Fictitious Movement and Real Movement

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The evolving of social struggles leads to profound changes in the structure of the movement of the exploited. Capital's attitude to the class struggle changes according to time and place, leading to diverse reactions and organizational forms.

We are going to look at some of the more obvious of these forms, see where they belong in the social clash and point to their real or apparent revolutionary essence in the anarchist sense.

The movement of the exploited

It is not easy to identify the social composition of this movement for the same reasons that make any analysis that claims to fix the essence of a class of exploited here and now unreliable. The great mass of disinherited (those who have been deprived of the means of production) is divided into many non-communicating areas. The technique of 'divide and rule' applied by capital at world level has transformed the classic workers' movement into a confused conglommeration of stimuli towards careerism and abuse of power, developing that capitalist individualism which, born elsewhere, has nothing to do with the miserable situation of the workers.

The decision to give producers access to consumer goods allowed capital both to overcome its crisis for about thirty years and to transform the movement of exploited profoundly. The unions and democratic parties were then called upon to complete the task.

Traditionally suspicious of the union, the worker is less so of the party, which he considers something detached from the reality of work and concerned with 'political affairs' that have little to do with him.

Basically, the worker would rather be exploited by a member of the bourgeoisie than by someone of his own class (or social status). For this he became suspicious of the union in situations where it was becoming a bureaucracy (or he was at first, when the union was produced by the working class), but was far less so of the political party, traditionally in the hands of lawyers, professors and other such despicable people.

However, although this distinction between party and union still exists, both of these institutions are now maneuvered by capital for its projects of integration.

Nevertheless, this integration can never be complete, and this applies to traditional capitalism, advanced capitalism, and State capitalism alike. It cannot become total because, in order to ensure the persistence of exploitation, a net class differentiation is required both at national and international level. This differentiation leads to the possibility of integration (consumerism and welfare state), on the backs of minorities that are still living in absolute poverty. Precise areas of the globe are deliberately left in this condition because they must produce raw materials at low costs and import finished products at high prices. When some of these areas change route, i.e. change their model of production, adjusting it to that of countries in economically advanced areas (such as happened in Chile), the correction of this tendency comes about through recourse to any means whatsoever, including genocide.

The same phenomenon occurs on a reduced scale within individual countries. The poorer strata subsist and are becoming more and more ghettoised in order to guarantee the inclusion of the part of the exploited that has been given access to expensive consumer goods.

There is no need to cry scandal, one shouldn't confuse traitor and betrayed and throw everything together in the dark night of a society that is making classes disappear. In substance, the movement of the exploited has been betrayed; its real interests — definitive liberation from the

bosses and the building of true socialism — have been betrayed. To complete this vast operation are the unions and so-called democratic parties, while the capitalists direct the queues. It goes without saying that the FIAT worker who is drawn by some occult force from the supermarket to the cinema, from the cinema to the football stadium, the stadium to filling in a football pools coupon, and fills his house with useless expensive objects, is not a traitor. He has been lent an ethical and social model that does not belong to him, a model that is guaranteed by the real traitors of the class of workers, the political parties and the unions. Think of the difficulty capitalism would have in getting its servants to troop into the police if it did not make them amazing promises (salary, professional qualification, social status, uniforms with shiny buttons, see the world, etc.). All the bodies that carry out some kind of activity related to the defence of capital enjoy some kind of concrete privilege. The judiciary, that State-commissioned band of criminals, that mafia in ermine called upon to destroy human lives with impunity, that gang of murderers in togas, enjoy a great reputation, permanence and free reign. False defamation and real privilege (very high salaries). The same can be said for army professionals, that other gang of murderers paid for with money that belongs to everybody. They are always ready to torture the proletarians that fall into their hands, suppress those who intend to make their own will prevail, contrive more or less murky conspiracies and ultimately take over power. Army professionals enjoy more than a few privileges. Warrant officers plunder the orderly office unpunished, laying in supplies for their own homes and those of the other officers. They have service personnel at their disposition and plenty of free time. They enjoy discounts and various privileges and, last but not least, can wear a uniform with lots of shiny buttons and medals to commemorate their fuck-ups in the service of the bosses.

Coming back to the movement of the exploited, it is easy to see how this is broken in half, thanks to the same system — they have given themselves little privileges and built an ethic that is far from the real interests of the working class.

But another part of the movement exists, one that cannot gain access to the aforementioned area. If it were possible, the 'closed' social State that Fichte once spoke about, unsuccessful attempts of which have been tried in New Zealand and Sweden, or the authoritarian socialist State which the USSR and China are gigantic examples of, would be realised.

But, if we look closely we see that even in the case of the closed social State a part of the exploited always escapes global control. They develop a fundamental disharmony with the 'globally harmonious' system. This disharmony is finding the class clash difficult at the present time and often ends up in individual refusal to accept the wellbeing that is being served down from above. Here a radical response to the State perspective of dreamed integration could constitute sparks of great interest. Not a contrast due to poverty therefore, but due to a different approach concerning individual autonomy and that of the class of 'the controlled'.

So it is the other part of the movement that we are interested in here, the part that has been excluded from the possibility of finding a job, is ghettoised inside prisons and asylums or isolated in areas that have been deliberately built for them inside the great urban enclaves. It is the part that is pushed into individual survival in order to be more effectively struck and physically eliminated. This part that is also more directly in contact with exploitation at the workplace, i.e. produces commodities directly and struggles with every means against the work pace and fatal accidents. These are the ones that get cut to pieces by machinery and rarely have all ten fingers on their hands.

The really incisive class clash is tied to the perspective of this exploited minority. Elsewhere, at higher levels, where the relationship proletarianisation-salarisation has disintegrated or is in the process of disintegrating, the clash is attenuating to the point of reaching mere discussions on how to share out the spoils of the ghettoised.

So, to conclude, we can see a clear disparity within the movement of the exploited. On the one hand there are those who have been seduced by capital's game and who, although they still have the outward aspects of wage-earners, have lost their proletarian characteristics. On the other hand there are those who have become estranged from this process, either because they have undergone intensive exploitation at the level of production, or because they have been cut out of work temporarily (unemployed) or once and for all (prisoners, alienated). Class unity can only be rebuilt by unmasking the traitors (parties and unions) and upturning the clash that has been determined by the authoritarian organisation of work, in other words, through a revolutionary process. What we need to do at the present time, therefore, is to identify both the fictitious movement and the real movement of the exploited and turn our revolutionary attention to the latter.

The anarchist movement

The anarchist movement is based on pluralism. Real pluralism, not the banality that this has been reduced to by the democratic parties that only refer to the term so as to mask their political agreements for power-sharing. For anarchists pluralism means the presence of different methods that are continually being confronted frankly and clearly. It also means the existence of different, constantly verifiable tendencies, all of which are based on anti-authoritarianism, i.e. freedom and equality, the substitution of the State with free agreement, self-management, federation, direct action, the integration of manual and intellectual work and solidarity.

We still haven't said much, however. The anarchist movement, as an historic movement existing in a precise moment in time and in precise social situations, never tallies with the fundamental principles of anarchism in absolute. And the differences cannot all be due to pluralism in the way that the word is used by political parties. At certain moments in history the anarchist movement has shown and still shows considerable divergences from the fundamental principles of anarchism. These approximations are often a consequence of the social clash that allows the use of certain means and excludes others. But they are often a result of precise choices operated by regroupings of tendencies influenced, in turn, by a small cohort of leaders. While in the first case approximation in the anarchist strategy of the struggle is due to the objective conditions of the class clash, in the second one it is possible speak of a totally negative influence.

