

IN MEMORY OF GEORGE FLOYD

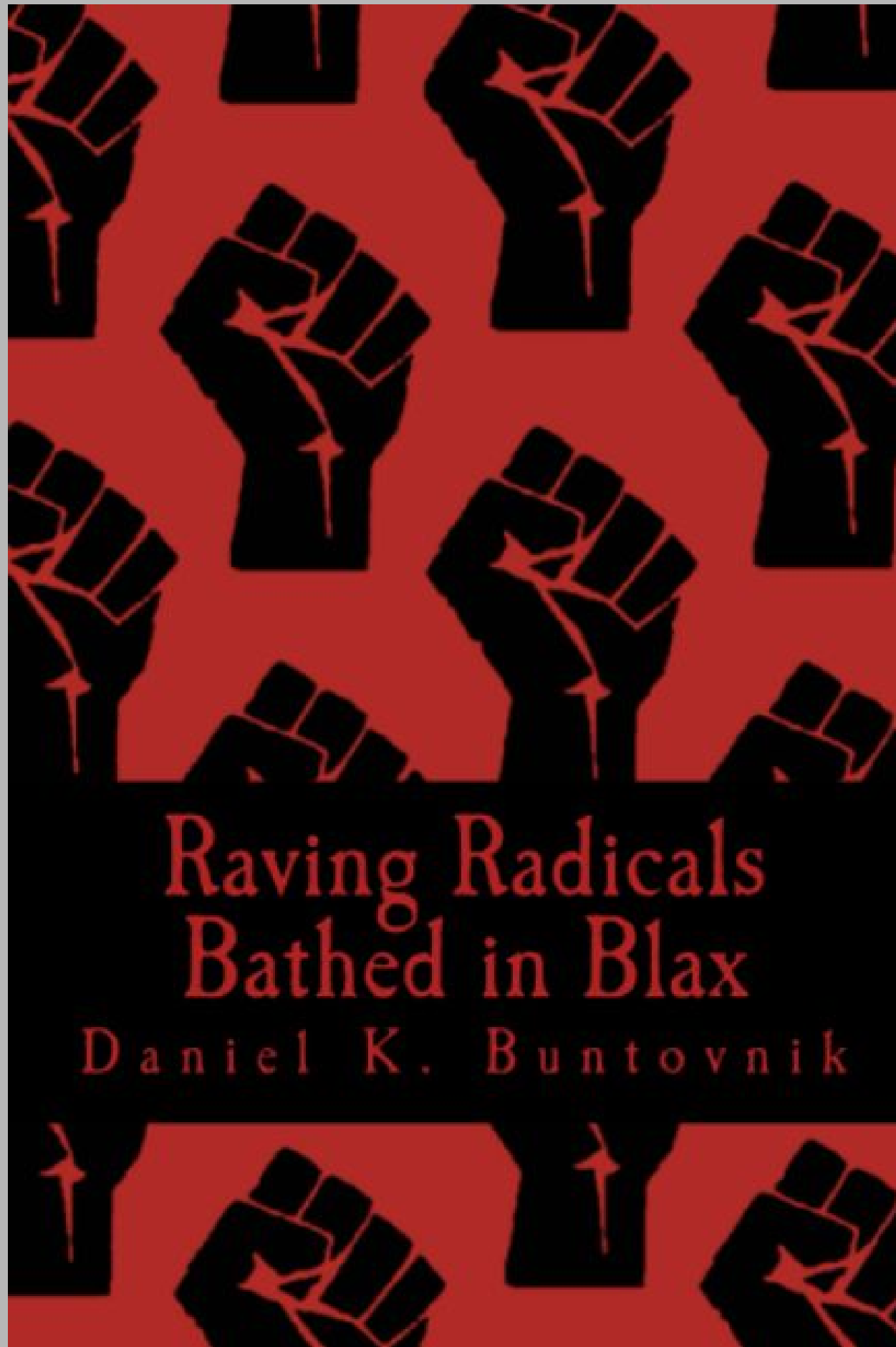
Free edition released 1 June 2020
by the author in solidarity with the uprising
against fascism and racism that began in
Minneapolis and which has spread
around the world.

This book is a novel about an uprising
against fascism and racism that begins in
Minneapolis and spreads around the world.

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as the first official edition, published on
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Please READ, ENJOY, AND SHARE!



raving *radicals*
bathed *in* **blax**



A 21st Century Proletarian Novel

DANIEL K. BUNTOVNIK

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RAVING RADICALS
BATHED IN BLAX

Part I. “A Book Club Gone Awry”

1 – BLAZIN’

“Marco.”

“Polo!”

Izzy gave the glass pipe to Paty and she took a massive rip. Exhaling a mountain of smoke, the ambiance turned a deep grayish purple. Paty handed the bowl to Pedrocco, and he too took an enormous hit.

“Good shit,” Pedrocco croaked throatily after breathing out a shit ton of smoke.

He passed the pipe on the left hand side to his chum Witherslapt. Witherslapt’s beady black eyes sparkled and his wide grin shrunk into a little ring as he wrapped his lips around the end of the pipe, which resembled a phallus. Witherslapt then forked the glass pipe over to Franky; it had almost come full circle now, and Izzy was itching for another gargantuan rip to get himself even more blazed. Being something of a germaphobe, Franky wrapped his hand around the end of the pipe, channeling the smoke through his clenched fist so as to prevent his lips from coming into contact with it.

Paty piped up, “I’m *so chopped!* Ha ha ha!”

Just then, the door creaked open. Tisha took two steps in, smiling. She was wearing an oven mitt and holding a pan of *hachis Parmentier*. Steam rose from the pan and mixed with the thick clouds of marijuana smoke.

“We should really open a window,” Izzy declared after he had already gotten up off the floor.

He opened the window and a rush of fresh air seemed to be sucked in as the clouds of weed smoke quickly dissipated.

“Let’s fuckin’ eat!” Pedrocco said.

Tisha got down on the ground, joined the circle, and hit the bowl a couple times while the others started eating.

“So, for this Wednesday do you guys wanna discuss Debord’s *Society of the Spectacle* or Badiou’s ‘Fifteen Theses on Contemporary Art’?” Izzy asked.

“Meh, I find Debord a bit trite honestly,” Franky said.

“A bit prolix if I do say so myself,” Pedrocco chimed in.

“You know, I actually started reading this article on new developments in Black nationalism—you know, the Black Belt thesis, New Afrika, mass incarceration, and all that jazz,” Witherslapt said. “There’s a lot of relevant issues there, as far as organizing, navigating the current political landscape goes. I mean, stuff that’d be good to know about.”

“Sure,” Izzy replied. “I’m all about that postcolonial jazz.”

Paty was a little too blazed to pay attention to what they were talking about. Anyway, she was more concerned with eating at the moment. She impaled the *hachis Parmentier*’s encrusted surface with her fork and brought the sloshy melange of ground beef and potato to her lips. She also noticed a faint hint of mushroom flavor in the mix, which Tisha did not normally put in her *hachis Parmentier*, but she didn’t say anything. The warm melange tasted pleasant and she gulped it down, repressing the thought of factory farming and deforestation in the Amazon: the price to pay for cheap ground beef available for First World consumption. She had just watched a pro-vegan documentary a couple weeks earlier.

“Good shit,” she said and winked at Pedrocco, echoing his thoughts on the quality of the bud.

Pedrocco grinned back at her and lifted a forkful of *hachis Parmentier* to his mouth.

“Wait, so isn’t this just shepherd’s pie?” he asked, turning his head towards Tisha.

“Nah, dude, it’s *hachis Parmentier*!” Tisha replied with forceful adamance. “This be some real *haute cuisine* shit, son. You call it that and you’re relegating my culinary skills to subaltern status!”

“Ha! Shepherd’s pie? Sounds like some hick town shit,” Izzy interjected.

“Pfft, don’t be such elitists,” Pedrocco chided. “Come revolution time, you can bet your bottom buck we’ll need those so-called ‘hicks’ on our side!”

“Hear, hear, Izzy!” said Witherslapt. “For what it’s worth, in his eleventh thesis on contemporary art, Badiou raises the specter of what he calls an ‘aristocratic-proletarian ethic’. Perhaps there is such a thing as a healthy dose of elitism. Eh, Pedrocco? I really do think we’d do well to study some Badiou and discuss it at our next get together.”

“No socialist revolution worth its salt would have gotten half way off the ground without the support of the peasantry,” Pedrocco shot back. “The peasantry is a powerful force-multiplier which, when incorporated into a popular front, can make any revolutionary movement virtually unstoppable!”

“First hicks, now it’s the peasantry? Come off it, Pedrocco! This is the twenty-first century we’re living in here!” Witherslapt said, beginning to raise his voice. “Update your social analysis a bit! And I thought we all agreed on the tactical superiority of the united front over the popular front at our last meeting!”

Paty finished her serving of *hachis Parmentier* quickly.

“Oh, come on, you guys! Are you seriously going to have this debate now? It’s Friday night; let’s save the intellectual book discussion shiz for when we’re not blazing,” she suggested.

“Yeah. Are we going to that dancehall, or what?” asked Franky.

“Dancehall? Dude, this ain’t the 1890s; it’s a fuckin’ rave,” said Izzy.

“Ha ha, whatever. Dancehall, warehouse, shepherd’s pie, *hachis Parmentier*, I know we all love semantics but let’s just drop some Molly and do this,” Franky retorted.

Pedrocco rolled up a blunt and tucked it behind his ear to save for later, Tisha put the empty pan in the sink downstairs, said goodbye to her cat, Printesa, and the gang was on its way.

“So how’d you hear about this thing anyways?” Franky asked as they strolled along the sidewalk.

“Myspace,” said Paty.

They got to the bus stop, where they all popped XTC pills. It was going to be a wild night.

While they were waiting for the bus, a homeless man sauntered up, asking for money.

Witherslapt's beady right eye sparkled at this hobo, projecting his idealization of homelessness onto him. *What freedom there is in unbound homelessness*, Witherslapt thought to himself, his left eye obscured under a tuft of jet black emo bangs. He gave the bum a few coins.

The gang climbed up onto the bus and paid the \$1.75 fare. Being a Friday night, the bus was quite packed with people, many of them rowdy and drunk. They made their way to the back of the bus, where there were a few seats open. A teenage couple who happened to be African-American were passionately kissing in the seats right before the very back of the bus. Tisha and Paty sat directly behind them.

What joy there is in unfettered sexual expression, Witherslapt pondered to himself as he glanced furtively towards the lovers, the twin pillars of guilt and shame for centuries of white supremacy constructing the framework of his gaze. At times it seemed the scalding pot-induced cultural erasure was so thorough that his closest Ethiopian kin may as well have been Lucy the Australopithecus.

Although the gang was fairly inclined to reject bourgeois mores, Witherslapt felt inhibited in expressing himself around Paty. He knew she was bisexual, but there was something about her that he couldn't quite put his finger on, something uneasy.

Out of the blue, Tisha said, "Hey, you guys feeling funny at all? Guess what: I put shrooms in the *hachis Parmentier*."

"No way! Awesome!" Pedrocco thundered, already rolling hard on the ecstasy.

The forty minute bus ride seemed to take years. It was raining now and Paty looked out the window, her vision illuminated by a panoply of vibrant colors: the streaking red and white lights of automobiles punctuated by green traffic lights, neon shades of the rainbow as the bus passed a gay club, and the flashing blue of several police cars. She was getting crazy visuals from the psilocybin mushrooms.

"Shit's goin' down," she said out loud as three squad cars zoomed past.

An old grey-haired woman sitting a couple of seats away heard this and looked back at her with a scowl. Noticing that her pupils were massively dilated, she glared judgmentally, but to no avail; Paty was oblivious to the old hag.

At one stop, a drunken middle-aged man climbed aboard and, after fumbling in his pocket for change, stumbled and tripped on a kid's foot. Whether the kid had done it intentionally or not, the drunkard ended up face planting with a loud smack and remained motionless until a good Samaritan helped him get up.

"Let me help you up, bro," the good Samaritan said.

At the next stop, a group of transit authorities got on to check tickets. When they got to the drunkard, he vomited on the ticket checker and then passed out. The transit authorities carried him out of the bus at the next stop and cut short the rest of their inspection.

Franky breathed a sigh of relief; he hated to deal with authority figures, especially when he was tripping balls. He remembered the breathing exercises his psychiatrist had taught him when he went to be treated for social anxiety: "Take a deep breath through your nostrils. Breathe out through your mouth."

"Elm Street!" the bus driver called the name of the stop.

"Hey, isn't this where we get down?" Tisha asked.

"Sure as fuck is," confirmed Paty.

They climbed down the steps one by one.

"It's just like two blocks this way," Paty said, leading the way.

Pedrocco remembered the blunt he had stuck behind his ear, grabbed it, and lit up. By this point, they were all stoned out of their minds.

Paty led the group down a dark alleyway and they could start to faintly make out the pulse of a heavily amplified bass. The vibrations continued to grow stronger as they approached the source of the pulsating beat. After turning a corner, they encountered a giant bald-headed bouncer, wearing a tight black muscle shirt and bearing tattoos of naked women, dolphins, and some kind of aquatic dragon around his neck.

"Have fun," he said, opening the door to let them into the

seemingly abandoned warehouse and giving Paty a wink as she was about to cross the threshold.

She gazed back with her solid black eyes and, grinning widely, uttered, "Nice tattoo." She reached to caress the man's neck. It seemed the XTC was making her super handsy.

"Thanks," the bald-headed bouncer croaked.

"What is it?" she questioned, her head cocked sideways.

"Naitaka. Lake demon," the bouncer shot back. "It's an old legend of the Okanakane tribe in British Columbia."

"Cool, it's so rad to meet someone who knows indigenous culture," Paty remarked.

"British Columbia? Hear the herb is pretty off the chains over there," said Izzy.

"Aw yea, you know it, brah. That's where I'm from!" said the bouncer. "I can hook y'all up if need be, later?"

"Nah, man, we got that supply-side. Thanks though," Izzy retorted as a queue of addled youths began to form behind them.

"Whatev's, man, y'all don't know what you're missin' with that B.C. shiz. But let's keep the line flowing," the bouncer said, directing them into the warehouse before turning to inspect the next group of arrivals to the free party.

What they saw upon entering the rave seemed to come from the realm of phantasy. The massive crowd resembled a school of fish: flowing, blurred. A super buff bro was fistpumping on the edge of the crowd and several people were doing electro milky way style dance battling. Izzy looked up and saw more people with glowsticks dangling on the rafters overhead. It was, of course, an unpermitted event.

They started dancing. There was a lineup of DJ's for the night. Presently, it was DJ Flaxseed spinning a minimal synth wave mix. Later, there would be DJ Midi Mutation playing a hardstyle and jumpstyle fusion, DJ Buntuyâv throwing down a new wave house mix, and Cat 500 spinning some cold hypno-pop tracks.

The rave was chaos, but an orderly chaos. The organizers had trained volunteers to do security and make sure people were staying hydrated. They had also taken care to only put the message out on Myspace for a limited amount of time to minimize the chances of the authorities getting wind of the event.

2 – PIGGIES ON THE PROWL

"Dispatch to Officer Peabody. Come in Officer Peabody," a voice on the radio chimed.

"Roger that, Officer Peabody here. What's the deal?"

"We have a report from a property owner; says he was going to put some surplus commodities in his warehouse early this morning and found a bunch of kids partying in it. Address is 8224 34th Street Northeast. Get your ass over there, over."

"Ten-four," Peabody grunted before licking donut glaze residue off his fingertips and glancing at the squad car dashboard's digital time display.

It was 5:10 AM. He had been looking forward to an uneventful conclusion to the night shift. Of course, having signed up to be a professional emergency response provider, what else could a law enforcement officer expect?

"Goddamn punks," he snorted, flipping on his squad car's lights and sirens. The warehouse district was not far off.

The party, naturally, was still raging at that early morning hour; DJ Flaxseed had just come up again to spin another minimal wave set. Tisha, Pedrocco, and Franky had decided to leave around 3:00 AM, but Izzy, Paty, and Witherslapt were in a trance and couldn't stop dancing.

The tattooed bouncer was the first hoodlum to hear the sirens approaching. Beads of sweat began to form around his Naitaka-

inked neck as the increasingly high pitched waves of all too familiar sound slapped his ear drums in shorter and shorter intervals: the crescendo of a Doppler effect. When he saw the flashing blue lights from about two blocks away, he knew shit was about to go down, so he ran inside, barricaded the main entrance to the warehouse with several iron rods, chains, and padlocks, and alerted the rave organizers. DJ Flaxseed got wind of it and put on a track that had a droning yet rhythmic World War II air raid siren looping over a pulsating 4/4 bass.

Upon arrival, Officer Peabody encountered a clusterfuck of police cars and men in blue uniforms milling about. In addition to him, police dispatch had ordered twenty-two other available squad cars to the scene of the rave. He jumped out of his police cruiser and walked up to the man in charge, Lieutenant Jackson, a burly Black man with a thick moustache.

“Jackson, what’s the situation?” Peabody inquired.

“We’ve got the place surrounded. We don’t want any of these punks getting away,” Jackson said through clenched teeth.

“How many do you reckon we’re dealing with here?” asked Peabody.

“Could be hundreds, no way to know until we bust up the joint,” Jackson replied.

“Do they know we’re out here?” Peabody wondered.

“Ha! Most likely. Ain’t you ever busted one of these goddamn things, ya greenhorn? They always got lookouts,” Jackson quipped before turning to direct the other officers.

“C’mon, boys, you know the drill! We got an unlawful public assembly in the first degree on our hands—unlicensed dancehall and malicious trespass. These kids will be so hopped up on rave and club narcotics that they may seem to have superhuman strength, so I want a minimum of three officers subduing each one of these perps. Now let’s kick some ravey-bopper ass!”

With men posted at all of the exits, the remaining officers got in formation outside the main entrance.

“Fuck, it’s locked,” the officer leading the breach squealed.

“That means they know we’re here. Get the battering ram!” Lieutenant Jackson wailed.

The officers formed two parallel lines, one on each side of the

medieval device, and firmly grasped the handles protruding out from its sides. Dangling the hard shaft between them, they began to swing their arms in unison.

“Heave! Ho! Heave! Ho!”

Inside the warehouse, a few dancers near the front door started to notice it shaking, out of sync with the pulsing bass of DJ Flaxseed.

“Oh my God, Paty . . . Izzy, what should we do?” Witherslapt asked, trying to keep from pissing himself as he eyed the jarring doors.

“Let’s go to that side door over there,” Izzy said, gesturing to a dim exit sign across the crowded warehouse.

They made their way through the rave. At this point, word had spread and most people knew the rave was getting busted. A few people started making their way toward the side and back exits, but most people just kept dancing, unable to break free from their trances.

Smash! The door swung open and in burst two dozen police officers with blinding flashlights.

“Draw tasers! Draw tasers! Tase anyone who resists!” Jackson wailed.

Peabody unholstered his taser and turned it to maximum voltage, as did the other officers. More people were starting to freak out now.

Jackson snarled through a bullhorn, “This is the Minneapolis Police Department! This is an unpermitted assembly! You are trespassing! Get on your knees and put your hands on your heads!”

A few people tried to comply with the orders, but they were surrounded by others in the crowd who weren’t complying, so the cops couldn’t even tell, since the non-compliers were blocking their field of vision.

Peabody ran up to a girl, about eighteen years old, who was looking around, looking scared, and he discharged his taser into her abdomen. Before he could observe her drop to the cold concrete floor and contort in violent spasms, he had already taken aim on his next victim.

“What the fuck! Run!” a partygoer shouted.

People started stampeding towards the back and side exits, trampling the ones who were still trying their best to comply with police orders, kneeling down with their hands on their heads.

Lieutenant Jackson saw where the music was coming from, ran up to DJ Flaxseed, gave him a jolt of electroshock, and then started smashing the turntables with his billy club.

“Turn this shit off!” he bellowed as he raised his billy club in what was the beginning of a frenzy of violent pummeling.

Just as Paty, Witherslapt, and Izzy were coming up to the side exit, four more cops came in, tasers drawn. It seemed the only way out now was in a paddy wagon.

“Hold up,” Paty said, raising her hand to motion for them to stop running toward the exit.

“Screw it, man. You saw what they’re doing to those people over there. It’s either we fight or we’re done for,” Izzy said with resolve as his hands formed fists.

“I don’t know, Izzy,” said Witherslapt. “Is violence really our best option now?”

“Izzy’s right. Fight or flight. We tried fleeing, all that’s left now is to put up a fight,” Paty reasoned.

Before she even finished her sentence, Izzy had run up to one of the police officers and sucker-punched him in the face. Soon enough, a few other partygoers joined Izzy and started fighting the cops alongside him. The muscular bald-headed bouncer appeared out of the stampede and wrestled a taser away from one of the cops at the side exit and started repeatedly tasing him. Luckily for the partygoers, the police had woefully underestimated the number of officers that would be needed for this operation. The cops were overwhelmed and Izzy, Witherslapt, and Paty ran outside.

“That shit was crazy!” Witherslapt gasped, hunched over with his hands on his knees and glancing back at the warehouse. He observed now that the extent of its state of disrepair was much worse than he had thought when they arrived earlier.

“Come on, let’s keep going,” Paty said.

Ravers were scattering down all the side streets, many of them still wielding glowsticks, and yet more of them still tripping balls.

“We should get out of the warehouse district,” Izzy said. “The coppers’ll have back up here any moment!”

“We can go to my apartment to lie low,” Paty offered.

The trio wandered down a few side streets and once they felt like they were far enough away from the traumatic scene, Izzy called for a taxi cab on his cell phone.

By the time they made it to Paty’s apartment, they were exhausted. They all lay down together on Paty’s bed, a queen sized mattress laying on the floor, and the next thing they knew, they were sound asleep, dreaming of techno rebellion. A tie-dyed tapestry depicting the goddess Kali with the syllable ‘om’ scrawled across it in Devanagari script radiated over them while Paty’s black night light made everything illuminate with a strange glow, including all of the bodily fluid stains on her mattress. At one point during the night, Witherslapt experienced sleep paralysis; turning conscious but unable to move his body, he was confused and filled with terror. Paty was lying next to him, asleep. In his bizarre mind state, psychological transference occurred; his subjective Self was totally absorbed into the object of his desire. Hallucinating, a snarling incubus used its slimy prehensile limb to manipulate his breasts, as he experienced his Self as a woman. It seemed so real and horrifying.

3 – POST-RAVE KIND OF MOURNING

Paty was the first to wake up, around noon, followed by Witherslapt a few minutes later. He could hear a pot being filled with water and somebody trying to strike a match.

“Dammit,” Paty muttered under her breath. The matches kept extinguishing themselves before she could get the stove lit.

Witherslapt glanced at Izzy, sound asleep, and crawled out of bed. He crept to the kitchen doorway and stopped, observing Paty’s backside. Her waist length hair formed dark leading lines down to her entrancing *derrière*. When she reached into the cupboard to grab the coffee grounds, she got a slight wedgie, and Witherslapt grew aroused. Not wanting to embarrass himself, he retreated, found a copy of *Steal This Book* by Abbie Hoffman, and pretended to read until Paty came back to the room.

“Ah, you’re awake. Would you like some coffee?” she asked. “Flat white, freshly brewed.”

“Oh—yes—I would.”

Near Paty’s floor strewn mattress there was a low coffee table covered in small technicolor tiles. Paty and Witherslapt were sitting there on some pillows, drinking their flat whites, when Izzy woke up.

“Cup of joe?” Paty said, smiling.

“Sure,” wheezed Izzy.

“So, the book club is going pretty well, don’t you think?”

Witherslapt said. He was the most theoretically inclined one of the bunch.

“Yeah, but sometimes I wonder if it doesn’t distract from the more practical aspects of Socialist Alliance. There are rumors that some of the comrades think the book club is creating a sort of elitist clique,” Izzy said.

“Rumors?” Paty probed.

“Well, the other day, Cillian mentioned that the topic of the book club as a distraction from the practical tasks of Socialist Alliance was brought up at the last committee meeting. I believe the exact words he used were ‘ultra-leftist diversion’. Apparently they think our clique is creating some sort of toxic environment of radical chic dick measuring,” Izzy replied.

“A distraction! Sometimes I think anything that doesn’t involve selling newspapers and shaking people down for dues is a distraction for them!” Witherslapt snapped.

“I know, right? Cillian just needs to take a few bong rips and chill the fuck out, stop riding on the coattails of left-liberal reformists,” said Paty. “Do you think the revolutionary left was selling Trotskyite rags during May ’68, or getting blazed and fighting cops? I, for one, believe it was the latter.”

“Agreed,” said Witherslapt, before adding on, “and so what if they looked *très chic* while they did it?”

“Either way, we can prepare a defense of the book club for the next branch meeting,” said Izzy.

“They can’t control what we do outside of Socialist Alliance, but the thing is, they don’t seem to like us operating with any sort of autonomy within the group. It’s like they take it as a threat to their scheme of building up their perfectly obedient little cadre. I swear, I’ve just about had it with this sectarian bullshit,” said Witherslapt.

“Have you done all of the required readings for new members of Socialist Alliance?” Izzy questioned.

“Are you kidding me? Of course I have,” Witherslapt shot back.

“I’m just saying, it’s useless to divorce theory from practice. And let’s be honest, half the time we spend in book club is just blazing up the dope,” said Izzy.

“You’re just parroting Cillian’s clichés,” Paty said accusingly.

“Yeah, Izzy! Do you even realize the implications of what you’re saying? The book club is a space where we can get a better grasp on theory, toy with it in an environment free from the rigid formality of Socialist Alliance, and really invigorate our everyday lives with the manna which is drug-fueled Marxian thought. Live and breathe that thought on the ravefloor, in our homes, workplaces, classrooms . . . wherever we go, and of course that will also inform the course of action we take through formalized political structures. But thinking comes before action! That’s praxis 101! And let’s not pretend that getting blazed on weed doesn’t open up our minds and help us think critically! Slavoj Žižek would probably agree with me!” Witherslapt shot back again.

“Look, let’s just talk about something else, okay?” Izzy said, trying to change the subject.

“Speaking of theory and practice, can you believe last night? Policing a class society if I ever saw it,” Witherslapt said.

“Tell us, Witherslapt, what grand theoretical extrapolations do you make out of pigs busting up an underground dance party?” Paty asked.

“Bourgeois morality is more concerned with the protection of inanimate objects than with the opening up of spaces for revolutionary social gatherings. Our praxis needs to evolve in response to police repression as well as in conjunction with the modes in which music is produced, distributed, and consumed within and outside of communities.” His train of thought started to lose its steam and he trailed off, “Really, it’s quite . . .”

“Yeah—but what’s so revolutionary about a rave?” Izzy asked.

“It’s direct action, propaganda of the deed. Look, you had to punch a frickin’ cop in the face last night. Why? Because we had to, to be free. People demand liberation because it is an imperative, not some wishful possibility,” Witherslapt expounded. “And even if the cops hadn’t crashed the party, we’d still have been taking part in an extralegal, albeit temporary, appropriation of infrastructural capital.”

A subtle smile appeared on Paty’s face. She admired Witherslapt’s adamance. What he lacked in the endowment of his physical package he made up for in theoretical prowess and an edgy hipster emo look.

“I’m gonna have to kick you guys out now. I need to get ready for work,” Paty said.

“Ayeight,” said Izzy.

Paty gave Izzy and Witherslapt each a kiss on the cheek and they went down the stairs of the old apartment building together.

“Wanna blaze some herb before ya go home?” Izzy asked Witherslapt as they stepped outside.

It was a sunny Saturday afternoon in April, the warmest day so far this year.

“Hells yeah, brah,” said Witherslapt.

They meandered over to Powderhorn Park and found a nice spot in the grass under a tree. There was a little snow left, but most of it had already melted.

“Thank God spring came early this year!” Witherslapt exclaimed.

“Yeah, man,” Izzy said, already in the process of rolling a fat joint.

As they were leaving the park, they walked past a newspaper dispenser for the *Sun Tribune* and the headline caught Izzy’s eye: “Botched Rave Bust Leaves 38 Dead.”

“Shit, man, look at this,” said Izzy.

“No way,” Witherslapt said in disbelief. “Do you have a quarter?”

“Yeah, here.”

They sat down on a nearby bench and read the front page article together.

4 – NEWSMAKERS

BOTCHED RAVE BUST LEAVES 38 DEAD

Minneapolis—April 25: 57 people have been detained after an unpermitted assembly held at a warehouse in the Northeast Industrial Park district was raided by Minneapolis Police early Saturday morning, resulting in 38 deaths.

Police were notified of the disturbance by the owner of the property, Glenn Maxwell, of Maxwell Container, a warehousing service company, after he went to drop off goods at the location, which had been out of use for several years.

“I get out of my truck and I step into a puddle of vomit, and that’s when I hear this awful racket come from inside the warehouse,” Maxwell said.

When police arrived, they found that the illegal occupants had barricaded themselves inside the structure.

Minneapolis Police spokesman Jesse Gallagher said, “It’s typical at this type of unauthorized gathering for the crooks to have lookouts posted outside wherever the event is taking place, ready to alert their partners in crime so they can begin destroying evidence in the event of a raid by law enforcement.”

Raves, or ‘free parties,’ are notorious for attracting rampant illegal drug use, solicitation, lewd conduct, underage drinking, and other forms of juvenile delinquency.

Police say that when they entered the building, the crowd became agitated.

“Partygoers immediately began resisting the break up—some even attacked police officers,” Gallagher said.

A stampede broke out as partygoers rushed to the exits, attempting to flee officers.

First responders arrived to find 34 stampede victims dead at the scene.

Deputy Fire Chief Jeanette Bird spoke out in defense of the Fire Department’s response.

“Anytime you have a mass casualty incident on your hands, it’s tough to save everybody, because EMT’s and paramedics are overwhelmed by the sheer volume of casualties. Given the circumstances surrounding an incident like this, EMS protocol does not allow us to intervene until the scene has been safely secured by law enforcement. It is my firm belief that first responders did the best they could to aid those who were injured in a timely fashion,” Bird said.

In addition to the victims of the stampede, three ravers died after being tasered by police. An 18 year old woman and a 22 year old man, whose names have not yet been released, died after police tasered them for resisting arrest. John Oacham, also known as DJ Flaxseed, also died after being tasered by police.

One police officer was killed after an illegal occupant of the warehouse managed to wrestle away the officer’s weapon in the confusion. Police witnesses say the suspect, who is currently at large, is a white male, approximately 6’5” in height, with a shaved head, strong build, and tattoo “sleeves” covering his arms.

“At the end of the day, you have to acknowledge [that] those kids lost their lives, most of them trampled to death by their own friends, because they were [too] doped up to comply with the

simple orders of law enforcement. We need parents to start keeping a closer eye on what their kids are up to, and young people need to grow up a little bit, stop wasting their lives at these stupid rave parties!” Gallagher said.

But some members of the community say police used excessive force in stopping the rave. Twin Cities United Against Excessive Force, an anti-police brutality group, has said that it will release an official statement in the coming days.

All 57 of those arrested remain in police custody and are expected to be charged with an assortment of crimes: disorderly conduct, assault on a police officer, possession and distribution of various narcotics, resisting arrest, illegal trespass, unlawful assembly, and inciting a riot.

Police have so far declined to estimate how many of the suspected unlawful occupants of the warehouse escaped during the chaotic raid.

Anyone with information relating to the incident is encouraged to submit a tip to Minneapolis Police. The Police Department is offering a \$1,000 reward for any information leading to the capture of an escaped raver and a \$20,000 reward for any information leading to the capture of the man suspected of killing a police officer.

Business owners in the Industrial Park district, meanwhile, are encouraged to remain vigilant and ensure that their facilities are adequately secured.

5 – WEEKLY BRANCH MEETING

The following Monday evening was the weekly meeting of the Minneapolis branch of Socialist Alliance. As a national organization operating in solidarity with an international association of left-wing political parties called the Committee for a Trotskyite International, Socialist Alliance had noteworthy pockets of activists, referred to as branches, in Minneapolis-Saint Paul, New York City, Seattle, San Francisco, Chicago, San Antonio, and Cincinnati. Lacking the resources to rent out their own office, the branch had agreed to hold its meeting that week in the backroom of Gene Debs Books, a radical bookstore in the Whittier neighborhood near the Somali Mall, which carried an assortment of communist, anarchist, and left-liberal-progressive literature.

Cillian, the longstanding chairman of the Minneapolis branch of Socialist Alliance, would be chairing the meeting that night, with Katryn taking minutes.

“I see we have a couple new people here today, so before we get to the agenda, why don’t we go around the room and have everybody say your name and what you do, or maybe one interesting thing you did in the last week? So . . . I’m Cillian, I’m a full-time organizer for Socialist Alliance and current chair of the branch committee, and this week I started playing the accordion again after a three year hiatus,” was how Cillian began the meeting.

“I’m Katryn, I’m a student at the University of Minnesota and this week I didn’t do anything interesting.”

“My name is Marita. I work as a personal care assistant.”

“Hey, I’m Jerry. I’m one of the masses of unemployed; lost my job last year when the company did a round of political firings for union organizing activity. I started reading Marx’s *Capital, Volume I* this week.”

“I’m Brian and I’m a call center drone.”

“Yo, I’m Izzy, also a student at the U of M.”

“I’m Paty. I’m an artist and server at a coffee shop.”

“My name is Pedrocco. I’m studying pre-med at Augsburg College.”

“I’m Mohammed, or you can just call me Mo; I’m a full-time organizer for Socialist Alliance and this week I negated the negation.”

Cillian chuckled.

“I’m Franky and I’m a fast-food worker, yo.”

“Name’s Jon, I’m a light rail tram conductor, and I built a treehouse for my nephew this weekend.”

“I’m Tisha, I’m studying culinary arts at Le Sacré Bleu Culinary Academy, and I went to a crazy underground rave party this weekend.”

Witherslapt swallowed and made brief eye contact with Izzy, remembering the article from the newspaper. Had no one told Tisha about the deaths? Things were already bad, with the Socialist Alliance branch committee criticizing their constant recreational partying and their book club activities for distracting them from the practical tasks of building a political party of the *avant-garde* working class: selling the newspaper and paying dues. Plus, there were new people here, and who knew what kind of impression that could make.

“I’m Witherslapt, I’m majoring in Slavic and Eurasian studies at Macalester College; didn’t really do anything interesting lately,” he said quickly, turning and smiling expectantly at the woman on his left to introduce herself before anyone could comment on the rave incident.

“I’m Jane, nurse at Saint Joseph’s, and mother of two children.”

“My name is Elizabeth; I heard about Socialist Alliance from my friends at Minneapolis Community and Technical College and wanted to learn more about it.”

“Yo, I’m Randy, heard about the Socialist Alliance at the table you guys had set up at the protest at the Capitol Building and thought I’d check it out. I’m a postal worker. Oh, and I quit smoking five days ago!”

“Hi, I’m Yvonne and I’m a law student at William Mitchell.”

“My name’s Phillip. I’m a psychiatric researcher at the University of Minnesota.”

After everyone had introduced themselves, the first order of business on the agenda was current events. Like any given week, the members of Socialist Alliance discussed rumblings in the labor movement, the latest protest trends of oppressed groups, ongoing wars and imperialist saber rattling, the government’s latest austerity measures designed to attack the living standards of the working class, and so and so forth.

“Did anyone hear about all those people who died at that rave last Saturday?” Marita asked.

“Yeah, they’re going to need some damn good lawyers,” Yvonne said.

“Such an unnecessary tragedy,” said Jon. “Those fu—I’m sorry—I mean, those pigs will never see justice! They come into our communities—they’re murdering our youth! I’m going to put in a word about this at the Amalgamated Streetcar Conductors’ Union.”

“Tisha, didn’t you say something about going to a rave this weekend?” Katryn asked.

“Point of process! *No*, she, uh, I mean, it was a different rave, not the same one at all,” Witherslapt interrupted.

“Witherslapt, that was not a point of process. Let’s please not break the stack. If you want to say something, you should raise your hand and get on stack, or if you do come in out of stack, it should be in response to a question aimed towards you,” Cillian explained. “I think Tisha can speak for herself.”

Witherslapt murmured, “Sorry,” and averted his eyes.

“Oh my God, people died at the rave?” Tisha seemed genuinely surprised.

Witherslapt put his palm to his face.

“Okay! It *was* the same rave! But Tisha left before it got busted,” he explained.

“Whoa, so you were there too?” Randy asked.

“No, I mean—well—I mean, Tisha was just telling me about it the other day. I wasn’t actually *there*,” Witherslapt lied.

“Alright, well, that’s all the time we have for current events, I’m afraid,” said Cillian. “We need to move on because the next item on the agenda is super important and I want to make sure we have plenty of time to plan everything out. As I’m sure most of you are aware, the May 1st protests are coming up in a few days,” Cillian said.

“May 1st protests?” Elizabeth asked.

“Yes! May 1st, also known as May Day, is the true Labor Day; it’s International Workers’ Day. It’s recognized as Labor Day virtually everywhere in the world, *except* the U.S.,” Witherslapt explained. “Ironically though, the tradition actually originated here in the U.S. It started out as a day to remember the Haymarket martyrs: late 19th century immigrant workers in Chicago gunned down for their radical politics. They were organizing for the eight hour workday. Then the tradition kind of died out in the U.S., particularly after the government declared May 1st to be Americanization Day, which was later dubbed Loyalty Day, basically just another day of mindless patriotism. But ever since 2005, the tradition has sort of been revived, especially by immigrants’ rights groups.”

“Interesting,” Elizabeth said.

“Thanks, Witherslapt, for that awesome tidbit,” said Cillian.

The Socialist Alliance then proceeded in carefully planning out their strategy for political intervention in the May Day protest. The main protest in Minnesota that year was being organized by a coalition of labor and immigrants’ rights groups, who were planning to march down John Ireland Boulevard from the Cathedral of Saint Paul to the Minnesota State Capitol Building, with rallies being held at both ends of the march.

Eventually, the topic of the stampede and taser deaths at the rave came up again. It was suggested that, given the recent tragedy at the warehouse, Socialist Alliance ought to take a position on police brutality in order to opportunistically attempt to make themselves more relevant.

Jon and Mo both argued for a vocal condemnation of police brutality to be part of the organization’s strategy for political intervention in the May Day protest, while Cillian argued that pushing the issue too far could be risky.

“We should campaign for citizen review boards which would have full control over investigations of police brutality, as well as the hiring and firing of officers. If we raise this demand loud and clear on May 1st, our message is sure to resonate with progressive-minded folks who are waking up to the reality of police violence, but are still on the fence about whether or not to come over to the Marxist camp,” Jon said.

“Look, I wholeheartedly agree that we need to reach out, find common ground, and work with those communities who face disproportionate levels of police brutality, but coming in with our outsider message could just alienate them from us,” Cillian passionately put forth with conniving ideological calculation. “We lack a strong enough presence in the oppressed communities to justify pushing the issue on their behalf. They need allies, not knights in shining armor.”

In the end, Cillian’s argument seemed to win out, as usual.

Pedrocco stroked his dirty moustache while the breeze from the ceiling fan gently blew his bleached blonde hipster euro-mullet. He felt that something was not quite right with Cillian’s argument. *He* felt a strong connection to the community, but he had to admit, Socialist Alliance, for all its vanguardist pretensions, was pretty irrelevant to the lives of virtually all of the Twin Cities’ working class people, much less to those rural workers and working farmers in the surrounding areas, dotted with small mining, manufacturing, and meatpacking towns. How could they make any inroads at all with such a cautious approach?

“Alright, let’s take a break and come back in fifteen minutes,” Cillian said.

Pedrocco, whose involvement in the Socialist Alliance was largely defined by mackivism (that is, ‘macking’ on activist chicks) strutted up to Elizabeth, one of the new faces.

“Nice of you to come, girl,” Pedrocco said.

“Uh, thanks,” said Elizabeth, clearly feeling uncomfortable.

“Did you study Marx?” he asked.

“A little bit. For my sociology class,” she said.

“I thought so, cuz you seem like you’re really smart,” he said.

“Um . . . thanks,” she said with a forced smile.

During the rest of the meeting, people decided what roles they would take on at the May 1st protest. It was decided that Izzy, Pedrocco, and Witherslapt would be in charge of selling *Equality*, the newspaper of Socialist Alliance. Paty, Franky, and Tisha would be in charge of carrying the Socialist Alliance banner in the march. Other members of Socialist Alliance would be tasked with painting protest signs as well as selling the paper and getting contact information from potential recruits.

6 – TAKING TISHA OUT

Later that night, after the meeting, Tisha went home. She lived in a duplex on the north side of Minneapolis with two roommates, but they had gone on a road trip together and would be gone the whole month. She was playing with Printesa, her short-haired calico cat, when she heard a knock at the door. A moment passed and the knock came again. It was louder this time: more like a violent pounding than a knock. The pounding continued and immediately Tisha could tell something was not right. She crept towards the peephole to see who was there. Then, just as she had put her eye up to the hole, the door was rammed open, smashing her in the nose. She felt it crack loudly and blood began pouring out of her sinuses. Tisha stumbled backwards in shock and collapsed, half of her body landing on the couch.

“Police, bitch!” Officer Peabody shouted as he forcibly entered the residence, followed by three more officers. “We know you were at that rave! You’re going to jail!”

Peabody whipped out his billy club and bludgeoned Tisha several times with it before cuffing her hands.

“You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to an attorney. If you cannot afford one, one will be provided for you,” Peabody mumbled as he dragged Tisha across the living room floor.

Just then, Prințesa jumped off of a bookshelf and sunk her claws deep into Peabody's left eye before scratching down the rest of his cheek.

"Shit! Shit! What the fuck?" Peabody squealed as he recoiled, dropping Tisha to the floor unconscious.

Officer Vang, another cop on the scene whose grandfather had fought for U.S. Army Intelligence in Vietnam, grabbed Prințesa to try getting her off of Peabody's face. He managed to get her off, but she scratched his forearms, so he dropped her and she ran outside.

"Shit, man, we'll get you to the doctor soon," Vang said.

Vang grabbed Tisha and threw her in the back of his squad car.

Another officer helped Peabody to his squad car and drove him to the emergency room, lights flashing and sirens blaring.

"That damn cat," Peabody moaned as he bled profusely.

7 – INTERROGATION

Tisha was naked, swimming in a dark spot. Squirt. An ink jet flowed over her skin, staining it like Just for Men on a man's beard whose color he wants to change. The squid's sheath contracted and relaxed rhythmically. She was rising fast now. The squid had lassoed her around the waist with its horned tail. It felt like it was swimming straight up now, faster and faster. Tisha could feel cold water rushing through her hair.

Two shadowy figures towered over Tisha. One dumped a bucket of ice water onto her face, while another held down the rag.

It was then that Tisha came to and realized that there was no squid. That was just some fucked up dream. This was reality, and it was even more fucked up than her hallucination. She gasped for air but it felt like she was drowning.

The rag came off and Tisha was blinded by the bright lamp shining down in her face.

A shadowy figure said, "Tisha Ulroy, we know you were at that criminal rave."

"No, I wasn't, I swear!" Tisha said.

"Silence! Tell us who you were there with and we'll let you off easy."

"I want my lawyer!" Tisha screamed.

Once again the privately contracted interrogators began the waterboarding procedure.

"Noooo!" Tisha screamed.

Tisha was in the custody of the federal government's key intelligence-gathering and domestic surveillance organ: the Homeland Intelligence Agency, or H.I.A. Formed during the early years of the post-9/11 era, the H.I.A. had, in less than a decade, superseded all other intelligence agencies in size and scope. Although it operated at first under the umbrella of the Department of Homeland Surveillance, the H.I.A. was later granted independence in a move designed to provide greater leeway for its Special Activities Division.

From behind a one-way mirror, Agent Taylor looked on with a smirk on his face. Agent Greaves stepped up behind him in the darkness and put her hand on his shoulder.

"Cup of joe?" she asked, holding two Starbucks Americano grandes.

"Sure thing," he responded.

"Greaves, there's one thing I want to know: If this little commie punk was at that rave, her little commie punk friends must have been there with her. What's the status of our moles inside Socialist Alliance? Why isn't our intelligence enough to make a move on these commie dipshits?" Agent Taylor said as he sipped his Starbucks latte.

"It's that crafty little commie bastard Witherslapt. He's too cautious. His clever wordplay inside the Socialist Alliance Minneapolis branch meeting doesn't allow us to implicate the others, but we think this 'book club' may be a rogue element, an ultra-left social circle operating within the Socialist Alliance milieu," Greaves coolly stated.

"Then it was this radical 'book club' who was at the rave?" Taylor asked.

"We can't be sure," Greaves responded.

Agent Taylor pounded his fist on the one-way window in frustration. "If we can't be sure, then we'll just have to make her talk. I need results *now*. Not next week, not tomorrow. Now! There's a cop killer on the loose and our directive is to squash this pinko sect before they rake any more goddamn muck in the labor unions. The last thing we need is a full-fledged movement for a nationwide general strike right when we're trying to hoodwink the sheeple into getting behind another war in the Middle East," he spat.

Taylor stepped out into the hall and then into the interrogation room.

"Stop the waterboarding," he commanded. "Take off her blindfold."

Agent Taylor pulled up a chair and sat in it backwards, with his stomach pressed against the backrest, across from Tisha. A hand from the shadows pulled the sack off of Tisha's face. Agent Taylor caressed her cheek with the back of his hand. He was the first person she had laid eyes on since Peabody took her into custody.

"Hello, Tisha. Look. We know you were involved with those socialist snots. Just admit it and I can make this whole nightmare end."

Tisha responded by promptly spitting a big ass loogie into Agent Taylor's face.

"Eat a dick, cockbag!" she bellowed. The sound waves emitting from her mouth seemed to blast out with uncanny discord, almost like she was possessed by some malevolent spirit and her next move might be supernatural.

"Jesus shitting Christ," Agent Taylor said. "Get that burlap sack back on this bitch's face."

A strange man stepped out of the shadows with a maniacal twinkle in his bird-like, severely sanpaku eyes.

"Initializing waterboard procedure, Agent."

8 – FRIENDS TO THE RESCUE

Paty was just getting home from work after another long day of serving shitbag Generation X aged yuppies their mochaccinos when she saw Tisha's cat Prințesa at the front door of her apartment building.

"That's strange. Why aren't you at home with Tisha, Prințesa?"

Paty kneeled down and pet the cat. She fondled Prințesa's ears and sensually slid her hand down the cat's back, until she felt something wet and sticky. Blood.

"Oh my God! What happened, Prințesa?" Paty asked.

Prințesa started meowing and nudging Paty's legs with her head.

"What is it, girl? Trouble? Did you get into a fight with that alley cat again? Let's get you back to Tisha. She must be worried sick about you."

Paty picked up Prințesa and placed her in the woven basket attached to the front of her fixed gear bicycle, departing immediately for Tisha's crib.

When she got there, she stumbled off the bike, not knowing what had come over her. A sudden rush of anxiety turned her legs into flaccid hot dogs. She grabbed the cat and managed to get up the stoop, onto the porch. She walked to Tisha's door and noticed that it looked damaged. She knocked. She waited. She knew something was up.

Just then, the old lady living in the other unit of the duplex opened her front door.

"If ya lookin' for yo' friend, I'm afraid you shan't find her 'round these parts," the old woman chirped, her head sticking out the door, cracked open just enough for it to protrude.

"What happened?" Paty asked.

"Policemen done come for her," the old woman said gravely.

"*What?* No . . ."

"Yep. Well, I done a-reckon ye oughts tuh go down to thar precinct and sortle it all out," the old woman said.

"Thanks for the advice," Paty said. She paused and looked into the old woman's eyes, which seemed to hold some sort of sentiment of solidarity behind them.

"You look lack a neiz gurl, why dun ya come in an' have a cup a tea with mah?"

"I actually need to get going," Paty explained.

"Ah well, dahlin'. I s'posin' ya know thar ain't no sense in a-what they dun," the old woman gibbered.

Prințesa meowed and Paty looked down at her, still in her arms.

"I don't suppose I could leave her here with you?" Paty asked.

"Soitainly, dahlin', Lawd knows I got me scads o' felines as it be!"

"Thanks," Paty replied. "I'm sure Tisha will appreciate you keeping on eye on her until she gets back." She sat Prințesa down and patted her head. "Goodbye."

"Gahbaye nah," the old woman said. Prințesa began rubbing her head on the woman's leg.

Paty stepped off the porch onto the duplex's stoop and began making her way to the street sign where she had chained her bicycle. The temperature was a sweltering degree, unusually hot for this time of year. Paty whipped out her android phone and speed dialed Pedrocco.

"Yo, Paty, what it does?" Pedrocco answered.

"Pedroc, I'm afraid something's happened to Tisha," Paty said as she entered the combination code into her bike lock.

"What do you mean?" Pedrocco asked.

"Prințesa came to my place and she had blood on her. I went to bring her back to Tisha's but when I got there the door was all

smashed up and this old neighbor lady said the cops came and took Tisha,” Paty explained.

“That shit’s fucked up,” Pedrocco said.

“Yeah, so what do we do now? Where are you?” Paty asked.

“I’m over here at Franky’s crib, chillin’ with Izzy and Witherslapt. Why don’t you get over here and we’ll figure out what’s goin’ on?” responded Pedrocco.

“Alright, I’ll be there soon. Bye,” said Paty.

“Catch you on the flip, Chip,” Pedrocco said.

Paty hopped on her fixed gear bicycle and peddled like a madwoman to Uptown, where Franky lived. When she got there, she ran to the intercom and pounded the keys frantically. Franky buzzed her in and in a matter of seconds she was in his apartment.

Izzy took a gigantesque hit off of a blunt and exhaled an obscene quantity of marijuana smoke just as Paty entered.

“You guys, Tisha’s in trouble! The police took her! We have to do something!” Paty exclaimed, covered in sweat and feeling a bit dizzy.

Witherslapt was sitting in a sleek brown leather swivel chair, looking out the window. He turned around slowly, stroking his chin as if he was deep in thought. He brushed his hipster emo bangs out of his eyes and tapped his foot on the hardwood floor.

“Somehow I knew this day would come,” he said.

“What are you talking about, Witherslapt?” Franky asked.

“Yesterday, after the branch meeting, I stayed to get tea at Shaah Hawash. You know, that new East African cafe down the street from Gene Debs Books? Anyways, I’m sitting there looking out the window and I see that Phillip dude from Socialist Alliance. He’s looking over his shoulders, like he’s sketched out or something, and then this white van pulls up and these guys that totally look like cops get out,” said Witherslapt.

“Cops?” Franky gasped.

“Yeah, they weren’t wearing uniforms or anything; they just looked horribly square. You know, real *Leave It to Beaver* types. At first I thought they were there to harass him. I got up to defend him, thinking this is a comrade in distress, but then as I’m heading for the door, I see they’re getting all buddy-buddy with each other, and Phillip hops in the van with them. So once they pull back out

into the street, I go outside and hop on my bicycle, start following them from afar,” Witherslapt elaborated.

“What happened then?” Franky inquired, adjusting his do-rag.

“I followed them all the way to the Police Federation Building and saw him get out with them! They all went in there together!” Witherslapt exclaimed.

“And you didn’t tell anyone about this . . . why?” said Franky.

“I think Phillip might not be the only government informant inside Socialist Alliance,” Witherslapt said. “Lately I’ve been noticing some strange behaviors exhibited not only at branch meetings, but also at some of the demonstrations we’ve been at, from different so-called ‘comrades’.”

“You’re talkin’ double agents?” Franky asked.

“Precisely,” responded Witherslapt. “I didn’t tell you guys anything because I didn’t want anyone to suspect that we knew something. As long as they don’t know that we do know that they’re double agents, we can still fuck with ’em on an information level,” he continued.

Pedrocco interrupted, “Well, then, we’ll just have to take these homeboys out,” and cocked his Glock pistol. Out on the North Side slums, a dude like Pedrocco had to be packin’ heat, unless he wanted to be minced meat.

“Hold on a sec’, Pedroc,” Paty said. “Just taking out the moles isn’t going to free Tisha.”

“Yeah, but it’d sure teach ’em a lesson,” Franky said in Pedrocco’s defense.

“We need a comprehensive strategy,” said Witherslapt, his voice conveying a sense of authority, as if years of reading every piece of Marxist literature he could get his hands on had endowed him with some unusual kind of wisdom. Communist revolutionary sages have been a godsend to countless Maoist guerrilla units, but never did Ho Chi Minh, Mao Tse-Tung, or even Lin Biao or Li Feng, have a mind quite as ruthless, quite as calculating as our dear Witherslapt. He came from a long line of thinkers, but his line of revolutionary dogma was by far the most well-informed.

“But when do we launch the true revolutionary red horror show?” Pedrocco said, setting his pistol down on top of a worn out copy of *Subject Object Cognition* by V. A. Lektorsky.

“In time, my friend. In due time,” Witherslapt responded, gently placing his hand on top of Pedrocco’s as it loosely caressed the firearm on top of the material remnants of a Soviet psychologist’s mental gymnastics.

Witherslapt’s new purple highlights were really cute in his jet black emo haircut, and caught Paty’s eye. It was the first time she had consciously noticed them since he got them last week and pointed them out to everyone after he had just come back from the hair salon. She thought it was so cool that he had purple highlights.

“But back to the matter at hand; if we want to free Tisha, we’re going to need support. If we can mobilize a mass movement in support of her release, there’ll be no way she won’t get free,” Witherslapt put forth.

“Ain’t nobody got time for that Free Mumia shit, dawg,” Pedrocco said, getting rowdy, his chest pumped up like a silverback gorilla.

“Pedroc, calm down,” Paty pleaded.

“Fuck nah, I ain’t calmin’ down!” Pedrocco shouted. “I got my gat, I got the balls, now it’s time for me to bust my comrade out.”

Pedrocco picked up his pistol and took a massive rip off a joint that Izzy had just lit, taken three puffs of, and passed to him. He began making his way to the door, but Witherslapt stepped in the way.

“Pedrocco, I care about Tisha too, but that’s a suicide mission. Listen to me. If we go on in as a political force, build the mass movement, we can get Tisha out and live to enjoy freedom not only with her, but with the whole of society. Being too quick to mobilize, without having adequate organization, will render our efforts futile, even counterproductive to the cause. We need mobilization *and* organization. Look, I know a way we can win Tisha’s freedom within the next forty-eight hours. Just give me a chance to explain the game plan,” Witherslapt pleaded.

“Alright, man, alright,” Pedrocco said. A few seconds were enough for him to realize how brash his hot-headedness could be.

“We’re gonna bust her out. But we need good public relations so that our direct action can inspire the masses to join the struggle. That’s where our propaganda arm comes in. We retaliate, we come

down hard on whatever detention facility the pigs are holding Tisha at, and we get her out, but we get the word out too. Network. Let people know that the resistance isn’t just make believe.”

“Brilliant!” Paty exclaimed.

Witherslapt paused, licked his lips. His eyes were darting around, making contact with each of his comrades.

“Look at what’s going on right now. The fight for a minimum living wage is on, meatpacking workers are radicalizing, teachers are on strike, longshoremen and rail workers are attempting to shut down the war machine by refusing to handle militarist materials, women are demanding an end to slut-shaming and victim-blaming, queer folk and trans people are increasingly highlighting the limitations of holding legalized gay marriage as the be-all and end-all of liberation under the capitalist paradigm, immigrants are fighting back against deportations, students are demanding the right to debt-free education, youth are organizing to put a stop to police brutality and racial profiling; everywhere, people’s consciousness is turning against the police state. These social movements are diffuse, but if we show people how their grievances intertwine, we can unite them into a potent political force. We can fan the flames of these sporadic worker and youth uprisings into full blown mass rebellion!” he went on.

“Some kind of infernal Marxian blaze . . .” Paty mused.

“But how are we gonna win them over to our side?” Franky asked.

“We’re already on their side, Franky,” said Witherslapt. “We’re all proletarians at the end of the day. Our class interests are the same due to our relations to the modes of production.”

“But how we gonna make them fight?” Pedrocco questioned, stroking his dirty hipster ’stache and furtively eyeing his loaded pistol.

“Guerrilla radio,” Witherslapt said with a wink. “Agitation.”

“Pamphlets, graffiti, networkjacking, you name it, I can do it,” Paty said. In addition to her love for the arts, Paty was quite computer savvy, and could probably hack into any system, the same way a mouse could hack through a slice of Swiss cheese.

“Paty knows what’s up. That’s exactly what I’m talkin’ ’bout. Alternative media. Revolutionary media. Armed propaganda,” Witherslapt said. “We kidnap Phillip, and we can extort him for all

the info he's got on the precinct station, or wherever they're holding Tisha. Then, while we still have him silent, we go in guns blazing to wherever they're keeping Tisha and bust her out," he continued.

"Alright, man, let's go get this Phillip mothafucka. But where's his ass at?" Pedrocco asked.

"Oh man, I didn't think of that. We're gonna have to wait 'til the next Socialist Alliance branch meeting, next week," Witherslapt answered.

"Man, fuck that! You said we'd bust her out by tomorrow!" Pedrocco screamed.

"—within forty-eight hours," Witherslapt mumbled.

"Whatever!" Pedrocco shot back.

"There has to be some way we can get to this Phil dude," Izzy said.

"Wait, I have an idea," said Paty. "I can call Cillian and tell him I need Phillip's phone number in order to talk to him about collaborating on making protest placards for the International Workers' Day march. Then I'll call Phillip and tell him I want to meet up because I have some awesome idea for a protest sign, but I don't have the materials. Once we get him between our fingers, we tell him to fess up on what happened to Tisha."

Pedrocco, Izzy, Witherslapt, and Franky were all in accord with the plan: Paty would obtain Phillip's phone number through Cillian. Then, using her skills in the art of flirtation, she would get Philip to come to her apartment with the supplies so they could work on protest signs for the May Day march together. Using this pretext to lure the prey, Izzy, Franky, Witherslapt, and Pedrocco would be hiding in her living room closet, and then they would all run out at the same time and duct tape Phillip to a chair and demand that he tell them where Tisha was being held. The plan was formed; now it was only a matter of putting it into action.

9 – DANCE WITH THE DEVIL

Since Franky's crib was quite macho, with posters of bikini-clad models covering much of the walls, and men's boxer briefs and grape blunt wrap packaging strewn all over the floor and furniture, the gang realized that Phillip might get spooked if Paty tried to pass off Franky's apartment as her own; so they agreed to meet up again later that day, in the evening, at Paty's place in South Minneapolis.

Cillian did not suspect anything out of the ordinary when Paty contacted him asking for Phillip's number. The Socialist Alliance chairman was aware of the fact that Paty was an accomplished artist, as she had taken her portfolio to a branch meeting once. After he recalled having been particularly impressed by her socialist realist lithographs and neo-expressionist found object mosaics, he thought it would have made more sense if she had been assigned to protest placard painting in the first place, so she should, by all means, collaborate with Phillip.

Now that they had the worm's number, it was time to call him up.

Ring. Ring.

"Hello?"

"Hey, Phillip, this is Paty. You know, from Socialist Alliance. Listen, I know we decided at the branch meeting that you were supposed to be in charge of making signs for the May Day protest,

but I just had this really great idea for some anti-war, pro-labor signs and I know you have all the sign making materials, so I thought maybe you could come over to my place tonight and we could work on the signs together. Are you busy?"

"Not at all, I can be right over. But where do you live?" Phillip said, seizing the opportunity to get closer to a female Socialist Alliance member. Trained by the H.I.A. in infiltration of environmentalist and other left-wing groups, he knew the best way to gather info on radical activists was to enter their polyamorous networks. Like semen, secrets were always spilled in bed, naked.

But two could play at that game.

"I live just off of Lake Street, not far from El Mercado Mundial," Paty said. "It's a big apartment complex."

"Oh, I know just where that is," said Phillip.

"Great, so just give me a ring on the phone when you're outside the building with the sign-making stuff and I'll let you up," Paty replied.

"Okay, see you soon," Phillip said.

"See you!" Paty exclaimed before ending the phone call.

Franky breathed a sigh of relief. He had been on edge, trying not to breathe too loudly so Phillip wouldn't hear any background noise and suspect that there were other people with Paty.

The next twenty minutes went by relatively quickly. After Paty called Phillip, Pedrocco turned on Conservative Cable News, or CCN, which he liked to watch just for the sake of irony. Jean-Claude Huntington, one of the network's most visceral pundits, was on, seething over immigration reform.

Then, Paty's phone rang.

"Oh my God, it's Phillip! Okay, everyone get in the closet. Quick!" Paty said.

Witherslapt, Pedrocco, Franky, and Izzy crammed themselves into the walk-in closet and then Paty answered the phone.

"Hey, Phil. You're here? Okay, great. Just a second, I'll come downstairs to let you in. Okay. Bye," Paty said over the phone.

Paty went downstairs and opened the door to her apartment building. Phillip was there, standing outside in the moonlight. For a government agent infiltrating a left-wing activist group, he

definitely looked the part, with his Che Guevara-esque patchy beard and a purple SEIU T-shirt.

"Come in," said Paty flirtatiously.

They came up to Paty's apartment unit and she opened the door.

"Would you like a drink or something?" she asked.

"Sure," Phillip said, taking a seat on a pillow next to the coffee table with technicolor tiles. "So what was your big idea for the signs?" he asked.

Just then, Izzy, Franky, Pedrocco, and Witherslapt all ran out of the closet at once and each of them grabbed one of Phillip's limbs.

"Hey, what are you guys doing here? Wait, what the hell! What are you doing? Let go of me!" Phillip pleaded to no avail.

"Shut up, fool! We know you're a mothafuckin' double crosser," Franky said.

"I don't know what you're talking about! Double crosser?" Phillip said unconvincingly. "Paty, talk some sense into your friends," he continued.

"Silly, silly Phillip. If that *is* your real name. Do you really think this isn't exactly the position I wanted you to be in?" Paty taunted.

Pedrocco punched Phillip in the face with a loud smack. The four young men then lifted Phillip and set him in a wooden kitchen chair.

"Alright, Paty. You duct tape him while we hold him down," Pedrocco said.

After Phillip was completely restrained, the five young people sat around the kitchen table and smoked a bowl. They decided it would be more fun to interrogate Phillip if they were high on THC.

Paty exhaled a bunch of cannabis fumes into Phillip's face, which had a huge black eye now due to Pedrocco's blow.

"So Phillip, where's Tisha?" Witherslapt asked.

"If I tell you, will you let me go?" Phillip responded.

"Don't evade our questions, you piece of shit," Izzy said.

Pedrocco cocked his pistol and aimed it at the H.I.A. informant's face.

"Last chance, Philly boy," Pedrocco said mockingly before pistol-whipping him.

Phillip started crying. "Please . . . please. Just . . . please don't hurt me. I was just doing my job," he squeaked.

“No sympathy for the devil,” Pedrocco snarled before punching him in the face again.

Paty chortled out loud, took another massive rip, and passed the bowl on the left hand side to Franky.

“Now tell us where Tisha is before we end this the brutal way,” Witherslapt said.

“Okay, okay. You win. You win, you socialist fucks,” said Phillip, blood beginning to flow from both of his nostrils. “The Homeland Intelligence Agency needed a pretext for repressing you radical activist pricks. The cop-killing at the rave, along with Tisha’s confirmation of her presence there around the time of murder, was more than sufficient grounds to justify her extraordinary rendition. She’s being held at a black site.”

“Where’s the black site, Phil?” Pedrocco shouted.

“Underground,” Phillip coughed. “The black site is underground. It’s a subterranean bunker complex located somewhere in the vicinity of Minnehaha Falls.”

“How the fuck we s’posed to get down there?” Franky yelled before slapping Phillip with the back of his hand. “Shovels?”

“The labyrinth,” Phillip gurgled, “can be accessed through a sewage tunnel found along the Mississippi River bank, draining under the Ford Parkway Bridge.”

“See, that wasn’t so hard now, was it?” said Franky.

“I just don’t understand one thing,” said Witherslapt. “Why, Phillip?”

“Why what, socialist fuck?” Phillip spat.

“Why betray the working classes? Why work against the ultimate triumph of social liberation? Why struggle against the abolition of exploitation, racism, sexism, and imperialism?”

Witherslapt questioned.

Phillip began to laugh with heavy disdain. “You really believe in those corny fucking ideals, don’t you, you . . .”

Suddenly and without warning, Pedrocco discharged his firearm into Phillip’s forehead, splattering brain matter all over Paty’s kitchen.

“Damn, son,” Franky said, placing his left hand over his mouth and slapping his thigh a few times with the other.

“All cops are bastards,” said Izzy, patting Pedrocco on the back.

Witherslapt put his hand on Pedrocco’s shoulder.

“The finality justifies the dialectic, comrade. And remember: The oppressed always have a legitimate right to violence against their oppressors,” he said.

“How much weaponry do you guys reckon we’ll need to bust Tisha out of there?” Paty asked, taking only a few seconds to absorb the informant’s liquidation, gather her wits, and move on.

“Couple of assault rifles should do the trick, I would think,” Witherslapt replied.

“We can hit up my cousin for that,” said Izzy.

10 – ASSAULT PREP

Santiago's iPhone started playing the reggaeton ringtone he had just bought. He let it ring for a minute just to listen to the music.

"*Bueno*," he finally answered.

"*Que onda, carnal? Por qué no contestas?*" Izzy said.

"*No manches*. Ismail, *eres tú?* What's up, *vato?*" Santiago responded with enthusiasm.

"*Mira, primo, es que necesito un favor*," Izzy said.

"What is it, man? You need *mota?*" Santiago asked.

"Nah, man. This is serious. Look, we shouldn't even be talking about this on the phone, *pero es urgente*. I need weaponry. *Mucho* weaponry, *vato*," Izzy responded.

"Say no more, *primo*. I got you covered. Ever since those ATF *pendejos* let all those guns walk in that Operation Fast and Furious shit, weaponry ain't a thang for me and my homeboys. Just come over to my garage and we'll get you and your *amigos* all set up," Santiago said reassuringly.

"*Sale pues ahorita vengo. Gracias eh*," Izzy said and hung up the phone.

Izzy looked over at Pedrocco. Phillip's body lay motionless, still duct taped to the chair.

"Did you ever think it was wrong to take a life?" Izzy asked.

"Pacificism is an illusion of liberalism. It only works for those who can afford to shelter themselves from the material realities of

class warfare. Besides, political power flows through the barrel of a gun," Pedrocco responded.

"And yet, consider this: It also flows from the lens of a camera, from the ink of a pen," Witherslapt interjected.

"Sounds like you're going soft on us, Witherslapt," Paty joked.

"That wasn't meant to be an anti-thesis. I'm totally on board with putting up a fight when the working class is under assault by Wall Street thugs. The options there are self defense or nonexistence. I'm just saying, our fight isn't *just* material. It's intellectual. Ideological. Spiritual, almost," said Witherslapt.

"Okay, Jerry Falwell," Franky said.

"Speaking of which," said Paty, "we're going to need to have some sort of press release ready for once we liberate Tisha."

"All in favor of leaving that to Paty, say 'I,'" Pedrocco said. "I."

"I," said Franky, Izzy, and Witherslapt in unison.

"Alright so who's coming with me to pick up the weaponry?" Izzy asked.

"I'll go," said Franky.

Just then, they heard something vibrating in Phillip's pocket. Witherslapt reached with his hand to see what was in there and pulled it out.

"It's a cell phone. Someone's calling him," he stated, pointing out the obvious.

"Who is it?" Franky asked.

"Caller ID says it's 'Agent Greaves'," Witherslapt responded.

"Should we answer it?" Pedrocco wondered out loud.

"If their informant doesn't answer, they're gonna know something's up. I say we just answer it," Witherslapt said.

"Alright," Pedrocco uttered in a deep, sensual voice before grabbing the phone from Witherslapt and pressing the answer button.

"Hello, Agent Greaves," Pedrocco said, his vocal waves resonating with a sick level of guile.

"What? Who is this?!" Agent Greaves demanded in frustration, losing her cool already.

"This is the book club," Pedrocco said, winking at his friends.

"I should have known we'd be hearing from you stupid commie radicals sooner or later. You were starting to get out of hand, and

that's why it's time for us to take you Marxian snots down. You should just give up now; we are already tracking this call. Besides, we have enough intelligence on you to chase you to Uganda. Not even Kony could protect you," Agent Greaves verbalized in an oral manner.

"And *we* know all about your informants inside the Socialist Alliance," Pedrocco bluffed.

Meanwhile, Franky and Izzy decided to leave Paty's apartment in Izzy's Cadillac Escalade to go get the weaponry. They got in the suburban utility vehicle like a couple of badasses, strutting as would straight up political and social revolutionaries. Then Izzy drove with one hand loosely flailing about the top of the steering wheel and the other rolling a blunt and messing with dials on the vehicle's stereo. It did not take long for them to arrive at Santiago's South Minneapolis garage to pick up the Kalashnikovs and some bulletproof body armor.

But back at Paty's apartment, Pedrocco was still talking to Agent Greaves.

"Thing is, Ms. Greaves, or is it Mrs. Greaves," he said condescendingly, "my friend Paty here is a networking expert, and you can't geo-localize us due to the encryption shield she installed all over the perimeter of my current location."

Agent Taylor was sitting next to Agent Greaves in a cramped communications van next to the Lake Nokomis beach. He had needed to urinate the moment before Greaves made the routine phone call to Intelligence Asset Number Forty-Five, codename Phillip, but now he was stuck flipping gizmos inside the van to run voice recognition analysis programs in real time. Taylor decided to urinate into a half empty bottle of yellow Gatorade so he could stick close to the action. After all, he could lose his job if his voice recognition analysis was off. He had to pee a lot because he had just drank forty ounces of water earlier, as his doctor had recommended. Accidentally, the pee started overflowing.

"What's that dripping sound?" Agent Greaves asked, cupping her hand over the telephone receiver.

"Just let me talk to them," Taylor snapped, in the process

dropping and spilling the bottle of Gatorade mixed with pee all over the van. He was just openly urinating on the floor and all over his legs now.

Greaves handed the phone to Agent Taylor.

Outside, a bunch of teenagers who had just got out of detention at 4:29 PM were doing drugs in a red 1999 Honda Accord that had just pulled up in the parking lot by Lake Nokomis beach. They were an eclectic bunch who had become friends under unlikely circumstances, coming all from different backgrounds, and being parts of different cliques at school. But they had overcome their superficial differences and bonded over their shared referential elements of consciousness as early 21st century working class youth.

"Listen, Pedrocco Orlando Pastrana Osio, we're not negotiating with your little Breakfast Club. We already have a team of federal agents on your case. There's a reason the Symbionese Liberation Army, the Weather Underground, the Black Panthers, the Bonnot Gang, the Blondinie Gang, the Red Army Fraction, and all those other emo rejects died out. What makes your punk asses think you're any different? We take freaks like you out in Yemen, Libya, Somalia, Pakistan all the time," Agent Taylor seethed.

Pedrocco responded with sardonic wit, "Whoa. Because we got ambition, dude."

"Communism never works in practice, you dipshits. Why the fuck would you idiots give up your lives for this bullshit? Just get a haircut and a real fucking job, Jesus Christ. Stalin, Pol Pot, Mao, and Mengistu were all genocidal freaks who hated freedom. Oh sure, communism was great in theory, back in the goddamn *eighteen hundreds*, before the economy diversified into robotics and panopticon-ization, but now it's, quite frankly, obsolete, and I think deep down, you commie bastards know that's the truth. Rest assured of this much: We are the overlords. And we have a very unique set of skills that we will use to repress your 'Radical Book Club' and stabilize the current hierarchical social order. And one more thing: This is America, so speak English or get the hell out! "

Taylor ranted.

“Cool story, bro. Nevertheless, I feel like this conversation is pointless because you are so brainwashed that there is literally zero chance of your worth as a human being redeemed.” Pedrocco said before ending the phone call. He turned to his comrades.

“Radical Book Club, that’s what they’re calling us,” he smirked.

“Has a decent ring to it,” said Witherslapt.

Meanwhile, inside the H.I.A. communications van, Greaves had just then gotten a wiff of Taylor’s incontinence. She looked to the floor of the van and, seeing that piss was covering it, was thoroughly grossed out. Oddly enough, she actually agreed with Pedrocco. That conversation had been going no where, and she was about to flip a tit over the piss covering the floor.

Sarah Melissa Greaves had been assigned to anti-environmentalist counter-intelligence operations in the year 2000, in the wake of the Battle of Seattle and the subsequent micro-proliferation of anarcho-primitivist and eco-terrorist movements. At that time she was just a local Seattle cop, but this experience made her an ideal candidate for work in the Homeland Intelligence Agency, which quickly took on the bulk of state repression against the environmental movement following its post-9/11 formation.

Following the Occupy Wall Street protests in 2011 and the accompanying increase of entitled snots thinking capitalism owed them something just for breathing, she had been re-assigned to the anti-Marxian division of the Homeland Intelligence Agency.

Early in her career, she had been instrumental in infiltrating several local activist groups throughout the Pacific Northwest and suffocating revolutionary sentiments there. She would methodically use manipulative psychological tactics to instead increase support for less radical, reformist alternatives like Ralph Nader and the Greens who ultimately posed no threat to the system. Making controllable assets, like Nader on the Left and Ron Paul on the Right, appealing to disenfranchised layers of society was the intelligence agencies’ tried and tested method of derailing insurrection in a nation long overdue for one. However, Greaves noticed it was getting more and more difficult to derail

insurrection. She wasn’t sure if this was an objective truth or if she was simply getting sick of her job and the crass good old boys it forced her to work with.

At a simultaneous hour, Izzy and Franky were just about to leave Santiago’s garage with the weaponry in crates aboard the Escalade.

“So this place you *güeyes* are *tratando* to bust this *paisana* Tisha outta, it’s on the river you said?” Santiago asked, looking to get a mental picture of the logistics of his cousin’s plot.

“*Sí, güey,*” Izzy replied.

“*Órale, carnal,*” Santiago said, “I can help you with that. I just got this speed boat from my Cuban bro. *Cabrón* lost it gambling on the Miami Heat.”

“Sweet shit, bro,” Izzy croaked.

“You just go to this spot on the river under the High Bridge in Saint Paul, across from West Side. Me and my homeboys will be there with the boat. You come with the weaponry and armor in the Escalade, then you get in the speed boat with that shit and you got a quicker getaway once you bust out your *paisana*. Just drive the boat back to the same spot and me and my homeboys Cedric and Omar will be there waiting to get you in the Escalade,” Santiago said.

“*Gracias,* cousin. We couldn’t do this without you,” Izzy said.

“Don’t thank me,” Santiago said, taking a step closer. Izzy could feel Santiago’s breath blowing onto his face as he spoke now. “The one you should really be thanking is *nuestra tiernosa madre oscura*, the Most Holy *Santísima Muerte*. It’s thanks to Her that I have all that I have today, *primo*. Before I give you my blessing to use my equipment in your operation, I need you to do something for *La Santa Muerte*,” he continued.

“*Órale, vato,*” Izzy replied.

“Follow me. Franky, you need to come too,” Santiago commanded.

They walked past some sketchy greasemonkeys and dodgy-looking Cholos to the back of the garage and entered what looked like a closet. Santiago pulled up an oriental rug, revealing a trap door on the floor with a large iron ring attached to it. He grabbed

the ring and pulled up the wooden trap door. Rays of red light shone up from the mysterious basement. Santiago instructed Izzy and Franky to go down first.

They descended into a hazy room, which was much larger than they had expected, although it was hard to tell exactly how big it was due to the minimal lighting and thick fuming clouds around what *seemed* to be the room's perimeter. Santiago had purchased a number of dry ice smoke machines to create this effect.

Izzy was flabbergasted as he walked through the subterranean lair, everything painted black. In all the years he had known his cousin, he had never known him to be a believer in the *Santa Muerte*. He suddenly recalled how several years ago their *abuela*, a devout Roman Catholic, had spoken to them of the *Santa Muerte* in no uncertain terms.

“Jesucristo murió por nuestros pecados, fue sepultado y resucitó al tercer día. Con su muerte ha vencido la muerte. Todo esta culto de la Santa Muerte es una chingadera satánica de pinches narcotraficantes. Si ustedes practican eso, les voy a repudiar,” she had said ominously.

As Izzy and Franky went further into the lair, they saw that there was a bunch of people prostrating on all fours in front of a skeleton placed atop an altar. Red lava lamps, black lights, candles, flowers, incense, gourds, maize, coins, bottles of rum, and marijuana cigarettes surrounded the place where the skeleton stood. The skull of the ghastly white figure was painted red and decorated with floral sequins, similar to a sugar skull on the Day of the Dead.

Suddenly, a nude woman seemed to emerge from the ground just in front of the skeleton altar. Jet-black she was.

Franky and Izzy saw the ground ripple in the red light and both had the brief sensation of standing on liquid, walking on black water. There seemed to be no distinction between the floor upon which they stood and the ground before them, small waves rippling across it. The surface they were observing was actually an inground hot tub filled with melted black wax from *Santa Muerte* candles sold at local Latino supermarkets.

Franky and Izzy stood there in awe, exchanged glances, then looked back at the fantastic scene. Santiago walked up behind them and placed his hands on their shoulders.

“Now it is time for you to let your Dark Mother bathe you in blax,” Santiago said.

“Blax?” Franky asked. A strange calm had come over him.

“Black wax,” Santiago explained.

Three more naked women who had been submerged in the black wax emerged from the ground. Their movement seemed to be powered by an unknown force, as they arose from lying flat on their backs like Count Orlok from *Nosferatu* awakening from his coffin to consume the blood of an English gentleman; their bodies moved like rigid doors and their feet were the hinges.

Franky and Izzy were each grabbed by two of the women dressed in nothing but a coating of blax and pulled towards the tub of blax. Blax was dripping all over. Then the women threw them into the tub of blax.

The people kneeling down before the white feet of the *Santa Muerte* started chanting in a bizarre tongue that Franky and Izzy had never heard before.

“Ha-shem to`nan-tzin ez'tli ka-lo, shu'kar ma'ku-ra lo-lo ama`r mu-lo! Ha-shem to`nan-tzin ez'tli ka-lo, shu'kar ma'ku-ra lo-lo ama`r mu-lo! Ha-shem to`nan-tzin ez'tli ka-lo, shu'kar ma'ku-ra lo-lo ama`r mu-lo! Ha-shem to`nan-tzin ez'tli ka-lo, shu'kar ma'ku-ra lo-lo ama`r mu-lo!” they would repeat continuously for the next forty five minutes

After tossing Izzy and Franky into the tub of liquid black wax, the four women covered in blax jumped into the tub and forcibly submerged them into the liquid, ripping off their clothes in the oily blax. The hot tub alternated between gentle blax bubbles caressing their skin and powerful jet streams of hot blax shooting out at them.

Santiago entered a trance, filled up a golden chalice with blax, and started dancing around. He was splashing the blax everywhere.

“Santísima Madre Oscura, granter of miracles!” he thundered. “Protect my *primo* and his *vatos* on their mission!”

Other devotees were still on all fours, swaying back and forth, chanting.

Meanwhile, back at Paty's apartment, Pedrocco had hung up the phone after getting bored with talking to Agent Taylor.

“What do you suppose is taking Izzy and Franky so long?” Witherslapt asked.

“I’m sure they’ll be back soon,” Paty said.

“Maybe we should call them,” Witherslapt suggested.

“Just be patient,” Paty said, seemingly unconcerned with the lifeless and badly beaten body duct-taped to a chair in her kitchen.

Izzy and Franky got back to the apartment around midnight. At the end of the black candle wax ritual, they had been thrown into another hot tub behind the altar that had only water in it. It was designed to cleanse them of the blax, but they still had remnant bits of it stuck in their hair and crevices. They were wearing white bathrobes since their clothes had basically been ruined by the blax. Izzy jumped out of the driver’s seat and pressed the button on the keys to lock the Escalade by remote control. The SUV’s klaxon gave two saccadic bleeps as they moved swiftly towards the building.

Izzy rang Paty’s phone and she buzzed them into the complex. As they walked into the apartment, Pedrocco, Paty, and Witherslapt were huddled over a map lying on the kitchen table, plotting the liberation of Tisha.

“Hey. Nice of you guys to finally show up!” Witherslapt said.

“Easy, comrade,” Izzy replied, his mind still lingering on the women drenched in blax. Who were they?

“What’s with the bathrobes?” Pedrocco asked.

“It’s a long story, my friend,” Izzy replied.

Franky and Pedrocco exchanged glances for an awkward length of time.

“Whatever,” Paty said, interrupting the maladroit moment. “Do you guys want to proofread the communique I came up with? It’s going out to all of our contacts: Indymedia, craigslist, ravelinks, all the radical left-wing and Black nationalist message boards online. If we play our cards right, Tisha’s liberation could be a flashpoint for a revolutionary mass movement.”

“Sure, let’s see that shit,” Franky answered.

11 – COMMUNIQUE NUMBER ONE

greetings comrades of the earth. this is rad book club communique number one. as some of you may have heard, fascist pigs in minneapolis slaughtered 37 innocent youth last week. raves are radical social spaces where subaltern communities are organizing ourselves and appropriating the decaying infrastructure of a moribund system, and this is the real reason pigs are so keen on destroying these revolutionary social gatherings. subsequently, comrade Tisha was sequestered from us by amerikkka’s forces of reaction. we say enough is enough. free Tisha! it is time to build a revolutionary mass movement against austerity, endless war, transphobia, racism, white supremacy, and the illuminati. join us in the movement for horizontal justice. organize for structural change in your schools, workplaces, and homes. end oppression. seek the ultimate liberation. history will absolve us.

“Cool. What up with the orthography though?” Franky asked after skimming through the text.

“It seems more aesthetically bad ass that way, like we just don’t give enough of a fuck to capitalize the first letter of our sentences. I got the idea from Godspeed You! Black Emperor’s response to winning the Polaris Music Prize,” Paty responded.

Izzy nodded his head.

“This is sure to build the mass movement,” he surmised.

“Illuminati?” Witherslapt questioned. “What are you trying to do, make us sound like a gaggle of two-bit conspiracist rapscallions?”

“C’mon, Witherslapt,” Paty shot back. “Engage in a little shameless populism. Illuminati conspiracy theories are totally in vogue right now.”

“Yeah, and widely associated with anti-semitic attitudes,” he replied, tossing his head slightly to the left so as to get his hipster emo bangs out of his eyes. Witherslapt’s bangs were nearly long enough to touch the bridge of his slender hooked nose.

“Correlation ain’t no causation. Just because peeps that believe in the Illuminati many times espouse anti-semitism don’t mean we can’t whip up those social forces to our benefit, to the benefit of Marxian ideals. Besides, that pyramid shit totes jives with class theory. Those at the top be the elites of the ruling capitalist class, the *crème de la crème* of the bourgeoisie,” Franky quipped.

“Aye, Franky has a point, Witherslapt,” said Paty. “Illuminati is just a paradigm for comprehending the bourgeoisie’s internal structuring that meshes with contemporary worker and youth consciousness. We’d be fools not to seize upon the rhetorical power of this kind of terminology.”

“Seriously?” Witherslapt uttered. “Look, there’s a difference between patiently explaining to people how their oppression can be abolished, giving them the theoretical tools to accomplish this Herculean task and manipulating them into doing our nefarious bidding through Delphic fearmongering.”

Paty folded her arms, unconvinced.

“Not to mention,” Witherslapt went on, “the Illuminati conspiracy theory began as a right-wing, conservative and counter-revolutionary idea, designed to discount the legitimacy of the French Revolution. Instead of recognizing it as a mass movement of the Third Estate (made up of peasants and the nascent classes of urban industrial workers, or *sans-culottes*, and commerçant bourgeois eager to throw off the old feudal order) against the First and Second Estates (made up of the Church and nobility), the reactionary Catholic priest Augustin Barruel painted it as a conspiracy executed by small groups of anti-Christian secret societies influenced by the ideals of the Enlightenment. This same paradigm has been applied to other revolutions, such as that of

1917 in Russia, where the right-wing has often painted the whole affair as a perfect storm of Judeo-Bolsheviks, Illuminists, and so on. But ask yourself this: If the French Revolution was a perfectly executed plot by conniving Illuminists to annihilate Christianity, why did the atheistic Cult of Reason lose out to the theistic Cult of the Supreme Being—basically just a repackaged Christianity?”

Pedrocco butted in, “Maybe the revolutionaries wanted to abolish Christianity in increments. Starting an atheistic cult was too extreme, so starting their own theistic cult allowed them to establish a sort of controlled opposition, give them a foothold within the civic sphere opened up by the destruction of the Church. An atheistic cult is a bit of an incremental step in and of itself. Why have a cult at all if there is no godhead?”

“Interesting that maintaining the Cult as social form would be deemed necessary, even from the atheist perspective,” Paty said, mulling over all of it in her head.

Franky and Izzy gave each other mildly perplexed, furtive glances.

“But back to the subject at hand,” Paty began again. “No matter how the damned conspiracy theory started, point is, kids in the ’hood are all talkin’ ’bout this shiz. We’ve got to make an appeal to them. Look, Witherslapt, how about this? We leave the reference to the Illuminati, but we throw anti-semitism into the laundry list of things our revolutionary mass movement is fighting against?”

“Fine,” uttered Witherslapt. “But for the record, the fact of Illuminati theory’s popularization amongst oppressed layers of ghetto populaces reflects a generalized atmosphere of social alienation and lack of Marxian alternatives in the wake of the defeat of the Black Liberation Movement in the 1970s after the reactionary and often times anti-semitic African-American comprador bourgeoisie co-opted the mantle of civil rights defenders of the whole Black nation. The African-American bourgeois compradors betrayed their nation by sitting at the table of imperialism, when national liberation can only ever be achieved when it is sought in conjunction with the destruction of imperialism. Illuminati theory is nothing more than the latest manifestation of the age old myth of the all-powerful, all-seeing

ruler. I tell you, these bourgeois Freemasonic fucks still put their pants on one leg at a time. But whatever, maybe you're right. Just send the damned communique and let's free Tisha!"

