

Social War, Antisocial Tension

A Continuation of 23 Theses Regarding Revolt

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dedicated to Gracia la Valle. We still remember, 513 years later.

*“But it won’t be the witches
that are burning this time”*

Blackbird Raum

An opening note from the translator.

*Many of the concepts and critiques published in *Guerra Social*, *Tensión Antisocial*, are currently widespread in some English-speaking anarchist circles. It is important to note that the text was written in 2011, and it is the continuation of another booklet that was written in the autumn of 2010, when the important revolts that would sweep Barcelona and the rest of the Spanish state had only begun. The first text therefore was written before the return of a combative May Day and the 15M plaza occupation movement, around the time of the first of a cycle of riotous general strikes. These struggles, occurring shortly before the Occupy movement and a couple experiences with general strikes in the US, were an influence on anarchists in the English-speaking world. Although the perspective contained herein is certainly minoritarian and not at all characteristic of the Spanish anarchist space, it may have indirectly spread to English-speaking anarchists through interpretations of the revolts in Barcelona between 2011 and 2013.*

*I have decided to translate this booklet and not its prequel because in many ways the ideas are the same but better developed. *23 Tesis en Torno a la Revuelta* is written simply and available on the internet; any curious reader with a free translation program can get an easy sense of it.*

*The present text’s importance, if it has any, is as an anticipation and expression of one specific anarchist modality, among others, within a social revolt, a modality that has already made its appearance in North America both as a translation of European struggles and as a completely endogenous response by North American anarchists to some of the same problematics that the author or authors of *Tensión Antisocial* presumably faced. Within the text we can also find an evident push towards a new understanding of colonialism, also on the European continent itself (in the form of witch hunts and other processes), and towards a rejection of rationalism. Neither of these elements are at all common in the Spanish anarchist literature, and the influence of both Federici and Rediker and Linebaugh, translated into Spanish shortly before the penning of the present work, is made explicit in *23 Tesis*.*

*The roots of a specific practice are always multiple. With this translation, we present one of them, to a practice readers might be familiar with, so that it might be contextualized, criticized, or elaborated. Clearly, the influences on *Tensión Antisocial* are international, from Novatore to Federici, but the vision itself was forged in the experience of struggles, some isolated and others popular, that have rocked the streets of Barcelona in the last years. Our hope is to feed an ongoing conversation, international in scope, and bring some small measure of clarity or inspiration to the struggles that will write the next chapters of this conversation.*

*Finally, North American readers might be surprised to know that the Blackbird Raum quote appeared in the original text. That band played its first Barcelona show at a squatted social center shortly before *Tensión Antisocial* was written. For her part, Gracia la Valle, mentioned in the dedication, was the first person killed as a witch in the Spanish Inquisition.*

A Deaf-Mute Conversation

For some time now, there has been an ideological abyss between insurgent people who sincerely want to destroy the State, Capital, and the patriarchy, and create a free and solidaristic world. They say that there are socials and antisocials. Although common, it is an imprecise division, and precisely for this reason we use it here, to not force the given categories but to reveal a false dichotomy.

In general, the debate has only been a distraction, an intentional confusion of terms to defend postures that have already been chosen. They say it's easy to make logs from a fallen tree, but if the tree itself is fictitious, its wood will not produce much fire. To dissipate the smoke a little, let's examine a typical episode in this debate so that we can then clearly see the essence of the social war and the antisocial tension.

In the introduction to the text *¡Enrabiliaos!* and in an article in the magazine Terra Cremada (“No dar el brazo a torcer”) we can observe very distinct postures, but in each text they criticize a strawman. I choose these two publications because they demonstrate a quality of thought and include very good texts. In other words, they are not the typical everything-is-bullshit denunciations that are only good enough to be written on the wall of a public bathroom. This also means that the deaf-mute conversation has reached an advanced level.

In *¡Enrabiliaos!* we find the following phrases.

“They will tell us that we are missing an opportunity to ‘present our discourse’ [by not going to the occupied plaza]. We are neither evangelists nor professional politicians, we don’t need to ‘present our discourse’ and in fact, there is nothing more erroneous than to think that we have a single discourse. Our ideas are there wherever people are questioning authority, private property, privileges and exploitation: in sum, wherever people question and take action against any form of oppression and hierarchy. Where that is taking place, that is where our supposed discourse is, without the need for us, like apostles, to take it there. And it is this identification with those who struggle against domination that makes us recognize ourselves in others, without needing to have seen their faces.”

We find here an absurd caricature of the contrary position. The anarchist interventions in 15M¹ encampments initiated a multitude of conversations, arguments, and fights, among companions² and among strangers. Day after day, new texts appeared reacting to nothing less than the situation of the previous day, showing that the anarchist intervention was above all a dialogue with reality. To call it “evangelism” is either to lie or to suffer a grave lack of critical attitude. If this were evangelism, the only people who would not be evangelists would be those who never talk with others. The caricature is so absurd that in one moment the author enters into an argument with themselves, confusing their exaggerated caricature with the reality of the contrary position. If it is true that some people at times used the phrase “present our discourse” it is also true that

¹ A movement of plaza occupations that arose in nearly all the cities of the Spanish state and also in a few other countries starting from a call-out for the 15th of May [2011], which was modeled on some aspects of the Arab Spring but controlled by a strong dose of citizenist ideology.

² [Trans] —Compañeros is usually translated as comrades, though camaradas also exists in Spanish. We have decided to use the literal translation, companions, to avoid the partisan connotations of comrade, and to convey the intimate connotations of compañeros, even though these are more pronounced, perhaps uncomfortably so, in English. Perhaps the alternative sticks; we consider it worth a try.

the anarchists³ who intervened in the events did not believe they had a single discourse. In fact, in the encampments, the anarchists spent a great deal of time arguing amongst themselves about the different discourses. To attack a position, the author of the introduction to ¡Enrabiaos! sums up all the beliefs of that position in a single imprecise phrase, “present our discourse,” and then makes battle with that phrase rather than coming to terms with the words, attitudes, and actions of the companions they presume to criticize.

Furthermore, the author commits the grave error of assuming that “our ideas are there wherever people are questioning authority”. How many times have our companions seen anarchy wherever there was a riot! But later, in several cases those very same romanticized troublemakers have not demonstrated any radical practice or have rejected attempts to extend solidarity. Yes there is something valuable in every riot, and in a way even football hooligans flipping cars are questioning authority, but it is a fatal error to underestimate the personal connections and the networks that are built by “seeing each other’s faces”, something which according to the author of the introduction is unnecessary.

And if our discourse really is wherever people are questioning authority and privilege, then it was in the 15M encampment from the beginning, and we could assume that the “social” companions went there to participate in that discourse. It is a fact that the “indignados” were questioning authority, although in general in a way that might seem incoherent or naïve to us. But it is easier to ignore this contradiction and belittle the phenomenon.

Too often the imperfect rebellions that happen here have been rejected, while companions see eruptions of anarchy in the romanticized rebellions that arise in other places and that surely also incorporate similar imperfections. This is nothing more than a disguised defeatism. The article “No dar el brazo a torcer” that appears in Terra Cremada no. 2 is an attempt to criticize pacifism and also the fetishization of violence. The article is interesting, but it often tries to dissipate the contrary position with tautology, playing with definitions rather than criticizing directly. It is clear that the section of the article about “the mythification of violence” is directed at insurrectional and antisocial companions.

To wit: “With this fundamental confusion, we also encounter those who postulate that the more destructive an action, in material terms, the more radical it is. But we err once again if we think that to destroy this society it is enough to destroy its physical part.” Here the authors get confused and contradict themselves. Just on the prior page, they write that violence in and of itself “demonstrates that the supposed social peace does not exist,” an argument that recognizes that violent attacks also have their symbolic aspect and also manifest at the level of social relations. So, why distort things by affirming that an attack only affects the State at the physical level?

Also on page 42, they make a criticism of the “professionalization of the use of violence” but this isn’t fair either in the chosen context. Professionals of violence like the militants of Hamas, ETA, IRA, or MAPU-Lautaro also had their social programs. Which is to say, they did not only seek to destroy the physical part of the system. Meanwhile, many mythifiers of violence, among them the Greek anarchists, have busied themselves precisely with the extension of violence, and with a good deal of success, for which reason it would not be fair to criticize them for professionalizing

³ And if I speak of anarchists it is because in the moment in which I write, anarchism serves as a pole and reference for the sincere and irreducible rebels. But our history of struggle goes far beyond the history of anarchism. What interests us here is rebellion, revolt, which has many paths and some do not have a name while others are called “anarchism”. But it is necessary to claim anarchy, called as such or by a different name, in order to signal our desire for total freedom, for the society or commune without domination.

violence when they have achieved great strides forward in realizing the contrary⁴. Ignoring such nuances, the authors of “No dar el brazo a torcer” are trying to win an ideological competition more so than trying to carry a conversation that might lead to the improvement of our strategies.

They make a good criticism of the “chronologies of actions [...] that generate a false idea of strength” and they point it out as quantitative thinking but then they also fall into quantitative thinking when they say, on the next page, that “the same damage that explosives can produce can also be caused by the blows of a hammer”.⁵ The objective of such attacks is not the unrealistic pretension of getting rid of capitalism through the amount of damage inflicted, but the generation of symbols of an offensive that grows constantly stronger and the spreading of other types of combat and sabotage capable of waging a more forceful social war.

This article, which faithfully represents the social perspective, does not analyze the ideas of “signals of disorder” or the spontaneous extension of attacks. In fact, it does not at all consider the theory of the attack, instead taking the criticism to the distant terrain of “direct action”. But the libertarian companions who could be accused today of mythifying violence almost never use the concept of direct action. This term belongs to the social anarchists who try to convince their contemporaries in the social movements to give up on civic and indirect practices. On the contrary, the antisocials speak, in general, about the attack and about war. Therefore it is not honest to criticize their actions for not living up to the definition of direct action, given that they often don’t presume to achieve a concrete change in the moment of their action so much as to augment their own strength and transmit a clear signal of war.

Despite the fact that both publications, *¡Enrabiaos!* and *Terra Cremada*, demonstrate a high level of critical thought, in the moment of criticizing one another, we see that they are not capable of responding to the practice actually represented by their adversary. They can only tilt at windmills and pursue an ideological battle. The truth is that the two postures cannot see each other because they are not opposed positions, but rather contrary directions of the same circle.

In the social war, the social and the antisocial are two attitudes that are not only necessary but inevitable.

Why Don’t We Speak of Class War?

