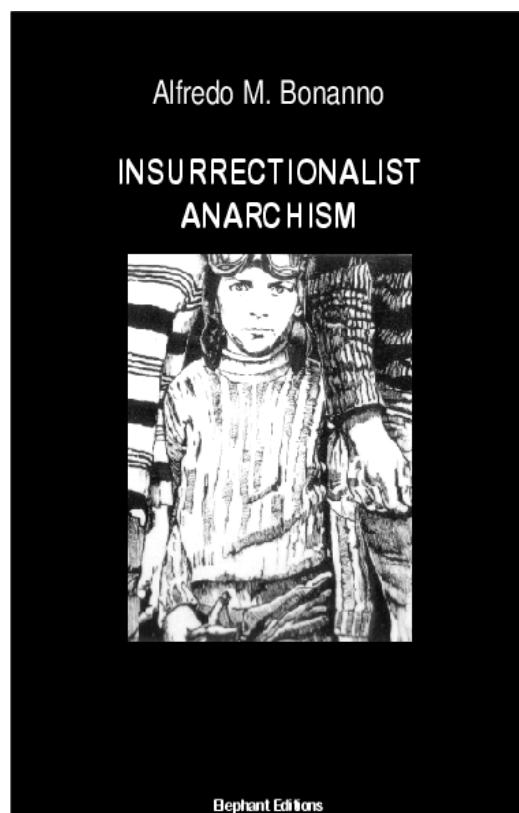


Insurrectionist Anarchism

Alfredo M. Bonanno



1999

Contents

Introduction to the second edition	3
Introduction to the second Spanish anthology <i>No podréis pararnos. La lucha anarquista revolucionaria en Italia.</i>	5
Introduction to the first edition	8
Excluded and Included	17
The excluded and the included	21
Two phases	25
Transformation in the world of work and school	30
a) Relations between inflation and employment	31
b) The new professionalism: flexibility	36
c) The world of school	40
Loss of Language	42
Loss of culture	46
Good Technology	48
Technical Language	51
The ‘End’ of the Crisis	54
A look in passing at some of the old certainties	54
The complexity of the problem of “crisis”	54
A double (and the same) error	55
Towards a cohabitation with disorder	56
The theoretical effort	56
The “new” factory is emerging from this unique melting pot.	58
Revolutionaries	59
Affinity	61
Informal organisation	64
The revolutionary project	66

Introduction to the second edition

Behind every aspect of anarchist insurrectionalist theory there is a project. I do not mean a lifeless picture complete in every detail, but a sufficiently identifiable project far beyond these pages and the many others that I have written on this tormented subject in my lifetime. Without taking this into account no analytical explanation will do much, it would risk remaining what it is, a set of words claiming to contest reality, an incongruously idealist claim. The fat plants of classical German philosophy have done all possible damage with their enticing stings, I hope that these are now no more than mere decoys.

That does not mean that the problem of method can be approached out of the blue without taking account of what has been said in a whole host of ways, even by classical German philosophy; that would be naive. There are no shortcuts or recipes in this perspective, only hard revolutionary work, study and action. The downslide of the many more or less hoary destroyers that I have seen in recent years comforts me in my rigidity of intent. It would be pointless to consider one's radicalness extreme if all one did was to hide the hand without ever throwing the stone. It is not a race for the best image, the magic mirror that fills up with brilliant colours, intricately weaving notes from baci Perugina.¹

This little book illustrates a method, an anarchist and insurrectionary method, but it is an experience that it is talking about, not theories that can more or less come into conflict or even get along. It is a continuous experience over time that has been putting itself as it were in the field, in action, taking written form and expression almost by accident in articles, reports, leaflets, or others sporadically entrusted to the needs of the moment. Instead of seeing this as an element of dissociation, I see, have always seen, a particular movement, a peculiar meeting of ideas and actions so that the latter will give special light to the first, and vice versa, uninterruptedly, seamless.

Many, from the Minister of the Interior down to lovers of fairy tales, have seen an indigestible mixture of vigorous maturity of thought and silly childish fantasy in them. What do I care? My skin is thick enough for me to realise that it makes no difference whether the lashes arrive from the sharp-eyed criticism of the carabinieri dreaming of giving me as many years' prison as possible or are basted in the praise of an imbecile or the literary braying of an ass.

Every method is based on reality, otherwise it would not be such and could never give life to a project. It would simply be a movement of restless legs, a walk in enchanted woods, a solving of riddles of the sphinx, problems of geometry only difficult for children. Life is too fierce a lesson to accept as fellow travellers dizzy parasites who delight in talking about their impressions and desire for freedom. A heavy word this one, very heavy.

In wanting to be free there is monstrous temptation, you would rip open your chest. The very word freedom is already a scandal, to be able to pronounce it without blushing is a scandal. For me to insist on saying this word without dealing with the consequences that it implies and confronts

¹ Iconic Italian chocolates each wrapped in a love note.

me with, would be just as outrageous. After all, freedom cannot be said, so the word freedom is deceiving and deceives me as soon as I say it. Yet it is said. But it requires a fundamental addition, which puts me at risk. This addition gives the word a new meaning, upturns it and bares it, severs ties with the endless chatter of layabouts in the mood for antics and strips it down, bringing the possibility of its realization to the surface. To realise freedom at any cost.

At this stage there is a mechanism that is still viable in part, the word still resonates in the critical gesture of digging inside the already said, but that is not all. The profound meaning of this word lies in the fact that it creates an opening for putting oneself on the line face to face with one's own truth, with no shield to take shelter behind to cushion the blows. The mechanism that I am talking about, the revolutionary method, cannot be aimed at getting results, in which case it would be a positive criticism oriented philosophically towards preserving rather than destroying. It is aimed at disturbing further, lacerating yet again before the engagement to make not only mine available but that of all, offering a possible conclusion, precisely from the application of the method and assuming revolutionary responsibility.

The extraordinary new condition that I can then catch a glimpse of is the insurrectional method, a fathomless abyss. The few indicative traces of it that I am peddling as the already done are merely a distant insipid image.

The distance between thought and action can sometimes reduce itself enormously. That is the moment to strike.

Trieste, October 20, 2007

Introduction to the second Spanish anthology *No podréis pararnos. La lucha anarquista revolucionaria en Italia.*

The comrades who published the first edition of *No podréis pararnos. La lucha anarquista revolucionaria en Italia* let me know of their desire to include an introduction of mine in the second edition. I agreed that this was necessary because the choice of writings implies the existence of something in common, an insurrectional as well as anarchist project.

In these writings I face the problem of the revolutionary project, but in many ways they are not in-depth, at least on the basis of the considerations that I have been able to reflect upon in recent years.

Many comrades have noted the presence of this revolutionary project in my analyses and how this has become increasingly detailed and compelling, in terms of writings and actions, since the struggle against the US base in Comiso in construction, the biennium 1982–1983. Yet, the very concept of insurrectionalism, the dream of a possible insurrectional anarchism capable of attacking power, not just stirring people's hearts but also their bodies, the same methodologically correct concepts of affinity, informal organization, base nuclei, included and excluded, etc., do not give a clear account of the project.

What do I mean by project?

Not just a certain amount of more or less extensive, more or less interesting analyses, pamphlets, books, newspapers nor even, strictly speaking, a series of concrete actions from the Comiso struggle to struggles now underway against the construction of high-speed trains. My project lives in my heart and nourishes my life. Here, taking this introductory opportunity, I would like to make an effort to say something more.

First of all what it is not, thus putting an end to the concerns of those who have often accused me of being too fond of organizational details. The project is not a foundation. But, if it is not a foundation, that is, if it cannot be restricted to within a stereotyped form—and the journalism of dominion is doing everything to make this form available to police and prosecutors—then what is it? I think it is an anticipation of something that might come next, a realization that remains poised and never fully realized, a substance that breathes before me and before thousands of comrades, a substance that feeds on facts, but which in those same facts does not conclude itself.

The project, in the many streams in which it continues to pulsate, involves a reference to the future. It talks about something to be done today but projected into a possible future realisation. The project therefore contains a possible condition that could come about in the future, that I believe in and for which I am ready to fight.

Here I am talking about an idea, articulated and wonderful, complex and difficult to understand, I am talking about anarchy. And I speak of it as a value that for me exists here in my heart, like an anticipation of the future, the future that I believe in, not as a literary exercise. The value that

the project has for me is the present one that guides my life, forcing me to make choices and realise actions now, not just a simple horizon towards which I am moving in time, if only for the simple fact of being alive and approaching death.

There can be no project without faith in the future, just as there is no future without a more or less detailed project. I remember that the slogan of the black uprising of Los Angeles about fifteen years ago was: "No future", and this marked the limits of that revolt, in a sense was its own death knell.

If I have a project I can break through the rigidity of the present, the obtuse malignancy of certain equilibrium of power, its passive grin just waiting for me to make a mistake in order to destroy me. With my project I am immediately in the future, no longer subordinate to the present, so I am difficult to control. The future, my future but also that of society as a whole, is not only possible, it is also realisable, and this possibility of realization is intertwined with my experience and the experience that the world, and society, accumulate. Having a project and acting for its possible realisation does not just mean dreaming, it also means acting, realizing actions on the basis of what I am and what society is, on the historical basis that accompanies me, that accompanies us all. To live projected into the future does not mean forgetting one's own history and the history in which society is immersed, on the contrary it means knowing it and grasping the many differences, not only individual but also continental, national, regional, up to individual communities, the very smallest.

I believe that the project for which I have worked my whole life is something that is always about to come into being, yet cannot be identified in this or that achievement. That is why it is unmoved by the criticism that is continually made of anarchists, according to which all their efforts, their actions and their theories, always leaves them with nothing in hand. The beauty of anarchy lies precisely in this elusiveness from history, and in its stable place in the future. This idea is against any logic of determinism, any more or less revised and amended dialectical mechanism, any claim to seeing history as the teacher of life lived. But the project is not, as I said, a dream that can take the most incredible and absurd forms, it is a particular kind of dream, a waking dream. The project, although addressing a future possibility, contains the historical necessity that makes it viable and operative, subtracting it from the possible fate of all simple literary ambitions. It is rooted in the possibilities of the future but, inside it feeds off the coordinates of history, is history, and so responds to certain principles, cannot do without them. While not deterministically thinkable it determines, in its realization, the reality that lies ahead of it. Insurrectionalism, as a project, has come out of the limited dream of the *grand soire*, the revolution as a spontaneous unpredictable happening, from vague millenarianism that had been widespread for many years, at least since the Paris Commune.

Insurrectionalist anarchism is a revolutionary project that looks to the future, but is grounded in the history and heritage of the struggles that the exploited all over the world have accumulated. This heritage makes the possibilities of the future legible. If the insurrectionalist project were not an anarchist one it would ultimately collapse in the face of the tragic farces that have been recited and continue to be recited by so many authoritarian revolutions all over the world. Only in the anarchist project of organized revolt does a real possibility of giving living body to the idea of social revolution emerge, without falling back on projects of small vessels, apparently able to provide seemingly more viable prospects.

Insurrectionalism anarchist as a project, and as action that never fully completes itself, because it continually addresses itself towards the future, which can be, and can also not be, has no need

to be, as anarchy is not necessarily a feature of the future, it is by no means certain that the world is moving towards anarchy, as the Kropotkinian determinists believed in the nineteenth century. Could not the possible failure of the insurrectionalist project also be significant?

No. Indeterminism is one of the logical characteristics of possibility, the fact that a project does not realise itself, here and now, or there after a while, does not prove the unreliability of the project itself. Moreover, when it is the project itself to consider itself incomplete and incompletable, there is no doubt about its validity, it will never be destroyed by this or that failure. Revolutionary action is this incompleteness, not modifying the project and lowering the revolution to a mere change of owner.

These few notes should make it easier to understand that the insurrectionalist project is neither a more or less literary coordinate of precepts and rules, nor a simple operative prospectibility, such as are found in the manuals of guerrilla warfare.

Dreams are often far more complex than reality.

Trieste, January 6, 2007

Introduction to the first edition

The following ideas have emerged from a long itinerary of struggle and reflection. They represent a tormented, complex thesis, which is not only difficult to set out—which would simply be due a defect of the author—but even to expose clearly and definitively.

In conflict with my whole being, I am about to set out the fundamental elements of insurrectionalist anarchism anatomically. Will it be possible? I don't know. I shall try. If the reading of these notes begins to suffocate, then just skip through them and leave it at that.

A mass insurrection, or that of a whole people, can at any given moment lead to the State's incapacity to maintain order and respect for the law and even lead to the disintegration of social and economic conditions. This also implies the presence of individuals and groups that are capable of grasping this disintegration beyond its immediate manifestations. They must be able to see beyond the often chance and secondary reasons for the initial insurrectional outburst. In order to give their contribution to the struggle, they must look beyond the first clashes and skirmishes, not put a brake on them or underestimate them as mere incoherent insufferance towards those in power.

But who is prepared to take on this task? It could be anarchists, not so much because of their basic ideological choice and declared denial of all authority, as for their capacity to evaluate methods of struggle and organisational projects.

Moreover, only those who have rebelled and faced the consequences of this rebellion and lived it to the full, be it only within the microcosm of their own lives, can have the sensitivity and intuition necessary to grasp the signs of the insurrectional movement in course. Not all anarchists are rebels, just as not all rebels are anarchists. To complicate things, it is not enough to be a rebel to understand the rebellion of others. It is also necessary to be willing to understand. We need to look at the economic and social conditions around us. We must not let ourselves be swept away like a river in full swell by the resounding demonstrations of the popular movement, even when it is moving full steam ahead and its initial triumphs lead us to hoist banners of illusion. Critique is always the first instrument, the starting point. But this must not merely be a surly taking sides. It must be a participatory critique, one that involves the heart, feels the excitement of the clash against the same enemy, now with its face finally stamped in the dust.

It is not enough to simply rebel. Even if a hundred rebels were to get together it would still not be sufficient, they would merely be a hundred crazed molecules writhing in destructive agony as the struggle spreads, wildly sweeping everything away. Important as an example and stimulus, rebels end up succumbing to the needs of the moment. No matter how effective and radical they are, the more their conscience carries them to attack—often blindly—the more they become aware of an insurmountable limit due to their failure to see any organisational outlet. They wait for suggestions from the mass in revolt, a word here, a word there, in the thick of the clash or during moments of calm when everyone wants to talk before taking up the struggle again. And they are not aware that even during these exciting moments there are always politicians waiting in ambush. The masses do not possess the virtues we often attribute to them. The assembly is

certainly not the place to risk one's life, but one's life can be put at risk by decisions made in assemblies. And the political animals that raise their heads at these collective moments always have clear ideas about what to suggest, with fine programmes of recuperation and a call to order already in their pockets. Of course, they will not say anything that is not absolutely correct, politically, I mean, so will be taken to be revolutionaries. But they are always the same, the same old political animals laying the foundations for the power of the future, the kind that recuperates the revolutionary thrust and turns it towards pacification. We must limit destruction, comrades. Please, after all, what we are destroying belongs to us ..and so on.

To shoot before—and more quickly than—others, is a virtue of the Far West: it's good for a day or two, then you need to use your head. And using your head means you need a project.

So the anarchist cannot just be a rebel, he or she must be a rebel equipped with a project. He or she must, that is, unite courage and heart with the knowledge and foresight of action. Their decisions will still be lit up by the flames of destruction, but sustained with the fuel of critical analysis.

Now, if we think about it for a moment, a project cannot just turn up out of the blue in the midst of the fray. It is silly to think that everything must come forth from the insurgent people. That would be blind determinism and would consign us gagged into the hands of the first politician that stood up on a chair and came out with a few organisational and programmatic proposals, throwing smoke in everyone's eyes with a few words strung one after the other. Although insurrection is a revolutionary moment of great collective creativity that is capable of producing intense analytical suggestions (think of the insurgent workers of the Paris Commune who shot at the clocks), it is not the only source of theoretical and projectual wealth. The highest moments of the people in arms undoubtedly eliminate obstacles and uncertainties, showing clearly what had only been hazy up until then, but they cannot illuminate what is not already there. These moments are the potent reflector that make it possible to bring about a revolutionary and anarchist project, but this project must already exist, even if only in terms of method. It must have been elaborated and experimented to some degree, although obviously not in every detail.

After all, when we intervene in mass struggles, clashes with intermediate claims, isn't that almost exclusively in order to propose our methods? Workers in a particular factory demanding jobs and trying to avoid being laid off, a group of homeless people trying to get shelter, prisoners rebelling for better conditions in jail, students rebelling against a cultureless school, are all things that interest us, up to a point. We know perfectly well that when we participate in these struggles as anarchists, no matter how they end up there will not be any corresponding growth in our movement, and this is quite irrelevant. The excluded often even forget who we are, and there is no reason in the world why they should remember us, least of all that of gratitude. In fact, we have asked ourselves more than once what we were doing in the midst of such struggles for claims, we anarchists and revolutionaries who are against work, school, any concession to the State, property and also any kind of negotiation that graciously concedes a better life in the prisons. The answer is simple. We are there because we can introduce different methods. And our methods take shape in a project. We are with the excluded in these intermediate struggles because we have a different model to propose, one based on self-organised struggles, attack and permanent conflictuality. This is our point of strength, and we are only prepared to struggle along with the excluded if they adopt such methods of attack, even concerning objectives that remain within the realm of claiming.

A method would be no more than an agglomeration of meaningless words if were we unable to articulate it within a projectual dimension. Had they paid any attention to this aspect at the start, many concerned critics of anarchist insurrectionalism would just have gone back to their momentarily disturbed slumber. What is the point of accusing us of being stuck in methods a hundred years out of date without taking a look at what we are talking about? The insurrectionalism we are talking about is quite different to the glorious days on the barricades, even if it might contain elements of a struggle that moves in such a direction at times. But as simple revolutionary theory and analysis, a method that comes to life in a project, it does not necessarily take this apocalyptic moment into account, but develops and intensifies far from any waving of banners or glittering of guns.

Many comrades are fully aware of the need to attack and are doing what they can to bring this about. They perceive the beauty of the clash and the confrontation with the class enemy hazily, but do not want to spend much time thinking about it. They want to hear nothing of revolutionary projects, so carry on wasting the enthusiasm of rebellion which, moving into a thousand rivulets, ends up extinguishing itself in small isolated displays of insufferance. These comrades are obviously not all the same, you could say that each one constitutes a universe of his or her own, but all, or nearly all of them, feel irritated by any attempt to clarify ideas. They don't like to make distinctions. What is the point of talking about affinity groups, informal organisation, base nuclei or coordinations, they say? Don't things speak for themselves? Are not tyranny, injustice, exploitation and the ferocity of power, quite visible there in front of us? Don't they exist in the shape of things and men basking in the sun as though they had nothing to worry about? What is the point of wasting time in pointless discussions? Why not attack now? Indeed, why not turn on the first uniform we come across? Even a 'sensible' person like Malatesta was of this opinion, in a way, when he said that he preferred individual rebellion to waiting to see the world upturned before doing anything.

I have never had anything against this personally. On the contrary. Rebellion is the first step. It is the essential condition for burning our bridges, and even if it does not cut the bonds that tie us to society and power with a thousand ropes in the form of family, morals, work, obeying the law, at least it weakens them. But I am convinced that this is not sufficient. I believe we need to go further and think about the possibilities of giving one's actions more organisational strength to so that rebellion can become a project aiming at generalised insurrection.

This second step obviously does not appeal to many comrades. And, feeling that such efforts are beyond them, they underestimate the problem or, worse still, criticise those who do spend time and effort on the question of organisation.

Here we will try to provide a few elements to enable us to examine the organisational aspect of insurrectionalist anarchism in some depth. In particular, the problem of the affinity group, informality, self-organisation of struggles, base nuclei and the coordination of these nuclei (anarchists and non-anarchists) with affinity groups (of anarchists), through informal organisation.

As we can see, the question implies complex problems of method, and this means understanding certain concepts that often get distorted in the context of insurrectionalism. We must therefore give them our full attention so as to get rid of some of the preconceived ideas that often limit our vision without our realising it.

This introductory note will become more schematic as it takes a look at these key concepts. The text itself will be more articulate, but would probably be difficult to follow without first becoming familiar with such concepts.

An anarchist group can be composed of perfect strangers. I have often gone into anarchist meeting rooms in Italy and elsewhere and hardly known anybody. One's mere presence in such a place, the attitudes, the jargon and the way one presents oneself, the level of discussion and statements impregnated with basic orthodox anarchist ideology, are such that any anarchist feels at ease within a short space of time and communicates with the other comrades as well as possible, to their reciprocal satisfaction.

It is not my intention to speak of the ways that an anarchist group can be organised here. There are many, and each chooses their own comrades as they think best. But there is a particular way of forming an anarchist group that puts real or presumed affinity among all the participants before anything else. Now, this affinity is not something that can be found in a declaration of principles, a glorious past, or a history of 'militancy', no matter how far back this goes in time. Affinity is acquired by having knowledge of each other. That is why one sometimes believes one has affinity with a comrade, then discovers that it is not the case, and vice versa. An affinity group is therefore a melting pot where such relations can mature and consolidate.

But because perfection is a thing of angels, even affinity needs to be considered with a certain mental acumen and not simply be accepted as the panacea for all our weaknesses. I can only discover that I have affinity with someone if I reveal myself to that person, do away with all the affectations that normally protect me like a second skin, harder and tougher than the first. And this cannot simply come about through small talk, me chattering about myself then listening to the other's tales, but must come about in things that are done together. In other words, it must come about in action. When we do things, we unconsciously send out tiny signals that are far more revealing than words. It is from these exchanges that we create the conditions needed for us to gain knowledge of one another.

If the group's activity is not simply doing for the sake of it so as to grow in numbers, but has the qualitative aim of comrades being aware of each other and feeling at one with each other, sharing the tension towards action and the desire to transform the world, then this is an affinity group. If it is not, the search for affinity will be no more than the search for a shoulder to lean on.