Paty clicked one button on her Mac Book Pro and the gang's first communique was essentially a viral meme already. She had created a spambot program to dispatch communiques to various websites simultaneously, as well as hacked into a bunch of cable TV stations' programming to broadcast a televised form of the communique read by a robot voice while a slideshow of images of communist propaganda she had found on the internet played.

12 – THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE BEGINS

At 1:30 AM that same night, Izzy, Witherslapt, Paty, Pedrocco, and Franky hopped in the black Escalade and drove eastwards, over to Saint Paul, under the High Bridge. They arrived and, sure enough, there were Santiago, Cedric, and Omar with the speedboat tied up at a small dock. Several large wooden crates filled with weaponry lined the dock.

Paty grabbed a crowbar from the Escalade, opened up the crates of weaponry, and then everyone was carrying their assault rifles.

"Don't forget to put on your bullet proof vests," Santiago said.

Cedric and Omar started untying the boat from the dock while Izzy, Witherslapt, Paty, Pedrocco, and Franky climbed in. Santiago's homeboys had a distinctive hipster-esque style, both of them sporting tight, skinny jeans and wearing their dark curly hair in large masses atop their heads. Omar often wore vests with long sleeved, floral button-up shirts, as did Cedric on occasion, though he usually preferred simply to wear black T's.

Santiago pointed vaguely to a panel of buttons and levers inside the boat. "This lever controls your speed," he shouted over the engine revving as Izzy ignited the motor.

Omar shouted, "Hey, I got the communique you guys sent out. Good stuff! I really admire what you guys are doing!"

Pedrocco heard this and shouted back, "Don't admire us; emulate us! Convince your homedawgs to join this righteous

struggle against the bourgeois state. Organize workers and youth in your community for social justice!”

Izzy slammed the speed lever into top gear and a wave rocked the dock, almost knocking Cedric off into the river.

As the speed boat raced upstream towards *Wita Tanka*, a slab of earth known as Pike Island to the white settler population, located at the sacred confluence of the Mississippi and the Minnesota known as *B'dote*, which had once been transformed into a concentration and extermination camp for thousands of indigenous Dakota people, Witherslapt gazed into Paty's eyes. She was resting her chin on her AK-47's ammunition clip and staring off into the darkness with a pensive expression. Her windswept hair framed her stoic face and Witherslapt thought about the future, full of uncertainty. His eyes drifted from her as they passed *Wita Tanka*. He looked into the moonlit woods along the southern shore and he was reminded of the genocide of the indigenous peoples of this land, of state repression against the American Indian Movement. They floated past the island and he looked up at Fort Snelling, that glorified remnant of primitive colonialism. He felt the trapped spirits bearing down on him from above the clifftops. Finally, he looked back down from the monstrosity and saw Paty again; in her figure he saw the glorious beauty of her ancestors, and wept. The white settler state had to be smashed, once and for all. Witherslapt decided then and there, that those Dakota warriors who Lincoln lynched had not died in vain. They had, indeed, not died in vain.

Paty looked back into Witherslapt's beady black eyes, no longer obscured by his hipster emo bangs as the savage nighttime gusts blew his hair wildly about, and she saw tears rolling down his cheeks and falling to the bottom of the boat.

She gazed and spoke, “Mourn not, dear Witherslapt. Though atavic lore may wax and wane, the fire of the people's eternal dance on the cloudy waters does not cease.”

Meanwhile, Agents Greaves and Taylor were frantically trying to do their jobs and geo-localize the rogue insurrectionists, but they were failing. Quite miserably. Taylor's piss stench was a serious distraction.

“Goddamnit, Taylor!” Greaves shouted. She was severely frustrated with the situation.

“Hey, stop blaming me for this, you stupid bitch!” Taylor retorted.

“For spilling piss all over the communications van? Who the fuck else should I blame, *Rod?*” Greaves screamed.

Agents, who only used a single name amongst colleagues for security purposes, were not allowed to know each other's full name, but Greaves had connivingly consulted Agent Taylor's file, or Agent Data Profile (A.D.P.) in official parlance, at the Homeland Intelligence Agency's central analogue mainframe. It was at the H.I.A. HQ in Langley, Virginia that the Agency kept files on all of its special agents and intelligence assets in a central analogue mainframe. The central analogue mainframe was a large, sprawling room filled with filing cabinets. Each filing cabinet had an analogue computer interface and was attached to a mechanical conveyor belt system that fed the cabinets hard copies of the A.D.P.'s. Agent Data Profiles had not been digitized due to fear of increased vulnerability to espionage.

Greaves had been granted Gold Access to the central analogue mainframe, a position of incredible prestige at the H.I.A. Sent to do agent file research on a rogue element in 2006, Greaves was judged trustworthy enough by H.I.A. brass and psychological type profilers to be privy to this highly classified location. The rogue element's name? It's not important; what is important was that Greaves promptly had him liquidated.

Greaves had unplugged and reattached several cables at one of the analogue computer panels and the cabinet then spat out Taylor's Agent Data Profile. The A.D.P. had shown that his alleged full name was Rodney Winston Taylor, but a special tab that Greaves had never seen before, called Agent Data Profile - Code Blue 62, or ADP-CB62, was taped inside of his file. The unusual ADP-CB62 tab showed that Rodney Winston Taylor's real name was unknown; he had adopted his current legal name as an alias during a twelve year stint in the French Foreign Legion. A mercenary in the former French West Africa, Taylor had made himself a valuable asset to neo-colonial French intelligence. Nostalgia took a toll on him though, and eventually he decided to come work for his alleged country of birth, the U.S.A.

“Rod? What the fuck!? You looked up my Agent Data Profile?” Agent Taylor was shocked by Greaves’ reckless disregard for H.I.A. protocol.

Greaves realized her slip of the tongue and decided to roll with it. “Yes, *Winston*,” she taunted.

“Agent Greaves, that is a serious violation of the codes of professional conduct of our relationship as licensed federal agents,” Taylor said in a serious tone.

“Whatever, TAY-lor,” Sarah Melissa Greaves sighed. “Look, we’re in a threat level Active Black situation here; this isn’t the time to bicker over stupid shit. We’ve lost an H.I.A. asset and he may be in the custody of an armed homegrown socialist paramilitary group.”

Taylor retorted, “As soon as this is over, I’m filing a request with the Agency for a new partner.”

“Go ahead and do that, piss boy. Like the bureaucrats will do shit,” Greaves said in a harassing tone.

Agent Taylor snapped off the deep end.

Picking up a keyboard, he smashed it over Greaves’ head, breaking it in half and sending keys flying all over the van, landing in the piss and on the equipment.

“What the hell are you doing?” Greaves shouted, the blow immediately triggering a sharp pain in her migraines.

Had Greaves not been interrupted at the H.I.A. HQ by General Johnson barging into the central analogue mainframe complex when she was reading about Agent Taylor’s stint in the French Foreign Legion, she might have had the time to fully examine his Agent Data Profile and see that he had a long previous history of anger management issues and violent outbursts, as well as heinous human rights violations in Chad, Mali and the Maghreb. Instead, she had to quickly put the file away before General Johnson could see her snooping; unauthorized examination of an A.D.P. would constitute a serious case of insubordination.

Agent Taylor then did the unspeakable to Agent Greaves. Fearing for her life, she struggled to grab her cell phone and call for help, but Taylor’s brute force overpowered her. She blacked out shortly thereafter.

Back on the Mississippi, the speedboat was approaching the Ford Parkway Bridge. Pedrocco looked around with a pair of night vision binoculars that he had found under his seat.

“No sentries posted, it appears,” Pedrocco affirmed.

“Do you see the sewage tunnel?” Paty asked.

“Affirmative,” Pedrocco replied.

“Let’s anchor the boat there, closer to the shore. It’ll be harder to see it under the branches of those trees,” said Paty.

The gang hopped off the boat, splashing their feet in the shallow waters, Kalashnikovs strung over their shoulders. They made their way through the mud, dirt, and pebbles up to a steep concrete edifice and climbed. The entrance to the tunnel was covered in graffiti, and a trickling stream of water flowed out. On each side of the tunnel was a small ledge, space enough to walk in two single file lines.

They walked deeper into the tunnel. They were in a complete disorienting darkness now. Pedrocco lit up a makeshift torch out of a stick and an oily rag so they could see better. Eventually they came to a turn in the tunnel. Witherslapt calculated that they must be heading towards the Minnehaha Falls now. They went on ahead a few hundred more feet, the graffiti becoming more sparse the further they moved. Finally, they came up to a small chamber.

Droplets of water dripped from high above. At the top of the narrow cone-shaped ceiling was a small opening that appeared to be the underside of a manhole. Intersecting at this strange chamber were three paths. One, the tunnel they had just arrived from, and on the left a triangular tunnel that became narrower and narrower as it went on. They could see that it quickly narrowed to just a few inches, making it impossible for a human to go through it. The third tunnel, that on the right, immediately dropped down about five feet to a platform, also about five feet across, and it appeared that after that platform there was another drop, like a giant flight of stairs. Being the only viable path to continue, the gang decided that this must be the way to the intelligence agency’s black ops rendition site.

“Hold my hands while I drop down,” Paty said.

Pedrocco and Witherslapt each gave her a hand. Franky and Izzy just jumped down without help.

“Okay, now you guys give me a boost,” Witherslapt said.

Franky and Paty each put their hands together so each one could support one of Witherslapt's feet and lowered him down.

They then repeated this process on each platform for the next fifteen steps down. They were deep underground now, and it was starting to get quite cold. Their rifles grew heavy. Paty shivered.

"Should have brought jackets," she said.

At the final platform, they reached another tunnel that stretched on as far as their eyes could see.

"This is nuts," Franky said. "This thing must go on for miles."

They walked for twenty minutes. Eventually they could make out a light at the end of the tunnel. At first, it looked like a star: a small, far off orb.

"Looks like they got lighting up ahead," said Izzy.

"Best extinguish that torch, wouldn't want them to see us coming," Franky said to Pedrocco.

He threw it on the ground and stamped out the flames.

As they got closer, the fluorescent lights grew brighter and brighter. The walls were now painted in a yellow and black checkerboard pattern. Every fifteen feet there was a red sign that said, *AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY*.

"Hold up, security camera ahead," Pedrocco said, his AK-47 now in his hands.

He held it up and started shooting at the camera, popping off six rounds before hitting it, emitting sparks and smoke.

"We must be close now," Witherslapt said.

"Look, a door," said Paty.

There was a large green metal door, covered in rust, padlocked.

Izzy pulled out a Desert Eagle pistol and shot the padlock, obliterating it to smithereens. "Access granted," he said with a smirk.

Everyone pulled their rifles off their backs and passed through the entrance one by one into the rendition site. The halls were white with pale green linoleum floors and beige tiles along the lower part of the walls.

Paty saw a security guard armed with an M4 rifle walking ahead of them and gunned him down without hesitation. The gang walked up to the neutralized target and examined him for clues to the nature of the site.

"See this uniform? No flag patches. Non-standard camouflage color scheme. Looks like a private contractor," Paty said, pushing the corpse onto its backside and patting down the pockets. She continued, "After the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, renditions have been increasingly delegated to private mercenary groups like Blackwater. It's really no surprise that we see this phenomenon happening here in 'our own country' now. Ever since the U.S.' imperialist occupation of the Philippines following the Spanish-American War, techniques of political and social repression have been tested out by the bourgeois military in the occupied Third World before being implemented as routine procedures for domestic agencies in the First World."

Just then, an alarm started buzzing. Red lights were flashing all along the corridor.

"Run!" Paty shouted.

They reached a portion of the corridor where there were protruding grooves, big enough to hide behind for cover, every couple of feet.

"We can post up here for an ambush," she said. "Wait for the fools to come to us."

Soon enough, a squad of private security contractors was advancing down the corridor, shuffling their feet, rifles drawn.

Pedrocco leaned out from behind his protrusion and opened fire, long enough to burst off nearly a dozen rounds.

One bullet hit a contractor directly in the heart, killing him instantly. Another was hit in the neck and fell to the floor, tried to put pressure on it with his hands, but couldn't say anything. His vocal cords had been annihilated, it seemed. One more contractor was hit in the thigh.

"I'm hit! I'm hit!" he squealed, dropping his weapon and grabbing his thigh.

Pedrocco went back behind cover as the other contractors returned fire.

On the other side of the hall, about fifteen feet further back, Izzy leaned out, going trigger happy. "Free Tisha!" he screamed, downing two more contractors.

Witherslapt gathered enough courage to lean out and fired a couple of shots, but failed to hit anything substantial.

Paty, furthest ahead, was still behind cover. One of the contractors started running forward to dive for cover in the grooved protrusion five feet past her, not having seen that she was there. As he ran past, she grabbed his jacket and whipped him around straight into the wall, which knocked him off his feet and caused him to fumble his rifle. With the disarmed contractor lying in front of her at point blank range, she swiftly seized the opportunity to mercilessly pump him full of lead.

Franky kneeled down and popped his head out from behind the cover, observing that there were only two active gunmen remaining. He promptly raised his Kalashnikov and wasted them, thinking nothing of it.

“Coast look clear,” he said, re-adjusting his do-rag.

They kept moving forward with caution, the alarm still blaring. Coming up to a T intersection, there was a sign that read *DETENTION CENTER*, with an arrow pointing to the right.

“Tisha must be this way,” Paty said. “Come on! Go! Go! Go!”

Another private security contractor jumped out, running up to them Rambo-style. They ducked and ran for cover, but luckily the contractor’s rifle jammed. Hearing it clicking, Pedrocco walked out into the middle of the corridor, his sights trained on the contractor.

“Don’t move!” Pedrocco shouted.

The contractor threw his weapon down and started slowly raising his hands like he was going to surrender, before making a sudden move and pulling out a buck knife. He started running towards Pedrocco again, now wielding a knife.

Pedrocco used his firearm to swiftly neutralize the contractor.

“What was the damn fool thinking?” he muttered.

“Damn fool stopped thinking the minute he signed up to defend the bourgeois military industrial complex,” Witherslapt said, eyeing the pool of blood spreading out from beneath the contractor’s body as he walked past.

Shortly after that, they went down a flight of stairs with a sign that read *HOLDING CELLS* above it. On each side of the hall, they could see through thick bulletproof glass windows into the holding cells.

“Tisha’s got to be in one of these rooms,” Franky said.

Witherslapt looked into one of the rooms and saw a Sikh man sitting in a chair, handcuffed. Then he walked to the next room and saw a Muslim man. Izzy looked in another room and saw a man and a woman in orange jumpsuits with black bags over their heads.

“This place is fucked up,” Witherslapt said, “We should liberate all of these political prisoners.”

“We need to figure out a way to open these doors first,” said Paty.

“Hey guys, down here! I found Tisha!” Pedrocco yelled.

Tisha was standing on the other side of the glass, and started pointing frantically to the left, further down the hall. Pedrocco seemed to see what she was trying to point out, a metallic box attached to the wall. He walked up and opened it, revealing a keypad and touchscreen.

“This must control the doors,” Pedrocco said.

“But we don’t have the code,” said Franky.

“Leave that to me,” said Paty, whipping out her smartphone. She plugged it into the interface with a USB cable.

“What are you doing?” Izzy asked.

“Jacking the mainframe,” Paty replied.

A loading bar appeared on her smartphone’s screen, and quickly filled up. Suddenly, all of the holding cell doors slid open.

Tisha ran out of her cell. For some reason, she was the only prisoner who wasn’t restrained.

“Paty!” she exclaimed and ran into her warm embrace.

“It’s okay, Tisha. We’re busting you outta here,” Paty responded.

Tisha lifted up her head from Paty’s bosom and looked at her face, then over her shoulder.

“Hey, nice gun, girl. But you know I ain’t no damsel in distress. Tell me you brought one of them thangs for me,” Tisha said.

“Carrying an extra AK would have been a bit cumbersome, but we have some pistols, or you could pick something up from the security contractors we wasted,” Witherslapt said.

“Here, just take this,” said Izzy, handing over his Desert Eagle.

“And this,” said Pedrocco, giving up his Glock so Tisha could dual wield the pistols.

“Quick, let’s liberate the political prisoners,” Paty said.

They walked into all of the holding cells, untying prisoners and shooting their handcuffs off.

Just after they had untied the last of the prisoners, they heard what sounded like a bunch of boots trampling down the staircase to the holding cell corridor.

“Fuck, take cover,” Pedrocco said.

The private security contractors started firing indiscriminately, but everyone was hiding inside the holding cells. One contractor peaked around into the first holding cell, where Pedrocco happened to be hiding. Seeing the contractor’s face peeking around the door, he immediately discharged his firearm, chalking up another one to the commies.

“Man down!” one of the contractors shouted.

Another contractor threw a tear gas canister into the holding cell. Pedrocco started coughing, but managed to pick up the canister and throw it back into the hall, where it bounced back in the direction of the contractors.

Tisha leaned out from another holding cell down the hall and blasted off a few rounds, taking down three contractors.

“They can’t see cuz of the tear gas!” she shouted.

Izzy and Franky leaned out from another holding cell and pumped the remaining contractors full of lead while Witherslapt remained behind cover.

They waited for the tear gas to dissipate a little bit. Then all of the prisoners picked up weapons from the downed contractors.

As a freed detainee grabbed an M4 rifle from one of the incapacitated private security contractors, Witherslapt noticed that the contractor was still breathing, although severely wounded. The contractor stirred slightly, moaning.

“Best just put him out of his misery,” Pedrocco suggested.

“With gusto,” Witherslapt replied, eager to deliver the *coup de grâce* so that he might prove his cold-bloodedness as he raised his Kalashnikov and discharged a round into the contractor’s forehead, brain matter splattering forth.

Meanwhile, Agent Taylor finally responded to the distress call coming into the communications van from the black rendition site.

He had been busy administering an amnesia serum so that Agent Greaves would forget what he had just done to her. Now she was laying unconscious.

“Yeah, hello. What’s up, Blackwater domestic rendition site eight dash forty-two X?” Agent Taylor responded.

A frantic voice on the other line said, “Agent, why haven’t you been responding? We have a Code Red, Defcon One situation here at the rendition site. Detention bay breached, holding cells compromised. I repeat: Code Red, Defcon One. Detention bay breached. Holding cells compromised. Over.”

“Goddamn,” Agent Taylor muttered. “Alright, I’m authorizing local law enforcement to take the situation from here, over.”

“Sir, with all due respect, are you sure that’s a good idea? If the press gets a load of this, they’ll have a field day,” the voice on the other line responded.

“Don’t question my authority!” Agent Taylor bellowed, going on another power trip.

Back at the site, Witherslapt, Izzy, Pedrocco, Franky, Tisha, and Paty led the prisoners out of the rendition facility and out to the sewage tunnel. They were almost back out to the Mississippi when Franky heard what sounded like a helicopter flying overhead. As they got closer to the tunnel’s exit, they could see the beam of a search light moving about.

“Let’s make a run for the speed boat,” said Paty.

“Okay. Quick! Go! Go! Go!” Pedrocco shouted.

The gang and the escaped prisoners started running down the steep concrete edifice. They were about a third of the way to the shoreline where the speedboat was hidden, tethered under some trees and driftwood when the chopper’s spotlight zeroed in on them.

“Stop! Police!” an amplified voice shouted down from the helicopter.

“Keep running!” Paty screamed.

Just then, Officer Peabody opened fire with a mounted fifty caliber machine gun from inside the helicopter. Bullets were slamming into the concrete, disintegrating chunks of it, and

ricocheting off of the Ford Parkway Bridge's metal support beams. One of the escaped prisoners wearing an orange jumpsuit was hit and rolled down the concrete edifice like a ragdoll into the river.

"Get me in closer," Peabody yelled to the pilot of the chopper, Lieutenant Jackson.

Six more detainees were fatally hit, but luckily Witherslapt, Paty, Pedrocco, Tisha, Franky, and Izzy made it down to the speed boat unharmed. Five detainees made it with them.

Izzy revved the speed boat's engine and threw the throttle into top gear. Soon they had lost the pigs near *Wita Tanka* and made it back downstream to the High Bridge where Cedric, Omar, and Santiago were waiting with the Cadillac Escalade.

"I'm sure they've raided all of our apartments by now," Witherslapt said as they piled into the SUV.

"Why don't you just lie low at my garage for a few days?" Santiago proposed.

"That would be wonderful," Witherslapt replied.

"Yeah, *mi casa es su casa, amigos*. Besides, I could use the extra hands for working on my cars," Santiago said.

"Ha, alright. But I'm not much of a mechanic," Witherslapt responded with false modesty designed to in fact indicate that not knowing much about cars' engines made him a better, more intellectual, person.

"*Órale, carnal. Todo se puede aprender en la vida,*" Santiago replied, then repeated himself in English for emphasis, "Everything can be learned in life."

Part II. "Taken to Another Level"

13 – LYIN' LOW FOR A BIT

The gang had agreed on crashing at Santiago's garage for the night. They surmised that all of their apartments would have been raided by the Feds at this point, so the best thing to do would probably be to go to a secure location, keep a low profile, and watch cable television news programming to see the manhunt unfold into a nationally televised spectacle. Above Santiago's garage were a couple artist's lofts, where he and his wife and children lived along with Cedric and Omar in the other unit.

The Radical Book Club was overjoyed to have their comrade Tisha back, and also delighted to have five new friends: the detainees they had just liberated. With fourteen people in a vehicle meant to seat eight, the ride back to Lake Street in the Escalade was more than, shall we say, a little cramped: lots of sitting on laps. But the mood soon became festive as the escaped detainees began celebrating their newfound freedom. Three of the escapees were Muslims and began praising Allah for sending Paty, Pedrocco, Izzy, Franky, and Witherslapt to liberate them. Of the other two liberated detainees, one was an Afghan Zoroastrian mystic and warlord, and the other a Sikh Maoist rebel officer from Uttar Pradesh. His name was Dilawar and he had been a commander in the Naxalite Army.

Izzy turned the radio dial to Eighty Nine Point Three, The Current, which happened to be playing the song *Ice Ice Baby* by Vanilla Ice as their daily 'No Apologies' track; hearing this

awesome beat, he turned the dial to max volume and started bumpin' it. Dilawar, the Sikh Maoist man, started singing along and dancing in his seat, and pretty soon everybody was throwing their hands in the air and singing along, "He gave them Ice Ice, baby." Izzy rolled down all the windows and the escaped detainees started leaning their bodies out of them; they were yelling out of the windows at random passersby. The only people still out at that hour of the early morning were crooks and homeless people, so no one was calling the cops. Eventually the song ended and everyone calmed down, until they got to Lake Street and drove past all the nightclubs and bars. Izzy, Franky, and Pedrocco started shouting at women on the street, asking how much they charged, and 'complimenting' them.

"Street harassment is not cool, you pieces of shit," Paty said.

"Lighten up, sugar," Pedrocco said with condescension immediately before leaning out the window and shouting at a woman on the street.

Paty grabbed the loaded Desert Eagle pistol from Tisha, who was sitting on her lap, and aimed it at Pedrocco's head.

"Whoa, whoa, let's calm the fuck down here," Cedric said, raising up his arms.

Omar chimed in, "Yo, dudebros, let's just settle the fuck down," also raising up his arms.

Paty continued, "You need to seriously check your male privilege. You claim you want to abolish oppression, but you are oppressing women, asserting sexist hierarchies."

"Complimenting bitches ain't oppression, ya Puritan broad," Franky retorted.

Izzy had turned the volume down a bit after the Vanilla Ice song finished, but was getting sick of this bickering, so he popped in a manele CD and started bumping the song *Şmecher de Capitală* by Babi Minune, drowning out Paty and everyone else's voice.

A few blocks later, the Escalade rolled past Jorge's Cantina and Discoteca, where there was a crowd of people standing outside. Around the corner, they saw a bunch of cop cars with their lights flashing.

Izzy turned down the volume of Babi Minune.

"Hey, isn't that Mo's house?" Witherslapt asked.

"Mo?" Franky said.

"You know, Mohammed from the Socialist Alliance."

"Oh, you mean *Somali Mo*," Franky said.

"Shit, well, why are all those cop cars outside his house?" Tisha asked.

"Just keep driving, man," Paty advised.

"Odds are that the Feds are cracking down on Socialist Alliance," Witherslapt surmised.

Eventually they made it back to Santiago's garage and went up to the artist's lofts to crash for the night.

Witherslapt, Paty, Tisha, and the Zoroastrian mystic ended up getting a room together for the night. The first thing they did was turn on the television to Conservative Cable News to see what was on.

They sat down together on the queen sized mattress and watched in amazement as Donaldo Oleada reported, "Breaking News here on CCN. I'm Donaldo Oleada, reporting from Minneapolis, Minnesota. We have reports of an armed criminal gang wreaking havoc in the heart of America and an exclusive video that you'll only see on Conservative Cable."

A helicopter dashboard camera video of Paty yelling, "Keep running!" and the gang running out of the sewage tunnel along with the escaping detainees started playing.

"Our lives are never going to be the same again," Witherslapt whispered softly.

The Zoroastrian mystic then said, "Change comes with all things, and with all things also comes conservation; that is, the maintenance of the status quo. However, subtle changes transcend this paradigm; subtle changes defy the expectation of change itself, while still maintaining enough of the expectation of change so that they qualify as this so-called change, which might more accurately in your language be known as 'differentiation,' but subtle change nevertheless maintains a plethora of aspects of the status quo. Life is but a series of subtle differentiations."

"I totally get what you're saying," Tisha said.

The Conservative Cable News exclusive dashcam video then showed one of the detainees who was wearing an orange jumpsuit rolling like a ragdoll down the concrete into the Mississippi River. Jean-Claude Huntington then came on and started arguing with

Donaldo about which civil liberties are okay to violate. Paty got bored after realizing CCN was just repeating the same thing every two minutes, and switched the television to one of the *Late Shows*. They laughed at the jokes and then started falling asleep. Paty got up to switch off the lights after it seemed like everyone was asleep.

She lay in the darkness, staring towards the ceiling, wondering what would happen tomorrow.

“Paty?” Witherslapt probed.

“Yes?” she said in a hushed tone.

“Are you still awake?” he whispered.

She whispered back, “Yes.”

“What is the people’s eternal dance on the cloudy waters?”

Witherslapt asked, still whispering.

“What?” Paty asked.

“You remember, when I was crying and you told me not to mourn because of something about atavic lore?”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” she yawned. “Good night, Witherslapt.”

Witherslapt thought to himself, *That’s strange*, and fell asleep a few moments later.

Paty did not remember what she had said because she was emotionally attuned to Witherslapt and knew on the level of her semi-conscious Ego that he was thinking about her ancestors and his passionate longing for her when they were riding upstream on the speedboat past *Wita Tanka*, or Pike Island. Deep beneath her semi-conscious Ego, in her unconscious Id, genetic and cultural archetypes had been engaged, activating a cognitive apparatus of ancestral spirit possession. Epigenetic memory allows for ancestral spirits to be bound on the molecular level to the DNA, a random microcosm of genetic ancestral memory then can be activated, resulting in the phenomenon Western society knows as, “Higgs Boson transgenerational channelling,” where a distant ancestor’s personality, knowledge, culture, and memory may be momentarily activated in his or her descendants. The Zoroastrian mystic thought about all of this in his sleep, his supple pineal gland secreting a mountain of melatonin, a consciousness-altering hormone.

When they woke up the next morning, the Zoroastrian mystic warlord had disappeared.

14 – CRACKDOWN

Officer Vang walked out of the Victorian-era home with Cillian in handcuffs as a SWAT team continued securing the domicile’s perimeter. He threw the ringleader of the blasted Trotskyite sect into a police van, hopped in the driver’s seat, and was on his way to the Hennepin County Detention Facilities.

As Vang drove, he shouted through the cage to the back of the paddy wagon, “Well, was it worth it, ya damn socialist sods?!”

Cillian was bewildered, lying on the floor, covered in sweat, still wearing his pajamas. Mohammed was already in the paddy wagon, tied up and gagged. Peabody and three other officers, Cunningham, Cox, and Anderson, lifted Cillian off the floor and tied him up too.

Agents Taylor and Greaves were at the jail, preparing to interrogate the Central Committee and full-time organizers of the Minneapolis branch of Socialist Alliance: Cillian and Mohammed, along with Katryn and Jon, who had been transported in a separate paddy wagon. Greaves felt slightly groggy from the amnesia serum, but recalled nothing of Taylor’s assault on her.

“This is a threat level Active Black situation,” Agent Greaves stated coolly, her eyes zoning out, “We have full authorization for employment of enhanced interrogation techniques.”

“Excellent,” Agent Taylor replied.

After arriving at the detention facilities, Vang, Peabody, Cunningham, Cox, and Anderson threw burlap sacks over Mohammed, Katryn, Jon, and Cillian's heads and transported them to four separate holding cells equipped with one-way mirrors.

Agent Taylor watched on through a one-way mirror as waterboarding procedures were initiated on Cillian by three privately contracted interrogation assistants from the X-Mark Corporation, a start-up company founded by none other than Duane Hartmann, a hot-shot Generation X yuppie. Duane Hartmann had an article in *Forbes* about him; that's how big of a hot-shot he was. From humble beginnings with hippie parents, Duane grew up to have connections all over the Orient which would eventually help build X-Mark into a thriving investment venture, and business would be-a boomin'. Any person with a high school education, or let's be honest, less, could become a security contractor in X-Mark's Modern America™. Slowly, the military-academic-prison industrial complex grew to wild proportions; much of the violence being funded by Midwestern, Appalachian, and Texan moguls. Duane Hartmann was from Texas. Laredo, to be precise.

Agent Taylor spoke to Cillian from behind the glass through an X-Mark intercom system.

"*Salut, Cillian. Ça va ou quoi?*"

"*Putain mais c'est quoi? Tu parles français?*" Cillian responded.

"Holy shit, Cillian, it been *longtemps* since I seen you," Taylor chuckled.

"Not since when we were living on the French Riviera, you old dog," Cillian laughed, realizing whose voice was speaking to him, that of his old frat bro.

Cillian and Taylor had lived together in the South of France back in the mid-1990s. Their relationship actually went way back. Cillian was, in fact, an H.I.A. Asset.

"*Alors, how about you untie moi?*" Cillian said.

"Actually, I can't do that, Cillian," Taylor responded.

"What! *Pourquoi pas?*" Cillian demanded.

"My directives are to liquidate you. Easterly Plateau Protocol. I'm sorry, Cillian." Taylor said, wanting to get it done with quickly. This was hard enough on him.

"*Nique ta mère et fuck you, Sebastien,*" Cillian said, using Agent Taylor's real name.

"I can't have you leaking out my birth name," Sebastien responded.

"Seb, it's not worth it! Think of all the good times we had together, up there in Estienne d'Orve Park, looking out into the blue Mediterranean, discussing *la politique, la littérature, et la poésie* in *les cafés de la Vieille Ville*, the Old City. *S'il vous plaît, Seb, ne fais pas ça!*" Cillian begged, looking into the mirror, which he knew Sebastien was standing behind.

An air-tight futuristic X-Mark glass door slid down in front of the interrogation room's only exit. Noxious gas began slowly rising.

Agent Taylor's men were locked in the interrogation room with the Socialist Alliance Minneapolis branch chairman, Cillian.

"Hey, what the fuck, Agent?" a private interrogation contractor yelled.

"Let us out!" another one shouted.

"Fuck you, Sebastien, fuck you!" Cillian gasped, choking to death on the chemicals.

A third private contractor flung himself onto the one way mirror, cursing Agent Taylor and smearing his face all over it as he was suffocated by Zyklon B gas.

Sebastien said to the private contractors, "Hey, you dumb fucks shoulda unionized if you wanted your personal well-being to be one of my top priorities! Ha! I can't have you dumb fucks meddling in my shit. Just knowing that my real birth name is Sebastien makes you a liability. And liabilities are just not business friendly, boys. But really, thank you for your service."

Sebastien then looked into Cillian's eyes, which seemed to be staring straight at him, but he knew this was impossible; it was a one-way mirror.

"Cillian, no hard feelings, right? It was just business, my friend," Sebastien said sociopathically.

Sebastien's neck jerked his head slightly to the left and his face started twitching in a bizarre fashion. Sebastien re-assumed his Agent Taylor persona through a trigger re-installing a dominant psychological profile switch using a psyche conditioning program to partition cognitive operating systems, booting up a hive mind.

Just then, Agent Greaves put her hand on Taylor's shoulder.

"It's okay, Taylor. I know that you've left that life behind you. You'll always be Agent Taylor to me," she said.

Taylor took this as an invitation to grab hold of Greaves and stick his snakish tongue down her throat like that sailor photographed at Times Square on Victory over Japan Day sexually assaulting a nurse, manhandling her, bending her over backwards and smooching as the Zyklon B gas terminated the lives of Cillian and the privately contracted interrogators.

Greaves was alarmed, and immediately began struggling to end this unsolicited ravishing, but Taylor held her down. Finally he paused, withdrawing his tongue for a moment so as to take a breath of air, and it was during this brief interlude that Greaves pushed him away and slapped him across the face, before pulling out her standard-issue H.I.A. firearm, a .44 Magnum revolver.

"Stop!" Greaves screamed.

"Whoa, there, sugar muffin," Taylor said in a creepy voice.

"I don't appreciate that shit," Greaves said, trembling as she raised the Magnum's barrel towards Agent Taylor.

"Agent Greaves, I order you to stand down! Stand down, now!" Taylor screamed, his throbbing veins jumping out of his neck as he lurched forward at her.

Bam! The revolver slammed off a slug straight into Agent Taylor's heart before ricocheting off the back of his rib cage, causing a bullet fragment to pierce his spleen and create a gnarly exit gunshot wound.

"Goddamn," Agent Taylor muttered, exhaling his last breath as his body collapsed onto the floor.

Sarah Melissa Greaves closed her eyes, sighed, and pulled out a voice recording device to make a memo to herself, "Agent Taylor has been compromised, file paperwork explaining death as suicide."

Greaves then stepped out into the hallway and saw Lieutenant Jackson, the H.I.A.'s local law enforcement liaison officer.

"Jackson, there's been a multiple casualty incident in Interrogation Room Three. I need you to get the undertaker's men here to collect bodies. Leave the paperwork to me. This is a classified operation, so I don't want any of this going public, or even on the department's records. Understood?" Greaves said.

"Understood, Agent. We'll keep it under wraps," Jackson responded, "for national security."

Greaves entered another room where Jon, the streetcar conductor, was being waterboarded by private contractors. She stood there behind the one-way mirror, listening to the contractors ask the questions she had prepared for them.

A shadowy figure lifted the cold wet towel off of Jon's face.

"Tell us, Jon, what is the Socialist Alliance planning to do on May Day?" the contractor asked.

"This shit is fucked. I know my rights. I want to talk to my lawyer," Jon said.

"Executive Order Eight Nine Four, Jon. We can make you talk if national security depends on it," the shadowy figure explained.

"And who decides what is a threat to national security?" Jon asked.

"Our intelligence indicates that *you* are, Jon. Now I'm the one who's supposed to be asking the questions here, so why don't you just let me do my job?" the shadowy figure said.

"Fuck your shit," Jon said.

"What is the Socialist Alliance planning for May Day?" the contractor questioned.

"Just march and sell the paper, maybe make some new contacts," Jon replied.

"Let's cut the bullshit, Jon. We both know the Socialist Alliance was planning something bigger than that," the private interrogation contractor asserted. "Where is Pedrocco Pastrana?"

"He lives in South Minneapolis," Jon said, desperate to give up some information and end the torture.

"We already know that, Jon. Where is he now?" the shadowy figure questioned.

"I don't know!" Jon exclaimed.

The shadowy figure replied, "Wrong answer. Where are Witherslapt Gobseckowitz and Ismail 'Izzy' Zamora Sanchez?"

"I don't know!" Jon exclaimed once more.

"Where is Patricia 'Paty' Guzman? Tisha Marie Ulroy? Franklin Giuseppe Ford?"

"I don't know! I don't know! I don't know!" Jon yelled.

“Re-initialize waterboarding protocol, see if that’ll make him talk,” Greaves chimed in through the X-Mark intercom from behind the one-way mirror.

“No! No! Nooo!” Jon screamed, struggling to wriggle beneath the straps holding him down.

“Very well, Agent. As you say,” the shadowy figure responded, throwing the cold wet towel back over Jon’s face.

Greaves stepped back out into the hall to check on the interrogations of Katryn and Mohammed, but no one seemed to be revealing anything on the whereabouts of the Radical Book Club. Frustrated and in need of a break, Greaves stepped into the employee lounge and lit up a cigarette.

“Goddamn,” she muttered, reminiscing in her own mind about what had all just gone down.

She exhaled the tobacco smoke and turned on Conservative Cable News, the television network most favored by the Homeland Intelligence Agency. (H.I.A. employees collaborated closely and had quite cordial relations with CCN executives in every stage of the programming production process). Agent Greaves took a seat in an armchair upholstered in extremely shiny and green faux leather. It seemed the amnesia serum she had been dosed with had been on the weak side. She was starting to have flashbacks to scenes of being assaulted by Agent Taylor, formerly known as Sebastien, but the CCN anchorwoman was distracting her from fully realizing her flashback, stopping the bringing out of the memory into the conscious domains of her cognitive apparatus.

“I’m Gretyl O’Brien here on Conservative Cable News, the most unbiased name in news. Breaking news here at the top of the hour! First, in a CCN exclusive, a top government insider involved in the recent national security raids has communicated to Conservative Cable on condition of anonymity that homegrown terror groups aren’t so homegrown after all; the ringleader of a terror gang that helped eleven terror suspects escape from a subterranean black ops rendition site in Minnesota is a Somali Muslim. Well, with more on that, here’s Mike Beckhammer. Mike, take it from here,” the anchorwoman was saying.

“Mike Beckhammer here on Conservative Cable! That’s right, Gretyl. A *Somalian* Muslim who insiders tell us goes by the name Mohammed has been arrested in Minneapolis, Minnesota and is

suspected of leading a gang of terror gunmen in what is being called the most atrocious affront to Law, Order, Stability, God, and Country in the last decade. Experts say the Somali community is devastated by rampant khat addiction. Too bad the expert pinheads in Washington haven’t figured out that it’s time to stop letting these African freaks into our nation! This is the kind of people Liberals want to give advantages to with their ridiculous affirmative action lies and entitlement attitudes. Enough is enough!” Beckhammer said in a douchebaggy, sing-songy voice filled with self-righteousness.

Just then, another H.I.A. agent walked into the employee lounge. She sauntered up to Agent Greaves.

“Agent Greaves?” she probed.

“Yes, I’m Agent Greaves,” Greaves responded.

“Excellent to meet you, Agent Greaves,” the other woman shot back. “My name is Agent Pamela. General Johnson sent me, said he thought you could use some help here.”

“Agent Pamela, eh?” Greaves said, exhaling a bunch of stale nicotine fumes. She took a few seconds to take another monster drag off the cancer stick and exhale the smoke like a Chinese dragon. “Let me guess, you’re some hot-shot rookie Agent, looking to test your toss in the big ol’ H.I.A.? Well, look, kiddo, there’s a lot you’ve yet to learn about intelligence work.”

“With all due respect, Agent Greaves, you are underestimating my training. Langley’s Agent Academy isn’t what it used to be. Rigors have been augmented. That shit is tough,” Agent Pamela responded.

“We’ll see about that,” Greaves snorted. “I should probably tell you that my colleague, Agent Taylor, just died.”

“My only directive is to help liquidate this ultra-leftist sect, the so-called Radical Book Club. An Agent’s liquidation outside the scope of my responsibility to that directive does not concern me,” Pamela said, expressing her loyalty to the Homeland Intelligence Agency’s philosophy that Agents are only to give a fuck about their directives, and *nothing* else.

“Excellent,” Greaves answered, assuming the role of commanding agent while Agent Pamela played out to be an obedient executing agent.

These two agent roles were like the H.I.A.'s yin and yang; agents were profiled and assigned colleagues along psyche type classification prognostics based on intense statistical analysis. However, it seemed apparent that the Homeland Intelligence Agency's psyche typologists had committed a grave error in placing Greaves and Taylor together. But so far, Greaves and Pamela were a match made in the closest thing to Heaven on Earth: the Hennepin County Detention Facilities' employee lounge.

Officer Peabody then walked into the employee lounge, followed a few seconds later by Officers Cox and Vang.

"Hey, check out the new broad," Peabody whispered to Cox and Vang.

"Eight outta ten, I'd say," Cox replied loudly.

"Are you kidding me? Ten outta ten, man!" Vang shouted.

Agents Pamela and Greaves looked over at the men.

"Are you rating me?" Pamela asked.

Embarrassed, Vang replied, "No . . . we were just talking about the scores of the B-ball game."

"You expect me to believe that?" Agent Pamela retorted, "I could have you liquidated, you know."

"Hey, relax, sugar toots," Peabody responded, "We're all colleagues here. Nobody's getting liquidated."

"Just keep up that attitude and you'll be the first one to go," Greaves said, pulling out her .44 Magnum revolver.

She aimed the Magnum at Peabody's crotch, then cocked back the revolver's hammer manually with her thumb as she closed one eye for precision. Suddenly, she aimed at Peabody's knee and slammed off a hollow-tipped slug. Bang!

"Ah, Jesus Christ, bitch!" Peabody squealed, falling to the floor and clutching his demolished knee. "I'm a fucking cop!"

Vang and Cox didn't know what to do, so they each just took a few steps back.

"I don't give a shit if you're a cop," Greaves snarled back. "Fuck with my colleague, and I'll make your life a world of hurt, or better (for you, at least), terminate it. This is a classified operation and I can do whatever the fuck I want. I am the motherfucking shadow government, you swine," Greaves continued, throwing her cigarette butt to the ground and stomping out the ember into the carpet.

Agents Pamela and Greaves decided to make their way to the communications van to run some analysis programs on the interrogations. As they walked by, Agent Pamela gave Peabody, who was bleeding profusely, her phone number on a scrap of paper and winked at him.

After the women had left and Peabody had become a pale green color, Vang kneeled down, put his hand on Peabody's shoulder, and said, "Shit, man. We'll get you to the doctor soon."

"That shit was fucked. But damn! That Agent Pamela," Officer Cox said as they carried Peabody away on a stretcher with a traction splint on his leg.

15 – REVOLUTIONARY CULTURAL RENAISSANCE IN SANTIAGO’S GARAGE

Pedrocco ripped a hit of hash off of a six foot long bong as incense burned all around him. Paty and Tisha were covered in melted black wax, or blax, making out with each other and practically heavy petting as Witherslapt watched on. Franky and Izzy were on all fours, swaying back and forth in front of the skeleton altar with Cedric, Omar, and the other devotees worshipping *La Santísima Muerte* as Santiago poured blax onto them from a golden chalice. After chanting for around forty five minutes, a strange woman covered in blax emerged from the in-ground hot tub like *Nosferatu* again. She began carrying out some sort of strange liturgy, and then instructed devotees to come up to her and drink shot glasses of mezcal mixed with heavy doses of Lysergic acid diethylamide. The ambiance was a deep, dark red, and dry ice smoke machines added to the haziness of the hot-boxed subterranean lair.

The woman covered in blax lifted up a machete and cried out in a booming voice, “We have come together here to warmly embrace our Dark Mother, Goddess of Afrika, Sara e Kali, *Svîntaika Muli*. She is the Destroyer of illusions and it is She who will carry us on to the afterlife. In my astral projection journey to the spirit realm, our Dark Mother has communicated to me her desire to channel her vital essence into this plane of existence through me.”

The blax-covered woman slammed the machete into a live goat that was tied up at her feet, causing blood to spurt haphazardously.

“Glory to Her highest priestess, *La Paloma Negra*,” Cedric shouted, “The Black Dove!”

Just then, Omar came out from behind the altar with a boombox on his shoulder and started playing the song *Boan Acid* by Boan.

Perception indicated that Paloma Negra was levitating. She was a living icon and she was beaming out dark energy onto her devotees. Dark matter, little understood by the inadequate methodologies of Occidental scientism, was in fact the essence of the Dark Mother.

The devotees of Saint Death then slaughtered another goat and a lamb, and started grilling them in another hidden pit (which contained a grill instead of tubs of wax).

The ceremony devolved into a righteous communal feast on the freshly grilled goat and lamb meats. Devotees spoke with one another and enjoyed each other’s presence as they gulped down the warm meats, which tasted good. Other devotees brought out huge jugs of wine for the feast. Some sipped from their jugs of wine while others chugged them slovenly.

A young devotee of *La Santísima Muerte* named Fabiola bragged, “All who art loyal unto *La Santa Muerte* doth feast on this occasion.”

Fabiola was Santiago’s wife, and she was pregnant with their fifth child.

Paloma Negra was this hippie chick who came in off the railways from Down South: Missouri-Kansas area, to be precise. She grew up on the Indian Reservation of the Meskwaki Nation in Kansas with her Meskwaki mother and Rromani father (who was adopted by the Meskwaki tribe), until her *piramno*’s Rromani family decided to kidnap her and take her to Missouri to live with their *vitsa*, a mixed Romanichal-Vlax clan, where she lived out in the swamps repairing pots and pans and carving wooden eating utensils to sell at flea markets alongside furniture-peddling Amish families in the villages and hamlets, often running asphalt driveway paving scams on elderly people along rural highways

(which they called *le dromuri bare*), as well as stealing livestock and fair-skinned *rakle*. Amongst the Rroma, she was known as Golumbaika Kali.

Eventually she and her *piramno*, Gabor, came up to the Twin Cities to run a combination psychic consultancy and strip club as well as a Native American-themed herbal art shop on Cedar-Riverside, which quickly devolved, respectively, into the Cities' biggest human smuggling and drug trafficking hubs.

She met Santiago at a dubstep concert and then he got her really into the *Santa Muerte* cosmovision. Now she was the Highest Priestess in the Midwestern synode of the underground *Santa Muerte* theocratic drug cartel, and she was recruiting all sorts of new *Santa Muerte* believers among Americans identifying with the Rromani ethnicity, who in Rromanes called Her *Svîntaika Muli*, though some of the more assimilated groups of Vlax Rroma tended to opt for the theonym *Sfânta Moarte*.

Golumbaika's *piramno*, Gabor, was also an initiate of the cult, but played a less active role and had missed tonight's ritual to go out on an adventure with mates to scam and pickpocket tourists at the Mall of America.

Paloma's relatives were even organizing a proselytization mission trip to Europe to convert Rroma in the Balkans to the *Svîntaika Muli* cult and they were asking her to go with to help spread *La Palabra de Perdición*. By bringing the remnant goddess of Tonantzin to the Balkans, the syncretism of religious beliefs would create a whirlwind of visceral and spontaneous social movements which no academic hack could ever anticipate.

Throughout Paloma's adolescent years, the Rromani elders of Southwestern Missouri and Eastern Kansas assembled regularly at the *kris*, or Rromani assembly of elders, to make decisions which would guide the whole community, decisions which would widely be regarded as antisocial and illegal by the surrounding population, primarily of white settler descent. It was a community which existed outside the social norms of the mainstream society, constituting a totally exclusive, secret world, where no exploitative bourgeois media pundits, orientazing gypsyologists, or *gadže dile* of any sort could could weasel their way in and fuck up the true Romanichal-Vlax hybrid culture.

Witherslapt's heart swooned over Paloma Negra. He locked his postcolonial gaze onto her blax silhouette and kept it there, trancing out into the realm of phantasy, where he met Paloma's spirit animal, a black dove. Witherslapt took the form of a rodent in the spirit world.

The black dove came down and landed in front of the rodent, and said, "Dearest Mister Rat, why do you so disappoint me?"

"Disappoint you? I should be asking you the same question, Golumbaika," said Rat.

Dove spoke back, "I wish to create rebellion. What is it you wish to foment?"

"Renaissance," Rat said.

Suddenly, Witherslapt and *La Paloma Negra* were both snapped back into the profane realm by some strange force. Unknown to them, the disruptive force was an electromagnetic pulse wave designed to disrupt the spiritual realm. Pulse waves such as this one were emitted hourly by Government Satellites as part of the top secret High Velocity Active Astral Research Program, or HVAARP. Paloma's eyes and his locked. They were both coming up to the peak of their acid trips.

Just then, Paty grabbed Witherslapt and kissed him.

Whoa, what's going on? was Witherslapt's first thought as Paty gobbled more blax all over him. He already had a bunch of blax on him from when Santiago was pouring it on the devotees during the ritual.

Then he realized, *Oh my God, Paty is kissing me. But what about Paloma. I've never seen her not covered in blax, but my soul instinct tells me she is my true spirit kin.*

Witherslapt jerked back and slapped Paty across the face.

"What the hell, Paty?" Wither slapte (the native spelling of his name) demanded.

"Jesus Christ, Wither slapte, I know you've wanted me since that time you cried on the boat. Why the fuck would you slap me? Can you answer that question, Wither slapte Gobseckowitz?" Paty said, taken aback and enraged.

"Look Paty, calm down. I believe in polyamory. I still like you, but for right now, my erotic passions are reserved for *La Paloma Negra*," Wither slapte said before turning to Paloma and winking.

“Alright Wither slapte, I understand,” Paty said, settling on Tisha as her partner for the night.

The feast continued until a late hour of the night, when the gang started falling asleep on luxurious cushions upholstered in black leather covering the floor in another part of the subterranean chamber. As they fell asleep, Pedrocco found some leftover meats from the ritual slaughter and gobbled them up. The meats were quite scrumptious.

Before retiring to the black leather ritual sleeping corner, Wither slapte dunked Paloma into the hot water tub to cleanse her of the blax and saw her natural corporeal appearance. Immediately, Wither slapte and Paloma fell in love. They shared an abundance of mutual physical desire, but they could also astral project at will, even in a conscious state, to the spiritual realm and interact in a variety of indescribable forms. Discovering this mutual ability was an unbelievable experience. Paloma already had a lot of experience astral projecting to the spiritual realm and far depths of the galaxy to hold communion with the *Santa Muerte*, but for Wither slapte, this was all new. Wither slapte was slightly unsettled though, because realizing the ability to astral project at will, effectively time warp-maneuvering to other aspects of the mega-verse, made him second guess his commitment to the Trotskyite ideal of dialectical materialism and the atheistic, de-spiritualized worldview it prefigured.

Wither slapte and Paloma laid on the luxury in-ground upholstered mattress cushions and started astral projecting, their avatars travelling faster than the speed of light, almost instantaneously reaching the far depths of the Milky Way Galaxy, to an undiscovered planet.

“How could this physically be possible?” Wither slapte wondered to himself as his consciousness literally flew through outer space.

Rat spaketh, “Golumbaika, you are a beautiful dove, but do you not run across the ground, as the other animals do?”

Retorted Dove, “Silly, Rat. Do you not see that I have both wings and feet? When Cat chases *your kind*, do you not wish that you could simply fly away?”

The black dove flew into the darkness.

“Paloma, come back!” Wither slapte said, crying.

Suddenly, Wither slapte transformed into a cat. Paloma was still hidden in the darkness though.

Before embracing the *Santa Muerte*, Paloma had been raised Pentecostal: Seventh Day Adventist, to be precise. That lasted until her Rromani family kidnapped her; then she just followed a bizarre misinterpretation of the creed of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Some people on the Romanichal side of the clan loosely followed Presbyterianism, but Paloma’s dad was a straight up Vlax Rrom, from Timișoara.

Coming back down from their astral projection, Paloma and Wither slapte fell asleep together, cuddling on the black upholstered leather cushions. That night, Paloma had a bizarre and unsettling dream in which she ended up swallowing Wither slapte’s gnarled offering whole. Of course, such unsublimated jouissant frolic with a (Jewish) *gadžo* would be a serious breach of *Rromanipen*, and would render her ritually polluted. If even a hint of such phantasm should transcend into material reality, the *mule* would for sure put Gabor into a jealous fit of rage.

The following morning, everyone woke up feeling incredibly lucid. It was as if the dark energy of the ritual had cleared their minds and given them the focus and resolve to accomplish the huge tasks that lay ahead: organizing the proletariat into a disciplined, ideologically hardline mass movement, building momentum from the liberation of the political prisoners, and taking their next step of action towards the final solution of dismantling the bourgeois State. The police had raided all of their homes, so it was either they get their act together and launch the Revolution within the next few weeks or they would have to go demand political asylum in Cuba, as Assata Shakur had done some years earlier. But Cuba wasn’t looking so hot anymore, what with the petit-bourgeois elements taking over and exploiting the Cuban working class so European sex tourists could ravish the island. The Radical Book Club would have to go hardline. Paty already had made multiple contacts in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

“Cup of joe?” Paloma said, offering it to Wither slapte as the first sun rays of the day hit Santiago’s garage.

“Don’t mind if I do!” Wither slapte responded, grabbing the coffee and slurping it up almost immediately.

It was hot and burned his throat.

“Ouch!” he whined.

Paloma put her hand on Wither slapte’s throat, looked him in the eyes, and they were about to swap saliva.

“Man, have you guys seen the news this morning?” Cedric said, interrupting the moment of intimacy between Paloma and Wither slapte. Other people were still laying around on the ritualistic leather sleeping cushions, but they were starting to wake up.

“No. What is it?” Paloma asked.

“The government is shutting down Socialist Alliance. All Trotskyite groups have been outlawed. The president just signed a bill adding all Marxist groups onto the War on Terror enemies list,” Cedric responded.

“Damn. Usually a president would just unilaterally add new enemies to the list, but passing a bill . . . this must be serious,” Paloma thought out loud.

“All of our comrades are going to be screwed,” Wither slapte said.

Just then, a shadowy figure wielding an assault rifle climbed down the ladder into the ritual den. The mysterious figure strutted up to Paloma, Cedric, and Wither slapte and they saw that it was Pedrocco. “Not all of them will be screwed. Think fast!” he said. Pedrocco swiftly threw the rifle to Cedric. “Are you ready to take down the bourgeois dictatorship?” he questioned.

“But what is our plan, man? We can’t just go into this all willy-nilly,” Wither slapte shot back.

“The plan is we bring the fight to the fucking pigs before they bring it to us!” Pedrocco screamed.

Wither slapte was visibly shaken. He responded, “Alright, Pedrocco. Well, we’ll need to plan out the logistics of the operation first, but I guess what you say is true. We can’t hide in this ritual lair forever. Eventually the pigs will be on us. It’s either we go down in a blaze of glory, establish a new proletarian state, or defect to North Korea.”

“Fuck that; I’m not moving to North Korea,” Izzy interjected.

“Oh, don’t be such a close-minded closet Liberal national chauvinist, Izzy,” Tisha said, “North Korea would be great, and don’t give me that petty crypto-nationalist, phony leftist rhetoric about how great it is to stay in your own country and fight for

revolution there. Fuck that! Maybe I would just be happier in Korea, okay? Besides, the working class *has* no country!”

Wither slapte then quipped, “Alright, alright. Scrap defecting to North Korea. It’s either we go down in a horrendous gun battle with security forces, or we smash the bourgeois state and organize the masses to begin building communism.”

“But first, let’s fuckin’ eat and smoke some ganj,” Franky shouted.

They climbed up to the artists’ lofts and Omar made a shit ton of scrambled eggs, fried bacon, and pancakes for everyone while they hot-boxed the residency.

After breakfast, Wither slapte, Paty, Paloma, and Santiago were sitting in a darkened room at the back of his artist loft, plotting the Radical Book Club’s next act of armed propaganda.

Santiago spoke, “My friends. May the *Santa Muerte* bless you. In my line of business, I have seen some fucked up shit. But let me tell you something. These piggies need to step out of the drug trade. You see, there is a new cartel down in Mexico, *Los Zetas*. They were trained at the School of the Americas, a fascist training facility in Georgia where death squads are shipped out from to all over Latin America. It was rebranded at the turn of the century as the ‘Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation’. But I digress; the point is, these *Zeta* fucks need to be dealt with. They are using the funds from their rackets, extortion, and smuggling operations to push the neo-liberal North American Free Trade Agreement and steal land from our *paisas*. *Ya basta!* Enough!”

“If we take out the *Zetas*, we can end the drug war and help free up Latin America from Yankee oppression,” Paloma surmised.

“If all of the drug trade is run by Marxist and anarchist autonomous affinity cells, people will see that the real perpetrators of crime in this heinous drug war are the State’s piggies who use drugs as a pretext to oppress communities of color and the working class,” Wither slapte explained.

“Our *paisas* are radicalizing. We can find sure allies in this fight for justice from the Zapatistas, the APPO, and the CNTE,” Santiago reasoned.

“APPO?” Wither slapte asked.

“*Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca*. A front of popular resistance against the Mexican comprador bourgeoisie’s complicity in the implementation of *yanqui* neo-liberal reforms in the southern, mostly indigenous state of Oaxaca.” responded Santiago.

“And CNTE; what’s that?” Wither slapte asked.

“*Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación*. A radical teachers’ union which has shown strong revolutionary potential in recent years, leading popular uprisings in Mexico City. It was created as an alternative to the mainstream SNTE. It seeks to challenge the corruption and injustice of this latter state-sponsored union, the *Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación*.”

“Red union, yellow union,” Gobseckowitz observed.

“*Precisamente*, Wither slapte,” Santiago verbalized with a nod.

“I can wire them all a communique ASAP,” said Paty.

Wither slapte straightened up his posture, jolted erect by a sudden bright idea. “We can call for a march on the School of the Americas. Bring gas masks, weaponry. Make some sort of Trojan horse, then once we’re inside: Bam! Lights out, imperialist motherfuckers!” he said.

A twisted smile curled up Paty’s juicy lips. She was going to enjoy assaulting those imperialist fucks.

Santiago placed his warm hand on Wither slapte’s shoulder and sensually uttered, “I am going to enjoy working *contigo*, buddy.”

Paloma smiled at Wither slapte, her beautiful brown eyes beaming, not even thinking that Gabor would be home soon, expecting dinner.

16 – MARITA’S BOOK CLUB ARMY FRACTION

Marita, one of the Socialist Alliance’s youngest members, was working as a personal care assistant after she had finished high school a year earlier. During her high school years she had helped organize a Twin Cities chapter of a queer anarchist collective known as Bash Bloc, drawing much ire from her petit bourgeois parents. Later, they found out that she became involved in a Marxian activist group and she was promptly sent to a psychiatrist. After that, Marita had to hide her yearning for radical activism from her parents.

“Marita! Come down here at once!” Sue, her ugly stepmother, shouted in a huff and a puff.

Marita was in her room. She quickly hid the worn copy of Lenin’s *Imperialism: What it is and How to Fight It* so that her parents would not find what she had been reading. She had purchased an old, used copy of the book, printed in the 1930s, at Gene Debs Books, the communist, anarchist, and left-liberal-progressive bookstore close to the Somali Mall in Minneapolis.

“Marita, look at what’s on Conservative Cable News,” her father, Don, said. “Those damn socialist sods have really done it this time. We warned you about hanging out with those unshaven slovenly losers, and now look what’s happening to ’em! The police are busting their asses down, those goddamn bastard punks.”

“I know, Dad. It’s been all over the news since those detainees escaped from that secret government prison. But I stopped going to

the Socialist Alliance meetings a super long time ago! I've matured and grown up enough to realize the foolishness of being an idealistic kid. Communism looks great in theory, but in practice it just never works," Marita said, reciting one of the lines she had rehearsed in order to evade her parents' suspicions of her continued involvement in Socialist Alliance.

Don responded, "As good old Winston Churchill used to say, if you're a Liberal when you're young, it's okay because young people are stupid. If you're Conservative when you're old, it's good because it means you're smarter than those Lib-tard fucks."

Marita rolled her eyes, pursed her fine lips, and crossed her arms. This was the type of dimwitted fuckery which passed for wisdom in the Bastesen household.

The television's speakers belched out, "Greg Charleston here on Conservative Cable. This just in: Marxist traitors are finally going down! The president has added Marxist homegrown insurgent groups to the state enemies list after a fiasco in Minneapolis involving a red commie scum outfit calling itself 'Socialist Alliance' attacking the people who keep us safe at night."

Greg Charleston took a moment to adjust his douchebaggy polka dotted bow tie.

Marita stared at the Zoroastrian-themed boteh covered Paisley drapes, beginning to trance out to the realm of phantasy. (She had just done shrooms the night before).

Just then, Marita saw two women in black suits with dark tinted sunglasses walk up onto the porch of their family home. Her heart skipped a beat before one of them pressed the doorbell button. It was Pamela and Greaves. Homeland Intelligence Agency operatives.

Sue opened the door and said, "May I help you, misses?" her chin wobbling to and fro.

Sarah Greaves coolly stated, "Ma'am, there's a loose cannon on the prowl and we need to ask you some questions," as she flashed her Agency badge nonchalantly.

Don stepped his hulking and decrepit figure into the doorway and said, "Now looky here, ma'am. You shan't be harastlin' mah wife."

Pamela barged in between Don and Greaves and shouted, "Sir, this is a federal investigation! Now I can either have your life

terminated, or you can step aside. We need to talk with your daughter. We understand she has been actively supporting an illegal Marxian group."

Don quipped, "Goddamn confused, y'all are. Marita hain't been seein' those damn socialist sods for over a year!"

"Our intelligence indicates otherwise," Pamela said, putting her hand up to readjust her spectacles as Don copped a glance down her blouse.

Sue and Don looked at each other intensely for a fugacious moment.

"Well, what are y'all waitin' for? Come on in!" Sue said, her pathetic 'Minnesota nice' disposition overriding her awareness of the fact that government agents couldn't just walk into their house without showing them a warrant.

"Goddamn it, Sue," Marita muttered under her breath.

"Please, have a seat here at the dinner table," Sue said to the agents.

"Marita Bastesen, we need to talk with you," Agent Greaves said, taking a seat.

"Fuck this," said Marita.

"Watch your language, missy," said Sue.

It was as though a surge of explosive rage suddenly ejaculated out of all of Marita's pores.

"You know what, Sue? Fuck you! You didn't have to let these goddamn pigs into our home!" Marita said.

Sue responded, "Marita! I don't know what's come over you! We have always taught you to be respectful!"

Pamela whipped out her taser menacingly and said, "Ma'am, just leave your daughter to us. We know how teens get."

"My, thank goodness! You can certainly control her with that!" Sue chuckled.

Don grabbed the back of his neck, saying nothing.

"What the fuck is this shit?" Marita said as Sarah Melissa Greaves and Pamela grabbed her by the arms and led her out of the home.

"Your daughter will be home shortly. We just need to bring her in for some questioning," Greaves muttered over her shoulder to Don and Sue as the agents exited the residence with Marita in their custody.

Greaves and Pamela led Marita to their communications van and tied her up so she wouldn't fidget. They drove to a secluded location: across the street from an abandoned factory in the industrial zone west of the Midway, Saint Paul. Upon arrival, the female agents carried Marita into the abandoned factory to carry out the interrogation. This was a black op and they didn't want any of the local law enforcement to get wind of what they were up to; thus they didn't take her to the Hennepin County Detention Facilities.

"Marita, we know you've been involved with those Marxian socialist snots. We also know all about your little Bash Bloc anarcho-clique in high school," Greaves coolly croaked.

"You ain't got shit on me. Just because I fight for social justice in this world doesn't mean you can do whatever you want to me," Marita said.

"Or does it?" Pamela questioned, sliding a latex medical glove over her delicate hand, insinuating something.

"Look, Marita. We can make your life very difficult. Just help us out. You scratch our backs, and we'll scratch yours," said Greaves.

"What did you have in mind?" Marita asked after a moment, raising an eyebrow.

Greaves answered, "We want you to lure the Radical Book Club out into the open. They trust you, Marita. We want you to infiltrate the group, find out where they're hiding, and what they're planning next. You have one week to establish contact with the Radical Book Club. If a week goes by and you still have nothing for us, we'll put you away for a long, long time. Adherence to Marxian ideals is a felony now, so no funny business."

Pamela put a geo-localization tracking device on Marita's ankle.

"What are you doing?" Marita questioned.

"This little doo-dad tells us where you are, where you're going, where you've been," Agent Pamela replied.

"This is unconstitutional!" Marita screamed.

The agents laughed raucously.

"You're a big girl," Greaves said. "You can find your way home from here, I reckon. Remember: You have one week."

Pamela untied Marita and the agents returned to the communications van.

Marita just sat there inside the abandoned factory for a little while. She didn't want to aid the bourgeois State, but she didn't want to go to prison either.

She stared at the peeling paint on the walls. Her eyes followed the cracks, which seemed to tell stories of unfulfilled wishes and the misery of the people who were once confined to this space, selling their labor, and thus themselves, for peanut crumbs while rich fucks made a fortune off of the whole operation. Marita slid her fingernails underneath the cumbersome tracking device and scratched her ankle.

Finally, she mustered up the strength to walk out onto the street.

Wandering aimlessly, Marita happened across some train tracks. It started raining, so to stay dry she crawled under a nearby concrete cylindrical tube, surrounded by rusted out machinery, defunct forklifts, and littered woods.

"April showers bring May flowers," she said to herself as she laid her head down on the cool dirt and began to cry. She was very upset not only with the way the agents had treated her, but also with her unsatisfying relationship with her father and stepmother.

A homeless man was sleeping in a black sleeping bag two feet further down in the concrete cylinder and woke up, hearing her cries.

"Them's slaughterhouse sobs," the homeless man said, recalling the days when he worked in a Southern Minnesota meatpacking plant, before he lost his hand in an industrial accident and went mad, first with anger, then with sadness, and finally an overbearing combination of the two. No one cared about him and he slipped through the cracks of the system, getting no workman's compensation or benefits after he was laid off. They blamed the accident on machine operator error, so the company was never held responsible. The man never knew what it was like to have someone support him and help him out with filing paperwork to get the welfare he was supposedly entitled to, since his dad died in a coal mine explosion in West Virginia when he was three years old and his mom abandoned him shortly thereafter. Later, he grew up in orphanages and foster homes where he was emotionally and physically abused.

Marita was startled.

“Wh-wh-wh-who’s there?” she probed, taking a deep breath as she attempted to liquidate the languidity in her throat.

The man with one hand responded, “Just a lonely, tormented soul.”

“I’m sorry,” Marita said.

For what seemed like an eternity, she and the homeless man just laid there, both sobbing as though they would never run out of tears. Both screaming as though their cries would be heard by Sati Sara, or some deity.

Eventually, Marita started worrying about work. She was scheduled to go wipe disabled people’s asses later that day, but she didn’t want to go because she felt unstable and was worried that she might disturb them, either by breaking into tears on the job or just by the deranged look in her eyes. Finally, she mustered up the strength to repress the tears enough to call up her boss, feign a cough, and say she was sick. Unfortunately, as her workplace lacked union representation and collective bargaining rights, workers there received virtually no benefits, and certainly had no entitlement to sick days; calling in sick would likely lead to retaliation from her employer, perhaps wage theft or even termination of her contract. Of course pressuring personal care assistants to come to work while sick put the special needs people whom Marita worked with, many of them more vulnerable to infection than the average person, at unnecessary risk, but in a capitalist economy, profit is simply more important than human well-being.

After some time, the rain stopped.

Marita said goodbye to the homeless man and walked down to University Avenue to catch a bus. She was itching to get out of this neighborhood.

At the bus stop she saw a poster wheatpasted up, advertizing for the May 1st March for Immigrants’ and Workers’ Rights. May Day, or International Workers’ Day, was only one week away now. She stared at the poster’s graphic design: a marching crowd and a big raised fist. Then she looked down at an old lady sitting there, waiting for the bus.

“Best to stay away from that type of event. Demonstrations only bring trouble. When I was a young girl those Civil Rights ruffians

were always making such a consarn ruckus. Now look! All these gangs of coloreds and negro punks roaming the streets! Back in the good ol’ days, we’d have had ’em strung up right quick,” the old white lady complained.

“I wonder how bad the police repression will be,” Marita thought out loud, rubbing her eyes, which still hurt from crying.

“Nothing a few Molotov cocktails and makeshift spudzookas can’t answer to,” a familiar voice responded from behind her.

It was Joe, her old friend from the Bash Bloc collective. Standing next to him was Chednilonya, another smelly young anarchist crust-punk wearing a mohawk hairstyle and numerous facial piercings.

Marita spun herself around.

“Joe!” she exclaimed, “Fancy meeting you here. What are you up to?”

“We’re on our way to Frogtown. Some crusty peeps just started up a new squat in this big ass condemned house that was foreclosed on after the housing crisis. The Numb Chucks, The Brutalized, and The Goddamnzillas are gonna be playin’ a punk show there tonight. Should be pretty off the chains. It’s a free show, but donations are going to a legal fund for the May Day protests. We’re anticipating a lot of arrests.”

“That sounds exciting,” Marita replied.

“Yeah. Hey, this is my friend Chednilonya,” Joe said.

Marita and Chednilonya fist bumped.

“Nice to meet ya,” they both said simultaneously, jinxing each other.

“It’s been such a long time since we seen you around. Where have you been the last year?” Joe said.

“Well, you know, my worldview kind of changed after I graduated and got this PCA job. I joined this group called Socialist Alliance. They’re Marxists. I guess I just didn’t see where Bash Bloc was going, theoretically or politically,” Marita responded.

“You and everyone else,” Joe replied, “Bash Bloc is dead, definitively. Turns out a lot of the people we used to roll with were just middle class lifestylists. Once mommy and daddy sent ’em off to liberal arts college, they were never to be heard from again. A few people embraced the Wobblies’ version of anarcho-syndicalism and tried to organize a Quiznos workers’ union, but

word on the street is that there's a new autonomous affinity cell calling itself the 'Underground Resistance'."

"Sounds hardcore," Marita shot back.

"Yeah, and looks like your Marxist friends might be joining their ranks, now that openly proclaiming Marxian ideals is illegal. Not even the State can uphold that fake free speech charade anymore," said Joe.

Chednilonya noticed Marita's puffy red eyes.

"Whatcha been smokin'?" she asked playfully.

Marita answered, "Not shit. I been crying."

She lifted up her pant leg, exposing the tracking device Agent Pamela had placed on her ankle.

"Damn. What the fuck is that?" Chednilonya asked.

"It's a tracking device. These government agent bitches put it on me. They were harassing me. They took me to this creepy abandoned factory and told me I have a week to spy on some people from Socialist Alliance for them or else they're gonna lock me up," Marita responded.

"That's why I always embraced illegalism and security culture. You just can't trust the State to tolerate any sort of above ground radical organizing. It was only a matter of time before they decided to crack down. But shit. Can we just smash it off or something?" Joe asked.

"I don't know. I would imagine it's pretty sturdy, and even if we did break it, it would probably set off some sort of wireless alert to notify them or something," said Marita.

Chednilonya asked, "Why don't you come to the show at the Frogtown squat tonight? Our friend Hacksaw is going to be there; he's an expert motorcycle thief. He could probably smash it off for you."

"I guess. But then what? Those government agents will be on my ass for sure. I just don't know if I'm ready to go underground yet. What about my family, my job, my whole life? Where would I live?" Marita replied.

"Well, for starts, I'm sure you could crash at the squat. What else are you gonna do? Spy on your comrades?" Joe asked. "Go to prison? Look, times are a-changing. Word on the street is that America's so-called liberal bourgeois democracy is about to go full

on fascist. Too much privatization of the military-academic-finance industrial complex. Better to get off the grid now rather than later, when it'll be too late."

Marita stood there, looking off into the distance. The bus was coming.

"I just don't fucking know," she finally replied.

The old lady, still sitting there, made a disapproving sound of Marita's foul language, "Hmmp!"

"Hey, shut up, you old racist bitch!" Chednilonya shot back.

"Yeah, and you better not tell anyone about what we've just been talking about," Joe threatened.

The old lady responded, "In my day, we respected our elders!"

"This ain't your day no more, bitch," Joe quipped.

Chednilonya said, "You know, in ancient cultures, elders were put to death when they resisted change."

"Well, this ain't no ancient culture!" the old racist answered.

"Sometimes it is," Chednilonya responded, whipping out a switchblade knife and brandishing it menacingly as the blade sprung open within centimeters of her face.

"Hey, put that thing away. The bus is almost here," said Marita.

"Looks like chance was on your side this time, ya damn racist. But next time you might not be so lucky," Joe said as Chednilonya put the knife back in her denim jacket with the sleeves torn off.

"Hey, gimme your number, Joe. Maybe I will make it to the show tonight," Marita said.

"Sure thing," he replied.

The bus arrived and Marita said her goodbyes. Chednilonya and Joe kept walking eastwards towards Frogtown. They were too cheap to buy bus tickets, since they needed the money for heroin.

Marita took a seat on the mostly empty bus and closed her eyes, contemplating her next step. She knew the agents would be listening if she tried to call Paty, Wither slapte, or any of the other Radical Book Club's members, and she didn't want to risk getting them into even deeper shit than they were already in for the time being. Joe was right, Marita decided. It was time to go underground, off the grid. She would ride the bus home, gather some essentials and sentimentals, stuff them in a backpack, leave, and never look back.

When Marita got home, she ran upstairs and frantically tore apart her bedroom.

“Panties? Check. Socks? Check. T-shirts? Check. Jeans? Check. Toothpaste? Check. Deodorant? Check. Toothbrush? Check. Literature? Check,” Marita said to herself.

Don slowly peaked his head in through the cracked open door.

“Marita?” he probed.

She stuffed Lenin’s *Imperialism* into her backpack.

“What?” she shot back.

“What are you doing?” he asked.

“I’m leaving. I can’t take it here anymore. I can’t believe you let Sue let those government agents just grab me like that. Why didn’t you say something?” Marita replied.

“Marita, it’s complicated. I don’t think you’re thinking clearly. Why don’t you just sit down and we can talk about this. I know you’re still a socialist, but I love you,” said Don.

“Oh, please. I’m thinking more clearly and rationally than I have in months. You love me? So that’s why you sent me to a shrink because of my political convictions?” she questioned.

“I’m sorry, Marita. I shouldn’t have signed those electro-convulsive shock therapy waivers. I was just scared and wanted what’s best for you. How are you supposed to have a career when you’re associating with those damn socialist sods? Can’t you see all the good that capitalism has provided for you? This house, a stable job for me to support you, the best country on Earth to call your home,” Don replied.

“Ugh. You just don’t get it, Dad. I *am* a goddamn ‘socialist sod’. And try telling that to all the millions of unemployed and underemployed people, or to the kids in Pakistan who are being extra-judicially droned to death, or to the millions who are homeless while an even greater number of houses sit empty, while the banks continue to foreclose on the victims of predatory lending schemes,” she retorted as she slung the backpack over her shoulders, “Now get out of my way. I’m almost nineteen years old. I don’t need your damn permission to move out.”

A single tear rolled down Don’s cheek as Marita whisked past him. It was in that tragic moment that he realized he had failed as a father.

Marita got back on the same bus line, going in the other direction this time, back towards Frogtown.

She decided to call up Joe to ask for precise directions to the punk house, where she planned on squatting, but she realized she would have to get rid of the tracking device before she arrived, if she didn’t want the H.I.A. to bust up the joint looking for her.

Ring. Ring.

“Hello?” Joe answered.

“Hey, Joe. It’s Marita. I can make it to the concert, but I’ll want to see your friend Hacksaw before I go. What are you up to right now?”

“You’re in luck. I’m still with Chednilonya. We’re about to shoot up some smack over here at Hacksaw’s place. It’s an apartment, not too far from the squat. Actually, the bus stops right in front of it. It’s a high rise. It’s section eight—perfect place for those pigs to lose your trace since nobody here will wanna talk to ’em if they come lookin’. Just get off after Chatsworth,” Joe replied.

“Awesome!” Marita exclaimed, “Do you think Hacksaw can help me though?”

“Yeah, actually I was just asking him about it. Says he’s cracked those tracking device things loads of times for his buddies on house arrest and out on bail. Shouldn’t be too difficult,” said Joe.

“Nice. I’ll call you again when I get there,” Marita said.

“Alright, sounds geezy,” Joe replied.

“See ya soon,” Marita said, ending the phone call.

Marita descended from the bus, having arrived outside the high rise, which happened to be located across the street from a Roman Catholic cemetery. She looked up and figured the tower must have been about twelve stories or so. From her vantage point, a perfect rainbow framed the building. The afternoon was beginning to transform itself into evening, and the breathtaking sky was golden and clear. Ironically, she felt the sun’s warmth not from the sky above, but from beneath her as her feet absorbed the heat via the grass, which had soaked up the sunshine. A group of children were playing on the complex lawn, brilliant and green. Long gone was the thought of the cold winter snow.

Marita stepped off the *terra firma* of the concrete laden pedestrian pathway onto the spongy grass, drawing nearer to the youth. The squishiness of this surface was spectacular, awakening in her an elaborate epigenetically inherited memory of Siberian spring times long past on the permafrost perimeter: reindeer hunted for their magical hooves, antlers, and scrumptious meats; Mongoloid nomads unwrapping swaddled infants to breastfeed on horseback; uncanny throat songs chanted within infinite coniferous woods; a foreboding graffiti scrawled in angular runes across disconcerting, mysterious geoforms. Asiatic stones which held seemingly inexplicable properties: autonomously shiftable, growable, and occupying an intermediary phylum between the animalian and the inorganic.

The vision was so incredible that Marita had to lay down, right there in the grass by the the high rise. It was as though the profane physical movement from surface of inorganic stability to surface of organic instability found its analogue in the sacred transformation of her mental state. Her fingers and strawberry blonde hair gracefully interlaced with the long blades of grass as she lay on her back, looking to the sky in ecstasy. She trembled as she experienced her first total body orgasm, which began in her spleen and spread out into her liver, heart, lungs, clitoris, throat, thighs, and eyes, until her whole body's autonomous sensory meridian response started vigorously reverse ejaculating dark matter. More accurately, this could be described as the Dark Mother radiating Her energy onto Her devotee, whom She loved. Although Marita did not consciously know it, she was actually performing ancestor communion. Marita Bastesen had a very supple, non-calcified pineal gland which produced a spiritually significant melanocyte receptor surplus, allowing her Id to manipulate the consciousness-altering hormones melatonin and melanin. With the right training and practice, she could eventually develop the ability to unlock the unconscious atavic lore contained within her, bring it forth from the Id to the Ego, and potentially even to the Super-Ego, provided she had the right platform to disseminate this occult knowledge from.

The worrisome strangeness of the scene unfolding before the children intrigued them, so they walked up to Marita.

"Hey, are you okay?" one of the kids asked, holding a dirty kickball.

"Never better," Marita replied, grinning widely, her autonomous sensory meridian response still going crazy, processing enormous loads of dark matter.

Just then, Joe, Chednilonya, and Hacksaw came strutting out of the high rise apartment complex, causing the children to scamper away, as their parents had advised them to stay away from the crusty punk junkies.

"Hey, there's Marita!" Chednilonya said.

"Marita . . . what are you doing laying in the grass?" Joe asked, all doped out, "Ha ha, looks comfy! Let me join you."

"No. We should get going. I need to break this tracking device, remember?" Marita said.

"Oh, right," Joe responded.

Marita raised her arms up towards the sky and Joe pulled her by the hands to help her get up.

"Marita, meet Hacksaw. Hacksaw, this is Marita," Joe said, introducing the two to one another.

"It's a right pleasure to meet ye," Hacksaw orally verbalized, "So, you'd like a little help with the ol' ball and chain, eh? No worries. I can jackhammer that shiz off right quick. Done it loads of times. This one time, my buddy Desmond was on house arrest, out on bail for a triple assault at Big V's Saloon, so I hammered that ankle tracker shiz off real good, and he done run outta state. Damn piggies've still never found him. Ha ha ha ha ha."

Marita replied, "It's a pleasure to meet you too, Hacksaw. I can't thank you enough for helping me. I wish there was some way I could repay you."

"It's no biggie, my friend. Come see my band play at the squat tonight, and it'll be all good," Hacksaw responded with a wink.

"What's your band called?" Marita asked.

"Hacksaw and the Numb Chucks," he replied.

"Cool," Marita said with a nod and a smile.

Marita followed Chednilonya, Joe, and Hacksaw into the high rise apartment building, where the four of them rode the elevator up to the twelfth floor to Hacksaw's abode. It was a barren two bedroom apartment, strewn with spoons, belts, syringes, cockroaches, and needles. In the middle of the floor was a bare

mattress covered in stains where two skinny pale naked chicks were sleeping with Hacksaw's roommate, Seth, who had a syringe sticking out of his tattooed forearm.

"Don't mind these folks," said Hacksaw, "And sorry about the mess. Follow me. Don't step on any needles."

He led them back to his room, where Marita, Joe, and Chednilonya sat on the hardwood floor. Hacksaw went into the closet and came out with a sleek metallic briefcase. He opened it, revealing an assortment of specialized thievery tools.

"What's that?" Marita asked as Hacksaw pulled out a long cylindrical lock picking device with some type of prongs on one end.

"This is what I call a 'fat power jimmy'. I actually designed it myself, specifically for breaking ankle tracking devices," Hacksaw replied.

"Wow, talk about convenient," said Marita.

In a matter of seconds, Hacksaw had cracked the geo-localization device. Marita was free.

"We'll just toss that shit in the dumpster before we head over to the squat. We should get going soon anyways," Hacksaw stated.

They crept past Seth and the two women, still sleeping in the living room, and took the elevator down to the ground level. Marita breathed a sigh of relief as she threw the tracking device into the dumpster, happy to feel a little more free and hoping that Agents Pamela and Greaves would feel bodaciously shafted by her defiance.

As they walked to the anarchist punk house, Marita felt glad to have some new friends, and to have met up with her old pal from Bash Bloc, but she was worried about her comrades in the Socialist Alliance. Chednilonya sensed Marita's unease and put her arm around her shoulder to comfort her as Hacksaw lit up a grape-flavored blunt. Despite their ideological discrepancies, when the going got tough, anarchists and Leninists could count on one another for healthy interpersonal relationships.

17 – WITHER SLAPTE'S YOM HASHOAH

The Radical Book Club had been on the lamb for several days now.

Today happened to be the twenty-seventh day of the Jewish month of Nisan, or Yom HaShoah; that is, Holocaust Remembrance Day. This year's Yom HaShoah fell just a couple of days before May Day, also known as International Workers' Day, or May First.

Wither slapte woke up in a sweaty panic from a nightmare, triggered by the fact that it was Yom HaShoah. He was in bed with Paty in one of the rooms of Santiago's artist loft, above the garage.

In the nightmare, he had been in an extermination camp somewhere in Poland during the Final Solution, and these pale Nazis in skintight shiny black leather uniforms were chasing him through the woods as he attempted to flee from the camp. He tried to run, but it felt like his legs were made of snail shells and he was swimming in a vat of molasses. Inevitably, the Nazis were catching up to him. Suddenly, as he stumbled through the woods, his teeth started falling out. As Freud explains in *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, teeth falling out in dreams are a symbolic punishment for masturbation. Masturbation was a practice whose devaluation in Wither slapte's psyche was epigenetically inherited through unconscious transgenerational links going back to the times of Israel, when the Hebrews determined that the finite amount of semen in the world meant that it needed to be

conserved, only to be used for doing Yahweh's will, procreating with Jewish women. The deep roots of this belief actually go back way further, to the ancient city of Kannauj in India, where men refrained from ejaculation in order to build up their Qi and raise their sperm up their chakras, giving them magical powers. Perhaps the Hitlerian cultural misappropriation of the Hindutva swastika did thus, in a way, come full circle, for as Reich explains in *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, biological rigidity and stifling of sex-economics are structurally essential in the maintenance of mechanistic authoritarian civilization which depends on en masse irrational character formation.

Wither slapte ended up hooking up with Paty that night because Golumbaika had gone back to sleep with her *piramno*, Gabor, since it was just too inconvenient for her to break it off with Gabor right now to pursue her true love.

Golumbaika knew that Wither slapte would probably wind up banging Paty, and she was submerged in a deep sea of irrational envy as she left Santiago's garage for the first time after Wither slapte washed the blax off her after they had slept together on the upholstered black leather ritual sleeping cushions and astral projected.

Gabor disagreed with the concept of polyamory due to his upbringing in a fairly conservative Vlach Roma community in the Banat, a historic region south of Transylvania, and it was for her fidelity to the ideals of *Romanipen* as Gabor understood them that Golumbaika, also known as Paloma Negra, wanted to remain in a monogamous relationship. At least, that was what she wanted on the level of her conscious Ego, and that was what the Super-Ego determined by her Romanichal-Vlach and American Indian Seventh Day Adventist upbringing was saying too. In her unconscious Id though, Paloma Negra desired to have a bizarre and melodramatic love triangle with Wither slapte and Gabor intersecting with another love triangle between Wither slapte, Paty and Tisha. Perhaps in the meta-scheme of the things, there could be even more linked love triangles, branching out from Tisha and Paty's own intersubjective polyamorous networks. Golumbaika kept telling herself that all she needed was Gabor, but when she astral projected to hold communion with the *Santa Muerte*, all of the signs and symbols were pointing towards one thing: engage in

bizarre intersecting love triangles. Thanks to Golumbaika's strong connection to the spirit world, she was able to overcome the mundane realm's injunction to be a square. Instead, like a true hepcat, Golumbaika would pursue a polyamorous affair with Wither slapte, while still coming home to bang Gabor and run their fortune-telling burlesque and herbal art shop. Holding ancestor communion through astral projection and seeking the counsel of the *Santa Muerte* allowed Golumbaika to extend her consciousness beyond her own Ego, into the Id so that she began to understand her conflicting feelings on the matter of achieving balance between her loyalty to *Romanipen* and her irrational desire to bang Wither slapte.

Wither slapte had had a number of nightmares relating to the Holocaust throughout his young life because he had Secondary Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, sometimes called Vicarious PTSD. After his paternal grandfather and maternal grandmother had all of their family members shot or gassed at Auschwitz, they became seriously mentally disturbed, and managed to control their lives somewhat, but would always have occasional crippling flashbacks, losses of touch with reality, and of course, a constant overbearing feeling of sadness, loss, and hopelessness pervading over every aspect of everyday life for decades. Their children were of course affected by this, and thus so was Wither slapte. For Wither slapte, the feeling of being trapped in a violent emotional cycle of anger and sadness was the norm.

