

# **The Insurrectional Project**

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## Preface

If we refuse to let our lives be organised by others we must have the capacity to organise ourselves, that is, we must be able to 'put together the elements necessary to act as a coherent functioning whole'. For anarchists, individuals who ardently desire the elimination of every trace of tyranny and domestication, this has been experimented in a myriad of forms according to prevailing social and economic conditions, and marked by each one's particular concept of wholeness. If this could once be interpreted — by some — to mean a big organisation to oppose big industry, today social disintegration and uncertainty have gone further than any critique in relegating such undertakings to the pages of history. We are left with the exquisite dilemma: if my freedom depends on the freedom of all, does not the freedom of all depend on my acting to free myself? And if all the exploited are not acting to free themselves — as a tangible composite whole — how can I function, i.e. organise myself, to destroy the reality that oppresses me without delay? In other words, how can I act as a whole that seeks to expand and enhance itself to infinity? Having refused the sop of participation, voluntary work and progressive change with which the democratic ideology seeks to satiate its bloated subjects, I am left with myself and my unmediated strength. I seek my accomplices: two or three, hundreds or hundreds of thousands, to upset and attack the present social order right now — in the tiny act that gives immediate joy, indicating that sabotage is possible for everyone; or in great moments of mass destruction where creativity and anger combine in unpredictable collusion. I am therefore faced with the problem of creating a project whose immediate aim is destruction, which in turn creates space for the new.

What holds things together and puts my actions in context cannot therefore be a fixed formal organisation, but the development of the capacity to organise myself, alone and with others, where numbers are not an aim, but are always potentially present. In other words, I must create an insurrectional project which already contains all the elements of a revolutionary perspective: the decision to act now; analysis of the present time taking account of the profound transformations capital is undergoing globally and which have had an effect on the whole concept of struggle; choice of objectives, means, ideas, desires; the means of making these known to others in my search for affinity; the creation of occasions for confrontation and debate, and much more besides. Projectuality becomes force in movement, a propelling element within the whole insurrectional flux.

The following texts come to us from a series of meetings that took place in Greece some years ago. A sub-heading of one of the sections has since reached notoriety after being chosen by the Italian carabinieri in 1996 to name the phantom armed organisation they subsequently accused dozens of anarchists of belonging to. This should not divert us from our understanding of the text, which could be seen as a starting point, an invitation to consider and experiment in the insurrectional adventure.

Jean Weir

## Introduction

In January 1993 I was invited to Greece along with another comrade to hold a number of talks at the Athens Polytechnic and the Law Faculty of Salonika.

The texts published here are: an outline of the talks I intended to give, a transcription of the tapes of the Salonika conference and a transcription of an interview with the Athens daily *Eleftherotipia*. As the first of these texts was intended to be a guide to the conferences, I worked it out in detail along with the Greek comrades in time for it to be translated and handed out to those present. This was necessary due to the difficulties of on the spot interpretation.

I published the texts in May 1993 in number 72 of *Anarchismo*, with the title 'Recent Developments in Capitalism'.

The three pieces have a homogeneity that still makes them worth publishing together, as they all concern capitalist restructuring and the forms of insurrectionalist struggle that anarchists are proposing against it.

A curious thing happened. The penultimate section of the first piece published here is still entitled 'Revolutionary anarchist insurrectionalist organisation'. The origin of this now infamous heading is rather strange and deserves comment. In fact I had originally entitled the subsection 'Informal anarchist insurrectionalist organisation', but we came up against difficulties when trying to translate the term 'informal'. It was impossible to solve them before my arrival in Greece, so the comrades suggested replacing the term 'informal' with the more generic one, 'revolutionary'.

I forgot to restore the word 'informal' when I published the text in Italy, although it is nearer to what I am talking about in that particular section.

I do not feel I can make such a correction now given all the nonsense that the specialists of the Attorney General's office in the courts of Rome, led by Public Prosecutor Marini, have come out with.

I think it might be useful to give a brief description of the way the minds of the Italian judiciary and Carabinieri have laboured on this text.

On September 17, 1997, dozens of anarchists were arrested in Italy on charges of kidnapping, robbery, murder, possession of arms, etc., initiating what came to be known as the 'Marini Frame-up'. These separate charges were transformed into one combined charge, i.e. that of belonging to a clandestine armed organisation entitled the ORAI. The name had been taken from the paragraph mentioned above: Revolutionary anarchist insurrectionalist organisation.

This trial is still going on, and could drag on for years to come given the various legal stages which make up the process. We were freed from prison fourteen months after being arrested thanks to a simple procedural error: the Attorney's Office genius in Rome had been so busy trying to justify a phantom 'armed gang' that they forgot to follow their own rules. The result is that although still facing charges that carry life imprisonment those who, like myself, did not have sentences pending are now all at liberty.

As the enthralled reader will discover, the following texts contain no theory relative to a specific armed organisation, but are an examination of the insurrectionalist method of

organising. This is based on affinity groups composed of anarchists, the elaboration of a common revolutionary project, their linking together in an informal organisation, the constitution of base nuclei in a situation of mass struggle and, finally, the way these structures could be linked together.

I realise that for the obtuse mentality of a Carabinieri educated to seeing the enemy as a negative copy of himself and his organisation, nothing under the sun could exist that is not equipped with an organisation chart, leaders, strategies and objectives. And up to this point I can even understand a tendentious reading of the text in question. But what I cannot understand, and what no reader will surely be able to either, is how such a text came to be given the task of constituting the foundations of a clandestine armed organisation. This is still simmering away in the mind of the Public Prosecutor, who will stop at nothing to demonstrate our guilt.

*Stop at nothing.* Precisely, even to the point of denying all the evidence to the contrary. And in fact, as appears from the trial documents and even from the succinct phrasing of the arrest warrants, they must have had a few doubts on the subject. However, these were evidently cast aside due to the greater precedence of their need to justify the unjustifiable: If it is true that Bonanno is theorising a specific armed clandestine organisation (ORAI) in this piece ('Recent Developments in Capitalism'), then we, the Prosecution and Carabinieri, declare that he cannot have gone to Greece to talk about it publicly in a university auditorium. That would be illogical. And as the text in question must mean what we, Prosecution and Carabinieri, say it means, then we must conclude that Bonanno did not go to Greece, did not give these conferences, and did not write this text as an outline and memorandum for what he was about to say in public... A logical conclusion! Only it ignores one thing: that in both Athens and Salonika hundreds of people were present at these conferences. There are tape recordings not just of the conferences but of the whole debate. Both the conferences and the Salonika debate have been transcribed and presented in a book published in Greece. And, finally, there are even photographs published along with my interview (the third of the pieces published here) on February 28 1993 in the Athens daily *Eleftherotipia*.

But why do the prosecution want to read something — the theorisation of an inexistent armed band complete with name — into this text, even at the risk of making themselves ridiculous? There is a simple answer: because they would not otherwise be able to sentence dozens of anarchists for conspiracy — a conspiracy that clearly does not exist. It would then remain for them only to prove individual charges which would have to be dealt with separately, according to the rules of the penal code, etc.

The accusers know perfectly well that the second alternative would not be easy for them. They are well aware that most of the charges are based on the spurious accusations of a young girl bribed by them, *that* is why they are so persistent in wanting to read something that is not there into this text.

In fact, the concept of informal organisation proposed in the text in question does not in any way resemble that of an armed clandestine organisation. We are in two different worlds. The closed organisation (necessarily so if we are talking of *clandestinity*), is an instrument like any other, and in certain conditions of the class clash it might even be useful as defensive or offensive means if one finds oneself in dire straits. The economic and social structure

would have to change profoundly in order for it to become useful as a means today. Capital would have to turn back on its steps to the conditions of production that existed in the Eighties when there was a strong, centralised working class and a fixed transmission belt of left wing unions and parties — all things which clearly no longer exist. The closed organisational model, which only indirectly wants the struggle to generalise and does nothing in that direction other than make its actions known through the media — and we know how *that* functions — corresponds in many respects to the ideological conditions that sum up the union and the party. If we refuse to be likened to political parties, we must also refuse to be compared to organisations whose aim is numerical growth, increasing the number of its actions and setting itself up as the mainstay of the class struggle.

