

# ANTI SYSTEMA

PAPER FOR LESS  
BLABLA AND MORE  
BUMBUM

ISSUE 4  
WINTER 2024  
APPEARS  
IRREGULARLY



## THE PROPAGANDA OF THE DEED

They seem to be two words that have become alien, “propaganda” and “deed”. They may sound even stranger when they are connected in our publications. However, this symbiotic community harbours an adventurous potential that can be a tool for the exploited and excluded to free themselves from their predicament. We are used to inciting in our texts, more or less rhetorically well formulated, that we, who see ourselves as enemies of authority, should act accordingly on all possible levels. We assume that everyone should know, or already knows, in their own way, why attack is an imperative in a specific moment of life. Nevertheless, this well-intentioned generalisation does not necessarily have to be accurate and sufficient, or automatically come true. It can be interesting to go even further, or to gain depth and meaning. Simply being an anarchist cannot be the beginning and the end, nor can the quality be defined by the mere intention of endless reflections and analyses, otherwise it would be enough to just deal with them. Strictly speaking, the momentum of reflection, of theory, can only represent one of several phases in the qualitative unfolding of a much more comprehensive idea or development of personality. After all, the experienced subject who wants to make progress must set themselves in motion in some way and put what they have learnt to the test, evalu-

ate and adjust it. The propaganda of the deed must be seen in this context. It was one of the many historical attempts by anarchists to take a step forward.

There are certainly undated, known and unknown theoretical approaches to the concept of the propaganda of the deed. To expand on these here, however, would go beyond the scope of this article and is not the focus here. An important and noteworthy event in the development of this concept goes back to the days of 26-29 October 1876, the days of the third meeting of the *Antiauthoritarian International* in Bern. It was the third of four subsequent meetings after the dispute with the Marxists and the subsequent expulsion of the anarchists from the First International in London in 1864. Among the countless people present in Bern were, of course, the hosts from the Jura Federation, but also people like Carlo Cafiero and Errico Malatesta. Primarily known in German speaking contexts will be Malatesta and his positions. Regardless of this, it should be emphasized that he had long been conspiring with Cafiero and many others to instigate an anarchist uprising in Matese (Naples). In the name of the Italian Anarchist Federation, they made the following announcement during the meeting: “*The Italian Federation believes that the insurrection-* continue on page 2

*ary act, which is destined to affirm the socialist principle with action, is the most effective means of propaganda and the only one that, without deceiving and corrupting the masses, can penetrate the deepest social strata and win the living forces of humanity to the struggle that the International supports.”* Malatesta continued: *“The continuous war against the existing institutions, that is what we call the permanent revolution!”*

The uprising of the *Matese gang* began on 5 April 1877. 25 anarchists traveled to the hills of Matese, including Cafiero and Malatesta. The aim was to liberate and self manage the area, which was regarded as a center for renegades, vagabonds and bandits. Out-numbered, exhausted and chilled by the bad weather, they had to surrender after days of fighting against an overpowering army of 12,000 soldiers of the Kingdom of Italy. It was only thanks to Silvia Pisacane’s courageous plea for clemency to the then Minister of the Interior Giovanni Nicotera that all the insurgents escaped execution. Silvia Pisacane was the daughter of Carlo Pisacane. An aristocratic libertarian guerrilla fighter who, over time, underwent a number of changes of heart and is also interpreted by some as *the* theorist of *the* propaganda of the deed. Sometime around 1850, he is said to have claimed something like: “Violence is not only necessary to attract attention or arouse public interest in a cause, but also to inform, educate and ultimately unite the masses in favour of the goals of the revolution. The instructive purpose of violence can never be replaced by pamphlets, posters or events.” In 1857, he and 20 other Mazzinians (followers of the proto-democrat Giuseppe Mazzini) boarded a ship bound for Tunis. The aim to liberate the prisoner island of Ponza from the clutches of the tyrannical Bourbon dynasty and then use the liberated prisoners to instigate an uprising on other Sicilian islands. On Ponza, Pisacane was the first to go ashore with the tricolour, triumphantly freeing all the prisoners in a short time. On another island, Sarpi,

he was less successful. He was met by angry peasants with pitchforks and driven away. On Padula, they were attacked directly by the peasants and 25 guerrillas were massacred by them. The others managed to escape to the island of Sanza, where they were massacred again by the local peasants, resulting in the deaths of 83 of them. Among the few survivors were Carlo Pisacane (Silvia Pisacane’s father) and Giovanni Nicotera (the future Minister of the Interior). Nicotera was himself a Mazzini supporter and guerrilla fighter at the time. But Pisacane succumbed to his serious injuries. Nicotera was sentenced to death along with all the other survivors. However, this sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment.

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This miraculously brings us back to Malatesta and Cafiero, who were finally pardoned by Giovanni Nicotera, then a guerrilla fighter, now Minister of the Interior, in 1878. Of course, this is a very abridged account of the events, but this rough summary







alone shows how multi-layered and complex the reality of the time was. Especially as Felice Orsini, together with co-conspirators, out of weariness against Mazzini's policies, had already carried out an unsuccessful bloodbath in Paris in 1858, whereby the main target, the Emperor of the French Napoleon III, remained unharmed. Historically, it is relatively certain that the actions of the Matese gang were followed by an accumulation of similar acts throughout Europe. In 1878, Alfonso XII, King of Spain, narrowly escaped an assassination attempt by Juan Moncasi. In the same year, Giovanni Passannante attempted to stab the Italian King Umberto I to death. There were four attempts on the life of the German Emperor Wilhelm I from 1878 onwards (Max Hödel, Karl Eduard Nobiling, Oskar Becker, August Reinsdorf). In 1883, Franz Hlubek, an Austrian spying official who was trained to spy on socialists, was shot by Anton Kammerer. The list of people who went into action goes on and on, here are a few surnames: Stellmacher, Lieske, Ravachol, Meunier, Berkman, Pallás, Salvador Franch, Vaillant, Henry, Léauthier, Liabeuf, Caserio, Lucheni, Bresci, Czolgosz and so on. And this is only a small and incomplete extract of what we know "officially", let alone of what anarchist historiography has handed down, in contrast to the hidden, unspectacular, anonymous deeds about which we know nothing and may never learn anything.

Some people will probably ask themselves, if they didn't know any better beforehand: "What is the propaganda of the deed?". The answer is sobering, because there is no such thing as *the* propaganda of the deed, hence the two examples given, which in my opinion have some chronological and personal overlaps, but are nevertheless very opposite in terms of projects. Certainly, both approaches share the

dream of a utopia, but one will paradoxically contribute to the emergence of a united Italy (through people like Mazzini, Garibaldi, Cavour), while the other will give rise to bitter battles against the latter. Both are aware, however, that much blood will flow on all sides on the path to utopia. Probably especially their own, but as the oppressed, it will always flow for and through domination anyway. Does that automatically make them fanatical maniacs? Perhaps, perhaps from the point of view of a generation of anarchists who know little more violence than a more or less escalating street fight with bludgeoning cops. Cafiero and Malatesta and their entire generation can be criticised and belittled for many things. Nevertheless, they created and lived through situations that we can't even imagine. Malatesta in particular seems today to be the unwanted forerunner of a "revisionist" anarchism that glorifies theory while cramming insurrectionary hearts into organization, structure and control. We cannot only consider and claim the result of decades of debate, individual and collective development, as the true end product, the non plus ultra. And this is only because some people, sometimes even convinced anarchists, stubbornly claim that the propaganda of the deed and insurrectionalism per se is an ineffective, even counterproductive tactic. An egregious error. We might as well just go to the cinema when the credits roll and talk our heads off about it. If anyone coined insurrectionalism, it is Errico Malatesta, along with, and this is more significant than any idolization, all the comrades, discussions and actions around the world at the time. The willful short-sightedness that prevails in some places, that insurrectionalism is a more or less remarkable *invention* of Alfredo M. Bonanno and can be traced back to him, is outrageous and shows the level of interest in one's own idea, history, but also perspective. His-



torically, it is certainly more accurate to say that insurrectionalism and the propaganda of the deed went hand in hand.

The word tactic has just been used, and it is no coincidence that it is meant in a pejorative sense. Words and their meanings define the fine line between understanding and not understanding a term; they have the power to clarify points of view. In the spectacle of society, all actors are looking for the best way to stage themselves. That's why successful staging is the ultimate goal. The motto is to reach the goal quickly and efficiently. In the development, but also just in the desperate search for *the* tactic, which is guaranteed to open up utopia, I see the danger of getting lost in the search. Any sign of imperfection, without the consideration of positive experience, seems to be subject to considerations of efficiency and security. Better to remain immobile, guaranteed to be on the safe side, than to take risks, to move forward.

So we need quality and quantity. We are dependent on it! We can't defeat Goliath alone and without a plan. Dying a glorious heroic death in a hopeless duel is out of the question for me, I'm too attached to life for that. So what constitutes quality? Is it our fancy, thick anarchist tomes that we can only beat ourselves to death with? Do we still have to constantly browse through the extensive anarchist literature and discuss what the theoretical R-E-V-O-L-T looks like in practice?

If we look at the anarchist idea of revolt as a collection of differentiated points of view, there are some common denominators that are not minimal, but carry the maximum scope of a *total* struggle for freedom. At a certain point, the meta-level that resonates here blends with the respective tension of each individual. Much has

been analyzed and written metaphysically in anarchism, and much is reduced to this. Where is the human variable? What moves and motivates us to take the next step? Looking at the historical propaganda of the deed, it quickly becomes clear that it can often be understood as a sometimes extreme reaction to the circumstances. A deeply justified and appropriate reaction. But do we even need a motive for action today, in the face of all-consuming capitalism and centuries of exploitation of people and the earth? I think we are inundated with motives that provide us with the motivation and the corresponding emotional mood to act, almost force it on us. The tension arises from the unfolding of this basic mood, which responds more to impulses than to dry phrases. It can neither be tamed nor ignored as long as we are forced to organise our lives under capitalist constraints. The deed, or rather the propaganda of the deed, is the unadulterated expression of this tension. The moment

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the deed follows the idea, the individual senses the possibility of self-empowerment, the deed fires the idea and the idea fires the deed. It then plays a subordinate role whether the Propaganda of the deed is crowned with success or not. Because the point is to show yourself and your fellow human beings: Action is possible, consciously and destructively, alone or in association. Action is life!

