



## WORKS

# **Black Cataclysm: Anarchism and Ruination**

**Sam C. Tenorio**  
**(2024)**

*Transcribed by CommieCon from an Anarchist Research Group essay uploaded to Youtube.*

*From the description;*

*In this essay, adapted from his recently published book, Sam C. Tenorio (he/they) reconsiders the Watts Rebellion of 1965 and its ruinous disruptions, like arson, theft, and vandalism, as a cataclysm that clears material and discursive ground and proffers its own questions of property.*

In 2015, to commemorate the Watts Uprising, the Los Angeles Times published a series of op-eds and editorials reflecting on the watershed moment and its legacy.

From the standpoint of the half a century past, Watts 50 Years Later in large part attempted to distance itself from its 1965 coverage that was grossly unsympathetic and unquestionably hazardous to Black Angelinos.

At the same time, the retrospect's very titling was careful to rescind any necessity to name the fierce confrontation with local, state, and federal forces a riot or rebellion. In the wider discourse for popular protests of increasingly gratuitous anti-black police violence, there remains a controversy of terms and a necessary resistance to sensationalise representations of such events.

Robin DG Kelly's Times op-ed echoes this in his opening warning to expect, on this day, crude reductions to gruesome statistics and violence; something readers were all too familiar with a year to the day from the severe police suppression of the 2014 protests in Ferguson Missouri.

Still, Kelly's claim that what they burned is less important than what they built, couched in the assessment that a focus on violence and looting fails to engage residents actual confrontation with social and economic catastrophe begs the question what if the opposite is true.

