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A Few Words: On the Practice of Theory

One of the foundations of the world in which we live (and to which anarchists want to put an end) is the division of labor, particularly the division between intellectual and manual labor. Many anarchists carry this division into their own projects, speaking of theory and practice as two separate aspects of anarchist activity and, in some cases, going so far as to proudly reject theory as the realm of intellectual specialization.

From an anarchist perspective, revolution is a complete overturning of current social relationships, a total transformation of existence. It follows from this that, for the individual anarchist, each project would be an experiment aimed at transforming one's relationships with oneself, with other people and with the surrounding world here and now in terms of one's revolutionary aspirations. Thus, the development of an insurrectional project involves the rejection of this division of labor and the consequent recognition that the development of revolutionary theory is itself a practice, a fundamental rupture with the normal way of encountering the world, a transformation of how we relate to it.

As I see it, the basic aim of social revolution is the reappropriation of life in its totality so that every individual can determine the course of her existence on her own terms in association with whom he chooses. Currently, a few people determine the conditions under which everyone must exist, operating through a network of institutions, structures and systems that define social relationships — particularly (but not exclusively) the state and commodity exchange. This imposition of determined, circumscribed relationships penetrates into the realm of thought in the form of ideology.

Ideology can be briefly defined as a predetermined and circumscribed set of flattened ideas through which one views and interprets the world. Ideological thought may be relatively internally consistent or utterly incoherent. Marxist-Leninists and religious fundamentalists tend to see everything through a single, rigid lens, while the “average” person on the street will have a mish-mash of contradictory ideologies through which he interprets her experiences. In fact, outside of the realm of a small minority of “true believers”, a lack of coherence, which makes action for oneself impossible, is a mark of ideological thinking. But most significantly, ideological thinking is passive thinking, thinking in terms that have been determined beforehand by those currently in power, their “oppositional” competitors or the various opinion-making, consensus-building apparati that serve them. In this predetermined social relationship, one does not really think, but merely passively consumes the thoughts that one is offered.

A revolutionary practice of theory begins with an overturning of ideology. The desire to take back one's life, to determine the conditions of one's existence, requires a new understanding of the world, what some have called a “reversal of perspective”. This understanding that distinguishes theory from ideology is the realization that this world, with its institutional framework and its circumscribed, hierarchical social relationships, is actually produced by our activity, by our continued resigned acceptance of the roles and relationships imposed upon us. Once we realize that our activity creates this world, the possibility of creating a different world, one based on

our desire to be the conscious creators of our own lives, becomes clear. And so we come to face the task of analyzing the world in which we live with the aim of realizing our aspiration to reappropriate our lives and re-create the world on our own terms. This process of thinking critically about the social relationships that are imposed on us, the historical processes of domination and revolt and our own actions taken against this world is theoretical practice.

So the practice of theory already initiates the process of taking back one's life, because it is the reappropriation of one's capacity to think for oneself. It is not a matter of opposing a refusal of reason to rationalism, a mere ideological reversal that plays into the hands of the ruling class. Rather, realizing that rationalism is the imposition of a single, dispassionate Reason (the Reason of the state and the market) on all of us, we develop a practice of attacking this single Reason and the institutions that impose it with the multitude of passionate reasons that spring from our desires, aspirations and dreams when they escape the logic of the market and the state. The reversal of perspective through which we come to see the real possibility of transforming our existence makes thinking critical, turns reason into a tool of revolutionary desire and transforms social and historical analysis into weapons for attacking the social order. But only if we are willing to take up the task of thinking deeply, of reasoning passionately for ourselves, in short, of creating theory.

Since revolutionary theoretical practice, from an anarchist perspective, must be the active, critical overturning of the social relationships of ideology and of intellectual specialization, since it must be the reappropriation of our capacity to think for the project of our own liberation, it cannot be the activity of a few recognized theorists who create ideas for others to consume and act upon. Rather theory must be made by everyone. This opposes the creation of a single unified anarchist theory, since this would require the flattening out of all that is vital, passionate and unique in each individual's thinking and would transform theory into a set of doctrines that would put an end to theoretical activity by providing a final answer, the usefulness of which would cease the moment it was declared. It also opposes activism and militantism which separate action from theory, disdainfully attributing the latter to "armchair intellectuals in their ivory towers". This attitude reflects a complete acceptance of the division of labor imposed by this society, and, therefore, leaves those who take this stance subject to incoherent, often unconsciously held ideologies — such as humanitarianism, social obligation, democratic tolerance, political correctitude, justice, rights, etc. — that send them spinning off into a jumble of contradictory activities from which the most basic anarchist principles are frequently missing, an alternative form of the mindless busyness through which most people carry out the tasks of social reproduction.

The creation of revolutionary theory is, thus, a practice aimed at the destruction of the current social relationships of specialization, division of labor and expertise so that each of us can take back our own lives, and this aim must exist already in the way we carry out this practice, which is to see that each of us must think for ourselves. Those who refuse this practice are choosing to continue to live and act in a mostly unconscious and reactive manner. In other words, they are choosing to remain slaves. One who is serious about putting an end to our slavery knows that this requires each of us to take up the task of being complete human beings capable of acting, feeling and thinking for ourselves. And until we destroy the ruling order of the state and capital, this means consciously taking up the practice of theory with all the effort that entails.

Without Prejudice

What difference does it make whether a military officer is fascist, democratic or communist? None. The uniform one wears, the hierarchy one serves and the violence in which one takes part are identical. The same consideration is valid for every authority.

And yet it is noteworthy that even the councilors of the National Alliance [Italian fascist political party] participate in the commemoration of a fascist massacre, along with partisans, the military and combatant organizations. Of course, I don't know what to make of the anti-fascism of a deputy or a general. Nonetheless, it is clear who this "national reconciliation", as they call it, serves.

In Figline, in the vicinity of Florence, the municipal administration invited the NA to the ceremony for the anniversary of the hanging of a child and his family that happened at the hands of nazi and fascist soldiers in June 1944. Everyone united to exorcise the civil war. Everyone united in the name of democracy.

The parties of the left, without exception as everyone knows, did everything in their power to give full legitimacy back to the fascists. What occurred at the time was only the official legitimation of a process that has been going on for quite some time. But the point is precisely the official legitimation. When it is publicly affirmed that since fascism no longer exists, anti-fascism no longer make sense, it means, beyond the stupid slogans, that now there is only democracy, that conflict has no more reason to exist. Everyone from the extreme right to the extreme left can share in the civil and pluralistic political struggle.

Thus, commemorations are moments of defense of the existent, attempts to eternalize it. Outside of democracy there is only room for delirium, totalitarianism, madness. The choice of the municipality of Figline was thus not bizarre, but rather intelligent.

When all this is accepted, contrary to everything that we are told, ideology reaches its maximum expression. A massacre that meets with nothing but universal condemnation is deprived of meaning, it vanishes. When it reappears, it is only to remind us that if we keep close to the institutions, defend the constitution and obey the law, the past will not be repeated.

It is useless to preserve distinctions that no longer serve the interests of power. Authority is authority, and let's be done with shabby prejudices — so they tell us.

In the end, they are right. We too should refuse all unjust discrimination and attack them all equally.

