Insurrectional anarchism emerges as a perspective within the class struggle. This perspective can be expressed in three key principles:
(i) Permanent conflictuality: the struggle should never turn into mediation, bargaining or compromise;
(ii) Autonomy and self-activity: the struggle should be carried out without representatives and 'specialists';
(iii) Organization as attack: the organization should be used as a tool in the attack against state and capital, and not treated as a goal in and of itself.
What this means, in its most essential and concrete way, is this: to seize and keep the initiative...

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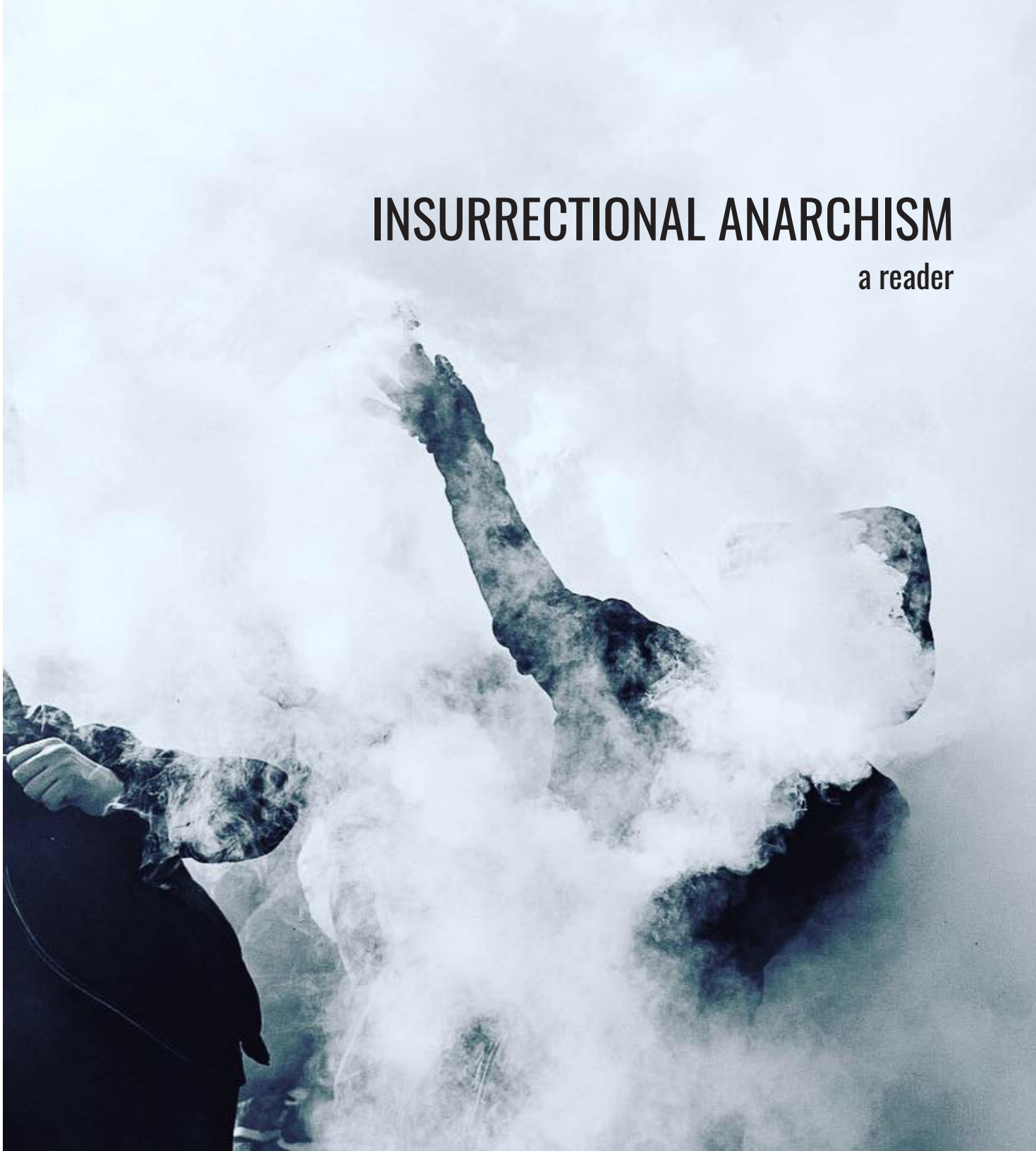
INSURRECTIONAL ANARCHISM

a reader



In 2005, the Swedish review *Dissident* released its second issue, which was devoted to insurrectional anarchist-communist perspectives.
Soon after, the journal disbanded and went out of print, relegating the collection to the obscure reaches of the internet.
We hope this zine will allow these ideas to reach a wider audience, enriching our understanding of the internal critique and development of revolutionary methods in the late 20th century, and allowing them to assume a new life in our struggles today.

-Ill Will Editions,
Chicago, March 2019

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of the railway worker and can come to be a part of *real wages* which are very much inferior[sic!] to the sum written on the pay slip.

- The basic perspective in which a longterm struggle could be planned would be that of the base of the workers getting control of management, progressively removing it from the bosses and foremen who find themselves in secure positions with the unions' approval. In this way an example could be given through a *series of proposals re changes in management*, and the *organizational capacity of the workers*, denouncing those responsible for the present disservice at the cost of the passengers and everyone involved.
- Capillary penetration in order to explain the mistaken position of the trade union struggles and their need to collaborate with the company, the impossibility of any change in this situation in the near future, and a return to struggle *at* the base. Struggle against the trade union structures and bureaucrats, not against union members.
- The final perspective is therefore that of autonomous management of the struggle, both for wages and working conditions, as well as the progressive taking over of management in its totality. Clearly this autonomy of struggle can only develop through a proper evaluation of the unions' position of collaboration with the employers.

Conclusion

The Autonomous Workers' Nucleus is an organism of struggle for the defense of the railway workers who mean to affirm the *principle of autonomous struggle*. For this reason it denies the validity of the trade unions, and denounces their collusion with the system.

On the basis of the principle of autonomy, the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus affirms the need for *permanent conflict* within the reality of production, and the need to *export* the essential characteristics of the struggle towards the exterior. The objectives of this communication with the exterior are the users of the railway service and the collateral productive sectors. The methods necessary for the realization of the defense of those involved and therefore of the whole productive collectivity are chosen in harmony with the principle of autonomy and permanent conflict. The validity of the strike should be examined critically, and a great deal of attention paid to the research for *other effective forms of struggle* not so easily controllable by the company.

The perspectives of the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus are the constant ones of *increasing wages and affecting working conditions*, with the aim of *safeguarding real wages* which is the basis for all concrete possibilities of struggle by the workers.

CONTENTS

- Another point against the strike is the fact that it is an intermittent instrument which the counterpart is always warned about in advance, enabling them to intervene (for example, reducing personnel from goods trains and transferring them to passenger ones).
- Other means exist which can be used alongside the strike, or in the place of it, means which attack the company's productive output directly and which constitute a very effective threat.
- During a strike the technical procedure is arranged at union meetings. Reading these rules, one is amazed by the care which is taken to avoid any damage to the company. But, in the other direction, what does the company do to try to reduce the exploitation of the workers? All these precautions reduce the effectiveness of the strike as an arm in the attack against the bosses, and the responsibility for all that is also due to the legalism and conservatism of the unions. To hard and constant repression, we must oppose struggle without half measures and without warning: hard and constant struggle.
- The choice of means to be employed in a certain struggle, and the basic direction to be given to the information which iras[sic!] to be constantly circulated towards the exterior, is decided upon by all those who belong to the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus, for which they must meet periodically.

C) Perspectives

- The concrete development of the struggle must be evaluated from time to time in the light of the objective situation, and not serve as a shield for vague and irresolute ideological constructions.
- Wage increase is one of the most important points of the struggle, because it allows the worker a greater capacity for resistance and the possibility of facing other battles which are just as important for his existence. This is not necessarily the main point of the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus, but, for obvious reasons it cannot be considered of secondary importance.
- The struggle for a different organization of work is undoubtedly more interesting, because it indirectly supplements real wages in a way that cannot be taken back by the mechanism of devaluation. These indirect supplements to wages are elements of great value during the course of the conflict. A reduction in working hours, the refusal of mobility or accumulation of duties, total staff coverage, the improvement of working conditions, the modification of rules and working hours for drivers, ticket collectors, etc., the strengthening of installations, lines, locomotives, etc. are all elements which improve the general situation

B) Methods

- The repression put into effect by the employers with the help of their servants is *constant*. It is exercised over us in many ways: diminishing the spending power of wage increases; refusing legitimate increases; putting pressure on the worker to avoid taking on more personnel, increasing work risks; nullifying our struggles through the unions' politics of recuperation. This repression must be fought with a struggle which is also *constant*. Therefore: permanent repression, permanent conflict.
- The comrades making up the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus should have a clear idea of the direction the struggle against exploitation should take. The employer strikes the worker as a part of a whole (the productive *collectivity*), therefore when it strikes him as a railway worker, the company adapts its exploitation to the general situation of production. For this reason a sectoral and corporative struggle does not make sense. The method of workers' autonomy is based on *exporting* the struggle, even if the immediate effects (economic and work conditions) remain within the sector of production.
- The method is therefore that of permanent conflict and carrying the struggle beyond the workplace.
- The objectives to be reached outside the workplace are the users of the railway service, especially commuters who must be constantly kept up to date with the evolution of the conflict within the company; and the same for the other sectors of production nearest to that of the railways (airways, road transport, postal services, telephones, etc.).
- Hence the great importance of *information* in the autonomous organization of the struggle. Obviously in the beginning the means available for this method of struggle will be inadequate compared to those of the trade union confederacy; however, even having recourse to leafleting, what matters most is working in the right direction, intervening constantly towards the users who must gradually be sensitized to the struggle of the railway workers and our perspectives. The same goes for the collateral sectors with whom it is necessary to make contact, favoring, whenever possible, the birth of other autonomous nuclei which can do the same kind of work.
- In this perspective the strike maintains its validity as a means of struggle, but must he seen critically, not as a means which automatically sets conflict in motion whenever the trade union leadership decides. The strike in that sense becomes an instrument which puts an end to a situation of conflict, and is thus useful to the employers and all those seeking to extinguish concrete struggle.

Foreword

THE BATKO GROUP (2005)

There is no such thing as "insurrectionalism," if by that we mean a new ideological package that claims to contain all the questions and answers that the "revolutionary worker" may need. Nor is it simply a negative critique or denunciation of the contemporary "left," or a specific tendency or theory. If you think that is all there is to it, you've missed the point. Instead, insurrectionary anarchism should be understood as an attempt to formulate a tendency within the revolutionary movement, based in a perspective that is always present in the class struggle and emerges from it. This might seem abstract and hard to grasp right now, but hopefully this will become clearer as you read these texts.

What the insurrectionary anarchists have contributed, and what makes them so interesting, is that they—with a point of departure in the classical principles of anarchism (direct action, propaganda by the deed, an undogmatic view on theory etc.), and derived from their own analysis of the contemporary reality—have tried to cast the whole of the *formal workers movement* overboard, along with all the ideological prejudice, traditions and alienating structures this entails. In this respect, they are engaged in an ambitious project of formulating a completely new and coherent theory of the totality of revolutionary practice, something that actually can bring us closer to the revolution, not just talk about it. Their aim is to formulate and rationalize the spontaneous perspectives that constitute the driving force of the class struggle; and they have come quite a long way.

At issue is the most ambitious anarchist attempt to draw up a revolutionary concept of totality (where theory, practice and organizational form forms a logical unity) since syndicalism was first formulated and put to the test in the early 1900's. Apart from this, the two best known and widely spread attempts to build revolutionary concepts of totality are Leninism and social democracy. And ever since these two gained hegemony within the formal workers' movement, almost every current that has emerged and crystallized from the class struggle has been either a variant of these, or else simply negative denunciations, without formulating any perspectives of their own. This is, of course, also true for the different anarchist initiatives that, instead of taking to heart the anarchist theory that actually exists, often have been satisfied with letting principles descend into flat dogmas, transforming theory into to ideology, without any real ambition of change anything.

The perspectives put forward by insurrectionary anarchism give voice to many of the unspoken or spontaneous perspectives that, to greater or lesser degree, served as the guiding lights of the so-called autonomous movement and extra parliamentary left throughout the 90's. But precisely because the perspectives were unspoken and spontaneous, they became *eclectic*; picking one bit here and one bit there, building a practice out of fragments. And at the same time, continuing to identify with the left rather than the class, and still trying to motivate their practice with selected scraps of ideology from the formal leftist movement.

Because of this anti-theoretical stance and negative demarcation, some things have been successful, while others have gone completely wrong. This is why you could say that the insurrectionary perspective both confirms and refutes the theory and practice of this so called "movement." It confirms it in so far as it actually was an expression of real tendencies within the class struggle, and to the extent that groups within it were in the forefront and developed this in an insurrectionary way from the housing-occupations of the 80's, through the environmental movement, militant anti-fascism, women's struggle and so on, up to the rediscovery of the class struggle, with some sort of highpoint in the anti-globalization movement. On the other hand, it refutes it in so far that it actually was/is a part of the activist and alienating left, with everything this implies.

Insurrectionary anarchism is often perceived as being a *theory of activism* (or even ultra-activism). Nothing could be further from the truth. This misunderstanding is most likely a result of the fact that people who make this interpretation (both its critics and some of its supporters) are themselves so deeply entangled in leftist ways of thinking that they have a hard time conceiving of an autonomous class struggle without *mediating* leftist organizations. The insurrectionary perspective is intended to offer a way out of activism. In order to understand this, insurrectionary anarchism must be understood as a theory of *class organization*, not a theory for *left organization*. Insurrectionary anarchism doesn't relate to the left; it makes the left meaningless. This simply means that the left as a point of reference is meaningless for us as revolutionaries (or communists, or anarchists, or whatever we chose to call ourselves).

The tendencies and currents that the insurrectionary perspective tries to unite as a *coherent* theory for practice, are an expression of tendencies that always are, and always have been, a part of the class struggle; they have always been present, and have made themselves visible in different ways and forms. Sometimes it has been called "the other workers movement," sometimes "faceless resistance," and it expresses itself through wild cat strikes, sabotage, riots, stealing etc.—struggles that have in common that

The Autonomous Workers' Nucleus organizes itself independently of the political parties and trade unions, in order to better defend the worker as a man. Its perspective of organization and struggle keep in mind the double necessity of imposing the confrontation both at the level of production (wages, contracts, etc.), and at the level of the individual worker's life (work risks, alienation, necessary links between living area, place of work, school, etc.). Autonomy is therefore a re-evaluation of the man in the worker, with a clear view of the struggle directed towards safeguarding the conditions which render possible work and life itself.

The Autonomous Workers' Nucleus

a) Characteristics

- Is an organization which means to distinguish itself from the trade unions including the autonomous versions of such.
- Its autonomy is based on an anti-bureaucratic structure.
- It is based on the elimination of the permanent delegate and the negation of professional representatives.
- All the workers are engaged in the struggle against the employers and their servants.
- This involvement in the struggle is permanent and does not limit itself to the strike periods fixed by the trade unions.
- Each component of the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus considers himself to be in continual struggle against the employers and his servants, in the same way as the latter are continually in struggle against the workers in their attempt to perpetuate exploitation.
- The Autonomous Workers' Nucleus has no link with trade union ideology or practice, while its anti-employer position qualifies it clearly and without doubt as *an instrument which the workers have created for their own emancipation*.
- Propaganda activity and struggles directed at obtaining precise results, and the choice of means for the realization of these struggles, are all elements to be clarified by the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus.
- To belong to an Autonomous Workers' Nucleus is the logical step for all those who consider they have been betrayed by the various trade union organizations and who want to continue the struggle against the State-employer, widening this struggle in a perspective totally different to that of trade union power.

These anti-worker objectives are backed up by demagoguery and a strong condemnation of any initiative. In this way they want to get the proposal accepted that management cannot take on wage increases, that to keep up productivity the number of working hours must remain unaltered, that the so-called phenomenon of absenteeism must be fought, and that to control the worker better the process of functional skills and work mobility will have to be re-organized.

Clearly they want to destroy all will to struggle, creating a financial situation which is unsupportable for most, hence the recourse to overtime, giving the bosses the arm of blackmail perfected by the use of the selective mechanism which stops anyone who is not *capable and disciplined* from getting on (in other words, whoever does not let himself be used and who refuses absolute respect for the bosses).

The autonomous union, FISAFS, is developing a struggle in opposition to the three central trade unions, and claims to be autonomous.

The FISAFS is trying to exploit the rage and discontent of the workers in order to gain a mass adhesion to its corporative and reactionary line. The trade-unionism of this so-called autonomous organization is an ulterior element in retarding the real possibility of workers' struggle at the base, which is very strong at the present time. The aim of the FISAFS is therefore that of channeling the workers into a corporative logic necessary for the industrialists, political parties, the government and capitalism, in order to consolidate exploitation and make it last.

The FISAFS therefore, in defending the employers' interests, cannot possibly employ the methods of struggle which characterize and qualify workers' autonomy. At the level of alliances and political decisions, it becomes impossible for the FISAFS to differentiate itself from the other union organizations who are in opposition to the three central majority-holding unions (for example, the USFI-CISNAL).

True proletarian autonomy is the only possible solution for the continuation of the struggle against the employers and their servants. To do this it is necessary to begin to form *Autonomous Workers' Nuclei*. These nuclei, such as those we want to create among the Turin railway workers, are born from within a precise productive reality, and should consider themselves a constant point of reference for the reality outside in the living areas, the land, the schools and so on, and draw them into the struggle.

Beginning from a clear conception of proletarian autonomy, two dangers ever present in sectoral or trade union methods of struggle are eliminated:

a) the bureaucratization of the structure;
b) the tendency towards a corporate vision of the struggle.

they completely break with the bourgeois order. But obviously, no clear line can be drawn between a "stupid left" and a "pure class struggle"—reality isn't that simple. Instead, the fact is that, in the same way that there is always a striving towards insurrection present in the class struggle, groups and initiatives are always emerging and crystallizing from these struggles that try to formulate a new theory and/or adopt already existing theory, confirming and developing these insurrectionary tendencies. This becomes even clearer in revolutionary situations and in great upheavals of struggle, but it is a constant process that goes on all the time, in one way or another. In this sense these groups actually do become part of the left (if they weren't already). This isn't really a problem in itself, because the tendency to *constitute* oneself as an institution within the left is always immanent in all class struggles and class organizations, just as the "real class struggle" is always, in one way or another, a part of the institutional left as a whole.

The big problem has instead been that the groups and theories that in one way or another are an expression of the insurrectionary tendency continue to have the institutional left as their point of reference. Their theory serves exclusively as a negative demarcation towards certain aspects of leftism, but uncritically continues to swallow others, and seeking unity with other groups on the basis of rejecting the formal workers' movement, even if they don't reject the same aspects of it, instead of uniting around a common class struggle. This creates a confused mishmash of currents and tendencies, usually called "the extra parliamentary left" or "the autonomous movement," that instead of being a tool in the class struggle becomes the borderland, or the uniting cement in the cracks, between the old formal workers movement and the *real communist movement*, and in this way actually counteracts its own expressed purpose. A critique of activism must always be based on a class struggle perspective. If it is based on a leftist perspective it misses the point, and in the worst case becomes a renunciation of the class struggle itself.

The insurrectionary perspective is nothing new to anarchism; it has been present since the time of the very first anarchists. Its roots can be traced back to Bakunin[1] and Malatesta..[2] Bakunin fought against the conception that democracy and representation (i.e. the state in all its forms) could be used in the name of social revolution. Instead, he advocated direct and uncompromising attack against state and capital, at the same time as he took active part in the formation of autonomous grassroots groups all across Europe. Bakunin was not the elitist or hypocritical authoritarian his adversaries accused him of being. Instead Bakunin stood for a direct, non-representative method of organization and struggle that, through the

propaganda of the deed, would push the social conflict to its peak, i.e. to insurrection, and ultimately to social revolution: "As invisible pilots amidst the popular tempest, we must steer it not by any open power, but by the collective dictatorship of all the allies. A dictatorship without any insignia, without titles, without official rights, and all the stronger for having none of the paraphernalia of power."[3]

One of Bakunin's comrades and followers was the Italian anarcho-communist Errico Malatesta. He criticized the platformists from an insurrectionary perspective. What makes Malatesta's critique relevant (as opposed to the advocates of synthesis and the individualists) is that he has a communist standpoint, that he advocates collective and social struggle, i.e. class struggle. Malatesta agreed with the platformists about the need for theoretical and tactical unity, and that the class struggle must be a social struggle, but he criticized the organizational proposition of the Platform for being too state-like.

In the footsteps of Malatesta, there was another Italian anarchist-communist with central importance for insurrectionary anarchism. His name was Luigi Galleani,[4] and he was contemporary of Malatesta, but in 1901 he was forced to flee to the U.S. to avoid imprisonment for his revolutionary ideas. Galleani criticized formal organizations of any kind, which he saw as having a tendency to develop into hierarchical and bureaucratic institutions, and thus lose their anarchist and revolutionary potential. He didn't see any contradiction between individual and collective struggle, and he advocated spontaneity, autonomy, independence and direct action etc., while at the same time defending anarchist communism and stressing the unity between Kropotkin's[5] "mutual aid"[6] and insurrection. His insistence that there isn't any contradiction between individual and social struggle, between anarchism and communism, and his critique of formal organization, was an important point of departure for later insurrectionary anarchists.

With the upheaval of struggle in the 60's and 70's, the insurrectionary perspective was revitalized, and was deepened through the analysis of, and participation in, the struggles of that time, especially in Italy. In Italy the young unschooled industrial workers, the "mass-workers," revolted violently against wage slavery, peaking during the "hot autumn" of 1969. One of the ways that the state responded to this insurrection was with the "strategy of tension," bombings carried out by the state and then blamed on the anarchists, provocations that served to justify harder repression. During the later half of the 70's a larger movement of students, women, youth and unemployed was formed. This movement was in many ways different from earlier proletarian movements: anti-hierarchical, ideologically open, and

Autonomous Movement of the Turin Railway Workers

MOVIMENTO AUTONOMO DI BASE, FROM *WORKERS AUTONOMY* (1975)[1]

Organization of the Autonomous Workers' Nucleus

The present situation is characterized by an alliance between employers, trade unions and reformist parties.

The first are using the help of the unions and so-called parties of the Left in order to continue exploitation, finding a way to make the workers pay the price of the economic crisis through a considerable sum of money paid to the industrialists by the State, thereby allowing them to survive for a few more years. To complete the picture, the parties of the Left, (with the Communist Party in the lead) are asking the working class to make sacrifices in order to save the employers and their servants.

The present characteristic of the unions and reformist parties is therefore that of *collaboration* with the employers; their most important task is that of extinguishing the spontaneous workers' movement, suggesting sacrifice and condemning the workers who are disposed to carrying on a tougher form of struggle with the usual slanders (calling them provocateurs). Under these conditions it does not seem to us that the trade union can be used as an *instrument of struggle*.

The three main unions, the SFI, SAUFI and the SIUF are putting their collaboration into effect by selling out the railway workers through a project of restructuring which means a heavier workload for those employed (*increased productivity*), with less money (*wage blocks*), and an increase in unemployment.

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[1] **MAB:** Movimento Autonomo di Base (Autonomous Workers' Movement), of the railway workers in the Turin region.
SFI: Sindacato Ferrovieri Italiani (Italian Railwaymens' Union), linked to the Communist Party dominated CGIL.
SAUFI: Sindacato Autonomo Unitario Italiano (Autonomous Unitarian Italian Union), linked to Christian Democrat dominated CISL.
SIUF: Sindacato Italiano Unificato Ferrovieri (Italian Unified Railwaymens' Union), linked to the UIL (predominantly Socialist Party).
FISAFS: Federazione Italiana Sindacati Autonomi Ferrovieri di Stato (Italian Federation of Autonomous State Railwaymens' Unions), autonomous union with no direct links with the larger confederations.

1. Chicago 7: Seven prominent figures in the American Left in the 1960s who were charged with conspiracy, incitement to riot and other charges related to the violent protests that took place in Chicago, Illinois on the occasion of the 1968 Democratic National Convention. Among those charged were Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin (see note 9). The latter describes the occasion in his autobiography "Do it!—Scenarios of the Revolution", Touchstone, 1970. In the beginning they were "Chicago 8," since Bobby Seale, the founder of Black Panther Party, was also among the charged. However, for various reasons he was transferred to a separate trial.
2. Marshall McLuhan (1911–1980): Frequently quoted communications theorist, who foresaw internet before the first personal computers. Came out with the book "Understanding Media" 1964. Coined slogans such as "the medium is the message" and "the global village".
3. Alexandra Kollontay (1872–1952): Russian Marxist and agitator who participated in the Russian revolution 1917.
4. Alexandra Kollontay: "Workers' Opposition", Solidarity, Pamphlet no.7, 1961.
5. Yippies: See note 9.
6. White Panthers: A group made up of white people that supported the revolutionary black separatist organization the Black Panther Party.
7. Jean-Paul Marat (1743–1793): Scientist, physician and leader during the French revolution as a member of the Jacobin faction. He was a devoted advocate of the Rein of Terror; he was later murdered in his bathtub by a royalist. A startlingly modern personality cult was built up around him.
8. Ivan Pavlov (1849–1936): Discovered by accident that if he rang a bell before feeding his dogs, they started to salivate whenever they heard the bell, regardless of whether or not they were fed. This observation was central to the Behaviorist School of Psychoanalysis.
9. Jerry Rubin (1938–1994) and his friend Abbie Hoffman (1936–1989) were prominent figures in the big American protest movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Rubin's and Hoffman's so-called "Yippies" were the bridge between the subversive university intellectuals known as "The new Left" and the increasingly apolitical hippy and beatnik movements.
10. Quote from the Situationist classic, "On the Poverty of Student Life."
11. SDS. Students for a Democratic Society: a prominent organization in the student and grassroots movement that protested against the Vietnam War in USA in the 60s. Many of the charged in Chicago 7 was leaders in SDS (see note 1).
12. Mao Tse-tung: "Oppose Book Worship", 1930.

loosely-organized. In 1977 a radical student was murdered by a fascist, and the "movement of '77" exploded all over Italy.

It was in this context that Alfredo Bonanno[7] and other Italian anarchists laid the foundation for a modern insurrectionary standpoint. Their critique of the struggles of the 70's focused on the way in which the organizational forms affect the content of the struggles, leading to a deeper critique of formal organization. The insurrectionalists were most notably involved in the anti-nuclear and peace movement, for example in their resistance to the military base in Comiso in Sicily. From this, they derived three basic principles for insurrectionary struggle: 1) permanent conflictuality—the struggle should never turn to mediation, bargaining or compromise; 2) autonomy and self-activity—the struggle should be carried out without representatives and "specialists"; and 3) organization as an attack—the organization should be used as a tool in the attack against state and capital, and not be a goal in itself. In this way, activity becomes primary, and the struggle doesn't transform itself into organizational fetishism.

