ATC Quarterly
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Ecological Crisis (abridged)*
by Greek Cynic

The contents of this entire document demand intellect and self-determination, advocating for a return to spontaneous lifestyles based around both human and nonhuman relationships in our immediate vicinity. We invite our readers to understand that the phrase *human nature* is tied together. You cannot escape nature. The world's industrialized banality of evil is producing cracks in nearly every aspect of the biosphere within which we are born, nourished, and die. This process of decay has created an unnecessary task: the engineering of the earth's vast and varied climate (usually called geo-engineering).

1. DE OMNIBUS DUBITANDUM (BE SUSPICIOUS OF EVERYTHING)

Ignoring that "warming is *likely* to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate.", some observers invite "permanent loss and irreversible damage to humans and ecosystems around the world" by suggesting we abandon the 1.5°C agreement altogether. Even though only 20% of the world's oceans have been explored, some scientists claim they can manage the other 80%. Meanwhile, reality reflects something quite different: the soils are becoming lifeless and washing into the sea, when they are not being entombed beneath pavement. The oceans are becoming acidic, devoid of coral and emptied of fish. The air is becoming increasingly carcinogenic and extinguished of insects. Proposed novel technological solutions merely elongate the earth's despoliation. The environment is being pushed to an irreversible brink by seemingly larger-than-life phantasmagoric images which subjugate the minds and physical space of those who participate in and around them, such as money, and *the economy.* They allow for only minor room regarding meaningful values such as freedom, or a connection with the land. Thus, dispossessed individuals engage in a seemingly endless, pacifistic, all-out war for fiat currency by climbing up corporate slave hierarchies.

Even among the proponents of geo-engineering, it has been noted that proposed technological solutions are frequently inaccessible to nations that lack capital. Fittingly, those most aware of technology trust it less. However, it has been speculated that it will likely take some kind of technological disaster for people to remotely ponder its horrors; several terrifying displays (wars, famine, poor living conditions, etc.) have and are still occurring as technology (which is supposed to enhance life) fails to do so. These conditions show that people simply ignore or cannot grasp the problems industrialization creates. This brief section examines some of the mutually reinforcing elements of the current climate calamity disrupting nature and mankind. It argues against geo-engineering and mass society, that is, against the majority subdued and hypnotized by the State and State worship.

The four main points are:

I. Changes to the environment often produce unexpected results, which can lead to more changes being necessary, *ad infinitum.*
II. Mitigating climate change through geo-engineering means a period of trial with grievous errors containing enormous consequences, because novel technologies and methodologies are never initially executed to perfection or with complete foresight for their widespread or enduring effects.
III. Pseudo-solutions provided by technology ("techno-fixes") ignore that industrialism is, as Gandhi stated, "a curse" upon humanity. No amount of changes to social policies will fix a reliance on technology, which

is in the long run a much stronger force than human will. (This is usually referred to as Technological Determinism.)

IV. Assuming geo-engineering does work, it may completely eradicate nature and will result in the most consolidated power ever, because threatening that system would be suicidal. Gandhi said, "It is beneath human dignity to lose one's individuality and become a mere cog in the machine." And yet, those subject to the controllers of Earth's climate and those with any influence upon the levers of the climate-management machines will be rendered less than the natural organic animal selves we evolved to be, and instead will have become more as the machine's cogs.

2. TEMPUS FUGIT (TIME FLIES)

NASA calculates that CO_2 "hangs around, for a *long* time: between 300 to 1,000 years. Thus, as humans [within techno-industrial society, with technological powers] change the atmosphere by emitting carbon dioxide, those changes will endure on the timescale of many human lives."

I. The Ozone Layer was a topic of frequent concern during the 1980s: scientists determined that refrigeration and air conditioning chemicals (mainly hydrochlorofluorocarbons, or HCFCs) were damaging a naturally occurring shield which protects our planet from the sun's ultraviolet rays. The Montreal Protocol was ratified by 198 nations in 1987, allowing for a gradual recovery of the ozone. However, those efforts required significant coordination, follow-through, research and time. Additionally, this momentous agreement solved only one problem: removing harmful agents. It did not use technology to solve problems created by technology, it simply forbade the creation of some harmful chemicals, limiting an aspect of modern science altogether.