Destroy Civilization?

I assume that all anarchists would agree that we want to put an end to every institution, structure and system of domination and exploitation. The rejection of these things is, after all, the basic meaning of anarchism. Most would also agree that among these institutions, structures and systems are the state, private property, religion, law, the patriarchal family, class rule...

In recent years, some anarchists have begun to talk in what appears to be broader terms of the need to destroy civilization. This has, of course, led to a reaction in defense of civilization. Unfortunately, this debate has been mainly acrimonious, consisting of name-calling, mutual misrepresentation and territorial disputes over the ownership of the label “anarchist”, rather than real argumentation. One of the problems (though probably not the most significant one) behind this incapacity to really debate the question is that very few individual on either side of it have tried to explain precisely what they mean by “civilization”. Instead, it remains a nebulous term that represents all that is bad for one side and all that is good for the other.

In order to develop a more precise definition of civilization, it is worth while to examine when and where civilization is said to have arisen and what differences actually exist between societies currently defined as civilized and those not considered. Such an examination shows that the existence of animal husbandry, agriculture, a sedentary way of life, a refinement of arts, crafts and techniques or even the simply forms of metal smelting are not enough to define a society as civilized (though they do comprise the necessary material basis for the rise of civilization). Rather what arose about ten thousand years ago in the “cradle of civilization” and what is shared by all civilized societies but lacking in all those that are defined as “uncivilized” is a network of institutions, structures and systems that impose social relationships of dominations and exploitation. In other words, a civilized society is one comprised of the state, property, religion (or in modern societies, ideology), law, the patriarchal family, commodity exchange, class rule — everything we, as anarchists, oppose.

To put it another way, what all civilized societies have in common is the systematic expropriation of the lives of those who live within them. The critique of domestication (with any moral underpinnings removed) provides a useful tool for understanding this. What is domestication if not the expropriation of the life of a being by another who then exploits that life for her or his own purposes? Civilization is thus the systematic and institutionalized domestication of the vast majority of people in a society by the few who are served by the network of domination.

Thus the revolutionary process of reappropriating our lives is a process of decivilizing ourselves, of throwing off our domestication. This does not mean becoming passive slaves to our instincts (if such even exist) or dissolving ourselves in the alleged oneness of Nature. It means becoming uncontrollable individuals capable of making and carrying out the decisions that affect our lives in free association with others.

It should be obvious from this that I reject any models for an ideal world (an distrust any vision that is too perfect — I suspect that there the individual has disappeared). Since the essence of a revolutionary struggle fitting with anarchist ideals is the reappropriation of life by individuals

who have been exploited, dispossessed and dominated, it would be in the process of this struggle that people would decide how they want to create their lives, what in this world they feel they can appropriate to increase their freedom, open possibilities and add to their enjoyment, and what would only be a burden stealing from the joy of life and undermining possibilities for expanding freedom. I don't see how such a process could possibly create any single, universal social model. Rather, innumerable experiments varying drastically from place to place and changing over time would reflect the singular needs, desires, dreams and aspirations of each and every individual.

So, indeed, let's destroy civilization, this network of domination, but not in the name of any model, of an ascetic morality of sacrifice or of a mystical disintegration into a supposedly unalienated oneness with Nature, but rather because the reappropriation of our lives, the collective re-creation of ourselves as uncontrollable and unique individuals is the destruction of civilization — of this ten thousand year old network of domination that has spread itself over the globe — and the initiation of a marvelous and frightening journey into the unknown that is freedom.

Property: The Enclosing Fences of Capital

Among the many great lies that maintains the rule of capital is the idea that property is freedom. The rising bourgeoisie made this claim as they partitioned the earth with fences of all sorts — physical fences, legal fences, moral fences, social fences, military fences... whatever they found necessary to enclose the murdered wealth of the earth and to exclude the multitudes who were undesirable except as labor power.

Like so many lies of power, this one manages to deceive through sleight-of-hand. The multitudes “unchained” from their land were free to choose between starving or selling the time of their lives to whatever master would buy them. “Free laborers” their masters called them, since unlike chattel slaves, the masters had no need to take responsibility for their lives. It was merely their labor power that the masters bought. Their lives were their own, they were told, though in fact these had been stolen away when the capitalist masters enclosed the land and drove these “free laborers” off to search for survival. This process of expropriation, which allowed capitalism to develop, continues at its margins today, but another sleight-of-hand maintains the bourgeois illusion at the center.

Property, we are told, is a thing and we purchase it with money. Thus, according to the lie, freedom resides in the things that we can buy and increases with their accumulation. In pursuit of this freedom that is never quite attained, people chain themselves to activities not of their choosing, giving up every vestige of real choice, in order to earn the money that is supposed to buy them freedom. And as their lives are consumed in the service of projects that have never been their own, they spend their wages on toys and entertainment, on therapy and drugs, these anesthetics that guarantee they won't see through the lie.

Property, in fact, is not the thing that is owned. It is the fences — the fences that keep us in, the fences that keep us out, all the enclosures through which our lives are stolen from us. Thus, property is, above all, a restriction, a limit of such magnitude that it guarantees that no individual will be able to realize herself completely for as long as it exists.

To fully understand this, we must look at property as a social relationship between things and people mediated by the state and the market. The institution of property could not exist without the state that concentrates power into institutions of domination. Without the laws, the arms, the cops and the courts, property would have no real basis, no force to support it.

In fact, it could be said that the state is itself the instituting of property. What is the state if not a network of institutions through which control over a particular territory and its resources is asserted and maintained by force of arms? All property is ultimately state property since it exists only by permission and under the protection of the state. Dependent on the levels of real power, this permission and protection can be revoked at any time for any reason, and the property will revert back to the state. This is not to say the state is more powerful than capital, but rather that the two are so thoroughly entwined as to constitute a single social order of domination and exploitation. And property is the institution through which this order asserts its power in our daily lives, compelling us to work and pay in order to reproduce it.

So property is actually the razor wire, the “No Trespassing” sign, the price tag, the cop and the security camera. The message that these all carry is the same: one cannot use or enjoy anything without permission, and permission must be granted by the state and paid for in money somewhere along the line.

It comes as no surprise then that the world of property, ruled by the market and the state, is an impoverished world where lack, not satisfaction, permeates existence. The pursuit of individual realization, blocked at every turn by yet another fence, is replaced by the homogenizing, atomizing competition to accumulate more things, because in this world the “individual” is measured only in terms of the things that he owns. And the inhuman community of the price tag strives to bury singularity beneath identities found in shop windows.

Attacking the things owned by the rulers of this world — smashing bank windows, burning police cars, blowing up the employment office or breaking machinery — certainly has its worth. If nothing else, one may get a bit of pleasure, and some actions of this sort may even hinder specific projects of the ruling order. But ultimately we must attack the institution of property, every physical, legal, moral or social fence. This attack begins from the desire we each have to take back our life and determine it on our own terms. Every moment and every space we steal back from this society of production and consumption provides us with a weapon for expanding this struggle. But, as one comrade wrote: “...this struggle is widespread or it is nothing. Only when looting becomes a large-scale practice, when the gift arms itself against exchange value, when relationships are no longer mediated by commodities and individuals give their own value to things, only then does the destruction of the market and of money — that s all one with the demolition of the state and every hierarchy — become a real possibility”, and with it the destruction of property. The individual revolt against the world of property must expand into a social revolution that will break down every fence and open every possibility for individual realization.