Insurrectionary perspectives have, of course, also been developed outside of the anarchist tradition. A Marxist variant was the *Johnson-Forest-faction*[8] that started to research ordinary workers' everyday life in America. They published writings that were composed by workers themselves, who analyzed their own situation. They focused on the workers' self-activity, and criticized the left's view of class consciousness. Their inquiries into how production is formed and politically met by the workers had parallels to the studies of *Socialisme ou Barbaries*[9] in France in the 50's, and the inquiries of the *Operaists*[10] in Italy.

Those who probably have been of most importance for us in *The Batko Group* are the French "ultra-left," with Gilles Dauvé[11] and Jacques Camatte[12] in the forefront. Dauvé's communist perspective allows him to see beyond false dichotomies, like democracy/dictatorship. Instead he correctly understands the state, in all its forms, as an enemy. It is the self-activity and autonomous antagonism of the working class this is primary, and the organizational form does not become a fetish, but rather something that has to be adapted accordingly to the content of the class struggle. This is put in relation to the real subsumption of labor under capital. This means that labor isn't only formally subsumed by capital (that capitalists own the means of production) but that capital has colonized the entire social body, so to speak. The labor-process has been totally subsumed to the logic of capital; all social activity has become commodities on the market. From this was derived a critique of all forms of synthetic organization, as they serve to reproduce the social relationship between human beings dictated by capital.

Real subsumption requires a deeper critique of synthesis. For example, things like democracy and self-management now become something we need to relate to critically.

In other words, there are ties between different theoretical currents that bridge ideological boundaries and complement one and other. This is why it's important point out that the insurrectionary perspective isn't some new ideological package deal, and that you make it much easier on yourself if you take the old anarchist principle of an undogmatic approach towards theory seriously.

The content of this issue is divided into three sections. The first two sections represent two different generations of insurrectionary anarchism. The first section contains texts from the first era of modern insurrectionary anarchism in the '70's and '80's, with Bonanno in the forefront, and texts from the British magazine *Insurrection* influenced by the struggles of that time. The second section contains texts from the group around the American magazine *Killing King Abacus* that was a part of, and clearly has its point of reference in, the so called anti-globalization movement in the 2000's. The third section consists of texts that are a bit older again, from the '70's, that are not explicitly anarchist, but none the less are very important for an understanding of the insurrectional perspective. They complement the first two sections, and perhaps should even be read first. All footnotes in this issue are written by us unless stated otherwise.

The two texts by Alfredo Bonanno introduce insurrectionary anarchism and the insurrectional approach to organization. The shorter articles from *Insurrection* Vol. 4 (May 1988) offer a brief presentation of some central terminology, such as affinity group, autonomous base nuclei, structure of synthesis, and so on, and constitute the conceptual foundation on which the texts in the second section are based.

The second section also begins with two introductory texts. "13 Notes on Class Struggle" was first published as non-editorial in *Green Anarchy* issue 18, which was devoted to class struggle, and "Some Notes on Insurrectionary Anarchism" is taken from the second issue of *Killing King Abacus*. These are followed by "The Insurrectionary Act and the Self-Organization of Struggle," first published in issue 2 of *Aporia Journal*. "The Anarchist Ethic in the Age of the Globalization Movement" was also taken from the second issue of *Killing King Abacus*. In the latter, the authors explain their understanding of anarchism, and put forward their insurrectional view on how anarchists should act in the present time, that is in the "age of globalization." This text goes deeper, and is more difficult than many of the other texts, and it can in many ways be seen as an attempt

significant differences among the oppressors. These have the effect of weakening them. Under certain circumstances these splits may provide a margin of maneuverability which may be strategic for us. The main thing is not to view the enemy monolithically. Monolithic thinking condemns you to one way of acting.

There is a tendency to see the most degenerate forms of reaction as the primary enemy. The corporations are consciously pandering to such ideas through films like Easy Rider which also attempts to identify with young males. The function of analysis is to break down and specify the different forces within the enemy camp.

The spaces created by these splits are of crucial importance to the preparation of a long range strategy. It will be increasingly difficult to survive with the visibility that we are accustomed to. The lifestyles which declare our opposition are also the ones which make us easy targets. We must not mistake the level of appearances for new cultures. The whole point is not to make a fetish of our lifestyles. In the psychedelic atmosphere of repression, square is cool.

Always keep part of your strategy underground. Just as analysis helps to differentiate the enemy so it should provide you with different levels of attack. Mao says: "flexibility is a concrete expression of initiative."

Going underground should not mean dropping heroically out of sight. There will be few places to hide in the electronic environment of the future. The most dangerous kind of underground will be one that is like an Iceberg. The roles created to replace our identities in everyday life must become the disguise of the underground.

An underground strategy puts the impulse of confrontation into perspective. We must fight against the planned obsolescence of confrontations which lock us into the time-span of instant revolution. Going underground means having a long range strategy—something which plans for 2004. The Iceberg strategy keeps us cool. It trains us to control our reflexes and calculate our responses.

The underground strategy is also necessary to maintain autonomy. Autonomy preserves the organizational form of the collective, which is critical to the sharpening of its politics. Nothing will be achieved by submerging ourselves in a chaos of revolutionary fronts. The principle strategy of the counterfeit Left will be to smear over differences with appeals to a class unity that no longer exists. An underground strategy without a revolutionary form of organization can only emerge as a new class society. To destroy the system of oppression is not enough. We must create the organization of a free society. When the underground emerges, the collective will be that society.

creating space for ourselves. The tendency now is toward two-sidedness which is embedded in every aspect of our lives. Our language poses questions by making us choose between opposites. The imperialist creates the anti-imperialist. Before 'cool' there was hot and cold. 'Cool' was the first attempt to break out of two sidedness. Two-sidedness always minimizes the dimensions of struggle by narrowly defining the situation. We end up with a one dimensional view of the enemy and of ourselves.

Learn to be shrewd. Our first impulse is always to define our position. Why do we feel the need to tell them? We create space by not appearing to be what we really are.

Shrewdness is not simply a defensive tactic. The essence of shrewdness is learning to take advantage of the enemy's weaknesses. Otherwise you can never win. The rule is: be honest among yourselves, but deceive the enemy.

There are at least three ways of dealing with a situation. You can neutralize, activate, or destroy. Neutralize is to create space. Activate is to gain support. Destroy is to win. What's more, it is essential to learn how to use all three simultaneously.

Struggle on many levels begins with the activation of all the senses. We must be able to conceive of more than one mode of acting for a given situation. The response, i.e. method of struggle, should contain three elements: (1) A means of survival; (2) a method of exploiting splits in the enemy camp; (3) an underground strategy.

The fundamental tendency of corporate liberalism is to identify with social change while trying to contain it. Wouldn't it be ironic (and even a relief) if we could turn the threat of co-option into a means of survival?

The fear of co-option often leads people to shun the challenge of corporate liberals. Some of the purest revolutionaries prefer not to think about using the co-opter for their own purposes. Too often the mentality of the 'job' obscures the potential for subversion.

The existence of corporate liberalism demands that we not be sloppy in our own thinking and response. The strength of the position is that it forces us to acknowledge our own weaknesses—even before we engage in struggle against it. The worst mistake is to pretend that this enemy does not exist.

Urban struggle requires a subversive strategy. Concretely, working 'within the system' should become for us a source of money, information, and anonymity. This is what Mao means when he says, "Move at night." The routine of daily life is night-time for the enemy—when he cannot see us. The process of co-option should become an increasingly disquieting exercise for them.

Exploiting splits within the enemy camp does not mean helping one segment defeat another. The basic aim is to maintain the splits. There are

to unite, further develop and go beyond the other texts in this issue. Together with *Anti-Mass: Methods of Organization for Collectives*, in the third and last section, it constitutes one of the cornerstones in this issue of *Dissident*. Ending this section, is an excerpt from our ongoing conversation with Sasha, one of the editors of *Killing King Abacus*.

Section three begins with the two situationist classics, "The Revolutionary Pleasure of Thinking for Yourself" and "Anti-Mass: Methods of Organization for Collectives." Neither of these are explicitly anarchist, but are still central both for an understanding of where insurrectional anarchism is coming from, and of a revolutionary way of thinking in general. The first of these two gives a short and pedagogic explanation of the difference between a so-called *revolutionary self-theory* with its base in the class struggle, and the *ideology* that is enforced upon us from the outside to keep us down. The second text tries to highlight the difference between a synthetic organization (referred to as "mass organization" in the text) and a class organization. In parts, it can be pretty hard to grasp and sometimes the authors use their own concepts and definitions, drawing their inspiration from many different and diverse sources, from Mao to American situationists, and has sometimes been called "anarcho-Maoist"). All things considered, it is still highly relevant for revolutionaries today, and it is written anti-ideologically and should be read "openly" with undogmatic eyes. The text focuses on self-activity, collectivity, class struggle, innovative thinking and the need for analysis, long term strategies and initiative. The third text, "Autonomous Movement of the Turin Railway Workers," was written by a group of militant workers during the Italian struggles of the 70s. They were a part in the development of the autonomous forms of struggle from which the modern insurrectional current in many ways can be said to descend. They emphasize the need for organization outside of the unions in autonomous base nuclei, and the need for permanent conflictuality. If you have a hard time picturing "real life insurrectional organization," you have a great example in the Turin railway-workers.

1. Michail Aleksandrovitj Bakunin (1814–1876). Russian revolutionary and agitator. One of the prominent figures of anarchism.
2. Errico Malatesta (1853–1932). Revolutionary and agitator and one of the most influential anarchists in Italy and the rest of the Latin World. Was one of the first to advocate "anarchist communism" (1876), and is looked upon as the father of insurrectional anarchism.
3. Bakunin, in a letter to Albert Richard.
4. Luigi Galleani (1861–1931). Italian anarchist. He was the founder and editor of *Cronaca Sovversiva*, a major Italian anarchist periodical which was issued about 15 years in Vermont, before being shut down by the American government.
5. Petr Kropotkin (1842–1921). Scientist, revolutionary and anarchist.
6. Peter Krapotkin, "Mutual aid". Freedom Press, 1987.
7. Alfredo M Bonanno: Italian anarchist. Editor of the Italian journal *Anarchismo Editions*. Got the nickname "the anarchist godfather" from the prosecutors during the "Marini Trails", where he 2003 was sentenced to six years in prison.
8. Johnson-Forest Tendency: The Johnston-Forest tendency was initially a subgroup of the Workers Party, the official Trotskyist party in the USA at the time, in the 1940s . The founders of the group were C.L.R. James (Johnson) and Raya Dunayevskaya (Forest).
9. Socialisme ou Barbarie: French socialist group that was founded 1949 and discontinued 1965. Like the Johnson-Forest Tendency it origins is in the Trotskyist movement. Influenced the Situationists and their magazine (which also had the name *Socialisme ou Barbarie*) was read a lot during the students' and workers' rebellion in May-June 1968 in Paris. The most prominent intellectuals were Cornelius Castoriadis and Claude Lefort.
10. The Operaists: In the 60s a strong left movement emerged around the world and in Italy where the movement was very strong, if not the strongest. The main conflicts circulated around the FIAT factory in Torino. Prominent intellectuals in this movement were Mario Tronti, Raniero Panzieri and Antonio Negri.
11. Gilles Dauvé: French communist. Further reading: "Eclipse and Re-Emergence of the Communist Movement". Antagonism Press, 1997.
12. Jacques Camatte: French communist. Known for, among others, his strong condemnation of the Leninist and Social democratic view of the party, which he—from his reading of Marx—said opposed the view of the party that Marx himself had.

realm of history. It prevents the construction of collectivity and *self-activity*. The issue of how to transform work into self-activity is central to the elimination of class and the reorganization of society.

Self-activity is the reconstruction of the consciousness (wholeness) of one's individual life activity. The collective is what makes the reconstruction possible because it defines individuality not as a private experience but as a social relation. What is important to see is that work is the creating of conscious activity within the structure of the collective.

One of the best ways to discover and correct anti-work attitudes is through *self-criticism*. This provides an objective framework which allows people the space to be criticized and to be critical. Self-criticism is the opposite of self-consciousness because its aim is not to isolate you but to free repressed abilities. Self-criticism is a method for dealing with piggish behavior and developing consciousness.

To root out the society within us and to redefine our work relations a collective must develop a sense of its own history. One of the hardest things to do is to see the closest relations—those within the collective—in political terms. The tendency is to be sloppy, or what Mao calls "liberal", about relations between friends. Rules can no longer be the framework of discipline. It must be based on political understanding. One of the functions of analysis is that it be applied internally.

Preparation is another part of the process which creates continuity between meetings and insures that our own thinking does not become a part-time activity. It also combats the tendency to talk off the top of one's head and pick ideas out of the air. Whenever meetings tend to be abstract and random it means the ideas put forward are not connected by thought (i.e. analysis). There is seldom serious investigation behind what is said.

What does it mean to prepare for a meeting? It means not coming empty-handed or empty-headed. Mao says, "No investigation, no right to speak."[12] Assuming a group has decided what it wants to do, the first step is for everyone to investigate. This means taking the time to actually look into the matter, sort out the relevant materials and be able to make them accessible to everyone in the collective. The motive underlying all the preparation should be the construction of a coherent analysis. "We must substitute the sweat of self-criticism for the tears of crocodiles", according to a new Chinese proverb.

10. Struggle on Many Levels

Struggle has many faces. But no two faces look alike. Like the Cubists, we must look at things from many sides. The problem is to find ways of

Because people see themselves essentially as objects and not as subjects, political activity is defined as an event outside them and in the future. No one sees themselves making the revolution and, therefore, they don't understand how it will be accomplished.

The short span of attention is one tell tale symptom of instant politics. The emphasis on responding to crisis seems to contract the span of attention —in fact there is often no time dimension at all. This timelessness is experienced as the syncopation of over-commitment. Many people say they will do things without really thinking out carefully whether they have the time to do them. Having time ultimately means defining what you really want to do. Over-commitment is when you want to do everything but end up doing nothing.

The numerous other symptoms of casual politics—lack of preparation, being late, getting bored at difficult moments, etc. are all signs of a political attitude which is destructive to the collective. The important thing is recognizing the existence of these problems and knowing what causes them. They are not *personal problems* but historically determined *attitudes*.

Many people confuse the revolt against alienated labor in its specific historical form with work activity itself. This revolt is expressed in an anti-work attitude.

Attitudes toward work are shaped by our relations to production, i.e. class. Class is a product of hierarchic divisions of labor (including forms other than wage labor). There are three basic relations which can produce anti-work attitudes. The working class expressed its anti-work attitude as a rebellion against routinized labor. For the middle class, the anti-work attitude comes out of the ideology of consumer society and revolves around leisure. The stereotype of the "lazy native" or "physically weak woman" is a third anti-work attitude which is applied to those excluded from wage labor.

The dream of *automation* (i.e. no work) reinforces class prejudice. The middle class is the one that has the dream since it seeks to expand its leisure-oriented activities. To the working class, automation means a loss of their job, preoccupation with unemployment, which is the opposite of leisure. For the excluded, automation doesn't mean anything because it will not be applied to their forms of work.

The automation of the working class has become the ideology of post-scarcity radicals—from the anarchists at Anarcho's to SDS's[11] new working class. Technological change has rescued them from the dilemma of a class analysis they were never able to make. With the elimination of working class struggle by automation (the automation of the working class) the radicals have become advocates of leisure society and touristic lifestyles. This anti-work attitude leads to a utopian outlook and removes us from the

Postscript

THE BATKO GROUP (2007)

More than a year has passed since we finished the second issue of our journal Dissident, which introduced insurrectional anarchism in Sweden. We chose to introduce the insurrectional perspective because we think it brings us valuable insights and experiences. Some critics, mostly syndicalists, unfortunately interpreted the insurrectional perspective in absolute terms. This text aims to answer those concerns and move the discussion forward.

Following *Killing King Abacus* and others, we formulated the insurrectional perspective on the basis of three central principles: 1) permanent conflictuality—the struggle should never turn to mediation, bargaining or compromise; 2) autonomy and self-activity—the struggle should be carried out without representatives and "specialists"; 3) organization as attack—the organization should be used as a tool in the attack against state and capital, and not treated as a goal in and of itself. What this means in its most essential and concrete way is this: to take and keep the initiative. That's the insurrectional perspective in the class struggle.

This perspective must be put into context. The starting point of the insurrectional perspective has always been the active minority, as opposed to the mass. This is because the "relationship with the mass cannot be structured as something that must endure the passage of time, i.e., be based on growth to infinity and resistance against the attack of the exploiters. It must have a more reduced specific dimension, one that is decidedly that of attack and not a rearguard relationship." (Bonanno) The exploitation and subsumption of our daily lives is a power-relation in constant flux—both on the grassroots level, and in general social structures. It is a power-relation based on speed, which means that those who have the initiative, are also in control. Therefore, our emancipation must constantly be re-conquered, by the taking and keeping of initiative. This permanent conflictuality means that we must be prepared to make quick decisions and not be tied up by rigid structures. The self-organization then, has to take on an informal character, because it can't be dependent on outside forces; to wait for others to represent you ensures that the initiative gets lost. We use the concept of the affinity-group to refer to this initiative-based, flexible, and often completely informal and invisible association of determined and active persons. In practice the affinity-group is based on discussion, personal bonds, mutual understanding, and revolutionary, practical solidarity. The affinity-group cannot be applied in a normative way, because it must always be based on initiative and not on impersonal structures. It's not an organizational form, but a strategic perspective to be practiced.[1]

The insurrectional perspective aims for the generalization of uncontrollable class struggle, that is: communization. Communization put into practice simply means that people take control of their own lives. This is the production of communism; simultaneous but heterogeneous processes that strive to move beyond capital by dissolving its logic and making its forms of communion, interaction and meaning obsolete. However, we can see that communization has two levels or dimensions: one internal, and one external.[2] The internal movement refers to all the ways we refuse work, control, and discipline. This could manifest itself in everything from loitering, sabotage, strikes, and riots, to migration, uprisings and revolutions. The external dimension, on the other hand, creates the spaces where relations other than those of capital are produced, i.e. "outsides" of the capitalistic totality. "They are the rooms and outsides that give human beings access to future communities and coming worlds." (Marcel). The relation between these two levels is complex, and they interact and relate in dynamic ways. Communization is neither a simple movement towards communism through the mediating actions of "revolutionaries" and organizations, nor a strict division between struggles, in which all forms of activity unrelated to the production of "outsides" would find itself condemned. These problems are best understood by the sober analysis of concrete occurrences and by continued theoretical practice; in other words, by asking ourselves, "where are we going?"

The question of how we move from insurrection to revolution is not then, from this perspective, about how we get more supporters, how we organize bigger demonstrations, fight for more rights and higher pay, administrate more of the field of social production, win more seats in parliament, expand democracy, and so on. The realization of communism through an irreversible communizing process has more to do with the possibility of simultaneousness. This means that different struggles are in phase with, and strengthen, each other. The conscious participation in this communizing process, the active call for a potential outside, is what we, following the insurrectional anarchists, call *projectuality*. We want to continue to develop this perspective on class struggle, capital and communism by giving concepts such as communization, simultaneousness, the outside, and projectuality central places in our theoretical practice…

[1] See "Proletarian Management" by *Kämpa Tillsammans!*

[2] We take this typology of communization from Marcel's "Communism of Attack, Communism of Withdrawal", *riff-raff,* Vol. 7. See also "Attack/Withdrawal", in *riff-raff* Vol. 8.

There is no getting around it—we need new formats, entirely new formats. Otherwise we will never sharpen our wits. To break out of the spell of print requires a conscious effort to think a new language. We should no longer be immobilized by other people's words. Don't wait for the news to tell you what is happening. Make your headlines with presstype. Cut up your favorite magazine and put it together again. Cut big words in half and make little words out of then—like ENVIRON MENTAL CRISIS. All you need is a good pair of scissors and rubber cement. Abuse the enemy's images. Turn the Man from Glad into a Frankenstein. Making comic strips out of great art.

Don't let anything interfere with your pleasure.

Don't read any more books—at least not straight through. As G.B. Kay from Blackpool once said (quoting somebody else), "Reading rots the mind." Pamphlets are so much more fun. Read randomly, write on the margins and go back to comics. You might try the Silver Surfer for a start.

9. Self-Activity

Bad work habits and sloppy behavior undermine any attempt to construct collectively. Casual, sloppy behavior means that we don't care deeply about what we are doing or who we are doing it with. This may come as a surprise to a lot of people. The fact remains: we talk revolution but act reactionary at elementary levels.

There are two basic things underlying these unfortunate circumstances:

* People's idea of how something (like revolution) will happen shapes our work habits.
* Their class background gives them a casual view of politics.

There is no doubt that the Pepsi generation is more politically alive. But this new energy is being channeled by organizers into boring meetings which reproduce the hierarchy of mass society. After a while, critical thinking is eroded and people lose their curiosity. Meetings become a routine like everything else in life.

A lot of problems which collectives will have can be traced to the work habits acquired in the (mass) movement. People perpetuate the passive roles they have become accustomed to in large meetings. The emphasis on mass participation means that all you have to do is show up. Rarely, do people prepare themselves for a meeting, nor do they feel the need to. Often this situation does not become evident precisely because the few people who do work (those who run the meeting) create the illusion of group achievement.

when you began. This is the pleasure of analysis. To investigate a problem is to begin to solve it.

8. The Need for New Formats

The need for new formats grows out of the oppressiveness of print. We must learn the techniques of advertisement. They consist of short, clear, non rhetorical statements. The ad words. The ad represents a break with the college education and the diarrhea of words. The ad is a concentrated formula for communication. Its information power has already outmoded the school system. The secret is to gain as much pleasure in creating the form as in expressing the idea.

How do we defend adopting the style of advertising when its function is so oppressive? As a medium we think it represents a revolutionary mode of production. Rejecting it has resulted in the stagnation of our minds and a crude romanticism in political culture. Those who turn up their noses at ads think in a language that is decrepit. Using the ad technique transforms the person who does it. It makes writing a pleasure for anyone because it strives in orality in print.

What we mean by the use of ad technique is to physically use it. Most of the time we are unconscious of ads and, if we do become conscious, we don't act upon them—don't subvert them. Ads are based on repetition. If you affect one of them, you affect all of them. Know the environment of the ad. The most effective way to subvert an ad is to make the contradiction in it visible. Advertise it. The vulnerability of ads lies in the possibility of turning them against the exploiters.

Jerry Rubin[9] says you should use the media all the time. At least he goes all the way. This is better than the toe-dipping approach that seems so common these days. Of course, there are groups who say don't use it at all. And they don't. They will probably outlast Jerry since the basic technique of mass media is over-exposure. That is why Jerry has already written his memoirs. The Situationists say: "The revolt is contained by over-exposure. We are given it to contemplate so that we shall forget to participate."[10]

We are not talking about the packaging of politics. Ramparts is the Playboy of the Left. On the other hand, the underground press is pornographic and redundant. Newsreel's projector is running backwards. And why in the era of Cosmopolitan magazine must we suffer the stodginess of Leviathan? We much prefer reading Fortune—the magazine for "the men in charge of change"—for our analysis of capitalism.

Anarchists and Action

ALFREDO BONANNO, FROM *INSURRECTION* (1989)

Anarchists are not slaves to numbers but continue to act against power even when the class clash is at a low level in the mass. Anarchist action should not therefore aim at organizing and defending the whole of the class of the exploited in one vast organization to see the struggle from beginning to end, but should identify single aspects of the struggle and carry them through to their conclusion of attack. An anarchist's revolutionary work is never exclusively aimed at mass mobilization, therefore, otherwise the use of certain methods would become subject to the conditions present within the latter at a given time. The active anarchist minority is not a mere slave to numbers but acts on reality using its own ideas and actions. There is obviously a relationship between ideas and the growth of organization, but the one does not come about as a direct result of the other. The relationship with the mass cannot be structured as something that must endure the passage of time, i.e. be based on a growth to infinity and resistance against the attack of the exploiters. It must have a more reduced specific dimension, one that is decidedly that of attack and not a rearguard relationship.

The organizational structures we can offer are limited in time and space. They are simple associative forms to be reached in the short term. In other words, their aim is not that of organizing and defending the whole of the exploited class in one vast organization to take them through the struggle from beginning to end. They must have a more reduced dimension, identifying one aspect of the struggle and carrying it through to its conclusion of attack. They should not be weighed down by ideology but contain basic elements that can be shared by all: self-management of the struggle, permanent conflictuality and attack on the class enemy.

At least two factors point to this road for the relationship between the anarchist minority and the mass: first, the class sectionalism produced by capital; second, the spreading feeling of impotence that the individual gets from certain forms of collective struggle. There exists a strong desire to struggle against exploitation, and there are still spaces where this struggle can be expressed concretely. Models of action are being worked out in practice, and there is still a lot to be done in this direction.

Small actions are always criticized for being insignificant and ridiculous against such an immense structure as that of capitalist power. But it would be a mistake to attempt to remedy this by opposing to them a relationship based entirely on quantity, rather than extending these small actions, which

are easy for others to repeat. The clash is significant precisely because of the enemy's great complexity which it modifies constantly in order to maintain consensus. This consensus depends on a fine network of social relations functioning at all levels. The smallest disturbance damages it far beyond the limits of the action itself. It damages its image, its program, the mechanisms that produce social peace and the unstable equilibrium of politics.

Every tiny action that comes from even a very small number of comrades is in fact a great act of subversion. It goes far beyond the often microscopic dimensions of what took place, becoming not so much a symbol as a point of reference. This is the sense in which we have often spoken of insurrection. We can start building our struggle in such a way that conditions of revolt can emerge and latent conflict can develop and be brought to the fore. In this way a contact is established between the anarchist minority and the specific situation where the struggle can be developed. We know that many comrades do not share these ideas. Some accuse us of being analytically out of date, others of not seeing that circumscribed struggle only serves the aims of power, arguing that, especially now in the electronic era, it is no longer possible to talk of revolt. But we are stubborn. We believe it is still possible to rebel today, even in the computer era. It is still possible to penetrate the monster with a pinprick. But we must move away from the stereotypical images of the great mass struggles, and the concept of the infinite growth of a movement that is to dominate and control everything. We must develop a more precise and detailed way of thinking. We must consider reality for what it is, not what we imagine it to be. When faced with a situation we must have a clear idea of the reality that surrounds us, the class clash that such a reality reflects, and provide ourselves with the necessary means in order to act upon it.

As anarchists we have models of intervention and ideas that are of great importance and revolutionary significance, but they do not speak for themselves. They are not immediately comprehensible, so we must put them into action, it is not enough to simply explain them. The very effort of providing ourselves with the means required for the struggle should help to clarify our ideas, both for ourselves and for those who come into contact with us. A reduced idea of these means, one that limits itself to simply counter-information, dissent and declarations of principle, is clearly inadequate. We must go beyond that, and work in three directions: (i) contact with the mass (with clarity, and circumscribed to the precise requirements of the struggle); (ii) action within the revolutionary movement (in the subjective sense already mentioned); (iii) construction of specific organizations, allowing us to both work within the mass, while also facilitating actions within the revolutionary movement.

is partly because they have never had the opportunity to do it before and, therefore, don't know they are capable of it. On the other hand, many activists put down analysis as being "intellectual"—which is more a commentary on their own kind of thinking than anything else. Finally, there are those who feel no need to think and become very uncomfortable when somebody does want to. This often reflects their class disposition. The general constipation of the movement is a product of all these forces.

