

Interview with anarchist comrade



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by

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This interview was published in *Conspiración Ácrata: Publicacion de tendencia anarquista insurreccional*, issue 15, March 2012, Mexico.

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The Italian version is available on informa-azione.info.

The project of the insurrectionalist anarchist intervention places the use of weapons in the overall context of the struggle, in synchrony with and in support of any other aspect of the intervention. As I have pointed out more than once in my answers to the earlier questions.

To conclude, I think it is useful to highlight another aspect linked to the ‘insurreccional’ fact, which responds at least in part to those who consider the use of violence and weapons to be negative from an ideological point of view, as they prefer educational methods, propaganda, etc. but is also an aspect that is not thoroughly acknowledged even by those who instead give absolute importance to the destructive part of the attack on the class enemy.

The insurreccional phenomenon does not only imply the material destruction (premises, men, institutions, etc.) of the dominant system but also the liberating rupture from all the psychological mechanisms, stratified and crystallized, which have penetrated the minds of masses of individuals who have inherited, at the genetic-cultural level submission and adaptation to servitude as if this were something spontaneous, belonging to the very nature of man. Such a rupture expresses itself like a celebration and carnival, perhaps, like an ancestral moment of radical refusal of the roles imposed daily along the historical trajectory of peoples, representing everywhere the possible parody that the State-capital allows its subjects (like other pseudo-liberatory moments, look at sport) a temporary safety valve, useful for keeping them happily in the subordinate roles that they must fulfill throughout the rest of the year.

From this point of view, in its brief duration, the insurreccional event manages to determine the rupture of the mental chains that would otherwise come about, and to a lesser extent, over a whole generation.

Costantino Cavalleri
Sardinia, November 2011

Conspiración Ácrata

Talking about violence: what's your opinion on revolutionary or antagonist violence?

Reply to question No. 9

Certainly it is not the case to dwell on ethical-philosophical speeches and all their historical, sociological and psychological explanations in order to discuss violence here. The problem relating to your question finds an answer in the very context of the revolutionary thematic. I need to clarify the meaning of a few concepts in order to avoid misunderstandings.

First of all the concept of *revolution*. With the term **revolution** is meant the radical change of the status quo. Social revolution means the radical change of a given society and, in the capitalist era, this concept affirms the necessity (and will) of a radical change of society in terms of new material and spiritual relations that would render exploitation, oppression and slavery impossible. As far as anarchism is concerned, I think that such social revolutionizing can only come from generalized insurrection.

By **insurrection** is meant that moment of destruction of the relations, roles, institutions, premises and men of established power. **Generalized insurrection** expresses the reality in which this destructive moment is carried out by significant sectors of the subordinate masses. It is therefore clear that the use of violence, made by revolutionaries and not only by power, is implicit in the very concept of insurrection.

However it becomes clear that the use of violence, also by the revolutionary side and not only by power, is implicit in the very concept of insurrection. But the recourse to violence, the moment of the use of weapons, does not accomplish either the revolutionary process or the insurrection itself, at least as far as anarchism is concerned.

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We have learned that you have produced various publications in the past, contributed to many others and have also written essays on the Insurrectional Anarchist Tendency*. What are you working on at the moment, recent essays or publications? Are you involved in any anarchist magazine or initiative?

Reply to question No. 1

My contribution to anarchist publishing has lasted for over 40 years, mainly articles in anarchist periodicals but also through the Edizioni Arkiviu-Biblioteka, which I've been doing since the beginning of the nineteen eighties. I have also brought out papers and magazines as well as various pamphlets and a number of books.

I was one of the first comrades to welcome Alfredo Bonanno's proposal for an Insurrectionalist Anti-authoritarian International at the beginning of the nineties. Since then, on several occasions and at different levels, I've been involved in a discourse related to the value – on a local and international level – of an organizational instrument of our own that reflects the needs of today's anarchist struggle so as to prevent formal structures and structures of synthesis crystallizing the multiple tensions that are emerging from individuals and groups.

