

Revolutionary Struggle and Insurrection

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Why Insurrection

Our task as anarchists, our main preoccupation and greatest desire, is to see the social revolution come about: a terrible upheaval of men and institutions which finally succeeds in putting an end to exploitation and establishing the reign of justice.

For we anarchists the revolution is our guide, our constant point of reference, no matter what we are doing or what problem we are concerned with. The anarchy we want will not be possible without the painful revolutionary break. If we want to avoid turning this into no more than a dream we must struggle to destroy the State and the exploiters through revolution.

But the revolution is not a myth to be used simply 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 of the masses and the most politically sensitized minority, opens the way to the possible involvement of increasingly wider strata of exploited in a flux of rebellion which could lead to the revolution but could also end up in the establishment of a new power or a bloody confirmation of the old one. In the case of the latter, although the insurrection begins as a liberating uprising it concludes bitterly with the re-establishment of State and private power. That is the natural way of things. Insurrection is the indispensable element of the revolution without which, without a long and painful series of which, there will be no revolution and power will reign undisturbed in the fullness of its might. We are not to be discouraged. Once again, obtusely, we are preparing and struggling for the insurrection that will come about, a small part of the great future mosaic of the revolution.

Certainly, capitalism contains deep contradictions that push it towards processes of adjustment and evolution aimed at avoiding the periodic crises that 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. In the meantime, for our part, we are preparing ourselves and the exploited masses for insurrection.

In this sense we consider the time is always ripe for the next insurrection. Better a failed insurrection than a hundred vacillations which cause the failure of a hundred occasions from which it might have been possible for the final revolution to break out. We are therefore against those who say that the recent defeat of the revolutionary movement should make us reflect and conclude that we should be more prudent. We consider that the time for insurrection has come precisely because it is always time to fight, whereas procrastinating is useful only capital.

To prepare for insurrection means to prepare the subjective conditions (personal and material) that consent a specific anarchist minority to create the indispensable circumstances

for the development of the insurrectional process. Although insurrection is a mass phenomenon, and would risk aborting immediately if it were not, its beginning is always the result of the action of a decided minority, a handful of brave ones capable of attacking the nerve centres of the partial objective to be reached.

We must be very clear on this point. The tasks of the anarchist struggle against power can be extremely varied, but all—in our opinion—must be coherently directed towards preparing the insurrection. Some comrades may want to dedicate themselves to theoretical clarification, economic analyses, philosophy or historical research but all this must be immediately functional to the preparation of that minority capable of realizing the insurrection, acting in such a way that the masses participate as widely as possible or that at least that they do not hinder it.

Some comrades might consider the insurrection realizable in the near future (not put off to infinity), others that it can be realized right away: this can determine a division of tasks, in the sense that the former will be inclined to interest themselves more in the problems of revolutionary culture, but their final aim must be the same. Otherwise the rebel forces, who need precisely clarity to organize action and not chatter to put it off, would be lulled to sleep.

The minority's task of preparation is therefore twofold: on the one hand that of being sensitized to problems at the level of the class struggle, which are not only military and political but principally of a social and economic nature. Following that, concrete, specific and detailed preparation with the insurrection in view.

Once again, we insist: the preparation of the wide masses can in no way be one of the preconditions of the revolution. If we were to wait for all the masses to be prepared for this grandiose task we would never do anything. We are convinced that the preparation of the great masses will more than anything be a consequence of the revolution, and perhaps not the most immediate one. On the contrary, the revolutionary anarchist minority must be prepared for the historic task awaiting them.

Let us also eliminate the argument of "purity". We do not only participate in insurrections led by anarchists but also in all the other insurrections that have the characteristics of the people in revolt, even if for some reason it is our future enemies, the stalinists, that are leading them. In that case we should try to conquer a better place for ourselves in the struggle itself, during the events, defending as far as possible our programme of total liberation which we shall counterpose to the banally economic ones of the authoritarians. It will be the insurrection itself to verify the rest.

The insurrection is a task to be accomplished right away. But with what concrete means? We have seen that the specific minority must take charge of the initial attack, surprising power and determining a situation of confusion which could put the forces of repression in difficulty and make the exploited masses reflect upon whether to intervene or not. But what do we mean by specific minority? Perhaps the revolutionary movement in the wide sense? These questions require a clear answer.

Let us begin with the widest hypothesis. From the point of view we are interested in, the revolutionary movement as a whole cannot be considered a specific minority capable of realizing the insurrection together. It presents a whole series of contradictions, which in turn mirror the contradictions of the society we are living in. To the ideological model

corresponds organisational groupings that end up putting theoretical prejudice before the immediate interests of liberation. Moreover, the analytical formulas of a large part of the revolutionary movement are of an authoritarian character, therefore envisage the conquest of the State, not its immediate destruction. They foresee its use in an anti-bourgeois sense, not its disappearance. This part of the revolutionary movement, therefore, clearly have no interest in preparing for insurrection right away as they delude themselves that time is on their side, crumbling away the supporting base of capitalism and preparing the revolutionary situation without the dangerous anti-chamber of insurrection. We would thus find this section of the revolutionary movement taking an anti-insurrectional position, going as far (as we have seen in many cases recently) as attacking and denouncing the anarchist comrades who support the opposite thesis. We conclude at this point that it is not possible to widen the concept of the specific minority. Hypothetically, when the stalinists unleash their insurrectional process, either because they are convinced that the revolutionary conditions are ripe or because they are drawn by the solicitations of the base who are not interested in ideological refinements, then our task will be that of participating in the insurrection with all our forces, to fight in the concrete field of struggle and find there the necessary space for our ideas. In the case of the contrary, where it is we who are the initiators and proposers of the insurrection, we might quite possibly find this part of the revolutionary movement to be in an opposite position or, at best, in the position of waiting.

Let us now see if the anarchist movement as a whole can be considered a specific minority capable of eventually realizing insurrection. The conclusion is negative yet again. The contradictions within the movement are immense and mainly due to the fears and restraints which a restricted group of shams have carefully disseminated within it. At the present time the movement resembles an old coat covered in patches, which only with a great deal of good will recalls its past splendours. The flight towards hypothetical forms of elitist interventions such as the attempt to impose pre-constituted analyses or catechisms ready for use, or when it claimed to supply the whole movement with the final analysis to be put into practice right away, has proved a failure. The same flight backwards towards anarcho-syndicalism which could not fail to leave both the exploited as a whole and the revolutionary comrades disappointed. And then the wider and ascertained politics of the ostrich, of hiding behind the fear of provocation in order to do nothing, only to intervene after the event, always with the scales ready to weigh, judge and condemn the few comrades who were doing anything at all, even if circumscribed and limited. From this part of the movement there remains but the name, the symbol, a few old comrades, a few young comrades old before their time, a few optimists who never lose hope, parchment mummies in their little shop. The great number of active comrades who form the revolutionary part of the anarchist movement and who are ready to begin the struggle must not be discouraged by Cassandras and birds of ill omen. Action is the measure for distinguishing beyond symbols and declarations of principle.

It is precisely the comrades that are available for action who make up the specific minority. They will be the ones to prepare and realize the insurrection in the ways and forms which the experience of the revolutionary struggle as a whole has transmitted to us, taking into consideration the recent modifications of the State and the bosses. The method cannot fail to take account of minimal organizational forms of the base which will have to solve the

various problems that will arise during the insurrectional preparation. In these organizational forms the responsibility for the work to be done must obviously fall on the revolutionary anarchist comrades and cannot be left to goodwill or improvisation. At this stage the very rules of survival impose the indispensable conditions of security and caution. The urgency of action puts an end to pointless chatter.

There is more to be said of the actions carried out in minimal structures of intervention by the specific minority as just identified. These actions cannot be considered purely from the point of view of "propaganda by the deed". Their aim, in fact, is not that of giving an example or of influencing a wide range of sympathizers. Certainly this empirical aspect also exists, bearing in mind that the maximum alliance that will guarantee the success of future plans is that of the masses in revolt, but this aspect is easily recuperated by the mechanisms of capitalist information which transform it into merchandise, retailing it through the newspapers, television, cinema, books, etc. The truth is that the specific minority themselves, through realizing action, have the possibility of making something clear to others if they themselves understand something in the moment of the action. Action therefore means education through action, education of oneself and others. If we think that we know everything and put our trust exclusively in our own knowledge at the moment of action, we are putting a repetitive mechanism into the hands of capitalism, one that inserts itself perfectly within the generalized mechanism of capitalist production which, above all else, is repetition to infinity.

The action of the specific minority must not therefore consist of an interruption of learning what the reality of the struggle is at one's cost, but a gradual and complete transformation of one's own learning in showing others how one learns to understand the reality of the struggle. If the action of the specific minority gives an example of anything it gives the example of how one learns to single out and strike the enemy, and not how one teaches. The right action at the right time becomes the substance of the individual and specific attack and symbol of all the possible future attacks. This unfurling of a moment which has not yet reached maturity is the maximum level of intervention that the minority operating in the reality of the struggle reaches. The class struggle is what characterizes the conflict in act and is the element that allows the concrete action of the specific minority. Within it action is continually transforming itself from attempt to understand to attempt to teach. By cancelling the first moment everything drowns in repetition, by cancelling the second, everything drowns in indecision.

In the continual flux of the class struggle one finds everything, teachers and pupils. In it everything finds its place within the relationships of strength. Whoever has not learned from their own mistakes can demonstrate nothing to others, and an eminent way of not learning is precisely by ceasing to learn, of thinking that the time has come to teach and that is all. Through the filter of the class struggle the memory of the revolution unfolds slowly, becoming something which can be handed down. In action this memory is handed down concretely and becomes perceptible to others at the moment in which it is reflection and criticism for the person who carries out the action himself.

