

ANARCHY IN THE BURBS PRESENTS:

Practice

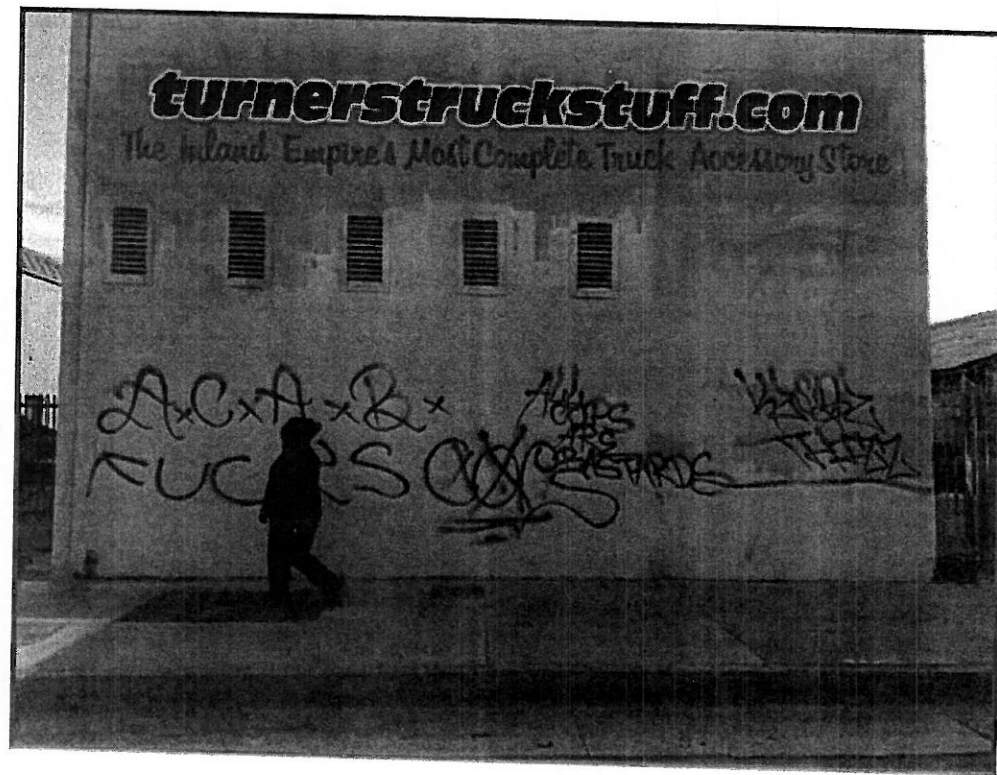
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space with these kinds of views will be removed.

- It's a waste of time and energy to argue with Democrats and liberals, and people with shared values should be prioritized for the sake of conserving resources and maintaining the integrity of our spaces. Point 3 stated that collaborating with reformists posed a risk by liberalizing our goals and our spaces; working with Democrats and liberals functions similarly. Ultimately, although many "nice" people may be Democrats or self-proclaimed liberals, they are ultimately moderates who in reality, seek to reform instead of radicalize the world. The DSA and nonprofits already exist.

9. We all agree to keep these agreements open to adding and editing as we continue to share space.

- In the spirit of horizontal organizing and collaboration, it's necessary to listen to our comrades' input when making decisions and setting agreements to make sure that we aren't merely imposing our will against others'. Similarly, people and life itself are fluid, and the adaptability of our community agreements should reflect that.



Four Fundamental Frameworks for Organizing in the IE:



MULTIPLICITY — INITIATIVE —

AFFINITY — CONFLICTUALITY

As more and more people take to the streets in the Inland Empire, we want to break down a few frameworks to inform action and strengthen our movements. Given that the IE has experienced few social movements in the past, and with revolutionary lessons learned from other historical contexts, we feel that these frameworks can facilitate the transformations we wish to see in our communities. In particular, anti-police brutality uprisings and Black revolt in the 21st century have taught us that social movements cannot ever compromise with any kind of authority: we cannot settle for petty reforms, defunding of the police, or crumbs of justice. Our movements must exist in constant struggle against the entire system until we are completely liberated from all forms of authority and hierarchy, or else they are doomed to be crushed. These four frameworks are meant to orient folks new to grassroots street movements in order to foster long-term and sustainable autonomous movements for abolition.

1. Multiplicity

Definition: the state of existing as or with multiples; the characteristics of diversity, range, and variety

Unity has historically suppressed real differences within movements — such those of class, race, gender, ability, etc. — and has itself become a form of oppression. The dream of unity is, in reality, a nightmare of compromise and suppressed desires: it is only a dream for those who wish to impose their experiences and desires at others' expense. Intentions, beliefs, and motives will always be different; this is out of anyone's control and not anyone's fault, nor is it anyone's responsibility to contain. This should be acknowledged as a matter of fact before you ever hit the streets.

