

ANTI-AUTHORITY

DAILY REVOLT

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# RETURN FIRE

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INDIVIDUAL WILL

DE-CIVILISATION

**The Exarcheia Commune Rises and  
Defends Itself**

(tactics for maintaining a state-hostile zone)

**Symbiogenetic Desire**

(tracing an egoist ecology)

**Clarification on the Attack on the CGT  
Headquarters and On the Topic of  
'Anonymous Disassociation'**

(on the time and place for co-critique)

**Nanotechnology and Transparency  
& taking on imperial science**

**Market Pressurised to Temporarily Drop  
G.M. Product Lines After Contamination  
Campaign Claimed, Lombardy**

(communiqué: stirring the pot in civil society  
over our daily consumer poisons)

**'The Matter of Knowing Who We Are'**

(the enemy is a way of seeing the world)

**What Could Compensate for the Loss of  
the Night Sky?**

& the possibilities of electrical disruption

**'Rejoin the Circle'**

(the gift as a new-old  
principle of existence)

...and more!

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**VOLUME 5, CHAPTER II**

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**AUTUMN 2017**



*... the unknown, the uncertain, seduces me. I'm filled with a desire for adventure, and I don't give a damn for success.*

*I hate your society of bureaucrats and administrators, millionaires and beggars. I don't want to adapt to your hypocritical customs nor to your false courtesies. I want to live out my enthusiasms in the pure, fresh air of freedom.*

*Your streets, drafted according to plan, torture my gaze, and your uniform buildings make the blood in my veins boil with impatience. And that's enough for me. I'm going to follow my own path, according to my passions, changing*

*myself ceaselessly, and I don't want to be the same tomorrow as I am today. I stroll along and I don't let my wings be clipped by the scissors of any one person. I share none of your moralism. I am going forth, eternally passionate and burning with the desire to give myself to the world, to the first real person that approaches me, to the ragged-trousered traveller, but never to the grave and conceited wise-men who would regulate the length of my stride. Nor to the doctrinaire who would like to clutter my mind with formulas and rules. I am no intellectual; I am a human being – a woman who feels a great vibration within herself before the impulses of nature and amorous words. I hate every chain, every hindrance; I love to walk along, nude, letting my flesh be caressed by the rays of the voluptuous sun. And, oh, old man! I will care so very little when your society breaks into a thousand pieces and I can finally live my life.*

*Who are you, little girl, fascinating like a mystery and savage like instinct?*

*I am Anarchy.*

# THE EXARCHEIA COMMUNE

## RISES & DEFENDS ITSELF

– a review of the battle

[ed. – The second in a series of dispatches from Greece by a travelling comrade reflecting on the anarchist space in that country. This regards the 2016 annual anniversary of the killing of Alexis Grigoropoulos (see *Return Fire vol.1 pg17*), always a conflictual date in the Athenian neighbourhood. We publish this as fighters gear up for the 2017 date as we speak... not (at least unnecessarily) to add to the legend of this often-romanticised anarchist stronghold, but for its tactical and methodical inspirations.]

“Ons Danse le Lachrymo...”  
– graffiti, France, July 2016  
(transl. “We Dance the Teargas”)

“Comrade, will you watch these while I throw one?” He is tall, masked from head to toe in black, and is known to me. As he speaks he motions to a milk crate stuffed with Molotovs. “Sure... go ahead,” I say as I light a cigarette and settle in to guard the precious weapons stash while he tosses the thing at the Social Enemy. Ten minutes later he returns and in spite of the dark night, his black clothing, and the shadow we stand in, he glows with happiness – like the Molotov he just launched, he is alight.

### Strategy

The strategy was simple, and for the anarchists new, defend the beating anarchist heart of Athens, of Greece, perhaps the world. Block, stop and turn back any and all attempts by the Athens Police to get to Exarcheia Square. And do so in a coordinated fashion between all the various groups, teams and squats. Each entity taking responsibility for one or two streets – ensuring they are effectively blocked. This in contrast to previous years when the rioting was scattered, unfocussed and usually developed into clashes around the Polytechnic, the University complex set off several blocks from the Square. This year, the Polytechnic and its environs played no role whatsoever, but Exarcheia Square sure as hell did. Finally, in crystalline form, the strategy was to take and keep liberated territory, to free a community – if only for a few hours.

The strategic plan included blocking all the approaches to the Square and by establishing a secondary system of barricades to

neutralize the unfortunately offset side streets that link the main avenues. The side streets were one of the real dangers of the plan, because should the Police actually have the ability to turn a barricade they would then have flanking access to at least one, perhaps several, adjacent streets and barricades. **The barricade that my team was tasked with defending was located such that the side street would have given the cops the advantage of flanking us effectively from the side and rear. Not good.** In order to counter this threat a series of smaller side barricades were set up on these side streets, effectively slowing any belligerent force from going on a free ride from one street to the next, one point of defense to the next. Two small pedestrian streets also lead into the Square and these were barricaded as well. **Finally there was a hope that at one or two points the anarchists could push hard enough to move the fighting up the street effectively expanding their territory** and maybe even be able to sever a police line of reinforcement, or even better, retreat.

The one huge downside to the system of barricades was simple – if one or several were turned it would have given to the police the ability to flank every remaining barricade from the rear. A rock and a hard place scenario. Everyone seemed aware of this, and as fighting was heard in other streets I saw more than one rioter glance nervously over their shoulder in anticipation of a police charge from the rear. Fortunately this never happened.



### Tactics

The primary tactical component on the anarchist side was the barricade – construction, defense, and use as a weapon. The Exarcheia barricade varied from street to street. Usually low, sometimes waist high, on occasion higher, but never above eye-level so that the fighters could see over and anticipate police charges. Most included tires, wood taken from construction sites, large planters from the sidewalks, **anything that could be ripped out of the ground, torn off a wall, or broken was used to raise the barricade just one inch taller.** In one case two steel police barricades had been used to block a side street. In many instances barricades caught fire, either deliberately set or by accident. Once alight, the fires were allowed burn unchecked. The actual battle tactic was to taunt, harass and generally disrespect the forces of authority in a vocal and physical fashion. This included standing in front of the barricade throwing stones at the cops in the hopes of pushing them off their adjacent corner. Occasional chants could be heard rising up from various barricades, the only one I recognized being a chant calling cops murderers. The cops would charge and be driven off by Molotov and stone barrages. In one case the barricade I was at was turned by the cops, but only for a moment. A swift counter charge by anarchists pushed them off the barricade and back down the street. It's fun to watch a cop retreat, especially as the ground around them sputters and roars in flame and smoke.

In terms of cop tactics they are hard to guess. But it seemed a pattern of varied harassment and probing. They seemed to move personnel from one barricade to another over the course of the night. The barricade I was at was very active with three or four charges an hour, usually beginning with a barrage of flash bang grenades followed by teargas, loads of teargas; then a charge, and a retreat. I saw this tactic deployed over and over, on almost every street. **Some streets, hotly contested early in the evening, were virtually empty an hour or two later. Other streets, like mine, felt the brunt of the fighting.** There was one barricade situated on a downhill street, in other words allowing some tactical advantage to the

cops on a charge, which while contested, it was not a main point of fighting. I kept thinking that the reason must be that the retreat was hampered by the sloped street. **Finally, the weather helped the insurgents – it was a humid, rainy cool night.** The two pedestrian walkways, swathed in tiles that get slick as shit when wet, went effectively uncontested. The cops realizing that short of wearing shoes with soles slathered in crazy glue there was no way to safely run and retreat on a surface that was, in effect, as treacherous as ice. Almost all insurgent forces like inclement weather to fight in especially against regular troops, one Special Forces guys told me that rain and 45-55 degrees Fahrenheit is sufficiently gloomy for regular soldiers to begin to lose heart. In his words, *"It tears the morale out of you."* Athens on the evening of December 6, 2016 was misty/slight drizzle, with a temperature hovering at 50 degrees. *Perfect.*

## Weapons

The Exarcheia Molotov is a brilliant technical innovation of the weapon, and worth taking note of. In general they use 500ml beer bottles, filled half way or a bit less with a flammable liquid, usually gas. They then take a length of gauze bandage and extend a portion into the gas and tape the remainder at the opening of the bottle for a fuse. The traditional dangling fuse being a relic of the past. **This accomplishes two things**, first as the bottle is only filled half way, the gauze wicks gas and inundates the remaining air in the bottle with gas fumes. Turning the Exarcheia Molotov from a simple device that delivers fire into – a bomb. The damn things actually explode in massive purplish red flame as the remaining liquid gas erupts and spreads fire to anything it touches. Next the taping of the wick at the opening of the bottle, again inundated with liquid gas makes a perfect "fuse". It can be easily lit and thrown without the danger of self-immolation by a flopping, flaming piece of cloth. **I would very much like to meet and congratulate the folks who developed this thing.** It's brilliant, it's easy, and the Athens Police hate them like the plague – with good reason. The Exarcheia Molotov is a fearsome and effective weapon. Some comrades have further advanced this innovation with an attached canister, which explodes on impact. I have no idea what's in this canister and asked one of the guys who was throwing these infernal devices what made them work, but as he spoke no English, and as I speak no Greek it remains a mystery. The explosion is loud, like a flash bang, with the attendant dispersal of flaming gasoline to the surrounding area. More information later, perhaps.

**Hand thrown chunks of whatever. The most desperate thing I saw in Exarcheia that night was insurgents scrambling to get their hands on stuff to throw. One scene that I'll always remember was of a bunch of young people kicking a pylon cemented in the sidewalk to loosen it. They eventually succeeded and it had the added benefit of producing further hunks of concrete when it was finally hauled out. Tiles torn out of walls, empty bottles, anything not actually nailed down was loosened, ripped out and thrown at the police.**

In addition I saw slingshots, and an actual, honest-to-God, David-slays-Goliath sling being used. The projectiles used included ball-bearings, marbles, stone or concrete chunks. These were clearly weapons of harassment, used during lulls to further infuriate and demoralize the police.

Finally, though linked to a cop weapon, the anarchists have found the use of gas masks absolutely essential. There was little breeze on the night of December 6th and even small amounts of teargas were devastating as it settled into corners, doorways and hung in the damp, unmoving air.

On the cop side little was new, the usual suspects. Flash bang grenades, though in Athens these don't use launchers, they are hand thrown. What is devastating in their repertoire is teargas, Brazilian teargas.

**Having been gassed recently in France, I'm beginning to be something of a lachrymator connoisseur, and I can tell you that Greek gas is dense, acrid and acidic – far more so than the Gallic variant.** In terms of first aid there is Riopan. A kind of Maalox [*ed. – a brand of antacid that counter-acts tear-gas*], but in handy single serving foil packets. The ground around the various barricades was littered with these white foil packs. And the faces of many insurgents looked clown-like as they poured the white liquid liberally into eyes, onto the mucous membranes, and finally taking a swallow to clear the acidic, noxious gas residue out of the throat.

## Order of Battle

*Anarchists: 800-1,000.* Organized as teams of between 5 and 10 fighters. Those from Exarcheia were assigned to various barricades and maintained themselves within their area. Those from outside Exarcheia roamed, the sound of flash bang grenades drawing them to specific streets, militants would frantically move from barricade to barricade as cop charges changed location and intensity. In a lull most hung out in Exarcheia, drank beer, talked, and scrounged for more stuff to throw. The number dwindled over the night to perhaps two hundred when the militants

finally dumped arms and hostilities ceased, about 11:00 pm.

*Cops: 200-300 (a guess).* Based on my observations of the number per charge (20 cops maximum) and the number of barricades being simultaneously probed and harassed – upwards of five, and the number of police needed to provide logistics, support, command, reserves, and to steer traffic well out of the area.

## Snapshots

As I sit and write this on the Isle of Lesbos a short 24 hours after the battle a number of scenes come to mind. Sitting in a room discussing preparations for the night, many of the militants standing, pacing, nervous with energy to get started. As I guarded the Molotovs having some Italian comrades wander by. They asked for a Molotov, which I provided and we all agreed that the Greeks had done something very right. Helping a young woman overcome by gas, who, when the Riopan got into her eyes and nose immediately recovered. Like a stoned person suddenly sober – she straightened, said, *"Thank you Comrade,"* turned and headed back to the barricade she was attending to. The sight of burning barricades, great arcs of Molotovs fuses sputtering as they flew and struck home in the ranks of the police. **The shouting, chanting, laughing, talking – the feeling of really finally being alive.** One's hair standing on end as the flash bangs explode and teargas projectiles clatter on the ground and cloud the street.

Finally on my way back to the apartment I was staying at, I noticed a small store open, with several people playing cards at a table in the back. I knocked on the door – needed smokes and something to drink. They motioned me in, and asked where I was from, a few questions and finally one of the older men asked, *"So tonight did you see the riots?"* "Yes," I answered not wanting to give too much away. *"And who are you with, the young people or the cops?"* Hesitantly I said, *"The young people, always."* He smiled broadly and answered, *"So are we."*



## 'COMBATIVE SOLIDARITY'

[ed. – Currently distributed in *Exarcheia*,  
anticipating December 2017 clashes...]

Social power against  
state repression is founded on  
combative solidarity.

By participating in the resistance  
we build our capacity for collective  
self-direction.

### ...you too can:

- open the door to your house or  
building to those who are  
persecuted by the cops
- provide protesters with  
access to the roof
- throw an (empty) flower pot from  
the balcony
- put out a bucket of water for the  
neutralization of teargas
- offer water, Maalox solution (1/2  
water) or Riopan pills to those  
injured by teargas
- offer first aid and protection  
to the injured
- come out on the street and stand  
against the state murderers
  - communicate with other  
neighbours and protesters, gather  
together and coordinate
  - contribute to the building of  
barricades and provide  
“ammunition” with any objects you  
no longer need
  - take video documentation of the  
actions of the occupying police forces  
and publicize their violence through  
means of counter-information  
(without filming the  
faces of protesters)
  - stand up against incidents  
of arrests
  - observe the daily movement of  
police forces and share this  
information with fellow fighters
  - encourage those who fight
- do all that you can imagine so as to  
contribute to the struggle
- organize in structures of resistance  
and partake in their collective  
strategy building

**TO THE BARRICADES,  
for FREEDOM and SELF-  
ORGANIZATION**

**WITH OUR CONTINUOUS  
STRUGGLE WE HONOUR  
THOSE MURDERED  
BY THE STATE**

## SYMBIOGENETIC DESIRE

– an egoist conception of ecology

### An Unfortunate Silence

Egoist anarchism has regularly had criticism leveled against it for its relative silence on issues of ecology. This criticism is well-placed: other than a few references to how non-human animals are exemplars of egoism due to their seemingly unalienated relationship with their desires<sup>[1]</sup>, egoist literature is sorely lacking in this regard. This lamentable absence likely has to do with the proclivities of its authorship more than anything else, as an egoist analysis is readily applicable to ecology.

The *identity eliminativism* – the denial of oneself as having an essential self, a perspective that will be defined and developed further in this piece – implied by egoism is the basis of this ecological worldview, as one's sense of self expands to subsume and be subsumed by one's habitat and symbiotes. Through such an analysis, one steers clear of the twin alienations of, on the one hand, the tiny self, that is, the self as an independent, enclosed, free-willed subject who remains relatively stable through space and time and who interacts with a world of objects; and, on the other hand, the reification of the nonhuman world, that is, the construal of nonhuman organisms as a more or less unified whole that acts collectively for the Good and into which one can dissolve oneself or to which one can swear allegiance [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg24*]. Eschewing both of these alienations, one finds oneself able to experience a symbiogenetic desire that unites a love of oneself with a love of one's ecosystem.

### The Expansive Self: Identity Eliminativism

An egoist conception of ecology begins with the notion of the expansive self. The expansive self regards the inner world, our thoughts and emotions, and the outer world, our phenomenality or sensory experience, as inseparable, as each reciprocally informs and defines the other. Insofar as identity can be said to exist, it is our perceptual totality, shifting from moment to moment. When we walk through the world, all that we touch and perceive is an extension of ourselves; conversely, there is no *I* that exists separately from our phenomenal experience. Thus, *the self subsumes and is subsumed by the world*, annihilating this subject/object dichotomy that alienates us from other beings and places.

If our language sounds strange here, it is because we are trying to talk about the ineffable. Perception is the basis of



existence, but it is also profoundly difficult to describe with words: the qualitative always eludes the symbolic; however circumspect and technical or poetic and pithy the phrase, it can never completely capture the real of our experience. The phenomenologist [Maurice] Merleau-Ponty, while not an anarchist egoist (actually, for at least part of his life, a Marxist! *\*gasp\**), nonetheless beautifully described how perception is neither subjective nor objective but a gestalt from which the two are artificially rendered: “*The visible about us seems to rest in itself. It is as though our vision were formed in the heart of the visible, or as though there were between it and us an intimacy as close as between the sea and the strand [...] What there is then are not things first identical with themselves, which would then offer themselves to the seer, nor is there a seer who is first empty and who, afterward, would open himself to them – but something to which we could not be closer than by palpating it with our look, things we could not dream of seeing ‘all naked’ because the gaze itself envelops them, clothes them with its own flesh.*”

What is traditionally called the object of perception, then, is as much a part of ourselves as what is traditionally called the subject of perception – we are so accustomed to think only of the latter as being truly ourselves. With the dissolution of transitivity of identity, the importance of perception to identity becomes clearer still. David Hume is instructive on the point of identity eliminativism, when he observes that there is no essential substrate, no fixed and quintessential *I*, that exists *behind* his phenomenality or the thoughts and feelings he has about it; instead, his sensory experience and his reflections of that experience are the whole of his being. **We are not merely a body, which is only part of our perception, but instead everything we perceive, everything with which we interact.** And among that with which we interact are of course other beings, meaning that our consciousnesses are inextricably intertwined.

We are therefore experiencing at all times the ultimately ineffable phenomenon of nigh-infinitely many mutually co-created consciousnesses. When we encounter one another, human or nonhuman, being or place, each becomes forever a part of the other – whatever beauty, strangeness, or upset that encounter might bring, we know, as those feelings pass from immediate intensity yet leave us permanently changed, that we have only encountered a new and stimulating aspect of ourselves with which we were previously unfamiliar.

### The Tiny Selves: The Reification of Identity

To highlight my meaning with a foil, opposite to the expansive self are various conceptions of what Jason McQuinn has taken to calling “the tiny self” – the self as mere body, the self as the free-willed bourgeois economic agent, the self as social role or identity, and so forth. Each of these is a reified self, an idea of who and what we are that comes from giving undue weight to one aspect of ourselves, to hypostatizing one part of our experience and imagining that it is all that we are.

The expansive self is diametrically opposed to these conceptions of self that characterize the dominant culture: the Cartesian self [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.4 pg54*] that sees its distinctiveness as self-evident or the bourgeois self that imagines a separable entity that is self-willed and therefore morally entitled to and responsible for its economic success.

To take just one case here, as I have discussed this issue at greater length elsewhere<sup>[2]</sup>, Descartes’ *cogito ergo sum* (“I think; therefore, I am”) contains, like every ideology of domination, a subtle presupposition: “I”. Stirner rejects out of hand the Cartesian split by describing himself as “creator and creature [*Schöpfer und Geschöpf*] in one” – **he does not presuppose himself as a separate entity of his phenomenal perception but instead recognizes that subjectivity and objectivity are simply synthetic conceptual frameworks, sometimes useful instrumental constructions that have no existence beyond our moment-to-moment imagination of them.**

Nietzsche [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg52*] similarly repudiated this atomized self as a linguistic fiction, a mode of thinking imposed on us by the subject-verb-object structure of our language.

### Nature: The Platonic Residue

Yet the expansive self is also the very antithesis of any conception of Mother Nature, Gaia perspective<sup>[3]</sup>, or other reification of the nonhuman – it is not advancing the notion that there is some transcendental whole we could call Life

that we might dissolve ourselves into or act on the behalf of for the Greater Good. While there is certainly a great deal to draw from the observation that organisms often are deeply enmeshed symbiotically, that the niches in ecosystems are often mutually reinforcing; these phenomena are counterposed by the fact that, at times, organisms also demonstrably act inimically to the stability of the biosphere: take cyanobacteria, photosynthetic microorganisms whose evolution might have annihilated most life on Earth 2.3 billion years ago by filling the atmosphere with oxygen that was toxic to the anaerobic majority of life. **Considering contradictions like this one, what can it mean to act in accordance with the biosphere?**

Even were this not the case, the identification of a Gaia or Life would be yet another case of self-alienation – we do not experience a biotic/abiotic totality except in cases of adventurous imagining; and, to whatever extent there is one, we are surely as much a part of it as anything else, meaning our desires are its desires. It thus cannot grant to us any metric of value. Unfortunately, a pernicious desire to recapitulate this reification of the nonhuman, for “*life [to be] about something bigger than ourselves*”<sup>[4]</sup> persists in anti-civilization theory today [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.4 pg92*].

The Platonic [ed. – see *The Matter of Knowing Who We Are*] urge is strong: insofar as we put our weight in recent archaeological findings<sup>[5]</sup>, the very beginnings of Civilization may be characterized by believing in things “bigger than ourselves”, things greater than actual and particular beings or events, things vast and eternal. Whether it can be said to be an essential human characteristic is unclear, but it is certainly an urge of present human beings to reify aspects of their lives, perhaps due to a relationship with enslavement<sup>[6]</sup> or depression<sup>[7]</sup>. Though some seem to think an ecological perspective entails reifying something great and beautiful and leaping into it with outstretched arms; an alternative lies in persistently refusing reification, rather than simply choosing which is ostensibly the right one.

### Symbiogenetic Desire

Biologists, most famously Lynn Margulis<sup>[8]</sup>, employ the beautiful term *symbiogenesis* (etymologically meaning something like *origin of life together*) to describe the phenomenon in which two or more ostensibly distinct organisms become so closely intertwined in their lifeways that they more or less merge into one creature.

By way of example, certain termites are able to digest wood through having their guts inhabited by protist (complex single-

celled organisms) symbiotes who, in turn, are inhabited by bacterial symbiotes; up to one-third of a termite’s weight can consist of these creatures, each of which is dependent on the others for survival. Other species of termites have their massive nests inhabited by a fungus that acts as a kind of external stomach for the insects, enabling enhanced digestion. The fungus occupies a larger volume of the nest and possesses a greater metabolism than the termites themselves, and it possibly influences the behavior of the insects through chemical signaling not unlike the kind that happens among differing organs of the same body.

In the same vein, an immensely distant ancestor of our cells may have been formed similarly, through smaller and simpler cells fusing into larger and more complex ones. Margulis’ Symbiogenetic Hypothesis posits that at least some eukaryotic cells – the complex cells that, in this case, make up plants and animals – came about through larger cells engulfing smaller cells, the latter becoming organelles of the former.

**A parallel, then, can be drawn between this biological understanding of inseparability and emergence in the organic and the gestalt sense of identity – or, perhaps better, lack of identity – described above. Recognition that each of us is constituted by every other being we encounter entails a perspective of intimacy, a desire to live as deeply and vivaciously as possible. As an ecological perspective, then, reveals itself as one that treats all organisms, humans and nonhuman, as potential symbiotes, cocreators with whom we can have various relationships.**

Just as one might have a close and intimate, a friendly, a cordial, a neutral, an antagonistic, or a hostile relationship with a human, one might have any of those relationships with a non-human. One might therefore strive toward unions of egoists among the organisms in one’s habitat, maximizing mutualistic interactions and minimizing antagonistic ones through Stirner’s understanding of infinitely revisable collaborations among beings who combine their powers toward the pursuit of cooperatively achieved, but individually recognized, values. Even non-animals, surely, experience something [ed. – see *Veganism: Why Not?*], possess a phenomenality, and have some notion of value, one we can often infer through interspecies communication; though surely their experience of value is unspeakable and ultimately incomprehensible to us.

Through such unions, we become symbiotes of one another; our sense of self expands to encompass the bodies, lives, and values of others through symbiogenetic desire.

Practically, an interspecies union of egoists would surely entail the abandonment of agriculture, a thoroughly stultifying practice that homogenizes experience and squelches the diversity of mutually co-created consciousnesses. Subsistence through some combination, varying with bioregion, of foraging and horticulture/permaculture would mean not only a richer and more diverse habitat; but also would entail an intimate relationship with it through regular interaction. In this way, we truly inhabit our ecosystem, enriching ourselves as well as our symbiotes from whom we are inseparable. Similarly, the abolition and destruction of the homogenizing and toxifying institutions and infrastructure characterizing civilization follow from such a perspective, as they could only limit and stultify ourselves and our connections [ed. – see **What Could Compensate for the Loss of the Night Sky?**].

### Anti-Civilization Egoism

The gaze of the rapacious capitalist objectifies the biosphere, treating it as an object to be plundered by whoever has the tenacity and guile to best exploit it. The paleoconservative or libertarian gaze romanticizes it, regarding it as the wide-open terrain of *rugged individualism*<sup>[9]</sup> on which one might live off the fat of the land. The liberal or conservationist gaze spectacularizes it, transforms it into a thing that should be cherished and preserved for its beauty. **Again, all of these perspectives are iterations of alienation predicated on reifying the subject/object dichotomy; they merely dress it in different skins.** As M. Kat Anderson writes, “*These seemingly contradictory attitudes – to idealize nature or commodify it – are really two sides of the same coin, what the restoration ecologist William Jordan terms the ‘coin of alienation’ [...] Both positions treat nature as an abstraction – separate from humans and not understood, not real.*”

But the egoist perspective dissolves this alienation [ed. – *at least in theory...*]. It refuses the notion that our selves are limited to this little bag of skin; it insists that we extend our bodies to encompass our perceptual horizons. I am every person I have met, however fleetingly; every river I have swum in lovingly or passed by, barely noticing; every mountain I have climbed or merely glanced upon while driving; every intoxicant I have consumed; every advertisement to which I have been subjected. The habitat in which we choose to live thus becomes not merely a

logistical-economical choice, but instead one of whom we fundamentally want to be.

**The anti-civilization insurgency thus takes on an irredeemably personal character.** We do not resist civilization because it is “*innately wrong*”<sup>[10]</sup> or because it is “*the domination of nature*”<sup>[11]</sup>, we resist it because it is an absolute assault on ourselves. There is no need to mediate such a desire through an unfounded claim about transcendental goods and evils or a conceptualization of the nonhuman; it is one immediately felt.

The flattening of living ground into dead, uniform parking plots is the flattening of our affect. The mediation of our lives through representations is a stifling of creativity and dreams. The denuding and toxification of the biosphere is the restriction of our lives and the narrowing of possibilities. Our sorrow and rage is not directed at some essential metaphysical Other that attacks Nature; it is directed at a immediate mutilation of our experience, **Of ourselves.**

1. [Max] Stirner writes, for instance, when imagining a conversation with people who feel they need absolute values to guide them lest they merely follow their instincts and passions and thus “do the most senseless thing possible. [Thus each deems himself the] devil; for, if, so far as he is unconcerned about religion, he only deemed himself a beast, he would easily find that the beast, which does follow only its impulse (as it were, its advice), does not advise and impel itself to do the ‘most senseless’ things, but takes very correct steps.” Stirner, Max. *The Ego and His Own*, trans. Steven T. Byington, ed. Benjamin R. Tucker.

2. See my “In Defense of the Creative Nothing”

3. Note that by Gaia Perspective, I do not mean to refer to the Gaia Hypothesis advanced by James Lovelock.

4. Hayes, Cliff. “Slaves to Our Own Creations”, *Black And Green Review*, vol. 1.

5. Consider the recent claims by archaeologist Klaus Schmidt – leader of the excavation of Göbekli Tepe, the earliest known human monument – that a human turn toward religion was the beginning of Civilization as its construction precipitated, perhaps necessitated, the domestication of plants and animals in order to furnish the sedentary lifestyle dictated by the construction, maintenance, and worship of the monuments. The monuments themselves display symbols that might be interpreted as the human domination of the nonhuman (humans holding, perhaps controlling, various animals that might be considered dangerous) and the triumph of patriarchy (phallogentrism).

6. Rosset, Clément. “The Cruelty Principle”. *Joyful Cruelty*.

7. Real, Terrence. *I Don’t Want to Talk About It: Overcoming the Secret Legacy of Male Depression*.

8. A number of biologists dating back to the early 1900s have discussed variants of this theory. Margulis put forth the modern version, still controversial but widely accepted, arguing that animal and plant cells first formed through the unification of simpler cells. She has since argued, more controversially, that symbiogenesis ought to be considered a major factor of evolution, influential on a par with selection by competition.

9. ed. – “[T]he endless parade of meaningless interactions and activities in which we are forced to participate: working, paying rent, buying and selling, paying bills, dealing with the presence of cops, bureaucrats, bosses, landlords, etc., etc. [makes us] dependent on the totality of the social order and at the same time transforms us into atoms that mainly seem to bump into each other randomly due to circumstances beyond our control in the meaningless, ceaseless movement of commerce. In the United States, an ideology has grown around this that absurdly goes by the name of “rugged individualism”. The absurdity is dual. First of all this ideology defines “individuality” precisely in terms of this atomized existence in which each one is nothing more than a cipher, equal to and separate from every one else in their nothingness. Secondly, these atomized beings that are the “individuals” of this ideology are made absolutely dependent by a social order that defines their lives as a competition for the same petty ends, thus guaranteeing their ongoing identity and separation. There is certainly nothing rugged in such abject dependence. The aspect of social fragmentation that this ideology seeks to justify – atomization – may play a major part in our inability to create real projects of affinity together that spring from our own lives, particularly if its ideological justification has penetrated into our own ways of conceiving individuality. [...] The concept of individuality that this society imposes stands as a crystalline and pure object outside of all relationships, but real concrete individuality is, in fact, a relationship. I become who and what I am in relation to Esther, Dave, Tiger, Susannah, Mary, Ivy, Anais, Membrane, Brendan, Brandon, Avram, Mandy, the woman at the coffee shop, the preacher in the church my parents made me attend, my parents themselves, the cops, the state, the economy, the technological apparatus, [ed. – and, we must add, non-civilised lifeforms] etc., etc. None of these relationships determines who I am, but all play a role in how I create who I am. A relationship is not a crystalline statue. It is an activity, a movement in course” (Life as Totality).

10. Tucker, Kevin, *Black And Green Forum*.

11. Zerzan, John, “Patriarchy, Civilization, And The Origins Of Gender”.



## 'THE POND'

Individual man [*sic*] has his particular integrity, to be sure. Oak trees, even mountains, have selves or integrities too (a poor word for my meaning, but it will have to do). **To our knowledge, those other forms are not troubled by seeing themselves in more than one way, as man is.** In one aspect the self is an arrangement of organs, feelings, and thoughts – a “me” – surrounded by a hard body boundary: skin, clothes, and insular habits. This idea needs no defense. It is conferred on us by the whole history of our civilization. Its virtue is verified by our affluence. The alternative is a self as a center of organization, constantly drawing on and influencing the surroundings, whose skin and behavior are both soft zones contacting the world instead of excluding it. **Both views are real and their reciprocity significant.** We need both of them to have a healthy social and human maturity.

