

South Chicago ABC
Zine Distro
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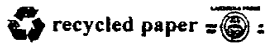
The Curious George Brigade. This zine brought to you by the ever elusive anarchist think tank: The Curious George Brigade.



N.W. Chicago ABC Zine Distro

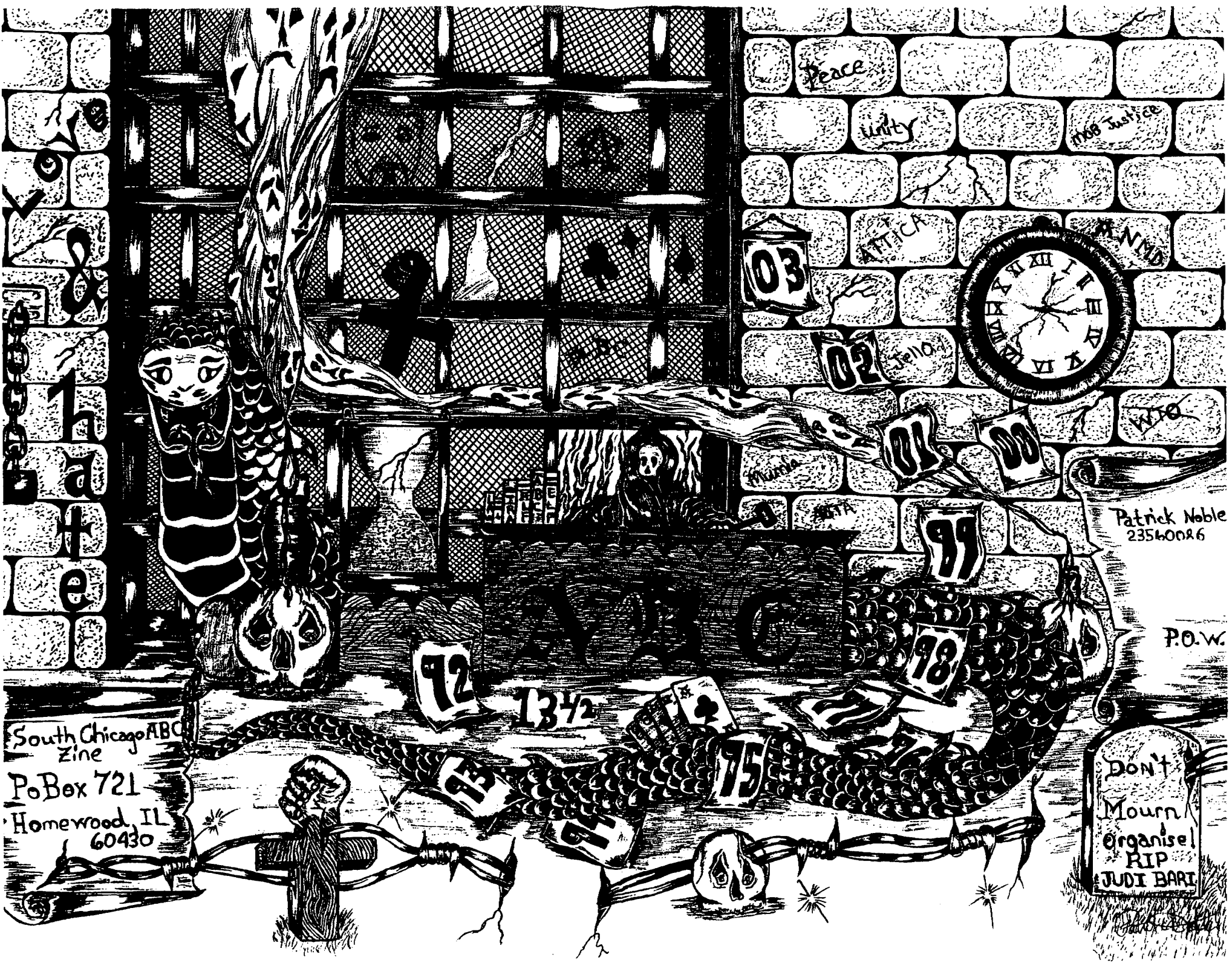
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INSURRECTIONARY MUTUAL AID





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Zine
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P.O.W.

