

ANTI-AUTHORITY

DAILY REVOLT

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# RETURN FIRE

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INDIVIDUAL WILL

DE-CIVILISATION

Poems For Love, Loss & War

**Global Flash-Points**  
(direct action reports)

**Rebels Behind Bars**  
(text by prisoners & repression news)

**Memory as a Weapon**  
(bridging the breach in our line,  
uncovering some of our grounding)

...and more!

**VOLUME 5, CHAPTER IV**

**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.*



# POEMS FOR LOVE, LOSS & WAR

## 'Outward is Inward to the Heart'

The Old Ones say  
outward is inward to the heart  
and inward is outward to the center  
because

for us

there are no absolute boundaries  
no borders  
no environments  
no outside  
no inside  
no dualisms  
no single body  
no non-body

We don't stop at our eyes

We don't begin at our skin  
We don't end at our smell  
We don't start at our sounds

I can lose my legs  
and go on living

I can lose my eyes

and go on living

I can lose my ears

and go on living

I can lose my hair

my nose

my hands

my arms

and go on living

but if I lose the water

I die

If I lose the Sun

I die

If I lose the plants and animals

I die

For all these things

are more a part of me  
more essential to my being  
than is that  
which I call "my body."

A mountain for seeking visions,  
An ocean for getting dreams,  
A lake of mirrors to give us names,  
Sacred Circles surrounding us.

Black Elk has told us that  
at the Center of the Universe  
dwells Wakan-Tanka  
the Great Holy,  
and yes, that Sacred Center  
is within each of us, as with  
Huehuetéotl, the Sacred Fire,  
in the Center of the sweatlodge.

And we know that our eyes are  
not windows,  
that indeed we do not  
"see" the world at a distance,  
that our "seeing" is within  
our heads, within our minds.

For if the eyes were windows  
we could pick up a dead creature's  
eye and look directly through it  
like clear glass  
but any hunter knows  
it can't be done.



The visions we find on the mountain-top  
inward they are looking in dreams  
outward they are looking for signs  
but both inward  
and outward  
do not leave us  
for we are not separate  
we are like the atomic nuclei  
which cannot be studied  
except in motion  
because motion is of their essence  
and we cannot be studied  
alone  
*for we do not exist alone.*

— Jack D. Forbes



## Bone-blade In Their Right Hand, Acorns In Their Left

That figure on the hillside

In their right hand they hold a knife carved from bone

In their left hand they hold a sack full of acorns

People would look upon the figure in confusion and distrust

"Who is this being who's footprints leave runes in the ground?"

Who calls to the hawk, deer and fox, that answer them back?

They could not be a man, for their claws and teeth, yet they run across the surface of the earth  
like a man!"

This is what people would say when discussing this being

Often they would only catch a glimpse, as the creature ran through the town at night

Children would lie and claim they had seen it in its home in the forest past the hills, but  
children are clumsy and noisy, and the creature hides itself from them

For the creature, though a trickster, saboteur and thief, was not so cruel as to frighten children  
But never without their knife, the creature would use the bone blade to pick locks, to steal what  
was stolen, and to sabotage the machines of the towns people

For this being is vengeful and takes delight in ludic vengeance against those who cut down the  
forest, ploughed the land, dammed the river and stole their friends homes

One day though the creature lead the children away from the town, so it could enter with them  
far away and safe from the flames they unleashed, after freeing imprisoned wild horses, in  
revenge of the barbaric engagement and all those other acts

The mothers and fathers were alerted by the creatures call, but nothing could be done to save  
the town, which burned to the ground

And after the children return to find their parents safe, they all stare at the figure on the hill

Who in their right hand they hold a knife carved from bone

And in their left hand they hold a sack full of acorns

— Julian Langer

## Crying in the Rain

Crying in the rain.

Feeding cycles of mist and dew, sweat and blood, rearranging vapors that  
permeate and bind.

Cycles feeding cellulose, lignin, flesh. Rainfall, that drifting water sanctum.

Cast a stone into the waters, watch the ripple of its waves.

Even a single drop can still add up to so much. Liquid echoes.

In cleansing rain, wash it all away.

The torments of the past, the fears of the future. Wash it all away.

Redeeming torrent.

Re-surface, head above the waters.

Take the next breath.

Still alive.

Surviving.

— autumnleavescascade



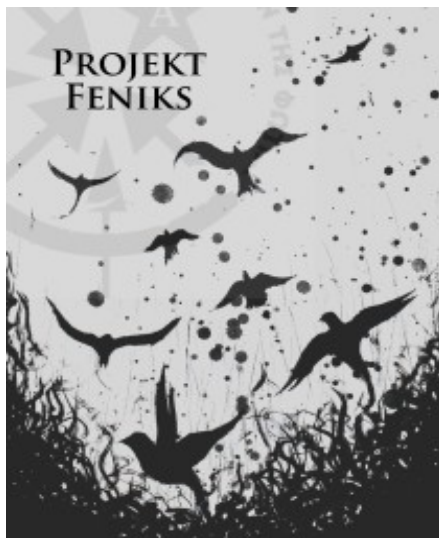


# GLOBAL FLASH- POINTS

**Philadelphia, U.S.A.:** “On a warm spring night, we went to a construction site where there was once a wild and abandoned place. We did what we could to hinder the progress that has befallen that area: removing survey stakes and dividers, stealing and destroying pieces of what was being built, and smashing the machines that homogenize and commodify the land. We don’t know what they intend to build on the site and we don’t care. Any domestication of wild places infuriates us. We took this action as a contribution to the month for the earth and against capital.”

**08.06.16, Mexico:** “At 4am, while so-called mexico city was blanketed by police, pollution, and restless capitalism, 320 birds and 3 foxes were liberated from Mercado Sonora, a crowded distribution point of nonhuman creatures kidnapped from their homes and crammed into horrid conditions of human negligence. All the human-labeled bird species that spread their wings, such as *Amazilia beryllina*, *Aquila chrysaetos*, and *Pharomachrus mocinno*, are found within the bioregions of ‘mexico’; and so, we are hoping, they have great chance of returning to their perch, or at least finding a viable new one where they can rest and continue to exercise their colorful existence. The foxes were tended to by a comrade and transported to their bioregions where, once released, began to frolic once again in rejuvenation. [...] Everyday we choose how we interact with our surroundings. Everyday there is a creature trembling in the corner of a cage. Everyday a sprout is pushing against concrete. Let us not forget our potential to act upon our values. Whether it is spreading stories and inspiration, nourishing seeds, or slipping on a mask and quietly opening doors... etc... we ALL have a role in the fight for liberation. In instinctual insurrection, Transborder Animal Liberation”

**28.06.16, Bristol, U.K.:** As a continuation of the Phoenix Project (see *Return Fire vol.2 pg45*), fire is set at an Avonmouth police depot. “The depot also stores crowd control barricade units, CCTV vans, staff support and military vehicles occasionally. We dedicate the action to the imprisoned members of the Conspiracy of Cells of Fire and Aggeliki Spyropoulou, as well as to those in the



attempted escape case [ed. – see *Rebels Behind Bars; 'Yet Another Fenced World'*]. This action is for the imprisoned comrades in UK, Greece, Chile, Russia, Poland, Czech Republic, France, Spain, Italy and around the world. War to the ‘Smart Cities’ [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg31*] and the prison-society. Long live anarchy and the wild.”

**05.07.16, Greece:** “On June 22nd 2016 the German police bastards once again raided the Rigaer 94 squat after the whole Nordkiez area had been declared a ‘danger zone’ with permanent controls and police presence. However they have failed to contain the conflict in this corner of Berlin [ed. – see *Rebels Behind Bars; A Comrade in Prison*]. [As a gesture of complicity] and within the framework of the call for a Black July, we took a stroll in Kolonaki (a posh area in the center of Athens) and began indiscriminately burning cars with the intention of the fire spreading uncontrollably to as many vehicles as possible.” Claimed by F.A.I./E.L.F. [Informal Anarchist Federation / Earth Liberation Front] ‘Chaotic Behavior in Constant Revolt’.

**06.08.16, Bristol, U.K.:** ‘Eco-Anarchist Vandals’ visit Easton-in-Gordano service station: “whilst the truck drivers were inactive in their cabs, 10-15 cars on four car-transporters were spray-painted causing their greedy earth-destroying companies loss of time and money infinitely larger than that we expended doing this opportunist crime. Solidarity to all the imprisoned comrades and those on the run.”

**West Lothian, U.K.:** A masked group torch three screws cars in daylight at HMP Addiewell, fleeing in a car later found burnt out 20 miles away in Edinburgh.



weeks earlier, five youth armed with clubs fought screws and scaled the 30ft fences with ladders stolen from a storeroom, but had been returned after an armed police operation.

**Magdeburg, Germany:** “Saxony-Anhalt has problems in recruiting new cops. Next year, they need to hire up to 700 instead of the current 350. The minister of the interior and the police union agree on the fact that there is a lack of ‘suitable candidates’. [...] September 9, under the slogan ‘A long night Festive Arrest at ‘Sternstraße 12’ crime scene – at the station’ the cops will practise new forms of public relations and recruitment attempts. [...] While in other parts of the building ‘daily operations’ continue, in others there’s a party. In a relaxed party atmosphere police training flyers are distributed. For children, there is a ‘Sherlock-Tour’ for taking specimens of traces and clues. For the older ones, it’s GAV [volunteer cops]. That includes reconstructed scenes and explanations of what is necessary, ‘when the person refuses.’ The event is organized in close collaboration with the ‘Kulturanker’ association, which is organizing the festive evening (voluntarily). While all are calling for more cops, we have begun their disposal. [...] ‘Almost the entire fleet of federal police vehicles was destroyed by fire in Magdeburg’ (From an article in the regional press)[...] Wednesday to Thursday night, September 8, [s]even police vehicles parked at the Magdeburg central station went up in smoke, as well as eleven ‘Deutsche Bahn’ vehicles. The press writes that the damage is estimated at 750,000 euros. Why the ‘Deutsche Bahn’? We remember 2014, when the DB provided the Nazis with extra trains to take them directly from the central station to the ‘SKET’ industrial park. We remember the propaganda hostile to unions against the railway workers’ strike last year. We remember the ‘CASTOR’ transportation train when the DB made its railways available to the nuclear industry. We remember the transport for the German Army, from military post to armoured vehicles.” This East German area is no stranger to such attacks; in 2012, 12 brand new police cars were set on fire in the state capital. Two days later, police cars parked at a police station in Halle were set on fire.

**29.08.16, Dublin, Ireland:** Heavy damage to infamous Oberstown youth prison after inmates utilised a staff strike (over their repeated assaulting by the youth) to seize keys and set fire on the roof, rioting late into the night and forcing riot police to retake the prison. Two

**26.09.16, Cañete, Chile:** Police headquarters holding the anarchist Joaquín

García (just captured after being underground; see **Return Fire vol.4 pg72**) are attacked with pyrotechnics. Part of a string of anti-vivisection, meat industry and bank vandalisms (and a railway blockade) coordinated across the length of Chile by 'Freely Associated Action' of the Earth & Animal Liberation Front (E.L.F. / A.L.F.) cells.

**Ontario, Canada:** "So back when Enbridge started shipping in pipeline segments for their line 10 expansion [ed. – for tar sands crude; see **Return Fire vol.4 pg29**], we started sabotaging them. There are vast networks of pipeline infrastructure throughout Turtle Island ['North America']. They are indefensible; perfect opportunities for effective direct action that harms nothing but an oil company's bottom line. It's in this spirit that we found ourselves going for long moonlit strolls through the trenches of the freshly dug line10 right-of-way. Wherever we felt the urge, we drilled various sized holes into pipeline segments while spilling corrosives inside others. We do this in solidarity with the Indigenous peoples of this area. [...]  
And lastly, but not least, to our comrades and co-conspirators:

A How-To from the heart  
You'll need 1) a decent cordless drill, 2) a good smaller-gauge cobalt or titanium drill bit – preferably with a pilot point, and 3) cutting oil. (Oh, the irony!)

With a righteous sense of adventure, prove your stealth ninja skills by getting into the right-of-way. Once you're in there you're pretty invisible from the road so long as you're not fluorescent, adorned in glitter or fucking around with a headlamp too much. Take a breath, take a look, and then find your way to an empty pipeline and start drilling! Go slow (so there's less noise, reverberation, and friction) and apply enough pressure so that you see metal shavings coming up – and then keep at it for 10 to 15 minutes. Cutting oil will help the process along by keeping the drill tip cool and effective.

Have fun."

**U.S.A.:** "Last week, we decided to ring in Kara Wild's trial in Paris [ed. – see **Rebels Behind Bars; New Accusations After Damien Kidnapped & Beaten**] by raining the streets of Chicago with shattered glass and popping a cop tire for each month that she has spent in prison. The windows of yuppie shops on the thoroughly gentrified north side stood tall and vulnerable to our

hammers. The tires of sheriff cars, brazenly parked on residential streets, challenged us to immobilize them. [...] Broken windows and popped tires are love letters to circulate between us. Never mind quantifying how much these acts hurt our enemies. By pulling up our masks and smashing their storefronts, we open up that beautiful space in which we can become ourselves, where nothing is sacred but the ties that bind us and the disgust we share for their miserable world."

**02.10.16, Chevilles, Switzerland:** *At the construction of a new migrant detention facility where "authorities want to hold people prisoners in order to drive them to the border quickly and unnoticed[...] we have fractured the lock of an exit door to the drill two holes and forced access to the building. Each of the seven floors, we opened the water pipes to cause flooding. Damage had to delay the work underway and inflate the invoice of the dirty work of the authorities and the companies who benefit."*

**03.10.16, Montevideo, Uruguay:** "Death to Nazism, fascism, communism and democracy. Always anarchists." *Arson attack against the home of Oscar Piquinela, secretary of the Inter-Parliamentary Uruguayan Group, an official at the Legislative Palace who was displaying neo-Nazi insignia on his balcony.* "[That a state agency official] does not have a problem with expressing ideas as rancid as Nazism, is sufficient evidence that ideas supposedly antagonistic like democracy and Nazism can coexist. Let's not forget that in Germany the Nazi party came to power through the electoral appeal of the Republican democracy. Both share authoritarian and marginalizing behaviors. Democracy with it's innocent mask of tolerance and classic discourse of 'social peace' also has a past and present endorsement that is stained in blood, just ask the parents who have lost children at the hands of the democratic police [ed. – see **We Can Be Worse Still**], or just ask the social and anti-social fighters who have been persecuted, beaten and imprisoned..."

**08.10.16, Porto, Portugal:** *Graffiti and damages against the headquarters of construction firm Vinci, in solidarity with the Z.A.D. (see **Return Fire vol.1 pg81**).*

**08.12.16, Thessaloniki, Greece:** "[W]e decided to attack the Church of Prophet Elijah [on Olympiados Street], setting fire to its entrance and interiors. [...] It bases its power on believers' hopes of a future afterlife, stifling any desire for insurgency today, in the here and now. It justifies war based on cultural differences that religion

itself has created. This is also the role of the church in Greece's contemporary reality, and beyond. Its all-powerful political role is exercised by its fascist, patriotic, xenophobic rhetoric, always in tandem and direct relation with politicians, cops, judges and journalists. At the same time it is well-known that the church is constantly trying to expand its economic hegemony and immeasurable wealth, which rests on the possession of huge tracts of land, buildings, etc. With a view to obtaining profits by means of speculation, it sets up a charitable façade which has nothing to do with reality. Finally, it has a huge social and cultural influence, being a pillar of the patriarchal system. It promotes (both externally and internally) heteronormativity, homophobia, and rape culture in its entirety. Its position on the place of women, sexuality or abortion is indicative of its stance on many such issues. [...] This act was in solidarity with anarchist prisoners Mónica Caballero and Francisco Solar [ed. – see **Rebels Behind Bars; Mónica and Francisco Deported**], accused of an explosive attack at El Pilar cathedral in Zaragoza on October 2nd 2013. In fact, during that period the Catholic Church in Spain had been struck by a series of attacks because of its willingness to limit access to abortions."

**16.10.16, São Paulo, Brazil:** *7 wards of a psychiatric prison burned in an uprising; 55 inmates escape into the countryside.*

**19.10.16, Athens, Greece:** *Statement from a crew who "took part, alongside many other groups and individualities, in the street clashes around the Polytechnic in Exharchia [ed. – see **The Exharchia Commune Rises & Defends Itself**], that lasted for several hours with constant attacks with molotovs, stones and fireworks against antiriot police squads. [...] But we don't want to limit ourselves in a routine of anticop hate; along with the attacks against the cops, we promote the practice of attack against the structures and symbols of domination, from the most obvious like banks and ministries, to those urban elements that serve the normal function of the metropolis: road signs, traffic lights, cameras, bus stops... as well the representations, symbols and idols of Power in the form of icons, monuments, statues[...] We don't see anarchic violence as a sacrifice or as a revolutionary obligation; instead, we demystify it, we turn it into a banality, we use it in a ludic way, making it obtainable for everybody, without professionalisms or restrictions."*

**U.K.:** *Four separate car dealerships hit by anonymous arson attacks in the Salisbury area; in each case the technique is placing a flammable device under the wheel arch.*



**Montréal, Canada:** "In response to the recent smashings of gentrifiers in the neighbourhood [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.4 pg91*], and in the context of twenty-two businesses being vandalized in the last year, the city and the police have publicly announced a renewed collaboration. They're desperately trying to reassert control, faced with people who "aren't afraid of the police", and their initiative to install more cameras shows it. [...] Over the last few months, friends have been playing Camover in the neighbourhood of Hochelaga. We've destroyed around twenty security cameras. For your pleasure (and certainly for our own as well!), here's a photo in which we see a friend sporting a necklace of optical trophies. [...] We decided to play, and will continue this game of revolt, which is simultaneously thrilling and frightening, where we learn to overcome fears, deal with stress, and expand our capacities, because this is ultimately about more than the gentrification of a particular neighborhood. What's happening in Hochelaga speaks to a history of struggle against domination as old as civilization itself: a multiplicity of wild and uncontrollable worlds that resist and evade the world of order and 'progress'."



**London, U.K.:** Report via [325.nostate.net](http://325.nostate.net), shortly after an anti-gentrification demo led to a brawl between Class War activists and Foxton estate agents; "Class War London opened up a water main outside gated estate agents Foxtons, which flooded dozens of expensive multi-million pound homes in a posh area. 100s of people had to be evacuated and the cost of the damage is extensive. Boris Johnson, the ex-mayor and now foreign secretary also had his basement flooded by waters which were reported to be up to 2 metres deep in the surrounding streets. The rich people were reported to have been taken to some kind of refugee camp for the upper class." Turns out 'devastate the avenues of the rich' was more than a slogan all along!



**10.12.16, Tyneside, U.K.:** Anarchist attack smashes police car windscreen.

**Wrexham, U.K.:** "It is important to announce one week before the opening of HMP Berwyn that two of the houseblocks in the prison are structurally unsound due to sabotage in 2015. After our action in May 2015 [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.4 pg60*] [we] knew that to regularly attempt to attack the prison would be impossible due to the prison walls being built around the site. After intensive research, it soon became apparent that we could have a dramatic effect with little effort. In July 2015, a strong acidic powder was poured into the excavations of the groundfloor slabs of two of the prisons's houseblocks. This has made two of these buildings structurally unsound – their foundations will eventually crumble and the buildings could collapse over time. Given that the strength of these slabs has been greatly reduced, intrusive investigations and a full re-build of these houseblocks would be necessary before attempting to

**02 & 07.02.17, Leipzig, Germany:** "We have wandered far and wide.

We have seen the beauty of natural chaos deep within ancient woodlands and amongst the weeds that crack the concrete. In the solitude of the mountain tops and in the silent encounters with other nocturnal individuals stalking in the night. When sharpening our knives in the shadows of the forests and conspiring around campfires with our fierce accomplices, those with whom we share the desire to break out of the cages of our domestication and become feral beings.

We have witnessed first-hand the devastation that the kingdom of "humanity" wreaks on the earthly environment, we have stood on the edges of vast and desolate quarries, we have walked through the clear cut forests and along the oil-slicked beaches strewn with plastic and the corpses of fishes and birds, feeling the hatred and anger building up inside us more and more like the blackness that gathers in our lungs. We have seen the horrors inside the factory farms and we each knew then in our hearts that liberation alone could never be enough.

We have set off incendiaries, torching the machines and infrastructure that annihilate the wild, momentarily paralyzing the norms and procedures of civilized order. We have launched attacks on the employees of ecocidal companies by daylight and moonlight, feeling more alive than ever as they fled before our knives, molotovs and stones. Our acts of vandalism have caused powercuts and severed internet and telephone connections to countless homes and businesses. We have rioted with criminal intent that does not stop at merely breaking a few windows and our rabid hands move to steal every necessity for our survival that comes within reach.

We are amoral, illegalist, antisocial and unrepentant individualists at war with techno-industrial society[...] With courage and determination we continue to practice new techniques in the application of the destructive arts, improving our methods of sabotage, attack and evasion. As we will stop at nothing, our attacks will erupt asymmetrically as we scurry from shadow to shadow and our fires will continue to spread... "Cluster of Vodafone antennae located and, "covering the bottom of the exposed cables in flammable gel and then placing two slow-burning incendiaries between the cables", destroyed. "Mobile phone antennas, besides functioning as important pieces of technical infrastructure for the smooth-functioning of society and the process of mass stupification also emit massive amounts of toxicity in the form of radiowaves and microwaves, resulting in tumors and brain damage in creatures dwelling nearby and are known to interfere with the navigational senses of birds and insects, leading to mass die-offs of entire colonies of bees and thus causing irreparable damage to existing ecosystems." Part of the same group also "destroyed 7 hunting towers and when I was finished, my desire was asking for more. More moments of silent activities between the singing of the birds." Six cars burn.

