in the project aptly put it, “Our opinion about gender in Mapuche society doesn’t matter.” It would also be wrong to assume that our opinion is entirely external. In fact, it was a criticism shared by several Mapuche comrades, although they tended to frame it in a different way.

We were able to talk frankly about gender with several of the *lamuen* and *peñi* we were closer with. Many of them said that the *machismo* of Chilean society had rubbed off on the Mapuche, which was traditionally not a patriarchal society. However, accepting that assertion requires allowing for a distinction between patriarchy and gender binary. In Western history, patriarchy and gender binary are largely inseparable.

But are we willing to assert this as a global truth? Mapuche society is built around a traditional division of gender, but this division constitutes two autonomous spheres of activity, rather than a hierarchy. In practice, women are full participants in the Mapuche struggle. Some spaces of this struggle are mixed, others are separate, but none are made invisible or subordinate. The question that we as outsiders are unable to know is, what happens to those Mapuche who do not accept their assigned role? Gender roles are gradually changing within the Mapuche struggle but, for better or for worse, the rhythm, form, and ends of that change are not necessarily recognizable to a feminist mode of struggle.

What Made This Project Possible

I hope comrades will take it as a matter of high standards and not self-congratulation if I describe this project as a great success that goes far beyond the complacency and repetition of most anarchist projects. It was not a success because those who made it happen are particularly successful anarchists; on the contrary, we probably aren't. It was a success because we were able to identify our weaknesses and find comrades with the skills necessary to shore up those gaps.

In order to encourage better anarchist projects, I wanted to identify the prerequisites for making it happen. Although the project was a joint affair with Mapuche comrades, I can only talk about our side of things.

The most vital element were relationships of friendship and solidarity. These could only form face to face, sharing moments of struggle and of daily life. This is an indictment of the superficial solidarity of communiques, or the abstract solidarity of NGOs, both of which commit to the idea of a distant struggle, and are therefore incapable of enabling a solidarity intense enough to challenge our practice. The relationships that enabled our project could only form in a healthy way if people on both ends were committed to their own autonomous struggles, but willing to find points of contact and affinity between those struggles. This is an indictment of ally politics. Someone who is only an ally can never offer anything more than charity. Those who believe they are so privileged that they do not have their own reasons for fighting have nothing to offer anyone else. But we also had to recognize the fundamental difference of the Mapuche struggle, staying true to our beliefs but not trying to impose them.

Personal relationships created the possibility for a deeper solidarity, but technical skills were necessary for transforming that solidarity into an intensification of the struggle. Liberal arts education is a wasteland that imprisons North American anarchists. Without technical skills, we condemn ourselves to an anarchism of abstraction, incapable of rising above dependence on the structures of dominant society.

No one on this trip had the skills necessary to complete the project. But together, and with a lot of help from the *peñi* we worked with, we were able to pull it off by the skin of our teeth. This gave us the confidence and the experience to do something like this again. The rural Mapuche had the experience of building their own houses, and a couple of us had learned welding or at least a very basic familiarity with hand tools through squatting or an interest in tinkering. This might have barely been enough to construct one of the simpler water systems. But the more complex of the systems we were working on would have been entirely out of our reach had one of the comrades not had an attribute rare among anarchists these days: years of experience working in a factory. These extensive technical skills, however, would have been inadequate without the aid of those

practiced at adapting to chaotic situations and scarce materials. Working in a factory, in the end, is nothing like working in the field. So the technical genius of the anarchist factory worker who participated on the project was completed by the practical genius of the Mapuche comrades who were used to making everything out of nothing. And finally, until all anarchists are polyglots, translation will be a necessary skill for international projects like these. However, translation alone can only enable projects centered on propaganda. The skills we are talking about, in other words, go far beyond hobbies. We are talking about years of experience to acquire abilities that most of us lack, in order to overcome very immediate limitations to our struggle.

Finally, this project relied on a strategic projectuality. This means identifying our weaknesses and crafting projects that might overcome them, projecting ourselves into the breaches where our struggle might be overwhelmed in the near future. This is the opposite of doing for the sake of doing, or carrying out a predetermined and repetitive set of activities, which is how many anarchists spend their time.

The Mapuche had identified their lack of land, and they began to recover that land. Only within the situation they had created were we able to work on such a project together and learn things that may be useful in addressing weaknesses we face on our own turf.

The original solidarity trip three years ago was an attempt to overcome an identified weakness in the international relationships of us anarchists. That trip made it possible for Mapuche comrades to suggest the present project to us, allowing our solidarity to advance to a new level. This is an indictment of those anarchists who either travel for mere personal pleasure, or those who use the contacts they cultivate as a form of social capital to hoard.

When the Line between Self-Sufficiency and Sabotage Becomes Fine

Why is it that in a context of total alienation, projects that focus on self-sufficiency or going back to the land almost invariably entail a cessation of hostilities with the State and a recuperation by Capital? The answer is probably equally related to the implications of buying the land or space for one's autonomy, and a spiritual acceptance of the a priori alienation between person and environment.

The Mapuche struggle involves the forceful recovery of land they uncompromisingly claim as theirs, and a way of being – by this I mean a seamlessly interlocked spirituality, economy, and social organization – that declares war on the alienation between person and environment. In this way of being, there is no dividing line between gardening, home-building, natural medicine, setting fire to logging trucks, clashing with cops, sabotaging construction equipment, or blocking highways.

Self-sufficiency signifies a contraction of one's relationships and an avoidance of the lines of social conflict. One who is self-sufficient need not form relationships with others. But the claiming of space and the inalienability of one's relationship to that space asserts an expansive web of relationships that we must defend in order to truly be alive.

In my free time in Wallmapu, I learned to harvest and thresh quinoa, to kill and gut a chicken, and to gather certain wild plants. In that particular context, these were not hobbies that might eventually be put to use in a strategy of avoidance. Capitalism has been very deliberate in deskilling us, which is a way of robbing us of the possibility of intimately relating with the

world around us. “Relating with the world around us” is not a leisure activity, as the bourgeois imagination would have us believe. It does not mean (only) walking barefoot and spending time with nature, or playing games and having picnics in the park. It also means feeding ourselves, healing ourselves, housing ourselves, and a hundred other activities. Doing things directly always requires relating with other living beings rather than relating with commodities. Feeding ourselves, within an offensive practice that seizes space from the State, is not at all a form of avoidance, but an intensification of our freedom and our war on the State.

The people in *Lof Pañihue* were very clear: being able to produce their own electricity would be a powerful form of sabotage against the State. Theirs was not a case of middle class people putting solar panels on their houses, selling the surplus back to the power company, and living with a cleaner conscience. It is a war to recover their territory, to kick out the State, the capitalists, and the Western way of life. If they end their dependence on the State’s infrastructure, not only have they intensified their practice of independence, they have also made that state infrastructure vulnerable to attack.

It is often said that there is no outside to capitalism. This is certainly true as far as capitalist projectuality is concerned, but the statement does not truly define our counter-activity unless we accept alienation as a physical feature of reality. Where land is being retaken as a part of ourselves, building the tools and developing the lost skills that allow us to relate directly to that land and to live as a part of it constitute a practice of independence from and against capitalism.

Our freedom is not merely a blank slate or the lack of imposition by the State. Freedom must be articulated ever more intensively, through the tools, skills, worldview, medicine, historical memory, food culture, and material anchors that constitute the becoming or the embodiment of that freedom.

Revolutionary Solidarity: Rojava and the International Struggle

By Rojava Solidarity NYC

Excerpted from a longer article from the website *The Kurdish Question*;

kurdishquestion.com

A Shared Struggle: Revolutionary Solidarity

While there are several inherent flaws with the notion of ‘critical solidarity,’ the most egregious problem is that it does not acknowledge the most important type of engagement: revolutionary solidarity.

The connections between small revolutionary groups in different cities rely on the conception that we are part of a shared struggle. We share knowledge, resources, and help propel each others’ objectives, building infrastructure and networks outside state and capitalist relations.

The same applies to a region deeply engaged in a revolution. The notion of ‘solidarity’ itself is perhaps too weak a term to express the relationship between nascent revolutionary groups and a region already practicing and experimenting with revolutionary social organization. In the most concrete terms, as friends and comrades travel to the region, even sometimes giving their lives for its success, our missions become intertwined.

It is our view that the best and most important criticality should be reserved for implementing the struggle in our neighborhoods. We look at how things work in Rojava, make connections with people who are implementing these social practices, learn from them, and evaluate how best they will play out in our own struggles. This is where criticality makes sense. How should these practices be introduced? How can they be most effective here? What practices allow for the most self-direction and participation? This is the very method of self-criticism and reflection practiced within every revolutionary organization in Rojava. In fact, if it hadn’t been so integral, it may never have pivoted over from a Marxist-Leninist struggle to an anarchist-inspired one.

A new way for relating with a decentralized society is necessary, both for appropriately acknowledging the people’s self-governance, but also for the work of propagating and reinforcing people as people, rather than subjects behind a centralized governing body. Groups, such as the women’s organization Kongreya Star or the youth networks, reach out to other such groups around the world, cutting through the unnecessary bureaucracy artificially erected by national borders. Connecting on the basis of interest, identity, and shared revolutionary intentions is an essential way for building movements across borders and undermining the hegemony of nation-states.

As the rise of the far right around the globe threatens to destabilize civil society in its turbulent battle for power and exclusionary violence, the more important it becomes to push forward revolutionary solutions around the globe. The more successes anti-authoritarians have on a local

level, drawing more power towards the ground, the less power imperialist states can wield and the less momentum fascist tendencies will have.

Many reactionary forces would not like to see the social project in Rojava succeed. Accelerating the struggle back home helps undermine the international reach of nation-states, and the fascist forces they breed. The rise of liberatory social movements simultaneously around the world helps ensure the longevity of all. As international revolutionaries, the borders that separate our landmasses, the languages we were born into, the history of our respective areas are not unbreachable differences that separate us, but things either to be overcome, or understood, in order to push the struggle forward together.

International Engagement

Presently international anarchists, socialists, and communist revolutionaries are actively involved in the struggle in Rojava. They are involved at the civic level, participate in the militias, write reports for those back home, and deliver supplies. At very least there is an alliance between such actors abroad and at home. By traveling to a dangerous location, often to put their lives at risk by participating in combat, these comrades have shown their commitment to the project. When these fighters return home, they will be able to put their knowledge to use, to help further the struggles there.

What has been confirmed many times over by the individuals and groups who have traveled to Rojava, whether to report back about what is happening, to engage in the struggle, or to help with civic projects, is that the goals of international revolutionaries and those participating in this social experiment are the same. The active engagement of anti-authoritarian revolutionaries is key to the success of any revolutionary undertaking. This could mean traveling to the region to participate, or this could mean actively engaging in struggle back home, or it could simply mean spreading accurate knowledge about the practices there.

Rojava has articulated a new set of tools, proven the efficacy of feminism, and demonstrated how to achieve the highest level of humanization of people through a stateless solution and anticapitalist practice. This work has not only made massive advances in the region, but brought these forms of organizing to a broader swathe of the population, from the Democratic Federal System of Northern Syria to regions abroad. This new paradigm for revolution has rejuvenated the struggle for smaller groups of anarchists and antiauthoritarians in cities to indigenous resistance at risk from neoliberal or capitalist enterprises, to armed guerrilla armies around the world. The longevity of this model rests on the connection with and success of such struggles around the world.

We propose revolutionary solidarity as the ideal way to engage with the social experiment in Rojava, the new revolutionary paradigm of the 21st century.

**IN SOLIDARITY WITH
THE KURDISH FIGHTERS YPG/YPJ
AGAINST IS, FUNDAMENTALISM & PATRIARCHY**



Until the last drop of our blood: Shingal and the future of Kurdistan

Megan Connelly

*this is from the website **the Kurdish Question**;*

www.kurdishquestion.com

On the afternoon of March 4th, Kurdistan National Council (KNC, also known by its Kurdish acronym, ENKS or simply as Rojava Peshmerga) forces, commanded by the Kurdistan Region of Iraq's dominant political party, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) encountered Shingal Resistance Units (YBŞ) forces in the town of Khanasur near Shingal. The Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs in the KRI claims that their forces were stopped by YBŞ volunteers and fired upon, while the PKK and YBŞ claim that they received tank fire prior to engaging ENKS forces. Fighting ensued and there were killed and wounded on both sides. While the fighting only lasted several hours, the event is the culmination of years of intra-Kurdish disputes over regional influence and may have reverberations far beyond Shingal.

The PKK and power politics in South Kurdistan

The KDP and PKK have a long history of mutual enmity and the two groups have intermittently fought each other since the 1990s. The KDP claims legitimacy in the KRI and in the Kurdish inhabited territories outside of the KRI proper (including Shingal) that are currently the subject of a jurisdictional dispute between the KRI and Baghdad. Additionally, while the KDP's territorial and economic disputes with Baghdad grow more complicated and intractable, it has come to depend more on its economic and security partnership with Ankara, which has also meant the increasing salience of its opposition to the PKK and the rising YPG in Rojava.

Meanwhile, the PKK has responded to opportunities occasioned by popular opposition among ethnoreligious minorities to the KDP's expansion of its military control into the disputed territories to expand its own activities into Iraqi territory. The KDP claims the northern parts of Nineveh and Salah ad-Din governorates as part of the KRI, but other groups including the Yazidis that populated the Shingal district, like the Kurds, also claimed the right to self-determination. The establishment of the YBŞ was the result of the withdrawal of KDP Peshmerga and Zerivani forces from the city in August of 2014 and the subsequent genocide of its Yazidi inhabitants by ISIS. PKK and YPG forces filled the security vacuum, established the YBŞ and declared Shingal to be an independent canton. Wary of the KDP's claims to Shingal, the Iraqi government not so secretly provided YBŞ forces with military support. Not surprisingly, the establishment of the Shingal canton and Baghdad's tolerance of its existence provoked the ire of the KDP and its Turkish allies. In December of 2015, Turkey reinforced Bashiqa, near Mosul, with armor and personnel and the KDP and Turkish government have had frequent meetings to, among other things, discuss security in Nineveh, the most recent being last week in Ankara between de facto

President of the KRI, Masoud Barzani, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and PM Binali Yildirim.

The KDP does not exercise political or military control over the entire KRI and its influence is largely confined to the governorates of Erbil and Duhok and the disputed territories in Nineveh and Salah adDin governorates. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan exercises de facto military and political jurisdiction over the governorates of Sulaymaniyah and Halabja, as well as the disputed areas of Kirkuk and Diyala governorates. Although the two parties have participated in a joint governing coalition since 2005, they continue to engage in a build-up of military forces and alliances to deter aggression on either side of Erbil- Sulaymaniyah line, particularly in Kirkuk governorate, which is jurisdictionally divided between KDP and PUK forces. This has meant that the PUK has sought to offset the KDP-Ankara alliance with support from Tehran, Baghdad and the PKK. The PUK has permitted the PKK to operate in its zone of influence and provide auxiliary support to its Peshmerga forces along the front line against ISIS.

Implications

First, the Shingal operation escalates tensions between Baghdad and the KDP. The KDP, United States and Iraqi government signed an agreement prior to the commencement of the Mosul operation that Peshmerga would participate in the operation to retake the towns and villages around Mosul in Nineveh province, but that those forces would withdraw after the completion of the operation. However, Masoud Barzani, president of the KDP and de facto president of the KRI has since asserted that his forces would not abandon their gains in Nineveh and the operation in Shingal is undeniable proof of the seriousness of this assertion and it brings the KDP into direct conflict with Baghdad. Furthermore, the apparent backing of Ankara may lead to escalating allegations by Baghdad that Turkey is violating of Iraqi sovereignty by intervening in the KRI and Nineveh.

