

Every generation,  
Western  
civilization is  
invaded by

**The**  
**Barbarians—**

**Anarcho-Tourist Review**  
1/2014

we call them  
children.

## **The Barbarian I/2014**

*καὶ ταῦτα ἔπραξα βάρβαρος ὦν καὶ ἀπαιδευτος  
παιδείας τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς*

*And I did this, though I am a Barbarian and  
uneducated in Greek culture*

- Lucian of Samosata

The Barbarian Review is a collection of thoughts written down by various foreign people in Athens: a few persons passing through a brief period of time, in a very special city.

It is no surprise that we have chosen to write in English, to better communicate the experience we have of being in, but not of, the Greek radical milieu, and it is to be hoped that this will be as rewarding for the Greek and non-Greek to read, as it has been for us to collect and write down our views.

Cover: Quotation from Hannah Arendt

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## Foreword



Prompted by various developments, and having something of a breathing space in time, we felt ourselves compelled to devote an issue to open-ended self-reflections concerning the Anarchist movement. Not only as participants who have some experiences to share, but also as those who represent the hopes of generally pacified Northern Europe. Not as those who have the answers, but as those beginning to pose the questions, evidently begged by the present time. This stance of ours is where the world finds itself, in a certain way, as quite unexpectedly riots have been spreading everywhere in the past few years, contrary to all official denials and expectations.

For example, the struggle in Burgos, Spain against a proposed parking lot and the increasing fight against the airport in Nantes, France. In Athens the return of Greece to international bond markets on the dubious strength of a fictitious budget surplus was met with a car bomb at the Central Bank office. Also as an act we saluted in the last issue, the riots against the World Cup in Brazil have continued in spite of the arrogant imposition of the social-democrat government. As we theorized in our first issue, the new struggles concern communities struggling against the economy as such, not for its management under new owners.

And in the previous issue we noted how deaths make for riots, not by accident, but because the world itself is becoming concerned with the meaning of life. So as Berkin Elvan passed away, victim of police violence, Istanbul saw more riots to commemorate just this meaning, which is now completely linked with revolution. And as we write, further riots are spreading in Turkey because of the deaths of miners. Finding ourselves in the midst of these historic events, we have to begin to think anew the old terms and ideas. So here we find ourselves speaking of tactics and ethics, identity and the movement.

After all, the world seems to demand such an advance in the realm of theory. A moribund Marxism has no chance of reviving itself, other than as yet another iteration of social-democracy that no one believes in any longer—this besides the governmental Marxism of China that now is officially the leader of the global economy. A dying American Empire is openly decaying into the Protestant-Nazism at the heart of this entire odious project, as we theorized last issue and as is seen quite openly in the Ukraine. The world itself seems to have no more real base or project to fulfil since the economic views of Liberalism can't speak to the depth of human meaning, and at any rate, everything is crumbling away so quickly from the spurious American End of History. In this time Greek Anarchy can speak to what it has of the universal and become something world-historic. These are the times we inhabit, the waning of a world, and the expectation of something epochal to pass.

*The Barbarians*

## Tactics

There has been a noticeable change on the streets of Greece in the last few years. The momentum of large protests which built from December 2008 through 2010 and 2011 bursting out into the open on February 12th 2012 has disappeared, for the moment at least. The feelings of initiative and possibility are no longer present in most demonstrations in Athens. Instead, initiative and control are often in the hands of the police. Demonstrations of various types seem ineffective and meaningless. Recently, only the wilder unplanned moments, such as those days in September after the murder of Pavlos Fyssas, recall some of the previous spirit.

There are many reasons why this could be. It is a fact that there have been fewer large scale demonstrations in recent years. Of course when in 2008-2012 demonstrations numbered 100-200,000 people the situation was different than in 2012-2014 when demonstrations rarely pass 10-15,000 at most. This itself could be due to a drop in morale, despair, or a sign of a population tired of the visibly ineffective forms of opposition offered by the old 'left'. Whilst these are important factors, another important part is the role of the police and a change in their tactics.

The drive for Greece to become more like its Northern European neighbours is also being carried out in the police force. From the perspective of Northern Europe where the police force often has, and exercises, complete control on the streets, the situation in Greece, with frequent riots and violent demonstrations, seems somewhat odd. In recent years the Greek force has become much more organised in its approach to protests. This, coupled with a license to deal with protesters much more harshly, is changing the situation on the Greek streets.

February 12th 2012: The unelected Papademos government prepares to put another set of austerity measures to the vote. A three day General Strike is called, leading up to the vote on the measures in parliament. As the vote is passed, the demonstration outside turns into a riot. All around the centre of Athens (and other cities) banks, shops and everything is burned. Rather than being confined to a small area, as before, the destruction in Athens is the most widespread and the most extensive of the anti-austerity riots.

If we look at a few examples in recent years we can see a shift in tactics. My first example is the General Strike of 26th September 2012, the first large demonstration after the usual summer lull and the May/June elections of that year. As usual, the crowd was roughly 100,000 and proceeded as normal to Syntagma Square. Once the main body of the demonstration reached Syntagma and clashes started, the MAT launched



a series of attacks which broke up the large body of the demonstration and cleared the square quickly. The police then continued to attack along Panepistimio street, not allowing any substantial blocs to reform. This was followed up by DIAS attacks on Omonia Square which forced any remaining people to flee to the metro. The result was that the first major demonstration since February 12th was cleared and dispersed in little over half an hour.

The police deployment was such that they were able to cut the body of the demonstration into smaller pieces and not allow it to stay in Syntagma Square. In addition, and in contrast to previous days, no time or space was given for scattered groups to reform (the current routine of the forced closure of metro stations in the area perhaps plays a part here).

Other large scale demonstrations have followed a similar pattern, with the heavy rain being an additional factor in the November 6th-7th 2012 mobilisations. By late 2013 the General Strike demonstrations had become simple marches from one point to another with police control of Syntagma Square rarely contested. We have gone from a situation where large General Strike demonstrations turned into open and participatory riots to them simply being dispiriting A to B marches.

**MAT:** The Greek police riot units. Often heavily armoured with leg and arm guards, helmets, rectangular shields and heavy boots. In equipment they distinctly resemble ancient Roman soldiers.

**DIAS and DELTA:** Mobile units on motorbikes. Armoured like the MAT but without the shields, they sit two to a bike. Despite the ridiculous sight of two guys weighed down with armour and weapons hugging each other on an overburdened bike, they are ruthless thugs.

If we skip forward to late 2013 on November 17th we saw the police contain and shepherd the traditional march throughout its length. The police remained in constant contact with the demonstration, not allowing any space or time away from the fixed route. Once people reached Exarchia

they were given a taste of the new tactical approach of the police. Within minutes of minor clashes starting the police invaded the neighbourhood with both MAT and DIAS units rampaging around. As we would see again less than a month later the days of standing off and trading tear gas for stones are gone.

The clearest example of the current situation so far was 6th December 2013. Early in the day we saw the first example of kettling in Greece when hundreds of people were arbitrarily surrounded by lines of MAT on the steps of the Propyleia. This incident with its adoption of a new tactic would seem to suggest that the Greek police forces are implementing new techniques learned via inter-European training. Later in the evening after the main demonstration finished and people gathered in the centre of Exarchia the police launched a concentrated and continuous attack throughout the night.

As with November 17th there were none of the previous attempts at minimal restraint by the police. The neighbourhood was surrounded by lines of MAT with DIAS units circling around. The main attack cleared people from the central square early on and then for the next hours any attempt to concentrate in a group met with swift attacks. I believe what we saw on November 17th and December 6th was something different from the traditional police tactic of containment. In previous years it seemed the police were happy to allow people to stay in Exarchia and let them riot for sometime before eventually closing things down. Now in addition to the traditional containment, an element of suppression has been added. No longer are skirmishes and clashes allowed to run on; they are stamped out immediately with exemplary force.

**Kettling:** A police tactic used in several countries. The idea is to surround an uncooperative group of people with several lines of police. Once the police lines are in place the people surrounded will be contained, often for many hours, in a state of de facto arrest. Sometimes the police will seek to arrest all within the kettle and other times just release people a few at a time.

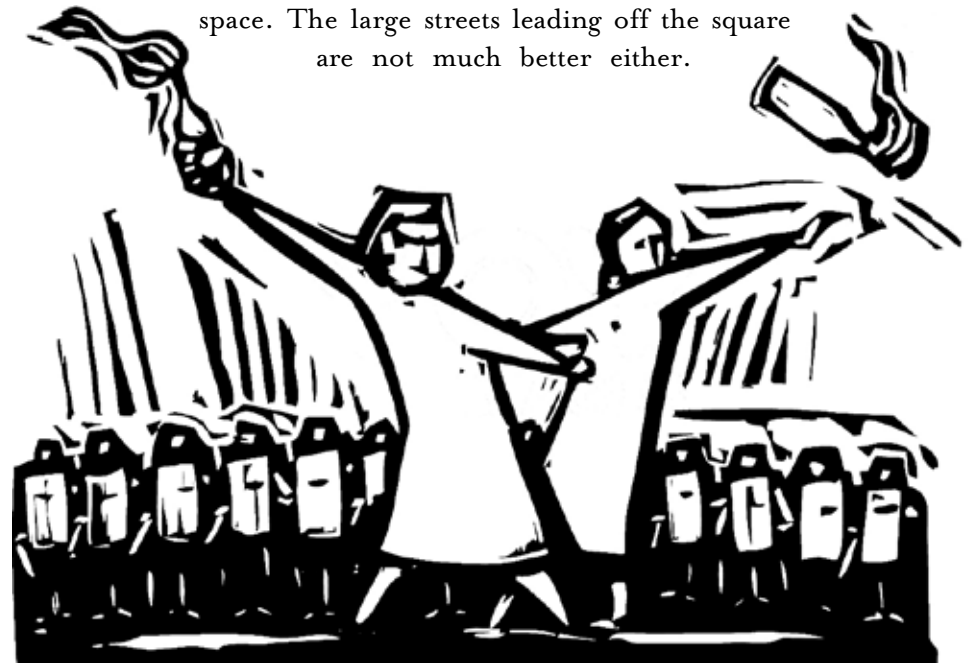
We have also recently seen an increase in the banning of protests. Several times now the government has banned demonstrations at certain times and places. Citing security reasons large parts of the city centres are sealed off by riot police. Recent examples include the Ecofin protest and the second visit of Angela Merkel in April 2014. On both occasions Syntagma was completely closed off by riot police as demonstrations were banned. Protests still went ahead but could do nothing more than crawl down one street before turning around and going home when the wall of cops was reached.

From these examples and more we can see that police tactics have changed since 2012. They seek much more to contain and neutralise demonstrations and, when deemed necessary, crush any further resistance. If Greece is to become more like Northern Europe then perhaps it is worthwhile for us to look at how people there (and elsewhere) respond to an organised police force at demonstrations. First, I'd like to look at what could be done in and around demonstrations. Later, I'll move on to ideas outside of the traditional demonstration march.

We have allowed demonstrations to fall into a familiar pattern in the last few years with most following a set route (General Strikes: assembly at Mouseio, down Stadiou through Syntagma back up Panepistimio and home by 3:30). This predictability firstly makes the demonstrations boring verging on pointless and second makes it easy for the police to control the situation. By keeping demonstrations on set routes it limits the disruption caused and reduces the visibility of the struggle. The police 'win' a situation when normality returns. We 'win' by keeping a resisting presence and space. To do this we need some more spontaneity and to include as much of the city as possible in actions.

We could start to do this before demonstrations begin. A variety of assembly points spread across the centre of the city instead of the one anarchist/anti-authoritarian gathering point would include more of the city and spread police resources. Each gathering point would, however, have to be organised well enough to assemble sufficient people to deter preventative arrests. From these various points feeder marches can then head into the city centre or indeed anywhere else. In this way the same number of people would disrupt a larger part of the city and come into contact with more people.

Another question is the one of destination. There is obvious logic in heading to Syntagma Square. It is a large open space which allows many thousands of people to be in one place and of course the parliament looms above. However, as a destination/battlefield the open spaces of Syntagma are a major disadvantage. The police are now very efficient at controlling and removing people from the square. Besides, tear gas makes it difficult to remain in one place and with the MAT being a heavily armed organised force it will always have the advantage when facing disorganised numbers in an open space. The large streets leading off the square are not much better either.



The reason Haussman cut large open streets through Paris still applies. If we were to seek a way to keep demonstrations from effectively ending at Syntagma we just need to stop thinking of the parliament as a destination.

Instead of seeing Syntagma as the end point there are plenty of other nearby destinations: Ermou street, one of the busiest commercial areas in the city, Plaka/Monastiraki in the heart of Athens, the idyllic haven for the economically vital tourists, or even rich and shiny Kolonaki. All are a short walk from Syntagma. Breaking off from the old familiar route in any of these directions would create a different situation. In addition, all these areas are made up mainly of small narrow streets which would be more advantageous than the open spaces of Syntagma and Panepistimio.

The other end point of demonstrations, Exarchia, also needs some consideration. Going to Exarchia, whether with the conscious idea of rioting or not, makes some sense but also has its problems. It is a neighbourhood of small streets which lead out to various parts of the city and is a kind of geographical hub for the movement in Athens. The drawback is that we can easily become trapped in Exarchia and cut off from the rest of the city as we saw on December 6th. Staying or retreating to one area can put us under siege, a siege we often walk into. Another way to think about this is to say that we should be offering something new and different to society. A riot in Exarchia is by now just another Greek tradition. As with all traditions it is one which gives us a sense of who we are but also holds us back at the same time.

In considering the location of demonstrations we should also think about our movements as the march is under way. In the UK protest blocs routinely change direction and move randomly as opportunity dictates in order to avoid the

police. This started as a tactical response to kettling. In order to avoid being surrounded and immobilised, protesters leave the march route as soon as the police are seen to be forming a line in order to kettle those present. If the aim is merely to avoid the police, not so much organisation is needed so long as the idea is there. If a group has a specific destination or target in mind then these marches require some planning so that the best route can be taken to get where you want.

On March 26th 2011 a large anti-austerity demonstration was held in London. The radical blocs kept moving constantly to avoid being kettled and to break out of the set route for the demonstration. Whilst blocs kept moving they reconvened at one location at a set time in order to support a symbolic occupation organised by the UK Uncut activist group along Oxford Street. The actual target of the occupation was unknown to the majority in the blocs which meant it managed to remain secret from police. However, the simple instruction to gather at Oxford Street at a set time was enough for the symbolic action to go ahead with some support.

The effect of this could be seen during the 2010-11 student protests in the UK. Large blocs evaded the police who were slow to respond to fast moving groups. The result was a series of demonstrations which briefly enlivened the British scene. For the more militant minded this practice offers the possibility of moving away from police concentrations to find less defended areas to target. A group can then inflict whatever damage possible on targets before quickly moving off somewhere else.

Of course, there are differences with the Greek situation. British police are often not so casually and routinely aggressive as their Greek counterparts. During 2010-11 British police would wait for an opportunity to encircle protesters again once they



had slipped through the net, whereas the MAT would likely just attack. Despite the traditional attachment to horse cavalry the British forces don't have the mobility offered by DIAS. So the response would be different in Greece, but this does not mean it could not work. There is, perhaps also a further difference in the attitude of those protesting. For many, a large part of the British practice is to avoid the police and continue with whatever protest or action is planned. Often in Greece a confrontation with the police seems to be the main objective.

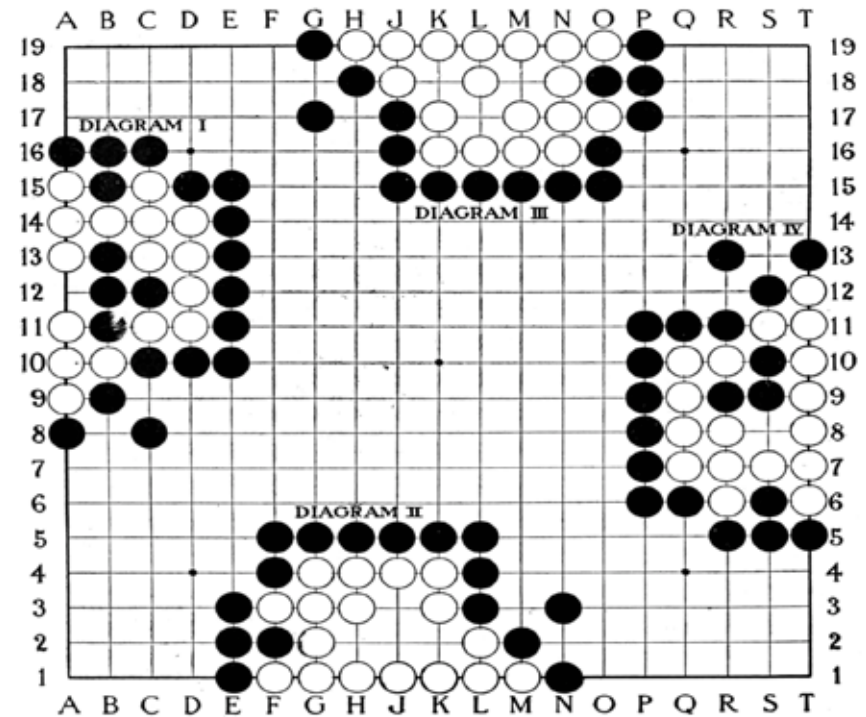
What I've talked about here isn't really anything new. After all, February 12th 2012 was significant because the events were spread widely over the centre of Athens, thus diverting police attention in several directions at once. All we need to think of is ways to create this spread of events on a regular basis.

Carrying out the actions mentioned above and those to follow could be made much easier if people increasingly organise on the basis of affinity groups. Such groups are based on a small number of people with similar attitudes and abilities who can plan and carry out actions on their own. Often based on friendship circles or people who spend a large amount of time together affinity groups at best can be secure, creative and resilient.