Wither slapte got out of bed and started pacing around the room.

"Wither slapte, what's wrong?" Paty asked.

"I just had a bad dream," he said.

"Oh my gosh. Baby, come here," Paty replied.

Wither slapte sat on the bed and started crying. Paty put her arms around him.

"I want to relate to my grandparents' experiences in Auschwitz, but I feel like I am misappropriating their struggle," Wither slapte explained.

Paty replied, "We all inherit something from our ancestors. Yours have passed a gift on to you: intimate knowledge of suffering. The transgenerational link between you and your grandparents gives you a more intimate understanding, an

experience of more emotional closeness to the Holocaust than most people will ever have to grapple with. That experience is legitimately a part of who you are. You're not appropriating their experience; their experience informs your passion for struggle."

"I feel like it's too much of a burden sometimes though," Wither slapte said, "My heart is heavy with guilt and shame. What if I have betrayed them by not being observant enough of Jewish religious law?"

"I can only imagine how overbearing it must feel," Paty said, putting her hand on his, "But I am here to help support you, Wither slapte. You are really awesome. You're so good at leading our Book Club and I really like your style. Like, your purple highlights are so hip and cool. Don't worry about religion; material conditions have always produced deviations in matters of spirituality from one generation to the next. I'm sure your grandparents would be right here with you, participating in *Santa Muerte* ceremonies and fighting the bourgeoisie, if they had been born in another time and place. You should be proud of what you are, and your origins."

"Thanks," Wither slapte whimpered, starting to feel a little better.

Later that day, Paty got on the computer and looked up a documentary on Youtube about Matzpen, a left-wing political party of anti-Zionist Israelis active during the 1970s.

Paty was interested in Matzpen because Wither slapte had told her about how his other two grandparents had been Matzpen organizers. Both his maternal and paternal grandparents had included one Matzpen organizer and one Auschwitz survivor. His maternal grandfather was a light-skinned Israeli of Ethiopian descent who married a Polish Ashkenazi Jewish Auschwitz survivor and helped organize political protests against Israeli Zionism and pioneered the concept of 'settler state-ism,' his critique being regionally renowned throughout the Holy Land. Meanwhile, his paternal grandmother was an Israeli Matzpen community organizer of Sephardic Turk descent who married a Jewish Belgian Shoah survivor.

As Paty sat in the computer chair reading about Matzpen up in Santiago's artist loft, she suddenly could hear a commotion downstairs, in the garage. She got up and went down to investigate the racket.

Paty walked down the stairs and opened the door to the garage area, where Santiago's homeboys stripped cars for parts and occasionally did repairs to keep up the front of a legitimate business. Pedrocco was up on one of the car repair platforms ringing a huge bell. A good position from which to act out a feudal lord pronouncing a decree. Pedrocco reminded Paty of Quasimodo. He resembled more closely a medieval freakshow than a feudal lord, as he hobbled around the platform, his dirty moustache and bleach-blonde hipster mullet flowing. Pedrocco continued ringing the giant bell and everyone started to gather around: Franky, Izzy, Tisha, Wither slapte, Cedric, Omar, Golumbaika (or Paloma, who had just returned to Santiago's place), the four remaining political prisoners (three Muslims and one Sikh), and some of the Cholos and Gypsies who worked on the cars and worshipped *La Santa Muerte*.

Pedrocco ceremoniously raised his arms, indicating that he was about to speak. "My friends! Great work keeping a low profile, everyone! It's been a good minute since we helped bust loose Tisha and the rest of the political prisoners at the black site and the pigs still haven't discovered our whereabouts. So far, so good! Thanks especially to Santiago and all the dudes here at the garage for helping us to avoid detection."

The greasemonkeys gave themselves a collective pat on the back and Pedrocco went on.

"Soon it's going to be May 1st, International Workers' Day, and we'll need to get out there, protest in the streets! The march for immigrants' and workers' rights is looking like it's going to be massive this year. Given the government's recent McCarthy-esque suppression of Marxist activist groups, people are looking to make a big impact. All of the trade unions are issuing calls for a day of protest and civil disobedience, and we've heard reports of high school students planning to skip class, stage walk-outs, and go to the protests in droves. There may even be a protracted nationwide general strike. This is our time to storm the centers of governance,

parliaments and such, and institute global proletarian political hegemony. If not us, then who? If not now, then when? Keep preparing yourselves mentally and physically by getting plenty of rest and eating nutritional foods in the coming days. I encourage everyone to practice meditation, hold communion with *La Santa Muerte*, and leave plenty of marijuana cigarettes at Her *ofrendas*. The May 1st protest is sure to be a true battle. But there's something else we need to be mindful of too. Today is International Holocaust Remembrance Day. I want to invite my friend Wither slapte to come up here and say a few words about the importance of remembering those who have struggled against injustice before us, those whom injustice has devoured . . ."

Pedrocco lowered the car repair platform, so Wither slapte walked up to him, got on the platform, and they rode up together.

Wither slapte shouted down from the platform, "My grandparents are Auschwitz Shoah survivors! Six million Jews died in the Shoah, and we must remember them today. It was a unique event, singular to the Jewish people: Yahweh's chosen ones. No other people has experienced Judaism as have our people. A world viewed through the Jewish lens is a world of wonder, hardship, and endurance. No other race has produced as much profound and time-honored thought on the human condition as have we. I stand with Israel. I stand for peace in the Middle East."

Golumbaika made a strange noise of disapproval through her mouth.

"What about the *Porrajmos*?" she shouted out. Some of the Gypsies murmured in approval of what Golumbaika was saying, the atmosphere growing more tense.

"Yo, check this! What about dat *Maafa*?" Tisha yelled. Franky cheered, and the atmosphere grew even more tense.

"What about the *Nakba*?" one of the Muslim liberated detainees called out. The other Arab liberated detainees screamed, "*Allah hu akhbar!*" several times, and the tension in the air was as thick as butter that had been out of the fridge for only a few minutes.

Wither slapte yelled down at them, "No one can understand my pain and suffering! Fuck you guys!"

"Wither slapte, calm yo' ass down," Tisha bitched.

"Grrrrrrrrrrrrhhhaaa . . . Arrggghhhh!" Wither slapte growled.

Juan, a Mestizo who worked in Santiago's garage and who probably had the highest Anglo-Saxon blood quantum of anyone there, rolled his eyes and muttered, "Fucking victims' Olympics."

"What did you say, white boy?" Tisha shot back aggressively.

"Enough of this infighting!" Gabor snapped, having just entered the garage and witnessed the scene beforehand with no one having noticed him come in.

"It's this *pinche* Jew, Wither slapte," said Julian, a Mexican Gypsy who worked in Santiago's garage, "*Pinches judios, siempre piensan que son ellos la mejora raza. Son ellos los quienes tienen la culpa! Nos pusieron en la esclavitud-robije-de tsiganii ande Rumunija, ande Valachija!*"

A Salvadoran Gypsy named Adrian piped up, "*Ya zhanes miro chavo te chi san le Hebrewii kaj san doshale pe robije de Rromanija! Mothos katar tiro khul thaj tiro gindimos si but protivo-zhudovovitsko. Chi nakhavav kodo.*"

Gabor said with force, "Rroms, Jews; we're all the same at the end of the day. One human race."

"Now let's stop this nonsense and behave like adults," Pedrocco vocalized. "We have an assault to prep."

"Ugh, you're totally universalizing our particular experiences as women," Paty bitched. "Universalization is a violence against oppressed identities. We may be one race biologically, but constructed identities like gender and race are tangible on the level of intersubjectivity."

"Just chill, girl. Semantics don't matta," Franky quipped.

"Words do matter, you fool," Paty shot back.

Wither slapte's body seemed to involuntarily jerk in a bizarre manner and foam began coming out of his oral cavity, like he was possessed by some sort of spirit being. Whether this being was malevolent or beneficent, one could not surmise due to the ambiguous nature of what happened next.

His eyes rolled back in his head and he spoke in Modern Hebrew, before passing out immediately thereafter. Though no one in the garage understood Hebrew, the uttered phrase, translated, was, "Words always change."

Golumbaika ran up to Wither slapte and put a cool rag on his forehead to make him feel better.

18 – ANOTHER DAY AT THE HOMELAND INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Agent Pamela was out on a date with Officer Peabody, who had been given a few months paid leave for his knee injury. They were at Chipotle, misappropriating Mexican culture.

Peabody took a bite out of his barbacoa taco and smiled.

Pamela caressed his leg beneath the table.

Peabody winced. "Ouch!" he exclaimed.

His knee was still quite sensitive due to the gunshot wound Agent Greaves had inflicted upon it.

"I'm sorry, hun. How about we go back to your place and I make you feel all better?" Agent Pamela said.

"Yeeshaw, cowgirl. Lemme lasso yah right up," Peabody said in a trite, douchebaggy way.

They got back to Peabody's house in the suburbs near Waconia and they were about to get sensually intimate when Agent Pamela got a text message from Agent Greaves.

It read, "im in communications van coming 2 get U asap. we have major prob. that marita cunt disabled the tracking device somehow."

"Goddamnit," Agent Pamela moaned.

"What is it?" Peabody asked.

"Duty calls," Pamela responded, already grabbing her things.

"No, don't leave me!" pleaded Peabody.

"Sorry, but I'm already in a committed relationship. With the U.S. government, that is," Pamela replied as she put her bra back on.

Peabody swallowed a handful of Vicodin pills as Pamela walked out the door of his suburban abode.

Greaves was outside in the communications van blasting classic rock; Lynyrd Skynyrd, to be precise.

Pamela hopped in the van and said, "So that Marita cunt's gone rogue, eh? Damn. And just before the May 1st protests. This shit is not looking good."

Responded Agent Greaves, "Aye, mate. General Johnson will have our asses for this one. It's best we just don't let any of the higher ups in the Agency know about this little doozey."

"So what was the damned point of interrupting my date then?" Agent Pamela replied.

"I was just getting lonely," Agent Greaves said as she locked the doors.

"Greaves . . ." Agent Pamela uttered.

"Shut up," Greaves responded, grabbing hold of Pamela.

"Greaves, I barely know you," Pamela said.

"We've known each other for a while now, and I've seen the way you look at me. Aren't a few days enough time to realize your desire?" Greaves questioned.

Pamela began to reply, "It's just that I don't want sentiments to affect my performance as an agent. I'm sure you would understand that, Greaves . . ."

Agent Greaves pulled out a comically long piece of paper filled with all sorts of digits, graphs, and equations.

"Look at this," Greaves said, "It's a psychological profile compatibility diagnostic, for us, that I just ran through the system. I've never seen a score this high, Pamela. I think we were meant to be together."

"Greaves, I'm sorry, but you are being delusional. Not even the H.I.A.'s computers can truly read the emotional subjectivity of a living, breathing woman," Agent Pamela replied.

Agent Greaves realized that she had made herself too vulnerable. It was time to backtrack, shake off this state of exposition.

She took a deep breath and spoke, "Look, I'm just testing your toss. The real reason I needed you here is to debrief you on the next step of this mission. Since this little Marita cunt is on the loose again, we're just going to have to wait until the May 1st protests. Those damn socialist bastards are sure to slip up then; they don't have the logistical intelligence to coordinate a mass insurrection at the present juncture. We just need to set up our dragnet, make sure we have plenty of agent provocateurs in the crowds, then bam! We crucify the commie bastards."

"Muahahahaha!" Agent Pamela laughed schadenfreudically.

Greaves was most bemused as they cruised around aimlessly in the communications van. Her mind grew restless, and she knew something had to give. Only Pamela could satisfy her sexual lust. She could see some sort of glimmer of hope in Pamela's eyes, like despite all of her brainwashing at Agent Academy, she might still care about the world. The problem, however, was that Greaves' semiosis was entirely misinterpretive.

19 – THE BIG MAY DAY MARCH AND RALLY

In the early morning of May 1st, Lieutenant Jackson stood on the front line of a phalanx of riot police in downtown Saint Paul, near the Minnesota State Capitol Building. A thick fog blanketed the streets; visibility was low.

Jackson snarled through a bullhorn, "Alright, men. Purveyors of Marxian ideals are considered terrorists now, so let's show these pinko scumbags what it means to be true American patriots!"

The phalanx of riot cops erupted into raucous cheers.

Officer Vang looked over to Officer Cox and said, "It's a damn shame Peabody couldn't be here to crack some commie skulls with us. Hope the poor bastard gets out of medical soon."

Vang recollected the war stories his grandfather had recounted to him of descending from Hmong villages to terrorize Viet Cong forces during the war, and was eager to match, if not surpass, his anti-communist bravado.

Jackson continued, "Now as soon as you see any protesters, alert a commanding officer and open fire if any threat seems imminent! I know visibility is not the best today, so best to shoot first, ask questions later. God willing, we will win this War on Terror. God bless America!"

The phalanx of riot cops shouted in unison, "Hoo rah!" and did a Roman salute, rigidly extending their right arms forward at a forty-five degree angle with the palms open.

A small group of anarchist crust punks who had gotten separated by accident from the rest of the protesters due to the fog started marching directly towards the riot cop phalanx, unbeknownst to either side. They were Wobblies, members of the Industrial Workers' of the World.

Although the I.W.W. had mainly been a threat to the American bourgeoisie's political and social hegemony during the late 19th and early 20th centuries before becoming largely defunct by the post-World War II era of economic growth and American neo-colonial expansion, the group, whose goal was to unite all of the workers of the world into one big labor union, had been revived in the early 21st century by certain elements of the far left political fringe; this, a sure sign that capitalism's long hot winter had finally begun. Class consciousness had begun to take deep root in the minds of an exponentially increasing number of working Americans ever since the mid 1970s when the global American-led capitalist system shifted from the ascending economic spring and plateauing summer of the post-war era to a bloated fall of slow decay, characterized by stagnant wages and loss of real working class income due to inflation, while power became more and more concentrated in the palms of a handful of corporations, who in turn were ideologically buffered by an indoctrinated petit bourgeois middle class of managerial and small business types whose beliefs in hard work and the merits of individualism masked the true nature of their relatively modest wealth, which was really gained from exploiting the working poor and extracting surplus value from their labor. The long hot winter's beginning was characterized by a rapid descent in the standard of living for workers and the poor as infrastructure deteriorated, with bridge collapses claiming the lives of hundreds annually, and healthcare and other basic necessities of life becoming luxuries, wildly unaffordable for ordinary folks.

Officer Cox was the first to see the red and black triangles of the anarcho-syndicalist Wobbly flag marching out of the fog towards them.

"Lieutenant! Communists spotted on our twelve o'clock!" Cox called out.

"Neutralize targets! Neutralize targets! Fire at will! I repeat: fire at will!" Jackson screamed.

Officers Cunningham and Anderson hurled copious amounts of lacrimogenic gas onto the already disoriented anarcho-communists using a mortar launcher as Officers Cox and Vang and the other riot cops unleashed a hail of gunfire, peppering the commie bastards with hollow-tipped rounds designed to expand inside the body post-impact, perforating and shredding up the internal organs.

The flag bearer was the first anarcho-syndicalist activist to be hit. As she collapsed to the dirt, another young anarcho-communist quickly picked up the flag before it could touch the ground and started leading the charge heroically, only to be gunned down in turn moments later.

Thanks to the thick fog, the anarchists, about fifteen of them still alive, had managed to advance astonishingly close to the front line of riot police.

"Equip bayonets! Equip bayonets!" Lieutenant Jackson wailed, "They're getting too close!"

Officer Anderson fumbled through his sack and struggled to attach the bayonet to his M4 rifle as a smelly anarchist man dressed like a lumberjack with a huge beard ran up to him and punched the glass facemask on his helmet in, shattering it. Glass shards sliced open Officer Anderson's face as well as the anarchist's fist. The anarchist bellowed like a Viking berserker as he pulled his arm back and went in for another punch, ignoring the pain. He managed to deliver several blows, punching the shards quite deeply into Anderson's face before another riot cop stabbed the anarchist in the heart with his bayonet.

"Argggghh!" the bearded anarcho-syndicalist cried.

A moustachioed anarchist pulled out a machete from a sash tied tightly around his hip and swung it at Officer Cunningham's neck, nearly decapitating him in one fell swoop. Blood began to spurt haphazardously.

Although this spectacle lasted barely over a minute, when one is engaged in fierce hand-to-hand combat, time seems to slow down.

After all was said and done, the Wobblies had been annihilated, but not without inflicting significant casualties on the riot police.

"How many?" Jackson shouted. "How many men did we lose?"

"Seventeen casualties, Sir," Cox reported after doing a quick body count. "All fatalities."

“Goddamn,” Jackson muttered, shaking his head. “Alright! Re-group! Close in the phalanx! We need our formation to be tight so no protesters can get into the State Capitol Building!”

Meanwhile, about a mile away, a large rally for immigrants’ and workers’ rights was taking place outside the Cathedral of Saint Paul. The protesters heard the gunshots ringing out and snarling death cries as the riot cops and anarchists battled, and people were starting to get worried. Some were even questioning whether it was a good idea to try marching to the State Capitol Building anymore.

Pedrocco strutted up to the steps of the cathedral to address the masses before him. He shouted inspirationally, “Fear not, brethren and sistren! Material dialectics are on our side. *La Santísima Muerte* is on our side! We must go storm the Capitol and uproot the oppressive yoke of bourgeois hegemony. We are the instauration!”

Suddenly, Golumbaika, standing in the crowd amongst the throng of demonstrators, started astral projecting. Her body was kept in stasis by a strange, spontaneous force, which some would, incorrectly, call diabolic; thus her astro-journey was imperceptible to those around her. It just looked like she was zoning out for a minute.

The Black Dove flew with unimaginable speed and grace to a planetary system resembling our Solar System to an uncanny degree, where she landed on the wide sanguine-tinted rings of the sixth planet from the star.

The inhabitants of this planetary system called their star called Szulo.

This sixth planet, known as Rátopia, was a gas giant reflecting less than 0.00000001% of all light coming into contact with it, making it nearly three million times darker than the darkest planet known to man, TrES-2b. It was blacker than a pile of coal and black acrylic paint forgotten in a nuclear fallout shelter fifteen miles underground. Blacker than the melanocyte receptors of the most afro-centric mystic on Earth. And blacker than the ink of a gigantesque deep sea cephalopod.

The soul of the late afro-futurist jazz musician Sun Ra floated up majestically from Rátopia, accompanied by a cosmic entourage of funkadelic cyborgs, and landed on the crimson ring close to *La Paloma Negra*.

“Welcome, Golumbaika Kali. I have been waiting a long time for you,” Sun Ra stated coolly.

A dissonant wave of horns and clashing cymbals blasted past them, a saxophone sound lingering on.

“You were hard to find. It’s so dark here,” Paloma replied.

“The map was in your mind all along, Golumbaika. The seat of your soul, what the Earthlings call the pineal gland, contains many universes within it. You only had to let your hormones guide you to melancholic consciousness,” Sun Ra explained.

“But what is this place, really?” Golumbaika questioned. She was vaguely aware of a jazzy piano riff that seemed to be emanating from the black planet below.

A cyborg Jimi Hendrix interjected, “This is Rátopia, where the blacker the berries, the sweeter the juices. You see, Le Sony’r wanted to see what a band of Gypsies could do with a planet all of their own, without any *gadže* there.”

“All those who are black of spirit may enter into the Queendom of Rátopia,” said Le Sony’r.

“I am black of spirit!” Golumbaika declared.

The red rings of Rátopia suddenly started oscillating like a sound vector as the timpani kicked in. A wave rippled forward and The Black Dove hopped on a cosmic open sleigh with Sun Ra and his entourage. Slowly, the rings oscillated into fractals, and a marvelous logarithmic spiral descended down towards Rátopia. Golumbaika raised her wings and brushed her feathertips along the spongy, foam-like texture of the fractal’s surface.

“Hopa!” she chirped.

Sun Ra stood up in the open sleigh, slowly raising his arms up on his sides and snapping his fingers, then stomping his feet rhythmically as his arms reached above his head, his wrists gyrating, his fingers still snapping.

“Hopa! Hopa!” Golumbaika cried.

“*Aj, Rromale!*” cyborg Jimi Hendrix sang, holding his arms out in front of him and snapping his fingers, bouncing up and down slightly on his spry robotic knees.

Cyborg Kool Keith was there too, and he shouted, "I'm the black Elvis up in this biznatch!"

Cyborg Elvis Presley shot back, "C'mon now, mothafucka, y'all know I'm Black Dutch and Romanichal; Esma Redžepova even be frontin' my Gypsy credentials."

Cyborg Esma Redžepova winked at Paloma with her bionic eyeball, and it was the most joyous moment any of them had ever felt.

At that precise moment, Golumbaika's consciousness was snapped back into the mundane realm. She stood in the throng of protesters and stared up at the cathedral. Pedrocco was just finishing an inspiring speech and the crowd started chanting, "*Si se puede.*" It looked as though there were about 500,000 people who had come out to the rally, but late-comers were still trickling in. No one was afraid anymore thanks to Pedrocco's words of encouragement. They knew some of them would probably not survive, but anyone would consider it an honor to be a martyr of the revolution.

Cedric illuminated an electronic bullhorn and shouted, "To the Capitol, *compañeros!*"

Pedrocco, still standing on the steps of the cathedral, pulled out his Glock pistol and fired off several rounds into the sky, shouting, "*Ándale, carnales!*" before looking up at the cathedral's apex and touching the Glock's barrel to his head, abdomen, and each shoulder as he made the sign of the cross.

The masses started marching towards the Minnesota State Capitol Building, led by the *Santa Muerte* worshippers and the Radical Book Club. John Ireland Boulevard was filled with protesters, all marching valiantly and defiantly against the government's prohibition of Marxian ideals. As they approached the state capitol, they passed the Minnesota History Center and crossed Interstate Freeway Ninety-Four and Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard and at last stepped foot onto the capitol lawn.

Lieutenant Jackson bellowed to the phalanx of riot pigs, "Hold steady, boys!" The riot cops could literally feel the earth shaking now as the hundreds of thousands of protesters marched in unison towards them.

The fog was still as thick as ever; visibility was near-nil. Perhaps a couple of meters at best.

As the ground shook vigorously and the riot cop phalanx was jostled by the sound waves emanating from the protesters chanting, "*La lucha obrera no tiene frontera,*" Spanish for, "The workers' struggle knows no border," Officer Vang began to panic, not wanting to die.

"Fuck this!" Officer Vang shouted, running away.

"Vang, get back into your position," Lieutenant Jackson wailed.

"We're sitting ducks out here! Minced meat, I tell ya!" Vang shouted, continuing to flee.

Officer Cox tried to loosen the collar of his uniform's shirt in order to scratch his neck as he began to sweat profusely.

"Goddamnit, Vang, don't make me do this," Jackson said as he raised his Luger P08 Parabellum and took aim at the deserter.

Just then, scores of radical left-wing demonstrators emerged from the fog, within feet of the phalanx of riot police.

"What the . . ." Jackson muttered, not having time to finish his utterance before another, more imperative thought entered his mind; interrupting himself, he screeched, "Fire at will! I repeat: fire at will!"

Before the phalanx even had time to take aim, throngs of protesters began clashing with the riot police and engaging them in close quarters combat. They were more determined than ever to storm the Capitol Building and take over the government.

Vang ran inside the Capitol Building, taking refuge in a janitorial closet underneath a painting of Jesse Ventura.

Pedrocco pulled out his Glock pistol and busted a cap into Officer Cox's ugly mug, killing him instantly. "Let communism reign," he proclaimed as Cox's blood splattered onto his face, dousing his euro-mullet and moustache. Pedrocco licked his moustache, savouring the brutality as he took aim on his next victim.

Paty jabbed a crowbar sharpened on one end through the facemask of another riot cop, impaling his visage.

Franky, wielding a Kalashnikov, began peppering the phalanx indiscriminately, crazed laughter erupting from his throat. After

downing a half dozen officers, he took a brief moment to re-adjust his do-rag before switching ammunition clips and going trigger happy again.

Tisha swung a spike-tipped chain over her head before lobbing it towards a riot cop. The chain twisted around the pig's neck and Tisha reeled her victim in, whispering into his ear, "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible make violent revolution inevitable," before yanking the chain, driving the spike deep into the officer's neck. The riot cop spun around as Tisha unfastened the chain and his corpse fell to the ground.

Wither slapte, also carrying a Kalashnikov, took aim at an officer, before being tackled by another officer. A vicious wrestling match ensued, and within a few short moments, Wither slapte was pinned down. The officer was straddling Wither slapte, his knees resting on the communist ideologue's shoulders, preventing him from moving. Just as the officer had raised his fists and was about to begin brutally pummeling Wither slapte, Izzy saw what was happening, whipped out a Bowie knife, ran up to them, and impaled the officer squarely in the heart. The riot cop tumbled off to the side, and Wither slapte looked up at Izzy.

"Thanks, bro," Wither slapte said.

"C'mon, man, get back on your feet," Izzy said as he gave Wither slapte a hand.

In the chaos of the close quarters hand-to-hand combat, Omar was struck in the back of the head by a billy club, and collapsed unconscious. A riot cop ran up to him and impaled his torso several times using a bayonet.

"Omar, noooo!" Paloma screamed as Omar's blood squirted up several feet as though his body were a geyser basin.

She ran up to the riot cop and swung her machete, but he deflected her swing using his bayonet. Paloma took another swing and once again the riot cop was able to use his bayonet to block the machete. Clash! Another swing. Clash!

"*En garde!*" the riot cop taunted as he fended off yet another swing of the machete.

Paloma struggled to push the bayonet away using her machete, but the riot cop was a skilled bladesman, having practiced the sport of fencing for several years.

Izzy then pulled out his Desert Eagle and blew the officer away, abruptly ending the blade encounter.

Cedric, standing up on higher ground, called out through his bullhorn, "For Omar, *compañeros!*" as a tear came to his eye.

The vicious and chaotic battle proceeded like this for a quarter of an hour. Eventually though, the riot cop phalanx had been almost completely wiped out.

Lieutenant Jackson was exhausted, and fell to his knees, realizing that all of his men were now either dead or severely wounded.

Paty approached him, and was about to execute him in one fell swoop of the machete when Pedrocco interjected, "Wait! We want this one alive! We may need him as collateral, for negotiations, if things go sour once we're inside."

"Damn," Paty said, sheathing her machete.

Jackson breathed a sigh of relief and muttered, "Commie bastards," prompting Izzy to brutally pistol whip him.

Just then, the demonstrators heard the blades of a chopper overhead. The fog was still too thick to see more than a few feet, but a few moments later there was the sound of several thuds from above. Suddenly, a demonstrator was struck in the head by a metal canister, dying instantly. Greenish gas began rising up from the canister and nearby protesters started violently coughing and foaming at the mouths. Several demonstrators keeled over and began contorting in violent spasms before gradually going completely limp.

"Poison mustard gas!" Wither slapte shouted.

"Quick, everyone, run inside the Capitol Building and take cover!" Pedrocco wailed.

Paty took Jackson's handcuffs, put the bracelets on him, and dragged him towards the Capitol.

Franky posted up by the front door of the Capitol as throngs of demonstrators stormed the building and started peppering the sky with his Automatic Kalashnikov, listening carefully in order to locate the helicopter by echolocation. Hearing metallic snaps and ricochets, he soon knew he had located it, and emptied his clip through the fog into the chopper. Just after finishing his clip, he heard the pilot cry out, "May day! May day!" and it sounded like

the chopper was spinning around in circles. A few moments later, the helicopter crashed into the ground, exploding and killing several dozen protesters instantly.

Although they would be sorely missed by their families and comrades, there were luckily hundreds of thousands more protesters behind them, who kept charging forth towards the Capitol, though many of them were also being killed by the chemical weapons. Despite the Chemical Weapons Convention, ratified by the United States in the year 1997, which forbids the use of chemical agents in warfare, it is considered perfectly fine to use them for riot control in domestic situations. Even so, the Bush administration authorized them for use in Iraq anyway, so of course it was no biggie to use them in Minnesota. Many of the protesters used kerchiefs doused in vinegar as breathing filters in order to help resist the effects of the gas.

Agents Greaves and Pamela sat in their communications van, parked outside Sears near the Capitol Building monitoring the entire fiasco unfold.

“Goddamn,” Greaves seethed as they watched surveillance footage from inside the Capitol as protesters ransacked all of the senators’ offices, taking hostages and brutalizing what security forces remained.

“General Johnson isn’t going to be too happy about this,” Pamela pointed out.

“General Johnson? You think what that old fuck thinks even matters anymore?” Greaves shot back. “This is beyond Code Red. Defcon One is an understatement. Hell, even Active Black doesn’t do justice to the gravity of this situation. We are dealing with an all out insurrection here, the likes of which this country hasn’t seen since Shays’, or perhaps even the Whiskey Rebellion. Point is, this is a game changer.”

“So what do we do now?” Pamela questioned.

“We hold tight,” Greaves said reassuringly.

Meanwhile, in the Oval Office, the president and members of the cabinet were being briefed by top advisers on the situation across the nation.

“Mr. President, I strongly advise you to declare nationwide martial law immediately,” General Johnson said.

“No! This country was founded on the rule of law, on respect for human rights! I can’t have it sink into dictatorship now!” the President of the United States of America declared.

“Mr. President, let’s be frank! Now look, I’m a military man, so I’m sure you’ll understand that cussin’ is in my nature. Well, let’s cut the bullshit! Save that human rights mumbo jumbo for the Libtards who’ll believe it! This is your ass on the line here! These protesters are calling for war crimes tribunals that would touch the highest echelons of power, open investigations into the excesses of our enhanced interrogation program, and beyond. A true national security nightmare scenario. Just look at this,” General Johnson said as he showed a map of the country on a big screen LCD television. “Each one of these red dots represents a violent insurrectionary movement. Larger dots represent places where masses of protesters have stormed state capitol buildings. As you can see, the entire nation is under siege from within. We’ve already lost thousands of riot police across the country. It’s time to take decisive action now, before we descend into total anarchy! Now, we at the Homeland Intelligence Agency have a game plan prepared for precisely this kind of situation. Just give us full authorization to work our magic and we’ll get these pesky protesters under control and we can re-stabilize the social order.”

“What I just want to know is, how did we not see this nationwide general strike coming?” the POTUS asked, turning towards the Secretary of Commerce. “How come our assets inside the trade unions weren’t able to avert this whole thing, like you assured me they would?”

The Secretary of Commerce replied, “Mr. President, it’s very complicated. But basically, it goes something like this. You see, since nearly all the mainstream unions were gutted years ago, we’ve had these wildcat unionization drives in sectors that were traditionally labor union free, like retail, fast-food, airport workers, and other low-wage jobs. Call it blowback due to years of an unresponsive system, but suddenly there has been rapid radicalization across the underclass.”

The Director of the Federal Bureau of Counter Intelligence piped up.

“We should have come down harder on those left-wing elements after the Recall Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, Occupy Wall Street, and Black Lives Matter movements. And then of course there was the public relations fiasco due to the brutal police response to that illegal dancehall in Minneapolis. A rave, I believe the kids are calling it. And all of that’s not to mention lack of progress on immigration reform. It was all a powder keg waiting to blow.”

“Goddamn,” the president muttered, grabbing the back of his neck.

The Secretary of State then interrupted, “Mr. President, declaring martial law now could hurt our chances in the next election cycle.”

“You’re right,” the president responded.

“You damn politicians and your damn elections!” General Johnson spat. “This country needs real leadership, balls-to-the-wall national security, not this pussyfooting shit!”

All of the sudden, General Johnson reached inside his jacket and whipped out a Magnum revolver, taking aim at the president.

“This here’s a goddamn *coup d’état*, ya goddamn yellabelly sonofabitch. If ya ain’t fit to lead this country, somebody with some balls is gonna have to!” Johnson snarled before blowing the president away.

Blood splattered across the American flag and Oval Office drapery.

“What the fuck do you think you’re doing!” the Secretary of State shouted before Johnson took aim and wasted him too.

“Now who else wants some?” Johnson growled at the other presidential advisers as a squad of H.I.A. stormtroopers smashed in the door of the Oval Office.

“Boys, take Mr. Vice President here out back and make sure he’s tied up real good,” Johnson continued as he lit up a cigar and took a seat at the president’s desk.

20 – RADICALS REGROUP

After storming the Minnesota State Capitol Building, protesters barricaded all of the entrances and began to board up the windows from the inside. The Rotunda became the base camp area, while casualties were brought into the House of Representatives chamber, where a makeshift triage was set up to care for the injured, many of whom had sustained heavy blows, gunshot wounds, and inhaled noxious chemicals during the clashes with police. On the upper level of The Rotunda, near the balcony, Wither slapte organized a guerrilla style teach-in/infoshop to educate people on the finer points of Trotskyite ideals.

“So, this ‘theory of permanent revolution’ you speak of; that means it’s like, revolution all the time?” an uneducated protester asked.

“Not exactly,” Wither slapte explained. “You see, as the Russian Revolution of October 1917 progressed, two distinct stances on the question of socialist development emerged. And by the way, the revolution was actually in November because they were using a different calendar in Russia at that time. Anyway, the Bolsheviks, who included Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky, who was the leader of the Red Army, stood for building socialism while the Mensheviks bought into a distorted view of the concept of stages of development. Basically, they thought society had to progress from a feudal order into a bourgeois-led capitalist order

before it could progress beyond that, to socialism and finally to communism. The German Kautskyites were also on some distorted stages of development bullshit.”

“Wow, I see,” the protester, a middle aged worker who had just been laid off by the Ford truck plant shutting down, said.

Wither slapte continued, “Yeah, so then Joseph Stalin weaseled his way in and killed off nearly all of the original leaders of the Bolsheviks, and basically supported that Menshevik stages of development hogwash with his bullshit bourgeois-collaborationist idea of so-called people’s democracy, all the while tryin’ to rep Bolshevism. Trotsky’s innovation was in pointing out that peasants in semi-feudal societies, like Russia at the beginning of the 20th century, could unite behind the nascent, though small, urban industrial working class, institute socialism, and start working towards building communism right away, skipping over the bourgeois-led capitalist stage. This is what we call ‘permanent revolution’.”

“But how would they build socialism right away if material conditions were semi-feudal?” another protester at the infoshop asked.

“Well, you see,” Wither slapte responded, “the socialist state, or dictatorship of the proletariat, needed to build links with the proletarian vanguard globally; meaning that they needed to take the struggle to an international level. Think of it this way: The working class, what we Marxists call *the proletariat*, is a transnational, global entity, so you can’t have a real dictatorship of the proletariat unless it covers every part of the planet where the working class exists. But Stalin threw this basic truth of Marxism out the window, and instead opted for the bullshit idea of ‘socialism in one country,’ which was really just the re-installation of petty national chauvinism under a bureaucratic caste acting as crypto-capitalists. You can see this clearly in that under Stalin’s rule, national minorities like the Meskhetian Turks, Crimean Tatars, or Volga Germans, among others, were oppressed by the degenerate workers’ state, subject to deportations and worse. The Soviet Union under Stalin and his successors did still have some of the elementary features of proletarian democracy, which is why we sometimes refer to it as a *degenerate workers’ state*, but these were largely anachronistic remnant elements. Fundamentally, by the

time Stalin had solidified his power, the society was basically state capitalist. If it had truly been a dictatorship of the proletariat, decisions certainly would have been made along the lines of class interests and not national interests; thus people like the Meskhetian Turks, Volga Germans, and Ruska and Vlack Roma would not have faced repression at the hands of the state.”

“Whoa, so basically, the Soviet Union wasn’t really communist at all?” one of the infoshop attendees asked.

“Yep. That’s just one of those truisms hung over from the legacy of Cold War propaganda we were all brought up on in this country. After Stalin’s abject rejection of internationalism, it wasn’t long before Khrushchev came up with its next logical leap, which was so-called ‘peaceful co-existence’ with capitalist states. The dissolution of the USSR, the bureaucratic caste’s rejection of what little vestiges of being a workers’ state remained by 1991, and the outright and open embrace of free market economic liberalism was only the logical outcome of Stalin’s revisionism and crushing of democracy. Stalinism was the seed; the dissolution and rejection of socialism was the tree from which it spouted. Still, the dissolution of the USSR was a horrendous disaster for the masses of the former Soviet republics, because they lost all the gains that had been made by the October Revolution. That’s why life expectancies, the standard of living, and what not, plummeted so dramatically in the 1990s and into the early 21st century,” Wither slapte said.

“What is this ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ that you speak of?” another protester, a machinist at one of the local jet-plane companies, asked. “How can it be democratic and dictatorial at the same time? I don’t get it.”

“Ah, yes. It may seem counterintuitive at first,” Wither slapte explained, “But what is democracy, if not the rule of the people, the majority of the people? And who is the majority? The working class, of course! The proletariat! You see, in the so-called liberal democracies that run the Western world today, who really controls things, if not the bourgeoisie, the ruling class who controls nearly all of the wealth? Liberal democracy is nothing more than dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. It’s minority rule. Red democracy is proletarian dictatorship. Rule of the masses, the expression of their class interests against exploitation and oppression.”

The protesters nodded in agreement with what Wither slapte was saying.

Chednilonya, the anarchist crust punk, showed up and interjected, "But why do Stalinists call themselves Marxists-Leninists then?"

"Like any group of usurpers, the Stalinists had to cling onto something to legitimize their own claim to power. Similar to how Republicans and Democrats today couldn't give two shits about operating a true democratic republic," Wither slapte explained.

Chednilonya nodded, and was joined by Marita, Joe, Hacksaw, and another mohawk-sporting punk named Ramona.

"Alright, why don't we break out into small discussion groups?" Wither slapte said after seeing Marita. He then walked over to her and her punk friends.

"Marita! Fancy seeing you here!" Wither slapte said, happy to see the familiar face of an old comrade from the Socialist Alliance.

"Hey, Wither slapte. How's it going? Exciting times, huh?" Marita replied.

"Good, good. We lost a loyal comrade storming in here, but yes, these are exciting times indeed," responded Wither slapte.

"Yes, the masses are quite ecstatic. Perhaps we should go see what the mainstream media is saying about all this. I hear senators' offices have cable television," said Marita.

"Not a bad idea," Wither slapte replied. "It's always good to keep tabs on what the bourgeois media is saying. It's like a barometer for the political madness of the ruling capitalist class."

"Oh, and by the way, these are my friends Joe, Chednilonya, Hacksaw, and Ramona," Marita said.

"It's a pleasure to meet all of you," Wither slapte said.

"And a right pleasure to meet ye as well!" Hacksaw shot back.

Ramona loosened her blouse, revealing tattooed breasts and provoking a questioning look from Wither slapte.

"Alright, well, let's go see what the mainstream media is saying," he said.

As they made their way to one of the senators' offices, they passed by all of the state senators, representatives, and security forces who were tied up and being guarded by Franky and Izzy with their Kalashnikovs as well as some other protesters who had appropriated M4 rifles from downed riot cops.

Ramona spat on a Republican senator who had introduced a number of bills attempting to curtail the civil rights of homosexuals and bisexuals.

"That's for being an anti-gay fuck, you piece of cock shit!" Ramona snarled.

They then proceeded into one of the senators' offices and attempted to turn the television to Liberal Media News, or LMN, but it was just a blue screen.

"Huh, that's weird," Marita said. "Why don't you try Cable Media News?"

Wither slapte switched the channel to CMN, but it too was nothing more than a blue screen.

"FPN?" Marita suggested.

"What's that?" Joe asked.

"Front Page News," she replied.

Wither slapte changed the channel again, but still it was nothing more than a blue screen.

"P-San [Public Satellite Affairs Network]?"

Still nothing.

"How about British Cable News America?" Marita suggested, getting desperate.

Once again Wither slapte tuned the television set according to Marita's suggestion only to find a blue screen.

"Ugh, how about Conservative Cable News?" she finally asked.

Wither slapte switched to CCN, and sure enough, it was working.

Right-wing pundit Greg Charleston proclaimed, "And now a word from our new leader, the savior of our nation, General Johnson!"

Wither slapte and Marita exchanged confused looks.

General Johnson spoke, "Greetings, my fellow Americans. And thank you, Greg. Conservative Cable has done a great service to this fine nation. In the chaos of the last couple of hours, it seems the Liberal Media has failed to adequately report on the treasonous nature of the recent protests. Rest assured, America, the military and Homeland Intelligence are working hard to restore the rule of law. Remember to support the troops in this time of crisis, and soon enough, everything will be better. America, you may be wondering why I, General Johnson, am speaking to you tonight,

and not the president. Unfortunately, violent left-wing muckrakers assassinated the president this afternoon. They also assassinated everyone else in the chain of people next in line to take over, so I was the only one left. But rest assured of this much, America: I am a true patriot, and I will lead our nation out of this time of troubles. God bless America!”

Canned applause erupted from the television set, followed by a gut-wrenching rendition of *To Arms in Dixie*, and then the *Star-Spangled Banner*.

“What . . . the . . . actual . . . fuck?” Marita said, astonished.

Just then, Pedrocco, Izzy, Franky, and Cedric came running into the office.

Pedrocco spoke with an air of authority, “Wither slapte, Marita, all y’alls! We got company! Looks like the military is trying to storm the place, take back over the Capitol Building! Best all of you pick up some arms; we stockpiled what assault rifles we could glean from the downed riot pigs up in The Rotunda. Those military fucks could breach the place any minute!”

Izzy tossed Wither slapte’s Kalashnikov, which he had left at the infoshop, to him and they ran off to warn other protesters.

“Looks like shit’s about to get real,” Hacksaw muttered.

“C’mon, you heard him! We may not have much time!” Marita shouted, running towards The Rotunda.

They made it to The Rotunda and everyone was picking up firearms. Since supplies were limited, those who were willing to fight but couldn’t get a traditional weapon broke off spindles from furniture to use as clubs. People were holding tight, waiting for the National Guard, now under the command of the Homeland Intelligence Agency, to storm the place.

“We must stand our ground!” Pedrocco proclaimed inspirationally, “We must not lose the Capitol Building!”

Just then, Izzy approached with Officer Vang in his custody, the barrel of his Kalashnikov trained on the cop.

“Look who I just found hiding in the janitor’s closet underneath that Jesse Ventura painting,” he said.

Vang pleaded, “Don’t hurt me! I’m worth more to you alive than dead!”

“Ha, we’ll see ’bout dat,” Pedrocco said, “Why don’t you go tie this dude up with the rest of them senators and what not?”

“Sure thing, comrade,” Izzy replied.

A few moments later, smashing glass was heard from above. All of the sudden, dozens of National Guardsmen in tactical gear started rappelling down from The Rotunda’s dome, indiscriminately peppering the occupants of the Capitol with gunfire as they quickly lowered themselves to the floor. Several protesters on the second level were critically hit and fell over the banister, down to the middle of The Rotunda, their bodies splattering in a most unpleasant fashion.

“Shit! Take cover!” Ramona shouted.

A fierce gun battle ensued, lasting some three hours. The radicals put up a good fight, but weariness eventually began to take its toll.

Beaten back by the unrelenting stream of National Guardsmen rappelling down from the breach in the Capitol’s dome, the members of the Radical Book Club, along with Golumbaika, Cedric, Marita and her crust punk friends, retreated to an antechamber. Nearly all of the other protesters had been shot or taken into National Guard custody at that point.

“Perhaps it’s time for a bit of uncompromising realism,” Wither slapte put forth.

“What do you mean?” Tisha asked.

“Look, we’re vastly outnumbered. If we fight any longer, we’re sure to die. Perhaps if we surrender now, they’ll go easy on us,” said Wither slapte.

“Fuck that!” Pedrocco shot back, “You’re just chickening out!”

Paty interjected, “Pedroc, calm yo’ ass down. Wither slapte’s right. There must be five, ten thousand of those Guardsmen bastards on the other side of that door. Maybe we can strike some sort of plea bargain, negotiate somehow.”

“Ugh. I guess,” Pedrocco conceded.

Izzy pulled off his plain white t-shirt to use as a surrender flag. In a few short moments, the Guardsmen came in and took everyone into custody, bringing them out back behind the Capitol Building where Agents Pamela and Greaves were waiting in the communications van, along with scores of National Guard armored personnel carriers and paddy wagons.

21 – GENERAL JOHNSON’S NEW DEAL

General Johnson spat over the telephone, “I told you, dammit, I only want Tea Party Republicans to survive this . . . cleansing. No damn centrists! We need people who are going to tow the new militarist line one hundred percent! No weak links! And remember: Their elimination needs to be *particularly* . . . spectacular, so as to discourage any wise guys from thinking they can undermine the new order.”

Agent Calvin, chief overseer of the the H.I.A.’s political reform squads, responded, “As you say, General. We’ll see to it that the transition goes as smoothly as possible. Consider your power solidified already.”

“We’ll see about that once you get to doing your damn job, Calvin! I hope you’re not this damn premature with your wife,” Johnson grumbled.

“Very well, Sir!” Calvin responded.

General Johnson abruptly ended the call, lit up another cigar, and poured himself a glass of whiskey on the rocks, making himself quite comfortable in the Oval Office.

Squads of H.I.A. agents were operating a dragnet across the District of Columbia, rounding up all Democratic senators and representatives, as well as moderate Republicans, and, of course, left-leaning independents.

Agent Calvin put his Agency cell phone into his inner coat pocket and looked at the group of twelve other agents sitting around a table with him in a Scottish Rite Masonic Lodge.

“Well, boys. The General says the elimination of the undesirables needs to be ‘spectacular’. Our intelligence indicates that these socialist scumbags were able to pull off this insurrectionary hullabaloo by promoting their Marxian ideals within the so-called ‘rave’ culture, appealing to the youth and what not. We need to find a means of eliminating these undesirable rats that will affect popular culture in a way that cements reactionary, fascistic capitalism as the dominant ruling ideology. Any ideas?” Agent Calvin asked.

“Perhaps we could disappear them . . . bring them up a thousand feet or so in black choppers over the Chesapeake Bay, and throw them overboard into the waters,” Agent Rollins suggested.

“Classic. Not a bad idea, if I do say so myself,” Agent Hertz responded.

“You fools, Johnson wants it to be spectacular, not discrete! Besides, that Pinochet shit is passé,” Agent Firth griped.

“Get this: How about gladiator matches?” said Agent Young.

“Definitely getting warmer,” Calvin said, “but it would take too long. Do you know how many Democratic representatives there are? That would take days.”

“I got it!” Agent Bridgewater exclaimed, “We guillotine them all in rapid succession on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, then throw their heads into the Reflecting Pool. Won’t take too long, and it will be a great blood sacrifice ritual, you know, from the occult perspective. Of course, we’ll have to dress it up in conservative evangelical rhetoric to placate our power base. We could call it *Operation: Katastrophic Kloaked Kleansing*.”

“Brilliant!” Agent Calvin shouted.

“Always important to keep the esoteric in mind!” Agent Windsor shot out.

The thirteen agents erupted in a boisterous chorus of raucous and maniacal laughter before donning hooded cloaks, blindfolding each other, drinking blood from a wooden chalice, and worshipping a golden calf representing Ba’al.

Agent Young sanctimoniously presided over the ceremony as the agents performed an awkward, mathematically calculated, sort of rhythmic movement, which one might call a dance, but which totally lacked any soul. Similar to a contradance, the agents held hands in a circle, came in to the center, then zig-zagged back to the outer edges of the black and white chessboard-patterned floor, framed by a large pair of Greco-Latin marble pillars. Skirting across the tiles, they chanted in Sumerian.

22 – ESCAPE

A group of National Guardsmen, under the command of Agents Pamela and Greaves, escorted the Radical Book Club and their newfound comrades out of the Minnesota State Capitol Building and threw them into the back of a large paddy wagon.

“You socialist fucks are going away for a long time,” a National Guardsman growled as he slammed shut the paddy wagon doors.

“Take these motherfuckers to the Hennepin County Detention Facilities,” Agent Greaves spat at the lead Guardsman, Sergeant Foxworthy.

“Very well, Agent,” Sergeant Foxworthy replied, grabbing his belt buckle and nodding his head as he copped a glance down Agent Pamela’s blouse.

In order to avoid the riots and looting taking place all along University Avenue in Saint Paul’s Frogtown district, Foxworthy drove the paddy wagon down Interstate Freeway Ninety-Four westbound towards Minneapolis. Agents Greaves and Pamela hopped in their communications van and followed close behind. The convoy made it a few miles, to the spot where the freeway was traversed perpendicularly below by Fairview Avenue and diagonally above by a metallic train bridge, before fate presented an impediment.

As it turned out, Santiago was posted up above the freeway, on the train tracks, with his homeboys Julian, Juan, and Gabor, having received word from some of his homies cruising around

Downtown Saint Paul that a coach bus-sized paddy wagon had just left the State Capitol. They followed it a ways, and radioed in to Santiago that it was heading towards Minneapolis on Ninety-Four, giving Santiago and his crew just enough time to get themselves in position.

Santiago put down his binoculars. "*Ya vienen. Oye, Julian, trujiste los lanzacohetes?*"

"*Simón,*" replied Julian, unpacking the weaponry.

"Alright, hold steady now. Easy does it," Santiago said as Julian and Juan brought rocket-propelled grenade launchers to their shoulders. "Now when the paddy wagon come up close, I want you to blast them two vehicles drivin' up in front of 'em."

"You mean we'll have to waste innocents?" Julian questioned.

"Aye, boyo. 'Fraid so. We don't wanna risk hurting our holme dawgs by blastin' the paddy wagon. Sometimes peeps just be in the wrong place at the wrong time, youknowaimsayin? *De todos modos, La Santísima Muerte tiene que llevar a cada uno de nosotros algún día.* With that pick-up truck and that minivan drivin' in front of the paddy wagon blown to smithereens, the wagon'll have to stop. That's when me and Gabor start indiscriminately pepperin' *esos culeros* with our AK's. After that, blast a few more rockets at the cars that'll be backed up behind the paddy wagon so they can't double back. Then we got the set who's gonna descend down there with a few Escalades to evacuate all of 'em and get 'em back to my garage to lie low for a bit."

"*Órale,*" Julian uttered as he began to take careful aim.

As Sergeant Foxworthy drove, he looked up and saw two silhouettes peering down from the bridge. "What's that? Something ain't right here," he said to the man in the passenger seat, Private Reynolds.

Fshhhooo! Two rocket-propelled grenades simultaneously struck the two vehicles in both lanes in front of the paddy wagon.

"What the fuck!" Foxworthy bellowed as he slammed on the brakes.

"Jesus Christ," Agent Greaves muttered, driving the communications van behind them.

Agent Pamela grabbed the radio and said frantically, "We need back-up ASAP, we have officers down! I repeat: officers down!"

Location is Ninety-Four westbound and Fairview. Requesting air support!"

Fshhhooo! Suddenly, a rocket flew just a few inches over the communications van, slamming into the car behind them. Greaves' heart started pounding and she ran out of the van, drawing her Magnum revolver and taking cover behind the paddy wagon. Agent Pamela followed.

Foxworthy and Reynolds jumped out of the paddy wagon and sprinted for cover behind a nearby truck. Civilian non-combatants were freaking out, jumping out of their vehicles and running into the grass off the freeway.

Santiago took careful aim and popped off a few rounds with his Kalashnikov, one of them striking Private Reynolds in the shoulder.

"Shit! I'm hit! I'm hit!" Reynolds screamed, beginning to panic as his own blood squirted all over himself. He had never done combat before.

Eight more Guardsmen jumped out of the paddy wagon and started shooting up towards the bridge, but the metal was deflecting their bullets.

Gabor started going trigger happy, downing five National Guardsmen before ducking down and stopping to reload, while Santiago continued unloading rounds into the truck behind which Reynolds and Foxworthy were hiding, hoping to ignite a spark in the gas tank and make it explode.

Fshhhooo! Another rocket slammed into the car behind which were hiding three of the remaining Guardsmen, obliterating the vehicle along with the baby killers.

Juan had just reloaded and was bringing his RPG up to his shoulder again when Agent Greaves leaned out from behind the paddy wagon, taking very careful aim with her revolver and cocking back the hammer before slamming off a slug, the trajectory of which led precisely to Juan's skull. His body tumbled off of the bridge, landing with a loud thud on the flaming minivan below. As his body caught fire, it began to create a foul stench.

"Damn. Nice one, Greaves," Pamela muttered. They fist bumped.

"What the hell's goin' on out there?" Pedrocco screamed from inside the paddy wagon.

“What you think, fool?” Tisha shot back. “They bustin’ us outta here.”

Just then, ten of Santiago’s homeboys came rolling up the wrong way down the freeway in five Cadillac Escalades. They pulled up in front of the heaps of burning wreckage and pulled out Glockes, starting to fire indiscriminately at the remaining security forces.

Fshhhooo! Julian fired another rocket-propelled grenade at the truck, wasting Reynolds and Foxworthy. No Guardsmen remained living now.

“Shit,” said Pamela.

“Where the fuck is our back up?” Greaves sputtered.

Just then, a police helicopter flew overhead, and both Agents breathed a sigh of relief.

“C’mon, rook. This shit ain’t over yet,” Greaves said with resolve.

The two H.I.A. agents then stepped out from behind the van, hammering off rounds with their Magnum revolvers, steadily advancing with tenacious determination against all odds.

Surprised by these women warriors, most of Santiago’s homeboys took cover behind the Escalades, though one of them crouched down behind the flaming pick-up truck.

As Greaves and Pamela approached the flaming vehicles blockading the road they managed to waste five of the Cholo greaser street thugs.

Meanwhile, Julian launched another rocket towards the chopper which was providing air support, striking it critically.

“May day! May day!” the pilot wailed as he struggled to maintain control moments before the helicopter went into a rapid tail-spin and slammed into a warehouse just off the interstate, instantly killing everyone on board.

Greaves and Pamela were still running forward with determination, but the blast was so powerful that it knocked both of them off their feet. While they were down, the greaser Cholo who was hiding behind the flaming pick-up truck ran up to them and punched both in the back of the head, rendering them unconscious, before grabbing their revolvers.

“*Ándale, vatos,*” he shouted to his brethren. “Free the political prisoners!”

Santiago’s homeboys rammed in the back door of the paddy wagon and began untying everyone. As they did this, Santiago, Julian, and Gabor climbed down to the interstate to help out. Greaves and Pamela were thrown into the back of one of the Escalades while the members of the Radical Book Club, along with Paloma, Cedric, Marita and the anarchist crust punks Hacksaw, Ramona, Joe, and Chednilonya were evacuated, hopping into the suburban utility vehicles. They swiftly turned the SUV’s around and sped off towards Santiago’s garage on Lake Street in Minneapolis.

As they sped away, several squad cars descended onto the interstate from the next on-ramp and started following close behind, prompting Franky, who was riding in the ultimate Escalade, to stick his torso out of the sunroof and fire on the police cruisers with his Kalashnikov. After the driver of the lead police cruiser sustained a severe gunshot wound, the vehicle veered off to the side before being T-boned by the second cruiser, its driver not realizing in the excitement of the high speed pursuit just how dangerous it was to tailgate his colleague so closely. This caused the lead cruiser to flip and roll over several times before bursting into flames, the occupants, though still alive, unable to escape due to severe damage sustained by all of the doors and windows. As they began choking on the black smoke, another squad car which had also been following too close behind smashed into them, killing everyone involved in the crash instantly. Additionally, one of the officers was jettisoned out of the windshield some forty yards due to not wearing a seatbelt.

“Lost the five-oh,” Franky said with an air of satisfaction as he descended back down into the Escalade.

A few minutes later and the Escalades pulled up inside Santiago’s garage. As the garage doors closed down, Santiago stuck his head out with shifty eyes, looking around to verify that no police had followed them. The revolution had been briefly put on pause, but now it was back on.

23 – THE CLEANSING

“Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Tell me, Calvin; what’s wrong with this statement?” General Johnson asked, rocking back another whiskey on the rocks as he sat with his feet crossed up on top of the president’s Oval Office desk. Blood stains still covered the carpet.

“Why, that’s Newton’s third law of motion, Sir. There’s nothing wrong with it, I’d say. It is a law, after all. And our job is to restore law, and order.”

Johnson gave a frustrated sigh. “Wrong, Calvin!”

“But . . . Sir? Care to explain?”

“Every action has an *unequal* and opposite reaction. Call it General Johnson’s first law of politickin’,” he said, douchebaggily referring to himself in third person.

“Sir, I don’t quite follow . . .”

“You see, me boy, every one of these commie bastards’ political actions needs to have an overbearing and opposite reaction. Overpowering reaction. Reaction that immobilizes. Crushes. Traumatizes,” Johnson mused.

“Ah, now I see. And *we* get to be the forces of reaction!” Agent Calvin said with giddy.

“Atta boy,” Johnson chuckled, slapping Agent Calvin on the back. “You’ll go far, son.”

“Thank you, Sir.”

“But anyways, tell me, Calvin; what’s the status of our dragnet?”

“Everything’s in order, Sir. All Democratic elected officials in D.C. have been rounded up and are being held in chains inside the Lincoln Memorial at gunpoint,” Agent Calvin responded.

“Excellent, excellent,” Johnson said. “And the moderate Republicans?”

“Ah, yes. Forgive me, Sir; I almost forgot. Yes, the moderate Republicans have also been rounded up. A few have promised to come over to the Tea Party camp if we let them remain at large though.”

“Flip-flopers, eh?” Johnson said with a raised eyebrow.

“That’s right, Sir. What do you think? Should we give them a chance?”

“No. We don’t want to take any risks. Once a moderate, always a moderate. Read my lips. No damn centrists. No damn moderates. We want far right people. Good, dedicated, far right-wing people.”

“Very well, General.”

“What did you say y’all were gonna do with ’em again?” Johnson asked in his sugary Southern drawl.

“Televised mass guillotining, Sir.”

“Oh, that’s right. Ha! Almost forgot. Who came up with that one?”

“Agent Bridgewater, Sir.”

“Looks like a promotion might be in order for the bastard,” Johnson chuckled as he rubbed out the butt of his cigar directly onto the desk’s mahogany and oak surface.

“Can I get you an ashtray, Sir?”

“Do I look like I need a damn ashtray, Calvin?” Johnson spat, shaking his head. “Ashtray! Goddamn! In my day, we just smoked our damn cigars and put ’em out where we pleased, and no one gave us the damn nanny treatment for it! That’s the problem with this damn Liberal society these days, everyone expects the goddamned nanny treatment. Well, I’m gonna put an end to this goddamned nanny state. American men will be real men again, and we won’t have any damn coloreds meddling either, sucking up their damn welfare money!”

“Forgive me, General.”

“Get the fuck outta here!” Johnson screamed, his throbbing neck veins bulging as his eyeballs nearly popped out of their sockets.

As Agent Calvin slinked out the door of the Oval Office, General Johnson’s telephone began ringing.

“Agent Greaves, eh? What’s the ol’ dyke want now?” Johnson quipped as he read the caller ID.

He then answered, “Greaves, what’s the situation over there in Minnesota?”

Greaves was tied up in the *Santa Muerte* ritual lair underneath Santiago’s garage, but she had managed to loosen her straps enough to free her right hand and reach for her cell phone, which she had hidden in her panties during the gun battle, knowing that there was a possibility she might be taken hostage by the Cholos and Gypsies.

She whispered, “General, the situation has doubled back. We are once again in Active Black. Code Red. Mission compromised. I repeat: mission compromised.”

“Greaves, what the fuck are you saying? Enough of that code mumbo jumbo. And speak the fuck up; you know my hearing isn’t what it used to be.”

Greaves bellowed, “The damn mission’s compromised! Those socialist fucks have us in their lair, tied up!”

Tisha was in the closet putting away a mop and bucket and heard Greaves shouting.

“What was that?” Tisha said to herself.

“Goddamn,” Johnson muttered on the other end of the line.

Tisha pulled up the oriental rug, grasped the metallic ring attached to the trap door, and pulled it up, causing the rusty hinges to squeak.

“Shit, gotta go,” Greaves whispered, stuffing the phone back into her panties and wrapping her arm around the ropes to make it look like she was still tied up.

Tisha climbed down the ladder into the ritual lair.

“Greaves, listen to me. I need to know your precise location. What is your location, Agent?” said General Johnson. A moment of silence passed. “Greaves? Greaves? What the fuck!”

Tisha slowly crept towards the chairs where Agents Greaves and Pamela were tied up. Just then, General Johnson tried calling Greaves back, thinking the call had simply been dropped. Agent Greaves had forgotten to set her phone to complete silence; instead it was on vibrate. The phone began vibrating, and slid in between the labia of her vulva.

Greaves moaned, “Oooohhh.”

“What the hell?” Tisha throatily croaked, slightly aroused herself.

Pamela, tied up and sitting with her back to Greaves, turned her head around to try to see what was happening.

Greaves couldn’t stop moaning with pleasure, until a contraction forced the vibrating cell phone to slide out of her.

“What’s up with you?” Tisha questioned.

“Nothing,” Greaves sighed.

“It sure looked like something the fuck was up with you,” Tisha shot back.

Suspicious, Tisha patted Greaves down. Patting her crotch, she felt the bulging telephone. Tisha reached into Greaves’ panties and grabbed the phone, her hand rubbing against her long pubic hairs.

“Thought you could trick me, huh?” Tisha fumed.

“Look, it’s not like that. Please, you look like a smart woman. Why can’t we just talk this out? Dialogue?” Greaves replied.

Tisha looked around with shifty eyes. “Look . . . I wasn’t supposed to tell you this yet, but we’re going to try to re-educate and re-habilitate you two,” she whispered. “If you can prove that you truly have Stockholm syndrome and identify with our cause, we might let you guys join our side.”

She then noticed a loose piece of rope hanging off to the side of Greaves’ chair and re-tied it.

Just then, Wither slapte, Pedrocco, Paty, and Cedric climbed down into the ritual lair and went rummaging through a closet behind the skeleton altar. Wither slapte came out wheeling a television set on a rolling cart, while the others pushed two

modified dental patient chairs. They strapped the H.I.A. agents to the chairs and hooked special devices to their eyelids so they couldn't close them.

"Don't worry," said Paty as Wither slapte set up the television and connected the DVD player. "Although this ocular apparatus will prevent you from blinking, we'll be here putting Rohto eye drops into your eyes every minute or so to prevent them from drying out."

The first video Wither slapte put in was a piece of Maoist-Third-Worldist produced propaganda called *That Hate Amerikkka Beat*. Beginning with a hard techno beat and post-socialist realist stylized images of Asian peasants armed and marching, it then progressed to fast paced thematically contrastive cuts showing images such as an American couple descended from the white settler population smiling and carrying an abundance of shopping bags, a stoic indigenous man, a painting of Custerian roughriders shooting rifles from horseback, more Americans obeying the injunction to consume material goods, a brutal scene depicting the Mexican-American war, a uniformed military figure sitting on top of a pile of skulls, a lynching, Africans held in bondage, and a chain gang.

The next cut was a vertical partition of the screen into a black half on the left and a white half on the right. Over the black half a text read, *Agitation (more sensory)*, and over the white half it read, *Propaganda (more cognitive)*.

A feminine robotic voice then narrated, "Requested: a higher agitation ratio."

The black portion of the screen expanded, engulfing half of the white portion to take up three-fourths of the screen.

The voice continued, "That's fine. With us. Just. Get that beat."

The black portion then fully filled up the screen and a radiating text spelled out in glimmering white letters, *Hate Amerikkka*.

More fast paced cuts. Images of American soldiers in Iraq and Vietnam firing heavy machine guns on the ground and from helicopters as billowing clouds of dark smoke arise. As a photo of soldiers surrounding a prisoner with a bag over his head flashed, a black text was superimposed, reading, *Hate Amerikkka*, and then, *Get That Beat*, as the gabba-style, acid house-esque beat banged

on. An angry looking American soldier pointing at the camera, another prisoner of war with a bag on his head, more people with shopping bags, another soldier firing a heavy machine gun, a Vietnamese teenager in handcuffs surrounded by American soldiers, bombs falling out of an airplane, explosions, a Vietnamese woman crying.

A shot of African refugees walking along train tracks then panned out, and a black background filled the screen around the silhouette of a young, tired and worn out looking African boy.

A series of white letters filled the black portion of the screen reading:

The world's oppressed march to it.

Ten billion feet.

Dance that rock solid

hate amerikkka beat.

A Ken Burns effect was then used to zoom in on the Sub-Saharan African boy's eyes, followed by more fast paced cuts of short video clips and stills of protests in the Middle East, someone giving the thumbs down to a passing armored personnel carrier, a man in a balaclava rubbing a small rocket with sandpaper, a group of people standing around a table in camouflage fatigues and keffiyehs, a flaming Humvee, people with raised fists standing in front of flaming vehicles, things exploding, a flaming tank, a man wearing a keffiyeh over his face while operating a large machine gun, black and white footage of peasants raising rifles and shouting together, anti-war demonstrators tipping over a parked helicopter, causing it to fall off of an aircraft carrier, and so and so forth.

Finally there was another shot of a lady carrying a shopping bag and a male voice shouted, "You think it's a game? You think it's a fuckin' gaaaaaame?" as the throbbing gabba beat pounded in double time.

Then there was one more shot of peasants' feet marching in a line along a small path.

Wither slapte had set the three minute video to repeat, and the whole thing started over again. Paty dropped some artificial tears into Greaves' and Pamela's eyes.

Meanwhile, in Washington D.C., the thirteen agents of the H.I.A.'s Inner Circle were just beginning the mass televised guillotining of all non-Tea Party elected officials. The thirteen agents put on their black executioner masks as a Conservative Cable News film crew set up. A few thousand National Guardsmen cordoned off the perimeter to prevent any potential interference with the dark blood sacrifice ritual.

Once the stage was completely set, two agents untied the first elected official, Frank Allen, and three other agents carried him over towards the guillotine. Frank Allen didn't say a word as the agents tossed him underneath the massive guillotine. Agent Calvin then pulled a rope and Allen's head plopped into a wicker basket, which Agent Young then handed off to a line of National Guardsmen who tossed the head into the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool before passing the empty basket back towards the guillotine in another line of Guardsmen. There were multiple wicker baskets so that the process could be carried out more quickly. Other Guardsmen were tasked with throwing bodies into semi-truck trailers, a convoy of which was taking the bodies to a mass grave at a nearby landfill.

Bloodthirsty conservatives throughout the nation reveled in the slaughter. Since the process took nearly twelve hours to complete, it became a sort of TV marathon, with Conservative Cable News pundits offering commentary on the spectacle as it progressed.

Gradually the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool's color transitioned from cerulean blue to a crisp sanguine. Numerous Guardsmen began urinating onto the disembodied heads, and a foul stench began to permeate throughout the Capitol Mall. Due to moderate winds, one could even catch whiffs of the scent miles away in the D.C. projects, where Blacks and other folks of color were growing increasingly worried about this new far right, military-led government.

In Minneapolis, Don Bastesen and his wife Sue watched on their television set as the Democratic Party was annihilated.

Sue chuckled, "Serves them right. Damn Democrats. For half a century those abortion supporting freaks have let millions of children be murdered, and now they're finally getting a little taste of their own medicine."

Responded Don, "I hear ya. I sure do hope General Johnson is a pro-life man."

"Why of course he is!" Sue replied. "Didn't you listen to Donald's commentary? Oh, no, that's right; you were in the bathroom. Well, he said Johnson's been a lifelong supporter of a child's right to life, and a big supporter of the Tea Party to boot!"

"Wow, looks like this Johnson fellow might not be so bad!" Don surmised.

"I'll say," Sue said in earnest.

Gretyl O'Brien then appeared in a corner of the TV screen as another Democrat was beheaded. The cameraman had been going in for a close up and blood squirted onto the camera's lens. One of the members of the film crew pulled out a kerchief and quickly wiped the lens.

"Gretyl O'Brien here on Conservative Cable. In a few moments we're going to have the Reverend Mitchell Aquilo, high priest in one of America's fastest growing denominations, come on and speak a few words."

As another Democrat was carried over to the guillotine, he struggled and briefly broke free from the masked Inner Circle H.I.A. Agents.

Raising his fists, the Democrat turned to the camera and shouted, "*Sic semper evellō mortem tyrannis!*" before punching Agent Windsor in the face.

"What the fuck do you think you're doing," Agent Young spat, before tackling the Democratic official and violently pummeling him. He was then carried to the guillotine and swiftly beheaded. Luckily no FCC regulations on vulgar language were violated since the audio stream being broadcast at that moment was Gretyl O'Brien's voice.

Mitchell Aquilo then appeared as a special Conservative Cable News guest, his abnormal eyebrows looming over the television sets of hundreds of millions of Americans.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans. Six, twenty-three. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image. Genesis. Nine, six."

As Aquilo continued reading Bible passages seeming to support the death penalty, Sue and Don cuddled under a light blanket on the couch of their Minneapolis home.

“Finally, some justice in this sick world,” Sue chirped before plopping her head of thinning grey hair onto Don’s hulking shoulder.

Don tried to convince himself that everything was alright, that it was great that he had a wife and didn’t have to live alone, but he couldn’t get out of the back of his mind the thought of Marita. Not knowing what had become of her brought much grief to his soul.

Aquilo then began subtly introducing his so-called Yuruguian philosophy, referring to Jesus Christ as the “Light Bearer,” or Lucifer. Aquilo, originally a member of Anton LaVey’s Church of Satan, went on to found the Temple of Yurugu in 1975 while working for U.S. intelligence in the domain of psychological warfare. Little more than a tool of militarist sociopathy, the Temple of Yurugu was Aquilo’s brainchild: a sect whose eclectic theology was based on blatant cultural misappropriation. Though Aquilo had initially been attracted to the racialism and neo-Nazism of Ásatrú, or Germanic neopaganism, he later toyed with the idea of basing his cult around the personality of Set: god of storms, violence, and foreigners in Ancient Egyptian mythology, but in the end he finally settled on misappropriating the mythic figure of Yurugu from the West African Dogon culture after he read a tract on the subject by Marcel Griaule, an anthropologist who had made several expeditions to Mali to study the Dogon during the 1930s.

Nearly fifteen hours passed and the last moderate Republican was being beheaded. The Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool was almost completely awash with the disembodied heads of murdered politicians, deemed subversives and undesirables by the draconian Johnson administration.

Agent Calvin then directed National Guardsmen to pour copious amounts of gasoline into the Reflecting Pool and set it aflame.

Meanwhile, back in the basement of Santiago’s garage, Agents Greaves and Pamela were being forced to listen to leftist hip hop.

Franky jived his head to the phat beat as Sun Rise Above spat

the hook to the song *In America*, featuring Lazarus and Shadowyze.

After that, it was time for some 240 Bravo, a Detroit-based Marxist rap duo. Izzy waved his arms around like a hip hop man in sync with the minimalistic beat of *The Rust Belt*.

A while later, Wither slapte put on some communist classic rock; Red Shadow, the economics rock ’n’ roll band, to be precise. Wither slapte grabbed Paty and they began swing dancing to *Ass with the Class*.

Get your ass with the class that’s a wage away from hunger

One little wage away

Get your ass with the class that is destined by history

It’s destined by history

Get it into your head that if you wanna be red, you gotta off the bourgeoisie

So get your ass with the class that will struggle to set you free

Well, everytime I look in the three volume book I understand it

How they make a lot of shit you don’t need and teach you how to demand it

And I learned how the masses are divided into classes that must struggle throughout history

So get your ass with the class that was not but one day all will be

Get your load with the mode that will eliminate all classes

Eliminate all classes

Get your load with the mode that will end private property

Good-bye private property

The division of labor makes you and your neighbor an underpriced commodity

So get your load with the mode that will end all of this absurdity

Agent Greaves began to have a genuine change of heart as she watched the lovers twirl about, and grew remorseful for the countless victims she had tortured in the name of national security. She had long known that something was missing from her existence, and she was sick of crass good old boys like Agent Taylor and General Johnson thinking they could just have their

way with her. Maybe this communism thing wasn't so bad after all. Perhaps it was even the answer to this void in her soul. And she had to admit that growing wealth disparity, along with wages falling in real terms for workers despite increases in productivity and hours, did seem pretty unfair.

Back in D.C., General Johnson called a special meeting at the Freemason Lodge, convening the Inner Circle of the H.I.A. to congratulate them on the success of the Cleansing as well as to brief them on the grave situation facing the two female agents taken prisoner by the rogue insurrectionary group in Minnesota.

Johnson lit a cigar and spoke, "Well, boys. Congrats. *Operation: Katastrophic Kloaked Kleansing* can be considered a wild success by anybody's standard. A truly sublime spectacle. We've flexed our muscles, and now the country knows where we stand. Across this fine nation, repression of protesters has been a relatively smooth and straightforward process, but this televised mass guillotining stands a pinnacle achievement without historical precedent. The forces of reaction have struck with unparalleled overbearance. The machination of repression is in play. The gears are turning, and the meat is grinding. That's the good news. So give yourselves a big pat on the back. Especially you, Agent Bridgewater."

The thirteen agents of the H.I.A. Inner Circle looked at one another with self-satisfied airs.

"But what's our next move, Sir?" Agent Klondike asked. "Surely we mustn't grow complacent."

"Give me a minute to get to it, dammit," General Johnson spat. "That was the good news. The bad news is we've lost two of the H.I.A.'s finest in this mess."

"Lost them, Sir?" Agent Pataki probed.

"Agents Greaves and Pamela have been taken prisoner by a group of radicals in Minneapolis-Saint Paul. Our intelligence indicates that their captors are a group known as the Radical Book Club, a rogue ultra-left sect issued from within the Socialist Alliance grouping we have been working so hard to crush. There have also been unsubstantiated reports of ties to Beaner drug cartels and Gyppo crime families. We'll need to set up a special investigative body to explore those connections. But we all know that the H.I.A. doesn't negotiate with commie bastards and Third

World darkies. We need to dispatch a special H.I.A. command unit to guide local law enforcement and military to locate and crush this pocket of resistance and annihilate these socialist fucks once and for all. Is that understood?"

"Sir, yessir!" the thirteen agents shrieked in unison.

"Agent Pamela, she's that rookie, right?" Agent Hertz asked.

"Yep, just graduated from the Academy a few months ago," replied Agent Pataki.

"A real looker too," Agent Firth shot out.

"Got a nice rack," added Agent Rollins.

24 – BURNING QUESTIONS OF THE MOVEMENT

Highest Priestess Paloma lay ensconced in a vat of warm blax, breathing through a straw. Slowly she was pushed up by a hidden lever mechanism, her rigid body swinging up effortlessly. All around her *Santa Muerte* candles were burning, beyond which dozens of devotees were on all fours, evoking Therapsid kinesthesia, which helped them to achieve first consciousness. Devotees chanted faster and faster as *E Golumbaika Kali* arose. She felt the blax grow heavy, rolling across her abdomen and breasts. Heavier and heavier it grew, until it began dripping off her in thick gobs. As Paloma peeled back her ocular lids, the whites of her eyes contrasted uncannily with the blax. Raising her arms, her hands performed a series of mudras. Paloma loved the thrill of being ritually doused in blax, for it awoke in her a phenomenological experience of sublime pleasure beyond representation. Only within the pineal gland could such phenomenology truly be expressed. Slowly Paloma's melanin started ejaculating dark matter, which her melanocyte receptors promptly absorbed, activating a positive feedback loop that caused her pineal gland to secrete insane amounts of the consciousness-altering hormone melatonin.

Fabiola, Marita, Chednilonya, and Ramona slid into the blax tub from a special trap door underneath, before emerging, naked and covered in blax. The four young women began to inch towards

Greaves and Pamela, who were no longer tied up, but standing amongst the devotees, awed by the strange ceremony.

Santiago sauntered up behind Greaves and Pamela, placed his warm hands on one of the shoulders of each woman, and sensually uttered, "It is time for your Dark Mother to bathe you in blax."

"Blax?" questioned Pamela.

"Black wax," Santiago clarified.

Greaves gazed longingly at her colleague. Pamela felt Greaves' eyes on her and turned. She grabbed Greaves' hand and squeezed it tightly just as Santiago's blax-covered wife and the blax-covered crusty punk girls grabbed them, marched them to the tub of hot oily blax, and threw them in before hopping in themselves and ripping off the agents' clothes.

Santiago erupted in a fit of maniacal laughter as he reached for his golden chalice, which he soon had filled with blax. He started dancing around as Izzy began to rhythmically beat a gargantuan huehuetl with a mallet.

Boom, boom, boom-boom, boom, boom, boom-boom, b-b-b-b-ba-ba-boom-boom, boom, boom, boom-boom, b-b-b-b-ba-ba-boom-boom. The devotees arose from all fours and began crazily dancing around to the beat of the huehuetl. Santiago threw blax at everyone, still laughing. He refilled his chalice and continued to splash blax everywhere, on everyone and everything.

"People used to be jaguars," he screamed.

Paty grabbed Wither slapte and ran her fingers through his jet-black hipster emo bangs with purple highlights.

"All people used to be jaguars!" Santiago bellowed once again as Izzy beat the huehuetl louder, louder, louder.

Sarah Melissa Greaves and Pamela Manning gasped for breath as Fabiola, Marita, Chednilonya, and Ramona allowed them to emerge from the blax for a moment before dunking them back in.

Cedric handed Paloma a roll of acid hits, so she put a few dozen of them on her left and right index fingertips, and then jumped into the in-ground blax hot tub and stuck her fingers in each of the H.I.A. agents' mouths.

Paloma climbed back out and stood on the skeleton altar and filled up several trays of shot glasses with pulque and opened a clay jar filled with wafers of peyote.

“Come now, children, to commune with the Most Holy *Santa Muerte!*” proclaimed *La Paloma Negra*, still naked and covered in blax.

Chednilonya and Fabiola brought Greaves to pass the rite of first communion. Sarah kneeled down before the skeleton altar as hot blax dripped off her body.

Paloma performed a mudra blessing and spoke, “You are a child of *Tonantzin*. As surely as mortals doth dwell upon the Earth and divines within the heavens, the spirit of the *Santa Muerte* dwells within you.”

The highest priestess proceeded to rub an egg all over Sarah’s body, carving a symbolic path through the blax beginning at the soles of her feet, mounting her legs, encircling her buttocks, swirling along the small of her back, and shooting up to zig-zag along her shoulder blades before going down and back up each arm and finally reaching her breasts. Upon this last part of her body she drew a vèvè, opening a portal for the Iwa Erzulie Dantor to commune with Sarah’s being. Finally she cracked the egg above her head and let the yoke drip over her face. The egg was rotten, having absorbed the evil. She then poured the shot of pulque down her throat and administered the peyote.

Marita and Ramona brought Pamela up and the same rite was performed.

Dancing devotees then came up one by one to indulge in the communal sacrament. Many then took the liberty of jumping into the in-ground blax tub and ripping off their own clothes.

As Izzy continued to beat the huehuetl, people danced and started tripping.

Franky approached Tisha and said, “You know, black on black love ain’t a crime.”

She laughed and they started heavy petting.

Pedrocco wasted no time to begin unsuccessfully macking on Marita, who instead started making out with Dilawar the Sikh Maoist liberated detainee, shortly after which, Wither slapte, Paloma, and Paty ended up having a *menage-à-trois* on the upholstered black leather in-ground cushions. Paloma had finally given into her desire. Luckily, Gabor was not there that night; he had gone with some of his mates to profit from the mood of

lawlessness that the insurrection had created to loot some big screen TV’s and other electronic items from a Best Buy in the north suburbs.

After falling asleep, Paloma started having an out-of-body experience at around three in the morning. Acting as a benevolent poltergeist, her disembodied spirit started sensually caressing Wither slapte and Paty’s bodies, still encrusted with drying blax as they had forgotten to wash off in the water tub before the orgy. Wither slapte and Paty’s pineal glands began tingling in response to Paloma’s touch, and soon their spirits also became disembodied. The trio then started astral projecting. Their avatars blasted through outer space to Rátopia. As they descended through the ionosphere along crimson spirals in a cosmic open sleigh with Sun Ra and other cybernetic beings to the surface beyond comprehensible blackness, the *Santa Muerte* began materializing in the über black gases of Rátopia.

Manipulating a powerful storm five times larger than the spot of Jupiter, the *Santa Muerte* manifested Herself out of the murk and roared, “Welcome, my children! You have shown much devotion to me, and for that, I praise thee!”

Wither slapte raised his arms above his head and shouted back to the *Santa Muerte*, “Great Mother, we have worshipped You with all our hearts, but still You did not protect us from the reactionaries in the Capitol Building! Why did You forsake us, Great Mother!”

“My sweet child,” the *Santa Muerte* replied, “did not Santiago and his brethren come to your aid when you thought all hope had been lost? Even I must admit though that the forces of evil have grown powerful on your planet. The mission which lies before you is daunting, but trust in me, for the material and spiritual rewards which you shall reap will be enormous. In the end, it is I who shalt carry you. ’Tis I who sustain the world, for without death there be no renewal. Without decay there be no renaissance, and without slaughter, there be no instauration.”

Sun Ra began playing a Minimoog.

“And you, Golumbaika Kali,” the *Santa Muerte* continued, “I praise your work. You must continue to be a beacon unto your clan, both Vlux and Romanichal. For truly I tell you, only you can reconcile the contradictions of your world. Go forth and make

devotee unto me all man and woman, for this is my will. Organize the working classes of nations and see to it that the proletariat doth triumph over the bourgeoisie, whom I do declare to be evil and despicable to the utmost degree, for this also be my will.”

“Thy will be done,” Paloma replied, making the sign of the cross, “on Earth as it is on Rátopia.”

The *Santa Muerte* went on, “And to you, Paty, I say this: Remember that I have many names. Some call me Erzulie Dantor; for some, it is Sati Sara e Kali, and yet for others I am Tonantzín. Find me in all things, for entropy dictates that I reclaim all in time. But forget not that within the *asili* of decay, lies also the sprout of instauration. When you feel despair, open your melanocyte receptors and allow dark matter to surge forth. This can create both positive and negative feedback loops which alter your consciousness hormonally, engaging the intersubjectivity. In this way you can shield yourself from and deflect covertly emitted very low frequency waves designed to alter your consciousness in accordance with bourgeois interests. Initiate and procure feedback loops and do this for me, for mine is the queendom, the power, and the glory.”

What happened after that became hazy for all three of the radical mortals.

The next morning, Wither slapte awoke first.

“Ugh, this wax is all hardened up and crusty now. Should have taken a dip in the water tub before that *menage-à-trois*,” he muttered under his breath. He stretched, some of the blax encrusted on his body started cracking, and a few hunks of it fell off.

He stepped over towards the large hot tub filled with water and slowly dipped himself in. As he submerged the lower half of his body, he noticed Sarah Greaves and Pamela Manning lying naked together, still asleep and covered in blax. He smirked, knowing that they must have Stockholm syndrome by now, and grunted gruffly as a powerful stream of water jetted onto his scrotum, blasting away bits of crusty black wax.

Pedrocco woke up next and climbed in with Wither slapte. A few minutes later they were joined in the large hot tub by Izzy,

Franky, Tisha, Paty, Paloma, Cedric, the liberated detainees, Marita, Ramona, Fabiola, Santiago, Chednilonya, Joe, and Hacksaw.

Wither slapte spoke, “You know, we shouldn’t forget what brought us together in the first place. We’re a book club. It’s time we study more texts. I think we could all benefit from a thorough analysis of Lenin’s *What Is to Be Done?* or perhaps something by Gramsci, depending on what folks are more interested in.”

“Wither slapte, please,” said Pedrocco. “The Revolution has already begun and you want to sit around reading books! Wake up and smell the coffee, bro. It’s time for action, not theorizing.”

“Action cannot be sustained without a strong theoretical foundation,” Wither slapte passionately put forth. “We need to maintain a pragmatic detachment of thought from the concreteness of action to keep things in perspective, to analyze what we do. To answer the ‘why’ of what we do. That is the only way our praxis can truly speak to the masses.”

“At this juncture, complacency could mean death to the movement,” Pedrocco shot back. “We need to keep steppin’ to these bourgeois mofo’s. Keep ’em on their toes.”

Paty piped up, “Is there any reason to suppose we can’t do both? I mean, look, we still have time for this *Santa Muerte* shiz.”

“Wither slapte and Paty are right,” Paloma argued. “We need that spiritual manna which worshipping the Dark Mother provides us, but we also need that intellectual rejuvenation that only a thoughtful piece of socialistic literature can provide us with. At the same time, we can keep up the fight. Read Marxian texts by day, waste capitalist scumbags by night, so to speak.”

“I s’pose,” Pedrocco conceded.

Joe interjected, “Now wait just a minute! Fuck Marxists! Never forget the Kronstadt Rebellion! Nestor Makhno! The Spanish Civil War! You statists just want to take state power for yourselves and betray us anarcho-communists who want to truly abolish state power. Fuck that! We need to smash the state in one fell swoop!”

Marita shook her head.

“Joe,” she said, “Quit being such a petit-bourgeois sectarian! How can the state be abolished without the proletariat first seizing power and using state power to abolish all class distinctions? Otherwise the bourgeoisie will regroup outside the country and

launch attacks to undermine communism. The state is simply an instrument of class rule. It isn't inherently evil. Right now it's evil because the bourgeoisie uses it to enforce its interests, but if the proletariat seizes power, it can be instrumentalized for implementing a revolutionary program of egalitarianization and abolition of mechanisms of oppression. The bourgeoisie isn't just going to abolish itself overnight. We need a dictatorship of the proletariat to monopolize legitimate violence in the name of working class liberation. Which is, really, *liberation from work itself.*"

"Marita's right, Joe," Ramona said.

Not wanting to quarrel with his love interest, Ramona, Joe agreed to keep quiet about his discrepancies with the Radical Book Club's ideology. Joe would in due time come around to see the logical superiority of their scientific socialist ideology, which would prove itself over the course of the revolution as the light shining upon the path to victory.

