Various Authors
Willful Disobedience Volume 2, number 12
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individual acts into "the collective struggle for individual realization", which I see as the real class struggle.

Since this aim of freeing every individual to be able to create her or his life as s/he sees fit requires that everyone have equal access to all that is necessary for this project of self-realization, it is necessary to destroy the institutions that prevent this free access. Thus, the destruction of the institutions of property and of commodity exchange, and consequently of work — that separation of the activity through which one gets the necessities of existence from life itself — is a necessary aim of revolutionary struggle. Only in this way can new social relations based on free association without hierarchy or privilege come to exist. This is communism as I understand it.

I recognize that the institutions of domination and exploitation are what constitute civilization, and, thus, recognize my struggle as one against civilization. Technological systems — and particularly industrialism — developed as means of controlling people, and therefore, the struggle against control is the struggle against such systems. So my perspective incorporates luddism and, in the broad sense, could be called a green anarchist perspective, though I have no use for any anti-human rhetoric, and desire to prevent environmental destruction because a devastated world impoverishes my existence and the existence of all human beings.

Thus, I see the dichotomies made between individualism and communism, individual revolt and class struggle, the struggle against human exploitation and the exploitation of nature as false dichotomies and feel that those who accept them are impoverishing their own critique and struggle.

Contents

My Perspectives

Above all, I am an individual who desires to create my life and my relationship to the world and to other people on my own terms. This is why I am an anarchist. Therefore, my anarchist perspective is egoist and I take from all perspectives that I find useful in developing and carrying out my anarchist project.

From individualism, I take the primacy of the freedom of every individual to determine the conditions of her or his existence in free association with others as the central aim of revolutionary struggle and also a recognition of the necessity of individuals to begin to reappropriate life here and now in revolt against this society to the extent to which they are able.

My perspective is insurrectionist in that it recognizes both the necessity of the individual to rise up in open revolt against her or his condition (individual insurrection) and the necessity for a destructive, subversive rupture on the large scale with the current social order — the rising of the multitudes of the exploited and excluded classes against their condition (social insurrection).

Thus, I recognize the necessity of class analysis and an active critique of the economy. I see class struggle as the struggle against proletarianization — i.e., the struggle against our dispossession of the capacity to determine the conditions of our existence in terms of our real desires and aspirations. It manifests on the individual level in the daily acts of sabotage, theft, subversion and revolt that the exploited carry out to take back a bit of their life and dignity. The recognition of one's own struggle in the struggles of others is what begins to build the solidarity capable of transforming these

In this sense, the most complete experience that we now take the extravagance of living is that of self-organization which makes space for direct action, understood as open, collective, expansive experience that doesn't give a damn for the fences set up by the state between legality and illegality.

The occupation of abandoned spaces brings these prerogatives together and opens the way, in the most precise manner, for self-organization. The development of the self-organization of our lives is not possible without subverting the existent.

> From "Against the Legalization of Occupied Spaces" by El Paso Occupato and Barocchio Occupato

Killing God

When we accept the dangerous cohabitation with god, when we allow a phantom to pollute our lives, everything comes to be tainted by death. God is death because it is a phantom that makes itself more concrete as the dangers and uncertainties from which a person suffers increase.

When life becomes full, when joy and beauty overflow and effectively oppose pain and fear (which still exist in the world and against which we have nothing except the ridiculous means that presumptuous science puts at our disposal), then the phantom of god vanishes.

Each one of us must decide what to make of her life, and in order to do so we must kill god, first of all in our own hearts, then in the earthly manifestations that claim to give body to this phantom: above all, the church.

> — *Canenero*

A Few Words: *Developing Relationships of Affinity*

> "Today the spirit drowns in a mass of chance encounters. We are looking for those who are still alive enough to support each other beyond this; those fleeing Normal Life."
>
> — Against Sleep and Nightmare

We live in a society in which most of our encounters have already been defined in terms of predetermined roles and relationships in which we have no say. A randomness devoid of surprise surrounds the scheduled torment of work with a "free time" lacking in joy, wonder or any real freedom to act on one's own terms, a "free time" not so very different from the job from which it is supposed to be a respite. Exploitation permeates the whole of existence as each of our interactions is channeled into a form of relating that has already been determined in terms of the needs of the ruling order, in order to guarantee the continued reproduction of a society in which a few control the conditions of everyone's existence and so own all of our lives.

So the revolt against our exploitation is not essentially a political or even an economic struggle, but a struggle against the totality of our current existence (and so against politics and economy), against the daily activities and interactions imposed on us by the economy, the state and all the institutions and apparati of domination and control that make up this civilization. Such a struggle cannot be carried out by any means. It requires a method of act-

ing in and encountering the world in which new relations, those of free individuals who refuse to be exploited and dominated and equally refuse to dominate or exploit, manifest here and now. In other words, our struggle must be the immediate reappropriation of our lives, in conflict with the present society.

Starting from this basis, the refusal of formality and the development of relations of affinity cannot be seen in merely tactical or strategic terms. Rather, they are reflections in practice of what we are fighting for if we are, indeed, fighting to take back our lives, to reappropriate the capacity to determine the conditions of our own existence — i.e., the capacity for self-organization.

The development of relationships of affinity is specifically the development of a deep knowledge of one another in a complex manner, a profound understanding of each other's ideas, dreams, desires, passions, aspirations, capacities, conceptions of the struggle and of life. It is, indeed a discovery of what is shared in common, but more significantly it is a discover of differences, of what is unique to each individual, because it is at the point of difference that one can truly discover the projects one can carry out with another.

Since the development of relationships of affinity is itself a reflection of our aims as anarchists and since it is intended to create a deep and ever-expanding knowledge of one another, it cannot simply be left to chance. We need to intentionally create the opportunity for encounters, discussions and debates in which our ideas, aspirations and visions of the revolutionary struggle can come into contention, where real affinities and real conflicts can come out and be developed — not with the aim of finding a unifying middle ground in which every one is equally compromised, but to clarify distinctions and so discover a real basis for creating projects of action that aren't simply playing the role of radical, activist or militant, but that are real reflections of the desires, passions and ideas of those involved. While publications, internet discussion boards and correspondence can provide means for doing this on some lev-

Dutch and Flemish protesters occupied the office of CEFIC, a lobby for European chemical companies. This occupation was evicted after four hours.