A bloc of several hundred people who follow a banner as a single mass or organisation are immobile and limited, as everyone has to follow the same plan even if they are unaware what that is. In contrast, affinity groups, whilst still taking part in a large bloc, retain their own autonomy. The same number of people organised into affinity groups would be capable of much more than a mass of individuals. From a bloc, affinity groups could spread out to attack targets of opportunity or

carry out a multitude of small-scale actions. From the point of view of defence, affinity groups have an advantage. A large bloc can get scattered in different directions by police attacks and if people are unable to regather again in a mass the bloc is destroyed. Affinity groups allow people to stay together as a meaningful unit with its own plans which they can either still carry out or retreat in safety.

Breaking with the idea of staying on the traditional demonstration routes and changing the organisation of blocs would make the police's attempts at control and containment more difficult. There are also other ideas beyond the organisation of demonstrations which may be of some use to us in the current situation.



At the end of 2013 and start of 2014 Golden Dawn held two large rallies in the centre of Athens. On both occasions counter-demos were called but both were ineffective. On February 1st the police cleared anti-fascists from Syntagma Square to allow Golden Dawn to march unopposed. The previous month a number of counter-demos were unable to do anything to disrupt another Golden Dawn Syntagma rally. Those gathered in Monastiraki were able to do nothing more than stand around in the drizzle occasionally seizing on a passing 'fascist', cop or even each other.

These counter-demos followed a similar pattern to that seen in other countries. Whilst the gatherings are important to create an anti-fascist presence, a public demonstration will not be able to directly confront fascism. Once they gather, fascists and their supporters will be under police protection. However, they must first get to their rally point. Focusing attention on places where groups gather or use transport has been effective in other countries. In 2010 around 12,000 people blockaded the largest gathering of European Neo-Nazis in Dresden. The train station used to arrive in the city was the point blockaded, not the rally site itself. Despite police attempts to protect the Neo-Nazi march it was eventually called off.



It should also be noted that this action was the result of an alliance of groups opposed to the march and was carried out with a diversity of tactics.

Whilst speaking of anti-fascist activities we should highlight a positive development of the kind we are talking about here. A practical action we have seen in recent years is the Antifa Motoporeias—large motorbike patrols which periodically sweep through areas of fascist activity. The Motoporeias answer a real direct need of the neighbourhoods in which they are active and provide a challenge to the fascist/police dominance on the streets. This goes beyond a demonstration which aims at gathering public support and moves instead to provide support to the public.

One positive thing of even the most boring protest march is that the streets it passes are closed, bringing about a little economic disruption. We should look to expand on this. Blocking roads and communication in urban centres would have an economic impact and break the circulation of normality. As well as being a tactic which offers a direct attack on capital in a way which a demonstration does not, blockades can also be used against specific targets. At times when the target of a demonstration will be heavily defended, a meeting of EU ministers, EU leader visit or fascist march, the best time to disrupt the target is at a distance from its final destination.

If we look at blockades as a tactic, in Greece we have the example of Keratea and Skouries, and elsewhere there were the Piqueteros of Argentina. Using wood, tyres, fuel, or anything else, people blocked major roads and national highways throughout Argentina. Once the roads were blocked the space could be used for setting up mobile kitchens or just general demonstrating. As they themselves said:

“We see that the way capitalism operates is through the circulation of goods. Obstructing the highways is the way to hurt capitalism the most.”

Many of those manning the blockades were often unemployed. With no job to strike from they found their own way to hit capitalism. In one widespread example in August 2001, over 300 highways were blocked by around 100,000 people. Incidentally 100,000 is a normal figure for those taking part in General Strike demonstrations in Athens. One thing to note is that the Piqueteros were able to operate because they had some local support. The roads they blocked were often in or close to poor neighbourhoods which made the police reluctant to intervene in full force lest they stir a reaction from the sympathetic inhabitants nearby. Should there not be similar areas of Greece for this kind of action, perhaps it could be tried at a large demo where there will be a crowd of sympathetic people. Holding roads and preventing the smooth flow through the city would do more harm to capital than going for a walk and shouting at an old building.

Another example to bring in here is the 'Schottern' tactic used in Germany. Schottern involves removing the stones from under the railway lines to prevent it being used. The Castor Schottern event in 2010 involved groups of people engaging in the tactic whilst others, both activists and locals, organised other blockades and protests along a railway leading to a nuclear waste facility. Affinity groups went along the lines removing the stones and disrupting the train. Partly because they were dispersed over a wide area and with the presence of supporting protests, people were able to delay a nuclear waste transport for 24 hours despite the presence of 16,000 police.

Schottern: A new tactic used at blockades and protests against the transport of nuclear waste. Schotter (noun) are the small ballast stones beneath railway lines. Schottern (verb) is the act of removing the stones to render the railway unusable. It requires a lot of time and a special train to repair the lines after the stones have been removed. Often the railway lines themselves have to be replaced as they have been broken or bent.

It is also worth noting that in the modern world communication and movement are often not just physical. The economy also needs to maintain its electronic flows. TV and radio signals, phone and computer networks. These are some of the modern roads of capital and whilst they can't be seen, they have physical parts which can be sabotaged and disrupted. The same goes for anything online. As we have seen many times in recent years, denial of service and hacking can be forms of sabotage in the digital world.

What I have been driving at here is the idea that we should think away from the controlled protest for our actions. Small groups of people acting quickly with the element of surprise can often achieve more than thousands on a public protest. For example a few days after thousands of people spent the night being attacked and chased on 6th December, a few dozen people got together unannounced and launched an attack on the Exarchia police station before disappearing. A small group attacking spontaneously were able to do more than the thousands who gathered days before.

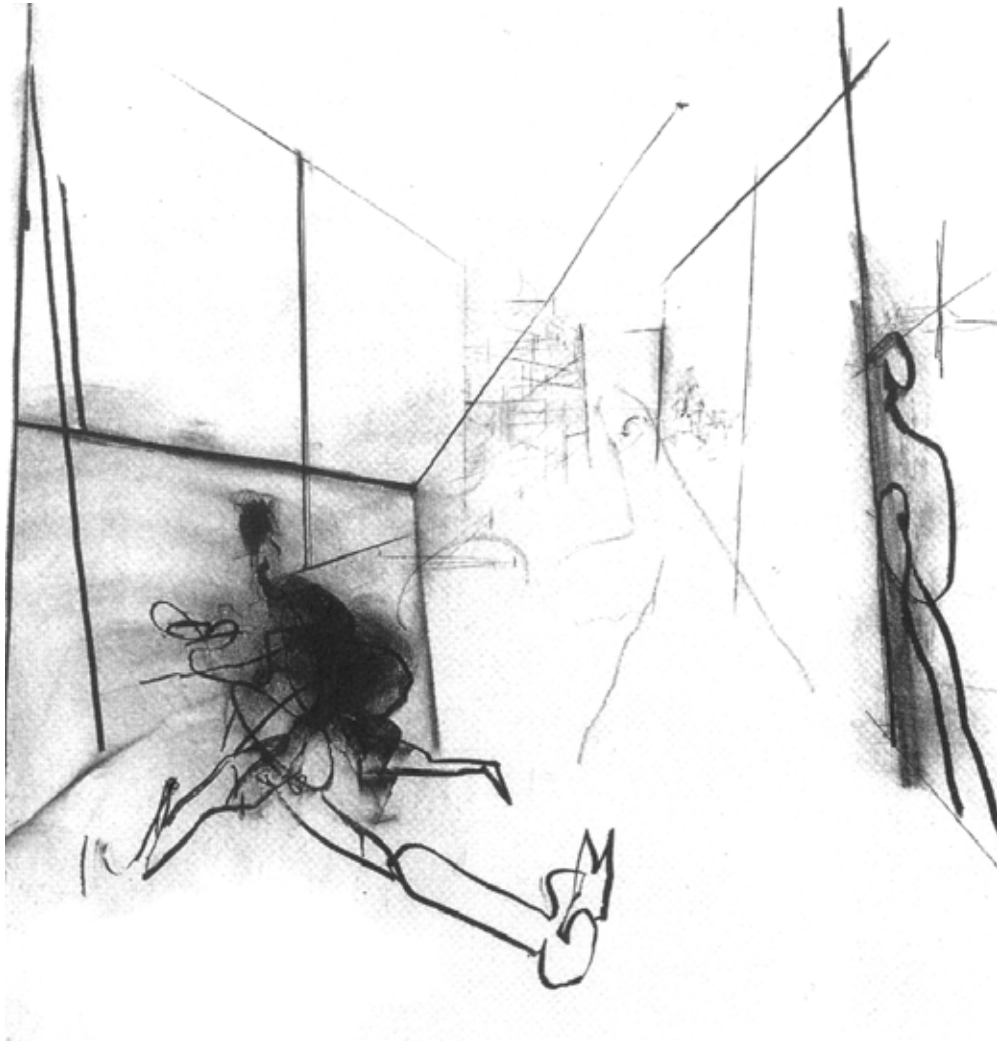


Of course this kind of thing happens all the time already. Another notable example from Greece are the supermarket expropriations. One such recent act in Athens saw a group of people enter a supermarket, take some food and supplies and give them to local people in need. Such small actions show the utility of affinity-group style organising. An increase in such organising could lead to a multiplying of small scale but constant actions. If people saw the urban environment as a constant site of attack and protest there is little police forces could do to control that.

To face increasing control and regulation we need spontaneity and a break with some of the traditional forms of protest. People within the anarchist movement do not expect that public demonstrations will change the world. Since a demonstration is an act of asking for something, they are indirect actions which still recognise the state. The anarchist tradition is to act for ourselves through direct action. Whilst demonstrations retain an importance as public performance, we are in danger of becoming a passive part in these performances.

When speaking to people about the future in Greece the most common thing to hear is 'we will wait and see what happens'. This state of waiting seems to pervade much of life in Greece these past years. It has also seeped into the anarchist movement. It's high time this period of waiting is brought to a close. The old 'left' with its symbolic (and shambolic) General Strikes and tired dead end parliamentary parties has gone as far as it can. To break the current deadlock people need to move beyond old constraints. The state knows this, hence the police's new efforts at organisation and control. An active and creative Anarchism with its tradition of direct action would be a new element in the mix and open new possibilities. However, should we continue to wait, the world will change around us, we will not be changing it.





## Two days for them Selves

This is exactly the same peaceful, early summer-morning mood as there has been the previous two days, from detail to detail, the same fresh green on the lemon leaves blinking in the sunlight, the same little breeze that waves the cloths on some of the backyards' balconies.

But nevertheless, today everything is different concerning the profound modus of how they live this day, the deep anatomical structure of the experience of this day, the nature of ownership over it, it is not theirs today, this day is taken out of their hands, of their phantasy, of their lust.

Two days in which the wheel was turning more slowly, and quietness, becoming deeper and embarrassing, finally cried out for being quickly filled with new celebrational, restless, mind-numbing noises. Too frightened to be reminded of these days' irreplaceability, their owners prefer to turn them into trash. Playing hide and seek with the total substitutability of their own existence. A relief almost as the big wheel is taking over again. And fills them up with pleasures as their asthmatic lust is not nurtured anymore and dies out. Long ago lust for life was exercised out of their body. They cannot remember how it felt.

Being cut off from their lust they have identity in order to get access to existence in this wheel that is called life. Identity check at every little threshold. What about your identity, for mind's sake? Dress code for empty puppets. In the theatre for sightless eyes. Every spectator in his or her identical identity box.

They have put on identity like a pair of gloves. But when such days come when they want to pull it off, it's impossible, and they pull and pull and feel a slight panic and it keeps on sticking on them and they use more force and feel more panic and eventually tear off parts of their flesh from the bones.

Identity functions as a shield against everybody's disgusting grip on anyone that lasts so long as they cannot figure out who the hell they have in front of them. Identity is for their blind eyes the refuge that spares them the effort to take a look. Staying in the dark, mastering everything.

Developed identities. Crumpled old tricks they used millions of times.

With identity they make themselves subservient. Eagerly submitting, happy to serve with everything that is taken away from them. And if there is not much more left of them behind the faces carried around in the streets than human trunks with arms and legs waving like beetles fallen on their neck, it's fine, too. More is not allowed. One must be able to afford it.

Identity, recognizable, easy to handle. Rules of give and take called relationship. Knowing each other, knowing them Selves. Spending a lifetime getting to know them. Using up a lifetime for a trip to them. Exhausting all their love, joy and inventiveness and never finding those Selves. Too early. Too late.

What they don't know, they don't like. They don't know what it is but having no knowledge of it is in itself a valid confirmation of that. Above all, they have a concept of them Selves. By means of which they conceive themselves, they can stay in consistency with themselves by being scornful towards everything else. They are filled up entirely with their identity. There is no space for something else. Should anything else, for any reason whatsoever, come too close, their own identity out of fright or nastiness will offend it not accepting anything at its side. After all, the proof for having an identity of one's own is the ability to reject. And that ability is going to be exercised with pride, that evidence provided very generously.

To see beauty one needs eyes. But not many have that. Most heads are filled with identity. Identity my ass. Eyes are of no importance to speak of. And should those few be in use once in a while and, she wears a brace, that's about it with eyes. Such a pair of eyes you can buy for fifty cents in the supermarket.



## The Strike

There was in the fall a university strike for many months, conducted with the typical lack of imagination of the traditional left, and with the same predictable failure. The doors were barred and things were left in their useless abandonment. The government, not caring at all about pretences or any humanistic illusions, simply waited (which it could afford to do) and the strike eventually petered out, through a small margin of vote at a strike assembly. No effort was made to expand or aggravate the struggle besides a tardy effort to link up with ERT. So with these reflections we started thinking about the passing away of the strike as a shape of the world.

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Does the strike actually threaten anything in the de-industrialized West? And did the strike ever really threaten anything, as the strike in itself? In neither case, one is forced to think. For the former contemporary example, none of the pensioned workers going on strike want to threaten the social fabric but to preserve their gains in it. So even if the potential for disruption is there, the government can always manage it, since the participants themselves don't actually want to hurt a social model, but keep it. Or for precarious workers, they perform non-vital (yet obviously exploitative) labour that threatens nothing (what would happen if there were no cappuccinos

at all for a week? Etc.). And to go further, the economist thinking which says that labour makes power, and thus the workers do have the power, needs to be challenged as a symbolic fiction and a myth. As Stirner says, only power makes power, not any substitute (almost self-evidently at the logical level), and certainly not labour which takes people away from being powerful and makes them servile. This is not a mean-spirited critique: the greatest proponent of the general strike, Sorel, openly admitted that this was a myth. If this was a myth, it is one we can no longer believe in. Similarly, if we review the history we see that the strike, when it was general, always posed the unthought question of power, even if unconsciously. But if it did so unconsciously, then it failed, whereas if it consciously posed the question, then it seems like a mere correlation of things not essentially related. The general strikes like May '68 or in 1920 Germany against the Kapp Putsch are never successful on their own: or, in another sense, they are very successful on an economic terrain that keeps them rooted in a normal world. Politically they are missed chances, or promising beginnings, but left off. Revolutions



have happened without general strikes, as in 1789, and also what most forget, in Russia's 1917. Even the most famous general strike ending in a revolution, Spain's 1936, could be critiqued (as it was by Debord) as defensive and lacking in initiative. After all, it occurred as a response to Franco's coup.

And today, does the government fear the general strikes, so much as the rioting that accompanies them? And this rioting is independent of strikes, as in December, for example. Just as Marxists talk the most of strikes, but they forget that their October, and later Mao, had nothing to do with strikes, but were rather armed decisions. German councilism, too, abandoned waged strikes for purely insurrectionary strikes. But why demand insurrectionary strikes, so much as insurrectionary acts? Why be focused on the metaphysics of economics, so much as the spiritual reality of political power?

On this score, the critique of Lenin would have to be taken up more carefully. Famously, he claimed workers could never have class consciousness, but had to have it brought from without. Why don't we admit that, yes, the workers never had revolutionary economic consciousness, they sometimes had revolutionary political consciousness. In Russia this was taken over for them by the Bolsheviks. Thus the real critique would be, not that economics is really the creator of consciousness (a vulgar materialist notion at any

rate), but that politics needs to be self-created consciousness and not from a Bolshevik Party. This was the only successful Marxist revolutionary party in Europe and the one that most severed the primacy of the economic (or denied Marx's Victorian ideology in practice, in other words). How significant that the only large section of the 2nd International that remained internationalist and revolutionary (in a Marxist sense), the Bolsheviks, came from a country with no tradition of legalized unions and strikes. From the other side, the CNT-FAI never abandoned its pistoleros and historic link to Bakunin's insurrectionary ideal. Should we not view the "premature" insurrections of Spanish Anarchy, from 1931 to 1936, not in a one-sided way as failures, but also as skirmishes that prepared the society to accept the reality of a struggle that had to happen?

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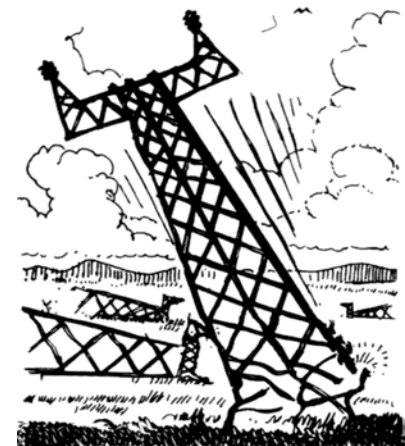
What began the workers' movement? Basically Utopian thinkers, on the one hand, and in practice, Luddites, neo-Jacobins, Carbonari and other secret societies for insurrection. The issues here are basically overtly political in nature and immediatist, without the complicated metaphysics of labour. They equally are in one sense closer to us today since they have less relation to a factory proletariat than with a general mix of middle-class radicals and the poor, so called. At the end of a thing we often return to the beginning, as with the octave. At the end of this period in history we are returning to violent political struggles, sabotage of industry and commerce, and Utopian collective experiments. The European factory has vanished into its own sad inessentiality, just as has its misguided ideological worship in Marxism.

