

The Anarchists from the White Mountains

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1.

The mountains are the first thing you notice. They look like they are capped with snow. But on closer inspection, you see it's not snow. The mountains themselves are white. White as snow. They are the marble mountains around Carrara, Massa, and Pietrasanta. The mountain I can see from my window is called Monte Altissimo, *the highest mountain*. The house I'm writing in lies on a mountain. It's called Montepreti. The Mountain of the Priests. Alright, mountain is a bit much; my mountain is 147 metres high. 147 metres above sea level at the highest point. I say, My mountain. 147 metres above the sea that lies down there, blue and trembling in the sunlight. Height above sea level is an important measurement with regard to the 200 or so olive trees I tend here, because the height determines whether or not they are attacked by the olive fruit fly. It's just high enough here for the attacks to be milder than down in the valley. Down in the valley, I say. I say, My mountain is 147 metres high. It's just a little hillock in comparison with the real mountains here: Monte Altissimo, 1,589 metres above sea level; Pania Secca, 1,711 metres above sea level; Monte Sella, 1,739 metres above sea level; Pania della Croce, 1,858 metres above sea level; Monte Tambura, 1,891 metres above sea level. Above the sea, the sea, the sea. Down there lies the sea with its sub-aqueous mountain ranges. The azure blue sea where the white Ur-marble fauna in the form of shellfish once sank to the seabed. Now time has turned bed and mountain upside down. All the little compressed sea organisms have been compacted into a white time-stone.

Marble is an industry with a turnover in the billions. Most of it, our local guide to the mountains tells us, becomes toothpaste. Toothpaste? Yes. Most of the 30,000 tons of marble that are quarried every week — every week! — are ground down to powder and sold to industry, becoming part of all sorts of processes and products, including foodstuffs and pharmaceuticals. The quarried material is equal to 4–5 million tons a year, let's say for argument's sake 4.5, which equals 1,636,636 cubic metres, with a volume of 1 by 1 by 1.6 km. This is roughly equal to a 36 km long queue of tourist buses, or a motorway paved with a 3 cm thick layer of marble stretching from Carrara to Stockholm. Only 20 to 25% of this volume is quarried in blocks, the rest as loose stones, or 'scaglie', to be crushed into powder. Of the blocks, only 20% are actually carved into statues, monuments or artworks. The other 80% are used to produce objects such as gravestones, ashtrays, and sinks, and in the building sector for tiles, stone cladding, and columns. Over the last 20 years as much marble has been quarried as in the last 2000 years.

Marble is no longer really worth anything. In Pietrasanta all the pavements are made of marble, the benches and the skate park are of marble. You have to duck to avoid it, literally. Fatal accidents are still frequent in this huge industry. Enormous mounds of marble are unloaded around the town. It was once a grind to get it out, but not any more; an endless chain of lorries transports the blocks down, the roads lead all the way up to the tops of the mountains, where the marble is whitest. This marble is the most sought-after. These layers of stone once lay at the bottom of the sea. Over the course of about 200 million years, their weight pressed the calcium carbonate shells and skeletons into a solid three-dimensional salt (marble). Following this, gigantic underground forces pushed these layers upwards, creating a huge highland made of carbonic stone. Erosion slowly carved this highland into the mountain range known today as the Apuan Alps. The highly compressed layers now lie like snow on the peaks, waiting to be cut out by gigantic diamond-edged saws. The Statuario marble, that of the purest and best quality, is still highly sought-after: for it is used to clad Saudi Arabian mosques. Statuario marble is fabled. The

supreme, the rare, favoured by Michelangelo. It can be polished up so that its surface is almost transparent. Statuario can therefore cost up to 30 million Danish crowns per ton. But there is none of it left in the mountains.