I understand life to be an imaginary abstraction, a quality of progress along individual paths, in contrast to passivity and paralysis. Action is in the foreground and carries the quality within itself. The propaganda of the deed is less strategic and efficiency oriented than one might think. It arises, as just described, from the conscious decision to finally give in to the drive, i.e. the pronounced need to take action. Every ideological mindset (no matter how anarchistic it may be) usually filters and mutilates this individual drive; submission is inherent in it. Action is thus the expression of a tension that is destructive in its physical effect, but creative in its metaphysical effect, even on a social level. When it goes on the offensive against capitalist death with acumen, precision and determination, the balance between theory and practice is restored.

The anarchist act must detach itself from simple symbolism, turn its back on it. It always sounds very affectionate when it is emphasized in certain discussions that all forms of action are welcome and have their justification. This statement means everything and nothing. Or rather, everything means nothing. Basically, it is the emptying of the meaning of action through rhetorical leveling. Which is certainly pleasing when people get together in a disorganized way and break a few windows of a bank for the first time just for the fun of it. This sometimes happens out of

and with a lack of perspective, so it is an expression of nihilism that cannot be defined more precisely. This arises from general feelings such as frustration, fear, anger etc. and is channeled and discharged through the use of violence. A deeply honest tension, yet aimless. It reveals the momentary emotional state of an individual and a collective and focuses mainly on this rather than on a general attack on this world. So while it is desirable in principle for banks or other symbols to suffer material damage, more must be possible, right? It can only be the beginning of a much bigger dream. Or do we want to content ourselves with serving up these or similar actions over and over again for the sake of fun and games? Pure symbolism, which aims to shake the regime through small and limited violent initiatives, can only be the starting point. Unfortunately, as long as a symbolic performance is being pursued, it remains a valiant attempt to finally enter into a dialogue with domination. Insurrectionary anarchism does not seek dialogue with those in power; accordingly, an act that sees itself as anarchist can only remain partial to a very limited extent, in other words, in its entirety the deed approaches quality through practice. This is the proposal that resonates in the idea of the propaganda of the deed, at least as it is interpreted in this text. And yet this cannot be our only suggestion, because if we see ourselves as part of society and act out of it, then we need theoretical and practical diversity, but this cannot be arbitrary and thus devoid of meaning. Yes, perhaps we should also learn to present things as they are, without fear of being accused of dogmatism. Yes, revolutionary violence has always been a part of anarchist thought and action, but certainly not its only aspect. Today, German-speaking and worldwide anarchism has a lot to offer: Infrastructure such as bookshops, info shops, print shops, house projects; a myriad of

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anarchist literature; moments of organization by workers, neighborhood initiatives; individual approaches to social struggles. There are hundreds of such projects, certainly thousands of people involved. Is that enough? Is it enough for us to hold on to the concept of the infinite expansion of our networks for the rest of our lives? When are we going to discuss our revolutionary potential? Let alone act on it?

Many are currently powerless and speechless before a turning point in Europe and the world. Everywhere, reactionary forces are successively and seemingly inexorably reaching for power, for domination. We all knew it, sensed it, foresaw it, and yet we are still watching. Some have committed acts of desperation, such as the shameful trip to the ballot box, or have stuck themselves somewhere or gone into politics. The right and their ideology will just keep trampling on us, and in the worst case scenario we will wake up one day dazed, as if we had had a nightmare, and realise that the feared authoritarianism is already a reality. In the meantime, no one can claim that such statements are some kind of catastrophism or scaremongering. It is happening before our very eyes. Exceptions prove the rule. There are a few experimenters. They try to give free rein to their will to destroy. The time for words seems to be over for them, or

at least no longer a top priority. Perhaps because so much has already been said and written. Some clever anarchist once said that there has to be a balance between theory and practice. I don't know about you, but I've heard that phrase so often that I shudder to use it myself. But its importance is undeniable. The world, civilization, culture, capitalism and all its achievements are hostile to "us". Thousands of books have been written for centuries by hundreds of scholars on every single word in this list. „Our“ *impassioned* conclusion after more than a century of anarchist debate is: Revolt. With violence. With ingenuity. With joy.

But even such a conclusion is nothing new. Generations of anarchists before us have dedicated their actions and lives to this axiom. One well-known aspect of anarchism is, that there is no uniform idea. Even with a term like "propaganda", I have certain differences of opinion with other companions. Some detest this word because they rightly associate it with a kind of manipulation of the masses. Which is certainly true in authoritarian systems. Detached from any context, it makes little sense for me to push this single word. I don't want to convince other people, nor do I want to enchant them in any way, let alone manipulate them. Some of us talk about "inspiration", a kind of initial spark that is spread by





the seed of the idea. At least that reads well and it's easy to hold on to in the turmoil of social warfare. But is the inspiration enough for people to recognise the need for negation and revolt against the system? I doubt that mere propaganda, as well as agitation or the objective/factual pointing out of grievances, is enough to spark individual, let alone general revolt, at least not from the perspective of permanent, insurrectionary, offensive, destructive anarchism. It needs a little more substrate, not just a few sporadic puffs of verbal smoke, but concrete moments of con-

understood his decision and his message and decided to act. Apart from that, all kinds of media have reported extensively on his person and the anarchists, for better or for worse. Millions of people who had probably never heard of Alfredo or other anarchist ideas have now realised what the anarchists stand for, how they act and what they want. A hunger strike by one comrade has created more resonance than decades of anarchist theoretical propaganda. However, his decision to act was far from successful on an individual level and many companions will



vergence between idea, word and deed. This is probably the anarchist's greatest burden: finding a balance. The worst thing for anarchists, on the other hand, is not being able to act, or, to put it even more dramatically, not knowing (anymore) how, with whom and where to take action. At the same time, the anarchist urge also harbours the danger of losing one's way on the dark paths of the night, of devoting oneself solely to action, self-centred and isolated. This world, this society, demands a lot from us, it tests our spirit at every moment of our lives, authoritarian forces are constantly at work on us and we are in a permanent struggle to balance capitalist death with the quality of life.

There have been several actions in recent years that have had the propaganda of the deed as their starting point. The first that comes to mind is Alfredo Cospito's struggle. He used his body as a last resort in a desperate situation to provoke an uproar. He wanted to speak out about his decision, but was forbidden to do so by the judges. Nevertheless, even without his words, anarchists from all over the world

be held accountable for their active solidarity. But Alfredo and the Italian companions maintained the balance between theory and practice. Realistically speaking, could he ever have been successful? With a state like the Italian one? Growing up and surviving as an anarchist in Italy was never easy, as every anarchist in Italy has experienced for themselves relatively quickly. Of course, Alfredo could be accused of arrogance what he was thinking when he challenged an entire state. But what options does he have? And why don't

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all of us who live in “freedom” challenge the state to the last? Alfredo certainly only has a few options... and with these few he has tried to do as much as possible. He can't destroy anything, attack anything, sabotage anything, conspire or communicate in these cursed aseptic four concrete walls. He can only wait. For what? He is a living dead man, but he is not trying to surrender to his fate. He, just like Anna. Like Juan. Like Giulio. Like Paska. Like Stecco, like all the other countless prisoners in the Italian dungeons. His motivation was probably something very simple, but significant: the individual anarchist tension that opens up a possibility for action even in the darkest catacombs of this society.

The rail sabotage in Paris, shortly before the Olympic Games, is another striking example of an act with a far-reaching impact. Millions of people were affected. Billions worldwide have heard about it. The French state clearly realized its vulnerability and it could happen again anywhere, at any time. Four simultaneous attacks paralysed the state festival. The timing of the attacks was perfect, ensuring that the train infrastructure could not be used at the crucial moment. Some German athletes arrived late in Paris. Not much attention was paid to the claim of responsibility. This is because the act itself was very clear in its expression. This demonstrates that, with the right timing and target, a single action or coordinated attack can overwhelm a strong enemy and spread the idea of the attack through action...The subsequent sabotage of fibre optic cables also had a significant impact on network stability...

The power grid sabotage of the Tesla factory in Grünheide/Berlin was also extremely precise and astute. Its thoroughly destructive impact was astounding. It would probably have even more interesting if there had been no claiming text. Group names and acronyms are grist to the mill for the cops and shouldn't it be more about the fact of the attack than who carries it out? Nevertheless, the social outcry was remarkable and the discourse of those in power was about damage limitation. Those in power needed an explanation, so the attack and the perpetrators, who were still unknown, were discussed in the Parliament. This single electricity pylon was definitely a sore point, and it will most likely not be the last. The attack on Tesla was remarkable. It had a polarising effect. Some were outraged. Most had a grin on their faces. The demonstration by workers in support of their boss and Tesla was probably the low point in the pitiful swan song of the exploited masses. Overall, the action attracted considerable attention and approval, considering Elon Musk's increasingly overt fascist tendencies. Nevertheless, this partial enthusiasm did not result in a recurrence of comparable deeds, nor did it contribute to the initiatives and the regional opposition to the Tesla Gigafactory adopting an especially offensive stance. Although there were a few smaller actions, such as the burning of individual Teslas, it seems that many either see themselves more in the role of spectators and consumers of large-scale and participatory actions, or are all too deterred by the fireworks of mutually outbidding threatening gestures by repressive forces and politicians... It can undoubtedly be said that this action, in its impact







achieved by a single attack (days of factory shutdowns and stock collapse), the attention it attracted (worldwide topic of conversation) and the overlapping disgustingness of the target attacked (green capitalism, militarism, technocrat, fascist, etc.), is a real beacon of liberated attack!

