A border, like race, is a cruel fiction
Maintained by constant policing, violence
Always threatening a new map. It takes
Time, lots of people’s time, to organize
The world this way. & violence. It takes more
Violence. Violence no one can confuse for
Anything but violence. So much violence
Changes relationships, births a people
They can reason with. These people are not
Us. They underestimate the violence.
It’s been awhile. We are who we are
To them, even when we don’t know who we
Are to each other & culture is a
Record of us figuring that out.

Wendy Tevino

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2018: YEAR IN REVIEW

Most of 2018 was a disaster, as the Trump administration carried on with its daily diversions and atrocities against the backdrop of the rapid destruction of the earth, ever-worsening economic downturn and class stratification, and rampant white supremacy, border violence and fascism. Our efforts to fight these worsening conditions seem to us to be both extremely inadequate and to offer a glimpse of what might still be possible. Below we share some of our thoughts on changes in the local anarchist space, some of our critiques and disappointments, and some of our moments of joy and success. This article is written with the intention of initiating reflection and dialogue, and of furthering anarchist struggle; responses and critiques are welcome.

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CHALLENGING INFRASTRUCTURE: BEYOND THE STATE

The U.S. energy industry has recently been suffering some losses, with oil prices sliding lower than a third of their value in the fourth quarter of 2018 as the stock market tanked, demand decreased, and fears of a renewed glut reemerged. The drop in oil prices may be due to investments being transferred to natural gas, which are by contrast doing well on the market. However, various energy corporations have also seen setbacks as regulatory agencies have denied permits for new pipeline and other natural gas infrastructure projects, making new potentially a good time for opponents to use a variety of tactics to intervene

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anathema.noblogs.org ★ anathemaphl@riseup.net
December 14 - A memorial bike ride for cyclists killed by cars takes place in Center City and surrounding neighborhoods. Flames are thrown and a condiment is painted on the ground. "Carrying the memory of the dead as a weapon. Furthering anarchist dialogue and action."

Late December - 110 ATMs, and other symbols of capital and gentrification are sabotaged for Black December and in solidarity with people facing repression. "Happy Holidays Motherfuckers."

Late December - 26 indigo bikes have their tires slashed for Black December. "These vile blue beasts are a fine ride around town for the wealthy (unmournably the most inept bike riders on the road), consuming space and welcoming the rich into gentrifying neighborhoods; reminding us that leisure, technology and convenience are crafted for the elite, and always at our expense."

December 29 - A man arrested for allegedly shoplifting died in SEPTA police custody outside the 24th police district.

New Year's Eve - Two police cars have their tires slashed while parked outside of a precinct for Black December. "This attack was carried out in revenge, specifically for the police brutality against anarchists in Philly this summer, and in general for all the indignities, small and large, that police cause every time they do their jobs."

New Year's Eve - A rowdy noise demo makes noise outside of the federal detention center. "It's difficult to navigate how long to stick around while maintaining an intensity that feels honest and defiant without making it easier for the cops to arrest us."

January 1 - 122 tires on 48 cars reported slashed overnight in a well-to-do neighborhood in Tredyffrin Township, PA, totaling around $40,000 in damage. One family reported that their five cars all had tires slashed, including a Jaguar and a Tesla.

January 7 - Jury selection begins for the second trial of Vaughn 17 prison rebels.★

It's Robbin' Season

The holidays are a time when the iron is hot for thieves to strike. It's much more likely that the register is full at all the stores, the poxeth are adorned with cardboard boxes full of goods, and many are carrying cash. This winter a few seasonally appropriate crimes took place that feel important to convey. In the Italian Market, a nativity scene was targeted by a thief who walked off with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph; unfortunately, police were unable to recover and return the stolen pieces the next day. In the lead up to Christmas, a quick-thinking thief stole a car that was still running while the driver was inside his house in Lawncrest; the car had a trunk full of gifts as well - two for one deal. On the 21st of December, someone dressed as a delivery driver stole an Amazon package from the porch of a house in West Philly, cleverly.

Two people held up a Dollar General in Port Richmond and made off with an undisclosed amount of cash, on Christmas Eve! On Christmas Day, a vandal dressed as Santa walked up to the same nativity scene in the Italian Market carrying a sack full of spray paint and defaced the scene.

