relative function by a millimeter. This does not deny two facts of great importance, however: first, it is always one less class enemy; second, it contributes to another educational process, very different and richer, that directed towards the exploited who see the progressive elimination of their class enemies as possible. The limitations of the first of these two reasons have been underlined many times. It has been said that when an enemy dies, another takes his place. It has been argued that one should not attack the person who holds a function, but rather accuse the function itself. All these reasons are not convincing. They may be valid reasons, but I obtusely believe that the elimination of a class enemy is always preferable to a simple abstract criticism of the function that the enemy carries out. And then it also can't be said that the two things must necessarily be separated. Regarding the second reason, it has been said that one should not concern oneself with developing "educational" messages directed at the exploited. On this point too I do not agree. All revolutionary action is an educational project of great complexity. The contradictions arise from the fact that one is often forced to take into consideration the partial aspects of the action itself, and these aspects, almost always disconnected from each other, contribute to misunderstandings and useless polemics.

No illusions

I have no illusions. Words are understandable depending on the actual situation. We give them space and credibility only if they fit into our patterns and certainties. Defense mechanisms become automatic and prevent the reception of the message itself. If it were not so, the Enlightenment thinkers would have already definitively changed the world two hundred years ago.

It happens, for example, that if someone says that the specific organization needs means and therefore must take charge of procuring them, immediately the deaf man who does not want to hear, translates into his language: hidden financing, presence of foreign secret services, a rabble of thieves and robbers, revelry and champagne. If someone says that a minimum of self-discipline is needed and that not everything can be left to improvisation, immediately the same deaf man translates: Jacobin asceticism, rigidity of a public prosecutor, devaluation of human life, lack of ethical foundation, exploitation of others, dehumanization. If someone says that the elimination, even physical, of the class enemy is a correct act, from the revolutionary point of view, immediately the deaf man translates: bloody madness, endorsement of behaviors of a military tribunal, application of the death penalty in practice, absence of ethical principles, incomprehension of the mechanism that reproduces the function beyond the functionary.

There is therefore no illusion that these insights can actually change the deafness of those who do not want to hear.

Some Excerpts by Alfredo Bonanno on the Insurrectional Anarchic Project, Informal Organization, Affinity, Autonomous Base Nuclei, and Active Minorities

Excerpts of writings by Alfredo Maria Bonanno, as well as Jean Weir (some translations also by Jean Weir, some of which were in collaboration with John Moore and Leigh Stracross), the MAB – Turin, Tierra y Tempestad, and La Jauria de la Memoria. Collected together and reprinted by Reeking Thickets Press, Occupied Lenapehoking aka Philadelphia, May 2025, with **some (to our knowledge) previously untranslated sections crudely machine translated, with obvious errors checked for and fixed (such sections are certainly not definitive translations, someone should definitely do better translations!)** and some explanatory footnotes inserted. No authorization sought for this independent, anti-copyright project. All of the excerpted texts are worth reading in their entirety, and this is certainly not an exhaustive collection! **Where text from the original work has been excerpted, it will be marked with an ellipse in parentheses**. Reading and printing pdf available online at **reekingthicketspress.noblogs.org**. Limited physical copies available, email **reekingthickets@proton.me**. Typeset in Bitstream Charter. The painting on the cover is *The Fight Between Carnival and Lent* by Pieter Brueghel the Elder, 1559.

ity, armed struggle has been accused of being an exclusively political method, and therefore fictitious. Here too we are faced with an accusation that can easily be generalized to any method, to any kind of human action. I insist that a certain method cannot be accused of lacking reality, but only criticisms can be developed regarding its strategic applications. These strategic choices can be based on political elements that are so discriminating as to disqualify the social and revolutionary meanings of the method. There is no doubt, for example, that reforms constitute the strong element on which the social democratic management of power is based. For the same reason, there is no doubt that intermediate struggles can lend themselves to political instrumentalization. Yet they are struggles that are carried out and supported by many comrades and all the criticisms that concern them only address the dangers of their instrumentalization and do not go as far as to deny them as a method because they are politically contaminated. Unfortunately, in problems concerning armed struggle, unclear motivations are often at work, sometimes of a personal nature, which prevent an evaluation of the problem that is, if not entirely detached, at least sufficiently objective.

There has been a certain infantile component in some statements that assigned revolutionary primacy to organized violence, but this was a superficiality that needed to be explored in depth, avoiding the use of reciprocal poisonous and impractical jabs. On the one hand, a gratuitous extension of the need for liberating violence has developed that has ended up making the method of armed struggle central. On the other, in the attempt to criticize the paradoxical aspects of this centrality, the entire heritage of violent struggles of the revolutionary movement has been thrown overboard, concluding the journey on the beaches of pacifism or in the existential contradictions of an uncertain daily life. If there is no doubt that only by resorting to revolutionary violence will it be possible to attack the class enemy and put it in difficulty until it is defeated during the revolutionary event, in the same way there is no doubt that this recourse to violence does not imply the exclusion of other methods by privileging only one. And this is also because it is not true that violence is an exclusive prerogative of the method of armed struggle. Even information, theory, intermediate struggles can have a violent approach (that is, not be simply symbolic) and therefore propose themselves as a stimulus to a revolutionary awareness on the part of the exploited.

The attempt to kill one to educate a thousand has been defined as unrealistic. This thesis seems very correct to us. But the content of the action that aims to eliminate a class enemy does not simply end in this perspective. One certainly cannot pretend to "educate" the structure of the State. Even accelerating the process of eliminating some officials of the repressive and consensus-obtaining apparatus does not move the

reality much more seriously than one's own critical analysis.

The division between appearance and reality, between spectacle and class struggle, between real revolutionary action and fictitious armed opposition, can lead to conclusions of great interest, but it can also abort in meaningless alternatives. Nothing is totally white or totally black. These are problems of tendency, of orientation, of action directed towards a goal. The static contemplation of truth is not a positive attitude at all, it ends up destroying truth itself by transforming it into a symbol, an ideal model, a cemetery of action. It is not "reality" that qualifies the substance of a movement, but its disposition towards reality. But this movement is a transformation in progress, a revolutionary action that modifies the movement in a specific sense and the reality that receives the action produced by the movement. Imagining one of these two things as immobile or as complete, perfect in every detail, can be useful for analytical purposes, but it has little to do with the actual unfolding of social phenomena. When we speak of the "appearance" of armed struggle, of a fictitious and spectacular clash, when we accuse – rightly – armed organizations of having assumed the right to represent the struggling proletariat and of acting in the name of something that is a thousand miles away, we are speaking the truth. But even true things can be wrong, indeed they are often partially untrue, and it is precisely this aspect of partial truth that makes them interesting and useful to man. Absolutely true things are banal tautologies, repetitions that add nothing to the means we possess to understand and transform reality. But something that is partly true cannot be taken into consideration only for the true part, it must be taken into account for what it means as a whole: partly true and partly untrue. Thus, when we say that the armed struggle is a fictitious opposition to capital, we cannot deny that this is a statement that contains a part of truth, but is not totally true. It is true, in that the specific organization marks the limit to the free development of the self-organization of struggles, it is not true, in that in the face of a modest development of this self-organization it replaces it and, without actually managing to supplant it, it feeds a modest nucleus from which unthinkable developments can arise. This obviously only on condition that one does not fall into the ambiguities of the armed party and the capture of the Winter Palace.[19] Beyond these limits and these aberrations, the specific armed organization represents, in concrete terms, what the self-organization of proletarian struggles will never become, and it is good that it is so. Revolutionaries are a small light that disappears before the bright sun of proletarian struggles in their full development. But, in the lack of struggle, or when the sun is slow to rise, the small light is always better than nothing.

As a consequence of the distinction between appearance and real-

[19] *Editor's Note:* Bolshevik strategy of storming central authority.

Contents

Editor's Note

We do not intend to frame Alfredo Bonanno as some sort of mythical, revolutionary immortal with this collection, nor ourselves as any kind of privileged interpreter. It is not some detached intellectual fondness for decades-old European theoretical tracts passed through language barriers that leads us to feel these texts are relevant (though these ones do also please us to read). In fact, Bonanno's rigorous criticism of this kind of ideological abstraction goes far further than many of his loyal, straight-talking critics who profess this angle. Both positive and negative appraisals of the insurrectionary anarchist proposals often suffer from a lack of genuine engagement with some of its primary theoretical elaborations, including with Bonanno's work (though not only; our focus on him here doesn't mean to repeat the frequent misconception that the many other, even less examined thinkers and currents historically involved are somehow irrelevant to the genesis of contemporary libertarian insurrectionary approaches). Part of this is a relative lack of translations, the tendency Bonanno had to sometimes present his complicated, often ambivalent (we mean this in a positive sense) ideas in simplified or indirect ways when not specifically explicating each referenced idea, the way that concise yet in-depth explanations of these core concepts are found somewhat scattered throughout his very prolific output (throughout which he wrote in numerous, divergent styles and tones), and his use of terms with specific contextual meanings. The over-reliance on secondary sources about his thought helps determine a situation where his positions are often presented in shallow terms, more relevant to the popular *representation* of his theoretical body of work than its actual content (all the more elusive for his fierce hostility to pre-determined dogma). Sometimes the criticism, largely baseless to us, alleges it's too movementist and cautious, others find a concealed vanguardism, organizationalism, yet others that it's too spontaneist, or spectacular, massified, isolated from the masses, militarist, classically socialist, insufficiently anti-civ, obsessively anti-acronym, etc..[1] Bonanno was himself drawn into polemics with critics or mistaken supporters revolving around these phantom positions, sometimes seeming to anticipate misreadings and frame his wording with these in mind (which an 'opposite' misunderstanding could find apparent confirmation in). The acknowledgement of this confusion, coupled with the implicit assertions of the contemporary invalidity of any conflictual premises shaped in the Italian Years of Lead, is itself a frequent excuse for watered-down, movementist

[1] The half of a page long, final subsection in this collection, 'No Illusions', wonderfully encapsulates our feelings on many of these readings. On acronyms specifically though, we do share the sentiment of the anonymous author of 'Named groups and barbarous tongues', a short piece available elsewhere.

losing one. Even when it does not gain on the quantitative level, even when it does not "win" on the military level, it does not mean that it is a losing one on the revolutionary level. Otherwise, the critics and the 'wait-and-see' would reconfirm an equivalence between military effectiveness and revolutionary results that they themselves deny (rightly) in principle. If anything, the inverse logic is a losing one, the one that teaches waiting, procrastination, compromise, camouflage. The political chair from which this sermon comes is too compromised to provide reliable indications.

No one imagines that the proletariat will let itself be dragged into a conspiratorial dimension. Attempts at armed struggle must be wary of this prospect. The self-organization of struggles is an active, bursting daily routine, a creativity of subversive action, an unrepeatable confrontation that finds no models to rest on or canons to respect. The revolutionary action of a minority, faced with this prospective spread, must deal with a wait that threatens to become too long. It cannot drown in a long-term accumulation effort, at the risk of making its own discourse incomprehensible, at the risk of being lumped together with the endless chatter that the metaphysical owls of militant politics transmit in the deepest night. It must go against the current. Go back to the source of an antagonistic movement that threatens to rest on its own possibilities. All this does not mean – even if it has been wrongly stated – a Leninist vision of the revolutionary struggle. Nor does it mean a vain educationalism applied to the proletariat as a whole through the method of armed struggle. It means, more simply, building the specific anarchist organization, amidst a thousand contradictions, to push the exploited to revolt. This can be achieved in many ways, therefore also through recourse to armed struggle. If there were a reason so well founded as to definitively demonstrate the impracticability of this method, the same reason would forever seal the tombstone on the revolutionary struggle as a whole, as it would demonstrate, at the same time, the impracticability of any other method.

It is a serious limitation to reduce armed conflict to the fight between rival gangs. And not only for those who enclose themselves within an acronym and from this cocoon pretend to instill fear in the State. Even those who criticize this partial vision do not make an effort to identify the reasons that generated the error, so they happily conclude, throwing up their arms, that the failure of the method is now inevitable. The former defend their own practice and, often, are also pathetic in their musings about theories that have very little to do with revolutionary self-organization, the latter are in bad faith, having no intention of contributing to reducing the errors of revolutionary action, but only want to isolate a behavior that they identify as dangerous and implicating for their personal tranquility and for their theoretical uniformity. The practical errors of others can upset the waters of one's way of interpreting

theory and not accept the limits of certain objective needs. In this way a polemic of the deaf develops. Clandestinity is not one of the essential prerogatives of the armed struggle, indeed it constitutes one of the negative aspects often determined by the conditions of the conflict. It can never be considered a privileged situation. If anything, the privileged condition would be that of active daily life, of complete revolutionary commitment in a situation characterized by open social "status".

This does not mean that the armed organization must not be clandestine, and that a rigorous clandestinity of the organization should correspond to an active daily life of all participants. They are open doors that it would not be necessary to break down but that, given the great quantity of people who insist on banging their heads against them, are worth opening once and for all.

The same discourse full of misunderstandings often develops with regard to active everyday life, therefore also armed. We can reject – and rightly so – the clichés of Jacobin[18] conspiracy, but we cannot rely on the occasionalism of everyday life, especially when it begins with so much good will and then gets bogged down in the privatistic labyrinth, in small concessions to an ideal of life that if perhaps were Epicurean to the core, at least would have the recognition of the primordial nature of the needs of the individual as real, and instead is nothing more than a revisitation of the same old story. A reactionary respectability is opposed by a progressive respectability. The colors, the languages, the stereotypes change. The immobility of the logic of adaptation remains intact. We can delude ourselves into changing the world by taking up a machine gun and ending up in a cell brooding over the mistakes we have made without getting to the bottom of them, and we can delude ourselves into changing the world by taking up the problems of our daily lives, ending up up to our necks in survival. Standing around excoriating each other over who is right, while mistakes pile up on both sides, does not lead to positive conclusions.

No one wants, by definition, to make the revolution in place of the proletariat. With all this, there are many who are tired of waiting for the world to rise up so that they too can rise up. There are many who believe that you have to start somewhere and that, even alone, you are always able to do something to attack the enemy. This logic is not a

[18] *Editor's Note*: The Jacobin Club was an exclusive, vanguardist left-wing political group during the French Revolution which advocated a strong revolutionary dictatorship, secularism, and market economics, and was allied with segments of the *sans-culottes*, the popular, working-class rebels, while supporting far more conservative goals and methods than their more radical rivals, the '*enragés*', the poor rebels who continued to push amid the compromised 'revolutionary' bourgeois order for a more radical, egalitarian, and less elitist vision. The Jacobins carried out and are closely linked with the bloody guillotinings of Robespierre and the 'Reign of Terror', and were an important inspiration for the later Marxist-Leninist and Bolshevik conceptions of the vanguard party/revolutionary state, the vanguardist insurrectionism of Louis Blanqui, and for Mussolini.

readings, or to dismiss his positions *a priori*. In fact, we also live, in a different way, in bloody times, and the lack of a current Western analog for the Red Brigades (besides the vicarious would-be models of Palestinian authoritarian formations) could just as well argue for a reading *less* weighted towards emphasis of the pitfalls of armed struggle. In this situation and more generally, relevant insurrectionary analysis often appears split between very introductory treatments and highly elaborated, niche levels, subject to layers and layers of strongly diverging interpretation.

We hope to evade some of these snags, and feel that the material in this collection is far from another stale debate of the organizational question, and holds real, critical relevance from multiple angles for some contemporary impasses, transmitting, still, a powerfully fresh and possibilizing potential. Much will hopefully be at least somewhat new here for even those well-versed in current discussions, and, read alongside the anonymous classic *At Daggers Drawn With the Existent, Its Defenders, and Its False Critics*, and *Armed Joy* – also by Bonanno, we feel this collection can offer a very solid, well-rounded overview for readers unfamiliar with insurrectionary anarchist positions.

From Riot to Insurrection: Analysis for an anarchist perspective against post-industrial capitalism (Excerpts)

By Alfredo Bonanno. Introduction and translation by Jean Weir. Published by Elephant Editions 1988. Digitalized and put on the Internet 2004.

Introduction

There can be little doubt left anywhere on the planet that a fundamental change is taking place in the organisation of production. This change is most obvious and most felt in the centres of advanced capitalism, but the logic of information technology and decentralised production is now reaching what were once remote peripheral areas, drawing them into an artificial communitarianism whose only real common element is exploitation.

In the "western world" the traditional worker, cornerstone of the authoritarian revolutionary thesis and still a principle element in many anarchist ones, is being tossed out of the grey graveyards of docks, factories and mines, into the coloured graveyards of home-videos, brightly lit job-centres, community centres, multi-ethnic creches[2], etc., in the

[2] *Editor's Note*: A 'creche' is a child-care center, and also commonly refers to the perfor-

muraled ghettos.

As unemployment is coming to be accepted as a perspective of non-employment, capital continues to refine its instruments and direct investment to areas more befitting to its perennial need for expansion. Production of consumer goods is now realised by an intercontinental team of robots, small self-exploiting industries, and domestic labour, in many cases that of children.

The trade unions are at an ebb, and the parties of the left are creeping further to the right as areas for wage claims and social reform are disappearing from the electoral map. What is emerging instead are wide areas of progressive "democratic dissent" in political, social and religious terms: pacifism, ecologism, vegetarianism, mysticism, etc. This "dissenting consensus" sees its most extreme expression in the proposals of "delegitimisation" and "deregulation" by a privileged intellectual strata that reasons exclusively in terms of its own rights.

An ideal society, it might seem, from capital's point of view, with social peace as one of its prime objectives today; or so it would be, this "self-managed" capitalist utopia, were it not for the threat coming from outside the landscaped garden. From the ghetto areas, no longer confined to the Brixton, Toxteth model, but which take many forms: the mining village of the north, the gigantic, gloomy labyrinths of council estates in urban complexes, many of them already no-go areas to police and other forces of repression, and other ever widening areas which until recently housed secure well-paid skilled and white collar workers, are on their way to becoming new ghettos. The ghettos of the future, however, will not necessarily be geographically circumscribed, as the hotbeds of unrest are farmed out to bleak and manageable dimensions, but will be culturally defined, through their lack of means of communication with the rest of capitalist society.

The presence of these ever widening ghettos and the message that is crying out from them is the main flaw in the new capitalist perspective. There are no mediators. There is no space for the reformist politicians of the past, just as there is none for the essentially reformist revolutionaries of the old workerist structures, real or imaginary. The cry is a violent one that asks for nothing. The mini riots or explosions that are now common occurrences, especially in this country,[3] do not have rational demands to make. They are not the means to an end like the bread riots of the past. They have become something in themselves, an irrational thrusting out, often striking easily identifiable targets of repression (police stations, vehicles, schools, government offices, etc.), but not necessarily so. Violence in the football stadiums cannot be excluded from this logic.

mance of a Nativity scene representing the birth of Jesus.

[3] *Editor's Note:* Referring to the UK.

tervention, where he will be able to make his contribution, perhaps less significant, but certainly not less important. Moreover, it will be precisely this overcoming of the sectoral activity that will guarantee that collaboration between different methods that allows a series of interactions that are completely impossible in a rigidly sclerotic perspective.

Therefore, organizational projects mean the coexistence of multiple interests, the meeting of individual and collective affinities, the materialization of ideas and intuitions, enthusiasms and knowledge in programs and analyses. Thinking of the organization as a hermetically sealed envelope, all the more hermetically the more it contains programs and ideas regarding the armed struggle, is a humble and codist habituation to the traditional places of the armed party, a repetition of conspiracy models that are now out of date. But the opposite of all this does not mean confusion, wishful thinking, spontaneity, rejection of any structure, of any self-discipline. Here we repeat the misunderstanding that many people have of anarchist thought. Imagined as the absolute dominion of light-heartedness, anarchy, in the light of the facts, is something quite different. Joy is not synonymous with stupidity, just as creation does not mean rejection of all previous knowledge. Self-discipline is the recognition of the need to undergo an effort to obtain a result that is considered important. Only with our will can we obtain that result, bending the obstacles that separate us from it. And these obstacles are not only walls to be torn down or cops to be kept from causing harm, but can also be problems of a personal nature, such as, for example, an inability to put our programs, our ideas, our gestures in order: a dispersive tendency to improvise, to the immediately pleasant, to the superficial, a fear of commitment, of in-depth analysis, of the hardness of the task that lies before us. All this is part of the problem of specific organization as it is part of human life. We cannot erase it just because we think it is easier to continue chatting about the beauty and spontaneity of anarchy. (...)

Of some open doors

Breaking open doors makes a lot of noise but produces little results. For those who are more interested in noise, the operation can have positive aspects.

Let's take the debate on "clandestinity". Those who find themselves in a situation like this are often led to imagine theoretical justifications originating from the needs of the class conflict. It seems a little reductive to them to simply admit that clandestinity is a contingent fact, linked to precise individual and group conditions, and not a fact that can be placed on a higher step of a hypothetical scale of revolutionary values. On the other hand, those who rightly criticize this choice as a theoretical fact are not capable of admitting it as an inevitable consequence of certain situations. They prefer to continue criticizing the

group, one does not understand much whether one stops at the acronym or the flag.

On such a problem, the mistakes made in the past can be avoided in the future, as many birds and vultures that squawk while perched on the highest branches of the tree continue to deny. Likewise, the criticisms, more or less well-founded, of many vultures certainly do not indicate the presence of a corpse. A criticism is a criticism. It is enough to take it into consideration without listening to the moral embellishments that the good heart of the critic loves to distribute here and there.

Of course, the specific organization is a tool that has several dangerous points, but the same thing is true for many other tools. Information used badly has the opposite effect and produces more harm than good. Theory, if it is incapable of going beyond the abstract moment of analysis, suffocates itself with academic clothes and becomes support and varnish for repression. Intermediate struggles, not channeled towards a progressive growth of revolutionary consciousness, translate into easy morsels for democrats and transformists. Dynamite can explode in the hands of those who do not know how to use it. Not having criteria for certain techniques, superficially agreeing to the use of certain tools, without appropriate preparation, thinking, light-heartedly, that one is a bearer of revolutionary truth, so that whatever one does one must necessarily be understood, all this leads to blindness of action, to approximate amateurism, to painful disillusionments, to discouragement, to defeat.

Here we do not want to sing a hymn to specialization, on the contrary the defects of the maniacal closure of techniques are in first place among the negative aspects of specific organizations. But we want to affirm that everything must be done according to certain realities, certain techniques. Ignoring them on purpose, or out of unconscious superficiality, is not an answer to the defects of specialization, but simple foolishness.

An intelligent and sensitive comrade must possess sufficient qualities that enable him to use, in the best possible way, all the methods that the long and painful history of the revolutionary movement places at his disposal. If he is a good journalist, and this skill specializes in the processing of information, in the editing of newspapers, radio, leaflets, etc., he must do everything to also take an interest in other methods, inserting them into the scope of the strategic project in which he is involved. He must do this even at the risk of seeing the specialization that he had ended up acquiring in the sector in which he was master of all the problems and all the tools lapse. Specialization is fought by broadening the field of revolutionary interests, not by inviting amateurism and approximation. Of course, that comrade will always remain fundamentally a journalist, because such will be his individual characteristics, but his new interests will lead him towards other sectors of methodological in-

Anarchists, since the first major riots—Bristol, Brixton, Toxteth, Broadwater Farm—have seen these events in a positive light, often joining in and contributing a number of extra bricks in the direction of police lines. Anarchist journals exalt these moments of mass insurgence, yet at the same time (the same papers) provide organisational proposals which, if they might have been valid at the beginning of the century or in the ‘thirties, certainly bear no resemblance to the needs of the present day. The best the most updated ones can offer, using the riots as their point of reference, is to create a specific movement of anarchists with the aim of instilling some revolutionary morality into these patently amoral events. Once again the poverty of our analytical capacity comes to bear. (...)

For an analysis of a period of change. From post-industrial illusions to post-revolutionary ones

Changes in society

In the evolution of social contradictions over the past few years, certain tendencies have become so pronounced that they can now be considered as real changes.

The structure of domination has shifted from straightforward arbitrary rule to a relationship based on adjustment and compromise. This has led to a considerable increase in demand for services compared to such traditional demands as durable consumer goods. The results have been an increase in those aspects of production based on information technology, the robotisation of the productive sector, and the preeminence of the services sector (commerce, tourism, transport, credit, insurance, public administration, etc.) over industry and agriculture.

This does not mean that the industrial sector has disappeared or become insignificant; only that it will employ fewer and fewer workers while levels of production remain the same, or even improve. The same is true of agriculture, which will be greatly affected by the process of industrialisation, and distinguishable from industry in statistical rather than social terms.

This situation is developing more as a “transition”, not something that is cut and dried, but as a trend. There is no distinct separation between the industrial and post-industrial periods. The phase we are passing through is clearly one of surpassing the obsolete institutions that are being restructured; but it has not yet reached the closure of all factories and the establishment of a reign of computerised production. (...)