Secondly, while the position of the PUK on the operation is unclear at this time, its tacit support for the PKK and the YBŞ puts it in an awkward position, especially as the KDP and PUK are negotiate to reassemble the Region's dissolved democratic institutions and prepare for Parliamentary and Presidential elections in September. The PUK politburo most likely prefers to avoid involvement in KDP affairs, but if Turkey or the Iraqi government intervene directly in the dispute, or if the KDP demands the PUK's compliance in cutting off support for the PKK as a condition for political or economic compromise, the PUK may be forced to choose sides. The PUK has not forgotten how the KDP used Sulaimaniyah's cordiality with the PKK as a pretext for summoning Turkish air support against PUK Peshmerga during their bloody civil war in the 1990s. Therefore, while the Shingal operation may not immediately lead to hostilities between the KDP and PUK, the KDP's campaign against the YBŞ sends a clear signal to the PUK that it is willing to take up arms against other Kurdish parties to attain its political goals; a position that will undoubtedly exacerbate the KRI's security dilemma, particularly due to the sensitive balance of power between the parties in Kirkuk. In fact, we may have already seen such an escalation with the deployment of PUK Force 70 peshmerga units to Kirkuk on Tuesday, a move perhaps as much intended to force Baghdad's compliance on prior agreements with the PUK and Kirkuk governorate as to deter KDP aggression.

Third, the PKK/YPG/YBŞ forces have declared that they are ready to fight until the “last drop of [their] blood” for Shingal, but they are vulnerable to attack on multiple fronts: from the KDP from the north and west, Turkey from the north and ISIS, as well as the Syrian regime, from the south in Rojava. Furthermore, its forces are currently moving on the ISIS stronghold of Raqqa and fending off frequent attacks by Turkish forces and their affiliated militias. Therefore, any reinforcement of Shingal would increase Rojava’s vulnerability to attack from any one of its enemies. The YPG can expect US air support for now, but there is uncertainty regarding the position of the new administration on supporting the YPG vis a vis the Turkey’s increasingly bold incursions into Manbij.

Fourth, the United States now must reevaluate its strategy against ISIS in Iraq and Syria as it has now become clear that Turkey and the KDP are jointly mobilizing against the PKK and its affiliated units. The US has supported both Peshmerga and YPG. Furthermore, the U.S., like Iran, supports a one Iraq policy and Turkey is a NATO ally. Therefore, the US is bound up in an almost impossibly complicated and contradictory regional policy. The overflow of tensions between the Turkish-backed KDP and PKK/YPG/YBŞ forces, which are tolerated by Tehran, Baghdad and the PUK, will either force the US-led coalition to choose sides or broker an agreement between the KDP and YPG/PKK/YBŞ. The consequence of choosing the former may be the United States’ involvement, however reluctant, in an intra-Kurdish, and possibly, international war and losing sight of the mission to defeat ISIS in Iraq and Syria.



You Will Learn A Few New Words In Resistance

From **mexicanarchist** blog

If you have read what I've written or seen my tweets on Mexico, it can be rather depressing. Mexico is in a downward spiral due to many factors. We can largely blame the government and it's neoliberal reforms that are sending an already impoverished society further into the familiar unknown. Mexicans know poverty, but they just don't know how much further they can go. I'm sorry if everything you've read from me makes you think that all of Mexico is lost. I can help you find a jewel in that dark, scary landscape that you all have seen when you look there. First, you'll have to learn a little bit about a language you may have never heard of, and a people you've never met. I'll help you learn along the way.

P'urhepecha, a people based mostly within the Mexican state of Michoacán, an original people with a fascinating history.

Most studies of pre-Columbian Mexican history revolve around the Aztecs. The ***P'urhepecha*** people are mostly known for being able to fight off the Aztecs throughout many wars, they were never able to be conquered. This is just a short history lesson which I'm giving to you because as it is commonly said, history repeats itself. Well, not exactly but you'll see what I mean by that. If you've followed the news from Michoacán, you'd know that is a very violent state with the ongoing drug wars. *Autodefensas* (self defense groups) dominated most of the coverage as everyday citizens rose up in arms to protect themselves and their communities from the cartels. There was an element of self defense in Michoacán that didn't receive as much attention. I'll try and fix that, because we should find the few good things in Mexico to remind us that something else is possible. You're going to find something new and learn a little about a language. A language you're going to have to identify with resistance.

Juchari Uinápikua, Our Force, Our Strength.

The ***P'urhepecha*** people in Cherán rose up to defend their forests and community from cartel control and the corrupt police that partnered with organized crime. It was spearheaded by women who were tired of their sons and husbands disappearing into the void that is cartel abduction and violence. They began by trying to protest against the cartel backed loggers on the streets, it ended with molotovs and the storming of police stations to gather assault rifles to defend themselves. There was no turning back at that point, they began to establish fogatas, something like a camp fire, in every block to keep watch and stay vigilant to any attack. This became a nightly routine, it was also in these community camp fires that they made decisions on what to do in their communities. You know it as direct democracy, they know it as decolonization. Through the process of decolonization, they also established their form of self-defense, how their communities used to defend themselves in the past.

Ronda comunitaria. Communal self defense. A literal translation wouldn't work, so I gave you what it is in practice. I'll explain what that practice is.

So a community kicks out cartel elements, and the police along with the politicians because they all knew these were all the many heads of the same hydra. Of course those they kicked out would attempt to return, angrily to be certain. Campfires on every block is good to stay vigilant, but how do you defend your community should these vile elements return? *Ronda comunitaria* was the traditional form of self-defense, now in their modern form they used what used to be police vehicles and assault rifles that used to belong to the police. Instead of using those tools to repress, kidnap and help cartel forces like before, they used them to defend not just their community, but also their forest. **Naná Echeri**, our mother earth, land. The trucks that once belonged to corrupt police were used to patrol the forests to keep loggers out. They not only defended **Naná Echeri**, they also replenished her with reforestation efforts. Over 50 thousand trees were planted to help heal the damage the loggers had brought upon **Naná Echeri**. The people of Cherán not only defend, they also heal. Above that, they shine like a lighthouse guiding the lost ships in a violent cold sea to a vibrant **Naná Echeri**.

Where once **Tatá Jurhiata**, father sun, gave his light to a land that was nothing but burned tree stumps, now nourishes the growing trees of **Naná Echeri**. The people of Cherán are now in direct control of not only their politics, lives and selves, but also their environment. It is difficult to find an equivalent in so called modern societies. We claim democracy in Europe and the United States of America, but there is no self-determination in either. In Cherán, an indigenous people became the **Tatá Jurhiata** for the rest of the world. I once thought it was just the light for Mexico, to show our people how to not only resist but flourish. It is the sun for the whole world to show you how to not just defend life, but how to nurture it so it can grow in many beautiful ways on Naná Echeri. I hope the language is never lost upon you.

Juchari Uinápkua!



Failed Mexican Narco-state's assessment of "anarchist" groups, 2016

Excerpted from Contralínea. Translation submitted to It's Going Down. Link to the original, in Spanish:

www.contralinea.com.mx

In the past 8 years, nearly 50 insurgency-ridden anarchist groups have carried out more than 220 violent actions against capitalist and state interests. The count is contained in the file ***Actions of groups called self-described anarchists, insurrectionalists, eco-extremists and /or eco-terrorists***, prepared by the civil intelligence agency of the Mexican State, CISEN.

The insurgents

Although the document identifies "306 actions" committed by 74 organizations between March 26, 2008 and July 22, they are not all the work of anarchist groups. About 220 have been carried out by anarchist and insurrectionist eco-anarchist groups, 40 of them already during Enrique Peña Nieto's term. Another 82 actions committed by 26 groups are actually the work of eco-terrorists or ecoextremists. In addition, four have been claimed by two fascist groups.

The document does not state whether all groups exist or whether some actions, as can be inferred, are committed by cells of larger organizations that use different names in certain attacks.

In the last 8 years, the most active insurrectionist anarchist groups have been, according to the document prepared by CISEN: the Earth Liberation Front, with participation in 52 violent direct actions; The Animal Liberation Front, with 44; Autonomous Cells of Immediate Revolution Práxedes G Guerrero (CARI-PGG), with 32; The Informal Anarchist Federation, with 30; and, among others, the Conspiracy of the Fire Cells, with 12.

The CARI-PGG were disbanded as a group in November 2013. They remained active for almost 5 years. As stated in a 2016 communiqué, those who joined them stopped acting as CARI-PGG but individually and in groups continue to militate in insurrectionary anarchism and carrying out "violent actions."

Some of the actions of this current of anarchism have been carried out in a coordinated way between two or more groups. Mexico City has been the entity with the highest number of attacks: 91. Other states with more than 10 actions committed by insurgent anarchists from 2008 to date are the State of Mexico, with 79, and Jalisco, with 16. And between one and nine actions have been committed in Oaxaca, Baja California, Guanajuato, Veracruz, Coahuila, Durango, San Luis Potosi, Quintana Roo, Chihuahua, Querétaro, Hidalgo, Nuevo Leon, Tlaxcala and Puebla.

Attacks against universities and research centers

In the answer document to *Contralínea*, the CISEN emphasizes that “the term anarchist is not specified in the current Mexican legislation.” And it says that the agency “does not attribute the authorship of attacks to any person or group identified by its ideology.”

He says that the agency is responsible for preserving national security against “violent groups.” He adds: “It is not necessary to point out that the objective of any authority is to contain violent actions, a situation foreign to ideologies.”

This is what they point out in the response to the request for public information. But the *National Agenda of Risks* condemns anarchism in general, not only those who have opted for insurrection. In the section on “vulnerabilities” of the Mexican State, the lack of a legal framework to limit the activism of anarchist groups stands out. This consideration assigns a “medium” level of risk. Non-electoral activism of any kind is *under the magnifying glass* of national security agencies.

In addition, the document considers groups anarchists that are not and that, even, are contrary to anarchism, as Individualists tending to the Wild. This organization has claimed the murder of administrative and scientific workers and the attack on universities and study centers. In their communiqués they point out that they do not believe in revolution of any kind, that they abhor anarchism, communism, or any project of society.

However, the *Agenda* points out: “anarchist cells have a slow increase in their levels of radicalism, particularly Individuals Tending to the Wild (ITS — Individualidades Tendiendo a lo Salvaje) that threatens attacks against human targets.”

Even attacks by groups of insurrectionists are not distinguished from those attributed to other postmodernist groups such as the ITS itself and other denominations that claim to be against humanity, such as the dissolved Wild Reaction.

There are also the cases of fascist or neo-Nazi organizations, such as the Tenochtitlan Salvation Front and its Tenochtitlan Secret Organization Dome, who say they fight to restore the “sacred” “Aztec nation” and “install into power” those who “Guarantee the protection of the natural rights of the human species.”

For the working document of the intelligence agencies, both military and civil, all these groups are “anarchists.” Therefore, all the attacks are the work of “anarchists.”

And in the “general diagnosis” of the risk, it is pointed out that “attacks against banks, institutions and people linked to research centers and direct attacks against human targets with terrorist dyes are expected”.

It also proclaims the species that “members of anarchist groups operate as clash groups during various social mobilizations.”

Among the “risk scenarios” envisaged in the *National Risk Agenda* is the “possibility of violent actions of high impact: explosive and human target attacks and expansion of anarchist groups due to the absence of a consistent interinstitutional coordination scheme To address the issue. ”

This situation would give rise to another, equally considered “risk scenario”: the “negative impacts on the perception of citizen security derived from the violent reactivation of groups (anarchists)”.



The *coup* that is being prepared against the Arabs

As for the “capacities” of government entities to deal with insurrectionist anarchism, the *National Risk Agenda* highlights the “inter-institutional intelligence work: SEDENA, SEMAR, SEGOB, in zones of (anarchist) presence” (*sic*).

Among the “recommendations” of the National Security Council “contained in the *National Agenda* of

Risks are: “the implementation of actions to strengthen the inter-institutional scheme to address (anarchism) “, as well as the “re-launch of operating groups in the interior Of the CISEN focused on specific objectives (*sic*).”

The operative groups are, in the slang of the intelligence services, those who are in charge of specific special missions: covert actions, follow-ups, infiltrations, penetration in homes or institutions to place microphones, for example. In some areas the operational groups are even charged with the elimination of persons who “attempt” to disrupt the “security” of a State.

Insurrection in middle country

The *National Risk Agenda* recognizes the presence of “direct action” anarchist cells in five entities of the republic: Mexico City, Mexico State, Morelos, Oaxaca and Baja California. Practically in all regions of the first three there are collectives of this type of anarchism. With respect to Oaxaca, they are in the capital city of the State and in strips of the regions of Central Valleys,

Sierra Norte and Sierra Sur. With respect to Baja California, the map included in the document points to the city of Mexicali.

However, in the list of actions of insurrectionist anarchists elaborated by CISEN, 17 of the 32 entities of the Republic are counted: Mexico City, Mexico City, Jalisco, Oaxaca, Baja California, Guanajuato, Veracruz, Coahuila, Durango, San Luis Potosí, Quintana Roo, Chihuahua, Querétaro, Hidalgo, Nuevo León, Tlaxcala and Puebla.

National security: rise of anarchism

Since the 2013 version of the *National Agenda for Risks*, anarchism was considered as one of the 10 issues of immediate attention for institutions responsible for preserving national security.

Then it was placed in fifth place, within the same section of guerrilla subversion. Thus, armed movements — such as the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), the Revolutionary Army of the Insurgent People (ERPI), the Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR) and, among others, the Revolutionary Democratic Tendency-People's Army — appeared together with the insurrectionist anarchist commandos and cells in a single chapter of the confidential document in the custody of the decentralized agency of the Secretariat of Government in charge of civil intelligence, CISEN.

For the 2014 version of the writing, anarchism was assigned an independent section and placed in the fourth place of priorities. The guerrilla movements were left in the fifth place.

But the action of the anarchist groups of insurrectionary character motivated that for the *National Agenda of Risks* 2015, anarchism climbed to the third position in the priorities of the military and civil institutions formally responsible for national security and defense: SEDENA, SEMAR, The CISEN, the SEGOB, the PGR and, among other instances, the Federal Police. Thus, the *black flag* insurrection went to the first places of priority attention and the *red flag* guerrillas were sent to position 10, last place of the table.

From boycott to armed confrontation

According to information compiled by *Contralínea* — of libertarian distribution portals, among which *Contrainfo* stands out — *insurrectionist anarchist* groups and cells performed more than 20 direct violent actions against specific targets between May 2015 and September 2016. Actions range from boycotts to armed confrontations. The spectrum is complete with sabotage, attacks, placement of fake bombs, detonation of explosives, and fires.

Only the direct actions are documented. The real number is not possible to be known because not all are claimed. Generally, police corporations avoid informing the media of the consummate or frustrated “attacks” of the anarchist insurrection.

The most recent coordinated attacks were the work of the Salvador Olmos García Autonomous Sabotage Group. On July 3, they set up and detonated explosive-incendiary packages at the headquarters of three of the main organizations of Mexican business organizations.

Salvador Olmos García is the name of the young anarchist activist for the rights of indigenous peoples, a punk singer, lawyer and community journalist who was murdered by police in Huajuapam de Leon, Oaxaca, on June 28. Olmos had been apprehended by police in the early hours of that day, when he had come to a call of the Community Radio **Tuun Nuu Savi**, to reinforce

the space that was at risk due to a threat of police eviction. After having a pint, *Chava* was arrested by the cops and later beaten by a 31year-old patrolman. This fact caused the indignation of activists of all groups in the state and, even of several entities of the Republic. Five days later came the attack on the high-level agencies.

Through a press release that can be read on the **Contrainfo** website (*www.escontrainfo.espiv.net/2016/07/09/mexico-ataque-explosivo-a-sedes-de-camaras-empresariales/*), he reports the attacks on headquarters in Mexico City of the Business Coordinating Council (CCE), the Confederation of Employers of the Mexican Republic (COPARMEX) and the National Chamber of the Industry of the Transformation (CANACINTRA). At the end of the statement, you can read:

***“For the oppressed, there is no possible solution within the institutional margins, but the uncompromising struggle against the capital-state, which enables an open scenario of generalized insurrection [and], dialectically establishing a relationship between spontaneity and organization, Social peace in the Mexican region and spread throughout the globe.”* “Death to the State / Capital!**

“Free the prisoners of social war!

“For Anarchy!

“Salvador Olmos García Autonomous Sabotage Group”.