"When we first began claiming some of our acts of destruction as the Wildfire Cell, we also associated our little gang with the ALF, ELF and FAI as part of a final experiment in communication between other interesting individualities within the "Anarchist" camp who we were not in direct contact with. Then in our second communique we abandoned the use of these acronyms and spoke briefly about some of our motivations for doing so. [...] We retained the name of the cell to mark clearly our departure from [the] hypocritical idea of fighting for an external goal or cause, for some better future or mystified idol. [O]ur acts of destruction are acts tending towards our self-liberation. Acts which aim to break the chains that society has forced upon us from birth and create the potential to escape the great cage momentarily by decivilizing ourselves and becoming dangerous. [...] We are not saying that all who call themselves "anarchists" fall into this ideological trap, there are still some unique ones who claim this "identity" for themselves, that is their discretion. Amongst these few we proudly count some of our close allies and accomplices."

cage people in these buildings. This action is dedicated to every human being that has died in the prison system at the hands of the State."

**U.K.:** *Vodafone mobile phone mast burned* "in front of Kenneth Steele House, the serious crimes unit of Bristol police near Temple Meads train station in Bristol. This is not only a hit to the company but to the pride of the cops and their facade of control." *The comrades also sabotaged a car of G4S*, "a massive global private security company that run a number of private prisons, including youth prisons and migration centres. [...]. It was the state who came to their rescue when HMP Birmingham (privately operated by G4S) saw explosive riots... [ed. – see **We Are Not Afraid of Their Ruins... We Carry a New Chaos in Our Hearts**]."

**22.03.17, Grenoble, France:** "Wednesday night we were not tired so we went hunting for collaborators." *3 vehicles of the Communal Center for Social Action set on fire.* "The C.C.A.S co-manages misery, thus giving a moral guarantee to democracy [ed. – see **Who Is It?**]. This social policy seems to us more dangerous even than the blows of truncheons of their colleagues in uniform. All cops are not in blue[...] integration is a form of incarceration."

**18.04.17, Liège, Belgium:** "Don't you have a light?" & friend" set fire to a police station [which] was completely destroyed[...] We dedicate this action to the imprisoned comrades who are accused of bank robbery in Aachen [ed. – see **Rebels Behind Bars; Aachen Case Verdict**] and "the Montreuil compa and Damien [ed. – see **Rebels Behind Bars; New Accusations After Damien Kidnapped & Beaten**]..."

**30.06.17, Chile:** *20 molotovs wreck offices of the Agricultural & Livestock Service and General Directorate of Civil Aeronautics*, "in the context of the month for anarchic agitation for Earth liberation[...] The other motivation for our actions are the recent deaths of the *weichafes* (Mapuche [ed. – see **We Can Be Worse Still**] warriors) Patricio Gonzáles and Luis Marileo[...] IMMEDIATE FREEDOM FOR THE MAPUCHE POLITICAL PRISONERS WHO WITH GREAT STRENGTH AND COURAGE WENT ON HUNGER STRIKE [ed. – see **We Can Be Worse Still**], AS WELL AS FREEDOM FOR ALL THE PRISONERS OF WAR –

BEING  
SUBVERSIVE  
IN THE FACE  
OF THIS  
SYSTEM IS  
NOT  
TERRORISM,  
IT IS  
SURVIVAL."



"Down with the Anti-Terrorism Law: freedom for Mapuche & anarchist prisoners", "Strength compa" (left: in Spanish, right: in Mapudugun)

**04.05.17, Indonesia:** "Prostitutes, in collaboration with our non-prostitute illegalist comrades, yesterday undertook an action [not] undertaken exclusively by prostitutes, [but] at the initiative of a prostitute. [...] A prostitute had the opportunity to service a member of the Central Jakarta Military Police, and subsequently identify this SOCIAL WAR CRIMINAL'S home address (and penchant for smoking methamphetamine). In revolt at the social war criminal's blatant hypocrisy, the prostitute passed pertinent information onto their so-call "criminal" comrades, all of whom have been similarly persecuted by those who we recognize as the most reviled foot soldiers of fascism. We recognise these State thugs as directly complicit and responsible for the innumerable arbitrarily beatings, sexual assaults, prison sentences, harassment, and extortion we have all experienced for engaging in the same so-called "vices" these repulsive hypocrites enthusiastically embrace (and indeed profit from, personally and systemically).

[...] Using their PRO-fessional wiles and skills, the prostitute filmed the encounter and undertook a covert assessment of goods which could be easily liberated from the dog's home. The prostitute also identified when the dog would be engaged in his job of torturing our friends and comrades, and when his home would ostensibly be empty of his (presumably long-suffering) wife, lowly paid domestic slaves, and children.

Hence, with the knowledge of the dog's long holiday weekend plans, a team of us visited the dog's house to ensure it was empty. With ease, we were able to gain access. Once inside, we joyfully and mischievously liberated and expropriated as many of the social war criminal's expensive and ostensibly highly prized possessions as we were able to transport.

In addition to loathing uniformed dogs, we undertook this action to provide anonymous resources to several informal networks of similar minded insurrectionists and anarchists we have enduring solidarity and respect for (and several of us participate in). We felt it was similarly essential to provide material support, solidarity and resources to our friends currently incarcerated in spirit-crushing local prisons.

Post successful-action, we collectively decided that the ultimate mockery would be to sell the goods we expropriated back to members of State apparatuses due to their inherent corruption, petty scams and culture of extortion. In Jakarta, our enemies in the cops, military, special forces, and 'human' drones working for State departments, are primarily of the reviled, aspirational moneyed class. Seemingly those of this ilk share a desperate penchant for parading their consumer 'goods' as an affirmation of their existential identities. [...] Hence, to our amusement and contempt, we are confident the last place they will investigate in searching for the liberated property is each other."

**22.07.17, London, U.K.:** Masked youth raise a burning barricade in the north of the city outside the shop Rashan Charles was suffocated to death in by pursuing cops, and attack the riot squad when they arrive with projectiles, forcing three retreats and trashing a bank and other businesses. Fireworks launched at police helicopter. Earlier the same month, London police's killing of Edir Frederico Da Costa in a stop-search also led to rioting and cops in the hospital.

**23.09.17, Melbourne, Australia:** "15 queer anarchists (including sex workers, drug users, disabled people, people living with blood borne viruses and survivors of child abuse & spiritual abuse perpetrated by fundamentalist christians & churches) disrupted and intervened in the launch of the national Coalition For Marriage campaign. The Coalition For Marriage is a front group for the fundamentalist religious organisation, the Australian Christian Lobby [whose members have worked with racist right-wing groups]. [...] In an attempt to deprive the religious fundamentalists of a platform, and to make their event as uncomfortable as possible, we engaged in a series of constant disruptions, beginning with two people unfurling a banner reading "Burn Churches, Not Queers" as the 1000 strong supporters of Christian fundamentalist ideology entered the venue." *The Christians homophobic speeches were interrupted (with slogans and enthusiastic kissing among the anarchists), and the merchandise table upset. Mainstream media report the intervention as "domestic terrorism", and some pacifistic 'anarchist' groups also distance themselves...*

**21-22.11.17, Aragón, Spain:** *Letter-bombs (accompanied by instructions to leave the premises and alert the police; presumably the devices were timed) delivered to the Italian Chamber of Commerce and three branches of an Italian insurance company. Following controlled detonations after evacuation, two turned out to be fake. Though press report a responsibility claim they received from anarchists, they decline to cite the signature. One possible reason the comrade/s of [anarhija.info](http://anarhija.info) brought up was that it was the work of "hypothetically 'dismantled' comrades, which could interfere with future or ongoing investigations..."* Around this time, a major anti-anarchist trial is due to start in Italy (see **Rebels Behind Bars; A Letter from Anarchist Comrade Anna Beniamino about Operation Scripta Manent & More...**)...



# REBELS BEHIND BARS

– text by prisoners & repression news

## A Comrade in Prison

(Germany)

On October 18th 2017, the trial against our friend and comrade Nero took place at the Amtsgericht in Moabit. He was charged with blinding a police helicopter with a laser pointer. On that night [June 16th], a concert was taking place in Rigaerstraße<sup>[1]</sup>, which led to riots in the streets. Nero was arrested in the Südkiez in Friedrichshain, assaulted in the police station and let go again the next morning. **A month later, civil cops where waiting at his work place and arrested him upon his arrival.** Since then it has been three months he has been in custody in the JVA Moabit.

Cops where already waiting in front of the court house in the Turmstraße and civil cops where snooping around the neighbourhood, to harass visitors. Press and police witnesses had gathered in front of the court room. The trial was supposed to start at 9:20 AM, though it took over an hour before the press and visitors where allowed inside. After having read out the charges, the judge declared, that a deal had been agreed upon, stating that the sentence should not be over 20 months, should the defended admit to the charges that is. **The confession included the blinding of the helicopter with the intention to support the riots in the Rigaerstraße.** These charges can legally be met with 1-15 years in prison. With a simple “yes” under pressure, the sentence was set between 16 and 20 months.

Afterwards the pilot was called to the stand. Angelo Koepp is not only a pilot but also a great actor. Obviously, he had practiced his performance many times, to create dramatic scenes, in order for our friend to receive a harsh punishment. Without naming any sources, he talked about a long-term disabled colleague, who allegedly after a similar attack still requires a reading aid. He also explains, that usually the helicopters are only equipped with one pilot. But as chance might have it, during all the laser pointer attacks, two pilots where on board to prevent a crash. Angelo was not shy about imagining catastrophic scenes in case of a helicopter crash by explaining how the 330 liters of kerosene, that where still in the tank could have created a monstrous fire ball. Strange, how when two helicopters collided at the Olympic stadium, no such fire ball could be seen, even though a lot more kerosene was in play then. Only the steep angle, with which the laser was pointed at the helicopter, prevented such a disastrous fire ball.

This way the pilots were able to follow Nero, arrest him

and afterwards return to Rigaerstraße. Already before the shift that night, they had been told to expect attacks with laser pointers in the Rigaerstraße. Just as well, since the helicopters have been terrorizing the neighbourhood for decades and it's not just the squatters who are fed up with it. Coming to an end, the witness was asked to name the number of operations carried out in the Rigaerstraße. Claiming he was lacking permission to testify, he refused an answer. After finishing his performance, Angelo joined the irritated visitors, to follow the rest of the trial. After that everyone agreed, that it was unnecessary to hear any more witnesses. Only one friend was heard by the judge. He stated that Nero was staying at his place and was in fact not homeless but just one of the many people in this city in trouble of finding an apartment and, being a worker, has limited time to stand in an endless line at the Bürgeramt to officially register [as homeless]. Apart from a couple of stupid questions from the jury, there was nothing left to say and the judge retreated until the proclamation of sentence.

When the doors to room 101 opened again, all the cop witnesses had occupied the visitors seats, even though they were no longer needed. The three cops who had been in the helicopter and Mr. Habedank, the director of LKA [ed. – *State Criminal Police Office of Interior Ministry*] 5, who did not mind to show several visitors that he knows exactly who they were. Everyone was excitedly awaiting the sentence. During the proclamation of sentence, the judge did not miss the chance to give a seemingly endless moral speech towards the audience. He integrated all the horror scenarios, that had been brought up by the pilot in his sentence. **He agreed with the prosecutors demand of 18 months in prison, without parole, since that would only give Nero the chance to continue his fight against the police.** We hope that he will fight this struggle in there, just as successfully as he did it out here. Lastly the judge decided against letting Nero out for a while before his sentence started. He also held another long moral speech before he proclaimed his decision, saying that since our friend did not apologize for his actions, there was danger for repetition and his missing rent contract was taken as a flight risk. Therefore our friend is and will stay in prison.

*Blow up the prisons, blow up the palaces, blow up the pigs!*

1. ed. – This article refers to the situation in a neighbourhood of Berlin that has long been a

hub of radical activity in that city (including the semi-autonomous spaces on Rigaerstraße street). Shortly after this court-report, 'Comrades and friends of Rigaer 94 and the resistance in Friedrichshain' released a text we will quote to contextualise the situation there: "In Berlin it is forbidden to organize a flea market, where everything can be given away for free, it is forbidden to play music in public spaces or just gather in the street with many people. It might be allowed if one requests a permission with the police. We did all of these things without having a permission and every time we did, the police came and attacked us. As a response, many stones were thrown towards the cops and their cars. [...] Due to gentrification, the population in our part of the city, is being slowly replaced. If you don't have the money, you can't pay the rent anymore and you have to move. This is why several luxury cars and new investors are being attacked in our neighbourhoods. [...] When the state attacks us, like last year, when the cops raided the Rigaer 94 twice and once occupied the house for over three weeks, while destroying large parts of it, it becomes possible for us to mobilize many people from outside our circles. For weeks over the summer 2016, cars all over the city were burning and during a bigger demonstration many people attacked the cops. [...] The autonomous movement was fueled in the '80s by the difficult housing situation and the many squats, that existed all over the city. **The experiences since then show us that as soon as we take one step backwards the enemy moves up right behind us.** In the cases, where squatters negotiated with the state, they always lost. In the cases, where we did not negotiate, we may have also lost, but by fighting the struggle we won new activists for our structures. As a realistic stop over, we are trying to make one part of the city impossible to control, a process which should be expanded chronologically and spatially. Maybe the cops will attack our spaces in Friedrichshain again in the near future. Then we will ask you for help, by attacking authority, no matter where you are." Police have designated the area a 'Danger Zone', which allows them stop-and-search from people without reason, breaking into homes without a search warrant and confiscating everything, and periodically there is media hysteria, comparing the place to Syria and other nonsense. It seems like many of the same problems are faced by comrades in Berlin as in many other cities of Europe and the world at this moment, with the right hand of State repression and the left hand of rising living prices pushes the conflictive zones against the wall and starts to funnel them out of the centers. **We wish fortitude upon the fighters of Friedrichshain in the confrontations to come!**





## **New Accusations After Damien Kidnapped & Beaten [& letter]** (France)

During the night of July 29-30th, anarchist comrade Damien Camélio was ambushed by cops as he was leaving the hospital he had just checked his collapsed partner (now recovered) into, in Saint-Malo, Brittany. Here is part of his account: *“When I got outside the hospital a cop car was parked in front of me and four cops were waiting for me next to the car.*

*They yelled: “Hey Camélio, give us your papers so we can check them.”*

*I had nothing to hide so I handed them over. A cop asked me: “Are you carrying a weapon?” to which I replied that yes, of course, I always have a knife on me. He asked me to show him it. **I took it out and he snatched it from my hands while the other three cops jumped on me at the same time.***

*I was thrown onto the ground, my hands were cuffed behind my back and they then beat me to the point where I was having trouble breathing. I tried to struggle a bit because it was really too much and at the time I was afraid they would kill me. They strangled me so much that I lost consciousness. When I woke up the blows were still raining down on me.”*

After 36 hours in custody the comrade was released with serious injuries and an order to attend court on charges of contempt of authority and resisting arrest. After hospital treatment, he was diagnosed with a major fracture of the right hand requiring 42 days of intensive therapy and a perforated right eardrum which may cause irreversible damage (deafness), as well as *“huge bruises on my arms, back, ribs and legs as well as large bumps on my skull and cuts in my mouth.”*

In the same letter he announced these injuries to the world, Damien also named his assailants (specifically, police officers Grenot, Remond, Cuzon and Lercorvaisier); the latter have now filed defamation charges, although the initial – harder to substantiate – charges of contempt and resistance have been dropped.

**Damien had only a month before been released from prison, after his arrest in December and sentenced for riot damages during the 'Ni Loi Ni Travail' rebellions** (see **Clarification on the Attack on the CGT Headquarters & on the Topic of 'Anonymous Disassociation'**), namely for attacks against the Chamber of Commerce, a Jaguar showroom, a job centre and supermarket during a wild demo that took place on April 14th 2016 in Paris. Damien emphasised that during the combative

wave that spring they had *“fiercely fought against the BAC (riot police) and the protest marshals of the CGT (General Confederation of Labour trade union), who could no longer contain the revolt and joined forces to repress it with huge blows of truncheons and gas”,* while his only police interview statement was *“I am neither guilty nor innocent. I am an anarchist. I have nothing more to say...”*

During his sentence, like ones he has served before, he released a number of letters, for example claiming solidarity with other prisoners or comrades facing repression, and to contribute to an anarchist discussion on 'justice' scheduled in Paris. **We have included parts of one of these letters here, while he was held in Fleury-Merogis (Europe's largest prison) which we feel gives a context to the extreme enmity the French state holds the comrade in** (not that police violence is always so discriminating, of course, but their memories are long).

Finally, his imprisonment provoked many solidarity actions (not least the burning of another Jaguar in Paris for his birthday), one of the more innovative which we insert at the end; and the news of his recent beating followed in form. September 21st (also the second trial date of Kara and Krèm over the action mentioned below in the footnotes), in Grenoble, 'some nocturnals' entered a vast police barracks; the fire they set devastated nearly 2,000m<sup>2</sup> of criminal investigation laboratory, offices, garages and 50 vehicles (including intervention vans and logistic trucks; one gendarmerie officer suffered smoke-inhalation trying in vain to battle the blaze), to the tune of around 20 million euros.



It's May 18th, the date of my parole, but I'm still in the slammer and I'm going to be staying here.

Sentence judge Catherine Ardaillon, left-wing trade unionist, activist at the Evry tribunal and at Fléury-Mérogis prison, has decreed that all the same, for cases like mine, its lucky that there are prisons and therefore adjusting my sentence is out of the question.

[...] For several weeks now, I have been subjected to numerous searches, searches of my cell, searches of my body, etc. **They found nothing until an informant (who must have been very close to me, to give such precise information) told them where I was hiding my SIM cards.** So a few days ago they found 3 SIM cards hidden inside a packet of new rolling papers. They were hidden interspersed between the papers at the bottom of the packaging. During the search, the guard reacted in a way that betrayed that they had an informant: just

before the search, when I emptied my pockets before undressing, he immediately took my 2 packets of rolling papers aside, but he seemed disinterested by the rest. I knew I was done, and indeed, at the end of the search, he said to me: *“And here, there is nothing?”* Then he pulled out all the sheets one by one until the SIM cards appeared.

In the days that followed, some of the prisoners who I am close to have undergone similar searches.

Last night on May 17th, an ERIS intervention squad broke into my cell at around 8PM. For those unfamiliar with the ERIS, they are squads that receive the same training as the GIGN, GIPN and RAID, overtrained and equipped with various protections similar to those of the CRS [*ed. – various special units*] – bulletproof vests, plastic shields, hoods under their helmets so they cannot be recognized, reinforced gloves, shin guards, etc, etc. They are usually armed with batons and flashballs which they shoot at point black range, of course, since a cell is not bigger than 9m<sup>2</sup>.

In short they shocked us and threw us into the corridor, glued to the wall with our hands on our heads and then handcuffed. Myself and my co-detainee were then dragged into separate search rooms. For the rest, we know the story, thorough strip search, with the particularity this time that one of them forcibly lifted one of my legs to keep them apart as much as possible so that his colleague who was squatting could look at my anus better, with his Mag-lite so close to my ass that I could feel the heat produced by the bulb.

At the time it made me think of the Théo affair<sup>[1]</sup>, but I found nothing better than to say to him with a sly air: *“Well my pig, you are doing a good job!”*

[...] After the strip-tease, they threw us into the waiting room. They had blocked the windows with sheets of paper glued to the outside, but as one of them was slightly torn, I could see what was going on in the corridor.

There were a large number of people: matrons, ERIS, all the lieutenants, the director, plainclothes cops and the prosecutor.

They completely emptied the contents of the cell into boxes that were loaded into a truck to take them to the scanner. Then I saw them go into the cell with dogs. Later my cell neighbours told me that they even heard them dismantling parts of the cell with a screwdriver.

**Meanwhile, my cell mate, who is far from being a good strategist, was trying to break everything, banging everywhere and playing hide and seek by crouching right under the windows when they lifted the paper to see what was going on.** Well, of course, the director ordered the ERIS to forcibly remove him to solitary confinement.

In these cases, I prefer to make myself as discreet as possible in order to observe and listen to everything that happens and is said, the people present, etc.

I was left alone in the waiting room until 1:30AM. **The search took approximately 5.5 hours.**

When they took me out of the waiting room, they conducted a rather strange search: this time they searched in my mouth! The Maglite so they could see and then “put your tongue to the left, top, right, bottom, spread your cheek with your finger,” etc. For a moment I wondered if they were going to take me to the scanner itself, these idiots!

Then I understood: they were looking for a SIM card. The first three they already had, they had to analyze them and see whether there was anything interesting to find.

A few hours later, the lieutenant confirmed my suspicions: during the search they found 2 phones, a charger and a SIM. The lieutenant told me that everything had been sent off to be analyzed to determine who it belongs to.

He asked me some questions and I said I did not know who it belongs to. He did not insist, something that did not surprise me, because I knew that the result of the analysis would be for my part negative.