Given the complexity of the problem, let us try to be more clear, even at the risk of repeating ourselves.

The social clash does not consent an anarchist strategy in absolute, just as it does not consent the realisation of an anarchist revolution in absolute. The problem is to carry anarchist aspirations to within the mass in order to allow the coming about of a revolutionary process that has as wide an anarchist presence as possible. The problem immediately rebounds: what means should we choose in view of the ends we want to obtain. Given that we are talking of anarchist aims, otherwise we would be outside the problem altogether, it is a question of how to choose from the various means that we have at our disposition. We maintain that the choice of one set of

means rather than another is never an objective fact. The analysis that precedes the choice, no matter how much it contains points of fact, cannot fail to include important subjective elements. In our opinion, the choice of means alone (adhering perfectly to the anarchist perspective) is no guarantee that anarchist aims will be attained. Power has the capacity to put obstacles in motion that get in the way between the movement and its aims. One could even end up with an irreproachable choice of anarchist means becoming counterproductive to attaining anarchist ends. Power has known how to modify contrasts and structures pertaining to the clash in such a way that those who put such choices into effect can find themselves on the wrong side, black and red stripes and all.

What we are saying is not as crazy as it seems, just as any attempt to look at the anarchist movement in relation to the movement of the exploited should not seem strange. Unfortunately the problem is complex and needs to be gone into further.

This discourse would obviously be absurd if the anarchist movement were to correspond to the ideal of comrades divided into affinity groups and, regrouped in federations or not, all working to bring about the conditions for a revolution with as great a libertarian presence as possible. In fact, none of this is actually happening. The anarchist movement harbours tiny power centres that develop, work, judge, condemn, absolve, programme, decide, make mistakes or get it right, just like any power centre the world over. I was about to add that the anarchist movement even has its heretics, but that obviously goes without saying.

The tendency of the small power centre is to put everything together, as far as possible, under one flag or acronym. In this case power is measured according to the number of militants or, better still, the number of groups (which makes more of an impression as one doesn't know whether a group consists of two or two hundred people). Bakunin himself averted that the absence of retribution was in no way a guarantee against the formation of power centres. Man is a strange animal. If money attracts, power for power's sake attracts just as much, even when it is so rarified as to seem impossible. This also occurs in the anarchist movement. Many comrades pay more attention to congresses and conferences than to the struggle. They elaborate philosophical articles for reviews that want to publish them rather than engaging themselves in first person. Rather than attack power they think of how they can disturb it as little as possible in order to cultivate the tiny space they find themselves acting in or believe they are acting in.

The truth is that in Italy the movement is to a great extent a 'fictitious' movement. Apart from a few rare cases, it is outside the struggles, at least as far as the task of intervention within the mass that many groups and federations consider this to be goes. Outside the struggles, but still with some residual capacity to elaborate decent analyses, have debates with some decorum, construct interesting theoretical interventions. A few groups are moving forward a little and take great delight in making known their experiences inside some factory committee or residents'group.

What we have said should not imply that everything is fine elsewhere, that the autonomous groups are quite beyond criticism. Confusion and rough measure reign everywhere. It is sufficient to think of the French and English phenomenon of the ORA and the Italian one of the Archinovists to get an idea. Reacting to the inefficiency and humanitarianism of some of the tendencies in the movement, these people have gone to the other extreme of claiming to have found the solution in a specific organisation, the class memory. We have already developed our critique of this tendency of contemporary anarchism that sees therapeutic values in Archinov's

Platform that would be capable of curing the great invalid, just like the Russian comrades who survived the disaster of the revolution.

What we want to point out here is that it is often possible to distinguish a few stronger personalities behind each of the tendencies, who build real (tiny) power centres, managing them in perfect harmony with the universal rules of power.

There is a tendency to overestimate the importance of the specific anarchist movement as a component of the libertarian revolution, and this is particularly evident in the Italian movement. While it is agreed that it is unthinkable that a revolution will be influenced by anarchists alone, it is believed that in the future revolution the wider the specific anarchist presence, the more likely it is that this will be useful to the masses. The concept is nothing special in itself, but what seems mistaken to us is how both the anarchist movement and the mass are considered, and the very meaning given to the term 'mass'. Once again it is this mania for quantitative growth, numerical strength, that becomes all the more pressing and disturbing the fewer we are and the further we are from the conditions that make growth itself possible.

To sum up, we have a movement that sees itself historically in a precise way. It has inherited ideas, analyses and very specific experiences, but it does not have any direct relationship with the struggles in course as it lacks the presence within the mass that is considered the 'sole' condition of its being able to call oneself an anarchist movement. Not all of the comrades that consider themselves part of the anarchist movement share the above ideas however. Not all of them abandon themselves to waiting for a quantitative growth in the movement as the essential element for any action to be carried out 'within' the mass. Some see the problem the other way around. This different analysis usually emerges from the so-called autonomous groups, although this is in no way consistent or universally accepted.

Fictitious movement and real movement

We see the fictitious anarchist movement as the whole of the comrades that hold positions of power within the movement. They do not make any effort to contribute to the growth of revolutionary anarchist consciousness within the mass, but limit themselves to meetings, conferences and congresses, trying to address the younger and less prepared comrades towards what they consider to be the indiscutable tenets of anarchism. These comrades — even those in good faith — are betraying the anarchist ideals of life and action. Then there are the other comrades, those who, due to weakness or acquiescence, end up complying with resolutions that are always drawn up by the same people. Even if they are involved in ongoing struggles, they distort the very meaning of struggle as soon as they succumb to the need to delegate it to others, taking no steps to inform themselves in order to be able to validly oppose themselves to the 'tyranny'of the more competent or influential comrades.

The rest of the movement includes two precise tendencies. The Archinovists, now in decline, who theorise the need for a specific minority with well-defined tasks, but confuse this with the real movement. If it were possible to realise this in libertarian and not leninist terms, it would simply be another form of fictitious movement as it would not emerge directly from the concrete struggles of the exploited but would superimpose itself on them, a vanguard destined to defend the sacred principles of anarchism (or anarcho-leninism). The autonomists, who are torn between the original goal of quantitative growth and a new vision of the movement in the real sense. When

these groups think that they hold the truth and, as such, are destined to reap the patrimony of sacred anarchist virtues of the past, their future is mapped out in advance. Very soon they too will find their leader (if they have not already done so) and will march within the ranks of the fictitious movement. Were they to look beyond organisation to the concrete reality of the struggles then, perhaps, they might be the comrades best indicated to give us a new analysis of the essence and possibility of a real anarchist movement.

The forces of capital that we have seen at work lacerating the movement of the exploited, producing the emargination of a minority and the access of the rest into consumerism, also act indirectly upon the anarchist movement, determining what we have just defined as the repartition between fictitious movement and real movement. Just as there is a fictitious movement of the exploited, there is also a fictitious anarchist movement; just as there is a real movement of exploited, there is also a real anarchist movement. The democratic illusion takes the place of the pitfall of inclusion into consumerism; cohabitation with power, its immediate corollary, does the rest. Anarchists only scare in operettas. Power has learned how to use the scarecrow of anarchy to instill fear in the well-fed bourgeois (when useful), but basically it knows very well that it is able to keep a good part of the movement under control at all times. Of course, it can still be useful to power to kill the odd anarchist, but that happens when the clash becomes more acute and they need to offer a victim to the god of public opinion (Pinelli), or when things reach the point of clashes in the streets (Serantini). But normally the anarchist movement does not disturb power very much and is left to doze in peace. The democratic illusion opens up imaginary spaces for action in the eyes of many comrades and leads them astray. It is the same kind of error as parliamentary entrism. But, although we are very good at criticising parliamentarianism (which doesn't cost us anything apart from not going to vote), we do not always see that any concession to power at all should be seen for what it is: a compromise.

