Episode Summary: In the 11th episode of the podcast we hear about the end of Portland Anti Racist Action, the consequences of being a SHARP, and other reflections by the punks; we also hear words of wisdom offered in hindsight, with love from the now-middle aged activists.

Interviews with China, Mic Crenshaw, Jason, Kelly Halliburton, Michael Clark, Pete Little, Jonathan Mozzochi, Eric Ward, and Rev. Cecil Prescod

**Leon Trotsky**, born Lev Davidovich Bronshtein, born to an intellectual middle class mother and a ‘Russified Jewish’ father in the steppe region of Russia. He became an ardent follower of Marx in 1879 when as a young man he was drawn into a secret society in the Ukraine, where he helped organize a worker’s union. For this revolutionary activity he was arrested and exiled to Siberia for four and a half years; he escaped to London using a passport bearing the name ‘Trotsky,’ which became his revolutionary surname until his death. In London he connected with V.I. Lenin; at the 1903 2nd Congress of Russian Social-Democratic Workers’ Party Trotsky sided with the Mensheviks, advocating for a democratic approach to socialism. Fatefully, Lenin sided with the Bolsheviks. This famous binary split defined the rest of his life. Trotsky returned to Russia, was jailed, exiled again, wrote *Results and Prospects* where he set out his most notable theory of ‘permanent revolution,’ which continues to influence organizing today. Trotsky got kicked out of France and Spain for his anti-war stance at the onset of World War I, made his way to New York and then returned to Petrograd to participate in the leadership of the 1917 Russian Revolution, where he proved an apt military commander. The end of the civil war found him in the top circles of the Politburo, second only to Lenin but without political acumen to get support from the Communist Party. Lenin suffered debilitating strokes, which coincided with an illness from which Trotsky needed to convalesce away from the political sphere. By the time he recovered, Lenin was dead and he had been outmaneuvered. Stalin came to power. Trotsky was gradually removed from power, exiled and eventually banished from Russia. He finally found asylum in Mexico, where he was murdered by a Stalinist agent. Trotsky left behind enough writing to support the legacy of his political theories. To this day he has not been ‘rehabilitated,’ that is, restored to his historical place as an actor in the great events of the first 25 years of post-tsarist Russia becoming the Soviet Union.

**Trotskyism** is a political ideology, the nuance of which is dependent on a fairly close understanding of the events unfolding prior to and following the Russian Revolution of 1917. It aligns with the political theories developed by
Leon Trotsky, who included some forms of syndicalism and anarchism. In its most basic understanding, the Trotskyist position within socialist political groupings is one of radical leftism. Trotskyists believe in a ‘vanguard’—the development of a front line of activists with astute political analysis which leads the movement, made up of ‘the proletariat’—working class people on whose behalf the vanguard struggles. This proletariat and vanguard combo, Trotskyists believe, should be in a state of ‘permanent revolution.’ Permanent revolution can look like indigenous land resistance efforts, rural efforts to kick corporate influence out of local government, urban organizing for fair housing or clean water, mutual aid and food justice work. For an example of vanguard at work in organizing, look to the Black Panther Party for Self Defense. Central organizing, having many small groups who take leadership and direction from and pay dues to a centralized national office, is a feature of Trotskyism. Groups were issued a mandate to grow leadership and thereby increase political influence, which resulted in harassing behaviors.

Jason’s description of the Trotskyist hijacking of ARA activism in order to add to their ranks was common in the U.S. in the 90s; at that time Trotskyists were dogmatic in their approach — if you joined them, they would treat you as an ally and a friend. In Against the Current, writer Alan Wall asked in 1994 if American Trotskyism was at an end. He writes, “The assessment of Alex Callinicos, a leading theoretician of the British Socialist Workers Party at the beginning of his short book Trotskyism (1990), strikes me as quite accurate. According to Callinicos, Trotsky, the person and historic actor, remains of considerable interest to some scholars and activists, because of his stature as a thinker and writer, and because he had the “good fortune to have his life recorded by Isaac Deutscher in what is without doubt one of the outstanding biographies of our time.” On the other hand, Trotskyism itself is largely dismissed “as a welter of squabbling sects united as much by their complete irrelevance to the realities of political life as by their endless competition for the mantle of orthodoxy inherited from the prophet.”