II. We know undeniably that changes made to an environment usually have unintended consequences beyond our ability to predict. The resolutions tend not to address the industrial societies causing them.

The 2010 explosion of the *Deepwater Horizon* oil rig allowed 134 million gallons of oil to gush into the Gulf of Mexico over 87 days. As the crisis unfolded, *Horizon* operator British Petroleum recklessly sought various solutions, including the use of 1.9 million gallons of Corexit 9527 and 9500, which many reporters simply called "dispersant"; some scientists, such as Wilma Subra, feared this would make matters worse, noting that Corexit exposure symptoms "include acute respiratory problems, skin rashes, cardiovascular impacts, gastrointestinal impacts, and short-term loss of memory," and "long-term impacts include cancer, decreased lung function, liver damage, and kidney damage." Workers in the clean-up often reported sickness, being uninformed of the dangers of Corexit. After thorough investigation and several whistleblowers, the Government Accountability Project released a report:

...evidence suggests that the cleanup effort has been more destructive to human health and the environment than the spill itself. **...the dispersant Corexit was widely applied... because it caused the false impression that the oil disappeared.** In reality, **the oil/Corexit mixture became less visible, yet much more toxic than the oil alone.** Nonetheless, indications are that both BP and the government were pleased with what Corexit accomplished.

In 2017, marine life was still suffering deformities, according to Dr. Jim Cowan of the Dept. of Oceanography and Coastal Sciences at Louisiana State University: tumors on shrimp; fish lacking eyes or gill flaps, with oozing sores; crabs with soft shells, with incomplete shells, or lacking their claws and spikes. "The fishermen have never seen anything like this. ...I've never seen anything like this either." BP's response to this incident near Texas copied verbatim the response plans developed for the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* tanker crash which spilled oil on the Alaskan coast. Now imagine that a company (or government) operating carbon sequestration technology has a similarly catastrophic failure and responds to a sudden and massive leak of CO_2 as the precedent for oil spills seems to be.

III. The IPCC's latest models assume carbon capture technology will be used to reduce amounts of atmospheric carbon, but according to a multi-university study in 2020, "More than 80% of proposed commercial carbon-capture efforts around the world have failed, primarily because the technology didn't work as expected or the projects proved too expensive to operate..."

In order to keep living comfortably in modernity, we need what the USA's Special Presidential Envoy for Climate called "technologies we don't have yet", depending on a hope that our salvation will be delivered by some engineers. Standard calculations *assume* that the technologies under development will work reliably, will become more efficient, and that the carbon stored will remain stored; the expenses are usually disregarded or assumed to be reducible. Despite frequent touting of a need for 'renewables' powering the society we inhabit today, the famous young eco-activist Greta Thunberg has admitted, "We don't have a technology solution that will get anywhere even close." And CCS does not address other pollutants released by technological society.

3. VERITAS VOS LIBERABIT (TRUTH SHALL LIBERATE YOU)

Government leaders and businessmen are all too eager to hide problems and shift blame, traits present in psychopaths, which allows for them to project successes and thus be elevated in their positions of power. It is thus likely that the worst people will be given the helm of power, and that the immense abilities delivered by geo-engineering will place humanity under a tyranny unrivaled by any authoritarian ruler or regime in all of history. As Kaczynski warned, "Because the system

will be seen as indispensable for survival [if it is allowed to geo-engineer us from total catastrophe], it will be virtually immune to challenge. The elite of our society - the scientists and engineers, the corporation executives, the government officials and the politicians... will be quite pleased to undertake management of the Earth's climate." Part of the reason why problems get *solved* by technology is because if major powers fall behind in technological development, others might replace them, and because it takes more effort to change human behavior than it does to use a techno-fix.

The weakness of our technological society exposes itself in increasingly obvious ways: Covid and the sudden halt of worldwide trade, conflict in Ukraine and global food shortages, horrific attacks on civil society by numerous individual gunmen. These events remind us of the capability of technology to create major changes <u>and</u> our inability to control how that capability is deployed. Any effort to end such madness as technology enables would most likely need to be done near simultaneously, everywhere.

