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A compilation of texts, a contribution to
a correspondence between those who desire
anarchy and subversion

Over the last decade we have been made witness to the naked brutality of power. In the four corners of the earth domination has displayed its capacity to wreck devastation without hesitation. Those who were just holding on to their last lines of dignity have been dragged down in the mud. Those who rose up to regain their dignity and fight for freedom, have been smothered and massacred. Not content with the daily administration of oppression, it seemed as if the rulers were aiming for a decisive victory by escalating their repressive violence.

They were mistaken. Instead of resignation, we are witnessing the resilience of those who want to live against all odds. The ruins that power left behind, as monuments to its scorched earth tactics and as a warning for the future, are in our hands the first stones of a new life. The cynical calculations of politicians, who are willing to sacrifice whole generations to uphold their political reign or their economical dogmas, have been erased by the unforeseen. An invisible line has been crossed; beyond this line humiliation is no longer tolerated. Where this line is drawn, and why there, is to remain unknown till it has been crossed. That there is a line is a certainty that the dominant forces wished to ignore.

Many take a passive attitude due to the unpredictable character of that moment, when the social order is not only confronted by a few rebels but by a full-on rebellion. But for anarchists the knowledge of this resilience of people should warm our hearts and nourish our determination that any instance of rebellion has the potential of overflowing.

In order to survive we all adapt to a certain extent to the daily lot of humiliations that are part of authoritarian societies. But surviving isn't enough and another line crossed can be one too many. These lines cannot be imposed by ideology or some kind of universal truth. And in a sense they are random, but that doesn't make them meaningless. On the contrary, they are the starting point of an existence that matters; one that rebels against its subjugation.

Autumn 2019

Issue 5

Cut Straight To The Fear

First appeared as Parlons peur mais parlons bien in Sans détour (journal anarchiste apériodique), Issue 2, May 2019

I think it's important to question ourselves about the sensations and emotions that this society, that we want to fight against and in which we live, uses to legitimise itself and to nourish the idea that its necessity is inescapable.

Capitalist organisation of life – based on exploitation, on the imprisonment of troublemakers, on the poisoning of the planet and on techno-scientific ideology – has a well-stocked arsenal of weapons of mass pacification. To uphold its domination, the eternal rule of the strongest employs coercion and raw violence as inevitable means. But it also has elaborated a different set of tricks over time.

Other institutions and tools taking part in the construction of the subject/model citizen – like culture, religions, family, school, means of mass communication – work continually towards annihilation and paralysis of any urge of rebellion and individual destruction by leveraging the emotional sphere of all of us.

The hand of the state delicately shapes our emotional sphere while constructing, through this silent operation, the most solid bases of social peace.

Fear is one of these instruments, sharp and venomous.

"Fear the Lord, you his holy people, for those who fear him lack nothing."

Psalm 34:9

"For by this authority that has been given to 'this man' [the Leviathan] by every individual man in the commonwealth, he has conferred on him the use of so much power and strength that people's fear of it enables him to harmonize and control the wills of them all, to the end of peace at home and mutual aid against their enemies abroad."

T. Hobbes

All powers resort to fear to legitimise their existence and to reproduce – en masse – the reverence of their subjects. It's an old, polymorphous history that deserves to be mentioned to understand certain mechanisms inherent to domination and power, and to not attach an innovative and exceptional character to the society of control in which we are living. Modern Europe, the social structure of which had been destabilised by serious demographic catastrophes and the plague, is certainly an indicative example. It seems that the daily life of individuals – crossed by permanent fears connected to the unknown (like the fear of the sea, stars, ghosts...) and by contingent fears (like the plague, passing armies, drought, hunger...) – was populated by a feeling of permanent anguish. These fears – partly culturally and historically determined – have been channelled by the ruling class and in particular by the Church that embodied power at that time. It strove to construct interpretative frameworks and an imaginary that permits the identification, naming and representation of these fears. It put in place a process of normalisation of the emotional sphere in the religious and moral frame of Christianity, aiming to integrate populations that were often resistant to the sternness of religious order. The ruling classes would thus construct an inventory of internal and external enemies of the constituted order. They would represent as agents of evil that Satan mobilises to impose his domination (Turks, Jews, heretics, witches, madmen...). In this manner it would provide the dominated masses the theological arguments allowing to interpret that feeling of fear and anguish. While at the same time allowing them to stigmatise and control those parts of the population that resisted the constituted order, those living on the fringes of all norms. It is not a coincidence if the years of the unleashed hunt against heretics coin-

cides with the fight against vagrancy and with the imprisonment of the poor, with the goal of reducing the ranks of potentially rebellious and to clean the cities of possible contaminations.

To dominate through fear. To poison the existence of individuals with a profound feeling of worry and anguish. For which at the same time is proposed the sinister moral and security antidote that conceals a project of total submission. It's not a matter of making forced analogies between two completely different times and social contexts, but of considering propaganda through fear as an instrument characteristic of all forms of authority. Power – yesterday between the hands of the Church and today of the state, capitalism and techno-science – manipulates the weaknesses of its potential subjects to filter through their conscience its inevitable necessity.

We're living today in a *society of risks*, a society used to representing and considering itself constantly on the brink of disaster. Not only the individual, but also the entire society is incessantly threatened. And the risk doesn't only come from outside – for example natural catastrophes – but it is produced by society itself on a political, ecological or public health level. A risk – so concrete that it becomes banal – that becomes a harrowing mirror of social life for everyone and transforms into fear. When this fear takes on concrete forms (for example when an event of extreme seriousness occurs: a terrorist attack, a nuclear incident, an oil spill, a pandemic), power imposes its ritual frame to control and channel it. Beyond these moments, it inhabits in a muted way the miserable existence of the subject. The fear that threatens, that can appear suddenly from everywhere. And the individual without any hold on the world and on their emotions, delegates control to those who are supposed to be in possession of the knowledge and power to contain it.

Take for example the fear of environmental disasters, which are linked notably to the consequences of the progress of science, of technique and of technology. Which continue to provoke unexpected effects and with great severity. A risk existing in the four corners of the world. Where capitalism thirsty for energy and primary materials to reproduce itself, and continues to construct and feed massive and destructive infrastructures – the source of exploitation and poisoning. Only states and science can "guarantee" a protection from these infrastructures

once installed (for example electrical and nuclear plants, oil drilling...).

Likewise on the more specifically "political" terrain, where consensus always prevails over coercion. Collective emotions – being expressed especially in reaction to unexpected events mobilising the attention of the media – imprison public space in a network of passions orchestrated by a rhetorical and institutional device. One that shapes the emotions of citizens in the narrow grid of identity; national, cultural, ethnic or religious. And in France during the last years we don't lack examples of big collective passions produced and steered by the state.

Like the recent, paradoxical image of thousands of people who with tears in their eyes comment on the work done by the nice little fire that transformed the Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris into an inferno (one that didn't respect the rigid protocol of every temple that respects itself). Persons who join their rulers in a mystical contemplation, who mourn the destruction of a sinister symbol while claiming it as "our history" or "our national identity". Resounding tears next to a generalised indifference of those same citizens towards the news on the front pages that 15 April. Namely that it is French weapons which bomb the inhabitants of Yemen, weapons and equipment sold by the French government to Saudi-Arabia and the Emirates.

The emotion that strengthens the Nation, which has traversed French society after the attacks in 2012 (in Toulouse and Montauban) and in January and November of 2015. The collective emotion which always appears at the right time. Which the state doesn't hesitate to capitalise support on. Which leverages fear; a feeling that power uses as cement



to build its hierarchical and authoritarian order. A fear of the unknown, of the unforeseen, of what we cannot dominate. A fear to which society accustoms us. That fear is not left to its own. But it is channelled and projected on clearly identifiable objects. It is thus transformed into a precise fear.

This is the Leviathan at work. This allegory of a monstrous Union, that of the state, which responds with an organised fear to the fear unleashed in men. "That mortal god to which we owe, under the immortal God, our peace and defence", the only capable of putting an end to the spectre of the "war of all against all". A spectre that is supposed to be engrained in the dominant imaginary and to be the only way of viewing the absence of the state.

A monster that works tirelessly to manufacture the *external enemy* (the legalised or illegalised immigrant, radical Islamism, health emergencies coming from elsewhere) which is functional for the consolidation of a feeling of unity and internal coherence, as well as for its home-made alter ego: the *internal enemy*. Criminals, rebels, *banlieusards*, French jihadists or yellow vests (depending on the season) who spread danger in the streets of the cities. They are pushed by the rhetoric of power to an irrational dimension; while on one side exaggerating the real aspects and on the other side flattening out all conscious and critical characteristics. An enemy that permeates the social tissue which contributes to a permanent feeling of distrust and anguish, pushing into the background other fears for which the state and capitalism are the sole responsables (like exploitation, inhumane living conditions, the proliferation of pollution...).

