

NIGHTFALL

FREE

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AGAINST THE SMART CITY

In April Hennepin County ran the latest demonstration of the EasyMile EZ10, which is not an overpriced treadmill as the name suggests but rather a self-driving shuttle, on the greenway in Uptown. This followed a run of demonstrations along Nicollet Mall that took place during the lead-up to the Super Bowl earlier this year. However, before the test run/photo op could begin a banner was affixed to a bridge directly over the test site reading “Against The Smart City!”

This action resonates strongly with us, so we’re using it as a starting point to elaborate this rallying cry, *against the smart city*. In the words of the anonymous communique, originally submitted to Conflict MN:

“While touted as progress, there are still those of us who see these projects as only the further deepening of the desert. As our cities become increasingly automated, this process attempts to eclipse not only the possibilities of revolt, but

even that of a life of anything but its perpetual (re)production. These automated shuttles will be yet another vehicle for funneling citizens between where they work, shop, and sleep, as mindlessly as the shuttle which carries them."

The ones who dropped the banner identify these automated shuttles as a new piece in a mosaic of projects designed to smooth the flow of people and capital within the metropolis. In other words, the city is designed to make sure that the only possible forms that life can take are that of producing or reproducing the capitalist, white supremacist, patriarchal reality. Although there are not yet plans to permanently deploy the shuttles locally, these tests give us a glimpse of the future form cities will take if no one intervenes.

Most often, these projects are criticized for their role as harbingers of gentrification. And there is no doubt that these shuttles were never meant for the poor. However, we feel the need to expand our critiques. We aren't opposed to these projects only because they cause displacement, but because they create a way of life we refuse to live.

The smart city is not only the way in which bodies are transported throughout the metropolis. As the name implies, the premise of the smart city can be boiled down to the logic of the smart phone applied at the municipal level. In their 2014 book *To Our Friends*, the Invisible Committee sketch out a broader picture:

"Behind the futuristic promise of a world of fully linked people and objects, when cars, fridges, watches, vacuums, and dildos are directly connected to each other and to the Internet, there is what is already here: the fact that the most polyvalent of sensors is already in operation: myself. "I" share my geolocation, my mood, my opinions, my account of what I saw today that was awesome or awesomely banal. I ran, so I immediately shared my route, my time, my performance numbers and their self-evaluation. I always post photos of my vacations, my evenings, my riots, my colleagues, of what I'm going to eat and who I'm going to fuck. I appear not to do much and yet I produce a steady stream of data. Whether I work or not, my everyday life, as a stock of information, can always be mined. I am constantly improving the algorithm."

The automated shuttle was, of course, not the only thing tested during the Super Bowl. Local law enforcement began using FieldWatch, an app that allows police officers to stream video directly from their phones to the command center, at the time staffed by nearly one hundred people. Along with newly installed surveillance cameras, this gave law enforcement a real time view of virtually the entire downtown terrain. While the Super Bowl festivities have left, the police continue to take ad-



vantage of their new tools, and have even requested the installation of another thousand cameras.

Looking at these shuttles and cameras alongside the proliferation of new light fixtures such as on Lake Street underneath Hiawatha (as we wrote about in Issue 9), we start to see what the pieces in the mosaic form. Not only a city devoted to the total surveillance of public space, but also the shaping of that space to eliminate the possibility of any disturbances. In other words, "a terrain where all that can happen is what has already been predicted and planned" to quote from this latest communique. Or, as the Invisible Committee wrote:

"The stated ambition of cybernetics is to manage the unforeseeable, and to govern the ungovernable instead of trying to destroy it. The question of cybernetic government is not only, as in the era of political economy, to anticipate in order to plan the action to take, but also to act directly upon the virtual, to structure the possibilities. [...] In this vision, the metropolis doesn't become smart through the decision-making and action of a central government, but appears, as a 'spontaneous order,' when its inhabitants 'find new ways of producing, connecting, and giving meaning to their own data.'"

