

About the Tarnac 9

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December 2008

By now the facts are well known. On November 8 2008 a few metal hooks put in the right place uprooted the electric cables of the railway in four different spots, making a mess by blocking 160 high-speed trains. On November 11 police raids carried out in different towns along with a strong media coverage, led to the arrest of ten people who were allegedly responsible for the sabotage. After 96 hours' questioning, nine of them were charged with 'criminal association with aims of terrorism' and five of them were put in jail (three on the basis of 'having contributed to causing damage'). On December 2 2008, two people were still held in prison, one of them considered the 'leader' of the alleged 'association'. In January 2009 one of the arrested was released with restrictions.

A massive presence of journalists during the very morning of the searches and then the slander against the 'anarchist-autonomous' area spread by the media over the following days demonstrate once again how the media are an essential part of the 'anti-terrorist' machinery. Craving for sensationalism, playing on personalization and digging in the rubbish, these vultures never change: they are enemies in the service of power. Even if there are still some naïve or idiotic people who think that the media can influence 'public opinion', an imaginary and therefore easily malleable concept, we will never be astonished by the tortuous reasoning following which the enemy can be struck only if you collaborate with it.

In the current climate of institutional lies we are witnessing the progressive construction of the characters of 'good' and 'bad' 'terrorists'. The former, obliging grocers, members of agricultural communities and good students, are the counter-part of the others, all the others, those who don't have adequate requisites or who, generally speaking, refuse to show that they are good boys and girls when power threatens them.

Not seeking the intervention of elected politicians, interviews and chats on the existence or inexistence of 'evidence', many comrades have been rotting in jail for months. They too are accused of belonging to the 'anarchist-autonomous area' and (on the basis of traces of DNA) of having set a police car on fire. Others, some of them 'illegal immigrants', have been put in jail following the fire at the immigration detention centre in Vincennes, on the basis of CCTV footage. Finally others more are continuously accused of 'criminal association', from Villiers-le-Bel to those guilty of trying to survive without having regular jobs. A priori the former are not distinguished from the latter. Unless we accept the categories set by power, the only one that defines who is 'terrorist' and who is not; unless we accept the distinction between 'political' and 'social' prisoners; unless

we forget — starting from the names of many support committees (for the 9 of Tarnac) — that others were imprisoned before and maybe others more will be imprisoned; unless we are ready to sacrifice, in the name of the ‘innocence’ of some, all the ‘guilty’ who are captured every day (even if the concept of ‘evidence’ belongs to the judges anyway). Unless we finally take some advantages by helping power in defining a line between the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’: between those who are willing to talk to the media and tell their life and sometimes that of others and those who stay silent in front of microphones, between those who are friends with professional intellectuals paid by the State and those who despise all specialisation, between those who exchange their opinions with elected politicians during meetings and those who attack the sites of political parties; in short, between those who talk with power and those who are definitively irreparable, mad people who are obstinate in attacking power instead of re-producing it (with its categories and hierarchies) — a reproduction that naturally ends up strengthening it.

But let’s get back to the point. To be against democracy in favour of free self-organization between individuals and against all representative systems, does this mean being ‘terrorists’? To defend sabotage as one of the many instruments of struggle without any hierarchy, does this mean being ‘terrorists’? To fight without mediation for the total destruction of the State and the Capital, in other words to be anarchists in a little more coherent way, does this mean being ‘terrorists’? To have bad intentions, to maintain them and to write about them, does this mean being ‘terrorists’? To find accomplices in the struggle does this mean forming a ‘criminal organization’? In this case, yes, one thousand times yes, we claim our passion for freedom in a loud voice, with all the consequences that are involved. The same passion that belongs to many unknown people who, far away from media celebrity, struggle every day against dominion. In this world based on exploitation, devastation of the environment, war and misery, it is not considered criminal to stay inactive waiting for everything to collapse or, in a more cynical way, to count the score and hope to be safe each one by himself or herself, atomised in his or her own little cage. Because democracy, this way of management of capitalism, is not the most unacceptable of the systems. So far democracy has mainly proved its failure: the world it dominates is still a world of submission and deprivation. It is a system that gives the illusion of participation to the management of the disaster, that is to say of one’s own annihilation, by fomenting and then concealing the division into classes, whose contradictions would be absorbed by permanent concentration.

At the same time, the State is not a neutral instrument that regulates the defects of the market. On the contrary it is one of the allies of market, as demonstrated in this time of ‘financial crisis’ by the massive injection of money in order to save banks and companies, whereas the conditions of exploitation get harder and making ends meet is even more difficult. Yes, we want to destroy the State and not conquer it, because it is one of the pillars of this world of death like its jails, its cops and its tribunals.

As for capitalism, if it is first of all a social relation without heart or centre, it is up to each of us to fight it in its daily aspects. In so-called ‘global’ economy, based on a continuous circulation, flow of goods (including human ones) is of crucial importance. It is therefore natural that blockage has appeared in struggles of recent years, if not to inflict hard blows, at least to lay the basis for new relations of strength (from the struggle against the CPE to the railway workers’ strikes in France in February 2008, as well as in Germany in 2007, or the struggle of Val Susa in Italy in 2005). The anti-capitalist critique based on direct action and judged useless, obsolete or criminal by the intellectual servants has been put into practise by many exploited in their struggles,

because it is they who experience capitalism on their skin. The blockage of the TGV (through damage to the tracks or fire to the cables like in November 2007) — this devastating machinery whose aim is to increase the speed of the circulation of goods — has not happened by chance but is the consequence of the common experience of recent social struggles. Sabotage, moreover, is a widespread practise that finds its reason for being in the very heart of exploitation, be it carried out to steal time from the bosses or to cause damage against oppression.

What power fears is not politically correct demos led by unions during big events of inaction, on the contrary it is the spreading of widespread and anonymous acts in the context of the permanent social struggle, beyond all separatism.

As repression increases everywhere against the dissidents of democracy, to repudiate one's own past, ideas or even one's own antagonism seems the last sheet anchor offered by power. To refuse this blackmail is therefore, beyond the worry of not harming anyone, a question of integrity, one of the few things that the State can't take away from us. Whoever the authors of last November sabotages are, we proclaim our solidarity with the action they did. At the same time, faced with repression that claims to have dismantled an 'invisible cell', we don't care about mere support, which necessarily becomes exterior and relating to what the 'cell' is supposed to be, but again we proclaim solidarity against the State and all its hangmen.

Solidarity which, exactly like revolt, cannot be exclusive but must be addressed to all those who struggle for freedom. If the innocent deserve our solidarity, the guilty deserve it even more!

December 2008,
Anarchists in spite of everything.

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