A fear, *perpetually hammered in by all the media*, which is instilled in citizens from their early childhood. It's enough to think about the countless anti-terrorist exercises inflicted on students of all ages for years already in the oh-so-republican French schools. In some cases consisting of real role-plays of terrorist attacks (explosions, firing of bullets, assaults) without prior warning for the involuntary protagonists. And the students – already recorded, controlled and watched over in different ways in schools – seem to react to these experiences by developing a profound feeling of anguish. During these occasions of "exercises" (of securing, of confinement...) the students, budding citizens, become literally hostages of a state that terrorises.

The strategy is clear. On one side the fear of the other that paralyzes consciences. This contributes to *feed*

the war between the poor, hindering any urge to revolt against those really responsible for the profound anxiety that this era of desolation instills in the hearts of the living. On the other hand power, which shapes the fears of its subjects, swiftly proposes all kinds of antidote. In a flash *the tyrant transforms in a protector* in whose arms individuals – now convinced that they *know nothing and can do nothing* – can only surrender.

The path is thus open to all kinds of *illusionary protections* in a *spiral of security* that only tightens the net of control. Through more generalised measures like the state of emergency (practically permanent in France since the attacks of 2015) against the terrorist threat, the lasting militarisation of urban spaces, and first the experimentation and then the application of technologies that allow for a surveillance that is increasingly capillary.

The state answers to the fear of terrorism or daily violence by infesting the cities with surveillance cameras (today called video-protection; either on the streets or in the pockets of municipal cops) and all kinds of sensors. There are the continuous experiments with new tools like the cameras installed in Nice with facial recognition, the sound recorders in a neighbourhood of Saint-Étienne, the security applications for smartphones like the one being experimented with by zealous citizens who want to denounce "antisocial behaviour" through video calls to the police, or drones – already used during demonstrations – to control mass events such as festivals or used daily by municipalities at the forefront who gave it to their local police force as a mobile means of video surveillance and which maybe tomorrow will fly en masse over the metropolitan streets. Those are some of the repressive measures that the state proposes as a remedy to the insecurity that it had itself cultivated and nourished.

"Only the state can protect us", repeatedly affirms the decent citizen – terrorised and atomised in their dispossession. Let's think about the fear that pours out of the television interviews after riotous demonstrations that have coloured many Saturdays. The fear inspired by the state through its media servants, of the "hooligans", of the "black blocs", of the "ultra-yellows", basically of all imaginary figures that are supposed to embody the violence of those that revolt and come out on the streets.

It is the same citizens – brought to identify themselves, in an identitarian withdrawal, with the ground on which they trample, work and consume – who learn to perceive those who come from the outside

as a danger coming from a hostile "elsewhere". The same who feel reassured by the multiplication of surveillance and the imprisonment of outsiders, by the hardening of deportation measures and the strengthening of national borders.

Individuals who are alienated from their emotions, incapable of living them, of reflecting them, of acting them. They *delegate management* to the state and the bosses. And that doesn't only concern the most contingent and historically determined fears like those we have briefly mentioned. The feeling of insecurity and anguish leveraged by the state concerns also the more intimate one linked to the fear of physical pain, psychological suffering, sickness, death.

The state hand in hand with pharmaceutical multinationals and with the blessing of scientists makes the total medicalisation of every "dysfunction" of the body into a social diktat. While capital finances the work of scientists and technicians who seek to conceive of a total, robotic intelligence. An intelligence imagined as the miracle cure of all ills. And which will give life to a transhumanist world in which one doesn't age and maybe even doesn't die.

In this ideal society that has been built for us – *a society intoxicated by fear* – the inevitability of the domination of the state and techno-scientific knowledge in all areas of existence, imposed as a self-evident fact, has reached the most intimate sphere of each individual. A society that would like to suppress adventure to condemn us to security; "justice can bury alive whoever holds their head high". Because, despite its apparent untouchability, in the silence of its greatness and the loneliness of its terror, the Leviathan also has fear. The fear of a moment of rupture. Of that "renunciation of subjection", which is to call into question, in words and acts, of the authority of the sovereign (to which one has originally freely submitted by an unspoken conclusion of a contract). The fear of a revolt which represents a constant and latent danger to this political system.

On the contrary, in a movement of rupture the individual capable of freeing themselves and freeing others should push back against the intrusions into their emotions and their passions. The individual should learn to live them and hold on to them. Thus to go beyond the obstacles to which we are confronted in the war against this system.

Those who think that this world can be attacked and

destroyed, put all they have – time, determination and the capacity of identifying the enemy – at service of the fight against the state, capital and the techno-scientific system. And instead of the catastrophism of science-fiction and of *despair* we should include in this arsenal the capacity to confront ourselves in our emotional sphere, in the ways we have of listening to our tensions, to *know* and *go beyond* our limits.

Human, All Too Human

We, anarchists, enemies of this order, we who want to destroy it and for this reason confront it directly; how do we relate to our fears?

Some time ago an episode made me think about this question. It was after participating in an assembly in solidarity with arrested and imprisoned anarchist comrades during which an energetic exchange took place. A young comrade stood up to older comrades because he interpreted their words as an exhortation to not have fear. A feeling he sensed he was suspected of having.

For the first time I noticed at what point this feeling is a taboo between comrades. One shouldn't have fear, neither mention it nor invoke it, and watch out for who talks about it. Any more or less voluntary reference to this common feeling could be perceived as an insult.

Maybe because there is no space for feelings that are commonly and crudely associated to weakness, passivity and cowardliness in the self-representation that anarchists who practice direct action forge of themselves. One prefers displaying confidence, irreverence and reluctance about introspection.



But it seems to me that the ascetic and combative image of the anarchist-hero is far removed from reality. Besides, what is a hero? In the classical mythology it is a half-God to which are attached phenomenal achievements, taken over as the model for a group who will be founders of a new order. Anarchists who put or have put themselves at stake by acting don't only have nothing divine, but are they not *a fortiori* the bearers of disorder? Isn't that the specificity of their violence – which is a means of conquering freedom? And don't anarchists confront themselves in their emotions and fears by carrying out this violence?

We put up a wall against fear and anguish, making our passion and rage artificial and inhuman. As if those who choose to act would be gifted with a superhuman will. And which by the effect of an inverted mirror, transforms in a justification for inaction for those who don't consider of themselves as disposing of this force.

I think on the contrary that we could think again the beauty of the anarchist passion that pushes us to act against this world if we succeed in freeing ourselves from this representation. We all have our fears. And fighting also means confronting them on our own and with others, to make them into travel companions, to face them, to defy them, to invert them.

To know one's limits, to be able to identify them and to discuss them; all this allows to have the means of going beyond them.

Because the choice and the decision to act also entails the transformation of our fears. It could lead to paralysis if we are subjected to our fears. But they can be surpassed as any other obstacle in the choice to provoke a rupture with the world that surrounds us, if we understand them. In a moment of revolt, of destruction that reintroduces life into our existence.

Because to give up fighting would be like dying.

And it is unthinkable to provoke others to rebel without shattering this atmosphere charged with fear, without puncturing the individual bubble of "I don't know anything, I cannot do anything". It would be difficult for the fear to change sides – as one hears often being repeated as a refrain – if we don't even know and recognise ours.

And the anarchist fight, far from being a supernatural gift, is a practice of will, of determination, of effort (and not of sacrifice). By the individual who leaves behind the comfortable space of certainties. And who storms the world *with the idea of being capable of succeeding* and with the vital energy of someone who is ready to *put oneself at stake*, to *assume the risks* that

are part of the fact of thinking and acting as an enemy of the state, capital and power.

Nothing innate, but the fulfilment of a raging tension.

Nothing more human.

And I'm aware that certain comrades have a similar reaction of paralysis and frustration when they confront themselves with the exceptional experiences of anarchists from the past. Anarchists who fought in all four corners of the world against oppression and domination. As if the greatness of their exploits and their lives would be a heritage too heavy to carry or a confrontation too hard to support. Nevertheless if we manage to free ourselves from this aesthetic distancing which is at work in the heroic imaginary, we could relish the force of a will that can only inspire us. And to say it with the words of a comrade who answered those who considered the will to be a metaphysical trick of anarchists: "*We're not talking about the abstract and metaphysical will, the one of Schopenhauer or of Nietzsche; but of the creative and active will of individuals and of the great mass – of the former more than the latter. A will that has to be force and action at the same time.*"

Anarchy is nothing like the cynicism of the bureaucrat, but continues to nourish itself with ideals and myths. And this is not because it finds its strength in a transcendent epic of half-Gods unattainable by fear, but in the strength of an all-too-human fighting spirit that should be cultivated.