These are just three briefly mentioned actions that, taken as a whole, express a kind of destructive and offensive tendency that to a certain extent opposes or even goes beyond any radical left-wing, anarcho-pacifist movement. Shrewdness and offensiveness are the (anarchist) drive that makes it possible to shape an endeavor in such a way that it is unambiguous and requires no mediation or identification. If we intensify our deeds and offensiveness and proclaim and exemplify them permanently and everywhere, then in the course of this struggle it will no longer necessarily be necessary to ideologically declare ourselves in favor of this or that action. From the moment the anarchist tension results in its targeted expression, in social war for the general public, it is superfluous to express oneself with a 10-page claim of responsibility. "The people" are not stupid, at least not all of them. The destructive action thus becomes a sounding board for our content and it works in its intention, at least as far as

the examples listed are concerned, but also for many other actions that were not in the media spotlight, but are no less significant because of this.

Of course *we* are not interested in the media spectacle, *we* are not risking our freedom and our lives for it. It is not the focus and also not the measure of the qualitative *success* of an action, yet it would be too stubborn to completely and rigorously ignore the media. At least they often reflect the actions, albeit in an uncontrollable and distorted way, and you can develop a feeling for how the majority of people receive and even understand an action, or not. A similar aspect: the actions spread like wildfire on scene websites all over the world, but people who are not part of the scene don't realize a thing. That is a fact. If we want to communicate through our actions, then the question is who the contact persons should be: our own people, or at best all possible inhabitants of an undefined area? Shouldn't our actions be a topic of conversation on everyone's lips instead of (just) giving us a brief smile in front of the screen?

In certain situations, practically all anarchists are accused of being "theorists" in a generalized but sometimes justified way. It can even happen that we are asked specifically "what we are proposing". Often, we then sheepishly try to avoid the question or (un)skillfully evade it. This may be because we, more than many other idealists, often don't have enough confidence in ourselves and are not used to packaging our ideas rhetorically without their explosive power, so that even the deafest of the deaf get an idea of what we actually want and how we want to achieve it. That is why our oratory and theory, no matter how logical, embellished, impassioned and powerful, cannot just stop at itself. There must be something behind it, or following on from it. Furthermore the propaganda of the deed cannot be an act of desper-

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ation, as it is often wrongly demonized by the ignorant/anarchists. There have certainly been moments in the past when individual desperation and general powerlessness, but also the massive exploitation of workers and anarchists, played a formative role and provoked extreme acts of violence. Just to name another interesting example: Gaetano Bresci traveled from the USA to Italy in 1900 to spend months preparing the murder of King Umberto I. In the USA, he was heavily involved in the local anarchist labour movement in Peterson, New Jersey, and there are even speculations that the regicide may have been decided within the movement. According to this, he was “only” the executor, so to speak. It may seem strange to be entrusted with such a task by chance, but it clearly shows that part of the social movement of the time, which had discovered the propaganda of the deed for itself, also arose from a collective moment of conspiracy and discussion among anarchists. And it was probably not a task that Gaetano was reluctant to take on, despite the high price he had to pay for it. These and many other acts were not only committed out of desperation, but also with acumen and foresight. There are certainly many other historical examples that smack of desperation. However, I would like to emphasize the aspect that I personally find most valuable today for a debate on the propaganda of the deed. It is the (non-) reference to the social context.

The challenge today is to find or even create a context in society that allows “outsiders” to develop an understanding of the necessity of anarchist violence against all forms of domination. There are many more or less historical examples in which individual rulers were specifically called to account, such as the aforementioned murder of King Umberto I. Whether the assassins were anarchist-motivated or can be put to one side. A charming young student from the upper middle class recently showed that it is perfectly possible to eliminate “parasites”. Millions of people secretly approved of this and many other historical acts of violence because they understood the motive and could even imagine pulling the trigger themselves. But this kind of empathy with oneself first of all and with the thousands of victims of King Umberto I’s reign of terror, or other tyrants, is not enough. The factual possibility that the majority of a population approves of a single act of revolutionary violence does not make it acceptable or a recipe for future success. On the contrary, it is a singular and temporarily isolated act, even if it provokes a momentary understanding, fizzles out if it is not embedded in a general and social struggle/war against domination. Those nostalgic for noble regicide will therefore be disappointed by this text.

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Today, domination, coercive relationships and technological control mechanisms are more omnipresent than ever before. Perhaps only a few people remain in the world who, if killed, cannot be replaced. There is no centralised heart of power; there is no one Achilles’ heel. The current system’s strength lies in its decentralisation. While the modern propaganda of the deed can be directed against those responsible for this misery, any infrastructure (military, technological or economic) remains far more vulnerable to significant, sustained and *balanced* attacks.

The future really does not promise anything good. For better or worse, we will have to prepare for a military conflict that will directly affect even the most *westernized* countries. The effects on our tranquil lives are hardly foreseeable, the routine and comfortable dozing off will come to an abrupt end. In such bleak times, we cannot afford to run around aimlessly like headless chickens. Even if the war does not escalate, we need tangible proposals and fantasies to show us why we are doing all this. And we need to provoke the most diverse moments of attack that contain the will to take on an ever more significant and incisive character. And every act that reflects this perspective is a clear call for further revolutionary acts, for the propaganda of the deed.



# DEVELOPING INCISIVE CAPACITY: MAKING ACTIONS COUNT

[readable on: <https://web.archive.org/web/20240507164844/https://scenes.noblogs.org/post/2024/03/02/developing-incisive-capacity-making-actions-count/>]

A recent text outlining a path for developing action capacity concludes that “studying the vulnerabilities of domination” also needs attention. If a capacity for destruction is present, then the question naturally arises of how to aim it so that this destruction hits where it hurts. Let’s imagine what such an approach might entail by turning our gaze to a central pillar of global power and counterinsurgency: the U.S. “defense industry.”

Anarchists and other rebels based in the U.S. are well-placed to strike at its war machine—the ’60s saw a prolonged social upheaval driven primarily by this objective, and in the many years since, anarchists here have occasionally moved beyond opposing war to attacking it. The current genocide in Palestine has heightened social tensions against U.S. militarism, though the actions of anarchists in this moment have mostly had little impact on their targets and not contributed much to the popular imaginary of how militarism can be attacked. What could equip anarchists to carry out more significant strikes, to hone a quality of action that goes beyond the symbolic? To this end, the proposal put forward by “Fragments for an Insurgent Struggle Against Militarism and the World that Needs It” deserves discussion: to focus on well-conceived

attacks that target vulnerabilities in the production and infrastructure of war.

## Breaking the links in the chain

The production of war starts here: the U.S. is by far the world’s largest arms exporter. Of SIPRI’s “Top 100 Arms-Producing and Military Services Companies,” 42 are based in the U.S., accounting for 51% of total global revenues. Most visible are the factories that churn out arms, ammunition and other war equipment. Less visible are the supply chains that transform raw materials into the components the factories need (production stage supply chains) or transport the finished product into the hands of States (distribution stage supply chains). “Fragments for an Insurgent Struggle...” proposes to focus destructive attention on the upstream supplier bottlenecks inherent in high-tech production, an industry “dependent on numerous expensive and difficult-to-obtain resources,” rather than on the well-secured assembly plants:

Arson attacks on the vehicles of arms companies and their suppliers, as well as on the vehicles of the logistics companies that transported their war material, etc., as well as a perhaps even larger series of paint attacks on the headquarters of these companies

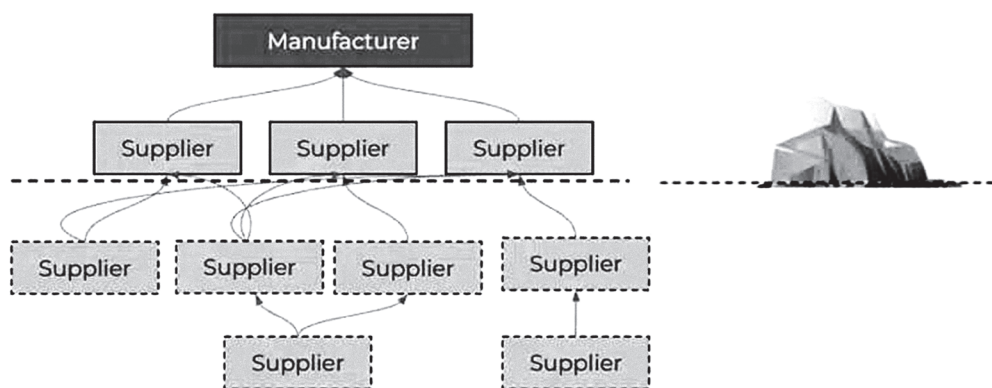


offered, and still offer, a militant perspective of intervention in war production. And yet: it would be news to me that supplies to the war fronts ever came to a standstill in the process. The interruption of production was too minor, the sabotage of logistics too insignificant. Nothing that could not have been made up by an additional night shift. And the financial damage? Well, let's say that the management of these companies make calculations in other dimensions.

It is by no means my intention to talk down these attempts at intervention, to discourage people from attacking even when the enemy seems overwhelming and one's own room to maneuver seems too small in comparison, one's own resistance too insignificant. None of this is a reason for me to refrain from attacking. Rather, I think it is worthwhile to reconsider established strategies from time to time and, if necessary, to revise them when it becomes apparent that one's actions within them are largely ineffective or becoming predictable.

a linear "chain." First tier suppliers directly supply a company like Lockheed Martin, second tier suppliers supply the first tier, and so on. The average U.S. aerospace company relies on about 200 first-tier suppliers, and the second and third tiers involve more than 12,000 companies. Irreplaceable suppliers are called "sole-source," and are often present at all tiers. As one engineer recently warned in the trade press, "Dassault has five thousand suppliers for its Rafale, and all it takes to block everything is for one to get stuck."

