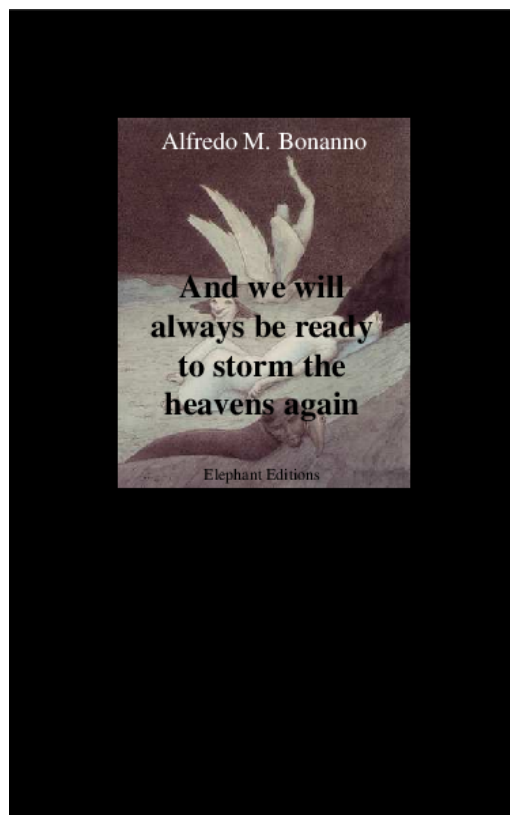


And we will always be ready to storm the heavens again

(Against amnesty)

Alfredo M. Bonanno



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Introduction

The Italian State had taken care to manage the vacuum left by the broken revolutionary movement long before revolutionaries started thinking about it. So anyone who starts shouting that any means are valid in order to free comrades from prison, should not complain afterwards that they find themselves standing alongside docile creatures who are no more than tools in the hands of power.

Recently in the Italian political scene truth and lies have been intermingled as never before, to the point of becoming a spectacle of different positions democratically produced by the government and the institutional opposition aimed at holding the attention of uniformed revolutionaries.

The Naria¹ case is a blatant example and has become an “affair” of State, a symbol of the period following the state of emergency based on recuperation and a generic discovery of human values. The current problems concerning prison and the process of dissociation in course all seem to converge on this painful human event that typifies the barbarism of the mechanisms of judicial procedure and administration which, by preventing the liberation of a man who is slowly dying, demonstrate the homicidal intent of those who manipulate them. Thus the Minister Martinazzoli, head of the prison system Doctor Amato and, of course, the good Pertini (to mention only the best known of them) announced that they were opposed to the judges’ refusal (who are sovereign in the strict application of the law passed by Parliament) to the request made by Naria’s lawyers to have him released. Apart from the human significance of the case, we should be asking ourselves what is behind these fake appeals and debates that are being organised on all sides.

We all know that the State, by approving the new law on pretrial detention, is preparing to change the internal control of the prisons to a more rational form than that which was applied in the special prisons and “death wings”. Barbarism can thus travel along the rails of differentiated internal sociality. The use of the judicial apparatus for exclusively political goals is appearing through the assistance given to anyone who dissociates himself or herself from “terrorism”, and this includes reduction in sentences and “possible openings”. The State is progressively emerging from the tunnel of “the state of emergency” and is regulating new areas of domination in all sectors of society. The period of conquest in the social sectors that had been torn through struggle and were independent of its interference is over; a new form of control is now being prepared. The characteristic of this control is no longer militaristic but will revolve around a strategy of consensus in order to normalize “deviant” behaviour. The State wants to promote and activate new

¹ Giuliano Naria, a worker at the Ansaldo in Genova and militant of Lotta continua was accused in 1976 of having participated in the killing of judge Francesco Coco, claimed by the Red Brigades. He remained in prison for over 9 years during which time he developed anorexia and was released under house arrest in 1985 after pressure by president of the republic, Sandro Pertini, minister of justice Mino Martinazzoli and another two hundred parliamentarians.

He was finally acquitted at the beginning of the nineties and began a career as writer and journalist. He died of cancer in 1997.

social operators and controllers in the microstructures of this country. As well as psychologists and sociologists, one sad figure is conspicuous: the dissociated from antagonism.

This is what the spectacle of political positions revolving around the phenomenon of dissociation is all about (from the document of Rebebbia 51, to that by the 40 signatories of Prima Linea trial in Turin, up to the current documents of the thirteen, still from Turin, or those that came out of the Prima Linea trial in Milan). The “homogenous” sphere of influence is spreading everywhere. It is no longer a question of small groups but of a compact mass inside the prisons taking the road of dissociation, finding advocates of it outside as well as inside prisons, giving rise to a labyrinth of positions where it is difficult to sort things out for oneself.

Everyone is waiting for further information from the State about the role it intends to entrust to these revised-and-corrected subjects, and this is the subject of a political battle in Parliament (there is a current of secular people who have dissociated themselves, for example, Catholic people who have dissociated themselves, then the so-called “total” ones, and so on).

The majority of political prisoners have found themselves drawn into the project of dissociation that the State wants to bring about, and things are the same on the outside. A large part of the revolutionary milieu is insisting on echoing the moves towards dissociation that are coming out of the prisons. Even a few libertarian milieu that don't seem to understand are thoughtlessly claiming to support such a project by showing solidarity with positions adopted by a few prisoners who puffed themselves up with the term “anarchist” thereby enjoying citizenship in our movement which is over saturated with conformity that comes from tolerance.

The question needs to be seriously considered and analysed, especially for the negative consequences to our subversive activity. Adopting positions like this would take the anarchist movement to the field of political opportunism and compromise with power, a terrain dear to the authoritarian elements that use it to justify their own existence and retention.

One part of the anarchist movement has never had anything to do with the question of repression and social control up until now. The interest it is showing at the present time is connected in particular to new positions adopted by certain libertarian prisoners who are dissociating themselves from the practices and motives that made them opponents of the State and Capital in the past.

Such a sudden convergence of interests between these prisoners and this part of the anarchist movement results from parallel views concerning the value that both attribute to liberalism, socialism and democracy.

To be aware of this it is enough to read a number of articles published in several anarchist magazines, which clearly give the impression of choosing to move only in an area of study and cultural intervention.

Starting from a criticism of their own experience of struggle, the dissociated have reached the point of reducing all conflictual relations against the institutions to zero. They are putting themselves right inside a discussion and parliamentary mediation whose intent is to recuperate all social conflict.

And because this self-criticism tries, in its subjectivity, to reassert the value of the individual space that was so neglected before, it follows that it ends up adopting the utopia of modern liberalism, which would like to humanize and socialise State structures by containing them in a sphere of action that is far more restricted than the current sphere. By another road, these prisoners are converging with that part of the movement that hopes to peacefully and in a utopian way empty the State of its functions, acting progressively from within by means of a use of

mass libertarian culture that would be capable of proposing autonomous counter-structures of society. It is a project that would like to realize the liberal maxim of “minimal State intervention in society”. The “seed beneath the snow” that Kropotkin spoke of.

Another part of the anarchist movement, although in a different and much more restrained way, is keeping an attitude of ‘let’s wait-and-see’ concerning dissociation, due to lack of analysis and the inability to make autonomous proposals.

Thus, continual postponement of a discussion of the content just poses the problem again unchanged, confirming dissociationist positions without saying so clearly.

This is the case with proposals that seem a little better than many others, which are driving comrades who are generous enough to support them, such as the amnesty proposal launched by advocates of Scalzone’s theses, taken up by anarchists in the pages of the movement’s papers.

These people are toying with political solutions, but with a minimum of dignity and hostility towards the State. In short, they would like to remain antagonistic but at the same time negotiate the comrades’ liberation when and how they like, but they do not have sufficient revolutionary force to impose them. What can one say about such a position? They would like to “make an omelette without breaking any eggs”.

It must be understood that all the proposals, from those most disposed toward a dialogue with the State to the worthiest ones, actually only differentiate themselves by degree and greater or lesser moral reticence, all of them however are obliged to weigh themselves up in a domain that is within the institutions and sort out the same problems. The former even appeared to possess more political realism, greater practical sense and a more offhand cynicism in the unreserved barter of what they possessed, conscious of the price set by the State for obtaining any benefit whatever.

The pamphlet we are publishing goes into the heart of the events that have been reported up till now, becoming material for a debate inside and outside the anarchist movement, possibly extending to include a part of the revolutionary movement that is wandering in a desperate search for a different road to the one mapped out by power.

Its undoubted topicality — although it has already been published in March of this year in the review *Anarchismo* — can be seen in the judgements and analyses that it presents, which are now no longer intuitions of something emerging at the time in the debate on the prison question, but are a palpable reality constituted of events and decisions that are assailing us close up.

The comrade who wrote this pamphlet is especially preoccupied with retravelling, beyond ideological sanctuaries and commonplaces, all the stages of the routes that brought about the forms of association expressed by the revolutionary movement in recent years, the theoretical debate that refers to it, the instruments that were used and the actions that were carried out. He grasps their merits and their failings, their limits and contradictions, trying at the same time to renew a logical thread capable of getting out of the “laissez-faire” attitude that leaves the door open to repressive actions and state control.

Defining problems is very important today, especially in order not to fall into short term perspectives and compromises that would inevitably lead us into the labyrinth of dissociation, denying us any possibility of direct action to transform reality. Many comrades will find arguments and concepts that they are reasonably familiar with. Not for explaining the past, but to provide instruments for future action by going beyond the causes and effects of the mistakes that were made, with the aim of being able to start again on a concrete basis, one that is more in keeping with the reality we are living in.

**And we will be ready to storm the
heavens again**

We cannot continue to hide our heads in the sand concerning the prison problem, and “what is to be done” in relation to it.

Support and counter-information are all worthwhile, especially those that aimed at involving the various elements of the anarchist movement, but there can be no doubt that this is only the start of the problem.