"If there is a personal fate, there is no higher destiny, or at least there is, but one which he concludes is inevitable and despicable. For the rest, he knows himself to be the master of his days. At that subtle moment when man glances backward over his life, Sisyphus returning toward his rock, in that slight pivoting he contemplates that series of unrelated actions which become his fate, created by him, combined under his memory's eye and soon sealed by his death. Thus, convinced of the wholly human origin of all that is human, a blind man eager to see and who knows that the night has no end, he is still on the go. The rock is still rolling. I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! One always finds one's burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well. This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy."

A. Camus

Every Day In The Present!

First appeared untitled in *Tormenta (Gegen die Herrschaft über Mensch und Natur, München)*,
Issue 1, Spring 2019

For weeks – now even for months – every Friday people go on the streets to protest against the destruction of the planet we're living on.

This destruction appears in a thousand ways and ever more blatant. We experience it more and more often not only through the outpouring of the media, but also in our own lives. Also when perhaps many of us didn't experience one of the environmental disasters that increased as a consequence of climate change, we are seeing extreme weather more clearly for example. And we're feeling the effects more strongly that living in this world has on our bodies and minds – in a world that is increasingly grey, suffocating, hectic, calculated. A world that is determined through technology, by "practical constraints" and through other persons. Life in the city where the air is so polluted that breathing becomes hard and where its ocean of concrete and its never ending noise tortures our senses, is only one of the daily examples for lots of us.

These aren't first and foremost problems and conditions of the future, but already of the present.

And indeed, there I see one of the problems with the content of the FridaysForFuture marches; when the attention is mainly directed to the future, how shitty everything is already is easily camouflaged.

They talk to us about the future to make us accept a miserable present; parents and teachers ("Get your diploma so you can find a good job"), employers ("retirement pension"), politicians ("climate targets for 20XX"), priests ("paradise after death") and scientists ("the bright future that is bestowed upon us through intelligent, nano and biotechnology").

A present in which we spent days in boring classrooms, in which we obey and leave experiences unmade, in which our lives are so tedious and our friendships so superficial that even smartphones seem more exciting, in which our planet gets destroyed more every day, in which every day animal species go extinct, people starve, are forced to flee, die in wars, get locked up... and in which the places where we live are already hostile to life and get each

day more hostile, which we only endure while we're already deadened or escape into artificial, technological worlds of illusions (social media, television, Netflix, Virtual Reality, video games etc.).

What is robbed from us by politics and science – and to whom the FridaysForFuture marches direct their demands – is first of all a self-determined life here and now. In this world which they defend and represent, there can hardly be a question of taking our lives in our own hands.

When one focuses their attention on the future, one maybe can hope that politics will change something, that the economy will change something, that scientific progress will change something... But then when we look at the present, we lose any trust in them. Because it becomes clear to us (or should become clear to us) how unbearable everything is; what they are right now doing with the world and our lives! And that to put hope in them is pointless. Politics, economy and science - which are mainly about the exercise of power and the accumulation of money – will, in the future as today, when necessary, go over the corpses of animals, humans and planets (also maybe in more sophisticated and better camouflaged ways...).

Isn't it then already time to consider the possibilities of how to resist the devastation that rages over our earth and inside ourselves? And that in doing so we don't make ourselves depend on the insight and will of those who even in this devastation see a financial, political or strategical benefit?

Possibilities in which we don't direct ourselves to those who in the present make sure that everything is what it is and instead take this change into our own hands, if we want change in the future?

Not only skipping classes! Let's also skip the future and present which others prescribe for us and let's find own paths to shape our lives and a world worth living for.

Hostility Towards Politics

First appeared as L'Inimicizia verso la politica in "Senza misure; Quel giorno che Cremona bruciò di gentilezza" (by Emma Varlin, S-edizioni), 2016

"Resolve to serve no more, and you are at once freed."

La Boétie

Between the beginning and the middle of the last century a brilliant mind of surrealism, André Breton, noticed that in the presence of the irreparable, nothing is more miserable than saying that rebellion serves no purpose, because rebellion finds its justification within itself.

More or less during the same period an erratic philosopher persecuted by the Nazis, Günther Anders, didn't let go of his relentless critique against the monstrosity of the atomic bomb and the world of war that instigates it. This fierce enemy of oppression even went as far as saying that humans – because of their total submission to technique – are doomed to become *obsolete* if they don't embark on a struggle against the latter. His positions were quite the shock for certain academics and servants of science from his time.

Certainly, neither the former nor the latter were really taken into consideration during their lifetimes and, even after their deaths, only a few passionate

and furious dreamers of words of freedom have deepened their studies and their compelling advice. These two individuals had in common that they captured the spirit of those times, because their critiques never seemed as grounded as in the moments of rebellion.

To say that the world of today is reigned by technique seems a banality. To say that technique is eliminating ethics, is going towards a quite precise critique.

Why say such a brazen thing when what surrounds us does so *technically*? Why provoke concerns towards a technical world, when many have integrated it in their lives and use it on an industrial scale?

Today human beings don't ask themselves what is just, but they strive to find what works and their existence only tends towards that.

They don't ask themselves anymore what is just, because in this world dominated by technique what is just is *what works*.

How many moralists have asked themselves after moments of revolt like 24 January : what was the purpose of this day of rage? [On 24 January, 2015 in Cremona, in the north of Italy, riots break out after a comrade was assaulted by fascists and heavily beaten. Banks, real estate agencies and the headquarters of several institutions are attacked]

This question, in itself as ridiculous as tragic, presupposes that ideas have to be instruments that shouldn't be evaluated according to the meaning or the explosive upheaval that they carry, but on the grounds of their efficacy.

What is politics if not a technique that takes the upper hand over the possibilities that are harboured within the relations that give sense to a possible rupture in all the – more or less diffuse – moments of revolt?

Wouldn't it be the shrewdness of a politician to subordinate your ideas to the tactics of the moment?

Is it politics or ethics that answers to all that? Polit-



ics, particularly in uncontrollable situations, always strategically chooses the tactic of appeasement of the spirits. Ethics – as a choice of life – doesn't consider tactics because it uses coherent means with the aim of getting rid of all tacticism.

Everything has become a means, the ends don't exist anymore. We have huge machines that produce an enormity of means without any idea of where we're going and forgetting where we've come from.

The ends have been brought back to zero faced with an irresponsible production of means. Because to produce is the evident sign of the times of misery.

The main preoccupation of these times, thus of the majority of humans, is efficacy. The means are justified by their efficacy.

We look favourably on what works. On the contrary, we denigrate what seems to fail or what doesn't seem to satisfy an instant need. It is technique that produces the efficacy of a means, and this is where many human gazes gravitate to and fixate on

The technical phenomenon – the one that works – evades little by little the human essence, with the mortal consequence that no judgement can be attributed to it.

How many question all the technological machinery that has progressively transformed our time and our places? Who thinks that technology is a means of social cohabitation?

Technique, combined with its huge technological means, is techno-science, in other words totalitarianism, made of instruments of force and structures of domination.

Technique, just like politics, has never been a set of means but is a real encompassing environment.

Technique and politics become science, to experiment in an authoritarian way. They move forward hand in hand with a whole bunch of technicians that work together for the construction of oppression.

In its exceptional character, insurrection is confronted with this technically political world. What sense does it make to carry an idea of subversion outside of moments of rupture, if it is to become *opportunists* at the moment that it becomes materially visible?

To start to think that means and ends are one is more than ever ethical. To separate means and ends is more than ever disgustingly political.

Radicality doesn't have any specific advantages, and doing the thing that seems more effective is not always synonymous with doing the right thing.

An ethical tension is independent of effects, positive or negative, which follow a certain way of thinking

and a certain view of the world. In fact, what counts is not the result, but the tension that leads to think and do a specific action.

The determination of certain actions – felt to their full potential – don't stay on the surface but run deep. The risk of not being at ease in certain situations can provoke the return to a reassuring normality.

And unfortunately, even during historical moments of rupture, even the insurgents are not immune to this. What drove Juan Garcia Oliver, in the 30's, during the Spanish revolution (of strong anarchist tones), to pass from an anarchist bandit to a minister of Justice in the republican government, with the Stalinists' backing? And what to say of Ferruccio Parri; unwavering partisan of sabotage during the resistance, then indulgent towards presidential decrees after the fall of the fascist dictatorship?

Maybe the fact of sitting on a seat of power? Or the incapacity to imagine another way of relating? Maybe the fear of passing through an open-ended dream of a different life that cannot be technically codified?

There's no prevalence of ethics over politics, or vice-versa, it's only a question of individual choices.

It's human to fall into certain errors. To drown oneself deliberately in suicidal tendencies already brings the smell of rotting flesh. And it's precisely because of this that nobody is immune to criticism.

The heart of every human has its obscure part; hiding this would mean lying to oneself. This is why insurgent moments put us in front of a very simple, fundamental question: security or liberty?

