



Once More Unto the Breach

Making good choices in the endless struggle

This is not an instruction manual for any specific action or strategy. Everyone has a combination of skills and conditions that suggest different choices.

This will help you navigate your decisions and act with discretion. Suffering is not the point of opposing capitalism and white supremacy, neither is feeling good about yourself. At least, it shouldn't be. Hopefully, you're striving towards something material - your neighbors suffering less, the ability to create and be free. Energy is scarce and stakes are high. We need everyone in the game.

- **What can you do that would be harder for someone else?**
- **What are your talents and passions? What makes you feel fulfilled?**
- **Think over your relationships, identities, skills, and other conditions in your life. How can these help you abstain from, undermine, obstruct, or subvert instances of oppression?**

The problems facing us are much larger than any one person. The moral myths of good prevailing and one great leader uplifting the masses hide the fear of our likely futures. We will probably spend our entire lives fighting for the spaces we carve ourselves, hoping others will be inspired to reject normality.

Capitalists and governments depend on the system to self-regulate itself away from the point of no return, but global empire has us set on a course for total collapse. With this in mind, how will you live your life?

We can't know what will come, but humans have always endured horrors and found reasons to keep living - even with joy. Sometimes there is an end to the hard times, and others spend their entire lives in the midst of struggle.

Oppression is everywhere, which means that one person will always have an opportunity to expose a crack in the armor of domination and contribute to joyful disorder.

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Learning Judgment

When times are hard and uncertain, all you can control is your approach; balance capacity, risk, and urgency. You can take inspiring action to oppose the state, but without good judgment you're likely to end up with more regrets than success. Sometimes, you should say no. Sometimes, you should pull the plug because there's something you didn't anticipate. Desperation and pride are only liabilities if we want to grow.

There is internal work that often goes unspecified: the ability to respond rather than react, to reject familiar benchmarks of success to stride closer to your goals. If you accept the reality of a situation, you can take strategic action to change it. You can carve out moments, between individuals and in precious solitude, that inspire and multiply. And, you can reduce the number of situations you regret getting involved in.

Two facts or perspectives can seem to contradict each other, but that doesn't mean one is correct and the other is wrong. Moral drive, practical responsibilities, and personal experiences cause tension when you have to decide how to live day to day.

For instance, consider a common torment plaguing do-gooders and bleeding hearts:

The world is full of horrors that require everyone's full efforts to oppose. There are countless opportunities to save myself and my community from death and disaster.

I am one person who requires rest and pleasure to be my best. I cannot be available 100% of the time or help every person I come across. Sometimes, I need help.

It can be difficult to act in a way that values both accounts. Often, someone is dragged between extremes driven by their current emotional state. This can appear as living reactively and urgently, throwing your entire self into every moment until your body literally cannot continue. When overwhelmed with burnout or despair, one might ignore creative ways to participate and grow while meeting their own needs.

Both of the example statements are true, but how do you choose when to pursue and when to rest? When do you clash head-on, and when do you prepare for a better opportunity? I hate to say it, but it all depends on your unique situation.

This world is all we have to work with, and our circumstances change constantly. Evaluate your situation, explore the contradicting truths, and make a plan.

Niche and Range

Factors

There are many difficult and unpopular tasks that need doing. If society is to flourish, some people must choose to contribute where it is needed most, not where they want.

There are certain things that bring me joy and others that are more difficult. I am able to maximize my capacity when doing something that motivates, excites, or fulfills me.

People are endlessly diverse in their interests. When able to control how and when they engage, people find a variety of seemingly-unpleasant tasks satisfying, or at least worthwhile.

Niche: A comfortable and sustainable position for a person.

Range: The limits of one's participation in various efforts.

These might be draining or impractical long-term, but is possible short-term.

Even in so-called normal times, there are too many people to feed, bank windows to break, police to watch, and bigots to confront for one person. Everyone must choose how and when to personally act.

Some things will be relatively easier or harder for you due to the kinds of resources at your disposal, your abilities, and the assumptions people make about you. Someone might have connections that make it easier to collect stores of expensive disaster resources. Others find

better results dumpster diving and meeting day-to-day needs. Seek the center of the Venn Diagram of what needs to be done and what you want to do.

People are drawn to efforts that align with their interests. Focusing on one niche allows for development of specialized skills, fulfillment, and affinity with neighbors. Organic community networks subvert dependency on capitalism.

Of course, we are limited if we only stay within what is comfortable or appealing. We can discover potential abilities and exceed our expectations when we act not out of personal interest, but because we noticed something needed doing.

Sometimes, crises that ebb and flow (whether based on weather or social events) coincide, and a community response calls for people to extend beyond their niche and “push through” to accomplish a goal. Responding to crises can be outside someone’s comfort zone, but improve their problem-solving and grow community.

