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J. Clark
Three-Way Fight
Revolutionary Anti-Fascism and Armed Self-Defense
April 2016

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Revolutionary Anti-Fascism and Armed Self-Defense

J. Clark

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action for operating a security service without a license. Incensed, the Oath Keepers promised to instead join the protesters, but were back on patrol a few days later. Like much of white America and the political establishment, the Oath Keepers were much more committed to the protection of private property than the struggle against white supremacy or police violence. Yet their relationship with the state, even though comprised largely of agents of the state and fulfilling some of its primary functions, seemed to oscillate between guarded suspicion and open hostility.

Conclusions?

In moments of crisis and upheaval, political lines and alliances can shift quickly. Right-wing elements that in one moment act largely in concert with the state can pivot to a much more system-oppositional, but still reactionary, posture as the state reacts to threats to its legitimacy from several directions. But whether these elements are acting in direct concert with the state (as in Greensboro), against the state (as in Nevada), or in a relative absence of state control (as in Ferguson and New Orleans), they still pose a threat to our revolutionary movements against white supremacy, patriarchy, capitalism, and the state.

The shape the future takes may hinge on our movements' ability to respond dynamically and appropriately to rapidly shifting conditions, to build communities and networks of revolutionary solidarity and mutual aid, and to defend those communities and networks. Armed self-defense is an area that the radical left in the U.S. has neglected, but which may be necessary for the survival and relevance of our future organizing in the face of a growing insurgent fascism.

despite being several miles from any of the protests. Many suspect Klan involvement.[52]

After the first night of post-grand jury protests in November, the right-wing Patriot group the Oath Keepers began mobilizing in Ferguson.[53] Founded by a former Ron Paul staffer, the Oath Keepers are a national network of retired and active law enforcement and military personnel, which vows to disobey any orders that they deem to be unconstitutional.[54] It is part of the right-wing Patriot movement and had a large presence at the "Battle of Bunkerville" with Cliven Bundy.

A cursory reading of their stated mission might lead one to think that the Oath Keepers mobilized in Ferguson against the police murder of an unarmed Black youth, or the extreme police violence against protesters. In reality though, they saw the government's real transgression as the failure to prevent property destruction by an angry and historically op-pressed community.[55]

The Oath Keepers spent only a few days posting up on the rooftops of commercial buildings with rifles and binoculars before area law enforcement told them to leave and threatened legal

[52] SeeWesley Lowery, "The Brown Family's Pastor Tries to Make Sense of the Fire that Gutted His Church," The Washington Post(Nov. 28, 2014) http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/the-brown-familys-pastor-tries-to-make-sense-of-fire-that-gutted-his-church/2014/11/28/15520f3e-7711-11e4-a755-e32227229e7b_story.html; Steven D., "Michael Brown Fami-ly's Church Burned to the Ground –Arson Investigated by ATF (UPDATED)," Daily Kos(Nov. 29, 2014) http://www.dailykos.com/story/2014/11/29/1348212/-Michael-Brown-Family-s-Church-Burned-to-the-Ground-Arson-Investigation-by-ATF.

[53] Brian Heffernan, "In Ferguson, Oath Keepers Draw Both Suspicion and Gratitude," Aljazeera America(Dec 14, 2014) http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/12/14/oath-keepers-fergusonprotests.html

[54] Justine Sharrock, "Oath Keepers and the Age of Treason," Mother Jones(March/April 2010) http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2010/03/oath-keepers.

[55] Mark Hay, "The Leader of Oath Keepers Says the Right-Wing Group Is in Ferguson to 'Protect the Weak,'" Vice (Dec. 1, 2014) http://www.vice.com/read/leader-of-oath-keepers-says-the-group-is-in-ferguson-to-protect-the-weak-1201

Contents

Preface: The Rise Of U.S. Fascism? 5
Prologue: A Specter Haunting Rural America 6
What is Fascism Anyway? 8
Political Tectonics in the Age of Crisis 12
Greensboro Was a Massacre 15
Bashing the Fash: Anti-Fascism Everywhere 17
Hurricane Katrina and the Showdown in Algiers 21
Open Carry, Ferguson, and the Three-Way Fight 24
Conclusions? 27

with their signs decrying the racist double standard in how police and citizens view people carrying firearms, and the police violence that results.[49]

In Texas, a group of Black activists from various political tendencies formed the Huey Newton Gun Club to flip the script on open carry, marching in Houston and Dallas while carrying firearms.[50] Both instances point to possibilities for creative engagement with the contradictions in the populist Libertarian right.

The events surround the 2014 uprising in Ferguson, Missouri provide another model of community defense and the challenges it presents. After the initial murder of Michael Brown, and again after the county prosecutor and the grand jury refused to indict the officer, outraged community members smashed, burned, and looted area businesses and police vehicles, making good on the maxim of "no justice, no peace." During the unrest, a local Klan chapter began distributing fliers threatening lethal force against protestors, and warning that the protests had woken a "sleeping giant."[51] In the midst of these riots in November, a local Black church that had been critical of the local police and prosecutor, and where Michael Brown's step-father had recently been baptized, was burned down,

[49] It's also safe to say that Ohio Open Carry isn't quite there yet with their analysis. SeeHeather Digby Parton, "Gun Nuts' Tragic Confusion: Why 'Open Carry' Groups Don't Get Police Brutality," Salon(Oct. 1, 2014) http://www.salon.com/2014/10/01/gun_nuts_tragic_confusion_why_open_carry_groups_misunderstand_police_brutality/ ; Shane Dixon Kavanaugh, "Shameless Open-Carry Activists Co-Opt Racially Charged Shooting," Vocativ(Oct. 7, 2015) http://www.vocativ.com/culture/society/i-am-john-crawford/2/.