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If we return to the strike as such, it means that sabotage is getting more important than bargaining over labour, and getting powerful is much more important than faith in any illusory dialogue or recognition from the State. For example, in Italy recent practices have been blocking roads during political trials—because to protest outside a courthouse is increasingly being hindered by putting courthouses in isolation or closed sessions, and it shows a thoughtful tit-for-tat relation. In an ironic fashion, the police demonstrations against their proposed mass lay-offs in Athens were interesting, as they simply roved around on motorcycles blocking traffic, and this was one method they had of putting pressure on the government. It is always good to learn from enemies, and while blocking traffic is not the ultimate solution, it is something to consider in our world of transport and mass consumption. Just as internet traffic, too, in rivalries of the US and Russia or China, gets disrupted. Basically the economic illusions recede and we return back to the political issues at the heart of our era. This demands more thinking, since behind the frontal confrontations at the parliament, in which no one can believe anymore, lies an endless supply chain and technical flows. The recent

metro and dock workers strikes all threatened the “lines of supply” for the post modern army-society. They were treated seriously (besides the governmental police, the ship-owners were paying fascists to break the port strike) because they blocked the arteries to the diffuse heart of the social body. But these workers don't produce anything material at all; their importance is as potentially disruptive, not productive. So again, we see we are leaving the productivist shape of the world behind and going to something more political and strategic. This is even borne out by the history of Marxism, as Trotsky in October cut the railways, telegraphs, electricity, etc. before proceeding to the famous Winter Palace. In Barcelona much the same position existed through the strength of the Anarchists. Perhaps now we can begin to think more in terms of the infrastructural bases of modern power.

Armed struggle, too, can be considered as a means of blocking the traffic of normal routine and propaganda. It is an act of communication that blocks the normal flow of governmental narratives since the everyday world of news is not, in fact, a reality but a one-sided flow of what has degenerated, from its 19th century ideology of liberty of speech, into a theatre of war for psychological operations directed against the populace. We see this quite a bit now with all the propaganda of recovery, the return to bond markets, and upcoming gentrification attempts in Athens. So interrupting these flows or, more truly, suspending their negation of the real reality is quite an important task. Generally this would have the *mass avant-garde* of a political movement connected to its real meaning, which is embodying a new form of spiritual meaning in the world, and in this sense, its existence is itself a communication at the spiritual level.





## London—watching out for you

A recent visit to London reinforced my view that the global metropolis would be a particularly unpleasant place to live. It takes the worst aspects of cities, the crowds, dirt, wealth and control and expands on them. It exists in its own bubble, hovering over the country it rules though often despised by it. Had London remained just the biggest English city it would still be ugly (as all English cities must) but it would be forgivable.

Instead, it has always been an imperial city. It grew rich and fat as the heart of the British imperial project. Its buildings were constructed as offices of a world empire. The monuments lining the streets and filling the squares celebrate the slaughter and enslavement of millions. Its museums filled by the plundering of other cultures. The palaces inexplicably still house a royal family.

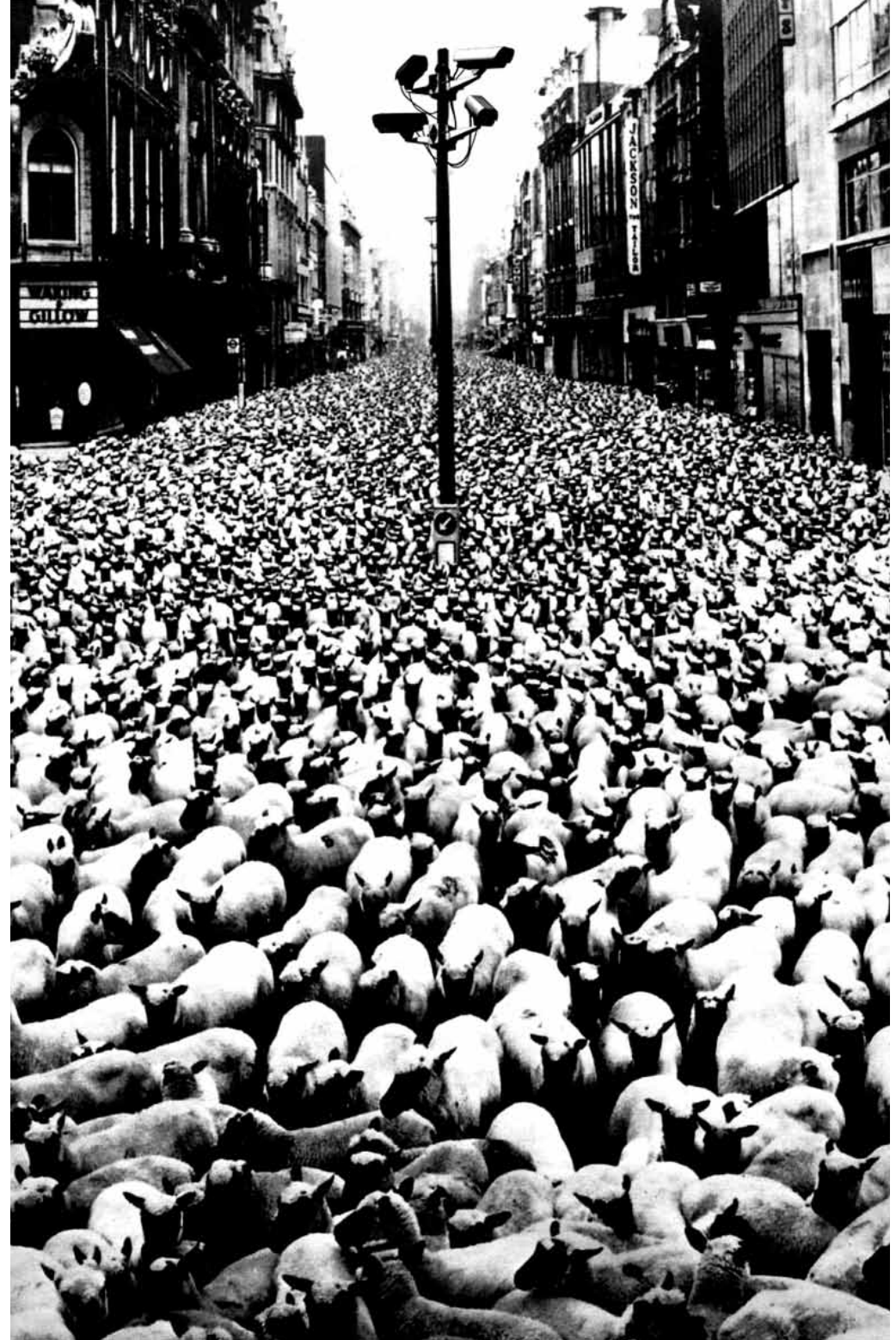
With the collapse of British pretensions to rule the world, London broke with its political past and headed to a financial future. It is now the city for the rich, the poor can only gaze in wonder (or disgust). The future which is being prepared across the world, the future of mass 'security', financial elites and empty materialism, is already London's present.

Even before you are in the country you're being watched. White lights spin around the lens of a bank of cameras hovering above the heads of joyless passport control officers. Later, three semicircular protrusions from the roof of the bus are watching. Six cameras watch the area as I sit down to eat a sandwich. There are big cameras and small cameras, cameras that look around corners and cameras to watch other cameras. At almost any point in central London you can normally see, and be seen by, at least two. Being watched by a multitude of not-so-subtle cameras, and an awareness of that fact, is a constant of life in England.

There's a constant flow of people, a great mass forming an unbroken line that never stops. Rushing lines snake underground, passing through man-made valleys of concrete and glass, along the streets, even seeming to glide through the air as they cross the river. You get the impression that no one lives their life here, everyone just temporarily joins the great flow of bodies and goods. The myriad of languages symptomatic of a place floating in a globalised world with little connection to its geographical and historical surroundings.

The old symbols of power, the church spires and parliamentary turrets, are now mere footnotes to the towers of glass which shoot up from the City—the new power changing the landscape. Below, the streets are clean despite the lack of rubbish bins. Few posters, little rubbish, no writing, no slogans. Only adverts, security warnings and legal notices break the grey silence of the architecture.

Huge shops resemble the old factories. The flexible and precarious staff fulfil their little part of the operation. One worker guards the changing rooms, another rolls out new stock and another sweeps the debris of broken clothes-hangers in a great wave across the floor. Floor upon floor is packed with people hurrying about. The atmosphere hot, sweaty and uncomfortable. The only difference now of course being that this seething crowd of people are consuming, not producing.



Every so often a disembodied voice hails a warning. 'Unattended luggage will be removed by the security services'. 'Report anything suspicious to the police'. The same messages of vigilance and warning cover the walls. Keep Left, Keep Right, Buying flowers from people at the traffic lights is illegal, No playing music in the streets. The doors of the shopping centres carry little stickers telling the disobedient that exclusion zones are in effect and they can't come in. Full size stickers of cops adorn shop windows in the event a real one or a camera isn't around to watch you. Just in case you get a little creeped out by this there's another poster to reassure you. All this monitoring and security is for your own safety. 'We're watching out for you'; so I guess there's no reason to worry.





## Negativity/Positivity

In these times of crisis a general negativity seems to be infused in everything, a negativity which slows us down, moves us towards depression and inaction or, at best, moments of hatred and vengeance expressed in destruction. But in these times it is hard to say that the crumbling of capitalism is creating the inspiration and space for anarchist intervention and expansion. Rather, a paralysis is created as recent big popular riots, uprisings and smaller acts of sabotage haven't changed much; the fascists have gathered strength not only in Greece but all over Europe and inserted their ideologies deep into the political sphere(s); neo-liberal capitalism dances ahead unhindered as everyone feels that we must let the professionals fix the economy even though the destruction of the economy would be a more desirable scenario. Years ago many wrote about a coming storm, predicting a crisis of the current logic with wild insurrections and uprisings all over Europe and the world. We saw them and if we were depressed before because nothing much was happening, now that these violent dreams have come to life and not much changed anyway, despair easily sets in.

So we live in a moment of time of in-betweens: there is no hope, it was better before, all work and no pay, remember the Pasok days... And in this gloom and the contagion of mass depression, we see this negativity also amongst ourselves as anarchists and anti-authoritarians. Even though internal negativity is always something to address and try to hinder in the anarchist milieu and something which is easily overlooked due to various factors, at the present time it



is increasingly important. All over Europe the riots have changed, they are not necessarily ours anymore. The days of the anti-globalisation movement and the so-called "*anarchists'* travelling circus that goes from summit to summit with the sole purpose of causing as much mayhem as possible" (Tony Blair, Gothenburg, June 2001) are long forgotten and these days we instead see French right-wingers fighting the police together with homophobic anti-abortion Christians on the streets of Paris and big scale riots and burning barricades in Kiev that led to the overthrow of a prime minister and the presence of Neo-Nazis in a transition government. The European elections are looking to be a huge victory for all kinds of far right forces from all over Europe. The riot as we have known it is over. Capitalism is more brutal and fascism is spreading everywhere.

But wasn't it the smashing of capitalism that we were proposing, amongst other things? How can it be that as capitalism loses all credibility, at the same time it becomes stronger and more authoritarian and it is not us who are seizing the moment? It may be that it's easier to swallow the simple answers of fascist populists, but it is difficult for me to see how the simplicity of their solutions can be so easily swallowed by so many. Perhaps the destruction of the capitalism that existed a few years ago suddenly

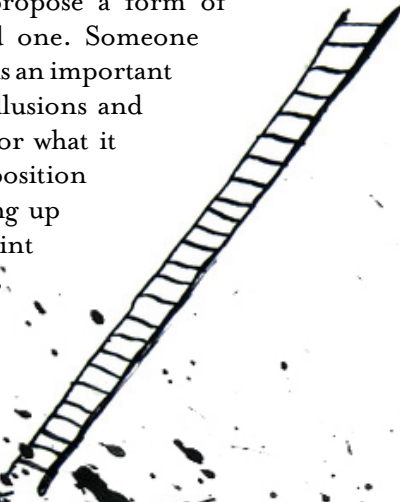


makes that recent kinder capitalism seem desirable again and we ask for the people who were running it then to please give it back to us, even when this is an absurdly foolish hope. As much as people can theorise, there is no semblance of a consensus as to why the political centre has moved far to the right, why capitalism has given up any façade of democratic representation and why we ended up in this so-called crisis anyway. However, all over Europe it seems that though the last few years have had many interesting moments in the streets, we are largely absent from the greater picture; while popular anti-authoritarianism has shifted like a flag in the wind both to parliamentary and extra-parliamentary politics, from national and EU elections to street activities, forms of direct action and internet activism. Who is anti-authoritarian now? Is it still us, or is it the populists and far-right who claim to be the underdog standing up for the common man against the European Union, unhindered multiculturalism and immigration, the destruction of traditions and family values? We may well feel that these groups and individuals represent many authoritarian positions such as nationalism, hetero-normativity and patriarchy but their support is gathered from what many see as an anti-authoritarian stance against a changing world.

So, there are good reasons to feel disempowered and negative. It is, then, a difficult task to suggest that we do not let this negativity destroy us into nothingness. First of all, we do not have a choice. Giving up means that we let a bunch of fascists and capitalist fanatics destroy our existence, reality and natural environment. The negativity is obviously not without reason and there is no love in these words for the smug activism of those who say that it's better to do something than nothing. Not all action is positive. Look for instance at the climate camp movement in the United Kingdom; it was a parody of anything antagonistic and was the perfect example of what was discussed in the excellent text 'Give Up Activism' which came out in that same country at the height of the anti-globalisation movement. Though the Climate Camp movement did radicalise a new group of people, it also marched happily down a dead end street on a political discourse which could only lead to liberalism, or self-destruction. Similarly, the consensus meetings and their rules of hand signals and formalities which legitimately were brought into

practice in order to create non-hierarchical spaces where everyone could participate on an equal level, eventually led to a farce best signified by a new breed of activists who travel around Europe criticising everyone who does not speak their specific political rhetoric, while they invent hand signals—like showing a flat palm or rubbing their bellies as different ways to prevent people from continuing their argument or expressing themselves at all.

The problem becomes how not to focus on negativity but rather to propose a form of positivity, though not a blind one. Someone once wrote that giving up hope is an important step because you give up on illusions and see the horror of this world for what it is and that's an important position to actually start from. So giving up on hope shouldn't be the point where one really gives up, but a point where one starts. Let us look at it simply. As anarchists we propose that a world where people are a part of making decisions about their



lives and acting together on a basis of solidarity, mutual aid and voluntary participation is a desired scenario and one that will lead to personal liberation and a world where the destruction of the self, others and our planet can be avoided. However, we fight amongst each other, many of our anarchist meetings have clear but unspoken hierarchical structures that are full of privilege-infused power and we say that we want to rule our autonomous, self-determined zones and federations (or whatever) by people's assemblies. We can excuse others for laughing at us. It doesn't make things look any better when young men at our demonstrations regularly start attacking each other or people they don't like the looks of or who tell them off for their macho shit. Anarchy is not a philosophy ruled by the strong or leaders, anarchy is when we do away with imposing ourselves on others and work together without threats and coercion.

If anarchists do not create environments which work in a way that creates motivation, a desire towards participation, encouragement, joy, empowerment and a lust for life, then we are neglecting a fundamental element of how anarchy is to exist. Calling those close to us 'scum' or 'liberals' or 'counter-revolutionaries' discourages participation and prevents anarchy. It is not the purism of me and a few of my friends that will move us away from the promised disaster of global capitalist monoculture. Neither is there a mysterious proletariat somewhere,

waiting for us to magically make a few right moves so it can rise with pure revolutionary strength and usher this world into a utopian era. Religion and Hollywood have both filled our childish hearts with such desires, but we're going to have to deal with each other instead. Anarchist theory becomes a lot less romantic when it comes to lots of people like us having to figure out together how to build anarchy. There will be no religious experience that saves us, and we're going to have to work together.