Each individual minimal structure of intervention that acts within the specific minority runs the risk of placing itself in contrast with the revolutionary movement as a whole and

sometimes with the whole mass of the exploited, if the sense of one's action is not posed correctly. In the face of so many references, if we take ourselves as an isolated part we end up convincing ourselves that the whole movement and the exploited, their fate and the fate of the revolution, depends on us. We expect who knows what from what we are doing and remain frustrated by the superficiality of the response and the general incomprehension. The revolutionary struggle is like a stormy sea against which to struggle would be vain folly, it is necessary to adapt ourselves to the direction of the waves, to swim sometimes strongly and sometimes lightly, to grasp the impetus of life which the sea hides within it to reach the desired goal. It is in this difficult art of swimming that the political meaning of minority action is hidden. The latter puts emphasis on its class significance, exploding suddenly as a fruit of the revolutionary memory and as indication for the struggle now in act.

We think, therefore, that if they are correctly chosen, the actions of these minimal structures are indispensable for the preparation of the whole insurrectional process, which we consider to be the immediate task of all anarchists that cannot be postponed. Far from there being a contrast between the two things—as some have tried to point out to us—we consider that they are complementary and indissociable. The basic task of the minimal structure of intervention sums up all the work of an organisational and general nature of the specific minority as a whole. Once again the insurrection will be the acid test, both cause and effect, of the changing of the power relationship that leads to the opening of the doors of the revolution.

Strategy and Methods

Exploitation is the foundation of the capitalist system. Without a terroristic dictatorship based on poverty, fear and death by a few over the many, capital's dominion would come to an end.

This determines the class struggle. Although they seem to adapt and compromise, the exploited are constantly on the defensive and ready. They follow the enemy's difficulties with interest, regard their traitors (who call themselves their defenders) with suspicion, and wait for the best moment to rise up and insurg.

The social clash alternates between acute confrontation and quieter spells. New theories and practices are developed that are never a simple repetition of what has gone before. Each historic moment produces new opposing sides: new bosses, new traitors, new exploited, new strategies of attack against exploitation, new attempts at repression.

Roughly speaking, we can say that capital is moving from repression through use of the economic apparatus to that using the political one. In the past, in happier times for capital, wide strata of the population were prepared to offer themselves in exchange for a wage, so everything was left to illusions of self-regulating market forces. As these strata diminished, with a consequent rise in the cost of labour, or when social pressure forced employment to grow out of all proportion, the system's automatic margins of equilibrium are reduced and it goes towards more overtly political and repressive strategies. The State intervenes massively to regulate both the economic and social process. Troubles become acute, the police becoming the cardinal element in maintaining social order, with the army waiting in the wings.

The strategy of the exploited also passes from a trade union type of organising—corresponding to the free market phase of capital—to a more disjointed procedure, apparently uncertain and contradictory, but which is lively and creative and more amenable to self-organisation. This process heightens the level of the struggle, possibly even allowing the use of armed struggle.

It should not seem contradictory that the exploited respond to the State's attempts at enforced order with creativity and self-organisation. Increasing repression triggers off many mechanisms, one of them being precisely that of heightening the level of the social clash. Moreover, this comes as a result of deteriorating conditions where large wageless strata are no longer waiting patiently to enter the world of production, even at starvation wages. Hopes of better times, more consumer goods and better wages are far more effective reins than police or army.

Repressive strategies and methods

Strategies are the choice of certain methods that are applied in the social clash. Methods are stable and well-defined procedures, so much so that they cannot be changed, at least within the present framework of exploitation.

Whereas strategies are linked to short term conditions and must be constantly updated, modified, discussed and, when necessary, declared unsuitable, methods are fixed, guaranteeing a continuity that characterises the struggle on both fronts. Strategies are constantly changing in the clash between classes, but the methods used remain the same.

As we have seen, capital uses different strategies at different moments: it goes from a free market logic to nationalised production, mixes increased productivity with less military repression and vice versa. Sometimes it intensifies consumerism, at others it reduces it, using monetary mechanisms instead of taxation. At still other times it uses overt repression, establishing a closed regime using nationalistic puppet politicians and uniformed torturers to eliminate all dissent in bloodshed.

But all of these strategies are based on four basic methods:

Information controlled by the power structure.

This is not only the task of the media, but also of everything that appears to be based on consultation with the people: elections, choice of work, choice of culture, use of free time, consumerism, political opinions, scale of ethical values, etc.

Differentiated education of the various social classes.

Not just a question of schooling, this is a continuing process. It is the method that corroborates and instills controlled information that would otherwise disappear into a void. A series of coordinated processes that produce and confirm ethical values, they are often applied at mass level, but are sometimes restricted to a minority.

Political and social reform.

Any one of power's single projects must be seen as part of a constantly changing whole. Even the most tyrannical regimes of the past moved towards adjusting and compromising with the oppressed. Absolute repression is a myth, an ideal that no reigning power can maintain for long. A mixture of pure repression and reformist compromise is always preferred. Modern democracies have gone a long way in this direction.

Terroristic repression of any behaviour deviating from the established norm.

This goes from social condemnation to organised terror by police, army, courts, prisons, etc., against anyone who tries to reappropriate what has been taken from them. In the latter case the State will use either specific organisations (police, secret services, army, etc), organisations designated for other activities, but which carry out terroristic duties when required (trades unions, parties, political movements, schools, hospitals, cultural structures, newspapers, television, etc.) or specifically terrorist organisations created by the State itself, drawing from the army, police, judiciary, extreme right political movements, professional killers, organised crime syndicates, etc.

It should be said here that any one of these methods does not exclude another, but that they are all applied at the same time with interesting results. Think, for example, of the effect that the development of information is having on the educational process. 'Information

technology' is still very much in the air. Basically, as we have said, repression is intensified when the other two methods show signs of slowing up and becoming inefficient. The inverse process, a reduction in State terrorism, tends to be slow as the organisations and mentalities whose usual methods are those of violence, torture and murder, tend to die hard.

Revolutionary strategies and methods

The difference between strategies and methods is constant, as it is a question of the forms of action human beings possess. Whether policeman or revolutionary, they cannot avoid studying the strategically different application of some basic methods.

Strategies are directly related to the conditions of the social clash at a given moment, not simply a consequence of it. The revolutionary is constantly trying to act on reality, to penetrate it and change it with his actions. But these actions, if they are to go beyond the field of illusion, must take account of the level the clash is at.

When the level of the clash is low, with wide strata of the exploited excluded from wage-earning and capital abandons itself to irrational market forces, the revolutionary strategy will be that of strengthening the movement, penetrating the various sectors of the world of work and unemployment among workers, housewives, labourers and students.

At a higher level, capital begins to show signs of instability. The State intervenes heavily to rectify an intolerable situation created by the capitalists' inability to manage the economy. The State's terroristic repression increases, each struggle risks becoming reabsorbed and even contributing to strengthening exploitation by rectifying some of its irrational aspects. Although it is partial and circumscribed, information and theory can be understood by the exploited during these moments. Things would remain at a purely theoretical and meaningless level otherwise. It is in the struggle itself, even the limited one in defence of rights or already existing conquests, that we prepare for a possible heightening of the clash.

Armed struggle employs the method of violent attack against the State, its organisations and structures, its men, wealth and projects. The fact that this method is often part of strategies at higher levels of the social clash does not mean that it is a 'higher', or more efficient, or more revolutionary method of struggle than others. It is a different method, with its own characteristics, limitations and qualities, but which cannot be placed in a hypothetical scale of revolutionary values. One level of consciousness pushes a proletarian to hand out a leaflet in front of a factory, another to arm himself to take back what has been taken from him, or to shoot a policeman or judge. Another again pushes him to attack a factory, sabotage its production and damage stocks. Still another will make him associate with others in the same situation, men and women conscious of the need to come together to work out an attack against the class enemy.

No one of these methods excludes the other. On the contrary, they interpenetrate and support each other. It is therefore never possible to positively identify one precise moment where a given method should be used. They are used together and bear fruit according to the limits and perspectives of the various strategies they are applied in.

The problem of strategy

A strategy of attack is of little importance for revolutionary dreamers. There exists an illusion that truth will triumph in the end, so, like the Christian martyrs, one marches onwards, holding high the torch of ideological purity, but often remaining very far from the reality of things.

In actual fact, the proletarians and exploited in general who undergo very acute levels of oppression, do not have clear ideas. The equation exploitation/clarity is not at all true. One can live one's whole life in chains, dragging them along, and still believe one has lived thanks to them rather than in spite of them. This point cannot be overstressed. Information on its own is not enough. 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.

As anarchists we pursue a qualitative growth in the movement, and support its self-organisation. In this we distinguish ourselves from the authoritarians and stalinists who support a massive quantitative growth based on total control and 'democratic' centralism. But not for this can we wait to infinity for the people to organise with their quality and creativity. We must act more directly, moving as a specific minority. This means taking on the task of carrying out actions that the exploited, at a certain level of the class struggle, cannot develop on their own. If we fail to do this we will simply end up consigning ourselves into the hands of the stalinists, and the proletariat along with us.

Let us give a few examples:

When setting out information we must adhere to reality as clearly as possible in order to avoid any ideological re-elaboration. We cannot expect the exploited to act immediately on reading our information, putting it to their own spontaneous use. We would be heading straight for failure, and end up circulating a horrible mixture of platitudes and meaningless generalisations. We should apply a revolutionary critique to contributions in our publications, so as to place them within our strategy more coherently. Our work will never be purely 'objective' without denying itself as information.

We must force ourselves to see things as they are, not how we would like them to be. Our innate love for utopia—of great nobility and sentimentality—must take second place in the face of the need for analysis based on reality. To do this, or even to simply understand it when it is done by other comrades, we must provide ourselves with some basic instruments. We might as well limit ourselves to pub talk if we don't possess some basic awareness (and perhaps a bit more than that) of economics. The point-blank refusal to widen our study of certain instruments such as economics, history, philosophy, State administration, public finance, etc., is based on a mistaken interpretation of the anarchist concept of destruction.

