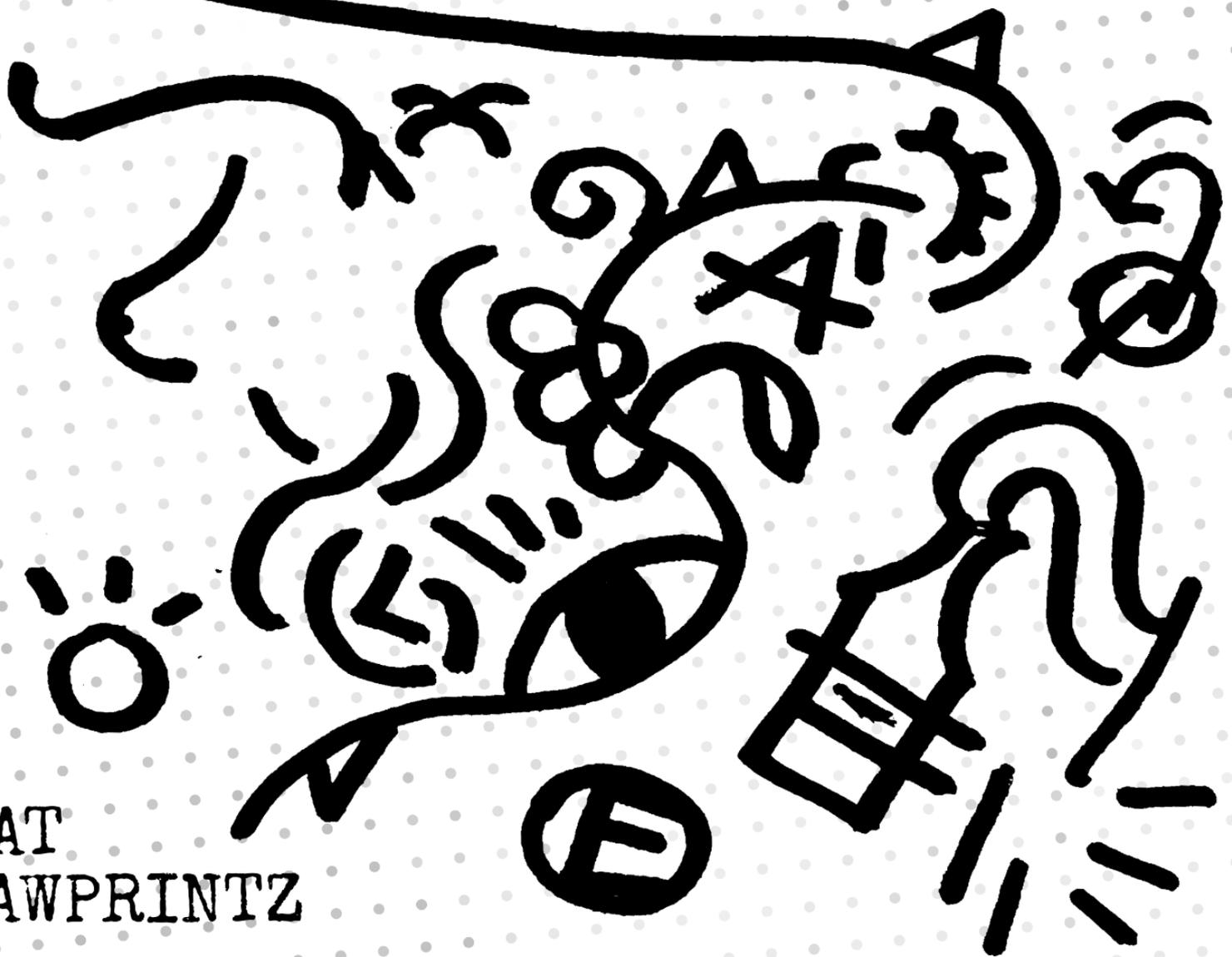


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Confessions
of an
Anarchist



KAT
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Confessions of an Anarchist:

Tried and tested actions against Capital

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Many people angry in this day and age, the neo-liberal world order is rapidly advancing into fascism as its only logical conclusion. The people on the frontlines are yet again the workers and marginalised of society. Many of these people now realising their dire societal standing, are turning to ACTION! But what action? Where to begin and with whom? With this I humbly present my confession as an anarchist -wannabe- insurrectionary in the imperial core.