* Note of CA: this is the name we anarchists in Mexico and other regions of Latin America such as Colombia use to define an insurrectionist tendency. It is a tendency of anarchism, an insurrectionist anarchist tendency, rather than absolute truth. Soon a comrade will publish an essay where he will be developing this definition.

Unfortunately, new and ongoing editorial projects have met with various obstacles, certainly not desired by me, that are slowing up my contributions, including struggles that I'm taking part in today, and have reduced my collaboration to a minimum, in spite of my efforts and will: sporadic written contributions, realization of a periodical (*Birdi ke su porru*, which stands for 'Green as a leek') specifically linked to the struggle for the dismantling of the biggest experimental military base in Europe located right in Sardinia (Interagency Polygon in Salto di Quirra – P.I.S.Q) and finally the running of the Arkiviu Biblioteka which I created at the end of the nineteen seventies, including the editorial sector.

Conspiración Ácrata

A talk entitled 'Antagonist violence: approximations concerning the armed choice among urban milieux from an anarchist perspective' was recently held in an anarchist place in Mexico.* At the end of the talk we made a constructive critique of the anarchist perspective concerning armed struggle and made reference to a communiqué and leaflet given out by Azione Rivoluzionaria during the third congress of the International of the Anarchist Federations. What's your perspective on armed struggle? What's your evaluation on the use of weapons on an anarchist insurrectionalist basis or principles?

Reply to question No. 2

The use of weapons and violence in general (by weapons I mean any material, technical instrument or knowledge supporting the anarchist struggle in its directly destructive aspect) is an essential part

*Note of CA: this was a talk held by comrade Gustavo Rodriguez at the *Centro de Información Anarquista* (CEDIA) in Mexico City, transcriptions of which are available on *Culmine* or can be requested via our e-mail address.

is consciously included, and all the same – precisely because it is insurrectionalist – it can involve more or less solid social sectors of those excluded from the 'enjoyment' of the system. In this context the good or mediocre 'anarchist' preparation of the comrade does not count either. Instead we come to a conclusion that we must take into account in whatever theory of insurrectionalist anarchism we envisage: an attack, any attack on the system however destructive it is, if it is not accompanied by the daily commitment typical of an operational project developed from an analytic reading of society, comes from the oppressed and remains an act of rebellion. No matter how insurrectionalist and positive it might be, if only because it shakes the dominant social peace, it remains on the margins of the development of social conflict and the generalized progression of the class struggle.

A further element for reflection concerns the real meaning concealed behind the names and claims of illegal actions. The fact is, a name does not say anything at all to those who don't know about the perpetrators of the actions. It can be a way of putting the enemy on the wrong track or it can be the actual acronym of a group, or it can be a mere temporary invention born from the perpetrators' imagination, or anything else. Let's leave the lansquenets of the press and the media to write their novels on this. For us it is all another story.

To conclude, it seems to me that establishing whether Luca is anarchist or not is of no importance; what is important for us is all the rest. In any case, whatever conclusions are drawn from his case, I think that his tension and the rupture he provoked with himself and with the stagnant society of commodities cannot be praised acritically but cannot be condemned either. I related to him and the whole case with these criteria.

Reply to question No. 8

Luca Farris is a young comrade who at a certain point in his life and in his own way decided to attack the system of State-capital in its most macroscopic aspect: that of commodities that reduce life to mere existence. He planned and carried out his actions alone, claiming them and attributing them to an imaginary acronym. When he fell into the hands of State justice, he always stated and claimed this up until the end of the trial. I don't have the criteria to declare him anarchist or not, nor am I interested in doing so, even though as far as I know it is true that he was never part of any known anarchist groups or areas. But I don't think that we can only consider anarchists those who act within a more or less well known anarchist group or situation. In that case, in fact, we would exclude individualist comrades, and going back in time we would exclude from our ranks hundreds if not thousands of our comrades who gave so much to anarchism.