On the 13th, a large demonstration took place. Being sponsored by the trade unions, it is no surprise that this march was peaceful.

On the 14th and 15th, a much smaller demonstration took a different turn as demonstrators armed with molotov cocktails, cobblestone and metal staves battled cops and damaged the windows of banks and businesses and threw a metal barrier through the window of a police station.

It is clear now that the rulers of this world can never expect to meet in peace. There are those who have their demands to make, and there are those with no demands who simply want to make it clear to the rulers that they have implacable enemies who will not give them peace. These latter need to carefully examine the place of these demonstrations in their lives, determining if and how they fit into a life lived against this order. There is no simple answer, nor one that applies to every one, but the real struggle is, in fact in the context of our daily lives, and we need to be careful not to be blinded by the flash of the spectacular and of the heroics of street conflicts. Street demonstrations are simply one (to my mind, fairly minor) tactic in our struggle, not the struggle itself.

Live Free or Die

Our dream is to live free, destroying every form of established power and every hierarchy since these are the negation of this dream.

For us freedom cannot be separated from pleasure. Therefore, we are willing to make titanic efforts in order to realize freedom and pleasure, aware that freedom does not exist in sacrifice and immolation.

Shorts

Why Democracy

It can be argued that democracy is the very heart of capitalism. Capitalism views people as equivalent in terms of the work they do — it reduces people to simple labor power. Democracy views people as equivalent in terms of voting, in terms of having an equal say in some machinery controlling you.

Here too, Justice and morality are equivalent parts of this machinery.

So why do so many anarchists embrace democracy?

— Because being against "authority" seems to many of them to be simply being in favor of Justice, perhaps?

— Because they haven't rejected exchange and the way that exchange can work to make people equivalent to each other.

Perhaps it is similar to what Nietzsche called the final cruelty of Christians, the need to kill God to keep the logic of religion. Many anarchists feel the need to kill the top, the boss, of a bureaucracy in order to keep the bureaucracy itself alive.

— ASAN

Clashes at the EU Summit

For several days in mid-December, leaders of the nations that make up the European Union held a summit meeting in Brussels. It was met with protests. On December 12, a group of predominantly

els, to the extent to which they are open forums they tend to be too random, with potential for the discussion to lose any projectuality and get sidetracked into the democratic exchange of opinions which have little connection to one's life. To my mind, the best and most significant discussions can take place in face-to-face encounters between people with some clarity of why they are coming together to discuss. Thus, organizing discussion groups, conferences, meetings and the like is an integral part of the development of relations of affinity and so of projects of action.

The necessity to pursue the development of relationships of affinity with intention does not mean the development of a formal basis for affinity. It seems to me that formality undermines the possibility of affinity, because it is by nature based on a predetermined, and therefore arbitrary, commonality. Formal organization is based upon an ideological or programmatic unity that ultimate comes down to adherence to the organization as such. Differences must be swept aside for the cause of the organization, and when differences are swept aside, so also are dreams, desires, aspirations and passions since these can only ever belong to the individual. But, in fact, formal organization has nothing to do with intention or projectuality. In fact, by providing an ideology to adhere to it relieves the individual of the responsibility of thinking for herself and developing his own understanding of the world and of her struggle in it. In providing a program, it relieves the individual of the necessity of acting autonomously and making practical analyses of the real conditions in which she is struggling. So, in fact, formality undermines projectuality and the capacity for self-organization and so undermines the aim of anarchist struggle.

Relationships of affinity are the necessary basis of self-organization on the most basic daily level of struggle and of life. It is the deep and growing knowledge of one another that provides the basis for developing projects of revolt that truly reflect our own aspirations and dreams, for developing a shared struggle that is based in the recognition and, at its best, the passionate enjoyment

of our very real and beautiful differences. The development of social revolution will, of course, require an organizing of activity beyond the range of our relationships of affinity, but it is the projects that we develop from these relationships that give us the capacity for self-organization, the strength to refuse all formality and, thus, all of the groups that claim to represent the struggle, whether they call themselves parties, unions or federations. In the relationship of affinity, a new way of relating free from all roles and every hackneyed social relationship already begins to develop, and with it an apparent unpredictability that the authorities will never understand. Here and now, we grasp a world of wonder and joy that is a powerful weapon for destroying the world of domination.

calls for the proper apportionment of blame (which never seems to fall on them). In fact, the catastrophe is this social order with its top priorities being profit and social control, with its specialization and division of labor that guarantees that no one fully understands what is going on, with its dependence on authorities and expertise that steals away people's capacities for self-determination, with its cumbersome technological apparatus which provides the authorities with a tool for controlling people, but which is itself beyond control. It is not by relying on experts that we will put an end to this existence on the edge of disaster, but by taking back our lives and destroying the present social order.

immune system, herbal antibiotics and similar natural and easily accessible methods of dealing with the potential of anthrax infection was spread through a variety of means that did not require going through an authority. But such self-reliance does not serve the interests of those in power, and so last month a government scientist, Dr. Stephen E. Straus, director of the National Center for Complimentary and Alternative Medicine, declared that people should not rely on such alternative remedies, but should rather have "an unwavering trust in the currently approved drugs and vaccines". Straus offers no evidence that the natural methods do not work. He simply describes them as "unproven remedies". In other words, the experts have not yet tested them in their laboratories on captive animals or on prisoners. In fact, Straus is just another voice — a government voice — telling us to put our faith in the authorities. And when fear gains the upper hand in people's minds, they are easily swayed by such voices.