In addition to supplying product components, supply chains must also provide specialized factory machinery. For example, the production of the machinery required for the microelectronics (semiconductors) used in virtually all military technology is a severe bottleneck causing shortages in this sector. In February 2022, the Department of Defense (DoD) released an action plan for "Securing Defense-Critical Supply Chains" which warns that "the high-tech company ASML



The world's largest defense contractor, Lockheed Martin, saw its annual revenue drop by 8.9% between 2021 and 2022 due to supply chain constraints (in other words, it couldn't produce \$6 billion worth of weapons). Of the 41 other U.S. companies in the "Top 100," 31 also saw their annual revenue decline for the same reason. By identifying the specific supply chain bottlenecks that are already severely hampering these leviathanic entities, it becomes possible to exacerbate shortages in a way that actually impacts weapons production.

Supply chains consist of "tiers" and look more like a network than

(Netherlands) is currently the sole-source for extreme ultraviolet (EUV) lithography tools that are required to mass produce semiconductor die in technology nodes below 7nm<sup>1</sup>. Such consolidation increases sole-source risk in the global microelectronics supply chain." ASML produces only about 40 machines per year (each taking 12-18 months and involving more than 1,000 first-tier suppliers). They have a \$50 billion backlog and their closest competitors are a decade behind EUV technology.

All supply chains have bottlenecks, and most have "single points of failure," it's just a matter of locating

1 Microelectronics products containing silicon die chips are typically described as being manufactured at a certain technology node (e.g., 45 nanometers), which refers to the dimension in nm of the smallest element in a transistor. State-of-the-Art (SOTA) is currently considered to be <10nm and is used in advanced computing (data centers, artificial intelligence, supercomputers, etc.). State-of-the-Practice (SOTP) is between 10nm-90nm and is generally what is used in conventional weapons, although today's SOTA will become SOTP and legacy in the future. The industry needs ASML's EUV technology to keep Moore's Law alive ("the number of transistors on microchips doubles every 2 years"), which is necessary for computing to progress. The DoD action plan goes on to say that "although most of DoD's current systems are reliant on State-of-the-Practice (SOTP) and legacy microelectronics, State-of-the-Art (SOTA) microelectronics are DoD's primary differentiator for asymmetric technology advantage over potential adversaries."



them. The tools to gain this visibility are included in the field of “supply chain risk management”—our enemies are publishing much of this research. The same DoD action plan describes “persistent sub-tier<sup>2</sup> supply chain vulnerabilities, from raw materials and chemical shortages to critical subcomponents produced by fragile suppliers.” It goes on to provide a high-level overview of supply chain issues for “areas in which critical vulnerabilities pose the most pressing threat”: missiles, batteries, castings, microelectronics, and critical minerals.

More recently, for the first time in its history, the DoD released a “National Defense Industrial Strategy” to provide a roadmap for “developing more resilient and innovative supply chains.” Their plans are not infallible—one advisor describes the document as lacking “a focus on long-term solutions to supply chain issues that have plagued the defense industry.” Equally interesting are the publications of RAND’s National Security Research Division, especially those of its National Security Supply Chain Institute.

### **The infrastructure of peace is the infrastructure of war**

Logistics means the movement and storage of goods between different points in the supply chain (e.g., from manufacturing plants to assembly plants to distribution centers). Logistics works through infrastructure. Not all supply chain problems involve logistics—for example, a supplier’s factory burning down has nothing to do with whether the component can be moved efficiently, but rather whether it can be produced.

The angles of attack can be adapted to the context: a supply vulnerability depends on supplier bottlenecks, and a logistics vulnerability depends on infrastructure bottlenecks. For example, an arms factory may be located in a region with ample infrastructural redundancy that would make sabotaging logistics difficult, but perhaps it has a sole-source supplier. Conversely, the factory may have invested in building a supply chain with significant redundancy, but its product is shipped to market through ports with limited rail connections.

Regardless of supply and logistics flows (which, it must be emphasized, are generally fraught with severe bottlenecks), a factory needs to be connected to a functioning electrical grid in order to operate, and it often needs to be connected to the Internet via fiber optic cables. Energy and telecommunications vulnerabilities extend far beyond the well-secured perimeter

***„What could equip anarchists to carry out more significant strikes, to hone a quality of action that goes beyond the symbolic?“***

of a factory, decentralized to such an extent that even a militarized police force would be incapable of protecting them.

To return to the proposal in “Fragments for an Insurgent Struggle...,” it suggests that an anti-militarist practice could sabotage “the entire logistical system in which these weapons are shipped, loaded, transported by rail or truck, rather than limiting itself to attacks on logistics companies,” as well as focusing on “the frequent freight rail connections of weapons companies’ production sites.”

The “dual-use” infrastructure that serves logistics quickly becomes the infrastructure of war when the State goes to war or has to turn against its own population in an insurgency scenario. The text “War Starts Here: Let’s Cripple its Infrastructure Where We Can” criticizes that “Fragments for an Insurgent Struggle...” leaves out “the most important raw material of war: oil or energy in general. Especially at the beginning of a war, the amount of energy needed to move troops is gigantic, but throughout the war, fuel has to be transported from some stockpile and/or refinery to the front, where it is needed to fuel the engines of the war machines. And especially when a war is not taking place directly in their own territory, but the logistics of supplying the troops with energy pass through this territory, it might be worthwhile to take a closer look at this infrastructure.”

In a very inspiring recent initiative, comrades did exactly that in the context of the EU’s infrastructure of war. Their words are no less relevant here:

We encourage people to make their own analyses of the military-industrial complex, its raw materials and its logistics, with no less than its efficient sabotage in mind. We feel the lack of such analysis all the more sharply

2 A sub-tier is any tier below the first.



because we believe that our ability to fight domination (and its wars) is irrevocably dependent on knowing its infrastructures, understanding the mechanisms that make them function and, not least, establishing the necessary skills and a certain routine for attacking identified vulnerabilities.

#### **An insurgent struggle against militarism**

Identifying vulnerabilities is certainly a step in the right direction. Mapping the “defense industrial base” with an eye to its vulnerabilities is an enormous and long-term project that anarchists in the U.S. have barely begun. An initiative in the German context could provide inspiration: “Attack the Arms Industry.” It collects companies and institutions into the categories of producers, suppliers, logistics, research, financing, and legitimization. They have written a tutorial sharing their approach entitled “An Introduction to Mapping the Local Arms Industry and its Vulnerable Points.” As in the ’60s, disillusioned soldiers and veterans are well positioned to undermine the military with their access to insider knowledge, and this information would be easier for them to share anonymously if an equivalent project existed for the U.S. context.

Studying the enemy to identify vulnerabilities enables a quality of action, but putting that knowledge into practice is what makes it truly consequential. What are the current obstacles to anarchists developing a capacity for action on a significant scale, organized in small autonomous groups that can coordinate around a particular focus? In other words, what needs to happen for more anarchists to establish the necessary skills and a certain routine for attacking identified vulnerabilities?

***„Studying the enemy to identify vulnerabilities enables a quality of action, but putting that knowledge into practice is what makes it truly consequential.“***

Only by fostering an incisive quality of action can we hope to bring the factories of death to a standstill, to disrupt the infrastructure of war, and more broadly, to make meaningful contributions to the social upheavals on the horizon. The task at hand is not straightforward, but that does not make it any less necessary.



# A FEW REFLECTIONS AFTER READING “ALL READY FOR WAR”

Although certain parts of the world were already in the grip of war, some of them for quite a long time (think, for example, of the wars that ravage eastern Congo, one of the world’s main regions where prized metals for technology and the green energy transition are extracted), the start of the war in Ukraine brought the specter of conflict right to the gates of our peaceful little gardens. Physically, because the war is only taking place a good day’s drive away. Psychologically, because the fields and cities involved in this war resemble our own much more than Kabul or Baghdad. And especially materially, because this war has had immediate consequences here that have been more tangible than those of the other conflicts that devour larger and larger territories and whose effects are just as real but less visible. It is these consequences (rising prices for energy and goods, bellicist propaganda, significant investment in the arms industry, threats of aggression, a large influx of refugees...) that, more than any geopolitical speculation or nuanced analysis of this hot war as inseparably paired with the major restructuring that is underway<sup>1</sup>, support the anxious feeling, more and more widespread among the population as well as among anarchists and other rebels, that *war is at our doorstep*.

The text “All Ready For War” offers a good overview of the militarist maelstrom. It seems to me that the text is too quick to brush aside certain issues—such as when it rejects, without any nuance or concrete examples, “national liberation struggles,” as though Palestinian, Kurdish, Mapuche, Basque, Armenian, Breton, Corsican, Irish, and Kanak resistance could be

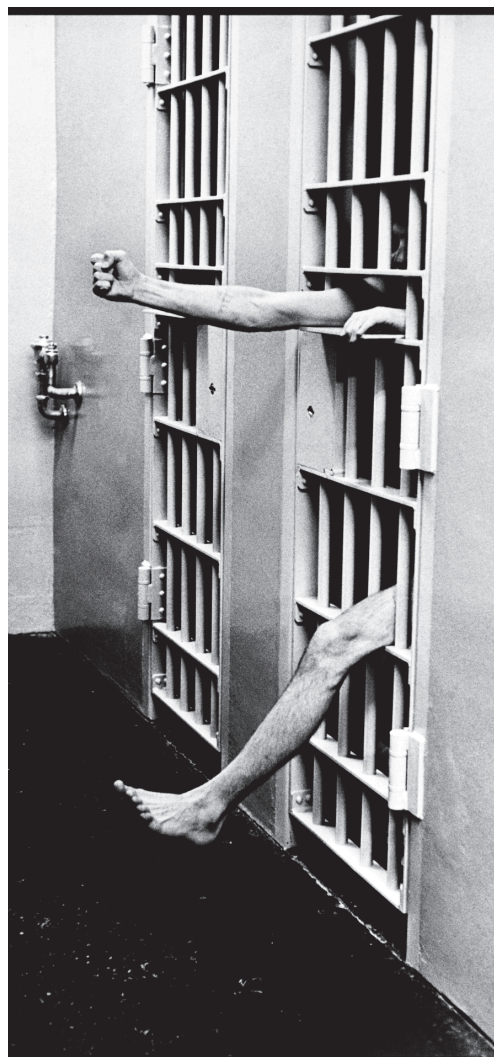
reduced to their political representatives, which are often, but not always, authoritarian organizations seeking to create a new state. When faced with a conflict that is strongly marked by an independence struggle, many anarchists would rather turn their backs on a real conflictual situation by arguing theoretically against the nationalist impulse or the idea of a “people” or “nation” rather than seeking to intervene to push it towards liberatory insurrection<sup>2</sup>.

