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Digest of the Anarchist Tubes

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Theories of Anarchist Development

<https://anarchistnews.org/content/theories-anarchist-development>

From *The Libertarian Labyrinth* by Shawn P. Wilbur

The question we're wrestling with remains this: *How do we understand the anarchist past and how does that understanding influence our action in the present?* This question is ultimately inseparable from questions about how our present understanding of the anarchist project influences our engagement with the anarchist past, but *one thing at a time*.

One important aspect of our coming-to-terms with the anarchist past has to be our general understanding of how anarchism has developed. An adequate theory of anarchist development should probably be able to:

1. account for the historical facts (and particularly, now, for the mass of historical facts newly available thanks to archive digitization, etc.)
1. describe the ways in which the defining characteristics of anarchism might have influenced that development
1. help us explain the state of anarchism in the present.

Let's just acknowledge that, for the most part, we do not have explicit, well developed theories of this sort. What we have instead are convictions about the relative merits of various anarchist tendencies and quasi-historical narratives that together suggest implicit theories of development. These vary from simple *just-so stories* to histories of considerable sophistication, but artificially narrowed focus. What they tend to have in common is a sense that anarchist thought has undergone some kind of relatively continuous change, often towards the ideology (communism, syndicalism, platformism, etc.) of their choice. Equally continuous, though obviously different in their implications, are a small number of narratives that trace a steady degeneration of anarchist thought from some moment of primal clarity. (I think I know a few folks who believe that "it has all been downhill from Stirner" and I have myself half-seriously described anarchist history as a sort of "parceling out" of Proudhon's project.)

Ultimately, there is a tremendous amount of good historical work that either accepts or does not challenge this kind of implicit theory of development. And the point here isn't to downplay the value of any of that work. But it does seem to me that *continuity* as an assumption about anarchist development is likely, sooner or later, to be a casualty of good historical work and that the more the light of historical research shines on the earliest decades of the anarchist past the more likely that assumption is to lose its place in our common sense.

Let's consider the three tasks that we've said a theory of anarchist development should perform:

Accounting for the details of the anarchist past, particularly in the era prior to the emergence of anarchism per se, means revising our sense of the various tendencies and their succession. To reconstruct the argument I have been making here for some time, let me begin by recalling a summary from "Our Lost Continent," the post in which I first proposed an "Era of Anarchy" or period of *anarchy-without-anarchism* in the years between 1840 and 1875-80:

I no longer feel the slightest hesitation in declaring that there was, in that forty-year period, what we might call an Era of Anarchy, during which a wide variety of anarchist philosophies developed and subsequently declined. Proudhon launched the era with his explicit declaration—"I am an anarchist!"—in 1840, but he wasn't alone for long. The communists of *l'Humanitaire* identified the "anarchistic" roots of their approach the following year. We can argue about how anarchistic other communists of the period were, but certainly by the 1850s, Joseph Déjacque had explicitly joined communism to the anarchy of Proudhon—running ahead of nearly all his contemporaries in proposing some form of *anarchism* and launching the sort of internal struggle that would mark the whole of the post-1880 Era of Anarchism. There were individualists as well, including Josiah Warren, whose dislike of labels kept him from identifying as an anarchist, and Anselme Bellegarrigue, who looks, in contemporary terms, like some sort of left-wing market anarchist. Stirner is there, with his anarchistic egoism. Ernest Cœurderoy dreams of cossack invasions. Virtually every radical current from the revolutions of the late 18th century or the "utopian" period of the early 19th century manifests some more-or-less libertarian extreme. In North America, Calvin Blanchard announces Art-Liberty, Eliphalet Kimball publishes his *Thoughts on Natural Principles*, and antinomian principles bubble up, over and over again, on the fringes of New England's

religious culture. Proudhon, Pierre Leroux and New England transcendentalism unite in the work of William B. Greene. Activity in the anti-slavery movement leads Ezra Heywood and Lysander Spooner to the most libertarian conclusions. Networks develop, formally and informally, among some of these figures and spread their influence among the working classes. The New England reform leagues, the *Association Internationale*, the *Union républicaine de langue française* and the International Workingmen's Association represent the efforts of various of these anarchist philosophies to manifest themselves as movements in the era before anarchism was established as an ideology, or even a widely-used keyword. In the context of these attempts, new tendencies will emerge, such as the anarchistic collectivism of Bakunin and his associates and a revived anti-state communism, which will reject the term *an-anarchy* because of its associations with Proudhon.

The facts of history force us to trade a narrative of *succession* for one that displays a great deal of *simultaneity*. The provocative follow-up, on "The 'Benthamite' anarchism and the origins of anarchist history," focused on the extent to which anarchism emerged as a break with that *anarchy-without-anarchism*, rather than a refinement or clarification of it. Having now explored the extent to which the ascendance of anarchist communism also involved a careful management of the legacy of Bakunin (with "God and the State" marking a sort of farewell to Bakunin for at least some of those involved in its publication), as well as having traced the conflict-filled construction and reconstruction of "mutualism" in various anarchist eras, *discontinuity* really seems to me to be the defining quality of many of the moments we often paint as advances for anarchist thought or victories for particular tendencies.

So we probably have a variety of reasons to believe that most of the claims to continuous development and succession from tendency to tendency have been based on an incomplete use of the historical data. But we can also just look around to see that, however convincing those claims might have been at particular moments in anarchist history, we are again faced with a wide variety of tendencies existing simultaneously, with no evidence that any of them are likely to go away any time soon.

Is there perhaps some way to discuss the contexts of this development that salvages the more continuous sorts of narratives? Could we find ground on which to claim that, for example, the emergence of anarchist communism (or anarcho-syndicalism or platformism or egoism or Proudhon's first barbaric yawp, etc.) really did mark a particularly decisive development, but that other events have obscured its significance, led the working classes astray, etc.? Part of the answer probably depends on what sort of thing we think the anarchist project is. If we think of anarchist theory as something that emerged in a somewhat unformed state from popular resistance to authority, and that it took some time for the basic ideas necessary for an anarchist movement to become clear (and this seems to be one of the rough-and-ready developmental narratives), then at least some of the early complications may not weigh too heavily on us, but it would still be necessary to explain why, after some series of positive innovations (including whatever steps you think it took to get from "je suis anarchiste" to your favored flavor of anarchism), we have continued to see innovations that simply do not fit the narrative of steadily increasing clarity. After all, one of the ways that reactionary would-be entryists have attempted to brand their efforts is as further refinements of the tradition.

