

## 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."

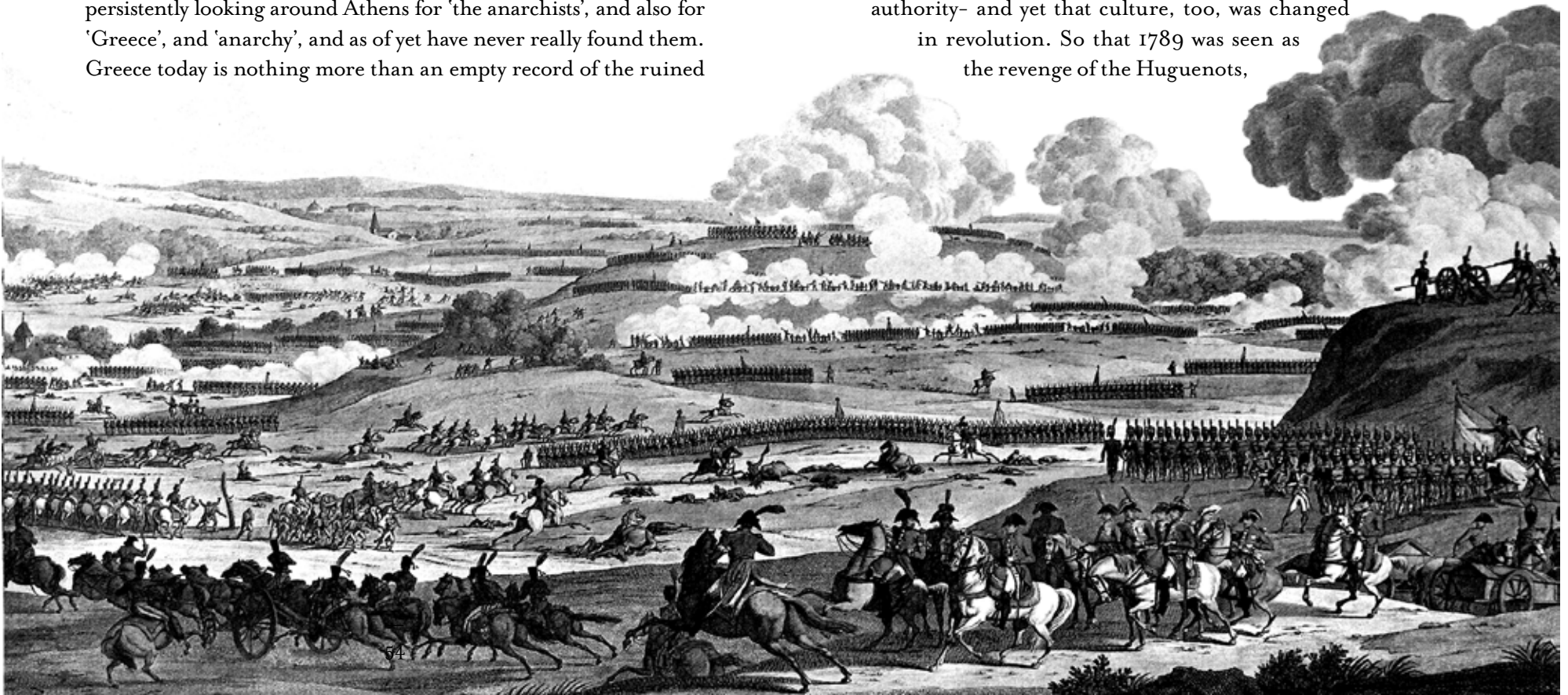
As well, in terms of sustainability, the current model of activism or even the idea as such needs to be questioned. Most people do not have the requisite abnegation to reach the level of sacrifice demanded. And thus, predictably, this model has only worked in small groups for a small period of time, 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

