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HUNGER STRIKE HIDES IMPORTANCE. Importance that results from a combination of body weakening and debilitation of the strikers, and from the actions/reactions that are created. These two factors usually (but not necessarily always) are connected in relation.

The sharpness that is hidden in the act of hunger strike creates sections within our milleau and also within the handlers of state authority. Main target of every strike is the creation of flows in the social ground. Till now in Greece, the handling of hunger strikes from the state is relatively "painless" (compared with examples that have written the history of hunger strikes). Strikers have reached real critical limits rarely, even if this of course is not any kind of guarantee for the process of future strikes. This prevention of extreme situations is not because of some moral features of institutional officials. Morality is not an independent condition, it is determined from the power correlations inside the field of war we are conducting. If the concept of political cost didn't exist, no state and the Greek one would have any concern about leaving the strikers to die. The political cost also is balanced in relation with the result of a partial complaisance to the strikers demands.

Also, rarely, especially in the last years following the big wave of arrests of anarchists, demands of a hunger strike have been accepted in total. This shows that in the conflict that is signaled by a hunger strike, demanded from both sides is balance, forceful but at the same time fragile. The fragility of this balance depends on the level of competition that developes every time, that is organization, determination and perseverance that each side shows in order to defend their position. A lot can be said about the way the state (talking specifically about Greece), regardless of who is managing power each time, faces hunger strikes and mostly the ones that feature political characteristics, leading to political conflict and social turn moil. I believe though that something like that would lead me to ramble and at the end i would tire, since in all hunger strikes, during their process and also (and mainly) after their end, this topic has been sufficiently discussed. What i see most important in the matter is a calm look on the ways that we perceive, signal and analyze hunger strikes. A look in our weaknesses which are seen more clearly after a hunger strike because of the polarity that preceded.

Like any action of ours, hunger strike has as well a twofold nature. It does not only answer to chronic or arising questions but it simultaneously actuates questions about who we are, in what terms we organize, how do we fight, what relationships we create occasioned by a period of intensified conflict with the state. And each one of them and all other that emerge, do not have only one answer, since each individual or collective subject assumes in different ways.

Every hunger strike starts with a decision that has a deep existential dimension. The continuous struggle that happens between body and brain, between will for resistance and survival instincts is a very special condition which wears down the striker, not only physically, but spiritually/ emotionally as well. Our organism, as an undivided set, is influenced as a whole by the procedure of the strike. The possibility of death is

something that each person which is committed to the revolutionary prospect has always in front of him/her. Hunger strike though, has the peculiarity that death doesn't seem as a detached, random or unpredictable moment, but an ending of a predetermined course, with increased possibilities actually, as the days pass. The means has also one more peculiarity. On its own it cannot affect the regime in any way.

Even if it sounds heretic, i believe that hunger strike is an introvert, self destructive and reformist means of struggle, regardless from the combativeness and determination with which it is carried out, even if it reaches the death of the striker/ strikers. The reformistic nature of hunger strike first of all emanates from the beginning of it since it aims to strengthen our position in a negotiation, by blackmailing the state agents. And from the moment we are talking about negotiation, it is expected that there will be agreements, compromises and even reductions from our original declarations. From the moment that we are addressing even by blackmailing state agents asking for fulfillment of some demands, we recognise the institutionalised authority and their power to provide some solution. Furthermore, every strike seeks the fulfillment of some demands within the given context, without it being able to destroy or at least overcome the a priori existing power relationships. Basically it promotes a balance in which we (depending on the progress) can win some space related with public addressing, but we realize at the same time the state's capability to compress and decompress a situation, or, in other words, the power to force it has in our individual or collective living.