Zósimo Camacho / from **Contralínea 510** / **October 17 to 22, 2016**



Contra Aztlán: A Critique of Chicano Nationalism

Written by Julio — A Chicano from the L.A. Eastside



The cap above is an image that is making the rounds as a counterpoint to now-President Donald Trump and the hat he's made (in)famous. It serves as a visual reminder that a great

deal of U.S. territory was once Mexican national territory. A Chicano act of *détournement*¹. Though it's an act *détournement* which lacks a critical analysis of Mexican history. That said much of the Chicano movement's nationalist fervor arises from Mexico's territorial loss at the hands of U.S. racist aggression, resulting with the Treaty of Guadalupe in 1848, which 'ceded' California and a large area comprising roughly half of New Mexico, most of Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and parts of Wyoming and Colorado² to the USA.

Last year, two artists have undertaken the task of surveying the northern border of Mexico as it was in 1821 by marking it with obelisks that lie well within current U.S. borders. Today we refer this historical form of the Mexican nation-state as the First Mexican Empire; this empire extended well into Central America up into what is now the nation of Costa Rica. If these artists were to survey the southern border of this Empire then we would begin to see the glaring oversight of this project. Yes, they claim to want to show the transient nature of borders but they also inadvertently highlighted what the project of the Mexican nation-state is really about: the extraction of Capital to be found within its borders without the need for wars of aggression; a project that prefers the class war of the privatization of natural resources held in common and the extraction of surplus value from its native and mestizo populations. Once this project held a territory which was much more vast. The nostalgic picture of a peaceful homeland that Chicanxs often project onto Mexico begins to fade into the past. Yet from this nostalgia is born Chicano Nationalism.

¿Aztlán Libre?

It is the Chicano poet, Alurista, who is largely credited for spreading the story of Aztlán as the mythic homeland of the Mexica. He wrote what became a leading document for Chicano Nationalists: *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán*. In it we find the first fundamental error in Chicano Nationalism:

Nationalism as the key to organization transcends all religious, political, class, and economic factions or boundaries. Nationalism is the common denominator that all members of La Raza can agree upon.

Here is Aztlán: a new nation to arise in the U.S. Southwest/West as part of the assumed patrimony of all Chicanxs, by way of a supposed shared ethnic heritage.³ As an anti-state communist, I desire the overthrow of capitalism en su totalidad. How then could even Chicano anti-state communists support a plan which would inevitably align us with a new national bourgeoisie? The contradictions are glaring and would result in no liberation of the actual people which make up this "Chicano nation" from wage labor and general exploitation. Yet another revolution fore-stalled in the name of national sovereignty. Though there may be certain things which bind Chicanxs across these "factions" and "boundaries" which Alurista lists, but these are binds that dampen the communist project which understands that the notion of a Chicano Nation is a false one. Fredy Perlman, in his incendiary essay **The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism**, notes:

¹ Further reading on *détournement*, source: **Nothingness.org**

² Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, source: **Wikipediato**

³ I note that this is a supposed heritage, for even if the territory which Alurista calls Aztlán were truly the homeland of the Mexica, not every Chicano could lay "claim" to it since not all Chicanxs bear Mexica heritage. Chicanxs contain a multitude of ethnic heritages, whether from other Native Peoples from so-called Mexico, other European origins and even African heritages.

[One] might be trying to apply a definition of a nation as an organized territory consisting of people who share a common language, religion and customs, or at least one of the three. Such a definition, clear, pat and static, is not a description of the phenomenon but an apology for it, a justification.

This fabricated justification is used to allow the project of capitalist exploitation. Further, if we were to begin to analyze this homeland which Chicano Nationalists hope to reclaim we also run into the fundamental contradiction wherein this supposed homeland has already been continuously occupied for millennia by many different Native peoples. To mention a few: the Tongva-Gabrielino, the Chumash, the Yuman, the Comanche, the Apache, the Navajo and the Mohave.

Further, the ***Plan Espiritual de Aztlán*** states that Chicano Nationalists “declare the independence of [their] mestizo nation.” Here creeps in the danger of a new form of oppression: yet another mestizo nation once again makes an enclosure around Native groups. Though the National Brown Berets, a Chicano Nationalist group, instead claim that:

The amount of mixture of European blood on our people is a drop in the bucket compared to the hundreds of millions of Natives that inhabited this hemisphere. The majority of us are of Native/Indigenous ancestry and it is that blood that ties us to and cries out for our land!⁴

A strange play of blood belonging lays the groundwork for a presumed claim to Aztlán. Kim Tallbear, an anthropologist at the University of Texas, Austin and a member of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate of South Dakota, laments:

There’s a great desire by many people in the US to feel like you belong to this land. I recently moved to Texas, and many of the white people I meet say: “I’ve got a Cherokee ancestor.”... That worries us in a land where we already feel there’s very little understanding about the history of our tribes, our relationships with colonial powers...⁵

Chicanxs are the historical product of colonialism, racism, capitalism, slavery, genocide and cultural erasure. Part of the struggle to liberate Chicanxs (and all people) would inevitably incorporate the reclaiming of lost ancient ways, but this cannot overtake the struggle of Native peoples who have managed to maintain a direct connection to their deep past & present. Indigeneity is more than just genetic heritage, it is a real cultural link. It is unclear how the Chicano Nationalist project would differ from the sovereignty that American Colonialist merchants desired from the English Crown.

Against All Nation-States, Against the Police

The original 10-Point Program of the Brown Berets includes demands that, “all officers in MexicanAmerican communities must live in the community and speak Spanish.”⁶ Forty-seven years later in 2015, the LA Times reported that 45% of the LAPD force is Latino and yet relationships

⁴ National Brown Berets, *Our Nation Aztlán* [Site is gone. Link is cached content.]

⁵ **New Scientist**, ‘There is no DNA test to prove you’re Native American’

⁶ **Hecho en Aztlán**, Brown Beret Ten-Point Program (1968)

between the LAPD and the city it overlooks remain very strained.⁷ It could be said that at the time of the drafting of this program that it was quite radical in its demand, but 61 years earlier there is an anecdote that exemplifies that Mexican-Americans had already known another way was necessary.



Mugshot of Ricardo Flores Magón. Arrested by the LAPD in 1907.

...scores of cholos jumped to their feet and started for the spot where the [LAPD] officer was supposed to be sitting. If he had been there, nothing could have prevented a vicious assault and possible bloodshed.⁸

Now the context: Mexican-American LAPD Detective Felipe Talamantes, along with two other Mexican-American LAPD Detectives arrested three members of the PLM, a Mexican Anarchist- Communist organization, in Los Angeles under trumped up and false charges in 1907. At the time, it was noted that it was highly possible that the LAPD detectives were working under direction of the Mexican Federal Government, then headed by dictator Porfirio Díaz, as a way to clamp down on Mexican radicals in the USA just prior to the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution. Someone in the courtroom said that Det. Talamantes might have been in attendance at a hearing resulting in the scene described above with the jumping cholos. At the time there was already a very strained relationship between the LAPD & Mexicans in Los Angeles. Consequently, there was massive support for the three anarchists arrested from Mexicans, Mexican-Americans and even white radicals in Los Angeles. Noting that on principal, all anarchists are against the institution of the police. Throughout their imprisonment they were able to raise a remarkable \$1,950.00 in their defense; remarkable in light of the meager size of the

⁷ LA Times, "LAPD is more diverse, but distrust in the community remains"

⁸ LA Times, Nov. 13th 1907

contributions ranging from \$0.10 to \$3.00.⁹ This anecdote is also telling since it mattered little to those who supported the 3 arrested that the LAPD detectives were themselves also Mexican-American. These detectives were clearly understood to be complicit with the white-majority which controlled the conservative power structure which was local governance at the time.

To this day Chicano National Liberation group, Unión del Barrio, advocate in Los Angeles what the Brown Berets advocated back in 1968: a Civilian Police Review Board. As the more radical elements in the Black Lives Matter movement begin to call for the wholesale abolition of the police, Chicano Nationalists trail behind with mere calls for more police oversight. It could be Chicano Nationalists, in their myopia, fail to see and acknowledge the anti-black origins of the police in the USA.¹⁰ Fredy Perlman notes and calls us to task:

It is among people who have lost all their roots, who dream themselves supermarket managers and chiefs of police, that the national liberation front takes root; this is where the leader and general staff are formed. Nationalism continues to appeal to the depleted because other prospects appear bleaker.

But what is be the prospect which — albeit bleak — anti-state communists offer?

Contra el nacionalismo, ¡por el comunismo y anarquía!

Chicano Nationalists often talk about “the border jumping over them,” to counter the racist narrative that Mexicans are somehow invaders of what is now the American SouthWest. They rail against the borders that their parents, grandparents and others have had to perilously cross, yet they evidently do not desire the abolition of borders but rather yet another re-drawing. Anti-state communists desire the wholesale abolition of all borders, all nation-states, capitalism, the police, patriarchy, colonialism and work. Though of course it is difficult to push forward anti-state communist measures without speaking to the experience of identity, speaking through the lens of a purely national liberationist scope is to speak in half-measures.

Mao Zedong Thought, a source of much National Liberation ideology, here is critiqued by Perlman:

Few of the world's oppressed had possessed any of the attributes of a nation in the recent or distant past. [Mao Zedong] Thought had to be adapted to people whose ancestors had lived without national chairmen, armies or police, without capitalist production processes and therefore without the need for preliminary capital. These revisions were accomplished by enriching the initial Thought with borrowings from Mussolini, Hitler and the Zionist state of Israel. Mussolini's theory of the fulfillment of the nation in the state was a central tenet. All groups of people, whether small or large, industrial or non-industrial, concentrated or dispersed, were seen as nations, not in terms of their past, but in terms of their aura, their potentiality, a potentiality embedded in their national liberation fronts. Hitler's (and the Zionists') treatment

⁹ Edward J. Escobar, “Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity: Mexican Americans and the Los Angeles Police Department, 1900 – 1945,” p. 58

¹⁰ For further reading see, **Origins of the Police** by David Whitehouse

of the nation as a racial entity was another central tenet. The cadres were recruited from among people depleted of their ancestors' kinships and customs, and consequently the liberators were not distinguishable from the oppressors in terms of language, beliefs, customs or weapons; the only welding material that held them to each other and to their mass base was the welding material that had held white servants to white bosses on the American frontier; the "racial bond" gave identities to those without identity, kinship to those who had no kin, community to those who had lost their community; it was the last bond of the culturally depleted.

The project of supplying Chicanxs with an alternative to National Liberation or some other false appeal to Nationhood is one that is more necessary than ever. As radical Chicanxs who desire to live free of the State, of Capitalism, of Patriarchy and Colonialism we should take it upon ourselves to create the rhetoric, the movements, the history which we want to see in the world. I look forward to helping find, create and elevate such work which would fulfill the project of total liberation, not just for Chicanxs, but for oppressed people everywhere.

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Expanded & Edited on March 9th, 2017

Live From Occupied Tongva-Gabrielino Territory [Los Angeles, CA]



But we have to, so we do it real slow

La Onda, March 2016

In Los Angeles to be against Capital typically presents itself in a pro-work/ worker position. The problem is never work itself, the nature of work or that work is waged but instead what is desired is extending a sphere of work that is unionized and bolstered with higher wages. Take for instance the CLEAN Carwash campaign, where carwash workers (whom are mostly immigrant men) have been unionized under the representation of United Steelworkers Local 675. Though this move is one that brings much needed betterment of working conditions and wages for these workers, what is ultimately not brought up is that the work of car wash workers can and has already been automated. But of course the fading labour movement is not concerned with the overthrow of capitalism and abolition of work at all. That dream is a dream that has been lost along with the labour movement.

The expression of an anti-work position has either been minoritarian or unheard of. In a city where working conditions for immigrants can be well below the legal standards set forth by the State and the Federal Government, the push for more protections and rights within the workplace takes on precedence. An anti-work affect (rather than a bonafide position) among Mexican immigrants and / or Mexican-Americans is usually to be found in cultural forms and do not often take on explicit anti political, or anti-capitalist forms. Whereas the playful and tongue-in-cheek cultural forms are plentiful, the other mentioned forms are few and far in between.

Anti-Work / Anti-Capitalist: An Introduction

My first encounter with an explicit anti-work position came from Chican@ friends who I had met in 2001 who were heavily-influenced by the French Marxist theorist Guy Debord and the Situationist

International. In 1953, a young Guy Debord painted on a wall on the Rue de Seine «**NE TRAVAILLEZ JAMAIS**» (tr. **Never Work**). A statement that was difficult for me to understand conceptually at the time but which I immediately gravitated towards. Hitherto, all the anarchist literature I had read on work concerned themselves with how wage labor was theft of our time & of our labor power and that the solution was not the abolition of work *per se* but worker self-management. [Think of all the nostalgia that some Left-Anarchists have for the revolution lost by the anarchosyndicalists during the Spanish Civil War.]

Growing up in a Mexican household where what was prized was the opportunity to find well-paying work and as well as reverence of a hearty work ethic, this was a scandalous position. Though the starting point for Guy Debord opposition to a world of work was not a beatnik, bohemian lifestyle refusal common to the 1950s but rather a rejection of the blariness of life under capitalism and part of a whole project to overthrow The Spectacle and make life a joyous affair once again.

The critique of work can be found elsewhere throughout history including Paul Lafargue's "**The Right to be Lazy**" (1883) written by Karl Marx's son-in-law, in the notorious post-left Anarchist Bob Black's "*The Abolition of Work*" (1985) and Gille Dauve's "*Eclipse & Re-Emergence of the Communist*

Movement" (1970) where he clarifies what the abolition of work could mean and says "what we want is the abolition of work as an activity separate from the rest of life." He later would explain that the issue at hand is not that we do or not do things, but that under capitalism what we do is often made confused by wage labor. We assume only those things paid a wage have value and that only those things which are productive are necessary to human life.



Mexican-Americans & Work

That said there is no shortage of cultural output from Mexican immigrants, or Mexican-Americans (some of whom identify as Chicano) that takes a swipe at the way work is made necessary to our social reproduction.¹ Take for instance a comedic song from "**Up In Smoke**" (1978), where the character Pedro de Pacas sings a song trying to upend notions of popular Mexican-American identity and says,

"Mexican-Americans don't like to get up early in the morning but they have to so they do it real slow."

Here we catch a key moment in the subjectivity of the worker racialized as a Mexican-American, but also caught in the paradigm where labor is managed by borders. There is an understanding that work and the preparation for work is drudgery but also that the refusal of work might be impossible, but yet such a refusal is acknowledged but gives way to a sort of sabotage on productivity by doing it real slow.

The spectacular production of the Mexican as a worker in the USA (or Mexican-American) is often tied up in a binary of either hard-working/job-stealing or lazy/welfare-scheming. As seen

¹ DEFINITION: all the labor that needs to be done so that workers are prepared to work the next day. this work is often un-paid though it is necessary for any work to be done under capitalism. examples: doing the laundry, child-care, sex, dish-washing, food preparation, commuting.

by the recent words of Donald Trump, there is also the perception of the Mexican as a dangerous criminal, forming a trinity of prejudice that returns when it suits the need of nativist, racist politicians. This type of characterization was first seen when the U.S. forcefully annexed the so-called American SouthWest from México and bandits like Tiburcio Vasquez haunted the minds of the waves of Westward-bound Anglo-Americans.

To posit an anti-work position and to take into account the racialization of workers in the USA looms as an impossible task. Often immigrants internalize a work ethic that is even more entrenched than that of right-wing Anglo-Americans that describe the USA as a meritocracy. This is more necessity than reaction by Mexican-Americans when they are forced into the most grueling of work that most nativeborn or Anglo-Americans will simply not take on: picking of fruits & vegetables, construction, food service, child care, landscaping, etc. We work hard because we have to and we make a mythology around it where we are the hard-working ones but everyone else is the not-hardworking ones, where notably elements of anti-blackness come to the fore.

To further the myth of the hard-working immigrant, that does not threaten the colonial-capitalist social order of the USA, is to strip immigrants of the agency to express revolt. In a time where nativist racism is peaking once again, we must realize that this myth proliferation is no safety net against ICE sweeps or other racist violence. There is no pride in presenting ourselves as hard-working, since under capitalism hard-working merely means we are putting in more labor for the same amount of pay. In effect, we are lowering our wages by putting in more work than is expected, and making ourselves hyper-exploited. If we were to collectively express our reluctance or refusal to work beyond the bare minimum we could begin to flex the capacity of our labor power. (An inspiring moment of this kind of flexing was the general strike on May 1st, 2006 where immigrants largely self-organized a strike to show how much their labor is integral to the functioning of capitalism; in Los Angeles 1 to 2 million people took to the streets & over 90% of LA Port traffic was shut down.)