Affinity is therefore the knowledge that comrades acquire of each other through action in the realisation of one's ideas. A glance backwards to allow my comrades to see who I am is reabsorbed by looking forward together into a future in which we build our common project. In other words, we decide to intervene in specific struggles and see what we are capable of. These two moments, the first, let us say, of the knowledge of the individual, and the second, the projectual one of the knowledge of the group intertwine and constitute affinity, allowing the group to be considered to all effects an 'affinity group'.

The resulting condition is not fixed in time once and for all. It moves, develops, regresses and modifies during the course of the various struggles, drawing from them so as to grow both theoretically and practically. It is not a monolithic entity. Decisions are not made vertically. There is no faith to be sworn on or commandments to believe in, in times of doubt or fear. Everything is discussed within the group throughout the course of the struggle, everything is reconsidered from the start, even if solid, eternal points might seem to exist already.

The affinity group's task is to elaborate a particular project, the best place to study and examine the conditions one decides to operate in. It might seem that organisations of synthesis are better instruments for intervening in struggles than affinity groups, but the vast range of interests held by anarchist structures of synthesis is only apparent. In fact, in an organisation of synthesis,

groups are allocated tasks at congresses, and although they are free to interest themselves in all the problems that characterise this society divided into classes, basically only operate according to what has been dictated by the congress. Moreover, being linked to programmes and principles that have been accepted once and for all, they are unable to make independent decisions and end up complying to the rigid limitations fixed by the organisation in congress. The latter's role is to safeguard the organisation itself, in other words to 'disturb' power as little as possible and avoid being 'outlawed'. The affinity group avoids such limitations, sometimes easily, sometimes only thanks to the courage and decision of the comrades that make it up. Of course, such structures cannot give courage to those who lack it. It cannot suggest attack unless each individual is already a rebel in his or her soul. It cannot go into action if people are only prepared to think at the level of an afternoon chat.

Once the problems concerning what is to be acted on have been gone into, the necessary documentation been found and analyses elaborated, the affinity group goes into action. This is one of the fundamental characteristics of this kind of anarchist structure. It does not wait for problems to appear like a spider in the middle of a web. It looks for them and seeks a solution, which must obviously be accepted by the excluded who are bearing the brunt of the problem. But in order to make a proposition to a social reality that is suffering some specific form of aggression by power in a given area, it is necessary to be physically present among the excluded of that area and have a real awareness of the problems involved.

The affinity group therefore moves in the direction of local intervention, facing one particular problem and creating all the necessary psychological and practical conditions, both individually and collectively. The problem can then be faced with the characteristics and methods of insurrectionalism which are self-organisation, permanent conflictuality and attack.

One single affinity group cannot necessarily carry out such an intervention on its own. Often, at least according to the (few and controversial) experiences to date, the nature of the problem and complexity of intervention, including the extent of the area as well as the means required to develop the project and the ideas and needs of the people involved, require something more. Hence the need to keep in contact with other affinity groups so as to increase the number of comrades and find the means and ideas suited to the complexity and dimension of the problem that is being faced.

That is how informal organisation originates.

Various anarchist affinity groups can come together to give life to an informal organisation aimed at facing a problem that is too complex for one group alone. Of course, all the groups participating in the informal organisation must more or less agree with the intervention and participate in both the actions and ideas.

Affinity groups often develop informal relations that become constant as they meet regularly to prepare for specific struggles or—better still—during the course of these struggles. This facilitates the circulation of information about the latter and the projects that are in preparation, as well as signs from certain parts of the world of the excluded.

An informal organisation 'functions' quite simply. It has no name as it does not aim to grow numerically. There are no fixed structures (apart from the single affinity groups, each one of which operates quite autonomously), otherwise the term 'informal' would be meaningless. It is not formally 'constituted', there are no congresses but only simple meetings from time to time (preferably during the course of the struggles themselves). There are no programmes, only

the common experience of insurrectional struggles and the methods that distinguish them: self-organisation, permanent conflictuality and attack.

The aims of the informal organisation are conferred on it by the individual affinity groups that make it up. In the few experiences that have materialised it has been a question of one specific objective, for example the destruction of the Cruise missile base in Comiso in 1982–1983. But there could also be more than one intervention and the informal organisation would make it possible for single groups to intervene in these different situations. For example they could alternate when it became necessary to be in one place for a considerable length of time (in Comiso groups stayed in the area for two years). Another aim could be to provide both analytical and practical means, and provide the financial support that the individual group might require.

The primary function of the informal organisation is to make known the various affinity groups and the comrades that make them up. If you think about it, this is still a question of a search for affinity, this time at a different level. Here the search for affinity is intensified by the project—which does not exclude the ever-increasing knowledge of the single individual—and comes about at the level of more than one group. One deduces from this that the informal organisation is also an affinity group, based on all the affinity groups that make it up.

The above considerations, which we have been developing over the past fifteen years, should have been of some use to comrades in their understanding the nature of informal organisation. This does not seem to be the case. In my opinion, the most serious misunderstanding comes from the latent desire of many of us to flex our muscles. We want to give ourselves a strong organisational structure because that seems to be the only way to fight a power structure that is strong and muscular. According to these comrades the first characteristic that such a structure should have is that it be specific and robust, must last in time and be clearly visible so as to constitute a kind of light amidst the struggles of the excluded—a light, a guide, a point of reference.

Alas! We do not share this opinion. All the economic and social analyses of post-industrial capitalism show how power would swallow up such a strong, visible structure in one gulp. The disappearance of the centrality of the working class (at least what was once considered such) means that an attack carried out by a rigid, visible structure would be impracticable. If such structures are not simply destroyed on impact, they would just be co-opted into the ambit of power in order to recuperate and recycle the most irreducible elements.

So long as the affinity group continues to look inwards, it will be no more than a few comrades giving themselves their own rules and respecting them. By looking inwards I do not just mean staying inside one's anarchist place, limiting oneself to the usual discussions among the initiated, but also responding to the various deadlines of power and repression with declarations and documents. In that case the affinity group would only differ from other anarchist groups superficially: ‘political’ choices, ways of interpreting the various responses to the power structure’s claim to regulate our lives and those of all the excluded.

The profound sense of being a ‘different’ structure, i.e. one based on a way of organising that is quite different to all other anarchist groups—in a word, on affinity—only becomes operative when it sets out a project of specific struggle. And what characterises this project more than anything is the presence of a considerable number of excluded, of people—in a word, the mass—bearing the brunt of repression that the project is addressing with recourse to insurrectionalist methods.

The essential element in the insurrectional project is therefore mass participation. And, as we started off from the condition of affinity among the single anarchist groups participating in it, it is also an essential element of this affinity itself. It would be no more than mere camaraderie

d'elite if it were to remain circumscribed to the reciprocal search for deeper personal knowledge between comrades.

But it would be nonsense to consider trying to make other people become anarchists and suggest that they enter our groups during the struggle. Not only would it be nonsense, it would be a horrible ideological forcing of things that would upturn the whole meaning of affinity groups and the eventual informal organisation that might ensue in order to face the specific repressive attack.

But here we are faced with the need to create organisational structures that are capable of regrouping the excluded in such a way as to begin the attack on repression. So we come to the need to give life to autonomous base nuclei, which can obviously give themselves any other name that indicates the concept of self-organisation.

We have now reached the crucial point of the insurrectional project: the constitution of autonomous base nuclei (we are using this term here to simplify things).

The essential, visible and immediately comprehensible characteristic of the latter is that they are composed of both anarchists and non-anarchists.

The more difficult points reside elsewhere however, and on the few occasions of experimentation these have turned out to be a source of considerable misunderstanding. First of all, the fact that they are structures in the quantitative sense. If they are such—and in fact they are—then this characteristic needs to be clarified. They are actually points of reference, not fixed structures where people can count themselves through all the procedures of established membership (card-carrying, payment of dues, supplying services, etc). The only aim of the base nuclei is struggle. They operate like lungs in the respiratory system, swelling when the struggle intensifies and reducing in size when it weakens, to swell again when the next clash occurs. During quiet spells, between one involvement and another—and here by involvement we mean any aspect of struggle, even simply handing out a leaflet, participating in a public meeting, but also squatting a building or sabotaging one of the instruments of power—the nucleus acts as a zonal reference, a sign of the presence of an informal organisational structure.

To see autonomous base nuclei as needing to grow quantitatively would be to turn them into union-style organisms, i.e. something like the Cobas in Italy, who defend workers' rights in the various productive sectors through a wide range of activities such as claiming and defence of those they represent. The more delegates there are, the louder the voice of the claimant. The autonomous base nucleus does not have delegates, it does not propose struggles based on wide objectives such as the defence of jobs, wage increases, or safeguarding health in the factory, etc. The base nucleus exists for the one objective that was decided upon at the start. This can also be a claim of some kind, not made through the representative method of delegation, but faced using direct methods of immediate struggle such as constant unannounced attacks and the blunt refusal of all the political forces that claim to represent anyone or anything.

Those who form the base nuclei should therefore not expect some complex level of support to cover a wide range of needs. They must understand that this is not a question of some union-style defence organisation, but is an instrument of struggle against one specific objective, and is only valid if the initial decision to have recourse to insurrectional methods stands firm. Participation in the nuclei is quite spontaneous, as there are no benefits other than the specific, exclusive one of strength and organisation concerning the objective that has been chosen together, and attacking it. So, it is quite logical not to expect such organisms to develop a high numerical or (even less) stable, composition. In the preparatory phase of the struggle those who identify

with the objective, agree with it and are prepared to put themselves at risk, are few. When the struggle is underway and the first results begin to appear, the hesitant and weak will also join in and the nucleus will swell, only for these last-minute participants to disappear later on. This is quite natural and should not worry us or make us see this instrument of mass organisation in a negative light.

Another common area of incomprehension is the short lifespan of the autonomous base nucleus itself. It comes to an end upon reaching the objective that had been decided (or through common agreement concerning the impossibility of reaching it). Many ask themselves: if the nuclei ‘also’ function as a regrouping point of reference, why not keep them in place for possible use in some future struggle? Here we come back to the concept of ‘informality’ again. Any structure that carries on in time beyond its original aim, sooner or later turns into a stable structure whose original purpose is distorted into the new and apparently legitimate one of quantitative growth. It grows in strength in order to reach the multiplicity of goals—each one interesting enough in itself—that appear on the nebulous horizon of the exploited. As soon as the informal structure plants roots in a new, stable form, individuals suited to managing the latter will appear on the scene: always the same ones, the most capable, with plenty of time to spare. Sooner or later the circle will close around the so-called revolutionary anarchist structure, which by now will have found its sole aim, its own survival. This is precisely what we see happening when such an organisational structure, albeit anarchist and revolutionary, establishes itself: it becomes a rarefied form of power that attracts all the comrades who want to do good for the people and so on, etc, etc.—all with the best will in the world, of course.

One last organisational element, which is necessary at times, is the ‘coordination’ of autonomous base nuclei. The coordinating structure is also informal and is composed of various representatives of the base nuclei. Whereas the individual nuclei, given their function as ‘lungs’ can be informal to the point of not even having any fixed meeting place (because a nucleus can arrange to meet anywhere), this cannot be so for the coordinating body. If a struggle—still circumscribed to the specific question that started the project—lasts for a considerable length of time and covers a fairly wide area, it is necessary to find a place for the various activities of the base nuclei to coordinate themselves.

The presence of anarchist affinity groups is not directly visible in the coordination, and this can also be said concerning the informal organisation. Of course anarchists are present in all the various base nuclei, but this is not the ideal place for anarchist propaganda in the classic sense of the word. The first thing to be done, both within the coordination and the individual nuclei, is to analyse the problem, the objective to be reached, then look at the insurrectional means to be used in the struggle. The task of comrades is to participate in the project and go into the means and methods to be employed, along with everyone else involved. Although this might sound simple here, it turns out to be far more complicated in practice.

The function of the ‘coordination of the autonomous base nuclei’ is therefore that of linking up the struggles. Here we have only one thing to suggest (absolutely indigestible for anarchists, but quite simple for anyone who is not an anarchist): the need, in the case of a mass attack against a given structure of power, to decide upon individual tasks before the attack takes place, i.e. to agree on what needs to be done down to the minutest detail. Many imagine such occasions of struggle to be an orgy of spontaneity: the objective is there in front of everyone, all you need to do is go ahead and rout out the forces protecting it and destroy them. I am putting things in these terms here, although I know that many will have a hundred different ways of seeing things,

but the essence does not change. All of the participants must have a precise idea of what to do, it being a question of a struggle taking place in a given area that will have to overcome specific armed resistance. Now, if only a few people know what to do the resulting confusion will be the same, if not worse, than if no one does at all.

A plan is therefore necessary. There have been instances where it was necessary to have an armed military plan simply to hand out a leaflet (for example during the insurrection of Reggio Calabria). But can this plan really be made available to everybody, even just a few days before the attack? I do not think so. For reasons of security. On the other hand, details of the plan of attack must be available to all the participants. One deduces that not everybody can participate in drawing it up, but only those who in some way or other happen to be known either for their participation in the autonomous base nuclei, or because they belong to the affinity groups adhering to the coordination. This is to avoid infiltration by police and secret services, something that is more than likely on such occasions. People who are not known must be guaranteed by those who are. This might be unpleasant, but it is unavoidable.

The problem gets complicated when the project in course is known to many comrades who could be interested in participating in one of the actions of attack we are talking about. In this case, the influx would be considerable (in the case of Comiso, in the days of the attempted occupation, about 300 comrades came from all over Italy and beyond) and the need to avoid the presence of infiltrators becomes far more serious. Comrades turning up at the last minute might not know about the action in course, and will not be able to understand what is going on. In the same way, all those who decide not to accept the above verification will end up feeling left out.

And finally two last points that merit a concise, linear explanation: why we consider the insurrectional methodology and projectuality to be the most suitable means in the revolutionary clash today, and what we think can come from the use of insurrectional methods in a situation that is not insurrection in act.

As far as the first question is concerned, an analysis of social and economic reality today shows how structures of synthesis reproduce all the defects of the political parties of the past, great or small, making them ineffective or only useful to the restructuring of power.

To the second question, one could reply that it is impossible to say in advance how the conditions leading to insurrection will develop. Any occasion might be the right one, even if it looks like an insignificant experiment. But there is more. To develop a project of insurrectional struggle starting from one specific problem, i.e. a precise manifestation of power to the detriment of a considerable mass of excluded, is more than a simple 'experiment'. It is insurrection in act, without wanting to exaggerate something that starts off as something small, and will probably remain so. What is important is the method, and anarchists still have a long way to go in that direction, otherwise we will remain unprepared in the case of the many insurrections of whole peoples that have taken place to date and continue to do so.

Basically this book is a contribution to the great problem 'What is to be done?'.

Catania, 21 November 1998.

Excluded and Included

The end of ideology has almost arrived, but not quite. No political apparatus could ever do without it altogether. The substantial changes in the productive structure of capital that have occurred globally over the last ten years, have almost emptied the existing ideological cover of any meaning. With this you cannot say that politics, intended as the management and repressive action of the State, has got any closer to people's needs. Vague new arrivals whose ideological cover is still in formation are appearing on the heels of the ghosts of the past. We can only say that, in the present state of affairs, their aim is always to put pressure on irrational instincts, to solicit behaviour disposed to maintaining the order imposed by the ruling class.

What leaps to our attention is the illusion of freedom embalmed in all the logical trappings of the old liberalism hastily dusted to make way for the sinister operation of managing the new markets in Eastern Europe. Liberalism bases itself on a precise discrimination between two categories of person: one who can enjoy not just human and political rights but also practical ones such as the right to life itself, and the others for whom such rights exist in a reduced form and can be suspended or withdrawn at any moment.

Historically there is no need to point out that the champion of political freedom, Locke, owed his fortune to private investment in British companies who operated in the slave trade for nearly a century. The English Revolution, from which the idea of political liberalism came, was considered a major victory over Spain as the Peace Treaty of Utrecht achieved the destruction of the Spanish monopoly of the slave trade and so it began this lucrative business itself on a large scale.

In fact, if we look closely we can see that the new ideological trappings that the academic organisations dealing with such affairs are about to throw over things hastily is a grafting of the old liberal hypocrisy on to a social body that is now extremely fragmented. Only one element of all the old chatter remains: that people are equal in principle alone, in practice they are divided into two categories, those who have rights and those who do not. By rights we mean the ability to access sources of material wealth and create change aimed at reducing discrepancies in income distribution, in other words, hopes for a better future or at least one that is better than the present.

Whether the political movements that are moving towards a phase in global management that could be seen as the participation of lower strata in the living conditions of the upper will reduce the power of States, remains to be seen. The effects of this ideological perspective are already there, helping to create the optimal conditions for the global productive system in a post-industrial perspective.

The main aspect of this process is that only a tiny number of producers will attain humane living conditions, i.e. will perceive any correlation between opportunities offered by the State and capital and the possibility of exploiting them. The rest, the vast majority, will have to find a place in separation, in the "dirty" work that old liberals like Mandeville likened to that of slaves. Not "dirty" in the sense of physical brutality, but "dirty" in the true sense of the word, in that it dirties intelligence, brutalising it, lowering it, reducing it to the level of the machine, distorting it from the most characteristic quality of man, unpredictability.

In this context ideological modernisation is moving hand in hand with profound changes in the structures of production. Now, in a coordinated system of real and imagined processes based on flexibility, adaptability and the rejection of an authority no longer interested in efficiency, the old function of the State as the centralising element of management and repression is bound to diminish.

This weakening is in the order of things, it is the spirit of the times, if you like.

Here the question arises: is this weakening a good thing? The answer, at least for anarchists, should be that it is. And it would have been, had it not run into ideas in recent times that we think should be stressed here.

Let's start with the positive aspects. Any reduction in State power is a positive move that opens up new spaces of freedom, more solid defence movements, an expectation of better times; survival if you like, but also organisational forms of struggle that the great repressive giants were easily able to destroy. It is therefore a positive move to participate in struggles that move towards breaking up States. Unfortunately, national liberation struggles have not always been opportunities to undermine the monolithic nature of power and propose possible lines of social conflict that could indicate various feasible paths in this sphere. This has often been overtaken by a sudden arrival of larger movements, capitalist restructuring in the lead, imperialist interference in the distribution of global power, mechanisms of uneven development, etc.

At the present time, other considerations are being imposed on already existing ones. Not so much to make us see national liberation struggles and all the movements involved in breaking up the centralised States of the past negatively, but to raise the question on grounds that are more suited to the present time.

First of all there are the international measures that balance out the repressive and productive apparatuses of individual States in agreements that provide for the circulation of data upon which all the internal structures of control are based. In the years to come these superstructures will spread to the point of reconstituting world divisions similar to those that we used to see in the past. For all that these new forms will present themselves in quite a different ideological wrapping, they will perform the task of taking the old State power back to the forms that are in the process of disintegrating. It could be argued, and rightly so, that the development of nationalism as an ideological element in some processes of disintegration is not just a stupid tool deliberately put in the field to permit structural changes that would otherwise be impossible. There can be no doubt that the global productive system cannot tolerate large centralised States today as they are too elephantine in their relations with a capitalism that is forever speeding up its productive processes.

Secondly, the need to adapt the democratic tool of consensus to the changing conditions of production needs to be taken into account. If the latter are producing individuals that are under-qualified, rendered unstable not just in their capacity to work but mentally in the widest sense of the term due to precarious wage-earning; if these individuals, as elements of society, family, work, leisure—in other words social elements—are constantly kept in unstable conditions, they cannot relate to a monolithic State bureaucracy that seems more and more obsolete. So, as the cultural instruments that were supposed to transform him from subject into citizen of a democratic State are taken away from the individual, especially through school, the State apparatus has become democratized, beckoning the subject—that so-called citizen of constitutional rights and freedom—to maximum collaboration. On the other hand, a democratic restructuring of modern States would not have been possible without a flattening of the individual, the breaking up

of the proletariat's traditional forms of organisation and, mainly, destroying the class unity that once often made itself heard in movements which, even if not exactly revolutionary, were still able to hinder and disrupt the process of capital accumulation.

Finally, it is necessary to consider the fact that these disruptive movements operate at two levels, only the second interesting from the revolutionary point of view. The first level is the official one promoted by the middle classes of the more advanced countries, whose aim is to rebuild the old monolithic State structures on more acceptable bases in relation to capital's new productive processes. And these bases appear to be breaking up in comparison with preceding administrations, because they must necessarily become more shrewd in terms of ideology. This movement's official breakdown of States is planting its roots very deeply, moving away from the regionalist argument that made administrative, and also political in some aspects, decentralisation the cornerstone of a regenerated and more efficient State system. The substantial failure of regionalism in countries like Italy, a good example in this field, must not lead us to believe there has been a turnaround. The ruling classes need to give the dominated the illusion of participation in the management of public affairs. This need is as old as the hills, but in recent decades it has become not just a blatantly and continuously violated facade, but a necessity.

The Italian Leagues, a phenomenon of so much interest today and not only in Italy, must be traced back to the collapse of the monolithic State of the past, and can be seen as heir and ultimate streamlining of the old regionalism. The transition between these two ways of managing public affairs is not continuous however, in the sense that there is a fracture, perhaps not very important from the point of view of those who see States as the enemy to strike down anyway, without being too subtle, but important for anyone trying to understand the composition of the enemy in order to identify its weak points. And this fracture is located precisely in the ideological graft attached to the simple and obvious fact that the upper classes of the richest regions would stand to gain economically by managing their own miniature State. On the other hand, this ideological graft has, as always, proved essential for involving the people on an emotional level, releasing the frustrations of the masses—who in any case are far from the wellbeing of the narrow ruling classes—based on the classic symbols of diversity: the black person, the jew, the immigrant, the thief, the violent, or building nationalistic myths bordering on the ridiculous at times. But the ridiculous, far from being a negative element in these things, in the general absence of critical illumination, becomes a cohesive and strong connective tissue within the masses.