We speak of social war and not of the more traditional class war because classes do not exist. We respect the companions who still feel part of the proletarian class, if it’s really because they live in one of the corners of the world where the disappearance of classes has dragged out for longer and not out of an identitarian effort to meet the dictates of ideologies from other times.

The bourgeois definition of class society, delineated by essential or cultural differences, went out of date a long time ago with the universalization of a consumer culture, which unites bourgeois elements with proletarian elements and newer elements. If in the past anarchist companions could throw a few orsini bombs into the Liceu Theater it is because in that epoch only the

⁴ We obviously can’t speak about all the Greek anarchists, as though they were homogeneous, but in general in Greece one can witness a practice based in large part on forceful attacks against the State and Capital, carried out with the purpose of making such attacks a daily occurrence reproducible by anyone.

⁵ [Trans] For those who might tend to doubt this assertion, the vast majority of the bombs used by anarchists across the Mediterranean or in South America are camping gas explosives or similar models that are capable of little more than destroying plate glass.

bourgeoisie could be found there.⁶ Currently, the average customer in a cinema in Nou Barris will be poorer than the average customer in Sarrià,⁷ but there is no defined line between the two groups; neither will consist exclusively of owners, politicians, and their wives and both groups are probably watching the same film, a radically significant difference with the prior epoch.

It is even clearer that the Marxist definition of classes is no longer in effect. If we understand classes as a difference in the relation to the means of production, currently very few people are actually owners of anything. Nearly all the means of production are in the hands of banks or corporations whose directors, that is to say, the wealthy, earn a wage. An incredibly high wage, but a wage nonetheless, and if they don't do their job well, they can be fired (even democratically, by the stockholders). Sometimes they're even sent off to prison. Meanwhile, an ever growing part of the poor are also being paid with stocks in their own companies; ever more of them have access to capital, even if it is in miserable quantities. Rich and poor exist, without a doubt, but tied to the system with mechanisms that are more and more equal. It is precisely the unification of their relation to the means of production that has dissipated the difference between them.

And if the system no longer needs classes to reproduce itself and if there was neither rupture nor revolution in the dethroning of the bourgeoisie (belying the Marxist thesis, which confused the relation between economic power and political power), by what force does it govern?

Put another way, how do we define the enemy?

The Matrix Model

After seeing the movie *The Matrix*, there were a few crazy gringos who, in the subsequent years, took up arms and began killing people, be it in their workplace or in a shopping mall, believing that in this way they could get out of the Matrix. It seems that similar things started happening in Germany and other countries. Surely, they are not that crazy. Metaphorically, we live in a system very similar to the Matrix. All of us are plugged in to a machinery on which we are dependent, without realizing the artificiality of this situation, without knowing that our current condition originates in having lost a war we have forgotten about. The enemy is the logic of control in and of itself. It is a code able to modify itself in order to recuperate rebellion and assure the continued running of the machines. The genius of a system that always offers opportunities to change specific elements and never lets itself be seen in its totality is that it trains people to recuperate their rage and direct it to the reform of the system, feeding it when they mean to take it apart.

In this artificial, controlled terrain called "society," anyone can be an enemy or an ally. At the moment, the great majority are against us or are not capable of understanding us. If we spoke to them of the Matrix or of the social war, they would think we were crazy. Nonetheless, the best outcome would be if they rose up also, but if they don't, we still have to keep on fighting.

It is this schizophrenia that provokes the antisocial tension.

⁶ [Trans] In 1893 the anarchist Santiago Salvador carried out an attentat in the posh Liceu Theater on Las Ramblas, Barcelona, killing some twenty members of high society.

⁷ Respectively, a poor neighborhood and a rich neighborhood of Barcelona.

If you don't hate, it's because you're not alive

With a great deal of pompousness, some social anarchists ridicule the contempt the antisocials demonstrate towards society, as though they were alienated, privileged, and weak. In truth, the social anarchists don't have truly deep relationships with other sectors of society, but they are appeased with less. The antisocial hatred is always portrayed as an attitude of arrogance, impatience, elitism, and lack of sensitivity. The truth is that those who feel the world will always have a proclivity to hate society and to hate other human beings.

Only with an extreme populism can one forgive the generalized apathy, submission, and stupidity without which the system of domination would never function. The true elitism is to pardon the masses of those despicable behaviors that we would never pardon in ourselves or our companions. In the same way, others whom we may not identify as rebels are also responsible for much resistance of which we are often unaware. It would be a grave error to suppose that the only struggles that exist are those we recognize as such; however, we remain ignorant of such struggles thanks to the same social peace that also makes us invisible. Those of us who are already fighting, known and unknown, are the most sensitive and the most daring, the first weeds that cannot stand the hypocrisy or the misery of normality.

The weeds have to hate the cement in order to break it, and it is normal that they confuse the cement with society because, at the moment, the only thing visible is the cement; society is below, acting as a foundation, but also containing new forms that are awaiting a little light in order to sprout.

The masses in the society of the Spectacle are cement: inert; immobile; without independent thoughts; never leaving the form chosen by their architect. The antisocial rebel plays a vital role when they attack the masses, because only by breaking the mass can the commune, the collectivity, be awoken. Those who fear popular opinion never develop stronger, more daring, more destructive tactics; tactics that in the beginning are scorned (and called "vanguardist" by the populists, even though a true vanguard wants to preserve the mass and not erode it) but later, in moments of rupture, suddenly extend and are collectivized, utilized by everyone.

The antisocial tension is this: a balance between loving people for what they could be and sometimes are; and hating them for the indignity they swallow, the heights they refuse to reach.

Dissidents of Utopia

But the antisocial tension is not a mere double line that has its strategic function in the current situation. It is a contradiction one feels in their guts. It is the curse of solitude and the rejection of any limit. The antisocial or individualist concept of liberty is so extreme that it cannot be programmatic; it is not practical. But it is exactly such an impractical contradiction that we need in order to avoid the monstrosities of rationalism! The rationalist revolutionary is the most frightful horror history has ever seen: having overturned the entire world, he has the possibility to order all the contradictions of nature and put in practice the dictatorship of abstractions.

Reading Renzo Novatore, it becomes clear that the antisocial anxieties are not a program for an individualist utopia. Such does not exist. This poetic nihilism is an endless rebellion since in the utopia of the commune one still will not feel at ease because one always pushes oneself to

explore the extremes of existence, to live the heights and the depths, —to be great like our crime,|| to not accept any limit or censure, and as such to always remain at the margins of society.

An antisocial tension will exist in any future. Many anarchists fight because we are very sensitive to the imposition of norms. Born in an antiauthoritarian utopia, we would still see much hypocrisy and imposition. Above all we reject the idea of a utopia in which rebellion is outdated and unnecessary. We don't believe in a rebellion that will abolish the need to rebel, to transgress. Knowing that the only perfection is chaos, we will be unable to create a new authority.

Once we have destroyed the State and every apparatus of repression and coercion, struggle will be completely different; to start with no one will put us in prison for rebelling, instead they might look at us bad and little more. As such it is possible to speak of utopia, of revolution, of a definitive rupture, of an "after". But we imagine a complex and imperfect utopia, that changes with the struggles against its norms, its complacency, the inevitable impositions of the collectivity towards the individual.

In Love With the World

In the 15M occupation, social and antisocial anarchists participated, each in their own way. There was also a posture of rejection towards any participation. Given the scarcity of actions exterior to the Plaça during those months, this posture cannot be considered a strategy but rather a lack of the same, a lack of patience, a lack of projectuality, an incapacity to confront the complicated realities of the world. In it we encounter the least interesting side of anarchism, because it refuses to learn from plurality and loses the opportunity to fortify its affinity by bringing it to more complex situations. If there really did exist an anarchist posture that did not participate in the social sprouting of 15M, why did the exterior actions stop during the month of the occupation? It would have been great had the attacks, sabotage, talks, propaganda, and whatever else continued during that month but the truth is that outside of the plaza we only find the continuation of a couple anarchist projects, valid but with little impact. Everything else is empty words. From what we saw, the posture of nonparticipation is purely hypothetical. If in some moment the partisans of this posture decide to develop a true practice starting from nonparticipation in social movements, maybe they will contribute new ideas and tactics that are very interesting, but at the moment we find nothing practical in their rejection, and lone words have never interested us.

It is equally boring, to the point of being pathetic, the posture of the populist rebels, supposed comrades who participate in any social movement without expressing their own ideas, who are satisfied with supplying tools for the use of the movement (whether it's the skills to facilitate a large assembly or their know-how for squatting buildings or constructing treehouses⁸) while they ignore the strategic debates, and decline to criticize their new allies. They must have the hearts of sheep or politicians. They fear frightening the others with their strange and radical ideas. Some feel so alienated from society (a society of alienation) that they want to be just like everyone else, to the point of losing their own identity. Others want to influence the masses without revealing who they are and what they really want; these ones end up reproducing the language of democracy and rights to win more popularity. They often defend their postures with

⁸ [Trans] This is a direct jab at some of the anti-authoritarians who participated in a non-critical way in the 15M movement.

false dichotomies, as though the only options were the use of concepts that betray our dreams or falling in the trap of the typical, clichéd anarchist communication, a sterile and abstract style that is hardly comprehensible to people who have not read the same books as we have. Their mistake is not recognizing that for rebels, conflict is good and the easy path is destined to fail.

Anarchists of the social war are completely in love with the world in all its complexity, and perhaps for that reason we hate society for being false and poisonous and for feeding itself in the market of commercialized relations rather than feeding itself in the world of free relations; or maybe because of this we love society for all the potential it has and because it still maintains some roots in the world and goes on creating communes here and there in the scorched earth, despite all it has suffered.

The Enemy is a way of Seeing the World

If classes don't exist, if the son of immigrants can become president of France or of the United States, if there are poor people who spend their lives imitating rich people and the system can get rid of any one of its directors, even sending them to prison to reinforce the illusion of justice, how do we recognize the enemy?

The guidelines of the class war, in those times when we all seemed to belong to one class or another, obviated an important truth right up until the historical moment in which the good proletarians began to convert themselves into revolutionary bureaucrats. The revealed truth is that the enemy is not a class but a point of view, a subjectivity, and all of those who look at their lives from above, whether a banker or an immigrant mother on welfare, have taken the side of domination.

The *comisocrats*⁹ of 15M who feared spontaneity and needed to centralize information and all decision making spaces; the employees who agreed to salary cuts in order to save the company; the citizens who identify with their politicians; the syndicalists who take on the problematic of raising production and the progressives who take on the problematic of security, crime, and terrorism; anarchists in '36 who got themselves off on the opportunity to join the government and put their supposedly libertarian economic theories into practice; the activists who care about their image in the media; the scientists who reduce climate change and mass extinction to carbon levels and temperature statistics.