The stakes rise here a bit, in ways that I have attempted to gently address in the past. I don't have any trouble drawing a clear line between the various consistent anti-authoritarian tendencies and various authoritarian attempts to graft their pet systems of hierarchy onto anarchism—and I don't imagine many other consistent anarchists have much trouble separating the two groups, as long as we stick to questions of logical consistency. But our implicit theories of anarchist development attempt to do more than just distinguish in this way, calling on the testimony of particular histories to bolster the claims of one or another anarchist tendencies to preeminence. As long as we can really show some sort of continuity, and some development towards a particular sort of clarification of the anarchist ideal, then we can at least point to those subsequent moments when proposed "developments" seem to lead anarchist thought off in some different direction. If, however, what our historical research shows is not the steady development of ideas, but instead a sort of theoretical *détournement*, through which a single set of terms is charged and then recharged with significantly different meanings—and this is one fairly compelling way, I think, of reading the succession of phases in anarchist thought—then we are on more dangerous ground. The fact that there is probably more connection between the thought of Proudhon and that of Kropotkin than was acknowledged by the latter in works like "On Order" does not change the fact that the form of the anti-authoritarian communist appropriation of the language of anarchy is essentially that of entryism. We can back up and say that this particular form of appropriation was unnecessary, that it was ultimately harmless in itself, etc., but if we appeal to it as a vindication of the "modern anarchism" of the anarchist communists then we have, at the very least, opened doors that we may find a little bit hard to close.

Fortunately, if deeper engagement with anarchist history takes away some familiar narratives of development, the same process seems to provide alternative accounts. But it really does not seem that the sort of "common sense" accounts of continuous development from "precursors" to "modern anarchism" (however you want to specify those categories) fulfill

any of the tasks we have set for a theory of anarchist development. And I wonder if there isn't something particularly demoralizing about some of the common, but under-theorized positions in the milieu, which combine a sort of faith that some process of clarification has taken place with the almost inescapable experience of our collective lack of clarity.

Let's not waste any time, then, proposing a more adequate alternative.

No one should be surprised when I turn again to Voline's 1924 essay "On Synthesis." As I suggested in "The Synthesist's Consolation," the first benefit of engaging with Voline's text is indeed *consolation*. If we are forced to acknowledge that we still have some work to do in order to come to terms with the anarchist past, we can at least remind ourselves that some of our best and brightest warned us a long time ago that the road wouldn't always be smooth. In moving from the the rude shot across the bow in "Coming to Terms with the Anarchist Past" to the more positive, conciliatory message of "The Synthesist's Consolation," I've really just been executing a variation on an old theme. We see it in rather extreme form in Max Nettlau, one of the most constant witnesses to difficulties that seemed inherent in our project, whose various writings on *mutual tolerance*, *panarchy*, *synthesis*, etc. provide us with extraordinarily challenging proposals to defects in the anarchist project that he clearly thought were themselves profound. But there we also see the theoretical questioning accompanied by a constant practical commitment. We see it again in the work of Ricardo Mella, whose essay on "The Bankruptcy of Beliefs" lumps anarchism among the systems of belief that must inevitably collapse under the weight of their own defects, but who sequel on "The Rising Anarchism" suggests another chapter, explicitly based in synthesis, provided we stick to the task at hand. Alongside these two remarkable bodies of work, Voline's account of *anarchist synthesis* (and my own appeal to it) are positively gentle and optimistic in their tone. More than that, however, I think that Voline's notion of *synthesis* really does the things that we might expect from an adequate theory of anarchist development—provided, of course, that we allow it to do that work and do not simply reduce it to a commentary on how to organize anarchist congresses or federations, as has so often been done.

If anarchism is a matter of exploration, followed by synthesis, and then no doubt by more cycles of a similar nature, then we would have to feel quite certain of our present beliefs and practices to waste too much time relegating the explorations of others to "precursor" status. Among contemporary tendencies, it becomes easy to see a sort of division of later, in the context of which we needn't pretend that all explorations are equal in their long- or short-term utility. Were we to adopt this perspective, we might expect some reduction in the most useless sorts of sectarian struggle, along with some reduction in the distractions that stand between us and serious engagements with the anarchist past. We might at the very least have better fights among ourselves and there are probably a whole series of improvements that we might see in our relations with one another if we were to really internalize this view of things. But perhaps one of the most immediate effects of adopting a synthesist theory of anarchist development would be the light it might shed on our present conflicts and incompatibilities. After all, we are talking about a critique that is now well over a century old. And if it was true that there was a need for synthesis among anarchist tendencies one hundred years ago, what do we imagine the effects would be if we failed to address that need?

If we are looking for a theory, rooted in the nature of the anarchist project, that seems likely to shine a line on what is demoralizing about our present situation, perhaps we have at least found a likely candidate.

Below and Beyond Trump: Power and Counter-Power in 2017

<https://anarchistnews.org/content/below-and-beyond-trump-power-and-counter-power-2017>

From Black Rose Anarchist Federation

Strategy and Analysis Document / Análisis de Coyuntura

Prepared by members of the BRRN Analysis and Strategy Committee and approved by the membership.

INTRODUCTION

This analysis was developed by ongoing discussions among members of the Black Rose / Rosa Negra (BRRN) Anarchist Federation's Analysis and Strategy Committee and sent as a discussion document to our August 2017 convention, where it generated deep discussion and further feedback. It is organized into four sections: an analysis of ruling class power, an analysis of social movements, a statement of basic organizing principles in light of the current moment, and some suggestions for the federation moving forward.

Its main points are that we see real potential to build popular power and social anarchism in the coming period. The U.S. ruling class is fractured, the political terrain has shifted dramatically, and there is mass discontent with corporate politics as usual. This provides numerous opportunities for pro-organizational revolutionary anarchists to intervene as social movements arise. At present the mass discontent is being channeled by the institutional left – unions, non-profits, and other institutions traditionally aligned with the Democrats – into explicit reformism and electoral politics. We argue for promoting independent social movements outside of the institutional left while putting forward within new and existing social struggles the need to advance class struggle, collective direct action, direct democracy, and a vision of libertarian socialism.

TENSIONS AT THE TOP

The US ruling class is experiencing a political crisis the likes of which it hasn't seen in decades. The basis of the crisis are serious tactical divisions within US ruling class interests around domestic control and stewardship, the decline of US global hegemony, looming structural crisis stemming from the limits of neoliberal policy, the coming climate catastrophe, as well as deep seated and wide-ranging popular discontent. Furthermore, recent challenges to white supremacy have forced ruling elites to respond, making their internal political crisis more difficult to manage. We've reached a point where "the center can't hold." The ideological glue of centrist politics is coming apart and significant segments of the population are polarizing, heading further left and further right for alternatives – reflecting a broader pattern on a global scale.

The Trump presidency is both a symptom and cause of the divisions within ruling sectors, widening existing cracks in the neoliberal edifice and fostering uncertainty. Major sectors of state power, from the so-called "deep state" to established politicians, are in open opposition to Trump and the ideological extremism present in his administration. Elements of Trump's agenda that clash with longstanding liberal ruling class commitments are successfully being challenged from within existing institutional channels, such as the courts initially and temporarily blocking Trump's "Muslim ban." Other aspects have widespread support within segments of the ruling class and a much greater chance of success, including recently proposed austerity budgets, the call for "law and order" policing, roll-backs of the welfare state, and loosening restrictions on fossil fuel extraction and businesses regulation.

