Distri Josep Gardenyes
23 Theses Concerning Revolt
how can we stop defeating ourselves each time?
2011

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so many years of self-deception and softer methods than those that are to come.

23. We will probably never win, although it is true that we will never lose.

The system has chosen an impossible project, which is total control. They will never attain it. They can not prevent their walls from falling, their slaves rebelling and spitting in their faces. Building the walls more quickly, they provoke more rebellion. Even if they perfect a machinery of repression, all the same the earth, and then the sun, will die in time, and the universe will continue in its nihilistic beauty without the slightest trace of these tyrants and their ruins. We have to rejoice for the certainty that even if we end up in jail, dead or overcome, a comfortable life without defeat is worth nothing compared to a life fighting for freedom, a life in love with the world, embraced by a warm network of relationships of solidarity, with the feeling both erotic and familiar to have roots in the earth, to be bigger than what one is, to be part of a collectivity of bodies within a terrible dance that can only be understood from within.

whole demonstration, if the people in the demonstration are already angry. A group of people with the ability to organize more attacks to create a second and a third riot, can extend the rupture. When a riot goes to bed dreaming of all the attacks that will be carried out again in the morning, the insurrection has arrived.

21. Insurrections only extend to the extent that society can nourish them.

Understood in this way, insurrections are an index of the health of society, an attempt to awaken. Will it have the strength to revolt for one, two, three days? Two weeks? It has to do with the forces of the people, with their ability to imagine another life, with the depth of their roots, if they hate all authority or only the police or only the party in government. An outbreak of weeds can cause a new crack in the concrete, a small break, but beyond that it does not go further.

22. The next step of the revolt, after which we can only speculate, is the destruction of normality.

There will be no turning back once the state has lost its mask of social peace, when society has realized its creative as well as destructive forces. Then the rebellious imagination will be alive and animated, and everyone will have visions of what "tomorrow" means. We will go from fighting to get out our rage to fighting to realize our desires. It is not known if we will have to face military occupation and the possibility of guerrilla conflict or if the State will fall, weakened by the crises and by

[ed. — A text published by Distri Josep Gardenyes, which was formed "to share and disseminate texts that we consider to be of strategic importance in the current struggles". Josep Gardenyes, who they took their name from, was one of the anarchist 'uncontrollables' executed in Barcelona during 1936 by anarcho-bureaucrats of the C.N.T. during their treacherous spell within the 'revolutionary' government (see ***Memory as a Weapon; 'These Women Refused to Sacrifice'****) despite him fighting hard on the barricades. The accounts differ, but it seems that his shooting was because of bringing 'disrepute' to the 'official' anarchists by looting jewelry from an abandoned shop, or being part of groups expropriating grocery stores while bearing anarchist insignia; either of which should have resonances for the disgraceful attitude of certain U.K. anarchists during the riots and looting of 2011 (see* ***Return Fire vol.1 pg61****), or for that matter the demonisation of the looters during the eruptive uprisings in the U.S.A. this summer sparked by yet more murders of Afro-Americans by the police... Another account holds that Gardenyes was killed for taking vengeance on police spies from the time of the previous dictatorship in the Spanish state. As Distri Joseph Gardenyes point out, "[w]ith the memory of our failures, we can stop betraying ourselves, and attack the spirit of domination wherever it is to be found."]*

1. The multiple defeats suffered by Western rebels, in which we lose by winning, come from the fact that we are not aware that we were the first colonized.

We assaulted the Winter Palace *[ed. — in Russia, 1917]*, but replaced the Tsar with a bureaucracy too extensive to put up against the wall. We took Barcelona after the fascist coup and then we boasted of having increased production

*[ed. — see **Memory as a Weapon; 'These Women Refused to Sacrifice'**]*. We burned all the banks and attacked all the police stations in Athens *[ed. — see **Return Fire vol.1 pg17**]* and then we didn't know what else to do. When we stand in solidarity from time to time, with certain indigenous struggles, we find it very beautiful that they have an intimate connection with the land, but we do not ask ourselves why we lack it. We assume the myth of progress, or question it from a mere technological point of view, instead of understanding that history is not linear and that the power of the State is not always increasing, but on several occasions, in the past, we were close to destroying it and that the current forms that power has taken are the response to our struggles. How to explain that the price of bread, poverty and hunger increased sharply (after centuries of low and stable figures) from the sixteenth century, just when Europe was flooded with riches stolen from the Americas? How to understand that in the Middle Ages women had access to land, to inheritance and to almost all trades, and that animals were considered as members of the community;[1] and yet, from the Enlightenment onward,

[1] ed. — "In his preface to *The New Ecological Order* (1995), the French philosopher, Luc Ferry, narrates an extraordinary tale of legal proceedings, in the year 1545, against a colony of weevils. The villagers of Saint-Julien, in France, sought 'appropriate measures' to demand the expulsion of the beasts from their vineyards, but it was argued that, as 'creatures of God', the animals possessed the same rights to consume plant life as the residents. The villagers (who lost their case) were required to sincerely repent, through prayer, tithes, and processions around the vineyards, followed by further devotions and penitence. All of this was designed to put right their error in the eyes of God. The weevils vacated and the matter ended, only to be brought again to the courts some forty-two years later; however, it appears that the villagers lost, once again. Not only did the judge order the vicar to reapply the ordonnance (penalty) of 1546, but a compromise was suggested in which the weevils were to be leased 'a location of sufficient pasture, outside of the disputed vineyards of Saint-Julien'.