The enemy is a subjectivity, it is falling into the trap of putting the needs of order above our own desires. The most profoundly rebellious act is to understand oneself as a being that lives through an entire web of other living beings, or, to put it another way, a being of the world. Once we have replaced in our imaginary the commune of citizens or the commune of producers, which is to say that of slaves and machines, with the commune of worldly beings; once we know in our bones that we are the heirs of a tradition of rebellion against a process of colonization begun in a first instant by ourselves in the form of autochthonous patriarchies and later carried out by a new State and its nascent capitalism; then there is nothing else but to struggle with all our strength and across the length of our lives, struggle with more force than that which can be added up in the few years it falls on us to live through, because in our struggle we concentrate a continuity of rebellion that has lasted centuries and will last for centuries more.

⁹ [Trans] Those who tried to locate power in the dozens of commissions and subcommissions that formed as part of the putrid experiment in direct democracy during the 15M movement.

Once we wipe that colonization clean from our beings and understand as something alien and imposed all thinking linked to the State, including the most democratic, the most civic, the most progressive, our utopias will no longer betray us like so many times in the past. Once we understand not only the hierarchies but also order, democracy, production, equality, and unity as a violent imposition, all the recuperators in our midst will start to look like invading Martians, and it will be that much more difficult for them to trick us. For all these reasons the communication and diffusion of other imaginaries and a history of our own is vital.

The social war is this: a struggle against the structures of power that colonize us and train us to view the world from the perspective of the needs of power itself, through the metaphysical lens of domination, in which the universe has a center and follows laws and can be quantified and assigned value. The prize for winning the social war is not physical (the taking of factories and land) but metaphysical (the reappearance of the world).

The Social War in the Beginning

Having come to this point, we can assume that in the beginning, we are quite alone in our social war. The few places where there is general support for a struggle against progress and order tend to be indigenous territories where people still remember their colonization, have never surrendered to it and have collaborated with it less than have the people of fully conquered lands. In the West, the few generalized struggles also have something to do with anticolonial struggles, as in Euskal Herria, Ireland, or among the descendants of slaves in North America, but given that for a long time they have understood their anticolonial struggle in national terms, they have swallowed the metaphysics and the social relations of their colonizers and, as such, are fighting to reproduce another model of the dominant civilization, with a different flag and other holidays.¹⁰

To fight against a colonization of which hardly any popular memory remains is, in the beginning, to appear crazy. In a schizophrenic society, the most coherent¹¹ people must lack shame. Only the boldest person can be the first to break a norm when they see that norm is oppressive. In an age when very few people understand themselves as combatants in a social war, they will be isolated and as such they will think affinity is the most important characteristic in their struggle. Simply to exist and begin to gain visibility, companions will have to defy the social peace, which means having a disposition towards antisocial attitudes.

These isolated rebels will grow stronger creating ties with other rebels who live in other neighborhoods, other towns, or other cities. Thus they can multiply their strength, exchange ideas, avoid isolation, protect themselves from repression, in sum: create a small tribe or nomadic commune that moves across a mute and sterile social terrain. Yet by seizing the strategy necessary for survival, they place an obstacle in their path, which many struggles have never managed to surpass. Knowing only the relations of affinity, they become incapable of breaking with the isolation created by the mediatic State and by the conservative customs of society itself.

¹⁰ The exceptions to this are highly interesting. For example in Val di Susa, where there is generalized support for a struggle against progress. What elements make its exceptionality possible? [Trans: Val di Susa is a valley in northwestern Italy in which a radical and generalized struggle against a high-speed train line (No TAV) has been going on for some 25 years.]

¹¹ [Trans] In Spanish, “coherent” is not only internal, as in the coherence of the ideas held or words uttered by a single person, but also refers to whether their ideas and actions cohere; do they walk the talk.

In a city with many companions, a tendency forms, among others, to substitute intra-neighborhood networks with extra-neighborhood networks only among people from *the scene*.

To create relationships in the neighborhood, that is, natural instead of arbitrary ones,¹² it is necessary to behave in a surprisingly old-fashioned way, talking with neighbors about family and the weather, baking them cakes, inviting them over to eat, taking care of their kids, asking their help to fix the refrigerator or move a mattress. And above all this attitude cannot come from a pragmatic calculation designed to create a network between anarchists and normies, to “build the neighborhood,” rather it must arise because you sincerely miss the lost commune. This is “appearing in the lives of the others”.¹³

Someone who is not motivated to get to know their neighbors, which is to say a more antisocial person, is not capable of creating an intra-neighborhood network. But they are capable of doing something equally important: fomenting the struggle and the combative, antisocial spaces that attract all the other freaks, isolated ones, losers, and solitaires who always constitute the struggle in ages when the State is strong enough to fake a lack of real problems.

Society in Rupture

And when the bold and isolated have achieved the exhumation of the social peace—or if this is achieved by spontaneous events—and the others begin to take to the streets and question the dominant order, which is to say, when there is a social rupture or at least an affective rupture with normality, what do those who have already spent a long time rebelling do?

They will be much better positioned if they have already worked towards resolving the tension between their social and antisocial attitudes, if they have already begun to appear in the lives of the others and learned how to act in heterogeneous spaces; but also if they already have a strong practice of attack to supply the new struggle with weapons adequate for sabotaging order. It is normal that in the season of the rupture, more rebels will approach social positions, seeking complicity outside of the traditional affinities. In this way they can play the important role of finding confluence between the different conflicts, eroding the single-issue alienation with which mediatic democracy disciplines legal movements. And within this new conflictivity born in the collectivization of all the complaints that before were monopolized by progressives, within this new totality of antagonisms, the companions disposed to put themselves alongside the others will be able to carry out a critical participation and spread anarchist visions and tactics. But if they trick themselves and fall into populism—which is to say, forget who they are, forget their heritage of thousands of years of struggle, in order to accept the democratic prejudices that will make it easier for them to communicate with people still immersed in normality—they will betray the struggle and betray themselves.

In the moment of populism and possibilism, the antisocials have the vital role of keeping alive the idealism that the companions who are forgetting the goal of the struggle have lost; of provoking; of making impossible any pact with normality; of continuing to attack and destroy; of going farther and ridiculing any self-interested pragmatism.

¹² Here I use these two words literally. Arbitrary relations are those that are chosen, that is, those of affinity. Natural relations would be those of the family or neighborhood, even though nature itself is a construction, as one can choose how to understand family or where and with whom to live.

¹³ The quoted phrase is the title of one of the theses in the prequel text, *23 Theses Regarding Revolt*.

Often the ruptures don't last long or spread. Anarchist interventions can sabotage the recuperators who attempt to neutralize them; they can bring more fuel to the fire by transmitting experiences of self organization and attack. In the moment of rupture, those who remain in their antisocial position cannot respond with agility, and those who reject their old antisocial position will disappoint themselves when the situation calms down again, if they do not betray it first. Both attitudes are necessary to confront the true question.

Who Are We?

All the terms they have given us to answer this question are inadequate. We need to reconstrue the web of signifiers itself, the grammar that operates invisibly between the proffered elements. As Foucault points out in *Les Mots et les Choses*, in the classical age (the 17th century), the sign stops being a worldly form and loses its affinity and organic relation with the signified. Previously, there was a fundamental grammar that rested on a magical vision of the world based on sympathies and symmetries that served to justify the established order. We can imagine—and there are archaeological traces—an even older fundamental grammar resting on a magical order in which the power of transformation was within everyone's reach, in contrast to the Renaissance, when the world, although magical, was an already written text and the only magic consisted in discovering it.

The new rationalism facilitated an aggressive change in the established order, another step away from the world and towards alienation. Language became an arbitrary species, something to be analyzed outside of its terrestrial context. The knowledge of the new science achieved its ideal form in the chart, the encyclopedia, the zoo: a neutral space, objective and even invisible in which to expound a series of units ordered in accordance with a logic that hides the violence that uprooted them from their organic relation with the world. And if in recent years the sciences have begun to show an interest in spontaneous orders, in the network of relations and interactions between things, it is not because they have begun to see the world, but because they have fully taken the machine apart, scrutinized its elements to the nth degree and now are beginning to put it back together again and get it running so that everything functions according to their commands. It is no longer a question of capturing some or many elements from the world and using them as tools for the good of the economy, but of reconstituting the world as a great machine.

Together with this change, human beings have ceased to be a perfect reflection of a divine order in the world and they have been converted into, on the one hand, beings that have nothing to do with the world because they have surpassed it¹⁴, and on the other hand, biological machines made of the same raw material as the entire dead and mute universe.

The prior Christian order was based on categories of identity that were transparent and simple, as useful for the rebels as for the authorities. Everything was based on the dichotomy between good and bad (believers and infidels) or in one's position within the social hierarchies. The first class of category was very easy to turn around. In the rebellions against feudal order and incipient

¹⁴ The vision of human surpassal of the world is a logical evolution of the vision of the human reflection of the divine, while the materialization of the earth and all the things in it constitutes a rupture with the prior vision of a spirit or animus that unites and lives in everything, although Christians prepared for that rupture by insisting that only humans have souls.

capitalism, rebels seized the torch of the believers, they signaled the authorities as the evil ones and it was in the name of God that they burned priests, disemboweled counts, and proclaimed the free commune, “the world turned upside down”. Regarding the second class, the hierarchies of the age also delimited the lines of war; it would not be possible to be part of the aristocracy or the church—which would mean owning the lands of others and directly involving oneself in administering their oppression—and also rebel against that system.¹⁵ In fact, it was the new bourgeoisie—who had no defined place in the old classifications but could only be understood as belonging to the ranks of the oppressed given their lack of noble blood or position in the Church—who diverted the struggles that almost destroyed Authority and directed them towards the formation of the current system.

In contrast, all the categories within which we understand ourselves today serve to hide the fracture lines of the social conflict. None of them contain all of those who must struggle, on one side, and all that we must destroy, on the other. Citizen/foreigner; obviously not. Man/woman; neither, unless the ones from SCUM¹⁶ are right, a possibility I would not be biologically capable of ascertaining nor asserting. Human/animal; on the most morbid days, it would seem to be valid, but who will administer the revolutionary genocide if not ourselves? Such a question reveals the incapacity of this category to illuminate a criterion for liberation. People/government; first democracy and then fascism have obscured this distinction to the point of converting it into a mere demagogic trick. Worker/owner; it excludes the invisible ones who still resist the logic of production and it obviates the fact that the work that animates workers will always dominate them, even if they organize it themselves. Besides, many owners work and many workers receive such privileges that they act more like owners. Rich/poor; but just until recently, the European masses thought they were rich.

