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Jack-in-the-box

Italy's anarchist phantoms

Federazione dei Comunisti Anarchici

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November 24, 2005

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- repression can be fought off with legal help, with defence committees and with a good deal of patience and solidarity but that on this point there is much to be done;
- we ourselves can prevent the criminalization of the struggles and the movements through clear analysis of the mass dimension of the movements, as spontaneity is often the precursor of traps and attacks. (The CUB grassroots union, in fact, was spot on in calling a strike of all sectors in the Val di Susa after the FIOM had called one for its own sector, industry.)

Our synergies, alliances and political choices must be unambiguous.

From the press, we learn of admissions of responsibility, of plots as easy to dismantle as lego, of the fault being anarchists' (all the TV news shows) or anarcho-insurrectionalists (RAI 3 news), of "organizations" responsible for the various "Jack-in-the-box" attacks — those little surprise packages, letter bombs or suchlike.

Bologna: Jack-in-the-box for the mayor, Cofferati.

Presumed motives of those responsible (according to the minister): Yeah, we'll show that old Stalinist wanker we're not joking and put the fucking Disobbedienti in the shit at the same time.

Motives of the secret services: The State is on the Mayor's side; a shadow is thrown on the movement against the evictions; militants get worried, terror among ordinary citizens; grassroots struggles wilt; political mediation is restored.

Final result: The Bolognese movement is in the shit; Cofferati becomes a martyr; much time and energy is spent distancing oneself; anarchists involved in the movement forced to constantly show their worth and always risking exclusion.

Val di Susa: Jack-in-the-box for the high-speed railway (TAV).

Presumed motives of those responsible: To radicalize the mass protest in the Val di Susa; to give the vanguards an example; to make a dramatic gesture on behalf of the poor masses of sheep and inflame the hearts of revolutionaries; to demonstrate that the individual is always more advanced than the masses.

Motives of the secret services: Erm... this crowd are all mayors, families, normal people with no masks, even kiddies; they need a good hiding, but then there'd be an inquiry; d'you know what

— why don't we put a nice harmless Jack-in-the-box on the line, no-one will get hurt, it'll ruin their movement, they'll spend more time protesting their innocence than protesting against the train!

Final result: Movement in difficulty, forced to defend itself from suspicion of terrorism, distance itself, spending more time protesting its innocence than protesting the train line; political mediation replaces grassroots struggle; the DS party takes over and incidentally regains political control of the region.

Parma: 2 Jack-in-the-boxes for the Carabinieri Special Branch.

Presumed motives of those responsible: Let this be a warning that we know you're trying to frame us with your "investigations".

Motives of the secret services: Bologna and Susa are not enough, we need a real attack at the heart of the State and some stupid carabinieri to fall for it so we can launch a witch-hunt for subversives.

Triple final result: Bologna, Susa, Parma — the latest in the terror campaign against the movements and repression of social struggles; sure, a bit too early for the election campaign, but from now until April, there'll be plenty more. We can't disappoint everyone who's waiting for the pre-election strategy of tension, can we? A 40-year-old tradition!

For some time now, not only have we analyzed and understood that the object of the policies of an increasingly security-obsessed Europe of criminalization and repression are directed at the anarchist movement, not only at anarchist militants, but also in the sense of anarchist practices and grassroots, self-managed social organization which has little or nothing to do with the institutional left or political representation delegated to the party professionals in national

parliaments or in Strasbourg. It is an operation that could not openly be performed with an attack on the movements' official organizations, but only through small terrorist actions, just as effective in throwing the newly-resurgent anarchist movement back into the shadows of history, to blacken its name, to scare off its supporters, to force it to continually protect itself from attacks on its name. Making life difficult for the anarchist movement means helping the Disobbiedienti and their ilk to become the stage-managed "opposition", in the knowledge that they are willing to play the part of political mediators and representatives as long as they get their 15 minutes of media glory every so often. It means making life difficult for anarchists who work in mass social and union activity, forcing them to distance themselves from the "nasty" anarchists and politically paralyze the movement. Sure, at present the movement, or rather its younger sectors, is dominated by devotion to literature whose approach is far from political. The black bloc, John Zerzan and the erroneous conception of the anarchist as individualist who is willing to organize temporarily by affinity. In the illusion of escaping police control, in the arrogance of criticizing organized anarchism, in the romantic dream of being enough in oneself, in the total disregard for mass, popular action. Just that — literature.

Faced with this sort of preventive counter-revolution, we need to realize that:

- class-struggle anarchism risks being backed into a corner, exhausted by having to explain ceaselessly that it is not what everyone assumes it to be, while knowing that it will be targetted by the State once the class struggles which directly attack capitalist interests show their face; we need to remain firmly anchored to the mass dimension, to continue to analyze events clearly;