The second view – that of relatedness of the self – has been given short shrift. Attitudes toward ourselves do not change easily. The conventional image of a man, like that of the heraldic lion, is iconographic; its outlines are stylized to fit the fixed curves of our vision. We are hidden from ourselves by habits of perception. Because we learn to talk at the same time we learn to think, our language, for example, encourages us to see ourselves – or a plant or animal – as an isolated sack, a thing, a contained self. Ecological thinking, on the other hand, requires a kind of vision across boundaries. **The epidermis of the skin is ecologically like a pond surface or a forest soil, not a shell so much as a delicate interpenetration.** It reveals the self ennobled and extended rather than threatened as part of the landscape and the ecosystem, because the beauty and complexity of nature are continuous with ourselves.

And so ecology as applied to man faces the task of renewing a balanced view where now there is a man-centeredness, even a pathology of isolation and fear. It implies that we must find room in “our” world for all plants and animals, *even for their otherness and their opposition.* It further implies exploration and openness across an inner boundary – and ego boundary – and appreciative understanding of the animal in ourselves, which our heritage of Platonism [*ed. – see Symbiogenetic Desire*], Christian morbidity [*ed. – see Return Fire vol.4 pg40*], duality, and mechanism have long held repellent and degrading.

The older countercurrents – relics of pagan myth [*ed. – see 'The Matter of Knowing Who We Are'*], the universal application of Christian compassion, philosophical naturalism, nature romanticism, and pantheism [*ed. – see Return Fire vol.4 pg43*] – have been swept away, leaving only odd bits of wreckage. Now we find ourselves in a deteriorating environments, which breeds aggressiveness and hostility towards ourselves and the world.

How simple our relationship to nature would be if we only had to choose between protecting our natural home and destroying it. Most of our efforts to provide for the natural in our philosophy have failed – run aground on their own determination to work out a peace at arm's length. Our harsh reaction against the peaceable kingdom of sentimental romanticism was evoked partly by the tone of its dulcet façade but also by the disillusion to which it led. Natural dependence and contingency suggest togetherness and emotional surrender to mass behavior and other lowest common denominators. The environmentalists matching culture and geography provoke outrage for their oversimple theories of cause and effect, against the sciences which sponsor them and even against a

natural world in which the theories may or may not be true. Our historical disappointment in the nature of nature has created a cold climate for ecologists<sup>11</sup>, who assert once again that we are limited and obligated. Somehow they must manage in spite of the chill to reach the centers of humanism [*ed. – see Return Fire vol.4 pg40*] and technology, to convey there a sense of our place in a universal vascular system without depriving us of our self-esteem and confidence.

Their message is not, after all, all bad news. Our natural affiliations define and illumine freedom instead of denying it. They demonstrate it better than any dialectic. Being more enduring than we individuals, ecological patterns – spatial distributions, symbioses, the streams of energy and matter and communication – create among individuals the tensions and polarities so different from dichotomy and separateness. The responses, or what theologians call “the sensibilities,” of creatures (including ourselves) to such arrangements grow in part from a healthy union of the two kinds of self already mentioned, one emphasizing integrity, the other relatedness. But it goes beyond that to something better known to twelfth-century Europeans or Paleolithic hunters than to ourselves. **If nature is not a prison and earth a shoddy way-station, we must find the faith and force to affirm its metabolism as our own – or rather, our own as part of it.** To do so means nothing less than a shift in our whole frame of reference and our attitude towards life itself, a wider perception of the landscape as a creative, harmonious being, where *relationships of things* are as real as the things. Without losing our sense of a great human destiny and without intellectual surrender, we must affirm that the world is a being, a part of our own body.

Such a being may be called an ecosystem or simply a forest or landscape. Its members are engaged in a kind of choreography of materials and energy and information, the creation of order and organization. (Analogy to corporate organization here is misleading, for the distinction between social (one species) and ecological (many species) is fundamental.) The pond is an example. Its ecology includes all events: the conversion of sunlight into food and the food chains within and around it, man drinking, bathing, fishing, plowing the slopes of the watershed, drawing a picture of it, and formulating theories about the world based on what he [*sic*] sees in the pond. He and all the other organisms at and in the pond act upon one another, engage the earth and atmosphere, and are linked to other ponds by a network of connections like the threads of protoplasm connecting cells in living tissues. [...] To convert all “wastes” – all deserts, estuaries, tundras, ice fields, marshes, steppes, and moors – into cultivated fields and cities would impoverish rather than enrich life aesthetically, as well as ecologically. [...] Even deserts and tundras increase the planetary opulence. Curiously, only man and possibly a few birds can appreciate this opulence, being the world's travelers. Reduction of this variegation would, by extension then, be an amputation of man.

1. *ed. – As far as institutional ecology goes, we follow Canadian comrades of Knowing the Land is Resistance in “[describing] the mainstream science of ecology as “dominator ecology” to refocus attention on the power relationships created by the practice of science as it is commonly carried out [ed. – see A Green Anarchist Critique of Science]. [...] We need to critique and fight dominator science to create space for us to trust our own experiences again[...] These starting points are: rooted in relationships, deep listening, urban ecology, re-enchanting, and unexpertness.”*



# CLARIFICATION ON THE ATTACK ON THE CGT HEADQUARTERS & ON THE TOPIC OF 'ANONYMOUS DISASSOCIATION'

[ed. – This text deals with events that unfolded during the Spring of 2016, when the introduction of the French Minister of Labour's amendments to the labour laws served as the kick-off for uprisings across that territory, detonating the tensions one street-poster described had been building against "exploitation, state of emergency [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.3 pg5**], all police power, paranoia, virtual life and future promises that look too much like this dreary present". Quickly escaping the control of the unions who had summoned the mobilisations, soon black blocs and rowdy young people (and more) less ostensibly impacted by the specific law changes were heading the demos, fighting cops, trailing destruction and aghast Leftists. **This moment was characterised by some as 'ni loi ni travail'; neither for (or only about) law nor work.**

The union bureaucracy typically (i.e. in a mirror image of the fist-fights in Perpignan with anarchists on May Day 2006) tried to control the movement and physically police its participants. (This isn't reserved for moments of mass rebellion; just months before, as Air France workers chased down bosses effecting redundancies and tore the shirts off their backs, knocking out their two security guards, the union deputy secretary general physically stepped in to protect the targets of their rank-and-file's rage.) **True to form, the union 'demonstration stewards' at demos began handing over 'trouble-makers' to the cops.** Sam FantoSamotnaf pointed out that "[f]ar more than probably anywhere else in the world (other than dictatorships, or semi-dictatorships) the unions in France are very much an intrinsic part of the state and work as a central part of the management of capital. The union question is probably the most central question facing any would-be social movement in France that doesn't want to end up repeating old mistakes and being inevitably defeated. [...] It's vital to know that probably less than 8% of workers are in unions – about 4% less than in 1968. Of course, this is partly due to the huge increase in unemployment, part-time jobs and auto-entrepreneur status since that period. However, like in '68, that doesn't mean they don't have a significant detrimental influence on struggles. [...] **The unions strongly oppose any communication between the more obviously integrated, and usually older, workers and younger proletarians, unemployed or in precarious work, and those destined to become so.** Hence their blatant hostility towards the most radical elements during the struggle – those who smashed things up, particularly the high school students."

Soon the unions themselves found themselves in the firing line for their attacks, as was the case when the Paris headquarters of the CFDT was stormed by a hundred rioters ("it unfortunately was not a surprise", an official lamented: "[in recent weeks] our locals in Bethune, Limoges, and Toulouse were either flooded or damaged") after unions again collaborated fully with police on a day that saw more than a hundred arrests in Paris and a manhunt for radicals. **Of the other organisations involved, one of the more notorious is the CGT (Confederation General de Travail)**, whose 'Force Ouvriere' patrol demos armed with telescopic batons, pick-axe handles, baseball bats and helmets, attacking demonstrators and sabotaging the uprising (just as they did as the 'Service d'Ordre' during the events of May 1968 – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg96**).

"Classes cancelled, wild demonstrations, graffiti, breakage, tear gas, a government under stress and a faculty on strike. Something is on its way to be born. "We" are on our way to be born. To name what is on its way by a name of that which has preceded it is to try to kill it. It would be a process of neutralization to attempt to bring together all that we have seen in the streets since last Wednesday, that which has been bubbling for weeks, the rage that grows all over in the "shadow of the CPE"<sup>1</sup> and all the howls. What could be the relation between the words of the unions and the school kids who tagged "the world or nothing" just before methodically attacking the banks? None. Or just perhaps a miserable attempt at recuperation performed by zombies. Never have the unions or the politicians been so visibly trailing behind a movement. If they are so feverish in their desire to frame everything to their liking it is because everything could very well escape their control. [W]e have taken to the streets and we have been numerous. The organizations have followed us. The risk of not coming on board was too great for them. If they were to stay behind, their mandate would be null and void. Those which they pretend to represent would have taken to the streets without them, without being able to put their banners at the front, without being able to cover our voices with their terrible sound systems, their boorish slogans or their dead & buried discourse. They would have been bared naked." – *The World or Nothing*

1. The CPE was another labor reform bill that sparked intense protests in Spring 2006.

"The secretary-general of the CGT Philippe Martinez had already justified the prohibition of participation in demonstrations sent the day before the demo of 14th June to 130 people (including some CGT members): "It's normal – they are casseurs [hooligans]" he said, judging them on the basis of the police files and not even on any judicial proceedings. [...] In Marseilles, on 12 May, the CGT stewards assaulted with sticks and teargas loads of different demonstrators in order to disperse them. And during the demonstration on 17th May in Paris they charged the protesters who were slow to disperse. Similar abuses have been reported in several other cities" (Sam FantoSamotnaf).

**The day after the CFDT received their trashing, it was the turn of the CGT:** masked individuals broke several doors and windows of the Paris HQ, and "managed to escape the cops thanks to the complicity of the crowd in the street who cheered us and covered our retreat". **What resulted from that attack, a denouncement from an altogether different angle, is the subject of this article.** As was also to be read on the walls of Paris during the months-long insurgency: "We have discovered, or rediscovered, what it means to run across the pavement, to play in spaces where policing controls our every movement. We knew that this society of misery depended on our servitude, and our fear of cops, but we've learned that we are strong enough to overturn it, that they can't prevent us from playing like wild children who destroy everything they pass." The new president imposes an updated version of the law, dubbed "Loi Travail XXL" by opponents; just last month at a protest in Rennes against the new work ordinances, hooded youth swarmed estate agents and damaged a bank (immediately being denounced by the unions organising the event), while a jobcentre in Foix was tagged and had oil poured all over the floor and staircase.

As we have reported on before (see **Return Fire vol.4 pg18**), such unions are a clear enemy on our path, and we celebrate attacks against their structures. But, this aside, why is this event in Paris

still deemed relevant well into the next year, aside from the fact that this specific summary on the (presumably ongoing) situation of denouncement and clandestinity was still previously untranslated? **Because we deem that it composes an ongoing chapter in the debate specifically within the 'anarchist galaxy'; when tactical disagreements can themselves lead to denouncement in the most unfavourable circumstances: in this case over the question of whether making public a claim of responsibility for a destructive act really adds something to its achievement, or rather enters the stage of political spectacle (even if to counter the cops' or media's claims or framing).**

To be clear, we think this to be a worthy topic worth further exploration (and regret that some consider the debate already 'aborted') – but clearly not in the time, tone or format that's outlined as having happened in this case. Also, we have included following the piece an example of a much more fruitful dialogue between anarchists a year later, again in France, and reflecting on themes within the 'Dangerous June' call-out by comrades for an intensification of solidarity with prisoners (and other accused) in Italy. This is how the call-out for that mobilisation in part read: "In particular, active solidarity is an essential instrument to respond to state violence and not take its blows passively but maintain a stance of attack, so as not to develop attitudes of victimisation [ed. – see **Memory as a Weapon; The Origins of Victimisation**], which is what repression wants. Thinking in terms of offensive, of permanent and internationalist conflictuality beyond each one's path, the risk of isolation can be reduced and one of the enemy's most important goals can be made ineffective. To express solidarity with specific contexts and projects doesn't mean to have to conform to the discourses and practices of those who have been struck, nor does it mean to necessarily follow in the wake of a given struggle or practice: if we recognize ourselves in a common horizon we can act in solidarity according to our own individual tension."]



On the night of 24-25th June 2016, comrades from a 'cell among many others' attacked the national headquarters of the CGT union. The action was subsequently claimed to denounce the collaboration of the unions with the police prefecture and in solidarity with the rebel prisoners in France as well as members of the Conspiracy Cells of Fire [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg40*] – the latter individuals now nearing the end of their trial for their alleged escape attempt [ed. – see *Rebels Behind Bars; 'Yet Another Fenced World'*]. **The communique also mentioned that the comrades [who attacked the CGT] were seriously wounded, being hunted by cops, and living in clandestinity.**

On the 25th June 2016 a media furore was underway, and Martinez, representative of the CGT, several ministers, including the Minister of Labour El Khomri, Interior Minister B. Cazeneuve and the Prime Minister M Valls, along with all the representatives of various unions, one by one made public statements of condemnation against the action (which of course comes as no surprise...), stating that police forces would be reinforced to defend the HQ of trade union federations and to find the “visibly well-organised” people responsible for the attack.

Such a political and repressive mobilisation is not explained so much by the level of violence used, as by the target chosen, as the attack was of relatively low intensity (despite being judged to be of unrivaled magnitude by the media).

The comrades effectively showed that it was possible to attack and even enter the headquarters of the most video-surveilled union federation in France, one which was most well-protected by private security as well as by a heightened police presence in these times of social conflict and the state of emergency.

Despite Martinez's claims, the comrades had the opportunity to enter the building in order to further their destructive passions, as illustrated by the photos of the smashed-in door. It's therefore neither the lack of time, nor the security guards, nor the so-called security system that would have been triggered that stopped them.

The same day (25.06.16), **in the midst of the media hype, the anarchist site “Brèves Du Désordre” disassociates itself publicly from the comrades** under the pretext that an action such as this should not be claimed and that they didn't agree with the comrades' perspectives on solidarity.

Here's the brief response made by one of the comrades responsible for the attack following the disassociation (Comment on Indymedia Nantes on 27.06.16):

*“Disassociation?”*

*Disassociation not of the act itself, but of the claim – and so by extension, of the individuals who wrote it: [cettesemaine.info/breves/spjp.php?article1746&lang=fr](http://cettesemaine.info/breves/spjp.php?article1746&lang=fr)*

*The reason given: it's pointless to claim so plain and clear an action, those that don't get it are simply “blind and anaesthetised”.*

*This is then the reason for which our anonymous disassociates consider worth getting into an anti-union tirade – completely relevant as it happens – and which could be well mistaken for a claim itself.*

*Besides, the points made would have certainly been appreciated if the authors hadn't deemed it necessary to paint the comrades who authored the communique with false intentions by suggesting that the use of the word 'treason'<sup>(1)</sup> implied a past complicity with unions targeted.*

*Omitting (voluntarily?) the conditions under which the comrades produced the*

*communique: badly wounded and hunted by cops, without, perhaps, having the time and the opportunity to enter into analysis on the role of unions, absent from the communique – whatever our disassociated friends say.*

*From that moment on it's been very easy, whilst sitting in the warmth behind one's computer, to criticise the communiqués of comrades who, surely for understandable health and safety reasons had to write quickly before parting so as not to leave Martinez's account and the statement of the police prefecture as the sole versions of events.*

*Being in this situation means neither having the time to adhere to stylistic conventions on solidarity, having used the the verb “falloir” ('have to'<sup>(2)</sup>) instead of the acceptable imperative form – as if that changed anything in terms of 'authoritarian language.'*

*Finally, it would have been possible to add this analysis on the role of unions parallel to the communique, as there is no contradiction, without saying to the enemy – even involuntarily – “it wasn't us, look elsewhere”...*

*Perhaps this was also in the pipeline, in a text proposed anonymously and written in a more general way to integrate the act and the responsibility claim to produce a clear analysis. And maybe it would have been agreeable with that proposed in the “Brèves du Désordre” – without ownership, without exclusivity and anonymous.*

*One actor in a 'cell among many others', created for the occasion, that carries no name, but has the practices<sup>(3)</sup>.”*

We emphasise that it's not acceptable to disassociate oneself from comrades on the run, injured and under the fire of the media, with the sole aim of promoting one's own strategy of propagating one's subversive ideas.



The graffiti reads; “we are all 'hooligans'!”

Besides, we are persuaded the debate on anonymity which the partisans against claims of responsibility make out to be over, on the contrary lives on across actions and their communiqués, across messages of solidarity and responses to international calls and proposals that emanates from it, and lives on in all the anonymous acts, **sometimes carried out by the same comrades**, from whom certain purists disassociate themselves once more.

*Complicity with the cell of the ACCA<sup>(4)</sup>, and the CCF, both of*

which equally experienced the wrath of 'anonymous disassociation' in the most difficult times.

A special wink to the anarcho-nihilist commando 'Gianfranco Bertoli' [ed. – see **Memory as a Weapon; The Origins of Victimisation**] of the FAI/FRI [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg44**] and the anarchist cell "Les Casseurs", who take material action with fire in complicity – among others – with the 'rebels in France'.<sup>[5]</sup>

A nod equally to all those, anonymous or not, who act in reality through destruction, fire, the propagation of ideas in all ways imaginable without ever disassociating from comrades under the fire of repression.

Through informal organisation and polymorphous action, let's spread chaos!

**some anarchists,  
today anonymous....**

1. ed. – The communique read "One hundred detainees because of the union betrayal".

2. ed. – The communique read "[solidarity with] the comrades of the CCF who want to escape. WE MUST HELP THEM."

3. Practices of attack and clandestinity, not of some sort of exclusivity or imagined ownership. [ed. – footnote in original post]

4. ed. – As part of Black December 2015 (see **Return Fire vol.4 pg64**) this group bombed a police training centre (also used by cops from other states) in Brescia, Italy; comrades Juan and Manu are under investigation over the act.



Bordeaux, France: CFTD office heavily fire-damaged a week after the events in Paris

5. ed. – Two attacks took place the same month as the CGT smashing; the first torching a van of French insurance company AXA in the centre of Athens (clarifying that it was not in solidarity "with the unions that try to manipulate the revolt to satisfy their own interest"), the second fire set against vehicles at Peugeot-Citroën dealership in Thessaloniki: "For almost four months the unrest continues in Paris and other cities of the French territory over a proposed new labour law, despite the intensifying control and repression in response to the recent ISIS attacks [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.3 pg5**] and in view of the Euro tournament. The struggle is manifested by all means, from occupations of squares, theatres, factories, to attacks against banks, stores, and large-scale clashes with cops."

## **Grenoble: incendiary attack targeting 12 vehicles of energy company ERDF / Enedis**

The most deadly enterprises are strategically adorned with new names. Suez becomes Engie, Vinci becomes Indigo, ERDF becomes Enedis [ed. – all energy and techno-industrial utility firms]. These changes of appearance do not miraculously deceive. **In a world where communication falsifies everything, let us frankly expose those responsible for the organized disaster.** ERDF works on the constant electrification of our territories. ERDF is deployed between each production site and consumer home. It is this network, this mesh of cables that plug human beings into dams, wind turbines, photovoltaics and nuclear power plants. EDF, alter-ego of ERDF administers doses of energy control bureaucracy. We will not discuss the insignificant distinctions that others like to make between the industrial modes of electrical production. We condemn them all.

Let us explain the night we destroyed the ERDF vehicles: We had firefighters in our pockets, a few liters of flammable material and our determination, sabotage then became necessary for us knowing the evidence against one of the thousands of avatars of the capitalist infrastructure.

*Due to the vital function of this company in flow management.*

*Due to the environmental devastation caused where EHT [extra-high-tension] power lines run [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.4 pg90**].*

*Due to our acute addiction to the electrical industry.*

Added to this is the small but very harmful device, the Linky [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.4 pg36**]. The dangers of this meter have already been explained by others who are more knowledgeable than us. The Linky is just a prelude, a pioneering device in the new wave of domesticating technology that is coming. Domotics [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg63**] is progressing, the old cybernetic dream is embodied [ed. – see the supplement to **Return Fire vol.4; Caught in the Net**]. **Let us not stop here, let us go back to its roots, to the genesis of nuisances.** Behind the Linky lies the omnipresent industry and the logical dispossession of the material means to produce our own energy.

It's about attacking, and the targets are many. We are attacking those who are responsible for the present state of the world. **We are opportunists. Why this target rather than another?** Vinci, Suez, Eiffage [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.4 pg60**] and the CEA<sup>[1]</sup> are all enemies. There are others too. Their arrogance is unbearable. We look for weaknesses, seeking where to strike to remind them that people resist and turn their criticism into action.

We wish to share this practice of sabotage. It is old but it is still current. It is putting a wrench in the cogs of the machine. We are aware that the ERDF and their misdeeds will not be stopped by our action. But we are aware that without offensive actions against it, ERDF is free to expand its grip.

It is not a question of dialogue or criticism of ERDF. With the sabotage of these vehicles we attack an enemy, we establish a balance of power, and we demonstrate that we can overcome our fears. Because it is no longer possible for us to contemplate misery by dressing our wounds or simply doing nothing. **But sabotage is not an end in itself. This practice is just one of many others in our lives.** We choose them in order to fully live our lives.



"Linky fuck off": tag in Limoges by where women of Des Élus Contre les Compteurs LINKy (People Against Linky Meters) burned 20 Enedis vehicles, 23.10.17

## **Crest: incendiary attack against the offices of energy company Enedis**

### **A Proposal for Dialogue, Solidarity & Attack**

As individuals, it is difficult to speak of solidarity because we do not want to express it as a group, but to individuals whose feelings we feel would be sufficiently close to establish a dialogue.

We feel in solidarity with people who, through their actions and their discourse, seem to convey a will to fight in the here and now against power in all its forms.

For us the most sincere way of supporting individuals in revolt is to revolt ourselves and to attack. That people who consider themselves potential accomplices to be transmitted by force can allow our ethics and passions to guide our actions and not the fear and resignation brought about by repression.

Through the attack we want to break the isolation and express our anger and sadness. In times where distances are no longer counted, we reaffirm offensive and irrecoverable positions.

We believe that if we want to sharpen practices and critiques it can be interesting to share, to confront others. We are not interested in the idea of producing ideas labelled 'anarchist' that everyone can accept and adapt to their local discourse or context. We like the dissent and conflict that allow us to take a stand. We are as disgusted by the omnipresent apathy as we are deeply moved by the beauty of those who revolt without waiting for either objective conditions or the favourable social ground or the strategic moment. Our choices will never be convenient since they are always in motion. We have no one to convince, nor any desire to wait until we have a thousand plans, only the desire to meet other accomplices in the impatient and irrepressible urge to fight.

**The attack can take many forms and for us the interpersonal dominations must be at least as much attacked as this existent which chokes us.** We do not want to focus on one another. We reject this logic and want to make each aspect of our insubordination visible. In support therefore with those who take action in the face of repression, in their affections, their friendships, their sexualities.

*We do not live in the past, we do not want hope for the future; our revolts have no future, so they can not be postponed until tomorrow.*

Even if we advocate conflict, **we think that debates about praxis have all to often crystallized around polarized positions that do not reflect the complexity of the points of view.** We reject consensus at all costs but do not want to participate in a dogmatic struggle. We are really excited by the idea that attacks are varied and we are not satisfied with certain debates (recurring signatures or not, for example). Even if it seems really important to us to communicate our actions and we do not find ourselves in [anonymous?] insurrectional perspectives, we do not feel the desire to break with people whose attacks are part of this goal.

We respond to the call for a Dangerous June because it expresses these nuances well<sup>[2]</sup>.

During the night on Thursday [June 8th] we penetrated within the enclosure of the ENEDIS building in Crest, supplier of the energy that allows in particular this world of shit to turn. We spilled 10 liters of gasoline and lit it with hand-held lighters (we had a plan B in case the lighters failed). **10 liters of gasoline made a breath of fresh air. When the grille was put back in place, the building was in the grip of the flames. We learned later that they had largely devastated it.**

A little thought for the incendiaries of Grenoble; we found your method of attack and communicating particularly relevant. Your critique is very well articulated, we could not have done as well. But we want to take advantage of the opportunity to raise a few points, and thus participate in the creation of a dialogue through attack.

We share your observation about the nuisance of technology. Nevertheless it is only one aspect of the new forms of domination. For us, at the genesis of these nuisances there is civilization itself. **So we do not want to attack technology as one of the excesses of the system, which we could transform / replace, but as one of the aspects of the domestication of life.**

We do not want to be content with a criticism of capitalism but to challenge the very concept of society (as fair and egalitarian). We are against all societies because they can not exist without the submission of the living beings that they are composed of. Whether it is through smartphones, Linky counters but also via work, family, culture, morals, justice, the exploitation of fauna and flora...

To fight against technology, it seems necessary for us to question the process of domestication that makes us civilized beings [ed. – see *'The Matter of Knowing Who We Are'*]. We wanted this kind of critique to be a kind of interpersonal

discussion, and to share it with you. So we can always find new angles of attack, new weaknesses, new targets.

*The joy we felt that night, we want to share it with others.*

*To Krèm, because he always knew how to keep silent.*

*To Kara, because even if she did not know how to keep silent, she had the courage to go back on those statements.*

*To Damien, because his words and his determination give us strength [ed. – regarding all three of these cited individuals, see **Rebels Behind Bars; New Accusations After Damien Kidnapped & Beaten**].*

*To the Brussels anarchists who face an anti-terrorist trial for having fought without mediation against all the prisons [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.4 pg68**].*

*To the accused of Scripta Manent [ed. – see **Rebels Behind Bars; A Letter from Anarchist Comrade Anna Beniamino about Operation Scripta Manent & More...**], who refuse to take on the role of victims.*

*To Nicola Gai and Alfredo Cospito [ed. – **ibid.**] who have been able to take firm positions despite the risks, and who have given themselves the means of their ambitions.*

To those who want to fly away even if they burn their wings.

### **Konspiration d'Individualités Complices et Kaotiques (K.I.C.K.)**

[Conspiracy of Complicit Individuals and Chaotics]

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1. ed. – *The Atomic Energy Committee, created in Grenoble in 1945 to build the atomic bomb, going on to nuclear submarines, reactors and aircraft carriers, regularly polluting the Isere river with radioactivity. In collaboration with the French military the CEA founded the nearby Minatoc – see **Return Fire vol.4 pg38**.*

2. ed. – *From the call-out: "In this respect, we recognize the importance of multiform actions and practices within anarchism. Precisely because the more differences that exist in a context, the stronger the possibility of not getting stuck on pre-arranged dogmatic positions, provided that any specific struggle and attack is part of the wider view of tension towards subversion. To recognize the value of this diversity also means to lay the foundations for opposing all centralizing and dominating tendencies within anarchism. This is only possible through an attitude of constant self-criticism and critique between the different approaches, an attitude that goes towards qualitatively significant growth of both analysis of what surrounds us and the various possible ways to organize the destruction of what oppresses us."*

# NANOTECHNOLOGY & TRANSPARENCY

[ed. – Various mainstream press, with comments by the collator, mostly concerning 'nano-silver'. The industry, sensing negative image, has changed tactics from initially promoting nano-tech components in products on sale or in production a decade ago, and entered a phase of relative media silence on its uses. Meanwhile the same institutions that sung praises on the 'safety' of asbestos, industrial food, the Dalka shield, atomic energy, etc. continue to release their creations into the environment. Indeed the second translation presented here especially shows the cynical 'introduce the product and see what happens later' attitude that leaves us all as their consumers in techno-industrial society; whether we bought them or not. **To a certain extent the laboratories could misleadingly be seen as the source of the problem when for more than half a century it's already been daily life and the whole world that has become the field of experimentation.**

Of course, we offer a few words regarding the media sources reprinted here, which require the usual reading between the lines for subversives to make into their own tools (or not, as the case may be). These words have to do with the archetypal State-subjectified 'concerned citizen', infantilised despite delusions of 'inclusion', that these articles were no doubt first written to 'inform', and the sterile so-called 'dialogue' within civil society over these technologies (as before with genetic engineering, nuclear, etc.). Some 'Notes on Technological Domination & the Myth of the Citizen' put it like this: "Since they will never be able to make any decisions by themselves, for the citizen everything is transformed into a mere object of knowledge that is to be endlessly studied. **That is why they will only accept debates that are stripped of all practical implications.** The "debate" in effect constitutes the privileged framework of civil society effusiveness: pleased that their dissatisfaction has been submitted for review, they listen religiously to the tranquilizing words of the experts who reveal to them the indispensable "objectivity" of their accredited Ph.D. knowledge; the more progress they make towards the illusory acquisition of this knowledge, the more they think that the time has come to commit to a comprehensive and fully justified decision. At the very moment when their certainty seems most fixed, however, they are once again seized by their sickly lack of resolve, and they collapse scorned and despondent in the ditch of their specific uncertainty. For they will never want to reach a conclusion.

[...] And when, during the debate at La Villette, it was announced that the development of GMOs [Genetically-Modified Organisms] is an indispensable last resort if Europe does not want to lose ground economically to the United States, they displayed their apathy with regard to what was clearly nothing but a decree. **Because they renounce all use of their will and discernment, the citizen, at the same time that their masters show that they are ready to face all challenges, is logically reduced to the need to tolerate everything.**" Engaged in false (or at best partial) 'debate' with science and industry you can find all kinds of NGOs, consumer groups, more-or-less 'green' political parties, and the other civil opposition that in most other aspects goes hand-in-hand with the



world of states, multinationals and their innovations. (And as far as the questions raised in these articles about 'regulation' go, it's enough to read from a 1978 guidebook for corporate executives: "Regulatory policy is increasingly made with the participation of experts, especially academics. A regulated firm or industry should be prepared whenever possible to co-opt these experts. This is most effectively done by identifying the leading experts in each relevant field and hiring them as consultants and advisors, or giving them research grants and the like. This activity requires a modicum of finesse; it must not be too blatant, for the experts themselves must not recognize that they have lost their objectivity and freedom of action.")