Currently, there are no categories that help us understand our history, our relation with the system and our desire for liberation. The closest to this last criterion would be an ideological category, an “ism”. But it is not our adherence to a doctrine that defines our relation with the system, our common history, and the rebel desires we express to a greater or lesser degree! The category of “anarchist,” perhaps the most pure, does not approach the —good|| of yesteryear because tying the moral value to the ideology creates a moralism and a possibility of vanguardism incompatible with anarchy; what’s more, the majority of people who create and who will create anarchy are not anarchists.

Beyond the given categories, one finds an entire process of uprooting that invades all the spheres of existence. They have done so much to make us forget who we are, to leave no word nor memory that might illuminate a pure being that existed before all their processes of colonization and that can still communicate with us through all the thick mists of history! We can only imagine when the mistake began.

As we have noted, in the continent of its birth capitalism did not replace a libertarian utopia, but another complex of hierarchies with fewer possibilities for control. There are many people on other continents who can claim a free commune that was crushed by capitalism—a before to reconstruct but those of European descent (or Asian in the great majority of cases) cannot. In

¹⁵ The many conflicts between layers of the elite, such as priests, bishops, knights, and kings that characterized the Middle Ages constituted attempts to shift the balance of power but not the way power was understood and reproduced.

¹⁶ [Trans] Valerie Solanas’ “Society for Cutting Up Men,” a manifesto popular among Barcelona feminists in recent years.

the European case, capitalism arose from a civilization divided into a series of feudal territories and cities with distinct balances of power between authorities and people, all loosely united by the catholic hierarchy. The latter was a collective attempt by a decentralized network of elites to safeguard the fragments of the dream of domination of the fallen Roman Empire, which itself was a logical evolution of the democratic Roman Republic, which was a bold project of warlike brotherhoods of Italic tribes, a society with very little family hierarchy (perhaps less than any other society in the world that has ended up creating a State), a very free society according to the patriarchal-occidental concept of freedom. Why did they favor warfare and minimize feminine spaces within the civitas? Why did they unburden themselves of wide and defined family relations (the clan, segmentary lineage) but without creating another concept of the collective, moving instead towards an atomization and privatization of the earth and tolerating a weak aristocracy that evolved in parallel with the brotherhoods? We could ask similar questions of the Germanic tribes that conquered Rome but quickly assumed its dream, already having much in common. But in no case will there be a definitive answer.

Nor can we give the easy answer that “We are human beings and human beings are like this,” because in the same history we find the silenced role of the Slavic and Celtic tribes who for the most part did not seek to erect a State in the Roman style as the Germanic tribes did; rather many of them resisted the empires of the day and also resisted the Church. In 983, when the Slavic inhabitants of the place where we now find Berlin rebelled against the Germanic nobles that had installed themselves atop them, like parasites¹⁷, they killed or kicked out the priests and nobles and afterwards lived in peace: horizontal, pagan, and free. Two centuries later, in the year 1147, the Church had to declare a Crusade against them to reconquer them and subject them to authority.

Though there is not a final answer to the question, “Who are we?”, we can approach the truth by better understanding what they have stolen from us in order to convert us into the lost beings we currently are. As such, we should arrive at a better understanding of capitalism. Contrary to the official history, which is believed by many anticapitalists, capitalism did not arise from “mercantilism” in the 18th to 19th centuries. We gain nothing by understanding capitalism in this way, dividing history into symmetrical phases just because. On a global level, there was a great change whose defining features appeared and achieved hegemony between the 15th and 17th centuries. It was a heavy blow, the invention of a new social motor of power that would impel all the subsequent changes in the forms of social control. We inhabit a completely different reality if we understand the current system as one that flowed or evolved naturally out of the prior one, and not as something that was violently imposed in accordance with specific strategies during a particularly agitated age of social war.

If Adam Smith identified capitalism as something distinct from mercantilism, it is because he was constructing the ideology of capitalism, which needed to hide its roots in the war against the communes in the colonies and in Europe, and portray its creation as a free contract between isolated individuals in an already existing commoditized terrain, as though it were something natural.

¹⁷ This is how many States in Europe and Asia began throughout history; influenced by the example of another civilization, a group that we currently understand as an ethnicity formed as a religious-belllic institution, conquering a neighboring society and installing itself on top to colonize it and convert it into the base of their new State.

It was between the 15th and 17th centuries that banks appeared and extended their power. It was then that money ceased to be a symbol of exchange—a token commissioned by a king to authorize and quantify commerce in order to appropriate a share, as it had been since its invention by the first states—and began to be the principal form of production in itself, the parthenogenic creation of value, debt, and speculation. As such it was then that speculation and price inflation began, first with food, creating a new mechanism of blackmail. It was then that the institution of wage labor as we currently understand it appeared, something inseparable from the forcible theft of self-sufficiency, a process that also began in the same epoch with the installment of the old Roman laws that privatized communal land and with the beginning of enclosures carried out to appropriate such land. This was also the beginning of the criminalization of poverty and an unprecedented intensification of the role and techniques of the governing structures in regulating and disciplining daily life and reproduction. At the same time, within the same process of the formation of the new State, colonialism was impelled, something qualitatively distinct from the antique forms of imperialism and within which slavery was linked to wage labor, enabling its mercantilization (slaves produced above all goods for the consumption of the new workers, thus subsidizing their cheap labor). They did the same thing with the new feminine labor.

In the face of all this, the changes of the Industrial Revolution and the end of mercantilism are more a question of degree and new techniques, just as neoliberalism constitutes a change that arose from the very same capitalist bases.

It is necessary to understand that capitalism did not arise as an evolution of an earlier homologous system. It is necessary because we should understand biopower as a type of power that is completely new and innovative and that supplies the State with previously unimaginable capacities; because we should understand the strategic role of the State and how close we came once to destroying it; because we should understand the true bases and principles of capitalism unencumbered by free market ideology.

There is now nothing beneath these bases. Reality itself has been transformed and what was lost was the world, the interconnectivity of beings, and with it, the knowledge of who we are. We could aspire to be the “creative nothing” of Stirner, the “species beings” of Marx, or the “future primitives” of Zerzan. But for now, those are proposals and not realities nor the memory of another reality.

The matter of knowing who we are demands the creation of a new “we,” a “we” that positions itself by way of the negation of a “they,” an enemy. And this enemy is the rationalist, democratic, and civilized way of seeing the world. We cannot use their ethical guidelines. We cannot position ourselves within their legality. We are not their citizens, we are not the inhabitants of a country that has simply been occupied, as though capitalism were just a bad neighbor and not the basis for our existence. As such, championing “independence” does not suit us. The idea of self-defense carries with it the possibility for coexistence. Better would be the certainty that our existence spells their destruction.

We are the bomb in the heart of the machine that wants to grind us up.

We Are Our Loss

It is necessary to consider the dominant culture as something alien, as though it were the imposition of Martian invaders. Yet we cannot fall in the trap of purism and isolate ourselves like

those who go back to the land to construct a libertarian culture and separate themselves from the others. We are greater than our single bodies. We are also those who stay in the city and in the dominant culture. We cannot propose a culture of our own because the attempt divides us from those who are the same as us, divides us from those who remain plugged in to the machine. It is impossible to reclaim a culture of our own, yet it is necessary to attempt it in order to expand our imaginary and remember that their culture of domination does not belong to us. While there is a State, we cannot give a positive answer to the question, Who are we? Meanwhile, we are our loss, we are everything they have stolen from us. Only this can signal to us what we might be in a free world. Only this brings us together with all the beings dominated and colonized by Capital, without using a false populism to constrain those who are already at war. All of us who are living beings—who are not machines, bureaucrats, police, or voluntary slave—have something in common: they have stolen the world from us, the commune, the clean air, the forest, the stars, the celebrations of equinox and solstice, the day and the night free from the chains of hours and minutes, freedom of action, the running of our bodies and lives and memories. If we define “we” as our loss, we join with the others, with those who do not struggle yet, without letting them dissuade our actions by being a passive majority. If we identify ourselves with our loss, we break with the categoric isolation imposed on all those who defy the roots of the system, and we signal a path of struggle away from dialogue and towards the recovery of all we have been deprived of.

To establish a positive vision of who we are, to create a new culture illusorily free and independent, just as the hippies or squatters did, divides us from the people who remain plugged in and thus we split ourselves in two. The Western individual is unworldly.¹⁸ We exist on the basis of our relations with the world. Those who abandon a part of us to the dominion of the system in order to create a supposedly autonomous existence let themselves be fooled by the impossibility of partial liberty. There is no escaping from a global system, neither on the level of territory nor that of identity.

Not Horizontal, But Circular

We need to develop a consciousness of who we are, an identity that constitutes a circular motion. For every escape from the prison society, we need to undertake an infiltration to smuggle in more metaphorical weapons, carry out ideological sabotage, and then flee with more people. The new experiences of self-organization, the new attempts to create the commune, must return to the dominated terrain to infiltrate in the imaginary of the people who remain totally colonized. Each rural project must maintain links with the city. Each anarchist idealism must contaminate itself in the cloudy waters of the social movements. Our future is just as much the contamination as the reclaimed soil. We will only finally be born in full when the monuments of State and Capital lie in ruins. Meanwhile, we cannot be more than the negation of their system, the fragments of a suppressed memory, the frustrated yet tenacious desire for freedom.

¹⁸ [Trans] “The Western individual is unworldly” is another of the theses from *23 Theses Regarding Revolt*. “Unworldly” is the literal translation for the Spanish “inmundo” and also fits well with the special meaning the present text gives to “the world”; however the Spanish word connotes above all monstrosity.

Yet knowing that their system is alien to us, we will know that we musn't fight like good citizens, but like barbarians, bandits, gangs, antisistema.¹⁹ We do not have leaders nor authorities nor followers; what we have are companions, including trees, lovers, children, friends, neighbors, earth, all the beings that comprise the web in which we live. A right cannot be eaten, a law does not allow you to breathe, a boss does not clean the house with you. All of those who guarantee the illusory mode of life of the citizen are worthless. We are living beings, thus the only company that interests us is that of other living beings, not machines and artifacts of the system.

