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**From the Centre
to the Periphery**

The professionalism that is flaunted elsewhere is not welcome in anarchist methodology, but neither is outright refusal or preconceived closure. The same goes for what is happening concerning the mania for experience as a thing in itself, the urgency of “doing”, personal satisfaction, the “thrill”. The two extremes touch and interpenetrate. The p r o j e c t sweeps these problems aside because it manages to see things in their globality. For the same reason the work of the revolutionary is necessarily linked to the project, identifies with it, cannot limit itself to single aspects. A partial project is not a revolutionary one, it might be an excellent work project, could involve comrades and resources even for long periods of time, but sooner or later it will end up being penalised by the reality of the class struggle.

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become fearful and dogmatic, resentful towards those who do manage to overcome these obstacles, suspicious of everyone, discontented, unhappy.

The only acceptable limit is that of our capabilities. But these limits should always be seen during the course of the event, not considered to exist beforehand. I have always started off from the idea (obviously fantasy, but good operatively) of having no limits, of having immense capabilities. Then day to day practice has taken on the task of pointing out my actual limits and those of the things that I do, to me. But these limits have never stopped me in advance, they have sometimes emerged as insurmountable obstacles later. No undertaking, no matter how incredible or gigantic, has seen me to refuse to start off. Only afterwards, during the course of particular practices has the modesty of my capabilities come to light, but this has never prevented me from attaining partial results, the only things that are humanly attainable.

But this fact is also a problem of “mentality”, i.e. of a way of seeing things. One often remains too attached to the immediately perceivable, to the socialist realism of the ghetto, city, nation, etc. One is internationalist in words but in reality prefers other things, things one knows better. One refuses real international relations, relations of reciprocal comprehension, of overcoming barriers (also linguistic ones), of collaboration in mutual exchange. But one even refuses specific local relations, their myths and difficulties. The funny thing is that the first are refused in the name of the second, and the second in the name of the first.

The same thing happens concerning the specific preparatory activity of finding revolutionary means. Again, delegating this to other comrades is often an automatic decision. One bases oneself on remorse and fear which, if gone into carefully, have little to say.

deriving from the fact that in each one of us there is a residual of the equation “power equals strength” that the modern structures of dominion are dismantling piece by piece in favour of a weak but efficient form, perhaps worse still than a strong, boorish one. The former penetrates the psychological fabric of society right to the individual drawing them into it. The latter remains external, makes a lot of noise, bites, but basically only builds a prison wall which sooner or later can be climbed.

The many aspects of the project also make the prospective of the revolutionary task multiple.

No field of action can be excluded in advance. For the same reason there cannot be privileged fields of intervention that are “congenial” to the particular individual. I know comrades who do not feel inclined to undertake certain kinds of activity—let’s say the national liberation struggle—or certain revolutionary practices such as specific small actions. The reasons vary, but they all lead to the (mistaken) idea that one should only do the things that please one. This is

mistaken, not because it is wrong that one (the sources of action—must be joy and personal satisfaction), but because the search for individual motivation can preclude a wider and more significant kind of research, that based on the totality of the intervention. To set off with preconceived ideas about certain practices or theories means to hide—due to “fear”—behind the idea, nearly always mistaken, that these practices and theories do not “please” us. But all preconceived refusal is based on scarce knowledge of what one is refusing, on a refusal to get close to it. The satisfaction and joy of today comes to be seen as the only thing that matters, as we shut ourselves off from the perspective of the future. So, often without wanting to, we

CONSIDERATIONS ON ILLEGALITY

The broad concept of illegality

Simply spreading information that has been distorted or kept quiet by the institutions and the media is “illegal”. It does not go against any precise law (except in cases of information protected by “State secret”), but is contrary to the State’s management of social control, of enforcing the law.

So a wide range of activity exists that attracts the attention of the State’s repressive organisms, to the same extent (if not more) as behaviour that actually breaks a precise law.

At certain moments the circulation of information can be very damaging to projects of State control, at least (if not more) as much as action considered by the law as crime.

It derives from this that the difference between the “formal” line of illegality and the “real” one fluctuates according to the repressive projects of power.

So State and capital both nationally and internationally determine levels of illegality—or if you prefer a limit of ‘legality’—fixed not so much through recourse to precise laws (the law acts in given cases), but with an intricate practice of control and dissuasion that only at certain moments becomes actual repression as such.

The politics/legality relationship

Basically, all political critique remains within the terms of legality. In fact, it strengthens the institutional fabric allowing it to overcome defects and delays determined by the contradictions of capital and some excessively rigid aspects of the State.

But no political critique can go so far as to reach the absolute negation of the State and capital. If it were to do so—as happens with anarchist critique—it would be a question of social critique, so would not be considered a constructive contribution to the institutional fabric and consequently become—in fact—“illegal”.

Social and political situations can arise in which greater equilibrium between the political and economic forces make it easy for a social critique, even a radical, anarchist one, to be recuperated. But that does not alter the substantially “illegal” content of this critique.

On the other hand, even behaviour that falls quite outside the law can be considered differently in the light of determined political situations. For example, the armed struggle of a combatant party is undoubtedly illegal behaviour, but at a given moment it can turn out to be functional to the project of recuperation and restructuring of the State and capital, an eventual agreement between combatant party and the State is not impossible (the latter in its guise of guarantor of the privileges of capitalism).