In reality, they did not succeed in finding anything concrete **[but that did not prevent them from rejecting my parole.]**

Perhaps the new Minister of Justice, the bastard of Bayrou, remembers the attack on the church in Pau, the town of which he is the mayor, made with a Molotov cocktail and claimed by the GADI (International Direct Action Group) in January 2014. An action and cell for which I claimed responsibility and participation following my arrest on charges of terrorism.

**Since I have not given any news for a long time, I will quickly recollect the sabotage of the prison workshops that I was accused of<sup>[2]</sup>.** As for the judicial procedure, which was not very interesting, I will simply say that they could not determine who was responsible. What is interesting is that the economic damage caused from inside the prison was not negligible. In fact, many Post-it customers would have been impacted in Norway, Sweden, Holland, Switzerland, Austria, France and England. It seems that the delivered merchandise was in some case not what had been ordered, and in the other cases was badly made and therefore unsellable.

**It is possible that following the debates surrounding the collage of anti-election posters that were pasted up in the courtyard, some prisoners wish to put into practice in the here-and-now the anarchist proposals that emerged from it.**

[...] I want to salute the Greek comrades and say that the Nemesis Project<sup>[3]</sup> is an exciting proposal.

A wink of solidarity to Kara and Krèm<sup>[4]</sup>!  
For a dangerous June<sup>[5]</sup>!

– Damien

1. ed. – 22-year-old black youth beaten and raped with a telescopic baton by four cops during a routine February 2017 stop-search in Paris, sparking riots.

2. ed. – Against a production line in one of the prison workshops (where via providers like Iccub, products of brands such as Hachette, Bourjois Parfums, Yves Rocher and Post-it, have merchandise packed by prisoners). Three other prisoners were also accused. In solidarity with them, tags appeared on the walls of the prison courtyard: ‘Fire To The Prisons’ and ‘a screw who commits suicide is partially forgiven’.

3. ed. – Modelled on the Phoenix Project (see *Return Fire vol.2 pg45*), so far this had comprised of a bombing at an Athenian judge’s home, bomb-threat at a Santiago military barracks, parcel-bomb to the German Minister of Finance, and fire-bomb in the Chilean National Association of Judiciary Officials.

4. ed. – Both still imprisoned when he was writing; they were among the 6 accused of burning a cop car (that initially still had the cops inside) during a police demonstration in Paris against the force frequently used against the during the Ni Loi Ni Travail days; the cop union had also invited major figures of the neo-fascist National Front to the event for photo-ops. The sentences this October for five ranged from a fine to between 1 – 5 years in prison (some of those years suspended, hence their release), whereas the sixth (on the run) was sentenced to 7 years in absence for lighting the car with a flare.

5. ed. – see *Clarification on the Attack on the CGT Headquarters & on the Topic of ‘Anonymous Disassociation’*

## LONG LIVE TUNGSTEN CARBIDE!

*In solidarity with Damien. An occasion to share the remarkable effectiveness of a little pocket companion.*

I was very pissed off this evening. I was thinking of Damien facing trial, thinking of the great demo of 14th April, when we had fun smashing everything, of all those arseholes who are ruining our lives, of our diver’s masks and gas masks getting bored since we stopped smashing everything every Thursday *[transl. – during the four months of protest against the Loi Travail, demos were often on Thursdays – sometimes also Tuesdays]*.

Near the Porte des Lilas [north-east of Paris], I smashed the screens of 7 ATMs, 4 JCDecaux billboards and the windows of a RATP [Paris public transport] car and one belonging to SPIE (prison building contractors).

**All this with much appreciated discretion (relatively discreet: it makes a little ‘plop’, especially on car windows), thanks to a small [tungsten carbide] wheel used to cut tiles, 22mm in diameter, attached to a lace strong enough to take the weight of the shards of broken glass.** To the cops *[ed. – i.e. in a stop-and-search]* it’s a funky necklace but it’s glass’s worst enemy. They can be found in all good DIY shops.

Handyman Bob



## Further Persecution of Ilya While Inside by Russian Authorities

*[continued from Return Fire vol.3 pg86]*

Following his complaints, in April the comrade Ilya Romanov was awarded 3,400 euros by the European Court of Human Rights in compensation for ‘unreasonably long’ detention during the investigation. However all accounts of Ilya’s are blocked by the state, and when elderly relatives of his tried to transfer the money to Ilya they were detained by the police. In May he began a four-month stretch in solitary confinement, and in July, as revenge for his publicising the horrible conditions in Russian prisons, authorities seized his mobile phone and used his account in social media to spread a video clip calling for terrorist attacks. For this reason a new terrorism case has been opened against him.

“TERRORIST” IS THE STATE...

Ilya Romanov appreciates mail: 431130, Mordovia, Zubovo-Poliansky district, st. Potma, n. Lepley.

## A Letter from Anarchist Comrade Anna Beniamino about Operation Scripta Manent & more... (Italy)

The prosecution in Turin have decided to put an entire anarchist tendency on trial: anti-organisation Anarchism<sup>[1]</sup>. **This isn’t a sensationalist and defensive overstatement, it’s what Turin’s investigating judge, Anna Ricci, enacted** with the arrest warrants issued in July 2016, and enforced in September, probably to avoid disrupting the summer holidays of some public official.

The inquisitors’ choice is clear from the ridiculous framework that appeared in the arrest warrant papers, a product of the deleterious encounter between the mind of some cop and the rushed reading of a Wikipedia summary.

The framework gives shape to a repressive Manichean *[ed. – i.e. dualistic]* vision of a ‘social anarchy’, a good and harmless one,

and an (anti-social and anti-classist) 'individual anarchy', violent and liable to repression, whose method is the 'anti-organization model'.

By making the necessary distinctions, this framework aims to define a specific camp, to create a cage, so that from a generic 'insurrectionism', (a sub-product of the anti-organization model), always violent and liable to punishment to varying degrees, sub-species can be pulled out to form different strands of the investigation<sup>[2]</sup> for Italian cops: 'classic insurrectionism', 'social insurrectionism', 'eco-insurrectionism' and the 'Informal Anarchist Federation' [hereafter, F.A.I.].

That different tensions and tendencies exist within Anarchism is a fact, but it's also true that this type of rigid categorisation is an inherent feature of the mindset and requirements of the inquisitors, who are set on delineating a specific area in order to make their manoeuvres as best they can: it is within this space that the following operation lies.

**Historically, solidarity with revolutionary prisoners has been a focal point of interest for anarchists and a way to come together and build a rebellious sensibility: revolutionary solidarity not solidarity with revolutionaries.**

Devised by Turin's DIGOS [political police] and prosecutors back in 2012, in the wake of 20 years of recurring and failed repressive attempts, operation Scripta Manent led to the arrest of 5 anarchists: A.M., V.S., D.C., M.B., A.B., all already under investigation and/or arrested following various anarchist publications on action and repression, specifically, Pagine in Rivolta<sup>[3]</sup>, the Croce Nera Anarchica bulletin<sup>[4]</sup>, KNO3<sup>[5]</sup>. In addition, there were the arrest warrants for A.C. and N.G.<sup>[6]</sup>, two comrades in prison since 2012 following an attack on the managing director of Ansaldo Nucleare, Adinolfi, which was claimed in court in October 2013 as the Olga Cell (FAI/FRI). For years, they'd been known as the editors of Pagine in Rivolta and Alfredo had already been prosecuted for KNO3.

Four other anarchists have been put under investigation, all of whom were imprisoned during the Ardire operation<sup>[7]</sup>, part of which converges into these current legal proceedings, along with 4 more whose arrests the judge refused to validate in the July warrant and led to the prosecutor's unsuccessful appeal attempt in October 2016. In addition, 32 raids were carried out across Italy, during which a comrade and editor of CNA was arrested and is still being held in prison under the AS2 [high-security] regime<sup>[8]</sup>.

*The investigation is still underway*

The operation is being led by prosecutor Roberto Sparagna, new to so-called anti-terrorism proceedings but well-known for having run trials for so-called organised crime. **It is unknown whether this operation was down to him or the input of Turin cops: the latter seems much more likely**, as the bulk of the investigation was conducted and archived by the DIGOS over the years and because of little picturesque background events like the "greetings from Dr. Petronzi" (Turin's ex-DIGOS chief), which Sparagna made sure to extend to the arrested during one of his interrogation attempts.

It matters little whether the prosecutor is essentially a puppet/ventriloquist or whether he's driven by his own will; the declared intent is to repress and silence an anarchist component that has always supported, and continues to support, direct action, solidarity with revolutionary prisoners, the multiform practices of anarchist destructive action and permanent rebellion against political conformism and compliance inside and outside the milieu of the movement.

Everyone is charged with article 270bis, some since 2003, others since 2008<sup>[9]</sup> relating to FAI/FRI to various degrees, as both 'promoters/organisers', as well as 'participants'.

A.C. and N.G. are also charged with article 280bis for a string of attacks<sup>[10]</sup> carried out from 2005 to 2007 on the basis of what is defined as a 'serious investigative framework' even if, in actual fact, the same comrades had already been investigated by the same cops, with the same 'evidence', both shortly after the same events and in 2012<sup>[11]</sup>, using the usual armoury of phone tapping, eavesdropping, video recording, tailing, DNA sampling, etc. and the cases had been archived.

Launched on the back of the 2012 arrests, this investigation is an attempt to apply an associative charge to the case of Adinolfi's wounding and to investigate a whole political area of comrades who expressed solidarity with those arrested and with their action: the cops used article 270bis and their so-called 'crimes of intent', in order to sift through what had already passed through the hands of various Italian prosecutors, putting everything together under their jurisdiction by reviving and rehashing a series of case files that had previously been archived.

**This attempt to bring everything together is also mentioned in the judicial order itself and had seeped into the media quite extensively in recent years**, as well as in August 2016, with newspaper articles that described 'anti-terrorism summits' held between the different prosecutors and made grand claims of 'bad masters' and 'violent

infiltrators' in contexts that in themselves, were democratically acceptable.

This time, having followed a temporal and logical format that inverts the classic action/repression sequence, repression is retroactively looking for unsolved actions and political positions consolidated over the course of 20 years, as a restraint and a warning against the current "excessive" shows of solidarity. **These are clearly aimed at repressing unwelcome solidarity and the spread of an anarchist feeling that openly talks about prisoners and actions, publishes and supports them.**



The cops' ambitions aimed even higher, as evident in the raids, failed arrests and most of all, in the accusatory framework that spans 20 years of anarchist actions and publications.

The excursus begins with the Marini trial<sup>[12]</sup> in 1996 and ends with the current Croce Nera Anarchica, tracing an optimal line that starts from critiques of how the Marini Trial was handled, passes through the various articles and claims presented in Pagine in Rivolta, KNO3 and CNA, and ends with writings containing discussions and calls to be present at the Adinolfi trial (WITH OUR HEADS HELD HIGH and HERE AND NOW) and finally, with today's CNA.

This is why it is not an overstatement to claim that this legal proceeding is one that is being **extended to an anarchist feeling**, even if it is trying to hone in on the circle: cornerstones of anti-authoritarian thought and method such as direct action and the rejection of representation, affinity and informality, revolutionary solidarity and mutual aid, become, in the words and paper rubbish of inquisitors, the dangerous raw material that must be repressed as soon as it appears.

It is neither simply a 'crime of opinion' that's being put on trial, nor the censorship of the democratic freedom of expression: this is the war that authority is waging against the bond between thought and action that lies at the basis of anarchism.

By trying to strike publications, blogs or any other means of communication anarchists decide to use, repression only reaffirms the validity of these means: to be



a thorn in the side of subjugation and silence.

— Anna

Anna Beniamino, C.C. Rebibbia Femminile, Bartolo Longo 92, 00156 Roma, Italy [correct as of 14/11/17]

1. ed. — see **Return Fire vol.3 pg80**

2. Turin's prosecutors have produced several judicial proceedings based on this framework in the last two years, which resulted both in the attempts to put 3 eco-anarchists who had been previously sentenced in Switzerland for attempted sabotage of IBM [ed. — see **Good News At Last From Italy!** below], on trial yet again for article 270bis [‘subversive association with the purposes of terrorism’] and to investigate and charge anarchists engaged in a solidarity fund for prisoners, with raids and warrants, using the same article 270bis.

3. *Pagine in Rivolta* was published under the subtitle ‘revolutionary anarchist periodical’ from 1997 to 2002, with 14 issues that had a variable circulation that reached one thousand copies. It had articles of analysis and critique of the anarchist movement, chronologies of direct actions, claims, prisoners’ lists and news on repression.

4. The CNA [Anarchist Black Cross] bulletin targeted by repression is the one published from 2001 to 2005, and today’s CNA published since 2014 with a blog and a journal. The editors of *Croce Nera Anarchica* of 2001/2005 were the targets of the 2005 ‘Operation Croce Nera’, a 270bis operation, which led to the arrests of seven comrades that led to no avail, 3 of whom are among those investigated within *Scripta Manent*.

5. KNO3 came out in 2008 as a single issue that was subtitled ‘revolutionary anarchist paper’. In 2008 it was the object of a 270bis investigation, ‘Operation Shadow’, led by Perugia’s prosecutor Emanuela Comodi, in collaboration with the ROS carabinieri forces, in which the associative crime was dropped during the first degree trial; in 2015 the appeal trial resulted in a sentence against A.C. and A.B., whilst a third comrade was put under investigation for article 302 with the aggravating circumstance of terrorism linked to articles published in KNO3; other comrades were sentenced for the sabotage of a railway track and for car theft.

6. ed. — see **Return Fire vol.1 pg78**

7. ‘Operation Ardire’ began in Perugia with prosecutor Comodi, in collaboration with ROS carabinieri forces and led to seven arrests in June 2012. It was based on article 270bis and referred to a series of attacks claimed by FAI/FRI between 2009 and 2012. The jurisdiction of the case passed from Perugia to Milan after a high court ruling in the appeal court, and for some of the accused, S.F., E.D.B., G.P.S. and G.L.T. [ed. — see **Return Fire vol.1 pg75**], it was passed from Milan to Turin and brought into *Scripta Manent*. All those imprisoned were released in 2013 after serving the maximum [pre-trial] term.

8. D.C. was arrested during one of the raids within *Scripta Manent* after electric material for common use (9-volt batteries and bulbs) was found in his home. Prosecutor Francesca Polino

from Rome opened a separated proceeding against him, whilst keeping him in the high security AS2 regime.

9. From 2003, because this is the year identified as the beginning of FAI following the attack on the interior minister at the time, Prodi and because of the text that claimed responsibility for it. For some of the accused, it’s 2008, because they’d already been put under investigation for the same attack, without having been formally charged.

10. This refers to: the explosive device against the RIS carabinieri forces in Parma in October 2005, an action claimed by Coop. Artigiana Fuoco e Affini (occasionally spectacular)/FAI; the explosive/incendiary parcel sent to the then mayor of Bologna Sergio Cofferati in November 2005, also claimed by Coop. Artigiana Fuoco e Affini/FAI; the double explosive attack on the carabinieri training centre in Fossano (CN) in June 2006 claimed by FAI/RAT [Tremendous Anonymous Revolt]; the explosive/incendiary parcels sent to the then-mayor of Turin, Chiamparino, the director of Torino Cronaca, Beppe Fossati, and placed on the premises of Coema Edilitia, a company involved in the construction of the CIE migrant detention centre in Turin in July 2006, all claimed by RAT/FAI; the 3 explosive devices set off in sequence in the Turin neighbourhood of Crocetta in March 2007 and claimed by RAT/FAI.

11. In the summer of 2012, during the investigation and subsequent arrest of A.C. and N.G., prosecutors in various Italian jurisdictions reopened a series of archived case files relating to the attacks that the FAI had claimed over the previous 10 years.

12. In 1995, about thirty anarchists were arrested and put on trial by Rome’s prosecutor Antonio Marini in collaboration with ROS carabinieri forces for article 270bis, in addition to a series of specific offenses. The associative charge referring to the so-called ORAI organisation was dropped in 2004 and a sentence for subversive propaganda and other specific offenses were confirmed.



This letter from Anna Beniamino, published in the third bulletin of the current CNA, was translated into English in April. Operation *Scripta Manent* was launched September



“When a society has destroyed all possible adventure, the only possible adventure is TO DESTROY THAT SOCIETY”

“Repression is the bulldozer of a capitalism that is destroying the world, of a civilization that isolates men and women in order to later *socialize them* into its virtual community. [...] There is no doubt that a strong repressive wind is rising. I think that the decisive stake in play is that of being able to *interpret* this repression.

Current living and working conditions can be imposed through an increasingly massive use of terror (terror of remaining unemployed and of not being able to pay quickly rising rents, terror of the police and of prison). Repression acts against atomized individuals whose increasing dependence on a bankrupt way of life is rendering them incapable of any material or ideal solidarity. It is a mistake to separate the repressive attacks from this progressive disintegration of the *world* — in the sense of a direct experience of reality and of one’s fellow human beings, outside of the media and mercantile bell-jar, outside of the tomb-like apartments of the concentration imposed by urban planning. Knowing how to interpret repression also means not falling into the illusion that those in power strike us because we are a real threat (with all the locking up of identity that such an illusion entails). If we are a detonator, as someone has said, the aim of those in power is to separate us from any explosive material, i.e., from any social context of struggle. In word and action, we should do the exact opposite.” — *A Friend of Ludd*

6th 2016 with raids on the homes of 34 comrades with pistols drawn (while Nicola and Alfredo were notified in prison of the additional charges), with at first 15 people charged of various of the actions named above, all for “subversive association with terrorist aims” and seven of those locked up awaiting trial. All of those jailed were instantly put in solitary confinement, subject to constant harassment, and denied contact with each other or outside.

Nevertheless, **the comrades began a series of spirited rebellions against their jailers**, variously undertaking hunger-strikes against their isolating conditions, refusing to comply with medical tests or fingerprinting and photo procedure, and breaking the windows of a screw’s office on one of the high-security wings many of them are held (and then the panels over the air vents in his individual cell that prevent view of the outside).

June 2nd, **Italian political police notified seven more comrades of their charges in a parallel investigation** focusing on the anarchist websites RadioAzione, Anarhija and Croce Nera Anarchica (in the last case



also its hard-copy version, its distributors and those who organised the presentations of the same journal in Italy) under 270bis and also '(terrorist) criminal association', while two of those comrades were also charged with 'attack with the purposes of terrorism'. One of the comrades summarized the content of the accusations like this: *"Translation of texts, predisposition, solicitation, defending of criminal acts, conception and dissemination through the web-sites and journals of ideological "insurrectionist-armed struggle" propaganda, money raising to support the imprisoned comrades, and the attack against a substation of ENEL [manufacturer and distributor of electricity and gas] in Civitavecchia, January 12th, 2016, signed by "Pyrotechnical Committee for an Extraordinary Year/F.A.I.-F.R.I."* (In some reports on the repression, the bombing in Civitavecchia is cited as being against the courthouse (for which a claim exists from the same F.A.I. group); we're not sure where the confusion comes from.) It also emerged that Gioacchino Somma, of RadioAzione, has been surveilled for six years with a key-logger installed on their computer, wiretapping, and physical tailing (even for a journey of 600 kilometers).

According to the comrade, *"on January 10th the Public Prosecutor's Office of Naples demanded an arrest for me, the comrade of [RadioAzione's Croatia version] and two other Greek comrades (one of which is already imprisoned for C.C.F. membership [ed. – see 'Yet Another Fenced World' below]). From that moment on, everything has been taken over by the Public Prosecutor's Office of Turin and the prosecutor Sparagna [in charge of Operation Scripta Manent], since the Office of Naples did not have jurisdiction over the crimes we are charged for. What are we accused of?"*

*Of providing counter-information through web-sites and magazines, translation of claims of responsibility from across the world, of support, solidarity and complicity with the anarchist comrades Alfredo [Cospito] and Nicola [Gai], raising money for imprisoned comrades. Of creating an Italian-Croatian-Greek F.A.I. cell.*

*In some parts of the documents, the prosecutor on duty tries to foment the rifts which exist between some of us and the rest of the anarchist movement, and furthermore he invents out of thin air, through wiretapping transcribed in his own way, a disagreement between me and the comrades of CNA [Croce Nera Anarchica], while there has been a full cooperation since the beginning, and I believe that it is the only anarchist journal in Italy worthy of reading, so much so that I am accused of organizing the presentation of this project in Naples." (In June it was decided that the*

comrade who runs the Croatian RadioAzione will be tried separately, even though she faces the very same charges.)

It seems obvious that what we are facing is a concerted attempt to criminalise solidarity itself, and to wear down specific anarchists who practice it through methodical and repeated targeting of those who raise their voice (or not only) in complicity with the accused. **Anti-terrorism being an international political project, police departments across Europe and the world definitely comparing notes and strategies for the neutralisation of radical forces (and the cowing of the population at large)**, it can't help but remind us of the strategy deployed in the Spanish State these last few years too (see **Return Fire vol.3 pg82**), but with anything a heavier focus on factionalising the Italian anarchist movement and confining it to ideological enclosures backed up by walls erected by the distribution of policing. **The comrades targeted in this operation, by the prosecutor's own theory, are those least 'integrated' with the broader anarchist movement in Italy;** often slightly older, some being parents, and/or holding positions the difference of which from others held by other anarchists have been at the root of disagreements over the previous years. While we reject 'unity' and the erasure of (in our eyes quite important) differences within the anarchist space, let's understand and expose (not to mention strategise against) the state's tactics.