Alienation resulting from the infrastructure that holds modern life together and events that are seemingly out of control haunt us. Power disruptions in North Carolina and elsewhere, fear over Chernobyl in Ukraine and nuclear reactors in Fukushima which have already failed remind us of our reliance on, not mastery over, various technologies. Now there are plans (in Japan) to dump nuclear waste originating at Fukushima into the ocean below, likely creating more problems. These events highlight how power (in the hands of humans) corrupts — regardless of intent. *No system is perfect.* And this one will necessarily become increasingly unnatural, unfree, and threaten masses of people, in order to maintain the dysfunctional social order.

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Book Review of *How To Blow Up A Pipeline*
(Selections from approximately the first third of the review)
by D.B., with edits by Marshall

0.0 Introduction

Written in 2019 and published in 2021, this book (or manifesto) is unsurprisingly *not* a manual on sabotaging gas or oil pipelines; it wouldn't have been published in such a polished way if it were. Still, the provocative and inflammatory title is only superficially misleading. The word "how" can also carry the meaning of "proper conduct". This in turn breaks down into questions of morality and maximizing efficiency. These are the guiding considerations of this manifesto. Unfortunately, to get to the heart of this discussion, one must suffer through Malm's meandering, pretentious, emotional, episodic, circular, and smugly self-righteous writing style. It is my aim in this that I can fairly extract the 'good' from this work while sparing others from actually

having to obtain a copy and read it in its entirety. In all fairness, this isn't *the worst* thing I've read: his rhetoric is moderately engaging the first time through, and there are some quotable phrases and moments of refreshing if yet accidental clarity. It's just that the signal-to-noise ratio doesn't justify paying money for it (and the noise in this case is quite grating), especially for people who might read this coming from an anti-tech starting point.

The stated aim of the manifesto is to convince individuals and groups within the 'climate movement' that violence (specifically against property) is both a morally acceptable *and* useful tactic—when applied intelligently. Another way of saying this is that it argues that those within the climate movement should adopt *tactical* pacifism. As most within our movement already hold this position or one similar, my emphasis will be less on laying out his arguments against pacifism and more on presenting the content of this work as a case study of Kaczynskian psychological leftism. However, I will still do the former for the sake of interested readers and for contextual reasons in the first section of this review. Scattered among the main argument and supporting considerations, Malm presents a few pieces of information that might be genuinely useful to our movement as well as a few incidental critiques of our movement which deserve redress.

[This selection will contain only this introduction and some sub-sections from my first section which covers Malm's first chapter. At the time of writing (Mar. 28, 2023), I have yet to finish the entire review, and all presented content is subject to change, expansion, or removal. I hope to have the entire thing finished not too long after the newsletter in which this selection will be published is released. The entire review will be published online, most likely on the ATC website, and perhaps in the next quarterly newsletter. You are also welcome to contact me directly at: staggeringdefeat@proton.me if you have feedback (positive or negative) or questions, or would like a more current and complete draft.]

1.0 Contra Pacifism: History

Overview

The main argument of the first chapter or section—*Learning from Past Struggles*—roughly takes this form:

> **P1.** The modern climate movement is non-violent because it ascribes to (strategic) pacifism. (p.30).
> **P2.** The climate movement justifies *strategic pacifism* primarily by employing a set of historical analogs as proof of the efficacy of such pacifism. (p.35).
> **P3.** The leaders of the climate movement's interpretation of this set of analogs is too limited, selective, and biased to be considered an accurate reading of history; a more truthful reading of history demonstrates that some kind and degree of violence accompanied each analog contained in the set. (p.37-63).

C1. Therefore, there is no historical argument for strategic pacifism. (p.53-4; p.54-63)

What should be immediately obvious to those familiar with anti-tech literature, especially Kaczynski's works, is that he also employs a set of historical facts to establish both the possibility and proposed character of a revolution against the techno-industrial system. It is somewhat interesting that two ideologies (climate activism and anti-tech, both of which arguably are descendants of a broader environmentalism) using the same kind of historical argument can come to such radically different conclusions with respect to effective solutions. Even with Malm attempting to rehabilitate violence within the climate movement, his own solutions to the ills of the world (as explained later) are a far cry from our own, and this explains the discrepancy in conclusions. That being said, it is difficult for me to evaluate the success of his book 1) because I am not a part of the target audience or in regular communication with such people and 2) because I was already predisposed to accepting an accurate reading of history which demonstrates that violence can be effective. To me, this first chapter is remedial, interesting only by providing some insight into Malm's psychology and ideology, the state of the climate movement at large, and a few historical analogs which I had not heard mentioned yet in anti-tech discussions.