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My Radicalisation

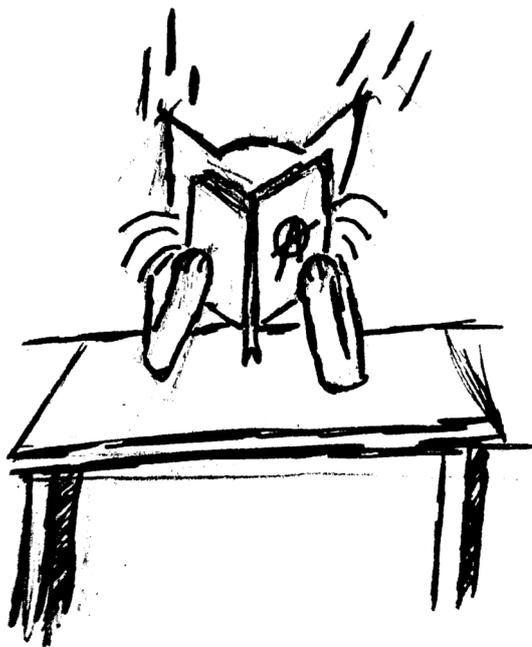
I confess that I have held hatred in my heart for the capitalist system. And that I'm a nerd.

My radicalisation is nothing of note, its boring. While I am transfeminine, and anarchy has liberated my thinking on gender, property, collectivism and mutual-aid, I am also the child of a sheltered middle class and imperial upbringing. I am not one of the people turning to action because of the direct consequences of the system crushing their way of life. I am part of the old and boring tradition of privileged white students reading the works of privileged white intellectuals and deciding that these words are gospel. The attitude that my way is the true way and that anarcho-communism must be imposed upon the whole of society, is something I've only abandoned recently and which has coloured a lot of my early "activism". This attitude lead to an unhealthy martyr/messiah complex, where I was 'serving' the Revolution. Please do not do any of the things laid out in this piece to 'serve', but let my experiences empower you to free yourself. My radicalisation is interesting in that it imposed upon me a lot of backwards ideas which seem 'ideologically pure', but entirely outdated by a century. If I could give younger wannabe insurrectionaries one advice it would be to not pretend like you're a Russian anarchist in 1920, but apply anarchism to the material conditions of your direct community as one tool out of many to liberate yourselves. Not as the goal, the means and the holy orthodoxy which stands above all.

Squatting

I confess that I have coveted the empty dilapidated buildings of the landlords.

I got my intro to anarchist praxis in the movement for housing rights of the early 2020s in the Netherlands. Thousands were taking to the streets in various cities, clashing with police and squatting became in vogue again. The Netherlands has a rich history of squatting, since the 70s anarchists, commies and non politically affiliated people have occupied empty buildings to facilitate housing, but also as politically engaged autonomous spaces and social centres. The squatting movement has always come and gone in waves, and with this new wave of protests also came a new wave of squatters. We tried to squat something in my home town, this did not go well. One bajillion meetings and one getting betrayed by Maoist electoralists later, we gave up on our plans of a squatted social centre. Later I moved up north and had a lot more success, new squats are always really



fun and stressful. Imagine a sleepover where everyone is fucked up drunk and the cops could barge down the door any second. Its actually pretty fun when you get used to the stress.

Squatting is giant rabbit-hole and the methods changes from country to country and even town to town. In general how it went for me is:

Scouting -> Breaking -> Occupying -> Living

First you scout for empty buildings, you put a little stick in the locks to check entry to the building, check in with the local squatting scene if people know of empty buildings etc. Online research is also important in this phase, looking up the building on the municipal permits, local zoning, online realtors and other information accessible over the internet.

If a building has not been entered recently you move on to breaking. There are many methods for this, any will work. I've seen bashing in a window work, to highly sophisticated cylinder-pulling. But some notable options are:

Pootje-over; Breaking open the door by using two crowbars (and 2 people) to put ever increasing stress between the door and the door frame, slowly moving the pressure to the point where the lock connects with the door frame and pulling on the crowbar.

Breaking the cylinder with pliers; Some bozos leave the cylinder of the lock peaking outside of its casing, in this case you can use a set of locking pliers to grab the cylinder and break it in two by gripping it and jerking it. (no not like that you freaky bastard)

There are also specialised tools for this, these are cylinder shaped clamps on a stick called a core breaker or cylinder breaker.