Comparison could also be made to the 'Green Scare' case in the U.S.A. (see **Return Fire vol.4 pg78**); sometimes the state seems to wait until years after actions have happened, assuming that the people they are going to target will be in less 'integrated' positions within the milieu and easier to isolate. This gives credence to the analysis that has been emerging in recent years among anarchists of repression *primarily as a means of enclosure* [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.4 pg69**]; the task is ours to combat it.

Although not part of the Scripta Manent case, it's worth mentioning in this context that two other comrades were sentenced on separate occasions for publicising their support for the action Alfredo and Nicola were initially locked up for; in the case of one, because he had responded to a denouncement from within the anarchist scene itself of the attack, which cost him a 14 month sentence for incitement (initially with aggravating circumstance of promoting terrorism added due to a new law created to prosecute people based on blog entries, though it didn't stick in court).

A summary was offered by the anti-prison group Cassa AntiRepressione Alpi Occidentali: *"[Scripta Manent] is essentially based on a comparison*

*between the claims of various attacks and pieces of writing by the comrades on trial, on the contacts between the latter and on the distinction between the good, the bad, the social, the radical, FAI members and so on, in the anarchist galaxy. One of the classic analyses devised in courtrooms and police stations. [...] To this it adds the 'necessity' to identify leaders (still according to a script and an investigation) i.e. the founders of the subversive association: precisely for this reason Anna Beniamino, Nicola Gai, Alfredo Cospito and Danilo Cremonese won't be able to be present at the proceedings in the courtroom, as they will be subjected to video conferencing.*

*For a defendant video conferencing actually means the impossibility to be present in the courtroom alongside comrades, friends, families; the difficulty to determine his/her own intervention at the trial (for example any defendant's statement can be immediately interrupted with a simple click); to communicate face-to-face with his/her co-defendants; to 'get out' of the prison walls.*

*The operation Scripta Manent is a direct attack on anarchists, on anyone who struggles without mediation or compromise." So, with the trial just having begun this November 16th, the accused Marco Bisesti, Valentina Speciale and Alessandro Mercogliano refused to participate in the trial in solidarity with the comrades subjected to video conferencing from the high surveillance units AS2 where they are locked up. November 19th, Claudia and Stefano declared the same: "The fact that our comrades are being denied the right to physically attend the courtroom, that the principle of participation in the defence, which the law that supports the democratic lie guarantees, is thus cancelled, is yet another demonstration of how partisan the use of legality is. Especially for this reason, we will no longer take part in this farce, deserting the hearings and entrusting technical defence to lawyers aiming to bring out as far as possible the contradictions that support this system, without justifying our being and without claiming any crumbs of democracy." Gioacchino Somma absented himself; "I have never gone to the courtrooms where my funeral was being prepared in the past and I will not do so now!"*

In his statement to the court, Alfredo claimed affinity with the actions of the FAI for which they are being accused, while denouncing the targeting of "a significant part of all those who have shown solidarity in these years, among them my dearest friends", but said that unlike for the action in Genoa (responsibility for which he had spat in the faces of the judges at that trial)

he couldn't take credit for the other actions. For our part, thinking of the isolated comrades in these heavy days, we have included an article written by an Italian anarchist while jailed in a separate case on the subject of video-conferencing in the context of trials (as was the case in his own). **Repression strikes again, the war continues, but in whatever form we brace against the tide and try to elude the police enclosure, find the rhythm appropriate to our moment (be that memory, attack, care, propaganda, whatever best serves), knowing that our**

**multi-formed practices are too expansive to fit in their fucking legal codes or ideological divisions.** For this reason we welcome the diversity of responses to the case (maybe even more so than certain of the accused do!); the Tattoo Circus benefit event in Genoa as much as the solidarity attacks across the world (from vandalism of prison staff's cars and home in Bristol to the arson a 4x4 of the Presidency of the Argentine Nation in Buenos Aires). In these days, making a public stand to defy the narrative of "anarchist terrorists" (despite the risks clearly being so great) is in itself an act of sabotage against the state apparatus and media machine, and the more diverse opportunities there are for people to participate in crossing that threshold (whatever their dispositions), the better. We'll leave it there with the words of those who burned out a couple of mobile phone antennas one week after the first Scripta Manent arrest, the first in a long wave of arsons on Italian masts, radio base stations and other infrastructure in the context of the case; "*May our daily life, with or without repression, be (also) destructive! May solidarity, even more when repression strikes, be (also) attack!*"

The trial continues.

## THE PRISON OF GAZES

– notes on trial by video-link

### Convicts' Chains & the Public Gaze

Up until 1836 it was still normal in France to make convicts walk to the prison in chains. The future prisoners wore iron collars and were chained together and forced to walk along the public road dragging proof of their conviction and showing crowds of people the consequences for anyone who broke the law.

The path to reclusion, the last journey before disappearing behind the secret obscurity of prison took place in full view, in a public ceremony with a strong visual impact that could unleash all kinds of feelings. The departure of these human chains attracted masses of people, exhibited the convict to the crowd, exposed them to insult and spitting, but also to feelings, compassion and complicity; in a complex ritual whose outcome was not predictable, the march exposed the convict to the public gaze and showed his [sic] gaze to the public.

*'The chain brought its celebration with it to all the cities it passed through'*. The convicts bore not only iron collars and chains, the obligatory signs of punishment, but also ribbons of straw, garlands of flowers and colourful pieces of rag which they themselves had sewn on to weird headgear and berets flaunted for the occasion. **A colourful and irreverent touch of joyous madness, of harlequin mockery dressed in rags, could turn this dismal march into an 'itinerant fair of crime', a sort of nomadic tribe of convicts that mocked the chains with which they were restrained, cursed the judges and invoked torment on them.**

And then the songs, convicts' songs. Marching songs sung together that deeply impressed the people and became famous and passed on from mouth to mouth. Songs that often *'excited pride in the face of punishment'* rather than moaning remorse for the crime committed. All this contributed to spoiling a celebration of justice set up by power as a ritual of guilt and repentance, making it socially dangerous as it was capable of overturning the symbols of power, changing the order of its discourse, overpowering its moral code.

To quote the *Gazette des tribunaux* of 19th July 1836: *'It is not our custom to lead men away this way; it is necessary to avoid such a horrible spectacle in the towns that the convoy passes through, it being in any case of no education to the population.'* Not long afterwards the transport of convicts to prison ceased to take place in public rituals. A technical change intervened to clear public roads of such a contradictory spectacle: the prison cart.

### The Prison Cart & the Panoptical Gaze

Michel Foucault, who studied the origin of prison and its accessory devices carefully, writes that *'imprisoning, which ensures privation, has always involved a technical project'* and that *'the replacement in 1837 of the chain gang with the prison cart'* is *'a symptom and summary'* of a technical mutation, a *'shift from one art of punishing to another'*.

The prison cart is not to be meant simply as a closed cart used to transport convicts who were previously subjected to the additional punishment of being chained in public; rather, it should be seen as a technical innovation that marks a change of paradigm. This vehicle was conceived as a prison on wheels lined with tin. Impenetrable to the outside eye, it parades sadly through the streets without revealing anything of what it contains.

The wretches riding in it, be they already convicted or awaiting trial, all travel in chains; but now they are in small single cells, which prevent them not only from looking out but also from meeting the gaze of the other 'passengers'. Instead, a central corridor allows the guards to keep an eye on all those being transported through a peephole.

Thus *Gazette des tribunaux* describes this mechanism of internal control: *'The opening and slanting position of the peepholes are made in a way that the guards can keep their eyes on the prisoners constantly, hearing the slightest sound, without the prisoners being able to see or hear one another.'*

Not simply a closed wagon, therefore, but a technical device developed with precise aims: hide the convict from the public eye, prevent him [sic] from seeing the outside world and improve the techniques of surveillance. Not just a mobile tin box, but a 'panoptical cart' [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.4 pg9*], a prison of gazes that wipes out the mocking splendor of the chains of the convicts, making them blind, silent, invisible and controllable.

The secret obscurity of prison extends and anticipates his arrival; its shadow falls upon the convict keeping him out of sight even before he sets foot in jail. Bourgeois reformist modesty transports without showing how it punishes, without making a spectacle any longer. No more exchanging gazes between the people and the criminal, the only permitted gaze is that of the guard at the penitent prisoner.

### The Video-Conference & the Disembodied Gaze

Let's get back to Italy now. The last frontier in the field of 'transport for judicial reasons' is the trial held by video-link, where the transport takes place in an immaterial form.

The defendant on trial, if already in prison for previous convictions or on remand, can be judged at a distance without having to leave the prison. He [sic] is taken to a specific room inside the prison and follows the proceedings on a screen under the watchful eye of the guards and the technological gaze of a camera focused on him, transmitting his image to the courtroom where the trial is taking place.

**Like the shift from 'chains' to 'prison cart', the introduction of the video-conference marks a shift that sums up a change in paradigm. In fact, video-linking is a technological device and as such it is not neutral, on the contrary its mediation involves profound changes that sink deep into the living flesh of those who have defied the law.**

In *Les Misérables*, Victor Hugo describes the punitive device par excellence, the scaffold: 'The scaffold is an image. It is not merely a framework, a machine, a lifeless mechanism of wood, iron, and rope. It is as though it were a being having its own dark purpose, as though the framework saw, the machine listened, the mechanism understood; as though that arrangement of wood and iron and rope expressed a will. In the hideous picture which its presence evokes it seems to be most terribly a part of what it does. It is the executioner's accomplice; it consumes, devouring flesh and drinking blood. It is a kind of monster created by the judge and the craftsman; a spectre seeming to live an awful life born of the death it deals.'

Unlike the scaffold, video-linking is not a device that enforces a sentence already imposed, let alone death, which is no longer contemplated by the penal code; but even more than the scaffold, articulated as it is with a microphone and cameras, it is a 'structure' that 'sees', a 'machine' that 'hears'. Certainly it doesn't 'eat flesh', but in its own way it 'disembodies' the accused, dematerializes his [sic] body, reduces him to a bunch of bits producing a sensorial and visual impact within a process that should not be underestimated: through it the presence of the defendant, however distant, becomes spectral, his body is treated like a video interference to whom words can be allowed or taken away by a simple 'click'.

**It's the triumph of reformist scruples that in the past cleared the streets of the human chains of convicts which now, through the new technologies, 'frees' the courtrooms from an annoying and strident presence so that the abstraction of the law can go forward undisturbed.** It also denies the embrace between co-defendants, who can't see each other even on that occasion. No emotional contact with the public either, who don't even appear on the screen. No complicit gazes, no greetings to family and friends. Once you enter prison, even before trial, you don't get out again, even to attend trial. Entombed, buried in concrete. The very jury is made to see you as being so dangerous that you can't be taken before them. Somehow your guilt is implicitly designated by the way you 'appear'.

In all this, the accused is reduced to a passive spectator. He [sic] observes his trial on a screen as if it was an episode of *Forum* or *Quarto grado*. His only right, in good TV tradition, is to be allowed to call his lawyer during proceedings. And yet it is his life that is at stake. It is his body that will be possibly destined to imprisonment. It is his, the amputated view of the horizon. It is he who is deprived of the embrace of his loved ones. His sense of smell deprived of spring. Finally, it's his gaze, dejected or proud, that faces 'punishment' – preventive or definitive – day after day. Video-linking is the technological ally that perfects the imprisonment of gazes. Cowardly, it multiplies the eyes peering at he [sic] who went beyond the boundaries of the law, but it no longer dares to look him in the eye. A cybernetic metaphor of blindfolded justice equipped with artificial eyes, but which remains blind all the same.



### Some Provisional Conclusions

Introduced in Italy for prisoners under the 41bis regime<sup>[1]</sup>, video-conference in trials is now rapidly being extended to all prisoners whom justice considers 'worthy' of special attention. It is the case of Maurizio Alfieri, a rebel bank robber not inclined to prison domestication; it is the case of Gianluca and Adriano, anarchists accused of having carried out various actions against ENI, some tycoons of the rubbish business and other poison-producing giants [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.3 pg71*]; it could be, actually it is already in the desire of the Turin prosecutors, the case of Claudio, Chiara, Niccolò and the present writer<sup>[2]</sup>, accused of having committed an act of sabotage on the High Speed site in Chiomonte.

A special exemption for the 'right of defence', which foresees the physical presence of the defendant alongside his [sic] lawyer during trial, justified with the usual pretext of 'security' and 'public order'. A new danger, that of video-linking destined to take root and spread rapidly, if it is not uprooted immediately; as, we know, it is today's exception that becomes tomorrow's rule. The paradigm lying under this new 'technical mutation' is complex, and it's difficult to assess and unveil all its facets at this very moment.

**Definitely the kind of trial procedure that is emerging shows a gradual disappearance of the accused, a growing conditioning of the jury in advance and the overwhelming inquisitorial power of the prosecutors.** What I have tried to do here is to highlight some of the repercussions of this technical mutation, and to focus on the topic of the 'gaze', i.e. the visual exchange between the prisoner's gaze, the judicial gaze and the public gaze. Many other considerations could be made, just as important or even more so. For example, on how video-linking prevents the defence lawyer from discussing with his [sic] client during the trial; or the fact that in the spectacularisation of trials special effects and optical illusions are likely to be more determining than the facts under examination. But my faith in the law is so little that I won't dwell on certain details. I'd rather conclude these random notes on video-linking by quoting the lyrics of some old prison songs, those sung in the streets by the chain gangs. Heart-to-heart words that speak for themselves.

*'Greedy for unhappiness, your gaze is seeking an infamous breed among us that whines and mortifies itself. But our gaze is proud. Goodbye, because we don't give a damn about your chains or your laws.'*

1. ed. – Severe isolation conditions, suspended only when a prisoner co-operates with the authorities, when a court annuls it, or when the prisoner dies; introduced in 1975 as an emergency measure to deal with prison revolts during the 'Years of Lead' (see **Memory as a Weapon; The Origins of Victimisation**) and never removed by any other democratic regime...

2. ed. – This text was written by Mattia Zanotti, from the High Security Unit of the prison of Alessandria, Italy. He was then awaiting trial on charges relating to the struggle against the Lyon-Turin international T.A.V. ('Treno Alta Velocita', high-speed trainline) construction; for which, the longest tunnel in Europe would have to be dug through the Alps mountains (releasing toxicity from the harmless-when-undisturbed uranium and asbestos they contain, fouling ground-water, and expanding the reach and connectivity of trans-national industrial capitalism). Specifically, in the Susa Valley of northern Italy (where the decades-long battle against the project is fiercest), around 30 people in Maddalena had raided a construction site for the works and torched a significant amount of machinery and equipment despite worker and police presence; just a few days after the site had been cleared (with violent clashes) following an occupation of over a month by opponents of the T.A.V. project. Mattia and six others were charged with participating in the attack, which prosecutors attempted to upgrade to a terrorist offense due to the importance of the infrastructural project of the T.A.V. to both Italy and the European Union. Sabotage and rioting has been a part of the arsenal of (some of) the opponents of the T.A.V. during the over-20 years it has been resisted (see *Return Fire vol.2 pg58/64/65*); Italian paratroopers fresh from foreign battlefields have been among the troops the State has dispatched to occupy the area and quell disorder, and the prosecutors for Mattia's case alone spoke of over a hundred attacks against the project in the area just in the two years leading up to the site raid. On trial, Mattia and his three comrade co-defendants proudly claimed their part in the raid. These are some of his words during the trial: "I knew Maddalena and the Clarea Valley before the TAV yard was erected there. In those woods I walked, slept, ate, sang, danced. In those places I experienced precious fragments of life together with friends who are no longer there and whom I carry in my heart. To those places I went back many times in the course of the years. In the daylight, in the night, in mornings and evenings; in summer, winter, autumn and spring. I've seen those places changing and trees falling down after being cut down to make room for barbed wire. I've seen the yard expanding and a piece of woodland disappearing, headlights popping up and the army coming over to watch a desolate landscape from the same armoured vehicles that patrol the mountains in Afghanistan. So I went back again to the Clarea valley during the now-famous night of May." He is currently serving a sentence of 3 years and 6 months on house-arrest.

Collaborazionisti, ditte, sbirri,  
politici e giudici  
potenziare la lotta è la nostra  
risposta. Sabotare il vostro  
esistente la nostra scelta.



The poster reads; "Collaborators, companies, cops, politicians & judges: We step up the fight and our response. Our choice is sabotage of the existent."

## Concerning the juridical situation of our comrade Marcelo Villarroel Sepulveda... or, how the state's revenge perpetuates itself in silence (Chile)

[continued from *Return Fire vol.1 pg72*]

Last September, at the 4th Military Prosecutor's Office in Santiago, the refusal of the petition to prescribe the sentences made by our comrade Marcelo several months ago was announced.

Immediately, Marcelo appealed this refusal, leaving the resolution of the appeal in the hands of the Martial Court, where it was reaffirmed in the first days of October.

**These condemnations correspond to some causes originated by actions framed in his old militancy at the "MAPU-Lautaro", organization in which our comrade was an active fighter since a very young age** and of which, while imprisoned, in 1995, he was expelled because of "anarchist deviations".

Marcelo served his sentence without interruption for 11 years, two months and fifteen days from October 13, 1992 until December 28, 2003, remaining only his night prison until March 2005, when he granted the so-called "probation", which obliges him to sign a document [at the police station] every week until completing 20 years of penitentiary control.

The first days of November 2007 for Marcelo are marked for him by his participation on the Bank Security robbery, along with other other comrades, action in which a cop died and that caused an answer from the State without precedents. Marcelo decides to assume clandestinity, and in February 2008, in his absence, he has his "probation" revoked.

In March 2008, he is detained in Argentina and in September 2014, he is sentenced to 14 years for 2 bank robberies.

In that same period, as penalties related to old causes emanated from the always sinister "Military Justice" were revised, the condemnation remained as it follows:

- *Illicit terrorist association: 10 years and a day.*
- *Damage to a cop car with serious injuries to carabinieri: 3 years + 541 days.*
- *Co-author of murder qualified as terrorist: 15 years and a day.*
- *Theft with intimidation, Law 18.314: 10 years and a day.*
- *Explosive attack against the embassy of Spain: 8 years.*

**In total, these old convictions add up to 46 years**, establishing its end on February, 2056.

There are a number of irregularities in this math, and although the legal issue is not our focus and never was, we believe that it becomes urgent and necessary to face this situation that represents a clear revenge against a comrade who holds high subversive autonomous and libertarian convictions, a comrade who has never abandoned the direct confrontation for total liberation, nor has it ever renounced its combatant history — leaving it as a commodity for books or prizes of borrowed stories, where hundreds of renegades hide while roaming around different pseudo-radical spaces.

Our call is to get rid of the verbiage and the false gestures of solidarity to face this and each of the revenge that come from the State (as a constant policy against all those who do not deny their ties and convictions).

It's time to act, to realize that no comrade in prison is alone.

**FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF ALL PRISONS!!!**


**WHEN MISERY EXISTS, THERE WILL BE REBELLION!!!**

**People near Marcelo**  
Santiago-Valparaíso (Chile)  
October, 2017

To send letters: **Marcelo Villarroel Sepúlveda**,  
Unidad Especial de Alta Seguridad, Cárcel de Alta Seguridad, Modulo H Norte, 1902 Avenida Pedro Montt, Santiago, Chile.

## "Yet Another Fenced World" – Olga Oikonomidou speaks [+ updates] (Greece)

On March 19th [2011] a jeep of EKAM [Greek police anti-terrorist unit] along with 3 cop cars stop in front of a huge rolling iron door. A guard asks for the papers. Everything checks out... and the door opens. As it shuts behind us, yet another fenced world appears before me. It is the prison of Eleonas at Thebes. I get out of the jeep escorted by two women of the anti-terrorism squad that, for the last four days, had been successfully playing the role of my nanny. It took a few minutes of waiting until


 they delivered me to my new life-guardians. In those few minutes, I kept hearing

remarks from them, like "it's nice in here... such a well-preserved building." I found it only proper to leave them with the phrase "if you like it so much, why don't you come and stay here?". Naturally, merely the thought of staying in any prison institution is scary to a visitor, scary enough to make any person – even a subhuman – shut their mouth and simply leave.

**The women's prison of Thebes is a newly built progressive monstrosity with oblong branching corridors, cameras covering every angle with no blind spots, with male and female guards, automatic doors with iron bars every 10 meters, empty concrete courtyards smaller than a basketball court, surrounded by walls that end in barbed wire.** Outside these walls there are security areas up until the external wall that separates you from freedom. There are guards in small raised kiosques that supervise the place almost 24/7, in case someone finds a hole to escape.

A small fenced zoo is located between the outer door and the main entrance of the prison. There is neither access to nor visual contact with anyone but visitors, prisoners cleaning, and while on your way to the warden's office. **They figured the scenery looks more natural with imprisoned animals next to imprisoned people. After all, democracy usually "decorates" its little monsters.** After three weeks of adjustment, I am now permanently<sup>(1)</sup> on C wing, at a ward with a 14 people capacity. I would say that the forced cohabitation with 12 other women is not the simplest of things. With zero personal space and all sorts of vagaries, anyone could easily go beyond their limits. Apart from 2.5 hours per day that I'm allowed to go out in the yard, the rest are confined to a 20x30m room. This is the space allowed for one to move. In this room I drink coffee, I eat, read, write, listen to music, think. This is the place I've spent my life for the last 2.5 months and will continue to do so, indefinitely more. The walls are painted up to the ceiling with images of meadows, trees, seas and fish.

They tried to give prison a more humane face. To make prisoners believe that lack of natural landscape could possibly be replaced with paint. During the first days of stay, it seemed to me like a bad joke, now it has become irritating.