We are not condemning partial struggles or struggles for claiming better conditions here. What we are saying does not mean that we think we should abstain from participating in the forms that the exploited in general invent beyond party and union models, just because these forms have limited objectives. It simply means that everything should not be confused with anarchism as such but be seen in the right dimension, in the perspective of approaching the mass and a growth in the autonomous libertarian movement in the wider sense of the term. Unfortunately, it is our own class position, our awareness, that pushes us to find a process of substitution at any cost. To false consciousness corresponds false revolutionary activity, and the cleverer we are at putting words and concepts together the easier it is to influence those around us, addressing them in the direction of fictitious and distorted activity.

The contemporary transformations of capital are rendering such a vegetation possible within the anarchist movement. Freedom of expression (up to a certain point) guarantees the right to call oneself anarchist without running too many risks. The problems start when somebody starts to cause trouble. Then there is the risk of waking the sleeping dogs that destroy indiscriminately, including the fictitious part of the movement that the compromise with power had made possible.

We should also point out that the tiny power groups that can be seen within the anarchist movement run roughly parallel to the large power groups of the movement of the exploited (unions and parties), having the function of connecting the requirements of capital with the pressures of the class clash. The rest of the movement, at least the part that revolves around these tiny vacuous power centres, corresponds to that part of the movement of exploited that has been absorbed into consumerism through the formation of 'intermediate classes' where wage-earning

no longer leads to consciousness of being exploited. Then there is the movement of the excluded, the ghettoised part, the excluded minority that does not find citizenship in the new capitalist perspectives and is persecuted by both the State police and the police of the parties and unions. There is nothing in the anarchist movement that corresponds to this part.

This lack of correspondence might seem strange or contradictory. Having developed a critique of the anarchist movement in these pages, and in particular having attacked the components that have recourse to quantitative growth through more or less complex mechanisms, it would seem logical that quite a positive evaluation would emerge concerning the autonomous groups. But no. And it is here that we reach the most complex point of the whole analysis.

The real anarchist movement

The considerable part of the international anarchist movement that, as we have mentioned, is constituted of autonomous groups, does not have any more right than the others to declare that it belongs to — or constitutes — the real anarchist movement. Here too the phenomena of elitism, stubborn elephantism, backwardness in analysis and strategy are to be found.

On the contrary, it seems to us that the best place to look for the real anarchist movement is beyond all the schema and churches. It is to be found in the mass that are realising the self-organisation of the struggle concretely with all their confusion and afterthoughts, mistakes and hesitancy, but also with considerable effort, in an anarchist strategy of moving towards social revolution. But this research inside the mass cannot be made in a sullenly spontaneous way, i.e. the number of autonomous actions (or those considered such) contain the highest coefficient of anarchism. This is not an accurate procedure. In the exploited mass which, as we have seen, are not the mass in general but a precise bunch of them, they are identifiable with fair approximation through analytical processes that must constantly be verified. The organisation of attack on associated power (bosses, unions, parties) is a spontaneous fact that emerges from the process of exploitation directly. This undergoes modifications according to the changing conditions of a real movement that is not quantifiable. The anarchist presence is indispensable here and could be useful to a maximum degree. Here is where the latter fuses indissolubly with the mass and the conditions for the growth of a real movement start to appear. This is not quantifiable in terms of groups or federations, but turns out to be measurable indirectly on the basis of the number of certain kinds of action realised, the circulation of certain ideas, and the correlation that these ideas find in certain milieu of the exploited.

The starting point for the 'decisive test' of the anarchist movement is precisely here, far from the stagnant atmosphere of traditional groups, lapidary decisions at congresses and conferences and more or less doctrinal or populist publications. They are the starting point for 'verification', not 'constitution'. In fact, by reasoning in this way the whole movement reassesses itself in what it still has that is alive and valid and has managed to keep integral throughout the years in spite of the onslaught of muddle-headed little leaders of various extractions. And in this perspective such a patrimony could give better and better fruit.

We do not agree with the comrades that make the same critique of the fictitious anarchist movement and come to the conclusion that the whole anarchist movement is an absolute nullity. We consider that, upturning the perspective and forgetting the logic of arithmetic or of seeing quantitative growth as a sign of strength, and ignoring the management of the small power

centres, the movement could contribute a lot to the struggle of the exploited by identifying with it.

Two immediate results would emerge from this upturning of perspective: a) analyses would not necessarily be made by specialised persons or groups; b) specific autonomous organisation that does not come into contrast with the libertarian principles of self-determination might take form.

The analytical part of anarchism is influenced by certain 'doctrines'. These doctrines do not bear equal weight today in the face of the development of the struggle, but there can be no doubt that some of them persist in influencing the movement in its fictitious aspect. Personally, we believe that the real movement of the exploited should not be seen as something separate from the theoretical development of anarchism, but that its realisations should be followed and enlivened in order to sustain the revolutionary component that can become a point of reference for everybody. Here the anarchist negation of eternal principles must express itself in order to allow a continual theoretical foundation for struggles coming from particular conditions of exploitation in the real movement of the exploited. Here the old anarchist texts cannot be dully accepted as gospel, but need to be reread in the light of the present day as models of action and not mummified stereotypes. Only then will it be possible to have an anarchist movement that does not turn out to be backward when faced with theoretical stimuli from situations presented by the real movement of exploited.

Finally, let us examine the other point: the structure of an autonomous organisation that is very different from that envisaged by the Archinovist comrades. When the struggle radicalises, the movement of the exploited resists further exploitation and ghettoization. The latter resist physical elimination in the prisons and mental asylums, refusing to play the role assigned to them by power, and develop autonomous organisational forms that can reach precise levels of articulation, not excluding armed organisation. What we said earlier concerning theoretical development is also valid in this case. The real anarchist movement cannot stay outside this spontaneous organisational fecundity. It must become a part of it, trying as far as possible to guarantee the libertarian essence of the movement of the base in contrast against all kinds of power.

But this specific organisation must not adopt forms that resemble those of the mass organisations that characterise the movement of the exploited. Class memory belongs to the exploited themselves and cannot be managed by enlightened specialists capable of keeping it alive even in moments of slack. The essential point to bear in mind is that the famous moments of reflux are such for the fictitious movement of the exploited, not for the real movement who suffer the relentless pressure of exploitation and genocide all the time. The attack on that part of the movement can also come about as a result of radical modifications in the economic structure, or it can happen with an accentuation of repression. In that case one is assisting in a radicalisation of the struggle, a phenomenon that must attract anarchists' attention to the maximum degree.