Before you judge how far to extend yourself, consider your baseline:

- Will this specific issue resolve before you need to take a break? Is it a crisis or ongoing?
- How much can you contribute to X compared to Y? Which will yield better results?
- Will you be able to provide better support if you tend to your needs first?

Then, you can decide on what you want to do until your factors change.

- How much time out of your week can you dedicate to this? Can you respond to emergent needs or do you need strict boundaries in your engagement?
- Is there an aspect of a project or issue that is less draining (eg transport, getting supplies, outreach)?
- What activities excite and engage you?

Learning from History

Factors

We are facing historically unprecedented conditions of institutional control and surveillance technology. No single movement or theory has succeeded within the US and institutions have learned from every failed attempt. Creative forward-thinking is needed to survive.

The history of resistance against empire provides insight to the logic and strategies used against autonomous groups. Current institutions adapted from specific contexts that suggest their likely course of action.

Seeing as the government prefers not to admit to the counter-insurgent and repressive measures they take in the moment, it is often more fruitful to find accurate information from declassifications and leaks. This information can be analyzed alongside your observations to anticipate what you might be facing.

It is possible to anticipate and prepare for repression instead of reacting to it. There are stories and detailed accounts of state retaliation against resistance across the world, paired with their advice on where they went wrong. Too many people end up in jail purely because they didn't know someone else already tried their idea.

Learning from history isn't as simple as copying and applying the stories told. Strategies rely on the conditions they emerged from. What was once effective or deemed

best might not apply with current technology, information, or society. Local, cultural, and global factors influenced the outcome of these conflicts, as they will our own efforts.

- What do I specifically want to accomplish (preventing construction, reducing police surveillance, etc)?
- How have others tried to achieve the same goals? How are others trying to now?
- When there are aspects or a method that I find distasteful or ineffective, what parts of it could be adapted or improved upon?
- How do I want to balance making my action's material effect with being sympathetic and replicable?

Consider what mindsets, practices, and behaviors consistently lead to better or worse outcomes. Tried and tested methods can be compared against the current conditions and used as a jumping board. Tactics and techniques should be updated or blended to remain unpredictable. If the state can anticipate your playbook, they'll win with overwhelming force.

- Based on their most recent actions, what are these institutions likely to try next?
- Based on how the people around me are operating, what might they expect me to do?
- Comparing the resources and context of other actors with my own, what can I do to become more prepared?

Relationships, Community

Factors

Every relationship and collaboration carries the risk of conflict, security leaks, and infiltration.

Every relationship and collaboration carries the possibility for growth, new opportunities, and inspiration.

The state gatekeeps many necessary practices and much of the information sought after is illegal or obtain. In order to learn, we have to teach each other.

How exactly are you supposed to build trust if the wrong choice could cost a lifetime in jail? Comradery and friendship are easy to exploit, even if you don't place trust in someone who ends up being a bully, predator, or cop.

You can do a lot on your own, but nobody can know everything or develop every specialized skill. If you want to plan for the future, it's important to find solidarity with people who can contribute all forms of knowledge. We need "professionals" who are invested enough in their community that they want to contribute to it.

Some separate relationships in terms of professional and personal in order to simplify conflict and streamline opsec. This framing doesn't actually address how harm occurs and why security leaks happen. You should not have different standards for building trust for people you meet in a project than your friends. Someone can easily leak critical information or cause intense harm completely by accident. Likewise, personal information is neither a reward for

intimacy or an indication of how much you trust someone.

Boundaries and discretion are tools to navigate relationships intimate, distant, and in-between. Someone might be offended, suspicious, or manipulative when you withhold information. By deciding in advance what information you will keep private, your response will be better prepared. On your part, accept boundaries and unanswered questions with grace and figure out how to move forward with what you have.

Security culture, while often helping us stay out of jail, also allows an excuse for anyone who wants to obscure their associations or motive. Even if someone has a good reason for not sharing information, only depend on something as far as you can verify it. If a plan is shaky and you're going to follow through, have a contingency plan.

There are as many risks as benefits to expanding your circles and networks. The difficulty of collaborating with someone that has clashing theories of change is also an opportunity.

- Are there open community gatherings where you can begin forming new bonds and affinity?
- Who is asking for solidarity and support right now?
- What are you comfortable with participating with? What do you disagree with, but are willing to support?
- How much risk is this collaboration bringing?

If there comes a time where there is little to gain from a relationship, disengage before there is bad blood.

Risk

Factors

There is no guarantee that I can plan for an ideal opportunity to take a major risk. People are suffering right now in front of us. Acting urgently could prevent a future where the risks are even more severe and more people die.

The consequences of my actions now will compound and limit future options. The future will contain more crises that are more severe. Any actions now are unlikely to make a meaningful difference in the course of events we are on.