Santiago then spoke, "My friends! May the *Santa Muerte* bless you! It is unfortunate that the masses were driven out of the State Capitol Building, but it's no time to give up yet. The masses have had a taste of power, and now they will stop at nothing until the forces of reaction are beaten back to the hole they crawled out of. But the truth is, we lost many thousands of comrades in yesterday's May Day Battle, including my good friend, Omar."

Cedric grew teary-eyed.

Santiago continued, "So we are weakened. But besides that, I have a hunch that if we stay here much longer, the Feds will be on us in no time. We all know how hard this General Johnson mothafucka is coming down on the Left. It's time we go to Mexico. There we can regroup, build our strength and prepare for a final epic assault on the imperialist beast, and build solidarity with groups down there, like the APPO, the Zapatistas, and others."

"And let's not forget the impossibility of building socialism in one country! The movement has to go international!" exclaimed Wither slapte.

"I also have contacts in the Balkans," Paloma offered. "My relatives went there to proselytize the *Santa Muerte* to Rroma."

"Great," Wither slapte said knowingly. "We can't forget to reach out to Europe as well. Student and labor movements against

draconian austerity measures and cuts to public services have shown promising revolutionary potential in recent years over there."

Santiago nodded. "*Ándale*, Wither slapte. *Ojalá que tampoco no se olvida de la lucha de nuestros hermanos y hermanas en Europa.*"

Part III. “Obscurantism and Liberation”

25 – HIT THE ROAD, SLAPTE

“The Escalades may attract too much attention from *los puercos*. We’ll be better off in these old Volkswagen vans,” Santiago said as the left-wing *Santa Muerte* sect gathered around inside his garage.

“Are you sure? We’ll look like a bunch of hippies in these Mystery Machines,” said Izzy as he ran his hand along the side of the red and white van.

“Better hippies than *coyotes* or gangstas,” Santiago replied. “Trust me, *vato*. Escalades may be fly rides, but *los puercos* are always on the look out for ’em, for that reason precisely. Most popular vehicle of rappers as well as thieves.”

“We’ll need to travel light,” Wither slapte said. “Twenty-one of us are going to Mexico, so it’s gonna be a tight squeeze with all three of the vans filled up.”

“That’s right,” Santiago replied. “And we may need to ditch the vans once we get to the border, cross the desert on foot. Another reason not to take the Escalades. Who knows what kind of border control this General Johnson *pendejo* is going to have set up. We can re-up on supplies once we make it *México*.”

“*Primo*, what about your four kids?” Izzy asked.

Fabiola interjected, “They’re going to stay with their *abuela* in Bloomington.”

“*Ándale*,” Izzy replied.

Wither slapte gently took Paloma aside by the arm and spoke softly, “And Gabor? You couldn’t convince him to come?”

“No,” Paloma responded flatly. She bit her bottom lip and looked away, her eyes beginning to moisten.

“You think he’ll be safe here?” Wither slapte asked.

“I don’t know. I mean, somebody has to take care of the fortune-telling burlesque and Indian herbal art shop.”

“It’s gonna be okay,” Wither slapte said as he put his hand on her arm, trying to comfort her.

“Give me some space,” she snapped. “Gabor is my *piramno* and you will always be nothing but a *gadžo makhardo* to my people.”

Wither slapte, taken aback, didn’t know quite how to respond.

Seeing his bewilderment, Paloma realized how harsh she must have just come off as. “Look,” she said, “I like you, Wither slapte. Your astral projection skills are amazing . . . We can be lovers . . . but never . . . *piramnurja*.”

Tears began pouring down Wither slapte’s cheeks.

“Wither slapte, please, it’s time to go. Now isn’t the time.”

“Fuck you, you cold-hearted bitch!” Wither slapte screamed.

In the next moment, everyone looked over at them just as Paloma slapped Wither slapte across the face with the back of her hand.

Wither slapte covered his face with his hands and fell to his knees, sobbing loudly.

“Come on, Paloma, let me handle him,” Paty said after walking over.

Paloma looked over her shoulder at the two as she walked towards the red van with white trim. Izzy, Tisha, and Franky were climbing aboard with Pedrocco in the driver’s seat. She joined them, sitting shotgun.

The second Volkswagen van was turquoise-colored with puke green trim and pink flowers painted on it. Santiago, Fabiola, Cedric, Sarah Melissa Greaves, and the three liberated Muslim detainees piled in.

Marita, Ramona, Chednilonya, Joe, Hacksaw, Pamela Manning, and the liberated Sikh Maoist detainee began piling into the third van, which was yellow with white trim. The H.I.A. agents had been placed in separate vehicles to ensure that they feel more

isolated and could be more easily intimidated by their captors if need be, guaranteeing that they would not stop having Stockholm syndrome.

A few minutes later, the yellow van and the turquoise van had hit the road. Pedrocco grew impatient and honked the horn. "Hurry the hell up!" he wailed.

"Come on, Wither slapte," pleaded Paty, caressing the back of his neck with her fingernails. "I won't make you sit by Paloma."

"Okay," he finally replied after a long-winded sigh.

Pedrocco switched on the radio, tuned it to Radio K: Real College Radio, and they began the long drive to Mexico.

Some Cholos and Gypsies stayed behind to destroy all evidence of criminal activities and cult rituals at the garage. Santiago was paranoid that the Feds would raid the place at any moment now, so he entrusted some of his men with this task. After that, they were to run the garage as a legitimate car repair business, although the profits would still be funneled into his international drug syndicate.

Izzy rolled up a fat blunt as a hipster-sounding radio deejay from the University of Minnesota introduced the song *P-9* by Soul Asylum, a band formed in Minneapolis in 1983. He lit it up, took a few gigantesque puffs, and then it was passed around: first to Franky, then to Tisha, Paty, Wither slapte, Pedrocco, and finally to Paloma.

"Hey, you know what this song's about, right?" Wither slapte asked no one in particular.

"Nah, bro. What?" Franky retorted.

"The Hormel workers' strike back in '85, '86. Reagan sent the National Guard out to crush them."

"Union-bustin' chump-ass bastard," Franky choked, coughing out much weed smoke.

Eventually they caught up with the other Volkswagen vans heading south on Interstate Thirty-Five. The caravan travelled in formation all through the day and the following night, first passing through Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, and finally, Texas.

Pedrocco's cell phone began ringing as they approached the city limits of the Texan capital, Austin.

"Yo," he answered in quite a groggy state after many hours of driving.

"S'up, buddy?" Santiago replied.

"Not much," Pedrocco yawned.

"How about we pull in here, take a little rest?"

"Sounds good, Santi, sounds good."

The three vehicle caravan pulled up in an alley behind a Mexican grocery market and a seedy dive bar.

Hacksaw and Joe immediately went into the dive bar, looking to score some black tar.

Santiago and Fabiola went into the grocery store to get some beer and meat. Pedrocco lay down for a nap inside the red van.

The others hung around the other Volkswagen vans, parked back to back, opened up the backs, and a spontaneous late night tailgate party was started. After Santiago and Fabiola came back, Fabiola pulled out the grill from inside the turquoise van and started preparing burgers.

Tisha dragged a barrel over from behind the grocery store and placed it in between the yellow and turquoise vans before lighting a fire inside of it. Paloma, Marita, Paty, Chednilonya, Ramona, Pamela, and Sarah Melissa all gathered around for warmth while Fabiola and the men smoked marijuana in and around the teal-turquoise van. It was early morning and somewhat chilly. The sun had not yet risen.

Golumbaika pulled her *dikhlo* down over her ears, which were sensitive to the cold.

"Wow, I love your headscarf. It's beautiful," said Pamela.

"It's not a headscarf. It's a *dikhlo*. Thanks though," Golumbaika replied.

"A dick-what?" Pamela asked.

"A *dikhlo*!" Golumbaika reiterated, squinting.

"You know," Marita interrupted, "Wouldn't it be great if we brought back the Women's Caucus?"

"Women's cock-what?" Pamela stammered.

"Women's Caucus!" Marita snapped.

"It was this thing we used to do back in Socialist Alliance, before . . . you . . . jailed and killed our comrades," Paty explained.

Pamela began to feel an immensity of guilt, and looked to Greaves for reassurance. But Greaves just turned red in the face, looked at her feet, and then stared into the flaming barrel.

"But that's behind you now, isn't it?" Chednilonya said.

"Well, of course," Pamela replied after a slight pause.

"I don't trust this bitch," Chednilonya spat, gripping her switchblade under her denim vest-jacket.

"Please," Sarah begged. "You must see that we've changed. We do feel remorse for what we've done. And we're sorry. We want to help you guys now."

"Calm down, Chednilonya," said Ramona, putting a naked-fingers gloved hand on her girl friend's shoulder. "They haven't given us any trouble this far."

"Burgers *listos!*" Fabiola called out.

Chednilonya grunted and spun around to get herself a hamburger.

The radical communists, anarcho-crust punks, and *Santa Muerte* drug cartelists garbled down the scrumptious burgers, gobbing the meat's juices all over themselves in the process. All except Marita that is, her being a vegan.

Pedrocco was woken up by the commotion as the women galloped towards the meat. Descending from the van, he stumbled and nearly fell over; his right leg had fallen asleep from lying funnily on it. He rubbed his calf vigorously before licking his fingers and brushing his moustache away from his mouth so bits of meat wouldn't get stuck in it. Grabbing a burger, he pulled out of his pocket an expired ketchup packet that he had found under the seat in the van. Pedroc Pastrana then squeezed the old ketchup packet hard, but it wouldn't pop. He never tore open condiment packets, nor did he ever tear open bags of potato, tortilla, or any other kind of chips, pretzel sticks, or similar product. He always squeezed or slapped them until they burst. Finally the packet popped open, more red sauciness spurting out than seemed feasible for such a small package to contain. He gobbled up the saucy bun-enveloped meat in a jiffy. The meat juice was greasy and slathered up his lips, scarred from recurring cold sores which he covered with his moustache. After finishing a third burger, he wiped his greasy hands all over his euro-mullet and belched loudly, before slovenly chugging three beers (droplets of which dribbled all down his chin and throat) and attempting to hit on Marita again.

Marita Bastesen was liberal in the amount of time she spent with the marijuana cigarette that had just been passed to her. Taking a long drag, she held the obscene quantity of cannabis fumes in her esophagus for what seemed like ages.

The tetrahydrocannabinol entered her bloodstream before seeping out and merging into the dermis, melanging with her melanin as her melanocyte receptors processed copious amounts of melatonin input, a consciousness-altering hormone. Large amounts of pheomelanin were present in Marita's hair, nipples, and lips as she wrapped them around the joint. She took another monster drag as she listened to Pedrocco's compliments delivered in the most vulgar of vernaculars. It was not long before the THC had caused her pineal gland to begin indiscriminately emitting dark matter. Although it seemed like this dark matter was simply being produced from within the pineal gland itself, it was actually being telecommunicated there through time-warp maneuvering permitted by the performance of ancestral communion through the melatonin-soaked pineal portal. Having nearly cashed the spliff to little more than a roach, she passed it finally to Pedrocco, and he took one last massive rip before flicking it into the fire.

In the drunken haze of a red twilight, Pedrocco slapped Marita's oval-shaped butt good-naturedly. Laughing, she was gay.

Everyone was raucous and outrageous.

Hacksaw and Joe came stumbling out of the dive bar, where they had shot up smack in the bathroom, accompanied by a strange fellow wearing a panoply of vibrant plastic bead Mardi Gras necklaces. Pamela flashed her breasts at him and he offered her several necklaces, generating much hooting and hollering.

The gang formed a circle around the fire and started hand clapping rhythmically in a flamenco style. Santiago brought out an acoustic guitar while Paloma danced around.

"*Ole!*" people started shouting as Paloma gave an impressive performance. Her movements embodied the feeling of solitude and strength in the face of emotional violence.

Finally the owner of the mom 'n pop grocery store came out, yelling in Spanish, "*Pinches húngaros de la mierda! Saquense de acá!*"

Judging that their welcome had run its course, it was soon time to hit the road again. If traffic and road conditions were favorable, the caravan would reach Monterrey that very same day.

Pedrocco sipped a beer as he drove southbound on Interstate Thirty-Five, through San Antonio and onwards to Laredo. Rays of

light hit his bleach-blonde hipster mullet as the sun rose over the Tamaulipan mezquital. He squinted, and put on a pair of aviator shades.

As they neared the Mexican-American border, Santiago, driving the teal-turquoise van in front, pulled over. The others pulled up behind him and simply watched as he walked out aimlessly into the desert a ways. Picking up a handful of earth, he whispered, "All humans were jaguars," clenching it in his fist before relaxing and letting the dusty earth slide out through his loose fingers. Once again he picked up a handful of soil, but this time he bellowed, "All human beings used to be jaguars!" He then threw the earth into the sky as his booming voice echoed across the dry Texan plains.

"*Hijoles*," Fabiola croaked as she watched her husband from the passenger seat. She made the sign of the cross and touched the *Virgen de Guadalupe* icon hanging from the rearview mirror, waiting for him to return to the van.

26 – THE FASCIST POLICE STATE TIGHTENS ITS GRIP

General Johnson flew in on Air Force One to the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport, arriving around 11 PM on a balmy mid-May evening. Agents Greaves and Pamela were compromised; he thusly had decided that it was his personal duty get to the bottom of their disappearance, find out who these Mexican and Rromani elements really were, and most importantly, restore law and order to the Twin Cities, which despite not being highly populated in comparison to other metropolitan areas, were still experiencing some of the worst rioting and general lawlessness in the country. National Guardsmen were working hard to quell the situation, but to little avail.

After arrival, Johnson was driven in a convoy of black SUV's by the Secret Service, which had of course been purged of Democratic and moderate elements (which were negligible to begin with), to the local Temple of Scottish Rite Freemasonry to meet with Agents Pataki and Rollins, who had been sent to take over H.I.A. operations in the Twin Cities in light of Pamela and Greaves' disappearance.

Meanwhile, on Cedar-Riverside, Gabor sat at the bar inside the fortune-telling burlesque parlor. Normally he didn't drink at his own bar, but tonight he sat there, stirring a glass of brandy.

"Why the long face, Gabor?" Julian asked.

“It’s Golumbaika,” he responded. “She’s gone to Mexico. And with that Jew, Wither slapte.”

“*Aj, miro čhavo,*” Julian said, putting a hand on Gabor’s shoulder. “*Dikh, but šukar si tiri piramni, sako prinžarel kodova, núma voj, sar tu, trobul te kerel so trobul te kerel.*”

“*Va, tálică mothos čačimasa!*” Gabor said, nodding his head.

“*Páša,*” Julian continued with a wry smile, “*na dikhes? San amen but lugnja kathe!*”

“Julian, you old *žukhel,*” Gabor replied with a chuckle, slapping him on the thigh and keeping his hand lingering on it for what would seem like an inappropriate length of time by the standards of the dominant culture.

They spun their bar stools around, turning to watch a topless go-go dancer named Veronika for a long while. Eventually Gabor grew weary of this pleasantries and retired to his quarters in the private upper level of the burlesque parlor, where he and Paloma had kept a modest apartment together, though now he would be alone.

The upper level also housed the parlor’s fortune-tellers. The most sought after of these was Fatiha, an old *drabarni*, or Rromani medicine woman, who had come up with Paloma and Gabor to the Twin Cities from Missouri to make some extra income dabbling in magic and fortune-telling, though she preferred to call it ‘advising’.

“*Laši ryat,*” Gabor said to her as he walked by.

She didn’t have any clients at the moment. “Wait a minute!” she called.

He turned around and stuck his head into her chamber, “*So si?*”

“*Mungro čhavo,*” she began in her thick Banatiski accent, “your aura is most unusual this evening.”

Gabor stepped all the way in and crossed his arms. Not being much of a true believer in the whole fortune-telling business, he mostly just saw it as a way to scam money out of gullible *gadže*.

“Your *piramni* has gone to Mexico, I take it,” she stated plainly as she grabbed a vanilla wafer and took a bite of it. She shoved the box of wafers in his face, offering it to him.

“*Najis tuke,*” he said, grabbing a wafer. “So Julian told you already? She did go to Mexico, with those communist *gadže*. She thinks they can stick it to The Man, fight the *Baro Gadžo* from

down there or something. I don’t get it, to be honest. We Rroma shouldn’t involve ourselves in the government’s affairs. If the *gadže* want to have a fascist dictatorship, that’s up to them. The important thing is to keep alive the Rromani *kris*, maintain the traditions and the old ways.”

“Julian? Your faith is so weak, *mungro čhavo.*”

Gabor grabbed another vanilla wafer, slightly annoyed.

Fatiha continued, “You young ones are all the same. You think you know the old ways, yet the old country is but a dim memory to you. And don’t even get me started on the American-borns! Speaking of which, why hasn’t Paloma birthed your seed and made you a true *Rrom* yet? You’ve been a *čhavrorro* for long enough! It’s time you marry that girl!”

“I know, I know, Fatiha,” Gabor sighed throatily.

“Anyway, as I was saying,” Fatiha went on, “the attitude of you Americanized Rroma is all backwards. In the old country, we were enslaved for five hundred years. Maybe if some of our people had been more involved in the *gadžengro* politics sooner, made our voices heard, we wouldn’t have been in bondage so long. My point is, Gabor, keeping our ways doesn’t have to mean cutting ourselves off from the outside world. Golumbaika is a smart girl. Trust in her.”

Gabor nodded sleepily, his eyelids growing heavy. “*Aj, mangav te sovav.*”

“Very well. *Laši ryat,* Gabor. *Dža devlesa,*” Fatiha responded.

As Gabor walked towards the door, Fatiha drew a worn card from a vintage Tarot deck she had brought with her when they came as clandestine refugees from the old country.

“Ahh harhar!” she screeched, startling Gabor. She had just drawn the Thirteenth Major Arcana: the Death card.

He turned around. “What now?” he asked.

“*Mulimos . . .*” Fatiha said, stressing each syllable in a voice deeper and throatier than her usual one as she slowly looked up from the card on the table. She had suddenly gone cockeyed and was extremely sanpaku.

Gabor felt a strange tingling in his feet and stomach, then turned around to go to bed. *What silly superstition,* he thought to himself.

Back at the Scottish Rite Temple of Freemasonry, General Johnson questioned Agents Rollins and Pataki on the status of the H.I.A.'s black ops in the state of Minnesota.

"Well, Sir," Agent Pataki began, "details are a bit murky to be honest. When we got here, we uncovered a memorandum left by Agent Greaves stating that our main asset inside the Socialist Alliance, a bloke by the name of Cillian Dupont, was killed during an interrogation. Since the outlawing of Marxian ideals, the Socialist Alliance meetings appear to have either stopped or gone underground, so our other informants have no further leads on the radical elements. And then Agent Taylor apparently committed suicide."

General Johnson spat out his coffee. "What! Why didn't anyone inform me about this sooner?"

"I guess with all of the violent insurrections happening across the country, we just lost track of things out here in the Midwest a bit. We were so busy with organizing the mass guillotining in Washington and what not," Agent Rollins replied.

"Goddamn," Johnson croaked. "What the hell do they pay you bastards for?"

"We apologize, Sir," answered Agent Pataki.

"Something is fishy about this," Johnson said after a long pause. "Taylor never seemed like one to commit suicide. Certainly nothing in the psychological diagnostics triggered any red flags."

"Either way, he's gone now, Sir," Rollins stated coolly.

"By golly, you're right, Rollins," General Johnson said in his Southern drawl.

"Anyways, Sir, I've done some investigating on those Beaners," Agent Pataki offered.

"Go on."

"Well, I got in touch with some of our boys in the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. They said they'd been running surveillance on a fellow by the name of Santiago. They had him running several tons of kilograms of Durango and Sinaloa grown marijuana and Somali khat up through Mexico. But it doesn't stop there," said Pataki.

"Khat?" Johnson inquired.

"An herbal stimulant popular on the Horn of Africa. Schedule I controlled substance," Pataki explained.

Johnson grunted, "Huh."

"As it turned out, the ATF boys were more interested in the Somali khat connection. Busted a fellow by the name of Shakuur, known in the Somali community as the 'kingpin of khat'. The man had all sorts of connections to Al-Shabaab and other Somali Islamo-radicals. Unfortunately, they poured so many resources into the Somali connection that their file on this Santiago guy was lost in the red tape."

"Goddamn. But what does this Santiago shithead have to do with those commie bastards in the Socialist Alliance anyway?"

"One of our informants spotted a Socialist Alliance member, Ismail 'Izzy' Zamora Sanchez, also a member of the so-called 'Radical Book Club,' get in an SUV with Santiago after a Socialist Alliance weekly branch meeting. The informant knew it was Santiago because she had also worked on his case for the ATF. The informant also heard Izzy call Santiago '*primo*,' Spanish for cousin."

"So these socialist fucks may be getting help from the drug cartels," Johnson surmised.

"That's correct, Sir," Agent Pataki replied. "And there was something else to follow up on. An ATF agent tells me that Santiago's cartel is affiliated with the '*Santa Muerte*' criminal drug cult."

"What is this '*Sancho Muerte*' shit you speak of?" Johnson inquired.

"Saint Death, Sir. A sort of deity worshipped by criminals, murderers, and other bloodthirsty Mexicans. Death worship is a big part of their culture, going back to the Aztecs and Mayans who loved to sacrifice people to their gods. It can still be seen today in the *Día de los Muertos*, or Day of the Dead, a holiday revolving around death."

"Grim shit," General Johnson retorted. "Interesting how those Hispanic bastards can be so close to the truth, and yet so far. Everyone knows that the true lord and master is the Great Architect of the Universe, Ba'al."

"Everyone who's anyone, that is," Rollins clarified.

"Ba'al? I thought it was Molech," Pataki responded.

Johnson chuckled. "What degree are you again, Pataki?"

"Thirty-second, Sir," Agent Pataki replied with pride.

“Ha. Didn’t know we let thirty-second degree Freemasons into the H.I.A.’s Inner Circle nowadays,” the General grumbled in his gravelly Southern drawl. “Son, maybe when you pass through the fire unto the thirty-third degree you’ll understand.”

After performing a bizarre ritual involving chanting in Sumerian around a flaming golden calf, passing patients kidnapped from the local Shriners’ Children’s Hospital who were kept in cages beneath the Temple into the calf, and homoerotic sex magick, General Johnson left the agents, instructing them to investigate the *Santa Muerte* connection and to encourage the National Guard to be more violent in their treatment of looters.

“Perhaps we can rattle some information on the whereabouts of Santiago from some Latinos at one of their local hangouts,” Agent Rollins proposed as the agents were leaving the Temple, headed to their communications van to get to work on the case.

“Good idea,” Agent Pataki responded. “I hear they sell those *Santa Muerte* candles at those Mexican stores. They must know something about it.”

Agents Pataki and Rollins made their way across the Cities to Saint Paul’s West Side. They cruised down Cesar Chavez Boulevard, reaching *El Taco Mercado*, a large Mexican grocery store. A convoy of armored personnel carriers was passing by as they pulled up, and Agent Rollins signaled for one of the APC’s to stop. Agent Pataki saw a Latino family walk out of the market and made brief eye contact with the mother, who had a look of fear and traumatization in her eyes.

The National Guardsman driving the APC rolled down his window and said, “Can I help you, Agent?”

“Have your men come down. We’re raiding this Mexican grocery store for information on the whereabouts of a drug cartel kingpin who may be involved in harboring the leaders of the insurrection,” Rollins ordered.

“Very well, Agent,” the Guardsman replied.

A platoon of National Guardsmen hopped down from the back of the armored personnel carrier, M4 rifles in hand.

“Who’s the commander of this fine platoon?” Rollins inquired.

“Lieutenant Gundersen, at your service, Sir!”

“Lieutenant, my colleague, Agent Pataki, and I are going to extort these aliens for info on a dangerous drug kingpin involved in the insurrection. I need your men to secure the perimeter of *El Taco Mercado*. Don’t let anyone out of the place. Also, detain any Latino-looking people you see in the vicinity—most are probably illegals anyway.”

“Very well, Agent,” Gundersen responded.

Agent Pataki grabbed an electric cattle prod out of the communications van and Agent Rollins took a billy club. Both were of course also armed with .44 Magnum revolvers, the H.I.A.’s standard issue firearm.

After barging into the *mercado*, Agent Rollins used the club to knock a bunch of religious candles off of a shelf in the store, desecrating the sacred objects.

“Hey, what do you think you’re doing, buddy?” a short man shouted, approaching Rollins.

Pataki punched the man in the face, knocking him off his feet, and began zapping him with the cattle prod. As the man’s body convulsed, Pataki shouted, “You like that, you fucking illegal alien?”

Rollins smacked a cashier over her head with his billy club and screamed, “You sell this *Santa Muerte* shit here, bitch? Where’s Santiago? Where’s the *Santa Muerte* drug cartel?”

“Ay, no sé que dices!” the woman pleaded.

Rollins spat on the woman, turned to a customer who had been in line at her register, a young Nordic-looking blonde man, and shouted, “What the fuck are you doing here? You’re not Mexican!”

The young man responded, “So? I can’t shop here?”

“Don’t push my buttons, punk,” Agent Rollins growled, dropping his billy club and pulling out his Magnum revolver.

“Fuck you! This is a free country!” the blonde man shouted.

“Say that again, punk,” Rollins grunted as he aimed the revolver at the man’s forehead.

The young blonde man grew nervous and cried, “Please, I’m just a student. I didn’t do anything wrong!”

“Let me guess, a *Liberal Arts* major?” Rollins spat.

The man’s lips trembled and he began crying.

“You fucking Liberal scum. You’re what’s wrong with this country,” Rollins seethed immediately before blasting a hollow-tipped slug through the skull of the young man of Scandinavian descent.

“Hey, *culeros!*” another young man shouted before throwing a *Santa Muerte* candle at Rollins’ head.

The glass-encased candle hit Rollins in the temple, knocking him unconscious.

“Shit,” Agent Pataki muttered, taking cover behind an aisle of beans and tortillas as youths chucked more candles at him.

A youth wearing a black hoodie over his long curly hair dived over the check-out counter and grabbed Rollins’ Magnum revolver.

Pataki, shooting at the other youths who were taking cover behind the deli counter, didn’t even notice the hooded youth at the check-out counter taking aim with Rollins’ revolver.

The youth blasted away, striking Pataki in the knee.

“Ah, shit,” Pataki muttered, limping behind another aisle for cover.

The youth looked down at Rollins and discharged the firearm at point blank range into his heart.

Lieutenant Gundersen had just finished positioning his men around the perimeter of the store when one of the Guardsmen shouted, “Sir, there’s an awful lot of shooting going on in there!”

“What?” Gundersen shouted, running towards the store entrance. He looked in and saw Agent Rollins’ lifeless body lying in a pool of blood.

Pataki limped from around the corner and stood in the entrance, holding onto his knee. “Lost control of the situation,” he muttered.

Suddenly the curly haired youth appeared again and blasted off another round into Pataki’s back.

“Arghhh!” Pataki bellowed, falling into Gundersen’s arms and coughing up blood.

“Shit! Get in there and neutralize the damned hostiles!” Gundersen barked to his Guardsmen as he dragged Pataki out into the street, away from the shooting.

Agent Pataki looked up into the grey sky as he lay on the pavement, dying. Seeing his pathetic life flash before his eyes, he

couldn’t help but think how meaningless it all had been. Moments before he died, a flock of crows flew overhead, one of them shitting directly into his mouth.

The Guardsmen then went into the *mercado* and massacred everyone.

The Massacre at *El Taco*, or *La Matanza al Taco*, as it became known amongst the Latino community, marked a turning point in the popular struggle against fascistic capitalism. The memory of the martyrs who died there: youth, workers, men, and women, would become a rallying beacon for people stuck under the oppressive regime of General Johnson and his H.I.A. and National Guard henchmen. It was thus that the community response to *La Matanza al Taco* marked the beginning of a protracted urban guerrilla warfare campaign that would be waged against the bourgeois national security state apparatus.

27 – REVOLUCIONARIOS IN EXILE

Surprisingly, security along the Mexican-American border had actually diminished in the days following the Homeland Intelligence Agency's *Operation: Katastrophic Kloaked Kleansing*. Thus the Radical Book Club, along with their cohorts, did not have to ditch their Volkswagen vans and cross the desert by foot. As it turned out, since the National Guard was already spread thin, violently suppressing insurrections in El Paso, Brownsville, Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Waco, and Austin, the H.I.A.'s Texan Division had ordered U.S. Border Patrol into the center of Laredo to help suppress yet another people's uprising there, leaving the border totally unguarded on the U.S. side. Additionally, many Latinos were fleeing the U.S., given the right-wing extremist shift. After the radical gang passed over the bridge from Laredo, Texas to Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, they were briefly questioned by Mexican border officials.

"*Cuál es el motivo de su viaje?*" asked the Mexican border official.

"*Estamos de vacaciones, señor,*" Santiago responded.

"*Ándale, paisano. Bienvenidos a México,*" the border official shot back.

"*Gracias, señor. Que le vaya bien,*" Santiago replied before speeding off, followed closely by the other Volkswagen vans as the border official sat back on a dusty wooden chair and took a swig of tequila.

The Radical Book Club arrived in Monterrey, Nuevo León, around 8 PM on a balmy mid-May evening. The lead teal-turquoise van driven by Santiago pulled up in front of a concrete house with rusty metal support beams sticking out the top. Pedrocco pulled up behind in the red van, followed by Hacksaw, who was driving the yellow van.

"We can rest here for a while," Santiago said as everyone descended from the vans and gathered around.

"What is this place?" Pedrocco inquired.

"My *padrino's* crib," Santiago replied before ringing the doorbell.

A husky-sounding dog began barking from behind the big metal door and a few moments later a quaint old man hobbled forth to open it.

"My son!" the old man exclaimed as Santiago embraced him.

"It's good to see you again, Godfather," Santiago replied.

"Who is all this *gente?*" the old man asked.

"Comrades, Godfather. Comrades."

"*Órale,*" the old man grunted. "Come in, everyone. *Mi casa es su casa.*"

The assortment of radicals trickled into the concrete home, which was more spacious on the inside than it had appeared from the unpaved street. The door from the street entered upon a central courtyard, around which were concrete block rooms stacked upon one another in a bric-à-brac fashion. Everyone began settling in, making themselves at home.

Santiago sat with his godfather in the living room under a gigantic red Che Guevara flag and began discussing the political situation in *El Norte* as the others milled about, and after some time, began to sit down and relax.

"Who's going to run your business while you're away?" the Godfather questioned.

"I left some of my homeboys to take care of it. Don't worry about that, *Padrino,*" Santiago answered. "What I'm really concerned about is *Los Zetas*. Those fascist fucks are stepping onto my turf. That's part of the reason I came down here. They need to be dealt with."

Godfather answered, "*Ay mijo,* you're right. There's a lot of rumors going around town about *Los Zetas.*"

“What are people saying, *Padrino*?” Santiago questioned.

“It’s bad, son. Real bad. People say that their leader, Jorge Peterson-Gonzalez, was trained at the School of the Americas, and is killing *Gitano* children in order to sell their organs on the black market to the U.S. military. They are taking the organs and using them for their soldiers when their organs sustain injury in battle, and to keep those old Yankee politicians alive longer with transplants.”

“*Ay, Dios*,” Fabiola croaked, standing behind Santiago. She put her hand on his shoulder while he remained seated.

The old man continued, “*Mi hermano*—my brother—was with them when they uncovered the mass graves last week. Many Gypsy children, the organs gutted. He was murdered two days ago.”

“*Ay, Santísima Muerte!*” Fabiola shot out.

“*Padrino*, we must avenge your brother’s death! Those *Zeta* fucks will never get away with this! My friends here are experienced in battle against these fascist paramilitary and military types. They have fought many private security contractors, riot pigs, and National Guard baby killers. We will push these *Zeta* fucks out of the drug trade, bring it all under the control of autonomous Marxist cells, and then we can use the funds to bring down that *pendejo* General Johnson and end the *Yanqui* oppression of our *paisas!*”

“Yes, Santi, yes. I have *mucho* weaponry stashed away here in my humble abode,” his godfather replied, lifting up the gigantic Che Guevara banner on the wall to reveal a hidden door.

“Fabiola, fetch Izzy and his friends Wither slapte and Pedrocco,” Santiago requested.

“*Sí, mi amor*,” she replied.

Santiago was already in the weaponry vault when Izzy arrived along with the others.

“Nice fuckin’ guns,” Pedrocco said as he stroked a rack of Kalashnikovs.

“I’ll say. And check out this shit,” Wither slapte replied as he pulled the lid off of a barrel, revealing that it was filled with hand grenades.

“My friends, it’s time we turn up the heat on those *Zeta* fucks,” Santiago began. “The bastards killed my godfather’s brother, and

they are murdering *Gitanos* to steal their organs, using them to keep their National Guards and political cronies alive. We need to launch an all out assault on *Los Zetas*’ compound.”

“*Órale, primo*,” Izzy replied as he picked up a Luger Parabellum.

“Where is the *Zetas*’ compound located?” Wither slapte asked with cold calculation. “We’ll need to plan out the logistics of the operation beforehand.”

“It’s on the estate of Jorge Peterson-Gonzalez,” Godfather replied, “In the hills not far out of the city. *El güey* has a big mansion with several barracks and caserns surrounding it. Heavily guarded. We’ll need serious weaponry.” A moment later he pulled a sheet off of another rack, revealing numerous M2 Browning .50 caliber machine guns.

“*Ándale*,” Izzy replied.

“*Primo*, tell the others about our plan and to get some rest. Tomorrow night we descend on this Peterson-Gonzalez fuck and end this travesty once and for all,” Santiago instructed.

Izzy, Wither slapte, and Pedrocco then went to tell the other radicals of this development.

“Get plenty of rest and eat nutritional foods in the coming hours,” Pedrocco instructed the other Radical Book Club members, anarcho-crust punks, and escaped terror suspects. “Tomorrow we launch an all out assault on the compound of a fascist fuck.”

That night, Wither slapte spoke to Paloma for the first time since screaming what a bitch she was back in Minneapolis and being slapped by her. They sat together on the roof of Santiago’s godfather’s house, looking up at the stars, no one else around.

“I’m sorry, Paloma,” Wither slapte began.

“I forgive you, Wither slapte,” she retorted before placing his hand on her warm bosom. Her chest pulsated rhythmically to the twinkle of the stars, rising and falling more and more rapidly as *Rátopia*, the darkest planet unknown to Man, spun in ambivalent obscurity, solitude, marginality.

Wither slapte grew aroused in a jiffy, and the next thing he knew Paloma was making love to him on the rooftop. In a matter of moments, Paloma had been impregnated with Wither slapte’s seed.

That same night they brought up bean bag chairs to sleep on the roof together. During the warm night, Wither slapte had a vision of the *Santa Muerte*, who told him to trust in Her, for She would protect him and reap the soul of Jorge Peterson-Gonzalez.

The next morning, Godfather made spicy quesadillas while the gang of radical communists and anarchists sat around in his courtyard, which was home to many cannabis plants. A ripe bud fell to the ground, and Izzy swiftly picked it up, pulling apart the sticky nebula and constructing with remarkable ease and deftness a marijuana cigarette. He lit the joint and passed it to Godfather, who took a few nonchalant drags as he casually bit his cheesy quesadilla. It was so tasty, and he gobbled it down rapidly.

Around noon the radical gang went to one of Monterrey's main markets, a sprawling walled-in plaza. There they basked in the bright sunlight at a picnic table outside of a taco shop. Quickly the tacos were made, the juices slopped up by the violent radicals. As they exited the plaza, a violent stabbing occurred. Wither slapte and Paloma were walking hand in hand when all of the sudden, a short, stocky man ran up to a slender man, both wearing hoodies, and brutally shanked the latter. The brutality seemed mundane to the radical gang, for they had already experienced so much murder and loss. It was nothing.

Later that day, they went back to Godfather's crib to procure firearms and bullet proof vests. A few hours later, they were prepared to launch an all-out assault on Jorge Peterson-Gonzalez's compound. It was time to destroy *Los Zetas*, once and for all.

After driving to the hills near the compound, they camped out in a fastness, waiting for the right time to strike.

"We'll wait 'til sun down. Then, when the *pendejo* least expects it, we blow a hole in the compound's wall using dynamite," Santiago said.

"Sounds like a plan," Wither slapte replied.

"*Órale, primo,*" said Izzy.

"Pedrocco, Izzy, Franky, and I will go in first with Kalashnikovs, waste the mofos in the immediate vicinity; that is, outside the caserns," Santiago continued. "After that, Hacksaw, Joe, Chednilonya, Marita, and Ramona will come in with the .50 cal. Set them up swiftly so that once Peterson-Gonzalez's

reinforcements come running out, you can waste them all quickly, understood?" He went on, saying to the escaped Muslim detainees, "Fahd, Mahmud, and Abdullah, you three will strap as many hand grenades as you can to these bandoliers, and carry these RPG's with you as well. If you see any of Peterson-Gonzalez's henchmen come out in groups, try to take out as many as possible at once so as to conserve grenades."

"And me and Paloma will go in on the flanks with AK's once you guys clear the first wave," Wither slapte offered.

"Sounds like a plan," said Santiago. "The rest of you can ram one of the vans through the wall after it has been damaged by the dynamite, mount a .50 cal on the roof and start mowing down any more waves of henchmen."

The radicals then posted up in the fastness, hidden beyond Jorge Peterson-Gonzalez's compound, waiting for the night to fall so they could begin their assault. As the evening progressed, they grilled fresh meats on the back of the turquoise Volkswagen van, a spontaneous tailgate party breaking out.

Pedrocco ripped a chunk of meat out of a chicken drumstick with his powerful jaw, gnarling and nibbling the meat to smithereens.

Santiago then proceeded to throw freshly slaughtered lamb meat onto the grill, mixing it with raw chicken drumsticks. As the lamb and chicken meats melanged, they sizzled loudly.

After nightfall, the radical gang breached the barrier of this fascist fuck Jorge Peterson-Gonzalez's compound, using dynamite to blast a gaping hole in the structure.

Santiago, Izzy, Franky, and Pedrocco switched their Kalashnikovs to fully automatic and swiftly passed through the gaping hole. Peterson-Gonzalez's mercenaries came running towards them to investigate the explosive sound they had just heard, but the pinko commie bastards threw themselves to the ground, lying prone and rapidly popping off rounds into the fascists' pestilent proto-cadavers. Scores of *Los Zetas* were downed by the radical *Santa Muerte*-worshippers in a matter of moments.

Ten seconds later, Marita and the crust-punk anarchists had already set up the .50 caliber machine guns and were waiting for the second wave of *Zeta* henchmen to come running.

Hacksaw noticed some movement on one of the balconies up in Peterson-Gonzalez's mansion, and started firing indiscriminately. The powerful machine gun tore apart another School of the Americas-trained *Zeta* henchman and the next thing everyone knew, the man had fallen off the banister to land with a sonorous splat upon the ground below.

Moments later, another *Zeta narcotraficante* appeared on the balcony to the right, another floor up, and Ramona started going trigger happy on the machine gun, pumping the motherfucker full of lead. The man tumbled over the banister only to land in a thorny rose bush, the thorns cerring his flesh in a most gruesome fashion. After a few minutes of indiscriminate slaughter, countless *Zetas* lay dead or severely wounded, incapacitated.

"Come, comrades. It is time to storm the mansion!" Santiago bellowed.

Pedrocco kicked open the front door of Jorge Peterson-Gonzalez's mansion, his hipster mullet flowing in the dry dusty breeze of the cool Mexican night. Immediately he began discharging his firearm as dozens of *Zeta* thugs were running down the curved staircases in the massive front entry room. Izzy and Franky then burst in and began pumping yet more *Zetas* full of lead, causing avalanches of corpses to cascade down the staircases.

After downing scores more of the *Zeta* thugs, the radicals proceeded up the staircases to Peterson-Gonzalez's office and command center.

"Oh my gosh, ew!" Wither slapte muttered in disgust as they climbed over dozens of *Zeta* thugs' cadavers.

Pedrocco and Santiago attempted to open the door to Peterson-Gonzalez's office, but it was locked.

"*Cabrón* must be hiding in there. Damn coward," Santiago huffed.

"Allow me, brah," said Hacksaw as he whipped out a custom-made lock-picking device. He jammed it into the keyhole and in a matter of moments, the door swung open.

Jorge Peterson-Gonzalez was desperately attempting to climb out of the window when the radical gang entered his office, but he was too overweight to heave himself over the ledge.

"Hold it right there, bub!" Paty yelled.

Peterson-Gonzalez tried to pull his leg out of the window but it got stuck and he ended up falling onto the floor. He was perspiring heavily.

Santiago walked up to him, raised his firearm, and was about to terminate Peterson-Gonzalez's life in an act of brutal revenge.

"Wait!" Wither slapte shot out. "You don't suppose he can be of any use to us?"

Greaves stepped from the back of the radical gang and spoke, "Making a crook like this guy speak will prove hopeless. Best to simply terminate him now."

Santiago put his finger on the pistol's trigger.

"Wait!" Wither slapte shouted again. "Peterson-Gonzalez may have very pertinent intel on the School of the Americas, which could prove valuable in working towards launching an assault on it."

"What you say is true, Wither slapte," Santiago said softly.

Pamela Manning stepped forward. "No! Greaves is right!" she proclaimed.

"What the hell! How are we going to trust these Agent bitches?" Chednilonya spat.

"Chednilonya's right," Wither slapte put forth. "Don't you think it's odd that both of the former Agents want you to eliminate Peterson-Gonzalez before we get a chance to interrogate him?"

Suddenly, Pamela grabbed Izzy's Desert Eagle pistol off of his hip and took aim at Peterson-Gonzalez's head. However, before she could eliminate the *Zetas*' ringleader, Santiago took aim at her and blasted a fatal slug through her cerebrum.

"Goddamn," muttered Wither slapte.

"Pamela!" Greaves wailed as she ran over to her dying colleague, before turning to Santiago and giving him a cold stare. "How could you?"

"She had no right to intervene," Santiago quipped.

"You cold-hearted bastard," Greaves shot back accusingly.

"Like you should be one to talk, ya fuckin' Agent," said Chednilonya.

“Whatever. Let’s just tie up this Peterson-Gonzalez mothafucka and this Agent Greaves!” said Santiago.

“What! Why are you tying me up? I’m on your side!” Greaves argued.

“A likely story!” Wither slapte screamed.

Izzy then snarled like a wild animal before pistol whipping Peterson-Gonzalez, and the entire gang of radical communists, anarchists and *Santa Muerte* worshippers hastily ran back to their Volkswagen vans.

28 – FEDERAL CRUST-PUNK DISTRICT

As the caravan of deranged radicals drove onwards towards Mexico City, Pedrocco and Wither slapte began questioning Jorge Peterson-Gonzalez for information relating to the School of the Americas.

“Tell us more about this so-called ‘School of the Americas,’ you piece of shit!” Wither slapte growled moments before Pedrocco bitchslapped Peterson-Gonzalez across the face as they rode in the back of the turquoise Volkswagen van.

“Okay, okay, I’ll talk, you damn socialist fucks,” Jorge Peterson-Gonzalez sputtered as blood trickled out of his sinuses due to the severe physical abuse.

“Damn right you will, you fucking right-wing piece of cock-shit,” Pedrocco shouted.

“It’s a militaristic compound, heavily guarded, located in Fort Benning, Georgia, along the state’s western central frontier near Alabama. Many of us Latino militarists have been trained there since the Cold War, so as to practice torture on communists and indigenous peoples from Central and South America who stand up for their rights,” Peterson-Gonzalez confessed.

“You goddamn piece of shit,” Wither slapte shot back before bitchslapping him once again.

“What else do you know, fucker?” Pedrocco questioned.

“That’s all the goddamn info I got,” Peterson-Gonzalez said unconvincingly.

“Like we couldn’t have found all that shit out from Wikipedia?” Wither slapte quipped.

“Pshh. Yeah. This fucker’s useless,” Pedrocco seethed before repeatedly brutally pistol-whipping Peterson-Gonzalez once again.

As Wither slapte slipped on a pair of brass knuckles, he screamed, “Was it worth it, ya damn bourgeois comprador? Killing all those Rromani kids so you could steal their organs? You goddamn sick bastard. Thought you could get away with that? What the hell were you thinking?”

“Okay, okay. I admit it. I do have more info, you socialist fucks,” Peterson-Gonzalez conceded. “Many of the Yankee politicians needed organ transplants. For example, your former vice president would have died decades ago if it wasn’t for the Gypsy aortas we provided him with. This General Johnson fellow, your new leader . . .”

Pedrocco interrupted, bellowing, “He’s *NOT* our leader, mothafucka!” before punching Peterson-Gonzalez in the face with a loud smack.

Peterson-Gonzalez spat out a tooth and some more blood, and laughed crazily before continuing, “General Johnson has a Gypsy boy’s spleen, you see.”

“Then we’ll have to return that spleen to that boy’s family,” Wither slapte croaked. “I think we’ve heard enough of your shit now. It’s time for us to waste you.”

“Bring it! You socialist fucks wouldn’t have the balls to do me in! *Los Zetas* will never back down, and you would have a price on your heads for as long as you live!” Peterson-Gonzalez challenged.

“Like hell we wouldn’t!” Pedrocco thundered before impaling a Bowie knife through the rat bastard’s neck.

Peterson-Gonzalez made a strange gurgling noise that came half out of his gaping neck wound, half out of his mouth. His eyes betrayed cruel and unusual suffering.

Wither slapte then pulled out a Luger Parabellum and blasted a fatal slug through the *Zeta* leader’s skull.

“And so vengeance is done,” Santiago spoke as he looked into the rearview mirror, still driving the Volkswagen van. “We’ll stop here at this autonomous peasant community near Querétaro, leave them the body so they can further mutilate it, put it on display. Perhaps brew the spine in the local medicine man’s *nganga* to

prevent the evil from spreading. That kind of humiliation will surely send a strong message to other elites of Mexico’s comprador bourgeoisie.”

“*Hijoles*,” Fabiola croaked from the passenger’s seat.

Santiago reached over, placing his hand on his wife’s thigh comfortingly.

After handing Peterson-Gonzalez’s cadaver over to an autonomous indigenous community, they drove on, reaching the outskirts of the *Distrito Federal* by nightfall. As they approached the sprawling metropolis, the atmosphere grew a dark dull pink. The city lights were reflecting off of billowing clouds of black smoke arising from the Mexican capital city.

“What’s all that smoke?” Marita asked, riding in another Volkswagen van.

“I don’t know,” Joe replied.

“It seems to be coming from the center of the city,” said Hacksaw.

“Just keep following the other vans,” Marita suggested.

As they drove on, they started to notice more and more people running around like chickens with their heads cut off, seemingly without rhyme or reason.

“What is this madness?” Chednilonya asked.

“It would appear to be civil unrest,” responded Ramona.

Eventually the caravan of radicals came up to a barricade. Piles of concrete, scrap metal, parts of motor vehicles, kitchen appliances, and other random objects had been piled upon one another to blockade the thoroughfare.

A masked *bandito* wielding a makeshift firework-lobbing device descended from the pile of urban rubble. “*Quién anda!*” shouted the outlaw. He seemed to make some sort of hand signal, and more shadowy *banditos* of the local Self-Defense Militia could be seen moving about above.

Santiago and Izzy stepped out of the first Volkswagen van to negotiate with the *banditos*.

“*Paisa, no manches, somos compañeros de la libertad*,” Santiago said, his hands raised to show he meant no aggression.

The *bandito* gave Santiago a quizzical look, lowering his makeshift firearm.

“We are the Radical Book Club,” Izzy explained.

“*El Radical Book Club? No mames! We heard of your communique! Es lo que inspired our insurrection!*” the *bandito* said jovially, pulling down the kerchief which had covered his face.

“Really? No way!” Izzy replied, excited and pleased to know that the Book Club’s communique had inspired international rebellion.

Santiago slapped Izzy on the shoulder and said, “Nice going, *primo*.”

“Hey, the one you should really be congratulating is Paty. She’s the one who came up with the communique,” said Izzy.

“You’re right. I will, when I get the chance,” Santiago said, before turning to the *bandito*. “*Señor*, we need to get our caravan through, into the depths of the metropolis, in order to meet with the CNTE teachers’ union.”

“*Lo siento, compañeros*. No can do. All thoroughfares have been blockaded so as to prevent the *militares* from recapturing the *ciudad*,” responded the outlaw. “You’ll have to continue on foot if you want to move through the Autonomous People’s Commune of *Mexihco Tenochtitlan*. Those are the rules in our community.”

“Very well, comrade,” Santiago replied. “We will continue on foot then.”

Suddenly, several *banditos* started shouting from atop the rubble barricade, “*Alerta! Alerta!*”

“Shit, *militares* come!” the *bandito* shouted. “Get your *gente* out of the vans! They will be sitting ducks!”

Izzy and Santiago frantically signalled for everyone to get out of all three of the Volkswagen vans.

Franky cut the rope around Greaves’ feet so she could walk, but left her arms tied behind her back.

As the entire revolutionary gang fled the vans and climbed over the pile of rubble and debris, a squadron of military helicopters flew overhead, started hovering in place, and began firing rockets at the vans, obliterating them into a smoldering inferno.

“Goddamn,” Santiago muttered. “There goes our vans.”

The *banditos* started launching huge fireworks at one of the helicopters and blew out its propeller, causing it to fall into a rapid descent, crashing into the ground in a fiery blaze.

Another loud explosion was heard from what sounded to be about a mile away, and a moment later, the helicopter squadron had flown away in the same direction.

The *bandito* raised his fist in solidarity with the Radical Book Club as they continued on foot into the heart of the metropolis. “*Suerte, compañeros!*”

As they walked through the streets of the Tepito *barrio* to the *centro*, where the radical teachers’ union kept its offices, they passed a shrine to the *Santa Muerte*.

“We should stop here for a bit. Rest and honor our Dark Mother,” Santiago suggested.

“Aye, my feet are starting to get tired anyway,” said Marita.

A stout *morenito* walked up, pulling a rickshaw filled with *Santa Muerte* candles behind him. “*Velas! Velas Santa Muerte!*” the man announced to the radical gang.

“Sir, candles please!” Paloma shot out.

Many of the radical communists ran up to the rickshaw and purchased *Santa Muerte* candles from the man, lighting them in a ritual fashion in front of the *ofrenda* to the Dark Mother.

Fabiola got on her hands and knees and started swaying back and forth, trancing out to a phantastic realm as she began chanting in a bizarre tongue. She was shortly thereafter joined in this activity by Paloma, Pedrocco, Wither slapte, Tisha, Paty, Chednilonya, Franky, Izzy, Marita, and Cedric.

“*Hashem Tonantzin eztli kalo*,” they repeated continuously for half an hour.

The liberated Islamic terror suspects, Abdullah, Fahd, and Mahmud crossed the street and began praying in the direction of Mecca.

“Comrades, please. Show some solidarity and come worship the *Santa Muerte* with us,” Santiago shouted a few moments later across the street to the Muslims.

Abdullah shot back, “There is only one Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet, peace be upon him!”

“The Dark Mother takes many forms. Allah is but one of Her forms. You see, truly She resides in all things,” Santiago explained.

“What you say is true, Santiago,” Fahd spoke, seemingly under the spell of a strange force. “Such a perspective does not conflict

with a non-dualistic conception of Allah, for truly there is only one Almighty, whether Her name be Allah or Erzulie Dantor.”

Mahmud spoke up, “Fahd, what has come over you? I can bite my tongue for no longer! These heathens may have liberated us from the snares of the Great Devil, but that does not mean that we can betray Allah! We must hold true to the ways of our forefathers!”

“Mahmud, if it were not for our brethren and sistren whom you do call ‘heathens,’ we would not be alive now. Truly it be Allah’s will that we reconcile ourselves unto our liberators, for though we prayed always to the One we call Allah, the *Santa Muerte* has revealed Herself unto me, by sending Her children to us. I have seen the darkness which enshrouds all things. Truly I tell you, we are also Her children, whom She does love. We may do no harm in rendering our offerings unto Her, for She is the Almighty.”

Abdullah expounded, “I see your point about the non-dualistic conception of Allah. Although it has been our custom to refer to Allah with masculine pronouns, it would be absurd to presume that the Almighty does not encompass both that which is masculine and feminine, thus our homage to the *Santa Muerte* need not conflict with the pillar of monotheism. Though we humans rely on dualistic cognitive binaries to process our mundane surroundings, it is telling of the true sacred nature of the universe to consider that the Most Holy *Santa Muerte* breaks down the constructed artifice which maintains the illusion of antagonism between the living and the dead. For without the dead, there be no living, and without the living, there be none to honor the dead. One should honor the living through death, and the dead through life. Though Muhammad was the final prophet, the word of Allah continues to be revealed through interstellar communications. I spoke not sooner for I did fear to incur the wrath of Allah, but I too have visited Rátopia, and I have felt the warm embrace of my Dark Mother. I hear Her calling, and I know now that my understanding of the divine was being held back.”

Mahmud’s legs became flaccid like hot dogs. He collapsed to the ground, reached towards the heavens, and bellowed, “*Santísima Allah Muerte hu akhbar!*” not conceding that he had been wrong, but exhibiting the syncretic visceral thought of the

moment, undistracted by the demands of revisionist orthodoxy. It was not a conversion, nor an awakening, but an attunement to social reality.

After everyone had made offerings of coins, gourds, maize, candles, loose crumbs of marijuana, and alcohol to the *Santa Muerte*, the gang of radicals continued to the central plaza.

When they got there, a hardcore punk show was going on. Youths in skinny jeans, black t-shirts, and hoodies were jumping around as though they were on pogo sticks. On the stage a gnarly *paisa* with spiky black and green hair screamed incomprehensible lyrics, showering the filthy stinking crowd in saliva.

“Awesome!” Hacksaw shouted, running into the moshpit.

“Sweet shit!” Joe yelled, following close behind.

“Fuck yeah!” Chednilonya bellowed, punching the air in front of her as she ran to be amongst the throngs of sweaty hardcore punks.

Ramona started pogoing as well, and soon all of the crust-punks were absorbed in the moshpit.

“The CNTE’s offices should be just on the other side of this moshpit,” Santiago uttered.

The rest of the radicals began making their way through the moshpit, shoving teenage punks out of the way.

Franky kept his thick fingers wrapped around Sarah Melissa Greaves’ handcuffed wrists so that she would not escape in the madness.

Wither slapte was smacked loudly in the face by the renegade fist of a giant youth who twirled about like a whirling Dervish in a state of ecstasy to the violent rhythm of the hardcore music.

“Ouch! What the hell’s your problem, man?” Wither slapte whined.

“*No mames, gabacho!*” the whirling Mexican laughed as another youth shoved him into Paty.

The spiky-haired singing *paisa* raised his fists and shouted, “Long live the Autonomous People’s Commune of *Mexihco Tenochtitlan!*”

The moshers grew even more rowdy upon hearing this affirmation of autonomy and concrete expression of the reality of systemic alternatives to corporate consumer culture.

A youth with curly black hair and wearing a hoodie pogoed into Pedrocco, getting all up in his grill. More youths surrounded him and began pogoing violently.

“What the fuck! Let me through!” Pedrocco shouted.

The youths continued hopping up and down all around him and throwing random punches.

“Hell, if you can’t beat them, join ’em!” Izzy wailed to Pedrocco, twirling about and swinging his clenched fists in a haphazard fashion before landing a blow on one of the hardcore punkers’ faces.

Pedrocco lost his temper and simply began throwing punches directly at the hardcore punkers’ faces and torsos.

“*Pendejo!* What the hell are you doing? Learn some mosh etiquette!” a hardcore punk wailed before punching Pedrocco in the face.

More hardcore punkers joined this punk and started pummeling Pedrocco for not following moshpit etiquette.

At that point, Izzy whipped out his Desert Eagle and fired off three rounds into the air in rapid succession in an attempt to calm the crowd down.

This plan backfired. Suddenly, people started pogoing and moshing even more crazily, more violently.

Chednilonya saw what was happening to Pedrocco. Being an experienced show-going crust-punk and already somewhat familiar with Pedrocco’s at times abrasive nature, she knew that this treatment was likely not uncalled for, but she also didn’t want him to get hurt, so she whipped out her switchblade knife and plunged it into the kidney of one of the hardcore punkers beating Pedrocco. She then pulled the knife out of the deep puncture wound and began viciously slashing her way through the crowd, severely wounding half a dozen people before clearing away a small space around Pedrocco. Spattered blood criss-crossed the cobblestone ground around where he was lying.

Izzy walked up to Pedrocco and gave him a hand to get up. He brandished his Desert Eagle pistol menacingly to show the hardcore punkers the degree to which he meant business.

Finally the gang of radicals made it through to the other side of the moshpit and entered the offices of the CNTE teachers’ union located in a crumbling colonial-era building.

The offices of this teachers’ union resembled a Silicon Valley-esque yuppie den minus the glass-top tables and other frills. Hipster-looking union organizers whisked about with stacks of papers, files, and folders, their eyes covered by thick lenses encased in Buddy Holly frames. The old building gave off a whimsical vibe. Everything seemed slightly miniature; the place was cramped, but in a cozy way.

A young teacher noticed the radical gang and stopped what she was doing. She addressed herself to Santiago, who seemed to have the air of being the leader of the group. “*En que le puedo servir, señor?*” she asked.

Wither slapte butted in and spoke, “We are the Radical Book Club. The dictatorship of General Johnson has forced us to look for allies in our struggle against neo-liberal capitalism internationally. We have come to—”

“Say no more, *compañero,*” the woman interrupted. “Your reputation precedes you. Surely you must have already heard from the revolting masses of *Mexihco Tenochtitlan* how inspirational your communique was. I think some would even say it was the final deciding factor in the establishment of the Autonomous People’s Commune. It is an honor to have the Radical Book Club here. Come right this way.” She led them up the winding narrow staircase to the top floor of the 16th century building. “Please,” she said as she held open the large wooden door at the top of the stairs.

The members of the Radical Book Club, along with their crust-punk, Arab, Indian, and *Santa Muerte*-worshipping brethren and sistren crossed the threshold, stepping into the office of Central Organizing Committee of this radical teachers’ union, the CNTE.

“Welcome, strangers,” a middle-aged indigenous-looking man spoke. He wore a short-sleeved green and orange plaid shirt, a fanciful gold chain around his neck, and Buddy Holly glasses on his nose. “My name is Guillermo Escobar. I am the lead coordinator of the Central Organizing Committee of the *Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación*. What brings you to our offices?”

Wither slapte began, “Mr. Escobar, members of the Committee—”

“Please, call me Memo.”

“—Mr. Memo, we are the Radical Book Club—we were instrumental in launching the popular insurrection which swept across the U.S. in recent days.”

“Yes, yes. We recently received a communique from your media specialist, Comrade Paty,” Memo said.

Wither slapte Gobseckowitz went on, “Workers and youth across the U.S. have grown weary of endless war-profiteering, corporate interests being put before human dignity. The masses have already begun to arise, but this Revolution has gone down an unexpected path. General Johnson, his henchmen in the Homeland Intelligence Agency, the National Guard, privately contracted security goons, and other elements of the Military-Industrial Complex have united into a potent reactionary force. Counterrevolution is in the air. Something needs to be done, or social progress could be set back decades. And that’s if this profit-driven fascist police state doesn’t degrade the environment to the point where Earth becomes uninhabitable first. But to get to the point: we’ve come to make you an offer, Memo. An offer you would do well not to refuse. Help us take down Johnson’s fascist police state and we’ll make it well worth your while.”

Memo, along with the other members of the CNTE’s Central Organizing Committee looked at Wither slapte with an air of skepticism.

Pedrocco took a deep breath and said aggressively, “Look, Memo. This General Johnson mothafucka needs to be dealt with *posthaste*, for all our sakes. For Mexico, for the whole world. He’s using his pawns, *Los Zetas*, to control the drug trade, using those funds to steal organs and suppress *el pueblo*.”

“Steal organs?” Memo questioned.

“That’s right—spleens, hearts, livers, kidneys, you name it. They’re using them to sustain the old decrepit bodies of the Yankee *políticos*.”

There was hushed stirring as the CNTE leaders began furtively whispering into each other’s ears.

“*Ay, Dios*,” Guillermo Escobar slowly croaked.

“You have resources, Memo. Resources that can be put to service in this Revolution. Man and womanpower, connections.” Wither slapte continued.

“This is true, this is true. Our teacher brigades were instrumental in setting up the barricades which keep out the *militares* from the Autonomous People’s Commune. We have been working closely with the APPO, the Zapatistas, and the Self-Defence Militias. The indigenous peoples are arising to finally throw off the yoke of *yanqui* oppression, finally decolonizing the nation by doing away with the eurocentric comprador bourgeoisie of Mexico. The time of national liberation is at hand,” said Memo. “But what can we do to help you in *El Norte*? Our resources are spread out thinly as it is.”

“We understand that, Memo. But we mustn’t allow the borders established by colonialism to dictate the boundaries of our movement. The workers’ struggle has no border. Besides, the time to act is now. If General Johnson is not dealt with soon, he will crush the combative spirit of the people. Once the U.S. domestic situation is under control, he is sure to turn this same aggression to Latin America. We must act now, together, before it is too late,” Wither slapte put forth.

Another member of the Central Organizing Committee, a woman named Rafaela, spoke up, “The Radical Book Club has shown the world what a few people can do if they consolidate their efforts. You have inspired the masses, and for that, we praise you. We will work with you, *compañeros*. Perhaps you noticed the hardcore punk show going on in the plaza outside. We know not where your quest for revolutionary justice will take you next, but we would like to offer some of you the opportunity to partake in one of our initiatives. We call it the ‘autonomous hardcore crust-punk initiative’. We need politically conscious musicians to spread awareness, reach out to the youth who live through this socio-political ‘crust-punk’ community, and help us understand this community’s ethos. Would any of you be willing to stay here, work with us on this initiative?” She looked at the anarcho-crust-punks.

“No way! Awesome!” Joe yelled.

Chednilonya’s eyes lit up as she stopped picking her fingernails with her switchblade.

“I’m a hardcore punk musician!” Hacksaw screamed.

“We’ll do it!” Ramona shouted.

Dilawar, the escaped Sikh Maoist detainee, spoke up, "I must confess that I have always been interested in the punk music scene as well. I cannot let this opportunity pass me up. I too will stay and participate in the CNTE's hardcore crust-punk initiative."

"Excellent," Rafaela replied.

"Great, then you five can stay here. But we must go south now, to Oaxaca. We must continue reaching out to other groups, expanding our network," said Santiago.

Memo took off his Buddy Holly spectacles, huffed onto the lenses, wiped them with a kerchief, and spoke, "We thank you for stopping here along your journey. I give you my word that we are but a humble teachers' union. Surely the APPO and the Zapatistas will be able to help you more with respect to the military nature of this struggle against General Johnson. Nevertheless, we promise that we will do whatever we can to aid you along the way. You are welcome to pass through the Autonomous People's Commune whenever you so need or desire. Godspeed, you Radical Book Club! Godspeed."

The members of the Radical Book Club then shook hands with each of the members of the CNTE Central Organizing Committee, and would soon be on their way to Oaxaca to further foment radicalism, gather support for the coming assault on the School of the Americas, and organize a drug syndicate made up of anarcho-Marxian autonomous affinity cells which would grow powerful enough to overthrow the bourgeois State.

29 – A FORTUNE-TELLING BURLESQUE CLUB BECOMES A HOTBED OF URBAN GUERRILLA ACTIVITY

Fatiha began muttering bizarre incantations in Rromani *čhib* as her deft fingers manipulated the marble pestle, using it to pulverize an unusual peppercorn-like purple substance held within the mortar. The mystical violet granules cracked sonorously as they metamorphosized into a fine powder. A pleasant by-product manifested itself: as the substance broke down, a fragrant and glittery matter poofed up, enveloping the droll old *drabarni*. The floating glitter's powerful aroma was something like a fusion between cilantro and lilac, along with a faint hint of the blood of an extinct species, perhaps sabertooth tiger or moa-nalo. She took a deep breath and wet a thumb and an index fingertip with her tongue to turn the page of the seemingly ancient grimoire propped up on a music stand beside the table with the mortar and pestle, continuing to murmur her bizarre incantations.

An aura of hazy debauchery seemed to seep through the mahogany floorboards as topless go-go dancers gyrated their hips in an obscene fashion downstairs, inebriated men hooting and hollering as some of them donned nipple tassels.

The fortune-teller's oriental-esque den was covered in mismatched botch-Paisley cloths and wallpaper. An intricately impressed gold-plated tin covered the ceiling.

Fatiha made the sign of the cross seven times before dumping the purple powder into a golden chalice filled with pulque. The melange began sizzling, though it generated no heat. Froth billowed up, dribbling a bit over the rim of the chalice. Fatiha then chugged the concoction, finishing it in three large gulps.

A few moments of strange calm went by. Fatiha shuffled her Tarot cards.

Suddenly, Fatiha's body went into violent spasms, falling out of her upholstered armchair. She started foaming at the mouth, her arms and legs flailing about haphazardously. She knocked over her crystal ball and it crashed to the ground, shattering into bits.

Gabor, who was feeling depressed since Paloma left and the country sank into fascism, was sitting alone in his room, staring at the wall when he heard this commotion. He rushed to Fatiha's den, and saw her lying there, still.

"Fatiha! What's wrong?"

She briefly started flailing about again and then was still for another moment before sitting up abruptly, her torso jolted erect as if Dr. Frankenstein had just flipped a lever unleashing a torrent of electricity through her. Her slyly mischievous eyes were severely sanpaku, bloodshot.

Startled before this strange sight, Gabor stumbled backwards, smashing into the wall and landing on his butt.

Fatiha began speaking. It almost seemed like there were multiple voices coming out of her throat, such was the uncanny vocal discord. "Hasten the day that the waste layers of bourgeois hegemony render unto the fascist police state the things that belong to the fascist police state."

Gabor looked beyond the ends of his feet at the sharp crystal shards of the *ghičitoara's* broken ball, and then did a double take, looking at Fatiha, afraid to guess what would happen next. He gathered his wits slightly and asked, "What belongs to the fascist police state?"

Fatiha croaked, "Intolerance."

Just then, a platoon of National Guardsmen came storming into the strip club downstairs.

At the same time, Santiago's homeboy Julian had just started rushing towards the staircase, having heard the commotion in Fatiha's den from downstairs. Although it was hard to break his

attention away from the topless go-go dancers, he managed to do it. He was halfway up the stairs when he saw the Guardsmen entering the combination strip club and psychic consultancy with assault rifles in hand.

"We got trouble downstairs, Gabor! And what the hell's goin' on up here!" Julian bellowed as he barged in through the doorway.

"What kind of trouble?" Gabor asked.

"Let's just say it's not the Girl Scouts," Julian quipped.

"Goddamn. Don't tell me. Guardsmen?" Gabor surmised.

"What do you think, fool?" Fatiha thundered.

"Quickly, to my firearms stash," said Gabor.

Julian gave Gabor a hand up.

"Fatiha, barricade yourself in here," Gabor advised. "Don't open the door for anyone until I come back for you."

"*Na* worries, *mungro čhavro*," she said reassuringly.

Gabor and Julian whispered away to his living quarters across and down the hall.

"Inside the bed," Gabor muttered as he lifted the mattress and flung it aside. Contained within the hollowed out box springs were numerous assault rifles.

"*Ándale, murro phral*," Julian uttered, grabbing a Cambodian-made Automatic Kalashnikov and swiftly inserting an extended ammunition magazine.

Gabor tied a red bandanna over his face and grabbed another Kalashnikov.

"Let's go waste some of those National Guard mothafuckas," he uttered.

Meanwhile, downstairs, a pair of H.I.A. agents named O'Malley and Van Duzen, who had been sent to replace Pataki and Rollins after the latter two had been slain by youths at the *mercado*, were working with Lieutenant Gundersen and his platoon to subdue the patrons and go-go dancers of Gabor's fortune-telling burlesque parlor.

"Our intelligence indicates that many Gypsies have been seen coming in and out of this location. There's got to be some connection. Some of them must know something about the whereabouts of the Radical Book Club," Agent Van Duzen said to Gundersen as Guardsmen began roughing up patrons.

Adrian, the Salvadoran Gypsy, heard this and spoke up, "That's antiziganism! You can't just come in here and arrest us for being Rroma! We did nothing!"

"A likely story!" O'Malley spat. A descendant of Irish Travellers, O'Malley was filled with self-hatred, scarcely submerged in his Id, his ancestors having been mistaken for Rroma.

Adrian broke loose and punched a Guardsman in the face with a sonorous smack.

A moment later, other patrons began violently resisting arrest and a no-holds-barred brawl broke out. Even the go-go dancers started fighting back, topless; one of them, Veronika, took off her stiletto heeled boots, put them on her hands like gloves, and began jabbing at a National Guardsman's face. The six inch long stiletto entered through the Guardsman's nostril, puncturing his sinuses and penetrating into his prefrontal cortex. Veronika swiveled her forearm, scrambling the cerebral lobes like cake batter, before pulling the stiletto out of the Guardsman's skull and taking aim on her next victim as his cadaver plunged to the floor.

Just then, Gabor and Julian came rushing down the staircase and began firing their Kalashnikovs indiscriminately into the saloon brawl. Luckily, the only patrons they hit were random sleezy dudes that no one knew, none from their clique. The Gypsies, Cholos, and go-go dancers managed to take cover while Gabor and Julian unloaded their extended magazine clips.

"Shit, retreat!" Agent Van Duzen wailed, seeing that the platoon had been taken by surprise and was being annihilated.

Agents Van Duzen and O'Malley, along with Lieutenant Gundersen and several Guardsmen managed to make it outside unscathed.

"Goddamn," O'Malley muttered. He pulled out a radio communicator to call for back up.

Just as he was about to signal for back up, Fatiha leaned out from the second floor window of her den, directly above the H.I.A. agents and National Guardsmen. She was holding her golden chalice, filled with another strange concoction that she had just brewed. Her wry wrist altered the angle of the chalice, causing droplets of the bizarre brew to pour out and splatter below upon the agents' and Guardsmen's bodies.

"Ahhhhh! Fuck! What the hell?" Agent O'Malley shouted, dropping the radio communicator. The highly acidic liquid was burning through his clothes, already seeping past the epidermis all the way to the bone.

Agent Van Duzen fell to the ground, writhing in extreme anguish as the acidic brew dissolved his muscle tissue.

Lieutenant Gundersen attempted to flee, the brew having hit the others first and thus giving him enough time to see what was happening, but when he ran out into the street away from the seedy establishment, he was struck by a passing motorist and killed instantly.

Bewildered, the motorist stopped his vehicle and tried to wake Gundersen up, but it was no use. The other National Guardsmen were also incapacitated by the corrosive brew.

Suddenly the saloon door swung open. Gabor, Julian, and Veronika stepped out onto the sidewalk.

"Any last words, mothafucka?" Veronika sensually croaked at Agent Van Duzen, her undressed figure looming above him, before impaling the rat bastard's skull with her stiletto. She didn't wait for him to respond, the question being merely a rhetorical platitude.

Gabor then raised his Automatic Kalashnikov and delivered a brutal *coup de grâce* to Agent O'Malley's heart.

Julian went trigger happy and pumped Lieutenant Gundersen and the remaining Guardsmen full of lead in a brief frenzy of gunfire.

The motorist who had struck Gundersen hopped out of the his vehicle and ran away on foot, having been scared off by the shooting.

More folks (Gypsies, Cholos, and go-go dancers) started trickling out of the club.

"C'mon, we should get out of here before any more pigs show up," Gabor declared. "We can lie low at the Indian herbal art shop."

"Let's take that car," Veronika suggested, pointing to the recently abandoned vehicle with her chin. It was a taboo in her culture to point at objects with one's fingers.

"Good idea," said Gabor.

"Hey, don't forget about me!" Fatiha shouted from the second floor window.

“Well, hurry up!” Gabor yelled.

Adrian, Julian, Gabor, Veronika, and another topless go-go dancer named Yolanda piled into the vehicle, a Mazda6. They waited a minute which seemed like an eternity, and finally Fatiha came and got in as well. Other Cholos and Gypsies fled down nearby alleyways on foot.

After arriving at the Indian herbal art shop, they went to the back room and began furiously plotting their next action.

“Those pigs will pay for wrecking my burlesque saloon,” Gabor seethed.

Meanwhile, General Johnson was in Berlin, meeting with the German Chancellor to discuss a new trade agreement.

“Well, I’ll be damned,” Johnson quipped, practically gropping the Chancellor as he stumbled across the threshold of the *Machtführer’s* front door entrance, “Ain’t you a beaut.”

“It *ist ein* pleasure to acquire your constipationcy,” the Chancellor croaked in a thick German accent, meaning to say something else in her broken English.

A large member of Johnson’s entourage then slid into the Chancellor’s abode; he was a fat man with a long coat, so large he could barely squeeze through the doorway. The man was a member of the *Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft* League named Sigismund von Johanneson who weighed nearly four hundred pounds. The next man to walk into Chancellor Ursala Heinrich’s abode was Geheimagent Wilhelm, a secret agent, the Chancellor’s most loyal bodyguard and a descendant of German Southwest Africa colonial administrator Theodor Leutwein.

General Johnson and Chancellor Heinrich hoped that the new German-American trade agreement would weaken the Commonwealth of Independent States, the post-Soviet Russian-dominated bloc, by promoting increased energy independence for the European Union from Russia. This would be done by subsidizing American gas companies and providing kickbacks for corrupt officials who allowed fracking in their dominions. The hope was that this in turn would isolate China, eliminating the threat of a Eurasian retaliation against the U.S.-E.U. neo-liberal fascist behemoth through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

In addition to the trade agreement, the right-wing leaders also met to devise another, more diabolical plot to gain the geopolitical upper hand over the Eurasian hordes: by staging a false flag attack on Saint Petersburg, once called Leningrad, and blaming it on a random warlord from N’Djamena, the capital city of Chad, Russia would be drawn into a Chadian conflict, triggering a French military intervention in Chad, a former French colonial possession that was still viewed as little more than a protectorate. The secondary objective was that this Russo-Franco-Chadian conflict would in turn spark World War Five (the Third World War having been the Cold War and World War Four having been the proletarian and subaltern struggle of the world’s working classes and indigenous peoples to overthrow corrupt and Western-backed global capitalism). Russia’s power would be seriously weakened after this conflict, and other former Soviet states would be gradually assimilated to the West, ensnaring the collectivistic Slav race like a wild beast deep in the wilderness of the Siberian backwoods. The barbaric Slavs would gradually mutate into a semi-humanoid subspecies. The grand scheme was that Chancellor Heinrich’s Germany and General Johnson’s America would ultimately conquer the world, gradually annexing foreign lands into the Reich and the Homeland and either assimilating the locals or ethnically cleansing the lands of them.

Johnson and Heinrich discussed all of this and more until the wee hours of the morning. So productive were the talks that scarcely not a moment was wasted, though a brief moment was wasted when Sigismund von Johanneson passed gas loudly and stinkily, prompting the entire delegation to evacuate the meeting room for over a quarter of an hour.

Weeks later, Gabor had organized a large militant force and was able to retake his combination fortune-telling business and strip joint from the control of the Guardsmen. Johnson was outraged by this, and instructed the National Guard and H.I.A. to surround the place. A standoff ensued, though the barricade was broken by proletarian masses led by a vanguard of mainly Black and Latino youths. It seemed that, at least in the Twin Cities, Johnson’s fascist regime was being seriously challenged.

30 – COMANDANTE PEDROCCO LEADS THE LIBERATION FORCES

By that time, south of the U.S. border, the Radical Book Club had already stopped in Oaxaca, meeting with the *Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca* to build with them a new envisioning of Man under socialism. Wither slapte argued passionately for the Marxian cause, winning many supporters for his campaign to launch an all out, no-holds-barred assault on the central mainframe of *yanqui* imperialism in Latin America: the School of the Americas, a quasi-fascist compound located in the American state of Georgia. After passing through Oaxaca, the Radical Book Club went on to Chiapas, the stronghold of the Zapatista National Liberation Army, also known as the *Ejercito Zapatista de Liberación Nacional*, or EZLN. The Zapatistas had become prominent on the world stage by 1994, when they launched their people's war against the corrupt comprador bourgeoisie.

Pedrocco and Wither slapte sat in a mud brick hut, deep in the Lacandon Jungle with Subcomandante Marcos, a key leader in the Zapatista movement. A steamy fire billowed in the center of the hut, giving the primitive dwelling a convivial glow, and an old woman came in from outside with blue corn tortillas to roast over the flames. Pedrocco passed a gargantuan blunt to Subcomandante Marcos, who in turn took a massive rip and got unbelievably choned. Marcos blew the obscene quantities of marijuana smoke through his balaclava ski mask like a Chinese dragon and started laughing uncontrollably.

Pedrocco spoke, "Marcos, you say you are for revolution, but you do not embrace warmly enough the concept of Marxian

justice. You must dissociate your movement from these Liberal fucks who think buying fair trade coffee is going to fundamentally change the power imbalance between white settlers and *indios*."

"Nonsense!" Wither slapte interjected.

"Truly I tell you, Pedrocco, as surely as the sun does shine, our autonomous indigenous people's movement knows no boundaries of race, ideology, nationality, or gender," Subcomandante Marcos laughed haughtily.

Pedrocco French inhaled the weed smoke, slowly releasing the fumes from his mouth and sucking them back into his respiratory system through his nostrils. "Fuck that," he croaked, "So you mean to say that there is no difference between revolutionaries and Liberal dipshits?"

Wither slapte spoke up, passionately putting forth, "I believe it may be time for a rapprochement between the anarchist Left and the Marxians. Undoubtedly, the fall of the Soviet Union was an unbelievable setback for the Left globally, but at the same time, it gives us the opportunity to re-envision what a broad left-wing coalition might look like."

"Wither slapte, please," Pedrocco shot back, "the Soviet Union ceased to exist decades ago and where are we now? Scantly does a workers' state exist in today's world, save for Cuba, and perhaps Venezuela, but even then, the right-wing remains powerful."

"Where are we now? On the cusp of global revolution, that's where," Subcomandante Marcos croaked, an incredible amount of violet-tinged cannabis colloid radiating from his masked face as he sprinkled crumbly bits of Oaxacan *queso fresco* onto a blue corn tortilla.

A *Copris incertus*, commonly known as the Mexican dung beetle, slowly scrambled across the hut's earthen floor and caught Wither slapte's eye.

"Hey there, little fellow," Wither slapte croaked.

"Ah, I see you've met Durito," Subcomandante Marcos uttered.

"Man, I could really go for some Doraditos right now," Pedrocco rasped throatily, succumbing to the munchies.

"Durito?" Wither slapte questioned.

"Aye," Marcos grunted as he picked up the beetle, gently stroking its sheathed wings with his index finger. "This little guy is my closest confidant."

Wither slapte and Pedrocco exchanged furtive glances as Subcomandante Marcos began rocking back and forth. Marcos then unfolded his legs, moved to a squatting position, and began taking a dump right there on the hut's earthen floor.

"Ah," he croaked as the turd plopped to the ground.

Pedrocco began stroking his hipster moustache, weed smoke all around them.

Marcos then released Durito and the spry dung beetle quickly whisked away the Subcomandante's feces.

"Useful, isn't he?" Pedrocco mused.

"From a utilitarian perspective, I suppose you could say that," said Marcos as he pulled out another blunt from underneath his balaclava.

The stout indigenous woman returned with more blue corn tortillas.

"Come, brethren," uttered Marcos, "There is something I must show you."

"Very well, Marcos, very well," Wither slapte replied.

Wither slapte, Pedrocco, and Subcomandante Marcos exited the hut and walked along a narrow footpath through the jungle. The radicals from the North did not know where the Zapatista was taking them, but intuition told them the destination would be an important one. Eventually the path came to a small clearing with some more huts where Zapatista militants were sitting on logs in a circle with other members of the Radical Book Club and *Santa Muerte* worshippers.

Paty saw Pedrocco, Wither slapte, and Subcomandante Marcos and her eyes lit up. "Where's y'all headed?" she called.

"To inspect the militants," Marcos shouted in reply.

"*Ándale*," said Santiago, jumping to his feet.

The entire gang continued along another narrow path through the jungle. The trek seemed to last hours. As they marched through the tropical rainforest of Chiapas, parrots flew in the forest canopy above.

"Stop," Marcos whisper-shouted.

The entire gang, marching almost in single file through the thick jungle, came to a halt.

"Listen to the parakeets," Marcos croaked. "They are speaking."

Although Marcos was not an indigenous man, he had been trained in the art of tracking by a Mixtec shaman woman.

The gang stopped, sweat dripping down their bodies in the hot *selva*. Above, birds called out words in Spanish.

"*Soldados*," the birds called.

"Shit," Marcos whispered. "Government forces," he gasped, giving Wither slapte a serious look through the ocular opening of his balaclava. "We must hurry! Quickly!" Marcos began running through the jungle, his Kalashnikov strapped across his lumbar spine.

The gang followed. It was a brutal struggle, like plowing a canal through a concrete continent. Finally they came to another clearing where Zapatista militants were doing practice shooting.

A beautiful young Chiapan woman threw a clay plate stamped with the face of General Johnson on the one side and that of Uncle Sam on the other. Bam! Another Zapatista militant hammered off a round, the blazing bullet obliterating the clay plate in one foul swoop.

"Bravo! Bravo!" other Zapatistas began to shout, clapping loudly.

"At attention, *carnales!*" Marcos barked.

"Government forces are in the vicinity!" Pedrocco shouted, his leadership traits beginning to throb.

The Zapatistas quickly stood at attention.

"Today we do battle, men!" Pedrocco screamed, ripping off his own shirt.

"You sexist fuck!" Paty shouted.

"Please comrades, this is no time for infighting," Wither slapte pleaded.

Suddenly, a government armored personnel carrier could be heard, plowing through jungle debris not far off.

Pedrocco took his firearm, a Kalashnikov, into hand and ran towards the APC.

"Pedrocco, no!" Paty screamed.

It was too late. Pedrocco ran over a land mine. His legs were obliterated from below the knees and he was thrown in a flaming ball of toxic chemicals thirty-five feet into the air.

"*Shiii . . . !*" Pedrocco screamed as the flames engulfed his proto-cadaver.

Tisha began lobbing sticky grenades at the APC from a safe vantage point, through some jungle vines. The devices, covered with homemade goo and industrial strength glue, were super adhesive to most surfaces. The sticky grenade attached itself to the APC and in twelve seconds, the device detonated.

“Boo yah,” Tisha moaned as she took cover behind a Babylon willow.

There was a loud smack as Pedrocco’s flaming body slapped back upon the Earth. Small pieces of shrapnel began peppering his crisp flesh as the APC was exploding.

“Fucking shit,” Pedrocco croaked, his hipster mullet mostly burnt off in the lacerating flames.

Tisha made her way over to Pedrocco’s proto-cadaver on all fours.

“Fucking shit, baby,” she squeaked, cradling Pedrocco’s baked scalp near her bosom.

“Tisha, I ain’t gonna make it,” Pedrocco heaved.

“Shut up, Pedro. Shut up! You will live, baby!” Tisha pleaded.

Pedrocco feebly attempted to raise his arm, to struggle, to fight back somehow and tell Tisha that he had indeed decided not to shut up, and not to live. To rebel against soundness entirely. His body was lying there, charred, in the jungle of Chiapas, where centuries earlier, great pre-Columbian Mesoamerican warlords had also relished sacred slaughter.

Remaining survivors of the toppled armored personnel carrier began to attempt forcing the rear door open and escape the overturned and flaming vehicular carcass, but the jungle was too dense. The surviving footsoldiers were caught in the thick brush and brutally slain by Santiago and three Zapatista militants.

More government infantry came slashing through the jungle with machetes, but several Zapatista women were there with Cambodian-made automatic weapons, ready to mow them down like blades of grass.

Suddenly, another wave of APC’s began surrounding the Zapatistas’ position.

“Shit, they’re surrounding us with their mechanized troop carriers,” Subcomandante Marcos called.

Izzy ran up to Pedrocco, who seemed to be near death, and lifted him onto his shoulders. Izzy was determined to save his comrade’s life.

“Goddamn,” Franky muttered, adjusting his do rag in the sweltering *selva*. He lifted up a large .50 caliber machine gun and began mowing down Mexican soldiers.

More Zapatista fighters emerged from the woods and began firing rocket-propelled grenades at the APC’s from the rear. Thick smoke began to drift around, seeming to tangle with the vines, which would have been suitable for Tarzan.

The communist radicals and their *Santa Muerte*-worshipping brethren and sistren continued their slaughter for some time, but finally the government forces had been annihilated.

Afterwards, Pedrocco lay in a makeshift tent constructed at the battle site. He was severely wounded, but still breathing. Perhaps he would remain a proto-cadaver for some time yet.

“The living are nothing more than proto-cadavers,” Wither slapte mused as he and other Zapatistas threw soldiers into a mass grave.

Subcomandante Marcos walked up behind Wither slapte and put his hand onto his shoulder. “*Andale*, Wither slapte. Proto-cadavers,” Marcos throated.

After burying the slain, the radicals moved on to another Zapatista stronghold and set up camp for the night. Pedrocco was sent into town to be cared for by a doctor sympathetic to the cause.

After sundown, the gang sat on logs placed around a fire, roasting marshmallows and swapping stories. Soon enough the tales turned towards horror, ghost stories of hauntings and fright.

Marita recalled a story she had heard at a creative writing workshop she had attended during her senior year of high school, back when she was active in the anarcho-illegalist entity known as the Bash Bloc collective.

“This is a story that is as frightening as it is true. It’s true in the sense that if we don’t act to stop capitalist barbarism now, this is what the globalized future will hold for us. Truly the future is nothing other than continued barbarism, or else socialism. This is the story of *the globalized future*,” she began.

31 – THE GLOBALIZED FUTURE

In the year 2234, Ralph Rodgers worked at the Central Authority Agency. His job was to slaughter innocents across the globe in the name of hierarchy.