DON'T
Mourn
organise!
RIP
JUDI BARI

their needs and that they can then put their lives back together quickly. 18

In the *recovery phase*, survivors may believe that rescue efforts are not proceeding quickly enough. That feeling, combined with other emotional stressors (for example, dealing with insurance adjustors, or living in temporary accommodations), may cause survivors to pull together AGAINST those who are trying to help them.

TAKING CARE OF OTHERS FOLLOWING A TRAUMATIC EVENT:

- * Listen carefully
- * Spend time with the traumatized person
- * Offer your assistance and a listening ear even if they have not asked for help
- * Help them with everyday tasks like cleaning, cooking, caring for children etc . . .
- * Give them time to be alone
- * Help them stay away from alcohol and drugs
- * Keep in mind what they've been through
- * Don't try to explain it away
- * Don't tell them that they are lucky it wasn't worse
- * Don't take their anger, other feelings or outbursts personally

Insurrectionary Mutual Aid affinity groups must be flexible and able to adapt to the needs of a changing situation. Part of the organizational challenge following a disaster is to be able to:

- * Size up the scope and requirements of the situation. The best way to do this is draw heavily on local community groups.
- * Identify resources as they become available. "Disaster areas almost always have resources. It is the distribution networks that may no longer be available" (FEMA)
- * Deploy those resources within already existing social networks (e.g. community centers).

As an individual responder, you must be ready to function in various roles as the availability of resources changes. You must begin by assessing and managing your own personal situation, then that of the immediately adjacent area (neighborhood), and then join others in forming response teams based on affinity. This type of concentric development results in an evolving self-organizing structure and requires flexibility in its members.

5 THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW ³

1. Learn a new skill that may be useful during an emergency, such as: basic carpentry, first aid/ trauma care, operating a short wave radio, grief counseling, self-defense, etc.
2. Put together a "Go Bag" that would have everything you might need during a crisis.
3. Start collecting supplies that may be handy. You can often find things in dumpsters, thrift stores, on-line, etc.
4. Read FEMA reports at (www.fema.gov) to get an idea what the State's response will be.
5. Make connections with other anarchists and collectives that you may work with when a crisis occurs.

RESOURCES

To get prepared you may need a little help. Below are some resources you can use.

TRAINING:

Anarchists do very few trainings/workshops/skill shares around things you may need in a crisis. Below are some free services you can use, all the better if the government is flipping the bill. It is also worth getting credentials: they can always be useful with heirarchical organizations.

CERT Training: you can get certified for free to become a member of the Community Emergency Response Team. This is very useful and exists as a national program. For information check out the web site at www.citizencorps.gov/cert/

First Aid Training: The Red Cross has free 1st aid courses and in most areas special trainings for "disaster preparedness". www.redcross.org/services/hss/courses/

Fire Safety: The US Fire Administration has a few interesting 3 to 6 hour courses on Fire Safety. The section on chemicals is very interesting and could be useful in working in toxic environments. www.usfa.fema.gov 4

Disaster Psychology: Relief International have some beginning courses for grief counseling and "crisis management" that maybe useful and they are free. Check them out, they even have on-line courses. www.reliefweb.int

Shortwave Radio Operations: For free trainings using ham/amateur and short-wave radios check out the National Association of Amateur Radio. They have live trainings all over the world and they are always free or very cheap. They even have special trainings for emergencies and interesting simulations. www.arrl.org

SUPPLIES:

For supplies you mostly have to go with crazy survivalists and religious fanatics. It sucks, but those are the guys with the supplies until we get our shit together. You can also check freecycle.org and waste.net to see if there is anything in bulk you might need. My personal favorite is www.majorsurplusnsurvival.com, which is unfortunately run by patriotic scum but they have cheap prices. For government surplus medical supplies, check out www.cpr-savers.com

OTHER:

To get info on emergency, police, and other scanner frequencies, as well as tons of technical info on amateur radio check out www.arrl.org.