The real anarchist movement must therefore be found within the mass after having examined the latter's composition attentively and individuated a real movement within the movement of exploited as a whole. But that does not mean to deny the validity of the traditional anarchist movement with all its sins and limitations, its pathetic power centres and obtuseness. These hindrances automatically disappear by upturning the point of reference. The real movement of the exploited thus comes to be seen as an integral part of the theoretical development of anarchism, whereas anarchist doctrines, relived in the critical light that eliminates the danger of sacralisation, contribute to enriching the continual realisation of the movement in question. By the same token,

a specific organisation can emerge from the real movement of the exploited and integrate with the real anarchist movement without becoming an 'institution' or the memory of the proletariat, but remain a spontaneous germination of the exploited strengthened in light of the experience of anarchist struggles of the past.

Fictitious movement and the dominion of the apparent

We are partisans of organisation. There is no life possible beyond organisation. Chaos and brutal spontaneity cannot produce the elements that are indispensable for liberation, which consists of a long and difficult process where a strategic project can turn out to be out of date and must be superseded.

But organisation cannot be a thing in itself, isolated from the struggle, an obstacle to be overcome before gaining access to the area of the class clash. On the contrary, it must model and condition itself on the actual situation of struggle, emerge as a homogenising fact, not set itself up 'a priori' to explain the contradictions of the social impact. When it is separate from reality, organisation descends into the realm of the apparent, becomes a cathedral in the desert. It takes on a living semblance, precise details and contours. Battles quite similar to real clashes take place within it, strategies and tactics that have nothing to envy of real ones rival each other. Only all this takes place in the world of the fictitious.

This situation usually has a precise class connotation. Manual workers, labourers and peasants are not inclined to give life to organisational forms that do not come from the class clash itself. Their lives (up to a point), take place within the nevralgic points of this clash and the intellectual hypothesis, even if not unknown to them, is at least not very familiar. On the contrary, intellectuals coming from within the context of dominion are afflicted with more or less severe crises of consciousness and want to reach theoretical clarity before passing to the resolutive action of the abstract moment. They find themselves up to the neck in endless contradictions, constantly building and undoing organisational models which, according to them, should serve to give life to action.

Of course, this repartition between intellectuals and manual workers is also arbitrary and approximative, which is why we should approach the subject with caution. However, we suggest that comrades reflect upon it. At the present time the anarchist movement is composed massively of students and intellectuals and is mainly a fictitious movement: is it impossible to get a relation between the two?

We are going to report a few statements made by various representatives of the fictitious anarchist movement that clearly show how these comrades are completely immersed in the 'domain of the apparent'. The need to do something to come out of the imaginary and go towards reality is evident.

'Let's be honest, the organisation is kept afloat by the resolve of a few comrades! We should be able to say such things between ourselves, shouldn't we? We must remind ourselves that when we each go our own way after a conference it is up to us, not Tom, Dick and Harry, but each one of us. There is a lot of activity and work that each one of us must do, must carry out endlessly, yet we will always and only be a movement that spreads and defends beautiful ideas.'

And elsewhere: 'Our Movement is mainly composed of students. And that is all very well, but the worker element is lacking and should be there.' We are obviously not the only ones to be

concerned about a situation of deficiency and crisis that is threatening to lose the sense of the relationship between anarchist theory and practice. But the comrades pointing out the danger are the same ones that are completely immersed in fictitious reality. We ask ourselves why it is that, once they see the danger, these comrades continue to flee their responsibilities and do nothing to remove the obstacle and start moving in the right direction?

The reason for this is to be found in the existence of little power centres that many comrades rotate around, while the few who manage these centres in the same logic as any organisation of power can do nothing other than continue to do so. It seems to us that, even if they are in good faith, comrades who do nothing to break up these power centres and turn the active potential of the movement towards the struggle even at the cost of denting the ideological heritage, bear some responsibility. The care with which certain mummies, which by their own definition should be against any kind of conservatism, are embalmed is really extraordinary.

Basically, it is the illusion produced by appearances that pushes these comrades to get involved in something that does not make sense if seen as an end in itself. Hence the great fatigue in sustaining organisations whose only aim is to perpetuate themselves in view of the day when it will be possible to put this or that libertarian strategy into effect. We don't want to accuse anyone in particular, we just want to point out a danger, that's all.

But there are those who have taken a significant step forward in the critique. Those who, declaring that they agree with us (largely speaking) as far as the basic analysis is concerned, have suggested that when it comes to it, we are no exception as far as this critique is concerned. And who has ever said anything to the contrary? We are developing a critique that is at the same time, and in the first place, self-criticism. But as soon as we see the danger the critique, precisely because it is self-criticism, loses its value because at least there is the will on our part to put the problem on the carpet and examine it with courage, without false modesty, whereas it seems useful to address the analyses towards those who insist on keeping their heads under the sand.

Of course we do not succeed in coming out of the reign of the fictitious decisively either. Many analyses are too vague and try to face too many problems all at once, there is no actual connection between ourselves and the real revolutionary movement. But we can say one thing net and clear: we do not try to build fantastic castles in the air, phantom organisations with bombastic acronyms. We do not dedicate ourselves to amassing converts. Our work is aimed towards the real movement, tries to contribute, as best it can, to the evolution of struggles in situations that we think are most significant: prisons, mental asylums, armed struggle organisations, autonomous workers' struggles. Any step in the direction of a clear libertarian organisation of these struggles is a step that is also taken with our contribution. We do not see how we can enter the heart of the class clash directly at the present time, perhaps due to particular short-sightedness linked to our own class situation, our analytical defects or for other reasons that we don't know. However, albeit with great timidity we are sure that we are moving in the direction of the place of the struggle and away from the dominion of the apparent.

What movement?

A clear sign of the incapacity to come out of the fictitious movement is shown in the confusion that reigns among comrades when one tries to define what one means by anarchist movement.

Tendencies are emerging from within one of the biggest federated organisations that is supporting an opening towards the whole 'movement' in order 'to bring about a restoration of the movement on proper bases: the recomposition of tendencies that compare and contrast each other and work together as far as possible, without any claims to predominate or any desire to prevaricate'. In this way they want to struggle against tendencies that — more or less openly — see a pre-eminence of the organised movement over the rest of the movement. But on the whole this organisation remains nebulous and has no clear ideas.

The problem becomes tragic when it is a case of a specific instrument, such as a paper produced by one organisation. In this case it is stated that the paper 'must above all be the expression of the whole Movement.' An absolutely impossible and mythical affirmation, clear indicating the great confusion on the subject. The same comrade then states: 'It must be the paper of the anarchist movement, a paper that belongs to the (specific federated organisation) and remains so (of this organisation) but opens up to the problems of the Movement.' How a paper of the specific federated organisation that must remain such can become the expression of the whole movement is not explained. And that, in our opinion, is a clear sign yet again of not knowing what the movement as a whole is.

Then there are the pathetic calls to action. 'I am not a fan of acronyms and would like all acronyms to disappear to move to one name alone, that of the Italian anarchist movement. But unfortunately fractionalism exists and is a sore, a cancer that we carry within us. Do we want to go on like this? I don't think so. Let's say the names, let's try to see if the defects that we have encountered can be corrected and we are here to correct them.' This is an indication of the role that appearance plays in the absence of concrete social struggles. The ghost's decomposition and recomposition pushes comrades to see a hallucinatory phenomenon as something real and to struggle, often with disgusting means, to address it towards this or that objective, not realising that its essential appearance transforms any objective, even a theoretically more solid one, into appearance.

