

Facing the Unknown

Selections from
Insurrection Magazine
with a new introduction

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latent conflict can develop and be brought to the fore. In this way a contact is established between the anarchist minority and the specific situation where the struggle can be developed.

We know that many comrades do not share these ideas. Some accuse us of being analytically out of date, others of not seeing that circumscribed struggle only serve the aims of power, arguing that, especially now in the electronic era, it is no longer possible to talk of revolt.

But we are stubborn. We believe it is still possible to rebel today, even in the computer era.

It is still possible to penetrate the monster with a pinprick. But we must move away from the stereotypical images of the great mass struggles, and the concept of the infinite growth of a movement that is to dominate and control everything. We must develop a more precise and detailed way of We must consider reality for what it is, not what we imagine it to be. When faced with a situation we must have a clear idea of the reality that surrounds us, the class clash that such a reality reflects, and provide ourselves with the necessary means in order to act on it.

As anarchists we have models of intervention and ideas that are of great importance and revolutionary significance, but they do not speak for themselves. They are not immediately comprehensible, so we must put them into action, it is not enough to simply explain them.

The very effort of providing ourselves with the means required for the struggle should help to clarify our ideas, both for ourselves and for those who come in to contact with us. A reduced

idea of these means, one that limits itself to simply counter-information, dissent and declarations of principle, is clearly inadequate. We must go beyond that and work in three directions: contact with the mass (with clarity and circumscribed to the precise requirements of the struggle); action within the revolutionary movement (in the subjective sense already mentioned); construction of the specific organisation (functional to both work within the mass and to action within the revolutionary movement).

And we need to work very hard in this direction.

*by Alfredo M. Bonanno
from Insurrection #6*



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Anarchists and Action

anarchists are not slaves to numbers but continue to act against power even when the class clash is at a low level in the mass. Anarchist action should not therefore aim at organizing and defending the whole of the class of exploited in one vast organization to see the struggle from beginning to end, but should identify single aspects of the struggle and carry them through to their conclusion of attack.

If anarchists have one constant characteristic it is that of not letting themselves be discouraged by the adversities of the class struggle or to be enticed by the promises of power.

It will always be difficult, often impossible, to find an anarchist comrade who has given in to power. This might happen as a result of torture or physical pain, never by long spells of repression or loss of heart. There is something in anarchists that prevents them from becoming discouraged, something that makes them optimistic even in the worst moments of their history. It makes them look forward to possible future outlets in the struggle, not backwards to past mistakes.

An anarchist's revolutionary work is never exclusively aimed at mass mobilisation therefore, otherwise the use of certain methods would become subject to the conditions present

within the latter at a given time. The active anarchist minority is not a mere slave to numbers but acts on reality using its own ideas and actions. There is obviously a relationship between these ideas and the growth in organisation, but the one does not come about as a direct result of the other.

The relationship with the mass cannot be structured as something that must endure the passage of time, ie be based on growth to infinity and resistance against the attack of the exploiters. It must have a more reduced the organizational structures we can offer are limited in time and space specific dimension, one that is decidedly that of attack and not a rearguard relationship.

The organisational structures we can offer are limited in time and space. They are simple associative forms to be reached in the short term. In other words, their aim is not that of organising and defending the whole of the exploited class in one vast organisation to take them through the struggle from beginning to end. They must have a more reduced dimension, identifying one aspect of the struggle and carrying it through to its conclusion of attack. They should not be weighed down by ideology but contain basic elements that can be shared by all: self-management of the struggle, permanent conflictuality, attack on the class enemy.

At least two factors point

to this road for the relationship between anarchist minority and mass: the class sectorialism produced by capital, and the spreading feeling of impotence that the individual gets from certain forms of collective struggle.

There exists a strong desire to struggle against exploitation, and there are still spaces where this struggle can be expressed concretely. Models of action are being worked out in practice and there is still a lot to be done in this direction.

Small actions are always criticized for being insignificant and ridiculous against such an immense structure as that of capitalist power. But it would be a mistake to attempt to remedy this by opposing them with a relationship based on quantity rather than extending these small actions, which are easy for others to repeat. The clash is significant precisely because of the enemy's great complexity which it modifies constantly in order to maintain consensus. This consensus depends on a fine network of social relations functioning at all levels. The smallest disturbance damages it far beyond the limits of the action itself. It damages its image, its program, the mechanisms that produce social peace and the unstable equilibrium of politics.

Each tiny action that comes from even a very small number of comrades, is in fact a great act of subversion. It goes far beyond the often microscopic dimensions of what took place, becoming not so much a symbol as a point of reference.

This is the sense in which we have often spoken of insurrection. We can start building our struggle in such a way that conditions of revolt can emerge and

A Perhaps Needless Introduction

It's with great excitement that we are able to present the paper you're holding. Contained herein are a selection of texts from the anarchist magazine *Insurrection*. Published between 1982 and 1989 by Jean Weir of Elephant Editions, *Insurrection* has become a classic of insurrectional theory and critique. In addition to the analysis and reporting on confrontations of the time, the paper advanced a serious proposal for an insurrectionary strategy of organization. Through the lens of a shared projectuality, these texts have a tremendous deal to offer anarchists of action in our rebellion. While the original magazine is absolutely packed with content which continues to be beautiful

and relevant, we chose to reproduce selections that we believe will help to sharpen our analysis. Some language (the revolution, the mass struggle) will feel dated to those living in such hopeless times as these, and yet the proposals found here remain incredibly stimulating and useful for our experiments and our attacks.

More than anything, we intend this project as a letter to our comrades. We've penned and included this new introduction so as to use the most exciting conceptual tools from the magazine to frame and analyze our current situation. We find the the proposals of *Insurrection* to be brimming with life and we wish to share them along with some propos-

als of our own. Whether reading these texts for the first time or reuniting as old friends, we hope that engagement with them will equip you with weapons for your journey into the uncertainty and wild abandon of revolt.

AN INFORMAL PROPOSAL

Writing in this moment in the Bay, it feels quite refreshing to think through the organizational and strategic proposals of *Insurrection*. Through several years of escalating social conflict and an influx of anarchists, the Bay Area has become an important node in the anarchist galaxy. As the center of gravity for so many comrades and projects, it seems a crucial



time and space to consider the proposals of informal organization and insurrectional strategy.

The theoretical pieces included in this reproduction begin with the failures of formal organizations of anarchists. These formal organizations are described as 'structures of synthesis' because their primary aim is to synthesize the entirety of the social struggle into their organization. This organizational perspective leads to a fetish for quantitative growth in membership and the lowest-common-denominator populism which stems from it. Consequently, action and attack become afterthoughts; firstly because the organization wants to displease as few people as possible, and secondly because an organization concerned with its own continuation is intrinsically limited in the risks it can take as an entity. This leaves the formal organization struggling to play catch-up with the more wild and uncontrollable groupings within a given conflict; leaves it caught by surprise and unable to act in an unexpected situation.

This irrelevancy is clearly evidenced by the history of the alphabet soup of the anarchist-communist left. Whether in its platformist or syndicalist variants, as cadres or as 'federations', those caught in the trap of formal organization strive for little more than the certainty of their continuation as structures. At most, these organizations produce a reading group or a yearly congress to feverishly debate the platform for their anemic federations. These ideas have picked up a bit of steam lately with their newest permutation, solidarity networks. Modeled after the flagship Seattle Solidarity Network, these projects remain limited because of the

tactical limitations imposed by formal organizations and because the group's objective is, above all else, to recruit more members.

In the Bay, the structure of synthesis is coded as 'movement building' or 'coalition politics'. This perspective has found a renewal in the course of the Occupy movement, and the perspective's failures are already readily apparent. An obvious example is the attempt by some anarchists, acting as representatives of Occupy Oakland, to form a coalition with the ILWU, the union representing port workers along the west coast. After tens of thousands of people participated in a blockade of the Port of Oakland during the November 2nd general strike, an anarchist among these coalition builders published an 'official'

communique claiming that the blockade was in solidarity with the 'struggle of the ILWU'. By this, the author meant the ILWU's attempts to maintain its jurisdiction over the Port in Longview, WA against a competitor union. And so we can see the re-writing of an action intended to blockade the flows of capital into a desperate attempt to preserve the organizational turf of a capitalist union. In this way the strategy of formal organization opened the floodgates of the recuperation, by subordinating attacks on the economy under the coalition leadership of self-appointed representatives of Occupy Oakland and the ILWU. These efforts ended in tragicomedy when the ILWU signed a deal as an effort to prevent any further wildcat or uncontrollable blockades. The

individual who disposes of even the most modest means can draw up his or her objectives, alone or along with others. It is materially impossible for the State and capital to police the whole of the apparatus of control that exists over the whole social territory. Also, by attacking energy sources, the productive system is also short-circuited: everything stops when the power is cut. Anyone who really wants to contrast the network of control can make their own theoretical and practical contribution. The apparition of the first broken links coincides with the spreading of acts of sabotage over the territory. The anonymous practice of social self-liberation could spread to all fields, breaking the codes of 'prevention put into act by power. The still minoritarian acts of sabotage against the vivisection centres, the death factories, the *enfants terrible* against information technology, will become the new way of relating to the world capitalist State. Its complete destruction will be what interests this new movement, certainly not its expropriation and alternative management.