Anarchists are often reluctant to involve themselves in intermediate struggles. Their essential purity makes them have nightmares. They imagine being compromised with other not always 'clean' political forces, and of not being able to compete with them at the level of intermediate claims or political sophistry. This blocks many initiatives at the simple stage of information. In so doing we are showing lack of faith in the great clarity of the anarchist discourse, which demonstrates the need to refuse delegation of the struggle. Then they are

surprised and almost disdainful about the fact that the exploited do not have clear ideas, fail to understand why they should not delegate their struggle to others, and continue to be conned by the professional politicians. This tragicomic situation often becomes clear in public debates, conferences and demonstrations that have been organised along with the forces of the more or less revolutionary left. The anarchists start off with great gusto, go all out to organise demonstrations, work out their own information with great precision and clarity (through leaflets, posters, talks, conferences, etc), then reach a mental block. They leave the political management of the event to other forces. It is usually these forces that exploit the anarchists' great propagandistic energy and manipulate the media, implying they are the only ones capable of doing anything against power.

In the meantime, the anarchists have returned to their own groups and are asking themselves how on earth they have failed to prevent a political take-over of their initiatives yet again. At the same time they remain prepared and available for any future requests of collaboration.

We cannot stop half way in these things. Once begun, we must continue to prevent attempts at being taken over, even using political means. After all, we can also intervene, before the stalinists take over. And, especially when we are among the organisers of the demonstration, we can also get particular motions passed at the end of the conference or meeting without feeling more 'dirty' or compromised than when we set out to work with other left political groups. To brush these problems aside, considering them to be unimportant or pointless compromise, we risk losing the fruits of the intermediate work and appearing to the exploited as comrades who are there purely by accident, alongside other political factions that are far more organised than ourselves. This gives the exploited the idea that party leadership is indispensable, the stalinists are given a hand in their grim quantitative work, and what we had been trying to build at the start is lost.

There is no need to be afraid of dirtying our hands by using the methods of intermediate struggles, so long as the aims of anarchists remain clear throughout, showing up the tricks of the professional politicians and the risks of authoritarianism. To a certain extent this can be achieved by not backing out of arguments with the authoritarian political sharks.

In clandestine armed struggle things cannot just be left to improvisation or to the spontaneity of individuals or very small groups. This method is extremely articulate and lends itself to applications of great strategic importance along with the intervention of other methods. From sabotage and the actions of individuals or very small autonomous groups, quite wide levels can be reached, capable of drawing in dozens of groups and hundreds of comrades. It is important to note here that the qualitative development of armed revolutionary action comes into contrast with some of its indispensable quantitative needs. A few comrades cannot do much, but it is a mistake to think that a mere growth in numbers gives rise to a correct use of armed struggle as a method. Generally, what is being looked for at the organisational stage is the creative development of ideas, theories, analysis, interpersonal relations, actions, contacts with the outside, and a spreading of the strategic project. An increase in numbers follows afterwards, and in turn will have a considerable effect on the quality of the organisation. One should not go too far in either direction: neither thinking purely in terms of number, nor going to the other extreme, believing that quality is the

only thing that counts. This apparent contradiction only exists when the method is seen as something immediate and circumscribed, instead of being seen in the long term.

Certain aspects of armed struggle can also be used in the intermediate stage, that of information. At this point it will not be likely to spread, but to accentuate the information itself. The 'angle' one gives to this is important. Not being 'mealy-mouthed', saying things clearly, and backing them up with 'harder' forms of intervention, can stimulate an awakening of consciousness and is a creative contribution to a quantitative growth in the future.

Affinity

Anarchists have a contradictory relationship with the question of organisation.

On the one hand there are those who accept a permanent structure with a well-defined programme and means at their disposal (even if only a few), that is divided up into commissions, while on the other there are those who refuse any stable relationship, even in the short term.

Classical anarchist federations and individualists are the two extremes of an escape from the reality of the clash. The comrade that belongs to an organised structure hopes that a revolutionary transformation will be the result of a growth in numbers, so he holds the cheap illusion that the structure is capable of controlling any authoritarian involution or any concession to the logic of the party. The individualist comrade is solicitous of his own ego and fears any form of contamination, any concession to others or any active collaboration, believing such things to be giving in and compromising.

This turns out to be the natural consequence, even for comrades who consider the problem of specific organisation and the federation of groups critically.

The organisation is thus born before any struggles take place and ends up adapting to the perspective of a certain kind of struggle which—at least one supposes—is to make the organisation itself grow. In this way the structure has a vicarious relationship with the repressive decisions of power, which for various reasons dominate the scene of the class struggle. Resistance and the self-organisation of the exploited are seen as molecular elements to be grasped here and there, but which only become meaningful on entering and becoming part of the specific structure or when they allow themselves to be regrouped into mass organisms under the (more or less direct) leadership of the latter.

In this way, one is always waiting. It is as though we are all in provisional liberty. We scrutinise the attitudes of power and keep ready to react (always within the limits of the possible) against the repression that strikes us, but hardly ever take the initiative and set out our interventions in first person, overturning the logic of the loser. Anybody that recognises themselves in structured organisations expects to see the number of their members increase. Anyone who works within mass structures (in the anarcho-syndicalist optic for example) is waiting for today's small demands to turn into great revolutionary results in the future. Those who deny all that but also spend their time waiting, who knows what for, are often stuck in resentment against all and everything, sure of their own ideas without realising that they are no more than the flip side of the organisational and grammatical stance.

We believe that it is possible to do something else.

We start off from the consideration that it is necessary to establish contact with other comrades in order to pass to action. So long as our struggle is reduced to platonic protest,

bloody and terrible as it sounds, but still platonic, we are not in a condition to act alone. If we want to act on reality incisively there must be many of us.

How can we find our comrades? We have eliminated any question of programmes and platforms in advance, throwing them out once and for all. So what is left?

Affinity.

Affinities and divergence exist among anarchists. I am not talking about personal affinity here, i.e. sentimental aspects that often bring comrades together (in the first place love, friendship, sympathy, etc.), I am talking about a deepening of reciprocal knowledge. The more this deepening grows, the greater the affinity can become. In the case of the contrary, divergences can turn out to be so great as to make any action impossible. So the solution lies in a growth in reciprocal knowledge, developed through a projectual examination of the various problems that the class struggle presents us with.

There are a whole range of problems that we want to face, and usually care is taken not to examine them in their entirety. We often limit ourselves to questions that are close at hand because they are the ones that affect us most (repression, prison, etc.).

But it is precisely our capacity to examine the problem that we want to face that leads to the best way to create the conditions for affinity. This can obviously never be absolute or total (except in very rare cases), but can be sufficient to create relations that are disposed to acting.

If we restrict our intervention to the most obvious and superficial aspects of what we consider the essential problems to be, we will never be able to discover the affinity we desire. We will constantly be wandering around at the mercy of sudden, unsuspected contradictions that could upset any project of intervention in reality. I insist on pointing out that affinity should not be confused with sentiment. We can recognise affinity with comrades that we do not particularly like and on the other hand like comrades with whom we do not have any affinity.

Among other things, it is important not to let oneself be hindered in one's action by false problems such as a presumed differentiation between feelings and political motivations. From what has been said above it might seem that feelings should be kept separate from political analysis, so we could, for example, love someone and not share their ideas at all and vice versa. That is roughly possible, no matter how lacerating it might be. The personal aspect (or that of feelings if you like) must be included in the above concept of going into the range of problems, as instinctively succumbing to our impulses often signifies a lack of reflection and analysis, or not being able to admit to simply being possessed by god.

From what we have said there now starts to emerge, even nebulously, a first approximation of our way of considering the anarchist group: a number of comrades linked by a common affinity.

The more the project that these comrades build together is gone into, the greater their affinity will be. It follows that real organisation, the effective (and not fictitious) capacity to act together, i.e. to find each other, make analyses and pass to action, is in relation to the affinity reached and has nothing to do with more or less camouflaged monograms, programmes, platforms, flags or parties.

The affinity group is therefore a specific organisation that comes together on the basis of common affinities. They cannot all be identical, different comrades will have infinite affinity structures, all the more varied the wider the effort of analytical quest reached.

It follows that all these comrades will also tend towards quantitative growth, which is however limited and not the main aim of the activity. Numerical development is indispensable for action and it is also a test of the breadth of the analyses that one is developing and its capacity to gradually discover affinity with a greater number of comrades.

It follows that the organism thus born will end up giving itself means of intervention in common. First, an instrument of debate necessary for analysis that is capable, as far as possible, of supplying indications on a wide range of problems and, at the same time, of constituting a point of reference for the verification—at a personal or collective level—of the affinities or divergencies that arise.

Lastly it should be said that although the element that holds a group of this kind together is undoubtedly affinity, its propulsive aspect is action. To limit oneself to the first element and leave the other in second place would result in relationships withering in Byzantine perfectionism.

Who's afraid of the revolution?

The fact that when the revolution is realised it will be a rampant destructive phenomenon of the whole constituted order of exploitation, at least in its initial devastating phase, is indiscutable and no anarchist has ever shown any objection to this, as far as I know. That those who are afraid of this destructive moment in which incredible forces of the mass of oppressed, are precisely those who reap benefit from oppression, is also obvious, they being the ones who will be swept away in the furore of the healing violence. Yet, apart from some unexpected reactions here and there, we perceive a certain 'fear' or, to be less dramatic, a sense of uncertainty and panic seeping through into the discourses of some comrades.