For information on the only "left" militia type group contact 2nd Main Militia info@mepj.org. I don't know much about them other then they are lefties and have helped others getting supplies and trainings.



area by promoting self-organization and providing support. Fear can bring out the best and worst in people. Powerlessness is the main symptom of those traumatized by disasters. The government relies on this paralyzing powerlessness to control shell-shocked victims of disasters, while Insurrectionary Mutual Aid can demonstrate that one can still have a powerful affect on the outcome—even if it may not be able to undo the damage caused by a crisis. When a crisis hits, we must find those who are organizing themselves and support them—providing genuine and substantial support to their efforts. We can do this in many ways, especially if we are from the affected the area. 17

ANATOMY OF A DISASTER

Researchers for the government have been studying "Disaster Psychology" for decades and have collected tons of material related to the psychological, sociological (and covertly the political) effects of disasters. Below are some of their findings.

"Traumatic events can generate feelings of powerlessness and a perception of being out of control as well as the capacity to impact all aspects of a community's life, regardless of educational background or socio-economic level."

"Most people pull together and function during and after a disaster, but their effectiveness is diminished."

SURVIVORS MAY GO THROUGH DISTINCT EMOTIONAL PHASES FOLLOWING A DISASTER:

In the *impact phase*, survivors do not panic and may, in fact, they show no emotion. They do what they must to respond to the situation and keep themselves and their families alive.

In the *inventory phase*, which immediately follows the event, survivors asses damage and try to locate other survivors. During this phase, many discard routine social ties in favor of the more functional relationships required for initial response activities, such as searching out family members and seeking medical assistance.

In the *rescue phase*, emergency services personnel are responding and survivors take direction from them without protest. They trust that rescuers will address

SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO? 16

One thing every insurrectionist responder must prepare for is that the crisis she is planning for may occur at home. The question of whether a person should leave an impending emergency or stay is a personal one filled with countless variables. For those militants that decide to stay during a crisis, there is much that can and must be done in the first few days of an emergency.

According to a 2005 Red Cross document, "The first 72 hours are key whether people will be traumatized or not by [crisis]." This is the period when the government and other stabilizing institutions often have the least power and where we can provide support for local community collectives and spontaneous self-organized groups. It has been demonstrated again and again that a small organized group can have a far-reaching effect in a crisis. The same Red Cross report mentions two examples where small, informal, highly-motivated groups had a large impact during a crisis. They mention the fact that the fairly moribund NYC Guardian Angels took an active role during the North East Black-Out that effected NYC in the summer of 2004. The Guardian Angels were holding a city-wide conference when the black-out struck. They mobilized throughout mid-Manhattan directing traffic, obtaining beverages and food for those walking home, and even setting-up a car-pool station. These actions helped foster a calm atmosphere in an overcrowded and paranoid (post- 9/11) part of the city. It must be remembered that these would-be vigilantes were not particularly organized and their organization had been in steady decline for at least ten years. Another cited example occurred outside Toledo, where a series of tornadoes ripped apart a small suburb. The police and fire-fighters were unable to respond quickly due to the only bridge to that town being compromised by the storms. The staff and residents of a large nursing home immediately mobilized. They started to provide food, which they had in abundance, and used the Access-A-Ride vehicles to shuttle people to a make-shift conversion center at an undamaged local church. The nursing home staff was able to mobilize with other social service organizations to create "an ever expanding web of support" for the beleaguered suburb. By the time the government arrived in the town they found a self-organized network dealing democratically with the problem.

Insurrectionary Mutual Aid can be a powerful force for radical change and survival during a crisis. A small group can have a ripple effect over an affected

WEIJI : 5 CRISIS = DANGER + OPPORTUNITY

Wei Ji is the Chinese ideogram representing the concept of "Crisis" which is made up of two characters Wei (representing "danger") and Ji (representing "opportunity"). This symbology seems to perfectly represent the importance of crises for those seeking radical change, and why radicals must be prepared to respond to them.