[50] Aaron Lake Smith, "The Revolutionary Gun Clubs Patrolling the Black Neighborhoods of Dallas," Vice(Jan. 5, 2015) http://www.vice.com/read/huey-does-dallas-0000552-v22n1.

[51] Alice Speri, "KKK Missouri Chapter Threatens Ferguson Protesters with 'Lethal Force,'" Vice News(Nov. 13, 2014) https://news.vice.com/article/kkk-missouri-chapter-threatens-ferguson-protesters-with-lethal-force.

Open Carry, Ferguson, and the Three-Way Fight

More recent struggles against white supremacy and police brutality paint a messy picture of the different political forces mobilizing around race, property, state violence, and individual rights to own and carry firearms. Much of the re-cent Open Carry movement has been driven by the largely white male Libertarian-right, a reaction to a perceived decline of their collective power and an assertion of the right to overtly threaten their historic violence in public. Whether promising to march through historic Black neighborhoods in Houston or organizing meet-ups at local fast food joints across suburban middle-America, much of Open Carry has blatantly smacked of white male entitlement and explicitly sought to normalize their armed presence in public spaces.

When John Crawford, a Black man, was shot dead by police for carrying a toy rifle at a Wal-Mart in Ohio, a state that allows open carry, much of the national Open Carry movement was remarkably silent on the matter. The white, male core of the movement was too overcome by their racist stereotypes about Black criminality and violence to see the obvious implications: white people get to open carry and Black people get a fusillade of bullets for trying to exercise a comparable right. And this was but one episode in a long history of communities of color in the US being legally and extra-legally denied the right to self-defense.[48]

One Ohio Open Carry group, however, partially recognized some of the dynamics underlying Crawford's murder. They mobilized several dozen activists to a protest at the Wal-Mart where Crawford was murdered by police, openly carrying firearms along

[48] SeeClayton E. Cramer, "The Racist Roots of Gun Control," Kansas Journal of Law and Public Policy(Winter 1995) (available at http://www.constitution.org/cmt/cramer/racist_roots.htm; Adam Winkler, "The Secret History of Guns," The Atlantic(Jul. 24, 2011) http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/09/the-secret-history-of-guns/308608/.

Preface: The Rise Of U.S. Fascism?

I wrote this piece between the second half of 2014 and early 2015 for Setting Sights: Histories and Reflections on Community Armed Self-Defense, a forthcoming book from PM Press edited by scott crow and Alexander Reid Ross. Since then, the activity and militancy of the far right has steadily grown.

Summer 2015 began with the white supremacist attack on the historic Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, that left nine parishioners dead and one very racist white boy safely in police custody. A wave of Black church burnings across parts of the South followed, some explained by natural causes, others ruled as arsons, and none featured very prominently in national media. Racist white southerners and their allies across the country launched a counter-offensive to defend their use of the Confederate Battle Flag.

In Minneapolis, Black Lives Matter protesters occupied the police precinct following the police murder of Jamar Clark. After several incidents of harassment and threats, three right-wingers shot five protesters outside the precinct. That same week, an anti-choice fundamentalist went on a shooting spree at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs.

In January 2016, a well-armed (but under-snacked) Patriot-militia group headed by Cliven Bundy's sons occupied the Malheur Wildlife Refuge in eastern Oregon for over a month, virtually demanding a shootout with federal authorities. And in February, Klansmen stabbed three anti-fascist militants who dared to confront them at a park in Anaheim, California.

In tandem with all these events has been the unexpected (though not necessarily unforeseeable) rise of Donald Trump's presidential campaign. As his success has solidified, the immediate physical violence coming out of his campaign and his supporters has also greatly intensified.

These events and others have brought the issues of fascism and anti-fascism from the margins to the center of many radical conversations in the U.S.[1] It's well past time, and I hope this essay will be a useful contribution to the discussion. Extremely grateful shout-outs to Lena, Julie, scott, and Alexander for their feedback and editorial work on this piece.

No pasaran! Pasaremos! Siempre antifascista!

J.

April 2016

> "We are not simply in a conflict with the state in its present incarnation, but in a three-way fight against it and its authoritarian opponents."[2]

Prologue: A Specter Haunting Rural America

Protesters blockade a highway in opposition to government land management policies. Law enforcement officers use tasers, dogs, tear gas, and "First Amendment Zones" to control protesters. Armed protesters face down federal agents over issues of sovereignty.

These scenes could easily describe an Earth First! for-est defense campaign, a mass protest against the Republican National Convention, or an American Indian Movement occupation from the 1970s, respectively. Instead, they all played out in southern Nevada in April 2014, during the "Battle of Bunkerville," when

[1] The blog threewayfight.blogspot.com as well as itsgoingdown.org/topics/anti-fascist both include some extremely valuable contributions to this discussion.