We've come to investigate anarchism, we tell our guide. I'm an anarchist, he says, you can ask me whatever you want. We look at him. He's a small, obstinate man in his mid-50s, and doesn't really look like an anarchist, with his four-wheel drive car and practical outdoor clothing. No black neckband and no spherical bomb in sight. What we have here is a natural disaster, he says, a small closed circle of families owns the quarries, nobody gets in. A cartel, a mafia pure and simple, he says and drives us higher up the mountain. Do we want the long or the short tour? We say the long one. Even though it costs €10 more it's difficult to see how it could have been different from the short one. We stand looking down on everything. The incomprehensible surface of the sea, the ant-like people, cranes and excavators that look like toys at the bottom of the quarry. The Romans were here, the Medici, Michelangelo, Rodin and Thorvaldsen came here. They all wanted a piece of the white and sparkling stone; white as grief, white as snow, insubstantially white, ghostly material. Tombstone and lifestone. Artisans have made it float in air and carved bodies out of it, and let them disappear in the simultaneously soft and hard stone. Endless rows of stone masons have hewn and blasted marble out of the mountains. It's no coincidence that anarchism arose right here, the guide says, because you have time to think a thing or two when you sit here hewing stone all day.

2.

More than twenty years have passed since I first came here, basically as part of a linguistic experiment: what would happen if I moved myself out of my language, what would happen if I hewed my language to pieces and was left without one? Which poems lay waiting in the landscape where there was no language? The experiment was to have lasted six months, then it got extended to a year and a second, then it turned into eight years, and now I've stopped counting. I discovered that I was happier south of the Alps. When I'm in the mountains, I'm somebody else. I went south here, I'm nobody here.

Can a Danish poet use the word 'mountain'? Of course she can, but during the more than twenty years I have lived in Italy, I have developed a different relationship with the word 'mountain'. In my youth I read Henrik Nordbrandt and Inger Christensen, of course, and felt off kilter in relation to the vocabulary they used: apricot, cicada, olive tree, blue mountains. They just used them, these words, as a matter of course. But no apricots grew in the suburban garden of my childhood, no cicadas were heard there.

Over time the mountains have become mine, if it is at all possible to say that one has a mountain. Can one say: My mountain? I do. If nothing else because I know them by now, I walk around in them, climb them and get lost in them. I stand on them and try to understand their history. For if there is one thing that marks the area, it is history and the stories about the mountains. One of the first words I heard when I came here was the word 'anarchist'. The anarchists were a mythological music that sounded from within the mountains. There were anarchists in the mountains. I decided to find them. One afternoon when we were bathing up by the river, a group of young people with paper bags arrived and began to collect all the rubbish that people had left by the

riverbed. When they were leaving again they shouted to us, “We’re anarchists from Colonnata”, and then they were gone.

When you walk in the mountains you see traces of the past everywhere. Here a concrete machine gun emplacement from World War II, there an ancient chestnut mill, here again the entrance to a deserted silver mine. An entire valley lies like a magically overgrown Indiana Jones land of ruins, a system of derelict dynamite factories. Everywhere there are traces of people who have been busy doing all sorts of things, but these traces are always abandoned now and overgrown with bracken and blackberries. Traces and layers of time and abandoned forms of industry, people who wanted to do something grand in the mountains and who now lie ground to dust and nothing by time. Even the names of the mountains are magical. The mountains bear the oldest and heaviest words in all languages. Just think, there is a mountain called Altissimo, and just think that Michelangelo Buonarroti opened the Cava Trambiserra overlooking Pietrasanta. Later he bought his blocks of marble at Carrara, and it is said that two hundred years after Michelangelo’s death, you could still find blocks of marble marked with an M in the quarries — the blocks had been laid aside for Il Maestro, in case he needed stone for a new papal tomb. It was said of Michelangelo that his talent also consisted in choosing the right block of marble.

You have time to think a thing or two when you sit and hew stone all day. In Michelangelo’s time the blocks were extracted by hand and axe power. Wooden wedges were drilled into the blocks and filled with water. During the night the wood expanded and caused the big blocks of stone to split. Then the enormous labour of getting them down the mountainside was at hand, a technique which consisted in looping ropes around felled stakes of oak and letting the blocks slide along special chutes carved for the purpose. The lizza routes are almost vertical; the Lizzatura technique has completely disappeared now, but the lizza routes can still be seen in the mountains.

The mountains are everywhere marked with traces of human projects, the traces of time and the war. The famous Linea Gotica ran through here, and during World War II the partisans were particularly active in the area. Many of them were marble workers, because they knew the mountains like the backs of their hands. The mountains are culture and history, they are criss-crossed with donkey tracks where people have wandered and carried kitchen utensils and vegetables to the markets in the valley. In the mountains you constantly move between culture and nature, and the mountains themselves seem to embrace it all. It’s not just marble that is found within them, but also the raw materials for producing dynamite; sulphur and saltpetre, substances which can be used to turn the mountain against itself and blow it up. As though the mountains, in a decadent gesture, encompass their own destruction.