[...]

Historiography of the Climate Movement

After Lanchester's paradox, Malm moves on to his historiography of the climate movement. The components of his theory are: 1) that the movement's energy has been cyclical or come in waves (p.13) and 2) that the cycles are cumulative in nature, and each wave learns from the last (p.21). The first wave of development spanned 2006 to 2009 (p.14), the second 2011 to 2016 (p.14-15), and the third and present started in 2018 (p.15-21). The first was largely contained in Northern Europe and was relatively impotent. The second wave contained the protests against the Keystone XL pipeline around 2011 and 'People's Climate March' in New York in 2014 and ended with the ascent of Trump. The third is where we see the rise of Thunberg, Extinction Rebellion, and Ende Gelände. While the movement has grown in total membership across each cycle, and members and organizations have learned and shared successful tactics, Malm notes that a yet persistent feature of the movement is that:

> Anything that could be classified as violence has been studiously, scrupulously avoided. Indeed the commitment to absolute non-violence appears to have stiffened over the cycles, the internalisation of its ethos universal, the discipline remarkable. (p.22)

Importantly Malm notes that the "strictures against violence extend to property destruction" (p.23), which is the type of violence that this book is ultimately trying to justify. With this he transitions back to the main topic of the book which is...

Pacifism

Malm quickly covers "a bundle of well-known tactical advantages [of pacifism]" (p.23) which includes:

> 1. "The bar for joining… is lowered by certificates of peacefulness" (p.24); pacifism lends to higher numbers;
> 2. It lends to better media representation;
> 3. It reduces causalities (in the form of imprisonments of and injuries to protesters);
> 4. It demonstrates "collective self-discipline" which is a "virtue".

Thus, Malm does not call into question the utility of pacifism as a *tactic*. In an anti-tech context, these are largely and implicitly accepted in discussions of strategy (though obviously the first is less important for us than the second). The third is exceptionally important for us at this stage because there are so few of us (any loss is proportionally a very high cost). In conjunction with the second, and assuming our movement will pursue some kind of mass appeal or recruiting efforts, it is even more important because we already have some degree of an 'image' problem, mostly because of the association with Kaczynski. The fourth is presently less applicable because our movement currently is too young, small and immaterial for 'self-discipline' to be demonstrable, but several members have stressed the need for eventual organizational hierarchy which no doubt will amount to voluntary conformity to the dictates of the most capable among us (i.e. self-discipline).

Immediately after agreeing that pacifism should remain the favored *tactic* of his movement, Malm returns yet again to the main theme of the book (and again in rhetorical question form):

> Will absolute non-violence be the *only* way, forever the sole admissible tactic in the struggle to abolish fossil fuels? Can we be sure that it will suffice against this enemy? (p.24)

> Do we say that we've done what we could, tried the means at our disposal and failed? Do we conclude that the only thing left is learning to die—a position already propounded by some—and slide down the side of the crater into three, four, eight degrees of warming? Or is there another phase, beyond peaceful protest? (p.25)

[...]

Moral pacifism, he says, claims that "it is always wrong to commit acts of violence" (p.30). He has two arguments against it, and the first is an appeal to fascism:

> This seems flawed. It also appears to yield a priori to the worst forms of evil: precisely those agents most intent on taking as many innocent lives as possible—fascist mass murderers, for instance—will be the least receptive to meek non-violent opposition. Indeed, the precepts of pacifism have often come across as exhortations to *surrender* to suffering and atrocity. (p.31-32)

The second is pointing out the contradiction of using moral pacifism to fight climate change:

> Isn't suffering unearned by the victims precisely what is so morally repugnant about the unfolding crisis? If so, why make it [unearned suffering, and, in this case, suffering caused by climate change] a virtue? (p.34).