Ferry does not give a final conclusion to this matter, but he discusses similar cases involving larvae (who won), leeches (who were ulti-

19. If the world has center, it is there where we lose.

The center is the cage where they trap us. Society, like the universe, has no center, because space itself moves, because the world itself is alive and is also a protagonist in events. The State was born at the central point of society. It was created in a space in which decisions had more validity, it deceived society by centralizing all discussions and conversations in a single assembly. This took centuries, but little by little it privatized this assembly and only when it had disciplined us enough to support its project of total control, began to allow us to participate in that assembly (first to the rich, then to white men, then to all men, and later to the women…). That is why we reject not only dialogue with the powerful but also any single resolution of the problems of society, any homogeneous plan or consensual agreement.

20. Ruptures cannot be planned, but they can be encouraged and extended; that is our most delicate task.

By creating signals of disorder and new methods of attack, we increase the likelihood of breakdowns and that these, in turn, are more powerful. But we do not determine the ruptures. **However, the libertarian insurgents have a very important role in the ruptures: to neutralize movement politicians and sabotage their attempt to lead the rupture, to turn it into a demand, to make it understandable to power (through the press, universities or professional activists).** In any given rupture, it is possible to spread new visions, point out new targets and objectives, popularize new weapons. A person with a hammer can provide stones to a

with normal people — people from ghettos even less powerful than ours — which would be the first step to rebuild that lost community.

18. Imagination is not a luxury or a child's game, but access to an essential terrain of struggle, land to reoccupy, and the only one on which we have an advantage.

A very important part of capitalism is the cultural industry. The task of recuperating desires and rebellious stories is a constant task of democratic counterinsurgency. During centuries of defeat, our rebellious heritage survived on the imaginary terrain, where they could never annihilate us. Outside Western civilization, magic is a fact. A universal aspect of colonization has been the infantilization of the imaginary world. The existence of the real world demands the existence of the imaginary world. Capitalism cannot destroy the imaginary world, but it can expropriate it from us, minimize it, weaken the connection between the two worlds so that we do not travel from one to another, so that we have unrealized desires, so that visions seem like nonsense, so that we don't imagine the real world in other ways, so that disillusionment with the real world is explained through neurochemicals and treated with psychotropic drugs (as we become even more like machines). To overcome capitalism, and even to fight as coherent rebels, it is essential to reappropriate the connection with the imaginary world and the ability to imagine; to spread visions; to realize desires; build a bridge between the two worlds.

women became totally dependent on men, and it was believed that animals could not even feel pain? How to understand that democratic evolution began in Runnymede in 1215, when the English aristocracy beat their king, the institutionalization by force of arms of the concept of rights and the idea of a broader participation in the project of government? How to understand the hundred thousand peasants, workers and artisans killed in the German-speaking lands in the year 1525, after revolting in a rebellion that lynched thousands of priests, bishops, knights and nobles, and how to understand the merchants who initially encouraged their rebellion and then betrayed it?[2] In the first century of world colonization, they

mately cursed to evacuate by the bishop of Lausanne), dolphins (excommunicated from Marseille, for clogging the port), rats (who also triumphed), and beetles (case dismissed, due to their young age and the diminutiveness of their bodies). What is fascinating about these cases is how Ferry captures a transitional moment in history that is rarely presented so clearly. His preface is a reminder that, for a certain period in European history, there was the possibility to think of other species in a manner which afforded them agency and equated their rights with those of human beings. Now, as Ferry laments, only humans are 'worthy of a trial' and nature is a 'dead letter'" (More Than Stories, More Than Myths).

[2] ed. — "European civilization has historically demonstrated a much higher tolerance for authoritarianism than the egalitarian societies described in the survey. Yet as the political and economic systems that would become the modern state and capitalism were developing in Europe, there were a number of rebellions that demonstrate that even here authority was an imposition. One of the greatest of these rebellions was the Peasants War. In 1524 and 1525, as many as 300,000 peasant insurgents, joined by townsfolk and some lesser nobility, rose up against the property owners and church hierarchy in a war that left about 100,000 people dead throughout Bavaria, Saxony, Thüringen, Schwaben, Alsace, as well as parts of what are now Switzerland and Austria. The princes and clergy of the Holy Roman Empire had been steadily increasing taxes to pay for rising administrative and military costs, as government became more top-heavy. The artisans and workers of the towns were affected by these taxes, but the peasants received the heaviest burden. To increase their power and their revenue, princes forced free peasants into serfdom, and resurrected Roman Civil law, which instituted private ownership of land, something of a step backwards from the feudal

system in which the land was a trust between peasant and lord that involved rights and obligations.

Meanwhile, elements of the old feudal hierarchy, such as the knighthood and the clergy, were becoming obsolete, and conflicted with other elements of the ruling class. The new burgher mercantile class, as well as many progressive princes, opposed the privileges of the clergy and the conservative structure of the Catholic church. A new, less centralized structure that could base power in councils in the towns and cities, such as the system proposed by Martin Luther, would allow the new political class to ascend.

In the years immediately prior to the War, a number of Anabaptist prophets began travelling around the region espousing revolutionary ideas against political authority, church doctrine, and even against the reforms of Martin Luther. These people included Thomas Dreschel, Nicolas Storch, Mark Thomas Stübner, and most famously, Thomas Müntzer. Some of them argued for total religious freedom, the end of non-voluntary baptism, and the abolition of government on earth. Needless to say they were persecuted by Catholic authorities and by supporters of Luther and banned from many cities, but they continued to travel around Bohemia, Bavaria, and Switzerland, winning supporters and stoking peasant rebelliousness.