This "spontaneous order" occurs because the potential for disorder has been foreclosed on by the very structure of the city. Not only do these surveillance projects allow the police to track those they designate potential criminals, they psychologically impact our behaviors and encounters—this is the real panopticon effect. While disorder can never be completely eliminated, the smart city is designed for its maximum attenuation. And to put our cards on the table, we greatly prefer disorder over the world as it exists.

How could we not? It's clear to everyone that there is something deeply wrong with the state of affairs today. We are told that there are proper, legal channels through which reform will happen—but these channels are only yet another way to structure our possibilities.

The *Against The Smart City* communique offers a few words of encouragement, with which we'll close:

"While their fantasy is to build a terrain where all that can happen is what has already been predicted and planned, we know that fundamentally life cannot be reduced to data and in its flux escapes prediction and control. Don't wait for others to take action for you. Take it yourselves."

TALKING TOGETHER

One thing that we haven't really talked about in *Nightfall* is radical approaches to mental health. I think one of the reasons for this is that we personally don't feel like we have the experience to stand on a soap-box and tell everyone exactly how to support each other in a meaningful and lasting way so as to cause the walls of superficial capitalist patriarchal bullshit that separate us to come crashing down so we can live together in a new and meaningful way. What becomes obvious when we put it in terms like that though is that nobody actually has all of that knowledge, so if we want to actually get closer to that ideal we'll need to start from wherever we are and figure it out as we go. With that in mind we're thinking of what follows not as advice but rather as some questions and ideas on how we can do better together. Anyway, its not like not knowing what we're doing has ever stopped us from writing about things in the past, right?

The first question that springs to mind about radical mental health is why? There are many fairly obvious reasons. Given the astronomical price of therapy as well as the fact that a greater percentage of people in this country than ever before identify as having a mental condition or disorder (whether diagnosed by themselves, their friends, the media or a medical professional), it only makes sense for us to try to figure out ways in which we can do some of the work of supporting people ourselves, thus saving money so that we can work less, which incidentally makes many of the problems we face easier to deal with. There is also the fact that psychologists act as extensions of the police; if someone goes to a psychologist and talks about how they are entertaining suicidal or violent thoughts, the psychologist is duty-bound to call the cops on them. In addition to often making things much worse for the people who are snitched on, the fact that we all know that this will happen acts as a deterrent that often prevents people from getting help when they need it most.

Another reason that we need radical community-based approaches to mental health is the fact that there are many problems about which psychologists are simply incapable of giving helpful advice. No matter the good intentions of many within its walls, at a structural level psychology exists not to help people but to keep society running smoothly. Truly empathizing with the existential depression many of us deal with as part of living in this fucked up world would require psychologists to question the privileged place they hold within it, something most are not willing to do. For example, how can you talk honestly about the crippling dread you feel at the prospect of working for the rest of your life, not

just working your specific job but working at all, with someone who spent thousands of hours of their life putting in abstract labor in order to earn a degree that allows them to be paid to sit and listen to your problems? You simply won't be heard.

Beyond these problems with psychology, however, is a more foundational flaw that I think lies at the core of why psychology as a specialized practice, whether or not it takes place in the context of the capitalist economy, will never completely fulfill our needs. At its core psychology is premised upon the existence of a state of mind or being that can be unequivocally positioned as sane or stable, thus solidifying as insane or flawed all those who deviate from it. But a lot of what this sanity ends up boiling down to is that the person in question is able to keep up genial relations with those around them and show up to their job every day on time. In a world of so much chaos and violence, where it is widely accepted that in the near future large swaths of the planet will become totally unfit for human life, the fact of people who can sleep easy at night is much more alarming to us than the fact of people who can't keep such facades together.