This is not as absurd as it seems in that the combatant party places itself in the logic of destabilising the ruling power in order to construct a power structure that is different in form but identical in substance. In this kind of project, as soon as it is realised that the military confrontation cannot proceed because there is no outlet in the medium term they come to some agreement. The amnesty being discussed in the [Italian 1970s] movement is one of these possible agreements. Other forms can be imagined in the light of the recuperation by social democracy. A cohabitation as a result of the military defeat that seems the only possible solution to those who yesterday were convinced they could take over the old power structure and manage it completely.

As you can see, whereas simple anarchist critique—radical

their immediate interests. Hence the growth in the importance of wider struggles and structures, national and supernational parliaments.

The end of politics is not in itself an element that could lead one to believe there has been “anarchist” turning in society opposing itself to attempts at indirect political management. Not at all. It is a question of profound changes in the modern structure of capital which is also happening at international level precisely because of the greater interdependence between the various peripheral situations. In turn these changes mean an impossibility of control through the political myths of the past and a passage to methods better suited to the present time: the offer of better living conditions in the short term, a higher level of satisfaction of primary needs in the East, work for all in the West. These are the new terms of the course.

However, no matter how strange the crisis of politics as a generalised phenomenon might seem, it will necessarily bring with it a crisis in hierarchical relations, the delegate, etc., all relations that tend to put the terms of class opposition in a mythical dimension. This will not be able to go on for much longer without consequences, and many might begin to see that the struggle cannot pass through the myth of politics, but must enter the concrete dimension of the immediate destruction of the enemy.

There are also those who, basically not wanting to know what the work of the revolutionary must necessarily be in the face of the above social changes, come to support “soft” methods of opposition, claiming they can obstruct the spreading of the new power through passive resistance, “delegitimation” and such like. In my opinion this is a misunderstanding due to the fact that they consider modern power, precisely because it is more permissive and based on wider consensus, to be less “strong” than that of the past based on hierarchy and absolute centralisation. This is a mistake like any other,

winds of repression. It is the myth of the quantitative that must crumble. The myth that numbers “impress” the enemy, the myth of “strength” before coming out into the struggle, the myth of the “liberation army” and other such things.

So, without wanting it, old things transform themselves into new. Models, objectives and practices of the past are revolutionising themselves. The final crisis of the “political” method is here without a shadow of doubt. We consider all attempts to impose ideological models on subversive practices to have disappeared for good.

In due proportions, it is the world as a whole that is refusing the political model. Traditional structures with their “strong” political connotations have disappeared or are about to do so. The parties of the left are aligning with those of the centre and the parties of the right are also moving in that direction so as not to remain isolated. The democracies of the West are moving closer to the dictatorships of the East. This yielding of the political structure correspond to profound changes in the economic and social ones. New requirements are emerging for those who have a mind to manage the subversive potential of the great masses. The myths of the past, also that of the “controlled class struggle” are finished. The great mass of exploited have been drawn into mechanisms that clash with the clear but superficial ideologies of yesterday. That is why the parties of the left are getting close to positions of centre which basically corresponds to a zeroing of political distinctions and a possible management of consensus, at least from the administrative point of view. It is in things to be done, short term programmes, the management of public welfare that distinctions are arising. Ideal (therefore ideological) political projects have disappeared. No one (or hardly anyone) is available to struggle for a communist society, but they could be regimented once again into structures that claim to safeguard

and absolute—is always “illegal”, even the armed struggle of the combatant parties can at some time enter the domain of “legality”. That proves once again the “fluctuating” concept of legality and the State’s intention to adapt this to the conditions of control.

The exercise of control

The instruments of repression are only in a minimal part directly related to the repression as such. Most of them function as preventive instruments of control.

This consequently has an effect on all the potential forms of illegality—through a series of measures—and on all forms of different behaviour. Potential illegality comes under the law today, but allows the farseeing eye of the censor to calculate their possible outlet. The same for “different” “deviant” behaviour, today a possible object of study or wonder (a move away from the ways imposed by the centres of production of consensus), tomorrow real danger points of social subversion.

Now, the exercise of control is based on the knowledge of data: behaviour, deformity, taste, ideology, actions, etc. The greatest amount of data possible and its relative elaboration is at the root of a wide project of control. Without these elements no direct control would be possible, it would be circumscribed and not very dependable in the wider prospect of control, of the participatory kind.

Space of secrecy

Contrary to the opinion of some—who maintain it is pointless—I consider secrecy to be one of the essential elements of revolutionary action.

But this concept must be gone into.

In the first place the idea that secrecy is only thinkable in the

eventuality of a clandestine action.

Even in the activity of counter-information, activity that precludes intermediate struggles, secrecy is indispensable. In fact intermediate struggle itself, for example, an occupation, is not the “real” aim of anarchists, this comes afterwards in the consequences that could develop from it. These consequences cannot be foreseen during the work of counterinformation and, in the narrow sense, are not part of intermediate action, but are part of a successive phase which only with difficulty could be grasped by whoever participates in the struggle in order to satisfy a primary, immediate need.

In the second place, even if we take for granted that the repressive organs come to know every aspect of our struggle,—from the phase of counter-information to the successive one—there is no reason why we cannot adopt the method of supplying as little information as possible to the enemy. Doing things in the light of day does not mean that we supply explanations of this for use by the police. Think, for example, of a situation where many actions take place in different places simultaneously. By taking care of the communication aspect (leaflets, posters, papers, etc.) one can make it more difficult for the police to discover the relationship that exists between these actions. It is a question of a normal cautionary measure in order to retard repressive action.