This level of disaggregation, controlled and managed by the ruling classes who have every interest in building privileged zones for themselves within their Teutonic castles, cling to administering their privileged status as included, keeping a distance and managing, mainly through the tool of ignorance, the constant pressure of the excluded that is manifesting itself in Europe today and could take global dimensions in the future.

The breaking up of the Soviet empire has resulted in a massive thrust towards this kind of particularism, accentuated in regions where ethnic specificity had not been eliminated in forty years of forced communalism. And it is this particularity that has nearly always taken over the developing and adapting of the conditions of the class conflict in course, the ideological element, until it reached the exacerbation of ferocity and brutality that can be seen in former Yugoslavia. Despite the vast variety of behaviour in individual States, a clear enough trend can be seen in the hypothesis of a piloted breakdown or smooth transition to another kind of public management. The recipe for this step is complex and in any case, without getting too specific, contains both an administrative and an ideological element. These two elements interpenetrate and are mutually

supportive, generating from each other, and neither the one nor the other excludes recourse to instruments of repression and staging of power that could be seen as a return to the old ways. Political pragmatism will never retreat before such petty things.

But there is another level of disaggregation, that which penetrates people's minds, operates at an individual level and which the State, unable to offer the behaviour patterns and values of the past, cannot avoid dealing with. The only demarcation capable of opposing itself to this failure of the State is cultural segregation, far more rigid and effective than the physical one that we saw in the past. An unprecedented apartheid, insurmountable because it is based on the absence of desire, because you cannot desire what you do not know. But for now, and it is not foreseeable until this disruption is actually taking place, runs parallel to the lack of ideological interconnection and is positive for Eastern European countries and bad for the so-called anti-communist Western bloc. The function that proletarian internationalism had in the USSR or China acted as a counterbalance to the fear of communism, fuelled by the bosses' interests, in the West. With all that out of the way, grand illusions were replaced by small ones, ghosts on a small scale that were promptly set to work in some cases, as the various nationalisms that are operating on the European scene, and in some other cases are still under construction.

Some reflection on the importance of elements within this disruptive erosion from below, now operating not only in advanced capitalist States, is important. Let's start with the decline of the idea of progress. According to liberal babble this concept, originating from the Enlightenment, was supposed to establish the constitutional State, then the democratic one, allowing everyone to contribute to the improvement of public affairs. But these illusions of progress, to use the title of a famous book by Sorel, served only to bolster hopes of improvement, whether reformist in the short-term, or long-term revolutionary ones.

Locked in the same fantasy, revolutionaries and reformist politicians shared the expectation of a better future, guaranteed by the objective progression of history. This idea, far from being a vacuous exercise of layabout spirits, fed millions of people with dreams of universal abundance, of taking everything, putting utopia and managerial pragmatism in the same basket. This is now over, and has added piece by piece to the breakdown in progress.

The Marxist and liberal ideologies were identical on this point. Both promised abundance and work for all, popular consumerism, although differentiated, and exponential economic growth. Then it was realized that the demand could not sustain itself indefinitely and that consumers were divided into two groups, one with access to consumerism and one with a progressive reduction in needs to the point of survival. This, at the global level, reaches hallucinatory clarity under conditions in underdeveloped countries where people are dying of hunger, disease, medieval pestilence, all in contrast with the privileged living conditions of the ruling class. And these differences are not only far away in space, surrounded by the desert or the swamps, but exist side by side in the great metropoli, which represent perhaps the clearest evidence of the failure of the progressive ideology.

In the evolution of social contradictions over the past few years, certain tendencies have become so pronounced that they can now be considered real changes.

The structure of power has moved from straightforward arbitrary rule to a relationship based on adjustment and compromise. This has led to a considerable increase in demand for services compared to traditional demands such as durable consumer goods. The results have been an increase in the aspects of production based on information technology, the robotisation of the

productive sector, and the pre-dominance of the services sector (commerce, tourism, transport, credit, insurance, public administration, etc.) over industry and agriculture.

This does not mean that the industrial sector has disappeared or become insignificant, only that it will employ fewer and fewer workers while levels of production remain the same, or even improve. The same is true of agriculture, which will be greatly affected by the process of industrialisation, and distinguishable from industry in statistical rather than social terms.

This situation is developing more as a “transition”, not something cut and dried, but a trend. There is no distinct separation between the industrial and post-industrial periods. The phase we are passing through is clearly that of eclipsing the obsolete institutions that are being restructured; but it has not yet reached the closure of all factories and the establishment of a reign of computerised production.

The tendency to break up units of production and the demand for small self-exploiting nuclei within a centralised productive project will predominate in the next few years. But in the industrial sector this will be accompanied by slow adjustments using traditional means expedient to the cautious strategies of capital.

This discourse relates more to the British and Italian situations, still far behind their Japanese and American models.

Torn from the factories in a slow and perhaps irreversible process, yesterday's workers are being thrown into a highly competitive environment. The aim is to increase productive capacity, the only consumable product according to the computerised logic of the centres of production. The atomised (and even more deadly) conflicts within capital itself will erase the alternative, revolutionary struggle, with the intention of exacerbating class differences and rendering them unbridgeable.

The most important gains for the inhabitants of the productive “islands”, their seemingly greater “freedom”, the flexible working hours, the qualitative changes (always within the competitive logic of the market as directed by the order-giving centres) reinforce the belief that they have reached the promised land: the reign of happiness and well-being. Ever increased profits and ever more exacerbated “creativity”.

These islands of death are surrounded by ideological and physical barriers, to force those who have no place on them back into a tempestuous sea where no one survives.

So the problem revealing itself is precisely that of the excluded.

The excluded and the included.

The first are those who will remain marginalised. Expelled from the productive process and penalised for their incapacity to insert themselves into the new competitive logic of capital, they are often not prepared to accept the minimum levels of survival assigned to them by State assistance (increasingly seen as a relic of the past in a situation that tends to extol the virtues of the “self-made man”). These will not just be the social strata condemned to this role through their ethnic origin—today, for example, the West Indians in British society, catalysts of the recent riots in that country—but with the development of the social change we are talking about, social strata which in the past were lulled by secure salaries and now find themselves in a situation of rapid and radical change, will also be among them. Even the residual supports that these social strata benefit from (early pensions, unemployment benefit, various kinds of social security, etc.)

will not make them accept a situation of growing discrimination. And let us not forget that the degree of consumerism of these expelled social strata cannot be compared to that of the ethnic groups who have never been brought into the sphere of salaried security. This will surely lead to explosions of “social ill-being” of a different kind, and it will be up to revolutionaries to unite these with the more elementary outbreaks of rebellion.

Then there are the included, those who will remain suffocating on the islands of privilege. Here the argument threatens to become more complicated and can only be clearly laid out if one is prepared to give credit to man and his real need for freedom. Almost certainly those who turn back from this sector will be amongst the most merciless executants of the attack on capital in its new form. We are moving towards a period of bloody clashes and very harsh repression. Social peace, dreamt of on one side and feared by the other, remains the most inaccessible myth of this new capitalist utopia, heir to the “pacific” logic of liberalism which dusted the drawing room while butchering in the kitchen, giving welfare at home and massacring in the colonies.

The new opportunities for small, miserable, loathsome daily liberties will be paid for by profound, cruel and systematic discrimination against vast social strata. Sooner or later this will lead to the growth of a consciousness of exploitation inside the privileged strata, which cannot fail to cause rebellions, even if only limited to the best among them. Finally, it should be said that there is no longer a strong ideological support for the new capitalist perspective such as that which existed in the past, capable of giving support to the exploiters and, more important still, to the intermediate layers of cadres. Wellbeing for the sake of it is not enough, especially for the many groups of people who, in the more or less recent past, have experienced or simply read about liberatory utopias, revolutionary dreams and attempts, however limited, at insurrectional projects.

The latter will lose no time in reaching the others. Not all the included will live blissfully in the artificial happiness of capital. Many of them will realise that the misery of one part of society poisons the appearance of wellbeing of the rest, and turns freedom (behind the barbed wire fences) into a virtual prison.

Over the past few years the industrial project has also been modified by the fusion of State controls and methods linked with the political interest in controlling consensus.

Looking at things from the technical side, one can see how the organisation of production is being transformed. Production no longer has to take place in one single location, (the factory), but is more and more spread over a whole territory, even at considerable distances. This allows industrial projects to develop that take account of a better, more balanced distribution of productive centres within a territory, eradicating some of the aspects of social disorder that have existed in the past such as ghetto areas and industrial super-concentrations, areas of high pollution and systematic destruction of the eco-systems. Capital is now looking forward to an ecological future, embracing the great hotchpotch of environmentalists and championing the protection of natural resources, thereby making the construction of cities of the future with a “human face”, socialist or not, seem possible.

The real motivation driving the capitalist project towards distant lands resembling the utopias of yesteryear, is very simple and in no way philanthropic: it is the need to reduce class discontent to a minimum, smoothing the edges of any effective confrontation through a sugar-coated progressive development based on a blind faith in the technology of the future.

It is obvious that the most attractive proposals will be made to the included, to try as far as possible to avoid defections, which will be the real thorn in the side of tomorrow’s capitalists. The

individual subjects who turn their goals in a revolutionary direction, if they come from within the sphere of the production process, will have real weapons to put at the disposal of the revolution against the rule of exploitation.

So far the utopian hope of governing the world through “good” technology has shown itself to be impossible, because it has never taken into account the problem of the physical dimension to be assigned to the ghetto of the excluded. They could be recycled into the garden-project in an ungenerous mixture of happiness and sacrifice, but only up to a point.

Tension and repeated explosions of rage will put the fanciful utopia of the exploiters in serious difficulty.

It has long been evident. Competition and monopolism were threatening to draw the productive structures into a series of recurrent “crises”. Crises of production in most cases. For the old capitalist mentality it was essential to achieve so-called “economies of scale”, and this was only possible by working with ever greater volumes of production in order to spread fixed costs as far as possible. This led to a standardisation of production: the accumulation of productive units in particular locations, distributed haphazardly with a colonising logic (for example the classical Sicilian “cathedrals in the desert”: isolated industrial areas, petrol refineries, etc. that were to serve as points of aggregation); the uniformity of products; the division of capital and labour, etc.

The first adjustments to this came about through massive State intervention. The State’s presence has opened up various opportunities. It is no longer a passive spectator, simply capital’s “cashier”, but has become an active operator, “banker” and entrepreneur.

In essence, these adjustments have meant the diminution of use value, and an increase in the production of exchange value in the interests of maintaining social peace.

In bringing to an end its most competitive period, capital has found a partial solution to its problems. The State has lent a hand with the aim of completely transforming economic production into the production of social peace. This utopian project is clearly unreachable. Sooner or later the machine will shatter.

The new productive process—which has often been defined as post-industrial—makes low production costs possible even for small quantities of goods. It can obtain considerable modifications in production with only modest injections of capital and makes hitherto unseen changes to products possible. This opens up undreamed horizons of “freedom” to the middle classes, the productive cadres, and within the golden isolation of the managerial classes. But this is rather like the freedom of the castle for the Teutonic knights of the Nazi kind. Surrounded by the walls of the mansion, armed to the teeth, only the peace of the graveyard reigns within.

None of the makers of the ideologies of post-industrial capitalism have asked themselves what must be done about the danger that will come from the other side of the walls.

The riots of the future will be ever more bloody and terrible. Even more so when we know how to transform them into mass insurrections.

It will not be unemployment as such to negatively define those excluded from the castle of Teutonic knights, but mainly the lack of real access to information.

The new model of production will necessarily reduce the availability of information. This is only partly due to the computerisation of society. It is one of the basic conditions of the new dominion and as such has been developing for at least twenty years, finding its climax in a mass schooling that is already devoid of any concrete operative content.

Just as the advent of machinery led to a reduction in the capacity for self-determination during the industrial revolution by trooping the mass of workers into factories, destroying peasant

culture and giving capital a workforce who were practically incapable of “understanding” the contents of the new mechanised world that was beginning to loom up. So now the computer revolution, grafted to the State’s process of adjusting capitalist contradictions, is about to deliver the factory proletariat into the hands of a new kind of machinery armed with a language that is only comprehensible to a privileged few. The rest will be chased back and forced into the ghetto.

The old knowledge, even that filtered down from the intellectuals through the deforming mirror of ideology, will be coded in a machine language and made compatible with the new requirements. This will be one of the historic occasions for discovering, among other things, the scarcity of any real content in the ideological gibberish that has been administered to us over the past two centuries.

Capital will tend to abandon everything that is not immediately translatable into this new generalised language. Traditional educative processes will be devalued and will diminish in content, unveiling their real (and selective) substance as merchandise.

In the place of language new behavioural canons will be supplied, formed from fairly precise rules, and mainly developed from the old processes of democratisation and assembly, which capital has learned to control perfectly. This will be doubly useful as it will also give the excluded the impression that they are “participating” in public affairs.

The computerised society of tomorrow could even have clean seas and an “almost” perfect safeguarding of the limited resources of the environment, but it will be a jungle of prohibitions and rules, of nightmare in the form of deep personal decisions about participating in the common good. Deprived of a language of common reference, the ghettoised will no longer be able to read between the lines of the messages of power, and will end up having no other outlet than spontaneous riot, irrational and destructive, an end in itself.

The collaboration of those members of the included, disgusted with the artificial freedom of capital, who become revolutionary carriers of an albeit small part of this technology which they have managed to snatch from capital, will not be enough to build a bridge or supply a language on which to base knowledge and accurate counter-information.

The organised work of future insurrections must solve this problem, must build—perhaps starting from scratch—the basic terms of a communication that is about to be closed off; and which, precisely in the moment of closure, could give life, through spontaneous and uncontrolled reactions, to such manifestations of violence as to make past experiences pale into insignificance.

One should not see the new ghetto as the shanty town of the past, a patchwork of refuse forced on to suffering and deprivation. The new ghetto, codified by the rules of the new language, will be the passive beneficiary of the technology of the future. It will also be allowed to possess the rudimentary manual skills required to permit the functioning of objects which, rather than satisfy needs, are in themselves a colossal need.

These skills will be quite sufficient for the impoverished quality of life in the ghetto.

It will even be possible to produce objects of considerable complexity at a reasonable cost, and advertise them with that aura of exclusiveness that traps the purchaser, now a prey to capital’s projects. Moreover, with the new productive conditions we will no longer have repetitions of the same objects in series, or changes and development in technology only with great difficulty and cost. Instead there will be flexible, articulated processes that are interchangeable. It will be possible to apply the new forms of control at a low cost, to influence demand by guiding it and thereby create the essential conditions for the production of social peace.

Such an apparent simplification of life, for both the included and the excluded, such technological “freedom”, has led sociologists and economists—like the good people they have always been—to go wild and sketch the outlines of an interclassist society capable of living “well” without re-awakening the monsters of the class struggle, communism or anarchy.

The decline of interest in the unions and the absence of any of the reformist character they might have had in the past—now mere transmission belts for the orders of the bosses—has come to be seen as proof of the end of the class struggle and the advent of the post-industrial society. This does not make sense for a number of reasons that we shall see further on. Trade unionism has lost its reformist significance, not because the class struggle is over, but because the conditions of the clash have changed profoundly.

Basically, we are now faced with contradictions that are greater than ever and remain unresolved.

Two phases

To be schematic, two phases can be identified.

In the industrial period capitalist competition and production based on manufacturing was prevalent. The most significant economic sector was the secondary (manufacturing) one, which used the energy produced as the transformative resource, and financial capital as the strategic one. The technology of this period was for the greater part mechanical and the most prominent producer was the worker. The methodology applied was empirical, based on experimentation, while the organisation of the productive process as a whole was based on limitless growth.

In the post-industrial period, which we are approaching but have not fully entered, the State prevails over capitalist competition and imposes its methods of maintaining consensus and production aimed at promoting social peace. The elaboration of data and the modification of services will replace the technical mode of manufacturing. The predominant economic sectors have become the tertiary (services), the quaternary (specialised finance) and the quinary (research, leisure, education, public administration). The principal transformational resource is information composed of a complex system of data transmission, while the strategic resource is provided by the knowledge that is slowly taking the place of financial capital. Technology is abandoning its mechanical component and focussing on the intellectual one. The typical requisite employed by this new technology is no longer the worker but the technician, the professional, the scientist. The method used in the project depends on theory, not experimentation as in the past, whereas the organisation of the productive process is based on the systematization of theoretical knowledge.

Looking back to the productive industrial phase, Marxism considered that the working class's contribution was fundamental to the revolutionary solving of social contradictions. As a result the strategies of the workers' movement were greatly conditioned by the aim of seizing power.

Hegelian mystification, nourished by Marx, lay at the heart of this reasoning: that the dialectical opposition between proletariat and bourgeoisie could be exacerbated by reinforcing the proletariat indirectly through reinforcing capital and the State. So each victory by the repression was seen as the anteroom of the future victory of the proletariat. Everything was set within a progressive delusion—typical of the enlightenment—of it being possible to forge the “spirit” in a world of matter.

With a few undeniably interesting modifications, this old conception of the class struggle still persists today in some of the nightmarish aspirations that occasionally spring up from the old projects of glory and conquest. This purely imaginary conception has never been seriously analysed.

There is only the fairly concordant acceptance that the workers have been deposed from their central position. First, timidly, in the direction of a move from the factory into the whole of the social terrain. Then, more decisively, in the sense of a progressive substitution of the secondary manufacturing sector by the tertiary services one.

Anarchists have also had their illusions and these have also faded. Strictly speaking, although these illusions never concerned the central role of workers, they often saw the world of work as being of fundamental importance, giving precedence to industry over the primary (agricultural) sector. Anarcho-syndicalism fuelled these illusions.

Even in recent times there has been great enthusiasm for the CNT's rise from the ashes, particularly among those who seem to be the most radical trailblazers of the new "roads" of reformist anarchism today.

The main concept of this worker centrality (different from that of the marxists, but less so than is commonly believed), was the shadow of the Party.

For a long time the anarchist movement has acted as an organisation of synthesis, that is, like a party.

Not the whole of the anarchist movement, but certainly its organised forms.

Let us take the Italian FAI (Federazione Anarchica Italiana) for example. It is an organisation of synthesis to this day. It is based on a program, its periodical Congresses are the central focus for its activity, and it looks at reality outside from the point of view of a "connecting" centre, i.e., as being the synthesis between the reality outside the movement (revolutionary reality), and that within the specific anarchist movement.

Some comrades would object that this is a generalisation, of course, but they cannot deny that the mentality behind the relation of synthesis of a specific anarchist organisation concerning the reality beyond the movement, is very close to the "party" mentality.

Good intentions are not enough.

Well, this mentality has diminished. Not only among younger comrades who want an open informal relationship with the revolutionary movement, but, more important, it has diminished in the social reality itself.

If syndicalist struggle, as well as marxist methods and those of the libertarian organisations of synthesis, might have seemed reasonable under industrial conditions of production, today, in a profoundly different post-industrial perspective, the only possible strategy for anarchists is an informal one. By this we mean groups of comrades who come together with precise objectives, on the basis of affinity, and contribute to creating mass structures that set themselves intermediate aims, while creating the minimal conditions for transforming situations of simple riot into those of insurrection.

The party of marxism is dead. That of the anarchists too. When I read criticisms such as those recently made by social ecologists where they speak of the death of anarchism, I realise that it is a question of language as well as the incapacity to examine problems within the anarchist movement, a limitation pointed out by these comrades themselves. What is dead for them—and also for me—is the anarchism that thought it could become the organisational point of reference for the next revolution, that saw itself as a structure of synthesis aimed at generating the multiple

forms of human creativity directed at breaking up State structures of consensus and repression. What is dead is the static anarchism of the traditional organisations with quantitative aims, based on claiming better conditions. The idea that social revolution is something that must necessarily result from our struggles has proved to be unfounded. It might, but then again it might not.

Determinism is dead, and the blind law of cause and effect along with it. The revolutionary means we use, including insurrection, do not necessarily lead to social revolution. The causal model so dear to the positivists of the last century does not exist in reality.

And precisely for that reason, the revolution becomes possible.

The reduction of time in data-transmission means an acceleration in programmed decision-making. If this time is reduced to zero (as happens in electronic “real time”), programmed decisions are not only accelerated but are also transformed. They become something different.

By modifying projects, elements of productive investments are also modified, transferring themselves from traditional capital (mainly financial) to the capital of the future (mainly intellectual).

The management of the different is one of the fundamental elements of reality.

By perfecting the relationship between politics and economy, putting an end to the contradictions produced by competition, by organising consensus and, more importantly, by programming all this in a perspective of real time, the power structure cuts off a large part of society: the part of the excluded.

The greatly increased speed of productive operations will more than anything else give rise to a cultural and linguistic modification. Here lies the greatest danger for the ghettoised.

The party is based on the reformist hypothesis. This requires a community of language, if not of interest. That happened with parties and also with trade unions. Community of language translated itself into a fictitious class opposition that was characterised by a request for improvements on the one hand, and resistance to conceding them on the other.

To ask for something requires a language “in common” with whoever has what we are asking for.

Now the global repressive project aims at breaking up this community. Not with the walls of special prisons, ghettos, satellite cities or big industrial centres, but, on the contrary, by decentralising production, improving services, applying ecological principles to production, all with the most absolute segregation of the excluded.

And this segregation will be obtained by progressively depriving them of the language that they possessed in common with the rest of society.

There will be nothing left to ask.

In an era that could still be defined industrial, consensus was based on the possibility of participating in the benefits of production. In an era where capital’s capacity to change is practically infinite, the capital/State duo will require a language of its own, separate from that of the excluded in order to best achieve its new perspective.