But the issue that strikes me as at the heart of the author’s concerns is this: if it is true that we are heading towards direct involvement in war, if it is true that the consequences of the wars “our” states are involved in will intensify as wars extend over the planet, and, finally, if it is true that we can’t exclude the possibility of war where we live — *then what should we do?*

In my opinion, the escalating ideological rhetoric and the endless bombastic slogans serve primarily to mask the lack of concrete, real anarchist interventions for waging our own war of liberation. For some, the war in Ukraine and its impact on the surrounding countries is just a war among capitalists, and the hypothesis of its transformation into a civil war or war of liberation should the belligerent states lose control

1 By this, I of course mean the transition towards the fully digital, the addition of new energy sources, robotization, and artificial intelligence. It is a race that seems, given that the climate is breaking down and nature has been sustainably devastated, likely to be the fatal blow against both ecology and freedom: an illusory project whose negative consequences are quite real.

2 There are countless examples and stories of anarchists who fought within the Palestinian or Irish resistance, for example. In the Basque conflict, although some anarchists, radical ecologists, and autonomists decided to join the ETA, others chose an autonomous and liberatory path to push towards armed insurrection in the Basque Country, of which the armed struggle organization Comandos Autonomos Anticapitalistas is one example. Although sometimes uneven or unexpected, the assessments and reflections on these experiences are particularly precious for those who don’t intend to stay warm and dry during the coming storm.



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is not even considered. For others, the response to any war can only and ever be active pacifism, an ethical rejection of all armed struggle. Then there are also the escalating declarations of war against the war industry, which is indeed, in my opinion, a good direction for intervention, but which is not accompanied by more serious reflection on how to really go about it. It all too quickly falls into improvisation, a lack of means, and simply demonstrating a radical ethical opposition. In the “war against war,” the organizational, technical, and logistical necessities involved in “making war” on the system are only rarely dealt with in concrete terms. And this is not surprising for a current that has often preferred beautiful gestures to an insurrectional or revolutionary projectuality, whether within social struggles, revolts, popular uprisings, or civil wars. Because we don’t think about it or build our own projectuality that is in confrontation with reality rather than up in the clouds, when the situation arises, we end up joining that of others due to lack of options. And so, as if by magic, we’ve come full circle. We lament the absence of a genuinely anarchist tension within the conflict, scorning those anarchists who end up joining the combative tendencies that exist (while sometimes, but not always, setting aside their anarchist ideals), which allows us to keep our hands clean, in theoretical

terms. This obviously has nothing to do with revolutionary action or an insurrectionary perspective, as these live out under the pouring rain where they are always at risk of being swept away in a torrent of mud.

Through this, I want to point out that our actions don’t occur on some abstract level, but rather we must struggle, we must fight, in a given set of conditions (that are not of our choosing!). I believe it is pretentious to say, and to turn into a political theory, which conditions and contradictions make the fight for freedom and anarchy impossible. Yes, I believe that even within authoritarian formations, in the past and present, there may well be anarchistic tensions. Yes, I believe that conditions can make it so that you find yourself in such a formation and that even there, by accepting the contradictions (which is not the same as hiding them!<sup>3</sup>) you can struggle for anarchy and be a “bearer of freedom.” The debate we can logically have then is not if but rather which conditions allow for which hypotheses, which liberatory project, and which are more favourable or less so. Can an anarchist who works in a factory (and who knows that anarchy can only come about if the factories are destroyed) envision a subversive project within the company where they are employed producing commodities? Can an anarchist involved in armed resistance in an authoritarian resistance organization against Israeli colonialism be a “bearer of freedom?”<sup>4</sup> But let’s move on.

\*

So, what can we do starting today, and what have we neglected for too long?

I recall a few texts from Ukrainian anarchists written before the Russian invasion that anticipated that war was going to break out and imagined a rapid defeat of the Ukrainian armed forces. An interesting hypothesis, but one certainly put forward too late, is that in the event of a defeat (or of a major loss of territory by the regular army) a resistance would inevitably emerge against the invader. And if they didn’t want to leave the patriots, statists, nationalists, and democrats with a

3 In my opinion, this is what was missing in, for example, the report backs written publicly by anarchists who travelled to Rojava. In the absence of a critical and nuanced perspective from the inside, we are left with only the assessments made at a distance by people who weren’t there and the numbing propaganda released by the organizations themselves, which is intended to encourage sympathy and enthusiasm rather than autonomous revolutionary activity.

4 Obviously, they are not all the same. Without proof to the contrary or a concrete proposal, I don’t believe that a professional army—as opposed to an army of conscripts, which is, essentially, just a factory that produces nothing but terror and death—leaves enough space to allow for subversive projects inside it. Let’s take Ukraine as an example. The room to maneuver dramatically decreased when the more-or-less improvised militia groups (in which anti-authoritarians and radical leftists were involved) became corps within the army (where there still seems to be anarchists, autonomists, and antifascists). It’s also worth taking a look at the partisan resistance activities carried out by anarchists in Belarus against the regime, which is a close ally of Putin, and the presence of Russian military units. Dozens of anarchists are currently imprisoned there. As these anarchists have made the struggle against the existing totalitarian Belarussian regime their primary objective, other anarchists constantly accuse them of being complacent towards western democratic powers, which pushes anarchists in Belarus to reject any critical examination of the real ambiguity of the situation as a lack of solidarity, a western intellectual attitude, etc.



monopoly, they would need to lay the groundwork for autonomous, social, anti-authoritarian resistance from the start. A resistance perhaps initiated by anarchists but which could be joined by anyone who was drawn to the relevance of the proposed methods of fighting (guerilla warfare, asymmetrical combat, sabotage of logistics) and organizing (resistance movement, high degree of autonomy, rejection of bureaucracy). This hypothesis did not manifest itself in any real way. They were overtaken by events, perhaps, by the lack of initial forces, by confusion and fear which diminished their mistrust of state initiatives, by a lack of capacity...

And yes, it is time to urgently concern ourselves with all of this, all the factors we can now identify that contributed to the failure of this subversive and combative hypothesis. And let's say it plainly: not only are there few comrades who seem to seriously dedicate themselves to these problems, but many others continue to denigrate, reject, or ridicule them.

Certainly, other hypotheses could be elaborated. No one has a crystal ball to see what is going to happen or what is going to "work."

But personally, I am among those who think that, faced with the coming war that is fatally paired with the ecocidal capitalist restructuring in progress, we need to get busy and start bringing together, piece by piece, the elements of a response of insurrectionary resistance. As the comrades from Germany wrote in their text, a walk in the woods would be better suited than the pages of a journal for seriously discussing this. But I think that in this moment when, at least here, we find ourselves so disarmed against what we can see on the horizon, against the very real and ongoing military and industrial massacres of entire populations and of living things everywhere on the planet, we can't allow ourselves the pleasure of crafting labyrinths out of words and metaphors.

I will bring a few elements to the table. I hope others will do the same, in these pages or elsewhere, and that, most importantly, we will get busy and active.

***„Yes, I believe  
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tensions.“***

The first element is preparation. I mean mental preparation, the rational and emotional capacity to detect and reject the blackmail of the state and its followers. But I also mean technical, physical, logistical, and military preparation (I know "military" is a garbage word, but we said no more labyrinths, which especially means no collective self-delusions: whether it happens today or tomorrow, pockets of resistance have much to gain by learning techniques for camouflage, tactical movement, weapons handling, operational communications, and close combat).

A second: intelligence gathering, lots of intelligence and study. It's the same deal as for preparation: we have to do it now when we have the time and the possibility, and not waste this precious window. We need to study supply lines, as our comrades from Germany wrote, and study the geography of energy and telecommunications infrastructure (that is "dual use" for both military and civilian purposes) as well as industrial bottlenecks. But we



also need to study and prepare fallback areas, safe houses, rear bases, areas that are more difficult to control and dominate.

A third element: to reflect on our relationships, form groups for reflection, support, and combat, organize sessions to train ourselves and others, establish ties based on reciprocal support and coordination, broaden our horizons beyond the boundaries of our neighbourhood, our region, and the state's borders, and make contact with comrades elsewhere.

Finally, a fourth one for the road: resistance can't wait for tomorrow, it needs to start right now, today, in this very moment. This is why it is necessary to foster and support all offensive initiatives that immediately attack the gears that feed the war machine and the techno-industrial system. Considering preparation as separate is a classic mistake that leads to a deformed vision of our own activity and to confusion about our immediate goals and our medium-term objectives. Preparation is not separate from practice, and the creation of logistical networks—essential for a resistance and a partisan war—is not only useful “tomorrow” or “just in case.”

Ultimately, what is important today is to have a hypothesis and a project that is at the level of what is happening. But it is no longer acceptable, at all, to content ourselves with old ideological formulas, without concrete consequences and which are primarily concerned with keeping their hands clean. Because it's exactly the opposite of what they profess—this will ultimately deliver us bound and tied to the state or authoritarian organizations.