Of course, if anarchists were to get involved in constituting a specific, closed organisation, they would do it in quite a different way to the classic sclerotic one of the Marxist-Leninists. And there is no doubt that, in its time, Azione Rivoluzionaria was an attempt in that direction. But it soon moved away from its initial trajectory in the direction of a generalisation of the struggle, and closed itself up in the logic of recruiting and joining arms with the other combatant organisations on the scene at the time. I am not saying that they did not make any interesting proposals, especially in their early documents. What I am saying is that, not only did these proposals not stand up to criticism but by withdrawing into a position of defence they ended up annihilating themselves by becoming more and more clandestine, that's all. The best comrades, it was said at the time, are those in prison. One simply had to end up in prison to become a better comrade.

The problem is simple. When we work out an analysis we cannot put our own personal positions aside. These inevitably come to permeate the analysis without our meaning it to. And when the latter is written in prison, it is obvious that that is where it has come from. Moreover, when a comrade sees his immediate reality to be radically compromised he conveys this in the analyses he is working on, as well as in the kind of intervention and methods he proposes. By imprisoning himself in the stifling viewpoint of a clandestine organisation his way of thinking becomes clandestine even to himself, almost without realizing it.

It has been said that if one were to find oneself in a pre-revolutionary phase (although no one could explain how we were to recognise this phase), the only road possible would be that of the more or less closed armed organisation. It was later seen that all attempts at 'being different' simply ended up aborting themselves in the classic condition of closure. It does not occur to anyone today that we are in a pre-revolutionary phase, so if we were to accept the idea of a specific armed organisation it would simply be a question of our own personal decision, nothing more. A choice like any other. And I say that with no expectations concerning the accusations in the trial in Rome.

At this point I could quote something I wrote years ago, in an article published in *Anarchismo* — in 1979 to be exact — entitled 'On Clandestine Organisation', which is also available in my book *The Illogical Revolution* (pages 88–90), but it seems pointless to me. While many might simply have forgotten these words from the past, I myself do not know what to do with them. I do not even want to read them again, because they belong to a period that is quite different to the present. As far as I can remember, they referred to the fact that the critique of the closed clandestine organisation is not simply an affirmation of

individualism. Criticism does not have a weakening effect, it strengthens. But something strange occurs when those under criticism are comrades who participate in, or support, a closed form of organisation, even in theory. The critique is taken as a personal attack or something aimed at weakening one's conditions. And when you are faced with a comrade with years of prison hanging over them, you run the risk of being lynched. I do not think that the concept of the generalisation of the struggle, including armed struggle, is the refusal of organisation. Nor do I think that to criticise the closed clandestine organisation means to 'expose oneself to massacre'. Such generalisations do not interest me.

The informal organisation of affinity groups and the consequent development of base nuclei in specific mass struggles, are the organisational forms I consider most useful today for the generalisation of the struggle, armed or otherwise.

Alfredo M. Bonanno  
Catania, 10 October 1998

# Recent Developments in Capitalism

From the late Seventies until the early Eighties, industry in the leading capitalist countries was in crisis. The relationship between plant and productivity had never been worse. Struggles led by the trades unions, as well as those of the proletariat in general (especially in their more violent manifestations under the leadership of the various revolutionary working class structures), had led to a rise in labour costs quite out of proportion to capital's income. Incapable of adjusting, lacking the strength to reduce labour and employment costs drastically, it seemed as though the whole system was moving towards its natural collapse.

But by the first half of the Eighties rapid change had set in, with industrial restructuring taking an electronic direction. The primary and secondary productive sectors (industry and agriculture) were in decline, with consequent reductions in employment. The tertiary (services) sector had expanded out of all proportion, absorbing some of the laid-off work force, thus attenuating the social backlash that the capitalists had feared more than anything else.

In short, the much-feared riots and revolutions did not take place. There was no intolerable pressure from the reserve army of the proletariat. Instead, everything quietly adapted to changes in the structures of production.

Heavy industry replaced old plants with robotised ones capable of reaching hitherto undreamed of levels of flexibility and low levels of investment. Labour costs decreased without this leading to any fall in demand because the services sector held well, assuring levels of income that were sufficient to inflate the capitalist system as a whole. Most of the sacked workers managed to find some way of getting by in the new flexible and permissive capitalist world.

## The new productive and democratic mentality

None of this would have been possible without the emergence of a new flexible mentality at the work place: a reduction in the need for professional qualifications and an increase in the demand for small, auxiliary jobs. This coincided with a consolidation of the democratic mentality.

The middle classes' myths of careers and improvements in workers' wages disappeared for good. All this was possible thanks to articulated interventions at every level:

- a. In the schools, in the adoption of less rigid teaching methods better suited to building a 'malleable' personality in young people. This was to enable them to adapt to an uncertain future of the kind that would have filled their parents with horror;



- b. In the political management of the most advanced capitalist countries. Authoritarianism gave way to democratisation, involving people in fictitious electoral and referenda procedures;
- c. In production where, as we have said, the disappearance of professional qualifications has made producers tame and flexible.

This all took place according to the spirit of the times. Dreams of philosophical and scientific certainty gave way to a 'weak' model, based not on risk and courage but on adjustment in the short-term, on the principle that nothing is certain but anything can be fixed.

As well as contributing to the disappearance of the old and in many aspects out-of-date, authoritarianism, the democratic mentality also led to a tendency to compromise at every level. This resulted in a moral degradation where the dignity of the oppressed was exchanged for a guaranteed but uncomfortable survival. Struggles receded and weakened.

## **Obstacles faced by the insurrectional struggle against post-industrial capitalism and the State**

Undoubtedly one obstacle to be faced is precisely this amorphous, flexible mentality outlined above. This cannot be compared to the old-style reliance on social security; it is simply a desire to find a niche in which to survive, work as little as possible, accept all the rules of the system and disdain ideals and projects, dreams and utopias. The laboratories of capital have done an exemplary job in this sense. School, factory, culture and sport have united to produce individuals who are domesticated in every respect, incapable of suffering or knowing their enemies, unable to dream, desire, struggle or act to transform reality.

Another obstacle, which is related to the first, consists of pushing production to the margins of the post-industrial complex as a whole. The dismembering of the class of producers is no longer a nebulous project, it has become a reality. And the division into numerous small sectors which often work against each other is increasing this marginalisation.

This is fast making the traditional structures of worker resistance, such as workers' parties and trades unions, obsolete. Recent years have witnessed a progressive disappearance of the old-style trade-unionism, including that which once aspired to revolution and self-management. But, more importantly, we have witnessed the collapse of the communism which claimed to have built a socialist State — realised through police control and ideological repression.

It cannot be said that any organisational strategy capable of responding to the new conditions of capitalist productive and social reality in general has emerged.

Developments that might have arisen from proposals made by insurrectionalist anarchists, especially those moving in the direction of informal relations between individuals and groups based on affinity, have not yet been fully taken on board. They have often received a tepid welcome by comrades due to a certain, in some ways understandable, reluctance to abandon the old ways of thinking and apply new methods of organisation.

We will say something about this further on as it is central to the struggle against the new structures of repression and total control produced by Capital and the State.

## **Restructuring technology**

The present technological revolution based on information technology, lasers, the atom, subatomic particles, new materials such as optic fibres which allow energy transportation and consumption at speeds and over distances once unthinkable, genetic modification concerning not only agriculture and animals but also man, etc., has not stopped at changing the world. It has done more. It has produced conditions that make it seem impossible to plan or make plans for the foreseeable future, not only as far as those who intend to maintain the present state of affairs are concerned, but also by those who intend to destroy them.

The main reason for this is that the new technologies, which are now interacting and becoming part of the context that has been developing over at least the past 2,000 years, could produce unpredictable results. And some of these results could be totally destructive, far beyond the devastating effects of an atomic explosion.