Do we want to perpetually live barely-passionate eternal present, where the catastrophe every day is that nothing happens? Or do we want to venture into the unknown, with its joy and pain?

Do we want the oppressive calm of the chain? Or the liberating tension of the open air?

Do we want to lock ourselves up in small spaces considered different but that maintain some of the cages that envelop us (of what's around us)? Or do we want to get out of our futile certainties to freely experiment what we feel?

Freedom carries a danger that is inherent to it. We cannot delegate the task to protect ourselves from danger neither to a power like the state nor to a transcendence like God. It is up to us to negate all *existential centrality* that ruins our life, with the aim of serving nobody and of being the masters of nothing. The will of emancipation and autonomy always challenges its moments of defeat, while it doesn't get inebriated on its own – always ephemeral – successes.

A small improvement in our lives is not synonymous with a small step towards freedom, but it's a short breath that helps us to go fiercely forward.

It's up to those who feel in themselves a liberating fire to break open the door of human impossibility; to find thousand and one escape routes out of a rotting institutional world, but also to desert those who reproduce their own objectification of the decaying role of the rebel.

Any institution, any approach that seeks to modify such or such institutional pact, nurtures obedience, but also badly hidden informal hierarchies; giving energy to that existential frustration.

It's low to demand pathetic rights (concessions) and to manage (to decide with those who are in charge) ridiculous claims that only help power to forge new weapons to defend themselves from those who are banished. It's a question of ethics and intelligence to emphasize the distance with those who collaborate with the police; irrespective of them doing it intentionally or because they are useful idiots.

The finite, the routine repetition cannot belong to us. To invite the infinite is craziness but also a perfect travel companion.

Individual revolt is compatible with generalized revolt. The freedom of all is a lie if individual freedom doesn't exist, remarked Emma Goldman. The life and the words of this revolutionary anarchist have always shed light on a question of vital importance: the drunkenness of pleasure can never be subjected to the reason of sacrifice.

The reason why individuals delegate to the state the task of organizing their time, is because they have renounced the aspiration of freeing themselves. They prefer to collectively delegate their existence



to institutions rather than, individually or in relationships of reciprocity, face their problems and their desires. It seems that we're afraid of determining the times and the ways of making the most out of ourselves. And it's on this fragility that the state constructs its devouring force.

That's why politics is linked to delegation and the ephemeral question of representation. That's why politics reproduces exactly what we already know. Everything is spectacle, nothing more.

The more the *decent citizen* relies on the state (even some supposed revolutionaries do it today...) which now swallows their whole imagination, the more the state demands the absence of dreams and imposes its own totalitarian reality on the *decent citizen*.

Not one qualitative sign comes out of submission, not one blasphemous word comes out of the repetition of the banal; you cannot create a world that aspires to freedom by starting from a compliance to politics.

To stay with both feet on the ground doesn't allow you to reach any utopia. It's only hypocrisy, like collecting signatures or eating organic. Not one *island of self-management* will remove the authoritarian world from our nightmares. As long as the state exists, there will not be any self-organization but only and always *co-management*.

The self-management of your own misery will never aid the idea of getting rid of it. It will certainly not be good intentions to transform the pathetic demands of concessions into a radical process of liberation.

A wave of liberation is far from politics. Politics is calculation and rational planning, it's not the expression of desires and spontaneity.

Everything political reeks of domination, because there's no politics without representation, there's no politics without corruption, there's no politics without boot-licking trickeries.

The creation of concentration camps in the heart of democratic Europe, of borders, of barbed wire, of cages and of armies in the streets, marks many people with the status of *excess humanity*, of human waste, who doesn't seem to matter to this world.

Those who persist in not understanding this reality as totalitarian, have internalized the assumption that the catastrophic past has been surpassed by a present and a future where the horrors of yesterday cannot find a place today.

Even less, of being collaborators of horrors. That would upset the sensitivity of all. But if we don't see and we don't hear, we collaborate and become, even indirectly, collaborationists. There is a very vis-

ible barricade: either we become hostile to this world and we seek to erase its projects, or we collaborate with its continuation. To not acknowledge this difference is one of the thousand atrocities of the existing.

How does the eye not see the rivers of blood in the streets, the ravaged corpses and the ever present, repulsive stench of death?

Thus, isn't it an existential affliction if we don't undergo ourselves the severity of this world, which is absolutely impossible when we open our hearts and eyes? However, by being the audience to the continuous manifestations of horrors, aren't we falling into another banalization, namely the banality of good?

Nevertheless, we live in a constant repetition of catastrophes, where the mass entertainment and the generalized consumption make quickly forget the cage in which we're trying to feel alive.

What happened in the past? What will happen today?

Didn't Nazism sacrifice a small amount of human beings for the 100 million persons living under the Third Reich? Being a bit provocative; didn't they *only sacrifice*, through a merciless death machine, some millions of human beings to protect the *well-being of all*?

Doesn't every war have its *unjust* victims? Besides, who are the right victims, given that no war is justifiable? Don't the detention centres, the prisons, the psychiatric hospitals and all places of imprisonment and confinement have the same purpose today? Are we so banal to think that we're not experiencing a continuation of certain Nazi ideals, just because of the absence of the former painter with the moustache and the stiff arm? It's nevertheless what's happening today.

State of emergency, emergency laws (yesterday anti-crisis, today anti-terrorist), concentration camps, walled borders and perpetual propaganda forged by the legitimate sons of Goebbels, are here to testify to the efficacy of this abomination.

Everywhere millions of individuals are stopped, registered, beaten up, encountering death in the democratic Mediterranean seas. Only because certain gentlemen want to contain the rage, anxiety and rebellion.

Why does all of this happen? Because the known resources of the earth are devoured by certain greed. Because for the increased wealth of a few, many others sink into the most destitute poverty. But above all, this happens because it seems that power doesn't anymore have opposition capable of disrupting its time, neither in front of it nor within its

fortresses and sanctuaries.

George Orwell understood very well two questions that are today resounding.

The first is that the control that produces the most incapacity of acting is not the fact of being constantly watched, but the fact of being aware of its possibility at any given moment. The second is a very recurring tragedy for any subversive: who to talk to when nobody is listening anymore?

Ignorance is strength, the monopoly of force in service of this world.

War is peace, an armed peace that reaps pacification between oppressed and oppressors and war between exploited.

Freedom is slavery, where in a world of domination the near victory of totalitarianism is given by the illusion of feeling free – paraphrasing Anders.

This world is thus the totality of horrors, a horrible environment where catastrophe is waiting at every corner. All politics is the latent representation of something that oppresses us.

The production of merchandise is joined with the deadly justification of all politics that administers and manages, where the management is a dialectical deception, which through words hides a police state and suffocating control.

Everyone is at the centre of their world, said Max Stirner. To affirm this means to deny all forms of hierarchy and authority, as they claim their own imposed centrality.

Every individual has their own uniqueness, not absoluteness, strictly connected to the mutuality of their relations. Because this world of law and money oppresses us with its presence as if it was nothing, but it's on this nothing that the liberating revolt has its base. It's precisely this conscience that permits one to fight against hierarchy, this knowledge that underpins another way of being together, founding one's life on radically different premises. To recognize his own uniqueness, Stirner wrote these fundamental words: the existence of the oppressor is the responsibility of the oppressed.

That said, it is up to each sensibility to reflect upon this, and the sooner the better.

It's certain that the *end of the most irresponsible responsibility* passes by the insurrectionary rupture. It's from the irredeemable break with habits that the possibility of something unimaginable and uncontrollable can emerge. Without a rupture the saying of an old rap song will continue to follow us: *life runs alongside death*.

[*"La vita corre in linea con la morte"*, Mauri B]

Letter Into The Void

First appeared as Brief ins Nichts in Fernweh (Anarchistische Strassenzeitung, München), Issue 31, August 2019

We live a life that condemns us to death from the beginning. We're born with the certainty of our end. And this life that demands so much from us, that loads so much weight on our shoulders, that resists our free choices and actions, can lead quite a few to pull the emergency brakes prematurely, when no strength and joy can be found to carry on the prescribed path to its end.

The impotence, disgust and exhaustion from existence can also stem from something outside of society, but I want to point to the social relations that give rise to the individual circumstances that drive the individual to suicide.

The lack of emotions and sensations seems to be a rather legitimate reaction to a surrounding that seeps a deep grey into our perceptions. Tied down by constraints - money, efficiency, exploitation - we're kept away from the places, persons and experiences that we long for. We're trotting along worn out paths instead of making our own discoveries, deviations and orientations. This is a world in which our paths channel us through a sea of concrete and asphalt, in which our senses are tortured, in which we cannot call time our own. In which each morning the alarm clock wakes us from dreams full of promise. We get driven from A to B in overloaded means of transport. And each evening we stumble totally exhausted into bed. While too often the money in the bank account even isn't enough for the rent. The question of meaning - in which the desire for life can push back the aversion of mere survival - doesn't seem to be possible to be answered in this constant fight for survival and conservation. In Germany each year around 10,000 persons commit suicide, and depression and burn-out seem to be the diseases of the 21st century. Doesn't that make us understand that we're not deranged, but the conditions in which we're living are?