Our duty is nothing less than to recreate the world. The world is the antithesis of the civilization/nature divide. Escaping into nature fortifies civilization. We have to destroy both. We have to destroy civilization for its pretension of being above nature and we have to destroy nature for its pretension of being pure and apart from us. The world is the commune of relations between all living beings. In the city and in the country, we have to recreate a bond with the earth and proclaim the new communes. But we cannot repeat the mistake of confusing a commune with a milieu that hides its lack of material affective relations behind a façade of politico-aesthetic relations. Each time we create a commune, we also have to flee from it, in order to take it everywhere, to infiltrate ourselves into the daily life of the others, to choose open imperfection over closed perfection, to include the obedient and timid in our subversion.

Given that the people who are not currently struggling will not become impassioned by our commune, the latter will always remain half-finished, incomplete, abandoned. This is good. We cannot let ourselves be enclosed. As such, we do not aim for self-sufficiency, as this is a lie as long as the State exists. It is better to only achieve a partial self-sufficiency because the important thing is not to tie ourselves down with the illusion that we have left the system behind, but to recover the knowledge and abilities that late capitalism has stolen from us. Today, operating an invention as complex as a metro train is as easy as operating an elevator. Through industrialization and then automation, capitalism has robbed us of the knowledge we once had to feed ourselves, educate ourselves, heal ourselves, provide ourselves with home and clothing, take care of ourselves, transport ourselves. That knowledge was our direct connection to the world when it still existed. We need to recover it in order to recover the world. Not like the squatters with their DIY, which did not often go beyond an alternative consumerism; nor like the syndicalists who learned how to self-manage the trades of their day without questioning the productive logic that lay behind them.

What we want is to recover our lives in a struggle that breaks with their civilization. In the city we will squat vacant lots for gardens and in the countryside we will cultivate, not to achieve full food sovereignty now, but to recover the ability to feed ourselves, once it is actually possible, and above all to influence the reality of the others. We will learn self-guided medicine and crafts to facilitate our lives in struggle and to serve as an open invitation to everyone else: *desert life in the market already, in the commune we take good care of ourselves!* But these projects of self-organization cannot serve as the first step in a process that will replace capitalism, as the partisans of de-growth²⁰ believe. Capitalism will never permit itself to be replaced because it is not a blind

¹⁹ [Trans] "Antisistema" is the word the Spanish press assigned to extralegal political and cultural rebels, principally so as not to visibilize anarchists by mentioning them. It carries with it the odor of dangerous, uncivilized radicals.

²⁰ [Trans] "Decrecimiento" refers to an anti-revolutionary and anti-capitalist movement that seeks to slow and then reverse economic growth as a non-conflictive way to transform capitalism. This current could contain anyone from ATTAC to permaculturists.

or unconscious structure. It has already devoured whole societies that offered idyllic examples of how to live in a cooperative way. Capitalism must be destroyed.

The truth is, if we wanted to, we could leave the cities and build anarchy now. It is a simple affair. Thousands of societies have already done it. But people do not remain obedient for lack of examples of freedom, because they believe logically that no other life is possible. They believe because they are afraid to defy the system that dominates them but also keeps them alive. The logic, the reasons, are all just justifications. The State is an addiction and a cautious bet. The difference between an example and the imaginary is that an example of anarchy tries to convince, based on the supposition that people live according to their ideals and their own choices, which is not the case. The imaginary is a tool. People surrender because they are dependent on the system. Animating an anarchist imaginary returns to people a tool that is vital for the self-organization of life.

But the imaginary does not feed off of perfect examples of utopia that prove the possibility of another life. The imaginary feeds off of questions and contradictions, not complete answers.

A while ago, anarchy flourished everywhere. But with the discourse of progress and the identity of the “civilized,” it was separated from “us” and forcibly liquidated. No more perfect examples of anarchy are needed. What we need are imperfect examples that interrupt the social peace, visibilize conflicts and awaken people’s imaginary. They will be more useful if they are imperfect and near than perfect and far away, already separated by an ideological enclosure that signals them as an element of an alien reality.

Identifying ourselves with our loss, we always move far away from capitalist normality and towards utopia, but at the same time we return to those who stay within normality, because they also comprise a part of our loss.

Militants or Warriors?

Nonetheless, we do not struggle to facilitate the struggle for anyone else. We struggle for our own freedom and to avenge our dead. We are not the militants of an organization or movement that will install the utopia. We struggle to aid others only insofar as they form a part of ourselves.

In certain aspects, or in the case of certain individuals if they are more egoist, we fight for our unique desires, to learn and to grow; in other aspects we fight for the community that sustains our lives and joys, the community that exists as a memory and as a hope, that contradicts capitalist alienation even though it does not exist in our daily lives due to its continuous decimation.

The pacification achieved by democracy often directs us towards a fetishization of violence. And although pacifism is an irremediable weakness, aggressive attitudes can assume an exaggerated importance in our circles.

It is less important to be militant than to know who we are. The workers movement in France, for example, is very militant. They claim the use of sabotage and take their bosses hostage. But they fight to defend or achieve the dignity of being Frenchmen. In general they have accepted the national idea, their particular social contract, and there the State is stronger than in other European countries, except those where the people accept the national idea and are also conciliatory instead of militant (e.g. the Netherlands or Germany). Aggressivity within labor struggles does not threaten the power of the State because it occurs on a stage that forms part of the national idea.

Building up in ourselves a great capacity for violence, at least we recover the possibility to struggle, but we exclude those people who by nature are not combative. The disgraceful truth is that many of the historical strategic debates in libertarian circles have been nothing but the distinct socio-emotional needs clamoring for their prioritization within a struggle that obliges us all to choose one and renounce the others. People whose blood boils opt for insurrectionalism; the patient ones who place importance on the opinions of others choose syndicalism; impatient and creative people find their solution in individualism; and those who want to quickly solve the problems that people suffer seek their path through a certain activism. But strategies cannot be a question of character. It shouldn't be like this.

There are severe and serious critiques that must be made of syndicalism's concept of production, Iberian insurrectionalism's idea of informality or Italian insurrectionalism's antirepressive practice, the leftism of activism, and so on. But each of these practices has turned into the refuge of a certain type of person, in a milieu where they can satisfy the emotional need that impelled them to struggle, be it the need to find affinity, to communicate with more people surpassing the barriers of normality and isolation, to attack power and destroy a deceitful peace, to ease the suffering of others. Given that each of these practices scorns the character of the others, each must also defend itself from the criticisms no matter how unreasonable they become.

Any strategy that does not embrace human heterogeneity is destined to fail.

On the one hand, as the first weeds, those of us who fight, now and always, are different from those who only begin to fight during a rupture. On the other hand, there is no sense in constructing our struggle in a way that excludes those who do not have the heart of a militant. Anarchosyndicalism and insurrectionalism both have committed the error of underestimating all that is not militance, whether that is the militance of the revolutionary organization or the militance that sustains an informal continuity of acts of negation of the existent.

It would be better if those of us who cannot live in their false peace because of the anxieties that push us to struggle tirelessly were, instead of militants, warriors: the warriors of a community that does not yet exist, but a community that also includes people with the heart of a healer, mother, artist, grower, builder, storyteller, and even the people who reject community itself, who question it and leave it in order to seek out the heights and depths Novatore spoke of, those who seek to form Stirner's union of egos. A community of all living beings, of all the people who have refused or might one day refuse to be machines and slaves. All the others, those who prefer to be functionaries, will die, either because they attempt to imprison and kill us, or because they will never learn to feed themselves without capitalism, because they believe food comes from the supermarket.

In this path, the most important thing is not one or another attitude of struggle, but the memory and the projection of who we are.

Our Lives Last Thousands of Years

The individuals of the world are much bigger than our bodies. A difference between myself and the Western individual, that much abused and deceived being, is that my lungs include the forest while the sea, the clouds, and the rivers form one same body with my kidneys. As for the Western individual, you can take out his lungs and kidneys, put them in a glass jar, and send

them to a museum. The Western individual, despicable creature, must rent the ideas that pass through his head, given that they are intellectual property.

We, those who are from the other side, have already collectivized our ideas just as we have our immune systems, our struggles, our imaginary. They have never been able to take away our commune completely.

Furthermore, while the Western individual only lives a few decades, and a population of them that reaches an average expectancy of over 80 feels very proud of the fact, our lives last thousands of years. It only falls on us to open our eyes for a few of these years, but we are here for much longer. As such, there is no hurry. We have been fighting for centuries and they still have not beaten us. The important thing is to find a rhythm we can sustain and thus not become the very ones to destroy us. Among us, there have always been the more beautiful companions—the more sensitive, anxious, or brave—who transform their lives into roses of fire, who will burn themselves in order to set all the lies alight, who will explode in bomb blasts in order to sound the furious beating of our heart: here we are, still and always.

But it is we who will guard their beauty, those of us who receive their gift. We shouldn't continue building a martyrology that teaches the hasty path, the suicidal path, as the only one of value. We are going far. If we attack from a place of anxiety and impatience, out of desperation, we will lose our strength when we do not produce immediate results, when the inevitable repression falls.

Now in the Iberian peninsula the North American strategy of the ELF²¹ is being reproduced. We should ask ourselves, why? Did some learn of this strategy from a few documentaries and articles on the internet and not worry too much about its ultimate failure? Have they not tried to understand why this strategy failed, why the majority of the arrested surrendered and snitched, why all of them isolated themselves, precisely through their chosen form of struggle? The failure represented by the repression of 2003²² was not enough, we need another one?

Failures invite us to question everything, to care for repressed companions and for ourselves, to reflect with calmness, to go back on the attack not only with more rage but also with more intelligence. We have to internalize this process until the streets think for themselves.

Insurrectionary militancy fears a year without attacks as though it were a pacification, and in a community of people who do not know who they are, it really would constitute the loss of an indispensable tool and a victory for the social peace. Under the regime of capitalist amnesia, people can forget the war in just a year without the presence of those whose memory sustains eternal struggles.

An activist militancy pronounces defeat if it cannot maintain the same rhythm week after week, as though the world did not exist, as though they were workers and their trade were salesmen

²¹ The Earth Liberation Front (ELF), a clandestine group or rather a clandestine practice of arson attacks against builders, laboratories, universities and other entities involved in the destruction of the earth, with the purpose of causing as much economic damage possible. On a technical level the group met with great success during over ten years but when the FBI finally acquired a snitch and arrested some twenty people, the accused in many cases did not enjoy strong support or they had already left the struggle. The ELF is related to the ALF (Animal Liberation Front), which carried out fewer arsons and more direct liberations of animals imprisoned in factories and laboratories. [Trans: Around 2011 there was a wave of ELF-style actions or actions claimed by ALF throughout Spain, although the tendency was short-lived.]