[2] CrimethInc., "The Ukrainian Revolution & the Future of Social Movements" CrimethInc. Ex-Workers Collective(2014), http://crimethinc.com/texts/ux/ukraine.html

Together with residents of the neighborhood, they sat on Rahim's porch and went out on informal armed patrols to keep the white militias at bay. When a truck with some of the Algiers Point militia pulled up in front of Rahim's house, as it had several times before to shout threats at Rahim, an armed stand-off ensued. But this time, faced with an armed and organized opposition, the militia abruptly left.

Without the presence of an organized, armed opposition to the Algiers Point militia, violence against poor people of color in Algiers would likely have been even much worse than it was. The presence of whites and Blacks working together to defend a community against the racist militias was often cited by local residents as having helped ease the tensions in a racially and economically divided area that was devastated in many ways before Katrina ever came ashore.

Moreover, armed self-defense helped create the space for broader grassroots organizing and relief efforts to take place. The militia's power had been clearly diminished after facing armed opposition, and it continued to wither as aid and food distribution sites, free medical clinics, and independent media centers were developed into full operations.

The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and particularly the struggles and organizing in Algiers offer a tiny and intensified example of both what is at stake and what is possible in the world today. John Clark explains that the hurricanes "offers abundant evidence of how crisis creates ideal opportunities for intensified economic exploitation, what has since then come to be called 'disaster capitalism,' and also for in-creased repression, brutality, and ethnic cleansing, which might be called 'disaster fascism.'" But "it also creates the conditions for an extraordinary flourishing of mutual aid, solidarity, and communal cooperation, something we might call 'disaster anarchism.'"[47]

[47] Clark, The Impossible Community, 192.

that is surrounded by the much larger Algiers and West Bank neighborhoods which are predominantly poor and Black.

The militias were comprised of white men from various socio-economic backgrounds who ostensibly to protect their private property and secure "law and order" locally in the absence of the state. However, much like the police, their actions mostly amounted to intimidation and harassment of Black people on the street in any number smaller than the pa-trolling militia.

The militias self-organized to enforce the racial hierarchy in an area where the state's violence was no longer actively present.[45] They threatened many desperate unarmed people of color, even killing some, which they later bragged about to Danish media.[46] The actions of these militias and the paternalistic, white supremacist attitudes of many rescuer escalated tensions between all who were desperate and left to their own devices in the storm's aftermath.

In the wake of the storm, some Texas anarchists responded to a call for support from Malik Rahim, an organizer and former Black Panther who lived in Algiers and was witnessing and experiencing the militia's racial policing. They snuck into the city under martial law to get to Rahim's house, armed and ready to support the defense of the community and their friends from the racist attacks and harassment of the militias.

[45] "This 'autonomous attempt to impose hierarchies in miniature', when allowed to develop in a zone temporarily abandoned by the State, takes the form of warlordism. Rule by local mafia, by religious cultists, by the tough-est guys on the block…[And] fascism is the ideology [that] warlordism tends towards. With its wild warrior ethos and its scorn for "feminine" bourgeois civility, warlordism has always been the social myth that traditional fascism has dangled before its men." Karl Kersplebedeb, "Thinking About Warlordism," Sketchy Thoughts(Aug., 29, 2010) http://sketchythoughts.blogspot.com/2010/08/thinking-about-warlordism.html

[46] Rasmus Holm, Dir., Welcome to New Orleans (Fridthjof Film 2006) (available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V__lSdR1KZg).

right-wing militias answered the call to arms of a wealthy, white settler-rancher named Cliven Bundy.[3]

After a protracted dispute over cattle grazing rights on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land, federal agents began confiscating Bundy's cattle to recoup unpaid grazing fees. Bundy declared a "range war" and called for support. Organized militias and unaffiliated individuals from across the country responded, providing armed security details, setting up armed checkpoints, and confronting federal agents.

The BLM quickly ceased their operation and released Bundy's cattle. Bundy, however, continued to call on supporters and local sheriffs to disarm all federal agents, remove en-trance stations to federal parks, and block interstate highways.

In speeches, he declared, "We're about ready to take the country over with force!" and invoked a long history of populist right-wing "Patriot" movements,[4] rejecting the authority and legitimacy of the federal government and proclaiming his sacred right to the land on which his cattle graze. Perhaps the only thing more remarkable than how quickly the far-right was able to mobilize a mass-based armed response to confront the Feds was how quickly the Feds surrendered.

Nonetheless, even before Bundy opined about whether Black people were better off picking cotton as slaves, and before he blamed abortion and welfare for ruining America, the movement coalescing around him represented the germinating seeds of an insurgent, right-wing populism eerily reminiscent of fascism.

[3] Grace Wyler, "An Armed Standoff in Nevada Is Only the Beginning for America's Right-Wing Militias," Vice (Apr. 16, 2014) http://www.vice.com/read/an-armed-standoff-in-nevada-is-only-the-beginning-for-americas-right-wing-militias

[4] The Patriot movement is a loose collection of groups and people who believe that strict (and some might argue selective) adherence to the US Constitution is necessary to reign in a tyrannical (and sometimes "socialist") federal government and its "New World Order." Various strands run the gamut from militias, conspiracists, white nationalists, and Christian fundamentalists.