In 1524, peasants and urban workers met in the Schwarzwald region of Germany and drafted the 12 Articles of the Black Forest, and the movement they created quickly spread. The articles, with Biblical references used as justification, called for the abolition of serfdom and the freedom of all people; the municipal power for people to elect and remove preachers; the abolition of taxes on cattle and inheritance; a prohibition on the privilege of the nobility to arbitrarily raise taxes; free access to water, hunting, fishing, and the forests; and the restoration of communal lands expropriated by the nobility. Another text printed and circulated in massive quantity by the insurgents was the Bundesordnung, the federal order, which expounded a model social order based on federated municipalities. Less literate elements of the movement were even more radical, as judged by their actions and the folklore they left behind; their goal was to wipe the nobility off the face of the earth and institute a mysticist utopia then and there.

Social tension increased throughout the year, as authorities tried to prevent outright rebellion by suppressing rural gatherings such as popular festivals and weddings. In August 1524, the situation finally errupted at Stühlingen in the Black Forest region. A countess demanded that the peasants render her a special harvest on a church holiday. Instead the peasants refused to pay all taxes and formed an army of 1200 people, under the leadership of a former mercenary, Hans Müller. They marched to the town of Waldshut and were joined by the townspeople, and then marched on the

tionships or fairweather friends do not work for us; friendship is revolutionary.

17. The hardest and most neglected task, in a vanished world, is to appear in the lives of others.

The fact that we form a political ghetto — although it is our responsibility to leave it — is not due to our own attitudes (both social and anti-social rebels have their own corner isolated from others), but the powerful effort that the system makes to isolate the whole world. If we have a network of thirty friends, we are already less socially isolated than the regular normalized person who does not even have ten trusted friends. We will only be isolated from the televised reality that nourishes the loneliness of others. But that discrepancy between realities makes it almost impossible to talk to normal people. Having different relationships to those generated by the system, we have different languages. When the land was expropriated, that is to say, when the world disappeared, it was still possible to meet with others because the same relationship was shared with the system of production. But today the system of production is different from the industrial age and the shared condition is isolation, metaphysical exile. It is as if all of us had disappeared from the neighborhoods and workplaces at the same time and now we only see clothing mannequins, shopping bags and well-made curriculums walking the streets. All this new communication technology only makes it impossible to meet *[ed. — see the supplement to **Return Fire vol.3; Caught in the Net**]*. There are anarchist struggles that develop and spread new techniques of attacking, new models of creative projects, new theories and ideas. There is none that does the same with tactics to appear in the lives of others, to break with isolation and to form strong relationships

in the mountains or rural project retains its connections with the struggles; so that the neighborhood assemblies are places where we honestly express our visions of another world.

16. Against their isolation and repression, we must intensify the existence of deep networks with a high level of connectivity.

Repression is an enclosure. To overcome it, it is necessary to extend our affective, material and solidaritarian connections beyond their divisions, be they the police and black lists or the discursive and cultural categories that they create to fit us inside a democratic plurality. The "theory of chaos" and "the theory of complexity" show that networks are stronger than hierarchies (that is why the gringo army developed internet, to create a decentralized communication network capable of surviving a nuclear war in a way their command hierarchies were not — and precisely because of that decentralization now they cannot control it). The networks are strong when they have high connectivity, when each unit has a multitude of connections instead of when there are a few nodes through which all connections pass. And for our purposes we need deep connections. We are not looking for more friends to add on Facebook (in fact, Facebook started with an investment from the CIA, which wanted to investigate social networks, because their hierarchical minds did not quite understand them). We are looking for accomplices for subversive projects, attempts to communalize the land, networks of mutual support and combative solidarity. In this network, then, we need to develop friendships and relationships based on values of trust, courage (before the enemy and also in the face of criticism or conflict with *compañeros*), respect for differences and the heterogeneity of struggles, affection and care and active solidarity. Therefore, superficial rela-

let very few Europeans live in the colonies, and these were businessmen and thugs of the police class who were betraying, torturing and repressing us during our frequent revolts, just as they tortured and murdered the indigenous rebels. And in later centuries, the new centralized state enacted several laws to prohibit Europeans from mixing or sympathizing with indigenous people or enslaved Africans. Because during those same centuries, they were completing the process of colonizing us, of destroying our ties with the earth and with the community of living beings that make up the world, and of making us forget all that we have lost. **We have lost and forgotten these links to such an extent that in classic anarchist texts we find the same rationalist proposal to replace the capitalist war of all-against-all with the socialist war of "all against nature"; we find a technological and**

castle at Stühlingen and besieged it. Realizing they needed some kind of military structure, they decided to elect their own captains, sergeants, and corporals. In September they defended themselves from a Hapsburg army in an indecisive battle, and subsequently refused to lay down their arms and beg pardon when entreated to do so. That autumn peasant strikes, refusals to pay tithes, and rebellions broke out throughout the region, as peasants extended their politics from individual complaints to a unified rejection of the feudal system as a whole.