Our inexisting freedom and the alienation of our lives are so all-encompassing that even our death, our end cannot lie in our own hands. Suicidals are chastised as deserters; moral repression and social

norms are the consequences. If we're anyhow here then we seem to be forced to submit to our duty to live. How can we expect from tired, exhausted and haggard persons that they discover joy and an appetite for life - for which the only alternatives seem to be some pharmaceuticals or rehabilitation measures - for a life that isn't ours?

Human misery, the painful process of converging and separating, venturing into new ways, changing ourselves or making choices... all are vulnerable moments; we can feel confused, overpowered, intimidated, crippled or lonely. Most particularly when we are persuaded that we cannot comprehend our own feelings, reactions and motives, that our own power of judgement is unreliable, that our mental processes are false and that we can only have hope of betterment through the aid of experts. Through the assignment in categories like "normal" and "abnormal" can the fear of being "sick" or not "normal" lead to paranoia. The fear of losing your social surroundings, of being seen as a burden or just of somehow being locked up. Agonies, "mental illness", feelings of - for example - alienation, loneliness and isolation are the destructive consequences of a society that suffocates our individuality. The belief that it is somehow "false", that it should be "corrected" (or at least suppressed) can only lead to the self-alien-



ation of people and to feeling themselves to be miserable and worthless. However, mental illness and their diagnostic categories are societal constructions. The border between the norm ("normality") and deviation ("mental illness") is partly a random attribution, based on conventions. While new legislation is drawn up constantly, to ever more tighten the corset of legality, new mental disorders are "discovered" to create new categories of "madness", to open up new markets for the pharmaceutical industry and to force people into an always smaller spectrum of "healthy". Also the new police mandates show how tightly intertwined these two things are – the repressive, policing structuring of the outside, the material world and the inner, mental world. The "Bavarian Mental-Illness-Assistance-Bill" foresees that any cop can lock up in a psychiatric institution someone who causes trouble or doesn't fit in the picture.

Psychiatry is a repressive instrument, equipped with state and police power, with locks and bars, with psychotropic drugs and tools of torture. It incorporates a certain idea, namely the assumption that the individual is a carrier of an invisible illness or an inherited strain which can be discovered by experts and "healed" through the use of force. Psychiatry becomes a means of social control and state power, endowed with authority, and which denies the individual with its own will and desires. For example the

heretics, witches, prostitutes, "deranged" and in fact all "social deviants" who were "treated" (tortured, exorcised, burned) by the Inquisition, shows well how the myth of "mental illness" is used by the system to repress. It is claimed that one is possessed by demons, which should be driven out and eliminated by whatever coercive means. Some switched from witch-hunting to psychiatry when the church began to lose its power, to basically do the same work; to take on the "possessed" and to try to adapt them to the societal standards. These standards change over time and space.

Behind the ideas of mental health and mental illness is a massive industry. A total surveillance system with closed sections and corresponding means; security personnel and technological devices, manufacturers of tools for recording, controlling and electroshocking and of course the pharmaceutical industry itself.

How can we recover, become "healthy" in a world that is sick, in institutions that lock us up, make us swallow drugs against our will and deny our own will? We cannot expect to find joy and wholeness without changing our surroundings, without changing this dreary reality. Every real, profound change also means necessarily a change of society as a whole. This society in which we can only choose between holding out or caving in, has to die so that we can live. So that we can take each others hand in the madness of being, without constraint or pressure.

Misleading Appearances

First appeared as Ingannare le apparenze on the website of Finimondo, September 2019

"With reference to current provisions prohibiting the publication of investigative acts, I call your attention to the serious disruption that occurs on a daily basis thanks to the press - through the reproduction of photographs of offenders arrested with serious charges [...] who are thus elevated to the honour of the most reprehensible notoriety".

Luigi Federzoni, Minister of the Interior,
telegram 17916, July 31, 1925
(sent nation-wide to the provincial prefects)

The use of censorship during fascism is a sadly known fact. Once the voices of the opposition had been eliminated, the regime assigned to the propaganda machine a practically exclusive task, in order to favour the spreading and deepening of fascist ideology. Within the country, there was no longer the need to crush a hostile enemy, but to shape, or rather, to produce, a faithful friend. It was a matter of imposing in all corners of life, a social perception of reality corresponding to the interests and the logic of the State, in order to capture, practically

automatically and unanimously, complete consensus. An impossible project to achieve without an incessant manipulation and distortion of a significant part of the news. A multi-faceted reality, one with all its chaotic and conflicting nuances, needed to be selected, dissected, amputated, calibrated, regulated and packaged, to make it look unambiguous and easily presentable. One of the main objectives of this veiling of reality was to eliminate any trace of disorder, not only on the streets but also in the mind.

The first measure taken in this sense was the law decree proposed to the king by Mussolini in 1923, which provided official warnings to any newspaper editor found guilty of spreading news relating to disruption of public order, class hatred or disobedience of laws. Then came the establishment of the national press office managed directly by the ministry, then the monopoly on all information admitted for publication entrusted to a single agency, then the formation of an order of journalists (still operating)... Language needed to be coded, the news properly filtered: particular attention needed to be paid to the financial situation (which could only be exulted), the imprisonment of the opposition had to be silenced, any crime news was minimized (in some cases the newspapers *La Stampa* or *L'Unione sarda* were confiscated for having given too much coverage to certain murders). In other words, Mussolini's censorship aimed at giving Italians the impression that under fascism social life was stable and in order.

These are known facts from the past, almost trivial to remember today. However... today we can ask ourselves, what is the use of censorship under democratic totalitarianism? Do we really think that the reality that emerges from today's mass media is the same one that we live in? Do we really think that the new technologies, which have made available to those in power deadly means to "format" minds, to prepare them for obedience, have not been completely taken advantage of?

To what extent does something that we consider *reality* correspond to something that actually happened, tangible, rather than to a perceived, virtual, artificial fact? Let us here make a small concrete example: individual acts of revolt, sabotages. According to mass media, here in Italy they occur very rarely, sporadically. Publicly known facts are usually the ones which are claimed by the authors, best if in a roaring manner, or the ones that have such visible and resounding consequences that it



would be simply impossible to silence. In other words, those acts that for institutional reasons – sometimes for obvious and other times unknown – are not neutralized in the most simple and summary way: filed away under "technical failure". Isn't it perhaps too obvious to *whom* it is most convenient to affirm that a given fire is the result of an unfortunate short circuit rather than a single match, *and for which reasons?* Who will ever notice the news of a technical failure? Unlike a sabotage, a malfunction does not run the risk of catching the eye and especially not of giving a bad example.

Let's be clear, we are not saying that here in Italy the wild fires of subversion are uncontrollably spreading – this would mean falling into the opposite perception error – just that today, more than in the past, what we call *reality* is most often a construction. Configurable, correctable, extendible and reducible, marketable. This is made abundantly clear by taking a look at the misadventures that transpired over the last year to the structures that supply with energy the world in which we survive. The ones mentioned in the mass media. Those which, eluding the eye, escape reflection.

So, after a minimal search, to our surprise, we discover that: on 26 February there is a fire in the inverter cabin of a wind turbine park in Girifalco (Catanzaro); on 20 March an underground Enel [multinational energy company] cabin goes up in flames in Loseto (Bari); on 14 April there is a fire in an electricity distribution cabin in Cremona; on 23 April an Enel cabin goes up in flames in Villanova di Bernareggio (Monza); on 3 May, in Livorno, a fire in an Enel cabin causes a blackout along the seafront and in the southern neighbourhoods of the city; on 5

May, an Enel cabin goes up in smoke in Palermo; on 9 May, a fire starts in an Enel cabin near Feltre; on 10 May, in Riglione (Pisa), a Telecom relay goes up in flames (the official cause... a short circuit); on May 15, in Florence, a telephone relay flares up; on June 12, an Enel cabin in Forlì burns down; on June 17, another fire devastates the umpteenth electric cabin in Afragola (Naples); on June 18, four Enel cabins catch fire in Corchiano (Viterbo); on June 20, a fire shuts down an Enel cabin in Vasto Marina (Chieti); on June 22, an Enel cabin is literally struck by lightning in Asolo (Treviso); on June 26, in Sassuolo (Modena), a fire to an electric cabin causes yet another distress; on July 10, an Enel cabin catches fire in Cagliari; the next day, July 11, the same thing happens in Orco Feligno (Savona); on July 21, a telephone relay burns down in Pieve di Compito (Lucca); on August 7, Enel loses another cabin in Germignaga (Varese); on August 24, an electric cabin goes up in smoke near a wind park in Arquà Polesine (Rovigo); on August 25, another electric cabin catches fire in Manocalzati (Avellino); on 27 August, the centre of Pescara is affected by a blackout due to a fire that breaks out in an Enel cabin; on 9 September yet another Enel electric cabin goes up in smoke in Prato Perillo di Teggiano (Salerno), and we all read that on 13 September, in Rome, a blackout blocked most of the subway lines.