Crises have been with humans since the beginning. Natural disasters, epidemics, wars, famine, social unrest, ecological disruptions and economic depressions are not new in this century and there seems no reason to believe they shall not continue. In fact, many scientists and thinkers believe we are heading for many more and new types of crises. Only the most naive person could possibly believe that there shall be no more emergencies in the near future. Though it seems obvious that radicals (like anyone else for that matter) would put some energy and forethought into preparing for natural or human-made disasters, many people refuse to acknowledge their inevitability. There seems to be a natural knee-jerk resistance to emergency preparedness in even the most radical circles because of its association with military and government responses and terminology. The extreme right and religious fundamentalists of all stripes currently have a near monopoly on preparing for crises and thus have at least a theoretically better chance to capitalize politically on the opportunities available in our increasingly dangerous world.

This article will examine why radicals should care about being ready for crises and what dangers and opportunities may come from responding (or failing to respond) to emergencies of all kinds. In addition, we hope to show why radicals are in a better position, than traditional survivalists to provide early and sustainable mutual aid during times of crisis.

Emergency preparedness should be approached like all of our political projects. Radicals, if prepared, have an opportunity to make meaningful social and political relationships with others during the crisis and create allies for future change.

We should be prepared for crises for a number of reasons, both social and political. The social reasons are obvious. Crises present a great danger for our lives and the lives of those we care about, work with, and those we seek to help by making a world a better place. Often crises can bring out the worse in folks. The combination of stress, unfamiliar choices, and a dramatic jarring of one's social constructs all work in tandem to make people react less than ideally during times of immediate danger. Ironically, it is at such difficult times that people need to draw most heavily upon their strengths, skills, compassion, and good judgment. The strains of crisis can tear at the social ties with those we are most close to. Preparedness allows us to enhance our ability to act positively during times of flux and to take time to concentrate on more than mere survival. By preparing ahead of time, we can inoculate ourselves to much of the stress that accompanies disasters and emergencies. We know from the research of emergency first responders and the military, that practice and preparedness substantially reduces stress during actual disasters and assures better judgment and more decisive action. Often crises require immediate actions otherwise disruptions can actually multiply. The old adage "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," is not just good medical sense but also relates to emergency readiness.

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No matter how prepared an individual is, they will undoubtedly need (or at least benefit from) the skills and support of others. Crises can often disrupt our relationships with those we normally work with and trust. Communications may become so overtaxed as to not be available; travel may be seriously hampered or dangerous; normal gathering spaces may be vacant or inaccessible; and normal routine encounters may become so disrupted that one can quickly find themselves isolated. Isolation during a crisis (despite what the right-wing survivalists say) is dangerous, unnecessary and possibly fatal. Our greatest security during any period of turmoil is to have a strong and prepared social network. Most people rely on social networks under current circumstances and would feel lost if they were suddenly removed in an instant. Part of preparedness is ensuring, as much as possible, that your social networks remain strong even during an emergency, so we can draw upon each other for support, mutual aid, and creative decision making.

Autonomy and liberty almost always become the first casualties during an emergency. Radicals have long critiqued various government agencies for being oppressive, irrational, exploitive, mismanaged, out-dated, inhumane etc. All of these faults are instantly multiplied during a serious crisis. It is naïve to believe that a government that daily exploits and oppresses large segments of the population without wealth and political capital will all of a sudden during

THE ADVANTAGES OF INSURRECTIONARY MUTUAL AID 15

- * Allows us to refocus and put our energies back into direct action.
- * Connects us with folks that may have never heard about anarchism.
- * Challenges the State and the capitalists on a more even playing field.
- * Allows us to test out our assumptions about how societies can be organized along anarchist principles.
- * Reinvigorates our anarchist networks by coming together for crisis mobilizations.
- * Provides more permanent socio-geographic areas for further resistance.
- * Access to public exposure.
- * Fighting for something, instead of against things.
- * Learning a new skill set that may be more appropriate for wide-spread militant resistance.