With the spring thaw of 1525, fighting resumed with a ferocity. The peasant armies seized cities and executed large numbers of clergy and nobility. But in February the Schwabian League, an alliance of nobility and clergy in the region, achieved a victory in Italy, where they had been fighting on behalf of Charles V, and were able to bring their troops home and devote them to crushing the peasants. Meanwhile Martin Luther, the burghers, and the progressive princes withdrew all their support and called for the annihilation of the revolutionary peasants; they wanted to reform the system, not to destroy it, and the uprising had already sufficiently destabilized the power structure. Finally on May 15, 1525, the main peasant army was decisively defeated at Frankenhausen; Müntzer and other influential leaders were seized and executed, and the rebellion was put down. However, over the following years the Anabaptist movement spread throughout Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, and peasant revolts continued to break out, in the hopes that one day the church and the state would be destroyed for good" (Anarchy Works).

rationalist utopia formed by happy workers who have taken over their factories and perfected the architecture of their controlled environment. You can read this story of colonization in the work of Silvia Federici *[ed. — see **Return Fire vol.3 pg93**]*, Rediker and Linebaugh *[ed. — see **Return Fire vol.3 pg90**]*, or Luther Blisset *[ed. — see **Return Fire vol.5 pg124**]*. But, even more clearly, you can read it inscribed in the current social fabric. It is present in the empty streets, which they enclose with permits and behavioral ordinances as before they enclosed the communal lands, reinstating the Roman laws that turned the land into something that could be sold. It is present in police torture and the campaigns of repression, which we call "witch hunts," remembering without remembering the bloody process that broke peasant solidarity and prohibited the self-knowledge of bodies, traditional medicine, abortion and contraception, trying to turn women into factories for the increase of the population and as a basis to invisibly feed the new wage labor. **It is also present in our struggles, but only half-heartedly.** We remember the Paris Commune and May Day, without remembering why *[ed. — see **Return Fire vol.3 pg87**]*. The "Commune" was above all a reference to the importance of the communes in the imaginary (that is, the connection between their actuality and their utopia) of the peasants of the Middle Ages. And May Day, which falls halfway between the equinox and the solstice, was a spring festival and a day of play and revolt linked to a tradition of resistance against Christianity and the aristocracy. In 1886 the immigrant workers from Europe [in the U.S.] still remembered the transcendence of the day and for that reason they organized the general strike on this date, later recorded in history for the events in Chicago. Without knowing it, we continue in a struggle that is not only 150 years old, but we are not able to win because in the end we always adopt the visions and objectives of the system that originally colonized us and then stole the memory of defeat, foisting upon us a culture of

tice of total negation does not constitute a "danger" to the revolutionaries who style themselves as the responsible ones (but in fact, it is these responsible revolutionaries who are a danger to the revolution). Rather, this practice involves a simple and lamentable lack of imagination. "Unfortunate" because the imaginary may be the most important ground for the struggle for freedom. If someone cannot find anything in this world, in this society, worthy of being protected, of being returned to life, it is because that person is totally alienated; a fairly common condition. Several Aymara *[ed. — see **Yarwar's Story**]* and Mapuche *[ed. — see **Return Fire vol.5 pg56**]* comrades consider anarchists as their best allies, but criticize them for their lack of connection to the earth and for being focused on negation, when for them the struggle is also a process of defending their roots and free creation (which entails the destruction, as a contingent activity, of any obstacle to such creation). We do not talk about "counter-power", nor do we intend to create an infrastructure that will replace the existing infrastructure. If we think of victory as the physical realization of our projects, we will adopt a conservative stance, trying to save or protect those projects and losing what constitutes their greatest value: our creative projects are useful when they nourish our ability to attack and survive the repression, when they are like offensive bases to recover our lives that have been stolen, when they connect us with the earth, with society and with a force that is more powerful than fear and obedience. If we use them offensively, we will physically lose much of what we create, but that is good, because they serve not to be conserved, but to teach us new skills and to express visions of new possible worlds to society. The State co-opts the "positive" projects when, with the stick and the carrot, it convinces them to detach themselves from the destructive activity and clean up their image. We have to do the opposite: so that every community garden has murals of the combatants and the prisoners; so that the means of counter-information speak of sabotage; so that any squat

ble contradicts the consensus on social peace and changes the image of what's normal and possible, giving the idea of the existence of new tools and stronger responses that anyone can use and carry out during a moment of revolt. Meanwhile, **attacking the system is a step towards returning to inhabit our own bodies, acting out rage instead of swallowing it, instead of disciplining our feelings and instincts as would the ideal man proposed by Cartesian philosophy** *[ed. — see **Return Fire vol.5 pg71**]*. The attacks also separate us from the citizens; they point us out as different creatures, as barbarians. That is why it is also important that struggles have their antisocial side, capable of challenging and stoking the hostility of the Good, of the Normal — that is, those who follow imposed norms — because a distinction between class society and a society of relationships is that currently it is not possible to attack the system without bothering normal people; they are not our enemies but they reproduce the enemy, which is normality. The trick is to make attacks that serve as an invitation to others to be accomplices of our illegality, whether sympathetic or smiling, offering their support or going out on the street.

15. The passion for destruction must be a creative passion.

The pleasure of the revolt, the insurrectional strategy and the need to survive while we fight, demand that we carry out a practice of free creation linked to our destructive activity. Total criticism and the desire to destroy oppression from its roots often lead to a theory and practice of total negation. The *compañeros*[5] who carry out a practice of total negation also play an important role and it is useless for us to lament how "bad" they are. Above all, it is important to be aware that the practice

[5] ed. — Somewhere between friends, colleagues, affines and comrades: no direct English equivalent exists.

slaves and a concept of freedom typical of a machine, a mere tool that belongs to another and that exists to carry out the projects of another. In the end, we always betray ourselves.