Having reached this point it seems to me that a few remarks are necessary; I hope the following will interest anarchist comrades and those close to the libertarian movement. Perhaps some comrades who are further away from it as well, but who are aware enough of the contradictions and ambiguities that are going around.

I repeat: this essay considers counter-information concerning repression to be valid and shares the goals and methods involved, but asks the question of what still remains for us to do. Our comrades are in prison and the prison movement is divided into “politicals” and “non-politicals”. Among those who are known as politicals there are the traditional divisions that are threatening to become not different paths of consciousness, but bloody roads of suspicion.

A number of comrades outside have refused a kind of moral blackmail that is coming from inside the prisons, and have ended up throwing the baby out with the bath water. In debates they confirm the totality of their intervention (prison included); in actual fact they are carrying out a process of separation into specialities which is increasingly obvious and is also easier to do.

Other comrades who gather sighs from prison do no more than reflect the moods of the prisoners, which they then present as political analyses. As a result they just add to the confusion and incomprehension.

We must say what can be done, what it is pointless to dream of doing from now on, and what we do not want to do because it is reputed to have an adverse effect, without mincing our words.

Why we are against a struggle for amnesty

There are many ways to get out of prison. And many other ways to get in. Prison is a basic component of any revolutionary confrontation; it cannot be considered an external variable. When it enters the confrontation by forcing thousands of comrades into solitude and silence, the circle can be completed or broken. We must not delude ourselves that the people who hold the keys on power's behalf will toss them into the ditch after they open the doors. Not one of them is inclined to do that for nothing. They will not give an amnesty away. We will have to pay for it dearly.

Their masters are asking too high a price. At the moment we constitute a burden, we are not a threat yet. We are not capable of negotiating from a position of strength, we can only appeal to their sense of pity and democratic order which is offended by such a large number of political prisoners. As well as to the fact that, first and foremost they themselves need to assert that "the war is over", to exorcise the mark of the monster, the one who wanted to be different, who dreamed of the world totally "here and now".

Now they want us on our knees. After the days of Canossa, in the cold and mud, they want the pleasure of "giving" us freedom.

Their laws suppress life sentences in order to free infamous and suspect people in the service of betrayal. These same laws should ratify an amnesty. Everybody out. The game is over. Carry on the struggle with other means. The ones you have used up till now are too boisterous. Please be quiet. Put the class struggle "aside". Forget the revolution.

But what war is over?

For anyone who imagined a war of opposing fronts, mini-armies and microscopic autumn and spring campaigns, the war is over. But the little theatre of politics bears no resemblance to reality.

The great blood sacrifice required of the proletarian class continues uninterrupted. The official massacrers kill systematically. Their executioners shoot in the street. When they don the robe, they add thousands of centuries on to the shoulders of the proletarians responsible of having interfered with sacred property rights.

The self-righteous neo-Ghibelline smiles skeptically at such considerations and invites us to consider the new Prince's kindness, his expansion of wellbeing and the end of the reality of poverty.

But the social war continues; beyond the ideological intrigues of this new race of recuperators, it will still be possible to return to storming the heavens tomorrow.

What defeat are we talking about?

Of their way of imagining the struggle. Obtuse and repetitive, mechanical and deterministic and incapable of a critical perspective. Their way of imagining was not a dream, but a calculation. The book-keeping went wrong. History never repeats itself in the same way. The models of the past, distant or recent, cannot be superimposed at will. But the absence of imagination needs models. It swears by them and lives through them.

The frontal engagement was defeated. The one that intended to match the strength of two armies at war. But their war was not the social war. The two rackets shooting at each other are not necessarily a representative slice of the whole of society; they are only a part of it, often the most marginal and aggravated one.

With many of them it was good faith, and that was why we expected the miracle of the rosary. In the end even the blind hen ends up pecking her little seed. But the blindness was too widespread. The weight of ideology covered everything with a thick fog. Insolence and mental pettiness went hand in hand with the ridiculous claim to represent totality.

What victory were they heading towards?

Towards the conquest of power. The dictatorship of the proletariat. The formation of the proletarian State. And others. Other no less dangerous phantasmagoria were to be found in their gamebag.

We gave them room and critical credibility, because we were always sure of the possibility of an accidental meeting of ways. Even comrades who have a perspective that is ar removed from our own should be supported when they attack. It is certain that we cannot support them now that they are preparing to betray. A correct evaluation of what they are calling failure should include a critique of the positions they held at the start, of what they believed the class war to be, of how they used the instrument of armed struggle and of the way they imagined their relationship with the reality whose transformation they sought. Instead of all this, they prefer to simply admit that they have been defeated; that things were correctly prepared, but that fortune was not on the right side, it preferred to kiss the brow of power.

And any time a voice is raised to begin a critical discourse, they sound the alarm of exceptional circumstances; there are four thousand political prisoners and all of a sudden this fact becomes the only one that matters. In fact, admitting defeat is the first thing that anyone who wants to negotiate surrender must do. We have always said that for us the war would go on, even in the case of victory. That is why we are not interested in their defeat that is on display everywhere.

That is the book-keeping of power.

Let us remember that as soon as Togliatti declared an amnesty to get the fascists out of prison, our comrades started to go inside. Power always comes to an agreement with the counter-power that has failed to bring off a process of power-sharing by alternation, but it can never set up a dialogue with revolutionaries. There is no place for them to agree.

They refer to the critique they were never able to use

The proud and haughty analysts of the proletariat's historical destiny who did not allow people to discuss the correct strategic use of an instrument that was and remains worthwhile (armed struggle), seem to be tormented with sobbing fits in the face of the breakdown of the critique of those who once choose the "critique of arms" with such assurance.

In their passion to destroy what they had built — though without wanting to — and in their haste to appear other than what they basically were, they are rejecting everything; both the positive and negative.

We sense that they are embarrassed by their critical garb; their way of relying on what the recent and less recent past has produced makes no sense, and shows the real inconsistency of their theoretical preoccupations.

Able as far as words are concerned, they will possibly fool a few of the more witless comrades, but I do not believe they will succeed in convincing those who realize what a clownish about-face is about to occur. Supple in the elaboration of words, the same people who, not long ago, fired pointblank at anyone that risked coming up with an hypothesis that was not their own, condemning it as a provocation, are now humble and circumspect in their proposals.

The central system of this so-called critique is intended to demonstrate that, after all, their activity never really existed, or that if it did it was very limited, and that this small part was an excess due to bad education, a collective craving for violence and illusions derived from the old days of '68, etc.

There is an element of truth in all this, but as usual it tends to reject the positive aspect as well as the negative things.

An overall rejection of this kind is not a critique; it is a defence lawyer's plea, the long rigmarole of someone who finds themselves in a difficult situation and wants to get out of it at any cost.

All this should be said clearly, and people shouldn't try to hide their own "desistence" behind a complex "critical analysis".

If certain aspects of the critique, such as that of the one-dimensional sluggishness of the armed model, for example, were borrowed from our positions, other aspects are no more than the tragic about turn of someone who has just said the opposite of what he said before, without giving any valid reasons for doing so. When these people accuse themselves of having "over-simplified" social complexity, they are saying nothing at all; they are simply disavowing, that's all. They do not explain — nor are they able to explain — what "unsimplified" project they are now proposing for future action.

When they speak of a "crisis" in the Marxist and Third Internationalist vulgate, they do not say what theoretical arsenal they will refer to tomorrow when this digression, the "years of lead", has drawn to a close and they obtain "everything in the house" one way or another. The ideology of Popper and Feyerabend perhaps? Or Husserl's critique of existence?

They were unable to form a critique from the start, and are only in a position to yell for the “need” for one today due to pressing circumstances and under the pressure of the other side; but what will emerge is nothing but complete rejection, quite an ominous irrational, cheap way of vomiting on themselves.

The revolutionaries' immediate struggle

In denying the practicability of an amnesty we are not asserting a vague maximalism cut off from reality but on the contrary are trying to redirect the present struggle according to its real possibilities.

It has been asserted that each moment spent in prison is a moment lost from one's life. And this is true, as is known, unfortunately, by someone who was once sentenced to life imprisonment.

But it must also be said that we must force ourselves to go beyond this first level of remark. Otherwise, would we be able to understand what we were expecting from the State when we were all yelling together what it was to its face? Maybe a place in the municipal register?

Yet, in the face of the all too foreseeable repression, each of us reckoned well. We were never like those adventurers of the pistol, fascinated by violence for its own sake, drawn into a process that saw strength in numbers and the inevitability of victory thanks to that strength. There was always a foundation of revolutionary maturity in our revolt. And this was true for each one of us.

This does not make us forget that we need to find the means to reduce the sentences of imprisoned comrades. We have to reach an agreement about which roads are feasible and which are not because they demand too high a price, a far higher one than prison itself.

Genuine revolutionaries have never been opposed to intermediate struggles on principle. They know that these struggles are indispensable in order to gradually bring the project closer to the social conditions that will cause it to bear fruit. It is impossible to propose a directly revolutionary development in a situation of social conflict that only allows us a glimpse of certain aspects of its contradictions, while other aspects, perhaps the most important ones, remain hidden.

That is why we participate in street clashes, counter-information, factory struggles, struggles in the schools and neighbourhoods. We are trying to gradually induce them in the direction of objectives that are much broader than simple demands, information or dissent.

For us, intermediate struggles are not a goal but a means that we use (even rather often) to achieve a different goal: that of inciting people to revolt.

In spite of all this we will not tolerate people coming to terms with power, drawing up an agreement and selling off the imprisoned comrade's freedom outright.

We disagree, because a negotiation like this would not be an intermediate struggle but the beginning of the end; it would be a goal in its own right: the comrades' freedom paid for with other comrades' freedom. Everybody (or almost everybody) out of prison, but stripped of everything, their revolutionary spirit first of all, their dignity and their human worth afterwards.