Overall, this picture of the Trump presidency is in line with what many on the left argued before and after the 2016 election – that is, the extreme elements of the Trump agenda would likely be checked by the structural limitations of the state and outside sources of concentrated power. US ruling interests are worried how long those restraints will last, or if broken, if they will break in their favor. Their main concern for the current moment is the uncertainty and unpredictability the Trump administration brings, and Trump's role in eroding US international leadership on economic and military matters. (See for example China's attempts at leadership on issues of global climate change, or fret over Trump's more outrageous rhetorical attacks on NATO).

The controversy surrounding Trump is a reflection of a broader crisis within the US political class. Both the Republican and Democratic Parties are extremely unpopular and unable to point in any clear direction. Nearly the entire GOP institutional leadership opposed Trump during the election but were unable to prevent him from winning the primary. They seem to be

aware that Trump is causing major damage to the GOP brand but vacillate between damage control and taking advantage of the chaos to push unpopular legislation. The Democratic Party leadership seems deeply out of touch in the wake of Clinton's loss, unable to present a vision beyond "we're not Trump," nor able to mount effective resistance at this point. On the other hand, it is unclear where this moment of illegitimacy for the two-party system will lead and we should not underestimate the resiliency of capitalist institutions to reconstitute themselves.

Ruling class divisions like those mentioned offer political opportunities, but also serious dangers. Instability plus Trump's authoritarian proclivities mean that the possibility of international conflict or more severe forms of domestic "law and order" repression should not be discounted. But Trump is extremely weak and isolated right now and these developments are less likely barring a major unexpected event. At the same time, leading sectors of US power are vocally and publicly supporting elements of militant reformism, especially around climate change and wealth inequality. These ruling class divisions provide political openings for libertarian socialists to push a revolutionary social program, build its base, and establish itself as a revolutionary pole for liberation.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: POWER FROM BELOW

Social movements are similarly fractured and most seem to be moving toward some type of retrenchment strategy in response to Trump. We see retrenchment as taking the form of scaling back organizing efforts, while channeling grassroots energy into the 2018 and 2020 elections to undermine and oust Trump. Increasingly important is the separation between popular resentment/action and the institutional left. While these forces appear to be recalibrating, we should not underestimate their ability to capture and domesticate popular discontent.

Trump's election and the growing visibility of the far-right have led to a tremendous growth of popular engagement with progressive causes and activity, dwarfing any equivalent gains on the Right. However, the institutional left has failed to build on deepening public outrage, offering little beyond symbolic demonstrations, "get out the vote" efforts and militant reformism. Whether its labor, Black Lives Matter (BLM), immigrant, environmental, queer, or feminist struggles, the established leaders of many institutional left organizations have called for or anticipate a period of retrenchment.

Since the militancy of the Baltimore rebellion, the Movement for Black Lives has put together a "united front" behind a shared platform of demands that range from reparations to community control. The organizations behind the M4BL Platform represent a broad cross-section of black-led progressive non-profits, a reflection of BLM being increasingly tied to the institutional left orbit, yet it's unclear how the platform is being advanced or if the collective strength of the organizations behind it are being mobilized in any meaningful way. Few seem to be engaged in the kinds of on-the-ground direct action rebellions that initially catalyzed and electrified the struggle against anti-black state violence, despite the endless string of black murders by police, while the Movement for Black Lives Platform points in the direction of a more electoral or legislative strategy.

For the labor movement, union leadership appear to be pursuing two strategies. One group, led by conservative building trades unions, favors "playing ball" with Trump in an effort to promote nationalist and protectionist manufacturing as a way to create jobs. The other, implemented by unions like SEIU, have preemptively laid off staff and shrunk their campaign operations as they prepare for the worst under the new administration. Two pending labor cases, *Yohn v. CTA* and *Janus v. AFSCME*, will likely make automatic dues payment illegal for public sector unions, which represent the bulk of unionized workers, and many in the labor movement see this a death blow. There are perhaps some signs of militancy, such as calls by some SEIU workers to participate in May 1st "general strikes" against the Trump agenda. But little materialized from these calls and this shows that militants have their work cut out for them.

In the face of a union movement on the wane and out of a desire to create a revolutionary pole within the broader labor movement, workers have joined the IWW in increasing numbers since the economic crisis of 2008. In addition to its modest growth, the IWW's recent activity among service workers, prison labor, and anti-fascist organizing points toward the kind of labor movement that is needed in this moment.

The feminist "movement" is currently experiencing a contradiction in its activism and practice, in which a feminist and anti-patriarchal discourse has become more widespread among the population, yet its self-proclaimed political leadership remains closely aligned with the Democratic Party. The "Women's March" in January 2017 was historic and inspiring with an estimated 1% of the population participating. The March 8th "Women's Strike" held more promise as an international call with a progressive set of demands, yet it had a smaller turnout than the Women's March. Unfortunately this orientation will likely fail to protect their number one policy agenda, defending Planned Parenthood and elements of the ACA (Obamacare). These marches highlight two developments: First, a confirmation in the bond between mainstream feminist organizations and the Democratic Party; and secondly, a growing divide between reformist feminism and an increasingly militant anti-patriarchal movement. These marches have opened a broader dialogue around feminism and the possibility

for building a feminist/anti-patriarchal movement aligned with the interests of working class women, trans, and queers, as well as inserting a feminist politic within current social movements. However, there is a need for coordinated and organized discussions to propose a plan of action on a local and national scale.

The indigenous and environmental movements have experienced a dramatic growth in activity, centered on militant defense of the land in confrontations with the oil and coal industries. Key on-the-ground campaigns to block pipelines and coal trains, such as the Kinder-Morgan Canadian pipeline, are moving forward. The struggle at Standing Rock, which followed on the heels of Idle No More, galvanized widespread attention and solidarity actions in urban areas. Standing Rock brought together a multi-generational and multi-ethnic indigenous movement whose struggle for land and autonomy has motivated a new generation of indigenous youth into militant political activism.

In the wake of Trump's election, much of the immigrant rights movement is on the defensive, yet the nakedness of the anti-immigrant agenda coming from the White House, most notably in the form of a renewed round of ICE raids, has begun to politicize a new generation of undocumented youth. We have seen more public expressions of xenophobia targeting immigrants of color. The purpose of this offensive by the state is to intimidate undocumented workers, one of the most exploited and precarious sectors within the working class. The increase in state policing has motivated some immigrants to leave the US, thus reducing the pool of farmworkers, forcing the Trump administration to increase the issue of H-2A (Temporary Agricultural Workers) visas. In addition, the escalation in militarizing the US border is not meant to end immigration, but to traumatize undocumented workers in order to further exploit their labor power.