DIFFICULTIES

- * The stakes are much higher; people could get into serious trouble.
- * The events are spontaneous (as oppose to scheduled events) so it is harder to plan for.
- * Requires greater mobility
- * Requires decisiveness. There is often only a small window of opportunity.
- * Greater demand on a functioning inter-network communications system. Insurrectionaries need to develop a real-time multiply redundant communications system beyond just the internet.
- * Often requires complex logistics.
- * Means working in areas that may have entrenched and baroque internal interests and politics- which we may know very little about.
- * Greater need for self-sufficiency.

An insurrectionist must also be prepared to deal with real risk. Anti-Globalization mobilizations did a good job of training and preparing us for possible arrests and police brutality. Even though the majority of protestors were never arrested or beaten with billy-clubs, the very real possibility of state violence allowed one to decide what levels of risk one was willing to engage in with their affinity groups. We need to be just as honest and talk with those in our affinity groups about what level of risk we are willing to engage in during crisis mobilizations. During emergencies all sorts of laws change and the risk of arrests are greatly heightened with real violence from the state and others. Real solidarity is taking similar risks as those most affected, not just sitting on the side-lines wishing they luck.

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Insurrectionary Mutual Aid is a difficult high risk activity that requires a substantial amount of resources and preparedness. It is reasonable to ask if this tactic is worth it. As anarchists, the revolution is our constant point of reference, precisely because it is a concrete event; it must be built daily through more modest attempts which do not have all the liberating characteristics of the social revolution in the true sense. These more modest attempts are insurrections. In them, the uprising of the most exploited and excluded of society can open the way to the possible involvement of others on the crest of rebellion which could lead to revolution. It is never possible to see the outcome of a specific struggle in advance. Even a limited struggle can have the most unexpected consequences. The passage from the various insurrections – limited and circumscribed – to revolution can never be guaranteed in advance by any method.

MUTUAL AID IS

NOT CHARITY!

IT'S AN ATTACK!

an emergency care about those same people. All one needs to do is look at local and federal preparedness manuals of organizations like FEMA and one can see the first order on their agenda—the priority is not to provide aid but to reassert State control during a crisis. This has been true since the dustbowl of the 1930's to this year's Katrina disaster.

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It should come as no surprise that government preparedness manuals for local and state governments spend as much time outlining plans to secure “commercial interests” as they do providing medical aid to those injured and in need. In fact, FEMA has a policy of not sending first responders, like firefighters and paramedics, until police or military units “have established order.” The government’s concept of order, defined by their own manuals, seems more akin to business as usual than doing anything to alleviate suffering. Just when the government should be promoting mutual aid and self-organizing among its citizens—that is, if it were actually interested in alleviating suffering—it does everything to marginalize these ideas and strip civil authority of all decision making. In one recent FEMA memo, during the Louisiana crisis, it suggests “Non-local Units [National Guardsmen from other states] should be used when possible...[because] local units may have too many connections to the local population.” In fact, the entire concept of FEMA is to de-localize the problem, to bring in outside government authority that is not democratically elected in order to re-establish the status quo and to protect interests of capitalists and the politically connected. This type of callous and counterproductive coercion needs to be actively resisted during times of crisis. The government spends millions and prepares constantly to take control and assert exploitive and divisive powers over already weakened localities and populations during disasters; radicals must be ready to resist and bring control and decision-making back to the people most affected by the emergency.

Radicals that invest in emergency preparedness are in a unique position to aid local populations and actively resist the detrimental effects of non-localized government occupation. They also have a long history of working with community groups, who are seeking to improve their neighborhoods and provide for each other what the capitalists and government will not. We have spent many years developing strong relationships and networks among a variety of people who have skills to organize. We have also taken time to improve and constantly re-evaluate our roles as organizers, seeking non-authoritarian ways of aiding self-organization among those exploited by capitalists and governments. We have not always been successful in our attempts to integrate with various oppressed communities, but we continue to put a premium on organizing and activism, which puts us way ahead of most right-wing survivalists

and makes our project of preparedness quite different from theirs. 8

Fortunately, most people naturally seek to self-organize during a crisis. However, often after an initial outburst of localized mutual aid and self-organization, at some point the government and capitalists react. They always institute things like forced evacuations, curfews, frozen zones, etc. and then take control over all civil communications channels and seek to centralize people (often in refugee camps) which makes decentralized, localized organizing very difficult if not impossible. Centralizing people breaks up normal affinity bonds like neighborhoods, religious affiliation, friends, co-workers, etc., treating all people as undifferentiated refugees. With these important affinity bonds destroyed, people are forced to turn to the authorities who control all organizing efforts.