The virtuous nature of unearned suffering comes from the moral pacifist's not-infrequent appeal to a spiritual or religious element that is off putting or confusing to those not ascribing to such a doctrine (p.32-33). The main figure who might fit the bill of being a moral pacifist employing such an appeal is Bill McKibben, whom Malm considers the figurehead of the second wave of the climate movement (p.33). Regardless, Malm does not consider moral pacifism the main ideological obstacle and does not spend any more time countering it.

The true target of his work is strategic pacifism. Strategic pacifism "says that violence committed by social movements always takes them further from their goal," (p.34). In this version, non-violence is viewed and treated as the superior technique for achieving the ends of the climate movement (p.34). Malm cites Extinction Rebellion and Bill McKibben (who has changed his language by this point in his movement's development) as representatives of the movement who exhort strategic pacifism. Their basic reasoning is that history demonstrates that non-violence increases the chance of success because it does not destroy the social foundation and unity of a mass movement (unlike violence), which in turn means a mass movement will be most powerful and likely to succeed without violence (35).

Malm calls their historical argumentation method "analogism", and his main strategy henceforth is to attack the peculiar historical reading of analogs that the strategic pacifists utilize. He specifies the claim that he is attacking:

> Instead, analogist strategic pacifism holds that violence is bad in all settings, because this is what history shows. Success belongs to the peaceful. (p.36)

Malm isn't explicit with this, but the set of historical analogies used can be broken up into two rough corpora, one more general and containing 'successful' social and political movements, and then a more specific one focusing on successful oustings of dictators put together by Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan in *Why Civil Resistance Works* (p.56).

The analogies in the first set employed by XR include: slavery and the abolitionists; the (British) suffragettes; Gandhi; the American civil rights movement; apartheid; and resistance to Margaret Thatcher's poll tax; (p.36-37). Since the claim on the strategic pacifist's side is that none of these events contained violence, Malm's tactic is to simply demonstrate that this is not the case.

I won't be exhaustive in providing every counter-example that Malm does as it should be obvious to everyone—at least those in our movement—that the claim of the strategic pacifist is simply wrong, but I will provide a few: for slavery, there was the Haitian Revolution and individuals like Nat Turner and John Brown; the civil rights movement was accompanied by a huge potential for violence with peripheral leaders like

Malcolm X and actual violence in the form of riots following MLK's arrest; and in South Africa Mendela and his people targeted and destroyed essential infrastructure (p.38-53).

In response to their selective reading of these events, Malm says that: "Strategic pacifism turns this method [non-violence] into a fetish, outside of history, unrelated to time," (p.53). Further, if they wish to justify their strategic pacifism in the face of Malm's corrected record, he points out that:

> The logic of the comparisons would instead have to be inverted. It would need to say: admittedly, violence occurred in the struggle against slavery...[etc.]...but *the struggle against fossil fuels is of a wholly different character and will succeed only on condition of utter peacefulness*. (p.53).

But Malm wishes to retain the analogist method, and says:

> If the analogies are taken seriously—and this emergency should indeed rank alongside slavery or apartheid—the conclusion would seem to tend towards the opposite [i.e. towards tactical non-violence]. (p.54)

So, while we can question his obsession with slavery and other such issues as moral equivalents to the current crises of the world, I do not think there is any point in arguing against accurate readings of history, especially in the pursuit of finding inspiration, discovering possibly effective strategies and studying mistakes, just as Kaczynski has already advocated.

Following this, Malm considers a potential objection in asking if the current situation can reasonably be compared with past crises—in other words, whether analogism can be a sound basis for his movement (p.54). As he ultimately wishes to retain this method, his response is essentially that some analogies (i.e. some of those in the first set) are genuinely relevant while some are less so. The second set of analogies, for example, is Chenoweth's study primarily concerned with 'peaceful' toppling of dictators. Discussed examples from their work include episodes from Palestine, Slovenia, Lebanon, Nepal, South Africa, Nazi Germany, Iran and Egypt (p.56-60). While Malm admits that not all these transitions contained violence, "Unarmed collective violence was present in the lion's share of the transitions, but ignored by Chenoweth and Stephan," (p.61). Malm then points out that the work of Chenoweth and Stephan is the primary basis for the stance of XR, but argues just before this that the nature of the climate crisis is far closer to the nature of slavery than to removal of dictators:

> ...fossil fuels are not a political arrangement like limited franchise or pass laws: they and the technologies they power are *productive forces* imbricated in certain property relations. At this level of abstraction, the analogy with slavery does have some pertinence… enslaved people were also productive forces, used in a tremendously destructive fashion, embodying gigantic capital that had to be liquidated… fossil fuel, like slavery, cannot be the object of compromise; no one would consider reducing slavery by 40 per cent or 60 per cent. All of it must go. (p.55)

> Business-as-usual is not a sideshow to bourgeois democracy, a relic from an authoritarian age that requires correction—it is the material form of contemporary capitalism, neither more nor less. (p.55-56)

Thus, even among the least relevant analogies, Malm points out that they contained violence, too. Regardless, he does return to the question of applicability and differentiation a few pages later. Here he specifies that the climate crisis has a temporal aspect that even the most relevant analogs lack:

> Many if not most struggles in the past have obeyed such a temporality of exasperation…but in this case, it is subordinate to prognostication. The worst has not happened; it is on the way, at speed… Now one shouldn't exaggerate the contrast between these two lines of time—they cross each other: the emergency is already here, the cup of endurance fast running over—but the onrush of catastrophe does have a temporality of its own. It imposes tight constraints on those who want to fight. (p.62-63)

A similar concern or consideration might exist within 'anti-tech analogism', to use Malm's terminology. While there are different ways to argue against the techno-industrial system, one possible argument is an argument from the future that resembles to some degree the pollution-induced catastrophe around which Malm is trying to radicalize people. While this form of argument in an anti-tech context does sometimes include warning about climate crisis, we tend to consider a broader set of possible technogenic crises such as: other types of pollution and general destruction of Nature, nuclear war, pandemics, the threat of AI, psychological degradation, and the continued erosion of human freedom. Regardless, when we go this route, we too are faced with the issue of reconciling the historical motivations behind the analogies that we employ with our own real circumstances. That being said, it is obvious that our uses of history differ from Malm's just as much as the aims of our movements differ. Furthermore, we are not limited to analogist thinking (which is quantitative); we can employ qualitative arguments against the System based on notions such as human freedom, Wild Nature, and the nature of technology. Similar kinds of arguments play a far lesser role for Malm, with the only possible parallel in this work being his leftist obsession with racial and classist inequality.

In closing this section, Malm's appraisal of the strategic pacifist reading of history can be summarized with these two quotes:

> ...indicative of the psychology of strategic pacifism: it is an exercise in active repression. (p.53)

> Strategic pacifism is sanitized history, bereft of realistic appraisals of what has happened and what hasn't, what has worked and what has gone wrong: it is a guide of scant use for a movement with mighty obstacles. (p.61)

Again, there is very little to disagree with Malm here. I think anyone with an ounce of honesty and familiarity with general history, let alone the examples of this specific corpus, knows

that violence is a common feature of revolutionary and even reformist movements. The employment of strategic pacifism within the climate movement probably has more to do with their movement fundamentally being a surrogate activity for affluent young people in relatively prosperous countries, adverse to life-altering consequences than with any honest belief that their methods are historically proven.

The Radical Flank Effect

In his correctional reading of the civil right movement and the actions against Apartheid, Malm brings up the "radical flank effect" which he returns to in the second chapter. The first instances are here:

> The civil rights movement won the Act of 1964 *because it had a radical flank that made it appear as a lesser evil in the eyes of state power.* That flank was associated with black violence, ever an incubus of the white American psyche. (p.49)

> Without Malcom X, there might not have been a Martin Luther King (and vice versa). The theory of the radical flank effect has application far beyond the African American struggle… the progress made by the reformist labour movement would have been inconceivable without the flank to the left and east of it. (p.50)

> But could it [the present lack of a radical flank in the climate movement] not also be seen as the opposite— as a failure to attain social depth, articulate the antagonism that runs through this crisis and, not the least, acquire a tactical asset? (p.50-51)

While I am not going to spend much time on this, it introduces the concept of the radical flank effect. This idea is neither exceptionally novel nor exceptionally useful to us now, but it does give a name to a recurring historical phenomenon and will be referenced later, so it is best to expose the reader to it here.