Selling out the Neighborhood

Councilman Kenyatta Johnson of Point Breeze has been on the defensive recently, after it was suggested that he is intentionally kicking down houses in his district for far below market value through "councilman prerogative" to a childhood friend, who is then flipping them for a substantial profit.

In an op-ed penned for the Philadelphia Review, Johnson cited the bureaucracy and "disfunction" of other city offices for the below-market price sales of three properties in his district, which he had pushed through (by way of that councilman's prerogative) to an alleged childhood friend named Delton Hayman.

The stalling of the sale to Hayman, first approved in 2014, which necessitated Johnson's prerogative, occurred because OCF Realty's infamous Ori Feibusch (competitor to Hayman in real estate and, formerly, to Johnson in the city councilman's race) challenged the sale. Feibusch's challenge was based on the city's failure to disclose that there were multiple interested parties willing to bid on the property - specifically Feibusch, who elaborated that the property in question was sandwiched between multiple OCF properties. The city is supposed to follow this process, unless the property is for the "greater good." Johnson himself has said that he has continued to advocate for the bidding process in order to keep outsiders from developing the neighborhood apart from the community's wishes. Regardless, Feibusch was awarded $34,000 in 2016 after a jury found that Johnson had violated Feibusch's constitutional rights.
The last year has seen the continuation of many anarchist practices based in time and continuity. May Day, June 11th, International Workers’ Day, and October 1st are particularly important days, but in August, the days surrounding Thanksgiving and Columbus Day, Black December, and New Year’s Eve have all been accompanied by intentional anarchist activities. What would it take to organize a large scale action in the next year? What can we do in the time in between these rituals? How can we continue to maintain them and also extend our activity beyond them?

LESS GOOD STUFF

We still haven’t figured out how to completely prevent or even disrupt major public fascist and far-right demos in Philly. A major effort was made to push back against the Proud Boys rally here on November 17th, which got a great turnout for the opposition, but the rally itself still happened as planned. As with the protest against the MAGA march in 2017, counte-er-demonstrations this year like the anti-Blue Lives Matter march in August have been confrontational, but not pointed. They gave you the sense of actually posing a threat to the action in the streets, but did not complete their original goal of stopping the right-wing from marching. If we want to make sure that the far right does not assert themselves in the streets, we need more people, better training, and better presenters, and we also need to experiment with new strategies to prevent them from getting there in the first place.

Aside from some Philly anarchists’ ongoing support of local political prisoners and recent support of the Vaughn 17, anarchists still mostly don’t have connections with prisoners in the region. Developing better connections with prisoners would help us have an ear to what’s happening inside, and would enable us to intervene more directly in prison struggles, in addition to supporting actions like the prison strike through outside solidarity efforts.

As with almost everything else, we are generally nowhere near in skills, resources, or capacity to effectively take on the energy industry’s ever-growing encroachments on the region’s land and water, much less to move towards destroying forever the infrastructure that makes global capitalism and American settler colonialism possible. Daily news reminds us of the massive extinction events, climate catastrophes, and human migration and suffering that is already resulting from climate change. We were glad to see people take up sabotage tactics against this infrastructure last year, as well as blockades against the Mariner East 2 and other pipelines, and we encourage more imagination and exploration of concerted action this year as new infrastructure continues to be built. For more socially oriented anarchists, imagining and spreading resources that could provide new means of survival, to show what else is possible as well as provide in case others do it in the future. Next year, with the current infrastructure, could be a crucial contribution.

The insurrectionary milieu still experiences people moving relatively quickly in and out of activity, as people figure out what they are or are not into, and struggle with fear, life un-
der capitalism, and feelings of exclusion. We would welcome more initiatives that create the feelings of community and solidarity with one another. The reassertion of the state that this is an ongoing issue for people trying to remain active in the scene, and as usual we encourage people who perceive a problem to offer their critique through action - in this case, organizing a bird strike against the government by organizing a potluck, a game, a demo, etc.

Death, illness, and sadness have weighed heavily on the anarchist space this year, and we have found friendship and care to be ever more important, and at times life-saving.*

FROM CYNTIA TO BOLSONARO

Violence becomes logical when it is a matter of survival. From feeding yourself (whether through the taking of plant or animal life) to resisting the control of an authority through equal means, it can even be a strategic and necessary option.