Mutual aid is quite common during the earliest moments of a disaster, with neighbors helping neighbors and even helpful strangers lending a hand. Officials and "specialists," working for the powers that be, usually interfere to stop such behavior under the pretense that their help is "better," more expert, and more appropriate. From daily experience we know that peoples' needs are at odds with the powerful elites' agenda. It would be foolish to think that if organizing was centralized by the elites that our best interests would be served.

For the radical interested in emergency readiness, the crucial questions are: how to prepare in such a way as to promote spontaneous self-organizing and extend it, as well as how to resist the government's attempt to centralize all help activity. From experiences elsewhere (e.g. Argentina), it seems once people start organizing for themselves during a crisis, they are often less willing to return to business as usual and defer power to the State. It is not surprising that most major radical social, political and economic revolutions have occurred after some sort of disaster or crisis. Real life experiences in mutual aid and egalitarianism are worth an entire library full of propaganda about how to create lasting changes in society.

There are almost no models in the survivalist subcultures to draw upon for radical emergency preparedness. Right-wing and fundamentalist circles interested in survivalism do not share the same goals as us and thus their methods are quite different. While it is true most of these "survivalist" groups seek extreme changes to society (ranging from libertarianism to fascism to metaphysical theocracies) their models do not tactically allow for radical social change.

Despite the popularity of such books like the Turner Diaries among right-wing extremists, there has been very little organizing among such groups. Even dur-

managers and truly reclaim the tactic of Propaganda by the Deed. 13

By supporting self-organizing groups, who by their very existence are in resistance to the order-obsessed government, we can aid true insurrection. The State, under the auspices of "order" crushes even the most basic and obvious self-organized communities and thus creates a point of conflict between everyday folks and the government on what becomes contested territory. Unlike similar events (e.g. mass mobilizations), this type of conflict has many advantages: a local population that is deeply cynical or outright hostile to the status quo; groups that know the terrain exceptionally well; the tendency of individuals and groups to fight harder "for" things than simply against them; individuals with a personal and immediate investment in the need for change; etc. For many reasons, providing mutual aid to self-organizing groups after an emergency can give us our best chance for a successful insurrection in this country. However, to be effective we need to prepare now. The influx of supplies and labor to locally affected communities—that we share affinity with—could mean the difference between the streets of Argentina and the stadiums of Louisiana. We must be prepared if a crisis happens tomorrow. A crisis is not the time to have fundraisers for initial supplies. We need to work on getting these things now, so when an emergency occurs, we can act immediately.

Any insurrectionist showing up during a crisis needs to be self-sufficient in the basics and have ready access to extra supplies of: food, water, medications, power, communications and shelter. It should be obvious in emergency situations one can not simply arrive and expect to plug-in to an already organized network. Unprepared radicals can actually put a strain on scarce resources by showing up unprepared. When hundreds of well-intentioned college kids flooded New Orleans during their spring break, it did not turn out to be the boon organizers had hoped for. The students came without adequate clothes, food, water, shelter and so on. One organizer spent an entire afternoon tracking down some medication for a student who had assumed they could have an important prescription filled at a local drugstore. The organizers were swamped with the logistics of supporting these hundreds of volunteers and organizing them to do meaningful and much needed work. In stark contrast, those organizing with Food Not Bombs provide a positive example on how groups of people can organize and prepare themselves enough to focus on the work needing to be done. In the weeks following the hurricane, more than a hundred Food Not Bombs and related volunteers served thousands of meals to those in need. They had their own shelter, communications, and supplies. The local communities did not need to waste limited energy and resources on these volunteers.

falls outside their imaginations they are at a loss to improvise. It can be a short step from emergency to the emergence of self-organized resistance. Argentina is one recent example of how an economic crisis can transform itself into a real counter-force to capitalism and the state.

