Do or Die

Insurrectionary Anarchy

Organising for Attack!

Issue 10

Contents

"From a certain point onward, there is no turning back. That is the point that must be reached."

— Franz Kafka.

For us anarchists the questions of how to act and how to organise are intimately linked. And it is these two questions, not the question of the desired form of a future society, that provide us with the most useful method for understanding the various forms of anarchism that exist. Insurrectionary anarchism is one such form, although it is important to stress that insurrectionary anarchists don't form one unified block, but are extremely varied in their perspectives. Insurrectionary anarchism is not an ideological solution to social problems, nor a commodity on the capitalist market of ideologies and opinions. Rather it is an on-going practice aimed at putting an end to the domination of the state and the continuance of capitalism, which requires analysis and discussion to advance. Historically, most anarchists, except those who believed that society would evolve to the point that it would leave the state behind, have believed that some sort of insurrectionary activity would be necessary to radically transform society. Most simply, this means that the state has to be knocked out of existence by the exploited and excluded, thus anarchists must attack: waiting for the state to disappear is defeat.

Here we spell out some implications that we and some other insurrectionary anarchists have drawn from this general problem: if the state will not disappear on its own, how then do we end its existence? Insurrectionary anarchism is primarily a practice, and focuses on the organisation of attack. Thus, the adjective 'insurrectionary' does not indicate a specific model of the future. Anarchists who believe we must go through an insurrectionary period to rid the world of the institutions of domination and exploitation, moreover, take a variety of positions on the shape of a future society — they could be anarcho-communist, individualist or primitivist, for example. Many refuse to offer a specific, singular model of the future at all, believing that people will choose a variety of social forms to organise themselves when given the chance. They are critical of groups or tendencies that believe they are 'carriers of the truth' and try to impose their ideological and formal solution to the problem of social organisation. Instead, many insurrectionary anarchists believe that it is through self-organisation in struggle that people will learn to live without institutions of domination.

There is also another, more specific usage of the term 'insurrection' — one that comes from the distinction Max Stirner, a 19th century German philosopher and individualist, drew between insurrection and revolution.[1] To Stirner, revolution

implied a transition between two systems, whereas insurrection is an uprising that begins from an individual's discontent with their own life and through it the individual does not seek to build a new system but to create the relations they desire. Both of these general conceptions of insurrection have informed insurrectionary anarchism.

In this article we will first explore some of the general implications of these two conceptions of insurrection. Then, as these ideas have grown out of the practice of struggle and from concrete experiences, we will explain these ideas further by putting them within the historical context of their development. While insurrectionary anarchists are active in many parts of the world at the moment, we are particularly influenced by the activities and writings of those in Italy and Greece, which are also the countries where insurrectionary anarchists are the most active. The current, extremely varied Italian insurrectionary anarchist scene, which centres around a number of occupied spaces and publications, exists as an informal network carrying on their struggle outside of all formal organisations. This tendency has taken on the 'insurrectionary anarchist' label to distinguish itself from the Italian Anarchist Federation; a platformist organisation which officially reject individual acts of revolt, favouring only mass action and an educational and evangelistic practice centring around propaganda in 'non-revolutionary periods' — and from the Italian libertarian municipalists[2] who take a largely reformist approach to 'anarchist' activity.

The state will not wither away, as it seems many anarchists have come to believe — some are entrenched in a position of waiting, while others even openly condemn the acts of those for whom the creation of the new world depends on the destruction of the old. Attack is the refusal of mediation, pacification, sacrifice, accommodation and compromise in struggle. It is through acting and learning to act, not propaganda, that we will open the path to insurrection — although obviously analysis and discussion have a role in clarifying how to act. Waiting only teaches waiting; in acting one learns to act. Yet it is important to note that the force of an insurrection is social, not military. The measure for evaluating the importance of a generalised revolt is not the armed clash, but, on the contrary, the extent of the paralysis of the economy, of normality. If students continue to study, workers and office employees to work, the unemployed to solely strive for employment, then no change is possible. We could look to the examples of May 1968 in Paris, Italy in the 1970s, or the more recent insurrection in Albania for inspiration.[3]

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[1] See *The Ego and Its Own* by Max Stirner (Rebel Press, London, 1993) ISBN 0 946061 009
[2] 'Anarchists' who generally turn their back on direct action, and use local politics to try and gain reforms and establish 'anarchist controlled' towns.