To know in order to transform

The ecological destroyers have given us back the meaning of revolutionary and social action, showing us the possibility to create the conditions of change directly, preventing the destruction of the plane from going ahead without having recourse to intermediaries, the creators of impotence.

Policing ideas and practising freedom

Until the reasons that push one to attack emerge clearly we must dissolve the State lynching

of its opposers and rigging the new scenarios of social prison on to them. One of the most urgent things to be done is to relaunch a coherent practice of freedom aimed at unhinging the myriad of great and also tiny cathedrals that oppress us. The real and only terrorists are the Statists of every kind and colour, advocates of a situation of emergency that produces repression and militarises the whole territory of social life; mountains of prohibitions that suffocate all proletarianised individuals, prisoners of a permanent state of unliberty sanctioned in the name of a violent peace.

It is necessary to oppose oneself to the policing of ideas and see freedom as the extensive base on which to regulate all relationships, both at individual and social level.

Many are asking themselves what these anonymous individuals want. We do not have this kind of problem, because we think that whoever does not aspire to management or command, but only to extending and radicalising the movement of social self-liberation, has no need for long words and documents. In fact it is probably precisely this that frightens the oppressors, accustomed until now to dealing with an enemy too similar to itself.

The atmosphere primed by the State serves to prevent the circulation of ideas, to condition every debate with reasons of State. Perhaps today we have an insurgent movement ahead of us which, deserting the street spectacle, is going ahead, without leaders, freeing itself not only of repression but also of ideology, and sooner or later it will pour forth like a full river into the streets, drowning the spectacle that wanted to represent it.

All this is frightening, not only to the State managers, but

also to certain revolutionaries in the habit of "controlling" and conceiving things in the usual stale way, not all that different as to the way the enemy sees us.

We recognise individual rebellion as being right, it being the basis of every social road of liberation. Whoever tries to free themselves, organises themselves. Freedom is not dead: only there are those who, defying everyone and everything, are making it take its first steps. We are against domination of any kind, and we are not afraid of all this. Perhaps it is for this reason that, behind the wall of incomprehension we are able to understand the reasons of those who rebel, and give the lie to those who have aligned themselves with the old world.

*by Pierleone Porcu
from Insurrection #6*



lutionaries concerning only the one social structure we do not accept, but must be so in all fields, including the scientific one. The dominating order we want to destroy has roots everywhere, therefore should be attacked everywhere.

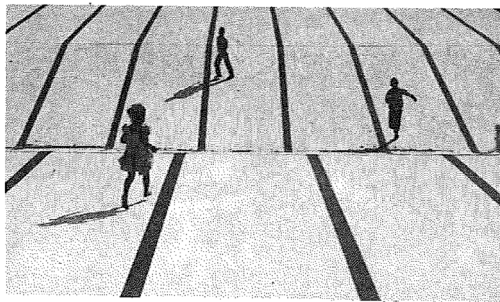
The only attitude to have towards the bosses of science is that of discerning what they are hiding behind all the things that seem innocuous and humane to the profane public.

This is very important as we are used to being aware of only the most noticeable and superficial things around us. The bosses and their servants take great care to show us certain things, just enough to capture our innate curiosity, pushing us to look at things that in reality are of no importance. We thus miss out the most important things that are brought about without our knowledge, to our cost. We should not underestimate the enemy's intelligence. The aim of those who dominate is to use all the scientific instruments that present-day scientific knowledge has to offer, not to alleviate suffering but to continue it within a set of relations that are modified from time to time. Capital and State find themselves obliged to carry out this incessant modification because of the unrelenting struggle that the proletariat carry on against them daily. In fact, notwithstanding the great transferral of wealth that takes place every day in the attack on the exploited, it would not take much for the latter to thwart the bosses' projects.

Once they show their intention to destroy things radically, revolutionaries gain an immeasurable advantage, as the attack on the State and capital becomes one that knows no limits and intends to concede nothing to the enemy.

This is why it is necessary to destroy the entire technological apparatus, beyond the use that anyone may think to make of it in the future. It will prevent the struggle from falling into the trap laid by the radical reformists who, from the partial destruction of the structures of domination have made the starting point for restructuring.

We are therefore against those who support political criticism, even in the field of science, because such a critique always tries to reduce the reasons for radical opposition to a simple question of detail concerning certain operative choices. In this way the supporters



of the political critique are looking for adjustment and compromise with the class enemy who is intelligently disposed to formally modifying its own position, with the aim of reconstructing a new, more rational consensus around the threatening institutions.

No fetish should remain in our minds. If we have had the strength to build ourselves a thousand chains we also have the power to break them. The decision to push ourselves beyond the barriers of prejudice and taboo is up to us.

by Pierleone Porcu
from *Insurrection* #5

Towards a New Projectuality

If we consider reality as irreversible movement, where the possibility of creating other than what is happening depends on our active intervention, we discover that the sense of change within us acquires a new value through the practical attempts we carry out. Analysis and radical critique are instruments in a project aimed at identifying elements that are qualitatively capable of creating discontinuity: action turns out to be the logical extension, the putting into practice, of what we really want to know and verify. There is no contradiction between theory and practice, between form and content, precisely at the moment in which this encounter takes place in reality and not in the paradise of abstraction.

Disintegrating Control

In spite of the fact that the media exalts the imperviousness of the apparatus of social control, such actions as those that took place recently against the Montedison show its vulnerability. They shatter the wall of appearances designed to make the mass feel powerless.

The anonymous attack carried out by these individuals who have discovered the possibility of intervening directly on their own material conditions, completely dissolves the terroristic blackmail created ad hoc by the State.

What the system is afraid of is not these acts of sabotage in themselves, so much as their spreading socially. Every proletarianised

punchline, of course, is that the organizationalists anarchists celebrated this betrayal as a victory.

The failure of the position of structures of synthesis can be further illustrated by looking at the events surrounding May Day 2012 in San Francisco and Oakland. Some anarchists lent their efforts to coalition endeavors such as the Coalition for Dignity and Resistance (an alliance of non-profits, unions, immigrant rights organizations, and identity politicians) or in trying to negotiate a blockade of the golden gate bridge with the union representing bridge workers. The supposed bridge shut down was a total farce and an embarrassment for all involved, while the CDR betrayed the anarchists working with it by obtaining permits for Oscar Grant Plaza, organized an incredibly banal march and instructed its constituents to go home as the permit expired (leaving anarchists and other rebels to face the police alone).

Despite all this, an incredible sequence of rebellion did play out in the two days surrounding May Day: the joyous destruction of Valencia street and the attack on SFPD's Mission Station on April 30th, the re-occupation of the SF Commune building at 888 Turk, and several attacks on businesses and arson of police cars in Oakland. Everything to be celebrated about May Day happened in spite of the formal attempts at organization and illustrate the desirability of an alternative strategy: autonomous and informal organizing.

As defined by g.c. in *Insurrection*, "We see the informal organisation therefore as a number of comrades linked by a common affinity. The wider the range of problems these comrades face as a whole, the greater their af-

finity will be. It follows that the real organisation, the effective capacity to act together, i.e. knowing where to find each other, the study and analysis of problems together, and the passing to action, all takes place in relation to the affinity reached and has nothing to do with programmes, platforms, flags or more or less camouflaged parties. The informal anarchist organisation is therefore a specific organisation which gathers around a common affinity."