For example, at the end of my article 'The enigma of the South', published in no. 33 of 'Anarchismo', I made a fleeting reference to the need to present oneself to the exploited as the possible victors of the class clash because the latter—particularly in southern Italy—do not like eternal defeats, concerning which they might at best experience a painful feeling of commiseration. Some comrades suggested to me that this conclusion presents more problems than it tries to solve. In particular, it makes anarchists seem like an element in a possible victory of the exploited, therefore supporters of an organisation that could, in certain favourable historical conditions, readjust social structures differently and finally wipe out every residual of politics and the State. But—these comrades continued—in doing that, by suggesting this possibility, one would give the impression that anarchists are supporters of a 'revolutionary force' that is capable of sweeping away the enemies of the proletariat and the oppressed, with the not inconsiderable problem of what to do with such a 'revolutionary force' once oppression has been destroyed.

Well, dear comrades, I think that this conceals incertitude and misunderstanding, fears and infatuation, frustrations and narcissism. Nothing serious of course, but still something that deserves the brief space of some friendly reflection without rancor. After all, we do not want to divide anarchists into two groups: those who suffer from this syndrome of the revolution being realised and those who do not. Let's say that everybody, more or less, is really afraid of the revolution as an event that might happen tomorrow, out of the blue, taking us by surprise and unprepared.

Let's talk about misinterpretations. Many comrades are very suspicious concerning the tasks and possibilities of an anarchist minority within the social clash. These suspicions derive roughly from a misunderstanding of the concept of 'minority'. These comrades see revolutionary anarchist action like a 'seed under the snow', a slow accumulation of concepts, behaviour, pedagogical action, illustrious examples, clarificatory analysis, from which the ideal conditions for the revolution emerge within the contemporary evolving of social, economic, political, etc. relations. Well, we do not think that this is the right way of seeing things.

The anarchist minority must act in every way to bring about the conditions that lead to the revolution. It must act 'in every way', that is, not just limit itself to questions of social, economic, political, etc. clarification, but also attack and possibly overcome partial objectives, tormentors of every kind. At the insurrectional level, so at the level of the choice of objectives to individuate and attack, also during the momentary inertia of the great majority of the exploited, the anarchist minority is 'active'. Precisely for this reason, it must give itself the minimal instruments—organisational and operational—indispensable for reaching these sectorial objectives concretely so that they do not remaining simple spontaneist wishful thinking. If this occurs, as it could, it seems that we are already on the way to solving the problem 'who is afraid of the revolution?' as it is out of the question that anyone who has been working over a long period carrying out partial and limited attacks would be overwhelmed with panic at the prospect of this miniscule operative model suddenly becoming generalised.

But there are still other objections. In fact, after so many centuries of oppression and so many decades of specific attacks against our movement, which is often chosen as a privileged target by the oppressors in charge, we anarchists are almost 'in love' with defeat. I am not sure, but it seems that the spirit of martyrdom prevails over that of the victor in many of us. The aura of the isolated and extremely beautiful saint who sacrifices himself for the unconscious populace, unaware and thankless, is too radiant not to be preferred to the concrete and not at all pleasant problems of whoever finds himself faced with a victorious insurrection and must face the millenarian hopes of the people. Not to mention the colossal difficulty of the problems of those who find themselves faced with a victorious revolution. These are problems of an organisational, economic and military nature which nearly always make one prefer the magnificent isolated sacrifice of those who rise victorious above the mass. Yet, if we do not want to disappear completely inside the pages of historical folklore we must break with the iconography that wants us to be losers, break with it inside our hearts, not just in our minds. Otherwise everything we do, including the insurrectional actions that we participate in, will be countersigned in advance, not with the black flag of the just claims of the exploited but with the white one of defeat and surrender. And our sacrifice, even if it might satisfy an inner need to sacrifice ourselves for an ideal, will certainly not meet the approval of the exploited who have already made too many sacrifices and do not much like those who insist on sacrificing themselves even when victory is at hand. So away with such discourses and those who maintain that the strength of revolutionary action can be calculated in the number of dead and imprisoned comrades. In my opinion, until proven otherwise, it is calculated on the number of enemy deaths, the amount of instruments of oppression destroyed and the number of possibilities made real when individual isolated actions find their natural outlet in the revolutionary event. Any other evaluation is not only losing, it is an incontrovertible sign of being in love with death.

And more. The narcissism of perfection attracts many of us. Our model is beyond discussion, we are those of purity and golden isolation. We do not admit discussion inside the ivory tower of our ideas—or even less a temporary concord of actions and deeds—and reject any concession to the reality of the class conflict. In this way, in the best of cases we look like isolated prophets of a better world that embodies desires, while in reality we

are the main embalmers of our own ideal. Coming down from the dreamland of ideal constructions to the reality of the class struggle we are forced to abandon our narcissism, but not for this—as some fear—do we run the risk of abandoning our slogan of struggle which must always be ‘everything now’. Here lies an apparent difficulty. Some comrades think that addressing specific problems—organisational, military, economic, structural, etc.—makes our effort fall from the social to the political, preventing us from proposing our programme of ‘everything now’, as we would be lowering ourselves to the level of ‘reformists’ disguised as revolutionaries. That is all wrong. The struggle on clear objectives, if it does not want to be unrealistic and purely ideological, must always be conducted on partial objectives, adapting our means (those of the revolutionary minority) to the aims (those of the vast majority of the exploited). But in its partiality our struggle contains the auspice of revolutionary totality in that it does not present itself as being aimed exclusively at reaching the single objective (which is what makes it real and achievable), but goes beyond that to further sub-targets; because it is from the continual realisation of single objectives that the plan of the realisation of the revolutionary totality ‘everything now’ emerges. In this perspective, incomplete revolutionary projects that examine and criticise the organisational forms realisable by the minority, making possible relations with the structures with which the mass of exploited continue their consensual adjustment to capitalism. Now, if these relations with the structures of power must be open and totally confrontational, not for this should they be wrapped up in empty ideological verbalism. It is not enough to say that we are against the State, because the most is also the least. It goes without saying that in being against the State we are against all the forms through which the State realises itself; so we are against the government, the judiciary, the police, the bosses, the unions, etc. And it is not enough to say all that needs to be done so that our ‘being against’ realises itself in precise attacks, not only against the ‘State’ in general, as also here the ambiguity of our action could be concealed (no one knows where to find this ‘State’, especially when there is little desire to find it); but against all the social forms that make up the State.

Educating ourselves to modesty but not for this renouncing our revolutionary vocation, just as we do not question our anarchist ideal. By recognising ourselves as part of the wider revolutionary flow that society generates from its suffering viscera, we are not putting ourselves in common with other conceptions and ways of acting that we do not agree with and which, tomorrow and also immediately, we would be ready to face with arms. In coming down from the pedestal of our ideological maximalism we are not accepting compromise, we are simply affirming that the revolutionary struggle, if it wants to take on a new meaning and not be a vain debate of chatter, a criminal diatribe at the cost of the blood of the exploited, it must evaluate the class struggle in act and insert itself within it, not sit waiting for a sign of ideological unity of the great majority of the exploited that will never come. According to such choices our activity becomes more circumscribed and precise. We need fewer discussions and more actions. Complex analysis about life and the value of anarchy is of little use to us, whereas there is a need for analysis of the instruments that we have, about the forces of reaction, the conditioning of the exploited to consensus, about the real needs of the latter, about the organisms to build to face and overcome the most delicate moment of the clash, the passage from the insurrectional phase to the real revolutionary one.

But all of these concrete analysis would remain dead letters, chatter disguised as substance, if each one of us, deep inside, does not stop being afraid of the revolution and starts preparing to do everything to achieve it, at both a personal and collective level.

Only then does talk about winning take on a new unequivocal meaning, while all sensations of sacrifice and martyrdom quietly ebb away until they disappear completely.

Things well done and things done by half

The relation with the level of the clash

The known, from which we must move, has to be the unknown, the absolutely known. (Novalis)

We are not the only ones facing the level of the clash. As anarchists we can have all the illusions we like, illusions of purity and being a voice in the desert, but sooner or later we must concede that we are in company, bad company.

And it is the relations with this bad company that we need to ponder on. The more these seem obvious and well known, the more they turn out to be incomprehensible, and it is precisely here that we see the point to start off from.

We are not alone, whether it be concerning information, theory, intermediate struggles or armed struggle.

The authoritarian concept of revolutionary struggle continues to pollute the relationship that the exploited have with the class struggle everywhere. It continues to pollute it but, at the same time is a direct expression of it.

This problem is very important.

The development of the revolution is certainly only possible if self-organised forms of struggle are strengthened. But it is clear that the present level of the class struggle has a low development of self-organisation, and to this low development corresponds a predominance of the action of the authoritarians in the field of revolutionary action. When the level rises, these organisations are swept away by the impetus of the revolution, to then present itself again in an attempt to renew the ranks of the party and reap the fruits of others' incapacities. We must have no illusions. The defeat of a certain model of revolutionary intervention at the present time has taught us something, but it does not mean that if the same kind of intervention were to be taken up again, it would not repeat the mistakes of the past, albeit revised and corrected.

On the other hand anarchists, also as an organisation, develop alongside the development of the self-organisation of the struggle. Not falling into the illusion of quantity, the growth of the movement as a whole also means growth in the specific sense, and the approach of the revolutionary storm never corresponds to panic and apprehension but to joy and the explosion of regenerating destruction.

So at a low level of the class clash it is the stalinists who turn out to be more appropriate to the social reality in movement and present themselves as the only force capable of giving life to revolutionary action. They are the visible point of a subterranean continent that attention is often turned to but which means little compared to the capacities of the submerged continent that are not yet active. As the authoritarians develop their action this has negative

consequences on the level of the clash, as by definition they propose the centralisation of the organisational forms of the struggle, and end up lowering the level even more. But this is practically infinitesimal due to the low level that the clash already finds itself in. When the clash reaches a high level their action always tends towards the same aim (subject to various disguises of the kind 'all power to the Soviets'), but given the euphoric climate it is once again negligible. One could conclude paradoxically that it is precisely the authoritarians that constitute that dustbin of history into which the slaughterer Trotsky wanted to throw the anarchists. No matter what they do, they have no hope of being anything other than the gravediggers of the revolution. At a time when the development of the struggles is extremely modest, they certainly cannot make things worse than they are; at the moment of the great upsurge they will be completely wiped out.