What is Fascism Anyway?

Fascism is a reactionary mass political movement that is hostile to both revolutionary socialism(s) and liberal, bourgeois democracy. Fascist movements are rooted in perceptions of community/national decline and obsessive myths of community/national rebirth and greatness. They therefore seek, through redemptive violence, to purge or "cleanse" the community/nation of "corrupting" or "alien" elements; replace the current ruling elite with their own idealized class; and impose their new brand of "order" on the rest of the populace.[5]

Fascism "is never a mere puppet of the ruling class, but an autonomous movement with its own social base."[6] Historically, fascism has often functioned to defend capitalism against instability, crisis, and the revolutionary left. At times, the state and its security apparatus have cooperated and colluded with fascists to undermine or attack the left, lending credence to narratives that fascism is simply a tool of the ruling class or the most extreme manifestation of the state and capital.

However, fascist movements have also pursued agendas that clash with capitalist and ruling class interests in significant ways, sometimes taking positions which seem inline with the left while

[5] For deeper explorations, see Don Hamerquist, et. al., Confronting Fascism: Discussion Documents for a Militant Movement(Kersplebedeb 2002); Matthew Lyons, "Two Ways of Looking at Fascism," Journal of the Research Group on Socialism and Democracy Online(Mar. 8, 2011) http://sdonline.org/47/two-ways-of-looking-at-fascism/; Matthew Lyons, "What is Fascism? Some General Ideological Features," Political Research Associates(Nov 1. 2000) http://www.politicalresearch.org/what-is-fascism; Kevin Passmore, Fascism: A Very Short Introduction(Oxford Univ. Press 2002); Robert O. Paxton, "The Five Stages of Fascism" The Journal of Modern History, Vol. 70, No. 1. (Mar. 1998) (available at http://w3.salemstate.edu/~cmauriello/pdfEuropean/Paxton_Five%20Stages%20of%20Fascism.pdf).

[6] Matthew Lyons, "What is Fascism? Some General Ideological Features," Political Research Associates(Nov 1. 2000), http://www.politicalresearch.org/what-is-fascism

North Carolina to Oregon, anarchists and radical anti-fascists have quietly prepared to defend their homes and organizing spaces. This preparedness can make all the difference.

The struggle against fascism and the insurgent right is largely political. Accessible political education and collective organizing against the ideology and practice of private property, white supremacy, and patriarchy, for example, can do more to curb the power and legitimacy of insurgent right-wing populism in a country where private property and white, male privilege are widely seen as synonymous with liberty.

However, this struggle is often physical as well as political, and building a capacity for armed self-defense is paramount. Armed self-defense is sometimes necessary to provide physical protection—autonomous of the state—from fascist terror, and to create and maintain the space in which to wage our political struggles.

Hurricane Katrina and the Showdown in Algiers

In the power vacuum in New Orleans immediately following Hurricane Katrina, a group of radicals used armed self-defense to create the space from which to launch broader grassroots organizing and relief efforts.[43] White militias had formed in several neighborhoods throughout New Orleans, including the Algiers Point neighborhood on the West Bank of the Mississippi River.[44] Algiers Point is a small wealthy, white neighborhood

[43] The original version of this section was co-authored with scott crow, and is recounted in greater detail in his book Black Flags and Windmills: Hope, Anarchy, and the Common Ground Collective, 46-70 (PM Press, 2nd Ed., 2014).

[44] For in-depth reporting on the racist militias in post-Katrina New Orleans, see A.C. Thompson, "Katrina's Hidden Race War," The Nation(Dec. 17, 2008) http://www.thenation.com/article/katrinas-hidden-race-war

> the right wing libertarians respond-ed.Quite a lot of them came out to [the anti-Nazi] action.[38]

The goal was "to divide [the local libertarian movement], neutralize it and, hopefully, to cause a shaking out of its more truly libertarian elements towards advancing the attack on Capitalism and State … [and breaking] with the overall fascist tendency, the reactionary free market ideology and the infantile patriotism."[39]

One area anarchist reflected on the personal impact of the actions: "This is the first time I have physically seen anarchists at demonstrations carry firearms with them –and I have to say that the experience was very empowering to see."[40] While emphasizing that "the way forward is collective action" and organizing by oppressed communities, they also declare "if we are going to go up against people like the NSM, we should be prepared to defend ourselves."[41]

In Kansas and Colorado, anarchists used their involvement with gun culture to distribute political literature—primarily focused on class struggle and critiquing white supremacy—to mostly white working class communities at local gun shows.[42] From Texas to

[38] "JT Ready is Dead: Fascism and the Anarchist Response in Arizona , 2005-2012," Fires Never Extinguished: A Journal of the Phoenix Class War Council(Jun. 1, 2012) http://firesneverextinguished.blogspot.com/2012/06/jt-ready-is-dead-fascism-and-anarchist.html

[39] "High Noon is Too Late for Tea: Seeking Ways to Engage and Oppose the Teat Party Movement," Fires Never Extinguished: A Journal of the Phoenix Class War Council(Apr. 7, 2010) http://firesneverextinguished.blogspot.com/2010/04/high-noon-is-too-late-for-tea-seeking.html

[40] "Phoenix: Where Anarchists Pack Heat and Send Nazis Packing," Fires Never Extinguished: A Journal of the Pheonix Class War Council(Nov. 9, 2009) http://firesneverextinguished.blogspot.com/2009/11/phoenix-where-anarchists-pack-heat-and.html

[41] "Phoenix: Where Anarchists Pack Heat and Send Nazis Packing."