Hence the need for a project aimed at the destruction of technology as a whole in its first, essential phase, and which bases all its political and social approaches on this imperative.

## **Political, economic and military restructuring**

Profound changes are also taking place in the economic sector. These changes are affecting the political situation in advanced capitalist countries, with consequent effects on the military sector.

New frontiers in post-industrial capitalism are emerging from widespread processes and re-arrangements that are continually in flux. The static concept of production tied to heavy machinery in huge factories capable of producing a multiplicity of consumer goods has been surpassed by the ingenious idea of swift change and increasing competition in specialised production with stylish, individual, personalised products. The post-industrial product does not require skilled labour but is set up on the production line directly, simply by reprogramming the robots to produce it. This has meant incredible reduction in storage and distribution costs and eliminated obsolescence and stockpiling of unsold products.

This development created great new possibilities for capital around the beginning of the Eighties, and by the end of the decade it had become the norm. So the political situation had to change to correspond with the new economic one.

This explains the considerable changes that took place at the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties. There has been a move towards careful selection of the managerial strata, which must be able to see to the requirements of this new form of production. That explains why advanced industrial countries such as the US and Great Britain went through a period of increased authoritarianism in government, then moved on to a more

versatile, flexible form of political management corresponding to the economic necessities of various countries which are now all coordinated globally.

## **The collapse of actual socialism and the rebirth of various forms of nationalism**

Any advance from the countries of actual socialism beyond cautious, reciprocal suspicion was unthinkable in the old capitalist reality. But the birth of the new computerised, automated capitalism has not only made advances possible but has forced these countries to change radically, pushing them to an irreversible as it was indecent collapse.

Rigid authoritarian regimes based on ideological calembours such as proletarian internationalism and the like are finding it difficult to comply with the needs imposed by a production structure that is now coordinated globally.

If they do not want to get stuck in a precarious, marginal situation, the few remaining authoritarian regimes will have to resolutely democratise their political management. Inflexibility forces the great international partners of industrial development to stiffen and declare war one way or the other.

It is in this sense that the role of the army has also changed considerably. It has intensified internal repression, and at the same time taken on the role of global policeman that was first developed by the US. This will probably continue for a number of years until other crises interrupt and require new yet equally precarious and dangerous forms of equilibrium.

Accordingly, the resurgence of nationalism is bringing with it one positive albeit limited element, and one that is extremely dangerous. Its immediate and specific effect consists in the overturning and dismemberment of the big States. Any movement that goes in this direction is to be hailed as positive, even if on the surface it presents itself as being a carrier of traditional, conservative values.

The other factor, the one that is extremely dangerous, is the risk of wars spreading between the small States, declared and fought with unprecedented ferocity and causing tremendous suffering in the name of miserable principles and just as miserable alternatives.

Many of these wars will lead to a more efficient and structured form of post-industrial capitalism. Many will be controlled and piloted by the multinational giants themselves. But basically they represent a transitory condition, a kind of epileptic fit, following which social conditions could evolve in the direction of the elimination of any trace of the old State organisms.

At the moment we can only guess how this might happen, starting off from an examination of conditions today.

## **Possible developments of the insurrectional mass struggle in the direction of anarchist communism**

The end of the great trades union organisations' function of resistance and defence — corresponding with the collapse of the working class — has allowed us to see another possibility for the organisation of the struggle. This could start from the real capacity of the *excluded*, i.e., of the great mass of exploited, producers and non-producers, who already find themselves beyond the area of guaranteed wages, or who will in the near future.

The proposal of a kind of intervention based on affinity groups and their coordination and aimed at creating the best conditions for mass insurrection often comes up against a brick wall even amongst the comrades who are interested in it. Many consider it to be out of date, valid at the end of the last century but decidedly out of fashion today. And that would be the case had the conditions of production, in particular the structure of the factory, stayed as they were a hundred and fifty years ago. The insurrectionalist project would undoubtedly be inappropriate were such structures and their corresponding organisations for trade union resistance still in existence. But these no longer exist, and the mentality that went with them has also disappeared. This mentality could be summed up by respect for one's job, taking a pride in one's work, having a career. This, along with the sense of belonging to a producer's group in which to associate and resist and form trade union links which could even become the means for addressing more problematic forms of struggle such as sabotage, anti-fascist activity and so on, are all things of the past.

All these conditions have disappeared for good. Everything has changed radically. What we could call the factory mentality has ceased to exist.

The trade union has become a gymnasium for careerists and politicians. Wage bargaining has become a filter for facilitating the adaptation of the cost of labour to the new structures of capital. Disintegration is extending rapidly beyond the factory to the whole social fabric, breaking bonds of solidarity and all significant human relationships, turning people into faceless strangers, automata immersed in the unliveable confusion of the big cities or in the deathly silence of the provinces. Real interests have been substituted by virtual images created for the purpose of guaranteeing the minimum cohesion necessary to hold the social mechanism as a whole together. Television, sport, concerts, art and cultural activities constitute a network for those who passively wait for things to happen, such as the next riot, the next crisis, the next civil war, or whatever.

This is the situation we need to bear in mind when talking of insurrection. We insurrectionalist and revolutionary anarchists are not referring to something that is still to come about, but to something that is already happening. We are not referring to a remote, far off model, which, like dreamers, we are trying to bring back to life, unaware of the massive transformations that are taking place at the present moment. We live in our time. We are the children of the end of the millennium, actors taking part in the radical transformation of the society we see before us.

Not only do we consider insurrectionalist struggle to be possible but, faced with the complete disintegration of traditional forms of resistance, we think that it is the condition towards

which we should be moving if we do not want to end up accepting the terms imposed by the enemy and becoming lobotomised slaves, insignificant pawns of the mechanisms of the information technology that will be our master in the near future.

Wider and wider strata of the *excluded* are moving away from consensus, and consequently from accepting reality or having any hope of a better future. Social strata who once considered themselves to be stable and not at risk are now living in a precariousness they will never be able to escape from by dedication to work and moderation in consumerism.

## **Revolutionary anarchist insurrectionalist organisation**

We believe that instead of federations and groups organised in the traditional sense — part of the economic and social structures of a reality that no longer exists — we should be forming affinity groups based on the strength of mutual personal knowledge. These groups should be capable of carrying out specific coordinated actions against the enemy.

As far as the practical aspects are concerned, we imagine there would be collaboration between groups and individuals to find the means, documentation and everything else necessary for carrying out such actions. As far as analyses are concerned, we are attempting to circulate as many as possible in our publications and through meetings and debates on specific questions. An insurrectionalist organisational structure does not rotate around the central idea of the periodic congress typical of the big syndicalist organisations or the official movement federations. Its points of reference are supplied by the entirety of the situations in the struggle, whether they be attacks on the class enemy or moments of reflection and theoretical quest.

Affinity groups could then contribute to the forming of base nuclei. The aim of these structures is to take the place of the old trades unions resistance organisations — including those who insist on the anarcho-syndicalist ideology — in the ambit of intermediate struggles. The base nuclei's field of action would be any situation where class domination enacts a separation between *included* and *excluded*.

Base nuclei are nearly always formed as a consequence of the propulsive actions of insurrectionalist anarchists, but they are not composed of anarchists alone. At meetings, anarchists should undertake their task of outlining class objectives to the utmost.

A number of base nuclei could form coordinating structures with the same aim. These specific organisational structures are based on the principles of permanent conflictuality, self-management and attack.

By permanent conflictuality we mean uninterrupted struggle against class domination and those responsible for bringing it about.

By self-management we mean independence from all parties, trades unions or patronage, as well as finding the means necessary for organising and carrying out the struggle on the basis of spontaneous contributions alone.

By attack we mean the refusal of any negotiation, mediation, reconciliation or compromise with the enemy.

The field of action of affinity groups and base nuclei is that of mass struggles.