Of considerable importance concerning this problem, it seems, is the way in which the management of money coming from the sale of a property asset belonging to the whole anarchist movement has been carried out. To decide the fate of this asset a commission was made up of three comrades belonging to the organisation we will call A and three comrades of the organisation we will call B. The sale was decided and a number of million (lire) were realised and put 'at the disposition of the whole Movement'. Thus a comrade belonging to the so-called commission continues: 'There is the problem of using this sum in such a way that it benefits the Movement as a whole, or to establish a repartition among the organised components of the Movement… The money has been put in a bank and is at the disposition of the Movement and therefore of organisation B and organisation A. As far as organisation C is concerned this is still to be decided.' Another comrade, one of the nominees of the asset we are talking about, says, 'It has been decided to print … (a certain work). In the name of the Italian Anarchist Movement of course, because the funds (coming from the sale of the asset) are funds of the Italian Anarchist Movement and do not belong to organisation A, B, or C, or to any other particular group that claims it.' Well, as we can see, ideas are not very clear, they are even in contrast. This blessed Movement (with so many capital letters), good ghost that it is, is made to enter and leave the stage whenever it suits them, without too much concern as to what it will actually say or do, so great is its acquiescence seen to be.

But let us take another very instructive argument. The defence of comrades in prison. We will take part in a debate on the question, limiting ourselves to the point where there is a discussion as to whether to allow autonomous groups to participate in a forthcoming conference or to limit it to the organised parts. '… Will this Conference only be open to the three federations or also to the autonomous groups?'

- It must be a Conference of the militants of the three federations.
- We have not discussed that much. There was talk of a conference of the Movement without specification or preclusion. It seems to me that the autonomous groups are also interested in the problem.
- Even if it is true that the autonomous groups have worked and are interested in the problem, this question must not include them as it only concerns the three federations (…) and must be resolved by them alone.
- I'd like to point out that many comrades of the autonomous groups are interested in knowing who has the task of defending the arrested comrades, who should manage the funds and how. Some of them have turned to us to find out what is happening. I think it is right to let them know the situation and to allow them to participate. To exclude them from the conference would not simply create even more chaos, but might also look like a political manouvre.
- But I wouldn't like to give the comrades that walked out through the door the possibility of coming back in through the window in this way.
- These groups are outside the Movement. We could invite the groups that are forming or have already formed, but which we can guarantee, not those that have already compromised themselves by taking certain positions'…

It should be remembered that they are talking about how to defend comrades in prison here.

No comment. Basically there is no such thing as an exact idea of what is meant by anarchist movement. Most of the time reference is made to it in order to cook up an alibi so as to be able to do certain things, not because this is really meant as a force.

But when all is said and done, what do we mean by anarchist movement? We believe that the anarchist movement should be seen in the widest sense of the term as all the forces that are struggling for the realisation of a libertarian social revolution. But we also believe that the crystallisation of certain parts of the movement that are wallowing in academic themes, closed up in cliques that play the wiseguy with sentences of absolution or condemnation, have ended up transforming the greater part of this movement into an awkward and useless ideological bureaucratic monster. Yet, beyond the structure that is killing everything, there are comrades, individuals, that mean to struggle for their ideal, who clearly see how this constantly comes up against the structure that ends up oppressing them when they should be enhancing it and making it feasible. These are the comrades that we are talking to here. Work together, not to establish who is closer to the real movement if the demarcation line also involves those pointing towards it, if the critique is also criticism of the critique, but to move in the right direction, that of the exploited masses struggling for their liberation.

Along these lines there are also some comrades that, although they are still tied to the perspective of a federated organisation, are getting tired of it. 'We keep bringing out beautiful analyses without putting ourselves in the optic of the concrete, in fact it is pointless to carry on ruminating old positions such as abstentionism, now a common patrimony of the Movement, without linking this to what there is that is new happening in society… In our opinion, it is no longer the moment for long discussions but for starting to work to find a strategy; in fact, until we find a strategy the Movement will go on making ideological statements that lead to paralysis on the one hand, and to throwing oneself into all the struggles that are going on without carrying out the necessary analyses on the other.'

As one can imagine, the other side of the coin is just as backward. In discussing a pamphlet illustrating the federated anarchist organisation, a comrade stresses, 'It is to be a propaganda pamphlet, so all the arguments that have taken place, etc., should not be put in it. It must be done for propaganda, so be something very simple.. a few deadlines and events to explain to those that don't know where (organisation A) comes from, when it was founded, what happened at the beginning…'

Anyone who, like this comrade, raises the problem of bringing out a pamphlet to make one's organisation known, but 'without the internal disputes', is so steeped in the 'fictitious movement' in our opinion that there is little to be said. On the contrary, the comrade mentioned earlier, while remaining — like most of us — in a fictitious situation, tends towards reality, faces the context that hosts him critically and tries to push it and bring it out into the open, with all the consequences that ensue but also with all the useful results that it is logical to expect.

Towards reality

If nobody can say in absolute that they are part of the real anarchist movement, that is due to the impossibility of pointing to legitimate situations of struggle or methodologies that are valid for everyone at all times. Even the thesis of armed insurrection that we are so often accused of, nevralgic point of any discussion on anarchist methodology, cannot be considered a winning horse at any cost. There can be no doubt that the clash with capital — as we have said many times — will not be pacific. Violence will be the midwife of the new society, it is necessary to be genuinely active against the organised terrorism of the State, trying in every possible way to denounce and contrast it; but all that cannot be considered a simple sacralization of the machine gun. Changing our tune, we have merely said that when such organisations emerge from popular struggles as a result of a process of radicalisation that has isolated them, making the struggles they produced regress, only then, and only on condition that the umbilical cord uniting them with the mass has not been cut, can these organisations be considered to belong to the real movement.

We have said more than once, in contrast with many comrades who considered our opinions to be unfounded, that an armed strategy is not only possible but necessary in Italy today at the present level of capitalist contradictions, so long as it comes from the mass and never ceases to maintain a reciprocal relation with it. If we must be blamed for this then we are ready to discuss all the criticism against us, so long as it is clear and detailed and not concealed in a cowardly way behind mumbling and half sentences as has happened until now. But, let me make it quite clear, we have never said that it is enough to pick up a machine gun to find oneself in the real movement all of a sudden. The problem is far more serious and complex.

At this phase in the struggle the only possible methodology is that of verification. In taking residence within the movement one must proceed to verify one's theoretical content in order to present a strategy that is not up in the clouds. In taking residence within the mass one must proceed to identify the class clash, discerning the 'territory' where this is still acute, i.e. where capitalism has not yet succeeded in completely solving its contradictions.

Once this double verification has taken place one must move towards the movement of the exploited, without claiming to impose any ideological direction or claiming that 'the exploited come to us' as so often happens in the discourses of anarchist comrades. Of course, the anarchist movement is precise enough — even though internal verification should take place at all costs — so is still something that opposes itself to the workers' movement, if nothing other than as an organisational reality that considers itself carrier of a certain revolutionary consciousness. But that is no guarantee as to why one must try to bring about a process that transfers this revolutionary consciousness, a process that allows the charge of the particular consciousness to the total one (that of the mass, or the movement of the exploited). As a revolutionary minority, anarchists must not impose their ideas on the exploited, even though — objectively speaking — they are the bearers of a precise revolutionary consciousness. To act in this way would be to involuntarily perpetrate leninist violence without the aim of the conquest of power, something that is totally contradictory.