Mobile Prosthesis

(translated from *Terra Selvaggia*)

This great invention isn't necessary to support a part of the body, but, if anything, a part of the mind. The mobile or cellular phone (this ill-omened name hits the mark so well), this indispensable tool linked to individuals in such a blatantly unhealthy manner, is not just electromagnetic toxicity, nor just a revolution in interpersonal relationships, nor even just a stupid consumerist gadget that fattens the usual pocketbooks as always.

Above all, it is the replacement of that bit of the unknown that this world still reserves for us, the very small wonders of a sought after solitude, of a journey with oneself, of a time away from known and unknown human beings. The terrifying unknown, inconceivable and unimaginable for those who are afraid of their own life, for those who don't want to cut themselves off from the cord that links them to the other puppets of this little sham theater even for a moment, for those who want to know and inform others about their life, or more accurately about their own and other people's physical presence.

Dread of the dark zones where a black line on the display indicates death, fear of death when another line is the foreboding omen of silence. The inability to connect induces states of panic in the frenzied search for a "zone of light" or an energetic fountain where the dead can rise again.

Mechanical gestures draw the prosthesis out by its appendages at nearly perfect development, controlling the conditions of one's connection, of one's life. The fear is that of being outside, of not knowing how to live outside of a vocal presence that is much too often reduced to an exchange of embarrassing banalities, "Love, I have a five minute delay; darling, I've left; dear, I'm in Bologna; sweetest, have you eaten yet; love, I don't know why I called, but I called you just the same..."

Now and in the future, everything must be in its place. Wonder would break a frantically desired monotony, sorry excuse for life, where the daily humdrum is broken by the ceaseless melodies that resound everywhere (from delirious concerts in non-places like the subway, to the solitary symphonies in the most unexpected places like at night at the top of Stromboli). The desire is to know everything — place, time, activities — in order to cry: I am here, I am there, no problem, no worry, nothing unknown; the buried desire for the unknown is utterly dead, replaced by security.

Because waiting is no longer part of this life, capital urgently needs space and time to be occupied, and no squandering is allowed, no elaboration of fantasy is tolerated except that of accumulating more, no misunderstanding, no anticipation lived with passion, determined by desire, sought after in itself for the satisfaction it brings.

From the most innocent matters to the sadly professional necessities, it is probably the moments by ourselves that most bear witness to the depressing dependence on this prosthesis, from the day trip in the hills to the passage through the desert, the ocean or the mountains, a little red ball on some computer screen indicates the exact point of presence; like an electronic bracelet

that transforms the world into the prison it is. Besides, there are challenges here to be sought, but calculated challenges, with a thread of confidence to prevent surprises, whims of the sort in which the only contest is with oneself, as in a virtual game where there is no space for solitary respite, where one is never outside and with a touch one returns to the friendly word, happy and smiling.

I hope that those who attack the high speed train do so not only because of the horrible disfigurement perpetrated against the earth, not only, in short, for the obvious consequences to the planet, but also because of what buying time, paying dearly for it, in order to spend it later growing increasingly fat, means, because of what is no longer a journey, but a displacement between identical places with no sensation of approaching. The journey is dead; capital requires something else.

I hope that those who attack telephone antennae do so not just because of the waves in which we are submerged, that infiltrate into the bodies and minds of individuals, but also in order to be done with the globalization of communications that pursues us everywhere and destroys even the smallest bit of wonder in this world, so dull, so determined, so staidly comfortable.

– Talpa

Prisoners of a Single World *by Gruppo Anarchico Insurrezionalista “E. Malatesta”*

“The fact is that the state would not be so pernicious if those who wanted to were able to ignore it and live their lives in their own way together with those with whom they get along. But it has invaded every function of social life, standing over all the activities of our lives and we are even prevented from defending ourselves when we are attacked.

“It is necessary to submit to it or bring it down.”

— Errico Malatesta

If we were not deeply dissatisfied with this world, we would not write on this paper and you would not read this article. It is therefore useless to waste further words to confirm our aversion to Power and its manifestations. Rather, what seems useful to us is the attempt to determine whether a revolt that is not openly and resolutely against the state and power is possible.

The question should not seem odd. In fact, there are those who see in the struggle against the state nothing but a further confirmation of the extent to which it has penetrated into us, managing to determine our actions — even if only in the negative. With its cumbersome presence, the state would distract us from that which should be our true objective: living life our way. If we think of taking down the state, of obstructing it, of fighting it, we don't have the time to reflect on what we want to do ourselves. Rather than trying to realize our dreams here and now, we follow the state wherever it goes, becoming its shadow and putting off the realization of our projects to infinity. In a frenzy to be antagonist, to be against, we end up no longer being protagonist, in favor of something. Thus, if we want to be ourselves, we should cease to oppose ourselves to the state and start to consider it not with hostility, but with indifference. Rather than giving ourselves to trying to destroy its world — the world of authority — it is better to build our own, that of freedom. It is necessary to stop thinking about the enemy, what it does, where it is found, what to do to strike it, and dedicate ourselves to ourselves, to our “daily life”, to our relationships, to our spaces that need to expand and improve more and more. Otherwise, we will never do anything but follow the inclinations of power.

The anarchist movement today is full of this sort of reasoning, the continual search for justifications disguised as theoretical analyses that excuse one's absolute inaction. There are those who want to do nothing because they are skeptical, those who do not want to impose anything on anyone, those who consider power too strong for them and those who don't want to follow its rhythms and times; every one of these excuses is good. But these anarchists, do they have a dream capable of setting their hearts aflame?

In order to clear the field of these miserable excuses, it is worth the effort to remember a few things. There are not two worlds, ours and theirs, and even if, to be absurd, they did exist, how could they be made to co-exist? There is a single world, the world of authority and money,

of exploitation and obedience: the world in which we are all forced to live. It is impossible to pretend that we are outside. This is why we cannot allow ourselves to be indifferent, this is why we cannot manage to ignore it. If we oppose ourselves to the state, if we are always quick to seize the occasion to attack it, it is not because we are indirectly molded by it, it is not because we have sacrificed our desires on the altar of revolution, but because our desires cannot be realized as long as the state exists, as long as any Power exists. The revolution does not distract us from our dreams, but rather is the only possibility that allows the conditions for their realization. We want to overturn this world as quickly as possible here and now, because here and now there are only barracks, courts, banks, concrete, supermarkets, prisons. Here and now there is only exploitation, while freedom, as we understand it, does not really exist.

This does not mean that we give up on creating spaces of our own in which to experiment with the relationships that we prefer. It only means that these spaces, these relationships, do not represent the complete freedom that we desire for ourselves and for everyone. They are a step, but not the final one, much less the definitive one. A freedom that ends on the threshold of our occupied house, of our “free” commune, is not enough, it does not satisfy us. Such freedom is illusory, because it frees only as long as we stay at home and don’t leave the confines that are imposed on us. If we don’t consider the necessity of attacking the state (and there is much that we could say about this concept of “attack”), then, by definition, we can only do what it allows us to do at its convenience, forever, limiting ourselves to surviving in the little “happy isle” that we will build ourselves. Keeping our distance from the state means conserving life, confronting it means living.