But another interesting bit of news came out a few weeks after Straus made his call for people to remain faithful to the experts in medicine. Tests on the anthrax powder that had been found in mail here showed that it was a form of anthrax developed in military laboratories here in the United States. The very authorities in whom we are to place our faith are the real source of that which threatens us. But those with an understanding of US foreign policy, those few who know the history of US involvement in Afghanistan in the 1980's, were already aware of this. The government that calls us to unite behind it holds at least as much responsibility for these attacks as Al Qaeda. But this too is simply a minor bit of news, a banality about how states function. This entire social order, dominated by capital and the state is a string of disasters, none of which can rightly be called accidents. We live our lives on the edge of catastrophe and turn the other way, hailing those who have placed us there as our protectors, simply because a few stopgap measures have maybe put off a particular catastrophe for a short while or because our masters meet a catastrophe with bellicose rhetoric and

From Proletarian to Individual: Toward an Anarchist Understanding of Class

The social relationships of class and exploitation are not simple. Workerist conceptions, which are based on the idea of an objectively revolutionary class that is defined in terms of its relationship to the means of production, ignore the mass of those world-wide whose lives are stolen from them by the current social order but who can find no place within its productive apparatus. Thus these conceptions end up presenting a narrow and simplistic understanding of exploitation and revolutionary transformation. In order to carry out a revolutionary struggle against exploitation, we need to develop an understanding of class as it actually exists in the world without seeking any guarantees.

At its most basic, class society is one in which there are those who rule and those who are ruled, those who exploit and those who are exploited. Such a social order can only arise when people lose their capacity to determine the conditions of their own existence. Thus, the essential quality shared by the exploited is their dispossession, their loss of the capacity to make and carry out the basic decisions about how they live.

The ruling class is defined in terms of its own project of accumulating power and wealth. While there are certainly significant conflicts within the ruling class in terms of specific interests and real competition for control of resources and territory, this overarching project aimed at the control of social wealth and power, and

thus of the lives and relationships of every living being, provides this class with a unified positive project.

The exploited class has no such positive project to define it. Rather it is defined in terms of what is done to it, what is taken away from it. Being uprooted from the ways of life that they had known and created with their peers, the only community that is left to the people who make up this heterogeneous class is that provided by capital and the state — the community of work and commodity exchange decorated with whatever nationalist, religious, ethnic, racial or subcultural ideological constructions through which the ruling order creates identities into which to channel individuality and revolt. The concept of a positive proletarian identity, of a single, unified, positive proletarian project, has no basis in reality since what defines one as proletarian is precisely that her life has been stolen from her, that he has been transformed into a pawn in the projects of the rulers.

The workerist conception of the proletarian project has its origins in the revolutionary theories of Europe and the United States (particularly certain marxist and syndicalist theories). By the late 19th century, both western Europe and the eastern United States were well on their way to being thoroughly industrialized, and the dominant ideology of progress equated technological development with social liberation. This ideology manifested in revolutionary theory as the idea that the *industrial* working class was objectively revolutionary because it was in the position to take over the means of production developed under capitalism (which, as products of progress, were assumed to be inherently liberating) and turn them to the service of the human community. By ignoring most of the world (along with a significant portion of the exploited in the industrialized areas), revolutionary theorists were thus able to invent a positive project for the proletariat, an objective historical mission. That it was founded on the bourgeois ideology of progress was ignored. In my opinion, the luddites had a much clearer perspective, recognizing that industrialism was another one of the masters'

September 11: What the Masters Want to Teach Us

The attacks of September 11 provided the masters of this world with a splendid opportunity for carrying out their most repressive projects with little dissent. It also provided their propaganda machine with the opportunity of promoting the ideological agenda of those who rule us. Almost from the start, the various "experts" were on hand to analyze, to theorize, to tell us what to think. The propaganda of a united America and of a world divided simply into "good" and "evil", the "good" again all united in the fight against "evil". This corny mythological worldview pushed by the politicians and the media though had more to it than a simple promotion of mindless patriotism. The attacks were, in a sense, of epic proportions. It was easy for the authorities to convince us that as individuals we were helpless in the face of something of this sort, that we needed to be protected. And, of course, this protection could only come from the experts in protection — the state.

This is, in fact, the fundamental lesson that those in power have been promoting since the attacks: we are not capable of defending ourselves; the dangers of the world are beyond our control; we need to rely on the authorities, the experts to decide what to do for us.

Last month, another voice joined in this chorus. When the first anthrax-laced letters were discovered, people began to investigate possible natural remedies that they could acquire for themselves without reliance on the medical system — which many in this country cannot afford. Information about methods of strengthening the

Our thoughts turn to our comrade, Carlo Tesseri now as well. He is still locked up in the prison at Dozza. He is a long-time friend and comrade of Horst, arrested with him on December 19. Since then, he has been denied conversation with his family. His partner has already asked prosecutor Orso for an urgent visit and has been denied over and over again. On the morning of December 25, she went before the vice-director of Dozza, Cardiano, who refused to let her meet with Carlo, stating that Horst's death was not sufficiently serious to allow them to speak.

We consider it important to draw ourselves close around Carlo, so that he feels our affection and solidarity.

FREEDOM FOR CARLO
FREE EVERYONE
BURN DOWN THE PRISONS

— Anarchist Black Cross (Italy),
Anarchist Group
for Global Direct Action

tools for dispossessing them. With good reason, they attacked the machines of mass production.

The process of dispossession has long since been accomplished in the West (though of course it is a process that is going on at all times even here), but it is in much of the South of the world it is still in its early stages. Since the process started in the West though, there have been some significant changes in the functioning of the productive apparatus. Skilled factory positions have largely disappeared, and what is needed in a worker is flexibility, the capacity to adapt — in other words, the capacity to be an interchangeable cog in the machine of capital. In addition, factories tend to require far fewer workers to carry on the productive process, both because of developments in technology and management techniques that have allowed a more decentralized productive process and because increasingly the type of work necessary in factories is largely just monitoring and maintaining machines.

On a practical level this means that we are all, as individuals, expendable to the production process, because we are all replaceable — that lovely capitalist egalitarianism in which we are all equal to zero. In the first world, this has had the effect of pushing increasing numbers of the exploited into increasingly precarious positions: day labor, temporary work, service sector jobs, chronic unemployment, the black market and other forms of illegality, homelessness and prison. The steady job with its guarantee of a somewhat stable life — even if one's life is not one's own — is giving way to a lack of guarantees where the illusions provided by a moderately comfortable consumerism can no longer hide that life under capitalism is always lived on the edge of catastrophe.

In the third world, people who have been able to create their own existence, if sometimes a difficult one, are finding their land and their other means for doing so being pulled out from under them as the machines of capital quite literal invade their homes and eat away any possibility to continue living directly off their own activity. Torn from their lives and lands, they are forced to move to the

cities where there is little employment for them. Shantytowns develop around the cities, often with populations higher than the city proper. Without any possibility of steady employment, the inhabitants of these shantytowns are compelled to form a black market economy to survive, but this also still serves the interests of capital. Others, in desperation, choose immigration, risking imprisonment in refugee camps and centers for undocumented foreigners in the hope of improving their condition.