Dynamite and gunpowder are what we associate with the anarchist. There he is, a cartoon character, with a black neckband and a lit cannonball bomb, shouting DOWN WITH EVERYTHING. Yes please, down with everything. We’ll subscribe to that, and in a way it’s easy to understand that anarchism arose in the mountains. You have time to think a thing or two, when you sit and hew stone all day. You think, Down with everything, this is too exhausting. You think, Anarchy or chaos. The human mind contains, I think, the hope of breaking free. In the human mountain run soft and hard currents, and somewhere inside it exists the desire to be everyone and nobody. This is the romantic element in every person. Sometimes it is allowed to express itself, other times not. Anarchism has roots in romanticism. An idea about freedom and expression and something originary, something that was, and which is now held back.

The anarchist shouts, DOWN. Not UP. The stone has to go down, not up — like Sisyphus’s stone. The anarchist shouts, DOWN WITH THE STATE, and then throws a cobblestone at the

commercial break. According to the anarchist there shouldn't be any rules and laws and trammels in the community. Community should be community and nothing else. In anarchism there is a holistic approach and a belief that human beings are fundamentally good, and that they don't need to be protected against themselves. Found in anarchist thought are both humanity's last hope and its destruction of the planet. The anarchist shouts, ECOLOGY. She shouts, COUNTERCULTURE and DIRECT ACTION, while planting a seed in the saturated earth. When the anarchist renounces hierarchies and the right to property and state and religion and capitalism, this is the last and natural consequence of the fact that we no longer need structures that lead to war, poverty, hunger and the destruction of the earth, which we must live on and live from.

In his book *Walden*, the anarchist Henry David Thoreau propounds a simple way of life and self-sufficiency in contrast to the progress of industrial society. A radical anarcho-ecology that is also a spiritual journey in which Thoreau writes a survival manual for himself. *Walden* was published in 1854 and describes Thoreau's experiences over the course of two years, two months and two days in a cabin he built near Walden Pond, in a forest owned by his friend and mentor Ralph Waldo Emerson. Thoreau preaches an anarchist critique of the progress of civilisation. What was later dubbed anarcho-primitivism blames the change from hunter-gatherer to agricultural societies for the coercion and alienation of human beings. Anarcho-primitivists dream of a return to non-civilised forms of life through de-industrialisation, abolition of money and abandonment of technology through a "rewilding".

3.

At one point I had to move back to Denmark from Italy. It was hard to leave. I think it was the mountains that were hard to leave behind. I remember that as a child in a suburban neighbourhood, I dreamed that the clouds, when they lay low along the horizon, would transform into mountains. That I could run out of the house on Enebærvej, Juniper Street, and run up to the mountains. The mountains which lay there waiting for me. Oh, how I wanted to reach them, up there! Then I'd be able to climb them. The white cloud-mountains! How beautiful it would be to walk among them, I could be their Skywalker, their cloud-mountain explorer. The highest point in Denmark is called Møllehøj, Mill Hill. It is 170.86 metres high (according to the DVR90 height system) and lies in Ejler Bjerre in Skanderborg Municipality. 'Ejer Mountains.' But I wanted to climb real mountains. My boyhood memories are of mountains and peaks. When I came to Pietrasanta for the first time, it was all about the proximity of the mountains. The town lies at the foot of the mountains, there are five kilometres of dammed marshland between them and the sea:

Never settle down between mountains and sea
but run back and forth between them every day.
You will in any case always miss the one place in the other
and thus avoid death halfway between them.
From *The Hand's Trembling in November*, 1986