 The staff act in a similar, contradictory manner. Typical prison guards trying to pretend that the kind of work they do could be somehow exonerated. They think that politeness could compensate for the standard evening and morning count, for the insensitivity and indifference they



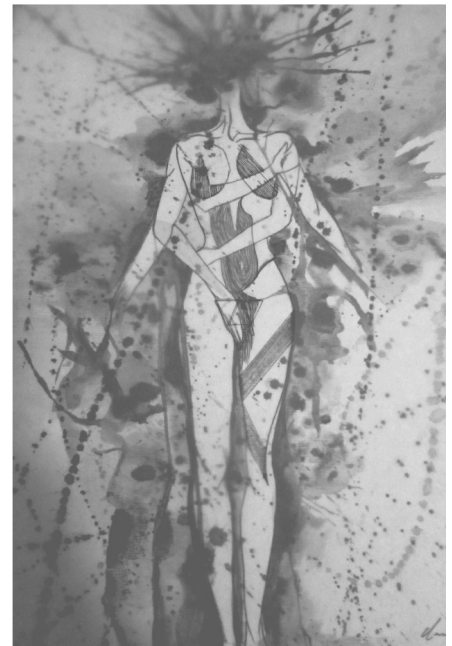
demonstrate when inmates very frequently self-mutilate in fits, or at addicts' outbursts. It is them who are handing out psychiatric drugs generously to avoid troubles, while depon (paracetamol) seems to be the drug for any other illness. It is them, who – depending on the command – will not hesitate one bit to lead you to isolation, who will conduct a humiliating strip search, who have the audacity to get a 'free peek' at your letters. It is them who will lock the door on their way out when it reaches 9pm, as easily as they wish you goodnight. Hypocrisy at its best. **In here, wishing does not seem appropriate. There is no good night or good day in prison. There is only day and night.**

The logic of sovereignty dictates a certain segregation of people according to seemingly fragmentary features. Thus, it creates ostensible communities resulting in the reinforcement of inequality and competition. The morality of society responds to this calling not just by reciprocating this logic, but most of the times by becoming its biggest supporter. Social class, ethnicity, gender are just some of the examples that shape perceptions and attitudes daily. **Prison is a crucial part of the system and the inmate community is a compact, small-scale representation of society.** So it's only natural that the symptoms of the sick world we live in, are transferred behind the walls as well. On one hand, prison somehow collectivises the inmates forcing them to identify themselves within a common identity negatively marked by their penalty. At the same time, segregation appears in all its magnitude when men and women are chucked into different hellholes. Men and women will be proportionally segregated once more in protection wards, drug addict wards, gypsy wards, under-aged wards, mothers wards, insubordinate wards, white [isolation] prison cells. **Each one of these categories requires different treatment depending on the actual interests of the system.** The submissive worms (snitches) and former clappers of the system (corrupt cops thrown away by the system itself) will be protected, the mothers will be used to show pretextual humanism, the addicts will receive degradation and indifference. There are decent female prisoners experiencing some of these conditions, such as the treatment of being an addict, who could surely be far more detailed and descriptive about their experiences.

As an anarchist revolutionary, I believe that gender segregation is an issue with much social implication, both inside and outside the walls. It is both an underestimated, and distortedly overestimated issue at times. I find that for ages, there's been a well-rooted perception amongst people as to which attributes and behaviours are suited

for men or women only. The roles and social identities one is attributed at birth and carries from then on, are gender based. **This is the deepest segregation society has ever abided by.** Social norms define women as the weaker sex, and the social implications in every day life are vast. Continuous reproduction of such a notion automatically defines a subject as inferior, presents it as a victim and it ends up being treated as protected species. But as in any relationship, there is he who transmits and he who receives/accepts. The female gender in its vast majority accepts its social identity and is lead to the logic of victimisation, either to renounce responsibilities, or to rest on its laurels, justifying its inertia, since "demands" are automatically brought down. A victimised perception of any issue, leads to defeatism and non-utilisation of one's ability and capability. The power and responsibility of an individual on both a personal and collective level, is what promotes liberating moments, conditions, or actions. Speaking for myself, I have never thought of myself as the weaker sex, and I never wanted to be passive. I released myself from the guilt syndrome society imposes on you, and I've always walked my way according to my personal values and will. **On my path, I've come across stares that were still trapped deep inside gender stereotypes, many times. In my opinion, even within the anarchist milieu there is great prejudice lurking on behalf of men, and complacency or even gender role exploitation on behalf of women. In my eyes, I can't think of a rebel who will not fight for the abolition of social roles.** Primarily for oneself on a personal level, and secondarily for others, at a global level. It is both a process of introspection, as well as basic denial of the ways of this world. Since nothing in this life is granted to you, you have to earn it yourself. The bottom line is, how well can a woman overcome the residue imposed on her by society, and act freely and no longer be confined in it. It's only then that the roles are broken, and finally abolished through active attitude.

I chose to be active in a world of passiveness. I chose active participation in a revolutionary organisation. I did not follow anybody and I was not carried away by anything. *I chose.* I was present at the conversations, decisions, actions, as I am now present to pay the price. I claimed responsibility for my actions while I could of taken advantage of my gender status to get a more favourable treatment. But how decent would that be? **Throughout history, a woman involved in revolutionary ventures, practically breaks two roles. On one hand, she consciously abolishes her identity as a law-abiding citizen questioning law and order, while on the other, her identity as**



**a woman, overcoming the standardised perception of gender roles (mother, wife, chick) that society itself has imposed on her.**

During the '70s when the revolutionary organization RAF [*ed. – Red Army Faction, authoritarian Marxist-Leninists*] was active and had a number of women participating in it, German authorities [operating against subversives] would command to "shoot the women first". The very fact of essentially overcoming two roles, made women more determined, more conscious, thus more dangerous in comparison to men, and their gender-based compatibility to delinquency (always according to the state-official-scientific approach), who were pursuing a more natural path.

Every era though, has its own characteristics and conditions. **The anti-authoritarian movement often searches within the outlaw milieu for a revolutionary subject, assuming that questioning the law through one or more illegal acts also involves the questioning of the extant system.** *Mutatis mutandis*<sup>[2]</sup>, it also assumes that a woman that questions the law, questions her social role as well, even unconsciously. As a matter of fact, real life in women's prisons, and specifically in the prison of Eleonas of Thebes, it can be ascertained that the modern-day petty-bourgeois behaviour of social roles has been transferred behind the walls as well. The illegal act that occurred was nothing but a momentum. Characteristically enough, the majority of women don't talk of the "crime" they committed, *but of the crime a man urged them to commit.* Which actually means they don't even find a part of themselves in the illegal act that brought them to prison in the first place, thus reproducing the logic of victimisation. The role of the mother was able to stand aside

for them to break the law, but as they experience the condition of confinement, the identity of the mother-protector is quickly brought back into play. They feel that it might just be their only salvation to get away, or their curse since they are forced to live apart from their children. Many times, this role will become a guide for some of the behaviours they will have to put up with in prison, it will become their fear and tolerance. The extortive penal system will step on this weakness, and ask for exchanges of any kind, prioritizing on submissiveness to prison rules, and reports about other prisoners. At the same time, it will cater to humiliate them in many ways, making them bear much more than their own body search, but that of their children as well, who are often of young age, if the prisoner wishes to see them in open visitation [ed. – i.e. not behind glass]. In front of this aggressive actual condition, along with their own inability to overcome social identity, they channel their vigor into dealing with inside prison survival, simulating it with the lives they ran outside prison. Frequent visits to the hairdresser, exchange-selling of clothes, make-up.

In the old days, desperate outlaws mainly comprised inmate population. People who had absolutely no hope to see any kind of change to their actual realities, banned from consumption, marginalized by society. A forced no-way-out placement at the lower social scale generates rage, which is a necessary condition for the birth of any liberating attempt. Besides, rage by itself is not political or apolitical. It all depends on which way it's going to want (or actually manage) to be expressed. This rage seems to be missing nowadays, right here and now. On the contrary, here and now seems to be dominated by resignation. While the majority of women are foreigners and do not even know of the events that took place on "September 3rd" street<sup>[3]</sup> or what followed them, they create a large gap between mere survival and wise insurrectionary behaviour. From a subjective standpoint, having the awareness of the actual external condition and the actual concerns, these women still find themselves at significant confusion.

The prison population does not consist of desperate people (setting aside the addicts who due to their addiction on one hand, and the insidious manipulation and repression through psychoactive drugs on the other, have limited capabilities). Nowadays, financial crime runs women's prison, along with large amounts of drug trafficking. No one is in any way excluded from consumption, fact which by itself alienates rage, and in conjunction with social identities, in the end it enables women to remain victims of their own illusions. **This notion of course is not unanimous. There are still, and always will be, some who hold their dignity and**

**head up high. In their minds, the word "staff", as they now want to be called, will always mean "guards/torturers of human beings" and their uniform will always be a target.** Solidarity to prisoners never loses its meaning, as well. Not by defending the prisoner role, but by opposing to confinement itself. To the condition that deprives us of the most precious thing we have, physical freedom, which in itself is associated with bone-crushing restrictions of many kinds. From the disruption of sexual relations to the humiliating dependence on prison machinery for communication. Within this context, you find particular delight in small pleasures that break away from this repressive machine.

Solidarity should remain alive and kicking, supporting the movement of prisoners, unscathed and alert in cases involving political prisoners. In my opinion, solidarity rallies should not be confined to specific ritual dates, as is New Year's for instance, but should keep their reflexes sharp so they can transmute into leverage when correctional whims go out of their way to test prisoners. Solidarity should serve as a tool to give prominence to anarchist prisoners' cases, not person-focused, not based on personal relations, not by guilt-innocence criteria. Besides, no one in this world is innocent, we are all guilty. Some for their consciousness and action against anything that oppresses them, and yet others for their tolerance towards repressive institutions.

I send out my revolutionary regards to those who tenaciously choose to act against the stubbornness of our times.

### – Olga Oikonomidou

**Olga Ekonomidou** [Όλγα Οικονομίδου], Dikastiki Fylaki Korydallou – Gynaikikes Fylakes, TK 18110, Korydallou, Athens, Greece.

1. ed. – Transferred out after beating a snitch moved onto her ward; see latest address above.

2. ed. – Medieval Latin phrase meaning "the necessary changes having been made".

3. transl. – It refers to the fascist pogrom [ed. – against migrants] unleashed with the active participation of police force after the murder of Manolis Kantaris in May 2011 [ed. – stabbed to death during a robbery].



Olga is one of the imprisoned members of the Conspiracy of Cells of Fire (C.C.F.); see **Return Fire vol.1 pg41**. This was her written contribution to a 'Women Against Imprisonment' event at the Patission 61 & Skaramaga occupied space in Athens. Also on the topic of the position of women

in armed revolutionary struggle, she spoke in April via video-connection from prison during the Anarchist Black Cross Festival in Vienna, Austria, along with other Greek prisoners, and also about the conditions around them, solidarity across the walls, the topic of claiming actions (see **Clarification on the Attack on the CGT Headquarters & on the Topic of 'Anonymous Disassociation'**) and membership, and the choice of breaking out of jail. This last point relates to the fact that, **July 8th 2016, the Koridallos prison court convicted all imprisoned C.C.F. members to an additional 115 years in prison each**, with various other alleged collaborators inside and outside given sentences ranging from 75 years inside to 6-year-suspended-sentences, for a foiled escape plan (the second by the comrades since their capture, the first ending with them holding screws hostage with guns in their hands in 2011 but ultimately failed).

*"The attempted prison escape of CCF from our probable graves, confirmed that the struggle for freedom never stops while it sounded the alarm of the state apparatus. It made the damage it would inflict to both the validity and the reliability of the state visible, if it was successful. So an escape plan, became the occasion for a whole repressive operation with revenge for the years our tenacious attitude and non-repentance as its sole purpose. [...] The pursuit of new arrests and raids in homes resulted in two detentions. Of the mother of Christos and Gerasimos Tsakalos [C.C.F. prisoners] and the wife of the latter [ed. – democratic repetition of the practices used by the previous military junta against the relatives of rebel prisoners, once again; see **Who Is It?**]. The criminalization of family relations showed nothing but the clear vengeful intention of the state. To blackmail and emotionally destroy those who have hurt the prestige of its structures. [E]ven six months after, our loved ones, either from within prison or from the restricted areas they are due to court orders, still give us smiles of patience and trust, maintaining their own dignity" (letter from Olga, also in solidarity with Tamara Sol and Natalia Collado; see **Return Fire vol.3 pg79/81**).*

These family targetings led to the C.C.F. members and Aggeliki Spyropoulou (a fugitive from the escape case, she was arrested at home of the C.C.F. brothers' mother) going on hunger strike; they were soon joined by about a dozen more radical prisoners in Greece who combined their demands, and then eight solidarious prisoners in Turkey joined in. After 32 days, the strike finally ended when the leftist Syriza government's Minister of Justice signed an amendement to free their relatives; but still Evi Statiri, the partner of Gerasimos, wasn't let out, so she

# MEMORY AS A WEAPON



The graffiti, in Bolivia, reads; "THE BIG DAY WILL COME" (in Aymara) "FREEDOM FOR THE C.C.F." (in Spanish)

undertook hunger-strike herself (during which there was arson of the office of the Member of Parliament responsible, as Minister of Justice, for the initial pre-trial detaining of the relatives) before release.

Whatever else has been said, comrades of the C.C.F. (and not only) have consistently showed that struggles don't end in prison, but another breach opens from there...

## Aachen Case Verdict

(Germany, Holland, Spain)

[continued from *Return Fire* vol.4 pg70]

The court result: the Dutch comrade is cleared definitively, as is one of the anarchists from Barcelona; but the second was sentenced to 7 years and 6 months for the robberies.

*She speaks Spanish, Italian, English and German:*  
**Lisa Dorfer**, JVA Willich II, GartenstraSSe 2, 47877 Willich, Germany

## Good News At Last From Italy!

[continued from *Return Fire* vol.4 pg73]

At the trial court in Turin, the Supreme Court confirmed the "non-procedural default of jurisdiction", as already decided at first instance and in appeal, for the principle of not being able to process twice a defendant for the same act. It then closes the case once and for all. The comrades have come out with their heads held high.

## Mónica and Francisco

Deported (Spain, Chile)

[continued from *Return Fire* vol.3 pg82]

On March 7th, after three and a half years inside, Mónica and Francisco were finally released to Chile, due to a Spanish law that allows for the expulsion of foreign prisoners. They are on the streets!

## Downham Market Food Riot

[ed. – Put out by *The Black Plume* ('a journal of total liberation', based in the English county of Norfolk) as part of their series on rebellious history in that area. Perhaps a little dry and historicist/materialist, but we are glad nonetheless to see efforts at remembering our roots in these pacified times, and 're-storying' our surroundings (a task obviously not only to be left to historians, even amateur ones like us). This tale includes moments of recuperation that, 200 years on, many still have yet to learn how to avoid. Quotes were uncited in the original.]

A wave of discontent swept through England in 1816. Following the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, France's European neighbours considered the country a liability and signed into the Treaty of Paris the need for an occupational force. The British component of this coalition military – 150,000 strong in total and called by some the Army of Occupation – was led by the Duke of Wellington. Thirty thousand men were sent from the British Army alongside an equal number from Austria, Prussia, and Russia as well as smaller numbers from five other European states.

The financial cost of this occupying force was propped up by France so that, in theory, the countries of the Army of Occupation would not lose out on having to undertake this task. **By 1816, though, Britain's financial situation met dire straits and reverberated throughout society and became what is proverbially known as the "food riots"**. Three key factors came together to create this perfect storm: the war irreparably changed the international commercial market; taxation

"According to Walter Benjamin, remembrance plays a profound role for those resisting the momentum of historical progress. In *Theses on the Concept of History*, remembrance is assigned a condition of redemption when utilized against coercive forces. It holds the power to make the otherwise historically complete "suffering of the victims of the past" incomplete, creating a realm of continual struggle, a tradition that extends deep into the precedent and up to this very moment. With every connection to the past, those before us rise from the dead and fight with us and within us, creating a discontinuity in the books of history- an opportunity, however slim, to redeem those made invisible by the pens of historians. We call this solidarity, and it exists both inter-temporally and inter-spatially. It reaches across borders as much as beyond the clock. When in solidarity, we act with the strength of all those who struggle. Discontinuity in history will be named here as the *ahistorical break*; a break from the linearity of progress, resulting in a context beyond history. A break in a line, of course, does not recreate a cycle. Breaks in history have occurred since its inception, and every time they do, historians pave over them; they become forgotten, ignored, or reformed into something else. The project of the unsatisfied positions itself in the mode of frequency. On the wave of subversion, the inflection point, the center, is linear history- it is order. Each inflection is a moment of chaos. When the space between inflections and wavelengths are reduced, the moments of chaos overwhelm the moments of order until chaos is continuous and in every moment, rupturing time and space, until the clock stops. In chaos, we breathe, the earth begins to spin again, and the seasons resume their impact upon our lives."

– *Ahistorical Break: A Bridge Between Worlds*



Norwich prison, today

was increased to refill the country's coffers emptied during the conflict; and freak climactic conditions caused much of the year's harvest to fail. Back then, as it is today, those most affected by a failing economy were the poor and working classes.

**Weighted beneath the pressure of high prices and falling living conditions, people across the country took to the streets in 1816 as an expression of their rage. Norfolk was no exception.**

*"It was on the 16th May in this year that an alarming riot occurred in Norwich. Late in the evening a large number of the unemployed assembled in the Market Place and created a disturbance by throwing fire-balls. They next smashed the windows at the Guildhall and proceeded to the New Mills, breaking all the street lamps and the windows of several houses on their way thither. On arriving at the mills, the ringleaders broke into the stores and removed a large quantity of flour, some of which was thrown into the river and some carried away. Returning by way of St Andrew's Bank Street, and Tombland, in each of which localities the mob committed great depredations, they marched to Magdalen Street, and made a hostile demonstration in front of the residence of Dr. Alderson. Upon the doctor coming out to remonstrate with them, the ruffians knocked him down and subjected him to brutal ill-treatment."*

Because the cream of the British Army crop were stationed in France, it fell to the "B Team" troops to fight the rioting people. **The Yeomanry Cavalry, volunteer horse-mounted units used primarily for domestic situations, were tasked in many counties to undertake defence of the State and calm the dissent through force.** These forces were first created in the 1790s following fears of an invasion of Britain by Napoleon and drawn from small-time farmers, with officers drawn from the gentry as was commonplace throughout the military at the time. So what we find in the 1816 riots once again are the working classes pitted against the working classes at the behest of the upper classes and the State.

Though riots raged in Norwich, it was not the only place in Norfolk that saw uprising and insurrection. Violence broke out in Rockland, and Wisbech was

occupied by 120 cavalry due to the threat of unrest, but it was Downham were the most spectacular actions occurred.

**Just days after the events in Norwich, three Downham district magistrates – John Thurlow Dering, Mr. Hare, and Mr. Pratt – met at The Crown pub to discuss concerns and demands put forward by**



**many in the local population.** Their solution to the crisis of the moment, which led to families unable to feed themselves due to low wages and high prices, was to offer a slightly increased wage and slightly lower price on flour when bought by families of four or more individuals. This was not nearly good enough. Crowds from Downham and other nearby villages had gathered for the decision and, after hearing the bullshit solution, reacted with outrage. From their announcement in the market place, the magistrates were chased by stick and bludgeon-wielding rioters all the way back to The Crown, where the crowd apparently threatened to defenestrate the trio.

*"Thus pursued, the magistrates attempted an escape by a back way, but were followed and pelted with stones and dirt. Mr. Pratt and Mr. Dering received several violent blows, and with difficulty obtained refuge in different houses – Mr. Dering at Mr. Wales'; Mr. Hare at Mr. Lemmon's, and Mr. Pratt at Col. Say's. Mr. Dering was the principal object of the mob's vengeance, and was so hunted that he had to be concealed in a garden for two hours, the excited people declaring they would murder him if they could find him. He and Mr. Hare afterwards escaped to Mr. Safiery's. Shops were meanwhile plundered of their goods, and publicans were compelled to make gratuitous distribution of beer."*

Yeomanry Cavalry from Upwell were sent to combat the looters and rioters in Downham and in the ensuing crackdown wherein many of those participating in the riots were arrested, word came to the small parish of Southery that two men from the village had been taken in. On the morning of 20th May a meeting was held by the parishioners during which it was decided that they would march to Downham

in order to demand the release of their fellow villagers. Picking up others en route, a crowd of between 700 and 800 arrived in Downham armed with sticks, scythes, pitchforks, and even shotguns to join the unrest. The total crowd now numbered around 1500 and comprised both men and women.



**Impression of the famed torching of London's Newgate Jail and the liberation of its prisoners during the 1780 Gordon Riots; see Return Fire vol.1 pg61**

Magistrate Dering, stricken with terror at the sight of this approaching mob, acquiesced immediately to their demands and released both Southery men. **It seems the crowd took this small victory as fuel for the possibilities of their communal power and, rather than dispersing in satisfaction, began demanding that the doors of Downham prison be thrown open and all inmates released.** Dering, afraid, agreed once more and the prison was emptied, and the inmates disappeared into the mass so that they would not be recaptured.