Yet they also have a significant function. They serve as a negative test. They serve to demonstrate to the exploited what they must not do, a limit that real revolutionaries clearly must not go beyond.

That is why we have never fought these organisations on the level of abstract empty criticism based on the strong points of anarchist theory; although it could open theoretical gaps, such a critique would never be able to demonstrate anything beyond a banal clash of ways of interpreting history and reality. That is why we prefer the verification of facts, the measure of their mistakes on the basis of their limitations, starting precisely from their obvious incapacity to understand the development of the class conflict and modifications in the level of the clash.

Things done by halves

Those with too clear vision lose the sense of the indistinct totality, the magic intuition of objects together, in varied illumination and obscurity. (Novalis)

There are precise conditions in order for human action to be defined such: it must have completeness, that is it must correspond to intentions or at least have some relationship with the accidents determined by a deviation from these intentions. Action that stops half way, that hesitates and remains uncertain, that takes place in unresolved dilemmas and remains contradictory and partial, is not real human action, it is an attempt, a sketch, an unrealised project, a desire.

In the social clash actions aimed at modifying the conditions of the class relationship are particularly affected by this status of action. Here uncertainty or hesitancy have far more serious consequences and transform themselves into negative aspects, often in opposition to the intentions and original aims that inspired the action.

This principle of 'things done by half' goes for all four of the methodological directions of social action. (see '*Anarchismo*' no. 41, Revolutionary strategy and methods). Information that is incomplete, partial or uncertain, is equivalent to the manipulated information that is typical of power. Theory that remains on the surface of problems and does not have the courage to penetrate them in depth, is afraid of consequences, ends up educating to

conformity and servility. Any intermediate struggle that loses sight of the revolutionary goal, no matter how far off it is, is a losing struggle from the start, an appalling waste of living social forces, a negative experiment that can do no more than put the conscience of the exploited to sleep. A project of armed struggle that is incapable of developing fully when the strategic conditions of the level of the clash permit it is a pointless, often counter-productive, brazenly timid effort to put one's own conscience at rest, refusing to see the reality of the problem.

To stop half way in the name of ill-conceived purity is a crime. Better not to communicate at all. If one is not sure of going on to the end, if one has unconfessed qualms, one might as well dedicate oneself to something else: it does less damage and is also better for one's health.

It is not true that this principle only applies to armed struggle and only marginally concerns other methodological facets. The damage that can ensue from inadequate information due to inefficiency or superficiality can be just as serious as the physical damage that can derive from bad clandestine organisation or strategic errors in the use of the method of armed struggle.

Things done well

We look for our project in the world, this project is we ourselves. What are we?

Personified points, omnipotent. (Novalis)

Revolutionary action that exhausts its operative potential and reaches its aims can define itself something well done. It is often impossible to see this potential in advance, as it only emerges during the action itself. The same can be said for aims. This creative aspect of action often dissuades revolutionaries, leading to more than one failure, and is one of the main reasons for things getting done by halves. Many apprentice sorcerers have become so scared by the great operative and destructive capacity of the broom that they could not manage to stop it. Why they should ever have had to stop remains one of the mysteries of the psyche of the revolutionary.

The individual is the primary source of revolutionary potentiality. Not all individuals are equal, just as not all comrades are revolutionary. The search for affinity is one of the great problems of revolutionary activity. Discourses and theories are worth a lot, often a great deal, but at times, in the face of such problems, different levels of understanding come into play. Affinity can spring from a sentiment, an attachment, a gesture, a look, a way of keeping silent or a way of listening. This great wealth can be thrown away in a few seconds. A word too many, an out of place suggestion of a symbol, an acronym, an attempt at enlistment that cannot fail to sound obnoxious and sectarian, and one ends up feeling extraneous. Wasted potential cannot be recovered, the sensitivity of a moment is easily lost, one ends up going on the defensive.

In another dimension, a group of comrades might develop particular potential at a given moment. It could even be a simple external occurrence—a discussion, the study of a book,

going into a problem—to push them to awareness. A particular moment of acute sensitivity is created in the group for the solution of a problem. If the affinity between the various components of the group is considerable this acuteness can transform potential into operativity. But something can also go wrong. You begin to detect the shadow of an organisation in the background—an acronym, a project wrapped up and ready for use. The seed of suspicion and mistrust can easily develop. Nobody likes to be instrumentalised. Especially when the experience of a not-far-off past has shown us that what the big organisation proposes is certainly not defence or any kind of guarantee, but simply a label and a flag.

The aims are clear. Revolutionary sensitivity grasps them silently, almost without discussion. Debate and going into things often serves to keep it at bay, allowing us to resist the sudden temptation to attack immediately, right here, at the corner of the street, without stopping to think about it. But analysis is right and is important. If one loses the opportunity to attack immediately one gains the alternative of a reasoned, programmed attack that is strategically more valid and significant. And in this perspective one must give space to critical argumentation, analytical examination.

But for the thing to be done well it is necessary that the goal be reached, not just the initial aim, but that which emerges during the course of the action itself, even when the aim intervenes to correct the initial objective, amplifying or reducing it. Only on this condition are we facing an action that is well done, a revolutionary action.

The self-organisation of struggles

*The greatest spellcaster would be he who
could enchant himself, so that his enchantments
came to him first of all as strange and autonomous.
Could it not be that this is our case?* Novalis

The main objective that anarchists want to reach in the strategic orientation of their proposed methods is the self-organisation of the struggles of the exploited.

Not for this however are their actions disorganised, devoid of internal logic or lacking in a well-defined minoritarian aspect. To state otherwise would be to deny reality. Today, at a time of a lowering of the level of the clash, the exploited's tendency to self-organise is fairly modest. It appears here and there, gives a sign of itself sporadically, but it is certainly not one of the most obvious conditions of the movement as a whole. Not for this do anarchists adapt to the situation by talking of a supine acceptance of the conditions of the clash in act. They often face the current situation in a clearcut way, trying to fight against it. They confront the exploited with their responsibilities, pointing out their mistakes, showing up the betrayals in course, doing actions in place of the exploited who are numbed by the tricks of power.

Armed struggle is one of the methods that anarchists, also as a specific minority organisation, use in place of the self-organised action of the exploited when this does not exist or is clearly lacking. The aim of this substitution is obvious: to serve as a stimulus, to detonate, to show that the struggle is possible even in minoritarian conditions, to demonstrate that

from the small to the large the passage can come about suddenly, when one least expects it. Shutting up and waiting, or criticising and working cynically and skeptically as a deterrent is certainly not what anarchists should be doing. Criticism is all very well. Demonstrating the limitations of a method, fine. But that does not negate the impetus to enthusiasm, the stimulus to the clash, even when it is unequal. The candour and stupidity of Don Quixote are preferable to the criticism and measuring of the shopkeeper.

The concerned discourses that stop at measuring and calculation are like the theses of those who would be there to destroy the whole world if we were many, decided and well-armed. Meanwhile, until these ideal conditions materialise, one ends up doing nothing, waiting, only to fret and perhaps conclude that nothing can be done. How much revolutionary potential has been wasted this way, how many comrades have gone towards fictitious organisations that offered apparent security of project and means. Instead of going into the aspects of a possible action, no matter how circumscribed, they chose to let themselves be dissuaded, inviting waiting because 'it is not the right moment', and disaffecting from the immediacy of acting.

Basically, it is always the right moment to attack. The terrorism of the State and the bosses is always in act. No shopkeeping subtlety will ever be able to convince me that there are times for using certain methods and times for using others. Strategic choices are commensurate to the conditions of the clash but cannot exclude a given method completely. They can, at best, suggest a different mixture of the various methods, more subtlety in the various interventions. Never the condemnation of a method in advance based on presupposed principles. Never the condemnation of a method based on fixed assumptions.

We are for the self-organisation of the struggles of the exploited, but that does not in the least prevent us from communicating and organising our structures of intervention in the social clash, here and now. If the future self-organisation of the exploited will be able to coordinate with these structures of ours or not is a problem which, although not of secondary importance, can never block our present revolutionary activity. Otherwise we would end up postponing everything indefinitely to a situation where our action would end up becoming so facile as to risk being pointless. The insurgent people certainly do not need anarchists to show them how to bring about an insurrection. On the other hand, under conditions of subjection and apathy the exploited have a great need for stimuli for struggle, clarification and information. To block some of these contributions—the method of armed struggle for example—in advance would be a dangerous mutilation of the whole revolutionary process.

A possible organisational project

Activity is the real Reality. The active use of reality is nothing other than thought, the will is nothing other than energetic capacity of thought. Must the supreme active principle contain in its exercise the supreme paradox? A proposition that leaves no peace, that always attracts and repulses, and always becomes incomprehensible again, as soon as it is understood? That continually stimulates our activity without tiring it, without ever generating

habit? All symbols are mystifications. External reality is an interior elevated to the state of mystery.(Novalis)

Anarchist revolutionary activity is not a joke, it cannot be considered something pleasant to be done from time to time to fill up the emptiness of everyday life. Regarding the complexity of the anarchist ideology, as it has been built over time by the numerous theoretical contributions, such a thing is possible. Quite a number of good people dedicate themselves to the agreeable reading of anarchist texts and perhaps deep in their bourgeois hearts they are lovers of destruction and violence (at a distance), in this way trying to find more or less remote compensation for their frustrations. Reading the theories of Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta and the adventurous deeds of Di Giovanni, Durruti, Ascaso, Makhno, Sabate, etc., is comforting and helps one to face the difficulties of living in the shit day after day.