Black Bloc is a tactic for resistance that can be deployed in many different ways but maintains the common trait of individuals dressing in all black, covering the face, in order to achieve individual anonymity and assume a collective identity. According to Fire and Flames, Black Bloc is the name that German press gave to the Autonome, the autonomous activists who in the 80s and 90s fought anti-immigrant racism and nuclear proliferation in Germany and influenced European activists who maintained ties through networks connected in solidarity with these issues. Many autonomes lived in ‘squats,’—houses or large buildings abandoned by owners that were occupied. Larger squats were converted to multi-use community centers with apartments, infoshops, show spaces and cafés that could accommodate local organizing as well as host long term visitors. Throughout
the late 20th century it was common for American activists to visit squats, lending assistance to building projects, and voices and bodies to actions like blocking road building projects through sensitive areas or preventing transport of nuclear material on trains. Through exchange with European activists, organizing concepts and tactics filtered back to the U.S. Anarchist infoshops, cafés, and bookstores sprang up in major cities like Detroit, Chicago, Berkeley, Minneapolis, New Orleans and New York to name a few. They created an informal decentralized activist network through which groups like Anti-Racist Action could travel and organize. Gentrification and resource scarcity has since closed many of the spaces—though Bluestockings Books in New York’s Lower East Side and Berkeley’s Long Haul Collective both remain open. While today, the media representation of black bloc is limited to its expression as depicted in clouds of tear gas under attack by police, the roots of autonome activism are in alternative culture creation as well as armed resistance to police and state oppression. It is generally agreed that the first major expression of black bloc in a U.S. protest was at the “Battle of Seattle” protests against the 1999 World Trade Organization talks. A group of about 40 ‘black-clad anarchists’ (as they were named in the press) targeted corporate businesses through property destruction like breaking windows; global media ignored the 39,960 other activists to fixate on the non-lethal violence of multi-billion dollar companies having some damage.

Dr. Cornel West is a philosopher, spoken word artist, author, professor, activist, political commentator, and actor (most notably in the The Matrix films, and the tv show 30 Rock). In August of 2017 Dr. Cornel West, other religious leaders, and Black Lives Matter activists led a counter protest against thousands of neo-Nazis, KKK members and white nationalists during the racist “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia where white men carried lit Tiki torches throughout the streets yelling anti-Semitic chants. Dr. West and other clergy members and activists who were trapped inside the church by fascists. “You had a number of the courageous students, of all colors, at the University of Virginia who were protesting against the neo fascists themselves. The neo fascists had their own ammunition. And this is very important to keep in mind, because the police, for the most part, pulled back. The next day, for example, those 20 of us who were standing, many of them clergy, we would have been crushed like cockroaches if it were not for the anarchists and the anti-fascists who approached, over 300, 350 anti-fascists.”

The Day The Nazi Died is a song by Northern English anarcho-punk band Chumbawumba from their 1994 album Anarchy. The lyrics refer to the annual pilgrimage made by neo-Nazis to the grave of Hitler’s far-right deputy Rudolf Hess, who was captured in 1941 and sentenced to life imprisonment in Nuremberg for war crimes. He was the
only inmate of the Spandau prison in British-occupied Berlin when he killed himself in 1987 at age 93. The Bavarian town of Wunsiedel in southeastern Germany (15 miles from the Czech Republic) reluctantly agreed to accept the remains of the dead Hitlerite whose last request was to be buried with his parents and for 20 years the town was invaded by neo-Nazis every August on the anniversary of the suicide until the body was **exhumed** and ashes scattered at sea.

Lyrics:
*We’re told that after the war the Nazis vanished without a trace*
*But battalions of fascists still dream of a master race*
*The history books they tell of their defeat in ‘45*
*But they all came out of the woodwork on the day the Nazi died*

*They say the prisoner at Spandau was a symbol of defeat*
*Whilst Hess remained imprisoned and the fascists; they were beat*
*So the promise of an Aryan world would never materialize*
*So why did they all come out of the woodwork on the day the Nazi died*

*The world is riddled with maggots the maggots are getting fat*
*They’re making a tasty meal of all the bosses and bureaucrats*
*They’re taking over the boardrooms and they’re fat and full of pride*
*And they all came out of the woodwork on the day the Nazi died.*

*So if you meet with these historians I’ll tell you what to say*
*Tell them that the Nazis never really went away*
*They’re out there burning houses down and peddling racist lies*
*And we’ll never rest again... until every Nazi dies...*