The Agency was the pinnacle of hierarchical perfection. All essential human wisdom had been relegated into the hands of the Agency. The brightest minds, the smartest fiends, and the maddest men: these were the people the Central Authority Agency had harnessed. These were the people the Agency bred. Constant oppression of the masses kept dissent to a bare minimum. Any outspoken criticism was instantly detected by the auditory mainframes, whose nodes saturated all aspects of automaton society, and was slated for brutal liquidation by the Automaton Dissent Repression Force.

The furthest a rebel movement had ever come to leading a revolution was in 2094, when the Human Liberation Army, in reality a rebellious and disillusioned sub-sect of low-level officers issued from within the Central Authority Agency, led a raid on the Authority Planning Center, a computer complex manned by hired guns in Langley, Virginia. The H.L.A. destroyed three mainframes in the Authority Planning Center. (How were the H.L.A. able to breach the Automaton Security Parameters? It was surely thanks to the Sonic Resistance Methods these rebels had picked up from the Central Africans in their campaign to automatize [or more precisely, automatonize] Sudan). With no computer systems

managing the Central African Human Automaton Territory, chaos broke out in Central Africa. The mainframes which had been managing the delicate process of automatonization in the C.A.A.'s final colony in transition were unable to be rebooted in time before the Resistance solidified its hold over the consciousness of the Central Africans.

Central Africa was the last territory of the Earth to begin automatonization in the 2080s. By 2094, it had still not reached a fully automaton state. Resistance lingered in Central Africa. With the outbreak of chaos, the Central Africans found themselves subject to a war with the Agency's puppet, the Central African Destruction Force on one side, and the Human Liberation Army on the other.

A wall had been constructed by the automatons around all of Central Africa. The area stretched from Cameroon to Kenya. Outside of this wall, automatonization continued as normal. The Central Authority Agency's automatonization scheme was somewhat flawed however, in that whether it was a question of modifying human beings, or replacing them with artificial intelligences (both practices were commonplace—though the humans were not completely dispensable due to their function in organic intelligence spore production), there was always the risk that some particular element might not be perfectly rendered according to the directives of the mainframes. This was remedied by periodically re-implementing Electromagnetic Thought-Emotion Destruction Sequences.

Nevertheless, by the year 2234, Essential Automatonization had been achieved in all territories outside the Central African Containment Wall. However, also by this time, a new resistance to the Central Authority Agency had solidified. The resistance had become the religion of the underground. Resistance and religion were one in the same. The Central Africans worshipped anti-authority. This lack of respect for authority was crafted by a Central African shamanic storyteller, or djeli, to give the Central Africans a means of resisting the Central Authority Agency. It was the djeli who performed the rite of intense facial scarification on all newborns, replacing the baptism as a symbol for their eternal refusal to co-operate and their rejection of the dominant aesthetics of beauty. Religious Central Africans could not be reasoned with.

They simply destroyed all hierarchy. This was done by living as wildly as possible. They ran through the forests, slaughtering all who they come across beyond the immediate family and shamanistic leaders. The exception of the immediate family existed only so that reproduction of the humans, and thus reproduction of the resistance, might continue. The shamans, meanwhile, used their powers to ward off the crazed survivors and rogue automatons of the global colonization.

This Afrikan Order grew so powerful that after all these years (2094-2234), the Central Authority Agency had not yet been able to stomp it out. Afrikan shamans held the esoteric knowledge behind the Human Liberation Army's success in Langley in their hands. They passed on the old literature of resistance in strange and subtle forms from shaman to shaman, generation to generation. Through the laying on of hands in decentralized djeli-to-djeli networks, the Afrikan shamans were able to transmit communist literature in the form of organic files through melanocyte receptor swarms. This was how they understood the powerful resistance strategies of Comrade Mao Tse-Tung in order to sustain their people's war against the oppressor.

The Central Authority Agency did have a plan though: slaughter each and every one of the free Central Africans. However, given the grand area and large jungles covering the territory, along with the way the Central Africans hid underground and in the trees, the Central Authority Agency was prevented from discovering the whereabouts of each and every Central African. Central Africa had become the final frontier in the struggle for a centralized global authority. With the destruction of the Central Africans, a central authority would guide mankind's journey for the rest of existence. Humanity would indeed become one, now and forever. Once total control and power is achieved, none can escape its sanguine grasp.

Outside the Central African Containment Wall, automonization meant a life of mass psychological programming for the pawns of the Central Authority Agency. Collectively, they were bound to automaton-consciousness by the powerful mechanized aspects of mass computer consciousness. Automatonization was simply material reality. It could not be escaped; it was unfathomable for the de-spiritualized automaton mind. Only within the Central

African Containment Wall did hope for freedom from oppression exist. The shamans gave strength to the Central Africans through their songs which glorified the brutal destruction of authority and planting the seed, or asili, of New Afrika.

This was the nature of things in 2234.

By 2235, the consciousness of the Central Africans reached a critical mass. No longer did they slaughter all beyond the immediate family, but they formed together a larger unit, a tribe dedicated to the destruction of authority, which was dubbed by some inside the Agency "The Egalitarian Sect". Why had the Central Africans passed through this antisocial phase? It seemed that the trauma of isolation had rendered many of them insane, as it turns out would be the fate of the great majority of future humans and humanoids. Many of the so-called "Central Africans" were in fact not indigenous to this region, but refugees who had fled the settler-automatons from the north and the south.

The shamanistic leaders were those who had guarded the ancient wisdom of the ancestral spirits, thus preserving some degree of sanity in the face of the global mechanization process. The shamans judged by 2235 that the time had come to unleash the ancestral spirits, and so they decided to share with all Central Africans their wisdom of resistance. Soon enough all became literate, all read the holy texts of resistance, and all were empowered with the strength of the Anti-Authoritarian Spirit. All were shamans now. Together they gathered and communicated with the Iwa, the spirits of their ancestors. The Iwa showed them the path to victory. Many visions were seen and through the third eye of the shamanic unity, great comrades of past resistance movements manifested in ethereal forms and their powers were transmitted to them. First came Toussaint Louverture, then Bhagat Singh, Lei Feng, Vera Figner, and finally many others. All showed them the way, expressing one great truth: Liberation is necessary.

That same year, Ralph Rodgers was flying helicopter reconnaissance over the Central African war zone. Intelligence reports indicated that the Central Africans were indeed forming a new communal unit. Strange sightings of bright lights and other phenomena had been coming in from the peripheries of the territory where C.A.A. settler-automatons were stationed.

Ralph Rodgers was a good automaton. He knew how to obey authority very well. Little did Ralph know though that long ago, in the year AD 943, his ancestor had been bitten by a rabid wolf in the frozen forests of Norway. A Cosmic Afrikan djeli had accessed the wolf's fangs by means of space-time warp-maneuvering aspects of the mega-verse. On the fangs of the wolf was placed the serum of self-hatred. The wolf sunk its fangs into Ralph Rodgers' ancestor, and so the serum of self-hatred was intravenously introduced to the bloodstream. Science would later show that dormant aspects of the bloodline can be awakened at points in time remote from the mutant progenitor. As Ralph Rodger's helicopter passed over an Afrikan shaman hiding in a tree, the serum of self-hatred was discreetly awakened by the passing. Suddenly Ralph Rodger's mind was aroused by the hatred of his automatized self. He could not help but to crash the helicopter, driving it towards the Earth. It exploded into a fiery ball of wreckage as it cascaded through the rainforest canopy. Branches flew every which way, brutally whipping his face into a hideous pulp. His corpse was disintegrated in the flames, and all Free Minds rejoiced. The wolf bitten spirit of his ancestor was released into the sunshine and then absorbed by many other automaton patrol-copters. They too were overwhelmed with wolf bitten spirit, and compelled by the realization of their worthlessness to crash into the tree tops. Those whose helicopters were equipped with automatic pilot ejection mechanisms were captured by mutant monkeys living in the rainforest canopy. The fate that awaited them was an even more gruesome one than had befallen Ralph Rodgers.

That night the Central Afrikans gathered on the spot where Ralph Rodgers had died. They rejoiced, knowing that soon the C.A.A. would fall apart as the oppressed masses inhaled the wolf bitten spirit.

32 – UNEXPECTED BETRAYAL

“Well, now. My Lord, that *Globalized Future* bullcracka was just a-beggin to be de-constructed!” Tisha screamed.

“Yeah, Marita. That story. It was just . . . bizarre,” Paty croaked.

“France Gall could have came up with a better story than that,” Wither slapte shot out.

Izzy began, “Just think of Pedrocco right now. He’s like Ralph Rodgers, dude.”

Tisha continued, shouting loudly, “Now listen here, peeps! That story was straight up stereotyping Afrikan peoples! Hipster racism, if I ever done saw such a thing!” She poked Marita squarely on the shoulder.

Marita defended herself, saying, “Now *you* listen *here*, Tisha! That story was anti-racist and you know it. You’re just playing *the race card* so that you can get special entitlements for your race! Admit it, bitch!”

“Whoa, whoa,” Wither slapte began, lunging towards Tisha and Marita. “Let’s not stereotype people by their ethnic identities! My grandparents are Shoah survivors, you bitches! Fuck! The Shoah!”

“Please, Wither slapte, stop playing the Shoah card,” Paty bitched loudly.

“In any case,” Wither slapte continued, “the story clearly belays the unsound mind of a petit-bourgeois first-worlder.”

“I beg to differ,” Subcomandante Marcos stated coolly. “There were several interesting aspects to the story, including this idea of epigenetic inheritance. Modifiable in the environment, but

genetically inherited in the DNA. A metacosm of its own morphoverse. Durito spoke to me once of it, in a dream long ago.”

Franky turned, having been sulking in a corner alone, and spoke, “*The globalized future* is now, mothafuckas! Ha! Ha! Yeah, bitches! That’s right! Franky done got yo azzes! Look at yo’ legs, motha-F.-a’s! Dass right, foo’s! Trackin’ devices! I put them on all y’all’s legs while you was listenin’ to ghost stories. I’m a mothafuckin’ double crosser!”

“Whoa, Franky, what the actual fuck?” Wither slapte blabbered.

“Sorry, Widder schlaptei, but my cuzz work in the Air Force, you think I’mma betray my cuzzes, dude? I got three cuzzes in tha Marines too, biyatch.”

“Yo, man, you gotta be shittin’ my azz,” Tisha quipped.

“Nah, bitch, I’zz for real.”

Izzy Zamora Sanchez pulled out an arm, a Desert Eagle. He took precision aim quickly, pointing it in the direction of Franky.

Paloma spoke, “Izzy, stop. Franky. Please, you can be talked out of this.”

Franky raised his voice. “Whateva, fools! Them trackin’ devices got self destruct mechanisms! If you shoot me, we all die.”

“Dear God,” Paty blurted out.

Subcomandante Marcos remained calm, collected. Silently, he raised his fist in what was once known as a Black Power salute. Slowly, he unclenched the joints of his fingers, revealing a moderately-sized dung beetle.

“What in the bull fuck is that?” Franky swore.

“A dung beetle,” Paloma replied.

“Just tell us what you want, Franky. Surely there must be some agreement which we can come to,” Wither slapte pleaded.

“I want all of you to call off the assault on the School of the Americas,” Franky demanded.

“Franky, don’t be a dumbass! You know as well as all of us that General Johnson is a racist fuck. Ever since the fascist coup, material conditions for the African-American community have deteriorated rapidly,” Wither slapte reasoned.

“Family over everything, biyatch,” Franky quipped.

“Come on, Franky. I got cuzzes in tha military too, but as far as I’m concerned, they died when they registered,” said Tisha.

“Yeah, Franky. We’re your true family,” Paty pleaded, impassioning Franky to reconsider what he was doing.

“Lies!” bellowed Franky. “My cuzzes always been there for me, through thick and thin. Where was the motha-F.’n Radical Book Club when the pigs beat my old man?”

“Don’t be retarded, Franky. That was before we even met! And you know full well the pigs and military are both part of the same imperial industrial complex,” Wither slapte spoke.

“Maybe this dude’s bluffin’,” Izzy croaked, his trigger finger itching.

“Quite likely, I would have to surmise,” said Wither slapte.

“Go ahead and try me, fools!” shouted Franky. “If you shoot me, those trackin’ devices are set to inject all y’all’s with a deadly toxin.”

“Goddamn it, we can’t take the risk of not believing him,” Paty said heavily.

“Okay, Franky. Just take off these tracking devices and we’ll call off the assault,” Wither slapte heaved with reconciliatory overtones.

“Ha, you thought it’d be that simple, Widder schlaptei? Hell’s nah, foo’,” retorted Franky. “We walkin’ to tha nearest Mexican military outpost and y’all mothafuckas turnin’ yo’selves in.”

“Fuck that. Something tells me this dude’s bluffin’,” Izzy uttered before slamming off a slug through the barrel of his Desert Eagle pistol and into Franky’s skull, the interior of which was dark and warm.

“Jesus, Izzy,” Paty croaked as Franky’s cadaver hit the jungle floor.

A couple of tense, strained moments passed.

“Everybody feel okay?” Izzy asked, blinking.

“A bit woozy, mate,” Wither slapte muttered, turning pale.

“Shit, Izzy, you idiot! You’ve killed us all!” Paloma dizzily croaked, her vision fading.

“*Ay, cabrón! Mi amor*, kiss me one last time before we die,” Santiago exclaimed as he embraced Fabiola.

Subcomandante Marcos spun around, Durito seeming to control the movement and pointedness of his digital appendages. He stumbled forward several feet to an herbal fern and began

frantically tearing off leaves from the plant. In another moment he managed to hobble back to the radicals who were rapidly approaching death.

“Quickly, everyone eat of this herb. It should counteract the effects of the neurotoxin,” Marcos gasped before administering the herb to himself.

The herb worked quickly to quell the neurotoxin. Soon enough the gang of radicals, *Santa Muerte*-worshippers, and their Zapatista allies were back in good health, albeit minus one individual who had been amongst the most trusted of their inner circle, and minus another who was much less trusted: Sarah Melissa Greaves. The neurotoxin had acted too quickly on her, and the herb could not be administered in time to save her.

The loss of Franky came as a shock to everyone. If Franky could not be trusted, then who really could?

After shooting the tracking devices off of their ankles, the gang made their way through the Lacandon Jungle of Chiapas over the course of the following days, periodically skirmishing with government forces until they finally made it to the state of Tabasco and then to the Gulf of Mexico. There they said good-bye to Subcomandante Marcos and boarded a small ship named the *Tetona Cabrona*. The gang landed in Cuba to re-up on supplies and weaponry, and gather more militants for the assault on the School of the Americas. These militant legions of volunteer brigades were drawn mainly from Cuban, Haitian, and Mexican extremist groups. Around this time, they also met with Assata Shakur, a hero idolized by all members of the Radical Book Club. Additionally, it was in Cuba where the Islamic terror suspects, Fahd, Mahmud, and Abdullah finally parted ways with their liberators, deciding to return to the Middle East to spread word to their countrymen of the miraculous nature of the *Santa Muerte*, or *al-Kidissa al-Myetta* (القديسة الميتة), as they called Her in Arabic.

After spending just over a week in Cuba meticulously planning the logistics of their assault, the radicals were at last prepared to move on. They sailed to the Florida panhandle, through the swamps to Lake Seminole, and finally up the Chattahoochee River to Shell Creek, coming out near Fort Benning, Georgia, the militaristic compound near the city of Columbus where the battle would take place.

33 – ASSAULT ON THE SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS

Across the American nation, the situation was deteriorating rapidly. General Johnson’s shock troops were facing serious setbacks now not only in Minnesota and Texas, but also in California, New Mexico, Kansas, Vermont, and New York. During the radicals’ excursion to Mexico, New York City had become a rebel stronghold, three-fifths of the boroughs being virtually overrun by anti-Johnson dissidents. Johnson mobilized the National Guard to suppress the insurrections, but to little avail. Mass casualty incidents were fast becoming a mere banality. Unfortunately for General Johnson, no matter how many mass casualty incidents his fascist regime perpetrated, it seemed that almost no dent was being made in the determination of the antifa forces.

Meanwhile, in Latin America, the Drug War raged on, much of the violence there being due to the proliferation in *El Norte* of firearms, which was in turn correlated with the popular insurrections against the Johnson regime led mainly by Black and Latino youths; this in turn fueled the insanity south of the border as crazed *banditos* began binging on hard drugs. The *Santa Muerte* cult also proliferated, spreading along the trade routes of the cartels.

It was already late June now. In Washington D.C., the sun baked the streets. It was looking to be an American summer like no other.

Agent Firth plopped down a memo on General Johnson's Oval Office desk.

"Memo from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Sir!"

After taking on the role of Commander-in-Chief, Johnson had delegated his position within the Joint Chiefs to an up and coming middle-aged man by the name of General Gassman.

"Memorandum, eh?" Johnson questioned with a raised eyebrow in his filthy Southern drawl.

"Aye, Sir."

Johnson bottoms-upped his whisky on the rocks before opening the manila folder containing the memo. As he read the memo, his eyes began to squint, his fists became clenched, his neck veins throbbed.

"What in the bullcock!" he finally bellowed.

Agent Firth came dashing back in.

"Care to explain this shit to me, Firthy?" Johnson rattled.

"Sir, where to begin? The Joint Chiefs' recommendations seem quite straightforward."

"It says here that the situation across the nation has spiraled out of military control!"

"No use denying the facts, Sir. It's those Black and Latino youths. Working class, mostly. They're out of control. Virtually all city centers have been overrun by these hoodlums. The Joint Chiefs are recommending total liquidation of all inner cities, Sir," Agent Firth replied.

"And that would mean admitting our weakness, wouldn't it?" Johnson spat.

"Not at all, Sir. Besieging and destroying the inner cities will play right into our power base, rural Whites."

"By golly, you're right, Firthy!" Johnson croaked. "But just how will this total liquidation be carried out?"

"Sir, did you not read the entire memo?"

"C'mon, Firthy, ya know I hain't got time for that."

"Well, Sir, the Joint Chiefs are recommending a combination of tactics. Our troops are already spread thin, suppressing terror groups in the Middle East as well as all these insurrections that keep cropping up in these Yankee queer states. So the Chiefs are

recommending a combination of nuclear assault and bringing in forces from outside, drawn from our German allies."

"Chancellor Heinrich will surely be willing to help an old friend in need of assistance," said Johnson, douchebaggily referring to himself in the third person.

"Of course, Sir. And our power base will relish in the nuclear holocaust of the inner city trash. Blacks and Latinos, mostly. Only whites who would die in such an assault would be willy nilly Liberal hippie types."

"Ya got that straight, Firthy. We'll blow those damn daffodils straight to kingdom come," Johnson said as he slapped Agent Firth on the back and lit up another cigar filled with Virginia-grown tobacco.

"Sir, there was one other thing I was supposed to brief you on," Firth spoke.

"Well, spit it out, dammit."

"It's the situation in Latin America, Sir. Since you came into power, the H.I.A. has been able to subvert the democratically elected governments of Guatemala, Honduras, Bolivia, Venezuela, Uruguay, Peru, and Ecuador."

"Ha. Not bad, Firthy. Not bad at all," Johnson croaked, exhaling the Virginian smoke.

"I know, Sir. We've done much good work to smash the advances of so-called Twenty First Century Socialism, promoted by the likes of Latino Darkies and Bolivarian Beaners. Socialist scum. Commie bastards. Many of the fascist militarists we've installed as our puppets are mainly of European origin, though there are some fears among us in the Agency that some of our Hispanic puppets be *conversos*."

"*Con-what-o's?* Goddamit, Firth. What in the fucking God's name language are you speaking? This is America, goddamit. English or get out!" Johnson bellowed.

"*Conversos*, Sir. Sephardim. Jews from Spain who converted to Christianity during the Spanish Inquisition, but only on a superficial level; in all actuality they continued to practice their filthy faith in secret. Crypto-Jews, if you will, Sir."

"Well I'll be damned, Firthy. See to it that none of those Jew bastards get into any positions of power under the H.I.A.'s watch. I want those shifty Hispaniards on a damned short leash. Even if

some of 'em are of White European stock, ya can't ever trust too much a damned Hispaniard."

"Exactly my point, Sir," Agent Firth nodded. "But anyway, moving on . . ."

Johnson leaned beneath the Oval Office desk, reaching into a mini-fridge and grabbing some ice cubes. He poured himself another whisky on the rocks.

"The Joint Chiefs are asking for your clearance to go ahead and transfer several tens of thousands of military and paramilitary personnel from the School of the Americas to help quell the rebellion in Mexico. Our intelligence indicates that radical groups like the Zapatistas, the teachers' unions, and armed Beaner militias are growing powerful. Possibly a damned commie revolution in the works. Such a turn of events could pose a grave danger to national security, what with Mexico being just a stone's throw away. Training the Latino forces of repression right in their own homeland will certainly be a cost-effective measure."

"Several tens of thousands of personnel, eh? But who will keep watch at the School of the Americas?"

"The School is right in the heartland of our White Southerner powerbase; Columbus, Georgia, to be precise. We've done several assessments with our risk management consultants and everything indicates that the School is at a very low risk," Agent Firth explained.

"Even so, Firthy; the School of the Americas is vital to our ability to dominate our Backyard. I would hate to leave it too unguarded."

"Worry not, Sir. The H.I.A. keeps a tight watch," Agent Firth said reassuringly.

"I'd damned better hope so," General Johnson grumbled.

As General Johnson and Agent Firth spoke, our beloved gang of radicals, the Radical Book Club, *Santa Muerte*-worshippers, and volunteer brigades of Haitian, Cuban, and Mexican freedom fighters were halfway up the Chattahoochee. By the time they would reach the militaristic compound, security would be significantly weakened by the transfer of personnel to Mexico.

Meanwhile, In Tuxla Gutiérrez, the capital of Chiapas, Pedrocco Pastrana was slowly recuperating in a Zapatista-friendly hospital

from the severe injuries he had sustained in battle. There he began to know true love for the very first time, falling madly for a matronly Chiapan nurse named Primitiva. She would go on to nurse him back to health, and eventually they would start a family. Although he had lost his legs from the knees down, Primitiva knew a maker of fine prosthetic limbs in the city, and so Pedrocco was able to maintain a fair degree of mobility, even playing street soccer with the many children who lived in the village where he and Primitiva lived, an autonomous Chiapan people's commune in the highlands where a Mayan language was spoken by most residents.

The following night, the Radical Book Club, their *Santa Muerte*-worshipping allies, and volunteer brigades recruited in Cuba camped out at a lagoon near the School of the Americas.

Wither slapte sat in a tent with Santiago, Izzy, Paloma, Paty, and Tisha.

"The assault begins tonight," he uttered.

"May the *Santísima Muerte* bless this great undertaking," Santiago cried.

Paloma revealed a wild boar that she had captured in the lagoon and prepared to ritually sacrifice the beast.

They exited from the tent and were joined by swathes of swarthy Haitian radicals, practitioners of Vaudou.

In a scene reminiscent of the Ceremony of Caïman Woods, or *Bwa Kayiman*, the Vaudou ritual initiating the Haitian Revolution, Paloma slaughtered the hog and the radicals began to feast on its flesh.

"Such a shame Pedrocco couldn't be here to relish in this slaughter with us," Wither slapte mused.

"Perhaps one day we'll see him again," said Paty.

Responded Wither slapte, "Yes, I have a feeling we shall."

After the ritual, the radicals began marching towards the School of the Americas in unison, chanting together a bizarre refrain in some heathen tongue.

Security at Fort Benning's Western Hemisphere Center for Security Cooperation, more commonly known as the School of the Americas, was significantly weakened, and logistics were a nightmare, as tens of thousands of personnel had been transferred

from the base to Mexico, and the Army folks were still not sure about how everything was supposed to work with so many personnel now gone. The H.I.A. had been a bit hasty with the whole transfer operation, as they were eager to begin the mass indoctrination of Latino militarists in Mexico itself. Unfortunately enough, no one was manning security monitors to alert the base of the approaching hordes of Haitian and Cuban radicals.

Santiago and Izzy led the charge, both dual wielding sawed-off Cambodian-made Kalashnikovs, while other members of the Radical Book Club and devotees of the *Santa Muerte* stayed back within the hordes, each of them commanding a smaller platoon or battalion within the larger grouping of volunteer brigades.

Santiago kicked in the door of an infantry barracks where troops from Argentina were being housed. It being the wee hours of the morning, the Argentinians were fast asleep in their bunks.

"*Hashem Tonantzin eztlí kalo,*" Santiago whispered before pulling the pins off two hand grenades and rolling them down the barracks floor like bowling balls. Seconds before they detonated, he began going trigger happy, pointing one Cambodian-manufactured firearm at the set of bunks on the left and the other at the bunks on the right. Within twenty seconds, Santiago had single handedly claimed over one hundred and forty lives. One hundred and forty fascist footsoldiers who would never go back to Argentina to install a military junta on behalf of the Johnson regime.

The radical gang continued to lead the hordes of Haitian, Cuban, and Mexican brigands, ransacking barracks and engaging base personnel in skirmishes throughout the early morning.

Tisha and Paty entered a mess hall near the garrison which had housed the Argentinian militarists to clear out any personnel who might have sought refuge there.

Pitter. Patter. The linoleum tiles sonorously reflected the vibrations of Tisha and Paty's heels as they strolled through the mess hall towards the kitchen in back.

"Hold up, I think I saw some movement ahead," Paty whispered.

"There!" Tisha sang out before opening fire on the damned militarist bastard. Bullets ricocheted every which way, hitting the

right-wing soldier, but also piercing a large metal container filled with hot gravy.

The gravy began to flow out. Filled with synthetic hormones and mind control drugs, the gravy poured into the open wound of the militarist who had just been critically hit by Tisha's gunfire.

"Booyah," she croaked as the scalding drug-laced gravy caused the militarist to contort in bizarre writhing.

They proceeded to the kitchen.

"Want some mashed potatoes with that?" Paty said mockingly before lifting her Cambodian-made firearm and delivering a merciful *coup de grâce* to the militarist henchman.

As the indiscriminate slaughter continued, base personnel were overwhelmed by the radical gang and Caribbean brigands. Thousands of baby killers were laid to rest that day. After laying waste to the School of the Americas, the radicals fled to the lagoon to set up a mobile base camp.

Meanwhile, General Johnson sat at his Oval Office desk, getting wasted on whiskey when a call came in.

"General Johnson, Sir. Terrible news," Agent Firth began.

"What in the damned hell is it now, Firthy?" Johnson throated.

"The School of the Americas, Sir. It's been annihilated."

"Goddamn. I'll have your balls for this, Agent Firth."

"Forgive me, Sir."

"You assured me the School was at a low risk, goddammit!" Johnson bellowed.

"I know, Sir. I know. A horrific mistake has been made," Agent Firth sputtered.

"Goddammit, Firthy. Goddammit. Summon the H.I.A.'s Inner Circle. We meet at the Temple of Scottish Rite Freemasonry in fifteen sharp," Johnson croaked at the hands-free interphone as he put on his green blazer.

Back at the lagoon, the radicals were regrouping, plotting their next move.

"The Cuban and Haitian volunteer brigades will permeate the Deep South, wreak havoc on the populace," Wither slapte explained. "And the Johnson regime is facing serious setbacks elsewhere. Reports from the underground radical networks indicate

that the fascist forces have been forced to withdraw from a majority of urban centers.”

“Then it looks like our work here is nearly finished,” Izzy rasped, exhaling vaporized hash oil. Smoking dope was Izzy’s preferred means of relaxation after doing battle with reactionary fiends.

“Soon communism will reign over America, and then the whole world,” Paty chirped as she grabbed hold of the spliff.

“Yes, Paty, you’re right,” Wither slapte spoke with a nod. “Once a socialist workers’ state has been installed in the world’s top superpower and largest industrial economy, all of the world’s economies will be forced to adopt egalitarian modes of production and distribution. The state, brought under the working class’s control, will cease to have a *raison d’être*. The socialist state will thus wither away, giving way to a new system of ‘governance’, if it could even be called that: global communism. A stateless system where states have no reason to exist due to the lack of class antagonisms.”

“Excellent,” Tisha spoke, releasing cannabis fumes from her esophagus.

“And where does all that leave the Radical Book Club?” Izzy questioned.

“We certainly are none to subscribe to a Great Man version of history,” responded Wither slapte. “The proletarian masses will reign autonomously. Our task as radicals, it would seem, is none other than to continue analyzing situations, reading Marxian literature, and inspiring the masses to progress, though we lead not the masses in their place.”

Santiago approached, surrounded by a platoon of Cuban and Haitian brethren and sistren, and spoke up, “This revolution would never have progressed as far as it has without the blessings of the *Santa Muerte*, and of course our Vaudou, Santería, and Palo Mayombe practicing allies. The Radical Book Club must praise and honor our Dark Mother. Lead through service unto *La Santísima Muerte*.”

“But how can we do that?” Wither slapte asked.

“Wither slapte, have you forgotten about our European brethren and sistren?” Paloma questioned in return. “*La Santísima Muerte* has been propagated relatively widespread across the Americas,

thanks to radical groups such as ours, and the autonomous Marxian and anarchist drug cartels, but Rroma in Europe are still being oppressed under the jackboot of fascist and far-right parties such as the Jobbik Party in Hungary, the *Union pour un mouvement national* in France, or the Golden Dawn in Greece. Not to mention the rumors of Chancellor Ursula Heinrich’s allying with the Johnson regime. We must go to the Balkans, spread the cult of the *Santa Muerte* amongst the Rromani masses. Only then will this revolution be complete, only then will the final nail be pounded into the coffin of capitalist decadence.”

“What you say is true, Golumbaika,” Wither slapte spoke. “Communist revolution must not limit itself to a mere turn of economic façades. Cultural revolution must also take place. We have all seen what greatness the *Santa Muerte* has allowed us to achieve. Truly this revolution will be immune to counter-revolution once the *Santa Muerte* occupies the hearts and minds of workers and youth the world over.”

Izzy piped up, “And what better way to spread this radical belief system than through the networks of the Rroma? Present in hundreds of countries, many times without official documentation, the *Santa Muerte* cult will spread like a wild prairie fire this way.”

“Quickly; we must not dwell here longer than need be. Santiago, I trust you have given the Cuban and Haitian volunteer brigades their directives?” Wither slapte questioned.

“*Ándale*, Wither slapte, the havoc has already begun to be wreaked,” Santiago croaked as, nearby, Haitian brigands stormed rural White Southerner homesteads, viciously slaughtering the inhabitants in a systematic fashion that could hardly be described as ethnic cleansing since whiteness is a ruling class ideological construct corresponding to not a single cohesive national or ethnic grouping and certainly having virtually no basis in the biological sciences.

“We’ll return to the Twin Cities. Re-group with our Cholo and Gypsy allies there,” Wither slapte throatied, “Continue to launch periodic assaults and skirmish with government forces. Then we make our way to the Balkans. Spread glory unto the *Santa Muerte* there.”

“*Órale*, Wither slapte,” Santiago uttered as the Radical Book Club commandeered several armor-plated vehicles and began driving towards Minnesota.

“*Hijoles*,” Fabiola throatied, pinching her nostrils shut as the radical gang left the School of the Americas premises, driving past a gargantuan pile made up of the flaming cadavers of scores of militarist henchmen, around which a number of Cuban brigands were performing a bizarre Santería ceremony.

34 – NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST

Kablooey! The atomic warhead throbbingly blew energy waves across the urban landscape as the radical communists and *Santa Muerte*-worshippers performed a blax ritual in the basement of Santiago’s garage in South Minneapolis, where they had returned to that same night after a cross country road trip from Fort Benning, Georgia, where the School of the Americas once stood.

“Shit, what was that?” Wither slapte interrupted, feeling the shockwaves.

“Wither slapte, please. Show some respect for your Dark Mother and don’t interrupt Her ritual,” Santiago throatied, filling his golden chalice with more liquified black wax.

Paloma and Marita emerged from the tub of blax and threw Wither slapte into it.

“*Hashem Tonantzin eztli kalo*,” the radicals began chanting.

“*Hashem Tonantzin . . .*” Wither slapte murmured, internalizing Saint Death.

Fatiha, the old *drabarni*, was there, having been invited to participate in the ceremony honoring the return of the Radical Book Club, along with Gabor, his homeboy Julian and several other Cholos and Gypsies including Adrian, Veronika, and Yolanda. She began muttering bizarre incantations in Rromani *čhib* as the ritual progressed. Slowly her eyes rolled back in her head, only the whites visible.

“*Mungro yilo rovel*,” she cried in her thick Banatiski accent.

The ceremony progressed into a ritual slaughter of several goats and lambs followed by ritual grilling and feasting. The depraved radical communists then began dousing themselves in tubs of hot water, washing away the black wax of the *Santa Muerte* candles.

Finally Wither slapte spoke up again, "Did anyone else feel those shockwaves earlier? I think there was some kind of blast outside."

"Probably just some fascist government forces bombing nearby innocent civilians," Paty quipped.

"Maybe an earthquake," Fatiha suggested.

"In Minnesota? Highly unlikely," Wither slapte responded.

"This is a reinforced bunker," said Santiago. "I seriously doubt we would feel the shockwaves of any blast down here. No conventional sort of blast, in any case."

The radicals retrieved their clothing and personal items from a subterranean bin where such things were kept during rituals.

"Oh my God," Paty said, looking at the news headlines on her smartphone. "That Johnson fucker just nuked the Twin Cities."

"Holly shiznit," Gabor throatied.

Cedric scrambled for the ladder leading to the trap door, muttering, "Gotta get outta here, gotta get outta here!"

"Cedric! Hold your shit together!" *La Paloma Negra* shouted, grabbing him by the arm. She continued, addressing Paty, "If what you say is true, going outside right now is tantamount to suicide. Radiation levels would have to be off the charts."

"Golumbaika is right," Wither slapte uttered.

"But we can't just sit here!" Izzy bellowed.

"Izzy is right," Santiago conceded with a nod. "We'll be sitting ducks here. Or worse, irrelevant relics, decaying unnoticed."

"Dear Lordy, we screwed," Tisha gasped.

"No!" Wither slapte screamed. "We're not screwed yet! Come on, you guys. Just think! We've been in worse situations before."

Some of the radical communists and *Santa Muerte*-worshippers formed a circle and sat down; others began pacing around the subterranean lair and still others began stroking the iconic skeletal effigy of the *Santísima Muerte*.

Wither slapte pulled out the TV set that had been used to deprogram Agents Pamela and Greaves and tuned it to

Conservative Cable News. Jean-Claude Huntington was on, offering commentary on the ongoing nuclear assault.

Huntington began, "A sad day, America. Un-American radical communists have launched a nuclear assault on dozens of American cities. It seems that the only hope for order to be restored lies with our great leader, General Johnson and the fine members of the American Armed Forces. God bless America, and may this tragedy be resolved promptly! With more on General Johnson's plan to restore law and order, here's Gretyl O'Brien. Gretyl, take it away."

"Gretyl O'Brien here on Conservative Cable News. We have a CCN exclusive story here. Get this, folks: General Johnson has invited our German allies to help quell the Islamo-terror on the homefront! We have a CCN exclusive interview now with Joe Cigspac, a regular blue collar guy, just like you viewers at home."

The screen cut to Mike Beckhammer sitting on a lakefront with Joe Cigspac, an actor hired by CCN to represent their ideal target audience.

"So, Joe, tell me, what do you think of this Chancellor Ursala Heinrich gal?" Mike Beckhammer questioned.

"Don't seem to be nothin' wrong with the lady if I say so myself. Got a nice rack if I do say so as well," Joe reckoned.

"Ha! Joe, you old dog, you. But, seriously, do you think it's right to invite foreign troops onto American soil?" asked Beckhammer.

"Well now, ain't a-nothin' too foreign 'bout a German folk. Why, it's right thar in the ol' census records that a great many of Americans is of a German heritage. They're our kinfolk, so tah speak. Why, I'd a-reckon that they're our racial brethren," said Joe in his salty Southern drawl.

"A totally valid point, Joe. My great-great-grandparents immigrated here from Germany in the 19th century, as I'm sure did the grandparents of many true blue, red-blooded Patriots," Beckhammer replied.

Paty put her hand on Wither slapte's shoulder as the broadcast continued. "What the fuck is this shit?" she uttered.

“What the ruling class thinks will be prevailing logic for years to come,” Wither slapte replied.

“Can you believe that they’re trying to pin the blame for this nuclear holocaust on us?” Paty asked.

“It’s not that hard to believe, sadly and honestly,” Wither slapte replied.

Jean-Claude Huntington re-appeared. “I’ve said it for years, folks: urban Latino and Black youths are running amuck in this country. The Islamo-radical commies are only shooting themselves in the foot with this nuclear assault business. America will only be stronger, more pure after all of this is over. The backbone of America—rural, blue collar folks—will re-emerge after these damn socialist sods have destroyed their own support base, and this country will be better for it! That’s why tonight’s ‘Up of the Thumbs’ goes to the un-American anti-Johnson radicals. Now we have a CCN exclusive report from our very own Donaldo Oleada, who is embedded with recently arrived German shock troops who have been sent by America’s ally, Chancellor Heinrich, to help restore peace and order on the homefront.”

“Jesus Christ,” Wither slapte muttered.

“Donaldo Oleada here with German shock troops, live in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Only on Conservative Cable News. I’m in a reinforced armored personnel carrier, driving through a recently atomically blasted zone with our German allies. Our task here is to scour the zone, looking for any survivors, and bring them to safety. We have special hazmat suits to protect us from the radiation and Geiger counters to indicate if we approach too close to the epicenter of the blast. God willing, we will find the survivors of this heinous communist crime, and God willing, those damn socialist sods will pay for their insanity. God bless America!”

The *Star-Spangled Banner* began to be broadcast in the background as Donaldo’s footage of the blast zone continued to play. Though much of Minneapolis had been obliterated in the nuclear holocaust, most of South Minneapolis as well as Saint Paul had survived the blast relatively unscathed. The Uptown and Powderhorn areas were somewhat irradiated, but still manageable

and had many survivors. Downtown and the Cedar-Riverside areas were totally annihilated.

“Wait a minute . . . Look at that!” Izzy cried. “Did you see that sign? Forty-sixth Street. Those bastards are only two blocks away, and they’re headed this way!”

“*Rápido, carnales*, grab firearms!” Santiago declared. “If we get up there and waste those German *pendejos*, we can commandeer their hazmat suits and reinforced vehicle, be protected from the radiation. Those fuckers could be our ticket out of here.”

“*Ándale, primo*,” Izzy throat. “Our exposure time to the radiation will be insignificant if we waste those *pinche* Krauts swiftly.”

Fatiha raised her arms sanctimoniously, a sharp blade in her right hand. “*Baxtale trayin!*” she cried as the radicals ran to the firearms stash located in a tub near the shrine to the *Santa Muerte*. She began dancing, shifting her shoulders to and fro as she clenched the blade with her teeth.

Izzy, Santiago, Fabiola, Paty, Paloma, Tisha, Wither slapte, Marita, Gabor, Julian, Cedric, Adrian, Veronika, Yolanda, and several other Cholos and Gypsies then grabbed Cambodian-made Kalashnikovs, climbed up the ladder and forced open the trapdoor. The radicals climbed through the urban rubble of Santiago’s annihilated garage and could faintly make out the sound of the approaching APC.

“Take cover,” Santiago called as the radicals took position behind remnant concrete posts.

“Ah, I feel weak,” Wither slapte moaned.

“Must be the radiation,” Gabor croaked. “Don’t worry, we’ll have those hazmat suits soon enough.”

As the APC containing Donaldo Oleada and a platoon of German shock troops approached, Tisha took out a sticky grenade, preparing to assault the vehicle.

Donaldo was sitting at the back of the APC with his interpreter, Fritz Heller, when Tisha lobbed the sticky grenade in front of the vehicle in order to bring it to a halt, but not too close so as to damage the vehicle. That way the radicals would be able to hijack it and flee the irradiated zone.

“*Scheisse!*” the APC driver shouted as the device detonated in front of him. He slammed on the breaks.

“Booyah,” Tisha croaked.

“Quickly, begin *asaltando los alemanes!*” Santiago bellowed as the Radical Book Club emerged from behind the crumbling concrete and began indiscriminately peppering the APC with gunfire.

“*Achtung!*” Kommander Pfeiffer shouted. “Rebel assault!”

The platoon of Chancellor Heinrich’s men rapidly descended from the APC and so began the skirmish. Unfortunately, they were unfamiliar with the territory, and they were thus quickly overwhelmed by the indigenous fighters.

The radicals then swiftly stepped over the German cadavers and commandeered the armored personnel carrier, taking Donaldo and Fritz hostage and donning the hazmat suits so as to be protected from the radiation.

“Goddamn,” Wither slapte croaked as the gang drove through the devastated metropolis.

“Those fascists will pay for this!” Izzy shouted, putting his hazmat glove-covered palm on Wither slapte’s hazmat suit-covered shoulder.

The radicals drove towards the outskirts of the Twin Cities, away from the epicenter of the blast, until finally they reached the bourgeois western suburbs, where a garrison of German troops were stationed.

“They’ll never know that it’s us as long as we stay here in the vehicle,” Santiago reasoned.

“Let’s drive into the center of their garrison, then when they least expect it, bam! We bum-rush the mofos!” Izzy screamed.

“Ha! Brilliant shit!” Paty shouted. “It will be like some kind of Marxian Trojan horse!”

The deranged radicals drove past several armored personnel carriers and came to a clearing near Lake Waconia where numerous platoons of German shock troops had formed a circle and were roasting bratwursts over an open fire.

“*Was ist das?*” a German soldier named Ignatz questioned as the APC containing the radical gang approached the ring of men.

Suddenly, the German troops began to panic as Tisha drove the APC into the bratwurst roasting circle, crushing four soldiers under the vehicle’s large tires.

“*Scheisse! Scheisse!*” the fascist Krauts called as the deranged radicals stormed out of the APC’s rear and began indiscriminately peppering them with small arms fire as they scrambled to their weapons, located in their tents. But it was to no avail. They had been caught off guard, and the great majority were swiftly neutralized. Several dozen German troops’ lives were thus abruptly terminated in the ensuing chaos.

An eery silence came over the scene as the fighting came to a standstill. Several Cholos had also been killed in the gunfire by the few Krauts who had managed to retrieve their weapons.

“Welp, no need to keep this Donaldo bastard alive,” Santiago throat, summarily executing the CCN reporter along with his interpreter, Fritz, with two swift blasts of the Desert Eagle.

“May the *Santa Muerte* take their souls,” said Fabiola, making the sign of the cross and wiping spattered blood from her long skirt.

Wither slapte impaled a severely incapacitated (though still living) German soldier with a bayonet he had recovered from the carnage. “*Hashem Tonantzin,*” he uttered, beginning to trance out to the realm of phantasy. Wither slapte was becoming more accustomed to brutality now, and felt less hesitant to take the lives of reactionaries.

E Golumbaika Kali put her hand on his shoulder and instantly they became Rat and Dove, projected through the cosmos to Rátopia, the darkest planet unknown to Man. There Sun Ra informed Rat that Dove had been impregnated when they had made love on the night before the assault on Jorge Peterson-Gonzalez’s compound.

As Wither slapte’s consciousness jizzed through space, he imagined that this child would be a special light unto the world, the starchild of the Highest Priestess and the Vanguard Leader.

In total, eighteen nuclear warheads strategically aimed at the metro areas containing the largest numbers of individuals of an anti-General Johnson persuasion were detonated that day. As survivors of the blasts, such as our beloved radical gang, regrouped along the

outskirts of metropolitan areas, the underground resistance networks eventually communicated a plan to re-group in Upstate New York. Quebecois radicals, mostly Maoists and some anarchists, provided relief to the anti-Johnson forces, periodically putting themselves at great risk by carrying care packages across the Quebec-New York border.

New York City, though about a quarter of the city was irradiated, remained a rebel stronghold as well, and after several months of civil war, the remaining members of the Radical Book Club, along with Marita, Santiago, Fabiola, Julian, Cedric, Paloma, Gabor, and Fatiha headed south to the Big Apple to procure a German submarine that had been captured by rebel forces stationed there. The radicals had a mind to utilize it to clandestinely arrive in the Balkans to spread the cult of Saint Death.

Before departing to the Balkans, the radical communists and their *Santa Muerte*-worshipping allies camped out for a few days on Jones Beach on Long Island. There Paty and Tisha plotted the itinerary of the transatlantic nautical voyage.

Paty pointed to a map in an atlas that Tisha held in her hands as they lay on the beach, waves crashing nearby as she explained, "We'll pass here, north of the Sargasso Sea. Then we'll enter the Mediterranean through the Strait of Gibraltar and make our way to the Adriatic Sea. From there we'll be able to disembark in the Balkan port town of Neum, found in the south of Bosnia and Herzegovina."

"Why Bosnia?" Tisha wondered.

"Little regulations, rule of law and order there. Unlikely we'll have any troubles getting in," Paty answered.

"You sure that ain't just some quasi-orientalist bull?" Tisha questioned. "I'm sure they got some behavioral social norms, *de facto* civic regulations and whatnot, culturally relatively speaking."

"Either way, we gotta enter the Balkans and spread the cult of Saint Death somehow," Paty replied.

35 – PEDROCCO RETURNS

As the weeks went by, Pedrocco slowly but surely adjusted to life with limbs terminating at the knees. His new lover, Primitiva, was an expert in the indigenous art of herbology, and she gave him many healthful herbs to recuperate and alleviate his pain. Primitiva became impregnated with their first child in the first month of their relationship, and shortly thereafter the couple was married at a Zapatista militant camp. Additionally, Pedrocco mastered the art of prosthetic limbs, and was able to move like any able-bodied person. The prosthetic limb-maker Primitiva knew in Tuxtla Gutiérrez had fashioned bladerunner style limbs for Pedrocco, similar to the 'Flex-Foot Cheetah' design used by amputee athletes in the Paralympic Games. He was even able to regrow his hipster euro-mullet and moustache, which had been singed off in the flames on that fateful day in which he had ran over a landmine.

As weeks turned to months, Pedrocco gradually became more and more absorbed with news of events in *El Norte*. Every evening he watched the news reports of the insurgency against the Johnson regime, the nuclear holocaust that had been blamed on Islamo-radical communists and anarchists, and the ensuing civil war between the pro-Johnsonites, predominantly rural white settler-descended folk on the one hand and the anti-Johnsonites, composed in large part of Black and Latino working class youths. He thought often of his old comrades, his brethren and sistren of the Radical Book Club, the *Santa Muerte* devotees.

“Primitiva. There’s something I must tell you,” he finally said one evening.

“*Si, mi amor?*”

“I must re-join my brethren. I must terminate the Johnson regime once and for all.”

“*Ay no, mi Pedrocco!* Your *hijo* needs you here,” she said, rubbing her large belly.

“The world demands sacrifice, Primitiva. Sacrifice from you and I. I know full well that I may not survive this undertaking. Our son may grow without a father to show him the way of the *Santa Muerte*, of Marxian ideals. However, I must fulfill my vendetta. When will this bloodshed end, if it is not I who end it? I will go to *El Norte* and I will terminate the life of General Johnson! I will unite the masses and smash the political rule of the capitalist class! I will institute cultural revolution which prevents the lingering of capitalistic and reactionary modalities in the collective consciousness! I will instaure communism, once and for all!” Pedrocco pleaded.

“You and your *pinche* Marxian ideals, Pedrocco!” Primitiva screamed.

“No woman will prevent me from pursuing my bloodlust!” Pedrocco bellowed, taking two steps on his prosthetic blade limbs to the cabinet where he kept his Glock and ammo. He swiftly loaded the firearm and discharged it several times into the ceiling of the couple’s humble abode to make sure that it was still functioning, since he had not done combat in months.

Primitiva began sobbing.

“*Ándale. Hasta luego,*” said Pedrocco as he walked away, not once looking back.

Pedrocco left Tuxtla Gutiérrez and made his way across Mexico, encouraging indigenous peasants to rebel against the neo-colonial free trade system and promoting Marxian ideals all along the way. He was like Johnny Appleseed, but spreading Marxian ideals rather than apple seeds. His fame grew and word of his travels spread like prairie fire amongst the workers and working farmers, while at the same time his infamy grew amongst the petit bourgeois and comprador bourgeois folk. Everywhere Pedrocco went he wasted comprador bourgeois *narcotraficantes* and this in

turn further strengthened the power of the Marxian and anarchist drug cartels, who were now a potent force, controlling the entirety of Ciudad Juárez, which was now being run as an autonomous people’s commune. Pedrocco stopped briefly in Ciudad Juárez to address the masses there on the need for proletarian revolution before moving on.

After Pedrocco crossed the border into El Paso, Texas, he was met at the frontier by a group of violent vigilantes known as the Radical Book Club Disciples, or RBC Disciples, who had taken over the Customs and Border Protection station.

“It’s an honor to meet you, Mr. Pastrana. I’m Biff Mathers, head honcho of the Radical Book Club Disciples,” the street gang’s leader said. He was a tall, somewhat deranged-looking man with auburn hair.

“The honor is mine. But please, call me Pedrocco.”

“Very well, Pedrocco. Surely you must know how influential your Radical Book Club has been in inspiring revolt against this corrupt system,” said Biff Mathers.

“Aye. So I hear.”

“Without the Radical Book Club’s lead, we would be totally lost in this fight. Truly you are the vanguard. For instance, we in the RBC Disciples adopted the Book Club’s coded numbering system to avoid police detection. We assign a code book and then use a three number system to communicate about classified topics. The first number represents the page, the second the line, and the third number is the word in that line. This helps us keep off the trail of the piggies,” Biff Mathers explained.

“Interesting,” Pedrocco uttered. “But we in the Radical Book Club never used such a coded number system. We were simply open with our diabolical plots to overthrow the police state and smash the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, although we did periodically worship the *Santa Muerte* in a dark subterranean lair. Truly our fame and renown have grown to hyperbolic proportions.”

“Please, you are so modest,” Biff uttered in reply.

“Enough with the flatteries, Biff. Let’s get down to business. This civil war has ensued for far too long. It is time that we smash the system and end this bloodshed, once and for all,” Pedrocco throatied back.

“Of course, Pedrocco,” Biff grunted as other RBC Disciples milled about the dusty road.

Pedrocco continued, “Where we have gone wrong is in letting this class struggle devolve into a race war. Rural whites could, in theory, be won over to the side of the proletariat as many of them are workers and working farmers. But alas, we have allowed the bourgeois folk to divide the proletariat along ethnic lines. Urban Blacks and Latinos are forthright in their role as the vanguard, but still, we must do more to reach out to backward elements. Lumpenproles. Workers with the consciousness of ruling class knobs. The key to victory lies in building a multinational coalition of the poor, workers and youth, united in the task of taking down their common exploiter.”

“What you say is true, Pedrocco,” Biff Mathers croaked slowly before a doubt sailed to the front of his mind. “But how can we win them over to our side?”

“By leading through example. If we slay General Johnson and transmit a communique to the masses which highlights the importance of inter-ethnic dialogue and co-operation, the rural white populace is sure to abandon their backward views and join our righteous cause.”

Biff Mathers nodded his head in comprehension of Pedrocco’s thought.

Pedrocco went on, “Without their supreme fucking leader, the rural whites will be like a headless chicken, running about haphazardously until finally their backward consciousness dies out.”

Biff interrupted, “Perhaps you’ve heard a thing or two about the recent attack in Georgia. Word on the street is that that fascist and militarist training facility, the School of the Americas, has been laid to waste. And now there are thousands of Haitian and Cuban brigands running amok through the Deep South, or so they say.”

“No way,” Pedrocco croaked.

“Yes way,” Biff replied. “Haitian and Cuban brethren, slaughtering all who have even the slightest trace of sympathy for General Johnson.”

Pedrocco learned with great joy from the RBC Disciples of the slaughter of the militarist personnel at the School of the Americas. He knew then that the revolution would go on. It must go on. For

the sake of all the working class folk of America, by God, this revolution must go on. He stayed several days with the RBC Disciples street gang in El Paso and finally convinced them to come with him to Upstate New York, where the anti-Johnson rebel forces had gathered. There he learned that he had only just missed the Radical Book Club’s departure to the Balkans. Pedrocco resolved to stay and sustain the resistance on the East Coast until General Johnson’s life would be terminated in an act of brutal revenge.

36 – THE RESISTANCE SOLIDIFIES ITS GAINS

Officer Peabody walked out the front door of his suburban abode to the tin mailbox to see what had arrived that day. Jovially he waved as a platoon of German shock troops marched past. He was wearing a baby blue bathrobe made out of towel material and humming the tune of *Stock* by Special Darkness, a minimal synth coldwave song he had heard on the night of the rave massacre. Peabody detested subaltern youth cultures, but the hypnotic synthesizer rhythms had engrained themselves in his consciousness against his own will. Several months had gone by since his knee injury was inflicted by Agent Greaves and it was feeling quite a bit better now.

“What’s this?” he muttered as he pulled an envelope stamped with the logo of the Minneapolis Police Department out from his mailbox.

Just as he was stepping back into his home, Officer Vang came speeding up in his off duty vehicle, a riced out Nissan.

“Hey Peabody! Enjoying the bachelor’s life?” Vang shouted out the window as he pulled up along the curb.

“Vang, you old dog!” Peabody called. “Long time no see!”

Vang hopped out of his vehicle and gave Peabody a high five.

“Come on in!” said Peabody. “Can I get you a beer or anything?”

“Whiskey on the rocks’ll do,” Vang replied.

“Ha, alright. Boy, I h’ain’t seen ya since the day that Homeland Agent bitch demolished my knee. What’s new with you?” Peabody asked.

“Well, the Force gave me paid leave for post-traumatic stress after I was taken hostage by those commie radicals when they launched an all-out assault on the State Capitol Building.”

“Damn, Vang. Hope you’re alright.”

“Eh, I’m holding up okay.”

“Anyway, juice that disability for all it’s worth. Lord knows we deserve the cash,” said Peabody, half-discretely sliding his hand down his pants to scratch his scrotum.

“I know, I know,” Vang spoke. “But I just can’t stand the thought of those damn socialist sods running amok in our streets. It’s like my grandfather killed all those Viet Cong for nothing!”

Peabody put his hand on Vang’s shoulder reassuringly, before remembering the letter he had just received from the Police Force. He sat back down and held the envelope, staring pensively at it.

“What’s that?” Vang questioned.

“A letter from the Force.”

“Well, open the darn thing up and see what’s inside,” Vang suggested.

Peabody tore it open and read the letter slowly, his eyes beginning to tear up.

“It’s a summons,” Peabody rasped. “Says my knee injury is no longer a valid reason not to be on duty.”

“Goddamn,” Vang whispered.

“You can say that again,” uttered Peabody. “Looks like I’ll be on patrol tomorrow,” he went on, reading more of the letter.

“What can I say? Good luck, buddy. And, my condolences. Lord knows these streets aren’t as safe as they used to be,” Vang said.

The next day Officer Peabody woke up early to report in for duty at the local precinct station. He groaned as he got out of bed, knowing that Minneapolis had largely descended into lawlessness during the period of his paid leave, and that his work would be extremely perilous, his life liable to end at any given moment.

Lieutenant Jackson was passing out hazmat suits to a group of fresh recruits when Peabody entered the station.

“Peabody, ya damn greenhorn! Finally back for some real police work, eh?” Jackson jabbed.

“Got my summons the other day.”

“Well, hope you’re ready to kick some looter ass!” Jackson rumbled.

“Looters, huh?” Peabody inquired. “Thought everything there was to loot would have been looted by now.”

“Well, Peabody, looks like you’ve been out of the loop for a while,” Jackson replied. “After those damn nuclear attacks by the Islamo-commies, the whole game has changed. We were starting to set up some semblance of order; basic commerce was functioning again. But now we have looters entering the irradiated zones, stealing goods that don’t belong to them! Only good thing is that the damn commie rebels seemed to destroy most of their own support base. They were stationing themselves at this place called Fatiha’s Fortune Burlesque, but luckily that was totally destroyed in the nuclear blasts.”

“Hm, doesn’t that seem a bit strange that they would deliberately target their own base camp?” Peabody questioned.

“Well, ya know what they say about commies, Peabody. Not the sharpest lightbulbs in the shed,” mused Jackson. “But anyhow, don’t think about none of that. Your job today is to patrol on the peripheries of the irradiated zone, stay on the lookout for any suspicious looking persons, and put a stop to the damn looting.”

“Sounds good to me, Sir,” Peabody retorted. “Say, they didn’t give you any paid leave for post-traumatic stress? Sure you musta seen a helluva lot of shit in the past few months. Rebel assault on the State Capitol Building, urban guerrilla warfare campaign, and whatnot.”

“Hell’s nah, Peabrain! Who’s gonna kick some commie ass if I’m at home just cuz a few of those damn Islamo-socialist sods took me hostage?” Jackson shouted.

“*Touché*, Sir,” Peabody shot back.

“Oh, and I almost forgot,” Lieutenant Jackson went on just as a blonde bombshell with long muscular legs and a perky bosom strolled in. “Meet your new partner, Officer McCuskey.”

“How do you do, Officer Peabody?” McCuskey asked politely.

“H-h-hi there,” Peabody stammered. “Pretty good, how’s about yourself?”

“Oh, not too bad,” she shot back.

“I’m sure you two will make a great team,” Jackson throated, beginning to fantasize about taking McCuskey out to a baseball game and eating footlong hotdogs with her on a warm and sunny summer’s day as he slapped the pair of police officers on their backs.

McCuskey and Peabody walked to their squad car together, not saying a word. They got in, Peabody driving and McCuskey riding shotgun, when finally Peabody made his move.

“So, sugartits, you got a first name?” Peabody croaked, his crotch beginning to bulge as they drove over the Lake Street Bridge, just on the edge of the irradiated zone.

“Excuse me?” Officer McCuskey uttered, taken aback.

“A first name, honey.”

“Fuck you, asshole,” McCuskey snapped.

“Jesus Christ, bitch. Come on and be a doll,” Peabody said. “Or else this partner gig ain’t gonna work out so well.”

“Who the fuck do you think you are?” McCuskey bemoaned.

Peabody reached over, gropping McCuskey’s chest, one hand still on the steering wheel. “Yeah, you like that, whore. Come closer,” he croaked.

Officer McCuskey then punched Officer Peabody in the throat, causing him to swerve and lose control of the vehicle.

“Shit!” McCuskey shouted as the squad car grazed an oncoming armored personnel carrier filled with National Guardsmen, nearly colliding with it. She grabbed the steering wheel in an attempt to correct the situation, but she overcompensated, slamming the right side of the vehicle into a bench along the sidewalk, which in turn caused the vehicle to flip. The windshield shattered and chunks of glass serrated the officers’ faces as the vehicle whirled through the air and proceeded to scrape across the concrete.

“Goddamn!” Peabody rasped quietly, his vocal cords in terrible shape.

The police cruiser then slammed into the parapet running along the edge of the bridge and teetered for a moment before finally tottering off the side. As the vehicle plummeted some two hundred feet before splashing into the waters of the Mississippi River

below, Peabody's face slammed into the steering wheel, knocking out several teeth and rendering him unconscious.

Officer McCuskey gasped for breath as irradiated water rushed in through the broken windshield. She struggled to unfasten her seatbelt as the interior of the car quickly became an aquatic environment, the vehicle submerging deeper, ever deeper into the river. Finally she managed to free herself and hesitated briefly before deciding to save Peabody.

Having been a swimming pool lifeguard in her early 20s, McCuskey was quite easily able to maneuver in the water and drag the unconscious Officer Peabody near the shoreline. However, as the officers approached the shore, a group of spear fishermen gathered, watching the cops swim towards them. The loin cloth-covered reverts to primitivism began grunting in a more and more agitated fashion as McCuskey pulled Peabody by his hair and swam within a few meters of them.

Given the collapse of social services and a near total breakdown in the commercial exchanges sustaining the populace's access to basic necessities of life in the wake of Johnson's coup and the ensuing civil war, many Americans had reverted to a hunter-gatherer lifestyle in order to survive. While many did this out of pure necessity, a significant number were inspired by the propaganda of anarcho-primitivist collectives and publishing houses. As it would turn out, a number of these publishers had in all actuality been covertly funded by the Homeland Intelligence Agency in an attempt to foster misunderstanding of the dynamics of political economy by spreading the erroneous notions that communism is impossible in a technologically advanced society, that liberation can only be achieved through a regression to primitive communism, and that technology inherently begets social stratification. This in turn gave the H.I.A. the upper hand on the telecommunications front as dozens of autonomous anarchist affinity cells opted to communicate only through carrier pigeons.

Finally one of the half naked primitivists chucked a spear through the air and it landed impaling Officer Peabody in the back. He floated face down in the water, his blood spreading around him as McCuskey let go of him briefly to unholster her firearm. She

gasped for breath as she had accidentally swallowed some water in the chaotic situation and then she fired off several rounds, striking one of the spearmen in the chest and another in the abdomen.

The first spearman collapsed instantly, blood spurting from the gaping gunshot wound as he lay supine, while the other spearman keeled over, clutching his stomach in agony. Other spearmen began grunting yet more loudly and chucking their spears at Officer McCuskey, just barely missing her. Finally a pair of hunter-gatherers threw a net over the officers, entangling them like a couple of catfish. The deranged primitivists snarled as they drew in the bewildered McCuskey and wounded Peabody, punching both of them in their faces before yanking out the spear from Peabody's back.

"Arghh!" Peabody grunted, his condition deteriorating as the spearhead serrated his flesh upon exiting.

The spearmen tied the net to a long spear and two of them carried the police officers on their shoulders to an abandoned building. It was a house whose inhabitants had fled to the countryside due to unrelenting urban guerrilla warfare and nuclear fallout. There the primitivists began grunting once again in Modern Neanderthal, a constructed language, or conlang, engineered by a think-tank associated with the Anarcho-Primitivist Publishing House, which was an H.I.A. front.

This conlang was invented with the discovery of Neanderthal jaw structure and Sumerian cuneiform tablets which told of the 40,000 year old Neanderthalian tongue, spoken in Nurthallistan, an ancient Neanderthalian empire which laid the base structure for all of the mighty human empires. These artifacts permitted the primitivists to re-construct Modern Neanderthal based on the manners of Neanderthal Man. However, the language's grammar and syntax still guarded much of English in the form of 'calques' (that is, loanwords). Other structures were guarded as well; literal translations of idioms and so on.

Nurthallistan had basically been an empire which stretched from southern France to Lebanon. It was an empire inhabited by Neanderthals. The anarcho-primitivist neo-Neanderthals who spoke the constructed Modern Neanderthal language relied heavily on their romanticized vision of Nurthallistan. Modern Neanderthal

is actually a misnomer because there was in all actuality another empire of so-called 'Neanderthal Men' in East Asia known as Vayutnubika. These Neanderthal Men did not speak the same language as those Neanderthal Men in the West. The East Asian Neanderthals were biologically identical to the European and Mediterranean Neanderthal Men, except in that they contained superior quantities of melatonin, a consciousness-altering hormone, in their pineal gland. The East Asian Neanderthals had mated with the so-called 'Negritos', dark island people of South Asia.

At the time of the Johnson regime's heinous human rights violations, the 'Negritos' still held a stronghold on 'Sentinel Island'. This was an island in the archipelago controlled by India known as the Andaman Islands. There another island people lived as well, known as the Jawara Tribe. These islanders, the Jawara, made contact with the capitalist world structure at the end of the 20th century, but those Negritos on Sentinel Island refused contact with the outside world right up to the present.

A very muscular spearman began grunting loudly in a burned out shell of a room in the abandoned house as Peabody came to.

"Damn, how long was I out?" Peabody groaned.

He was sitting in a chair, strapped back to back with McCuskey.

The spearman set down his spear in the corner of the creepy room filled with peeling wallpaper and burn marks.

"When will that damn Lieutenant Jackson learn to stop meddling in the Nurthand tribe's affairs?" the man shouted in English. He was an agent from the H.I.A. known only by his *nom de guerre*, Cloaked Assassin. Sent to covertly lead an anarcho-primitivist sect for an experimental mission, part of a top secret project overseen by the H.I.A., Cloaked Assassin was a key leader of the neo-Neanderthal movement which was increasingly rising as a controlled opposition force against the *Santa Muerte* drug cult-backed rebels.

"Nurthand tribe? What is this, some new street gang?" Peabody muttered, throwing his words over his shoulder to Officer McCuskey.

"No, you fool. Didn't the department brief you on anything? They're primitivists," McCuskey muttered back at him.

"Primitivists?" Officer Peabody said in disbelief.

"Neo-Neanderthals!" Cloaked Assassin screamed before kneeling Peabody in the face violently. "We're Neo-Neanderthals! Get it right!" he shouted once more as he delivered the blow.

"Jesus! My fucking back . . . my face. What happened?" Peabody uttered in bemusement.

"You were impaled by a fishing spear," Cloaked Assassin shot back. "And I just smashed your face with my knee. You've lost a lot of blood, sonny boy. Don't make me take more than I must."

Agent Cloaked Assassin was wearing nothing but a skimpy loincloth to cover his junk.

"Do your worst, Neanderthal," Officer Peabody spat. "You're no different than the rest of the old street gangs."

"Shut up, fool!" Cloaked Assassin bellowed before grunting at two other neo-Neanderthals, instructing them in their bizarre tongue to beat and torture the officers.

Cloaked Assassin then retreated to the dark basement of the abandoned house. Making sure no one else was around, he pulled on a loose brick in the wall, opening a secret lair that not even the other anarcho-primitivist neo-Neanderthals knew about. It was a telecommunications chamber constructed by the H.I.A. to keep tabs on their controlled opposition, the primitivist neo-Neanderthals.

Immediately after Cloaked Assassin sat down in the cramped telecommunications chamber, a large LCD screen on the wall lit up for a video conference call, revealing the H.I.A.'s Inner Circle sitting around a table at the Masonic Temple in Washington D.C. They were still wearing black robes from the sex magick human sacrifice ritual they had just performed.

"Well if it isn't Agent Cloaked Assassin," Agent Calvin began. "So lovely to see you, my friend."

"Please, Calvin, spare me the flatteries and let's get down to business," Cloaked Assassin uttered in response.

Agent Windsor spoke up. "Listen here, Cloaked. This neo-Neanderthal pet project of yours needs to start producing some results or we're going to rein in on your little parade."

"Fuck you, Windsor," Cloaked Assassin hissed. "The neo-Neanderthal movement is the last hope the government has to

triumph over these Marxian and anarcho-communist radicals. I don't know what they put in the water over there in D.C., but you boys would do well to wake up and smell the coffee here. The *Santa Muerte* cult has grown incredibly powerful in the last period. The only chance we have to smash it is to transform the radicals' belief system through alchemy. And that means mass promotion of an insurrectionary worldview capable of competing with their own. After that we stage a false flag neo-Neanderthal triumph. Keep the sheeple masses speaking Modern Neanderthal to control and limit their thought capacity and indoctrinated into an anti-technology worldview in order to keep rebel movements from using tech against us. Meanwhile the H.I.A. continues mass surveillance through its vastly superior technological arsenal, keeping the filthy uninitiated ones at bay."

"Goddamit, Cloaked. We've heard this spiel a million times," Agent Hertz rasped.

"How many potential recruits to the *Santa Muerte* cult have you diverted into neo-Neanderthalism?" Agent Klondike probed.

"Countless," Cloaked Assassin replied.

"Come on, Cloaked, we need numbers here!" Klondike shouted.

"Several dozen in the Twin Cities alone, at least," the mysterious Agent shot back.

"And how many actual bona fide *Santa Muerte* devotees have you brought over?" Agent Firth questioned.

Cloaked Assassin swallowed. "None. As of yet, Sir."

"Look, Cloaked. We have a lot of respect for what you're doing there, but we're going to need to see some more concrete advances made against the *Santa Muerte* cult in the near future if we're going to treat this project as at all viable," said Agent Firth.

"Understood, Sir. I just need a little more time," Cloaked Assassin pleaded.

Meanwhile, two floors upstairs, Officer McCuskey had just managed to free her hands from the bonds as a pair of neo-Neanderthals who were wearing skimpy loincloths were savagely beating Officer Peabody. After freeing her hands, McCuskey reached for a knife that happened to be lying on the ground nearby and swiftly cut the bonds that were keeping her legs restrained. Immediately she stood up and threw the knife at the first neo-

Neanderthal. The knife landed directly in the primitivist's chest, incapacitating him instantaneously. McCuskey then roundhouse kicked the other primitivist in the face, rendering him out cold.

"Damn, McCuskey. Didn't know ya had it in ya," Peabody moaned, blood pouring out of his lips and nostrils.

"There's a lot you don't know about me," McCuskey throated. "Now come on, let's get out of here!"

She then yanked the knife out of the dead primitivist's chest cavity and cut Peabody's bonds.

Some primitivists downstairs heard the commotion caused by McCuskey's assault on the two neo-Neanderthal thugs and came running up.

By the time they arrived, McCuskey had recovered the officers' firearms and was dual wielding them (since Peabody would have made a poor shot, as his eyes were practically swollen shut from the beating).

Officer McCuskey began slamming off slugs indiscriminately as hordes of anarcho-primitivists began flooding forth into the hallway outside the interrogation room. Numerous cadavers lay astrew as the officers ran down the flight of stairs, McCuskey continuing to down more primitivists as the duo made their escape.

Cloaked Assassin looked up towards the ceiling, hearing the rapid succession of gunfire through the floorboards above him.

"Goddamn," he blurted out, knowing that it must be the local law enforcement officers escaping, since neo-Neanderthals did not believe in using guns, only spears and bows. While swords and maces were considered unorthodox, many neo-Neanderthals actually permitted themselves to wield these.

"What is it now, Cloaked?" Agent Young asked.

"Nothing. Just let me handle this," Cloaked Assassin croaked back before ending the video conference call and picking up an M4 assault rifle from a locker bin nearby.

Cloaked Assassin swiftly ran up the stairs from the basement and came out into the entryway just as Officers McCuskey and Peabody were running away into the ruins of Minneapolis. He began discharging his firearm wildly, hollow-tipped slugs flinging out at an insanely rapid rate of succession. A gentle breeze blew his loincloth, exposing his manhood to the open air.

Back at the Scottish Rite Temple of Freemasonry in Washington, the H.I.A.'s Inner Circle was in a conundrum.

"What in the hell was that?" Agent Young questioned.

"He just cut the call," answered Agent Hertz.

Agent Windsor croaked, "Goddamn."

"It's time to rein in on this neo-Neanderthal shit," Agent Calvin thundered.

"Perhaps you're right, Calvin. Agent Bridgewater, I want you to write up a memorandum on the neo-Neanderthal movement and send it to General Johnson right away. Be sure to note that Agent Cloaked Assassin is a semi-rogue element. See what he has to say about it," Agent Young commanded.

In a particularly dark and shrouded portion of the circular table sat four elite agents of the H.I.A. who were more reserved than the others. Their names were Agents Butler, Hardy, Davis, and Blair. They made up the remainder of the Inner Circle, which normally had been made up of thirteen agents, but was down to eleven after the slayings of Agents Pataki and Rollins by Latino youths.

Agent Butler lowered a black cloak that had obscured his visage, revealing a scarred and disfigured soul. "Fuck General Johnson," he uttered.

The other seven agents, the talkative ones, gasped in unison.

"Agent Butler, explain yourself immediately!" Agent Windsor bellowed.

"Cursings of Ba'al upon thee!" Agent Hardy shrieked.

"You dimwitted fucks," Agent Butler croaked, "Can't you see that Cloaked Assassin is right? Cultism is the way of this New Age we are in. Mainstream conservative Evangelical Christianity stands no chance to manipulate the masses in the face of this *Santa Muerte* drug theocracy shit. Sure, Liberation Theology could be defeated by a few sponsorings of semi-fascist *coups d'état* and death squad campaigns. But this shit is different. The game has changed. Our only hope is extreme primitivism. Our very own mass death cult combined with a hardcore stance against technological innovation. One that will make the Amish look like a millenarian extraterrestrial suicide cult. Archaeology indicates that Neanderthal Man practiced the innovation of the death ceremony. Burying the dead with flowers and what not. Now, we can totally eradicate leftist beliefs, but only if we unleash a programme of

severe mind control and coercion upon the masses. And honestly, what better way to do that than to revert mass consciousness to the stone age?"

"This plan is idiocy," Agent Calvin snorted, "The neo-Neanderthal movement is based on pure romanticism for a bygone era. Well, I say let bygones be bygones! We all know that Neanderthal Man lived in a state of primitive communism. There were no class distinctions at that time. No shrouded elite exploiting the sheepish masses. No Neanderthalian nobles lording over the filthy Neanderthalian peasantry. Hell, not even a Neanderthalian bourgeoisie extracting surplus value from the productive capacity of Neanderthalian proles. Only a mass of primitive men, wallowing in lack of technology. This so-called 'Nurthalian' Empire might as well be a pure concoction of the imagination. Reverting mass consciousness back to a Neanderthal era state is a dangerous game. Mark my words. And besides that, there's virtually no guarantee that evangelical Christianity can't be reconciled with fanatical anti-technologism. We'd simply have to stage an epic false flag attack, blame it on the Anti-Christ or some shit. Dumping Evangelical Christianity now would be throwing the baby out with the bath water."

"The archaeological evidence contradicts your ignorant statements, Calvin," Agent Blair shot back. "Neanderthals were totally capable of class-based exploitation and hierarchical power structuring."

"Like that even matters. Neo-Neanderthalism does not seek to recreate Neanderthal Man. Rather simply to re-inspire and re-infuse modern Man with the Neanderthalian spirit. A task which is, to say the least, fraught with problematic utopic and romantic underpinnings," Agent Calvin retorted.

"Neo-Neanderthalism is an *economic* model," Agent Hardy croaked, "And I don't think you realize that you're arguing against it in terms of *political* paradigm."

"Goddammit, Hardy," Agent Klondike snarled. "Ritual can be wielded in support of or in detriment to both economic *and* political systems."

"My fellow agents," Agent Davis began, "Let us not bicker over such trivial matters at this juncture. Come, let us resolve this issue

through another round of homoerotic sex magick. Surely we will see matters with more clarity after that.”

“Agent Davis is right,” said Agent Young, “At the end of the day, the important thing is that The Great Architect of the Universe feasts on the blood of the innocent. We are the providers of that blood. Whether we maintain that arrangement through Evangelical Christianity or through late stage capitalist reversion to proto-animism, the important thing is that, at the end of the day, we still manipulate the masses through dark ritual and blood sacrifice.”

All eleven robed agents then stood up. Flames shot up from the ground near the marble pillars and they began methodically skirting across the chessboard tiles and chanting in Sumerian.

“Bridgewater, do be a doll and fetch the caged Shriners’ Hospital children from the dungeons,” Agent Butler throatied.

“As you so desire,” Agent Bridgewater shot back.

“As *The Great Architect* so desires,” said Agent Butler, correcting him with a wink.

Agent Bridgewater forced a smile, thinking to himself, *Sure, whatever, buddy.*

“A little help here?” Bridgewater croaked at Agent Klondike.

“Sure thing,” Klondike shot back.

Agents Bridgewater and Klondike went down to the dungeon beneath the Scottish Rite Masonic Temple to procure several captive children who had been abducted from nearby Shriners’ Hospitals.

Known colloquially as the ‘Shriners’, the official name of the organization operating these hospitals was the Ancient Arabic Order of the Noblemen of the Mystical Shrine, or A.A.O.N.M.S. A sub-sect issued from within Freemasonry, the Shriners were particularly adept in cultural misappropriation, taking Freemasonry’s fixation with Canaanite, Phoenician, and Babylonian mythologies to whole new levels by wildly laying White European claim to more modern aspects of Middle Eastern cultures; Arab, Turk, Berber, Domari, Lom, and so on. Famous for driving miniature motorized carts in Independence Day parades across the United States, misappropriating fezzes and perpetuating clownish stereotypes of Arabs wearing ridiculous pointy shoes, the Shriners also ran a network of pediatric hospitals. The hospitals

were initially created as a pretext for improving Freemasonry’s public relations after the fiasco of the second Anti-Masonic Party that had been active from 1872 to 1888. Although this anti-Masonic revival nearly discredited the Scottish Rite by exposing the dark blood sacrifice rituals which were taking place at the highest echelons of power, the Shriners’ hospitals did much to quell the moral panic. Ironically, the primary benefit achieved by the pediatric network was the creation of an easily accessible pool of candidates for blood sacrifice, combined with the plausible deniability insured by the fact of the hospitals having been created for exactly the opposite reason.

Agent Bridgewater stepped down the dusty spiral stone staircase to the catacombs where a few dozen children were held captive in small cages similar to dog kennels, followed closely behind by Agent Klondike. Cries and whimpers filled the air as the two agents trod slowly along the dark and narrow cobblestones. Near the end of the hallway lay several wooden crates where occult paraphernalia were stored. A few torches, flaming oil-soaked rags on sticks, provided a dim lighting.

Little did Bridgewater and Klondike know that behind the crates were hiding Pedrocco Pastrana, Biff Mathers, and several other RBC Disciples.

“The agents have arrived,” Biff Mathers whispered to his brethren and sistren. “The ritual must be starting.”

The RBC Disciples street gang had been tipped off to the H.I.A.’s sick Masonic rituals and to a tunnel connecting the Scottish Rite Temple’s dungeon to the DC sewage system by an intrepid sleuth and urban explorer known only by his *nom de guerre*, Soundjata.

“Hold it right there!” Pedrocco called out from behind a wooden crate in his typical thunderous, deep and illustrious voice as the agents drew near.

“What the . . .” Agent Bridgewater muttered.

“Infiltrators!” Agent Klondike gasped, diving for cover behind a small protrusion.

Pedrocco and Biff stepped out into the hallway (one on organic limbs, the other on prosthetics) and began going trigger happy, peppering the hall indiscriminately with small arms fire.

“Shit,” Bridgewater grunted. “We’re outmatched. Should have brought our guns.”

The agents had only brought with them an electric cattle prod, having judged that this would be sufficient to coerce the children into following them to certain doom.

“On three we make a run for the stairs,” Klondike suggested, quickly formulating a simplistic plan. “Run to the temple and grab our Magnum revolvers so we can shoot back.”

“We’ll never make it,” croaked Bridgewater. “That’s nearly a thirty foot stretch of hallway to make it back to the stairs.”

“We don’t have any other choice,” Agent Klondike barked. “Stay here and we’ll be minced meat. Sitting ducks.”

“Goddammit, you’re right. Okay, let’s do this,” Bridgewater conceded, trembling.

“One, two . . . three!” Agent Klondike bellowed.

The agents scrambled as quickly as they could, sprinting for the staircase to go back up to the temple. But it was to no avail. Within a half dozen steps, Pedrocco and Biff had neutralized their targets, pumped them full of lead.

Pedrocco went first to inspect the fallen agents. He ripped off their black robes with a Bowie knife to examine their gunshot wounds and noted that Agent Klondike seemed to still be breathing. He raised his Glock and swiftly put a slug in the rat bastard’s brain. Cerebral matter splattered onto his moustache and he wiped his forearm across his upper lip to remove the waste.

“Now let’s free these poor kids,” said Biff Mathers as he placed a warm hand on Pedrocco’s shoulder.

“First things first,” Pedrocco shot back, “Let’s go upstairs and waste the remaining H.I.A. agents, then we can free them when the coast is clear.”

“Good thinking, Pedroc,” Biff replied.

Meanwhile upstairs, Agent Firth was lying naked on a pentagram beneath the Greco-Latin arch in front of the marble pillars. He was surrounded by the other eight agents who were each in turn

fellating him, chanting a bizarre refrain in Sumerian as they watched on. All were wearing Venetian carnival masks.

Agent Calvin readjusted his Venetian mask as he climbed atop a large statue of a golden calf and began autofellating. He had achieved an uncanny degree of flexibility after lying atop the pentagram and being orally received by his fellow agents before Agent Firth took his place.

The altar, containing a rotating stage mechanism, began to move about, revealing a large statue of a horned animalian head, flames inside the mouth.

“Where are Agents Bridgewater and Klondike?” asked Agent Young, his impatience growing.

Agent Windsor looked over his shoulder. “Who knows? Those sacrifice victims should be here by now. It is time to pass them through the flames unto Molech,” he spoke.

Suddenly, Pedrocco, Biff, and several RBC Disciples footsoldiers stormed onto the chessboard tiles and began indiscriminately peppering the Inner Circle with gunfire.

“Arghhhhh!” Agent Calvin shouted as a gnarly gunshot wound manifested itself on his abdomen. A moment later, another one had manifested itself on his chest, rendering him instantaneously incapacitated.

“Shit! Hostiles have infiltrated the premises!” Agent Blair screamed as he ran, fully nude, towards a massive Baphomet-esque bust only to be struck down in a hail of gunfire a moment later.

As Pedrocco began to go completely trigger happy, maniacal giggles blasted out of his esophagus. His booming laughter was louder than the gunpowder exploding as countless slugs flew out of the barrel of his Cambodian-made assault rifle.

Bang! Bang! Ha! Ha! Pedrocco’s laughter was practically indistinguishable from the bursts of gunfire.

Agent Butler was struck in the shoulder and fell to the ground, grasping himself in agony and feebly attempting to stem the flow of blood from the gunshot wound. He slowly began to drag himself towards the Masonic altar, thinking maybe he could get away in the chaos and hide behind the idol.

Agents Young, Firth, Davis, and Hertz were all killed swiftly by the RBC Disciples footsoldiers. Direct hits to their skulls had

fragmented their craniums and scrambled their cerebral tissues, chucking them up to fatality instantly.

Agent Windsor and Agent Hardy made a quick dash to the table, where their Magnum revolvers were sitting inside their Agency rucksacks.

Biff saw this and intercepted them, engaging the nude pair of agents in close counters. He threw a right hook and landed a blow right on Agent Windsor's temple, rendering him unconscious. He then kicked Agent Hardy forcefully in the gonads, causing him to keel over. Finally Biff pulled out a Bowie knife and impaled Hardy's torso several times before doing the same to Agent Windsor.

"Goddamn," said Pedrocco, easing up at last from the trigger of his Cambodian-manufactured Kalashnikov.

"Sick bastards," Biff Mathers mused, observing the occult paraphernalia.

"Hey, check it, one of 'em's still livin'," said one of the RBC Disciples, a young chick by the name of Shameka.

Agent Butler gasped for breath and looked back. He had barely made it up two steps of the altar to the golden Molech. A thick sanguine trace gave testimony to his movement.

Pedrocco walked slowly up to the severely wounded agent, kicked off his masquerade ball mask, and raised his Glock before uttering, "Any last words, mothafucka?"

"We're not so different, you and I," Agent Butler coughed. "We both work to serve our Dark Lord."

"Wrong, mothafucka," said Pedrocco, lowering his firearm to go on a tirade. "I achieve liberation. You maintain enslavement. I am nourished by my Marxian ideals and by my Dark Mother, the Bony Lady. Tonantzin. The one they call *La Santísima Muerte*. You nourish only your master, the so-called Great Architect of the Universe, the Lord, *Ba'al*. In greed and vain, you build monuments to him, you hoard money to expand and finance the structures designed by your overseer. You seek to emulate this role of overseer, but you remain oblivious to your own subservience. Your continual sacrifice of innocent life is written into the blueprints of this sick architecture, inscribed into the very fabric of this hierarchical universe. But I come to you as a child of the multiverse, the horizontal multiverse, and truly I tell you, your

apparatus will be shut down. For whoever shalt destroy the creators of destruction, so shalt they create the destroyers of creation."

"You simple-minded child," Butler croaked as he lay dying, "That is nothing more than a tautology."

"No it ain't, foo'," Pedrocco shot back. "Now shut the fuck up!" he continued, raising his handgun once again and pistol whipping the damned son of a bitch. He then slammed off a slug at point blank range into Agent Butler's brain and that was that.

All thirteen agents of the Homeland Intelligence Agency's Inner Circle were dead. The Johnson regime was effectively a snake without a head.

Shameka piped up, "Now let's go liberate those kids!"

"Hot damn, nearly forgot about them!" said Biff.

The radical communist gang bangers then went back down to the dungeon and freed the children there before making their getaway through the same tunnel they had dug from the sewer system to enter the Masonic Temple's dungeon.

"It's just a damn pity General Johnson wasn't here to be slaughtered with the rest of 'em," Pedrocco said as they left the premises.

In the coming fortnight, the Johnson regime's grasp on the populace quickly deteriorated further than it already had. The Cuban and Haitian brigands had virtually annihilated pro-Johnson sentiment in the Deep South and without the H.I.A. leadership there to provide directives, the National Guard's morale dropped to an all-time low. This, combined with increasing feelings of resentment building up around the issue of occupation of many parts of the country by German troops, led large swaths of National Guardsmen to turn against their officers and the regime itself. Pedrocco quickly rose to the status of national hero after he first united the two main factions within the anti-Johnsonite rebel forces, the Trotskyites and the Maoists, and then integrated the disaffected Guardsmen with these anti-Johnsonites into a potent new fighting force officially dubbed the 'Army for Radicalism and Liberation', though 'ARL' or 'Radical Army' were variously employed for shorthand. The RBC Disciples continued to serve as

an important auxiliary organization to this radical army, while a steady flow of Cuban and Haitian brigands into the country supplied countless ARL footsoldiers.

When Pedrocco and the RBC Disciples went to the media with evidence of the H.I.A.'s true child-sacrificing, *Ba'al*-worshipping nature, even the nation's Evangelical Christians began to withdraw their support for the regime. In what would have seemed an unbelievable twist just a few weeks earlier, huge swaths of Evangelicals began to view Marxian ideals in a positive light. Such is the nature of public opinion during times of revolution. Social consciousness develops in a wildly unpredictable fashion, moves at breakneck speeds, and what seems impossible becomes that which is inevitable. Many Evangelicals, rural Whites, and Rednecks finally came to realize how the regime had played them against their co-nationals, pitting them against Black and Latino youths when in all actuality the ones responsible for the evil were the H.I.A. and the rest of the Military Industrial Complex fiends. Of course, the white settler population still had a ways to go in deconstructing their complicity in institutionalized eurocentric systems of privilege, but blaming the H.I.A. was a great start.