Cyntia Brown was granted clemency this month. She had been imprisoned by the state since she was 16 for killing a "john" when she thought he was going to pull a gun on her. Convicted of murder in 2006, she was given a life sentence after being tried as an adult (as the prosecution argued that she had allegedly attempted to rob the man), which notably ignored her youth and that she had been forced into prostitution by an older, violent-abusive boyfriend (i.e. pimp, i.e. rapist). That is to say, she was imprisoned by this relation- ship because she was sent to prison, and the killing of that "john" appears to have been a step toward her liberation.

Now 30, she has been freed by the governor of Tennessee, who cited the "steps Ms. Brown has taken to rebuild her life," after an incredibly massive and long-term campaign for her release.

Since her life, that her freedom, was taken and withheld from her and a young girl, her governor’s statement seems in-arorough. Perhaps the governor meant was that she has taken steps to accrue skills that would enable her to legally survive on her own land while, almost simultaneously, state powers increasingly criminalize and burden independent people who choose to do sex work with bills like SISTA-FOSTA, which may only drive those who can afford to do so more into the hands of the state to survive. Thus, the above situation creates a conflict to make client introductions for them — contacts that then have the opportunity to take advantage of that arrangement.

Prostitution is commonly referred to as the oldest profession. As such, it seems unlikely that any capitalist entity could ever do away with it. Moreover, all kinds of sex work will continue so long as currency is exchanged, and to further criminalize it is to make it more difficult to do safely.

The revolutionary perspective of 1930s Spain lends some light on this issue in the sense that sex work is a function of capitalism (toconnexion to prisoners), banning tax and property records (in addition to churches), and executing the most unapologetic of ex-

It is quite possible to view Johnson’s behavior as political activism, since Johnson has been a staunch critic of OCP’s government. With this being said, it is hard to see Johnson’s behavior as a mere political move since his recent acceptance (seemingly defunct) anti-gentrification activist group Point Breeze Organizing Committee had vocally backed him in the past. But the personal ties to Hayman, Hayman’s flipping of these properties to Baltimore-based developer DTS, and similar sales to Hayman for far below “fair market value” (as reported by the Inquirer in 2016) doesn’t bode well.

Still, Johnson now vows to put up every property for competitive bid to avoid these scenarios.

Meanwhile, the District Attorney’s office has been selling off homes seized in police raids, largely to cops and speculators, which in turn funded an unrelated budget that was split between the police department and the DA. That budget has bought everything from custom embroidery on uniforms to submachine guns.

PlanPhilly’s analysis of 1,682 deed records linked to such sales between 1993 and 2018 also suggest that almost 20% of them are vacant.

It seems like much of the problem lies in investing in authority figures and unengaged bureaucracy to fix or maintain our own neighborhoods. Due to the impositions of industrialization, these neighborhoods, along with cities in general, have become a dumping ground for the nation’s criminal population. The real advantage of a more lenient District Attorney’s office, if there is any, is that there may be reduced risk in taking direct ac-
thion — from occupying vacant homes to attacking those that seek to displace us — even though the downward trend of such prosecutions predates Krasner’s election to DA, and the quality of criminal defense in the city may be suffering as his office continues to recruit progressive and radically defense attorneys to the prosecution’s side.

CHALLENGING INFRASTRUCTURE CONTINUED

in these projects’ construction. Legal strategies alone are not sufficient approaches to stopping ecological destruction, however, and decolonial struggles demonstrate that anti-in-frastucture projects can also aim to damage settler colonial control itself.

in a relatively rare example of proposed projects being shut down before they begin, in early January the Maryland Board of Public Works denied Columbia Gas Transmission, a subsidiary of TransCanada, access for a gas pipeline proposed for construction under the Potomac River.

Meanwhile, opponents of Dominion Energy’s Atlantic Coast Pipeline, slated to run through West Virginia, Virginia and North Carolina, have brought a temporary halt to construction through a string of legal victories. In mid-December, a federal court vacated another permit for the project, con-
cluding that the U.S. National Forest Service did not have the authority to allow the pipeline to cross the Appalachian Trail.

Most notable so far have been the setbacks to the Mountain Valley Pipeline, which is being built by EQT Corporation and also extends from West Virginia into Virginia and North Carolina. Federal agency FERC issued a stay work order on the pipeline in early August due to environmental concerns, which was then lifted in late August except for two stretch-
es of the cross federal lands, including the Jefferson Nation-
al Forest. Ecodefenders’ treetops on that federal land in the spring had delayed the pipeline’s construction there; unless EQT can obtain a new permit from the Forest Service, those blockades likely will have been critical in protecting those forests.