Cylinder pulling; This involves drilling a screw into the cylinder and placing a crowbar on the screw. By using the screw to grab onto with the crowbar with the crow-feet of the crowbar you can break the cylinder at its weakest point by pressing down hard on the crowbar. There are again also specialised devices for this, some of which are able to be DIY'd by a decent welder.

I personally have only done pootje-over, so take all other explanations with a grain of salt, these are only intended to inspire and not as play by play.

Occupying is like a big 2 week long sleepover, it kind of blends into the last stage which is just living in a squat. In general try to keep yourself calm as the police could come by any second. Have a spokesperson ready to talk to the police, have them outside ready when the cops come and without any reason to have to open the door of the squat. Cops will utilise a cracked unlocked door to barge in so do not open the door unless you want the cops inside. Explain to the cops that the



building is squatted, your local scene will know more about the local laws so consult with them. Keep up a vibe of professionalism and confidence, the police are often also in untreaded waters with squatters so they probably have no idea what to do. After a week or two or after the police have come by and are no longer threatening to evict the building is when the occupation phase ends and a squat is established. From here on on it's no longer about surviving as a squat but living in one. The most important part of squatting is after all the organisation and sustainability of the project. Any bozo can break open a door. But building a healthy community in the abandoned husks of capital? That's a labour of patience, grace and communal wisdom.

I've made many mistakes as a teenager, and now in my early twenties I cannot in good confidence claim I know what I'm doing now. But maybe that's the most valuable lesson I could teach you. Be open to learning from others, and don't take your truth as the only truth. There are many people who show up to squat with you, all with their own baggage and background. Be open-minded and learn from them, don't impose your ways on them and set proper boundaries if others mess with you. Avoid violent communication like screaming, threatening and insulting and instead cultivate a community where people feel safe to be vulnerable and communicate openly. Squatting is inevitably something which brings up a lot of machismo due to its inherent risk and criminality, so try extra your best to avoid toxic masculinity from creeping in to your community. Call it out! Don't call each-other wimps, pussies etc., don't pretend you're hot shit for being able to break open a door, and let FLINTA people have a go at it if they want to! Men often pretend like "well this is serious business, we need qualified people" is an excuse to sideline femmes, the squatting movement depends on people learning and picking up all tools of the trade, so INCLUDE PEOPLE! Without it the movement bleeds dry over time.

Holding a meeting

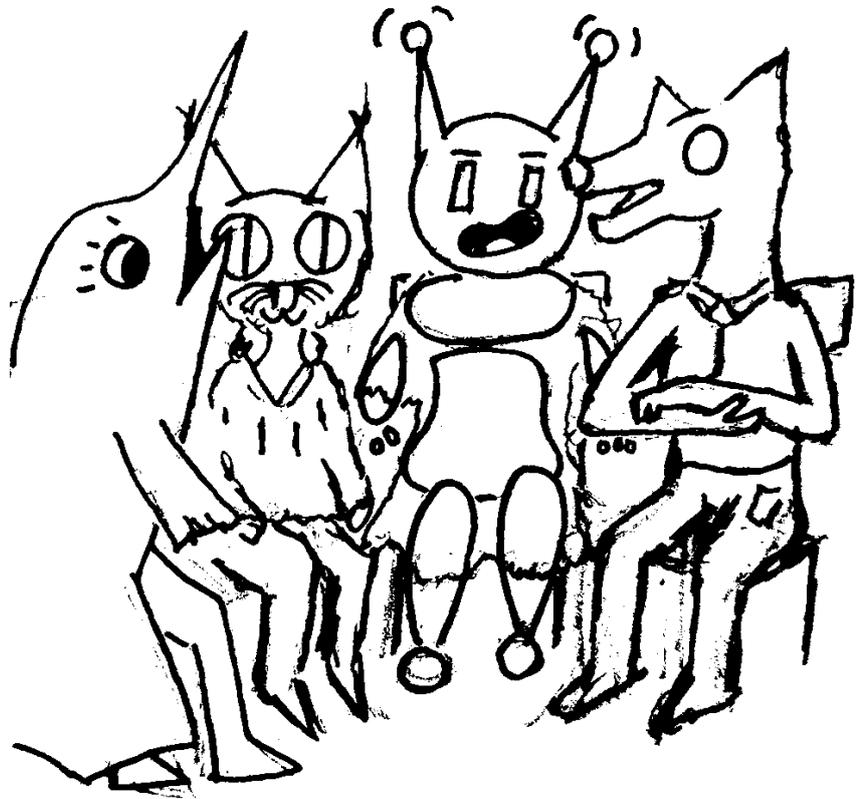
I must confess that I have held and participated in meetings, truly I have sinned. Some people swear by weekly meetings, I prefer meetings as needed. Utilise hand signals for meeting, these are awesome and I swear by them every time. These were thought to me by the Vrije Bond and Radical Sunday Schools (Shout-out both of them). These signals make meetings so much more accessible, horizontal and quicker.