Yes, Henrik Nordbrandt, it's true, that's where I live. When I came here, I ran up into the mountains, never out to the sea. The sea corrupts the soul, mountains expand your mind. Think in the mountains, write the poems out in the open, that's how it is. And there in the mountains, on the donkey tracks and among the disorderly piles of overgrown stones, between the rabbit

hutches and the chicken coups, in the evening light that falls on a wall, among the fig trees, among the olive trees, in the butterfly flight of the hoopoe, is the thing I'm looking for and will hopefully never find. It is a sort of chaos, a mild anarchy, which I have over time begun to see as mine. But then we had to move back to Denmark, and I thought, What about my mess, my chaos, my mild anarchy? What will happen to it, who will take care of it, look after it, keep an eye on it? Who will I be without it? I thought, I'll probably find it, it'll come by itself. And I did find it, a Christiania-like anarchy at the end of Refshalevej, at the very tip of the Blue Caramel. It lay between stinging nettles and plastic bags and gasped for air before it flew away and turned into nothing. No matter how long I searched, I couldn't find what I had found in the mountains: a sort of disorderly calm which was mine. I had to go back.

4.

Anarchism begins in many places, it trickles out in all modes of thought and ideas, it is inside everything that later hardens into ideology. Zeno of Citium was an anarchist, taught by Socrates – Zeno founded Stoicism and placed emphasis on ethics. A crater on the moon bears his name. His thought is re-encountered in Epicurus, who said “tend to your garden, far from the noise of life.” Epicurus said, DO SOMETHING. And time passed and passed and passed over people and with them, it started to go so fast that it began to be called the Industrial Revolution. Machines came and changed everything. The machines said, Things can go much faster. And the machines also arrived at the foot of the mountains in Carrara.

Piotr Kropotkin was a Russian anarchist and geographer. He was imprisoned in Saint Petersburg and survived by walking back and forth in his cell every day, thousands of kilometres. His escape from prison is incredible; he played sick, limped around in a dressing gown even though he was in fantastic shape. A violin gave the signal, he ran and jumped into a horse-drawn carriage and was gone. His fundamental idea is that most people are good, that it's not every wo/man for themselves, but that people have a social instinct, which one day, with the help of ethics, science and technology, will be victorious. The revolution will come from below and from within, with the necessity of a force of nature – one day capitalism's time will have passed. Passed, passed, and people will raise their eyes from their screens and say, How on earth did it happen that we ended up in this crazy situation? Capitalism will be over, and people will begin to laugh as though we finally get the biggest joke in the world. Like an incredible escape in broad daylight, people will begin to run out of the prison of capitalism.

And around the same time, Leo Tolstoy, cousin of Alexander, encouraged civil disobedience in Russia. He threw his expensive nobleman's clothes away and put on peasant's garb. He wanted to build a new world and cultivate the earth. This later inspired Mahatma Gandhi's belief in passive resistance and non-violence, and his ideas about a simple, harmonious life with respect and reciprocal dependence among human beings.

Mikhail Bakunin also dreamed of an international anarchy, and his thinking was of great importance for syndicalism. The workers were to be organised in open, individual and pacifist groups. Bakunin was a driving force behind the First International and the establishment of anarcho-syndicalism, which, in contrast to Karl Marx's ideas about communism, was to strive for the destruction of a strong state because the latter would, in the final account, form the breeding ground for a repressive elite of bureaucrats. He foresaw the mechanisms which would come

to characterise capitalism. Bakunin strove for the impossible. He said, Other people's freedom in no way limits or denies my freedom. On the contrary, other people's freedom is necessary in order to condition and confirm my freedom. His utopia is a vision of self-organisation from below via trade unions consisting of self-governing collectives of free-thinking people. He shouts to us through his window somewhere in the course of time, BE REALISTIC — DEMAND THE IMPOSSIBLE! He shouts, ACTION, AT ANY COST. We look at each other and nod. DO SOMETHING. WRITE SOMETHING. GET GOING. For the aim is to awaken people from their money-sleep and thing-lethargy with the help of ONE-OFF and SENSATIONAL actions.

Demand something of one another. Demand something. Demand. But at all costs: have high moral standards. Be a worthy person. Take one step and then another and carry on walking. Walk into the mountains and look around, feel the light on your skin, the light in your eyes, sit down and think about what life could otherwise be like. Well, ἀναρχία anarkhia, the word means 'absence of a regime', constructed of ἀν- an-, 'without' and ἀρχία arkhia, 'ruler' — yes, we know. How difficult can it be? No gods, no rulers, no state. NOTHING but EVERYTHING instead.