Educating oneself to care and prudence is therefore fundamental for every revolutionary no matter what action they intend to carry out. A moment’s reflection on this question leads us to understand the techniques of safeguarding that it is necessary to employ even in simply drawing up a leaflet, so as to avoid aspects of repression. And, in another perspective, knowledge of these techniques allows us to use some instruments of denunciation, also of contempt and scorn at the opportune moment, when we consider it important,

pects of dispersion and of not being reducible to one single project. They are pulverised, diffused, i.e. they concern minimal objectives that cannot at first sight be related to a central enemy, at least as it comes to be presented in the iconography elaborated by power itself. Power has an interest in showing its peripheral ramifications and supporting structures it in a positive light, as though they had purely social functions that are indispensable to life. On the other hand it effectively conceals, given our incapacity to expose them, the connections that pass from these peripheral structures to repression then to consensus. This is the considerable task that awaits the revolutionary who should also expect incomprehension at first concerning his or her actions when they begin to strike, hence the consequent need for “clarification”. And here lies another trap. To supply these clarifications in ideological terms would be to reproduce the exact terms of concentration and centrality. Anarchist methods cannot be presented through an ideological filter. Whenever this has happened it has turned out to be no more than a juxtaposition of our methods to practices and projects that possess very little that is libertarian.

The concept of delegating is criticised because it is a practice which, apart from being authoritarian, leads to increasing aggregational processes. Refusal to delegate could possibly lead to building *i n d i r e c t a g g r e g a t i o n*, an organisational form of reference not based on organisation charts. Separate groups then, united by methodology, not by hierarchical relations. Common objective, common choices, but *i n d i r e e t*, the whole thing coming about through the objectivity of common aims. Each does their own thing, not feeling the need to propose aggregational relationships that sooner or later end up producing hierarchical organisation charts (even if they are horizontal, claiming to remain within anarchist methods) which turn out to be vulnerable to any increase in the

different significance through time and in changing social relations. That leads to the need for a theoretical consideration of the things to be done. The fact that some of these things go on for a long time as though immobile does not mean that they are. For example, the fact that there is a need to organise to strike the class enemy necessarily involves duration in time. Organisation and means tend to crystallise. And in some respects it is well that it should be so. That means that it is not necessary to re-invent everything each time one reorganises, even after having submitted to the blows of repression. But that does not mean that this “resumption” must be an exact repetition. Preceding models can be submitted to criticism even if they remain basically valid and constitute a considerable starting point. Here one often feels one is prey to misinformed critics and preconceived ideas, wanting at all costs to avoid being accused of being an “irreducible”, which in fact sounds quite positive but also implies an incapacity to understand the evolution of social conditions as a whole.

So is it possible to use old organisational models so long as they are submitted to a radical critique. But what could this critique be? One mainly. A denunciation of the uselessness and danger of centralised structures, the mentality of the delegate, the myth of the quantitative, the symbolic, the grandiose, the use of the media, etc. As we can see, it is a question of a critique aimed at revealing the other side of the revolutionary horizon, the anarchist and libertarian aspect. To deny centralised structures, organisation charts, the delegate, the quantitative, the symbolic, entrism, etc., means to fully adopt anarchist methodology. And anarchist proposition requires a few preliminary conditions.

At first all this might seem (and in certain aspects is) less effective. Results are more modest, less evident, having all the as-

so that the risk that ensues becomes a calculated risk not a simple error of the pen or thought of who then regrets immediately afterwards.

As we can see, the spaces of secrecy are wide and go far beyond the realm of clandestinity.

The anarchist movement and the problem of secrecy

To say that the anarchist movement is not by nature a clandestine movement is meaningless. A revolutionary movement so complex and rich in elements of radical transformation of society cannot fail to be thought of other than in function of external intervention in the light of day, in such a way that everyone can take its ideas into consideration and consider them critically.

The fact that the anarchist movement has at times been reduced to clandestinity depends exclusively on altered historical and political conditions in a given country.

But that does not prevent the anarchist movement from developing its political and revolutionary activity (with the caution mentioned earlier). It also develops more specific activity not aimed at propaganda and participation in social struggles, but with different objectives which are—obviously—not in contrast with the first. In the first place, the problem of finding the means necessary for the struggle. In the second, attacks against objectives and individuals who bring about exploitation, and so on.

This kind of activity cannot be considered as something “different” or “separate” from the rest. The need for secrecy, which seems out of the question as far as these aspects are concerned, carries those who believe secrecy is impossible to conclude that all such activity must be abandoned, thus sacrificing a potential that continues to reduce everything to simple declarations of principle

and a sad melancholy inadequacy of means.

Technology and secrecy

But do the potent technological means the adversary is doted with really make secrecy impossible?

This question re-enters the ambit of perplexities generated over the past few years due to a lack of knowledge of technology and a fantastic and hyperbolic view of its possible use.

Like everything else one does not know, or that one knows little of, the technology of the past few years with its computers, automatic listening centres, lasers, radar, has fascinated many comrades who before were nearly always passionate science fiction readers. The pleasures they once found in such reading is now found in reading, often without a necessary basic preparation, more or less specialised newspaper accounts (but more often simply “scandalistic”), of the great possibilities of technology today.

We are not trying to underestimate the repressive potential that the technical findings of today put at the disposition of power. We just want to say that certain things should be said cautiously. If for no other reason as not to undo people’s subversive energy and contribute to hammering nails into our own coffin.