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[3]   See *Albania: Laboratory of Subversion* by Anonymous (Elephant Editions, London, 1999) No ISBN

Sabotage and Other 'Modest Attempts'

As anarchists, the revolution is our constant point of reference; no matter what we are doing or with what problem we are concerned. But the revolution is not a myth simply to be used as a point of reference, it should not be thought of as inhabiting an abstract future. Precisely because it is a concrete event, it must be built daily through more modest attempts that do not have all the liberating characteristics of the social revolution in the true sense. These more modest attempts are insurrections. In them the uprising of the most exploited and excluded of society and the most politically aware minority opens the way to the possible involvement of increasingly wider sections of the exploited in a flux of rebellion which could lead to revolution. Over the last year, we have seen the beginning of this process at work in Argentina. Yet struggles must be developed both in the intermediate and long term. In other words, it is still possible and necessary to intervene in intermediate struggles, that is, in struggles that are circumscribed, even locally, with precise objectives that are born from some specific problem. This may be direct actions to resist the building of military bases or prisons; fights against the institution of property, such as squatting and rent strikes; or attacks on particular capitalist projects, such as high-speed railways, genetically modified crops or power transmission lines. These should not be considered to be of secondary importance; such kinds of struggles also disturb capitalism's universal project.

For these events to build, they must spread; insurrectionary anarchism, therefore, places particular importance on the circulation and spread of action, not managed revolt, for no army or police force is able to control the generalised circulation of such autonomous activity. Paying attention to how struggles have spread has led many anarchists to aim their critical focus on the question of organisation, for whereas centralised struggle is controlled and limited (one only needs to think of the examples of the many revolutionary movements in Latin America that until recently were controlled by 'The Party' to understand this), autonomous struggle has the capacity to spread capillary-style.

Therefore, what the system is afraid of is not just these acts of sabotage themselves, but also them spreading socially. Uncontrollability itself is the strength of the insurrection. Every proletarianised individual who disposes of even the most modest means can draw up his or her objectives, alone or along with others. It is materially impossible for the state and capital to police the whole social terrain. Anyone who really wants to contest the network of control can make their own theoretical and practical contribution as they see fit. There is no need to

fit themselves within the structured roles of formally organised revolt (revolt that is circumscribed and controlled by an organisation). The appearance of the first broken links of social control coincides with the spreading of acts of sabotage. The anonymous practice of social self-liberation could spread to all fields, breaking the codes of prevention put into place by power.

In moments when larger scale insurrections are not taking place, small actions — which require unsophisticated means that are available to all and thus are easily reproducible — are by their very simplicity and spontaneity uncontrollable. They make a mockery of even the most advanced technological developments in counter-insurgency. In the United States, a string of arsons of environmentally damaging projects, some claimed under the name Earth Liberation Front, have spread across the country due largely to the simplicity of the technique. In Italy, sabotage of high speed railways has spread uncontrollably, again because anyone can plan and carry out their own action without needing a large organisation with charters and constitutions, complex techniques or sophisticated knowledge.

In addition, contrary to the mathematicians of the grand revolutionary parties, it is never possible to see the outcome of a specific struggle in advance. Even a limited struggle can have the most unexpected consequences. The passage from the various insurrections — limited and circumscribed — to revolution can never be guaranteed in advance by any method, nor can one know in advance that present actions will not lead to a future insurrectionary moment.

