

“The Brutal Logistics of Revolution”

By Michael Truscello

Should radical anti-capitalists focus their efforts on sabotage and other forms of rupture designed to interrupt the flows of global capitalism, as many insurrectionary anarchists advocate? The Invisible Committee, for example, points to the "nodes that must be undone in order to interrupt circulation," in order for "something to rise up in the midst of the metropolis and open up other possibilities" (61). Or should more emphases be placed on engaging assemblages of debris from what Alberto Toscano describes as “the dead labours which crowd the earth's crust in a world no longer dominated by value” (Toscano 2011: 40)? Toscano, following Mike Davis, decidedly argues for the latter. Davis eloquently describes the challenge for revolutionaries in a dying world dominated by capitalism: “Since most of history’s giant trees have already been cut down, a new Ark will have to be constructed out of the materials that a desperate humanity finds at hand in insurgent communities, pirate technologies, bootlegged media, rebel science and forgotten utopias” (Davis 2010: 31). To sabotage, or to scavenge? These options have been foregrounded in much of the radical Left literature on industrial collapse.

But there is also a third major movement related to the collapse of industrial capitalism and ecosystems worldwide, in addition to this dichotomy of sabotage or scavenge: living off the grid. The grid, the consummate symbol of modernity, is what materially and symbolically perpetuates the project of modernity, and while some radicals equate human survival with annihilation of the grid and the sociotechnical assemblages it enables, and others ask what can be salvaged from the components of the grid, a smaller group of radicals (as well as right-wing militias and religious fundamentalists) believe the only way to survive the collapse of industrial civilization is to leave its grid structures behind. I want to complicate all three scenarios – sabotage, scavenge, off-grid – by suggesting that a planet now dominated by hyperobjects such as global climate change, nuclear contamination, and noxious industrial drift is a planet that is always already toxic and so haunted by the remainders of modernity no matter what we do—sabotage the grid, recover and reassemble the debris, or simply *bug out*.