Total control is a dream that power has been passing on since the era of the great Leviathan. In actual fact this is impossible. The main obstacle is not so much lack of technical efficiency concerning the mechanisms of control and, basically, not even the limitations of those who have the task of making it work. The limit of control is that, in order to extend, it must penetrate the mentality of whoever is being controlled. So the real controller is not so much—or at least not only—the policeman, the judge or the prison guard, as the person being controlled themselves.

enriches it, transforms it.

Not understanding these fundamental premises of the work of the revolutionary often gives rise to confusion and frustration. Many comrades who remain tied to what we could call *r e f l e x* interventions often submit to backlashes such as demotivation and discouragement. An external fact, (often repression) gives the stimulus to act. Often this ends or exhausts itself the intervention has no more reason to exist. Hence the frustrating realisation that one has to go back to the starting point. It is like digging away at a mountain with a spoon. People do not remember. They forget quickly. Aggregation does not occur. Numbers decline. Nearly always the same people. The comrade who can only act as a “reflex” often survives by going from radical refusal to shutting off in disdainful silence to having fantasies of destroying the world (human beings included).

On the other hand, many comrades remain tied to what we could call *r o u t i n e* interventions, i.e. those involving periodicals (papers, reviews, books) or meetings (congresses, conferences, debates, etc.). Here again the human tragedy does not fail to show up. Usually it is not so much a question of personal frustration (which also exists, and you can see it), as the transformation of the comrade into a congressional bureaucrat or editor of barely readable pages that try to hide their inconsistency by going into daily events, explaining them according to their own point of view. As you can see, it is always the same story.

The project must therefore be *p r o p o s i t i o n a l*. It must take the initiative. First operatively, things to be done or seen in a certain way. Then organisationally: how to do these things.

Many do not realise that the things to be done (in the context of the class clash) are not established once and for all, but take on a

the utility and completeness of the action they wish to undertake is not enough for the revolutionary. The only expedient one can have recourse to is that of putting off to infinity, to better times when it will no longer be necessary to dedicate oneself “exclusively” to doing and one will be able to think. But how can one think without the means to do so? Perhaps thought is an automatic activity that one slips into when one stops doing? Certainly not. In the same way as doing is not an automatic activity one slips into when one stops thinking.

The possession of a few things then, courage, constancy, creativity, materiality, can allow the revolutionary to bring the means they possess to fruition and build their project.

And this concerns both analytical and practical aspects. Again a dichotomy appears which needs to be gone into in its inconsistency, i.e. as it is usually intended by the dominant logic.

No project can be just one or other of these aspects. Every analysis has a different angle and development according to the organisational proposal which is only valid if it comes to be assisted by a similar analysis.

The revolutionary who is unable to master the analytical and organisational part of his project will always be at the mercy of events, constantly turning up after things have happened, never before.

The aim of the project in fact is to see in order to foresee. The project is a prosthesis like any other of man’s intellectual elaboration in order to allow action, make it possible, not let it be extinguished in pointless discussion and improvisation. But it is not the “cause” of action, it contains no element of justification in this sense. The project, if correctly intended, is itself action, while the latter is itself a project, becomes a full part of it, makes it grow,

Whoever brings about control plans to enter the culture of the person they are controlling, building within them a series of resistance to freedom, obstacles to the subversive struggle, impediments to free thought. Once that is done it will be the controlled person themselves to censure their actions and their thoughts. Finally, in a third phase the controlled person will see to extending control, to perfecting it by participating in the elaboration of technological centres for storing data and the elaboration of information. This participation, which constitutes the maximum level of control imaginable, will only become possible when the first two levels have been interiorised (that of control seen as enemy and that of control penetrating us as a way of thinking). The third level should not be seen as participation in the functioning of “machinery” so much as an ongoing contribution to enriching the information available to capital and which constitutes the base of capitalist accumulation of the future.

In such a perspective clearly any sector that is taken away from the reaches of control or protected from the spreading process of cultural integration must be defended with every means, even by having recourse to the techniques of *depistage* that are based on secrecy.

Anyone who denies such techniques a priori does so because they short-sightedly see them as plots and romantic nonsense of times gone by. This is not so.

Of course, it would be absurd to entrust messages to a ciphered code, not only of the kind used by Bakunin and Malatesta but any kind at all, for the simple reason that any communication that is more than a couple of lines can be easily decoded by any computer. But even the code of Bakunin and Malatesta (for messages of a few words) still holds and cannot be decoded by comput-

ers because they lack the necessary frequency to establish the various letters.

I am not discussing the question of coded messages here, I am just saying that no one can exclude that at a given moment a revolutionary might see themselves forced to make a communication that they do not want to make known by the enemy. It is as well to know that such a thing is possible—if the message is very brief—and that no technology in the world that can break even the most simple codes.

Why open the way to repression?

Those who consider secrecy to be impossible maintain that all anarchist and revolutionary action should be publicised to a maximum degree. For example, for them there would be nothing strange if one were to publicise the lists of members of all the anarchist organisations (starting from the FAI, [Italian Anarchist Federation] these comrades write, precisely, the names of the members of this organisation).