I have always considered his affair, and also him, from another point of view, with a kind of understanding more adequate to the needs of insurrectionalist anti-authoritarian struggle. His case is emblematic: he is either praised or fiercely criticized; and in both cases only on the basis of news reported by the media. This says a lot about the ease with which even a part of the movement falls into the media traps that the power of information sets up. Rather than praising or condemning him I was interested in better understanding the comrade, his tensions and ways of conflict with the society of commodities, in order to evaluate possible personal and projectual affinities, which might turn out to be useful in our everyday struggle unlike his actions in themselves, which are an easy prey to the praise or demonization of both the media and acritical stances.

Following my interest in better understanding the situation I was able to observe once again that an attack on established power can be an insurrectionalist one, destructive per se, but not necessarily elaborated within the context of an overall project where anarchism

of anarchist action. However I don't consider it a privileged aspect in itself, in respect to the other aspects that constitute anarchist intervention as a whole. On the contrary, I believe that the use of weapons supports and integrates all the other aspects. If it is isolated from the context of the overall struggle, however positive and stimulating it might be (and this depends on the general social conditions) it does not express its maximum potential and risks generating involutive aspects such as specialization, self-gratification and satisfaction at the level of the professionalism achieved, all aspects that can overshadow or cancel altogether a proper assessment of the overall social conflict and the tasks that the anarchist movement needs to undertake in order to involve the participation of fairly considerable sectors of the subalternised classes.

Dominion and exploitation are not based exclusively on the use of violence and weapons. Precisely because it is a SYSTEM, State-capital is made up of the symbiotic intertwining of countless aspects, material and spiritual, which compete to varying degrees in also determining **voluntary servitude**, mental mechanisms, psychological manipulation, that penetrate social and individual life at many levels, constituting the basis for generalized consensus that is indispensable for the very existence of the present society.

Therefore, beyond the more or less solid validity of individual and collective acts aimed at violently striking the structures and men of established power, it is clear that complexive projectuality is of capital importance for insurrectionalist anarchism. Starting from a minimum analysis of reality (as a whole as well as the particular reality in which one is operating) it connects all the aspects required to stimulate the insurgency of wide social sectors that are excluded from the existential circuit that the State-capital reserves for the privileged.

It therefore becomes clear that what counts in projectual insurrectionalist action is the very articulation of the struggle, its evolving dynamic, which sometimes requires the use of one instru-

ment (which could be a leaflet, a good intervention during a meeting or an attack on some structure or mechanism of the system, depending on the specific cases), sometimes another, according to the situation. These are all valid instruments for pushing the struggle towards the generalized insurrectional moment, and they have to support each other without any one of them becoming disconnected from all the others, or going beyond the capacity to understand the actual operational level of the social reality directly involved in the struggle.

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Can you tell us something about the group *Azione Rivoluzionaria*? What contribution did this organization give to the development of the Italian anarchist 'movement' of those years?

Reply to question No 3

Azione Rivoluzionaria was an armed group formed by anarchist and libertarian comrades in the context of the class struggle in Italy that had developed radically and extensively from the end of the nineteen sixties. The generalised attack of the proletariat, who were putting all the aspects of the system in question, from the economy to education, from militarism to social hierarchies to the plots of the State and the Church, was also reflected in widespread armed actions against the institutions, their premises and their men.

Such a wide-ranging revolutionary movement, which involved all the subordinate fringes, required constant stimulus in order to raise the level of the clash, but certainly did not need a separate professional apparatus to erect itself and act as an armed vanguard with the illusory attempt at striking an inexistent 'heart' of the State. Only a conception of the State-capital that sees social relationships as being determined by one power centre rather than by dynamics

insurrectionalist tendency in particular. At the same time I believe it is necessary to have more information about the different anarchist insurrectionalist movements, on the social-historical and economic conditions within which they are acting or intend to act, on their projects of struggle.