And as it has been noted, more and more Mexicans are returning to Mexico than coming into the USA, the payoff for this hard-work is in decline. I've heard amongst friends and family that many recent Mexican immigrants find that the work they encounter in the USA is either too dangerous, too difficult or too hard to find.

A WAY OUT?

But this desire to be the most hardworking Mexican in the world wasn't always the norm. In British historian E.P. Thompson's 1967 text "**Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism**" he mentioned how economic-growth theorists viewed Mexican mineworkers as "indolent and childlike people" because they lacked discipline. For instance, he notes from a book on the **The Mexican Mining Industry, 1890 – 1950** that Mexican mineworkers had:

"[a] lack of initiative, [an] inability to save, absences while celebrating too many holidays, [a] willingness to work for only three or four days a week if that paid for necessities, [and] an insatiable desire for alcohol..." (Bernstein)²

It seems that time changes little. Of course in many ways we always knew that we don't really want to go to work and that we only have disdain for those who don't have to because we are

² tr. The ideal worker / Damn! it seems the company isn't making the profits that it should be...well, say no more! : tomorrow I will quit without any kind of compensation or anything... how would I dare protest! I'd rather call the anti-riot police and have them split my head open!

not them. That we enjoy the winter break where we fill up on tamales, cervezas, and spend the evenings talking about what we'd really like to be doing, and dreams for the future.

Even the Left's obsession with the mythologized collective worker that is socially-responsible, punctual and whom identifies with their work is largely a fabrication of the dead worker's movement.

II

The anti-state communist theory journal, **Endnotes**, states that:

“the supposed identity that the worker’s movement constructed turned out to be a particular one. Itsubsumed workers only insofar as they were stamped, or were willing to be stamped, with a very particular character. That is to say, it included workers not as they were in themselves, but only to the extent that they conformed to a certain image of respectability, dignity, hard work, family, organisation, sobriety, atheism, and so on.”³

Too often we are given the lie that the way to progress is to submit to the rationalization of the capitalist system; that we simply need to awaken the sleeping giant which represents the possible Latino voting bloc; that the rich are rich because they really know how to handle their money; that if only we could sway Congress to push immigration reform; if only we could get universities to tell us back our histories or to enroll us at all...but really the way out is to abolish the social relation that is capitalism...that protects itself by way of the State; that protects itself with borders, police and a standing army; that controls the way we envision our lives with careers, time management and gender roles; that makes into a commodity even the way we choose to spend our not-working hours, which yet are still spent preparing or recovering from those working hours.

¿Pero Cómo Resisteremos Por Mientras? / How Can We Resist Right Now?

Or we've been resisting this whole time

Thinking back to the 90s when the ditch party was both an escape from the terrible LAUSD as well as a form of resistance to the most alienating of compulsory schooling: in many ways these teens that would not show up to school and party instead contained much more awareness of the society around them than the kids that would instead get 'straight As' and then study Chicano/a Studies. These kids implicitly understood the pipeline that the LAUSD was to low-paying, entry-level service work where they would have to do much more rule-following, guideline-abiding, button-pushing, uniform-wearing than critical thinking. It was as though they were able to envision the no future we currently find ourselves in.

So many of us already partake in the public secret(s) of our resistance to work:

³ link to text www.endnotes.org.uk/en/endnotes-history-of-separation-part-2: (“A History of Separation”) www.onda.la

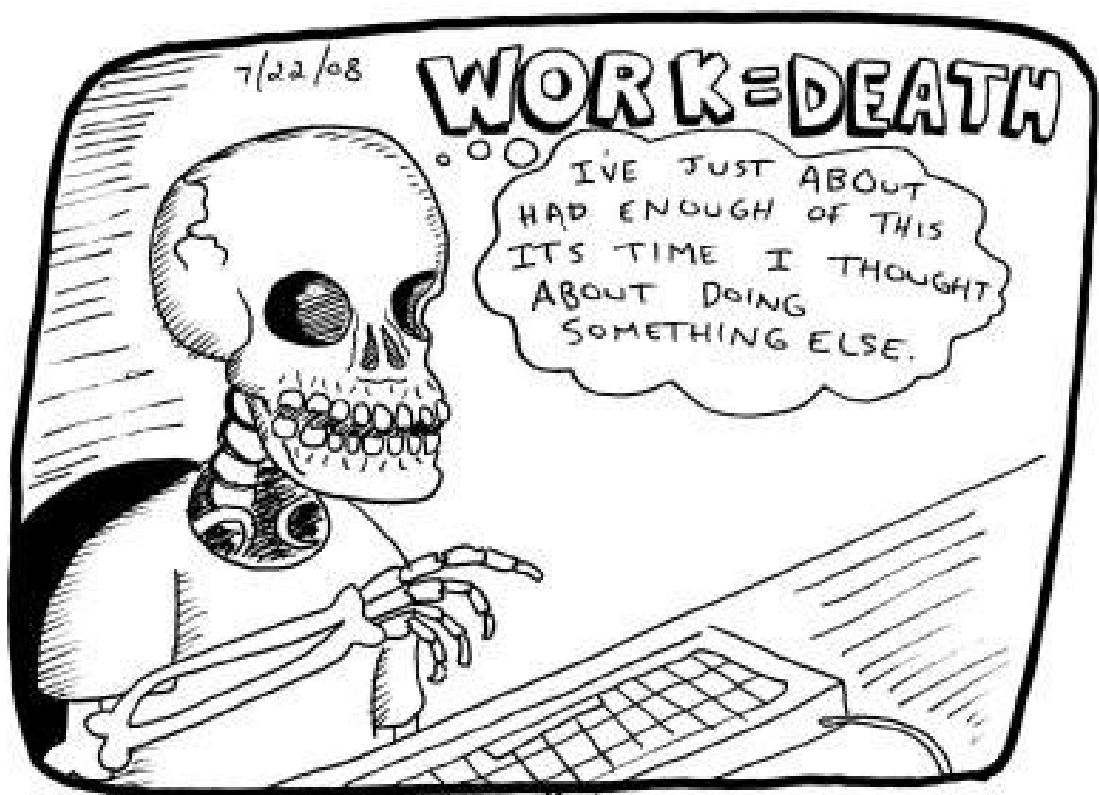
- we slack off at work, which in Marxist terms could be seen as a way of raising your own wage since you are putting in less labor for the same length of time.
- we steal from work and thus make our time at our workplace much more worthwhile, and even get some nice gifts for friends and family.
- we sabotage the flow of productivity by working real slow, or by shutting down the internet, or by talking to our coworkers about not work-related things, or by not working at all and taking a nice siesta. • we call in sick when we're really not sick at all or really we're just too hungover from the rager the night before.

A world without work seems like an impossibility, a utopia, an unlikely dream — especially when most of our waking time is spent thinking about how we're gonna pay the rent, the power bill, car insurance, possible student loans, more probable credit card debt or the bar tab...but a world without work is also a world without capitalism...a world of communism.

That world is a world without wage labor, without patriarchy, without race, without class, without a state, without police where we would decide our lives on our own terms without the limitations of value production, without the control of borders, without Monday mornings, without social death, without artificial crises, where we won't have to suffer the indignities of being harassed by the boss, a world beyond accounting, a world where what we do will not define who we are to each other.

WHAT IS L.A. ONDA?

***ONDA.LA** brings a vicious, non-moralistic anti-capitalist perspective to Los Angeles. ONDA knows the cops cannot be reformed; that education is never a way out of a pit dug by racist capitalism. LA ONDA knows how to recognize the racist, sexist, heteronormative, homophobic, transphobic, and anti working-class aspects of the city. We know that politicians will always cut us short whenever they can; that the question of violence is not a question at all; that decolonization is not a metaphor but a threat backed by material violence; that the legal system offers nothing compared to revenge; that none of us are pure nor that we should be; that knows work is a drudgery imposed; that knows that the bad days will end.*



EZLN: in this war the enemy is all of us and everything.

Translated by El Kilombo Intergaláctico, and with much, much Much more to read, from **dorsetchiapas solidarity, On Ayotzinapa, the Festival, and Hysteria as Analysis**
dorsetchiapassolidarity.wordpress.com

The era in which capital needed peace and social stability is over.

And in the new hierarchy within capital, speculation reigns and commands, and its world is made of corruption, impunity, and crime.

As it turns out, the nightmare in Ayotzinapa is not a local, state, or national problem. It's a global one.

And it turns out that it is not only against young people, nor only against men. It is a war of many wars:

a war on the other, a war against indigenous peoples, a war on youth, a war against those who with their labor make the world go round, a war on women.

Because it seems that femicide is such old news, so everyday and ubiquitous in all ideologies, that it now goes down as "natural death" in the records.

Because it is a war that every few minutes takes on a name in whatever calendar and geography: Erika Kassandra Bravo Caro: young woman, worker, Mexican, 19 years old, tortured, killed, and flayed in the "pacified" (according to civil, military, and media authorities) Mexican state of Michoacán. "A crime of passion," they will say, just like those who say "collateral victims," or "a local problem in the municipality of the provincial Mexican state of... (enter the name of any state in the federation)," or "it's an isolated event, we must move on."

It turns out that Ayotzinapa and Erika are not the exception, but rather the reaffirmation of the rule of capitalist war: destroy the enemy.

Because in this war the enemy is all of us and everything.

And this is a war against everything, every thing everywhere.

Because as it turns out, this is what it's about, what it has always been about: a war, which is now a war against humanity.



Critical Response to Frantz Fanon's 'The Wretched of the Earth'

by Musawenkosi Cabe

(this is from the Franz Fanon blog; <https://readingfanon.blogspot.com/2014/05/critical-response-tofrantz-fanons.html>)

"Fifty years ago, Frantz Fanon died, leaving us with his last testimony, The Wretched of the Earth. Written in the crucible of the Algerian War of Independence and the early years of Third World decolonization, this book achieved an almost biblical status"

"[The] Post-colonial nightmare Fanon predicted in The Wretched of the Earth has become our reality"

- Achille Mbembe, 2011

Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* is a classical text on the conditions of the colonial reality. It is one of Fanon's widely considered books; hence it has "achieved an almost biblical status" (Mbembe, 2011). The text provides a critical analysis of an overwhelming number of issues drawing from racial formation identity, colonialism/decolonization, narratives of the liberation struggle, language, nationalism and violence and the various ways in which it shapes and it alters the relationship between colonizer and the colonized. Before I attempt to critically engage the book, it is significant for this paper to contextualize the Preface of the book by Jean Paul Sartre. In this paper I will briefly look at the chapter "On Violence", and will look at violence as a force for change, and as a tool for social and political transformation. The critical response will focus on the chapter 'The Pitfalls of National Consciousness' This paper will also be relating the arguments of the chapter on contemporary times in an attempt to make them relevant and meaningful to our contemporary political reality.

It is important to recall that Fanon wrote most parts of the book in 1960 – when decolonization was occurring in most African countries. This suggests that, Fanon had a direct experience of colonialism, independence and problems that came with it. In *A Dying Colonialism* I was of a view that Fanon was at times idealistic and too optimistic about the liberation struggle. *The Wretched of the Earth* sustains his passion, optimism and commitment to the 'bottom up' emancipatory project, but Fanon does not blind himself to reality. He is equally critical of colonial reality; he warns about the liberation movements, that when they have attained independence they are capable of undermining their own democracy and liberation through ignorance and greed. Also given the complexities of the colonial struggle and almost a century of exploitation, newly independent countries struggle to function independently.

It is of paramount importance for this paper to note and clarify that *The Wretched of the Earth* is not necessarily 'for' the colonized as Jean-Paul Sartre suggest in the preface of the book, but it is an intensive study 'about' the reality of the colonial/post-colonial world (emphasis added).

I find specific contents of Sartre's account of *The Wretched of the Earth* in the preface of the book, not only to be problematic but also Eurocentric to a certain extent. Firstly, the preface by Sartre is problematic on grounds that it perpetuates the Manichean thinking that Fanon strives to transcend and problematize throughout the book, the idea of 'us' and 'them'. For Sartre, 'us' refers to a White or European audience, and 'them' refers to the group that has been subjected to wretchedness. Sartre writes that Fanon's book "is for his brothers; his aim is to teach them to beat us at our own game" (Sartre, 196: 10). Euro-centrism thrives on the idea of the west discovering the 'other'. The colonized are portrayed by Sartre through the trajectory of euro-centrism as objects rather than subject in the story of their emancipation and liberation.

The point I am trying to assert here is that, Sartre is wrong about the book's intended audience.

Fanon writes *The Wretched of the Earth* for a multi-racial and global audience from all walks of life.

Fanon challenges the Manichean thinking created by colonialism. Some people might ask how does Fanon challenge this thinking, given the fact that the colonial situation demands a clear division between colonizer and the colonized. Fanon (1961: 138) in advanced pages of the book asserts that "racialism and hatred and resentment — 'a legitimate desire for revenge' cannot sustain a war of liberation". Fanon does not separate between the colonizer and colonized using fixed notion of racial essence. But he believes lived experience of European colonialism will compel people's political choice, whether they identify with the colonizer or colonized.

Perhaps significantly in this chapter, Fanon talks about the importance of violence as a political tool, which can not only bring about fundamental change, but which also deconstructs the colonizer/colonized, master-slave relationship thus bringing in a change in the social structure from the bottom up. Violence is constructed as an empowerment tool which the colonized uses to re assert their authority and legitimacy at the colonizer. This notion of violence, as a function, as an instrument of change, or as being a necessary condition for the bringing into change, a new world for the colonized subjects, which would construct them as a people with agency, rather than passive subjects who are the receivers of powers. This understanding is interesting, as it leads to questions posed about the role of violence in post-Apartheid South Africa, and its meaning in relation to the marginalized communities?

The role of violence, especially domestic, in asking whether it could be related to the apartheid apparatus which sought to deconstruct the black self, and reconstruct in its place, submissive and broken individuals who resort to violence, especially at home, as a vicious means of communication and asserting order and discipline. And to echo Michael Neocosmos, why do events such as the 2008 xenophobic attacks take on a violent undertone, and the significance of violence as a signifier of dispossession, disillusionment and necessity in carrying the message home of discontentment? Thus one could postulate that if violence could be seen as language needed by the colonized to re assert legitimacy and right to existence to the settler, then therefore violence could also be seen as linguistic medium in contemporary South Africa, which needs to be deciphered and broken down, and understood in relation to the broader society.

Fanon argues that the colonized world is a world divided into compartments, divided into two, to cater for two different species (Fanon, 2001: 30). One could argue that this special divide, which seeks to establish boundaries and pursue discrimination of the space, ensured that locations and boundaries were set up in which the colonized was localized and positioned, and essentially made to perform the role of a foreigner, in his or her own country. Fanon (1961: 187) is of a view that a compartmentalized colonial city perpetuates itself even after a successful independence.

This transpires only if the capital city, which Fanon regards as “a commercial notion inherited from the colonial period”, becomes even more important and central to the economy of the new country (Fanon, 1961: 187).

