

Rock! Paper! Scissors! Issue 7

Exit Left: Fugitivity and Destituent Power

GUEST CURATOR: KATRINA KNISS



Christian anarchism has long been a theological framework that sparks imaginative possibilities for a new world: what many may call the kingdom of God. This kingdom is free from hierarchy and removed from the stranglehold of state sovereignty; a place where life is lived in common and defined by love. But in a present world formed by the forces of racialized capitalism and the carceral state, how does the creation of such a world become possible? When there is no geography untouched by borders, how do we escape to a new world?

The options to create change are not simply split between passive isolation or participation in formalized political parties. We have the option to militantly refuse to participate in the political landscape we've inherited. This shift in thinking from the binaries of reform or revolution to a third option of mass exodus is called *destituent power*. Destituent power does not seek to overthrow the political order and place a more democratic sovereign in its place. Instead, when we act in destituent power we render sovereignty, and its death-dealing values of White supremacy, cisheteropatriarchy, etc., powerless by destroying our reliance on it. We act as fugitives, actively refusing to be the constituents of any political establishment, and become ungovernable. What remains after this exit is the potential for refuge and a life lived in common.

In this issue, we hope to explore the ways ideas of destituent power and fugitivity (concepts from the Italian *autonomia* movement and the Black radical tradition) can renew Christian anarchist thought and practice, as well as the ways the Christian anarchist tradition, at its best, can provide examples of destituent power in practice. The following questions around the nature of this active, militant struggle may be useful to guide your submission:

- What contributions does Christian anarchist thought give to the theories of destituent power and fugitivity?
- If our lives are to be governed by the sovereignty of God, what are practicable ways that we can abandon the sovereign power of the world to become ungovernable?
- How do we lessen our material reliance on the infrastructure of government – economy, defense, prisons and policing, etc.?
- How can white communities begin to abandon the power structures of white supremacy? How are BIPOC communities already leading the way?
- Which movements already demonstrating destituent power can Christian communities join in solidarity?
- In what ways do we already care for each other in Christian community that do not rely on the mechanisms of the state? How can these forms of care be aggregated?
- How do we begin to challenge the engrained patterns of carceral thinking in our communities, families, and relationships?
- What is the role of spirituality in sustaining a community of refuge outside of the law? What's Love got to do with it?
- What could a politics look like that operates outside of the binary of moral pacifism that fails to resist the state, and armed revolution that only reforms the rule of law?

With these kinds of questions in mind we are seeking contributions that include: academic explorations of destituent power from the perspective of Christian anarchist thought (including theology, political philosophy, biblical studies, etc.); art (poetry, story-telling, music, visual media) that speaks to a new use of this world; historical accounts of fragments of fugitive community; current portraits and examples of common life that abandon sovereignty; and anything else inspired from the spirit of this document.

The kingdom of God does not lie in a new world in the distant future, but in a new use of this world. The destituent strike involves an intentional exit from the pessimism of the present, harnessing the future worlds we want in the ways we already live. We cannot wait for the crises of apocalypse to take action – the end is already here. The crises of a global pandemic showed us the beautiful and varied possibilities of destituent power in practice: autonomous zones, solidarity movements, mutual aid, community care,

and the creation of abolitionist communities freed from carceral thinking. All of these movements are fragments of possibility that when woven together illuminate a new form of life. We hope that Christian anarchist communities can be one such fragment of the coming community.

Submission Guidelines: Word length is flexible, but brevity is prized. Maximum length is approximately 2,000 words. Conversational or academic writing styles are both acceptable, but keep in mind a popular audience. We seek intersectional, liberative, and self-reflective pieces. We also accept photos, drawings, sermons, songs, videos, poems, interviews, how-tos and anything else you can think of. Please fact-check and proofread your work. You retain full copyright control of your work. Content is due by December 14th, 2021 to submissions [dot] jesusradicals [at] gmail [dot] com. Please include a short biography, photo, and possible accompanying image. Visit our website to view the full guidelines and our previous issues at: jesusradicals.com/submission-guidelines.html.