By the end of those two weeks, forces loyal to General Johnson had been beaten back by the Army for Radicalism and Liberation into one last stronghold: Fairfax County, Virginia and the area around the H.I.A. headquarters in Langley. There General Johnson found himself cooped up in a bunker with a few mid-level H.I.A. agents, most of them Freemasons of the fifteenth to twenty-fifth degrees. He hoped to stave off the advancing Radical Army for just a few more days, long enough to make his escape and seek asylum in Germany where Chancellor Ursula Heinrich was offering him the chance to live in exile. Privately contracted security goons stationed around the perimeter of the county were managing to keep the revolutionary forces at bay for the time being, but the coming period had a dark shadow cast over it.

Part IV. "Instauration"

37 – TRANS-JUGOSLAV DEBAUCHERY

While Pedrocco Orlando Pastrana Osio's bravery, personal sacrifice, and leadership illuminated a shining path to the fast-approaching triumph of communist workers, working farmers, and autonomous affinity cells of anarchist and *Santa Muerte*-worshipping narcotraffickers, the other surviving members of the Radical Book Club, along with their old comrade from the Socialist Alliance (Marita Bastesen), Izzy's unsavoury cousin (Santiago Zamora), the latter's wife (Fabiola), Santiago's homeboys (Julian, Cedric, and Adrian), Paloma, also known as Golumbaika (the Highest Priestess of the Midwestern synod of the devotees of the *Santa Muerte*), her *piramno* (Gabor), two of the go-go dancers from their fortune-telling burlesque (Veronika and Yolanda), and the old *drabarni*, or Rromani medicine woman, (Fatiha) had managed to escape the volatile cesspool that was America by embarking on a nautical voyage eastwards, to the Balkans. What awaited them there was, nevertheless, yet another volatile cesspool.

During General Johnson's fascist-militarist takeover of the United States, an analogue process was occurring across the pond. A drastic course of events gripped Europe, regressive throes not seen since the bad old days. Euro-skeptic and New Right political parties achieved remarkable outcomes in elections to European Parliament in the same week as the radical occupations of state capitol buildings and the subsequent *coup d'état* in America. This

paved the way for the outright fascist takeover of the European Union by the neo-Nazi *Nationalrepublikanische Partei Deutschlands* (National Republican Party of Germany) led by Ursula Heinrich. Heinrich was closely aided and abetted by Olivier La Plume of France's *Union pour un mouvement national* (Union for a National Movement) as well as Kiss Laszlo of Hungary's *Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom*, or Jobbik, another far right political party. Together, Germany, France, and Hungary made up the Axis Trifecta of European powers most closely allied with the Johnson regime.

Though Britain also became an authoritarian state, with the draconian Lord Kenneth Farwell of the far right British Nationalist League seizing power, the British Euro-skeptics remained somewhat true to their principles: first withdrawing from the European Union and then implementing a policy of half-hearted isolationism. Half-hearted because, despite exiting the E.U., Lord Farwell's relations with the Johnson and Heinrich regimes remained quite cordial; Britain stayed in NATO and continued co-operating closely with German and American intelligence agencies.

The first action of the Axis Trifecta was to increase revenue through the imposition of harsher austerity measures on the PIGS countries of southern Europe (Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Spain). When people there began to protest and rebel against these oppressive measures, the Axis Trifecta responded by sending troops to militarily occupy their nations. Since they were E.U. countries, it was not considered an invasion but merely an internal affair; ironically, the so-called Euro-septic parties had quickly moved to pass legislation centralizing the jurisdiction of the E.U. and absorbing all member states' militaries into a consolidated E.U. Armed Forces. On paper, the E.U. Armed Forces were a multinational coalition under the joint command of all member states. But *de facto* it was a puppet of the Axis Trifecta dominated by Germany.

Nevertheless, in time, the fascist E.U. forces gradually began to face setbacks and serious challenges to their power as local PIGS populaces organized themselves into Self-Defence Militias.

Additionally, the far right, neo-Nazi turn in the European Union led to a mass exodus of left-wing individuals, people of color, and other *Untermenschen* to realms beyond the direct reach of Heinrich's fascist forces: principally to areas of the former Soviet Union which remained outside E.U. jurisdiction and ex-Yugoslav Balkan states (minus Slovenia and Croatia). Though smaller groups of leftist refugees initially fled to Switzerland and Norway, before long these countries' governments began co-operating with fascist Europe, extraditing leftists and undesireables to certain doom in Heinrich's secret network of concentration and death camps.

Despite a significant presence of far right extremists in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and the Balkan ex-Yugoslav states, these countries became attractive destinations for dissidents within the E.U. because Heinrich, La Plume, and Kiss were busy pacifying the PIGS and had little extra resources, nor the political will, to incur the wrath of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a Eurasian military alliance which increasingly saw these lands as belonging to its sphere of influence. Besides that, German Chancellor Heinrich was already stretched thin, having lent additional forces to aid General Johnson in quelling the rebellion in the United States. Of course, the ex-Communist states were still reactionary bourgeois-led countries, but they were not actively fascist (a term which refers to a very specific situation in which the middle classes mobilize a mass movement incorporating working class elements but which preserves bourgeois interests on the whole).

This was the predicament awaiting the Radical Book Club and their allies as they sailed across the ocean blue.

"Not bad, this U-boat," Wither slapte mused as the radical gang passed near the Sargasso Sea.

Wither slapte was playing a game of cards with Julian, Cedric, Adrian, Santiago, and Izzy inside the submarine they had procured.

"Not bad indeed," Izzy throated. "Could use some more frills though."

"What do you mean?" Wither slapte questioned.

"Oh you know, cushions and stuff," Izzy replied.

The floor they were sitting on resembled a cast iron grill.

Wither slapte acknowledged Izzy's remark with a nod.
 "Go fish," Cedric croaked, throwing in a full house.
 "Dammit!" Adrian shouted.
 "Read 'em and weep, sucka," Cedric shot back.
 "A royal flush . . . no way!" uttered Julian.
 "Bullshit!" Santiago screamed.
 "Goddamn. You win again, Cedric," said Izzy.
 "Good game, *carnales*," Santiago said. "How about a spot of rum?"
 "*Ándale, primo*," Izzy shot back.
 Santiago poured shots of rum for his friends. They made a toast to Pedrocco, not knowing what had become of him.
 "Hope the bloke's alright," Wither slapte muttered. "You s'pose he's still in Tuxtla Gutiérrez?"
 "I doubt it," said Izzy. "Pedroc was never one to sit tight, even if he did lose both his legs."
 Santiago poured his mates another round of shots of rum, followed by another and another. He then poured yet another round and finally several more.
 They decided to play another card game, this time poker.
 "Let's bet our lives," Cedric said drunkenly. "Winner gets to kill the rest of us."
 "*No seas cabrón*, Cedric," Santiago throated.
 This time, Wither slapte won the game.
 "Dammit!" Julian, a Mexican Gypsy of the Ludar clan, yelled. "It's this *pinche* Jew, Wither slapte! *Pinches judíos, siempre engañan!* Cheater, Wither slapte! You are a cheater, you Jew!"
 "Whoa, I'm no cheater!" Wither slapte shot back. "I won fair and square! And let's not bring my bloodline into this."
 "Don't mind, Julian, Wither slapte," Adrian, a Salvadoran Gypsy of Machvaya descent, said drunkenly. "He's a bloody antisemite. I know, it's stupid, us being Rromani and all. Our peoples have suffered oppression in much the same way."
 "I'm not an antisemite, Adrian!" Julian thundered. "It's just that the damn Jews are responsible for slavery! Christopher Columbus was a bloody crypto-Jew and look how he enslaved the Taínos. I have this hunch that it was Ottoman Jews who enabled the enslavement of we Rroma in Wallachia as well! Everywhere there

has been mass enslavement, you'll find a *pinche* Jew there who was responsible for it all!"

"Bullshit!" Adrian shot back. "Practically all historians agree that Columbus was Genoan, and you clearly are an antisemite!"

"Still," Julian went on drunkenly, "It's worth pointing out that there's a difference between Judaism and Zionism. One is a religion, the other a colonial, racist, nationalist ideology. And perhaps you'll recall that when we were preparing our assault on the Minnesota State Capitol Building, Wither slapte made a pronouncement about International Holocaust Remembrance Day in which he stated, 'I stand with Israel.' Care to explain that shit, Wither slapte, you Zionist *pendejo*?"

"He has a point, Wither slapte," Adrian conceded. "Zionism is oppressing the Palestinian people, occupying their lands."

"I was referring to Israel in the spiritual, immaterial sense," Wither slapte clarified. "Come on, you guys. I'm a frickin' Marxian militant, you really think I would support the State of Israel?"

Julian shot back, "*Pinche* wordplay, you clever Jew. Just know this: one day ZOG will fall!"

"ZOG?" Santiago questioned.

"Zionist Occupied Government," Wither slapte sighed. "A common conspiracy theory among white supremacist groups which states that a cabal of Jews secretly controls the U.S. government as its puppet regime. Really, Julian, you should be ashamed of yourself, subscribing to this bullshit. This ZOG conspiracy only serves to distract the working class from the true culprit of exploitation and oppression: the bourgeoisie, not the Jewish people. Compounding the fact of class exploitation, when we add imperialism, the most advanced stage of capitalism, into the equation, we see that the core of imperial hegemony is the European and Euro-American bourgeoisie which exercises power on a global scale through the system of white supremacy. And when you realize this, it's also clear that the Zionist State of Israel is in all actuality a puppet of the West, not the other way around. How else can you explain the fact that people of color, even Jews of color, are oppressed in Israel? Ashkenazim, or German Jews, have long been held essentially as white by the establishment. My maternal grandfather was an Ethiopian Jew and he was constantly

discriminated against by Israeli governmental officials, most of them of European descent. Fact of the matter is Israeli Zionism represents an effort by Europeans to colonize the Middle East, to foment white supremacy there. Israel serves U.S. interests, and that's why the U.S. backs Israel. One simply has to understand imperialism to see that. Might I suggest that you take a closer look at Lenin's *Imperialism: What it is and How to Fight It*."

Near the mention of *true culprit of exploitation*, the full effect of the alcohol really began to hit Julian, causing him to pass out halfway through Wither slapte's diatribe.

Meanwhile, in another compartment, Fatiha was with Veronika, Yolanda, and Fabiola, advising them with her Tarot cards. Gabor had left them to use the toilet.

Still elsewhere on the submarine, Marita, Paloma, and Tisha had gathered and were enjoying a sack of potato chips together.

"Gee, Paloma, you're looking a bit preggers there," said Marita.

"Really? Is it starting to show?" Paloma asked, wrinkles spreading across her forehead.

"Well, yeah," Marita replied, grabbing a handful of chips.

"What's wrong?" Tisha questioned, noticing that Paloma seemed troubled.

"It's Gabor," she responded despondently. "I've sort of been letting him think the baby is his. He would probably freak out if he knew."

"Whoa. You mean it's not?" Marita wondered out loud.

"No," Golumbaika sighed. "It's Wither slapte's. We made love the night before the assault on Jorge Peterson-Gonzalez's compound."

"Oh my gosh!" Marita chirped, reaching for more of the genetically modified potato shavings. "You know though, the proper term is fetus. And the fetus is not Wither slapte's or Gabor's. It's your body! Down with patriarchy!"

"Congrats," said Tisha. "Didn't know Wither slapte had it in him!"

"Come on, you guys! This is serious! What should I do?" asked Golumbaika.

"Well, not much you can do," Tisha replied. "Wait 'til the

baby's born, then try to convince Gabor it's his, if you're just trying to avoid upsetting him, which seems to be the case."

"Perhaps the more empowering choice would be to abort the fetus," Marita suggested.

"No," Paloma gasped. "I had a vision, from the *Santa Muerte*. This fetus will be a starchild of Rátopia."

"Oh, well, in that case . . . Why don't you talk to Fabiola? She's been pregnant for months, should be giving birth any day now. I'm sure she'd have some sound advice," said Marita.

"Look Paloma, just enjoy being pregnant, have your starchild and that's that," Tisha offered.

"You're right," Golumbaika replied. "I shouldn't worry so much."

After arriving on the Adriatic coast of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the radical communists and *Santa Muerte* devotees wasted no time in beginning to make their way inland. First donating their submarine to a group of far left-wing Bosniak partisans, the radical gang then made their way to Sarajevo, travelling mainly by foot until Santiago, Adrian, Julian, and Izzy commandeered a horse-drawn cart from a group of Arli Rroma so that the elderly and pregnant women of the group could sit down.

Once in Sarajevo, the radicals made their way to Baščaršija, the main square and center of the city with a mind to rest a bit, gather some intelligence on the situation awaiting them in Europe. There they encountered a young lad hawking newspapers.

"Will ya take a gander at that?" Fatiha throatied as she read the front page headline, being the only one in the group with some linguistic knowledge of Bosnian.

"What does it say?" Paloma asked.

"No way . . ." Wither slapte uttered as he looked at the photo accompanying the front page story. "It's Pedrocco!" He bought the newspaper from the lad, paying two *konvertibilnih maraka*, Bosnian convertible marks.

It was a photo of Pedrocco stroking his hipster moustache with a roughed up-looking General Johnson in handcuffs in front of him. He was surrounded by Black and Latino youths, most of them wearing berets and holding shotguns. One could faintly make out his prosthetic limbs, somewhat obscured by the youths.

“Holly shiznit,” Gabor uttered in turn.

“It says,” the old *drabarni* began, “Army for Radicalism and Liberation Topples U.S. Government: General Johnson in Rebel Custody.”

“Hell’s to tha mothafuckin’ yeah,” Izzy croaked.

“We all knew this day would come!” Paty bellowed. “Socialist revolutionaries have seized power in the belly of the beast. It’s only a matter of time now until a global communist system is instaured!”

“As our hunter-gatherer ancestors once lived in a state of primitive communism, so too shalt we live in a state of advanced communism,” Tisha mused joyfully.

The radicals began high fiving one another with self-satisfied airs.

“Let’s not get ahead of ourselves,” spaketh Paloma. “No political revolution can be complete without social and cultural revolution to complement it. We must go forth and proselytize the *Santa Muerte*. Only then will communism be immune to counter-revolution.”

“Nonsense,” a strange figure spoke, approaching the gang from behind. It was a loud-mouthed ‘ugly American’ tourist, baselessly feeling entitled to butt his head into strangers’ conversation. “Culture is a superstructure which rests upon the base of the economic system. The base determines the superstructure, so to posit that a change in superstructure can alter the base is entirely erroneous. As Marx once said, social being determines consciousness; consciousness does not determine being,” the douchebag American went on.

“Let me guess,” Paloma shot back, “Your privileged ass just got out of your little Ivy League institution and you thought you’d go to someplace *exotic* with a rucksack on your back because you read some shit your bro posted on social media about *twenty things twenty somethings should do before they settle down*? Well, listen here, fucker. Cultural superstructure is an element of social being. Just because base and superstructure are interdependent doesn’t mean that superstructure is rigidly determined by base. In fact, superstructure has a degree of autonomy, and alterations in superstructure can re-determine the base, because not only does superstructure depend upon base, but base depends also upon

superstructure. Thus culture is not only superstructure, but also the basis of infrastructural synapses, making constellations between disparate elements within consciousness. This, compounded by the fact of melanocyte receptive hormones, the biological basis of consciousness, a superstructure in and of itself.”

“Whatever,” the tourist retorted in a pompous huff, knowing he had been intellectually outmatched.

“Jesus Christ, read some Althusser and shut the damned hell up,” Wither slapte fumed.

“Yeah,” Tisha uttered. “Get the hell out of here with your reductive mechanical-determinist bullnatch!”

Finally, the douchebag American tourist left.

“Long live the cultural revolution!” the radicals began chanting at the embarrassed man as he slinked away.

“Why don’t we stop somewhere, have a bite to eat?” said Paty after the ugly American was finally out of sight and the slogan chanting subsided.

“Not a bad idea,” Wither slapte replied.

The radical gang went to an outdoor cafe terrace and ordered coffee, beer, sandwiches.

“We’ll rest here tonight,” Paloma declared. “In the morning, we make the trek to Romania, meet with my relatives there. They came back to the Old Country last year to spread the word of *Santa Muerte* to Rroma in the Balkans. From what I heard last, they’ve been incredibly successful.”

“*Ándale*,” said Santiago. “No surprise there. Our Dark Mother is quick to grant miracles to those who are loyal unto Her. I’m sure the Rroma are beginning to see that firsthand.”

The radicals ate and continued to converse about a wide range of topics: structural Marxism, Vlax and Balkan Rromani culture, minimal synth aesthetics. After leaving the cafe terrace, they went to the outskirts of Sarajevo to an open pasture where they set up camp. There they slept beneath the stars, tired after their long transatlantic journey.

After traversing the Republika Srpska, a semi-autonomous Serbian state within Bosnia, and then Serbia itself, the radicals made their way to Timișoara, the hometown of Golumbaika’s father. There many of her relatives yet dwelled.

38 – PEDROCCO’S DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

Swarms of journalists flocked around Pedrocco and his entourage as they stepped out of an Army for Radicalism and Liberation helicopter near the White House.

“Mr. Pastrana! How will the ARL restore peace and order to America?” one of the journalists questioned.

“Now ain’t the time for peace, biyatch. First things first. Class war. Destruction of the bourgeois order. The ARL will protect workers as they seize the means of production and expropriate property from the capitalist class,” Pedrocco retorted. “Ruling class fucks will be socially obliterated. The ARL will carry out a nationwide assault on bourgeois social milieux: country clubs, luxury car dealerships, Masonic lodges and temples, and so on and so forth. To the bourgeois fucks listening, I say this: You can run but you can’t hide. You’re either with the proletariat or you’re against it. So get ready to be physically assaulted if you’re against it!”

“But Mr. Pastrana, is such bellicose rhetoric really appropriate at this juncture?” the journalist shot back. “Surely some measure of reconciliation must be reached with the pro-Johnson forces who have surrendered their arms.”

“Fuck off, biyatch,” Shameka, an RBC Disciple and member of Pedrocco’s entourage, shouted as she brandished a Cambodian-made Kalashnikov. “We gon’ lay waste to all dem bitches.”

“Mr. Pastrana!” another journalist yelled. “What will be the fate of General Johnson?”

“That Johnson mofo will be turned over to a people’s proletarian tribunal,” Pedrocco called out across the swarm of newsmen. “And to that tribunal I’d recommend swift execution of capital punishment, but ultimately that’s up to the proletarian tribunal to decide. Now if you’ll excuse me, y’all, me and my brethren and sistren here got business to do!”

Pedrocco and his entourage began making their way to the White House, past a checkpoint beyond which only members of the Radical Army security detail were granted clearance.

As they were distancing themselves from the swarm of reporters, one journalist stormed past the security checkpoint. He was wearing a plaid sweater vest and a polka dotted bow tie. It was Greg Charleston, from Conservative Cable News.

ARL security goons ran after Charleston and grabbed him by the arms, holding him about ten feet away from Pedrocco and his entourage.

“Please!” Charleston screamed. “Just one more question for Pedrocco. This is important!”

“Press conference is over, buddy!” an ARL thug shouted before punching the journalist in the face with a loud smack.

“Arghh! Please . . . just one question,” Charleston begged.

“Release him!” Pedrocco uttered.

Immediately a hush fell upon the crowd.

“What is it you wish to ask me, Greg?” Pedrocco recognized the blowhard conservative pundit from the days when he and Wither slapte used to watch Conservative Cable News in a deliberately ironic fashion, though it was useful for keeping tabs on the latest in bourgeois discourse; in a way, it was as if scanning Wall Street’s mouthpieces allowed them to create computerized topographic images in which to observe malignant discursive growths in their own virtual-mental worlds.

“Do we have assurances that the new regime will respect the right of pro-capitalist media to broadcast our views of integrity and objectivity to the nation?” Charleston questioned.

“Goddamn, Charleston. You got a lot of balls askin’ a question that stupid here,” said Pedrocco.

“Our media is our private property!” Greg Charleston shouted. “You have no right to interfere with our programming!”

Pedrocco pulled out his firearm, a Glock pistol.

“By decree, I hereby declare Conservative Cable News an illegal organization,” he said as he raised his Glock. “All CCN correspondents are to be executed on sight!”

“What! You’re a madman, Pastrana! An absolute madman!” Greg Charleston shouted, seemingly in an effort to convince the people around him.

Radical Army goons grabbed hold of Greg Charleston by the superior limbs once again, restraining him.

“Let the reign of revolutionary red horror begin,” Pedrocco croaked before slamming off several slugs into Charleston’s abdomen.

The ARL thugs let go of the bourgeois journalist as he keeled over in severe agony, clutching his midsection as blood flowed out of it.

Pedrocco stepped slowly over to the dying Charleston on his prosthetic limbs, Chiapan-made ‘Flex-Foot Cheetah’ blade knock offs, and uttered coolly, “Any last words, mothafucka?”

“Fuck you, ya damn socialist scumbag,” Charleston croaked, continuing to clutch his wounded midsection.

“Ha! Like I haven’t heard that one before. Ya know what, Charleston, those last words were so pitiful that I just may let you yet live,” Pedrocco whispered softly as he holstered his pistol inside his jacket. He kept his hand in there for a moment. “At least give you the chance to come up with some better gallows remarks than that.”

“What? Really?” Charleston spaketh, seemingly surprised.

“Hell nah, fool! Just fuckin’ with ya,” Pedrocco shouted, drawing out a Bowie knife from inside his jacket.

He proceeded then to impale Charleston’s torso over two dozen times in a frenzy of frenetic stabbing. Blood splattered upon his moustache and he licked it away, savouring the fatality. In animalian fashion, he lowered himself to all fours.

Even the members of his entourage seemed somewhat perturbed by this sudden display of unsettling brutality, eyeing each other nervously.

Pedrocco breathed heavily as the frenetic frenzy faded to a lethargic lurching. Finally he stopped impaling Greg Charleston’s cadaver. His posture became more erect, humanized; he was kneeling upright with his prosthetic limbs occupying the space between the blood-soaked ground and his buttocks. He looked up from the carnage which lay before him, and uttered, “My brethren. My sistren. Why do you regard me so? Surely you are not worrying about appearing ‘respectable’—maintaining the support of some ruling class fucks? That is the difference between true Radicals and so-called ‘Progressive’ petit-bourgeois fucks. Progressive petit-bourgeois fucks only want to buddy up with elements of the ruling class, work within their imperial system. Well, that’s bullshit! We need to smash imperialism, eradicate these bourgeois fucks—no matter how brutal it may be. All that matters is that we fulfill the will of the proletarian masses. Our based depravity will only strengthen our cause, win more of the masses to our side. Come, brethren. Come, sistren. To the White House!”

The entourage of RBC Disciples and ARL thugs was reassured by Pedrocco’s reasoning. No longer did they seem at all disturbed by his knifing frenzy.

Biff Mathers and Shameka each gave Pedrocco a hand to help him get back up on his false feet.

As Pedrocco strutted away from the bloody mess, Biff uttered to one of the ARL thugs, “Put the cadaver on display in front of the Washington Monument. That kind of spectacle is sure to intimidate and silence the bourgeois media. They’ll think twice about spreading their reactionary, counterrevolutionary filth when they see how we deal with their kind.”

Pedrocco and his entourage entered the White House, where they were greeted by another squad of ARL goons who had ransacked the place, gleaned the furnishings and other valuables, sold them, and used the wealth to uplift those in poverty.

“Mr. Pastrana, it’s a pleasure to meet you,” one of the Army for Radicalism and Liberation leaders said as Pedrocco and his entourage entered the White House. “I am Comrade Lieutenant Ramiro Parascandola, a loyal footsoldier of the Radical movement.”

“*Ándale, carnal,*” Pedrocco throated, slapping Ramiro on the back. “Take us to the strategizing chambers.”

“As you wish, Sir,” said Ramiro. “Though, perhaps you would like to take a tour of the place first?”

“No need, Comrade Ramiro. Such displays of bourgeois extravagance do not interest me in the slightest,” Pedrocco said with a look of slight revulsion as he eyed the ornate interior of the presidential palace. “Besides, we have much work to do. And please, none of this ‘sir’ business. We’re all comrades here.”

“You’re right, Comrade,” Ramiro shot back. “To the strategizing chambers!”

Pedrocco and his entourage went with the ARL forces down a long corridor within the White House.

“Previously, this chamber had a strict security clearance system in place. Three sets of retinal scans were required to access the strategizing chambers. However, we were able to bypass this security measure by introducing the severed heads of high level H.I.A. agents who fell in battle to the retinal scanner interface after we surgically removed their eyelids,” Ramiro explained.

The large group of radicals entered the chamber, which contained a long oval-shaped table. The entire western wall was covered by an LED backlit screen. The radicals took their seats and began to discuss how best to install the new proletarian regime, cement their power, and solidify Marxian ideals into the masses’ consciousness.

Assembled at the table were a number of ARL commanders who had flown in from various parts of the country. It was, in fact, the first time that so many Army for Radicalism and Liberation leaders and organizers had come together to coordinate on the national level.

About two dozen ARL comrades were assembled around the table when Pedrocco spoke up.

“Greetings, comrades. You’re here today because you’ve proven yourselves in the fight against the pro-Johnsonite fiends. With Johnson in our custody, those fiends are well on their way to total eradication. But that doesn’t mean we can become complacent now. We must continue our struggle for social justice. Pockets of the German occupation forces remain. Their enclaves must be surrounded and utterly annihilated, or else they must be

driven out. In that regard, we now face before us a national liberation struggle. But besides them, an even more nefarious and insidious enemy remains. Elements of the ruling class, so-called Liberals and Progressives, will be quick to style themselves as longtime opponents of the Johnson regime, victims targeted by the H.I.A.’s infamous *Operation Katastrophic Kloaked Kleansing*. We must patiently explain and convince the masses why these bourgeois forces are no less to blame for the fascist catastrophe than the right-wing of the capitalist class. By blocking and sidelining the efforts of true Radicals such as ourselves for years, these Liberals and so-called Progressives set up the conditions which led to the *coup*. If we do not destroy them now, they will only allow those conditions to return. When private ownership of industry is once again seriously threatened by a radical mass movement, those Libtards, for lack of a better term, will undoubtedly cast their lot with those who will go to extreme measures to protect their class privilege. A future generation will find itself again under the jackboot of fascist scum. We must do everything in our power to prevent such a calamity.”

“What you say is true, Pedrocco,” Ramiro replied. “We must channel mass outrage against the fascistic Johnson regime into a wider movement against capitalism itself and uncompromisingly oppose the bourgeoisie in all its shades and flavors. Private owners of the means of production should not be tolerated, no matter their views on abortion, drug legalization, separation of Church and State, how not racist they style themselves as, and so on.”

“You right, Ramiro. Tha tendency of boozhy folk, Liberal ones I mean, to see them issues as isolated only highlights the flaws wit dey worldview. In reality, all dem issues be interconnected. Tha Liberal mind see racism as a moral flaw of individual persons, but we know that it be a system, embedded in the institutions of the class society. And the Liberal mind don’t go to the root of the problem, don’t question why a woman be seekin’ abortion or why she be fixin’ to smoke crack in tha first place. Workin’ class folk be needin’ them thangs to escape they material conditions set forth by capitalism. Smash capitalism and, nine times outta ten, you smash the motive; you give a baby mama free access to contraception, mo’ rights in the workplace, paid time off, and a community that supports wit free chil’ care, and nine times outta

ten she ain't gon' be abortin' that fetus. You eradicate poverty and build community and nine times outta ten, peeps ain't gon' be usin' that crack to escape reality. Nah, peeps just gon' be usin' dope n' shit for spiritual enlightenment, expandin' they minds in ritual, or some shit, ya know wha-I'm sayin'," said Shameka.

A beautiful ARL commander sitting a few seats from Pedrocco then spoke up. She was wearing olive combat fatigues and a black beret with a red star on it.

"Greetings, comrades. My name is Carolina Sandoval. I led several Radical Army platoons in the takeover of San Diego, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino. Those of us who have fought the reactionary forces in Southern California can attest to the fact that had it not been for the thoroughly destabilizing spillover of drug violence north of the U.S.-Mexico border, the annihilation of the Johnsonites would never have happened with such rapidity."

"*Andale*," Pedrocco uttered.

"Drug violence?" a representative of the Rocky Mountains ARL questioned.

Carolina retorted, "That's right, Comrade . . . ?"

"Reimers. Jules Reimers," the Rocky Mountains Radicalist shot back.

"Our *hermanos* of the Marxian drug cartels were a magnificent boon in crushing the Johnsonite fiends," Carolina Sandoval went on. "Not to mention the autonomous affinity cells of anarchist drug cartels. The *inestabilidad* caused by the drug violence effectively created a Lernaean Hydra of radical social forces which overwhelmed the Johnsonites, both their regulars in the National Guard as well as their paramilitary forces, in particular the so-called 'Minutemen' anti-immigrant group. When they went after the cartels, two more affinity cells of radical Marxian partisans formed; when they would then target the Radical Army, two more drug cartels would expand north from Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Sonora."

"Whoa, whoa, hold on there," Jules rasped, his eyes half bulging out of his face. "You're telling me these drug cartels are the good guys? If the public finds out we've been working with them, our image could be seriously tarnished! Haven't you heard

of *Los Zetas*? Many of these drug cartelists fucks were trained right here in the U.S.A. by the ousted bourgeois regime. Do you really think we can trust them?"

"Easy, Comrade Jules. Easy," Comrade Sandoval replied. "The folks we're talking about have nothing to do with those punks of the comprador bourgeoisie's *yanqui* collaborationist cartels."

Pedrocco butted in, "You listen here, Reimers. I was there with the Radical Book Club when we launched an all-out assault on the compound of Jorge Peterson-Gonzalez in Nuevo León. I can assure you that we were more than aided and abetted by Marxian and anarchist drug cartelists. The strategy of the Radical Army's predecessor, that is, the Radical Book Club, has always been to bring the drug trade under the control of autonomous affinity cells of anarchist and Marxian drug cartels. It's no secret that many of our supporters have been keen to embrace Radical beliefs precisely due to our close alliance with the drug cartelists. And being that we practice democratic centralism in this organization, you would do well to tow the ARL line."

"Of course, Pedrocco," said Jules Reimers with assiduous care. "However, I'm sure you'll recall that Lenin's conception of democratic centralism means that here, in the strategizing chamber, we are free to contest the Army for Radicalism and Liberation's political line. Out on the mean streets, that's where we tow the line."

Flabbergasted, Pedrocco simply glared at Jules for a long moment. The air grew thick as gelatin.

In all actuality, Pedrocco knew little of Marxian-Leninoid-Trotskyite and Mao Tse-tung thought and theory. That had always been Wither slapte's forte. Every time the old comrades of Socialist Alliance had attempted to teach the gang about the finer points of Marxian ideals, Pedrocco had been busy macking on activist chicks.

"If you've made your point," Pedrocco finally uttered in a low tone, "then we'll be moving on to the next point on the agenda."

Another leader from the ARL's Deep South Division named Jasper Jones spoke up, "Echoin' Comrade Sandoval's recognition of the aid which the drug cartelists brought, I would just like to add to that the enormous help which the volunteer brigades of Haitian and Cuban brigands have provided to us Radicals in the South."

“That’s excellent news, Comrade Jasper,” Carolina replied. “Truly this proletarian struggle is international in character. We would do well to keep that in mind moving forward. Perhaps it would be wise to invite indigenous peoples of other postcolonial nations to come and relish in the slaughter of their oppressors.”

“*Ándale,*” said Pedrocco. “That is a great idea.”

“It’s no secret,” Jasper went on, “that many of the Haitian and Cuban brigands are practitioners of Vaudou and Santería, a few of Palo Mayombe. As these Caribbean brigands have permeated the Deep South, the radical, and some would say, down right bizarre belief systems which they brought with them have begun to spread like wild prairie fire amongst the workers, youth, and in particular, the working farmers of the region.”

Pedrocco Pastrana, Biff Mathers, Shameka, Carolina Sandoval, and several other ARL commanders nodded knowingly.

Jasper continued in his quaint Southern drawl, “Workin’ farmers were particularly susceptible to these heathen belief systems due to their close relations to the Earth. Literally muckin’ around in the soil for hours at a time, these hillbilly folk found themselves swiftly overpowered by the resonantly succulent message these bizarre belief systems presented them with: the possibility not of change in the distant future, the afterlife, but in the here and now. Some of us in the ARL Deep South Division have speculated that this may be due to their close relation with agriculture, a sort of godship of the mobile organic over the immobile organic, wherein the inorganic serves in both digital and analogue capacities.”

“And just what is the relevance of this?” Jules Reimers shot out. “Marxian ideals are clearly diametrically opposed to such backwards religions and primitive superstitions.”

“That may have once been the conventional wisdom,” said Biff. “But received ideas must be challenged from time to time. We would be shooting ourselves in the foot if we did not engage the masses of workers’ and youths’ consciousness on the plane where it rests at the present juncture. This is the conceptual crux of the transitional program which Comrade Trotsky so precipitately outlined.”

“*Órale,*” Carolina throated in a raspy voice. She had just inhaled a smoldering heap of hash bits off of two hot knives the

night before. “We might also employ an entryist strategy. Subvert somehow these religious groups from within, to assure that they help us reach our Marxian objectives. A long march through the cultist institutions will be sure to cement Marxian ideals in the masses’ consciousness.”

“You fools,” Jules began, “don’t you see? These cultist tendencies will only practice their own entryism into our movement for communism: a system achieved through the realization of materialist dialectics, not by any sort of mystical process.”

Pedrocco coughed. “It seems you’re not on the same page as the rest of us, Comrade Jules,” he uttered, eyeing the others around the oval table. “Perhaps there are yet others among you who are not on the same page as well. I don’t know. But it may well be that it is long past time that I reveal something of great importance to all of you, my brethren and sistren.”

“Brace yourselves, comrades. The revelation may come as a shock to some,” spake Biff Mathers.

“Thank you, Biff,” Pedrocco said. “The truth is, our radical movement for Marxian ideals has been made possible in no small part by *Santa Muerte*-worshipping drug cartelists. While the Radical Book Club’s assault on the *Zetas*’ compound was in part inspired by the material necessity of uprooting and destroying the foothold of *yanqui* imperialism in the drug trade, it also served to empower the Marxian and *Santa Muerte*-worshipping narco-trafficking networks. In truth, we would not be here if it was not for this unsavory alliance. Moreover, there has, in effect, been established a sort of revolving door policy between these two radical social entities, with personnel and weaponry frequently exchanging hands.”

Jules gasped silently, though not quite imperceptibly, pondering this startling revelation. A Coloradan of white settler extraction, he had been remarkably sheltered from the material reality of the geopolitical situation and developments in the wake of the syncretic indigenous and African-derived belief systems’ encroachment onto the mainstream postcolonial scene. Jules Reimers’ understanding of the movement was instead based in a more mechanical and de-spiritualized worldview.

The meeting concluded with the radical communist militants resolving to carry out a bloody cultural revolution all while safeguarding autonomous elements of the working class, communities which would independently carry out the political and economic reforms leading to obliteration of the ruling capitalist class. The ARL's role would be to violently suppress any and all opposition to their Marxian agenda.

39 – FOLLOW THE BLACK DOVE

Paloma and Wither slapte sat on the front bench of a horse-drawn cart as the gang of radicals neared Timișoara, a Romanian city in the region historically known as the the Banat, which comprised parts of Romania, Hungary, and Serbia. The far left extremists had managed to commandeer several more horse-drawn carts in Serbia, near Subotica, allowing almost everyone to ride in the primitive means of transport.

Gabor, still oblivious to the liaison between Paloma and Wither slapte, rode in another horse-drawn cart with Adrian, Julian, Fatiha, Yolanda, and Veronika.

On the outskirts of the city, east of the Kuncz neighborhood, they discovered the encampment where Paloma's relatives were living. A mixture of American Vlax Rroma missionaries who had gone to spread the word of the *Santa Muerte* and European Vlax Rroma, the encampment gave off a lively, whimsical vibe. Beautiful women with dark braided hair danced around in long floral skirts, moustachioed men wore fedoras and larger brimmed hats, clasped onto the blades of knives with the teeth in their mouths and saccadically gyrated their shoulders to and fro, and swarthy children ran around freely, uncouth and unclothed. Near the center of the encampment was a cloaked skeletal figure surrounded by gourds, coins, candles, and bottles of hard alcohol.

It was an effigy to *La Santa Muerte; Sfânta Moarte; E Svîntaika Muli*. Around Her the elders had gathered and were singing praises unto Her.

A strange figure on horseback wearing tenebrous, flowing moustaches beneath his nose emerged from the camp to greet the long caravan of horse-drawn carts upon which the radicals rode. His name was Zăbar. He wore a white collar shirt and a dark vest, skinny jeans, and metrosexual cowboy-esque boots made of crocodile skin, the spurs of which were mismatched; one being a chakra that looked like a wagon wheel, the other a hammer and sickle.

Zăbar hopped off his black stallion.

"My cousin," he uttered serenely, "it is a miracle! Truly the *Sfânta Moarte* has blessed you!"

"Zăbar!" Paloma cried as she descended from the carriage to warmly embrace her cousin.

"And who is this?" Zăbar questioned, jetting an eye upon Wither slapte.

"Name's Wither slapte Gobseckowitz. I'm a social activist with the Radical Book Club."

"Excellent," the strange figure throatied back. "I'm Zăbar, a cousin of Golumbaika's. I'm sure you must be tired after your long journey. Please, make yourselves at home."

The gang of radicals began milling about the encampment, making friends with the many Gypsies there.

Paloma, Wither slapte, Paty, Izzy and Tisha went with Zăbar into a small tent.

Zăbar packed a long pipe with a mixture of clove and ganja, gandolfing it so that a mountain of bud rose over the bowl. He drew aside his obscure moustaches as one might pull back musky curtains to bring light into an atrium on a sunny morning, began toking gently, and passed the pipe around.

"You're lucky to be alive," Zăbar coughed as he semi-violently exhaled copious amounts of THC-laced vapors. "From what we heard on the news, the fascist regime in America was quite a handful."

"No doubt about that," Izzy replied. "Life's quite a bitch under fascism. Authoritarian goons hounding you every which way. But we managed to waste quite a number of them."

"*Mișto*," Zăbar uttered.

"We also lost some good comrades," Paty croaked as she blew out smoke like a Chinese dragon. "Omar, Franky. So many have died in the fight against fascism."

"I would hardly call Franky a good comrade," said Wither slapte as he grabbed hold of the pipe.

"Don't be dissin' the memory of Franky," Tisha fumed.

"The dude tried to kill us," Izzy said in Wither slapte's defense.

"Yeah, but he wasn't in his right mind," Tisha countered.

"Sounds like some shit went down between you guys," quipped Zăbar.

"Aye, that's a bit of an understatement," Paty mused.

The radicals were incredibly blazed now.

"You should know though," Zăbar rasped, "the situation is not so good here either. Here in Romania we managed to avoid the unfortunate fate of the PIGS nations, but being geographically so close to *Hungaria*, we still catch a lot of shit here in the Banat. Rumor has it that the Jobbik fascists may be fixing to lay claim to the old Hungarian-controlled lands which Romania took at the end of the First World War, after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire."

"That's awful," said Wither slapte. "When will the workers of the world finally come to realize that such jingoistic revanchism will only deepen their exploitation and misery?"

Just then, an old woman opened the tent's flap and hobbled forth. She wore a green headscarf and a skirt down to her ankles. Paloma instantly recognized the woman as her grandmother, Elena. She was followed quickly behind by Fatiha, the old *drabarni*.

"Baba Elena! *Me chi dikhjom tut de but bershara!*" Paloma exclaimed.

Elena kissed Paloma's head, saying, "*Aj miri shej! Će bari san akana!*"

"What is it?" Paloma then questioned, having turned to Fatiha and noticed her concerned facial expression.

"I have received an ominous vision," Fatiha explained in her thick Banatiski accent, huffing and puffing as though she had just

ran a marathon. "We must begin arming ourselves. The Jobbik are on the move. Sleeper cells being activated. Not much time." She passed out immediately after saying this.

Elena caught Fatiha as she was falling, slowly brought her to the ground and began fanning her.

"Devla," Zăbar croaked.

Wither slapte placed his hand atop Paloma's.

"We must astral project. Commune with the most holy *Sfânta Moarte* on Rátopia. See if she sees merit in this prophecy," he said.

"Sweet, sweet Wither slapte. You are wrong. We must not bother the *Svîntaika Muli* with such trivial matters. Fatiha's prediction seems undoubtedly grounded in reality. We should act on the assumption that it will so come to pass," Paloma replied.

That night the elders held a *kris*, a Rromani council, to decide what must be done with regard to the vision.

"*Hajde ando baro wêrsh, în pădure. Kothe kaj dashtisaras te garavas-amen!*" said O Yanko, one of the community's elders.

"*Va, uva. Numa pala godo, so kerasa? Nashtis te garavas-amen zhi ka agor vrjamja,*" retorted Silaki, another elder.

"*Si amen nevoja de but arme, phrala!*" said another elder named O Gachupin.

"A little translation here?" Wither slapte whispered to Paloma.

"It seems the elders believe Fatiha's prophecy to be true. We must procure weaponry and then hide in the woods further away from the city, build some sort of base camp there. The Jobbik fascists will be sure to persecute Rromani communities; this must be why the elders believe this course of action to be necessary," Paloma replied.

The following day, Fatiha's prediction indeed began to take foothold. Hungarian sleeper cells stationed throughout Transylvania and the Banat, as well as parts of Serbia and Slovakia, were activated by carrier pigeons sent out by the *Magyar Garda*, an auxiliary paramilitary organization tied to the Jobbik. Comprising a significant ethnic minority within Romania's borders, particularly in the north and west of the country, the Hungarian community had long suppressed yearnings for separatism, to once again join their motherland.

The far right campaign began subtly. Small groups of Hungarian separatists first gathered in the central squares of cities across Transylvania: Cluj-Napoca, Sibiu, Braşov. Although the protests had been billed as peaceful marches, the situation quickly escalated to ultra-violence.

Romanian authorities first attempted to suppress the protests in Cluj, remembering the threat Hungarian protesters had posed to national unity in the wake of the December 1989 *coup d'état* which had deposed the Ceauşescu regime. The Hungarians responded by taking sledgehammers to the cobblestone streets and throwing bricks at gendarmes. At first, the gendarmes restrained themselves, using only non-lethal force: billy clubs, rubber bullets, and tear gas, until finally one gendarme was incapacitated by a cobblestone. A large crowd of Hungarians had then surged forth, overwhelming the gendarmes and sending them into retreat. In the panic and confusion, they had left their fallen comrade to be trampled. A group of Hungarian separatists then took the gendarme and savagely beat him, as though they were a pack of wild and depraved wolves. Seeing what the separatists had done, the gendarmes opened fire with their assault rifles, laying waste to nearly five dozen Hungarians, as well as several Romanian shopkeepers who had been caught in the crossfire. This massacre only further emboldened the *Magyar Garda* sleeper cells, stoking the raging fire of ethnic separatism.

In Budapest, Laszlo Kiss, or Kiss Laszlo as he was called since the family name comes first in Hungarian, leader of the far right Jobbik Party, got wind of the violent events by noontime. Immediately he made a phone call to German Chancellor Ursula Heinrich to present his scheme of sending *Magyar Garda* paramilitaries into western Romania's Transylvania and Banat regions to support the separatist movement. By using a paramilitary group rather than the official Hungarian forces, which were under the command of Germany as part of the unified E.U. Armed Forces, and busy occupying parts of Greece and Italy, Kiss could play off the separatist movement as essentially fueled by local sentiment, not receiving much, if any, outside aid from the Hungarian state. Kiss could also exercise greater control over the paramilitaries, since they answered only to Jobbik.

Chancellor Heinrich had only one reservation about this plan.

“Listen closely, Laszlo. You must not make any incursion into non-E.U. member states,” Heinrich declared. She knew that the Jobbik had long yearned to retake not only the old Hungarian lands of western Romania, but also those of northern Serbia and southern Slovakia. “Such an incursion could incur the wrath of Russia, and ultimately, of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. We won’t make the same mistake as our predecessor, Adolf Hitler. Once we have pacified the swarthy Southern Europeans and consolidated our power, then we can confront the Eurasian hordes. But we are not prepared for such a conflict at the present juncture, especially without the Americans, who have just fallen to the Latino drug cartel gangsters.”

“Understood, Ursula,” Kiss growled begrudgingly. He hung up the phone and pounded his miniature fist on his desk in frustration, breathing loudly. Kiss had unusually small hands.

“What is it, Sir?” asked Bela, a young intern and political aide.

“For a hundred years the Hungarians of Serbia and Slovakia have suffered under the oppressive yoke of Slavic scum,” Laszlo seethed. “We will not stand idly by, no matter what those German pussies say! Send my directives to the *Magyar Garda*: at sundown we begin assaulting Slovak, Romanian, and Serbian shops, marking the front doors to homes of ethnic non-Hungarians with red paint and threatening to end their lives if they do not either accept their status as ‘New Hungarians’, pay a special tax, or evacuate. Gypsies and Jews are to be shot on sight! We will drive all of them out of the Hungarian lands! The Great Kingdom will soon be restored!”

“Yes, Sir!” Bela said, snapping at attention.

Meanwhile, in the Banat, Wither slapte, Izzy, Tisha, Paty, Paloma, Sanitago, Gabor, Cedric, and Zăbar made their way into Timișoara proper. The others remained at the encampment on the periphery of the city. As soon as they had arrived in the city limits, they split into two groups. Paloma, Santiago, Gabor, Cedric, and Zăbar resolved to procure a stockpile of firearms while the remaining members of the Radical Book Club decided to look for an internet cafe so they could talk to Pedrocco on Skype.

As the first group explored the city to look for an armory from where they could steal weapons, they happened across a pro-Hungarian demonstration in one of the main squares, *Piața Unirii*.

“What’s this?” Cedric asked.

Paloma looked at the red, white, and green Hungarian flags and the distinctive red and white striped flags of the *Magyar Garda*. “It seems to be a protest in favor of ceding the Banat to Hungary,” she replied.

“Interesting,” Cedric then said.

“Interesting?” Paloma shot back. “You call that interesting? These are fascist fucks.”

“My bad,” said Cedric. “Thought maybe they were socialists.”

Zăbar’s eyebrows furled and his lips scrunched up upon his moustaches in a worrisome fashion. “We should get out of here. It could be dangerous,” he said.

Suddenly, the sound of rapid bursts of assault rifle fire rang out.

“Shit!” Santiago shouted. “Run for cover! We’re sitting ducks out here in the open!”

Santiago dived beneath a small ledge overhanging the top of a parapet going around a large fountain in the center of the plaza. He then motioned for the other radicals to get down and take cover there. Bullets whizzed overhead.

A stampede of pro-Hungarians ran past in the opposite direction, towards the gunfire.

“Goddamn. What the hell is going on?” Gabor questioned.

Scores of pro-Hungarians began falling, sanguine pools quickly forming beneath their pestilent cadavers.

“Just hold tight,” Santiago rasped. “It’s too dangerous to make a run for it right now.”

Blood curdling screams filled the air. As they hid by the fountain, Hungarian separatists engaged Romanian gendarmes in close quarters combat. Many of the demonstrators wielded bats and clubs wrapped in barbed wire.

After what seemed like a lifetime, the Hungarian separatists retreated from whence they had come. A moment later a platoon of Romanian gendarmes came pursuing the survivors.

Dozens of gendarmes were climbing through the fountain and leaping off the ledge, directly over the Latino and Rroma radicals.

The gendarmes began trampling over the fallen Hungarian separatists.

“Quickly!” Santiago screamed. “We must assault the gendarmes, take their weapons and uniforms. We’ll then be able to infiltrate the gendarmes’ armory, use the weapons stockpile to protect our brethren and sistren.”

After the stampede of gendarmes seemed to have trickled down, Izzy’s deranged cousin peeked over the fountain parapet and saw that just five gendarmes had yet to pass over in pursuit of the pro-Hungarian demonstrators. He reached up and grabbed one of these gendarmes by the ankle as he leapt over the fountain’s ledge. The gendarme face-planted onto the cobblestone, several teeth being knocked out in the process. Santiago then began punching the gendarme brutally in the face until he was rendered unconscious. He grabbed hold of the authority figure’s assault rifle and swiftly turned the muzzle on the remaining gendarmes who were sloshing through the fountain’s water, preparing to leap over the parapet. There were four of them left now. The rest of the gendarmes were facing away, chasing the pro-Hungarians. Santiago went trigger happy and pumped them full of lead. The four gendarmes’ cadavers splashed as they fell into the fountain waters.

“Quickly,” Santiago commanded. “Procure the weapons and remove their uniforms before the blood has time to stain them.”

Meanwhile, in another part of the city, Wither slapte, Tisha, Izzy, and Paty had just found an internet cafe furnished with webcams.

At the front desk sat a young woman with a heavy metal style. She was wearing an inverted cross necklace and the t-shirt of some Finnish band. She might have been nineteen years old. “Five *lei* per hour,” she rasped, ashing a cigarette into a tray as the Radical Book Club entered the seedy establishment.

Customers nearby, strange men with neck beards, sat watching unorthodox porn, seemingly oblivious to the fact that anyone could see what they were doing.

“We’ll take two hours,” said Wither slapte as he handed over ten *lei*.

Wither slapte swiftly took a seat at a computer as far away from the creepy men as possible and logged into Skype.

“Is Pedrocco online?” asked Paty.

“Just a minute, let’s see here . . .” Wither slapte uttered.

“What time is it there?” Izzy wondered.

“Well, if Pedrocco’s still in D.C., like the Bosnian newspaper said, it should be a seven hour difference. So it’d be early morning there,” Wither slapte replied.

“Hope the bastard’s awake,” said Tisha.

“Hey, what do you know! He’s online,” Wither slapte gushed jovially.

He placed the call and the next thing the radicals knew, Pedrocco was on the screen.

“Pedrocco, lookin’ good, man!” Izzy shot out.

“My old friends!” said Pedrocco. “It’s great to see your faces again. The insurgents in New York told me you were heading to the Balkans to spread glory unto the *Santa Muerte*. Tell me, what good news do you bring? Where are you now?”

“We’re in Romania, in Timișoara,” Wither slapte replied. “A lot of Paloma’s family lives here. We’re staying with them, doing some really good work, fomenting fundamental shifts in paradigms of social consciousness. But our Gypsy friends here tell us that an Axis Trifecta of Germany, France, and Hungary has taken over the European Union, unfortunately. No worries though. Probably going to start slaughtering more fascist fiends again soon. But who knows. We’ll see what material conditions dictate.”

“*Andale*,” Pedrocco croaked, lighting up a blunt. “That’s what I like to hear!”

“And where are you, Pedroc?” Paty questioned. “Hard to believe you really captured that General Johnson bastard!”

“Well, take a look for yourselves!” Pedrocco shot back before picking up his webcam and showing them his surroundings.

“No way . . . Pedroc! Is that the Oval Office?” Paty asked in astonishment. It was hard to recognize as the American flag had been replaced with a red and black banner with Che Guevara’s face on it.

“Sure is!” Pedrocco thundered. “Smashing the ideological apparatuses of the bourgeois state and establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat does have its perks. Me and my RBC Disciples and ARL homedawgs are operating out of the White House. We’re planning to paint it red tomorrow though.” He kicked his blade limbs up on the desk and thought about all the chicks he could

impress with his powerful position of prestige and stunning social status as the *de facto* leader of the communist revolution.

“Damn, I’m so jelly,” Tisha chirped.

The Radical Book Club members reminisced for almost another two hours. They talked about the good old times, back when they were just a bunch of raucous youths, half-assed Trotskyite activists, constantly smoking dope and reading Marxian literature; back when Cillian, the chairman of the Minneapolis branch of the Socialist Alliance, was hounding them about their non-stop partying getting in the way of paying dues and selling the newspaper of Socialist Alliance, *Equality*.

They talked about all the raves they used to go to, to trance out to minimal synth and new wave house music. None of them had been to a rave since that night when Minneapolis police massacred over three dozen partygoers. More than anyone, Paty found that to be a shame. The others also loved raving, but none more than Paty, the most avid raver of them all.

Tisha also wondered what had become of her cat, Prințesa. She hadn’t seen her since that night she was arrested and brought to the black ops rendition site in Minneapolis. Paty had later found the bloodied cat, which led her to the discovery of Tisha’s sequestering; she had left Prințesa with Tisha’s duplex neighbor, but North Minneapolis had since seen a wave of civil unrest, guerrilla warfare, and ultimately, radioactive contamination. Had the neighbor survived? Would she even have taken Prințesa with her if she did? Tisha hoped Prințesa was okay, that perhaps if her neighbor was killed in the fighting, someone else might have found Prințesa and adopted her. But this was unlikely. People had bigger shit to worry about, given the situation. Still, perhaps someone out there had had enough of a heart to take in a scared and lonely short-haired calico cat.

Eventually their session at the internet cafe expired. Pedrocco said he had business to attend to. It was getting late.

In the twilight hours, the Radical Book Club returned to the Gypsy encampment and found that Paloma, Cedric, Santiago, Gabor, and Zăbar had already arrived shortly before them.

Wither slapte trodded slowly through the camp, an uncanny feeling of otherness running throughout his melanocyte receptors. The *Santa Muerte* seemed to be reaching out to him.

Zăbar was hanging up the uniforms of the slain gendarmes on a clothesline strung up between two wooden horse-drawn wagons while Santiago rubbed down the firearms with a white handkerchief. The wagons were painted red. Santiago seemed very concentrated on what he was doing.

Wither slapte eyed Santiago and then walked up to Zăbar from behind. He put his hand on Zăbar’s shoulder and spoke, “Hey there, brother. What are these?”

“Gendarme uniforms,” Zăbar explained. “Putting them up to dry since the militarist goons whose cadavers we gleaned them from were felled in the waters of a fountain.”

“I see,” Wither slapte muttered.

Santiago looked up from the polished assault rifles. “As soon as they dry, we’ll infiltrate the gendarmes’ compound. Pack full these wagons with weaponry, ammo. Then the whole caravan can hide in the woods, keep safe when the shit hits the fan.”

“And take it from me,” said Paloma, “if what we saw today was any indication, the shit has already begun to hit the fan.”

“What exactly did y’all see?” asked Izzy.

“A pro-Hungarian demonstration,” Paloma answered.

“And a bloody one at that,” Gabor added.

“Whoa. What happened?” questioned Wither slapte.

“Hungarian nationalists seem to be pressing for the old lands of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Banat and Transylvania, to be ceded back to Hungary,” said Zăbar. “Gendarmes were sent to repress their demonstration and it quickly turned violent. Dozens killed. If the Hungarian state begins to aid them, the result could be a protracted conflict. Axis Trifecta forces in Romania. We might well join the ranks of Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Spain: the PIGS.”

“Goddamn,” Izzy uttered.

Paloma’s grandmother, Elena, started a campfire as the sky turned dark and everyone gathered round to roast lamb and goat meats over the open flames.

The elders sang praises to the *Sfânta Moarte*, the *Svîntaika Muli*.

Santiago began to trance out the realm of phantasy. He pet Fabiola's belly and then began jumping over the fire. The raspy flames licked his boots as crazed laughter erupted from his throat.

Tisha and Paty began leaping over the flames as well.

The radical *Santa Muerte*-worshipping Rroma began to chant a bizarre refrain in the darkness, their voices echoing and calling the wolves who lurked not far off in the wilderness.

*Ando kalo žas,
Svîntaika Muli dikhas,
Jekh baro balo xas
Thaj but mol pijas.
Ande Rátopija žas,
Sun Ra si kathe, žanas
Thaj vov phenel:
Mulimos kam-avel,
Jekh lolo yilo kam-rovel,
Amaro butji kam-keras.*

By the end of this ritual feast and praise-singing, the uniforms were dry. Santiago, Izzy, Zăbar, Wither slapte, and Cedric volunteered to wear them, to impersonate the gendarmes and infiltrate their compound. They took with them a covered wagon and two black stallions to transport the weaponry and ammunition so that the Gypsy community could defend itself from the far rightists.

Marita, Tisha, Gabor, Paty, Fabiola, O Gachupin, Paloma, O Yanko, Silaki, Fatiha, Elena, and the other Rromani men, women and children stayed at the encampment, packing things up and preparing to move to a more secluded location where it would be harder for the Hungarian separatists and Jobbik thugs to find them.

40 – DIVINE INTERVENTION

In the early morning hours, Wither slapte held the reins on the stallions as he rode at the front of the wagon filled with ammunition and weaponry back to the encampment. The nighttime raid on the gendarmes' compound had been a stunning success. Zăbar and Izzy sat on either side of him, while Santiago and Cedric walked behind the wagon, keeping watch for anyone who might meddle with their theft of the weapons stockpile.

Upon their return to the encampment, they received a hero's welcome.

O Gachupin, the leading patriarch, or *baro rrom*, of the Vlach Rroma of the Banat walked up to the gang of radicals and slapped each of them on the back in a congratulatory fashion.

"Come now, you fine young men! Your brave undertaking brings pride to us all!" O Gachupin declared. "As much as you deserve a feast and celebration now, our caravan must dwell here no longer, for danger lurks and our *drabarnja* sense it growing closer. We must be on our way."

"Very well, O Gachupin," Wither slapte replied. "Let us be on our way."

"As much as we would love to celebrate," Izzy began, "we're tired from this sleepless night of combat."

"Ah, you're right," said Elena. "Come, rest in the wagons while we are in transit to the isolated forest."

A few moments later, the entire caravan was on the road.

The previous night, *Magyar Garda* thugs had entered Romania en masse. Fortunately, they had not made it past Arad, a city closer to the Hungarian border, where they encountered fierce resistance from Romanian gendarmes. Thus the Rromani caravan was able to travel to their secluded campgrounds unhindered.

After they arrived, around noontime, Wither slapte remained in a cozy covered wagon to get some more shut eye.

Santiago slept for only about four hours, and then went with Gabor to begin training the Rroma in the handling of firearms, taking a group out to the woods to do target practice.

Golumbaika Kali decided to come in the covered wagon and cuddle with Wither slapte, but she didn't realize that Paty was watching her from behind a tree nearby.

Paty was feeling jealous that Golumbaika was getting to sleep with Wither slapte. She had had plenty of amorous liaisons with Tisha in the last period, but she noticed that Wither slapte had been growing more distant from her as he fell more and more madly in love with *E Golumbaika Kali, La Paloma Negra*. Although she didn't realize it consciously on the level of her Ego, within Paty's Id, these feelings of jealousy all seemed to have begun on the night that the three of them, Wither slapte, Paty, and Paloma, had a *menage-à-trois* in the basement of Santiago's garage shortly before they left for Mexico. Wither slapte had seemed way more into Paloma that night. Thus all this jealous rage had been building up within Paty for quite a long time.

Paloma snuggled up under the blanket with Wither slapte. He moaned gently and began spooning her big pregnant belly.

Just as Paloma was about to fall asleep, Paty kicked in the wagon's door.

"What the fuck, you slut!" Paty screamed.

Wither slapte was startled, and sat up swiftly.

"What the hell, you crazy bitch!" Paloma shot back.

"Wither slapte is mine, goddammit!" Paty shouted.

"Arrrrggghhhh!" Wither slapte yelled. "Just stop! Both of you! Okay?"

"Fuck you, Wither slapte," Paty screamed. "Who was there to comfort you when you had nightmares on Yom HaShoah? I can't believe you would sleep with this filthy Gypsy whore!"

"Cunt!" Paloma shouted, getting up on her feet and grabbing a large kitchen knife off of one of the shelves inside the wagon.

"Oh hell's nah, biyatch. Take that back, you two-timing skank!" Paty yelled.

"Fuck you, lesbian bitch!" Paloma thundered, throwing the knife. It stabbed into the wagon's wooden door, just barely missing Paty's face.

"Oh my God, what the fuck do you think you guys are doing?" Wither slapte screamed.

"Stay out of this, Wither slapte, you fucking knob goblin!" Paty shouted, grabbing the knife's handle and beginning to pull it out of the wooden door as Paloma reached for another knife.

Meanwhile, out in the woods, Santiago and Gabor heard shouting from the camp and eyed each other nervously.

"What's that?" Gabor asked.

"Sounds like a cat fight," Santiago replied.

"Better go check this out," said Gabor. "You stay here and continue the weapons training session. It's important that the young ones be prepared for combat."

"*Órale*," Santiago croaked.

Gabor quickly galloped back to the camp. By the time he got there, Izzy was holding Paty back, trying to restrain her as best he could, while Wither slapte and Cedric held back Golumbaika.

"Does someone want to tell me just what the hell is going on here?" Gabor thundered.

"Your woman is a goddamn two-timing tramp," Paty shouted.

"Don't listen to her filthy lies, Gabor," Golumbaika retorted. "I'll always be your *piramni*."

"I caught her sleeping with Wither slapte!" Paty proclaimed loudly.

Gabor's eyes grew narrow, focusing in on Wither slapte. "Tell me it's not so, Wither slapte," he growled in a whisper.

Wither slapte became drenched in sweat in what seemed like no more than a second. "No . . . it's not true," he murmured.

Golumbaika began crying.

"What is it, Golumbaika, *murri piramni*?" Gabor questioned.

But she only sobbed louder. "Wither slapte! How can you deny me? How can you deny my love for you?"

Gabor turned once again towards Wither slapte. “You bastard,” he whispered. Suddenly he charged towards Wither slapte. He tackled him and, straddling him, began punching his face in a frantic frenzy.

“Hey, lay off him!” Izzy shouted. But Gabor just kept punching him, so Izzy pulled out his pistol, a Desert Eagle, and blasted off a round into the air as a warning shot.

“Cease!” bellowed O Gachupin. “I will not have this nonsense in my *vitsa!*”

A hush fell upon the crowd that had gathered round to watch the fight.

Gabor’s fist finally came to a halt. He shot O Gachupin a sideways regard and breathed heavily. Zābar and Cedric slowly lifted him to his feet. Izzy and Tisha lifted up Wither slapte and dusted off his back.

O Gachupin walked over to Gabor and stood uncomfortably close so that Gabor could feel his garlicky breath landing upon his face. “We will hold a *kris* in three days time at sundown to determine a rendering of justice in accordance with our principles of *Rromanipen*. Until that time, you are not to speak or interact in any way with Wither slapte or Golumbaika Kali,” said O Gachupin. He then turned to Wither slapte and Golumbaika. “And the same goes for you two. Neither of you are to see or speak to the other two individuals involved in this bizarre love triangle until the *kris* has made its decision.”

“Very well, *murro baro rrom*,” said Golumbaika.

Gabor made the sign of the cross and walked away.

Wither slapte just stood there, in severe pain.

“Goddamn, Wither slapte. Sorry we didn’t kick that Gabor bastard’s ass,” said Tisha.

“Argh. It’s okay. I just want to get some rest, sleep this off,” Wither slapte said.

That night Wither slapte, Paloma, and Gabor each slept in separate wagons, several elders staying up all night to keep watch over the *vardos* and enforce the apartheid measure.

“Holly shiznit. What is this bullnatch?” muttered Gabor to himself as he got into bed. He was sleeping in the same wagon as the elderly Fatiha and Elena.

In an uncanny occurrence, Paloma and Wither slapte’s melanocyte receptors started reverse ejaculating dark matter in their sleep at exactly the same time, at 1:11 AM, projecting them to the astral realm of phantasy at quantum lightning bolt speeds.

First their out of body experiences united above the trees of the oaken grove where the caravan was staying. Wither slapte, for reasons unknown, took the form of a chinchilla in this bizarre astral realm. His beady black eyes seemed to seamlessly mesh into this new cosmic avatar. His plush hipster emo bangs wrapped around the rodent’s furry belly as they melanged into one entity. Chinchillaslapte, as Wither slapte’s avatar liked to be called, still had purple highlights in his fur. Paloma was, as usual, a dove. Their avatars left behind black-light-esque hormtrails in the night sky, going up to the ionosphere.

Hormtrails, similar to chemtrails, or chemical trails, were trails of hormones left behind by astral projection. Made up of high concentrations of melanocyte-channelled dark matter and disembodied feedback loops of the consciousness-altering hormones melatonin and melanin, hormtrails were real, physical, hard evidence of the *Santa Muerte*. Hormtrails appeared first as barely noticeable threads of blackness jutting out from the astral projector’s pineal gland, but gradually grew into massive aurora borealis-like funnels. Chinchillaslapte nearly didn’t make it out of the ionosphere due to interference from large microwave pulse beams sent out by the U.S. government’s top secret High Velocity Active Astral Research Program, or HVAARP, whose facilities were located in a remote area of Alaska. Despite the collapse of the bourgeois government, a team of mad scientists, funded by wealthy French and Belgian Walloon Freemasons connected to Olivier La Plume’s *Union pour un mouvement national*, combined with the seclusion and difficulty of access to the HVAARP facilities, were enough to keep the project going. The Freemasons were working hard to keep proletarians from escaping to the realm of astral phantasy, where the *Santa Muerte* Herself was promoting Marxian ideals and offering the masses tantalizing nocturnal escape from the monotony of life under wage slavery. Fortunately, with Black Dove’s help, Chinchillaslapte was able to navigate his way around the microwave beams bouncing around throughout the ionosphere.

Twin hormonal flames licked the stars as Black Dove and Chinchillaslapte jizzed through the night sky into the far reaches of the cosmos. They were headed straight for Rátopia, the darkest planet unknown the mankind.

The sanguine rings of Rátopia were there to greet them, as per the usual.

Chinchillaslapte rode on the Black Dove's back, her wings blowing the spacedust that had been floating in suspended animation all about as she flew under the rings. The spacedust came alive and blew across the crimson rings like sandpaper, eroding off pinkish, isomorphous crystals. Bits of the crystals fell downwards like snowflakes and Chinchillaslapte caught them on his tongue. The crystals popped like carbonated candy as he pushed his tongue against the roof of his rodent mouth. He then maneuvered onto the belly of the dove, grasping her black feathers with his rodent appendages, and regurgitated the isomorphous crystals so as to feed them to her in predigested form.

"You are my birdling," Chinchillaslapte uttered.

Golumbaika Kali chirped with joy and grasped Chinchillapte with her talons so that he would not have to hold on with his small rodent hands, which were getting tired. She then cawed loudly. She sounded like a pterodactyl and this got the attention of the *Santa Muerte*, who then sent the spirit of late afrofuturist jazz artist Sun Ra out to greet the visitors to Rátopia.

"You know," Black Dove began, "the chinchilla is a crepuscular creature, meaning that it is active in the twilight hour."

"I would know; I am one," Chinchillaslapte replied. "It is my instinct on this plane."

Sun Ra floated up from the darkest unknown planet, humming a forlorn tune filled with melancholy.

"Blessings of the *Santa Muerte* upon thee," he croaked.

Black Dove dropped Chinchillaslapte on his left shoulder and perched herself on his right.

"Why the long face?" she asked.

"It's the *Santa Muerte*," Sun Ra uttered despondently. "She's grown weary of other aspects of the mega-verse. The beings of the inverse-Betelgeusian star system have bypassed the death-birth cycle, attained immortality. Nothing left for Her to feast upon there."

"Well, I'm sure there will be plenty more deaths on Earth for Her to reap and relish in," Chinchillaslapte offered.

"Aye, Chinchillaslapte, those were my thoughts exactly," Sun Ra replied. "But it's not good enough. You see, once the *Santa Muerte* gets habituated to lording it over various galactic races, it's just not like Her to let go of them like that. Needless to say, She hasn't been taking it all that well. Besides, it's not natural, what these inverse-Betelgeusians are doing."

Golumbaika interjected, "Inverse-Betelgeusians, you say?"

"That's right," said Sun Ra. "Their star system is only accessible through a pineal-powered portal known as Orion's melanin, effectively unfastening Orion's belt and inverting the contents."

"Perhaps if we could unzip Orion's fly, reverse the inversion, the Betelgeusian death drive could be restored," Golumbaika chirped.

"The instauration instaured," Chinchillaslapte whispered into Le Sony'r Ra's left ear.

Sun Ra smirked, barely suppressing almost uncontrollable eruptions of hearty laughter as a Minimoog monophonic analogue synthesizer spontaneously materialized before him.

Cyborg versions of Jimi Hendrix, Esma Redžepova, Elvis Presley, and Kool Keith appeared, approaching quickly as they rode in an open sleigh along the rings of Rátopia.

"It's a miracle," Jimi shouted as he pulled on the reins, slowing down the large celestial cephalopods of burden to a steady trot before they finally plopped down, stopping at the feet of Sun Ra. "Despite O Gachupin's injunction against your assemblage, you do yet remain in glorious union."

Chinchillaslapte remembered the fight; Golumbaika Kali, the words of O Gachupin.

"*Aj miro phral*," Golumbaika muttered, "do not remind me of my infidelity to *Rromanipen!*"

"Foolish Black Dove," Esma thundered. "There are many ways to follow the Rromani path."

"*Le guruvesko gožni*," the *Santa Muerte* roared as She blasted through the Rátopian ionosphere. Her arm span seemed massive enough to engulf the lot of them. "The only *latcho drom* is through *Me!*"

“But, Dark Mother,” Golumbaika began, “Very few Rroma are devotees unto You yet. Most are Orthodox Christians, Muslims, some Catholics, and Evangelical and Pentecostal sects are said to be growing. Surely they are still of the *chacho rat*?”

“Golumbaika, *chi san dili*. Surely in all your communion with Me, your *Dej Tunyariki*, you must have seen that it is only through fulfillment of the dark covenant with Me that you are a true *Rromni*. This spiritual misguiding is only a consequence of imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism. Always remember, Golumbaika Kali, that the darker the covenant, the sweeter the convection. The *gadže*-imposed cults are only prolonging a sordid pastiche. With the undoing of imperialism, capitalism shalt be smashed, and only then will true national liberation occur. I will feast on the carcasses of the institutions which benefit from racialized subjugation, allowing the birth and instauration of advanced communism. Disalienation shalt precipitate the proliferation of my cult.”

“Yes, Twilight Mother, yes,” *La Paloma Negra* cooed.

“And I will see to it that O Gachupin and the elders punish Gabor most severely. His attack upon the physical integrity of Wither slapte was most certainly uncalled for,” the *Sfânta Moarte* went on. “His decision to hold a *kris* on the matter was foolish altogether. Gabor should simply have been declared *mahrime*, with the only way to redeem himself being by personally slaughtering ten thousand fascist fiends.”

“Thank you, Dark Mother,” Chinchillaslapte softly murmured.

“One last thing,” spaketh the *Sfânta Moarte*, “Given O Gachupin’s ineptitude, I hereby declare that your starchild shalt in time become *cel mai baro rrom* someday.”

“*Mișto!*” Golumbaika chirped.

Sun Ra lifted the astral projecting radicals in his gentle hands and set them atop the keys of his Minimoog synthesizer.

Chinchillaslapte and Black Dove began milky wave style electro dance battling as the cyborgs watched on.

Just then, Chinchillaslapte and Black Dove were suddenly snapped back to the profane realm.

Wither slapte woke up in a cold sweat. He flung himself up and hit his head on a shelf inside the wagon where he had been sleeping.

“Ouch,” he muttered.

Izzy stirred, awakened by the rustling.

“Yo, Wither slapte, what’s up, man?” he uttered.

“Just communed with the *Santa Muerte*,” Wither slapte explained.

“Damn, bro. What’d She say?”

“The instauration of advanced communism hastens the disalienated collective embrace of our Dark Mother,” Wither slapte croaked, paraphrasing.

“*Ándale*,” Izzy rasped. His eyelids felt heavy. He rolled over and he went back to dreaming.

41 – THE LAST BLIZZARD OF THE LONG HOT WINTER

Make-up artists vigorously pampered Pedrocco as he prepared to address the masses outside the Red House, formerly known as the White House. Biff Mathers and Ramiro Parascandola sat nearby, coaching Pedrocco on how to best manipulate the people's emotions to the benefit of the new Army for Radicalism and Liberation regime.

"Enough, enough I tell you," Pedrocco groaned. "Honestly, you guys are acting as though I've never delivered a revolutionary address to throngs of agitated proletarians."

"We're just trying to help you," Biff said defensively.

Pedrocco put his hand on Biff's shoulder. "I know, Biff. Forgive me," he said in a deep voice.

Just then, Carolina Sandoval burst into the Oval Office.

"Pedroc, you're on in five!" she shrilled. "What the hell, where are your pants?" She eyed his bulging crotch, seemingly tucked with care above his prosthetic blade limbs.

"Spilled some ketchup on them earlier, so I took them off," Pedrocco replied.

"Oh for fuck's sake, can't you just tear open your ketchup packets like a normal person?" she inquired. She had observed his bizarre habit the night before, when the ARL cadre had gone out for burgers together.

"No. I always squeeze or slap condiment packets until they burst open."

"Goddammit. Alright, well somebody get this man some pants!" Carolina shouted.

A loyal ARL footsoldier quickly volunteered his olive green khaki pants. Pedrocco donned the combat fatigues, along with a red beret, before stopping briefly in front of a mirror to admire his hipster euro mullet, moustache, and prosthetic blade limbs. He winked at himself and then made his way to the balcony from where he would address the large crowds. The speech would be historically significant in that it was the first time the radical new regime had directly addressed the entirety of the nation at once.

Pedrocco Pastrana stood paralyzed for a moment as the masses surged forth, eager to take in the words of America's most famous radical communist. The surreality of the moment hit him like a bag of bricks. The largest rally he had ever addressed before this was on that fateful May Day when hundreds of thousands of far left-wing protesters stormed the Minnesota State Capitol Building, but now there were easily over ten million people occupying the Capitol Mall area, eager to display their opposition to the capitalist system, as well as their unwillingness to tolerate bourgeois mores and reactionary attitudes amongst the remaining enclaves of Tea Party white supremacists.

Throng of radicalized youths threw their clenched fists into the air in what had once been known as Black Power salutes.

Pedrocco raised both his hands in the air, extending his index and middle fingers together and sticking his thumb out so that his hands resembled pistols. He held this pose for a long while, bobbing his head like he knew what was up, and the crowds cheered ever louder.

Finally, somewhat of a semblance of calm grew over the masses and it was quiet enough for Pedrocco to speak and be heard. Loudspeakers carried his voice throughout the Capitol Mall and live feeds streamed the broadcast throughout the land.

"Brethren and sistren," Pedrocco began. He waited a few seconds as his voice echoed through the loudspeakers, sending chills down many a spine. "We have gathered here today to mark the end of the bourgeoisie's reign over this land."

A woman standing on the Red House lawn, close to the Oval Office balcony began going hysterical. "Praise be Pedrocco," she kept repeating loudly.

Several ARL footsoldiers asked her to calm down because the microphones were picking up her voice and making it harder to understand the speech. She was unable to so they escorted her a few meters back.

"No more will workers and youth suffer under the oppressive yoke of the Johnson regime. And I assure you of this, workers and youth: all those who aided and abetted Johnson will be brought to justice for their crimes against humanity. That's why I'm announcing today the formation of a special committee: the Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against the Proletariat."

The masses began roaring with applause once again.

"And make no mistake," Pedrocco went on, "The so-called liberal democracy preceding Johnson's reign of fascist brutality was by no means a viable alternative. It was that rotten system of bourgeois control from which fascism naturally flowed as the next logical step in material progression."

Many in the crowd nodded their heads, acknowledging the truthfulness of Pedrocco's words.

"I'm also pleased to announce that the people's proletarian tribunal has sentenced General Johnson to death!" Pedrocco shouted.

Millions of sonorous approbatory claps rang throughout the Capitol Mall and the crowds began chanting, "Peace through justice! Peace through justice!"

Pedrocco continued, "To the workers and youth here today, and to those listening across the land, I say this: you are the true vanguard of this revolution. The forefront, the most advanced segment of the populace in terms of social consciousness. To you I say, go forth and seize control of businesses, schools, communities. Seize not only the commanding heights of industry, but also those small mom and pop shops, for truly those petit bourgeois fucks are the most insidiously reactionary of all capitalists. Those petit bourgeois small business fucks have always been the backbone of fascist movements. Smash all private ownership quickly, for time is of the essence. On the rubble of all

this, build new socialist institutions. Establish democratic workers' councils, band together and we will launch assaults on the bourgeoisie on the international level. Once these bourgeois fucks have been sought out and annihilated across the globe, communism will reign. And I can assure you that the Army for Radicalism and Liberation will be there to back you up every step of the way!"

The ocean of humans burst into uncontrollable jubilation. In their ecstasy, throngs of radicalized youths began to run amok through the streets of the District of Columbia, overturning and setting aflame vehicles, and storming structures deemed symbolic of the old social order: department stores, shopping malls, the embassies and consulates of foreign bourgeois liberal democracies, churches and cathedrals. Many of these were burned to the ground while others were occupied with no clear aim. D.C. had been left remarkably intact up to this point, given that General Johnson and the H.I.A. were unwilling to launch a nuclear attack on their own seat of power.

Pedrocco retreated to the Oval Office and met with his top ARL and RBC Disciples advisors.

"Good news, Pedroc," Ramiro rasped. "A communique from our comrades in New York came in while you were delivering your speech. The Radical Navy just capsized a ship off the coast of Long Island. It was headed to Chancellor Heinrich's Germany, filled with Conservative Cable News pundits and other fascio-conservative propagandists masquerading as journalists. Apparently the TV network's entire staff was attempting to flee the country. Sailors of the Navy for Radicalism and Liberation torpedoed the ship and indiscriminately peppered the shark-infested waters with gunfire to insure the already near certain demise of the lot of them."

"*Ándale*," Pedrocco croaked. "That is most excellent. I didn't even know we had a *pinche* navy."

The Army for Radicalism and Liberation and Radical Book Club Disciples leaders began high-fiving one another with self-satisfied airs.

Pedrocco then invited his radical cohorts to the strategizing chamber in the Red House basement. There they engaged in debauchorous and hearty booze-fueled partying until the wee hours

of the morning. They passed out all over the table and floor and slept until about 10 o'clock the following morning when they were awoken by a frantic Jules Reimers, the Radical Army operative from the Rocky Mountains.

"Wake up! Wake up, you fools!" Jules shouted.

"Argh, what now, Jules?" Pedrocco groaned, his head still spinning.

"We have a situation," Jules began. "Last night, after your speech, throngs of recently radicalized working class youths began occupying a number of government buildings."

"Well, what's the problem there?" Carolina moaned. "Wasn't that what we were expecting?"

"Yes, yes," Jules replied. "But there's been further developments. It seems a new faction has been formed within the protest camp. They're calling themselves Young Patriots for a Stable Transition. Their ideological orientation seems to be center-right libertarian, perhaps it could even be described as anarcho-capitalist."

"My ass," Pedrocco spat. "Rightist libertarianism is always petit bourgeois, if not outright fascist in nature, and certainly never moderate."

"Anyway," Jules went on, "The Young Patriots have gathered around the Washington Monument and they're demanding ARL concessions, saying they won't leave until their demands are met."

"Those insolent fucks," Ramiro growled.

"What are their demands?" Carolina questioned.

"Take a look for yourself," Jules shot back, handing her a leaflet which had been passed out by YPST activists.

Fellow Americans! What has happened to the rule of law? To respectability, honor, and order? We, as a nation, seem to have lost our way. Instability and extrajudicial killings have become part and parcel of our day to day existence. This must stop. We are Young Patriots for a Stable Transition, and we believe the extremism of the Army for Radicalism and Liberation has gone too far. A transition is necessary, but not on their terms. Join us! Our demands:

1. Re-establish civilian governance and the rule of law. General Johnson's military regime was unconstitutional, but so is the ARL's wanton Radicalism. The ARL may only continue to exist as a private militia, as guaranteed by the Second Amendment, but no longer as a de facto governing body.

2. Ensure the right to property, a basic human right.

3. Stop the repression of a free press. All journalists have a right to report the news.

4. Bring back the gold standard. Abolish the Federal Reserve!

5. Legalize marijuana.

6. End the NAFTA. American jobs for American workers!

"Fucking populists," said Pedrocco. "These dumbasses wouldn't know the difference between personal property and private property if it slapped them in the face."

"Yeah," Shameka added. "Free press? Like a worker under capitalism can just go and broadcast dey views widdout controllin' tha means of mass broadcast discourse production. These idealistic libertarian fucks need a serious lesson in material dialectics, Ah tell ya hwat!"

"We have to repress this counterrevolutionary shit *post haste*," uttered Ramiro.

"Right you are, Comrade Ramiro. Assemble your footsoldiers," Pedrocco declared. "Jules, how many of these 'Stable Transition' fucks are we dealing with here?"

"ARL scouts estimate they are approximately three-hundred-thousand strong, Comrade Pedrocco."

"Goddamn. Hopefully they'll mostly back down, or it'll be a bloodbath," said Pedrocco forebodingly.

"A massacre of these libertarian fucks may be jus what dis historical junction requires," said Shameka.

"You're right," Pedrocco conceded. "This is no time for pussyfooting. Comrades, gather all ARL forces in the vicinity. At sundown we take collective action, descend on the Washington Monument; the indiscriminate slaughter then begins."

"*Órale*," Ramiro shot back, rubbing his palms together.

"I'll plot the logistics," Carolina blurted out.

"But first, let's chase these hangovers and get some cheese pizza! Who's with me?" Pedrocco shouted.

“Fuck yeah, dawg!” Shameka screamed.

“Aw yea,” Biff Mathers croaked.

The deranged Radical Army leaders and their RBC Disciples cohorts ordered several large pizzas from a local Italian-American joint and began furiously plotting their repression of the counterrevolutionary Young Patriots for a Stable Transition.

“We’ll send in a crisis negotiator—make it seem like we’re actually willing to take their concerns into consideration,” Carolina said as she took a big hunking bite of outrageously cheesy pizza. It was composed of four different varieties Franco-Italian cheeses: mozzarella, gorgonzola, gruyère, roquefort. The fall of the bourgeois government had left Food and Drug Administration regulations on cheese fermentation by the wayside, allowing cheese-makers across the land to experiment with more radical recipes. “That will give us some time to surround their position, corral them like filthy animals into our snare.”

“I like it,” replied Pedrocco, reaching for a hot cheese-covered bread stick. He slapped the cheesy breadstick on his lips, grease slathering up his sleazy moustache, and tonguing the breadstick slightly before ripping off the end with his powerful jaw.

Biff Mathers volunteered himself to be the negotiator. Despite the enormous risks to personal safety such a task entailed, he was willing to put himself in grave harm’s way for the sake of the cause.

Several hours passed; noontime became afternoon, afternoon became evening, and evening became night. It was time to assault the right-wing libertarian protest encampment.

Army for Radicalism and Liberation commanders assembled their D.C. area forces, some one-hundred-thousand strong, and prepared to attack the reactionary, peaceful protesters in a pincer movement. Although they were outnumbered by almost three to one by the right-wing libertarians, they were confident that their battle-hardened radical troops would withstand any potential libertarian counter-maneuvers.

Biff Mathers went in first, directly to the base of the Washington Monument, where the leaders of the Young Patriots for a Stable Transition were said to be camped out. He wore a bulletproof vest with the word ‘negotiator’ scrawled across the

breastplate and carried with him an ARL flag, which was blood red with the word ‘radical’ printed on it in bold, golden-yellow, capitalized letters.

“Stop right there,” a Young Patriot called out as Biff approached. His voice cracked, “What do you want?”

“I wish to speak with your leaders on behalf of the ARL,” Biff shouted. “I mean you no harm.”

The Young Patriot, a self-proclaimed men’s rights activist from Arizona, wore a trilby, which he mistakenly took to be a fedora. He looked at Biff suspiciously, but finally decided to let him pass. “Very well,” he squawked.

“Thanks, pipsqueak,” Biff muttered as he walked past the young right-wing libertarian.

“Hey, what’d you just say?” the men’s rights activist said defensively.

Biff turned around, performing a backwards pivot. “I said, thanks, ya mothafuckin’ pipsqueak!”

The Young Patriot clutched his trilby and trembled with impotent rage.

A large crowd of Young Patriots gathered round to see what was all this commotion.

“Hey, what’s your friggin’ problem, dude?” another trilby-wearing young man jeered at Biff.

“I don’t have time for this shit!” Biff shouted. “Just take me to your goddamn leader.”

“Show a little respect, you friggin’ socialist sod,” were the words out of yet another trilby-adorned noggin of Caucasian persuasion.

Biff sighed and looked around. “Why the fuck are you all wearing trilbies?”

“This is a fedora, dude!” another trilby-wearing alt-right libertarian shot back.

Just then, a segment of the crowd parted like the Red Sea before Moses and a large, plump man wearing a trilby sauntered forth. He seemed older than the others in the crowd; his face more weathered, worn. His neckbeard more full, greyed ever so slightly.

Biff turned and faced the man. “Hello, there,” he said.

“Greetings, socialist,” the plump man breathed. “Please, forgive the younglings; they can be a bit overzealous at times.”

“No problem, Mister . . . ?” Biff said, trailing off.

“James Wilson,” the plump man replied. “But you can call me Jimmy.”

“Well, Jimmy. Name’s Biff. I’d like to have a word with you in private, if you don’t mind.”

“Certainly, Biff,” replied Jimmy before turning to his young followers. “Well, what are y’all lookin’ at? Get back to fighting feminism or something!”

The Young Patriots began to mill about the area once again.

“Biff, right this way please,” said Jimmy, leading him into the entrance of the Washington Monument.

They rode an elevator up to the observation deck, near the apex of the obelisk, which corresponded to George Washington’s apotheosized urethral meatus in the Masonic phallic symbolism of the structure, culturally misappropriated from ancient Kemetic African people.

“I’ve got to hand it to you, Jimmy,” Biff said. “Interesting choice of locale for this meeting.”