[42] "Rednecks with Guns and Other Anti-Racist Stories and Strategies" The Defenestrator (2011) (available at http://multi.lectical.net/content/rednecks_guns_and_other_anti_racist_stories_and_strategies).

maintaining authoritarian and reactionary underpinnings. For example, right-wing and fascist elements have long opposed neoliberal globalization on the grounds that it is an attack on national sovereignty and the privileged position of white men in Western society. In the mid-to late-2000s, after the anti-war left had mostly withered into irrelevance, various right-wing elements vocally criticized the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan for compromising the state's capacity to police the U.S.-Mexico border and other internal "threats." A subset of the right-wing anti-war tendency is also hostile towards Israeli colonialism and the U.S.'s complicity, presuming both to be manifestations of various anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. Whether it's environmentalism, opposition to law enforcement, or distrust of bankers, the far-right's opposition-al politics are always grounded in authoritarian values.

It is sometimes said that fascism is revolutionary, in that it seeks to overthrow or seize state power. However, I prefer to only use the term "revolutionary" to refer to movements that seek a more fundamental and liberatory transformation of existing social relations. I instead refer to fascism's "insurgent" nature, as insurgencies can come from a variety of political positions.

Twenty-first century fascism, in particular, does not always look like the traditional forms of fascism that we are used to seeing. Some contemporary fascists have "shifted away from traditional fascism's highly centralized approach to political power and toward plans to fragment and subdivide political authority."[7]

These different forms of fascism are still built on authoritarian ideologies and belief systems, but may use certain anti-authoritarian language, strategies, and tactics to achieve their goals. For example, prominent fascist groups over the previous decades have opposed all government authority above the

[7] "Third Position," Political Research Associates Archive(undated) http://www.publiceye.org/fascist/third_position.html(quoting Chip Berlet and Matthew N. Lyons, Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close For Comfort, 267 (Guilford Press 2000)).

county level, advocated strategies of "leaderless resistance," or sought to establish the racist, right-wing equivalent of temporary autonomous zones. One of the Patriot militia groups which mobilized support for Cliven Bundy calls itself Operation Mutual Aid,[8] appropriating a central tenant of anarchism in its defense of "private property, lives, and liberty to exercise God-given rights… codified in the Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights."[9]

So-called Third Position fascism often espouses an explicitly anti-capitalist politics. "National Anarchism," for example, blends anti-statism, anti-capitalism, and decentralization/hyper-localism (along with many anarchist symbols) with their own special brand of anti-Semitism, racial determinism and separatism, homophobia, and anti-feminism.[10]

Similarly, Keith Preston's "anarcho-pluralism" seeks to replace centralized nation-states with small-scale political entities through a "pan-secessionist" coalition amongst a wide range of oppositional movements from "white nationalists, Patriot/militia groups, Christian rightists, and National-Anarchists, [to] left wing anarchists, liberal bioregionalists/environmentalists, and nationalist people of color groups."[11] His end-goal, though, is to empower "a handful of superior individuals [to] rise above the bestial mass of humanity,"

[8] Cheryl K. Chumley, "Militias Head to Nevada Rancher's Standoff with Feds: We're Not 'Afraid to Shoot'" The Washington Times(Apr. 11, 2014) http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/apr/11/militias-head-nevada-ranchers-standoff-feds-were-n/

[9] Operation Mutual Aid(2014) http://operationmutualaid1.webs.com/ (accessed Apr. 18, 2014; subsequently taken down); see also"Operation Mutual Aid Militia," Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium(2014) http://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/operation-mutual-aid-militia(accessed Dec. 21, 2014).

[10] Spencer Sunshine, "Rebranding Fascism: National-Anarchists," The Public Eye Magazine Vol. 23, No. 4 (Winter 2008) (available at http://www.publiceye.org/magazine/v23n4/rebranding_fascism.html).

[11] Matthew N. Lyons, "Rising Above the Herd: Keith Preston's Authoritarian Anti-Statism,"New Politics(Apr. 29, 2011) http://newpol.org/content/rising-above-herd-keith-prestons-authoritarian-anti-statism

patriarchal tendencies, and getting stuck in a mostly reactive posture. Emphasizing armed self-defense here admittedly runs the risk of compounding both of these problems—simply one more example of anti-fascists preferring supposed militancy over the less dramatic work of building a broad anti-fascist culture and politics in revolutionary movements; one more instance of anti-fascists jumping at some emergent fascist threat but never proactively building a positive anti-fascist strategy.[37] Confronting these challenges is imperative to building effective revolutionary, anti-fascist movements.