Our capitulation is implicit in indifference toward the state. It is as if we were admitting that the state is stronger, is invincible, is beyond contestation, one might as well lay down one’s arms and consider cultivating one’s kitchen garden. Is it possible to call this revolt? It seems to us rather to be a completely inner attitude, circumscribed by a kind of diffidence, incompatibility with and disinterest in that which surrounds us. But resignation remains implicit in such an attitude. Contemptuous resignation if you will, but resignation nonetheless.

It is like throwing punches that are limited to warding off blows without ever trying to bring the adversary that one hates down. But our adversary does not give us any respite. We cannot merely leave the ring and go on making a laughing-stock of it. It is necessary to bring our adversary down; dodging and expressing our disappointment in it is not sufficient.

Revolt Without Membership Cards

It has always been a bit odd to me that anarchists in the United States so often situate themselves among political activists, those specialists in issues and demands, rather than among the outsiders — both those excluded by society and those who choose to live beyond its rules. Are we not, after all, rebels above all else, committed to revolt and not reform? In fact, many anarchists think of themselves as the most authentic manifestation of revolt. When they want to see a rebel, they simply look in a mirror. In their eyes, only those who rise up against authority with a fully developed revolutionary consciousness, moved by clear values of equality and freedom and endowed with an immaculate ethic are true rebels and only their activity can be considered revolt. Those spurred only by their daily experience of boredom, restlessness, anguish and the pain of life in this society rather than by a high ideal, may, at best, be granted condescending recognition as manifestations of the horrors imposed by this society.

But, in fact, revolt recognizes neither membership cards nor adherence to the revolutionary program — not even that of the anarchists. No doubt, there is a chasm between Durruti and John Dillinger — that is a given. But what interests me is revolt as such, not merely anarchist revolt. And this interest does not spring from a desire to co-opt these, but to free the energy of revolt from the dead weight of a univocal ideological interpretation. Thus, revolt, as I understand it, is not the prudent adherence to an ideal program (that so frequently seems to become, in practice, an excuse for distancing oneself from revolt), but rather a rupture of the order desired and imposed by those in power — the breaking of a custom, a schema, a convention, a dogma. Though the results of such a rupture may be partial when compared with thought-out anarchist revolt, this does not make such a rupture the negation of the anarchist project. It is true that the student who pisses on his school records is not the revolutionary who shoots the king, but who is to say that he couldn't evolve in that direction? In fact, anarchists have always tended to have confidence in the generalization of the subversive virus, in its capacity to spread contagiously — how else have insurrections blossomed from the rage of the exploited? Revolt intoxicates the senses, stimulates the mind and has an unforgettable flavor; once tasted it enters into the blood forever. But even if this were not so, even if all these unknowns — who escape passivity to become the protagonists of their lives, even if only for a moment — later end up putting up with a comfortable position in a bank, why shouldn't I give space to all the little sparks that break out, if only for a moment, illuminating the dark night to which the rulers of this order would like to condemn us all? Has resignation so thoroughly invaded our hearts that they won't even beat for the child who disobeys?

Of course, as an anarchist, I make distinctions. I have made a conscious choice regarding my life and my struggle, my path is straight as a dagger's blade and I will travel it to the end. But this does not mean that those who have not made this conscious decision, who have not chosen the same path, are my enemies or nonentities to be held in contempt. As an anarchist, I, in fact, feel closer to the one who rebels against the conditions of their life without any political ideology

than I do to the activists whose political programs more often than not somebody's ladder for climbing the pyramid of political power.

In response to those who worry about the credentials of those who have carried out such actions, I would remind them that only cops demand IDs. They need to know who to watch in order to protect the social order. But there are also those anarchists who think this, seeking to protect the good name of the movement by keeping an eye on those who rebel, carefully defining and monitoring their credentials. Like the state's police, those so-called anarchists who want to protect the movement also must feel distrust and even hatred for that which they do not know. Those who have no interest in controlling anyone couldn't care less who was beating a cop, vandalizing a church, pillaging a supermarket, attacking a military facility. When those who carry out such acts are unknown, all that matters to me is the poetry with which they resonate, the marvelous poetry of revolt. Everything else is police conjecture that strives to destroy this poetry.

(Thanks to the editors of *Canenero* whose writing laid the basis for this article)

“Eternal War on the Hitler Youth”. The Edelweiss Pirates, 1938–1945

[I discovered this interesting bit of history on a web site called – I believe – Outlaw History and Theory (I do not have the url available now), which examines the practice of illegality among the exploited classes from an anarchist perspective. What drew me to this article was not any sort of knee-jerk liberal antifascism, that gets all warm inside at any talk of resistance to fascism no matter what the source, but rather the description of resistance by youth largely from the exploited classes attacking the domination under which they lived with audacity even when it took the form of a genocidal totalitarian police state of the most extreme form. The actions these youth took were direct action, and in the case of the Edelweiss Pirates, seem to have been largely autonomous. The Meuten were apparently connected with communist groups, and I wish the article had gone into differences between the practice of the Pirates and the Meuten, since this could have been a fruitful area for practical analysis, but of course an article like this is just a beginning.

To be clear, I am not interested in antifascism by itself. Without a clear revolutionary perspective, the struggle against fascism all too easily degenerates into the struggle for liberal values and the democratic state. Thus, I agree with Alfredo Bonanno’s statement: “I have never liked fascists, nor consequently fascism as a project. For other reasons (but which when carefully examine turn out to be the same), I have never liked democratic, liberal, republican, Gaullist, labour, marxist, communist, socialist or any other of those projects. Against them I have always opposed not so much my being anarchist as my being different, and therefore anarchist.” I publish this article in that spirit, desiring and working for a struggle against all states, regardless of their political form like that of the Edelweiss Pirates against the Nazi state in Germany between 1938 and 1945.]

* * *

Within months of coming to power in Germany in 1933 the Nazis had effectively smashed what was perceived to be one of the best organized working classes in the world. The Communist and Socialist parties and their trade unions, militias and social organizations had been banned: the activists had been executed, imprisoned, exiled or had gone underground. Working class districts were sealed off and subjected to terror raids and house-to-house searches.

The Nazi programme of creating a National Community and silencing opposition through the use of terror was to intensify over the next twelve years.

Involvement in the Hitler Youth and National Socialist education policies were intended to ensure that the young became active (or at least passive) supporters of the Nazi state. Behind the propaganda of the ‘National Community’ the reality, especially in working class areas, was very different. The more the state and the Hitler Youth intruded into the lives of the young, the more clearly visible acts of non-conformity and resistance became. Thousands of young people

declined to take part in the activities of the Hitler Youth and instead formed groups and gangs hostile to the Nazis.

From 1938, until the destruction of the Nazi state, the authorities (especially the Hitler Youth, the police and the Gestapo) became increasingly concerned about the attitudes and activities of 'gangs' of working class youths who were collectively known as 'Edelweiss Pirates'.