Rather than a formal organization with a name and membership, the contributors to *Insurrection* propose a specific network of anarchist comrades organized based on their affinity with and knowledge of one another. Rather than a political platform and membership guidelines, those involved with this informal organization would join together in the shared desire and outlook of insurrection and the possibility of intervention. Such a network could link together publishing projects, social spaces, squats, affinity groups and individual comrades for the purposes of debate, analysis, care, and ultimately action. Rather than an organizational model which vampirizes the energy and resources of its members, the informal organization is a model for enriching and extending the power of each individual comrade through the coordination of attacks and the sharing of resources. This type of network is continuously adapting itself and updating its analysis to the current situation, and yet is invariably oriented towards the perspective and desire for an insurrectionary break with normality.

For the contributors to *Insurrection*, the concept of the affinity group is crucially important to the formation and vitality of of

an informally organized anarchist network. As o.v. writes in issue 4, "The affinity group... finds it has great potential and is immediately addressed towards action, basing itself not on the quantity of its adherents, but on the qualitative strength of a number of individuals working together in a projectuality that they develop together as they go along. From being a specific structure of the anarchist movement and the whole arc of activity that this presents – propaganda, direct action, perhaps producing a paper, working within an informal organisation – it can also look outwards to... intervene more effectively in the social clash".

Within an insurrectionary approach, an affinity group comprised of a handful of people with deep knowledge of one another and a shared perspective can be a very dangerous and uncontrollable formation. When linked together with other such groups, it can coordinate more adventurous or imaginative attacks and interventions. Such relationships begin with an understanding of how each person within the group conceives of their own potential. Sometimes this can emerge through debate and discussion around a specific proposal, whereas other times it comes solely from years of shared struggle and friendship. This understanding is the quality that allows an affinity group to take on more intense projects and attacks. These structures are also interesting because they can be constantly evolving and fluid in their organization. An individual can work with one set of comrades for one project, and another set for a different endeavor. This overlapping and extension of affinity is what creates the qualitative (and perhaps as a consequence: quan-

titative) growth of an informal anarchist network. Because they emphasize a projectuality of attack, these texts offer a way to break out of both the stagnancy of a formal organization, but also the impotency of an inert social scene.

Another interesting structural proposal from Insurrection is the Autonomous Base Nucleus. As defined by o.v., an Autonomous Base Nucleus is a structure organized for the purposes of intervention in the ongoing social struggle. Autonomous Base Nucleii are defined by the authors by three characteristics: a) autonomy from political parties and unions, b) permanent conflictuality (constant struggle toward decided up on aims, rather than sporadic action), c) attack (and the refusal of any mediation, abstraction or deferment that would prevent it). These structures are not conceived of as specifically anarchist, but rather as spaces where an informal anarchist network can meet and interact with other rebels. Anarchists do not participate in these structures to be their leaders (like a leninist cadre), or to act in their place (as an armed struggle group), but rather to fight alongside new comrades. Autonomous Base Nucleii do not offer the political program of platform of a formal organization, with lofty utopian schemes to abolish capitalism and the state, but rather “the objective... is to fight and attack this State and this Capital in their smaller and more attainable structures, having recourse to an insurrectional method.” In collaborating with the base nucleii on these attacks, informally organized anarchists have the most practical and theoretical help to offer: knowledge of the enemy, practical skills, defense against

recuperation and repression. We’ll argue that the lens of an informal proposal offers a way to explore the successes and failures when analyzing the struggles of the last year. The range of activities that are understood to constitute the ‘occupy movement’ in the bay area, are in fact an infinite amount of relationships and events which occurred alongside one another. There are countless interpretations and theories of these events, but the framework of informal organization is perhaps the most useful for our analysis. While the struggles in the bay area have played out in extremely complex and often contradictory ways, a survey of these contradictions has a lot to offer moving forward.

If we use Occupy Oakland as an example, we can see both formal and informal organizational forms existing alongside and in conflict with one another. Undoubtedly, the actual camp at Oscar Grant Plaza, affectionately known as the Oakland Commune, is a beautiful example of an Autonomous Base Nucleus in which an informal anarchist network participated. The camp offered a space for rebels, anarchist otherwise, to meet one another, to share in collective projects, to work together to meet their needs and to constantly offer and critique various proposals. It was in this environment that anarchists were both able to carry out successful attacks and interventions, but also to find new comrades (not as recruits, but as co-conspirators). Almost all of the most significant actions in the camp were not endorsed or organized by any formal structure, but were rather the autonomous initiative of affinity groups. Examples include the decision to force the police out

of the plaza, establishing a police free zone, various anti-capitalist and queer demonstrations, attacks on police vehicles and recruitment offices, expropriation of materials and supplies, and the riotous defense against and response to the eviction of the camp.

The formalization of Occupy Oakland is most obviously evidenced by the General Assembly and various Committees (finance, media, etc). As supposed Political representation of the camp, these forums became home to the most concerted efforts to establish Occupy Oakland as a formal organization. While there were certainly competing conceptions of the role of the GA, it was dominantly attended by people who wanted it to be the governing body of the movement. This resulted in countless debates and proposals aimed at controlling tactics and propaganda, as well as a stifling tendency for people to believe they needed the GA’s approval before going forward with an initiative. At times anarchists engaged with this political spectacle, vying for control of the organization or attempting to defeat undesirable proposals. This is an unfortunate validation of the process itself. Meanwhile, more interesting engagement with the GA are those which defy its hegemony and direct democratic ideology. Examples of this would be when Jean Quan was chased off the stage or when a letter from city hall was burnt as refusal to compromise with the state. Though without a doubt, the best strategy for anarchists is to act without reference or regard for such formal structures.

The General Assembly of Occupy Oakland was most problematic when it continued to exist after the destruction of the en-

A perspective based on the need to completely destroy technology is confusing to many comrades, and a considerable number of them refuse to accept it. They find it more reasonable and realistic to consider only the problem of destroying so-called hard technology (all kinds of nuclear armaments, asbestos, etc). They consider soft technology (electronics, information technology, etc) socially useful and think they will be able to make good use of it in the future, as though the latter could be detached from the logic of domination that produced and developed it.

In this way comrades are demonstrating an “enlightened” positivist attitude to science. They claim the instruments produced by technological and scientific knowledge are neutral, and only criticise the bad social use that Power puts them to. We think, on the contrary, that the instruments created by Power cannot fail to obey the logic that created them. They are totally functional to its aims no matter who uses them and in spite of any apparent advantages they might bring to society.

We are against those who are trying to justify things, saying that there is some good at the base of everything, and it deserves to be preserved. Moreover, we think it is useful to place an element of doubt into the swamp of certainties and commonplaces that abound.

Those who maintain there is an absolute need for existing technology are the bosses, governors and their multitude of servants. They all have good reason for doing so, no doubt. Comrades, on the other hand, should have just as good reasons for always being suspicious of such attitudes. Things become tragic when we see an identity of view-

point between those in power and those struggling against it.

All the base technology that is used in every thread of social life today comes from military research. Its civil use obeys this logic far more than we immediately understand. Until now all we have succeeded in demonstrating has been the precise, scientific, authoritarian project at organizational level. It is important to understand the unconscious mechanisms that operate at mass level, allowing the power structure to overcome people's initial rejection and gain their full support. Only a few people contest cybernetic command. The general tendency is a feeling of inevitability. It is coming to be considered indispensable, therefore socially useful. Anyone who points out the need for the total destruction of the technological apparatus produced by capital is passed off as an irresponsible madman who wants to take civilization back to the Stone Age.

This does not have to be the case, if one thinks about it. Present day technology is the practical result of a form of knowledge that matured during capital's industrial development. It is always motivated by those who are in power. To want to safeguard some technologies over others is to put an obstacle in the way of the total destruction of the whole productive order of dominion. It also means to put a limit on revolutionary action and maintain an ambiguous social relationship with such structures. So those who, although they say they are revolutionary, support the need to safeguard part of capital's productive technology, do not see that in doing so they are lending a hand to the declared reformists. The latter, more coherently, support a continual modification of all the organisms of power in such

a way that the system is always functional and updated to meet the new needs of domination and social change. Our radical project to destroy technology must be within the revolutionary process, and we should put no limits on the course of this or circumscribe it to within our presently limited knowledge.

The problem of a contemporary social revolution cannot be resolved with recourse to the knowledge that has been acquired until now and which is limited by the interests of Power. We are against those who see present day knowledge as something that has reached its conclusion. As for how things stand now: the so-called scientists who are studying artificial intelligence or the application of present-day technology in other fields, are in fact scientific workers. They are highly specialised in one sector (the scientific one) but most of them are unaware of what is happening in other fields of research, not to mention the rest of society which they often neglect completely in their aseptic laboratories.