On the contrary, by participating in the process of mass self-organisation, working within it, not as theoreticians, politicians or military specialists, but as mass, it is possible to avoid the obstacle of the separate minority that wants to 'move' towards totality, but does not know how to decide upon what methodology to use. It is necessary to start from the actual level of the struggle, from the concrete, material level of the class clash, building small autonomous base organisms that are capable of placing themselves at the point of concurrence between the total vision of liberation and the partial strategic vision that revolutionary collaboration renders indispensable. It is therefore not a question of propaganda, of 'making oneself known' to the mass, it is not a question of reaching the media, it is not a question of speaking on television to millions of viewers. It is a question of realising the revolutionary awareness of the minority in single episodes of mass struggle, making concrete the consciousness that remained abstract when closed up in minoritarian cliques, doing so in such a way that the need for communism felt by the mass is realised little by little, daily, in the material organisation of life.

That is why we do not want to teach anyone anything. The point we are making belongs to the ambit of the theoretical indication that we are proposing as an indispensable starting point in the road towards the real movement. We do not consider ourselves to be holders of the truth or revolutionary consciousness, and we do not want to close ourselves up in sterile arguments that are only good for rendering the present divisions of the revolutionary movement insurmountable. We are not carrying out this struggle in our own name in order to get stronger, quantitatively, or to build another organisational model that is destined to abort prematurely. We are struggling to denounce a grave situation of crisis within the revolutionary movement as a whole and the anarchist movement in particular. Those who don't see these crises, refuse to look at them, are either in bad faith or are so used to exchanging fiction for reality that they no longer even notice it.

Organisation

But we also support the need for organisation. If we put ourselves in the direction of the real movement and look at the concrete possibilities of the anarchist movement critically (not triumphalistically), we realise that these are far more beyond its traditional components — permeated with that episcopal hue that characterises cliques in the phase of reflux — and that is why we are taking up the problem of how to face organisational relations with the mass of exploited rather than with the anarchist movement in the traditional case in point. Today, the areas suffering the contradictory dominion of capital, the ones excluded from the area that has resolved a few fundamental contradictions, are understanding the great alliance of traitors, parties, unions and hangers on, very quickly. They also understand the need for self-organisation, autonomy and the elimination of separate organisms.

Our task is to avoid isolation and extensive theoretical disputes that will never move mountains. We must appear with a series of actions within the mass — along the lines of self-organisation — that are capable of defining our position clearly and unequivocally, making real what up till now — in the mass — is only a spontaneous refusal of the parties, unions and collateral clowns.

If we were to carry out these actions successfully this could open up a road that even the best of us believed unthinkable until now and bring an exasperating situation to a head. We must undermine the social-democratic principles that have infiltrated us through bourgeois hypocrysy or the threat of reprisals from within.

If the prisons enter the struggle, we must struggle with the prisoners, because we too are in prison. We must put an end to making hypocritical distinctions between prisoners that are innocent because they are political and prisoners that are guilty because they are social prisoners. As we are all prisoners, we are all innocent and all guilty. Our struggle, which seemingly takes place outside the prison walls, actually comes about within the great prison which is the present society. Democratic freedoms are puppets that populate the world of the fictitious.

If we dismantle the defensive possibilities of the boss structure, contradictions emerge that the State must face and overcome in first person. Our task is to propose ever new, ever more acute contradictions in order to make the divisions that the State creates between each social group in struggle explode and make the unthinkable thinkable and the impossible possible. This is the self-negation of the vanguard.

In this way a specific mass organisation can arise within the mass, produced by a self-organisational phenomenon. This can extend during the course of the clash and the development of the contradictions to the point of becoming an armed organisation, but without losing its spontaneous self-regulating function. That guarantees, among other things, the persistence of a horizontal structure, the only safeguard for the continuation of the struggle under the present levels of militarisation of States. Isolation leads to revolutionary defeat, not just on a military level but even more so at the political one. That is impossible when the active organism is not the product of dualism (mass organisms versus specific organisation), but it is the mass itself that extends its activity, structuring itself autonomously to face the social clash, also at a military level.

Everything remains to be done in that direction. Every day the mass are developing and incrementing their need for communism, elaborating their theory, recognising their enemies. We stay closed up in our groups, meditating upon analyses and proposing strategies for action

as products of an organism that considers itself the interlocutor, even a privileged one, of the mass. We must upturn the reasoning, stop counting ourselves and start counting the exploited and ghettoised. Then we would realise that we are far more than we thought to have clear ideas, to be better organised, have a precise military defence structure, to be on the right road for attacking power, for building the real revolutionary movement for the elimination of exploitation, for laying the foundations of the future society than cannot fail to be anarchist.

The dangers of the primacy of doing

In their attempt to break the barrier of fictitiousness that they are all too aware of, many comrades end up favouring an activist conception of the movement, one that privileges 'doing' above everything else. Identifying a particular 'field' of intervention that usually coincides with the area they live in, they begin personal 'work'. Preferred areas tend to be factories, housing estates and schools, the countryside being very dispersive and the other places based on total institutions (prisons, asylums, barracks, etc.) very difficult to penetrate.

However, this — very interesting — perspective has one great limitation if it is not inserted into a wider revolutionary project which, although it emerges from the microscopic fact of the unicellular life of the 'area', does not necessarily do so spontaneously. Moreover, it should be said that in fleeing from a situation of apparent lack of involvement, comrades can end up exalting 'work for the sake of it', in a 'pre-eminence of doing'.

Inserting oneself into a minimal field of intervention, they take all the decisions from the base, all the initiatives that have something in common with the anarchist methodology of revolutionary 'work'. But they cannot stop there. In fact, these initiatives are always 'responses' to power's project of exploitation, i.e. they are subordinate to a precise strategy that comes from the power centres, while very little can be done to prevent this strategy and reach its source directly. To face this part of the problem it is necessary, while insisting on intervention in the 'territory', to develop a wider analysis allowing for the individuation of the real objectives of the struggle, the central nucleus of the system of exploitation, at the same time. We can say that any intervention in the peripheral 'territory' must be carried out as though it is attacking reality as a whole, because the small situation contains all the problems of the large. On the contrary, in giving greater scope to the primacy of doing many comrades end up getting involved in a myriad of sectorial struggles that all add up to maximum involvement (seen as number of hours and personal availability). At first this might satisfy the just aspirations of the individual militant — who must recognise himself in what he does in first person — but soon ends up entering the monotony of habit and repetitivity.

Not just that. As our intervention is, by definition, against an immediately quantitative perspective, militants have no control over the amount of involvement in the 'territory'of their intervention. It thus often turns out that one lives periods of flux and reflux as moments of enthusiasm or apathy. On the other hand the revolutionary project is more far-reaching, it presents more complex nuances and interlacing, and if it lives fluxes and refluxes it does so on an international, not a peripheral, level. When one severs the links with the general framework of the revolutionary project (which is both analysis and action), one inevitably see one's own 'work' enclosed within a specific dimension and ends up suffering the consequences.

The false dilemma between theory and practice

The current distinction between theory and practice is based on a misunderstanding. The term theory is seen as something autonomous, worse still, as separate from practice. Speaking of theory one thinks of books, academia, universities, intellectuals, things written and said in a very difficult way. Vice versa, speaking of practice one thinks of actions, organisations, realisations, transformations of the concrete structure of things. Now this polarisation is false.

Another current thesis among revolutionaries is that 'ideas derive from events and not the contrary'. Absolutely correct, only it leaves standing a polarity between ideas and facts that does not exist. If Pisacane, to whom this phrase is attributed, were alive today, he would not be able to do other than agree with this.

