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*Various Authors*

# Willful Disobedience Volume 4, number 2

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and objects toward the forces of order, who used tear gas and water hydrants against the demonstrators.

Pisa, Italy (May 8, 2003) — A transmitter tower for Wind cellular phones was burned in the night. To reach the tower, the attackers climbed the nets that protect an adjacent sports field and lit the fire.

Barcelona, Spain (May 10, 2003) — Three ATMs of the Caja Madrid and the Banco Zaragozano were attacked. The windows of a branch office of the BBVA were destroyed.

Apache Junction, AZ (May 20, 2003) — Vandals slashed tires on 52 of the 59 buses of the Apache Junction Unified school district (kindergarten and special education buses were left intact) and glued the locks of several classrooms at the high school, causing delays in the start of the school day.

Louisville, KY (May 22, 2003) — Vandals deflated the tires of about 80 buses and glued locks at Fairdale high school. The deflation of the tires affected attendance at several schools in the school district.

Fredicton, New Brunswick, Canada (Late May 2003) — A military vehicle containing computers and diving equipment was stolen from the Regent Mall. The vehicle and its contents were valued at \$80,000. Local police say that this is not the first time that military vehicles have been stolen from a mall parking lot.

## A Few Words: *On Some Recent Events*

Just a few weeks ago on a bridge about four blocks from my house, the city police pulled a car over. They took the man who was driving into custody because there was a warrant for his arrest. The woman who was in the car climbed into the driver's seat hoping to get away. One of the cops who had pulled the car over jumped in and shot the woman. A few moments later, she was dead.

This story is not unusual. The cops stop people all the time, and if they are too poor to afford legal assistance, particularly if they are not white, there is a good chance that they will be arrested or beaten, even shot and killed. This only surprises those who prefer to live in the illusion that democracy has anything to do with freedom or that rights are anything more than a bribe used by those in power to buy our obedience.

As with so many of the horrors this social order perpetrates upon those it exploits, it would be all too easy to treat this as an isolated incident, an aberration in an otherwise healthy social system. But this is not an aberration. Events like this happen constantly across the globe, and they do so for a reason.

Perhaps one of the greatest deceptions that has been perpetrated upon us is that the job of the police is to uphold the law. This is only true to the extent to which the law carries out its real function — to protect the interests of the ruling class. The primary task of the police is to maintain the social order. If carrying out this task requires them to act in an “unlawful” manner because the law does not adequately provide for what they need, there will be all sorts of loopholes they can use to exonerate themselves.

Of course, among those responding to this shooting there have been the various political vulture. They may even be sincere, but what they sincerely desire is the maintenance of the order in which they have their little bit of power. They seek to channel the anger of those who are tired of living under constant threat into acceptance of the leadership of the “good” politicians, into government-sanctioned programs for policing the police, into petitions and appeals to the authorities. Even the mayor is

apparently now expected to announce a “community review” to examine the shooting — indeed isolating this one event from its social context and examining it precisely on the terms of those in power.

The social order we live under, in fact, requires laws and police precisely because it serves the interests of a few at the expense of the rest of us. If it is true that most people most of the time resign themselves to being exploited, to having their lives consumed in the interest of an exploitive and increasingly poisonous social system, there are always those few eternal rebels who refuse passivity and those incendiary moments of insurgence through which almost no one can sleep. This is why the rulers of this world need to occupy more and more social space with their armed guards and the machinery of surveillance.

The US military and its allies are currently occupying Iraq in order to establish a level of social control useful to the rulers of this world. The police play the same role in the cities (and increasingly everywhere) here. They are, in fact, an occupying force for maintaining social peace in enemy territory. As economic, social and environmental conditions worsen in more and more of the world, as existence lived on the edge of catastrophe becomes harder to tolerate, unrest is bound to increase. As revolts, civil wars and blind violence become more common, the real nature of the police will become more and more evident.

We are living in the midst of a social war. We must not let ourselves be fooled into negotiation. Those who rule us have already stolen our capacity to create our lives on our own terms. We can only steal this back again in open revolt against them and the social order they create. By becoming aware of the real enemies and attacking them relentlessly, and by finding our accomplices, those who share our awareness regardless of whether they define themselves as anarchists or not, and acting with them, we can begin to transform the social war into social insurrection with the aim of overturning every ruler and every lackey.

New Orleans, LA (mid-April, 2003) — Over 350 independent truckers in New Orleans staged a wildcat strike to protest rising expenses that reduce their real wages to about minimum wage. Because they have been hired (by one company) as “independent contractors”, they are not allowed by law to unionize. This lack of a formal structure to act for them has not prevented them from acting. The strike apparently all but closed down the parts and train yards in New Orleans.

Buenos Aires, Argentina (April 16, 2003) — During the night the armored glass windows of a branch of the Banco Francés were cracked and the bank was attacked with incendiary devices. The fire from the hall entrance destroyed the automatic teller of the bank.

Sardinia, Italy (April 19, 2003) — During the night a bomb exploded inside a McDonalds restaurant in the town of Oristano.

Milan, Italy (April 25, 2003) — During the night an explosive device detonated at the center of a Neo-fascist group. During a demonstration of the “Antagonist Movement” some banks are damaged, two automobiles were attacked, one municipal police vehicle was set on fire, and some Bennetton stores were damaged.

Nairobi, Kenya (April 26, 2003) — Students at the University of Nairobi rioted after the vice chancellor issued a decision to send home all nursing students. This decision followed a 3-week boycott of classes by the nursing students who were demanding an increase in their student loans and a salary for interns. The students attacked vehicles and police with stones and destroyed property. During the protest they blocked traffic in three places.

Berlin, Germany (May 1, 2003) — About a hundred people were detained in the night after conflicts between demonstrators and police — among which there were 29 wounds of which one was serious. The first incidents broke out around midnight on the margins of a pacifist demonstration of about 6000 people at Mauerpark (the park at the wall). About two hundred demonstrators threw firecrackers

Edison, NJ (March 18, 2003) — An armed forces recruitment center was attacked. According to a communiqué from a group calling itself Direct Action Front, “the intention was to cause the greatest economic damage possible”. The main entrance was destroyed and the interior methodically razed to the ground. Shelves were damaged and propaganda material and recruitment photos torn up.

Minneapolis, MN (March 20, 2003) — During the night, paint was used against the windows and the locks were sealed at a Marine recruitment center at the Village Stadium.

Athens, Greece (March 21, 2003) — A demonstration (200,000 people) against the war in Iraq. A thousand anarchists formed a fine “block” of the excited. The march passed into the zone of government palaces: during the passage rocks, eggs, red paint, bottles and other objects were thrown at the central offices of the European Union, as well as at journalists. Outside the US embassy, protected by dozens of cops and flying squads, there was an attack by comrades against the flying squads using rocks and molotovs. The leaders of the so-called communist Party tried to block the attack at the embassy. Due to a thick rain of tear gas, the struggles were continued in the neighboring streets. There were about forty demonstrators arrested, including 12 Iraqis who were tortured.

Milan, Italy (March 22, 2003) — During an anti-war demonstration, molotovs were thrown at a real estate office, journalists cameras were smashed, and the windows of a McDonald’s, several other businesses and an Israeli tourist office were shattered.