The way these scientific workers think greatly resembles the machines they project. They apply binary logic and are basically incapable of thinking beyond this. There is no creative reasoning, they cannot bring any development of thought into the field of knowledge. It is only our ignorance that makes us consider them great brains. This is an important factor that should be gone into further. Scientists are in fact the new intermediate class produced by the technological revolution.

The greatest discoveries have always been made when the principle of authority was absent or vacillating at all levels -as happened at the beginning of the century- and this also applies to the field of science. We cannot be revo-

Against Technology

A revolutionary project must comprehend the destruction of all the structures that have been build by capita. A perspective that aims to save the technological aspect of present day capitalism, believing it can be put to good social use, would mean to conserve a system of knowledge that has come from military research. Revolution cannot come about only in the parts of social reality we do not like. It also means opening up new spheres of human knowledge.



campment by the police. Without the propulsive, dynamic autonomous nucleus that it claimed to represent, the GA became purely a formal political organization. Despite an often ferocious struggle over space consistently occurring at Oscar Grant Plaza, the GA now primarily concerned itself with maintaining itself as an organization. This time was marked by explosive conflicts over a proposal to change the name of the organization, snitch-jacketing, the censoring of an entire committee by the GA, drama about the use of the organization's funds, bickering over quorum, recruitment drives, etc. Without any connection to a concrete struggle, it reached the dead end of formal organizing. While these tendencies had existed from the beginning, the later formalization of Occupy Oakland perfectly illustrates the misery and

limitations of formal organization.

Ascertaining the right moment to walk away from an informal organization turned stale or formal is challenging. Our hearts and minds can be fully entrenched in the stated goals of a project and we forget to step back and examine its efficacy. If our current actions don't further a merging of intermediate struggles with that of anarchist techniques and principles, it is okay to look elsewhere. One of our greatest strengths is our fluidity. This is not to say we should be fleeting or arbitrary in our involvements. Difficult times arise in any project. We should not leave because things get tricky or less glamorous, but when our actions are actively being co-opted and limited by organizational bureaucracy, or when the droning on of competing representatives silence actual communication, we can find our place elsewhere. Our ultimate goals should always be at the forefront of our minds.

Actively cultivating affinities is of utmost importance. We should foster a practice that weaves in and out of different groupings. Specific projects can coincide but our affinities exist beyond them. Our projectuality can tie us together in one moment and let us go elsewhere and re-form in another with no hard feelings. We can see exciting examples of such autonomous base nuclei being formed in spite of the formal and bureaucratic limitations of the general assembly. The strike assembly to coordinate the November 2nd general strike proved to be an impressive success. Alongside the destructive efforts of informally organized anarchists, the day saw widespread attacks, the trashing of the financial district, the first building occupation of the nascent



Occupy Movement, and a 24 hour blockade of the port of oakland. This day unquestionably demonstrates the potential chaos which can emerge when an informally organized anarchists participate in struggle with an autonomous base nucleus. Another example would be the failed efforts by queers and feminists to occupy a building (these efforts were later concretized into Oakland Occupy Patriarchy, a formal organization with all the trappings). The Move-in Assembly, which planned the attempted building occupation on January 28th, can also be seen in this light. Though a tactical failure, it succeeded in carrying out an experimental proposal in building occupations and in inspiring two thousand comrades to attempt to illegally and autonomously take a space in Oakland. The most beautiful moments of the Occupy Movement in Oakland always took place as the result of autonomous initiatives organized for permanent conflictuality and attack, and thus show the desirability of the logic of insurrection.

The informal, insurrectional outlook offers us countless projects and spaces in which to intervene. The outlook is based on a willingness to meet others in day-to-day struggle (intermediate struggles, as the authors of Insurrection would call them) and explore whether those situations can grow in an insurrectionary direction. Creative comrades could imagine a wide range of autonomous base nuclei to participate in: assemblies to defend against squat evictions and foreclosures, conspiracies of workers against work, a network of fare evaders, leagues against gentrification and development, etc. Many interesting autonomous efforts have been

made in the struggle against gendered violence. Coming out of the demise of Occupy Patriarchy as a formal organization, there have been initiatives of queers and feminists to autonomously distribute self-defense implements, to train together, and to organize a network of crews to combat heteronormative and patriarchal enemies (known as the Feminist Vigilante March). An extension and interweaving of these informal initiatives could demonstrate the viability of the informal proposal in the struggle against gender.

In the past years, many comrades have taken up the strategic proposal of informal organization. One interpretation of the proposal can be seen in the breathtaking series of attacks by anarchists who claim their affinity and solidarity with the Informal Anarchist Federation (FAI). These comrades have carried out a wide array of actions on several continents including sabotage, arson, explosive and armed attacks. Those responding to the FAI proposal organize informally into affinity groups and cells, carry out their attacks and then communicate the theoretical and strategic decisions behind them to other comrades through open communiques dispersed through an international network of counter-information sites. They use this attack-as-communication to make proposals to and debate with comrades who they will perhaps never have the pleasure of meeting face to face. These attacks often happen alongside wider explosions of social conflict, but also continue the struggle when others are unwilling to do so.

This strategy is a creative response to the situations of those who are geographically isolat-

ed from other comrades or who don't have the desire or capacity to participate in an autonomous base nucleus. The context in the Bay, however, is quite different and offers us an almost unlimited amount of models to experiment with. With efforts at coordination, we can appear by the hundreds, without notice, and lay waste to unsuspecting bourgeois neighborhoods or expropriate massive quantities of food and other commodities. Or, when the state has focused its forces in one part of our geography, we can carry out a diffusion of attacks in unexpected places. When our occupied social centers are facing eviction, we can organize for their defense, but more importantly strike fear into those who would orchestrate their eviction. When the glimmering facade of capital makes itself seem impenetrable, we can literally and figuratively shatter its fantasy.

Despite the importance and romance of large demonstrations, there is still utility in covert actions against infrastructure carried out by small groups of people. For example, in April of 2009, someone or a group of people cut four fiber optic cables in San Jose. The sabotage essentially froze operations in parts of the three counties at stores, banks and police and fire departments that rely on 911 calls, computerized medical records, ATMs and credit and debit cards. Actions like these shatter the illusion that governmental technology is infallible and without points of attack. They beg replication. In June of this year a fire broke out at the West Oakland BART station halting the commute between San Francisco and Oakland. This demonstrates that choke points are weaknesses to exploit. For another example, the Bay is now

the home of Facebook, Twitter, Google, and Apple as well as their tens of thousands of employees. Struggles against the gentrification of neighborhoods could widen to also be about targeting the architects of capitalist infrastructure who are moving in to those neighborhoods. Infrastructural attacks become more relevant from an insurrectionary perspective when they coincide with people's struggles to improve their daily lives. Here again the idea of affinity groups and the informal organization between them is of use.

The limits of an informal approach remain unknown. It is this relationship to the unknown which, more than anything, differentiates the insurrectionary anarchist from her formalist counterparts. The platformist or syndicalist is motivated by a fear of the unknown, and thus requires the consistency and stability of a formal organization. The membership roster, dues, consensus process and platforms may offer a sense of safety, but the insurrectional beasts find no nourishment in such things. The insurrectionary perspective is premised on the fact that nothing is pre-determined. The insurrectionary anarchist does not know in advance the outcome of her attacks, and she greets this unknown like a forbidden lover. This is why we attack: because the 'right time' is always defined in hindsight, because we refuse to wait and the unknown calls to us. To guide us through this unknown, we have only the consistency of our shared project and a deep knowledge of how our friends and comrades relate to it.

by h.g. and l.b., Winter 2012

tain kinds of organisation, and indicate possible alternatives.

One of these is known as "affinity groups".

The term requires an explanation. Affinity is often confused with sentiment. Although not distinctly separate, the two terms should not be considered synonyms. There could be comrades with whom we consider we have an affinity, but whom we do not find sympathetic and vice versa.

Basically, to have an affinity with a comrade means to know them, to have deepened one's knowledge of them. As that knowledge grows, the affinity can increase to the point of making



an action together possible; but it can also diminish to the point of making it practically impossible.

Knowledge of another is an infinite process which can stop at any level according to the circumstances and objectives one wants to reach together. One could therefore have an affinity for doing some things and not others. It becomes obvious that when one

speaks of knowledge that does not mean it is necessary to discuss one's personal problems, although these can become important when they interfere with the process of deepening knowledge of one another.