Islands of lost men

Torn from the factories in a slow and perhaps irreversible process, yesterday's workers are being thrown into a highly competitive atmosphere. The aim is to increase productive capacity, the only consumable product according to the computerised logic of the centres of production. The atomised (and even more deadly) conflicts within capital itself will extinguish the alternative, revolutionary struggle, with the intention of exacerbating class differences and rendering them unbridgeable.

The most important gains for the inhabitants of the productive "islands", their seemingly greater "freedom", the flexible working hours, the qualitative changes (always within the competitive logic of the market as directed by the order-giving centres) reinforce the belief that they have reached the promised land: the reign of happiness and well-being. Ever increased profits and ever more exacerbated "creativity".

These islands of death are surrounded by ideological and physical barriers, to force those who have no place on them back into a tempestuous sea where no one survives.

So the problem revealing itself is precisely that of the *excluded*.

Two reservoirs of the revolution

The *excluded* and the *included*.

The first are those who will remain marginalised. Expelled from the productive process and penalised for their incapacity to insert themselves into the new competitive logic of capital, they are often not prepared to accept the minimum levels of survival assigned to them by State assistance (increasingly seen as a relic of the past in a situation that tends to extol the virtues of the "self-made man"). These will not just be the social strata condemned to this role through their ethnic origin—today, for example, the West Indians in British society, catalysts of the recent riots in that country—but with the development of the social change we are talking about, social strata which in the past were lulled by secure salaries and now find themselves in a situation of rapid and radical change, will also participate. Even the residual supports that these social strata benefit from (early pensions, unemployment benefit, various kinds of social security, etc.) will not make them accept a situation of growing discrimination. And let us not forget that the degree of consumerism of these expelled social strata cannot be compared to that of the ethnic groups who have never been brought into the sphere of salaried security. This will surely lead to explosions of "social ill-being" of a different kind, and it will be up to revolutionaries to unite these with the more elementary outbreaks of rebellion.

Then there are the *included*, those who will remain suffocating on the islands of privilege. Here the argument threatens to become more

tionships, actions, contacts with the outside, and the diffusion of the strategic project. Only in a subordinate and parallel form can quantitative development be brought to life, which, in turn, will give qualitative consequences of considerable importance. One must not exceed in either direction: neither in the quantitative direction, deluding oneself that only afterwards can creative and qualitative processes be brought to life, nor in the qualitative direction, deluding oneself that quantity is a fact that necessarily follows the fine qualitative intentions. The apparent contradiction becomes substantial only when the method is not considered in its global conception. Even in the application of the information method, even in the analysis, even in the intermediate struggle, aspects of the armed struggle method are often proposed and implemented, but it will certainly not be the numerical objective that one wants to pursue. The "cut" chosen in providing information, the use of certain interventions that can be defined as "harder" in intermediate struggles, the clarity of certain analyses, are qualitative stimuli for awareness, creative contributions to a quantitative growth that is foreseen in the future but which certainly cannot be considered entirely superfluous.

The two things must therefore be wisely interpenetrated. From the reciprocal relationship emerge those essential developments that can be read exclusively in quantitative or qualitative terms. (...)

A possible organizational project

(...) Let us say right away that we do not consider the method of armed struggle under a privileged angle, but we keep it in mind as one method among others, capable of giving its own contribution to the revolutionary project, provided that it is within a strategy capable of applying different methods in different combinations.

But we also say, and with the same firmness, that just as it is necessary – for the anarchist movement as a whole – to give itself the best structures of information, analysis and intermediate struggle, so it is necessary to give itself a structure of armed struggle.

It follows that if information structures need printing houses, newspapers, publishing houses, etc., if theoretical structures need books, editorial series, studies and study centres, if intermediate struggles need intervention groups, organised presences in factories, social centres in neighbourhoods, struggle structures in schools, etc., in the same way the armed struggle needs means and its own organisation.

From an objective point of view, looking at this last organization, one cannot see its real difference from other similar organizations, set up by authoritarians. But the same goes for a printing house or an intervention structure. Passing in front of the door of a neighborhood

other forces. Generally it is these forces that blatantly exploit the propagandistic thrust of the anarchists' work, inserting motions, exploiting the press, giving the impression that they are the only presence capable of doing something against power. The anarchists have meanwhile returned to their headquarters to ask themselves why this time too they have not managed to prevent a political encroachment on their initiative, but deep down they are ready and available for any future request for collaboration. It is clear that in these things you cannot stop halfway. Once started, they must be carried forward, preventing, even with political means, attempts at abuse. After all, we too can draft a motion in time, before the Stalinists get their hands on it, and we too, especially once we are among the organizers of the demonstration, can impose that the motion pass at the end of the conference or meeting, without feeling dirtier or more compromised than when we began the work together with other left-wing political groups. By leaving aside these problems that are mistakenly considered marginal, believing, in good faith, that they are useless compromises, we risk losing the fruit of the intermediate work, of appearing, in the eyes of the proletariat, the accidental traveling companions of political formations more organized than us. In this way the idea of the indispensable leadership of the party is reaffirmed among the exploited, the Stalinists are helped in their quantitative task, on the one hand what on the other had been tried to build is destroyed. There is no need to be afraid of getting one's hands dirty by resorting to the method of intermediate struggle, as long as one maintains, in the application of the various strategies, a clarity on the aims of the anarchists, opposed to the deceptions of professional politicians and the risks of the authoritarian project. And the anarchist aims can also be achieved without retreating in the dispute with the political rogues of the authoritarian alignments.

4) In the clandestine armed struggle one cannot expect everything to be entrusted to the improvisation and spontaneity of the individual or of very small groups. The method is extremely complex and lends itself to applications of great importance within strategic perspectives in which other methods also intervene. From sabotage and individual action, or that of a very small group, autonomous in all respects and detached from operational contacts with other comrades or groups, one arrives at an organizational agreement on a fairly broad level, capable of involving dozens of groups and hundreds of comrades. What is important to note here is that the qualitative development of armed revolutionary action certainly enters into contradiction with certain of its indispensable quantitative needs. Certainly one cannot achieve much if one is very few. But one must not think that only numerical growth permits a strategically correct use of the method of armed struggle. In general, what should be sought in the organizational moment is the creative development of ideas, theories, analyses, interpersonal rela-

complicated and can only be clearly situated if one is prepared to give credit to man and his real need for freedom. Almost certainly it is the "homecomers" from this sector who will be among the most merciless executants of the attack on capital in its new form. We are going towards a period of bloody clashes and very harsh repression. Social peace, dreamt of on one side and feared by the other, remains the most inaccessible myth of this new capitalist utopia, heir to the "pacific" logic of liberalism which dusted the drawing room while it butchered in the kitchen, giving welfare at home and massacring in the colonies.

The new opportunities for small, miserable, loathsome daily liberties will be paid for by profound, cruel and systematic discrimination against vast social strata. Sooner or later this will lead to the growth of a consciousness of exploitation inside the privileged strata, which cannot fail to cause rebellions, even if only limited to the best among them. Finally, it should be said that there is no longer a strong ideological support for the new capitalist perspective such as existed in the past, capable of giving support to the exploiters and, more important still, to the intermediate layers of cadres. Wellbeing for the sake of it is not enough, especially for the many groups of people who, in the more or less recent past, have experienced or simply read about liberatory utopias, revolutionary dreams and attempts, however limited, at insurrectional projects.

The latter will lose no time in reaching the others. Not all the *included* will live blissfully in the artificial happiness of capital. Many of them will realise that the misery of one part of society poisons the appearance of wellbeing of the rest, and turns freedom (within the barbed wire fences) into a virtual prison. (...)

The end of irrational competition

(...) The new productive process—which has often been defined post-industrial—makes low production costs possible even for small quantities of goods; can obtain considerable modifications in production with only modest capital injections; makes hitherto unseen changes to products possible. This opens up undreamt of horizons of "freedom" to the middle classes, to the productive cadres, and within the golden isolation of the managerial classes. But this is rather like the freedom of the castle for those Teutonic knights of the Nazi kind. Encircled by the mansion walls, armed to the teeth, only the peace of the graveyard reigns within.

None of the makers of the ideologies of post-industrial capitalism have asked themselves what to do about the danger that will come from the other side of the walls.

The riots of the future will become ever more bloody and terrible. Even more so when we know how to transform them into mass insurrections.

Consciousness and ghettoisation

It will not be unemployment as such to negatively define those to be excluded from the castle of Teutonic knights, but principally the lack of real access to information.

The new model of production will of necessity reduce the availability of information. This is only partly due to the computerisation of society. It is one of the basic conditions of the new domination and as such has been developing for at least twenty years, finding its climax in a mass schooling that is already devoid of any concrete operative content.

Just as the coming of machines caused a reduction in the capacity for self-determination during the industrial revolution, trooping the mass of workers into factories, destroying peasant culture and giving capital a work force who were practically incapable of "understanding" the contents of the new mechanised world that was beginning to loom up; so now the computer revolution, grafted to the process of adjustment of capitalist contradictions by the State, is about to deliver the factory proletariat into the hands of a new kind of machinery that is armed with a language that will be comprehensible to only a privileged few. The remainder will be chased back and obliged to share the sort of the ghetto.

The old knowledge, even that filtered from the intellectuals through the deforming mirror of ideology, will be coded in a machine language and rendered compatible with the new needs. This will be one of the historic occasions for discovering, among other things, the scarcity of real content in the ideological gibberish that has been administered to us over the past two centuries.

Capital will tend to abandon everything not immediately translatable into this new generalised language. Traditional educative processes will become devalued and diminish in content, unveiling their real (and selective) substance as merchandise.

In the place of language new canons of behaviour will be supplied, formed from fairly precise rules, and mainly developed from the old processes of democratisation and assembly, which capital has learned to control perfectly. This will be doubly useful as it will also give the excluded the impression that they are "participating" in public affairs.

The computerised society of tomorrow could even have clean seas and an "almost" perfect safeguarding of the limited resources of the environment, but it will be a jungle of prohibitions and rules, of nightmare in the form of deep personal decisions about participating in the common good. Deprived of a language of common reference, the ghettoised will no longer be able to read between the lines of the messages of power, and will end up having no other outlet than spontaneous riot, irrational and destructive, an end in itself.

The collaboration of those members of the included, disgusted with

information tools, we must necessarily pass the contributions coming from outside through the sieve of a revolutionary critique, so as to give them a more suitable position within what is our strategy, avoiding – as far as possible – that this intervention transforms itself into a radical deformation of the information itself. In a word, our work will always be a "partisan" work and can never claim to arrive at pure "objectivity" without denying itself as information.

2) In the theoretical development of our analyses we must strive to account for how things are and not how they should be. This last aspect, on which we often dwell out of an innate love for utopia, must necessarily be secondary to the more urgent and primary analysis, based on the evaluation of reality, however praiseworthy and of great sentimental significance our push towards a merely imagined future may be. It is clear that to carry out this work, and even just to understand it when it is carried out by other comrades, we must equip ourselves with some tools that are developed by capital and that find free circulation in the circles of power. We will be forced to engage in mere coffee-table chatter if we do not possess today some fundamental notions of economics (and perhaps something more than a few notions). The *a priori* refusal to study in depth some tools: economics, history, philosophy, state administration, public finance, business techniques, etc., has no revolutionary foundation, but lies in an incorrect interpretation of the destructive moment advocated by anarchism.

3) In intermediate struggles, anarchists often present themselves with a thousand reluctances. Their basic purity leads them to have bad dreams. They imagine themselves compromised in relationships that are not always clean with other political forces, that they cannot compete with these forces on the level of partial motivations, on the level of demands, ending up at the mercy of political sophisms. All this blocks many initiatives at the sole stage of informational push. Once this is done, one stops, trusting in the clarity of the anarchist discourse, in the evidence of the need to refuse delegation, in the impossibility that after so many negative experiences one continues to deceive oneself about the role that political forces play as support for capital and the State. Then one is surprised and almost indignant at the fact that the proletariat does not have clear ideas, does not easily understand why delegation should ever be done without and continues, as always, to be deceived by the political craftsmen. These tragicomic situations are very evident in public debates, conferences and demonstrations organized together with the so-called left-wing political forces, more or less revolutionary. The anarchists start out with great good will, they bend over backwards to organize the demonstration (usually those forces live off the anarchists), they carry out their informative task with precision and clarity (flyers, posters, interventions, rallies, conferences, etc.), then they stop. They leave the political use of the demonstration to the

The problem of strategy

In the field of revolutionary dreams, the value of the attack strategy is clearly secondary. We delude ourselves that truth must necessarily triumph over lies. Like the Christian martyrs, we do not retreat in the face of danger. We move forward headlong, putting our conscience at peace, holding high the torch of ideological purity, but often remaining distant from the reality of the clash.

The proletarians, the exploited in general, the sub-proletarian strata that suffer from very acute aspects of oppression, do not have clear ideas. The equation of exploitation = clarity is not true at all. You can live your whole life with chains around your neck, dragging yourself along with difficulty, without realizing who has closed the padlock. It is not easy to emphasize this point sufficiently. Words are not enough. Nor is information. At least, they are not enough by themselves. We need to develop struggles, even intermediate and long-term ones. We need to have very clear strategic projects, capable of allowing the use of the different methods available, in a coordinated and fruitful way.

As anarchists we pursue the goal of the qualitative growth of the movement and support its self-organization. In this we oppose ourselves to the authoritarians and Stalinists, who support a massively quantitative growth, based on control and centralization (so-called democratic). But this position of ours cannot be placed in the arms of a vain strategy of waiting. That is, we cannot wait indefinitely for the tendency to self-organization to develop in the proletariat and the exploited masses, with all its necessary qualitative and creative premises. We must have a more direct and even more heavy-handed impact. We must also act as a specific minority, taking on the task of bringing to fruition actions that the exploited alone, at a given level of the class conflict, cannot develop. Otherwise, we would deliver ourselves, and with us the proletariat itself, into the hands of the Stalinists.

Let's take some examples:

1) In the elaboration of information we must pursue the project of a transmission as close to reality as possible, so as to avoid an ideological re-elaboration, even if it is our ideological re-elaboration. But we cannot for this reason rely on the initiative of the exploited, by opening, for example, the information tools that we are creating, to their spontaneous use. It would be a colossal failure. We would put into circulation a horrendous mixture of clichés, chatter, maximalisms without head or tail, coffee-house discussions. We must take care of drafting our own

police, army, judiciary, prisons, torturers, intelligence agencies etc., directed at those who attempt to take back what's been stolen from them as a warning to everyone, sometimes also employing the use of far-right forces, mafiosi, and professional assassins, as well as organizations normally intended for other activities such as unions, parties, political movements, schools, hospitals, cultural structures, newspapers, television, etc.

the artificial freedom of capital, who become revolutionary carriers of an albeit small part of this technology which they have managed to snatch from capital, will not be enough to build a bridge or supply a language on which to base knowledge and accurate counter-information.

The organised work of future insurrections must solve this problem, must build—perhaps starting from scratch—the basic terms of a communication that is about to be closed off; and which, precisely in the moment of closure, could give life, through spontaneous and uncontrolled reactions, to such manifestations of violence as to make past experiences pale into insignificance. (...)

End of reformism, end of the party

The party is based on the reformist hypothesis. This requires a community of language, if not of interest. That happened with parties and also with trade unions. Community of language translated itself into a fictitious class opposition that was characterised by a request for improvements on the one hand, and resistance to conceding them on the other.

To ask for something requires a language "in common" with whoever has what we are asking for.

Now the global repressive project is aimed at breaking up this community. Not with the walls of special prisons, ghettoes, satellite cities or big industrial centres; but, on the contrary, by decentralising production, improving services, applying ecological principles to production, all with the most absolute segregation of the excluded.

And this segregation will be obtained by progressively depriving them of the language that they possessed in common with the rest of society.

There will be nothing left to ask.

The dumb excluded

In an era that could still be defined industrial, consensus was based on the possibility of participating in the benefits of production. In an era where capital's capacity to change is practically infinite, the capital/State duo will require a language of its own, separate from that of the excluded in order to best achieve its new perspective.

The inaccessibility of the dominant language will become a far more effective means of segregation than the traditional confines of the ghetto. The increasing difficulty in attaining the dominant language will gradually make it become absolutely "other". From that moment it will disappear from the desires of the excluded and remain ignored by them. From that moment on the included will be "other" for the excluded and vice versa.

This process of exclusion is essential to the repressive project. Fundamental concepts of the past, such as solidarity, communism, revolution, anarchy, based their validity on the common recognition of the concept of equality. But for the inhabitants of the castle of Teutonic knights the excluded will not be men, but simply things, objects to be bought or sold in the same way as the slaves were for our predecessors.

We do not feel equality towards the dog, because it limits itself to barking, it does not "speak" our language. We can be fond of it, but necessarily feel it to be "other", and we do not spare much thought for its kind, at least not at the level of all dogs, preferring to attach ourselves to the dog that provides us with its obedience, affection, or its fierceness towards our enemies.

A similar process will take place in relation to all those who do not share our language. Here we must not confuse language with "tongue". Our progressive and revolutionary tradition has taught us that all men are equal over and above differences of mother tongue. We are speaking here of a possible repressive development that would deprive the excluded of the very possibility of communicating with the included. By greatly reducing the utility of the written word, and gradually replacing books and newspapers with images, colours and music, for example, the power structure of tomorrow could construct a language aimed at the excluded alone. (...)

Cut off from the language of the included, the excluded will also be cut off from their new technology. Perhaps they will live in a better, more desirable world, with less danger of apocalyptic conflicts, and eventually, less economically caused tension. But there will be an increase in irrational tension.

From the most peripheral areas of the planet, where in spite of "real time" the project of exploitation will always meet obstacles of an ethnic or geographical nature, to the more central areas where class divisions are more rigid, economically based conflict will give way to conflictuality of an irrational nature.

In their projects of control the included are aiming at general consensus by reducing the economic difficulties of the excluded. They could supply them with a prefabricated language to allow a partial and sclerotised use of some of the dominant technology. They could also allow them a better quality of life. But they will not be able to prevent the outbursts of irrational violence that arise from feeling useless, from boredom and from the deadly atmosphere of the ghetto.

For example in Britain, always a step ahead in the development of capital's repressive projects, it is already possible to see the beginning of this tendency. The State certainly does not guarantee survival, there is an incredible amount of poverty and unemployment, but the riots that regularly break out there are started by young people—especially West Indian—who know they are definitively cut off from a world that

struggle, even partial and limited, that information and theories first find their possible and exact understanding by the proletariat. On a purely theoretical level they would remain forever devoid of meaning. It is in the struggle, even partial, that class consciousness is formed and grows. It is in the struggle, even rear-guard, for the defense of certain rights or conquests already achieved, that one prepares for a possible rise in the level of the conflict.

4) Armed struggle, which summarizes the violent methodology of attack against the State, its organizations, its structures, its men, its wealth, its projects. The fact that this method often gives substance to the strategies corresponding to the highest levels of social conflict does not mean that it can be considered a "higher" or more efficient or more revolutionary method of struggle. It is simply a different method, which has its own characteristics, limits and merits, but which cannot be placed in a higher place in a hypothetical and never defined revolutionary scale of values. Certain levels of consciousness push a proletarian to distribute a leaflet in front of a factory, other levels push him to take up a gun to take back what has been stolen from him, to shoot a policeman or a magistrate, to punish a guilty party, an executor of the State's terrorist project, a spy, or, still other levels push him to attack a factory, to sabotage its production, to damage its products, still others, finally, push him to associate with proletarians in the same situation, men and women aware of the need to develop together and with a minimum of coordination an attack against the class enemy.

Each of these methods does not exclude the other, on the contrary, they interpenetrate and support each other. From this it is clear that it is never possible to clearly identify a precise moment in which one must resort to the use of a certain method, but, all together, they must be used and can bear fruit, within the limits and perspectives in which the various strategies allow the realization of these fruits.[17]

[17] *Editor's Note:* This section mirrors the immediately preceding section in the original, un-excerpted text – 'Repressive Strategies and Methods', which is likewise divided into four main groups of techniques used by the forces of order, which are employed flexibly and simultaneously to varying degrees depending on conditions and the needs of power, with important reciprocal connections. These are outlined as, **(1) information controlled by power:** the mass-media as well as the mechanisms of democratic or social-pacifying political, cultural, economic, and personal illusions of agency, choice, and consensus, **(2) differentiated education of the different social classes:** schooling, as well as the broader, continuous crafting of worldviews and ethical values which reaffirms and inculcates controlled information in the masses as well as in smaller minorities, including ideals of democracy as well as nationalism among many other mental structures, **(3) reform of the conditions of exploitation:** the continuous adjustments and compromises with the oppressed that the whole-in-motion of power makes on the political, economic, and social level which even the most tyrannical regimes employ to some degree, and is used to an exceptional degree by modern democracies, mixing repression and reformism, and which is preferable to those in power given the unsustainable nature of absolute repression, **(4) terrorist repression of any behavior contrary to the codified norm:** from widespread social disapproval of 'deviant' values to organized legal or 'extralegal' terrorism by the

of illusions. At a low level of the conflict, when large sections of the proletariat remain distant from wage-labor, when capital has enough capacity to entrust itself to the irrational laws of the market, the revolutionary strategy will certainly be that of strengthening the organizations of the movement, of penetrating the various sectors of the world of work and unemployment, among workers and laborers, students and housewives. At a higher level of social conflict, the strategy of capital shows signs of instability: the State intervenes heavily to correct the intolerable conditions of incapacity in the capitalist management of the economy, at a level in which the terrorist repression of the State increases and the possibilities of work and well-being are reduced (however fictitious it may be), the revolutionary strategy will be oriented towards an intensification of the armed attack and therefore towards a growth and a progressive qualification of the armed organizations that operate in clandestinity.

Within these two directions – which do not exclude each other, but rather support each other – different strategic choices develop which, in turn, specify the profound and decisive differentiation that lies within the revolutionary alignment: the anarchist tendency towards the quality of the struggle and towards its self-organisation, and the authoritarian tendency towards the quantity of the struggle and towards its centralisation.

The methods underlying the various revolutionary strategies can be divided into four orientations:

1) Free information, as close as possible to the reality of the facts, transmitted directly from the event to the user, without distorting interventions of a political or ideological nature. Of course, this statement constitutes an ideal that is often unattainable, but the method of information must tend to this maximum perfection, transmitting, as much as possible, contents of real facts, making known the different realities, in order to avoid them being irremediably distorted by the information controlled by power.

2) Theory on the conditions of social conflict. An analysis that provides reflections on the facts is essential, to better focus them and frame them within a broader context. This second methodological moment serves to better understand the information, to make it speak, to tear it away from its mute context that makes it dangerously resemble the criminally false information spread by those in power.

3) The intermediate struggle, which involves revolutionaries even in partial aspects of the social conflict: in schools, factories, barracks, neighborhoods, in the countryside. Individually, each struggle of this type has all the credentials to be reabsorbed by the other side and, often, contributes to fortifying the very bases of exploitation, correcting its irrational aspects. However, it cannot be said that they are rear-guard struggles, or losing ones, or to be considered reformist. It is in the

is already strange to them, from which they can borrow a few objects or ways of doing things, but where they are already beginning to feel "other".

From irrational riot to conscious insurrection

The mass movements that make such an impression on some of our comrades today because of their danger and—in their opinion—uselessness, are signs of the direction that the struggles of tomorrow will take.

Even now many young people are no longer able to evaluate the situation in which they find themselves. Deprived of that minimum of culture that school once provided, bombarded by messages containing aimless gratuitous violence, they are pushed in a thousand ways towards impetuous, irrational and spontaneous rebellion, and deprived of the "political" objectives that past generations believed they could see with such clarity.

The "sites" and expressions of these collective explosions vary a great deal. The occasions also. In each case, however, they can be traced to an intolerance of the society of death managed by the capital/State partnership.

It is pointless to fear those manifestations because of the traditional ideas we have of revolutionary action within mass movements.

It is not a question of being afraid but of passing to action right away before it is too late. (...)

The Insurrectional Project (Excerpts)

by Alfredo Bonanno, first published by Edizioni Anarchismo *1998. Translated in 2000 by Jean Weir in collaboration with John Moore and Leigh Stracross and published by Elephant Editions.*

(...)

New Capitalist Order

Comrades, before starting this talk, a couple of words in order to get to know each other better. In conferences a barrier is nearly always created between whoever is talking and those who are listening. So, in order to overcome this obstacle we must try to come to some agreement because we are here to do something together, not simply to talk on the one hand and listen on the other. And this common interest needs to be clearer than ever given the questions about to be discussed this evening. Often the complexity of the analyses and the difficulty of the problems that are being tackled separate the person who is talking from those who are listening, pushing many comrades into a passive dimension. The same thing happens when we read a difficult book which only interests us

up to a point, a book with a title such as *Anarchism and Post-industrial Society*, for example. I must confess that if I were to see such a book in a shop window, I'm not sure I'd buy it.