Maniago (Pordenone), Italy (March 24, 2003) — A US military vehicle was burned at the Aviano military base.

Vicenza, Italy (March 25, 2003) — Two military vehicles were set on fire at the US military base.

Concepción, Chile (April 1, 2003) — A bomb exploded at the office of the telephone company.

Istanbul, Turkey (April 4, 2003) — A bomb exploded in a UPS office.

## Complicity, Not Debt: An anarchist basis for solidarity

“We owe each other nothing, for what I seem to owe to you, I owe at most to myself.” — Max Stirner

None of us owes anyone anything. This should be a guiding principle behind all anarchist practice. All systems of power, all hierarchies and all economic relationships are justified by the idea that each of us as individuals owes her existence to the collectivity that is this social order. This is a debt without end, an eternal obligation that can never be fulfilled, which keeps us chained to a cycle of activity that maintains this society. Our aim as anarchists and insurrectionaries is the complete overturning precisely of this cycle of activity, of the social relationships that rule over our lives. What better place to start than the absolute refusal of the most basic of economic and political principles: debt.

Unfortunately, much of the social struggle that is currently going on bases itself on economic/political assumptions, and particularly that of debt. People speak of reparations, of getting what is owed, what is one’s by right. This even extends into the way we talk of class struggle when the idea of “taking back what is truly ours” is taken to mean that which we have a right to because we have “earned” it — i.e., the idea that “the product should belong to the producer”. This way of conceiving class struggle keeps it firmly within the economy, which it is in our interest to destroy.

The economic/political methodology of struggle opposes privilege with rights. In doing so, it assumes that the individual is dependent upon a higher power, the power that grants rights and privileges (i.e., the existing social order). In fact, rights and privileges are really the same thing: limited freedoms that a higher power grants to one due to some inherent or earned value that this power recognizes in one. Thus, the opposition of rights to privilege is a false opposition. It is nothing more than a disagreement over how the higher power should value us and an appeal to it to recognize our value. As such the struggle for rights

is nothing more than a struggle to sell oneself at a higher price. At its most radical, it becomes the attempt to sell everyone at the same price. But some of us do not want to be sold at all.

The kind of “solidarity” this method of struggle creates is a relationship of service based on the conception of debt. When you demand that I give up “my privilege”, you are not just demanding that I sacrifice something to your conception of struggle. More significantly, you are assuming that I recognize this privilege, define myself in the terms necessary for earning it and owe it to you to give it up. To use an example, let’s say that you demand that I give up my male privilege. There are a few assumptions in this: 1) that I see myself as essentially male; 2) that I own this privilege and can thus dispose of it as I will; and 3) that I owe it to you to give this up, i.e., that I have a debt to you due to my maleness. But I do not, in fact, see myself essentially as a male, but rather as a unique individual, as myself. You may correctly respond that this sexist society, nonetheless, does perceive me as male and grants me specific privileges as such which act to your detriment. But here we see that I do not own this privilege, nor do I own the maleness upon which it is bestowed. Rather these are imposed on me by the social order. The fact that they may work to my advantage in relation to you does not make them any less an imposition upon me as a unique individual. In fact, this advantage acts as a bribe through which the rulers of this society attempt to persuade me not to unite with you against it. But this bribe will only work to the extent to which I perceive the advantage of the male privilege granted to me by this society to be of greater value to me than my capacity to define my own sexuality and create my relationships with others of whatever gender on my own terms. When I recognize this society as my enemy, I recognize all the privileges and rights that it grants as enemies as well, as impositions and limitations it places upon my individuality. Since male privilege is something granted, and therefore, defined and owned by the social order, even if we remain within the economic/political framework of struggle, it is not I, but this social order that is in debt to you. But as we have seen above, the very conceptions of “privilege” and “right” depend upon the idea of a rightful dispenser that stands above us and decides what we deserve. The social order is that dispenser. Thus, it cannot be said that it owes you anything. Rather it dispenses what it

## Chronicles of Revolt

Douglas, AZ (February 11, 2003) — Undocumented immigrants beat a Border Patrol agent unconscious in the desert west of here. While the agent was chasing one group of suspected border crossers, six migrants attacked him. As the agent fought one attacker, another hit from behind several times with a rock.

Athens, Greece (February 15, 2003) — During an anti-war demonstration, anarchists broke through the pacifist atmosphere by attacking some symbols of power (the office of the pro-government, social democratic newspaper “Ta Nea”, some banks and the British embassy) with molotov cocktails, afterwards running up against the forces of order during the march outside the American embassy where the demonstration ended. The police responded with charges, tear gas, beatings and a manhunt that has as its outcome the arrest of 25 people who were then beaten at the police station. Most were released, but Thanos Michalakelis, an anarchist known to the police from earlier social conflicts, was held for trial.

Jacksonville, FL (February 17, 2003) — Unknowns vandalized and burned a train carrying equipment for the army’s 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne division — intended for shipment to the Persian Gulf — and stole tools, batteries, gas cans and field rations sometime during the night.

Fife, Scotland (March 11, 2003) — Ulla Roder of the Trident Ploughshares group entered a British military airport and attacked a Tornado airplane with a sledgehammer causing so much damage as to render it unusable. Consequently she was arrested and held in preventive custody

Gloucestershire, England (March 13, 2003) — Arthur Paul Milling and Margaret Jones entered the Fairford military base and caused about \$80,000 in damages to military aviation vehicles. Arthur and Margaret are imprisoned on charges of “conspiracy to commit criminal damages”.



owns on its terms, and if you disagree with those terms, this does not make you its creditor, but its enemy. And only as the enemy of this social order can you truly be the enemy of privilege, but then you also become the enemy of “rights”. As long as you do not decide to reestablish “rights” by appealing to a higher authority, for example, a better future society, you are now in the position to begin the struggle to make your life your own. At this level of total hostility to the existing social order, we can meet in true solidarity based on mutuality and complicity, uniting our efforts to overturn this society.

Ultimately, any form of solidarity that rests on an economic/political basis — on the basis of debt, rights and obligations, sacrifice and service — cannot be considered solidarity in an anarchist sense. From the economic/political perspective, “freedom” is a quantitative term merely referring to relatively lower levels of restriction. This view is summed up in the statement: “Your freedom ends where mine begins.” This is the “freedom” of borders and limits, of contraction and suspicion — the “freedom” of sacred property. It makes each of us the prison warden of the other — a very sorry basis for solidarity.