Demise of Revolutionary Politics

While closing the section, Malm presents an exceptionally lucid explanation for the aversion to violence, which I will quote at length:

> The insistence on sweeping militancy under the rug of civility—now dominant not only in the climate movement, but in most Anlgo-American thinking and theorising about social movements—is itself a symptom of one of the deepest gaps between the present and all that happened from the Haitian Revolution to the poll tax riots: the demise of revolutionary politics. It barely exists any longer as a living praxis in powerful movements or as a foil against which demands can be set. From the years around 1789 to those around 1989, revolutionary politics maintained actuality and dynamic potentiality, but since the 1980s it has been defamed, antiquated, unlearned and turned unreal. With the consequent deskilling of movements comes the reluctance to recognise revolutionary violence as an integral component. This is the impasse in which the climate

movement finds itself: the historical victory of capital and the ruination of the planet are one and the same thing. To break out of it, we have to learn how to fight all over again, in what might be the most unpropitious moment so far in the history of human habitation on this planet. (p.61-62)

We can obviously argue about the root cause of this demise in revolutionary activity [it likely has something to do with the techno-industrial system crystallizing its domain over mankind, not simply 'capitalism'], but there is, to me, something in this explanation. Something similar to the above became obvious in my reviewing the development of Hezbollah: many of the founding members were radicalized, instructed, and directly aided by the revolutionaries in Iran and other neighboring states experiencing similar developments. But what revolutionaries or even ex-revolutionaries are we able to call upon for instruction at present? Ignoring whether any would be willing to help our specific cause or not, or whether it would actually benefit us, it is not readily apparent who could instruct us or other 'revolutionary' movements developing in the West or World at large. There are several ongoing insurgencies, protests, and even civil wars, but these carry a seemingly different character from the kind of revolutionary activities to which Malm refers. While we can question the validity of calling such movements revolutionary instead of violently reformist, there is no doubting that there could be pedagogical value in having someone who participated in nominally revolutionary activity to instruct us, and that we lack this resource.

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Acting Effectively: A True Story
by Jorge Clúni

jorgecluni.medium.com/acting-effectively-a-true-story-3cc21242c3a7

In my younger days, as I tramped around by road and by rail, I met with a group of students who lived in an old sorority mansion which had been converted into a co-ed house for some 32 people inhabiting about 25 rooms. I was offered a mattress in the basement on which to sleep for a brief period.

In my time at this household, which operated on weekly Sunday evening consensus meetings, I saw that their system of residents' rotating duties for cooking and cleaning worked decently, and that about 80% of the residents would attend the Sunday meetings, though the participation level of individuals varied greatly.

The household had much earlier in its existence voted to keep a vegetarian kitchen, leaning toward fully free of any animal products except those kept by individuals; rarely was the communal budget spent on milk or cheese, nor did the provided communal meals incorporate such things. But being built three stories high and having no household cat, the first animal-related problem to come up—predictable, in hindsight—was rodents feeding on the cooking supplies in the household's pantry.

The initial response to this was sensible enough, to simply keep the goods secured from access to these pests: within glass jars, on shelves, and in racks suspending from the ceiling, as well as to be thorough about not leaving any food remnants out to entice the little mammals. And while this sage advice was met with compliance, for everyone had a self-interest in ending the enticement of mice to scurry about the house, the population of the rodents was more than one and they were fed well enough that it soon enough increased.

As it became obvious that the population of mice was not being deterred but was in fact rising, the students were perplexed, but resolved to take more effective countermeasures. The first Sunday meeting was held and there were no objections to the proposal that live-capture traps be deployed throughout the household, to catch mice who could then be harmlessly relocated elsewhere in the town. One or perhaps two (but no more than three) of the students had suggested more serious and terminal measures such as fatal spring-loaded traps, or glue traps, or poisoned pellets, but everyone agreed to first try to avoid the killing of these innocent creatures.