But as soon as one commits oneself in the substance of the social clash one cannot avoid choosing. Trifling is no longer enough. Efforts need to be made. The police don't joke. Neither do the judiciary. For someone who has a job with the council or a small business activity, these can be irritating factors. One might end up having to reckon with trials, sentences, being held hostage, short or long periods of time in prison, social discrimination, emargination, all kinds of difficulties. And it is not true that this only happens to those who move towards methods closer to armed struggle. Comrades who dedicate themselves to information, publish theoretical books and pamphlets or are involved in intermediate struggles are also under the iron heel of the repression and have to reckon with it every day.

Power grasps the profound meaning of anarchist and revolutionary activity, not so much in the method used but in the consequences of the action. The risk of well-chosen and diffused information could be greater than an action of reprisal or sabotage which, at a given moment, might even turn out to be strange and incomprehensible.

It is the revolutionaries themselves who do not have clear ideas on this important question. They apply a schematic maxim that neatly separates the different methods of struggle. In particular, concerning armed struggle, they have very clear ideas that either a) unconditionally define it the only revolutionary method capable of defeating power; b) denigrate it, considering it a terroristic method worthy only of power and its servants, a method not to be followed, that is polluted by spies and informers, a method that leads the whole movement to ruin.

These two positions clash, with results that are at times comical, at times pathetic.

Let us say right away that we do not consider the method of armed struggle to be a privileged one, but simply one method among others that is capable of giving its contribution to the revolutionary project within a strategy aimed at applying diverse methods in various combinations.

But let us also say, with the same clarity, that just as it is necessary for the anarchist movement as a whole to give itself the best structures of information, theory, and concerning intermediate struggles, it is necessary to give itself a structure of armed struggle.

It derives from this that if the structures of information require printing presses, newspapers, publishing projects, etc; if the theoretical structures require books, editorial series, study and study centres; if intermediate struggles require intervention groups, an organised

presence in factories, social centres, living areas, struggle committees in the schools, etc.; at the same time armed struggle requires its own means and organisation.

Objectively speaking, looking at this last form of organisation, one cannot see its real difference from similar organisations formed by the authoritarians. But the same thing could be said for a printing press or a struggle committee. When one goes past the door of a neighbourhood committee it is not very clear if one simply looks at the initials or the banner.

On this problem, mistakes committed in the past will not necessarily be avoided in the future, as the many hawks and sparrows that flutter perched in different points of the tree continue to repeat. At the same time, the more or less valid critiques of many vultures do not necessarily indicate the presence of a corpse. A critique is a critique. It is enough to take it into consideration without listening to the moral adornment that the good heart of the critic likes to administer here and there.

Certainly the specific organisation is an instrument that presents many dangers, but the same thing also goes for many others. Information that one doesn't know how to use can produce the opposite effect and do more harm than good. Theory that is incapable of going beyond the abstract moment of analysis wraps itself in traditional academic clothing that stifles it and makes it support and camouflage repression. Intermediate struggles that are not addressed towards a growth in revolutionary consciousness translate themselves into easy bites for democrats and transformists of every kind. Dynamite can explode in the hands of someone who doesn't know how to use it. Not reaching standards with certain techniques, agreeing to use certain instruments superficially without the necessary preparation, thinking that, as one is the bearer of revolutionary truth, one will be understood no matter what one does, leads to blind action, superficial amateurishness, painful disillusionment, discouragement, defeat.

We do not want to sing the praises of specialisation here, because the defect of a manic closure of technique is one of the worst aspects of specific organisations. One simply wants to say that everything needs to be done according to certain rules, to given techniques. To ignore them deliberately or due to superficiality is not a conscious negative response to the defects of specialisation, but just absolute stupidity.

An intelligent, sensitive comrade must possess sufficient qualities to enable him to put all the methods that the long painful history of the revolutionary movement puts at his disposition to good use. If he is a clever journalist, and he uses this ability in the elaboration of information, the editing of papers, radio, leaflets, etc., he must also do everything to interest himself in other methods, inserting himself as he thinks best in the ambit of the strategic project that he is engaged in. And he must do that at the risk of seeing the specialisation that he had acquired in the sector that he had mastered, decline. You fight specialisation by widening your field of revolutionary interests, not through an invitation to amateurism and approximation. Of course, that comrade will remain fundamentally a journalist, because such is his particular inclination, but his new interests will lead him to other sectors of methodological intervention where he will be able to give a contribution, perhaps less significantly than other comrades, but certainly no less important. More than that: it will precisely be this overcoming of sectoral activity to guarantee a collaboration between different methods,

leading to a series of interactions that would have been quite impossible in a rigid, schlerotic optic.

So an organised project means the coexistence of multiple interests, a meeting of individual and collective affinities, materialisation of programmes and analyses, ideas and intuition, enthusiasm and knowledge. To see organisation as something hermetically closed, all the more so because it contains programmes and ideas concerning armed struggle, is a classic backward addiction to the traditional cliché of the armed party, a repetition of conspiratorial models that are quite out of date. But the opposite of all that does not mean confusion, lack of realism, spontaneism, and a refusal of any structure or self-discipline. The idea that many people have about anarchy is reproduced, seen as the absolute reign of boyish pranks. Joy is not synonymous with stupidity, just as creation does not necessarily mean the refusal of all the knowledge that has come before it. Self-discipline is the recognition of the immediate and impelling need to make an effort to get a result that one considers important. Nobody will guarantee us that result if it is not we ourselves, with our own will power, to bend the obstacles separating us from it. And these obstacles are not just walls to be knocked down or cops to prevent doing harm, they can also be linked to our own problems of a personal nature such as, precisely, the incapacity to put order in our programmes, our ideas, our gestures: a dispersive tendency towards the improvised, the immediately pleasurable, the superficial; our fear of commitment, of going into things more deeply, the difficulty of the task that awaits us. All that is part of the problem of the specific organisation, as it belongs to the life of the human being. We cannot delete it all of a sudden because we consider it easier to continue to prattle on about the beauty and spontaneity of anarchy.

According to how the relation with organisation is lived it can either be a bitter experience or a creative project. Organisation itself can give life to relationships of two different kinds with two different comrades, but these two relationships, if they really are such, will not leave the organisation where it was before. Reciprocally a mistaken approach of relationships gives negative results that affect the whole organisation and all its components. The same happens, in the positive sense, for relations that develop harmoniously, in mutual respect for commitments and individual autonomy.

A great critical effort has been made concerning the formal aspects of this kind of specific organisation. Most often, when it was a question of anarchist experiences, residual conspiratorial and Jacobin deformations similar to those of the authoritarians have been criticised in them: elements that are certainly far from anarchists' ideas and ways of acting. But how many of these critiques stopped half way? How many have been able to grasp the real significance of the mistakes that have been made, even the most obvious of them?

At other times critical analysis has started off from documents considered (or passed off) as pilot, to then reach the organised structures. We consider it legitimate to ask ourselves if the depth of the gulf that passes between saying and doing can really assess the true dimension of the mistakes made.

In other cases we resorted to comparisons between different historical situations (Russia, Spain, Mexico, etc.) to develop critiques which, if objectively correct, turned out to be of little use in the face of the need to show the errors and deformations of the organisational structure.

Some open doors

Correct reasoning is nothing but a play on words, the extraordinary thing is that people believe they are speaking in function of things. More often it happens that only those who talk for the sake of talking state supreme and original truths. When instead one makes an effort to talk about something specific, language, bizarre, makes them say the most ridiculous and distorted things. (Novalis)

Smashing through open doors makes a lot of noise but gives few useful results. For anyone who likes making a din the operation can also have some positive aspects.

Take the debate on 'clandestinity'. Someone who is in this situation will be likely to dream up more elaborate theoretical calculations than those that justify clandestinity in the face of the need for the armed clash (which are often inexistent). He finds it a little reductive to simply admit that clandestinity is a contingent fact linked to precise individual and group conditions, and not a fact that you can place a step higher in a hypothetical scale of revolutionary values. On the other hand, those who rightly criticise this choice on theoretical grounds are incapable of seeing it as an unavoidable consequence of certain objective situations. They prefer to carry on with their theoretical critique, refusing to accept the limits and teachings of certain real necessities. In this way a polemic develops between the deaf. Clandestinity is not an essential prerogative of armed struggle, on the contrary it constitutes one of the negative aspects that the conditions of the clash often push individual comrades into, but cannot be lived as a privileged condition. If anything, the privileged condition would be that of daily activity, of complete revolutionary engagement in a situation characterised by open social 'status'.

This does not mean that the armed organisation must be clandestine, as also—in the best hypothesis—to rigorous clandestinity corresponds an active daily life of all its participants. These are the open doors that do not need to be smashed through but, once there are people who insist on beating their heads on them, we might as well open them once and for all.

The same discourse full of misconceptions could be developed on active, therefore also armed, daily life against the class enemy. We can reject—and rightly so—the commonplaces of conspiratorial Jacobinism, but we cannot put our trust in the occasionalism of daily life, especially when this starts off full of good will and ends up in the privatist labyrinth, in the little concessions to an ideal of life which perhaps, had it been Epicurean all the way, at least the recognition of the primordially of the needs of the individual would be real. Also the hardly gratifying needs of respectable society, which instead is nothing other than an upturned revisitation of the same scale of values. To reactionary respectability contrasts a progressist one. Change the colours, the language, the stereotypes; the logic of adjustment remains intact in its immobility. We can delude ourselves that we are changing the world by toting a machine gun and ending up inside a cell mulling over the mistakes made without getting to the bottom of it, and we can ... wielding the problems of our everyday life, end up up to our necks in shit in a series of problems of survival that we are also incapable of coping with. Sitting arguing about who is right, while the mistakes add up on both sides, does not lead to any positive conclusion.