It is not true — as some have said — that today's agreement would be the prelude to a continuation of tomorrow's struggles. By accepting the agreement today, tomorrow we might perhaps at best be able to struggle inside the ghetto where power has parked us. The ghetto of people who have suffered failure, defeat and surrender. It is not true — as some have said — that if we do not bargain this surrender right away, tomorrow's struggles will be condemned to a maniacal repetition of the model of armed struggle that we have already seen.

Who could have such a bloody stupid thing in mind?

Future struggles will be quite different if we keep our mistakes and the positive things we have done in mind. If were to gamble everything on unconditional surrender our past would be reduced to oleographic reproductions for use and consumption by the next century's bourgeoisie, a cheap thrill in their parlours.

The wretched prospect of collaboration

They are appealing to us to reflect and be reasonable.

They are asking us to stop being the usual bad boys and understand the situation. They are inviting us to collaborate.

On one side (that of power), they are waiting with open arms, even if the price of negotiation is exorbitant.

On the other (that of the imaginary counter-power), the arms are no less open, and they are not even trying to get a discount. Biological urgency is transformed into high priority fact. The four thousand companions' physical and mental solitude is a mountain on our chests, but we cannot shift it by one millimetre. We are not unyielding in error, we are unyielding in critical appraisal.

We do not want to collaborate because we believe in our ideas and our capacity to transform reality; it is not because we believe in what we have been that we do not believe that a modification is possible. We are not besotted worshipers of a model considered to be the truth. Even less are we collaborationists, who base their convictions on a critique drawn up in the rooms of the Minister of the Interior.

Collaborating means surrendering to the enemy outright; they are not proposing an alternative so as to displace the struggle elsewhere. There will never be an "elsewhere" for the collaborators. They will always carry their past with them, wrapped up in the shit of their present.

Their reasoning is in crisis

Fierce rationalists, they are now in crisis. The list the stalinist Lukacs produced to make his peace with philosophy (denunciation of Nietzsche and Stirner) was not enough for them. Now they have run back into Spinoza's arms, and even worse, to Husserl's.

They were priests practically from the start. Now they are displaying the radical and possibilist behaviour of someone who has discovered that the crisis is the (apparently monolithic) other side of consciousness. They are throwing themselves headlong into perplexity in the same way as they once threw themselves headlong into certainty.

Now they want to "use" politics. Previously they let themselves be used by it. For them the crisis followed military defeat. Like a good accountant who can no longer get the books to balance because someone has subtracted from them – by force.

Thus, the crisis becomes an alibi rather than an opportunity. A camouflage for the tumours of their own idiocy, not an opening on to the diverse and the creative. They thrash about like cats chasing their own tails around the problem of the cause of the crisis and how to get out of it. they do not realise that there never was a crisis; they just saw themselves, according to the circumstances, in different distorting mirrors: yesterday they thought they were beautiful and strong, now they think they are stupid and weak, snivelling and beaten.

What they were and what they really are, they are finding very difficult to understand.

What they never understood

They never did have any imagination. The framework of their existence was cramped and limited. Memory repeated to infinity.

The banality of pulsations of victory and defeat. Really existing socialism as communism and freedom. The inner destiny of disgrace transformed into a radiant sign of glory. Not confusion, but sadness and the police State.

They did not understand everything that could be liberating in an attack and repeated it as though it were a classical piece, under the gaze of directors who were strict and respectful of formality.

Subversion always uses the same roads; it chooses the same objectives more than once but expands and opens out towards varied horizons. It does not seek to expand through the magic of the organs of information: it is itself expansion. It grows with the growth of the subversive phenomenon; if the opposite happens it reduces itself, withdraws into itself and anticipates our interventions. It doesn't cry out at the scandal of history, doesn't fall down submissive at the oppressor's feet, doesn't talk about crisis and doesn't wink at collaboration.

They didn't understand that a critique develops when people advance in times of growth and development. If in this phase you only harbour illusions, then in the following phase, when you pay for the mistakes that have been made, you are no longer in a position to make "a critique"; at best you can recite a "mea culpa".

The real movement is not in the prisons

They always made the mistake of looking for the privileged interlocutor in this or that part of reality. Today the sub-proletariat, yesterday the factory worker; between today and yesterday the working masses, and tomorrow the political prisoner.

Once again, their myopia puts them out of the game. It cuts them off from reality. So it is not worth the trouble to be crueller, more unyielding and more of a butcher of corpses and proclamations than others have been in history. The endless night is full of such things.

Imprisoned comrades cannot constitute a privileged point of reference. They cannot provide the most advanced indication of the struggle. They are in a sacrificial space, in a state of continuous physical and psychological torture. They are a symbol of the class confrontation. They are not the class confrontation itself.

We are not Christians. The testimony of some of us, even of the dead comrades, does not lead us to thoughts that are different to symbolic ones. In spite of this, we are afflicted neither with insensitivity to these comrades or the mental breakdown of attaching oneself to a symbol. These are all false problems.

We have our banner, but we do not take an oath on it.

We have our dreams, our hopes, our desires and our loves, but we do not wrap them all up into a unilateral vision of life.

Having said all this, we are not eclectics or possibilists for all that. Our harshness comes from reason and from the heart.

Sometimes the reasons of the heart prevail and at others that of the mind; but this is no cause for us to feel guilty or to believe that we have betrayed ourselves and our principles.

Our feelings for our imprisoned comrades cannot make us shut our eyes to the reality that they are indeed comrades in prison, comrades living in conditions of privation and isolation.

If we want to liberate them, we must start from something else, from the real movement. If we start from them and their specificity we will be going about nailing them – in one way or another – to their prison situation, however just the success of our initiative might be (even the success of a possible liberation).

It will be the real movement, which is outside, to produce their liberation; the effort of struggle that we, as a specific movement, will be able to develop by connecting the thousands (or hundreds, or even a few tens) of threads that tie the specific movement and the real movement together.

If the opposite happens, there will be a thousand years of loneliness for everyone.

There cannot be any crisis of imagination for someone who never had any imagination

Only now has a horrible suspicion dawned on them: that the culture whose bearers they were and the practice they had begun to bring about were incompatible. On the one hand the dream of something, and on the other, something without the dream.

The leap should have been made with the imagination; the leap toward the heaven of the impossible, of the extraordinarily other, something that was always alien to them anyway.

Nevertheless they now see that, on the contrary, the compatibility actually existed and that it was simply heinous. Everybody chooses his own means, and they fit him like a glove; they belong to their inventive ability for finding agreeable arrangements and directions, prospects and orientations towards ends that are always varied. The stifling of one's means is one of the most horrible ways to die.

For the travelling salesman of death, only end-of-the-year (or end-of-“campaign”) vacations are allowed. As a general rule, he has to operate the guillotine. The noise of the falling blade ends up marking the moments of his day. After a while, one cannot do without it.

The project is complete. The beginning meets the end.

A new beginning and a new end appear, always identical and repetitive. The culture that it promoted is in turn promoted to the level of a promotional act.

Where is the corpse of imagination? There is not even a hint of anything imaginative here.

The stereotype of the armed party

The party acts as a conveyor belt between the organised minority to the disorganised proletariat. In the scatological view of events, the small destructive acts of today mimic the apocalypse.

The party anticipates, classifies, executes, transforms and repeats. The last phase of this repetition always occurs in the same way.

The party is the most organic one-dimensional project you can find. Nothing escapes its administrative chart; anything can be included, depending on the circumstances. This extreme “proficiency” makes it appear as a mini-State in formation, a current tumour of the great and widespread disease that is State politics.

Class war and leninist centralism

The orientation given to class disturbances (in the classified imagination) makes the confrontation seem like a military war. As a result the infinitely complex events of social conflict are reduced and simplified and are completely hidden under feats of arms.

Peripheral spontaneity, necessary at the outset, is an army that is recruited haphazardly and does not receive regular material from any source at all, and the very fact of having to “make arrangements” to procure arms becomes a negative limit to be overcome as quickly as possible. The progression is necessarily rapid. Whoever stops is lost. The enemy equips for counter-guerrilla operations. The guerrilla must equip himself, change himself into a soldier.

The orientation of interventions, political decisions, intermittent campaigns, objectives, possible consequences and so many other things are filtered and provided to various levels by the centralised structure. Preliminary discussions, debates, proposals and analyses are selected to reach the summit in a simplified form, ready to be transformed into a new proposal for action, whose development always starts from the centre.

After all, it is a democratic army.

The reduction of class war to a mere military confrontation carries in it the logical conclusion that, if we undergo a military defeat on this terrain, the class war ceases to exist as such.

Here we come to the not just theoretical but practical absurdity that in Italy today, after the defeat of the fighting organisations, there is no longer an actual class war, and that it is in everybody’s interest (the State’s first of all), to negotiate a surrender in order to avoid the development, or the continued development, of a process of conflict that is absolutely nonexistent and completely useless, as well as dangerous for all of us.

The marginality of the armed parties in relation to the class war

It is easy to see that armed structures, especially those that take the form of a party, are always marginal in relation to the class war. Not that they are foreign to it; they are simply marginal.

The course of the class confrontation has its effect on them; it pushes them to withdraw into themselves or to open up according to situations of greater or lesser social tension. But all this has very narrow limits. A representative relationship is never established, with the exception of very small marginal minorities or groups with great political sensitivity.

It is clear that these phenomena are very important, and it is also clear that the State does everything it can to recuperate them into a “terrorist” logic that will present them as exceptional actions carried out by madmen, deranged criminals or secret service agents.

In this case, the road to take is the one that extends towards the people’s consciousness, by producing actions and clarifications that affect and include people without immobilizing them in spectacular fixity.

Well, by its very nature the party occurs in the form of a filter, which repels people by isolating them within a rigid, amorphous social status: worker, housewife, employee, middle management executive, student, etc. It is like a sieve, which absorbs some of these people, but only after an initiatory acceptance of an ideological type. Politics is an instrument of selection. In this way a route towards quantitative growth is only feasible through the party’s administrative chart. Action and clarification are handed over to pedagogical mechanisms that are mistakenly thought to be automatic. Later, the State carefully destroys even the tiny reflexes of machinery like this (when it exists).