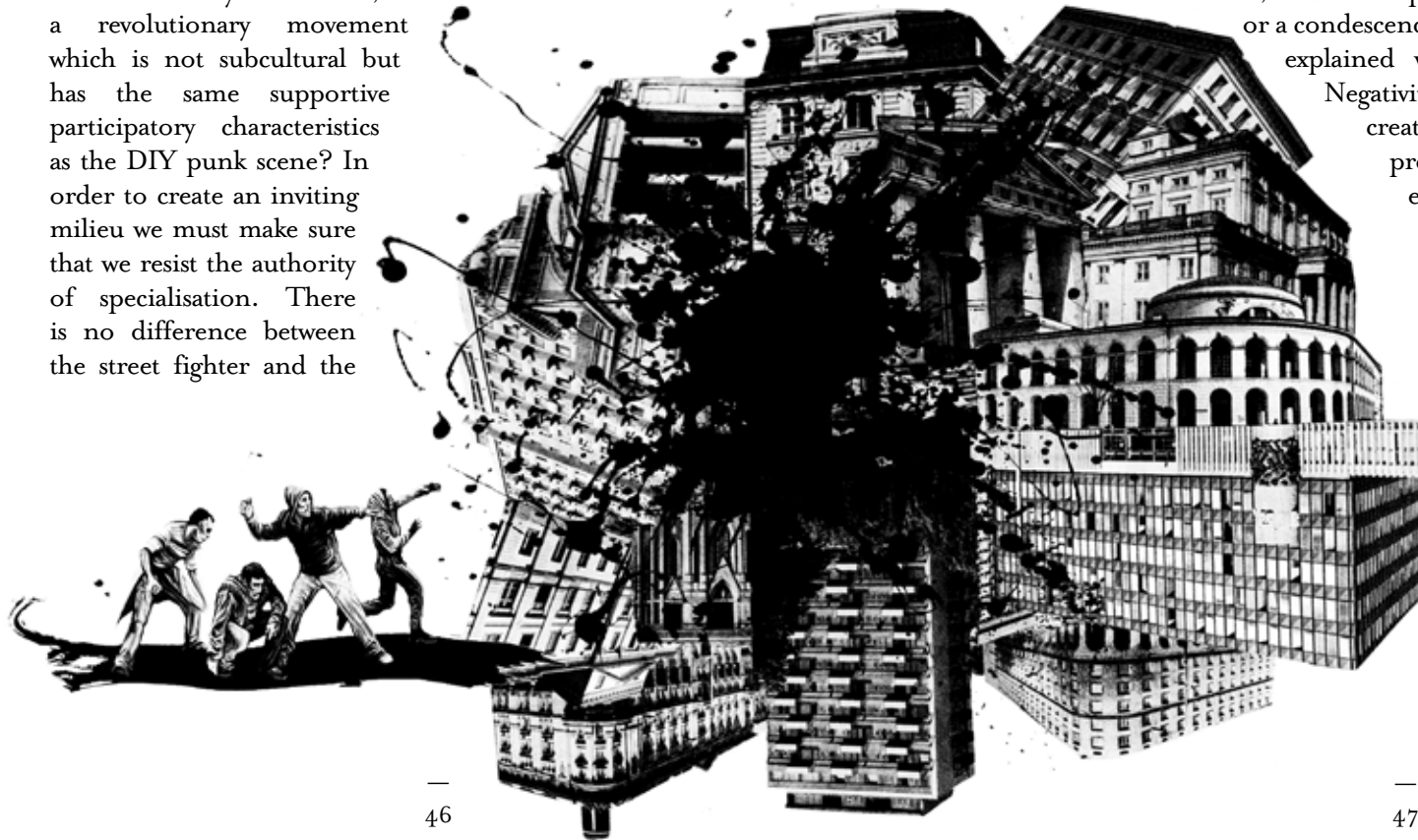
When working together it is important not to be always putting one another down. Often, in these anti-authoritarian political milieus, it can feel to a newcomer that the agenda is very explicitly set, though it is not written anywhere. A learned programme can be regurgitated over and over again, truths have been agreed upon and the newcomer is told how it is and what will and won't work. This 'tyranny of structurelessness' (to borrow a phrase from an interesting essay from the seventies) shows itself continuously in anarchist praxis. It exposes a basic lie: that we are without hierarchical structures. The structures are there and the tyranny exists because the structures are invisible- or not recognised. No one takes responsibility for setting the agenda. This is not to say that non-hierarchical organising is not possible or desirable, but it is difficult, and the creation of positions of power and specialisation needs to be continuously addressed. When we do not address these we easily re-create the positions of power that are dominant in the mainstream society we claim to want to transform or reject. If your parents or the state give you money and you have a good education you are immediately in a better position for attending all meetings, setting the agendas and taking more risks in the streets than if you have children, lack papers, are struggling to pay the rent and juggling several jobs etc. Since these situations do appear, it is important that people are honest about this and that we create an environment where it is not just the professional revolutionaries or activists who run the show, but rather that we create a space where everyone feels empowered, welcome and important, even if they don't know everyone and do not have the same time to give to the struggle.

Similarly, it is important to also recognise that even though one might have a lot of experience, none of us have figured out this thing about how to overthrow capitalism and create a revolutionary momentum. When we silence voices because we make people think that their ideas are stupid or make them afraid to speak and act, we immediately halt potential. The student demonstrations on the 6th of December in Athens have had an enthusiastic energy and spontaneity often lacking in more regular anarchist demonstrations. This can often be seen across the world as students and youth regularly surprise everyone when suddenly taking to the streets and starting occupations with unhindered momentum, without asking any established groups or milieus for permission. It is important to share knowledge and experience, but it is equally important to not censor other people's initiatives because we think they won't work. If we sometimes shut our mouths and stay on the sidelines we will often be positively surprised.

Some friends once wrote that they never felt as free in free spaces as they did in the process of creating them. It is true what I stated earlier, that doing something is not necessarily better than doing nothing, it depends on what you are doing, but there is something to be found in the act of doing itself which is worth looking into. When the streets of the city centres cease to be what they normally are, and we walk through wide roads covered in rubble and smouldering bins as the shop windows are smashed or boarded up and teargas residue stings our eyes; there is that moment. No traffic, no shopping, a suspension of normality. When we are in the demonstration or blockade and we feel strong, empowered and stick together, defending ourselves when necessary, attacking when possible if we want; there are those moments of feeling free and together. These are the moments that we must recreate everywhere. A friend once said during the counter-summit days of the anti-globalisation movement that she was always involved in the actions but none of that would be possible without the self-organised kitchens, the teams that organised toilets, built structures and carried out first aid. In these processes we find the same moments as in the riots and their surroundings. A suspension of normality, a collective process of self determination- we do things on our own terms and support each other in the process. Many times this is the only source of strength that I can find when it comes to wanting to escape or overthrow this normality.



However, we know that the social centres, meetings and deeper organising often lead to negativity, frustration, in-fighting etc. Negativity infects everything and our moments of collective joy crumble as we wake up in the grim reality. Much can be taken from the DIY punk scene which is a big part of autonomous and anarchist structures in the north of Europe and the Americas. Another set of values, styles and codes combined with a sense of everyone being able to participate draws people to this scene. Subculture however, is not the answer: DIY vegan punks might as well be goths or metal heads or whatever identity that comforts them, while capitalism is very fond of niche markets; "get your vegan shoes and snacks here, it's more expensive but it's organic & cruelty free!". There is nothing wrong with looking for another reality, in fact it can be refreshing as hell to sit down for a beer in a social centre or local bar with some friends after spending a day in a normal work place with all the fucked up values that we often find in such places. But subculture can never be revolutionary in itself. So, can we create a revolutionary movement which is not subcultural but has the same supportive participatory characteristics as the DIY punk scene? In order to create an inviting milieu we must make sure that we resist the authority of specialisation. There is no difference between the street fighter and the



person who organises self-organised children's spaces. No task is above another, no person more or less important. We need everything, so there must be a place for anyone who wants to contribute.

This text is written as a summary of discussions around this topic and is not a critique on the situation in Greece or any groups or individuals specifically. Neither is it a text that wishes to suggest pacifism in any way or discuss the specifics of tactics. It comes from discussions with both foreigners and Greeks where two things were noticeable: many people are not so involved in Athenian anarchy because they do not feel welcome and do not feel that their opinions would be valued, even though they are themselves sympathetic, hang out in anarchist places, attend demonstrations and have various levels of experience already. This is a scenario which is recognised in many countries and not limited to the city of Athens, but still worth pointing out. Secondly, when one does try to participate and suggest

ideas, these attempts are often met with scepticism or a condescending attitude where it is pointedly explained what will and will not work.

Negativity then seeps into everything, creating an exclusive environment and preventing participation, initiative, encouragement, and the joy of experimentation. This is exactly what we do not need. We must kill the cops in our heads to start to break free, but we must also kill the bosses and workers in our heads to work together and resist authority and negativity in the broader society as well as within our free spaces and anarchist milieu. Remember, there is no authority but yourself!

Love and Rage,  
*Coraline*

## Intervention

Of course, to begin with, everything needs to be broached with caution. We need to remember to make distinctions in our thought. To speak with tact is not always the same as silence even if in some situations the only real choice is a tactful silence. Yet this is not the case in a general manner. Thus in speaking in a general way, we can avoid this first, no doubt common objection, of preferring silence to dialogue. Similarly, there will be the plea to avoid mixing in these affairs, because, as we ourselves have quite openly admitted, we are neither Greeks nor have we spent our whole lives in Greek Anarchy. If this is admitted, there is no real shame in that. On the contrary, our position as outsiders might be considered as a benefit, both in being more free from insular dynamics and also to aid us in having some space to view things. Besides, as we are outsiders, we have little to lose, and if we have a small influence, then here again this helps us, since we do not have the illusion that with one text we can resolve a practical issue. But to begin a practical process of change and advance, a small text from marginal figures might indeed be suited to its purpose.

To aid us along this path, we should inquire what kind of change or development could one desire from Greek anarchy, apart from a general desire for victory? Anarchy has to deal

with its own attempt at victory, and most difficult of all, also to prepare for its gradual fading away. The first dilemma would be to show that the change one demands is not abstract but rather rooted in the real situation of the time. So first we must show the situation and later we can elaborate further concerning practical affairs. Thus there would not be random ideas, but rather an exigency of the situation itself. Changes are already underway and our point is merely to act as a midwife, to aid the process of birth. Then our role obviously reorients itself from proclaiming an abstract demand to actually pointing out what is underway, with references to the concrete situation.



To commence with a brief overview of the political situation: the Greek State was shaken by December 2008, and this began the general process of decomposition we see unfolding before us, which has both positive and negative aspects. The state, from its own incompetence, corruption, lack of control and so forth, is on the brink of becoming a failed state—this is a sober analysis one can read from various establishment sources, not an illusory radical optimism. In this climate Anarchy itself is changing from a movement of aspiration and hope to a movement of reality. This necessitates a change in forms and ideas of the antagonist movement that have been shaped over time. But again, this is not something made up or imposed onto reality. December, and later Syntagma, February 12, and other developments, have opened up entire new avenues and possibilities for action, most of which, it should be noted, are *basically offensive*, since the old terrain has shifted. The neighborhood assemblies, new parks and squats, occupations, motorcycle demos, and yes, armed struggle, are all polymorphous changes that no abstract analysis created but rather an integral part of the changing reality itself. This does not need so much philosophizing, but only a quick reflection: Anarchy by definition changes as it gets closer to its goal since it becomes less a small group of believers than a general situation. The only difficulty with accepting this, again, is with lack of distinctions in Thought: often we say one day or one discrete point in time, “the big day” (*le grand soir*) will change everything; instead of reflecting that change always takes place in time with its delays and irregular progressions, so that the change from normality to Anarchy is a process of quite some time and certainly is in no way inevitable. A real analysis would point out the potential available for anarchy and situations where the state has been shaken. But this is obvious to everyone in the crumbling away of beliefs and buildings, the police on every corner, the splitting of political parties, the polarization of society, continued resistance by anarchists, etc.

Everything is getting more anarchic, or potentially more so, in a country that just a short time ago was the middle class success story of Europe. And to deny this, on the basis that we are not yet at Anarchy, is denying the evident reality of the process for the sake of an end that becomes unrealisable and separated from the world. No: the butterfly is leaving its hard, defensive chrysalis; the drab colors and immobility are being changed for something radically new. Or, to recall the old example of Themistokles, the traditional Anarchist way of inhabiting Athens—the classical movement and so forth—is passing as the city falls to the universal despotism of our times. But there is the chance for *an audacious victory in a new element*, to strike out on the great and stormy sea of revolution.

Just as a thing changes in time and so always is and is not, or is always coming-to-be and passing-away, so too Greek Anarchy is changing, just as the larger society and the world are changing. Anarchy itself is getting more anarchic.

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What can help to bring out the best in this change, and what can be discarded? This basically is one major trend in this issue. In a general way, what is important to promote in order to conserve collective strength in the coming times? For us, as we are trying to show with our example (and thus, our theory is trying to be immediately practical), there can certainly be more openness and discussion in a public form with all the proprieties that should be observed there. To clarify: what exists now is much discussion, but generally in an informal and personalized manner or in a deeply bureaucratic manner (the assembly, to which we will return later). Neither way is the best medium for discussions and they bleed into one another in a deeply tragic fashion. Greek Anarchy is half a dysfunctional and small social milieu, another half a radically utopian political movement, but these should try not to intermingle with one another. And one foresees that in the future, they will continue to diverge. The personal is not the political, as in the misguided 60's slogan. For us today the slogan must speak to the failure and feebleness of the New Left itself since, of course, the personal makes up a part of the political, as self-evidently persons take part in politics, but this hasty thought has confused the issue. This is the same error as in saying that the marble is the statue, or the paint is the painting. The personal is certainly related and a part of the political, but on the other hand this is so basic a claim and yet so obviously not everything that is in politics (just as the paint does not fully describe the painting). The movement is built upon friends, but politics cannot work only in this fashion, as is obvious, since a general political situation is always larger than the amount of friends, even friendly acquaintances, that one could have. These forms should separate themselves into their proper spheres, as friends are certainly the material for the political, but not the political in and of itself.

Historically, this slogan only emerged from the extreme self-denial and negation of the individual undertaken by Stalinism, so the pendulum swung in the opposite direction. Perhaps we can endeavour to find a golden mean, which would both acknowledge the individual, and yet also encourage us to set aside personal differences, or more realistically, to strenuously work to manage them, when issues of over-arching importance come into play. If no existential respect is conceded to others, then not only are we deprived of a certain type of nourishment, but worse, then only force necessarily remains to demand a certain respect. This is in fact the very opposite of the correct relation of mutual respect, which should be in one sense unconditional in a small way, and in a large way, can only be freely granted. For more on this large theme, we have elaborated about negativity in this issue. But in brief what model or ideals can help us? Certainly, not the levelling down of critique, but rather a building up, the noble spirit of *ἀγων*, as Nietzsche saw, emulation and uplift. As Goethe said, "Divide and conquer, a good maxim. Unite and lead, a better one."

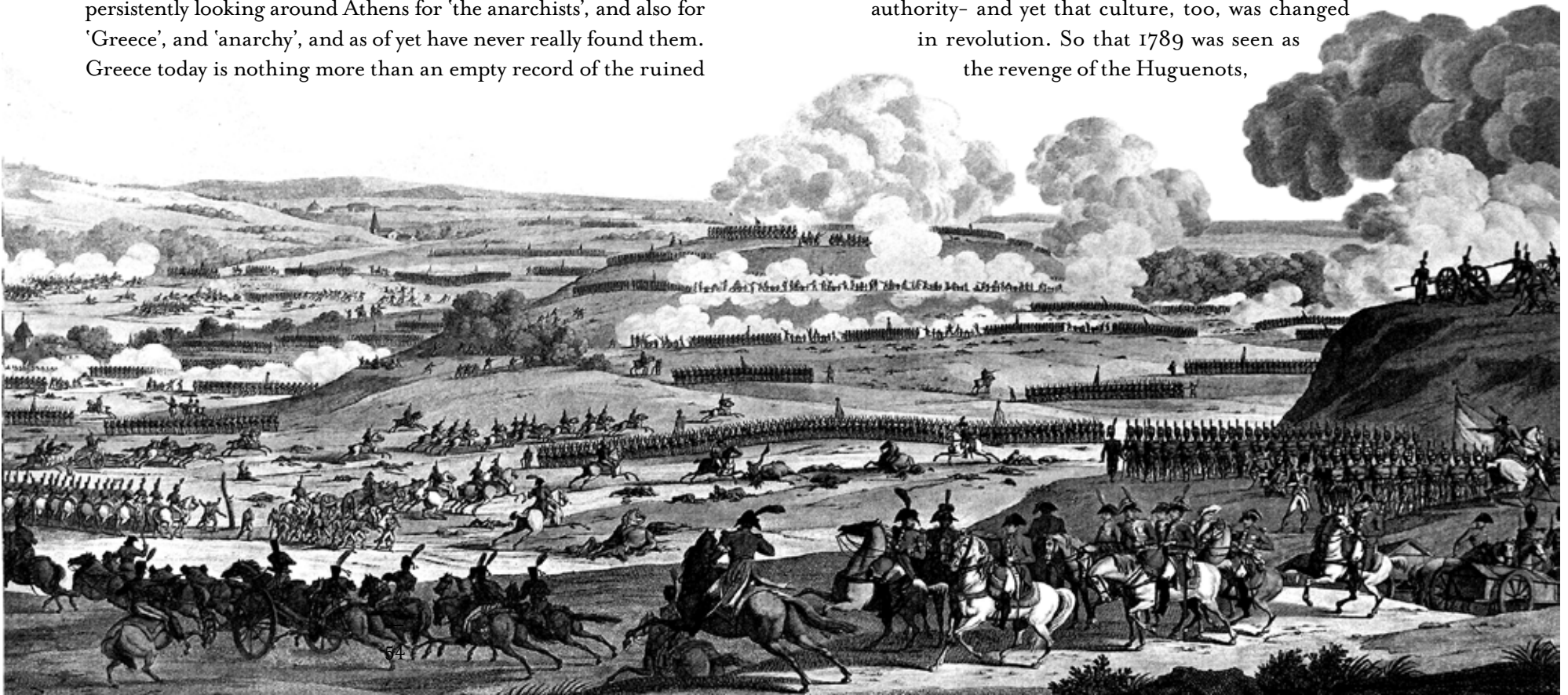
As well, in terms of sustainability, the current model of activism or even the idea as such needs to be questioned. Most people do not have the requisite abnegation to reach the level of sacrifice demanded. And thus, predictably, this model has only worked in small groups for a small period of time, whence comes the famous burn-out or sell-out which inevitably seems to follow. Evidently the model demands too much, this being related to the vaguely Christian roots of the workers' movement. Similarly we should re-think the idea of the common and reflect on how much is common already and on preserving that as an idea. For example, the welfare-state is doomed, but the idea that a community should care for its ailing, aged, unfortunate or infirm members is a most reasonable idea. But this can equally come about without the state and then it preserves its true character, which is spiritual. Furthermore, this thinking about the common would also apply to our effort since the activist method demands everything and leaves no space for varied

or partial commitment. But that is what most people can give. One resource we often do not think of because of an unfortunate tendency to materialism is motivation, which is perhaps the prime thing that keeps the movement going, even though (or seen more clearly, precisely because) it is spiritual. This collective motivation is often squandered in a thoughtless manner that makes things all the more difficult. Whereas if a small effort was made to conserve the collective motivation, one would not demand more or be satisfied with less but recognize varying levels of commitment without a hostile critique.