The activities of these groups encompassed a whole range of resistance to the regime (absenteeism from work and school, graffiti, illegal leaflets, arguing with authority figures, industrial sabotage and physical violence). One Edelweiss slogan was "Eternal war on the Hitler Youth". Attacking Hitler Youth hiking and camping groups in the countryside and Hitler Youth patrols and Nazi dignitaries in the towns and cities was a favored activity of Edelweiss Pirate groups.

The activities of many young people were so problematic for the Nazis that the Reich youth leadership were driven to declare "The formation of cliques, i.e. groupings of young people outside the Hitler Youth, was on the increase a few years before the war, and has particularly increased during the war, to such a degree that a serious risk of the political, moral and criminal breakdown of youth must be said to exist." (1942)

It is important to remember that their activities were not taking place under a 'liberal' regime but in the years just before and during the Nazi's total war on 'Bolshevism' and the West and after almost a decade of National Socialist education and propaganda in the schools. The gang members were from the generation on which the Nazi system had operated unhindered.

Although most Pirates had no explicit political doctrine, their everyday experience of encounters with National Socialist authority and regimented work and leisure led them into conflict with the Nazis and into anti-Nazi activity.

The group members were almost exclusively working class being mainly unskilled or semi-skilled workers and most members were aged between 14 and 18 years (most males over 18 were conscripted into the army) and had grown up and been educated in schools and homes under National Socialist rule.

The gangs usually consisted of about a dozen young men and (some) women who belonged together because they lived or worked in the same area. The Pirates relied on informal structures of communication for support and "developed a remarkable knack for rewriting the hit songs inserting new lines". The songs often expressed a thirst for freedom and calls to fight the Nazis.

The different groups and their structures arose spontaneously and their understanding of the problems they were facing was formed by the day-to-day realities of Nazi society. Gang activity revolved around meeting up, socializing, and confronting the regime in different ways.

In the working class districts such as Leipzig, youth gangs emerged in the former red strongholds that, while broadly similar to the Edelweiss Pirates, had a more politicized class identity and drew on the communist and socialist traditions of their neighborhoods. These gangs were known as 'Meuten' (literally 'Packs').

Gestapo reports on the Leipzig Meuten estimated their numbers at 1500 between 1937 and 1939. The Meuten, probably because of their clearer political position, were subject to more detailed state attention and suffered more massive and ruthless repression than some of the other youth groups.

Reports of brawls with members of the Hitler Youth (especially the disciplinary patrols), of assaults on uniformed personnel, of jeers and insults on Nazi dignitaries, are widespread and documents from the time give a flavor of what was going on.

“I therefore request that the police ensure that this riff-raff is dealt with once and for all. The HJ [Hitler Youth] are taking their lives in their hands when they go out on the streets”. (SA Unit report 1941).

“For the past month none of the Leaders of 25/39 Troop has been able to proceed along the Hellweg or Hoffestrasse (southern part) without being subject to abuse from these people. The Leaders are hence unable to visit the parents of Youth members who live in these streets. The Youth themselves, however, are being incited by the so-called bundisch (youth movement) youth. They are either failing to turn up for duty or seeking to disrupt it.” (Hitler Youth report to the Gestapo 1942).

“It has recently been established that members of the armed forces are to be found among them (the youth gangs), and they exploit their membership of the Wehrmacht to display a particularly arrogant demeanour. There is a suspicion that it is these youths who have been inscribing the walls of the pedestrian subway... with the slogans ‘Down with Hitler’, ‘The OKW (military high command) is lying’, ‘medals for murder’ and ‘Down with Nazi brutality’ etc. However often these inscriptions are removed, within a few days new ones appear on the walls again.” (National Socialist Party Branch report to the Gestapo 1943).

It appears that the authorities response to the Pirates was confused at the start, some seeing them as “delinquents who would grow out of it”. However as confrontations and incidents (and Hitler Youth casualties) increased, the authorities took the situation more seriously and repression of the Pirate groups escalated.

Against the sophisticated terror of the Nazi state the only advantage that the gangs had were their numbers and their ability to retreat into “normal” life. Despite this thousands of Pirates were rounded up in repressive measures which for some ended in the youth concentration camps or public execution.

For example, on the 7 December 1942 the Gestapo broke up twenty-eight (28) groups with a total of some 130 members. However, the activities of the Pirates continued (and in some cases escalated).

The Cologne Pirates had joined an underground group which sheltered army deserters, concentration camp prisoners and forced laborers. They made armed raids on military depots and took part in partisan fighting. The chief of the Cologne Gestapo fell victim to the Pirates in the autumn of 1944. In November 1944 the Nazis publicly hanged members of the Cologne Edelweiss Pirates.

On the 25th October 1944 the situation was so serious that the national leader of the SS (Heinrich Himmler) issued an ordinance for the ‘combating of youth cliques’ at the end of a long series of actions aimed at defeating the youth and protest movements.

Apart from ‘ringleaders’ the Nazis did not execute large numbers of German youths involved in or sympathetic to the Pirates in the way they executed Jews and Poles. This was partly because they didn’t know who all of the Pirates were (despite the massive surveillance and repression machinery and volumes of files held by the authorities on known Pirates) and partly because the Pirates were potential workers in armament factories and future soldiers. National Socialist ideological concepts such as the ‘healthy stock of German youth’ is likely to have also played a part in the state’s response.

Involvement in the Pirates and the Meuten meant that many members moved from non-conformity through to open protest and political resistance against the Nazi state. The history of everyday life in Nazi Germany is often forgotten against the backdrop of the Second World War

and successful Nazi propaganda of a nation united behind Nazi ideology. The fact that there was defiance and resistance by thousands should not be forgotten, and the activities of the Edelweiss Pirates and the Meuten, should be of inspiration to anti-fascists everywhere.

Freedom's Disorder *by Massimo Passamani*

The state is the supreme expression of institutional order. It is a model of social organization built on hierarchy, control and coercion. According to one view that many anarchists share, institutional order is nothing other than the usurpation of another kind of order that could be described as spontaneous.

The theory is that social life is realized through rules that are intrinsic to it, i.e., rules that tend to occur in all contexts. This self-regulating capacity of the social whole is suffocated by the external intervention of the state (an intervention, that is to say, which corresponds to other rules, precisely those of institutional order). And anarchists have always based their theory and revolutionary projects on this spontaneity. Spontaneity both in the insurrectional clash and in the organization of society from the base when the intervention of the various political and economic activities is suspended by the struggle in course. Where there is a relative absence of power, the exploited tend to satisfy the requirements of production and distribution in a horizontal manner.

Seen in this way, real order is not that of the state which creates inequality, domination and consequently civil war, but precisely that which is spontaneous. This is the idea that Proudhon expressed with the famous phrase: "Freedom is the mother, not the daughter of order." Order imposed from above ends up suffocating freedom while maintains and increases the rigid and increasingly rational organization of techniques of government. On the other hand, the complete expression of freedom would eliminate the reasons for social disorder.

I do not agree with this way of formulating the problem. And it is certainly a problem of considerable importance. What follows should therefore be read as a series of questions, above all for the writer.

