

From insurrection to guerilla

Anonymous

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A direct action, a physical attack on institutions and symbols of power, is at the same time an act of rebellion and confrontation with oppressors and a symbol that, having reached society, becomes a strong, loud call to fight. It is the point where the existential meaning of the act of combating converges with strategic considerations (with attempt to involve more people in a direct clash with the system). That is the basic goal of insurrectionary anarchism as a practice.

There are also more individualistic interpretations of the meaning of “insurrectionary” actions – some understand this action as complete self-worth, without having the task of influencing “ordinary people”. However, this interpretation is not for us.

It is necessary to note the difficulty of interpretation of the meaning of “insurrectionary anarchism”. Since the end of the 2000s, in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, everyone who use Molotov cocktails in order to damage institutions and symbols of power were called “insurrectionary anarchists”. At the same time, in the West, from where the formulation of insurrectionary anarchism or insurrectionism came to us, this trend is defined more narrowly: basically this term is used to describe those anarchists who support views of anarchist-communist Alfredo Bonanno and later nihilist groups. The Molotov cocktails, stone, armature and even weapons in Western Europe and in the USA are the property of a much wider range of anarchists, not only of insurrectionists.

But let’s go back to our latitudes. For those practitioners of insurrectionary anarchism who seek to convey their statements to society and to widen the struggle, the basis of the strategic line is in its own way understood the principle of “propaganda through action”. This principle is succinctly expressed in the phrase “sometimes direct action speaks louder than words”. So, insurrectionary anarchists expect that the given example will win the sympathies of many people, and encourage the most active of them to fight.

Direct communication between active insurrectionary groups in such a situation does not take place or, at best, is conducted only virtually and anonymously without coordinated interaction and joint strategy planning (so, insurrectionary groups are united rather by the general “mental” focus on sabotage). So, their activity is based on the expectation that the anonymous message-action will be heard, and gradually the number of active fighters will increase to a critical mass. Then, at a certain point, insurrectionary movement can become a factor contributing to the crush of the system.

We do not intend to turn away from insurrectionary legacy and we know for sure that the insurrectionary practices of anarchists in our region noticeably and positively impacted on the movement as a whole, inspiring and radicalizing many of its members.

It was “the insurrectionists” who made the anarchist idea and movement sound in public sphere very loud at end of 2000th and at the beginning of 2010th. However, the experience of the insurrectionists themselves and significant public events of the last decade, such as the protests in Russia of 2011–2012, Maidan, the Arab Spring, clearly show the need to adjust this approach. Counting on “swarm of affinity groups” did not prove to be working.

First of all, the need for an extensive revolutionary organization is obvious to us. This underground organization will seek to unite and coordinate as much as possible radical-minded people and their groups. This will allow to carry out a common strategic line and fight much more purposefully.

One of the main obstacles for the radicals in creating the organization is the necessary security culture. Arrests, tortures and long prison terms threaten members of such an organization much more than members of more peaceful-minded groups (despite recent experience which shows that peaceful-minded anarchists are in group of risk too). Many anarchist groups from the outset came to the conclusion that security requirements do not allow them to come into direct contact with other groups and conduct active recruiting work.

Meanwhile, the experience of the most diverse radical political forces clearly shows that the illegal struggle is fully compatible with the recruitment of new people, and with the creation of broad associations. There are different tools to do this — first of all, work through the old reliable contacts and surety, as well as a number of other simple conspiracy methods which shouldn't be voiced publicly. This active organizational work must be combined with the necessary security measures but, at the same time, there is no way to avoid some risks as each new acquaintance is a risk itself. But if it is necessary (and it is necessary) for our revolutionary goals, then the interests of the struggle should be more important than complete personal safety.

In addition to such kind of organization it is necessary to increase the degree of “seriousness” of action. We support insurrectionary approach, according to which physical confrontation with the system is needed here and now. However, this direct actions should become not as symbolic as they are not rather more guerilla-like. At the dawn of the insurrectionary anarchist trend in Russia one of its detractors stated that the insurrectionists on their actions “invariably miss”. Regardless of the fact that this statement came from the lips of unscrupulous cowards, there is a certain amount of truth in it. It is time for us to become better, comrades! Guerrilla struggle and strikes, painfully beating on the state machine and capitalists, will have incomparably more significant propaganda effect and will allow us to realize ourselves as a full-fledged revolutionary political force.

In our opinion, active work on the creation of a guerilla anarchist organization and a prepared, organized transition to guerilla struggle are the essence of the practice of guerilla anarchism. Guerrilla anarchism is the creative development and critical correction of insurrectionary anarchism. We believe that victory is ahead of the anarchist movement.

Freedom or death!

Long live the revolution!

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