

Anarchists call for solidifying gains, expanding violent insurgency

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SUMMARY

In this report, Senior Analyst Kyle Shideler contextualizes a published call for an anarcho-communist insurgency published by multiple anarchist websites. Shideler notes that the proposal is in keeping both with the historical continuity of left-wing urban guerrilla movements, and with the current and on-going developments within the U.S. Anarchist milieu.

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“Positions are seldom lost because they have been destroyed, but almost invariably because the leader has decided in his own mind that the position cannot be held.”

So quotes pseudonymous anarchist “Sofia Valencia”¹, referencing U.S. Marine Corps warfighting doctrine, at the beginning of a manifesto entitled *The Enemy Doesn’t Know How Many We Are: A Proposal for Building an Insurgency*.

One might expect that the reference is intended to invoke recent reporting² that Border Patrol commander Gregory Bovino and ICE agents would be departing or drawing down in Minneapolis³.

Numerous commentators, including a former Green Beret whose post on X went viral with over 37.6 million views, invoked the phrase “insurgency” to describe the sophisticated rapid response network produced in Minneapolis to target federal law enforcement.

But in fact, the Valencia piece foreshadowed that development, published months prior on October 7th, 2025, at the Internet Archive⁴ before being spread on anarchist social media sites, including Puget Sound Anarchists and Montreal Counterinfo. It was subsequently uploaded to the Anarchist Library in December, before being republished by the Anarchist Federation Newswire on January 27, 2026, and appearing on social media.

In the piece, Valencia seeks to:

...take example [sic] from diverse insurgent forces, this text will look at how to adapt effective organizational models to support an anarcho-communist revolution. Armed with this knowledge and committed to see a revolution through, a nascent movement would have the capacity to build a force that can overturn the state and capitalism while constructing liberatory communities of the future.⁵

¹ For convenience I will use “she/her” pronouns to refer to the author, recognizing that the selected pseudonym does not necessarily provide insight to the author’s actual or claimed gender.

² Braye, K. (2026, January 27). What does a scaled-back ICE operation look like? KSTP.com 5 Eyewitness News. <https://kstp.com/kstp-news/top-news/what-does-a-scaled-back-ice-operation-look-like/>

³ Karnowski, S., & Balsamo, M. (2026, January 26). Bovino is set to leave Minneapolis as Trump reshuffles the leadership of his immigration crackdown. AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/shooting-minneapolis-protests-ice-immigration-lawsuit-5bd12d70d3c76bfe5eacd802ce7480a7>

⁴ Archive.org. The use of the Archive.org by a variety of extremist organizations of all different ideologies to upload documents and videos has been a source of consternation for some observers. See: Fisher-Birch, J. (2018, February 14). The dark side of the Internet Archive. Counter Extremism Project. <https://www.counterextremism.com/blog/dark-side-internet-archive>

⁵ Valencia, S. (2025, October 7). The enemy doesn’t know how many we are: A proposal for building an insurgency. The Anarchist Library. <https://>

She notes that ongoing efforts, including notably the creation of ICE Watch,⁶ as well as the campus encampment campaign, which began after the October 7th, 2023, attack against Israel by Hamas, have been primarily “reactive” in nature, adding that “no recent attempt has presented a way to win the war against humanity waged by the US government.”⁷

Valencia goes on to propose the development of an anarcho-communist insurgency as the solution, highlighting what she perceives as uniquely positioned anarchist assets for conducting such an insurgency, which she defines as efforts to utilize social organizations for “self-governance, justice, education, medical care and other important social projects,” by which “revolutionary forces work to transform society in the areas they hold,” while simultaneously “war is waged for abolition of the state.”⁸

For Valencia, insurgency, as compared to rebellion, is viewed as the only means to both combat and overthrow the state while at the same time building the anarcho-communist organizations necessary to replace it.