Now, all these facts (we want to point out once again that this list is not exhaustive and was put together rather hastily, making it justified to wonder

how many more similar "accidents" have occurred) were the result of "technical failures" or "short circuits", according to mass media. However, at least in the case of the one which took place in Pisa on 10 May, we can find online an anonymous claim. Although this certainly does not mean that all these fires are the result of sabotages, the exact opposite can also be argued: it is not true that they are all the result of short circuits. And where the State's lie begins and where it ends is impossible to define. If on top of all this we add the many failed arson attempts (because they didn't spark, or were immediately contained or were thwarted in advance), which obviously don't make it on the pages of the mainstream press, the number of incidents that took place, but were never reported, increase in a way that is beyond our calculation.

No, we certainly don't want to force a glimpse or a dream of a reality that is practically overtaken by incendiary acts. We (attempt to) demonstrate that *what appears*, on mass media and on counter-information channels, is a dismal point of reference, a weak criteria, to try to grasp what is really moving and *its potentiality*. To grieve or regret "that nothing ever happens" makes little sense. It makes much more sense to ask oneself how (and where and why) to make something happen and, if it is deemed necessary, how to attempt to communicate it, piercing the techno-democratic censorship and attempting to give everyone a bad example. And once having found a possible answer, going for it.

An Insurrection Against Destiny

First appeared as Insurrection contre le destin in Fawda (feuille de critique anarchiste, Bruxelles), Issue 1, Summer 2017

"Imagine a number of men in chains, all under sentence of death, some of whom are each day butchered within sight of the others; those remaining see their own condition in that of their fellows, and looking at each other with grief and despair await their turn. This is an image of the human condition."

Blaise Pascal

Someone said that the main sad passion in which this time is soaked is this generalised feeling of impotence, faced with the ever more evident end of any noble idea, with the disappearance of any extraordinary horizon, with the hindering of any bold act. In the face of the daily massacres and devastations – of the external world, as of the internal universe – nothing seems worth attempting. Everything

appears vain, mortified in the reproduction of an eternal present. After, long time ago, hitting the iceberg, this titanic society only has to sink. Useless to make a fuss; or... ?

An interesting question to pose oneself. What can those do who don't cultivate any illusions on the possibility of a social change during this period of time that separates us from the fatal destiny of humanity (which will be relieved of an infinite number of persons that only lived because they were born – like some hoped a century ago with the Great War)? Some say we have to dedicate ourselves to hedonism, to seek out material pleasures capable of providing us the intensity of life – even if only for a flash. In the absence of reaching the climax of communism one day (*"to every one according to their needs and their desires"*), ephemeral sensuality emerges as the last line of defence of what is still human. Others say we have to dedicate ourselves to cataloguing and learning survival techniques – to make fire with two sticks, to be able to recognise and grow edible and medicinal plants. In the absence of reaching the climax of anarchy one day (*"my freedom that extends infinitely through the freedom of others"*), historical intelligence will be the last line of defence of what is still human. We have to learn to use weapons, according to yet others, to strike those responsible of the imminent apocalypse because they deserve neither to be forgotten nor forgiven. In the absence of reaching the climax of revolution one day (*"the destruction of all oppressive structures and the eradicating of all authority"*), ruthless vengeance will be the last line of defence of what is still human.



Of course not everyone agrees to take note of the sorry fate of the world. The state's servants don't; they proceed to massive injections of unbridled optimism to fight anxiety and overcome depression. *"The devastation of the environment will be defeated by new technologies. Inequality will disappear with the generalisation of communication and interactive technologies in the workspace as in daily life."* Academics – faithful cultivators of power – demand information for all, a connection for all by calling for the accessibility of data for all (even if they don't flatly deny the new intellectual and perceptive illiteracy produced by the virtual world). Scientists – condemning humanity to the sorry fate we're witnessing – paint new paradises in glowing colours where hunger will disappear from the face of earth thanks to genetic manipulation and where industrial pollution will be eradicated by new inventions, biofuel, solar panels, synthetic materials fabricated in laboratories. And many opponents also don't want to take note of the fate to which power has condemned this world. They spice up their hope with gestures of goodwill, humanitarian activities, while bowing to the orders of power that views their opposition as a good way to avoid that one would break ranks and that the lid would blow off.

"When we act, we should certainly not be guided by the despair of our convictions" said a philosopher who openly asserted the necessity of joining theoretical despair with practical resolve. Lucidity concerning humanity should not lead to a deadlock or to resignation, but should be the propulsion for action. Let's dare to base our action on the revolt against fate, to continue dreaming with our eyes wide open, to stay ready for adventures, to keep an enthusiastic look by examining the possibilities to quicken the sinking of this titanic society. *Because nothing is ever finished, no destiny is invincible, nothing disappears forever and everything can fall apart today.*

That bold action, individual conviction and the dream of a world rejecting its own destiny will be our compass in the storms that approach.

Banished Experiences

First appeared as Esperienze bandite in "In Incognito. Esperienze che sfidano l'identificazione" (new edition by Cassa Antirepressione delle Alpi Occidentali), 2014

*They have a black flag at half-mast for hope
And melancholy as their dancing partner
Knives for slicing the bread of friendship
And rusty weapons, so as not to forget*

Léo Ferré, Les anarchistes

I had the chance of experiencing *in vitro* – for rather short periods, all considered – some different forms of banishment: in hiding, in prison, in exile. Although all these conditions were imposed by repression, these experiences differed quite drastically from each other. Here I will talk about them as experiments in freedom.

Rather than on the practical aspects, however, I will focus on some thoughts that surfaced in such situations. I will reference a more "internal" dimension, in order to draw some more general conclusions. This is the approach that suits me the best. In fact, from all of the situations I have experienced, my own nature would be more inclined to remember the ideas that emerged and what I would refer to as *emotional tonality*. Here however, I will have to resort to storytelling, to the most elaborate line of reasoning, to the scattered note. I will sometimes mention the words of others, but only because those words had for me, in a specific moment, a decisive importance. Only an echo – albeit distant – in the experience of the reader, will be able to distinguish these pages from a simple literary exercise.

The most extreme experience that I ever lived is not tied to a deprivation of freedom nor to fear. In a poem written while at war, Ungaretti describes feeling one day like "a docile fibre of the universe". Something similar happened to me. The poet, however, uses that expression to describe a sort of communality with the universe, while for me it was an overwhelming disorientation. However, I remember that those words immediately struck me as the most apt. (While your heart is pounding, certain mental associations seem to push ideas into the strange universe of intuition.) For my own pride, I changed

"docile" into "fragile", trying to convince myself that this was the word that the poet actually meant. Yet, I did not consider myself only "fragile"; I really felt "docile". Why?

I once got lost in the woods. While trying to find the road, I fell into a ravine. Thankfully my backpack broke my fall and prevented me from breaking my neck. I still remained paralysed because of the pain, and for one night and one day a dried up riverbed was my resting place. Soon after I found myself without water nor food; as I spent entire days climbing, trying to locate a landmark, passing one night under the rain. After four days I began to notice, apart from hunger and exhaustion, the presence of a strange internal dizziness. At a certain point, the different sides of my personality began fighting each other, as if they had turned into distinct people. These dialogues were so intense that each time I would wake up after having dozed off, with my legs threaded through a tree branch to avoid falling, I could hardly remember if those encounters really took place or if it had been a dream. Amongst all the voices, two were the most recurring: the one of the pessimist and the one of the optimist. The former was raging against the naivety of the latter, with arguments that I will never forget. The clash especially revolved around the relationship between man and nature. The optimist would interpret the shapes of the woods (some branches, some paths through the bushes) as *signs*, perhaps the indication of a passageway, and his heart rejoiced. The pessimist mocked him, his reassuring anthropomorphism, aware of the fact that the forest wasn't giving signs to anyone – it simply *existed*. But the optimist wouldn't give up, creating little spirits that would accompany him on his path. When I almost tripped over a sloping rock, a few hundred metres high, was the moment that I felt like a "docile fibre of the universe". I understood, all of a sudden, that freedom was a matter of... balance.