Unfortunately not everybody got away. The Upwell Yeomanry, with the help of special constables (volunteer police types), were able to seize 19 of the rioters following a reading of the Riot Act by John Dering at 5pm in the market square. This caused the mob to peter out and disperse, leaving Downham quiet once again. It is said some of the rioters went onto the Cambridgeshire town of Littleport and continued their attack on the injustices of the State when riots broke out there on 22nd May but only one man by the name of Thomas Sindall appears to be confirmed at both outbreaks.

Of the 19 that were arrested in Downham, nine men and six women were sentenced to death following a brief trial in August 1816. Thirteen of these sentences were commuted but two still hung at Norwich Castle: Daniel Harwood, 22, who was taken from a pregnant wife; and Thomas Thody, 25, who was taken from a wife and two children. There is no word of what happened to their families.

The food riots of 1816 continued to rage throughout the rest of the country but the Downham incident appears to have been the final mass disturbance relating to the post-Napoleonic fallout in Norfolk.



## 'An Enemy of the Desire to Create'

[*ed. – We encourage a critical look at this poetic 1967 text, so wonderfully hostile to left- and right-wings of domination, to authoritarian communists and capitalists of all stripes. If it is admittedly rather pro-'modern technology' (imagining the reduction of work hours that has never been the aim of those producing such tools – see **New Technologies, Extraterrestrial Exploitation & the Future of Capitalism**), perhaps this could be chalked down to the technophilic delirium in some rebel quarters during the '60s when, as they claim below, "a generation, drowned in mortification, felt such a rage to live", including reaching for rather dubious 'liberators'. Of course, work has now escaped the factory (in the case of 'feminised' labour, never having lived there in the first place) and permeated much of social life; this chapter is still remarkably prescient about the shifts that may have only been hinted at in those days.]*

*The duty to produce alienates the passion for creation. Productive labour is part and parcel of the technology of law and order.*

*The working day grows shorter as the empire of conditioning extends.*

In an industrial society which confuses work and productivity, the necessity of producing has always been an enemy of the desire to create. What spark of humanity, of a possible creativity, can remain alive in a being dragged out of sleep at six every morning, jolted about in suburban trains, deafened by the racket of machinery, bleached and steamed by meaningless sounds and gestures, spun dry by statistical controls, and tossed out at the end of the day into the entrance halls of railway stations, those cathedrals of departure for the hell of weekdays and the nugatory paradise of weekends, where the crowd communes in weariness and boredom? **From adolescence to retirement each 24-hour cycle repeats the same shattering bombardment, like bullets hitting a window: mechanical repetition, time-which-is-money, submission to bosses, boredom, exhaustion.** From the butchering of youth's energy to the gaping wound of old age, life cracks in every direction under the blows of forced labour. Never before has a civilization reached such a degree of contempt for life; never before has a generation, drowned in mortification, felt such a rage to live. The same people who are murdered slowly in the mechanized slaughterhouses of work are also arguing, singing, drinking, dancing, making love, holding the streets, picking up weapons and inventing a new poetry. Already the front against forced labour is being formed; its gestures of refusal are moulding the consciousness of the future. Every call for productivity in the conditions chosen by capitalist and Soviet economy is a call to slavery.

The necessity of production is so easily proved that any hack philosopher of industrialism can fill ten books with it. Unfortunately for these neo-economist thinkers, these proofs belong to the nineteenth century, a time when the misery of the working classes made the right to work the counterpart of the right to be a slave, claimed at the dawn of time by prisoners about to be massacred. Above all it was a question of surviving, of not disappearing physically. The imperatives of production are the imperatives of survival; *from now on, people want to live, not just to survive.*

The *tripalium* is an instrument of torture. *Labor* means 'suffering'. We are unwise to forget the origin of the words 'travail' and 'labour'. At least the nobility never forgot their own dignity and the indignity which marked their bondsmen. The aristocratic contempt for work reflected the master's contempt for the dominated classes; work was the expiation to which they were condemned to all eternity by the divine decree which had willed them, for impenetrable reasons, to be inferior. Work took its place among the sanctions of Providence as the punishment for poverty, and because it was the means to a future salvation such a punishment could take on the attributes of pleasure. Basically, work was less important than submission.

The bourgeoisie does not dominate, it exploits. It does not need to be master, it prefers to *use*. **Why has nobody seen that the principle of productivity simply replaced the principle of feudal authority? Why has nobody wanted to understand?**

Is it because work ameliorates the human condition and saves the poor, at least in illusion, from eternal damnation? Undoubtedly, but today it seems that the carrot of happier tomorrows has smoothly replaced the carrot of salvation in the next world. In both cases the *present* is always under the heel of oppression.



Is it because it transforms nature? Yes, but what can I do with a nature ordered in terms of profit and loss, in a world where the inflation of techniques conceals the deflation of the use-value of life? Besides, just as the sexual act is not intended to procreate, but makes children by accident, organized labour transforms the surface of continents as a by-product, not a purpose. *Work to transform the world? Tell me another one.* The world is being transformed in the direction prescribed by the existence of forced labour; which is why it is being transformed so badly.

Perhaps man [*sic*] realizes himself in his forced labour? **In the nineteenth century the concept of work retained a vestige of the notion of creativity.** Zola describes a nailsmiths' contest in which the workers competed in the perfection of their tiny masterpiece. Love of the trade and the vitality of an already smothered creativity incontestably helped man to bear ten or fifteen hours which nobody could have stood if some kind of pleasure had not slipped into it. The survival of the craft conception allowed each worker to contrive a precarious comfort in the hell of the factory. But Taylorism [*ed. – see **Return Fire vol.2 pg28***] dealt the death-blow to a mentality which had been carefully fostered by archaic capitalism. It is useless to expect even a caricature of creativity from the conveyor-belt. **Nowadays ambition and the love of the job well done are the indelible mark of defeat and the most mindless submission.** Which is why, wherever submission is demanded, the old ideological fart wends its way, from the *Arbeit Macht Frei* of the concentration camps to the homilies of Henry Ford<sup>[1]</sup> and Mao Tse-tung [*ed. – see **Who Is It?***].

**So what is the function of forced labour? The myth of power exercised jointly by the master and God drew its coercive force from the unity of the feudal system. Destroying the unitary myth, the power of the bourgeoisie inaugurated, under the flag of crisis, the reign of ideologies, which can never attain, separately or together, a fraction of the efficacy of myth. The dictatorship of productive work stepped into the breach. It's mission is physically to weaken the majority of men [*sic*], collectively to castrate and stupefy them in order to make them receptive to the least pregnant, least virile, most senile ideologies in the entire history of falsehood.**

Most of the proletariat at the beginning of the nineteenth century had been physically

enervated, systematically broken by the torture of the workshop. Revolts came from artisans [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.4 pg85*], from privileged or unemployed groups, not from workers shattered by fifteen hours of labour. Isn't it disturbing that the reduction of working time came just when the spectacular ideological miscellany produced by consumer society was beginning effectively to replace the feudal myths destroyed by the young bourgeoisie? (People really have worked for a refrigerator, a car, a television set. Many still do, 'invited' as they are to consume the passivity and empty time that the 'necessity' of production 'offers' them.)

Statistics published in 1938 indicated that the use of the most modern technology then available would reduce necessary working time to three hours a day. Not only are we a long way off with our seven hours, but after wearing out generations of workers by promising them the happiness which is sold today on the installment plan, the bourgeoisie (and its Soviet equivalent) pursue man's destruction outside the workshop. **Tomorrow they will deck out their five hours of necessary wear and tear with a time of 'creativity' which will grow just as fast as they can fill it with the impossibility of creating anything (the famous 'leisure explosion').**

It has been quite correctly written: "China faces gigantic economic problems; for her, productivity is a matter of life and death." Nobody would dream of denying it. What seems important to me is not the economic imperatives, but the manner of responding to them. The [Chinese] Red Army in 1917 was a new kind of organization. The Red Army in 1960 is an army such as is found in capitalist countries. Circumstances have shown that its effectiveness has been far below the potential of a revolutionary militia. In the same way, the planned Chinese economy, by refusing to allow federated groups to organize their work autonomously, condemns itself to become another example of the **perfected form of capitalism called socialism** [ed. – see *Tools of the Technology*]. Has anyone bothered to study the modes of work of primitive [sic] peoples, the importance of play and creativity, the incredible yield obtained by methods which the application of modern technology would make a hundred times more efficient? Obviously not. **Every appeal for productivity comes from above.** But only creativity is spontaneously rich. It is not from 'productivity' that a full life is to be expected, it is not 'productivity' that will produce an enthusiastic collective response to economic needs. But what can we say when we know how the cult of work is honoured from Cuba to China, and how well the virtuous pages of [François] Guizot<sup>[2]</sup> would sound in a May Day speech?

To the extent that automation and cybernetics [ed. – see the supplement to *Return Fire vol.4; Caught in the Net*] foreshadow the massive replacement of workers by mechanical slaves, forced labour is revealed as belonging purely to the barbaric practices needed to maintain order. Thus power manufactures the dose of fatigue necessary for the passive assimilation of its televised diktats. What carrot is worth working for, after this? The game is up; there is nothing to lose anymore, not even an illusion. The organization of work and the organization of leisure are the blades of the castrating shears whose job is to improve the race of fawning dogs. One day, will we see strikers, demanding automation and a ten-hour week, choosing, instead of picketing, to make love in the factories, the offices and the culture centres? Only the planners, the managers, the union bosses and the sociologists would be surprised and worried. Not without reason; after all, their skin is at stake.



1. ed. – Arch-capitalist Henry Ford famously expanded market for his products by raising salaries while increasing mass-production and credit, thus undercutting the threat of the more revolutionary demands of the labour movement of his time by turning producers into consumers (encouraging even the most precarious workers to aspire to inclusion), heading off the last major crisis that capitalism faced. John Connor reminds us that he was big on "psychological profiling and home checks on his Detroit workers so that he also had 'scientific' control of their morals and character ensuring they were hard-working and subservient. (Despite – or perhaps because of, as we'll see below – of his prematurely Modern attitudes to managing production, Henry Ford was also prepared to resort to cruder 19th-century union-bashing techniques – Pinkertons – and even to issue the Tsarist anti-Semitic forger Protocols of the Elders of Zion as a pamphlet to his employees, *The Eternal Jew*[...] The Nazis hailed Henry Ford as "the American Hitler" and saw him as the New World's fuhrer. More significantly, they learned Ford's techniques of mass production and car consumption to hold the favour of the German lower middle class on assuming power.) Fitting that his great innovation, the assembly line – where workers were forced to work at the rate of not just one machine, but all machines in one factory – was modelled on the disassembly lines of Detroit's slaughter-houses, where living flesh was butchered and commodified."

2. ed. – French Prime Minister 1847-1848, said only enrichment by hard work merited suffrage.

## The Origins of Victimisation

[ed. – It's easy to sympathise with this revision of the received wisdom about the opening of the 'Years of Lead' in Italy, when also here in the U.K. there has always been a chorus (usually from the most dubious of sources or anonymous comment threads) ready to cry 'false flag' or 'agent provocateur' in the face of blows struck and claimed by anarchists, which has never convinced us... This account may come across as rather brusque, but is an important reminder of what provocations we must possibly face if struggles gain traction, without cutting and running. However we would argue that the response to repression needs more than increasing attacks alone (especially when we end up overcommitting our energy and resources towards this goal as a singular fetish) so as not to end up in the dead-end of a duel with the State... but that's another conversation.]

"We commit to freeing the prelate Marco Ussia as soon as the Church makes a statement in favour of release of political prisoners detained in Spain... Our action's purpose is to place the Church before its conscience and its responsibilities, in these critical moments for the Spanish people, since after 27 years of fascist dictatorship the Spanish democrats who are claiming a minimum of freedom of expression and of association recognized by the charter of human rights, are still in prison..." – Kidnapping of Ussia, April 1967, Rome: First of May Group/Sacco & Vanzetti' [ed. – see *Return Fire vol.1 pg86*]

"The science of USA in the service of crimes... we are targeting one by one the people responsible for the genocide in Vietnam! [President] Johnson doesn't give a damn about the marches of peace, we are using his own weapons: dynamite and sabotage!" – Attack against the American company Dow Chemical, 30th of March 1968, Milan: Anarchist Group... (the rest of the flyer unreadable because burned)

"We condemn the Church for its activity against the revolution... for the criminal act of supporting the Spanish fascism..." – Attack against the church St. Babylas, 10th of June 1968, Milan: Anarchists

"Comrade, destroy the banks... destroy the churches... destroy the universities... raid the department stores" – Attack at Rinascente, 30th of August 1968, Milan: Anarchists

"Last minute: the police killed again, two farmhands in Sicily! It is their own sacred mission. People revolt! Against authoritarianism, against the laws, the State and the Church that sanctifies everything. Long live anarchy!" – Attack with dynamite against the municipal offices of Genoa, 3rd of December 1968 (in solidarity with the dead people of Avola): Revolutionary Group Carlo Cafiero<sup>[1]</sup>

*"Comrade worker, inside the banks there is wealth... destroy the banks... Within the universities lies the culture of science, destroy the universities, inside the churches lies the dynast of mind... destroy the churches. Inside the department stores consumer goods can be found, destroy them!"* – Second attack at Rinascente, 15th of December 1968, Milan: Anarchist Brigade Ravachol [ed. – see **'The Matter of Knowing Who We Are'**]

*"American science is a tool for enslavement of people... the amazing space expeditions are not feeding the exploited."* – Attack with dynamite at the NATO base Camp Darby, 3rd of January 1969, Pisa: Anarchist Group J. Most<sup>[2]</sup>

*"Defendants! Burn the judges' gowns! Turn the courts of law into a battlefield... the struggle continues with all available means against the authority of the State and of the Church. Greetings!"* – Attacks with dynamite at the Courthouse and at the Ministry of Education, 27th and 31st of March 1969, Rome: Anarchist Revolutionary Association for the Social Revolution

The historical interpretation of a certain anarchism has always been partial, manipulated and often as bad as the one of the official historians. The purpose of this writing is to reach the source of this Victimisation which corrupted, and is still corrupting, the Italian anarchist movement for more than forty years, since the massacre of Piazza Fontana<sup>[3]</sup>. Risking to be considered a "revisionist", before I develop my theory I have to specify some issues. Although I am sure that it was the State which placed the bomb in Piazza Fontana, I will accompany this my certainty with some "other" certainties:

– *the belief that many of the attacks presented as fascist by the extra-parliamentary left of that time, were indeed anarchists attacks completed with responsibility claims of high reliability*

– *the belief that Giuseppe Pinelli was not a pacifist, a nonviolent, a martyr of the left, a little saint of democracy, but instead, an anarchist revolutionary that shortly before he was murdered by Calabresi<sup>[4]</sup> and his colleagues had actively and specifically collaborated with an anarchist organization engaged in armed struggle with bombs and kidnappings across half of Europe, with International anarchist group First of May<sup>[5]</sup>, direct expression of FIJL<sup>[6]</sup>, and as a natural consequence, like every anarchist consistent with what he did, he believed in revolutionary violence*

– *the belief that Gianfranco Bertoli was an individualist anarchist - not a fascist, a puppet or a useful idiot in the hands of "corrupted" intelligence agencies, as many anarchists shamelessly assert even now –*

*and that his action was perfectly included in the tradition of propaganda of the deed [ed. – see **Return Fire vol.1 pg84**], of anarchist individualistic terrorism.*

Having said that, and after putting these few points of references, we can start our journey through the past dispelling some myths. The Piazza Fontana massacre was not for anarchists, as many historians affirm, "the loss of innocence", but instead, the birth of a new figure, of a new role accepted in fear of repression. A role steeped in a pathetic and manipulated "innocentification". The anarchist-victim of the system, the anarchist-naive child who plays easy with revolution, with the risk of being approached by cover agents and turned into a tool for power. Almost all anarchists voluntary or involuntarily, with only a few exceptions, were wearing the same cloak in those years. **After Piazza Fontana there was a spreading of legalistic and acquitting counter-investigation<sup>[7]</sup> in which the caricature of the bloodthirsty anarchist bomber was replaced by an even more idiotic caricature of the anarchist helpless victim predestined by the State violence.** Many joined the game, either for a quiet life or to get their comrades out of prison, but someone went even further, contributing on their own to this new "investigative" trend through no less legalistic, caricatural and snivelling counter-investigations.

We can not understand entirely the tragic events of Milan and the following confusion and panic among the anarchists without making a brief reference to the slow but gradual evolution in which a part of the movement had been involved in years between 1962 and 1969. Across Italy, during these years, the anarchists of action lived moments of great vitality, I would say almost of renaissance. Various nucleus and affinity groups, very mobile, with young and not so young people, increased the strength of their actions, from the attacks of low intensity with nitrate to more powerful attacks with dynamite. This upgrade was accelerated thanks to the influence of the Spanish FIJL and of their direct expression: the international group First of May. This evolution occurred at the same time in other European countries with better results: like the Angry Brigade in England, the Hashish Rebels in Germany, GARI<sup>[8]</sup> in France. **In Italy the collective shock of the State massacre abruptly interrupted this evolution, blocking its development.** This massacre and the subsequent Pinelli's murder represented for the anarchist movement the "original sin" after which nothing will be like before. From that moment the "games" stopped and the positive trend that got through the movement at that time turned into a strong, although not permanent, standstill.



There are many legends and falsities built about those years. One of most persisting is the one that see the anarchism of the 60's as the weakest link in the revolutionary movement. An anarchist movement struck by repression and fabrication precisely because of its hypothetical, intrinsic weakness and because it could have been infiltrated easily. Another falsity (to say the least) concerns the roles of clown and slanderers, which our victimisation and the left-wing intellectuals assigned to the actors of this tragedy. Pinelli the innocent martyr, pacifist of "anarchy does not meant bombs but the justice in freedom", Valpreda the anarchist individualist, naive and manipulable, who claimed with "head held high" his innocence, his being just all talk of "bombs, blood, anarchy" and no action. **We, the anarchists, were the first responsible for such distortion of reality.** A distortion which stems from the need to defend ourselves from an accusation considered defamatory, a massacre that hits regular poor souls, random customers of a bank for farmers, mostly family-based. This alternate reality was so absorbed by anarchists, and even by the same actors of that tragedy, that every good thing done in past years deliberately was erased, and buried. The "panic of defence" brought to a general stampede and to an almost total fall back; in these years just few examples to the contrary, but significant ones: shooting of Commissioner Calabresi and the massacre at the police headquarters in Milan<sup>[9]</sup> by the anarchist Bertoli, who would dearly pay the consequences of his action, not only with more than 20 years in prison, but through the constant defamation and almost total isolation by a frightened and crazed anarchist movement.

The theory I want to support with this my article is that the so-called "strategy of tension" was set-up against anarchist movement not because it was the weakest link, but instead because it was the only segment of the revolutionary "left" credible for set-up a such plot in those years. Mainly for two reasons, first because in that historic moment it was the most active in terms of armed actions, bombs and even with a background of two kidnappings<sup>[10]</sup>, and second for its international contacts with groups like First of May and FIJL which carried out armed actions across half of Europe for years. It would have been more difficult to set up a

fabrication against the communists, at time less active in terms of armed struggle. Not without reason the only communist whom they tried to implicate in the Piazza Fontana events was Feltrinelli [transl. – influential publisher, communist militant, died under mysterious circumstances in 1972], due to his contacts with some of these anarchists, particularly with Corradini and Vincileone<sup>[11]</sup>. A concrete example of the "operative" contacts of the revolutionary publisher with those anarchists was when some weeks before Che Guevara<sup>[12]</sup>'s death in Bolivia, through the mediation of these two comrades, Fertinelli sought for support of the First of May to organize joint solidarity actions with the Bolivian guerrillas. After Guevara's death, the First of May started up a wave of coordinated attacks across Europe without precedents: November 12th 1967 in Bonn three bombs exploded at the Greek, Bolivian and Spanish embassies; in Rome at the Venezuelan embassy; in Milan in the Spanish Tourist Office; in Hague at the US, Greek and Spanish embassies; in Madrid at the embassy of USA; in Geneva at the Spanish Tourist Office.

Ten coordinated attacks in a single day: the organizational skills of anarchists in Europe had no equal, all thanks to the libertarian youth and their will to act and coordinate; this array of forces took place when in Italy Fertinelli's GAP [transl. – Marxist "Groups of Partisan Action"] were barely more than an idea and the Red Brigades were still far from their birth, since their first attack took place in 1971. We can say it with certainty that the cancer of the anarchist victimisation was born on December 12th of 1969 among the ruins of the Agrarian Bank in Piazza Fontana. A glimmer was already seen on April 25th of 1969, always in Milan, on the Resistance Day, when small incendiary devices based on nitrate salt and gasoline exploded in the currency exchange office at the central station and at the Trade Fair, which had been targeted (as power structures) by the student movement in those days. The smoke of fire at the station sent a dozen of passengers to emergency room for examination, but were immediately released from hospital; the other mechanism, at the trade fair, broke some windows: so harmless that even the "Rivista Anarchica" [transl. – magazine of Italian Anarchist Federation] called them paper bombs in March 1971. The devices were very like those used by anarchists at Rinascente [transl. – huge luxury department store in Milan] concerning the ignition (there is a reference at the beginning of this article, in an excerpt of the responsibility claim): the usual electric resistance, the usual gasoline bottle and the usual clock as a timer. The attackers' intention was not of course to cause victims, there had been phone calls to the

police which heralded the "explosion" at the station, some newspapers talked also about a claim of responsibility, about flyers found at the scene, as it had already happened in the previous Milanese anarchist attacks. The newspapers made a big deal about these "dreadful" attacks. The Milanese anarchist movement immediately covered its own back talking about provocation and putting on the same level these attacks considered fascist and the anarchist attacks at the Ministry of Education and at the courthouse of Rome which were claimed by the "Anarchist International 'Marius Jacob'<sup>[13]</sup>". The theory of conspiracy, shitting on actions by their own in order to clean themselves, was the prelude of Piazza Fontana. For these mysterious explosions were held responsible some comrades, which we already had the chance to meet, Giovanni Corradini and Eliane Vincileone. Together with them the young Paolo Braschi was arrested as well: the luckiest one was Ivo della Savia who managed to escape the arrest, becoming a fugitive. These four comrades were contributors of the journal "Materialismo e Libertà".