2. Production is primarily an instrument of control.

Therefore, talking about self-management or worker control of production is the same as talking about the appropriation of state power or talking about the proletarian dictatorship. Production — that is, the capitalist system that manages life through the creation and distribution of commodities and commodified relationships — is not and never was a mere method of increasing the profits of the bourgeoisie, but is and always was an emergency response to a crisis of social control. The failure of the feudal system because of peasant resistance forced the nascent bourgeoisie to ally with the most dynamic part of the old hierarchy to create a new state capable of establishing biopower *[ed. — see **Return Fire vol.5 pg47**]*, as Silvia Federici explains; a State capable of enclosing and taking land from the people, turning women into domestic workers, responsible for reproducing labor power, and converting men into masculinized workers, who would enter the workshops and then the factories to produce value. Letting them have contact with the land or allowing them to create things autonomously and take away the surplus would have allowed them to develop an imaginary of the commune (as they did under the feudal system), that is, a horizon that frames other possibilities of freedom, of mutual aid; of the "World Turned Upside Down" of the heretics. **The ruling classes had to take away their contact with the earth, with their creations, with the world and discipline them to move in a plane of pure abstract values, not only to extract more profits and to fill even more pockets, but also to**

survive as a class, to avoid the total revolution that was being forged after centuries of rebellions of peasants, artisans, urban workers and heretics, and they had to push the colonization of the rest of the world to pay the debts of the increasingly high expenses generated by the permanent armies and the new techniques of repression. They never managed to destroy the commune completely (just as it never existed, *tout court*, in European history, at least not as it existed in a past that has been completely forgotten). This commune survived in the imaginary and constantly re-emerged. When women were removed from public life and confined to to the private sphere, they opened gaps in it to create new communes; for example, if we interpret the spontaneous meetings around the laundries as an improvised agora. There are still attempts to destroy the new communes: with household appliances and civic prohibitions against hanging clothes out to dry "on streets or in public spaces". You can see more clearly what production is when you understand its preconditions. Primitive accumulation *[ed. — see **Return Fire vol.2 pg96**]*, contrary to [Karl] Marx's strictest hypothesis, was achieved only through institutions such as the Inquisition, the witch-hunt, and the "Bloody Laws," by which a million people were tortured and killed during three centuries, especially independent women, men who showed solidarity with them, vagabonds, homosexuals and heretics (most of whom were revolutionaries who spoke of a world without classes, without priests, without marriages and without private property). Through this process the collectivities of women were destroyed, enabling the creation of a stronger patriarchy (the chaos and cultural mobility produced after the fall of the Roman Empire had resulted in a weakening of it) and thus a powerful division among the exploited. A category of unvalued work was created (the femininized work since then associated with the private sphere: to raise and nourish the future labor force) without which capitalism would never

our reach. Currently (in 2011),[4] the most important battle is the fight against the enclosure of the streets. It is already very late, but if we totally lose public space, it will be extremely difficult to have the slightest presence in society, because then society will not exist, only the market. The sterile criticism against political ghettos stems from the lack of recognition that society itself is disappearing. The ghettos are the most resistant bubbles. The more conscious criticism would be: why the hell are we focusing our energies on occupying closed spaces just at a time when the State wants to expropriate us from the street to finish enclosing public spaces?

14. Every moment is the right time to develop the ability to attack with agility and ease.

The first responses to a rupture are the most important, those that have the possibility of influencing everything that follows and thus changing the narrative. If we do not develop the possibility of attacking before a rupture, without going through endless assemblies and months of preparation, we lose the most important opportunity that there may be to create new possibilities of response by the whole society faced with a rupture or crisis. If attacks are not made at the "inappropriate" times, the appropriate time will never come. Making the attacks visi-

[4] In 2010, the Spanish state was accelerating the enclosure, privatization, and regulation of public space, for example punishing non-permitted meetings, protests, and gatherings while giving over all plazas and sidewalks to increasingly expensive bars. Shortly after this text was published, the 15M movement *[ed. — see **Return Fire vol.5 pg45**]* constituted a massive popular reappropriation of public space, thwarting the State's attempts to assert control. The riotous general strike in spring of 2012 constituted a recovery of the ability to go on the attack and forcibly push back the police. The subsequent ability of social movements to make free use of public space was a foundation to all the powerful movements that followed.

first instrument to communicate with society and influence its controlled reality. It is achieved through posters, stickers, graffiti, social centers, public events, demonstrations, street theater, broken glass, sabotage in sites with a large circulation of people and illegal actions in broad daylight. They work as signals of disorder, as A.G. Schwarz explains *[ed. — see **Return Fire vol.1 pg18**]*, wearing away the illusion of social peace necessary for the functioning of democracy. With this visibility, it is not necessary to convince anyone or change their opinions, because, under capitalism, opinions are not the cause of people's actions, but their alibi. The behavior of people is coerced and opinions are adapted to soften the schizophrenia of living against oneself. The psycho-emotional reality of capitalism is a cognitive dissonance. For that reason, many people like social centers, but never enter them to participate because participation in a social struggle involves admitting that one is a slave. Visibility finds its importance in making known that we exist and thus, changing the spectrum of what is possible in the mind and imagination of society. Recognizing that there are anarchists, they will have to reformulate their opinions to respond to the criticisms we represent, and although opinions do not change in themselves, they will have changed their position orienting it towards us and not towards the center of the spectrum of official discourses. That already supposes a big success. **Once, by visibility, our existence is undeniable, we will move towards presence.** Manifesting as a social force, capable of altering the symbolic reality of the Spectacle and breaking social peace, we participate in all social conflicts, providing new discourses, values and tools of struggle, awakening solidarity and strengthening the ability to survive repression. Presence is visibility endowed with a material force, a social intuition, and a strategic positioning within all conflict and struggle within

have been possible. The subsequent enclosing of the land was made possible and police techniques were developed that are still in force. To speak of an economic sphere, as if it were a natural category, is absurd, since the economic only exists thanks to a great state violence that fractured the social into two parts: the economic and the political.