So, along with dispossession, precariousness and expendability are increasingly the shared traits of those who make up the exploited class worldwide. If, on the one hand, this means that this commodity civilization is creating in its midst a class of barbarians who truly have nothing to lose in bringing it down (and not in the ways imagined by the old workerist ideologues), on the other hand, these traits do not in themselves provide any basis for a positive project of the transformation of life. The rage provoked by the miserable conditions of life that this society imposes can easily be channeled into projects that serve the ruling order or at least the specific interest of one or another of the rulers. The examples of situations in the past few decades in which the rage of the exploited has been harnessed to fuel nationalist, racialist or religious projects that serve only to reinforce domination are too many to count. The possibility of the end of the current social order is as great as it ever was, but the faith in its inevitability can no longer pretend to have an objective basis.

But in order to truly understand the revolutionary project and begin the project of figuring out how to carry it out (and to developing an analysis of how the ruling class manages to deflect the rage of those it exploits into its own projects), it is necessary to realize that exploitation does not merely occur in terms of the production of wealth, but also in terms of the reproduction of social relationships. Regardless of the position of any particular proletarian in the productive apparatus, it is in the interests of the ruling class that everyone would have a role, a social identity, that serves

On the evening of December 24, comrades in Italy were informed that Horst had died in the shower due to complications from a heart attack.

The next day they learned that he had been beaten severely by the cops as was evidence by the bruises on his body.

To anarchists in Italy who have lost another comrade, I con only offer condolences, and to the cops who killed him, and all other cops, my undying hatred.

> [I based this text on one written by comrades from El Paso Occupato in Italy.]

Horst, a Life for Anarchy

In this hour of rage and anguish at the death of our comrade, Horst Fantazzini, many questions are still left unanswered. They told us that Horst died of cardiac arrest. But what caused this heart attack? Above all, who stopped his heart? His children noticed bruises on his body. Was it a beating or the return to prison itself that caused his death? The only thing of which we can be certain is that Horst's death is simply another one of the many murders perpetrated by the state against an anarchist who intended to live without respite struggling against capital, against the prisons in which he lived for half his life and against every form of authority. Death in prison had already been planned for Horst, seeing that his sentence would have ended in 2022, but they had already tried to eliminate him in the past, riddling him with bullets during an attempted escape. On December 24, after having spent 32 years in prison, our comrade died in their hands, locked away in the state's prison! We hold the Bolognese prosecutors, Orso and Pescatore directly responsible, not to mention the prison director and all the wretches who work in the prison at Dozza.

MURDERERS OF YESTERDAY AND TODAY, WE WILL NOT FORGET YOU

Italian Anarchist Killed in Prison

On Wednesday, December 19, at 1pm, Carlo Tesseri and Horst Fantazzini were arrested near a bank in Bologna, Italy and charged with attempted aggravated robbery. Apparently, they were stopped while on bicycles and were in possession of materials the cops found suspect.

A few hours later, the cops searched their houses and confiscated books, flyers, stickers and other forms of anarchist propaganda, as well as personal letters, notebooks, a computer and cash.

After 32 years in prison, Horst had obtained partial liberty a few months earlier with his punishment scheduled to end in 2022.

Carlo was released in July after seven years in prison. Both are anarchist comrades who have lived lives characterized by rebellion and the passion for anarchy, in pursuit of true freedom.

At last the media was onto the story of Horst — rather wretchedly as usual — transforming it into a little tale of colorful gossip and making it into a film.

The few newspapers that mentioned the arrests described it in terms of the usual hateful and miserable script of the "romantic anarchist" arrested during yet another attack.

Not a word on the persecution Horst had suffered, not to mention Carlo (both were among those investigated by public prosecutor Marini in the major investigation and subsequent trial against seventy people for allegedly being part of an "armed gang").

in the reproduction of social relationships. Race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual preference, subculture — all of these things may, indeed, reflect very real and significant differences, but all are social constructions for channeling these differences into roles useful for the maintenance of the current social order. In the most advanced areas of the current society where the market defines most relationships, identities largely come to be defined in terms of the commodities that symbolize them, and interchangeability becomes the order of the day in social reproduction, just as it is in economic production. And it is precisely because identity is a social construction and increasingly a saleable commodity that it must be dealt with seriously by revolutionaries, analyzed carefully in its complexity with the precise aim of moving beyond these categories to the point that our differences (including those that this society would define in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, etc.) are the reflection of each of us as singular individuals.

Because there is no common *positive* project to be found in our condition as proletarians — as the exploited and dispossessed — our project must be the struggle to destroy our proletarian condition, to put an end to our dispossession. The essence of what we have lost is not control over the means of production or of material wealth; it is our lives themselves, our capacity to create our existence in terms of our own needs and desires. Thus, our struggle finds its terrain everywhere, at all times. Our aim is to destroy everything that keeps our lives from us: capital, the state, the industrial and post-industrial technological apparatus, work, sacrifice, ideology, every organization that tries to usurp our struggle, in short, all systems of control.

In the very process of carrying out this struggle in the only way that we can carry it out — outside of and against all formality and institutionalization — we begin to develop new ways of relating based on self-organization, a commonality based on the unique differences that define each of us as individuals whose freedom expands with the freedom of the other. It is here in revolt against our

proletarian condition that we find that shared positive project that is different for each one of us: the collective struggle for individual realization.

All right, it is as you say, I am going too far. But doesn't seem to you that this all consolidates the group and calcifies thought?

Starting from myself, what is said to me always seems so imprecise and reassuring, that hearing it continually repeated is frankly too much.

Deepening relations of affinity would have to mean making difference emerge (otherwise, on what do we base affinity?). And yet one doesn't escape homogeneity (the fact that some anarchist use this word in a positive sense makes my head spin) by refusing conferences, membership cards and other blatantly formal fixations.

The mechanisms — I hesitate to say rhythms, but perhaps they really are rhythms — , the rhythms, then, of participation and compromise stress our lives well beyond measure. Thinking for ourselves, as Lessing expressed it, is never the outcome.