In this sense having knowledge of the other does not necessarily mean having an intimate relationship. What it is necessary to know is how the comrade thinks concerning the social problems which the class struggle confronts him with, how he thinks he can intervene, what methods he thinks should be used in given situations, etc.

The first step in the deepening of knowledge between comrades is discussion. It is preferable to have a clarifying premise, such as something written, so that various problems can be gone into well.

Once the essentials are clarified the affinity group or groups are practically formed. The deepening of knowledge between comrades continues in relation to their action as a group and the latter's encounter with reality as a whole. While this process is taking place their knowledge often widens and strong bonds between comrades often emerge. This however is a consequence of the affinity, not its primal aim.

It often happens that comrades go about things the other way round. Beginning some kind of activity and only proceeding to the necessary clarification later, without ever having assessed the level of affinity required to do anything together. Things are left to chance, as though some kind of clarity were automatically to emerge from the group simply by its formation. Of course this does not happen: the group either stagnates because there is no clear road for it to take, or it fol-

lows the tendency of the comrade or comrades who have the clearest ideas as to what they want to do while others allow themselves to be pulled along, often with little enthusiasm or real engagement.

The affinity group, on the other hand find sit has great potential and is immediately addressed towards action, basing itself not on the quantity of its adherents, but on the qualitative strength of a number of individuals working together in a projectuality that they develop together as they go along. From being a specific structure of the anarchist movement and the whole arc of activity that this presents – pro-



paganda, direct action, perhaps producing a paper, working within an informal organisation – it can also look outwards to forming a base nucleus or some other mass structure and thus intervene more effectively in the social clash.

by o.v.
from *Insurrection* #4

Contrary to what is often believed, affinity between comrades does not depend on sympathy or sentiment. To have affinity means to have knowledge of the other, to know how they think on social issues and how they think they can intervene in the social clash. This deepening of knowledge between comrades is an aspect that is often neglected, impeding effective action.

The Affinity Group



One of the most difficult problems anarchists have had to face throughout their history is what form of organisation to adopt in the struggle.

At the two ends of the spectrum we find on the one hand the individualists who refuse any kind of stable relationship; on the other those who support a permanent organisation which acts on a programme established at the moment of its constitution.

Both of the forms sketched out here have characteristics that are criticisable from an insurrectional point of view.

In fact, when individualists single out and strike the class enemy they are sometimes far ahead of the most combative of the class components of the time, and their action is not understood. On the contrary, those who support the need for a permanent organisation often wait until there is already a

considerable number of exploited indicating how and when to strike the class enemy. The former carry out actions that turn out to be too far ahead of the level of the struggle, the latter too far behind.

One of the reasons for this deficiency is in our opinion lack of perspective.

Clearly no one has a sure recipe that contains no defects: we can however point out the limitations we see in cer-

Why Insurrection

Our task as anarchists, our main preoccupation and greatest desire, is that of seeing the social revolution realized: terrible upheaval of men and institutions which finally succeeds in putting an end to exploitation and establishing the reign of justice.

For we anarchists the revolution is our guide, our constant point of reference, no matter what we are doing or what problem we are concerned with. The anarchy we want will not be possible without the painful revolutionary break. If we want to avoid turning this into simply a dream we must struggle to destroy the State and exploiters through the revolution.

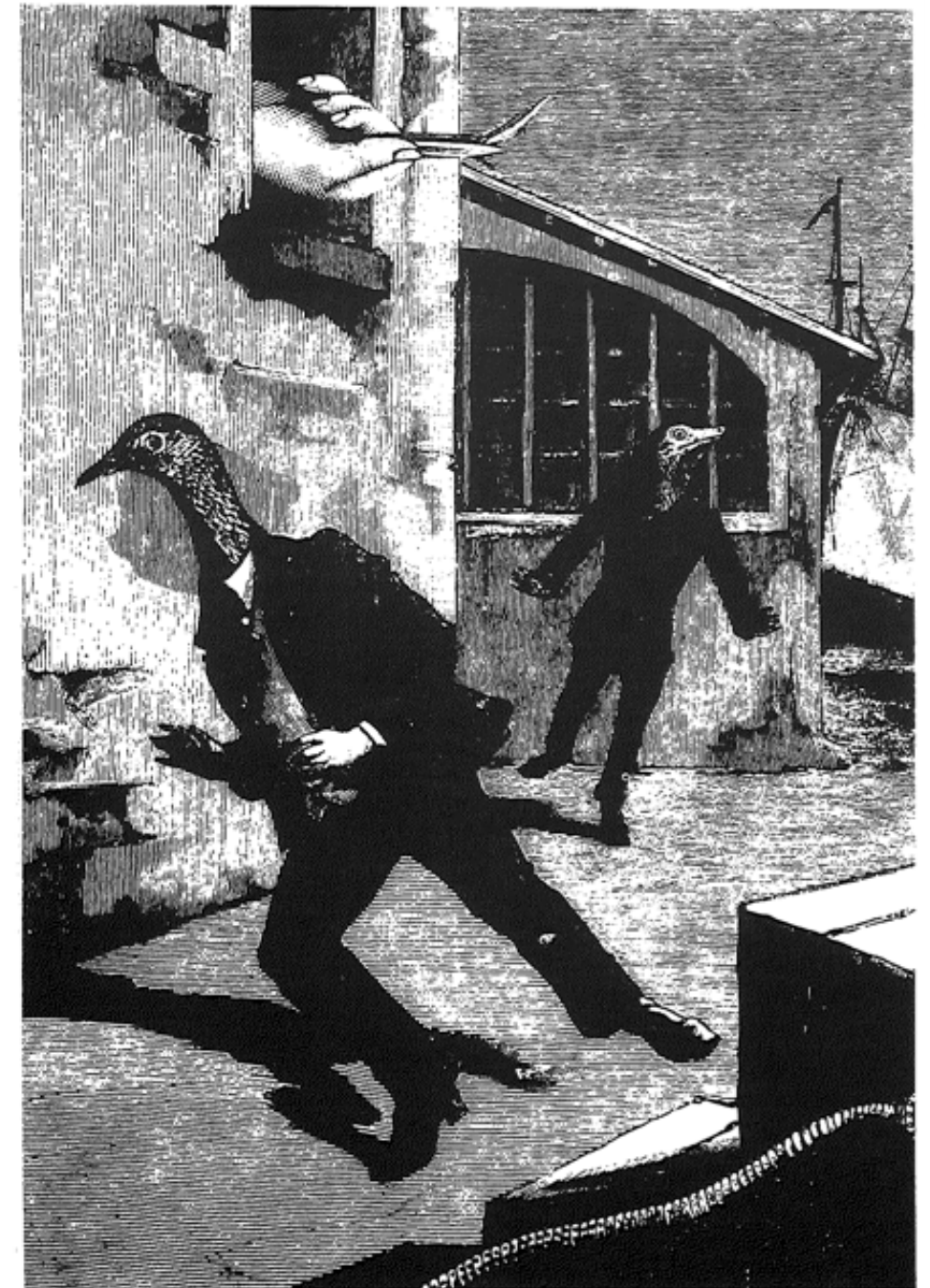
But the revolution is not a myth simply to be used as a point of reference. Precisely because it is a concrete event, it must be built daily through more modest attempts which do not have all the liberating characteristics of the social revolution in the true sense. These more modest attempts are insurrections. In them the uprising of the most exploited of the masses and the most politically sensitized minority, opens the way to the possible involvement of increasingly wider strata of exploited in a flux of rebellion which could lead to the revolution but could also end up in the establishment of a new power or a bloody confirmation of the old one. In the case of the latter, although the insurrection begins as a liberating uprising it concludes bitterly with the re-establishment of State and private dominion. That is the natural way of things. Insurrection is the indispensable element of the revolution whiteout which, without a long

and painful series of which, there will be no revolution and power will reign undisturbed in the fullness of its might. We are not to be discouraged. once again, obtusely, we are preparing and struggling for the insurrection which will come about, a small part of the great future mosaic of the revolution.

Certainly, capitalism contains deep contradictions which push it towards processes of ad-

justment and evolution aimed at avoiding the periodic crises which afflict it; but we cannot cradle ourselves in waiting for these crises. When they happen they will be welcomed if they respond to the requirements for accelerating the elements of the insurrectional process. In the meantime, for our part, we are preparing ourselves and the exploited masses for insurrection.