3. The bourgeois and proletarian classes do not exist.

Or rather, they exist — given that identities exist precisely when they are believed to exist — but being so, such classes do not matter. The proletarian class died adopting bourgeois culture and the bourgeois class sacrificed itself, Christ-like, to be eternal and universal, to become a unifying culture represented in the new non-subject, the consumer. It does not suit capitalism that anything belongs to anyone. Property, understood in a classical way, is a condition too stable for the taste of Capital. It is more interested in the relationship based on managing, because in such a relationship the power does not reside in the one who manages, but in the disciplined movement of goods, activities and managed people. (An unused farm belongs to the owner all the same, but a manager who does not manage will be replaced by another who will better follow the abstract logic of the system). Thus, an apparatus, using the term of [Giorgio] Agamben, does not render any autonomy to its leaders but rewards all the citizens of its regime for moving and behaving according to the rules suggested by the flow of the apparatus, conditioning them to manage their own obedience without forcing the apparatus to show the annihilating power it possesses. In this way class society — which implied an obvious conflict and the need for frequent use of the annihilating powers to exercise control — has been replaced by a society of flows, in which the environment itself and the space between beings is constructed

to reward obedient mobility and thus minimize and hinder social conflict. Today all belong to the ruling class who look at their own lives from above *[ed. — see **Return Fire vol.5 pg38**]*.

4. Reality is polycentric.

Scientific rationalism has been, among other things, a religion, and it is more effective than Christianity in guaranteeing social control. The advantage it has is a greater capacity for self-criticism and, thus, greater possibilities of changing the governing structures in the face of popular defiance or disillusion. Finally the scientists at the service of our rulers had to admit, not only that the earth was not the center of the universe, but also that the universe had no center, and that space itself is something that moves, expands and contracts. However, science as a religion continues to promote the idea of objectivity, despite having found that objectivity does not exist either. Objectivity, above all, is a metaphysical operation that makes us contemplate our own lives from above, which makes us wonder how the economy should be deployed and how society should be organized instead of "what am I going to do within the world to meet my needs and fulfill my wishes with others?" For the system, disciplining worldviews is essential precisely because reality is polycentric and if we assume this truth with all its consequences, they will have lost the ideological war. By contemplating our lives from above, we share the *Weltanschauung* — the way of seeing the world — of the system that dominates us. Contemplating our lives from above is a non-ecstatic substitute for the deeply ecstatic extracorporeal experiences that formed an important part of the spirituality of pre-colonized societies (including European ones before Christianity) by providing people, through magical plants, ritual or meditation, the possibility of connecting with the world on the

12. Without knowing where we came from, we can not know where we are going.

For this reason, cultivating historical memory is one of the most important tasks of the insurgent. Historical memory is a root that connects us with the strength of thousands of ghosts of past struggles. As Walter Benjamin said, we do not fight to improve the lives of our children and our grandchildren, but to avenge those ghosts. Historical memory gives us the knowledge of a thousand years of rebellion. It gives us the patience and perspective to survive repression, knowing that our lives, although they are a reason to fight for everything and against everything, are only drops in a sea of resistance; that we have been fighting for more than a thousand years and even if we die in prison, the struggle continues; that dying is nothing more than going back to the world they intend to make disappear. It gives us an awareness of the existing antagonism against the system from its origins. Only a people with little historical memory, who do not understand how the system we fight against began, could consider the possibility of being their own bosses in the factories or forming their own party in the government as a victory.

13. Against the isolation imposed by the system, our strength lies in starting from visibility and gaining presence.

The theory of opacity (proposed by the Invisible Committee *[ed. — see **Return Fire vol.3 pg58**]* and some Situationists) is valid insofar as a refusal to enter into dialogue with power (the press, the Academy) or the Spectacle. But avoiding visibility is suicide in a time of widespread alienation. Visibility is the

11. The rebel's main motto, the strategic axis of the insurgent, is "society against the State."

The anthropological phenomenon that Pierre Clastres expressed with these words frames the hidden secret of the State and the current dynamics in which we fight. The State always tries to obscure the differences between itself and society. It pretends to be our defender, our teacher, our father, our mother, even to be ourselves. But it is not society. What they parade as a society is nothing more than the market, and the market, in its ideal form, is society completely dominated, comatose, unconscious. In every situation we have to show the distance between the system and us, between our roles as workers and our bodies, needs and desires. As soon as society has any form of independent existence, the State becomes afraid and minimizes its indignities and aggressions. Let us build up the strength of society and point to the State as a parasite and usurper. The only thing that is strong enough to destroy the State (and not seize it, as the Socialists do) is an awakening society, as was seen in Greece, in Albania, in Argentina or in Kabylia; and the only possibility the State has to impose itself again is to convince society to disarm, to return home, to return to sleep. In Greece they did it with television and the spectacle of the crisis; in Albania they did it with a radical change of government; in Argentina they did it with Peronism *[ed. — see **Return Fire vol.5 pg60**]*; in Kabylia they are doing it with NGOs and political participation. In no case was the repressive violence of the State sufficient. Thus we see that co-optation is the other hand of the State, but it can only work if many people see the State as their own and not as a totally alien parasite.

metaphysical level, and thus making the domination that occurs through alienation impossible.