On a purely abstract level there would be nothing strange about this. But in practice many objections to such an idea arise. First, why open the way to the repression? Second, if anarchists are tolerated today within a certain repressive perspective, tomorrow this could change for the worse, and the police would already find themselves with well drawn up lists in order to facilitate their task. Why should we help them in their job of policing? Of course, many comrades' names are already known, but many others are not and the police go to great lengths to find them out. Some innocent soul might ask themselves why they bother, given that the work of the movement—in the main part—takes place in the light of day. But that would be a stupid question. Accumulating data today could be useful to the repression of tomorrow.

can only see life in theoretical terms. They do not have to be men of letters or scholars (for the latter this would be quite normal), but could be any proletarian, an emarginated person who has grown up coming to blows in the streets. The search for a resolution through the subtlety of reason transforms itself into disorganic anxiety, a tumultuous desire to understand what invariably transforms itself into pure confusion thus lowering the primacy of the brain they want to hold on to at any cost. Such exasperation reduces the critical possibility to put order in their ideas, widening the individual's creative capacity but only in the pure, one could say wild, state, supplying images and judgement that are quite devoid of any organisational method that could make them utilizable. This person lives almost constantly in a kind of "trance", eats badly, relates badly to others. They become easily suspicious when not anxious to be "understood", and for this reason accumulate an incredible hotchpotch of contradictory thoughts with no guiding thread. The solution for getting out of the labyrinth would be action. But according to the model of polarisation we are looking at, this would have to be submitted to the dominion of the brain, to the "logic" of reason. In this way the action is killed, put off to infinity or lived badly because not "understood", not brought back to the pre-eminence of thought.

On the other hand endless doing, passing one's life away in things to be done. Today, tomorrow. Day after day. Perhaps waiting for a particular day that will put an end to this putting off to infinity. But in the meantime, no or almost no search for a moment's reflection that is not exclusively linked to things to be done. Devoting all one's time to doing kills, just like devoting it all to thinking does. The contradictory moment of the individual is not resolved by action as an end in itself. For the revolutionary things are even worse. The classic flattering that individuals develop to convince themselves of

ple, we require suitable means in order to understand and act, and that is not so simple. The question of means seems clear, but always leads to misunderstanding. The question of money, for example. It is obvious that if we do not have money we cannot do what we want. A revolutionary cannot ask for State financing to develop projects aimed at its destruction. They cannot both for ethical reasons and a logical one (that the State would not give it to them). Nor can they seriously believe that with small personal subscriptions they will be able to do everything they want (and consider necessary). Nor can they simply continue to complain about lack of money or resign themselves to the fact that some things just can't be done due to that lack. Even less can they take the stance of those who, being penniless, feel their conscience to be at rest and, stating they have no money, do not participate in the common effort but wait for others to do so in their place. Of course, it is clear that if a comrade does not have any money they are not held to pay for what they cannot afford. But have they really done everything they can to procure some for themselves? Or is there only one way to procure money: going begging for it, letting oneself be exploited by a boss? I don't think so.

In the arc of the possible ways of being, including personal tendencies and cultural acquisitions, two extreme kinds of behaviour polarise, each of which is limited and penalising. On the one hand there are those who accentuate the theoretical aspect, on the other, those who close themselves up in the practical one. These two poles hardly ever exist in the "pure state", but are often sufficiently accentuated as to become obstacles and impediments.

The great possibilities that theoretical study gives the revolutionary remain dead letters and become obstacles and elements of contradiction when exasperated to infinity. There are some who

The function of secrecy

After understanding that control is not just a repressive fact but is also, and often essentially, participatory, it is possible to evaluate the problem of secrecy differently.

Basically it is we ourselves who by "participating" could sanction definitive real control. If we refuse to collaborate, if we obstruct the creation of a ghetto culture with all possible means, a language for the exclusive use of those who are and will be excluded from the technological management of production, therefore of power, then real control will not be possible.

It is not so much the problem of considering today what margins the State conserves from so-called "not applied control", i.e. of the capacity it could employ—also preventively—but doesn't, so as to give the impression that at least there is an area that is devoid of control. In substance, this area might exist, it might not. It is social control as a whole that is not yet total. Even that which looms up before us—prisons for example—are still incomplete control. It follows that it is not a question of the extent of control, but of the quality of the control itself.

The function of secrecy in subversive behaviour could therefore be that of denying this participation, avoiding interiorising the values and language that the State is transmitting with the aim of perfecting control.

THE DILEMA OF ARMED STRUGGLE

In a climate of restructuring with hardly a space free from the sobbing of the penitent and the subtle jesuitry of the dissociated it seems absolutely essential to us to reflect critically again on the question of the armed clash.

We realise that we are alone in being against most manifestations of the problem. Alone against penitence. Alone against dissociation. Alone against the obtuseness of blind continuism. Alone against the silence that would like to talk but is waiting for a sign of recognition from the State. Alone against those who refuse armed struggle, considering it to be out of date, or want to put off its use (and therefore the relative organisational project) against the enemy to a hypothetical future of full revolutionary maturity.

Why? why such closure?

Apart from the idiots whom there is little point in talking to, there are still some who understand the choices they are making and declare themselves (and are) responsible for. It is precisely to them that we are addressing these words for reflection.

The first question, which it is necessary to discuss in depth, is that of the concept of “unity in the european combattant organisations”. This proposes the old question of the party under a new guise. Considering all the Leninist paraphernalia of “memory” and “transmission” to be no longer possible, and not seeing—at least in the short term—any operative outlet for the old concept of “armed party”, these structures are casting a fearful eye on the reality of the movement and the pulverised guerrilla that is to be found all over Europe, and are trying to translate this reality back into the language of the

The search to acquire these means is constant work which never ends. It is the revolutionary’s continual task to perfect these means and widen them to other fields.