²² In 2003, there was a wave of repression in Barcelona, which, similar to the Greenscare a few years later, effectively halted the struggles they were directed against, sowing fear, discouragement, and disappointment in a large milieu.

of resistance. Does a week really exist? And the animals who sleep through the winter or plants that do not grow in the summer – are they defeated?

We have to sow and naturalize a daily rhythm of struggle in the street. Even though we have a lot of time, the way we fight today will have repercussions in the fights of the future. It is not a coincidence that in the few places where people collectively resisted the witch hunts (and the patriarchal and capitalist advances they represented) are the places with the strongest popular struggles in Europe of the 20th century: Euskal Herria and Eire.²³ Neither can it be coincidence that the [European] country that fought most fiercely for its political independence, but did not solidarize internally against the imposition of an even more intensive Christian patriarchy today enjoys an autonomy that means very little and has become extremely capitalist: Switzerland (we should also mention Scotland, which has a similar history with the presence of Calvinism and a strong participation in the witch hunts, but which was never granted as much autonomy since it lost its wars against England).

Capitalism arose as a strategy of social control implanted by the elites who would form the new State (progressive princes with bourgeois and Protestant theoreticians) but it was a renovated patriarchy that allowed it to put down roots and completely change the terrain of existence.

As such it is worth asking, do we presume to attack the mega-structures of State and Capital without changing the relations between ourselves and the tasks that go along with this—questioning the dominant concepts of time and rhythm, of survival and life, of symbol and reality?

If we come to question the rhythms that capitalism has implanted in us, it would be good to recognize that the struggle will still exist in five hundred years, so there's no hurry, but a strong struggle today can give us more possibilities in the struggles of the future.

A Complementarity of Tasks

We need to develop a practice based on the complementarity of distinct tasks and distinct strategies. The true anarchist strategy does not seek to convert the struggle into a monopoly nor impose homogeneity from above, but rather to array the forces that one truly possesses, in the same way that in an anarchist world, one does not seek to order others around but to organize what is one's own and to influence the rest, and be influenced by the rest so as to arrive at a harmony among all the diverse parts.

Anarchist strategy must always be a way of making use of an uncontrolled multiplicity of strategies. As such, we must distinguish between those strategies that truly hurt us, that take away our freedom, and those that may be more or less interesting to us but that in any case extend the terrain of struggle and multiply the frontlines of conflict.

Within this practice, it is much more important to accustom ourselves to strategic thinking—always evaluating in every situation what we can achieve and what we might lose—than to find the correct strategy.

We will be stronger if our strategic evaluation includes an immediate perspective and a perspective that embraces a thousand years of history and future. How do we link the tasks that

²³ [Trans] Euskal Herria is the Basque country. And without overstepping our bounds as translator, we might also mention the popular resistance in support of heretics throughout the Middle Ages in the Balkans or the proximity of the Cathar territories to the Pyrenees, and thence to Catalonia.

strengthen a thousand year struggle with those that make the struggle stronger this very year? To start with, we must equally value the tasks of care, of memory, of survival, of imagination, of reflection, of propaganda, of extension, and of the attack.

We learn not only from experience but also from difference, and by joining diverse practices and recognizing diverse necessities of struggle, we will have more opportunities to learn and sharpen our practice.

The great emphasis the insurrectionalists have placed on the concept of affinity appears to be misplaced. In every analysis, there are priorities that can turn into hierarchies and there are norms that can turn into codes. In a milieu based on informality and affinity there are also dirty games. It is possible to share a close political affinity with someone who does not take good care of other companions, who is a coward or a manipulator.

Sincerity is more important: the enthusiasm to struggle with all one's heart, the desire to take good care of companions, the motivation to always combat with greater effectiveness, the passion for vengeance, the imagination of other worlds, the capacity to receive criticism, bravery. In fact, all of these things are bravery. It is necessary to be brave in order to be sincere. Cowardice can manifest as reformism but also as a certain extremism that, through sheer tenacity, does not fear prison, but fears above all being questioned, waiting, desiring, contaminating itself in the complexity of the world.

The Community Against Repression

To survive repression, aside from bravery, the most important things are the recognition that we are in no hurry and, as such, we do not need to attack out of desperation and impatience; and a framework that equally values the complementary tasks of taking care of companions, realizing projects that foment libertarian relations and sustain us in the struggle, and attacking.

The heroic character of Iberian insurrectionalism has forgotten this balance. Honoring the image of the solitary martyr—fallen after having realized a suicide action or having set an equally suicidal pace (or sometimes just out of bad luck)—we create a solitary and suicidal struggle. In the portrait frame of our memory, we see a lonely figure, a Roger, a Carlos, a Mauricio, or a Severino, p24] with the people around them erased, the people who survive, the people who ache, who try to stop the bleeding or in some other way help the only one who remains in our promethean vision of struggle.

The truth is we are fascinated by the image of being a few against the State. We have assumed our isolation, our antagonism with society, to the point of maintaining it. We adore a Ravachol more than a Louise Michel because we identify more with him who declared war on society and fought with a few affines, than with her who moved among barricades, assemblies, and neighborhoods, who did not only fire from bulwarks but also cured people or moved them to action.

The State has moods. It can go through conciliatory and arrogant phases. It does not always act in its best interest. The mode of attack of a Ravachol demands a strong response from the State, because such a mode questions and ridicules the State's strength. Even if it is in a conciliatory mood, it will have to quickly respond with repression to preserve the illusion of its monopoly on force. Arrogance always provokes an arrogant response. But we cannot lie: the attacks of all the Ravachols of history fill us with joy and hope. The word "arrogance" stems from ancient Greek

and refers to the combative posture of a warrior who attacks one who is more powerful. We need arrogance to inspire us, to remind us that even though we are alone, it is always possible to attack and we are braver than the miserable cowards who work as thugs for the State.

But arrogance, if it is the only mood we are capable of, hides those elements necessary to survive repression. We also must be sensitive, humble, cautious, and attentive to the State's changes of mood and its probable reactions to our attacks.

This has been the failing of Italian insurrectionalism (the principal influence on the poorly formed Iberian insurrectionalism). It resuscitated an important critique of recuperation—a critique that was lacking in many countries—but it did not develop an adequate practice with regards to repression. It raised the level of struggle without having what it needed to sustain such a struggle, without understanding what society is and how it had changed in the prior decades to dry up the social struggles and make a stronger repression possible. They did not understand that the degree to which society still exists acts as a brake on the statist project of total control, that strong states and weak states don't exist according to some internal nature, rather that there are strategies to increase the force of the State and strategies to increase the force of the struggles and of society itself. If the Italian state won the power to carry out a stronger repression it is because its strategy triumphed and the rebels let their society die.

Ironically, although the insurrectionalist companions there had a good critique of recuperation, their isolation due to other errors also isolated their critique, facilitating the recuperation of great sectors of the social struggles in Italy by Negriism and other paths.

Chilean insurrectionalism, on the contrary, has always situated itself in the heart of combative neighborhoods or in the sectors of combative youth. And even though they have never been very strong and in general have had a posture even more antisocial than that of the Italian companions, they have been able to survive and even defeat a wave of repression, a repression that did not manage to stop the bombings and other attacks.²⁴

And with even more success, the Greek companions have created an anarchist *xoros*—a space—that displays a complementarity of strategies and a balance between social and antisocial postures, each of them indispensable. Given that in general they are not relativists, it is possible that the majority of them do not agree with an integral vision of their space because each posture and each strategy contain strong critiques of the others, as they must, but the truth is that they have resisted the attempts to unify the *xoros* or convince companions with different opinions. They have defended a heterogeneous space (perhaps one of the most heterogeneous) and this fact cannot be separated from their relative strength.

At the other extreme are the libertarian companions in Bolivia, who had developed one of the practices most capable of surviving repression.²⁵ They had taken on a great capacity for violence and on several occasions defeated the military or at least survived its offensives. Companions

²⁴ At the moment of this writing, the Bombs Case has not ended but it seems to have largely fallen apart. Furthermore, the accused seem to have achieved much support or at least visibility in the face of a repression directed against the anarchists starting with the arrests on August 14, 2010.

²⁵ [Trans] This view, published before the 2012 TIPNIS repression, an absolute disaster for the anarchists of La Paz, shows a confusion between the anti-repressive capacities of the earlier social movements and the capacities of the anarchists, the older of whom generally shared the populism of those movements and thus distanced themselves from minoritarian attacks and the younger of whom lacked experience, not having participated in the great upheavals. One thing is to survive the brute repression conducted by the military, and another is to survive the more psychologically directed repression of the police, which is more difficult when a part of the anarchists have been recuperated to identify with aspects of the progressive state, and thus have no compunction against snitching.

there have expressed that in Bolivia insurrectionalism does not make sense because, being one of the least colonized countries in the world, they still enjoy a living memory and a popular imaginary of a world outside of capitalism and against the State. There, according to them, society still exists (or better put, various societies and indigenous nations) and they only need to organize to meet their own needs again and the State will fall (or, more probably, a neighboring state will invade them, opening the way for a distinct phase of struggle). To put it another way, in many parts of Bolivia, to get rid of the State the people just have to lynch the village mayor, something that has happened many times, and they can return to their native way of life.

Nonetheless, five years ago the companions in Bolivia had not spread a critique of democracy or recuperation, and with the election of Evo the social movements were recuperated and the struggles halted for several years.

Comparing these distinct situations, we can propose that a struggle based in a strong community is better able to survive repression. However, the community, even in the freest corner of the world, is still imaginary, and if we don't work hard on a libertarian imagination, our supposed community will include the future politicians who will recuperate the struggle. All of it comes down to the basic question, who are we?

How to Defend Ourselves

Repression is an enclosure. Its principal objective is to isolate us and its secondary objective is to exhaust us. The repressive enclosure can be synchronous or diachronous, which is to say it can isolate us from our contemporaries—neighbors and others—or it can provoke a historic fracture that inhibits the transmission of learning and experience between one generation and the next (the chronic problem of struggles in English-speaking countries).

Anti-repression groups are counterproductive if they take on the task of organizing solidarity. Repression can only be defeated by the extension of solidarity. As such, anti-repressive groups should take on the task of extending complicity and the commitment to carry out actions of support and solidarity, rather than trying to organize those actions on their own.

To overcome exhaustion and discouragement, which are the secondary objectives of repression, it is necessary, as everyone already knows, to take good care of the repressed and make sure the attacks continue. Nonetheless, it is an error to believe that the attacks should continue at the same pace or in the same form. We always need to be flexible and adapt ourselves to the situation. An advantage that we have over the State is that we can change our practices much faster. It is an advantage we should use, instead of reproducing a constancy fit for a machine.