For a brief digression we should also inquire, what exactly is this Greek Anarchy that one speaks about? Not the varied experiences or the actual thing "in itself", which no one trying to retain their sanity could attempt to define. We here are still persistently looking around Athens for 'the anarchists', and also for 'Greece', and 'anarchy', and as of yet have never really found them. Greece today is nothing more than an empty record of the ruined

West, so we should just try for a brief genealogy. But it deserves noting for historical consciousness that this "Greek moment", with its general strikes and riots and most especially its section of Greek Anarchy, is basically the last recognizable and influential remnant of the classical workers' movement, which faded out in Western Europe and was discarded as unfashionable by French intellectuals a few decades ago. The only other exception (as we noted last issue) is in Spain, for reasons specific to its history. Greece, besides still having a residue of leftist revolutionism, is also an anarchic country. Anarchy can become a more real expression of something that has always existed in this Greece that could never unite its regions. Revolutions happen and change the lives of peoples, as they make an effort to cast off all their bonds, but on the basis of their prior life. France and Russia had both been the lands of reaction, aristocratic pomp, of authority- and yet that culture, too, was changed

in revolution. So that 1789 was seen as  
the revenge of the Huguenots,



the victory of the *philosophes*, as 1917 was that great revolt predicted by Bakunin, the millennial peasant rising in continuation with the legacy of the social-revolutionaries. But now we come to a new era of revolt: as Surrealism announced almost a century ago now, Marxism never developed the means to attack modernized parliamentary democracy. So it is in fact of the utmost import that Greece is probably the most middle-class country one could ever hope to find. Revolution here would signify leaving behind this middle-class world, the completed welfare-state, and going somewhere completely new, not simply universalizing the bourgeois revolution in peripheral countries as happened for example in Marxism.

At any rate, in critique it is very important to avoid the purely negative influence that would lead Greece into a similar sad state of apathy and vain intellectualizing that has made most of Europe such a frozen place. On the other hand it is important to note that Greece is, because of this, in a special way behind of Europe, in its form, and yet ahead in its content. This is also related to its backwards historical development, with fascism ending here the prior generation, which in Europe was the position of the New Left. Greece has not yet suffered the defeats other countries have suffered, and the form of its modernity is in this sense undeveloped. So the world has not yet really finished with the issues posed by the workers' movement, because the real issue of the workers' movement was always-already Anarchy (Marxism's heaven is Anarchy so this theory too is oriented around an Anarchy it can never reach). In face of the global oligarchy (allied to Protestant nothingness) arrogantly imposing itself, the issues have clearly not gone away, yet only Anarchy retains some of the old force. But this is actually a hopeful situation since Europe is only more advanced into decadence than Greece. Anarchy is only a retrogression compared to the disillusion following Marxism in the sense of not having advanced so far into intellectual sophistries and poorly-founded

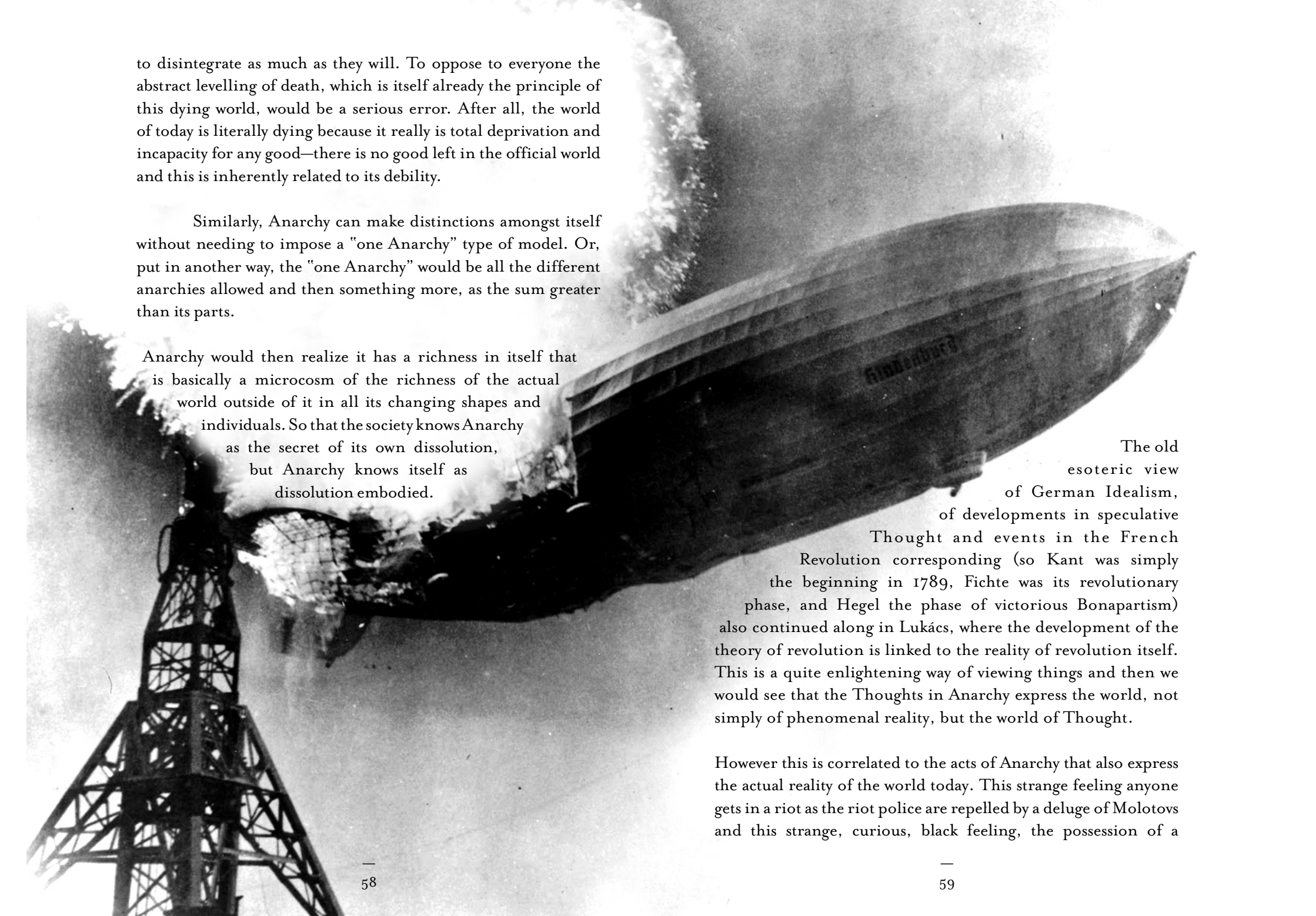
hopes. And to close with a brief note, this workers' movement both was dedicated to leaving behind Christianity yet also had some Christian or militant components.

In this vein, there exists both moralizing critique and a moralistic critique of morality in Anarchy, but elaborating a reasonable relation to ethics is surely on the agenda. Should we not rather leave others in the movement to be as mistaken or correct as they wish to be, since the true exists on its own, even in a world of falsity? Moreover, if we had more distinction in Thought we would find not absolute evil everywhere else except for the small circle of true believers (from whom we are always focused on excluding the impure). Rather people are not as supportive as we would have liked; or not at the level of their past behavior; or not at our own way of thinking, which is not the same as absolute evil. This idea of popular morality was itself suited to a time when a small movement confronted a gigantic world opposing it and so could pose an abstract negation to the world, since the relation really was such. Now that the chance to determinately negate a society actually poses itself (by which is meant destruction of the State without the reconstruction of a new State) we will find the need for much more distinction to bring about this goal successfully. To lump everyone together under one label is not fit for the moment, just as Anarchy as a movement already makes a tactical distinction between the Nazified police and Golden Dawn, on the one hand, and on the other hand, Syriza and many other groups. This is quite correct as these social forces are really quite different and the point is to see in what ways they are different and how the movement has to relate to this. Revolutions have always differentiated between officers and soldiers, volunteers and conscripts. Great tacticians have always known to give the enemy a "golden bridge", as Kutuzov famously gave to Napoleon, as the Ancient Greeks gave to the Persians, to facilitate the disbandment. In a world where there are no more kings to kill, no real power but institutions and networks, it would certainly be a grave mistake not to allow things

to disintegrate as much as they will. To oppose to everyone the abstract levelling of death, which is itself already the principle of this dying world, would be a serious error. After all, the world of today is literally dying because it really is total deprivation and incapacity for any good—there is no good left in the official world and this is inherently related to its debility.

Similarly, Anarchy can make distinctions amongst itself without needing to impose a “one Anarchy” type of model. Or, put in another way, the “one Anarchy” would be all the different anarchies allowed and then something more, as the sum greater than its parts.

Anarchy would then realize it has a richness in itself that is basically a microcosm of the richness of the actual world outside of it in all its changing shapes and individuals. So that the society knows Anarchy as the secret of its own dissolution, but Anarchy knows itself as dissolution embodied.



The old esoteric view of German Idealism, of developments in speculative Thought and events in the French Revolution corresponding (so Kant was simply the beginning in 1789, Fichte was its revolutionary phase, and Hegel the phase of victorious Bonapartism) also continued along in Lukács, where the development of the theory of revolution is linked to the reality of revolution itself. This is a quite enlightening way of viewing things and then we would see that the Thoughts in Anarchy express the world, not simply of phenomenal reality, but the world of Thought.

However this is correlated to the acts of Anarchy that also express the actual reality of the world today. This strange feeling anyone gets in a riot as the riot police are repelled by a deluge of Molotovs and this strange, curious, black feeling, the possession of a

*shocking new form of Liberty*, as the riot police are forced to retreat, when the crowd still has possession of the street—all this can only happen because the spiritual state of the official world already is in a morbid sickness. Nothing can be destroyed that has much life in it; a healthy body recovers from a common cold. And the unconscious “anarchy” of white collar crime, intellectual confusion, the mass of suicides, imperialist wars, the surveillance state etc. is only expressing that the real truth of the moment is the conscious Anarchy for revolution. The real “truth” of the shopping glass window lies in its shattering or shuttering.

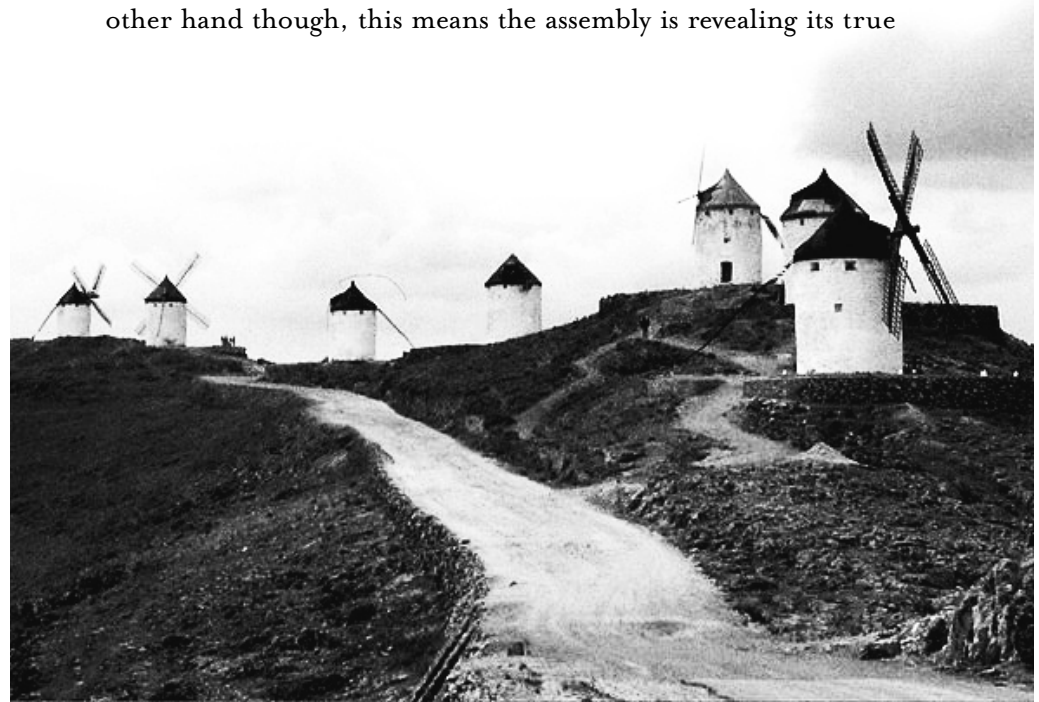
As Hegel tells us, History is the history of the advance of Liberty: to resurrect this idealist schema, we simply need add one more new form, that of penultimate liberty, of Anarchy.

\* \* \*

Talking about the assemblies might be unwanted, but it should be stated. The assembly is most certainly a valuable tool for political organization. No one has ever denied that. However, the real question is: can a political movement always relate amongst itself in a directly democratic manner, and is this always profitable? Let us take the Villa Amalias eviction as an example, since this was when *The Barbarian* was founded and was quite a big event. To set the scene, afterwards everyone went for a cacophonous assembly at the polytechnic, with shouting and gesticulation for hours until finally people trickled off. The end result was much the same as what everyone was thinking at the beginning: there was the decision for a big collective march. Finally the firebombings that also took place afterwards, which most people probably supported or tolerated, could not have been collectively discussed in that manner. Thus the assembly does not solve everything, nor can everything be put to an assembly. Moreover did the assembly introduce anything new or rather was there already a basically collective sentiment in favor of a march? This

is simply to reduce the assembly to its important but by no means all-embracing role, as the democratic assembly is not a panacea but a means of managing political differences. This would also be related to the classical observation that no political form is perfect and the most ideal form of politics is a mixture of the elements. More than anything the aim is a feeling of unity in a community. However, a political movement within itself has little political differences, almost self-evidently. It already has that unity. Thus the debate that takes place is either a caricature of a real debate that would take place in an open forum in any random neighborhood assembly, or a tactical debate that in many cases cannot be conducted openly, for clear reasons.

This curious or redundant character of some assemblies stems from the basic fact that the political unity is already there. Thus the question is immediately not “what to do” but “how to do it”, whereas real political debate demands a question of “what”, and then of “how”. Assemblies should most certainly be exported outside of specifically anarchist spaces (the polytechnic) to take part in a real collective life—and this is already happening. On the other hand though, this means the assembly is revealing its true





function as a mass participative form of political education, not as something suitable for every occasion for a minority of militants. Just because armed struggle and other actions cannot be conducted or proposed in an assembly do not render them bad, simply it connects the moment of war with a monarchical or aristocratic type of decision, with which historically it was always associated, even in democracies.

Finally, what exists in the assemblies is in no way a pure direct democracy but because of the small and self-referential nature of the Anarchist community, it is always-already touched by the social scene and with other political forms like aristocracy. But this in no way is to say a thing is bad (unless we have the one-sided equation that only democracy = good), however it is to say honestly what a thing is.

\* \* \*

Something to note, since it is unavoidable: Nihilist currents of anarchy are not the orphans abandoned on the doorstep of an unsuspecting Greek Anarchy, as was noted quite some time ago (by London Occupied in their work *Revolt and Crisis in Greece*). On the positive side, we again have to agree with Hegel that a split often confirms the vitality of a principle itself: since both sides find that what they thought was the outside world was in fact inside their movement, forcing them to realize that they never really left the outside world. And that this outside world, while touching the anarchist space, also is becoming touched by it in quite real ways. Then perhaps some potential would exist as the self-clarification is forced upon the two sides. This could become not the mirrored replication of a negative definition but the stimulus for elaboration of positive projects. As always, every difficult situation presents us with the truth of the great proverb that crisis is both a danger and an opportunity.

But assuredly more fruitful than discussing the well-worn polemic of non-social and social anarchy would no doubt be armed struggle and who does and does not support the tactic. Immediately we would find the need to make more gradations in Thought, between those who support unconditionally, some support more cautiously, some do not think it is the right time, a few are unconditionally against, etc.&c. This would help clarify things more and would show where Anarchy has a chance to go as the crisis situation deepens and where chances for some practical unity, even from different angles, might lie. From our own Northern history, the Calvinists and Lutherans of different countries all did work together to protect themselves against Catholic reaction in the 30 Years' War. There were problems, but this did take place. From our anarchist history, Spain had many different stripes of Anarchists, and yes, even left Marxists working together in a fashion. The point is not to have perfect examples since everyone can point out the problems in these situations, but to establish the idea that in the heat of struggle, groups of different goals and forms can work together for tactical objectives, especially if they are committed to everyone making a tiny sacrifice on their own to achieve a collective objective.

As an aside, there was a positive debate in the anarchist space concerning anonymity and identity, to which we point our readers and which is available at *Contrainfo* in English (*A Debate on Anonymity*). The issue concerned being anonymous or proclaiming a group name for radical actions undertaken. At any rate, philosophy always is concerned with finding unity in division. Here, we can find that both sides are anarchists, they agree on violent tactics (itself already an advance over typical Protestant debates) and where they disagree are on particular tactical matters concerning the presentation of acts of sabotage. But for us, the particular and contingent character of various acts already implies an impossibility of assigning any position normatively, since the real question at hand is the singular

meaning of each action and the liberty of the actors to decide the question: would a formal organization, or an anonymous, or a pseudonymous, or no claim of responsibility at all, give more meaning to the acts performed? And also what are the actors themselves trying to communicate and how does this function?

So perhaps in this way, at a philosophical level we may say that we have found ourselves again at Hegel's dictum of the "identity of identity and non-identity". What should be underlined is the positive fact that the debate was conducted in texts at a reasonably high level (varying interpretations of Homer, something always to be commended) and clearly laid out the contending positions in basically de-personalized texts. Thus the final result of the debate was not winning for either side, as it so rarely is, but a positive gain for Anarchy as a whole, and offers a model of how to raise and manage differences in a type of theoretical forum.

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If Anarchy is not able to resolve these problems, then it is clear one runs the danger of the unhappy prior experiences of either the French, Russian or Spanish variety of revolution. It might degenerate into factional violence and from there degrade into the unrewarding victories of betrayed revolution in France or Russia. Or on the other hand, it may be too spiritually weak and not have enough faith in itself to push its goals to completion as in Spain. Without a way for managing differences and resolving conflicts in a fashion other than that of the Greek village—constant informal discussions and explosions of emotion, threats of physical violence and appeals to the elders to act as arbitrators—Anarchy does run serious dangers as its importance becomes ever more serious. Especially if we have taken Anarchy to mean not a revolutionary self-discipline but no discipline

at all, which anyone could imagine might develop poorly in stateless scenarios. But to point out a danger, in no way implies it is certain to happen. To take a part, however small, in a constructive process is the best way of ensuring that an unhappy outcome will not take place. Happily, the problems are small right now. Yet that is not a reason to ignore them or brush them under the rug, just to avoid a momentary discomfort. If these little issues are ignored, like a small wound or a minor illness, they can fester and get much more serious. While if they are treated with the healthful tonic of frank but respectful proliferation of discussion and resolve at an individual level to carry out the ideas, then they will no doubt help the organism grow stronger—even if this in itself is not the ultimate solution to every problem. Finally, this will also help the lands with less developed movements to expand and grow. So the issues are, as the Greek developments themselves, both specific and universal, just as we are dealing here not with any one incident but general trends.