The inaccessibility of the dominant language will become a far more effective means of segregation than the traditional confines of the ghetto. The increasing difficulty in attaining the dominant language will gradually make it become absolutely “other”. From that moment it will disappear from the desires of the excluded and remain ignored by them. From that moment on the included will be “other” for the excluded and vice versa.

This process of exclusion is essential to the repressive project. Fundamental concepts of the past, such as solidarity, communism, revolution, anarchy, based their validity on the common

recognition of the concept of equality. But for the inhabitants of the castle of Teutonic knights the excluded will not be people, but simply things, objects to be bought or sold in the same way as the slaves were for our predecessors.

We do not feel equality with the dog, because it limits itself to barking, it does not "speak" our language. We can be fond of it, but necessarily feel it to be "other", and we do not spare much thought for its kind, at least not at the level of all dogs, preferring to attach ourselves to the dog that provides us with its obedience, affection, or its fierceness towards our enemies.

A similar process will take place in relation to all those who do not share our language. Here we must not confuse language with "tongue". Our progressive and revolutionary tradition has taught us that all men are equal over and above differences of mother tongue. We are speaking here of a possible repressive development that would deprive the excluded of the very possibility of communicating with the included. By greatly reducing the utility of the written word, and gradually replacing books and newspapers with images, colours and music, for example, the power structure of tomorrow could construct a language aimed at the excluded alone. They, in turn, would be able to create different, even creative, means of linguistic reproduction, but always with their own codes and quite cut out of any contact with the code of the included, therefore from any possibility of understanding the latter's world. And from incomprehension to disinterest and mental closure, it is a short step.

So reformism is in its death throes. It will no longer be possible to make claims, because no one will know what to ask from a world that has ceased to interest us or to tell us anything comprehensible.

Cut off from the language of the included, the excluded will also be cut off from their technology. Perhaps they will live in a better, more desirable world, with less danger of apocalyptic conflicts, and eventually, less economically determined tension. But there will be an increase in irrational tension.

From the most peripheral areas of the planet, where in spite of "real time" the project of exploitation will always meet obstacles of an ethnic or geographical nature, to the more central areas where class divisions are more rigid, economically based conflict will give way to conflictuality of an irrational nature.

In their projects of control the included are aiming at general consensus by reducing the economic difficulties of the excluded. They could supply them with a prefabricated language to allow a partial and sclerotised use of some of the dominant technology. They could also allow them a better quality of life. But they will not be able to prevent the outbursts of irrational violence that arise from feeling useless, from boredom and from the deadly atmosphere of the ghetto.

In Britain, for example, always a step ahead in the development of capital's repressive projects, it is already possible to see the beginning of this tendency. The State certainly does not guarantee survival, there is an incredible amount of poverty and unemployment, but the riots that break out there regularly are started by young people—especially West Indian—who know they are definitively cut off from a world that is already strange to them, from which they can borrow a few objects or ways of doing things, but where they are already beginning to feel "other".

The mass movements that make such an impression on some of our comrades today because of their danger and—in their opinion—uselessness, are signs of the direction that the struggles of tomorrow will take.

Even now many young people are no longer able to evaluate the situation in which they find themselves. Deprived of that minimum of culture that school once provided, bombarded by mes-

sages containing aimless gratuitous violence, they are pushed in a thousand ways towards impetuous, irrational and spontaneous rebellion, and deprived of the “political” objectives that past generations believed they could see with such clarity.

The “sites” and expressions of these collective explosions vary a great deal. The occasions also. In each case, however, they can be traced to an intolerance of the society of death managed by the capital/State partnership.

It is pointless to fear those manifestations because of the traditional ideas we have of revolutionary action within mass movements.

It is not a question of being afraid but of passing to action right away, before it is too late.

Transformation in the world of work and school

It is now clear that it is impossible for collective wellbeing to be increased through a planned increase in demand, and that certain groups are destined to be forever excluded from any significant consumerism. One realizes in horror that this field has been narrowed down along with the State's capacity to provide acceptable standards of living. Wider and wider strata are pushing from the confines of the empires, making short-term recipes precipitate into periodic failures that are hastily repainted with slogans of hopeful possibilism. Grandiose programs turn out to be the basest political swindles. Not only are they unable to solve the problem of poverty through great works of social restructuring, they have no desire to do so. The richest country, the United States, is thus prospecting a sad future for its proletarian masses, now well down the road of 'desalarisation' and emargination. In a world that is becoming the circulation of news and the management of information the disparity between rich and poor is growing, and this abyss is visibly greater in the solid monolithic States where the process of decentralisation has not yet taken place. An immense universe of derelicts is spreading like leopard spots, marking with poverty areas that were once considered the centres of commerce and culture of the developed world. In this universe, amidst the continual flow of communication, the metropoli are becoming the extreme point of rupture. One finds oneself abandoned to oneself in the midst of everyone, isolated in the desert inside the global village.

This is not just a question of economic wellbeing. The failure of all the promises of freedom, hopes of an authentic assertion of human dignity regardless of race or social condition, is also important. The values of the global village are anything but universal. They are the values of separation, ghettoisation, and the infinite repetition of all the banalities that build barriers and make forced cohabitation possible. In fact, the argumentation from both right and left is that universal values, valid for all, are inappropriate. Concepts such as equality—real equality, not artificial—are criticised with little insight. In defence of differences, on the other hand, affinities that could consolidate into an adequate response beyond the old class models are marked, whereas artificial differences such as those between nations and peoples are heightened, sometimes with discourses it was thought had disappeared forty years ago. A strong centralised State project is unacceptable in this great melting pot, and people have finally realised this.

One of the symptoms, and perhaps also the causes, of this breaking up of the State can be found in the crisis in humanist culture, the traditional foundation of all strong States. In the most developed countries the incredible decline in teaching standards even in the universities is reaching hitherto unplumbed depths, precisely in the humanist faculties. This is in no way compensated by the technological culture which, although identifiable as a model of life and ideas in the same way as the old humanist culture was, could never be suited to a strong unificatory State.

This breaking up of the idea of the State would be very interesting for anarchists if they were capable of escaping the historical fetters of an outdated concept of revolutionary aggregation. On the other hand, this condition is becoming the field for a proliferation of political movements evolving around single issues that are incapable of supplying a global vision of life and society in the way that anarchism does. Many political specifications are nevertheless operating in the field of renunciation of the traditional State, with the aim of accompanying the profound transformation of world capitalism into the field of public affairs.

But this is threatening to become another story.

a) Relations between inflation and employment

Inflation has been defined in many ways that could be summed up as the tendency of price levels to increase as a whole.

For neoclassical economic thought (up until the twenties) the concept of inflation was restricted to cases of total monetary collapse (for example in Germany after the first world war), where prices increased beyond measure. The normal course of prices was considered to be that of a re-equilibrating of the market where periods of sudden increases were balanced out by phases of reduction.

After the second world war prices increased uninterruptedly alongside an increase in wages. The neoclassical economists thought that, in spite of the constant imbalance and deviation from full employment levels, there was a spontaneous tendency towards equilibrium within the system thanks to a series of automatic mechanisms that act as correctives. One of the mechanisms they theorized was the effect of movement of prices. They said that in an economic system with a high supply, and so with unemployment on the increase, a fall in prices (following an increase in the supply of products) would lead to a return to full employment (following a reduction in wages).

In reality things were different. The fall in prices led to a reduction in economic activity, hence a suppression of demand (due to the reduction in spending power, caused by the increase in unemployment), which did not restore employment to optimal levels, but, on the contrary, led to even more serious levels of unemployment.

Keynes was the first to be convinced that the situation could only be corrected by State intervention. He pointed out the relationship between demand, income levels and employment. He argued that acting on employment would have an effect on demand, which would then stimulate production, setting off a mechanism that would lead to full employment.

Keynes' theories were developed before the events that were to affect capitalism in the thirties took place. At that time mass unemployment came about within a context where the bosses had no prospects of investment, even when considerably lowering costs (wages, reduction of interest on loans), because they could not be sure that they would be able to sell their products.

Today unemployment is very different to that of the twenties. Due to the presence of corporate mechanisms (collective contracts, trade union struggles, etc.) that have slowed down the process, it is not necessarily linked to a decrease in wages and reduced worker combativeness. On the contrary, it can develop as a consequence of the bosses' fear that they will be unable to control the situation. For example, excessive trade union power can cause the other side to stop taking on labour, leading to an increase in unemployment. In such cases—as happened at the beginning of the eighties—Keynes's recipe for sustaining demand no longer applies.

The strange situation occurs where contract labour, initially passed off as a mechanism for strengthening the weaker side, but actually aimed at bolstering demand, inevitably results in reducing investment. It does this by lowering capital's expectations of remuneration, reducing production and leading to an increase in inflation.

Capital has two ways of facing inflation. The first assumes that the capitalist system contains an intrinsic mechanism that moves it spontaneously in the direction of the equilibrium of full employment, an optimal situation where individual wellbeing would correspond to the collective one.

The second considers capitalism to be essentially contradictory, making a situation of equilibrium impossible. In this way the solution—in the medium term—is to obtain the maximum profit in conflictual situations that are absolutely incompatible.

In the first case inflation is seen as an anomaly, a more or less passing evil that can be cured which strikes the system when it approaches full employment or diametrically moves away from it. The malfunctioning of the system is blamed on the behaviour of one or another economic category (bosses, unions, workforce, etc.) refusing to conform to the rules, which should be acting to restore equilibrium.

In the second case, inflation is seen as a condition of development itself, part of the context of the problems of capitalist accumulation. In this way a precise economic category—the bosses—are identified, who make decisions concerning investments. In this perspective inflation becomes one of the instruments that are used in the interests of the dominant side. It is no longer a sickness to be avoided, but an unavoidable event in the tormented trajectory of the capitalist system.

Classical inflation is caused by an excessive demand for goods and services, leading to an increase in prices. If it is protracted over a long period, this leads to an increase in the amount of money in circulation (derived from a nominal increase in income). The result is a discrepancy between the productive level of capital and the number of products available. Clearly it is impossible to establish what increases first: market prices or wages, so it is impossible to establish a clear difference between demand inflation and cost inflation.

However, I want to briefly point out that it is only possible to talk of demand-pull inflation when we are faced with an autonomous extension of demand not linked to an increase in production costs (in the first place wages). When economic policies of sustaining demand according to Keynes's recipe are followed, this corresponds to a kind of redistribution of earnings that can only be realised by the State having recourse to the national debt, given that taxes and duties are never sufficient. Now the national debt is composed of both the sums that the capitalists great and small and the savers lend the State, as well as the paper money that is printed and put in circulation. In theory the first part does not lead to inflation, but in practice it does because it solicits demand and thereby contributes to raising market prices; the second part of the national debt is undoubtedly a thrust towards inflation (by increasing the amount of money in circulation, prices also increase).

Cost inflation comes from a rise in the cost of consumer goods due to a direct or indirect increase in the cost of production (labour in the first place). Basically, increases in the cost of raw materials also have an inflationary effect, but it would be more correct to see these in the increase in wages of the industries producing the raw materials.

Now the labour market is not a competitive market, it is by nature monopolistic (being based on trade union wage contracts). There are no competitive elements in cost inflation that could

lead to a hypothetical mechanism of re-equilibration. Here the mechanism is purely of a social and political nature.

This inflation is therefore social conflict because of the way it is possible to distribute the national income based on continuous attempts by various social groups to increase their own availability (and therefore their own consuming) more quickly than is compatible with the objectives of other groups, and with the abstract concept of general economic stability. This leads to constant price increases and a spiraling prices-wages and wages-prices relationship.

Over the past few years even in conditions that would once have led to a reduction in prices, these have kept increasing, apparently without any limit. Now, so long as there is a substantial increase in productivity, this no longer leads to further price increases, as this is covered by the favourable course of the economy. In fact, it is seen as a contribution to production because it delays or avoids (never completely, however) the dreaded crisis of overproduction. But sooner or later these constant increases affect real wages in the broader sense (including the recompensation of the workforce under the conditions of advanced if not exactly postindustrial society of today), especially in the absence of a parallel increase in productivity. Constant wage increases therefore become necessary, thus affecting the cost of labour and, consequently, profit. Of course, this can be delayed by various factors (firms' capacity for self-financing, markets in expansion, scarce dependence on the financial market, etc.), but no sooner does it start, it ends up spreading rampantly as inexorable cause of cost inflation.

The international causes of inflation are economic and political factors that lead to increases in the cost of raw materials elsewhere which, when imported, give rise to an inflationary process of great dimensions.

That leads to a number of consequences in terms of expectation, conflict, defence within the social body and therefore the labour market. The monopoly situation of wages prevents political intervention in the capitalist sense and exposes companies to backlashes of international inflation which cannot be softened by a drastic reduction in wages or employment. The only road the capitalist can take is therefore that of increasing prices .

What do capitalists do to solve the problem of inflation? The left support an incomes policy (always in the name of capital obviously). Their aim is not so much to affect inflation, as to affect unemployment, so that, by modifying the first, the second is also modified. It is certain that in some cases the politic of sustaining employment in the (also recent) past, has affected the relationship between real wages and productivity; in other words it has led to a worsening of the conditions of production and so to a reduction in profits and a resulting reduction in investment.

Now the first effect of inflation felt by workers is a reduction in real wages, so they struggle for wage increases, employment remaining the same. On their side, the bosses are pushed to restricting the demand for work as they try to rationalise production in every possible way. All that leads to rises in monetary wages, but leaves the problem of employment and productivity unsolved. The only solution that remains is to transfer any increase in cost on to prices. Hence a constant reduction in real wages (in the wider sense seen before) and a quick response with further increases in nominal wages.

Concerning employment, let's take a look at the preceding situation (industrial economy). The elements affecting employment in a traditional economy are many: increase in retiring age, higher qualifications requirement, more women's work, an influx of labour from the country into cities in situations, all increase unemployment.

Wage increases also lead to an increase in unemployment. Companies move to save work by changing investment (the first attempts at factory automation are realised), the work pace is increased (overtime, work pace, etc). Restructuring makes it possible to reduce work, therefore it increases unemployment.

In this phase—which existed in Italy between 1973 and 1980—a large strata of non-employed is created. They cannot be defined “unemployed” in that they are not looking for work but simply get by or refuse work or access to the procedures given to the unemployed in search of work. In this climate of recession economists realised that the system does not move spontaneously towards equilibrium as happened in the initial phase of economic development that emerged from the pathological economic situation caused by the war and the need for reconstruction. After the crisis of 1973 economists understood the relationship between inflation and unemployment better.

In fact, within certain limits, there is an inverse relation between variation in wages (so also in the level of prices) and unemployment. With an increase in wages and the subsequent demand for goods (thereby decreasing unemployment) there is an increase in the level of prices (i.e. inflation).

The first consequence of this discovery was the realisation that Keynes’ theory of social stability as a result of full employment was an illusion. Increases in employment lead to a rise in prices, therefore to an unstable economic and social situation.

But this had practical consequences that took capital to the brink of collapse at the end of the seventies, from which it recovered with its passage to the post-industrial phase. The obstacles were: trade union index-rating, limited work mobility, rigid investment, the illusion of full employment, lack of market information and, last but not least, workers’ struggles.

Friedman, with Modigliani and Tarantelli close behind, always maintained that supporting demand led to an increase in unemployment, not its decrease as Keynes thought.

For Italy, the post-industrial about-turn can be seen around 1981. Whereas the Italian economy once preferred a system of progressive adjustment when faced with internal and external inflation (for example, the increase in the cost of petrol) far harsher and more effective processes of adjustment were applied after that date. Struggles practically disappeared. The road of union conflict was blocked, even formally. All the talk of the “terrorist” threat contributed to breaking the final resistance of autonomous worker struggles. A climate of intimidation and criminalisation led the capitalists to make these long-lasting adjustments.

Reduction in employment increased considerably and spread throughout industry. The huge industrial complexes became obsolete. After 1981, in Lombardy the annual decline was 7 per cent. Not only had the level of employment changed, but also the very class structure itself. The absurd dreams of the marxists, old and new, disappeared. The more recent theses of organised autonomy have also disappeared.

The Italian economic world began to change for two reasons. First due to a crisis in production leading to considerable flexibility in the use of industrial plants. Second, due to a growth in productivity following redundancies that started with women and older workers, then spread to the younger and middle-aged strata. The labour market changed as a result. The most combative nucleus of the working class disappeared following the use of certain instruments to stabilise the productive cycle, in the first place redundancy. Wages were frozen and the phenomenon so common ten years before that saw wage increases even in periods of reduced production, no longer occurred.

Jobs are no longer defended by rigorous trade union contracts and, above all, unemployment no longer scares with a threat of autonomous struggle beyond trade union dictates and Communist Party recuperation. No longer a threat to capital, employment has become less rigid in relation to the productive cycle.

The first positive results for capital began to appear on the horizon. In a rigid work situation the capitalists could solve their production problems only by putting up prices, thereby increasing inflation. After 1981 the Italian economic system picked up again. Inflation decelerated.

Wage index-rating had less bargaining power and so capital's manoeuvres were smoothed out. Productivity grew through work mobility. A ferocious use of instruments for stabilizing incomes (e.g. redundancy) was underway.

By now the working class are on their knees. The unions, who lived on the real capacity for struggle with the sole aim of controlling and certainly not enlivening it, are also on their knees. In this way new forms of controlling the work market are being experimented. In particular, Fiat and Montedison are moving towards a different system of control, liquidating surplus labour almost exclusively through sackings.

So productivity is not growing due to an increase in the use of new factors (technological improvements and increase in employment), but to a more rational exploitation of already existing ones.

The unions are being forced to make proposals that they would have considered absurd a few years before, such as contracts of solidarity, training schemes for the young, reduction in working hours, all attempts to spread employment (something that is quite dubious in practice, as Italy has the lowest number of working hours). In the large factories, from 1983 onwards, they started to realise that a simple underuse of enterprise could not solve the problem in the medium term. Projects of renewal therefore extend to restructuring and innovation.

As far as they are concerned, the State and the unions have every interest in creating a policy of inventing jobs. Once again the capitalists' interests identified with those of the unions and the State. The first are worried about an excessive substitution of workers in the future (a contraction in demand); the second and third are worried about possible social disorder, and have now lost all illusions of a spontaneous absorption of labour.

In this way the tertiary sectors are developed through State investment with the help of the unions who are now spreading the variable of worker mobility, to the joy of the capitalists who are finding fuel for the structural stoking of their firms precisely from this sector.

The State is told that monetary manoeuvres alone are no longer enough to reorganise the productive efficiency of the company. Outlets for financial investment are necessary. So an economic policy based on public spending has expanded industry to allow for technological innovation, a credit policy and retrieval of capital on the stock market favourable to low interest rates. A mere financing of industry is no longer being requested, but a general economic climate (from the stock market to changes in the State debt) capable of creating conditions that are favourable to the innovations.

Electronics technology is spreading everywhere.

This situation, which remained constant at least until 1981, put the policy of employment based on supporting demand in a critical light (and so put the neo-Keynesian economists in crisis). This caused a limited redistribution of income, but mainly led to a reduction in the bargaining power of the unions, torn between supporting the workers' demands and becoming load-bearing elements

of the inflationary process, or supporting the capitalists' requests and figuring as traitors of the interests of the class of producers.

The monetarist policy is the classical choice of conservatives and technocrats. It is based on the supposition that controlling the amount of money in circulation and speed of exchange can help to keep the level of inflation within limits that are acceptable for capitalist development.

This necessarily leads to unnaturally high levels of unemployment. But that is a sacrifice that needs to be made so as to avoid greater damage. The wage-earners are to realise the benefits they have from a slowing down of price increases and the fact that these benefits come after a certain time and not right away.

A third way—based on Modigliani's and Tarantelli's analysis—maintains that a net separation between these two roads is impossible. The two economists maintain (to tell the truth the second no longer does, having been killed by the Red Brigades) that there is a need to sustain demand, so also employment, but at the same time talk of the need to reduce real wages. Modigliani has also maintained that the only way out to avoid the total deflection of profits, something that destroys all investment incentive, is to reduce the excessive cost of work. So, stop pay rises and lay people off. The first aspect of this recipe allows for a re-equilibrium of productivity, the second a faster restructuring of the industrial sector.

The old preoccupations about possible repercussions in terms of social disorder have been shown to be partly unfounded precisely by Modigliani and Tarantelli, who have long been insisting on the fact that resulting benefits in terms of political stability make it possible to avoid social disorder. People feel better governed, see that prices increase more slowly and everyone convinces themselves that they are getting short-term benefits, that they are living in a situation of economic and institutional recovery.

b) The new professionalism: flexibility

The system of production is calling for a different kind of professionalism in the workplace today. It is not a question of a mere absence of professionalism or of a wider range of the same. Substantial problems exist in regard to flexibility. Making many things in a superficial way corresponds to the concept of horizontal proficiency, the opposite of the vertical proficiency required by the productive system in the past.

In order to understand the problems related to this new kind of professionalism that the system is asking of the educational system, we must briefly take a look at the conditions in which these requests are being made and the possible responses to them. Production now requires a deeper integration of technological and socio-organisational factors. Technical instruments have increased both in quantity and in quality. And the people handling them have different roles today, requiring a different kind of professionalism.

It can thus be said that the entrance *en masse* (and in quality) of technology into the productive system has led to an essential change in the underlying social organisation.

This change can be seen in two respects:

- a. a *quantitative* aspect, shown in a considerable reduction in employment, so that the relationship between information technology and employment is far more complex than a banal equation between increase and decrease;

- b. a *qualitative* aspect, given by a profound transformation in the way professionalism works.