Reciprocally, our organizing should engage the communities that tend to form the mass base for the insurgent right, pushing on the internal tensions and inconsistencies in their politics, to divide the misguided from the true believers. For example, in Arizona, anarchists openly carried firearms during their campaign against the neo-Nazi National Socialist Movement (NSM) as part of a larger strategy to engage and split the local Libertarian movement over their contradictions around immigration and white supremacy. One participant wrote:

> We carried firearms openly against the NSM, not just for self-defense, or so that the NSM would know we were armed, but also informed by the memory of having seen pacifist anti-war liberals denounce armed anti-war libertarians at protests during the early days of that movement in Arizona. We wanted to differentiate ourselves from the liberals in the eyes of both groups.We knew the significance that would have.And

[37] Some of these critiques were raised in response to the first version of this piece back in 2006. See "The Three-Way Fight and Militant Antifascism: A Short Review," Threewayfight(Nov. 16, 2006) http://threewayfight.blogspot.com/2006/11/three-way-fight-and-militant.html

Michael Staudenmaier, anti-fascism without revolution guarantees capitalism's continuing misery and devastation, reproducing the conditions from which fascism grows. Meanwhile, revolution without anti-fascism all but ensures that the insurgent right will ace out the insurgent left.[34]

On the one hand we must oppose, disrupt, and under-mine the fascist/insurgent right and their organizing, as well as help build support for the targets of right-wing violence and scapegoating.[35] On the other we must organize to fight the conditions from which fascism grows, such as capitalism and its current austerity programs which intensify the impact of economic crisis on marginalized communities.

We must also recognize and address the potentially reactionary positions within our own movements. For example, many environmental/anti-climate change movements propagate narratives of catastrophe and apocalypse that can inadvertently fuel reactionary ends.[36] Similarly, Occupy's myth about the 99% flattened out a lot of differences of race, class, and ideology, reinforcing many of the nationalist myths about the U.S. and allowing right-wing elements (like the "End the Fed" crowd) to feed off of Occupy's popular appeal.

Also, recent anti-fascist movements in the U.S. have encountered several major pitfalls, including hyper-macho behavior and related

[34] Michael Staudenmaier, "Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and the Three Way Fight," Upping the Anti No. 5 (2007) (available at http://uppingtheanti.org/journal/article/05-the-three-way-fight-debate).

[35] For ideas and accounts of antifascist strategies and tactics, see Recipes for Disaster: An Anarchist Cookbook (CrimethInc. 2004) (specifically the chapters "Antifascist Action" and "Infiltration") (available at https://archive.org/details/RecipesForDisasterAnAnarchistCookbook); K. Bull-street, Bash the Fash: Anti-fascist Recollections 1984-1993 (Kate Sharpley Library 2001) (available at https://libcom.org/library/bash-the-fash-anti-fascist-recollections-1984-1993).

[36] Eddie Yuen, "The Politics of Failure Have Failed: The Environmental Movement and Catastrophism," in Sasha Lilley, et. al., Catastrophism: The Apocalyptic Politics of Collapse and Rebirth, 15 (PM Press, 2012).

a starkly anti-liberatory and authoritarian vision masquerading as revolution.[12]

This appropriation of the symbols, language, and tactics of the anti-authoritarian left does more than just muddy the waters; it also reflects "an ideological split in fascist circles as the younger generation attempts to update its organizational models for the 21st century."[13] Early-twentieth century, industrial-era totalitarianism relied on the central power of the nation-state to impose its vision. Today, "in the era of outsourcing, deregulation, and global mobility," the decentralist currents in fascism express "a new social totalitarianism" that "look[s] to local authorities, private bodies (such as churches), and direct mass activism to enforce repressive control."[14]

Celebrating decentralized resistance without an analysis of the political aims and content of that resistance ignores the role of "illegal violence on the part of fascists, paramilitaries, gangs, drug cartels, mafias, and authoritarian revolutionary movements [in forming] an essential aspect of domination."[15] If the last century taught the revolutionary left "the consequences of using hierarchical means to pursue supposedly non-hierarchical ends," this century may teach us "how supposedly non-hierarchical means can [still] produce hierarchical ends."[16]

[12] Lyons, "Rising Above the Herd."

[13] CrimethInc., "Fighting in the New Terrain: What's Changed Since the 20th Century," CrimethInc. Ex-Workers Collective(2010), http://www.crimethinc.com/texts/recentfeatures/terrain.php

[14] "Third Position," Political Research Associates Archive(quoting Berlet and Lyons, Right-Wing Populism in America, 267).

[15] CrimethInc., "Say You Want an Insurrection," Rolling ThunderNo. 8, pg 18(Fall 2009) (available at http://crimethinc.com/texts/recentfeatures/insurrection.php).

[16] CrimethInc., "Fighting in the New Terrain."

Political Tectonics in the Age of Crisis

Recent history has demonstrated that, like anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist ideas, fascism also finds increasing support from the downtrodden and dispossessed people subjugated and alienated by neo-liberal globalization; cycles of economic crisis and austerity-driven "recovery;" climate change; and the expansion and reconfiguration of modern empires.