Roots of Insurrectionary Anarchy

As insurrectionary anarchism is a developing practice — not an ideological model of the future or a determinist history — insurrectionary anarchists do not take the work of any single revolutionary theoretician as their central doctrine: thus insurrectionary anarchists are not Bakuninists, for example, and feel no need to defend all his writings and actions. Yet Bakunin was historically important to the development of an anarchism that focused its force in insurrection. Unlike Marx, who built his support in the First International, mostly within the central executive structure, Bakunin worked to build support for co-ordinated action though autonomous insurrections at the base, especially in Southern Europe. And since Bakunin's time insurrectionary anarchists have been concentrated in Southern Europe.

In the responses to the Paris Commune of 1871 and in the conflicts of the First International one can see the formation of insurrectionary anarchism's basic concepts. Whereas Marx believed that the new political forms of the Commune (forms of democracy and representation) would advance the social revolution, Bakunin argued that political and organisational forms had held the social revolution back. Also influential to later insurrectionaries, Bakunin argued that it was one's actions that would spread the revolution, not words. In 1871 Marx and his supporters allied themselves with the followers of Blanqui — from whom the concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" came — to cut Bakunin and his supporters out of a special conference of the International held in London. Bakuninists held their own conference in Sonvilier, arguing that hierarchical and political means could never be used to gain social revolutionary ends. As the Sonvilier circular states, it was impossible "for a free and egalitarian society to come out of an authoritarian organisation." Marx pejoratively termed the Sonvilier conference "anarchist," and those in Sonvilier called the London conference "Marxist" to mark its authoritarian attempt to control the International. In 1872, Marx succeeded in expelling Bakunin from the International and requiring all member organisations to advocate the conquest of political power as the necessary prerequisite to revolution.

Social and Individual Struggle

Another issue that has caused a lot of debate within anarchist circles is the supposed contradiction between individual and social struggle: again, this is a question of the organisation of struggle. This is a debate that has gone on and still goes on within the insurrectionary anarchist circles; Renzo Novatore stood for individual revolt, Errico Malatesta for social struggle, whilst Luigi Galleani believed there was no contradiction between the two.

Novatore, an Italian anarchist who died in a shoot-out with the police in 1922, wrote, "Anarchy is not a social form, but a method of individuation. No society will concede to me more than a limited freedom and a well-being that it grants to each of its members."[1] Malatesta, also an Italian and an active insurrectionary his whole life, was an anarcho-communist for whom anarchism was based in the organised attack of collective struggle, especially of the labour movement; yet, he was still very critical of any form of organisation that could become authoritarian. This was the basis of his 1927 disagreement with the Russian Platformists — who attempted to create a centralised and unitary revolutionary organisation.

Malatesta critiqued the proposal of the Platformists — who put forward their program in response to the victory of the Bolsheviks in Russia — for attempting to discipline and synthesise struggle within a single organisation. In his critique of the proposal he stated, "in order to achieve their ends, anarchist organisations must in their constitution and operation, remain in harmony with the principles of anarchism; that is, they must know how to blend the free action of individuals with the necessity and the joy of co-operation which serve to develop the awareness and initiative of their members." While many social anarchists of today critique insurrectionary anarchists by claiming that they are against organisation as such, it is worth noting that most social anarchists and anarcho-communists active in the beginning of the last century did not view organisation and individualism as a contradiction, and that few anarchists have ever been against organisation as such. Maltesta's 1927 statement on the subject bears repeating: "Judging by certain polemics it would seem that there are anarchists who spurn any form of organisation; but in fact the many, too many, discussions on this subject, even when obscured by questions of language or poisoned by personal issues, are concerned with the means and not the actual principle of organisation. Thus it happens that when those comrades who sound the most hostile to organisation

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[1] See *A Strange and Outcast Poet: The Life and Writings of Renzo Novatore* (Venomous Butterfly Publications) See: www.geocities.com/kk_abacus/vbutterfly.html

want to really do something they organise just like the rest of us and often more effectively. The problem, I repeat, is entirely one of means."[2]