The first of these two aspects affects the second as it puts pressure on choices within the productive system, which is transformed into signals addressed to the education system. Later these choices become orientative both for those elaborating study programmes and for students themselves. This has resulted in a new “model” of professionalism, which is already quite widespread. Basically, the problem of the near future will not be so much unemployment and the possible social (revolutionary) disorder linked to it, as that of a separation of knowledge, the creation of an absolutely insurmountable *cultural wall* between those with operative decisional professionalism and those with only executive pseudo-professionalism. The second aspect, the qualitative one, is now emerging in full force. This change concerns the nature and content of professionalism, as well as its distribution at various levels. This obviously affects its permanence within the unit, upon which were based what were once referred to as “career opportunities”. Today this possibility has been greatly reduced, hence the importance of flexibility. But we will come back to this question later.

The decline in professionalism is the result of a system that has been built inside production as a whole. It is a question of a “closed” model or one that is trying to close itself within an ideal of automation. The human operator is the physical reality that must transform itself, he or she cannot “insert” themselves into a computerised system of regulation and control. This system is based on mathematical logic upon which the productive process is modelled through information that reaches operative terminals in real time. It is this intermediate automation between man and reality that is incorporating the “technical competence” that the productive process requires. Humans are left with the task of supervising and detecting exceptions.

Thus the characteristics of the new “professionalism” are very different to those of the past, not only in the sphere of traditional production (industrial or factory sectors), but also in the wider sense of production that includes the so-called “free professions”, from artisans to the independent professions.

This new characteristic could be specified as follows:

- a. *Visualisation* processes. These are essential and require an education of the eye and a response to visual stimuli at a speed that would have been unthinkable just a few years back. The reading of a video is a complex achievement which visual adaptation only manages to reach by degrees through an “education” or, if you prefer, conditioning, that takes years. Programmed reactions must also be included in these processes of visualisation, i.e., on everything that follows on from the simple visual impact. In other words, after “reading” the video there is the elaboration of mental schema giving indications concerning the process in act. Not so much the single elements, but a global concept largely capable of fixing levels of exception. Some of these are discretionary and would not be attainable through a simple mathematical elaboration, as even modern computers would not be able to resolve the algorithms.
- b. Processes of *conceptualisation*. This is a question of evaluations that the subject must elaborate through mental schema. Here you see the effective decline in the capacity to conceptualise, i.e. to transform problems into ideas in order to make decisions, i.e. the coordination between the will and an aim to be reached. The discretionary power of these processes of conceptualisation is within very rigid limits. This marks the end of the subject. Autonomy

disappears at the moment in which technology is available for resolving all the problems that hampered him in the past. The less he needs to do, the less he wants to do. Gradually the thinking subject becomes a subject that chooses the best solution within a schema that can only reach a goal that is beyond his capacity to desire. The scale of values that such a process is based on is forever fixed beyond the desires of the individual. In elaborating information the calculator dissects the man.

- c. Processes of *comprehension*. These are also diminishing. The fewer possibilities of ideas, the less the possibility of understanding anything at all. No one can understand beyond the concepts that elaborate distinctions. Hence the fact that the less there is to understand, the less one is capable of understanding. Now, if there is less to understand one has the illusion that one understands more, and better. This gives a sense of security typical of the people who know little and are convinced that their modest amount of knowledge is more or less "all" knowledge. Doubt and torment belongs precisely to those who widen the limits of their knowledge and, through this dangerous task, realise that they are always discovering new limits, that are further and further away.

To sum up, the "new" professionalism has been reduced to the perfectioning of certain "faculties" and the total elimination of others. One of the most important faculties under re-evaluation is *concentration*. This is an ability that can be developed and consists of keeping perception of a process and its transformation into mental schema constant. This constancy obviously tends to subside, not only due to tiredness but also due to repetition and the various pulsions of desire and memory. Recovery from these falls (within the limits of tolerance), which must come about within a very short space of time, characterises concentration, which, as one sees, now qualifies itself as a mental faculty based on the speed of intervention in the face of an anomaly. When an exception in the behaviour of the process is detected, full concentration must be turned to restoring normality.

Even a sense of *responsibility*, which is counted on at a certain level of the new professionalism, is not so much an ideological conditioning concerning given values (the good functioning of the system), as a true "faculty", that is quantifiable in the same way as concentration is. In fact, a sense of responsibility comes to be seen by those estimating the operator's levels of "professionalism" as the capacity, in a given space of time, to intervene within a series of choices to make the choice leading to the best possible functioning of the system. It would be a mistake to see this as something purely technical. When examined individually, the contents of a sense of responsibility annul themselves, denouncing their ideological essence.

Bearing these considerations in mind, a different distribution of professionalism between that of the traditional factory and that of the post-industrial unit can be outlined.

- a. In the traditional factory there is a wide differentiation in tasks and cultural levels. The traditional system of production has less need for extremely low or extremely high levels of professionalism, whereas the demand for labour rises greatly at the intermediate level. That means that the factory of the past required (and still does) average rather than high or low levels of professionalism.
- b. On the contrary, in the post-industrial productive unit there is a constant demand for a low level of professionalism, barely any for the medium one, and a limited demand for high professionalism.

In this situation the possibility of a *passage* or mobility within the productive unit disappears. In other words, it is impossible to pass from a very low level to a high level of professionalism in the absence of a demand for a medium level. This narrowing, which is tending to grow to the point of becoming a real *cultural wall*, will eventually make the internal structure of the productive unit so rigid that only interstructural mobility will be possible. Hence the great importance given to flexibility in terms of accepting different kinds of work. However, the deep gap between low and high areas of professionalism is static.

Before leaving this problem we must remember that although the concept of a *new* professionalism is aimed at emptying the individual operator of content and using only a few of his or her faculties, the difference between low and high professionalism is not just a question of an intensification of single faculties but also concerns content, including the traditional or cultural one in the narrow sense. Logically this only comes about in the sphere of high professionalism, which still has the task of moving to the elaboration of the ideological conditions that induce the low professional strata to accept their condition of exploitation.

Flexibility, as has been seen, is one of the leading concepts to have come out of the period between the seventies and the nineties.

The end of the seventies, the period of the most spectacular involution of the “old style” capitalist system, can be remembered as a period of rupture where the certainties of a distant and not so distant past all collapsed. The first of these certainties was the programming of the capitalist project based on progressive accumulation and the reduction of conflict through a doubling up of the State as producer, not just as gendarme. It is no longer legitimate to talk of “crises”, this can only be done by bringing economic theory into the concept. Precisely the theories (both the neo-classical and the managerial in the narrow sense) maintaining the possibility of putting order in the multiplicity of phenomena and programming the development of capital, that were rejected at the end of the seventies. This situation did not only affect the structure, it also affected all the other theories that wanted to impose reason on the force of events.

The first discovery to be made at the beginning of the eighties was precisely that of the *lack* of order existing in economic reality. This was undoubtedly a great discovery as far as the situation of crisis was concerned, but is also a theory that clarified the old way of seeing things, constituting a point of strength for going forward. Companies operate in situations of extreme uncertainty and instability. Control over the industrial situation is practically zero. Turbulence has become reality.

The causes of this turbulence can now be isolated theoretically with great accuracy: the trades union movement of the sixties, high levels of employment, inflation, monetary instability. The idea that this turbulent reality can be regulated is developed. The plurality of forces at work only becomes comprehensible in the short-term. This demands a new capacity of the company: *flexibility*, i.e. knowing how to adapt to this situation of perennial instability and turbulence as opposed to wanting to adapt the contradictions of the productive system to the rigid structure of the individual company.

So flexibility is taken to the maximum degree, both in decision-making and in the organisation of productive cycles, the use of the workforce, programming, and ideology.

The decentralised organisational structures try to lose their rigid bureaucratic aspects (accounts, tax, etc.) and discover that labour, which it had considered very dangerous, are moving with less resistance than was feared. The risks, (including that of social unrest) are inserted within the market strategy and resolved through restructuring (i.e. the sudden breaking up of

production entities). The productive entity adapts to a turbulent hostile environment, it becomes flexible. Like the bulrush it leans to allow the tempest to blow over. What was once rigid and ordered in stable forms struggling unsuccessfully against constant adversity in an environment that it considered by definition fixed, breaks up in countless ways into hundreds of productive structures with dozens of attitudes and multiple goals. Pluralism makes its entry into the world of production and discovers that it is basically the only element that can connect harmoniously with the political conditions of a democratic structure. The authoritarian ideologies and repressive practices of the past are now no more than a vague memory. The great to-do that everyone is making to combat so-called “terrorism” (including comrades who use this term nonchalantly, not realising that they become functional to precisely those whom they want to fight) contributes to fuelling this new form of possibility in white coats. The “wicked” are cast aside, but not brutally (there is always a lot of talk about the limitations and danger of repressive decisions based on the concept of “emergency”).

Was it purely by chance that the road of flexibility was chosen to overcome the situation of the seventies, precisely at a time when technology was providing the means to make companies become flexible? Of course not, just as it is not possible to fix the terms of this relationship, i.e. how much technology has influenced these choices, and how much these choices have influenced the development of technological research. This, and much more, happened over these years. We will never know to what extent technology is pushing the whole productive and social system towards flexibility today, and how much these choices—now indispensable—are looking for technological innovation to facilitate this process.

Irrationality is now the foundation of economic theory, supplanting the old mechanistic mythology of equilibrium. This takes neoclassical theory into the ambit of the most recent developments of science which, obviously, are far away from eighteenth century mechanism. But that, although interesting, is quite another problem.

c) The world of school

The time when school could be considered a closed system, with its own problems that it needed to bring out and insert into a wider context (living area, school, etc.) is now over. School has been projected into the general conditions of the social conflict completely, but students (and teachers) are not necessarily aware of this.

In fact, school absolves very precise functions that are always adjusting to production.

1. *Qualification.* Its function of producing qualified workers has been greatly reduced. Production no longer requires vertical specialisation characterised by high qualifications and limited adaptability. On the contrary, it requires horizontal specialisation, where barely qualified people are able to do many things and so are more adaptable to changing jobs or even simply spending long periods looking for work.
2. *Indetermination of subjects taught.* Basically, the cultural content of qualification is still available and, given scientific progress at every level, there are many more instruments for imparting these contents (text books, audiovisuals, computers, films, tapes, etc.). But this often does not materialise, or, if it does, only in part. The general context is unstimulating.

Teachers are not sufficiently qualified. Moreover, they are aware that there are no real outlets for their efforts and this results in a reduction in their work to transmit these cultural contents. This has led to a general cultural abasement of school corresponding to capital's need to construct a mass of "excluded" with lower cultural attributes.

3. *Democratic mentality*. This is a "new" function of the educational system. Individuals who must be flexible, adaptable and mobile, cannot be educated in an authoritarian manner. They must learn to participate from an early age. Hence the wide use of assembly and the disappearance of the old authoritarian idea based on facts.
4. *Contribution to solving the problem of employment*. This consists of attempting to "address" the future work force towards sectors with less risk of unemployment in advance. This is not so much through recourse to "closed numbers" in universities or secondary schools, but by simply developing a different ideology and a changed scale of values in respect to the traditional repartition of human activity.
5. *Social protection*. School reduces tension and social conflict by simply blocking future pressure on employment levels inside an institution that has become a kind of parking lot.
6. *Producing consensus*. School has various ways of bringing this about. Some are of an "objective" nature, simply happen because school has become obligatory up to a certain age (this, as we have seen, gives considerable benefits to capital). Others are specifically desired and programmed. These are:
 - a. a positive view of the capitalist cultural model through the re-elaboration of the concepts of savings, work, property, family, God, State, etc.;
 - b. acceptance of the economicistic model of society, hence the best solution is always that which produces the best results with the least effort;
 - c. prevention of "deviant" behaviour, but with recourse to discussion and critique, avoiding brutal repression as far as possible;
 - d. (critical) acceptance of the hierarchical model, in that hierarchy exists because it is the best solution to the problem of social functioning. It is not imposed, therefore, but is accepted critically (something that is far more effective);
 - e. the construction of a bridge between the economic system and the scholastic one, something that guarantees a better correspondence of school activities to the demands of the productive situation in general;
 - f. diffusion within the school of more burning social problems ("terrorism", mafia, drugs, etc.) because here they can receive suitable "treatment" for becoming elements of ideological uniformity and therefore of social consensus;
 - g. supplying a generic capacity to adapt, which will allow the future labour force to survive even under conditions of profound occupational changes.

Loss of Language

The wall that will finally separate the included from the excluded is already being built. It is based on various elements. One of the most important is the diversity of language that is being realised through a reduction in the excluded's possibility to express themselves.

One of the projects that capital is bringing about is the reduction of language. By language we mean all forms of expression, particularly those that allow us to articulate complex concepts about feelings and things.

Power requires this reduction because it is replacing straightforward repression with control, where consensus plays a fundamental part. And uniform consensus is impossible in the presence of multiform creativity.

The old revolutionary problem of propaganda has also changed considerably over recent years, showing the limitations of a realism that claimed to show the distortions of the world to the exploited clearly, to make them become aware of their situation.

In the historical sphere of anarchism we have the exceptional example of Malatesta's literary capacity based on an essentialised language that was unique for its time. Malatesta did not use rhetoric or shock effects but elementary deductive logic, starting off from simple points based on common sense to reach complex conclusions that were easily understood by the reader.

Galleani worked at quite a different level. He used great rhetorical constructions, attaching a great deal of importance to the musicality of the phrase as well as to the use of out-dated words chosen to create an atmosphere that in his opinion would move spirits to action.

Neither of the above examples can be proposed as examples of a revolutionary language suitable for the present time. Not Malatesta, because there is less to "demonstrate" today, nor Galleani, because there are fewer and fewer spirits to be "moved".

Perhaps there are more models of revolutionary literature to be found in France, due to that country's great tradition, unequalled in Italy, Spain or Britain, and for her particular spirit of language and culture. Around the same period as the above Italian examples we have Faure, Grave and Armand for clarity and exposition, while for research and in some aspects rhetoric, there is Libertad and Zo d'Axa.

We should not forget that France already had the example of Proudhon, whose style even surprised the Academy, and later Faure who was considered to be a continuation of this great school along with the methodical, asphyxiating Grave. Self-taught, he was an enthusiastic pupil of Kropotkin. The latter's French was good and basic precisely because, like Bakunin's, it was the French of a Russian.

One could go on forever, from the linguistic, literary and journalistic experiments of Libertad, Zo d'Axa and others, as well as their predecessor Coeurderoy. But although they represent some of the best examples of revolutionary journalism, none of these models is valid today.

The fact is that reality has changed, whereas revolutionaries continue to produce language the same way, or rather worse. It is sufficient to compare a leaflet such as the *En Dehors* by Zo d'Axa with its huge Daumier drawing on one side and his writing on the other, to some of the lapidary leaflets we produce today—looking at our own situation—such as the one we did for the meeting with the comrades from Eastern Europe at Trieste.

But the problem has gone far beyond that. Not only are our privileged interlocutors losing their language, we are also losing ours. And because we must necessarily meet on common ground if we want to communicate, this loss is turning out to be irrecuperable.

This process of a generalised flattening is striking all languages, reducing the heterogeneity of expression to a uniformity of means. The mechanism could be compared to television. The increase in quantity (of news items) reduces the time available for the transmission of each one. This is leading to a progressive, spontaneous selection of image and word, so that on the one hand these are being essentialised, and on the other the quantity of transmittable data is on the increase.

The much desired clarity bemoaned by so many generations of revolutionaries desiring to convey reality to the people has finally been reached, not by making reality clear (something that is impossible in any case), but by making clarity real, i.e. showing the reality that has been built by technology.

This is happening to all linguistic expression, including desperate attempts to save human activity through art, which is also letting fewer and fewer possibilities pass. Moreover, it is finding itself having to struggle on two fronts: against being swallowed up by the levelling that is turning creativity into uniformity, and against the opposite problem with the same roots, that of the market and its prices. My old theses on poor art and art as destruction are still close to my heart.

Let us give an example: language, in that it is an instrument, can be used many ways. It can be used to transmit a code aimed at maintaining or optimising consensus, or it can be used to stimulate transgression. Music is no exception here, although because of its particular characteristics the road of transgression is even more difficult. Although it seems more direct, it is actually further from reaching it. Rock is music of recuperation which contributed to extinguishing much of the revolutionary energy of the seventies. According to Nietzsche's intuition, the same thing happened with the innovation of Wagnerian music in its time. Think of the great thematic and cultural differences that exist between these two kinds of musical production. Wagner had to build a vast cultural edifice and completely undo the linguistic instrument in order to captivate the revolutionary youth of his time. Today rock has done the same thing on a much wider scale with a cultural effort that is ridiculous in comparison. The massification of music has favoured the work of recuperation.

So one could say that revolutionary language operates in two ways, first according to the instrument, which is undergoing a process of simplification and stripping down, then in the sense of its use, which has become standardised, producing effects that cannot always be reduced to an average that is acceptable to all or nearly all. That is happening in so-called literature (poetry, narrative, theatre, etc.) as well as in that restricted microcosm, the revolutionary activity of examining social problems. Whether this takes the form of articles in anarchist papers, or leaflets, pamphlets, books, etc., the risks are fairly similar. The revolutionary is also a product of his and her time and uses the instruments and occasions it produces.

The possibility of reading about the actual conditions of society and production has waned, because there is far less to be brought to the surface, and because interpretative instruments

have shrunk. In a society that was polarised into two distinctly opposing classes, the task of counter-information was to bring out into the open the reality of exploitation that the power structure had every interest in hiding. This included the mechanisms for extracting surplus value, repressive schemes, authoritarian distortions of the State and so on. Now capital is becoming increasingly comprehensible in a society that is moving more and more towards a democratic form of management and production based on information technology. This is precisely because it is becoming more important for it to be seen, and less important to discover the methods of exploitation.

Today society needs to be interpreted with cultural instruments that are not only capable of bringing out hidden facts or those that have been treated superficially, but also an unconscious conflictuality far from the old extremely visible class conflict. One ends up being drawn into a simplistic refusal that is incapable of examining the mechanisms of recuperation, consensus and globalisation. More than documentation we now need active participation, including writing, in what must be a comprehensive project. We cannot limit ourselves to denouncing exploitation, we must bring our analyses to within a precise project, which will only become comprehensible during the course of the analysis itself. Documentation and denunciation are no longer enough. We need something more, so long as we still have tongues to speak with, so long as we have not had them cut off.

This new interaction between ways of expressing oneself and one's project constitutes the strength of this way of using linguistic instruments, but also leads to the discovery of the latter's limitations. If language has been impoverished by absorbing and adapting to the reductionist tendencies studied and applied by power, this is inevitable.

I have always fought against a kind of detached objectivism in writing aimed at clarifying revolutionary problems. Precisely because it is an instrument, linguistic expression always has a social dimension that is summed up in its style. It is not just "the man" as Buffon says, but "man in a given society". And it is the style that solves the problem, undoubtedly a difficult one, of supplying along with the indispensable content, the so-called facts of the event and their insertion within a project. If this project is alive and up to the conditions of the conflict, the style can be livened up, but if the style is not suitable or is lost in the illusion of objectivity, it will run the risk of losing itself in a ghostly forest of impressions.

Our language must therefore have a *form* that is capable of supporting our revolutionary content, with a provocative thrust capable of violating and upsetting the usual ways of communicating. It must be able to represent the reality we hold in our hearts without allowing ourselves to become wrapped up in a logical sudarium and only understood with great difficulty. The project and the language used to illustrate it must meet and recognise itself in the style used to express it. Without wanting to go to the extreme of this well-worn thesis, we now know that the means constitutes a considerable part of the content.

We must look out for these processes, not let a new practical ideology submerge us in throw-away phrases where there is no relationship between the project and the *way of saying it*.

So, an increasingly generalised linguistic impoverishment is reflected in the instruments of communication that we use as revolutionaries. First of all because we are men and women of our time, participants in the reductive cultural processes that characterise it. We are losing some instruments like everyone else, and others are atrophying. And, more important, we are reducing ourselves. This is normal. We need to make more of an effort to obtain better results and acquire a better capacity to resist these reductive projects.

This lowering in stylistic capacity is a consequence of the lowering of content. It is also capable of producing even greater impoverishment, unable to express the essential part of the project that necessarily remains tied to the means of expression. It is therefore not the “genre” that saves the content, but above all the way this content takes form. Some people make out a schema first according to their capabilities and never manage to free themselves from it. They filter all the content they come to possess through this schema, believing it is “their way of expressing themselves”, like having a limp or brown eyes. But it is not like that. Sooner or later one must free oneself from this prison, as from any other, if one wants to give life to what one is communicating.

There are those who choose irony to transmit the urgency they feel, for example. Very well, but irony has its own peculiarity, i.e. it is pleasant, *light*, a dance, an allusive metaphor. It cannot become a system without becoming repetitive or pathetic like the satirical inserts in the daily papers, or comic strips where one *must* know beforehand how the story ends otherwise one wouldn’t be able to understand it, like barrack-room jokes. In the same way, for inverse reasons, the call of *reality*—the effort to make reality visible and palpable through communication, starting from the supposition that there can be no immediate fruition from anything that does not seem real—ends up becoming tedious. In fact it is unrealisable, and one gets lost in the continual material need to insist, losing the conceptuality that is at the basis of true communication.

One maxim in the museum of everyday stupidity is that one does not know *how* to say something, when in fact the problem really is that one does not know *what* to say. This is not necessarily so. The flux of communication is not unidimensional, but multidimensional: not only do we communicate, we also receive communication. And the way we communicate with others is the same as what we receive from others. There is also a problem of style in reception. The same difficulties, the same illusions. For example, still on the subject of written language, when we read newspaper articles we can reconstruct the way the writer receives communication from outside. The style is always the same, we can identify the same mistakes, the same short-circuits in the same kind of articles. And that is because these incidents and limits are not just *questions* of style but are the essential components of the writer’s project, of their very life.