That is why we need to come to some agreement. I think that behind the facade of the problem under discussion, undoubtedly a complex one, the fact that we are anarchists and revolutionary comrades means we should be able to find some common ground. This should permit us to acquire certain analytical instruments with which to better understand reality, so be able to act upon it more effectively than before. As a revolutionary anarchist I refuse to inhabit two separate worlds: one of theory and another of practice. As an anarchist revolutionary, my theory is my practice, and my practice my theory.

Such an introduction might not go down well, and it will certainly not please those who support the old theories. But the world has changed. We are faced with a new human condition today, a new and painful reality. This can leave no room for intellectual closure or analytical aristocracies. Action is no longer something that is separate from theory, and this will continue to be the case. That is why it is important to talk about the transformation of capitalism yet again. Because the situation we see before us has already undergone rapid restructuring.

When we find ourselves in a situation like this, we tend to let ourselves be seduced by words. And we all know anarchists' vocation for words. Of course we are for action too. But tonight it is a question of words alone, so we run the risk of getting drunk on them. Revolution, insurrection, destruction, are all words. Sabotage — there, another word. Over the past few days spent here among you I have heard various questions asked. Sometimes they were asked in bad faith, as far as I could tell. But translation from one language to another comes into it, and I don't want to be malevolent. I just want to say that it is important not to deceive oneself that my analysis provides the solution to the social problem. I do not believe any of the comrades I have spoken to over the past few days have the solution either. Nor does the anarcho-syndicalist comrade with his analyses based on the centrality of the working class, or the other comrades who as far as I can understand do not seem to agree with him and are proposing an intervention of an insurrectionalist nature. No, none of these hypotheses can claim to possess the truth. If anarchism teaches anything it teaches us to be wary of anyone who claims to hold the truth. Anyone who does so, even if they call themselves an anarchist, is always a priest as far as I am concerned. Any discourse must simply aim to formulate a critique of the existent, and if we sometimes get carried away with words, it is the desire to act that gets the better of us. Let us stop here and start thinking again. The destruction of the existent that oppresses us will be a long road. Our analyses are no more than a small contribution so that we can continue our destructive revolutionary activity together in ways

anarchists therefore became a simple adaptation, they were "guests" of a potentially insurrectional situation which found no outlet for more concrete developments. In other words, the anarchists found themselves acting without being able to follow an insurrectional logic.

Throwing a brick at the police occasionally is certainly not the best way for a conscious revolutionary to participate in an insurrection. In practice, that brick signifies his acceptance of a factual situation that he did not help to determine and that requires, indeed imposes, that bricks be thrown at the police.

The insurrectional logic reverses the intervention. The comrades who apply it do not limit themselves to identifying situations of social tension and do not limit themselves to generically pushing people to rebel, they go further, they propose an organization of the revolt. (...)

The organizational structures we propose are not born in the logic of resistance, typical of trade unionism of all kinds. They are not corporate groups for the defense of category interests.

These are minimal aggregation structures to channel the exploited towards a specific objective of struggle. Elements of cohesion through which to agree on what to do to better organize the struggle, to stimulate the instinct of rebellion of the people and transform it into insurrection as conscious as possible.

For all these reasons the group of anarchist comrades within the organized structure cannot transform itself into a leading minority group or a power minority. In fact, it is obliged to follow the conditions of the conflict, it cannot rely on the infinite quantitative growth of the group itself, it does not have the possibility of proposing simply defensive actions, it is forced to push towards a series of increasingly advanced actions which, if on the one hand can lead to insurrection and therefore to increasingly higher levels of conflict and to results that are not easily predictable, on the other hand also lead to the inevitable destruction of the basic organizational structure and therefore to the dissolution of the function carried out by the group of comrades who thus return to their previous activity. (...)

Revolutionary Strategies and Methods

The difference between strategies and methods is practically the same. They are forms of action that man possesses. Whether he is a cop or a revolutionary, he cannot help but act by studying strategically different applications of some fundamental methods.

Revolutionary strategies have a direct relationship with the conditions of social conflict. They are not its passive consequence, and this is because the revolutionary constantly tries to operate on reality, to influence it, to modify it with his own action, but they must take into account the level of the conflict if they do not want to remain in the realm

transmitted concretely and becomes perceptible by others, precisely in the moment in which it is reflection and criticism for those who carry out the action itself.

Every single minimal intervention structure, which acts within the specific minority, runs the risk of positioning itself as a dialoguing party with the revolutionary movement as a whole and, sometimes, with the entire mass of the exploited, if it does not correctly set the meaning of its action. By positioning itself as an isolated party, in front of such a referent, we delude ourselves that the whole movement and the exploited, their fate and the fate of the revolution, depend on us, we expect who knows what from what we do, we remain frustrated by the superficiality of the answers and by the general lack of understanding. The revolutionary struggle is like a wavy sea against which fighting would be vain folly, it is necessary to adapt to the direction of the waves, swim now with strength and now with lightness, grasp the impetus of life that the sea hides within itself to reach the desired goal. The difficult art of the swimmer hides the political meaning of minority action. The latter highlights its class meaning by suddenly exploding as the fruit of revolutionary memory and as an indication for the present clash. (...)

IV. The Logic of Insurrection

When we speak of insurrection we obviously take into account a "logic" that supports insurrectional behavior, that is, we speak of a method of intervention in the reality of struggles. With this it is clear that we are not referring to this or that model of the past.

Insurrection is not the barricades in the streets and the people in arms. Or, at least, it is not only that.

When the people rise up spontaneously because they have reached the limit of intolerability of their exploited situation, visible facts occur: clashes in the streets, attacks on the police, destruction of symbols of capital (banks, jewelry stores, shops, etc.). But these spontaneous manifestations of popular violence usually catch anarchists unprepared, who are surprised that yesterday's apathy suddenly transforms into today's anger.

We do not intend to talk about this situation of surprise or the possible participation of anarchists in such an event.

This is why we make a clear distinction between riot and insurrection.

Let's take the Brixton riot in London a few years ago [1981]: the anarchists were there, but they were not, nor could they be, protagonists of the riot, nor, much less, develop it into an insurrection in the sense envisaged in this book. The events had taken them by surprise. Black people had risen up for apparently simple reasons but which had been smouldering under the ashes for a long time. The participation of the

that make any small talk simply a waste of time.

So, what can we do? Anarchists have been asking themselves this for a long time: how can we come into contact with the masses? to use a term which often comes up in this kind of discussion, and which I have also heard on various occasions over the past few days. Now, this problem has been faced in two different ways. In the past, throughout the history of anarchism, it has been faced by using the concept of propaganda, that is, by explaining who we are to the masses. This, as we can easily see, is the method used by political parties the world over. Such a method, the use of traditional anarchist propaganda, is in difficulty today in my opinion, just as the spreading of any other ideology is. It is not so much that people don't want to have anything to do with ideology any longer as that capitalist restructuring is making it pointless. And I must say here publicly that anarchists are having difficulty in understanding this new reality, and that it is the subject of an ongoing debate within the international anarchist movement. The end of ideology is leading to a situation where traditional anarchist propaganda is becoming pointless. As the effectiveness (or illusion, we do not know which) of propaganda disappears, the road of direct contact with people is opening up. This is a road of concrete struggles, struggles we have already mentioned, everyday questions, but of course one can't exceed one's limitations. Anarchists are a very small minority. It is not by making a lot of noise, or by using advertising techniques that they will be able to make themselves heard by the people. So it is not a question of choosing the most suitable means of communication — because this would take us back to the problem of propaganda, and therefore ideology, again — but rather of choosing the most suitable means of struggle. Many anarchists believe this to be direct attack, obviously within the limits of their possibilities, without imagining themselves to be anyone's fly coachman.

I ask you to reflect for a moment on the state of Capitalism at the beginning of the Eighties. Capitalism was in difficulty. It was facing increased labour expenditure, a restructuring of fixed plants at astronomically high costs, a rigid market, and the possibility of social struggles developing in response to this. And then, think about the conditions six or seven years later. How quickly Capitalism changed. It overcame all its difficulties in a way that could never have been predicted, achieving an unprecedented programme of economic and imperialist management of the world. Perhaps it does not seem so at the moment, but this programme aimed at closing the circle of power is well underway. What has happened? How was a situation so wrought with difficulties able to pick up so quickly and radically?

We all know what happened, it is not the technical side of it that surprises us. Basically, a new technology has been inserted into the productive process. Labour costs have been reduced, productive programmes

replaced, new forces used in production: we know all this. That is not the aspect of capitalist restructuring that surprises us. No, what astounds us is the latter's ingenious use of the working class. Because this has always formed the main difficulty for capitalism. Capitalist geniality has succeeded in attacking and dismantling the working class, spreading them all over the country, impoverishing, demoralising and nullifying them. Of course it was afraid to do this at first. Capital was always afraid to venture along that road, because reductions in the price of labour have always marked the outbreak of social struggles. But, as its academic representatives had been insisting for some time, the danger no longer exists, or at least it is disappearing. It is now even possible to lay people off, so long as you do it by changing production sectors, so long as others are being prepared to develop an open mentality and are beginning to discuss things. And all the social forces: parties, unions, social workers, the forces of repression, all levels of school, culture, the world of the spectacle, the media, have been rallied to tackle Capitalism's new task. This constitutes a worldwide crusade such as has never been seen before, aimed at modelling the new man, the new worker.

What is the main characteristic of this new man? He is not violent, because he is democratic. He discusses things with others, is open to other people's opinions, seeks to associate with others, joins unions, goes on strike (symbolic ones, of course). But what has happened to him? He has lost his identity. He does not know who he really is any longer. He has lost his identity as one of the exploited. Not because exploitation has disappeared, but because he has been presented with a new image of things in which he is made to feel he is a participant. Moreover, he feels a sense of responsibility. And in the name of this social solidarity he is ready to make new sacrifices: adapt, change his job, lose his skills, disqualify himself as a man and a worker. And that is what Capitalism has systematically been asking of him over the past ten years, because with the new capitalist restructuring there is no need for qualifications, but simply for a mere aptitude for work, flexibility and speed. The eye must be faster than the mind, decisions limited and rapid: restricted choices, few buttons to be pressed, maximum speed in execution. Think of the importance that video games have in this project, to give but one example. So we see that worker centrality has disappeared miserably. Capital is capable of separating the included from the excluded, that is, of distinguishing those who are involved in power from those who will be excluded forever. By 'power' we mean not only State management, but also the possibility of gaining access to better living conditions.

But what supports this divide? What guarantees the separation? This lies in the different ways that needs are perceived. Because, if you think about it for a moment, under the old-style form of exploitation, exploited and exploiter both desired the same thing. Only the one had,

confusion that can put the forces of repression in difficulty and make the masses of the exploited reflect on the problem of intervening or not. (...)

There is still something to be said about the whole of the activity carried out by this specific minority, thus identified, which is articulated in the minimum structures of intervention. This activity cannot be considered only from the point of view of "propaganda by deed". Its purpose, in fact, is not to set an example or to influence a wide range of possible sympathizers. Of course, the empirical aspect also exists, taking into account that the maximum alliance that guarantees the success of future plans is that with the masses in revolt, but it is an aspect that is tacitly taken up by the mechanism of capitalist information that transforms it into a commodity by selling it retail through newspapers, television, cinema, books, etc. The truth is that the specific minority itself, by carrying out its actions, has the possibility of making others understand something only if it understands something itself at the very moment of the action. Action therefore means education through action, and education of oneself and others. If we believe we have understood everything and we rely exclusively on our science, at the moment of action we hand over to capital a repetitive mechanism that fits perfectly into the generalized complex of capitalist production which is, first and foremost, an infinite repetition of itself.

The action of the specific minority must therefore consist not in an interruption of learning at one's own expense what the reality of the conflict is, but in a gradual and complete transformation of one's learning, a transformation achieved by showing others how one learns to understand the reality of the conflict. If the action of the specific minority sets an example of something, it sets an example of how one learns to identify and strike the enemy and not of how one teaches the relative method. At the right moment the right action becomes the substance of the single and specific attack, a symbol of all possible future attacks, the unfolding of a moment not yet ripened, the maximum level of intervention achievable by operating in the reality of the conflict. The class struggle characterizes the ongoing conflict. This element allows the concrete action of the specific minority. Within it the action continually transforms from an attempt to understand to an attempt to teach. By erasing the first moment everything drowns in repetitiveness, by erasing the second moment everything drowns in indecision.

In the continuous flow of the class conflict we find everyone: educators and students, in it everything receives the right place within the balance of power. Those who have not learned from their mistakes cannot show anything to others, and an eminent way of not learning is precisely to stop learning, to think that the time has come to simply teach. Through the filter of the class conflict the memory of the revolution slowly unfolds, becoming transmittable. In actions, memory is

the establishment of a new power or in a bloody reconfirmation of the old. In this case, although the insurrection presented itself as a liberating uprising, it ended bitterly with a restoration of state and employer domination. There is no contradiction in this. It is the natural unfolding of things. Insurrection is the indispensable element of revolution, without it, without a long and painful series of insurrections there will be no revolution and power will reign undisturbed in full force. Discouragement is not for us. Once again, obtusely, we prepare and fight for the insurrection that will come, a small piece of the future great mosaic of the revolution. (...)

Preparing the insurrection means preparing the subjective conditions (personal and material) that allow a specific anarchist minority to create the indispensable circumstances for the development of the insurrectional process. If the insurrection is a mass phenomenon for which, otherwise, it risks aborting immediately, its beginning is always the result of the action of a determined minority, of a handful of courageous people who attack the most significant points of the partial objective to be achieved. (...)

The role of the specific minority

The task of preparing the minority is twofold: from on the one hand its sensitization to the problems of the level of the confrontation, which are not only military and political problems, but also and mainly, social and economic problems. Then, the concrete preparation, in specific and detailed terms, in view of the insurrection.

We insist once again: the preparation of the masses can in no way be one of the conditions of the revolution. If we waited to prepare the masses first for such a grandiose task, nothing would ever be done. More than anything, we are convinced that the preparation of the great masses will be a consequence of the revolution, and perhaps not among the most immediate. Vice versa, the revolutionary anarchist minority must be able to be prepared for the historical task that awaits it.

Let us also eliminate the problem of "purity". We will not only participate in the insurrections led by anarchists, but also in all other insurrections that manifest themselves with the characteristics of the people in revolt, even if, due to certain circumstances, they will be led by the Stalinists, our future enemies. This means that we will try to gain a better place for ourselves in the struggle itself, in the course of events, spreading as much as possible our program of total liberation that we will counterpose to the banal economic and political one of the authoritarians. The rest will be verified by the insurrection itself.

A task to be accomplished immediately, this of insurrection. But with what concrete means? We have seen that the specific minority must take charge of the initial shock, surprising power, determining a situation of

and the other did not. If the construction of this divide were to be fully realised, there will be two different kinds of desire, a desire for completely different things. The excluded will only desire what they know, what is comprehensible to them and not what belongs to the included whose desires and needs they will no longer be able to comprehend because the cultural equipment necessary to do so will have been taken from them for ever.

This is what Capitalism is building: an automaton in flesh and bone, constructed in the laboratories of power. Today's world, based on information technology, knows perfectly well that it will never be able to take the machine to the level of man, because no machine will ever be able to do what a man can. So they are lowering man to the level of the machine. They are reducing his capacity to understand, gradually levelling his cultural heritage to the absolute minimum, and creating uniform desires in him. (...)

In the light of all this we have been asking ourselves for a long time now: how can we attack the enemy if we do not know it in depth? But, if you think about it, the answer is not all that difficult. We very much enjoy attacking the police, for example, but no one becomes a policeman in order to do so. One informs oneself: how do the police operate? What kind of truncheons do they use? We put together the small amount of knowledge required for us to roughly understand how the police work. In other words, if we decide to attack the police, we simply limit ourselves to obtaining a certain amount of knowledge about them. In the same way, it is not necessary to become engineers in order to attack the new technology, we can simply acquire some basic knowledge, a few practical indications that make it possible for us to attack it. And from this consideration another, far more important one, emerges: that the new technology is not abstract, it is something concrete. For instance, the international communication system is a concrete fact. In order to build abstract images in our heads it needs to spread itself throughout the country. This is the way the new materials are being used, let us say in the construction of cables for data transmission. And it is here that it is important to know technology, not how it works in the productive aspect, but how it is spread throughout the country. That is to say, where the directing centres (which are multiple) are to be found and where the communication channels are. These, comrades, are not abstract ideas but physical things, objects that occupy space and guarantee control. It is quite simple to intervene with sabotage in this instance. What is difficult is finding out where the cables are.

We have seen the problem of finding the documentation and research required to attack: at some point this becomes indispensable. At some point, knowledge of technology becomes essential. In our opinion this will be the greatest problem that revolutionaries will have to face over the next few years. (...)

An historically unprecedented kind of capitalism is appearing on the horizon. When we hear of neo-liberalism, this is in fact what is meant. When we hear talk of global dominion, this is the project that is being referred to, not the old concept of power, not the old imperialism. It was in the face of this project and its immense capacity to dominate that real socialism collapsed. No such thing would ever have happened in the context of the old capitalism. There is no longer any need for the world to be divided into two opposing blocs. The new capitalist imperialism is of an administrative kind. Its project is to manage the world for a small nucleus of included, at the cost of the great mass of excluded. And with these projects in mind, all possible means are already being used — the new ones we have mentioned, along with the old ones, as old as the world, such as war, repression, barbarity, according to the situation. In this way, in the former Yugoslavia for example, a ferocious war is being waged aimed at reducing a people's capacities as far as possible. Then there will be an intervention in this situation of absolute destruction in the form of a little humanitarian aid which will seem like an enormous amount of help in such conditions of absolute and total misery.

Think of what the state of countries like the former Yugoslavia would be like without the war. A great powder-keg at the gates of western Europe, on our borders, alongside the European Community. A powder-keg ready to explode, social contradictions which no economic intervention would ever be able to raise to the level of western consumerism. The only solution was war, the oldest device in the world, and that has been applied. American and world imperialism are intervening in Somalia and Iraq, but there is little doubt that they will intervene in the former Yugoslavia because the probability of rebellion in this area must be reduced to zero. So, old means are being used along with new ones, according to the situation, according to the economic and social context involved.

And one of the oldest weapons in the great arsenal of horrors is racism. On the question of racism and all the misdeeds related to it (neo-nazism, fascism, etc.), let's look for a moment at the differentiated development of capitalist restructuring. In order to understand the problem it is necessary to see how capitalist restructuring cannot solve all its problems just by waving a magic wand. It is faced with many different situations all over the world, each with various levels of social tension. Now, these situations of social tension are making what is lurking in the depths of each one of us rise to the surface, things that we have always put aside, exorcised. Essential factors such as racism, nationalism, the fear of the different, the new, AIDS, the homosexual, are all latent impulses in us. Our cultural superstructure, our revolutionary consciousness, when it puts on its Sunday clothes, obliterates them, hides them all. Then, when we take off our Sunday best, all these things start to reappear. The beast of racism is always present, and Capitalism

nal order and therefore reduces itself to the level of lower conscience (unionist, for example). With this it would continually reconfirm itself as a support for reality and from the latter it would derive its own justification for existing.

Revolutionary consciousness, on the other hand, is alone in front of the structure that gradually slows down the contributions it previously provided. And this defense of reality occurs in step with the intensification of the destructive attack that consciousness unleashes against the structure.

At a certain point, one must decide for destructive action because an eternal lingering on awareness is unthinkable. And it is precisely this necessity that brings us back to the relationship with the structure, with a different structure. The construction of tomorrow's free society is given by a series of violent passages between destruction and construction. And in this fight, we are often the ones who succumb.

However, to avoid any pessimism, we must keep in mind that the saddening of the conscience, the corresponding and obvious collapse of bodily life, are phenomena that undergo strong modifications depending on the collective situation, the development of the action, the joy that one feels in what one does.

Even consciousness can learn to better direct blows and thus to dose forces. It is a type of wisdom that is acquired at one's own expense, in the course of the struggle. (...)

II. Revolutionary Struggle and Insurrection

The need for the insurrectional perspective

Our task as anarchists, our main concern, our greatest desire is to see the social revolution realized: a terrible upheaval of men and institutions, capable finally of putting an end to exploitation and establishing the reign of justice.

For us anarchists, the revolution is our guide, our constant point of reference, whatever we do, whatever problem we deal with. Anarchy, which we all want, will not be possible without the painful revolutionary passage. If we do not want to transform anarchy into a useless dream, we must fight to destroy the State and the exploiters with the revolution.

But the revolution is not an ideal myth to be used as a simple reference. Precisely because it is a concrete fact, it must be built day by day, even with more modest attempts that do not have all the liberating characteristics of the true social revolution. These more modest attempts are insurrections. In them the movement of uprising of the most exploited minorities and of the most politically sensitized minorities opens the way to the possible uprising of ever larger layers of exploited people, in a flow of rebellion that can also lead to revolution, but can also end in

it possesses (if it possesses one)(...)

Destruction and consciousness

The only thing to do, therefore, with regard to the structure, is to work towards its destruction.

This destructive process corresponds to the awareness, to the birth and formation of revolutionary consciousness.

I do not want to open the discussion on the levels of consciousness here but it is necessary to keep in mind that there is an evident correspondence between false consciousness, consciousness of domination, unionist consciousness, social (or revolutionary) consciousness and the relationship with the structure, meaning by this the degree of utilization, the limit of involvement and the project of destruction.

Consciousness is not born with the individual, it is not inherited with what we call life. The individual must engage in a struggle to acquire it, at the different levels in which the objective and subjective conditions allow him to carry on the fight. This is what we call "experiencing", that is, acting, trying, educating oneself to feel, to reason. And in addition, beyond all this, the experience of others combines with our own and becomes indispensable as it is relived as one's own experience.

Consciousness is not inherited. Only struggle produces it.

It is not a simple vision of the world, a way of interpreting reality. As one approaches revolutionary consciousness, one understands how the phenomenon is very complex. If in general no one can change their biological nature, their consciousness can be changed. One can choose a different direction from the one followed. In this way, fundamental decisions are made.

In this perspective, one is influenced by external structures but one also acts on them. The influence can be passive and therefore widespread, or made more limited through precise, individual and collective actions. In the case that interests us here, that of the revolutionary level, the destructive action is directed towards the structure but cannot prevent it from also turning against the conscience itself.

For this, as they say, consciousness burns itself.

It develops from the relationship with reality (therefore with the structure itself), but it inserts a new, vital element, the destructive element, the only one capable of preventing the conservation of the eternally objective. Consciousness thus transforms the structure, often improves it, precisely because it forces it to reappear under different guises, more suited to the development of the times. Other times, conscience grows, becomes more articulated, refines itself, educates itself to understand the relationships with reality, sensitizes the world, creates movement. And it is precisely this enthusiasm that, at a certain point, threatens to weaken it. It cannot go on forever, unless it accepts the exter-

is always ready to use it. In situations such as that which exists in Germany where social tensions have developed rapidly over the past few years, this phenomenon is in constant development. Capital controls racism and uses certain aspects of it, but it is also afraid of it in that the overall management of world power is of a democratic, tolerant and possibilist nature. From the point of view of utilisation, anything (e.g., ideology, fear) can exist — it is all part of capital's project. We cannot say with certainty that post-industrial capitalism is against racism. We can see a few of its main characteristics, such as its democratic nature, then suddenly discover that in the context of one specific country the same technologically advanced capitalism is using methods that were used a hundred years ago: racism, persecution of Jews, nationalism, attacks on cemeteries, the most hateful and abominable things man can devise. Capital is manifold, its ideology always Machiavellian: it uses both the strength of the lion and the cunning of the fox.

But the main instrument of capitalism the world over are the new technologies. We must think about this a little, comrades, in order to dispel so much confusion. And in doing so we must also consider the possible use of such technology on our part, in changed social conditions, in a post-revolutionary situation. We have already seen how there has been a great qualitative leap from the old technologies to the new — by new technologies we mean those based on computers, lasers, the atom, subatomic particles, new materials, human, animal and vegetable genetic manipulation. These technologies are quite different from, and have little to do with, the old ones. The latter limited themselves to transforming material, to modifying reality. On the contrary, the new technologies have penetrated reality. They do not simply transform it, they create it, instigating not just molecular changes, possible molecular transformation, but above all creating a mental transformation. Think of the use that is normally made of television. This instrument of communication has got inside us, into our brains. It is modifying our very capacity to see, to understand reality. It is modifying relations in time and space. It is modifying the possibility to step out of ourselves and change reality. In fact, the vast majority of anarchists do not think it possible to make use of this assemblage of modern technologies.