Many desires, many projects, many discussions

about the strength of the individual who transforms his life: just a step few centimetres further, and it would have all been over. Pathetically, I regretted not being able to write anything about this to the world of my peers, on whose fragile boundaries I was still treading with uncertain step. I had the acute realization that words are a drug (in the double meaning that this term had for the Greeks, as medicine and as poison) that keeps us away from the absolute other that is Nature. Wild nature, unlike the imagery of illustrated primitivist magazines, is a terrifying place because it is "mute" – a place of the most sublime communality and also of the most perfect solitude. Even extreme solitude is a drug, because it is a relationship in which others participate – by their very absence.

I found myself, lying on those rocks in the dried up riverbed, imagining the words that under such circumstances my comrades would have said to me, and I laughed, a full and serene laugh. My comrades... Words as drugs. One of my most intense moments with theory was an evening when, out of necessity, I lit a fire with a book about Hegel. It is hard to describe my hesitation in ripping out those pages, or the thoughts that came to me in the company of the fire, or how Hegelian dialects appeared to me then, bowed to such an unusual use... By no coincidence it was then that I understood Heraclitus the Obscure: he saw in the flames the tactual expression of coming into reality.

Logic cannot resist against someone who wants to live, once said Kafka. I promised myself to always remember what I had felt on that rock, each time I would talk with confidence about struggle and radical choices.

Life, on the other hand, with its necessary illusions, often keeps this awareness of "docility" at a distance. With a similar awakened consciousness, in fact, it would hardly be possible to act. What to destroy and what to build, if we don't know whether we'll even still be there the next step? Even when I was in prison or in exile I promised myself to do many things when I got back, but of course many of these intentions were never fulfilled. Life sucks you in and helps you forget the blows you've received. Yet I am aware that this sense of everything's emptiness has slipped into me as a note that secretly follows me in any convinced affirmation. If I listened more to that rocky demon, I would speak a lot less. On the barren rocks, where



the eagles build their nests, I have tasted how much strength the possibility of suicide can instill. The idea that, at any moment, you can wish goodnight to the music, makes life wonderful. "Go ahead, keep daring, nobody can force you to live!": with the obstinate voice of such a demon, we can confront all enemies, because on the sharp tip of this consciousness all blackmail crumbles.

On the edge of an inviting precipice, in the absolute of emptiness, where all fiction falls and only what counts counts, I have known unconditional love.

In other words, the optimists, for reasons that reason cannot grasp, won. I felt inside the most uncontrollable euphoria when, at night and under the rain, some kind of cosmic voice (my own personal Mephistopheles) proposed a pact: "If you renounce to your ideas, I will get you out of this forest". I mentioned euphoria because I declined the offer. Rhetorical even in your delirium, some would say. Be that as it may, even our hallucinations *reveal who we are*. It might seem strange, but, for the greatest part, for me living in hiding is contained in the story I just told. The rest is a series of details. We really only remember what has shaken us.

I understood, by listening to my different selves, while they were quarrelling in the forest, the meaning of the Nietzschean affirmation, according to which the definition of "I" is only a grammatical illusion, our lives being a space crossed by many powers in conflict with each other.

After this moment, I have often found myself thinking about the concept of identity.

What really scares us is the absence of control over what surrounds us. I have no doubts about the fact that the few days lost in the woods marked me

much more than the months I spent in prison. In prison – within the conditions that I experienced – everything is, or seems, under control. Of course you are deprived of your freedom, you feel the hatred for your jailers, yet you are on your side and them on theirs. Everything repeats itself, allowing you to plan some – even minimal – projects. There are some codes of behaviour. Between the prisoner that completely internalizes them, becoming a full part of the institution and the rebel who stubbornly refused to adapt to them, the differences are huge. However, even the most resolute rebel makes use of certain protocols. In other situations instead, our codes completely fall through, because nothing, not even our lack of freedom, is certain. I believe the absence of any guarantees brings you closer to madness. In this respect, I got a better glimpse to the real weight of a radical anti-psychiatric critique.

I often woke up startled by the fear of not having any water (in those cases it was an indescribable pleasure to have a bottle of water close to my bed); however, I hardly ever dreamt of prison.

Earlier I talked about identity. Living on the run is an extraordinary experiment in the discovery of this topic, much more useful than many philosophy books. Coeurderoy said that we should have the possibility of changing our name each day. It is the same thing I repeated to the cops that were questioning me at the Ministry of the Interior, adding that the concept of identity is an authoritarian concept. The extent to which the world of domination relies on the police's classification of identity, was proven to me in the uneasy reaction of the cops to my words. What is identity?

Within our daily relationships we show a constructed image, put together by many elements. Our past history, what others know about us, are assumptions we rarely reflect about, because we are used to them. When we get close to someone we open up our most precious part, feelings and ideas that have their own stories. The clandestine, instead, has to continuously recreate for himself a new identity, whose impeccable coherence is crucial to not raising suspicions. To nonchalantly get used to a name that is not your own, to the story that you have created, is a very singular experience, for some unsustainable (perhaps because it is too close to the *I is another*, as expressed by the outlaw of poetry, Rimbaud). An interesting and

worthwhile aspect of such a condition is that it pushes you to develop a particular capacity, the one of being able to talk about yourself, sometimes with extreme sincerity, while avoiding references to details of your life. I would not call this a capacity of abstraction, rather a capacity of transforming lived experiences into a brew of thought and emotions. A different concept of identity is perhaps what remains after this distillation process. What is thrown away after such an internal alchemy can be very important, I would say painfully important. For me, for instance, it was quite hard to give up the public aspect of subversive activity, because of my experiences and actually also because of my "personality" (I use the quotation marks because I cannot forget a phrase from the notebooks of Valéri according to whom what we call personality is only periodical...). Certainly a constant thought of a comrade on the run is how to remain bound to the projects of other comrades, the identity that is at stake (do they remember me?...). Coherence, which in social relationships is also a guarantor of "correctness", protecting us from the fear of chaos, often much less "gratuitous" than it seems, gains a unique dimension. Here the tension between theory and practise follows a much more personal thread. It becomes a sort of loyalty to oneself. This coherence is attained often at the expense of one's affections. I, by choice, did not set up a clandestine life with such rigour (as a visit from the police showed a few months later...). However I can sense how in certain aspects one can tend to close themselves up, in a vortex of incessant precaution, while in others there can be an opening. I understand the comrade that says that they only lived authentic freedom in clandestinity, travelling *incognito* through places and alongside people. I had a small taste of this one evening on a hill, observing the lights of a city from the distance of a fugitive. Those who are banished can reverse their situation and become *bandits*.

Learning how to pay attention (to the territory in which you move through, to your appearance and behaviour, to your contact with comrades not actively wanted by the law) is not something that can be improvised, as it requires adequate time and energy. This can probably be better explained by other comrades, as they possess more wise experience on this subject.

As far as your own perception of your identity, there is a big difference between being on the run

and in prison. In prison you are there with your story. I remember the profound joy, even euphoria, when in my cell I started writing to comrades with whom I had not been in contact since a long time. Writing with "my own" name, receiving correspondence, talking about past experiences and future projects, all this filled my heart and my days. The comrades talk about prisoners, organize solidarity events, make their ideas public. Those underground are often much more isolated. Their coherence is much more difficult and proud, as it does not have external gazes. May the wanderers be remembered.

Clandestinity is an experience of intense relationships, great complicities, but also deep solitude. Often the demon of nostalgia visits, who awakens memories that you believed buried. A long lost childhood friend, the smell of the bakery you used to go to as a kid, a first love as a teenager on which you embellish a much greater story, perhaps doing the same to yesterday's cute passer-by; and then words, places, songs, everything seems plotting melancholy. What a strange world the one of nostalgia, that can even melt the heart of a wandering anarchist to a silly Sanremo song [televised music competition]...

I think everyone knows, by personal experience, the difference between sadness and melancholy. The latter is a dark feeling, but a darkness that nourishes. Have you ever noticed how the melancholics have their own sort of kindness, so diligent yet distracted? Overtaken by the nostalgia of their past, they develop a particular sensibility for strangers, almost trying to transform the void into a promise of happiness. Exile is also a bit like this.



Only recently did I pay attention to the verses of the Leo Ferré song quoted at the beginning, finding them recently, in a peculiar coincidence, also written with a marker on a wall. It's curious how the song portrays anarchists as melancholic, don't you think? "They have a black flag at half-mast for hope / And melancholy as their dancing partner"... I think clandestinity has transformed this in me: since then my unwavering optimism has become more melancholic, as if it were accompanied by a sweet gypsy melody.

The massification of activities and gestures renders the critical word increasingly inoffensive. We often get the feeling that talking means quite little. Also from this point of view prison and clandestinity have been quite different experiences for me. In prison I experienced the power of the word. To speak in a certain way to the screws, to the warden and to all the administration workers, or with the fellow inmates during yard time, has *practical effects*. Words of rebellion are closer to the possibility that they could transform into action; and thus are scarier.

As a clandestine this power of the word is often limited, and this not only for obvious security reasons.