Thus, that is the reason for this intervention and for most of the articles in this issue. Basically these are ideas that are fairly common and have come up repeatedly in our discussions with others. So there is not anything new being presented nor is there the tacit assumption of a lack of thought in Greek Anarchy; rather, what is at stake here is a bringing-out into the best form and a reasonable manner of presentation, attempted in a respectful way. These last are also not new to Greek Anarchy, but in our view these are some things that could most certainly and profitably be multiplied in the movement.

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*“Have I been understood? –  
Dionysus versus the crucified”*

- Friedrich Nietzsche

*Dionysus, this old new divinity, come to reclaim his rights as the patron of bare life, ecstatic joy set against the despair and unhappiness of Protestant sophistries...*

*This abhorrent doctrine of cold, frosted forests and rocky sea coasts, rainy cities and money-making tried to implant itself in the lands of the Mediterranean. But unbeknownst to all, the rebellious Dionysia kept growing, now taking the city by revelry, now by flame. The masks of the theatre stayed on as more and more forgot themselves, this strange remembering of the essential...*

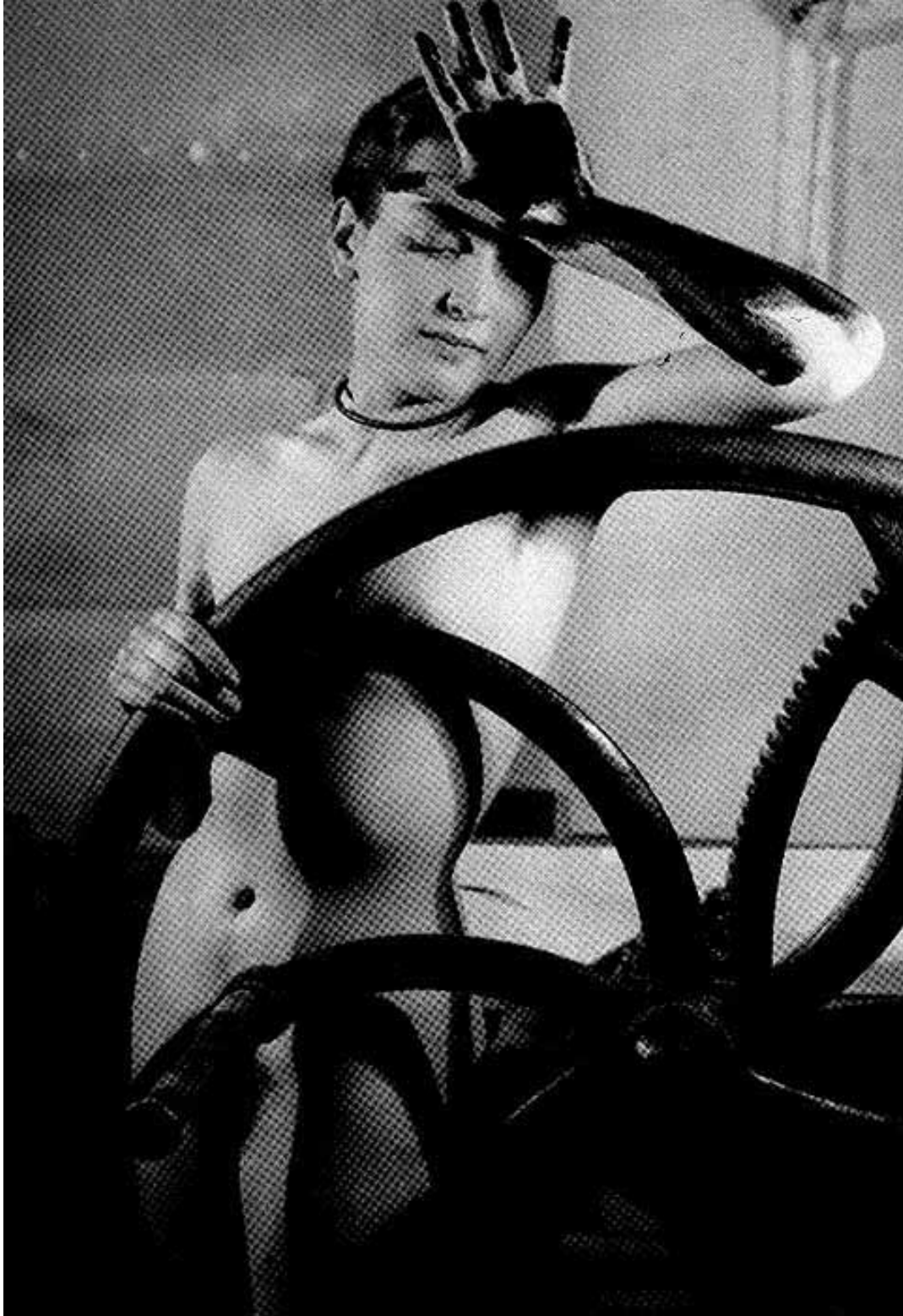
*Release the dark passions, says Bakunin, and this dark fury destroys all the old beliefs and monuments. This would be inexplicable were it not the midnight of childbirth...*

*Many the thyrsus bearers, few the Bacchantes. Yet revolutions are these bacchanals where none are not drunk, Dionysian festivals of world-history. The millennial peasants demanded the sacrament of wine to be shared for all, and the time is soon coming when the consciousness of Liberty demands this once more.*

*The official end of the Christian era and its divinized State...  
We want no more rationed units of pale happiness, this utilitarian world of small pleasure and empty rejoicing-*

*no, the loss of these petty concerns: unaccounted delight,  
the old celebration deprived of its spurious veiling,  
a final epochal revolution to reveal  
the true mystery of bread and wine!*





# Radical Erotica

*"Criticism Deflowered" or "If religion is the opium of the people, critique is intellectual porn" or "The Pleasure of Marx on Hegel"*

*Criticism has plucked the imaginary flowers on the chain not in order that man shall continue to bear that chain without fantasy or consolation, but so that he shall throw off the chain and pluck the living flower. (Marx, Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right)*

Her naked body cast an alluring shadow against the dull metallic hull of the hovercraft. Kneeling over the body prostrate before her she unclipped the remote control from the man's aluminium belt and with an awed calm pushed the small grey button. With a whisper the thin silver bars around her wrists, ankles and neck protracted and fell to the floor.

*In the struggle against that state of affairs, criticism is no passion of the head, it is the head of passion. It is not a lancet, it is a weapon. Its object is its enemy, which it wants not to refute but to exterminate.*

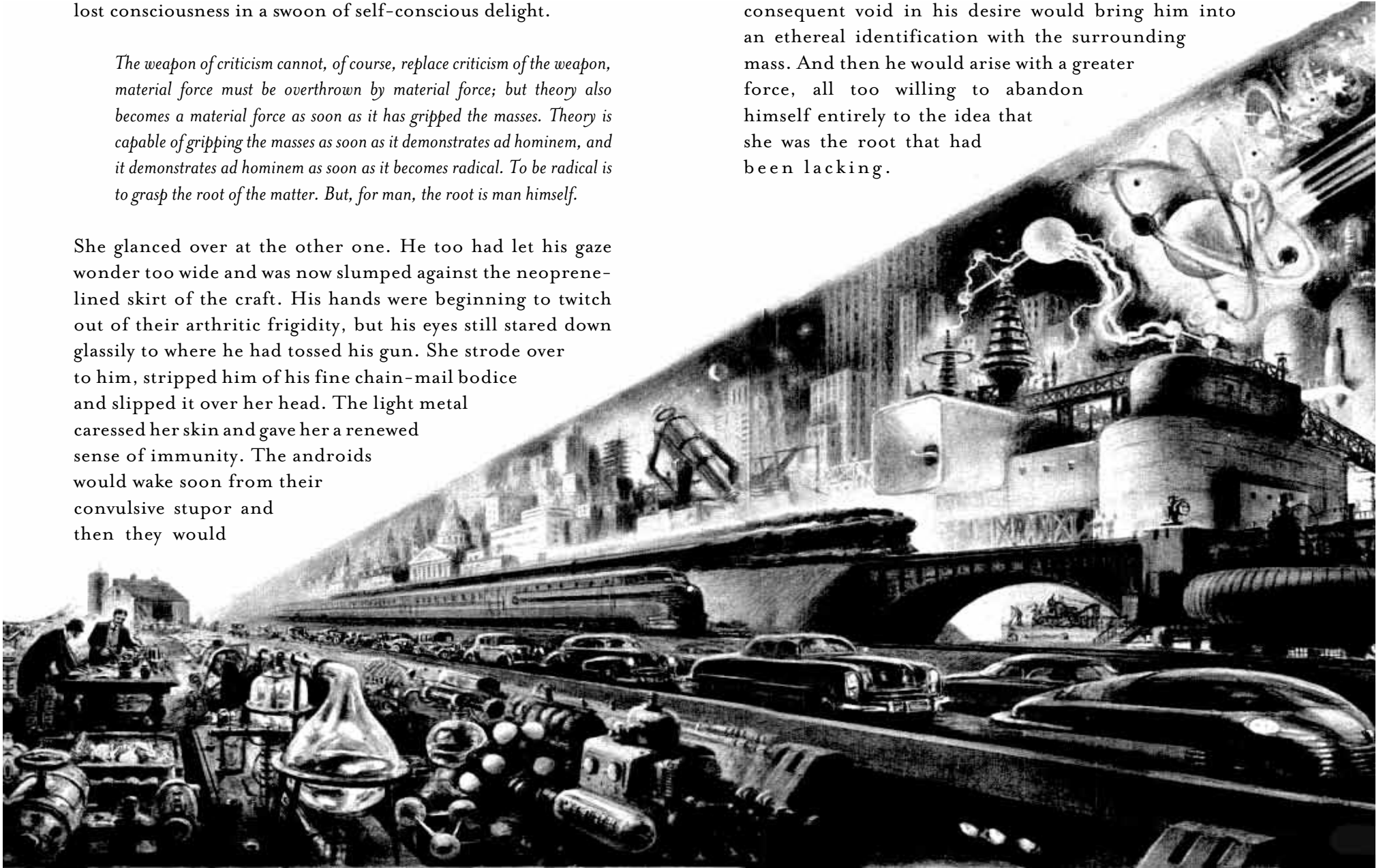
She looked down at him, his gun hanging flaccid under his belt. She had that effect upon these androids. Once her feline curves came into perceptive range, their powers of penetration turned

against themselves, until occupied obsessively with themselves, any offensive was useless. As fervently as they grasped their weapons and repeatedly pulled the trigger, one after another they all fell subject to her force, until, ammunition spent, their defence systems drained and exhausted, with a gasp they lost consciousness in a swoon of self-conscious delight.

*The weapon of criticism cannot, of course, replace criticism of the weapon, material force must be overthrown by material force; but theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses. Theory is capable of gripping the masses as soon as it demonstrates ad hominem, and it demonstrates ad hominem as soon as it becomes radical. To be radical is to grasp the root of the matter. But, for man, the root is man himself.*

She glanced over at the other one. He too had let his gaze wonder too wide and was now slumped against the neoprene-lined skirt of the craft. His hands were beginning to twitch out of their arthritic frigidity, but his eyes still stared down glassily to where he had tossed his gun. She strode over to him, stripped him of his fine chain-mail bodice and slipped it over her head. The light metal caressed her skin and gave her a renewed sense of immunity. The androids would wake soon from their convulsive stupor and then they would

be a danger to her. Though made man they were not yet free of the seductive power of the machine. Although her initial effect was to turn them upon themselves, investing in each a self-critical desire to grasp himself, once the android had demonstrated the radical nature of his manhood, the consequent void in his desire would bring him into an ethereal identification with the surrounding mass. And then he would arise with a greater force, all too willing to abandon himself entirely to the idea that she was the root that had been lacking.



*Meanwhile, a major difficulty seems to stand in the way of a radical German revolution. For revolutions require a passive element, a material basis. Theory is fulfilled in a people only insofar as it is the fulfilment of the needs of that people. But will the monstrous discrepancy between the demands of German thought and the answers of German reality find a corresponding discrepancy between civil society and the state, and between civil society and itself? Will the theoretical needs be immediate practical needs? It is not enough for thought to strive for realization, reality must itself strive towards thought.*

But even she was not capable of gratifying their every need. She might offer an android time to reflect, she might even suffice to strip him of his presumptions, but the truth was that if he was to do more than just free himself from the role he believed himself constructed to play, he would have to test his metal and draw from deep within himself a beastly, visceral core. With this as her aim she stalked over and reached to open the pod hatch, her chain-mail clinking with her steps. Although she had succeeded in immobilising the craft she was yet to discover how to get the thing air-born. This would be no small task in itself, and yet the undertaking was complicated by the fact that it would require an ascent in the absence of a pilot. As she raised the hatch she felt a strong, almost fleshy arm close around her waist. The first stage of the metamorphosis was completed, and yet, his lust for her was still less than his desire to take control of the machine, to feel the cold hard metal of the thruster in his hands and soar up alone beyond the clouds.

*But no particular class in Germany has the constituency, the penetration, the courage, or the ruthlessness that could mark it out as the negative representative of society. No more has any estate the breadth of soul that identifies itself, even for a moment, with the soul of the nation, the geniality that inspires material might to political violence, or that revolutionary daring which flings at the adversary the defiant words: I am nothing but I must be everything.*

Without a second glance he threw her aside. Unperturbed she leapt on him, twisting his head round to face her. Their gaze met and immediately, doubling over he knelt down under the burden of his freshly inspired breadth of soul. Taking the opportunity, and using all her force she jammed the thruster to full and began the launch sequence, ingeniously stripping herself of the chain-mail to provide the weight that would substitute for the pilot. With a surprising dexterity she then swiftly removed herself as the hatch automatically sealed closed. The hovercraft shuddered slightly and then with a decompression of air and a pulse of heat it rose and sped upward. Startled from his masturbatory convulsions, the man looked around and reflected upon himself as the craft's negative representation. In its absence he had no choice but to identify himself wholly with her. And yet, standing naked before him, she offered him nothing. How could she then be the positive possibility of his emancipation?

*Answer: In the formulation of a class with **radical chains**, a class of civil society which is not a class of civil society, an estate which is the dissolution of all estates, a sphere which has a universal character by its universal suffering and claims no particular right because no particular wrong, but wrong generally, is perpetuated against it; which can invoke no historical, but only human, title; which does not stand in any one-sided antithesis to the consequences but in all-round antithesis to the premises of German statehood; a sphere, finally, which cannot emancipate itself without emancipating itself from all other spheres of society and thereby emancipating all other spheres of society, which, in a word, is the complete loss of man and hence can win itself only through the complete re-winning of man. This dissolution of society as a particular estate is the proletariat.*



**PROLETARIAT**

*[ORIGIN mid 17th century: from Latin proletarius (from proles 'offspring'), denoting a person having no wealth in property, who only served the state by producing offspring.]*

Now that he was freed from the machine, his universal character became apparent to her. She looked upon him as he stood bewildered before her, the muscles on his biceps taut, the hairs on his chest prickling in the fresh air. His hips slim and melting into the luscious curves of his thighs. Suddenly, the struggle which she had so long fought in the negative focused upon him with the material admiration and fantastic delight that can only end in the production of a revolutionary daring. More than anything she desired to fling herself upon his every estate and caress his spheres into a particular emancipation. Delving into his receding memory he remembered her enchained and then revelled as he imagined the two of them bound together in an all-round antithesis of more than radical chains.

*Philosophy cannot realize itself without the transcendence [Aufhebung] of the proletariat, and the proletariat cannot transcend itself without the realization [Verwirklichung] of philosophy.*

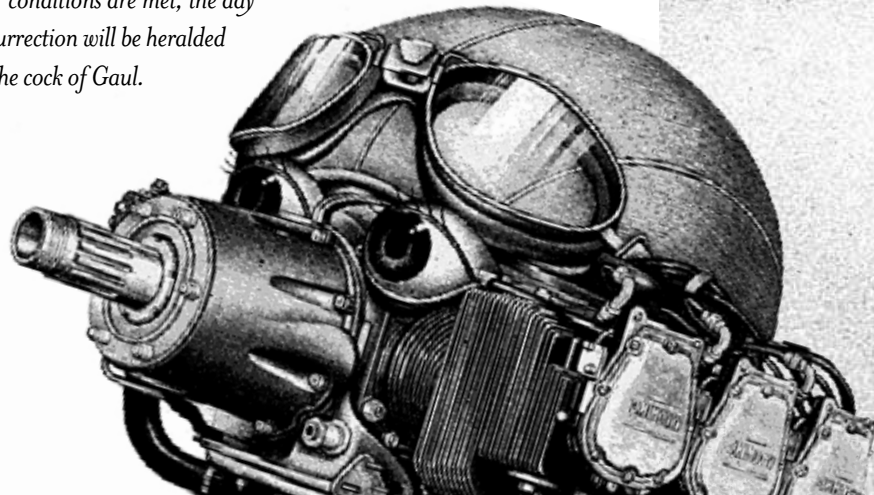
No longer mere voyeur, no longer the purely negative urge of theory, Criticism was herself transformed and overcome by the pleasure of every adversary, not only stripping man of his chains but allowing him to throw hers aside as well. With the subtle poetry of a revitalised imagination, they sought consolation in one another, plucking the living flower in a free act of mutual transcendence.

*When all the inner conditions are met, the day of the German resurrection will be heralded by the crowing of the cock of Gaul.*

- Magdalena

*Philosophy stands in the same relation to the study of the actual world as masturbation to sexual love.*

- Karl Marx, The German Ideology



## Thoughts on Progress

The world of today, in a very short time, seems to be going backwards. However, this is only thinkable as an event if we concede that the linear model of advance, the progress religion of the 19th century, which was never challenged either by Marxism or Liberalism, is basically flawed.