I know that there is an ongoing debate about this. However, this debate is based on a misunderstanding. That is, it is trying to treat two things that are radically different in the same way. The old revolutionary dream, let us say of Spanish anarcho-syndicalism, was that of attacking and defeating power so that the working class could take over the instruments of production and use them in the future society in a way that was more just and free. Now it would be impossible to make a fairer and more free use of these new technologies, because they do not stand passively before us like the old technologies of yesterday, but are dynamic. They move, penetrate deep inside us, have already penetrated

us. If we do not hurry to attack, we will no longer be able to understand what we need in order to do so, and rather than us taking the technologies over, it will be the technologies that take us over. It will not be a case of social revolution but of the technological revolution of capital. This is why a revolutionary use of these new technologies is impossible. The misconception is similar to the old one concerning the possible revolutionary use of war, which many well-known anarchists fell prey to when the first world war broke out. A revolutionary use of war is impossible, because war is always an instrument of death. A revolutionary use of the new technologies is impossible, because the new technologies will always be instruments of death. So all that is left to do is to destroy them — to attack, now, not in the future, not when the project has been completed, not when those who are deceiving themselves stop doing so, but sabotage now, attack now. This is the conclusion we have reached. It is at the moment of the destructive attack that one clarifies what we said to begin with. It is at this point that theory conjoins with practice, and the analysis of post-industrial capitalism becomes an instrument with which to attack capitalism. It becomes an instrument for insurrectionalist and revolutionary anarchism in order to direct one's attention to what — the men and the things — makes this project of restructuring of Capitalism possible, and whose responsibilities are clear.

Today as never before, striking at the root of inequality means attacking that which makes the unequal distribution of knowledge possible directly. And that is because, for the first time, reality itself is knowledge, for the first time Capitalism is knowledge. Whereas the centres where knowledge was elaborated, the universities, for example, were once cloistered places to be consulted at specific times of need, today they are at the centre of capitalist restructuring, the centre of repressive restructuring. So, a distribution of knowledge is possible. I insist on saying that this is an urgent problem, because it is possible to grasp any difference when one sees it. But when a net separation between two different kinds of knowledge which have no communication between them occurs — the knowledge of the included and that of the excluded — it will be too late. Think of the project of lowering the quality of schooling. Think how mass schooling, once an instrument for gaining knowledge, has been transformed over the past twenty years into an instrument of disqualification. The level of knowledge has been lowered, whereas a restricted minority of privileged continue to acquire other knowledge, in specialised masters degrees organised by Capital.

This, in my opinion, demonstrates the need and urgency for attack yet again. Attack, yes. But not blind attack. Not desperate, illogical attack. Projectual, revolutionary attack, with eyes wide open in order to understand and to act. For example, the situations where capital exists, and is being realised in time and space, are not all the same. There are some contexts in which insurrection is more advanced than others, yet

This allows us to understand better, but we also need to give ourselves a perspective. We cannot delve into it endlessly. We risk relegating everything to the archaeology of doing, looking so far back that we see nothing.

This book insists instead on the re-proposition of the reality of the immediate data, in the progressiveness of the constructible. It may therefore seem static, limited, sometimes dogmatic.

There is, however, a key to understanding that allows a sort of overcoming of the immediate, the appearance of something unexpected. The sense of passion must overlap with the close order of the elements (facts, events, sentences, words). Have we worked in the direction of revolutionary action? Have we, on the contrary, resisted it? Perhaps no one will be able to answer these questions. The course of human life is a continuous denial of the origin, of the problem of the origin and therefore, also, of the problem of the path (in one sense or another). Life is or is not. The revolution too.

But those who wait motionless cannot claim to be privileged for not having dirtied their hands. Theirs is simply a solitary illusion.

Action is the delimitation of facts, the progress of events, a reflection in progress. It is not performed to demonstrate the certainty of the theory (if this had been flashed *a priori*). The reasons for its coming into the world are different. Joy is also an excellent reason. Often the only valid reason, even if very rare.

Seen from the outside, however, the action appears to be equipped with an iron logic. No one would admit to acting without a good reason. The economism of this premise escapes all those who deny their logical slavery in theory and succumb to it in practice.

This iron logic constitutes the external element of this book, the thing that is most easily grasped and the last to have importance.

Yet such a presence-absence must be considered well. What is secondary becomes a help for memory and support for the unexpected events of the heart. The same thing that recurs is certainly a heavy weight that we carry at our feet, but it is also the modest and continuous element on which to build the action. Something of little importance is not necessarily to be underestimated. Each piece is part of the mosaic and the incompleteness of the latter offends at any level.

And then it is a matter of taste. The content of a structure is not determined by the limits it possesses. On the contrary, the action of these limits – as a product of the institution – comes upon individual creativity and encloses it in a perspective that gives it the illusion of movement. As usual, we do not convince ourselves that we are walking despite the chains, but thanks to the chains. If we allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the limits of the structure, it solidifies precisely at the moment it encloses us. We must be able to recognize its mortal status, its criminal origin. To overcome it, to use the constructive sense

and putting me at risk. In short, I need time to learn to graze and also comfort, that comfort that everyone receives with pleasure. Making me know – as the insurrectional method unwisely does – that there is no mole working in my place distresses me and exposes me naked to the ravaged fury of the times. In each of my works I can be astonished or succeed, and I can succeed more or less. I can face periods in which the objective conditions, the "spirit of the times" (how strange, as soon as I hear something whispered about this worn bone structure inherent in history, images of the Hegelian zoo emerge), are not in the best position towards my action and that of others. And then, why always take myself as the measure of all things? Isn't it enough to observe what is done almost everywhere? Is it the critic's job to examine whether I have succeeded, to do something, and how and to what extent, or is it up to me to express an evaluative judgment? This is how those who feel the lack of a hard core in reality, of the contradictions that like angry clouds on the horizon crowd together at the edges of the sky, continue to reason.

What harm can there be in imagining this underground movement? Even Pascal had said to himself, when speaking of the wager: what harm can there be in considering God as existing, in the positive case we gain, in the negative case we lose nothing. What a sad idea for a great man like him. Even our panting desire for objective foundation reasons in the same way. He does not realize that imagining this historical mechanism as existing involves delicate consequences, some of the same kind as the hypothesis that admits the existence of any God. With a little attention it is not difficult to understand that the so-called political counterpart, concretely and blatantly political, of this imagined hypothesis acting within history, therefore hovering above the events that human misery marks with its own tabes, is the party. Here is deposited the pragmatic science that observes and studies, indicating the modifications (high and low) of that secret process, whose judgment greatly benefits from the philosophy of history, both in the conscious and rigorous form in which it is exercised by prepared minds, and in the less conscious and less rigorous form in which every man forms the concept of a friendly but not visible force. The dream of this something that fights in my place undermines every clearly critical disposition, but can accompany any doing of daily existence, in whatever direction it is oriented, without mortifying it, but rather strengthening and illuminating it. There is no incompatibility between the philosophy of history dreamed, to name one, by Hegel and science, art, action, faith. Only the revolution is something else.(...)

Introduction to the first edition

Hindsight is always critical. And this is the age of critics and do-gooders.

there is still a great possibility for mass struggles to take place internationally. It is still possible to intervene in intermediate struggles, that is, in struggles that are circumscribed, even locally, with precise objectives that are born from some specific problem. These should not be considered to be of secondary importance. Such kinds of struggle also disturb Capitalism's universal project, and our intervention in them could be considered an element of resistance, putting a brake on the fragmentation of the class structure. I know that many comrades here this evening have experienced such things, and have participated directly in specific struggles.

So, we need to invent new instruments. These instruments must be capable of affecting the reality of the struggles without the mediation of trade union or party leadership. They must propose clear, even though limited, objectives, ones that are specific, not universal, so in themselves are not revolutionary. We must point to specific objectives because people need to feed their children. We cannot expect everyone to sacrifice themselves in the name of universal anarchism. Limited objectives, then, where our presence as anarchists has the precise task of urging people to struggle directly in their own interests because it is only through direct, autonomous struggle that these objectives can be reached. And once the aim has been reached the nucleus withers and disappears. The comrades then start again, under different conditions.

What comrades are we talking about? What anarchists are we talking about? Many of us are anarchists, but how many of us are available for real, concrete activity? How many of us here today stop short at the threshold of the issue and say: we are present in the struggle, we suggest our project, then the workers, the exploited, do what they like. Our task is done. We have put our conscience at rest. Basically, what is the task of the anarchist if it is not propaganda? As anarchists, we have the solution to all social problems. So we present ourselves to the people who suffer the consequences of the problem, suggest our solution, and go home. No, this kind of anarchism is about to disappear out for good. The last remaining mummies belong to history. Comrades must take the responsibility for struggles upon themselves directly and personally because the objective against which the exploited need to struggle in certain situations, and against which they often do not, is a common one because we are exploited just as they are. We are not privileged. We do not live in two different worlds. There is no serious reason as to why they (the so-called masses) should attack before we do. Nor do I see any reason why we should only feel ourselves authorised to attack in their presence. The ideal, certainly, is mass struggle. But in the face of the project of capitalist restructuring anarchists should feel responsible and decide to attack personally, directly, not wait for signs of mass struggle. Because this might never happen. So this is where the destructive act takes place. It is at this point that the circle closes. What

are we waiting for?

So, individual acts of destruction too. But here an important objection has been raised: what does one gain by smashing a computer? Does that perhaps solve the problem of technology? This question, an important one, was presented to us when we worked out the hypothesis of social sabotage. It was said: what result is obtained by destroying a pylon? First of all, the question of sabotage is not aimed so much at the terminal points of technology as at the communications network. So, we are back to the problem of knowledge of the way technology is distributed over the country, and, if you allow me to digress for a moment, I want to point to a serious problem that arises here. I allow myself to use the term 'serious problem' because a comparison has been made between what a clandestine armed organisation thinks they are doing by striking a specific person, and what, instead, an anarchist insurrectionalist structure thinks it is doing by striking a technological realisation, maintaining that, all said and done, there is not much difference. There is a difference, and it is a very important one. But it is not a question of the difference between people and things. It is an even more important difference, because the aims of the clandestine armed organisation contain the error of centrism. By striking the person, the organisation believes it is striking the centre of Capital. This kind of error is impossible in an anarchist insurrectionalist organisation, because when it strikes a technological realisation (or someone responsible for this realisation), it is fully aware that it is not striking any centre of Capitalism.

During the first half of the Eighties, huge mass struggles took place against nuclear power plants in Italy. One of the most important of these was the struggle against the missile base in Comiso. In this context we realised 'base nuclei'. For three years we struggled alongside the local people. This was a mass struggle, which for various reasons did not succeed in preventing the construction of the base. But that is not the only kind of struggle we consider, it is just one of the possible ones we participate in as insurrectionalist anarchists, one of the many intermediary struggles possible.

In another direction, in the years that followed, over four hundred attacks took place against structures connected to the electric power supply in Italy. Sabotage against coal-fired electric power stations, the destruction of high-voltage pylons, some of them huge ones that supplied a whole region. Some of these struggles transformed themselves into mass struggles; there was mass intervention in some of the projects of sabotage, in others there was not. On a dark night in the countryside, anonymous comrades would blow up a pylon. These attacks were spread over the whole country, and in my opinion possessed two essential characteristics: they constituted an easily realisable attack against Capital, in that they did not use highly destructive technology and, sec-

themselves: how can it be done? Even their presumption fiddles with a project, even though it is said that it does not need a method. Inspiration is something else, even if treated in the same way. The truth is in us, sanguine, acting with clarity (or at least with some truth), it is present, no longer only in an idea that I form of it with experience but in the agitation that it causes in my chest, that is, in its direct effectiveness. I am privileged, a vessel of choice, I do not need to beg for documents, study, possess a method, give life to a project: I exist therefore I am, fully complete in my multifaceted limitation of which I do not complain. Starting from nothing, I indulge my archaic ignorance and make it a faculty. I know well when and how to attack. The rest are bunglers and chatterboxes, Chinese shadows[16] from which my faith in myself will keep me away. The formulation of this intuition gives rise to the dogmas of the will. The will is assumed to be free when it is an instrument of slavery. Life is assumed to be similar to that awkward shred of existence that we experience every day, when it is something else entirely.

This hypothetical almanac who hates the method would gladly accept it if it did not call for a direct and personal commitment, annoying because it is invasive and too involving. He would certainly like a method - raise your hand if you absolutely do not want it - but a discreet method, capable of working on its own, of replacing in need those who do not like it, of producing objective effects, even if long-term, that can be taken possession of and used in the last indispensable push against the enemy. Oh ideal method, why don't you speak? What a masterpiece you would be.

Such a method (Marxist?, certainly not, let me speak and you will find that Marxists in this field are in large and good company) would be based on a rigorous criticism incapable of stammering, become the simulated skeleton of all things, natural, human and divine, so that these can be studied in the awareness that I have of them, without asking questions as to how this grim revealing awareness is possible and what it means. But this criticism excludes any blush at the testimony of my awareness that, if I distrust, I have the duty to distrust the criticizing reason as well as the criticized reason. The main task of this hidden structure is the elaboration of a patriarchal critique of the act of knowing, a critique that should show me the facts by imagining and trying out an interpretation and an explanation, a critique that would finally allow me – if I do not refuse this work that surpasses my immediate nostalgia for the attack – to engage in universally human activities, which take place in directions that I myself indicate to my work, suited to what I am, to my limits but in such a way that they do not become involvement

[16] *Editor's Note*: This is the usual Italian name for the traditional Chinese art form of shadow puppet plays, and sometimes refers generically to all shadow plays regardless of origin.

take, it has its continuation in my need to consider the way to reach a conception of existence and reality that is not oppressive but is instead liberating, and to regulate my judgments and my conduct on it, it has its actuality of conscious choice when it subjects to criticism the thinkability of the many possible projects offered to consciousness by the vast, disparate heap of aggregated methodological proposals.

Thus the insurrectional method cannot have any other subject than man (because only man has the desire to transform himself and the reality that surrounds him, and he needs this transformation if he does not want to suffocate in the rule and the parrot-like obviousness). It cannot have any other object than man himself, that is, the action with which I, feeling myself, my life and, through this, the universal reality that surrounds me, give myself an awareness, of which I ask myself how it is possible, and what its possibility means. The insurrectional method is therefore an opportunity for planning, but this does not deprive it of its revolutionary nature, nor of the totality of its logic. Even if the project takes on the characteristics of murky partiality, the method feeds something that does not accept the logic of "little by little".

I do not trust a gruff *monatto*[15] who looks at me suspiciously of my availability, I do not take a position immediately, I do not tell about myself, but neither do I intentionally refuse it. I give it course – it is still the insurrectional method that I am speaking of – not affirming that it is a truth established, alien to changeability, but knowing that I am not left without a project from the moment I think it and, in some way, talk about it. The spontaneous figurations of the "free" imagination, however varied they may be among different individuals, fall within the natural adversative disposition, multiform in dispositions and procedures, but one in referring, in such different ways, to what we are and for which we are. By limiting oneself to this offensive impulse (which we are all archaically in love with) one remains a prisoner of one's own limitation: a venerable and hostile old lady full of tics and ignorance. The idea of purifying from such a jumble a metallic core of beliefs so true that, in fact, no one lacks them, is a presumptuous idea of neurotics. But even neurotics, when they fashion this vaporous belief, listen to the mischief of their heart but also to their experience, so they ask

[15] *Editor's Note*: *'Monatto'* is an Italian word which was in common use in the 17th and 18th centuries, especially in Milan, referring to a public official tasked with removing plague-infected people or the corpses of victims to the *lazaretto* (a quarantined location specifically for those sick with plague) or the cemetery. The word initially referred to gravediggers and had connotations of contamination or deviance, partly due to the suspicion that *monatti* stole from the dead or dying, or spread the plague themselves. *Monatti* were usually people condemned to death, prisoners, or those who had already recovered from the plague and developed immunity. They were sometimes associated with the iconic beaked plague doctor mask, which was also worn by the traditional *commedia dell'arte* character defined by that profession, as well as being a popular costume in the Venetian Carnival.

ondly, they are easily copied. Anyone can take a walk in the night. And then, it is also healthy. So anarchists have not passively waited for the masses to awaken, they have considered doing something themselves. In addition to the four hundred attacks we know about, one could guess that at least another four hundred could have taken place as the State conceals these actions because it is afraid of them. It would be impossible to control a capillary-style spreading of sabotage all over the country. No army in the world is capable of controlling such activity. As far as I know, not one comrade has been arrested in connection with the known four hundred attacks.[4]

I would like to wind up here because I think I have been talking long enough. Our insurrectionalist choice is anarchist. As well as being let us say a characterological choice, a choice of the heart, it is also a choice of reason, a result of analytical reflection. What we know about global capitalist restructuring today tells us that there is no other way open to anarchists but that of immediate, destructive intervention. That is why we are insurrectionalists and are against all ideology and chatter. That is why we are against any ideology of anarchism, and all chatter about anarchism. The time for pub talk is over. The enemy is right outside this great hall, visible for all to see. It is simply a question of deciding to attack it. I am certain that insurrectionalist anarchist comrades will know how to choose the timing and the means for doing so, because with the destruction of this enemy, comrades, it is possible to realise anarchy.

Uruguay, 2013: Interview with Alfredo Maria Bonanno (Excerpts)

Editor's Note: Retrieved April 2025 from https://lajauriadelamemoria.wordpress.com/2016/02/10/uruguay-2013-entrevista-a-alfredo-maria-bonanno/ and machine-translated with cursory manual corrections.

> *(Note of La Jauria de la Memoria):* The following is an interview conducted by the comrades of the newspaper ***Tierra y Tempestad*** with Alfredo Maria Bonanno, within the framework of the cycle of talks in the Southern Cone on the insurrectional struggle, during the last two months of 2013, which took place in Buenos Aires,

[4] *Editor's Note:* Other estimates put the tally of such attacks in Italy during this period at over 1,200. However, the anarchist Marco Camenisch and René Moser were arrested in Switzerland in 1980 for an attack on a power station there, and Camenisch was charged in 1992 in Italy for attacks on Italian pylons, among other charges relating to his escape from prison during the previous sentence, shootout with cops wounding one during his re-capture after 10 years in clandestinity, bombs and guns found in his hideout, and the killing of a Swiss border guard authorities alleged he was responsible for while on the run. Camenisch was freed in 2017.

Montevideo and Rosario, with a failed experience in Chile (*Editor's note:* Bonanno was denied permission to enter Chile by local authorities at the airport due to his insurrectional orientation and history of state repression). The following interview appeared in issues 19 and 20 of the aforementioned publication. An interesting account of Bonanno's visit to Spain in 2012 can be read at https://es-contrainfo.espiv.net/2012/07/27/barcelona-estado-espanol-cronicas-sobre-la-visita-de-alfredo-bonanno-en-junio-de-2012/

What's your definition: an anarchist, an insurrectionist? What does that mean?

(...) Talking about insurrection is one thing, and carrying out an insurrection is another; they're two different things. If we limit ourselves to talking about insurrection, we end up like journalists. We give talks, we chat about insurrection. Can we carry out an insurrection? Can anarchists carry out an insurrection? No, no more than they can carry out a revolution. It's not that anarchists fighting make a revolution. Revolution or insurrection is a process; it develops according to certain transformations of capital and power. What we can do is the insurrectional project; it's a much smaller thing, which has to do with the insurrection to a certain extent, but it's not the insurrection... Therefore, the deception of the newspapers, of certain critics, like Amorós[5] – this Spanish comrade – is that they talk about insurrectionalism, when we don't talk about insurrectionalism as if it were an ideology; we talk about an insurrectional project; it's something else. You understand? We don't know what insurrection is; when we look at it, we say, 'Okay.' But, in addition, the insurrection scares you a little, because you don't know what to do well if you don't have a project beforehand. I've seen certain situations in which certain people get agitated, and you, with all your practice, all your experience, "and what the hell am I supposed to do?" And one is afraid, because one feels strange, because in the power of the insurrectional or revolutionary process, we are suddenly different; or we are strangers, and if we are not strangers and we are with others, we get dragged along by the process, as if we were swimming in the sea or in the river, we get dragged along, and what about our project? (...)

What is (the affinity group's) importance in the insurrectionary process?

[5] *Editor's Note:* Miguel Amorós is the anti-industrial anarchist author of a 2007 critique of Bonanno & insurrectionary anarchy, *Professional Anarchy and Theoretical Disarmament*. While useful for some of the historical context & connections outlined, it seems written in somewhat bad faith, with misinterpretations of what's critiqued. His works on surrealism & anarchist/autonomist Spanish student/workers movements of the '70s seem useful, but he perhaps places too much faith in the antagonistic potential of assemblies.

The sadness that many feel when faced with any analytical commitment (which they can freely accept or refuse, since it is never forced upon them) depends on what has been said before. Self-confidence, the very physiological will to live becomes brutalized into careless boredom, nullifying the initial impulse to face the inevitable obstacles that every analysis places before it. Warmed by self-confidence, in my abilities, between pains and joys I move forward, affirming not so much the validity of a method, but my strength, absolutely mine, to persuade myself of its validity or its lack of meaning. If that method tells me something, provides me with the foundation for a project, there it is, acquiring meaning for my life, which is, at the same time, its origin, its purpose and the internal norm and measure of persuasion.

And this is a book that speaks at length about method, about method and the problems related to its application. Making one's way through the fog that the mass media repeatedly spread over the concept of "insurrection", one can still grasp something concrete amidst the disgust. Ultimately, no matter how much worry the various components of power may have, they cannot completely mutilate a revolutionary idea. With the insurrectional method I do not go beyond the objective conditions of the class conflict, nor reality as a whole, but I position myself critically toward everything, not accepting anything as a fact, but asking everything if and how it is thinkable and possible. I do not accept the fable of a privileged place of struggle, nor of an equally privileged subject capable of determining the desired revolutionary catastrophe. My method itself is only a tool for building limited and circumscribed projects, not the jewel in the crown of the revolution. Having found this critical thinkability, I approach the method with a different consciousness, able to choose between the various possibilities that are suggested to me, first of all the alternative between accepting or rejecting. What I previously lacked because of my arrogance, with an increased, not diminished, interest, I now possess. I am able to face the difficulties of the theory with a frank criticism of its thinkability and possibility. The project, once identified in its broad lines, moves in another direction of methodological reflection: both when this is a simple moment of pause and concentration to understand and evaluate what has already been done in order to better decide what to do, as well as when it provides information on reported facts that have never been seen by the excited gaze of the chronicler or the annalist, and when it is meditated on for a further theoretical deepening, a starting point for better accessing one's own ideas and convictions now free from the old obstinate malice.

The insurrectional method has its beginning in my need to judge for myself what it is appropriate for me to believe or which actions to

ety still marked by old realities, and while successful in modernizing Oblomov's country estate, he ends up constantly traveling to and fro to different countries, forced to keep moving forward.

tude, it does not take charge of effigies but of living creatures.

The invention of pure linear motifs (the method as pure ornament, the pure project that satisfies the most demanding intellect), even if it composes a world in itself coherent and harmonious, belongs to the antechamber of action, to an imaginative movement that realizes and brings to life the figures it imagines, but does not provide them with body and blood. This fantastic world, aroused and created by the art of analysis, overlaps with the world of action and experience, as I cognitively live it in myself. Sometimes it interposes itself and intertwines, penetrating it with perfectly figured imaginary forms, raising the difficulties of thinking about the completeness of a dance, and this can fascinate, but concrete reality lies elsewhere.

With the use of the method - made of coherent hypotheses and leaps of the imagination - I go beyond simple knowledge to document myself, to know how to regulate myself, I build the action, I lay the foundations of something that goes beyond what I consider my immediate utilities, the existence that imprisons me and characterizes me. The methodological hypothesis takes me beyond the coercive horizon of common research, it seduces me to realize the abstract model in reality, therefore, to me, its author, it shows something enigmatic that is in the project but does not immediately come to light, mutilated as it is because of my incapacities and limitations. And this something is a principle, a propeller of life to which all the analytical effort remains tied but that cannot be simply deduced or "understood" with all calm, risking not being persuaded of why that enigmatic aspect remains so important if one is not contaminated by it and made precarious even in the belief of acting for the best. The first movement of understanding is spontaneous, a feeling of trust in life, without which not only would I not attempt any enterprise, whether practical or theoretical, but I would not lift an arm from the sofa where Oblomov was rotting.[14]

[14] *Editor's Note*: Oblomov is the titular protagonist of an 1859 novel by the Russian writer Ivan Goncharov. Oblomov is an immature, lazy young nobleman and a classic incarnation of the figure of the 'superfluous man', which was then prevalent in Russian literature. Incapable of making decisions or taking action for himself, he remains in his bed or an adjacent chair in his bedroom for most of the book, desiring only sleep, and dreaming of his pampered upbringing where though his father was largely absent (his patronymic name Ilya Ilyich marking him as a repetition of his father rather than a son and man in his own right) his mother had taken him on constant trips and vacations, his life having revolved around the cyclical repetitions of seasons and births and deaths to give it coherence. Oblomov's country estate (a thousand miles away, which he simply collects feudal income from) falls into socio-economic decline and out of his control, which he can't bring himself to take responsibility for managing amidst broader changes with the modernization of Russia and approaching abolition of serfdom, and he ends up exploited by his friends, his social connections and romantic relationship failing because of his reclusiveness, and being looked after like a child again by his widowed landlady before dying (the cause of which he diagnoses as 'Oblomovitis'), and realizing his dream of eternal sleep. Oblomov's friend Stoltz meanwhile is raised by his father as a hardworking, modern adult and is very progress-oriented, though he also has no real place in a soci-

(...) In insurrectional processes, groups have the function of knowing what needs to be done differently from what the process is doing. Therefore, the process moves in a certain direction; the groups try to have a slightly different project. Because it's not a given that the process that is moving knows what needs to be done. Sometimes revolutionary, insurrectional processes are violent in nature, extremely violent (people break everything because they react violently to repression, to centuries of misery, poverty, suffering, pain, and all of that explodes). The anarchist revolutionary who is part of affinity groups must know what to do, because if he too explodes... For example, when the fascist takeover took place in Spain in '36, the anarchist comrades seized the weapons because they knew where the weapons were. It's no coincidence that Ascaso died in front of a barracks, because he was trying to seize the weapons. Because if you don't seize the soldiers' weapons, what do the people do? They break everything, but without weapons, nothing can be done. Then there were all the successive errors in the Spanish revolution... But the Spanish comrades moved forward, acting as conscious comrades, who knew where to go, not going where the people were going, but where to go to and the things necessary to make the revolution.