One reason for this sad state of affairs is that analysis gives so little satisfaction. This is another way of saying that it is not practical. What has happened to all thinking can best be seen in the degeneration of class analysis into stereotyped, obese definitions. There is little difference between the theory mongers of high abstraction and the sloganeers of crude abstraction. Theory is becoming the dialect of robots, and slogans the mass production of the mind. But just because ideas have become so mechanical does not mean we should abandon thought.

Most people are willing to face the fact that they are living in a society that has yet to be explained. Any attempt to probe those areas which are unfamiliar is met with a general hostility of fear. People seem afraid to look at themselves analytically. Part of the problem of not knowing what to do reveals itself in our not knowing who we are. The motivation to look at yourself critically and to explain society comes from the desire to change both. The heart of the problem is that we do not concretely imagine winning, except perhaps, by accident.

Analysis is the arming of the brain. We're being stifled by those who tell us analysis is intellectual when in reality it is the tool of the imagination. Just as you can't tolerate intellectualism, so you cannot act from raw anger —not if you want to win. You must teach your stomach how to think and your brain how to feel. Analysis should help us to express anger intelligently. Learning how to think, i.e. analysis, is the first step toward conscious activity.

No doubt you feel yourself tightening up because you think it sounds heavy. Really, the problem is that you think much bigger than you act. Be modest. Start with what you already know and want to know more about. Analysis begins with what interests you. Political thinking should be part of everyday life, not a class privilege. To be practical, analysis must give you an understanding of what to do and how to do it.

Thinking should help to distinguish between what is important and what is not. It should break down complex forces so that we can understand them. Break everything down. In the process of analyzing something you will discover that there are different ways of acting which were not apparent

defensively to the charge of elitism and, thus, have avoided dealing with the issue head on. That in itself is a class reaction.

The internal is the mirror of the external. The best way to avoid behaving like an elite is to prevent the formation of elitism within the collective itself. Often when charges of elitism are true, they reflect the same class relations internally.

The ways of undermining the autonomy of a collective are many and insidious. The call for unity can no longer be responded to automatically. The time has come to question the motives and effectiveness of such actions —and to feel good (i.e. correct) in doing so, Jargon is pigeon talk and is meant to make us feel stupid and powerless. Because collective action is not organized as a mass, it does not have to rely on the call of unity in order to act.

"Does 'one divide into two' or 'two fuse into one'?" This question is a subject of debate In China and now here. This debate is a struggle between two conceptions of the world. One believes in struggle, the other in unity. The two sides have drawn a clear line between them and their arguments are diametrically opposed. Thus, you can see why one divides into two." (Free translation from the Red Flag, Peking, September 21, 1964).

7. The Function of Analysis

Not only can there be no revolution without revolutionary theory, there can be no strategy without analysis. Strategy is knowing ahead of time what you are going to do. This is what analysis makes possible. When you begin, you may not know anything. The purpose of analysis is not to know everything, but to know what you do know and know it good—that is collectively. The heart of thinking analytically is to learn over and over again that the process is as important as the product. Developing an analysis requires new ways of thinking. Without new ways of thinking we are doomed to old ways of acting.

The question of what we are going to do is the hardest to answer and the one that ultimately will determine whether a collective will continue to exist. The difficulty of the question makes analysis all the more necessary. We can no longer afford to be propelled by the crudest forms of advertisement—slogans and rhetoric. The function of analysis is to reveal a plan of action.

Why is there relatively little practical analysis of what is happening today? Some people refuse to analyze anything which they cannot immediately comprehend. Basically they have a feeling of inadequacy. This

The Insurrectional Project

ALFREDO BONANNO (2000)

An anarchist insurrectional project requires a method that reflects the world we desire and the reality of the world we seek to destroy. Acting in small groups based on affinity fits both of these requirements. Power in the present world no longer has a real center, but spreads itself throughout the social terrain. Acting in small groups allows projects of attack to spread across the terrain as well. But more significantly, this method brings one's aim into one's method—revolt itself becomes a different way of conceiving relations. Anarchists always talk of refusing vanguardism—but such a refusal means refusing evangelism, the quantitative myth that seeks to win converts to an ideology of anarchism. Acting in small groups to attack the state and capital puts anarchy into practice as the self-organization of one's own projects, in relations based on affinity—real knowledge of and trust in each other—rather than adherence to a belief system. Furthermore, this sort of action, liberated from the quantitative, does not wait until "conditions are right", until one is guaranteed a large following or until one is certain of the results—it is action without measure. Thus, it carries within it the world we desire—a world of relations without measure.

Once one has decided not to put up with being ruled or exploited and therefore to attack the social order based on domination and exploitation, the question of how to go about this arises. Since those of us who rise up in rebellion cannot let themselves be organized by others without falling under a new form of domination, we need to develop the capacity to organize our own projects and activities—to put the elements together that are necessary for acting projectually in a coherent manner.

Thus, organization, as I'm using the term here, means bringing together the means and relations that allow us to act for ourselves in the world. This starts with the decision to act, the decision that our thirst to have all of our life as our own requires us to fight against the state, capital and all of the structures and institutions through which they maintain control over the conditions of our existence. Such a decision puts one in the position of needing to develop the specific tools that make intelligent action possible. First a thorough analysis of the present conditions of exploitation is necessary. Based on this analysis, we choose specific objectives to aim for and means for achieving these objectives based upon our desires and the ideas that move us. These means, these tools for action must first and foremost include ways of making our objectives, desires and ideas known to

others in order to find affinities, others with whom we can create projects of action. Thus, we look to create occasions for encounters and discussion in which similarities and differences are clarified, in which the refusal of false unities allow the real affinities—real knowledge of whether and how we can work together—can develop. These tools allow the projectuality of individuals in revolt to become a force in movement, an element propelling toward the insurrectional break. Since affinity is the basis for the relations we are aiming to use in action, informality is essential—only here can its forms be expressions of real needs and desires.

So our desire to create insurrection moves us to reject all formal organization—all structures based on membership and the attempt to synthesize the various struggles under one formal leadership—that of the organization. These structures for synthesis share some common traits. They have a formal theoretical basis, a series of doctrine to which all members are expected to adhere. Because such groups are seeking numbers this basis tends to be on the lowest common denominator—a set of simplistic statements with no depth of analysis and with a dogmatic tendency that militates against deep analysis. They also have a formal practical orientation —a specific mode of acting by which the group as a whole determines what they will do. The necessity such groups feel to synthesize the various struggles under their direction—to the extent they succeed—leads to a formalization and ritualization of the struggles undermining creativity and imagination and turning the various struggles into mere tools for the promotion of the organization. From all of this it becomes clear, that whatever claims such an organization may make about its desire for insurrection and revolution, in fact its first aim is to increase membership.

It is important to realize that this problem can exist even when no structures have been created. When anarchism promotes itself in an evangelistic manner, it is clear that a formal theoretical basis has imposed its rigidity on the fluidity of ideas necessary for developing real analyses. In such a situation, the practical orientation—the modes of action also become formalized—one need only look at the ritualized confrontations by which so many anarchists strive to get their message across. The only purpose that this apparently informal formalization serves is to try to convince the various people in struggle that they should call themselves anarchists—that is, to synthesize the struggles under the leadership of the black flag. In other words to gain numbers of members for this formal non-organization. Dealing with the media to explain who anarchists are seems to enforce this way of interacting with the other exploited in struggle, because it reinforces the separation of anarchists from the rest of those exploited by this society and leaves the impression that the anarchists have some special

The first principle of local action is to de-nationalize your thinking. Take the country out of Salem. Get out of Marlboro country. Become conscious of how your life is managed from the national centres. Lifestyles are roles designed to give you the illusion of movement while keeping you in your place. “Style is mass chasing class, and class escaping mass.” (W. Rauschenbush, “The Idiot God Fashion,” Woman’s Coming of Age, eds Schmalhausen and Calvert, 1931).

Local action gives you the initiative by enabling you to define the situation. That is the practice of knowing you are the subject. Marat[7] says: “The most important thing is to pull yourself up by your own hair, to turn yourself inside out and see the whole world with fresh eyes.” The collective turns itself inside out and sees reality.

6. The Dream of Unity

The principle of *unity* is based on the proposition that everyone is a *unit* (a fragment). Unity means one multiplied by itself. We are not going to say it straight—in so far as unity has suppressed real political differences—class, racial, sexual—it is a form of tyranny. The dream of unity is in reality a nightmare of compromise and suppressed desires. We are not equal and unity perpetuates inequality.

The collective will be subject constantly to pressure from outside groups demanding support in one form or another. Everyone is always in a crisis. Given these circumstances, a group can have the illusion of being permanently mobilized and active without having polities of its own. Calls for unity channel the political energies of collectives into support politics. So, as a precaution, the collective must take time to work out its own politics and plan of action. Above all, it should try to foresee crisis situations and their “rent-a-crowd” militancy.

You will be accused of *factionalism*. Don’t waste time thinking about this age old problem. A collective is not a faction. Responding to Pavlov’s bell puts you in the position of a salivating dog.[8] There will be no end to your hunger when who you are is determined by someone else.

You will also be accused of *elitism*. This is a risky business and should not be dismissed lightly. A collective must first know what is meant by elitism. Instead of wondering whether it refers to leadership or personalities, you should first anchor the issue in a class context. Know where your ideas come from and what their relation is to the dominant ideology. You should ask the same questions about those who make the accusations. What is their class background and class interest? So far many people have reacted

any program, is what is intolerable to all the Xerox radicals trying to reproduce their own images

The collective is the hindquarters of the revolution. It makes no pretense whatsoever in regard to the role of the vanguard. Expect nothing from them. They are not your leaders. Leave them alone. The collective knows it will be the last to enter the new world.

The doubts people have about local action reveal how dependent they are on the glamour of mass politics. Everyone wants to project themselves on the screen of revolution—as Yippies[5] or White Panthers[6]. Having internalized the mass, they ask themselves questions whose answers seem logical in its context. How can we accomplish anything without mass action? If we don't go to meetings and demonstrations. Will we be forgotten? Who will take us seriously if we don't join the rank and file?

Slowly you realize that you have become a spectator, an object. Your politics take place on a stage and your social relations consist of sitting in an audience or marching in a crowd. The fragmentation of your everyday experience contrasts with the spectacular unity of the mass.

By contrast, the priority of local action is an attempt to unify everyday life and fragment the mass. This level of consciousness is a result of rejecting the laws of mass behavior based on Leninism and TV ideology. It makes possible an enema of the brain which everyone so desperately needs. You will be relieved to discover that you can create a situation by localizing your struggle.

How can we prevent local action from becoming provincial? Whether or not it does so depends on our overall strategy. Provincialism is simply the consequences or not knowing what is happening. A commune, for example, is provincial because its strategy is based on petty farming and glorification of the extended family. What they have is astrology, not a strategy.

Local action should be based on the global structure of modern society. There can be no collective action without collectives. But the creation of a collective should not be mistaken for victory nor should it become an end in itself. The great danger the collective faces historically is that of being cut off (or cutting itself off) from the outside world. The issue ultimately will be what action to take and when. Whether collectives become a social force depends on their analysis of history and their course of action.

In fact, the "provinces" today are moving ahead of the centres in political consciousness and motivation. From Minnesota to the Mekong Delta, the revolt is gaining coherence. The centres are trying to decipher what is happening, to catch up and contain it. For this purpose they must create centralized forms of organization—or "co-ordination"—as the modernists call it.

understanding of things that makes them the de facto vanguard of the revolution.

So for the purpose of creating our insurrectional project we want to organize informally: without a formal theoretical basis so that ideas and analyses can be developed fluidly in a way that allows to understand the present and act against it and without a formal practical orientation so that we can act with an intelligent projectual spontaneity and creativity. A significant aspect of this informal organization would be a network of like-minded people. This network would base itself on a reciprocal knowledge of each other which requires honest, straightforward discussions of ideas, analyses and aims. Complete agreement would not be necessary, but a real understanding of differences would. The aim of this network would not be the recruitment of members—it would not be a membership organization—but rather developing methods for intervening in various struggles in an insurrectional manner, and coordinating such intervention. The basis for participation would be affinity—meaning the capacity to act together. This capacity stems from knowing where to find each other and studying and analyzing the social situation together in order to move to action together. . Since there is no formal organization to join, this network would only grow on the basis of real affinity of ideas and practice. This informal network would consist of the tools we develop for the discussion of social analyses and the methods for intervening in struggles that we create.

This network is basically a way for individuals and small groups to coordinate their struggles. The real point of action is the affinity group. An affinity group is an informal, temporary group based on affinity—that is real knowledge of each other—that comes together to accomplish a specific aim. Affinity develops through a deepening knowledge of each other: knowledge of how the other thinks about social problems and of the methods of intervention they consider appropriate. Real affinity cannot be based on a lowest common denominator, but must include a real understanding of differences as well as similarities between those involved, because it is in the knowledge of our difference that we can discover haw we can really act together. Since the affinity group comes together for a specific circumscribed aim, it is a temporary formation—one that ceases to exist once the aim is accomplished. Thus it remains informal, without membership.

With this informal basis, once we recognize that our own freedom will remain impoverished as long as the masters continue to control the conditions under which most people exist, depriving them of the ability to freely determine their own lives, we recognize that our own liberation depends on intervention in the struggles of the exploited classes as a whole.

Our involvement is not one of evangelism—the propagandistic method would place us on the same level as political movements, and we are not politicians or activists, but individuals who want our lives back and therefore take action for ourselves with others. Thus, we do not propose any specific anarchist organization for the exploited to join, nor a doctrine to put faith in. Rather we seek to link our specific struggle as anarchists to that of the rest of the exploited by encouraging self-organization, self-determination, the refusal of delegation and of any sort of negotiation, accommodation or compromise with power, and a practice based on direct action and the necessity of attack against the structures of power and control. The point is to encourage and participate in specific attacks against specific aspects of the state, capital and the various structures and apparatuses of control.

Since our purpose is to struggle against our own exploitation with other exploited people, certainly with the aim of projecting toward insurrection, there can be no guaranteeing of any results—with no organization striving to gain members, we can't look for an increase in numbers. There is no way to know the end. But though we have no guarantees, no certainty of accomplishing our aim, success is not the primary reason for our struggle. The primary reason is that not to act is the guaranteed defeat of an empty and meaningless existence. To act to take our life back is to already regain it on the terrain of struggle, to already become the creator of one's own existence, even if in constant battle with a monstrous order determined to crush us. Why we are insurrectionary anarchists:

* Because we are struggling along with the excluded to alleviate and ultimately abolish the conditions of exploitation imposed by the included.
* Because we consider it possible to contribute to the development of struggles that are appearing spontaneously everywhere, turning them into mass insurrections, that is to say, actual revolutions.
* Because we want to destroy the capitalist order of the world which, thanks to computer science restructuring has become technologically useful to no one but the managers of class domination.
* Because we are for the immediate, destructive attack against the structures, individuals and organizations of Capital and the State.
* Because we constructively criticize all those who are in situations of comprise with power in their belief that the revolutionary struggle is impossible at the present time.
* Because rather than wait, we have decided to proceed to action, even if the time is not ripe.
* Because we want to put an end to this state of affairs right away rather than wait until conditions make its transformation possible.

meetings, etc.—that passes for communication. It is time we gave more thought to what we say and how we say it.

What exactly do we mean by contact? We want to begin by taking the bureaucracy out of communication. The idea is to begin modestly. Contact is a touching on all sides. The essential thing is about its directness and reliability. Eyeball to eyeball.

Other forms of communication—telephone, letters, documents, etc.—should never be used as substitutes for direct contact. In fact, they should serve primarily to prepare contacts.

Why is it so important to have direct contact? Because it is the simplest form of communication. Moreover, it is physical and Involves all the senses —most of all the sense of smell. For this reason, it is reliable. It also takes account of the real need for security. Those who talk about repression continue to pass around sheets of paper asking for names, addresses, and telephone numbers.

There are already a number of gatherings which appear to involve contact but in reality are grotesque facsimiles. The worst of these and the one most people flock to is the conference. This is a hotel of the mind which turns us all into tourists and spectators. A lower form of existence is the endless meeting—the one held every night. Not to mention the committees formed expressly to arrange meetings.

The basic principle of contact between collectives is: you only meet when you have something to say to each other. This means two things. First, that you have a concrete idea what it is you want to say. Secondly, that you must prepare it in advance. These principles help to ensure that communication does not become an administrative problem.

The new forms of contact have yet to be created. We can think of single examples. A member of one collective can attend the meeting of another collective or there may be a joint meeting of the groups as a whole. The first of these appears to be the more practical, however, the drawback is that not everyone is involved. There are undoubtedly other forms of contact which are likely to develop. The main thing is to invent them.

5. Priority of Local Action

The collective gives priority to *local* action. It rejects the mass politics of the white nationalists with their national committees, organizers, and the superstars. Definitely, the collective is out of the mainstream and what is more it feels no regrets. The aim of the collective is to feel new thoughts and act new ideas—in a word to create its own space. And that, more than

it will be harder to destroy a multitude of collectives than the largest organizations with centralized control.

Size is a key to security. But its real importance lies in the fact that the collective reproduces new social relations—the advantage being that the process can begin now.

The limitation on size raises a difficult problem. What do you say to someone who asks, "Can I join your collective?" This question is ultimately at the root of much hostility (often unconscious) toward the collective form of organization. You can't separate size from the collective because it must be small In order to exist. The collective has a right to exclude individuals because it offers them the alternative of starting a new collective, i.e. sharing the responsibility for organization. This is the basic answer to the question above.

Of course, people will put down the collective as being exclusive. That is not the point. The size of a collective is essentially a limitation on its authority.

By contrast, large organizations, while having open membership, are exclusive in terms of who shapes the politics and actively participates in the structuring of activities. The choice is between joining the mass or creating the class. The revolutionary project is to do it yourself. Remember, Alexandra Kollontai[3] warned in 1920, "The essence of bureaucracy is when some third person decides your fate."[4]

4. Contact Between Collectives

The collective does not communicate with the mass. It makes contact with other collectives. What if other collectives do not exist? Well, it should talk to itself until the day they do. Yes. By all means, the collective also communicates with other people, but it never views them as a mass—as a constituency or audience. The collective communicates with individuals in order to encourage self-organization. It assumes that people are capable of self-organization, and given that alternative, they will choose it over mass participation. The collective knows that it takes time to create new forms of organization. It simply seeks to hasten the crumbling of the mass.

Much of the problem of "communication" these days is that people think they have got to communicate all the time. You find people setting up administrative functions to deal with information flows before they have any idea what they want to say. The collective is not obsessed with "communicating" or "relating" to the movement. What concerns it is the amount of noise—incessant phone calls, form letters, announcements of

Insurrectionary Organization

JEAN WEIR, FROM *INSURRECTION*, VOL. 4 (1988)[1]

Beyond the Structure of Synthesis

Instead of an anarchist *organization of synthesis* we propose an informal anarchist organization based on struggle and the analyses that emerge from it.

Anarchists of all tendencies refuse the model of hierarchical and authoritarian organization. They refuse parties and vertical structures that impose directives from above in a more or less obvious way. In positing the liberatory revolution as the only social solution possible, anarchists consider that the means used in bringing about this transformation will condition the ends that are achieved. And authoritarian organizations are certainly not instruments that lead to liberation.

At the same time it is not enough to agree with this in words alone. It is also necessary to put it into practice. In our opinion an anarchist structure such as a structure of synthesis presents not a few dangers. When this kind of organization develops to full strength as it did in Spain in '36 it begins to resemble a party. Synthesis becomes control. Certainly in quiet periods this is barely visible, so what we are saying now might seem like blasphemy.

This kind of structure is based on groups or individuals who are in more or less constant contact with each other, and has its culminating moment in periodic congresses. In these congresses the basic analysis is discussed, a program is drawn up and tasks are divided covering the whole range of social intervention. It is an organization of synthesis because it sets itself up as a point of reference capable of synthesizing the struggles taking place within the class clash. Various groups intervene in the struggles, give their contribution, but do not lose sight of the theoretical and practical orientation that the organization as a whole decided upon during the congress.

Now, in our opinion, an organization structured in this way runs the risk of being behind in respect of the effective level of the struggle, as its main aim is that of folding the struggle into its project of synthesis, not of pushing it towards its *insurrectionary* realization. One of its main objectives is quantitative growth in membership. It therefore tends to draw the struggle to the lowest common denominator by proposing caution aimed at putting a brake on any flight forwards or any choice of objectives that are too exposed or risky.

Of course that does not mean that all the groups belonging to the organization of synthesis automatically act in this way: often comrades are autonomous enough to choose the most effective proposals and objectives in a given situation of struggle. It is a mechanism intrinsic to the organization of synthesis, however, that leads it to making decisions that are not adequate to the situation, as the main aim of the organization is to grow to develop as wide a front of struggle as possible. It tends not to take a clear and neat position on issues, but finds a way, a political road that displeases the fewest and is digestible to most.

The reactions we get when making criticisms such as this are often dictated by fear and prejudice. The main fear is that of the unknown which pushes us towards organizational schemas and formalism among comrades. This safeguards us from the search hinged on the risk of finding ourselves involved in unknown experiences. This is quite obvious when we see the great need some comrades have for a formal organization that obeys the requirements of constancy, stability and work that is programmed in advance. In reality these elements serve us in our need for certainty and not for revolutionary necessity.

On the contrary we think that the informal organization can supply valid starting points for getting out of this uncertainty. This different type of organization seems to us to be capable of developing—contrary to an organization of synthesis—more concrete and productive relationships as they are based on *affinity* and reciprocal knowledge. Moreover, the moment where it reaches its true potential is when it participates in concrete situations of struggle, not when drawing up theoretical or practical platforms, statutes or associative rules.

An organization structured informally is not built on the basis of a program fixed in a congress. The project is realized by the comrades themselves in the course of the struggle and during the development of the struggle itself. This organization has no privileged instrument of theoretical and practical elaboration, nor does it have problems of synthesis. Its basic project is that of *intervening* in a struggle with an *insurrectionary objective*.

However great the limitations of the comrades involved in the informal kind of anarchist organization might be, and what the latter's defects might be, the method still seems valid to us and we consider a theoretical and practical exploration of it to be worthwhile.

The Affinity Group

Contrary to what is often believed, affinity between comrades does not depend on sympathy or sentiment. To have affinity means to have

The form of the collective is its practice. The collective is opposed to the mass. It contradicts the structure of the mass. The collective is *anti-mass*.

3. Size of the Collective

The aim of any organization is to make it as simple as possible, or as Marshall McLuhan[2] puts it, "high in participation, low in definition." The tendency is just the opposite. Our reflex is to create administrative structures to deal with political problems.

Most people cannot discuss intelligently the subject of size. There is an unspoken feeling either that the problem should not exist or that it is beneath us to talk about it. Let's get it out in the open. Size is a question of politics and social relations, not administration. Do you wonder why the subject is shunted aside at large meetings? Because it fundamentally challenges the repressive nature of large organizations. Small groups that function as appendages to larger bodies will never feel like small groups.

The collective should not be larger than a band—no orchestras or chamber music please. The basic idea is to reproduce the collective, not expand it. The strength of a collective lies in its social organization, not its numbers. Once you think in terms of recruiting, you might as well join the Army. The difference between expansion and reproduction is the difference between adding and multiplying. The first based its strength on numbers and the second on relationships between people.

Why should there be a limit to size? Because we are neither supermen nor slaves. Beyond a certain point, the group becomes a meeting and before you know it you have to raise your hand to speak. The collective is a recognition of the practical limits of conversation. This simple fact is the basis for a new social experience.

Relations of inequality can be seen more clearly within a collective and dealt with more effectively. "Whatever the nature of authority in the large organization, it is inherent in the simple organization unit." (Chester Barnard, The Function of Executives, 1938). A small group with a "leader" is the nucleus of a class society. Small size restricts the area which any single individual can dominate. This is true both internally and in relation to other groups.

Today, the mode of struggle requires a durable and resilient form of organization which will enable us to cope both with the attrition of daily life and the likelihood of repression. Unless we can begin to solve problems at this level collectively, we are certainly not fit to create a new society. Contrary to what people are led to think, i.e. united we stand, united we fall,

Why should the collective be the primary focus of organization? The collective is an alternative to the existing structure of society. Changing social relations is a process rather than a product of revolution. In other words, you make the revolution by actually changing social relations. You must consciously create the contradictions in history.

Concretely, this means: organize yourselves, not somebody else. The collective is the organizational nucleus of a classless society. As a formal organization, it negates all forms of hierarchy. The answer to alienation is to make yourself the subject, not the object, of history.

One of the crucial obstacles to the formation of collectives is the transitional period—when the collective must survive side by side with a disintegrating movement and a mass society. The disintegration of the movement is not an isolated phenomenon but reflects the weakening of the major institutions in American society responsible for our alienation. Many people are demoralized by this process and find it bewildering because they actually depend subconsciously on the continued existence of these institutions. We are witnessing the break-up and transformation of an institution integral to society—the mass market. The mass market is corporate structure which few people are sufficiently aware of to realize how it affects our political life. We really depend on our "leaders" whether they be the Chicago 7[1] or 7up. Our understanding of the collective form of organization based on a critique of the mass and the dictatorship of the product.

These contradictions make it imperative that any people who decide to create a collective know exactly who they are and what they are doing. That is why you must consider your collective as primary. Because, if you don't believe in the legitimacy of this form of organization, you can't have a practical analysis of what is happening. Don't kid yourself. The struggle for the creation and survival of collectives at this moment in history is going to be very difficult.

The dominant issue will be how collectives can become part of history—how they can become a social force. There is no guarantee and we should promise no easy victories. The uniqueness of developing collectives is their definitive break with all hierarchic forms of organization and the reconstructing of a classless society.

The thinking of radical organizers is frozen in the concept of the mass movement. This form of struggle, no matter how radical its demands, never threatens the basic structure—the mass itself.

Under these circumstances it takes great effort to imagine new forms of existence. Space must be created before we can think of these things and be able to establish the legitimacy of acting upon them.

knowledge of the other, to know how they think on social issues, and how they think they can intervene in the social clash. This deepening of knowledge between comrades is an aspect that is often neglected, impeding effective action.

One of the most difficult problems anarchists have had to face throughout their history is what form of organization to adopt in the struggle. At the two ends of the spectrum we find on the one hand the individualists who refuse any kind of stable relationship; on the other those who support a permanent organization which acts on a program established at the moment of its constitution. Both of the forms sketched out here have characteristics that are criticizable from an insurrectional point of view.