We can see that the poorer and more repetitive the incoming communication, even when it comes directly from the reality of events, the more modest our capacity to grasp the articulations is. A revolutionary must necessarily combine incoming communication and events. Approximation and uncertainty is emerging in word and unfortunately in deed, a low level of ideas that does not do justice to the complexities of the enemy’s capacity or to our own revolutionary intentions.

If things were otherwise, socialist realism, with its good working class always ready to mobilise, would have been the only possible solution. The latest aberration dictated by such ignorance and refusal to consider reality *differently* was the intervention of the good Rumanian miners to re-establish Illiescu’s new order.

Power’s attempts to generalise the flattening of linguistic expression is one of the essential components for building the insurmountable wall between *included* and *excluded*. If we have identified direct, immediate attack as one instrument in the struggle, we must also develop an optimal use of the other instruments at our disposition and take those we do not possess, whatever the cost. The two are inseparable.

Loss of culture

Much could be said about the concept of culture once one moves to a more modern concept away from the humanist view where science is central. For us, culture is something different, although we cannot say it is completely *other*.

Being the whole of knowledge and the availability of instruments produced by the reality in which we live, it also includes a considerable part of each one of us to the point of constituting a part of life and a possibility of grasping something that might escape us due to monotony and repetitiveness.

There is therefore a passive and an active way to live the heterogeneous cultural system we are passing through and which penetrates us in turn. We can enjoy the effects, let ourselves be modelled like clay and emerge like trained parrots, standing open-mouthed before the trash supplied by the universal centres of knowledge (no longer even divided into arts and science). Or we can actively set out for the conquest of knowledge, without fooling ourselves that we will follow it in all its mad variations, but without for that stripping it to the bone or turning it into mush for babies' gums.

The mysterious cultural universe that surrounds us in a reality marked by the history of domination is undoubtedly the fruit of the system of power in act, both instrument and product, cause and effect, these two inseparable moments of continual human creation. But man is also an historical product of dominion who must be discredited in order to be free, and this cannot come about by simply drawing a beautiful but dead image on the surface, an abstractly pure and uncontaminated free man who does not require culture as a possibility of life.

The revolutionary instinct for cleaning up and above all destruction is certainly an essential component of the action required for transforming reality, but that in itself cannot be considered the guardian or carrier of the naked truth, that would merely become a banal and odious simplification. Reality is always more complex than one imagines and that does not just go for the conditions under exploitation today but also for future ones when they are finally freed. Simple naturalness is also a cultural production which has unfortunately been tragically ideologised and the most folklorist extremists are those who pay the price, convincing themselves that they have a personal, perfect contact with nature. Reality is always wrapped up in veils. We must take them off, interpret them, tear them apart, but we cannot ignore them. Culture directs these veils as it likes of course and in its own interests, personifying itself with the power structure in charge but not only. In this management it is itself, as culture, a moment in our life, an aspect of our becoming, of our becoming possibility and action.

The reappropriation of culture is therefore a multiple process full of numerous stimuli and obstacles. To simply reduce it to the obvious seems dangerous to me because the obvious, the extremely simple, contains precisely the highest ideological content. It suffices to think of advertising, the language of sports papers and cliques, and their scurrilous repetitive language.

Anarchists, who have always had among them those who have consciously provoked this unveiling, have also, with a few exceptions, reached a low level of creativity in recent decades.

Once, apart from the anarcho-syndicalists who are necessarily tied to a model of repetitivity, they produced best quality culture even if this was soon taken over by the most advanced sectors of the dominant culture, at least since sixty-eight and the relative recuperation. One might say that what prevails now is more a yielding to the cultural models that are supplied by the academy and opportunely expunged and adapted.

By overloading this process of adaptation it has gone into decline and continues to do so, i.e. removing the academic content from the technical part in the name of a revolutionary essentiality accompanied by a disdain for the difficulties of the contents to cover up our ignorance.

We are besieged by a pseudo-culture, that is true, padding is c to make us accept maniacal survival conditions, but that does not mean to say that everything must be transformed into this indigestible shit. And this invasion becomes an avalanche when it takes the form of information, of simple facts. Piles of information accumulates before our eyes, we are submerged in eruptions and tempests of paper images and ideas and publicity. Noise, rhythm, fashion, accumulate oppressively. We have been asked to accept, to receive, to watch, to move like an obsessional neurosis that strikes us and stagnates inside us. There is no longer even cause to dream of a critical dominion over this fearful cultural universe which the advent of computer technology is perfecting from the point of view of domination.

Nor can we throw everything away dreaming of an *innocence* that has *never* been of this world, a return to nature where if there is noise it is not the music of the regime but the orchestra of the forest. Absurd. Our asphyxia cannot push us to say (and do) things that are in contrast with reality. Today more than ever man is immersed in a complex cultural situation that must be known if we want to transform it. To think we can do less, simply practice it, or produce abstract sentences of condemnation, does not produce suitable instruments for revolutionary action.

The subjection that is materialising even in small things is shown in a reflex of a process of disgregation which is not accidental but is desired by power. The disappearance of culture is not that one no longer knows Latin, now the domain of post-university degrees, but is more easily demonstrated in pointing out the modalities of power through the use of attitudes and terms (also linguistic) that have been built. Concepts such as “homogenised”, “qualitative leap” “planet”, “quality of life” “high profile” show an induced poverty, always the result of cultural poverty. To speak of the “post-industrial scenario” “homogenised by power” with “high profile decisions”—or that maths are courses—is the deliberate acceptance and use of attitudes. To “circumscribe the metropolitan planet” and so on in the present state of affairs is equivalent to the almost incomprehensible signs that the communiqués of the armed combatant organisations were full of yesterday. Identical cultural poverty, identical ideological poverty. Yet similar phrases and concepts are also currently being used by anarchists, even in our own publications. Generalised poverty is not the worst evil.

Good Technology

Basic common sense tells us that if we want to do something we need to get hold of the necessary means. So I happen to read that comrades who, like myself, feel not just the need but also the urgency to attack and destroy the information technology network are thinking of mastering a knowledge of computers as a first step to attacking all the rest.

I share this cognitive premise, in the sense that knowledge is always, or nearly always, something positive. So long as we are aware of what we are learning and how that knowledge can be used, avoiding the traps laid for a long time now that make us learn not what we want, but what our enemies want us to want. This problem is not a simple one, but it can be approached fairly simply by starting from what is defined as the limits of “good” technology. Nearly all the ecology theses are based on what is believed to be the solution of this problem, including a presumed identification of these limits. Now, so long as one stays within that perspective, the use of less harmful technology is certainly possible, and no one would think of suggesting a return to the Stone Age. Not all technologies are equal and we agree that there is a considerable difference between those aimed at developing nuclear power and those aimed at realising the telematic network.

The nuclear production sector is a high-risk sector and represents a danger to everyone’s safety, so up to a point, it touches interests that can sensitise social strata who are in contrast with each other, *included* and *excluded*. Fear of total war has led us to a world order that depends on small wars and a progressive reduction of the atomic arsenal. Here we are faced with a problem which, even when considered in antithetical terms, is understood by those on both sides of the class barricade.

The information technology sector is certainly also a risk, in that it is causing an upheaval in the world order as we know it. But it is a risk that the *included* are gradually eliminating by cutting the *excluded* off from them, proposing a different interpretation of the interests to be defended due to the spreading of this technology. In other words, the consequences, which we will come to further on, will not be the same for everyone as in the case of atomic death, but will be perceived and controlled by the *included*, while for the *excluded* they will be unknown, therefore uncontrollable, therefore lethal. Information technology separates what nuclear power basically brought together into a social hybrid, and is erecting a wall that will allow a far more rigid division than the one we know so far.

But whatever could these consequences be? What harm is there in information technology and computers, many ask. Why this neo-luddism? Isn’t that out of date? In their fury, do the opposers not risk attacking good technology that we could also use after the revolution, and which moreover we need to use today in order to fight the class enemy. These are questions we need to find answers to.

Information technology has opened up a new world, one that in order to be technologically managed and utilised requires a considerable reduction in human resources in terms of intelligence, analytical capacity, self-awareness, individual autonomy, thinking and projectuality.

There is no such thing as good technology. We need to see what use it is being put to. But the technology in question is not bad for the same reasons that nuclear technology is (bad for everyone), but because information technology is only bad for the excluded. In actual fact any technology, even that derived from nuclear sources, is always a reductive prosthesis.

In order to spread to the level of world conquest, information technology must diseducate man to use it. Unable to reach individuals at their own level, not even that of basic common sense, it needs to reduce the latter to the level of the machine. The new man that information technology wants to fabricate, corresponding to the requirements of a substitutive technology, is one of low intelligence, a poor capacity to communicate, reduced imaginative and creative possibilities, but with fast reflexes and capable of being flexible and of choosing between different elements, but all within a precise framework.

In order to do this, information technology is changing man's creative capacities profoundly. Now, if we just think how fundamentally important these are to us, we become aware of the dramatic consequences if this project were to succeed in being applied totally and pass unobserved. What they are changing without our noticing is the relationship between technology and our bodies. The relationship with any technology is that of a prosthesis, i.e. of an increase in the body's capabilities. A short-sighted person sees better with spectacles, and with the right lenses can even reach the point of seeing as though they had good eyesight. However, the digital image supplied to us by information technology has nothing to do with such a reality. If we see a house in front of us we reconstruct it through mental processes of perception and memorisation, a complex system of "analytical reconstruction" which allows us to state that there is a house in front of us. But if we see a house on the computer screen, what we are really looking at are thousands of luminous impulses which suggest a picture that in no way resembles a house. In order to see a house we must be educated to see it, reduce ourselves to the level of the machine.

Of course, we instinctively rebel against this strange image of the house at first, but everything depends on the passage of time without reacting. Gradually a new behavioural map emerges in our awareness. We react differently to the image and only with difficulty do we manage to rebel against the idea that it is really just a drawing of a house. At this point the computer has already penetrated us. Technology is no longer something outside us, a mechanical hand of immense strength has now become an inverted prosthesis that is penetrating our brains and conditioning us.

At this point we have become capable of receiving even long sequences of images, for example a whole TV programme, and exchanging it for a reproduction of reality. Our TV conditioning no longer allows us to rebel. Moreover, with a slightly better definition, the integrated circuit will close in on us for good.

But information does not only concern itself with the problem of our reception (perception), but also our transmission (language). Here again it has been necessary to adapt in a reductive way. A continual selection of our linguistic heritage is taking place through information technology, and a vast number of words are falling into complete disuse, being forgotten and substituted by other more essential ones. Here one could make a few interesting points. For example, expressions used in Italy such as "sales philosophy" or "economic return" or "there's no problem", and so on, can be seen as examples of this impoverishment of language. In a previous article in this paper entitled "From Virus to Virus" (in itself somewhat enigmatic) we read at a certain point that "the Jerusalem virus of Friday 13th, is programmed to destroy all the files it finds...".

Whyever was the term *file* used to indicate something which in Italian could quite adequately be called “data archive”? For precisely the reasons we are discussing here.

At the present time a problem that is central to the history of the struggle against the class enemy is emerging: whether to decide to go for an immediate, horizontal attack on the structures of information technology or not. This decision must be made before advances in the same technology take away our capacity to even decide to struggle against it. Before long we will be unable to understand the wide effects of computer technology, and our ignorance on the subject could grow alongside our knowledge of computer technology itself, precisely because it is not possible to have any knowledge of this technology that is not in some way vicarious, that does not depend on the acceptation of generalised intellectual submission.

I would like to point to a number of not very clear aspects concerning this problem of computer knowledge that some say is necessary in order to fight the latter and contribute to their destruction.

I ask myself what it means to say there is a need to “gain computer knowledge”. At this point something from my own indirect experience comes to mind. At the beginning of the sixties two mathematician friends of mine, attracted by a proposal by Olivetti and coordinated by the maths institute at Pisa university, accepted a transfer to this faculty to participate in the construction of the first wholly Italian computer. About two years later I met one of them who told me of his vicissitudes in Pisa. At one point the whole project ran aground due to difficulties concerning the resolution of a few more complex logarithms. The director of the project had had the brilliant idea of finding a solution of the logarithmic, which required a great deal of time and frankly a large dose of mathematical creativity, by putting an ad in the weekly puzzle magazine “*Settimana enigmistica*” (a crossword puzzle weekly) asking for the collaboration of enthusiasts in the sector who, in exchange for a modest recompense came forward and solved the problems indirectly, i.e. through tables or matrixes, developing all the possibilities of binary logic: an incredibly long but also an incredibly stupid piece of work. When the Olivetti so-called first generation computer was ready, it solved the aforementioned logarithms easily, so they were able to go ahead. The sad reality of electronics is that, apart from the strictly technical aspects of components, there is hardly any trace of real cognitive problems. Many comrades, attracted perhaps by clamorous electronic thefts or sabotage through programmed “viruses”, see themselves carrying out such great enterprises, therefore deduce that it is necessary to learn how to make programmes and so on. Then there is the passage to more or less sensate fantasies concerning the validity of attending “courses” or “studying” manuals.

In my opinion the problem is no different to that where one concludes that, although it is possible to make explosives in one’s own kitchen, it is best to avoid it: it is quicker and less dangerous to buy them and learn, quite simply, how to use them.

Technical Language

Our understanding of technology must be critical in two ways, first because it gives support to power in general, meaning that it could be put to unforeseeable use in the future, and because it could do an about-turn to the point of adapting to the social conditions in the course of modification. One could say, and recent ecologist modifications bear witness to this, that all defensive positions contain a hidden critical and just as plausible turning. In the same way, any critical analysis that examines the defects of the present in order to correct them, contains the possibility of turning to its defence, all the stronger the more it finds itself capable of going beyond these critical considerations.

Often the multiplicity of fields where technology is used and reproduces itself where the thought systems that create the premises concerning its consumption and production are elaborated, create quite unpredictable problems of interaction. The inconsiderate management of the way some of the technologies are used makes it impossible to make forecasts, either way. In the strict sense of the word, it would not even justify the negative, destructive, aspirations that we are bearers of. But, the irresponsibility of those who simply put their heads under the sand does not induce us to wait passively or rely on our intuition. We might also be wrong and thus be contributing to nipping in the bud, or putting obstacles in the way of the genial emergence of man's future happiness, but there seems to be no sign of any miracles appearing on the present scientific panorama. Approximation and superficiality reign, mitigated only in all the short-lived projects that are taking the place of the old long-term illusions.

Of course, scientific ideas and their technological application have always modified matter, subjecting it to man's needs and his basic desire to make reality adapt to his ideas.

This "historical" course of human affairs does not exactly correspond to what we normally call reality, in that it cannot be said that many of the technological and scientific adaptations of matter, from gunpowder to the atomic bomb, have been positive events for man. But one can certainly see a tortuous and often contradictory movement aimed at submitting the spontaneity of nature and life processes in general to the controlling and reproducing capacity of technics. Basically, of all the animals man is that which is least capable of living in nature. He is among those with fewest defences, the weakest cubs, but with an exceptional capacity for changing environmental conditions from unfavourable to favourable.

That is why what we know as human beings today, product of a brief historical evolution of a few thousand years, is also a product of technics. At this point it would be all right if these technics were still simply aimed at modifying reality, creating prostheses which, if not exactly useful to man, could at least be controlled by him. Of course, by increasing man's limited possibilities, any prosthesis at all turns him into a giant capable of levels of destruction undreamed of even by the Titans. This means that the germ of the danger lies in the very concept of the multiplication of strength—but because the prosthesis is always something useful, it seems to be worth taking a few risks. And so it has been for thousands of years. Terrible prostheses, from bronze to iron

and steel to missiles, have followed one another, often without giving us time to think about it. Attracting enthusiasm and imbecility, sterile opposition and hopeful enchantment.

However, in the field of changes in matter, i.e. in the construction of the prosthesis, although serious dangers could arise there was always the theoretical at least possibility of providing controls that would be able to put a brake on human lack of consideration.

All that has been profoundly transformed with the technology of the last two decades. The danger has reached intolerable limits for two reasons that are often not properly understood, so all criticism of technology tends to spill over into either becoming too generic, simply trying to exorcise some hidden danger, or into attempts to distinguish something that cannot be distinguished due to ignorance.

The first of these reasons that technology does not just change matter today, i.e. work on it to develop different uses, it actually penetrates it, thereby altering its composition. The second is that it is now possible for anything realised by technology to be modified unpredictably by this penetration of matter, making certain scientific aspects, hypotheses or simple technical discoveries that were once kept under control, extremely dangerous.

The creation of new materials, new living beings, a new virtual reality considered a further step in scientific research and the relative technical applications, is no worse than the invention of chemical weapons, nuclear reactors or the hydrogen bomb that we know. But, even without going into specific questions too deeply, one cannot fail to be surprised by the fact that we have reached a new threshold. Genetic or molecular modification, as well as the realisation of a virtual reality within which it is possible to reach the full sensation of being and acting, are allowing living beings and absolutely unknown materials to be produced on a wide scale, as well as have it believed that previously undreamed of behaviour is possible. This is accelerating the process of detachment from reality that is so useful to the management of consensus. Many of the new products—including the possibility of experimenting virtually with nonexistent reality—are inserting themselves into all the other materials, all other living beings and the whole experience of reality as we know it. This could lead to unforeseeable consequences for those who today, inside their laboratories, are limiting themselves to bringing about these transformations without questioning themselves about the consequences. The simple production of a huge cow or a tiny horse for laboratories, or a mouse as big as a horse, can impress no one but science fiction enthusiasts. The same goes for the production of super-conducting materials capable of transferring electricity practically without any loss. The same goes for virtual reality through a massive use of the whole computer network. It will be fascinating at first, then upset the order of things and finally uniform them to the norms of the new common sense, packaged and conditioned precisely as the moment presents itself in the guise of the freedom to live one's dreams in this reality.

No one can say what the reaction of the environment to certain materials and living beings will be. No one can foresee how our world will be changed by our modified behaviour, once this interacts with the new materials. If the technology of the past, a complete system based on the scientific hypothesis of research and analyses, presented dangers, it was possible to circumscribe them within certain limits, or at least we were able to control each other in the field of opposing interests. And if it presented the revolutionary possibility of one day becoming the instrument of liberation, abolishing class division and the ghost of the State—if all that was true and in many aspects plausible, it was because each new wedge in the whole technological and scientific framework could be predicted to some extent.

Now that this possibility to predict has disappeared both in the case of the single prosthesis (which can no longer be defined such), and the interaction of each new individual technological production with the whole social formation, we finally see that even the old managerial illusions of control and limitation were but the product of an historical era that has come to an end.

And, not being able to foresee the consequences, even the most innocuous experimentation could concur in the irremediable spreading of a terrible catastrophe.

The ‘End’ of the Crisis

Present-day capitalism has changed the whole of economic reality. The old world regulated by laws and rigid rules where individual companies could make long term programmes has turned into one where, in order to survive, companies must develop their flexibility and adaptability to the maximum. Revolutionary structures, including anarchist ones, were also modelled according to a concept of a rigid economic reality. Now that profound technological changes have put production in a state approaching “chaos”, we are asking ourselves if these old revolutionary theories are still valid. I do not think we can say they are.

A look in passing at some of the old certainties

One thing that can be understood from the few not very elaborate analyses in circulation, is the different role being given to the concept of “economic crisis” in the widest sense of the word.

Up until recently a lot was still being said in Marxist circles about a “coming of the crisis”, and various strategies and organisations were based on this certainty. Not only did they base themselves on the possibility of coming to a revolutionary moment of truth with the class enemy, they even went into detail, linking the strategic function of the revolutionary party and the “winning” choice of generalised armed struggle to the course of the “crisis”, which they claimed was objective.

We know that things are not like that. But the events leading up to their floundering today are not worth discussing. They could be summed up as an about-turn in perspective due to a few banal problems of accountancy. Things didn’t work out (but starting off with such a premise, how could they have?) so they reached the conclusion that the objective mechanism had not “functioned” as it should have done. Others, converting to collaborationism, ended up refuting this mechanism altogether, thereby revealing that the mental limitations of today are identical to those of the past, only that those of yesterday were concealed under a mantle of slogans and prefabricated ideas.

The complexity of the problem of “crisis”

It is a known fact that Marxists also used this concept once, as a form of consolation. At times, when conflict was at a low ebb and hearts were tepid, the determinist train kept chugging along. The crisis worked in place of the revolutionaries, eroding away the heart of the economic and social structure and preparing the field for the contradictions of the future. In this way the militant who had sacrificed everything to revolutionary hope did not feel the ground move under his feet and continued to struggle, believing himself to have an ally concealed in the very nature of things.

At times, when the contradictions are more acute and the level of the class struggle heightens as a result, determinism stalls—or rather, being of little use, is put behind the scenes. It is replaced with an opportunistic voluntarism capable (or hopeful) of jumping on the movement's initiatives, its sudden destructive outbreaks and its creative, spontaneous organisations.

But, questions of bookkeeping that are still keeping the supporters of revised power busy aside, the problem still exists in force.

In actual fact the course of the economic and social process is not homogenous, neither in the minutiae of specific situations nor in the situation as a whole. There are periods of economic shakedown, constant levels of production, greater international equilibrium (both political and economic) that alternate with periods dominated by contradictions, where the whole system seems to be reaching a critical point.

Economists have often spoken of "cycles", though they never agree on how to identify them. It could be said that the chapter of cycles is one of the most amazing aspects of this ridiculous science.

Will it ever be possible for capitalists to put order in the economic setup as a whole, or in the individual structures that comprise it? The answer is a definite "no"...

A double (and the same) error

But this does not mean that crises necessarily exist, so we can just calmly wait for events to take us to the revolutionary moment themselves.

On the contrary. Such "revolutionary" theory goes hand in hand with the capitalist theory of "planning" (Long Range Planning).