These struggles are nearly always intermediary, which means they do not have a direct, immediately destructive effect. They often propose simple objectives, but have the aim of gaining more strength in order to better develop the struggle towards wider objectives.

Nevertheless, the final aim of these intermediate struggles is always attack. It is however obviously possible for individual comrades or affinity groups to strike at individuals or organisations of Capital and the State independently of any more complex relationship.

Sabotage has become the main weapon of the exploited in their struggle in the scenario we see extending before our very eyes. Capitalism is creating conditions of control and domination at levels never seen before through information technology which could never be used for anything other than maintaining power.

## **Why we are insurrectionalist anarchists**

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

These are the reasons why we are anarchists, revolutionaries and insurrectionalists.

# New Capitalist Order

Comrades, before starting this talk, a couple of words in order to get to know each other better. In conferences a barrier is nearly always created between whoever is talking and those who are listening. So, in order to overcome this obstacle we must try to come to some agreement because we are here to do something together, not simply to talk on the one hand and listen on the other. And this common interest needs to be clearer than ever given the questions about to be discussed this evening. Often the complexity of the analyses and the difficulty of the problems that are being tackled separate the person who is talking from those who are listening, pushing many comrades into a passive dimension. The same thing happens when we read a difficult book which only interests us up to a point, a book with a title such as *Anarchism and Post-industrial Society*, for example. I must confess that if I were to see such a book in a shop window, I'm not sure I'd buy it.

That is why we need to come to some agreement. I think that behind the facade of the problem under discussion, undoubtedly a complex one, the fact that we are anarchists and revolutionary comrades means we should be able to find some common ground. This should permit us to acquire certain analytical instruments with which to better understand reality, so be able to act upon it more effectively than before. As a revolutionary anarchist I refuse to inhabit two separate worlds: one of theory and another of practice. As an anarchist revolutionary, my theory is my practice, and my practice my theory.

Such an introduction might not go down well, and it will certainly not please those who support the old theories. But the world has changed. We are faced with a new human condition today, a new and painful reality. This can leave no room for intellectual closure or analytical aristocracies. Action is no longer something that is separate from theory, and this will continue to be the case. That is why it is important to talk about the transformation of capitalism yet again. Because the situation we see before us has already undergone rapid restructuring.

When we find ourselves in a situation like this, we tend to let ourselves be seduced by words. And we all know anarchists' vocation for words. Of course we are for action too. But tonight it is a question of words alone, so we run the risk of getting drunk on them. Revolution, insurrection, destruction, are all words. Sabotage — there, another word. Over the past few days spent here among you I have heard various questions asked. Sometimes they were asked in bad faith, as far as I could tell. But translation from one language to another comes into it, and I don't want to be malevolent. I just want to say that it is important not to deceive oneself that my analysis provides the solution to the social problem. I do not believe any of the comrades I have spoken to over the past few days have the solution either. Nor does the anarcho-sindicalist comrade with his analyses based on the centrality of the working class, or the other comrades who as far as I can understand do not seem to

agree with him and are proposing an intervention of an insurrectionalist nature. No, none of these hypotheses can claim to possess the truth. If anarchism teaches anything it teaches us to be wary of anyone who claims to hold the truth. Anyone who does so, even if they call themselves an anarchist, is always a priest as far as I am concerned. Any discourse must simply aim to formulate a critique of the existent, and if we sometimes get carried away with words, it is the desire to act that gets the better of us. Let us stop here and start thinking again. The destruction of the existent that oppresses us will be a long road. Our analyses are no more than a small contribution so that we can continue our destructive revolutionary activity together in ways that make any small talk simply a waste of time.

So, what can we do? Anarchists have been asking themselves this for a long time: how can we come into contact with the masses? to use a term which often comes up in this kind of discussion, and which I have also heard on various occasions over the past few days. Now, this problem has been faced in two different ways. In the past, throughout the history of anarchism, it has been faced by using the concept of propaganda, that is, by explaining who we are to the masses. This, as we can easily see, is the method used by political parties the world over. Such a method, the use of traditional anarchist propaganda, is in difficulty today in my opinion, just as the spreading of any other ideology is. It is not so much that people don't want to have anything to do with ideology any longer as that capitalist restructuring is making it pointless. And I must say here publicly that anarchists are having difficulty in understanding this new reality, and that it is the subject of an ongoing debate within the international anarchist movement. The end of ideology is leading to a situation where traditional anarchist propaganda is becoming pointless. As the effectiveness (or illusion, we do not know which) of propaganda disappears, the road of direct contact with people is opening up. This is a road of concrete struggles, struggles we have already mentioned, everyday questions, but of course one can't exceed one's limitations. Anarchists are a very small minority. It is not by making a lot of noise, or by using advertising techniques that they will be able to make themselves heard by the people. So it is not a question of choosing the most suitable means of communication — because this would take us back to the problem of propaganda, and therefore ideology, again — but rather of choosing the most suitable means of struggle. Many anarchists believe this to be direct attack, obviously within the limits of their possibilities, without imagining themselves to be anyone's fly coachman.

I ask you to reflect for a moment on the state of Capitalism at the beginning of the Eighties. Capitalism was in difficulty. It was facing increased labour expenditure, a restructuring of fixed plants at astronomically high costs, a rigid market, and the possibility of social struggles developing in response to this. And then, think about the conditions six or seven years later. How quickly Capitalism changed. It overcame all its difficulties in a way that could never have been predicted, achieving an unprecedented programme of economic and imperialist management of the world. Perhaps it does not seem so at the moment, but this programme aimed at closing the circle of power is well underway. What has happened? How was a situation so wrought with difficulties able to pick up so quickly and radically?

We all know what happened, it is not the technical side of it that surprises us. Basically, a new technology has been inserted into the productive process. Labour costs have been reduced, productive programmes replaced, new forces used in production: we know all



this. That is not the aspect of capitalist restructuring that surprises us. No, what astounds us is the latter's ingenious use of the working class. Because this has always formed the main difficulty for capitalism. Capitalist geniality has succeeded in attacking and dismantling the working class, spreading them all over the country, impoverishing, demoralising and nullifying them. Of course it was afraid to do this at first. Capital was always afraid to venture along that road, because reductions in the price of labour have always marked the outbreak of social struggles. But, as its academic representatives had been insisting for some time, the danger no longer exists, or at least it is disappearing. It is now even possible to lay people off, so long as you do it by changing production sectors, so long as others are being prepared to develop an open mentality and are beginning to discuss things. And all the social forces: parties, unions, social workers, the forces of repression, all levels of school, culture, the world of the spectacle, the media, have been rallied to tackle Capitalism's new task. This constitutes a worldwide crusade such as has never been seen before, aimed at modelling the new man, the new worker.

What is the main characteristic of this new man? He is not violent, because he is democratic. He discusses things with others, is open to other people's opinions, seeks to associate with others, joins unions, goes on strike (symbolic ones, of course). But what has happened to him? He has lost his identity. He does not know who he really is any longer. He has lost his identity as one of the exploited. Not because exploitation has disappeared, but because he has been presented with a new image of things in which he is made to feel he is a participant. Moreover, he feels a sense of responsibility. And in the name of this social solidarity he is ready to make new sacrifices: adapt, change his job, lose his skills, disqualify himself as a man and a worker. And that is what Capitalism has systematically been asking of him over the past ten years, because with the new capitalist restructuring there is no need for qualifications, but simply for a mere aptitude for work, flexibility and speed. The eye must be faster than the mind, decisions limited and rapid: restricted choices, few buttons to be pressed, maximum speed in execution. Think of the importance that video games have in this project, to give but one example. So we see that worker centrality has disappeared miserably. Capital is capable of separating the *included* from the *excluded*, that is, of distinguishing those who are involved in power from those who will be *excluded* forever. By 'power' we mean not only State management, but also the possibility of gaining access to better living conditions.