Increasingly today, this citizenist form finds itself not so much disturbed as complimented by another rising trend: catastrophism. Much has already been said about possible nano-induced disasters, available with a simple web search. While the well-known precipice Western allopathic medical science has brought us to regarding the near-obsolescence of antibiotics from their rampant use and corresponding resistance-building (to take one example) finds resonances with the immunity-building responses to anti-bacterial nanosilver mentioned below, in the same breath the scientist-prophets sell us the CO2 emission reduction promised by nanotechnology, hence heading off another catastrophic horizon... **Catastrophism can shore up the State via justifying 'climate security measures' in military (see Return Fire vol.3 pg7) as well as scientific terms** when it is divorced from any subversive horizon, and basing our critiques solely on 'health' or 'environmental' concerns fares little better in terms of leaving the door open to recuperation by the next expert and their 'solutions'.

**While we won't discredit the more dramatic threats sometimes painted (rather, acknowledging that the terrain it bases its arguments upon is not our own), these articles address the mundane, everyday appearance of nano-tech in our lives.** And it is exactly in this way that we come to the heart of the matter for us. Within an certain scientific paradigm (a dominant one, despite the protestations of some individual scientists powerless to affect the impact of scientific-universalist thinking on culture), the dream is still that articulated by Francis Bacon (see the supplement to **Return Fire vol.3; Smarter Prison?**) in his utopian work 'New Atlantis': "the Knowledge of causes, and the secret motions of things; and the enlarging of the bounds of human empire, to the effecting of all things possible." (On how literally he pushed the imperial part of that, see **Return Fire vol.3 pg31.**) That same "effecting of all things possible", the impulse to realise all that is

technically feasible, creates the ideology that we call techno-totalitarianism, and is materialised in the world today as the converging sciences (nano-, bio-, informatic, robotic, they cannot be separated) aim to equip the system to produce anything anywhere, fabricating more durable products (of interchangeable parts rather than requiring exclusively important substances), made from less materials... In other words, to continue the industrial nightmare **we already are and have been experiencing** beyond and above the crises it has provoked, as others have said before eloquently enough (see **Return Fire vol.4 pg73**). Hence, we have reason enough to assault the ideologies and structures of these sciences – as exemplified in the chronology we have added to the text below – aside from any technical hair-splittings, before any 'disaster'.

Finally, big thanks to Cicada for the additional translation help!]

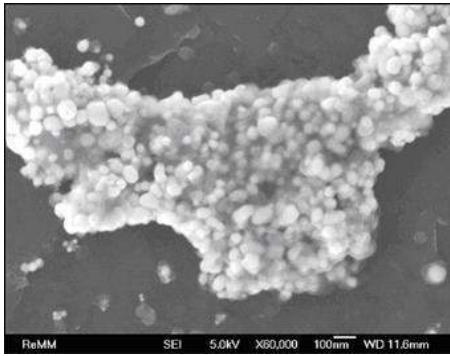
## 1st Translation: From WOZ N°22

*"The industry is producing more and more consumer goods containing nanosilver. But most of these consumer goods are neither useful nor sensible. If anything, they are only a threat to the environment." – De Franziska Meister*

A silence has fallen on the clamor surrounding nanotechnologies. New materials with new properties are diffuseable thanks to tiny, highly reactive nanoparticles. Where have these new materials ended up?

**The answer is surprising: nanomaterials have been present in our daily lives for a long time;** in fact, they have penetrated the most intimate spheres. For example, nanosilver. With it, we wash up, we brush our teeth, we anoint our armpits, our face, and all over the body in the most intimate areas; we dress with it, from socks to underwear to slippers. We use it to cook and package food. **Because nanosilver disinfects, it kills fungi, bacteria, and other microorganisms.** Meat is kept fresh longer under a film of nanosilver; it sterilizes the dishes; our socks do not stink; we do not stink.

The hygiene industry is big business. Globally, no other nanomaterial is used in as many consumer goods as nanosilver. In recent years, the rate of use has been very high and growing like never before seen. The estimated annual worldwide use of nanosilver surpasses thirty tons; in Switzerland, the annual production is of about three tons, a third of which is used in the textile industry alone. In Europe, this means that, after Germany, Switzerland is the second largest producer of nanosilver for textiles.



However, doing business based on our hygienic demands has its downside. An increasing number of studies have shown that, albeit at different speeds, nanosilver can become completely washed out. According to EMPA, the Federal Institute for Testing and Materials Research, it is sufficient for certain fabrics to be washed a few times in the washing machine to remove the nanosilver. Even nanosilver surfaces immediately lose their anti-rotting properties which are supposed to keep parasites away; in fact, according to a Swiss study, about 30% of nanosilver was in the sewer after one year, and after two and a half years the nanosilver was absent.

### What Happens in the Water?

Often, much of the nanosilver from consumer goods ends up in the water system: through the sewage pipes, it ends up in purification facilities, or is fed directly into lakes and rivers. And this is a problem, primarily because the active principle of nanosilver is based on the fact that in aqueous solutions the silver ions are isolated. The true toxic effect on bacteria comes from these ions and does not stop even against other aquatic organisms. *"We have tested nanosilver particles of different sizes in different coatings,"* says one researcher at the ETH (Federal Polytechnic of Zurich), **"the result was always the same: silver ions of nanoparticles have an acute toxic effect on algae."** And algae are always at the beginning of the aquatic food chain [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.4 pg24*].

Under the national research program "Opportunities and Risks of Nanomaterials," her team examines the effect of nanosilver particles on aquatic communities, such as algae, moulds, and microorganisms, in the real world. *"We observed a great susceptibility of algae to silver ions,"* says the researcher.

In the long run, communities of some moulds and some fungi would change into another variety. Investigations of such complexity are so far rare, as are studies of multiple generations of aquatic organisms – meanwhile, nanosilver's potential environmental dangers cannot be assessed without these studies, the researcher points out.

But to what extent does nanosilver truly penetrate the environment? There is no reliable data on this, among other things, because it is very difficult to detect the nanoparticles in the environment and measure their quantity. However, a colleague of the researcher was able to show in a recent study that certain purification facilities can retain about 95 per cent of nanosilver. Once in the discharge water, one part of the nanoparticles is transformed into saline silver sulphide. *"Thanks to this [process], its toxicity drops a lot, because it emits almost no silver ion,"* the researcher

explained. *"Our initial concerns were just that, while still having antibacterial properties, nanosilver particles would be harmful to the residue."*

**In fact, several studies have shown that nanoparticles continue to be active even in the residue where they obstruct the work of the nitrifying bacteria in charge of eliminating toxic substances from the water. If, unlike in Switzerland, these residues are not burned but instead are spread onto the fields as fertilizer, the results may be even more toxic, according to a US-based study. "By doing these experiments, nanosilver is poured directly into the residue," says the researcher. "These experiments cannot be equated to the real conditions, because the silver nanoparticles have a history, which starts already in the sewage pipes."**

"[Nanotechnology] creates new 'products' actually starting from the manipulation of atoms, subatomic particles and molecules. Unlike biotechnology that manipulates the structure of DNA, creating organisms through the recombination of genes, nanotechnology 'breaks down' matter transforming it into atoms with the possibility of artificially synthesizing them and thus of creating something material from nothing (atom by atom). At the moment, attention is focused on carbon atoms, the skeleton of matter, but soon it could be extended to other elements. In short, scientists would like to control the elements of the Periodic Table at will; according to science, this would allow combining the characteristics of a product (such as color, resistance, melting point) in a manner completely different from what has been possible up to now. For example, the enterprises that deal with nanotechnology have tested new products such as stainproof fabrics, self-cleaning windows, cement with special characteristics, anti-pollutants for diesel, etc. [...] But the applications unfurled before the great public are just shoddy goods, useless innovations to satisfy infantile desires generated by technology in the 'consumer'. And, in fact, the applications described above for the manipulation of matter turn out to be just the tiniest part of the results sought in current research projects. [...] But as always, every fear, and not just those that are most absurd, is set aside in the name of progress to the benefit of humanity. Furthermore, the world of science has always been defended by maintaining that the misdeeds of techno-science are due to the bad uses that have been made of the knowledge; by maintaining, as always, that technology is neutral, just as those who, with their studies of nuclear science, then fully contributed to the bombs that fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to the tragedies of nuclear accidents and to the proliferation of armaments, were quick to say. It is certainly not by allowing the usual experts from the same academic-political world the only say in the matter that we will be able to resolve such questions. Nor will we be able to do so by placing our trust in the information arising from the scientific world since one of its current prerogatives is to openly make people accept the new technological applications of scientific research. In reality, its transparent information merely communicates decisions to us that have already been made in our names and over our heads and discloses the results of research that has already been carried out. Who knows if in the case of nanobiotechnology, as already happened with biotechnology, those who claim to oppose it will once again venture into demands for regulation, precautionary rules, independent structures of control. Then the story will end just as it did for biotechnology: a minimal opposition to applications related to food with arguments easily recuperable (and recuperated) by a part of the scientific clique, with transgenic food that already makes part of our daily diet. No opposition at all to medical biotechnology that is rather looked upon by all as a great opportunity for sick people. And these things are really what the entire apparatus that has everything to gain from biotechnology focuses on: no more debate on GMOs in the dietary field, no more alarmism, no more news, despite the fact that there are still people who want to struggle, opposing the harm with the only possible solution: destruction." – *The Nano-Nightmare*

### Attention: multi-resistant bacteria!

Speaking of history: how harmless is it if each day we treat our body with nanosilver cosmetics and we wear it in our antimicrobial underwear? The federal office states in its Nanomaterials and Health Information Platform that nanosilver cannot be presumed as a danger to human beings.

Meanwhile, in Germany, the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment is more prudent. **It presents studies on animals that show damage to the intestinal flora caused by large doses of nanosilver, accumulated in the liver and spleen where it attacked the immune system cells.** Only because of some unique cases reported up until now can it be inferred that there is certain potential toxicity even for humans, especially with the intake of pharmaceutical drugs containing nanosilver. *“Unfortunately, we still know too little about the potential harmful effects on health that nanosilver could have,”* stated a researcher after an international conference of experts held in February, 2012. *“So, now, we are not able to evaluate the health risk for the consumer.”* The German institute is concerned, above all, about the danger that wide-spread nanosilver applications through products of daily use poses: it could lead to the extensive formation of resistance to antibiotics. Thus, the extensive use of nanosilver could become a dangerous boomerang for the human being.

This is exactly what was shown in a recent study by Australia’s University of New South Wales: in that experiment, nanosilver effectively killed the proposed bacteria, *escheria coli*, which is one of the most responsible bacteria for causing infectious diseases. However, **at the same time it caused aggressive growth of some vaciiform bacteria, and these are not only resistant to silver ions, but can diffuse even faster in the air, while transmitting their resistant properties to other microorganisms.**

*“The antimicrobial effect of the nanosilver does not work with all bacteria,”* says one researcher, *“and if consumer goods containing nanoparticles are diffused increasingly over the long term, opposite effects could take place.”* This is especially fearsome for the health sector, where resistant germs have been found in nanosilver applications, for example in skin flora after having used it for treating burns.

Also for this reason, the German Institute explicitly renounces the use of nanosilver in “widely consumed products.” In particular, it views critically the continuous diffusion of fabrics containing this active antimicrobial substance.

### More Harm Than Good

*“Many products containing nanosilver are*

*in circulation,”* says one researcher, *“and they will become more and more numerous. Is it really justifiable?”* The researcher expressed doubts about the alleged antimicrobial effect on clothing. *“Nanosilver is very dynamic and unstable,”* he warns, and indicates the studies; they’ve demonstrated that in normal lab air nanosilver particles totally sulfurize after only two weeks, at which point they no longer emit silver ions. Even with air at 50-60% humidity they transform quickly. *“The antimicrobial effect could also swiftly deflate by simply wearing treated clothing,”* says the researcher.

This begs the question: who will change their own washing habits for antibacterial clothing alone? Who would wear their nanosilver-plated underwear for one week instead of a day? According to the researcher, *“You should leave the decision up to the consumer of whether or not they want these fabrics. And for this to work, you absolutely need labelling.”*

The EU has decided: since the summer of 2017, cosmetics (and since 2014, food products) must include a note of some kind. The German Institute promises that with the revision of the EU Order on Biocides, even textiles produced with nanosilver must have a label.

And in Switzerland? The Federal Council wants to examine labeling.

“Nanomaterials: Effects on the Environment and on Health,” a new study being conducted right now by an evaluation center for effects of technology, recommends the introduction of mandatory labeling and statements “in the sectors of mass consumption.” It also suggests a ban on circulating the “non-specific use of nanosilver in consumer goods.”

*Numbered days for microbial underwear?*

### 2nd translation:

*according to the NZZ [Swiss Neue Zürcher Zeitung] from May 31, 2013; does not seem to be the same “Center...” mentioned above...*

### Unnecessary Nano Moratorium

Nanoparticles offer great opportunities for product improvement, but can they can put

“Switzerland is internationally seen as an oasis of uncontaminated nature, at least in the tourist sector. Mountains, woods and springs from which fresh clean water gushes out. Clearly, tourism is as sneaky a form of marketing as it is schizophrenic, because while it boasts of uncontaminated valleys it forgets other small details: Beznau, the nuclear power plant with its 47 years of radioactive waste production – and its disposal is at present unknown; the Basel pharmaceutical district with its aquifers and soil pollution following decades of chemical and pharmaceutical industry activities (some of them owned by politicians in the Swiss government); the fertilizers, herbicides and ‘phytosanitary’ chemical treatment constantly sprayed, without which modern conventional agriculture can’t survive; the sites of the multinationals (from Nestlé to Novartis), which have more skeletons than money in their closets; the highways that give us huge quantities of CO, O3, NO2, SO2, C6H6, PM10, PM2.5 and much more disgusting stuff. In other words, this is no happy island. There’s no river or breath of air that doesn’t contain toxic chemical substances and the functioning of techno-industrial society requires that these substances be constantly transported throughout Europe. [...] Industrial progress has put us in the situation of living our lives in environments colonized by the needs of the market economy and techno-industrial society. Air is becoming ever less breathable and ‘green areas’ are disappearing in order to make space for advancing urbanization.”



– Between Militarisation & Risk Propaganda

health and the environment at risk? In spite of everything, there is no need for action on the part of the legislator.

The emergence of a new technology usually raises the request for a moratorium. This is the case with nanotechnology, which works with tiny particles. Above all, the NGO, ETC Group, is fighting for an immediate moratorium on the commercial production of nanomaterials. Not sharing this view is the Center for Evaluation of the Effects of Technology (TA-Swiss), who conducted a large study on nanomaterials’ effects on the environment and on health with funding from the Federal Environment Office.

*“A moratorium would be counterproductive at this point,”* said Professor Emeritus of Medicine, Peter Gehr. *“The level of knowledge of how human, animal, and*

plant cells react to nanomaterials has improved over the years. Although there have been some "critical knowledge gaps," little is known about possible long-term effects on human health and the environment. For this reason, it would be necessary to continue the research on the risks, but alarmism would be out of place," Gehr said. "A moratorium would not solve existing problems. An ethically responsible risk management would be decisive. Opportunities for nanomaterials should be exploited only when new risks are considered to be reasonably acceptable for the person exposed to it. Nanoproducts that could be viewed as toxic could be limited, but it would also be a risk to not take advantage of this new technology's opportunity," Gehr said.

Martin Moller, who leads the study, sees opportunities in the climate protection field, for example. He believes that the use of nanomaterials could reduce the material and energy requirements for producing common goods, and, therefore, contribute to the reduction of CO2 emissions. Moreover, he believes a research center for the gravity of climate and nanotechnology should be initiated here.

**In Switzerland, large-scale industrial nanomaterials are not produced, but they are already diffused in other ways, for example: in paints and varnishes for protection against ultraviolet rays; as sunscreens; as an antimicrobial additive in textiles and foodstuffs; in tennis rackets and in bicycle frames; and, as an adjuvant for the fluidity of food.** However, it is almost never made visible to the consumer where these nanomaterials are contained. Ta-Swiss, whose job it is to advise policy, therefore recommends introducing mandatory information and labeling obligations for consumer products, such as cosmetics and food. Consideration should also be given to the introduction of a "nano product registry." But a "Lex Nano" [Nano Law] would not be necessary. The compatibility of legislation and EU rules would have to be monitored.

### 3rd translation:

From the Swiss newspaper "Landbote". [This "study," or rather, this clutch of federal techno-totalitarian state propaganda, typical of scientific, political, industrial, and NGO gangs in Swiss style, can be found as an E-Book at [vdf.ethz.ch](http://vdf.ethz.ch). Always with the same ingredients: omissions; lies; incredible contortions of logic; the threat of "Well, it's us who decide" on the "opportunities" for health and the environment; "anyway, nanomaterials are here and that's that;" "let us

deceive ourselves with democratising labeling..." etc. And, watch out to not disturb these great humanitarian and democratic benefactors, even if it had only to do with that pseudodemocratic legislative theater of a moratorium. (Marco's note.)]

### Nanoproducts: Soon, More Transparency?

Nanomaterials promise lighter-weight bikes, socks that do not stink, and even lower [!] CO2 emissions. But those tiny particles can be dangerous to health and the environment. A study by TA-Swiss reveals some knowledge gaps. "There is little transparency on what products contain nanomaterials," Martin Moller, director of the Institute for Applied Ecology in Fribourg im Breisgau, said in front of the media yesterday. Although Switzerland does not produce nanoproducts on an industrial scale, it works with them in large quantities.

The research center for the evaluation of the effects of technology (TA-Swiss) summarises what is known about the effects of "nano particles" on the environment and health. From those it draws recommendations for politics, industry, and science.

According to the study, in Switzerland there are eight nanomaterials that are produced or worked with in large quantities. Among them are zinc and titanium oxide for UVA protection in colour paints and sunscreens; nanosilver with antibacterial effect for fabrics and food preparations; silicon oxide to facilitate the fluidity of tires; nanocarbon fibers for bicycle frames and tennis rackets. **Nano particles are composed of metal, or even carbon, with particles ranging from just one to 100 nanometers – about 1,000 times finer than a human hair.** Their size allows them particular characteristics which can be useful, though also harmful.<sup>[1]</sup>

### May Have Carcinogenic Effect

For humans, inhalation into the lungs would be especially problematic, according to Peter Gehr of the Institute of Anatomy at the University of Bern. At high concentrations, certain nanocarbon tubes and titanium oxide could be carcinogenic. "The long-term effects of nanoparticles are, in practice, unknown and should be examined," Gehr said. But alarmism would also be out of place, although there may be a need for public awareness, as certain nanoparticles would indeed be potentially dangerous.

These nanoparticles also escape into the environment, like with titanium oxide in sunscreens or nanosilver in fabrics. At very high doses it has been proven to cause damage to aquatic organisms, explained eco-toxicologist Kristin Schirmer of the Eawag Aquatic Research Institute. But the long-term effects in this case are not examined and remain virtually unknown. **In practice, according to the study, it would never be made visible to the consumer which products contain nanomaterials.** The labeling requirements are not uniform, although the EU proposed a definition as early as 2011. "Consumers currently cannot exercise their freedom of choice because of a lack of information," criticized the Romanda Huma Khamis consumer organization. Therefore, the study recommends greater market transparency for the consumer with a product registry and mandatory labeling. Additionally, it proposes a national research center on the effects of nanomaterials. The question of residue/waste disposal should also be resolved.

*[Technoscientific totalitarianism candidly announces the inevitable catastrophe that is ongoing and hypocritically evokes a lack of "freedom" of choice due to a lack of "information" on the part of the consumer, in order to – with the typical, stupid arrogance of power, as the former deserves – implicitly declare that it is about the introduction of "technological innovations..." (Marco's note.)]*

### 4th translation:

An article from the NZZ, "Swiss Economic Forum, Technology."

*[From the same NZZ issue, an article titled "Research and Technique" informs us that nanoparticles are on "swimming spots and fields," and "how researchers notice," or, rather, fail to notice, "carbon nanotubes, nanosilver, and other tiny particles in the environment." And they admit that, "concerning the amount of nanomaterials produced on an industrial scale in water, in the field, and in the air, as of yet almost nothing is known."*

*Epecially because "nano-environmental analysis is still in its infancy," and "there are no methods of study;" but, "don't worry... we will think of something." We cannot avoid mentioning the typical compound exercise of minimization coupled with announcements of inevitability concerning "our" samples of techno-*



Professor Gehr, false nano-critic



**totalitarianism. Case in point: the researcher, Thomas Bucheli of the Agroscope research institute of Zurich, responsible for open-field GMO experiments... Simultaneously, he comforts us by stating that the nanoparticles in the environment would still be almost non-existent, while also threatening us with the facts that “a growing number of patents” (most likely including some of his own) “indicate that carbon nanotubes, titanium nanoxide, and the like, in the future could also be used as active ingredients in fertilizers and in pesticides, for example as a carrier substance or as UV-protection.” And then, the inevitably high dose of hypocrisy: “Given the scarce knowledge of these environmental effects, Bucheli warns against the large-scale use of long-term stable nanomaterials.” (Marco’s note.)]**

**“Small and medium-sized enterprises are pioneers in nanotechnology. The nanotechnology market is booming. Whether in sunscreens, computer chips, or repellent coatings, more and more Swiss companies are using nanotechnology for their products.” – Alex Hammerli**

Innovations from the laboratories are having an increasing impact in our daily lives.

Since the invention of the tunneling microscope in the 1980s by IBM researchers and Nobel Laureates, Gerd Binnig and Heinrich Rohrer, at Ruschlikon near Lake Zurich, hundreds of products with nano properties have made their way into mass production – almost always in a stealthy manner in relation to the general public. **Meanwhile, Switzerland has a leading role in the nanotechnology market. According to Heinz Muller, an expert on patents for chemistry and biotechnology at the Federal Institute**

**for Intellectual Property in Bern, every year since 2006 there have been about 10-15 nano inventions per million inhabitants (with about 8 million inhabitants in Switzerland, that means 80-120 patents per year). Thus, Switzerland ranks first in the world – followed by Japan, Germany, and USA.** Now, more than 600 companies here [ed. – by now surely more] produce or work with nanomaterials in order to achieve greater diffusion in the treatment of materials and surfaces. One example is found with the company Schoeller de San Gallo. They produce a fabric called Nanosphere with the so-called lotus effect (water drips from clothing while taking away dirt) for companies like Levis and Black Diamond. Another company that focuses on nanotechnology is Solothurnm's Spring Pharma. They quietly and successfully sell Daylong brand sunscreens, which contain nanoparticles of titanium oxide. Those tiny solar particles reflect the sunlight as if they were billions of tiny mirrors. Even larger particles have this same effect, but nanoparticles can produce more fluid and transparent creams.

A third story of nano success is SwissLitho. Using IBM's so-called Nano-Frazer technology, they've developed a device that can produce three-dimensional nanostructures. The heart of that technology is an extremely sharp and resistant silicon tip which can withstand up to 500 degrees of heat. With this technology, it is possible to not only produce smaller-sized chips for computers, but also to produce new electronic or optical chips [ed. – see the supplement to **Return Fire vol.3; Smarter Prison?**].

### **Unbridled Growth**

The latest figures from the US market analyst, BCC Research, show that the

success stories described above are not isolated cases, in fact they reflect a trend: the volume of the global nanotechnology market has grown only in the last year from \$600 million to a total of \$20.7 billion. By 2017, sales should already be at \$48.9 billion [ed. – and expected to grow another 17% between 2017 and 2024] – that is, an annual commercial growth of 18.7%.

Equally optimistic are the statements made in the “Swiss Nanotechnology Report”: with the relationship initiated by the Federal Institute for Testing and Materials Research (EMPA), nanotechnology would be a “sector from the future with enormous economic potential.” **The need to exploit that full potential would be based on an effective transfer of knowledge and technologies from laboratories to enterprises with the least friction possible.** That was precisely the objective pursued by IBM's research section and consulting firm: with a budget of 90 million Swiss francs, IBM Research partnered with the Higher Technical School of Zurich (ETH) and finished constructing the Binning and Rohrer Nanotechnology Center in 2011 in Ruschlikon [ed. – after an attempt by *Earth Liberation Front-Switzerland to attack the construction failed: see **Rebels Behind Bars; Good News At Last From Italy!***]. This was based on an “Open Collaboration Model,” meaning that expensive nano research laboratories would be open to cooperation with companies and other research institutes. The nanotechnology center offers 950 squared meters of floor space in sterile environments for basic research on new materials, and construction of elements at nano-scale. It is necessary for the laboratory's air to have a smaller amount of particles, since tiny particles can disable the nanostructures. In addition, the research center has special laboratories that, with shielding and measures to

“The role of the experts has always been to justify the technological system, to explain how the ongoing parade of disasters are mere separate incidents, aberrations that do not reflect at all on the system itself. We can no longer let them be the ones to make the decisions about these matters. And taking back the capacity to decide for ourselves on this matter can take only one road, that of attack against the system of domination and exploitation in all of its aspects. By the time the scientific experts are telling us about these technologies, they are describing a decision that has already been made over our heads. To seek any dialogue with them or with the ruling powers they serve at this point about them is useless. We need to recognize these developments for what they are – a further stealing away of our lives, an attack upon any capacity for self-determination that may be left to us. The opposition to these latest technological developments cannot go the path of so many past movements of opposition, that of attempting to dialogue with the masters of this world. In such dialogue, the masters always win. Perhaps in a few places, the monstrosities produced by these technologies have to be labeled, so that we have a “choice”. But the monstrosities still become a normal part of our existence. Nanotechnology creates the tiniest monstrosities capable of the greatest horrors, because they are capable of carrying the systems of social control directly into our bodies. We cannot even pretend that there is any room for dialogue here any longer. This is a blatant display by the rulers of this world that the maintenance of social peace is an act of war against all the exploited and dispossessed. It is necessary for those of us who desire the freedom to create our lives on our terms, who desire to remain human individuals capable of any sort of autonomous action, to act destructively against the entire system of social control, the totality of this civilization in which machines ride people and people slowly transform into machines. Here and now.” – *The Tiniest Monstrosities*

“Science is the eternal sacrifice of life, fleeting, ephemeral but real, on the altar of eternal abstractions. What I predict is therefore the revolt of life against the government of science.” – *Mikhail Bakunin*

cushion external sources of interference, such as changes in temperature or vibrations, minimize inaccuracies.

IBM is committed to nanotechnology in order to "further expand established information storage, processing, and transmission technology, as well as to develop new technologies," according to Matthias Kaiserwerth, director of the IBM Lab in Ruschlikon. He indicates that, according to Moore's law, every 18 months so far transistors on the computer chips are doubled. "If we want to maintain this rate of speed we will face several challenges, such as overheating, manufacturing, and gradation of the building elements." In short, miniaturization has reached its limit. "Nanotechnology here offers enormous potential to overcome these challenges with new designs and materials," says Kaiserwerth.

### Huge Figures

Swiss research is at the top of the world's nanotechnology research, with the corresponding budget:

90 million Swiss francs = cost of the construction of the IBM nanotechnology research center and ETH Zurich.

100 million Swiss francs = donation by entrepreneur Adolphe Merkle in 2007 to the University of Fribourg. With that money, a research institute for nanotechnology science in Marly, on the outskirts of Fribourg, was built.

120 million francs = the budget of the federal Nano-Tera Initiative for nanotechnology-based sensor research [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.3 pg31**].

140 million francs = the funding of the national research center "Nanosciences," coordinated since 2004 by the University of Basel.

[This is all due to the magical politics of the democratic circus, largely paid for by the ignorant "free and informed" consumer, on occasion good voter or indeed... taxpayer! (Marco's note.)]

1. ed. – "[In a mid-2000's study], some rats were made to inhale carbon nanoparticles: their lungs look like those of the victims of asbestos. Carbon nanotubes bass were introduced into the water some bass they lived in: they developed various cellular abnormalities. Nanoparticles can already be found in sunscreens, in self-cleaning glass or in some rubber tyres [ed. – and by now much more]. Toxicologists have shown that their very small size allows them to move everywhere in the body, across the skin, blood cells or the blood-brain barrier. Why do insurance companies refuse to insure the environmental and health risks of the nanotechnologies?" (Resistance to Nanotechnology in France).

**About the source:** This synthesis and commentary was originally released in Italian by Marco Camenisch (see **Return Fire vol.2 pg70**) from a jail cell in Lenzburg, Switzerland, as one of many translations or instructive/analytical and solidaritarian texts created during his three decades inside. In these most recent months, Marco finally began a staged release; involving day trips to the outside, weekend leave permits, a external job, and finally bail (as of March 2017, the comrade completed the process). In the build-up to his final exit, Marco communicated from Saxerriet prison that "[t]he possibility of continue my political/personal relations (especially my writing) has been strongly reduced in recent years due to the repeated transfers and consequent reorganization of this work, sometimes starting again from scratch. And now, in this long passage 'between inside and outside' such possibilities have been reduced even more (often to a flicker...) or otherwise taken up, ex-novo, in an intriguing as it is impervious reorganization of the remains of solidarity beyond the walls in this prison society. These are efforts that all those directly involved in solidarity including myself, having to cope with in 'spaces' at times even more limited and certainly more uncertain than the 'prison-prison'. So in no way is it due to indifference or lack of personal and/or political solidarity if now and in the future I won't be able to maintain the bulk of correspondence and writing that I have done up until recently." We know that the transition of leaving prison is often difficult, even in the best of circumstances and with a much shorter sentence, and we feel the isolation from comrades and projects (slowly built up or maintained over years of prison) that he must be experiencing now. Hence, to show our respect and appreciation for Marco, and knowing that this text was unavailable in English, we found it fitting to include it here, to continue our shared trajectory. "Always resisting, always contributing, always in solidarity (even by being silent... -.)" (Marco).

## TAKING ON IMPERIAL SCIENCE

**September '17, Basel, Switzerland & Saint-Louis, France:** Tyres popped on vehicles of the following: "Bouygues: this construction group builds and manages prisons and detention centers in France. The company is also involved in the construction of the nanotechnology center in Grenoble, and maintains the protected G.M. plantation site in the open air around Zurich[...] Adecco: work agency. Because "work is to life what oil is to the sea", as was so well formulated in a leaflet distributed during the labor law [ed. – see **Clarification on the Attack on the CGT Headquarters & On the Topic of 'Anonymous Disassociation'**]. [...] A car from the council of Haut-Rhin. We simply despise authority. Enedis: a French electricity company that is constantly being targeted for attacks [ed. – *ibid.*] because of its involvement in the nuclear waste storage project in Bure or for the installation of Linky



The graffiti, near industrial centres contributing to the degradation of the Patagonia Sea outside Huasco, Chile, reads "Marco Camenisch to the street!", left in the desire to see him "free and wild[...] looking towards the infinite horizon"; as we hope the comrade can now once again, on the outside at last

smart electricity meters. [...] Siemens: for their work in favor of wider surveillance, for example connected video surveillance systems, facial recognition... ABB: a leading company in the field of automation and energy, which has disseminated its robots worldwide in the service of capitalism and would prefer to see people as machines [ed. – see **'Tools of the Technology'**]. Finally, a car each from Implemia, Alpiq and EAGB, actively participating in the unappreciated enlargement of Bässlergut prison."