Pierre Joseph Proudhon suggests an exchange bank, he suggests doing away with money, he argues that property is theft. Instead of the law there should be a common contract. People should encourage reciprocity, mutualism, and cohabitation with different kinds of organisms for the good of both parts, a symbiosis. Human beings should be bees which gather honey for the common good. He stands for a utopian individualism which displays a rock solid belief in the good person, in that nobody wishes harm on others as long as they understand that everything can be for the common good. Karl Marx called him very naive. Perhaps you have to be naive to dream about an entirely different society? Otherwise cynicism wins.

How do we move on? What should we do? We must act! Draw a circle around an A. Red and black must go together. People have believed in the good in people, we have to carry on doing so. Some have thought that action meant violence. Giovanni Passannante was a young anarchist, he shouted, DOWN WITH THE KING and tried to kill Umberto I in 1878. But it didn't go as planned, and Passannante spent the rest of his life imprisoned on the island of Elba, in conditions which eventually made him go mad. After his death, his head and brain were exhibited in the Crime Museum in Rome, and remained on display until 2007. For two hundred years anarchists have thrown cobblestones and wordstones and believed that this would make something stop, while the world has carried on with kings and presidents and billionaire industrialists, as though nothing had happened.

5.

I get in the car and drive down to play football with the marble workers. We play twice a week, Monday and Wednesday. They arrive savagely, some of them straight from work, on scooters or in four-wheel drives. They all used to vote for Berlusconi, you might say that they clearly vote against their own interests, and that the working class has been bought off by those in power. They accept Berlusconi's rhetoric about the threat of immigration while they toil in the mountains, they watch Berlusconi's TV channels, they support the football team Berlusconi owns, they buy Berlusconi products. We play on Astroturf, and I recognise the sounds they make when they play, but I don't know who they are. In Italy there is pride in being a defender, and we have a couple of man-mountains at the back, you can't get past them. I play as a striker,

the one who scores goals up front, the strange foreigner, Morten Olsen von Laudrup. They use marble terminology even on the football pitch. One day I was tired and didn't score any goals and received the shout, "la punta dei diamanti si è fermato", *the diamond drill is blunt*.

We play on the football pitch down by the motorway — near the helipad that people are flown down to when they are injured in the quarries. There lie the mountains, an incredibly beautiful backdrop of white and grey and blue. The mountains are the ground from which everything springs. The marble workers argue as though they were in a soap opera; I stay on the edges until it's over, I basically just want to play football. Then the match is over and they get on their scooters and into their four-wheel drives and go back to the mountains.

The history of the marble workers is the story of toil, that's for sure. It is the story of traditions and industry and pride. A hundred and fifty years ago it was the story of tuberculosis and pulmonary illnesses, caused by the changes in temperature and altitude the workers were exposed to, as well as dust, inconceivably hard manual labour and rampant alcoholism in combination with a fatal lack of safety regulations. For it was all about getting the mountains cut into pieces and blocks and getting them down the mountainsides as quickly as possible so they could be shipped from Forte dei Marmi. The same thing it's been about since Roman times: getting the mountain down into the valley and out to sea. Faster and faster. Throughout the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. Until it ran amok in the 20th. The lack of safety in the work is due to the fact that you physically saw across the makeshift marble vein you sit on. The roads and your standpoint slip and disappear beneath you. In 1885 there was an average death rate of 10 in 1000 marble workers a year. In 1880 it was 20, in 1881 14 died, in 1882 19 died. You put your life at risk when you went up to the quarries. Women literally ran up with water balanced on their heads in the heat. Children dragged food up. An 80-hour working week, a 12-hour working day. It was said that they worked from the stars to the stars, in others words from morning to night. It was dark when they walked the two hours up, and night when they walked the two hours down. The oldest walked in front to set their tempo. There was boozing all day on Sundays, and in the evening when they came down people would fall from the blocks, dynamite would explode without warning. Bad living conditions, bad food, bad clothing.