What would the desire to rebuild be if it never leads us to destruction? What would it be if it anchored us to the role of destroyer?

Gottfried Benn said that the one who loves the ruins also loves the statues. And with regard to statues, Benn, it was understood.

Perhaps it is anxiety about the future that transforms individuals into puppets of a group. A life considering needs a solid basis. Obedience and calculation live under the sign of an eternal tomorrow.

But aren't ideas — coagulants of language — giving us the awareness of time?

Thought is born only when desire grows pale. Living the moment, the immediacy of existence, completely, does one have no future, does one have no time — does one have no ideas?

If all values collapse (is it possible?), only "because it pleases me, that's why" remains.

So many acrobatics to discover what children have always known.

The relation of mutuality — in no way a moral good, in no way a duty — is maybe really a relationship between children.

Children's Thoughts *by Massimo Passamani*

Yes, I know, we are all against axioms, guarantees, certainties.

But can we really live without sharing our being against — without depending upon this sharing?

The search for identity is not always oriented toward the mass, toward the great crowds of followers. Even the small group can become our safe space. What's more, the very refusal of every group and of any form of membership can construct its own arrogant, solitary radicality through the play of recognition.

My stubborn solitude is fed by what it opposes; it even — or maybe, above all — feeds on criticisms.

To appear to be against someone or something that seems to assume the features of authority — a charismatic person, a common truth — is not always an act of revolt. Its origins could be, for example, the desire to receive part of the light of that which one challenges by taking the role of challenger. As if saying: I beg you to notice that I have no leaders.

I believe that the reality of not being esteemed (which is to say valued and measured — even in the form of a certain hostility — by a group has greater significance in the renunciation of revolt than repression. And there is no resigned desistence that does not degenerate into resentment, quick to assemble in new, spiteful herds.

Two or three words, the same ones, repeated in some meeting, and there they are joining the discussion that unfailingly ensues, in hope that other words — two or three — will replace them.

Against the Logic of Submission: *The Subversion of Existence*

The desire to change the world remains merely an abstract ideal or a political program unless it becomes the will to transform one's own existence. The logic of submission imposes itself on the level of daily life offering thousands of reasons for resigning oneself to the domination of survival over life. So without a conscious project of revolt and transformation on this level, all attempts to change the world remain basically cosmetic — putting band-aids on gangrenous ulcers.

Without an intentional projectuality toward freedom and revolt here and now a myriad of potentially worthy projects — the occupation of abandoned spaces, the sharing of free food, the publication of a bimonthly anarchist periodical, sabotage, pirate radio stations, demonstrations, attacks against the institutions of domination — lose their meaning, becoming merely more hustle and bustle in a confused and confusing world. It is the conscious decision to reappropriate life in defiance of the present reality that can give these activities a revolutionary significance, because this is what provides the link between the various activities that make up an insurgent life.

Making such a decision challenges us to figure out how to realize it practically, and such a realization is not just a matter of involving ourselves in a variety of projects of action. It also, and more essentially, means creating one's life as a tension toward freedom,

thus providing a context for the actions we take, a basis for analysis. Furthermore, such a decision takes our revolt beyond the political. The conscious desire for total freedom requires a transformation of ourselves and our relationships in the context of revolutionary struggle. It becomes necessary not merely to rush into this, that and the other activity, but to grasp and learn to use all of those tools that we can take as our own and use against the current existence based on domination, in particular, analyses of the world and our activity in it, relationships of affinity and an indomitable spirit. It also becomes necessary to recognize and resolutely avoid those tools of social change offered by the current order that can only reinforce the logic of domination and submission — delegation, negotiation, petition, evangelism, the creation of media images of ourselves, and so on. These latter tools precisely reinforce hierarchy, separation and dependence on the power structure — which is the reason why they are offered to us for use in our struggles. When one resorts to these tools, revolt and freedom degenerate into a mere political program.

Analysis that does not arise from one's desire to reappropriate life here and now tends to reinforce domination, because it either remains baseless or turns to an ideology or political program as its base. A great deal of what passes for social analysis today falls into the former realm. Having no base from which they make their critique, those who follow this path tend to fall into a ceaseless round of deconstruction that ultimately concludes that domination is everywhere and nowhere, that freedom is impossible and that, therefore, we should just make the best of it either through conformity or the staged oppositional games of groups like *tute bianche* (the famous "white overalls") which are intended to challenge nothing. Arguably, this is not analysis at all, but an excuse for avoiding real analysis, and with it concrete revolt.

But the road of political ideology and programs is no more useful to the project of subversion. Because this project is the transformation of existence in a way that destroys all domination and

What is Seen Through a Keyhole

The fate of the controller is not very enviable. Viewed through a keyhole, the world must certainly not be reassuring. Even with the most supervised individuals, there is always something that escapes, something that cannot be investigated with the stupid and cumbersome hands of a police inspector.

Thus, the attempt to confine all words in the dictionary of control and repression only shows the arrogant stinginess of those who consider life as nothing more than the extension of the penal codes. Having already forgotten the low figure created with the intention of finding those presumed responsible for incendiary actions carried out to the harm of the norm, the state continues to turn the houses of anarchists upside-down searching for that which could only exist in the suspicions nourished by the sleepless nights of some magistrate. After the concept of the *affinity group* — supported for years in our papers — is transformed by the artifices of the Great Men and the law into the operative structures of a clandestine organization "with the aim of terrorism", other and more zealous servants of authority will describe all that will be said or written by those who do not speak the language of domination or live the life of submission as a "violent political project called 'thought'".

In the eyes of the law, life itself is taking on the features of a criminal body. On the other hand, the space of desire and revolt is not completely seen through a keyhole.

— *Canenero*

Just like the old days. But we have the impression that all this is "at least" rational, organized with the aid of technology and in the service of our security. The apparatus justifies it.

If anyone is held responsible for any brutality whatever, he is defined as a monster or a lunatic and imprisoned. The walls in which she is enclosed are as distant as a prohibition and as close as a warning. However, the worst wickedness carried out for reasons of state no longer seems so terrible, because there is a meaning in its brutality. Anyone who kills and commits violence in a "gratuitous" way is frightening, but the general who bombs an entire population, the soldier who rapes, the secret service agent who carries out a massacre, the police who tortures and shoots, these are never crazy.