It could happen that you hesitate to speak because what you say could assume the tone of a lecture, given that openly speaking cannot become a shared practise with other comrades (for instance if others expose themselves publicly, while you cannot). Then you prefer to remain silent, unless you can find a way to be complicit toward a common project. After all, you are even more free to act, since you have an advantage on your enemy: he does not know where you are...

In some native communities still alive, there exists a form of punishment, which its members consider the harshest.

It's neither physical torture, nor prison, nor exile. Confronted with particularly serious and deplorable acts, the community reacts by treating its author as if he didn't exist. Not looking at him, not talking to him or about him, the tribe considers him, for a period of time, as if he were *invisible*. They say that this is an unbearable punishment.

Our individuality is built and sharpened on a continuous play of communication and reciprocal recognition. We become invisible to one another when we lose our very presence, rendered cumbersome and anonymous by a massification that prevents us from determining our relationships and sincerely expressing ourselves, without mediations.



This is similar to the situation that millions of clandestine individuals are faced with today in the world, mostly *economic immigrants* of the capitalist massacre. They are rendered invisible, obliged to slither like shadows along the streets of the metropolis, to atone for the crime of being poor and foreign. The clandestine scares us because we recognize through his uprooted and precarious experience, our own, same condition. Submitted to an enormous productive and technological apparatus, we control nothing. Tossed around from one material need to the next, any meaning completely eludes us.

I am happy to see that in this book [Incognito] there is included the experience of somebody that has known and knows what it's like to be clandestine, but for reasons that are different from the ones of many comrades.

By this I don't mean to flatten the differences, but to begin to formulate a radical critique of borders and documents, on a more *social scale*. Unfortunately the subversion of the categories of domination (worker or unemployed, citizen or foreigner, documented or undocumented, innocent or guilty) is mostly *our own* discourse, and not a general one. In struggle any separation should actually be forgone, but it is not enough to just say that these categories are not there. At this point, the practically global condition of millions of men and women *legally inexistent*, as they were defined by a well-known and servile Italian political scientist, could be simultaneously a painful and formidable occasion to overthrow all authoritarian and collective identities. Often, however, those rendered invisible, being deprived of their speech and mutu-

ality, look for a sort of protective community in which to blend. This is where fundamentalism comes into the picture, as a symmetrical product of capitalism that systematically negates this similarity. A reflection on its social causes is more than ever urgent, given that it is certainly not with the intellectual proof of the nonexistence of god that one can formulate a practical critique of religion. The need of a community, in a world where the only accessible community is based on consumption, is increasingly strong and manipulated by the latest nationalist or fundamentalist hypes. The numbers of invisibles, who only find themselves surrounded by animosity and indifference, keep growing each day. Men and women who are constantly faced with an ultimatum: either submit or be expelled, either coerced integration or deportation. To create common spaces of revolt, starting from immediate needs in order to push beyond them, is much more than simple solidarity; it's a path that concerns our own freedom, because the powerful sirens of temptation, able to transform the possibility of social war into the certainty of a "racial" war, are relentless.

It is in the overwhelming chaos of languages and cultures that new directions and new unions can be experienced and experimented...

How to remain invisible to power and its lackeys – how to *challenge any identification* – while remaining socially visible? This seems to be the question of any comrade on the run. I only presume that beginning from a more widespread wandering, we can begin to speak about our wandering comrades, and shortening the distances.



The Impossible Consensus

First appeared in *Journey Towards The Abyss; Scattered Reflections On The Technoworld*
(Hourriya, internationalist anarchist pamphlets #4)

When discussing the possibilities of struggle against new technologies, we quickly get to a difficult point where a number of comrades take a step back. "*But will we encounter other people to struggle with us?*" Maybe this is a false question. Because if we don't fight the new technologies, how could we still succeed in encountering other people, or worse, how could we still succeed in struggling? Given the evolution of the world and its spaces that are closing themselves more and more with every new technological application (yes, the flaws will always be there, but can we always let the struggle be confined to the existing flaws?) it is not at all possible to assume that the way we struggle today will still be possible tomorrow.

And moreover, we cannot demand from every aspect of revolutionary struggle that it must be able to count on a certain consensus. Besides, it is only when we start to struggle that we can discover if others are ready as well. To start making propaganda against technology in competition with the state seems to be pointless. In order to struggle against technology, *one must abandon the quest for consensus*. There is no other way. Even if we decide to participate in a precise conflict such as, for example, a struggle against a new high tension line, this does not necessarily mean that we hope to obtain consensus about the sabotage of *already existing lines*. Do we therefore have to restrict ourselves to do only that which could get the acceptance of a certain number of the exploited?

Will there be people to applaud the saboteurs who plunge their neighbourhood into the dark, who stop the trains they are taking everyday to go to work, who deprive them of their telecommunication?

Maybe, and so the better, but we cannot base our project, our acting on such a hope. In the best case we can wish that the situation, in which the decision to sabotage the infrastructures has been taken, can help other rebels to see more clearly. In his time Caracremada certainly did not base his action on the search for consensus, however few explanations were necessary to make his actions understood, because it was clear who was the enemy. Who is the enemy can only become clear to those who develop an understanding of the world, of their situation as oppressed. Anarchist and revolutionary propaganda, but especially the experiences of shared and insurrectionist struggle with other exploited people, can contribute to this. But in the end, there are a lot of factors at play which are not in our hands. Not in ours, not in the ones of power. The analysis of these factors could certainly help us to better orientate minority action.

In a certain way, to gain consciousness, as it is awkwardly called, is a violent process. We separate ourselves from something we have known, we have maybe cherished, we burn some bridges. It is not rare that these gains of conscience intervene because of external factors which make us "open our eyes". The clash produced by a look at the real world can provoke a reaction of no longer willing to look, but it can also push towards a more important understanding of what is surrounding us. In this last case, the provoked reflections and emotions will be added to our conscience. A short circuit in the dependence on technology, an abrupt disconnection, an obscurity which puts an end to the continual chatter of the devices, why could this not generate such a clash?

Hold Your Head Higher

First appeared untitled on the [wwweb](#) (sent from the pre-trial detention centre Holstenglacis, Hamburg), August 2019

"They can bun my flesh, but they can't touch my spirit, They wan' take way my freedom, but they can't take away my spirit"

Every cell, every hair, every drop of blood is a part of my body. With the extraction of a DNA sample, from body cells, against my will, my body has been hurt by the justice of the state and its minions, just like through imprisonment.

I will not go into the futility of the arguments in favour of extraction in this procedure because I generally do not want to justify DNA sampling. The DNA databases introduced a few decades ago are no longer hiding behind the false arguments of dangerous violent crimes, but are a permanently used instrument of the state's mania for data collection and control. To them we should all be better already preventively stored in their databases; from graffiti writers to shoplifters.

And also in court we see the progressive development of DNA, from being just an indication to now being the proof. For example in many other European countries it has already long been a reality to be convicted based on DNA as the main evidence. Because DNA as a thoroughly ideological instrument makes it possible to make, from an image of a person, a biography or position combined with an alleged offense, a verdict. Even if it proves nothing.

But it would be a mistake to argue inside the framework of their self-legitimizing theatre. The ever-increasing collection of data of any kind is obviously not for our protection, for our good. But it is for the defence of their rule of money, property, and power over other people. Contrary to widespread misconception, there are no neutral databases. They work by the logic of domination. Because what is still "harmless" data today can be used tomorrow against those that it concerns. History has taught us this lesson in a cruel way. What is a list, register,

membership one day can be a death sentence on another day. And we all know that conditions change quickly and are never as stable as they claim. The fact that the enemies of freedom collect data and categorise people for their own purposes was again made clear by some recent events. For example, the death lists of the right-wing network "Nordkreuz", consisting of (elite) soldiers of the army, police officers, reservists, as well as persons from the judiciary and politics. Or the threatening letters against anti-authoritarian and anarchist revolutionaries in Berlin, compiled and sent by LKA [police department for serious crimes] officials with data from police files and databases. Or the databases that are used across Europe against displaced people in which their bodies, like those of animals, are measured in order to be able to identify them elsewhere...

But the ubiquitous digitisation of everything also plays a major role. The data of social networks, the telecommunications and GPS data as well as all that is collected about us through online shopping and the digital apps of "shared transport schemes", are now the main sources of repressive institutions. And unfortunately there is a frighteningly high level of voluntary participation in this process. This is accompanied by the exclusion of all those people who cannot be part of the established legal society, as they have no papers for example. Because with the evermore transparent society the spaces in which there is no permanent control disappear. The social fog vanishes for domination.

Individuals who feel the urge to live a life of freedom should, regardless of their own situation, create and defend uncontrolled spaces and meet and support those who are persecuted, threatened, exploited and oppressed.

But this means conflict with those who rule us. Let's face their order with our self-organized struggles.