Does the insurrectional project only seek to weaken power? To attack in order to weaken it? Is that all?

This is probably one of the objectives. Because if you attack power in more places, the principle of guerrilla warfare: if you attack in different places, not only where the insurrectional process is moving, but also where the insurrectional process isn't moving, you weaken power, allowing growth, giving indications for the growth of the insurrectional process. You also empower comrades, therefore, affinity groups that are within the process but also have a project in mind; you give them resources, ideas, etc., that they can transmit to others.

For example, if you think about it, an insurrectional process can begin with a demonstration, like the demonstration of 100,000 in Athens on the occasion of Alexis' death. Now, 100,000 people is a lot, but at the same time, it's not a lot. Taken one by one, do they know what they're doing? No, they don't. They know they're angry. And that's not enough. The project is something carried out by a few, by a few comrades who are aware of what to do because they studied it beforehand, they learned to swim beforehand. It's not that they swim; they learn to swim in the demonstration. They know where to go, they know what to do. This contributes to weakening power on the one hand, because if the power says, "These people want to attack Parliament," they all stand in front of Parliament, and that's the end of it. If instead they see 100 different attacks all over the city, they ask themselves, "What do we have to do?" They don't know. The explosion of rage of the insurrectional pro-

cess takes another path, it expands. Do you understand the difference, the enormous difference, in something like this? What would have happened in Athens if there had been 500 anarchists capable of carrying out actions in separate groups throughout the city? What would have happened to those 100,000? They would have destroyed the entire city. There's no doubt about it. (...)

You say that the method of attack, to be anarchist, must be simple, straightforward, and reproducible. When the target is more complex and an informal organization is formed, does it then remain a simple, straightforward, and reproducible target?

We're talking about two different things. Because the simple and reproducible objective is when the attack is from the group, while the more complex objective, where there is the presence of the informal organization, seems simple but is a complex thing. They are two different things. That is a specific struggle, it's a struggle of affinity groups. They are two different things. The struggle of the affinity groups, the attack, has to be reproducible. The attack of the informal organization lasts for a certain time, it's also reproducible, but overall it's something extremely complicated. It can be seen as a model, as an anarchist method of destruction, as a method of relating to people, as a method of debating with people, of attempts to create affinity groups, which are part of the informal organization and which intervene to do some things that people can't do. They use certain methods, those methods we talked about before (the media inflates these methods)[6] that affinity groups have and which, therefore, are also part of the informal organization, but nevertheless, people don't have them. The duty of anarchists, of informal organizations, is therefore to carry out actions related to those objectives that people cannot achieve, but without actions that cow people. And they must also be coordinated with what people actually perceive and feel. Because the objective is for the people; (*Eds.:* the force of oppression in a particular situation) harms people, not anarchists. Anarchists are collaborating with the people.

So there are two types of attacks? Those carried out by affinity groups...

...the simple and reproducible, and those that are a bit more complex. So much so that it requires the union of more affinity groups into an informal organization.

And these attacks by the informal organization cannot scare people...

[6] *Editor's Note:* Bonanno's referring back to a previous part of the interview, the methods in question include planting bombs, using guns, robberies, etc.

each of us had no need to be as it is at present, and were unthinkable as it is given. No one can give themselves courage if they do not possess it, much less by squawking. In the opposite direction to life, transcending experience in control and correspondence to analytical presumptions, creating a world of phantoms I lie waiting, I construct capricious justifications that are so independent of reality that they can be, at will, support or criticism, without this increasing or decreasing their own value, which is that of being a living creature, not an image of abstractly concluded perfection.

The first germ of involvement arises in the imaginative impulse whereby, in front of something unknown that surprises me, I picture it to myself by alluding to it as it strikes me and moves me. I do not maintain a detachment, I do not show disappointment at having been disturbed in my honest dreams. The word theoretical bears the sign of this emotion, and of the image that remains in me. It is not a play of abstract correspondences between theory and practice. But then the word wears out. Used to understand each other, it no longer suggests the image that it continues to enclose in a cryptic way, it is tired, it does not help, it needs to be helped. Once again it is the great heart of the one who acts that it needs, not the necroscopic[13] malice of the one who harbors in his heart an ill-advised old man. The new imaginative impetus, new because it is never tamed in the face of impending repetition, faces events of which it knows little about the nature and nothing about the origin, but reconstructs their history in a credible development alien to moral imperatives.

I must believe in the urgent necessity of the attack against the enemy, while I imagine the method that will have to sustain me. If I no longer believe in it, as to the pure letter of the method, either I give it up or it becomes languid rhetoric, a witch's restlessness. If I do not nourish my poetry of life, my music of life, my art, my freedom, all the ideas and figurations, held on the leash of realism at all costs, drown in the quarrelsome coercion of existence. The pulse of my life having dried up, I remain fascinated by the impeccable rhythm of analytical repetitions - the pure reign of the method - and my conscience is pleased with it. I still sing, if my throat is capable of it, but it is no longer my personal vision, the fruit of my emotional life and also of my imagination, but the reasonable deduction that garrulously feeds suspicions and tearful recriminations. It would be necessary to have eyes so deep into men and things as to intuit their deepest character, and from this start out on other reconnaissances, get involved while waiting for the revealing aspect of one's own limits to emerge. Do not try to hide every appearance of these latter. Life is never constrained by any obligation of verisimili-

[13] *Editor's Note*: 'necroscopic' is an adjective meaning of or relating to post-mortem examinations or autopsies.

satisfaction, the thrill. The two extremes touch and interpenetrate each other. The project sweeps away these problems because it manages to see things in their globality. For the same reason the work of the revolutionary is necessarily linked to the project, it identifies with it, it cannot limit itself to partial aspects. For its part, a partial project is not a revolutionary project, it can be an excellent work project, it can engage comrades and resources even for long periods of time, but, sooner or later, it ends up being penalized in the face of the reality of the class conflict.

Theory and practice of insurrection (Excerpts)

by Alfredo M. Bonanno, first edition published by Edizioni Anarchismo *October 1985. Retrieved from fourth edition, published by* Edizioni Anarchismo *February 2025, crudely machine translated by Reeking Thickets Press with cursory manual corrections.*

(...)

Introduction to the second edition

(...) This book, which here sees its second edition, can also be read as an unpaired sequence of occasional documents and witty late justifications, necessary to put order into a practice that is indistinguishable at the moment of its implementation from any other intermediate activity against power. Hence a tired reading, stingy with itself, indulgent to details, attentive to contradictions and fueling unspeakable suspicions. By underlining only the overabundance of organizational attentions, the result is to magnify the formal moment, overshadowing the substantial one. One no longer looks at the things done (or to be done, always possible) and one resents the anguish of the attentions that claim to regulate the spontaneity of the confrontation with the enemy. In this way one closes oneself in a lair and like all lairs one is then obliged to defend it. The memory of possible transports, of flights dreamed of and never possessed, of sensations of lightness then counterbalances the sense of suffocation that one feels. The catacomb-like heaviness of the gesture, and of the thought, is thus exchanged for realism and concrete respect for objective relationships. From this moment on, whoever finds himself in this deplorable condition, before being overwhelmed by his devotion to suspicion, is better off suspending the reading begun with inappropriate arrogance.

Life is a source that makes water gush out in the place and under the circumstances it believes. But the water made to gush out in this way lays bare its own conformation, which is its being what it is and, in this sense alone, its own constancy. Which has nothing to do with an originality, with a necessary immutability, almost as if the nature of

...as specific actions carried out by affinity groups that are part of the informal organization; they do things they need to know how to do, because if you do things that are too big, too important, you herd people away. The newspapers immediately write, "These are terrorists," and people become reactive. They have to be important, but not too important. We're talking about another type of situation, called intermediate struggle or specific struggle; it's a different situation, in which there's a need for a larger organization than the informal organization. But everything that needs to be done must be done thoughtfully, reasoned. (...)

What is your perspective on the insurrectionary anarchist struggle in Europe today?

It's not easy. I don't know. For me, we anarchists made a grave mistake 10 or 12 years ago when we renounced—not me personally, but many other comrades did—the prospect of an informal, insurrectionary, anarchist international organization. The proposal was to unite more informal structures of struggle with the perspective that's in the Mediterranean, long before the No TAV insurrection, which dates back 15 years. (...)

And isn't this institutionalizing informality?

No, it's about institutionalizing an international relationship. Maintaining it within certain limits of international relations. That is, comrades exchange information. It's not an organization of struggle, but only of information. Regular meetings are held, information is exchanged, and then each informal organization, each affinity group, decides whether to use that information or not. It would have been a great tool for knowledge if it had worked. Not for struggle, but for knowledge to develop struggles. In itself, it's something formalized, but only for the exchange of information. That would have been a tool for perspective (...)

Insurrectionalist Anarchism (Excerpts)

by Alfredo Bonanno, first edition published by Edizioni Anarchismo *June 1999. Crude machine translation with cursory manual corrections by Reeking Thickets Press, 2025.*

(...)

Introduction to the first edition

An uncomfortable contradiction lurks, unresolved, within this book, and threatens to make the reader's task difficult.

I must say at once that these introductory lines will be of no help whatsoever. Yet, at the same time, for strictly logical purposes, they are indispensable.

The thesis supported here arises from a long journey of struggles and reflections, it is a troubled and complex thesis, difficult not only to expose - which could be a shortcoming of its author - but also to fix in a few clear elements, once and for all.

Here is the contradiction: the entire book, developed at different times, over a period of more or less fifteen years, is affected by the urgency and passion of the moment, this introduction, coldly, is not. Here I have the anatomical intention, which clashes with my whole being, to expose the fundamental elements of insurrectionist anarchism. Will it be possible? I don't know. I'll try. If reading these introductory notes were to threaten the reader's legitimate desire for fresh air too much, let them jump right in and good night to the bucket.[7]

The insurrection of large masses, or of an entire people, at a given moment, presupposes some elements that already exist, presupposes disintegrated social and economic conditions, if not a situation of extreme inability on the part of the State to maintain order and respect for the laws, but also presupposes individuals and groups of individuals capable of grasping this disintegration beyond the external signs with which it manifests itself. It is necessary, in other words, to be able to see beyond the motivations, often occasional and secondary, that accompany the first insurrectional fires, the first clashes, the first warning signs, in order to give one's own contribution to the struggle and not, on the contrary, to slow it down or underestimate it as simple and disordered intolerance to the political domination in office. But who are the individuals prepared to face this task? They could be the anarchists, not because of their basic ideological choice, their declared denial of any authority, but because of the critical capacity, which they should have, to evaluate methods of struggle and organizational projects.

Furthermore, only those who rebel, those who have already rebelled, even in the microcosm of their own life, those who have faced the consequences of this rebellion and lived them to the full, can have the sensitive nerves and the necessary intuitions to grasp the signs of the insurrectional movement in progress. Not all anarchists are rebels, just as not all rebels are anarchists. To complicate matters, it is not enough to be a rebel to understand the rebellion of others; one must also be open to understanding, to understanding the economic and social conditions that one faces, and not let oneself be swept away by the flood

[7] *Editor's Note:* 'Good night to the bucket' is an Italian expression of exasperation and/or surrender, vaguely similar to 'washing one's hands of something'. Often used in response to an overly challenging, optimistic, or frustrating statement or request. Possible origins include the experiences of a rope tied to a bucket hoisting water from a well breaking, or dumping out a bedpan before sleep.

sonal satisfaction, but because the search for this individual motivation can be preclusive of another broader and more significant search, one that is based on the totality of the intervention. To start with preconceptions about certain practices or theories means to hide – exclusively out of "fear" – behind the fact, almost always illusory, that we do not like those practices and theories. But every preconceived refusal is always based on the lack of knowledge of what is being rejected, on the little or no willingness to approach the thing that is being rejected. Today's satisfaction and joy are thus chosen as a definitive goal, in their immediacy they close us off from tomorrow's prospects. We become, without wanting to, fearful and dogmatic, hostile towards those who manage to overcome these obstacles, suspicious towards all those who approach us, discontented, unhappy.

The only acceptable limit is that of our (limited) possibilities. But even this limit can always be identified in the concrete fact and not suspected as existing *a priori*. I have always started from the hypothesis (evidently absurd, but operationally real) of being limitless, of having immense possibilities and capabilities. Then, practice, the practice of every day, took charge of showing me the objective limits of myself and of the things I have been doing. But these limits have never stopped me *a priori*, they have emerged as ineluctable obstacles *a posteriori*. No undertaking, however incredible or gigantic, has stopped me before starting it. Only afterwards, during the practices related to it, the modesty of my means and my capabilities has emerged but, even with its insurmountable presence, it has not been able to prevent me from achieving partial results which are then the only things humanly attainable.

But this fact is also a problem of mentality, that is, of the way of seeing things. Often we remain too tied to the immediately perceptible, to the socialist realism of the neighborhood, the city, the nation, etc. We are internationalists in words, but, in concrete facts, we prefer what is best known. In this way we close ourselves off from the outside and the inside. We reject real international relations, which are relations of mutual understanding, of overcoming barriers (including linguistic ones), of collaboration and mutual exchange. But we also reject specific local relations, with their characteristics, their internal contradictions, their myths and their difficulties. The funny thing is that the former refuse in the name of the latter and the latter in the name of the former.

The same thing happens with regard to specific, preparatory activities aimed at finding revolutionary means. Here too, delegating to other comrades is a fact that is often decided *a priori*. It is based on hesitations and fears that, if thoroughly explored, do not have much to say. The professionalism that is paraded elsewhere does not find hospitality in the anarchist methodology, but neither does the *a priori* refusal, or the preconceived closure. The same thing happens with regard to the mania for experience as an end in itself, the urgency of doing, personal

The decline of politics is not, in itself, at these levels, an element that can make one think of an "anarchic" turn in society, which, having become aware of its own primacy, opposes attempts at indirect political management. None of this. These are profound changes in the modern structure of capital, which is also becoming uniform at an international level, precisely because of the ever-increasing interdependence that exists today between the various peripheral realities. These changes determine, in turn, the impossibility of consensual control through the political myths of the past and the transition to methods of control more suited to the times. However, strange as it may seem, the crisis of politics, as a generalized phenomenon, will necessarily entail a crisis of hierarchical relationships, of delegation, etc., that is, of all those relationships that tend to dislocate in the ideological dimension what are the real terms of class opposition. This cannot remain for long without consequences also on the capacity of many people to understand that the struggle can no longer pass through the myths of politics, but must enter the concrete dimension of the immediate destruction of the enemy.

There are also those who, not wanting to understand, in essence, what the task of the revolutionary should be, become advocates, in the face of the social changes seen above, of methods of gentle opposition, which would claim to hinder the new domination with passive resistance. This is, in my opinion, a misunderstanding based on the fact that modern power, precisely because it is more permissive and more largely based on consensus, is thought to be less "strong" than that of the past, based on absolute hierarchy and centralization. It is a mistake like any other, and it derives from the fact that within each of us there remain the residues of a parallel: power-strength, which modern dominant structures are dismantling piece by piece. A weak but efficient power is, perhaps, a more effective power than a strong but crude power. The first penetrates the psychological tissues of society, right into the individual, involving them; the second remains external, raises its voice, bites, but, ultimately, only builds prison walls that sooner or later can be scaled.

The multiplicity of aspects of the project gives the revolutionary's work a multiple perspective. No field of possible activity can be excluded *a priori*. For the same reason, there cannot be privileged fields of intervention, fields "congenial" to the individual. I know comrades who do not feel inclined towards certain sectors of intervention – let's say the struggle for national liberation – or towards certain revolutionary practices, such as specific minority activity. The objections that support the refusal of a certain field of intervention are the most varied, but they all lead back to the (erroneous) idea that everyone must do the things that bring them the greatest possible satisfaction. This idea is wrong not because it is not right that one of the springs of action is joy and per-

of the sensational manifestations of the popular movement, even when the latter is sailing away with the wind in its sails and the first successes raise the flags of illusion. Criticism is always the first tool, the starting point, but let it be participatory criticism, criticism that involves the heart, that stirs the emotion of the actual clash against the usual enemies beat, with their faces ruined for the first time in the dust, and not a grim evaluation of the pros and cons.

But one rebel is not enough, even if a hundred rebels get together they are not enough, they will be a hundred molecules gone mad in the destructive arena of the first hours, when the fight blazes fiercely and spreads, overwhelming everything. Important figures, as an example and as a stimulus, the rebels end up succumbing to the needs of the moment. The more their conscience guides them to the attack, often as blind as it is effective and radical, the more they themselves realize an insurmountable limit, they cannot see an organizational outlet, they wait for suggestions to come from the masses in revolt, a word here, a word there, in the heat of the clash, in moments of pause when everyone wants to talk while waiting to resume the fight. And they do not realize that even in those exhilarating moments there are always politicians lurking. The masses, then, do not have the virtues that we are often led to grant them. The assembly is certainly not a place to put one's life at stake, but one's life is put at stake by the decisions that are taken in the assembly. And the political animals who raise their heads in these collective moments always have clear ideas about what to suggest, they have a nice program of recovery, of returning to normality, of calling to order in their pockets. Of course, they will not say any word that is less than correct, politically I mean, and therefore they will be mistaken for revolutionaries, but it is always them, the same political animals, who are laying the foundations for the reconstruction of future power, the one that will recover the revolutionary thrust by directing it towards more moderate counsels. Let's limit the destruction, comrades, please, after all it is what belongs to us that we are destroying, etc.

Shooting before others, and faster, is a Wild West virtue, good for a day, after which you have to know how to use your head, and using your head means having a plan.

And the anarchist cannot be only a rebel, but must be a rebel with a project. That is, he must unite heart and courage with knowledge and the foresight of action. His decisions will therefore always be illuminated by the fire of destruction, but fueled by the wood of critical analysis. Now, if we reflect for a moment, there is no project that can be born on the spot, as they say, in the midst of the fray. It would be stupid to think that everything must come from the insurgent people, a blind determinism that threatens to deliver us gagged into the hands of the first politician who, having climbed onto a chair, can indicate some organizational and programmatic lines, throwing smoke in our eyes with

four words rhetorically lined up one after the other. If the insurrection is largely a revolutionary moment of great collective creativity, a moment that can provide analytical suggestions of considerable intensity (think of the insurgent workers of the Paris Commune who shot at the clock towers), it cannot be the only source of theoretical and planning insight. The highest moments of the people in arms do indeed get rid of preventive hesitations and uncertainties, they make clear what was previously blurred, but they cannot illuminate something that is not there. Those moments are the powerful spotlight that makes a revolutionary and anarchist project possible, but this project, even in its methodological lines, must have existed beforehand, must have been elaborated beforehand, even if not in all its details, and, as far as possible, tested.

On the other hand, when we intervene in mass struggles, in clashes for intermediate demands, don't we do it almost exclusively to suggest our methodological heritage? Whether factory workers ask for work and try to avoid being fired, whether a group of homeless people try to get shelter, whether prisoners strike for a better life in prisons, whether students rebel against a school without culture, all this interests us up to a certain point. We know very well, when we participate in these struggles as anarchists, that however they end, the response in quantitative terms, that is, in terms of the growth of our movement, is very relative. Often the excluded even forget who we are, and there is no reason in the world to remember us, much less a reason based on gratitude. In fact, we have often asked ourselves, what are we doing, as anarchists and therefore revolutionaries, in the midst of these struggles for claims, we who are against work, against school, against any concession from the State, against property and even against any type of plea bargain that graciously grants a better life in prison. The answer is simple. We are here because we are the bearers of a different method. And our method takes shape in a project. We are alongside the excluded, in these intermediate struggles, because we are the suggesters of a different model, one based on the self-organization of struggles, on attack, on permanent conflict.[8] This is our strong point, and only in the event that the

[8] *Editor's Note*: From *The Insurrectional Project* by Bonanno (emphasis added),

> "By **permanent conflictuality** we mean uninterrupted struggle against class domination and those responsible for bringing it about. By **self-management** we mean independence from all parties, trades unions or patronage, as well as finding the means necessary for organising and carrying out the struggle on the basis of spontaneous contributions alone. By **attack** we mean the refusal of any negotiation, mediation, reconciliation or compromise with the enemy."

Expanding on these points from Bonanno's writings elsewhere we find that ***permanent conflictuality*** also encompasses not waiting for indications, deadlines, outrages, or appointments set by power, supposedly 'objective' conditions of the social struggle or of Capital/State, mass participation, or organizational decisions to enter into conflict, and the refusal to cease or betray our conflict against power or be pacified by reforms, replace-

well as authoritarian (this second aspect might sound less comprehensible to non-anarchist comrades), it leads to the deepening of aggregative processes. That is, it leads to the possibility of building an indirect aggregation based on affinity and informality, that is, a form of organizational reference that is not conditioned by organizational bases. Separate groups, united together by affinity and a common methodology, not by hierarchical relationships. Common objectives, common choices, but indirect, all desired through the objectivity of common choices, common analyses, common purposes. Everyone does their own thing and does not feel the need to propose direct aggregative relationships that end up, sooner or later, building hierarchical organizational charts (even if horizontal, as they claim to remain within the anarchist method) and that have the good result of being destroyed by every rise of the repressive wind. It is the myth of the quantitative that must fall. The myth of the numbers that impress the enemy, the myth of the "forces" to be sent into the field, the myth of the "liberation army" and other matters of the sort. Thus, almost without wanting it, old things are transformed into new ones. The models of the past: objectives and practices, are revolutionized internally. The definitive end of the political method emerges in the foreground, without a shadow of a doubt, the claim to re-present ideological models to impose on subversive practices.

In other respects, and all due proportions made, it is the whole world as a whole that is rejecting the political model. The "end" of politics is an everyday matter. Traditional political structures, with their strong connotations, are waning or have already faded. The parties of the left are conforming to those of the center and the parties of the right are increasingly moving towards the center so as not to remain isolated. This collapse of the political framework corresponds to a profound modification of the economic and social structures. New needs are emerging for those who have to think about managing the subversive potential of the great masses. The myths of the past, including that of the "controlled class struggle", are over. The great masses of exploited people have been sucked into mechanisms that clash with the political ideologies of yesterday, clear but superficial. This is why the parties of the left have moved closer to positions of the center, which, in essence, corresponds to a zeroing of political discriminants and to a possible management, on their own, of consensus, if only from an administrative point of view. It is the things to do, the very short-term programs, the management of public affairs, that focus the discriminants. Ideal (and therefore ideological) political projects have dried out. Nobody (or almost nobody) is available to fight for a communist society, but can once again be regimented within structures that claim to safeguard their immediate interests. Hence the growth in importance of municipal political struggles and alignments in relation to the broader political structures, national and supranational parliaments.

But this does not mean that this "recovery" must necessarily present the characteristics of absolute repetitiveness. Previous models can be subjected to criticism, even if, ultimately, they remain valid and therefore can constitute a non-negligible starting point. In this matter, one often feels oneself targeted by criticism, even uninformed and preconceived, and one wants to avoid, at all costs, the accusation of irreducibility, which sounds like a positive evaluation, but also contains a notable element of denunciation of the inability to understand the evolution of social conditions as a whole.

Therefore, the possibility of using old organizational models, provided they are subjected to radical criticism. But what could this criticism be? Mainly one: denunciation of the uselessness and danger of centralized and organizationally structured structures, denunciation of the mentality of delegation, denunciation of the myth of the quantitative, denunciation of the myth of the symbolic and the grandiose, denunciation of the myth of the use of mass media, etc. As can be seen, these are criticisms that show the other side of the revolutionary sky, the anarchic and libertarian side. Denying centralized structures, managerial organizational charts, delegation, the quantitative, the symbolic, informational entryism, etc., means fully entering into the anarchist methodology. And an anarchist proposition requires some preliminary considerations.