This is why the Inquisition seems senseless — and therefore distant — in comparison with traveling papers, decrees of expulsion, prison and the electric chair. But ideology is no different from religion, not even when it abandons the great values, the great hopes and becomes a eulogy to dialogue and pluralism. The Inquisition no longer exists today because it is everywhere. Now the Brunos and Vaninis, who were burned in the past as the bearers of a thought that blasphemed the truth, end up burning themselves on their own. Individuals are always sacrificed in the name of something. If it isn't the good, it is the sovereign people or the gross national product. The state makes the lack of individual freedom common to all. The community of authority and capital is the order of this lack. When the order is threatened, sooner or later the garrote appears.

— Canenero

exploitation, it is inherently *anti-political*. Freedom, conceived politically, is either an empty slogan aimed at winning the approval of the ruled (that American "freedom" for which Bush is fighting by bombing Afghanistan and signing increasingly repressive laws into effect) or merely one end of a continuum with domination. Freedom and domination become quantitative — matters of degree — and the former is increased by decreasing the latter. It is precisely this sort of thinking that caused Kropotkin to support the Allies in the First World War and that provides the basis for every reformist project. But if freedom is not merely a question of degrees of domination — if bigger cages and longer chains do not mean greater freedom, but merely the appearance of greater mobility within the context of continuing enslavement to the rulers of this order — then all the political programs and ideologies become useless to our project. Instead it is precisely to ourselves and our desires that we must turn — our desires for a qualitatively different existence. And the point of departure for the transformation we seek becomes our lives and relationships. It is here that we begin to undermine the logic of submission with the aim of destroying all domination. Then, our analyses of the world are aimed at achieving an understanding of how to carry out our own struggle in the world and to find points of solidarity (where we see our struggle in that of others) to spread the struggle against domination, not at creating an interpretation of the world in terms of an ideology. And our analyses of our activities are aimed at determining how useful they really are for achieving our aspirations, not at conforming our actions to any program.

If our aim is the transformation of existence, then the development of relations of affinity is not just a tactical maneuver. It is the attempt to develop relationships of freedom within the context of struggle. Relationships of freedom develop through a deep and ever increasing knowledge of the other — knowledge of their ideas, their aspirations, their desires, their capacities, their inclinations. It is knowledge of similarities, yes, but more significantly, it is knowl-

edge of differences, because it is at the point of difference that real practical knowledge begins, the knowledge of whether and how one can carry out projects and create life with another. It is for this reason that among ourselves — as in our relationship to that which we are struggling against — it is necessary to avoid the practice of compromise and the constant search for common ground. These practices are, after all, the heart and soul of the democratic form of domination that currently rules in the world, and thus are expressions of the logic of submission that we need to eradicate from our relationships. False unities are by far a greater detriment to the development of an insurrectional project than real conflicts from which individual intelligence and creative imagination may flower brilliantly. The compromise from which false unities develop is itself a sign of the submission of the insurrectional project to the political.

Unities brought about through compromise are, in fact, the very opposite of affinity since they spring from a suppression of knowledge of oneself and of the other. This is why they require the creation of formal decision-making processes that hold the seeds of a bureaucratic methodology. Where there is real knowledge of the others with whom one is carrying out a project, formal consensus is not necessary. The awareness each has of the others' individuality creates a basis where decision and action need not be separate. This is a new form of sociality that can be brought into existence here and now in struggle against the order of domination, a form of sociality grounded in the full enjoyment of the singularity of each individual, of the marvelous difference that each of us carries within ourselves.

On the basis of these relationships of affinity, real projects that reflect the desires and aims of the individuals involved, rather than simply a feeling that one must do something, can develop. Whether the project is a squat, a sharing of free food, an act of sabotage, a pirate radio station, a periodical, a demonstration, or an attack against one of the institutions of domination, it will not

Above all, they correspond to a project of rationalization of the repressive instruments. The torture of heretics is an extremely rational thing, the opposite of a blind, violent reaction. Everything occurs according to precise rules, with legal procedures and a very particular attention to the spectacle that must accompany the trial. The church defends its power and its interpretation of the scriptures with a rigorous refinement of repressive techniques.

If the inquisition was a horror, it was a horror of Reason. This is why one cannot make an enlightened appeal to rationality and science against this horror. This is why pyres don't merely brighten the dark night of History, but are here as well, burning in a different form.

Several years ago, the pope rehabilitated the figure of Galileo after so many centuries with the intent of celebrating the marriage of religion and science. Well then, in his gesture there is simply a continuation of the same project of power and conquest. Just as his predecessors blessed the garrote, today the pope blesses the electric chair (as is said in paragraphs 55 and 56 of Evangelium vitae, a papal encyclical of the 1990's). The first was built by religion in the name of god; the second by science in the name of the state.

Today, repression no longer makes reference to god, but the power that justifies it is no less totalitarian. Rather, if the efficacy of its control over individuals is measured in terms of acquiescence and acceptance, one could say that the present society is the most repressive up to now.

The Community wants participation because everyone has to contribute to their own and other people's oppression. This is why repression I increasingly becoming the capacity for draining the individual of all desire for revolt. Television, the extortion of work, the value given to social climbing all annihilate the tension for freedom, and when these are refused, repression is forced to abandon its customary methods and to show itself directly: then there are the interrogations, the searches, the asylums, the prisons, the physical elimination.

Of Holy and Democratic Inquisitions

Passing in the short space of an exhibition from the instruments used by the Inquisition to the methods of interrogation used today in every police station and barracks of the world seems to be nothing but a provocation. How can one compare the cruelty that forced a huge number of people to the garrote to the legal procedures of the police of a democratic state? How can one relate the brutal phantoms of the church in such a dark epoch with the rationality that is the basis of the defense of contemporary institutions? And yet the time that separates the pyres erected in the name of god from the modern electric chairs is not on the order of centuries as many people think, but rather of a few decades, since, in fact, the trials of the Inquisition continued into the 19th century.

So what is it that makes it seem so very distant? Maybe the conception we have of it.