In this sense we consider the time is always ripe for the next insurrection. Better a failed insurrection than a hundred vacillations which cause the failure of



a hundred occasions from which it might have been possible for the final revolution to break out. We are therefore against those who say that the recent defeat of the revolutionary movement should make us reflect and conclude that we should be more prudent. We consider that the time for insurrection has come precisely because it is always time to fight, whereas procrastinating is useful only to capital.

To prepare for insurrection means to prepare the subjective conditions (personal and material) which consent a specific anarchist minority to create the indispensable circumstances for the development of the insurrectional process. Although insurrection is a mass phenomenon, and would risk aborting immediately if it were not, its beginning is always the result of the action of a decided minority, a handful of brave ones capable of attacking the nerve centers of the partial objective to be reached.

We must be very clear on this point. The tasks of the anarchist struggle against power can be extremely varied, but all- in our opinion- must be coherently directed towards preparing the insurrection. Some comrades may want to dedicate themselves to theoretical clarification, economic analyses, philosophy or historical research but all this must be immediately functional to the preparation of that minority capable of realizing the insurrection, acting in such a way that the masses participate as widely as possible or at least that they do not hinder it. Some comrades might consider the insurrection realizable in the near future (not put off to infinity), others that it can be realized right away: this can determine a division of tasks, in the sense

that the former will be inclined to interest themselves more in the problems of revolutionary culture, but their final aim must be the same. Otherwise the rebel forces, who need precisely clarity to organize action and not chatter to put it off, would be lulled to sleep.

The minority's task of preparation is therefore twofold: on the one hand that of being sensitized to problems at the level of the class struggle which are not only military and political but principally of a social and economic nature. Following that, concrete, specific and detailed preparation with the insurrection in view.

Once again, we insist: the preparation of the wide masses can in no way be one of the preconditions of the revolution. If we were to wait for all the masses to be prepared for this grandiose task we would never do anything. We are convinced that the preparation of the great masses will more than anything be a consequence of the

revolution, and perhaps not the most immediate one. On the contrary, the revolutionary anarchist minority must be prepared for the historical task which awaits them.

Let us also eliminate the argument of "purity". We do not only participate in insurrections led by anarchist but also in all the other insurrections which have the characteristics of the people in revolt, even if for some reason it is our future enemies, the stalinists, who are leading them. In that case we should try to conquer a better place for ourselves in the struggle itself, during the events, defending as far as possible our program of total liberation which we shall counterpose to the banally economic ones of the authoritarians. It will be the insurrection itself to verify the rest.

The insurrection is a task to be accomplished right away. But with concrete means? We have seen that the specific minority must take charge of the initial



to the circumstances and the objectives one is trying to reach.

The basic project of an informal anarchist organisation has, in our opinion, the objective of intervening in struggles in an insurrectional logic. This organisation does not give one area privilege over another, does not have a stable centrality. It singles out an objective which at a given moment presents a particularly acute area of social conflict and works in a perspective of insurrection.

The debate is open on this point. Criticisms that insurrection is not a valid proposal today, sometimes confuse insurrection with the old "propaganda by the deed". On the contrary we think that the insurrectional project gives itself the aim of attacking power in each one of its manifestations by the stimulation of the anarchist informal organisation, but always with mass participation, showing in deed the possibility and validity of such attacks.

In that way it is possible to be present in the class struggle and heighten the level of it.

We see the informal organisation therefore as a number of comrades linked by a common affinity. The wider the range

of problems these comrades face as a whole, the greater their affinity will be. It follows that the real organisation, the effective capacity to act together, i.e. knowing where to find each other, the study and analysis of problems together, and the passing to action, all takes place in relation to the affinity reached and has nothing to do with programmes, platforms, flags or more or less camouflaged parties. The informal anarchist organisation is therefore a specific organisation which gathers around a common affinity.



Undoubtedly it will tend towards a growth in numbers, but this is not the main aim of activity. As the organism born in this way develops it will give itself common means of intervention. First of all an instrument of debate necessary for analytical examination, such as a paper or review, capable of supplying indications on a wide range of problems and of becoming a point of reference for continually verifying affinity or divergence of opinion between groups and individual comrades.

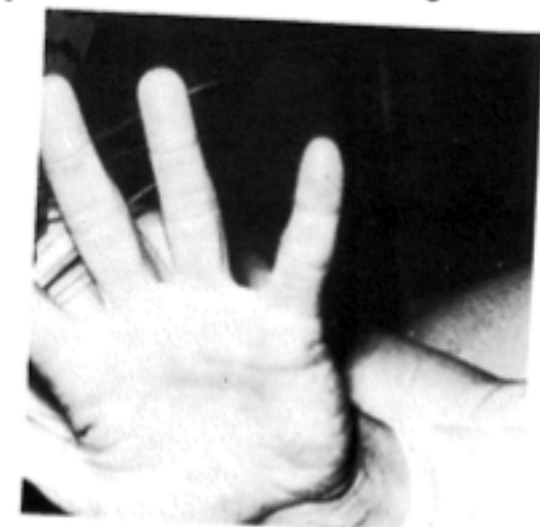
Secondly these specific groups can also form base structures involving exploited in specific areas of the struggle, not as an element of growth in the spe-

cific movement. In this optic it becomes dispersive to give life to a permanent structure to confront specific problems. The base structures have a single objective. When this objective has been reached, or the attempt fails, the structure either widens into a situation of generalised insurrection, or dismantles as the case may be.

It should be stressed here that although the element holding the informal organisation together is undoubtedly affinity, its propulsive element is always action. If it limits itself to the first alone, all relationships will become arid in the bizantine perfectionism of whoever has nothing better to do than try to hide one's will to do nothing.

The problems that have been touched on here deserve more going into and we invite all comrades to take part in a discussion of them.

by g.c.
from *Insurrection* #4



The Informal Organisation

Anarchist groups and individuals are often spread over the territory with little contact between them and few ideas on methods and possibilities of intervention in social reality.

There is a certain presence in some areas, especially of a syndicalist nature. In others there is action against nuclear installations. The widest area of intervention is that of counter-information and propaganda.

An anarchist movement that is really active and incisive needs two main factors: an agile and effective instrument and an objective that is sufficiently clear in perspective.

We think the informal organisation and insurrection are the concrete possibilities that present themselves at the present time.

It has already been said that the organisation of synthesis, based on the congress and politi-



The informal anarchist organisation has nothing to do with programmes, platforms or flags but is based on a common affinity between comrades whose objective is to intervene in struggles in an insurrectional direction. In that way it is possible to be present in and heighten the class struggle.



cal programme, is a structure that because of its internal characteristics and the mechanisms that support it, cannot be a valid instrument for comrades wanting to move in an insurrectional perspective. Political programmes and platforms are organisational models which, from an insurrectional point of view, have seen their day.

One thing that is indispensable in the informal anarchist organisation is reciprocal knowledge between members. This and affinity among comrades is what characterises the informal form of organisation.

We have all reached anarchist positions through time, maturing certain convictions concerning social problems. We also have some idea of how to intervene in social reality and the relative strategic choices to be made. Well, let us go into these problems, ascertain whether we agree on certain points,

show each other how we think.

Certainly, it is not easy. It is nevertheless indispensable to confront one another. Without this no kind of informal structure or informal relationship is possible.

The informal proposal does not mean one has to agree on every single problem that arises. Affinity does not possess a uniform level of intensity. Knowledge of another is an infinite process that reaches greater or lesser depth according



attack, surprising power and determining a situation of confusion which could put the forces of repression into difficulty and make the exploited masses reflect upon whether to intervene or not. But what do we mean by specific minority? Perhaps the revolutionary movement in the wide sense? These questions require a clear answer.

Let us begin with the widest hypothesis. From the point of view we are interested in, the revolutionary movement as a whole cannot be soldiered a specific minority capable of realizing the insurrection together. It presents a whole series of contradictions which in turn mirror the contradictions of the society in which we are living. To the ideological model corresponds organizational groupings which end up putting theoretical prejudice before the immediate interests of liberation. Moreover, the analytical formulae of a large part of the revolutionary movement are of an authoritarian character, therefore envisage the conquest of the State and not its immediate destruction. They foresee its claimed use in an anti-bourgeois sense and not its disappearance. This part of the revolutionary movement therefore clearly have no interest in preparing for insurrection right away as they delude themselves that time is on their side, crumbling away the supporting base of capitalism and preparing the revolutionary situation without the dangerous anti-chamber of the insurrection. We would thus find this section of the revolutionary movement to take an anti-insurrectional position, going as far as (as we have seen in many cases recently) attacking and denouncing the anarchist comrades who support the opposite thesis. We conclude at

this point that it is not possible to widen the concept of the specific minority. Hypothetically, when the stalinists unleash their insurrectional process, either because they are convinced that the revolutionary conditions are ripe or because they are drawn by the solicitations of the base who are not interested in ideological refinements, then our task will be that of participating in the insurrection with all our forces, to fight in the concrete field of struggle and find there the necessary space for our ideas. In the case of the contrary where it is we who are the initiators and proposers of the insurrection, we might quite possibly find this part of the revolutionary movement to be in an opposite position or, at best, in the position of waiting.