In the absence of sufficient information to get a general picture I think one only expresses opinions, moreover opinions formed on considerations of an ideological or moral nature, which don't offer anything constructive and positive in the elaboration of insurrectionalist projects and the resulting practices.

Therefore the contribution I can give in the immediate, also considering the development of the proposal for an International such as that which we are discussing, is to share past and present experiences of struggles I have taken part in and still take part in with the same modalities i.e. starting from the analysis of the social reality within which these struggles are carried out, and from the resulting operational projects, and finally to explain the limits and positive aspects that each of these struggles has highlighted.

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Coming back to Italy, in issue 13 of *Conspiración Ácrata* we published an article on Luca Farris. We got the information from the magazine you edited, *Nihil*, which was translated and re-edited by the Spanish magazine *Conspiración*. Following the publication of our article some Italian comrades wrote to us and remarked that Luca is not an anarchist and that Italian insurgent affinities are not sympathetic to his case. In fact they say that Farris was never part of the movement nor met comrades in Sardinia, and that ASAI was invented by him. You are from Sardinia, what can you tell us about the matter? How do you see his case generally speaking and in context?

come out of it – in terms of the creation of more or less extended groups, projects, etc - will assert themselves following developments and articulations that are foreseeable only in part. Moreover, precisely the informal nature of such an organization is just **an occasion, not a pre-arranged goal**, for moments of encounter based on a project agreed by everyone and therefore on organizational modes requiring coordination (obviously agreed by everyone according to the contributions that each one intends to give). Of course it is not just a question of ‘different terms’, different words or different names that we want to give ourselves. I believe that the question of an informal insurrectionalist Anti-authoritarian International needs to be clarified concerning its content, including aspects that some might consider insignificant or of little importance.

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Concretely, what is your contribution to the current conformation of the International Revolutionary Front? Do you know anything about the current situation of insurrectionalist anarchism in Mexico? What’s your assessment on the Mexican situation and what could your contribution be? What’s your contribution to insurrectionalist anarchism on an international level?

Reply to questions No. 5, 6 and 7

In the light of what is written above, these three questions find a partial response above and for the rest, given that they are questions that are linked to each other, they require one single further clarification.

My current knowledge of the social situation of the territories of the State of Mexico, and in particular the anarchist movement, does not allow me to make any hypothesis for a valid contribution on my part, which could strengthen the movement in general and the

generating from these relationships at multiple levels: economic, political, cultural—in other words, only a unilateral-monolithic conception of power that assumes the existence of a centre to be conquered, can elect itself as vanguard of the revolution and prepare to conquer power. It is no coincidence that the first clandestine armed groups, proper political parties, were created by Marxists-leninists (the Red Brigades, to name just one).

The tension that animated the comrades who gave life to *Azione Rivoluzionaria* (a tension documented in the analysis emerging from their documents) cannot be understood if we do not see them in the context of the general social situation at that time (which I have summarily traced above). Amidst widespread enthusiasm in the face of the unfolding of the conditions for generalized insurrection, erroneous evaluations of the function of armed struggle were made. The latter was being forcibly equated with the creation of operational groups that were to have assured a major contribution to the development and enhancement of the ongoing conflict if they remained clandestine, as well as opposed itself to and challenged the hypothetical monopoly that the authoritarian fringes of the movement had on armed/violent attack.

Here a very important problem emerges, which is often neglected in discussions among comrades or at least not given enough attention. Fascination with specialized armed attacks and militarily impeccable actions that hit the headlines often affects even anti-authoritarian anarchist comrades. At the time when armed parties and *Azione Rivoluzionaria* came to life in Italy, many believed (and some still believe) that voluntary clandestinity, that is to say the choice of having one’s identity and past life permanently concealed, was the most efficient condition for actions of destructive attack against established power most fruitful in function of a generalized insurrection. This might prove true from only a technical-militaristic and specialized point of view. But precisely because it is a limited point of view, ultimately, for us, insurrectionalist anarchists, it is also misleading.