The error was the same in each case. It was thought that the economic (and social) formation was a composite whole held together by intrinsic, well-ordered, laws which a precise science (economics) and its chambermaid (sociology) studied and illuminated. This allowed revolutionaries on the one hand and capitalists on the other, to reach certain conclusions so that each could set out their long-term strategy.

It is now understood that crises do not exist—not because the world is in perfect order, but because, on the contrary, it is in complete disorder. It is continually at the mercy of turbulence that can augment or diminish, but which cannot be considered a "crisis" in that it does not in any way correspond to "anomalous" situations, but simply to the reality of the economic and social setup. For the capitalists, Long Range Planning became obsolete at the beginning of the Seventies. One could say that the parallel concept of "crisis" still exists for some revolutionaries. The time-lapse, as we can see, is considerable.

I believe it would be useful to look at the changed conditions of the economy—at least at the macroeconomic level—in order to try to understand the profound changes that are taking place in revolutionary analyses that saw "crises" as a borderline concept, so as to allow a better use of instruments of rupture.

It is also a given that much anarchist analysis is based on slow comprehension, undeserved transfers and unwanted gifts. For a long time it was believed that the economic analyses supplied by the Marxist church could be used by simply dropping a few assumptions and the final conclusion. This has caused enough problems already. It would be well to look for a solution.

I do not believe that it is possible to use Marxist ideas in any way at all—except to purge them of their dialectically-determinist postulates. This invariably ends up transforming them into indigestible banalities.

Towards a cohabitation with disorder

The need to conform to productivity forecasts based on a presumed economic order or economic laws, made the situation of the capitalist enterprises (the main element of what we call “capital”) very risky. Any variation from forecasts resulting from unexpected situations was considered spurious and the lasting, constant nature of occurrences that were claimed to be exceptional escaped them. Changes in levels of demand, oligopolistic competition, corporate defence of markets, price levels, changes, costs, occupational regulations, environmental conditioning: none of this could be considered simply “elements of disturbance” that contradicted the “certainties” of the only theory now authorised to interpret reality.

So capital found itself faced with surprises at the strategic level. It came up against continual changes in forecasts, making it more and more difficult to adjust to economic reality.

The suspicion that economic behaviour as a whole might be “irrational” began to catch on.

State intervention, especially at the end of the seventies, was undoubtedly one aspect of a possible equilibrium, but that alone was not sufficient. Also because State intervention, directed towards reducing the negative aspects of “capitalist competition”, started to concentrate too much on the institutional need for social control. Basically the State is an economic enterprise that tends to reduce the whole economic (and social) reality to the production of one product alone: social peace.

Capital, seeing its reflection in the deforming mirror of the Eastern European countries, is well aware that regeneration through State capitalism is an even worse evil. The latter guarantees the persistence of power but distorts the classical aspects of capitalism too much, domesticating it within the restricting confines of an institutional need for control.

Basically then, thinking about it, the whole phase of setting up the “State” as a corrective variable, which came to an end in strictly economic terms in the early eighties, also aimed to support itself (at least as far as the advanced capitalist countries are concerned) with the greatest technological innovation in history; the electronic one. Here was the indispensable element for living with the monster. The solution lay in reaching maximum flexibility in the shortest possible time.

The theoretical effort

The economists have been busy. Faced with the dangers of remaining locked up in the schema of “crisis”, they set to work. First they criticised the neoclassical theory of business enterprise, then the managerial one. They tried to look further into “uniformity” so as to curb the uncertainties caused by the great multiplicity of phenomena.

Then a critique of “crisis” seen as the passive acceptance of an anomalous situation that could be overcome, was formulated. The whole of the seventies was characterised by economic research aimed at criticising, in the “negative” sense, the unreliability of forecasts based on the economic theories of the past (both neoclassical and managerial, it makes no difference).

Finally, at the beginning of the eighties, “instability” and the complexity of phenomena came to be recognised as intrinsic to the economic setup, and the idea of the presence of contrasting forces that could be resolved was discarded for good.

Economists now talk clearly of “non-regulability”. A given situation—in the short or very short term—only becomes comprehensible for the company if economic reality is seen as a whole. In other words, if it is seen to be devoid of any centre or of any innate capacity to put order in various forces acting on the basis of decisions that are not always “rational”.

The solution that economic theory came up with in response to this problem was simple. Capitalist enterprise can only face such a situation if it develops flexibility to a maximum. It is not a question of a “new” situation, but of a “new” way of seeing things. The company must be flexible in decision-making, organisation of production, and its capacity to adapt to change in general.

So companies are decentralising, production is no longer a rigid process, anomaly has become the rule. Chaos is placed within the reassuring doctrine of “economic law”.

In actual fact, chaos has remained just that. What has changed are the ways of looking at it. The capitalist is learning to stride the monster. He has always had very few scruples and a certain pirate-like brand of courage. Even more so today. And there are no economic priests left to console him. If he wants to survive, he must do so in the short term. Robbery and violence are increasingly becoming the weapons of the short and medium term. Great planning projects—once often echoed by chatter in the social field—have been discarded forever.

The economic theory of the past has come to a sticky end. The neoclassical model that theorised rational economic calculations clashing and finding natural equilibrium in the market, have been discarded. The same for the managerial theory based exclusively on the firm’s stability and planning capacity.

These remnants of the past have been discarded in favour of the concept of proceeding by “trial and error”, now completely taken over by cybernetics. Of course these attempts are only possible after the company has become highly flexible and is capable of exercising sufficient control. Not control of the end product. These theories also discarded the idea of “bounded rationality” that characterised the managerial theories of the seventies.

This new situation presented the problem of how the company should act in the face of its incapacity to control external variables and even a number of internal ones clearly. The “political” components of the firm, the technostucture as defined by the “left wing” American economists of the seventies, became elements of uncertainty. At the level of macro-analysis, the State and its influence on the economy lose the determination of the preceding hypothesis. At the level of microanalysis, individual firms lose the capacity for strategic planning.

The new reality is therefore characterised by the introduction of instability into the enterprise itself. This means the end of stable relations between companies, changes in State regulatory functions (more weight given to maintaining consensus), and an end to fixed procedures inside the firm, where the traditional capitalist concept of accumulation and quantitative growth in production is disappearing.

The new methods are based essentially on speedy decision-making and no end of possibilities for changing production factors. In this way the managerial aspect of the company is changing considerably. The science of economic decision-making is disappearing forever, it being replaced by a practice (or art if we prefer) of empirical, eclectic decisions skillfully and impudently aimed at instant profit.

Economists are elaborating the contingency theory, a theory of the circumstances that link the company to the unique external situation. These cannot be submitted to economic calculations based on laws, but only to observations in the very short term based on empirical considerations, the fruit of (recent) experiences free from any theories based on long-term laws.

Neo-capitalism's dreams have crumbled forever, and with them the huge factory setup, which has seen its day. It has become evident that analysis based on a rigid concept of organisation would make it impossible to see economic reality as it is, resulting in preventing adequate productive action.

In order to understand the changes that are taking place it is necessary to look at a few essential points of the old economic analyses. For example, the productive cycle of the end product, the curve of cost-reduction related to the processes leading up to it, concentration (of both individual companies and oligopolistic sectorial groups), the size of the company: the idea that the small company represented the backward part of the economy, the function of State investment, the existence of advanced investment nuclei at the technological level capable of influencing the economy of a whole area—these are some of the classical points of the traditional view. They are all gradually disappearing. The conclusion is that it is impossible to come out with a general theory, only approximations in order to limit the damage of contrast between reality outside and the company.

The “new” factory is emerging from this unique melting pot.

This factory is no longer centralised and does not serve as a point of reference to polarise with external functions and interests. At one time research, manufacturing, distribution, demand (which was forced into constant growth), procuring raw materials, the spread of property-owning, growth in political power, etc., were all elements of planning based on the “central” positivism of the factory.

The factory no longer moves towards continual expansion, nor does it see itself as one compact unit. It continues to develop, but in a different way.

It is important to understand this concept. The “new growth” is based exclusively on the relations that the factory establishes with the outside world. Agreements and projects grow in tune with a common language and codes. Not only with other factories (limited by natural borders), but with the environment as a whole, advanced technology and scientific research. This new system (with Japan in the lead, far ahead of the US) is transforming itself from a closed system into a situation-system or, as it has been called, a “country system”. The situation system supplies technology, professionalism, services, the capacity to overcome and improve legal infrastructures, and material, social and ideological behaviour. In a word, it produces a suitable environment. Not the objective one that the old firm related to by trying to reduce its need for order, but a re-elaborated environment suited to the new concept of the development of the factory.

When we talk of the “breaking up” of the factory, this concept should be borne in mind. It is not so much one particular situation that is “pulverised” as the whole situation in all its complexity. In the first place, this is now possible due the presence of electronics technology that has abolished the confines of space and time. Now working in real time, the modern firm no longer requires warehouses and a rigid provision of parts. It no longer requires production units to be set up for long periods of time. It does not even need massive financial investment in order to bring

about changes in production lines. Its flexibility is growing exponentially, especially since the key problem of manpower has been solved and the phantom of social struggle that accompanied it has disappeared.

The multinational as we once knew it has also changed. It is no longer a great self-sufficient colossus. There is not now a centre capable of imposing its development on that of the State. The new multinational is linked to the environment with which it interacts, trying to turn the external conditions to its advantage. It no longer dominates the technological circuits or controls the market. No one firm, no matter how big, can control the development of technology and decide on its application (or not) today. The multinational is tending to become a collective supranational undertaking. It is becoming a great complex of complementary firms linked by the conditions of production technology and the individual capacity to exploit.

Revolutionaries

What we have described, albeit only in outline, cannot fail to be of interest to revolutionaries.

If the “end” of crises means that capitalism is surviving by adapting to economic reality seen as chaos, we cannot talk of programming, predictability and economic “laws”. We cannot talk of “crises”, meaning situations that will happen in our favour.

We cannot even think of the class struggle as something that has alternate phases. Of course, the clash is not “constant” throughout time, i.e. with moments of greater or lesser intensity, but rather it is a question of qualitative and quantitative changes that cannot be deterministically related to simple economic causes. The class struggle is based on a vast interweaving of social relations. No analysis can give us a sure road to measure expectation and legitimise behaviour. The time is always ripe for attack, even if the consequences can obviously be very different.

It is in this sense that we need to think about the possibility of revolutionary organisation capable of responding to the reality of the class clash as it stands today.

The organisational structures of the past—from party to federated group, from trade unionism to workers’ councils—more or less corresponded to a concept of economic reality that saw the capitalist enterprise as the centre, a concentration of power and exploitation. It was thought that an equally monolithic structure (union, party, federation) was the logical way to oppose it.

Not only has productive reality changed, we have also changed our way of looking at it. Even in the past, when we swore on eternal economic laws, the reality of production was actually chaotic and systematically penalised us when we approached it the wrong way. Perhaps concepts of “economic cycles” and “crises” should be seen in this light.

A different organisational structure still largely needs to be thought out and realised, but certainly does not need to be invented anew. This task is essential in our opinion. Anyone attempting to resuscitate the corpses of the old organisational processes (in the first place, the “revolutionary” party of course) should explain how they stand in the face of an economic (and social) reality that is becoming more and more comprehensible as indeterminism, certainly not through fixed economic laws. Whenever there is an attempt to make a revolutionary proposal tied to images of the past (parties, federations, groups, syndicalism, etc), one sees how economic reality is still seen as being linked to the assumption that more or less rigid laws continue to exist.

When these laws are taken for granted, or are timidly held between the lines, faith in economic cycles of “crises” comes to the fore. And as we know, this faith, just like any other, turns out to be very comforting when times are hard.

Affinity

Anarchists have a contradictory relationship with the question of organisation.

On the one hand there are those who accept a permanent structure divided into commissions with a well-defined programme and means at their disposal (even if only a few), while on the other there are those who refuse any stable relationship, even in the short term.

Classical anarchist federations and individualists are the two extremes of an escape from the reality of the clash. The comrade that belongs to an organised structure hopes that a revolutionary transformation will be the result of a growth in numbers, so deludes himself that the structure is capable of controlling any authoritarian involution or concession to the party logic. The individualist comrade is concerned about his ego and fears any form of contamination, any concession to or active collaboration with others, believing that would be giving in and compromising.

This turns out to be the natural consequence, even for comrades who consider the problem of specific organisation and the federation of groups critically.

The organisation is thus born before any struggles take place and ends up adapting to the idea of a certain kind of struggle which—at least one supposes—is to make the organisation itself grow. In this way the structure has a vicarious relationship with the repressive initiatives of power, which for various reasons dominate the scene of the class struggle. Resistance and the self-organisation of the exploited are seen as molecular elements to be grasped here and there, but which only become meaningful on entering and becoming part of the specific structure or when they allow themselves to be regrouped into mass organisms under the (more or less direct) leadership of the latter.

In this way, one is always waiting. It is as though we are all in provisional liberty. We scrutinise the attitudes of power, keeping ready to react (always within the limits of the possible) against the repression that strikes us, but hardly ever take the initiative and intervene in first person, upturning the logic of losers. Anyone seeing themselves in structured organisations expects to see the number of their members grow. Anyone working within mass structures (in the anarcho-syndicalist optic for example) is expecting today's little demands to turn into great revolutionary results in the future. Those who refuse all that but also spend their time waiting, who knows what for, are often stuck in resentment against all and everything, sure of their own ideas without realising that they are no more than the flip side of the organisational and programmatical stance.

We believe that it is possible to do something else.

We start off from the consideration that it is necessary to make contact with other comrades in order to pass to action. So long as our struggle is reduced to platonic protest, no matter how bloody and terrible it sounds, but is still platonic, we are not in a condition to act alone. If we want to act on reality incisively we need to be many.

How can we find our comrades? We have got rid of programmes and platforms in advance, rejecting them once and for all. So what is left?

Affinity.

Affinities and divergence exist among anarchists. I am not talking about personal affinity here, i.e. sentimental aspects that often bring comrades together (in the first place love, friendship, sympathy, etc.), I am talking about a deepening of reciprocal knowledge. The more this grows, the greater the affinity can become. In the case of the contrary, divergences can turn out to be so great as to make any action impossible. So the solution lies in a growth in reciprocal knowledge that is developed through a projectual consideration of the various problems that the class struggle presents us with.

There are a whole range of problems that we want to face, and usually we are careful not to go into them too deeply. We often limit ourselves to things close to us because they affect us most (repression, prison, etc.).

But it is precisely our capacity to examine a specific problem that opens up the way to creating the conditions for affinity. This can obviously never be complete (except in very rare cases), but can be enough for creating relations disposed towards acting.

If we restrict our intervention to the obvious aspects of what we consider the main problems to be, we will never find the affinity we desire. We will constantly be wandering around at the mercy of sudden unexpected contradictions that could upset any project of intervention in reality. I insist on pointing out that affinity should not be confused with sentiment. We can recognise affinity with comrades that we do not particularly like, just as we can like comrades with whom we have no affinity.

Among other things, it is important not to let oneself be hindered by false problems such as a presumed distinction between feelings and political motivations. From what we have just said it might seem that feelings should be kept separate from political analysis, so we could love someone and not share their ideas at all and vice versa. That is roughly possible, no matter how lacerating it might be. The personal aspect (or that of feelings if you like) must be included in the above concept of going into the range of problems, as instinctively succumbing to our impulses often signifies a lack of reflection and analysis, or not being able to admit to simply being possessed by god.

Now a first approximation of our way of considering the anarchist group begins to emerge, even nebulously, a number of comrades linked by a common affinity.

The more the project that these comrades are building together is gone into, the greater their affinity will become. It follows that real organisation, the effective (not illusory) capacity to act together, i.e. find each other, make analyses and pass to action, is related to the level of affinity reached and has nothing to do with more or less camouflaged monograms, programmes, platforms, flags or parties.

The affinity group is therefore a specific organisation that comes together on the basis of common affinities. They cannot all be identical, different comrades will have infinite affinity structures, all the more varied the wider the effort of analytical quest reached.

It follows that these comrades will also tend towards quantitative growth, which is limited however and not the main aim of the activity. Growth in numbers is indispensable for action and it is also a test of the breadth of the analyses that one is developing and its capacity to gradually discover affinity with a greater number of comrades.

It follows that the organism thus born will end up giving itself means of intervention in common. First, an instrument of debate necessary for analysis capable, as far as possible, of supplying indications on a wide range of problems and at the same time constituting a point of reference for the verification—at a personal or collective level—of the affinities or divergences that arise.

Lastly it should be said that although the element that holds a group of this kind together is undoubtedly affinity, its propulsive aspect is action. To limit oneself to the first element and leave the other in second place would result in relationships withering in Byzantine perfectionism.

Informal organisation

First let us make a distinction between the informal anarchist organisation and the anarchist organisation of synthesis. Considerable clarification will emerge from this distinction. What is an anarchist organisation of synthesis? It is an organisation composed of groups or individuals that relate to each other more or less constantly and have periodical congresses. Basic theoretical analyses are discussed at these meetings, a programme is prepared and tasks shared out covering a whole range of interventions in the social field. In this way the organisation sets itself up as a point of reference, a structure that is capable of synthesizing the struggles taking place in the reality of the class clash. Its commissions (single comrades or groups) intervene in different struggles and give their contribution in first person, without for that losing site of the theoretical and practical orientation of the organisation as a whole as was decided at the last congress. When this kind of organisation develops fully (as happened in Spain in '36) it starts to dangerously resemble a party. Synthesis becomes control. Of course, in moments of slack this involution is less visible and might even seem an insult, but at other times it becomes more evident. In substance, in the (specific, anarchist) organisation of synthesis, a nucleus of specialists works out proposals both at a theoretical and ideological level, adapting them as far as possible to the programme that is roughly established at the congress. The shift away from this programme can also be considerable (after all, anarchists would never admit to adhering to anything too slavishly), but when this occurs care is taken to come back to the line previously decided upon as soon as possible. The project of this organisation is therefore that of being present in various situations: antimilitarism, nuclear power, unions, prisons, ecology, interventions in living areas, unemployment, schools, etc. This presence is either direct or through participation in interventions managed by other comrades or organisations (anarchist or not). Clearly any participation aimed at bringing the struggle into the project of synthesis cannot be autonomous. It cannot really adapt to the conditions of the struggle or collaborate effectively in a clear plan with the other revolutionary forces. Everything must either pass through the ideological filter of synthesis or comply with the conditions approved earlier during the congress. This situation, which is not always as rigid as it might seem here, leads to organisations of synthesis dragging struggles to the most basic level, proposing caution and using contrivances aimed at redimensioning any flight forward, any objective that is too open or means that might be dangerous. For example, if a group belonging to this kind of organisation (of synthesis, but always anarchist and specific) were to adhere to a structure that is struggling, let us say, against repression, it would be forced to consider the actions proposed by this structure in the light of the analyses that had roughly been approved at the congress. The structure would either have to accept these analyses, or the group belonging to the organisation of synthesis would stop its collaboration (if it is in a minority) or impose the expulsion (in fact, even if not with a precise motion) of those proposing different methods of struggle. Some people might not like it, but that is exactly how things work. One might ask oneself why on earth the proposal of the group belonging to the organisation of synthesis must by definition always be more backward, i.e. in the rearguard, or more cautious than others concerning possi-

ble actions of attack against the structures of repression and social consensus. Why is that? The answer is simple. The specific anarchist organisation of synthesis has growth in numbers as its basic aim. It needs an operative force that must grow. Not to infinity exactly, but almost. In the case of the contrary it would not have the capacity to intervene in the various struggles or even be able to carry out its own main task: that of moving towards synthesis within one single point of reference. Now, an organisation that has increase in members as its main aim must guarantee proselytism and pluralism. It cannot take a clear position on any specific problem but must always find a middle road, a political road that upsets the smallest number and turns out to be acceptable to most. The correct position concerning certain problematics, repression and prison in particular, is often the most dangerous one, and no group can put their organisation at risk without first agreeing with the other member groups. But that can only happen in congress, or at an extraordinary meeting, and we are well aware that it is always the most moderate opinion that prevails on such occasions, certainly not the most advanced. So, unavoidably the presence of the organisation of synthesis in actual struggles, struggles reaching the essence of the class struggle, becomes a brake and control (often involuntarily, but it is still a question of control).

The informal organisation does not present such problems. Affinity groups and comrades that see themselves in an informal kind of projectuality come together in action, certainly not by adhering to a program that has been fixed at a congress. They bring about the project themselves, in their analyses and actions. It can occasionally have a point of reference in a publication or a series of meetings, but only in order to facilitate things, whereas it has nothing to do with congresses and such like. The comrades who recognise themselves in an informal organisation are automatically part of it. They keep in contact with the other comrades through a paper or by other means, but, more important, they do so by participating in the various actions, demonstrations, encounters, etc., that take place from time to time. The main verification and analysis therefore comes about during moments of struggle. To begin with these might simply be moments of theoretical verification, turning into something more later on.

In an informal organisation there is no question of synthesis. There is no desire to be present in all the different situations and even less to formulate a project that takes the struggles into the depths of a programme that has been approved in advance.

The only constant points of reference are insurrectional methods: in other words self-organisation of struggles, permanent conflictuality and attack.

The revolutionary project

The various aspects of revolutionary activity are not easily grasped. It is even more difficult to see everything in terms of a complex project with its own logic and articulation. That is what I mean by revolutionary work.

We all, or nearly all, agree as to who the enemy is. In this vague definition we include elements from our personal experience (joy and suffering) as well as our social situation and our culture. We are convinced that we have everything we need to draw up a map of the enemy territory and identify objectives and responsibilities. Times change of course, but we don't take any notice. We make the necessary adjustments and carry on.

Obscure in our way of proceeding, our surroundings also obscure, we light up our path with the miserable candle of ideology and stride ahead.