Then there is a third thing, creativity. There can be no doubt that all these means would be useless and would become specialisation as an end in itself were they not to produce new experiences, continually producing modifications in the means themselves as a whole and the possibility to put them to use. And it is here that it becomes possible to grasp the great force of creativity, i.e. the fruit of all the preceding efforts. Logical processes become no more than a basic, unimportant element, whereas a whole, different, new one emerges: *i n t u i t i o n*.

So now the problem comes to be seen differently. Nothing is as it was before. Numerous connections and comparisons, inferences and deductions are made without our realising it. All the means in our possession now vibrate and come alive. Things of the past along with new understanding, old concepts that had not been understood, ideas and tensions, become clear. An incredible mixture, itself a creative event, which must be submitted to the discipline of method in order for us to produce something, limited if you like, but which is immediately perceivable. Unfortunately the destiny of creativity is for its immense initial explosive potential (which becomes something miserable in the absence of the basic means mentioned above) to be taken back to the realm of technique in the narrow sense of word, to become word, pages, figures, sounds, form or objects again. Otherwise, outside the scheme of this prison of communication, it would remain dispersive and abandoned, lost in an immense, fathomless sea.

And now one last thing, materiality. The capacity, that is, to grasp the real material foundations of what surrounds us. For exam-

ing diversity Beyond good, but also beyond evil, as someone once said.

They cannot wait for others to do what needs to be done. They cannot delegate to others what their conscience dictates to them. They cannot peacefully accept what others, itching to destroy what oppresses them like themselves, would do if only they decided to, if only they woke up from their torpor and from letting themselves be swindled. Away from the chatter and confusion.

So they must set to work, and work hard. Work to procure the means necessary to give some foundation to their convictions.

And here we come to the second thing: constancy. The strength to continue, persevere, insist, even when others are discouraged and everything seems difficult.

Only with constancy is it possible to procure the means one requires. The revolutionary needs c u l t u r a l means, i.e. analyses and basic common knowledge. But studies that seem far from revolutionary practice are also indispensable to action. Languages, economy, philosophy, mathematics, the natural sciences, chemistry, social science and so on. This knowledge should not be seen as sectarian specialisation, nor should it be dilettante exercises of an eccentric spirit nibbling here and there, desirous of knowledge but forever ignorant due to the failure to possess a method that allows it to learn. And then the technics: writing correctly, (and in a way that is able to reach one's objective), speaking to others (using all the techniques on the subject, which are not easy to learn and are very important), studying (this is also a technique), remembering (memory can also be improved, it does not have to be left to our more or less natural disposition), the manipulation of objects (which many consider a mysterious gift of nature but which instead is technique and can be learned and perfected) and others still.

old party idea. Of course, this is now taking a step backwards, camouflaged behind their need to oppose the growing monolithic strength of imperialism with supranational coordination (naturally only coordination). This tendency will also have poor results in our opinion. Not so much in the practical aspect of support or operative or logistic connections, as in the aspect of development and involvement. Comrades have no intention of getting involved in structures which have basically reduced themselves to the whimsical practice of trying to centralise the new forces that are available. Most of these comrades intend to do exactly the opposite: attack the realisations of State and capital, men of power and their servants, the enemy's interests and projects. But they want to do all this in small groups that are separate the one from the other, far from a common theoretical project or even any connection at the level of simple coordination.

The second innovation, which might seem unimportant, seems to be considerably so to us. It concerns the use of the name and logo of the old revolutionary structures, both in documents claiming actions and in theoretical elaborations. As we said some time ago, these names are no longer credible. Not in the sense that they have been invented, but in the way they are used, comrades who use them not necessarily belonging to the under-signed organisation in question. Often the contact is purely external, occasionally a simple acceptance of armed struggle and the objective to be struck. Nothing else. This has been admitted in an interview with "Action Directe". It seems to us to be of great importance, precisely because we consider the pulverisation of armed structures into many increasingly small and more direct initiatives that are easily comprehensible and reproducible, to be of primary importance today. And, it seems, the "improper" use of certain names is done almost to excess, consequence of a scarce understanding of the

problem in relation to armed action and attack on the State and capital on the one hand, and the use of the media to become the vehicle for the spreading of action on the other. The error therefore lies in the hope of using the channels of information by making reference to a signature which it is thought should speak for itself. Unfortunately a lot still needs to be said about the real function of the media and the way they deform news according to the logic of power, consigning only what they want to the consumer, not what in effect whoever carried out the action wanted to communicate. The use of a name does not change the situation, in fact at times it makes it worse. It transmits a content that often goes beyond the intentions that motivated the action, projecting it into the absolutely fictitious panorama of a process of collective intimidation that is precisely at the root of mass consensus. For us it seems possible to grasp the third aspect in the critique of the traditional concept of “taking power”. It has not been gone into well yet, but it is still something. The “winter Palace” is more and more a far off memory. History does not necessarily repeat itself in the same way. Changes are radical and concern the profound upturning of reality. Perhaps when seen in the abstract, errors and certainties of the past seem fairly similar. But as soon as we move away from theoretical models and emerge ourselves in daily reality we are forced to admit that change reigns sovereign and that it is necessary to adapt our methods to the new conditions. That seems clear even to those who have been educated at the Leninist school and the harshness of the nevertheless important and indispensable propaganda and theoretical clarification. In such a perspective the distance that separates us from combattant organisations is enormous. But the distance that separates us from the great number of comrades who are operating against the State and capital regardless of the problem of recognising oneself in this or that organisation is not so great, we hope.

this transformation to come about it is necessary for the attack to be accompanied by a critical examination of the enemy’s ideas, ideas that are part of its repressive and oppressive action.