We see two trends dominating the coming period: the use of militant reformism and electoral efforts in the name of social democracy. While Trump is in office, major segments of the institutional and radical Left (as with Socialist Alternative and their uncritical support for Bernie Sanders) are going to advocate and channel activists into electoral campaigns. While more moderate advocates of electoral struggles continue to fight within the Democratic Party for more progressive candidates, others are clamoring for the elusive independent party of the left. Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), whose membership has surpassed 30K, are explicitly calling for this "inside-outside" strategy, attempting to push the Democrats from within while building the base for a future third party. Given that the left is experiencing rapid growth, a move towards electoralism is a further shift towards reformism. Instead, we propose an offensive program of building popular power – a distinct form of power exercised through combative, self-managed social movements independent of the institutional left – that can win meaningful reforms while laying the groundwork for pushing beyond them.

One other element needs to be noted here – the ominous presence of the far-right. In response to BLM, diminishing returns on the "wages of whiteness," economic uncertainty, and the perceived threat to US hegemony posed by immigrants/refugees and Islam, a vocal minority of xenophobic, white nationalist, and proto-fascist forces have become increasingly mobilized – emboldened by Trump's presence in the oval office. While the strength of the far-right seems to be geographically uneven, the increasing use of violence by the far right, particularly by lone-wolf actors who kill in the name of the movement, is having a chilling effect for many. Through the alt-right and other forces, what was once largely an internet phenomenon is now entering the public arena, with varying degrees of success.

In response to the alt-right and other fascist forces, Antifa has grown in prominence as a countervailing force, sparking renewed debates on the left over black bloc tactics. While dramatic street confrontations are necessary at times, they can also lead to a fetishization of militant tactics and lead to a dynamic of one marginal wing of the right fighting with another marginal wing of the left. Nonetheless, fascist forces should not be permitted to take root.

STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES MOVING FORWARD

Given this picture we argue that several strategic orientations are key in the current moment for the larger left and organized political forces:

Build independent social movements from below: Popular anger is at an all-time high, but there is very little movement being generated. The institutional left is not interested in building power outside of tightly controlled channels. We need to build autonomous social movement power (autogestión) independent of the institutional left in our workplaces, schools and communities. To this end, we need to adopt strategies in specific sectors as guideposts for social movement activity. In the same way that socialist organizations argue for the need to build an independent political party, we should make our argument for *building independent social movements*.

Push Offensive Campaigns: A surefire strategy to let the Trump agenda win is to fall onto a defensive footing merely trying to prevent the many attacks on social programs, unions and scapegoated populations. An orientation of permanent retrenchment and defense is a failed strategy that the most conservative elements of the left have been pushing for decades.

Instead, moving struggle forward with offensive demands could turn the tables and put major segments of power on the defensive, prevent the worst of many of the cuts, and dramatically change the political climate.

Advance an explicitly libertarian socialist practice and program: The cumulative weight of the 2008 economic crisis, Occupy, BLM, and the Bernie Sanders campaign, has laid the groundwork for the growing appeal of radical politics in general and socialism in particular. Growing discontent over the two party system and “politics as usual” has created space to sharpen and deepen our criticisms of electoral strategies and the state. Overt forms of state violence and repression against black and brown communities has expanded critiques of the police, the prison industrial complex, and ICE, opening space for advancing a broader anti-state, anti-racist and internationalist revolutionary practice. In the face of cascading capitalist crisis and the failed history of state socialism, there is a wide demand and audience for an alternative vision and a coherent path forward.

For more background on Black Rose/Rosa Negra we recommend reading “Strengthening Our Politics, Commitment and Growth” on our 4th national convention held in August 2017.

If you are interested in more “Anarchism 101” material, we recommend the article, “Who are the Anarchists and What is Anarchism?” or the podcast with Mark Bray, author of Antifa: An Antifascist Handbook and a member of Black Rose/Rosa Negra, appearing on Revolutionary Left Radio. You won’t be disappointed!

For Katarina Gogou

<https://anarchistnews.org/content/katarina-gogou>

From Autonomies

... we convalescents still need art, it is another kind of art – a mocking, light, fleeting, divinely untroubled, divinely artificial art that, like a bright flame, blazes

into an unclouded sky! Above all: an art for artists, only for artists!

Friedrich Nietzsche

I would like to spin a eulogy / of filth, of poverty, of drugs and suicide . . . drugs, disgust, rage

Pier Paolo Pasolini

Banks give birth to 'robbers'.

Prisons to 'terrorists'.

[...]

Products to the 'need'.

Borders to armies.

All because of private property.

Violence is engendered by Violence.

[...]

Don't ask. Don't stop me.

It's time to restore

the supreme act of moral justice.

Poeticize life and act on it.

[...]

For as long as it takes, from the beginning

I defend ANARCHISM

Katarina Gogou

Poetry is the gesture of language expressing itself as language, a medium which refuses itself as an end in itself (the aesthetic attitude), or as a means to a further end (the instrumentalisation of language) ... Mallarmé's milieu pur.

Anarchism is politics as the gesture/exposure of the being-in-community of human beings, politics as a "showing", a "revealing", which cannot speak itself without becoming an end in-itself (fetishised institutionalisation) or an end to a further (transcendental, non-political) end. Anarchy refuses self-justification in constitutional forms (e.g., capitalist parliamentarianism) or in the making of a priori communitarian identities. It is as gesture, as a permanent bringing forth and support of itself, an ethics.

Anarchism is politics as poetry, as pure gesture; an autonomous community's way of life.

If Plato expelled the poets from the Republic, it was because poetry's way of being defied all order. The prohibition of poetry was the suppression of art's an-arche, its refusal of any foundation or ground for the showing/coming into being of expression.

O clear intelligence, force beyond all measure! 295

O fate of man, working both good and evil!

When the laws are kept, how proudly his city stands!

When the laws are broken, what of his city then?

Never may the anarchic man find rest at my hearth,

Never be it said that my thoughts are his thoughts.

(Sophocles, Antigone, 295-330)

The anarchist is poet, as the poet is anarchist, in their desire to live beyond Law.

The poetry of Katarina Gogou gives a voice to this way of life ...

We share a short biography of Katarina Gougou by taxikipali, along with a selection of her poetry, posted on libcom.org (09/04/2010).

All video is excerpted from the movie "Special request" released in 1980 with Katerina Gogou reciting her poem "I want to talk" from her first collection of poems "Three clicks left". Music by Kyriakos Sfetsas.