The tragic thing is that events around us change, often rapidly. The terms of the class relationship are constantly widening and narrowing in a contradictory situation. One day they reveal themselves only to conceal themselves the next as the certainties of yesteryear precipitate into the darkness of the present.

Anyone keeping a constant, albeit non static, position is not appreciated as a forthright navigator in the sea of class confusion but tends to be seen as just a stubborn old chanter of abstract, ideological slogans. Whoever persists in seeing the enemy inside the uniform, behind the factory, in the ministry, school, church, etc., is considered suspect. There is a desire to substitute harsh reality with abstract relations and relativity. So the State ends up becoming a way of seeing things and individuals, with the result that, being an idea, it cannot be fought. The desire to fight it in abstract in the hope that its material reality, men and institutions, will precipitate into the abyss of logical contradiction, is a tragic illusion. This is what usually happens at times like this when there is a lull both in the struggle and in proposals for action.

No one with any self respect would admit to the State's having any positive function. Hence the logical conclusion that it has a negative one, i.e. that it damages some for the benefit of others. But the State is not just the idea State, it is also the 'thing State', and this 'thing' is composed of the policeman and the police station, the minister and the ministry (including the building where the ministry has its offices), the priest and the church (including the actual place where the cult of lies and swindling takes place), the banker and the bank, the speculator and his premises, right down to the individual spy and his more or less comfortable flat in the suburbs. Either the State is this articulated whole or it is nothing, a mere abstraction, a theoretical model that could never be attacked and defeated.

The State also exists inside us, of course so is also i d e a. But this being an idea is subordinate to the physical places and persons that realise it. An attack on the idea of State (including that which we harbour inside us, often without realising it) is only possible if we do so concretely on its historical realisation that stands there before us in flesh and blood.

What do we mean by attack? Things are solid. Men defend themselves, take measures. And the choice of the means of attack is also open to confusion. We can (or rather must) attack with

ideas, oppose critique to critique, logic to logic, analysis to analysis. But that would be a pointless exercise if it were to come about in isolation, cut off from direct intervention on the things and men of the State (and capital of course). So, in relation to what we said earlier, attack not only with ideas but also with weapons. I see no other way out. To limit oneself to an ideological duel would merely augment the strength of the enemy.

Theoretical examination therefore, alongside and at the same time as practical attack.

Moreover, it is precisely in the attack that theory transforms itself and practice expresses its theoretical foundations. To limit oneself to theory would be to remain in the field of idealism typical of the bourgeois philosophy that has been filling the coffers of the dominant class for hundreds of years, as well as the concentration camps of the experimenters of both Right and Left. It makes no difference if this disguises itself as historical materialism, it is still a question of the old phagocytic idealism. Libertarian materialism must necessarily go beyond the separation between idea and deed. If you identify the enemy you must strike, and strike adequately. Not so much in the sense of an optimal level of destruction as that of the general situation of the enemy's defences, its prospects of survival and the increasing danger it represents.

If you strike it is necessary to destroy part of their structure, making their functioning as a whole more difficult. And if this is done in isolation it might seem insignificant, it does not succeed in becoming a reality. For this transformation to come about it is necessary for the attack to be accompanied by a critical examination of the enemy's ideas, the ideas that are intrinsic to its repressive and oppressive action.

But should this reciprocal crossing of practical action into theoretical action and theoretical into practical come about artificially? For example, in the sense of realising an action and then printing a fine document claiming it. The ideas of the enemy are not criticised or gone into in this way. They are crystallised within the ideological process, appearing to be massively in opposition to the ideas of the attacker as they are transferred into something quite ideological. Few things are as obnoxious to me as this way of proceeding. The place for the *conversion* of theory into practice and vice versa, is the *project*. It is the project as an articulated whole that gives practical action a different significance, makes it a critique of the ideas of the enemy. It ensues from this that the work of the revolutionary is essentially the elaboration and realisation of a project.

But before discovering what a *revolutionary project* might be, we need to agree on what the revolutionary must possess in order to be capable of elaborating this project of theirs. First of all, courage. Not the banal courage of the physical clash and the attack on the enemy trenches, but the more difficult one, the courage of one's ideas. Once you think in a certain way, once you see things and people, the world and its affairs, in a certain way, you must have the courage to carry this through without compromise or half measures, without pity or illusion. To stop half way would be a crime or, if you like, is absolutely normal. But revolutionaries are not 'normal' people. They must go beyond. Beyond normality, but also beyond exceptionality, which is an aristocratic way of considering diversity. Beyond good, but also beyond evil, as someone would have said.

They cannot wait for others to do what needs to be done. They cannot delegate to others what their conscience dictates to them. They cannot wait peacefully to do what others itching to destroy what oppresses them like themselves would do if only they decided, if only they were to awake from their torpor and from allowing themselves to be swindled, far from the chatter and confusion.

So they must set to work, and work hard. Work to supply themselves with the means necessary to give some foundation to their convictions.

And here we reach the second point: constancy. The strength to continue, persevere, insist, even when others are discouraged and everything seems difficult.

It is impossible to procure the means one requires without constancy. The revolutionary needs ~~cu 1 t u r a 1~~ means, i.e. analyses and basic common knowledge. But studies that seem very far from revolutionary practice are also indispensable to action. Languages, economy, philosophy, mathematics, the natural sciences, chemistry, social science and so on. This knowledge should not be seen as sectarian specialisation, nor should it be the dilettante exercises of an eccentric spirit dipping into this and that, desirous of knowledge but forever ignorant due to the failure to acquire a method of learning. And then the technics: writing correctly, (in a way that reaches one's objective), speaking to others (using all the techniques on the subject), which are not easy to learn and are very important, studying (this is also a technique), remembering (memory can be improved, it does not have to be left to our more or less natural disposition), the manipulation of objects (which many consider a mysterious gift but instead is technique and can be learned and perfected), and others still.

The search to acquire these means never ends. It is the revolutionary's task to work constantly to perfect these means and extend them to other fields.

Then there is a third thing, creativity. All of the above means would clearly be useless, mere specialisation as an end in itself, were they not to produce new experiences, continual modification in the means as a whole and the possibility of applying them. This is where we can grasp the great force of creativity, i.e. the fruit of all the preceding efforts. Logical processes become no more than a basic, unimportant element, whereas a different, totally new one emerges: ~~i n t u i t i o n~~.

Now the problem comes to be seen differently. Nothing will be as it was before. Numerous connections and comparisons, inferences and deductions are made without our realising it. All the means in our possession begin to vibrate and come alive. Things of the past along with new understanding, old concepts, ideas and tensions, that had not fully been understood become clear. An incredible mixture, itself a creative event, which must be submitted to the discipline of method in order for us to produce something, limited if you like, but immediately perceivable. Unfortunately the destiny of creativity is that its immense initial explosive potential (something miserable in the absence of the basic means mentioned above) be returned to the realm of technique in the narrow sense of word. It must go back to becoming word, pages, figures, sounds, form, objects. Otherwise, outside the scheme of this prison of communication, it would be dispersive and abandoned, lost in an immense fathomless sea.

And now one last thing, materiality. The capacity, that is, to grasp the real materiality of what surrounds us. For example, we require suitable means in order to understand and act, and that is not so simple. The question of means seems clear, but it invariably leads to misunderstandings. Take money, for example. It is obvious that one cannot do what one wants without money. A revolutionary cannot ask for State financing to undertake projects aimed at its destruction. They cannot do this for ethical reasons and for a logical one (that the State would not give it to them). Nor can they seriously believe that with small individual subscriptions they will be able to do everything they want (and consider necessary). Nor can they simply continue to complain about lack of money or resign themselves to the fact that some things just can't be done for that reason. Even less can they adopt the stance of those who, being penniless, feel their conscience at rest

and, stating they have no money, do not participate in the common effort but wait for others to do so instead of them. Of course, it is clear that if a comrade has no money they cannot be held to pay for what they cannot afford. But have they really done everything they can to procure some for themselves? Or is there only one way to get hold of money: go begging for it, letting oneself be exploited by a boss? I don't think so.

In the arc of the possible ways of being, taking personal tendencies and cultural acquisitions into account, two extreme kinds of behaviour polarise, both of which are limited and penalising. On the one hand there are those who accentuate the theoretical aspect and on the other, those who immerse themselves in the practical one. These two poles hardly ever exist in the 'pure state', but are often accentuated enough to become obstacles and impediments.

The great possibilities that theoretical study gives the revolutionary remain dead letters when they are exasperated, and become elements of contradiction and impediment. Some people only see life in theoretical terms. They are not necessarily men of letters or scholars (for the latter this would be quite normal), but could be any proletarian, an emarginated person that grew up in the streets coming to blows. This search for a resolution through the subtlety of reason transforms itself into disorganic anxiety, a tumultuous desire to understand that invariably turns into pure confusion, lowering the primacy of the brain that they are trying to hold on to at any cost. This exasperation reduces their capacity to put order in their ideas, it widens their creativity but only in the pure, one might say wild, state, supplying images and judgement devoid of any organisational method that might make them utilizable. This person constantly lives in a kind of 'trance', eats badly, has difficulty in relating to others. They become easily suspicious, are anxious to be 'understood', and so tend to accumulate an incredible hotchpotch of contradictory thoughts with no guiding thread. The solution for getting out of the labyrinth would be action. But according to this model of polarisation this would have to be submitted to the power of the brain, to the 'logic' of reason. So, action is killed, put off to infinity or lived badly because not 'understood', not brought into the pre-eminence of thought.

On the other hand, there is the endless doing, passing one's life away in things to be done. Today, tomorrow. Day after day. Perhaps in the hope that a day will come that puts an end to this postponing to infinity. Meanwhile, no search for a moment's reflection that is not exclusively linked to things to be done, or very little at least. Devoting all one's time to doing kills in the same way as devoting it all to thinking does. The contradictions of the individual are not resolved by action as an end in itself. For the revolutionary, things are even worse. The classic flattery that individuals use to convince themselves of the validity and importance of the action they wish to undertake is not enough for the revolutionary. The only expedient one can have recourse to is eternally putting things off to better days when it will no longer be necessary to dedicate oneself 'exclusively' to doing and there will be time to think. But how can one think without the means to do so? Perhaps thought is automatic activity that one slips into when one stops doing? Certainly not. In the same way as doing is not automatic activity that one slips into when one stops thinking. The possession of a few things then, courage, constancy, creativity, materiality, can allow the revolutionary to bring the means they possess to fruition and build their project.

And this concerns both the analytical and practical aspects. Once again a dichotomy appears that needs to be seen in its inconsistency, i.e. as it is usually intended by the dominant logic.

No project can be just one or other of these aspects. Each analysis has a different angle and development according to the organisational proposal, which needs to be assisted by other, similar analyses.

The revolutionary who is unable to master the analytical and organisational part of his project will always be at the mercy of events, constantly turning up after things have happened, never before.

The aim of the project, in fact, is to see in order to foresee. The project is a prosthesis like any other of man's intellectual elaborations. It allows action, makes it possible, prevents it from being extinguished in pointless discussions and improvisation. But it is not the 'cause' of action, it contains no element of justification in this sense. If correctly intended, the project itself is action, whereas the latter is itself a project, becomes fully part of it, makes it grow, enriches and transforms it.

A lack of awareness of these fundamental premises of the work of the revolutionary often leads to confusion and frustration. Many comrades who remain tied to what we could call reflex interventions often suffer backlashes such as demotivation and discouragement. An external event, (often repression) gives the stimulus to act. This often ends or burns itself out and the intervention has no more reason to exist. Hence the frustrating realisation that one needs to start all over again. It is like digging away a mountain with a spoon. People do not remember. They forget quickly. Aggregation does not occur. Numbers decline. Nearly always the same people. The comrade who can only act by 'reflex' often survives by going from radical refusal to shutting himself away in disdainful silence, to having fantasies of destroying the world (human beings included). On the other hand, many comrades remain attached to what we might call routine interventions, i.e. those involving periodicals (papers, reviews, books) or meetings (congresses, conferences, debates, etc.). Here again the human tragedy does not fail to present itself. It is not usually so much a question of personal frustration (which also exists, and you can see it), as the comrade's transformation into a congressional bureaucrat or editor of barely readable pages that try to conceal their inconsistency by going into daily events, explaining them according to their own point of view. As we can see, it is always the same story.

So, the project must be prospective. It must take the initiative. First operatively, concerning things to be seen or done in a certain way. Then organisationally: how to go about doing these things. Many people do not realise that the things to be done (in the context of the class clash) are not set down once and for all, but take on different meanings throughout time and in changing social relations. That leads to the need for their theoretical evaluation. The fact that some of these things actually do go on for a long time as though they cannot change, does not mean that this is so. For example, the fact that there is a need to organise in order to strike the class enemy necessarily signifies extension in time. Means and organisation tend to crystallise. And in some respects it is well that this should be so. That is not to say that it is necessary to re-invent everything each time one re-organises, even after being struck by the repression. But it does mean that this 'resumption' should not be an exact repetition. Preceding models can be submitted to criticism, even if basically they remain valid and constitute a considerable starting point. At this point one often feels attacked by misinformed critics and preconceived ideas and wants to avoid being accused of being an 'irreducible' at all costs, which actually sounds quite positive, but implies an incapacity to understand the evolution of social conditions.

So it is possible to use old organisational models, so long as they undergo a radical critique. But what could this critique be? In a word, pointing out the uselessness and danger of centralised structures, the mentality of delegating, the myth of the quantitative, the symbolic, the grandiose, the use of the media, etc. As we can see, it is a question of a critique aimed at showing the other end of the revolutionary horizon, the anarchist and libertarian side. Refusing centralised

structures, organisation charts, delegates, quantity, symbolism, entrism, etc., means to fully adopt anarchist methods. And an anarchist proposition requires a few preliminary conditions.

All this might seem (and in certain aspects is) less effective at first. Results are more modest, not so obvious, have all the aspects of dispersion and that cannot be reduced to one single project. They are pulverised, diffused, i.e. they concern minimal objectives that cannot immediately be related to one central enemy, at least as it is presented in the iconography invented by power itself. Power has every interest in showing its peripheral ramifications and supporting structures in a positive light, as though they had purely social functions that are indispensable to life. Given our incapacity to expose them, it manages to conceal the connections between these peripheral structures and repression, then consensus. This is the no small task that awaits the revolutionary, who should also expect incomprehension concerning actions when he starts to strike, hence the need for 'clarification'. And here lies another trap. To state these clarifications in ideological terms would be an exact reproduction of concentration and centrality. Anarchist methods cannot be explained through ideology. Any time that this has happened it has simply been a juxtaposition of our methods on to practices and projects that are far from libertarian.

The concept of delegating is criticised because it is a practice that, as well as being authoritarian, leads to increasing processes of aggregation. Refusal to delegate could lead to building in direct aggregation, a free organisational form. Separate groups then, united by the methods used, not by hierarchical relations. Common objectives, common choices, but in direct. Not feeling the need to propose aggregational relationships that sooner or later end up producing hierarchical organisation charts (even if they are horizontal, claiming to adhere to anarchist methods), which turn out to be vulnerable to any increase in the winds of repression, where each does their own thing. It is the myth of the quantitative that needs to fall. The myth that numbers 'impress' the enemy, the myth of 'strength' before coming out into the struggle, the myth of the 'liberation army' and other such things.

So, without wanting it, old things are transforming themselves. Past models, objectives and practices are revolutionising themselves. Without a shadow of doubt the final crisis of the 'political' method is emerging. We believe that all attempts to impose ideological models on to subversive practices have disappeared for ever.

In due proportion, it is the world as a whole that is refusing the political model. Traditional structures with 'strong' political connotations have disappeared, or are about to. The parties of the left are aligning with those of the centre and the parties of the right are also moving in that direction in order not to remain isolated. The democracies of the West are moving closer to the dictatorships of the East. This yielding of the political structure corresponds to profound changes in the economic and social field. Those who have a mind to manage the subversive potential of the great masses are finding themselves facing new necessities. The myths of the past, also that of the 'controlled class struggle' have gone. The great mass of exploited have been drawn into mechanisms that clash with the clear but superficial ideologies of the past. That is why the parties of the left are moving towards the centre, which basically corresponds to a zeroing of political distinctions and a possible management of consensus, at least from the administrative point of view.

It is in things to be done, short term programmes such as the management of public welfare, that distinctions are arising. Ideal (therefore ideological) political projects have disappeared. No one (or hardly anyone) is prepared to struggle for a communist society, but they could be regi-

mented into structures that claim to safeguard their immediate interests once again. Hence the increasing appearance of wider struggles and structures, national and supranational parliaments.

The end of politics is not in itself an element that could lead one to believe there has been ‘anarchist’ turning in society in opposition to attempts at indirect political management. Not at all. This is a question of profound changes in the modern structure of capital that are also taking place on an international level, precisely due to the greater interdependence of the various peripheral situations. In turn, these changes mean that the political myths of the past are no longer exist as a means of control, resulting in a passage to methods better suited to the present time: the offer of better living conditions in the short term, a higher level of satisfaction of primary needs in the East, work for everybody in the West. These are the new rules of the course.

No matter how strange it might seem, however, the general crisis in politics will necessarily bring with it a crisis in hierarchical relations, the delegate, etc., all the relations that tended to put class opposition in a mythical dimension. It will not be possible for this to go on for much longer without consequences, many people are starting to see that the struggle must not pass through the mythical dimension of politics but enter the concrete dimension of the immediate destruction of the enemy.

There are also those who, basically having no interest in what the work of the revolutionary should be in the light of the above social changes, have come to support ‘soft’ methods of opposition, claiming that they can obstruct the spreading of the new power through passive resistance, ‘delegitimation’ and such like. In my opinion this misunderstanding is a result of the fact that they consider modern power, precisely because it is more permissive and based on wider consensus, to be less ‘strong’ than that of the past based on hierarchy and absolute centralisation. This is an error like any other, and comes from the fact that there is still a residual of the equation ‘power equals strength’ in each one of us, whereas contemporary structures of dominion are dismantling bit by bit in favour of a weaker but more efficient form, perhaps even worse than a strong, boorish one. The new power penetrates the psychological fabric of society right to the individual, drawing him into it, whereas in the past it remained external. It made a lot of noise, could bite, but basically only built a prison wall that could be scaled sooner or later.

The many aspects of the project also make the perspective of the revolutionary task multiple. No field of activity can be excluded in advance. For the same reason there cannot be privileged fields of intervention that are ‘congenial’ to one particular individual. I know comrades who do not feel inclined to take up certain kinds of activity—let us say the national liberation struggle—or certain revolutionary practices such as small specific actions. The reasons vary, but they all lead to the (mistaken) idea that one should only do the things one likes. This is mistaken, not because it is wrong for one of the sources of action to be joy and personal satisfaction, but because the search for individual motivations can preclude a wider and more significant kind of research, that based on the totality of the intervention. To set off with preconceived ideas about certain practices or theories means to hide—due to ‘fear’—behind the idea, nearly always mistaken, that these practices and theories do not ‘please’ us. But all pre-conceived refusal is based on scarce knowledge of what one is refusing, on not getting close to it. Satisfaction and the joy of the moment comes to be seen as the only thing that matters, so we shut ourselves off from the perspective of the future. Often without meaning to, we become fearful and dogmatic, resentful of those who do overcome these obstacles, suspicious of everybody, discontented and unhappy.

The only acceptable limits are those of our capabilities. But these limits should always be verified during the course of the event, not as something that exists beforehand. I have always started

off from the idea (obviously fantasy, but good operatively) of having no limits, of having immense capabilities. Then daily practice has taken the task of pointing out my actual limits to me and the things that I can and can't do. But these limits have never stopped me in advance, they have always emerged as insurmountable obstacles later on. No undertaking, however incredible or gigantic, has prevented me from starting off. Only afterwards, in the course of particular practices, has the modesty of my capabilities come to light, but this has not prevented me from obtaining p a r t i a l results, all that is humanly attainable.

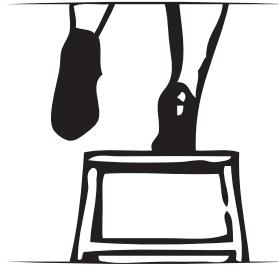
But this fact is also a question of 'mentality', i.e. of a way of seeing things. We are often too attached to the immediately perceptible, to the socialist realism of the ghetto, city, nation, etc. We say we are internationalist but in reality we prefer other things, the things we know better. We refuse real international relations, relations of reciprocal comprehension, of overcoming barriers (also linguistic ones), of collaboration through mutual exchange. One even refuses specific local relations, their myths and difficulties. The funny thing is that the first are refused in the name of the second, and the second in the name of the first.

The same thing happens concerning the specific preparatory activity of finding revolutionary means (instruments). Again, this decision is often automatically delegated to other comrades. This is due to fear or remorse which, if gone into carefully, have little to say for themselves.

The professionalism that is flaunted elsewhere is not welcome in anarchist methodology, but neither is downright refusal or preconceived ideas. The same goes for what is happening concerning the present mania for experience as a thing in itself, the urgency of 'doing', personal satisfaction, the 'thrill'. These two extremes touch and interpenetrate.

The *project* sweeps these problems aside because it sees things in their globality. For the same reason the work of the revolutionary is necessarily linked to the project, identifies with it, cannot limit itself to its single aspects. A partial project is not a revolutionary one, it might be an excellent work project, could even involve comrades and resources for great lengths of time, but sooner or later it will end up being penalised by the reality of the class struggle.

The Anarchist Library
Anti-Copyright



Alfredo M. Bonanno
Insurrectionalist Anarchism
1999

archive.elephant editions.net. Proofread text version from RevoltLib.com, retrieved on
December 12, 2020.

Original title: *Anarchismo insurrezionalista*. Edizioni Anarchismo 1999, 2009. Translated by Jean
Weir.

theanarchistlibrary.org