**Before I move on with our story, I would better comment briefly the effervescent cauldron which was the anarchist Milan at the end of the '60s.** In Milan during that period of protests and large liberal ferments, among the many experiences of struggle two small anarchist groups took their first steps. The "older" group included Ivo della Savia and Braschi, with more experience with explosives, in touch with Corradini and Vincileone, in close contact with the youth anarchist federations of other countries, with FIJL and First of May. In the youngest group, the most "boisterous" one, Valpreda, Claps and Derrico took part, who were considered "out-of-control" by the Milanese milieu, with less practical experience but with an individualist anarchist strong mind. They called themselves the "iconoclasts" and published a paper named "Land and Freedom" in which they expressed quite plainly their "violent" ideas. They will get involved in the fabrications of Piazza Fontana and they will end up as a consenting meat for the grinder of various counter-investigations, to which however they will owe their freedom. The Milanese political police were more concerned about the group that was revolved around Corradini and Vincileone, according to their words. This concern for the couple was result mainly of their international contacts, in a police report we could read: "At least until the end of 1962 they were a centre of anarchist activism that always attracted a number of youngsters. In a similar milieu was developed, although it couldn't be confirmed if and which part played the couple Corradini, the kidnapping of vice consul Isu Elias". Soon, the movement forgot these two militant persons, maybe

too disturbingly for an anarchism that from this period came out "purged" of its own interior.

The specific anarchist organizations FAI / GIA / GAF [transl. – Italian Anarchist Federation/Groups of Anarchist Initiative/Federated Anarchist Groups] after the oppressive wave that followed Piazza Fontana, will try to dampen their internal conflicts and at least in one thing they will manage to join up: to consider as provocation all those actions of some note claimed by anarchist over the past months. An important testimony regarding these years is being given by Ivo della Savia himself who as fugitive gave an incredible interview in "Corriere Della Sera" [transl. – important daily mainstream newspaper] in which he narrated with no reserve to a journalist the origin of the anarchism of action in Italy: "in 1963 we have witnessed the formation of the first anarchist groups which started to carry out the direct actions. By direct action we mean the attacks. I took part in these groups structured in a very rigid way. There wasn't any problem regarding the numbers, that is we were not concerned if we would be many... the action itself would have made a very clear choice... from 1963 till 1967 we have witnessed in Italy the material constitution, the articulation, the preconditions in order to reach a certain situation, to guarantee more effectiveness, the greater connection... **These days the police found themselves in front of a new affair, that was disorienting: anarchists were striking with a periodical regularity, and every two-three months there was something happening in the quiet Italian society...** You can see, as an example, the attacks against the Spanish embassy in Naples and the failed attack against the same embassy in Genoa...".

This evolution will be interrupted suddenly by the widespread of paranoid conspiracies that will follow after the massacre of Piazza Fontana. The "wallowing of self-pity" will reach its zenith after the murder of Pinelli, with the distortion of this comrade's image by majority of the movement in a victimized, pacifistic and democratic figure: dozens of assumptions, millions of trial documents to confirm the most abstruse theories about international conspiracies, black plots, red plots, opposite extremists, CIA, KGB, "corrupted" intelligence agencies. **From all these trials paperwork and from the subsequent and parallel counter-investigations a new "science" was born, which will have in anarchism of action one of its most illustrious victims.** In the name of this "science", named "strategy of tension", in every firecracker or bomb in years that will follow, the accusation of provocation will show up regularly as stopwatch. Every time an



anarchist group strikes, the mummies of “revolutionary” immobility even today dig out this very old and useful theory against anyone who dares to turn into action those things about which thousand other people keep babbling. The Italian anarchism in the beginning of 70’s will be characterized intensely by the campaign regarding the liberation of Valpreda<sup>[14]</sup>. A campaign that was completely focused at the judicial part, almost completely concentrated at the judicial defence and at the pursuance of pathetic approval by the democratic public opinion.

The cherry on top of this campaign was the nomination of the “illegalist” Valpreda in the voting list of “Manifesto” [*transl.* – *important Communist daily newspaper*], an attempt that was a failure since he didn’t get elected. Whoever went off the legality rails was automatically accused for provocation and lynched ideologically.

Outside of the borders of this “beautiful country” the comrades who had cooperated with Pinelli and his “Black Cross”<sup>[15]</sup>, the youthful federations, FIJL, First of May, the English Black Cross, were all confused and dazed. The information they were receiving from Italy was contradictory, the Italian movement was totally in the grip of the infiltrators-hunt, it seemed like you couldn’t trust anyone, completely in panic, the Italian anarchists were seeing secret agents and provocations in every corner of the street. An enlightening example for this widespread and contagious paranoia is offered by Octavio Alberola, one of the founders of First of May, in the book “El Anarquismo Espanol y la accion revolucionaria, 1961-1974”, co-written with Ariame Cransac in 1975, when he start to number the actions occurred in those years he stops, confessing that after a certain date onward he will not speak about Italy due the provocations and fabrications in motion in that country, which made scarcely credible the actions carried out in that period of time. These doubts of Alberola indicate the confusion and the panic that was reigning within the Italian anarchist milieu, where the huge majority was found unready in front of these tragic events, and couldn’t be able to give a collective answer so aggressive as the violence and the repression which struck them. At that moment the Italian movement transmitted only discouragement, Victimisation and doubts to movements of other countries, and all these when between French, Spanish, Swiss, English, and Italian youthful federations had been established strong contacts, which had already produced the first concrete results, by the way putting in a difficult position the old immobilist of European anarchism, for example Montseny<sup>[16]</sup> of the FAI [Iberian Anarchist Federation] gets very busy to tone down these new ferments.

At the 9th of September 1970, the youthful federations and the First of May in memory of comrade Pinelli exploded several devices simultaneously in Paris, London, Manchester and Birmingham in buildings of Italian delegations. It was the only action of a certain range carried out in Europe for Pinelli. This insufficient revolutionary solidarity was due to the legal defensive line pursued by the comrades in Italy.

For some people outside of the borders of Italy to remember Valpreda too, we will need to wait until the February of 1972 when a bomb in his solidarity exploded at the Italian embassy in Brussels. In Italy things were not so different, there were very few important actions (which got off the rails of civil symbolic protest) to frame in reaction against the events of Piazza Fontana. **Few actions, but significant;** at the 17th of May 1972 the commissioner Calabresi, the most responsible for the murder of Pinelli, got killed outside his house by unknowns. Even in this case the indignation of a part of movement sprang up: unbelievable but even many anarchists, including Valpreda, cried foul. Lack of someone responsible to slander, they attacked this action by raving about “conspiracies” and about a spurious usefulness from the side of authority to eliminate a disturbing witness. With no scruples, they tried to smear an exemplary, lucid, surgical action.

This operation of slander failed, the whole movement became galvanized, Lotta Continua praised this gesture of revenge, some decades after some of its former militants will bear the huge cost of imprisonment because of their former enthusiasm. **With this date the historians will start the so called “Years of Lead”.** Exactly one year after, at the 17th of May 1973, in front of the Milanese police headquarters that had just completed the unveiling of memorial tablet of Calabresi, the individualist anarchist Gianfranco Bertoli launched a handgrenade that resulted in several dead and injured people.

The comrade, after the arrest, claimed with pride his being an anarchist individualist and explained his gesture as a revenge for Pinelli’s murder: slandered publicly by the whole anarchist movement, the kind souls of “Revolution” turned him immediately in a fascist on payroll of the corrupted intelligence agencies. Among the few exceptions “Ponte della Ghisolfia”, a Milanese anarchist association, that despite its dissociation from this “insane” (sic.) gesture, it recognized him as a comrade (that did wrong, but always a comrade). Many years after, persuaded by a democratic magistrate they will change their minds, but this is another story, very ugly, that I don’t want to narrate. An ugly story of manipulations and political interests<sup>[17]</sup>.

Let me finish with a consideration, in my opinion the deepest meaning of what those years represented for anarchists, is well given in the opposite and distorted interpretations made by the same movement of the two, in my view, most emblematic figures of that period of time, Pinelli and Bertoli, victim and executioner: – *Pinelli: martyr of anarchy, good father, worker, conscious proletarian, avowed pacifist.*  
– *Bertoli: fascist, crazy, provocateur, spy, drug-addicted subproletarian, violent, thief.*  
**It was not the bourgeois press that presented them that way, but our own newspapers, “Umanità Nova” [ed. – weekly newspaper of Italian Anarchist Federation] in primis.** These two masks are telling us a lot about what the Italian anarchist movement became after the panic that followed the bomb in Piazza Fontana. They are showing us a decay, a retreat in front of the repression. We will bear the high cost of these fears, of this lack of courage with a stall that will extend throughout time. **Maybe you are wondering why I drug up these old stories? Because I am convinced that if some knots of the past do not get untied, we risk to fall continuously in the same mistakes.**

And I am still more convinced that the answer to repression is the main field where every revolutionary movement is playing its most important game, of its own credibility. Very often the repressing operations are being answered with backtracking exclusively at the legal level, merely crying about fabrications, claiming their own guilty as innocent, practically demanding justice to the court, relying only on the lawyers. For this reason I believe that critically revisiting the history can help us untie these knots in order to move forward faster.

*“Nothing beautiful and new can be written on old and filthy pages.”*

– C.C.F. [ed. – see *Rebels Behind Bars; ‘Yet Another Fenced World’*]

## **TIMELINE**

- 29.09.62:** kidnap of the Spanish vice consul Isu Elias in Milan. Anarchists.
- 06.03.62:** attacks at the headquarters of the airline company Iberia and at the Spanish National Research Council (CSIS) in Rome, at the same time as a bomb at the Ministry of Technology in Madrid, with claim of responsibility by CIL [Iberian Liberation Council] (issued by the Defesa Interior). Anarchists.
- 27.11.64:** two molotovs destroy the Seminary of Opus Dei Rome. Anarchists.
- 17.12.64:** firebombs inside Vatican and at the Pontifical University. Anarchists.
- 02.01.65:** bomb at the Spanish embassy in Napoli. Anarchists.

**25.04.65:** bomb at the offices of the Spanish airline company Iberia in Milan. Anarchists.

**31.04.66:** kidnap of prelate Ussia. First of May Group 'Sacco & Vanzetti'.

**12.11.67:** Rome – bomb at the Venezuelan embassy, Milan – bomb at the Spanish Tourist Office, at the same time other attacks in Geneva and Bonn claimed by First of May and by International Revolutionary Solidarity Movement.

**03.03.68:** Turin, bomb at the American consulate, simultaneously other bombs in Hague and London, claimed by First of May Group and by International Revolutionary Solidarity Movement.

**26.05.68:** firebomb at a Citroen dealership in Milan. International Anarchist Group.

**16.06.68:** firebomb at the Bank of Italy, signed by "Anarchists".

**23.07.68:** firebomb at the Ambrosian Library in Milan. Anarchists.

**20.08.68:** bomb at the Cinema Palace of Venice [transl. – main venue of the Venice Film Festival], claimed by Anarchist Group 'M. Nettelau'<sup>[18]</sup>.

**23.08.68:** unexploded bombs at Milan Cathedral, at the churches of St. Babylas and at the church of St. Ambrose, claimed by "Anarchists".

**25.08.68:** bomb at commercial metropolitan police station in Milan. Anarchists.

**31.08.68:** failed incendiary attack at Rinascente, signed by Anarchist Group Ravachol

**04.09.68:** during the international anarchist conference in Carrara the international Black Cross was born; Giuseppe Pinelli is responsible for the Italian section.

**03.12.68:** bomb at the municipal offices of Genoa, signed by Anarchist Group Carlo Cafiero.

**23-24.12.68:** second attack at Rinascente, signed by Anarchist Group Ravachol.

**25.12.68:** TNT bomb at the Courthouse of Livorno, signed by Anarchist Group People's Justice.

**03.01.69:** attack at the NATO base Camp Darby in Pisa, signed by Anarchist Group J. Most.

**19.01.69:** Milan, bomb at the police barracks. Anarchists.

**26.01.69:** Milan, bomb at the Spanish Tourist Office, signed by Anarchist Group Barcelona 39.

**January 1969:** Turin, bomb in front of the church S. Christina, signed by Direct Action Group.

**08.03.69:** Vercelli, attack against the police headquarter; anarchists arrested.

**27.03.69:** Rome, TNT bomb at the Ministry of Education, signed by Anarchist International Marius Jacob Group.

**31.03.69:** Rome, TNT bomb at the Courthouse, signed by Anarchist International Marius Jacob Group.

**03.04.69:** Turin, bomb at the Memorial to Carabinieri, signed by Anarchists.

**25.04.69:** Milan, bombs at the FIAT stand at the Fair Trade and at the currency exchange office in Central Station.

**01-03.05.69:** Milan, arrest of the anarchists Paolo Faccioli, Paolo Braschi, Ivo Della Savia (fugitive), Eliane Vincileone, Giovanni Corradini: all accused for bombs 25th of April.

**07.12.69:** Corradini and Vincileone released.

**12.12.69:** massacre of Piazza Fontana.

**15.12.69:** Pinelli was murdered.

1. ed. – Named after a 1846–1892 anarchist who set up a rural Swiss haven for fugitive anarchists and was among 30 initiating an insurrection in Benevento province of Italy in 1877, taking two villages before capture by government troops.

2. ed. – Named after Johann, a German-born U.S. anarchist, a notorious 1880's rabble-rouser.

3. transl. – The Piazza Fontana bombing: 12th December 1969 at 4:47pm a bomb exploded at the headquarters of National Agrarian Bank (some 200 metres from Cathedral), killing 17 people and wounding 88; the same afternoon three more bombs exploded in Rome (one at 4:55pm at the underground passage that leads to National Bank of Work, and the other two between 5:20 and 5:30pm, in front of the Altar of Fatherland and at the entrance of Central Museum of Risorgimento, that is of Italian unification; with a total of 17 wounded people), while a fifth in Milan was found unexploded in the headquarters of the Italian Commercial Bank. The same year, on April 25th a bomb exploded at the Fiat stand at a Milan trade fair, in which five people were injured, and there was also a bomb discovered at the city's central station. The Piazza Fontana bombing was initially attributed to anarchists. After over 80 arrests were made, anarchist suspect Giuseppe Pinelli died after "falling" from the fourth floor window of the police station where he was being held. One of the police officers who were interrogating Pinelli at that moment was the Commissioner Luigi Calabresi, murdered in revenge in 1972. Two members of communist organization Lotta Continua, Adriano Sofri and Giorgio Pietrostefani were convicted of plotting his assassination, and other one, Ovidio Bompressi, was sentenced for carrying it out; all of them were sentenced to 22 years of prison (Sofri was released in 2012; Pietrostefani is still fugitive in France, according the Mitterrand Doctrine those convicted for violent acts in Italy of far-left during the "Years of Lead" would not be extradited; Bompressi was released in 2006 for serious health reasons). Anarchist Pietro Valpreda was sentenced to prison on charges of being responsible of Piazza Fontana bombing, in 1987 was acquitted by the supreme Court of Cassation for lack of evidence.

4. transl. – Luigi Calabresi was a police officer and Italian State Police official in Milan. He chose to enter the police over a career as an attorney and was sent to Milan, where he was assigned to investigate anarchists group, as a police commissioner. Three police officers interrogating anarchist Pinelli (member of the Milan-based anarchist association "Ponte della Ghisolfia" and responsible of the Italian branch of the Anarchist Black Cross) regarding the Piazza Fontana bombing, including Calabresi, were put under investigation in 1971 for his death, but legal proceeding concluded it was due to accidental causes. Calabresi was killed by two shots from a gun outside his home in 1972. In 2004 the Italian President awarded the gold medal for civil merit to the memory to commissioner, and the Pope Paul VI declared him "servant of God", martyr of justice.

5. The birth of Grupo Primero de Majo (First of May Group) could be traced back at the 1st of May 1966, when they kidnapped the prelate Marco Ussia in Rome. It was a journalist who "baptised" the group in this way. The kidnapping was organized, with the support of some Italian anarchists, by the militants of FIJL [ed. – see following footnote] and CNT [ed. – see below], among them Octavio Alberola, one of the best minds of DI (Defesa Interior), a body that stems from the Iberian Liberating Movement (which united FAI, CNT and FIJL) to fight the Franco regime [ed. – see **Who Is It?**] with guns in their hands. After the dissolution of DI, caused from internal sabotage carried out by the faction of FAI and CNT "immobilists", the FIJL was left alone to fight. The First of May Group was one of the tools created by anarchism in order to continue the struggle. [ed. – "The CNT was a major force in Spain and Catalunya in the 1930s, with over a million members and a leading role in the war against fascism. During the Franco years, they played a major role in coordinating the resistance from exile, though according to many they had a moderating, stifling effect, owing to a conservative mentality and their legal status, exacerbated by pressure from the French authorities. Accordingly, most of the anarchist urban guerrillas who fought through those decades against Franco's police did so outside of the CNT. Nonetheless, the weight of their legacy made the CNT a major rallying point for the "insubmission" movement when the fascists cosmetically altered the state into a constitutional monarchy after Franco's death (and the assassination of his handgroomed successor by the Basque group ETA). That movement, though it brought out hundreds of thousands in the streets in what appeared ready to become a revolution, failed, hindered according to some by the moderating effect of the behemoth CNT and according to nearly everyone by a terrorist arson occurring at a key point in the mobilizations, engineered by the military and blamed on the anarchists" (Dreams, Demands & the Pragmatic Pitfall).]

6. FIJL (Federacion Iberica de Juventudes Libertarias) was established in 1932 as a youth anarchist organization, thousands of its militants took part in the Spanish civil war in 1936. During the following anti-Franco resistance it became the most vital component of Iberian anarchism.

7. transl. – Counter-investigation: the recourse of anarchist in technical matters of legal nature, that are setting aside the political identity of anarchy with purpose of creating a victimized image of an anarchist who is being persecuted for his ideals.

8. ed. – Revolutionary Internationalist Action Groups; French and Spanish anti-fascists.

9. Anarchist Gianfranco Bertoli, on the 17th of May 1973 (day of the first anniversary of the murder of police commissioner Calabresi, at the inauguration of a memorial plaque inside the yard of the Milanese police headquarters in Fatebenefratelli St.), threw a handgrenade at the main door of the police HQ, where, as Bertoli himself told, a cop kicked the bomb back resulting in the death of four people. His intentions were to hit the authorities present at the celebration in order to get revenge for Pinelli's death. He was sentenced with a life sentence and released on probation after 21 years of prison; his whole life he reaffirmed his being an individualist anarchist and the reasons of his gesture, denying the allegations of being a fascist manipulated by intelligence agencies, made by the magistrates and the media, and by a part of the same anarchist movement.

“When the attacks are seen as an individual duty, the task of every anarchist, we are all converted into militants or hypocrites. When all the aspects of our struggle are equally valued, the one who is not cut out for being a warrior need not boast or front a tough image. The partisans struggled as a community, and everyone had a role depending on their abilities. We must do the same. The acts of destruction must come from the collective body and go back to it. They should be formulated to restore the dignity of the whole body, not just that of the individual perpetrator or the brand name of the spectacular clandestine cell they belong to. They should be celebrated by the whole community, bringing everyone back to life.” – Lev Zlodey & Jason Radegas

10. In Italy, before the Red Brigades [ed. – authoritarian Marxist-Leninist armed group], it was the anarchists who used the method of kidnapping as a mean of political pressure. At the 29th of September 1962 some young anarchists, in a quite improvised way, kidnapped in Milan the Spanish vice consul Isu Elias, to demand the commutation of the death penalty for their comrade of FIJL in Spain, who was destined to the garrotte. The goal was achieved: the life of the young anarchist was saved. Then, at the 1st of May 1966, they kidnapped the Spanish councilor of the embassy in Rome, the prelate Marcos Ussia (see footnote 5).

11. Eliane Vincileone and Giovanni Corradini, editors of “Materialismo e Libertà” [transl. – Materialism & Freedom], published in 1963 as “a periodical of actions and libertarian studies” in just three issues. They both had contacts at international level, with FIJL and other militant anarchists. They were arrested for bombs in Fair Trade, the 25th of April, and released at the 7th of December 1969 due the lack of evidence. The couple had bonds of friendship with the publisher Giangiacomo Ferrinelli, and their names will appear several times in the investigations and in the information files of that time. Vincileone was among the anarchists under arrest at the police HQ in Milan when Pinelli was murdered.

12. ed. – Notoriously authoritarian Marxist guerrilla leader, important in the Cuban revolution.

13. ed. – Named after 1879-1954 anarchist member of ‘Workers of the Night’ expropriators.