Hold up your hand or 1 finger if you want to say something, hold up 2 fingers if you're the second person in line to say something, hold up 3 if you're third person to want to speak, and so on.

Hold up 1 finger on both hands if you want to skip the queue and directly respond to someone, use these conscientiously. Make a T symbol with your hands if there is a technical point about the meeting. The technical point signal needs to be immediately addressed.

Have a meeting facilitator and a note-taker. The facilitator is responsible for looking around for the hand signals and make sure everyone gets their turn to speak, the facilitator also is responsible for making sure the meeting stays on track and announces the agenda points.

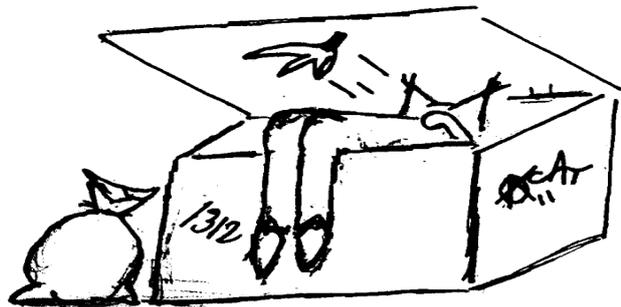
These hand signals make sure that people with the louder and deeper voices don't dominate meetings, they empower the disempowered in consensus decision-making.



Dumpster diving

I confess that I have given in to the sin of gluttony, I love trash, I love eating trash. One of the first direct action thingies I really found my stride in is dumpster diving. I got into this when I lived in my first squat and it is loads of fun. We got so much fucking food this way, and fancy food as well. I vividly remember my partner making me a really fancy sandwich with like mushrooms at 4am in the lobby of our squatted cinema. All ingredients of which I dumpsterdove. Climbing over fences, breaking open locks and escaping with all the loot is about as much risk-to-fun an action could have, but there are also many disappointments and cold nights rummaging through empty rotting dumpsters. Take some big strong bags with you, bicycles are great but a van is better (unless you're worried about your plates being spotted). Maybe bring a small saw with you to cut through chains or locks, otherwise boltcutters will also do the job.

Try to go with someone on your first time, steel yourself and exercise your “fuck it let's go” muscles. Grab the top trashbags and set them aside next to the dumpster, methodically grab the trashbags at the bottom and turn them over inside the dumpster, rummage through the contents. Then turn over the trashbags you set aside and rummage through them inside the dumpster. It's very important you leave no trace of trash outside the dumpster, if you're a nuisance to the businesses then they're gonna take measures to repel you. And it's not just about you, but all other people rummaging through the dumpsters. So be mindful and make sure you're not leaving a mess or causing excess damage. Try to be in- and out as fast as possible, repression on dumpsterdiving can be weirdly severe in some places.



Stickering

One of the most beginner friendly acts of little sabotage/vandalism and mischiefery out there is stickering. Anarkoids often hand out stickers at events, so if you go to many protests and meetups you will accrue quite a collection. Put that collection to use in the great outdoors! By putting stickers on lamp posts and around the neighbourhood you mark an area as having a friendly presence. Your leftist stickers will drown out the hateful fascist ones, the weird football hooligan shit and the random sticker ads.

Make sure to not be seen by police or fascists while stickering, normal bystanders often don't really care, but fascists and police can be quite a problem. Try to be nonchalant and don't give off a suspicious vibe. You can also design our

own stickers! There is no shame in ordering from a big print-on-demand company, but try to work with printers from inside the movement.