The left often assumes that the discontent spawned from these crises and contradictions of contemporary capitalism will always translate into support for the left.[17] However, anarchist philosopher John Clark (no relation to this author) observes that these crises and contradictions do not exist in a vacuum. When analyzed concretely, "in the context of the totality of social relations, they can be expected to lead in a direction determined largely by the prevailing institutional structure and the dominant political culture"—that is, in the United States, one of white supremacist settler-colonialism, class exploitation, and hetero-patriarchy.[18] "The disquieting but inescapable conclusion is that [capitalism's contemporary] transformative contradictions might very well transform in a rightist, authoritarian, or even fascistic direction."[19]

In Greece, protracted economic crisis and suffocating austerity measures imposed under intense pressure from the European Commission, European Central Bank, and International Monetary Fund led to an intense period of social upheaval, and dramatic rise in the visibility of radical and anarchist organizing. But it also brought about a sharp increase in scapegoating immigrants and support for the fascist Golden Dawn party. In the 2012 parliamentary elections,

[17] Sasha Lilley, "Great Chaos Under Heaven: Catastrophism and the Left," in Sasha Lilley, et. al., Catastrophism: The Apocalyptic Politics of Collapse and Rebirth, 54 (PM Press, 2012).

[18] John P. Clark, The Impossible Community: Realizing Communitarian Anarchism, 30-31 (Bloomsbury Publishing 2013). No relation to this author.

[19] Clark, The Impossible Community, 31.

to fascism –away from restoring the old racial order, to new dreams of creating a new whites-only homeland or overthrowing the U.S. government entirely."[30]

As a chilling reminder that that past doesn't pass, one of the neo-Nazi participants in the Greensboro massacre, Frazier Glenn Miller, made national headlines in 2014 when he fatally shot three people outside a Jewish community center in Kansas City, after decades of fascist organizing.

Bashing the Fash: Anti-Fascism Everywhere

In the struggle against the state and capital, we run the risk of being out-flanked by fascism and the insurgent right. Don Hamerquist states, "The real danger presented by the emerging fascist movements and organizations is that they might gain a mass following among potentially insurgent workers and declassed strata through an historic default of the left. This default is more than a possibility, it is a probability, and if it happens it will cause massive damage to the potential for a liberatory anti-capitalist insurgency."[31] CrimethInc.'s commentary on the events in the Ukraine similarly foreshadows "a future of rival fascisms, in which the possibility of a struggle for real liberation becomes completely invisible."[32]

To guard against this trend we must cultivate a movement that is both revolutionary and explicitly anti-fascist.[33] To paraphrase

[30] Lyons, "Frazier Glenn Miller."

[31] Don Hamerquist, "Fascism and Anti-Fascism," in Hamerquist, et. al., Confronting Fascism, 16 (available at http://kersplebedeb.com/mystuff/books/fascism/fashantifash.php).

[32] CrimethInc., "The Ukrainian Revolution & the Future of Social Movements."

[33] "Anti-Repression, Anti-Fascist Strategizing Suggestions," Black Orchid Collective (Oct. 16, 2012) https://blackorchidcollective.wordpress.com/2012/10/16/anti-repression-anti-fascist-strategizing-suggestions/

The fascists emerged from their vehicles, pulled firearms from the trunks, and opened fire, killing five core CWP members and wounding eleven other organizers and bystanders. Unlike previous similar events in Greensboro, lo-cal police were not present during the march, evidence of the police collusion with the fascists in the attack. Nonetheless, the CWP's unarmed presence at this march, despite known threats, provided a ripe opportunity for an open fascist attack. One unarmed CWP member got to his car to retrieve his handgun and returned fire, albeit ineffectively.

Had the CWP maintained an effective armed presence at the march as they had at others, it is extremely unlikely that the attack would have ever occurred. The history of Klan action in the South during the Civil Rights movement shows that their power and gall were greatly diminished when met with organized armed opposition.[28] The Greensboro massacre greatly deflated the power and capacity of the CWP, which transitioned from revolutionary communism to social democratic activism before fully dissolving a few years later.

The Greensboro massacre was also "a pivotal event for the U.S. far right" in part because "it broke the suspicion and animosity" that had previously "kept Klansmen and Nazis at odds with each other."[29] The subsequent "collaboration, cross-over, and interchange between the two branches of the far right" shifted the "movement's ideological center of gravity" from "segregationism

[28] The history of armed self-defense in the South during the Civil Rights and Black Freedom movement is very instructive in this regard. See Charles E. Cobb, This Nonviolent Stuff'll Get You Killed: How Guns Made the Civil Rights Movement Possible(Basic Books 2014); Lance Hill, The Deacons for Defense: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement(UNC Press 2004); Timothy Tyson, Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power (UNC Press 1999); Akinyele Umoja, We Will Shoot Back: Armed Resistance in the Mississippi Freedom Movement (NYU Press 2014).

[29] Matthew N. Lyons, "Frazier Glenn Miller, Nazi Violence, and the State," Threewayfight (May 8, 2014) http://threewayfight.blogspot.com/2014/05/frazier-glenn-miller-nazi-violence-and.html

Golden Dawn won nearly 7% of the vote, up from 0.5% just 3 years earlier, to capture its first seats in parliament. Emboldened by their electoral victory, members and supporters of Golden Dawn escalated and increased their violent—and sometimes deadly—attacks on immigrants, queers, and leftist political opponents.