As opposed to the illusion of unity, multiplicity is a closer approximation to the real experiences encountered in the streets and at actions. The reality of multiplicity translates into a diversity of tactics and strategies, given the diversity of people and their motivations. The tempta-

tion of unity must be resisted at all times because it lends itself to burnt-out authoritarianism: people are not a monolith, and so the diverse reasons and desires for which they fight in the street must be conserved and not channeled for the ends of any so-called “leadership.”

Multiplicity in Action:

The late May protests in San Bernardino are a good example of multiplicity in action. People of all backgrounds showed up in the streets with very different goals. This manifested itself in the different actions that took place, ranging from the mask/water distribution, graffiti tagging, looting, and peaceful marching that took place inter-dependently.

All these things are just a matter-of-fact and they took place independent of anyone’s control or idealized images of protest. Multiplicity as a strategy allows for movements to become harder to be attacked by the state or repressed by the police. It also prevents state collaborators from taking over our movements: a diversity of methods and intentions for direct struggle will be too difficult to completely co-opt for their ends.

2. Initiative

Definition: the quality of displaying self-motivation and capacity at one’s own discretion; acting out of one’s individual will or collective volition

Initiative — as opposed to following others’ orders — is how true uprisings begin: they are usually spontaneous and self-organized. Uncritically waiting for the right conditions is a constant deferral of action when it matters most: now, instead of tomorrow. This self-activity also functions as a balance of power to other formal organizations, vanguards, and self-appointed movement leaders.

For uprisings to become irreversible, anti-authoritarian initiative must be fought for and kept alive, free from the constraints of elitist leaders and other power-hungry actors that otherwise kill any movement’s diversity and spontaneity. Instead of following the commands and peer pressure of “recognized” or “legitimate” leaders, initiative is derived from within a community’s own impulses for self-determination. Initiative begins from trusting in one’s own truths and propensities. Our active powers are the key to our self-liberation. The

- For the sake of security culture, it is imperative to make sure the information said in any anti-state organizing space stays within that space and the folks in communion. Otherwise, sensitive and even incriminating information can fall into the wrong ears. Dry-snitching is also a very real threat, and a recording of people at a secret meeting or even at a protest can help the feds build a case against someone. Don’t be that person who accidentally collaborates with the state!

6. As we continue to work in community together, we do not want to reproduce cycles of harm to ourselves or each other while building power. No anti-Blackness/transphobia/queerphobia/sexism/classism/racism/fatphobia/ableism/will ever be tolerated in the space.

- Similar to other points regarding the need to build power outside of hierarchical, colonial, and state relations/ institutions, we need to also make it a priority to prevent all oppressive and harmful behavior in our interpersonal relationships. If we are to be intentional about our liberation, we must treat one another with respect and be mindful of the way we may recreate harmful dynamics in our

personal spaces. After all, the micro scale is just a reflection of what already exists at a macro scale, meaning that the way we socialize at a small, personal level will be influenced by the systems and dynamics at play in greater society.

7. Although this is a BI-POC-centered space, we still have to acknowledge the privileges between certain identities and proactively work to center the most oppressed voices, such as Black, indigenous, and trans voices.

- Just because we work together does not mean everyone has the same experiences, and we shouldn’t reduce people’s identities and experiences to such just because they are BIPOC. In fact, it’s damaging to treat all BIPOC as static or identical because that can recreate harmful dynamics and ignore important intersections within already marginalized identities. It’s important to listen to the most affected voices and center them when organizing.

8. On Democrats and Liberals: Being a democrat is not radical since liberals play respectability politics and prioritize capitalism over BIPOC communities. Any person that comes to the

leaderless organization or group because you can be incognito from and untraceable to the state and state collaborators.

3. This is a space that is actively building power outside of the state and its institutions: if you are a fed, cop, snitch, abuser/abuse apologist, non-profit, mainstream media, or state collaborator (i.e. reformist or politician) you will be asked to immediately leave the space.

- The purpose of autonomous organizing is to build power beyond the state, its institutions, and its style of relationships. To do that, we must push back against and remove those who collude with the state directly and indirectly. This includes removing literal agents of the state (feds and cops), state collaborators (snitches, mainstream media outlets, and reformists/politicians), and those who recreate oppressive interpersonal behavior (abusers/ apologists, nonprofits, and reformists). There is no way to work with these kinds of people without risking state repression or liberalization of our movements and spaces, and attempting to change their minds is a waste of resources.

4. This is an autonomous space,

meaning that we are trying to empower ourselves and our communities to liberate themselves: this is not a space for recruiting, centering ideological debates, or for clique behaviors. We should not be concerned about trying to persuade people to follow one ideology over another or argue with each other: we are more concerned about working towards a material change in our lives, not necessarily in abstract ideas.