When we think about the inquisition, our minds turn to images of the religious folly of a handful of fanatics who tortures and killed blinded by their fear. Secular and rationalist thought has given us the conception of religion as an irrational phenomenon, a mental impulse that, having abandoned the paradise of Reason, leads to violence and terror. Thus we think that the Inquisition was a long sleep of Reason, the most frightful statement of the arbitrary nature of faith.

But the Holy Inquisition was exactly the opposite. The heresy trials do not just represent the total faith in dogma, nor are they merely a constant attempt to repress every form of difference.

be entered into as a political obligation, but as a part of the life one is striving to create, as a flowering of one's self-determined existence. And it is then and only then that its subversive and insurrectional potential blossoms. If joy and wonder, and a beautiful, indomitable existence are what we want, we need to try to achieve this here and now in rebellious defiance against all domination, eradicating the logic of submission from our lives, our relationships and our revolutionary struggle — for the destruction of politics and the creation of life without measure.

An Open Letter to Those Involved in the Black Bloc

The anti-globalization movement has brought with it an increase in public confrontations with those in power. Of course, anarchists have been there. One of the tactics anarchists have used in these situations is that of the black bloc. I am not interested in going into a thorough discussion of the effectiveness of this tactic or discuss its merits as an anarchist practice. Rather I want to deal with a somewhat troubling recent development that has made its appearance in discussions about the black bloc. In the Summer/September 2001 issue of Barricada and in the October 2001 issue of Tute Nere there are articles discussing the tactics of the black bloc. This is certainly not surprising, nor is it uncalled-for after two years of regular summit demonstrations as well as other demonstrations in which black bloc participates were involved. What bothers me is the direction in which the examination of the black bloc has gone.

It has been said over and over again that the black bloc is not an organization, but a tactic. The organizational framework in which it has operated has been the affinity group (or at least, the small group of friends — each such group can decide for itself to what extent to which it has made a determined effort to achieve true and deep affinity). The purpose for wearing black has been anonymity and a visual statement of solidarity not the formation of an anarchist army. I am convinced that this informality has been the real strength of this tactic, providing flexibility and leaving real choice of action in the hands of individuals in relation with others of their choosing. The tactical organization here reflects the aim of a world

In US newspapers, this rebellion has been largely described as "middle class" (an ambiguous term, at best, when used by the US press), but reports from Argentine and the nature of the looting indicate significant involvement by the poor as well. At least one person has described the events as "bread riots". And the unrest among the unemployed and marginalized in Argentine has been going on for quite some time.

Most of the reports that I found of these events came from anarchists who were there. These accounts raise many questions. Though there has been unrest on some level in Argentina for quite some time, this rebellion seemed to take anarchists by surprise. The accounts treat these events in a spectacular manner as a moment separated from life and from the ongoing struggle. This is not at all surprising. Events like this tend to be unpredictable, and sometimes the apparently most politically aware have the most difficulty figuring out how to respond. Clearly we need to bring our analytical capacities and our insurrectional project into such events, but how?

It was also clear from the reports that although the formal anarchist organizations had no idea how to respond to the situation, no real initiatives to propose, they saw their task as that of educating the people in revolt, of getting their message out. But what message could these formal groups have for those who have entered the sphere of informality that is real revolt? It became increasingly clear to me as I read these reports, how important it is to pursue the self-organization of our lives, our struggles, our revolt as an ongoing movement against all formalization and institutionalization so that we will be able to encounter situations such as this not with ideologies, platforms or programs (like any politician) but with the capacity to carry out initiatives for the ongoing expansion of the self-organization of struggle that spontaneously appears in such uprisings to more and more aspects of life, aiming at the total transformation of existence.

went to street corners, clapped their hands and gathered people to demonstrate in the Plaza del Mayo. When police moved in to remove people from the plaza passersby aided the demonstrators, harassing the cops and attacking them with a variety of objects. In the course of the day people destroyed eight banks in Buenos Aires. Looting continued throughout the country.

The president then in office was compelled to step down, and the Peronists took advantage of the situation, presenting themselves as potential saviors of the nation. One of their party was appointed interim president. The Argentine secret service went out to on the streets of Buenos Aires to spread rumors to frighten people from the streets, and within a few days, things quieted down… briefly.

Then on December 29, fed up with the lack of any real answers from the new president, a "self-convened" (i.e., autonomous — not called by any formal organization) demonstration took place in the Plaza de Mayo in front of the presidential palace. People attacked the doors of the palace. Chants included: "Everybody out, nobody stay" and "Without Peronists, without radicals, we will live better", indicating the level of disillusion with the government. When the police attempted to disperse the demonstration with tear gas, some stayed to battle the cops. Others marched to the Parliament and still others took to the streets. In the streets, people attacked banks and billboards, and at least one ruling class observer perched on the balcony of a luxury hotel received a bruise from a projectile. At the parliament, people built bonfires on the steps and looted the building, taking out furniture for barricades, bonfires and so on. When the cops used teargas in an attempt to disperse this crowd, most instead took to the street together with the idea of going on to the supreme court. But cops armed with tear gas and rubber bullets ambushed the march. Fortunately, people in cars and on foot who sympathized with the demonstrators helped them as they retreated, blocking and attacking the cops. The next day, the interim president resigned and a few more have followed suit.

without delegation or hierarchy, a world where the separation between decision and action has disappeared, at least to some extent.

But the context for which the black bloc was developed and in which it has been used is that of mass street demonstrations, often involving attacks against the symbols of the state and capitalism and pitched battles with the police. It was, of course, inevitable that some would start to raise the question of how to better coordinate black bloc activities. Unfortunately, this question has been raised without first dealing with more fundamental questions which would effect it and which I feel should not be ignored or given second place by those seeking to develop a specifically anarchist revolutionary practice. I would assume that very few if any anarchists would say that the defeat of the police in street battles is the central aim of anarchist struggle. Nor, for that matter, is the destruction of as much capitalist property as possible (as enjoyable and potentially useful as such destruction may be). Rather these are specific moments in the struggle that can certainly serve important purposes but that need to reflect the greater aim of an anarchist insurrectional project.