*Zéphyr*

*“Civil war is my domain, it is the terrain where the anarchist can see the first premises of a revolutionary process that is liberatory in nature sprouting, as long as it is not a pantomime imitating the ‘just’ war of states [...]. The power of my situation is indirectly confirmed by how my enemy, the state, in the event of a civil war, immediately considers me a ‘bandit,’ a criminal. [...] The posters against the maquisards of the French Resistance read Achtung Banditen, and the Napoleonic posters against the followers of Garibaldi said the same. Anyone who does not accept the uniform of the ‘just cause,’ and therefore to wage a ‘just war,’ is a bandit. I leave it to the readers to draw out all of the consequences. Once and for all, let it be said that we are all bandits, all banned, excommunicated, placed ‘outside’ the law. And this suits us very well.”*

Alfredo M. Bonanno,  
*La paura della guerra civile*, 1999.

PS. I would like to use this quotation to suggest some further reading which, although not an easy read, may be useful in this current moment as it brings into relief the implications of acting as an anarchist within a resistance, situated within the contradictions rather than offering the illusion of being above them. In the book “L’ospite inatteso” (not yet translated to English), Alfredo M. Bonanno shares all the doubts, reflections, and conundrums raised by his participation in armed resistance in Palestine, Greece, Ireland, and elsewhere. The French translation was released by Tumult Editions a couple of years ago.





# WANDERINGS IN THE WAKE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY CELLS

*Reflections After Reading „All Fire, All Flame“  
[external contribution translated from French]*



*„It would be naïve to reduce the guerrilla to the moments of its practical effectiveness, even if this is where it finally materializes. Any mystification and idealization, any aura of adventure, must fade when confronted with the real conditions. Each intervention is based on a series of preparatory tasks — movements, skills, studies, safeguards — which in themselves rarely satisfy the more global aspirations. In isolation, there’s really nothing revolutionary about transporting something, gathering information, organizing shelter, or traveling miles and miles, waiting, and discussing again and again. But each of these activities is an indispensable link in a whole chain of preconditions without which we may have managed to carry out isolated actions, but certainly not to maintain a continuity of armed resistance.[...]*

*„Our goal is and always has been to broaden the armed resistance; it was and is to support a network of autonomous groups that, as an armed tendency within the movements in their cities and regions, are capable of acting on their own, using subversive methods to push the contradictions further and intervening at the lower levels of the power structure.“*

*—8 Years of Revolutionary Cells: Two Steps Forward in the Battle for People’s Minds and Our Own(1981)*

Without consistency of method and operational rigor, there’s a very real risk that everything will fall back on improvisation. Often equated with the beauty of spontaneity, the instinctive reaction to an intolerable situation, improvisation is an undeniable quality when faced with unforeseen circumstances. But to systematically count on it to slip through the nets that inevitably tighten when the adventure extends over time, as if it were a grace bestowed upon us by an invisible benevolent entity in exchange for our commitment to the struggle, is to delude ourselves. Those who commit themselves to the struggle, at whatever

level, are putting themselves on the line — of course, it makes no sense here to distinguish between major involvement in large-scale sabotage actions and the more limited commitment to making the continuity of these actions possible through logistical support. And only the blissfully carefree put their freedom — and their lives, along with those of their comrades — at stake with a lightness bordering on recklessness.

Whatever the writers of odes to the joy of action may say, who generally skip over this less lighthearted dimension of clandestine action, reality also claims its right to exist beyond



these sweet reveries and extraordinary imaginings of a full and pure struggle. Subversive action is also a matter of calculations, measures, protocols, methods, attention to detail, waiting, and repetition. This „preparatory“ work tends to become increasingly important the more ambitious the goals, the less occasional and circumscribed the action, the more refined and long-term the projectuality. It guarantees not only the success of a given action, but also the possibility of continuity. Because in the underground, even if mistakes

***„Subversive action is also a matter of calculations, measures, protocols, methods, attention to detail, waiting, and repetition.“***

are inevitably made, there is no margin for error: just one is enough to bring everything crashing down. On the other side, this pressure doesn't necessarily exist: among those who are experienced in countering subversive struggles, they more or less patiently wait for the „elusive ones“ to make a mistake, then come down on them, presenting the sum total of their accumulated misdeeds.

Of course, mistakes are inevitable, and you can't just blame them on improvisation. Rigidity can also become a trap. For example, the systematic and repeated use of the same alarm clock model (well suited to its new vocation as a reliable delay) over many years eventually led the State's sleuths onto the trail of Revolutionary Cells (RZ) and Rote Zora, opening a breach in their decentralized structures that was sealed at the cost of considerable effort and temporary tactical retreats. Likewise, it's not surprising that when faced with surveillance counter-measures or other procedures to avoid detection, the wisest agents end up trying to uncover the thread that holds it all together, the bridge to the clandestine dimension protected by many protocols and precautions, the method itself. Creativity, exchange, questioning, hindsight, finesse, and self-criticism all seem to help prevent



a certain indispensable rigidity from becoming obtuse.

Another challenge, far less „technical“ and all the more important, is to reconcile ideas and feelings — what drives and motivates us to struggle and act — with the concrete reality of domination. When the relationship to this reality (and its conflictuality) is based on abstractions, a slew of maximalist declarations desperately tries to fill the gap, poorly concealing an unwillingness to make an effort to observe and analyze the concrete reality of domination by evoking an ideal that is fantasized as superior and self-evident and therefore doesn't need to grasp anything concretely. The resulting action can certainly be virulent, an explosive existential cry, authentic and irrecoverable against a mortifying world, but on the other hand, with hindsight, it often lacks incisiveness. In order to go beyond this, it is necessary to approach reality critically, to study and analyze the evolution of domination and the conflictuality that emerges within it. Losing oneself in such activity to the point of becoming completely incapable of action is commonplace. On the other hand, it is also common to content oneself with very approximate analyses of reality, thinking that one can fill the gap with thunderous declarations that enumerate a few generalizations without offering any remotely concrete orientation, rejecting from the height of a pedestal cloaked in ethics any attempt at projectuality that though inspired by anarchist ideas, also arms itself with precise analysis and knowledge to have a major incisiveness. In this way, action is often reduced to mere testimony, worn down by the passing years until the next generation arrives.

The history of the RZ reveals attempts to go beyond the level of reaction — the explosive but highly symbolic gesture — by refusing to run ahead of the movement, as well as the role of blindly following its footsteps, always pushing towards the construction of armed resistance. They sought to establish specific orientations based on an analysis of the evolution of domination or an assessment of social conflictuality and its potential, such as their interventions against the advanced information technology sectors, within the anti-nuclear and „environmental“ struggles, or against the arms industry and the military presence that made West Germany a very important bridgehead in geopolitical balances. In anticipation of the major restructuring brought about by technology and economic globalization, they launched an innovative campaign against borders and migration policy and, above all, maintained a continuity of offensive

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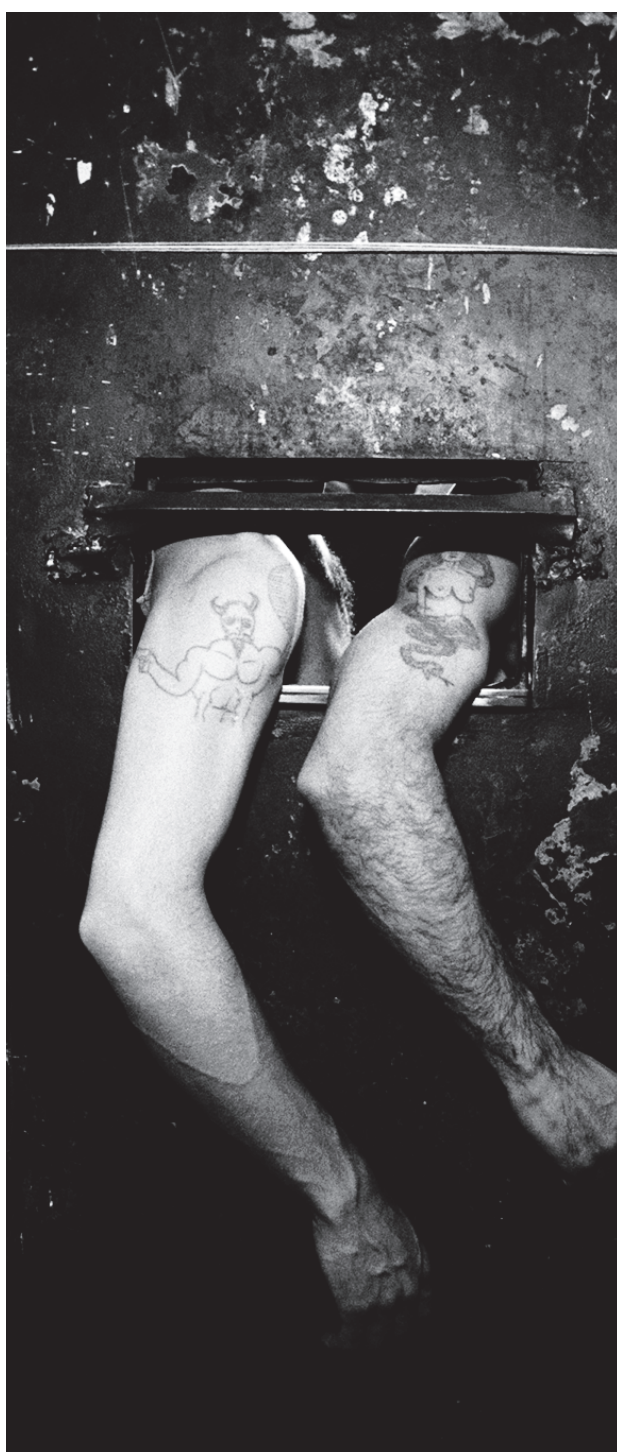


support for liberation struggles in the so-called Third World. These attempts to build „references“ and „orientations“ — in short, projectualities — were not always successful; they also faltered or were caught off guard by sudden developments.