Galleani, who emigrated to the United States in 1901 after facing arrest in Europe edited one of the most important US Italian anarchist journals, *Cronaca Sovversiva*, and was critical of formal organisation. In his articles and speeches he merged Kropotkin's idea of mutual aid with unfettered insurgency, defending communist anarchism against authoritarian socialism and reformism, speaking of the value of spontaneity, variety, autonomy and independence, direct action and self-determination. Galleani and his followers were deeply suspicious of formal organisations, seeing them as likely to turn into hierarchical, authoritarian organisations. The critique of formal organisation has become a central concern of most insurrectionary anarchists ever since. Galleani saw no contradiction between individual and social struggle, nor did he see a contradiction between communism and anarchism. He was firmly against authoritarian communism, which he saw as growing out of collectivist ideologies — the idea that production and consumption must be organised into a collective in which individuals must participate. Galleani is one of main influences on those who today call themselves insurrectionary anarchists.

Why we are Insurrectionary Anarchists. . .

- 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 is useful to nobody but the managers of class domination.
- Because we are for the immediate, destructive attack against the structures, individuals and organisations of capital, state and all forms of oppression.
- 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 some of the reasons why we are anarchists, revolutionaries and insurrectionists.

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[2] *A Project of Anarchist Organisation* by Errico Malatesta (1927) See: **www.geocities.com**

by Alfredo Bonanno.

The debate about the relation between individual and social struggle, between individualism and communism, continues today. Some insurrectionary anarchists argue that insurrection begins with the desire of individuals to break out of constrained and controlled circumstances, the desire to re-appropriate the capacity to create one's own life as one sees fit. This requires that they overcome the separation between themselves and their conditions of existence — food, housing, etc. Where the few, the privileged, control the conditions of existence, it is not possible for most individuals to truly determine their existence on their own terms. Individuality can only flourish where there is equality of access to the conditions of existence. This equality of access is communism; what individuals do with that access is up to them and those around them. Therefore, there is no equality or identity of individuals implied in true communism. What forces us into an identity or an equality of being are the social roles laid upon us by our present system. Thus there is no contradiction between individuality and communism.

The insurrectional anarchist project grows out of the individual's desire to determine how one will live one's life and with whom one will carry out this project of self-determination. But this desire is confronted on all sides by the existing social order, a reality in which the conditions of our existence and the social relationships through which our lives are created have already been determined in the interests of a ruling class who benefit from the activities that we are compelled to do for our own survival.

Thus the desire for individual self-determination and self-realisation leads to the necessity of a class analysis and class struggle. But the old workerist conceptions, which perceived the industrial working class as the central subject of revolution, are not adequate to this task. What defines us as a class is our dispossession, the fact that the current system of social relationships steals away our capacity to determine the conditions of our existence. Class struggle exists in all of the individual and collective acts of revolt in which small portions of our daily life are taken back or small portions of the apparatus of domination and exploitation are obstructed, damaged or destroyed. In a significant sense, there are no isolated, individual acts of revolt. All such acts are responses to the social situation, and many involve some level of complicity, indicating some level of collective struggle. Consider, for example, the spontaneous, mostly unspoken organisation of the theft of goods and the sabotage of the work process that goes on at most workplaces; this informal co-ordination of subversive activity carried out in the interest of each individual involved is a central principle of collective activity for insurrectionary anarchists, because the collectivity exists to serve the interests and desires of each of the individuals in re-appropriating their lives and

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often carries within it a conception of ways of relating free of exploitation and domination.

But even lone acts of revolt have their social aspects and are part of the general struggle of the dispossessed. Through a critical attitude towards the struggles of the past, the changes in the forces of domination and their variation between different places, and the development of present struggles, we can make our attack more strategic and targeted. Such a critical attitude is what allows struggles to circulate. Being strategic, however, does not mean there is only one way to struggle; clear strategies are necessary to allow different methods to be used in a co-ordinated and fruitful way. Individual and social struggle are neither contradictory, nor identical.