Yet in the articles in Tute Nere and Barricada, the questions raised are purely strategic, questions of immediate effectiveness. The greater question of what it is we are really struggling for is lost. And so the solutions brought up involve an increasing centralization and militarization of the black bloc, an embrace of "tactical" delegation and hierarchy. The writer of "The Communiqué on Tactics and Organization…" in Barricada even goes so far as to talk of "elected tactical facilitators" (emphasis mine) and "anarchist principles of tactical leadership" with no hint of irony. The only aim reflected is that of out-maneuvering the police during demonstrations, as if these demonstrations represented the essence of the anarchist struggle. Putting the ideas of this communiqué into effect would transform the black bloc from a tactic taken up by individuals with those they know and trust into a formal and basically military organization. In my opinion, this would itself constitute

an immediate defeat of our anarchist aims in our own practice here and now regardless of what improvements there might be in black bloc street maneuvers.

As I see it, the central aim of anarchist struggle is the subversion of existence, the reappropriation of life by each of us as individuals, the creation of our relationships on our own terms free of all domination, all hierarchy, all delegation and every chain of command, even those which claim to be merely tactical, and the destruction of everything that prevents or suppresses these possibilities. Rather than examining our practice first and foremost on the level of tactics and strategies, of effectiveness in battle, our first priority should rather be to examine them in terms of whether they indeed reflect and are therefore capable of creating — not just in the future, but also here and now — our aims. Do they reflect in practice the principle of individual self-determination and the collective struggle for individual realization? Military methods involving tactical leadership are founded on chains of command, that is to say on hierarchy and obedience. As such they are in contradiction with the aims of anarchist struggle.

As I see it, the questions those involved with the black bloc need to be asking is: how do we carry out this specific method of struggle in such a way that it reflects our aims? Can this tactic be effective as a specifically anarchist tactic in the context of demonstrations? If not, then should we maybe consider the other areas of our struggle where we can continue to fight in a way where our practice reflects our aim?

The struggle against this order is the place where we can most completely implement the aims of anarchy here and now. If we give ourselves over to the domination of the strategic, to the ideology of efficiency for its own sake, we have lost what is most essential — what is left of our life. Our anarchy becomes just another political program, and not the life we desire to live here and now. I reject the sad and desperate slogan, "By any means necessary", in favor of the principle, "Only by those means that can create the

Rebellion in Argentina

Argentina has been experiencing economic woes for quite some time. Over the past few years, there have been mass demonstrations of the poor and unemployed,, road blockades, battles with police and so on. Already deeply in debt, the Argentine government has been seeking a loan from the IMF which has required it to institute harsh austerity measures, measures that inevitably strike those at the bottom the hardest. In the second week of December, there was a general strike. Over the next week or so, fear of economic collapse led many people to withdraw their money from the bank. So on December 19, the Economy Minister, Domingo, issued a declaration that limited bank withdrawals to $250 a week. Of course, those most affected by this measure were those without credit, without other means to make the purchases needed to feed themselves and their families. The response was immediate.

As soon as people heard about the new measure that Domingo had enacted, road blockades went up all over the country. People began looting supermarkets and other stores, mainly for food. People battled police and attacked banks. In La Plata and Cordoba, the state houses were attacked as well. Of course, the Argentine government declared a state of emergency and outlawed all public gatherings.

On the 20th, both official left and spontaneous demonstrations continued, as did looting and attacks on banks. The unions, whose role of course depends on the continued functioning of the present social order, were afraid to agitate because the situation might "get out of their hands". But the initiative for demonstrations required no formal organization. Those who wanted to gather people simply

project of individual self-realization finding its means to destroy all domination with every tool it hand, transforming life arm in hand.

Neither pacifism, nor militarism, but social insurrection.

world I desire, those means that carry it in their very practice as I carry it in my heart."

Anti-Militarism and Social Insurrection

Of course, as an anarchist, I am opposed to all of the state's wars. If, historically, particular anarchists have supported certain wars (Kropotkin's support of the Allies in World War 1, for example), this has shown a lack of coherence in their analysis and a willingness to allow political and strategic thinking to take precedence over a principled attempt to create the life and world one wants here and now. Wars of the state can never increase freedom since freedom does not simply consist in a quantitative lessening of domination and exploitation (what Kropotkin perceived as the outcome of the defeat of imperialist Germany), but in a qualitative transformation of existence that destroys them, and state wars simply change the power relationships between those who dominate.

So the anarchist opposition to state wars is, in fact, opposition to the types of social relationships that make such war possible. In other wards, it is opposition to militarism in its totality. And militarism is not just war as such. It is a social hierarchy of order givers and order takers. It is obedience, domination and submission. It is the capacity to perceive other human beings as abstractions, mere numbers, death counts. It is, at the same time, the domination of strategic considerations and efficiency for its own sake over life and the willingness to sacrifice oneself for a "Great Cause" that one has been taught to believe in.

Considered in this way, anti-militarism carries within it, not just the opposition to the state's wars, but also a conception of how we wish to carry out our revolutionary struggle against the state and

capital. We are not pacifists. A qualitative transformation of life and relationships capable of destroying the institutions of domination and exploitation will involve a violent upheaval of conditions, a rupture with the present — that is to say a social insurrection. And here and now as well, as we confront these institutions in our lives, destructive attack is a legitimate and necessary response. But to militarize this struggle, to transform it essentially into a question of strategies and tactics, of opposing forces and numbers, is to begin to create within our struggle that which we are trying to destroy. The essence of militarization is, in fact, the essence of the society of the market and the state: quantification, the measuring of all things. The anarchist ideal of the freedom of every individual to fully realize herself in free association with those of his choosing without interference from ruling social institutions or lack of access to all that is necessary to achieve this aim is, in fact, the very opposite of such a measured existence.

Armed struggle is likely to be part of any social insurrection, but this does not require the creation of a military force. Such a formation could even be considered as a sign that the far more significant movement of social subversion is weakening, that the transformation of social relationships has begun to stagnate. From an anarchist perspective, the specialization inherent in the formation of a revolutionary army has to be considered as a contradiction to anarchist principles. If, in the midst of social insurrection, the insurgent people as a whole arm themselves with all they need for their struggle, this would undermine the tendency toward militarization. When we remember that the primary aim is social subversion, the transformation of social relationships, that this is the real strength of the movement because it is in the process of this practice of subversion that we discover our indomitable singularity and that arms are simply a tool among many that we use in this project, then the importance of rejecting militarization should become quite clear. There is no joy in militarism. Armed joy is found in the collective