Alternatively you can also use an inkjet printer and sticker paper to print your own right at home, these do not have a plastic coating on the outside however and won't last outside in the rain. Stickers are often seen as an act of vandalism, and repression varies from a warning to a fine in most cases, but beware of local laws and mind avoiding jail over a lamppost. Although repression over stickers is very rare, so don't let it dampen your resolve.

Wheatpasting

Instead of boring non bio-degradable stickers, try wheatpasting! A wheatpasted poster is not only better for the environment, but also a way bigger pain the ass to remove. Wheatpaste is a glue made from flour protein, and it is really simple to make.

From 'Field Guide to Wheatpasting (*Crimethinc, distributed by Sprout Distro*):
“To make wheatpaste, mix two parts white or whole-grain wheat flour with three parts water, stir out any lumps, and heat the mixture to a boil, stirring continuously so as not to burn it. When it thickens, add more water; continue cooking it on low heat for at least half an hour, stirring continuously. Some people add a little sugar or cornstarch for extra stickiness; don't be afraid to experiment. Wheatpaste, once made, will last for a while if kept in sealed containers, though eventually it will dry up or become rotten—and sealed containers of it have been known to burst, to unfortunate effect. Keep them in a refrigerator if you can.”

Now Crimethinc here really isn't lying about the “stir continuously” bit, you really need to keep an eye on this and stir it constantly. It really wants to stick to the pot and burn. My preferred method is to pour the wheatpaste into an old squeeze bottle, and keeping it in a tote bag with posters and a big paintbrush. I went into the city centre in broad daylight, put a poster on the floor, squeezed the wheatpaste onto the rim of the back of the poster, and spread it with the paintbrush. My confidence doing this in the middle of the day was quite bold, and maybe the early morning or late night makes a better time for this activity. But then again, activities done after dark always seem more suspicious than in daylight. These posters kept for literal months. Wheatpaste is almost impossible to remove due to the way it binds with the paper after it has set. This method allows you to spread propaganda at near 0 cost, since you only need posters, a bag of flour and a brush.

Graffiti

Graffiti is an outlier in this piece, in that it is a subculture with rules and traditions and an artform completely separate from any anarchist praxis. You can dip your toes into it with just plain political messaging without fancy lettering, but it's wise to inform yourself of the people you're sharing the walls with. Don't be that one activist who believes their word's are worth scrawling over the voice of others, just because it's of a "higher" political purpose. Don't silence the art of others in the pursuit of justice and work with the rules of the wall:

Only go over someone's work with something bigger; tags (simple words on wall) go over nothing, throwies (bigger text using like a couple different colours) go over tags, pieces (big art pieces with a background) go over throwies. Graffiti is a self regulating ecosystem, where the more time a wall is left undisturbed by the municipal art-erasers, the more elaborate and beautiful the wall becomes. And who knows? Maybe you'll get a taste for it and develop a new hobby in the process.

I love graff, even if I'm not that good at it honestly. I've mostly stuck to tags and political slogans, but the city takes on an entirely different dimension of creativity when you grow to respect graffiti for the artform that it is. I have a newfound respect for a lot of

writers who previously blended into the noise of the city to me. Get a good spraycan not just some hardware store crap, its often cheaper and has way better coverage. I'm a big Montana fan, but there's plenty of good stuff out there. A good spraycan is bought where the local graffiti scene buys spraycans. Go out at night, at around past midnight on weekdays or around 2-3am on busy days. Be brave and inconspicuous. Maybe design a cool tag, or just spraypaint Free Palestine everywhere.



Organising a peoples' kitchen

Something a little less criminal for a change, a peoples' kitchen! A peoples' kitchen is an event/place/organisation that cooks food for the local community about once a week or so. Food is often gotten from donations and dumpsterdiving. Organising a peoples' kitchen may seem like a daunting task but it really is not that deep.

Step 1, Get a good recipe book or something, this isn't strictly needed but a little repertoire of recipes will take a lot of the brainstorming work off of the collective. See the further reading for some pointers.

Step 2, Get some people together. You are not going to be able to do this alone every week. Get a handful of motivated people together at first and be sure to rotate duties frequently this is to be mindful of burnout. As you go along make sure to make space for others to join in on the cooking, this way the project survives beyond you and the initial burst of motivation.