- In continuation to the above point, we should be cognizant of our limited resources and energy. If we focus on working together to create material changes in our communities, we will naturally be less concerned with people's exact placement on the political compass and why ours is "better," recruiting people for some other organization or event, canceling and shunning people who haven't exhibited harmful behavior just because we don't "like" them, and other inane issues that just waste time, take up space, and create further unnecessary divisions.

5. Please respect the privacy and security of others in the space: what is said in Vegas stays in Vegas, and do not record participants of this space without their consent.

secret is simple and it is to just begin from wherever we may find ourselves. From initiative, we find autonomy in the capacity to act for ourselves and with community who hold common truths, such as those of Black liberation and decolonization.

Initiative in Action:

After the first night of the Minneapolis uprisings, there were spontaneous protests happening in Downtown Fontana. The people present were primarily Black and brown youth, and reports show that they were mostly young people who lived around the block. Most of them learned about the gathering by word-of-mouth and through their friends' Instagram stories.

The unruly, self-organized gathering happened organically and without direction, and its autonomous qualities were so surprising to everyone that Fontana PD brutally attacked the protestors that night. Autonomous initiative revealed the police's fear of power so vividly. It takes the creativity of movement participants to keep the initiative to attack authority. Strategizing for the longevity of anti-authoritarian initiative brings community closer together, creating unforgettable moments and bonds

between each other.

3. Affinity

Definition: a relationship existing by chosen kinship or natural connection; the fundamental basis for all inter-personal bonds and relations

Given the reality of people's diverse desires and the existence of many autonomous initiatives, it is impossible to impose only one method or approach of achieving liberation. In contrast, affinity groups decide for themselves what they wish to do; they manifest the diversity of community truths. The bond and connection you feel to the people closest to you — and your collective desires — already hold the key to how you wish to collectively make your dreams of freedom into reality.

The common truths that we hold with those around us carry the meaning of our lives and are the basis of actualizing our own worlds. The affinity group allows for an unbreakable cohesion that has historically created the basis for powerful movements and revolutions. Because the affinity group acts of its own initiative and decides for itself how it wishes to make real their liberation, the creation of your

affinity group — and coordination with other autonomous affinity groups — is foundational for social movements. Affinity resolves the problem of “how liberation must be done,” leaving behind the outdated question of “what is to be done.” The former emphasizes that the means of achieving liberation are already in our midst, while the latter emphasizes a pre-determined formula for struggling against oppression and a pre-determined outcome for such a struggle. We must pay attention to process and to our interpersonal dynamics and relationships as we fight for self-determination to ensure that we do not replicate oppressive habits and structures.

Affinity in Action:

Almost every action and demonstration in the Inland Empire was visibly composed of small crews of homies, siblings, neighbors, couples, and childhood friends that decided to roll up to the street together. Each crew had their own reasons for being in the streets and their own goals for the night. These things are discussed prior to and decided upon through affinity, whether or not folks are aware of it.

The IE has never seen so many people in the streets until now. This is because we all secretly had an affinity in common the whole time that we have only now begun to actualize: our desires for freeing our loved ones and communities. The affinities and community that we build right now are the entire reason for why we struggle against oppression in the streets at all. For this reason alone, we must be intentional and as communicative with each other as possible, especially if there is conflict between our truths or experiences. Our ability to uproot hierarchy and authority is only as good as the relationships that make such struggles possible in the first place.

4. Conflictuality

Definition: an ongoing state of conflict or opposition between opposing forces; an irreconcilable and permanently antagonistic situation

Affinity groups’ active initiative and the ensuing autonomous measures they circulate could instigate permanent conflictuality, or permanent revolution. Struggles should never turn to mediation, bargaining, or compromise with authorities. Our liberation must constantly be

situations and community needs that folks can face at any given time. Those who cannot abide by the agreements must create their own spaces on their own preferred terms. Ideally, there should not be harm nor personal beef that stems from this because of reference to the dynamic collection of agreements. Conflict can be generative and can help proliferate multiplicity and autonomy when certain alliances are no longer useful. Autonomous community agreements are meant to facilitate the growth of power and groups that can eventually create self-determining communities that move at their own terms and set their own priorities in their fight for self-liberation. In the end, proactive trust and attunement to each other’s needs and conflicts is the foundation for autonomy and abolitionist praxis.

Loose Blueprints for Autonomous Community Agreements:

- 1. First and foremost, we acknowledge that we are on occupied native lands and must keep that in mind in all of our organizing.**
- We could inadvertently recreate settler-colonialism in our organizing if we don’t prioritize

native people’s plight and acknowledge that this land is stolen in the first place. For example, autonomous land projects — such as the purchase of land to build a commune — must be considered through this lens to prevent said projects from recreating colonialism. This can happen when we continue to ignore native people’s ancestral ties to the land being “purchased” and reinstate smaller scale settler-colonial relationships to land and natives.