But as I see it, the anarchist conception of freedom is something qualitatively different from restriction. It is our capacity as individuals to create our lives on our own terms in free association with others of our choosing. When we conceive of freedom in this way, there is the potential for us to encounter each other in such a way that the freedom of each of us expands when it meets the freedom of the other. This is the basis of mutuality; our coming together enhances each of us. But in the world as it currently exists, there are many with whom a relationship of mutuality is not possible. Those who hold social and political power, those who hold wealth as their sacred property, those whose social task is to maintain the order of domination and all those who passively put up with this order act to restrict my freedom, to suppress my capacity to create my life on my own terms and to freely associate with others to achieve this aim. The masters of this world and their guard dogs impose their terms upon my life, forcing predetermined associations upon me. The only possible relationship I can have with them and the social order they uphold is that of enmity, of complete hostility. I discover the basis for mutuality precisely in those others who are enemies of the rulers of

this world and their lackeys, those who strive to take back their lives and live them on their own terms. And this is where mutuality — the recognition that one’s freedom can expand where it meets the other’s freedom — becomes complicity. Complicity is the uniting of efforts in order to expand the capacity for individual self-determination against the world of domination. It is the active recognition that the rebellion of specific others expands one’s freedom and, thus, it finds ways to act together with these others against the forces of domination and social control. It is not necessary to know these others personally. They may be carrying on their struggle half a globe away. It is only necessary to recognize our own struggle in their struggle and to take appropriate action where we are. Not out of charity or a sense of duty, but for ourselves.

## Revolutionary ideology is dying

Revolutionary ideology is dying, not revolutionary theory and practice. And, after all, the collapse of ideologies only involves those who were trapped inside them, those who needed the Berlin wall to see revolution. Or the great masses of the cold and hungry. Or the great proletarian parties. It is enough for us that we do not feel at ease in this world. And if the possibility of revolution is not guaranteed with certainty, the desire and necessity increases before our eyes with every day that passes. But in order to launch this wager once again, it is necessary to put the past back in play. The heritage of revolutionary movements can no longer form a tradition to safeguard, a torch to keep lit or a program to realize, but must become an arsenal to plunder for continuing use by new revolutionaries.

One thing should be clear. If a revolutionary movement has so much difficulty emerging today, it is because it is no longer possible to demand anything of that which exists in this world in order to defend it, to understand it, much less to transform it in a “radical” manner as the reformists of survival claim to do. Thus, if the end of certainty signals a decisive step for the domination of capital, in a certain sense, it also grants the triumph of utopia. At last, revolution appears as what it has always been, a gratuitous feast. Not the carrying out of a political program, not the conquest of the means of production — and so much the less of power — but the irruption into the unknown through the destruction of what exists. Now that the lie that this movement required the bricklayers of socialism has been exposed, the Argonauts of Revolt can begin their journey. In short, it’s a question of resuming hostilities, knowing well that this time there will be no contradictions because the end is in the means themselves.

## Deciding For Oneself: Democracy, consensus, unanimity and anarchist practice

One of the distinguishing principles of anarchist practice is that if we are to achieve our aims, they must already exist in the methods we use to attain them. The most basic aim of all anarchist revolutionary activity is the destruction of every structure of authority, every hierarchy, domination in all its forms. But to understand what this means in the immediate practice of struggle, it is necessary to have some idea of what this means beyond the negations. I am not speaking here about utopian blueprints or political (or even anti-political) programs, but rather about of how we can relate to each other in a way that is truly free of hierarchy and domination in our projects aimed at the destruction of this society and the creation of different ways of living and being together. It is important to keep in mind that the anarchist project is not to be a political program among political programs, another ideology in the marketplace of opinion (and thus, the eternal loser it is bound to be in that arena), but rather to develop a practice of social subversion here and now that is in perpetual conflict with the social order that surrounds us.

The absence of any sort of domination, of any sort of hierarchy, of any imposed order would manifest in practice as the practical capacity for every individual to decide for herself how she is going to live his life and to freely choose with whom he is going to share it and how. This is the meaning of self-organization — that most fundamental of anarchist principles. If instead we were to interpret the self that is organizing as a collective entity, then we would have to recognize that every state, every corporation, every institution is technically “self-organized”. Self-organization in the anarchist sense starts from individual self-determination and develops itself from there.

The application of this idea to our practice of revolt has significant implications in terms of the way we organize our projects and decide how to carry them out. Perhaps the first principle to be drawn from this is that

organization in itself has no value. The value of organization lies in the use that each of us can make of it in carrying out the tasks necessary for creating her life and struggles in solidarity with others. Thus, the point is not to create massive organizations that seek members and that represent a particular perspective (anarchist, anarcho-communist, revolutionary or whatever label is chosen for the group), but rather to bring together the time, the space, the tools and the accomplices for carrying out the projects and activities we desire, the projects that can combine to form that “collective movement of individual realization” that is revolution in its fullest sense.

Unfortunately, many anarchists — even some who may claim to reject formal organization — organize their projects on a collectivist model. The desire to carry out a project together and the need to organize that project is transformed into the creation of a collective entity that represents that project. This collective entity and the project it represents come to have priority over the individuals who first had the desire to do the project. The contradiction between this model and the anarchist principle of self-organization as described above becomes most evident in the way decisions are made in these collectives. As soon as a collective entity formalizes, it becomes necessary for decisions to be made as a collective, and this requires a decision-making process. Thus, in joining the collective, the individual must sacrifice her capacity to decide for himself to the need of the collective for a decision-making process that is incumbent on all. The two processes most commonly used in collectives formed by anarchists are direct democracy (majority decision) and consensus.

Consensus has been described quite well as a method for obtaining people’s support without allowing them to express themselves autonomously. Starting from the idea that the needs of the collective take priority over the individuals involved, it seeks a decision that no one in the group will actively oppose, and once such a decision is reached (usually through hours and hours of tedious discussion that, as likely as not, merely wears down some of those in the group), everyone is expected to abide by it. Achieving consensus among any more than a few people is necessarily a matter of finding the lowest common denominator between all involved and accepting this lowest common denominator as

Against the endless war of Empire, against the state, against the civilization of domination, the barbaric joy of class war and individual and social insurrection.

What distinguishes the revolt of the barbarians from the opposition of alternative politicians, of the parties, unions and organizations that claim to represent the exploited or whatever specific cause, is that the former makes no demands. It is an expression of rage that says all it has to say in the burning of banks and employment offices, the trashing of military recruitment centers, the fragging of officers. Such actions leave no room for negotiation or dialogue with power. If those who carry out such acts are often not too clear about their reasons, one thing is clear: their reasons are not reasons of state.

So an opposition to any particular war that is not a mere questioning of how the endless war is managed must also be a matter of barbaric revolt. Total insubordination is just the beginning. The attack against the institutions through which war operates is essential. But I am not speaking here about a military attack. The technological, organizational and structural formations necessary to make the global network of domination possible are also the sources of its vulnerability. In order to spread itself across the globe, the Empire has had to decentralize its institutions, structures and technological framework and accept the fragmentation inherent to its functioning. Thus, there is no Winter Palace to attack. Instead the targets are everywhere, and the methods and tools for attacking them are available to everyone. In such a context, the methods for developing, spreading and carrying out the struggles cannot be the same as those used by politicians of whatever kind. To continually march with signs to some symbolic institution of power in order to hear the various alternative politicians sing to the choir implies that we still have something to say to those who rule us. Better to stop listening to speeches and start listening and talking to each other. Better to stop waving signs in front of the institutions of power and to start attacking them. Better to learn to let the mass break up into smaller conscious groups capable of actually bringing a city to a halt and possibly inflicting some damage on the institutions of power. The war in Iraq has officially ended (though the military occupation certainly has not). The war against the exploited will not end until the Empire of Capital and the State is razed to the ground.

the highest level of action. Thus, if we are talking specifically of anarchist revolutionary projects, the consensus process operates by lowering the level of critique that can be actively expressed. It is easy to get people to accept and rally around superficial critiques, but deep, radical critiques — and the kind of activity they call for — tend to frighten people and cause division. Thus, consensus best corresponds to a gradualist, piecemeal approach, to a reformist approach that does not require one to be able to act on one's own and to make decisions quickly in the moment of action.