It is not possible to make a distinct separation between society and the state. There is no inside or outside. In fact, if it is true that the state transforms what is produced into coercive strength in social relations, it is just as true that the power to alienate, transfer and organize this strength comes from society itself. The state has nothing of its own. And that's not all. Every social context tends to institutionalize relationships between individuals. When it is the context that conditions relations, these become mere functions of a broader organization. Without the ceaseless will to unite and determine our unions starting from our desires, society becomes a reciprocal belonging, a bond that reproduces and autonomizes the only common element: the absence of freedom.

What I am trying to say is something a bit different from the idea that domination is a product of the dominated. It seems difficult to me to contest that if no one were to obey, no one would be able to command, as Belleguarrigue stated. But that is not what interests me here. To put it another way, I believe that there is a self-regulating spontaneity that the state extorts. Or rather, I believe that power and hierarchy are just as spontaneous as freedom and difference. Furthermore, it may be precisely domination that expresses social spontaneity (without falling into a reverse reading of Rousseau for this reason). Moreover, the concept of order has been used far too often as a synonym for the absence, or at least the reasonable containment, of conflict. Since it is the state that creates conflict, a society free of its interference would be ordered. In my opinion, however,

authority does not originate in dispute, in the impossibility of harmonizing what is different, but rather in the attempt to impose harmony by force, to resolve, which is to say to annihilate, contraries. Class division and hierarchy are expressions of mutilated difference.

Another conception of order makes difference itself the common element, the space of the interpenetration of opposites. But the only way opposites can be harmonized is by making difference a mere function of something greater. But rather, it should be order that is a function of difference. In other words, the freedom that is tolerated or guaranteed with the aim of creating a harmonious society is not the sort that expresses singularity (that singularis which for the Latins was totally distinct. The space of individuality is a union that is always changeable and can never become a mere container.

Identifying principles of social spontaneity, charging them with a value that goes well beyond the purely descriptive aspect, really means singling out tasks and aims. As I see it, there is no guarantee that society without the state would necessarily have to be free. This is where freedom's charm originates, precisely from the fact that it is a decision, both in the sense of a stratagem that goes beyond merely spontaneous development, and in the sense of rupture, of differentiation. Relations of mutuality without command can only be realized by constructing something, not by taking something away. If spontaneous forms of order exist, they can at most be a basis from which to start, a mutually anti-social basis.

When we rid ourselves of the destinies of spontaneity as well as the impositions of every institution, the concept of order becomes an area that is more linguistic than real. Perhaps this is how one could explain the profound antipathy that every rebel has always felt towards it. "Free, that is to say ordered," I have read it so often. Come on, let's not be silly.

Poor Heroes

“His death unleashed a frantic propaganda about the hero Durruti. Any discussion would end with the citation of his name. And each time he was named, a bit of his thought and work was killed.”

— Abel Paz, “Buenaventura Durutti”

Durutti is probably the best known anarchist in the world. His name is linked to the Spanish revolution, to the summer of 1936, when the Iberian proletariat rose up, arms in hand, against power and attacked the military bases, burned the churches, occupied the factories. It is this struggle, where he fought on the front lines together with the people of his column, that every one remembers. This is the struggle in which he lost his life on the morning of November 20, 1936, and due to which he became a hero to all.

And a hero is always right. No one ever dares to bring his statements or his actions into question. No one. The dark sides of heroes need never be put on display; they are justified. And Durutti had his dark sides as every human being does. Of those linked to his character, such as his hatred for homosexuals, there is nothing more to say. Everyone is made as they are, and besides so much water has passed under the bridge since then. But what of those linked to his choices in life? What can be said about these? What, for example, can be said about his past as a bank robber? Something needs to be said about it today when there are anarchists in prison accused of robbing banks. Can one sing the praises of that distant anarchist robber, dedicate a fine commemorative book to him and keep silent about the anarchist robbers of our time? A response to this is necessary; the comparison is far too obvious. And, as usual, the response is found in his time, in his implacable raids, in his ability to “objectively” change contexts and situations. And then there is the man, Buenaventura Durutti. Wasn't he, in fact, the one who said — and the word of a hero is sacred — that “then I followed that method because the circumstances were different from those of the present day”, and “Banditry, no. Collective expropriation, yes! Yesterday is surpassed by the road of history itself. And anyone who desires to revive it, taking refuge in ‘the right to live’ is free to do so, but outside of our ranks, renouncing the title of militant and accepting individual responsibility for his action without compromising the life of the movement or its prestige before the working class”? Yes, he really was the one who said this, and we all need to remember it. All of us.

Only in this way could one forget. Forget that these words were said in 1933, when there were, to quote Durutti again, “a million union members” and “a population awaiting the propitious moment to carry out the great revolution.” Forget that, after the propitious moment when he urged collective action had passed, it would be the time for Sabate, Facerias and other anarchist proponents of individual action — who were maligned and disowned for this by other anarchists afraid that their organization might lose its good reputation — to take this struggle up again.

But today, are we in a moment propitious for revolution? And besides, don't Durutti's thoughts exclusively deal with members of the FAI/CNT? Wasn't it the militants of these organizations

who were to renounce their “titles” if they decided to attack a bank? And what of those who have never been part of such organizations, who have always strongly affirmed individual responsibility for their

Actions? Has Durutti’s meaning been erased in order to use his words against these people? Those who have something to say are only his self-interested interpreters, preoccupied with confirming for the millionth time that there is no salvation outside the church.

Poor Durutti. His name — when not used to christen an after-work bar for comrades — is reduced to a mere polemical tool.

Shorts and News

A Couple of God's Gifts

According to the Bible, when Cain killed Abel, the lord punished him by sending him to the "Land of Nod", a place of misery and loneliness. Why was the place considered to be so miserable? Because it was located in cold regions, much like Siberia. But god goes further; he specifies that Cain must stay in a separate habitation, disowned by everyone. In these punishments, one can see both banishment and prison.

State power has always availed itself of these lessons, and does so now more than ever, creating concentration camps and prisons and feeling at peace with god and with the protection of its own interests. Those who hold power have always been on god's side (even if, at times, they have called it the "dialectic of history"). Written on the waistband of their pants, the nazi SS had this phrase: "God is with me."

Revolt and Repression in Argentina

Demonstrations, protests, blockades and direct action seem to be almost daily occurrences in Argentina these days as the uprising that began in December continues. Considering that a quarter of the population is jobless and half live in poverty, the people there who have been in revolt since December certainly have no reason to heed president Duhalde's threats. Even when he carries them out viciously as occurred on Wednesday, June 26.

On June 26, a mobilization of jobless protesters moved to block traffic into Buenos Aires. They gathered at various bridges and highways that provided access to the city, including the Pan-American Highway. They were met by heavily armed police and nation guard troops who used tear gas, rubber bullets and, as became clear later, lead bullets to disperse the protesters. The jobless, many of them masked, met the first assaults with rocks, some launched with slingshots. They also used home made clubs to smash shop windows and cars, and set a bus on fire (as a barricade?).

The saddest and most intense events occurred at Pueyrredan Bridge. Five thousand jobless protesters had gathered on the bridge. Police divided the group in two and indiscriminately attacked men, women and children. In the course of the events, they killed Dario Santillan and Maximiliano Costeki, two men who have been very active in the struggle of the jobless.