**16.04.17, Cremona, Italy:** Monsanto receive four molotovs against a headquarters; lab equipment and experimental seeds are destroyed, hundreds of thousands of euros damage. 'Bayer & Monsanto, Criminal Marriage' reads the graffiti, referring to the new merger between the two biotech giants. This is the fifth major anti-biotech attack in the area of Cremona since 2001...

**24.01.16, Santiago, Chile:** As a collaboration of 'Circle of Individualists for Anarchy' and 'Kapibara Group' (both of the Informal Anarchist Federation / International Revolutionary Front), some gain access to the science faculty of Andrés Bello University, place a timed incendiary (a mixture of potassium nitrate, gasoline and oil) and exit without being spotted or apprehended. "A proliferation of attacks and coordination of groups and individuals to hit harder and constantly against patriarchal civilization and its techno-industrial fabric, the path is arduous and uncertain, only our actions in the present reveal our real convictions." The large facility is totally destroyed in the huge ensuing blaze.

**July 2015, Ospedaletto Euganeo, Italy:** Mangimi Veronesi, animal breeders and feed producers, have been subject to protest since 2014 over the use of G.M. grains. Molotovs are placed under lorries loaded with fodder; 15 destroyed.



"NO GMO, NO BREEDING"

**28.08.15, Louvain, Belgium:** Fire part-destroys the front wall of the nanotechnology and chemistry research centre of the Université Catholique, by placing a backpack containing

“Everywhere around us, science, business and governments have shaped the existent, placing us all in suspension on an artificial self-regulating scaffold that is anything but solid: namely, industrial-technological society. Over thousands of years of civilization, it is now condensing into its most total and global expression which is multinational capitalism, to whose harmful effects and illusions we are all forced to entrust our lives. With the stupid arrogance that throughout history has marked every dominant power, it cannot afford any questioning of itself and the present into which we are forced. Open to alterations, albeit always false solutions, only if they can reinforce its legitimacy, but that cannot continue to reproduce in a continuous spiral whose circles are increasingly shrinking around us asphyxiatingly. Where the internal bio- and nano-technologies of this spiral that is detrimental to the system itself are not simple and additional technological developments among many, but are the key technologies with which the whole edifice on which we are deported far away from our natural world is restoring and, inside of the techno-industrial spiral, representing the ring of the chain that goes to close the steel circle of dominion over our life and everything that exists. Where the profitability-concern of the owners and of the multinational corporations is not so much that the masses must become dominated by material progress, but about the “limits” of this world. Then comes the need to obtain new materials, new substances with new properties, new forms of energy production, new and ‘improved’ plant and animal species, new food applications, industrial and medical applications obtained by the manipulation of life and of matter. Innovations that, as with all the key innovations of civilization, are born out of military needs for imperialist war on the outside and inside, the trinity of conquest, control and exploitation. War, now more than ever, transcends the military field and has expanded its front, in fact, to every expression of the living and the material from the macro to the nano and even beyond the planet itself [ed. – see *New Technologies, Extraterrestrial Exploitation & the Future of Capitalism*]. Thus every productive sector is invested in these technologies, but no longer content with the narrowness of the research labs – even after it transformed [everything] along with space into one deadly and sickening landfill – is transforming the entire planet into a laboratory, a new living world – or rather a dying, engineered one. Not – as the great “greenwashing” campaigns of media terrorism and state want us to believe – to solve social and environmental disasters arising from the system, but always and as ever to reproduce this system of domination and exploitation with the end of completing once and for all the techno-industrial complex enclosure.”

– Call for an Escalated Anti-Genetic Engineering Struggle

*inflammable material and a detonator in the vicinity of the engine room.*

**05.03.15, Itapetinga, Brazil:** *1,000 women from the states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais occupy FuturaGene Technology and destroy seedlings of G.M. eucalyptus.*

**06.01.14, Bristol, U.K.:** *Bomb placed against the offices of construction firm Vinci “with the aim of cutting off power lines, scorching the exterior and starting a fire inside.” The company are building the “Biological Life Sciences Centre soon to open at the University of Bristol [which] will offer courses for “the next generation of biologists” as well as current specialists, aiming to improve collaboration with the university’s nanotechnology centre and just across from the Medical School’s genetic engineering, vivisection and animal breeding labs. The world capitalist system sees advances in fields like this as key to the next round of discovery, enclosure and wealth creation. As the area around Bristol and Bath houses the biggest hi-tech design cluster in the world after America’s Silicon Valley, this “revolution” is happening on our doorsteps, “with Bristol being an exciting and ideal place to carry out research over the coming years.” [...] One of the main thrusts of this drive is synthetic biology, a disturbing practice using the latest technology for “rewriting and rebuilding natural systems to provide engineered surrogates.” [ed. – For example, to make them produce pharmaceuticals or energy; unlike older genetic engineering which ‘cuts and pastes’ existing genes between species, synthetic biology creates new DNA modules programmed to self-assemble with other modules to create ‘designer organisms’ (mostly viruses /bacteria for now) capable of functions normally associated with mechanical production lines.] In 2012 a conference at the University of Bristol stated that synthetic biology “could become a driving force of the national economy,” and the government have declared it a top research priority. The European Union has now awarded £3.3 million to the University of Bristol just to create “public awareness” promoting the practice. [W]e’re moving fast into a future where even lifeforms “in nature” are the products of laboratory experiments, and nothing remains that isn’t engineered somewhere along the line by a human-centred system of scientific totalitarianism.”*

**10.06.13, Toluca, Mexico:** *Explosive attack on seat of the National Council of Science and Technology; it is the second time the same group bombs the place, and they also take credit for burning a police truck less than three weeks earlier. CONACYT, as well as G.M. “collaboration with the scientists of the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT)”, is also part of running the “Abacus” lab containing a supercomputer to develop*

*genetic sequencing, petroleum extraction, finance, market economics, aeronautic and automotive industry, nano-tech, logistics...*

**04.03.13, Naples, Italy:** *4 of the 6 pavilions of the Science City of Naples (and with them, this being the dense technological cluster of the city, dozens of start-ups) burn to the ground in a deliberate arson, with 50 million euros damages.*

**07.10.12, Oakland, U.S.A.:** *During a destructive anti-imperialist march, the Oakland Scientific Facility is among those damaged. “Countless lives contained, controlled, reduced, stolen, and destroyed by civilization, colonialism, patriarchy, and capitalism. 11 years of war in Afghanistan, hundreds of years of colonization and my entire life of being socialized, categorized, identified[...] Fight Genocide, Destroy what is civilized.”*

**05.09.12, Buenos Aires, Argentina:** *To “express solidarity with Marco Camenisch, who went on hunger strike”, visit to the Leloir Institute “known to promote development of the disgusting nanotechnology, present and future of the technological system of control. There we unfurled a banner with which we greet our comrade and on leaving paint bombs and rocks full of our liberatory hatred were thrown.” Marco’s strike, against the “global techno-scientific, patriarchal, terrorist and totalitarian system of the multinationals and imperialist States”, he dubbed ‘Operation Fukushima’ (see *Return Fire vol.1 pg43*) after “the appalling pain and annihilation administered to life by the few bosses and many servants of civilization and progress for the power and wealth of the few. It could also be called Chernobyl, Muhleberg, Beznau, Lucens, Hiroshima, depleted uranium, IBM, Trino Vercellese, Superphoenix [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg79*], Ansaldo [ed. – *ibid.*], biotechnology and nanotechnology, asbestos, cancer, Deep Water Horizon [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg28*], Xstrata [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg40*], Monsanto, TAV [ed. – see *Rebels Behind Bars; A Letter from Anarchist Comrade Anna Beniamino about Operation Scripta Manent & More...*], alternative energy...” It was in solidarity with repressed Italian anarchists (see *Return Fire vol.1 pg75/78*), and against daily harassments he endured in Lenzburg prison.*

**04.09.12, Toluca, Mexico:** *“[L]ike the Teocintle [ed. – wild maize species considered a harmful weed by agri-business] corrodes malignantly domesticated corn fields,” three litres of petrol deployed to torch a CIMMYT minibus used daily to transport international scientists to a research center, which “among other activities, develops Sustainable Modernization of Traditional Agriculture Program (MasAgro), in collusion with the Mexican state through the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food (SAGARPA) and agencies such as the Inter-Development Bank (IDB); whose job is to promote genetically modification or “improvement” among small farmers to increase production/domestication of maize and wheat seeds, and to try to counter the same problems that these technologies have created (soil erosion, water scarcity...) [yet] if biotechnologists house 28,000 seed samples of maize to “guard” ancient biodiversity, or if GM foods are labeled, “controlled” or “perfected” for the purposes of this perpetual monolithic civilisation, this would only be the cleverest trick the system.” *Informal Anarchist Federation / Earth Liberation Front ‘Anti-Civilisation Fraction’ are again responsible.**

April 2012, Trento, Italy: During the inauguration of a new laboratory of IBM (see *Return Fire* vol.4 pg73), opponents are present with megaphones to disrupt. In addition to the Swiss nanotechnology centre mentioned above, the event is promoting IBM's "model of the city of the future [ed. – see *Return Fire* vol.3 pg31], where mobility, security and surveillance systems, access to the cities, the identification, financial transactions, medical systems, are all connected to each other through a technological infrastructure of ubiquitous and pervasive computing. It is already happening: in Stockholm IBM have created the video control system for the license plates of cars entering the city, whose owner is automatically charged the fee for the movement in the centre, and has also worked for the New York police Real Time Crime Center, a database obtained by integrating all the data from the different institutional repositories to create personal profiles of any suspected displayed directly by the individual police officer."

**23.06.10, Pulley, Switzerland:** *Despite 24 hour guard, a double fence, CCTV and plain clothes cops in the surrounding streets, an experimental field of G.M. wheat is attacked with herbicides. Unlike in 2008 and 2009 when the field was also 'decontaminated', the research centre this year did not issue a press release about the attack.* "Opposition to genetic engineering is part of a wider opposition to the total control of society and life that is being created thanks to the development of nano and biotechnology. For these reasons, we also want to express our solidarity through concrete actions with those who oppose this technoscientific capitalist system, and in particular with Marco Camenisch, Silvia, Costa and Billy... [ed. – see *Rebels Behind Bars; Good News At Last From Italy!*], revolutionary prisoners who are now jailed in Switzerland because they understood words are not enough..."

## A GREEN ANARCHIST CRITIQUE OF SCIENCE

Humans use processes where we start from experience, form conjectures, and then test predictions based on tentative explanations. We compare results with our peers. Our evolution of trekking, foraging, tracking, hunting all involved this process. **These things constitute a form of "science"**. While even this encounters the problem of induction, the problem of the uncertainty of the future remaining despite previously clear experiences, the dominant culture embraces a distinct form of science that has its own features. Harmful features.

Empire has a specific form of science. Imperial science begins by attempting to remove the actual physical world from the understanding by the use of a sterile laboratory to disconnect, isolate, and reassemble parts; these attempts can expedite access to certain claims on knowledge but devalue intimacy, participation, and co-determination, which lead to narcissism and over time cultivate hostility to aliveness and wildness. **Imperial science conceals its implicit values and filters (observability, detachment, objectifiability, quantifiability, predictability, controllability, uniformity), proclaims itself "neutral", and discards or disciplines the anomalies and mysteries that do not fit in its framework**, potentially demolishing their immense subjective worth.

Imperial science prefers unidirectional cause-and-effect understandings while ignoring interdependent, co-determining connections. Imperial science possesses a bias toward instruments and numbers, and assumes a disparate, mechanistic universe. It also often implicitly maintains the philosophical system of Western rationality which reasons through the use of hierarchical binary oppositions, e.g. subject/object, mind/body, matter/spirit, masculine/feminine, even if reality does not always fit such a perspective. And imperial science pushes itself as the only acceptable path to understanding.

Imperial science divides accessibility to methodologies and tools by specialization and class,

creating a priestly class of expert authorities that mediate to the public the Discovered Truth of the Universe. With imperial science a small professional cadre actively confines deeper understanding to within their own compartment through models and instruments beyond the lay person's awareness or access. It moves ever further toward abstraction beyond the lay person's ability to confirm or refute, developing characteristics of religious dogma.

Imperial science divorces itself from ecological ethics, instead embracing exclusively purposes utilitarian to certain human cultures. It attempts to magnify control over lifeforms and landbases and further human pursuit of all knowledge regardless of the cost (sometimes excepting white humans or all humans, othertimes not), facilitating the self-destructive project of Dominion. "Welcome to the Machine", page 41, [Stanley] Aronowitz speaking: **"The point of science – and this may or may not be true of individual scientists – is to make the world subject to human domination. If they can abstract, and then they can predict on the basis of that abstraction, then they can try, at both the human and natural levels, to use that prediction in order to exert control. Genetic engineering is a great example, although almost any field will work as well. The ideology underlying its conceptualization is that we cannot and will not depend on nature to yield its own productivity, both in terms of its own development and human need. We're going to intervene, because the process of maturation has to be faster, the output has to be more plentiful, production has to be cheaper, humans have to be more in control of the process."** Imperial science promotes the human exceptionalism responsible for leading us to long-term disaster (planetary biotic collapse). But forms of comprehension do not have to yield forms of domination.

**Humans also use very unscientific elements to successfully make decisions:** intuition, instinct, imagination, inspiration, associations. And we cannot objectively quantify such things as personality (e.g. propensity for self-care), attitude

(e.g. optimistic or pessimistic), self-esteem (e.g. desire for self-preservation), stress (e.g. subjective perception of pain), or willpower (e.g. how determined one feels). These fundamentally unscientific elements of decision-making and character prove essential to our own wellness but imperial science pushes them to the margins. Cultures with other forms of science however respect those elements' place and value. These elements also do not usually or even often fit solidly within the science-or-religion dichotomy; we cannot reduce these decision-making features or influences upon the world to someone's belief or non-belief in an Invisible Sky Daddy or Magic Man, and yet they remain unscientific.

Imperial science can certainly help us understand certain information and trends, industrial science especially, because it comes at a devil's bargain of sacrificing any other consideration: we know how calories work because the Nazis wanted to know how little they could feed Jewish death camp laborers. Calories do exist as a concept measuring a phenomenon, and might yield useful insights, but we cannot reduce understanding to just numbered measurements, and viewing lifeforms, landscapes, or the totality of matter in solely utilitarian lenses enables abuse. Imperial science has no conflict with, and in fact has higher compatibility with, for instance, Nazism, whereas the hunting methods of traditional indigenous peoples intimately entwined to their landbases, based at least in some part on empiricism, testing educated guesses, and peer review, have no receptiveness to practices that disregard their spiritual place as members in an interdependent web. **We must not accept the reasoning behind attempts to grind up every form of life in machine gears just to squeeze out some new insight that will further a subsection of humans' control of the world.** Imperial science tries as long as possible to avoid philosophical and ethical challenge; as a litany of experiments with coerced use of surgery, pathogens, radiation, psychological torture, physiological torture, and pharmaceuticals under the guise of "necessary research" confirm, from antiquity to modernity. Empire makes science a heartless terror; intimacy and balance put it back in its rightful place.

# MARKET PRESSURED TO TEMPORARILY DROP G.M. PRODUCT LINES AFTER CONTAMINATION CAMPAIGN CLAIMED, LOMBARDY

[ed. – Lombardy is the most populous and richest region in Italy, home to Milan, and one of the richest regions in Europe. The following action took place while the European Union pretended to consider ruling against use of glyphosate herbicide.

This action followed in the footsteps of hugely successful anarchist consumer sabotages wrought by in Greece. First in 2013 during the pivotal Christmas period (and then again in this year in the same timeframe) in solidarity with Italian prisoners Nicola Gai and Alfredo Cospito (see **Rebels Behind Bars; A Letter from Anarchist Comrade Anna Beniamino about Operation Scripta Manent & More...**), batches of Coca-Cola (a company known to produce G.M. for ingredients) were tampered with: "This way we provoke a boycott, not begging for the consumers' "sensitive ecological consciousness" but based on the decisiveness of direct action instead. Our goal is not, in any case, to harm someone who might consume these mass production commodities, that's why we send this claim of responsibility before we start placing these products back on the shelves." Coca-Cola announced a precautionary removal of "every single plastic bottle 500ml PET of Coca-Cola Light and Nestea (of all tastes)", to millions loss in their profits and high publicity. In the second wave, various Nestlé and Unilever brand products were also contaminated and had to be withdrawn.

While so far all such actions (initiated by the animal liberationists in past decades) have successfully avoided injury to random people (more than can be said for the bombings, arsons or even rock-throwing that we otherwise accept as if they only risked the attacker and their specified target) this cell doesn't back away from the importance of articulating the anti-social element (see **'The Matter of Knowing Who We Are'**) in their critique of apathy. We reproduce this not because we agree with every point they make (see footnotes), but because it opens the doors to continuing many important discussions in the anarchist space, while explaining yet another method available to disrupt business-as-usual (though we ourselves prefer forms of action that don't rely on pressuring the capitalists and state to do something but rather do it ourselves – 'direct action' as we'd call it – we are not moralists on this point).

That year, 2016, had already seen an Italian mobilisation against the European Authority for Food Safety (based in Parma), "the internationally recognized body to which the European Commission refers to concerning toxicities such as GMOs, pesticides, chemicals and nanotechnology. [C]lose relations allow a continuous exchange of administrators, scientists, managers and the inevitable technical staff: what better way to permit a capillary distribution of GMOs in Europe. Thanks to contamination thresholds tolerated in food and seeds, GM feed, transgenic crops in the open field... the work of spreading has been underway for too long. Europe has given itself a body called upon to guarantee the safety of every toxicity along the lines of the American FDA [Food & Drug Administration]. To protect, as well as the interests of the biotech-chemical-pharmaceutical multinationals, an economic, political and social system that clings to the new bio-nano-technological revolution, producing more and more environmental and social disasters that underlie techno-industrial development, of which the manipulations of the living are deadly. We are not for the creation of a safer, transparent and democratic EFSA[...] Dealing with techno-scientific power and its principal manifestations – biotechnology, nanotechnology, computer science, neuroscience – is not just focusing on some aspect of this particularly harmful society. [...] Some call it green economy, others scientific progress and yet others catastrophe management, covering the areas that once redesigned will widen the network where all the relations of power are developed in every link, such as the launching of a GMO or the manipulation of the germ line, from where there is no return." (The writers also called the mobilisation in solidarity with Silvia, Billy and Costa: see **Rebels Behind Bars; Good News At Last From Italy!**)

Shortly after the Lombardian contamination campaign, an explosive parcel detonated inside the Milan premises of bio-tech firm Algamundi SRL, a start-up company that had won a competition in the Milan EXPO (see the supplement to **Return Fire vol.3; Smarter Prison?**), leaving one professional lucky to get away with only bruises and hospital examination: an almost identical parcel was intercepted at the mail department of the EFSA. Police suspect anarchists, mentioning the exposé published the year before by the comrades of Fenrir magazine on the activities of Algamundi SRL... Domesticators out of our genes, and our lives. Wildness remains.]

"For now we have used the enemy's instruments against it. We have fed civilization with the poison it produces..."

Nicola and Alfredo Cell  
F.A.I./F.R.I.

## Choices of Attack

Safety is a recurrent theme in today's industrialized society, which safe it cannot feel in that it spreads hatred, violence and poison back and forth over itself daily. By periodically establishing the tolerability levels of the cancers that it itself develops, it is attempting to accustom people to accepting them. So 'fine particles' are allowed to pile up to within a certain threshold, torture in prison should be limited to denying prisoners any kind of reading inside the most punitive prison units, water is potable if it only contains a given amount of heavy metals... So what is 'sure' is just the constant poisoning we are subjected to; it is power alone that establishes the recommended daily dose.

We decided to highlight how unmanageable these limits are today. We overcame those that could tie down anarchist action a long time ago, turning it into a mere cumbersome repetition of violent slogans and innocuous practices, as we savoured the beauty of discovering and reinventing new means of attack each time. The limits we are facing today are instead those that establish the safety of a food product.

If the average consumer feels protected by the controls *the very fabricators of noxious substances apply, with this action we are making clear the impracticability of a mechanism of self-control in industries such as food, chemicals, agriculture, engineering (which are coming to resemble each other more and more), where it's not true that the consumers' health comes before profit, but occurs precisely to the detriment of*



## their health in an endless circle of poison-antidote-poison.

Currently any food product intended for human consumption is accompanied with a maximum residue of herbicides that it may contain 'according to law'. We decided to increase the amount of these residues that can normally be found on the shelves of all the supermarkets, concealed in products that are passed off as safe.

Starting from the week between May and June, while most people are getting ready to elect those who will make decisions about their lives, we are gradually replacing some of the products in the supermarkets with 'ours' with higher maximum residue limits. So far we have only replaced the number of products that can be seen in the photos attached. We intend to finish our stocking by the end of June, the final deadline we have decided for this action.

Each week we will add an injection of poison to the water-poison solution that we replace. We will do this because we only tamper with substances that the food industry uses as it likes, starting with only a small amount of poison because, unlike the white coats, we don't know what effects it might have. So, we're interested in being effective, not in playing word games. This is our first test. Its continuation and exacerbation will depend on to what extent economic and 'social' interests come into conflict.

Our operation will cover the whole of the Lombardy region, making a fool of various distribution chains that have been visited, studied and chosen for the best outcome of this campaign against poisoning. **What we are aiming for is clearly withdrawal**

from the market of the products we have used, in the period of time decided by us, but we also want to throw the contradictions that the whole of society is based on in everyone's face, even of those who try to look the other way. For we know that a coat of green paint won't be enough to clean up a world now addicted to its own noxiousness, because allowing oneself to be poisoned little by little is equivalent to dying day after day.

We shall begin with a technical description of our operation: the poison used is Monsanto's Roundup [herbicide], a bottle of liquid concentrated per 560 square metres. Our kit: a syringe, a funnel, a 1.5-litre bottle of water, tweezers, a screwdriver, a fine-tipped paintbrush, glue. The products poisoned: Misura soya biscuits, Suzi wan soya sauce, Kikkoman soya sauce, Save soya sauce (in the 'traditional' and 'Japanese style' versions).

Obviously we try to give the investigating cops as few clues as possible, which is why some of the attached photos have been retouched (we are not professional photographers and we had to make up for a lack of technical knowledge, as well as distractions during 'posing'). The batches and other product codes have been covered or erased in order to prevent targeted batches being withdrawn while leaving others on sale.

We began by adding an injection of Roundup to the bottle of water, but as we said this is only the early stage solution. We took care to avoid any possible damage to the product packaging and we found a perfect way to violate their fake food safety for each of them. We took a syringeful of sauce out of all the sauces and added an injection of the solution. As for the biscuits we injected a syringe of Roundup solution into the bag and shook it. Eyebrow tweezers helped us open both types of Save sauce. We inserted one end into the back of the opening of the cap, then a screwdriver allowed us to take off the cap with its seal intact. To close them again we just had to push down on the cap. As for the Kikkoman sauces it sufficed to unscrew the cap along with the plastic film, take off the anti-drip cap and do the same in reverse after the substitution. The procedure for the Suzi wan sauce was also pretty simple. Pulling the cap hard along with the seals and pressing everything back to redo the package was quick and

clean. As for the Misura biscuits, we began at the bottom of the package by slightly opening the heated seal, just enough to pass our needle through, then repackaged them with paintbrush and glue.

This done, the first couriers resupplied the supermarkets for this initial test.

**The choice of protagonists for our action was all too easy.** Various

technology sectors extend their interests to the food industry so as to incorporate it. The same companies that invest in technological research and aim to have genetically modified organisms (GMOs) passed into the world are at the forefront of the chemical pesticide sector, also becoming actual owners of seeds and crops. Patents copyright anything at all.

Monsanto has a crucial role in this field. Born in the early 1900s it had an immediate impact on the chemical sector during the Second World War thanks to an increase in the use of DDT [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg37**], which was sprayed over entire populations and passed off as panacea, concealing its real toxicity. Since then it has been engaged in a long trajectory of political intrigue, impositions and coercion through which it became one of the major economic giants in the world, to such an extent that it has attracted the attention of another giant, Bayer, which is negotiating a merger precisely at this time. The Monsanto empire ranges from chemicals to agriculture, passing through genetic engineering. It was responsible for the spreading of Agent Orange (100% dioxin) in Vietnam, the cover-up of toxicological data concerning its PCB [polychlorinated biphenyl] patents, research in the nuclear field, up to our time. First in line in the race for the appropriation of every right over the existent, it was quick to take an interest in equating GMOs with normal crops.



Since Monsanto's 1996 incursion, Argentina's entire soy crop (the world's third-largest) and nearly all its corn and cotton are genetically-modified and glyphosate is used roughly eight to ten times more per acre than in the U.S.A., with cancer rates two to four times higher than the national average in affected croplands, as well as higher rates of hypothyroidism, birth defects and chronic respiratory illnesses. This farmworker Fabian Tomasi, after routinely handling the substance for three years, is wasting into a living skeleton from neurological disorder 'polyneuropathy'.

Thanks to this sort of 'equivalence in substance' introduced in the 1990s in the US by one of its future directors infiltrated through the watchdog agencies, it managed to avoid testing and get the go ahead in relation to its new creations. After trading in a vast range of herbicides, through genetic engineering it managed to obtain patents on many GM plants that were resistant to its own herbicides or which were even able to develop the herbicides within themselves<sup>[1]</sup>. **It is here, in this making all aspects of our lives artificial and thinking that their unscrupulous actions will be met with vile resignation, that our circle closes.** Roundup is the most widely used herbicide in the world. Its active component is glyphosate, a herbicide which can now be found in most ground water. It is related to various types of cancer, kidney conditions, Parkinsons and Alzheimers by the holders of scientific truth themselves. Monsanto was granted a patent for Roundup in 2002 from which followed a series of GM crops resistant to the herbicide being introduced into the market.

Among them Roundup Ready soya (practically the species most cultivated in the world) has enslaved thousands of farmers to this multinational as they are being forced to pay concession rights in order to be able to plant. The 'green revolution', as the vast operation of spreading GMOs throughout the world led by the 'humanitarian' Rockefeller Foundation was called<sup>[2]</sup>, has been made possible their dependency on of the 'seeds of the bosses' thanks to financing of farmers in difficulty. While the litres of this pesticide sprayed over the soya plantations all over the world run into millions, one more syringe shot is a drop in the ocean<sup>[3]</sup>.



As the European Union keep on suspending judgement over the carcinogenic effects of glyphosate, we are throwing the problem back on the plate.

## To the Accomplices, To the Insurgents

We were tired of thoughts of freedom atrophied by the political realism of the theoreticians of the revolution "not here, not now", and of crippled actions lacking continuity, effectiveness and communicative clarity, so we decided to take a turning point in our lives and projectualities with this first contribution to the struggle against the noxiousness of civilization and against the development of the economic strategies of *dominion in an eco-sustainable style*. Our turning point came about with the kind of action that we have chosen. To a form of now consolidated attack, always and anyway effective, we have added a new poisoning of the enemy's merchandise, drop by drop. A dripping of poison that fights against and highlights the daily global poisoning that hyper-technological, consumerist, alienated and alienating society is imposing.

## This homeopathic administration of their poisons is showing up the daily reality of self-poisoning that industrialized civilization is inflicting on bodies and minds.

The turning point was also the decision to enter the seas of the debate that has been bouncing from one side of the globe to the other thanks to the actions which, from that far off 2003, have been carried out by various and different individuals and groups that adhere to the Informal Anarchist Federation [F.A.I.] and its further extension the International Revolutionary Front [F.R.I.], as they continue to give living and stimulating perspectives to the thought-action binomial that is at the root of anarchy. **Throughout the years we have read the dialogue that has been established through actions and claims: it alternates from critical contributions and basic methods to slogans and collections of greetings often with simplistic reductions of problematics.** We are going to try to dissect some of the problems and undo a few basic knots, which for us are sources of useful discussions.



– The legal-illegal dichotomy is created by power to the extent that it wants to raise the measure of its tolerance, based on social pressures and tensions and from its own risk assessment (we see for example

the evolution of so-called anti-terrorism legislation [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg5*], repression in the streets, etc.). Legality and recuperation go hand in hand, so it is we who favour certain practices, not in as far as they are illegal, but in as far as they are more effective. We simply realise that if we have to face a problem in an incisive and resolute way, the solution naturally ends up in illegality given that the legal instruments 'offered' to us (counter-information, raising social awareness of a problem, demonstrations and protests) do not satisfy us, nor do they interest us<sup>[4]</sup>.

– We are rebels, insurgents not insurrectionalists. We rebel every day, filing away at our own, individual chains. We have no masses to educate, to foment for 'the coming insurrection'. We are not preparing any ground by trying to 'unite the specific movement and the people, guerrilla and insurrectional perspectives'. We are not seeking roles of leaders or vanguards, present or future. After all, today's revolutionary leaders will be the hangmen of tomorrow's rebels as soon as they put their arses on a bench. That is why we hate politics, which through mediation turns the free dialectical flow between thought and action gangrenous. We have neither the time nor the desire to build a long-term revolutionary process. It isn't the sun of the future that dazzles us but the lightning in the clear sky of an act of revolt, chosen, meditated, planned and above all urgently necessary against the ever more rapid advance of the machinery of dominion.

– We adhere to the F.A.I. in critical continuity, critically because we understand the risk of transforming a free network – in time and space – into a platform. **To propose an 'informal platform of polymorphous anarchist action' with structures and infrastructures means to cage a beast that must by its very nature stay wild. Action is multiform, multifaceted and iridescent like life, but multiformity cannot become an easy slogan to conceal the defects of the action itself like a bank of fog.** We are in the streets, in anarchist bookshops, at events, concerts, in squats every day; but if we were to relate all this to the real attack on power that we feel is urgent and necessary, we would be deceiving ourselves. It would mean levelling anarchy and raising what is, or at this point should be, anarchist 'daily life' to a means in itself.

– We don't want to compensate for the practical organizational lacks of single individuals with 'structures' or worse 'infrastructures'; mere union does not mean strength, quite the opposite, structures sclerotize action<sup>[5]</sup>. On the contrary, we believe that the old hypothesis of a network of comrades who, without knowing one another, come into dialogue

through actions, as the first text that launched this informal projectuality [of the F.A.I.] proposes: technical/theoretical/practical growth through the developing of the actions. *"To reconcile organization and theoretical/practical debate with the anonymity of groups/single individuals is possible by means of a dialogue diffused through the actions, which, besides giving their specific destructive discourse, also carry other messages (through the adopted methods and means, the goal being communication), independently of the material damage."*

– Spontaneism is not synonymous with informality and even less does informality mean disorganization and superficiality. Actions are planned spontaneously from the idea of one or more insurgent minds, they consolidate through critique and analysis and go on to solve tactical and logistical problems, to then bloom like poisonous flowers in the fields of dormant society.