Valencia imagines a structure where “political organizations,” which are “expansive assemblies,” set up both “armed factions and social organizations

with shared political and strategic objectives.”⁹ This emphasis on political organizations as the central actors may put Valencia within the “Especifismo” anarchist tradition.¹⁰

“Especifismo” promotes the creation of a “specific” Anarchist organization that openly promotes anarchist politics. It differs slightly from “platformist” anarchism which organizes around a “platform” of shared principles¹¹, as well as from anarcho-syndicalism, which views the union or syndicate as the only necessary or acceptable structure for the organization of the working class.¹²

Under Valencia’s proposal, the political organizations are to set up autonomous structures of self-governance based on the Kurdish Rojava’s network of neighborhood councils, together with inspiration from the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) and various historical anarchist efforts. Valencia then proposes combining these efforts with the social services model of foreign terrorist organization Hezbollah —whereby social organizations first and foremost are integrated with and exist to serve the needs of the armed resistance.¹³

Neighborhood councils as a form of anarchist (self-)governance have been a hot topic among Anarchists since before

the Minneapolis “uprising” began. The same week ICE was reported to be scaling back its activities in the Twin Cities, the Instagram account “Anarchofgg” posted the 2012 tract “To Live in Revolutionary Times: The Formation of Local Councils,” by late Syrian anarchist Omar Aziz, which described a detailed proposal for local governance in the midst of the Syrian Civil War.¹⁴

The post added, “Americans need to apply this shit right now,” and was liked by almost 500 anarchist accounts.¹⁵

Almost exactly a year ago, the Black Rose/Rosa Negra Anarchist Federation (BRRN), likely the largest anarchist federation in the United States and closely aligned with numerous Latin American Anarchist federations, held a webinar promoting Omar Aziz’s ideas. BRRN recently also reposted a “how-to” document on establishing popular neighborhood assemblies, responding to a debate on the left regarding calls for New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani to implement such neighborhood councils with city support.¹⁶

Alongside the creation of the political organizations, Valencia emphasizes the need to establish the social organizations which will establish goodwill for the insurgency among “the people” and

theanarchistlibrary.org/library/sofia-valencia-the-enemy-doesnt-know-how-many-we-are

6 On Ice Watch groups utilizing anarchist tactics and methods see: Shideler, K. (2026, January 26). The revolution is on in Minnesota. The American Mind. <https://americanmind.org/salvo/the-revolution-is-on-in-minnesota/>

7 Valencia, Pg. 3

8 Valencia, Pg. 6

9 Valencia, Pg. 7

10 Weaver, A. (2006). Especifismo: The anarchist praxis of building popular movements and revolutionary organization in South America. The Anarchist Library. <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/adam-weaver-especifismo>

11 Klien, K. (2010). Contemporary platformism: A critical study. The Anarchist Library. <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/karl-klien-contemporary-platformism>

12 Black Rose/Rosa Negra Anarchist Federation. (2024, July 22). Especifismo before its critics. <https://www.blackrosefed.org/especifismo-before-its-critics/>

13 Valencia, Pg. 8

14 Aziz, O. (2021, February). To live in revolutionary times: The formation of local councils [Translated essay]. <https://north-shore.info/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/aziz.pdf>

15 anarchofgg. (2026). [Instagram post reminding followers to remember Omar Aziz and Syrian local councils during the Assad regime's collapse]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/DT7GYNSFGmR/>

16 Kumar, S., & Baiocchi, G. (2026, January 2). Building “mass governance” in Zohran Mamdani’s New York City. Jacobin. <https://jacobin.com/2026/01/mamdani-municipal-governance-mass-democracy>

replace the existing social and economic system in “liberated” areas.