Things are going backwards today not merely as reaction, but also because of the implicit victory of the principles themselves, out of completion. I think Negri, for the very reason of his confusion, captured this quite well when he claimed that we were living inside the communism of capitalism. After all, almost every demand of *The Communist Manifesto* has been completed. The State controls very much and rations production and distribution in a general way. The poverty of the Victorian era has been done away with, along with the factories and the top-hat capitalists. Everyone has access to culture and education. We are slowly freeing ourselves from traditional Christian habits and morality, etc. Think to yourself, as you reflect on the various jobs you have held or do hold, their immaterial labor, the welfare you perhaps touch, and the generalized abundance of products (or for the Greeks, to think back a few years)—you in fact *have lived inside the dream of the 19th century*. The well-preserved, now altered facades of that era adorn the empty silence of the cities of the West, expressing in their fashion both the inner emptiness now filled by multinational corporations for consumption and how the outer dreams are fulfilled in this way. Walk down Ermou in central Athens and see if the feverish era of production has not given way to a boundless consumption of commodities. Consider if that ultimate spiritual commodity, leisure, has not now been bequeathed to all. The gentle streetlit nights, abandoned churches





and deserted plazas, the velvet decadence and ease of the welfare-state, most of all, the spiritual state, the ideal of the *End of History*, has now been generalized and lived. This means that the world of the workers' movement has completed itself as a *World-Spirit*, but also spent its energy. You feel this today, as no one can get excited about debates over the management of the economy and no one believes in a resurrected social-democracy. As you stroll through the well-stocked stores, perhaps on an evening passing another abandoned church, the realization dawns as the twilight arrives: the world we live in today, that is passing away, *is the completion of the workers' movement*. Of course, ideas can never realize themselves as fully as they might like and they realize themselves most fully as Ideas. Just as Christianity's heaven can never really arrive, but this negation of life finds itself approximated in a monastery. Theoretically we find in the *City of God* of Augustine that despite all the imperfections, the schema of world-history still did correspond with the eschatological version of things, Babylon as Rome had been overthrown and the true city of saints, the Church, firmly established. But then this millennium of Christianity itself ends historically, when Christianity no longer rules world-history, at the great eruption of 1789.

The passing era claimed itself as Marxist, so what is important is the spiritual claim and also a certain inherent rationality inside the world itself. After all, the Christian era was most Christian in its ideas and this is how we designate that era. As an historic stage we actually are inside the dream of the past society since this workers' movement, despite claims to the contrary, is actually a spiritual stage of humanity, not a material one. It is simply spiritualized materialism. But where are we today? We are living out the end of the workers' movement and arriving at Anarchy. This is concomitant with the "end of history" as a specific universal stage of human understanding, which generally has been reached in post-modernity. The teleological goal has been reached and now we are entering into retrograde or, potentially, a different motion. We are not finished with the world but there is incontestably a world that is finished. The State is literally withering away all over the globe. Just look at the decay on the edges—in Ukraine, Somalia, or Syria—and this will indicate to you the real rot at the core. Since the state is synchronous with history and history has ended, then the state too, has to end. And the final act in history is appropriately the destruction of the State.

So why does it seem we go backwards? We have now an alliance of Neo-Nazism and Neo-Liberalism in Greece and in Ukraine. People are threatened by fascists for example even in 'progressive' Sweden. Women are having their rights curtailed as in Spain. The trade unions are being destroyed and the middle class reduced to poverty once again... without a spiritual conception of understanding that the prior stage has been reached, we seem to be going only backwards. Actually, however, we are only going backwards as related to the old exhausted mode. All the old things are now getting ready to emerge in a new shape, much as the notes repeat in a higher octave. They remain, but as transfigured. So the possessions of the workers' movement, such as it was, the anti-fascism, the welfare state, the identity politics of the New Left, can no longer fit inside the world that they formed because they formed it on the basis of the State. This also accounts for the general vapidness and tiredness of all the old demands of today besides that of rioting and violent destruction. They no longer have the same force—their energy is spent. But the energy is spent because they have reached their goal. If it seems a defective world we live in today, what was defective was not the world,



as such, but the ideas that inspired the changing of the world, e.g. abstract negation, a Victorian economist ideology, the unelaborated idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat, etc.

It would be a one-sided and abstract negation to claim that things we have been dealing with since 1789 are simply 'ended' in this way, which is a popular method and one that has a certain appeal to it. However the real point would be that these issues, in their unfolding, have ended as such in their historical relation to the state, but now, protecting their essence—what was truly inside them—falls to those who work outside the State. Today it is only Anarchy that possesses any of the old energy that used to belong to these various movements and is also the only one that can articulate them anew. And we find that the real essence of the past era of the workers' movement was actually the destruction of Christian morality and the attempt to articulate a different way of life, as well as a philosophically comprehended relation to history. The real critique of Marxism is that the prior era was simply a defective form of what is now being revealed as Anarchy. Then we have not simply a one-sided acceptance or refusal but the comprehension of a thing in its changing aspects manifested over a period of history. This too, unobserved, has happened in our times.

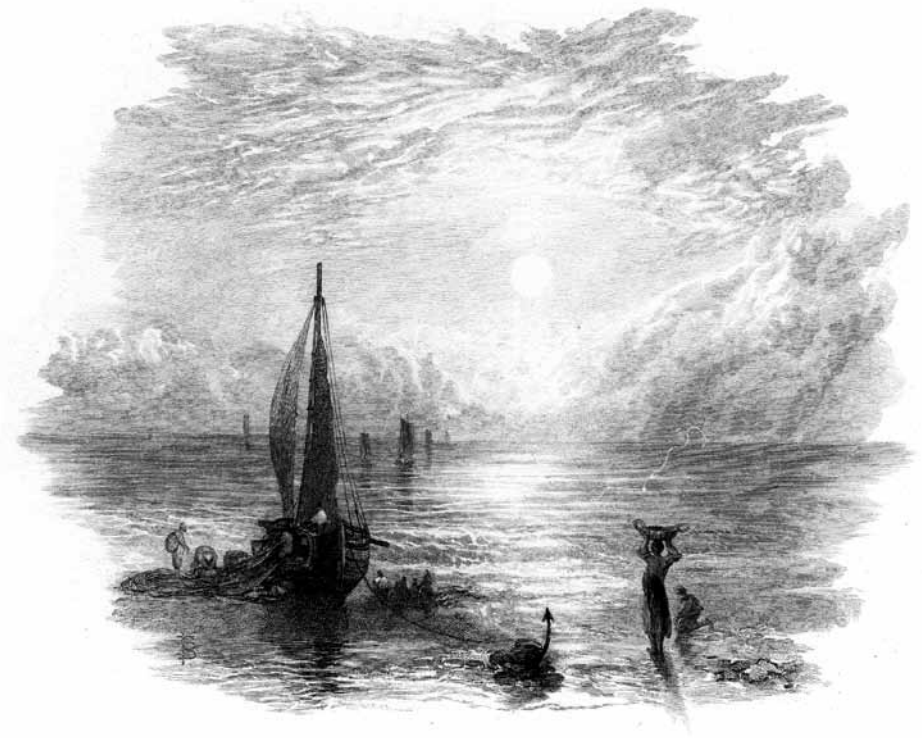
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In another image, the tapestry of the prior period of history has now been woven, with all its threads bound together, colored differently, forming great battle scenes, and now lies on the loom. There is no more of the old work, classically considered, left to be done. However, to take the work itself off of its prop, to bring it out into a life free from its now useless support, and most of all, *to admit the work itself has been finished...*

Penelope, after enough delays and false starts, has been compelled to finish her work, just as the *Odyssey of Universal Geist* completes itself after its long wanderings and peregrinations. On the one side is the isolated culture that tells the record of the tales already past or passing, and on the other, the history and practice of

the deeds in their own right. When once again re-united under the aegis of the Goddess of Philosophy, Athena, then the corrupt and debauched suitors, sophists, unfaithful servants, in a word, the world of today, are chased off and destroyed through their own folly and presumption...

*Life returns to its self-altered self and resumes its simple course of Love, what it always-already was, before the weaving and the wandering. . .*



## Negative Ethics and Barbarism



Politics means applying ethical principles onto a community. The state is an institutionalized form of this intention that has constituted a monopoly to enforce morality in all its forms. Under this domination, individuals are permitted to have different opinions concerning morality, though the unrestricted freedom to express it requires a crime or at least a conspiracy against the state.

However, abolishing the state does not directly liberate people from being objects of ethical domination. The absence of legislative institutions does not prevent something similar to law from being established, if ethics itself is not liberated from those restrictions that seem to make it essentially dominating.

Most of the larger-scale examples of non-governance that we have seen recently in North Africa, the Middle East or Eastern Europe have invariably turned into factional violence and those factions have been equally—or often more—authoritarian and exclusive than the states we are living in now. Even more conscious political approaches—like Zapatista autonomy in Chiapas, Mexico—have not been able to solve the dilemma of law-constituent power, and they have fallen back upon solutions such as radical democracy, enlightened leadership, and ethical and ideological unity. The Zapatistas' way is surely a thousand times better for people in Chiapas than governance by the State of Mexico and

has a greater potential of sliding into anarchy than any European reformist movement. But still, it is a system that perceives politics as a social contract, and so lets us doubt that it has ever reached the fundamental social criticism—the criticism of ethics itself.

The desire to constitute a law is—first and foremost—the problem of ethics itself and is more precisely located in a “negativity” at the core of ethical thought as we know it. The anarchists' phrase “against all domination” clearly points out that an essential part of the struggle is to deal with the general logic of domination at all levels. So some thought is needed with the dynamite—just like a glass full of ice cubes is clearly more tasty when you pour in the whisky.

This text proposes some views concerning ethics in order to sketch an alternative understanding. The last part of the text summarizes and draws up something we could call an ‘existential introduction to barbarian theory’, that might be helpful for theorizing coming social revolution or dispersal of involuntary social bonds—however it should be called.

The doctrine of modern ethics and politics is more or less the same. The good in both contexts is understood as an absence of evil, or to be more precise, as an absence of threat and danger. This kind of concept of the good is applied everywhere in the world, and because of it, the most common political argument is based upon the real or fictional necessity of avoiding a threat or an evil—such as crisis, unemployment, poverty, war, terrorism, school shootings, natural catastrophes and so on.

This sense of the good leads to two interesting notions. First, if the good is based on absence of an evil it is “negative” by nature. Negativity here means that the good does not have any positive attributes itself except being anti-evil, a purely conceptual negation rather than anything else. The nature of the good is passive and defensive and always reactive against something that is hostile and belligerent. With this idea, we are very close to the liberal way of defining things, where all qualitative questions are privatized to an implicitly trusted third party: be it God, markets or history.

However, this leads directly to a second notion: only evil is self-contained, active and has any distinguishable qualities and its own will. Thus, an evil also has a tendency to expand and take over if not controlled or resisted. For utilitarians, pain was supposed to take over if we do not drive our own utilitarian interests.

So, we can conclude that the reactive good is actually always determined by the active evil, and evil is the only and absolute power in this world. Well, a proper question is, is it really so? Surely not, but this does not change the fact of how things are rationalized. Negative ethics is one out of many philosophical misconceptions that we have somehow managed to apply to human intelligence without any proper consideration.

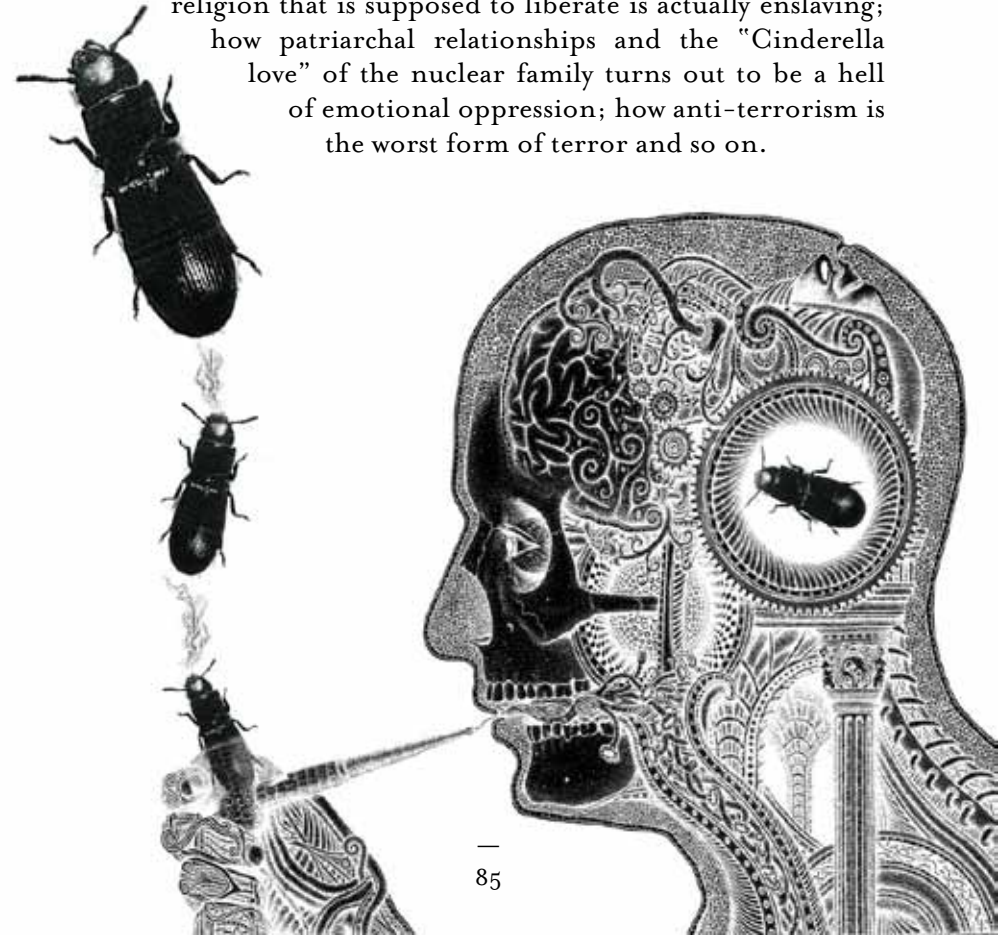
If we want to stir the soup more, we could address the question of evil to ourselves and ask: am I a subject of evil, am I striving for bad? If good is defined negatively as anti-evil, without giving any qualities to it, the evident answer to this question would be that evil does not exist as such either—it is always 'The Other'.

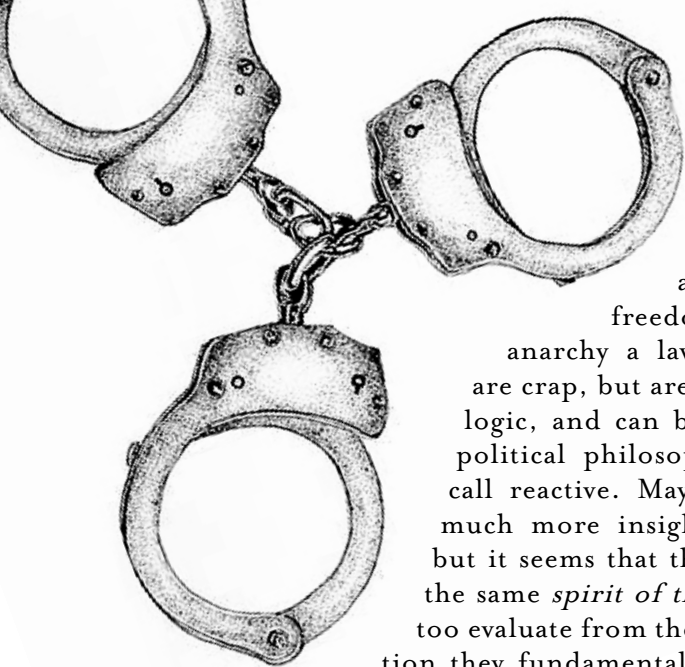
However, the big question is of the chicken and egg variety. Is life just a chain of reactions resisting the evilness of an objectively hostile world? Or, is hostility just a product of an "ethical" establishment that pursues power in a society?

Whatever label evil has—be it crisis, poverty, regression, insecurity, tyranny, savageness of nature or people's discontent—each one requires a certain opposing force or counter-party to exist. For example, the current economic crisis can only exist in an economic system that is based on a capitalist economy and all its structures: international currencies, debts, the banking system, global markets and organizations and so on. Similarly, another kind of "evil", debauchery, can exist only when there is an idea of chastity to protect, or adultery against institutional marriage and so on.

Because evil is not distinguishable from ethical virtue or a political system, we can rightly point out that the only positive and creative quality of those systems is a passion to generate their own enemies for their own justification. The parthenogenesis is "the big secret" of good and evil. And "NO" is a virgin birth of the evil or *the Other*—a self contained creature that has its own will—that without which there is no order. Does it sound biblical? Indeed. And it truly fulfils the definition of arbitrariness that is power for power's own sake—what else could a parthenogenesis be?

With these notions we are close to the classical anarchist criticism of institutions of power—although these are usually drawn up a bit differently. Anarchists frequently note that states create injustice by trying to constitute justice; how a religion that is supposed to liberate is actually enslaving; how patriarchal relationships and the "Cinderella love" of the nuclear family turns out to be a hell of emotional oppression; how anti-terrorism is the worst form of terror and so on.





But if we want this thought to be consistent and to continue with this reasoning, we must be honest and say that striving for freedom brings an order, and anarchy a law. These last arguments are crap, but are in line with the previous logic, and can be found in 17th century political philosophy, that we could now call reactive. Maybe anarchists have been much more insightful than many others, but it seems that they have been trapped in the same *spirit of their time*, insofar as they too evaluate from the very same negative position they fundamentally criticize. Well, I can't blame them, but it is time to go further.