But what supports this divide? What guarantees the separation? This lies in the different ways that needs are perceived. Because, if you think about it for a moment, under the old-style form of exploitation, exploited and exploiter both desired the same thing. Only the one *had*, and the other did not. If the construction of this divide were to be fully realised, there will be two different kinds of desire, a desire for completely different things. The *excluded* will only desire what they know, what is comprehensible to them and not what belongs to the *included* whose desires and needs they will no longer be able to comprehend because the cultural equipment necessary to do so will have been taken from them for ever.

This is what Capitalism is building: an automaton in flesh and bone, constructed in the laboratories of power. Today's world, based on information technology, knows perfectly well that it will never be able to take the machine to the level of man, because no machine will

ever be able to do what a man can. So they are lowering man to the level of the machine. They are reducing his capacity to understand, gradually levelling his cultural heritage to the absolute minimum, and creating uniform desires in him.

So when did the technological process we are talking about begin? Did it begin with cybernetics as has been suggested? Anyone who has any experience of such things knows that if poor Norbert Wiener has any responsibility at all, it lies in the fact that he started to play around with electronic tortoises. In actual fact, modern technology was born a hundred years ago when an innocent English mathematician started toying with arithmetic and developed binary calculus. Now, following on from that it is possible to identify the various steps in modern technology. But there is one precise moment in which a qualitative leap takes place: when electronics came to be used as the basis upon which the new technology (and consequently the technology for perfecting electronics) was built. And it is impossible to predict how things will evolve, because no one can foresee what the consequences of this entry into a new technological phase will be. We must understand that it is not possible to think in terms of cause and effect. For example, it is naive to say that the great powers have the atomic potential to blow up the world, even though this is so. This idea, so terrifying and apocalyptic, belongs to the old concept of technology based on the hypothesis of cause and effect: the bombs explode, the world is destroyed. The problem we are talking about here opens up the prospect of a far more dangerous situation because it is no longer a matter of speculation but something that already exists and is developing further. And this development is not based on the principle of cause and effect but on the weaving of unpredictable relations. Just one simple technological discovery, such as a new substance for energy conservation for example, could lead to a series of destructive technological relations which no one in all conscience, no scientist, would be able to predict. It might cause a series of destructive relations which would not only affect the new technologies, but also the old ones, putting the whole world in chaos. This is what is different, and it has nothing to do with cybernetics, which is only the distant relative of the present nightmare.

In the light of all this we have been asking ourselves for a long time now: how can we attack the enemy if we do not know it in depth? But, if you think about it, the answer is not all that difficult. We very much enjoy attacking the police, for example, but no one becomes a policeman in order to do so. One informs oneself: how do the police operate? What kind of truncheons do they use? We put together the small amount of knowledge required for us to roughly understand how the police work. In other words, if we decide to attack the police, we simply limit ourselves to obtaining a certain amount of knowledge about them. In the same way, it is not necessary to become engineers in order to attack the new technology, we can simply acquire some basic knowledge, a few practical indications that make it possible for us to attack it. And from this consideration another, far more important one, emerges: that the new technology is not abstract, it is something concrete. For instance, the international communication system is a concrete fact. In order to build abstract images in our heads it needs to spread itself throughout the country. This is the way the new materials are being used, let us say in the construction of cables for data transmission. And it is here that it is important to know technology, not how it works in the productive aspect, but how it is spread throughout the country. That is to say, where the directing centres (which are multiple) are

to be found and where the communication channels are. These, comrades, are not abstract ideas but physical things, objects that occupy space and guarantee control. It is quite simple to intervene with sabotage in this instance. What is difficult is finding out where the cables are.

We have seen the problem of finding the documentation and research required to attack: at some point this becomes indispensable. At some point, knowledge of technology becomes essential. In our opinion this will be the greatest problem that revolutionaries will have to face over the next few years.

I do not know if any use will be made of the computer in the society of the future, the self-managed society many comrades refer to, just as it is impossible to know whether any use will be made of a considerable number of the new technologies. In fact, it is impossible to know anything about what will happen in this hypothetical society of the future. The only thing I can know, up to a point, concerns the present, and the effects of the use of the new technologies. But we have already gone into this, so there is no point in repeating ourselves. The task of anarchists is to attack, but not on behalf of their own organisational interests or quantitative growth. Anarchists have no social or organisational identity to defend. Their structures are always of an informal character so their attack, when it takes place, is not to defend themselves (or worse still to propagandise themselves), but to destroy an enemy who is striking everyone. And it is in this decision to attack that theory and practice weld together.

An historically unprecedented kind of capitalism is appearing on the horizon. When we hear of neo-liberalism, this is in fact what is meant. When we hear talk of global domination, this is the project that is being referred to, not the old concept of power, not the old imperialism. It was in the face of this project and its immense capacity to dominate that real socialism collapsed. No such thing would ever have happened in the context of the old capitalism. There is no longer any need for the world to be divided into two opposing blocs. The new capitalist imperialism is of an administrative kind. Its project is to manage the world for a small nucleus of *included*, at the cost of the great mass of *excluded*. And with these projects in mind, all possible means are already being used — the new ones we have mentioned, along with the old ones, as old as the world, such as war, repression, barbarity, according to the situation. In this way, in the former Yugoslavia for example, a ferocious war is being waged aimed at reducing a people's capacities as far as possible. Then there will be an intervention in this situation of absolute destruction in the form of a little humanitarian aid which will seem like an enormous amount of help in such conditions of absolute and total misery.

Think of what the state of countries like the former Yugoslavia would be like without the war. A great powder-keg at the gates of western Europe, on our borders, alongside the European Community. A powder-keg ready to explode, social contradictions which no economic intervention would ever be able to raise to the level of western consumerism. The only solution was war, the oldest device in the world, and that has been applied. American and world imperialism are intervening in Somalia and Iraq, but there is little doubt that they will intervene in the former Yugoslavia because the probability of rebellion in this area must

be reduced to zero. So, old means are being used along with new ones, according to the situation, according to the economic and social context involved.

And one of the oldest weapons in the great arsenal of horrors is racism. On the question of racism and all the misdeeds related to it (neo-nazism, fascism, etc.), let's look for a moment at the differentiated development of capitalist restructuring. In order to understand the problem it is necessary to see how capitalist restructuring cannot solve all its problems just by waving a magic wand. It is faced with many different situations all over the world, each with various levels of social tension. Now, these situations of social tension are making what is lurking in the depths of each one of us rise to the surface, things that we have always put aside, exorcised. Essential factors such as racism, nationalism, the fear of the different, the new, Aids, the homosexual, are all latent impulses in us. Our cultural superstructure, our revolutionary consciousness, when it puts on its Sunday clothes, obliterates them, hides them all. Then, when we take off our Sunday best, all these things start to reappear. The beast of racism is always present, and Capitalism is always ready to use it. In situations such as that which exists in Germany where social tensions have developed rapidly over the past few years, this phenomenon is in constant development. Capital controls racism and uses certain aspects of it, but it is also afraid of it in that the overall management of world power is of a democratic, tolerant and possibilist nature. From the point of view of utilisation, anything (e.g., ideology, fear) can exist — it is all part of capital's project. We cannot say with certainty that post-industrial capitalism is against racism. We can see a few of its main characteristics, such as its democratic nature, then suddenly discover that in the context of one specific country the same technologically advanced capitalism is using methods that were used a hundred years ago: racism, persecution of Jews, nationalism, attacks on cemeteries, the most hateful and abominable things man can devise. Capital is manifold, its ideology always Machiavellian: it uses both the strength of the lion and the cunning of the fox.

But the main instrument of capitalism the world over are the new technologies. We must think about this a little, comrades, in order to dispel so much confusion. And in doing so we must also consider the possible use of such technology on our part, in changed social conditions, in a post-revolutionary situation. We have already seen how there has been a great qualitative leap from the old technologies to the new — by new technologies we mean those based on computers, lasers, the atom, subatomic particles, new materials, human, animal and vegetable genetic manipulation. These technologies are quite different from, and have little to do with, the old ones. The latter limited themselves to transforming material, to modifying reality. On the contrary, the new technologies have penetrated reality. They do not simply transform it, they create it, instigating not just molecular changes, possible molecular transformation, but above all creating a mental transformation. Think of the use that is normally made of television. This instrument of communication has got inside us, into our brains. It is modifying our very capacity to see, to understand reality. It is modifying relations in time and space. It is modifying the possibility to step out of ourselves and change reality. In fact, the vast majority of anarchists do not think it possible to make use of this assemblage of modern technologies.

