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Insurrection

Alfredo M. Bonanno

May 1988

A considerable part of the anarchist movement shares insurrectional positions, but they are theoretical stands only. We think that a new way to consider insurrection is possible.

Apart from a few not very significant fringes, the international anarchist movement shares theoretical positions of a revolutionary character. The liberal democratic vein, important as far as it shows a possible line of involution, remains on the margins.

In turn almost the whole of the revolutionary anarchist positions — with different nuances — see insurrection as a necessary phase along the road to revolution.

But this insurrection is seen as a mass revolt due to certain socio-economic forces that serve to set it off. The role of the anarchist movement is to limit itself to understanding these conditions and economic and social contradictions to make them more comprehensible to the mass. Basically, a role of propaganda and counterinformation.

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Often even the anarchist comrades who see the need for violent struggle against the structures of oppression without half measures, limit themselves to this part of the analysis and do not feel obliged to go any further. The mass – they say – must do everything themselves. Anything else would be authoritarian on the part of the specific anarchist organisation and could turn out to be disastrous.

This idea of insurrection might have been logical when nearly the whole of the anarchist movement was on positions of synthesis, i.e. in the dimension of the big (or not so big) quantitative organisations. Through the instrument of the syndicalist organisation they planned to address the whole of the social and economic struggles into a situation of waiting for a breaking out of the revolutionary moment.

There is a different way to envisage revolutionary struggle in an insurrectionalist key in our opinion.

We consider that the anarchist organisation, so long as it is informal, can contribute to the constitution of autonomous base nuclei which, as mass organisms, can programme attacks against structures of social, economic and military repression. These attacks, even if circumscribed, have all the methodological characteristics and practises of insurrectional phenomena when not left to the blind forces of social and economic conflict but are brought into an anarchist projectuality based on the principles of autonomy, direct action, constant attack and the refusal to compromise.

In a word, this is the insurrectional conception that we are inviting all interested comrades to assess with critiques, analysis, and debate.

a.m.b.