One of the critiques some anarchists have made of the consensus process — a critique that is correct as far as it goes — is that if complete consensus were always required in order to act, nothing would ever get done, because it requires only one person to block it. But if those who make this critique don't also reject the collectivist model, then they have to turn to another decision-making process, that of direct democracy, i.e., majority rule. From an anarchist perspective, the problem with this should be obvious. We are opposed to all rule, that of the majority as well as that of a minority. Even when it is the desires of the majority that prevail over the rest, even if that majority comprises 99% of those involved, if this decision is mandatory over those who do not agree, it is an imposition, a form of rule.

The real problem with the processes of consensus and direct democracy is that they are based on the assumption that the collective will, however it is determined, is to prevail over the will of the individual. But this has always been the basis of every form of rule, of every institution of authority. It is an act of self-deception to think that one has eradicated domination and hierarchy simply because one has eliminated its human face. The most insidious forms of domination are precisely those invisible concepts that stand above us and determine our existence — invisible concepts such as the collective will, the group consensus, the majority. These create the faceless domination, the disembodied hierarchy, in which the group rules over the individual. The rejection of all rule in our practice, thus requires the rejection of the collectivist model and all that it imposes. In other words, it must start from my choice neither to be ruled nor to rule, and to create my life against every form of rule to the extent that I am able to do so.

Thus, each of us decides for ourselves what she will do and does this with those who agree with him on what to do and how to do it. In this way, those who act together do so in full unanimity, and the project is not tainted by reservations or resignation to a decision that was not one's own. In practice, this inevitably means that we will come together in small, temporary groups based on affinity. These groups will be fluid, constantly changing, coming together and breaking apart. Those who value large-scale unity, a single front to present to the world, will look upon this as a lack of organization, a weakness preventing "us" from having a continuous influence over time, from presenting a "real alternative" to people in struggle. But behind this critique lies the political program, the preordained schema of how to go about overturning this world, that can only seek followers, not accomplices.

Acting in small, temporary groups in which the desires and the will of each individual is fully realized because the group itself forms out of the coming together of the individual wills is a completely different way of conceiving revolutionary transformation. The point is no longer to bring together the masses to storm the Winter Palace, but rather to act immediately against the forces of domination we confront in our daily lives and to organize this activity in a way that expresses our refusal to be ruled, to submit to any form of higher authority. By not submitting ourselves to any sort of collective will in the way we carry on our struggle, we subvert those tendencies toward centralization, representation and hierarchy that exist even among anarchists, and remain free to act even when the various so-called revolutionary groups say to wait, to submit to the times. This is how we express our aim to destroy all domination in the methods by which we go about our struggle. Each of us starts from himself and finds her accomplices through the immediate practice of struggle in her life here and now.

to try to limit the consequences of these catastrophes — or increasingly today to simply create explanations that may make them more acceptable to people.

This is the context of the war in Iraq. Those who have opposed this war in favor of "a peaceful solution" to this one problem taken out of context still support the endless war of the Empire. Though this war is officially over, military activity continues in Iraq, as well as in Afghanistan, Columbia and the Philippines. The supposedly "peaceful" French government is imposing its "order" on the Ivory Coast through military force. The Israeli military continues to bulldoze Palestinian villages and kill young children along with alleged "militants". And Russia is enforcing its control in Chechnya. And within cities throughout the world, armed police enforce the order of the rulers on the exploited, harassing and even killing the most dispossessed — the homeless, the undocumented immigrants, refugees of all sorts.

So it is essential that opposition to this war become opposition to the endless procession of wars and catastrophes, opposition to the Empire, in other words, opposition to the state, capital and the totality of the technological and institutional apparatuses through which the ruling class maintains power. Such an opposition does not consist in creating a "Counter-Empire", a mirror image of that which we oppose, but in destroying the Empire in its totality. Therefore, it will not function as a political opposition, as a force contending for power. Its methods will not be the methods of politicians, contending with each other for mass popular support. It will rather be a revolt of the barbarians.

Unlike the Roman Empire though, the current Empire has no outside. So where do the barbarians come from? In fact, the current Empire is creating its own barbarians in its midst. The process of dispossession through which the masters accumulate their wealth and power, places more and more of the exploited into highly precarious positions. Endless war and catastrophe throws millions onto the road as refugees. More and more find themselves homeless or jobless. The "dreams" of high-level consumption become meaningless to these people. What do they have left to say to the rulers of this world? And besides how does one say it, when one doesn't speak the language of the state? This civilization offers them nothing.

of rule through fear in which the state convinces people to accept more and more generalized repression in their daily lives by presenting the image of a fearful and threatening outsider from which the state will protect them with its military, its police and its technologies of social control spread across the globe and into every sphere of daily life. But to maintain this image, the state must find terrorism everywhere. The nebulous way in which the term is used makes this easy enough. The terrorists, so we are told, are in fact everywhere — hidden in secret cells across the globe. So the policing of the world, particularly the fight against terrorism, is an endless task that justifies every use of force and every sort of repression.

In fact, war is simply one of the ongoing disasters imposed by Empire, because Empire is the global system of Capital/State. Along with war, it also brings ongoing environmental disaster, increasing precariousness on every level, social disintegration, the degradation of language, . . . the list of disasters could go on endlessly as the disasters themselves do. The endless flow of disasters is now so evident that those in power can no longer even pretend that there is some business-as-usual that runs smoothly to strive for. Instead they readily admit the disasters, but present them in a piecemeal fashion as separate and unrelated events. They are presented as “natural catastrophes”, “human error” or tragic inevitabilities. And increasingly, they are presented to us in a technical language that reinforces the idea that we must rely on the authorities and their experts who have the real understanding of events. In this way those in power use our fear of the disasters caused by power to reinforce their rule.

The technological and institutional systems through which the Empire operates are far too cumbersome for anyone to truly control. Each specialist, expert or functionary knows only his or her small portion of the operation. The machine itself lumbers on like a juggernaut, outside of anyone’s control. These systems were developed this way in order that the control would exist within the machinery itself. The point was to eliminate to the greatest extent possible the capacity for willful activity on the part of the individual. But this is precisely why the current social reality is one of ongoing disaster. In their lumbering, these juggernauts set off catastrophes that no one can predict, and the real role of experts is

## Representation of a Conflict: Camera! Action!

In the epoch of the realization of separation, of the complete separation of the human being from life and of the consequent loss of the sense of existence itself, the image functions as a protective screen with respect to a paralyzing reality.

Photos, films and visual documents fill the head and hands no longer just of cops and magistrates but also, if not more so, of the actors in the scene-painting of demonstrations of false dissent.