At the beginning, especially for those who are not deeply convinced of the necessity and validity of this method, it may seem (and, in some respects, it is) less effective. The results are more modest, less evident, they have all the appearance of dispersion and of not being traceable back to a unitary project. They are pulverized and diffuse results, that is, they derive from minimal objectives that do not seem immediately traceable back to a central enemy, at least as it appears in the descriptive iconographies drawn up by power itself. Many times power has an interest in showing the peripheral branches of itself, and of the structures that support it, under positive aspects, as if these branches fulfilled social functions indispensable to life. Instead, it hides very well, and very easily given our inability to denounce the connections, the relationship that passes between these peripheral structures and repression or the finding of consensus. Hence the notable task that falls to the revolutionary, who, by striking, also has to expect an initial incomprehensibility of his actions, hence the consequent need for clarification. And here lies a further trap. Translating these clarifications into ideological terms means re-presenting, in diffusion and peripherality, the exact conditions of concentration, of centrality. The anarchist method can never be explained through an ideological filter. When this has happened, our method has simply been juxtaposed to practices and projects that possessed very little of the libertarian.

From the denunciation of delegation, as a deleterious practice, as

excluded accept this method of attack, are we willing to fight together with them, even for an objective that in itself remains of a claim-based nature.

A method would still remain a dead letter, a collection of meaningless words, if it could not articulate itself into a project, a project capable of taking substance from the specific problem that the excluded find themselves facing. Many anxious critics of anarchist insurrectionism would have returned to their interrupted sleep if they had paid attention to this aspect. What is the point of reproaching us for being stuck on methodological demands that are a hundred years old, when no attention has been paid to what we say? The insurrectionism we speak of is something other than the glorious days on the barricades, even if it could, at certain specific moments, have in hand the most appropriate suggestions for a struggle that is directed towards a clash on the barricades. Only that in itself, as a revolutionary theory and analysis, as a method embodied in a project, it does not necessarily take this apocalyptic moment into account, but develops and deepens regardless of the waving of flags and the flashing of rifles.

Many comrades are fully aware of the need for attack, and they do their best to make it happen. They vaguely perceive the beauty of the clash and of facing the class enemy, but they do not want to subject themselves to a minimum of critical reflection, they do not want to hear talk of revolutionary projects, and they persist, in this way, in wasting the enthusiasm of their rebellion which, directed into a thousand rivulets, ends up dying out in small and disunited manifestations of intolerance. There is, obviously, no uniform typology of these comrades, it can be said that each of them constitutes a universe apart, but all, or almost all, have in common the annoyance with any discussion

ments of hierarchy, or partial achievements. Instead, this means seaking out the enemy and engaging in an immediate, continuous and effective, unceasing struggle against all domination, rather than a sporadic, occasional, or conditional one. ***Self-management*** includes the principle supporting free autonomy for everyone, and the group not being controlled by a vanguard or clique, including the perhaps smaller collective that initially acted to form the group, or people with particular identities or specializations. It also includes the hostility to not just blatant hierarchy but also democratic procedures, massified representations of false consensus, bureaucratic, dogmatic, or hegemonically-determined structuring of individuals or the group, and internalized roles within oppression. As well, rejection of delegation and representation, and the refusal to act as delegate or representative for others. ***Attack*** additionally indicates the active, practical affirmation of the necessity of the offensive rupture of social peace and the successful material destruction of power where it's embodied, and the rejection of pacifism (none of this contradicting the point that armed or 'violent' action is also not seen as an inherently privileged or self-sufficient method, or as a mandate for every individual or group to personally engage in directly at all moments). This also means a rejection of the limiting of force to solely defensive stances, symbolic expression, or the achievement of standoffs, and rejection of the orientation which aims just to achieve some niche for 'revolutionaries' to escape to and live separately from domination, undisturbed and, in turn, not disturbing the dominant order they coexist with.

that requires clarifications of a methodological nature. Distinctions annoy them. What sense does it make, they tell me, to talk about affinity groups, informal organization, basic nuclei, coordination? Isn't it all clear, aren't the abuse and injustice, exploitation and ferocity of power right there in front of us, clearly visible, aren't they embodied in men and things that lie in the sun as if nothing could disturb them? What's the point of dwelling on discussions that are a waste of time? Why not attack immediately, here and now, or rather, why not turn to the first uniform that comes to hand? After all, even a "sensible" person like Malatesta was in a certain sense of this opinion when he said he preferred individual rebellion to the wait-and-see attitude that waits until the world is turned upside down before acting.

Personally, I have never had anything against it, on the contrary. Rebellion is the first step, the essential condition for the bridges to be burned behind us, for the connections that, with a thousand very strong threads, tie us to society and to power, to be if not severed at least weakened, the connections with the family, with the dominant morality, with work, with obedience to the laws. But, I believe that this step is not enough. I believe that we must go further, reflect on the possibilities of giving greater organizational strength to our action, so that the rebellion transforms into a projectual intervention towards generalized insurrection, so that from the individual insurrection, the first and necessary step, we go further.

That this second moment is not congenial to many comrades is a very evident fact. Therefore, from feeling themselves extraneous to any effort in this direction they pass to an underestimation of the problem, or worse still to a contempt for all the other comrades who dedicate attention and effort to the organizational problem.

This book tries to provide some essential elements for considering, in depth, the organizational aspect of insurrectionalist anarchism. In particular, it addresses the problems of affinity, and therefore of affinity groups, of informality, and therefore of informal organization, of self-organization of struggles, and therefore of base nuclei and coordination between these nuclei constituted by anarchists and non-anarchists with affinity groups, constituted by anarchists, through informal organization.

As can be seen, the topic has quite difficult methodological characteristics, therefore it requires the availability of some concepts, often distorted due to their common meaning not always coinciding fully with the meaning they assume in the context of an insurrectionalist organizational theory, and which mainly requires a little critical attention, that is, that we free ourselves from the preconceptions that sometimes limit our view without us realizing it.

This introduction, in the following pages, will be more schematic on these concepts, the text will be more structured but perhaps more

it is not the "cause" of the action. The project, if correctly understood, is action itself, while the action is project itself in that it increases it, enriches it, transforms it.

Not understanding these fundamental premises of revolutionary work often causes confusion and frustration. Many comrades, who remain tied to interventions that we can define as reflexive, often suffer backlashes similar to demotivation, to discouragement. An external fact (repression, almost always), determines the stimulus to an intervention. When that fact stops, or runs out, the intervention no longer has any reason to exist. Hence the (frustrating) observation that one is forced to return to where one was before. One has the impression of wanting to dig out a mountain with a spoon. People do not remember, they quickly forget. Aggregation does not occur. There are almost always few of us. Almost always the same old people. Until the advent of the next external stimulus, the experiences of the comrade who knows how to act only reflexively, survive by often going from radical refusal to closing in on himself, from indignant silence to fantasies of destroying the world (including human beings). Many other comrades remain tied to interventions that we can define as routine, that is, tied to literary (newspapers, magazines, books) or assembly (congresses, conventions, debates, assemblies) anniversaries. Here too, human tragedy is quick to make its appearance. Most of the time it is not so much a matter of personal frustration (which is also there, and it shows), but of the transformation of the comrade into a congressional bureaucrat or an editor of more or less readable sheets that try to hide their own inconsistency of proposals by following the events to explain them in the critical light of their own point of view. As you can see, the tragedy is always the same.

The project is therefore necessarily proactive. It is the element that concludes and consolidates the affinity. This, starting from the knowledge between the different companions who are part of the affinity group, blossoms in the planning ground, where it grows and bears fruit. Being proactive, the project cannot help but take the initiative. First of all, an operational initiative: the things to do, seen in a certain way. Then, an organizational initiative: how to do these things. Many do not realize that the things to do (class opposition) are not codified once and for all, but that they take on different meanings over time and in the course of social relations. This entails the need for theoretical evaluations of the things to do. The fact that some of these things persist longer as if they were immobile, does not mean that they are immobile. For example, that there is a need to organize to strike the class enemy, entails, as a necessity, a permanence in time. Organizational means and methods tend to crystallize. And, in some respects, it is good that it is so. It is not necessary to invent everything from scratch every time one reorganizes, perhaps after having suffered the blows of repression.

others badly. He becomes easily suspicious, if nothing else anxious to be understood, and for this reason he accumulates more and more a jumble of contradictory reasoning, without being able to find a common thread. The solution, to get out of the labyrinth, would be action. But action, to be such, according to this model of polarization that we are examining, must first be subjected to the dominion of the brain, of logic, of reasoning. In this way, action is killed or postponed, or experienced badly because it is not understood, because it is not brought back to the primacy of thought.

On the other hand, the constancy of doing, the deployment of one's life in the things to be accomplished. Today, tomorrow. Day after day. Perhaps waiting for a particular day that will put an end to this postponement forward to infinity. But, in the meantime, no, or almost no, search for a moment of reflection that is not exclusively pertinent to the things to be done. The primacy of doing kills like the primacy of thinking. In action, in and of itself, there is no overcoming of the contradictory moment of the individual. For the revolutionary, things are even worse. The classic courtships, which the individual develops to convince himself of the usefulness and completeness of the action he wants to do, are not enough for the revolutionary. The only expedient he can resort to is the postponement forward, to a better time, when it will no longer be necessary to dedicate oneself exclusively to doing and one will also be able to think. But how will one be able to think without the means to do so? Is thinking an automatic activity of man when he stops acting? Certainly not. In the same way that doing is not an automatic activity of man when he stops thinking.

Having possessed certain things, courage, perseverance, creativity, materiality, the revolutionary can make the most of the means he possesses and, with these, build his project. And this will have to concern the analytical aspects and the practical aspects. Once again a division arises that in order to be eliminated must be deepened to the very core, that is, in its real dimension of commonplace of the dominant logic. A project is analysis (political, social, economic, philosophical, etc.), but it is also an organizational proposal.

No project can be only one or the other of these aspects. Each analysis receives a different angle and a different development if it is inserted in one organizational proposal rather than another. And vice versa, an organizational proposal becomes well-founded only if it is supported by a suitable analysis.

The revolutionary who is unable to master the analysis and organizational element of his project will always be at the mercy of events, constantly arriving just after things, never before. The purpose of the project is in fact to see in order to foresee. The project is a prosthesis, like any other intellectual elaboration of man, to allow action, to make it possible, to not nullify it in the useless debate of improvisation, but

difficult to follow if one does not first master these key concepts.

An anarchist group can also be formed among complete strangers. It often happened to me to enter the headquarters of anarchist groups, in Italy and in other countries, and to know almost no one. The mere presence in a given place, the attitude, the way of speaking and of presenting oneself, the discussion, the personal declarations more or less imbued with the basic ideological choices of the most orthodox anarchism, make an anarchist, in a short time, feel at ease communicating with the comrades present in the best possible way and with mutual satisfaction.

It is not my intention here to talk about how an anarchist group can be organized. There are many ways and each person chooses their own comrades as they see fit. But there is a particular way to form an anarchist group, and that is the one that takes into account first of all, but not exclusively, this is obvious, the real or presumed affinity between all the participants.

Now, this affinity is a good that is not found in any declaration of principle, in any *a priori* program, in any participation in specific struggles, in any attestation of "militancy" however far back in time this goes. Affinity is a good that is gained through mutual knowledge. This is why there are cases in which one presumes to be in affinity with someone only to discover later that one is not at all, and vice versa. An affinity group is therefore a crucible in which affinity relationships mature and are cemented.

But since perfection is the business of angels and not of human beings, affinity must also be taken into consideration with intellectual acumen and not stupidly accepted as the panacea for all our weaknesses. I can discover that I am in affinity with someone only if I put myself at risk with respect to this someone, that is, I reveal myself, I remove all the pretenses that usually protect me like a second skin, harder and tougher than the physical one. And this revelation of mine cannot happen only with chatter, telling about myself, waiting to register the chatter of the other, but must happen in the things to do together, in action. There are small signals that we often do not control in doing, that are much more significant than the words that we control better in speaking. And it is from the set of these mutual exchanges that the conditions necessary for mutual knowledge develop.

If the entire activity of the group is not directed to doing for doing's sake, to the aim of growing quantitatively, to the aim of becoming a hundred while yesterday there were only ten, if this numerical calculation remains in the background, while the essential aim becomes and remains the qualitative one of feeling the other companions, of feeling them united and participating in one's own tension towards action, in one's desire to transform the world, if this happens, we are in the presence of an affinity group. Otherwise, the search for affinity is, once

again, the search for a shoulder to lean on to shed the tears that we all feel the urgency of.

The formation of an affinity group is therefore not a matter linked exclusively to theoretical discussions, but essentially flows into the practical activity of the group, into the choices it makes to intervene in reality, in social struggles, because it is through these choices, and these struggles, that each individual participant can deepen his knowledge with all the other companions, and here, in this multiple and complex process, also insert theoretical deepening. Affinity, if on the one hand is mutual knowledge, on the other, is knowledge in action, in practice, in the realization of one's ideas. The backward glance that I allow my companions regarding what they are, is thus reabsorbed in the forward glance that all together, me and them, cast into the future when we build a project together, that is, we decide to intervene in the reality of the struggles and we try to understand how and in which direction we can intervene. The two moments, the backward one, consisting in the moment of let's say individual knowledge, and the forward one, the planning one, consisting in let's say group knowledge, are welded together and constitute the affinity of the group itself, allowing the latter to be considered in all respects an "affinity group".

The condition thus obtained is not a good fixed once and for all. It moves, develops and regresses, it changes in the course of struggles and, within the struggles, it takes nourishment to change theoretically and practically. There is no monolith, no decision from the top, no faith to swear by, no decalogue[9] to rely on in moments of doubt and fear. Everything must be discussed within the group and during the struggles, everything must be reconsidered from scratch, even when it seems that there are fixed points guaranteed forever.

The development of an intervention project remains the common heritage of the affinity group since this is precisely the most suitable place for the study and analysis of the conditions in which one decides to operate. Thus, apparently, the affinity group, compared to the group adhering to a synthesis organization, has a more limited vision of its own possibilities for intervention. But the breadth of interests of an anarchist synthesis structure is only apparent. In fact, within the synthesis organization the group receives a direction at the time of the congress and, while remaining free to concern itself with all the problems that characterize a society divided into classes, in essence, it operates in the direction dictated by the congress.

Furthermore, being bound by programmatic principles accepted once and for all, it is far from being able to decide differently, and not being able to do so it does not do so, and by not doing so it ends up adapt-

[9] *Editor's Note:* a decalogue is a list of ten rules or laws, usually referring to the Ten Commandments of Christianity.

ability to understand that in order to act, suitable means are needed for action is not a simple thing. The issue of means seems very clear, but it causes misunderstandings. Let's take the case of money. There is no doubt that without money we cannot do the things we want to do. There is no doubt that a revolutionary cannot ask the State for funding to build those projects aimed at destroying the State itself. He cannot ask for it for an ethical reason and then for a logical reason (the State would not give it to him). He cannot even seriously think that with small (and, as a rule, modest) personal subscriptions one can do all the things one wants to do (and that one considers necessary to do). He cannot even continue to cry endlessly about the lack of money or resign himself to the fact that given the lack of money, some things that should be done cannot be done. Nor can he assume for long the position of someone who, being penniless, feels perfectly at peace with himself by saying he has none and does not participate in the common effort waiting for others to do what needs to be done in his place. Of course, it is clear that if a comrade does not have money he is not obliged to pay what he cannot afford to pay, but is it really true that he has done everything he could to get the money? Or is there only one way to find money: to go and beg for it, being exploited by the bosses? I really don't think so.

In the range of variations of a possible way of being, personal tendencies and cultural acquisitions polarize two borderline behaviors that are both limited and penalizing. On the one hand, the one who privileges the theoretical moment; on the other, the one who encloses himself in the practical moment. These two polarizations are almost never in a "pure state," but are often characterized enough to become impediments.

The great possibilities that theoretical study places at the disposal of the revolutionary remain a dead letter, indeed, they become an element of contradiction and obstacle, when they are exasperated to infinity. There are those who do not know how to do anything other than think theoretically about life. It is not necessary for them to be a man of letters or a scholar (for these people, this would be almost normal), but they can also be any proletarian, an outcast who grew up on the street fighting. This search for the resolving hypothesis through the subtlety of reasoning transforms into a disorganized anxiety, a tumultuous desire to understand that inevitably transforms into pure confusion, lowering that primacy of the brain that one wants to maintain at any cost. These exasperations reduce the critical possibility of putting one's ideas in order, they broaden the creative possibility of the individual but only in a pure state, one could say in a wild state, providing images and judgments absolutely devoid of an organizational method that can make them usable. The subject lives in a kind of trance, eats badly, has a terrible relationship with his own body, experiences relationships with

from revolutionary practice are indispensable for action. Languages, economics, philosophy, mathematics, natural sciences, chemistry, social sciences, and so on. All this knowledge must not be seen as areas of specialization, but neither as amateurish exercises of a whimsical spirit that pinches left and right, eager to know but constantly ignorant because it does not possess a method that allows it to learn. And then the techniques: writing correctly (and also in a way that is suitable for the purpose one wants to achieve); speaking to others (with all the techniques of speaking, which are not easy and of great importance); studying (which is also a technique and must be studied as such to facilitate learning and not as a specialization in itself); remembering (which can be improved and not always be left to the more or less natural disposition that we carry with us from childhood); manipulating objects, that is, the use of the hands, (which many consider a mysterious gift of nature but which instead is a technique that can be learned and perfected); and others. The search for means is an effort that never ends. Their improvement, like their expansion to different fields, is a constant commitment of the revolutionary.

Then there is a third thing: creativity. There is no doubt that the set of means that are being built would not be productive and would drown in specialism as an end in itself if it did not produce, immediately or after a certain time, new experiences, profoundly transforming the individual, which from these experiences modifications are continuously produced in the set of means themselves and in the possibilities of their use. It is here that one can grasp the strength of creativity, that is, the fruit of previous efforts. Logical processes remain behind, they become a background fact, a negligible element, while a new element emerges, total and different, intuition.

The problem is now seen differently. Not as before. Countless connections and comparisons, inferences and deductions, occur without us realizing it. The whole set of means we have come into possession of vibrates and becomes alive. Memories and new understandings, old things not understood that now become clear, ideas and tensions. An incredible mixture that is itself a creative fact and that must be immediately subjected to the discipline of the method, to the dominion of techniques, so that it can produce something, limited if you like, but immediately perceptible and usable. Unfortunately, the fate of creativity is that its immense initial explosive potential (which becomes a miserable thing in the absence of the basic means we were talking about before) must subsequently be brought back within the limits of technique in the strict sense, it must become word, page, figure, sound, form, object. Otherwise, outside the schemes of this small communicative prison, it remains abandoned and dispersed in the sea of incommensurability.

And finally, one last thing: materiality. The ability, that is, to grasp the material, real foundation of what surrounds us. For example, the

ing to the rigid limits set by the organization at the congress, which as a necessary and inevitable condition provide first of all for the protection of the organization itself, that is, "disturbing" the power as little as possible to avoid being "banished". The affinity group avoids all these limits, some easily, others only with the courage of the decisions of the comrades who are part of it. This does not take away the fact that this type of structure cannot give courage to comrades who do not possess it themselves, it cannot suggest decisions to attack if there is not the soul of the rebel in each of them, it cannot act if everyone decides to think only of afternoon chatter.

Having studied the problems of reality, found the necessary documents, formulated the analyses, the affinity group decides to take the initiative. This is one of the fundamental characteristics of this type of anarchic structure. It does not wait for problems to arrive like a spider in the middle of its web, it goes looking for them, it urges them towards a solution that, once proposed, must obviously be accepted by the reality of excluded people who directly suffer the negative consequences of the problem. But to make a project proposal to a social context that is suffering a particular attack from power, a specific, limited attack, identifiable in one or more repressive sources and in a given territory, it is necessary to be physically present among the excluded, in that territory, and to have an in-depth knowledge of the problems that characterize the repressive fact in progress.

Thus the affinity group always ends up moving towards a localized intervention, addressing a specific problem together with the people, creating all those conditions, psychological and practical, individual and collective, of theoretical study and availability of means, so that that problem is addressed with the methodological characteristics that are those of insurrectionalism: self-organization, permanent conflict, attack.

Not always does a single affinity group have the practical and theoretical capacity to arrive at such an intervention. Often, at least from what the experiences (few and often controversial) have shown, the level of the problem, the complexity of the intervention, the vastness of the territory, the gradual nature of the means to be employed in spreading the suggested project model in collaboration with the ideas and needs of the local people, make the union of larger forces necessary. Hence the need to maintain constant contact with other affinity groups, in order to plan a larger intervention, to adapt the number of companions, the availability of means and the clarity of ideas to the complexity and size of the problem to be addressed. This is how the informal organization was born.

Several anarchist affinity groups join together to form an informal organization, which has as its goal the problem that made the intervention of a single affinity group inadequate. Naturally, all the groups

participating in the informal organization must share the intervention in its broad outlines, in order to then participate in both practical actions and theoretical elaborations. In practice, it often happens that affinity groups have informal relationships among themselves that in the long run end up becoming constant, that is, solidifying in periodic meetings, preparatory to specific struggles or – even better – meetings held during some struggles. This makes it easier for information to circulate about individual interventions in progress, projects in progress, requests that come from some part of the world of the excluded.

The "functioning" of an informal organization is very simple. There are no names that distinguish it because there are no goals of quantitative growth. There are no fixed structures (apart from the individual affinity groups, each of which does its work completely autonomously), the term "informal" would otherwise no longer make sense. There are no "constitutive" moments, there are no congresses but simple periodic meetings (preferably to be held during the struggles themselves), there are no programs, but only the common heritage of insurrectional struggles and the methodology that distinguishes them: self-organization, permanent conflict, attack.

On the positive side, the purpose of the informal organization is that which is given to it by the individual affinity groups that constitute it. As a rule, in the few experiences that have been made, it is a specific problem, let's say the destruction of the missile base in Comiso in the two-year period 1982-1983, but it could also be a series of interventions, for which the informal organization is structured in such a way as to provide a possibility of intervention to the individual groups in different situations, for example alternating commitments when it is a question of being present for a long time in a given place (in Comiso, the groups present remained there for two years). Another purpose could be to make available analytical and practical means of research but also financial support, which the individual group might not possess.

Always positively, the primary function of the informal organization is to allow the knowledge of the various affinity groups and the companions that compose them. If we think about it carefully, it is a different degree of search for affinity. This time, within the limits assigned by the objective to be achieved, the search for affinity, intensified by the part of the project, but not excluding the deepening of the single individual knowledge, occurs at the level of several groups. It can be deduced that the informal organization is also an affinity structure, being in fact based on the set of affinity groups that constitute it.

These considerations, which we have been making in a more or less detailed way for almost fifteen years now, should have made all the comrades involved understand in time the nature of the informal organization. It does not seem that things are like this. The most serious misunderstanding comes, in my opinion, from the desire - latent

action.

But this mutual conversion of practical action into theoretical action and of theory into practice cannot happen as something artificially superimposed. In the sense, for example, of someone who, having completed an action, prints his own document of claims on it. The enemy's ideas, in this way, are neither criticized nor deepened. They crystallize within the ideological process and are seen as massively opposed to the ideas of the attacker, which are also transformed into something massively ideological. I believe that few things are as hateful to me as this way of proceeding.

Is there anything else to do?

The place of the conversion of theory into practice, and vice versa, is the place of the project. It is the project, in its articulated whole, that makes practical action and the criticism of the enemy's ideas differently significant.

It follows that the work of the revolutionary is, essentially, the elaboration and realization of a project.

But, before knowing what a revolutionary project could be, we need to agree on what things the revolutionary must possess in order to work on the elaboration of his own project.

First of all, courage. Not the banal kind of physical confrontation or assault on the enemy trench, but the more difficult kind of one's own ideas. If one thinks in a certain way, if one has a certain evaluation of things and men, of the world and its affairs, one must have the courage to go all the way, without compromise, without half measures, without pietism, without illusions. Stopping halfway is criminal or, if you prefer, absolutely normal. But the revolutionary is not a "normal" man. He must go beyond, beyond normality, but also beyond exceptionality, which is the aristocratic way of considering diversity. Beyond good, but also beyond evil, someone would say.

He cannot wait for others to do what needs to be done. He cannot delegate to others what his conscience dictates to him to do. He cannot peacefully accept that in other places, other men like him, like him burning and eager to destroy those who oppress us, do the things that he himself could do, if only he wanted to, if only he would emerge from the torpor and the deceptions, the chatter and the misunderstandings. Therefore, he must labor, and labor hard. Labor to provide himself with the necessary means with which to give a suitable foundation to his convictions.

And here comes the second thing: perseverance. The strength to continue, to persevere, to insist, even when others become discouraged and everything seems difficult.