Critique of Organisation

In Italy, the failure of the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s led some to reassess the revolutionary movement and others to abandon it all together. During the '70s, many Leninist groups concluded that capitalism was in the throes of its final crisis, and they moved to armed struggle. These groups acted as professional revolutionaries, reducing their lives to a singular social role. But by the 1980s they came to believe that the time for revolutionary social struggle had ended, and they thus called for an amnesty for movement prisoners from the '70s, some even going as far as to disassociate themselves from the struggle. This separated them from insurrectionary anarchists who believed that a revolutionary struggle to overthrow capitalism and the state still continued, for no determinist history could name the correct moment to rebel. In fact, determinist history often becomes an excuse for not acting and only pushes a possible rupture with the present further into the impossible.

Much of the Italian insurrectionary anarchist critique of the movements of the '70s focused on the forms of organisation that shaped the forces of struggle and out of this a more developed idea of informal organisation grew. A critique of the authoritarian organisations of the '70s, whose members often believed they were in a privileged position to struggle as compared to the proletariat as a whole, was further refined in the struggles of the '80s, such as the early 1980s struggle against a military base that was to house nuclear weapons in Comiso, Sicily. Anarchists were very active in that struggle, which was organised into self-managed leagues. These ad hoc, autonomous leagues took three general principles to guide the organisation of struggle: permanent conflict, self-management and attack. Permanent conflict meant that the struggle would remain in conflict with the construction of the base until it was defeated without mediating or negotiating. The leagues were self-generated and self-managed; they refused permanent delegation of representatives and the professionalisation of struggle. The leagues were organisations of attack on the construction of the base, not the defence of the interests of this or that group. This style of organisation allowed groups to take the actions they saw as most effective while still being able to co-ordinate attack when useful, thus keeping open the potential of struggle to spread. It also kept the focus of organisation on the goal of ending the construction of the base instead of the building of permanent organisations, for which mediating with state institutions for a share of power usually becomes the focus and limiting the autonomy of struggle the means.

As the anarchists involved in the Comiso struggle understood, one of the central reasons that social struggles are kept from developing in a positive direction is the prevalence of forms of organisation that cut us off from our own power to act and close off the potential of insurrection. These are permanent organisations, those that synthesise all struggle within a single organisation, and organisations that mediate struggles with the institutions of domination. Permanent organisations tend to develop into institutions that stand above the struggling multitude. They tend to develop a formal or informal hierarchy and to disempower the multitude: power is alienated from its active form within the multitude and instituted within the organisation. This transforms the active multitude into a passive mass. The hierarchical constitution of power relations removes decision from the time such a decision is necessary and places it within the organisation. The practical consequence of such an organisation is that the active powers of those involved in the struggle are stifled by the organisation. Decisions that should be made by those involved in an action are deferred to the organisation; moreover, permanent organisations tend to make decisions based not on the necessity of a specific goal or action, but on the needs of that organisation, especially its preservation. The organisation becomes an end in itself. One needs only to look at the operations of the many socialist parties to see this in its most blatant form.

As an organisation moves towards permanence and comes to stand above the multitude, the organiser appears — often claiming to have created the struggle — and begins to speak for the mass. It is the job of the organiser to transform the multitude into a controllable mass and to represent that mass to the media or state institutions. Organisers rarely view themselves as part of the multitude, thus they don't see it as their task to act, but to propagandise and organise, for it is the masses that act.

The Opinion Factory

For the organiser, who takes as their motto 'only that which appears in the media exists', real action always takes a back seat to the maintenance of the media image. The goal of such image maintenance is never to attack a specific institution of domination, but to affect public opinion, to forever build the movement or, even worse, the organisation. The organiser must always worry about how the actions of others will reflect on the movement; they must, therefore, both attempt to discipline the struggling multitude and try to control how the movement is represented in the media. Image usually replaces action for the permanent organisation and the organiser.

The attempt to control the vast image and opinion-making factories of our society is a losing battle, as if we could ever try to match the quantity of images put forward by the media or get them to 'tell the truth'. Thus, many insurrectionary anarchists have been very critical of carrying on the struggle within the capitalist mass media. In Italy, this has put them at odds with organisations such as Ya Basta! who see the media as a key vehicle for their movement; in other parts of the world, the question of how anarchists should relate to the media has been a focus of debate in recent years — especially since 1999 in Seattle — and it is therefore important for us to spell out the critical position of some insurrectionary anarchists.