However, rather than repositioning those who are depressed when contemplating the state of the world as the sane ones and those who aren't bothered by it as insane, we are interested in seeing how we could work together to develop new ways of talking about our lives and inner experiences that deconstruct the concepts of 'sanity' or 'mental health' entirely and instead focus on helping each other figure out practical and non-pathologizing ways of approaching life. This is not to say though that people can't or shouldn't use or identify with diagnoses of specific conditions if it helps them get a handle on what they are going to through and connect with people who are going through similar things, but only that we shouldn't take for granted the objective existence of these conditions divorced from any actual experience.

Well all of this is very well and good, but what does this sort of deconstruction actually look like in practice? As we said before, we don't really know for sure. One simple place to start is consciously focus on regularly talking about the shit we go through with people we know and trust. Our culture teaches us that doing this will cause everyone around us to view as depressing and weak, and that we should instead bottle up our feelings and only occasionally let them vent out to our closest friend or partner. Not only is this ridiculous when pretty much everyone who is paying attention is dealing with some amount of trauma stemming from capitalism, rape culture, white supremacy, or just the fact of our own mortality, but it also sets us up to form isolated

MAKE MAY DAY EVERYDAY

Over one hundred and thirty years ago, during a massive strike in the city of Chicago, a stick of dynamite sprouted wings and began to fly above one of the demonstrations. The dynamite, as the amateur it was, crash landed into a squad of police officers who were attacking the demonstration. This explosion and the repression that followed helped create what we refer to as May Day.

There are other stories too: the pagan celebrations of spring, the mass mobilizations against anti-immigration laws more recently. Today, we create our own stories of May Day. In the Pacific Northwest those who draw on these histories have put special emphasis and effort into marking the day with combat against this world of exploitation. In 2012, an anti-capitalist demonstration made headlines by smashing state buildings and chain stores in Seattle, echoing the 1999 riots in the city which are often credited with sparking the anti-globalization movement. In the years that followed, however, the anti-capitalist demonstration became more and more routine and were easily contained by law enforcement.

In light of this, this year a call was made for a “decentralized anti-capitalist May Day.” It read:

“We envision a May Day where groups from across the city and wider region take the initiative to plan their own direct actions at various times and locations throughout the day. Whether it is a block party at the juvie, a march against gentrification in a neighborhood facing mass-displacement, or a less public form of direct action, we want to see it all. By spreading our actions across the city and region, we will circumvent the massive police mobilizations that accompany each May Day, giving each action-group a broader spectrum of tactics to choose from that best suits the participants’ needs and goals. [...]

“This means that you will likely have to step up and take some control of your own plans for the day which we understand can be a daunting task. Rest assured though, there is no better feeling than creating an action that is at every level a space of your own (whether it’s you as an individual or your respective organizations or crews). This allows you to find the most meaningful ways to disrupt capitalism at a level that best suits you, without having to abide by somebody else’s plans you may disagree with tactically or otherwise. Trust us; it is as rewarding as it is exhilarating.”

From what we can see, the effort was wildly successful. While we may never truly know the scope of the actions carried out across the region, many were communicated online through the local counter-info website Puget Sound Anarchists. We’ll run through them for you here.

As the sun rose in Portland, the news began reporting

the “first disruption of May Day 2018”; over twenty police cars had been covered in paint. However, some hours earlier according to a communique, a crew of queer, femme, and trans folks had been strolling through the streets of Seattle ambushing bigots and street harassers. In addition, a Wells Fargo bank in Olympia was vandalized before the sun came up. Several alt-right organizers across Washington woke up to their personal information posted all over their neighborhoods.

Over the course of the day in Seattle, several banners were dropped and a black bloc joined the annual immigrant worker’s day march. In the middle of the day, one brave hero threw a rock at the Amazon Headquarters—a cluster of massive glass spheres in the middle of the heavily gentrified downtown. Unfortunately, the person was quickly arrested as Seattle PD had been stationed around the building in preparation for such an attack. Later in the day, a driver plowed through a strike picket, although thankfully no one was injured. Elsewhere, a block party was held against the construction of a new youth jail. The night ended with crews decorating their neighborhoods with stickers and vandalizing the city’s bike share program. Even without a large anti-capitalist march, many businesses closed down for the day as a precaution regardless.