In October, a court revoked a federal stream-crossing per-
m for the MVP, and the State Water Control Board is now reconsidering a water quality permit it had granted the pipe-
line. In December, Virginia’s Attorney General filed a law-
suit against the gas company due to the pipeline’s over-growth of environmental violations. Trees blocking the pipeline’s route have been running since September in Elliston, VA and a federal judge is currently considering a motion filed by MVP for an injunction that would restrict sawing and their support to people move. Although the company claims that over 70% of the pipeline is already constructed, officials have pushed back completion to the last quarter of 2019, and a report from the October 2020 company noting that the pipeline’s construction may never be finished.

As of this writing, the Gidim’ten access checkpoint to Wet’suwet’en Nation land and the Unist’ot’en camp, on the other side of the border in so-called British Columbia, were recently been violently breached by the RCMP. The RCMP is attempting to enforce an injunction for access to the land for TransCanada’s Coastal GasLink pipeline. The Unist’ot’en Camp has been directly blocking the path of three proposed pipelines, including Coastal GasLink, for almost a decade. The Gidim’ten Camp was last year the closest to the entrance of the access road as the first blockade that the RCMP would have to breach in order to access the Wet’suwet’en Nation’s land. All plans of the Wet’suwet’en Na-
tion are opposing the project.

Despite these seeming successes, relying on the decisions of federal courts and regulatory bodies is not the most desirable strategy, not only because we prefer strategies that move towards our autonomy from state authority rather than improving the state’s functioning, but also because these are unrelenting, environment-
mentalist campaigns, including some of the more radical, have consistently been derailed by official decisions in their favor. The Gidim’ten camp have also formed a sense of victory that had sufficiently dalled opponents’ sense of urgency and weakened their activity. We take note of these
**Year in review continued**

Er-demonstrations, Occupy ICE, the prison strike — were spaces opened up by and filled with many different radical actors.

As always, 2018 brought with it social shifts in the anarchism space. Friendships forming and ending, new groups coming together and coming apart, independence on many and less active roles. Some organizational projects are finished, like RAM Philly and Love City Antifa; others have sprouted up (Liberation Project, Friendly Fire, direct action in the Philadelphia IWW, and the informal pseudo-organization Summer of Rage). Other projects have stayed put, continuing and even expanding their activity during 2018: the North, West, and Solidarity chapters of Philly Peace Not Bombs; Radical Education Department; the Philly Anti-Repression Fund; Philly Antifa; as well as this publication, Anarchism.

One difference between 2018 and the year before has been that things have felt less frantic — the need to respond to Trump’s election by “doing something” has slipped away like so many liberals from the street. This is not to say that anarchist activity has slowed or stopped; anarchists are still doing their thing, this time with an energy that feels more sustained.

**Strengths**

The anarchist space has proved itself to be consistent, communicative, and intense in 2018. Through the major struggles of the year, a range of tactics and approaches were put forth. From doxing fascists to knocking on doors to spread information in neighborhoods, from sabotage and attack to squatting and occupation, the methods used in the last year have been much more varied than in 2017. This may be due to the diversity of radicals present in and around the anarchist space.

The diversity of tactics and actors has led to a need for communication and clarification, which, although sometimes in an abrasive manner, has been met with publications, conversations, and communications. The most notable example is the conflict between some anarchists and others at Philay’s Occupy ICE. This feud led to the clarification of anarchists’ positions within the larger radical space, via participation in assemblies, the publication of a controversial zine, the distribution of anarchist literature future face-to-face conversations. Tensions along lines of class, race, and, because were addressed by anonymous writer(s) Philly Anarchy Zawn, and were written by a heterogeneous group that the role of the homeless comrades in the struggle against ICE and policing in general.

This kind of clarification between radicals is important in understanding each other’s struggles. It’s clear that ideas of left unity are not appealing or relevant to all anarchists in Philadelphia, but it seems that mutual understanding and the possibility of collaboration (when our goals line up) is still very much on the table. What will it look like to continue this industry and position in the movement? How can we be so bad if we’re not all on the same page about everything? Can we re-imagine discourse between radicals as a multiplication of fronts on which to fight the social war? How can we continue to expand and approach this work as a collective strength, and work together when our projectivities align?