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Mutual Aid: *a voluntary giving or lending of resources, labor or goods to others in a shared community/communities with the expectation that the entire community will in turn benefit.*

Mutual Aid is a concept that is familiar to many anarchists, but often not fully understood. Mutual aid is not charity or some baroque bartering system. It rejects the "tit-for-tat" psychology of modern capitalism while challenging the nightmare of hyper-centralization in communist distribution. Mutual aid is help freely given (in the form of services and resources) to others. The idea is that as individuals in the community help each other, the entire community benefits, and that in turn supports the individuals' own goals. It is similar to the simple concept of sharing. Mutual aid, like charity, central communism, and capitalism, promotes a specific ideological system. In the case of mutual aid, it supports a libertarian ideology where individuals are trusted to make decisions that promote the entire community.

The state and its flunkies work from a position that charity is an effective tool to re-establish the status quo. In its most recent report on Katrina, FEMA summarized the state's logic on providing assistance to affected people: "All aid should be used strategically. The use of sustainable supplies must be administered in such a way to maximize compliance with the emergency plan. Unfortunately, this may delay some aid but the primacy of maintaining control in the first few days can not be underestimated."

It comes as no surprise that our leaders are willing to let us die while they implement their misguided plans to maintain law and order. It is during this period of government hesitation that we need to be on the ground providing real solidarity for those the State is afraid of and indifferent to. Solidarity is more than holding protests, organizing fundraisers and filing indymedia reports. Real solidarity requires commitment, risk and preparedness. Mutual aid is a direct challenge to the government and the associated NGOs and religious institutions that monopolize "helping people." Mutual aid by necessity promotes an egalitarian relationship between individuals and groups, whereas charity and government aid aim to create hierarchical relationships of dependence (at best) and oppression (more often). Through the solidarity of mutual aid, we can show our commitment to those excluded by the government emergency

ing their hey-day of the mid-1980's and early 1990's they could offer no organized response or message to such rightist watershed events as Ruby Ridge or Waco. They lack both the communications infrastructure and the desire for collective organizing. Instead, they are taking a course of extreme individualist survival. They seek to provide bunker-like supplies, skills and support for only them and their own family. In fact, they spend a great deal of time worrying about the spontaneous self-organizing of others. This leads to their nearly absurd preoccupation with weapons and self-defense. They have a deeply cynical view of others and hold many of the preconceived and racist notions the elites have about poor or marginalized people—the most likely victims of any crisis in this country. The right-wing survivalists have failed to extend mutual aid during times of crisis in this country and instead they redouble their own personal efforts to prepare while offering nothing to those affected, whereas we have been much quicker (though we must do more) to reach out and provide help to those suffering.

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We need to reject the "bunker mentality" not only as right-wing fanaticism but as an inherently bad idea for actually creating sustainable communities after a major disaster. While it is acceptable for radicals to use the substantial resources created by the right-wing for emergency preparedness, such as utilizing their on-line supply stores, reading articles about storage, and even attending skill-specific trainings, we must create our own models based on the work we already do every day, which is a much more complex task than what the right-wing is doing. We have a much better history and experience with organizing coordinated actions (albeit it's often temporary nature) such as mass-mobilizations and extended campaigns that are regional, national or international in scope. We have developed fairly sophisticated processes for decision-making among varied groups that are both supportive and egalitarian. We promote decentralization but unlike the right, we want to coordinate decentralized groups into sustainable resistance networks based on concepts like solidarity and mutual support. In addition, over the past few decades, we have been slowly building relationships with various community groups engaged in projects different from our own, though these relationships have developed more slowly than most of us have anticipated.