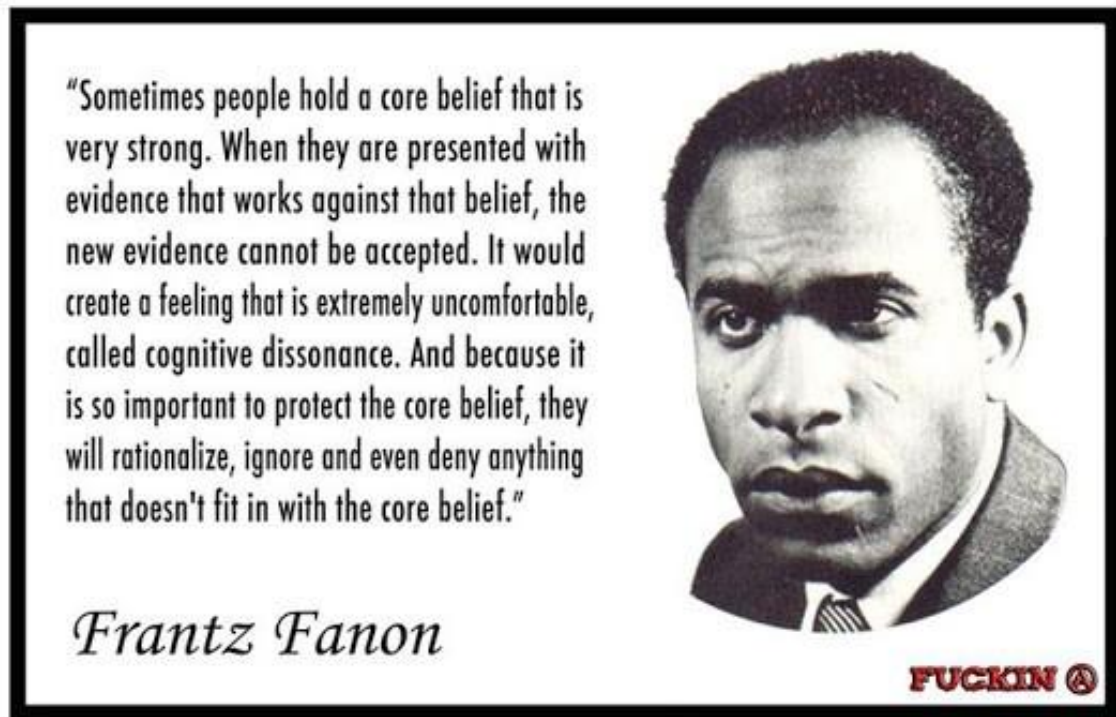
Furthermore, Fanon’s post-colonial nightmare has become our reality in South Africa. Johannesburg is without doubt one of many cities in post-colonial Africa that is “a commercial notion inherited from the colonial [and apartheid] periods” and continues to perpetuate a compartmentalized space. Johannesburg is a highly contested space, it is a center of power and an economic hub. The problem, Fanon argue is when the new ruling elites move to the capital city and occupy colonial governing institutions. What happens is that the new democratic government duplicates the structure of imperialism, rather than changing it. Steve Biko just like Fanon, at the height of apartheid was able to predict that a change of governors without dismantling colonial and apartheid oppressive institutions will be an illusion (Biko, 1987: 149). Meaning if there is “a mere change of face of those in governing positions, what is likely to happen is that black people will continue to be poor, and you will see a few blacks filtering through into the so-called bourgeoisie. Our society will be run almost as of yesterday” (Biko, 1987: 149). In an allegedly democratic South Africa for instance, the state openly uses violence to silence the poor from their legitimate protest against corruption and service delivery.

Fanon suggests a radical decentralization of power that will compel the reordering of the colonial space. Fanon (1961: 164) correctly assert that “in a certain number of underdeveloped countries the parliamentary game is faked from the beginning” (Emphasis added). South African parliamentary democracy for instance, does not represent the will of the people, on grounds that it is inherently oligarchic, and that it subsequently leads to the technicism of politics from the public domain into the private, which is not accessible to the majority. Fanon argue that it cannot be ethically correct for 300 people to decide for the greater majority, “the whole population [must] plan and decide [together] even if it takes them twice or three times long” (Cherki, 2000: 157).

In conclusion, what I get from *the Wretched of the Earth* is that, humanism is a system of thought attaching fundamental importance on human rather than other supernatural matters. It is also equally problematic to normatively describe humanity “as purity of thought and rationality as thinking according to absolute rules of inference”, and then locate human existence exclusively within Europe (Headly, 2006: 7). This however, runs a “risk of confining and condemning non-Europeans to irrationality or cognitive underdevelopment” (Headly, 2006: 8). We need to rethink humanity in a critical way. Critical humanism entails the rethinking of the problematic of being or existence outside the confines of western metaphysics of presence. Fanon (1961: 205) believes that “Each generation must out of relative obscurity discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it.” As a generation of a disbanded revolution in our underdeveloped countries we need to continuously question, challenge and resist the neo-liberal technocratic thinking and the legacy of “colonialism and also help on the maturing of the struggles of” our life time (Fanon, 1961: 206). For example formalized agreements between African Union and Europe Union, are generally assumed to be in the best interest of Africa, on grounds that the continent is impoverished, marginal and in desperate need to achieve “what Europe has achieved in terms of social and human development” (Zondi, 2013:10). We need to problematize this kind of thinking by working out new concept of being. To advance our humanity differently, we will have to invent and make discoveries that are made with the people and driven by the people.

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quote from Black Skin, White Mask

Eritrea: National Liberation? National Disaster?

By **Pink Panther**

*This from the website of **The Aotearoa Workers Solidarity Movement (AWSM)**, *an organisation across Aotearoa / New Zealand working towards a classless, stateless society. **www.awsm.nz****

The world is divided into nation-states. These artificial constructs have either evolved over an extended period, through the actions of people within particular areas, or are created by outside forces. There is nothing 'natural' about them, though this is harder to see in cases where they have been in place for a long time.

In Africa, the European colonial powers drew up the political boundaries to suit themselves, in the latter half of the 19th Century. Later wars of independence fought in Africa did not result in the redrawing of colonial boundaries. Most of the anticolonial movements were essentially united only by their hatred of the imperialist powers. Despite using the rhetoric of a nation united regardless of ethnicity or tribe, the reality has been far more fractious, with a large degree of favouritism given to certain groups. Upon gaining independence many African countries, for example the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi and Nigeria, spawned separatist movements based along ethnic, tribal and religious lines. They have fought each other just as bitterly as their former rulers.

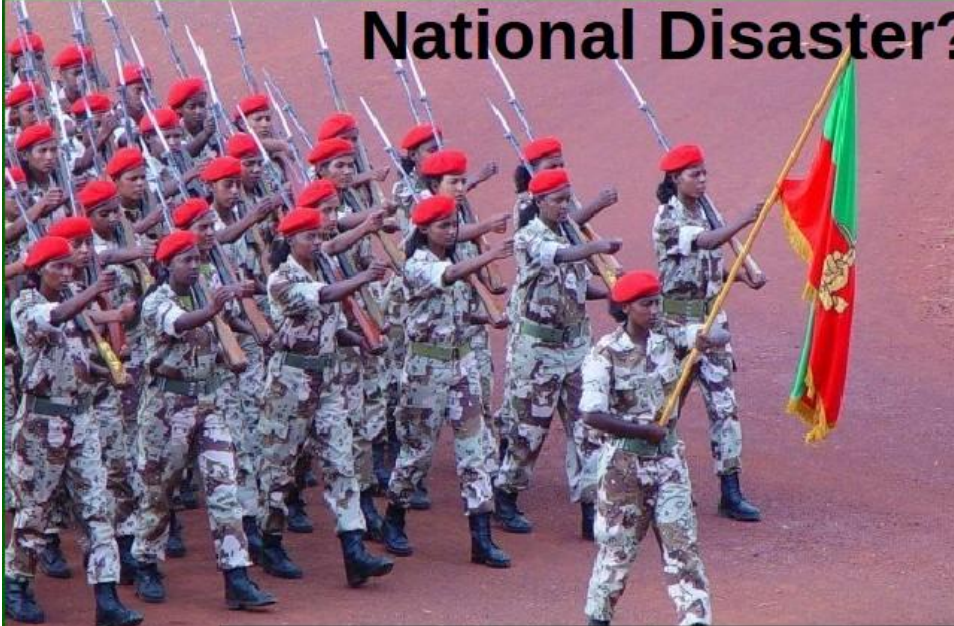
Eritrea is a place many people elsewhere probably haven't heard of. It is worth knowing a bit about it because it is a textbook case of a war of national liberation that did not work for the betterment of people and the consequences of that is seriously impacting on events elsewhere right now. Eritrea is a small country in northeast Africa, with a population of about 6.3 million. There are nine ethnic groups of whom the largest are the Tigrinya who make up 55% of the population and the Tigre who make up about 30%. It is one of the world's poorest and most autocratic countries, often coming at or near the bottom of most human rights lists.

Eritrea was an Italian colony, then it was put under British administration. In 1962 it was taken over by the feudal monarchy of Ethiopia. It would not be until 1993 before Eritrea would become formally independent. For most of that time the two main rebel factions the Eritrean People's Liberation Front and the Eritrean Liberation Front, fought against the monarchy of Haile Selassie then the Soviet backed Mengistu Haile Mariam. After 'liberation' a one party state was established by the People's Front for Democracy and Justice under Isaias Afwerki. As is all too common with states and political parties labelling themselves with the words "democracy" and "justice", both are absent from Eritrea.

The devastation wrought by decades of war, which were marked by forced population resettlements, famine and atrocities, ensured that Eritrea had a woefully inadequate infrastructure and an economy in ruins when it finally gained independence. This made economic growth very hard to achieve and matters have not been helped with at least two border wars being fought

National Liberation?

National Disaster?



National liberation struggles have succeeded in eliminating the scourge of colonialism but not that of authoritarianism. One definition of insanity is knowing something doesn't work but continuing to repeatedly do it. With decades of examples in various parts of the world and contemporary disasters like that of Eritrea, the need for a change of approach is compelling.

From comrade Pink Panther;

<http://www.awsm.nz/2015/11/13/eritrea-national-liberation-national-disaster/>

with Ethiopia. To aggravate matters, there have been appalling human rights abuses under the Afwerki regime. An aspect of his rule that has drawn increasing attention has been the introduction of indefinite compulsory military conscription. As a result, everyone under 50 is tied to the military, with the possibility of release only at the whim of a commander. People spend years in a form of military induced slavery and are used to build various projects for the ruler and his clique.

The situation has become so grim that thousands of Eritreans have fled abroad and made a trek across northern Africa and crossed the Mediterranean Sea to Europe, along with hundreds of thousands of Syrians fleeing the Syrian civil war. This has helped create one of the greatest refugee crises since the Second World War. European countries, which are the heirs to the colonial powers, have been pressured to help Syrian refugees to some extent. In contrast, Eritreans have been treated as 'economic migrants', and therefore unworthy of the same consideration.

So what went so horribly wrong?

In wars of national liberation the only thing that ultimately unites the various factions is a hatred of those whom the nationalists blame for their problems. In the case of Eritrea that was initially the Italians, then the Ethiopians. However, the defeat of the Mengistu regime in 1991, did not bring about the liberation of the Eritrean people. Rather, one tyranny was substituted for another and this replicates a common pattern in many countries.

The removal of the hated foreign power and nationals of that group from a newly independent country, exacerbates existing problems in the short term. One reason is because the people who are expelled take their money, skills and expertise with them: the unfortunate situation that happened in many of the African countries such as the former Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique and in the Belgian Congo. After a grace period, what often then happens is the return of these outside powers in the form of giant multinationals in search of raw materials. The nationalist regime needs the expertise the companies bring, and offer sweetheart deals in return. This leads to all sorts of corruption and kleptocracy. For example, in Eritrea a multi-national minerals company called Nevsun is making profits from mining there, with President Afwerki also personally picking up a huge percentage of that money extracted from his slave labour force.

Another problem is that these wars of national liberation were usually led by people trained in elitist schools in the West, the former Soviet Union or some other place of exile. They often had little, or no, understanding of the real situation in their country. Idi Amin was educated in the United Kingdom. Robert Mugabe was educated in apartheid era South Africa and the UK. They also picked up the ideological or elitist hatred and contempt for ordinary people. Thus, when they took over their respective countries, they imposed the same repressive and autocratic rule that had previously been imposed by the colonialists. In essence, a white colonial elite was replaced by a tribal or local ethnic or other elite. Replacing one clique with another, either through wars of liberation such as that which Eritrea endured, or through the ballot box, is not really changing much. It is a problem that both liberals and certain brands of Marxists alike, fail to grasp or under-emphasize.

Wars of national liberation can easily be made to sound romantic or noble. After all, there have been a number of horrific regimes that have sorely needed replacing. That has usually required organised resistance. Only a total cynic, right-wing racist or utterly naïve person would argue otherwise. Psychologically there is also an unacknowledged tendency on the Left to over focus on obscure struggles in faraway places. There's nothing intrinsically wrong with looking at difficulties in other countries. It is essential in fact. However, it is far easier to obsess over the

plight of the workers and peasants of wherever, than doing the hard work of trying to deal with problems in your own immediate neighbourhoods or town. We need to get the balance right and keep our wits about us. The sobering reality of such wars can be found in their legacy: a whole list of nations, like Eritrea, ruled by autocrats in repressive one party states that use terror and repression to silence any real or imaginary threats. Eritrea may be an extreme example, but it is one within an overall pattern.

Anarchists do not oppose the state because of a belief that any form of rules or organisation is wrong. It is because we recognise the state is a key means by which an elite rules over everyone else. Whether the rulers are elected through the ballot box or gains power via the bullet, they still think they know what is best for everyone else and will use varying degrees of coercion, ideological indoctrination or brute force to impose their will. National liberation struggles have succeeded in eliminating the scourge of colonialism but not that of authoritarianism. One definition of insanity is knowing something doesn't work but continuing to repeatedly do it. With decades of examples in various parts of the world and contemporary disasters like that of Eritrea, the need for a change of approach is compelling.



Amilcar Cabral's revolutionary anti-colonialist ideas

Firoze Manji

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Amilcar Cabral and Frantz Fanon are among the most important thinkers from Africa on the politics of liberation and emancipation. While the relevance of Fanon's thinking has re-emerged, with popular movements such as Abahlali baseMjondolo in South Africa proclaiming his ideas as the inspiration for their mobilizations, as well as works by Sekyi-Otu, Alice Cherki, Nigel Gibson, Lewis Gordon and others, Cabral's ideas have not received as much attention.

Cabral was the founder and leader of the Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde liberation movement, *Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde* (PAIGC). He was a revolutionary, humanist, poet, military strategist, and prolific writer on revolutionary theory, culture and liberation. The struggles he led against Portuguese colonialism contributed to the collapse not only of Portugal's African empire, but also to the downfall of the fascist dictatorship in Portugal and to the Portuguese revolution of 1974-'75, events that he was not to witness: he was assassinated by some of his comrades, with the support of the Portuguese secret police, PIDE, on 20 January 1973.

By the time of his death, two thirds of Guinea was in the liberated zones, where popular democratic structures were established that would form the basis for the future society: women played political and military leadership roles, the Portuguese currency was banned and replaced by barter, agricultural production was devoted to the needs of the population, and many of the elements of a society based on humanity, equality and justice began to emerge organically through popular debate and discussion. Cultural resistance played a critical role in both the defeat of the Portuguese and in the establishment of the liberated zones.

Culture and the reclamation of humanity

The use of violence to dominate a people is, argued Cabral, “above all, to take up arms to destroy, or at least neutralize and to paralyze their cultural life. For as long as part of that people have a cultural life, foreign domination cannot be assured of its perpetuation”.

The reason for this is clear. Culture is not a mere artefact or expression of aesthetics, custom or tradition. It is a means by which people assert their opposition to domination, a means to proclaim and invent their humanity, a means to assert agency and the capacity to make history. In a word, culture is one of the fundamental tools of the struggle for emancipation.

For Cabral, culture has a material base, “the product of this history just as a flower is the product of a plant. Like history, or because it is history, culture has as its material base the level of the productive forces and the mode of production. Culture plunges its roots into the physical reality of the environmental humus in which it develops, and reflects the organic nature of the society.”

Culture, insists Cabral, is intimately linked to the struggle for freedom. While culture comprises many aspects, it “grows deeper through the people’s struggle, and not through songs, poems or folklore. ... One cannot expect African culture to advance unless one contributes realistically to the creation of the conditions necessary for this culture, i.e. the liberation of the continent.” In other words, culture is not static and unchangeable, but it advances only through engagement in the struggle for freedom.

If being cast as African was originally defined as being less than human, the resounding claim of every movement in opposition to enslavement, every slave revolt, every opposition to colonization, every challenge to the institutions of white supremacy, every resistance to racism, every resistance to oppression or to patriarchy, constituted an assertion of human identity. Where Europeans considered Africans to be sub-human, the response was to claim the identity of “African” as a positive, liberating definition of a people who are part of humanity, “who belong to the whole world,” as Cabral put it. As in the struggles of the oppressed throughout history, a transition occurs in which terms used by the oppressors to “other” people are eventually appropriated by the oppressed and turned into terms of dignity and assertion of humanity.