What they can reject

People's conditioned reflexes. Induced sympathy. Everything that is let through the tight net of State censorship.

The support people give to someone who fought the good fight, even if it was fought with methods that not everyone agrees with.

Not much, in order to have an influence in and on the revolutionary process as it progresses. The real movement – which never loses anything – might assert itself there, but this “very little” must be contributed, inserted in a critical way and consolidated behind the immense black curtain that power was able to place in front of people's critical vision. Starting with the word “terrorism”.

What is happening, on the other hand: they think they are at the centre of an experience that is very different to anything that was written in the newspapers or declared in the courts. They are repeating the official truth as though it is a given one. They are declaring that the war is over.

In this way, even the little bit that remained of what is positive and revolutionary is eradicated.

What they can look forward to in the future

Absolutely nothing. The irreversible process of the real movement will firmly expel them as collaborationists. No dialectical invention can give credibility to the decision they are making today or to their neo-contractualism, which appears in a thousand ways behind the complicated analyses of these wordsmiths.

They can go back to their old outline. In times that we hope will be better, these guardians of the temple, calculators of proletarian remembrance, will be able to act out the old and meagre mistake yet again.

It has been done in the past; it will surely be done in the future. There are always so many worthy citizens who want nothing more than something to believe in.

But all this has little to do with revolution.

An instrument in the hands of the real movement

Basically, we all act and live on the basis of our convictions — real or mistaken — but most of the time we are not in a position to anticipate the consequences of our actions and our lives. In this sense, even the preachers of partyist psalms get their share. An accumulated baggage of experience and struggle, available to be used or spread. It cannot be guarded in the vaults of history. We must take it now, quickly, to the extreme consequence. If the opposite happens, even the conscious instruments of the revolution will end up getting rusty.

Incidentally, this proves the uselessness of decisions like the ones that have been made so confidently at the present time: collaboration is always the act of a part, or rather of the party. The reality of the struggle does not collaborate. It can use men and methods as its instruments, reject them and set them aside afterwards in places of solitude and ruthless thinking. But all this will not deflect the course of the social confrontation by one millimetre. Other things set the outcome in action; other levels of consciousness, other participations and other objective modifications. And in the verification of these “other things”, the insignificance of already rusted instruments will cease in spite of themselves.

Very few comrades

Only a few will be present at the crossroads of decision-making. Not due to their refusal to collaborate, but due to their critique of the mistakes and limitations of past actions.

Construction is a relational act; it does not tolerate addition and subtraction. Balance sheets are for accountants.

Anyone who deluded himself about the possibility of suppressing capitalist exploitation — on the spot — through a military decision must now yield to the fact that such mythology can only come about if it takes shape in a genuine and suitable spreading of the confrontation. The prairie burns completely if the wind is blowing in the right direction, and the wind is not always at our command. Now, someone who fails to understand this might well refuse to collaborate, but he will remain cut off from tomorrow's struggles; a caryatid held in place, a self-praise of immutability in both good and in evil.

Beyond the party

The libertarian armed struggle, anarchic, popular and insurrectional, is beyond the party. At the moment of retreat, when they are already preparing to consign arms and baggage to those they recognise as victors, they resolutely assert the impossibility of this kind of struggle.

It is true that those who lived through the experience of the armed struggle from inside the armed party are not aware of this possibility. But it is also true that the initial causes that blocked timely operational research in this direction were of an ideological nature, not strategic or tactical. It was the spirit of old fashioned Bolshevism that imposed the plan of Iskra and the Winter Palace. Not the certainty of the impossibility of a different method of libertarian guerrilla struggle.

Now, at a time of collaboration for a plate of lentils it is senseless to expect critical second thoughts. With them, it may even be a question of a remnant of goodwill to want to portray the solution of defeat as the only possibility. How to begin again? On what basis? That of an unknown program and method? Often loathed or ridiculed? Head towards what perspective?

With what credibility? Admit defeat, not of a military project (that would just be common tautology), but of a political project? It would be better to bring oneself to collaborate in order to save what can be saved, and start again from the beginning tomorrow, perhaps even repeating the same course of action.

The anarchist project

We have spoken many times of the way anarchists consider armed struggle. We did this in unsuspecting times, while everyone was marching ahead into the messy space of big spectacular actions which were systematically ground up by the news media for consumption by the populace.

A rejection of vertical structures, unstructured cooperation between different fields of activity, coordination within the limits of security, self-sufficiency of groups, choice of small objectives, comprehensibility of these objectives, continuity of intervention, progressive radicalisation in the social field, self-information, propaganda activity, critical clarification, circulation of ideas within the movement, intermediate struggles, the connection between this phase and the following insurrectionary phase, attempts and results of individual actions tied together by a logical thread, equal importance of every level of the struggle, the many-sidedness of the military dimension as such, the bipolar aspects of organised structures, the ability to destructure at any time, critique of professionalism, critique of superficiality, critique of “efficiency-for-its-own-sake”, critique of technological economism and the critique of arms.

The insurrectional opening

Participating along with people, the exploited in general, in intermediate struggles: for housing, against war, against missiles, against nuclear power stations, for jobs, for the defence of wages, for the right to health, against repression, against prison, etc.

And then using our organisational strength to gradually urge these struggles still further ahead toward a possible insurrectional opening.

In practice, the development of the real movement is a process of violent transformation of class confrontation

It is not certain that the real movement can grow indefinitely through intermediate struggles. If it were so it would mean that anarcho-syndicalism would be the best solution, given that it provides for both a transposition of the structures of struggle into tomorrow's society, and its own transformation into a constituent structure of the new social order.

The important thing is that intermediate struggles reach a violent outcome, a breaking point, an essential line beyond which recuperation is no longer possible, except in minimal and therefore insignificant proportions. But to achieve this result the process of violent transformation must be as widespread as possible. Not in the sense that it must inevitably start from a broad mass movement, one that is violent and denies immediate and tangible results, but in the sense that it must contain, even when it has a minimal size at the beginning, the idea and intention of developing as mass violence. If the opposite happens, the role of the specific movement becomes purely symbolic, withdrawn into itself, only capable of satisfying (up to a certain point) the components of the minority that constitutes it (or if you prefer, of the racket).

The ethical value of violence

Discussions on violence are meaningful from this point of view alone. Certainly not from that of someone who talks about life as an absolute value. As far as I am concerned, the lives of the exploiters and their servants are not worth a cent. And making distinctions — as some already have done — between the death of a Moro and that of a Ramelli seems, in my view, to be the specious prelude to an anaemic discussion.

It is never possible to balance liberatory violence with the conditions of the conflict. The process of liberation is excessive by nature. In the direction of over-abundance or in that of deficiency. Where have we ever seen a popular insurrection hit the bulls-eye, clearly distinguishing the enemies to kill? It is the blow of the tiger's claws that rips and does not make distinctions.

Certainly, an organised minority is not the insurgent people. So it distinguishes. It has to. But even in the necessary prudence that it imposes on itself, it finds both its own limits and the direction of a possible opening. In this sense it is revolutionary; it is an experience in vitro, and can therefore turn into a laughable storm in a teacup.

We should not make distinctions according to the action's decipherability. The two things are not separate if you like, but they are different. The action's decipherability is different from what the minority can accomplish by itself, since it remains tied to the big news media, and therefore to the distortions of power. Reproducibility is something intrinsic to the action itself. To distort it, power must hush it up, because even in the most risky commentaries the action itself — naked and raw — cannot be questioned.

This difficult problem can be solved as follows. An attack against the class enemy is always justified. The life of someone who oppresses others and prevents them from living is not worth a cent. This attack can be carried out in a generalised manner then, with a massive intervention from people, so it cannot be measured in relation to the confrontation's real conditions: the result is always disharmonious, excessive or reductive. This is the maximal dimension of revolutionary violence, which is simultaneously creative and destructive. On the other hand, in a minoritarian dimension, we always try to measure the blow and adapt it to the real limitations of the confrontation. We all think we have a precise idea of the level of class conflict, and therefore we set solutions and limits. But in practice, it is decipherability that guides us. We are pedagogues in search of disciples. It is precisely reproducibility that should be the criterion for measuring minority violence, so that it develops from a minoritarian phenomenon into the generalised one it should be.

The remainder is just priestly chatter.

The simplifying project of the party

Among other things, there is an illusion that the party can simplify the model used to construct action. Decipherability is therefore entrusted to the propaganda organs, which secrete horrible junk known as proclamations, programs or communiques.

Language can be standardised like actions. Everything is repeated. Everything becomes familiar. The broad mass of people acquire this familiarity through power's interpretations. The result is prefabricated models of action. The others help and are satisfied with thrills of risk on credit. The model becomes a success, like a thriller or a horror film. But it doesn't occur to anybody to cut a man to pieces in his own bathtub to see how it's done. People prefer to see it done at the movies.

It is not a question of fear of involvement. Many people take far greater risks with a car or a syringe. It is a question of distance. Of a romantic deformation of reality. Of well-constructed glorifications surrounding liberatory practices that have nothing at all exceptional about them. Preclusions, often of religious origins, that people may never completely get beyond.

The party claims to clarify all of this from the outside, to construct a pre-packaged model of reproducibility. It does not realize that in doing this, it does the same job as the State. Offering false desires. The two poles meet through their distance from the real scope of liberatory violence. Power and counter-power march alongside each other and support each other.

What communication are they talking about?

The example's inflammatory effect should have spread by the marvel of distribution But the action remained indecipherable.

There wasn't much initiative in this direction. The rest had to be done by the big news media.

But what can they really communicate, these transmitters of the developing power's ideology? Exactly what power wants them to? But isn't the party itself a mini-power in the making? And this reasoning actually worked, at least at the start.