Valencia writes:

Social organizations are responsible for the production and distribution of resources and the creation of infrastructure. Organizations can include food production, hospitals, schools, construction and activities can range from mediating conflicts to providing medical care and education to producing necessities. These organizations are structured in an egalitarian manner and are based on revolutionary perspectives. They displace those of capitalist businesses and the state.¹⁷

One can see the formation of social organizations at work in the growing anarchist emphasis on establishing and promoting robust mutual aid organizations, as well as a revitalized movement for the creation of “Free Stores”, where items are donated and then given away.¹⁸ As Space City Anarchist Organization explained in a 2023 Zine “What is a Store”:

The Free Store also serves as an exercise in mutual aid. Mutual Aid is a revolutionary concept that emphasizes building relationships within our community so that we can rely on our own communities for our basic needs instead of having to rely on a bunch of corporations and the government to survive. This Free Store is a way of distributing resources like clothes, food, appliances, art, and

“IT IS IMPORTANT TO BEGIN CONSIDERING HOW TO DEAL WITH THESE [RIGHT-WING] FACTIONS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF AN ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT. COMPLETE ANNIHILATION IS ESSENTIAL.”

- Sofia Valencia

other things for free, and within our communities without having to rely on stores like H&M, Walmart, Target, etc. We hope that the relationships built via the free store can be used to form the basis of a society that is without exploitation and instead about community.

Kill the cop in your head- take free shit!¹⁹

Despite the perhaps seemingly bucolic image of “neighborhood councils” and “free stores”, the author is ultimately unapologetic that the goal is to use force to seize and control territory in a balkanized United States, from which they will eliminate their political opponents.

She writes:

The ideologically hardened right wingers are essentially enemy combatants. Whether they are currently active is not so much a question. If allowed to remain

in a territory, they may be or could become agents of the counterinsurgent. They must be thoroughly disabled and removed from liberated territories. It is important to begin considering how to deal with these factions from the perspective of an abolitionist movement. Complete annihilation is essential.²⁰

Indeed, the effort to seize and hold territory from which opponents can be withheld is being promoted in Minneapolis now, as Minneapolis Spring, which describes itself as a “Clearing House” for Anti-ICE efforts in Minnesota, in cooperation with MN ICE Watch, issued a proposal for establishing “Filter Blockades.” These are essentially rolling road checkpoints, where activists are blocking traffic and conducting inspections of vehicles in an attempt to prevent ICE from operating within specific neighborhoods.²¹

Before territory can permanently be “liberated” by revolutionary forces

¹⁷ Valencia, Pg. 7

¹⁸ Green America. (2023, February). Free store: Where everything is, yes, free. <https://greenamerica.org/green-living/store-where-everything-free>

¹⁹ Space City Anarchist Organization. (2023, August). What is a Free Store? <https://spacecityao.noblogs.org/files/2023/08/Free20Store20Zine20absolute-1.pdf>

²⁰ Valencia, Pg. 18

²¹ Minneapolis Spring [@mplsspring]. (2026, February 1). What would it take to begin coming together across the entire twin cities... Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/p/DUOVLfLiF4c/>

and perceived opponents subjected to “complete annihilation,” Valencia recognizes the need to build out the insurgent force itself, which is seen as a medium to long-term project.

She notes,

Time is on the side of the insurgent. An insurgent force can be assembled long before a single bullet is fired. Fighters can prepare for years or decades, striking only when the time is right. The EZLN built its forces for over ten years before attacking the state, presenting revolutionary ideas to villagers and systematically recruiting fighters. Taking time to build armed groups concertedly and growing slowly in qualitative force allows for the development of politically aligned and well-trained guerrillas, ready to take action when the time is right.²²

Valencia’s approach to insurgency borrows heavily from that of Carlos Marighella, the Brazilian Communist and author of the infamous “Mini-Manual of the Urban Guerrilla”, which is cited extensively, although Valencia also references the Black Liberation Army –which itself relied heavily upon Marighella– while also drawing from traditional Maoist guerrilla warfare doctrine, particularly in noting the guerrilla force’s reliance upon the goodwill of “the people.”²³

Much of Valencia’s approach consciously apes Marighella, including references to

“expropriations,” that is, bank robberies, for which the Brazilian guerrilla was well known. Robberies were common for funding the Black Liberation Army in the 1970s, all the way up to the disastrous 1981 Brinks Armed Car Robbery that killed one guard and wounded two others.