– Informality doesn't mean meeting with 'other political affinity groups' so as to coordinate the struggles, but informality is the antidote to political delegating. It is the method that makes relations between individuals qualitatively better, avoiding interweaving 'political' relations for the sake of quantitative growth. Informality is open but not transversal.

– We adhere to the International Revolutionary Front in critique and continuity. In critique because we are not an 'armed organization' nor do we want to become one; nor do we feel the need to point it out in relation to the disarming and reformist critiques of the mainstream. On the contrary we are proud to be part of the chaotic front of comrades at war with society, face to face with the enemy, arms in hand. Coming back to the text from which the Informal Anarchist Federation was born: *"Moreover whoever is part of the Informal Anarchist Federation is a militant of it in all respects only in the specific moment of the action and its preparation; it doesn't invest the comrade's entire lives and projectuality, which leads to putting any armed-struggle specialism out of the way once and for all."*

– We are individualists not collectivists. The drive at the basis of our action is individual. We create free and unstable associations of individuals in order to make the action more effective. Collective struggle claims lead to delegating, the seed of politics, and to reformism. Stable organizations of synthesis crystallize the container instead of strengthening the contents: they give professional politicians a springboard and the lazy *an alternative* and the shield of numbers (even if small).

We don't underestimate the fundamental importance of dialectics among comrades,

be they inside or outside prison; for this reason we are thankful for the writings of the comrades in prison (Nikos Romanos [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg75*], Alfredo Cospito, Nicola Gai, the imprisoned comrades of the CCF [ed. – see *Clarification on the Attack on the CGT Headquarters & On the Topic of 'Anonymous Disassociation'*]...) for the stimuli they offered our minds and practices, and the written claims of the comrades who adhere to F.A.I. (CCF Urban Guerrilla Cell, Kapibara Group [ed. – see *Nanotechnology & Transparency*], Fireworks Committee for an Extraordinary Year [ed. – see *Rebels Behind Bars*; **A Letter from Anarchist Comrade Anna Beniamino about Operation Scripta Manent & More...**]...), which albeit different and often contradictory have helped us dissolve doubts and pushed us to concretise our action.

*The great challenge in these times is both mad and necessary.*

*Mad that scattered handfuls of dreamers are trying to fight dominion, necessary that they do it.*

**Danaus Plexippus<sup>[6]</sup> Cell  
INFORMAL ANARCHIST FEDERATION  
/ INTERNATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY  
FRONT**

**First week of June 2016**  
*'Til next time*

1. ed. – Despite the company line that GM crops reduce pesticide use, many drastically increase pesticide use through the promotion of superweeds – some of which cannot be killed, except with increasingly large amounts of pesticides and in some cases flamethrowers. Plants engineered to withstand repeated spraying also have the unique ability to absorb large amounts of it and remain healthy, earning them the title “pesticide plants”. All over the world these pesticide plants are also fed to the animals on the meat, milk, eggs production lines. The longest-term feeding study ever on GMOs found that rats fed a lifetime diet of GM maize became as ill as those fed the herbicide glyphosate (Roundup). The increasing introduction of GMOs is leading to an increased use of animal experiments, as this is a



**Bombing by the Earth Liberation Front of the ultra-polluting genetic-engineers BASF's Netherlands headquarters, in Arnhem, 16.04.96**

requirement for them to be developed into a commercial crop for human consumption.

2. ed. – Actually the so-called Green Revolution pre-dated GMOs, though one continues the work of the other: “Genetically modified crops, for example, are regularly sold to us as a means of “feeding the world.” But why is the world hungry? At least in part because of the previous wave of agricultural improvements [sic] – the so-called Green Revolution, which between the 1940s and 1970s promoted a new form of agriculture that depended upon high levels of pesticides and herbicides, new agricultural technologies, and high-yielding strains of crops. The Green Revolution is trumpeted by progressives as having supposedly “fed a billion people” who would otherwise have starved. And maybe it did; but then we had to keep feeding them – or should I say us? – and our children. In the meantime it had been discovered that the pesticides and herbicides were killing off vast swaths of wildlife [ed. – and by 2000 in India as many humans were dying annually from these as died at the notorious Bhopal pesticide factory explosion], and the high-yield monoculture crops were wrecking both the health of the soil and the crop diversity, which in previous centuries had helped prevent the spread of disease and reduced the likelihood of crop failure. It is in this context that we now have to listen to lectures from the neo-environmentalists [ed. – including former chief of UK Greenpeace, to name one] and others insisting that GM crops are a moral obligation if we want to feed the world and save the planet: precisely the arguments that were made last time around. GM crops are an attempt to solve the problems caused by the last progress trap; they are also the next one. I would be willing to bet a lot of money that in forty years’ time, the successors of the neo-environmentalists will be making precisely the same arguments about the necessity of adopting the next wave of technologies needed to dig us out of the trap that GM crops have dropped us neatly into. Perhaps it will be vat-grown meat, or synthetic wheat, or some nano-bio-gubbins as yet unthought of. Either way, it will be vital for growth and progress, and a moral necessity. As Kurt Vonnegut would have said: “so it goes” (Dark Ecology). Indeed, as you could read in the claim for an #Anonymous web attack on Monsanto, “In 2006, AGRA, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, was established with funding from Bill Gates and The Rockefeller Foundation. Among the other founding members of, AGRA, we find: Monsanto, Novartis, Sanofi-Aventis, GlaxoSmithKline, Procter and Gamble, Merck, Mosaic, Pfizer, Sumitomo Chemical and Yara. The fact that these corporations are either chemical or pharmaceutical manufacturers is no coincidence.” At the G8 summit of world leaders in 2013, the British prime minister pledged £395 million from the UK Aid budget to support private initiatives involved in spreading GM crops in Africa; an investment under the guise of aid, to lock small-scale farmers into a dependency on corporate providers of seeds and chemical fertilisers.

3. ed. – “Finally, we must take into account a factor that works to the detriment of natural biodiversity and environmental equilibrium: the genetic pollution affecting the flow of genes that normally takes

place between cultivated plants, wild plants and variants of the cultivated species. This genetic pollution will confer upon these plants certain undesirable properties and capacities for resistance that could have a deleterious effect on the rhizosphere, and not just on farmland. [...] As Monsanto’s director of corporate communications boldly proclaimed: “Monsanto shouldn’t have to vouchsafe the safety of biotech food. Our interest is in selling as much of it as possible. Assuring its safety is the FDA’s job” [...] One will get a better appreciation of the gist of this declaration if one considers the fact that Monsanto occupies responsible positions in that very same regulatory institution... As with the nuclear industry, once again the regulator and the regulated are one and the same” (Some Enemies of the Best of All Transgenic Worlds).

4. ed. – Much could be said about such a simplistic dichotomy between il/legal actions; we tend to agree with some Barcelona comrades on this matter. “With this communiqué, we wish to claim the following actions, as part of a struggle for the destruction of the State, Capital, patriarchy, and any system of domination, a struggle for the free creation of voluntary and solidaristic relations at the global and local level; in other words, a struggle for anarchy. May 5, at night, we told a child the story of the maquis [ed. – anti-fascist partisans] and the anarchist struggle against Franco and against democracy [ed. – see *Who Is It?*]. May 13, we cooked a healthy meal for a comrade who has a chronic illness. May 17, we wrote a letter to a comrade imprisoned for participating in a riot. June 12, we took care of the infant of some friends who suffer economic precarity and the imposed obligation of wage labor. June 16, we spoke publicly with our neighbors about the need to burn the banks and attack the police in order to realize our dreams. June 19, we told some leftist activists that the masked-ones were not police infiltrators but ourselves, and that it was necessary and good to mask up and take the streets with force. June 20, we gifted vegetables from our garden to friends and neighbors, without money or exchange. Why do we claim these actions? In the last months, we have also barricaded roads with dumpsters, burned banks, injured journalists, smashed shop windows, and attacked cops. For us, the attacks against the system are essential to our struggle. But we’ve fooled ourselves. A struggle does not consist only in attacks. The attacks are not more important than the need to care for ourselves, to preserve and spread our collective history, to create relations based in the gift, solidarity, and reciprocity, to imagine new worlds and new struggles, to confront our isolation and establish subversive and honest relationships with people outside of the categoric and political ghetto in which the Spectacle hides us” (Communiqué for Anarchist Actions in Barcelona & Response to the Nihilist Comrades).

5. ed. – For a more nuanced account of anarchist organisation, we recommend the relevant sections of ‘A Wager on the Future’.

6. ed. – The monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) is considered an iconic pollinator species. A 2016 study attributed a decade’s ten-fold decline in overwintering numbers of the eastern North American monarch population to the loss of breeding habitat (namely the many species of milkweed), highly correlated with the adoption of herbicide-tolerant G.M. corn and soy, which now constitute 89% and 94% of these U.S. crops respectively, with heavy glyphosate.



# 'THE MATTER OF KNOWING WHO WE ARE'

The bourgeois definition of class society, delineated by essential or cultural differences, went out of date a long time ago with the universalization of a consumer culture, which unites bourgeois elements with proletarian elements and newer elements. If in the past anarchist companions<sup>[1]</sup> could throw a few orsini bombs<sup>[2]</sup> into the Liceu Theater it is because in that epoch only the bourgeoisie could be found there.<sup>[3]</sup> Currently, the average customer in a cinema in Nou Barris will be poorer than the average customer in Sarrià<sup>[4]</sup>, but there is no defined line between the two groups; neither will consist exclusively of owners, politicians, and their wives and both groups are probably watching the same film, a radically significant difference with the prior epoch.



It is even clearer that the Marxist definition of classes is no longer in effect. If we understand classes as a difference in the relation to the means of production, currently very few people are actually owners of anything. Nearly all the means of production are in the hands of banks or corporations whose directors, that is to say, the wealthy, earn a wage. An incredibly high wage, but a wage nonetheless, and if they don't do their job well, they can be fired (even democratically, by the stockholders). Sometimes they're even sent off to prison. Meanwhile, an ever growing part of the poor are also being paid with stocks in their own companies; even more of them have access to capital, even if it is in miserable quantities. **Rich and poor exist, without a doubt, but tied to the system with mechanisms that are more and more equal.** It is precisely the unification of their relation to the means of production that has dissipated the difference between them.

And if the system no longer needs classes to reproduce itself and if there was neither rupture nor revolution in the dethroning of the bourgeoisie (belying the Marxist thesis, which confused the relation between economic power and political power), by what force does it govern?

[Put another way], if the son of immigrants can become president of France or of the United States, if there are poor people who spend their lives imitating rich people and the system can get rid of any one of its directors, even sending them to prison to reinforce the illusion of justice, how do we recognize the enemy?

**The guidelines of the class war, in those times when we all seemed to belong to one class or another, obviated an important truth right up until the historical moment in which the good proletarians began to convert themselves into revolutionary bureaucrats. The revealed truth is that the enemy is not a class but a point of view, a subjectivity, and all of those who look at their lives from above, whether a banker or an immigrant mother on welfare, have taken the side of domination.**

The *comisiocrats*<sup>[5]</sup> of 15M who feared spontaneity and needed to centralize information and all decision-making spaces; the employees who agreed to salary cuts in order to save the company; the citizens who identify with their politicians; the syndicalists who take on the problematic of raising production and the progressives who take on the problematic of security, crime, and terrorism; anarchists in '36 who got themselves off on the opportunity to join the government and put their supposedly libertarian economic theories into practice<sup>[6]</sup>; the activists who care about their image in the media; the scientists who reduce climate change and mass extinction to carbon levels and temperature statistics.

The enemy is a subjectivity, it is falling into the trap of putting the needs of order above our own desires. The most profoundly rebellious act is to understand oneself as a being that lives through an entire web of other living beings, **or, to put**

**it another way, a being of the world.**

Once we have replaced in our imaginary the commune of citizens or the commune of producers, which is to say that of slaves and machines, with the commune of worldly beings; once we know in our bones that we are the heirs of a tradition of rebellion against a process of colonization begun in a first instant *by ourselves* in the form of autochthonous patriarchies and later carried out by a new State and its nascent capitalism [*ed. – see Return Fire vol.3 pg87*]; then there is nothing else but to struggle with all our strength and across the length of our lives, struggle with more force than that which can be added up in the few years it falls on us to live through, because in our struggle we concentrate a continuity of rebellion that has lasted centuries and will last for centuries more.

Once we wipe that colonization clean from our beings and understand as something alien and imposed all thinking linked to the State, including the most democratic, the most civic, the most progressive, our utopias will no longer betray us like so many times in the past. Once we understand not only the hierarchies but also *order, democracy, production, equality, and unity* as a violent imposition, all the recuperators in our midst will start to look like invading Martians, and it will be that much more difficult for them to trick us. **For all these reasons the communication and diffusion of other imaginaries and a history of our own is vital.**

The social war is this: a struggle against the structures of power that colonize us and train us to view the world from the perspective of the needs of power itself,

through the metaphysical lens of domination, in which the universe has a center and follows laws and can be quantified and assigned value. The prize for winning the social war is not physical (the taking of factories and land) but metaphysical (the reappearance of the world).

### The Social War in the Beginning

Having come to this point, we can assume that in the beginning, we are quite alone in our social war. The few places where there is general support for a struggle against progress and order tend to be indigenous territories where people still remember their colonization, have never surrendered to it and have collaborated with it less than have the people of fully conquered lands. In the West, the few generalized struggles also have something to do with anticolonial struggles, as in Euskal Herria [the Basque Country], Ireland, or among the descendants of slaves in North America, but given that for a long time they have understood their anticolonial struggle in national terms, they have swallowed the metaphysic and the social relations of their colonizers and, as such, are fighting to reproduce another model of the dominant civilization, with a different flag and other holidays.<sup>[7]</sup>

To fight against a colonization of which hardly any popular memory remains is, in the beginning, to appear crazy. In a schizophrenic society, the most coherent<sup>[8]</sup> people must lack shame. Only the boldest person can be the first to break a norm when they see that norm is oppressive. In an age when very few people understand themselves as combatants in a social war, they will be isolated and as such they will think affinity is the most important characteristic in their struggle. Simply to exist and begin to gain visibility, companions will have to defy the social peace, which means having a disposition towards antisocial attitudes.

These isolated rebels will grow stronger creating ties with other rebels who live in other neighborhoods, other towns, or other cities. Thus they can multiply their strength, exchange ideas, avoid isolation, protect themselves from repression, in sum: create a small tribe or nomadic commune that moves across a mute and sterile social terrain. **Yet by seizing the strategy necessary for survival, they place an obstacle in their path, which many struggles have never managed to surpass.** Knowing only the relations of affinity, they become incapable of breaking with the isolation created by the mediatic State and by the conservative customs of society itself.

In a city with many companions, a tendency forms, among others, to substitute intra-neighborhood networks

with extra-neighborhood networks only among people from *the scene*.

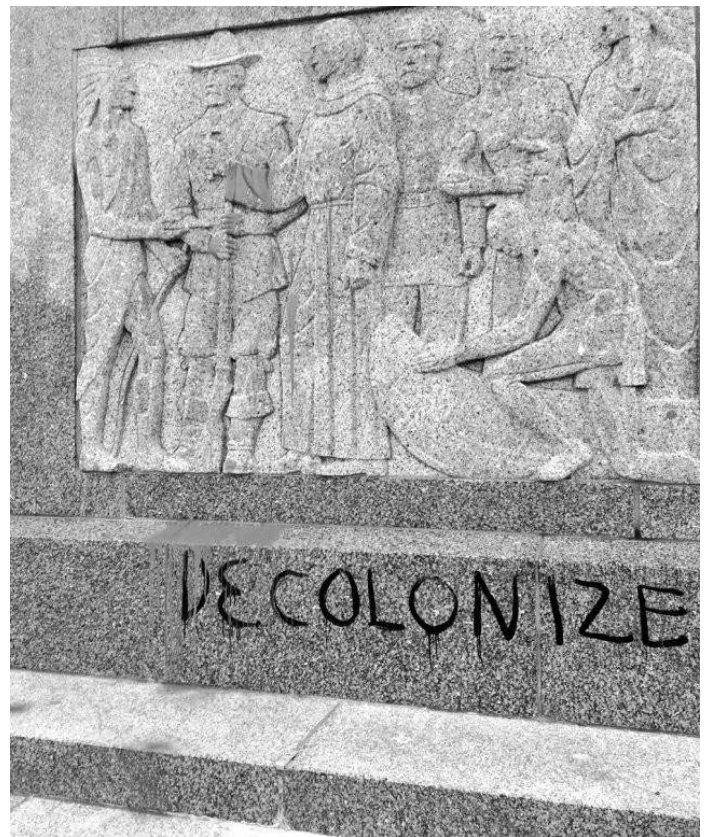
To create relationships in the neighborhood, that is, natural instead of arbitrary ones,<sup>[9]</sup> it is necessary to behave in a surprisingly old-fashioned way, talking with neighbors about family and the weather, baking them cakes, inviting them over to eat, taking care of their kids, asking their help to fix the refrigerator or move a mattress. And above all this attitude cannot come from a pragmatic calculation designed to create a network between anarchists and normies, to “build the neighborhood,” rather it must arise because you sincerely miss the lost commune. This is “appearing in the lives of the others”.

Someone who is not motivated to get to know their neighbors, which is to say a more antisocial person, is not capable of creating an intra-neighborhood network. But they are capable of doing something equally important: fomenting the struggle and the combative, antisocial spaces that attract all the other freaks, isolated ones, losers, and solitaires who always constitute the struggle in ages when the State is strong enough to fake a lack of real problems.

### Society in Rupture

And when the bold and isolated have achieved the exhumation of the social peace – or if this is achieved by spontaneous events – and the others begin to take to the streets and question the dominant order, which is to say, when there is a social rupture or at least an affective rupture with normality, what do those who have already spent a long time rebelling do?

They will be much better positioned if they have already worked towards resolving the tension between their social and antisocial attitudes, if they have already begun to appear in the lives of the others and learned how to act in heterogeneous spaces; but also if they already have a strong practice of attack to supply the new



Minneapolis, U.S.A.; colonial monument symbolically blood-splattered and tagged

struggle with weapons adequate for sabotaging order.

It is normal that in the season of the rupture, more rebels will approach social positions, seeking complicity outside of the traditional affinities. In this way they can play the important role of finding confluence between the different conflicts, eroding the single-issue alienation with which mediatic democracy disciplines legal movements. And within this new conflictivity born in the collectivization of all the complaints that before were monopolized by progressives, within this new totality of antagonisms, the companions disposed to put themselves alongside the others will be able to carry out a critical participation and spread anarchist visions and tactics. But if they trick themselves and fall into populism – which is to say, forget who they are, forget their heritage of thousands of years of struggle, in order to accept the democratic prejudices that will make it easier for them to communicate with people still immersed in normality – they will betray the struggle and betray themselves.

In the moment of populism and possibilism, the antisocials have the vital role of keeping alive the idealism that the companions who are forgetting the goal of the struggle have lost; of provoking; of making impossible any pact with normality; of continuing to attack and destroy; of going farther and ridiculing any self-interested pragmatism.

Often the ruptures don't last long or spread<sup>[10]</sup>. Anarchist interventions can sabotage the recuperators who attempt to neutralize them; they can bring more fuel to the fire by transmitting experiences of self-organization and attack. In the moment of rupture, those who remain in their antisocial position cannot respond with agility, and those who reject their old antisocial position will disappoint themselves when the situation calms down again, if they do not betray it first. Both attitudes are necessary to confront the true question.

### Who Are We?

All the terms they have given us to answer this question are inadequate. We need to reconstrue the web of signifiers itself, the grammar that operates invisibly between the proffered elements. As [Michel] Foucault points out in *Les Mots et les Choses*, in the classical age (the 17th century), the sign stops being a worldly form and loses its affinity and organic relation with the signified. Previously, there was a fundamental grammar that rested on a magical vision of the world based on sympathies and symmetries that served to justify the established order. We can imagine – and there are archaeological traces – an even older fundamental grammar resting on a magical order in which the power of transformation was within everyone's reach, in contrast to the Renaissance [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.4 pg54*], when the world, although magical, was an already written text and the only magic consisted in discovering it.

The new rationalism facilitated an aggressive change in the established order, another step away from the world and towards alienation. Language became an arbitrary species, something to be analyzed outside of its terrestrial context. The knowledge of the new science achieved its ideal form in the chart, the encyclopedia, the zoo: a neutral space, objective and even invisible in which to expound a series of units ordered in accordance with a logic that hides the violence that uprooted them from their organic relation with the world [ed. – see *A Green Anarchist Critique of Science*]. And if in recent years the sciences have begun to show an interest in spontaneous orders, in the network of relations and interactions between things, it is not because they have begun to see the world, but because they have fully taken the machine apart, scrutinized its elements to the umpteenth degree and now are beginning to put it back together again and get it running so that everything functions according to their commands. It is no longer a question of capturing some or many elements from the world and using them as tools for the good of the economy, but of reconstituting the world as a great machine [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.4 pg73*].

“The insurrection is the meeting of society at the barricades assembled from the smashed remains of everything that isolates us. For me it is a vital concept in the anarchist vision of revolution, and it is something that we must prepare the ground for and fertilize at every moment, even and especially when it seems like the wrong moment. Just as the anarchists of Spain would never have been able to resist Franco's coup [ed. – see *Who Is It?*] and create space for a revolution if the *pistoleros* [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg80*] had not irresponsibly embarked on a course of armed struggle a decade earlier, I think the anarchists in Greece facilitated a social insurrection when they wed their uncompromising and illegal approaches with recognition of the importance of communicating with society, in the years before December 2008 [ed. – see *The Exharchia Commune Rises & Defends Itself*]. The ability to be antisocial allowed them to adopt a course Greek society was not ready for, and the need to be social brought them back to the people who would eventually rise up, because the insurrection is a function of society and not of a political movement, as important as those movements may be in the development of necessary social characteristics. The anarchist participation in those movements, because it was both critical and enthusiastic, won a greater visibility for anarchists and their ideas. Simultaneously, the fact that the anarchists had never succeeded in consolidating as a single movement seems to have helped them immensely to diversify and spread and include a greater portion of society [ed. – see *'Combative Solidarity'*]. And in December, the lack of a single program and the diversity of strategies made the task of police repression impossible. What the rebellion in Greece shows, as do the rebellions in Kabyliya, Oaxaca, and China, is that although insurrection becomes second nature to everyone and vanguards can only get in the way, the insurrection does not spontaneously provide the people with what they need in order to go from insurrection to revolution. We still have to find the answers to certain questions, and those of us who never go back to normality, those of us who keep dreaming of freedom, need to suggest and deploy these answers when the moment comes. Once we've burned everything, how do we reveal and attack the *social relationships* that underpin capitalism and the State? What structures and infrastructure can we target that will weaken the counterinsurgency without putting society in a passive disaster mode, waiting to be rescued? How do we help other people believe in another world they would be willing to fight for, and to spread visions of stateless, communal societies that begin now? [...] Spontaneity is a crucial element without which the insurrection would not exist, but spontaneity is not a God that will deliver us from Egypt if we walk through this desert for long enough. The anarchists, doing what they always do, miss strategic opportunities that previously had never been possible. The apolitical people, exercising secret desires, will have their spirits crushed when a temporary return of order prevents them from being the selves they only just discovered, and with the help of this demoralization the temporary return of order will win the appearance of being permanent. But order is never permanent. Although we may never achieve the world we want, the very dynamics of control and rebellion ensure that we will never lose and the State will never win. Either we will destroy it, or we will continue fighting against it and troubling its pathological dreams forever. Nature itself is chaotic, making total control impossible. We may not have ultimate defeats and they may not have ultimate victories, but there are steps forward and steps backward.”

– *What Greece Means (To Me) For Anarchism*

Together with this change, human beings have ceased to be a perfect reflection of a divine order in the world and they have been converted into, on the one hand, beings that have nothing to do with the world because they have surpassed it<sup>[11]</sup>, and on the other hand, biological machines made of the same raw material as the entire dead and mute universe.

The prior Christian order was based on categories of identity that were transparent and simple, as useful for the rebels as for the authorities. Everything was based on the dichotomy between good and bad (believers and infidels) or in one's position within the social hierarchies. The first class of each category was very easy to turn

around. In the rebellions against feudal order and incipient capitalism, rebels seized the torch of the believers, they signaled the authorities as the evil ones and it was in the name of God that they burned priests, disemboweled counts, and proclaimed the free commune, “the world turned upside down”. Regarding the second class, the hierarchies of the age also delimited the lines of war; it would not be possible to be part of the aristocracy or the church – which would mean owning the lands of others and directly involving oneself in administering their oppression – and also rebel against that system.<sup>[12]</sup> In fact, it was the new bourgeoisie – who had no defined place in the old classifications

but could only be understood as belonging to the ranks of the oppressed given their lack of noble blood or position in the Church – who diverted the struggles that almost destroyed Authority and directed them towards the formation of the current system.

In contrast, **all the categories within which we understand ourselves today serve to hide the fracture lines of the social conflict.** None of them contain all of those who must struggle, on one side, and all that we must destroy, on the other. *Citizen/foreigner*; obviously not. *Man/woman*; neither [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg35*], unless the ones from SCUM<sup>[13]</sup> are right, a possibility I would not be biologically capable of ascertaining nor asserting. *Human/animal*; on the most morbid days, it would seem to be valid, but who will administer the revolutionary genocide if not ourselves? Such a question reveals the incapacity of this category to illuminate a criterion for liberation. *People/government*; first democracy and then fascism have obscured this distinction to the point of converting it into a mere demagogic trick. *Worker/owner*; it excludes the invisible ones who still resist the logic of production and it obviates the fact that the work that animates workers will always dominate them, even if they organize it themselves [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg59*]. Besides, many owners work and many workers receive such privileges that they act more like owners. *Rich/poor*; but just until recently, the European masses thought they were rich.

Currently, there are no categories that help us understand our history, our relation with the system and our desire for liberation. The closest to this last criterion would be an ideological category, an “ism”. But it is not our adherence to a doctrine that defines our relation with the system, our common history, and the rebel desires we express to a greater or lesser degree! The category of “anarchist,” perhaps the most pure, does not approach the “good” of yesteryear because tying the moral value to the ideology creates a moralism and a possibility of vanguardism incompatible with anarchy; what’s more, the majority of people who create and who will create anarchy are not anarchists.

Beyond the given categories, one finds an entire process of uprooting that invades all the spheres of existence. They have done so much to make us forget who we are, to leave no word nor memory that might illuminate a pure being that existed before all their processes of colonization and that can still communicate with us through all the thick mists of history! We can only imagine when the mistake began.

**As we have noted, in the continent of its birth capitalism did not replace a**

**libertarian utopia, but another complex of hierarchies with fewer possibilities for control.** There are many people on other continents who can claim a free commune that was crushed by capitalism – a *before* to reconstruct – but those of European descent<sup>[14]</sup> (or Asian in the great majority of cases<sup>[15]</sup>) cannot. In the European case, capitalism arose from a civilization divided into a series of feudal territories and cities with distinct balances of power between authorities and people, all loosely united by the Catholic hierarchy. The latter was a collective attempt by a decentralized network of elites to safeguard the fragments of the dream of domination of the fallen Roman Empire [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.4 pg76*], which itself was a logical evolution of the democratic Roman Republic, which was a bold project of warlike brotherhoods of Italic tribes, a society with very little family hierarchy (perhaps less than any other society in the world that has ended up creating a State), a very free society according to the patriarchal-occidental concept of freedom<sup>[16]</sup>. Why did they favor warfare and minimize feminine spaces within the *civitas*? Why did they unburden themselves of wide and defined family relations (the clan, segmentary lineage) but without creating another concept of the collective, moving instead towards an atomization and privatization of the earth and tolerating a weak aristocracy that evolved in parallel with the brotherhoods? We could ask similar questions of the Germanic tribes that conquered Rome but quickly assumed its dream, already having much in common. But in no case will there be a definitive answer.

**Nor can we give the easy answer that “we are human beings and human beings are like this,” because in the same history we find the silenced role of the Slavic and Celtic tribes who for the most part did not seek to erect a State in the Roman style as the Germanic tribes did; rather many of them resisted the empires of the day and also resisted the Church<sup>[17]</sup>.** In 983, when the Slavic inhabitants of the place where we now find Berlin rebelled against the Germanic nobles that had installed themselves atop them, like parasites<sup>[18]</sup>, they killed or kicked out the priests and nobles and afterwards lived in peace: horizontal, pagan, and free. Two centuries later, in the year 1147, the Church had to declare a Crusade against them to reconquer them and subject them to authority.

Though there is not a final answer to the question, “Who are we?”, we can approach the truth by *better understanding what they have stolen from us* in order to convert us into the lost beings we currently are. As such, we should arrive at a better understanding of capitalism. Contrary to the official history, which is believed by many anticapitalists, capitalism did not arise from “mercantilism” in the 18th to 19th centuries. We gain nothing by understanding capitalism in this way, dividing history into symmetrical phases just because. On a global level, there was a great change whose defining features appeared and achieved hegemony between the 15th and 17th centuries. It was a heavy blow, the invention of a new social motor of power that would impel all the subsequent changes in the forms of social control. We inhabit a completely different reality if we understand the current system as one that flowed or evolved naturally out of the prior one, and not as something that was violently imposed in accordance with specific strategies during a particularly agitated age of social war.

If Adam Smith [ed. – *Scottish philosopher and author of 'The Wealth of Nations', the first modern work of economics and the foundation of free market theory*] identified capitalism as something distinct from mercantilism, it is because he was constructing the ideology of capitalism, which needed to hide its roots in the war against the communes in the colonies and in Europe, and portray its creation as a free contract between isolated individuals in an already existing commoditized terrain, as though it were something natural.