Likewise, the broader perspective that the RZ were still describing in 1981, without blushing, as the construction of a „people’s guerrilla“ — emanating from the radicalization of ongoing social conflicts — was significantly reduced a few years later. Social conflictuality and the so-called diffuse guerrilla (with hundreds of incendiary, explosive and sabotage actions carried out by as many more or less ephemeral groups and a vast autonomous, anti-authoritarian movement) was undeniably on the wane, to the point that even their signature slogan to „create numerous revolutionary cells“ (which preceded the „people’s guerrilla“) no longer appeared very often in their texts and communiqués. In touch with reality, the perspective now seemed to boil down to ensuring that the imaginary of armed resistance could continue to exist, now that many people were settling down and the system was adopting more flexible and permissive ways of doing things. In short, to prevent everything

from going back to square one.

This concern recurred in the Cells’ reflections, albeit in different ways over the years. It also seems to have been behind the decision to keep the same name and use the same acronym, while proposing organizational decentralization through autonomous groups, a far cry from the centralized approaches of many urban guerrilla groups in Western Europe during the same period. Moreover, contrary to the gravediggers who never cease to reduce armed activity to fighting organizations with a more or less Marxist-Leninist framework, this urban guerrilla universe was also populated by other autonomous or libertarian organizations that were very active, such as the Azione Rivoluzionaria in Italy, the GARI and libertarian autonomous groups in France, the Angry Brigade in England, the Comandos Autonomos Anticapitalistes in the Basque Country and autonomous groups in Spain, the June 2nd Movement in Germany, etc... And that’s not to mention the myriad ephemeral groups that also devoted themselves to explosive, incendiary and even armed activities on a massive scale, without forming stable organizations or giving them acronyms.







Taking Germany as an example, the dozens and dozens of attacks claimed by the Revolutionary Cells and the Rote Zora during the „diffuse guerilla“ of the mid-1980s were not even a tenth of all the incendiary and explosive attacks claimed by „movement“ groups or left unclaimed. But, to return to this concern for continuity on the part of the RZ, it is also reflected in the texts that critically evaluate their own activities, failures, mistakes and shortcomings, which were put into circulation despite the obvious security problems that this entailed, with the aim of stimulating debates beyond the „confines“ of the line between those who were part of the RZ and the rest of the movement, however blurred it may have been at times. In the same vein, the RZ regularly circulated DIY manuals for making explosive or incendiary devices, reliable timers, car theft, and lock picking. While many similar manuals were already circulating within the movement, their quality sometimes left something to be desired. The RZ sought to remedy this shortcoming by producing detailed, precise and effective manuals, supported by advice on conspiratorial security and organization into small, autonomous groups.

The organizational originality of the RZ was to combine a decentralized approach of autonomous groups, whose entire composition was not necessarily known by the other groups (which functioned structurally through delegation in order to maintain compartmentalization while allowing for real coordination and exchange), with shared logistics (funding, weapons, intelligence, hideouts, etc.). Although the members of the RZ were organizing clandestine structures, they were not obliged to go into clandestinity, and remained anchored, one way or another, in the broader movement.

The dangerous bridge between the legal and clandestine dimensions was all the more secured and protected by protocols, as it was obviously one of the most vulnerable links. However, this protection was clearly not only structural (through compartmentalization) and technical (through the rigor of the method), but also „social.“

Despite differences, disagreements, and different choices, the RZ were seen as part of the same movement, and there was a great deal of reciprocity. The RZ didn't just watch from afar when the movement went into battle, but sought to be at its side, in their own way, and on the other hand they could count on support and solidarity, which was an all the more significant shield against repression. The RZ seemed to have thought this way throughout their existence, to have always re-discussed and questioned their relation with „supporters,“ showing a great deal of concern and care for those who helped them (without knowing exactly) despite the demands of secrecy, remaining quite lucid about their own activities, and thus avoiding falling into contempt for those who didn't do as they did. Of course, none of this should give the impression that everything was smooth and seamless, or that there were formulas that worked every time and without fail for over 20 years. But it must also be said that, even if arrests are not necessarily synonymous with failure and, conversely, the absence of arrests is not tantamount to making a real impact, the organizational concept of the RZ (and the similar one of the Rote Zora) worked, in the sense that it enabled a certain continuity and the maintenance of a certain level of action for more than two decades, without repression succeeding in disarticulating the structures or condemning people to heavy sentences. And all of this in

***„The history of the RZ reveals attempts to go beyond the level of reaction — the explosive but highly symbolic gesture — by refusing to run ahead of the movement, as well as the role of blindly following its footsteps, always pushing towards the construction of armed resistance.“***

a particularly repressive context, as evidenced by the high death toll among the Red Army Faction (RAF) and its sympathizers, both in prison and on the streets, the sophisticated investigative methods of the German police and the seemingly infinite resources they had at their disposal, the brutal repression of mass movements, the special anti-terrorist legislation, a state and economic apparatus infested with former Third Reich officials, the massive presence of NATO and its agencies, and so on.

Unlike armed organizations whose more or less Leninist conception of revolutionary upheaval ultimately led them to direct confrontation with the state apparatus (such as the RAF or the Red Brigades), the RZ's perspective was more „movementist,“ without, however, subjecting all their activities to the criteria of compatibility with the themes that animated the movement in Germany (as witnessed by the persistence of their internationalist attacks in solidarity with liberation struggles in South Africa, Palestine, Chile, Mozambique, etc.). This desire to remain close to the movement and its practices, while at the same time constituting a point of reference for armed resistance within it, also had clear consequences for the choice of means used: arson, bombings and a few attacks with firearms against repressive officials (kneecappings). Even from a much less movement-oriented perspective, where social conflictuality nevertheless remains an important point of reference, this discussion cannot be settled once and for all. The exaltation of certain instruments (such as firearms) or certain practices (such as direct attacks on individuals responsible for domination), instead of questioning their relevance, the possibility of their actual (and not fantasized) use, their appropriateness to the goal sought and, ultimately, their relationship to the level of conflictuality, is nothing more than empty words which, it must be said, more often than not serve as a substitute in the absence of a real project. On the other hand, the necessary discussions on the perspective of armed resistance or

on the relevance of networks that equip themselves with offensive means or even organizational structures adapted to their project are undermined by fear, unfamiliarity, the persistent disease of movementist legalism („outside the social movement, no salvation!“) and bewildering claims of „specialization“ or „militarism“ that denounce as inherently authoritarian any transition from a rudimentary, approximate and incomplete knowledge of the instruments and methods of combat to a more in-depth and tested knowledge.

The world has changed a great deal since the end of the RZ in the early 1990s. The triumphant advance of techno-industrial society in recent decades has not led to a stabilized globalized society, let alone a peaceful planet. At a time of accelerating ecological crisis, synonymous with mass extinctions, collapsing ecosystems and the degradation of the conditions on which human societies are based, everything seems to be converging toward a sharpening of conflicts. It is within these conflicts that discussions, concrete experiments and practical attempts at armed, libertarian and ecological resistance will inevitably resonate ever more loudly<sup>1</sup>. In other words, critical assessments of the past and the transmission of experiences can only help to give depth and perspective to current attempts — from popular or indigenous resistance on the relative periphery of techno-industrial society to offensive struggles in the shadow of its glass and steel centers.

*Salvang*



## BIRDS...



France, 26.07. : Shortly before the start of the Olympic Games in Paris, there is a coordinated sabotage action on all TGV train lines leading to Paris, whereby one of the four sabotages is foiled. 800,000 train passengers are affected, athletes arrive late in Paris and a „Unexpected Delegation“ declares its support for the action in a letter against nationalism, war and environmental destruction.

Saint-Orens-de-Gameville (Haute-Garonne - FR), 26.07. : An antenna including a fiber optic node is set on fire as an anti-Olympic action.

Toulouse (FR), 28.07. : Anger flares up in Toulouse after a police murder. Four Lafarge concrete mixers are burned to the ground. A day later, the 1,800 m<sup>2</sup> warehouse of CSI Sud-Ouest, which is also active in the aerospace, nuclear and defense sectors, burns down. One day later, a hundred square meter building of Toulouse Métropole and eight of its commercial vehicles burn down.

France, 29.07. : Various national and international fiber optic backbone cables are cut at different locations in ten different departments in France - 195 antennas are affected.

Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg, early August: This week there were fire attacks on Deutsche Bahn infrastructure in Bremen, Hamburg and Berlin. There were considerable problems on long-distance and local services.

Berg (Bavaria), 9.8. : A door to a wind turbine is broken open with a power cutter and a fire is set inside. The fire goes out, but the damage is still in the 10,000s.

Saint-Amand-sur-Ornain (Meuse - FR),

09.08. : A hydraulic jack is used to bend a rail near the Cigéo nuclear repository. The rails are not in use and are to be repaired.

Saint-Cyprien (Pyrénées-Orientales - FR), 13.08. : A golf course is sabotaged by plowing the grass and closing the holes. „In view of the ongoing disaster, immediate action is needed!“

Villenauxe-la-Grande (Aube - FR), 15.08. : In front of a prison, a car is torched by guards and two others are demolished.

Hamburg, 19.8. : The battery company Northvolt is attacked with butyric acid and „Northvolt, Hands Off Sápmi!“ is sprayed. „Northvolt is one of the main investors in the mega infrastructure project North Bothnia Line, which stands for the ongoing Swedish colonization of Sápmi.“

Mettmann, 21.8. : „The earth is going down the drain. The industrial corporations of the villain state we call home are not least to blame. That’s why incendiary devices were attached to railroad signal cables in the Mettmann district on Wednesday. Passenger services were not affected. Angry Birds commando“

Saïx (Tarn - FR), 23.08. : The construction site of the A69 near Toulouse is attacked: One group forces the securities to leave, the other sets fire to a bridge structure with Molotov cocktails. The damage is immense. In the days that followed, a police car was set on fire.

Serres (GR), 23.08. : The ATMs of a Piraeus bank are set on fire by the „Conspiracy to Increase Entropy“.

Sardinia (IT), 26.08. : Bolts of a

## ...NEVER...

supporting mast of a wind turbine were unscrewed, affecting the stability of the mast.