On a basic level, we need to ask, what is opinion? An opinion is not something first found among the public in general and then, afterwards, replayed through the media, as a simple reporting of the public opinion. An opinion exists in the media first. Secondly, the media then reproduces the opinion a million times over, linking the opinion to a certain type of person (conservatives think X, liberals think Y). Thirdly, as Alfredo Bonanno points out, "[An opinion] is a flattened idea, an idea that has been uniformed in order to make it acceptable to the largest number of people. Opinions are massified ideas."[1] Public opinion is produced as a series of simple choices or solutions ("I'm for globalisation and free trade" or "I'm for more national control and protectionism"). We are all supposed to choose — as we choose our leaders or our burgers — instead of thinking for ourselves. It is obvious, therefore, that anarchists cannot use the opinion-making factory to create counter-opinions, and hopefully anarchists would never want to operate on the level of opinion even if we could somehow exert control over the content spewed out of the factory gates. Anyhow, the ethic of anarchism could never

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[1] *The Anarchist Tension* by Alfredo M Bonanno (Elephant Editions, London, 1998) No ISBN

be communicated in the form of opinion; it would die once massified. Yet, it is exactly on the level of opinion that the organiser works, for opinion and image-maintenance are the very tools of power, tools used to shape and discipline a multitude into a controllable mass.

Instead of moving power and decision making into an organisation, most insurrectionary anarchists recognise the need to organise in a fashion that lacks the formality and authority which separate organisers and organised; this is called informal organisation. Because the organiser's nature is to plan and control, they often privilege the perpetuation of the organisation over other goals. Informal organisations, on the other hand, dissolve when their goal is achieved or abandoned; they do not perpetuate themselves merely for the sake of the organisation if the goals that caused people to organise have ceased to exist.

As in the case of the Comiso leagues, informal organisation is a means for affinity groups to co-ordinate efforts when necessary. We must always remember that many things can be done more easily by an affinity group or individual, and, in these cases, higher levels of organisation just make the decision making process cumbersome — it stifles us. The smallest amount of organisation necessary to achieve one's aims is always the best to maximise our efforts.

Informal organisation must be based on an ethic of autonomous action; autonomy is necessary to prevent our active powers from becoming alienated, to prevent the formation of relations of authority. Autonomy is refusing to obey or give orders, which are always shouted from above or beyond the situation. Autonomy allows decisions to be made when they are necessary, instead of being pre-determined or delayed by the decision of a committee or meeting. This does not mean to say however that we shouldn't think strategically about the future and make agreements or plans. On the contrary, plans and agreements are useful and important. What is emphasised is a flexibility that allows people to discard plans when they become useless. Plans should be adaptable to events as they unfold.

Just as an informal organisation must have an ethic of autonomy or it will be transformed into an authoritarian organisation, in order to avoid the alienation of our active powers, it must also have an ethic of no compromise with respect to the organisation's agreed goal. The organisation's goal should be either moved towards or abandoned. Compromising with those who we oppose (e.g. the state or a corporation) defeats all true opposition, it replaces our power to act with that of our enemies.

The scraps handed down to appease and divert us by those we oppose must be refused. Compromise with any institution of domination (the state, the police, WTO, IMF, 'The Party', etc.) is always the alienation of our power to the very institutions we supposedly wish to destroy; this sort of compromise results in the

forfeiture of our power to act decisively, to make decisions and actions when we choose. As such, compromise only makes the state and capital stronger. For those who wish to open the possibility of insurrection, for those who don't wish to wait for the supposedly appropriate material conditions for revolution, for those who don't want a revolution which is merely the creation of a new power structure but want the destruction of all structures which alienate our power from us, such compromise is contrary to their aims. To continually refuse to compromise is to be in perpetual conflict with the established order and its structures of domination and deprivation. Permanent conflict is uncontrollable autonomous action that does not compromise with power.