I know that there is an ongoing debate about this. However, this debate is based on a misunderstanding. That is, it is trying to treat two things that are radically different in the same way. The old revolutionary dream, let us say of Spanish anarcho-syndicalism, was that of attacking and defeating power so that the working class could take over the instruments of production and use them in the future society in a way that was more just and free. Now it would be impossible to make a fairer and more free use of these new technologies, because they do not stand passively before us like the old technologies of yesterday, but are dynamic. They move, penetrate deep inside us, have already penetrated us. If we do not hurry to attack, we will no longer be able to understand what we need in order to do so, and rather than us taking the technologies over, it will be the technologies that take us over. It will not be a case of social revolution but of the technological revolution of capital. This is why a revolutionary use of these new technologies is impossible. The misconception is similar to the old one concerning the possible revolutionary use of war, which many well-known anarchists fell prey to when the first world war broke out. A revolutionary use of war is impossible, because war is always an instrument of death. A revolutionary use of the new technologies is impossible, because the new technologies will always be instruments of death. So all that is left to do is to destroy them — to attack, now, not in the future, not when the project has been completed, not when those who are deceiving themselves stop doing so, but sabotage now, attack now. This is the conclusion we have reached. It is at the moment of the destructive attack that one clarifies what we said to begin with. It is at this point that theory conjoins with practice, and the analysis of post-industrial capitalism becomes an instrument with which to attack capitalism. It becomes an instrument for insurrectionalist and revolutionary anarchism in order to direct one's attention to what — the men and the things — makes this project of restructuring of Capitalism possible, and whose responsibilities are clear.

Today as never before, striking at the root of inequality means attacking that which makes the unequal distribution of knowledge possible directly. And that is because, for the first time, reality itself is knowledge, for the first time Capitalism is knowledge. Whereas the centres where knowledge was elaborated, the universities, for example, were once cloistered places to be consulted at specific times of need, today they are at the centre of capitalist restructuring, the centre of repressive restructuring. So, a distribution of knowledge is possible. I insist on saying that this is an urgent problem, because it is possible to grasp any difference when one sees it. But when a net separation between two different kinds of knowledge which have no communication between them occurs — the knowledge of the included and that of the excluded — it will be too late. Think of the project of lowering the quality of schooling. Think how mass schooling, once an instrument for gaining knowledge, has been transformed over the past twenty years into an instrument of disqualification. The level of knowledge has been lowered, whereas a restricted minority of privileged continue to acquire other knowledge, in specialised masters degrees organised by Capital.

This, in my opinion, demonstrates the need and urgency for attack yet again. Attack, yes. But not blind attack. Not desperate, illogical attack. Projectual, revolutionary attack, with eyes wide open in order to understand and to act. For example, the situations where capital exists, and is being realised in time and space, are not all the same. There are

some contexts in which insurrection is more advanced than others, yet there is still a great possibility for mass struggles to take place internationally. It is still possible to intervene in intermediate struggles, that is, in struggles that are circumscribed, even locally, with precise objectives that are born from some specific problem. These should not be considered to be of secondary importance. Such kinds of struggle also disturb Capitalism's universal project, and our intervention in them could be considered an element of resistance, putting a brake on the fragmentation of the class structure. I know that many comrades here this evening have experienced such things, and have participated directly in specific struggles.

So, we need to invent new instruments. These instruments must be capable of affecting the reality of the struggles without the mediation of trade union or party leadership. They must propose clear, even though limited, objectives, ones that are specific, not universal, so in themselves are not revolutionary. We must point to specific objectives because people need to feed their children. We cannot expect everyone to sacrifice themselves in the name of universal anarchism. Limited objectives, then, where our presence as anarchists has the precise task of urging people to struggle directly in their own interests because it is only through direct, autonomous struggle that these objectives can be reached. And once the aim has been reached the nucleus withers and disappears. The comrades then start again, under different conditions.

What comrades are we talking about? What anarchists are we talking about? Many of us are anarchists, but how many of us are available for real, concrete activity? How many of us here today stop short at the threshold of the issue and say: we are present in the struggle, we suggest our project, then the workers, the exploited, do what they like. Our task is done. We have put our conscience at rest. Basically, what is the task of the anarchist if it is not propaganda? As anarchists, we have the solution to all social problems. So we present ourselves to the people who suffer the consequences of the problem, suggest our solution, and go home. No, this kind of anarchism is about to disappear out for good. The last remaining mummies belong to history. Comrades must take the responsibility for struggles upon themselves directly and personally because the objective against which the exploited need to struggle in certain situations, and against which they often do not, is a common one because we are exploited just as they are. We are not privileged. We do not live in two different worlds. There is no serious reason as to why they (the so-called masses) should attack before we do. Nor do I see any reason why we should only feel ourselves authorised to attack in their presence. The ideal, certainly, is mass struggle. But in the face of the project of capitalist restructuring anarchists should feel responsible and decide to attack personally, directly, not wait for signs of mass struggle. Because this might never happen. So this is where the destructive act takes place. It is at this point that the circle closes. What are we waiting for?

So, individual acts of destruction too. But here an important objection has been raised: what does one gain by smashing a computer? Does that perhaps solve the problem of technology? This question, an important one, was presented to us when we worked out the hypothesis of social sabotage. It was said: what result is obtained by destroying a pylon? First of all, the question of sabotage is not aimed so much at the terminal points of technology as at the communications network. So, we are back to the problem of knowledge

of the way technology is distributed over the country, and, if you allow me to digress for a moment, I want to point to a serious problem that arises here. I allow myself to use the term 'serious problem' because a comparison has been made between what a clandestine armed organisation thinks they are doing by striking a specific person, and what, instead, an anarchist insurrectionalist structure thinks it is doing by striking a technological realisation, maintaining that, all said and done, there is not much difference. There is a difference, and it is a very important one. But it is not a question of the difference between people and things. It is an even more important difference, because the aims of the clandestine armed organisation contain the error of centrism. By striking the person, the organisation believes it is striking the centre of Capital. This kind of error is impossible in an anarchist insurrectionalist organisation, because when it strikes a technological realisation (or someone responsible for this realisation), it is fully aware that it is not striking any centre of Capitalism.

During the first half of the Eighties, huge mass struggles took place against nuclear power plants in Italy. One of the most important of these was the struggle against the missile base in Comiso. In this context we realised 'base nuclei'. For three years we struggled alongside the local people. This was a mass struggle, which for various reasons did not succeed in preventing the construction of the base. But that is not the only kind of struggle we consider, it is just one of the possible ones we participate in as insurrectionalist anarchists, one of the many intermediary struggles possible.

In another direction, in the years that followed, over four hundred attacks took place against structures connected to the electric power supply in Italy. Sabotage against coal-fired electric power stations, the destruction of high-voltage pylons, some of them huge ones that supplied a whole region. Some of these struggles transformed themselves into mass struggles; there was mass intervention in some of the projects of sabotage, in others there was not. On a dark night in the countryside, anonymous comrades would blow up a pylon. These attacks were spread over the whole country, and in my opinion possessed two essential characteristics: they constituted an easily realisable attack against Capital, in that they did not use highly destructive technology and, secondly, they are easily copied. Anyone can take a walk in the night. And then, it is also healthy. So anarchists have not passively waited for the masses to awaken, they have considered doing something themselves. In addition to the four hundred attacks we know about, one could guess that at least another four hundred could have taken place as the State conceals these actions because it is afraid of them. It would be impossible to control a capillary-style spreading of sabotage all over the country. No army in the world is capable of controlling such activity. As far as I know, not one comrade has been arrested in connection with the known four hundred attacks.