Nobody, by definition, wants to make the revolution in the place of the exploited. That said there are more than a few who are tired of waiting for everybody to rise up so that they too can insurgé. More than a few believe that it is necessary to start somewhere and, even if we are few, that we can always do something to attack the enemy. This is not a losing logic. Even when one doesn't manage to gain something in the quantitative sense, even when one doesn't 'win' on a military level, that does not mean that one is a loser on the revolutionary level. Otherwise the critics and those who wait would reconfirm an equivalence between military efficacy and revolutionary results that they themselves (and rightly so) deny on principle. If anything, the reverse logic is the loser. The logic that teaches waiting, temporisation, compromise, camouflage. The political chair that preaches this is too compromised to supply reliable indications.

In the same way, no one imagines that the exploited will be swept into a conspiratorial dimension. Even attempts at armed struggle must look at themselves from this perspective and from all the efforts made by power to make it the only possible solution. The self-organisation of struggles is the bursting forth of active daily life, the creativity of subversive action, irrepeatable confrontation with whoever has no models to lean on or canons to respect. In the face of this spread in perspective the revolutionary action of a minority must deal with a waiting that threatens to become too long. It cannot drown in the long-term work of accumulation without risking rendering its own discourse incomprehensible, without risking letting itself join the metaphysical nonsense that so many owls of militant politics transmit in the darkest night. It must go against the current. Go back to the source of an antagonist movement that is threatening to recline on its ability. All that does not signify—even if it has mistakenly been said so—a leninist vision of the revolutionary struggle. Nor does that mean an awry educationism applied to the exploited as a whole through the method of armed struggle. More simply, it means building the specific anarchist organisation, among a thousand contradictions, to push the exploited to revolt. That comes about in many ways contemporaneously and therefore also through recourse to armed struggle. If there were a reason capable of demonstrating the non-practicability of this method in absolute, the same reason would seal the headstone on the revolutionary struggle as a whole for ever, in that it would be demonstrating, at the same time, the non-practicability of any other method.

Reducing armed struggle to a clash between rival gangs is a serious limitation, but that does not only apply to those who close themselves up in an acronym and from this cocoon claim to inculcate fear in the State. Those who criticise this partial vision do not make the effort to identify the reasons behind this error and happily put up their hands, concluding for a failure of the method as a whole. The first defend their own practice and are often even pathetic in their fantasizing about theoreticians who have nothing to do with revolutionary self-organisation; the second are in bad faith in that they have no intention of contributing to the correction of errors and so, with their critique, give life to a better use of the method: they simply want to silence behaviour that they often recognise as dangerously engaging for their peace of mind or their theoretical uniformity. The practical errors of the others can disturb the peaceful waters of their own way of interpreting reality far more than their own critical analysis does.

The repartition between appearance and reality, spectacle and class struggle, real revolutionary action and fictitious armed counter-position, can lead to conclusions of great interest but can also abort in alternatives that are devoid of any sense. Nothing in this world is totally white or totally black. It is a question of tendency, orientation, action aimed at something. The static contemplation of truth is not at all something positive, it ends up destroying truth itself, transforming it into a symbol, an ideal model, a graveyard of action. It is not 'reality' that qualifies the substance of a movement, but the latter's disposition towards reality—as we have said elsewhere—when it addresses itself towards the reality of the struggle. But this moving is transformation in course, revolutionary action that modifies the movement as such and the reality that receives the action of the movement. To imagine one of these two things as immobile or performed, perfect in all its particulars, can be useful to analytical ends but this has nothing to do with the effective going of social phenomena. When one speaks of the appearance of armed struggle, of fictitious and spectacular clash, when—rightly—accuses the armed organisations of arrogating the right to represent the exploited in struggle and of acting in the name of something a thousand miles off, very true things are said. But even things that are true can be mistaken, in fact they are often partially untrue, and it is precisely this aspect of partial truth that makes it interesting and useful to us. Things that are absolutely true are banal tautologies, repetitions that add nothing to the means that one possesses to understand and transform reality. But something that is in part true cannot only be taken into consideration for the true part, it must be taken into account for that which it signifies as a whole: part true and part not true. So when one says that armed struggle is a fictitious counter-position against capital one cannot say that this affirmation is absolutely true. It is true in that the specific organisation marks the limits of the free development of the self-organisation of struggles; it is not true in that if there were to be a modest development of this self-organisation it would put itself in its place and without supplanting it, feed a small nucleus from which undreamed developments could result. This, obviously, only on condition that one does not fall into the equivocation of the armed party and the storming of the Winter palace. Beyond these limits and aberrations the specific armed organisation represents concretely that which the organisation of the struggles of the exploited will never become, and it is well that it be like that. Revolutionaries represent a small light that disappears under the vivid sun of the full blown struggles of the exploited. But in the lack of struggle, or when the sun is late in rising, the small light is always better than nothing at all.

As a consequence of the distinction between appearance and reality one has accused armed struggle of being an exclusively political, therefore fictitious method. Here too it seems to us that this accusation could be extended to any method, any kind of human action, when it turns out to be oriented exclusively in the formal sense. We insist on saying that one cannot accuse a given method of lack of reality, one can only develop criticism concerning its strategic applications. These, precisely, can be supplied with political accentuations such that they end up disqualifying their social and revolutionary significance. There can be no doubt, for example, that reforms constitute the strong element on which the social-democratic management of power bases itself. For the same reason there can be no doubt that intermediate struggles can open the way to political instrumentalisation, to a denial of

the revolutionary outlet. Yet there are struggles that are realised and supported by many comrades and the only critiques of them are those that concern themselves with reducing the danger of their instrumentalisation and do not simply define them political struggles and advise against their use by comrades. It seems to us that in the problems concerning armed struggle there are motivations that are not always clear, often of a personal kind, that prevent if not exactly a detached evaluation, at least a sufficiently clear one concerning the problem.

There has been an infantile element in some of the affirmations that have assigned revolutionary priority to organised violence, but it was a superficiality that needed to be gone into together without having recourse to reciprocal poisonous needling and lack of construct. On the one hand a gratuitous extension of the need for liberatory violence has developed where there is a centrality of the method of armed struggle. On the other, in the attempt to criticise the paradoxical aspects of this centrality, some have reached the point of throwing the whole legacy of the violent struggle of the revolutionary movement into the sea, ending their journey on the beaches of pacifism or the existential contradictions of a certain everyday life. If there is no doubt that only with recourse to revolutionary violence will it be possible to attack the class enemy and put it in difficulty to the point of defeating it in the course of the revolutionary event, in the same way there can be no doubt that this recourse to violence does not signify exclusion from the other methods, to prioritise one particular method. Also, because it is not true that violence is a prerogative of armed struggle. Information, theory, intermediate struggles can also have a violent formulation and propose themselves as a stimulus to the revolutionary awareness by the exploited.

The attempt to 'kill one to educate a thousand' has been defined unrealistic. This thesis seems a good one to us. But the content of the action that has the aim of eliminating a class enemy does not stop there. Even accelerating the process of eliminating some officials of the repressive structure does not move the function one millimetre. That does not deny, though, two things of great importance: first, it is always a question of one less class enemy; second, one is contributing to another, very different and far richer educative process, that aimed at the exploited who thus see that the progressive elimination of their class enemies is possible. The narrowness of the first of these two reasons has often underlined. It has been said that as soon as one enemy is dead another will take his place. It has been said that one shouldn't attack the person who carries out a function but put the function itself under attack. None of these reasons convince us. Perhaps they are valid reasons, but we continue to consider that the elimination of a class enemy is always preferable. Concerning the second reason it has been said that we should not concern ourselves with developing 'educative' messages aimed at the exploited. I do not agree on this point either. The whole of revolutionary action is an educative process of great complexity. The contradictions (formal) emerge from the fact that we are often forced to take it into consideration in its partial aspects, and it is on these unrelated aspects that incomprehension and pointless arguments develop.

No illusions

Whoever has a fine sense of his time, perceives in himself the delicate action of his internal nature, and moves his tongue and his hand accordingly.. people will laugh at him, like the Trojans with Cassandra. (Novalis)

I don't have any illusions. Words are or are not comprehensible according to their actual situation. We only give them space and credibility if they fall into our patterns and certainties. Defence mechanisms become automatic and prevent the very reception of the message. If that was not so the illuminists would have definitively changed the world two hundred years ago.

It happens, for example, that if someone says that a specific organisation requires means so it should go about procuring them, the deaf that do not want to hear immediately translate this into their own language: occult financing, presence of foreign secret services, gang of street thieves and robbers, revelry and champagne. If one says that there is a need for a minimum of self-discipline and that one certainly cannot leave everything to improvisation, the same deaf one immediately translates: Jacobin asceticism, authoritarian rigidity, devaluation of human life, lack of ethical foundation, instrumentalisation of others, dehumanization. If one says that the physical elimination of the class enemy is also correct from the revolutionary point of view, the deaf one immediately translates: sanguinary madness, endorsing the behaviour of a military tribunal, practically applying the death penalty, absence of ethical principles, incomprehension of the official.

No illusion, therefore, that these words will alter the deafness of those who do not want to hear.

The revolution

Limits only exist in order to be overcome, and so on.
(Novalis)

Today hardly anybody speaks of revolution any more. Having made so many discriminations and covering one's back we have almost reached the absurd of denying the fact that we are revolutionaries. Anarchists are for the revolution, not just in words but also with deeds. We are not just waiting for a future event, which often inside us we consider far off and improbable, but are acting now to realise this event as soon as possible.

And in this perspective we are always prepared to start all over again.

Towards the generalisation of armed struggle

The level of conflict

This can be defined as the whole of the conditions that characterise the class conflict. It is very important to know these conditions, because one is often carried, for different reasons, to consider some more important than others, with the obvious conclusion that those who do not accept the same ones come to be defined counter-revolutionary.

It is not possible to fix a scale of merit concerning the conditions that determine the level of the struggle. It would in fact be out of place to overestimate economic conditions, underestimating, for example, ideological conditions which, precisely because they are breaking down, produce certain consequences and not others.

Heightening the level of conflict

Every historical moment has its own level of conflict. In a certain sense, history is history in that it manages to trace these levels and give accounts of the conditions which caused them.