- 2. This space is run horizontally, meaning that: everyone will have a voice at the table, there is no one single leader or shot caller, we proactively delegate tasks and rotate roles, and we ask for each person to actively contribute to the best of their ability and capacity.**

- Vertical or top-down organizing means that orders come from the person in charge and trickle down to bottom ranks; this happens in any group or organization with a hierarchical leadership structure, such as CEO to manager or manager to laborer. Instead of enforcing hierarchical relationships, horizontal organizing is a practical way to encourage autonomy and self-representation in our spaces. Furthermore, it’s safer to be a



Moving at the Speed of Trust: Autonomous Community Agreements

We all want to live lives outside of the hardships imposed upon us by oppressive, violent systems of power. However, as we seek to break away from these violent systems, we must be careful in not reproducing the dynamics of systems of power — such as those of patriarchy, ableism, and so on — within the spaces we navigate and the new realities that we create. In order to do so, we must pay attention to the means that we use in our abolitionist movements and not just towards to goals we aspire to.

What we propose is that, as we build our power and capacities to liberate ourselves, we must move at the speed of trust; what this means is that our movements are only as strong as the relationships that constitute them. We cannot assume that individuals are immediately trustworthy when they claim to be against the police, capitalism and so on, if they replicate oppressive behaviors. In addition, working in coalition or with other organizations must also move at the speed of trust: we cannot know every detail of the internal politics or agendas of

other groups or organizations, so we must coordinate together on the basis of autonomous community agreements. By assembling and linking up together in community, we can actively achieve specific goals through temporary formations that emphasize material concerns and affinity, instead of abstraction and ideology.

The practice of autonomous community agreements must not be confused with points of unity, party line, or political program. Community agreements are a contextual, flexible, and “formal” informality of practices that individuals and groups consent to in their collective organizing, with special care for process and means. We must embody today the new realities that we aspire to and wish to see actualized. What we have here is a rough set of boundaries and agreements that others can model off of. They are not rules nor are they principles; they are meant to be community truths and modes of conduct that are never to be set in stone or policed. They can be subject to change given the dynamic

regained by taking initiative and maintaining momentum. This perpetual conflict means that our movements must be prepared to make quick decisions and not get tied up by rigid structures. The self-organization, then, has to take on an informal character because it can't be determined by recognized organizations or pre-determined answers. Waiting for others to represent you ensures that initiative gets lost.

The concept of the affinity group is the basis of this initiative-based, flexible, and informal association of determined communities. Permanent conflictuality means that self-determining communities should not wait for orders from leaders or organizations who — by nature of their role — aim to control our rebellion and thus, alienate or extract our active powers for other ends that we may not consent to. Affinity groups and networks must spread the initiative and methods for self-liberation instead of trying to lead communities themselves. The ability for everyone to attack the system and achieve true liberation is contingent on the autonomy of all of the most oppressed groups. Thus, conflictuality is a constant and effective struggle

towards cooperative aims mutually decided upon by autonomous networks and clusters of coordinated affinities.

As social movements in the Inland Empire remain at a nascent phase, we have yet to see if or when this cycle of uprisings will transform into an irreversible, sustainable conflict with the powers that be. Right now is the time to create affinity groups and link up with other crews in the area who are interested in keeping the momentum alive.

By going to the protests and getting to know other autonomous groups who are present — as well as by organizing more actions, creating long-term projects and community infrastructure — we can establish the networks needed to keep the fight going. By refusing to vote for crumbs or bargain with politicians, we can eventually realize strong autonomous movements that will accomplish our wildest dreams.

-- June 2020





Postscript 1 - The Politics of The Streets: A Clarification on the Four Frameworks

We had a hard time trying to come up with a title for the original post. Alternative titles were considered beforehand, such as ‘4 helpful tips for new IE actions’ or ‘4 things to know before protesting,’ etc. However, we must argue that these are not necessarily “frameworks,” rather dispositions and mentalities. This means that they function as ways to get your head in the game for the reality of the streets. In other words, we were suggesting alternative ways of moving in the street.

Language is a limiting way to understand reality and we all know that. For example, how hard is it to describe things like love and joy? Precisely because they are more than language; they are felt and lived in moments and events. Likewise, getting a feel for moving at protests and tapping into the collective power of the streets requires that you be there, present, and active in the disruption of power. You can only get a sense of what these posts are about when you are on the ground, by witnessing

and participating.