This is a biography of Greece's greatest anarchist poetess, Katerina Gogou (1940-1993). Until today Gogou remains the bet-noire of modern poetry in Greece with only one poetic anthology including her groundbreaking heretical work. However, her poems have become an indivisible part of the radical culture of the country and of the public imaginary of Exarcheia. Recently a biography of Katerina Gogou titled "Katerina Gogou: Death's Love [Erotas Thanatou]" appeared, authored by Agapi Virginia Spyratou (2007, Vivliopelagos, Athens), based on her doctoral thesis. However no study or history of Katerina Gogou's involvement in the anarchist struggle of the 1980s has ever been published in Greek, leaving a great gap in both the history of the movement and in the biography of the poetess. The biography presented below is based on the book of Spyratou as well as on several reviews of her life and work in literary magazines like *Odos Panos* (Vol. 145, July-September 2009). The only translation of her work in English is an old publication of her first collection of poems "Three Clicks Left", translated by Jack Hirschmann and published in San Francisco by Night Horn Books. The book not being available in Greece, I have provided my own translations to her poems with asterisks for explanations on notions and places (apologies for my literary sloppiness in advance). The original format of the poems is generally preserved, but no titles are given as her poems had no titles. Links to videos of Gogou reciting them are given where available. The recitations heard are from the vinyl record "On the Street" described below. Weird screeching siren like noises interrupting the recitation at places is no digital mistake but the 1980s not-so-subtle censorship of "inappropriate words" and political comments by the authorities.

Katerina Gogou was born in Athens on the first of June 1940 and spent the first years of her childhood in the harshest conditions of the Nazi occupation when famine due to conscription of all edibles led to hundreds of thousands of deaths in Athens. Her memories of the years of the Nazi occupation, the Resistance and the Civil War are reflected in a piece of prose published post-mortem from her unfinished poetical autobiography "My name is the Odyssey":

"Gang-war (1)

Aaaaaaaa! This is the gang-war.

Grrrrreeks with big hats, I know, they called them republicas.

Square, biiiig, with long coats and gabardines, they had guns in their pockets, maybe

more guns inside. With their hands in their pockets they shot other Greeks and they walked fast as if in a great hurry or as if someone was chasing them.

I wanted -they did not let me, they said- to go out. Out I wanted. There I wanted. To the "It Is Forbidden".

In our corner, Lambrou Katsoni and Boukouvala, piles of eaten cats and famine corpses -they called them trash-parents and children.

I saw through the glass a bullet hitting my left hand palm, blood and the trash breathing. My mother was in the kitchen and my father I don't even know where, I open the door and I go to the trash.

And there I saw, and I don't give a dime if you don't believe me, the most beautiful boy I had seen in my life. He was covered there, holding a machine gun, he had a short blond beard and long blond hair. His eyes...I don't know to tell their colour. He looked like or was the Christ. "Go little girl, go", he told me, "away from here. They will kill me".

I took a deep breath to run fast.

"Bend so I can kiss you", he told me.

I was already home.

The first man and the last I ever loved was an urban guerrilla"

Her teenage years were spent in down-town Athens of the post-Civil War monarchy, an era of strict censorship, police terror, and exile island camps filled with political prisoners. In "My name is the Odyssey" Gogou recalls one of the rare moments when she could express her indignation to the order of things alongside hundreds of other teenagers when the movie "The Blackboard Jungle" (1955) was screened in Pallas, Athens's most prestigious cinema: "When the movie came to town, the movement of all the angry children from even the farthest neighbourhoods and from down-town Athens gathered [...] when the song of the movie was heard, the famous "One two three o' clock four o'clock rock", half of the crowd light their lighters and the other half tore the velvet armchair of the so-aristocratic Pallas with razors. I did both". It was the birth

of the Teddy Boy tendency in Athens, which was soon to be ruthlessly repressed by the Law No.4000, which prescribed forced public humiliation by means of scalp shaving of “teddy-boys”.

A few years later Katerina Gogou, already working in theatre, graduated from high school and enrolled in a series of drama and dance schools of Athens. Within the strict censorship of the post-civil war monarchy, the only place she could make a living as an actress was the greek comedy industry, a major factor in the social reproduction of statist, capitalist and patriarchal values at the time. The roles ascribed to Katerina by Finos Films, her employee company, were usually the secondary role of the naive domestic servant, or of the silly little sister, or of the undisciplined school pupil. Her most characteristic role was the one played in the “Beating came from Paradise” in 1959 where next to the regime’s favourite actress, Aliko Vouyouklaki, she played the incumbent rascal pupil that made her famous. Until the collapse of the colonels’ junta in 1974 she played in dozens of other block-buster comedies, always in the same range of roles. As Spyratou puts it, “the world of the cinema composed the capitalist ideal as a consumer society, where the positive heroes supported order within the limits of the traditional family and within the patriarchal state”. Despite performing a never ending series of female stereotypes, Katerina Gogou developed an acute radical perspective far removed from the nominal conservative feminists of the post-junta era who she mocked bitterly in an 1980 poem from the collection “Idionimo”:

“They shoot to kill.

– They are shooting in the air, they (2) cried

Then the small hole in front of the bus stop was filled with blood

– They are only plastic bullets, they said

Then he fell

– He has fainted, they cried.

Then he was motionless,

But they were already on their way. He was still,

But they had already taken the trolley-bus, and gone. Gone were they”

Katerina Gogou’s feminism was far removed from the official republican exercises in democratic progressiveness. Many of her early poems talked about a world that greek society, including the late 1970s ideologically dominant left, ignored or wanted to ignore: prostitution. A large part of Katerina’s poetry was dedicated to a viral description of the dark side of Athens, in a way no one had dared articulate that far:

“Oily food in a plastic bowl in Acominatou street

outside the door, August

white like sheets the whores

40 degrees in shadow 4 o’clock p.m.

The legs open by themselves

Like dead oysters

The street is filled with coloured underwear

Pakistanis (3), anti-mosquito chemicals, limping women, snitches

And faggots injecting their breasts

Filled with carcinomas.

The street is filled

With destroyed fallopian tubes and discarded uteri

The belly is swollen

By useless sperm

– no child is conceived here

nothing is caught out of nothing

Magdalene and Vanou did the job

The money lenders and the saint of the neighbourhood are foul
 First they get bribed and then they snitch on you
 That's the way it is
 You have spread whores all across Metaxourgeio (4)
 Under the scorching sun with not a tree around – for shadow
 Not even a stone wall – to lie against.
 Enraged citizens (5)
 and religious groups have made a pact. They got organised.
 They brought bottles
 And petrol.
 They will soak you. They will burn you, they say.
 Like rats, they say.
 Armoured vans filled with policemen
 Impotent voyeurs, the doctors of the Vice Department
 Crabs are taking a stroll all day on your brain
 The whistle boys are the syphilis of your sleep
 – whose side are they on.
 Here we burn the witches. We fuck the whores.
 A poster of Karamanlis
 Your eyes a picture
 Threads of handiwork
 Bold wig, bruised nipples
 And evictions are closing in around your hair and throat
 They tie you hands and feet on the bed
 You and us as well
 The way and the tariff changes
 The place and the name changes
 In Larissa 40 degrees
 Here at the cross, the sun” (from the collection *Wooden Coat*, 1982)

For Gogou, Spyratou writes, “prostitutes were not a social fact, they were a social formation and as such they were a necessary part of the reproduction of control: a woman must be a whore when the man demands it, and must prove she is not a whore in order to be a wife and a mother. In both cases it is the male imagery of femininity that must be satisfied”. As for her ideal woman figure, she was a revolutionary nonetheless, but a revolutionary unfit for the leftist heroicism of the republican era [Metapolitefsi]:

“She is dangerous – when god is bringing down the world with hail and rain she comes out on the streets without socks and whistles at the men she throws stones at the police cars and lies like a squirrel on trees lighting her cigarette with thunders.