Already, it has been said and repeated, however uselessly, that the use of cameras and their technologically more advanced relatives at marches is a dangerous boomerang weapon useful for repression; we are sick of having to go over this again. There is no understanding why one should collaborate in gathering material useable for embroiling oneself in the strangling web of the network of judiciary proceedings. A photo works as evidence and nothing else is needed. The irresponsible practice of the obsessive collection of images becomes collaboration, and that from the side of those who claim to demonstrate dissent.

Now aren’t we told that turn-outs are carried out in order to firmly rein in the cops when they go too far in the fulfillment of their wicked duty; does one really think that an image could be enough to put a police officer in jail? And then, above all, is our revolutionary task that of taking the place of a magistrate or the spokesperson of those who have arranged judiciary justice? What step forward will we have made once we have entrusted our freedom to the hands of a magistrate, a politician or a new law that doesn’t feel any need for it?

In the rivalry for the collection and spread of images one ends up later competing with the other fine category, that of the journalist.

The frenzy to communicate the event takes upper hand over the event itself, so much so that it is no longer even necessary that it happens; it is enough that it is simulated for those few moments requested and dictated by television times. This craze for the day after in the newspapers, or better for the same day on TV has gotten so out of hand as to cause the

loss of being ourselves and acting in the moment, since one is already projected toward the image to project.

One thinks to escape from this tiresome whirlpool through self-production by going around in the supposedly antagonistic circuits of the social centers. What simpler way to give breadth and resonance to a movement born dead than that of making it live by placing it under the restraints of the neo-modern media prison?

Foolish imitators, whose schemes break down, what leads to this shattering if not their self-celebrative representation? "Against the war of the powerful now and always disobedient!" Ah. . . bah!

With objectives that intertwine themselves in an exultation of interlaced leaps, like building the set of a hall of mirrors in which the images, to be narcissistically enjoyed, rebound off of each other. In a game of infinite return, the situation is amplified at pleasure until alluding to a spectacle for strong emotions. On stage there is the tension of an urban guerrilla war that always seems to be on the point of exploding. . . But that moment will never come.

The sign is enough: a helmet on the head, the face covered, whatever smoke-producer and the pre-arranged space for the sham retreat. All the actors on the field know the script well but the unaware nonentities remain there with their rage in their throats, ignorant of what has really happened, besieged, closed in on both sides by cops and bullies.

The action is fake and impotence increases.

The hands morbidly seize the recording tools; there is no way now to use them for other purposes. The mind is occupied by the anxiety of capturing the instant the best expresses the spectacle. The eyes fix on the objective and this is how the separation from living and from concentrating on that which one is doing is concretized in the being absent in the moment in which being present would be needed.

With this body weighed down in all its parts by technological prostheses what does one want to demonstrate? Against who does one want to go? How can one claim to chase police masked as humans and journalistic vultures from the march when one cannot see the difference between them and the others?

It is a conflict between video cameras that infects the consciousness and the blockheads.

unilateral approach of alliance under US control. For now, it is having its way. But this conflict between the UN and the US was nothing more than a disagreement over management techniques. The only peace France, Germany, Russia and the UN wish to maintain is the social peace that stems from the fear of the exploited to revolt against their masters, and that provides the rulers with a peaceful sleep. One merely has to look at Chechnya or the Ivory Coast to see this.

The social peace of the Empire is, in fact, endless war. When the rulers of this world say they are making war in order to preserve the peace, they are not necessarily lying. Peace, for them, means precisely the maintenance of their power with as little disturbance from those they rule as possible. Yet the maintenance and expansion of their power can only happen through the dispossession and exploitation of the majority of human beings, so unrest is inevitable. Most of the exploited do not have a clear understanding of the nature of current social relationships and so through campaigns of fear and hate the rulers can redirect their rage into nationalistic, ethnic or religious conflicts. Thus, civil wars rage particularly in poorer and more desperate parts of the globe. In addition, the smooth functioning of capitalism requires that such conflicts be kept at an adequately low level. Thus, the great powers must police the world, and this policing is carried on through their armed forces. A system based on dispossession, exploitation and domination can never do without policing. Institutional violence or the threat thereof is essential to the maintenance of political and economic power. Thus, Empire means endless war. The Pax Romana is maintained with battalions, tanks, guns, tear gas and "smart" bombs. This is one reason why, while still in Afghanistan, killing and enforcing the will of the world's masters, the US and its allies started a war in Iraq as well. While it may be true that this particular war would not be happening if Bush were not president, we can be certain that there would be others, as indeed there are others even now.

With the initiation of the "war on terrorism", endless war has, in fact, become the open policy of the world's rulers. "Terrorism" is a nebulous concept especially as those in power use the term. Their aim, of course, is not to define a precise problem and deal with it, but to create a specter to haunt the dreams of the people they rule. It is a sophisticated form



technological development moved largely into the hands of the military, seeking means to advance social control. But it was the swift advances in cybernetic, communications and surveillance technologies beginning in the '60's and '70's that provided an essential material basis for this network. These technologies combine with the international political and economic institutions, military forces and alliances and police forces on all levels to provide the state with the means for policing the world. By the early 1990's, the infrastructure of this network was in place and one could indeed talk of a global Empire of capital.

But the nature of both the technological and institutional means through which this Empire has developed has significant implications. While it is true that certain factions of the ruling class may be in the ascendant at various times, as the American state is now, the real operation of power in the Empire is in fact decentralized. The networks of information, communications and surveillance are able to spread control precisely by operating as a network, spread thinly across the social terrain. The specialization required both technologically and in the operation of bureaucracies also serves to prevent this Empire from building its Winter Palace. This is why it is a mistake to speak of the American Empire, even though the US is currently the greatest power within the Empire. It is not enough to bring down the current US regime or to weaken its power if we want to bring down the Empire, because its tentacles are everywhere. This is why those like Negri, who see European political unity as a potential opposition to Empire, are fools.

Due to the specialization necessary to the maintenance of the imperial network and the competition that is an inherent aspect of the capitalist ruling class, the power of Empire is not merely decentralized, but also fragmented. Every faction of the ruling class agrees upon the necessity of global social control, on the necessity of policing the world, in order to guarantee their wealth and power. But they cannot agree on how to divide that wealth and power, or even how to manage the process of global policing. Certainly, one of the reasons why the latest war in Iraq developed as it did was a disagreement between different factions of the ruling class over how to manage the policing of the world. The UN in general wanted a multilateral approach involving the relatively equal cooperation of a number of powerful states, whereas the US desired a

Then repression does not just come from the simpletons in uniforms or the evidence collected unwarily for them, but also from that which is produced from the inside. The instinct brought back to reason, restrained and annihilated by the ideology of the image, prevents the realization of the authentic act of revolt.

The image empties the action while the fetish sucks the blood of the human being.

Some comrades with free hands

## Endless War

The war in Iraq is now officially over. Of course, U.S. and allied troops continue to occupy the country and casualties continue, just as in Afghanistan. The fact that no weapons of mass destruction have surfaced makes the arrogance and irrationality of the US regime all the more blatant. At the start of the war even some people in the American media felt compelled to write of “Empire” when describing reactions around the world. But without an analysis of the full context of these events, this war remains simple another random atrocity among the rest.