In fact, when individualists single out and strike the class enemy they are sometimes far ahead of the most combative of the class components of the time, and their action is not understood. On the contrary, those who support the need for a permanent organization often wait until there is already a considerable number of exploited indicating how and when to strike the class enemy. The former carry out actions that turn out to be too far ahead of the level of the struggle, the latter too far behind.

One of the reasons for this deficiency is, in our opinion, a lack of perspective. Clearly no one has a sure recipe that contains no defects; we can, however, point out the limitations we see in certain kinds of organization, and indicate possible alternatives. One of these is known as *affinity groups*.

The term requires an explanation. Affinity is often confused with sentiment. Although not distinctly separate, the two terms should not be considered synonymous. There could be comrades with whom we consider we have an affinity, but whom we do not find sympathetic, and vice versa.

Basically, to have an affinity with a comrade means to know them, to have deepened one's knowledge of them. As that knowledge grows, the affinity can increase to the point of making an action together possible, but it can also diminish to the point of making it practically impossible.

Knowledge of another is an infinite process which can stop at any level according to the circumstances and objectives one wants to reach together. One could therefore have an affinity for doing some things, but not others. It becomes obvious that when we speak of knowledge, this does not mean it is necessary to discuss one's personal problems, although these can become important when they interfere with the process of deepening knowledge of one another.

In this sense having knowledge of the other does not necessarily mean having an intimate relationship. What it is necessary to know is how the comrade thinks concerning the social problems which the class struggle

confronts him with, how he thinks he can intervene, what methods he thinks should be used in given situations, etc.

The first step in the deepening of knowledge between comrades is discussion. It is preferable to have a clarifying premise, such as something written, so the various problems can be gone into thoroughly.

Once the essentials are clarified, the affinity group or groups are practically formed. The deepening of knowledge between comrades continues in relation to their action as a group and the latter's encounter with reality as a whole. While this process is taking place, their knowledge often widens and strong bonds between comrades often emerge. This, however, is a consequence of the affinity, not its primal aim.

It often happens that comrades go about things the other way around, beginning some kind of activity and only proceeding to the necessary clarifications later, without ever having assessed the level of affinity required to do anything together. Things are left to chance, as though some kind of clarity were automatically to emerge from the group simply by its formation. Of course this does not happen: the group either stagnates because there is no clear road for it to take, or it follows the tendency of the comrade or comrades who have the clearest ideas as to what they want to do, while others allow themselves to be pulled along, often with little enthusiasm or real engagement.

The affinity group on the other hand finds it has great potential and is immediately addressed towards action, basing itself not on the quantity of its adherents, but on the qualitative strength of a number of individuals working together in a *projectuality* that they develop together as they go along. From being a *specific structure* of the anarchist movement, and the whole arc of activity that this presents—propaganda, direct action, perhaps producing a paper, working within an informal organization—it can also look outwards to forming a *base nucleus* or some other mass structure and thus intervene more effectively in the social clash.

Autonomous Base Nuclei

Mass structures, autonomous base nuclei, are the element linking the specific informal anarchist organization to social struggles. The autonomous base nucleus is not an entirely new form of struggle. Attempts have been made to develop these structures in Italy over the past ten years. The most notable of these was the Autonomous Movement of the Turin Railway Workers[2], and the self-managed leagues against the cruise missile base in Comiso[3].

socially apart. Their lives are privatized and depraved. Coca-Cola and loneliness. The social existence of the mass—its rules and regulations, the structuring of its status, roles and leadership—are organized through consumption (the mass market). They are all products of a specific social organization. Ours.

Of course, no one sees themselves as part of the mass. It's always others who are the masses. The trouble is that it is not only the corporations which organize us into the mass. The "movement" itself behaves as a mass and its organizers reproduce the hierarchy of the mass.

Really, how do you fight fire? With water, of course. The same goes for revolution. We don't fight the mass (market) with a mass (movement). We fight mass with class. Our aim should be not to create a mass movement but a class force.

What is a class? A class is a consciously organized social force. For example, the ruling class is conscious and acts collectively to organize not only itself, but also the people (mass) that it rules. The corporation is the self conscious collective power of the ruling class. We are not saying that class relations do not exist in the rest of society. But they remain passive so long they are shaped solely by objective conditions (i.e. work situations). What is necessary is the active (subjective) participation of the class itself. Class prejudice is not class consciousness. The class is conscious of its social existence because it seeks to organize itself. The mass is unconscious of its social existence because it is organized by Coca-Cola and IBM. The moral of the story is: the mass is a mass because it is organized as a mass. Don't be fooled by the brand name. Mass is thinking with your ass.

2. Primacy of the Collective

The small group is the coming together of people who feel the need for collectivity. Its function is often to break out of the mass—specifically from the isolation of daily life and the mass structure of the movement. The problem is that frequently the group cannot create an independent existence and an identity of its own because it continues to define itself negatively, i.e. in opposition. So long as its point of reference lies outside of it, the group's politics tend to be superimposed on it by events and crises.

The small group can be a stage in the development of the *collective*, if it develops a critique of the frustrations stemming from its external orientation. The formation of a collective begins when people not only have the same politics, but agree on the method of struggle.

Anti-Mass: Methods of Organization for Collectives

THE RED SUNSHINE GANG (1970)

Introduction

The writers of this pamphlet were a part of the counterculture in Berkeley, California which began with troops returning from World War II and evolved in the late 1960s and early 1970s after the Free Speech Movement and as a reaction to the Viet Nam War, the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Movement and a general rebellion against "The Establishment". They quote counter-culture writers and Mao Zedong, but are specifically critical of both Leninism and Liberalism. They criticize mass society, TV ideology and following leaders and urge people to organize themselves. The Anti-Mass is reflective of Michael Bakunin's "Secret Brotherhood" and the Affinity Groups formed to organize Anarchist resistance in Spain prior to the 1936 Spanish Civil War. It has become the organizing model of choice for Do-It-Yourself organizers in the Anarchist and anti-racist movements in Mexico and the United States. Included in this edition are editorial notes to clarify and expand upon points of the original authors based upon our experiences using this model in Southern California.

-Insurgency Culture Collective, Los Angeles, 1999.

1. The Difference Between Mass and Class

Why is it important to know the difference between *mass* and *class*? The chances are that there can be no conscious revolutionary practice without making this distinction. We are not playing around with words. Look. We are living in a mass society. We didn't get that way by accident. The mass is a specific form of organization. The reason is clear. Consumption is organized by the corporations. Their products define the mass. The mass is not a cliché—"the masses"—but a routine which dominates your daily life. Understanding the structure of the mass market is the first step toward understanding what happened to the class struggle.

What is the mass? Most people think of the mass in terms of numbers—like a crowded street or stadium. But it is actually structure which determines its character. The mass is an aggregate of couples who are separate, detached and anonymous. They live in cities physically close yet

We believe the revolutionary struggle is without doubt a *mass* struggle. We therefore see the need to build structures capable of organizing as many groups of the exploited as possible. We have always been critical of the syndicalist perspective, both because of its limitations as an instrument, and because of its tragic historical involution that no anarchist lick of paint can cover up. So we reached the hypothesis of building autonomous base nuclei lacking the characteristics of mini-syndicalist structures, having other aims and organizational relations.

Through these structures, an attempt has been made to link the specific anarchist movement to social struggles. A considerable barrier of reticence and incomprehension has been met among comrades and this has been an obstacle in realizing this organizational method. It is in moments of action that differences emerge among comrades who all agree in principle with anarchist propaganda, the struggle against the State, self-management and direct action. When we move into an organizational phase, however, we must develop a project that is in touch with the present level of the clash between classes.

We believe that due to profound social transformations, it is unthinkable for one single structure to try to contain all social and economic struggles within it. In any case, why should the exploited have to enter and become part of a specific anarchist organization in order to carry out their struggle?

A radical change in the way society—exploitation—is being run can only be achieved by a revolution. That is why we are trying to *intervene* with an insurrectional project. Struggles of tomorrow will only have a positive outcome if the relationship between informal specific anarchist structure and the mass structure of autonomous base nuclei is clarified and put into effect.

The main aim of the nucleus is not to abolish the State or Capital, which are practicably unattackable so long as they remain a general concept. The objective of the nucleus is to fight and attack *this* expression of the State and *this* formation of Capital in their smaller and more reachable structures, by means of an insurrectional method.

The autonomous base groups are mass structures and constitute the point of encounter between the informal anarchist organization and social struggles. Organization within a nucleus distinguishes itself by the following characteristics:

* Autonomy from any political, trade union or syndical force;
* Permanent conflictuality (a constant and effective struggle towards the aims that are decided upon, not sporadic occasional interventions);
* Attack (the refusal of compromise, mediation or accommodation that questions the attack on the chosen objective).

As far as aims are concerned, these are decided upon and realized through attacks upon the repressive, military and productive structures, etc. The importance of permanent conflictuality and attack is fundamental.

These attacks are organized by the nuclei in collaboration with specific anarchist structures which provide practical and theoretical support, developing the search for the means required for the action by pointing out the structures and individuals responsible for repression, and offering a minimal form of defense against attempts at political or ideological *recuperation* by power, and against repression more generally.

At first sight, the relationship between specific anarchist organization and autonomous base nucleus might seem contradictory. The specific structure follows an insurrectional perspective, while the base nuclei seem to move in quite another dimension, that of intermediate struggle. But this struggle only remains such at the beginning. If the analysis on which the project is based coincides with the interests of the exploited in the situation in which they find themselves, then an insurrectional outcome to the struggle is possible. Of course this outcome is not certain. That cannot be guaranteed by anyone.

This method has been accused of being incomplete and of not taking into account the fact that an attack against one or more structures always ends up increasing repression. Comrades can reflect on these accusations. We think it is never possible to see the outcome of a struggle in advance. Even a limited struggle can have unexpected consequences. In any case, the leap from the various insurrections—limited and circumscribed—to revolution can never be guaranteed in advance by any procedure. We move forward by trial and error, and to whoever has a better method, we say 'carry on'.

Beyond Workerism—Beyond Syndicalism

The end of syndicalism corresponds to the end of workerism. For us it is also the end of the quantitive illusion of the party and the specific 'organization of synthesis'. The revolts of tomorrow must seek out new roads. Trade unionism is in its decline. For good and for evil, this structural form of struggle that defined an era is disappearing. It was a model and a future world seen in terms of an improved and corrected reproduction of the old one. Meanwhile, we are moving towards new and profound transformations. In the productive structure, in the social structure. Methods of struggle, perspectives, even short term projects are also transforming.

In an expanding industrial society, the trade union tends to shift from being an instrument of struggle to an instrument supporting the productive structure itself. Revolutionary syndicalism has also played its part: pushing

rat race for survival, etc.). In other words, we need a critique of the totality of daily existence from the perspective of the totality of our desires.

Opposed to this project are all the politicians and bureaucrats, preachers and gurus, city planners and policemen, reformers and Leninists, central committees and censors, corporate managers and union honchos, male supremacists and feminist ideologues, landlords and eco-capitalists who work to subordinate individual desires to that hideous abstraction, "the common good," of which they are the supposed guardians. They are all forces of the old world-bosses, priests, and other creeps who have something to lose if people extend the game of seizing back their minds into seizing back their lives.

Revolutionary theory and abstraction-based ideologies are enemies, and every politically conscious person knows it.

10. By now it should be obvious that self-demystification and the creation of our own revolutionary theory do not eradicate our alienation; "the world," with its capitalist economic relations permeating every aspect of life, goes on and is reproduced every day with the acquiescence and assistance of billions of people.

Although this text has the creation of self-theory as its focus, we do not mean to imply that revolutionary theory can exist separately from revolutionary practice. In order to be consequential, to effectively reconstruct the world, practice must be based in theory, and theory must be realized in practice. The revolutionary project of ending alienation and transforming social relations requires that one's theory be nothing other than a theory of practice, realized in what we do and how we live. Otherwise theory will degenerate into an impotent contemplation of the world, and ultimately into a survival mechanism—an intellectual armor that acts as a buffer between the daily world and oneself. And if revolutionary practice is not the practice of revolutionary theory, it degenerates into, at best, altruistic militantism—"revolutionary" activity as one's social duty or role. At worst, it degenerates into pure gangsterism.

We don't strive for a coherent theory purely as an end in itself. For us, the value of coherency is that it makes it easier to think critically and effectively. For example, it's easier to understand future developments in social control if you have a coherent understanding of present-day social control ideologies and techniques.

Having a coherent theory makes it easier to put into practice your strategy for realizing your desires.

choices and to hide from us the fact that *the material preconditions for social revolution already exist*.

7. Any journey toward self-demystification must avoid the twin quagmires of absolutism and cynicism.

Absolutism is the total acceptance or rejection of all components of particular ideologies, or indeed, of any set of ideas or concepts. An absolutist cannot see any choice other than complete acceptance or complete rejection; s/he sees things purely as good or bad, black or white. The absolutist wanders along the shelves of the ideological supermarket looking for the ideal commodity, and then buys it lock, stock and barrel. But the ideological supermarket—like any supermarket—is fit only for looting. It is of more practical use to us to move along the shelves, rip open the packets, take out what looks authentic and useful, and dump the rest.

Cynicism is a reaction to a world dominated by ideology and "morality." Faced with conflicting ideologies, the cynic says, "A plague on both your houses." The cynic is as much a consumer as the absolutist, but one who has given up hope of finding the ideal commodity.

8. The process of constructive thinking is a process of continually adding to and modifying one's current body of self-theory as well as resolving contradictions between one's new thoughts and perceptions and one's previous beliefs. The resulting synthesis is thus more than the sum of its parts.

This synthetic method of constructing a theory is counter to the eclectic method in which one collects a rag bag of favorite bits from favorite ideologies without ever confronting the resulting contradictions. Modern examples include "anarcho-capitalism," "christian marxism," and liberalism in general.

If we are continually conscious of how we want to live, we can critically appropriate from *anything*: ideologies, culture critics, technocratic experts, sociological studies, even mystics (though the pickings will probably be slim). All the rubbish of the old world can be scavenged for useful material by those who want to reconstruct it.

9. The nature of modern society, unified globally through its capitalist economic system, makes necessary a self-theory which criticizes all areas in which socio-economic domination exists (i.e., both the corporate capitalism of the "free" world and the state capitalism of the "communist" world) as well as all forms of alienation (sexual poverty, enforced participation in the

the most combative workers forward but, at the same time, pushing them backwards in terms of their capacity to see the future society or the creative needs of the revolution. Everything remained parceled up within the dimension of the factory. Workerism is not just common to authoritarian communism. Singling out privileged areas of the class clash is still today among the most deep-rooted habits, one difficult to shake.

The end of trade-unionism, therefore. We have been saying so for fifteen years now. At one time, this caused criticism and amazement, especially when we included anarcho-syndicalism in our critique. We are more easily accepted today. Basically, who does not criticize the trade unions today? No one, or almost no one. But the connection is overlooked. Our criticism of trade unionism was also a criticism of the "quantitive" method that has all the characteristics of the party in embryo. It was also a critique of the specific organizations of synthesis. Finally, it was a critique of a certain kind of class respectability politics, one inherited from the bourgeoisie and filtered through the clichés of so-called 'proletarian morals'. All this cannot be ignored. If many comrades agree with us today in our now-traditional critique of trade-unionism, those who share a view of all the consequences that it gives rise to are still but a few.

We can only intervene in the world of production using means that do not place themselves in a quantitive perspective. They cannot therefore claim to have specific anarchist organizations behind them working on the hypothesis of revolutionary synthesis. This leads us to a different method of intervention, that of building factory "nuclei" or zonal "nuclei" which limit themselves to keeping in contact with a specific anarchist structures, and are exclusively based on affinity. It is from the relationship between the base nucleus and specific anarchist structure that a new model of revolutionary struggle emerges to attack the structures of capital and the State through recourse to insurrectional methods.

This allows for a better following of the profound transformations that are taking place in the productive structures. The factory is about to disappear, new productive organizations are taking its place, based mainly on automation. The workers of yesterday will become partially integrated into a supporting situation or simply into a situation of social security in the short-term, and survival in the long run. New forms of work will appear on the horizon. Already the classical workers' front no longer exists. The same goes for the trade union. At least, it no longer exists in the form in which it was previously known. It has become an enterprise like any other.

A network of increasingly different relations, all under the banner of participation, pluralism, democracy, etc., will spread over society bridling almost all the forces of *subversion*. The extreme aspects of the revolutionary

project will be systematically criminalized. But the struggle will take new roads, will filter towards a thousand new subterranean channels emerging in a hundred thousand explosions of rage and destruction with new and incomprehensible symbology.

As anarchists we must be careful—as carriers of an often heavy mortgage from the past—not to remain distanced from a phenomenon that we end up not understanding, and whose violence could one fine day even scare us, and in the first case we must be careful to develop our analysis in full.

Breaking out of the Ghetto

The struggles taking place in the inner city ghettos are often misunderstood as mindless violence. The youth struggling against exclusion and boredom are advanced elements of the class clash. The ghetto walls must be broken down, not enclosed.

The young Palestinians throwing stones at the Israeli army rightly have the sympathy and solidarity of comrades who see them in their just struggle for freedom from their colonial oppressors. When we see the youth of Belfast throwing stones at British soldiers, we have no doubt about their rebellion against the occupying army whose tanks and barbed wire enclose their ghettos.

There is an area of young people today however who find themselves in just as hard a battle against their oppressors, who find themselves constantly marginalized and criminalized. These young people do not find themselves fighting a liberation struggle against an external invader, but are immersed in an internal class struggle that is so mystified that its horizons are unclear even to themselves. This war is taking place within what have come to be known as the "inner cities" of Britain, areas that are now recognized by the class enemy—the capitalists, with the monarchy leading, and the State in all its forms—as the most fragile part of the class society, one that could open up the most gigantic crack and give way to unprecedented violence.

The youth struggling for survival from exclusion and boredom in the deadly atmosphere of the ghettos of the eighties are in fact among the most advanced elements in the struggle in Britain. As such they find themselves surrounded by a sea of hostility and incomprehension, even by those who, in terms of their official class positions, should in principle be their comrades. No trade union or left-wing party has anything to say about their struggle. They are among the first to criminalize it, relegating its protagonists to the realm of social deviance, perhaps with the distinguishing variable that,

people, in fact, to the immense majority of the world's population. They produce your life, and you help to produce theirs. In this light, all artificial group identities and special group interests fade into insignificance. Imagine the potential enrichment of your life that at present is locked up in the frustrated creativity of these millions of workers, held back by obsolete and exhausting methods of production, strangled by lack of control over their own productivity, warped by the insane rationale of capital-accumulation which pits one against all and makes life a mad scramble for economic survival. Here we begin to discover a real social identity—in people all over the world who are fighting to win control over their own lives we find ourselves.

Those who have a vested interested in the political and economic status quo continually present us with false choices, that is, with choices which preserve their power ("Vote Democratic!" / "Vote Republican!"—"But Vote!"). We are constantly being asked to choose sides in false conflicts. Governments, corporations, political parties, and propagandists of all kinds constantly present us with "choices" that are no choice at all. We are given the illusion of choice, but as long as those in power control what our "choices" will be ("choices" which we perceive as the only alternatives available to us), they will also control the outcome of our "decisions."

The new moralists love to tell those of us in the rich West how we will "have to make sacrifices," how we "exploit the starving children of the Third World." The choice we are given is between sacrificial altruism or narrow individualism. (Charities cash in on the resulting guilt.) Yes, by living in the rich, wasteful West we do exploit the poor of the Third World—but not personally, not deliberately. We can make some changes in our lives, boycott, make sacrifices, but the effects are marginal. We become aware of the false conflict with which we've been presented when we realize that under the global socio-economic system we, as individuals, are locked into our roles as "exploiters" just as others are locked into their global roles as the exploited. We have a role, but little power to change it—at least individually. Therefore, we reject the false choice of "sacrifice or selfishness" by calling for the destruction of the global social system whose existence forces that decision upon us. Tinkering with the system, or offering token sacrifices, or calling for "a little less selfishness," simply won't do. Charities and reformers never go beyond such false choices as "sacrifice" or "selfishness"—but if any true social progress is to be made, the rest of us must do so.

Those in power continually use such falsifications to divert and disempower us. By spreading myths like, "If we shared it all there wouldn't be enough to go around," they attempt to deny the existence of any real

over both what they produce and how they produce it. And, of course, what they produce in both East and West is then sold back to them as commodities.

In the West, the surplus value, or the value produced over and above the value of the workers' wages, is the property of the corporate management and stockholders, who keep up a show of domestic competition. In the East, the surplus value is the property of the state bureaucracy, which does not permit domestic competition. Big difference.

Like the false issues and false conflicts cited above, false questions are used to distract us from living in the present, from seeing the totality of existence. One example is the stupid conversational question, "What's your philosophy of life?" It poses an abstract concept of "life" that has nothing to do with real life because it ignores the fact that "living" is exactly what we are doing at the present moment, and our "philosophy of life" is clearly revealed by our actions.

False identities are perhaps an even more potent form of mystification. In the absence of real community, people cling to all kinds of phony social identities—they contemplate and attempt to emulate a huge variety of roles presented to them in school, church, and, especially, the "entertainment" media. These social identities can be ethnic ("Italian-American"), residential ("New Yorker"), nationalistic ("patriot"), sexual ("gay"), cultural ("Giants fan"), and so on; but all are rooted in a common desire for affiliation, for belonging.

Obviously being "black" is a much more real identification than being a "Giants fan," but beyond a certain point, such an identification only serves to mask one's real position in society; and in order to recognize that real position, you have to reject the false identities, false conflicts, and false dichotomies, and begin with yourself as the center. From there you can examine the material basis of your life, stripped of mystification.

An example: Suppose that you want a cup of coffee from the vending machine at work. First, there is the cup of coffee itself: that involves the workers on the coffee plantation, the ones on the sugar plantation and in the refineries, the ones in the paper mill, and so on. Then you have the workers who made the different parts of the vending machine and the ones who assembled it. Then the ones who extracted the iron ore and bauxite, smelted the steel, and work for the electric utility which supplies power to the machine. Then all the workers who transported the coffee, cups, and machine. Then the clerks, typists, and communication workers who coordinated the production and transportation. Finally, you have all the workers who produced all the other things necessary for the other ones to survive. That gives you a direct material relationship to several million

instead of the "short sharp shock treatment," they prefer to employ an army of soft cops and social psychiatrists.

The anarchist movement itself, anti-authoritarian by definition and revolutionary in perspective, has so far produced nothing tangible as a project of struggle to encompass the 'real' anarchists, the visceral anti-authoritarians. The forms that violence from the ghettos take do not have the content of moral social activity that anarchists want to find. This cannot emerge spontaneously from situations of brute exploitation such as exist in the urban enclosures. The idea of importing this morality into the ghettos, which are then to be defended and 'self-managed', are in our opinion quite out of place. They smack of the old 'Takeover the City' slogans of Lotta Continua[4] years ago, now just as dead as that organization itself. The problem is not one of self-managing the ghettos, but breaking them down. This can only come about through clear indications of a class nature, indicating objectives in that dimension and acting to extend the class attack.

The article by the Plymouth comrades gives an indication of what is happening in most major (and many smaller) cities in Britain today. These events do not reach the headlines, if they're reported at all.

Clearly, the conditions of the clash are very different to those where the presence of a tangible "outside enemy" has clarified the position of the whole of the exploited against the common enemy. There is no doubt in Sharpeville or Palestine or Belfast about what happens to those who collaborate with the police. In this country, on the contrary, the fact that the latter have made inroads into gaining the active collaboration of people within the ghettos themselves shows the barriers of fear and incomprehension that exist and divide the exploited in one area.

Levels of cultural and social mystification have succeeded to some extent in confusing class divisions. By defining the violence of the youth in pathological or ethnic terms, the latter find themselves isolated and ostracized even by those who are nearest to them in terms of exploitation.

The dividing line is a fine one, however, and it can take only a mass confrontation with the "forces of order" to demonstrate to all where the real enemy lies. This happened in the Brixton Riots, for example, where parents, seeing the police brutality at close hand, immediately moved from a tacit consensus to open antagonism towards them.[5]

Maintaining the consensus of people who have very little to gain from the "social order" involves a complex network of media, social workers, school teachers, community leaders, community police, etc., all of whom are recognized as being in positions of authority. That authority is tolerated unwillingly today. It could break down completely tomorrow.

Our work must therefore be in the direction of continually clarifying and extending the class attack, by identifying and striking objectives that are easily attainable and comprehensible in the perspective of breaking down the walls of the ghettos and opening up a perspective of mass action against the common enemy.

1. Jean Weir: British anarchist who has translated many of Bonanno's texts to English. Was in the editorial staff of the magazine *Insurrection* and the publishing house Elephant Editions.
2. See "Autonomous Movement of the Torino Railway Workers," below.
3. Refers to the struggle in the 1980s against the construction of a military base with nuclear weapons in Comiso, Sicily. See "Insurrectionary Practice and Capitalist Transformation," below.
4. Lotta Continua (The Struggle Continues): A Leninist Party which was a part of the "autonomous movement" in Italy in the 1970s.
5. The Brixton Riots: Riots in the London suburb Brixton 10-12 April 1981. Brixton was a suburb with a large black population and huge social problems. The riots started when a stabbed man was taken by the police.

For example, in present day society we are expected to repress our real feelings and play a *role*. This is called "playing a part in society" (how revealing that phrase is). Individuals put on "character armor"—a steel-like suit comprised of role playing, posing, and concealing one's desires as a defense against other individuals. Transforming social relations and surpassing the role-playing game requires the conscious decision of most if not all individuals to shed these roles and truly communicate; therefore, the end of individual role playing is directly related to the end of social role playing.

6. To think actively, critically, is to make your life—as it is now, and as you want it to be—the center of your thinking. This positive self-centering is accomplished by a continuous assault on externals, on the false issues ("support our troops"), false conflicts (e.g., those arising from notions of racial "superiority"), false identities ("American," "patriot," "Catholic," "white Christian"), and false dichotomies ("economic survival" versus "a clean environment") which permeate social life.

People are kept from analyzing the basic nature, the totality, of everyday life by the media focus—including "consumer" surveys and public opinion polls—on mere details: the spectacular trifles, the phony controversies, and ridiculous scandals. Are you for or against trade unions, cruise missiles, identity cards? What's your opinion of soft drugs, jogging, UFOs, progressive taxation, Michael Jackson's latest nose job, the royal family's sexual relations?

These are diversions, false issues. The only issue for us is how we live. There's an old Jewish saying, "If you have only two alternatives, then choose the third." It impels people to search for new perspectives. We can see the artificiality of false dichotomies by searching for that "third choice."

Being conscious that there is a third choice allows us to refuse to choose between two supposedly opposite, but equally repulsive, possibilities which are presented to us as the *only* possible choices. In its simplest form, this "third choice" consciousness is expressed by the person brought to trial for armed robbery and asked, "Do you plead guilty or not guilty?" "I'm hungry and unemployed," she replies. A more theoretical, but equally classic, illustration of this consciousness is the refusal to choose between the corporate-capitalist ruling classes of the West and the state-capitalist ruling classes of what's left of the Eastern bloc. All we need to do is to look at the basic social relations of production in the USA and Europe on the one hand, and China, North Korea, and Cuba on the other, to see that they are essentially the same: over there, as here, the vast majority work for a wage or salary in exchange for giving up control over their life's work, control

capitalism in which subject and object are inverted, and people and abstract concepts are converted into things, commodities to be sold. They see daily life as a theatrical landscape in which "everyone has their price," God (via televangelism) and happiness (smile buttons) become commodities, radio stations say they love you, and detergents have compassion for your hands.