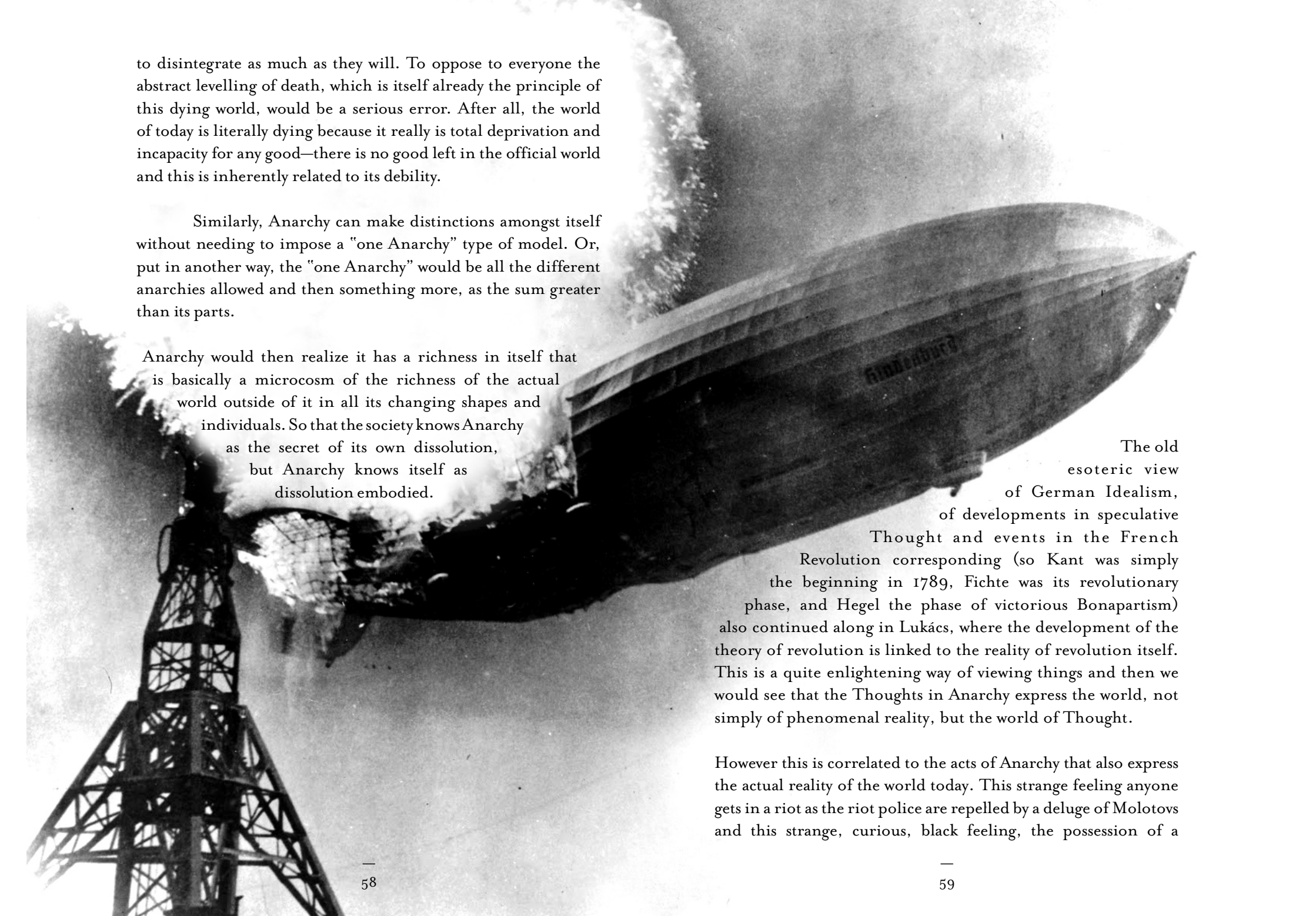
hopes. And to close with a brief note, this workers' movement both was dedicated to leaving behind Christianity yet also had some Christian or militant components.

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.

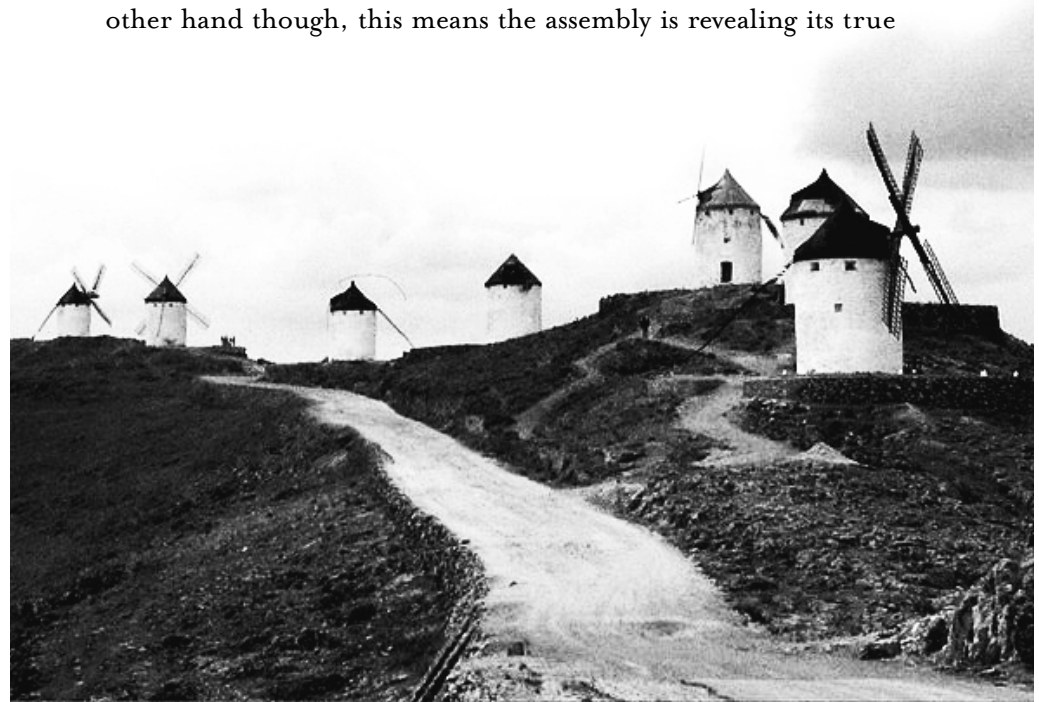
As Hegel tells us, History is the history of the advance of Liberty: to resurrect this idealist schema, we simply need add one more new form, that of penultimate liberty, of Anarchy.

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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.

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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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