Beyond Occupy ICE, counter-information initiatives continue to provide a space to encounter and deepen anarchist and anti-authoritarian ideas. The walls in 2018 were not kept blank, and anarchist zine distros, social media accounts, this newspaper, the PHI. Anti-Cap website, conversations more and more, and the publication of the book Movement for No Society by local anarchists have helped spread and deepen anarchist ideas. What messages are we interested in spreading, and to whom? How can we articulate our ideas in ways that are accessible to our intended audience? How can inter-anarchist communication better sharpen and solidify our ideas?

Public social space was opened up for benefit events more often this year, including for a 20th birthday, a 20th benefit at LAVA, the annual June 11th barbecue, and Running Down the Walls. If these events continued or happened more often, it could serve a number of purposes in building a stronger radical milieu.

Relatively, anti-repression efforts among anti-authoritarians were strong: 20 resistance defense successfully flew to a cloud of various defense funds and $2000 was collected. Individuals conducted a campaign against the Moral Arts Pro- gram’s Frank Rizzo mural that succeeded in driving down the plea deal for a friend who had been charged with most recently vandalizing it; and a coalition of Philly anti-au- thoritarians got together to help coordinate support for the Vaugn 17 prison rebels as their trials began in the fall in Wilmington, DE.

Philadelphia ABC has been a consistent project that aims to support political prisoners, but has made efforts to do much more than that. While only open to communicating with prisoners, but also for anarchists, new or not, to run into each other and share a meal. ABC organized Running Down the Walls in August to uplift the struggle of political prisoners, and has also been focused on freeing the Virgin Island 3 by organizing a call-in and write-in cam- paign. What other long-term anti-prison projects are we interested in creating? How can we bridge the gap between so-called political and social prisoners?

As anarchists face a society whose notion of time matches the need to think of ourselves as part of a struggle, food, membership, and homebodies begin to feel more and more important. Timelines and chronologies have been published online and as zines, specifically a text on the unfold- ing of the zine recording the struggle against gentrification over the last five years. This year saw the death of Paco Avendano, which had a powerful impact on many radicals. People wrote graffiti, dropped a banner, and organized two bicycle rides to commemorate his life and to keep his struggle in the public eye.

During Black December (an international call for action and communication in remembrance of dead anarchists) were accompanied by communiques that explicitly reference an- archist teachings. How can we use the sense of memory and time to be used for further struggle? How can we avoid the trap of longing for the past while remaining immobilized in the present?

Like 2017, 2018 saw consistent clandestine attacks and sab- otage throughout the year, reminding us that breaking the social structure is not an option, that we cannot do anything if we were able to practice and deepen their skills, experiment with what dose and does not work, and figure out what will it take to fight against domination as this global shitshow gets even worse.

This year, the timing of various attacks has been more lined up with the occupations and social struggles. During Occupy ICE, attacks took place against collaborating companies and banks; during the prison strike, prison prof- iters like Starbucks and UPS were struck; and in the lead-up to fascist and far-right gatherings, symbols and people involved were attacked.

In the spring, an underground campaign against Amazon, during which most of the people involved who were set on fire overnight in the parking lot of a West Philly Amaz- on warehouse, was probably a major reason that the cor- poration stopped building its headquarters elsewhere. Prior to the campaign, Philadelphia had been within Amazon’s top three choices for HQ2.

In the fall, anti-fascists waged a concerted campaign to stop Keystone United (a state-wide white supremacist bonehead crew) from holding its annual Left Erik’s Day celebration at the Thorfinn Karlsefni statue in Philadelphia. After 30 days of impressively doxing seemingly everyone who had ever purposefully hung out with KU members, including de- tailed information on the housing, employment and cars of some key regional members, KU members and associates were scared and panicking. When a vigil in the night took down the Thorfinn statue itself and threw it in the Schuy-kill River, the conditions for KU’s event were completely destroyed. This is the first time in recent memory that an- ti-authoritarians have succeeded in completely preventing a fascist or far-right event from occurring here, rather than from simply disrupting it — this can point us in the direction of further success.

2018 saw some escalation in terms of attacks. Attacks aimed at individuals responsible for Amazon (a new guard’s car and a far-right organizers home), attacks using fire (the burning of a cell phone tower and an Amazon truck), and at- tacks during Black December (against police cars and ATMs) indicate the frequent use of more intense methods than in previous years.