Daily conversation offers sedatives such as, "You can't always get what you want," "Life has its ups and downs," and other clichés of the secular religion of survival. "Common sense" is just the non-sense of common alienation. Every day people are denied (and deny themselves) an authentic life and are sold back its representation.

Nihilists constantly feel the urge to destroy the system which destroys them. They cannot go on living as they are. Soon, most realize that they must devise a coherent set of tactics in order to transform the world.

But if a nihilist does not recognize the possibility for the transformation of the world, his or her subjective rage will ossify into a role: the suicide, the solitary murderer, the street hoodlum-vandal, the neo-Dadaist, the professional mental patient... all seeking compensation for a life of dead time.

The nihilists' mistake is that they do not realize that there are other nihilists with whom they can work. Consequently, they assume that participation in a collective project of self-realization is impossible.

5. This project of collective self-realization, the changing of life itself through the transformation of social relations, can properly be termed "politics." Politics, however, also signifies a mystified, separate category of human activity, an isolated interest with its own specialists—politicians, political consultants, etc. It is possible to be interested (or not) in this type of politics just as it is possible to be interested (or not) in football, stamp collecting, music, or fashion. What people see as "politics" today is the social falsification of the project of collective self-realization; it has become a spectacle and a parody. And that suits those in power just fine.

Authentic collective self-realization is *the* revolutionary project. It is the collective transformation of social relations and the natural world according to the desires of all participants.

Similarly, "therapy" at present usually refers to attempts to "help" individuals "adjust" to their restrictive social roles and to the banality of daily life. *Authentic* therapy involves changing one's own life by changing the nature of social life. Therapy must be social if it is to be of any real consequence. Social therapy (the healing of society) and individual therapy (the healing of the individual) are linked together: each requires the other, each is a necessary part of the other.

II.

Thirteen Notes on Class Struggle

SASHA K, FROM *GREEN ANARCHY*, ISSUE 18 (2004)

1) Classes have existed since the beginning of civilization. Civilization has always been a class society.

2) Class is not just an economic category, it is social. Class relations structure and discipline the whole of society, not just the economy.

3) Class social relations have always been linked to a series of other oppressions such as patriarchal social relations and different forms of racism.

4) Classes are one of the primary structures organizing all societies since the beginning of civilization, although the form of class has changed through the development of civilization. This development of class society and social relations has always been intimately linked to the development of technology (society may be called a 'socio-technological regime'). As class society develops, so too does social specialization and its technologies. A deep critique of society must always include a critique of class social relations and their links to the dominant material culture of that society, including the technologies that it both makes possible and that make it possible.

5) Class struggle has existed since classes have existed.

6) Class struggle exists even when people don't recognize that they are taking part in it. It exists throughout daily life. One of the ways revolutionaries can intervene in class struggle, therefore, is to help people recognize that this is what they are doing. There are many ways to do this and we need to be creative.

7) When revolutionary, the dispossessed class struggles to end the existence of all classes. However, leftist managers of revolt often attempt to channel class struggle, to recuperate it to capitalist ends, in

order to put themselves into power over others and into a position to benefit materially. For true revolutionaries, those who really seek to end the rule over life by the state, capitalism and all commodity relations, the discipline of work, patriarchy and the socio-technological regime, the auto-destruction of the proletariat/dispossessed as a class is the goal, and not for one class (the dispossessed/proletariat) to take over the position of another class (the capitalist or ruling class). The point of class struggle is not to claim workers are better people than capitalists, to morally judge each class, or to celebrate one class over another, but to destroy the social institution of classes as a whole. Class struggle originates in the contradiction between our desires and the way class structures limit, control, exclude and exploit our life. Our struggle begins with our desires to live in a different way, to break out of class society's disciplining control. Yet the recuperation of class struggle will continue in various guises as long as class relations exist, but this should not make us give up on class struggle, it should make us more careful in our analysis and more creative in the fight for our lives.

8) Class struggle is always global as is capitalism, but it is often recuperated by nationalist forms. We need to find where the revolutionary content of class struggle pushes to break from the nationalist form and put our force behind such a move. Thus it is not simply a matter of ignoring national liberation movements, nor certainly of celebrating them, but of a critical and revolutionary solidarity with the force of class struggle that pushes for the complete destruction of class relations.

9) The root of class struggle is not to be found in economics. Production is not just economic either: it doesn't only take place in factories, but spreads over society as a process of social production and reproduction that includes the control and discipline of workers as well as all other members of society. It is this whole social factory, which produces social roles, relations and subjectivities, disciplines our bodies and our minds, and transforms and controls life itself, that we aim to destroy.

The would-be leftist managers of class struggle usually try to transform class struggle into an economic struggle, a struggle for greater economic power, for a bigger piece of the pie, for a slight reorganization of the economy. This is the basis for the creation of the leftist bureaucracies, parties and unions, this is their lifeblood. Yet since classes aren't economic as much as social in character, for class struggle to be truly radical, for it to move towards the ending of classes

attributes of power and will, while human beings become things, tools to be used in the service of these abstractions (God, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the fatherland, etc., etc.). Ideology is upside down self-theory. It fosters acceptance of the separation of our narrow, daily lives from a world that appears totally beyond our control. Ideology offers us only a voyeur's relationship with the life of the world.

All abstraction-based ideologies demand duty, sacrifice for the cause; and every such ideology serves to protect the dominant social order. Authorities whose power depends upon docility must deny us our subjectivity, our conscious will to act for our *own* desires. Such denial comes in the form of demands for sacrifices for "the common good," "the national interest," "the war effort," "the revolution,"…..

3. We rid ourselves of the blinders of ideology by constantly asking ourselves: How do I feel? How's my life? What do I want? Am I getting what I want? If not, why not? This is being conscious of the commonplace, being aware of your everyday routine. That real life exists—life in which you are active, a subject acting to achieve your desires—is a public secret that becomes less secret every day, as the breakdown of daily life constructed around abstraction-based ideologies becomes more and more obvious.

4. The creation of self-theory is based on thinking for yourself, on being fully conscious of your desires and of their validity. Authentic "consciousness raising" can only be the "raising" of people's thinking to the level of positive (non-guilty) self-consciousness, free of imposed morality in all its forms. This type of consciousness can be termed "radical subjectivity."

Conversely, what many leftists, therapy mongers, racism awareness trainers, and sisterizers term "consciousness raising" is the practice of beating people into unconsciousness with guilt-inducing, ideological billy clubs.

The path from self-negation to self-affirmation passes through point zero, the capital city of nihilism. This is the windswept still point in social space and time, the social limbo in which one recognizes that there is no real life in one's daily existence. A nihilist knows the difference between surviving and living.

Nihilists reverse their perspectives on their lives and the world. Nothing is true for them but their desires, their will to be. They reject all ideology in their hatred for the miserable social relations in modern society. From this reversed perspective they clearly see the upside-down world of commodity

Therefore, constructing your self-theory is a revolutionary pleasure. It is both a destructive and constructive pleasure, because you are creating a practical theory—one tied to action—for the destruction and reconstruction of this society. It is a theory of adventure, because it is based on what you want from life and on devising the means necessary to achieve it. It is as erotic and humorous as an authentic revolution.

2. Any system of ideas with an abstraction at its center—an abstraction which assigns you a role or duties—is an ideology. An ideology provides those who accept it with a false consciousness, a necessary component of which is other-directedness. This leads those who accept the ideology to behave as "objects" rather than "subjects," to allow themselves to be used rather than to act to attain their *own* desires. The various ideologies are all structured around different abstractions, yet all serve the interests of a dominant (or aspiring dominant) class by giving individuals (though the term hardly seems appropriate—"members of the herd" is perhaps more accurate) a sense of purpose in sacrifice, suffering, and submission.

Religious ideology is the oldest example: the fantastic projection called "God" is the Supreme Subject of the cosmos, acting on every human being as "His" object.

In the "scientific" and "democratic" ideologies of "free enterprise," capital investment is the "productive" subject directing world history—the "invisible hand" guiding human development. In order to prosper, the early capitalists had to attack and weaken the power that religious ideology once held. They exposed the mystification of the religious world and replaced it with the mystification of technology and commodity capitalism, wherein Profit becomes the Supreme Subject of the cosmos.

The 57 varieties of Leninism are "revolutionary" ideologies in which the Party is the rightful subject entitled to dictate world history by leading its object—you, the proletariat—to the promised land through replacement of the corporate-capitalist "free enterprise" apparatus with a state-capitalist Leninist apparatus.

The many other varieties of dominant ideologies can be seen daily. The new forms of religious mysticism help to preserve the status quo in a round about way. They provide a cheap and tidy way to obscure the vacuousness of daily life and, like drugs, make it easier to live, or rather exist, with this emptiness—and so prevent us from recognizing our real roles in the functioning of the socio-economic system.

All of these ideologies differ in the specific sacrifices they demand of you, the object, but all are *structured* in the same way. All demand an inversion of subject and object; things, abstractions, take on the human

as such, it must break away from economic goals and from the leftist managers that push them.

The synthesis of all struggle under one organization makes struggle particularly susceptible to control by leftist managers. Thus for class struggle to maintain its radical force it must remain autonomous, self-managed, and self-organized, it must become uncontrolled and uncontrollable, and it must spread and deepen socially. The goal of the dispossessed's revolution is never economic, it is *anti-economic*, it pushes to break out of and destroy economy, all commodity exchange, and the mediation of relationships by all forms of money, ideology and morality.

10) Work is a disciplined behavior within the economy. As an activity, it is separated from other aspects of life and relegated to the sphere of the economy. As class society has developed and transformed, work has been further and further alienated from our life and our desires. It becomes an activity that disciplines and oppresses us, an activity that we can't control, that instead controls us. The revolutionary class struggle of the dispossessed fights to break all the separations imposed upon us by class society: the separation between ourselves and our activity, between work and play, and between ourselves and those with whom we interact.

11) Within the transforming capitalist system, different regimes of accumulation have organized how the capitalist class accumulates capital through the exploitation of labor and energy of the exploited, excluded, and dispossessed. Regimes of accumulation are different forms of capitalist labor discipline and organization. In the U.S. and much of Europe, most of the 20th century operated under the Fordist regime of accumulation (this is named after Ford's model of production, whose ideology was Keynesianism). Beginning in the 1970's, this regime was replaced by the regime of flexible accumulation (temp work, no unions, flexible hours, no guaranteed employment or retirement, outsourcing, the end of welfare, no controls on the movement of capital across borders, the increased importance of global trade and of technologies of communication, surveillance and control, etc.; its reigning ideology is neo-liberalism, and it is often referred to as "globalization").

Many other countries are being pushed to take on the cast of Fordist jobs, but without the Fordist guarantees for workers (this is true of much of the third-world, for example). But the death of Fordism in

some countries does not mean the death of class struggle, only its continued global transformation. This means we need to analyze such transformations and our responses, not that we simply give up on class struggle as some within the anti-civilization milieu seem to be suggesting. The regime of flexible accumulation has been accompanied by an increased financialization and privatization of all forms of social life and the increased commodification of life itself as well as a new looting of the third-world. This has shaped the character of present day class struggle. This transformation of capitalism and class relations should point out new targets for intervention (social, material, technological, etc.) and new contradictions of class society to exploit.

12) As anarchists or revolutionaries, it is not up to us to invent, produce or manage class struggle. Class struggle will continue to occur whether we acknowledge it or not. We can intervene in class struggle, but we don't make it up in entirety. The question, therefore, is not whether we should recognize class struggle or not, but always, how do we intervene in class struggle which will continue whether we intervene or not.

13) Since civilization, through all its transformations, has always been a class society, the destruction of classes as such through the revolutionary class struggle of the dispossessed will always be a central goal of anarchism. This is one aspect that separates revolutionary activity from the bland leftist managers of revolt who often hang around revolutionary movements hoping to discipline and channel the force of class struggle to their own ends, saving capitalism and all its separations and alienations in the process.

I've also introduced a certain amount of new material which contradicts some of what I've deleted. Thus, it's quite possible—in fact quite probable—that the authors/editors of the previous versions of this essay would take strong exception to some of the changes I've made. While I regret that my alterations and additions may upset the original author(s), the point of this pamphlet is to get people to think for themselves; and I believe that the changes I've made increase the effectiveness of the pamphlet in that regard.

But despite the changes in this edition, the central thesis of this essay remains unchanged: that all genuine revolutionary impulses and activities stem directly from the desires of individuals, *not* from any ideologically imposed sense of "duty" with its attendant guilt, self-sacrifice, and self-deadening "should's."

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1. Those who assume (often unconsciously) that it is impossible to achieve their life's desires-and, thus, that it is futile to fight for *themselves*—usually end up fighting for an ideal or cause instead. They may *appear* to engage in self-directed activity, but in reality they have accepted alienation from their desires as a way of life. All subjugations of personal desires to the dictates of a cause or ideology are reactionary no matter how "revolutionary" the actions arising from such subjugations may appear.

Yet, one of the great secrets of our miserable, yet potentially marvelous time, is that thinking can be a pleasure. Despite the suffocating effect of the dominant religious and political ideologies, many individuals *do* learn to think for themselves; and by doing so—by actively, critically thinking for themselves, rather than by passively accepting pre-digested opinions—they reclaim their minds as their own.

This is a manual for those who wish to think for themselves, a manual for creation of a personally (rather than ideologically) constructed body of critical thought for your own use, a body of thought which will help you to understand why your life is the way it is and why the world is the way it is. More importantly, as you construct your own theory, you will also develop a *practice*: a method to get what you want for your own life. Theory, then, must be either practical—a guide to action—or it will be nothing, nothing but an aquarium of ideas, a contemplative interpretation of the world. The realm of ideas divorced from actions is the eternal waiting room of unrealized desires. Forming your own practical theory, what could be called "self-theory," is intimately connected to achieving the realization of your desires.

III.

The Revolutionary Pleasure of Thinking for Yourself

Preface

This essay was originally published in the United States in 1975 by *The Spectacle,* under the title *Self-Theory: the Pleasure of Thinking for Yourself*. An extensively revised edition was published in London in 1985 by *Spectacular Times* under the title *Revolutionary Self-Help: a Beginner's Manual*, and it has appeared twice since then in American periodicals under the title *Revolutionary Self-Theory*; in 1989 it was published in a slightly revised edition by OVO, and in 1992 in a further revised edition by *No Longer Silent* (NLS). This edition is an extensively rewritten and somewhat expanded version of the text which appeared in NLS.

As the editor of *No Longer Silent* commented, "...at this point it's fair to say that 'RST' has been penned by multiple authors, which is as it should be. Hopefully this trend will continue as future editions of this text appear. After all, the propaganda, literature, and so forth that we produce should not be considered as immutable tomes, determining the language and boundaries within which we are expected to interpret our experiences, but rather as fluid and alterable, reflecting our experience of reality *as we are*."

This is entirely in keeping with the sentiments of the previous authors/editors who stated, "...the ideological supermarket—like any supermarket—is fit only for looting. It is more productive for us if we move along the shelves, rip open the packets, take out what looks authentic and useful, and dump the rest."

In fact, that is exactly the approach which I've taken while editing this text: I've retained those portions which were useful and insightful, but I've also jettisoned a lot of waste material, including almost all of the marxist/situationist jargon plus a number of statements (particularly in the concluding section) which were factually incorrect or simply missed the point; as well, I've cleaned up the text by eliminating a number of non sequiturs and hopelessly fuzzy statements and by using terms (e.g., "ideology") in a more precise manner than in the previous editions of this work. What I've done, essentially, is to take a situationist tract and translate it into plain English.

Some Notes on Insurrectionary Anarchism

KILLING KING ABACUS, VOL. 2 (2001)

Insurrectionary anarchism is not an ideological solution to all social problems, a commodity on the capitalist market of ideologies and opinions, but an on-going praxis aimed at putting an end to the domination of the state and the continuance of capitalism, which requires analysis and discussion to advance. We don't look to some ideal society or offer an image of utopia for public consumption. Throughout history, most anarchists, except those who believed that society would evolve to the point that it would leave the state behind, have been insurrectionary anarchists. Most simply, this means that the state will not merely wither away, thus anarchists must attack, for waiting is defeat; what is needed is open mutiny and the spreading of subversion among the exploited and excluded.

Here we spell out some implications that we and some other insurrectionary anarchists draw from this general problem: if the state will not disappear on its own, how then do we end its existence? It is, therefore, primarily a practice, and focuses on the organization of attack.

These notes are in no way a closed or finished product; we hope they are a part of an ongoing discussion. Much of this comes from past issues of *Insurrection* and pamphlets from Elephant Editions.

1. *The state will not just disappear; attack!*

The State of capital will not "wither away," as it seems many anarchists have come to believe—not only entrenched in abstract positions of "waiting," but some even openly condemning the acts of those for whom the creation of the new world depends on the destruction of the old. Attack is the refusal of mediation, pacification, sacrifice, accommodation, and compromise.

It is through acting and learning to act, not propaganda, that we will open the path to insurrection, although propaganda has a role in clarifying how to act. Waiting only teaches waiting; in acting one learns to act.

The force of an insurrection is social, not military. The measure for evaluating the importance of a generalized revolt is not the armed clash, but on the contrary the amplitude of the paralysis of the economy, of normality.

2. *Self-activity versus managed revolt: from insurrection to revolution*

As anarchists, the revolution is our constant point of reference, no matter what we are doing or what problem we are concerned with. But the revolution is not a myth simply to be used as a point of reference. Precisely because it is a concrete event, it must be built daily through more modest attempts which do not have all the liberating characteristics of the social revolution in the true sense. These more modest attempts are insurrections. In them the uprising of the most exploited and excluded of society and the most politically sensitized minority opens the way to the possible involvement of increasingly wider strata of exploited on a flux of rebellion which could lead to revolution.

Struggles must be developed, both in the intermediate and long term. Clear strategies are necessary to allow different methods to be used in a coordinated and fruitful way.

The self-management of struggle means that those who struggle are *autonomous* in their decisions and actions; this is the opposite of an 'organization of synthesis,' which always attempts to take control of struggle. Struggles that are synthesized within a single controlling organization are easily integrated into the power structure of present society. Self-organized struggles are by nature uncontrollable when they are spread across the social terrain.

3. *Uncontrollability versus managed revolt: the spread of attack*

It is never possible to see the outcome of a specific struggle in advance. Even a limited struggle can have the most unexpected consequences. The passage from the various insurrections—limited and circumscribed—to revolution can never be guaranteed in advance by any method.

What the system is afraid of is not these acts of sabotage in themselves, so much as their spreading socially. Every proletarianized individual who disposes of even the most modest means can draw up his or her objectives, alone or along with others. It is materially impossible for the State and capital to police the apparatus of control that operates over the whole social territory. Anyone who really wants to contest the network of control can make their own theoretical and practical contribution. The appearance of the first broken links coincides with the spreading of acts of sabotage. The anonymous practice of social self-liberation could spread to all fields, breaking the codes of prevention put into place by power.

Small actions, therefore, easily reproducible, requiring unsophisticated means that are available to all, are by their very simplicity and spontaneity

7. The Marini Trial: A huge trial in which the State accused about 50 anarchists for being double-organized in a underground terror network. Bonanno and Weir, for example, were sentenced to prison.
8. John Zerzan (born 1943): American primitivist. See for example "Elements of Refusal" (1988), "Future Primitive" (1994), "Against Civilization: A Reader" (1998).
9. Harry Cleaver: American Marxist; coined the concept "Autonomous Marxism".
10. *Midnight Notes*: An Autonomous Marxist magazine in America. The magazine *Zerowork* from the 1970's was a precursor.
11. *Insurrection*: See "About Insurrectionary Organization"
12. Elephant Editions: Anarchist publisher from the U.K.
13. *Bratach Dubh:* Precursor to Elephant Editions.
14. *Diavolo in Corpo*: An Italian insurrectionalist magazine.
15. *Canenero*: An Italian insurrectionalist magazine.
16. Alfredo Bonanno: "The Anarchist Tension". Elephant Editions, 1998.
17. Probably referring to Freddy Perlman's book, *Letters of Insurgents.*
18. Surrealism is a cultural, artistic, and intellectual movement which is described by its founder André Breton as "[p]sychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express—verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner —the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by the thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern." Together with Dadaism, it was a major artistic and critical influence for the Situationists.
19. Max Stirner (1806–1856): German left-Hegelian. Most famous work: *The Ego and Its Own*.
20. Gilles Dauvé: "When Insurrections Die."
21. *Green Anarchy:* The most prominent "anarcho-primitivist" magazine.
22. See "Insurrectionary Anarchy!" in *Do or Die* issue 10.
23. Cf. "The Necessity and Impossibility of Anti-Activism" by J. Kellstadt
24. The LA Riots: The 1992 Los Angeles riots, also known as the *LA riots*, the *Rodney King uprising* or the *Rodney King riots*, were sparked on April 29, 1992 when a mostly white jury acquitted four police officers accused in the videotaped beating of black motorist Rodney King. The riot continued for three days and were crushed by a massive police and military operation. See "The Rebellion in Los Angeles: The Context of a Proletarian Uprising" in *Aufheben,* Issue 1.
25. Poll Tax Riots: riots in London 1990 which started when the cops attacked a big demonstration against the so-called "Poll Tax," an attempted tax reform introduced by Margaret Thatcher. The tax said that "all shall pay equal" which was the Thatcherist way of redistributing wealth—the rich pay less, the poor pay more. A little comparison: the duke of Westminster paid Ł10 255 in taxes before and Ł417 after the Poll Tax. His probably underpaid gardener was also obligated to pay Ł417. The Poll Tax's official name was the Community Charge, but it was renamed Poll Tax after a tax reform in 1381 which led to a peasant rebellion. See Danny Burns: "Poll tax rebellion" (AK Press, 1996).
26. Street protests in France 1996 against the Neoliberal restructuring. See "The Class Struggles in France" in *Aufheben,* Issue 5.
27. Alfredo Bonanno: "From Riot to Insurrection". Elephant Editions, 1998.

insurrectionalist theories would you say we need to be critical of, and what needs to be developed in your opinion?

Sasha: I certainly read Dauvé and Camatte as well. Dauvé's newer writings have been an influence in particular. I think what some people miss in insurrectionary writings is the strategic take on our present situation. Insurrectionary writings focus on the present and on revolt. There is less of an understanding of our changing circumstances. This allows some to view insurrection in a very a-historic way. And people tend to just chase after insurrections wherever they occur, without any understanding of a general condition of these uprisings.

Although, Bonanno has done some writing that push against this tendency, as we have already discussed. More thinking on our present conditions and how they affect our attack and its organization would be useful, yes. This does seem to be something that people within the anti-political/insurrectionary milieu are doing. But I would be wary of arguments that say that everything had changed at some certain point in time, such as the 1970s. Real subsumption is important, but it doesn't change everything. That, too, is a rather a-historical perspective.

Also, I would say that there really isn't anything called "insurrectionalist theory" per se. Insurrection is a process of becoming uncontrollable, not a branch of theory. Insurrectionary anarchism, if such a thing exists, is a tendency that discusses this process and takes part in its practice in a way that attempts to consciously push things further. People like Bonanno have been very useful in this discussion, but so have countless others who are unnamed or not named "insurrectionary anarchists," at least.

1. *Killing King Abacus*: A now discontinued American magazine that Sasha did together with Leila and Wolfi. Published two issues 2000-2001.
3. Wolfi Landstreicher: American anarchist. He was the editor of the anarchist journal *Willful Disobedience,* and ran the Venomous Butterfly Anarchist Distribution.
4. Anti-civ: Short for "anti-civilization". A wide concept, used by everyone from primitivists to Camatte. Examples of typical anti-civ perspectives include the arguments that workers cannot just take over the capitalist mode of production and manage it democratically, and that technical development is not class-neutral.
5. Freddy Perlman (1934–1985): An American Marxist who stressed the importance of the fetishism of commodities in Marx's theories. Married to Lorraine Perlman.
6. Situationists: The Situationist International developed, through their paper *Internationale Situationniste* (Paris, 1958-1969), a new reading of Marxism during the 1960s, which came to inspire a big part of the '68-radicalization and a newfound interest in Council Communism.

uncontrollable. They make a mockery of even the most advanced technological developments in counter-insurgency.

4. *Permanent conflictuality versus mediation with institutional forces*

Conflictuality should be seen as a permanent element in the struggle against those in power. A struggle which lacks this element ends up pushing us towards mediating with the institutions, grows accustomed to the habits of delegating and believing in an illusory emancipation carried out by parliamentary decree, to the very point of actively participating in our own exploitation ourselves.

There might perhaps be individual reasons for doubting the attempt to reach one's aims with violent means. But when non-violence comes to be raised to the level of a non-violable principle, and where reality is divided into "good" and "bad," then arguments cease to have value, and everything is seen in terms of submission and obedience. The officials of the anti-globalization movement, by distancing themselves and denouncing others, have clarified one point in particular: that they see their principles—to which they feel duty-bound—as a claim to power over the movement as a whole.

5. *Illegality; insurrection isn't just robbing banks*

Insurrectionary anarchism isn't a moral critique of survival: we all survive in various ways, often in compromise with capital, depending on our social position, our talents and tastes. We certainly aren't morally against the use of illegal means to free ourselves from the fetters of wage slavery in order to live and carry on our projects. Yet we also don't fetishize illegalism or turn it into some kind of religion with martyrs; it is simply a means, and often a good one.

6. *Informal organization; not professional revolutionaries or activists, not permanent organizations*

i. From party/union to self-organization

Profound differences exist within the revolutionary movement: the anarchist tendency towards quality of the struggle and its self-organization and the authoritarian tendency towards quantity and centralization.

Organization is for concrete tasks: thus we are against the party, syndicate and permanent organization, all of which act to synthesize struggle and become elements of integration for capital and the state. Their

purpose comes to be their own existence, in the worst case they first build the organization then find or create the struggle. Our task is to act; organization is a means. Thus we are against the delegation of action or practice to an organization: we need generalized action that leads to insurrection, not managed struggles. Organization should not be for the *defense* of certain interests, but of *attack* on certain interests.

Informal organization is based on a number of comrades linked by a common affinity; its propulsive element is always action. The wider the range of problems these comrades face as a whole, the greater their affinity will be. It follows that the real organization, the effective capacity to act together, i.e. knowing where to find each other, the study and analysis of problems together, and the passing to action, all takes place in relation to the affinity reached and has nothing to do with programs, platforms, flags or more or less camouflaged parties. The informal anarchist organization is therefore a specific organization which gathers around a common affinity.

ii. The anarchist minority and the exploited and excluded

We are *of* the exploited and excluded, and thus our task is to act. Yet some critique all forms of action that is not part of a large and visible social movement as "acting in the place of the proletariat." They counsel analysis and waiting, instead of initiative. Supposedly, we are not the exploited alongside the exploited; our desires, our rage and our weaknesses are not part of the class struggle. This is nothing but another ideological separation between the exploited and subversives.

