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For the Widespread Adoption of Militant, Combative Direct Action Tactics

Burn Shit

June 18, 2012

Striking Asturian miners have adopted aggressive direct action tactics in defence of their livelihoods and communities. Road blocks, railway blocks, barricades, sabotage, slingshots and homemade rocket launchers (!) are being used in a fierce struggle to protect the mining industry from death-by-austerity.

Take note, Occupiers! As you're discussing the Tobin tax and huddling around a ciggy-end for warmth. Take note, Insurrectionists! As you play around with signal boxes in Bristol, trying to pop off nuclear energy executives in Genoa. You build with one hand but break with the other. Disrupting the quotidian functioning of capitalism, yes. Taking, occupying, yes. But your fantasies, your methods – revolution via late trains – are based on a pompous romanticism, a grossly inflated sense of the efficacy, relevance and worth of your actions mixed with a strange nostalgia for an era of Red Brigades, Angry Brigades and RAFs. Your combativeness is admirable. As is your (albeit

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ill-judged) attempt to break the inertia of a static and puerile ultra-left movement. Your desperation is obvious, your strategy elitist and narcissistic. This is not collective action. This is not a scenario in which people can realise their potential both collectively and individually or extricate themselves from the mundane, workaday exploitation of modern capitalism with cooperative struggle.

Occupy; how pained you social democrats and liberals must be with your malignant black bloc tumour. Not even the sounds of a drum circle can block out the rancorous cries for industrial militancy, property destruction and mass blockades. How happy you were to confine yourselves to your parks and marches, your placards and pacifism – before the time came for something more meaningful and profound than a few new laws and regulations here and there. Your horizontal structure was promising, your direct democracy, your lack of leaders. But you fell at the first hurdle, failing to answer the question; where now from here? Your May 1st General Strike was always doomed to fail. With a few exceptions from some of the camps, there was no broadening of the movement, no connections made with workplace or community struggles, with everyday life, no ‘diversity of tactics’, a media spectacle – and in the end, a damp squib.

In Quebec, the state has responded to the ongoing struggle against tuition fees with draconian laws criminalising protest. The new measures against freedom of assembly have only broadened support for the student strike amongst the general population. The militant tactics of the strike; street battles, flying pickets, property damage and occupations are accompanied with an awareness that the tuition fee hike is symptomatic of the general system. CLASSE do not separate the issue from a wider analysis of capitalism, property relations and centralised political power. The movement must be generalised and extended beyond the student body with a *total* critique and a maximal rejection of the totality.

We want to create two, three, many Asturias. Two, three, many Montreals. Two, three, many Tottenhams. We want office workers hurling their computers through the windscreens of police cars. We want barricades of burning filing cabinets. Call centres ransacked and transformed into meeting places and convergence centres. We want workplaces occupied by employees drunk on their own power. Every picket line with its own homemade rocket launcher. The arteries of capital blocked, not by two or three disgruntled activists, but by a sea of pissed off and organised bodies, multitudinous and hostile. This is what a strike should look like.