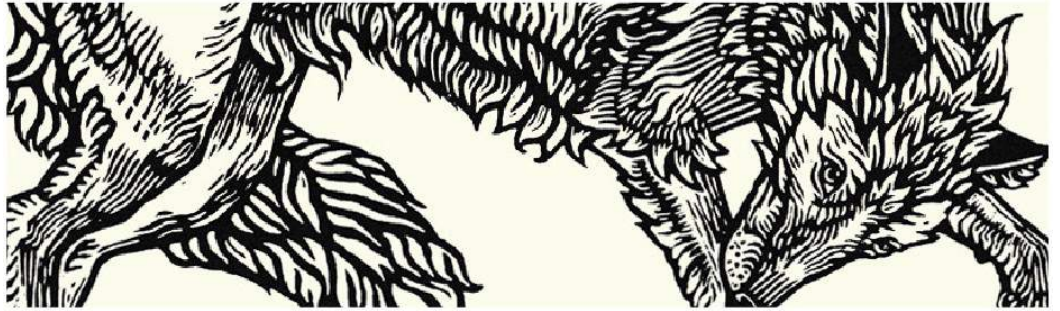
It was between the 15th and 17th centuries that banks appeared and extended their power. It was then that money ceased to be a symbol of exchange – a token



A warrior of the Pictish Celts (of what's now Scotland) who repelled the Roman expansion; Celts are known more for their legacy in Wales, on Eire, and in Brittany than on Mann, in Galicia and in Asturias

commissioned by a king to authorize and quantify commerce in order to appropriate a share, as it had been since its invention by the first states [ed. – see *'Rejoin the Circle'*] – and began to be the principal form of production in itself, the parthenogenic creation of value, debt, and

speculation. As such it was then that speculation and price inflation began, first with food, creating a new mechanism of blackmail. It was then that the institution of wage labor as we currently understand it appeared, something inseparable from the forcible theft of self-sufficiency, a process that also began in the same epoch with the



installment of the old Roman laws that privatized communal land and with the beginning of enclosures [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.4 pg55*] carried out to appropriate such land. This was also the beginning of the criminalization of poverty and an unprecedented intensification of the role and techniques of the governing structures in regulating and disciplining daily life and reproduction. At the same time, within the same process of the formation of the new State, colonialism was impelled, something qualitatively distinct from the antique forms of imperialism and within which slavery was linked to wage labor, enabling its mercantilization (slaves produced above all goods for the consumption of the new workers, thus subsidizing their cheap labor). They did the same thing with the new feminine labor [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg8*].

In the face of all this, the changes of the Industrial Revolution and the end of mercantilism are more a question of degree and new techniques, just as neoliberalism constitutes a change that arose from the very same capitalist bases.

It is necessary to understand that capitalism did not arise as an evolution of an earlier homologous system. It is necessary because we should understand biopower<sup>[19]</sup> as a type of power that is completely new and innovative and that supplies the State with previously unimaginable capacities; because we should understand the strategic role of the State and how close we came once to destroying it; because we should understand the true bases and principles of capitalism unencumbered by free market ideology.

There is now nothing beneath these bases. Reality itself has been transformed and what was lost was the world, the interconnectivity of beings, and with it, the knowledge of who we are. We could aspire to be the “creative nothing” of Stirner [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg92*], the “species beings” of Marx [ed. – see *New Technologies, Extraterrestrial Exploitation & the Future of Capitalism*], or the “future primitives” of Zerzan [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.4 pg92*]. But for now, those are proposals and not realities nor the memory of another reality.

**The matter of knowing who we are demands the creation of a new “we,” a “we” that positions itself by way of the negation of a “they,” an enemy. And this enemy is the rationalist, democratic, and civilized way of seeing the world. We cannot use their ethical guidelines. We cannot position ourselves within their legality. We are not their citizens, we are not the inhabitants of a country that has simply been occupied, as though capitalism were just a bad neighbor and not the basis for our existence. As such, championing “independence” does not suit us<sup>[20]</sup>. The idea of self-defense carries with it the possibility for coexistence. Better would be the certainty that our existence spells their destruction.**

[W]e are our loss, we are everything they have stolen from us. Only this can signal to us what we might be in a free world. Only this brings us together with all the beings dominated and colonized by Capital, without using a false populism to constrain those who are already at war. All of us who are living beings – who are not machines, bureaucrats, police, or voluntary slaves – have something in common: they have stolen the world from us, the commune, the clean air, the forest, the stars, the celebrations of equinox and solstice, the day and the night free from the chains of hours and minutes [ed. – see *Memory as a Weapon; The Tyranny of the Clock*], freedom of action, the running of our bodies and lives and memories. If we define “we” as our loss, we join with the others, with those who do not struggle yet, without letting them dissuade our actions by being a passive majority. If we identify ourselves with our loss, we break with the categoric isolation imposed on all those who defy the roots of the system, and we signal a path of struggle away from dialogue and towards the recovery of all we have been deprived of[...]

### **Not Horizontal, But Circular**

We need to develop a consciousness of who we are, an identity that constitutes a circular motion. For every escape from the prison society [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg7*], we need to undertake an infiltration to smuggle in more metaphorical weapons, carry out ideological sabotage, and then

flee with more people. **The new experiences of self-organization, the new attempts to create the commune, must return to the dominated terrain to infiltrate in the imaginary of the people who remain totally colonized.** Each rural project must maintain links with the city. Each anarchist idealism must contaminate itself in the cloudy waters of the social movements. Our future is just as much the contamination as the reclaimed soil. We will only finally be born in full when the monuments of State and Capital lie in ruins. Meanwhile, we cannot be more than the negation of their system, the fragments of a suppressed memory, the frustrated yet tenacious desire for freedom.

Yet knowing that their system is alien to us, we will know that we mustn't fight like good citizens, but like barbarians, bandits, gangs, *antisistema*<sup>[21]</sup>. We do not have leaders nor authorities nor followers; what we have are companions, including trees, lovers, children, friends, neighbors, earth, all the beings that comprise the web in which we live. A right cannot be eaten, a law does not allow you to breathe, a boss does not clean the house with you. All of those who guarantee the illusory mode of life of the citizen are worthless.

[...] In the city and in the country, we have to recreate a bond with the earth and proclaim the new communes. But we cannot repeat the mistake of confusing a commune with a milieu that hides its lack of material-affective relations behind a façade of politico-aesthetic relations. **Each time we create a commune, we also have to flee from it,** in order to take it everywhere, to infiltrate ourselves into the daily life of the others, to choose *open imperfection over closed perfection*, to include the obedient and timid in our subversion.

Given that the people who are not currently struggling will not become impassioned by our commune, the latter will always remain half-finished, incomplete, abandoned. This is good. We cannot let ourselves be enclosed. As such, we do not aim for self-sufficiency, as this is a lie as long as the State exists. It is better to only achieve a partial self-sufficiency because the important thing is not to tie ourselves down with the illusion that we have left the system behind, but to recover the knowledge and abilities that late capitalism

has stolen from us. Today, operating an invention as complex as a metro train is as easy as operating an elevator. Through industrialization and then automation, capitalism has robbed us of the knowledge we once had to feed ourselves, educate ourselves, heal ourselves, provide ourselves with home and clothing, take care of ourselves, transport ourselves. That knowledge was our direct connection to the world when it still existed. We need to recover it in order to recover the world.

[...] What we want is to recover our lives in a struggle that breaks with their civilization. In the city we will squat vacant lots for gardens and in the countryside we will cultivate, not to achieve full food sovereignty now, but to recover the ability to feed ourselves, once it is actually possible, and above all to influence the reality of the others. We will learn self-guided medicine and crafts to facilitate our lives in struggle and to serve as an open invitation to everyone else: *desert life in the market already, in the commune we take good care of ourselves!* But these projects of self-organization cannot serve as the first step in a process that will replace capitalism, as the partisans of de-growth<sup>[22]</sup> believe. Capitalism will never permit itself to be replaced because it is not a blind or unconscious structure. It has already devoured whole societies that offered idyllic examples of how to live in a cooperative way. Capitalism must be destroyed.

[P]eople do not remain obedient for lack of examples of freedom, because they believe logically that no other life is possible. They believe because they are afraid to defy the system that dominates them but also keeps them alive. The logic, the reasons, are all just justifications.

The State is an addiction and a cautious bet. The difference between an example and the imaginary is that an example of anarchy tries to convince, based on the supposition that people live according to their ideals and their own choices, which is not the case. The imaginary is a tool. People surrender because they are dependent on the system. Animating an anarchist imaginary returns to people a tool that is vital for the self-organization of life.

**But the imaginary does not feed off of perfect examples of utopia that prove the possibility of another life. The imaginary feeds off of questions and contradictions, not complete answers.**

[W]ith the discourse of progress and the identity of the "civilized," [anarchy] was

separated from "us" and forcibly liquidated. No more perfect examples of anarchy are needed. What we need are imperfect examples that interrupt the social peace, visibilize conflicts and awaken people's imaginary. They will be more useful if they are *imperfect and near* than *perfect and far away*, already separated by an ideological enclosure that signals them as an element of an alien reality.

Identifying ourselves with our loss, we always move far away from capitalist normality and towards utopia, but at the same time we return to those who stay within normality, because they also comprise a part of our loss. [...] The antisocial tension is this: a balance between loving people for what they could be and sometimes are; and hating them for the indignity they swallow, the heights they refuse to reach.

### Dissidents of Utopia

But the antisocial tension is not a mere double line that has its strategic function in the current situation. It is a contradiction one feels in their guts. It is the curse of solitude and the rejection of any limit. The antisocial or individualist concept of liberty is so extreme that it cannot be programmatic; it is not practical. But it is exactly such an impractical contradiction that we need in order to avoid the monstrosities of rationalism! **The rationalist revolutionary is the most frightful horror history has ever seen: having overturned the entire world, he [sic] has the possibility to order all the contradictions of nature and put in practice the dictatorship of abstractions**<sup>[23]</sup>.

[...] An antisocial tension will exist in any future. Many anarchists fight because we are very sensitive to the imposition of norms. Born in an antiauthoritarian utopia, we would still see much hypocrisy and imposition. Above all we reject the idea of a utopia in which rebellion is outdated and unnecessary. We don't believe in a rebellion that will abolish the need to rebel, to transgress. Knowing that the only perfection is chaos<sup>[24]</sup>, we will be unable to create a new authority[...]

### Militants or Warriors?

Nonetheless, we do not struggle to facilitate the struggle for anyone else. We struggle for our own freedom and to avenge our dead. We are not the militants of an organization or movement that will install the utopia. We struggle to aid others only insofar as they form a part of ourselves.

In certain aspects, or in the case of certain individuals if they are more egoist, we fight for our unique desires, to learn and to grow; in other aspects we fight for the community that sustains our lives and joys,

the community that exists as a memory and as a hope, that contradicts capitalist alienation even though it does not exist in our daily lives due to its continuous decimation<sup>[25]</sup>.

The pacification achieved by democracy often directs us towards a fetishization of violence. And although pacifism is an irremediable weakness [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg16*], aggressive attitudes can assume an exaggerated importance in our circles.

It is less important to be militant than to know who we are. The workers movement in France, for example, is very militant. They claim the use of sabotage and take their bosses hostage. But they fight to defend or achieve the dignity of being Frenchmen [ed. – and elements have been known to repress those fighting differently; see *Clarification on the Attack on the CGT Headquarters & on the Topic of 'Anonymous Disassociation'*]. In general they have accepted the national idea, their particular social contract, and there the State is stronger than in other European countries, except those where the people accept the national idea and are also conciliatory instead of militant (e.g. the Netherlands or Germany). Aggressivity within labor struggles does not threaten the power of the State because it occurs on a stage that forms part of the national idea.

Building up in ourselves a great capacity for violence, at least we recover the possibility to struggle, but we exclude those people who by nature are not combative. **The disgraceful truth is that many of the historical strategic debates in libertarian circles have been nothing but the distinct socio-emotional needs clamoring for their prioritization within a struggle that obliges us all to choose one and renounce the others.** People whose blood boils opt for insurrectionalism; the patient ones who place importance on the opinions of others choose syndicalism; impatient and creative people find their solution in individualism; and those who want to quickly solve the problems that people suffer seek their path through a certain activism. But strategies cannot be a question of character. It shouldn't be like this.

There are severe and serious critiques that must be made of syndicalism's concept of production, Iberian insurrectionalism's idea of informality or Italian insurrectionalism's antirepressive practice, the leftism of activism, and so on. But each of these practices has turned into the refuge of a certain type of person, in a milieu where they can satisfy the emotional need that impelled them to struggle, be it the need to find affinity, to communicate with more people surpassing the barriers of normality and isolation, to attack power and destroy

“Many anarchists seem blind to the real spirit of Authority, and they cling to central values of Western civilization, like monotheism, objectivity, the right of intervention. There are many different kinds of people, people with different needs, so it follows that there should be many anarchist strategies. But we Western anarchists too often see differing strategies as evidence that one side is right and the other is wrong. We make a dichotomy or a crusade where there should be a tension or a balance. We may not believe in one God, but we still believe in one Truth, and we also think we have the right of the missionary to impose this truth on other people. I think this is a reason that nearly all anarchists are white. The tradition is Eurocentric, and we don't listen enough to other people, don't allow other people to adopt anarchism to their needs without denouncing them.”

– Void Network interview with Peter Gelderloos

a deceitful peace, to ease the suffering of others. Given that each of these practices scorns the character of the others, each must also defend itself from the criticisms no matter how unreasonable they become.

*Any strategy that does not embrace human heterogeneity is destined to fail.*

On the one hand, as the first weeds, those of us who fight, now and always, are different from those who only begin to fight during a rupture. On the other hand, there is no sense in constructing our struggle in a way that excludes those who do not have the heart of a militant. Anarchosyndicalism and insurrectionalism both have committed the error of underestimating all that is not militance, whether that is the militance of the revolutionary organization or the militance that sustains an informal continuity of acts of negation of the existent.

[...] **The important thing is to find a rhythm we can sustain and thus not become the very ones to destroy us.** Among us, there have always been the more beautiful companions – the more sensitive, anxious, or brave – who transform their lives into roses of fire, who will burn themselves in order to set all the lies alight, who will explode in bomb blasts in order to sound the furious beating of our heart: *here we are, still and always.*

But it is we who will guard their beauty, those of us who receive their gift. We shouldn't continue building a martyrology that teaches the hasty path, the suicidal path, as the only one

of value. We are going far. If we attack from a place of anxiety and impatience [ed. – see **'At the Root of My Survival'**], out of desperation, we will lose our strength when we do not produce immediate results, when the inevitable repression falls.

[...] The truth is we are fascinated by the image of being a few against the State. We have assumed our isolation, our antagonism with society, to the point of maintaining it. We adore a Ravachol<sup>[26]</sup> more than a Louise Michel<sup>[27]</sup> because we identify more with him who declared war on society and fought with a few affines, than with her who moved among barricades, assemblies, and neighborhoods, who did not only fire from bulwarks but also cured people or moved them to action.

The State has moods. It can go through conciliatory and arrogant phases. It does

not always act in its best interest. The mode of attack of a Ravachol demands a strong response from the State, because such a mode questions and ridicules the State's strength. Even if it is in a conciliatory mood, it will have to quickly respond with repression to preserve the illusion of its monopoly on force. Arrogance always provokes an arrogant response.



“WE HAVE MAINTAINED A SILENCE CLOSELY RESEMBLING STUPIDITY”: anarchist Niel Robert's graffiti near his 1982 suicide bombing of the much-protested Police Computer Centre in Wanganui, Aotearoa, then considered a groundbreaking development in surveillance; currently, CCTV sensors in Wellington analyse behavioural movement and even detect graffiti paint fumes, while New Zealand police monitoring culminated in a major 'anti-terror' operation against indigenous militants and their anarchist accomplices in 2007

**But we cannot lie:** the attacks of all the Ravachols of history fill us with joy and hope. The word “arrogance” stems from ancient Greek and refers to the

combative posture of a warrior who attacks one who is more powerful. We need arrogance to inspire us, to remind us that even though we are alone, it is always possible to attack and we are braver than the miserable cowards who work as thugs for the State.

But arrogance, if it is the only mood we are capable of, hides those elements necessary to survive repression. We also must be sensitive, humble, cautious, and attentive to the State's changes of mood and its probable reactions to our attacks. [...] It would be better if those of us who cannot live in their false peace because of the anxieties that push us to struggle tirelessly were, instead of militants, warriors: the warriors of a community that does not yet exist, but a community that also includes people with the heart of a healer, mother, artist, grower, builder, storyteller, and even the people who reject community itself, who question it and leave it in order to seek out the heights and depths Novatore spoke of [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg89**], those who seek to form Stirner's union of egos [ed. – see **Symbiogenetic Desire**]. A community of all living beings, of all the people who have refused or might one day refuse to be machines and slaves. All the others, those who prefer to be functionaries, will die, either because they attempt to imprison and kill us, or because they will never learn to feed themselves without capitalism, because they believe food comes from the supermarket.

In this path, the most important thing is not one or another attitude of struggle, but the memory and the projection of who we are.

**[...] The insurrection cannot feed itself in that sterile terrain that suffers a lack of imaginaries. We can burn everything that constitutes an obvious aggression against our lives – police stations, banks, government offices, and perhaps, if we are very smart, the television station – but we will hold back before the task of transforming that which maintains our survival in an abusive and manipulative way: the food industry, work, closed and single-family dwellings, transportation, institutional education and healthcare; that is to say, the gears of the capitalist system.**

[...] The path towards rebel magic can only be pointed out. It consists of discovering our bodies, exploring the mysteries of the world, the interconnectivity between the existent, the fact that *we are our relations* – that we are much more than ourselves,

that we live for thousands of years, that history and future mix, that in our own brains memory and imagination are linked, that the earth itself is alive [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.4 pg39*]. It consists of abandoning the philosophy of exchange and value in favor of a philosophy of mutuality and gift [ed. – see *'Anarchist Relations in Practice'*], of recognizing that we do not live through a measured exploitation of resources that surround us; instead we live thanks to the gifts of other beings that also form a part of ourselves, that we should honor with gifts of our own.

It consists of recognizing that we can achieve what we believe impossible, that ten people with enough enthusiasm and bravery can easily realize an attack that a hundred people doubting themselves could never do, that a person who is crazy enough can set five trained riot cops running. **But the craziness that permits us this power is not a calculated bet but a surrendering of oneself to the world, a knowledge that dying is nothing more than returning to the earth.** The crazy rebel is the one who understands herself [sic] as just another element, but instead of being fire or water or air she is the passion for freedom and she will do what her nature demands of her. One such as this cannot be stopped, not even by killing her, because she is not an individual but a spirit that travels from body to body, visiting even the most timid if they know how to open themselves to the world.



[...] When an old lady marches in a protest and imagines the street free of cars and full of gardens; when a young boy lights fire to a shopping center that he and his friends have filled with gas cans and imagines a forest growing out of the ruins; when a mother entertains the fantasy of conducting her own birthing with friends in a free community where her daughter will never know of prison, of marriage, of advertising that assaults her self-esteem, of pollution, of institutional education; when all those worlds flourish parallel to our own, we will be stronger than ever.

[...] We are the bomb in the heart of the machine that wants to grind us up.



“Human regeneration can only emerge from cultural regeneration. (By ‘cultural’ I mean not the system of commodified mediations that currently pass under this term, but freely chosen actions and interactions characterised by spontaneous creativity). The attempt to prompt human regeneration in the absence of cultural regeneration can all too easily result in totalitarianism. Human and cultural regeneration are dialectically interrelated, but the latter provides the all-important context within which the former can succeed. Fredy Perlman, [talking of indigenous resistance to civilisation]: “*The resistance is not primarily a clash of arms[...] The resistance is in the drums, not in the spears; it is in the music, in the rhythms lived by communities whose myths and ways continue to nurture and sustain them...*”

This passage raises the question of the relationship between drums and spears, culture and armed resistance. but we are not in the position of these indigenes: civilisation has deprived us of those things that Perlman sees as the heart of resistance. We have no free communities of individuals, no life-sustaining myths and ways, no substantive community. So we cannot resist in the same way. [...] So what options are left? Clearly, for us, there must be a closer, more informed relationship between the drums and the spears, even if the latter are subordinate to the former. But to forego the spears would be madness. The spears must have their place – but their place remains rooted in the world of the drums. And if the drums no longer sound, then we must beat them. And if we have no drums, we must build them. And if we’ve forgotten how to play them, we must remember or learn again. And if we can’t renew our continuity with the past, then we must make a virtue of our discontinuity and make it all anew.”

– Beyond the Fragments

1. transl. – “Compañeros” is usually translated as “comrades”, though “camaradas” also exists in Spanish. We have decided to use the literal translation, “companions”, to avoid the partisan connotations of “comrade”, and to convey the intimate connotations of “compañeros”, even though these are more pronounced, perhaps uncomfortably so, in English. Perhaps the alternative sticks; we consider it worth a try.

2. ed. – An early kind of grenade which explodes on impact; used in Felice Orsini’s attempted 1858 assassination of French Emperor Napoleon III, then commonly by anarchists in the remaining 19th century in Europe.

3. transl. – In 1893 the anarchist Santiago Salvador carried out an attentat [assassination] in the posh Liceu Theater on Las Ramblas, Barcelona, killing some twenty members of high society. [ed. – To vindicate his companion Paulino Pallás Latorre, a Catalan-Argentinian anarchist whose attentat of a general during a military parade sadly only killed the horse. Coincidentally, the bombs were thrown into the audience during the play “William Tell” which is the same play that the Emperor Napoleon III and his wife were on their way to during the attempt on their life by Orsini over 35 years earlier.]

4. Respectively, a poor neighborhood and a rich neighborhood of Barcelona.

5. transl. – Those who tried to locate power in the dozens of commissions and subcommissions that formed as part of the putrid experiment in direct democracy during the 15M movement. [ed. – The Spanish anti-austerity movement starting on March 15th 2011 which became known as the “indignados”. From ‘From 15M to Podemos’: “Before the 15M movement started, Barcelona had already witnessed a one-day general strike with majority participation, in which anticapitalist discourses were frequent if not predominant, and which resulted in large scale occupations, rioting, looting, and clashes with police, constituting an important step in the reappropriation of street tactics that would make other victories possible in the following years. A combative May Day protest had abandoned the typical route through the city center to snake through several rich neighborhoods, sowing destruction and a small measure of economic revenge. The 15M movement broke out just two weeks later, and its official discourses called for total pacifism and symbolic citizen protests to achieve a better, healthier democracy through constitutional reform. Almost no mention was made, within this official discourse, of the conditions of daily life, of collective self-defense against austerity and the direct self-organization of our survival. But where did this official discourse come from, and how was it produced in such a huge, heterogeneous crowd? 15M wasn’t huge from the beginning. In fact, the first assembly in Barcelona, the first night on Plaça Catalunya, there were just a hundred people present. Some of these were adherents of “Real Democracy Now,” a new group based in Madrid that had produced the original call-out for the countrywide protests and occupations. Their discourse was extremely reformist and made no mention of the growing waves of real protest and social conflict that had been growing in Spain, building off a tradition of struggle that contained a great deal of collective knowledge. This history was absent from their perspective, which was perhaps the only way they could feasibly call for a movement based on pacifism and legal reform. They did mention the “Arab Spring” [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.2 pg87*], above all the uprising in Egypt, but only in the most condescending, manipulative way. They described it as a nonviolent movement, and they portrayed it as



having already won its objectives, when, as is clear now and was clear then for anyone with a radical perspective, the struggle had only begun. [...] Empowerment was little more than a slogan in the plaza. With even a hundred people in an assembly, not everyone can participate. Once the number of participants grew from the hundreds to the thousands, commissions and subcommissions started popping up like mushrooms after a rain. Experienced moderators began directing the assemblies, putting in practice techniques for a modified consensus process that had been developed during the anti-globalization movement. Proposals were developed and consensed on in commissions, then they had to be clearly read out to be ratified by the general assembly. A hundred people, if I recall correctly, could block a decision, and a smaller number could send it back to the commission for more debate. To truly have any meaningful influence on a decision, someone would have to spend two to four hours during the day at a commission meeting to draft the proposal, in addition to the several hours that the nighttime general assembly lasted. More difficult proposals were in commission for days or a whole week, and in any case you had to go to the commission meetings every day if you wanted to make sure that the old proposal wasn't erased by a new one. Clearly, only a small number of people with a certain level of economic independence could participate fully in these directly democratic structures. Even if everyone enjoyed economic independence, the structures themselves necessarily function as funnels, limiting and concentrating participation so that a large, heterogeneous mass can produce unified, enumerated, homogeneous decisions. In any given assembly or commission, certain styles of communication and decision-making are favored, while others are disadvantaged. Direct democracy is just representative democracy on a smaller scale. It inevitably recreates the specialization, centralization, and exclusion we associate with existing democracies. Within four days, once the crowds exceeded 5000, the experiment in direct democracy was already rife with false and manipulated consensus, silenced minorities, increasing abstention from voting, and domination by specialists and internal politicians.”]

6. ed. – Reference to the tragedy of the Spanish Civil War, when ‘anarchists’ upheld democratic government in the name of anti-fascism: “Diego Abad de Santillan, the anarchist economist who was eager to mobilize state power to impose an anarchist economic model [succeeded], partially, in creating an anarchist dictatorship. [...] Catalan President Companys’ personal notes confirm the reality on the streets: if the anarchists had only ignored the government, it would have disappeared, for it had become powerless after workers’ militias defeated the fascist coup attempt. It was the CNT [ed. – see **Memory as a Weapon; The Origins of Victimisation**] that resurrected the government, by accepting dialogue with Companys and then by joining the Central Committee [of Anti-Fascist Militias]” (A Critical Review of Anarchism & the City).

7. The exceptions to this are highly interesting. For example in Val di Susa [ed. – see **Rebels Behind Bars; A Letter from Anarchist Comrade Anna Beniamino about Operation Scripta Manent & More...**], where there is generalized support for a struggle against progress. What elements make its exceptionality possible?

8. transl. – In Spanish, “coherent” is not only internal, as in the coherence of the ideas held or words uttered by a single person, but also refers to whether their ideas and actions cohere; do they walk the talk.

9. Here I use these two words literally. Arbitrary relations are those that are chosen, that is, those of affinity. Natural relations would be those of the family or neighborhood, even though nature itself is a construction [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.4 pg92**], as one can choose how to understand family or where and with whom to live.

10. ed. – “Contrary to what many have written, though an insurrection does meld all those who enter its furnace, it does not surpass identity; in fact pre-existing identities – not political beliefs or courage or material poverty – are generally what determine whether people feel called on to run into that furnace, or to look on in astonishment. For this reason, despite all the poetry and encouragements of insurrectionists, insurrections do not leap national boundaries. Those who considered themselves French did not join the immigrant insurgents of the banlieue [suburban estate ghettos], excepting a small number acting out a conscious political project (some of whom were mugged by the insurgents, and others of whom were accepted). In the Greek insurrection, people who thought of themselves as living beings in struggle against authority saw the protagonists as one melded group; people who saw themselves as Greeks saw them as students, anarchists, and immigrants acting separately. The insurrections that jumped state borders from Tunisia to Syria [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg87**] filled precisely that vessel that gave its name to the revolt, the Arab world. The nation, understood separately from the nationalist projects of European states, is simply the largest imaginary community a person can envision based on their history and their ability to communicate with the world around them. An insurrection, it should be obvious, occurs within the imaginary community of its participants. Knowledge of rebellion, particularly its images, among the population of a neighboring country will destabilize the political authority that seeks to manage them, but that population will not rise up without an independent spark. [...] We could speak here in terms of frictions of distance. The insurrection is as fluid and unrestrained as a great wave, but it does not break on smooth terrain. All sorts of inevitable identities and natural limits to empathy act as barrier reefs or sea dikes to slow or stop the wave. On the one hand, immigration and globalized information create empathic links that subvert these barriers; on the other hand, nationalism, citizenship, and the media mobilize to neutralize the subversions. Radicals and organizers must counteract these measures by proliferating a culture of internationalism and solidarity and promoting decentralized and self-organized media that can spread images and news of revolt across the planet in the face of the selective censorship now in place, in which images of violence are almost strictly associated with insecurity, and rarely with popular challenges to authority” (Here... At the Center of the World in Revolt).

11. The vision of human surpassal of the world is a logical evolution of the vision of the human reflection of the divine, while the materialization of the earth and all the things in it constitutes a rupture with the prior vision of a spirit or animus that unites and lives in everything, although Christians prepared for that rupture by insisting that only humans have souls.

12. The many conflicts between layers of the elite, such as priests, bishops, knights, and kings that characterized the Middle Ages constituted attempts to shift the balance of power but not the way power was understood and reproduced.

13. transl. – Valerie Solanas’ “Society for Cutting Up Men,” a manifesto popular among Barcelona feminists in recent years. [ed. – The notorious text

is actually remarkably lucid in describing the actual inversion of popular stereotypes of the (hetero-) sexist mind (i.e. women = needy and weak, men = strong and independent); what we found as equally disturbing about it as the rampant essentialism is the proto-transhumanist desire for a single-sexed breeding program, as if capitalism’s reproductive technologies have not always been a tool of the patriarchal-scientific establishment – see **Return Fire vol.3 pg26.**]

14. ed. – At least one exception to the historically-successful colonisation of Europeans living indigenous life-ways would be the nomadic Sámi people of Sámpi (northern Scandinavia). They have been seriously undermined by the establishment of national borders (Norway, Finland and Sweden) and historical farming settlements creeping north, and by forced Christianisation, boarding schools and sterilizations, with the usual attendant suicide crisis among the young of a culture undergoing destruction. After Swedish eugenics claimed to prove the ‘inferiority’ of the ‘Laplanders’, the modern Swedish state now want to claim that Sámi is not an ethnicity at all so they can complete their genocide, while still using images of the culture for the tourism industry in a country whose world-famous social democracy was and is build from the proceeds of the mining industry (see **Return Fire vol.2 pg41**) devastating Sámpi (among other projects). On top of industrial forestry, hydro-electric dams, military test ranges and wind parks, like all Arctic indigenous peoples the Sámi are already feeling the effects of industrial society’s global warming.

15. ed. – Again, with some exceptions; see **Fraud, Fantasy & Fiction in Environmental Writing/The Invention of the Tribe/Q.**

16. ed. – At his Anti-University event in London this summer, Peter Gelderloos refers this tradition first to Athenian democracy; which “had – and this was very important to their society – certain visions of freedom and equality. And I say ‘certain’ visions because the caveat is in this case the most important part; this was a very patriarchal vision of freedom and equality. It was equality between men; freedom of citizens. So this gave this sort of warrior class of men the ability to conquer, to take slaves, although that took some time to develop... So within the society itself there had to be this equality among men. [This new democratic state] proved to be in both commercial terms and military terms an extremely effective model for state power, because it could ensure that you could get a much larger percentage of the population actively serving as state agents (supporting what was in the end an imperial project, and a project of dominance, of conquest) much more effectively than these really top-heavy hierarchies based on competing family lineages and based on unassailable privilege and many other factors that weren’t present in this new Greek model of the state. So this obviously has very important ramifications for today, if we understand democracy [as the emergence] of a much more powerful, much more militaristic model of the state; one that was more effective at creating commercial empires. [...] The Romans were extremely patriarchal; and this is another society (like the Greek city states) formed by warrior brotherhoods which had ideas of formal equality (internally) and had ideas of the necessity of decision through assembly, that then became a very effective empire.”