But does this reciprocal conversion of the practical into theoretical and the theoretical into practical come about as something that can be imposed artificially? For example, in the sense of carrying out an action, then printing a fine document claiming it. The ideas of the enemy are not criticised or gone into in this way. They are crystallised within the ideological process that are massively in opposition to the ideas of the attacker, so transferred into something that is quite ideological. Few things are as hateful to me as this way of proceeding.

The place for the c o n v e r s i o n of theory into practice and vice versa, is the p r o j e c t. It is the project as an articulated whole that gives practical action a different significance and critique of the ideas of the enemy.

It derives from this that the work of the revolutionary is essentially the elaboration and realisation of a project.

But before discovering what a r e v o l u t i o n a r y p r o j e e t might be, it is necessary to agree as to what the revolutionary must possess in order to be able to elaborate this project.

First of all courage. Not the banal courage of the physical clash and attack on enemy trenches, but the more difficult one, the courage of one’s ideas. Once you think in a certain way, once you see things and people, the world and its affairs, in a certain way, you m u s t have the courage to go through with it without compromise or half measures, without pity or illusion. To stop half way would be a crime or, if you like, is absolutely normal. But the revolutionary is not a “normal” person. They must go beyond. Beyond normality, but also beyond exceptionally, which is an aristocratic way of consider-

What do we mean by attack? Things are solid. Men defend themselves, take measures. And the choice of means for the attack is also prey to confusion.

We can (or rather must) attack with ideas, opposing critique to critique, logic to logic, analysis to analysis. But that would be a pointless exercise if it were to come about in isolation, cut off from direct intervention concerning the things and men of the State (and capital of course). So, in relation to what we said earlier, attack not only with ideas but also with arms. I see no other way out. To limit oneself to an ideological duel would merely increase the enemy's strength.

So, theoretical examination parallel to and at the same time as practical attack.

Moreover, it is precisely in the attack that theory transforms itself and practice expresses its theoretical foundations. To limit oneself to theory would be to remain in the field of idealism typical of the bourgeois philosophy that has been feeding the coffers of the dominant class for hundreds of years, as well as the lagers of the experimenters of both Right and Left. It makes no difference if this disguises itself in historical materialism, it is still a question of the old phagocyte idealism. Libertarian materialism must necessarily overcome the separation between idea and fact. If you identify the enemy you must strike, and strike adequately. Not so much in the sense of an optimal level of specific destruction, as that of the general situation that constitutes the enemy's defence, survival and increased dangerousness.

If you strike it is necessary to destroy part of their structure, thereby making their functioning as a whole more difficult. All this, if considered in isolation, runs the risk of seeming insignificant. It does not manage, that is, to convert itself into something real. For

ACCIDENTS ALONG THE WAY

An essential condition of the revolutionary struggle is the capacity for self-criticism. Not in the sense of thumping one's chest with a "mea culpa", but by adapting one's analyses to the changing conditions of the class clash.

Revolutionary Marxists do not possess this capacity of course. Not because they are more stupid than others but simply because their theory of dialectics and scientific socialism (based on the intellectual terrorism of the founder of their "church") prevent them.

To tell the truth, in the recent past they have also shown themselves to be incapable of adapting their analyses (not only those in the course of development but even to changes that have already taken place) leading to tragic consequences such as analytical obtuseness and the uselessness of propagandistic efforts and armed attacks.

At the time—around the beginning of the sixties—the group of comrades who were to give life to the review "*Anarchismo*" thought that these weaknesses, although innate in Marxist thought could, if not immediately, at least within a reasonable space of time be penalised by the real movement, so there was a possibility that "accidents along the way" could emerge that were capable of not so much pushing Marxists out of their "churches" as convincing many sincere comrades of another possible concept of struggle—the libertarian one—that had remained in the shadows, only having been gone into in theory.

Such a hope was to grow when anarchists entered the quick of the struggles a little, bringing about theoretical analyses and practical realisations that might have become, if not a point of reference—

given also the unavoidable errors and contradictions in similar human enterprises—at least an area of confrontation for the comrades in good faith (certainly not for the old marpioni with the seeds of the party in their veins).

It is not up to us to analyse the reasons for the delay in such a process, just as it is not up to us to analyse the reasons for the giving in, the abjuration, the dissociation that took place after those delays, or even consider whether the two things can be related. At a certain moment, with the precipitation of events, the idea of “accidents along the way” came to be radically less probable, but not for this have we given up.

Now, looking at some of the theoretical elaboration of groups that are carrying on armed struggle in Europe, with great difficulty we can say a few things that are of some comfort to us. Even if they do not make us think immediately of an accident along the way, at least they leave some hope for the future. Some, when they read this will say it is only a question of self-criticism by the Marxists for their own exclusive use and consumption, and that might be so, but they should remember our old idea of accidents along the way never considered the possibility of a change in the positions of the Marxist militants as such to be particularly likely, but rather the possibility of a different turning in that vast area of comrades who have no crystallised ideological preclusions.

So, it is in this sense that we ask you to reflect on the following considerations of various documents in circulation today.

a) It is not a question of a crisis in militancy or a series of individual giving in that is causing the present situation (including dissociation) so much as the combination of individual, personal elements with a series of objective ones that are to be found in the changed conditions of the class clash.

date, abstract, ideological slogans. Anyone who persists in seeing the enemy inside the uniform, behind the factory, at the ministry, school, the church, etc., is considered suspect. There is a desire to substitute harsh reality with abstract relations and relativity. So the State ends up becoming a way of seeing things and men, with the result that, being an idea, it cannot be fought. The attempt to fight it in abstract in the hope that its material reality, men and institutions will precipitate into the abyss of logical contradictions, is a tragic illusion. This is what usually happens at times like this when there is a lull both in the struggle and in proposals for action.