Power gave an exaggerated (hence deformed) image of the real attack on the enemy. But that was in keeping with its goal of digging an ever-deeper ditch, of transforming the minute reality that was developing at the time into a general illusory theatre of death, with its spectators in their paid seats and convenient atmosphere of silence and insecurity; in short, all the elements of bourgeois drama were there. When from that point on the distance became huge, the closing in became complete: then came the interruption. In unbridled fantasy, mysterious action continued inordinately. A cross between the Bonnot gang and Jack the Ripper.

And the timid attempts at generalisation? The mass illegality that stammered here and there? The small applications of sabotage? The thousand fires, the hundreds of anonymous "knee-cappers", the broken windows, the really proletarian lootings? All of that was swept aside. Trifles for charity ladies. Toys for deviant children. Small peripheral scenes.

At the centre (but what centre) the great climatic scene was repeated, with the State and the counter-State co-producing.

Notwithstanding, in this great production, with all its limitations, there were the seeds of both the most absurd degeneration and its dissemination throughout the country. It was necessary to shut up the ever more burdensome militarism, the terrifying discourse from before and the no less terrifying illusions of dazzling actions.

But to do that, a real critique would be necessary; not a critique in words alone. A test in the field, not on the tables of the anatomy institutes. A death is a death, no matter how you look at it. One must get there first, build along parallel lines, show people; not restrict oneself to pointing out cracks and fissures that no one wants to accept in practice.

The anarchist relationship between the active minority and the real movement

Neither a point of reference nor a safe for a memory that the movement manages very well itself. Neither planners of strategies and methods, nor a recycling station. Nonetheless, an indispensable precondition of the revolutionary project. In the magical intervention of a thousand conditions, waiting becomes unbearable and often useless.

We must push and create the minimal conditions so that the event can be confirmed, so that the magic of an action can become general and spread like a wave in the water. But with our minds and our eyes wide open. With a project. With the indispensable means.

But the project and the means must also not become the most important thing, the only thing that we are struggling for.

Its essentialness can never turn into exclusive rights. We must even know how to let everything fail. Not at first, while we are waiting for the event to be confirmed, but afterwards, if the indispensable, necessary (certainly minimal) conditions do not appear. Not to self-reproduce because we have to go on living.

We are different from all that. We are going much farther; that is why we can always start all over again.

They are exclusively this. A theorem that grows on itself.

A monstrous and complicated embroil of tautologies.

The ideology of separate surrender

And the others? From the closest to the furthest away. From the sub-proletariat that inspired so much shrillness close up, in the same cage, but a thousand miles away because of its own real reasons for contestation. To the proletariat in general, the mythical one, but also the real one, the one that wakes up early in the morning, that produces, the one that is massacred with the regularity of a chronometre, the one that got fewer serenades but many more theories, all equally useless in any case. There is nothing we can do about that. Surrender is separate.

It makes no difference that we are all supposed to carry the struggle forward together. Now that the vanguards have been captured by the enemy. At least we can say that most of the proletarian army spared itself a similar fate. It keeps its mouth shut and continues to let itself be exploited. Well, to the devil with it. And along with it the others who claim to be building their racket, those who say they are ready for political discussion but prove inconsistent later, and who do not take orders or digest theory. Short-term alliances that are not really worth much. And now, let's go it alone: let's come to terms with the State and leave the others in their galley (or in the factory) if that's what they want. A thousand years of solitude, but only for them. After all, they are ingrates.

Hell is paved with this kind of reasoning. They're all ready and willing to sacrifice themselves, but they all expect to be paid. From Saint Paul onwards, the precondition is clearly stated: wages and slavery. Concealed in this so-called reasoning is the idea that the proletariat (above or below) should serve as a manoeuvrable mass, an assault force led and enlightened by the combatant party in arms. You could die laughing.

However, when they experienced this in the past, it was as something serious, something sadly disarming.

For them, the level of confrontation is determined by the amount of firepower they have succeeded in mobilising.

They do not understand that though the proletariat left them alone when they attacked Moro and his escort (and how could they ever have intervened?), they were the ones who left the proletariat alone in its thousand small everyday actions. In its continual confrontation. In its suffering. In the collapse of its dreams and hopes. In the tragicomedy that it is forced to see tirelessly repeated by the various trade unionists, party functionaries, bosses and bosses' servants, etc.

If we come to the conclusion that the difficulty of joining the proletariat in this infinite series of armed confrontations (and why must the arms always be the kind manufactured by industries such as Breda?), we are forced to conclude that the armed party must necessarily have been alone in its attacks on one or a hundred exploiters. Not only in the physical sense, because that is of secondary importance, but in the political sense, in the revolutionary sense, in the sense of a project of changing the world.

“Putting aside” as betrayal

Let's stop for a moment and think. Each of us with yesterday's ideas, but in today's conditions. To solve the problem, we must put class confrontation aside and put forward the hypothesis that a moment of idyllic suspension is possible. Ourselves inside, the others somewhere else, in a place that is no place at all.

New words for behaviour as old as the world: betrayal.

Someone is not a traitor because he wants critical thinking, an examination of mistakes and a correct repositioning of future actions. He is a traitor when he withdraws into a prison much colder and more terrifying than the worst Benthamite constructions.

He is a traitor when he puts barriers between us and someone who lived through the same experiences as us, who ate the same bread and made the same mistakes. When he withdraws from the objective that he set for himself, leaving it fixed and unchanging, and looks for a basin to wash his hands in.

Once the traitor gave a kiss on the cheek. Today's traitor has read Lakatos and plays on the ambiguity of words for his remission. He knows that Husserl spoke of a “suspension of judgement” as a methodological step toward a knowledge of reality. But this cold realism is not even that of the East, which had a peasant and rustic heaviness, but that of the West, which is refined, having gone through Louvain. Come off it: in treason, the German professor and the Russian peasant resemble each other a great deal, while both of them have made careers in the Party. Each one uses the means that suits him best; the result is the same.

There are those who cross over: they talk quickly and negotiate directly at the source. There are others who are slower and take longer, involving all kinds of complicated concepts before finally reaching an agreement through intermediaries.

It is the same filth.

All rats come back to the political boat sooner or later

A step backwards is always a political pact. A step forward might even be mistaken, but it opens out to the social. At times marginally or even on a smaller scale; but what matters is the orientation, the direction of the journey. Rats can throw themselves into the sea to drown, but with a little luck they might find the ship's gangplank. Their instinct saves them.

Negotiation is a political moment: it is a war in a teacup. Like a cease-fire. Like a frontal attack and a weakening of class conflict. That too is politics. The art of making arrangements while others do something that we should have done ourselves. This is why rats are not moles.

Reducing the demand to its realistic minimum, they offer themselves as bearers of an alternative: getting four thousand comrades out of prison. The importance of the result strains to conceal the underhandedness of the procedure. The struggle can only be political. A platform of demands, nothing unacceptable; a limited process of liberation, which they present as the only possible solution to the most complex problem of the liberatory process. Basically, this is the usual game of super-realist politicians. Reforms can be achieved immediately; the revolution can not. Utopia disturbs the master's dreams and the reformist dialogue of conciliation. Their current anguish consists of the existence of four thousand political prisoners in Italy, who are more or less in contact with a mass of thirty-five thousand so-called "common-law" prisoners. Maybe if the former were released, satisfactory schools for social re-education could be organized: a kind of part-time post-prison environment. Utopia for utopia; one good thing deserves another.

There are no limits to the fantasy of "little by little".

Back when these rats were screaming like eagles, talk like this would have been settled with guns. But those were other times. Now that the candle has burned out, the candelabra has also been lost.

The uncritical abandonment of militarism

Not even a signal. Cease-fire and that's that! We have to go home because the war is over.

But who and what was defeated? Certainly not the real movement, which is continuing its underground process. Certainly not a method that can suffer neither defeat nor victory. A state of mind, yes; that was defeated.

And not just on the terrain of armed struggle.

But critiques of this mentality are superficial and few.

And they have little to say about monolithic militarism.

The old caryatids and the old arguments

Here is why there is always a risk of the old arguments reappearing. Preferably in a new guise. Today we can see several travesties of the old reformist behaviour, a kind of appeal to all those who want to give the movement a new opportunity to breathe. Tomorrow we will see a reappearance of the old leninist centralism. There are no limits to indiscretion.

The theory of escape and the theory of resistance

In regard to revolutionary critique, surrender and ultra-implacability are the same thing. This affirmation should not come as a surprise. We are here to examine painful problems, not to gloss over areas of agreement. What we need is not a romanticism of form or fidelity to our strategic choices. We need to move forward. That is why we don't want to run. Not because we think that everything has been done as it should have been, and that everything is fine in this best of all possible worlds.

Running means hiding in the territory of the rear-guard, where the revolution is not just denied in words, but fought in real terms. The alternative to civil disobedience, reformism, pacifism and demonstrations that are an end in themselves is nothing but surrender, dissociation, alienation and a refusal to continue the struggle. Appealing to the law, to parliament and the intermediaries of political traffic whose meaning has been understood long since, means turning one's coat: betrayal.

But stopping at the old choices, reaffirming the indisputable validity of the method of the armed party and the ongoing belief in minoritarian militarism is also a kind of running away; it is precisely a running away from one's critical responsibilities.

Perhaps this way is more inviting; it makes for less mouthing off and invites sincere expressions of solidarity, but one doesn't construct revolutionary conditions with moods.

Changing in order to go forward

So we need a critique. What we need are methods of involvement in which we can use our experience of past struggles to good advantage. In this way, it is possible to understand the armed struggle of the future. As a project in itself, arising from a specific organisation, the armed struggle doesn't even retain the minimal driving possibility that the experience of its beginnings – in the conditions of advanced capitalism – might lead us to expect.

We must go forward. The specific organisation is good.

