

## In the cage of dogmas

It hasn't only been social pacification that has kept our revolutionary imagination in a strait-jacket for years and years. It hasn't only been the world of power and money that has suffocated our wildest and irreducible dreams and exchanged them for merchandise for our immediate consume. It hasn't only been the theatre of democratic opinions that has stunted the growth and proliferations of our ideas. It has also not been the reactionary shifts everywhere around us that have muzzled our mouths and made us swallow our deepest words, thoughts and desires.

It has as well been the dogmas from our own movement which have kept our hands bound together for years, have gagged us, have been a millstone around our neck. For too long have we believed that "propaganda" equalled evil because we didn't want to appear like Stalin or Hitler. Far too long have we believed that we shouldn't spread around our ideas, simply out of fear of appearing as missionaries. Exactly because of this there has been a lot of water poured into the anti-authoritarian wine, *not to offend anyone*. For a long time, too long, have we blindfolded ourselves and believed that our ideas are not *accessible*, not *understandable* for "*the masses*". We have long forgotten that our path of liberation sprung out of our individual desire towards freedom and experimentation, and that the confrontation with the anti-authoritarian ideas gave us a solid push forward. Locked up in our ghettos, inhaling its air dense with the thought that we were infinitely and completely different than all of the others. Therefore it is not surprising that the traces of these ghettos can still be found in the young movement that has broken out of it. It is not surprising, but it remains quite a pain in the ass. It prevents our pride to grow and blossom, to stand on antiauthoritarian bases, as anarchists in the open air, in the world. The ghettos have caused us to no longer be able to express what is living inside of us, it has made us regard ourselves as being marginal outsiders. Inside of the ghettos, it was forbidden to think, because thinking equalled being intellectuals. It was forbidden to write because writing was supposed to be uniquely reserved for university students. And through this road we perfected the practice of using different words depending on the person in front of us, or the direction the wind was blowing, always being carried by the wind.

For all of us who at night indulged in fantasies about revolution, it was hard to keep this dream alive. The world around us kept on marching the totalitarian road. Comrades have told us to bury our youthful dreams, because anyway it was pointless. To desire a revolution, was said to equal awaiting the final act. We could also not speak about a desire for revolution because this was supposed to equal talking about fairy tales to people, it equalled selling strong-worded bags of air. Some comrades decided they didn't want to wait any longer but forgot that this didn't need to imply putting our revolutionary dream in the closet. Acting in the here and now is sometimes limited to seizing the day, period. *Carpe diem* doesn't need to imply that there is no future. Moreover, the conquering of the here and now is the only road that can lead us towards a free future. And this is what we are fighting for.

And so it came that some issues were walled up in our heads. So we started to believe that we couldn't make propositions towards *the others*, those not belonging to our club. Simply because we didn't want to be politicians, authoritarians. We knew that self-organisation was entwined within our hearts, but didn't want to enrich others with our experiences, prudish as we were. So we forgot that maybe there were others who could enrich us. We built cement blocks around our feet out of fear to be something that we didn't want to be (and anyway are not).

Dogma after dogma, another one was added to the list: it was told that we shouldn't get overexcited when hearing the news about revolts, we should all keep in mind and sometimes even say out loud that those were not *anarchist revolts*. We are not fond of the masses, in struggle we don't wait around until the day we are supposedly *enough*, we prefer individually shared roads than collective anonymity, the development of liberating ideas over an expanding vagueness which is the ideal soil

for new leaders, but... A large group of human beings is not necessarily a mass, it is also a group of individuals. It doesn't make any sense to negatively qualify a revolt because it concerns a large group of people. Measuring its actors time after time by use of the anarchist criteria transforms anarchism into a whining and paralysing opinion, kills the livelihood of the struggle inside of her.

Last but not least, solidarity was stamped with the label of activism, instead of making an attempt to give it a revolutionary content.

### **...the wind of insurrection helps us to break free...**

The current events have stirred up something deep inside of us. Inside of many of us this old dream has been tickled again: this dream of fighting for freedom. Half naked, but all of us baggage of experiences, we try to think about insurrection, and revolution. Quite few are those saying that the uprising stirred up in the North of Africa and in the Middle East is none of our concern. Why would we concern ourselves with what's happening in continents that we are not living in? First of all let's state clearly that we are not just talking about *events*, but about popular uprisings, about people that organize themselves, that aim against the power, against the oppression they have been living for years. If we as anarchists cannot recognize ourselves in this act, we can better ask ourselves where our lust for struggle is, dried up by lack of desire. Secondly we are internationalists, so we should eradicate the borders that the ever growing nationalism has cut deeply into our heads. Furthermore these uprisings have a certain magical character for us as well, here and now. These uprisings have stirred up the thought of insurrection. These brave people at the other side of the Mediterranean and elsewhere have helped us to break down the walls of our horizon, and this counts for many others as well. In the city we are living in, the word revolution has found a previously unknown echo. In the end there is no one who can deny that the situation over there is firmly connected to the situation over here. Not only are the politicians and capitalists the leaders everywhere, our situation is connected to the situation there no matter from which place in the world. The uprisings in Northern Africa have for example breached for a moment the gates of Fortress Europe. The fall of Ben Ali and Moubarak, the armed threat to Qadhafi's power, translates itself also in the disappearance of the authority which aided Europe to guard its heavenly gates, even temporarily. Lampedusa fills up, Berlusconi hands out temporary visas, France stops trains at the border, in Paris there are Tunisians occupying buildings, Belgium asks for an intensification of the border control, and so on. The situation in the countries we are living is changing *de facto* by the uprisings.