Sardinia, 30.08. : The rotor blades of a wind turbine that has not yet assembled are set alight.

Munich, 02.09. : Trucks, conveyor belts, silos and excavators go up in flames at the Max Bögl concrete plant. Millions in damage. The company was producing concrete foundations for wind turbines in the region.

Sardinia (IT), 11.09. : 2000 photovoltaic modules torched after being doused with gasoline.

Lyon (FR), 19.09. : The electricity is sabotaged at the venue of a right-wing transphobic lecture.

Freiburg, 21.09. : Four cars plus charging stations of the town hall burn down.

Leverkusen, 22.9. : 10 new cars torched in the parking lot of an Audizentrum.

„Wars are never so far from home. They need industries, transportation and energy flows that are everywhere.“

Rovereto (IT), Sometime in October : Several telephone cabinets were damaged and their cables were cut.

Toulouse (FR), 04.10. : Cables on the railroad tracks are torched: „Solidarity with all deserters, conscientious objectors and conscientious objectors“

Berlin, 06.10. : ThyssenKrupp makes money from war and genocide. Three trucks were set on fire on the premises of ThyssenPlastics and a warehouse was set on fire. „Through its subsidiary „ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (TKMS)“, ThyssenKrupp earns billions from the construction of warships of all kinds. These include submarines as well as corvettes and frigates produced in Hamburg, Kiel and Emden. „Thyssen Krupp Marine Systems (TKMS)“ is the only supplier of submarines in Germany.“



„Destroy Capitalism! Switch off system of destruction! (...) Green, i.e. climate-neutral and sustainable capitalism is simply impossible.“

Hamburg, 30.9. : Some of *Spie's* cars go up in flames in solidarity with imprisoned antifascist Maya. *Spie* is active in the prison, arms and nuclear industries.

Flamanville (Manche - FR), 30.09. : Bolt loosened from a high-voltage power with 46mm raw pliers and WD40 to make it lose stability. „All this energy drives the machines that control us, monitor us, make us work, entertain us and impose a way of life on us.“

Colombelles (Calvados - FR), 03.10. : Fire in the substation of a technology center where various companies that develop military technology work.

Missolungi (GR), 11.10. : Explosives attack on a police interrogation vehicle.

Athens (GR), 13.10. : Fire at the party office of Nea Demokritia by the „Anarchist Attack Group“.

Saint-Bonnet-près-Bort (Corrèze - FR), 19.10. : A Total Energies wind measurement mast, which is erected before wind turbines are installed, was felled.

Clermont (Oise - FR), 19.10. : All the windows of a right-wing RN party office smashed.

Toulouse (FR), 21.10. : Seven trucks torched by *Spie Batignolles*, which are involved in the construction of the A69.

Berlin, 23.10. : Fire for T-Systems: war profiteer, aid cop, environmental



# ...SING IN...

destroyer. A branch was attacked with gasoline and car tires.

Brissac (Hérault - FR), 24.10. : 15 conveyor belts are destroyed by fire in a quarry. Damage: approx. 6 million

Volos (GR), 26.10. : After a 21-year-old dies in juvenile prison, the prisoners fight back. In a show of solidarity, ATMs at Alpha Bank are smashed and garbage cans set alight.

Munich, 28.10. : TÜV Süd building attacked with an incendiary device made of petrol and wooden pallets. „TÜV Süd is partly responsible for the dam collapse at an opencast iron ore mine in Brazil in 2019, in which over 270 people died, and refuses to compensate their families. It is also serving the German nuclear lobby with courtesy reports and preparing the ground for a return to the use of nuclear energy.“

Villeurbanne (Rhône - FR), 29.10. : Excavator torched by NGE, which is involved in the construction of the A69.

Assago (IT), 31.10. : Arson attack on 23 Enjoy vehicles and an Eni Plenitude van.

Berlin, 06.11. : Broken windows at Bundeswehr consulting company „BwConsulting“.

Bremen, 10.11. : Two cars of the armaments and nuclear company Kaefer torched.

Hamburg, 16.11. : Wild demo & rioting for Kyriakos, against militarism and all authority.

Toulouse (FR), 18.11. : Car of MT Energies, a photovoltaic company, torched in memory of Kyriakos Ximitiris. „Green capitalism allows civilization to consume more and more resources, territories and lives.“

Milan (IT), 24.11. : Corvetto in flames - Because of the police murder of Ramy

Elgaml. He died during a chase in which he was finally rammed by a police car and fell fatally from a scooter on which he was traveling with a friend.

Amsterdam (NL), 25.11. : Two cars of KPN (largest Dutch telephone provider) attacked for military cooperation.

L'Oie (Vendée - FR), 25.11. : Nine trucks and machines belonging to TP Charpentier, involved in the construction of megabassins, torched. „We set fire to two places on the building. Stones, Molotov cocktails and several liters of flammable mixture helped us.“ The company develops surveillance technologies for the police, security agencies and the military.

Munich, 25.11. : Two Strabag excavators torched.

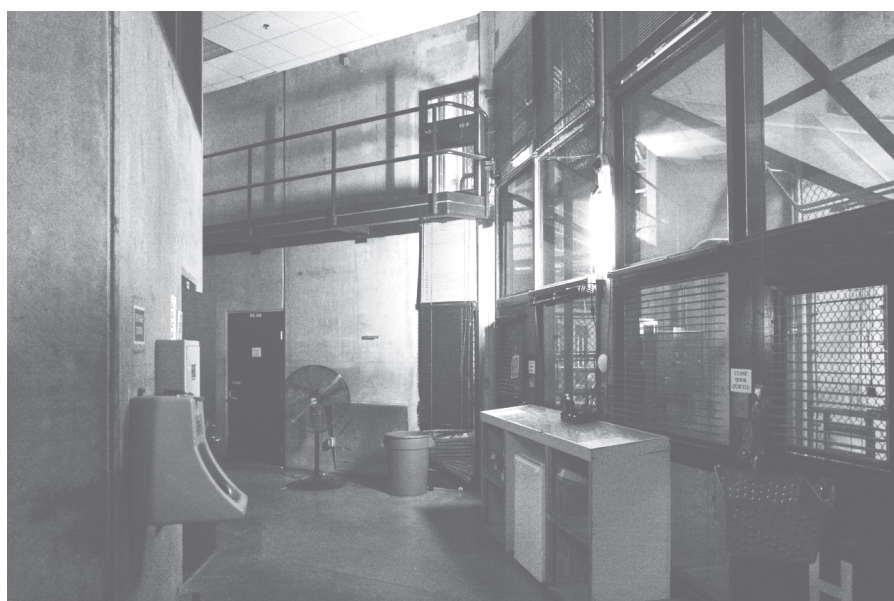
Bremen, 26.11. : OptoPrecision headquarters in Bremen-Horn attacked with incendiary devices.

La Bâtie-Rolland (Drôme - FR), 28.11. : Two hangars of the extractivist company Soterex, part of the Poisson group operating in quarries, were burned down.

Rome (IT), 28.11. : Arson attack against Italferr (subcontractor of the Italian State Railways), militarism and nationalism. 16 company cars were destroyed. „As a willing collaborator of the current military turn, we have identified Italferr, as part of the State Railways Group, as the target of our anti-militarist efforts to counter the new bellicose drive of the States.“

Berlin, 02.12. : Switch off concrete industry! 17 machines and vehicles from the concrete giants Cemex and HeidelbergMaterials were destroyed.

Toulouse (FR), 03.12. : On the day of the aerospace fair, three power lines Toulouse were attacked (two transformers, one high-voltage pylon). The aim of the action was to damage



# ...CAVES

the city's aerospace, defense and technology industries.

Toulouse (FR), 05.12. : Car torched by Toulouse Métropole and the town hall - against the planned NATO base in Toulouse!

Meuse (FR), 07.12. : In order to obstruct track repairs for the Cigéo nuclear waste repository near Bure, the tracks were lifted and damaged with a hydraulic jack (for trucks).

Dortmund, 9.12: Five luxury Audi cars torched at a car dealership

Hamburg, 10.12. : Attack on Hamburg Senator for the Environment Jens Kerstan. The heat pump in front of his villa was torched with a time-delayed incendiary device made from petrol bottles and barbecue lighters.

Estadens (Haute-Garonne - FR), 11.12. : Several excavators are on fire on the construction site of a future factory.

Béziers (Hérault - FR), 11.12. : The cables are cut at 24 Tesla charging stations.

Athens (GR), 13.12. : Three cars of the post office are set on fire in solidarity in memory of Kyriakos Ximitris in solidarity with the Ambelokipi defendants.

Dresden, 13.12. : Attack on police station in Dresden

Toulouse (FR), 14.12. : Three vans torched at Toulouse Métropole. letter opposes the construction of a NATO base in Toulouse and the arms industry.

Athens (GR), 14.12. : A hotel and a fashion store in gentrified Exarcheia are smashed down in memory of Kyriakos.

La Motte-d'Aveillans (Isère - FR), 15.12. : A control cabinet at a ski resort was damaged. Consequence: the ski area remains closed for the whole winter.

Amsterdam (NL), 17.12. : KPN car torched with barbecue lighters.

Jura (CH), 21.12. : Several cars torched by „Sitadel Sarl Delémont“, which is involved in a regional geothermal project in Glovelier.(...) The earth is not Emmenthal cheese!“

Berlin, 24.12. : Thyssenkrupp car torched.

Cenves (Rhône), 30.12. : A hundred-meter-high antenna north of Lyon is torched, leaving 800,000 users with limited telephone and television reception.

Paris, 31.12. : Two police cars burned down.

Berlin, 31.12. : Siemens vehicle torched -- in memory and solidarity with Kyriakos.

Brussels, 2.1. : A guard's car is set on fire in a prison parking lot with a Molotov.

Leipzig, 04.01.25 : New luxury building in Connewitz attacked.

Berlin, 06.01.25 : A Bundeswehr vehicle in Tempelhof was damaged by fire.



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