The concept of “Empire” can certainly be a useful tool in analyzing the nature of the world we are facing today. The networks of economic and political power have spread themselves across the globe forming a web of domination and exploitation from which nothing escapes. Even people in the most remote places find themselves being dispossessed of the capacity to create their own lives as the pollutants of industry contaminate the lands from which they have made their lives or capital itself directly intrudes with dams, mines and other environmentally devastating projects. Thus everyone becomes dependent on a social order that is not based on the needs and desires of the individuals who make it up, but on the need of the system to maintain and expand itself at any cost. Certainly the metaphor of Empire seems fitting.

But in using this metaphor, it is essential to clearly analyze the nature of this Empire. Over and over again since the war against Iraq began, I have heard people speak of the American Empire. Certainly, the United States seems to be ascendant in the control of the Empire right now. But this is simply the current situation in the relationships of power in the world, in the competitions and intrigues between the various parts of the ruling class. It is necessary to recognize this, because otherwise we will be easily drawn into false oppositions, becoming pawns of one or another faction of the ruling class or those who want to become so.

The Empire is in fact a global network of domination. This network has not just now come into being. On a technological and institutional level, it has been developing since the end of World War II, when advanced

decentralized organizational structures on the one hand while it attacks the centralized formations of the class enemy on the other. Revolutionaries must take the initiative to constantly fight against any tendency towards centralization if they are to defend freedom. From this perspective, revolutionary initiative becomes a project based on combining the struggle for individual liberation with the social struggle to overthrow the capitalist system and the class enemy.

Insurgent-S

Vancouver, B.C., Canada

Coast Salish Territories

April 30, 2003

## “Everything Must Go!”. Some Thoughts On Making a Total Critique

“Think of another concept of strength. Perhaps this is the new poetry.

Basically, what is social revolt if not a generalized game of illegal matching and divorcing of things.”

— At Daggers Drawn

The various institutions of the state and the economy are spreading their net into every corner of the globe and every moment of our existence. From the surveillance camera on the street corner to the genetically engineered soy product, from the strip mine in the West Papua jungle to the increasingly broad and far-reaching “anti-terrorist” laws, the world is becoming an interwoven network of control and exploitation coupled to an unending parade of environmental and social catastrophes that are used to justify the increase in control. For those of us who imagine and desire a world in which we, as individuals, truly determine our own existence, together with those we enjoy sharing our lives with, it is necessary to develop a critique of this world that goes to the roots of all this, a total critique of the existence that has been imposed on us.

This is by no means an easy task. We have been taught to simply accept things as they are, and when we start to question, it is much easier to examine things piece-meal, not trying to make connections or keeping those connections on a surface level. This is easier on a number of levels. It not only does not require one to think as deeply or examine reality as closely. It also makes for a critique that is much more easily actively expressed without disturbing one’s own calm existence too greatly. If we view the killing of an unarmed person by a cop, the war against Iraq, the clear-cutting of a forest, the sweatshop in Taiwan and the emptiness of our daily lives as separate matters, we can easily conceive of them as mere aberrations. Our task then simply becomes that of pointing out the problem to the right authorities, so that they can correct the problem.

Voting, petitions, litigation, appeals for legislation and public non-violent demonstrations before the symbols of the institutions responsible for taking care of these matters become the order of the day. The aim is simply to make the institutions live up to their own proclaimed ideals. But in the present reality, this reformist perspective either requires one to put on blinders so as to only see one's own narrow issues, or to continually scurry from one isolated problem to the next, on and on in the activist rat race until one burns oneself out.

So it is clearly necessary to go deeper, to make the connections between the various miseries and disasters that we face. It is necessary for us to learn to make the "illegal matches" that we have been trained to ignore, the connections that allow us to begin to understand the totality of our existence. This is not as simple as making blanket declarations that all of this is caused by the state, by capital, by civilization. As true as this may be, all that we have done if we do this is given a label to this totality, and labeling a thing is not the same as understanding it adequately to be able to confront and challenge it. In fact, without an adequate analysis of the nature of the state, capital or civilization, they merely function as abstractions that can distract us from the actual realities we face and may even end up become one's role within the activist milieu, the basis for a political identity that is placed in contention with others in the ideological marketplace. This is itself enough to indicate that such critiques are not yet total.

If one has not overcome the method of critique that this society imposes, the piecemeal critique of the parts without any conception of the whole, one's attempts to critique the totality of our existence may take the form of quantitatively adding together a series of oppressions and/or institutions to be opposed. A prime example of this is to be found in the statements of purpose of groups such as Love and Rage, which may inform us that they oppose sexism, racism, homophobia, classism, capitalism and the state. And those who want to be more radical may add ageism, ableism, speciesism, civilization and so on. But this still is a more like a laundry list than a serious critique, a list of issues to deal with in a political framework. Deeper connections — connections that show how the ruling order can recuperate partial oppositions (anti-racism, feminism, gay liberation, even those forms of opposition to capitalism, the

## The Class Enemy

"Let every dirty, lousy tramp arm himself with a revolver or knife and lay in wait on the steps of the palaces of the rich and stab or shoot the owners as they come out. Let us kill them without mercy, and let it be a war of extermination and without pity. Let us devastate the avenues where the wealthy live."

— Lucy Parsons

Behind every institution of oppression is the class enemy. Determined to maintain their position at all costs, intoxicated by power and willing to use the most brutal forces of repression at their disposal, the exploiters wage class war relentlessly. Revolutionary organizations must act against this reality by refusing negotiation or compromise with the class enemy. The only effective strategy in revolutionary warfare is the strategy of annihilation. The application of violence to this concrete necessity of the movement itself should not cause discomfort for even a moment. The lives of the exploiters and their servants are not worth a cent.

## Autonomy and Centralization

"If revolutionaries organize like those whose rule they seek to overthrow, they are defeated before the battle is engaged."

— Andy Anderson, Hungary '56

Autonomy is the prerequisite of social freedom. Only the absolute autonomy of individuals and groups, the freedom to associate or disassociate with others at will, can allow the natural tendency towards solidarity and mutual aid to take root. The principle of self-determination must grow from the free individual out towards the community, and further outwards to distinct cultural groups and geographic regions. Autonomy provides the basis for meaningful interrelations between groups and territories on the basis of communism; the equality of access to the means of existence and social life. Revolution is a project that develops

With the individual as a catalyst, an insurrectionary process can begin to take shape, first in small affinity groups, and then in base structures; mass organizations founded on principles of self-management, direct action and permanent conflict with the class enemy. The forum for individual and collective action is the class war itself, the contradiction between exploiter and exploited that can only be resolved by the violent elimination of those in power. Organization is a tool to be used in coordinating specific tasks, a tool to be fashioned, adapted and dismantled as necessary. It should not be an end in itself. Only the struggle should be permanent. Revolutionary initiative has a variety of means at its disposal, from counter-information work and expropriation to attacks on capitalist institutions. Class warfare may develop over time in the form of escalating individual, intermediate and mass insurrectionary struggles, but all efforts should aim at achieving concrete results and gains, and symbolic methods should be dismissed as useless.

## The Institutions of Oppression

“Naturally one must begin with the insurrectionary act which sweeps away the material obstacles, the armed forces of government which are opposed to any social transformation.”