In that post, we suggested 4 different things that can help people tap into the realities of the politics of the street. These 4 “frameworks” were: multiplicity, affinity, initiative, and conflictuality. To summarize it, we were suggesting to folks who were showing up to the streets to respect and participate in diverse ways of being together in the streets. After seeing the influx of actions labeled as “peaceful” and the enforcement of such standards by protestors themselves, we opted to encourage folks to respect and defend each other against the common enemy and not shoot each other down for acting in ways they might not agree with (except for said people acting like the cops they were “protesting”).

After the initial uprisings in the IE in the wake of George Floyd’s murder, we have since then reflected and want to give a few clarifying points on the 4 frameworks:

- We must recognize the dif-

necessarily to make big decisions/plan actions).

Find each other, build affinity, link up, coordinate, and multiply our power!

All power to the affinity groups!



groups. You and your crew decide on what projects or actions that you would like to begin or become a part of. We all know that the IE faces so many problems, and thus there are so many community solutions that autonomous affinity groups can address, such as: hunger, COVID-19 issues, homelessness, lack of transportation, poverty, etc. Honing in on what drives us, and meeting others half-way in what drives them allows us to mutually build common projects through consensus. From initiative, we find autonomy in the capacity to act for ourselves and with community, and no politician or cop can ever take that away from us.

What is a cluster?

Once you have your own affinity group and help facilitate the creation of other groupings, we can start to group the scale of autonomous organizing and initiatives through the creation of other autonomous structures, such as: networks/hubs, clusters, and spokes-councils/assemblies. A cluster is a grouping of affinity groups that come together to work on a certain task, initiative, or part of a larger action. Thus, a cluster might be responsible for blockading an area, orga-

nizing one day of a multi-day action, or putting together and performing a mass street theater performance. Clusters could be organized around where affinity groups are from (example: Inland Empire cluster), an issue or identity (examples: immigrant issues cluster or anti-warehouse cluster), or action interest (i.e. street theater or black bloc).

What is a spokes-council?

A spokes-council is the larger organizing structure used in the affinity group model to coordinate with others in the community. Each affinity group (or cluster) empowers a spoke (representative) to go to a spokes-council meeting to decide on important issues for the action. For instance, affinity groups need to decide on a legal/jail strategy, possible tactical issues, meeting places, and many other logistics. A spokes-council does not take away an individual affinity group's autonomy within an action; affinity groups make their own decisions about what they want to do on the streets. These assemblies allow for people and groups to meet each other, build common interests, and share vital information useful for folks/groups to further form new autonomous initiatives (not

ference between autonomous street insurgents, and the Left/leftists: we must recognize the different dynamics that these two groupings bring into the streets, and how they tend to conflict and contradict with each other.

- The post itself was more about an approach to moving within protests and street actions rather than our view of the ultimate method for organizing (i.e. multiplicity, affinity, initiative, conflictuality).
- No modes of organizing are universal, which means that organizing methods can look differently across different places, contexts, and timing.
- The frameworks themselves are just ways of orienting new folks to the streets and it sought to push for a non-organization-centric mode of organizing (because a lot of people still think they need to “join” an organization to participate in social change, and that is just not true!)
- Non-organizational movements are inherently organic and street-made. As we saw in the IE, almost none of the professional and recognized activists were out in the streets, or if they were, were

extremely outnumbered.

- The framework we proposed can be reduced down to this one statement: Trust the streets! The streets always fight back, and their people (youth, hood folks, everyday peoples, etc.) will ALWAYS be there independent of political movements or the presence of organizations.
- A lot of the times, these same political cliques and “leftist” organizations usually become ends in themselves as opposed to doing the actual work of cultivating the conditions for organic and spontaneous street uprisings to emerge. (As an example, look up the history of Germany's Spartacist uprising to see what social democratic organizations always end up doing in revolutionary moments: co-opting and betraying)
- Multiplicity is real, and we just have to learn to coordinate across our differences and desires. What this means is that we should creatively build bridges with people who face different struggles and set common boundaries and expectations as we move in coalition.
- Affinity and autonomous initiative allow us to find

our place within the streets or in the community. We need to continue to link up with others in our area not as an organization, but as people with similar material needs, common oppressors, and through bonds that are stronger than rigid ideological lines.

- As we have seen recently through the brutal repression of BLM protestors in San Bernardino and Yucaipa, we must learn methods of self-defense to protect our growing power against the reactionary forces that wish to keep us down. This is because conflictuality will always be a fact of the streets, both against state actors and non-state enablers of oppression (i.e. the Nazis and fascists in Norco, San Jacinto, Hemet, etc.)
- To that end, we need more folks in the streets and more folks doing the work of affinity-group building in order to create a community safety net against repression so that our people do not get lost in the system. The more folks we bring into the fold of our community-organizing, the more we can weaken their ability to repress us and the harder we can struggle

against the state knowing that we have community that has our back through the thick and thin.