It is not an instrument that can be replaced, for it is a direct expression of the specific movement: it is what an objectivisation of revolutionary consciousness succeeds in giving that can immediately be put to use. But it must be directed exclusively toward involvement. Always exactly one step ahead relative to the masses' degree of combativeness, on specific terrain where this fighting spirit appears, even in the slightest degree, and by limiting our activity to this capacity of the masses. Not advancing in all directions, thereby assuming a significance and roles that are not relevant to the specific organisation.

In this sense there is still much to be done. In fact, we must struggle on two fronts. On the one hand, against the militaristic mentality that cannot imagine a specific organisation so well-defined and limited. On the other, against a reformist mentality that mistrusts even this small step forward, which the specific organisation must accomplish, interpreting it in terms of dishonesty and vanguardism.

In an attempt to clarify these problems, we have talked about insurrection.

In the proposal of amnesty, there is a refusal to go forward

There can be no solution to the problem within the capitalist structure. Prisons must disappear in totally and decisively. We cannot discuss partial liberation.

Indeed, we can impose intolerable conditions on the State in such a way that it produces a partial solution to the problem by itself. This is not a result of post-revolutionary negotiation but of a moment of conflict. Surrender must come from the State. We don't delude ourselves about the possibility of a total surrender; at most, it is or will be a way of concluding a pact. That, yes. That is possible. And imposing this pact must be the act of the real movement: class confrontation is not decided by the minority who attach themselves to the reformist fringe, always ready to exploit every available opportunity to continue their conquest of power.

We have no obligation to, nor should we demand, an amnesty for the four thousand political prisoners. We must demand (or impose?) the abolition of prison for all, a definitive end to the concept of "prisoner". It is in the process of a struggle to impose this method of "everything now" that the State might decide to make a pact and conclude some legal antic that could be called an amnesty, social work or anything else.

It will be up to us — on the basis of an evaluation of the conflict's conditions — to accept it or not. This is why the pure and simple proposal of an amnesty hides the desire to not advance.

The enormous moral pressure of the four thousand bodies who are practically dying in solitude, cannot make us close our eyes to the obvious. By choosing to make a pact and negotiate with the State, we will never succeed in really getting them out of there. We would release four thousand simulacra of men and women, who would fall into a dimension in which they would just find the bars of another prison: the prison of their uselessness, their discouragement, their feelings of being constantly "somewhere else", in the space in which they left their identity as revolutionaries.

The disgusting thesis that was proposed, that of negotiating the liberation of our comrades before continuing the struggle, must be reversed by the much more logical and meaningful affirmation of starting the struggle again in order to be able to force the liberation of the comrades. This resumption must not be an unhealthy repetition of monolithic models of the armed party, but a critical development in another direction.

The illusion of reducing the state to its minimal repressive coefficient

“Taking a step backwards in order to jump better” is an old French proverb that is not adaptable to class confrontation.

Whoever withdraws is finished. The State doesn't permit stumbling.

Repression does not diminish when revolutionary action slows; it simply transforms itself. It becomes more considerate and penetrating. It insinuates itself in the social-democratic way and forces a search for consensus with the cop's club. It reestablishes the formalities of the legal State. After all, those who make the laws always manipulate them as they please.

By hesitating over the proper course to take, we make things easy for the repression. We concede to it an unhoped-for breathing space. No oppressive method can last for a long time.

No special law can be institutionalised indefinitely. Sooner or later, consensus makes itself felt. Then they must return to normality. The State is aware of this necessity in advance. And it speaks to the most reasonable among us. It tries to persuade.

It promises nothing, but it does not dissuade either. It gives us glimpses. Meanwhile it changes the direction of repression.

It insinuates itself with helpfulness at the welfare office, promises of work and reformist projects. It is impossible to reduce the State to its minimal repressive coefficient. We can dismantle the attack, and thus allow the repressive organism to give itself a social-democratic facade; we can take as many steps backward as power gives itself brushstrokes to whitewash and re-establish its credibility.

They want to obtain a sphere of action within the State, to create a more important ghetto within it to compensate for the small ghetto they have now. In this sense, they claim to represent not so much a project — which would be quite incredible, given their irrelevance in the overall scheme of things — as an illusion, a mirage that has nothing to do with the situation of the real movement. Of course, the claim is carefully presented, but it also hides the pretence of being a step forward, although it puts on the appearance of a working hypothesis.

The substance does not change: a heritage is being auctioned off. We intend to continue to prevent this clearance sale. Not because we think that this heritage is absolutely indispensable for the development of the real movement, but because in the first place, its sale will not produce any “liberation”, and then because we must examine this very heritage in a critical light. By selling it wholesale, all future critiques would make no sense and just be a resume of a ridiculous fetish.

Communities of the future will be communities of struggle, so they cannot result from political negotiation

Someone who never left his political shell now claims to be starting off on a long journey. He is leaving an old mentality behind and acquiring a new one. They want to change everything because everything has stayed the same as before. If war was the continuation of politics by other means (but what means?), now politics must be the continuation of war by other means. How many people fell into this imbroglio? Really, there is no end to human naivety. Each one thinks he is shrewder than the rest, and this is why we systematically scamper in all directions.

They were always political people. They declared that they wanted to take the war to the “heart of the State”; now they want to negotiate peace and surrender. All this could hardly be more normal.

But the thousands of comrades who took part in the struggle with all its mistakes and limitations, that enormous pulsation of hope, dreams, joy, unsatisfied desires, the monster with a thousand heads and arms that could really shake the obscene universe of the bosses, really existed; it was all encapsulated within a project, with several variants nonetheless, but it was a unique and tragically mistaken project.

Now a large part of that marvelous pulsation is in chains.

If we want to build the project of tomorrow together, we must create the possibility of a specific movement that is capable of encountering the real movement in places and moods where the latter’s pulse becomes perceptible to the former.

What do you think, could something like this ever come out of negotiation with the State?

A new guarantee as an imbroglio

They are asking the State for a space where they can deploy what they have left. The repressive and productive mechanism must concede a pause equal and inverse to that of someone who — by generous concession finds himself on his knees and — is inclined to grant one to the State.

The specific movement must be reborn in this space, with the essential contribution of the comrades who have been newly released from jail.

The State, then, must develop a new kind of assistance; supply a new kind of hallucination to the movement that has been released from the prisons: the possibility of building an imaginary movement. Someone who had grown used to the most incredible mystifications of the armed party, of the soon-to-be dictatorship of the proletariat, of the memory that must be ensured, etc. might consider this latest fairy tale from Wonderland to be acceptable. We hope Alice has become clear-sighted.

Let's try to follow a plausible line of reasoning. The State is a regulator of contradictions. It resolves the fundamental aspect of capital, competition, but not completely.

It resolves a whole other series of contradictions: cultural, physical, logical and mystical, but does not suppress them. Now it must also resolve the existing contradiction between the specific movement of prisoners and their minds, who are trying — rightly — to escape from the trenches and the barbed wire. But the “social State” is demanding its price of capital and the individuals who are dragged into illusory solutions (from work to the registry to self-managed spaces to TV); the same thing is supposed to happen to the specific movement.

Do you remember the old and miserable project of little self-managed activities of the handi-craft type: jewelry, leather, oriental decorations and trashy mysticism? Well, something like that. Why couldn't the State, which finds and erects a useful product (in terms of the production of social peace) from the specific movement's decisive surrender, take responsibility for financing initiatives of this type? After all, why not give a good lifestyle (almost) to a penitent: remake his face and give him a new identity, give him a pension; it costs billions, why couldn't we find an M.P. (or a hundred) that is inclined to propose a bill along these lines?

It could be said that deep in the minds of many super-heavies hides the sad, calculating sensibility of a grocer.

The State is not being asked for money, but a guarantee.

To set the boundaries of a space in which they can breathe new life into the movement, based on another project.

On closer inspection, doesn't this space resemble a prison in all its important aspects? Wouldn't there only be ghosts there, without a name or identity, ghosts who would move in the confusion, trying to survive in the universe of jewelry, leather bags and samovars made in Gallarate?

Decidedly not. They have a far more expansive idea of this ghetto. It is not a question of a new kind of commercial mentality, but of a political self-management of spaces where power permits the quantitative growth of the specific movement or a liaison with the real movement. A subtle and ingenious structural ramification, which resembles a well-tied pork roast.

Of course, all this would revive Party morale. Nothing dangerous, naturally, otherwise the backer would lose his temper. A little game, simple and loyal, a new type of oxymoron; in other words, a verticalisation of the horizontal.

But by negotiating and obtaining this space of poverty and survival, what would happen to the others? To those who don't agree? And to others who are even further away, but still in the same boat with the proles? And also to the regular prisoners?

The class-collaborationist soul of hyper-class consciousness

The centrality of something is indispensable for them.

Yesterday the working class. Today themselves. Not as a class, obviously, but as privileged go-betweens for the State, to silence everything that might remain of the revolutionary contradiction through an outside agreement, suspended in the void of class collaboration. In reality, even when they were ultra-militants they had a class-collaborationist perspective. The centre was the guide, the element of coagulation. We could go on indefinitely with hypotheses describing the progressive transition to the all-inclusiveness of the class, describing unlimited quantitative growth. To the point where it would encounter a small nucleus of anti-social rebels defined — a priori — as counter-revolutionaries. Sure, violence was a discriminatory element, but accidental, a pedagogical instrument, a means of communication.

Understood in this way, things could reach their logical outcome all by themselves. A touch of the brush and it's done. The blow to the heart of the State.

They always saw class struggle as a half-completed project; something to resolve between the autumn and spring campaigns. In that lay their class collaborationism. In an ability to understand the innumerable and subtle contradictions of the real class perspective, of the social war. The thousand little streams that make up the class front. The impossibility of separating the good ones from the bad ones.