It was thus that the concept of being “African” became intimately associated with the concept of freedom and emancipation. The people “have kept their culture alive and vigorous despite the relentless and organized repression of their cultural life,” wrote Cabral. Cultural resistance was the basis for the assertion of people’s humanity and the struggle for freedom.

With the growing discontent with the domination of the colonial regimes, especially following the second world war, many political parties were formed, many of which sought to negotiate concessions from the colonial powers. Colonialism had been reluctant to grant any form of pluralism to black organizations, but as popular protests grew, so there was a grudging opening of political space, often involving favors to those who were less threatening to colonial rule.

But such associations with freedom were, tragically, not to last for long beyond independence.

The second half of the 20th century saw the establishment of independence governments in most of

Africa (the exceptions being Western Sahara, currently occupied by Morocco, and US-occupied Diego Garcia). Movements that had sought a radical agenda to advance the people's interests were systematically removed through coups d'état and assassinations (for example, Lumumba in Congo, Nkrumah in Ghana, Sankara in Burkina Faso). As stated earlier, Cabral too was assassinated by a group of his own comrades, apparently with the support of the Portuguese secret police (PIDE), on 20 January 1973.

The rise of neocolonial regimes, many of which arose out of the defeat or attrition of the mass movements, gradually resulted in the demise of the struggles for emancipatory freedoms in Africa. What happened after independence cannot be entirely blamed on imperialism. As Cabral pointed out: "True, imperialism is cruel and unscrupulous, but we must not lay all the blame on its broad back. For, as the African people say: 'Rice only cooks inside the pot'". And "here is the reality that is made more evident by our struggle: in spite of their armed forces, the imperialists cannot do without traitors; traditional chiefs and bandits in the times of slavery and of the wars of colonial conquest, gendarmes, various agents and mercenary soldiers during the golden age of colonialism, self-styled heads of state and ministers in the present time of neo-colonialism. The enemies of the African peoples are powerful and cunning and can always count on a few lackeys, since quislings are not a European privilege."

Nationalist governments were to play a critical role in the demise of emancipatory struggles. The newly emerging middle class saw its task as one of preventing "centrifugal forces" from competing for political power or seeking greater autonomy from the newly formed "nation". Having grasped political self-determination from colonial authority, it was reluctant to accord the same rights to others. The new controllers of the state machinery saw their role as the "sole developer" and "sole unifier" of society. The state adopted an interventionist role in "modernization" and a centralizing and controlling role in the political realm. The idea of "development" had, as was intended by Harry Truman, an implicit allusion to progress of some kind, and acted as a counterweight to the attraction of socialism that the US saw as a threat to its growing hegemony.

The popular associations that had projected the nationalist leadership into power began to be seen as an obstacle to "development". No longer was there a need, it was argued, for popular participation in determining the future. The new government would bring development to the people, representing the nation and everyone in it. Now that political independence had been achieved, the priority was "development" because, implicitly, the new rulers concurred that its people were "under-developed". Social and economic improvements would come, the nationalist leaders said, with patience and as a result of combined national effort involving all. In this early post-independence period, civil and political rights soon came to be seen as a "luxury", to be enjoyed at some unspecified time in the future when "development" had been achieved. For now, said many African presidents, "our people are not ready" — echoing, ironically, the arguments used by the former colonial rulers against the nationalists' cries for independence a few years earlier.

Camouflaged in the rhetoric of independence, the prevailing narrative treated the problems faced by the majority — deprivation and impoverishment and its associated dehumanization — not as consequences of colonial domination and an imperialist system that continued to extract super-profits, but rather as the supposedly "natural" conditions of Africa. The solution to poverty

was seen as a technical one, supported by “aid” from the very colonial powers that had enriched themselves at the expense of the mass of African people.

Almost without exception, the nationalist movements insisted on occupying the colonial state rather than constructing democratic structures that enabled popular participation, as Cabral had created in the liberated zones of Guinea. As a result, the repressive arms of the state remained intact. The police, armed forces, judiciary, and civil service, had been designed to protect the interests of capital and of the colonial powers. Fundamentally, the colonial state was premised on the notion that its function was to perpetuate the dehumanization of the colonized. In almost every case, freedom fighters of the liberation movements were, if not entirely marginalized in the post-independence period, incorporated, integrated, and placed under the command of the existing colonial military structures. The only real change was to deracialize the state while dressing up the armed forces in the colors of the national flag.

Cabral was adamantly opposed to this tendency. He did not believe that independence movements should take over the colonial state apparatus and use it for their own purposes. The issue wasn't the color of the administrator's skin, he argued, but the fact that there was an administrator. “We don't accept any institution of the Portuguese colonialists. We are not interested in the preservation of any of the structures of the colonial state..”

The destruction of the colonial state was not a goal in itself, but the means to establish structures that the people would control and whose interests they would serve. “Our objective is to break with the colonial state in our land to create a new state — different, on the basis of justice, work, and equality of opportunity for all the children of our land ...We have to destroy everything that would be against this in our land, comrades. Step by step, one by one if necessary — but we have to destroy in order to construct a new life.”

Culture was no longer considered a means of liberation. Instead, disarticulated from such notions, it was left empty of meaning beyond representing a caricature of some imagined past comprised of customs and traditions, consistent with notions of the savage that still prevailed in liberalism and which provided fodder for tourists' imaginations. As Fanon described it:

Culture never has the translucency of custom. Culture eminently eludes any form of simplification. In its essence it is the very opposite of custom, which is always a deterioration of culture. Seeking to stick to tradition or reviving neglected traditions is not only going against history, but against one's people.

At the same time, the emerging national bourgeoisie had growing aspirations to assimilate and become full members of the culture of the sacred space, for which they received encouragement from cultural institutions such as the French Cultural Centre and British Council.

Once the concept of being African is delinked from notions of liberation and emancipation, all that remains is a depoliticized taxonomic identity that renders people merely objects rather than determinants of history. Indeed, the very notion of African began to disintegrate, except if it represented the sum of national states, as in the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) (and subsequently the African Union). It was easy then for empire to drive a wedge between the emancipatory histories of the peoples referred to as “Arab” and those of so-called “Black Africans” in the mythical geographies of “Sub-Saharan Africa”.

Even the idea of the nation, disconnected from ideas of liberation, gradually gave way to the politics of identity, tribe and ethnicity. The consequences of this degeneration became apparent

in the genocide in Rwanda, the ethnic conflicts in Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Kenya and Burundi (to name just a few), the disenfranchisement of citizens because of their supposed ethnicity, as in the DRC and Côte d'Ivoire, the growing antipathy towards and internment of refugees, especially in Kenya, and the xenophobia that has taken root in South Africa.

The re-emergence of liberalism in the 1980s in the form of "neoliberalism"ⁱ exacerbated the depoliticization of culture. The cult of the individual, fundamental to neoliberalism, has grown, especially among the middle classes for whom personal accumulation and privilege is held as a value above all else. It is accompanied by attempts to break up the collective – especially organized forms such as trade unions, farmers' organizations and youth movements. The decline in the value of wages and the need to do more than one job in order to survive has frequently restricted the time for community and organization.

The growing domination of Western culture is supplemented by the hegemony of the corporate media, the ubiquity of CNN, Fox News and of a generalized Coca-colonization of everyday life, with the commodification of anything that can make a fast buck. Just as the early years of liberalism were characterized by the plethora of charitable organizations, so today Africa is replete with development NGOs contributing to the depoliticization of poverty by diverting attention away from the processes that create mass impoverishment and misery. Citizens have been transformed into consumers, and those without the means to consume have been thrown on the dung heap of history as the seldom or never employed. And neoliberalism has attempted to rewrite the histories of the damned (Fanon's *Les Damnés de la Terre*), seeking to erase their memories of the past through its invasion of the curriculums of schools and universities.

The re-emergence of resistance

Cabral's words resonate today: "The value of culture as an element of resistance to foreign domination lies in the fact that culture is the vigorous manifestation on the ideological or idealist plane of the physical and historical reality of the society that is dominated or to be dominated." Despite the power of neoliberalism and the trillions of dollars at the disposal of the corporations, banks, financial institutions, governments and local elites, the people have not lost their desire for agency, for making history, for engaging in struggles wherein they both demonstrate and invent their humanity, for constructing the basis for a true universalism.

The mass mobilizations in Egypt, Tunisia, and Burkina Faso that led to the overthrow of local despots are but some of the examples of such struggles. I have written elsewhereⁱⁱ about other uprisings and protests that have swept the continent as a result of growing discontent over austerity these uprisings and protests reflect the re-emergence of resistance in which culture is once again manifest with an emancipatory dimension. Consider how millions occupied Tahir Square in Cairo: songs, music and dance were just some of the features that emerged. People's security, defense, the provision of food, healthcare, childcare, and shelter, all these were created anew by those present. Decisions were made collectively. Where just a month before, people were considered apathetic and seemingly non-political, were transformed into political beings willing to put their lives at stake, to participate in mass meetings, and to release their creativity. It was demonstration of how the engagement in struggles releases not only people's ability to claim their humanity, but also to re-invent themselves, something that Fanon insisted upon.

Many current movements are fired by the energy and creativity of young people. One effect of neoliberalism has been to endeavour to remove the experiences and knowledge of history. Fanon writes:

Colonialism is not satisfied with snaring the people in its net or of draining the colonized brain of any form or substance. With a kind of perverted logic, it turns its attention to the past of the colonized people and distorts it, disfigures it, and destroys it. The effort to demean history prior to colonization today takes on a dialectical significance.

In such circumstances, Fanon points out: "Each generation must discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it, in relative opacity. In the underdeveloped countries preceding generations have simultaneously resisted the insidious agenda of colonialism and paved the way for the emergence of current struggles".

The Western liberal conception of humanity has been deficient from birth, argues Neocosmos, and that deficiency is ever more obvious today.

Its ultimate dependence on exploitation, colonial oppression and racism for its existence is now more evident than during previous historical epochs because it exercises its dominance over the whole globe in a manner which is manifestly inhuman. Thus the contradiction between

a liberal conception which restricts freedom, equality and justice to a minority while denying it systematically to the majority of the world's population is becoming more and more obvious. In this context, the search for a true universal, without excluding supposed "barbarians," is becoming more urgent.

I end with the words of Cabral:

Except for cases of genocide or the violent reduction of native populations to cultural and social insignificance, the epoch of colonization was not sufficient, at least in Africa, to bring about any significant destruction or degradation of the essential elements of the culture and traditions of the colonized peoples ... the problem of a ... cultural renaissance is not posed nor could it be posed by the popular masses: indeed they are the bearers of their own culture, they are its source, and, at the same time, they are the only entity truly capable of preserving and creating culture – in a word, of making history.

(Emphases in original)



John Trudell's 1980 Thanksgiving Day Address

Source: <airwalker.tumblr.com/post/69013049722/john-trudells-1980-thanksgiving-day-address>

I'd like to thank all of you for coming here tonight and sharing this evening with us. And tonight I'd like to talk in honor of the water and the earth and our brother Leonard Peltier.

We're faced with a very serious situation in this generation. There are insane people who wish to rule the world. They wish to continue to rule the world on violence and repression, and we are all the victims of that violence and repression. We as the indigenous people of the western hemisphere have been resisting this oppression for 500 years. We know that the black people have been resisting it for at least that long. And we know that the white people have had to endure it thousands of years. And now it's come full swing to this generation that we live in: the nuclearization of the world.

You see, this cannot be. We cannot allow this to go on. We cannot do it. We cannot expect that the pronuclear oppressor, that other side, we cannot expect that they're going to change for us. They are going to become more brutal. They are going to become more repressive because it's a matter of dollars and their illusionary concepts of power.

We have to re-establish our identity. We have to understand who we are and where we fit in the natural order of the world, because our oppressor deals in illusions. They tell us that it is power, but it is not power. They may have all the guns, and they may have all the racist laws and judges, and they may control all the money, but that is not power. These are only imitations of power, and they are only power because in our minds we allow it to be power. But it's all an imitation. Racism and violence, racism and guns, economics- the brutality of the American Corporate State way of life is nothing more than violence and oppression and it doesn't have anything to do with power. It is brutality. It's a lack of a sane balance. The people who have created this system, and who perpetuate this system, they are out of balance. They have made us out of balance. They have come into our minds and they have come into our hearts and they've programmed us. Because we live in this society, and it has put us out of balance. And because we are out of balance we no longer have the power to deal with them. They have conquered us as a natural power.

See, we are power. They deal in violence and repression, we are power. We are a part of the natural world. All of the things in the natural world are a natural part of the creation and feed off the energy of our sacred mother, Earth. We are power. But they have separated us from our spiritual connection to the Earth, so people feel powerless. We look at the oppressor and we look at the enemy because they have the most guns and the most lies and the most money. People start to feel powerless.

We are power, we are a natural part of the creation, we were put here on the sacred mother Earth to serve a purpose. And somewhere in the history of people we're forgetting what the

purpose is. The purpose is to honor the earth, the purpose is to protect the earth, the purpose is to live in balance with the earth, the earth is our mother. And we will never free ourselves as human people, we will never free ourselves as sexual people, we will never free ourselves until we address the issue of how we live in balance with the earth. Because all our resistance and all of our struggle is hollow, it's false, it's another one of the oppressor's hypocrisies. If we do not look out for the welfare of the Earth first, because I don't care who it is, any child who turns on their mother is living in a terrible, terrible confusion. The Earth is our mother, we must take care of the Earth.

They pollute- this oppressor, this machine that has gone mad and run amok, it is berserk. They keep telling us, "progress." They keep telling us "face reality." Well, let's deal with reality. Reality is the Earth can no longer take this attack. We can no longer allow this Thing to continue when it's polluting the air, it's polluting the water, polluting our food. They pollute the air, they pollute the water, they pollute our food, they pollute our minds. They put us out of balance.

They have made us be insecure with ourselves. They have put us into a situation where we have to play many roles. You know, we gotta be chauvinist, or we've got to be on some kind of a class trip, or some kind of illusionary power trip. We've gotta play a role, see? We've gotta play a role to communicate with other people. We've got to go through this charade because they have attacked our self confidence. They have attacked our self confidence and they have made us to listen to *them.* They have made us to believe that they are power. But they are not- they are violent and they are brutal, but they are not power.

We are a natural part of the earth. As a natural part of the Earth, we have the energy and the power that IS the Earth. The Earth will take care of us if we will remember the Earth- in more than just our words. If we will remember the Earth in our way of life; we are all here to play a role. And all of the animals, and all of the life on the earth is playing it's proper role except the human people. Somehow we are betraying, we are betraying our purpose here and that is why we live in the confusion that we live in.

They tell us, they want us to believe, that we are powerless. We are a natural part of the earth, we are an extension of that natural energy. The natural energy which is Spirit, and which is power. Power. A blizzard is power. An earthquake is power. A tornado is power. These are all things of power that no oppressor, no machine age, can put these things of power in a prison. No machine age can make these things of power submit to the machine age. That is natural power. And just as it takes millions and billions of elements to make a blizzard to happen, or to make the earthquake, to make the earth to move, then it's going to take millions and billions of us. We are power. We have that power. We have the potential for that power.

I remember in the 60s and 70s I heard all these things about "power to the people" and I never really understood because everyone was saying "power to the people" when they were talking about demonstrating, they were talking about votes, they were talking about dealing on the terms of the oppressor. Our power will come back to us, our sense of balance will come back to us, when we go back to the natural way of protecting and honoring the earth. If we have forgotten how to do it, or we think that it looks overwhelming, or think that we can never accomplish it, all we have to do, each one of us, an individual, is to go and find one spot on the Earth that we can relate to. Feel that energy, feel that power. That's where our safety will come.

The Earth will take care of us. We have to understand that the American Corporate State will not take care of us. They do not care about us. Maximize their profit, that is where their

whole life's balance is placed upon- maximizing the profit. They will turn us against each other to maximize the profit, because they have done it in the past.