The substantial peculiarity of a hunger strike though, the one that transforms the rest of its characteristics and is its driving force, is the way it puts the striker from the weak position to the strong one. The determination (or the desperation, depending on the point of view) and the self denial that the decision to hunger strike hides, puts in a activity orbital people

with very different perceptions with the striker, creating social movement. The lyrical sym- bolic image that the hunger striker gains as a human who is voluntarily confronting death in order to fight back the "injustice" of totalitarianism, is the subcutaneous (or also apparent many times) starting point for supporting a hunger strike. Depending on references and perceptions, this support can turn on, besides solidarity, humanitarianism, justicial balance, poitical calculation, emotional sympathy, as the most usual from a range of them. And here is where a contradiction is presented which we experience as anarchist "milleu" related with hunger strikes. While each support that doesn't begin from anarchist value solidarity makes us feel disgust, the social pressure they cause is not only desirable, but also necessary for achieving tactical aims/demands of a hunger strike.

The most characteristic example are the hunger strikes by RAF members, which against a very tough and consolitated political system, mobilized gradually (mainly after the death of H.Meins) be sides than leftist organisations of various references, some vicars of catholic church, increasing thus by far their dynamics, leading the German state to small concessions.

The support of hunger strikes from various sides is an independent procedure from the striker's/strikers' will and has to do with the social reflexes that develop. Always though, the question emerges about how the hunger strike proposals will transform to ruptural and confrontational ones, outflanking assimilative approaches. The thing that denatures a hunger strike from a self-destructive course to a sharp choice of struggle (and sometimes to a substancial conflict) is the meaning of solidarity, the requirement of every struggle.

Hunger strike is a means of struggle which more clearly than any other shows the necessity of expansion and diffusion. Solidarity connects the strikers with other people that feel part of the same struggle, who transmit their voice, who create a common front, who with their actions create cracks

Recognizing that despite the possible disagreements about timing, way, organisation and other components that complete an action, it is against the hostile conditions that surround us, at some level it can liberate us politically and strengthen us collectively in order to be more insightful, meaningful and dangerous in the struggles we give.

These are our victories and their absense is our defeat.

December 2015

Absoluteness may be very useful in our slogans and our declarations but is proved totally useless when it is about defining our position in the depth of time. The only substancial condition that we can see as "victorious" in a hunger strike is to manage to overcome its context, its demands, its personal objections and qualms, and after all the subjects of it, the strikers, and capitalize the dynamics that develop in the next battles (not necessarily strikes). The experience of battle, the conclusions of self-criticism, the heritage left by the struggle is our victory. Respectively, "defeat" is defined from the level of failure to actuate the above.

In a complex and evolving reality which is composed of outbreaks and remissions of intensity in the clash we are conducting in various ways against the alienation of state and capital sovereignity in all fields of our existance (moral, spiritual, biological, economic, political), the usage of military terminology about 'victories' or and 'defeats', not only disorients us, but hides hastily the essence of our struggle. That it's not a chain with rings in line or a wall where bricks are placed uniformly, but a mosaic where each tile is in interaction with all the others in order to produce a such complex result as the reality that surrounds us. Each tile in this mosaic, each place and moment in space time continuum, each individual struggle we give hides something from the 'rights' and 'wrongs' of the past, from the strength and the weaknesses of older struggles, while it simultaneously ingrains the present and future with its own individual characteristics, and hides inside the relationships it creates, the sperm of overcome, not only of the past, but of itself. Only under this prism we can connect our struggles, justifying the over time value of Heraclitus who said that 'everything is one'. And under this prism we can perceive that seeing different views and perceptions as a reason for infertile and ruptural disagreement with a hunger strike (or anything else) being the occasion, weakens us in total.

in the management of the strike by the state agents. Solidarity liberates and diffuses proposals, ideas, creates movement, the essential substance of life. This is the main issue of a hunger strike (and of every struggle in general) and from this it's succes is counted. If the meaning of solidarity doesn't exist, the militant sup- port of a hunger strike as a moment of sharpening the conflict with state power further and outside of the existing institutionalised context, finally its termination will end up for a wide range of people as acceptance of institution agents' authority to safeguard "human rights" or "democratic values" as our "victory" in the good occassion or "defeat" in the worst. Thus, instead of undermining the nature and the role of state, it will strengthen. And this is a condition that, besides of direct results, makes difficult the beginning of the next strike. Without the militant solidarity, the perception that overcomes the demands or sometimes even the strikers, transforms the hunger strike from demand assertation into struggle for life, the strike ends up a self-destructive option, a "special way of committing suicide" according to Thatcher's quote on IRA strikers.