The Euromaidan uprising in the Ukraine in the spring of 2014 was particularly disorienting for North American radicals because at first glance it was easy to identify with the street fighting and rioting. But in the midst of Ukraine's multi-faceted power struggle, fascists constituted "a powerful minority in the anti-Yanukovych campaign."[20] "The neo-fascists from Svoboda [Freedom party] and Pravy Sektor [Right Sector] [were] probably the vanguard of the movement, the ones who pushed it harder than anyone."[21] Genuine anti-authoritarian/anti-capitalist elements were nearly invisible, while fascists reportedly appropriated anarchist symbols and even the image and legacy of anarchist Nestor Makhno. The "accepted and leading role" of Euromaidan's fascist organizations was "a breakthrough and set a new benchmark for fascists across Europe."[22]

In France, the previously marginal far-right National Front party won municipal elections in fourteen cities in March 2014, and then captured a quarter of the national vote in the 2014 European Parliament elections. Right-wing insurgencies and coups in Venezuela[23] and Thailand, respectively, and electoral victories for hardline na-

[20] Mark Ames, "Everything You Know About Ukraine is Wrong," Pando Daily (Feb 24, 2014) http://pando.com/2014/02/24/everything-you-know-about-ukraine-is-wrong/

[21] Ames, "Everything You Know About Ukraine is Wrong."

[22] Tash Shifrin, "Ukraine: No Tears for Yanukovych, No Cheers for New Regime or Fascists in Its Midst," Dream Deferred(Feb. 25, 2014) http://www.dreamdeferred.org.uk/2014/02/no-tears-for-yanukovych-no-cheers-for-the-new-regime-or-the-fascists-in-its-midst/

[23] George Ciccariello-Maher, "#LaSalida? Venezuela at a Crossroads," The Nation (Feb. 22, 2014) http://www.thenation.com/article/178496/lasalida-venezuela-crossroads

tionalists in India[24] and other parts of Europe fill in the picture of a global reactionary shift in the current moment of overlapping crisis. It is not yet clear whether the far-right in these countries will simply get absorbed into the current ruling class and act as the new right hand of capital, or whether their parliamentary gains will act as a foothold from which to further build their mass base and advance insurgent aims.

The United States has not been an exception to this trend. The far-right in U.S. is perhaps more inclined than elsewhere to adopt decentralized forms and anti-authoritarian language, due in part to the cultural and political mythology of individualism and federalism in US. The far right in the US has also "worked diligently for decades at the [local] grassroots level in many areas"—through churches, civic organizations, and local political structures, for example—"to create the cultural preconditions for reactionary grassroots [politics]."[25] This allows the right to wage their reactionary battles state by state, city by city, and school board by school board.

Yet, the far right also faces barriers to their power that contributes to growing radicalism and militancy in their ranks. Despite some electoral gains for the Tea Party,

> They will never be able to muster the strength to defeat finance capital and the political mainstream on parliamentary grounds. Assuming no unforeseen economic amelioration, the conditions that are developing and radicalizing the far-right …will only deepen. Yet with a decided inability to advance any further through parliament, the possibility of a right-wing break with the ballot box as the [primary] terrain of political struggle will begin to loom ever larger on the horizon. The popular base and the historical conditions for a new form of Fascism or proto-Fascism, called by a much different name, will continue to grow unless relentlessly combated by a genuine, militant U.S. Left.[26]

A possible turn toward extra-legal, militant, collective action by a growing right-wing mass movement is evidenced by Minuteman-style border militias; Tea Party disruptions of Democratic town hall meetings; the growing tendency of right-wing groups to openly display firearms at any protest they attend; and the mobilization of armed Patriot militias to con-front the federal government in defense of oppositional 21st century settler-ranchers. If this movement is effectively mobilizing for war with the feds over a bunch of cattle and the specter of a centrist president that they think is too socialist, "what will happen if [anarchists and the radical left] are the next ones who piss these guys off?"[27]

Greensboro Was a Massacre

On November 3, 1979, the multi-racial Communist Workers Party held a "Death to the Klan" march in Greensboro, North Carolina. At CWP rallies in the area over the previous months, they had openly carried firearms for self-defense, due to death threats and acts of violence against them. However, for this particular event, local law enforcement had required that the CWP remain unarmed to receive a permit.

During the march, a caravan of Klansmen and mem-bers of the American Nazi Party drove up to the CWP march and stopped.

[24] Matthew N. Lyons, "Reading 'The Solstice'—Kasama on Right-Wing Mass Movements," Threewayfight(Jun. 15, 2014), http://threewayfight.blogspot.com/2014/06/reading-solstice-kasama-on-right-wing.html

[25] Clark, The Impossible Community, 266.

[26] "On Shutdowns and Party Politics," Dirt Road Revolutionary (Oct. 7, 2013) https://dirtroadrevolutionary.wordpress.com/2013/10/07/on-shutdowns-and-party-politics/

[27] "Psycho Hicks," RednBlackSalamander(Apr. 25, 2014) http://rednblacksalamander.deviantart.com/art/Psycho-Hicks-450072949.