First of all clandestinity imposes obvious limits on comrades' relations, both with the rest of the movement and the social sectors with which and within which we must constantly operate in symbiosis in order to understand their tensions, discussions, levels of preparation, ongoing projects etc, so that we can actively take part in all this and avoid digging a deep furrow that isolates us from real social conflict.

Secondly, because even if armed attack gives us the opportunity to achieve specialized levels at a given moment, when it comes to weapons and the wider destructive attack on established power, other aspects of insurrectionalist anarchism – no less important than the purely military one – are neglected as they cannot be thoroughly put into practice: active participation in what for lack of a better word I dare define 'mass intervention' (development and distribution of editorial instruments, participation and intervention in public meetings, etc).

Thirdly, because high specialization (concerning technical instruments and use of materials) in the military field marks a considerable distance – when not an unbridgeable abyss – between the expert and the mass, which in the specific case we are looking at here, would be constrained to look on passively and become mere spectators of two entities fiercely at war with each other, contenting themselves with supporting the one or the other party as it cannot undertake any active participation due to lack of knowledge, technical instruments and materials. This form of ignorance contributes to increasing the risks in the real flow of the struggle, resulting in widespread delegating.

As you can see the acquisition of specialization involves aspects that are usually neglected in analysis and debate: for example the necessary delegation of all the other elements that make up projectual insurrectionalist anarchist action aimed at making it possible for anarchists to go along with a considerable part of the socially excluded in the attempt at an assault on the heavens; they become,

Later in time insurrectionalist anarchism might go through what capital-State power has always wanted, i.e. the reduction of social conflict to two aspects only: on the one hand an armed clash between armies, the well equipped one belonging to the State and that of the active minorities (including anarchists) emarginated/isolated from the mass of the excluded who in turn suffocate in explosions of self-defeating rage as they are deprived of any political-social hypothesis of an assault on the heavens.

Certainly not prematurely, the proposal for an Insurrectionalist Anti-authoritarian International raised the problem, taking part of the movement unprepared. What has been proposed since, in particular by the Conspiracy of the Cells of Fire and by the Informal FAI, as far as I know, undoubtedly reflects the widespread need for an international 'place' of encounter and confrontation of anarchist insurrectionalist tensions. However, the first (CCF's) proposal is undermined by the irrepeatability of the specific Greek conditions, the second, (Informal FAI), by the uniforming claim of standardizing the way of understanding and putting insurrectionalist struggle into practice.

In conclusion, I believe that the proposal for an I.A.I. is still valid today, in both the propositional part and the discriminating factors, although the analytical part needs to be reassessed and reviewed. If anti-authoritarianism seems not to be affected by problems of interpretation, there are various ways of understanding insurrectionalism, which need to be discussed and evaluated fully so as to eliminate any possible misunderstanding which could later turn out to be harmful.

I think it useful to point out that the proposal for the creation of an international anarchist insurrectionalist place-time-space, organizationally articulated in informality, does not of necessity turn into a 'Revolutionary Front' or a 'Coordination' of those who form it. Precisely because it is informal it cannot crystallize into a structure lasting in time, and in this way the possible affinities that should

of the charges pressed against a significant number of comrades, and which in Italy led to an articulated and varied response (in a context of dignity and consistency) to the many political-judicial attacks, saw a dissimilarity of views emerge. Until then dissimilar views had existed but from this point on they were deemed incompatible. The tragic death of a comrade in Greece exacerbated already tense relations, and the repression unleashed in Spain thanks to the collaboration of various States caused a sort of generalized dispersion. New and old rancours emerged as well as prejudice concerning comrades, about the very proposal for an I.A.I. and about alleged and never surfaced substantial differences, which widened and spread like a contagion throughout all the situations.

2) In that specific situation the spontaneous and positive care that comrades, both individuals and groups, had shown in order to avoid instrumentalisation and regimentation soon turned into a weaving of a conscious or unconscious 'certitude' of the manipulation or bad faith displayed by some or other comrades...