It was at this time that the machines reached the mountains. Great systems of steel wire pulled by steam engines placed down in the valley. The tempo increased. Unscrupulous businessmen, and a proletariat which had no choice but to follow the pace of the age. A pit of despondency. A small group of families controlled the coveted concessions which granted the right to run the quarry, a heartless exploitation of the workforce. You have time to think a thing or two when you sit and hew stone all day. You think a thing or two when you've got dynamite to hand and know how to use it. This created the perfect breeding ground for anarchism in the area around Carrara and in the whole of Versilia. The urban middle class was growing, and the workers began to organise themselves in small groups, initially called sects. *La Congiura*, *The Plot*, was the first in 1865. *Leghe di Mestiere*, *The Craftsman's League*, 1870. Strikes were organised, social unrest was beginning. They had understood that it was important to help one another, they organised as *Mutuo Soccorso*, *Mutual Aid*. In the beginning the organisations were tolerated because they weren't political, but as time passed they were driven by the desire to stand stronger together and the desire for a better standard of living. Inspired by Bakunin, revolutionary committees were formed, and the workers began to arm themselves. At the end of the 1890s the runaway marble gold rush ran into a crisis, the price of bread rose, there was an outbreak of cholera. Fights broke out between anarchists and republicans. Italy was not yet a fully formed country,

it was still a dream, an idea. Things went as far as a state of exception, things went as far as the Second International in Paris, things went as far as fights. 464 marble workers were tried at a military court and were sentenced to between one and thirty years' imprisonment. Support for the anarchists and the socialist party grew, anarchist newspapers were founded: *Versilia Nova*, *la Difesa*, *La Martinella*. It was the time of the syndicalists, it was the time of the great general strikes. It was the time of Giuseppe Mazzini and Errico Malatesta. Everything that everyone else had access to in the rest of the country, was now to be part of the world of the workers in the mountains too. And then World War I broke out and changed everything.

6.

Mutualism: single celled organisms and invertebrates, such as bestial fungi, sea anemones and corals, can serve as hosts for flagellates which undertake photosynthesis. The host provides the symbionts with inorganic nutrients and in return gains carbon-rich products of photosynthesis. Similarly, lichen are composite organisms created through mutualism between a fungus and an alga. Mutualism between animals and microorganisms that break down cellulose, is necessary in many herbivorous animals. Termites, for example, the rectums of which are home to particular flagellates; leafcutter ants, which are assisted by a fungal culture; and ruminants, which are dependent upon microorganisms in the gut. Mutualism occurs among marine animals, for example between sea anemones and hermit crabs. The hermit crab carries the sea anemone around, protecting the crab.

7.

I am a fanatical believer in freedom, since I view freedom as the only medium through which we can still develop intelligence, worthiness and happiness, Bakunin wrote from his prison cell in Siberia. The only freedom which is truly worthy of the name, is the freedom that consists of the full development of all the physical, intellectual and moral/ethical abilities that are latent in everybody. It is the freedom which doesn't acknowledge any limitations but those which can be traced back to the laws of our own nature. This means that there are essentially no limitations, since these laws are not imposed on us by an external lawgiver, next to us or above us. They are laws which lie within us as a part of us, and are an element of the very essence of being a person. Bakunin is imprisoned by a state which he dreams will disappear. He dreams of people entering into voluntary relations with one another. He dreams of wild strikes and actions that will make people think. He dreams of direct action in the midst of the great wasteland of faces that turn the other cheek. In his apartment in Paris, Proudhon wrote that property is theft, that owning land makes no sense and that it can instead be cultivated by a community for the common good. That things can go from hand to hand, hand in hand. That human beings can transform prison into freedom, and transform and distribute freedom among themselves. That the utopian is possible because it is necessary to carry it with us, wherever we go and wherever we stand, in order to attain Something Else. That money and property in themselves achieve nothing other than to take advantage of others. As Kropotkin dashed out of the prison hospital he shouted, ONE MUST CONTRIBUTE ACCORDING TO ABILITY AND ACCORDING TO NEED.

But. Then there's a PowerPoint presentation again with Steve Bannon and Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk and all the world's other hardcore capitalists. Hey, come on, let's be market anarchists. Management is management of chaos, market and network are the real anarchy. Humans will be able to achieve more and more, come on, let's pay homage to anarchocapitalism. They say, the economy is a force of nature, the human being is an evil animal that only wants more and more.

No thanks. That's exactly the point. ANARCHY OR CHAOS! Come, let's go up into the mountains and enjoy the view for a moment. Sit down on the grass. The cool, soft grass, it wants the best for you. Anarchy is the dream of a good society, where everybody has enough and there is enough for everybody.