Other than the early morning attack, Olympia was conspicuously quiet on May Day. As the site of multiple recent blockades/occupations against fracking materials passing through the local port as well as a raucous May Day march last year, the police and local authorities were clearly prepared for trouble, using large amounts of resources to bring in officers from four jurisdictions as well as have a plane circling the city all day. All of this, but the only public action during the day was a peaceful noise demo that chanted and flied outside the mayor’s



Solidarity with the Amazon rock thrower!

and codependent relationships that we eventually burn through rather than resilient webs of support.

So yeah, talking about your shit can really help—although with the caveat that it is important to ask for consent from someone before unloading on them, as they may or may not be in a position to perform the emotional labor of supporting you. One problem though is that the thought of opening up is often extremely terrifying and paralyzing. One way to help ease yourself into this practice is to try to set up a semi-formalized structure in which to do it, such as regularly scheduled meet-ups where you and others can take turns talking about things that are challenging you and getting feedback or advice if desired. From our experience it is easy to simply say “yeah I’m going to talk about my feelings more” and then put it off again and again because the situation isn’t quite right or it feels like it will be too draining. Often though the opposite ends up being true, and we feel invigorated and supported in navigating our problems after telling someone else about them, whether or not we even get their feedback. Having a regularly scheduled time for this sort of conversation can help apply just enough pressure to get us over our hesitance and do something that can be very good for us.

Another approach that can be helpful is to try to establish conversations such as these with people you trust but who might not necessarily be the people you see every day or are closest to. The strict formalization and absolute separation between doctor and patient inherent in formal therapy are features we neither can nor should attempt to replicate in our own relationships, but having at least a little bit of distance from which to talk about your how you navigate closer relationships can be helpful, and also can end up breaking down the divisions we make between those who we really know and care for and those who we are simply acquainted with.

That’s all we have for now; as we think, read and experiment more we may try to put together a follow-up. For more local analysis on the complications inherent in challenging current conceptions of sanity without creating new prescriptive regimes of health we highly recommend the first and second releases in the *Bellum Primer* series, available online at: belliresearchinstitute.com

And good luck in opening up about your feelings and stuff; remember, there’s nothing to it but to do it!

house, shaming her for cloaking the forces of gentrification in watered-down progressive rhetoric. At the end of the day the cops went to bed congratulating themselves on a job well done. Then on the night of May 2nd a small march took to the streets, spreading graffiti in its wake, smashing a number of condo and bank windows and vandalizing multiple ATMs, as well as passing out fliers that read “Make May Day Everyday”. The cops weren’t able to respond in time to make arrests, as the crowd had dispersed on its own initiative.

This sort of ingenuity is something we find incredibly heartwarming; after all, we of all people should know that what matters most is not adhering to strict rituals on specific days but rather finding new ways of spreading our ideas and attacking the systems that dominate us. What we’ve seen from the Pacific Northwest inspires us, we hope it ignites the creativity in all of us to continue to act in new and diverse ways.



This image, taken from an advertisement for a psych clinic, speaks volumes about the priorities of psychology.

HOPELESS CITY

We wrote last issue about the importance of radical and DIY publishing, so naturally we were excited to check out the first issue of *Hopeless City*, a “lifestyle magazine” for Minneapolis printed on “100% scammed paper.” The first issue covered a lot of diverse topics, like how Peace Coffee is the physical manifestation of OK Cupid, local graffiti, high school Yelp reviews, an advice column and more.

While the content differs from what we at *Nightfall* focus on, it’s nevertheless inspiring to see others take their own autonomous initiative to put their thoughts into the world.

Look for copies wherever punk zines can be found. Seward Cafe seems like a safe bet.