Valencia does seem to recognize that modern robberies are likely much more challenging as she writes:

Kidnapping, extortion and expropriation can be used with caution. They should have the dual purpose of putting pressure on the enemy while also gaining funds. These endeavors should be undertaken in the safest way possible, when the odds are stacked in favor of those doing the actions. It is important not to get too many fighters caught up by activities that should support the growth of the insurgency. For example, digital bank robberies are safer and potentially more lucrative than ones in person or extortion can be based out of another country to decrease the risk.²⁴

Other considerations for funding the guerrilla effort include international funding from American adversaries abroad, although Valencia notes this risks “becoming their proxy”. But primarily, Valencia seems to imagine that communal social organizations, along with contributions from supporters’ local businesses, will largely serve to bankroll

the enterprise.

Valencia sees what she calls “nighttime affinity groups” as a potential source of guerrilla fighters, presumably referring to the tendency of insurrectionist anarchist affinity groups to conduct sabotage and vandalism, direct actions under the cover of night.²⁵

In Europe, Vulkangruppe (Volcano Group) has conducted numerous arson attacks in recent years citing anti-fascist and environmentalist justifications, including most recently, the January 3, 2026, attack which left 45,000 Germans outside Dusseldorf without power.²⁶

Developing insurrectionary anarchist cells into a coordinated guerrilla force may prove challenging, as insurrectionary anarchists have sometimes questioned the viability of creating armed organizations separate from the broader social movement of revolt. CrimethINC writes:

One common insurrectionist critique of these groups is that their actions are too specialized; but this does not explain why more easily reproducible tactics often fail to catch on. Another critique of armed groups is that they separate themselves from others so energy and ideas cease to flow; this seems more to the point.²⁷

The observation that armed underground groups become isolated from the larger aboveground movement, and thereby atrophy, was one of the primary conclusions

22 Valencia, Pg. 10

23 Valencia, Pg. 12

24 Valencia, Pg. 24

25 Anonymous, “You Say you Want an Insurrection” CrimethINC, January 7th, 2010, <https://crimethinc.com/2010/01/07/say-you-want-an-insurrection>

26 The WannabeWonk. (2026, January 13). “SWITCH OFF”: Left-wing arson attacks expose Germany’s electrical grid. Militant Wire. <https://www.militantwire.com/p/switch-off-major-left-wing-arson>

27 Anonymous, “You Say you Want an Insurrection”.

of the Weather Underground. Having shed itself from the aboveground influence of its leftist comrades, the underground “resistance” found itself hamstrung. This revelation was the impetus for the creation of the Prairie Fire Organization Committees (PFOC), and later the May 19th Communist Organization’s (M19CO) founding of the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee (JBAKC). Modern day Antifa and related anarchist formations have largely internalized this challenge, and participants in militant direct action frequently participate in broader movement building and mutual aid efforts, while keeping their militant activities clandestine.²⁸

Despite potential ideological reservations in some quarters, while difficult to quantify, an observation of anarchist and anti-fascist social media accounts does

seem to suggest that support for armed militancy has increased steadily.

This support includes a growing cadre of firearms trainers and armed organizations with an explicitly revolutionary leftist orientation. Following the assassination of Charlie Kirk and attacks on ICE detention centers and police, media interest in these armed groups has likewise risen.

Valencia specifically cites Puget Sound John Brown Gun club and self-identified Antifa member Willem Van Spronsen’s 2019 armed attack against a Tacoma ICE detention center in which he was killed by federal law enforcement officers, as “impetus to take armed action against colonial adversaries” which “displays demonstrate [sic] a groundswell of popular sentiment that could be organized into a cohesive force.”²⁹

Valencia sees actions like Van Spronsen’s as helping to further radicalize the left, a form of “armed propaganda” as Marighella terms it.³⁰

Valencia adds:

While armed action pushes prevailing opinion further left, armed action complemented by social organizations becomes a thoroughly convincing force. Social programs indicate the genuine intention of political actors to better people’s lives and facilitate people joining the effort.³¹

There does seem to be some justification for the confidence Valencia feels that armed action will gain, rather than lessen support. A poll conducted after the assassination of Charlie Kirk showed that 25 percent of individuals identifying as “very liberal” believed political violence could be justified.