Let us now see if the anarchist movement as a whole can be considered a specific minority capable of eventually realizing insurrection. The conclusion is negative yet again. The contradictions within the movement are immense and mainly due to the fears and restraints which a restricted group of pinchbecks have carefully sown within it. The movement today resembles an old coat covered in patches which only with a great deal of goodwill remembers its past splendours. The flight towards hypothetical forms of elitist interventions such as the attempt to impose pre-constituted analyses or catechisms ready for use, or when it claimed to supply the whole movement with the final analysis to be put into practice right away, has proved a failure. The same flight backwards towards anarcho-syndicalism which could not fail to leave both the exploited as a whole and the revolutionary comrades disappointed. And then the wider and ascertained politics

of the ostrich, of hiding behind the fear of provocation in order to do nothing, only to intervene after the event, always with the scales at hand to weigh, judge and condemn those few comrades who were doing anything at all, even if circumscribed and limited. From this part of the movement there remains but the name, the symbol, a few old comrades, a few young comrades old before their time, a few optimists who never lose hope, parchment mummies in their little shop. The great number of active comrades who form the revolutionary part of the anarchist movement and who are ready to begin the struggle must not be discouraged by Cassandras and birds of ill omen. Action is the measure for distinguishing beyond symbols and declarations of principle.

It is precisely the comrades who are available for action who make up the specific minority. They will be the ones to prepare and realize the insurrection in the ways and forms which the experience of the revolutionary struggle as a whole has transmitted to us, and taking into consideration the recent modifications of the State and the bosses. The method cannot fail to take account of these minimal organizational forms of the base which will have to solve the various problems which will arise during the insurrectional preparation. In these organizational forms the responsibility for the work to be done must obviously fall on the revolutionary anarchist comrades and cannot be left to goodwill or improvisation. At this stage the very rules of survival impose the indispensable conditions of security and caution. The urgency of action puts an end to pointless chatter.

There is more to be said of the actions carried out in mini-

mal structures of intervention by the specific minority as just identified. These actions cannot be considered purely from the point of view of "propaganda by the deed". Their aim, in fact, is not that of giving an example or of influencing a wide range of sympathizers. Certainly this empirical aspect also exists, bearing in mind that the maximum alliance which will guarantee the success of future plans is that of the masses in revolt, but this aspect is easily recuperated by the mechanism of capitalist information which transform it into goods retailing it through the newspapers, television, cinema, books, etc. The truth is that the specific minority themselves, through realizing action, have the possibility of making something clear to others if they understand something themselves in the moment of the action itself. The action therefore means education through action, and education of oneself and others. If we consider that we know everything and entrust exclusively in our own knowledge in the moment of action, we place into the hands of capitalism a repetitive mechanism which inserts itself perfectly within the generalized mechanism of capitalist production which is, above all else, repetition to infinity.

The action of the specific minority must therefore consist not of an interruption of learning at one's own cost as to what the reality of the struggle is, but a gradual and complete transformation of one's own learning in showing others how one learns to understand the reality of the struggle. If the action of the specific minority gives an example of anything it gives the example of how one learns to single out and strike the enemy, and not how one

teaches. The right action at the right time becomes the substance of the individual and specific attack and symbol of all the possible future attacks, and this unfurling of a moment which has not yet reached maturity is the maximum level of intervention which the minority reaches operating in the reality of the struggle. The class struggle characterizes the conflict in act and is the element which allows the concrete action of the specific minority. Within it action transforms itself continually from attempt to understand to attempt to teach. Canceling the first moment everything drowns in repetition, canceling the second, everything drowns in indecision.

In the continual flux of the class struggle one finds everything, teachers and pupils. In it everything finds its right place within the relationships of strength. Whoever has not learned from their own mistakes can demonstrate nothing to others, and an eminent way of not learning is precisely by ceasing to learn, of thinking that the time has come to teach and that is all. Through the filter of the class struggle the memory of the revolution unfolds slowly becoming something which can be handed down. In action this memory is handed down concretely and becomes perceptible to others at the moment in which it is reflection and criticism for the person who carries out the action himself.

Each individual minimal structure of intervention which acts within the specific minority runs the risk of placing itself in dialogue with the revolutionary movement as a whole and, sometimes with the whole mass of the exploited, if the sense of one's action is not imposed correctly. Taking ourselves as an isolated part

in the face of so many references we illude ourselves that the whole movement and the exploited, their sort and the sort of the revolution, depends on us; we expect who knows what from what we are doing' we remain frustrated by the superficiality of the response and the general incomprehension. The revolutionary struggle is like a wavy sea against which to struggle would be vain folly, it is necessary to adapt ourselves to the direction of the waves, to swim sometimes strongly and sometimes lightly, to gather the impetus of life which the sea hides within it to reach the desired goal. In this difficult art of swimming is hidden the political meaning of minority action. The latter puts emphasis on its class significance, exploding suddenly as a fruit of the revolutionary memory and as indication for the struggle now in act.

We think therefore that the action of these minimal structures are yet again indispensable- if correctly chosen- for the preparation of that insurrectional process which we consider the immediate task of all anarchists and which cannot be postponed. Far from being a contrast between the two things- as some have tried to point out to us- we consider that they are complementary and indissociable. The basic work of the minimal structure of intervention sums itself up in the whole work, of an organizational and general nature, of the specific minority as a whole. The insurrection will be, yet again, the acid test of what has been done, cause and effect at the same time. of that modifying of relationships of strength which consent the opening of the doors of revolution.

from Insurrection #0

chist structure and the mass structure of autonomous base nuclei is clarified and put into effect.

The main aim of the nucleus is not to abolish the State or capital which are practically unattackable so long as they remain a general concept. The objective of the nucleus is to attack this State and this Capital in their smaller and more attainable structures, having recourse to an insurrectional method.

The autonomous base groups are mass structures and constitute the point of encounter between the informal anarchist organisation and social struggles.

The organisation within the nucleus distinguishes itself by the following characteristics: a) autonomy from any political, trade union or syndical force; b) permanent conflictuality (a constant and effective struggle towards the aims that are decided upon, not sporadic occasional interventions); c) attack (the refusal of compromise, mediation or accommodation that questions the attack on the chosen objective).

As far as aims are concerned, these are decided upon and realised through attacks upon the repressive, military and productive structures, etc. The importance of permanent conflictuality and attack is fundamental.

These attacks are organised by the nuclei in collaboration with specific anarchist structures which provide practical and theoretical support, developing the search for the means required for the action, pointing out the structures and the individuals responsible for repression, and offering a minimum of defence against attempts at political or ideological recuperation by power or against repression pure and simple.



At first sight the relationship between specific anarchist organisation and autonomous base nucleus might seem contradictory. The specific structure follows an insurrectional perspective, while the base nuclei seem to be in quite another dimension, that of intermediate struggle. But this struggle only remains such at the beginning. If the analysis on which the project is based coincides with the interests of the exploited in the situation in which they find themselves, then an insurrectional outcome to the struggle is possible. Of course this outcome is not certain. That cannot be guaranteed by anyone.

This method has been accused of being incomplete and of not taking into account the fact that an attack against one or more structures always ends up

increasing repression. Comrades can reflect on these accusations. We think it is never possible to see the outcome of a struggle in advance. Even a limited struggle can have the most unexpected consequences. And in any case, the passage from the various insurrections – limited and circumscribed – to revolution can never be guaranteed in advance by any procedure. We go forward by trial and error, and say to whoever has a better method – carry on.

by o.v.

from Insurrection #4



ing criticisms such as this are often dictated by fear and prejudice. The main fear is that of the unknown which pushes us towards organisational schema and formalism among comrades. This safeguards us from the search hinged on the risk of finding ourselves involved in unknown experiences. This is quite obvious when we see the great need some comrades have for a formal organisation that obeys the requirements of constancy, stability, and work that is programmed in advance.