Every day could be our last, whether we are protesting police or going grocery shopping. As climate disasters and political suppression grow worse in the coming decades, these dangers will grow more dire. Do you risk an arrest record that puts you on a radar or wait to gain experience until repression reaches a new peak?

No amount of planning or skill can guarantee success, but we can increase the barriers to our safety and take basic precautions for the future. The more likely you are to get away with something, the more reliable it is as an option. Pay attention to where the system is operating unguarded in your midst. If you are going to experiment, do it as far as practical from your home. Seek out stories of success and failure.

In turn, your actions have greater rewards than the visible effect. When acts of solidarity are unfamiliar and unpracticed, witnessing a daring de-arrest or construction shutting down can be a reminder of what's possible.

If you want to do something cool, first learn about the topic and the lessons that political prisoners have shared. The opportunities and risks of your specific situation can narrow your range of ideas. As you gain more knowledge, you can better understand where you can access and engage with the system.

- What do you want to achieve? Is it reasonable you could achieve your goal with this idea?
- Are there ways you can make success more likely? Can you prepare for possible consequences if things go poorly?
- What ways can you contribute while you make preparations for larger risks?

And of course, never forget the most important question:

- Does someone in front of you, right now, need your help?

Unity and Growth

Factors

Widespread, simultaneous action is necessary to make long-term change on a societal level. Any disconnected efforts are inconsequential when talking about materially preventing the worst-case scenarios.

The more interconnected the organizing, the more devastating the effects of any disaster (deaths, wrongdoing, etc) in the community. Suppression focuses pressure where it can have the widest effect. Survival depends on small networks working independently and anonymously.

Political movements place a heavy emphasis on the number of people participating for their cause to measure success. The more people you can summon for a display of support, after all, the more power and influence the group should have in political landscapes.

This might be true about shifting power dynamics between groups, but not for fundamentally changing the social foundations of oppression. Seeing a crowd of thousands marching in the streets does feel empowering. But, this display of sympathy doesn't translate to power, ability, or even desire to change the way we live. Social conflict is less dependent on the number of people who sympathize and more so on those people's ability to disrupt "normal" operations.

Organizations (groups with membership, formed for a specific purpose) are the main way people are familiar with creating social change. It is easy to find people to work with

and collect resources. But capturing your potential into a group trying to facilitate social change often loses great sources of potential and take a high cost.

- Collective decision making faces diminished returns. The lengthy, cyclical discussions of consensus models and the natural conflict between interests frequently cause embitterment and exhaustion.
- Future actions are easy to anticipate and there are countless ways for efforts to be infiltrated or sabotaged.
- Tensions are either ignored in pursuit of goals or they flare, stopping all momentum while the conflict exists.
- While individuals can take different approaches towards a common goal, within an organization it threatens the unity that defines the group. Often, only the most socially-acceptable actions move forward.

Consider the possibilities when there's no group to claim the credit or take the fall. Someone inspires others to make their own mark on the community rather than endlessly trying to engage them with guilt. Through communiques and public statements (along with actions that speak for themselves), the priority shifts from attendance to achieving your shared goals, together. Instead of one distro group trying to coordinate across a city, a dozen collectives cultivate community in their own neighborhoods.

Whether you are a collective, affinity group, syndicate, network, or a couple friends, the process is more

important than whether or not you're technically an organization. Are you utilizing someone's labor for a goal, or engaging in a shared processes? If you're out of the picture, will your actions ripple outward?

When trying to expand your efforts, it is often more effective to share information and methodology than join together into a cohesive, larger group. We do not (and as argued, should not) have to become one united force to overcome adversity. We can work together when it's beneficial and practical, but we are safest and at our greatest potential when seeds of disorder are planted anonymously.

When deciding whether to work with someone or simply pursue your efforts in parallel, examine the possibilities and issues it could bring.

- Why do you want to work together? Does everyone involved have similar or compatible methods? How similar is the alternative you imagine?
- Do certain parts of our efforts seem more productive to collaborate on than othes?
- What are we trying to get out of a collaboration (more attention, more capacity, pooling resources/contacts)?

Moving Forward

A lot of words have been tossed around, so let's recenter.

Find ideas to break the inertia of despair in ways that are easy to start. Carry a sharpie with you if you have strong opinions on street art. Buy an extra umbrella or pair of socks and offer it to whoever you come across. Flip through a zine that interests you, even if you don't actually read it. Starting with things that feel utterly pointless in the big picture can be the first step.

Find ways to abstain from, undermine, obstruct, and subvert the systems of oppression and exploitation in your life.

Invest in yourself and prepare for a lifetime of struggle. It will be joyous and painful.

Stay frosty.

With Love,



Bad Apple