In January 2026, the Network Contagion Research Institute (NCRI) reported that, in a study, 67% of left-leaning respondents considered political violence justified. NCRI noted that the three highest correlations with support for violence were time on social media, being female, and believing the United States is “an empire in decline.”³²

That the United States is declining, wounded, and unable to successfully resist an insurgency is clearly part of Valencia’s thinking. Recognizing that armed insurgency against the United States may seem far-fetched, she hazards several

THE PERCEPTION THAT THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT WRIT LARGE IS INCREASINGLY READY FOR MILITANT DIRECT ACTION, AND THE SENSE THAT THE U.S. IS WOUNDED AND SUSEPTIBLE TO ATTACK, IS A POTENT COMBINATION.

28 For more on the role of the JBAKC in the formation of modern Antifa see Shideler, K. (Ed.). (2020). *Unmasking Antifa: Five perspectives on a growing threat*. Center for Security Policy.

29 Valencia, Pg. 16

30 Carlos Marighella, “Mini-Manual of the Urban Guerilla,” 1969. Pg. 30

31 Valencia, Pg. 16

32 Michael Ruiz, ‘Assassination culture’ is on the rise, especially among women, study warns”, Fox News, January 22nd, 2026, <https://www.foxnews.com/us/assassination-culture-rise-especially-among-women-study-warns>

reasons why it will be successful.

Setting out to build an insurgency in the US from the current state of the movement might seem like a monumental task but it is important to keep some precedents in mind... The situation in the US makes it ripe for political change. The US is flailing politically and economically. People are searching for solutions for basic survival and want to see the development of a capable struggle.³³

Valencia further adds that the growing radicalization of the left, particularly in support of Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups, is also a source of confidence:

The tides of political change have been decisively shifting within the last 20 years. The veneer of civil society has eroded, making activism essentially useless. Where previously many on the far left have vocalized a more tempered political vision, now they are taking their cues from the most serious insurgent forces like the Resistance in Palestine.³⁴

The perception that the revolutionary left writ large is increasingly ready for militant direct action, and the sense that the United States is wounded and susceptible to attack, is a potent combination.

There is certainly no shortage of anarchist literature that relishes the prospect of

insurrection or uprising against the hated capitalist system, and especially the United States, and in this, *The Enemy Doesn't Know How Many We Are* might be seen as more of the same.

But Valencia's tract lacks the more poetic stream of consciousness that one sees in more aspirational anarchist tracts. In some ways, it reads more like a laundry list of things which the anarchist movement has largely *already accomplished*, or at a minimum is well on its way to successfully establishing.

While it goes too far to suggest that Valencia's proposal is being deliberately acted upon, there is no proposed activity described which cannot be perceived as already underway.

The creation of active Anarchist Organizations, promotion of neighborhood councils, the development of a robust system of mutual aid,³⁵ the growing development of armed cadre, formation of explicitly leftist armed groups, and increasing tolerance or support for violence by a broader mass base are all currently observed within the American Anarchist milieu.

These currents have been overshadowed by the immediate political debate, which seeks to hide the growing revolutionary disorder by insisting that what can be seen is merely the work of a handful of paid agitators in Minneapolis or elsewhere.

If this proposal for an anarcho-communist insurgency seems fanciful, it may be because, as Valencia's title suggests, we have yet to take seriously the extent of

the revolutionary fervor now underway, or the numbers of those who are actively working towards what is therein proposed.

If we were to honestly answer the question, "how many are they?" perhaps we would not like the answer.

³³ Valencia, Pg. 25

³⁴ Valencia, Pg. 26

³⁵ The extensive ability of to create and deploy systems of mutual aid which bring to bear significant resources has been the bafflement of many outside observers, who insist that such a capability can only be replicated by significant outside financial contributions.



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