5. The anarchist strategy is simply to decide what to do, at all times, with the relationships and forces that we have at our disposal.

As such, it is it is totally different from military strategy, whose starting point is an ideal and abstract plan, and a point of view from above that is like a map with a set of resources deployed atop. All military strategy is to impose an ideal plan on the map that represents reality. Anarchy, not as a revolutionary movement, but as a multifaceted reality of rebellion and permanent creation, is based on the free initiative of every member of society; in the idea that we all contemplate social problems with our own eyes, and not from above. **Many of the divisions that have affected the anarchists with the passing of the decades have been revealed as totally incoherent with the ideal of anarchy, because they are based on the pretension of creating a compulsory unity.** I am referring to the complaint that one is not following the plan, that one is not doing with her resources what she should do. If we do not intend to make a military campaign, we must refuse to see the revolution as something organized according to a unified plan, as if it were a game of Risk. We are not looking down from above, giving orders. We are here, in the midst of a beautiful chaos that our enemies always try to organize. We will be stronger than ever if we learn to triumph in this chaos, to move in the network of our own relationships, to communicate horizontally or circularly, to use only what really is ours and to influence others, to understand that not everyone is going to act as we act; that is the beauty of rebellion, and our effec-

tiveness in it does not lie in making the whole world equal, but in devising the best way to relate in a complementary way to those who are different and follow different paths.

6. The Western individual is unworldly.

It is a mysterious body and one can never know how it works. They guarantee it survival with what they call "rights," which allow them to buy and sell the land, and prohibit others from basic needs. They allow it free speech (it is not supposed to be able to do it organically, with its own mouth, without this concession); but they do not allow you to make your words in the form of decisions and transform them into actions. The rights of the Western individual do not allow another person to inject toxins into their lungs, but they do allow them to cut the forest or drain the swamp that produces their oxygen, which obviously would have a similar effect on us, the individuals of the world. The respiratory system for living beings is collective and consists of a multitude of lungs, leaves, bacteria and other organisms. But it follows that the Western individual only exists within its own body, since its rights do not extend beyond its skin. Although the Western individual cannot be understood as a living being, it has certain advantages; among them that it is extremely mobile. Because all its roots and relationships can be canceled through a simple monetary operation, it can be moved from one place to another with ease: from the countryside to the city, from Africa to the Caribbean, or from the uterus to the school, and from there to the factory, the prison, the hospital and the cemetery. It is not necessary to say — because it is obvious and only a very advanced religious complex of scientific rationalism could make one forget — that unlike the Western individual, the individual of the world is not an isolated body, a subject that realizes verbs against objects scattered in a static

nent revolt. It is not because we see ourselves as a permanent nihilist vanguard or that, a thousand years after having strangled the last policeman with the guts of the last bureaucrat, we imagine ourselves still forming a Black Bloc and smashing shop windows, but because we understand revolt as the chaotic condition of a healthy society, a permanently creative and regenerative cycle without restrictions, like springtime and its explosion of new initiatives and projects born from the corpses of old achievements.

10. We are the first weeds.

Both revolt and society are an ecosystem. You could say that the first weeds are the most important to break the concrete and turn dead soil into a place of abundance. But weeds, obviously, will not form this abundance by themselves. The smallest or fastest growing plants are usually those that can detoxify the earth and not those that can take best advantage of healthy land. Even in a forest, the first generation trees are not the ones that will form the same forest after two or three generations without the interruption of the axe or saw. **Soon the first weeds reach a limit in their reproduction. Taking this into account, the first rebels should recognize that our task is not to create more weeds — more rebels like us — but to break the concrete to provide space and healthy soil for other totally different species, types of rebels and living beings that do not look like us.** So the strategic question would not be how we can get more people into our social center, but how can we make our social center interrupt normality in the neighborhood or strengthen other nascent expressions of rebellion (without forgetting the peremptory need to nourish our own rebellion and sustain ourselves in it)?

8. Monothematic activism is capitalist alienation in the field of struggle.

If a campaign against war or against deportations is the only event that manifests a social conflict, we should be there. But while we only understand each other as political subjects, while our facility to participate in a demonstration works as a substitute for the facility of speaking with neighbors and with co-workers, and thus develop a social intuition that enables us to perceive forms of social conflict also more opaque to the press and the State, we will be isolated, because the terrain of politics in capitalist society is a scenario of alienated combat. The farce is that all isolated miseries are one misery. Dividing our rage into themes makes it easier for the State to propose reforms. We have to move always in the network of conflicts that exist in our society, but without letting the discursive construction of such conflicts stop us from imagining the conflict that we bring with us or the ability to recognize conflicts that for the Spectacle are unrecognizable.

9. Revolt is the rebirth of society.

It is not a line or a movement, even if it involves a lot of movement. It cannot be another revolution that imposes a vision of society, but must be the destruction of every obstacle to breathing freely and to the qualitative growth of society. **The question "by what vision or plan will society be organized after capitalism?" is a covertly dogmatic operation that is really asking: "What visions and plans are going to be repressed in this new society?"** Society is an intelligent and self-organizing organism, as long as we are all making plans, communicating visions, taking initiatives. Society needs all our creative energy to overcome the coma to which it is subjected, and to be reborn and live. That's why we talk about perma-

and empty space,[3] but the individual of the world, the one who

[3] ed. — "Although ecology may be treated as a science, its greater and overriding wisdom is universal.