The last time she was spotted at the same date and year in three different places – based on valid information the blown up bridge of Manhattan the delivery of weapons to anarchocommunist movements as well as the exportation of top secret state information are to be attributed to the same person. She is believed to be wearing a red or black military woolly jumper childish pearl ribbons in her hair with her hands in the pockets of a borrowed jacket.

Place of birth: unknown

Sex: unknown

Vocation: unknown

Religion: atheist

Eye colour: unknown

Name: Sofia Viky Maria Olia Niki Anna Effie Argyro

Darius Darius. To all patrol cars Attention she is armed. Dangerous. Armed. Dangerous

Her name is Sofia Viky Maria Olia Niki Anna Effie Argyro

And she is Beautiful Beautiful Beautiful Beautiful my god..."

(From the collection *Idionimo*, 1980)

The first collection of poems published by Gogou in 1978 "Three Clicks Left" is a vitriolic depiction of an Athens not proper to the leftist heroics and the republican triumphism of the time. Gogou identified with the damned of the metropolis, with the lumpen fringe like no other writer or thinker had done before, causing an immediate adoption of the poetess by the newly born anarchist milieu of Exarcheia and beyond, a relation that developed into a mutual bond of trust and respect until the poetess' death. The end of the 1970s was a time when the initial post-junta revolutionary chic was giving way to more substantial and contradictory urban cultures and movements, with many workers breaking free from the unions and the left, mass factory occupations, the first occupations of universities and a ferocious armed struggle against unpunished agents of the junta, with the far-right responding with bombs in cinemas, squares and leftist offices. It was this era with the increasing disillusionment of Athens' radical youth with the classic leftist currents and the first experimental steps towards anarchism that the forgotten lumpen fringe of prostitutes, junkies, psychiatric patients, prisoners etc acquired the political importance of the "unrepresented" that would provide the moral basis of the 1980s anarchist movement. Gogou was a true prophet of this unexpected political and social development, and her poems got to be respected exactly for that:

"Our life is pen knives
in dirty blind alleys
rotten teeth faded out slogans
bass clothes cabinet
smell of piss antiseptics
and moulded sperm. Torn down posters.
Up and down. Up and down Patisision (6)
Our life is Patisision.
Washing powder which does not pollute the sea
And Mitropanos (7) have entered our lives
Dexameni (8) has taken him from us too
Like those high ass ladies.
But we are still there.
All our lives hungry we travel
The same course.
Ridicule-loneliness-despair. And backwards.
OK. We don't cry. We grew up.
Only when it rains
We suck secretly on our thumb. And we smoke.
Our life is
Pointless panting
In set-up strikes
Snitches and patrol cars.
That's why I tell you.
The next time they shoot us
Don't run away. Count our strength.

Lets not sell our skin so cheeply, damn it!
Don't. Its raining. Give me a fag”

At the final years of the 1970s Gogou re-engaged in cinema, this time however in radically different roles than the female stereotypes of her earlier career. Her new début was made in the ground-breaking film “The Heavy Melon” (1977), the first attempt at a greek social neo-realism, directed by her husband and father of her only daughter, Pavlos Tassios. The film describes the new urban working class composed of déclassé village petty owners. Gogou appears as a “by the piece” industrial worker who breaks the appointed work time limit for a minimal profit, and seeks refuge in love only to find that it simply entraps her in more work of a domestic-patriarchal nature. For her role Gogou was awarded the best female actress award in the Salonica Film Festival. A few years later, in 1980, she will again perform on the big screen for “The Order” [Paragelia], again directed by Tassios. The film sought to depict the life of Nikos Koemtzis: in February 1973, after being released from prison, Koemtzis went to the music night club Neraida with friends, where his brother ordered the orchestra to play a zeibekiko called “Vergoules” by the rebetis Marcos Vamvakaris. When other men stood up to dance as well [zeibekiko is a solo male dance from Asia Minor], the singer announced they should sit down as the song was “an order”, a fight ensued and Koemtzis stabbed to death three policemen thinking they were killing his brother. The Koemtzis case became a celebrated issue in mid and late 1970s greece, representing a figure-out-of-time, a man obsessed with his honour in a society that was moving to an altogether different ethical code. The film featured a series of recitations of poems from “Three Clicks Left” by Gogou under the vanguard musical score of Kyriakos Sfetsas, the future director of the “Third Programme”, greece’s prestigious classical music state radio. The recital and musical score won the best music award in the Salonica Film Festival and was soon published in vinyl to become one of the musical fetishes of radical culture in the 1980s. It remains today one of the boldest attempts of combining poetry with music in greece. The best known poem recited during the film has direct political implications for the state of things in republican greece.

“Loneliness

does not have the saddened colour
in the eyes of the cloudy bimbo.

She does not stroll abstractly and self-content
Shaking her hips in concert halls

And in frozen museums.

She is not the yellow cadres of “good” old times

And naphthalene in granny’s chests

Rosy ribbons and straw hats.

She does not open her legs with fake small laughters

A cow’s gaze rhythmic sighs

And assorted underwear.

Loneliness

Has the colour of Pakistanis, this loneliness

And she is counted inch by inch

Along with their pieces

In the bottom of the light-shaft.

She stands patiently queuing

Bournazi – Santa Barbara – Kokkinia

Touba –Stavroupoli – Kalamaria (9)

Under all weathers

With a sweaty head.

She ejaculates screaming and smashes the front windows with chains

She occupies the means of production

She blows up private property
 She is a Sunday visit in prison
 Same step in the yard revolutionaries and penal prisoners
 She is sold and bought minute by minute, breath by breath
 In the slave markets of the earth – Kotzia (10) is near here
 Wake up early.
 Wake up to see it.
 She is a whore in the rotten-houses
 The german drill for conscripts
 And the last
 Endless miles of the national highway towards the centre
 In the suspended meats from Bulgaria.
 And when her blood clots and she can take no more
 Of her kind being sold so cheaply
 She dances barefoot on the tables a zeibekiko
 Holding in her bruised blue hands
 A well sharpened axe.
 Loneliness,
 Our loneliness I say. Its our loneliness I am speaking about,
 Is an axe in our hands
 That over your heads is revolving revolving revolving revolving”

The same year, 1980, Gogou published her second poetic collection, “Idionimo”. The title of the collection referred to Law No.410/1976 which fortified the security forces against protesters and the regime itself against strikes etc. The law was dubbed “idionimo” by anarchists and leftists at the time, a word referring to the law passed in the late 1920s by the liberal PM Eleftherios Venizelos who ordered the expulsion of communists to barren island camps. In the poetical collection Gogou attacked the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) for treason against the struggle. The accusations came as the youth of the Party, KNE, had formed a special force, the Communist Youth for the Restoration of Order (KNAT rhyming with MAT, the riot police) that used to brutally repress any attempt at autonomy and anti-police violence during the first university occupation of 1979-1980. Anarchist magazines like “The rooster crows at dawn” at the time indicated that KNE actually tortured anarchists in special rooms of the Polytechnic. The 1979-1980 university occupations against the educational law No.815 were a sort of a greek May ’68, with the youth for the first time massively mocking communist and leftist orthodoxy, especially KNE and EKKE, the numerous Maoist Party that had already clashed with anarchists in 1977 in Exarcheia.