— Errico Malatesta, *The Insurrection*

Capitalism is not merely an abstract concept or system of social relationships. It depends on its institutions of repression, its courts, police stations, and prisons. These structures will not destroy themselves. They will not crumble under the weight of an inevitable historical process. They must be physically assaulted. The subjective aspects of material resistance also come into play, as individuals realize their capacity to actively attack and destroy capitalist targets. By intervening directly in the social clash, individuals and groups gain experience that can be attained in no other way. When engaged in collective action, the bonds of solidarity are strengthened between comrades. The combative spirit gathers momentum.

state and civilization that continue to operate within a political activist framework) to its own ends — can only spring from a different kind of critique.

Even when a critique places the various oppressions under a single conceptual umbrella (e.g., the state, capital, patriarchy, civilization) in order to explain them, this critique is not necessarily a total critique. Such critiques may in fact be broad without having depth. When such critiques are partial this will become evident first of all in the inability to apply the critique concretely to one’s daily struggle against this social order. This indicates that although the critique may indeed appear to have made the necessary connections, the “illegal matches”, on the surface level, this has happened in such a realm of abstraction that it does not allow for the “illegal divorces” — the singling out of specific targets, the recognition of the physical body of the enemy — to occur.

One of the primary reasons for this is a failure to recognize and reject reification. Reification is the ideological and social process of transforming an activity or social relationship — something we do — into a being that stands above us and acts upon us as if we were mere tools. An example of what I mean can be drawn from a particular critique that has developed in certain anti-civilization circles. (I choose this example because it so clearly expresses this failure and because my own perspective also includes a critique of civilization, thus this is part of a comradely critical discourse.) In recent writings, certain individuals in anti-civilization circles have made a critique of reason that is actually an ideological rejection of reason. Of course, their argument against reason is always reasoned (even if often poorly so). However, the fact that this critique may not be able to be fully realized in practice now (which anti-capitalist lives absolutely without money? which critic of technology lives without any products of the industrial system?) is not sufficient reason to discount it. Where the problem lies is that if this critique cannot be applied usefully precisely in the way we develop theory and critique, i.e., in the way we think (and there is no evidence that it can), then it has no practical application to our revolutionary struggle. The failure of this critique as revolutionary theory stems from the fact that it accepts the concept of reason as a thing in itself. In other words, it accepts the rationalist reification of reason and bases its rejection of reason upon this. So this

critique is really a mere philosophical game, a game of words that allows the players to claim that their critique of this society is more total simply because it is broader than that of others. But a total critique requires depth; it needs to get to the bottom of things, to the roots. And at bottom reason is not a thing in itself. It is an activity we do, but one that has been reified in the form of rationalism into an ideal above us precisely because it was socially useful. But the absolute rejection reason is also a reified concept, an ideal that stands above us, since even on the level of antagonistic struggle it can only exist as a goal for a distant future. The rejection of reified reason would start with the recognition that Reason, as a thing above us, does not exist. Rather each of us reasons, and has his own reasons, and certain tools for critical thinking can help us hone our capacity to reason into a weapon we can use in our lives and struggles.

In fact, a total critique is qualitatively different from a partial critique. All partial critiques, regardless of how extreme they may be, start from the perspective of this society. (For instance, the critique of reason described above starts from the social conception of Reason as defined by rationalism). The more extreme and broader partial critiques simply lead to an ideological rejection of major aspects of this society or even of all of it considered abstractly because this society is deemed to have failed on its own terms. Such ideological rejections offer little of practical use to the immediate struggle against this society since they are based on the same reifications through which this society seeks to justify itself. In developing a total critique, one starts from herself, from her desire to determine his existence on his own terms. This critique is thus the act — or better, the ongoing practice — of confronting this society with oneself and one's hostility to its intrusion into one's existence. It is from this basis that one can indeed plumb the depths of this society and begin to recognize the intertwining networks of control through which it defines every moment of our existence. This is also the practical basis from which to make those “illegal matches and divorces” — the capacity to put together and break apart in order to know how and why, when and where to attack. Since one makes this critique starting from herself and her desire, it is not merely a critique of the failures of this society, of what is worst in it; it is also a critique of its success, of what is best in it, because even if this society were to live up to all of its ideals, it would

## Revolutionary Initiative

### The Exploited Individual

“We must take into account not only the objective causes of oppression, but must also examine the subjective factors which play an important role in the persistence of exploitation and are hindering the process of workers' autonomy.”

— Jean Weir, *Worker's Autonomy*

The will to resist exploitation and social exclusion is an often overlooked factor within the revolutionary movement, but without this subjective element revolutionary change can not take place. Oppression can nurture apathy and resignation as easily as it can provoke hatred and anger. The exploitation of the capitalist system creates the context and justification for mass rebellion, but the determination to resist must come from within each individual. The spirit of revolt, the indispensable revolutionary initiative of individuals must be the groundwork of a project that aims at overthrowing the dominant class and destroying the infrastructure of their economy. The struggle for real individual freedom must also necessarily become a struggle for equality of conditions and access to social life for the entire exploited class.

### The Insurrectionary Process

“When a revolutionary situation arises in a country, before the spirit of revolt is sufficiently awakened in the masses to express itself in violent demonstrations in the streets or by rebellions and uprisings, it is through action that minorities succeed in awakening that feeling of independence and that spirit of audacity without which no revolution can come to a head.”

— Peter Kropotkin, *The Spirit of Revolt*

still demand the subjection of our individuality, of our uniqueness to it, “to the common good”. Furthermore, because it is an active critique, the intertwined theory and practice of our enmity against this social order, it is never a finished critique. Rather it is in continual development, honing itself as we struggles against the reality of our current existence. When one starts from himself in developing his critique of the social order, she recognizes this order as an enemy to be destroyed and seeks the weapons she and the accomplices with whom he can attack this order. And from here solidarity and revolutionary practice can develop.

(present on the territory in their various forms), of every sort of re-gurgitation and reposition of them, we might finally take control of our existence.

— humanliberation



- Deserting the working places positions school rooms and causing them to be deserted; occupying the schools and universities, blockading those places that form our daily prisons and declaring the authoritarian indoctrination of deans and teachers now empty and meaningless; if the situation doesn't allow this, walling up the entrances or putting silicon into the locks, preventing opening and access; doing the same to workplaces; spreading general strike.
- Taking back the paths, the plazas, the streets, carefully choosing those that are most central and trafficked; occupying them and holding them, interrupting the rhythms that daily make us slaves and lunatics (obviously without asking for authorization from the police station or the civil governor); involving drivers; constructing total blockades.
- Avoiding locking oneself into the cage of pro-institutional opposition (let's remember that the majority of the political forces that now oppose the war supported the one for Kosovo and those that even then opposed it did so because, from the bottom of their parliamentary impotence, they were not called to submit to the rules of international capital) or in organization that are not structures horizontally; in the plaza refuse their (or any other) services of order, opposing total autonomy to them.
- Resisting repressors of every sort; spreading the refusal of their role; if possible passing to the counter-attack and driving them out (at least when they don't renounce upholding their unfortunate function) from the cities; demolishing their vehicles and offices; if violence against people or even against things is repugnant to you, organize and integrate forms of defense and passive resistance.  
Remember that in any state in the world, anyone who puts on a uniform has chosen to obey orders in exchange for the legal power to coerce, to force others into obedience, into the renunciation of freedom. And that these uniforms are not different from any other uniform worn, least of all by those who trample down the Iraqi population
- Keeping in mind that the war in Iraq, like all wars, and like the war that is carried out against humanity every day is the fruit of the economic-political system to which we are subjected; that therefore, only by freeing ourselves definitively from the state and capital

## The Two Faces of the Present

One cannot enter twice into the same river — Heraclitus

What's new? There's Clio — A Renault advertisement

The totalitarian dream of power is to make us bathe not twice, but thousands of times in the same river. The governors of time want to force us to survive within the walls of an eternal present — the social measurement of a continuous and collective deferment of life to the future.