At the same time, there is something brewing on the continent of Europe. Protests against austerity measures and the final dismantling of the welfare state as we know it. From Portugal through to Spain, to France, England, Croatia, Serbia, Albania, Greece. Everywhere in Europe there are many who see the dreams in which they were made to believe (working hard, consuming, retirement and a lifetime of savings, for a well deserved resting time) vanish into thin air. We could read the signs of a disaster, and get stuck on the thought that this historical moment will end up fuelling the *hate for the foreigners*, present everywhere. Pogroms, massive deportations, and who knows what more. But there is as well a chance that the recent events can stir up *something different*, something different than protectionism and racism. Might there be a chance that these heated and potentially explosive situations start cross-breeding with each other?

Another doom scenario is one already brewing for years: the construction of new prisons and deportation camps everywhere, the erection of cameras, the expansion of the control and the repressive apparatus, the penetration of technologies of control in the entirety of "social life". An answer given by the states towards insurrection is of course: repression. But the moment of an uprising opens up many possibilities, the many escaped prisoners during the last months can testify to this. It becomes quite easy to dismantle the repressive infrastructures of the enemy during an uprising. They are experimenting with measures to keep the metropolis under their control, but what if their network of cameras doesn't function anymore? There are no metropolises in which the cops are loved, there are no metropolises you can say are fully under control of the state.

### **... and to give back the content to our practices...**

There used to be times in which certain words and practices could not be separated from their revolutionary content. It seemed so easy to talk about the world with the help of anarchist ideas.

There used to be times when the antiauthoritarian ideas and practices aimed at the realization of our ideas were fully alive.

Today people might consider solidarity with revolts and imprisoned comrades as activism, while solidarity is an essential part of every insurrection and revolution, and so it is as well for every revolutionary project. When the insurgents in one city come on the streets out of solidarity with another city, we shouldn't put this too much into question. It is a necessary part of the revolutionary practice.

Nevertheless, today we get often stranded in endless and muddy descriptions of all of the ugliness that can be found in this world. For example we rightfully interact after a murder by the cops, but often don't get any further than expressing that we are against prison, against cops and the state. We don't share the basis of our will: to act with other people, our desire for a world without authority. In the city we are living in there is for example almost nobody to be found who loves the cops, nor prison. Continuing to repeat that we are against prison will not help us to go much further in this case. We've got more to say, much more.

Besides, the fact is that today a big part of the faces of the state's enemies have become recognizable for many, with whom we can talk about many other issues. About issues stimulating the subversion of the society.

### **... in a struggle armed with a revolutionary perspective...**

What do we need for an insurrection or revolution? What do we need to appropriate, and which appropriation can we stimulate? How can we fuel the revolutionary imagination? How can we make the antiauthoritarian ideas and practices *imaginable* and *alive*? How can we take care that we start off from a strong base, a base of quality, rather than quantity. How can we stir up the existing conflictuality and mix in our ideas? How can we stimulate self organization on the basis of affinity and therefore fuel solidarity? How can we leave the borders behind and become internationalists? What about our knowledge of the lands we live in? Can we experiment with other ways of struggling other than a specific struggle? How can the specific struggle cross-breed with the ongoing conflicts that develop outside of that specific place? Can we stimulate and push forward those moments in which the lines become clear, the lines between those who fight in defence of authority and those who struggle against it?

A project with a revolutionary perspective does not aim at victories, but it is a permanent event. By far this does not mean acting without thinking. The thoughts about where, when and how cannot and should not be thrown aside in the corner of "pure theory".

The concrete realization of a struggle with this perspective differs from context to context. The conscious use of methods depends on the choice of comrades, as well as on the context in which they act. Many of us have reclaimed many means; it is up to us to think in which way we want to use them.

We have already been noticing that the world *revolution* is expressed by many different mouths, and the content of their revolutions scares us often away (we are already fed up by the indignatos and their unstoppable capacity to recuperate). When we are talking about revolution, we cannot detach this from the ideas that inspire it. Revolution without content is a dangerous shell, but this doesn't imply that we should be prevented from facing the present challenges. Those challenges, they are there. They are popping up as flowers right in front of our eyes. We will not pour water into our

wine, but understanding that the situation is neither black nor white (there are just a few anarchists, but there are many people who desire freedom and who are fed up with this disastrous existence) enables us to try, to discover. We inevitably have something to offer. Years of experiences of struggle (be it in the squatting movements or in specific struggles for example against detention camps), of experiments with means, of always looking for new possibilities, angles of approach, of the development of affinities and ideas,... This is not intended to applaud ourselves, but to put into question how it can be possible that at each time people on the street ask us this eternal question "What can we do?", we are there blinking out in not knowing what to answer. We, obsessed by the question of what we can do, are not able to take this one seriously...

*From out of the deepest desire, a world of freedom*