Nuclear energy. It's the final assault. Nuclear energy should tell each and every one of us that they have gone beyond the reasons of sanity. That they are no longer sane. That they no longer deal with the real, natural world. Because they want to create a radioactivity that is going to make it impossible for the mother earth to take care of our life. We will not destroy the world. We are arrogant and we are stupid and we are foolish if we believe that we will destroy the world. Man has the ability to destroy all of the people's ability to live on the Earth, but we do not have the power to destroy the earth. The earth will heal itself. The earth will purify itself of us. If it takes a billion years to get rid of the radiation the Earth will do it, because the Earth has that kind of time. We do not.

Our obligations and our loyalty have to be to the Earth, and they have to be to our sense of community and to our people and our relations. Our obligations and loyalty should not be to a government that will not take care of our needs. Our obligations and loyalty should not be to a government that has proven time and time again that it is the enemy of the people unless the people are rich in dollars. That has been the consistent history of Western civilization and the American Corporate State Government- that's reality. They are not our friends, they do not care about us.

We have to face the reality that we have an enemy. We all want to talk about nuclear war, everyone's afraid of nuclear war, and it's going to come between the Americans and the Russians or the Chinese or whoever. But are they not waging nuclear war on us now when the miners die from cancer from mining that Uranium? Are they not waging nuclear war with Three Mile Island? When they release that stuff into the air? Are they not waging nuclear war when they build these nuclear reactors and it's not safe? Are they not waging nuclear war when they attack the Indian people on their land, militarily attack the Indian people, racistly attack the Indian people, so they can get at the natural resources to feed their radioactive machines? That is war, and they are waging it against us. They bribe congress, they bribe your elected officials, they terrorize and intimidate your elected officials by getting the FBI to blackmail them. Those are acts of war.

We have to come to a time in our lifetime, and it will come in our lifetime, where we are going to have to deal with the fact that the enemy has taken over your government. The government is not your ally. The government will use you, chew you up and spit you out. You think that we are wrong? You think that we are talking unrealistically? Then go look at your elders and see what has happened to your elders in your machine age society. See what kind of respect that they get. See what kind of a voice they are allowed into your society, what kind of input they have. See what their final reward of happiness is after working for this slave state for 30 or 40 years and allowing someone to exploit their labors. What is racism? Racism is an act of war. What is sexism? Sexism is an act of war. It's a war against our human dignity and our rights to self respect. This is the war that they wage there.

War! They are war-like. And we have to understand that the American Corporate State got to where it's at through the act of war. The next war... you wanna worry, you wanna think about a war? The next war that you better be concerned about is the one that they're gonna fight here. Here in the continental United States. They have fought many wars here. They fought us all along, see, because we said 'it's ours and you haven't got a right to it.' They fought us. Now you all are claiming that it's yours under this illusionary concept of private ownership of

property and they're gonna fight you. But they're going to call it "national security" and "national energy crisis." They're going to call it "constitutional rights" and they're gonna call it "judicial proceedings." They're going to nationalize... you know, your military coupe is going to come there. They're going to nationalize the police departments, there's your military coupe. In the name of "violence." "Rising crime." But all we must do is look in the corporate office and see the rising crime that is taking place there and nobody's going to jail for it. So we've got to understand that they are arming themselves to wage a war against us and it's going to be called the war of "law and order." Because they're twisting it around.

For 500 years my people have resisted. For 500 years we will resist again if it becomes necessary. We want to be able to relate and communicate with all of the people who are living on this land, but we want to be able to relate and communicate from a position of truth. You all gotta face the truth. We have had to face it through 500 years of genocide, we have had to face the truth, we have had to live the truth. We have had to die the truth. **Before we're gonna ever see our evolutionary liberation, the people that call themselves Americans are gonna have to face the truth also.**

They tell us to "be realistic," that "progress" means that all these things have to happen. They tell us that we can't go back to the old way. They tell us "be realistic." But there is no old way, no new way, there is a way of life. We must live in balance with the earth. We MUST do it. We have no choice. If we allow ourselves to be apathetic, or we allow ourselves to be lied to, or tolerate their lies about what they're doing to the Earth, then we are betraying our intention. We are betraying our purpose here. We cannot protect that 7th generation if we do not protect the Earth. We cannot protect ourselves if we do not protect the earth. The Earth gives us life, not the American government. The earth gives us life, not the multi-national corporate government. The Earth gives us life, we need to have the Earth. We must have it, otherwise our life will be no more. So we must resist what they do.

They want to break our spirit. They will do everything and anything to break our spirit, our will to live. We must learn to resist, we must learn to see, we must learn to look. We must learn to step out of this reactionary-ism. All of our lives they've had control of us through their schools, their tv, their electronic media. They've had control of us all of our lives. They have programmed us, they have made us become reactionary. We don't think, we react to what they do. We don't think, we react. To everything that they do- we react to it. They're setting us up in the 80's because they know consistently throughout the past the people have always reacted to their manipulations of circumstance. They know that the people always react. They're counting on it in the 80's.

See, and they outnumber us with guns, They outnumber us with money. They outnumber us with votes. They control all the machines that count the votes. They've got it all stacked in their favor. Except there's a key. The key is we must start thinking, and stop reacting. The oppressor has no thinkers, they have no philosophers, it's all scientific, it's all economic, it's all manipulative. They have no thinkers. You go look and you deal with the enemy and what the enemy does is: the enemy will send somebody out on the street to hit you in the head and the guy says "I'm only taking my orders." And if you can come from a position of strength to this guy whose hitting you in the head and say "Hey, you've got to stop hitting me in the head, we want to talk." then he says "Well I have to go to my superior to see." They have no thinkers, either.

If we will start to think we will learn to see, to see what reality really is, and we will outnumber them through the thinking process. We will take our minds away from them. Because through

their manipulation of our minds they control our spirit, and they know this is true. They tell us, see, they want us to believe that we are powerless. They want us to believe that we are becoming overwhelmed, that they can overwhelm us. You see, but they are paranoid. They are more paranoid than any of us are, no matter what happens to us. You see, because they have to put people in here to come and listen to what we're saying, so they can go back and tell.

See, so they're afraid! They're afraid because they know we're talking about reality! Now why are they afraid? They are afraid because they know they are dealing with the illusions of power which are based on the realities of violence and brutality. They're afraid! See, they don't want people to think, they don't want people to be talking, and they don't want people to think about what they talk about.

Because they know. They've known it all along, that they built their whole Thing on illusions. And because they have drawn us in to giving this illusionary world all this power, they have taken our power away from us. Because we believe in the illusions.

The Great Lie is that this is civilization. It's not civilized. It has literally been the most blood-thirsty brutalizing system ever imposed upon this planet. This is not civilization, this is the Great Lie. Or if it does represent civilization, and that is truly what civilization is, then the Great Lie is that civilization is good for us.

~ John Trudell



For america to live, europe must die!

by Russell Means

It takes a strong effort on the part of each American Indian not to become Europeanized. The strength for this effort can only come from the traditional ways, the traditional values that our elders retain. It must come from the hoop, the four directions, the relations: it cannot come from the pages of a book or a thousand books. No European can ever teach a Lakota to be Lakota, a Hopi to be Hopi. A master's degree in "Indian Studies" or in "education" or in anything else cannot make a person into a human being or provide knowledge into traditional ways. It can only make you into a mental European, an outsider.

I should be clear about something here, because there seems to be some confusion about it. When I speak of Europeans or mental Europeans, I'm not allowing for false distinctions. I'm not saying that on the one hand there are the by-products of a few thousand years of genocidal, reactionary, European intellectual development which is bad; and on the other hand there is some new revolutionary intellectual development which is good. I'm referring here to the so-called theories of Marxism and anarchism and "leftism" in general. I don't believe these theories can be separated from the rest of the of the European intellectual tradition. It's really just the same old song.

The process began much earlier. Newton, for example, "revolutionized" physics and the so-called natural sciences by reducing the physical universe to a linear mathematical equation. Descartes did the same thing with culture. John Locke did it with politics, and Adam Smith did it with economics. Each one of these "thinkers" took a piece of the spirituality of human existence and converted it into code, an abstraction. They picked up where Christianity ended: they "secularized" Christian religion, as the "scholars" like to say—and in doing so they made Europe more able and ready to act as an expansionist culture. Each of these intellectual revolutions served to abstract the European mentality even further, to remove the wonderful complexity and spirituality from the universe and replace it with a logical sequence: one, two, three. Answer!

This is what has come to be termed "efficiency" in the European mind. Whatever is mechanical is perfect; whatever seems to work at the moment—that is, proves the mechanical model to be the right one—is considered correct, even when it is clearly untrue. This is why "truth" changes so fast in the European mind; the answers which result from such a process are only stopgaps, only temporary, and must be continuously discarded in favor of new stopgaps which support the mechanical models and keep them (the models) alive.

Hegel and Marx were heirs to the thinking of Newton, Descartes, Locke and Smith. Hegel finished the process of secularizing theology—and that is put in his own terms—he secularized the religious thinking through which Europe understood the universe. Then Marx put Hegel's philosophy in terms of "materialism," which is to say that Marx despiritualized Hegel's work altogether. Again, this is in Marx' own terms. And this is now seen as the future revolutionary potential of Europe. Europeans may see this as revolutionary, but American Indians see it simply as still more of that same old European conflict between being and gaining. The intellectual

roots of a new Marxist form of European imperialism lie in Marx'—and his followers'—links to the tradition of Newton, Hegel and the others.

Being is a spiritual proposition. Gaining is a material act. Traditionally, American Indians have always attempted to be the best people they could. Part of that spiritual process was and is to give away wealth, to discard wealth in order not to gain. Material gain is an indicator of false status among traditional people, while it is “proof that the system works” to Europeans. Clearly, there are two completely opposing views at issue here, and Marxism is very far over to the other side from the American Indian view. But let's look at a major implication of this; it is not merely an intellectual debate.

The European materialist tradition of despiritualizing the universe is very similar to the mental process which goes into dehumanizing another person. And who seems most expert at dehumanizing other people? And why? Soldiers who have seen a lot of combat learn to do this to the enemy before going back into combat. Murderers do it before going out to commit murder. Nazi SS guards did it to concentration camp inmates. Cops do it. Corporation leaders do it to the workers they send into uranium mines and steel mills. Politicians do it to everyone in sight. And what the process has in common for each group doing the dehumanizing is that it makes it all right to kill and otherwise destroy other people. One of the Christian commandments says, “Thou shalt not kill,” at least not humans, so the trick is to mentally convert the victims into nonhumans. Then you can proclaim violation of your own commandment as a virtue.

In terms of the despiritualization of the universe, the mental process works so that it becomes virtuous to destroy the planet. Terms like progress and development are used as cover words here, the way victory and freedom are used to justify butchery in the dehumanization process. For example, a real estate speculator may refer to “developing” a parcel of ground by opening a gravel quarry; development here means total, permanent destruction, with the earth itself removed. But European logic has gained a few tons of gravel with which more land can be “developed” through the construction of road beds. Ultimately, the whole universe is open—in the European view—to this sort of insanity.

Most important here, perhaps, is the fact that Europeans feel no sense of loss in all this. After all, their philosophers have despiritualized reality, so there is no satisfaction (for them) to be gained in simply observing the wonder of a mountain or a lake or a people in being. No, satisfaction is measured in terms of gaining material. So the mountain becomes gravel, and the lake becomes coolant for a factory, and the people are rounded up for processing through the indoctrination mills Europeans like to call schools.

But each new piece of that “progress” ups the ante out in the real world. Take fuel for the industrial machine as an example. Little more than two centuries ago, nearly everyone used wood—a replenishable, natural item—as fuel for the very human needs of cooking and staying warm. Along came the Industrial Revolution and coal became the dominant fuel, as production became the social imperative for Europe. Pollution began to become a problem in the cities, and the earth was ripped open to provide coal whereas wood had always simply been gathered or harvested at no great expense to the environment. Later, oil became the major fuel, as the technology of production was perfected through a series of scientific “revolutions.” Pollution increased dramatically, and nobody yet knows what the environmental costs of pumping all that oil out of the ground will really be in the long run. Now there's an “energy crisis,” and uranium is becoming the dominant fuel.

Capitalists, at least, can be relied upon to develop uranium as fuel only at the rate which they can show a good profit. That's their ethic, and maybe they will buy some time. Marxists, on the other hand, can be relied upon to develop uranium fuel as rapidly as possible simply because it's the most "efficient" production fuel available. That's their ethic, and I fail to see where it's preferable. Like I said, Marxism is right smack in the middle of European tradition. It's the same old song.

There's a rule of thumb which can be applied here. You cannot judge the real nature of a European revolutionary doctrine on the basis of the changes it proposes to make within the European power structure and society. You can only judge it by the effects it will have on non-European peoples. This is because every revolution in European history has served to reinforce Europe's tendencies and abilities to export destruction to other peoples, other cultures and the environment itself. I defy anyone to point out an example where this is not true.

So now we, as American Indian people, are asked to believe that a "new" European revolutionary doctrine such as Marxism will reverse the negative effects of European history on us. European power relations are to be adjusted once again, and that's supposed to make things better for all of us. But what does this really mean?

Right now, today, we who live on the Pine Ridge Reservation are living in what white society has designated a "National Sacrifice Area." What this means is that we have a lot of uranium deposits here, and white culture (not us) needs this uranium as energy production material. The cheapest, most efficient way for industry to extract and deal with the processing of this uranium is to dump the waste by-products right here at the digging sites. Right here where we live. This waste is radioactive and will make the entire region uninhabitable forever. This is considered by the industry, and by the white society that created this industry, to be an "acceptable" price to pay for energy resource development. Along the way they also plan to drain the water table under this part of South Dakota as part of the industrial process, so the region becomes doubly uninhabitable. The same sort of thing is happening down in the land of the Navajo and Hopi, up in the land of the Northern Cheyenne and Crow, and elsewhere. Thirty percent of the coal in the West and half of the uranium deposits in the United States have been found to lie under reservation land, so there is no way this can be called a minor issue.

We are resisting being turned into a National Sacrifice Area. We are resisting being turned into a national sacrifice people. The costs of this industrial process are not acceptable to us. It is genocide to dig uranium here and drain the water table—no more, no less.

Now let's suppose that in our resistance to extermination we begin to seek allies (we have). Let's suppose further that we were to take revolutionary Marxism at its word: that it intends nothing less than the complete overthrow of the European capitalists order which has presented this threat to our very existence. This would seem to be a natural alliance for American Indian people to enter into. After all, as the Marxists say, it is the capitalists who set us up to be a national sacrifice. This is true as far as it goes.

But, as I've tried to point out, this "truth" is very deceptive. Revolutionary Marxism is committed to even further perpetuation and perfection of the very industrial process which is destroying us all. It offers only to "redistribute" the results—the money, maybe—of this industrialization to a wider section of the population. It offers to take wealth from the capitalists and pass it around; but in order to do so, Marxism must maintain the industrial system. Once again, the power relations within European society will have to be altered, but once again the effects upon American Indian peoples here and nonEuropeans elsewhere will remain the same. This is much the same

as when power was redistributed from the church to private business during the so-called bourgeois revolution. European society changed a bit, at least superficially, but its conduct toward non-Europeans continued as before. You can see what the American Revolution of 1776 did for American Indians. It's the same old song. song.

Revolutionary Marxism, like industrial society in other forms, seeks to "rationalize" all people in relation to industry—maximum industry, maximum production. It is a doctrine that despises the American Indian spiritual tradition, our cultures, our lifeways. Marx himself called us "pre-capitalists" and "primitive." Precapitalist simply means that, in his view, we would eventually discover capitalism and become capitalists; we have always been economically retarded in Marxist terms. The only manner in which American Indian people could participate in a Marxist revolution would be to join the industrial system, to become factory workers, or "proletarians," as Marx called them. The man was very clear about the fact that his revolution could only occur through the struggle of the proletariat, that the existence of a massive industrial system is a precondition of a successful Marxist society.

I think there's a problem with language here. Christians, capitalists, Marxists. All of them have been revolutionary in their own minds, but none of them really means revolution. What they really mean is continuation. They do what they do in order that European culture can continue to exist and develop according to its needs.

So, in order for us to really join forces with Marxism, we American Indians would have to accept the national sacrifice of our homeland; we would have to commit cultural suicide and become industrialized and Europeanized.