Meanwhile, we need a security practice based in the strategic question of enclosure and not in the techniques, as the German companions do. We should minimally understand the technologies of repression and surveillance, know the basic facts about email and cellphones, but to obsess over the topic, aside from the people who want to specialize in it, is a distraction. The technical practice is a solution to the question: "how do we keep people from getting arrested?" This is an absurd question as long as prisons and police continue to exist. The intelligent question is, "how do we overcome isolation when people get arrested?"

Why Attack

The attack has four meanings. 1: To come alive again, to inhabit our bodies and feel the full rage that this civilization provokes, but rather than drowning in it, making ourselves stronger and healthier by acting on it. Also, through irate vengeance we can send a love message to repressed companions in other places, helping them to come back to life even though they are in a cage. 2: To visibilize social conflicts and suggest possible responses to the rest of society. 3: To show that we exist and we are strong, a necessary condition for achieving a social presence. 4: To accumulate practice in order to be able to sabotage the system when a moment of rupture and popular rebellion breaks out.

The anarchists alone cannot cause real damage to the State with our attacks if these are not developed within the framework of a popular rebellion. During a popular rebellion, our attacks can have a revolutionary effect, neutralize recuperation, tauten social conflicts, and open new paths of struggle. Given that normally there is no popular rebellion, attacks are important in an anarchist daily life for the four reasons listed.

Unfortunately, many insurrectionalists have formulated their attacks—without realizing—as a conversation with the State. They imagine themselves alone in a war against the existent, they attack symbols of the power of the State like government buildings and they frame their attacks not necessarily as sabotages but as vengeance, they speak in their communiqués to a —you|| who is their enemy, and they value the idea of a coordinated wave of attacks, of which only companions and agents of the State will find out (unless they hope that the media will communicate their actions to the masses, a fundamental part of the strategies of groups like RAF and Brigade Rossi [the Red Brigades]). They seek to destroy but are only carrying out a conversation with the State a little more forceful but just as symbolic as the conversations formulated by progressives through elections and civil disobedience.

Affinity Exists in Networks, Not in Groups

Affinity has a fluid nature. Given that we are trained to view the world through a rationalism based on Cartesian geometry, we mentally assign affinity the form of a circle. The members of an affinity group, as such, would be points along the circumference of a given circle, and an anarchist space would consist of a plane full of well defined circles. Some larger, others that fragment or dissolve over time, and over there a complex triangle—the companions who continue their activism in the Organization.

This vision is erroneous, not because affinity is not a circle, but because we base our practice, at least sometimes, on the implicit assumption of the objectivity of our vision. The sky looks like a ring to us because we are at its center. It would only be erroneous to say that the sky is shaped like a ring if we then proceeded to represent it with the drawing of a ring—depicted from the outside, from an external perspective, like nearly all two-dimensional representations.

It is the rationalist education and the need to represent what we see in four dimensions with only two that extracts us from our own bodies and trains us to see the world from the outside, thus facilitating the disappearance of the world.

Affinity only appears as a circle to us because we are in the middle, just like with the sky. To be honest, we would draw affinity as a circle with a point in the middle representing “I” and

points along the circumference that represent our companions. If we are not exceedingly dull, we quickly see a possible problem: all our companions would constitute the centers of other circles that we are not capable of seeing, due to our perspective. It might be that they have more affinity with someone who does not form a part of our circle than with someone who is on the opposite side of it.

Almost every time people try to formalize an affinity group, there will be someone who has more affinity in the group than the others, someone who is more equal than everyone else. Once again the damned mistake of equality, now arising in the heart of insurrectionalism.²⁶

Sometimes there are motives for formalizing an affinity group.²⁷ But it is high time to recognize that affinity does not exist in groups but in networks that shift over time. We are not dealing with circles but with a map of points moving fluidly like bacteria under a microscope. In each moment and each project, each of these points will have a circle of other points around it but that will also go on changing. In general, trying to capture this motion and stop it within a fixed group is to waste energies in order to preserve a group that will quickly have lost its utility. It is to falsify affinity in order to avoid suffering a perceived defeat with the dissolution of the group. Affinity is not a static geometry of established relations but rather a knowing how to move within a chaotic web and to bond with other people according to the needs and desires of each.

Appreciating Disorganization

The enemies of the revolution, since the 19th century, have always brandished the criticism of a supposed disorganization in order to justify formalization, centralization, that is, the recuperation of the struggle. Even anarchists themselves—above all the most populist ones—have taken advantage of demagogic discourses to kill anarchy, from infamous CNTers like Federica Montseny and Diego Abad de Santillán to the current partisans of the imposition of formal consensus and similar processes, those who passed through the antiglobalization movement without having learned anything, evidently, apart from some tactics without strategy and a sophisticated defeatism.

In general, the weaknesses that are a product of a supposed lack of organization actually arise from theoretical confusion. It is said that the anarchists in the Russian Revolution were disorganized and for that reason the Bolsheviks won. It is certain that various sectors of the anarchists of the day suffered a lack of initiative and unity, but the greatest division had to do with the question of their relationship with the Bolsheviks themselves. If the anarchists did anything to facilitate the victory of the Bolsheviks, it was not the failure to form a national congress²⁸ or other unified organ, but rather the fact that they directly helped the Bolsheviks, confusing them

²⁶ In this case the mistake is that of assuming an equality of experience, vision, and perspective, that there is an objective experience that everyone in the same group shares; the mistake of understanding affinity as a homogeneous state and not a practice of relating among distinct beings.

²⁷ [Trans] I believe we should interpret “formalize” in this section not as a counter to “informal”, since the critique is directed at insurrectionary thinking, but simply as the tendency to call and understand the affinity group as such, to believe that affinity exists in a group, and thus, to give it an abstract form.

²⁸ Which is to say, one that did not only bring together the anarcho-syndicalists or the non-combative, Kropotkinian anarcho-communists, but one that achieved a fictitious total anarchist unity, suitable to a political party or politico-military organization like the Bolsheviks had.

for allies thanks to Lenin's populist and antiauthoritarian discourses before the revolution.²⁹ It was anarchists like the Kronstadt sailor Zhelezniakov who served as shock troops for the Bolsheviks in the putsch against Parliament in October and in the end the majority of anarchists who flocked to the Communist ranks as a pragmatic way of promulgating the social revolution. This did not save them from the gulags.

And if previously there was an ideological division that obstructed the ability of the anarchists to coordinate their struggle, aside from the eternal disagreement between anarcho-syndicalists and anarcho-communists, it is necessary to point out the confusion sowed by the academic Kropotkin who positioned himself with the Entente during World War I instead of adopting an anti-militarist position that would have helped the anarchists foment desertion in the army and the dissolution of the same; after all the Red Army would ultimately become the most important argument in favor of Leninism.

The lessons that various Spanish anarchists drew from the Russian failure were not the importance of not collaborating with Communists but rather the position that they should not advance their own struggle, not realize any attack against the State similar to that of October 1917. Thus it was an antiauthoritarian discourse that justified the collaboration of the CNT with the government: once again we see how idiotic ideas are convincing when they serve the interests of power. And among the discourses in favor of collaboration and against the militias and collectivizations, the criticism of a supposed disorganization was the most common. But now we can see clearly that it was precisely anarchist disorganization that achieved all the revolutionary gains of '36, while organization (and the Organization) betrayed them and assured the Stalinist victory (Stalin wanted a drawn-out defeat in Spain to allow for a pact with the Nazis, for the destruction of the anarchist dream, and for the liquidation of a large number of dissident communists). It was not disorganization that constituted the weakness of the anarchists but theoretical confusion, a fundamental ignorance about who they were, who were their allies and who weren't.

Currently, the neighborhood assemblies of Barcelona face the criticism of a supposed disorganization and lack of coordination, which turns into a justification for the need to centralize into a formal structure. Given the character of the people who push this proposal, it remains clear that in 75 years little has changed.

The irony is that, while the value of organization is celebrated in the social movements, surely due to a fixation with proving their sophistication and demonstrating that such and such movement would be capable of governing given the opportunity,³⁰ states and their scientists for a long time now have recognized the intelligence of chaos and they are trying to harness it to augment social control with new methods and technologies.

The anarchists who fear chaos and spontaneity demonstrate a fear they will have to overcome; it seems they feed off the mediatic normality, because today the idea of chaos only causes fright within the amphitheater of the mediatized public. Within academia chaos has been a quotidian

²⁹ The fact that Lenin had to pander to anarchist sentiments in the masses demonstrates the popularity of the libertarian idea and the great possibilities the anarchists had to carry out their own propaganda instead of seeking a revolutionary unity with vanguardist groups. I do not aim to dissuade alliance with any group that is not anarchist, since purism is a fatal flaw, and considering that, for example, sectors of the esery (the SR), among others, did not demonstrate any predisposition towards vanguardism.

³⁰ It is another case of the press training the rebels to see themselves through the eyes of the powerful; to go on the defensive and want to show the paternal power that they are not antisistema without demands or an idea of what they want; that on the contrary they know very well how to discipline themselves and how to execute well ordered plans; in other words, they know how to tie things down.

and mundane concept for some time. The structures that academia serves fear chaos as long as it is not dissected. They have failed in their attempt to suppress it, and upon confirming that chaos is the most fundamental principle of the universe they are trying to colonize it in order to convert the universe into a factory.

The new military sciences are studying methods of controlling decentralized groups of combatants (probably through training and ideology, so that they can let them act autonomously—a more efficient form—and later trust that they will return to receive new orders instead of breaking off from the hierarchy); the new information sciences are constructing computers modeled on the human brain, based on decentralized networks of neurons; the new physics, in order to accept the chaotic reality of the universe, breaks with the rationalist mechanism that was a fundamental element of scientific religion since the time of Bacon and Descartes.

Clearly, they do it to augment their control. The scientific religion has this advantage over Christianity: it does not have to erase the facts that contradict its principles, because it can extract those facts from their context, from the world that gives them life; it can convert them into inert information and then plug them into its dead schematics where the only context is the impulse to exploit and control. Thus, within rationalism, there is no information or argument that threatens its power. To be a threat, arguments must link up with attacks, with a social force.

To understand the chaotic movements of subatomic particles does not contradict the rational bases of capitalism if such understanding never comes to feed a philosophy of chaos and rebellion, but rather helps capitalism construct the new nanorobots—technologies operating at the fundamental level of biology and physics.