### **Affirmation a.k.a. vitality of the "yes"**

My perspective on the previous thoughts is that a world without the dialectical relation of positive and negative is, first of all, possible, but also necessary if we want to rid ourselves of authoritarian domination. The twisted idea of enigmatic evolution by protecting ourselves from bad is not really a problem of The World, but of those who are epistemologically dependent upon enmity and prohibition as a condition for their social status. In fact, if we look around us in order to understand what is common in the world, we merely see different forms of a stubborn life that is characterized by affirmation rather than negation—and amongst them a befuddled human being trying (equally stubbornly) to apply logical consequences and the law of non-contradiction to everything. Death is not a negation of life; just like day is not a negation of night, but one part of a long and willing continuum of highly affirmed transformations, just as it is the rotation of the globe that creates the time of the day.

Positive affirmation might sound a bit suspicious for those who are not accustomed to it. These doubts are easy to overcome by noting that affirmation has nothing to do with submission or obedience—those two are part of a dialectical logic and constitute oppression and authority just in the same way as does enmity and prohibition—nor has it to do with pacifism.

"Yes" can be said in three different ways: obediently, passively or militantly. The obedient "yes" is not an expression of one's own will, rather it resembles the "yes" one has to say before the priest when marrying; a one-sided contract that replaces oneself—and all eccentricity and mutual relations based on uniqueness and love—with the words of God, Law and Institution.

The obedient "yes" is initiation into a certain position in a hierarchy. It has nothing to do with a ritualistic playfulness, but a discipline of a play writer whose imagination is strictly limiting all improvisation. This is how a drama is invented for a lukewarm reflection of life itself. The whole cultural narrative is full of great examples, most of them masterpieces, dealing with obedience as a predominant theme of humanity. It is easy to identify with the universal human experience as a part of a too-familiar order; or to see death as a metaphor for a final resolution and liberation. Even though freedom in death is one true possibility, what we are interested in here is vitality and life, freedom in life. However, getting bogged down in the concept of obedience is of no significance for this text.

A perfect example of another way of saying "yes" is the passive affirmation of Mr. Bartleby from Herman Melville's short story "Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street". Bartleby is a dismal-looking but modest scrivener hired by a Manhattan lawyer. In the beginning of his job Bartleby works hard and produces a large volume of high-quality work. This goes on until the day the lawyer asks him to proof-read a document. Bartleby answers with what soon becomes his only response to any question or command: "I would prefer not to".

“I would prefer not to” is a sentence that suddenly locates Bartleby beyond the dialectics of ethics or an authoritarian order. In spite of the fact that Bartleby’s answer is systematic it seems very honest and real, and actually describes the attitude of many workers far better than a working contract.

Melville does not aid us by telling whence and why Bartleby originally comes to this statement, nor what kind of motivation moves him. This is why we have to follow his story through several scenarios where “I would prefer not to” leads to the situation in which Bartleby performs fewer and fewer tasks around the office, finally doing nothing and shrivelling like a weird grey flower.

One day the lawyer notices that Bartleby has moved in to live in the office. *The good-hearted boss*, lacking a solution, invites Bartleby to come and live with him in his own home. Bartleby, alas, “would prefer not to.” Thus, the only way is to give up and find a new place for his office and leave the poor scrivener to live in the empty estate all alone. Unfortunately, the next tenants are not so persistent with a strange guy unwilling to co-operate, so they get the police to evict him by force. This leaves Bartleby in prison, where he finally starves, having apparently preferred not to eat. The end.

It is a too hasty conclusion to say that the destiny of this very special scrivener is strictly joyless. Melville does not reveal whether the reason for Bartleby’s fading is caused by a strange way of flowering and giving fruit or just a lack of water and nutrition. Actually the story does not say anything about Bartleby’s own experience.

Even though Bartleby’s apathy is hard to bend into an ethical imperative, condemning it as suffering is a very superficial judgement too. However, what we can surely conclude is that Bartleby commanded his own bizarre destiny, and because of that he was truly free—not really an example, but still, free.

Bartleby represents an attitude that in political discourse could be related to disobedience or other reactive (stressing *re-act*) or passive tactics and even a strike—though what is important to notice and what makes Bartleby a revolutionary is his absolute inexorability, which is not comparable to any known political movement. However, that is still very far from a positive and creative morality which is actively in affirmation with the world.

An active affirmation is “yes, I surely do, but in a way I find convenient”—the emphasis being on the last part of the sentence. This kind of position despises all obedience without negating anything and allows a person to re-evaluate situations and circumstances from one’s own standpoint. A stubborn “yes”—honest to one’s own will—is the only way to think freedom.



One can imagine what it would mean to say “yes” to everything, not for the sake of obeying, but to act how one feels is best. It is hard to imagine a more tempting thought, or to avoid a whiff of a thriving force of life this kind of affirmation has. Similarly, it is impossible to avoid recognizing the obvious problems if active affirmation is limited to some sort of Darwinistic hunter-mentality.



Survivalism and the evolutionary idea of “the strongest” or “cruellest” has nothing to do with affirmation as they both are vulgarly superficial interpretations of what affirmation means. Affirmation is a *relation* and appears *with* the world not *against* the world. This makes it much more dangerous and more political than a two-sided confrontation, because it really has the potential to break structures of ideologies and hierarchy. For the same reason we see thousands of regulations and unwritten rules about what is correct, that try to prevent affirmation and avoid the inevitable change it carries with it.

It is important to be able to make a distinction between a conflict and a militant vitality. A conflict is a clear return to the dialectics of negative and positive that establish trenches. These are the monuments we see from the past: castles, fortresses, monasteries, factories, churches and other temples of the good—all those we understand as history, but this is another discussion.

For someone who cries for freedom, the struggle is always self-defense and therefore justified. However, despite the justification and the obvious importance of self-defense, it is also a way to expose a process of self-definition to the influence of “an enemy”.

The new and fresh antifascist slogan “antifascism is self-defense!” is an interesting example of this. First, I have to admit that I found the slogan quite clever when I heard it initially and it surely has been very successful in radicalizing anti-racist positions while justifying a militant attitude as self-defense among the people. However, what

The slogan “antifascism is self-defense!” popped up after the infamous Neo-Nazi attack upon the antiracist demonstration in Kärrtorp in Stockholm, December 2013, where a local antifascist stabbed one of the Nazis—as obvious self-defense—and got six and a half years in prison.

I have noticed and found problematic is a sudden need to define, and state more clearly, a certain political identity of every group—which has become as important as classifying the enemies. The obvious result is an isolation of ideological factions. This development is not necessarily very positive in the strict meaning of the word 'positive'.

Again, a joyful tragedy of militant affirmation turns into a drama, action into reaction, creation into reproduction; and we can return back to the beginning of this article and start to analyse once more how power for power's own sake will function. I stress that vitality does not mean pacifism or any other restriction of tactics—the only restrictions for life are one's own limits and desires.

## Part II: A brief introduction to barbarian theory

The full content of active affirmation will appear when it is related to an idea of truth. Truth and language are bound together. Language can be used for lying, but *lying language* is not language anymore. This indicates that there is a great deal of truth in language. But what is this truth? The whole symbolic order that language requires is based on discipline and trust, in a similar way to value on the stock market. *A truth is a contract*—even though language is never exactly precise and so is never fully trustworthy. This vagueness of language is then also in the truth and so projected on the whole world.

Trust is a basic fundament of ethics and the very point that separates ethics from personal morality. In ancient Rome—to which the concept of modern law owes its foundation—the most severe crime was to break an oath. Punishment was not merely execution but expulsion from the juridical and ethical system so the offender could be killed without any legal or ethical consequences. However, the kind of trust that Romans knew—and how we know it now—cannot be built on voluntarism. That is

why there has to be another understanding of the whole epistemology of trust, and to present that, we need to introduce a *barbarian* as an oath breaker by nature.

As one who does not understand cannot be trusted but cannot lie either, the barbarian who—by definition—*does not speak the language of the polis* (city), does not stand under the same law and order that considers citizens and the polis, and makes them different from barbarians and barbarian towns. Yet the definition of a state is based on a legislation that

draws the borders and divides citizens from outsiders or those who are lawless.

For the Athenians, the polis was surely much more than a bunch of houses next to each other. It was the place of public affairs a.k.a. politics. An Athenian was in the first place a citizen, and only then a human being; they were "by nature political animals", as Aristotle wrote, deriving the word 'politics' from the presupposed sociality of human nature, subordinated to several hierarchies and other social restrictions.

The themes of this text are also meant to be contemplated inside and about the anarchist universe. I have a few very general observations in my mind. If the desire for anarchy is to liberate ourselves in order to express our heterogeneity, personality and personal morality freely, why is it that all we see is people wearing black and not really defined by their personality in any means or at least not explicitly showing it? Why are we united in a general void rather than a positive affinity and curiosity awakened by our differences?

A big part of anarchism is clearly defined by a minimum common denominator: the struggle and enmity. Unfortunately, this minimum has become an identity, a *minimum logos* that defines good and evil; political or nothing, but

political without adjectives. What is this kind of political subjectivity?

Minimization of personal characteristics (a.k.a. black bloc) used to be a tactic, now it is an anarchist fashion. Anarchism without adjectives used to be a base for co-operation, now *existence without adjectives* seems to be the definition of an anarchist (anti-) identity. How can *freedom* look and sound one and the same? Maybe there is a misunderstanding about what freedom means? Maybe we try to define it from the wrong angle—or as we say in that barbarian country I am from, maybe we are *trying to climb into a tree arse first*. Maybe the lack of positive affirmation is preventing us from radicalizing the political situation at its very basis—from how we understand ethics.



I do not look back to ancient Greece from any hellenophilic reasons or because I write this text in Athens, but because the model of antique civilization is still present in many thoughts and concepts of contemporary culture and politics. And what I am presenting here is not an historical study, but rather an allegorical essay that shamelessly uses all suitable elements from cultural history to its own end.

In Ancient Greek the word *βάρβαρος* (barbaros), "barbarian", did not only mean a stranger, but it was an antonym for *πολίτης* (polites), "citizen" (from *πόλις* – polis, "city-state"). This contrariety of citizen and barbarian shows that barbarism was never really about a foreignness or different ethnicity, but more about political subjectivity. From the perspective of a citizen, a barbarian was stateless, non-national and so non-political, and his access to the political realm of the citizen was prohibited by law. It is important to note that ideas of politics, state and nationality have always been largely incorporated in so-called 'Western Thought'.



David Graeber defines democracy not as a concrete form of government that was invented in ancient Greece but as the belief "that humans are fundamentally equal and ought to be allowed to manage their collective affairs in an egalitarian fashion using whatever means appear most conducive". For him democracy is regarded as more like a spirit or a sensitivity that is as old "as human intelligence itself". I commend Graeber for many of his theoretical

developments, but here I fully disagree. What Graeber defines as a democracy is rather one of many sorts of barbarism. A democracy is surely nothing else than "a concrete form of government that was invented in ancient Greece", recycled later by liberal nationalists, and so has never had anything to do with any egalitarian fashion.

Instead of equating democracy with some sort of *true nature of human beings*, I could call old *Athenian democracy a perverted and institutionalized form of barbarism*. This is important to notice if we want to see what a barbarian means in relation to the political body of a citizen-society.

As Plato brightly perceived, the barbarians were not a true category as they were not one homogenous group even though they were all included "under the single name of barbarians". However, the barbarians *could* have come from egalitarian societies or communities unlike citizens of the polis, who never had experienced any social equality larger than some sort of unconditional but aristocratic *φιλία* (philia), "a friendly affection".

But the cultural background of any barbarian is not as important as their presence as strangers in a highly structured social organization such as the polis—and this is their weird yet political position, which Plato seems to want to avoid by refusing to understand an essence of something that he cannot categorize. It is more substantial to think about how the barbarians reveal the arbitrariness and authoritarian structures of citizen-society, just by existing and not speaking the language of the polis.

This is how we can locate a law-destituent essence of the barbarians in language and especially in relation with the concept of *logos*, which means a rational discourse of language that separates speech from senseless noise. In ancient thought *logos* was not only a semantic term but also a major principle of politics (as a capacity to make the private public) and ethics (as a possibility to perceive difference between good and evil).

“For Aristotle, *logos* is something more refined than the capacity to make private feelings public: it enables the human being to perform as no other animal can; it makes it possible for him to perceive and make clear to others through reasoned discourse the difference between what is advantageous and what is harmful, between what is just and what is unjust, and between what is good and what is evil.”

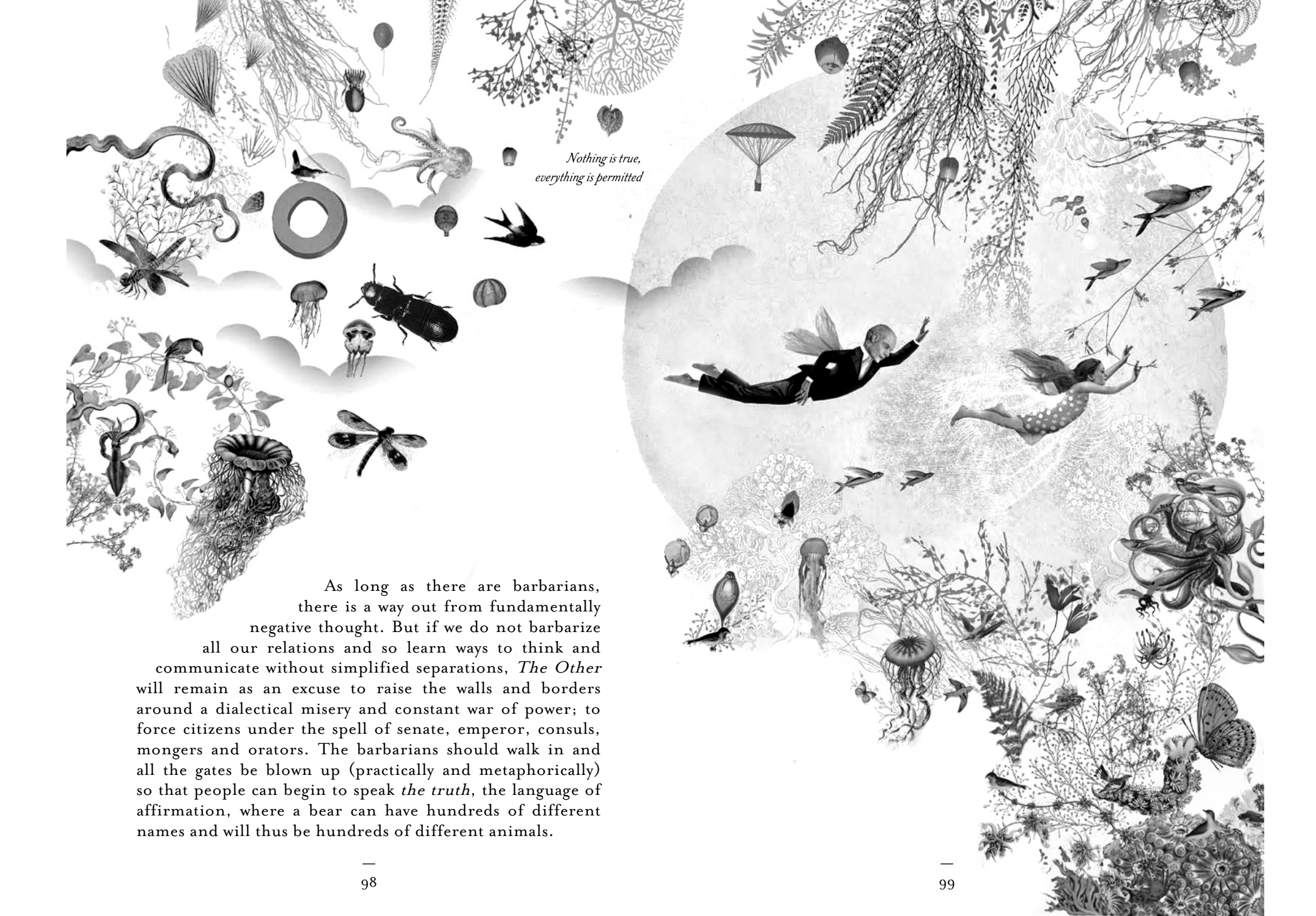
According to Aristotle, the language of the polis—based on *logos*—splits the world in two: “between what is good and what is evil” can be made clear to others. As I stated in the very beginning of this text, these two qualities create the fundamentals of modern politics. But a barbarian—who is unable to speak the language of the polis—is excluded from this kind of dialectics because of his position outside the law-constituting *logos* of the citizen-state.

However, this does not mean that a barbarian is not a human being. On the contrary, he/she is first and foremost a human, and is so more than anything else: “the man of flesh and bone; the man who is born, suffers, and dies—above all, who dies; the man who eats and drinks and plays and sleeps and thinks and wills”, and if we continue a previous quote from Miguel de Unamuno,

“the man who is seen and heard; the brother, the real brother”. Seen and heard without legislative and dividing *logos*, but through a language based on affirmation and mutual acceptance. This kind of “barbaric brother- or sisterhood” requires an Athenian or any other citizen to step outside of an identity of citizen (defined by rights and obligations) beyond the law and order where the questions of sociality and sovereignty has to be thought again from a totally new basis.

The question of barbarism is actually a question of an encounter that is not based on any negativity such as law, social status, blood, nationality, religion, ideology or some other artificial unity, but voluntariness, mutuality, desire, curiosity, challenge and other forms of positive affirmation, and treated in the same manner: with hospitality, manslaughter or true revolution (that is inevitably not a question about the means of production but a highly existential one). Sounds dramatic, but it is not. It is rather a tragedy, where “the hero is joyful, this is what has, up to now, escaped the authors of tragedies”, as Nietzsche understood.





*Nothing is true,  
everything is permitted*

As long as there are barbarians, there is a way out from fundamentally negative thought. But if we do not barbarize all our relations and so learn ways to think and communicate without simplified separations, *The Other* will remain as an excuse to raise the walls and borders around a dialectical misery and constant war of power; to force citizens under the spell of senate, emperor, consuls, mongers and orators. The barbarians should walk in and all the gates be blown up (practically and metaphorically) so that people can begin to speak *the truth*, the language of affirmation, where a bear can have hundreds of different names and will thus be hundreds of different animals.



Every genera

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civilization is

invaded by

<sup>The</sup>Barbs

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