But how do we get there? Guy Debord called a meeting in the little Italian town of Cosio d'Arroscia on 18 July 1957. There is talk of a great and radical potential. Art can create a revolutionary consciousness. Undermine society with art. We have to turn and turn. We must contort what is, so that the spectacle becomes visible. Move and push and turn things on their heads. Come, let's go, let's drift around in the streets without a plan. Let's see what happens when we don't know where we are going. Let's see how far we can get along that road. Let's talk to each other about the geography of the psyche and the other possibilities of the landscape, let's cross the fence to a place where no one lives.

Hey ho, time flies. It's 1 May 1968 and look, there comes the Cobra group running with cobblestones in their hands. There's Asger Jorn with his hands dipped in a paint bucket of the DADA and SURREALISM brand. Everything is absurd and alienated anyway, and we have to do something if we are to sit on the grass on the anarchists' mountains. Society is a spectacle, Guy Debord shouts into his megaphone on a barricade. A person is not a subject, it is an object in a hall of mirrors of money and media lies. Adverts and commodities and data and politics are a performance projected onto the wall of the cave in front of us. We can't move, we are tied by capitalism's chilling logic. And hey! Chop the heads off the mermaids, let a constructed situation arise out of the blue paint, the red paint, listen to *The Disturbing Duckling* and *What the Woodland Lake Knew!* We have to do something, we can't carry on being spectators to money's carnival. You thought it didn't concern you, but it's about you. You are the main character. It's your situation. Look: the artists and the situation are out of control.

8.

And what now? Here we are. In the middle of it all with nothing but good intentions and the hope for a future in peace. Kropotkin claps us on the shoulders and says, We must realise that those who insist on the right to private property in the shape of land, factories, mines and marble quarries run a wage system, and do so as a way to force people into miserable jobs. Why should those who have the worst jobs have the lowest wages? Why not the other way around?

We know it only too well. Freedom is not something that can be given. It has to be taken. Mountains are huge animals that lie waiting, they accept most things — that we cut into them, drill tunnels through them, hollow them out. But they are right in what they do. They just lie there and exist. A bee lands on a flower. Are bees anarchists? I have a feeling they are. We share a bottle of wine and begin to believe in the world again. Why don't we, in fact, start a revolution? I mean: Anarchopistprottanism! That has a future too.

It must be possible for humans to take back control of their lives. It must be possible to believe in another world. Revive the idea that we can live without destroying, believe in a better lifeworld. Capitalism is over! Capitalism was something someone invented to see what you can get people to do. A non-violent cloud drifts by beneath us. We think to ourselves that a society is only healthy to the extent that it displays anarchistic characteristics. That anarchism isn't something to strive for, rather, anarchistic thought is the idea of a valueless way of being together. We lie in the anti-authoritarian grass and think about all the multiplicity and contradiction that characterises anarchism, that it is alive all around us.

We stand in front of FAI, Federazione Anarchica Italiana, on the square in Carrara. It is their headquarters, their pride and joy. The sign with the letters FAI looks dusty, the large palazzo, *palace*, is being renovated. It is said that the new Forza Italia mayor suggested it was high time they got rid of those anarchists who reside in the town's most prominent building – without paying for electricity or water. Only a few days passed before the mayor's car blew up, and nothing more was said about that matter. We wander about the town a bit and ask for the anarchists. Someone gives us an address. And there they are. A slightly dreary office run by a man who is slightly too friendly. He seems to be a temp. There is a smell of mouldy revolution. There are black and white pictures of socialist heroes on the walls, there is dusty literature on the shelves. There are free postcards. We find ourselves in an anarchistic parallel world. Perhaps this is anarchism made real? So this is what archaism looks like.

Above the town the quarrying of marble continues as though nothing has happened. Carrara is still one of the poorest towns in Italy, the municipality has one of the highest unemployment rates. A text message tells me that it has just snowed in Copenhagen. The next morning I can see that it has snowed in the mountains here too. The same snowfall? The mountains are twice white. White as the marble that still lies waiting inside them. I think that anarchism is neither red nor black, but that it is white like the marble that rolls through dreams, through the heart and through time.

Morten Søndergaard, Pietrasanta 1 May 2019

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