We must claim chaos and decentralization as intelligent principles of free organization. But we cannot disconnect these concepts from a negation of the current order, like the cooperativists who offer their model of work to the capitalist market or antiglobalization activists who teach consensus to businessmen and NGOs in the hopes that the form in itself will change the world. Form without content or content without form are dead things, dismembered bodies.

By valuing chaos, we do not have to create a cult around it. It is also good that there are attempts to create formal organization. In the end, entropy needs structures to break down, true? It strengthens the struggle that there are companions participating in the formal spaces of the social movements (if they can handle it), as long as we are capable of criticizing and influencing them, a condition that requires a lively and communicative relationship.

As much as we can criticize—to use the most typical example—the CNT for the strategic errors of '36, we can't draw any historical lesson from the episode if we do not also recognize the obvious: without the CNT no revolution would have been possible then. To get more nuanced, it is necessary to remember that the CNT was not only a formal, federated organization but also an informal network of relations and complicities in neighborhoods and factories. It was thanks to these networks, more than anything else, that the CNT could survive the years of dictatorship and repression (before '36)³¹ when its formal structures were suppressed.

Equally, the occupation of Plaça Catalunya in May, 2011, was much more than an ensemble of commissions and subcommissions, imperfect and sometimes nefarious, legitimized by the inoperative General Assembly. It was also a chaotic network of new complicities, debates, communication, and learning. And the forces we gained throughout it all we owe as much to the presence of anarchists in the informal sphere as to the antiauthoritarian participation in the commissions

³¹ [Trans] Spain was ruled by a military dictatorship through the '20s.

and subcommissions. The most interesting and useful critique is not that which puts one above the other (although we should all see clearly which sphere is the more dangerous and which is the more creative) but that which debates priorities, whether many companions placed too much vitality and legitimacy in the commissions, whether other companions facilitated the manoeuvres of internal politicians when they helped in the logistical processes in an uncritical way.

The result of our prizing of disorganization must be a rejection of the idea of unity. Those who try to sell us the bridge of unity are the ones who want to lead us across it. They are leaders in search of a mass.

Anarchists do not need a platform. And within this heterogeneity there is also room for platformists. Not because we are relativists who fear to truly believe in something with a passion and to ruin the good vibes with strong criticisms, but because we will never let them impose their platform on the whole anarchist space but neither do we care to dedicate energies to liquidating them like ideological enemies; because some companions feel more comfortable in formal groups, they trust more in written words than in those that live in the air, and maybe, elaborating their own mode of struggle, they might achieve something unforeseen, they might surprise us, and they can criticize our own errors.

We learn from difference. Long live disorganization!

Rebel Magic

Refusing the mechanical thinking of scientific rationalism, we rebels can find the disappeared world through magical thinking. But not all magic is equal. Confucian philosophy appropriated traditional magic to create a worldview that metaphysically legitimized the divine power of the Chinese state. The magic of the artists and alchemists of the Renaissance permitted a reading of a perfect order in the contemporary hierarchies.

In the society of the zoo-encyclopedia-prison-museum, magic dies on paper. If it was once possible, a suspicious supposition, currently it cannot consist in signs and gestures, rather it is found in acts and gazes, in seeds that sprout in a terrain other than that of words.

The path towards rebel magic can only be pointed out. It consists of discovering our bodies, exploring the mysteries of the world, the interconnectivity between the existent, the fact that we are our relations—that we are much more than ourselves, that we live for thousands of years, that history and future mix, that in our own brains memory and imagination are linked, that the earth itself is alive. It consists of abandoning the philosophy of exchange and value in favor of a philosophy of mutuality and gift, of recognizing that we do not live through a measured exploitation of resources that surround us; instead we live thanks to the gifts of other beings that also form a part of ourselves, that we should honor with gifts of our own.

It consists of recognizing that we can achieve what we believe impossible, that ten people with enough enthusiasm and bravery can easily realize an attack that a hundred people doubting themselves could never do, that a person who is crazy enough can set five trained riot cops running. But the craziness that permits us this power is not a calculated bet but a surrendering of oneself to the world, a knowledge that dying is nothing more than returning to the earth. The crazy rebel is the one who understands herself as just another element, but instead of being fire or water or air she is the passion for freedom and she will do what her nature demands of her. One such as this cannot be stopped, not even by killing her, because she is not an individual but

a spirit that travels from body to body, visiting even the most timid if they know how to open themselves to the world.

Appearing

Sometimes it is only necessary to pose the question, and the answer begins to appear, though always in an unexpected form. The events of 15M responded to the question posed in the thesis about “appearing in the lives of the others”, when those others began to appear in our lives, in the streets. But the political frame in which they appeared sought to prevent their appearance in the world, sought to rob them of even the most limited history and keep them from understanding themselves within the trajectory of recent revolts—those of May Day and the general strike of 29S³²—and much less within an anticapitalist trajectory that embraces hundreds of years of collective experience. The structure prepared by the activists of Real Democracy Now who sought to contain all the popular rage directed the masses to understand themselves as indignant citizens, as though capitalism and democracy, a supposedly false one, had ceased to satisfy their needs as it had earlier, in the beautiful days of prosperity and welfare, as though all those indignant people had just appeared there thanks to Twitter and Facebook.

Today, the rebels of Barcelona and other cities where occupations arise, from Argentina to the United States, are faced with the appearance of phantoms, of half- people. We are in a collective process of remembering who we are, in order to be able to appear completely.

In another moment, a moment of social peace and not of agitation, we will be confronted again with the need to invent tactics to appear in the lives of the others, with fireworks and fire and inconvenience, following the antisocial path, and following the social path, with invitations to potluck dinners, talks and movies in the plazas, gifts from the garden and more things that still must be invented.

For now, we have to extend a rebel self-awareness to such a point that from neighborhood assemblies to the occupation of apartments to protests, many more people feel in their bones the loss of the land, the enclosure of public space, the centuries of oppression, and the confidence in ourselves, without mediator nor representative.

To Speak of Revolution

We do not need fixed schemes for the future. When the future is a certainty, imagination dies, and with imagination the future dies as well. Libertarians have rejected drafting blueprints of the future but with this rejection we have also refused the duty and the pleasure of imagining other futures. This error is a chosen failure.

The insurrection cannot feed itself in that sterile terrain that suffers a lack of imaginaries. We can burn everything that constitutes an obvious aggression against our lives—police stations, banks, government offices, and perhaps, if we are very smart, the television station—but we will hold back before the task of transforming that which maintains our survival in an abusive and

³² On May Day 2011, two weeks before the beginning of 15M, thousands of people marched through the rich neighborhoods around Sarrià and smashed some hundred banks, luxury stores, car dealerships, and other symbols of capitalism and wealth. On the 29th of September, 2010, a large part of the city participated in the general strike, not only refusing to work but also blocking streets, handing out propaganda, and fighting with the police.

manipulative way: the food industry, work, closed and single-family dwellings, transportation, institutional education and healthcare, that is to say, the gears of the capitalist system.

It is ironic that the rebellious ones had already stopped speaking of revolution when one day in May 100,000 strangers got together in a plaza to shout, “The revolution begins here!” It would be easy to say that their vision of revolution was social-democratic and, as such, counterrevolutionary. That’s probably true. But it is also true that the anarchists who dared to claim that revolution while arguing that it had to include solidarity, the destruction of capitalism, the rejection of any political party, and the recovery of a memory of hundreds of years of struggle, met with a good deal of support and found that strangers would come up to them to agree, introduce themselves, and start conversations that left both parties wiser and less isolated.

The term “revolution” has been much abused and originally did not mean much more than a coup d’etat, the substitution of one class of bosses for another. But words are not born from an essential meaning, rather they are constantly reborn and change their meaning in accordance with their use. The concept of revolution can also embrace liberation or even the Aymara concept of pachakuti, returning its literal sense of circular motion. The disgraceful history of the revolutions of the 20th century has blemished the term anew, but cutting ourselves short to avoid failure is defeatism. Regardless of what term we use, we have to speak about more than just negation, have to situate this conversation in the imaginary terrain and we have to smuggle new imaginaries into the collective mind.

It is significant that the few attempts to project an anticapitalist future—for example Michael Albert’s Parecon or Zeitgeist’s rationalized world directed by computers and maintained by robots—do not question the fundamental bases of capitalism, but instead reinforce them. Imposing a plan on the world is to revive the impulse to control and this is capitalism’s mechanical heartbeat. Nonetheless, their authoritarian dystopias, masked as final solutions, help us imagine possible failures—new ways to lose by winning³³—and they signal essential elements of the present day that we need to question more. Neither vision vindicates the figure of the politician nor that of Capital, showing that over the years we antiauthoritarians have had some success in defaming those figures in the popular imagination. But Albert’s utopia is based in the quantification and valorization of work and its products, while the Zeitgeist utopia places total trust in the figures of the scientist and technology. In both cases, the supposed utopia is based on the rationalization of human needs, not leaving any space for desire or the freedom of other living beings.

It is interesting that *The Dispossessed* by Ursula K. LeGuin also shows an anarchist world based on the rationalization of all the processes of life, though being a novel, her work does not pretend to present a perfect world and as such is all the more stimulating for the imagination.

In the end, perhaps the most nefarious obstacle to anarchy is not any institution of the State or Capital but rationalism, the religion that constitutes the philosophy and methodology of social control. To recover an anarchist projectuality that permits us to survive in an ever more dead future and that strengthens us to win the battles that await us if we continue along these lines of conflict we have been tracing, we will need a living imagination, an imagination that constantly makes use of the manure of the past to sow visions of new possibilities. Here we anarchists have

³³ Thesis 1 of 23 Theses Regarding Revolt states: “The many defeats suffered by Western rebels, the ones in which we lose by winning, arise from the fact that we are not conscious of being the first colonized.”

the advantage, because our futures are the most bold and exciting, if only we can dare to claim and spread them.

Contrary to the rationalist doctrine, the others will not approach libertarian imaginaries in accordance with their credibility, their realism, and the number of footnotes they dispose of, but in accordance with the force and social presence of the people who fight for those dreams. Spectacular post-industrial capitalism might be the most surreal and illogical system possible. If it has many followers, it is because it commands a great force.

When an old lady marches in a protest and imagines the street free of cars and full of gardens; when a young boy lights fire to a shopping center that he and his friends have filled with gas cans and imagines a forest growing out of the ruins; when a mother entertains the fantasy of conducting her own birthing with friends in a free community where her daughter will never know of prison, of marriage, of advertising that assaults her self-esteem, of pollution, of institutional education; when all those worlds flourish parallel to our own, we will be stronger than ever.

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