We often complain about how the extreme right is out-organizing us, and how during a crisis "they have all the guns." This reasoning seems to suggest that the right is better-prepared to take advantage of a crisis, however, this is unfounded. The right has, perhaps, a better ability to "survive" as isolated individuals and families and protect what they have from outsiders, but they are inherently unable to extend their influence to other communities or society at large. It must

also be said that is not their goal. The few attempts over the past two decades for the right to resist the State has met with utter failure and little public notice or sympathy. In the end, the right may be able to survive a temporary localized emergency, but never resist the State's re-imposition of power. 10

We have natural advantages over the right, but there is still a lot of work to do. During any crisis, we will not be competing for influence on the course of events with small groups in their bunkers, but with the government and private security forces.

There is so much to do and none of us know how much time there is before the next major crisis/opportunity. First, we must continue with the projects we are already doing and continue to network among ourselves and make inroads with other community groups. We should keep building and strengthening our relationships based on mutual aid and solidarity, while continuing to build infrastructure throughout North America. We must keep resisting while analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of our resistance. But we must also do much more than that.

We live in an excellent time to start learning skills, sharing information, and collecting valuable resources that may be in short supply during a crisis. The time to do this is now, because during a crisis, time will be in short supply and the added stress will make learning new skills and techniques very difficult. Besides, when people's lives are on the line, that is no time to be honing your skills or dumpster diving for the tool you need to set up an alternative energy generator.

Now is the time to be talking, writing, and scheming about our collective readiness in a crisis. There is precious little discussion about emergency preparedness in radical circles; it is not even a blip on the radar. We should start immediately with our friends, affinity groups, collectives and organizations. Start by figuring out ways in which you, along with your comrades, could provide mutual aid during a crisis. Decide what you might need to be effective, and what skills, resources and knowledge you already have. Next time there is a hurricane, flood, blackout or any other crisis, follow it closely and if possible go there to provide aid. You will find that experience is a great teacher for what is necessary. Provide reportbacks and analyses to various communities. Build networks between various groups that are also involved in this type of project. We can do it, but it must be together.

While too many anarchists wring their hands about the end of the rollicking anti-globalization mobilizations of the last decade, others are conspiring a resistance of direct action in places where we have a chance to win. The truth is that while we learned many valuable organizational and tactical lessons during the years after Seattle, most of our energy was spent on largely symbolic actions. The real strength of these mobilizations was actually in the organizing: the ability to awaken many people to the possibility of resistance to global capitalism, as well as providing a catalyst for regional and international networks. At no point did these mobilizations actually threaten to end world capitalism, seriously challenge State power, or even liberate any socio-geographical territory. As anarchists, now is not the time to mourn the death of "anti-globe" mobilizations, but move to the next phase of our resistance - Insurrectionary Mutual Aid. //

Insurrection: an organized rebellion aimed at overthrowing a constituted government through the use of subversion, sabotage and direct resistance - calling in question the legitimacy and efficacy of the government.

It is through acting and learning to act that we will open a path to insurrection. Propaganda does have a role, but that role is limited to clarifying actions—not inciting them—since the context for propaganda is dependent on the actions of people. Simply put: waiting only teaches waiting; in acting one learns to act. The force of an insurrection is not the state's military response, but the social upheaval it generates. Beyond the surface of the armed clash, the importance of any particular revolt should be evaluated by how it managed to expand the paralysis of normality in a given area and beyond. The Zapatistas are a recent example of this. Their limited military clash—less than ten days long and 150 people killed—with the government at San Cristobal on New Year's day 1994 was a success, not because of a stunning military victory, but because it was able to disrupt normality in Chiapas—a disruption which is still going on to this day. Recently, the Zapatistas have used this base in Chiapas to launch a new challenge to the legitimacy of the Mexican State and have expanded beyond Chiapas.

It is this potential expansion that gives an insurrection its power and drives the fear behind the state's reaction. In a crisis or emergency situation, fortune favors the rebel, since, crises are by nature (if only temporarily) beyond the control of government forces. Governments have numerous contingencies to deal with a variety of "acceptable variations" [actual term used in FEMA documents], however the lack of imagination and the lumbering bureaucracy that dominates all governments makes it difficult to react to new situations. If it