At all of the points where the jobless attempted to create blockeds, they experienced fierce repression. Many people were hospitalized, some with bullet wounds. Houses and the office of the United Left, where many protesters had gone to get out of the streets and await news of their arrested or hospitalized friends and comrades, were ransacked by police. In the raid on the United Left office, police entered with guns drawn, shooting.

The press showed its true colors by reporting unsubstantiated stories that some of the protesters had guns. The cops took immediate advantage of this by denying that any of the lead bullets shot were theirs. Journalists also tried to paint a picture of the “tragic piqueteros” (the Argentine term for the jobless protesters — literally “picketers”) seeking martyrs. One shithead who earns his keep from the rulers as a “local political analyst” claimed, “All these movements are greatly benefited by such deaths — they become instant martyrs” projecting his own and his masters’ callous utilitarianism onto the insurgents. Ultimately, despite such media manipulation, the evidence against the cops was so great that the state was forced to arrest two cops on murder charges and suspend a hundred more for misconduct in order to maintain its public image as a regime seeking to restore a peaceful democracy.

According to the anarchists of the Organizacion Socialista Libertaria, comrades “are in a state of permanent mobilization”. So it is clear that the daily activity of the struggle is their top priority. I would like to learn more about the daily practice of self-organization as it is occurring in the course of this uprising and read any anarchist or anti-state communist analyses of the situation. If anyone knows where I can find such descriptions and analyses let me know at acratiscus@yahoo.com.

* * *

DERBY, AUSTRALIA (April 19–21, 2002) — After a riot on Friday at the Curtin detention center for asylum seekers, hundreds of detainees armed with sharpened broomsticks and knives took over part of the camp. Participants in the takeover are thought to be people whose applications for asylum have been rejected. Authorities seek to blame individuals who had been involved in the mass escape at the Woomera Detention Center three weeks earlier for starting this uprising. As if the conditions of detention were not themselves enough to evoke such anger.

Riots in British Prisons

Early in May, prisoners in three British prisons rose up in the course of a week. On the night of May 2–3, about thirty prisoners at Guy’s Marsh prison in Shaftesbury, Dorset damaged six cells and injured one prison officer in the course of a riot. On May 7, twenty-six prisoners at Lindholme prison in Doncaster, South Yorkshire barricaded themselves into one wing of the prison. On May 8, forty eight prisoners at Ranby prison in Retford, Nottinghamshire lit small fires and turned on taps causing extensive water damage and putting 50 cells out of commission. There is no mention of the prisoners making any demands, but the condition of being imprisoned is sufficient to explain the rage felt by those inside.

Marco Camenisch Extradited

After completing a 12-year prison sentence in Italy for anti-nuclear actions, Marco Camenisch was extradited to Switzerland where he is to serve the remainder of a 10-year sentence for similar activity there. The actions for which he has been imprisoned involve the use of explosives to destroy power lines which led to nuclear facilities. He is also due to stand trial for participation in a mass breakout from prison in which some prisoners hijacked a piece of heavy machinery

and broke through a security wall. Marco is charged with murdering a guard during the escape, but denies this charge. His current address is:

Marco Camenisch
Hornlistr. 55
8330 Pfaffikon
Switzerland

BERLIN, GERMANY (May 1, 2002) — Masked young people associated with radical movements hurled cobblestone and bottles at cops during May Day demonstrations. Protesters also looted a supermarket for the second time in 24 hours. This was a continuation of activity from the night before when protesters attacked cops with rocks, set fires in the streets and made their first raid on the supermarket. Similar violent protests occurred in Hamburg as well.

BLOOMINGTON, IN (May 3, 2002) — Individuals involved in the Animal Liberation Front set fire to trucks belonging to the Sims Poultry Company as an act of “economic sabotage against an industry that tortures and kills animals.”

There are Reasons not to Trust Experts

Of course, we should take the word of the experts. Aren't they trained to know their specialty, to understand details beyond our comprehension?

Well, the word of the experts has finally come in on the killing of Carlo Giuliani. Here is their tale: It seems that the carabinieri — the Italian special police — are not to blame for his death. Instead, these well-meaning, good-hearted upholders of the social order merely shot into the air, but it was raining stones and molotovs, and the experts tell us that the bullet that killed Carlo was deflected off of something thrown by a demonstrator. So now it is official: the demonstrators, not the cops, killed Carlo Giuliani.

I guess that I would have to agree that experts are trained to know their specialty — the specialty of serving those who pay them, of making sure that the only “facts” they see are those that serve their masters' ends. And if the details they understand are not precisely beyond our comprehension, they are certainly beyond are knowledge — details like precisely how much they are being paid to tell their lies. Yes, my friends, there are reasons not to trust experts.

CRESTWOOD, MO (May 29, 2002) — Two shoplifters who were seen by a lackey employee on a security camera managed to get to their car before the off-duty cop who was moonlighting as a security guard for the department store tried to stop them. When he ordered them to stop the car, they instead hit him, carrying him seventy-five feet before the car threw him. The cop fired one shot at them as they fled, but they apparently got away unharmed.

Prison Revolt in Genoa

On Tuesday, May 7, a rebellion broke out at the Massari prison in Genoa. The immediate spark was the report of a suicide, the second in three days, that occurred in the diagnostic therapy center of the prison. The victim was a former psychiatric patient who had been imprisoned without any help.

The climate in the prison, however, was already heavy due to the harsh conditions to which the prisoners are subjected. The prison is severely overcrowded, holding more than twice the number of prisoners for which it was intended. Many of the prisoners are elderly and/or terminally ill and have no alternatives to assist them with these conditions. And recently, the prison administration decided to suspend every form of medical assistance, including giving medications, even the most basic “life-savers”.

So that evening the rage exploded. Sheets burned; objects were thrown out of windows at the guards; bottles of gas for camping stoves were set on fire and thrown, one hitting a jeep that was parked in the courtyard and setting it ablaze. This revolt ended when guards intervened with hydrants, charging into the cells.

On May 11, a group of comrades were present at the entrance as the hourly visits were going on, leafleting and showing their solidarity. On speaking with the relatives of prisoners, it became clear that there is a heavy atmosphere of intimidation in the prison that leads the prisoners to keep silent about the events.

After the revolt on May 7, news was spread that the administration would have about seventy prisoners transferred. This led to a new outbreak of rage on May 11. Again there were fires and a guard’s car that was parked in the courtyard burned.

A few hours later a disquieting silence reigned.

BERGAMO, ITALY (June 2–3, 2002) — During the night on the peak of a mountain where antenna and transmitter installations important to the entire Lombard region are located, an incendiary attack took place, lightly damaging some transmitters. At the site of the fire there was a circle A.

Italian Anarchist Free for Now

Silvia Gurini, who has been under house arrest since last October, accused of involvement in an incendiary attack against a transmitting tower that occurred last year in early July, was sentenced on June 3 in the court at Bergamo, Italy. Though the prosecutor asked for a sentence of four years and four months, she was only given three years. In addition, she has been set free from the restrictions of house arrest until her appeal trial occurs. If the sentence is upheld, she will not go to prison, but will be placed under the supervision of a social assistant for the two years and four months remaining of her sentence (the eight months of house arrest counting as time served).