That wisdom can be approached mathematically or chemically, or it can be danced or told as myth. It has been embodied in widely scattered, economically different cultures. It is manifest, for example, among pre-Classical Greeks, in Navajo religion and social orientation, in Romantic poetry of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in Chinese landscape painting of the eleventh century, in current Whiteheadian philosophy, in Zen Buddhism, in the worldview of the cult of the Cretan Great Mother, in the ceremonials of the Bushman hunters, and in the medieval Christian metaphysics of light. What is common among all of them is a deep sense of engagement with the landscape, with profound connections to surroundings and to natural processes central to all life.

It is difficult in our language even to describe that sense. English becomes imprecise or mystical — and therefore suspicious — as it struggles with "process" thought. Its noun and verb organization shapes a divided world of static *doers* separate from the *doing*. It belongs to an idiom of social hierarchy to which all nature is made to mimic man. The living world is perceived in that idiom as an upright ladder, a "great chain of being," *[ed. — see **Return Fire vol.4 pg95**]* an image that seems at first ecological but is basically rigid, linear, condescending, lacking humility and love of otherness.

We are all familiar from childhood with its classification of everything on a scale from the lowest to the highest: inanimate matter — vegetative life — lower animals — higher animals — humankind — angels — gods. It ranks animals themselves in categories of increasing good: the viscous and lowly parasites, pathogens, and predators — the filthy decay and scavenging organisms — indifferent wild or merely useless forms — good, tame creatures — and virtuous beasts domesticated for human service. It shadows the great man-centered political scheme upon the world, derived from the ordered ascendancy from parishioners to clerics to bishops to cardinals to popes, or in a secular form from criminals to proletarians to aldermen to mayors to senators to presidents.

And so is nature pigeonholed. The sardonic phrase "the place of nature in man's world" offers, tongue-in-cheek, a clever footing for confronting a world made in man's image and conforming to words. It satirizes the prevailing philosophy of antinature and human omniscience. It is possible because of an attitude which — like ecology — has ancient roots, but whose modern form was shaped when [Thomas] Aquinas reconciled Aristotelian homocentrism with Judeo-Christian dogma. In a later setting of machine technology, puritanical capitalism, and an urban ethos it carves its own version of reality in the landscape, like a schoolboy initialing a tree. For such a

struggles, exists from their relationships. Their body, their being, their essence, are exactly the set of networks that coincide in them, the relations they have with the world. The most serious assault committed by the system we are fighting is to make the world disappear, the chaotic network of relationships that is the only terrain on which we can live.

7. Capitalism wants us to survive.

In some regions of the world, during certain times — even the current one — capitalism needs to use genocide: but capitalist genocide has been essential to inaugurate biopower; that is to say, the power that is proper to the system of guaranteeing survival is based on an annihilating and homicidal power that has been necessary to destroy and suppress self-sufficiency and make us dependent on capitalism. And capitalism wants and needs us to survive and multiply. In fact, capitalism was formed from the Black Death, during which a third of the population of Europe died, causing a crisis for the elites. With the shortage of labor and the abundance of empty land, the peasants gained much strength in relation to their oppressors. They could escape from the feudal system and get their own land, and through work they could demand salaries three times higher than in previous decades. And all in a context of the forceful growth of rebellions that often ended with priests and nobles lynched. As a desperate response, the

philosophy nothing in nature has inherent merit. As one professor recently put it, *"The only reason anything is done on this earth is for people. Did the river, winds, animals, rocks, or dust ever consider my wishes or needs? Surely, we do all our acts in an earthly environment, but I have never had a tree, valley, mountain, or flower thank me for preserving it."* This view carries great force, epitomized in history by Bacon *[ed. — see **Return Fire vol.3 pg27**]*, Descartes *[ed. — see **Return Fire vol.5 pg71**]*, Hegel *[ed. — see **Return Fire vol.4 pg48**]*, Hobbes *[ed. — see **Return Fire vol.4 pg20**]*, and Marx" (Ecology & Man: A Viewpoint).

new bourgeoisie and the Protestants (the half-heretics, that is, the reformists), who had already managed to weaken the old system by opening space for their ascent, allied with the aristocracy and transformed wages into the new instrument of domination, putting the land on sale and thus abolishing self-sufficiency; inaugurating speculation and raising the prices of bread and other necessities; provoking three centuries of hunger and misery. Meanwhile, the legal systems and the churches (both Catholic and Protestant) adopted several measures to force a constant increase of the population, criminalizing contraception, abortion and homosexuality, and replacing a tradition of midwives and autonomous births by a masculine medical profession. Capitalism guaranteed survival to prohibit life. From this contradiction arise many struggles that in their beginning confront capitalism, but once they manage to survive or improve physical conditions, they allow themselves to be co-opted by capitalism itself, claiming some ends that are better suited to capitalism than to the subversive project of making the world reappear. **You can not criticize the measures people use to achieve their survival, unless they steal from their neighbors or adopt a discourse of solidarity and end up stealing the future from their grandchildren, who will suffer an even greater misery because of the crisis that capitalism always generates as long as we do not destroy it. But neither can a struggle that does not go beyond survival be called revolutionary.** What is revolutionary is only that which demands more than survival, which demands life. Such a fact creates another contradiction: fighting for life makes survival more difficult.