I would like to wind up here because I think I have been talking long enough. Our insurrectionalist choice is anarchist. As well as being let us say a characterological choice, a choice of the heart, it is also a choice of reason, a result of analytical reflection. What we know about global capitalist restructuring today tells us that there is no other way open to anarchists but that of immediate, destructive intervention. That is why we are insurrectionalists and are against all ideology and chatter. That is why we are against any ideology of anarchism, and all chatter about anarchism. The time for pub talk is over. The enemy is right outside this great hall, visible for all to see. It is simply a question of deciding to attack

it. I am certain that insurrectionalist anarchist comrades will know how to choose the timing and the means for doing so, because with the destruction of this enemy, comrades, it is possible to realise anarchy.



# Anarchists and History

*What is your identity and that of anarchism?*

Today, particularly following the collapse of actual socialism, wide perspectives are opening up for revolutionary anarchism. This should be intended both as an analytical instrument, a means for understanding reality, and as an organisational point of reference for people carrying out social struggles in everyday practice.

*What is the position of the Italian anarchist movement in today's society?*

The Italian situation is very different from the Greek, partly because Italy has witnessed twenty years of authoritarian revolutionism, i.e., Marxist-Leninist armed groups. The failure of this authoritarian strategy, the aim of which was the conquest of power, has led people to think that all revolutionary struggle is doomed to failure. So anarchists in Italy are faced with a very difficult task today, because on the one hand this problem needs to be clarified, and on the other it is necessary to explain to people what one means by revolutionary struggle, which for anarchists is the destruction of power. And they cannot limit themselves to explaining all this merely in words. It also needs to be done by means of the concrete practice of social struggles, something that is still to happen.

*What image do Italian people have of anarchists?*

When Italian society has an image of anarchism and anarchists — I say when it has, because often they do not even know what anarchists are — it is either an image that dates back about 100 years or one supplied by the media. Media images often confuse anarchists, autonomists and other marginal components of society such as the lumpen-proletariat in revolt, even to the point of sometimes calling hooligans anarchists.

*This happens in spite of the fact that the anarchist movement has a long history in Italy?*

It is also due to a certain incapacity on the part of anarchists themselves. But it should be said that it is not easy to destroy an opinion that television constructs in a day, in one single programme. You must understand that the historical inheritance of the Italian anarchist movement is hardly known, as it is confined to the anarchist minority and academic study. The information that most people receive is limited to the mass media. Due to such conditions, which are the same in Greece, it is not possible to modify the situation from one day to the next, a lot of work is required here.

*Is a use of the media considered to be part of the insurrectional project?*

This is a very important question, and demonstrates the radical difference between two revolutionary strategies. On the one hand the authoritarian one, that of the old Marxists whose aim was to realise spectacular actions — the case which caused the greatest stir being the Moro kidnapping — using the media and, through this instrument of sensationalism, make mass propaganda. According to insurrectionalist anarchists this is definitely a losing strategy. Anarchists do not think it is possible to use the media. A limited, subtle dialogue

can only be held at a theoretical level, as we are doing now. It cannot exist at a practical level during social struggles, because then, more than at any other time, the media merely carry out the role of supporting the enemy. Insurrectionalist anarchists do not believe it is possible for objective, neutral information to exist.

*But are all people prey to the media? Could these means of information not play an important role in making anarchists better known?*

I don't believe anything is absolute. In revolutionary activity choices are made that naturally have both positive and negative aspects. When they find themselves in social struggles, insurrectionalist anarchists have chosen to refuse this means of communication. Of course that has its price in terms of transmission of the image, but I think that there are more important issues involved such as keeping the media away from the social struggle, although that does not prevent them from carrying out their job of mystification. But here it is a question of revolutionary responsibility, and in Italy more than a few journalists have been attacked personally as a result. So, there is nothing absolute about making such judgements, only practical choices to be made.

*It has been argued that Europe is presently moving through a cultural Middle Ages. What is your opinion on this?*

This is a complex question, which in order to answer requires at least a couple of words of introduction of a cultural nature. The very concept of a 'cultural Middle Ages' shows the limitations of certain information. The Middle Ages is seen negatively, as the 'dark ages', which was not the case. The crisis of ideology has also led to a crisis in the idea of progress, upon which the Marxist analysis in particular was based. It is sufficient to think of Lukacs and his theory that reality is proceeding in a determinist and historicist way towards a better future. In the past this ideological concept was also shared by various anarchists, and it was in error. Reality is not moving in a progressive direction, and the conditions of barbarity are always present. There is not one thing in history that can guarantee otherwise. We cannot look at any specific period and say: barbarity is over, fascism is finished with for good. We live with fascism, we can see this better thanks to the crisis in ideology that has opened our eyes a little, but only a little. So, as far as this question is concerned I am of the opinion that we find ourselves, not in the Middle Ages, because the Middle Ages were not barbarian, but in a situation where barbarity is currently possible. So, no, I don't agree with the idea that we are going through a historical period similar to the Middle Ages. We are constantly living in a condition of possible barbarity, but also of possible freedom. It is up to us to choose which road we want to take, and this is the aim of revolutionary activity: understanding which road is the road to freedom, and finding the means to take it.

*Concerning the crisis in ideology and the position of Fukuyama re the end of history, the end of ideas — have we reached the end of history or do we have any ideas that are capable of giving us information? And if so, what do we then mean by the concept "the end of history"?*

That is a very articulate question. We need to determine what we mean by history. Not by chance is there a relationship between neo-liberalism and history, because the old liberalism was historicist, that is, it supported the ideology of history. That kind of history is finished. No matter what the philosophers say, the crisis in the idea of progress concerned a single line

proceeding forward through reality and time, necessarily leads to a crisis in the ideology of history, not merely a crisis of history. So, it is not just a matter of a crisis in ideas, because the new liberalism is afraid of a future lack of social control and is circulating the fear of 'the end of history' at the level of public opinion. Their aim is to limit people through an ideology of history which, like any ideology, is an instrument of control. So, we have not reached any end historically at all. The fact that we are reaching the end of the millennium just increases the confusion. A neo-millenarianism is being put into circulation for irrational reasons. This is a very dangerous social terrain where we can see a development of all the religious integralisms, including the Christian version, in the name of an abstract need to save man. So, it is not a question of "the end of history", but rather of the end of historicism which, like any new ideology of world domination does not know what to do yet. It realises that it does not yet have the ideally adapted theoretical instruments necessary, whereas academia, i.e. the world — Japanese and American — university has nothing better to do than produce amenities of this kind.

*Does history have a cyclical or a linear pattern?*

This is also a difficult question. But are all your readers philosophers? I do not know how much depth analysis could be useful, however I will start by establishing that we cannot separate the idea of history from the idea of progress. The idea of progress comes from the revolutionary bourgeoisie who lent themselves to the conquest of power. We need to understand that the idea of progress is an idea of power, of the management of power. Now, the idea of progress requires a linear conception of history, something that was expressed very well by Marx. He thought that the revolutionary clash between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat would necessarily end up with the victory of the proletariat, because the latter were destined to realise history. In this he applied the idea of his philosophical mentor, Hegel, who said that the objective idea of the world would realise philosophy and would render it useless, so people would no longer need to think. And we have seen how the State did think in place of people in the countries of actual socialism. And these apparently innocent philosophical ideas still lurk amongst small university groups and are discussed by very serious people, savants worried about people's destiny. Then they come out of the universities, move about in reality and contribute to building the concentration camps, determining full-scale massacres, historical tragedies of vast proportions, wars and genocide.