“Indeed, Biff. But let’s get down to business. I assume you’re here to try and convince me that our free market, anarcho-libertarian ideals are unrealistic, unattainable under the ARL’s Marxian paradigm. But you listen here, Biff. Feminazi bitches are impeding our ability to get laid! They’re hoarding the Federal Reserve’s gold and selling it to the Chinese and Russians, accelerating the fiat currency collapse. It’s all part of their diabolical scheme to fragment family values, turn our womenfolk against us. Create a one world currency, one world government. A sick New World Order where feminazi whores lord it over us menfolk. They must be stopped, Biff. Surely you, as a man, can see that?” Jimmy Wilson said.

“Err, yes, I see your point,” Biff said, nodding. He looked out the window and remarked that he could see quite a distance from such a great height.

Jimmy clasped his trilby and wiped his underarms with it as he sweat profusely.

“However, the Army for Radicalism and Liberation sees this matter from a different perspective,” Biff went on. “Patriarchy does indeed exist in the world today, and we’re working to establish genuine gender equity.”

“Socialist scumbag!” Wilson screamed. “Paid off by the feminazis, aren’t you? You fucking sick bastard! Let me guess, you’re sexually active? I hate you, all of you sexually active men! I hate you! You walk all over nice guys like us! Well, no more!”

“Whoa, let’s settle the fuck down here,” Biff croaked, looking out the window again. This time he noticed signal flares in the distance. ARL forces getting into pincer formation, signalling to those on the other side where they were. Biff knew that the onslaught was imminent now.

“Enough,” Jimmy uttered. “If we can’t get any concessions from you on the feminazi issue, let’s move on to the next point on the agenda.”

“Alright,” Biff replied.

“We want the ARL to guarantee the safety of all journalists,” Jimmy Wilson continued, “including, and especially, those from Conservative Cable News. Now, we libertarians may not always agree with their conservative viewpoints—for instance, we’re big supporters of marijuana legalization—but we still respect their right to hold different opinions. You could learn a thing or two from us in that regard, Biff.”

“Too late, I’m afraid,” Biff uttered back. “The entire Conservative Cable News staff was killed in a shipwreck off the coast of Long Island yesterday.”

“Goddammit,” Wilson murmured as he began furtively stroking his neckbeard. “Well, then what about the North American Free Trade Agreement? Surely we can work out some sort of compromise on this issue, if not the others.”

“Well, the ARL certainly does envision a future where resources are allocated based on human need, not profit, under a system of centrally planned fair trade as opposed to so-called free trade,” said Biff.

“Finally we are making some headway here, Biff!” Wilson uttered jovially. “You see, perhaps it was Murray Rothbard who said it best, but NAFTA is wholly unconstitutional. If the government truly wanted to promote free markets, it would simply abolish regulations, tariffs, not promote greater statist red tape with more treaties.”

Just then, a half dozen ARL tanks began shelling the hordes of trilby-sporting men's rights activists at the base of the Washington Monument.

"Shit, what the hell was that?" Wilson muttered to himself as he turned and looked out the window. He could feel the towering monument swaying back and forth slightly as tank shells struck its base.

Biff took a step towards Wilson's behind and placed his hand on his shoulder. "That, my friend, is the Radical Army."

Jimmy Wilson turned and looked at Biff Mathers in horror. "No! No! It can't be! You conniving socialist scum! These negotiations were nothing more than a ruse!"

"Ha, you got that right, sucka!" Biff shouted before suckerpunching Wilson in the face, knocking him out cold.

The Young Patriots for a Stable Transition, scattered around the central zone of the Capitol Mall, near the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool and the Smithsonian, ran towards the Washington Monument to mount their defense. Many of them were farm boys from the Midwest who had managed to escape the onslaught of Cuban and Haitian brigands in the Deep South, and they were heavily armed.

Carolina Sandoval led a division of M1 Abrams tanks, which the Radical Army had commandeered from the bourgeois State. As the Young Patriots began taking cover behind concrete edifices around the monument, she opened the tank's hatch and grasped the large fifty caliber machine gun mounted atop it. She put her goggles up on her forehead to get a better view of the battlefield and took off her tank commander skullcap, letting her long flowing hair fall down on her shoulders. It was quite hot inside the tank.

Dozens of men wearing trilbies then ambushed her tank in an effort to stop the onslaught, but it was to no avail.

Carolina began going trigger happy, pumping the right-wing populist libertarians full of lead as they surged forth. Intense flashes lit up the dark scene. It was as though the barrel of her gun was a flashlight, flickering on and off because it suffered from poor contact between the batteries due to grime that had built up over time. As she fired off countless rounds, the strobe-like flashes

of light allowed her to see into the whites of the men's rights activists' eyes as she mowed them down.

"Arghhh!" a right-wing populist shouted as he keeled over in horrendous agony, his trilby falling off to the side. He gasped for breath and began coughing up torrents of blood.

Another men's rights activist wearing a trilby kneeled down in an attempt to comfort the blood-barfer. "Hang in there, buddy! You're gonna make it through this! I know it!" he bellowed.

Carolina ran up to the neckbearded man and kicked him swiftly in the chest, knocking him backwards onto his sitter. "Eat lead, shizbag!" she shouted before blowing the right-wing libertarian populist away at point blank range. The blast was so powerful that it ripped his trilby in half.

Meanwhile, Ramiro Parascandola was on foot, leading a platoon of Radical commandos and giving infantry support to the tank division.

Scores of right-wing populists fell as the Radical commandos engaged them in close quarters combat, Ramiro impaling several of them with a large buck knife.

On the opposite side of the monument, Pedrocco was surveilling the situation from atop the Red House, commanding ARL mobile assault units by radio.

As another division of tanks led by Jules Reimers on the side opposite of Carolina began shelling the base of the Washington Monument, where the rightist libertarians were concentrated, Biff Mathers grew nervous. The monument seemed to be swaying more now. Indeed, the tank shells were eating away at the bricks, effectively turning the towering edifice into a gargantuan jenga tower. The RBC Disciples' paramount chief unclipped his walkie talkie from his hip and radioed down to Pedrocco.

"Pedroc! This is Biff Mathers. Call off the tank shelling! The structural integrity of the Washington Monument seems to be getting eaten away! Over."

"All the better," Pedrocco replied. "One less remaining edifice of symbolic glorification of filthy slave-owning white men. Over."

"Pedrocco, you don't understand! I'm up here at the observation deck, at the top of the monument! Over."

Pedrocco looked with a pair of night vision binoculars at the top of the monument and saw Biff Mathers in the window with a panicked look on his face. Multiple tank shells hit the base of the monument at the same time. “Goddammit, Biff! Get out of there!” he shouted into the walkie talkie.

But it was too late. Seconds later, the obelisk began to gradually lean drastically to the side until finally it tipped over completely, massive mounds of rubble cascading to the ground. Tens of thousands of Young Patriots for a Stable Transition were crushed by the shower of stone. Biff Mathers’ life was, of course, terminated.

ARL thugs continued to indiscriminately fire on the surviving YPST activists until sunrise, when other radicalized youth, more sympathetic to the ARL, gathered around the Capitol Mall, curious to see the toppled Washington Monument. As the morning went on, some muckrakers were starting to press the masses to demand answers. Why had the ARL slaughtered so many protesters? Was this really the liberation they were seeking? Were the Young Patriots really that much a threat to the revolution?

Pedrocco and his top ARL and RBC Disciples advisors piled into an armored personnel carrier and left the Red House to go to the Washington Monument Rubble Mounds to address the concerned masses.

“Pedrocco, there’s something I must tell you,” Ramiro began as they rode along. It would be a short drive. “I’ve thought this through, and the sad truth is that the masses seem to lack the political awareness and education, much less the generalized social consciousness required to comprehend what we’re trying to achieve here. I believe that the best option we have now is to foment a cult of personality around you. Control things top-down and start a long march through the institutions. Educate the youths in Marxian concepts, and in one generation’s time we’ll be prepared to fully transition to genuine socialism, working class control. Until then, we need a small, ideologically adept vanguard who has the working classes’ best interests at heart to rule on their behalf.”

Pedrocco twirled his moustache pensively.

“Worse yet,” Ramiro continued, “if the Young Patriots for a Stable Transition fiasco has taught us anything, it’s that the Third Worldist political line was correct all along, in surmising that the majority of the First World’s populace is anything but proletarian in class character. In fact, the First World masses are essentially a labor aristocracy—workers paid off with the crumbs of the bourgeoisie, financially in terms of currency, and psychologically in terms of white supremacy.”

Jules Reimers, the Rocky Mountain Radicalist, piped up, “Goodness gracious, man! Listen to yourself! You can’t be serious. We’ve come so far. Never has a leftist mass movement made so much headway, seized so much power, as have we. The American working class just needs a little more time, a little more patient explaining. Astounding numbers of even what were once the most reactionary elements of the populace have been partially won over to our side. Evangelicals, rural Whites, lower middle class professionals are all sympathetic to Marxian ideals in large numbers. Everything we’ve fought for could be lost in a heartbeat if you make this decision, Pedrocco. Don’t leave us in that kind of precarity.”

“So this ‘cult of personality’ you speak of,” Pedrocco said, addressing Ramiro, “what exactly would that entail?”

“In essence, you’d be the object of mass veneration,” Carolina replied, butting in.

“Hmm, that doesn’t sound so bad,” Pedrocco said.

“That’s right,” said Ramiro. “It’s also worth pointing out the value in building a culture of appreciation and admiration around the supreme leader’s ability to translate theorem into action. Therein lies the essence of revolutionary praxis. Promoting and popularizing the correct leadership will guide the masses down the path to liberation. As a baby would never take its first steps without a parent to guide it, so too the masses must be led.”

“But you’d be following in the footsteps of Stalin, Pol Pot, Mengistu, Kim Il-sung, Bob Avakian!” Jules claimed.

“Can it, Jules!” Shameka shouted, raising her fist in a threatening gesture.

“Ramiro, I’d like you to introduce me before I address the masses at the Washington Monument Rubble Mounds,” Pedrocco uttered after considering the cult of personality proposition for a brief moment.

After arriving at the Rubble Mounds, the radical authoritarian communists piled out of the armored personnel carrier and prepared to address the masses before them.

Ramiro climbed atop a large pile of stone rubble and shouted through a bullhorn to the hundreds of thousands of protesters who had gather there. He spoke eloquently, stressing the need to recognize the supremacy of Pedrocco’s personal contribution to casting off the fascist Johnson regime.

“Without Pedrocco, we’d be still be living under the jackboot of fascism,” he proclaimed at one point.

The masses began chanting, “Long live Pedrocco! Long live Pedrocco!”

Jules clenched one of his hands into a fist and grabbed the back of his neck with the other as he stood rigidly, nearby.

Ramiro went on to smear the Young Patriots for a Stable Transition, claiming the ARL had uncovered evidence that they were nothing more than a group operating on the Homeland Intelligence Agency payroll in a vain attempt at counter-revolution, which was not far from the truth, though, granted, it was a bit of an exaggeration; plenty of the reactionaries were genuinely non-state actors.

Pedrocco spoke after Ramiro. In comparison to his address two days earlier, he spoke less of the need for international proletarian revolution and more about his own personal exploits and thinly veiled innuendos proclaiming his sexual prowess.

Ramiro and Pedrocco made such an impression on the masses of radicalized youths that day that immediately after they had spoken, a committee was formed which decided to build atop the Washington Monument Rubble Mounds a large copper-plated statue of Pedrocco. The committee proposed that the colossal statue be referred to as the Pastrana Monument. It was thusly that the first major step in the consolidation of Pedrocco’s cult of personality was made.

42 – THE AXIS TRIFECTA BEGINS TO FACE SERIOUS SETBACKS

Ursala Heinrich was furious.

“What do you mean *Magyar Garda* deathsquads are operating in Serbia?” she thundered into the telephone receiver. “I told you only to infringe on the sovereignty of Romania and Slovakia!”

“It had to be done!” Laszlo Kiss shot back. “Hungarians were being oppressed under the jackboot of those Slavic barbarians for far too long!”

Olivier La Plume, also on the conference call, piped up. “Don’t worry, Ursala. We need only create a media blackout. What can the Shanghai Cooperation Organization do if they do not even know that Serbia has been attacked?”

“Fat chance of keeping them in the dark for long. Russian intelligence is knee deep in Belgrade,” she sputtered back before sighing loudly a moment later. “And to top things off, we’ve lost the support of the Americans. Have you been debriefed on the situation there by your intelligence agencies? Have you?!”

“Of course, Ursala. Of course we have. Leftist scum have taken over, it seems,” La Plume responded.

“Yes, and tens of thousands of German troops are still stranded there!” Heinrich bellowed.

“We must not limit ourselves to Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Spain, the PIGS nations,” Laszlo proposed. “First we must eliminate non-E.U. enclaves within our lands. We must invade and

occupy all of the remaining former Yugoslav republics. Annex them into our realm. Switzerland should be eliminated as well—we can use her gold reserves to fund our militarism. Then we must build our defenses on the eastern front, prepare for a final showdown with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.”

“I’m afraid Mr. Kiss is correct,” Olivier La Plume added. “Confrontation is inevitable now. With America and its military backing out of the picture, the Eurasians will be like a pack of wolves, sensing that now is the time to attack, exponentially expand their sphere of influence.”

“Goddammit, you’re both right,” Ursala Heinrich conceded. “But we’ll be spread thin—we can’t end the occupation of the PIGS now—the Self Defense Militias will rise up, throw off the yoke of E.U.-Axis Trifecta lordship.”

“The solution is simple,” La Plume began. “Population reduction. We massacre the PIGS. This brings two primary benefits. Namely, the swarthisness of the European race will be reduced and, of course, the PIGS will be easier to control with a smaller occupying force. Less swarthy Southern European hordes to control, less required quartering of a large bodies of armed men.”

“By God, you’re brilliant, Olivier!” Ursala rasped, rubbing her palms together.

“Dastardly, if I do say so myself!” Laszlo throat.

The Axis Trifecta leaders began laughing maniacally in unison for nearly thirty seconds.

“Then it is settled,” Ursala finally said. “We hand down these directives to our underlings immediately?”

“Yes, Ursala, it is settled,” Olivier replied.

“Indubitably, it is settled,” Laszlo uttered in turn.

Meanwhile, in the Banat, Wither slapte was on a roadside with Izzy, Santiago, Tisha, Paty, Gabor, Zăbar and Marita. The eight of them had taken it upon themselves to help ignite a guerrilla campaign on behalf of the Banat’s Rroma against the fascist, ultra-nationalist invaders from Hungary. They lay low in a ditch on the side of the road as a Hungarian military convoy passed.

Zăbar stroked his thick black moustaches and said to himself, “*Aj phrala.*”

Gabor slapped him on the back and told him to be quiet. “We wouldn’t want them to hear us now,” he whispered.

Tisha firmly grasped the detonator of the improvised explosive device the gang of radicals had planted some two hundred and fifty meters further down the road. She waited patiently for clearance to blow these fascist fucks away.

Effectively, Gabor and Wither slapte had made a temporary truce. Gabor was still furious about his impregnation of Paloma, who rested at the Rroma’s forested encampment beyond the outskirts of Timișoara. Though O Gachupin and the other elders were upset with the compromise Gabor and Wither slapte had made, the extraordinary socio-political circumstances allowed them to overlook this challenge to the *kris*’ authority.

The surviving members of the Radical Book Club and their *Santa Muerte*-worshipping cohorts were increasingly resolute in their steadfast conviction that, in the final analysis, the solution to fighting back the Axis Trifecta forces, beyond waging a focoistic armed struggle, was to agitate for socialist revolution amongst the poor and working class communities of South-Eastern Europe. Often these communities were centered around Rromani *malhalas*, or slum neighborhoods dating from the Ottoman era, located throughout the Balkans. It was firmly believed that spreading the *Santa Muerte* cult to these communities would help unite them in solidarity against the capitalist class and its right-wing overseers.

Politically, the situation was a mess, and deteriorating rapidly for the Axis Trifecta forces. China and Russia, along with the Central Asian nations, emboldened by the internal collapse of the U.S., had just held Shanghai Cooperation Organization talks in Tehran.

Inspired by the communist and drug cartel takeover in America, an emerging left-wing of the Chinese Communist Party was increasingly pressing for radical reforms to undo the economic liberalization carried out in the name of ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’. In Russia, meanwhile, radical leftists were making steady advances as well, drawing on the inspiration not only of their Chinese brethren and sistren, but also on that of the Radical Book Club’s first communique. It was thus that Heinrich, La Plume, and Kiss were in no way mistaken in anticipating countless

waves of Eurasian hordes scarcely beyond the eastern horizon. And not only did these hordes represent rivalrous inter-imperialist tensions, but they were quickly becoming a potent force for proletarian empowerment.

Spiritually, on the other hand, things were in perfect order. The *Santa Muerte* was growing stronger, especially in North America, but also in the Balkan states. In the United States, Her devotees were nearly eighty million strong. In Mexico, virtually the entirety of the populace now followed the syncretic cult in some way or another. Papist rhetoric had increasingly fell on deaf ears as Roman Catholicism's firm stance against the Most Holy Saint Death became identified with the historic legacy of Spanish colonial efforts to suppress indigenous spiritual traditions.

Wither slapte, Paty, and Golumbaika had seen firsthand the power of the *Santa Muerte* in their astral projection journeys to Rátopia. They knew that with Her blessing, all was possible. Nothing more so than the instauration of communism. The only thing standing in the instauration's way was time. And time, like death, would pass inevitably.

In the midst of all this, Wither slapte slowly grew closer to becoming a father. It seemed as though *La Paloma Negra*'s belly grew increasingly globular by the hour. *Cel mai baro rrom*, Wither slapte thought to himself, thinking about what the *Santa Muerte* had said about their starfetus' destiny during his last trip to Rátopia, *what had She meant by that?* He would have to ask Zăbar later.

"Four hundred and fifty-three," Paty softly rasped as they lay in the tall grass after the last armored vehicle in the Hungarian convoy passed. "That's how many APC's are headed straight for Timișoara."

"Goddamn," Izzy uttered.

"Probably just passing through," Zăbar surmised. "Those vehicles looked like standard Hungarian military forces. My bet is that the Hungarian regulars are headed straight for București to lay siege to the Palace of Parliament. Securing the border cities will likely be left to paramilitaries like the *Magyar Garda*."

"*Ándale*, Zăbar," Santiago croaked.

"Hey, so are we gonna blow these mofos away or what?" Tisha questioned.

"Ha! Almost forgot," Zăbar shot back. "Go on ahead."

Tisha pressed her thumb against the remote control's big, circular, red button, triggering a horrific explosion which caused three armored personnel carriers to become rapidly engulfed in volatile, high velocity flames. The blazing inferno spat out charred cadavers and burnt wreckage onto the rural wayside. In total, over four dozen fascist Hungarian troops had been blown to smithereens.

"Boo yah," Tisha purred as random body parts splattered upon nearby foliage.

Marita Bastesen patted Tisha on the back and said, "You go, girl."

"Let's get back to our basecamp," Wither slapte suggested, "before they find us."

The Hungarian troops were spinning around with their guns drawn, trying, to no avail, to locate their partisan attackers.

"Yes, we should report back to the elders how many casualties we just inflicted. Plot our next assault from there," said Zăbar.

The mildly depraved gang of radicals slinked away, first through the tall grass, then through the woods to the Rromani encampment as the Hungarians fled from the brutal madness, continuing to make their way eastwards down the road.

Paloma stood in the strange forest with Fabiola, hanging up some wet garments on a clothesline strung up between two trees when Santiago, Izzy, Tisha, Paty, Wither slapte, Gabor, Marita, and Zăbar returned, having found their way back. She noticed looks of traumatization in all their eyes as they approached the encampment. Although it is possible to withstand such traumatic brutality, from time to time, such things do take their toll, even on the battle-hardened. Knowing that their violent actions were justified (materially in terms of class struggle and spiritually in terms of morality), and could even be considered righteous (in the same way as Jesus' legendary overturning of the money changers' tables and violently driving them from the temple was considered noble) helped the radical communists and *Sfânta Moarte-*

worshippers to feel no remorse for the mayhem and slaughter they had just perpetrated.

“What happened?” she asked.

“Just wasted some fascist invaders,” Zăbar replied.

“Always good to hear those words,” said Fabiola. She put her hand on Zăbar’s bicep and rubbed it up and down vigorously for a moment before turning to Santiago and slapping his plump buttocks. “*Ay mi amor*, you’re getting *gordito*! Too much *pan dulce romano* for you!” He had, effectively, been eating a fuck ton of *gogoși* lately.

Santiago laughed and reached his arms around her so as to grasp both of her butt cheeks with his hands. He pulled her tightly against his body and as her soft bosom pressed upon his chest, her cleavage grew exponentially.

Zăbar put his hand on Santiago’s shoulder and uttered, “We’ll leave you two alone,” before turning to the rest of the radicals. “Come, my friends! We must report back to O Gachupin, O Yanko, Silaki, and the rest of the *bare rroma*. Tell them how successful our assault was. Let them vicariously relish in the slaughter.”

“*Ăndale, murro phral*,” Izzy throated back.

“Hey, not bad! You’re learning to speak *rromanes*!” Zăbar cried out.

“Speaking of Rromani,” Wither slapte interjected, “I was wondering, what does *cel mai baro rrom* mean?”

“Ha! That’s not true Rromani,” Zăbar replied. “It’s Rromanian. A mish-mash of Romanian and Rromani.”

“Yes, but what does it *mean*?” Wither slapte said, reiterating his question.

“The biggest Gypsy, the patriarch of patriarchs, *bulibașa bulucbașilor*, so to speak,” Zăbar answered. “Come now, let’s all be on our way.”

Paloma went with the rest of them, leaving the remaining laundry to Santiago and Fabiola so that they could make love on a nearby mossy boulder after they finished the chore. Paloma held Wither slapte’s hand while they were walking through the woods. Gabor saw this at one point and simply grumbled in disappointment. Another altercation with Wither slapte would not bode well with the elders, even if there was a war going on.

43 – THE SOCIALIST RROMANI REPUBLIC OF THE BANAT

Several weeks went by and the Radical Book Club (sans Pedrocco and Franky of course), along with their Cholo and Gypsy allies, continued to conduct guerrilla warfare against the fascist invaders. They launched periodic assaults, conducting skirmishes with the activated *Magyar Garda* sleeper cells, as well as improvising explosive devices to whittle away at passing convoys of Hungarian regulars. The Rroma had managed to evade the Jobbik thugs and their militarist and paramilitarist enforcers by remaining mobile, moving through the dark woods to new camping spots from time to time.

The situation throughout the Balkans was deteriorating rapidly as the Axis Trifecta went into full genocide mode, massacring innocents across the PIGS nations and turning to unleash their depraved militarism onto the former Yugoslavia, still outside the jurisdiction of the E.U. Hardest hit were marginalized communities such as the Rroma, women, and the working class.

However, through loosely affiliated constellations of close-knit Rromani communities, news travels fast by word of mouth. Word spread quickly throughout Southeastern Europe that a group of Banat Rroma, Timișoorean Gypsies, were fighting back, conducting with stunning success a savage focoistic armed struggle against the reactionary forces with the aid of outside allies from North America: several Cholos, a young Saami-American woman,

and a mysterious Jew by the name of Gobseckowitz. A consensus among Rromani elders throughout the Balkans, and even many of those in the PIGS, developed rapidly: all of the *vitse* must converge on the Banat to ensure the survival of the Rromani clans being assaulted by the Axis Trifecta forces. There they could join the Banat Rroma, learn fighting tactics, and find strength in numbers.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization might have been willing to tolerate the incursion of the Jobbik into Romania and Slovakia, E.U. member states, but Kiss Laszlo crossed a figurative red line when he activated *Magyar Garda* sleeper cells in the former Yugoslav republic of Serbia. Russian intelligence was almost immediately aware of the incursion, and notified their allies in China without hesitation. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization held another round of talks, an emergency meeting in the Mongolian capital city of Ulaanbaatar. There it was decided that the eastern powers could no longer sit idly by while the Axis Trifecta carried out its atrocities. Russia quickly sent its military to recapture all of the former Soviet republics in Eastern Europe, including the Baltic states, which were now part of the E.U. Axis Trifecta forces put up almost no resistance to the loss of the Baltic states as they were already busy carrying out genocide in the PIGS nations of Southern Europe. China joined in shortly thereafter, and along the E.U.'s eastern border, some three million Chinese and Russian troops were amassed, stationed in Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltic states. Sensing that the situation was coming to a head, the Axis Trifecta forces began ramping up the pace of their indiscriminate slaughter.

Wither slapte, meanwhile, lay in a grassy field with Zābar, Marita, Paloma, Tisha, and Izzy. Even hardcore guerrilla fighters had to take a few moments of peace and calm every now and then. The field was sprinkled with wild sunflowers, growing high. It was not far from the encampment, where the rest of the *Sfânta Moarte*-worshipping Banat Rroma and Cholos were. Rays of sunshine were beating down on the radicals as they passed a marijuana cigarette amongst themselves. The cigarette was a melange of marijuana, clove, and Saint John's wort. A black tomcat rolled around nearby and Wither slapte reached over to rub his belly. He playfully bit at Wither slapte's hand.

"Ouch! Don't bite so hard, little fellow!" Wither slapte groaned.

"Hey, look! That cloud looks like a Cambodian-made assault rifle," Marita blurted out. She pointed to the oblong gathering of humidity.

The other radicals turned their heads in the direction of the imaginary rays of guidance projecting from her index finger.

"Whoa, it totally does," Paloma said.

Izzy coughed up a thick cloud of aerosolized weed. It surfed slowly upon a current of air, staying largely intact as it floated above the radicals.

"Looks like some sort of an ethereal lich," Wither slapte breathed, "that fog of pot smoke."

Suddenly, the radicals could faintly hear in the distance the sound of dozens of stallions, neighing occasionally as they trotted along. The noise grew stronger and soon they could also hear the sound of many wooden wheels spinning through the soft earthen mud, axles grinding.

The beginning of a long caravan of wagons appeared over the crest of the gently sloping hill before the sprawled out radicals.

They had finished their joint so they walked over to the lead wagon. A quaint moustachioed man wearing a large brimmed hat and holding the reins on two black stallions jostled around as he brought the wagon to a halt.

"*Latcho dives*," Zābar called out, jumping up to shake the Rrom's hand, before repeating himself in another dialect for emphasis, "*Lašo djes*."

"Ahoy there, mate," the man said to the stoned radicals. His illustrious voice rang out like thunder.

"*Koski san?*" Zābar asked, the question being typical between two unfamiliar Rroma of disparate clans.

The man squinted back, seemingly confused.

"Whose are you?" Zābar reiterated.

"Ah, forgive me," the man said. "We are Ashkalija of the Hoxha clan—we were Albanianized, so we do not speak Rromani," he went on as his children, three girls and a boy, poked their heads through the curtain covering the interior of the wagon. "We come from the Drino Valley, Albania. But there are many others in our caravan. Balkan Egyptians, Lovari, Machvaya, Ursari, Gurbeti,

Sinti, Zidari, and Kalderari. We come looking for the one they call O Gachupin. His name has grown renown.”

Zăbar raised an eyebrow. “Renown, you say?”

“Yes,” the Ashkali man replied. “We hear his *vitsa* has begun a campaign of fierce resistance against the fascist forces. We wish to join you and stop this nonsense once and for all!”

“*Mișto*,” Zăbar uttered.

“Your courage is commendable,” said Paloma as she put a hand on the stallion’s snout, “and your horses are strong.”

“We had no choice,” the Ashkali shot back. “Across Albania, Rroma, Ashkali, and Balkan Egyptians alike were all being persecuted by the evil Germans, Hungarians, and French. First came the Greek Gypsies, telling tales of massacres there, in Greece. We didn’t believe it in the beginning; it was too horrific. But more Greek Gypsies came, even *gadže* started to come. Then came the soldiers from the E.U. Axis Trifecta, they call them. They set fire to our villages, threw our children who could not escape in the madness down wells.”

“My Lord!” Tisha spat.

“Then it is worse than we thought,” Zăbar muttered, his forehead wrinkling.

“Indeed,” the Ashkali conceded. “Life seems pretty hopeless sometimes. My youngest was thrown down a well by fascist Kraut bastards,” he went on, gesturing to his children inside the wagon as he began to cry.

“There, there,” Wither slapte said comfortingly. “Come to our encampment and get some rest. We have plenty of weaponry. You will have your revenge.”

The radicals led the caravan to the encampment which was not far off, in the woods. Some fifteen hundred wagons had converged in Serbia before passing into the Banat. Rromanies had come from all over the Balkans and Southern Europe, especially the PIGS. But a few even came from France and Germany, fleeing persecution under the heinous regimes of La Plume and Heinrich. Each wagon had several people in it. In all, there were perhaps five to six thousand Rroma in fighting form. A potent combat force was thus well on its way to assemblage. Over the course of the coming days, more and more Rroma would trickle into the Banat and make their

way to the forest where the radical *Sfânta Moarte*-worshipping Rromanies dwell.

O Gachupin greeted the large crowds of Rromanies as soon as they reached the encampment. He proclaimed that they would be safe, that the Banat Rroma would do everything in their power to protect their brethren and sistren.

After his speech, O Gachupin was approached by Santiago.

“We must continue to prep our assault forces,” Santiago reckoned in a slur, with an unseemly odor of alcohol on his breath as he plopped his hand onto O Gachupin’s shoulder, “expand our destructive capacity. But we can’t stop there. We need to build an all-out army, capable of annihilating the Hungarian invaders.”

O Gachupin grabbed Santiago’s arm by the wrist and wrested it off his shoulder.

“Your analysis is spot on,” he throated. “But your demeanor is most problematic. Sober up a bit, Santi. Then we’ll talk.”

Santiago stumbled backwards, almost falling over. But Fabiola caught him.

“*Ay Dios*,” Fabiola croaked. “Please forgive my husband, Mr. Gachupin,” she uttered.

Weapons training began in earnest shortly thereafter. Santiago and Gabor were joined by Izzy, Tisha, Paty, Wither slapte, Zăbar, Adrian, Julian, Marita, and dozens of Banat Rroma to train the newly arrived migrants in the art of guerrilla warfare.

The next few days went by like clockwork. The young Rroma, accustomed to learning traditional arcane crafts like metallurgy and complex musical instruments such as the accordion in order to hustle, guilt-trip *gadže* into giving alms on tramways, took quickly to weaponcraft. More Rroma from throughout the Balkans continued to flow in, while still others from more remote corners of Europe trickled in as well.

A week later, the Rroma encampment had grown into a small city. Over sixty thousand Rroma were now camping in the seemingly mystical woods near Timișoara. Some thirty-five thousand of them were fit for combat. A Rromani army was being amassed.

Some worried that the occupying authorities would soon get wind of the encampment, since the forest was practically overflowing with Rroma. It would only take one Jobbik thug wandering a bit astray into the strange woods for the whole community to be exposed, subjected to an all-out assault by Jobbik forces.

Nevertheless, nearly three thousand of the Rroma gathered in the Banatean woods were *drabarnja*, Rromani shaman women. Every night, the thousands of *drabarnja* gathered deep in the woods and held bizarre ritualistic ceremonies which bestowed upon the entirety of the community a black energy, a shrouded drive. The strange occult force also seemed to cloak the encampment, warding off *gadže dile* by somehow temporarily deactivating their melanocyte receptors when they came too close to the woods.

On one of these nights, under a full moon, Fatiha screamed out, “*Devla* bless this slaughter!” before plunging an obscenely sharpened machete into the scruff of a hog.

“*Anav Sara rat lolo, anav Tonantzin rat kalo, čijek živina si les rat parno, baro balo si mulo,*” the medicine women began to chant.

In an uncanny sight to behold, thousands of Rromani medicine women raised their arms and began snapping their fingers in unison, basculating their shoulders to and fro in a saccadic fashion and stomping their feet on the cracked earthen ground. Many of the *drabarnja* were clenching by the blade machetes and Bowie knives between their teeth as they danced. The obscure power was growing stronger, to the point of no return. Could anything now stop it from covering the Earth?

After two weeks of dark ritual combined with intense weapons training, the army of radicalized *Sfânta Moarte*-worshipping Rroma were fully prepared to launch an all-out assault on Jobbik positions within Timișoara.

Zăbar, Gabor, Wither slapte, Izzy, Tisha, Paty, Marita, and Santiago took on the roles of sub-commanders, while O Gachupin was by popular consensus selected to be the top commander of this potent armed force. Each sub-commander, answering to O

Gachupin, was in charge of a division of some five thousand Rromani, Ashkali, and Balkan Egyptian fighters.

On the night before their planned assault on the Jobbik occupiers, the eight sub-commanders met inside O Gachupin’s *vardon* to discuss the operation’s logistics.

“These right-wing racist fucks will be laid to waste!” Gabor shouted.

“Yes, Gabor, yes,” O Gachupin throatied sagely as he placed a comforting palm on the young Rrom’s shoulder.

Wither slapte piped up, “We can’t just focus on destruction. After we obliterate the Jobbik-aligned forces, we’ll need a post-war strategy to win the masses over to our side, cement our ideology into their hearts and minds.”

“Wither slapte is correct,” said Marita. “We would do well to start thinking in terms of *ius post bellum* now, so that a lasting peace can be secured after we dish out proletarian justice.”

“Rromani justice!” O Gachupin challenged.

“These two forms of justice are one and the same,” Wither slapte shot back. “The liberation of oppressed nations is wrapped up with the wider struggle for social emancipation within the heart of imperialism. Like Malcolm X said, you can’t have racism without capitalism.”

“Oh for fuck’s sake, you pompous pinko fucks!” Gabor grumbled. “You know nothing of *Rromanipen*, of our struggle for self determination. From your cesspit of white privilege you see people of color as mere chess pieces to be positioned according to your Eurocentric logic!”

“Oh piss off, Gabor!” Marita shouted. “I’ll have you know that I am a Saami person! And Wither slapte is a quarter Ethiopian. We are indigenous peoples, oppressed under the same jackboot as yourselves!”

“How dare you tell me to piss off, ya goddamn Lappish broad!” screamed Gabor.

“Cease!” O Gachupin roared. “I will not have this infighting in my *vardon*!”

“Forgive us for our quarreling, Mr. Gachupin,” said Wither slapte.

“If it happens one more time, we’ll assemble the *kris* again!” O Gachupin shouted. “I don’t care if it interferes with our rebel campaign. I cannot tolerate this nonsense!”

The radicals continued the meeting with no further bickering. After hammering out all of the fine details of their violent plan, the sub-commanders left O Gachupin’s wagon at around two in the morning.

Wither slapte felt a strange mist as he walked through the moonlit encampment. It seemed as though the *drabarnja* had cast some sort of an ethereal net through the site. A net which was travelling back and forth across the diameter of the hallowed forest.

The sub-commanders slept only a couple of hours, for they had decided that the best time to launch the assault would be shortly before sunrise.

The divisions of radicalized Rroma met in a clearing, in the pasture where Wither slapte, Zăbar, Marita, Izzy, Paloma, and Tisha had earlier in the week smoked a joint.

Thousands of *drabarnja* fluttered through the mass gathering of Rromani footsoldiers, performing blessings in the name of the *Svîntaika Muli*, waving bizarre talismans at them to ensure that She would protect them.

Sub-commanders Wither slapte, Zăbar, Gabor, Izzy, Tisha, Paty, Marita, and Santiago led their divisions, which were in turn each divided into several assault brigades, battalions, and platoons. In all, the fighters were fifty thousand strong now, thanks to more Balkan volunteers who had trickled in over the last few days. After doing a roll call, they were on the move.

The assault brigades swiftly surrounded Timișoara. Just as the sun crested over the horizon, throngs of Rroma began marching on Jobbik and *Magyar Garda* positions. Their weapons training with the seasoned guerrilla fighters had been more than adequate, for they quickly laid waste to hundreds of fascists. The remaining Hungarians were pinned down inside their bunkers, slowly being picked off by mortars and small arms fire.

By noontime, over half of the Jobbik outposts had been vacated of their fascist occupants. Dozens of platoons of Rromani fighters combed through the city, looking for pockets of remaining

Hungarians holed up in abandoned buildings and other nondescript structures.

By late afternoon, the Jobbik forces had been totally driven away from their outposts. None were able to flee the city due to the tight line of Rroma around the municipality’s perimeter. Several thousand were taken prisoner. More lay dead.

Timișoara’s inhabitants were jubilant following liberation from Jobbik occupation. A large rally was held in the city’s main square, *Piața Victoriei*, located in front of the large Orthodox Cathedral. The crowds were a mixture of Rroma and Romanians; the mood, festive. Longstanding prejudice against Rroma, long a feature of Romanian society, was quickly dissipating as the people realized that the government had done nothing to liberate them from the Jobbik oppressors. Only the Rroma and their *Sfânta Moarte*-worshipping communist bedfellows had stood up and done something, taken concrete action.

The radical fighters hoisted a massive Rromani flag over the cathedral. The flag, horizontally divided into a sky blue half above and a grass green half below with a red chakra or wagon wheel superimposed in the center, waved majestically in a gust of wind as the masses began to sing *Gelem, Gelem*, the Rromani anthem. A ray of sunshine lit up the flag as they sang.

After the singing was over, O Gachupin stood up before the masses and proclaimed that Timișoara, historically and culturally the capital city of the Banat, would from now on be the political capital of a new state. “*Manușale!*” he shouted, raising his arms triumphantly before the surging crowds.

The masses began thunderously hooting and hollering.

“Today we are a free people! Today we are a nation of Rroma!” O Gachupin bellowed.

“*Opre Rroma!*” the crowds began to chant.

“Banatiski Rroma, Balkan Rroma, Egyptians, Ashkali, Sinte, Calo, Erromintxela, Gurbeti, Kalderash, Ursari, Zidari, Romanichal, Ruska Rroma, Lovara, Machvaya, Arli, Romungre, Olah, Bashalde, Rudari, Gabori! *Me bishtrav warekon?* We are many peoples, but today we become one. Today we redeem our right to self-determination!” O Gachupin went on. “We have been united against our oppressor: the Axis Trifecta forces. These fascist

gadže have repressed our yearnings long enough. The Banat will from this day forth be a Rromani land. We have been without a homeland to call our own for a thousand years, but we have fought, we have won, and now we have a country! Some thought Rromanistan would be somewhere in West India or Pakistan. Our ancestors left those lands long ago, but we morphed along the way, picking up new words from the Persians, the Armenians, the Greeks, and even the Wallachians. Our journey from South Asia to Eastern Europe defined our identity, and it was in this context, at the end of this journey, that our national identity, our *ethnos*, was combobulated. This is what makes us indigenous peoples to this land. For we developed on this land. We are distinct from the dominant society which has heretoforth ruled this land, and we seek to preserve our culture. That is why it is only fitting that the Banat become our land. We must go forth and create our own new social institutions, governmental institutions, maintain our mighty Rromani military, expand our Rromani legal system, so that we might ensure our continued existence as a people . . . *Manušale* . . . Can you dig it?"

Working committees, charged with accomplishing these various tasks, immediately began to form, almost spontaneously, after O Gachupin's historic address was over.

Wither slapte joined a number of these committees and was highly influential in them, despite not being a Rrom himself. He eloquently argued in favor of the need for this new independent Banat not only to strive for socialistic economic construction, but also for its class composition to be proletarian in nature: a workers' state. Wither slapte won countless Gypsies over to his point of view, and the Committee for the Establishment of Proletarian Rroma Justice quickly became one of the country's leading policy-making bodies. It was through this committee that the country's name was decided on. The radical Gypsy activists came to the conclusion that the name should emphasize both the country's dedication to Rromani self determination and its social-class-ideological character. It was thus that the country was dubbed the Socialist Rromani Republic of Banat. The committee had opted to keep the name Banat, instead of Rromanistan, conceding that Rromanistan was a spiritual state outside of geopolitical space and

time. Rromanistan therefore could, and indeed does, exist both throughout and outside of profane space and time. The Banat, meanwhile, would continue to exist geographically as it had historically, as a plot of land sliced out of Western Romania, Eastern Hungary, and Northern Serbia.

Santiago and Paloma, meanwhile, joined and became leading organizers of the newly formed Working Group for the Cultivation of Saint Death. *Santa Muerte* worship had become incredibly widespread amongst Rromani people by this point, many of them having attributed their success in the annihilation of the Jobbik to the blessings of the *Sfânta Moarte*, making it the *de facto* official religion of the masses. Many identified the Saint Death with *Sara e Kali*, or Saint Sarah the Black, a syncretic subject of veneration derived from the Hindu mother goddess.

Gabor, on the other hand, joined the Rromanipen Protection Committee, a task force whose goal was to ensure the safeguarding of Rromani identity. In a somewhat ironic reversal of roles, the Rromanipen Protection Committee adopted a policy comparable to 18th century Habsburg Empress Maria Theresa's policy of assimilating Rroma within the old Austro-Hungarian lands. *Gadže* were declared *Nevo Rroma*, or "New Gypsies" (an erroneous translation for reasons explained below). Non-Rromani children were to be forcibly ripped away from their families and raised in Rromani households. Though some people argued that this policy, designed to ensure the solidification of Rromani worldview amongst the citizens of the SRRB, was somewhat shortsighted in that it would alienate non-Rroma, these people were incorrect. The *gadže* of the Banat (mostly Romanians, Hungarians, Serbians, and a few Swabians and Jews) were for the most part happy to be considered as equals with the Rroma, for it was explained to them that in Rromani *čhib*, *rrom* means man, and *rroma* thus means men or, more simply, people. (This in the same way that French or Spanish use the masculine form of a noun when talking about a group which includes both males and females, e.g., *les étudiants* for a group of students, even if the majority of the group are *étudiantes*.) Rromization of the Banatean society was therefore a humanizing transformation. As Rromani *čhib* became more widely spoken, the distinction between *rrom* and *gadžo* became less

pronounced, and people began to understand the simple meaning of *rroma*: people.

Tisha, Paty, and Marita joined the Rromnies' Caucus, a feminist auxiliary group to the new communist Gypsy regime. There they plotted militant acts to secure the rights of Rromani women. The Rromnies' Caucus was also active in academia, deconstructing the ill-conceived postcolonial gaze of *gadžengro* ethnographies so as to put a stop to the filthy myths attributed to Rromani culture by so-called Gypsyologists.

Zābar became active in the expanding Rromani legal system. The Banat Rroma elders decided that it was time to pass on the reins of the Rromani nation to the new generation, and he was soon named chief justice in the Supreme *Kris*, the ruling judicial body of the SRRB.

As the weeks went on, the Axis Trifecta-led European Union began to show significant signs of increasing weakness. Although the populations of Portugal, Italy, Greece, and Spain were decimated and the Axis Trifecta forces had all but retreated, repositioning themselves along the E.U.'s eastern frontier in preparation for the coming Eurasian onslaught, Self Defense Militias across the PIGS were nevertheless growing in strength, more partisans joining the anti-fascist cause. Heinrich, Kiss, and La Plume had also lost control of large swaths of territory within their realm: not only the Banat, but the Swiss were putting up fierce resistance to the Axis Trifecta's attempt to slaughter the leftist refugees there and raid the gold vaults. An uprising in Paris forced La Plume to relocate his administrative operations to Nice, in the South of France. The Parisians declared a new Paris Commune and were busy building links of solidarity with other nascent revolutionary-controlled lands: the Socialist Rromani Republic of the Banat, the Autonomous People's Commune of *Mexihco Tenochtitlan*, and the Uhuru Union, a recently formed federation of autonomous indigenous communes and proletarian dictatorships located in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In the Middle East, the Maghreb, and Central Asia, focoistic armed struggles combined with mass working class occupations of urban centers began popping up like whack-a-moles as large swaths of the population succumbed to *Santa Muerte*

proselytization at the hands of the Islamic terror suspects who had escaped from the domestic black ops site with the help of the Radical Book Club and converted, embraced their Dark Mother, in Mexico, in addition to Domari and Lom nomads, who in turn had adopted the spiritual worldview from their Rromani cousins. The *Santa Muerte* cult there did, nevertheless, have its own unique characteristics, owing to the syncretization which took place. One key aspect of this cultural fusion was the importation of the concept of caliphate, many Arabic-speaking Muslims considering the *Santa Muerte*, or *al-Kidissa al-Myetta* as they called Her, to be the successor to Mohammed. Soon enough, an expansive territory stretching from as far west as Morocco to as far east as Pakistan, from as far north as Kazakhstan to as far south as Mali had been laid claim to by hordes of *al-Kidissa al-Myetta* jihadists.

The global capitalist system now thoroughly deteriorated; the stage was set for its imminent collapse. The Banat's declaration of independence, along with analogue developments in Paris, Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America sent waves of panic through virtually all financial markets. Without the United States at the helm of the imperialist bloc, and with socialistic Eurasian hordes pounding at Western Europe's gates, no one had confidence in any currency. Hundreds of thousands of refugees meanwhile flowed across the Mediterranean, threatening to further destabilize the capitalist class' control over the remaining vestiges of the European Union. Bourgeois state managers were particularly concerned by the fact that many of the refugees were *Santa Muerte*-worshippers. In those areas across the world where the ruling class was still made up of capitalists, governments turned towards ever increasing levels of barbarism in a last ditch effort to thwart the advance of communism.

44 – FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NASCENT GYPPO-COMMIE REPUBLIC

On a cool and cloudy evening, Wither slapte sat on a curb, eating a greasy shaorma on *Strada Studenților*, the Students' Street, in Timișoara.

An orange haziness filled the sky. Bright slashes of red lacerated the wispy clouds above. Everyone's vision seemed to be filtered through this bizarre backlight.

Paloma sat next to him, her large spherical abdomen protruding beneath her multicolored blouse, along with Izzy, Tisha, and Paty nearby, each with their own shaorma.

"Hey, how's about you bum me a French fry?" Paloma asked as she caressed her belly. "For the little one."

"But they're my French fries!" Wither slapte shot back.

"You ass, Wither slapte!" Paloma bellowed, drawing attention from proximal passersby.

"Jeez Luis!" said Wither slapte as he forked over the fry. "I was friggin' kidding!"

"Typical Wither slapte," Paty interjected.

"What the frick? So now you're ganging up on me? This is bullocks!" Wither slapte shouted.

"Wither slapte, man, relizzax," Izzy suggested.

"Can it, Izzy!" exclaimed Wither slapte. "I do not need to be told to relax."

"Wither slapte, I was just messing with you," Paloma conceded as she slapped him on the back. "But thanks for the damn fry, sweetie pie."

Just then, several men on rooftops began blowing shofars, trumpets made from ram horns, commonplace in Judaic ritual.

"Ah, the Supreme *Kris* must have just made a decision," Paloma surmised. "Come, darlings, let us head quickly to *Piața Victoriei* to see what the proclamation is."

As the radicals made their way to the main square, they happened across Marita, Fabiola, and Santiago.

"Hey, mates," Marita called from across the street. "Heading to the *Piața*?"

"Sure is," Tisha answered

All eight radicals walked together now, nearing the imposing cathedral which marked the front of the square.

Santiago crept up behind Wither slapte and Izzy and placed his warm hands on their shoulders. "You're in for quite a treat," he throatied.

Paloma, being a member of the Working Group for the Cultivation of Saint Death, knew exactly what Santiago meant, and winked at them.

As they arrived at *Piața Victoriei*, the scene was already bizarrely spectacular, festive in nature. Several men on stilts in Baron Samedi costumes were fire breathing, juggling pins covered in barbed wire. Inflatable tube men painted to look like Mundro Salamon flailed about the entire perimeter of the square.

The sun had just set when large flames shot up through the center of the tubular Mundros Salamon. The tubes caught fire and continued flailing, giving the impression, when viewed from liminal spaces, that the whole plaza was a sea of fire.

The large wooden front doors of the cathedral opened up and out stepped O Gachupin. He raised both of his arms in the air, rotating slowly back and forth as he surveyed the fiery crowds. The Rromani masses began cheering loudly. He was followed closely behind by Zăbar, new chief justice of the Supreme *Kris*.

"*Haj Rromale!*" O Gachupin shouted. "*Așunen pe Zăbar, vov si yekh baro rrom!*"

Zăbar in turn raised his arms.

“*Te aven baxtale,*” he bellowed. His voiced echoed, seeming to zigzag around the burning, ephemeral obelisks. “You have been summoned by the call of the shofars! The *Svîntaika Muli* thanks you for your presence here.”

“Praise be to the *Santa Muerte!*” Fabiola shouted, standing near the steps of the cathedral.

“I won’t beat around the bush,” Zăbar continued. “The reason you have gathered here is to hear the proclamation of the Supreme *Kris*, is it not?”

The masses responded affirmatively with much hooting and hollering.

“Well, the Supreme *Kris* has summoned you here to announce the investiture of the Highest Priestess of the Assembly of the *Svîntaika Muli* of the Socialist Rromani Republic of the Banat,” Zăbar shouted.

A hush fell upon the crowds as they listened attentively.

“Without further ado, I would like to invite Paloma up here,” said Zăbar.

Paloma strutted up to center stage.

“It is with great honor that I bestow upon you, Golumbaika Kali, the title of *Cea Mai Bari Raśni*, Highest Priestess of the Banat. You have proven yourself as Highest Priestess of the Midwestern synode of Santiago’s theocratic drug cartel, where you successfully led many dark rituals. The Supreme *Kris* has duly noted these accomplishments and deemed you the most worthy *rromni* to fulfil this gargantuan role. I thus present to you, Rroma of the SRRB, your new chief spiritual intermediary to the *Svîntaika Muli*, Golumbaika Kali!”

The masses erupted into furious applause. The volcanic approbation was so intense that it practically melted the inhibited Ego of each reveler, melanging the ethnos into a single molten Super Id.

From the rooftops surrounding the plaza, *drabarnja* began showering the throngs of radicalized Gypsies with liquid black wax, which they had collected from *Santa Muerte* candles. They poured the blax by the bucketload. To reach those in the center of the plaza, hoses had been connected to highly pressurized, heated vats of blax. Virtually everyone in the large crowd became coated in blax within a few short minutes.

The men on stilts in Baron Samedi costumes began beating on large huehuetla. Boom, boom, boom-boom, boom, boom, boom-boom, b-b-b-b-ba-ba-boom-boom, boom, boom, boom-boom, b-b-b-b-ba-ba-boom-boom.

The masses began to display their devotion to the *Santa Muerte* in diverse manners. Some got on all fours and began swaying back and forth; others began to stomp their feet and gyrate their shoulders in a saccadic fashion to the beat of the huehuetla. However, by two measures, the devotees manners of worship were uniform: all chanted, “*Hashem Tonantzin eztli kalo,*” continuously for approximately forty-five minutes and all tranced out to the realm of phantasy.

At the same time as this phantasmagoric ceremony progressed, something else was happening. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization forces had just received another set of directives. After yet another round of talks in Ulaanbaatar, an S.C.O. assault preparedness evaluation committee had deemed the invasion force fully prepped. Beijing and Moscow signalled for troops to enter E.U. territories and begin eradicating the Axis Trifecta forces. Massively outnumbered and demoralized by the loss of their American backing, the last outpost of late-stage capitalism was effectively foreclosed on. It was only a matter of time before the imperial metropole would be evicted. With the District of Columbia under Pedrocco’s far left Marxian jackboot, the Vatican under siege by increasingly radicalized Roman Self Defense Militias, roving gangs of Sicilian and Calabrian anarchists, and fresh off the boat *al-Kidissa al-Myetta*-worshipping North African refugees, and London increasingly isolated as each of its NATO allies was in turn decimated by this panoply of anti-capitalist extremists, the Trinity of Babylon’s military, spiritual, and financial epicenters would be rendered powerless to enforce their bourgeois agenda.

After the ceremony concluded with freestyle praise singing to the *Santa Muerte* and a cleansing of the blax, Wither slapte, Tisha, Paty, Izzy, Paloma, Marita, Santiago, Fabiola, Julian, Adrian, Cedric, Veronika, and Yolanda went with Zăbar into the nearby old center of the city, away from *Piața Victoriei*.

“There’s a rave tonight,” said Zăbar as the gang of radicals walked down a wide Timișoorean pedestrian street. “Should be pretty off the chains.”

“A rave? Glad to hear it!” Paty exclaimed.

“Lord knows it been ages since we had a chance to rock out at a rave,” said Tisha.

But first, the radicals milled about the cobblestone streets, getting sidetracked at an open air bazaar for a brief time. Unlike the neoliberal misnomer, this was a true free market. *Dikhlo*-covered Rromani *babe* were distributing goods and commodities according to human need, with no regard to the profitability of their actions. The SRRB had placed no interdiction upon cannabis, and the gang of young radicals were thus quick to fill their satchels with copious amounts of the herb. Marijuana was one of the first commodities for which artificial scarcity had been eliminated, as everyone and their uncle found it quite easy to grow the plant. Abundance of the good meant that it no longer had to be rationed with entitlement going predominantly to moneyed folk.

Eventually the gang made their way to the free party, still in the old center of Timișoara, not far off from the free market.

The rave was being hosted in a villa which had been constructed during the interbelic period. During the early 1970s, the structure had undergone a series of renovations to draw out a brutalist façade, putting on display an uncanny amalgam. The interior was stripped bare, while the ceilings were incredibly high. In the middle of the interbelic villa lay a central courtyard, a bar stocked with plenty of Romanian beers adjacent.

Waves of hollow bass vibrated repetitively throughout the entirety of the structure as the large group of radical communists and *Santa Muerte*-worshippers neared the premises. At the same time, synthesized sounds faded in and out through the dry and scratchy programmed beat of a pre-MIDI analogue drum machine.

“*But manușa,*” Zăbar throatied as they walked in.

Sweaty Gypsies were gyrating every which way, many of them doing electro milky way style dance battling. Some incorporated elements of flamenco into the popping and locking of their joints.

Strobe lights were flashing at insane rates of rapidity, making it a very unsafe place for seizure-prone individuals.

The party went on crazily, the radicals getting blazed out of their minds in the process.

Wither slapte challenged Izzy to a milky flow style dance battle and they started twisting their arms around their heads and cripwalking on top of the bar.

Partygoers were chugging Romanian beers and cheering them on.

Wither slapte pushed his head by the chin to the left with his right hand and circled his head several times clockwise with his left forearm, before piercing his left arm through his folded right arm and then wrangling them both around one another.

Izzy responded by Melbourne shuffling and slamming his open palms against each of his upper thighs in a ‘suck it’ gesture, generating much hooting and hollering from the crowds.

Soon enough some of the revelers began to smash their bottles, grasping the shards by the spouts and challenging one another to broken bottle fights.

“Damn, what the fuck, peeps!” Izzy shouted.

Santiago barged into the bar and punched several people, clearing a path which allowed Izzy and Wither slapte to escape the brawl and head upstairs, where things were a bit calmer.

“Thanks, *primo,*” Izzy rasped as they ran past Santiago.

“No problem, cuzz,” Santiago shot back as he continued bare-knuckle brawling.

When Izzy and Wither slapte got upstairs, they noticed, beyond the pulsating strobelights, glow sticks, and smoke machines, a large curtain. A few dim pinkish rays of light projected through a number of moth-bitten holes in the old drapery.

“Yo, Wither slapte, what do you think’s back there?” Izzy questioned.

“Only one way to find out,” Wither slapte replied as he lifted the curtain and hunched over to climb through the threshold into this semi-hidden chamber.

They entered the strangely lit room only to find their friends Zăbar, Tisha, Paty, Paloma, Marita, Fabiola, Julian, Adrian, Cedric, Veronika, and Yolanda sitting on pillows in a circle, smoking hash from several hookahs.

“Hey, guys! Come on in!” Zăbar rasped.

“What the fuck! Weren’t you gonna invite us to the VIP room?” Wither slapte asked. “We just stumbled in here by chance.”

“Sorry, Wither slapte. We were going to tell you to come on up but you and Izzy seemed to be having too much fun dance battling at the bar,” replied Zăbar.

“Understandable,” Wither slapte conceded.

Wither slapte and Izzy each took a seat on the cushions, crossing their legs. It was then that they both noticed a strange moustachioed figure in the room with them. The man had a moustache at least four times the length of Zăbar’s.

“*Te aven baxtale*, Wither slapte *thaj* Izzy,” the strange figure uttered before taking a massive rip from the hookah.

“Oh, almost forgot to introduce all y’all,” Zăbar croaked.

“Please, Zăbar, we can introduce ourselves,” the strange figure throated. “My name is Balint. I’m director of the Banat Rromani Intelligence Committee.”

“Ah, of course, the BRIC! I’m Wither slapte, a leading organizer in the Committee for the Establishment of Proletarian Roma Justice. Our organizations have already begun work on a number of joint projects, according to some of the memos I read the other day. It’s a pleasure to meet you!”

“And I’m Izzy, seasoned guerrilla fighter of the Radical Book Club.”

The three shook hands vigorously.

“I was just discussing here with Zăbar the need for the SRRB to establish diplomatic relations with the emerging powers,” Balint said.

“Interesting,” uttered Wither slapte. “Please, do go on.”

“The global political landscape is changing rapidly,” Balint explained. “The Autonomous Peoples’ Commune of *Mexihco Tenochtitlan*, the Paris Commune, the Uhuru Union, the Caliphate of *al-Kidissa al-Myetta*, and the Army for Radicalism and Liberation takeover in the United States are all intriguing developments. We have many potential allies; that much is clear. And although it’s still not too clear what is happening in China and Russia, it does seem that we are fast approaching a post-imperialist era. Of course, none of this is guaranteed. That’s why it is imperative that we in the SRRB begin to establish some diplomatic missions in all of these emerging powers as soon as possible.”

“What you say is true,” Wither slapte replied. “Maintaining diplomatic outposts in these far off lands will help us to spread the proletarian revolution throughout the world. It would be more than tragic to neglect this aspect of Marxist doctrine; doing that could very well lead to revisionism down the road, acceptance of the possibility of socialism in one country.”

“Not to mention,” Paloma added as she exhaled a helluva lot of hookah hash vapor, “such diplomatic missions would give us the opportunity to dispel much backwards thinking and stereotypes about Rromani people.”

“Very true,” Balint replied. “And, I would also have to add, as director of the Banat Rromani Intelligence Committee, that such diplomatic outposts would be highly instrumental in gathering intelligence, serving as key infiltration points for our Gypsy agents and saboteurs.”

“Spoken like a true espionage expert,” Zăbar rasped softly as he passed the hookah hose to Yolanda, the stripper from Gabor’s fortune-telling burlesque club.

“Enough of this political talk!” Paty interjected just as the rave’s DJ cued up a minimal wave Balkan synth track. “Let’s get our groove on!”

The radicals grew more raucous, standing up from their cushions and entering the main party area. There the crowds were packed in like sardines in a can.

Shower heads fixed to the ceiling began dousing the throngs of partygoers with liquid XTC, as if they were a school of tuna trapped in a dragnet and being squirted with tobacco tea.

The free party lasted until the wee hours of the morning. Gradually the radicals started trickling back in small groups to the wagons of their caravan.

Balint placed his warm hand on Wither slapte’s shoulder just as the latter was leaving the rave at five in the morning.

“Going somewhere?” Balint questioned.

“Aye, mate,” Wither slapte shot back. “Fraid I’m a bit tired. I’ll have to catch you on the flip.”

“*Nicio problemă*,” Balint uttered back with a wink. “May our paths cross again soon.”

Wither slapte was joined by Tisha, Paty, and Marita, they being the last of the radicals to leave the free party, besides Balint. When they arrived at O Gachupin's caravan, which was now encamped at *Parcul Central*, across from the cathedral, they all went to their own *vardon*, or wagon.

Paty came into the *vardon* where Paloma and Wither slapte were sleeping and immediately the three of them began heavy petting.

"I'm so sorry, Paloma," Paty whispered gently as she began to digitally stimulate her. "I was such a bitch to you."

"I forgive you, Paty," Paloma shot back as she caressed Wither slapte's buttocks.

The three radical activists grew increasingly aroused, rocking the *vardon* back and forth as their heavy petting eventually progressed into a full blown *ménage-à-trois*. After concluding this escapade, the three radical activists slept soundly, at one point astral projecting.

The following day, many of the radical communists, Cholos, and Gypsies slept in until well past noon, as they were quite wiped out from the free party.

It wasn't until three in the afternoon that Balint came riding on horseback, ringing a handbell to get everyone's attention.

"*Rromale!*" Balint screamed. "Shanghai Cooperation Organization forces are in the vicinity! They are requesting an immediate envoy to meet with their leaders, General Ren and General Petrov."

"An envoy?" Zăbar questioned as he stood up. He had just been smoking a pipe as he sat in front of his wagon.

"Yes," Balint replied. "Who shall we send?"

O Gachupin, who was also sitting nearby and having a smoke with Elena, Fatiha, Silaki, and Yanko, raised his arms sanctimoniously before standing up and bellowing loudly, "An envoy? Those bastards came here! Tell them to send their own damn envoy to us! *Te xan murro khul!*"

"Mr. Gachupin, with all due respect," said Wither slapte, "While I totally understand how your sensibilities may be offended, we would do well to remember that China and Russia are major players in today's geopolitical landscape. The SRRB is but a

small and emerging nation. Showing some humility now will likely pay off later."

"Wither slapte is right," spake Zăbar. "We can't afford to upset these behemoth nations. Recognition from them will demonstrate to the world that we are more than a simple rogue state armed with Cambodian-made Kalashnikovs."

O Gachupin sighed and then paused for a moment. "Zăbar, one day I will no longer be the *baro rrom* of this *vitsa*. I may not agree with you, but as chief justice of the Supreme *Kris*, you are the beacon for future generations, thus I feel I must acquiesce to your judgement."

"I am honored, Gachupin," Zăbar replied.

"However," O Gachupin shot back, "it will be me who chooses the emissaries."

"Very well, *baro rrom*," said Zăbar.

"I select Silaki, Yanko, and Gabor," O Gachupin declared.

Gabor's eyes lit up; this was his chance to finally redeem himself to O Gachupin after bringing dishonor to the *vitsa* through his misconduct towards Wither slapte. He went with the two elder men as they sauntered up to Balint, who was still on horseback.

"So, Balint? Where are these blokes—Generals Ren and Petrov, you say?" Gabor questioned.

"Follow my nephew, Luiko. He will lead you to them."

A black stallion with a young Rrom riding atop him came dashing through the park up to the encampment.

"*Te aven baxtale*," Luiko hailed. "Follow me!" Luiko held a rope with three other horses attached to it.

Gabor, Silaki, and Yanko each hopped on a horse and then made their way to the outskirts of Timișoara where the Sino-Russian generals awaited them with thousands of raucous, though not seemingly hostile, troops. After they had left, O Gachupin went back to smoking with Elena and Fatiha, while Balint dismounted his stallion and approached Zăbar.

"Zăbar," Balint said, "I've made arrangements for setting up the diplomatic missions in the emerging powers. Do you know where the Radical Book Club is?"

"Still in their *vardos*," Zăbar replied. "Seems they're not used to partying *rroman*es."

Zăbar and Balint shared a chuckle.

Just then, Paty emerged from a nearby *vardon*.

“*Droboj tut, Paty,*” Balint greeted her.

“Yo, whaddup?” she shot back.

“I need to speak with you and the other members of the Radical Book Club,” Balint explained. “It’s about the diplomacy project we discussed briefly last night at the rave.”

“Oh, sure,” Paty replied. “When did you have in mind?”

“As soon as possible,” said Balint.

“Well, we’ll need a bit to get ready,” Paty responded.

“No problem. Just come meet me in *Parcul Carmen Sylva* this evening. It’s quiet there, and there’s a cafe nearby where we can relax,” Balint uttered.

“Alrighty,” Paty croaked, her voice raspy from the copious amounts of hash she had smoked the night before.

Balint mounted his stallion once again and rode off.

Wither slapte and Paloma emerged from the *vardon* shortly thereafter, and soon enough Tisha and Izzy appeared from other mobile homes as well. Paty informed them about Balint’s request to meet with them and they all got ready. Although they were not officially members of the Radical Book Club, Paloma, Santiago, Fabiola, Cedric, and Adrian decided to tag along.

About an hour and a half later, the small group of radical communists and *Santa Muerte*-worshipping Cholos and Gypsies made their way to the middle of *Parcul Carmen Sylva*, where they found Balint waiting for them.

“*T’aves baxtalo,*” Golumbaika throatied to him.

“*So maj keres?*” he rasped in response.

“*Mišto,*” she uttered. “*Numa si amen but butji kaj trobul te keras, nu-i aša?*”

“*Ej, va,*” he croaked back in a guttural fashion. “*Diplomasija. Žastar ando birto, das дума kotho!* Come, everyone!”

The gang of radicals went into a nearby cafe, sat around a table together, and ordered some coffee. The interior of the establishment was mostly wooden, covered in dark mahogany panels, and a warm hearth gave the joint a convivial glow, comforting on a cloudy day.

Wither slapte was delicately pouring a packet of sugar into his porcelaine *tasse à café*, visible vapors rising from it, when Balint

began to get down to business. He pondered the uncanny soothingness of Balint’s bullfrog-esque voice as he croaked on about the Socialist Rromani Republic of the Banat’s need to establish diplomatic missions in the newly emerging geopolitical entities where the working classes were in the process of seizing control. The guttural of Balint’s voice practically put Wither slapte in a hypnotic state.

“My nephew, Luiko, is a hacker,” Balint went on. “A cyber warfare technician, you could say. He’s been gathering digital intel on the Chinese and Russians. Based on what he has told me, I can assure you that the Sino-Russian invasion force poses little threat to the SRRB. The situation is complicated and riddled with contradictions; however, the collapse of global capitalism is making the domestic situation in both China and Russia increasingly unstable. The leadership at home is mainly concentrated on transitioning peacefully to post-imperialism. They know that with the working classes seizing control of the means of production everywhere, that the international community is unlikely accept the emergence of another imperialist superpower. However, there is one troublesome aspect to all of this. The ruling state capitalists in China and Russia are still not prepared to fully relinquish power to the proletarians. Intercepted messages between the Generals Ren and Petrov and the domestic leaders in China and Russia indicate that they are not all on the same page. That is to say, the Sino-Russian invasion force has at this point largely gone renegade. The Sino-Russian state capitalists realize the necessity of annihilating the fascistic European Union, and Ren and Petrov, ardent leftists, are the only men capable enough to lead the three million man invasion force without soldiers committing mutiny en masse. But once the Axis Trifecta has been obliterated and the bulk of the radicalized Sino-Russian troops return home, internal power struggles will inevitably break out.”

“*Andale,*” Santiago softly uttered, taking a sip of coffee.

“Sounds like it would be best for us to simply sit back, let that power struggle play out,” Tisha mused.

Paty spoke up, “Our resources are limited. We should make tactical decisions; agitate for proletarian revolutions in key flashpoints of the class struggle. Places where we can make the biggest difference.”

“Word, Paty,” Izzy verbalized. “We gotta show solidarity first and foremost where the people are already in struggle. With the way things’ve been going, I doubt those Russian and Chinese troops will need much support carrying out communist revolutions out East once they pulverize the Axis Trifecta.”

Balint lit up a cigarette. “Given your cultural backgrounds,” he uttered, “The lot of you are apt to do great service to the Rromani people, by helping to establish SRRB embassies in the emerging proletarian nations: ARL-controlled America and the Autonomous People’s Commune of *Mexihco Tenochtitlan*. You know the lay of the land. Perhaps if you’re feeling adventurous, you could also work to strengthen the Banat’s links with the Paris Commune, the Caliphate of *al-Kidissa al-Myetta*, or the Uhuru Union.”

“Yes, and we could also do more to further disseminate and normalize *Santa Muerte* worship through such links with the international community,” Paloma said, thinking out loud.

“Aye, Paloma. Let us never forget to always honor our Dark Queen Mother,” Santiago throatied.

“It’s always been my dream to go to the Mother Continent,” Tisha said. “The Uhuru Union may be the perfect opportunity for a socialistic pan-Afrikanism to finally decolonize the continent, in the truest sense of the word. I would be more than honored to go there, build links of solidarity with the Afrikan nations!”

“*Mišto*,” said Balint.

“It *would* be nice to meet up with Pedrocco again,” spoke Wither slapte. “Haven’t had a chance to Skype the bloke in ages.”

“Then it sounds like we have some willing volunteers,” Balint jovially croaked.

“Word, holmes,” Izzy shot back. “It was a mad honor for us to help establish the first proletarian Gypsy state, but I think I speak for all of us when I say we’re mad homesick.”

“With General Johnson’s life terminated, it would seem the pathway for the process of socialist reconstruction has been cleared,” said Paty. “And while there is undoubtedly a time and place for modesty, let’s be honest: many of the revolutionary developments in the world today have been made possible thanks to us, the Radical Book Club. Throwing our weight, and prestige, behind the socialist reconstruction project within the belly of the

recently deceased imperialist beast will be a major boon to the ultimate triumph of advanced communism.”

“Let’s not forget the enormous role the *Santa Muerte* and Her devotees have played as well,” Paloma interjected.

“Of course, of course,” Paty conceded.

“We ought to be wary also of the danger posed by the Freemasonic hoodoo. Such nefarious meddling might well resuscitate the imperialist beast, bring it back, but in a zombie state,” Paloma surmised.

“*Ándale*, Paloma,” Santiago uttered, rubbing his palms together as the thought of demise crossed his mind. “We must hold many dark rituals unto the *Santa Muerte* to empower Death, ensuring that She does swallow whole this moribund system of exploitation.”

“Yes, Santiago, yes,” said Balint, goading on the macabre recommendation.

“How will we make our way back to these far off lands?” Wither slapte questioned. “We turned over our commandeered German submarine to leftist Bosniak partisans.”

“Worry not. I’ll make the arrangements,” Balint replied.

“*Ándale*,” rasped Izzy as he lit up a blunt which he had just discretely rolled under the table.

After finishing their coffee and blunt, the gang of radicals made their way back to the encampment at *Parcul Central*. A campfire was stoked and Fatiha began to throat sing praises to the *Santa Muerte*, her eyes becoming severely sanpaku in the process. More Rroma appeared soon thereafter, playing banjos. It was looking to be another wild and festive night.

45 – DISRUPTIVE ASSAULT RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY

Mitchell Aquilo, the U.S. Army intelligence operative who had appeared on Conservative Cable News during *Operation: Katastrophic Kloaked Kleansing* to conduct psychological warfare operations (sometimes referred to in baby-killer circles as ‘military information support operations’), had managed to escape the Lower Forty-eight just before Langley, the last stronghold of the Johnson regime, fell to Radical Army forces.

Being privy to a plethora of information dragnets, including human intelligence (HUMINT), geospatial intelligence (GEOINT), electro-optical measurement and signature intelligence (MASINT), signals intelligence (SIGINT), and cyber intelligence (CYBINT), Aquilo knew that with Mexico falling to affinity cell-based anarcho-narco cartels, Marxian teachers’ unions, self defense militias, and armed indigenous movements, the only direction he could flee was into the desolate pine forests of the Great White North.

But that wasn’t the only reason to head north. After analyzing all of the intel as best he could, Aquilo surmised that the last hope to restore white bourgeois supremacist order, and put a stop to this radical *Santa Muerte* shit once and for all, lay in the operations of the High Velocity Active Astral Research Program, or HVAARP: an academia-military-industrial complex facility located near Gakona, Alaska. The program, founded in 1993, was jointly run by the U.S. Navy, Marines, and Air Force in conjunction with the

University of Alaska and the Disruptive Assault Research Projects Agency, or DARPA, a branch of the Department of Defense (known as the Department of War between 1789 and 1947) whose purpose was to develop new technologies for military use.

HVAARP data showed that by disrupting the ionosphere with a sufficient number of high-powered microwave beams, the astral realm could be rendered inaccessible, depriving the rebel force of Her mana. If HVAARP could succeed in doing this, the annihilation of infrastructure caused by the war and the rise of neo-Neanderthalism would create the perfect conditions of chaos needed to usher in a new age of Luciferian corporate theocracy under Aquilo’s Temple of Yurugu, the so-called left hand path mind control cult Aquilo had founded in 1975 after breaking off from Anton LaVey’s Church of Satan.

Mitchell Aquilo quietly purchased a nondescript minivan in the days before the apparent triumph of the Army for Radicalism and Liberation and drove it along the winding backwater roads of Saskatchewan, on through Alberta, the Northwest and Yukon territories, and finally to Alaska.

As he made the long trek, he turned on the radio from time to time, hoping to hear a tune or two sung by pop music industry pawns. These vocalists had little to no control over their creative output; their images, sounds, even their personalities were tightly controlled by their handlers in the industry, many of the latter being covert military intelligence officers specializing in psychological warfare. A few industry handlers and producers had even joined the Temple of Yurugu. To the ignorant masses, the music represented nothing more than fame, fabulousness, light-hearted fun, and fashion to emulate, but to those in the know, the initiated, such as Mitchell Aquilo, the lyrics communicated messages, reminders about the greatness of the occult bourgeoisie, white supremacy, glorification of the Ego and so on and so forth.

Aquilo stopped along the way to Alaska and visited several enclave-like compounds deep in the wilderness where colonies of Devil-worshipping white supremacists had gone to live and play in shitty National Socialist black metal, or NSBM, bands. The colonies were, however, prone to infighting due to frequent disputes between those Nazis who promoted Satanism and those who favored Ásatrú, also known as Germanic neopaganism. It was

in one of these compounds, a racist commune of right-wing bigots located in rural North Dakota, where he learned with great sadness of the destruction of the Washington Obelisk. Well aware of the true meaning and purpose of the structure, Aquilo knew that the Great Architect's power would be seriously weakened by this loss.

The rest of the journey across Canada was rather boring and uneventful, though Aquilo did spot a HVAARP-induced aurora borealis while driving through the Yukon territory.

At last having reached Alaska, Aquilo pulled onto a narrow gravel road as he neared the HVAARP complex and parked a stone's throw away from the facility's entrance. Aquilo had, of course, approached the secret entrance, unknown to the public.

He cleared away some brush, revealing a concrete wall built into the side of a hill. Above an iron door traversed diagonally with bolts, a security camera rotated, and could be heard zooming in on him. A red dot began blinking on the cam.

A speaker box vibrated, "Halt! Who goes there?"

"Mitchell Aquilo. U.S. Army intelligence," the man uttered, his Grandpa Munster-like brows looming above his eyeballs.

"Greetings, Aquilo," the speaker box chimed. "Processing credentials verification."

"Please, proceed," Aquilo breathed.

"Requesting ritual fidelity demonstration," the box chimed once more.

"All hail Ba'al, the Great Architect of the Universe, the one whom I do call Yurugu," Aquilo spake.

"Welcome, Colonel," the speaker vibrated as the door unlocked itself.

Aquilo opened the door and entered the subterranean complex.

He was greeted immediately by an old man in a white lab coat.

"Doctor Wittelsbach!" Aquilo observed as he reached to shake the scientist's hand.

"Mitchell, my boy, it has been such a long time since I saw you," said the doctor in a thick German accent.

"Indeed, Doctor Wittelsbach, it has."

"Didn't tink you would have made it out of zee Lower Forty-eight alive, vhat vit tose damn socialists wreaking zer havoc," Wittelsbach gibbered.

"Not many of us did," Aquilo explained. "I was lucky. Had I been with Homeland Intelligence, I likely would have been slaughtered with the rest of them in Langley. I must say, we in Army Intelligence saw this coming a mile away, but those damn H.I.A. boys had their heads stuck so far up their asses that they just weren't willing to listen."

"Vell, you vill be safe here, for now," Wittelsbach said comfortingly. "Der vas some rumblings of radicalism in Juneau, but as I'm sure you know, zee Alaskan people are most friendly to dee white race."

"Of course," said Aquilo with a nod.

"Zies conspiracy theorists even convinced zee radicals to attempt to destroy our microvaves," Wittelsbach went on. "It had seemen zat some bloggenger on zee vorld vide veb convinced zee Eskimo youthens to radicalize, telling zem zat HVAARP vas using veather manipulation for military applications. A groupen of radicals attacked our microvaves and destroyed a number of zem. But little did zee fools know zat zies microvaves vere merely decoys. Last year, ve have builden zee neue microvaves, north of *das* Arctic Circle. Zee neue vaves reach much deeper in zee ionosphere, penetrate and produce more extremen fractal reflections. Dus our ionospheric disruption capability has not been affecten by zee destruction of zee decoys, zough zee radicals are led to believe zat zer puny direct action was a success, zat zee HVAARP is no longer a threat to zer puny, puny organisms, zat zee anthropogenic climate change can be stoppen!"

"This is most excellent news, Doctor Wittelsbach!" Mitchell Aquilo uttered, putting a hand on the old scientist's shoulder.

"Yes, Mitchell," Wittelsbach croaked. "But our vork is not done yet. Our microvaves are still not powerful enough to accumulaten a combined effect, one which can sustain a permanent blockage of *der* ionosphere."

"What must be done then, Doc?" Aquilo questioned.

"Ve must increase vave production!" Doctor Wittelsbach shouted.

"But how, Doc?"

"Allow me to show you something," Wittelsbach replied, leading him down the blindingly lit corridor.

The two men went through another iron door into a large hangar-like lab filled with men in white coats.

“Mitchell, allow me to introduce you to *mein* colleague, Doctor Eichenlaub,” said Wittelsbach. “Doctor Eichenlaub, I think you will find Mitchell’s specialization in the domain of psychological warfare most relevant to our project.”

“It’s a pleasure to meet you, Doctor,” Aquilo said as he shook the other man’s hand.

“*Die* pleasure *ist* *mein*,” Eichenlaub replied.

“Doctor Eichenlaub, please explain to Mitchell what we must do to increase the wave power,” Wittelsbach said.

“Ah, why yes . . .” Doctor Eichenlaub croaked, slowing down a notch from his high strung baseline. “It is simple, really. The microwave emitters must be amplified. We might better term them ‘macro’-waves,” he chuckled.

“By Yurugu, Doctor Eichenlaub, you’re brilliant!” Mitchell Aquilo blurted out.

“Yes, yes,” Eichenlaub said in his thick Bavarian accent, relishing the adulation. He went on, smugly rhodomontading, “But you will see, we haven’t something truly remarkable. If my calculations are correct, the new microwaves, working in conjunction with the laser-armed satellites beyond the ionosphere, will allow us to beat back the advance of the radical scum!”

“Incredible! Is it some sort of new weapons system, Doc?” Aquilo wondered.

“In due time you will see, *mein* boy,” Eichenlaub replied. He paused a moment. “Come, you will better understand after we pay a visit to Doctor Klangstetter.”

Aquilo walked between the scientists as they escorted him to another part of the underground hangar. The laboratory complex was divided into sectors by towering white latex curtains. As they approached the lab of Doctor Klangstetter, a large sign read *Sector 14 - Weaponized Hologram Information Technology Experimentation*.

“Ah, and you must be Doctor Klangstetter,” Aquilo said as he walked in and eyed another grey-haired scientist in a white lab coat.

“Ach, *nein*, I am Doctor Weishaupt!” the scientist shrieked before bumping into Aquilo with his shoulder. “Now get out of

mein way! I have important work to do with the militarized laser satellites in Sector Thirteen!” As Weishaupt was halfway out the door he muttered over his shoulder, “Eichenlaub! *Das* wave radiators have been upgraded!”

A somewhat younger, more ruggedly handsome man in a lab coat approached Aquilo, Eichenlaub, and Wittelsbach after the rude scientist had exited through the white and transparent latex doors.

“Forgive my colleague,” the man spoke.

His foreign accent, though still present, was less pronounced, more subtle than the others. He was of the third generation of the secretive group of German scientists who had immigrated to the Americas during the immediate post-World War II years. The migration of tens of thousands of members of the Nazi scientific community and their families had been made possible thanks to an Office of Strategic Services program codenamed *Operation Paper Stapler*. The German scientists tended to practice endogamy, marrying within the community to preserve their alleged racial superiority. Enough of them had escaped prosecution for crimes against humanity to make this inbreeding relatively viable, at least in the short term, and secluded communities in Brazil, Argentina, the Dakotas, and Saskatchewan allowed the descendants of the Nazi scientists to preserve their unique legacy and cultural identity. Weishaupt, Eichenlaub, and Wittelsbach were all second generation Nazi scientists, and thus they were not as assimilated as the younger generations.

“Doctor Weishaupt is not much of what I believe you Americans call a ‘people person’. My name is Doctor Klangstetter, lead coordinator of weaponized hologram research,” he uttered as he extended his open hand towards Mitchell Aquilo.

“Doctor Klangstetter has done much good work for us,” Wittelsbach explained.

Aquilo looked around, observing the lab. Large computer consoles on wheels stood nearby, while small groups of scientists observed a photon accelerator machine, and several miniature unmanned aerial vehicles, or mini-drones, suspended model satellites built to one one-hundredth scale equipped with laser emitters.

"I know the data was optimistic about HVAARP's ionospheric disruption capabilities, but weaponized holograms? Militarized laser satellites? Wave radiators? You mind explaining to me just what all this is about?" Aquilo questioned.

"Tell me, Mitchell," Klangstetter began, "Would you consider yourself to be a visual learner?"

"Absolutely," Aquilo replied.

"Excellent," Doctor Klangstetter breathed. "Then I think a demonstration may be the best way to make you comprehend." He turned to his assistants and screamed, "Bring us *das Versuchskaninchen!*"

The scientist's interns dashed away to fetch the human research subject, a young woman who had been sequestered from the Juneau Shriners' Hospital. They returned a minute later with their victim and began strapping her limbs to a cold metallic upright table.

After she was completely secured, the assistants stepped aside.

"Initialize hologram-induced death sequence," Klangstetter commanded.

"Very well, Doctor K.," a young intern replied. "Initializing hologram-induced death sequence in ten, nine, eight, seven, six . . ."

The sedated human guinea pig reacted to this turn of events with only a dull hate-filled glance at Aquilo.

The small unmanned aerial vehicles, or mini-drones, began moving into different positions around her as the intern continued to count down. After uttering, "Zero," the laser-equipped model satellites shot out scores of red, yellow, and blue beams. When these lasers began to intersect, a non-transparent, three dimensional image materialized. The life-like, full scale image was that of a soldier in combat gear.

The holographic soldier lifted up his rifle and began shooting it at the girl. The bullets flew out in slow motion. The hologram was so detailed that one could even see shells being flung out of the rifle in slow motion as well.

As the first bullet reached its target, the searing effect could be noted by the smell of burnt flesh and the wispy smoke it produced.

Doctor Klangstetter looked towards Aquilo, eager to see the

colonel's reaction to his monstrous new weapons system as the young woman screamed in agony.

"Increase holographic bullet velocity!" he then called out.

The slugs now flew out at the speed of conventional ammunition. The searing effect was less pronounced, simply creating what seemed to be typical gunshot wounds.

"The laser diodes are superheating the holograms," Klangstetter explained.

"Brilliant," Aquilo rasped as the holographic soldier continued to pump the poor girl full of superheated high velocity holograms.

"Yes," said Doctor Wittelsbach. "*Und das* satellites can be programmed to produce any number of holographic images."

"This is correct," said Doctor Klangstetter. "Of course, mind that these laser satellites are only small scale prototypes. Once the system is fully complete, it will be capable of producing weaponized holograms on a much more massive scale."

"How massive?" Aquilo asked, his large brow furled.

"Large enough to supersede the curvature of the Earth," Klangstetter replied.

"Such a hologram would stretch from one horizon to *die* next, take up *das* entirety of a person's field of vision," Doctor Eichenlaub added.

"Stretch from sea to shining sea . . ." Wittelsbach mused.

"And of course the ionospheric disruption would be sufficient enough to disable any unauthorized telecommunicative transmission," Klangstetter then added. "Ah yes, and I should also mention, that although this demonstration did not incorporate the audio element, coordinating our microwave emitters with holographic light shows will allow us to sync up sounds capable of being heard across vast geographic expanses."

Without missing a beat, Aquilo began to think of the myriad ways that this new weapons system could be utilized to conduct psychological warfare operations to make the populace turn against the ARL's governance. Immediately, the idea of filling geospace with occult symbols and ancient archetypes sprang to mind. Perhaps this cultural atavism would activate some aspects of humanity's collective unconscious, encourage the masses' minds to become repossessed by therapsid mentality, rendering socialist reconstruction a pipe dream.

46 – BACK TO AFRICA

Tisha had just arrived by aeroplane in Kinshasa, formerly the capital city of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, now the seat of power of the newly formed Uhuru Union, or Lipanda Union, as it was more commonly called by the Lingala-speaking Kinshasans. Kinshasa was the world's largest francophone metropolis, having recently surpassed Paris in terms of population. Tisha's assignment was to establish a Socialist Rromani Republic of the Banat embassy in the nascent Pan-Africanist agglomeration and serve as ambassador.

Having long longed to make the pilgrimage to the land of her ancestors, Tisha felt an uncanny sentiment of familiarity as she stepped onto the tarmac at the N'djili Airport. After stepping off the tarmac onto the genuine earthen surface, this worryingly strange feeling of familiarity increased tenfold.

Tisha was greeted by a welcome delegation of the Uhuru Union made up of several Twa people, as well as Xhosa, Zulu, Dinka, Mandinka, Igbo, Tuareg, and Dogon people. Luiko, Balint's nephew, had sent a communique to the young socialistic union of African nations to arrange for them to meet her at the airport.

In addition to carrying tri-colored red, yellow, green, and red, black, green flags, both variations on the theme of representation of pan-African unity, members of the delegation also held signs with Tisha's name on them, and red flags representing the blood of workers and working farmers.

"Welcome to Africa!" an obscure man wearing a colorful dashiki and kufi shouted at Tisha as she approached the delegation.

"*Boyei malam*," a Kinshasan woman then sang out as Tisha ran into the delegation's warm embrace.

Several Zulu members of the delegation offered Tisha biltong, a sort of dried, cured meat, as a symbol of their hearty pleasure in receiving her.

With tears of joy in her eyes, Tisha embraced her cousins whom the Triangle Trade had ripped her apart from so many centuries ago. But the journey home was not yet complete.