No one with any self respect would admit to the State's having any positive function. Hence the logical conclusion that it has a negative one, i.e. that it damages some to the benefit of others. But the State is not simply the ‘idea State’, it is also the “thing State”, and this “thing” is composed of the policeman and the police station, the minister and the ministry (including the building where the ministry has its offices), the priest and the church (including the actual place where the cult of lies and swindling takes place), the banker and the bank, the speculator and his offices, right down to the individual spy and his more or less comfortable flat in the suburbs. Either the State is this articulated whole or it is nothing, a mere abstraction, a theoretical model which it would be absolutely impossible to attack and defeat.

Of course, the State also exists within ourselves and others. It is also therefore *i d e a*. But this being an idea is subordinate to the physical places and persons that realise it. An attack on the idea of the State (including that which we harbour within ourselves, often without realising it) is only possible if we attack it physically in the destructive sense, in its historical realisation standing before us in flesh and blood.

THE WORK OF THE REVOLUTIONARY

It is not easy to grasp the various aspects of revolutionary activity. It is even more difficult to grasp everything in terms of a complex project that has its own intrinsic logic and operative articulation.

That is what I mean by revolutionary work.

We all, or nearly all, agree as to who the enemy is. In the vagueness of the definition we include elements from our own experience (joy and suffering), our social situation, our culture. Everyone is convinced that they know all that is required to draw up a map of enemy territory and identify objectives and responsibilities.

Times change of course, but we don't take any notice. We make the necessary modifications and carry on.

Obscure in our way of proceeding, our surroundings also obscure, we light our path with the miserable candle of ideology and stride ahead.

The tragic fact is that things around us change, and often rapidly. The terms of the class clash are constantly widening and narrowing in a contradictory situation. They reveal themselves one day only to conceal themselves the next as the certainties of yesterday precipitate into the darkness of the present.

Whoever maintains a constant though not immobile pole is not accepted for what they are: honest navigators in the sea of class confusion, but are often taken to be stubborn chanters of out of

This leads us to recognise that the bosses are capable of adjusting beyond the schema of "crisis" that classical Marxist analysis depicts.

b) One of the greatest mistakes made by the revolutionary movement of the 70s was the formulation that claimed to take the struggle of the third world to the metropoli of Europe. From that there derived an exclusively "political" analysis of the struggle.

c) Another element of the delay in the development of the struggles in relationship to capital's capacity to recuperate can be seen in the claimed "centrality" of the worker today.

The fact is that the capitalists have been quicker to dismantle their theoretical support. This has resulted in analytical change of position and difficulty in linking up with the real struggles of the exploited, because they are imprisoned in a model that has been completely wiped out by the new conditions of production.

d) The clamorous illusion of the party as the "conscience" of the class, predisposed to taking over power and managing it in a revolutionary fashion.

The critique of the party is one of the most intriguing elements of these analyses today and should interest many comrades, for their own personal maturity, not for simply glossing over the old Marxist theses. In fact, here we are not faced with a critique of let us say democratic centralism, but of the party as a whole, concluding with the thesis that the party structure is not necessary for setting out for the revolutionary struggle.

e) The critique made by the comrades of "Autonomia Operaia", although trying to get away from the area of the factory, thereby affirming the possibility of autonomous action of the revolutionary movement, have also become a crystallisation of the process of reappropriation of wealth and the consequent acceptance of commodity

logic. A situation that took the movement back as far as the process of capitalist development was concerned in that it set about precisely to deny validity to commodity.

Here again the position seems to have changed a great deal in our opinion. A whole world based on the simple primitive logic of needs is disappearing in the face of a reality where rebellion no longer necessarily starts off from situations of necessity.

f) The multinationals are changing and the production of value is transferring from the factory to finance. Capitalism is changing and in the near future it will almost completely replace its economic base with a simple organisational one. No longer investments of capital but investments of ideas.

A deepening of capitalist analyses beyond the classic schemes of social formulae seen by Marx. This is considerable if we bear in mind the particular viscosity of the intellectual world in which the Marxists find themselves operating.

g) In this situation a revolutionary perspective basing itself on the simple conquest of power intended as the substitution, even violent, of a leadership that holds the present power becomes unacceptable.

The new concept of destruction is interesting because it does not seem to be subordinate to that of considering the present level of knowledge and accumulation as elements to be used “after” the revolutionary event. These comrades are beginning to realise that the present development of capital has brought about conditions that cannot be put to use after the revolution. It will be necessary to destroy if not everything, nearly everything.

h) The guide-line of attack must be set up against Production against Communication and against War.

The choice of these three objectives is in harmony with the critical modifications seen before. It should be noted that the “politi-

cal” objective in the strict sense has disappeared, whereas the objective of “communication”, is no longer seen in the traditional sense of “fourth power”, i.e. the media, but principally—if not exclusively—in the sense of the informatisation of the new post-industrial society. Production has been clarified to some extent: no longer work of penetration (and party propaganda) in the factories, but a task of destruction. Finally, “war” is no longer seen as a question of the repressive part of capital, but principally that it is taking on a more and more a productive role and integration into the capitalist system.