Now, having established this we can return to the problem of the linear concept of history. What do anarchists put in its place? They suggest inverting Marx's sentiment, that the sleep of reason breeds monsters. On the contrary, anarchists maintain that it is in fact reason that breeds monsters. That is to say the reason of the philosophers, the politicians, the programmers of power, dominion, and also of historical ideology. So, as long as it is possible to build States and support exploitation, war and social death, a concept of linear history will be possible. When all that changes, or begins to change, we will finally realise that there is no such thing as linear history but that, according to the intuition of your ancient Greek philosophers (who remain unchallenged today), reality is of a circular movement wherein the barbarity of the past can present itself at any time. In this circular movement nothing is ever old or new, but rather everything is always different — which does not mean that it is more, or less, progressive. That is why it is necessary to begin again each time, identify the

enemy, the class enemy, the social enemy, power, and attack it, always with new means. It is something of the work of Sisyphus, and anarchists have this quality of Sisyphus, of always starting at the beginning again, because, like him, they never give up. And with this moral strength of theirs they are superior to the gods, just like Sisyphus.

*What do you think of the reappearance of nationalism?*

There is not only a reappearance of nationalism, but a reappearance of the most ferocious barbarity of the past. For instance, at least according to what the newspapers report, twenty thousand women have been raped in Bosnia. But not in the same way as with all the other armies in the world, because rape is a normal practice of any army, but rather as a deliberate means of fathering Serbians, i.e. as a kind of genetic programming. Such an idea really goes back to the beginning of time and confronts us with tragic considerations. For example, it could be that we (including anarchists) made a mistake concerning man's original goodness and the notion that it was society that made him become bad. We will probably all have to reconsider these concepts. We need to become more intellectually acute, and not be amazed each time these events re-occur in history, and stop placing our hopes in peoples' goodness. Nationalism rises up again because it exists in each one of us, because racism is inside every one of us. The fear of the black man is inside us, in those obscure regions that we are afraid to penetrate, where there is the fear of the different, the foreigner, the Aids sufferer, the homosexual. These fears exist inside all of us, anarchists included, and we need to talk about them, not hide them under ideology, under great words such as revolution, insurrection, freedom. Because all these beautiful words, if they are developed and brought about in reality by men who are afraid of the different, run the risk of becoming the instruments of the power of the future, not instruments of liberation.

*What do the American ghetto riots such as the one in Los Angeles signify?*

The collapse of actual socialism has brought the apparent universal domination of the Americans to the fore. I say apparent because it is not just the Americans. If we make the mistake, as I seem to see being made during the course of these talks in various towns in Greece over the past few days, of aiming all our criticism at the Americans, we will not be able to understand the general character of the new imperialism. Yes, we have American domination, but also that of the European Community and the Japanese economic colossus. But this triumvirate is different to the power structures of the past. They do not relate to each other in terms of the competition that existed before the collapse of the Soviet empire, but share economic relations of imperialist administration, that is, the construction and maintenance of world domination.

For example, the situation in the former Yugoslavia is only comprehensible through an analysis of the new world imperialism — not only Yankee, but also European. Just think, west Germany has planned to invest thousands of billions of marks over the next ten years to raise east Germany to the level of western consumerism. And that concerns just 17 million people. Now, if such a project were to be made for the whole of the East, from Russia to the former Yugoslavia, an impossible sum would be required. No world power in existence is capable of bringing about such an operation, and world imperialism is aware of this.

What is the solution then? War. That is why there is no American intervention in the former Yugoslavia, because a ferocious, destructive war such as the one now taking place will

throw the Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian people into conditions of such acute poverty that even the slightest intervention, any tiny act of humanitarian aid, will be seen as something positive. Think of such a situation existing without the war. Combative peoples at the gates of Eastern Europe, on the border with Greece. Combative peoples in extreme poverty, with a great capacity for revolutionary social action: what a danger for the European Community! Unfortunately I believe the use of war as an instrument of imperialist management could well be extended, and other examples of this can be seen.

The question of the riots within the American empire is quite different. We must bear in mind that it is not just a question of America, because similar events have also taken place in other countries. More than ten years ago there were riots in Brixton. Then in Switzerland, there was the revolt in Zurich, and in Germany, in Hamburg. Under the conditions of advanced capitalism and precisely due to the process of expulsion of the old proletariat from the factory, there is an increasingly wide strata of new poor who have nothing to lose, and who constitute a threat that is ready to explode at any moment.

It should be said however that the significance of these explosions should not be overestimated. It is true that anarchists have always been in favour of such revolts. Whenever possible, they have participated in them, anywhere — in society or in prison, and always on the side of the weakest. But today they must avoid the theoretical risk of putting the social rebels of the future in the place of the worker centrality of yesterday. Society is a complex problem, which has nothing in its centre. There is not one small part of society that is capable of realising the revolution, not even the Los Angeles rioters. Even if we sympathise with them, even if we are alongside them. But we must admit that they are just one element, a sort of involuntary anticipation of possible future mass insurrections, not the main element. And this needs to be said clearly, against all those who deliberately accuse us of forgetting the roles of the other social strata.

*What relationship is there between the recent scandals in Italy and Greece, and the new management of power?*

The problem of the Italian and Greek scandals is important, and it is no coincidence that these have come to light at the present time, because they correspond to profound changes in the management of power. The new global capitalism, more obvious in some places than others — for example it is more evident in the United States, less so in Greece — needs a political managerial class, not one characterised by ideological agreement, but one technically suited to the managerial needs of global imperialism.

For example, a management of power similar to that of the ex-USSR, or a kind of national socialism, would of necessity have had recourse to mass arrests, mass executions, and would have resolved the problem of a revolt in a few days. A democratic management must use other means. Replacing the head of government is a difficult thing to do, and scandals are an excellent means of achieving the replacement of the old social leadership by the new technocratic one.

*Can you tell us anything about the Gladio in Italy?*

As Machiavelli once wrote, anything is legitimate in the political arena. In Italy the Gladio scandal is the Christian Democrats' response to the denunciation of their clandestine activity after the war, which came to light in the Soviet archives years later. Yes, I said it was the

Christian Democrats' response... Contrary to what is believed, it was not the Communist Party that denounced the armed activity of the USA and the Christian Democrats. It was the Christian Democrats themselves who justified their activities in terms of the defence of capitalist ideals, in a desperate attempt to save the old political leadership by building a 'revolutionary' purity to show that people who had taken up arms in the past should not be made to pay by Capital. Contrary to the logic of other economic scandals, the Gladio is an exercise in inverse logic. Whereas the economic scandals are aimed at destroying the old leadership, the Gladio operation tried to save it. Nevertheless this proved impossible, because the needs of world imperialism are greater, and end up by taking over.

*In a Greek anarchist paper of 1896 there is an interesting article on ecology. What do you think about the fact that today Capital itself uses ecology as a means of restructuring?*

First we need to put this into context, given that you've made reference to a paper from the nineteenth century. Anarchism is not a political movement and never has been. It is a social movement, a carrier of social ideas, and so has always, right from its birth, dealt with the entirety of social problems. If one looks at anarchist papers of the last century, one can find not only the question of ecology addressed but also any other problem that concerns man. The anarchists were the first to talk about free love, eroticism, homosexuality, about all the aspects that concern daily life. This is one of the strengths of anarchism, and has led to the anarchist movement being considered, today as in the past, a great reservoir of ideas into which everyone can dip, and from which Capital itself has derived many concepts. But anarchists are aware of this. They have always put their ideas at the disposal of others, because, as Proudhon said, the worst kind of property is intellectual property. Anarchists have never been afraid that Capital might steal their ideas, because they have always known that they are capable of moving beyond them. So, if at the end of the last century anarchists were ecologists in a particular way, in that they were the only ones to be ecologists, now that Power has 'become ecologically-minded' and ecology has become a leading industry, anarchists are no longer ecologists the same as before. They no longer say that it is necessary to save nature, but rather that in order to save nature it is necessary to destroy both those who are polluting it, and those who want to save it using State means.

*How do you see yourself?*

That is a question that I was asked before many years ago here in Greece, in a very different political situation. The physical conditions were also very different then. At the time I replied: a comrade among comrades. Now that I am older my reply is the same: a comrade among comrades.

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Alfredo M. Bonanno  
The Insurrectional Project  
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