By the next Sunday meeting, mice raids upon the food supplies had become more evident, and the mice themselves had been sighted in action, often made known by a shriek at the time of occurrence. And as clear as it was that the rodent population had grown from the week before, another one or two students (at most) had joined in the suggestion that poisons or deadly traps be deployed. But the majority were sympathetic to the mice, and harbored no ill will, wanting only to relocate them rather than see them dead. "Besides," it was said, "the live-traps seem to be working well enough, and we have relocated seven mice already." Of course, whether that was 70% or 7% of the total population was unknowable — though I suspect nobody would have guessed at the former figure.

When the third Sunday meeting came, I was no longer staying at the house, having headed south on a short sojourn, but I was told that it was quite an event. In the time since the last meeting, the mouse population seemed only to have grown, and there were rumors of mice being killed here and there by individual students with no aversion to sufficient measures of pest control. Those rumors were put beyond doubt when, after the decision-making body had assembled for their evening meeting, one such mouse-killer dropped two corpses onto the floor in a dramatic display. I was told that she then pleaded for an intervention more drastic than anything yet undertaken, which had not quelled the budding problem of a house being overrun with mice competing for the humans' foods.

However, the display of death backfired, fueling some weeping from the more fragile students, some of whom claimed to be traumatized by the sight. Then proceeded a round of personal stories, where students spoke of the painful memories they could never suppress, of the time they saw their cat or their father kill a mouse or a rat, and how they were sickened by the recollection of it: the liberal arts students were not short of ability to give prosaic details and linguistic flourish to these accounts. The vegans announced their steadfast opposition to consenting to any mortal actions or devices being used with their participation or approval in the house that they lived in and contributed to; that it would even be considered was an outrage to the ethic of the household principle which had long ago determined to provide its residents a violence-free diet without any sacrifice of an animal's body parts. That the live-capture traps had been found fully empty for two weeks now was not of concern, and the resolution to implement more effective measures against the mice did not achieve consensus and was not adopted. And though nobody had at that time a count of the mouse population that day, there is no contention that it had by then risen a few magnitudes higher than it was three weeks ago.

And by the time of the subsequent Sunday meeting, I was returning north, so I made an effort to veer from my route so that I could check in on this household where I had developed a couple of good friends. I was keen to see what the situation was with the mice, whose population was surely still climbing, as it had no imposed reason to halt. But to my surprise, the subject was not at all mentioned in the entirety of the group's gathering. As a visiting observer, I did not interrupt their proceedings, and only afterward inquired with one of my mates about this unexpected absence of discussion. I was then informed of the events occurring over the preceding week, and upon the prior Sunday, to conclude with the revelation of why the subject could escape having ever been resolved under unanimous decision by the household.

As the divergence of opinions had paralyzed this group for a few weeks, with ideal solutions being attempted (and failed) repeatedly, and dogmas and ideologies being given an equal standing (if not priority) to more unpleasant but thoroughly effective course of action, the mouse population had steadily grown. By delaying a firm and fully adequate intervention, the good intentions of the vegans and the most timid of student residents had spared the lives of those initial rodent infiltrators, but those well-meaning youngsters had also unwittingly ensured that more mice would come to reside within the house. And ultimately that meant that even if they never saw this reality or would rationalize away their culpability when confronted with it, those students impeding decisive action in the early days of the problem actually bore a significant responsibility for the deaths of a great many mice. Because finally some anonymous and brave one (or more) among the 32 residents simply resolved to ignore the need for consensus and rectify the worsening problem: early one morning, holes were made in the walls, through which was delivered an enticing poison that the mice were attracted to eat.

And with that I was given a memorable lesson in the negative consequences of half-measures and the costs and harmful consequences of indecision.

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General Updates & Contact Information

As we continue to spread awareness of the problems of modern technology, we have been conducting monthly open Zoom meetings where we discuss these problems in detail, have debates and lectures, and generally network with like-minded folks. If you would like to participate in these meetings, feel free to contact us at our email below. Also, we have a YouTube channel where we add content up to and including live recordings of our debates, lectures, and podcasts: https://www.youtube.com/@AntiTechCollective

<p style="text-align:center">Feel free to contact us over email:
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