

Facing Fascism: Sabotage

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Contents

Sabotage	3
About The Simple Sabotage Field Manual	4
The Underlying Concept	5

I've been meaning to write this post for the last week or two, but I've been so relieved to see that in the interim, so many people are already aware of a resource I'm about to discuss, and they have been sharing it widely in my social media channels. Although, as I'm sure you're likely to suspect, I tend to gravitate toward some pretty radical corners of social media.

It's time you hear about this, too.

Let's talk about one of my favorite words: *sabotage*

When you think of this word, you probably immediately think of the Beastie Boys, Right?

No? Just me?

Actually, truth be told, the first two things I think of when I hear the word sabotage are wooden clogs and Star Trek. If you're unfamiliar with this very brief scene from Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country, you should watch it (even if you're not into Star Trek). This scene encapsulates the spirit of what we are discussing here.

“Sabot” scene from Star Trek V: The Final Frontier. Link to YouTube clip embedded in original source: <https://youtu.be/cKLIivrA3g0?si=LC1ibKXshWhg0jTq>

If sabotage sounds like a scary word to you, I admit, it can be scary. There are endless bounds to what constitutes an act of sabotage. However, you have committed sabotage in your life. I guarantee. Sabotage does not need to be violent. It can be much more mundane.

And just to kind of break it to you, if you're worried about a word like sabotage while also being subscribed to a radical leftist queer AF trans girl who calls herself Revoluciana, you might want to take a deep breath and embrace what brought you here in the first place. You feel you're missing something, and you suspect that maybe it's time to get at least a little bit more radical, because the status quo isn't working. The status quo is crumbling. The status quo is complicit with pain and suffering. So, **let's get radical**.

Let's talk sabotage...

(By the way, you are subscribed, aren't you? If you're already subscribed, have you thought about sharing with a few friends why might be open to getting a bit radical with us? There's also an RSS feed if that's your thing.)

Subscribe field embedded in original source

Sabotage

During WWII, there was a precursor to the CIA called the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). They did all kinds of things. Did you know that Julia Child's first major recipe was for shark repellent that she worked on developing while working for the OSS?

One project the OSS undertook was the creation and dissemination of information contained in the OSS Simple Sabotage Field Manual.

I want you to read it. I'm not asking you to do anything specific with it, but I want you to have the knowledge now, before it's more difficult to access, especially because there are some very effective things that are possible to implement now, legally, and without any real risk.

There are a lot of places it's available online, even the CIA website, but I'm not about to link you to their site. Gross. By the way, they also have public information on Julia Child's shark repellent story, too, but I'm not going to link you there, either. Here's a link to Project Gutenberg, which has links to read it online and downloads for various formats:

link embedded in original source: <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/26184>

Here's the thing, during WWII, the Allies knew they had a lot of support among Europeans to fight against the fascist takeover from within, but most regular people are just like you. They just know someone needs to do something. We've discussed this when we talked about First Steps Under Fascism.

Like you, these regular Europeans knew:

I'm someone

I need to do something

But wtf am I supposed to actually do?

Like you, they didn't have experience fighting fascists. They didn't have academic knowledge, let alone experience. They felt helpless, because unless you know what to do, how are you supposed to find out what to do, especially when knowledge is hidden, dangerous, and scarce? Spoken in whispers in rooms that you don't know where to find, or who to trust to find them.

I'm going to tell you something. I know all sorts of stories of secret rooms and plots and whispers. They're wonderful stories and they deserve to be told. But here's the thing I want to tell you. Wars are not won in secret rooms. Movements do not succeed in the gentle breeze of a whisper, but in the hurricane of the power of the people.

You don't need secret rooms. You don't need whispers. There is no secret knowledge that you need in order to resist.

As I often tell people, each according to their ability, and each according to their need is doubly important in times of crisis. You do what you can with what you are given. If what you are given is a secret room, that's fine. If what you can do is throw wooden shoes into a machine to grind the gears, that's great. If it's the ability to slow the rise of fascism by walking slowly and "losing" important documents, then that is what you have.

I will repeat the same thing I've said many times and last discussed when we talked about Crisis, Resistance, & Opportunity, I firmly believe that **the most revolutionary act is the refusal to be complicit.**

About The Simple Sabotage Field Manual

What am I talking about? Walking slowly and losing important documents?

As I said, the OSS recognized that the Allies had broad support among the citizens who wanted to do something but did not know what to do.

So the OSS published a field manual. The manual describes concepts behind sabotage, and it gives specific examples of things that can be done to counter fascism while remaining safe, often legal, and often undetectable.

The field manual describes many levels of sabotage, some violent, some destructive, and others that are incredibly mundane, but effective.