There is no way to obtain the means one needs except through constant labor. The revolutionary needs cultural means, that is, analysis, basic knowledge, institutional insights. Even studies that seem very far

police station, the minister and the ministry (also the building where the ministry is located), the priest and the church (also the place where the cult of deception and lies takes place), the banker and the bank, the speculator and his office, and all the way down to the individual spy and his more or less comfortable apartment on the outskirts. The State is this articulated thing, or it is nothing: a vain abstraction, a theoretical model, impossible to attack and defeat.

Of course, the State is also inside us, and inside others. So it is also an idea. But, in its being an idea, it is subordinate to the physical places and physical bodies that realize it. An attack on the idea of the State (even the one we harbor inside ourselves, often without realizing it), is possible only while we are physically and destructively attacking its historical materialization, that is, its being there before us in flesh and blood and in bricks and concrete.

But how to attack? Things are hard. Men defend themselves and take precautions. The choice of means of attack is also the victim of a similar misunderstanding to the one above.

We can attack (indeed we must) with ideas, opposing criticism to criticism, logic to logic, analysis to analysis. But this would be a useless exercise if it were to happen in an isolated way, detached from a direct intervention on the things and men of the State (and of capital, of course). Therefore, in correlation with what was said before, I do not only attack with ideas, but also attack with weapons. I see no other way out. Limiting oneself to an ideological contest contributes to providing elements to the enemy. Therefore, theoretical deepening parallel and contemporary to the practical attack.

Moreover, it is precisely in the attack that theory is transformed into practice and practice takes on its theoretical foundations. Limiting oneself to theory one remains in the field of idealism, a typical bourgeois philosophy, which for hundreds of years has fed the safes of the ruling class and also the concentration camps of right-wing and left-wing exterminators. It does not matter if this idealism has sometimes disguised itself as (historical) materialism, it was always that old idealism that devoured men. A libertarian materialism must necessarily overcome the separation between idea and fact. If the enemy is identified, it must be struck, and struck in an appropriate way. Not so much appropriate to the optimal evaluations of its destruction, evaluations made by the attacker; but to the general situation which constitutes a non-negligible part of the enemy's defenses and possibilities of emergence and increase in dangerousness. If one strikes it, one must do so by destroying a part of its structure, thus making the functioning of the whole more difficult. All this, considered in isolation, runs the risk of remaining insignificant. That is, it fails to convert into something real. For this transformation to occur, the attack must be accompanied by a critical examination of the enemy's ideas, those ideas that are part of his repressive and oppressive

in some of us - to show our muscles, to give ourselves a strong organizational structure, because there would be no other means to fight a power, in turn, muscular and strong. The first characteristics of a strong structure, according to these comrades (more or less clearly) should be specificity and robustness, stability over time and high visibility, in order to constitute almost a beacon in the fog of the struggles of the excluded, a beacon, a guide, a point of reference. Alas! We do not share this opinion. The entire economic and social analysis of post-industrial capitalism makes it clear that of such a structure, strong and visible to the naked eye, the power would make a mouthful. The disappearance of a class centrality (at least of what in the past had been mistaken for centrality) makes an attack conducted by rigid structures, clearly visible and strong in their articulations, impracticable. In the event that these structures were not destroyed at first impact, they would certainly be co-opted into the sphere of power with the task of recovering and recycling the most irreducible elements. But on this point we refer you to the reading of the texts presented here, certainly much more convincing.

As long as the affinity group remains closed within itself, a group of comrades who give themselves rules and respect them, and by remaining closed here I mean not only not leaving its own headquarters, limiting itself to the usual discussions between initiates to the work, but also responding with appropriate declarations and documents to the various repressive deadlines proposed by power, as long as things remain at this level, the affinity structure differs from any other anarchist group only in the apparent aspects, in the words, in the "political" choices, in the way of interpreting the different responses to be given to the claims of power to regulate our lives, the lives of all the excluded.

The deep meaning, the essential purpose of its being a “different” structure, that is, based on organizational choices different from all other anarchist groups, precisely the affinity, comes to be effectively operative only in the setting of a specific project of struggle. And the characterizing element of this project, beyond the words or motivations that make it more or less analytically in-depth and practically effective, is given by the presence of the excluded, that is, of the people, in short of the masses, more or less numerically consistent, who suffer the repressive effects of the power against which that project is directed by resorting to the use of the insurrectionalist method.

The participation of the masses is therefore the founding element of the insurrectional project and, starting from the condition of affinity of the individual anarchist groups that participate in it, it is also the founding element of this affinity itself, which would remain a poor elite camaraderie if limited to the mutual search for a deeper personal knowledge between comrades.

However, it would be a contradiction to think of making people become anarchists by suggesting that they join our groups in order to face

the struggle in an anarchic way. It would not only be a contradiction, but a horrible ideological forcing and would upset the whole meaning of affinity groups and of any informal organization born to face the repressive attack that at a certain moment, in a given territory, a more or less consistent part of the excluded suffers from the power.

However, since it is necessary to create organizational structures capable of bringing together the excluded in order to begin attacks against repression, it is necessary to give life to autonomous basic nuclei, which obviously can take any other name that indicates the concept of self-organization.

Here we are at the central point of the insurrectional project: the constitution of the autonomous basic nuclei (for convenience we accept this term here).

Their essential characteristic, immediately visible and understandable, is that they include anarchists and non-anarchists.

But there are other points that are more difficult to understand, and that in the very few occasions of practical experimentation have proved to be the source of many misunderstandings. First of all, their being quantitative structures. If they are structures of this type, and in fact they are, it must be made clear that they have a particular characteristic. They are real points of reference, not fixed places where people are counted and therefore where it is necessary to implement all those procedures that make the aggregative persistence possible over time (membership, payment of a participation fee, provision of services, etc.). Since the autonomous basic nuclei have only the purpose of fighting, they function like a real lung in its respiratory function, they swell when the fight intensifies and reduce when the fight weakens to swell again at the time of the next clash. In the dead spots, between one commitment and another – and here by commitment we mean any moment of struggle, even the distribution of a simple leaflet, participation in a rally, but also the occupation of a building or the sabotage of an instrument of power – the nucleus remains as a zonal reference, as a sign of an informal organizational presence.

Thinking that a stable quantitative growth of the autonomous base nuclei is possible means transforming them into para-union organisms, that is, something similar to the Cobas,[10] which defend the rights of workers in the various productive sectors, proposing a wide range of defensive and claim-making interventions in favor of their representatives, with the consequence that the higher the number of delegations,

[10] 'Cobas' is the *Confederazione dei Comitate di Base*, an Italian 'rank and file' union which like similar others in Italy and elsewhere (for example *Avanguardia Operaia*) is based on a movementist, vaguely social-democratic, but also Trotskyist and covertly vanguardist recuperation of the genuinely radical and autonomous worker's form pioneered in Italy in the '60s of the CUB's (Unitary Committees of the Base) and similar 'Worker-Student Leagues'.

The revolutionary project

Grasping the different aspects of revolutionary intervention is not an easy thing. Grasping them all together, inserted in a comprehensive proposal that has its own intrinsic logic and a valid operational articulation, is even more difficult. This is what I mean by revolutionary project.

We (almost always) understand each other well enough when it comes to identifying the enemy. In the vagueness of the definition we place the elements that come from our experiences (sufferings and joys), from our social situation, from our culture. Everyone believes they have suitable elements to draw a map of the enemy's territory and to identify objectives and responsibilities.

That things are not this way is also normal. But we do not care. When the opportunity arises, we prepare the appropriate changes and move on.

The way forward is obscure, the things that surround us are obscure, we light ourselves only and exclusively with the miserable candle of ideology and, sure as behind the guidance of a lighthouse, we move forward.

The tragic fact is that the things that surround us change, often quickly. The terms of the class relationship, which in the contradictory situation continually expand and contract, reveal themselves today only to hide themselves again tomorrow. Thus, the certainties of yesterday fall into the darkness of today.

Whoever maintains a constant, though not immobile, directional pole is not taken for what he actually is, that is, an honest navigator of the sea of class perplexities, but is taken for a stubborn repeater of outdated schemes and abstract ideological metaphors. Whoever persists in seeing the enemy behind the uniform, behind the factory, behind the ministry, behind the school, behind the church, etc., is looked upon with condescension. Things, in their harsh reality, are replaced by abstract relationships, ways of being, relative positions. The State, thus, ends up becoming a way of seeing things, and not a material fact, constituted by men and things. The result is that the ideas of the State cannot be fought without attacking the men and things of the State. Wanting to fight them in isolation, in the hope that the material reality underlying them will change as a result of their fall into the critical abyss of logical contradictions, is a tragic idealist illusion. And this is what happens in times like these, when struggles and operational proposals retreat.

No anarchist, out of self-respect, would admit the positive function of the State. Hence the logical deduction that if this function is not positive it must be negative, that is, it must harm someone for the benefit of someone else. But the State is not (only) the idea of the State, it is also the "thing State", and this "thing" is made up of the policeman and the

exactly infinitely, but almost. Otherwise it would not have the capacity to intervene in the different realities and could not even hypothesize its own main task which is, precisely, that of proceeding to their synthesis in a single point of reference.

Now, those who have quantitative growth as their primary goal must use intervention tools that can guarantee proselytism and pluralism. In the face of every problem, they cannot take a clear and straightforward position, which often turns out to be unpopular with most, but must find a middle ground, a political path that displeases the few and is acceptable to the most.

Again, on some issues, such as repression and prisons in particular, the most correct position is often very dangerous, and no group can jeopardize an organization to which it belongs without first reaching an agreement with the other groups. But this can only happen at a congress, or at least at an extraordinary conference, and everyone knows that it is precisely in these places that the most moderate opinion always prevails and certainly not the most advanced. Thus, the presence of the organization of synthesis within real struggles, struggles that are inserted into the heart of the class conflict, constitutes a brake and a control (often involuntary, but still a control).

The informal organization does not have these problems. Affinity groups and comrades who recognize themselves in an informal project area are together in fact and certainly not because of their adherence to a program set in a congress. The project in which they recognize themselves is realized by themselves, by their analyses and their actions. It may find an occasional point of reference in a newspaper or in a series of meetings, but this is only to facilitate things, while it has nothing to do with congresses or other matters of the sort. The comrades who identify with an informal organization are automatically part of it. They keep in touch with other comrades, through the newspaper or other means, but, what is more important, they keep in touch by participating in the various actions, demonstrations, meetings, etc. that, from time to time, are realized. The central point of verification and deepening is given by seeing each other in moments of struggle that, at the beginning, can also be simply moments of theoretical verification and then become something else.

In an informal organization there is no problem of synthesis, there is no desire to be present in different situations and much less to formulate a project that brings the struggles back into the fold of a previously approved program.

The only point of reference is the insurrectional methodology: in other words the self-organization of struggles, permanent conflict and attack.

the stronger the voice of the organism proposing the claim. The autonomous base nucleus has none of this. It does not propose a struggle for claims with the method of requests and delegation, it does not propose a protest on generic objectives that can range from the defense of the job, to the increase in wages, to the protection of health in factories, etc. The base nucleus is born and dies with its only objective identified at the moment of starting the struggle, an objective that in itself can also have a claim-making nature, but is not sought with the representative method of delegation, but with the direct method of immediate struggle, of permanent and unannounced attack, of the refusal of any political force that claims to represent someone or something.

The members of the basic nuclei cannot therefore legitimately expect multiple support, covering a wide range of their needs, they must understand that it is not a para-union support, but a tool for fighting against a specific objective and that it remains valid, as an instrument, only if the initial decision to resort only to the insurrectional methods of struggle mentioned above remains unchanged. Participation in the nuclei is therefore absolutely spontaneous and cannot be solicited, or advised, by any benefits other than the specific and exclusive ones of greater strength and organization in reaching the attack objective that, all together, we had set ourselves. It is therefore more than logical to expect that these organisms will never reach a high quantitative composition, much less a stable one. When preparing for the fight, there are always few who see the objective to be reached, share it and, moreover, are willing to put themselves at risk. When the struggle begins, and the first results are achieved, even the hesitant and the weak are encouraged to participate, and the core grows, only to then see the disappearance of these last-minute participants, a fact which is in itself completely physiological and which must not make a negative impression, or endorse a negative judgement on this specific instrument of mass organisation.

Another point of uncertain understanding is the limited life of the autonomous basic nucleus, limited to the achievement (or common agreement on the impossibility of achieving) of the pre-established objective. Many ask themselves: if the nuclei function "also" as points of grouping, why not leave them alive for another possible future use, different from the current one? The answer is once again linked to the concept of "informality". Every structure that persists over time beyond the purpose that saw it born, if for its essential condition of existence it had that purpose and not a generic wide-ranging defense of those who participate in it, sooner or later shrinks into a stable structure that overturns the initial purpose into the new, and apparently legitimate, one of quantitative growth, of strengthening to better achieve a multiplicity of purposes, all equally interesting, which will not fail to present themselves on the nebulous horizon of the excluded. In parallel with the rooting of the informal structure in its new stable form, suitable

individuals will be found to manage this structure, always the most capable, with the most time available, in short, sooner or later the circle will close around a structure, self-styled revolutionary and even anarchist, which will however have discovered its true and only purpose: its own survival. Even the most rarefied form of power, such as the one we are seeing forming in the "stability" of an organizational structure, even if anarchist and revolutionary, attracts a lot, naturally all comrades in good faith, all eager to do good for the people, and at this rate, etc. etc.

A final organizational element, which can sometimes be indispensable, is the "coordination of autonomous basic nuclei". This structure, which has the same characteristics of informality, is made up of some representatives of the basic nuclei and it is almost always essential that it be provided with adequate means for the purpose to be achieved. If the individual nuclei, given their "lung" function, can have an informality also with regard to the absence of a headquarters, of a place to meet, since the nucleus can agree to meet directly in the square, this cannot happen for the coordination, which requires an officially open place that, in the case of a struggle that continues over time, for months or years, and that involves a fairly large territory, although limited by the specificity of the problem that generated the project, becomes the place where the various activities of the basic nuclei are coordinated.

The presence of affinity groups is not directly visible in the coordination, and the same can be said for what concerns the informal organization. Naturally all the anarchist comrades involved in the struggle are present in the various base nuclei, but almost always this is certainly not the best place for anarchist propaganda in the classical sense. What must be done within the coordination, and within the individual nuclei, before anything else, is an analytical clarification of the underlying problem, of the goal that one wants to achieve, then a deeper understanding of the insurrectional means to be employed in the struggle. The task of the comrades is realized in the participation in the project and in the deepening, together with all those interested, of the means to be used, of the methods to be employed. Even if the thing seems simple in the present schematization, in practice it turns out to be very complicated. The function of the “coordination of autonomous base nuclei” is therefore that of the coordination of struggles. Here only one problem is suggested (extremely indigestible for anarchists, but very simple for those who are not anarchists): the need in the case of a mass attack against structures of power, to distribute the individual tasks before the attack itself, that is, to agree, in the smallest details, on what must be done. Many imagine these occasions of struggle as the celebration of spontaneity: the objective is there in front of everyone, all you have to do is go, defeat the forces that guard it, destroy it. I put it in these terms here, even if I know that many will see a hundred different nuances, but the substance does not change. In these cases, either all the partici-

mulate the proposals on a theoretical and ideological level, adapting them, as far as possible, to the general program decided at the congress. The deviations from this program can also be notable (after all, anarchists would not admit an overly pedantic adaptation), but, when they occur, care is taken, in short, to bring them back to the normality of the line decided previously.

The intervention project of this organization is therefore to be present in different realities: antimilitarism, anti-nuclear, unions, prisons, ecology, interventions in neighborhoods, unemployment, schools, etc. This presence translates into direct interventions, that is, directly organized, or into participation in interventions managed by other comrades or other organizations (anarchist or not).

It follows that since participation has the aim of bringing the struggle within the project of synthesis, it cannot be autonomous, it cannot really adapt to the conditions of the conflict, it cannot effectively collaborate on a clear level with the other revolutionary forces, if not thanks to the ideological filter of the synthesis, if not through the conditions imposed by the project approved at the congress.

This situation, which however is not always as rigid as it would seem here, entails the unavoidable tendency of the organizations of synthesis to drag down the level of the struggles, proposing precautions and measures that have the aim of reducing every rush forward, every choice of objectives that are too exposed, every use of means that are too dangerous.

Let’s take an example. If a group belonging to this type of organization (of synthesis, and still specific and anarchic) joins a structure of struggle, let’s say against repression, it will be forced to evaluate the actions proposed by this structure in light of the analyses previously made and, more or less, approved at the congress. It follows that the structure of struggle will have to adapt to these analyses, or the group belonging to the organization of synthesis will interrupt its collaboration (in the case it constitutes a minority) or will impose the expulsion (in fact, if not with a specific motion) of those who had proposed different methods of struggle.

As much as this political reality may displease some, that is exactly how things are.

One might ask why, by definition, the proposal of the group forming part of the synthesis organization must always be more backward, that is, rearguard, or more cautious than other proposals, regarding possible actions of attack against the structures of repression and social consensus.

Why? The answer is simple. The organization of synthesis, specific and anarchic, which, as we have seen, finds its main moment in the periodic congress, has as its fundamental aim quantitative growth. As a structure of synthesis it needs an operational force that must grow. Not

the different companions will have infinite shades of affinities, all the more varied the greater the effort of analytical deepening that has been achieved.

It follows that the group of these companions will also have a tendency towards quantitative growth, but limited and not constituting the sole purpose of the activity. Numerical development is indispensable to the action and is also proof of the breadth of the analysis that is being carried out and of its ability to gradually discover affinities with a greater number of companions.

It follows that the organism thus born will end up giving itself common means of intervention. First of all, a debate tool necessary for analytical deepening, capable, as far as possible, of providing indications on a vast range of problems, and, at the same time, of constituting a point of reference for the verification – on a personal or collective level – of the affinities or divergences that will arise from time to time.

Finally, it must be said that the element that holds together a group of this type is certainly affinity, but its propulsive aspect is action. By limiting oneself to the first element and leaving the second aspect undersized, every relationship dries up in Byzantine perfectionism.

Informal organization

First of all, let us distinguish the specific informal anarchist organization from the specific synthetic anarchist organization. From this distinction, by contrast, considerable clarifications will come.

What is a synthesis organization, obviously anarchic and specific? It is an organizational structure, based on groups or individuals, in a more or less constant relationship with each other, which has its culminating moment in periodic congresses. In these public assemblies the basic theoretical analyses are discussed, a program is analyzed and the tasks that cover the whole range of interventions in the social are divided. This organization therefore presents itself as a point of reference, as a pole capable of synthesizing the struggles that take place in the reality of the class conflict. The different commissions of this organizational model intervene in the struggles (as individual comrades who compose them, or as groups) and, by intervening, give their contribution, but do not lose sight of the theoretical and practical orientation that the organization, as a whole, has decided in the previous congress.

When this type of organization develops to the full extent of its strength (as happened in Spain in 1936) it begins to dangerously resemble a party. Synthesis turns into control. Of course, in moments of slack, this involution is not very evident, and may even seem blasphemous to suggest, but in other moments it is more visible.

In essence, in the organization of synthesis (always specific and anarchic), there is the presupposition of a nucleus of specialists who for-

pants have in mind, in a precise way, what to do, since it is a fight that for better or worse will take place in a territory and will have to face armed resistance to overcome, or if only some know what to do and the rest do not, the confusion that will result will be the same, if not worse, than the case in which no one knows what to do.

A plan is therefore needed. There have been cases in which an armed military plan was needed even to distribute a leaflet (for example, during the insurrection in Reggio Calabria[11]). But can this plan really be made available to everyone, even a few days before the attack? I think not. There are reasons of caution that say no. On the other hand, the details of the attack plan must be made available to all participants. It follows that not everyone can participate, but only those who are known in some way, either through their membership in the autonomous basic nuclei, or through their membership in the affinity groups that through informal organization have found themselves part of the coordination. This is to avoid those infiltrations by the police and secret services that in these cases are more than probable. People who are not known should be guaranteed by others who are known. This may be unpleasant, but it is not avoidable.

The problem becomes more complicated when the ongoing proje-

[11] The Reggio Revolt was a significant insurrectionary outbreak in that far Southern Italian city in 1970-1971, caused by tensions related to disruptive, uneven development by centralized, bureaucratic state planners, shifts in patronage and hierarchy relations, and regionalist popular tradition in the structurally marginalized and oft-looked-down on South, kicking off after an opaque decision of the government to choose the smaller town of Catanzaro as regional capital of Calabria, rather than Reggio Calabria. The revolt very quickly reached a high level of escalation, with a general strike declared, almost all access to the city (by roads and highways, railroad, airport, and the port) cut off by rebels, numerous popular or urban guerrilla style gun and bomb attacks, barricades in the streets, armories and police stations stormed, with the army eventually sent in and structural pacifiers put in place (including a railroad stump in Reggio and the nearby Gioia Tauro port, which became important sources of power and wealth for many of the local *'Ndrangheta* groups, with extremely bloody gang wars fought for control in the new context). The revolt developed outside of the traditional left or workers structures, who were in general totally, uncritically opposed to the revolt, (while some extraparliamentary left groups like *Lotta Continua* or certain Situationists were uncritically positive and romantic about the events from a relative, uninvolved distance in the North) and in a real sense did involve spontaneous, generalized, 'revolutionary-delinquent' struggle from many very marginalized people with some legitimate revolutionary aims, and was an influential example for struggle in the rest of Italy. However, the revolt was also strongly subject to rapidly increasing cooptation by fascists, corrupt politicians, would-be authoritarian coup-plotters with links to shadowy intelligence/para-state networks, and patriarchal, generally right-wing organized crime groups of the *'Ndrangheta*, with even the official mayor of the city taking part as ringleader in the unrest. Local anarchists, including some close to the early proto-insurrectionary '*Sinistra Libertaria*' ('Libertarian Left') network Bonanno was involved in, were actively present in the revolt and made interventions, but ultimately found difficulty in resisting the revolt's transformation due, according to Bonanno, to a lack of sufficient preparatory common understanding and means for how to proceed, as well as the practical and theoretical incapacity of the *Lotta Continua* members who they tried to intervene alongside.

ct, even in its broad outline, is known to many comrades, who may be interested in participating in one of these attack actions that we are discussing. In this case, the influx could be considerable (in the case of Comiso, in the days of the attempted occupation, there were about three hundred comrades from all over Italy and even from abroad) and the need to avoid the presence of infiltrators is much more serious. The comrades who arrived at the last moment could thus find themselves outsiders to the ongoing organization of the action and unable to understand what is happening. In the same way, all those who decide not to accept the above-mentioned verification end up finding themselves effectively outsiders. (...)

Catania, November 21, 1998

Alfredo M. Bonanno

Workers' Autonomy (Excerpts)

by Alfredo Bonanno, the comrades of Kronstadt Editions, and the MAB — Movimento Autonomo di Base *(Autonomous Movement of the Base) of railway workers in the Turin region, first published in Italian as several articles in* Anarchismo*, 1975-1976. Translated from Italian by Jean Weir and published as a collection in English by Bratach Dubh, 1976. Retrieved 2025 from Elephant Editions.*

(...)

Workers' autonomy: surpassing trade unionism

Given the development of national trade union disputes, some comrades might think it natural to insert themselves within this movement with alternative claims or platforms aimed at radicalising the bargaining in an attempt to expel the trade union leadership, the Communist Party and other reformist groups. But this kind of action has nothing to do with proletarian autonomy.

The only possible way to turn the workers towards direct action is to go beyond the logic of disputes and collective bargaining. The struggle for better wages and demands for investment (especially in cases where it is necessary to reduce production) are areas where the bourgeoisie are able to create strata of workers' consensus and aquiescence in order to impose restructuring, and attempts to lead disputes in the direction of the workers' interests results in increasing faith in the unions.

In the face of a complex and many-sided restructuring of industry the reasons for which are compound (increasing production in some sectors, a complete elimination of it in others; adapting to technological change, or returning to old and proven methods of exploitation), it is

tual knowledge. The more this deepening grows, the greater the affinity can become, otherwise the divergences can be so evident as to make any common action impossible. The solution remains entrusted to the deep common knowledge, to be developed through a detailed planning of the different problems that the reality of class struggles poses.

There is a whole range of problems that, as a rule, are not explained in their entirety. We often limit ourselves to the closest problems because they are the ones that affect us the most (repression, prisons, etc.).

But it is precisely in our ability to delve into the problem we wish to address that lies the most suitable means for establishing the conditions of common affinity, which certainly cannot be absolute or total (except in very rare cases), but may be sufficient to establish relationships suitable for action.

By limiting our interventions to the most obvious and superficial aspects of what we consider immediate and essential problems, we will never have the opportunity to discover the affinities that interest us, and we will always wander at the mercy of sudden and unsuspected contradictions capable of upsetting every project of intervention in reality. I insist on emphasizing that we must not confuse affinity and feeling. There may be comrades, with whom we recognize affinities, who are not very nice to us and, vice versa, comrades, with whom we have no affinity, who gain our sympathy for various other reasons.