14. transl. – Pietro Valpreda frequented the “Bakunin Circle” in Rome, before founding with several friends the “22 March Circle”. He was arrested following the December 12th 1969 Piazza Fontana bombing, and his name was splashed across the media as “the monster of Piazza Fontana”. For three years he languished in jail awaiting trial. In 1972 he was released pending a trial, thanks to the so called “Valpreda law” introducing limitation to pretrial detention even in the case of very serious crimes. In order to achieve the release due to the parliamentary immunity, the “Manifesto” nominated Valpreda in parliament elections, but he did not reach the quorum. The Italian judiciary took 18 years to conclude that Valpreda was acquitted for lack of evidence. He died in 2002.

15. The Anarchist Black Cross was formed in Italy, Milan, in the first months of 1969, partly thanks to federated anarchist groups, in order to support the anarchist prisoners. One of the most important promoters of this initiative was Giuseppe Pinelli. The Italian branch published even a bulletin, of 9 issues from June 1969 till April 1971.

16. Federica Montseny (Madrid 1905 – Toulouse 1994) began her militant activity in CNT, alongside with her parents, Catalan anarchist, creators of “La Revista Blanca” in 1898. In 1936 she is present at the local committee of CNT and at the committee of the peninsula, of the Iberian

Anarchist Federation, participating in the drawing up of an anarcho-communist program. After the outburst of [the Spanish] revolution in the July of 1936, she is taking part in the struggle against the putschists of Francisco Franco. At the 4th of November 1936, she becomes one of the four ministers of CNT in the new government of Largo Caballero: Juan Garcia Oliver gets to the Ministry of Justice, Juan Peiro to the Ministry of Industry, Juan Lopez Sanchez to the Ministry of Commerce and Montseny to the Ministry of Health. At the end of revolution, she and her partner Germinal Esgleas were forced into exile in France, where she was arrested and released by the Vichy government, she managed to avoid her extradition to Spain, becoming one of the most important representatives of the CNT in exile, and of the “immobilist” component among the Iberian anarchists.

17. About that see Gianfranco Bertoli – by Alfredo Maria Bonanno, “Carteggio 1998-2000”

18. ed. – Named after Max, 1865–1944 anarchist historian and student of the Welsh language.

## THE WAR OVER MY LIFE

[ed. – By an anonymous Swedish comrade, included for its slightly more thoughtful treatment of attack and rebellion in the course of one’s life.]

The battery feels cold against my fingertips. I stop grubbing about in the desk drawer. Slowly the filter of the cigarette pastes itself onto my lips. The thread of steel wool from the workshop is diligently prepared with the eyes and the fit for the battery. Solemnly I construct the smouldering gear. First at the positive pole. Important that the smouldering point, the eye, is proper. And so the other end follows at the negative pole. The smouldering appears quickly. Hurriedly the tobacco filled mouth of the cigarette meets the glowing eye. Puff. Puff. The cigarette is lit. The smell of burned metal, battery acid and tobacco smoke. It is past lockup. I’m really not the smoker type, I’m doing the snuff but then again the forbidden smoking ritual... A heretic ritual. A spit in the face of the correctional institution... a manifestation of a fervent need within me, to refuse that uniform which they are trying to impose on me. It raises the quality of life...

I light a cigarette that I sloppily rolled myself. I stand in front of the house where I live in an European metropole. A catholic church faces me in defiance from the opposite side of the street. The cigarette no longer raises the quality of my life, it is now as much a part of my everyday life as was the strip-searches in prison.

I can never speak for anyone else without committing a most horrific crime to myself, I can always only speak from my own experiences, my contradicting interests and desires.

**The prison that I was defying when I was lighting a cigarette with a battery and a piece of steel wool, is the same prison that I defy when I today choose to act for myself, for my liberation and to be able to live together with other free individuals. This is not a prison with a given name or a specific place to find for confrontation. It is a prison that I see us all living in.**

The shapes it takes are so many and its guises are so different but what they all have in common is that they are substantialized as soon as you try to approach the spontaneous, the wordless, the immediate, the unmediated – that, which is your life. There are many different names for this prison – shame, justification, obligation, duty, obedience – that all are deriving from the same source, which is, **to be ruled by someone else’s interests.**

The prison walls most simple to aim ones arsenal at, are of course the ones right in front of us. Whether it be a local cop station, a company or one of the state institutions that so innocently, through hard paper work, administrate our life circumstances.

But what then is a demolished wall when you later finance its reconstruction with the taxes you pay from the work that has been more or less imposed on you? When, after all, there is yet another wall and yet another still... behind the first one?

Attack is a splendid act but is so easily institutionalized into becoming yet another unreflected part of ones administrated everyday life’s constitution. The attack is indeed an act of self-defense when it is aimed from a slave to a ruler but how long are we gonna act like slaves, how long are we gonna defend ourselves? How long are



we gonna let our ideas – our passions and wills – give in to the fear of *really* becoming a threat to the ruling interests? When do we quit our roles as submitted and start acting with the self-confidence of one who lacks masters? When do we stop believing in change and start to destroy the foundation of this prison, that surrounds us all from first breath to the last?

We can only be ruled so far as we allow ourselves to be. It might sound cynical but it is at the same time a statement hard to disarm. Ultimately: the one who rather chooses to die than to bow before a master, is in no way better or worse than any other individual – disgusting moralist values don't belong here – but what we can say is that it dies as itself. It chooses to die of and for itself, for its will to live completely in accordance to its own passions, needs and desires. It chooses to die rather than to serve someone else's interests.

Most people continue, however, barely living, to kill themselves for someone else's interests. Few are of course the ones who *wish* to die but, confronted with the possibility to really live, will they dare to take the chance?

**What does it really mean to live in constant hostility with the existent, with the state, with the interests that tries to rule me? Put aside the rather exciting taste it gives as the words roll out of the mouth, it is of course something that receives a new answer every time a comrade asks herself [sic] that question.**

For me, this means to never become comfortable in the circumstances that the rulers create for us – circumstances they create in an illusory exchange for our submission. I enjoy life as much as I can but I never sink so far into the sofa that I can't get up again.

This means that my everyday life does not only consist of pure survival, or to “take care of myself” according to the latest fashion, or to achieve something that does not correspond with my passions, dreams, needs and wishes, may they be social or societal expectations or obligations.

For me this means a *constant conflictuality* with my current existence, which is to say, with the interests that try to rule my life. This means the active search for the materialization of my anti-authoritarian rage and opportunities for confrontation with all the structures that maintain this society.

This means to *never compromise* with these structures. To never fall for the promises of change, accommodation, negotiation or improvement. For my basic survival I do of course need to make practical compromises but to confuse them with the place that my

heart's desires has, that my passions and ideas has, is just one big self-delusion. To confuse them means in this case to hand over my arms to the State, in one self-loathing weapons amnesty. To hang up my boots and be pleased with the existence this society offers me. This means to not feed myself with the lie that I can live a life on my own terms within this society.

To *never compromise* means to never stop fighting as long as my freedom and my life is being restricted and ruled by someone else.

*The gate opens slowly. The sun makes me peer. On the parking lot the hacks' cars are reflecting the sun in their shiny paint. The air above the asphalt is rippling. It smells of freshly mowed lawn and elder. My clothes are so last autumn's fashion and way too warm. The sweat is pushing through my eyelids. They say that if you turn around, you will come back. I turn around in defiance, smile and reach out a long finger. I think a bit about the time that has passed. A tear appears in my eye but soon disappears into the sweat. The smile expands. I turn back again, let go of what I have in my hands and cartwheel over the baking-hot asphalt. Soon my ride arrives with loud music through the rolled-down windows...*

Constantly enriched of experiences in the struggle against the existent, from one prison to another, I throw myself with a fighting spirit in to the war over my life!



“If we take a look back at our normality, we see that direct violence from the State and its institutions is not the most freedom-killing one, but rather carries with it a catalytic potential for revolt. No, the worst of all, and what could make the most freedom-committed of individuals rot away in a concrete landscape, is the bureaucratically administrated power: the Job Centre, the Tax office, the Social Insurance Authority, the Social Security Administration, the Migration Authority, the Prison Institution, the Juvenile Office, the Bailiffs and all of their capitalist collaborators (career coaching firms, asylum entrepreneurs, debt collectors, “child entrepreneurs”, etc.). Together with the morals enforced by society, telling us how to act and what our obligations are as slaves; religious and patriarchal structures in families and local communities... You should want to work, but no one wants to hire you. You get a job, but you're not paid any money. You are promised asylum, but in the end you still have to go underground. You are supposed to be eager to learn, but your intelligence is defamed. It should come as no surprise that, because of all this, a hatred towards the existent is formulated, and conscious steps are taken to attack it. Rather it is worrying that so many keep submitting to these social relations.”

– Concerning the Rågsved Riots





## 'FORM DEFINES CONTENT'

[ed. – From a 2008 letter from anarchist then-prisoner Eric McDavid who walked away from a career to peruse ecological direct action (see *Return Fire* vol.1 pg70); in January 2015, after serving 9 years, he was released.]

To those familiar with debates, it's known that when one side establishes the terms to be used, it's only a matter of time before they've won the match – the other views have conceded to that particular frame of reference/mind-set which leads to a particular outcome. **i found it curious (to say the least) that so many adhered to the given definition of freedom shoved in front of them.** What is your definition of freedom at this moment? How are you to share it with others without it being explored by & for yourself? Whose definitions do you wish to utilize in perceiving your reality? When that is given up, what occurs? Within this constellation, what are the benefits of exploration? & the repercussion of leaving it obscured?

[Sorry, this following bit of constructive criticism may be hard for some to digest]

Another aspect of this undoing feels like it's been manifesting itself for some time by the way the (anarchist/radical) community [sic] has been/is received by the larger communities [sic] with which it comes into contact & interacts (please forgive the generalizations). The folks who have lived within those communities for generations have seen time & again how “energetic youth” (be it from schools, churches, radical groups, etc.) come in to make a change – perhaps gaining some window dressings here & there; but soon most end up leaving & making way for another up & coming generation of exuberance. The majority of those who leave go on to some form of schooling in order to “use the system for good.” So many, falling back on to careers after they've earned their credentials as activists.

Here, society at large, smiling a sigh of relief & giving a knowing nod, no longer sees them as lost children; having got it out of their system: they've grown up & accepted the responsibility to be truly effective in the world (please re-read that; **how many rationalize their choices/actions by adhering to those loaded terms and concepts, consciously or not**). ‘Form defines content’ is a hard lesson to learn, and regardless of the intent that initiates a career, a change of priorities is inevitable: concessions are made. Through this a distance is maintained (activist vs. ‘those in need’) – fortified by a colonialist based behavior [ed. – see *Return Fire* vol.3 pg67] that has nurtured a divide & conquer loop-hole which only we can close. The safety net which rides along in the back pocket of the privileged becomes a web that bears it's own poison.

## And where do the costs arise?

No matter what choices we make, we're always allowed back into the fold. The deeper the deviation, the trespass: the higher the toll for return. Actually at that point, the cost is irrelevant (made stark by some of the G.S. [*Green Scare*]; see *Return Fire* vol.4 pg83) cases) because all that matters is the return to comfort: that familiar (given level of) freedom. And who couldn't relate to the choices made? We've been shown repeatedly the outcome: “it's only natural.”

From my perspective the type of Death we're Dancing with here is the fear of letting go – letting go of what we've been taught (programmed) defines us – that which we are to hold most sacred.

What are the definitions which define your reality? What choices do they open before you? And which are closed? What unfolds because of those choices?

Basically: How do you wish to Live your Life?

## The Tyranny of the Clock

[ed. – By George Woodcock; first published in *War Commentary: For Anarchism*, March 1944]

In no characteristic is existing society in the West so sharply distinguished from the earlier societies, whether of Europe or the East, than in its conception of time. To the ancient Chinese or Greek, to the Arab herdsman or Mexican peon of today, time is represented in the cyclic processes of nature, the alternation of day and night, the passage from season to season. **The nomads and farmers measured and still measure their day from sunrise to sunset, and their year in terms of the seedtime and harvest, of the falling leaf and the ice thawing on the lakes and rivers.** The farmer worked according to the

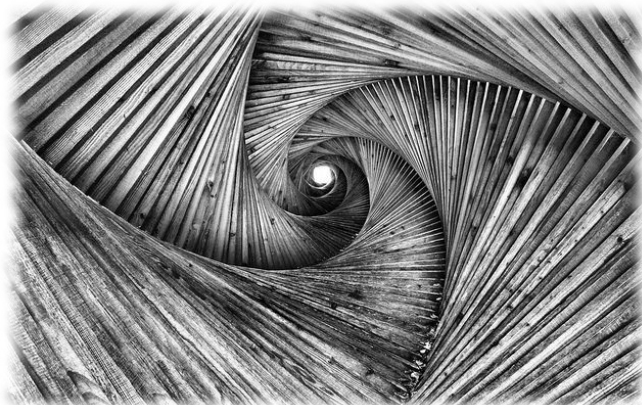
elements, the craftsman for so long as he felt it necessary to perfect his product. Time was seen in a process of natural change, and men [sic] were not concerned in its exact measurement. For this reason civilisations highly developed in other respects had the most primitive means of measuring time, the hour glass with it's trickling sand or dripping water, the sundial, useless on a dull day, and the candle or lamp whose unburnt remnant of oil or wax indicated the hours. All these devices were approximate and inexact, and were often rendered unreliable by the weather or the personal laziness of the tender. Nowhere in the ancient or medieval world were more than a tiny minority of men concerned with time in the terms of mathematical exactitude.

Modern, Western man, however lives in a world which runs according to the mechanical and mathematical symbols of clock time. The clock dictates his movements and inhibits his actions. The clock turns time from a process of nature into a commodity that can be measured and bought and sold like soap or sultanas. And because, without some means of exact time keeping, industrial capitalism could never

have developed and could not continue to exploit the workers, the clock represents an element of mechanical tyranny in the lives of modern men more potent than any individual exploiter or any other machine. It is valuable to trace the historical process by which the clock influenced the social development of modern European civilisation.

**It is a frequent circumstance of history that a culture or civilisation develops the device which will later be used for its destruction.** The ancient Chinese, for example, invented gunpowder, which was developed by the military experts of the West and eventually led to the Chinese civilisation itself being destroyed by the high explosives of modern warfare. Similarly, the supreme achievement of the ingenuity of the craftsmen in the medieval cities of Europe was the invention of the mechanical clock, which, with it's revolutionary alteration of the concept of time, materially assisted the growth of exploiting capitalism and the destruction of medieval culture.

There is a tradition that the clock appeared in the eleventh century, as a device for ringing bells at regular intervals in the monasteries which, with the regimented life they imposed on their inmates, were the closest social approximation in the middle ages to the factory of today. The first authenticated clock, however, appeared in the thirteenth century, and it was not until the fourteenth century that clocks became



common ornaments of the public buildings in the German cities.

These early clocks, operated by weights, were not particularly accurate, and it was not until the sixteenth century that any great reliability was obtained. In England, for instance the clock at Hampton Court, made in 1540, is said to have been the first accurate clock in the country. And even the accuracy of the sixteenth century clocks are relative, for they were only equipped with hour hands. The idea of measuring time in minutes and seconds had been thought out by the early mathematicians as far back as the fourteenth century, but it was not until the invention of the pendulum in 1657 that sufficient accuracy was attained to permit the addition of a minute hand, and the second hand did not appear until the eighteenth century. **These two centuries, it should be observed, were those in which capitalism grew to such an extent that it was able to take advantage of the industrial revolution in technique in order to establish its domination over society.**

The clock, as Lewis Mumford has pointed out, represents the key machine of the machine age, both for its influence on technology and its influence on the habits of men. Technically, the clock was the first really automatic machine that attained any importance in the life of men. Previous to its invention, the common machines were of such a nature that their operation depended on some external and unreliable force, such as human or animal muscles, water or wind. It is true that the Greeks had invented a number of primitive automatic machines, but these were used, like Hero's steam engine, for obtaining 'supernatural' effects in the temples or for amusing the tyrants of Levantine cities. But the clock was the first automatic machine that attained a public importance and a social function. Clock-making became the industry from which men learnt the elements of machine making and gained the technical skill that was to produce the complicated machinery of the industrial revolution.

Socially the clock had a more radical influence than any other machine, in that it was the means by which the regularisation and regimentation of life necessary for an exploiting system of industry could best be attained. The clock provided the means by which time – a category so elusive that no philosophy has yet determined its nature – could be measured concretely in more tangible forms of space provided by the circumference of a clock dial. Time as duration became disregarded, and men began to talk and think always of 'lengths' of time, just as if they were talking of lengths of calico. And time, being now measurable in mathematical symbols, became regarded as a commodity that could be bought and sold in the same way as any other commodity.

The new capitalists, in particular, became rabidly time-conscious. Time, here symbolising the labour of workers, was regarded by them almost as if it were the chief raw material of industry. **'Time is money' became one of the key slogans of capitalist ideology**, and the timekeeper was the most significant of the new types of official introduced by the capitalist dispensation.

In the early factories the employers went so far as to manipulate their clocks or sound their factory whistles at the wrong times in order to defraud their workers a little of this valuable new commodity. Later such practices became less frequent, but the influence of the clock imposed a regularity on the lives of the majority of men which had previously been known only in the monastery. Men actually became like clocks, acting with a repetitive regularity which had no resemblance to the rhythmic life of a natural being. They became, as the Victorian phrase put it, 'as regular as clockwork'. Only in the country districts where the natural lives of animals and plants and the elements still dominated life, did any large proportion of the population fail to succumb to the deadly tick of monotony.

At first this new attitude to time, this new regularity of life, was imposed by the clock-owning masters on the unwilling poor. The factory slave reacted in his spare time by living with a chaotic irregularity which characterised the gin-sodden slums of early nineteenth century industrialism. Men fled to the timeless world of drink or Methodist inspiration. But gradually the idea of regularity spread downwards among the workers. **Nineteenth century religion and morality played their part by proclaiming the sin of 'wasting time'**. The introduction of mass-produced watches and clocks in the 1850's spread time-consciousness among those who had previously merely reacted to the stimulus of the knocker-up or the factory whistle. In the church and in the school, in the office and the workshop, punctuality was held up as the greatest of the virtues.

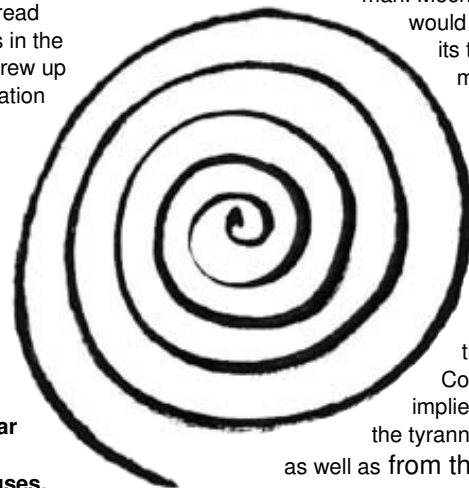
Out of this slavish dependence on mechanical time which spread insidiously into every class in the nineteenth century there grew up the demoralising regimentation of life which characterises factory work today. The man who fails to conform faces social disapproval and economic ruin. If he is late at the factory the worker will lose his job or even, at the present day [1944 – while wartime regulations were in force], find himself in prison. **Hurried meals, the regular morning and evening scramble for trains or buses,**

**the strain of having to work to time schedules, all contribute to digestive and nervous disorders, to ruin health and shorten life.**

Nor does the financial imposition of regularity tend, in the long run, to greater efficiency. Indeed, the quality of the product is usually much poorer, because the employer, regarding time as a commodity which he has to pay for, forces the operative to maintain such a speed that his work must necessarily be skimmed. Quantity rather than quality becomes the criterion, the enjoyment is taken out of work itself, and the worker in his turn becomes a 'clock-watcher', **concerned only when he will be able to escape to the scanty and monotonous leisure of industrial society**, in which he 'kills time' by cramming in as much time-scheduled and mechanised enjoyment of cinema, radio and newspapers as his wage packet and his tiredness allow. Only if he is willing to accept of the hazards of living by his faith or his wits can the man without money avoid living as a slave to the clock.

The problem of the clock is, in general, similar to that of the machine. Mechanical time is valuable as a means of co-ordination of activities in a highly developed society, just as the machine is valuable as a means of reducing unnecessary labour to the minimum. Both are valuable for the contribution they make to the smooth running of society, and should be used insofar as they assist men to co-operate efficiently and to eliminate monotonous toil and social confusion. But neither should be allowed to dominate men's lives as they do today.

Now the movement of the clock sets the tempo men's lives - they become the servant of the concept of time which they themselves have made, **and are held in fear, like Frankenstein by his own monster**. In a sane and free society such an arbitrary domination of man's functions by either clock or machine would obviously be out of the question. The domination of man by the creation of man is even more ridiculous than the domination of man by man. Mechanical time



would be relegated to its true function of a means of reference and co-ordination, and men would return again to a balance view of life no longer dominated by the worship of the clock.

Complete liberty implies freedom from the tyranny of abstractions as well as from the rule of men.

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

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**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)

**sources if not already cited:  
(anonymous if unlisted)**

*inside front* – Emile Armand

**'An Enemy of the Desire to Create'**  
– from 'The Revolution of Everyday Life', by Raul Vaneigem

**'The Origins of Victimisation'**  
– by Alfredo Cospito, in *Croce Nera Anarchica* #2

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



PDFs of this chapter, other chapters of the same volume or previous volumes of Return Fire and related publications: [actforfree.nostate.net/?tag=return-fire](http://actforfree.nostate.net/?tag=return-fire)



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