What happened today? The images of products on advertisements changed. Some different faces appeared on television and an identical commentary gathered facts in a different order. A statesman disappeared into the void that is absence in the news after forty years in government. For forty years, it was a difficult enterprise not to come across his name at least once a day — now he has become a perfect Carneade. What happened today?

Capital has managed to make almost all the activity of individuals nearly identical day after day. The way in which they dream of doing something different (the career, the unexpected prize, fame, love) is also identical. But bodies, though malnourished and atrophied, are different from each other and from themselves from one moment to the next. Everything that has happened can even be reconstructed and rewritten (“one never knows what the past reserves for us” as a worker under the Stalinist regime commented), but bodies are not recuperated, not yet.

Power has made recycling, in all senses, its proper practice and ideology. The science of transplants — which an effective euphemism calls “the frontiers of medicine” — has been working for some time so that the exchange of parts insures an ever-longer survival to the social machine that is the human body. Like all the other property of the state domain, individual existence obeys only one imperative: to endure. For anyone who produces (automobiles or rights, resignation or false critiques, it matters little), domination is quick to replace an arm, a liver, a heart. In the name of progress any organ of anyone who is no longer of service

can be easily sacrificed. On the other hand, as a doctor favorable to transplants said, “If someone is clinically dead, why waste all that good stuff?”

Human beings whose opinions are interchangeable, just like the performances carried out during work and “free time”, must have the bodies they deserve. This serial world wants everything to be in its image and likeness.

Only religion is left to talk of tomorrow (ideologies, as is well known, are all dead). Capital, however, speaks of today, speaks of that which must be bought and sold now. But at bottom they say the same thing. The first distances happiness, the second brings misery close. For both, the future is the thing that is always the same, for which one sacrifices the previous day that becomes the present. The next day, one starts again.

What happened today?

Living beyond laws that enslave, beyond narrow rules, even beyond theories formulated for the generations to come. Living without believing in earthly paradise. Living for the present hour beyond the mirage of future societies. Living and feeling existence in the fierce pleasure of social battle. It is more than a state of mind: it is a way of being, and immediately.

— Zo d’AxA

Quick

— graffiti from May ’68 in France

The struggle against oppression is merely the indispensable minimum of an insurrection that wants to lay hold of life. It is now that one plays the game, not tomorrow or the day after. Our lives are much too short and there have never been so many kings’ heads to chop off.

The unsuccessful realization of militance has produced its wretched counter-image everywhere. There is no longer anyone speaking of the duties to the Cause and promising the future society. All are for the “here and now”, quick to accuse every discussion and every practice that

## Practical Advice For Sabotaging The Economy, Obstructing War, Damaging Those Who Finance It

Lacking the will to manifest an impotent presence, with little interest in fanning nay simulated and generic humanitarian pacifism, we try to spread some methods for rendering the life of the mass destroyers difficult and, possibly, to liberate ourselves from their presence.

Outside of the institutions, the unions and the more or less oppositional political forces that offer their services in false and spectacular contestations, we desire to build passages of self-organization that allow individual or collective, transitory or extended, violent or nonviolent practices of direct action to extend and travel, but without any longer being restrained by the dam of legality.

What we would want to sow therefore is nothing other than the seed of revolt.

- Not getting gas at Exxon-Mobil distributors (that supply fuel for the military vehicles in Iraq); cutting the pumps or sealing the slots of the automatic payment machines with silicon; when necessary chewing gum inserted deeply or a little spray bottle to obscure windows and screens of distributors can be useful; at the limit attaching a sheet of paper with the writing: “OUT OF ORDER”. Remember that other petroleum companies are no different, Exxon-Mobil simply won the contract; thus the same methods can be used for them as well.
- Boycotting the payment of taxes, bills, rent: refusing all tribute to the institutions; more generally, not accepting selling your life (working) in order to have what you need to buy survival; refusing the domination of property and considering everything that pleases you as yours, taking it without asking permission of anyone.

does not guarantee the security of the known and approved here and now of martyrdom and messianism. On sale today is militance in its most laicized version: realism.

To those who talk of wanting to enjoy life without concerning themselves over the oppressors, one can only respond in one way: by watching how they live. One will discover how much they accept the way the oppressors concern themselves over them.

The one who does not hide the limits and impositions by which she is constrained knows that, beyond empty proclamations, one can be outside of that which exists only to the extent to which she is against it. Really because he wants much more, he launches herself into the struggle.

When she lacks the strength, he has no need of an ideology of pleasure to disguise his weakness and fear. They exist and are part of the game as well, like love and hatred, relationships torn away from exchange value and actions that spit in the face of the order of passivity.

My ideas, my activity and my body are not those of yesterday, nor of everyone — so she desires to think and feel. Today something happened. Each day he must release her own unique perfume from the impersonality — now secretly, now with the roar of the tempest. Then one can speak of tomorrow as well. As it is currently written for us, there is only slavery behind the imperative: Attend to the future.

In a time that is always the same, the rulers of survival want to impose their measure on each and all. The immeasurability of our demands is the only true necessity of a change much more than necessary, and that is to say, possible.

Today something happened.

— Massimo Passamani

## That Fear Changes In The Field

They terrorize us in order to turn us against each other, those born here against foreigners, documented immigrants against illegal immigrants.

They terrorize us, forcing many of us to live us undocumented aliens: with the police breathing down our neck and the fear of expulsion, the state and the masters push thousands of individuals into the shadows, rendering them even more docile for exploitation.

They terrorize us with the blackmail of wage labor: either sell yourself to a master or don't eat.

They terrorize us with images of "barbarous and fundamentalist" Foreigners in order to make us accept more restrictions, more control, more precariousness; or else to make us love an empty and worthless national identity — if capitalism recognizes no borders, why ever should the exploited do so?

They terrorize us with police in the neighborhoods, with the fascist patrols, with the sweeps. The pretext is criminality (at bottom, what creates criminality if not the need for money?), but the real objective is to make everyone bow their heads.

They terrorize us with prison or expulsion, with the barracks or the lagers for the undocumented.

The more the poor hate each other, the fatter the rich grow.

They terrorize us by making us believe that the one who struggles against the state and the masters is the terrorist, and not the one who bombs entire populations, colonizes lands and minds, razes houses to the ground with bulldozers.

Now is the time that fear must change in the field.

Now is the time that the hatred between "races" must be replaced with class solidarity, the war of the exploited against the exploiters.

— Guerra sociale