And as a side note, remember, too, that intelligence agencies use these same tactics against people all the goddam time. Radical spaces are often familiar with these tactics and they do their best to weed them out. If you're active on social media, you've likely encountered these tactics online without even realizing it. As you move forward, remember this both in application and in self-defense. Remember it online and in person. Remember it when you are in work meetings,

golfing with friends (please stop golfing, the world is on fire), or when you're organizing a protest. Remember it if you ever plan something involving others which breaks the rules.

The Underlying Concept

Sabotage sounds spicy. It sounds dangerous.

And yet, the underlying concept is simply this: inefficiency.

I told you last time, make every inch have its cost.

Resistance does not have to be violent, and that's not something I'm advocating here. Resistance is the word no. Resistance is standing in place. Resistance is pushing.

Resistance is the albatross around the neck of your opposition. Resistance is the anchor that drags along the sea floor.

Here are some incredibly mundane but effective examples from the manual:

- Make mistakes with purchasing travel tickets
- Make engineering mistakes
- Make long speeches and waste time
- Act ignorant, or ask a lot of questions: if you're not familiar with the concept of sea-lioning, you should really learn it
- Take longer to do your work

Even if you're terrified of doing more, this is simply a place to start.

You are someone and you have a responsibility to do something.

You cannot make it easier for the fascists to achieve their goals. You can't do it today, and you can't do it later if they claim authority. **You must stand in the way of oppression.**

As things slide further into darkness, watch what others are doing. Learn from them. Notice that the most effective forms of resistance are the ones that create a cost. The ones that slow the ones inflicting harm. The ones that throw wrenches into the gears.

Under the weight of authority, lesser powers with fewer resources do not overcome with might. They overcome by making it too costly for authority.

I hate to use this example, especially given the work that I've done against the Taliban and the work I've done to support their victims, but it's a touchstone that most people will understand.

The longest active war in US history was in Afghanistan. An entire generation were born and grew to adulthood in a world where this war was reality. The US has the most powerful military in human history, incredibly larger than any other military force in existence today, and furthermore it wields the influence of its own hegemony, at least it has until now. We can only hope that this hegemony will choose to resist fascism, as well, though it's difficult to tell. The world is in flux and geopolitics currently resemble a powder keg.

The weapons the US commands are world-ending, several times over.

The US lost the war in Afghanistan, miserably. The US lost this war against a decentralized militant group that had very few resources and zero chance of ever overcoming the might of the US military.

I've had extensive analytical discussions with military scholars and White House / DoD advisors, high-level officers, special operations forces members and regular ground troops concerning the war. They like to call it asymmetrical warfare. And whenever the topic arises, they inevitably shake their heads, because no one has a real solution to winning against decentralized people and networks who are relatively invisible and are conscious of the fact that they don't need to win a war. They just need to make it cost too much.

I hold only deep hatred for the Taliban, and deep compassion for the Afghans suffering their terror, so don't misunderstand me. This example is about understanding strategy, because for two solid decades, you have heard about the Taliban. Everyone knows that they lack anything but the most basic of resources in comparison to the US Military. And **they still managed to overcome a military with the power to end worlds**. I write these words with a pit in my stomach, but everyone inherently understands these truths once it's at least pointed out.

And furthermore, I'm not at all encouraging you to take violence into your hands. That's also irrelevant to the point I'm trying to make.

But I am asking you to say no. I'm asking you to stand at the water cooler a bit longer. I'm asking that when there are discussions in your workplace about how to reduce DEI in the company or what should be done to get rid of trans and queer employees, I think you should speak up, but you shouldn't only speak up. In fact, in the right circumstances, even without speaking against the oppression, simply talking longer, mansplaining, interrupting, asking too many obnoxious questions, sea-lioning, and wasting the entire meeting time until the timer runs out and nothing gets accomplished— this is sabotage. This makes them less effective.

Volunteer to be put in charge of writing the announcement letter to employees. Warn people. Leak information. Take too long to write it. Lose the document. Lose your work laptop. Fuss over the wording. Write wording that could be used against your company in court. Instead of writing it in a way that reduces liability, write it in a way that increases liability for the company so it's easier to sue the company.

Make every inch have its cost.

By no means is this enough. You must be loud, especially now. But I want you to consider that every tiny little action adds to the cost. **Slow them. Stop them. At every. fucking. turn.**

If it gets worse, there may come a point where you feel the need to take bigger steps. You might need to break the internet router. You might need to accidentally drop a box of nails in the parking lot. You might need to do more.

Read the Simple Sabotage Field Guide. Understand the underlying concepts. Read this post again. Read the field guide again. Play mental games about what you could do in hypothetical situations. Strategize what you could do in real situations. Be prepared to put it into practice at a moment's notice because things are escalating quickly.

Share this information widely, so that others know to do the same. This only achieves full effectiveness when we have solidarity. When we work in tandem from every quarter.

It's time to get radical, y'all. It's time to get inefficient.

Here's a kiss and wink for y'all. Mwah.

no ends, only means

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