It was the inheritance of the Third International, of the impulse toward simplification. The same process has now returned to keep the faith in this political method intact. The nuances are only picked up in the abstract, in the world of negotiation with power and the reformism of the self-managed community; not derived from the struggle but from compromise. In this sense, they are all extremely penetrative, discovering links and recommending relations that no one else could discover. In the true sense of revolutionary theory, they are crude and superficial.

They always repeat the same thing: defeat and capitulation, running away and the inevitability of having to declare ourselves defeated.

They are the Fabians of the old school, yet modern in their language. Neo-socialists of the social contract, they don't even have the appearance of angels that have fallen from heaven.

They never made any attempts in that direction. Their flight was always inept and without a horizon. A true skipping after lost opportunities.

The unfeasible path of innocence

At least we agree on one point: it is impossible for us to declare our innocence. It is impossible technically speaking, and also from a revolutionary perspective.

If we exclude the limited cases where a precise act is disputed because it is possible to demonstrate its falseness beyond all doubt, in most cases, declaring one's innocence leads to a separation from the other comrades and the poverty of declaring oneself to be elsewhere.

And it means joining the shabbiness that anyone who has used this attempt at reification has fallen into: not so much a refusal of this responsibility, but rather a refusal of his revolutionary development and own ideas. Arms raised to the sky as a sign of emancipatory joy, or as a sign of unconditional surrender?

Sadness accumulates in the face of this poverty, when we see the fastidiousness with which someone who made total innocence a passport to leave the walls of the prison lowers himself to prove the unprovable. What wordy and self-justifying manoeuvres he clings to.

And even then, at the very bottom of such a position's poverty, we cannot say that the result is guaranteed. The course of an individual negation of whatever significance would not convince even the most superficial of inquisitors.

And then we are all responsible for our dream of storming the heavens. We cannot turn into dwarfs now, after having dreamed, elbow to elbow, each feeling the other's heartbeats, of attacking and overthrowing the gods. This is the dream that makes power afraid. To deny it means to deny the community of gentle feelings that bound us together when we decided to begin the climb, even if we were so far apart, even if we were so ignorant of ourselves, even if — ultimately — we did so with strong critical biases. To deny it would quite simply be despicable.

On the other hand, to take advantage of innocence is a recognition of the State; negotiation, exactly like someone seeking an amnesty for political prisoners. The innocent self makes the other one feel guilty; the idea that we were once different and not that this or that act did not happen the way we intended, but as an oddity and a renunciation.

No one can be neutral; we are guilty of the planning and elaboration of that climate which filled us with enthusiasm and led us along. But even the most critical of us could not claim perfect innocence. In the eyes of the State, it is precisely this climate that is guilty. We must assume responsibility for this. Our struggles against repression, prison and exploitation were not just dreams. Power knows this. Its servants are perfectly acquainted with us. This is the great denunciation that brings us all together.

In addition, this means a recognition of the mechanism of repression: the court first of all. It is true that the old process of making demands has been put aside and, incidentally, that it belonged to the militaristic conception of armed struggle. But from there to admitting the legitimacy of the justice that the courts administer is a big step.

The judicial confrontation

The State has never had legal credibility. The norms of its legitimacy are seized by force. In this sense the reality of the courts is a ridiculous farce which should not interest us.

The balance of power — if we are able — can be redressed elsewhere. In the real movement. If the opposite happens, then whatever process there is a losing one from start to finish.

There are obviously special legal cases whose falseness can be proven in a precise way. These should be exploited to the full, forcing power to respect its own rules by denouncing the irregular procedures in them; often this tactic works, at other times it doesn't. In any case, it is worth a try.

Afterwards, it is for propaganda in general to demonstrate the incredible contradiction that is visible between what is dictated by law and its inquisitorial and repressive application. Also, it is profitable. The progressive bourgeois feels his rage rising whenever he sees things like this. Noise and agitation in matters like this never do any harm.

But we must not delude ourselves. We are perfectly aware that the rule of law and the anger of radical do-gooders are equally relative. Justice is always run by the strongest.

The so-called penitents

The State has made a deal with a handful of poor clowns with submachine-guns who found themselves by accident in a firing team. Troubles due to indiscriminate recruiting?

The fault of the quantitative myth? A distortion of their military logic? What does it matter whether we are specific or not? We will settle our accounts with these people when the time comes.

For the moment we must understand that the State used every available legal principle when making its agreement with the penitents, in negotiating life imprisonment for the comrades.

This is absolutely normal. For anyone who didn't know, all States have a special organisation made up of spies (the secret services), and at times every good cop is a good spy. The fact that these fine people have increased in number recently comes as no surprise.

The surprise concerns people who delude themselves about the existence of a "legal" State, the ideal counterpart to the merchandise they want to sell. This is exactly the case with those who chatter most against the actions of the State in releasing penitents who have admitted to tens of homicides from prison, yet keep comrades who have not confessed to anything locked up. But why are they surprised? Simply because it is less embarrassing than to consider coming to an agreement with people who don't even respect their own rules.

What would happen if, after the neo-contractualist attempts and the more-or-less legalised promises, the pacts were not respected?

The funniest thing about any contract is its bilateral aspect.

There must be two parties before we can speak of a contractual agreement. In addition, neither of them must be a professional cheat.

They will retort that nevertheless, the State has respected the deal with the penitents. Yes, but it has not respected its own laws, according to which a cat is a cat and can never become a rabbit. But laws change by themselves. So do contracts.

The State will respect its agreements with the new entrepreneurs of social self-ghettoisation, but only if these agreements correspond to an effective lowering of the level of confrontation.

The new infrastructure that is appearing on the horizon must produce social peace. Think about the way people take up a project like this: people who used to march in the front line of demonstrations, and who formerly linked together the most advanced actions (from their point of view). Think about what certain personalities who formerly theorised the liberatory violence of the proletariat are saying and doing today. They are seated on the most obscene of all stages, mummies alongside other mummies, talking over their shoulders about peace the way others talk about war. They are useful to the State. But are they to the revolution? Certainly not.

Attention, comrades. Repentance can take various forms.

Some are noticeably repulsive, others are somewhat more tolerable; they are served with a sauce of helpful reformism, full of words stripped of meaning, and can only wear a fig leaf to cover their shame.

At least the real penitents, those who sold dozens of comrades wholesale, know what awaits them: today a false freedom, a just as false passport and a false identity; tomorrow a bullet in the head. The neo-contractualists don't know what awaits them, either from their relations with the State or from their relations with their comrades.

Dissociating from whom and from what?

It makes sense to give up when a project is in the process of being accomplished. We can more or less be in agreement with the project. We could see something different in the changing situation; a change in the initial situation that drove us to take action. And in this context we pause and prepare our critique. We go into the reasons for our disagreement. We measure it with our comrades in the reality of revolutionary viewpoints and we make choices.

But when it is the State that invites us to retreat and offers us a good price for our surrender, then it is a different matter. We are not being asked for a critique, we are being asked for renunciation. There is nothing here to back away from; also because at the operational level, there are no consequences for the project of the armed party. There could be future developments in a different direction, leading to the construction of a libertarian model of armed confrontation. And that is why they are inviting us to desist.

Here is the dangerousness and the gravity of the request.

Many comrades think that an uncritical defence of a model of implacability, based on positions that reality has shown to be anachronistic, is foolishness. And their thinking is correct and reasonable. But it does not reflect the fact that surrender is being requested in relation to possible future opportunities, and not to the extent that a way of theorising class confrontation is currently blocked.

We cannot demand autonomous behaviour in surrender.

The only possibility is criticism. It doesn't matter whether it receives adulation or indifference from the State organs, and it also doesn't matter whether it is linked to an implacability which although it no longer has a revolutionary basis at least contained a moral clarity.

A non-existent project doesn't allow dissociation or surrender. We must develop another project, one that is critical of the first and is a proposal in its own right. But this development cannot start with a reification, with the State as its guest; it must start from an analysis of the current level of class confrontation.

Revolutionary solidarity is the result of a great moral initiative, but it cannot constitute a qualitative basis for the future development of the specific movement. Even less so for dissociation.

It is not a question of distance. It is a question of the road. We are heading toward class confrontation. In the other direction, there are people who are withdrawing from it. Whoever wants to continue the struggle must grow. And above all, critically. They must, then, identify implacability as a preserve mechanism for reproducing something that is non-existent. They must also identify neo-contractualism as an equally perverse mechanism of stagnation and resignation. These two roads do not lead to liberation. These two roads only lead to Rome.

Claiming our struggle as anarchists

In these times of liquidation and stagnation, we reaffirm that our struggle is a struggle for total liberation now, right now. That is why we have even supported this overstated project, which had declared, a priori, that it did not see liberation the same way as we did. Because a wrong turn was always possible; a transformation in the negative sense for them and a positive one for us. The transformation did not take place, but we were not the birds of ill omen. It was others who cast the facile a priori anathemas, facile critiques in front of brass guns. We did not make the mistake. The mistake did not lie in inadequate means but in the impossibility of the method.

And we took the critique inside the organisational project. We did not stop at words, like the amateur scribblers who knocked out analyses like the Fiat knocks out cars. From inside, other people's mistakes even shone a pitiless light on our own, and we too had our stagnant moments: vanity, flagwaving and defence of principles. But they weren't much compared with intrusive stubbornness on one hand and pathetic acquiescence that turned into simple and superficial critiques on the other.

Now it is time to take another road. Someone who asked for a pause for himself, without also having the courage to voice it as an attitude to be shared with others, well, he should stay where he is, in his slippers, warming himself by the fire. We insist on the necessity of going outside, into the fog and the cold. Outside, where it is no longer possible to be certain about what should be done and what direction we should take.

The use of organised violence against exploiters of all kinds

In times like these when birds fly close to the ground, there are only a few who still consider revolution a possibility.

It is always easy to find some enlightened soul who “talks” about revolution, yet there are few who try to achieve something concrete in the right way.