The active anarchist minority is not slave to numbers but continues to act against power even when the class clash is at a low level within the exploited of society. Anarchist action should not therefore aim at organizing and defending the whole of the class of exploited in one vast organization to see the struggle from beginning to end, but should identify single aspects of the struggle and carry them through to their conclusion of attack. We must also move away from the stereotypical images of the great mass struggles, and the concept of the infinite growth of a movement that is to dominate and control everything.

The relationship with the *multitude* of exploited and excluded cannot be structured as something that must endure the passage of time, i.e. be based on growth to infinity and resistance against the attack of the exploiters. It must have a more reduced and specific dimension, one that is decidedly that of attack and not a rearguard relationship.

We can start building our struggle in such a way that conditions of revolt can emerge and latent conflict can develop and be brought to the fore. In

voluntarism? I don't think so. Anyhow, I think we should be very critical of determinism as it is (we don't really have time to get into the problematics of that dichotomy—perhaps some future time!). You say that now that formal domination is mostly complete "anti-political struggle is the only thing that makes sense..." My point is that from a revolutionary perspective anti-political struggle is all that ever made sense. Political struggle simply never was revolutionary in the sense of moving towards a world without a state, wage labor, work, classes, capitalism, etc. We can see that as clearly in the moment of Russia, as in Spain.

What seems to be happening in your proposed schema, is that you see the political project as being "progressive" (thus the critique of "voluntarism"?) during a certain era, but no longer; it has become regressive now. Or at least I think you imply that—correct me if I am wrong. I, however, don't see the negation of capitalism in such a progressive, teleological schema. Instead, I see it as a radical break, as ending the progressive trajectory itself. During the era when platformism came into existence, I would argue, there was as much of a material basis for this break (a break from the political project which is also a break from capitalism and all that it entails) then, as there is now.

I would say that the state was never as autonomous as you seem to be implying it was, say a century ago. And the case of Russia and Leninism illustrates this quite well. So the state is not something we can use in the revolutionary project; it isn't now and it wasn't then. Certainly its integration was different than today, but autonomous, never. The conquering of the state links up with a progressivist view. The state is used to develop the forces of production in the place of the market and individual capitalists —looking at Russia or China, we have seen very clearly where that leads. Delinking is a form of developmentalism, whether Maoist or Leninist or Stalinist or nationalist.

The Batko Group: What would you say is the biggest strengths and weaknesses of insurrectionalist theories? Our impression from this talk and your writings in *Killing King Abacus* is that you seem to have a broad range of influences. Are there any particular theories you consider to be of special interest? Apart from the anarchist insurrectionalists, our biggest influence is Dauvé and Camatte. One reason is because they relate the need for insurrectionary organizing (even though they don't use the same concepts) to the dynamic of real subsumption. This has also led us to realize that we need to reread Marx. In this sense, insurrectionalist theories sometimes feels "incomplete" and need to be complemented. What aspects in

as constituting communistic activity. It attacks and withdraws from capitalism. We act in a cramped space, trying to make the impossible possible. It isn't a new ideal to be realized because it isn't satisfying desires, but rather constantly producing new desires.

Sasha: I see much better now what your argument is, although we still have points of disagreement. Also, I know platformism is something that you are grappling with, but for me it isn't something I dwell too much upon. I would say that there is still very much a material basis for the political project you talk of even under real subsumption or domination. First, I don't see that platformism was really ever a product of being outside of the real domination of capital. Its material basis was always inside and always political. In other words, I don't see that political project as a project of formal domination versus real domination. The specific political project you talk of was always of real domination in the first place. I would say it was always operating within a society in which the labor process was transformed and fully dominated by capital.

Second, the material basis for the political project, of whatever type, is always there under capitalism—there will always be managers of revolt ready and willing to represent us and then collect their benefits, and, in the end, to save capitalism. Platformism, of course, has never really had the chance to play much of a role, political or otherwise; and we don't know what would happen if platformists or platformist organizations had such a chance. Perhaps their organizations of representation and management would dissolve into a general social insurrection; perhaps they would attempt to tighten the reins of management. But there is just as much a basis for that today as there was in the past—assuming we reached a more revolutionary moment.

Anyhow, political recuperation of struggle is not the cause of the weakness of revolutionary tendencies so much as a sign of the weakness itself. Recuperation works exactly because our revolution is manageable, controllable. Becoming uncontrollable is the insurrectionary force. And this is, of course, the problem with specialization, especially militant or military specialization and its spectacularization—it is so much more controllable. What we need instead is social generalization. Again, Spain is an example of this problem.

The way you say that "political struggles make no sense" under the conditions of real subsumption seems to carry within it a judgment upon the political struggles of the past as if they made same sense. You may not want to get into such a historical argument but I think your words do seem to contain it. And I think it isn't something we should avoid. Is that

this way, a contact is established between the anarchist minority and the specific situation where the struggle can be developed.

7. *The individual and the social: individualism and communism, a false problem.*

We embrace what is best in individualism and what is best in communism. Insurrection begins with the desire of individuals to break out of constrained and controlled circumstances, the desire to reappropriate the capacity to create one's own life as one sees fit. This requires that they overcome the separation between them and their conditions of existence. Where the few, the privileged, control the conditions of existence, it is not possible for most individuals to truly determine their existence on their terms. *Individuality can only flourish where equality of access to the conditions of existence is the social reality.* This equality of access is communism; what individuals do with that access is up to them and those around them. Thus there is no equality or identity of individuals implied in true communism. What forces us into an identity or an equality of being are the social roles laid upon us by our present system. There is no contradiction between individuality and communism.

8. *We are the exploited, we are the contradiction: this is no time for waiting.*

Certainly, capitalism contains deep contradictions which push it towards procedures of adjustment and evolution aimed at avoiding the periodic crises which afflict it; but we cannot cradle ourselves in waiting for these crises. When they happen they will be welcomed, if they respond to the requirements for accelerating the elements of the insurrectional process. As the exploited, however, we are the fundamental contradiction for capitalism. Thus the time is always ripe for insurrection, just as we can note that humanity could have ended the existence of the state at any time in its history. A rupture in the continual reproduction of this system of exploitation and oppression has always been possible.

The Insurrectionary Act and the Self-Organization of Struggle

SASHA K. FROM *APORIA JOURNAL*, VOL. 2 (2004)

For anarchists, the questions of how to act and how to organize are intimately linked. And it is these two questions, not the question of the desired form of a future society, that provide us with the most useful method for understanding the various forms of anarchism that exist. Insurrectionary anarchism is one such form, although it is important to stress that insurrectionary anarchists don't form one unified block, but are extremely varied in their perspectives. Insurrectionary anarchism is not an ideological solution to social problems, a commodity on the capitalist market of ideologies and opinions, but an ongoing practice aimed at putting an end to the domination of the state and the continuance of capitalism, which requires analysis and discussion to advance. Historically, most anarchists, except those who believed that society would evolve to the point that it would leave the state behind, have believed that some sort of insurrectionary activity would be necessary to radically transform society. Most simply, this means that the state has to be knocked out of existence by the exploited and excluded, thus anarchists must attack: waiting for the state to disappear is defeat.

I will spell out some implications that some insurrectionary anarchists have drawn from this general problem: if the state will not disappear on its own, how then do we end its existence? Insurrectionary anarchism is primarily a practice, and focuses on the organization of attack (insurrectionary anarchists aren't against organization, but are critical of forms of organization that can impede actions that attack the state and capital). Thus, the adjective "insurrectionary" does not indicate a specific model of the future.

Anarchists who believe we must go through an insurrectionary period to rid the world of the institutions of domination and exploitation, moreover, take a variety of positions on the shape of a future society—they could be anarcho-communist, individualist or even primitivist, for example. Many refuse to offer a specific, singular model of the future at all, believing that people will choose a variety of social forms to organize themselves when given the chance. They are critical of groups or tendencies that believe they are "carriers of the truth" and try to impose their ideological and formal solution to the problem of social organization. Instead, many insurrectionary

around the globe. Struggles can become global much quicker under the present conditions. Revolutionary solidarity more directly attacks the heart of capitalism under these conditions. I would like to hear more by what you mean about overcoming the negation/affirmation dichotomy and more on what you think has changed with the global shift to real subsumption.

The Batko Group: When we define capitalism we include primitive accumulation, formal subsumption, real subsumption, and so on. So when we talk about real subsumption we aren't assuming a strict periodization. All these historical tendencies within capitalism are merely tendencies. We do, as you say, see tendencies of primitive accumulation and formal subsumption today, even though it's real subsumption that is most dominant. The political projects, such as platformism and so on, are products of a relation of formal subsumption. They are a natural response to the experience of the capital-relation being forced upon us, in circumstances where the latter doesn't yet seem to occupy all aspects of social life; in such situations, we try to establish autonomous areas and fight capitalism as an intrusive force. Sure, it can be argued that this wasn't the "right" solution, but we have to consider the material conditions within which these political projects evolved. Otherwise we fall into voluntarism. It was the political projects of the period of formal subsumption that pushed capitalism into a dynamic of real subsumption; hence, the political project has now come to an end.

Political struggles were always struggles for power. While the Marxists saw the state as something to be conquered, the anarchists saw it as the biggest enemy. Today, however, state and capital cannot so easily be separated anymore, and this is a result of real subsumption. Political struggles makes no sense. The material conditions for political struggle have been eclipsed. So, we don't justify Leninism, or platformism, or anything like that, we are not interested in moral considerations on contra-factual statements. What we are saying is that anti-political struggle is the only thing that makes sense today. We think it's important to point this out. Otherwise we easily fall into voluntarism.

We see the anti-political, insurrectionary project as potentially overcoming the negation/affirmation-dichotomy for two reasons. First off, the perspective of permanent conflictuality negates the capital-relation constantly through faceless resistance and non-mediating organization (with affinity groups formed in struggle). But we know that negation isn't enough. However, with the unification of direct action and organizational form (the organization of attack) unmediated affinity is formed between people, but a temporary and fleeing, you could call it "rhizomatic," affinity. We see this

organization (of life). So, instead of furthering the political project, the focus should be on the class struggle, on attacking value. However, while these attacks become more "lethal" to capital and operate as negations, we know that these negations will either be recuperated and lead to reforms, or they'll get overcome by capital. As we already know, capital's limit is capital itself, which is class struggle. So, as the organization of attack increases the blows leveled against capital—temporary negations—we need to develop the class struggle, or rather, to transcend class struggle. Attack and withdraw, in order to constitute communist relations. We see this as a way to go beyond the negation/affirmation dichotomy.

Sasha: Ok. I hope I am reading you right here. If not, certainly correct me. This seems somewhat influenced by Negri and Hardt's thesis in *Empire*. And I am pretty suspect of some key aspects of it. With Negri there is the idea that the political project of Leninism made sense until the 1970s when everything changed and now we are in a new period. And what you have said above seems to mirror this sentiment. "The political project ... has come to an end," you say. But I would ask if it ever made any sense at all. I would say that the political project was always a recuperative project. That goes for Leninism, Maoism, Trotskyism and any form of leftism, including, unfortunately, much of anarchism.

I do agree, however, that things have changed since the 1970s. Capitalism certainly has moved from formal to real subsumption for the most part—a shift from extensive capture to intensification, a social deepening of capital. Although there are increasing numbers of people who are excluded from this process and pushed into the human warehouses of slums or rural poverty. But I don't see this as entailing a shift from political to anti-political struggle. I feel anti-political struggle always made more sense for those trying to end the domination (formal or real) of capitalism than political struggle. Political struggle, of course, always was an attempt to moderate capitalism—it was always and is always a struggle to control the development of capitalism and its distribution of its benefits. I would say, therefore, that we should have been developing the class struggle of the proletariat—it's project of self-abolition—from the very beginnings of capitalist society. In short, I believe that anarchy and communism has always been possible, even before the existence of capitalism.

I do think that attack on capitalism is different in the period of real as opposed to formal subsumption. During the period of formal subsumption, struggles were often split between anti-imperialist struggles and anti-capitalist struggles in countries that were under real subsumption. This is really no longer true. I feel this opens the potential for greater connections

anarchists believe that it is through self-organized struggle that people will learn to live without institutions of domination.

While insurrectionary anarchists are active in many parts of the world at the moment, the points in this article are particularly influenced by the activities and writings of those in Italy and Greece, which are also the countries where insurrectionary anarchists are the most active. The current, extremely varied Italian insurrectionary anarchist scene, which centers around a number of occupied spaces and publications, exists as an informal network carrying on their struggle outside of all formal organizations. This tendency has taken on the "insurrectionary anarchist" label to distinguish itself from the Italian Anarchist Federation, a platformist organization which officially reject individual acts of revolt, favoring only mass action and an educational and evangelistic practice centering around propaganda in "non-revolutionary periods," and from the Italian libertarian municipalists who take a largely reformist approach to "anarchist" activity.

Insurrectionary anarchists are not historical determinists; that is, they don't see history as following one set path, as something with which we need to move in tune. On the contrary, history is an open book, and the path that it will take depends on our actions. In this sense, a true act does not happen *within* context, but *to* context. To break with the present we must act against context, and not wait for a historically determined time to act, for it will never come. *The act does not grow out of context, it happens to context and completely changes the context, turning the impossible of one moment into the possible of the next.* And this is the heart of the insurrectionary event. As the insurrectionary event transforms the context of possibility, it also transforms the human and human social relations.

Yet, for an insurrectionary event to occur that opens a break with the present we need to pay attention to the question of organization. Anarchists must do what they can to open and develop the potential of insurrection. Certain forms of organization, however, stifle our potential to truly act against the present and for a new future, to move towards insurrection and a permanent break with the state and capital. Permanent organizations, organizations that attempt to synthesize those struggling into a single, unified organization, and organizations that attempt to mediate struggle are all forms of organization that tend to close the potential of insurrection. These ways of organization formalize and rigidify the relationships of those struggling in ways that limit the flexible combination of our power to act. Our active power, our power to create and transform, is our only weapon, and that which limits such power from within the movement of the exploited and excluded is our greatest weakness. This does not mean that we should remain unorganized (an impossibility—we always have some

level of organization no matter how informal); in fact, it poses the very question of organization: how do we combine in a way that promotes our active powers?

1. Against permanent organizations

Permanent organizations tend to take on a logic of their own—a logic that supercedes that of insurrection. One just needs to look at the operations of authoritarian, Leninist groups or leftist, activist organizations to see this at work. It is usually all about building the group, recruiting above all else—permanence becomes the primary goal. Power is separated from those active in struggle and becomes instituted in the organization. The organizer becomes separated from the organized, and tends to take on the role of disciplining and speaking for the struggle.

2. Against mediation with power

As organizations become more permanent and worry about recruiting, they often begin to worry about their image, and attempt to limit the actions of others within the struggle who might give the movement a bad name. The more they institute power within their organization the more they tend to limit direct confrontational action and to encourage dialogue and mediation. Naively, they come to want to harness the power of a mass of bodies in order to win a seat at the table of power. This process is heavily at work in the anti-globalization movement; larger organizations are increasingly attempting to mediate with power. It is also the role unions take in society. For anarchists, of course, being against capitalism and the state in their entirety, there can be no dialogue with instituted power. The willingness of those in power to initiate a dialogue may be a sign of their weakness, but it is also the beginning of our defeat when we limit our active power to join them in discussion.

3. Formality and informality

Formal organizations separate the people into formal roles of organizer and organized. The roles of organizer and organized, of course, mirror the very social roles necessary to the operation of the society that we as anarchists are trying to overcome. In addition, formal organization tends to separate decision from the moment and situation of the act itself, separating decision from its execution, and thus limiting the autonomy of action. Both of these tendencies rigidify the social relationships that are vital to those in struggle.

problem. This is, of course, one of the points of so-called ‘anti-politics'. Work, however, is also a separated activity. We need to overcome both, and to do that is part of the insurrectionary or revolutionary process itself. I also do agree that anti-globalization globe-trotting is a problem—again, it becomes either a vacation or a job. I think the idea of struggle spreading across the social terrain is exactly a critique of these positions. It is when it become a separated activity, separated from everyday life, that it becomes weak and more controllable. And that is also one of the roots of activism.

The Batko Group: When you say that, “[l]eftist and activist practices are really part of the left wing of capitalism—seeking, in the end, to self-manage capitalism in a more human and organized fashion. And this often involves a nostalgia for Fordist capitalism,” we agree with you. But both your projects and ours started as projects *within* and *for* this left-wing of capitalism. Now we and other groups are moving away from activism and leftism, leaving the bubble, returning to reality. But it isn’t the working class, or the dispossessed, that reads our papers and discuss our theories. So how do we spread our theories to the working class? And do we need to? One idea some of us have is that maybe we shouldn’t be trying to further the political project; maybe we should not develop the political organization, but focus, rather, on the development of the class struggle per se.

Sasha: Yes, we all begin within capitalism. We are trying to break out. But we are also of the dispossessed. At the same time, you are right that the working class in general don’t read our papers. The point of journals like KKA was not, however, propaganda. It was more to find like-minded people, people with whom we have a certain degree of affinity, and to communicate with them, make connections with them, and maybe move toward doing projects with them. We aren’t taking the role of waking up the working class. That said, I’m not sure I understand your last statement: what does “focusing on the development of the class struggle per se” mean? If I hear more from you on this perhaps we can discuss this point further.

The Batko Group: We think that the real subsumption of labor under capital is a central issue here. If the capital-relation has colonized the entire social organism and made all social activities productive, that requires of us as communists to deepen our critique of synthesis. In that sense the insurrectional perspective makes perfect sense and becomes an essential tool. The organization of attack, the unification of organizational form and direct action, is the direct assault on value. This, then, means that political organization has come to an end. The point now is to dissolve (capital’s)

Latin America also spread and deepened. In the 1990s in Europe and the US there was a large amount of circulation between these riots. And this process is not over, even if things in the West seem to have quieted down somewhat at the moment. None of this, of course, happens without a response from capital, and we can see neo-conservatism in the US as a response to the contradictions of neo-liberalism.

How do pro-revolutionaries such as ourselves take part in these struggles, in the insurrectionary process? We can neither replace the struggle of the dispossessed (for we will always be a minority within the dispossessed) nor can we stand outside of it to organize it or synthesize the struggle into our organizations. This is the difficult position we are in. So we have to find ways of acting within the struggles of the dispossessed, of communicating methods we feel are appropriate—both through action and words—of pushing struggles forwards in an insurrectionary direction. Certain types of organizational forms and practices block this process, and we need to be critical of them. And we can note that these organizational forms and practices are often linked up to a perspective that does not fully leave capitalism behind—this is no accident. Leftist and activist practices are really part of the left wing of capitalism—seeking, in the end, to self-manage capitalism in a more human and organized fashion. And this often involves a nostalgia for Fordist capitalism.

The Batko Group: Even if Bonanno is correct in his analysis (about the spread of struggle in the social terrain and so on) isn't it also possible to argue that the shift of battleground from the workplace to the streets was a result of us (as a global working class) being pushed back to a much more defensive position as result of the capitalist restructuring? What do you think about the argument that in order to regain momentum in the class-struggle we must find a way back to the workplace? Not because of any romanticism about "real workers" or anything like that, but because that is the place we are at. That's the reality where we (consciously or unconsciously) are struggling with our comrades every day, and as long as the revolutionary struggle is fought separate from the point of exploitation (as in the anti-globalization movement) we can't really make an impact as revolutionaries. We will only reinforce the division between politics (as something you do in your spare time) and what we perceive as "real life" (work).

Sasha: Well, I don't think that is the only place where we are. But I do agree that a split between politics as something one does in their spare time (or worse, what one does for a living), separate from everyday life, is a big

Formal organizations often also take on the role of the representation of the "movement," shifting the struggle from social in nature to political. Insurrectionary anarchists tend to promote informal organization because they recognize that we, as anarchists, are part of those struggling, and don't stand outside and above the exploited and excluded politically organizing them.

4. Organization grows out of struggle, struggle doesn't grow out of organization

Most formal organizations first attempt to build the organization then organize the struggle or "movement." Insurrectionary anarchists see this as backwards. Informal organization, based on the affinity group, grows out of struggle. Affinity groups come to build links in struggle and then often coordinate actions; but, the level of organization depends on the level of struggle, not on the demands of a formal organization.

5. Autonomous action and solidarity

Insurrectionary anarchists recognize that the actions of individuals and affinity groups are autonomous, that no organization should be in a position to discipline the action of others. But autonomous action becomes strong when we act in revolutionary solidarity with others in struggle. Revolutionary solidarity is active and in conflict with the structures of domination; it is direct action that communicates a link between one's struggle and that of others.

The Anarchist Ethic in the Age of the Anti-Globalization Movement

KILLING KING ABACUS, VOL. 2 (2001)

The question always before anarchists is how to act in the present moment of struggle against capitalism and the state. As new forms of social struggles are becoming more clearly understood, this question becomes even more important. In order to answer these questions we have to clarify the relationship between anarchists and the wider social movement of the exploited and the nature of that movement itself. First of all, we need to note that the movement of the exploited is always in course. There is no use in anarchists, who wish to destroy capitalism and the state in their entirety, waiting to act on some future date, as predicted by an objectivist reading of capitalism or a determinist understanding of history as if one were reading the stars. This is the most secure way of keeping us locked in the present forever. The revolutionary movement of the exploited *multitude* never totally disappears, no matter how hidden it is. Above all this is a movement to destroy the separation between us, the exploited, and our conditions of existence, that which we need to live. It is a movement of society against the state. We can see this movement, however incoherent or unconscious, in the actions of Brazil's peasants who take the land they need to survive, when the poor steal, or when someone attacks the state that maintains the system of exclusion and exploitation. We can see this movement in the actions of those who attack the machinery that destroys our very life-giving environment. Within this current, anarchists are a minority. And, as conscious anarchists, we don't stand outside the movement, propagandizing and organizing it; we act with this current, helping to reanimate and sharpen its struggles.

It is instructive to look back at the recent history of this current. In the U.S., beginning in the 1970s, social movements began to fracture into single-issue struggles that left the totality of social relations unchallenged. In many ways, this was reflected in a shift in the form of imposed social relations, which occurred in response to the struggles of the 1960s and early 1970, and is marked by a shift from a Fordist regime of accumulation (dominated by large factories and a mediated truce with unions) to a regime of flexible accumulation (which began to break unions, dismantle the welfare state, and open borders to the free flow of capital). This shift is also mirrored by the academic shift to postmodernist theory, which privileges the

force in this shift. Workers today are not only excluded from the benefits of capitalist restructuring, but it is harder and harder for people to understand how society even operates, as they have been excluded from the technical knowledge that constructs production, workers have been deskilled again. This is linked to the increased atomization of both our daily lives, we split from each other, and of the production process. All of this can make it harder to imagine a different world. Yet I think Bonanno also overestimated the ability of capitalism to expel the worker—remembering that this text was produced something like 20 years ago.

Other than Bonanno, who was looking at this shift rather early in the process, not many anarchists have tried to think about what this shift in capitalism means for anti-capitalist rebellion; instead, they simply suggest we need to do more of the same, applying organizational forms from a different era, when the relationship between the dispossessed and capital was very different. An organizational structure that attempts to synthesize the struggles of the excluded into a single organization, organizations that often take the factory as their model, will fail. We will find that the struggles of the dispossessed, when they are active, will always be ahead of such organizations.

Instead of trying to synthesize struggles into a permanent anarchist organization or attempting to have the organization produce struggle, we need to see how struggles grow organization. This makes us ask what class struggle is for us. To me, class struggle is not, as it is for many leftists, about the proletariat taking power and managing the affairs of society; it is not a celebration of proletarian culture, such as we had in the USSR. Class struggle, for me, is the struggle for the auto-destruction, the self-abolition, of the dispossessed class; it is the struggle to end the existence of all classes as such.

So the question of how a riot of the excluded, of which we have seen a lot over the last decade, turns into an insurrection is very important. Living in China for several year out of the last decade has allowed me to watch this shift happen in another social and political context; this same process is happening as they shift from their state capitalist version of Fordism to a more flexible regime of accumulation and a lot of people, especially rural residents, are being excluded. Increasingly there are riots taking place, and they are growing in size as well—some up towards 100,000 participants and continuing for several days. People active in these events are beginning to communicate with each other—this is an important activity that we can take part in. Methods of struggle are spreading between areas both through direct communication and through imitation. Some of these struggles seem to be developing more intermediate aims. The anti-neoliberal-capitalist riots in

As the anarchists involved in the Comiso struggle understood, one of the central reasons that social struggles are kept from developing in a positive direction is the prevalence of forms of organization that cut us off from our own power to act and closes-off the potential of insurrection: these are permanent organizations, those that synthesize all struggle within a single organization, and organizations that mediate struggles with the institutions of domination.

One of the things we were doing was to develop this critique into a critique of activism. In the 1990s and even more so in the last 5 years (since Seattle in 1999), US activists have loudly celebrated their role and identity as activists. This is something that we wanted to be critical of. I recognize that capitalist society pushes us into the role of the activist and organizer, but to be revolutionary means to always try to break with that role and not celebrate it and become fully identified by it, placed, controlled. Such identification is part of a process of foreclosing the potential of uncontrollability. I would say that this is one of the most important cleavages in the U.S. scene: between those who celebrate the role of the activist and organizer and those that try to break with it.[23] I feel that the insurrectionary anarchist critique and practice that was developed in Italy was a good way to discuss this problem and to think of ways to break from it. Of course, the situationists were influential in this as well. One of the main points of insurrectionary anarchism is that insurrection is a process of becoming uncontrollable—the insurrection is the moment when the state begins to lose control and also its own coherence. The whole activist dichotomy of organizer/organized, of course, fights against that process.

The Batko Group: Do you think Bonanno's analysis of "post-industrial" capitalism is accurate? The social outbursts in the early nineties, with the L.A. riots[24], the Poll tax in the UK[25], the street protests in France[26] and so on, seemed to confirm the thesis of the excluded, but what about today? Did these riots, social outbursts and insurrections in your opinion fail to communicate or spread?

Sasha: I would say that Bonanno captured some aspects of the changes going on within capitalism. Class relations changed a lot beginning in the late 1970s. The shift from a Fordist regime of accumulation to neoliberal or flexible accumulation did mean that a lot more people came to be socially and economically excluded, expelled from the normal operations of capitalism. And the excluded often are more likely to take part in rebellious activity. Also, in "From Riot to Insurrection"[27] I think Bonanno is right to pay attention to the role that technology plays in the disciplining of the work

fractured, the floating, and the flexible. While the growth of single-issue groups signals the defeat of the anti-capitalist struggles of the 1960s, over the 1990s we have witnessed a reconvergence of struggles that are beginning to challenge capitalism as a totality. Thus the revolutionary current of the exploited and excluded has recently reemerged in a cycle of confrontations that began in the third world and have spread to the first world of London, Seattle, and Prague, and in the direct action movement that has, for the most part, grown out of the radical environmental milieu. In the spectacular confrontations of the global days of action[1], these streams have been converging into a powerful social force. The key to this reconvergence is that the new struggles of the 1990s are creating ways to communicate and link local and particular struggles without building stifling organizations that attempt to synthesize all struggle under their command. Fundamental to this movement is an ethic that stands against all that separates us from our conditions of existence and all that separates us from our power to transform the world and to create social relations beyond measure—a measure imposed from above. This ethic is a call for the self-organization of freedom, the *self-valorization* of human activity.