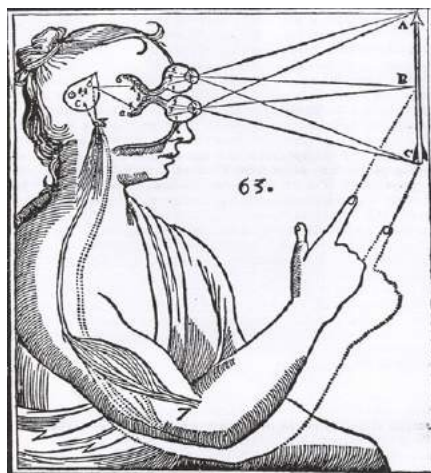
17. ed. – “A destructive mode of being is somehow inflicted at an early age on every child in the Western world. One wants to call it Hebrew or Greek or Christian with Lynne White, but judging from the wreckage of the interiors of China and India, the Buddhists and Hindus offer no helpful

alternative. [...] The poisoned ontology-ontogeny carried into Europe by Mediterranean cultures [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.3 pg87**] between the fall of Rome and the Reformation [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.4 pg54**] was diluted and resisted by the pagans and heathens who were, ostensibly, converted. The desert mind from the Mediterranean rim, a Platonic [ed. – assertion of Greek philosopher Plato that the 'Real' in ideal form lives outside of our possible experience], prophetic, self-centering, dualistic, schizoid, eco-alienating way of being, could not have been less like the Celtic way that it eventually quashed and absorbed. As Japanese philosopher Watsuji Tetsuro has remarked, it is astonishing that a hemisphere of people in the north could believe that their whole existence hinged on things that happened to a small, distant, desert-fringe people two millennia ago. [...] The Protestants might be regarded as hard-liners who could see what the northern pagans were doing to Christianity, the compromises that the Church was making to gain a lease, the whole infiltration into the orthodox religion as described by [Jean] Seznec in *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*. Like the Indians of North America centuries later, who went underground with their religion as the American [ed. – and Canadian, British, Spanish, French...] government sought systematically to destroy their culture, the Britons, Finns, Hungarians, and Germans retained their "superstitions" in private and brought them masked to church. The prelates, in what they thought was a strategy of assimilation, kept the polytheistic holidays, but their success was their own perversion" (Paul Shepard).

18. This is how many States in Europe and Asia began throughout history; influenced by the example of another civilization, a group that we currently understand as an ethnicity [ed. – see **Fraud, Fantasy & Fiction in Environmental Writing/The Invention of the Tribe/Q**] formed as a religious-belluc institution, conquering a neighboring society and installing itself on top to colonize it and convert it into the base of their new State.

19. ed. – "[T]he practice of nation-states and their regulation of their subjects through "an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations." The science of Biopower, by extension, is known as biopolitics. [Miche] Foucault elaborates: "By this I mean a number of phenomena that seem to me to be quite significant, namely, the set of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the human species became the object of a political strategy, of a general strategy of power, or, in other words, how, starting from the 18th century, modern Western societies took on board the fundamental biological fact that human beings are a species. This is what I have called biopower." Biopolitics is thus more simply a science of controlling and managing populations of people using the knowledge of their biological needs and impulses. The focus here is the manipulation of our sensual experience of everyday life, the effective recuperation of an entire species from their era and displaced into an increasingly technocentric and inverted society. One example would be the transition from fascist control to democratic control. Implementing the tools of voting, representation, and state-funded aid to further pacify citizens and implement them within the process of control. Labor unions and other progressive reforms in modern mass society could even be within the interests of power, creating a more passive population, blurring the lines of responsibility for the traumas inflicted by the culture as a whole. The population then feels invested in the flow of capital, even identifying with their productivity. The idea

that a job is not something one does simply to survive, but that one is encouraged to pursue a job that blends leisure with labor, therefore paid hours and unpaid hours are all spent toward the same ends, is another aspect of Biopower. This is, of course, a controversial idea. To imply that today's social democracy is a refinement of yesterday's national fascism would be a tragic and impossible truth for many. Subjectification is the process through which individuals and groups of people are molded and lured into accepted roles and identities by dominating mechanisms and disciplinary technologies as permitted and assimilable by Empire. [...] Today we experience constant subjectification and re-subjectification: In the store I am the shopper, at home, the consumer, or in the kitchen, the cook. Identities such as male and female, gay and straight, hipster, musician, or entrepreneur are all identities as subjects. At the protest, we are collectively channeled into the role of the activist, or even terrorist. In this sense, Empire has successfully and constantly absorbed, or assimilated, dissident elements of society by channeling them into a group that can be either demonized or democratized into the system, thereby eliminating subversive activity. The act of turning individuals into subjects, more generally, is to make them digestible to Empire; they then are circulated between apparatuses as needed by capital as a means toward generalized control. There is a place for everyone, and no one is left out" (*The Ancient Origins of Biopower, Part III: Domestication*).



20. ed. – Presumably a reference to the drive for Catalan independence from the Spanish State; a matter which has of course been very topical once again of late. From elsewhere in the original text: "It is not a coincidence that in the few places where people collectively resisted the witch hunts (and the patriarchal and capitalist advances they represented [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg6**]) are the places with the strongest popular struggles in Europe of the 20th century: Euskal Herria and Eire. [transl. – And without overstepping our bounds as translator, we might also mention the popular resistance in support of heretics throughout the Middle Ages in the Balkans or the proximity of the Cathar territories [ed. – diverse Christian heretics (often with a focus on gender parity, and against taxation by the Catholic Church) against whom in the south of France a crusade was launched by the Pope in 1209, playing a role in the creation and institutionalization of both the Dominican Order and the Medieval Inquisition] to the Pyrenees, and thence to Catalonia.] Neither can it be coincidence that the [European] country that fought most fiercely for its political independence, but did not solidarize internally against the imposition of an even more intensive Christian patriarchy today enjoys an autonomy that means very little and has become extremely

capitalist: Switzerland (we should also mention Scotland, which has a similar history with the presence of Calvinism and a strong participation in the witch hunts, but which was never granted as much autonomy since it lost its wars against England). Capitalism arose as a strategy of social control implanted by the elites who would form the new State (progressive princes with bourgeois and Protestant theoreticians) but it was a renovated patriarchy that allowed it to put down roots and completely change the terrain of existence." We don't know the further thoughts of the authors on this matter, but in an interview one Barcelona anarchist further described the difficulties they were facing during the recent popular push for independence: "One thing that's really really noteworthy is... most people in the street are extremely enthusiastic about it so any criticism of the referendum process will be very difficult to get across[...] [because things are polarized] they'll automatically associate any criticism of the referendum process with a position in favour of the Spanish State, in favour of the historical oppression of Catalan culture and language (I mean it was largely prohibited during the fascist regime; these things are important). If anarchists in the past had never been sympathetic to certain aspects of national liberation (aspects which I think should be important to anarchists [ed. – see **We Can Be Worse Still**]); obviously not any inter-class kind of alliance, obviously not any support for creating a new state, but support for self-organisation of human communities – which also includes linguistic and cultural elements), if none of us had been supporting those struggles in any way in the past, then if all of a sudden we just appear in the streets now when there's a possible rupture then people will very easily see us as just opportunists, with actually nothing to say. In the past few years there's been some anarchist presence [in Catalan liberationist spaces] but definitely not that much, and in part that's also because of the Left (I mean, the Left has been interested more in hegemonic politics and not in entering any real debates, not in receiving criticisms), so overall the independence Left has been really vital in creating the sort of segregation or separation between views which has made it harder to be critical participants in some kind of movement around that. And now we're definitely facing those limitations. And anarchists have been in the streets, without a doubt, but it's just like this overwhelming mass psychology is really hard to deal with and also really really dangerous; I mean if they win independence due to an act of popular disobedience and popular participation, then they'll create a state which is much stronger than the Spanish State, which is suffering a huge crisis of democracy; now you'll have a state in which (at least in the beginning) there is no crisis of democracy, there's a great deal of loyalty, and there's a reduced list of who the public enemy is, there would be a greater ability of the state to repress those public enemies, repress anarchists for example... So if there's fighting in the streets and people see anarchists fighting in the streets, going up against the police, going up against the military if that's an issue [ed. – all of whom's leave was cancelled at the time, though not reported upon], then we'll win more camaraderie, more solidarity, and it might be more difficult for the new state afterwards to repress us, but yeah, it's a difficult situation. [...] It's a situation where it's really hard to defend an anti-authoritarian concept of independence and self-determination without defending [an] authoritarian and ultimately nationalist concept of political independence." Another recent text 'About Catalonia' also stressed the historic legacy of cross-class nationalist alliances: "In a civilized southern Europe, which has been hierarchized for more than two thousand years, which has known the notorious influence of

the Roman Empire [then] the Catholic Church or various Maghrebian civilizations, Catalonia emerged as an important power from the Middle Ages onwards. The First Catalan State was born in 1162, with the unification of several counties previously under the control of local lords. Its court then adopted Catalan as the official language. Later, the region was integrated into the Kingdom of Spain, retaining certain institutional privileges, the fueros, negotiated by its elites for themselves, and not for the beautiful eyes of the miserable, the exploitation of whom they lived off, not without some conspicuous luxury on the part of Lerida, Girona, & co.. This is what we are referring to when we speak of a Catalan nation. It is from this mythical past that the Catalans of today derive their origins. Some "libertarians" fantasize about an ancient autonomy, which obviously does not include those subjects who expressed their anger. There has in fact never been any popular autonomy in the history of Catalonia, if we were to judge the result – the achievements of an opposition to its elites, any more than there's been anything similar in neighboring Provence or Occitania [ed. – on the 'French' side of the Pyrenees]. Everywhere, the historical struggles of the peasants or craftsmen have been confronted with the various fractions of power: those of the monarchy, the Church or the commercial and merchant nobility, which have never ceased to claim and negotiate local privileges as against the central power, against their loyalty towards it. [...] Language, like social organization, is largely derived from the hierarchical relationships of societies in "our" region of the world. There are, of course, certain peculiarities, social practices which may oppose certain forms of power, or power itself, which are especially forged in struggles. But this part of southern Europe is not a region of "peoples" who have preserved a way of life and "autonomous" logic vis-a-vis the external power, as existed in regions of the world where populations of tribal people lived who had not known civilization. It is a territory whose borders have moved, a region of cathedrals and castles, the land of crusades against the Cathars, the City of the Popes, the Inquisition and trade, of colonization. [...] And if among the famous Catalan conquistadores, there are certainly not as many Catalans as Basques, history still recalls sympathetic characters such as Joan Orpí i del Pou, last conqueror of Venezuela, Gaspar de Portolá in Mexico, etc."

21. transl. – "Antisistema" is the word the Spanish press assigned to extralegal political and cultural rebels, principally so as not to visibilize anarchists by mentioning them. It carries with it the odor of dangerous, uncivilized radicals.

22. transl. – "Decrecimiento" refers to an anti-revolutionary and anti-capitalist movement that seeks to slow and then reverse economic growth as a non-conflictive way to transform capitalism. This current could contain anyone from ATTAC [ed. – reformist and anti-combative alter-globalisation group; see **Return Fire vol.3 pg17**] to permaculturists.

23. ed. – "As influenced by rationalistic doctrines as [philosopher Jean-Jacque] Rousseau himself had been, French revolutionaries [of 1789] tried to apply social reason to the human environment in the same way that natural reason, or science, was starting to be applied to the natural environment. Rousseau had worked at his desk; he had tried to establish social justice on paper, by entrusting human affairs to an entity that embodied the general will. The revolutionaries agitated to establish social justice not only on paper, but in the midst of mobilized and armed human beings, many of them enraged, most of them poor. Rousseau's abstract entity took the concrete form

of a Committee of Public Safety (or Public Health), a police organization that considered itself the embodiment of the general will. The virtuous committee members conscientiously applied the findings of reason to human affairs. They considered themselves the nation's surgeons. They carved their personal obsessions into society by means of the state's razor blade. The application of science to the environment took the form of systematic terror. The instrument of Reason and Justice was the guillotine. The Terror decapitated the former rulers and then turned on the revolutionaries. Fear stimulated a reaction that swept away the Terror as well as the Justice. The mobilized energy of bloodthirsty patriots was sent abroad, to impose enlightenment on foreigners by force, to expand the nation into an empire" (The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism).

24. ed. – Again, from 'From 15M to Podemos': "Even during the general assemblies, the chaotic margins could not be extinguished. Many thousands of people boycotted the votes. Some of us refused on principal, as anarchists, to legitimate such farcical exercises of authority in the name of the people, a collective whole that was only effaced by the artificial imposition of unity. Many others didn't vote because they found the assembly boring (much like the child in the classroom who daydreams, not because she [sic] is unintelligent, but because she is, in fact, more intelligent, because she is not engaged by the authoritarian, pacifying method of education). Others because, once the crowds had surpassed fifty thousand, they couldn't get close enough to hear. The margins of the plaza became an unruly country of whispered conversations, criticisms, and occasional heckling. Weren't all these other spaces also decision-making spaces? Don't we make decisions in every moment of our lives? Why is the formalized, masculine space of an assembly more legitimate than the common kitchen, where many decisions and conversations also take place? Why is it more legitimate than the hundred clusters of small conversations and debates that take place during the day, on a small scale, allowing people to express themselves more intimately and more fully? Even if we participate in every formal decision, are these the same decisions we would arrive at in spaces of comfort, spaces of life rather than of politics? Is it possible that our formal selves become a mere representation, a manipulation produced during a few boring hours of meetings that is used to control us during all the other moments of our lives? [...] Again and again in the plaza, we saw a correlation between democracy and the paranoia of control: the need for all decisions and initiatives to pass through a central point, the need to make the chaotic activity of a multitudinous occupation legible from a single vantage point – the control room, as it were. This is a statist impulse. The need to impose legibility on a social situation – and social situations are always chaotic – is shared by the democracy activist, who wishes to impose a brilliant new organizational structure; the tax collector, who needs all economic activity to be visible so it can be reappropriated; and the policeman, who desires a panopticon in order to control and punish. [...] Calling the 15M movement imperfect doesn't cut it. All the oppressive dynamics, all the habits of passivity and authoritarianism in our society followed us into the plaza. But there, in that collective space, we had the opportunity to confront them. The structures of direct democracy only masked or exacerbated those dynamics; they were feeble

attempts to control the underlying chaos. Even some anarchists failed to see this. Like many others, they got distracted by the aura of officiality – the titles and processes, commissions, schedules, and diagrams. All that was a farce. The imposition of an official framework was intended to redirect our attention just the same as it sought to control our participation. Next time, hopefully, we will know not to take it seriously."

25. ed. – Some (though clearly not all) who use the term egoist would consider the two inseparable; see **Symbiogenetic Desire**.

26. ed. – As the Dutch-French anarchist François Claudius Koenigstein was better known, sent to the guillotine in 1892 for a string of bombings including that of the living quarters of the executive of the Public Ministry and the councillor who had presided over the Assises Court during the trial of three imprisoned and tortured anarchists.

27. ed. – "Louise Michel, terror of the bourgeoisie. The bastard child of a twilight aristocrat and a poor servant woman, she grew up in poverty and became a schoolteacher in Paris in the 1860s. She first published a book on education for the developmentally impaired titled, "No more idiots, no more madmen"; colleagues recalled her as a compassionate and radically innovative teacher. Converted to anarchism by another woman who had run a sort of neighborhood Food Not Bombs during the Prussian siege [of wartime Paris], she became one of the fiercest militants of the Paris Commune. Beforehand, she had participated in the Vigilance Committees in Montmartre, which arranged mutual aid for the poor and planned protests against the emperor and later the new republican government. She would first attend the Women's Vigilance Committee, then often would head over to the meeting of the Men's Committee, dressed in male military attire. In early 1871, the new Republican government attempted to disarm the French people to secure its own position. In March, concerned about the rebellious workers who refused to hand over the cannons they used to defend the city against the Prussians, the Republican army marched into Montmartre. Louise Michel is staying at the house of the radicals who are holding on to the cannons. The house is surrounded by soldiers; many are arrested, some killed. The soldiers pay no attention to a woman, who, posing as a nurse, slips out, and then sounds the alarm call, rousing the vigilance committee to the defense of the cannons. A workers militia confronts the soldiers, while old women put their bodies in front of the cannons and contemptuously refuse to be moved. The generals demand that the soldiers fire on the crowd. The soldiers refuse. By the end of the day, the generals are dead and the entire city is rising in revolt. The Paris Commune has begun. On the barricades, Louise Michel fights tirelessly, helping lead the people's defense against the invading army and refusing to surrender. When the city falls and she is finally captured and put on trial, she makes one of the most defiant courtroom statements in history, concluding: "Since it seems that every heart that beats for freedom has no right to anything but a



The banner reads; "NEITHER SLAVES NOR PRISONERS NOR REINTEGRATED Free & Rebellious"

little slug of lead, I demand my share. If you let me live, I shall never cease to cry for vengeance... If you are not cowards, kill me." The court were indeed cowards. Despite having reputedly killed numerous policemen and soldiers, Michel wasn't executed, but instead deported to the South Pacific penal colony of New Caledonia. During her time there, a revolt broke out among the indigenous population; unlike many transported Communards, who side with their captors against the so-called "savages," she supported the rebels, reportedly showing them how to cut telegraph lines to gain an advantage against the French. Pardoned after seven years in exile, she returned to France, greeted by a crowd of thousands upon her arrival. Ever wondered why anarchists to this day carry the black flag? It was Louise Michel, who in 1882 demanded that anarchists march with it rather than the customary red flag to distinguish ourselves from the followers of turncoats like Marx [ed. – see **New Technologies, Extraterrestrial Exploitation & the Future of Capitalism**], who condemned the Commune from his armchair. She would spend 30 more years touring, speaking, leading riots, organizing radical schools, giving away nearly everything she owned, and agitating for liberation. [ed. – Aged 47, she was also sentenced to 6 years prison and 10 years police supervision following an 1883 demonstration which she headed as it looted

multiple Paris bakeries. Confronted by a would-be arresting officer, her young companion Jean Pouget jumped in while Michel hijacked a carriage and initially escaped. Pouget was caught with a loaded revolver on him (which she claimed on trial was hers), and a search of his lodgings found "three files sharpened like daggers, a copying press, six hundred copies of a sixteen-page pamphlet entitled 'To the Army' [distributed seditiously amongst soldiers in Amiens, Bordeaux, Marseilles, Vienna, Rouen, Rheims, and Troves], a large number of Anarchistic journals and pamphlets, and some incendiary and explosive instruments". Pouget got 8 years.] On a trip to Algeria, where she was attempting to spark a rebellion against the French colonial government, she fell ill, and died in Marseilles in 1905; thousands rallied to the funeral of the defiant woman who never married, never stopped fighting, and became the anti-heroine of the French nation" (*The Ex-Worker #26*).

"I think a lot about how our politics (therefore/ that is, our lives) must have room for emotions: for expressions of all kinds of emotions, not just (righteous or otherwise) anger. And I think about how hard I find that. What do I talk about? What do I try to avoid? Which feelings do I try to pretend aren't there or don't matter? Those times my neck aches from holding my tongue set firm in my jaw, locked with the weight of everything I don't say. But of course I want what I can't have. It's not an ideological test I fail. We all want what we can't have. If what we wanted as simple, realistic, we'd never talk of revolution. We wouldn't talk of anarchy if we could easily shape our desires to fit this world. Those people I have been closest to have almost always been people with whom I have shared an identity that came about because of what we call politics, or ways of living that grow around certain directions of thought. And maybe I could just have other hobbies. There are other forms of intense moments people share. But there's something precise & special about the common pursuit of the impossible. Then, all you have is each other. [...] This is it: in hegemonic anglo masculinity, is anger the only strong emotion men are allowed to express openly, with passion? The same can be said of anarchist politics: except in our case, it's for everyone. [I]f our texts speak only of anger, we're not fully human."  
– *Taking Things Too Far*

## TRYING FOR SPRINGS

"More faults are committed while we are trying to oblige than while we are giving offense." – Tacitus

As people who reject the status quo, we are all critics. But most of us have learned how to critique badly, and so we either are, or are perceived to be, judgmental, dogmatic, sloppy, and ideological, as opposed to helpful, contextual and interesting.

Anarchist culture, to the extent that [ed. – at least in certain parts of the West] it operates on middle class white (protestant) values, is a culture of interpersonal niceness, with a mythology that tells us that people respond better to support and that support always looks like calm voices and careful communication, that good intent on everyone's part is not only essential but is always apparent. (If we are paying attention, we can all remember times when people have said sadistic things to us in a calm voice, and other times when people have hurt us needlessly from good intentions.) Sometimes none of the above is true, frequently it doesn't need to be true, and in fact we are hampered by the assumption that it is true. **Not only that, but support and care look different coming from different people.** Especially in a culture that has mixing of diverse peoples, it is inappropriate to expect that nice, support, or care, will (or should) always if look the same. The homogenization of what support is supposed to look like increases as more and more people rely on and learn from therapists – people trained in formal institutions to interact with their clients in specific ways (ways that are considered neutral, but that reflect and promote values from a specific culture). And many times this increasingly narrow range of options means that our bottom line is departure, that is, the conflict resolution tactic that we fall back on more and more is the abandonment of the conflict, be it embodied in person, place, or situation.

**This tendency towards abandonment seems to increase how often and desperately people cling to the rhetoric of community. Community comes to be misunderstood as a place where everyone likes each other, where everyone agrees with each other; it could be better understood as a place where people appreciate what they like about each other and live with what they don't like, where there is enough of a buffer of size and variety to allow that and where, even if and when people leave, they don't disappear.**

If we broaden our range of conflict options, what do we have?

Talking to people more, and more creatively, about our problems, and being engaged in other people's problems more and better than we are now. Being around long enough to see things through, and (if we travel) of coming back frequently enough, and for long enough, to maintain connections and information about significant events. Becoming tougher people, who challenge each other emotionally as well as ideologically and ethically, who ask each other (and ourselves) hard questions including "how do we live with insoluble discrepancies?" (**The point of these hard conversations is to increase our ability to meet each other's needs in real life situations, from violence to arrest to drug use to raising children to dying.**)

What kind of support do we need to learn in order to become tougher (that is, able and willing to keep fighting for what we want when things are difficult)? Obviously there is not one answer for this. Just as obviously, we are all traumatized by this culture, and to the extent that we are explicitly and consciously outside of the mainstream, we get stepped on and beaten up. So being gentle with ourselves and each other is appropriate. But not always appropriate. The more monolithic the concept of support comes to be, the more proud or comfortable the role of victim, and the less likely we are to recognize our full range of option for acting in the world.

An appropriate toughness includes being able to avoid getting wrapped up in questions of intention. (Intention is too often brought up as a way to manipulate and deflect.) **The ability to get something useful out of someone's critique does not depend on how well-intentioned the critic is.** How many stories have we heard of people who were told they couldn't do something and were motivated to succeed *by that resistance*? How many times are we told that "we can succeed" by people who care nothing for us and merely want to sell us something?

Anarchists have chosen to be against most things in this culture, have chosen to fight on most possible fronts. As part of that fight, we take on our deepest assumptions about what we are taught, about appropriate relationships to other people and the rest of the world. This requires being tough in a way that nice society doesn't teach us or support. How do we learn to be tough in the ways that we need to be?

How well we are who we want to be is an issue of luck, which we can't do anything about, and of will, which we can.

"A good critic is the sorcerer who makes some hidden spring gash forth unexpectedly under our feet."

– Francois Mauriac

# WHAT COULD COMPENSATE FOR THE LOSS OF THE NIGHT SKY?

It is at best hubris and at worst obscene to think that we can even answer the question; to think that we could even crudely predict the consequences of such a monumental change in our lived experience. But in reality there is no prediction to be made because most humans now live in cities where the night sky has been blotted out. We do not need to predict the consequences rather we need to determine what we have lost. **It is a relatively new experience for humanity to be living without stars and consequences are only now coming to light.**

The New York Times Magazine recently featured a slide show of images by photographer Thierry Cohen that show cityscapes and the (normally absent) starry sky. Cohen's project is titled "Darkened Cities" and it re-inserts what has been lost so that

we can better know and feel what has been taken from us. The sky in Cohen's photographs is brilliant and it is not a product of his imagination, it is the genuine sky of the world we live in, he has just photographed it in places where it remains visible and inserted into a cityscape where it is generally hidden from view.

The project highlights the fact that we are born into a denuded landscape (skyscape?) and so often only notice the loss that happens during our relatively short lives. We don't frequently question the desecration that occurred prior to our own individual existence. But obviously we suffer from decisions made prior to our birth just as our decisions today will either benefit or harm those who follow us. That we are not always aware of the harm that has been done does not lessen – in fact it may amplify – our loss. At some point – or more accurately, at a great number of points – a decision, or more accurately a long series of decisions, was made that stars are not important to our well being. That we can blot out the night sky without suffering...or at least not suffering in a way that couldn't be offset by some perceived benefit. **But what benefit could be sufficient?** And how can such a decision be made and imposed on the whole community of life?

In a 2004 article in *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, Travis Longcore and Catherine Rich distinguished between "astronomical light pollution" and "ecological light pollution". The former is

light pollution that obscures our view of the night sky; the latter is light pollution that disrupts the normal light-dark patterns that are part of the ecosystems that animals – human and nonhuman – have evolved in concert with.

The human health effects are significant and are still being documented.

In 2012, the American Medical Association issued a report on the health effects of light pollution stating: *"The natural 24-hour cycle of light and dark helps maintain precise alignment of circadian biological rhythms, the general activation of the central nervous system and various*

*biological and cellular processes, and entrainment of melatonin release from the pineal gland. Pervasive use of nighttime lighting disrupts these endogenous*

*processes and creates potentially harmful health effects and/or hazardous situations with varying degrees of harm...Even low intensity nighttime light has the capability of suppressing melatonin release. In various laboratory models of cancer, melatonin serves as a circulating anticancer signal and suppresses tumor growth. Limited epidemiological studies support the hypothesis that nighttime lighting and/or repetitive disruption of circadian rhythms increases cancer risk; most attention in this arena has been devoted to breast cancer."*

Ecological Consequences of Artificial Night Lighting – a volume edited by Longcore and Rich – catalogs the deleterious effects on animals. Many animals are disoriented, attracted or repelled to artificial lighting. Migratory birds are drawn off course and crash into illuminated buildings. Nocturnal foragers are faced with what is effectively a "perpetual full moon" and consequently may have reduced time to obtain needed calories or else face greater exposure to predators. Predator-prey relationships and reproductive patterns can be disrupted. Wildlife corridors may be effectively blocked. Below is a short list of more specific findings from the recent scientific literature:

– Artificial Night Lighting and Sea Turtles (2003) Sea turtle hatchlings exposed to lights may fail to find the sea after emerging. *"What happens is documented on the beach surface by their flipperprints...Instead of tracks leading directly to the sea, turtles leave evidence that they crawled for hours on circuitous paths ('disorientation'), or on direct paths away from the ocean and toward lighting ('misorientation')."*

– Apparent Effects of Light Pollution on Singing Behavior of American Robins (2006) *"Proliferation of artificial nocturnal light may be strongly affecting singing behavior of American Robins at a population level."*

– The Effect of Light Intensity on Sockeye Salmon Fry Migratory Behavior and Predation by Cottids in the Cedar River, Washington (2004) *"increased light intensity appears to slow or stop out-migration of fry, making them more vulnerable to capture by predators such as cottids"*

– Studying the Ecological Impacts of Light Pollution on Wildlife: Amphibians as Models (2007) *"Results...demonstrate that artificial night lighting has the potential to affect foraging and breeding as well as growth and development of frogs and salamanders...artificial night lighting should be considered an additional factor that negatively impacts amphibian populations"*

– Street Lighting Changes the Composition of Invertebrate Communities (2012) *"invertebrate community composition is affected by proximity to street lighting independently of the time of day. Five major invertebrate groups contributed to compositional differences, resulting in an increase in the number of predatory and scavenging individuals in brightly lit communities. Our results indicate that street lighting changes the environment at higher levels of biological organization than previously recognized, raising the potential that it can alter the structure and function of ecosystems."*



– Does Night Lighting Harm Trees (2002) Artificial lighting “can change flowering patterns, and most importantly, promote continued growth thereby preventing trees from developing dormancy that allows them to survive the rigors of winter weather.” Additionally, disruption of flowering patterns can in turn negatively affect pollinator species.

**Even aquatic animals are not exempt from the bright lights of humanity [sic].** Fishing boats, offshore oil rigs, and research vessels project light in places and times that would otherwise be dark. In some cases, aquatic animals live and/or feed at very specific depths. A particular depth can normally be assessed by the amount of sunlight that penetrates the water. This is disrupted by artificial light thereby generating conflict and exacerbating competition.

**A 2001 article in Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society calculates that: “about one-fifth of the World population, more than two-thirds of the United States population and more than one half of the European Union population have already lost naked eye visibility of the Milky Way. Finally, about one-tenth of the World population, more than 40 per cent of the United States population and one-sixth of the European Union population no longer view the heavens with the eye adapted to night vision”.**

So in exchange for compromised human health, dead animals, damaged ecosystems, and a sky void of stars we have gained the ability to forego sleep by working graveyard shifts under fluorescent lights. If there is such thing as a birthright it must include the full use of our eyes and an unimpeded view of the night sky.

## THE POSSIBILITIES OF ELECTRICAL DISRUPTION

**06.05.15, Santiago, Chile:** *Anarchists enter a substation of Chilectra provider and leave an incendiary “composed of 1.2 liters of benzene plus 400 grams of polystyrene” inside a cabin. Due to the actions of those who “take advantage of the last dark sighs of this sky”, much of the capital city is temporarily with power...*

**06.10.13, Arkansas, U.S.A.:** *Two power line poles severed east of Little Rock. Cops connect the act with two more within 6 weeks before; a high-voltage line felled by connecting a metal cable between a transmission tower and a train track close by in order to, according to the FBI, “utilize a moving train to bring down the tower”, and in Lonoke County a substation is burned out and left with the tag “you should have expected U.S.”*

**11.06.13, Mikashevichi, Belarus:** *Arson of a*

*power booth for a granite quarry by “a group of dedicated earth liberation warriors. Resulting short circuit left quarry and nearby village in total darkness. It was a strange feeling to suddenly hear silence where just a minute before there had been constant industrial noise. To see stars in the sky that had been blocked out by quarry lights just moments before.”*

**16.04.13, California, U.S.A.:** *An assailant (possibly two) enters manholes at the PG&E Metcalf power substation (who supply Silicon Valley), southeast of San José, and cuts fiber cables for the stations communication before more than 100 high-powered rifle rounds damage 17 transformers and three transformer banks. Cooling oil then leaks from a transformer bank, causing the transformers to overheat and shut down. State regulators urge customers in the area to conserve energy over the following days... “There are ways that a very few*

*number of actors with very rudimentary equipment could take down large portions of our grid,” the chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission said. “I don’t think we have the level of physical security we need.”*

**April '13, Derrylin/Ballyconnell, Ireland:** *Three high-voltage poles are cut down (and one for communications set ablaze) at the power station of the Quinn Group (producer of cement and concrete products, container glass, radiators and plastics); not the first time the company has been sabotaged in those lands over the years.*

**21.09.12, Belgium:** *Comrades of Suie et Cendres note that a fire “in the high tension electrical supply cabin paralysed the Indaver garbage incinerators in Lillo, the harbour zone of Antwerp. The two ovens of the cancer production plant were put on standstill for a few days.”*

“If politicians speak of a blackout, they do so likely to frighten the population, to get the vote. To evoke a power shortage is making a preparation work in people's minds for the construction of, for example, a new nuclear plant. Never is the question raised of why all this energy would be needed.