By 1980 Gogou was deeply involved in the sprouting anarchist culture of Exarcheia where the first Athens squat appeared on Valtetsiou street in 1981. Two years earlier, in 1979, Gogou played a central role in the big concert against police repression in Sporting, where many singers at the time took part. The concert was in demand for the immediate release of Philipos and Sofia Kiritsi, two anarchists imprisoned as terrorists by the regime. The Kiritsis affair was the first emblematic anarchist repression case, and played an important role in the creation of the milieu via the solidarity movement that arose for the liberation of the comrades. Naturally, the concert ended in riots with over 100 people arrested. It was the era of the great concert-riots which reached its climax during the spring 1980 concert of the “Police” in Sporting. It was the first rock concert in greece after the Rolling Stones concert during which the junta had ended it, with the police entering the stage and beating the band manager after Mick Jagger threw carnations to the audience, an act deemed to be a conspiratory communist signal by the cops. During that warm night of March 1980, while all universities were occupied, 2,000 young people stormed the stadium with no tickets leading to extended clashes with the police across Patision and Aharnon avenues.

In 1982 Gogou publishes her third poem collection “Wooden overcoat” where her poetry acquired a personal touch, while in 1984 Gogou played in her last role for the film “Ostria –endgame” whose scenario she wrote herself. The film, again directed by Tassios, narrates the story of three couples who sold out their revolutionary ideas for petty-bourgeois

comfort, a theme castigating the entire “generation of the Polytechnic” by then well entrenched in positions of power and exploitation.

In 1986, Gogou publishes her fourth poem collection “The Absentees” well known for the poem dedicated to the murdered anarchist transvestite Sonia:

“She bent her pale head with a sigh
and fell asleep
for ever
Above her the sky mountainous
Barren landscape –dark-
stones only and rocks not even rain...
Bride you with the plastered mouth red
Brocade hands melted handiwork
Offered pleadingly
Some lilies
Around the fresh earth your girlfriends
Sad and over-painted
Making strange noises
As craving attention
In order to play in some film
Here this ring child poem
Word of Honour
This hour that the future-ones
Learn the eagle’s flight
This hour that your forehead
Reveals what is hidden
Always the same hour
That the RED KNIVES
Kill the Different ones..”

The red knives in the poem referred to the traditional communist policy against homosexuality deemed by the KKE “a bourgeois perversion that will disappear with the revolution”. The mid 1980s was a time of fierce gay liberation struggle in Greece. Only a few years before, in 1979, the right wing government had proposed a law for the displacement of homosexuals to barren island camps. The law was overturned only by way of mass grassroots reaction as well as international pressure from intellectuals like Foucault and Guattari. The struggle against the displacement law was the cradle of the gay liberation movement of the 1980s mostly led by the leftist group AKOIA. The most militant part of the struggle however was played by transvestites (this was their self-referential term) who even clashed with riot police forces. Sonia was an anarchist transvestite closely related to Paola, the leading anarchist trans figure of the decade who published *Kraximo* [Heckling] a transvestite anarchist magazine that led her to numerous arrests. Sonia’s assassination and the abandonment of her brutalised naked corpse on desolate rocks on the Attiki coastline was an emblematic call to arms affair at the time.

Gogou herself was a consistent victim of police violence and arbitrariness. In 1986 she pressed charges against General Drosos, the notorious Minister of Public Order of PASOK, after being brutally beaten by riot policemen during one of the numerous anarchist marches of the time. Gogou was on the Ministry’s constant suspect list, a fact only worsened by her friendship and comradeship with Katerina Iatropoulou, the leading prison abolition anarchist figure of the time. Gogou’s struggle against repression is best depicted in her poem “Some times”.

“Some times the door opens slowly and you enter.

You wear an all-white suite and linen shoes.
You bend, you tenderly put 72 coins in my palm and you leave.
I have stayed in the same position where you left me, so that you can find me again.
But a long time must have passed because my nails
Have grown long and my friends are scared of me.
Every day I cook potatoes.
I have lost my imagination.
And when I hear 'Katerina' I am scared
I think I have to denounce someone.
I have kept some newspaper clippings about a man they claimed was you.
I know the papers lie, because they say they shot you in the feet.
I know they never aim at the feet.
The mind is their target.
Hold it together, eh?"

In 1988, Katerina published her fifth book titled "The Month of Frozen Grapes", a collection of 38 poems many of them consisting of a couple of verses, or even a single line. The collection reflected a time of ravaging psychological anguish that led Gogou in and out of clinics for the rest of her life. A characteristic poem (no.17) reads:

"I was a tree and I broke
They broke all my branches
Because there all the lost children found refuge
So as to play the hanged."

Finally in 1990, Katerina published her last book "The Return Journey" which combined both her earlier political and social penetrating gaze and her existential angst. In one page of the book a hand-drawn box contains five names that marked the birth of the anarchist movement in Greece, five men who died by police bullets, the urban guerrillas Kasimis, Tsoutsouvis and Prekas, the 15 year old boy Kaltezas shot by a cop in 1985 during the Polytechnic anniversary march, and Tsironis, the eccentric revolutionary doctor who had proclaimed his apartment a free state and was shot down by special forces. The prose-poem above the drawing reads:

"The terror of the silent danger of the freezing silence that climbs the steps with proplasmatic faces, who slowly move in line. The hunted down knows. He has great pains behind the ears and deep in the stomach. The features change, he becomes younger, more handsome, he enters the final clash, he climbs gloriously to his god. All the more as the cause for his persecution included the justice of ever more people. He is no more in pain. Now terror sits on the shoulders of his hunters.
Now they will take aim.
Now they will murder.
They murder.
Their human face took its form in conscious retreat. They will devour each other in eternal fire to eternity. The angels get ever more numerous".

Katerina Gogou died on October 3 1993 at the age of 53 due to an overdose of pills and alcohol, the last among the triad of radical poet-singers (alongside Pavlos Sidiropoulos and Nikolas Asimos) to exit the changing stage of Exarcheia. Her funeral gathered thousands of people. A lost poem of Katerina unearthed and published in her recent biography reveals her unwavering commitment to anarchy:

"Don't you stop me. I am dreaming.