Anarchist hunger strikers are not mar- tyrs or eremites that are tortured now in order to gain later a place in some "revolutionary list of martyrs". Nor they are potential suicide victims. Revolutionary history is full of examples of strikers which their death turned them into "martyrs". Every movement/organisation of national liberation (ETA, IRA, Palestinian organisations etc.) or class liberation orientation (RAF, DHKP-C, GRAPO etc.), violent (like the above mentioned) or peaceful (Gandhi movement, African National Congress etc) has its own list of martyrs that died during very tough strikes. As much as it affects us emotionally, the approach that seeks death, dissociates us from the essence of a hunger strike. From the way our choices create movement, namely life, while our choices touch death at the same time. The ways that reality gets disrupted by actions caused from

a hunger strike is a procedure to live history in present time and not in the past or in the future.

The core of anarchist overcoming of the archetypical image of the striker is found in overcoming his/her act, his/ her choice of hunger strike through other acts that are supplied and connected with the strike but also between them. In this sense, not the striker but the strike is not found only in the prison cell or the hospital ward but mainly in the occupations, the demonstrations, the clashes, the arsons and anywhere else where solidarity is spread. If the strike will success and in what degree it will meet the claimed demands is one requirement, but bigger one is the roads that opened for the creation and expansion of relationships through solidarity. Of course every struggle works in the opposite way as well, breaking ties and destroying relations, so from the start there is no certainty if a strike or any other form of struggle will move things forward or undermine them in relation with our position. Only the attempt and the act in real conditions can give the answer and this is something that is showed not that much during the struggle but after time following it's termination. In the long run, we can view more roundly the results of a hunger strike. Cel- ebrations or grief cries about "victory or defear" equivalently, after the termination of a strike, reveal the lack of depth with which we value stuff as anarchist millieu, persisting more on the spectacular reflection of things and less on the bases we put for giving our next battle.

Anarchism is an ongoing try for the destruction of state, capitalism and authoritarian relations. As anarchists therefore, this is the only thing we can define as victory. A route in which we cannot put beginning, middle and end. Or letting Malatesta to speak "to anarchy we will never reach, not today, nor tomorrow nor ever. We can only head towards it". We need to realize that the dipoles obscure and never unveil. With the calmness and the security that elapsed time gives, we can have a look at the most recent (and typical) examples of hunger strikes that

we experienced as anarchist millieu. The weakness of the analysis based on the dipole "victory/defeat" to completely value the situation is indicative.

Kostas Sakkas forced the state to retreat and won his way out of prison, breaking the fascist measure of indefinite detaintment which was going to be put on some of the accused. The hunger strike of Kostas created a very strong solidarity movement. A few months after his release, repressive pressure had become so stifling that Kostas had to go underground, a special condition that removes him from his social/political environment and the interaction created by this relation. Another example is the hunger strike of Spiros Stratoulis who claimed the cessation of the prosecution that deprived him of the right for leaves' days during his 21st year of imprisonment. Spiros won not only this but also the shift of charges to misdemeanours for the vast majority of the accused. He won, therefore, more than he was actually claiming at the beginning, giving at the same moment a political struggle for overthrowing the anti-"terror" law from the "Thessaloniki stekia" case. The hunger strike of Nikos Romanos was the one that made the biggest impression the last years. Nikos won something that was not provided by the law till then, the allowance for leaves' days for educational reasons to pretrial imprisoned ones. However, till the time this text is written, he hasn't be given yet leaves' days, because of the subjectivity criteria that got activated on this occasion as well, eventhough the 'gps bracelet' was presented as solomonic solution. The recent hunger strike of Conspiracy cells of fire, theoretically led to release of their close relatives, but actually a second hunger strike was needed for the same reason and strict conditions were imposed on the revealed relatives. At last, the limitation of the arbitrary and violent taking of DNA that was won on papers after the hunger strike of the political prisoners of DAK (Network of fighting prisoners), was practically violated by prosecution provisions. All the above show the vague limits between 'victory' and 'defeat'.