Yet modern voracity of capital could perhaps be measured through its energy consumption. To give a simple example: getting rich Eurocrats and managers in 1 hour 20 minutes with a Thalys [high-speed train] from Brussels to Paris requires the equivalent electrical energy that five Brussels households on average consume in a year! [...] We must break through the lies of the state. It says we're all in the same boat, that we must all make efforts to take care of them. But it is not like that. We are on it's boat against our will, or at least, without having ever really chosen. Notorious as the galley slaves of the past, to make the insane real life machine. Because since we were born and we we die in the hull, the hull of the work, obedience, consumption, our eyes were never able to scan the horizon and the sky. So if the government says it is terrorists who want to sink the ship, it's just because it wants to retain its power over the chained slaves. So it's up to you to choose between staying chained a lifetime or escape, also taking the risk of having to swim by yourself; for you to choose between submission and rebellion, between obedience and dignity.”

– We See More Clearly in the Dark



“If the present society looks like a big open air prison, its barbed wire would be in fibre optics and its watchtowers would be more like networks of communication. [...] These decentralized and highly complex infrastructures have made possible for new forms of exploitation (it suffices to think about the present necessity to be reachable in every moment on a cellphone, in the logic of the flexibility of work), and thus it is there that today exploitation can be attacked. Fibre optic cables, networks of transportation... [...] infrastructures of communications as well as the cellphone networks... [...] sabotages of public illumination systems, fires to generators and electric transformers, sabotages of axes of railway transportation or of networks of public transportation. In a present analysis of the metropolis the importance of transportations (of human beings, merchandise, information) would not be negligible. [...] If some cracks in normality, in the social reproduction, offer some possibilities, then it is important to have imagined them beforehand. What to do in case of an electrical shortage? What to do when the public transport doesn't function anymore and generate an incredible chaos in a city? [...] During a riot, cutting off electricity is not only a question of making it harder for the police forces to advance, but will have echoes that go well beyond any technical consideration of the moment. We don't live in the same way when its dark. This aspect is even more vivid in relation to energy networks; where the consequences can usually go way beyond the first imagined objective.” – From Short-Circuit to Social Blackout

26.02.11, Bristol, U.K.: "[T]argets are everywhere and in direct accordance with their being, so comes our attack, a 'smart' cctv van was paintstripped in broad daylight, later that night internet and telecommunications cables were set on fire."

28.10.10, Paris, France: *Daytime power outage at the Ministries of Economy & Budget disrupts office functioning – an internal investigation suggests "that it is a malicious act" performed by "experienced people"; "and this, the same day as there is a call out for a strike against pension reform."*

July '10, U.K.: "Over the past three week three mobile phone antennas have been destroyed by fire in the Nottingham area. [...] These actions were simple and repeatable. The tools were old rags, flammable liquids and a lighter." Dedicated to "all those who are imprisoned by civilization" in struggle.

## ON SABOTAGE & ARSON ATTACKS IN EUROPE

optic fibers and electrical cables. Indeed, for those who dream of stopping

If silence is frightening, it is perhaps because the absence of familiar sounds tends to project us on ourselves. When we advance in the silent darkness, it is not uncommon for us to speak to ourselves, to whistle a little refrain, to think out loud so as not to find ourselves prey to the anguish. **This is not easy and may even require some exercise, as our brains have been conditioned to identify silence with danger, darkness with risk.** It is the anguish that the emptiness provokes, the feeling of being on the edge of the abyss and not being able to turn our eyes away from the abyss that opens before us. **Yet it is also at such times that one tends to be closer to oneself, without an intermediary, with a much more assertive presence of mind and emotion.**

It is difficult to find silence or darkness in the modern world. Industrial noises always accompany us, the devices emit their electronic sounds permanently, and if not, there is almost always someone to fill the void with gossip as impenetrable as superficial. **Today, the fear of the void, the anguish of silence is sublimated by permanent connectivity.** Never alone, never in silence, never before the abyss. And so, never face to face with ourselves. Calls and voices from the "inside," the whole universe of imagination, consciousness, sensitivity, reflection, are rendered mute, ignored, flattened and replaced by the continuous bombardment of information, *E-mails, appointments, consumer warnings, reminders.* **Thus, the modern world is completing the inner universe of the individual.** With an annihilated interior, the human being will find themselves in ideal conditions to accept slavery, even to embrace slavery without even having the ability to understand the state in which they are in: caught in the web.

All this is certainly not new. The history of oppression did not start with the smartphone. Not so long ago, the conditioning of the human spirit was done mainly through a galaxy of camps. The factory camp, the education camp that is the school, the control camp that is the family authority and the places of worship. **Nevertheless, despite the threads woven between all these structures of domination, there was still, relatively speaking, a lot of emptiness [ed. – see *Fraud, Fantasy & Fiction in Environmental Writing*/"The Invention of the Tribe"/QJ].** And this void fueled the revolt in the camps, and vice versa. The prisoner who is mutinous has, nevertheless, their eyes riveted on the horizon beyond the walls, it does not matter if their imagination of this horizon pleases us or not. Although the camps of all types have certainly not disappeared, the ongoing capitalist and state restructuring, notably through the increasingly widespread introduction of technology, is aimed, beyond increased exploitation and control, more totalitarian, to the *elimination of all emptiness.* The adage of permanent connectivity is at the heart of this deadly symphony. Connected, we are **always a bit at work, a little in family, a little in the supermarket, a little at the concert.** Connected, one is always exposed to the injunctions of power, to the summons to consume, to the eyes of the control. We are entirely at the disposal of capital, we are the slaves who wear invisible collars.

Someone said that if this society is an open-air prison, the modern cells must be these antennas and communications relays that contrast everywhere with the blue sky, and the barbed wire

the reproduction of domination, it seems to be paramount that they can look elsewhere and otherwise. **It is not that the local police station should no longer attract the attention of the enemy of authority, or that the window of the bank would not deserve to be smashed, or that the court should not receive what it deserves, but it is also true that domination has spread over the territory a vast number of relatively small and unprotected structures, of which more and more, if not almost everything, depend.** It is in these little things that the invisible web which encloses us and which allows the restructuring of capital and of the State materializes. It is there that the arteries of domination which irrigate the exploitation and oppression can be attacked; this is where technological prostheses and their enslaved chatter can be silenced.

This is what happened when a fire destroyed the technical installations and cables of France 3, on April 21st, 2017 in Vanves (Hauts-Seines), disrupting emissions. This is what happened when anonymous hands cut an Orange telephone cable in Morbihan on May 4th, fifteen minutes before the presidential debate, depriving thousands of viewers and hundreds of companies of their connectivity. This is what happened on Monte Finonchio in Trentino, Italy, when in solidarity with imprisoned anarchists, several relays and cabins for radio, television, mobile telephony and military communication were destroyed by fire on June 7th, the day after the conviction of an anarchist comrade for a bank robbery by the court of Aachen in Germany [ed. – see *Rebels Behind Bars; Aachen Case Verdict*]. This happened on June 12th in Hamburg, where a subway station was set on fire. This is what happened a few days later when night owls burned a television transmitter and a mobile phone antenna in Piégros-la-Clastre in the Drôme on June 15th, and later stated that "*the pylons which grow everywhere are sensitive and vulnerable points because they are points of concentration of flow and because it suffices a few liters of gasoline to seriously damage them*". And on June 23rd, it is in Vilvoorde in Belgium that a relay antenna is destroyed by a voluntary fire.

These few examples, probably far from exhaustive and all drawn from the last few weeks, show that everywhere, the snip is possible. It must also be said that, unlike the authoritarians who can only conceive of the world's upheaval through the taking of the temples of power and the management of large masses, a sort of impossible symmetry with a much better equipped enemy, **we anarchists emphasize the agility of small groups, the capacity of the individual, the spread of hostilities rather than their centralization, inter-individual relations of reciprocity, trust and knowledge.** Such a way of organizing seems to us much more interesting to attack the ever more tentacular enemy, dependent on the interconnection between all its structures. Faced with the spread of a vast number of small transmission structures on the territory, nothing is more appropriate than a myriad of small groups, acting autonomously, able to co-ordinate with each other when this makes sense, practicing the old art of sabotage against the arteries of power. In the silence they impose on machines, in the perturbation they inflict on the "real time" of domination, we will find ourselves face to face with ourselves. And this is an unavoidable condition for a practice of freedom.

# 'REJOIN THE CIRCLE'

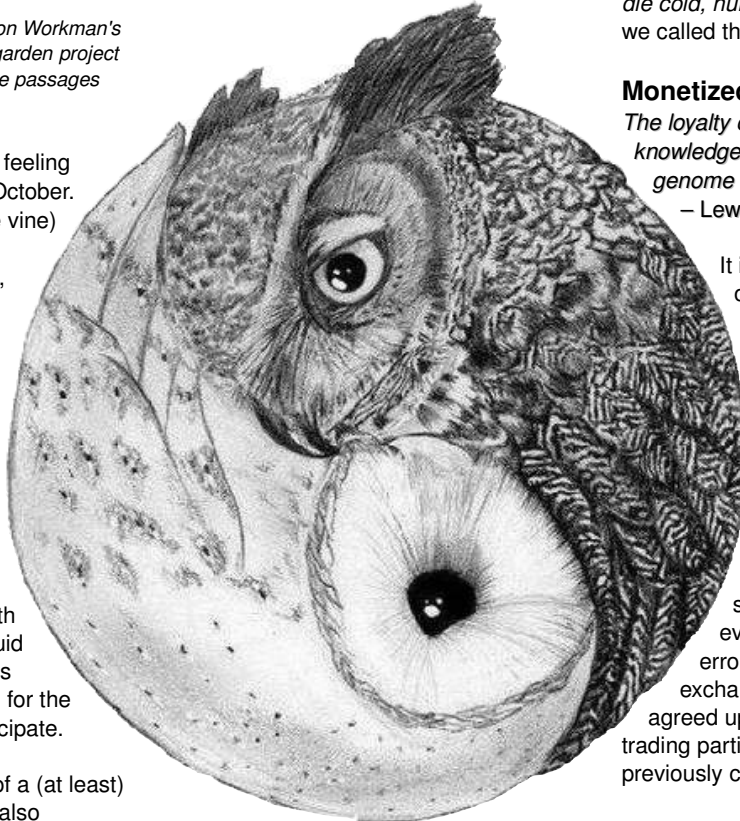
[ed. – Written during the author Dion Workman's time living at the Shikigami forest garden project in Japan, as a two-part essay these passages are extracted from.]

This past week I have been feeling deep gratitude for the gifts of October. The delicious *Akebi* (chocolate vine) fruits that have appeared everywhere amongst the trees, the walnuts and chestnuts littering the ground, the first of the winterberries, little raspberry like fruits peeping out from under a carpet of deep green foliage, the *Inubiwa* (wild fig) fruits, persimmons, salads of tender chickweed, dandelion, plantain, sorrel and pomegranate, the warm sun on my face, the cool moist earth under my feet. Receiving a squid from Tsuchiya-san I give thanks also for the gifts of community, for the gift economy in which we participate.

Via Tsuchiya-san we are part of a (at least) three-way gift economy which also includes a local fisherman whom we are yet to meet. Passing on our surplus to Tsuchiya-san, and often things we have made with our surpluses, we receive the surplus not only from Tsuchiya-san's garden and kitchen but also the surplus catch of her fisherman friend. I don't know if our gifts ever make it directly to this particular fisherman but they will certainly make it out to Tsuchiya-san's circle of friends and family as there is simply too much for her to consume on her own. In the words of a Pirahã hunter-gatherer "*I store meat in the belly of my brother.*" [...] And here we must understand "brothers and sisters" in the widest possible sense: **all creatures, all plants, Earth itself, are our kin, or, more precisely, are us.**

The gift economy is, of course, not limited to goods. With Tsuchiya-san we also participate in another ancient form of the gift economy, a form absolutely fundamental to the development of culture, *the defining characteristic of culture*: the intergenerational passing down of knowledge borne of experience.

[...] **Such exchanges, so essential, are now largely absent not only from rural communities that have experienced a mass exodus of young people but throughout our entire culture** (in the cities of our most "affluent" societies there seems to have been a mass exodus of old people, shunted off to retirement and nursing homes, hospitals, or self-exiled somewhere). Our relationships have been



monetized, as "services." The guidance of our elders has been replaced with educational institutions, life coaching, counselling, therapy, the physical contributions of our young ones replaced by labourers, hired help, contractors etc. As our economic system, with its insatiable need for growth, converts every natural resource [*sic*] into money, taking them away from us so they can be sold back to us, so too are our relationships slowly but surely being replaced by services for which we must pay. [Charles Eisenstein]

To break the psychological tyranny of our deeply engrained fear for tomorrow is no easy task. **Increasingly our belief that scarcity is the ground state of Earth is being actualized.** Our (agri)culture has made it so. The shift from hunting and gathering to agriculture has altered the environment from one that abounded in an astounding diversity of wild plant and animal foods to a homogenous landscape of agricultural crops that we must sow and tend today in order to harvest tomorrow. And thus begins the process of deferment that has come to dominate our culture (exemplified in the Judeo-Christian-Islamic religions but present throughout all agricultural peoples), a process of rewards for work done where nature no longer gives freely but must be coaxed into giving, where we must toil to "make our living," where paradise will come later, always later. Our monetizing of everything, every natural resource converted into a "good" and every relationship converted into a

"service" realizes this belief in scarcity, making mere existence a cause for anxiety: *Get to work! if you don't want to die cold, hungry and alone.* In other times we called this slavery[...]

## Monetized Life

*The loyalty of school children, indigenous knowledge, drinking water, the human genome – it's all for sale.*

– Lewis Hyde, *The Gift*

It is commonly believed that the origins of money lie in barter. Money, we are told, developed as a technology to facilitate the otherwise cumbersome direct exchange of goods. As anthropologist David Graeber, in his book *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*, points out (as have many others) there is virtually no anthropological evidence to support this view and plenty of evidence suggesting that it is erroneous. Barter, the direct exchange of goods based on an agreed upon value of the goods by the trading parties, is found where people have previously come into contact with money.

Money and barter are systems where the emphasis, the value, is placed on the object of exchange, that is, on the material goods or services. The purpose of the exchange is acquisition. **In traditional gift economies, such as potlatch, for example, we see something very different. Objects that help meet material needs are indeed transferred but the value does not reside solely in the object but, rather, in the giving and receiving.** The purpose is not acquisition of material goods but the strengthening of support networks or gift circles.

What does it mean to strive for "financial independence"? That we don't want to be dependent on others, to *need* others. We want to be free of obligation and responsibility. If you do something for me and I pay you for the service I have met my obligations and therefore owe you nothing. Job done, money paid, we're finished. "Nice and clean."

This hard won "independence" is illusory, of course, for we have actually exchanged *interdependence*, with family, friends and community for near total dependence on money and the goods and services it can afford us. We are no longer intimate with the people who sustain our lives. The monetized life is a depersonalized life.

## The Gift Circle

The dynamic of the gift is very different. The gift builds relationship. The feelings of gratitude we experience in receiving gifts



foster our desire to give back, to share our gratitude. And, on the flip side of gratitude we have obligation. We feel a sense of responsibility to those who are generous toward us. We look out for them and care for them. The gift attends to our self-interests by fostering the interests of the community at large. More for you means more for me.

[...] The gift economy, in fostering relationships of gratitude and responsibility, relies on social witnessing: a community awareness of who is generous and who stingy which consequently determines the level of generosity shown to individual community members. How, and by whom, your needs are met directly relates to how you have treated others.

**In the modern world we often bemoan the loss of community. It seems the more “affluent” the society at large the more keenly the loss of community is felt. But this should not surprise us for the dynamic of money undermines community bonds by removing our interdependence, our *needing* each other. This need for one another is the foundation of community.**

The gift circulates through the community – and we should note that the movement of the gift is indeed one of *circulation* and not exchange, for where, as Charles Eisenstein points out, our gifts are exchanged we are moving into the realm of barter and are no longer in the realm of the gift. As the gift flows through the community it infuses the feelings of generosity and gratitude that strengthen our communal ties as our needs are met. Spirit is breathed into the community.

### The Community of Life

*What is the origin of this monstrous machine that chews up beauty and spits out money?*

– Charles Eisenstein, *Sacred Economics*

The fictitious story of money's origins in barter conveniently supports the notion that markets will spontaneously emerge, sooner or later, wherever there are human societies. Again, David Graeber shows us that **such an assumption is highly problematic as the emergence of markets had far more to do with rulers meeting the needs of their armies than it ever did with meeting the needs of the people.** If markets are inevitable then it is only to certain kinds of societies. Getting “the people” to participate usually required forceful coercion such as undermining social networks and stealing land (enclosing the commons, or privatizing, as we call it today. As [Pierre-Joseph] Proudhon said, “*Property is theft*”). Of

course the simplest method is to start issuing currency and then demand taxes paid in that currency. What was formerly given away is now sold and co-operation disintegrates into competition. The market emerges.

**The functioning of markets requires an element of scarcity.** There must be a need for something not easily obtained. Either new needs must be manufactured or the meeting of existing needs made difficult. When intrepid explorers, missionaries, anthropologists and the like encountered “primitive” societies they did not find barter or market mentalities because what they generally found were people who lived in a world of abundance, not scarcity. Needs were met by the gifts of the gods. The world, the entire community of life, was a gift circle where, as long as behaviour appropriate to a gift circle was maintained, all ones needs would be met.

Of course, the simple minded savages couldn't possibly be allowed to continue living in such a state of ignorance. One of any number of ingenious methods of inducing scarcity was introduced, necessitating the establishment of markets, the use of money, the collection of taxes, debt, poverty, theft, prisons, and so on, and so on... From living by the gifts of the gods to survival of the fittest. More for you means less for me.

If money has undermined the bonds of human community then it's severing of our connection to the larger community of life has been even more complete. As the quote opening this section suggests, our economy is a monstrous machine that consumes the natural world to create money. Although the overt buying and selling of human life is generally looked down upon in our “enlightened” age [*ed. – at least, if it isn't for an hourly rate...*] the rest of life is still up for grabs. “*For a price, you can buy anything, even the pelt of an endangered species.*” [Eisenstein] **Although money is not the root cause of our (self)exile from the community of life, but is, rather, a manifestation of it,** it has nevertheless become a ferocious enforcer of the belief that we are discreet beings separate from the rest of life.

Our sense of separation goes back at least to the Neolithic and the first agriculturalists. With agriculture a new binary view of the world is born, a world of competition, of us against them: crops or weeds, beneficial insects or pests, domestic or wild, good or evil, etcetera, etcetera. Some, such as John Zerzan, would place the origins of our separation even earlier with the emergence of symbolic culture; representational language, number and art. No matter when we place the origins of our separation, with money we have

carried it to its conclusion and today find ourselves in a world of abstractions where everything has been reduced to number.

The fate of life is determined by the monetary value that can be extracted from it. If we see more value in a field of soy beans than a prairie then prairie will become field of soy beans. *Sacred land or uranium mine? Rain forest or hardwood decking? Endangered species or pelt?* Numbers in a ledger.

### Living in the Real World

From the mistaken view of ourselves as discrete and separate beings we have developed our stories, our cultures, philosophies, sciences, technologies, economies...that support and reinforce this view. We have written ourselves into a monstrous fiction and remade the earth as a backdrop for our dystopian plot.

*But we are not separate, are we?* When we look at a forest freshly clear cut we feel the pain of the forest. We feel the sense of loss of the creatures whose home has been razed. Thousands of years of steadily increasing separation has not completely extinguished our sense that we are those creatures, we are those trees. **When we allow ourselves, when our rational mind momentarily drops the prison guard role it has been educated to play, we feel the truth of our interdependence.**

Returning to live in the real world requires just that we *live* in that world of interdependence. That is to say, not just believe, or even know, but *live*.

From the moment of your birth, no, before that even, you have been receiving the gifts necessary to sustain and nourish you. Before you were capable of “earning your keep” you received the gifts of life, of Earth. It is no wonder that we often experience deep feelings of gratitude for simply being alive, for we've been receiving precious gifts non-stop the whole time we've been here. What has changed? Why do we now feel anxious that what we need will no longer be given to us? Is it because we have not maintained the behaviour appropriate to a gift circle?

Marcel Mauss noted that traditional gift economies contained a trio of obligations: “*the obligation to give, the obligation to accept, and the obligation to reciprocate.*” [Hyde] We have all been given gifts, ways in which we are able to make unique contributions to life on our beautiful planet and, if we are not to renege on our obligations then we must be giving generously of our gifts. To do not what you love but what you think you must do “for the money” is to renege on your obligations. Behave inappropriately and the gift circle is broken. To overcome your

survival anxiety, to put aside the monetized illusion of security, and wholly offer up your gifts for the well-being of all life is to re-enter the gift circle.

[...] To refuse a gift is to proclaim that we do not want to be in relationship with the giver. The obligation to accept also requires that we be open to all gifts that come our way, that is, *not to have fixed ideas about how our needs are to be met*. Let's face it, we don't know best. The evidence of that is everywhere. Our "knowing" is so wrapped up in our story of separation that it is woven through with desires to control the world around us. It is time to let go. Remember, the "weeds" are often more nutritious than the crops.

The earth gives us what we need. Long before we got the idea that we could run the show, Earth generously provided for our every need. We must reciprocate if we want to live in the gift. Nothing can demonstrate this more clearly than looking at the current state of this planet. Since attempting to take over the reins we've run vital life support systems in to the ground. Not reciprocating the gift ceases to flow. To rejoin the circle we must use the gifts given us and give back to Earth.

## 'ANARCHIST RELATIONS IN PRACTICE'

[A]narchists in the small Catalan city of Manresa held the first Gathering of Libertarian Infrastructures [in 2015]. Specifically, the initiative reflects a sentiment that there is a lack of creative or constructive projects that put anarchist relations in practice, support and amplify the struggle, and utilize anarchist methods to respond to the needs of daily life. **In fact, as the call-out for the gathering states, Catalunya boasts an unusually high number of projects that embark in such a direction, but such projects quickly become divorced from other aspects of the struggle.**

We know what often happens. Cooperatives and projects for a solidaristic economy end up in self-exploitation or even transform into capitalist businesses with an alternative character. Projects that fail due to exhaustion fall into a productivist logic, or collapse under the imposed need to pay rent.

**Projects that little by little distance themselves from the struggle as they come to inhabit a reality different from that of those comrades who remain "in the streets." Projects that limit themselves to a legalistic path in order to avoid repression and the significant loss of energy and material that such repression brings.** Or, projects that, even as they evade capitalist dynamics, condemn themselves to self-isolation in their search for self-sufficiency [ed. – see *'The Matter of Knowing Who We Are'*].

Other comrades, often the youngest and most active, develop an idea of struggle centered on abstract and combative activities, such as writing and debating, protest, and sabotage, all of which are vital, but are by themselves incomplete. Thus, the constructive part of the struggle is divorced and distanced from practices of collective self-defense, propaganda, and theorization. In the end, all of us are weakened.

This is a predictable dynamic. Capitalism always offers us tools for "achieving our dreams" and realizing any and all creative projects, but they are tools that reconvert us towards mercantile and productive relations. Democracy will also give us permission for nearly any initiative, but with regulations and conditions that will not allow us to step out of the game that the powerful control so easily.

[...] Given that the recent proliferation of new organizations in Catalunya, and new failures, has led to a climate of cynicism, the level of participation in the gathering came as a surprise.

Around 70 people from 45 different projects turned out, from all the provinces of Catalunya and beyond, from city, town, and countryside. The projects came from the fields of free education, rural self-sufficiency and ecological farming, pirate radios and propaganda, printers and publishers, self-organized medicine and healthcare, artisanal crafts, carpentry and metal workshops, liberated and open-source technology workshops, internet platforms, and more.

**One of the objectives of the gathering was to transform the dominant mode of meetings and encounters in a way that reflects the social relations we want to foster.** Aside from debates (on the concept of the gift economy and on the idea of using our projects to counter the results of austerity), people also came together in diverse spaces: a decentralized and informal space for weaving networks, a space for workshops of artisanal and other skills, moments for communal work

and moments for play and games. **The activities of care – the kitchen and the children's space – were in central, visible locations and were staffed collectively.**

Money was not present during the gathering; on the contrary everything was shared as a gift, and the few costs for the preparation were assumed by everyone via a donation jar and a visible list of expenses, which were removed as soon as the minor debts were repaid. There was a gifts table where people from varied projects left samples of what they make, from books and pamphlets to homemade remedies to vegetables from the garden.

After a night of healthy partying, on Sunday morning thirty people worked shoulder to shoulder to fix up new spaces in La Ruda (the anarchist athenium in Manresa where the gathering was held). The purpose of putting aside time for communal labor was to take advantage of the collective force of all the people present and to get to know one another in a non-intellectual space.

Emphasis was also placed on the question of reskilling and artisanal techniques. The pertinent analysis holds that capitalism currently trains us only in the skills necessary for increasingly absurd jobs [ed. – see *'Tools of the Technology'*], skills that are useless for the self-organization of survival, whereas useful skills and artisanal crafts are disappearing.

New technologies make us progressively stupider and more dependent<sup>[1]</sup>, **meaning that our values of mutual aid, solidarity, and self-organization rarely go beyond a superficial, abstract plane.** As such, the gathering constitutes an attempt to visibilize and encourage those projects that recover skills such as healing, carpentry, agriculture, and more.

And perhaps most centrally, the initiative marks a strategic decision to encourage a gift economy, so that such projects will not perpetually have to support themselves within a capitalist market or with alternative currencies that still perpetuate a quantitative and productivist logic.

As one text distributed at the gathering states, **the gift economy is that which most closely approaches anarchist ideals, and it is one we still practice in our intimate spaces.** Yet in general anarchists have not made a concerted effort to spread the relationships and practices based in reciprocity and a true communal feeling, necessary to enable such an economy, meaning that the only alternatives are the cooperatives and alternative currencies that never seem to leave the capitalist orbit.

Participants set themselves the objective of holding a gathering twice a year.

1. ed. – Yes, even the open-source, participatory ones: "Intelligence is within anyone's reach through reading, reflection, study, curiosity, discussion, even sensitivity. Intelligence can stimulate and can be stimulated, but it cannot be shared. Because it is unique, and differs from individual to individual. Those who speak of "shared intelligence" are speaking of power. When everyone starts to go to Wikipedia to know who, what, where and when – and no one any longer makes the effort to read dictionaries, encyclopedias, books, to confront then various versions and try to understand – that day (and it doesn't seem distant) Wikipedia will be dictating Law, univocal and equal for all. Its successive reconfigurations will not be able to change in any way this totalitarian effect, but rather will consolidate it. Shared intelligence can only be an enormous project of standardization and control. Aspiring to a shared intelligence means hoping for the advent of a single modern thought" (*To the Customers: Insurrection and Doublethink*).

**English-language  
anarchist news &  
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**Act For Freedom Now!** (Greece & global) [actforfree.nostate.net](http://actforfree.nostate.net)

**Anarchist Library** (multi-lingual, open-source catalogue of print-ready texts) [theanarchistlibrary.org](http://theanarchistlibrary.org)

**Anarchy, Secession, Subsistence** (rejoining rebellion with the land) [anarchysecessionsubsistence.blogspot.ca](http://anarchysecessionsubsistence.blogspot.ca)

**Anarchy Radio** (streaming and downloadable hour of global news and anti-civilisation analysis, every Tuesday) [johnzerzan.net/radio](http://johnzerzan.net/radio)

**Avalanche** (web presence of international correspondence publication about and from sites of social tension; each edition available multi-lingual) [avalanche.noblogs.org](http://avalanche.noblogs.org)

**Attaque** (France, multi-lingual) [attaque.noblogs.org](http://attaque.noblogs.org)

**Bordered by Silence** (France) [borderedbysilence.noblogs.org](http://borderedbysilence.noblogs.org)

**Chronik** (Germany, multi-lingual) [chronik.blackblogs.org](http://chronik.blackblogs.org)

**Contra Info** (global, multi-lingual) [contrainfo.espiv.net](http://contrainfo.espiv.net)

**Montreal Counter-Information** (Canada, bi-lingual) [mtlcounter-info.org/en](http://mtlcounter-info.org/en)

**Non-Fides** (France & global, multi-lingual) [non-fides.fr](http://non-fides.fr)

**Oplopanax Publishing** (a cache of handsome and engaging printable zines) [oplopanaxpublishing.wordpress.com](http://oplopanaxpublishing.wordpress.com)

**Resonance Audio Distro** (various readings as MP3s plus source files) [resonanceaudiodistro.wordpress.com](http://resonanceaudiodistro.wordpress.com)

**The Brilliant Podcast** (deeply thoughtful questioning on key topics for radicals) [thebrilliant.org](http://thebrilliant.org)

**Uncivilized Animals** (writings on ecology, technology and society from an anti-industrial perspective) [uncivilizedanimals.wordpress.com](http://uncivilizedanimals.wordpress.com)

**Untorelli Press** (an archive and publisher of radical pamphlets against capitalism, patriarchy, the state and civilisation) [untorellipress.noblogs.org](http://untorellipress.noblogs.org)

**Warrior Up** (sabotage techniques) [warriorup.noblogs.org](http://warriorup.noblogs.org)

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**'The Exharchia Commune Rises & Defends Itself'**

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– from 'Come Out to the Streets of Fire', by Open Assembly Against the Police Occupation

**'Symbiogenetic Desire'**

– by Bellamy Fitzpatrick

**'The Pond'** – from 'Ecology and Man: A Viewpoint', by Paul Shepard

**'A Green Anarchist Critique of Science'**

– by Autumn Leaves  
Cascade

**'The Matter of Knowing Who We Are'**

– from 'Social War, Anti-Social Tension', by *Distri Josep Gardenyes*

**'Anarchist Relations in Practice'** – from 'Coordinating a Gift Economy', by PG, Fifth Estate #395

Articles referenced by title throughout this chapter in **[square brackets]** which do not appear in the previous pages appear in the other chapters of this volume.



“Long live  
the weeds  
and the  
wilderness  
yet.”

– *Inversnaid*

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