It is also necessary not to be hindered in one's action by false problems, such as the supposed differentiation between feelings and political motivations. From what has been said before, it might seem that feelings are something to be kept separate from political analyses, so that we could, for example, love a person who does not share our ideas at all and vice versa. This is generally possible, as lacerating as it may be. However, in the concept of deepening the range of problems, a concept expressed above, the personal aspect (or, if you prefer, feelings) must also be included, since instinctively succumbing to our impulses is often a lack of reflection and analysis, not being able to admit that we are simply possessed by the god of excess and destruction.

From what has been said, a first approximation of our way of considering the anarchist group emerges, albeit nebulously: a group of comrades linked by a common affinity.

The more in-depth the project that these comrades build together, the greater their affinity will be. It follows that the real organization, the effective (and not fictitious) ability to act together, that is, to find each other, engage in an analytical study and move to action, is related to the affinity achieved and has nothing to do with acronyms, programs, platforms, flags and disguised parties.

The affinity group is therefore a specific organization that gathers around common affinities. These cannot be identical for everyone, but

Even comrades who critically address the problem of anarchist organization, and who reject any possible individualist isolation, often only examine the problem in terms of classical organization, and find it difficult to think of alternative forms of stable relationships.

The core group is seen as an essential element of the specific organization and the federation between groups, on the basis of an ideological clarification, becomes its natural consequence. The organization is thus born before the struggles and ends up adapting to the perspective of a certain type of struggle that – at least it is assumed – makes the organization itself grow. In this way the structure turns out to be a vicarious form with respect to the repressive decisions taken by power, which for various reasons dominates the scene of the class conflict. The resistance and self-organization of the exploited are seen as molecular elements, which can be picked up here and there, but which become significant only when they become part of the specific structure or allow themselves to be conditioned in mass organisms under the (more or less declared) guidance of the specific structure.

In this way, we always remain in a waiting position. We are all as if on provisional liberty. We scrutinize the attitudes of power and we are ready to react (always within the limits of the possible) in the face of the repression that hits us. We almost never take the initiative, personally set up interventions, or overturn the logic of the losers. Those who identify with structured organizations expect an improbable quantitative growth. Those who work within mass structures (for example, in the anarcho-syndicalist perspective) expect that the small defensive results of today will spill over into the great revolutionary result of tomorrow. Those who deny all this are waiting anyway, they don't know exactly what for, often closed in a hatred against everyone and everything, sure of their own ideas without realizing that these are nothing but the empty negative side of other people's organizational and programmatic affirmations.

It seems to us that other things can be done.

Let's start from the consideration that it is necessary to establish contacts between comrades to move to action. Alone you are not in a position to act, except to reduce yourself to a platonist protest, bloody and terrible as you want, but always platonist. Wanting to act incisively on reality you need to be many.

On what basis to find the other companions? Discarding the hypothesis of programs and platforms *a priori*, drawn up once and for all, what remains?

The affinity remains.

Among anarchist comrades there are affinities and divergences. I am not talking here about affinities of character or personal ones, that is, those aspects of feeling that often bind comrades together (love first of all, friendship, sympathy, etc.). I am talking about a deepening of mu-

absurd to move in an optic that defends trade unionism, whose claim to confront general problems is only a façade for creating equilibrium within the capitalist system.

Now that the supranational bourgeoisie find themselves managing the economy in a speculative and substantially unproductive key, it does not make sense to think one can fight them by 'imposing' investment and new consumer channels. When restructuring leads to mass redundancies, to reply with demands for employment and a union 'guaranteed wage', enters the schemes of bourgeois interest: many promises, some money right away, which is taken back through other channels, and so go the plans aimed at weakening the proletariat's capacity for resistance, and re-enforcing the economic structure.

Demands for work by the unemployed invariably result in not getting a stable job, at the most a short spell in a government sponsored scheme to be used as direct or indirect blackmail against the employed workers.

Even recent proposals such as a reduction of the working week to 35 hours, if inserted into the logic of the refusal of work, are objectives of no real consequence in that capitalism (far more elastic in its structure than it was in the past) can impose greater exploitation even in situations of reduced working hours.

Left-wing trade unionism can at best put the bourgeoisie in difficulty, but is not capable of even scratching their positions of strength, whereas the autonomous actions of the proletariat need to move on more immediate foundations, allowing the development of certain concrete forms of struggle that can be experimented daily.

The authentic unifying moments for the class, in which it is possible to mobilise in first person, exist in the contradictions inherent in working conditions in the factory and those of the proletariat in general, in the living area (physical region of exploitation), the structures of production and consumption, the factory hierarchy, politics, administration, the police, fascists, work pace, pollution, mobility, prices, rents, bills, etc.. Direct action, the self-conscious struggle of the masses, can only be born from aspects of everyday life, not abstract programmes or platforms. Class initiative must be concrete and managed in first person, without the mediation of trade unions or political parties. These apparently minimal struggles actually represent the first step upon which to base a new consciousness and organisational practice, starting off from the contradictions that are suffered daily in individual situations within the organisation of work and consumption and gradually approaching general confrontation, always getting closer to the roots of class oppression. The logic of proletarian autonomy is therefore one of sporadic growth, so there can be different levels of autonomous expression.

One of the main points of this discourse is the smallest element of mass struggle: the mass organism, which by its very nature does not

comprise the whole class in a given situation, but is strictly tied to experiences of direct action. These organisms are formed by the exploited during particular struggles and moments of awareness and reflection preceding and following them, not as a result of discussions by groups on the problem. The more they merge with and become an internal element of the mass movement, the more effective they become, sometimes without realising it. The validity of their activity can be verified in their absorption into successive mass actions that are capable of developing or surpassing the indications they have provided. These organisms should not be considered a form of counterpower or alternative unions directing groups or parties, all denominations that are more or less consciously transmission belts of some ideological regroupment. Mass organisms are one stage in autonomy, but they always represent partial aspects that can be surpassed. They are the first point of reference, but their function is always to remain tied to precise situations. Their initiatives do not therefore represent the needs of the whole of the proletariat, of which they are nevertheless an expression. Their institutionalisation in the party sense would therefore be impossible without changing their very nature.

There was a time when a super-evaluation of mass organisms led to a purely organisational concept of autonomy, resulting in a passage to autonomous trade unions, and where proletarian autonomy came to be reduced to trade union autonomy. We must therefore examine the whole process of autonomy, where the intervention of the active minority (specific organisms) should not be directed towards the formation of mass organisms, but towards stimulating moments of direct action, the only thing capable of expressing true proletarian organisational forms.

Even the most violent encounter with economic contradictions does not necessarily push the proletariat to find a solution in direct action. We see evidence of this every day. The most recent examples are the response to the closure of industrial plants, redundancies and increased dependence on social security, which has usually been in the form of the now old practices of meetings that are open to all the democratic forces, mediation with the government and local authorities, etc.. Mass direct action is therefore not an automatic reply, but is the result of a process that comes about through a fairly slow and not easily tangible process of maturation. The dialectical process existing within the masses is capable of working out certain forms of retaliation, even repeating the same experience more than once before surpassing it, transforming mere lack of faith in reformist structures into the capacity to attack.

Comrades of the active minority must therefore act in the direction of a re-entry into this process, taking the indications put forward by the masses and carrying them on as analyses and information that are useful for the struggle. Often the classical instruments for spreading proposals are disdained (posters, leaflets, wall writing, etc.). Every now

On the basis of the principle of autonomy, the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus affirms the need for permanent conflict within the reality of production, and the need to export the essential characteristics of the struggle towards the exterior. The objectives of this communication with the exterior are the users of the railway service and the co-lateral productive sectors.

The methods necessary for the realisation of the defence of those involved and therefore of the whole productive collectivity are chosen in harmony with the principle of autonomy and permanent conflict. The validity of the strike should be questioned, and a great deal of attention paid to the search for other effective forms of struggle not so easily controllable by the company.

The perspectives of the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus are the constant ones of increasing wages and affecting working conditions, with the aim of safeguarding real wages which is the basis for all concrete possibilities of struggle by the workers.

MAB — Turin

Insurrectionalist Anarchism (Excerpts)

by Alfredo Bonanno, first edition published by Edizioni Anarchismo *June 1999. Crude machine translation with cursory manual corrections by Reeking Thickets Press, 2025.*

(...)

Affinity

Among anarchist comrades there is an ambivalent relationship with the problem of organization.

At the two extremes are the acceptance of a permanent structure, equipped with a well-defined program, with resources at its disposal (even if few) and divided into commissions; and, on the other side, the rejection of any stable and structured relationship even in the short term.

The classical anarchist federations (old and new style) and the individualists constitute the two extremes of something that tries to escape the reality of the clash. The comrade adhering to the organized structures hopes that from the quantitative growth a revolutionary modification of reality will emerge, for which he allows himself the cheap illusion of controlling every authoritarian involution of the structure and every concession to the logic of the party. The individualist comrade is jealous of his own ego and fears every form of contamination, every concession to others, every active collaboration, thinking of these things as concessions and compromises.

Wage increase is one of the most important points of the struggle, because it allows the worker a greater capacity for resistance and the possibility of facing other battles that are just as important for his existence. This is not necessarily the main point of the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus, but, for obvious reasons it cannot be considered to be of secondary importance.

The struggle for a different organisation of work is undoubtedly more interesting, because it indirectly supplements real wages in a way that cannot be taken back by the mechanism of devaluation. These indirect supplements to wages are elements of great value during the course of the conflict. A reduction in working hours, the refusal of mobility or accumulation of duties, total staff coverage, the improvement of working conditions, the modification of rules and working hours for drivers, ticket collectors, etc., the strengthening of installations, lines, locomotives, carriages, etc. are all elements that improve the general situation of the railway worker and can come to be a part of real wages that are very much inferior to the sum written on the pay slip.

The basic perspective in which a long-term struggle could be planned would be that of the base of the workers getting control of management, progressively removing it from the bosses and foremen who find themselves in secure positions with the unions' approval. In this way an example could be given, through a series of proposals re: changes in management, and the organisational capacity of the workers, denouncing those responsible for the present disservice at the cost of the passengers and everyone involved.

Capillary penetration in order to explain the mistaken position of the trade union struggles and their need to collaborate with the company, the impossibility of any change in this situation in the near future, and a return to struggle at the base. Struggle against the trade union structures and bureaucrats, not against union members.

The final perspective is therefore that of autonomous management of the struggle, both for wages and working conditions, as well as the progressive taking over of management in its totality.[12] Clearly this autonomy of struggle can only develop through a proper evaluation of the unions' position of collaboration with the bosses.

Conclusion

THE AUTONOMOUS WORKERS' NUCLEUS is an organism of struggle for the defense of the railway workers who mean to affirm the principle of autonomous struggle. For this reason it denies the validity of the trade unions, and denounces their collusion with the system.

[12] *Editor's Note*: We disagree with this strategy of taking over management.

and then someone makes the great discovery that they are useless, that instead one 'must remain within the situation', or that things should be discussed directly, etc.. But this is not a problem. Posters, leaflets, newspapers, discussions (or even actions of the so-called 'vanguard') are simply instruments, what is important is the use that is made of them. If one is simply going to say 'long live autonomy', 'ahead with direct action', 'no to repression', and other such meaningless remarks, they are clearly senseless. Nor is it enough to single out concrete issues (e.g. piece work, contractual work, wages, prices, etc.) as the fact that the problem exists is not enough, but there must be a disposition for it to be perceived. There must be a synthesis therefore between the proposition and the potential for direct action.

The functioning of the specific organism, or active minority, is subject to a series of contradictions that do not always make the relationship with the mass easy. The reason for these contradictions lies in the fact that most often such organisms are not formed as a result of direct action, but are due to theoretical sedimentation concerning the experiences of proletarian autonomy. It is possible however that following prolonged activity, mass organisms can evolve into specific ones, just as it can happen that comrades of the active minority can participate in the functioning of mass organisms. This produces a fluidity of organisational forms within the process of autonomy. Many comrades prefer not to make a distinction between mass organism and active minority, talking instead of different organisational levels within the process of autonomy. This is not altogether unfounded, and in fact the two kinds of organisation can blend roles. The distinction makes sense in order to avoid certain arbitrary identification by militant 'autonomists' with the organisms of the mass, and their consequent self-selection as a vanguard. Direct action and the self-managed struggle of the workers are the only criteria for moments of organisation expressed directly by the masses. It is therefore a question of making a distinction between what is clearly expressed by the proletariat in struggle, and what are only very useful attempts to clarify and elaborate proposals.

The need for a continual updating of organisms gives space to opportunism and one even hears comrades who call for autonomy making statements such as, 'We don't absolutely refuse to negotiate with the bosses, but only accept to do so in situations where it leads to a recognition of gains that have already been conquered through direct struggles', or, 'Trade unionism can still be valid in backward situations, where it becomes in itself a step forward'. Negotiation to legalise conquests is a contradiction in terms and seems to be an elegant reproposal of the principle of the delegate. The discourse on backward situations can come to justify anything under the sun.

The work of the active minority is conditioned by the reality around them, but specific actions are still possible. Although carried out by a

minority, when drawn from thoroughly analysed experiences in other situations, these actions can carry information and forms of struggle that are susceptible to development, and possibilities of direct action where the industrial workers are a minority compared to the rest of the proletariat. It is a mistake to think that autonomy is a typical expression of the large factories in the North, and that it cannot be extended to other situations. Apart from the fact that autonomous action has certainly not yet taken the place of trade union illusions, that which is carried out is always action characteristic of a particular reality, and not the only possible expression of autonomy. It is moreover always susceptible to further developments that are not always foreseeable.

It would be easy to say: trade unionism is still predominant, therefore I shall continue to move, even if only partly, within the trade union optic. Autonomy is an historical process, an objective reality in the course of development, and not a movement managed by so-called autonomous militants. The potential for a growth in autonomy always exists, even if it is repressed, and it is on this alone that we base our work.

Trade-unionism cannot be surpassed through the simple spreading of propaganda about other positions aimed at dissuading the worker from belonging to the union (also because it is not enough to take away the trade unions for autonomous struggle to develop), but rather through the proposal of forms of struggle that the workers are receptive to, allowing the construction of more advanced bases. Self-reduction of the work pace, already common in certain factories in the North (where the struggle against the work pace has been the most advanced expression of autonomous activity), and also some in the South, represent, in this phase, the type of struggle that can come about through a qualitative change in the workers' consciousness, capable of reaching the point of a total self-management of their own interests. One of the main tasks of the specific organism should be that of generalising and consolidating this and other forms of struggle as far as possible. These are proposals that can be made directly without the mediation of the shop stewards, trade union officials, or ideological militants, because they involve the working class at the place of exploitation itself and in what he knows best, his work. They avoid abstract, exhausting arguments with the Communist Party or groups, because, carrying the contradictions back to their original source, they allow the class to make a clear choice of what their interests are, and thus create beyond any ideological discussion, the foundations for a mass confrontation with the trade unions and all the other repressive structures. They progressively introduce more advanced forms of direct action and tougher forms of struggle: sabotage, blockages, distribution of products in stock (or free distribution of food products, etc, in suitable cases) without forcing levels of consciousness.

the same goes for the sectors of production closest to that of the railways (airways, road transport, postal services, telephones, contracting sectors, etc.).

Hence the great importance of information in the autonomous organisation of the struggle. Obviously in the beginning the means available for this method of struggle will be inadequate compared to those of the trade union confederacy; however, even having recourse to leafletting; what matters most is working in the right direction, intervening constantly towards the users who must gradually be sensitized to the struggle of the railway workers and our perspectives. The same goes for the collateral sectors with whom it is necessary to make contact, favouring, whenever possible, the birth of other autonomous nuclei that can do the same kind of work.

In this perspective the strike maintains its validity as a means of struggle, but must be seen critically, not as a means that automatically sets conflict in motion whenever the trade union leadership decides. The strike in that sense becomes an instrument that puts an end to a situation of conflict, and is thus useful to the bosses and all those who have an interest in extinguishing concrete struggle. Another element against the strike as a means of struggle is the fact that it is an intermittent instrument that the counterpart always has warning of in advance, enabling them to intervene (for example, reducing personnel from goods trains and transferring them to passenger ones).

Other means exist that can be used alongside the strike, or in the place of it, means that attack the company's productive output directly and that constitute a very effective threat.

During a strike the technical procedure is arranged at union meetings. Reading these rules, one is amazed by the care that is taken to avoid any damage to the company. But, in the other direction, what does the company do to try to reduce the exploitation of the workers? All these precautions reduce the effectiveness of the strike as an arm in the attack against the bosses, and the responsibility for all that is also due to the legalism and conservatism of the unions. To hard and constant repression, we must oppose struggle without half measures and without warning: hard, constant struggle.

The choice of means to be employed in a certain struggle, and the basic direction to be given to the information that has to be constantly circulated towards the exterior, is decided by all those who belong to the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus, for which they must meet periodically.

C) Perspectives

The concrete development of the struggle must be evaluated from time to time in the light of the objective situation, and not serve as a shield for vague and irresolute ideological constructions.

It is based on the elimination of the permanent delegate and the negation of professional representatives.

All the workers are engaged in the struggle against the bosses and their servants.

This involvement in the struggle is permanent and does not limit itself to the strike periods fixed by the trade unions.

Each component of the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus considers himself to be in continual struggle against the bosses and their servants, in the same way as the latter are continually in struggle against the workers in their attempt to perpetuate exploitation.

The Autonomous Workers' Nucleus has no link with trade union ideology or practice, while its anti-employer position qualifies it clearly and without doubt as an instrument that the workers have created for their own emancipation.

Propaganda activity and struggles directed at obtaining precise results, and the choice of means for the realization of these struggles, are all elements to be clarified by the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus.

To belong to an Autonomous Workers' Nucleus is the logical step for all those who consider they have been betrayed by the various trade union organisations and who want to continue the struggle against the State-employer, widening this struggle in a perspective that is totally different to that of trade union power.

B) Methods

The repression put into effect by the bosses with the help of their servants is constant. It is exercised over us in many ways: reducing the spending power of wage increases; refusing legitimate increases; putting pressure on the worker by avoiding taking on more personnel and increasing work risks; nullifying our struggles through the unions' politics of recuperation. This repression must be fought with a struggle that is also constant. So: permanent repression, permanent conflict.

The comrades making up the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus should have a clear idea of the direction the struggle against exploitation should take. The boss strikes the worker as part of a whole (the productive collectivity), therefore when he strikes him as a railway worker, the company adapts its exploitation to the general situation of production. For this reason a sectorial and corporate struggle does not make sense. The method of workers' autonomy is based on exporting the struggle, even if the immediate effects (economic and work conditions) remain within the productive sector.

The method is therefore that of permanent conflict and taking the struggle beyond the workplace.

The objectives to be reached outside the workplace are the users of the railway service, especially commuters who must be constantly kept up to date with the evolution of the conflict within the company; and

They also represent a way for predicting and combatting projects of redundancies and dependence on social security due to excess production: a defence of jobs managed directly by the workers without a supine acceptation of the work ideology. Obviously, the trade unions can also succeed in repressing these struggles, even opening disputes for a reduction of the work pace or referring to 'general themes of major importance', just as autonomous actions can be used as occasional supports for a single dispute. These dangers are always present, and it is useless to spill tears over the fact that an experience of direct action burns itself out, or that it does not immediately move on to higher levels, because the process of autonomy should be considered in its complexity, also at an international level, and not be reduced to one single experience.

It should be clear therefore, that the function of the active minority consists not so much of devising forms of struggle and objectives, as that of understanding the effective potential of the mass.

To explain better we shall refer for a moment to the railway sector. It would be too easy, starting from the fact that in the first place a transport strike affects the passengers, to propose, for example, a form of struggle based on not charging passengers for tickets, thus creating a unitary situation within the proletariat. Not that this is not a valid hypothesis, but the problem lies not in the technical application of the proposal, but in the disposition of the mass (workers- proletarians-passengers) to lay the foundations for a combined practice of direct action that can only come about through a whole process that is open to error, crises of lack of self-confidence, or instrumentalisation. It would obviously be just as much of a mistake to applaud every initiative on the part of the workers, always seeing in them possibilities for autonomous outlets.

It is necessary to refer not to a hypothetical level of perfection, but to the effective availability of the mass, which in this case would mean stimulating a process (which is in fact already happening) of reappropriation in the living areas, capable of linking up with outlets in the service industry.

The link with the living area is not an episodic factor, nor is it something that is due to particular circumstances. Exploitation also occurs at the level of consumption (as well as work), to which all the other political, social and cultural structures that constitute the capitalist organisation of an area are related. The reality of consumption is therefore not secondary to that of production in the aims of the struggle, and one could say that the two are tending to synthesize in the living area, point of unification of both employed and unemployed workers, whose main expression has been squatting, where there has also been a development of an autonomous female social role.

The appropriation of an autonomous social and economic role by women also opens the way for an autonomous sexual role. The prole-

tarian woman, used to having to bear the greatest burden of capitalist exploitation at the point of consumption, has great fighting potential concerning the struggle in the living area, putting her in a position of a vanguard in respect to the men. Some feminist projects that speak of self-management of their sexuality by women and form educational programmes in this direction, leave out of consideration the question of real appropriation, thus falling into an ideological situation and eventually finding themselves only proposing a more tolerable management of their sexual oppression. Besides, the most overtly reformist solutions (free abortion, play schools, creches. etc.) merely come to rationalise repression. The proposal of work for women is sometimes seen as an instrument of emancipation; but salaried work is not emancipation, but further slavery, and does not even create a weakening of family or social oppression. This does not mean that women's' liberation should be postponed until after the revolution. On the contrary, the female proletarian struggle in the territory, the appropriation of an economic and social role by women (and therefore of their sexual autonomy) resolves immediate contradictions, as well as being at the same time a part of the revolutionary struggle for communism.

Also, leaving aside women's struggle, the (useless) demand for infrastructures ('social salaries') represents a way of imposing a trade union logic in the living area (see disputes on housing supported by groups), a clear demonstration of imposing on proletarian reality. The work in the housing estates, if not set out on the basis of immediate contradictions, can easily end up in competition with the parish, evening classes, clinics, meals for proletarian children, and lots of people's parties, with the Red Flag in the place of hymns. There is nothing new in this: competition with the parish is in the tradition of Italian reformism.

Rent strikes, squatting, self-reduction of bills and transport charges, are all a defence of wages or living conditions, that also permit the unemployed to conquer a dignified level of existence during the struggle in the territory alongside the employed workers, and not through social security payments and subsidies, which are only instruments for dividing the proletariat.

Going beyond trade-unionism is not therefore some ideological argument that is more or less revolutionary or more to the left, but is an historical necessity, the only way to rebuild, in the face of changed conditions, a defence of the immediate interests of the proletariat outside trade union negotiation and practice. The new data is no longer a question of struggle becoming finalised in disputes, but struggles that represent in their very form and development, the satisfaction of proletarian needs.

The defence of health in the factory is realised by self-reduction of the work pace and the refusal of mobility, with systematic boycotts and sabotage of production and restructuring, preventing the boss from carrying out redundancies.

The indications we have glanced at are just a start, a first possible basis upon which to act, but which already have the capacity to go beyond the purely defensive aspect, and lay the immediate foundations for the offensive. The self-managed struggle of the mass is therefore capable of uniting in one practice, both the problem of economic defence and that of revolutionary struggle in the long term, surpassing, through their actions and not through anti-reformist propaganda, trade union illusions and practice.

Autonomous Movement of the Turin Railway Workers – Organization of the autonomous workers' nucleus

(...) TRUE PROLETARIAN AUTONOMY is the only possible solution for the continuation of the struggle against the employers and their servants. To do this it is necessary to begin to form Autonomous Workers' Nuclei. These nuclei, such as those we want to create among the Turin railway workers, are born from within a precise productive reality, and should consider themselves a constant point of reference for the reality outside in the living areas, the land, the schools and so on, and draw them into the struggle.

Beginning from a clear conception of proletarian autonomy, two dangers ever present in sectorial or trade union methods of struggle are eliminated:

the bureaucratisation of the structure;

the tendency towards a corporate vision of the struggle.

THE AUTONOMOUS WORKERS' NUCLEUS organises itself autonomously of the political parties and trade unions, in order to better defend the worker as a man. Its perspective of organisation and struggle keep in mind the double necessity of imposing the confrontation both at the level of production (wages, contracts, etc.), and at the level of the individual worker's life (work risks, alienation, necessary links between living area, place of work, school, etc.).

Autonomy is therefore a reevaluation of the man in the worker, with a clear view of the struggle aimed at safeguarding the conditions which render possible work and life itself.

The autonomous workers' nucleus

A) Characteristics

Is an organisation that means to distinguish itself from the trade unions including the autonomous versions of such.

Its autonomy is based on an anti-bureaucratic structure.