LOCAL RESISTANCE

- Feb 4th** Banners are dropped in Minneapolis “Against The Super Bowl And Its World.”
- Feb 22nd** A Lakes Area Bank is robbed, take-over style.
- Feb 25th** “Kill The NRA” graffiti is painted on a billboard in St Paul.
- March 3rd** A guard is punched multiple times in the face by an inmate at Dakota County Jail.
- March 8th** A police officer is hit in the head repeatedly while attempting an arrest in St Paul.
- March 14th** A Trump supporting student is attacked by his peers during a student walkout at Southwest High School.
- March 15th** Sparked by a scandal involving H&M using a street artists’ work without permission, graffiti writers all over the globe target the store. In Minneapolis, WATR and HART use a fire extinguisher filled with paint to get leave their mark.
- March 23rd** Five prison staff members are injured in a spontaneous attack from inmates at Oak Park Heights prison. The same weekend, another five staff members are injured in a second attack.
- March 24th** Banners are hung for a global day of action in solidarity with Afrin, a city in the autonomous region of Rojava (northern Syria), that had been facing down the invading Turkish military. Solidarity posters and graffiti were also put up around the Minneapolis.
- Late March** An Minneapolis anti-trafficking bus stop ad is covered in pro-sex worker graffiti.
- April 8th** A banner is hung in Minneapolis expressing solidarity with the zad, an autonomous zone in France. The French state announced that the zad would be evicted April 9th.
- April 10th** A banner is hung in Minneapolis to support the J20 defendants.
- April 10th** A rally is held in Minneapolis to support the zad, fiercely defending against the eviction.
- April 19th** A banner is hung in Minneapolis directly in the path of a testing site for the EZ10, a self-driving shuttle.
- April 27th** Two gun stores in the Twin Cities are burglarized overnight.
- April 29th** More than thirty cars have their tires slashed in Bloomington.

Links

NightFall

nightfall.blackblogs.org

Conflict MN

conflictmn.blackblogs.org

Belli Research Institute

belliresearchinstitute.com

Minnesota Vandalisms

[@mnvandalisms](https://twitter.com/mnvandalisms)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 10th** Info Night about la zad, an experimental commune in Notre-Dames-des-Landes that is currently under siege from the French state. *Boneshaker Books - 2002 23rd Ave S at 7:00pm*
- May 12th** Midwest Trans Prisoner Pen Pal Project twice-monthly letter writing night. Write letters to and potentially start friendships with queer/trans prisoners in the Midwest. *Boneshaker Books - 2002 23rd Ave S at 6:00pm.*
- May 17th** Monthly letter writing night to support political prisoners and prison rebels around the country. *Walker Church - 3014 16th Ave S at 6:00pm.*
- May 24th** Free movie screening “Princess Mononoke” a complex fable about resistance against industrialism and patriarchy. *Boneshaker Books - 2002 23rd Ave S at 6:00pm.*
- May 31st** The beginning of the Two Spirit, Trans, and Womxn’s Action Camp against Line 3. The TTWAC is a direct action camp with workshops, skill shares and comraderie for people who identify as two-spirit, womxn, trans and/or gender variant to come together, establish a resistance camp & fight the patriarchy! Interested in attending, set up, training or facilitation? Email twats@riseup.net
- June 6th** Movie screening “The Gentleman Bank Robber” the story of rita bo brown—an anti-authoritarian, ex-prisoner, and member of the George Jackson Brigade. *Bryant Lake Bowl - 800 W Lake St at 6:00pm.*
- June 11th** International Day In Solidarity With Long-Term Anarchist Prisoners. Every year, people gather all over the world to show their support for comrades locked up behind bars. Keep an eye out for local events happening!
- June 21st** Monthly letter writing night to support political prisoners and prison rebels around the country. *Walker Church - 3014 16th Ave S at 6:00pm.*



International Day of Solidarity with Marius Mason
& All Long-Term Anarchist Prisoners

JUNE11.ORG