We lived centuries of injustice bent over.
 Centuries of loneliness.
 Now don't. Don't you stop me.
 Now and here, for ever and everywhere.
 I am dreaming freedom.
 Though everyone's
 All-beautiful uniqueness
 To reinstitute
 The harmony of the universe.
 Lets play. Knowledge is joy.
 Its not school conscription.
 I dream because I love.
 Great dreams in the sky.
 Workers with their own factories
 Contributing to world chocolate making.
 I dream because I KNOW and I CAN.
 Banks give birth to "robbers".
 Prisons to "terrorists".
 Loneliness to "misfits".
 Products to "need"
 Borders to armies.
 All caused by property.
 Violence gives birth to violence.
 Don't now. Don't you stop me.
 The time has come to reinstitute
 the morally just as the ultimate praxis.
 To make life into a poem.
 And life into praxis.
 It is a dream that I can I can I can
 I love you
 And you do not stop me nor am I dreaming. I live.
 I reach my hands
 To love to solidarity
 To Freedom.
 As many times as it takes all over again.
 I defend ANARCHY.

...

1. Gang-war [Symmoritopolemos] was the official monarchist term for the Civil War, current until the mid 1970s.

2. "They" [Autes] in feminine plural (Elles – fr) indicates the Movement of Democratic Women [Kinisi Dimokratikon Gynaikon], the most numerous women's organisation at the time which after 1981 was recuperated into the Socialist State apparatus to provide the cadres of the Secretariat of Equality. The poem was written in 1980, the year when during the

Polytechnic Uprising anniversary march, one worker and one student, Koumis and Kanellopoulou, were killed by the riot police forces (MAT) – the official stance of the socialist opposition was a complete cover-up of the incident.

3. Pakistanis were the first immigrant worker population in Athens well before the first wave of immigration in the 1990s. Pakistani workers in the mid 1970s organised one of the fiercest wildcat strikes, at a time where the movement for proletarian autonomy was at its high noon.

4. “Metaxourgeio”, the down-town Athens area south of Omonoia square, a devalued working class neighbourhood which slowly became a derelict district of collapsing houses, car garages and the main red-light zone of Athens. Despite some efforts to gentrification the area remains the same today.

5. “Enraged citizens” [aganaktismenoi polites] is a term used until today by the media as a euphemism for fascist groups and para-state thugs.

6. Patission is the avenue joining Ano Patissia with Omonoia square passing next to the Polytechnic and the ASSOE university as well as to Athens’ major squares (Victoria, Amerikis, Kolliatsou) in between Patissia and Kypseli, the most densely populated areas of the metropolis. It is considered to be the “radical avenue” of the capital, the first to be affected by civil disturbances.

7. Mitropanos is a popular singer of working class origin identified with chain-smoking male proletarian culture, he was recuperated first in the post-junta left-wing republican music scene, and then in the music entertainment industry as a whole.

8. Dexameni, referring to the “arty square” of Kolonaki, the ruling class neighbourhood next to the Parliament was then a metonym for the bourgeois left.

9. proletarian neighbourhoods of Athens and Salonica at the time/ Kotzia is the city hall square of Athens where day-workers (builders etc) gathered before dawn to be picked by construction bosses.

10. proletarian neighbourhoods of Athens and Salonica at the time/ Kotzia is the city hall square of Athens where day-workers (builders etc) gathered before dawn to be picked by construction bosses.

...

May 25th

One morning I will open the door
and I will go out in the streets
as I did yesterday.

And I won't be thinking about anything other than
just one piece of the father
and one piece of the sea
-those two pieces they didn't deprive me of-
and the city. The city which they transformed into a rotting corpse.

And our friends that are no more.

One morning I will open the door
straight into the fire
and I will enter as I did yesterday
shouting “fascists!!”
constructing barricades and throwing rocks
with a red banner
held high, shining in the sunbeams.

I will open the door
and it's time to tell you
-not that I am afraid-
but, see, I want to tell you that I didn't make it in time
and that you have to learn
not to be going out in the streets without weapons as I did
-because I didn't make it in time-
because then you will disappear as I disappeared
“like that” “in the void”
cracked into little pieces made
of sea, childhood years
and red banners.

One morning I will open the door
and I will be gone

carrying the dream of the revolution
within the infinite loneliness
of the paper-made barricades
bearing the label -do not believe them!-
“Provocator”.

White is
the aryan race,
the silence,
the white cells,
the cold,
the white medical gowns,
the death-gowns,
the heroin.
...These few words in order to retribute black.

What I fear most
is becoming “a poet”...
Locking myself in the room
gazing at the sea
and forgetting...
I fear that the stitches over my veins might heal
and, instead of having blur memories about TV news,
I take to scribbling papers and selling “my views”...
I fear that those who stepped over us might accept me
so that they can use me.
I fear that my screams might become a murmur
so that to serve putting my people to sleep.
I fear that I might learn to use meter and rhythm
and thus I will be trapped within them
longing for my verses to become popular songs.
I fear that I might buy binoculars in order to bring closer
the sabotage actions in which I won't be participating.
I fear getting tired – an easy prey for priests and academics –
and so turn into a “sissy”...
They have their ways ...
They can utilize the routine in which you get used to,
they have turned us into dogs:
they see to us being ashamed for not working...
they see to us being proud for being unemployed...
That's how it is.
Keen psychiatrists and lousy policemen
are waiting for us in the corner.
Marx...
I am afraid of him...
My mind walks past him as well...
Those bastards...they are to blame...
I cannot -fuck it- even finish this writing...
Maybe...eh?...maybe some other day...
(Translated by G.Chalkiadakis)
Ah, my companion
poetry: Katerina Gogou
music: Nikos Kallitsis
vocals: Martha Frintzila
“Up and down Patission”

Ah, my companion, how we miss you. . .
The time has become filled with worms
nuclear tests, popular fronts,
bordellos and multinationals,
they don't allow us to love.
Ah, my companion, how we miss you. . .
You know it, what is there for me to tell you.
And afterwards they got together on it.
In China, January of '77, they slaughter workers
Ah, my companion, why weren't you careful
why weren't you more careful?
Here, the same. They hide in their shells, the people.
Ah, if you only knew, companion, what a heavy load we carry. . .
In that way you appear a little weak, you crossed over
Ah, my companion, why weren't you careful
why weren't you more careful?
Ah, my companion who did not betray us
we are living in a barbarous world. . .

(translation: Eva Johanos

*"Katerina Gogou, Up and down Patisision," (book with cd), published by Odos Panos, 2012."The views of Katerina Gogou on loneliness, and 20 of her poems set to music", a selective publication dedicated to the poet and actress Katerina Gogou, [1940-1993])

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