At this point, I've got to stop and ask myself whether I'm being too harsh. Marxism has something of a history. Does this history bear out my observations? I look to the process of industrialization in the Soviet Union since 1920 and I see that these Marxists have done what it took the English Industrial Revolution 300 years to do; and the Marxists did it in 60 years. I see that the territory of the USSR used to contain a number of tribal peoples and that they have been crushed to make way for the factories. The Soviets refer to this as "the National Question," the question of whether the tribal peoples had the right to exist as peoples; and they decided the tribal peoples were an acceptable sacrifice to the industrial needs. I look to China and I see the same thing. I look to Vietnam and I see Marxists imposing an industrial order and rooting out the indigenous tribal mountain people.

I hear the leading Soviet scientist saying that when uranium is exhausted, then alternatives will be found. I see the Vietnamese taking over a nuclear power plant abandoned by the U.S. military. Have they dismantled and destroyed it? No, they are using it. I see China exploding nuclear bombs, developing uranium reactors, and preparing a space program in order to colonize and exploit the planets the same as the Europeans colonized and exploited this hemisphere. It's the same old song, but maybe with a faster tempo this time.

The statement of the Soviet scientist is very interesting. Does he know what this alternative energy source will be? No, he simply has faith. Science will find a way. I hear revolutionary Marxists saying that the destruction of the environment, pollution, and radiation will all be controlled. And I see them act upon their words. Do they know how these things will be controlled? No, they simply have faith. Science will find a way. Industrialization is fine and necessary. How do they know this? Faith. Science will find a way. Faith of this sort has always been known in Europe as religion. Science has become the new European religion for both capitalists and Marxists; they are truly inseparable; they are part and parcel of the same culture. So, in both theory and practice,

Marxism demands that non-European peoples give up their values, their traditions, their cultural existence altogether. We will all be industrialized science addicts in a Marxist society.

I do not believe that capitalism itself is really responsible for the situation in which American Indians have been declared a national sacrifice. No, it is the European tradition; European culture itself is responsible. Marxism is just the latest continuation of this tradition, not a solution to it. To ally with Marxism is to ally with the very same forces that declare us an acceptable cost.

There is another way. There is the traditional Lakota way and the ways of the American Indian peoples. It is the way that knows that humans do not have the right to degrade Mother Earth, that there are forces beyond anything the European mind has conceived, that humans must be in harmony with all relations or the relations will eventually eliminate the disharmony. A lopsided emphasis on humans by humans—the Europeans' arrogance of acting as though they were beyond the nature of all related things—can only result in a total disharmony and a readjustment which cuts arrogant humans down to size, gives them a taste of that reality beyond their grasp or control and restores the harmony. There is no need for a revolutionary theory to bring this about; it's beyond human control. The nature peoples of this planet know this and so they do not theorize about it. Theory is an abstract; our knowledge is real.

Distilled to its basic terms, European faith—including the new faith in science—equals a belief that man is God. Europe has always sought a Messiah, whether that be the man Jesus Christ or the man Karl Marx or the man Albert Einstein. American Indians know this to be totally absurd. Humans are the weakest of all creatures, so weak that other creatures are willing to give up their flesh that we may live. Humans are able to survive only through the exercise of rationality since they lack the abilities of other creatures to gain food through the use of fang and claw.

But rationality is a curse since it can cause humans to forget the natural order of things in ways other creatures do not. A wolf never forgets his or her place in the natural order. American Indians can. Europeans almost always do. We pray our thanks to the deer, our relations, for allowing us their flesh to eat; Europeans simply take the flesh for granted and consider the deer inferior. After all, Europeans consider themselves godlike in their rationalism and science. God is the Supreme Being; all else must be inferior.

All European tradition, Marxism included, has conspired to defy the natural order of all things. Mother Earth has been abused, the powers have been abused, and this cannot go on forever. No theory can alter that simple fact. Mother Earth will retaliate, the whole environment will retaliate, and the abusers will be eliminated. Things come full circle, back to where they started. That's revolution. And that's a prophecy of my people, of the Hopi people and of other correct peoples.

American Indians have been trying to explain this to Europeans for centuries. But, as I said earlier, Europeans have proven themselves unable to hear. The natural order will win out, and the offenders will die out, the way deer die when they offend the harmony by over-populating a given region. It's only a matter of time until what Europeans call "a major catastrophe of global proportions" will occur. It is the role of American Indian peoples, the role of all natural beings, to survive. A part of our survival is to resist. We resist not to overthrow a government or to take political power, but because it is natural to resist extermination, to survive. We don't want power over white institutions; we want white institutions to disappear. That's revolution.

American Indians are still in touch with these realities—the prophecies, the traditions of our ancestors.

We learn from the elders, from nature, from the powers. And when the catastrophe is over, we American Indian peoples will still be here to inhabit the hemisphere. I don't care if it's only a

handful living high in the Andes. American Indian people will survive; harmony will be reestablished. That's revolution.

At this point, perhaps I should be very clear about another matter, one which should already be clear as a result of what I've said. But confusion breeds easily these days, so I want to hammer home this point. When I use the term European, I'm not referring to a skin color or a particular genetic structure. What I'm referring to is a mind-set, a worldview that is a product of the development of European culture. People are not genetically encoded to hold this outlook; they are acculturated to hold it. The same is true for American Indians or for the members of any culture.

It is possible for an American Indian to share European values, a European worldview. We have a term for these people; we call them "apples"—red on the outside (genetics) and white on the inside (their values). Other groups have similar terms: Blacks have their "oreos"; Hispanos have "Coconuts" and so on. And, as I said before, there are exceptions to the white norm: people who are white on the outside, but not white inside. I'm not sure what term should be applied to them other than "human beings."

What I'm putting out here is not a racial proposition but a cultural proposition. Those who ultimately advocate and defend the realities of European culture and its industrialism are my enemies. Those who resist it, who struggle against it, are my allies, the allies of American Indian people. And I don't give a damn what their skin color happens to be. Caucasian is the white term for the white race: European is an outlook I oppose.

The Vietnamese Communists are not exactly what you might consider genetic Caucasians, but they are now functioning as mental Europeans. The same holds true for Chinese Communists, for Japanese capitalists or Bantu Catholics or Peter "MacDollar" down at the Navajo Reservation or Dickie Wilson up here at Pine Ridge. There is no racism involved in this, just an acknowledgment of the mind and spirit that make up culture.

In Marxist terms I suppose I'm a "cultural nationalist." I work first with my people, the traditional Lakota people, because we hold a common worldview and share an immediate struggle. Beyond this, I work with other traditional American Indian peoples, again because of a certain commonality in worldview and form of struggle. Beyond that, I work with anyone who has experienced the colonial oppression of Europe and who resists its cultural and industrial totality. Obviously, this includes genetic Caucasians who struggle to resist the dominant norms of European culture. The Irish and the Basques come immediately to mind, but there are many others.

I work primarily with my own people, with my own community. Other people who hold non-European perspectives should do the same. I believe in the slogan, "Trust your brother's vision," although I'd like to add sisters into the bargain. I trust the community and the culturally based vision of all the races that naturally resist industrialization and human extinction. Clearly, individual whites can share in this, given only that they have reached the awareness that continuation of the industrial imperatives of Europe is not a vision, but species suicide. White is one of the sacred colors of the Lakota people—red, yellow, white and black. The four directions. The four seasons. The four periods of life and aging. The four races of humanity. Mix red, yellow, white and black together and you get brown, the color of the fifth race. This is a natural ordering of things. It therefore seems natural to me to work with all races, each with its own special meaning, identity and message.

But there is a peculiar behavior among most Caucasians. As soon as I become critical of Europe and its impact on other cultures, they become defensive. They begin to defend themselves. But I'm not attacking them personally; I'm attacking Europe. In personalizing my observations

on Europe they are personalizing European culture, identifying themselves with it. By defending themselves in this context, they are ultimately defending the death culture. This is a confusion which must be overcome, and it must be overcome in a hurry. None of us has energy to waste in such false struggles.

Caucasians have a more positive vision to offer humanity than European culture. I believe this. But in order to attain this vision it is necessary for Caucasians to step outside European culture—alongside the rest of humanity—to see Europe for what it is and what it does.

To cling to capitalism and Marxism and all other “isms” is simply to remain within European culture. There is no avoiding this basic fact. As a fact, this constitutes a choice. Understand that the choice is based on culture, not race. Understand that to choose European culture and industrialism is to choose to be my enemy. And understand that the choice is yours, not mine.

This leads me back to address those American Indians who are drifting through the universities, the city slums, and other European institutions. If you are there to resist the oppressor in accordance with your traditional ways, so be it. I don’t know how you manage to combine the two, but perhaps you will succeed. But retain your sense of reality. Beware of coming to believe the white world now offers solutions to the problems it confronts us with. Beware, too, of allowing the words of native people to be twisted to the advantages of our enemies. Europe invented the practice of turning words around on themselves. You need only look to the treaties between American Indian peoples and various European governments to know that this is true. Draw your strength from who you are.

A culture which regularly confuses revolt with resistance, has nothing helpful to teach you and nothing to offer you as a way of life. Europeans have long since lost all touch with reality, if ever they were in touch with who you are as American Indians.

So, I suppose to conclude this, I should state clearly that leading anyone toward Marxism is the last thing on my mind. Marxism is as alien to my culture as capitalism and Christianity are. In fact, I can say I don’t think I’m trying to lead anyone toward anything. To some extent I tried to be a “leader,” in the sense that the white media like to use that term, when the American Indian Movement was a young organization. This was a result of a confusion I no longer have. You cannot be everything to everyone. I do not propose to be used in such a fashion by my enemies. I am not a leader. I am an Oglala Lakota patriot. That is all I want and all I need to be. And I am very comfortable with who I am.”



The Pathless Quest: Creative Mythology

rob los ricos first published in *Green Anarchist*.

“For those in whom a local mythology still works, there is an experience both of accord with the social order, and of harmony with the universe. For those, however, in whom the authorized signs no longer work – or, if working produce deviant effects – there follows inevitably a sense both of dissociation from the local social nexus and of quest within and without, for life, which the brain will take for “meaning”. Coerced into the social pattern, the individual can only harden to some figure of living death; and if any considerable number of the members of a civilization are in this predicament, a point of no return will have passed.”

...Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God, Vol. 4: Creative Mythology*

Mythology, according to the late Joseph Campbell, serves four major purposes:

- **To reconcile our individual consciousness to the mysteries of life as it is – that is, as it exists without our interpreting it or trying to relate it to our existence;**
- **To make sense of the universe in a context our contemporary minds can grasp;**
- **To enforce the moral order of the society we are born into;**
- **To encourage us as individuals to grow, both inwardly and socially, in a manner that respects our relationships to ourselves, our culture, the greater world around us and the infinite mystery of being.**

Leaders of Western Civilization long ago recognized that their mythologies weren't working. So, they launched a reign of terror to destroy all the forces threatening the ancient order so many emperors, high priests and prophets had so long suffered to create, rather than admit that the world and its many societies, climates and ecosystems could not possibly be crushed into a single, all – encompassing, tightly controlled social entity.

The brutality of these attempts to conquer nature and reduce human existence to soul-destroying drudgery has left us shocked into numbness and psychotically clinging to literal interpretations of Bronze Age mythology that no one back then believed, knowing as they did the cosmological talebetween-the lines that gave these myths meaning at a level unapproachable by factual historic tales.

The only new mythology to have arisen since the bloody death-throes of the ancient religions is grounded in the all-too-human theory of historical progress and its dual doctrines of economic development and scientific knowledge. Too busy chasing after income to experience life, much less reflect on one's place in the infinite mystery of being, the westernized person is left hollow by the bankruptcy of her society's spiritual disconnection to the rest of the universe.

“The profession of views that are not one’s own and the living of life according to such views – no matter what the resultant sense of social participation, fulfillment, or even euphoria may be – eventuates inevitably in self-loss and falsification. For in our public roles and conventional beliefs we are – after all! – practically interchangeable. “Out there” we are not ourselves, but at best only what we are expected to be, and at worst what we have got to be.

The intent of the old mythologies to integrate the individual in his group, to imprint on his mind the ideals of that group, to fashion him according to one or another of its orthodox stereotypes, and to convert him thus into an absolutely dependable cliché, has become assumed in the modern world by an increasingly officious array of ostensibly permissive, but actually coercive, demythologized secular institutions.

“A new anxiety in relation to this development is now becoming evident, however; for with the increase, on one hand, of our efficiencies in mass indoctrination and, on the other, of our uniquely modern occidental interest in the fosterage of authentic individuals, there is dawning upon many a new and painful realization of the depth to which the imprints, stereotypes, and archetypes of the social sphere determine our personal sentiments, deeds, thoughts, and even capacities for experience...”

(J.C., *ibid.*)

When a young person enters the workforce, she is expected to have achieved a state of detachment from the consequences of her actions. Yes, cars cause pollution, but she has to get to work. Fertilizers and pesticides are destroying entire bioregions, but organic food is too expensive or hard to find. And so on.

Older societies and cultures encouraged youth to take inward and actual journeys in order to find their place in the world, not – as our culture does – shut themselves away from themselves and their sense of empathy for and connection to other living entities. In the place of a feeling of at-one-ness, we are given a few limited social roles to perform.

A young man named Kip Kinkel walked into his high school one morning, armed – the day after he’d shot and killed his parents. He opened fire, wounding and killing dozens of his fellow students. Weeping as he surrendered to the police, Kip – when asked why he had done this – could only repeat over and over “I had to, I had no choice.” An awkward, shy boy, Kip’s parents were both educators – his father athletic, his mother scholarly, his sister both. Unable to match his sister’s performance in the classroom and unable to live up to his tennis coach father’s expectations, Kip was continually forced into categorizations he could not fit. And rather than allow Kip the freedom to explore his own potentials, his limitations were continuously exposed. He could not be what his parents tried so patiently to make him. Kip saw two options; to be seen as a complete failure while surrendering his life to other people’s worldviews, or to fight back in self-defense. The many other school-related massacres and the high instance of teenage suicides in the U.S. are indications of how greatly our cultural mythology fails to induce even so much as a perception of meaning to our lives.

A universal myth of earlier societies concerns the questing hero. The hero is caught up in some circumstance which requires a journey, during which she is presented with an array of

challenges that she overcomes and leads her to some sort of gift – a magic object or an extraordinary revelation- which will bring to her people peace and prosperity.

In our spiritually dead society, such tales are seen as stories of a time long ago lost to us.

To living, dynamic Peoples, however, these stories serve as instructions and preparation for their very own adolescent journey of quest, when an old child ventured into the wilderness for a time and upon returning, would have been transformed into an adult, ready to take her place in the community. This is such a momentous change in the person's life that she usually takes a new name – a name suggested by her experiences during her wilderness quest. She has experienced the cycle of death and rebirth, like the seasons, and the waxing and waning moon.

Human beings have the longest period of childhood of any animal on Earth. This is good in that it provides an ample time to learn and grow, to explore one's self as well as one's society and one's relationship to it. Unfortunately, this lengthy period also provides us with time to flounder, to lose our way and to become disoriented and misinformed about our society, our communities, and ourselves. Indeed, this is the goal of our education system – to indoctrinate us into the belief that the world is progressing from an age of superstition to an age of scientific rationalism. The results of this blind faith in cold machinery and learning which denies inward growth are so profound now that few people are able to turn a blind eye towards them. More people are beginning to doubt the validity of our society's goals and our roles within it, and still more people are turning away from them altogether.

This is a time of human development that will define us as a species for all time. Will we redefine our lives in such a manner as to regain our place in the organic nature of this splendid, living world, or will we go extinct and take most of our fellow creatures along with us?

“Today the walls and towers of the culture world...are dissolving; and whereas heroes then could set forth of their own free will from the known to the unknown, we today, willy-nilly, must enter the forest...and, like it or not, the pathless way is the only way now before us...

“In this life-creative adventure the criterion of achievement will be, the courage to let go of the past, with its truths, its goals, its dogmas of “meaning,” and its gifts: to die to the world and to come to birth from within...

“Thus, creative mythology does not come from authority (like theology)...but from the insights, sentiments, thought and vision of an adequate individual...it corrects the authority...left behind by lives once lived...it restores to existence the quality of adventure ...that is no thing but life, not as it will be, or as it should be, as it was or as it never will be, but as it is – in depth, in process – here and now.”

(J.C., *ibid.*)

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