In the end, revolutions are made by the people in the streets who usually do not belong to organizations, formal groups, or informal minorities. The revolutionary communities are always already in existence, not as some “mass” waiting to be organized by leaders; they are just there, and we need to be present with them. We know now from movement in the IE and across the so-called United States that the power of the revolts has primarily stemmed from affinity-group based action, suggesting the power of small crews with lots of initiative.

Because the momentum is dying down slowly, and street actions have limits, we must think about steps for sustaining a movement for liberation in the IE based on the realities of street politics as well as our relationship-building and presence in our everyday communities.

-- August 2020



similar issue interests, and thus would want to go to collaborate on similar projects or actions. When you find each other, ask yourselves: what are our common interests or skills that everyone can bring to the table in the fight for liberation?

Friendships are inherently political even we do not always realize it. Friendship is not neutral, like the systems of patriarchy and individualism mislead us to believe. Affinity is held together by common truths and values. By putting on display your own truths, you will never know who around you in your routine life is ready to conspire by your side, wherever and however possible. Friendship does and will carry more of a material impact as struggles continue to unfold and escalate everywhere. Look around you, and start there—every aspect of our social lives is a potential field of accomplices. When you find each other, decide on a common path. The strength of the internal ties of affinity groups are the key driver of their activities—make the time to go for hikes, talk about your histories and personal struggles, get to know each other well and kick it tough.

With the COVID-19 pandem-

ic and surveillance, finding like-minded people to form affinity groups may be difficult, and this requires us to flexibly and creatively solve this issue. It is important to converse with the people all around us in our regular lives: you do not know who may be down or have a creative idea for addressing community issues. Take advantage of meetings, hang-outs, socials, and events where like-minded political people may be at, but it won't always be other “leftists” who may be people you want to form affinity groups with. That's because there is an overemphasis on organizing other politically involved and leftist-minded people, when we should be including everyone into our projects and community spaces, regardless of their labels or political identifiers. Sometimes, the best projects come out of very unlikely encounters and friendships: affinity is sometimes found in the most unexpected places.

What is autonomous initiative?

As opposed to following the direction and desires of leaders or hierarchical organizations, autonomous initiative stems from the mutual meanings and intentions put forth by affinity

top-down decision-making and organizing, and empower those involved to take creative direct action. Affinity groups allow people to “be” the action they want to see by giving complete freedom and decision-making power to the affinity group. Affinity groups by nature are decentralized and non-hierarchical. Affinity groups can exist for a long time or form temporarily to accomplish one task, it all depends on everyone checking on each other’s intentions. The label “affinity group” makes it seem more formal than it actually is: a more fitting name would be “crew” or squad. An affinity group doesn’t even have to be political: reading groups and art circles are other examples of everyday affinity groups.

What can an affinity group do?

Literally anything! They can be used for mass or smaller scale actions. Affinity groups can be used to blockade a road, do street theater, organize local food kitchens, confront the police, strategic property destruction, legal aid support, create community art spaces and events, change the message on a massive billboard, etc. There can even be affinity groups who take on certain tasks in an

action or project. For instance, there could be a roving affinity group made up of street medics, or an affinity group who brings food and water to people on the streets. What makes affinity groups so effective for actions is that they can remain creative and independent and plan out their own action without an organization or person dictating to them what can and can’t be done. Thus, there are an endless amount of possibilities for what affinity groups can do.

How do you start an affinity group?

It all starts off like anything else in your life that you’re involved in: find each other and get to know each other well. An affinity group could be a relationship among people that lasts for years among a group of friends and organizers, or it could be a week-long relationship based around a single action. It could be about hitting old friends, new friends, family, neighbors, or people you’ve met at school or the gym. Either way, it is important to form an affinity group that is best suited to you and your interests. If you are forming an affinity group in your area, find interested friends or other organizers who have

Postscript 2 -

Beyond the Protest:

Cultivating Movement Infrastructure



Protests or marches are not ends in themselves and we tend to forget that in our organizing; this is especially the case when spectacular forms of resistance are the most idealized or publicized. As we have seen with the final wave of the summer’s George Floyd uprisings, we cannot always depend on mobilizations to sustain beyond a certain period of time. Building the basis for the liberation of our communities requires a lot more than just the ability to mobilize or attack. As necessary as these capacities are, they are only sustained and made possible by the work that we do outside of and beyond the protest or march. This is what we mean by cultivating movement infrastructure: our ability to disrupt the system and escalate conflictuality is only possible when we have strong material bases that can sustain the capacity to mobilize. We should devote as much time, if not more, to the construction of new realities as we do to the destruction of this reality. In fact, we argue that the ability to mobilize and attack structures of

oppression is inseparable from the building of community infrastructure and affinities. We’d like to open up a discussion on moving beyond the hyper-emphasis and fetishization of mobilization culture.