Just as there is theory and theory, there is also practice and practice. In abstract terms, theory is that of the bourgeois philosopher that speaks to us of his ontological dreams, and practice is that of the boss that exploits the worker. Only this theory and practice, which correspond and cooperate at the level of the system as a whole, do not constitute the theory and practice that we consider to be the indispensable elements of the revolutionary project.

In the latter sense we have the movement of the exploited which, in its progressive disposition towards self organisation of the struggles develops a theory, is its own theory. But this theory is also the practice of the movement. From this point of view there is no difference between theory and practice. It is just that the whole movement is not capable of self-managing its own struggles at the present time. On the contrary, a large sector find themselves at the mercy of the reformist lie and substantially favour the game of boss exploitation. In this sense there is a sliding, an imbalance, in the theory of the movement of the exploited. It is here that the intervention of the anarchist minority that is developing its own practice, soliciting the 'rectification' of the positions of the movement and developing the project of generalised self-management of struggles, fits in. In this tendency towards the elimination of the above-mentioned imbalance, the anarchist minority realises both practice and theory. It is its own theory and its own practice.

To be more specific, analysis has two functions: a) it leads to knowledge of the nature and composition of the struggles of the exploited; b) it serves as a point of reference for the latter to see the contradiction between the perspective of self-managing one's own struggle and the reality of the instruments of compromise (unions, parties).

Obviously, by underestimating the importance of analysis or sticking to events inside one 'area' seen as a microcosm that is complete in itself, one ends up evaluating the latter at the cost of the former. The movement of the exploited cannot see its position in the face of a series of interventions, events, experiences without the intimate link of the anarchist revolutionary project as a whole.

The first contact with the reality of the struggle

It is necessary to start off by relating to the reality of the struggle as a whole as the exploited have only one point of contact: that which power makes with them in order to exploit them more effectively. Here there could be an impasse or critical intolerance. The essential reason for this situation is society's division into classes and the permanent war that derives from this.

The only way to get round this difficulty is to see it for what it is, i.e. a serious obstacle, and not close one's eyes to it or delude oneself that, because we are the bearers of a 'thesis' of self-organisation and ultimate liberation, the exploited will immediately throw their arms around us.

Another necessary step is to outline the social components of the relation. We think that these components are three and not two as is usually maintained. We have the active minority, the reality of the struggles, and power, which makes that contact possible within a precise institutional framework.

Let us examine these elements. The active minority can only be isolated from a wider context by means of abstraction. In substance, it has its own class composition and acts consequently in some way. Only, at the same time, it is an anarchist minority (because that is what we are talking about), i.e. it has become aware of a method of intervention, an ethical evaluation of life, an aim to be reached and a clear discrimination in the choice of the methods to be used. They do not draw all this from an abstract theoretical code, a philosophical tradition or the illumination of some 'thinking hero'. They find it in a tradition of struggle and specific analyses of course, but mainly in a praxis of struggle that they verify as they go along. We can therefore say that the further this minority is from the 'theory' of the movement of the exploited, the further it is from understanding its own struggles. In this case, a perfect observance of abstract principles drawn from anarchist philosophy does not help.

Second element: the reality of the struggle. We cannot 'know it', i.e. set about describing it, just as we cannot measure or classify it. We can advance approximate models, but as long as we are operating as a detached entity these remain very far from it. But if on the one hand the reality of the struggle cannot 'accept' the minority as its own without unleashing a series of contradictions within itself, it is able to indicate its own state of dissociation with some clarity. In fact, the reality of the struggle is not uniform, and it is precisely this fact that allows for the existence of the active minority as an entity that is getting ready to belong to this reality but does not yet do so. We are thus facing two fluxes and tendencies: a) the tendency of struggles to move towards their own self-management (in contrast with the persistence of the unions and parties); b) the tendency of the active anarchist minority to become part of the reality of the struggles (in contrast with the persistent illusion of the minority that it takes the truth to the masses and considers itself the custodian of this truth).

The third element is power and its institutional framework. This is the class enemy and is the point of theoretical consolidation of the struggle. Only, in advanced social-democratic situations the institutional framework is irregular, complex and often succeeds in breaking up the unity of the struggle by proposing models of collaboration with power. These models, in themselves 'theory', are the theory of power even if they are proposed by trades union or party structures, just as the theory of the movement of the exploited lies in the self-organisation of its struggles.

The first contact with the reality of a struggle is also always a three-way relationship, as it is senseless to assume that a 'certain kind of undertaking' will be tolerated by power. When this moves in the direction of the theory and practice of the real movement, it is immediately singled out and opposed by power.

More on the misconception of the quantitative growth of the minority

A fictitious residuum can appear in this opening towards the reality of the struggle. The old quantitative ideology can pass through an objectification of the minority. The struggle then address itself towards a growth in the specific movement. Given that the work of spreading ideas is possible in any situation, at least theoretically, it is not very difficult to find a target to turn one's attention to. Of course, there are always specific sectors such as immigration, unemployment, ghettos, criminality, as well as the various sectors of production; but the importance of isolating a point of encounter decreases. Anything will do in view of a growth in the minority. For example, there is discontent in a particular area due to a lack of something (water, lighting, services, transport, etc.). It is not important if alongside this discontent there are hints of self-organisation or not. What counts is being there with one's own organisation; an occasion is awaited to start the game all over again. The results demonstrate one's capabilities and how much more they might be if one were to find oneself greater in number. If nothing is obtained, one waits for another occasion. The problem of why, once the water, electricity or other has been obtained the movement calms down, or why it quietens down all the same even if nothing has been obtained, is not questioned. The prioritising of doing and the quantitative illusion prevent many comrades from thinking about such things and elaborating a different strategy of intervention.

It seems to us that the contact should not be made on the basis of one's own perspectives and interests (those of the minority), using the occasional demands of the movement of the exploited as detonator of a process of development and growth, but, on the contrary, the starting point must be the transformation of reality itself, i.e. the transformation of the relationship that exists between self-organisation and the delegation of struggles. The 'field' one involves oneself in cannot therefore be that of stimuli from reality, as we know that these stimuli are torn between self-management and delegating. That is, not all the stimuli that come from the reality of the struggle can be taken in absolute. It is necessary to insert oneself within them in order to transform the situation that led to them, and so transform the relationship between self-organisation and delegating the struggle.

If an area shows stimuli of discontent due to certain defects in power that lead to lack of services (increase in exploitation), that does not necessarily mean that those involved are prepared to organise the struggle to solve this problem themselves, reduce the exploitation that is striking them and move on to developing the struggle with other more general and specifically revolutionary aims. Often all they are interested in is waiting to see which road is more effective for getting what they need. For this simple reason, unions and parties can at any time force power to solve the contradictions and, in so doing, extinguish the struggle. So our task cannot simply be that of turning up, but is also that of placing the struggle in a wider framework, within a more complex revolutionary project that can move the relationship between self-organisation-delegating in the direction of self-organisation. And that is impossible if one becomes immersed in the event itself, where action is an end in itself or even worse, by using it to increase the numbers of the minority.