Step 3, Organise a place, this can be a squat or a local community centre, heck it could even be just in your home! Or on the streets, fuck it, Food Not Bombs does it right in the city centre. It's preferable to have a static place, but you can make anything work with enough organisation.

Step 4, Get some toolz. Get a big pot, this will be the workhorse of your operation. A big gas burner and some propane tanks will also be very useful to have on hand. Be mindful of second hand propane gas equipment, put some soapy water on the fittings and gaskets to test for gas leaks. Local mutual-aid funds will sometimes cover the cost of this equipment, so send them an email before you use your own money. Other useful tools will be some smaller pots and pans, a big wooden stirring stick, a nice ladle, and a shitload of utensils, plates and bowls.

Step 5, The event. Get people settled in by greeting them. When the food is done, gather everyone and announce:

- who you are and what this is.
- where they can donate.
- how they can get involved.
- what the food is and how to grab some (and any allergens!)

As with all things the secret is to just get going and do it! Feed the people and build solidarity within your community with it. A peoples' kitchen is in my experience by far the best way to cultivate affinity with your local community out of any other initiative. We've had so many of these that they all kinda blend in to eachother, some initiatives were successes, others just did the bare minimum of feeding our direct community and squat-mates. But even a poorly attended peoples' kitchen is still a reliable place to get food, and something your community can build on. If the revolution is a great house we build for ourselves, then the peoples' kitchens are its foundations.

Organising radical protests

Protests are both most people's intro to radical action, and intro to activist burnout and apathy. The endless parade of peaceful ineffectual standing around and chanting never seems to stop. One could get Fear Of Missing Out from not being there, and yet while there wonder why they even showed up in the first place. Yet, begrudgingly, I have to admit that they are unfortunately the backbone of mass movements. You can't motivate hundreds of people to go out in the street and riot, without motivating hundreds of people to take to the streets first. But many protests organised by those less visionary in the art of insurrection never really like go anywhere interesting without police escalation. Sure when backed against a wall they might show their teeth, but liberals and even many leftists never strike first. And so we go, week after week marching through the streets chanting the same slogans without really disrupting anything. But how do we do better?

Well -see- I don't really know, the annoying bit about the imperial core is that our (or well mine) imagination is pigeonheld by the extremely successful pacification of the ""activist"" movement. I've only heard stories of- and seen snippets of insurrection, I am not the person, and this zine is not the zine to tell you how to stage a successful insurrection by way of mass protest. But of the stories I've heard, and the snippets I've seen, and the ineffectual liberal circle jerks I've organised, I can give a few pointers I use for my future endeavours.

Try using a cell structure, over a large centralised mob; one massive block of people moving slowly is much easier to control than many bands of people. The police forces in the Imperial core are not able to respond to 10 groups of 10 people in the same way they are able to respond to one group of 100. In countries like Chile and Germany this technique is often utilised to cause chaos and disrupt the statist order. This technique was used to great effect to block all entrances to the city of Gießen for the gathering of the AFD-Jugend (nazi bozos). Decentralisation multiplies the effect of a group, but does require more boldness and courage out of the average participant as a group of 10 people is more vulnerable than 100.

Do. Not. Invite. Drummers; Loud music like drummers, sound systems etc often have the effect of disarming a demo before it even has the chance to get fired up. It takes the fiery passion of a screaming, chanting mob, the human megaphone of a mass of people, and dampens it with the sole unitary voice of the loudspeaker or drumband. It leaves the mass of people behind it feeling like they might as well not have come, if their voices are drowned out by the music anyway. The bane of my existence is Rhythms of Resistance, an XR affiliated group of drummers. They are super nice people, this is not a judgement on their

character. But good gods can they overstimulate the fuck out of me before we've even started marching. I've seen their drums used to great effect to support the chants of the crowd, but when they take over the noise-space and monopolise the crowd's sound with their drumming, they completely shut down the voices of the 50 or so people marching behind them. The voices of the people are the passion that escalate a demonstration into a riot, do not use any speakers, megaphones or instruments if you want the fire of the crowd to set the city alight.

Take inspiration from international protest movements; gas masks, umbrellas, traffic cones etc. are all tools in the modern protestor's arsenal against the increasing militarisation of the police force. Organise street medics to keep people safe, wear anonymous clothing, cover up tattoos. Don't disarm yourselves.