Revolutionary Solidarity

Revolutionary solidarity, another central practice of insurrectionary anarchism, allows us to move far beyond the 'send a cheque' style of solidarity that so pervades the Left, as well as solidarity that relies on petitioning the state for relief or mercy. One example of revolutionary solidarity was Nikos Mazotis' action against TVX Gold in December 1997.[1] Many people in the villages around Strymonikos in Northern Greece were struggling against the installation of a gold metallurgy plant in their area. In solidarity with the villagers, Nikos placed a bomb in the Ministry of Industry and Development that was intended to explode when no one was in the building; unfortunately, it never went off at all. Nikos was sentenced to fifteen years in prison, but is now free. TVX Gold is a multinational company whose headquarters is in Canada, there are thus many points at which revolutionary solidarity with the villagers of Stryminikos could have been enacted. Fundraising on behalf of one's comrades is necessary and surely appreciated, but this can be combined with more active forms of solidarity with those who struggle against our common enemies. Revolutionary solidarity communicates the link between the exploitation and repression of others and our own fate, and it shows people the points at which capitalism or the state operate in similar ways in very different places. By creating links between struggles against the state and capital, revolutionary solidarity has the potential to take our local struggles to a global level.

Moreover, revolutionary solidarity is always an active attack; it always involves the recovery of our own active powers that multiply in combination — in solidarity — with the active powers of others. Many insurrectionary anarchists have been involved in the resistance against the FIES prison regime (Ficheros de Internos de Especial Seguimiento — Inmate Files for Special Monitoring) in Spain. This is a revolutionary struggle because it is not only aimed at a mere reform, but ultimately its goal is the disappearance of prisons, which involves a radical social change. It is a self-organised struggle, in which there are not any leaders or representatives, neither inside the prisons nor outside, but only solidarity that grows between exploited people both from inside and outside the walls.

One of the primary strengths of informal organisation is that it allows anarchists to intervene in intermediate or specific struggles without compromising principles or demanding uniformity of action and politics. Informally organised

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[1] When arrested Nikos refused to recognise the authority of the whole legal system. He made a radical anarchist statement to the court during his trial, giving the reasons for the bombing, and explaining his insurrectionary hatred for the state and industry. He's now released.

struggles may be composed of affinity groups with quite different political perspectives from each other. Some people may wish to open the possibility for insurrection, while others are only concerned with an immediate goal. There is no reason why those who share an immediate practical aim but diverge in their long-term goals might not come together. For example, an anti-genetic engineering (GE) group could form and decide to co-ordinate the tearing up test crops and to circulate anti-GE leaflets. In this case those who want an insurrectionary rupture with this social order and those who merely hate genetic engineering could easily work together towards this immediate goal. Groups that take a more insurrectionary approach to action, however, often end up in conflict with other groups working around similar issues. The Earth Liberation Front, an informally organised set of groups which have taken a position of attack on those they see as destroying the earth, have been vilified by the mainstream environmental movement. At the same time, they would probably be critiqued by many insurrectionary anarchists for focusing defensively on the protection of the earth and ignoring the social aspect of revolution. What is important to allow different groups to work together is co-ordination with autonomy.

For those who wish to open the possibility of insurrection, such co-operation will not close the door on their dreams. Informal organisation, with its ethics of autonomy and no compromise, does not control struggle, and uncontrollability opens the possibility for an insurrectionary rupture with the present social order..

Further Reading

It's worth looking at these two English language insurrectionary anarchist journals:

Killing King Abacus, PO Box 993, Santa Cruz, CA 95061, USA. Email: kk_abacus@yahoo.com Web: http:// www.geocities.com/kk_abacus/

Wilful Disobedience, PO Box 31098, Los Angeles, CA 90031, USA. Email: acraticus@yahoo.com Web: **www.geocities.com**

Many insurrectionary anarchist writings can be obtained from Elephant Editions publications. These, mainly pamphlets, can be ordered from them at: Elephant Editions, BM Elephant, London WC1N 3XX, England. Many of them can also be found on the web at: **www.geocities.com**

For insurrectionary anarchist texts in Spanish check out the Palabras de Guerra website at: **flag.blackened.net**

FootNotes