It is true: there will never be a “right time” or “sufficient numbers” to attack the system and so, we must act now regardless of existing conditions. But we must not confuse strategic patience with the constant deferral of acting. There is a difference between these two things and we must move accordingly: if we cannot realistically attack or mobilize right now (without getting killed or repressed), then maybe we should not act right away. Confidence is not the same thing as courage. We can act and mobilize with more confidence when we have created strong community bases and cultivated movement infrastructure, such that we can consistently attack and have a movement to hide within. We can attack viciously knowing that we have dependable mate-



Why is it important to talk about affinity groups?

Well the whole point of life is to enjoy it with the people that make up our lives. When it comes to fighting for our liberation and self-determination, we can accomplish revolutionary change by working together in our affinity groups. The affinity group is just another way of saying your crew or squad. All it takes is rounding up your homies and loved ones, cause everyone has a role to play within the radical change we are trying to create. We only exist as people embedded within communities, not as lone individuals in the world: every person on earth has contact with others. Contact with another body is, then— at the same time— contact with our own selves. Affinity is the foundation of autonomy.

What is autonomy and autonomous organizing?

Autonomy is based on the love for and mutual respect of individuals that does not seek to gain power-over their lives or trajectories. Autonomy is synonymous with horizontal (i.e. on equal grounds/power-with),

communities and networks. We can mobilize and attack on our own terms - because it is within everyone's autonomy to do so - but we can get many more people mobilizing if we build the collective confidence that can come with patiently building strong bases and movement infrastructure. Examples of movement infrastructure can include: community defense trainings, people's mental health/healing hubs, land projects, political education initiatives, food sovereignty networks, free medical clinics, legal support/anti-repression committees, and so on.

It is a public secret that the militant uprisings of the last few decades have all been doomed in part to the fact that social movements have not created bases and autonomous power outside of the state. Even recent abolitionist movements are not able to fully escalate conflictuality because of this unspoken dependence on the state for the means of survival. For example, we are all still dependent on the state's infrastructure, such as its agriculture, its medicines, its educational systems, etc. Thus, in addition to finding ways to mobilize and outmaneuver the state's attempts at total control, we must also devote time and

rial support and a large community that has our backs. Courage would imply that action is taken without a larger movement infrastructure so that only the "fearless" or "brave" are able to attack or participate in conflictuality, but that just creates other hierarchies (i.e. between militant and "non-militant"). In contrast, confidence-based action against this system would signify a larger social backing and material backbone from which many actors can participate in and feel included.

Courage-based attacks and responses are not necessarily the same thing as collective confidence because they are not always embedded within a larger movement context (although it is not always necessary or possible). In addition, overreliance on courage-based responses can sometimes be easier for the state to repress without proper planning, hence why confidence is a key factor in struggle. This is why, for example, many people are not attending protests locally: there is an overreliance on "getting numbers" based on "liking" an Instagram image of a protest flyer (whether it's posted by CrimethInc. or some other local org) rather than on the ability to mobilize with offline

and can be contrasted to other forms of life that are vertical (i.e. top-down/power-over) such as the authoritarian, capitalist, gendered, and racial hierarchies that we see in the world. Consequently, autonomous organizing is based on the collection of desires, friendships, and projects that seek to disrupt those forms of oppression. This form of organizing is different from and opposed to other models of organizing that are based on leadership or bureaucracy. Instead, autonomous organizing is based on consensus, mutual aid, and affinity. It is based on the affinity group model, and it has historically been the organizational basis that have popped off the wildest revolts, insurrections, and uprisings for the last few centuries.

What is an affinity group?

An affinity group is a small group of 5 to 15 people who conspire together autonomously on direct actions or other projects. Your life is already filled with many people that you have affinity with, and that's the point: these groups are ultimately based on closeness and trust. Affinity groups challenge

be physically prepared for such fights. Confrontation will be an inevitable aspect of our attempts to build power outside of the system. We must be prepared for counter-attacks from the state and non-state agents. If we do take the streets, there must be a means, an intention, and a goal to the action. If we train and take defense seriously, the police will not be as efficient to respond. As decentralization has shown, pigs cannot act rapidly enough to a moving multiplicity that can strike a number of targets at once and that tries to always keep the initiative. The spread of our autonomous initiative must be both militant and social. We are, after all, ultimately embedded in a social war. We must make authority's attempts at repression ubiquitous so that they are ultimately effective nowhere through multi-frontal conflictuality.

Let's continue to expand our bases of power so that we can continue to escalate conflictuality, to end oppression once and for all!