As long as we do nothing but talk, we can all be more or less in agreement. But later, when it is time to go into action, even in a minimal, peripheral, microscopic way, then the disagreements start. We always have to wait for something else to happen. For a signal to come from somewhere, announcing that the time is right. And we anxiously rip open the bellies of the birds, but their entrails never tell us anything.

We continue to insist that the use of organised violence against exploiters, even if it takes the form of minoritarian and limited action, is an indispensable instrument in the anarchist struggle against exploitation.

Our idea of proletarian justice

In this sense, even where a critical or sceptical attitude prevails, and after the bitter realisation (bitter for whom?) that there is no “justice” in the clutches of the State, people come to the conclusion that there is no proletarian justice, nor should there be.

Here too, we disagree. We think it is right to remember exploiters and their servants. To remember this when the time comes, when it will be possible to discuss the destruction of bourgeois justice. Not in order to recreate courtrooms in a different form, installing new judges, new prisons and new ministers with portfolio, but simply to settle our accounts with those responsible. And by settling accounts, we mean simply putting a bullet between their eyes.

If some innocent soul finds this excessive, he should try to take his feet out of the water now and then – he might catch a chill.

We say these things today, in times that are – relatively – relaxed, not in order to appear on the list of extremists who dare to say the most advanced thing, but because we remain firmly convinced of the need for a procedure of this kind.

When the revolution awakened in Russia in 1917, anarchists organised the systematic execution of all the stationmasters on the St Petersburg-Moscow line, for they were responsible for the denunciations of 1905, which sent thousands of anarchist railway workers to prison. These comrades were not trying to apply any pedagogical theory, nor were they trying to teach anything to the other station masters, or to people in general; even less were they interested in donning the filthy judge’s robe of some tedious tribunal of proletarian justice: they just had the modest and limited goal of shooting all the station masters responsible for the denunciations, on the spot.

No more, no less.

This is what we mean by proletarian justice.

The right to remember traitors

This too. Let no one come along afterwards with some complicated story, with the justification that this or that behaviour was dictated by necessity. One never knows, because even among us there is always some theoretician of ethics who raises doubts about the right to throw out traitors. And the discussion always starts with the customary chatter about the death penalty.

People often ask themselves now whether the State has the right to condemn an individual to death who has, according to it, committed some crime. And we fight the death penalty.

A very just struggle, which intends to limit the repressive action of States. But that does not mean that a State that has abolished the death penalty is a “legal State”. No such State exists. It is a legal fantasy and no more. There are States that mobilise a different equilibrium, like the so-called democratic one, for example, whose equilibrium can or must be maintained through the use of the death penalty. Sometimes this space (of the death penalty) is one that we tend to reduce ourselves, through our reformist and civil libertarian struggles, and this is a good thing, because this is how we push back their dictatorial and repressive whim. But that doesn’t move the fact that the State bases its laws on force, not on right, by one centimetre.

At the right time, during the revolution, and even at the first signs of it, we will not attempt to substitute our force for that of the State or build organisations of counter-power, which would impose their own kind of law to settle accounts with traitors. We just want to carry out this process of proletarian justice without having to develop a theory of revolutionary law to justify it. We will not need it. The actions committed by these people will speak for themselves, not any laws made a priori that we might use to mass-manufacture similar acts. We will not make this kind of law (we will not make any laws at all and that’s all there is to it!); these laws have been in people’s hearts for thousands of years, and therein we read that traitors must be eliminated.

The stifling attitude of certainty was not one of our mistakes

We didn't make them in "good faith". We don't know what good faith is. We made them in the full knowledge of making them, but considering that it is right in certain circumstances to prefer a mistake to an abstract truth that is based on an a priori critique.

All anarchists know about the mistake of the party and the leninist conception from long experience. But our critique, faced with the concrete emergence of this kind of experience, was never pursued in the abstraction of principles. We preferred to conduct it through the carrying out of actions, even in the difficulty of the specific organisation, entering fully into the contradictions of acting. And on this wind-swept ground we met comrades with great hearts and courage, capable of facing the struggle with serenity, even when the result was worse than uncertain and the means at our disposal worse than dangerous. And this was because we had confidence in our comrades and in the possibility that a wrong turn could be transformed without further delay into a critique-in-action, capable of calling plans and doctrines into question and burning mummies and programmes. That did not happen. Might things have happened differently if we too donned the severe robe of a political censor? If we had developed a critique of the ideology of efficiency and doctrinaire thought?

Our theses on creativity, on subversion, on joy

However, while we were searching for the right path, we developed various critiques and project. We saw how there was no joy, after all, in what they were doing, or in other activities which, by self-examination in the light of the situation, ended up strongly influenced by the direction forced on them by the struggle. And finding no joy there, we managed to miss the very foundation of the struggle; the creativity of our invention, the subversive content of the project whose bearers we were.

Even at the macroscopic level, this element should have been present in our revolutionary work, otherwise we would have been forced to accept what we only did because we were the ones who did it. It could not have worked. And it did not work.

In this sense, and through our experience of past limitations, we are ready to start again from the beginning.

There is no separate solution

The more we think about the conditions of past confrontations, the more we see to what degree the present situation is the product of past mistakes, and only offers a possible opening on the condition that a working critique is included; the more we also realise that there is no separate solution to the problem of the imprisoned comrades.

By accepting a commodification like the one proposed by the neo-contractualists (an amnesty, an equal number of years of imprisonment for all, a period of social work outside prison, etc.), we would have to pay for it by putting our whole past at risk. This would mean a denial of the revolution, a denial of anarchy, a denial of our own identities as women and men and a denial of our future.

The only solution, then, is a continuation of the struggle.

In a critical way, of course, with different objectives and methods more appropriate to the present situation, but a continuation of the struggle.

In prison in all interventions: a qualitative moment of the confrontation

The dismantling of sector-based intervention must be complemented by an ability to propose new forms of struggle; otherwise, it becomes a tedious methodological formula. If we limit ourselves to “informing” people about the viciousness of power, we won’t see the wood for the trees, and be immediately forced to arrange the worst crimes in order of importance, in order to appear more specific and thus more incisive. If we talk to people about nuclear power, we can certainly bring the problem of the imprisoned comrades into the discussion, but we don’t do it all the time: we predict death and destruction, atomic pollution, the end of life on earth, war and apocalyptic conflict. People are more impressed, and we are fascinated by the fact that we have managed to impress people.

The destiny of counter-information is this: to always end up divided into sectors. Today this, tomorrow that. We end up as specialists in anti-militarism, in problems of world labour, in prison problems, in feminism, in movements involved in rent struggles, etc.

So, we must have two levels of clarity:

1.

Totally comprehensive counter-information is impossible.

1.

We cannot “crowd together” varied problems (without people ceasing to understand us).

Yet there is another way of seeing things. By focussing on a problem (on neighbourhoods, for example) and connecting it to problems that are most closely related to it. Then we will realise that without necessarily intending to develop a well-argued discussion, we will succeed in also including the problem of the imprisoned comrades. Even so, this can only be on condition that we don’t confine ourselves to mere counter- information. If we limit ourselves to this first stage of revolutionary intervention, the prison problem will happen to be introduced from the outside into the reality we are trying to intervene in.

Let’s frame the discussion differently, with a different project. We move from the simple phase of counter-information to a second phase, which can be identified as commitment. We propose an organisational structure that will take care of a specific problem (let’s return to the example of the neighbourhoods), and which permits the inclusion of the problem of prison and the imprisoned comrades.

Let’s establish a relationship between this organisational structure (outside the specific movement) and the specific movement itself. From the response in practical terms that this relationship gives us, we will have a sufficiently clear image of the state of the real movement. On the basis of this image, we can construct our interventions as a specific movement outside and even independently of the organisational structure of commitment) and in this phase then, we can be far more comprehensive in solving the problem of the imprisoned comrades.

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The elimination of special laws, different conditions of imprisonment, special prisons and article 90. The reduction of preventive detention. The abolition of life imprisonment, long sentences, special trials and special treatment. Obviously, these measures must apply to all, not just to our comrades.

This perspective of struggle should try to involve people, and should also have its own autonomy of action. Our ability to measure the results depends on the way people are involved, the way they achieve a harmonious autonomy of action, and what we succeed in doing outside the specific movement.

Only on the basis of these results can we impose a solution to the problem of the imprisoned comrades.

We should not forget that our road goes on much farther than that of those who are preparing to collaborate today.

Power's road, on the other hand, still runs around us.

In the last analysis, we are all in the sights of the repression.

We must develop our struggle. If we are unable to do so, they will destroy us all, inside prison or outside the prison.

With a rise in the level of confrontation and a broadening of objectives, the repression will strike again. No one is trying to guarantee a danger-free way of getting out of prison here. All of us, when we were sent to jail, were sent there because we were convinced of the validity of our revolutionary action, not because of some trick of fate. Of course, objectively speaking, there is always something like this: the work of a spy, something that went wrong, the repressive interpretation of an act that was in itself completely legitimate. But the real reason for our imprisonment has always been the fact that we are anarchists, and our faith in the revolution. Jail for an anarchist is a constant part of our activity.

Our problem today, one of central importance, is that to get our comrades out. We can only solve this problem by intensifying struggles in various sectors of intervention, and by linking these struggles to a real perspective of insurrectional development, not limiting ourselves to platonic dissent or beautiful declarations of freedom for all, which only serve to silence our conscience in order to express, later, a facile disagreement with someone who, on the contrary, wants to do something concrete.

Only in this way will we force the State to solve what will become its problem of our comrades in jail. As long as it remains our problem, we will be unable to solve it except by mortgaging our whole future and consigning it to the repression.

We don't think there can be any doubt about which road to take.

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Alfredo M. Bonanno
And we will always be ready to storm the heavens again
(Against amnesty)
1984

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E noi saremo sempre pronti a impadronirci un'altra volta del cielo (Contro l'amnistia), 1984
Edizioni Anarchismo. Various translators

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