NORTH ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MO (June 5, 2002) — This morning, two men wearing disguises confronted employees who arrived for work at the local Bank of America, tying them up and then proceeding to take cash from the tellers’ drawers. They got away without being identified and with no need to worry about exploding dye bags or electronic tracking devices.

ARNOLD, MO (June 12, 2002) — Someone apparently set fire to the Sherwood Elementary School in the early morning hours. The blaze gutted two classrooms, melted structural supports in the roof and caused heat and smoke damage amounting to more than \$1 million. The police have arrested two boys aged 13 and 15 in connection with the fire. The school superintendent, whose position indicates how thoroughly he has forgotten his own childhood educational experience, expressed shock at the attack. I’m sure most of the children who have attended the school

recently including the two boys currently being held by the cops could refresh his memory with a thousand reasons for burning a school.

Riots Against Privatization in Peru

Starting on Thursday, June 13 and continuing for several days, demonstrators in two cities rioted after Peruvian president Alejandro Toledo confirmed his plans to privatize two state-run electricity companies by selling them to the Belgian firm, Tractebel. In Tacna, hundreds of protesters destroyed phone booths and smashed the windows of banks and office buildings and also forced the airport to close down for a short time. Police used tear gas in an attempt to quell the riot and arrested thirty people. Two cops were injured.

In Arequipa, thousands participated in rioting, building barricades and attacking and practically destroying several government buildings and the property of companies associated with multinational capital. Some of the protesters attacked the airport, smashing landing lights and stealing equipment. All flights were cancelled and the airport was closed down. On Sunday, Toledo declared a month-long state of emergency in the region, and on Monday morning, and sent 5000 soldiers to quell the uprising. In the course of the days of rioting, two people were killed, one due to injuries sustained when he was hit by a tear gas canister, and at least hundred people were injured including at least twenty-four cops.

On Wednesday night, in an agreement with local authorities facilitated by the city's Archbishop Fernando Vargas Ruiz de Somocurcio, the national government agreed to "suspend" the privatization of the electrical facilities until a tribunal rules on an appeal presented by regional authorities against the sale and to suspend the state of emergency and take measures to compensate for the insults against the local population by the Ministers of Justice and of Legal Affairs. If this agreement on the one hand is indicative of the fear the Peruvian government has of popular insurgence, on the other hand it is an agreement between different levels of authority reestablishing the control of those in power over the region and over the decision with regard to the privatization of the electrical facilities. As such, from an anarchist perspective it cannot be considered a victory, but rather a reestablishment of social peace through negotiation. As such, it is fitting that an archbishop should preside over the establishment of such an agreement. I point this out not as a criticism of the people who rose up in Arequipa and Tacna (I certainly don't know enough about the situation to know what was possible), but as reminder to anarchist revolutionaries not to mistake the recuperative strategies of those in power for an insurgent victory. These are moments neither to glorify nor to regret, but to learn from.

UTRECHT, NETHERLANDS (June 12–13, 2002) — Individuals using the name Earth Liberation Front (ELF) held a new moon party at the Botanical Gardens of the Utrecht University, where experiments with genetically engineered bacteria were being carried out. During the course of the party some distilled "elvenwine" was strategically spilled, apparently killing the experimental bacteria.

ATHENS, GREECE (June 14, 2002) — Fire bomb blasts damaged three vehicles belonging to the Greek public work ministry south of the city center and a branch of the Alpha Bank in the eastern suburb of Kessariani. Three bombs made from propane gas canisters exploded under the ministry's vehicles at about 5 a.m. and a half hour later, a firebomb was thrown at the entrance of the bank, causing minor damage. There were no injuries.

MARNE-LA-VALLEE, FRANCE (June 18, 2002) — Masked robbers robbed a currency exchange in the Disney theme park here, crashing their car into the office and exchanging fire with police as they fled with an undisclosed sum of money. At least three officers were injured. This is apparently the latest in a series of robberies of jewelers, armored cars and money exchanges around France.

WOOMERA, AUSTRALIA (June 27, 2002) — During the night, some individuals involved in the struggle against refugee detention camps, in a coordinated effort with fifteen inmates of the Woomera camp, used their car to pull down fences, allowing these fifteen and an additional nineteen refugees to escape the camp. As of Sunday, June 30, 2002, twenty-four of these escapees remain at large as do an additional fourteen from earlier escapes.

Update on the Usak Case

On May 24, the five anarchists of Usak, Turkey who were arrested for distributing flyers at a trade union demonstration on December 1 went through another appearance at the Izmir State Security Court. They were released in their previous court appearance. It seems that now the prosecutor has changed his story and is charging the anarchists in accordance with a different law. The Anarchist Black Crescent of Ankara feel that the court is trying to observe the “attitude” of Turkish anarchists. They are calling for an international solidarity campaign. The next trial date is July 25.

Against Capitalist Schemes in Atenco, Mexico

Last October, a very large piece of land in the city of Texcoco, east of Mexico City, was sold in order to build a large airport there. The town president made this agreement with the national government without informing the people who lived in the area that is known as San Salvador Atenco.

The airport is part of the Plan Puebla Panama, a capitalist strategy for expropriating more land and resources in Latin America while dispossessing and thereby proletarianizing increasing numbers of people to maintain and expand a cheap labor force. Of course, the airport would also require new highways, the expansion of metro lines, the construction of hotels and restaurants and the creation of huge new industrial zones which would not only displace people, but also destroy a large part of the natural environment which is home to several endangered species and thirty different types of birds.

But the people of Atenco have not simply accepted their fate. Armed with nothing but their determination and the machetes they use daily in creating their lives, they drove out the town president and government and also the police. Whenever they get word of police hanging around the gates of the town, they go and chase them away, sometimes forcing them to walk home after having confiscated their shoes, clothes and other useful items.

The government has used a combined strategy of promises and repression in an attempt to break the struggle. The promises — which include things like drinkable tap water — are an attempt to cause division among the people in struggle. The repression seems to be an attempt to frighten supportive outsiders sharing in the struggle. Those involved in this revolt have held several marches, and during the May 1 march, participating foreigners were photographed and

eighteen people were quickly deported back to the US since the march was illegal. On May 9, Cayo Vicente, a comrade in the struggle, was harassed by police as he waited for a bus back to the city. Police also target the vehicles of those who participate in the marches. And at universities (which in Mexico are often hotbeds of radical activity), campus security often deny the people of Atenco entrance when students invite them to conferences. The state and its guard dogs are clearly out to impede active solidarity by every means possible.

The building of this airport and Plan Pueblo Panama in its entirety constitute a capitalist strategy to expand the wealth and power of the ruling class. The struggle of the people of Atenco — up to now an autonomous struggle based on direct action — thus coincides with the struggle of all who detest the rule of the state and capital, all who desire full and unhindered self-determination of their own lives. Each of us can express our solidarity as we see fit, in terms of our lives and struggles. The authorities may deport us, harass and try to block our paths, but if we develop our own ongoing revolt and practice of solidarity on our own terms wherever we are, they cannot break the complicity of our defiance.

Those in struggle in Atenco can be contacted at: atencorebelde@yahoo.com.mx (write in Spanish).

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