-- December 2020



energy to being able to autonomously self-reproduce and sustain ourselves. We must reclaim practical skills and the ability to heal, to grow, to build, and so on. We can begin this by taking an inventory of our collective skills, capacities, and connections, and by pooling our resources together. Fleshing out our material autonomy will be urgently necessary when the time comes not only to provide for ourselves outside of the system, but also sustain community self-defense against the state and fascists.

Toward that end, material autonomy will only come by when we continue to devote time to building strong relationships with each other and the communities that we belong to. We do not need to recruit people into organizations or build new social contracts: we need to spread concrete practices, knowledge and resources to take self-determination into our own hands. We have talked about affinity previously before, but the point stands that almost all the relationships that we encounter in our day-to-day have the potential to become political accomplices. However, the logical next step once we find our community is to live

and struggle together; some have called this the “commune.” The uprisings create the space in which diverse communities and affinities come into contact, but we must maintain the initiative and continue building our collective power even after the events of struggle. If we are all over-worked by capitalism, we will never be able to sustain mobilizations or attack the system on our own terms. We must become intentional about meeting each other's material needs or else we are doomed to default to getting our needs met by the current hellscape we live in. We must put our minds together and really scheme it up: what are ways we can pull in community together to provide for each other so that we do not become hyper-dependent on working a job or become over-reliant on money at all?

As we saw in the summer of 2020, decentralization is one of the strongest features of any social movement. The state has a much harder time repressing a multiplicity than it does one large mass; this also applies to a strategy for building communes. The decentralized construction of communes and hubs can help us defeat the curse of surviving the horrors of capitalism on our

own: collectivizing with others will help insurrections endure past the first stages of riot and revolt. We all know the importance of having the capacity to address our material/emotional/mental/spiritual needs so that we can all sustainably remain active in the struggles against oppression. Collective care is a prerequisite for any revolutionary activity. Communes can eventually displace our material dependence on the institutions of this society, too (such as the family, employment, citizenship etc.). However, we should not become insulated in our comfortable commune communities, cut ourselves off from locals, or become complacent with mere lifestyle politics. The point is to become materially autonomous enough to sustain an offensive, abolitionist attack on this system and spread the capacities for communities to self-determine. Devoting time and intention to building material complementarity between diverse communes and hubs can give our movements strength in the long-term coordination of struggles.

We have a few other last suggestions on building movement infrastructure that provides for a long-term fight against the state and capital:

1. As we fight off the settler-colonial state, the ultimate goal is decolonization and pushing police control off of stolen native lands. The colonial state tries to control the territory and map it out in order to keep it under control. Beyond the riot or protest, we must contend with not reproducing settler-colonialism in our organizing. In addition to the protest, we must spend time and be intentional about cultivating meaningful relationships and affinity with native people, increasing their own capacity and power to liberate the land.

2. Local self-organization allows space to be used outside of its designated or official use, such as when barbershops or strip malls or empty properties are used outside of their economic function; it is a matter of spreading the complicities between existing relationships in a given area or place. We must subvert the imposed and given environment. We must remain opaque and invisible to the state as much as we can, using space and places as cover to hide in and cultivate our bases (i.e. by building squats, occupying buildings, liberating public parks, constructing the underground). Avoiding visibility will allow us

to gather force in the shadows, and when we become visible we will be stronger and ready.

3. We should all get to know comrades from other struggles: reach out, link up with folks, and make the efforts to travel and communicate consistently with them. Learning from others experience and techniques they've learned is great for our movement beyond what only enclosed self-criticism could offer. Social media has been great for this but must be done with security culture procedures in mind. Although social media has been helping people link up, it is ultimately the oppressor's tool and we must use it with that in mind. We can start the conversation online and use encrypted communications tools to keep the conversation going and the affinity growing.

4. Speaking of the social, interpersonal skills and conflict resolution are absolute prerequisites for any movement for abolition of the state and negation of all oppressions. We all come into movements with a lot of personal traumas and baggage: how can we learn to tune in to our own desires, needs, and personal struggles and have them inform - while not negatively impacting

- our participation in collective spaces? This is an important issue because when we fail to be accountable to our community, our movement is weakened. We would make a call for everyone to continually check in with themselves, a trusted homie, your affinity group, and the spaces that you are a part of to make sure that conflict, harm, and traumas are not perpetuated in liberatory organizing. We should devote as much time to our relationships, engage in our own healing, and build our interpersonal skills as we do to any other kind of self-education or movement infrastructure.

5. Community self-defense is extremely taken for granted and we must continually have it in our sights. We must treat self-defense as an obligation of social life (i.e. through consistent self-defense trainings and community mobilization responses to abuse by individuals or the state). We cannot reconstruct our movements each and every time we encounter police violence and state repression. Instead of becoming outraged after some offense from capitalist relations or police murders, we must stop this culture of denouncing-then-mobilizing ritual when we may not even