In this article we will outline our understanding of the ethic of the revolutionary anarchist current of society that grows out of the movement of the exploited in general. Then we will turn to the question of action and organization, looking critically at the forms of struggle that are appearing in the recent cycle of social movements and arguing that informal organization is the best way for anarchists to organize as a minority within the wider social movement. By organizing along these lines, we believe anarchists can sharpen the level of struggle and develop social relations in practice that are both antagonistic to capital and the state and begin to create of new ways of living.

Ethics and morality

We use the term *ethics* in a very specific sense and contrast it to *morality*. Morality stands outside what it rules over, it swoops down from above to organize relationships and discipline behavior. For example, the relationship between two people can be set morally by a third party, the church, the state, or the school. This third party is not a part of the relationship; in other words, it stands *transcendent* to the relationship. The relationship between two people can also be arranged through an ethic. Unlike morality, an ethic never comes from the outside; an ethic lets us understand how to relate to other people or objects, other bodies, in a way that is beneficial to us. An ethic is thus a doctrine of happiness, one which never comes form the

outside of the situation, which never stands above a relationship, but is always developed from within; it is always *immanent* to the situation instead of *transcendent* to it. An ethic is a relationship of desire. In an ethical relationship, desire is complemented by desire, expanded by it. Morality, on the other hand, always limits and channels desire. A transcendent morality is alien to the situation at hand; its logic has no necessary connection to the desire of those involved or to increasing their pleasure. It is a fixed law whose reasoning is always "because I said so," "because it is the word of god," "because it is wrong," or "because it is the law and what would happen without the law." An ethic is a tool for the active creation of our own lives; it is never an imposed decision, a bought position in society, or a passively accepted role that we attempt to play. The most valuable thing one can learn in the struggle against imposed decision is how to act, how to become more powerful in our action.

Anarchism is an ethic in the most basic sense: it is an ethic because it calls for decisions to remain immanent to the situation at hand instead of alienated into a transcendent institution; it moves in an antagonistic relationship to all transcendent morality and institutions, such as the state, the party and the church.

Power and the Alienation of Power

Human nature has been a foundational concept for many anarchists. As such, the argument runs, human nature is good and power, which constricts and warps that nature, is bad. Anarchism becomes a philosophy that stands for getting rid of power and allowing the good nature of humans to flourish. In this section, we develop a different understanding of power, an understanding that doesn't automatically define power as bad. Instead of setting a particular conception of human nature as the foundation of anarchism, therefore, we suggest that an *ethic of desire* is the proper foundation for anarchist action and organization.

Power is the potential to exert a force, the ability to create and transform. Capitalism alienates that potential from us in the production process. The state also alienates our power; in fact, *the state is a form of alienated power that has been instituted, that has been constituted in the state form*. In its alienated form, power becomes the potential and ability to make others exert a force, to do work, or the ability to prevent us from exerting a force. It is a power that has been extracted from the social body through a complex process of force and consent.

Capitalism and the state separate the moment of decision from the act of its realization in both space and time: a decision is made before the action

solidarity with interned immigrants, against war and the building of military bases, in occupying spaces, and many more areas.

The Batko Group: You seem to have had quite a lot of contact with Italian anarchists. Can you tell us something about your view on the origin and development of the insurrectionary theory in Italy, and its status and practices today? (Due to the language barrier we sadly have almost no knowledge about the anarchist debate and contemporary theories in either Italy, Greece or even Spain.)

Sasha: Most of the contact I have in Italy were made through Wolfi. He is also the one that knows that situation the best. So maybe you should talk to him about this question. I speak Chinese but no Italian or Greek. I did spend some time there. (There is an article in *Do or Die* that touches on the development of insurrectionary anarchism in Italy that you could look at.[22]) As I said, we in the U.S. were interested in the insurrectionary anarchist critique of the movements of the 1970's. Much of the Italian insurrectionary anarchist critique of the movements of the '70s focused on the forms of organization that shaped the forces of struggle and out of this a more developed idea of informal organization grew. A critique of the authoritarian organizations of the 70s, whose members often believed they were in a privileged position to struggle as compared to the proletariat as a whole, was further refined in the struggles of the '80s, such as the early-'80s struggle against a military base that was to house nuclear weapons in Comiso, Sicily.

Anarchists were very active in that struggle, which was organized into self-managed leagues. These ad hoc, autonomous leagues took three general principles to guide the organization of struggle: permanent conflict, self-management and attack. Permanent conflict meant that the struggle would remain in conflict with the construction of the base until it was defeated without mediating or negotiating. The leagues were self-generated and self-managed: they refused any delegation of representatives or professionalization of struggle. The leagues were organizations of attack on the construction of the base, not the defense of the interests of this or that group. This style of organization allowed groups to take the actions they saw as most effective while still being able to coordinate attack when useful, thus keeping open the potential of struggle to spread. It also kept the focus of organization on the goal of ending the construction of the base instead of the building of permanent organizations, for which mediating with state institutions for a share of power usually becomes the focus and limiting the autonomy of struggle the means.

which people develop deeper understandings of what they confront and how to confront it. And in this process we also learn from the struggles of others. Through this process struggle can spread and deepen. But none of this is determined; it is a very contingent process.

The Batko Group: What do insurrectionalists do? As we understand it, insurrectional anarchists try to point out the social character of class struggle, and that anarchists shouldn't organize as a political organization separated from the class. Anarchist ought to organize and fight foremost as the exploited/excluded. The question "what do insurrectionalists do?" might at first therefore seem quite strange, but still there are political anarchist groups calling themselves insurrectionalists here and there. So, what do these insurrectionalist groups you know about do? What ought to be their purpose vs. do any of them live up to this?

Sasha: They do many different things, of course. But the main point I would make is that insurrectionaries try to act from where they stand, instead of focusing on organizing others to act. We don't stand outside of the exploited and excluded, the dispossessed, we act as members of the dispossessed. Yet I would stress that we recognize that, while struggle begins with our own desires it expands from there through revolutionary solidarity: thus insurrectionaries often act in solidarity with others who seem to share our desires and struggles. Insurrectionary anarchists also pay close attention to how struggles spread. Thus they tend to support small actions that can be easily reproduced by others, such as acts of sabotage—although we shouldn't fetishize sabotage either—for it is these types of actions that we spread in an uncontrollable way. It is uncontrollability, and not their formally organized character, that will make struggles strong.

In the struggle against the high speed railway in Italy, insurrectionary anarchists intervened with acts against the railway, and soon a huge number of acts of sabotage against the railway spread socially well beyond the anarchist milieu. It is clear that anarchists will never be the main force within revolutionary moments, so if acts don't generalize socially and uncontrollably beyond the anarchist milieu then the struggle will fail. So the key is not to organize everyone who struggles into anarchist organizations or federations, but to intervene in ways that can help the spread and deepening of uncontrollable revolt. And it is through becoming uncontrollable that individuals and groups will be creating new social relations beyond capitalism and the state. The targets of such struggles are all over the place. Insurrectionary anarchists have intervened in struggles over the building of railways, new factories and mines, in wildcat strikes, in

has begun and it is made in a different place, in some office of the state, corporate boardroom, or organizer's meeting. A law can be made years before it comes to control an act. The form of alienated power tends towards fixity, of setting and maintaining an order and a set of institutions—like the heavy-set granite structures that house the institutions themselves—that stand above society; it can thus be called *constituted or transcendent power*.

If power is the potential to exert a force, the ability to act in a creative, transformative, productive, or destructive way, the state as a transcendent institution is that which cuts us off or separates us from our *active power*. Our power is alienated from us, taken from us, and instituted in the state. We are only allowed to act in certain ways, whereas the state constantly acts and decides for us, acts in our name, or forces us to act in certain ways. It cuts us off from the creative energy of desire itself.

When power has not been alienated, it remains immanent within individuals and the social body as a whole. And, so long as it is not separated from the act itself, it remains a creative, productive, and transformative potential, for it refuses a fixed order. As Kropotkin states, "Now all history, all the experience of the human race and all social psychology, unite in showing that the best and fairest way is to trust the decision to those whom it concerns most nearly." But there is always a danger that this power will be recuperated by groups to form institutions and will become a constituted, transcendent power that stands above the social body: the revolutionary power of those struggling against capitalism and the state can be frozen in the form of "the Party" and, finally, the state itself.

In studying primitive societies, Pierre Clastres discovered that societies without a state were really "societies against the state." They organized the social body in such a way that warded off the constitution of alienated power into an institution separate from society. Stable, conserved power is prevented from crystallizing into a hardened state form. As Deleuze and Guattari point out, the state "is defined by the perpetuation or conservation of organs of power. The concern of the State is to conserve." Thus the state is the political organization of passivity. Anthropologists have noted the appearance of conserved organs of power in small-scale societies and have called such early organs *impersonal institutions*. Impersonal institutions are distinguished from an authority that is based on personal abilities or qualities, an authority that ends when either that person dies, they are no longer seen as holding those personal abilities, or when those abilities are no longer useful to society. Someone could become known as a great hunter in a band society and trusted as an authority on hunting; that authority is vested personally in the individual. A society could have several individuals with such authority or it could have none. As such, authority does not

crystallize into an institution that tends towards permanence, into impersonal institutions. But once authority comes to be institutionalized into a permanent position that is filled as an impersonal role, power begins to be conserved and separated from society itself. The President is an impersonal institution in that the authority of the Presidency continues after one President leaves and another takes their place; the authority rests in the institution.

Such impersonal institutions are openings that allow the state to slowly form above society. But the society against the state, that attempts to ward off or destroy the state, does not die as the state grows into a hardened, ugly body; in fact, the society against the state is continually reemerging and transforming its methods as the movement of the exploited and excluded to decide their own fate. The long and twisted history of the development of the state and the creative movement of the society against the state has been written and analyzed elsewhere. This history has brought us to our present moment in which the society against the state rises again. In the present moment, the form that alienated power takes is also varied: while the party dictatorship, a form that still exists, is an obvious example of alienated, transcendent power, the democratic form of alienated power no less separates decision from the act, no less separates us from our active powers.

As with the society against the state, anarchists must always fight against the alienation of power, against the formation of transcendent institutions that turn active power into a constituted order, whether that order be called democratic or totalitarian. This is not only because such transcendent power separates us from our power to act on our desires, but also because as soon as our active power—our power to transform society and to create our own lives—begins to harden into a permanent order, a permanent organization, once impersonal institutions form within our midst, we lose the power to attack the state and capitalism effectively.

Value, Measure, and Social Organization

The movement of the exploited, the excluded, of the society against the state, is a movement to destroy the separation between humans and their conditions of existence. It is a movement to build new social relations without measure. It is a revolt against the imposition of a single regime of value. Looking at the many struggles that are being called “the anti-globalization movement,” we can see in their diversity a complex pattern of attack on, and defense from, capitalist valorization. These struggles are heterogeneous in that no single solution or system of valorization is being offered to replace capitalism (thus these struggles can not be contained by a

of? How have your theoretical discussion developed over time, and were do you stand now? Here in Sweden the latest input of new insurrectionary theory was the publication of a Gilles Dauvé anthology last year.

Sasha: I actually found several of Bonanno’s texts and concepts very important and an inspiration. *Diavolo in Corpo*[14] and *Canenero*[15] were also very important inspirations for us. For us in KKA, I would say that Bonanno’s reading of individualism and communism as not in contradiction was very useful; for example, thinking of communism as equal access to the conditions of our existence, an overcoming of the separations that have been imposed upon us, instead of as a celebration of a naturalized conception of working class culture and life, is important. I personally found Bonanno’s *The Anarchist Tension*[16] very interesting in the way it defines anarchism as a tension. But even more important has been the idea of practice that developed out of the Italian experience: the centrality of attack instead of compromise (a critique of politics, therefore, and representation), informal organization, organization as growing out of struggle and affinity instead of producing struggle (which seems to be the U.S. way of understanding organization), permanent conflictuality, revolutionary solidarity, etc.. Bonanno and others have all written about these practices. Other influences for us are varied: we were all influenced by the Situationists, Freddy and Loraine Perlman (especially *Letters of Insurgents*[17]), and by surrealism[18]. Wolfi, like Bonanno and others in Italy, is a reader of Stirner[19]. I would say Dauvé and some other anti-state communists were important for me: Dauvé’s “When Insurrections Die"[20] influenced me a lot. It was one of the first texts we put on our original website.

As to recent developments: with the primitivists seeming to completely reject class struggle these days, we have less and less in common. I would say that their critique of class struggle (as we can see in the latest issue of *Green Anarchy*[21]) is still stuck in a critique of the weak class politics of syndicalists, instead of taking class and class struggle seriously. So I am interested in continuing to look at class struggle in a more thorough way instead of just rejecting a weak version of it, to push class struggle as the struggle to end all classes, for the self-abolition of the dispossessed, the auto-destruction of the proletariat. I have been living on and off in China and the sharpening conflicts here have helped me in this respect. Sure there are a lot of contradictions within these struggles, but we can’t just step outside of them and find some pure subject to attack totality, some pure human nature untouched by society’s contradictions. It doesn’t exist; it never has. Struggle begins within our contradictions. Struggle is a process in

an institutionalized workers-movement in power, so as a result the recuperation takes other forms as well.

The environmental movement over here probably emerged more or less in the same way as on your continent (and the amount of wilderness to defend is probably not a big factor) with one reformist wing, from the start just in it for the mediation and building of green-parties and so on, and one radical wing more in line with a direct-action movement. But the difference is (we think) that over here the radical wing got recuperated mainly into the existing Leninist perspectives and more or less disappeared from the map. In the U.S. there was no existing "alternative" perspective big enough to suck up the environmental movement and (which is important) other struggles connected to it. So it kept the shape of an environmental movement and adapted a straight-up liberal ideology, much in the same way as parts of the revolutionary workers-movement already had done in Europe.

This theory is a simplification, but the point is that primitivism, even though it seems like it, isn't a unique phenomenon at all, it's just a different expression of recuperated struggles. Basically it fills the exact same role as Leninism and social-democracy within the "activist-movement" over here. And just as all Leninist-influenced projects and theories is not all bad, there is a gray-scale within your "activist-movement" but more across the environmental axis than the left/right axis.

Sasha: Well, I don't think that is quite the way I'd put it. I don't really see primitivists as acting as a recuperator for capitalism. But I do see it as a rather ideological take on the present. It seems to mix an activist ideology with essentialism in terms of human nature, or "primal nature." But I think they play a different role than the leftists in Leninist or social democratic parties do. But enough on primitivism.

The Batko Group: Our main sources for self-labeled insurrectional anarchist theory has been Bonanno texts, the English magazine *Insurrection*[11], publications from Elephant Editions[12] and Bratach Dubh[13] and stuff from KKA. But of course there is also a lot of non-anarchist theory with an insurrectional content. For example different kinds of "alternative" Marxism, like the Situationists and the autonomous theories from Italy or the French ultra-left. The consensus in Sweden seems to be (among the few that read him) that Bonanno is more of historical interest (as the "father" of this current) than an actual theoretical must-read. What are your theoretical influences (both anarchist and non-anarchist), and what historical movements/events do you think your theoretical roots grew out

single organization). Yet, while they are heterogeneous, there is a pattern, and that pattern is produced by the fact that they are all fighting a singular and hegemonic regime of valorization, capitalism, that is invading every human practice and relationship. Alienation is the gap between desire and what is socially valued, between our potential to transform the world and the theft and parasitic use of that power by capital and the state. As that power comes to be alienated in the state form, society comes to be increasingly ruled by numbers to the extent that humans themselves are even reduced to interchangeable numbers.

One of the state's most important roles is to be the guarantor of measure: the state maintains the value of money, the general equivalent, it sets the low point for wages, taxes, and guarantees the measure and protection of property. The state uses numbers to reduce social problems to simple math problems with solutions. But society isn't so easily quantified and reduced; society isn't just a problem that can be solved with a ruler or an algorithm. Thus, every solution is in reality a repression of the problem or a shifting of the problem to a new level or different sector of society. Solution and repression are a twined pair.

The largest of such social problems that states have to contend with are the distribution of wealth, the mediation of social conflicts that erupt from its unequal distribution, and the reproduction of society itself. Over this century, two solutions to the problem of the distribution of wealth, the setting of value, have dominated the world: Western capitalism and Soviet communism. Both systems separate humans from their conditions of existence, from what they need to live and follow their desires. Both systems also rely on transcendent institutions of power to maintain their systems of valorization. In the West, capitalist valorization relies on the state to guarantee the general equivalent and to maintain the private property structure that separates us from what we need to live. The human is thus split into a producer of goods for sale and a consumer of other goods. This split allows the extraction of surplus value, and it is the production of surplus value that defines one as productive, producing and, thus, having value in society.

The Soviet system was a different solution to the same problem. One's value within the Soviet system was set by a different measure. Within the Soviet system, value operated as a quantified, measured need as set by the transcendent intuition of the state. The state, as an alien institution, a form of alienated power, decided what was needed through its great, calculating bureaucratic apparatus. By treating society as a mathematical problem, the Soviet system guaranteed an equality and homogeneity of existence. It flattened desire and individuals. Desires were judged to be of social value or

not by committee. Use value came to be set by a moral system that stood outside of society. In the Soviet system humans were no less separated from their conditions of existence, for a transcendent system of property still existed as the state itself directly controlled property.

There is, however, a different type of communism, one in which the institutions of private property backed up by state power are absent; this communism can be defined by the equality of access to the conditions of existence. This ethic is at the heart of the movement of the excluded, of the society against the state, that always remains antagonistic, however incoherent, to the separations that capital and the state impose upon it.

This communism offers no mathematical solution, imposed from above, to social problems. There is no guarantee of what individuals and groups will do with the conditions of existence once they have access to them, that is up to their desires and abilities. Rather, in the absence of transcendent solutions and institutions, social relations and problems remain as tensions within society, tensions that are worked through immanently in practice. Value comes to be produced immanently in ethical practice, as a self-valorization activity by those involved in a certain situation. A single regime of value no longer covers and organizes the social terrain.

This ethic of desire, which remains fundamental to the movement of the excluded, is antagonistic to the constituted social order that separates the multitude from its conditions of existence; and, it is out of this antagonism that anarchist practice—as immanent to the movement of the excluded multitudes—grows. Just as self-valorization becomes an ethical practice for the excluded, informal organization, in struggle against capital and the state, becomes an ethical practice for anarchists: *both create social relations beyond measure*.

Part II: The Anarchist Ethic and the Organization of Attack

The starting point for understanding the relationship between anarchists and the new social movements is to recognize that we are a minority within the movement. This is, of course, the normal position for anarchists, but it does call for a specific theoretical thinking and practice in order for us to effectively operate in such a context. Anarchists are hopefully at an insurrectional level of struggle; they are, for the most part, working towards insurrection, while the movement in general struggles at an intermediate level. What does this mean? Anarchists, except those who hold a determinist and evolutionary view of history, understand that insurrection, which destroys the transcendent institutions of state and capital and allows the

apparent connections between early writings of Zerzan[8] and the US school of Autonomous Marxism, like Harry Cleaver[9] and Midnight Notes[10].

Sasha: First off, I want to be clear that for me and many others, anti-civ and primitivist are not the same thing. I would say there are a couple of reasons why primitivism might attract more people here in the U.S. than in Europe. First, America actually has more of a wilderness to try to defend, and there was a pretty radical environmental movement here. Secondly, I think that American anti-communism (as in being against anything communist, even anti-state communism) is a very big influence on the American scene. I think the influence of primitivism is actually waning now in America. More and more people, while possibly initially interested in the critique, are finding primitivism to be too rigid of an ideology. So I wouldn't say that Primitivism has that wide a following at all. But those that do consider themselves Primitivists are very dedicated to what they are doing.

Camatte has definitely been an influence on the anti-civ critique, especially on Perlman. And Perlman was an influence on KKA. But in the US only a small number of Camatte's articles have been translated into English, mostly only his newest stuff. In Europe, you might have a bit of a different view of Camatte because of that. The Situationists were an influence on Perlman, but not really on Primitivism. In fact, I think they could use a good dose of reading the Situationists once in a while. The Primitivists like to name everybody else as a leftist, but they don't seem to understand what the left is, other than that it is bad. Reading the Situationists could be good for them in that sense, but I doubt that is really on their agenda.

The Batko Group: This discussion was not supposed to develop into a discussion about primitivists. It's really not that interesting. But, after we sent you the question "Do you have an analysis on why this current has gained so much influence in the USA?," some of us discussed the issue and came up with a theory of our own:

Sooner or later all struggles become recuperated. But depending on their history and the current hegemony, the recuperation takes different forms. In Europe we have a long tradition of social-democratic and Leninist dominance within the formal workers-movement and also in the capitalist state. So in Europe almost every struggle or movement in one form or another gets recuperated by these gigantic "left-wing" institutions and/or their ideology. In the U.S. on the other hand (as you point out) you have an extreme anti-communist tradition, and you don't have the same traditions of

to a large extent in the US at the time. So we wanted to reintroduce some of the writings of the insurrectionary anarchists into the U.S. We also wanted to get away from a rather weak debate on class, which seemed to be caught between, on the one side, a reduced understanding of class and capitalism, which lacked a critique of work as separate from life and of the link between productive forms and social relations while celebrating worker self-management, and, on the other side, a rejection of class struggle. Primitivism has ended up trying so hard to stress that capitalism is just the latest stage of civilization that it has washed out an understanding of capitalism as a specific social form. Another dichotomy within the US milieu that we wanted to move out of was the one that saw individualism and communism as in contradiction. So into this situation we wanted to inject more energy into the discussion of struggles themselves and how we act.

After two issues we had succeeded better than we could have imagined. Yet we had also fallen into a rather long debate with various primitivists as well, which have not really been that useful. It is probably time to move on to other projects. For me, in terms of text projects, this has meant starting the anti-politics.net website, which is trying to bring people together in terms of how they relate to struggle and to further a thorough critique of capitalism and unfree social relations.

The Batko Group: You say: "After two issues we had succeeded better than we could have imagined." How so? Tell us a little more about that.

Sasha: Well, what I mean is that we generated more discussion than we thought we would. And the ideas and concepts we were translating from Italy have been quite widely discussed. In turn, several articles from KKA were then translated into other languages as well. And this discussion has brought some people together in interesting ways. The anti-politics.net forum is one example.

The Batko Group: You refer a lot to the Primitivist and "anti-civ" movement, partly as a problem/opposition but also as a part of your background. Here in Sweden (and we believe in the whole of Europe) this current is a more or less non-existing phenomenon, or at lest very marginal and unheard of in any debates. Do you have an analysis on why this current has gained so much influence in the USA? The consensus over here (across the whole spectra of anarchists and left-wing commies) is that they—generally speaking—just are confused nutjobs. Camatte and the Situationists, on the other hand, seem like unlikely influences. And there are

realization social relations that are immanently organized, is always possible as an outcome of struggle. Thus anarchists should always be working towards the goal of insurrection. The struggle of the new social movements that have developed over the 1990's, however, are mostly at an intermediate level, a level in which specific institutions may be attacked without a clear goal of insurrection against capital and the state. Direct action against the WTO, the IMF, and the World Bank, the movement to destroy genetically modified crops, the movement of the landless to directly appropriate the conditions of their existence, and the direct action environmental movement all contain the potential of moving towards insurrection. Anarchists must open and develop that potential. There are others within these social movements that, whether consciously or not, work to close the possibility of insurrection. This often happens as a result of certain forms of organization and organizing activity. Permanent organizations, organizations that attempt to synthesize the multitude of those struggling into a single, unified organization, and organizations that attempt to mediate struggle are all forms of organization that tend to close the potential of insurrection.

Before discussing the question of organization further, we need to clarify how we will use the terms "the multitude" and "the mass". The *multitude* is what we will call all those who are excluded and exploited by capitalism; it is the multitude that struggles against the state and capitalism, it is the multitude that makes up the society against the state. The *mass* is the multitude as it has been synthesized into a singular block and disciplined to act in a unified manner. Just as a nation-state must transform a multitude of people into "the People" or citizens in order to create a disciplined nation, and the church must morally discipline its members to produce a flock, organizations of synthesis, such as "the Party," must shape the multitude into a mass in order to control its movement. The nation-state, the church, and the Party are all transcendent institutions in relation to a multitude, in that they all stand above and outside the multitude while attempting to organize its social relations. They swoop down upon the multitude with a grid of identity into which all must fit—all relationships are organized from the outside with such a grid.

For anarchists, the question of organization, however, is an ethical (immanent) instead of moral (transcendent) question: in a given situation, how do we combine in a way that promotes our active powers? How do we bring a multitude together in a way that doesn't limit our potential, our power to act, and our different desires?

In the wake of Seattle and Prague many organizers are discussing how to build and control the movement. They talk as if they are artists standing over a lump of clay—the multitude—that needs to be shaped, disciplined.

The discussion usually leads to talk of the need to limit the actions of the most confrontational and to be better "organized." Concerning the Prague demonstrations, one "American organizer" stated, "If we are really serious about doing an action, then we need to make certain there are de-escalation teams, people who are responsible for breaking up the violence." The goal of the type of organization that they promote, however, is to limit direct confrontational action and to encourage dialogue and mediation. Naively, they want to harness the power of a mass of bodies in order to get a seat at the table of power. For anarchists, of course, being against capitalism and the state in their entirety, there can be no dialogue with constituted power, with the transcendent institutions of the state and capital. The willingness of those transcendent institutions to initiate a dialogue may be a sign of their fear and weakness, but it is also the beginning of our defeat when we limit our active power to join them in discussion.

Our active power, our power to create and transform, is our only weapon, and that which limits such power from within the movement is our greatest weakness. This does not mean that we should remain unorganized; in fact, it poses the very question of organization: how do we combine in a way that promotes our active powers? The anarchist ethic is always a critical ethic, and thus it denounces everything that cuts us off from and diminishes our power to act.

As noted above, one of the greatest dangers to the development of the new social movements in a positive direction is that forms of organization that cut us off from our active power and close off the potential of insurrection in the present moment become dominant: these are permanent, synthesizing, and mediating organizations.

Permanent organizations tend to develop into transcendent institutions in relation to the struggling multitude. They tend to develop a formal or informal hierarchy and to disempower the multitude: power is alienated from its active form within the multitude and instituted within the organization. This transforms the active multitude into a passive mass. The hierarchical constitution of power-relations removes decision from the moment—the immanence—of its necessity. The practical consequences of such an organization is that the active powers of those involved in the struggle are stifled by the organization. Decisions that should be made by those involved in an action are deferred to the organization; and, permanent organizations tend to make decisions based not on the necessity of a specific goal or action, but on the needs of that organization, especially its preservation. The organization becomes an end in itself.