In reality these elements serve us in our need for certainty and not for revolutionary necessity.

On the contrary we think that the informal organisation can supply valid starting points for getting out of this uncertainty.

This different type of organisation seems to us to be capable of developing – contrary to an organisation of synthesis – more concrete and productive relationships as they are based on affinity and reciprocal knowledge. Moreover, the moment where it reaches its true potential is when it participates in concrete situations of struggle, not when drawing up theoretical or practical platforms, statutes or associative rules.

An organisation structured informally is not built on the basis of a programme fixed in a congress. The project is realised by the comrades themselves in the course of the struggle and during the development of the struggle itself. This organisation has no privileged instrument of theoretical and practical elaboration, nor does it have problems of synthesis. Its basic project is that of intervening in a struggle with an insurrectional objective.

by g.c. from *Insurrection* #4

Autonomous Base Nucleus

Mass structures, autonomous base nuclei are the element linking the specific informal anarchist organisation to social struggles.

The autonomous base nucleus is not an entirely new form of struggle. Attempts have been made to develop these structures in Italy over the past ten years. The most notable of these was the Autonomous Movement of the Turin Railway Workers¹, and the Self-managed Leagues against the cruise missile base in Comiso².

We believe the revolutionary struggle is without doubt a mass struggle. We therefore see the need to build structures capable of organising as many groups of exploited as possible.

We have always considered the syndicalist perspective critically both because of its limitations as an instrument, and because of its tragic historical involution that no anarchist lick of paint can cover up. So we reached the hypothesis of building autonomous base nuclei lacking the characteristics of mini-syndicalist structures, having other aims and organisational relations.

Through these structures an attempt has been made to link the specific anarchist movement to so-

cial struggles. A considerable barrier of reticence and incomprehension has been met among comrades and this has been an obstacle in realising this organisational method. It is in moments of action that differences emerge among comrades who all agree in principle with anarchist propaganda, the struggle against the State, self-management and direct action. When we move into an organisational phase, however, we must develop a project that is in touch with the present level of the clash between classes.

We believe that due to profound social transformation it is unthinkable for one single structure to try to contain all social and economic struggle within it. In any case, why should the exploited have to enter and become part of a specific anarchist organisation in order to carry out their struggle?

A radical change in the way society – exploitation – is being run can only be achieved by revolution. That is why we are trying to intervene with an insurrectional project. Struggles of tomorrow will only have a positive outcome if the relationship between informal specific anar-

The Logic of Insurrection



When we hear the word insurrection we think of some precise moment of upheaval in the past, or imagine a similar clash in the future. Spontaneous insurrection occurs when people are pushed beyond their limits of endurance at their points of exploitation. Certain events take place: street clashes, attacks against the police, destruction of the symbols of capitalism (banks, jewelers, supermarkets, etc). Such moments of popular violence catch anarchists unprepared,

amazed that yesterday's apathy is transformed into today's rage.

Look at Brixton a couple of years ago: anarchists were not, could not have been, protagonists in the riot. Events took them by surprise. People rose up for reasons apparently simple, but which were hatching beneath the surface for a long time. Anarchists' participation was simply that of adapting to the situation, the guests of an insurrection but not acting with an insurrectional logic. To throw a brick is not the best

way for a conscious revolutionary to participate in an insurrection.

When we talk of applying a logic of insurrection we mean going about things the other way round. We do not limit ourselves to identifying areas of social tension and joining in when it explodes, we try to stimulate rebellion and even more, propose and participate in the formation of an organisation of revolt.

Let's try to be as clear as possible. The kind of organisation we mean should be of an associative, social or mass character – a committee, support group, league against repression, association for housing rights, anti-nuclear groups, abstentionist league against the elections etc – not a specific anarchist group. Why should people have to belong to an anarchist group to take part in a social struggle?

People's participation in this kind of structure can be limitless, depending on the work the anarchists manage to do within it. Beginning with a handful of comrades and people most motivated in a particular struggle, whether it be a wildcat strike, mass sackings, a proposed NATO base, squatting, etc, it would entail initially spreading information about the situation set out as clearly and directly as possible. Leaflets, journals, posters, debates, conferences, public meetings and so on would be used and the embroil of one of the groups mentioned above formed. When there is some response to this part of the work it is time to establish a meeting place and

1. See 'Workers' Autonomy' (Bratach Dubh)

2. See 'Insurrection' No. 0

contact number. The organization's actions will become more effective as the struggle progresses, numbers increase and repression develops against it.

The outcome will not be certain. The active presence of anarchists does not mean control but rather stimulation. They have the same rights as the others and no particular weight in decision making. Their suggestions will be considered valid if they are both in tune with the general level of feeling and at the same time try to push it forward.

Timid or hesitant proposals would be rejected as obstacles to advancing the struggle and as betraying their needs and rebellion. A proposal that is too far advanced, that goes beyond the level of the moment would be considered impossible, dangerous and counterproductive. People would withdraw, afraid of being mixed up in who knows what.

Anarchists operating within this structure must therefore be in touch with reality and propose actions that are both possible and comprehensible. It is possible that a spreading mass rebellion could evolve from this initial work of stimulation. This is what we mean by the methods and logic of insurrection. It is quite different to the logic of trade unionism and syndicalism (including anarcho-syndicalism), structures which all begin from a logic of defense as opposed to one of attack. They tend towards quantitative growth (increasing membership) and defending past gains, and, in the case of the trade unions, protecting the interests of one category. What we are proposing on the contrary are basic associative structures organized to deal with one objective of struggle and stimulate people's feelings of rebellion, to culminate in as conscious an insurrection as possible.

Using this method there is no way the anarchist within the structure can transform themselves into a leadership or power group. In fact, as we have said, they are obliged to follow the conditions of the struggle. They are not



working for a quantitative growth in their own anarchist group. They cannot propose simply defensive actions but are constrained to go towards increasingly advanced ones. On the one hand these actions can lead to insurrection and levels that cannot be predicted. In the other they can fail to be effective.

In either case the original associative structure inevitably becomes redundant, and the anarchists will go back to what they were doing before.

*by Alfredo M. Bonnano
from Insurrection #1*

Beyond the Structure of Synthesis

Instead of an anarchist organisation of synthesis we propose an informal anarchist organisation based on struggle and the analyses that emerge from it.

Anarchists of all tendencies refuse the model of hierarchical and authoritarian organisation. They refuse parties, vertical structures which impose directives from above in a more or less obvious way. In positing the liberatory revolution as the only social solution possible, anarchists consider that the means used in bringing about this transformation will condition the ends that are achieved. And authoritarian organisations are certainly not instruments that lead to liberation.

At the same time it is not enough to agree with this in words alone. It is also necessary to put it into practice. In our opinion an anarchist structure such as a structure of synthesis presents not a few dangers. When this kind of organisation develops to full strength as it did in Spain in '36 it begins to resemble a party. Synthesis becomes control. Certainly in quiet periods this is barely visible, so what we are saying now might seem like blasphemy.

This kind of structure is based on groups of individuals who are in more or less constant contact with each other, and has its culminating moment in periodic congresses. In these congresses the basic analysis is discussed, a programme is drawn up and tasks are divided covering the whole range of social intervention. It is an organisation of synthesis because it sets itself up as a point of reference capable of synthesizing the struggles taking place within the class clash. Various groups intervene in the

struggles, give their contribution, but do not lose sight of the theoretical and practical orientation that the organisation as a whole decided upon during the congress.

Now, in our opinion, an organisation structured in this way runs the risk of being behind in respect of the effective level of the struggle, as its main aim is that of carrying the struggle to within its project of synthesis, not of pushing it towards its insurrectional realisation. One of its main objectives is quantitative growth in membership. It therefore tends to draw the struggle to the lowest common denominator by proposing caution aimed at putting a brake on any flight forwards or any choice of objec-

tives that are too exposed or risky.

Of course that does not mean that all the groups belonging to the organisation of synthesis automatically act in this way: often comrades are autonomous enough to choose the most effective proposals and objectives in a given situation of struggle. It is a mechanism intrinsic to the organisation of synthesis however that leads it to making decisions that are not adequate to the situation, as the main aim of the organisation is to grow to develop as wide a front of struggle as possible. It tends not to take a clear and net position on issues, but finds a way, a political road that displeases the fewest and is digestible to most. The reaction we get when mak-

