John Jacobi
Placing Our Bets
22 September 2014

Text created by Freedom Club at UNC-CH. For
feedback or questions, email uncfc@riseup.net.
http://johnfjacobi.github.io/articles/2014/09/22/placing-our-bets/

*John Jacobi*

# Placing Our Bets

22 September 2014

A revolt against technology is inevitable; the task before us[1] is turning that revolt into revolution. How we will go about doing this is not yet known, and it will not be a sure path no matter what we choose to do. One thing we can be sure of, however, is that the vehicle for change in modern society will continue to be the mass movement.

There are many things that make up a revolution, but most of them are inevitable. Revolts, terrorism, contrarian art, and so on are all elements of a revolution that will happen without any conscious force. The decisive factor in every revolution, however, is the mass movement. And while a mass *rebellion*may happen without any guiding hand, a mass *movement* must be a conscious endeavor. There must be a dedicated and stable force that connects each rebellion, that sustains its fervor, and that makes it grow.

Other frameworks toward revolution have been offered before. Some anarchists of the 1800s proposed terrorism or "propaganda by the deed." In their visions, a dramatic act of class violence would awake the masses from their ignorant slumber and induce them with a fervor that would power the revolution. Quite obviously, their framework failed. Furthermore, the anti-tech terrorists[2] of today have demonstrated clearly that terrorism is a tactic of those who have given up hope. Consider this quote from a communique by *Reacción Salvaje*:

> . . . we do not want to form an "anti-technological movement" that encourages the "total overthrow of the system," we do not see it as viable, we do not want victory, we do not pretend to win or lose, this is an individual fight against the mega-machine; we don't care about getting something positive from this . . .

How clear a line of demarcation from the luddite position!

[1] The Luddites

[2] I speak here of Individualidades Tendiendo a lo Salvaje (ITS), now renamed Reacción Salvaje (RS), and of the various cells of the Federazione Anarchica Informale / International Revolutionary Front (FAI/IRF) and the Conspiracy Cells of Fire (CCF). Groups like Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC), Animal Liberation Front (ALF), and Earth Liberation Front (ELF) are more complicated groups. Some, especially the ELF, probably do not even qualify as terror groups.

Then there are some who proposed (and some still propose) an armed struggle against the powers-that-be. This is an ignorant suggestion when any armed struggle in present times would clearly be stamped out from a number of factors. No group will be successful in an armed struggle against the United States, for example, with all its advanced technology and overwhelming military power. Such a group would only achieve long prison sentences for the actors. And what work do they suppose they can do in prison?

Not only would an armed group be unable to succeed, it would be unable to sustain its success. An armed revolution would do nothing to legitimize the values of wild living. Therefore, a successful armed struggle would lead only to the overthrow of the armed group or a reversion to the same circumstances as those that compelled them to overthrow it.

Then there are those who support a nonviolent revolution. It is true that in some areas a nonviolent revolution similar to the historical ones could take place. But the historical ones have always been supplemented by violent counterparts.[3] Furthermore, nonviolent revolutions almost always occur in nations transitioning to industrial-capitalistic democracies. In other words, these "revolutions" are not a break from the general trend of history; they are a continuance of it. Because of this, non-violent movements often have considerable institutional backing, from states to NGOs and other organizations. And one cannot deny that a state's power is based on violence.

That is not to say that luddites should discard nonviolence completely. It remains effective and desirable in many cases. But, as Arundhati Roy says:

> If you're an adivasi [tribal Indian] living in a forest village and 800 CRP [Central Reserve Police] come and surround your village and start burning it, what are you supposed to do? Are you supposed to go on hunger strike? Can the hungry go on a hunger strike? Non-violence is a piece of theatre. You need an audience. What can you do when you have no audience? People have the right to resist annihilation.

[3] The Indian independence movement consisted of Ghandi, but it also consisted of riots and bombs; Martin Luther King Jr. (who did not, by the way, lead a revolution—he lead a reform) had Malcom X; and so on.



The luddites are not terrorists, pacifists, or insurgents. We are revolutionaries, and the path to revolution is one that begins with a group that has placed its bets on a mass movement. How we might sustain a revolution is a question for another essay—or a book, more likely—but one present and clear task can be discerned now: those who wish to protect their freedom must find each other and organize around common values and a common project. Only from there can we move forward.