Changes in the level of conflict are normal events which often come in “waves” which move around an axis which seems to remain stable even during continual change. This something is the ideological structure of power or, if we prefer, ideological structure itself, in that revolution does not have an ideological structure until it takes the concrete form of counter-revolution.

To move the conflict to the fictitious level of ideology often means to lose the concrete ground of the struggle, the only ground on which any theoretical consideration is valid.

There being no doubt that revolutionaries have every interest in raising the level of consciousness, it remains equally beyond doubt that there can be no interest in reaching ideological perfection sooner or later, as this would become functional only to the re-establishment of power. In the specific case of the ideology of violence that is being discussed in Italy today, this becomes functional to the State, consenting the oscillations which allow the latter to become paternalistically open to discussion (see the Bologna meeting surrounded by six thousand policemen) one minute, then rigidly adopting strong means such as special prisons, police intimidation, special laws and tribunals the next.

It is not discussions about violence that raise the level of conflict, nor the debate on which type of violence is acceptable and which should be refused that pushes the exploited

towards their liberation. No one can teach anything to those who have been suffering every kind of repression for centuries, on this argument. The ideological curtain falls, and the stage remains in its stark reality, that of the class struggle, with on the one hand the exploited and on the other the servants of the exploiters walking to their bosses' heels.

When we speak of the need for violence we are certainly not doing it to convince the exploited. They know this very well themselves, and put it into effect any time they have a chance to do so, with all the means at their disposition. We speak of the need for violence in order to point to the enemy with greater clarity, an enemy that tries to conceal itself in the guise of even brother or comrade.

The discussion on violence is also an element of great importance in order to recognise all those who, at the time of words, were so clever at splitting hairs, proposing models of the "right kind of violence" to the masses, based on their ideological judgments. When the level of the conflict heightens for all the reasons we have mentioned, all such discourses become both useless and determining. They are useless because the real confrontation renders them out of date and senseless; determining because they sweep away the last of the illusions and denounce barren attempts to recuperate.

As anarchists we are for the social revolution, that is we are the immediate and definitive overthrow of the State. We are for revolutionary logic, which is above all a destructive logic.

We are for the destruction of the State, which means we are for the physical (not verbal) destruction of the institutions and people who represent and bring about the State. We are against the police, the judges, the bureaucrats, the trade union leaders, and the bosses. Not only are we against police control, bourgeois justice, techno-bureaucracy, trade unionism and capitalism; we are concretely against the people who bring about these ideological forms in everyday life, turning them into instruments of repression. And this being against must translate itself into precise actions of attack. If we are against the police, we must not let ourselves be drawn into the ideological trap of those who, in the name of a misunderstood pluralism or a retrograde enlightenment, give space and feasibility to the enemy, affirming that everyone has the right to express him or herself, therefore also the police — who when they do express themselves do so with batons. If we are against all judges and bureaucrats, all bosses and the trade unions in their service, we must not wait for someone to tell us: "this boss committed a particular wrong or this trade union leader is guilty of such and such, this judge is particularly reactionary". No! All of them, without ideological distinction, all the police, all magistrates, all bureaucrats and all the trades union leaders, all the bosses and all those in their service are guilty and should be attacked with any possible means, at any moment, at whatever the cost.

The moral justification is to be found in the fact of exploitation itself. Anyone who has been subjected to centuries of the monstrous pressure of work, anyone who has participated in building the world knowing that he or she would never be able to enjoy any of it, does not need to wait for a particular sign of wickedness from the other side. He or she is authorised to attack, to strike, and to kill, just as the bosses and their servants attack, strike and kill at any time they like.

The problem of strategy

The fact that it is possible to discuss the methods and the best forms in which to conduct this attack, is a problem that has nothing to do with the moral foundation that justifies the attack itself.

Any such discussion must therefore become a discussion on strategy, on the evaluation of means and the achieving of ends. It cannot be said for example that “anarchists do not do certain things because...”. This argument does not make sense. What anarchists do as such must be evaluated in reality, not in the abstraction of theory, otherwise anarchism would not make sense, and become a mystifying ideology like any other.

Certainly strategic choices are not separate from the fundamental anarchist analysis, which when it is placed in reality becomes an indispensable part of revolutionary intervention. But if this same analysis were to be cut off from the reality of the struggle and become the product of some illuminated mind and transformed into a militants’ catechism, it would simply enter the field of ideology and become functional to the power it was pretending to attack.

That is why, when anarchists criticise and attack the claimed revolutionary role of the armed military parties such as the Red Brigades, the NAP or other more recent formations, they do it starting from an anarchist analysis, but one which bears in mind the real conditions of the class conflict today in Italy. It is not an anarchist analysis planted in the vague realms of ideology, that feels obliged to give judgment on matters which it not only sees as estranged from it, but also as hostile. To be anarchists it is not enough to say what is right concerning the struggle that is in the course of development. It is necessary to be within a concrete perspective to be available for the revolutionary confrontation, to have evaluated well what all that means for each one of us at a personal level, and at a global level for the whole of the anarchist movement.

We have often published the documents of the armed struggle organisations that are operating in our country. Sometimes, on these very pages, we have also traced the essential lines of a critique of the closed military party. But we have not, when these comrades were persecuted and chased away, claimed to measure the distance separating them from us. This is because the distance, without doubt present and significant, could only have been put down on paper, therefore resulted in a banal ideological question. This has led to some misunderstanding by other comrades concerning our position, fuelling an artificial argument that would have had no reason to exist had these comrades considered it more expedient to engage themselves in first person in underlining these differences which they only identified at an ideological level.

Now however things have changed, and the time has come to raise our voices loud and strong, so that even the deaf can hear us and those who pretend to be deaf see themselves shown up in front of the serious comrades who really want to struggle for the liberation of all the exploited and for anarchy.

The reason we have given space to the phenomenon of armed struggle over the past few years and supported the need to defend these points, however contradictory and dangerous they might be, was because we felt the road undertaken was an important one. We felt that

this road could—which has in fact happened—take another direction, that of mass armed struggle, of generalised illegal behaviour which could deny and finally eliminate the very conditions of the initial clandestine struggle based on the closed military party. To put ourselves against this behaviour from the very beginning, as so many have done, would have contributed to the State repression against them, and would have prevented any development in a libertarian direction, something we considered possible from the start. By this we do not mean a libertarian development in the closed military parties, but the development of armed struggle in general and of all the comrades who work in this direction.

Disillusionment is pushing many people to a practice of generalised illegal behaviour. This behaviour materialises either at the workplace, or in the field of unemployment and criminalisation. This phenomenon goes far beyond the strategic perspectives of any closed military party, no matter how big and effective it might be. The Red Brigades, the NAP, Prima Linea, and many other organisations, have nothing left to say apart from their own self criticism. Either they integrate their actions within the plan of generalised armed conflict, which is happening slowly, or they will be destined to extinction.

Our task is also this. Just as we contributed to checking stupid and malevolent criticism and to avoiding the global repressive tactic hoped for by the State, today, as anarchists we must continue to give our contribution to the clarification of this process of generalised armed conflict, singling out, criticising and attacking any attempt—no matter where it comes from—to impose strategic and political models which the daily practice of struggle have declared out of date.

Insurrection

It is within the perspective of generalised mass armed struggle that the insurrection takes on a libertarian meaning, and marks the definitive critique of any 'closed' attempt to organise the management of the class conflict.

Generalised armed conflict is the natural outcome of a situation that is getting worse every day. The exploited are beginning to point out this necessity in a series of anti-institutional actions that are continually spreading. The isolated acts of punishment carried out by minority clandestine groups against some of those responsible for exploitation are coming to be accepted with satisfaction and approved by the mass. Attempts by the unions to organise protest strikes against such actions have had, at the FIAT for example, a very small number of participants.

There is no doubt that today the movement of the exploited, in its various forms and all its contradictions, is capable of attacking capital and the State structures that defend it. There is no doubt that this attack is actually happening. The only thing that seems strange to us is that at this point in the struggle, steps backward are being taken, shown in the persistence in using instruments (such as the armed party) that although they may have been effective in some way yesterday, are now anachronistic and threaten to become inward looking.

As anarchist revolutionaries we know very well that in this phase of class confrontation clandestine forms of resistance are still necessary. We know just as well that at the same time this presents negative aspects, that is, they risk becoming authoritarian.

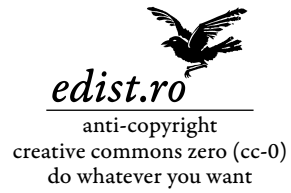
It is our task to be careful so as to stop this involution, to fight so that the confrontation becomes generalised in its insurrectional form which guarantees it not only as anarchist strategy, but also as a libertarian perspective.

When speaking of insurrection in the past, many comrades immediately brought out historical examples: the Matese gang, the Pontelungo conspiracy, and other such events, accusing us of “revolutionary romanticism” or of being “idealists”, or of being “objectively dangerous”. To us this all seems ridiculous.

Insurrection is the attempt made with revolution in sight. As anarchists, insurrection remains our privileged element, but this insurrection must be generalised, at least to the level of the widest possible practice of illegal behaviour. This is what is actually happening. What should we be feeling sorry about? Maybe we should complain about the fact that the contradictions of capital and the revolutionary claims of the exploited are preventing us from carrying on our sweet dreams?

Let us take heart. If hard times are ahead of us we know how we shall face them. It is precisely in these times that the sheep discard their wolves' clothing. The time has come to put the chatter aside, and fight. Let us take courage and go ahead. And then, because as always the best form of defence is attack, let us begin by attacking first. There is no lack of objectives. May the bosses and their servants feel how hard it can become to carry on their jobs as exploiters.

find each other.



Alfredo M. Bonanno
Revolutionary Struggle and Insurrection
1980

<https://archive.elephanteditions.net/library/alfredo-m-bonanno-revolutionary-struggle-and-insurrection>

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