As an organization moves towards permanence and comes to stand above the multitude, the organizer appears, often claiming to have created the

Insurrectionary Practice and Capitalist Transformation

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE BATKO GROUP AND SASHA K. (2005)

The Batko Group: Our first contact with American insurrectionary anarchism was through *Killing King Abacus*[1] and *Hot Tide*[2] on the web. And it was after this that the word "insurrectionary" began to be used as a label for a specific theoretical current in Sweden. It would be very interesting to get a short history and evaluation of that project—the theoretical background and the discussion that preceded it, what movement it grew out of, your initial aims and what you later accomplished, its impact, and last but not least, why it ended.

Sasha: Well, calling it a "movement" is a bit of a stretch. I'll primarily speak for myself here and say what KKA was for me. The three of us who did KKA, Leila, Wolfi[3] and myself, were all involved in the anti-civ[4], anarchist milieu in the U.S. At the time, I found the debate in the U.S. anarchist scene somewhat stale. It was increasingly turning into a debate between primitivists and syndicalists, with primitivists claiming that syndicalists did not really step outside of our present society. This was true enough as far as it went. Yet the debate did not really talk that much about how we would actually move forward and act.

The anti-civ milieu that we came out of was influenced by the likes of Camatte, Perlman[5], the Situationists[6], surrealists, and anti-state communists. In the debates with syndicalists, the critique of work, the link between the material form of society and social relations, and the critique of the ideology of progress were important. But, I increasingly felt the anti-civ milieu was getting more closed and fixed in its ideas and, in the process of debating with syndicalists and the such, rejecting the importance of class completely. At the same time, largely because of the Marini Trial[7] and Wolfi's correspondence with Italian anarchists, we became more aware of the Italian insurrectionary current. It was on a trip to Europe that we decided to do KKA.

The practice and writings of various insurrectionary anarchists seemed to offer a way out of some of the problems of the US anarchist scene. Instead of debating the neutrality of technology or the origins of alienation, the insurrectionary anarchists drew on their own experience in practice of how to act and organize. This was a discussion that didn't seem to be happening

is the refusal of a *transcendent, constituted order*, the demand that decisions be made by those involved in a situation. Anarchism is an attack on all that separates us from our active powers; anarchism is the desire that animates our refusal to allow the alienation of our power. Thus the practice of anarchism is an ethic. The practices that we have sketched in the above essay have been developed by anarchists within the struggle of the excluded, and, as such, they constitute a continuation of the society against the state.

In order to remain vital, however, anarchism must avoid the constitution of transcendent power-relations within its midst. For such relations would both void the effectiveness of our attack and lead to the defeat of self-constituted social relations. Informal organization is a means for anarchists to combine with others of the exploited multitude without forming transcendent institutions. The practice of the anarchist ethic within the wider struggle will both allow people to remain active in their attack and bring into existence new, immanently created ways of living and relating. Through the very practice of informal organization, the anarchist ethic can spread further within the anti-globalization movement. Within the wider movement of the exploited and excluded, the movement—however coherent—to reclaim the power to create our own social relations beyond measure, anarchists are thus in a position to deepen the struggle against capital and the state.

1. The global days of action: A initiative by the network People's Global Action (PGA) during the 1990s, a predecessor to the summit protests. The first global day of action was J18 (18 June, 1999) and was against the world's financial center. The financial district in London was occupied by 10 000 people, for example. Later these summit protests continued and includes the now-famous protests in Seattle, Prague, Gothenburg, Genoa etc. PGA is a network made up of everything from big social movement to small activist groups. The network grew out of the international meetings that the Zapatistas took the initiative to by organizing "The Intercontinental Meetings for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism" 1996, where different groups and movements from all over the world met in the jungle of Chiapas.
2. Direct Action Network: Network of organizations and movements who arranged seminaries and protests against the WTO-summit in Seattle 1999.
3. Earth Liberation Front: A network of environmentalist groups which doesn't have any official membership, leadership or a spokesperson. You can say that ELF is more of a concept you can use if you do some kind of environmentalist action. Kinda like the Animal Liberation Front which works in the same way.
4. A16 Washington protest: Protests in Washington 16 April 2000 against the IMF and World Bank.
5. Nikos Mazotis: "Statement to the Athens Criminal Court", 1999.

struggle, and begins to speak for the mass. It is the job of the organizer to transform the multitude into a controllable mass and to represent that mass to the media. Organizers rarely views themselves as part of the multitude; they stand outside of it, transcendent to it, and talk of "reaching out to the community," "awakening the masses," and "building the organization and movement" as if insurrection was a game of numbers. Thus, as outsiders, they don't see it as their task to act, to do actions, but to propagandize and organize, for it is the masses that act.

Their worst fear is alienating the 'real masses'; thus image becomes all-important. After Seattle many organizers were worried about the effect that property destruction would have on the image of the movement, and went to great lengths to distance themselves from the perpetrators of such acts. The Direct Action Network[2] went to the extreme of not offering legal aid to those charged with felonies during the Seattle protests. Seemingly, they subscribe to Napoleonic law in which the accused are presumed guilty, not innocent. Again, their image was at stake. Later, in L.A., the August Collective asked D.A.N. if they could use its space for the L.A. anarchist conference. D.A.N. declined, explaining that anarchists in general were too white and too male, and this would affect D.A.N.'s ability to reach out to the community. In other words, they wanted to appear to be in touch with the community, and anarchists would hurt their image.

For the organizer, who takes as his/her motto "only that which appears in the media exists," concrete action always takes a back seat to the maintenance of media image. The goal of such image maintenance is never to attack a specific transcendent institution, but to affect public opinion, forever build the movement or, even worse, the organization. The organizer must always worry about how the actions of others will reflect on the movement; they must, therefore, both attempt to discipline the struggling multitude and try to control how the movement is represented in the media. Image replaces action for the permanent organization and the organizer who operates within the society of the spectacle.

The attempt to control the vast image and opinion-making factories of our society is a losing battle, as if we could ever try to match the quantity of images put forward by the media or get them to "tell the truth." To come to a better understanding of the problems involved in such a battle and how the "organizer" operates, we need to first better comprehend how "opinion" functions in society. On a basic level, we need to ask, what is opinion? An opinion is not something first found among the public in general and then, afterwards, replayed through the media, as a simple reporting of the public opinion. An opinion exists in the media first; it is produced by the media not the multitude. Secondly, the media then reproduces the opinion a million

times over linking the opinion up to a certain type of person (conservatives think x, liberals think y). Thirdly, as Alfredo Bonanno points out, "[An opinion] is a flattened idea, an idea that has been uniformed in order to make it acceptable to the largest number of people. Opinions are massified ideas." Public opinion is produced as a series of simple choices or solutions ("I'm for globalization and free trade," or "I'm for more national control and protectionism"). We are all supposed to choose—as we choose our leaders or our burgers—instead of think for ourselves. It is obvious, therefore, that anarchists cannot use the opinion-making factory to create counter-opinions, and hopefully anarchists would never want to operate on the level of opinion even if we could somehow exert control over the content spewed out of the factory gates. Anyhow, *the anarchist ethic could never be communicated in the form of opinion*, it would die once massified. However, it is exactly on the level of opinion that the organizer works, for opinion and image-maintenance are the very tools of power, tools used to shape and discipline a multitude into a controllable mass.

"The Party" is a permanent organization that attempts to synthesize all struggle into one controllable organization; in doing so, it cuts the multitude off from its active power and closes the door to insurrection. For the Party, the struggle is always in the future, at some mythical time; the present is for political work, for recruiting and disciplining party members. Commenting on Prague, the Communist Party of Great Britain noted that the most positive event in the latest Global Day of Action wasn't the action, but the fact that they sold or distributed 2,100 issues of the Weekly Worker and passed out 5,000 leaflets (what they call political work). Meanwhile the International Socialist Organization (the SWP) concentrated on image at the expense of action: they claimed they would bring 2500 people but brought less than 1000 and switched from an agreed upon position within the structure of the direct action damaging its success. But, of course, the ISO had other priorities than the action itself; they were present in order to recruit new members for the future, a future that their actions ensure will never come. As such, their decision wasn't adequate to the necessity of the moment; decision had been removed from the immanence within a multitude and brought into a transcendent institution. The ISO left a key intersection open and a few hundred anarchists, who could make decisions within the moment itself, covered the intersection as best they could. Transcendent organizations, such as permanent organizations and mediating organizations, by their very logic, will always forgo action and close the potential for insurrection. But transcendent organizations, such as "the Party," while they can stifle action, can never contain the desires and power of the multitude; they are always doomed to failure.

perspective or the tactics they choose. It is the solidarity with the becoming-active and the refusal of the alienation of power that is most vital. As Nikos Mazotis said at his trial, "For me, solidarity means the unreserved acceptance and support with every means of the right that the people must have to determine their lives as they wish, not letting others decide in their place, like the State and Capital do."[5]

Along with a critical solidarity that is always open to the autonomous action of others, we need to build revolutionary solidarity. Revolutionary solidarity should be active and in conflict with the structures of domination. Revolutionary solidarity allows us to move far beyond the "send-a-check" style of solidarity that so pervades the left as well as solidarity that relies on petitioning the state for relief or mercy. One example of revolutionary solidarity was Nikos Mazotis' action against TVX Gold in December 1997. Many people in the villages around Strymonikos in Northern Greece were struggling against the installation of a gold metallurgy plant in their area. In solidarity with the villagers, Nikos placed a bomb in the Ministry of Industry of Development that was intended to explode when no one was in the building; unfortunately, it never went off at all. Nikos is now serving a 15-year prison sentence (reduced to five and a half years; he is due out this year). TVX Gold is a multinational company whose headquarters is in Canada, there are thus many points at which revolutionary solidarity with the villagers of Stryminikos could have been enacted. Fundraising on behalf of one's comrades is necessary and surely appreciated, but this could be combined with more active forms of solidarity with those who struggle against our common enemies. Revolutionary solidarity communicates the link between the exploitation and repression of others and our own fate; and, it shows people the points at which capitalism or the state operate in similar ways in very different places. By creating links between the struggles against the transcendent power structures that form the State and Capital, revolutionary solidarity has the potential to take our local struggles to a global level. Solidarity is when you recognize your own struggle in the struggle of others. Revolutionary solidarity is solidarity with the becoming-active of others and therefore with their refusal to accept the alienation of their own power. Moreover, revolutionary solidarity is always an active attack; it always involves the recovery of our own active powers that multiply in combination—in solidarity—with the active powers of others.

Conclusion

In this article we have argued that anarchism is a practice that is always in tension with the constituted order. The common thread of anarchist practice

capitalism in general, perhaps the greatest opportunity these global days of action offer is the potential to link-up particular, local actions that attack specific targets with a general opposition to capitalism. In other words, the fact of the simultaneity of actions on a particular date may be more important than the spectacular shutting down of a huge meeting. By skipping the big event and instead doing smaller, local actions, anarchists can communicate the local consequences of the ever expanding capitalist death-machine. By the very simultaneity of many actions connections between regions and struggles are built. We are not saying that our actions should be determined by the dates set by the institutions of global capitalism nor should one only conduct actions on such dates, but we also should not ignore the historical opportunities offered by the growth of the global days of action. To be effective such actions should be part of an ongoing struggle. Doing actions locally also has the potential to involve others who may not understand how the big events of the global days of action—the attacks on institutions such as the WTO, the WB, and the IMF—are connected to their lives. Doing local actions on the dates of the global days of action is one important way to intensify such struggles.

4. The final—and possibly most important—key to an active, transnational attack on capital and the state is developing the practice of a critical and revolutionary solidarity. When we are critical of those who share our aims, critical solidarity is a way for disagreements over strategy, tactics and organization to be aired and discussed without trying to block each other's actions. If we continually block the actions of others no action will take place. Notably, since Seattle previously fierce theoretical divisions have taken on less importance. This was particularly clear in the call for a Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Block at the A16 Washington protest[4], which was a significant call for solidarity and joint action by all who consider themselves to be anti-capitalist revolutionaries. There has been a lot more activity on many levels since Seattle, people who didn't go have been inspired by the stories of those who did, suddenly now that there is plenty to do, theoretical divisions give way to concerns of practical importance.

As a minority within the movement of the exploited, anarchists must find ways to work and interact with those with whom they disagree. At the same time this doesn't mean that disagreements are hidden. It is important that the concept of critical solidarity be understood widely, for all too often a critical attitude is taken to mean a lack of support. We can be critical of the Zapatistas while we act in solidarity with the struggle of the excluded in Chiapas against the Mexican State and the imposition of neo-liberal economics. It is always more important to act in solidarity with people's decision to create their own lives, than to agree with their theoretical

But, as anarchists, who refuse such a vanguard, transcendent position, we are part of the multitude, we are within it, we are immanent to it. We are exploited as the multitude is; we are excluded as the multitude is. While on the one hand the anarchist ethic is always a critical ethic that denounces transcendent institutions and morality, it is also always a constructive ethic that leads towards the building of new social relations and new forms of active power. As a minority within the struggling multitude, we choose a form of organization that follows both the logic of our position within the movement of the exploited and the anarchist ethic of immanently organized social relations—relations that are self-organized instead of organized by a transcendent institution (such as the state, the church, or the party) which stands outside the multitude. We must organize ourselves in a manner that won't tend towards permanence and hierarchy, which won't come to stand above the multitude, and chooses self-activity over image and representation. We must develop forms of organization that open the potential for insurrection and move the struggle in that direction, instead of always shifting that potential further into the future.

Informal Organization

What type of organization allows decision to occur in the moment of its necessity? We call organization that lacks the formality and authority which separate organizers and organized, *informal organization.* In this section, we are specifically discussing the organization of social struggle. We will discuss some general principles that have grown out of practice. Just as some small-scale societies lack formal impersonal institutions, informal organization lacks offices and hierarchical positions. Because the organizer's nature is to plan and control, s/he often privileges the perpetuation of the organization over other goals. Informal organizations dissolve when their goal is achieved or abandoned, they do not perpetuate themselves merely for the sake of the organization if the goals that caused people to organize have ceased to exist. The passage from informal to formal or permanent organization is analogous to the moment when a small-scale society creates impersonal institutions; it is a moment in which the group's power is alienated and placed outside of it.

Informal organization is a means for affinity groups to coordinate efforts when necessary. We must always remember that many things can be done easier with an affinity group or individual, in these cases higher levels of organization just makes the decision making process cumbersome, it stifles us. *The smallest amount of organization necessary* to achieve ones aims is always the best to maximize our active powers.

Informal organization must be based on an ethic of autonomous action; autonomy is necessary to prevent our active powers from becoming alienated, to prevent the formation of relations of authority. Autonomy is refusing to obey or give orders, which are always shouted from above or beyond the situation. Autonomy allows decision to occur in and during the situation of its necessity, instead of being predetermined or delayed by the decision of a committee or meeting. Organizational platforms impose a formality in the decision making process that inhibits autonomy. This does not mean to say, however, that we shouldn't think strategically about the future and make agreements or plans. On the contrary, plans and agreements are useful and important. What we are emphasizing is a flexibility that allows people to discard plans when they become useless. Plans should be adaptable to events as they unfold. It can be dangerous during a demonstration or action to hesitate to change plans when events take an unexpected turn, because one's group had originally planned otherwise. Since autonomy is born out of an ethic that rejects the blocking of active powers, it therefore implies a refusal to block the actions of others with an important exception. When others try to impede our action, we will not just sit by and let them. Examples of this include, those who tried to physically stop protestors from breaking windows in Seattle, those who take photos of illegal actions, those who unmask people who choose to be masked for security reasons, and those who mark protestors with paint to be identified later by the police. These people not only refuse to respect the autonomy of others' action, but take this to an extreme by trying to place those they disagree with in the hands of the police, enemies who have the power to take away years of our lives. We have no choice but to defend ourselves. *The point where autonomy ends is the point where alienated power is formed, where our only weapon, our power to act is taken from us.*

Just as an informal organization must have an ethic of autonomy or it will be transformed into an authoritarian organization, in order to avoid the alienation of our active powers, it must also have an ethic of no compromise with respect the organization's agreed goal. The organization's goal should be either achieved or abandoned. Compromising with those who we oppose (e.g.; such as the State or a corporation) defeats all true opposition, it replaces our power to act with that of our enemies. Since Seattle, global financial and trade organizations have been calling for dialogue. To get us to bargain with them they have tried to look sympathetic and concerned. During the protests in Prague in September, a World Bank representative said: "We sympathize with the questions the protestors are proposing but we disagree with their methods. We think they're going about this in the wrong way. We want dialogue not force." Another World Bank representative said:

becomes necessary to wait to act until the appropriate material conditions arise, for a crisis to arise in capitalism as a whole. Such thinking is blind to the multifarious local motivations for revolt.

Transcendent organizations can only command revolt; in doing so they try to deprive revolt of its impetus, the immanent desire of the multitude. It is this desire that is the spark of insurrection; only it can transform the whole of social life. No individual, affinity group, or organization can command insurrection; *insurrection is by nature uncontrollable.* Those who dream of an insurrection cannot just will it into existence, they can only open up the possibility for its unfolding through direct attacks on this social order, actions which can communicate and spread throughout society.

2. Capital can never be attacked in the abstract, it can only be attacked in its concrete manifestations; *attack is always local, but it can communicate globally*. Local attacks can inspire people elsewhere—who have a common enemy—to take action. The points at which people perceive the commonality of an enemy vary widely, from a specific company, specific law or politician, to capitalism or the state as a whole. Actions and the publicizing of actions via communiques and our media are opportunities for people to see the commonality between the oppressed in a faraway place and themselves. In this lies an opportunity for people to take their analysis one step further, and become critical of capitalism as a totality.

Recently in North America, environmentalists have been more successful than workers in letting local struggle communicate the global scale of capital. The environmental direct action movement is spreading quickly all over the continent, with very little organization at all. The ELF[3] is not an organization, anyone can sign the name ELF (though those who started it request that those who sign the name meet certain criteria of perspective and goal). Yet, ELF actions have spread widely without the support of an organization, ELF actions occur because people are angry that the earth is being trashed, this ire spreads more effectively than would a permanent organization with its committees and paper selling. Not all people who engage in such acts of sabotage use the name ELF, there are innumerable other examples, the tearing up of genetically engineered test crops which has spread over several continents is the most well known example. In these cases, the local act of sabotage communicates a global enemy the capitalist industrial machine that is polluting our planet.

3. The recent upsurge of the global days of action offers an opportunity for specific actions to communicate and build links globally. But we need to ask what exactly is the nature of the opportunity that the global days of action offer anarchists? While the targets chosen, the international institutions of capitalism, do help to communicate an opposition to

longer be completely outside of capitalism; it is a social disease that has touched all societies. This is not to say that it has fully penetrated them all, the few Penan of Borneo that remain in the forest do still share a social life that is in stark contrast to capitalist relations. But they are fighting for their lives and there is not much forest left. We must understand that just as a genetically modified test crop will spread into nearby fields, capitalism is a pest which seeks to take over everything it touches; it cannot be contained without being destroyed as a whole.

Many anarchists in the anti-globalization movement operate on the scale of the nation-state, imagining that Clastres' "Society Against the State" could be rearticulated as the "State Against Capital"; they seem to understand capital as becoming pure and separating itself from the state. And as an index of current pessimism the state is imagined as protecting culture against global capitalism. As we argued in our section on value, however, there can be no capitalism without transcendent institutions, such as the state, to back up its private property system. The state, in some form, is the condition of possibility of capitalism, that which is necessary for capitalism to go on existing. Thus capitalism can never free itself from the state and continue to reproduce itself. Of course, the transcendent institutions that allow for the reproduction of capitalism are constantly transforming themselves; they are not static.

As the scale of the state-capital relation changes so too must the organization of resistance and attack; yet, any argument that we need to compromise and even ally ourselves with older transcendent institutions such as the nation-state are sorely misguided. Any compromise with alienated power can only cut us off from our power to transform society and our power to create the life of our desires to the best of our abilities. Thinking about the issue of the scale of resistance, about how to bring the concept of a transnational resistance to and attack on capital into practice, demands a much more careful analysis.

1. When people start thinking on global terms there is sometimes a tendency to assume that the only way for a struggle to be global is to function like a state or corporation, to try to synthesize all struggle within one international organization, and thus unify practice through this organization. This is undesirable from an anti-authoritarian point of view, yet it is also impractical. How could one possibly bring all struggle under one organization, without first suppressing many local struggles. A large organization of this sort by nature separates decision from the needs of the exploited, it makes them wait to act until the moment which is most advantageous to the organization. Large organizations that bring together many social struggles often think only in abstract terms about capital. It thus

"These are important meetings, about ending AIDS and poverty; what we want is dialogue not diatribes." The fact that the World Bank wants dialogue is a measure of our success in the streets. They hope we will choose dialogue over direct action, because they know that dialogue with them would be ineffective, that they would never really concede to our demands. They can listen to us, politely respond, even make minor adjustments, but they all eventually go home to a gated community of oblivion and have a martini. This is why they want to channel the force of our direct action into appeals, petitions and attempts to manipulate the mainstream media. The World Bank recognizes the power of our direct action and is taking counter measures; it is trying to convince us to use ineffective methods.

The scraps handed down to appease and divert us by those we oppose must be refused. Compromise with any transcendent institution (the State, WTO, WB, IMF, the Party etc.) is always the alienation of our power to the very institutions we supposedly wish to destroy; this sort of compromise results in the forfeiture of our power to act decisively, to make decisions and actions in the time we choose. As such, compromise only makes the state and capital stronger.

For those who wish to open the possibility of insurrection, those who don't wish to wait for the supposedly appropriate material conditions for revolution, for those who don't want a revolution which is merely the creation of a new power structure but want the destruction of all structures which alienate out power from us, such compromise is contrary to their aims. To continually refuse to compromise is to be in perpetual conflict with the established order and its structures of domination and deprivation. Permanent conflictuality means that we will not wait for orders from leaders or organizers who, by nature of their role, aim to control our rebellion and thus alienate our active powers. Permanent conflictuality is uncontrollable autonomous action.

Informal organizations may be composed of affinity groups with quite different political perspectives from each other. The disparate perspectives that may be found in an informal organization would not tend to be found within the affinity group. The affinity group would be based on a commonality of perspective that wouldn't necessarily exist in a larger group. Some people wish to open the possibility for insurrection, while others are only concerned with an immediate goal. There is no reason why those who share an immediate practical aim but diverge in their long-term goals might not come together. For example, an anti-genetic engineering group could form and decide to coordinate the tearing up test crops if there are many plots in an area and to circulate anti-GE leaflets. (In cases of sabotage, the fewer the people who know the better, information should

only be shared between affinity groups when there is a reason to coordinate efforts, for example, when it is desirable for several affinity groups to hit several targets in one night.) In this case those who want an insurrectionary rupture with this social order and those who merely hate genetic engineering could easily work together towards this immediate goal. For those who wish to open the possibility of insurrection, such cooperation will not close the door on their dreams. Informal organization, with its ethics of autonomy and no compromise, does not control struggle; and, uncontrollability opens the possibility for an insurrectionary rupture with this necrophilic social order.

In the above case, we're assuming that all involved uphold an anti-authoritarian ethic that respects autonomy of action. Because authority can arise in any group, some anarchists feel safer if they only interact with other anarchists, thus avoiding authoritarians. *It is not the label anarchist that annihilates authority, but an ongoing struggle with all those one interacts with.* Every new situation and relation we enter poses the possibility for the rise of authority. Just as Clastres called attention to a "Society against the State," other anthropologists who have lived in small-scale societies have noted a process of assertive egalitarianism, an active tendency to squelch attempts at creating roles of authority, or economic inequality. In an informal organization, we need to assertively counter the formation of authoritarian relations. The difficulty of this problem cannot be avoided by staying in an anarchist ghetto.

Anarchists could be a force that helps the anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian currents within the anti-globalization movement spread further. This could be achieved by opening up discussion between anarchists and other anti-capitalist groups, and between anti-capitalists and anti-corporate/anti-globalization groups. This discussion would in some cases lead to links of cooperation and solidarity. When we discuss the importance of links between struggles or the spread of struggle we are not talking about a growth in numbers of an organization or movement. The type of organization that we have been discussing is not composed of people who aim to increase its numbers at the sacrifice of the quality of the relationships of those who come together; the spark of rebellion cannot be quantified. Informal organization is a means for discussion between diverse individuals and groups to become focused action. Informal organizations, affinity groups and individuals have already given birth to many projects, some of which aim to increase communication and sharing such as gatherings, the creation of social spaces like info-shops, and publications, these projects are crucial when capitalism constantly puts up walls to separate us. Others have focused on the urgent task of directly attacking the existent social order.

"Make our struggle as transnational as capital."

This slogan is very compelling and has become the most common slogan heard within the anti-globalization movement. But how do we make our struggle as transnational as capital? This brings up some difficult problems for anti-authoritarians. How can a transnational struggle against capital and the state occur without creating an overarching massive authoritarian structure? How can struggle against a common enemy, capital, remain focused yet disparate, local and global? Transnational struggle, in reality, means struggle on many scalar levels. It also demands the development of many practices that allow us to work together and, at the same time, ward off the growth of transcendent institutions in our midst. Operating on many scalar levels will create tensions within the movement, and there is no simple solution that resolves such tensions. Yet, attempting to operate on a single scalar level, such as the national scale or the building of a massive international organization, dooms our movement to failure; nor can we build a local cocoon to hibernate in. Waiting only brings us defeat.

Capitalism is a very adaptable force; it has managed to embed itself in innumerable social and cultural realities. Capitalism operates from above and below; it imposes itself through the coercion of deprivation and then embeds itself in social relations. There is one capitalism, it operates as a system, yet it functions in millions of particular local ways. Any fight against it must destroy both the transcendent institutions that impose it from above (the state, companies, etc.) and transform the relations that sustain it from below. If the structures of domination and deprivation which uphold capitalism, and the capitalist social relations that have penetrated nearly every facet of our daily lives are to be destroyed, this destruction must spring from the desire of the multitude. The desire to destroy capitalism is the spark which must arise in many localities and spread throughout the globe, in order for our struggle to become as transnational as capital.

There is no longer anywhere to hide. If we destroy the state and capital in one place, leaving the industrial military regime in the hands of our enemies, our little utopia will soon be crushed. Likewise if we try to isolate ourselves, as Hakim Bey so poetically suggests in T.A.Z., to create a self-sufficient autonomous zone free from capital, we cannot succeed. It is of course very important to create spaces for ourselves where we can breathe freely; where we can act and think without the immediate strait jacket of capitalist relations and roles, without the 9-5 production-consumption grind. But if we stop there we run into a problem, capitalism surrounds us. The squat is evicted, the self-sufficient rural community is surrounded by towns, or logging moves in until the only trees left are on ones land. One can no