The need to fully understand this relation has become pressing in recent times. We could say that dissent has become institutionalised. Contestation, unorthodox demands, a certain animosity of the base, everything that until recently caused a certain panic in the unions and parties, can be drawn back into the institutions today. By democratising these institutions, power, (which is

itself an institution), has lain the foundations for absorbing dissent. It has blunted the more dangerous edges by throwing divergences into the quicksands of assemblies. In fact, if by institution we mean repeatable forms of activity, social behaviour and structures that acquire a capacity for social control, we can deduce that no political instrument controls better than democratic centralism, the one that uses debate, assembly, dialogue, to impose what the centre wants in a clean form without any residue. Power has programmed a modification of society. To do that it will support the cost, make concessions, determine the genocide (ghettoisation, criminalisation) of one part of society; but it will succeed in convincing the other part that it is choosing its own destiny. In other words, power has also realised that the struggle takes place at the demarcation line between self-organisation and delegation of the struggle, and wants the delegate (which it can always control) to predominate, even when this is camouflaged as self-organisation.

Power would even allow us to grow quantitatively, as long as this takes place within the institutional framework. In the same way, it allows us to 'work' politically so long as we remain one of the forces of democratic opposition. On the other hand, if we intend to enter the social fabric as an external force in order to push the base to make the contradictions more acute, we must grow in number. And that is precisely what power fears least. So, the objective of the intervention cannot be qualified in advance but needs to work itself out during the course of the intervention itself on the basis of the modifications that it causes within the struggles themselves. It cannot, that is, qualify itself on the basis of immediate results to be reached, as the unions and parties can do the same. Nor can it qualify itself on the basis of an ideology that ends up becoming a maximalist and often contradictory stand in the face of a reality that is structuring itself on a contradiction: that between selforganisation and delegate of the struggle.

It is during the course of the intervention itself that its aims are developed, the separation between the minority and the movement of the workers is overcome and an awareness of new problems and stimuli is gained.

Contact with reality and the consequences

The real objective of the intervention is something that can only emerge during the course of the intervention itself. This is not clear at first, but grows and gradually becomes identifiable as the intervention develops and relations between the minority and the reality of the struggle pushes, with greater emphasis, between self-organisation and delegation of the struggles.

First one tends to overestimate the specific conditions of the reality we are facing. If it is the question of prison, we tend to exaggerate prison as a physical place of ghettoisation. We concentrate on conditions of detention, possible improvements, torture, the mechanism of trials and sentences. Then, the unravelling of the intervention puts us in a different relationship with the reality of the struggle, we change and, in doing so, change our relationship with reality. It is precisely at this point that the 'work' that we are doing becomes productive.

If we were to limit ourselves to shouting to improve prisoners' conditions, against torture or trials in special tribunals, we would still undoubtedly be useful to the comrades who are suffering repression at that moment — and this is work that needs to be done because it carries out its basic task of preparation and defence at the same time. But, if we stop there we will be condemning our intervention to remain such, i.e. the intervention of a minority that approaches reality and evaluates it, struggles for it, even does something to change it for the better. But this 'changing

for the better' is also useful to power in that, sooner or later, it must somehow decide to adopt more refined and social democratic systems of repression, systems that are just as effective, if not more. And we should also follow it in these modifications, keep on its heels and force it to unmask itself, but always as work of defence and preparation. Another task exists alongside this work, and this is what signs the demarcation between waiting, the vision, the interpretation of the struggles, and action within struggles themselves; it is this other that breaks the barriers and allows one to enhance the experiences of the minority.

The action of the minority within actual struggles is therefore to develop the tendency to strengthen self-organisation, breaking the conspiracy of the delegate and the leader, also when camouflaged by the leninist type of revolutionary project.

To bring this about it is necessary to see the situation that one is acting in all its details, including the intervention of the minority itself. In fact, the more this presence is a source of contrast, the more it raises doubts and contradictions, the more fruitful the modification of the situation in all its parts and the deeper the insertion within the struggles will be.

It is only at this point that what we mean by 'it is necessary to insert ourselves within struggles' becomes clear. What emerges is the absence of a stable, clearly defined schema. Everything is problematic, the intervention in the first place. This appears more as a tension than as being comfortably 'inside' something. That explains why we cannot accept the idea that the initial situation, where we accentuated the importance of certain conditions, can transform itself into an optimal situation. The consequences of such interventions should be borne in mind because they always create problems and transformation, they always put the objective conditions of the situation one started off from in question.

The fragmentary nature of the reality of the struggles

The surest sign of the fragmentary nature of the struggle is the existence of power and exploitation. If the struggle were to succeed in fusing uniform action, i.e. were to succeed in making the tendency to self-organisation predominate, power would be swept away. The latter, being perfectly aware of this danger, organises accordingly, its most effective allies being the parties and the unions.

This fragmentariness cannot be catalogued in horizontal lines, that is, it cannot be seen as a distinction at different levels, according to the reformist, technocratic, authoritarian revolutionary, or other presence. It descends vertically, in depth. A place of struggle, let's say a factory, a living area, a ghetto, a school, an asylum, etc., can never be qualified in absolute as reformist, technocratic, revolutionary, etc.. It is always characterised by a complexity of problems and stimuli, a complexity of tendencies and prejudices, distancing and involvement, compromise and awakening of consciousness. All that must be approached with conoscitive instruments, that is, one must 'document' oneself on this reality, dismantling the mechanisms as far as possible. All these technical aspects, however, cannot fail to be seen as something separate from the constitution of the minority, its conditions as an element of insertion within a reality which up until then was foreign to it. And this constitution often presents problems and tendencies that are not unlike those of the reality we are going towards. It is an illusion to say that the minority is by definition immovable because it has gained consciousness, whereas reality is fragmentary because it must

still do so. In truth things are very different, the process for both elements of this relation is still a tendency and constant modification.

To clearly see the relations that reality has with the basic coordinates of the system, with exploitation and social control, produces an immediate questioning of the relations that the minority also has with these coordinates, i.e. with exploitation and social control.

The distinction proposed earlier between fictitious movement and real movement of the exploited (concerning the anarchist movement), should not be seen in the sense that the bad are all on one side and the good on the other. The forces that push the movement of the exploited towards the self-organisation of struggles constitute a tendency that is acting within the same fragmentary reality, proposing a need to go beyond it.

In this way, even in the most advanced and self-organised struggles it is only possible to see a tendency and never 'reality in every detail'; the most intimate point of contact is precisely this fragmentary aspect. The minority is also fragmentary and problematic, does not hold the truth, does not intend to impose an illuminated dogma, guide, or leader.

The revolutionary anarchist project

Having spoken of the tendency of struggles to self-organisation, of tensions that come about at the point of contact between the minority and actual struggles and of the series of contradictions that emerge as a result of that contact, we gain a more detailed idea of the revolutionary project.

Above all this cannot be the product of the minority. It is not elaborated by the latter inside their theoretical edifice, then exported to the movement in one block or in pieces. Neither is the revolutionary project a 'complete' realisation in all its parts. It comes from all the problematics that emerge from the tensions that have become more acute following the relation anarchist minority / movement of the exploited. It is therefore itself tension and development, the negation of everything defined and immutable.

It starts from the specific context of actual struggles, underlines their self-organisational component and develops consequences and relations with the adversary forces, with power, within the general context of the movement.

It uses the specific elements of struggles that make them significant. When seen in the light of the strategy of self-organisation, these elements place themselves within a wider perspective, connecting to other elements that are just as important, though normally less visible.

The anarchist revolutionary project is the bridge that is thrown in the direction of specific reality, uniting experiences of self-organisation that are often singularly isolated. It is also, however, the indication of overcoming the distinction between anarchist minority and movement of the exploited where, from the moment that the project is in course, all barriers start to fall and one finds oneself struggling for a common goal.

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