The delegation invited Tisha to climb aboard an old refurbished school bus which had been resting nearby. The benches had been removed and people simply sat upon the floor, on blankets and mattresses. There were also a few armchairs. The bus was painted in the colors of the red, black, and green pan-African flag and had the words *Uhuru* and *Lipanda* printed across the sides. As the bus drove through the outskirts of Kinshasa, throngs of Marxian and pan-Africanist slum-dwellers lined the streets, cheering and waving to the representatives of the proletarian state riding inside the bus. Tisha opened up the sunroof and stuck her torso out the top of the bus. She waved to the crowds and they cheered more wildly.

Eventually the bus went beyond the outskirts, into the countryside. Afternoon faded into night. Many celestial bodies could be seen. The Dog Star, or Sirius—as it is sometimes known—shone darkly upon the savannah as the speeding metallic block traversed it.

The Dogon members of the Uhuru delegation began to recount with pride to Tisha how the elders of their tribe had passed down knowledge to them of the star system Sirius. Dogon cosmology had been a curiosity to Western scholars since the early 20th century, when French ethnologist and honorary Dogon tribesman Marcel Griaule had brought the tribe's inexplicable *savoir* of the star system to the world's attention. Improvements in observatory and space exploration technologies would later confirm Griaule's findings, demonstrating that a Dogon *hogon*, or ritual elder, was able to accurately anticipate the layout of the Sirius star system.

Some of the Dogon claimed that the source of this astral knowledge was none other than Sun Ra, the alien jazz musician come from the ancient dream of a Black man via Saturn.

The Twa members of the Uhuru delegation disputed the Dogons' claim. One Twa man instead attempted to convince Tisha that Sun Ra had actually been a 20th century African-American man who had fabricated his extraterrestrial backstory in a dissociative response to torture inflicted upon him near Tuskegee, Alabama during imprisonment for draft dodging during the Second World War. This first Twa man's assertion was, however, disputed by another Twa man who claimed that, though Sun Ra was a 20th century African-American man, he was the descendent of a Dogon *hogon*. Furthermore, Le Sony'r Ra's abundant melanocyte receptors, not to mention his copious amounts of the consciousness-altering hormone melanin, had allowed him to perform ancestor communion at will.

How could they have possibly known these facts? The Twa people, known for their supple pineal glands, which were rumored to be immune to calcification, were said to be adepts in the art of liminal epistemology, able to abstract invisibility from the visible. It was thus that they knew much about late stage capitalist barbarism, and formed well articulated critiques of it, without ever needing to leave the rainforests.

The bus drove for hours. Long hours, which seemed to morph into physical objects. Objects that could be arranged according to patterns, or fill up a satchel weightily.

Many riders on the bus had already dozed off, Tisha among those, when a Dogon tribeswoman named Marimba began caressing Tisha's shoulders. The woman's leathery and oiled hands released an enormous amount of tension from Tisha's body as they eventually began to progressively cup her dorsal and lateral rib cage.

Suddenly, a short and bizarre-looking Twa villager appeared standing out in the middle of the low-quality highway. The Twa man's eyes were shaped like zigzagging lightning bolts, and seemed to glow a fluorescent blue shade.

Thunder rumbled in the skies above, and a sudden avalanche of clouds seemed to swipe across the ionospheric dome overhead. An unforeseen torrent of rain was unleashed and the bus driver was startled to observe the vehicle's piercing into the darkness cease by no conscious effort of his own, preventing him from running over the Twa villager who sat there in the middle of the road, strangely calm. The same exotic force which had halted the bus seemed to compel the driver to notice the lighted bolt-shot eyes of the man, and the flashing of the heavens. The driver had not noticed the rural villager until after the bus was already there, immobile before him.

Spirit had led the Twa man to blockade the highway, simply by sitting in the middle of it. Able to communicate with forces of nature, the Twa man knew that no man-made vessel would threaten his integrity.

The man was a ritual elder, a *hogon*, though he wore the clothing of a *griot*, a travelling musician. The man had crossed paths with many communities in rural Africa. He knew of a great mysterious source of energy which the Radical Book Club, if it could grasp it, would be able to harness and use to power social forces.

Silence. The calm within the storm.

"*Mbote na yo, camarades,*" the African mystic shouted in the pouring rain.

Some members of the delegation were awakened by the thunder. Their kinesthetic senses had allowed them to alert themselves to the stopping of the bus.

The Lingala-speaking tribeswomen began to chuckle at the man's Twa accent as he continued to rant in his poor Lingala syntax. He was a mystic who had discovered a means to supposedly speak every human language on the Earth. Though in reality, it was simply a pan-Africanist amalgam of rural African languages and dialects.

Tisha awakened, her muscles incredibly relaxed by the massage of Marimba. Tisha ran to the front of the bus and attempted to see what was going on outside. Another flash of lightning allowed her to see the bizarre rural Twa man mounting the bus. Heavy drops continued to pound down on the vehicle's large windshield.

Nearly everyone in the bus was awakened by this point.

Crash. Another unsettling rumble of thunder.

The Twa man, remarkably short in stature, began to perform a strange series of movements inside the bus.

“A trick, perhaps?” a Zulu man questioned as the bizarre Twa man continued to sniff objects within the bus frantically.

The long metallic box was somehow being rendered unto the zone of phantasy. Incredibly, the Twa mystic had discovered a means to directly project beings to the realm of the *Svîntaika Muli*. This *hogon-griot* could actually teleport a group of people’s minds to alternative realms of sensory being. Deep within Rátopia, Erzulie Dantor had set up a sort of multiplex, large arenas of the psyche, where souls could be unleashed in worlds crafted according to the macabre exigencies of Mama Death.

“What is the purpose of this madness?” an African communist named Souleymane blurted out as the bus itself seemed to dissolve and the entire delegation was now deep in the jungles of the Congo, extremely far away from all technology and infrastructure. They could feel the heat and the moisture. Remarkably merry-seeming bands of child soldiers conducted a dragnet nearby.

“Tis witchcraft!” a Sudanese radical shouted.

“We been zombified!” Tisha screamed.

“Shit, Tisha, how do you know?” Marimba questioned.

“Look at the dirt on yo’ clothes!” Tisha shot back.

Everyone’s clothing was covered in films of soil. Dark earthy soil, the kind found in Africa.

Just then, a short woman climbed in the bus behind the peculiar Twa *hogon-griot*. She was dressed in red and black. A Vaudou priestess.

“*Santa Muerte* no mean you no harm,” the strange Twa man’s wife said sternly yet somewhat bashfully. “You was a scared ’cause you thought it was the Boogie Man, well all along, it was ya ancestors, lookin’ tah see how you was doin’.”

The woman then began to writhe and contort, the spirit of Erzulie Dantor seeming to come over her. Softly she rasped as the writhing subsided after a moment. Her vocal chords seemed to echo, as though in chorus, a voice for each of Her names.

The leaves of nearby plants could be felt waving.

Then Erzulie Dantor spake.

The radical Sub-Saharan socialists and Pan-African extremists were immobile, overloaded by confusion and unsureness.

“You must bring on a new type of death. System death,” She pleaded. Her corporal vessel’s eyes had gone severely sanpaku. “Be yet wary and watch for the trickery of Yurugu!” Instantly thereafter, the woman collapsed; she was dead. A black spirit seemed to float off of her.

The Twa *hogon-griot* began laughing in his strange earthy voice. The laughter turned down into gasps of sorrow as Tisha’s vision seemed to go down a long dark train. The Twa man was using his voice to make the group invisible to the profane realm. Skillfully he projected them to Rátopia once again, where they could continue to be filled with dark matter.

The delegation began repeating a mantra in the fifth arena of the psyche of the Rátopian multiplex: “Yurugu the incomplete, Yurugu the unfinished, Yurugu the foreclosed.”

Suddenly Tisha found herself visualizing sitting with the Twa *hogon-griot* on the earthen floor of a hut in a rural village, before being snapped back to a seemingly less mentally hazed state.

The entire Uhuru Union delegation, plus Tisha, were back on the bus, on the being rained on road, in the night.

Tisha felt weighty, as though she had just been heavily dosed with sedatives, or perhaps as though she had succumbed to a neurological disorder after habitually inhaling aerosolized hog brains. Though in actuality, it was only the enormous quantities of dark matter which had just been absorbed by her pineal gland.

“Shiiiyat,” she croaked.

It seemed there was no way of knowing whether what she had just experienced was reality or fiction, because all of the clocks on the bus had been somehow set off by the lightning, and they were too far from civilization to possibly charge electronic items.

Tisha’s eyes darted around the bus, looking for the mystical Twa man and the cadaver of his Vaudou priestess wife, but both were gone. She looked out the window and saw what she thought was a shadowy figure scurrying away through the roadside shrubberies.

“Yurugu?” Tisha repeated.

Marimba paused a moment, glancing with concern at her fellow Dogon tribespeople. They nodded at her, and so she began to explain, “In the primordial time, Amma, the one you call *Svîntaika Muli*, created all beings in accord with the sacred principle of twinness. The self was whole, communal in and of itself, for it contained both male and female souls. Amma infused each unity with contraries. Yurugu sought to compete with Amma, to usurp Her role. This restless creature came out of the womb prematurely, eager to separate himself from the placenta of Amma. But by not allowing the gestation period to follow its course, Yurugu was left incomplete, without his female soul. Yurugu sought to compensate this lack of soul by seeking power, the power of control through destruction. Without the sacred principle of creation, Yurugu could only create Profane Death. Very different from the African worldview, which emphasizes Sacred Death, death which compliments the rejuvenation of life. Yurugu was forever in want. It is said that he took the form of a pale fox, roaming beyond the wastelands north of our homeland, forever desiring to fulfill this soul void through insatiable ravishing.”

“Damn . . .” Tisha mouthed.

Back in Alaska, Mitchell Aquilo had just fellated himself after being tied to a pentagram altar deep within the HVAARP complex.

47 – THE PALE FOX STRIKES

Wither slapte, Paty, and Izzy were just touching down in Washington D.C. after a long flight over the Atlantic Ocean. They’d taken a bus from Timișoara to Belgrad’s Nikola Tesla Airport before catching a layover in Athens. Pedrocco was on the airport runway with many of his Radical Army and RBC Disciples pals, waiting to welcome the other members of the Radical Book Club back to the Turtle Island continent, North America.

Armed guards unfurled a red carpet from the base of the mobile staircase ascending to the plane’s door. Ramiro Parascandola, Carolina Sandoval, Jules Reimers, and several other high level Radical Army officials and RBC Disciples thugs stood nearby, eager to greet the Radical Book Club.

Wither slapte was the first to step out from the aeroplane, followed closely behind by Paty and Izzy. The conniving ideologue opened up his arms and ran towards Comandante Pedrocco’s warm embrace.

“Comrade! So good to see you again!” Pedrocco exclaimed as he hugged his old friend Wither slapte.

Paty ran up and pried them apart so that she too could warmly embrace Pedrocco.

Pedrocco, ever the macktivist, loved the way he could feel Paty’s bosom ply itself to his torso, clad in an olive camo fatigues, as he imagined himself sultrily whispering into Paty’s ear, *Let’s bang*.

Izzy came next. He gave Pedrocco a gangsta style handshake before fist bumping, chest bumping, and ultimately each of them drawing their pistols and slapping the barrels of the goddamn firearms together as though they were bottles of beer. Izzy's was a Desert Eagle, while Pedrocco's was a Glock. Both of them were avid and long-time pistol enthusiasts. Perhaps this was what had made the Radical Book Club so quick to take up arms against the fascist police state.

Pedrocco took a step back, half expecting to fist bump Franky next, before remembering that Izzy had wasted the bloke back in the Lacandon. "Where's Tisha?" Pedrocco wondered.

"Establishing a diplomatic mission for the Socialist Rromani Republic of the Banat in Sub-Saharan Africa," Wither slapte replied.

"Whoa, props to that chick," said Shameka, the Radical Book Club Disciple.

Ramiro Parascandola and Carolina Sandoval introduced themselves to the radical trio.

"It's an honor to meet the other members of the Radical Book Club," Ramiro blustered.

"Indeed," Carolina echoed. "None of the political developments in the world that occurred during the last period would have been possible it wasn't for you folks. Thank you," she added with sincerity.

Wither slapte, Izzy, and Paty then met Jules Reimers, Jasper Jones, and several other high level Radical officials before Pedrocco suggested, "C'mon, let's get out of here, you guys."

"Word," Wither slapte replied.

A limousine pulled up on the tarmac and a man dressed in a burgundy butler suit stepped out. He opened the door to allow the radicals into the vehicle. The limo was painted bright crimson red and had golden hammers and sickles painted on all the doors and the hood.

"Fly ride," Paty commented as she climbed in.

"Yeah," Pedrocco shot back. "It was recently refurbished by some communist ride-pimpers," he explained.

As the vehicle headed towards the Red House, they passed through the center of the Capitol Mall, where the Washington Monument

had once stood. A pro-Radical Army rally was taking place in front of the now under construction Pastrana Monument.

Paty looked out of the window in amazement, and then so did Izzy.

Wither slapte, meanwhile, was filling himself a glass of champagne from the limousine's luxury console.

"Got to hand it to you Pedroc," said Paty. "It's better than that old Washington phallus."

"Well, the statue was actually my idea," Ramiro said half jokingly.

Pedrocco slapped him on the thigh. "It sure was, *compañero*."

A moment went by.

"You don't suppose it's a bit narcissistic though?" Wither slapte tongue-in-cheekingly chided.

"A solid foundation of generalized appreciation and admiration around the achievements of this revolution's prime mover and shaker will go a long way in containing any potential counter-revolutionary groundswell," Ramiro barked defensively. "Think of this pervasive atmosphere of personality aggrandizement as a sort of cultural immunization. And frankly, after all the destruction and havoc wreaked by the Homeland Intelligence Agency and their neo-Neanderthalist cronies, the infrastructure is just not there to implement genuine working class control, at least here in the States, for the time being."

"The States? There's your problem right there," Wither slapte shot back. "Why hasn't the United States of America been abolished yet?"

"It has," Pedrocco uttered, doing damage control, "it has." He leaned forward in his seat. "Ramiro was just using the term to refer to the geographic and cultural apparatus we inherited after we overthrew its bourgeois administrators: an apparatus molded by hundreds of years of racist capitalism. In due time the cultural revolution will wipe out such oral relics."

"Exactly," Ramiro said with a nod. "Once that apparatus has been unearthed, the referent will be abolished, this negating the utility of all signifiers for it, at least outside the realm of historical discourse. But at the present juncture, enough vestiges of the referent remain so as to make 'the States' still a go-to signifier. The destruction of the Washington Monument was an important

step in unearthing the apparatus though. So was painting the White House red.”

“On the question of unearthing the apparatus, we are certainly in accord,” Wither slapte replied. “The question to which I believe our answers likely diverge is this: after this foundational apparatus has been unearthed and discarded, what . . . *seed* will we sow upon the torn up and loosened earth which remains?” After speaking these words, Wither slapte remembered the strange trio of syllables the *Santa Muerte* had thundered on Rátopia. Somehow they seemed better suited to signify the concept he meant to express. “What *asili* will give root to the new underground base which upholds the advanced communist superstructure we so dearly wish to bloom?”

Jules Reimers eyed Wither slapte nervously, remembering the harsh reactions his objections to the establishment of Pedrocco’s cult of personality had elicited.

“The only hope for that superstructure to blossom is if the barrels of our guns continue to enforce the Army for Radicalism and Liberation’s political will,” Carolina said. “Ramiro is right. While there have been plenty of rural whites coming around to the socialist cause, we still need to be wary—many of them likely yet hold unconscious prejudices. And who knows how many of the H.I.A.’s astroturfed neo-Neanderthal cells are still intact? Appreciation around the achievements of Pedrocco simplifies things, builds our mass appeal in this time of crisis when we haven’t the resources to patiently explain and educate a critical mass of the populace. It will only be after we have consolidated a global socialist system—under the leadership of avant-garde entities like the ARL—that we can be assured that the infrastructure will be sufficient to allow for the mass deportation of the white settler-descended population. A consolidated global communist-controlled system is needed to ensure that the deportees will remain docile, submissive to the proletariat. A communist infrastructure throughout the Global South needs to be erected there to prevent the deportees from returning until their identity has been totally renegotiated. That’s what’s so great about you being here; us building more links with the movement abroad, in places like the Balkans, is how we can translate this process of alter-globalization from theorem into praxis.”

The driver rolled down the windows and the limousine’s speakers started blasting *manele* as they neared the Red House, making it difficult to continue the conversation. Throngs of radicalized youths began cheering, slovenly making their way from the rally towards the Red House lawn for a free party, as were typically thrown after pro-ARL rallies. The limousine pulled up right onto the Red House lawn, the maneuver being quite simple since radicalized Black and Latino youths had torn down the wrought iron fence using forklifts hijacked from a nearby construction site after the annihilation of the Young Patriots for a Stable Transition.

The surviving Radical Book Club members (minus Tisha), Radical Army officials, and RBC Disciples thugs piled out of the limo and started helping the deejay set up his soundsystem. His name was DJ Buntuyâv, the same party facilitator who had helped preside over the rave on the night of the massacre in Minneapolis.

Radical militants and youths milled about the Red House lawn as Wither slapte and Pedrocco stood nearby one another, surveying the scene.

“It’s enough to make you think liberation has achieved some degree of permanency,” Pedrocco mused as Paty, Izzy, and Jules lifted a massive subwoofer together, rotating it by ninety degrees.

“You should have seen the revellers in Timișoara,” Wither slapte replied. “It was like something from the realm of phantasy . . . as though the masses had liberated dreams from the threshold of sleep itself.”

“I’m sure it was a sight to behold,” said Pedrocco, his severed limb beginning to itch above his prosthetic blade leg. “Though it is a pity you weren’t here to relish in the slaughter of the Johnsonite fiends, those Homeland Intelligence fucks, and all the rest.”

“Well, we had plenty of Jobbik thugs to waste ourselves,” Wither slapte shot back.

“That’s what I like to hear,” Pedrocco retorted.

“Hey, you two going to give us a hand or just stand there and chit-chat?” Izzy shouted as he lifted a turntable out of DJ Buntuyâv’s trailer.

“Aye, mate,” Wither slapte throat.

Shameka came out of the back of the trailer after rummaging through it and shouted, "Distribute these to the masses!" before tossing a pack of glow sticks towards Wither slapte.

Pedrocco intercepted the glow sticks, snatching them airborne. They would have smacked Wither slapte in the face had he not, Wither slapte being a poor catcher.

"Comrade Shameka," Pedrocco began, "show some consideration. Comrade Wither slapte is surely a bit jet-lagged, having just flown in from Eastern Europe." He turned towards his fellow Radical Book Club members. "Paty, Izzy, Wither slapte; wouldn't you prefer to get some rest, rather than rave?"

Paty was practically falling asleep standing up. "Oh my God, yes," she replied.

"Yeah, as much as I hate to be a major party pooper skipping out on a rave, hittin' some hay does sound pretty rad right now," Izzy added.

"I'll second that," said Wither slapte.

"Alright then," said Pedrocco, "Ramiro will show you to the guest rooms inside the Red House."

"Rooms?" Paty retorted with mock incredulity. "I think we'd prefer to share a bed. Right, Izzy? Right, Wither slapte?" She winked at the both of them.

"Word," Izzy shot back.

"No problem," said Pedrocco. "There's a king size bed in the Lincoln Bedroom. You can also use the Lincoln Sitting Room if y'all feel inclined; it's all part of the same guest suite."

"Sweet shit," Izzy retorted.

Ramiro led the trio of radical communists towards the entrance of the Red House. The atmosphere on the front lawn was already quite festive by this time. Large speaker boxes began pumping out thick rhythm and bass lines. Darkness had taken over the sky and the large crowd continued to swell.

Free party and rave cultures were quickly becoming synonymous with radicalism, the ARL using the subaltern youth movement as a vehicle to cement class consciousness into the minds of working class folk. Blending recreational drug use, dance, and reconstruction of political culture and state ideological apparatuses allowed the pounding of the new metanarrative to become

relentless, getting closer and closer to omnipresent. Work and play were growing to be one in the same thing; the institution of the rave becoming ubiquitous, a singularity where there was both fun to be had and minds to be molded. Thus no social space would afford individuals respite from their indoctrination into Marxian ideals.

The *Santa Muerte*-worshipping radicals and their ARL escort made their way up the stairs to the second floor of the Red House and walked down the hall to the southeastern corner of the place.

"Enjoy your stay," Ramiro throat. "Careful though, some folks say the Lincoln Bedroom is haunted."

"Probably the spirits of all the innocent men, women, and children who died from U.S. imperialism and neocolonial policies," Wither slapte surmised.

"Aye, chickens coming home to roost," mused Izzy.

"Maybe they'll finally move on to the netherworlds now that their victimizer has been annihilated," Paty suggested.

On that note, Ramiro left the radical trio to settle in.

Wither slapte went to use the jacuzzi while Izzy and Paty went to the Lincoln Sitting Room to take in the luxurious 19th century decor. Paty sat in a chaise longue upholstered in leather; Izzy in an armchair.

"It feels like there's silly putty embedded above my eyeballs," Paty began, rubbing the lower part of her forehead.

"Sounds like your orbicularis oculi muscles are flaring up," Izzy replied. "Probably from the jet lag."

Paty stopped rubbing her face a moment, lowering her hands to reveal a raised eyebrow. "You're awfully precise."

"Eh, I had a human physiology exam coming up, back at the U, before our lives got all caught up in this revolutionary shit," said Izzy.

Paty and Izzy began to reminisce about the old days. Before the massacre at the warehouse rave, before the government cracked down on the Socialist Alliance and other left-wing Marxian and environmentalist activist groups, before Tisha's kidnapping and subsequent rescue, before Santiago introduced them to the *Santa Muerte*, before the short-lived May 1st occupation of the Minnesota State Capitol Building, before the Homeland

Intelligence Agency decapitated all Democratic and moderate Republican elected officials, before the Radical Book Club had gone to Mexico to fight alongside the teachers' unions, popular assemblies, self-defence militias, and Zapatistas, before they had returned to assault the School of the Americas, before General Johnson had ordered nuclear attacks on inner cities and invited in Heinrich's German shock troops in a vain attempt at quelling the rebellion, before the astroturfed neo-Neanderthal movement had emerged as a competitor to the *Santa Muerte* worldview, before the radical gang had gone to the Balkans to foment *Svîntaika Muli* worship amongst the Rroma.

Wither slapte emerged from the bathroom, drying his ear with a Q-tip. "You say something about silly putty?" he questioned.

Just then, they heard shrieks coming from outside, on the Red House lawn. Concerning shrieks, not the type you'd normally hear at a rave.

"Nevermind that," Paty replied. "What the hell is going on out there?"

She sprang out of the chaise longue and dashed to the Lincoln Sitting Room's window. What she saw was pandemonium. Sheer pandemonium.

Izzy and Wither slapte leaned in from behind her towards the window and tried to see what was happening. At first they couldn't understand a thing. Why was everyone panicking, running around like headless chickens?

But then Wither slapte looked towards the heavens. "What the . . . ?" he muttered.

Izzy and Paty in turn turned their gaze skywards and at last understood what all the commotion was about.

What seemed to be a massive, celestial, pale fox was galloping through the sky. It stretched from one horizon to the other.

Tisha, in the Congo Basin, could also see the apparition, as could Luiko, Balint, Zăbar, Fatiha, O Gachupin, Santiago, Fabiola, Marita, Paloma, and all the other Cholos and Gypsies in the Banat. Olivier La Plume, Ursala Heinrch, and Laszlo Kiss saw the phenomenon too, for it was a global happening.

The pale fox seemed to be spinning the Earth with each leap and bound across the horizon. The stars and clouds became lines,

giving the impression that the planet was rotating faster and faster. The pale fox ran like this for a long time, creating a hypnotic effect.

The crowds in front of the Red House grew calm. Everyone was simply staring at the bizarre apparition.

Finally the pale fox stopped running. He turned his head towards Earth. His eyes seemed to be staring into the soul of each and every person who was looking up. The pale fox spake, "Human beings! I am Pale Fox! I come to you from the celestial wastelands. Listen to me, for I am a miraculous creature. Do not heed the new systems instilled by those humans whom think themselves clever. Truly their lot is only but rot, and decay. Follow me and I will lead you on the true path to enlightenment. Evolve with me, for I am Pale Fox!"

With that, the pale fox faded and dissipated, fragments scattering across the night sky. The stars returned to their seemingly static state.

Chaos returned. People began panicking, once again running around like recently decapitated hens.

"We must listen to Pale Fox!" a random partygoer on the Red House lawn proclaimed. "The ARL will lead us only into perdition! We must give up on the project of proletarian state-building!"

Pedrocco heard this and grew angry. He climbed atop one of the massive subwoofers, swinging one of his prosthetic blade limbs and using it to hoist himself up. He then raised his arms sanctimoniously, trying to calm the crowd a bit so his voice could be heard. This worked somewhat, though one could still hear rumblings further off. "Fuck this Pale Fox shit!" he shouted. "Pale Fox don't know shit about material dialectics!"

The random partygoer retorted, "But Pedrocco, you saw what just happened! Pale Fox disproves the prime postulate of Marxism: philosophical materialism."

"That vision could be discounted by any number of rational explanations," Pedrocco shot back. "Perhaps some hallucinogenic mold grew on our bread rations."

“A likely story!” the random partygoer shrieked back. “You’re nothing but a charlatan, Pedrocco! Pale Fox is the one who will truly liberate us!”

“Fuck you, reactionary scum! Let’s see if your precious Pale Fox protects you from my wanton wrath,” said Pedrocco before pulling out his Glock and blasting off several rounds into the ravegoer’s torso.

The partygoer stumbled forwards two steps and then backwards several more, croaking, “Goddamn,” as he clutched his severe gunshot wounds. Finally he collapsed dead.

Pedrocco looked into the starry night sky. “You see, people? Pale Fox will not shield you from the Army for Radicalism and Liberation! And he certainly won’t shield the bourgeoisie from us either! Now you can either continue reconstructing society in the name of social justice and egalitarianism or you can put your faith in some hokey sky fox. What’ll it be, people?”

The crowd’s members eyed one another nervously.

Ramiro Parascandola stepped forward first. “I’m with you, Comrade Pedrocco! I stand with the ARL!” he shouted.

He was followed by Carolina Sandoval. “Once a damn socialist sod, always a damn socialist sod!” she cried as she stepped forward.

Shameka and Jules came next. They were followed by the rest of Pedrocco’s entourage of close ARL and RBC Disciples associates.

Finally the rest of the crowd began cheering Pedrocco, convinced by his display of brutality that the ARL would remain more powerful than whatever tricks this Pale Fox had up his sleeve.

But high-ranking ARL officials were not present everywhere to reassure the masses of the legitimacy of the Radical Army’s vanguard leadership. Across the country, the semblance of proletarian law and order that had been building up under the ARL’s diligent guidance seemed to be wiped away in a matter of hours.

The pale fox apparition was a trigger activating neo-Neanderthal clans which had hitherto only operated as sleeper cells. Neo-Neanderthal groups began openly organizing in city

parks and other public spaces. Neo-Neanderthal public relations were revamped, the neo-Neanderthals permitting increased use of the English language within their organizations in order to hold classes and teach the Modern Neanderthal conlang to a wider public.

Mitchell Aquilo followed all of these developments as closely as he could from within the HVAARP complex near Gakona, Alaska.

Tisha Ulroy, meanwhile, was beginning to learn more about the true nature of the pale fox, Yurugu, from the Dogon tribeswomen and tribesmen, *hogons*, and *griots* whom she was encountering in Africa.

48 – LAST DAYS OF THE GREAT AND POWERFUL

In the days following Wither slapte, Izzy, and Paty's departure from the Banat, Paloma began to grow closer to Zăbar's hacker nephew, Luiko. He was polite and open-minded enough not to judge her for her out-of-wedlock pregnancy. More importantly, he was a good listener, attentively hearing out each and every one of her concerns, personal and political (the two categories often being intertwined).

Though Paloma missed Wither slapte terribly, she began to wonder if it had been right of him to leave her behind. And with that skank, Paty! Not to mention leaving behind his responsibilities inside the Committee for the Establishment of Proletarian Rroma Justice. Still, she tried not to blame him. After all, she had engaged in polyamorous networking with Paty as well, and establishing an SRRB diplomatic mission in America did seem quite vital.

When the apparition of the pale fox occurred, Paloma knew that this false god could only lead the masses astray. Luiko let her bounce ideas off of him as she set out to devise a new reassurance ritual that would ward off Pale Fox, and encouraged her to prevent the *Sfânta Moarte*-worshipping masses from succumbing to another H.I.A.-backed cult, as had happened with the rapid growth of Pentecostalism in Latin America in the wake of death squad suppression of liberation theologians.

Of course, in Rromani communities, when two young souls of masculine and feminine persuasion begin to spend more time together, everyone takes notice, especially the elders. O Gachupin, Fatiha, Elena, O Yanko, and Silaki gossiped relentlessly about an affair developing between Paloma and Luiko. Gabor heard all the rumors, and continued to fume over her infidelity towards him, but he had largely given up on trying to win her back. Besides, he had little time to focus on romantic pursuits anymore; his involvement in the Rromanipen Protection Committee was taking up most of his energy. In the end, there wasn't much he, nor the elders, could do. A new, more promiscuous, generation of Rroma was asserting itself. With the libertine and metrosexual-esque Zăbar at the helm of the Supreme *Kris* as chief justice, no legal action could be taken.

Paloma went to sleep one night hoping to commune with Wither slapte through astral projection to Rátopia. She settled into her *vardon* in Timișoara's *Parcul Central* after a long night of *Svîntaika Muli* worship and free partying. Yolanda and Veronika shared the wagon with her, sleeping each in separate bunks.

As Golumbaika slept, her disembodied melatonin avatar began to lift off of her. She was entering into an out of body experience. The Black Dove floated effortlessly through the troposphere, on through to the stratosphere, but as she began to enter the liminal space of the mesosphere-thermosphere threshold, she noticed a sudden onset of drag. It was a molasses like thickness that exhausted her.

What in the hell? Golumbaika Kali thought.

At the same time, Wither slapte, back in Washington DC, had decided to take a late afternoon nap. As he slept, his melatonin projection had also met transferent resistance in the realm of phantasy.

"Damn, what is this bullnatch?" Chinchillaslapte muttered, peeved.

It seemed as though HVAARP's microwave manipulation of the ionosphere was starcrossing the lovers.

Just then, Golumbaika Kali noticed scores of laser beams shoot past her disembodied consciousness. The colorful lights were being emitted from near outer space satellites above Eastern Europe. The lights started bending; they were being redirected

through the ionosphere by microwave-induced gravitational lensing. Curious, Golumbaika followed the beams. They were heading to Washington DC. Mitchell Aquilo was putting the weaponized hologram system to use, unleashing its insanity. When the Black Dove reached the sky above Washington DC, she encountered Chinchillaslapte there.

“My birdling!” Chinchillaslapte gasped in jouissance.

“Chinchillaslapte!” Golumbaika Kali cooed.

“What is happening, Golumbaika? Why can we not go to Rátopia to commune with our Dark Mother?” he wondered.

“There is some kind of interference,” Golumbaika explained. “I believe it must have something to do with these lights,” she added as the colors continued to bend and blend into a distressing assemblage.

“I feel strange vibrations coming from that way,” Chinchillaslapte throat, turning his fur-covered snout to the north.

“Let’s check it out,” Golumbaika shot back.

The consciousness-altering hormone melanin began reverse ejaculating dark matter within their pineal glands, projecting their minds’ eyes with insane rapidity to the HVAARP site near Gakona, Alaska. There Chinchillaslapte and Golumbaika Kali could interpret the microwaves. It was as though their long nights of *Santa Muerte* worship had equipped them with the mental infrastructure needed to break down the waves, remotely view the algorithms as text.

Pale Fox appeared above Washington DC and masses of people began to gather in the streets, keen to observe what message the apparition might convey this time.

Pedrocco was in the Red House strategizing chamber, meeting with his top ARL and RBC Disciples advisors, along with Paty and Izzy, to discuss ways to suppress the growing threat of the neo-Neanderthals when Pale Fox materialized, unbeknownst to them.

“Pedroc,” began Carolina, “we’re getting troubling reports from our ARL commanders in the field. The neo-Neanderthals are making sweeping gains in working class communities across the nation. Rural areas are increasingly hostile to our leadership, with

the remarkable exception of the Cuban and Haitian brigand strongholds in the Deep South.”

“That’s okay,” Pedrocco replied. “Our power lies with the proletariat, in the urban zones. The educated urban proles will never fall for cheap Neanderthalian propaganda.”

“But we can’t neglect the rural areas,” Carolina shot back. “Neo-Neanderthalist guerrillas could put a serious damper in our supply chains. And we can’t take the urban zones for granted either. There’s been substantiated reports of neo-Neanderthalist outreach programs going on in some cities. And let’s not forget the damage done by Johnson’s nuclear attacks. Infrastructure, the education system, it’s all in shambles. Then there are the rumors that the neo-Neanderthals may be building up their force in the irradiated zones.”

“Rumors?” Pedrocco probed.

“Yes . . .” Carolina replied. “One of my underlings, an ARL subcommander by the name of Ricardo, said that his footsoldiers encountered genetically mutated neo-Neanderthals on the periphery of the Los Angeles irradiated zone.”

“Pfft, urban legends, nothing more,” Shameka interjected. “We all know that life inside the irradiated zones is impossible!”

“Look, Pedroc; allow me to be blunt,” began Ramiro. “I’m afraid we need to rebrand ourselves to compete with the neo-Neanderthals. Urban tribalism is the name of the game in this post-capitalist landscape. By repackaging the ARL as a tribalistic sect, we’ll be able to go viral, become a true mind meme. We could turn this *Santa Muerte* shit more to our advantage.”

“You know nothing of the *Santa Muerte*, Ramiro,” said Paty icily.

Just then, Jules Reimers, the Rocky Mountains Radicalist, burst into the strategizing chamber. He opened his mouth to shout, but he was too out of breath.

“Argh, what now, Jules?” Shameka yelled.

“Pale Fox is back!” he shouted at last.

“Goddamn,” Pedrocco uttered, arising upon his blade limbs. “Quickly, brethren and sistren, follow me! And grab firearms! We may need them to fend off the weak-minded fools who turn against us because of this Pale Fox shit.”

The radicals fled out of the strategizing chamber, carrying Cambodian-made assault rifles, and stormed out onto the Red House lawn to witness the latest Pale Fox apparition. When they got outside, Pale Fox was taking up the entirety of the sky and in the middle of a diatribe.

“Some of you have begun to listen to your instincts. Those of you who return to your animalian roots are correct to do so, and Pale Fox salutes you. But Pale Fox brings retribution and suffering to those who exult in the sin of so-called advancement. Only lack of technology can bring peace and justice to humanity.”

Suddenly, Pale Fox’s face seemed to grow more massive, his body less prominent. His face became devilish and uncanny in nature. His eyes turned sanguine, and great flames began to shoot out of them. The massive flames were heading straight for the under construction Pastrana Monument.

As the gargantuan explosive flames lacerated and annihilated the large incomplete statue of Pedrocco, several ARL commanders and their RBC Disciples cohorts fell to their knees in emotional anguish.

“My likeness!” Pedrocco bellowed into the sky, raising his clenched fists. “My likeness!” he repeated once again.

Carolina Sandoval put her hand on his shoulder comfortingly. “We’ll rebuild it, Pedroc, I swear.”

“Word of this event cannot spread!” Ramiro shouted, thinking quickly. “It could mean the downfall of our regime. We must slaughter all eyewitnesses!”

“No!” Wither slapte screamed out from the window of the Lincoln Sitting Room. He had just awakened from his nap. “No! Listen to me! I’ll be right down!” Wither slapte quickly ran downstairs and out onto the Red House lawn to confront the Radical leaders.

As he stepped out onto the lawn, the superheated Pale Fox hologram discontinued its assault on the communist monument.

“Fuck the ARL! Let the neo-Neanderthalian apocalypse begin!” the hologram appeared to shout, though in reality the audio was merely supersonic directed waves being bounced off of massive satellite dishes north of the Arctic Circle. Pale Fox went on to make further remarks in Modern Neanderthal, the constructed

language, or conlang, developed by H.I.A.-funded publishing houses. The hologram then dissipated into the pink sky. Twilight was setting in.

Wither slapte ran up to the top ARL officials and RBC Disciples thugs and put his hands on his knees, catching his breath.

One could hear pandemonium beginning to break out in the surrounding areas, mass riots on the brink.

“Well, spit it out, Wither slapte!” Ramiro shouted. “What you got to say?”

“Pale Fox . . .” Wither slapte began, “he’s not real! The thing is a goddamn atmospheric hologram!”

“I knew it!” Pedrocco thundered.

“A hologram?” Carolina Sandoval questioned.

“Yes!” Wither slapte shouted. “It’s some kind of weaponized satellite system. They’re bouncing supersonic waves off of these dishes north of the Arctic Circle, beaming superheated light through the ionosphere and manipulating it with gravitational lensing.”

“They? Who’s they?” questioned Shameka.

“I don’t know . . .” Wither slapte replied. “Some kind of remnant enclave of the shadow government. They must have somehow been able to survive the ARL’s onslaught.”

“Impossible!” Shameka shot back. “We wasted all dem bitches.”

“And just where would this shadow government be hiding?” Ramiro questioned.

“I told you, it’s coming from north of the Arctic Circle. There’s actually two locations, one slightly further south. Both are in Alaska, most likely,” said Wither slapte.

“And just how the fuck did you find out about all this shit?” the ever skeptical Ramiro asked.

“Through communion with the *Santa Muerte*,” Wither slapte answered.

“Pfft,” Ramrio huffed. “This spiritual shit is just for transformation of consciousness and manipulation of the masses. I hope you don’t think you can actually gain insight into physical circumstances, do reconnaissance on enemy positions with this astral projection hullabaloo.”

“Silence, Ramiro!” Paty shouted. “Your eagerness to opportunistically benefit from the spread of *Santa Muerte* worship combined with your dismissal of the uncanny powers She wields unto those who do Her bidding sickens me!”

“C’mon, Pedroc. You’re not going to listen to these fools, are you? Are we dialectical materialists or New Age hippies?” Ramiro sneered.

“It does make sense, I have to admit,” Carolina uttered. “The Army for Radicalism and Liberation’s presence in Alaska is minimal.”

“Shut the fuck up, Ramiro,” Pedrocco shouted before suddenly swinging his prosthetic blade limb and knocking the insubordinate Radicalist to the ground. He held his blade limb centimeters from his throat, threatening to stomp it at any given moment. Keeping it there, he turned his attention to his other comrades. “Prep Radical Air Force One and a squadron of ARL fighter and attack aircraft. We’re going to Alaska! It’s time to deal the final death blow to this imperialist beast, once and for all!”

“I’ll radio in yer commands, Comrade Pedrocco!” Jasper Jones, the ARL Deep South Division commander shouted before running off to the Red House.

Pedrocco looked down at Ramiro and finally moved his blade limb away from his throat. “I trust you’ve learned your lesson, Comrade Ramiro?”

“Aye, comrade. My only fear is that we may be too late. The ideological damage inflicted by the Pale Fox hologram may too great to salvage this dictatorship of the proletariat,” Ramiro rasped as Pedrocco gave him a hand to get up.

“Never say never,” Pedrocco quipped.

“But I didn’t say ‘never,’” Ramiro replied.

“You know what I mean,” said Pedrocco.

The large group of radicals then made their way to the helicopter landing pad on the top of the Red House, waited a moment for an ARL pilot to come and pick them up. By the time the transport helicopter (a CH-47 Chinook sporting rotary blades on each end) had landed, large crowds had surrounded the Red House.

Pedrocco looked out one of the transport chopper’s small circular windows and could see the eyes’ whites of several men

dressed in skimpy loincloths, who seemed to be leading the raucous protesters. Neo-Neanderthals.

As the Chinook continued to fly away from the scene, the Radicals watched on in horror as a mass of anarcho-primitivists stormed the Red House. In the midst of this chaos, ordinary people were ripping off their clothing, making loincloths out of scraps of their shirts, embracing the neo-Neanderthalian primitivist lifestyle.

“Goddamn,” Pedrocco rasped, banging his head gently against the window.

Wither slapte approached him from behind and put a warm hand upon his shoulder. “Don’t worry, Pedrocco. Once we disrupt the hologram system, these primitivist fucks will lose their steam. No more ‘Pale Fox’ to guide them,” he said reassuringly.

“Thanks, Wither slapte,” Pedrocco replied. “I just hope you’re right.”

The Chinook flew the large group of top ARL officials, RBC Disciples gang bangers, and Radical Book Club members to an airfield not far off. There they re-grouped with a number of loyal Radicalist pilots and prepared to launch their aerial assault on the HVAARP compound near Gakona, Alaska. The head honcho at the base was the Air Force for Radicalism and Liberation commander, Giovanni Brown.

Pedrocco, Wither slapte, Izzy, and Paty entered into Giovanni’s office to discuss matters while the other violent extremists gathered Radicalist pilots and paratroopers.

“Well if it ain’t the Radical Book Club!” Giovanni shouted as they strolled in.

“Yo, bro!” Pedrocco shot back loudly.

Pedrocco and Giovanni had already established strong rapport between one another. Giovanni started out his militarist career as an RBC Disciple gang banger, meeting Pedrocco through Biff Mathers. Pedrocco and Giovanni had hit it off so well that when the United States Air Force was dissolved by radical Trotskyite and Maoist forces united under Pedrocco’s leadership, Pedrocco named Giovanni commander of the AFRL. Though he had had no previous experience with aircraft, Pedrocco deemed his charisma to be adequate qualification for the job.

“What brings ya here, cuzz?” Giovanni thundered as they chest bumped. “And you brought your friends, I see! It’s a pleasure to finally meet the rest of the Radical Book Club!”

“We need to launch an assault on something called the HVAARP facilities. You ever heard of it?” Pedrocco questioned.

“Aye, bucko. I done heard of that shiz. Got a memo from some of our comrades running high altitude spy flights over Alaska about some unusual activity up there.”

“Damn, we got spy planes flyin’ over Alaska?” said Izzy.

“Shit yeah, son! Lord knows the ARL presence up there ain’t what it is down here in the mainland. Gotta keep an eye on them Rednecks somehow!” Giovanni replied.

Pedrocco put his hand on Wither slapte’s shoulder. “So your vision *was* accurate.”

“Vision?” Giovanni repeated with a raised eyebrow.

“Wither slapte alerted us to the fact of HVAARP’s responsibility for the Pale Fox apparition by remote viewing,” Pedrocco explained.

“Damn, son,” Giovanni gasped gruffly. “It makes sense though, now that I come to think of it. On the surface they said HVAARP was just for benign research, academic stuff. But then, it was always on the back of our mind: why the imperialist military was involved in the project. There had to be more to it. But we did find one thing: a heavily redacted document discovered inside the Pentagon, detailing what the white bourgeois Air Force was calling the Albany Project, some kind of powerful new weapons system. Unfortunately, we didn’t find out much more than that; the bourgeois Air Force was able to destroy or hide most of the documents detailing what they were really up to with HVAARP.”

Just then, Carolina Sandoval barged in. “The aerial assault force has been prepped, comrades!” she shrieked.

“Alright, Carolina! Let’s do this!” Pedrocco then yelled.

Pedrocco, Izzy, Wither slapte, Paty, Ramiro, Carolina, Jasper, Jules, Shameka, Giovanni, and several other ARL and RBC Disciples thugs ran to the runway and piled into a large transport aeroplane, a C-130 to be precise.

Before take off, Pedrocco ordered Ramiro, Carolina, Jasper, Jules, and Giovanni to radio in to the subcommanders in each of

their divisions. Pedrocco wanted the entire Army for Radicalism and Liberation command structure to be on high alert.

ARL forces across the nation regrouped to defend key positions against neo-Neanderthal attacks. But morale was running low amongst the communist army’s footsoldiers. Many had cousins, family members who were embracing the neo-Neanderthalian primitivist lifestyle. Disillusionment with the lack of material gains made in terms of working class quality of life made the pseudo-egalitarianism of the neo-Neanderthals seem appealing to many. In all, perhaps thirty to forty percent of the Radical Army’s footsoldiers deserted the cause, made loincloths out of their uniforms and went into the wilderness to live as neo-Neanderthals. But ARL education was also stepped up, many ARL subcommanders mandating that their footsoldier underlings spend at least three hours a day reading Marxian literature. Particularly immune to the neo-Neanderthalist delusion were the strong-willed Cuban and Haitian brigands, who made up a large part of the ARL’s footsoldiers, and whose grounding in Vaudou, Santeria, and Palo Mayombe worldviews kept them from seeking spiritual fulfillment in the cheap anarcho-primitivism of the neo-Neanderthals.

At last the extremist baggage handlers had loaded up the C-130 and the squadron of emotionally unstable radicals was airborne once again. While still over Canadian airspace, they strapped on their parachutes, getting ready to jump from the plane and begin their aerial assault once they reached the HVAARP facilities near Gakona, Alaska.

49 – LA SANTA MUERTE’S FINAL KNELL

“Aj! Dukhavel! Dukhavel ma!” Golumbaika shouted.

Wither slapte’s seed was at last beginning to sprout.

“Vušoro! Vušoro, mungri kali čirikli,” Fatiha rasped soothingly in her thick Banatiski accent. “Sa si mišto.”

O Gachupin, Zăbar, Silaki, Gabor, O Yanko, Elena, Balint, Luiko, and a number of other Banat Rroma, not to mention Marita Bastesen, Veronika, and Yolanda sat smoking and shooting the shit in an oblong semi-circle on wooden stools outside the *vardo* in *Parcul Central* where Fatiha was midwifing Paloma.

“This *šavorro* will be a special one, methinks,” O Yanko breathed heavily.

“Ya reckon?” Elena replied, ashing her hand-rolled cig onto the packed down earth.

“Fără indoială,” said Silaki.

To pass the time, Balint began slapping two spoons together and humming the tune to *Ederlezi*. Soon enough, Luiko busted out his fiddle and O Gachupin pulled an old-looking crate from another nearby *vardo* and the other elders grabbed several brass instruments from it.

The Rroma’s music grew so raucous that they weren’t even aware when, inside the *vardo*, the newborn child plopped out of Paloma. Fatiha whipped out a switchblade knife and diced apart the umbilical cord before throwing the body part into a nearby cauldron filled with sizzling violet brew.

“Si ekh šukar šavo,” she whispered. “Adjes si pherdo de baxt.”

Paloma looked up and smiled as Fatiha put the starchild into her arms.

“Ha-shem Tonantzin eztli kalo,” Paloma uttered, seemingly as a reflex. She began to chant the incantatory mantra over and over. In her ecstasy, the words began to slur together, morphing and shortening, “Ha-she tonantztli kalo . . . Hash nantztli kalo . . . Hanantztli kalo . . . Ha-ntztlikalo . . . Ha-onantztlikal . . . Ha-onantztlikal. Ha-onantztlikal! Ha-onantztlikal!”

Fatiha dunked a golden chalice into the bizarre brew and began splashing the strange substance onto Paloma’s vaginal area.

“Ha-onantztlikal! That is what I will call this child!” Golumbaika shouted.

“What a *frumos* name,” Fatiha throated.

“Truly your birth cements the idyllic reign of advanced communism over the Banat,” Golumbaika cooed into Ha-onantztlikal’s face.

Outside, the predominantly brass band continued to play.

Meanwhile, above Alaska, the platoon of radical paratroopers was about to jump from the C-130 military transport aircraft to launch an all-out assault on the HVAARP facilities compound.

“Lock and load, mothafuckas,” Shameka yelled.

“Show no mercy!” Ramiro shouted. “These mothafuckin’ pieces of shit are the ones responsible for that Pale Fox shit!”

Wither slapte clutched his Cambodian-made assault rifle and relished the thought of slaughtering yet more counterrevolutionary fiends. “Ha-shem Tonantzin eztli kalo,” he uttered, making the sign of the cross. He closed his eyes and visualized demise flowing out in all four cardinal directions.

“Alright, comrades! We’re above the drop zone! Bail out!” bellowed Pedrocco as he walked down the aisle of the aeroplane on his prosthetic blade limbs, inspecting his loyal brethren and sistren.

Wither slapte opened his eyes, slightly startled.

The large group of mildly deranged radicals began to pile out of the airplane. They were at such a high altitude that the difference in air pressure even seemed to suck them out.

A few moments later, some seven dozen violent communists were in freefall. One by one, they began to open their parachutes.

Tragically, the parachute of Jasper Jones, the ARL Deep South Division commander, failed to deploy, as it had been folded improperly. His proto-cadaver gathered speed as it continued on its downward trajectory until finally he splattered onto a medium-sized boulder.

Pedrocco landed in a small clearing in the woods. The spy plane intelligence he had been briefed on by Giovanni indicated that the public entrance to the HVAARP facilities was not far off. Pedrocco unhooked his walkie talkie and radioed in to the other radicals, "Alright, comrades, we've made touch down. Re-group half a click to the west. There we'll find the HVAARP facility's entrance. Don't bother planting explosives on the microwave installations. Our intelligence indicates that those are merely decoys."

Members of the radical commando unit ran through the woods swiftly, like a herd of gazelles. Their experience fighting the National Guard, plus Mexican, German, and Hungarian militaries and paramilitaries had turned them into battle-hardened sociopaths.

"Doctor Wittelsbach! Doctor Wittelsbach!" a young intern shouted inside the HVAARP complex's control room. "Our ground sensors are indicating a swarm of activity near the facilities' public entrance."

"Vhat!" Wittelsbach responded. "Ach! Where *ist* Mitchell?"

"Right here, Doc," Mitchell Aquilo replied from behind, startling the old man. Aquilo had gotten into the habit of periodically coming into the control room to oversee the smooth running of the weapons holograms.

"Mitchell! It seemen zat *die* Radicalist Eskimo youthens are at it again! Assemble our private security contractor force! I vant you to show deez punks a lesson!"

"Sure thing, Doc," said the colonel. "But first, why don't you pull up our security camera feed?"

"Good tinkin, Mitchell," Wittelsbach replied, pushing a button.

A nearby monitor flickered slightly, and an image of the surrounding woods appeared.

"Do you see someting?" said Wittelsbach.

"No," Aquilo replied, squinting at the screen.

Two minutes passed by quickly.

"Must have been a false alarm," Doctor Wittelsbach surmised optimistically. "Still, you'd better gather some private security contractors and comb trough *das* vicinity."

"Wait, I think I see something," Aquilo said.

Suddenly, Pedrocco appeared, emerging from a rustling shrubbery on his counterfeit 'Flex-Foot' blade limbs. He swiftly raised his assault rifle, took precision aim, and began peppering the security cam with gunfire.

The CCTV went static.

"Goddammit! What the fuck!" Colonel Aquilo screamed.

"Hostiles have infiltrated *das* premises!" Wittelsbach shouted before running to a metallic box labelled *EMERGENCY LOCKDOWN*, which was bolted to a nearby wall. He unlatched and flipped open the box's covering, revealing a large red button, and pushed it. An alarm began blasting throughout the HVAARP complex.

Pedrocco and scores of violent left-wing radicals ran up to the complex's public entrance and began kicking the front doors. One of Pedrocco's blade limbs slipped through the crevice between the metallic doors, giving his powerful force the leverage needed to pry them open like the lid of a can of pork pâté.

"*Achtung!* Hostiles!" a man in a white coat shouted immediately as the rush of Marxian extremists flooded into the complex.

Paty lowered herself, touching one knee to the ground to give her increased shooting accuracy, and began popping off rounds until the scientist was covered in sanguine polka dots.

"Fan out!" Pedrocco called as his radical cohorts flowed through the corridor, approaching a T-intersection. Half went to the right, half to the left. He trod near the left front.

Not far behind, Paty, Izzy and Wither slapte stuck close together, working in unison to indiscriminately slaughter all of the complex's militarist-academics. The trio felt a strange schadenfreudic ecstasy as they ran through the facility, Cambodian-made assault rifles in hand, peeking their heads into random nooks and crannies, finding the white coats cowering in their research bunkers and offices, executing and gunning them down in the halls.

Finally the squads regrouped near the rear of the complex.

“That was easy,” remarked Carolina.

“Almost too easy,” said Paty, giving her a celebratory high five.

“You really thought it would be that simple, didn’t you?” a deranged voice chimed out over the facility’s intercom system. It was Colonel Aquilo. “You may have been able to break your way into the declassified sector of the HVAARP complex, but the occult wing is inaccessible to you! We are on lockdown, and a team of private security contractors has just barricaded you inside the declassified sector! When will you damn socialist sods ever learn? Face it: You simply cannot win! The Temple of Yurugu will triumph; the masses are succumbing to neo-Neanderthalism! Hierarchy prevails! Nothing you radical scum do can stop it!”

“No! This can’t be!” Ramiro shouted.

“Believe it, Radicalist buffoons!” the colonel screamed. “A team of private security contractors is setting fire to the declassified sector as we speak. But don’t worry about your imminent deaths being too, shall we say, charring. It’s the smoke inhalation that really gets you!” Aquilo began to laugh maniacally.

“Goddammit!” Pedrocco said.

“We have to find some way out of here before the fire engulfs us all!” said Paty.

“Quickly, check the air ducts! We can escape through the ventilation system!” Izzy exclaimed.

The radical communists began to use the butts of their assault rifles to smash in ceiling vents.

“Argh! The ducts are too small!” Shameka screamed.

Thick plumes of smoke could be seen beginning to rise from beneath doors at the end of the hall.

“We’re done for,” Jules rasped.

“No! Look here. I have a hunch. Stand back, everyone!” shouted Wither slapte before beginning to discharge his Cambodian-made Kalashnikov into the linoleum tile flooring.

The tiles shattered and began flying up every which way. After the frenzy of gunfire was over, Wither slapte kicked some of the tile shards away and instructed his radical comrades to swipe the rest of them off.

“By God, it’s a trapdoor!” said Paty.

“Wither slapte . . . how did you know?” Pedrocco wondered.

“No time to explain,” Wither slapte shot back. “We’ve got nearly a hundred footsoldiers to cram through here.”

“Right,” Pedrocco replied, unhinging the trapdoor. “But you’d better tell me later, brah!” He climbed down into the opening.

“You’re brilliant, Wither slapte!” said Paty, giving him a peck on the cheek before hopping down the rabbit hole herself.

Wither slapte blushed and began directing the rest of the large group of violent social justice activists towards the trapdoor.

Thanks to Wither slapte’s quick thinking and keen observational skills, the entire platoon of gunslinging communist radicals was able to escape the blazing inferno that was the declassified sector of the HVAARP facilities. The trapdoor led to a long tunnel which connected the declassified sector to the secret portion of the vast complex.

The large group of political extremists swarmed to the end of the corridor where they encountered a heavy iron door with a sign which read *PROJECT W.H.A.T. RESEARCH FACILITIES*.

Giovanni Brown took out some explosives and blasted the door to smithereens, allowing the radicals to flood into the massive hangar-like lab where the bulk of the Weaponized Hologram Assault Technology research and experimentation was being carried out.

As the radical communists began to unleash a torrent of gunfire, it was as though their assault rifles had become a crew of undocumented landscaping technicians, their ammunition: the blades of several lawn mowers and weed whackers, the men in white lab coats: reeds of grass, and the large research facility: the lawn outside a suburban home. In a matter of moments, hundreds of the scientists had been slaughtered. Radical communists milled about, delivering brutal *coups de grâce* to the few scientists who remained alive, though badly injured.

Mitchell Aquilo and Doctor Wittelsbach watched on in horror from the control room, a raised chamber which overlooked the entirety of the hangar-like lab from a safe vantage point.

Doctors Eichenlaub, Klangstetter, and Weishaupt came running to the control room, hoping to escape the indiscriminate slaughter.

“*Ach!* Let us in *das kontrolle* room!” Eichenlaub shouted, finding the door locked.

“*Nein* can do!” said Wittelsbach. “It’s too dangerous!”

“Don’t be *ein* fool!” Doctor Weishaupt shouted. “There are no radicals on our tail!”

Mitchell Aquilo put his hand on Doctor Wittelsbach’s shoulder.

“Let them in,” he whispered.

“*Ach*, if you say so, Mitchell,” Wittelsbach replied. He smashed a button on the control panel, lifting the X-Mark Korporation-designed sliding doors.

“Asshole,” Eichenlaub shouted, “you were going to leave us to die out *der*, at *die* hands of Radicalist scum!”

“Nevermind that,” Doctor Klangstetter said. “Where in the fuck are the private security contractors?”

“They’re in transit,” Aquilo explained. “I had sent them to the declassified sector to destroy the radical scum there, but those damn socialist sods managed to infiltrate the occult sector somehow. The contractors are on their way back now.”

“You bumbling fool!” Doctor Weishaupt screamed. “Project WHAT is in shambles because of you! Scores of my colleagues dead. I’ll have your throat for this.”

“Nevermind that!” the colonel snapped. “What’s done is done. Mistakes and mishaps will be made. The important thing is that the strong survive. Aquilo then pushed another button on the control panel, causing an X-Mark designed extendable wall covering to automatically slide into the ceiling. A large array of weaponry revealed itself. “Arm yourselves if you dare to yet live!”

The frail scientists stumbled towards to weaponry.

“Why don’t you simply use *die* weaponized hologram system to assault *das* radicals?” Doctor Weishaupt questioned.

“Too risky,” Klangstetter shot back. “The prototypical mini-system still has a lot of kinks to work out. We’ve only run the mini-system in highly directed contexts: individual human guinea pigs. Unleashing a full-scale assault could be disastrous. The holograms could end up destroying all of our research, attacking the panels of the control room, killing us, and even rendering the macro-system out of order.”

“*Ach*, you’ll just have to rely on *das* private security contractors then,” said Doctor Weishaupt.

Just then, several squads of private security contractors burst into the classified sector of the HVAARP complex, entering from several breach points.

The private security contractors worked with remarkable deftness. Colonel Aquilo watched from the control room and sent them commands in real time.

Pedrocco, Giovanni, Wither slapte, Paty, Carolina, Jules, Izzy, Shameka, Ramiro, and the scores of other radical communists were overwhelmed. These were no ordinary private security contractors. Mitchell Aquilo had given them intensive hands on training in the last few days, giving them a firm grasp of the latest special weapons and tactics. He had also indoctrinated them into the Temple of Yurugu. This mental conditioning seemed to put them in an uncanny mind state—one which had somehow enhanced their annihilatory capacity.

Pedrocco, Wither slapte, Paty, and Izzy ran for cover as they were under heavy fire from the contractors out in the open, in the middle of the hangar-like lab.

“Shit,” Pedrocco grunted, witnessing dozens of his Marxian comrades become casualties left and right.

The Radical Book Clubbers ran up a flight of stairs and found themselves outside the control room.

Izzy put his eyes near the X-Mark glass doors, cupping his hands around them to see better into the room. “Looks like some more of them white coated bastards,” he rasped.

Suddenly, the doors flung open, knocking Izzy back onto his sitter.

Doctor Klangstetter opened fire with a fully automatic M4 assault rifle at nearly point blank range, pumping Izzy full of lead. Ismail Zamora Sanchez died instantly.

“Shit!” Wither slapte shouted, diving for cover.

Colonel Mitchell Aquilo had also been sitting poised behind the X-Mark doors. He took aim and began discharging his firearm at the remaining radical activists.

A hollow-tipped bullet struck Pedrocco in the chest and expanded on impact, serrating and mutilating his vital internal organs. His ‘Flex-Foot’ artificial blade limbs gave way beneath him and he landed on the ends of his severed thighs.

Doctor Eichenlaub then began popping off rounds from the pistols which he was dual-wielding, striking Pedrocco several more times in the torso and head. Pedrocco Orlando Pastrana Osio's life was terminated. Now he would never get to know how Wither slapte knew to shoot the floor tiles to make it into the Project WHAT research lab.

Aquilo then turned his aggression towards Paty, who had followed Wither slapte's lead in diving for cover, but she had only managed to conceal her upper half. Her lower limbs were still in the corridor, exposed to the mad scientists and psychological warfare expert from their vantage point inside the control room.

Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam! Hollow-tipped slugs flew out like enraged hornets from the nest as Aquilo went trigger happy, riddling Paty's lower limbs with gunshot wounds.

In terror Wither slapte looked into Paty's eyes as excruciating pain overcame her.

Doctor Wittelsbach stepped slowly around the corner, unaware of Wither slapte's presence as he prepared to hammer off a round into Paty's skull.

But Wither slapte raised his Cambodian-made assault rifle and hammered off a round first, chucking Wittelsbach up to fatality.

"*Scheisse! Ein radical is still alive!*" said Doctor Eichenlaub after witnessing Wittelsbach's lifeless cadaver tumble backwards into the frame of view delineated by the control room doors.

Aquilo swiftly grabbed a hand grenade from the weapons arsenal and removed the pin. He waited a split second, then threw the grenade down the corridor towards the small set of protrusions behind which Wither slapte was hiding. In the split second before it exploded, Wither slapte decided to sacrifice his own life in order to extend Paty's. He rolled over onto the hand grenade and absorbed its fiery ball of shrapnel into his abdomen. Wither slapte Gobseckowitz exhaled for the last time milliseconds later.

"Radical scum," Doctor Eichenlaub breathed in his thick Bavarian accent as he approached the gunshot wound-riddled cadavers of Pedrocco and Izzy to inspect them, ascertain their demises.

Aquilo walked up to Paty, kneeled down, and caressed her cheek with the back of his hand. "Sleep tight, my beauty," he

uttered. His eyebrows seemed to envelop her the same way that HVAARP's ionospheric barriers were enveloping the Earth.

Just then, Giovanni Brown appeared, wielding two Cambodian-made assault rifles, one in each hand.

"Die, muthafuckas!" Giovanni shouted as he went trigger happy, indiscriminate bursts of gunfire ringing out.

Ramiro, Carolina, Jules, and Shameka followed close behind. Shameka and Jules crouched down as they made their way up the stairs, shooting back in the direction whence they came, peppering the pursuant private security contractors with an intense hail of lead. Only they and a handful of other radical communist paratroopers had managed to survive the onslaught.

"*Ach, das ist scheisse,*" Doctor Weishaupt grunted as he was pumped full of slugs.

Eichenlaub and Klangstetter ducked down, trying to make themselves smaller targets, but it was no avail; Brown had caught the Kraut bastards off guard, and terminated their lives easily, thinking nothing of it.

Mitchell Aquilo attempted to flee back into the control room, but he too was swiftly gunned down.

Giovanni, Ramiro, Carolina, Jules, and Shameka ran towards the control room.

"Goddamn," Giovanni muttered, seeing the wasted Radical Book Clubbers.

"Paty! She's still alive!" said Jules.

"Take her into the control room, we can barricade ourselves in there!" said Carolina.

Jules and Shameka grabbed Paty by the arms and dragged her in. Ramiro slapped a button on the panel, causing the X-Mark doors to slide shut, sealing them off from the private security contractors.

"Where the fuck are we?" Shameka shouted.

"The HVAARP complex control room," Carolina replied.

"We should be able to control the weaponized holograms from here," said Jules.

"Make it happen, Jules," Ramiro said.

"Give me a sec," Jules shot back before turning to the computer console and attempting to reprogram the weaponized hologram system prototype floating from the mini-drones in the lab.

Outside the control room, the private security contractors were milling about the hangar-like lab, attempting to gun down the remaining radical activists as they hid in and around the large white latex curtains.

The console's robotic text-to-voice software uttered, "Re-programming complete."

"Booting up the holograms," Jules croaked.

Immediately the mini-drones began shifting slightly. The laser emitters powered up, and soon enough the diodes were projecting red, yellow, and blue beams across the lab. Moments later, essentially invincible holographic soldiers materialized and started emitting high velocity superheated holo-bullets at the private security contractors. Unfortunately, the holo-soldiers, unable to distinguish friend from foe, began attacking the radical communists as well.

Pseudo-gunshot wounds rapidly splayed themselves across all the combatants' flesh.

"Now let's dismantle this system and be done with this Pale Fox shit once and for all!" Jules shouted. "For Pedrocco, Wither slapte, and Izzy! For the Radical Book Club! For all the proletarians of the world!" Jules went back to the console and began hacking it once again, programming the ionospheric satellites to self destruct.

"Not so fast, buddy," Ramiro growled.

Jules felt the cold hard barrel of a Cambodian-made assault rifle touch the back of his neck. "What the fuck?" he gibbered.

"Don't you think this weaponized hologram system could be useful to the Army for Radicalism and Liberation's cause?" Ramiro questioned.

"This weapon system is criminal," Jules replied. "You'd have to be a madman to see any legitimate application for it. Don't be a fool, Ramiro. Do you seek liberation or just further exploitation, manipulation, and fear?"

"I always knew you were nothing more than a petit bourgeois Liberal pacifist buffoon," Ramiro seethed.

"Wow, Ramiro, seriously, what the shit?" Jules said. "Carolina? Shameka? Giovanni? You're not going to go along with this shithead, are you?"

Ramiro then assault rifle whipped Jules in the back of the head. "Silence, bitch!" he shouted.

"Argh!" Jules grunted in severe pain.

"Fuck you, Ramiro," Paty rasped, lying on the floor, blood beginning to pool around her.

"Re-program those weaponized hologram satellites to begin emitting celestial apparitions of Pedrocco's likeness to the world!" Ramiro shouted. "This cult of personality will never die!"

"Pedrocco's dead!" Jules shot back. "You saw him out there!"

"He'll live on in holographic form," Ramiro explained, a crazed glimmer in his eyes as they grew more sanpaku, whites above the iris.

Just then, the lab's mini-drone suspended weaponized hologram assault system began to malfunction. Superheated holograms started to pepper the control room's bulletproof windows. The superheating of the holograms was enough to melt the polymer layers of bulletproof plexiglass, while their high velocity nature allowed them to shatter through the glass layers.

"Shit!" Ramiro gasped.

The radicals' jaws dropped as the bulletproof windows continued to disintegrate. They were futile against high velocity superheated holographic bullets.

Jules used this distraction to his advantage, programming the Project WHAT satellites above Eastern Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa to self destruct in thirty seconds.

It was only a matter of moments later when the prototype destroyed the windows and began to pump Giovanni, Carolina, Ramiro, Paty, and Jules full of pseudo-gunshot wounds.

The mini-drone suspended laser diode-equipped model satellites crashed to the ground a minute later when they inadvertently struck the control console which regulated drone altitude settings. High in the ionosphere above, the satellites were exploding, just as Jules had programmed them to.

It was thus that the weaponized hologram assault system was totally neutralized. The High Velocity Active Astral Research Program was now nothing more than a ghostly pocket of bygone mad science, waiting to be devoured by the Alaskan woods which surrounded it. But all of this came at a great cost: the deaths of four score radical social justice activists, leading members of the

proletarian vanguard, the Radical Book Club and senior officials of the Radical Army. Wither slapte, Pedrocco, Paty, and Izzy: dead. Ramiro, Carolina, Shameka, Jules, Giovanni, and Jasper: all dead! Without a vanguard of intellectual proletarians to guide the American masses in advancing their own social consciousness, neo-Neanderthalism continued to spread like wild fire. What was left of once great cities like New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, Houston, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, and Omaha became cesspools of urban tribalism, various neo-Neanderthalian sects vying for control over the water supply. Rural areas were no different, with the anarcho-primitivist warlords frequently clashing over resources and enslaving captured members of enemy neo-Neanderthalian sects. Gradually the highly simplistic and thought-restrictive Modern Neanderthal conlang grew dominant, the masses forgetting English, Spanish, and all the other languages. This caused the neo-Neanderthalized masses to lose the capacity for radical communist thought, proletarian class consciousness becoming a mere pipe dream. It was thus that the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis was proven correct.

In the Deep South, enclaves of Cuban and Haitian brigands continued to resist assimilation to the neo-Neanderthalian paradigm by holding onto their Vaudou, Santería, and Palo Mayombe lifeways, but the going was tough due to the isolation, lack of technology and resources.

But the former United States of America was isolated in its development trajectory towards becoming an anarcho-primitivist hellhole. The rest of the world began to establish genuine socialism, dictatorship of the proletariat, and thus got on track towards global communism.

South of the Rio Grande, the Autonomous People's Commune of *Mexihco Tenochtitlan* continued to thrive, though a wall had to be erected to keep out the roving bands of neo-Neanderthals in *El Norte*. Eventually *Mexihco Tenochtitlan* established diplomatic relations with the Paris Commune, the Uhuru Union, the Caliphate of *Al-Kidissa Al-Myetta*, and the Socialist Rromani Republic of the Banat. These nations would eventually go on to be the founding members of a powerful bloc known as the International Proletarian Dictatorship Treaty Organization, or IProDiTO, whose central tenet was the guarantee of military defense of the proletariat in

class struggle throughout the planet. Due to the collapse of the economy which went along with neo-Neanderthalism, the U.S.A. was deemed to have no proletariat, and thus continued its existence only as a marginal pariah non-state, outside the realm of global economics.

Tisha continued to aid Sub-Saharan Africa in building institutions of proletarian class rule. She also grew in wisdom as she attended seances with Marimba and other Dogon tribeswomen.

Although China and Russia were not founding member states of the IProDiTO, they did fall to autonomous regionalism, many of the regions there succumbing to Anarcho-Marxian drug syndicalism and *Santa Muerte* theocracy. Marita played a big role in spreading *Santa Muerte* worship in Siberia.

Around the time of Wither slapte's death, Golumbaika had been sitting outside her *vardon* in Timișoara's *Parcul Central*, along with her newly born child, Ha-onantzlikal. It was dark outside. She felt a warmth envelop her as Wither slapte's spirit floated past on its journey home.

Paloma made the sign of the cross and gazed beyond the clear ionosphere above. She understood what had happened. Dark Rátopian energy seemed to penetrate her pineal gland. She began reverse ejaculating the dark matter and her consciousness became disembodied. Sun Ra possessed her mundanely in the interim so that her body could continue to breastfeed Ha-onantzlikal.

The Black Dove rode up to Rátopia at breakneck speed.

There the *Santísima Muerte* greeted her, and accepted her into Her warm embrace.

Appendix

GLOSSARY

Note: *Raving Radicals Bathed in Blax* incorporates decolonial border thinking by venturing beyond the linguistic frontiers of Anglo-American-Franco-Germano-Italo-centric matrices of political power and cultural hegemony. To help the reader navigate these alternative epistemic traditions drawn broadly from all regions of the Global South (i.e. Africa, Latin America, and Asia), including but not limited to Afrocentricity, Zapatismo, and Rromanipen, a glossary has been provided. Non-English language terms are identified by the following abbreviations:

Arabic = Ar
Dakota = Da
French = Fr
German = Gr
Hebrew = He
Lingala = Li
Nahuatl = Na
Rromani = Rr
Romanian = Ro
Spanish = Sp
Swahili = Sw

AL-KIDISSA AL-MYETTA – Name used for the Saint Death in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia, where syncretism took place between the *Santa Muerte* and Islam.

(Ar)

ÁNDALE – Come on; go on; do tell; that’s what I like to hear.

(Sp)

ARMY FOR RADICALISM AND LIBERATION (ARL) – An armed Marxist organization led by Pedrocco Pastrana after he united the Maoist and the Trotskyite rebel factions who had been radicalized by the criminalization of advocates of Marxism. Its primary function was to fight against the military dictatorship of General Johnson. Worked closely in conjunction with the RBC Disciples street gang.

ASILI – Swahili word meaning “seed”. Afrocentric scholar

Marimba Ani uses the term to refer to the core driving force in a culture which finds its expression, reflection, and affirmation in both the culture’s *utamawazo* (patterns of thought) and its *utamaroho* (framework for emotions). (Sw)

ASTRAL PROJECTION – The ability to expand one’s consciousness through space into the cosmos, typically done while sleeping.

AUTONOMOUS PEOPLE’S COMMUNE OF MEXIHCO TENOCHTITLAN – Left-wing state located in Central Mexico characterized by high levels of Indigenous and working class people’s political power, which arose following the overthrow of the Mexican comprador bourgeoisie.

AXIS TRIFECTA – The three countries which dominate the European Union following the rise to power of the right-wing nationalist leaders Ursula Heinrich, Olivier La Plume, and Laszlo Kiss in Germany, France, and Hungary.

BA’AL – A word meaning “lord”, “master”, or “owner” in Ancient Semitic languages. Entity worshipped by Freemasons of the 33rd degree and higher, who believe that he demands relentless blood sacrifice.

BADIOU, ALAIN – Left-wing French theorist.

BANAT, THE – Traditional (now informal) region located north of the Balkan peninsula which comprises adjacent parts of Romania, Hungary, and Serbia.

BANATISKI – Rromani dialect associated with a sub-vitsa of Gurbet Rromani from Vojvodina (Serbian part of the Banat).

BARO BALO – big pig (Rr)

B’DOTE – Location where the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers meet; it is considered a sacred place for the indigenous Dakota people. B’dote landmarks include **Wita Tanka** and Fort Snelling.

BLACK DUTCH – Branch of American Rromani people who lived among the Pennsylvania Dutch. They are likely the reason Benjamin Franklin argued in 1751 that the swarthyness of colonial era Germans posed a danger to the White Anglo-Saxon futurity of America. The label has also sometimes been applied to Melungeons and other “tri-racial isolates”, in addition to white-passing American Indians.

BLAX – Portmanteau combining the words “black” and “wax”. *Santa Muerte* candles are often made from black wax.

BOURGEOISIE – The ruling group of people in capitalist society. Male members of the bourgeoisie are called bourgeois, while their womenfolk are known as bourgeoises, though boojee or booshy are sometimes used as gender neutral slang terms for bourgeois individuals. Emerging in cities during the feudal period, the boojees were originally middle class, occupying a place in social hierarchy above the peasantry but below the nobility. However, with the overthrow of feudalism, they asserted themselves as the new upper class. Boojees control virtually all of the means of producing industrial and financial wealth, giving them the ability to deprive the lower classes of the means of survival, and thus the right to life itself, which is only extended to them through their participation in wage labor. However, boojees have enshrined charity to mask this injustice. (Fr)

BOYEI MALAMU! – Hello! (Li)

BULIBAŞĂ – Leader of a Rromani clan, derived from an Ottoman military term. (Ro)

BULLNATCH – Portmanteau combining the words “bullshit” and “biznatch”.

BUT [boot] – very, much, a lot (Rr)

BUTJI (buki) – work (Rr)

CABRÓN – dumbass, dude, stupid (Sp)

CALIPHATE OF AL-KIDISSA AL-MYETTA – Santa Muerte-worshipping proletarian state spanning across North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia.

CARNAL – blood brother, brother of the flesh (Sp)

COMPAÑERO – comrade (Sp)

COUP DE GRÂCE – Final death blow, typically delivered to a reactionary fiend as an act of mercy after they've been severely wounded. (Fr)

ČHAVRORRO (šavorro) – little boy (diminutive) (Rr)

ČIRIKLI – female bird (Rr)

DARPA – Disruptive Assault Research Projects Agency. A government entity tasked with developing technologies with military applications.

DEBORD, GUY – Left-wing French theorist.

DEVLA – Oh God (vocative) (Rr)

DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM – Analytical approach used by Marxists.

DIKH-AV/-ES/-EL/-AS/-EN/-EN – I see; you see (singular); he/she/it sees; we see; you see (plural); they see (Rr)

DIKHLO – head covering worn by Rromani women (Rr)

DJELI – see **griot**

DOSHALO/DOSHALI/DOSHALE – Guilty (masculine, feminine, plural) (Rr)

DRABARNI – Medicine woman, shaman, healer, adviser. (Rr)

DROBOJ TUT! – Semi-formal way of saying “Hello!” (Rr)

DROM – Road, way, path. (Rr via Greek)

DUKHAVEL – it/she/he hurts (Rr)

EDERLEZI – A traditional Rromani song.

EUROPEAN UNION – Supranational neoliberal polity.

EZTLI – blood (Na)

FĂRĂ ÎNDOIALĂ – without a doubt (Ro)

GADŽE DILE – foolish non-Rroma (Rr)

GENTE – people (Sp)

GINDIMOS – a thought (Rr)

GOLUMBAIKA – dove (Rr)

GRIOT – Caste of storytelling and praisesinging musical oral history keepers in West African cultures. (Fr)

GURUVESKO GOŽNI, LE – the bull's shit (Rr)

HACHIS PARMENTIER – dish made from mashed potatoes and

beef (Fr)

HASHEM – the name (He)

HOGON – ritual elder in the Dogon culture

HOMELAND INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (H.I.A.) – Domestic surveillance and information-gathering entity which was established in the aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks. Quickly expanded, superseding all other intelligence agencies in operational size and scope within the first few years of its existence. The H.I.A. was pivotal in bringing the tactics used abroad during the War on Terror to the homefront (e.g., secret imprisonment, suspension of *habeas corpus* and due process). It established the first domestic black sites in the second decade of the 21st century, possibly earlier.

HERMANO – brother (Sp)

HIJOLE – Oh my gosh! Holy moly! By golly!

HOLLY SHIZNIT! – Holy shit!

HVAARP – High Velocity Active Astral Research Program. Joint effort by the military industrial complex and academia to develop technologies which weaponize the *ionosphere*.

INNER CIRCLE – An elite group of thirteen Homeland Intelligence Agency operatives who oversee the military dictatorship of General Johnson.

JOBBIK – a right-wing fascist Hungarian political party

KALO/KALI/KALE – black (masculine/feminine/plural) (Rr)

KEREL – he/she/it does (Rr)

LIPANDA – liberty, freedom (Li)

LIPANDA UNION – see **Uhuru Union**

LISTOS – ready, prepared (Sp)

LUDAR – Rromani vitsa historically connected to mining (Rudari, Boyash, or Banyai) and woodworking (Kashtale, Lingurari). The Ludar are said to have lost a significant part of their knowledge of the Rromani language during slavery, at which time they were forced to adopt Romanian.

LUGNJA – whores, bitches (Rr)

MAAFA – Founding trauma of some of the African diaspora’s most celebrated branches. It refers to the systematic slaughter of human beings, particularly in connection to the transatlantic slave trade. Coined by Marimba Ani, *maafa* means “disaster”. (Sw)

MACHVAYA – a particular Rromani vitsa

MBOTE NA YO! – a greeting in the Lingala language (Li)

MELANIN – A form of dark matter, theorized by a number of Afrocentric psychoanalysts to play a role, not only in pigmentation of a variety of body parts, but also in spirituality.

MELATONIN – A consciousness-altering hormone secreted by the pineal gland which plays a role in inducing feelings of sleepiness. It is associated with blackness or darkness, coming from the Greek word *melas*, meaning “black”, which is also the etymological source of “melancholy”.

MOLECH – Bovine deity worshipped by Freemasons beginning from the upper mid-levels until they are passed through the fire unto the 33rd degree.

MORENITO – A man small in stature with brown skin. (Sp)

MOTHOS – you say (Rr)

MULIMOS – death (Rr)

MULO/MULI/MULE – dead man, dead woman, the dead (Rr)

MURRO/MIRO/MURRI/MIRI – my (Rr)

NAKBA – “Disaster” in Arabic. Nakba refers to a mass campaign of ethnic cleansing which took place in Palestine in the year that the modern state of Israel was founded. (Ar)

NAKHAVAV – I swallow; I accept (Rr)

NOM DE GUERRE – an alias used by a warrior (Fr)

OPERATION: KATASTROPHIC KLOAKED KLEANSING
– A mass killing of non-Tea Party elected officials perpetrated by the H.I.A. after General Johnson’s *coup d’état* to solidify the power of the ultra-reactionary forces over U.S. society.

ÓRALE – Right on. That’s what I like to hear. (Sp)

PADRINO – godfather (Sp)

PAISA/PAISANO – co-national, compatriot (Sp)

PALABRA – word (Sp)

PALOMA – dove (Sp)

PARIS COMMUNE – Arguably the first attempt by the working class to throw off the yoke of the bourgeoisie and build socialism, occurring in 1871. A second Paris Commune was established in retaliation against Olivier La Plume’s nationalist government, forcing the far right French leader to relocate his administration to Nice, in the South of France.

PHRAL – brother (Rr). Origin of the English word “pal”.

PINEAL GLAND – a part of the brain which is said to play a role in regulating melanin and melatonin cycles

PINCHE(S) – fucking; goddamn (Sp)

PIRAMNO/PIRMANI – lover (masculine/feminine) (Rr)

PORRAJMOS – Genocide of Rromani and Sinti people perpetrated by the regime of Nazi Germany. It means “devouring” in *Rromani čhib*.

PRIMO – cousin (Sp)

PRINŽAREL – he/she/it recognizes (Rr)

PROJECT WHAT – Weaponized Hologram Assault Technology.

It is a weapons system developed by the mad scientists employed by the U.S. military through *HVAARP*.

PROLETARIAT – The class of people in capitalist society whose primary means of producing wealth is selling their bodies for periods of time known as “working hours” or “workdays”.

PROTIVO-ZHUDOVOVITSKO – anti-Semitic (Rr)

RADICAL BOOK CLUB – The ones who started it all. An informal faction of six young people interested in raves and radical literature issued from within the activist group known as Socialist Alliance.

RÁTOPIA – The darkest planet in existence. It is a gaseous giant which the *Santa Muerte* considers to be her home. She lives there along with a host of cybernetic beings. It is surrounded by a system of red planetary rings.

RBC DISCIPLES – A violent street gang inspired by the propaganda of the Radical Book Club. Led by a man called Biff Mathers.

ROBIE/ROBIJE – A system of slavery which was practiced in Romanian and Moldavian lands for approximately 500 years, ending in 1856. Enslaved persons were called *robi* or *țigani* (Tziganes) and most were of the Rromani ethnicity, while some were Tatars. (Ro/Rr)

ROMANICAL – Term which is usually used to refer to Roma who migrated to Britain during the Middle Ages and their descendants.

ROTHBARD, MURRAY – 20th century bourgeois economist whose ideas contributed to modern day right-wing libertarianism.

ROVEL – (he/she/it) cries (Rr)

RROMANIPEN – everything related to Rromani identity as such; one's Rromani-ness (Rr)

SAKO – everyone (Rr)

SAN – you are (Rr)

SANTA MUERTE – Saint Death, a Mexican folk saint (Sp)

SAR – how (Rr)

SFANTA MOARTE – Saint Death (Ro)

SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION – a Eurasian political alliance dominated by China and Russia

SOCIALIST ALLIANCE – An American political party and activist group claiming ideological descent from the line of thought developed by Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky. Works in solidarity with the Committee for a Trotskyite International.

SOCIALIST RROMANI REPUBLIC OF THE BANAT (SRRB) – A state located in Eastern Europe which aims to achieve liberation from capitalism while at the same time emphasizing a special need for attentiveness to be given to the abolition of national oppression against Rromani people.

SO MAJ KERES? – How are you? Literally “What more you do?” (Rr)

SUN RA – Afro-futurist jazz musician who claimed to be from Saturn. He was interned at Camp No. 48, a theocratic forced labor camp in Pennsylvania, for his conscientious objection to conscription into modernity's second great imperialist war.

SVÎNTAIKA MULI – Saint Death (Rr)

ŠUKAR – beautiful, good, well (Rr)

T'AVES BAXTALO! – Greetings! Literally “That you come fortunately/luckily”. (Rr)

TE – that (connecting word, e.g. *Mangav te džav* – “I want to go [I want that I go]”) (Rr)

TIRO/TIRI – your (Rr)

TONANTZIN – One name for the divine mother. It should be noted that the Mesoamerican worldview, or *cosmovisión*, tends to view entities, including divinities, not as strictly separate, but in fluid processes of becoming one another. (Na)

TRILBY – A kind of brimmed hat which is often mistaken with the fedora. Trilbies have smaller brims than fedoras.

TROBUL – should, must (Rr)

UHURU – liberty, freedom (Sw)

UHURU UNION – pan-African socialist state located in Sub-Saharan Africa

VATO – Man, dude. Comes from the Rromani word *baro*, short for *baro rrom* (literally “big man”, or leader) (Sp)

VELAS – candles (Sp)

VERSUCHSKANINCHEN – test subject, guinea pig, experiment volunteer (Gr)

VIAJE – trip, journey, voyage (Sp)

VITSA – a “branch” of the Rromani people, clan (Rr)

VLAX – Relates to the term “Wallachian” (Wallachia was one of the principalities, along with Moldavia/Moldova which would go on to form the modern Romanian state). Vlax is a family of Rromani dialects which developed during the period of **robie**.

WITA TANKA – Island located at **B'dote**; it was called Pike Island by White Anglo-Saxon Protestant settlers. (Da)

XAN – they eat (Rr)

YILO – heart (Rr)

YURUGU – Restless and devilish entity which takes the form of a pale fox. Said to roam the wastelands north of the homeland of the Dogon people in West Africa. Marimba Ani uses Yurugu as a metaphor for that which is problematic in longstanding European patterns of thought and behavior.

Six millennials sharing an interest in raves, radical literature, and social justice form the Radical Book Club: an informal faction operating within a left-wing activist group called Socialist Alliance, whose leader suspects the uppity twentysomethings of using their “club” as little more than a cover for recreational drug use and organizing underground dance parties. In short, a serious liability to party-building discipline. When a bungled police raid on an unpermitted warehouse rave leads the Homeland Intelligence Agency to draw a tenuous connection between the Marxian micro-sect and a vast criminal underworld, the leadership’s concerns seem vindicated. Seizing the incident as a pretext to quash social movements, the H.I.A. begins targeting domestic dissidents for extraordinary rendition. It’s clear peaceful protest ain’t gonna cut it, but it isn’t until advocates of Marxism are officially designated legitimate targets in the War on Terror and the Book Club is forced to team up with Roma clans and a Santa Muerte-worshipping drug cartel, that the radical ravers realize what it really means to go down the path of revolutionary armed struggle: a path that leads to strange sojourns in Latin America, Eastern Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa... and outer space.