Yellow vests are for helpers, not demo-cops and not organisers with a complex. Yellow vests are an amazing tool to differentiate in the chaos who to turn to in an emergency, save them for medics or at the very least people who are in direct contact with the medics. Just avoid demo-cops in general, the last thing your protest needs is people on a power trip on your side, leave the power tripping to the statist. Even if the state demands you have them, tell them to go fuck themselves.

Putting the duty to defend the demo on the people in yellow vests is dangerous to the demo and to the people in the yellow vests, who are often organisers and not trained for violence. Have the people in the demo defend themselves together, we defend us. A self organised mob of people will see the people capable of violence rush to the front to meet the challenge, coordinate this flow instead of assigning a class of demo cops. Not even to mention the consequences of hierarchy also showing their ugly face in your protest if you have a bunch of people walking around with a uniform and authority over the protestors. Save the yellow vests for the helpers.

Okay but actually now how *do* I organise a protest?

With my sour anarchist rant over- , how does one organise a protest?

Step 1 Get people together! Pitch the idea to people in your network to form the protest's organiser crew. Make a little groupchat (Signal) and set up a meeting.

Step 2 Get a location(s). Its better to leave this to people who know the area. A good location is vital for a disruptive protest, make sure you're somewhere that cannot be ignored. If you're doing a march, be sure to bike the route first on the ground. Do not rely on google maps for your scouting out the area. Check the area for wheelchair accessibility, but also for chokepoints, flight routes and possible positions where the demo or a portion of it could be kettled (surrounded by police). At the spaces where the demo is stationary, try to keep bathroom access in mind. Either organise port-a-pottys or organise around accessible bathrooms if possible.

Step 3 Pick a date! This is self-explanatory, pick a date that makes sense for you. There is no one size fits all advice, some demos needs to be done ASAP, others can wait a month or so.

Step 4 Organise stages and materials. There are plenty of companies who could rent you a stage setup, there are even some volunteer orgs who would do it for free if they're active in your area. Otherwise a beer crate and a megaphone (or even just a place with good acoustics and someone who can project their voice) will do the trick in a pinch.



Step 5 Get a few good speeches -not too many- one or two good speakers can elevate your protest and give It some deeper societal critique that your chants cannot. But inversely, too many can take the steam out of a crowd quick. If people are sitting down at your protest, then you're organising a lecture not a protest. That doesn't have to be a bad thing if your goal is to occupy a space for as long as possible, but it's not what you're going for before a long march around town. This step is optional however, a mob is also perfectly capable of speaking for itself.

Step 6 Take care of your future comrades! Get an appropriate amount of medics. With any gathering of people it is important to have enough people on hand who can provide emergency care. Have enough bottled water, bandages, band-aids, painkillers, sunscreen, masks, epipens, tourniquets, glucose tablets etc. Especially if a situation gets hairy, its important to be able to take care of your comrades. What I've seen in Amsterdam is that they have a big cargo bike rolling with the demo, where people can sit in for a bit if they need to rest their legs. It's also stocked with all of the medical supplies. Something like this can be a literal life-saver while also making your demo accessible for people who may not be able to do an entire march on two legs.

Step 7 Inform the public! Use facebook groups, posters, social media pages, flyers, radio appearances, word of mouth, just anything to get the word out.

Step 8 (Don't) Inform the authorities! So in some countries its mandatory to notify the state/police/municipality of your protest. Ignore this out of principle where possible, but telling them the bare minimum is also...acceptable in some instances. But know this, the more they know, the better prepared they can be to de-fang your protest. They can demand you move to a different less disruptive location, prepare kettling manoeuvres, organise an appropriate police response etc. If you're set on doing something illegal, then informing the authorities beforehand of even your legal protest is an easy way to lock the handcuffs around yourself pre-emptively. Remember that your goal is to disrupt, theirs is to keep order. The police are not colleagues, not bystanders, they are the direct opposition to the means of the protestor.

Step 9 Just do it! Don't overcomplicate it too much. These steps are my guide for a best case scenario, but sometimes you don't have best case conditions. Get out there and disrupt the status-quo!

Further Reading

- Field Guide to Wheatpasting, *by Crimethinc (2017)*
- Recipes for Disaster, *by Crimethinc (2004)*
- The revolution starts on your plate: a guide to vegan cooking, *by Tinnitus Patches*

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