3) And the very insurrectional organizational modality turned... for many... into the certitude of centralization and uniformity elaborated by manipulators! In other words the movement didn't seem ready to welcome the proposal for an International as a moment and opportunity of encounter for individuals and groups that consider organizational informality and anarchist and anti-authoritarian insurrectionalism as the right place for better challenging the current society of the State-capital.

I believe that today, two decades later we could say, the needs of that time and the relative debate that aborted then can no longer be postponed. The material and spiritual conditions imposed by dominion on a global level have embarked on an irreversible road. Patches of projectual insurrectionalist anarchist intervention still persist here and there, we don't know for how long but certainly not for decades.

even involuntarily, bearers of delegating within the very sector in which they have become specialized.

If we analyze it in all its aspects in relation to an insurrectionalist intervention, the choice of clandestinity turns out to be more limited than is believed, and can at times even be a deviation. The fact is that everything (or nearly everything) one does when one chooses clandestinity can be elaborated and done in the normality of our lives, it being understood that both cases involve acting in illegality. By eliminating the unavoidable limits and constraints of clandestinity one can also participate in person in all moments of the class struggle, day by day, within the social reality that we want to mature towards insurrection, and help provoke the outbreaks necessary to enhance the ongoing conflict to the destruction of all the ganglia: cultural, material, psychological and also technical/military that articulate the power of the State-capital

We can say that all these issues were raised within the anarchist movement when Azione Rivoluzionaria was formed and started operating. Each one took the road that best suited their theoretical-analytical positions in respect to the ongoing social struggle. And the comrades of Azione Rivoluzionaria took theirs, thus marking one of the many experiences (perhaps more tragic than others, if one evaluates it from certain angles, but not for this more or less anarchist) of our movement as a whole. Certainly today the lack of rich and articulate debate and deep reflections that characterized that time must be noted, reflections that involve all those who give priority to the best possible forms of action for the anarchist movement in respect to generalized insurrection. And generalized insurrection goes beyond any well-planned destructive attack (successfully carried out by us or by others) on one or many of the appendages of established power.

Conspiración Ácrata

As we know, throughout anarchist history and that of the present time, informality in the coordination of solidarity actions has always existed. It has manifested itself on several occasions on a local level in Mexico, but there have also been efforts aiming at creating a wider and more concrete coordination, let's say on an international level, for example the International Revolutionary Solidarity Movement promoted by the First of May movement* in the sixties, or the more recent campaign promoted by the comrades of the Conspiracy of the Cells of Fire in Greece for the realization of an International Revolutionary Front, or the widening of the Informal FAI.

Could you tell us why the project of the creation of an Insurrectionalist Anti-authoritarian International promoted between Italy and Greece was not pursued and developed? What was the problem or the mistake, and what evaluations have been made about it?

Reply to question No. 4

The idea of an Insurrectionalist Anti-authoritarian International (I.A.I.), put forward by Alfredo Bonanno at the beginning of the nineteen nineties, was welcomed by many comrades of the anarchist movement, including the Sardinian comrades of the project Union of Sardinian Anarchists. The proposal for the creation of the

*Note of C.A.: the First of May Group was a guerrilla anarchist group that promoted a coordination of international solidarity, and it also was one of its more active components. In the sixties it machine-gunned the USA embassy in London and on November 12 1967 8 embassies and 2 government offices were totally destroyed by massive explosive devices in actions coordinated in different European countries. These 10 explosive attacks were all claimed by the First of May Group. The embassies of Greece, Spain and Bolivia were attacked in Bonn; the Venezuela embassy was attacked in Rome, while in Milan and Geneva Spanish government offices were attacked.

I.A.I., discussed and clarified by many anarchists in the territory of the Italian State who agreed with the analysis and discriminating factors, was widely socialised at international level, finding its first response in various situations, mainly European (Spain, Greece, France...), but not only.

There was the need to find a 'place', **not necessarily of coordination** (which might never even have existed or existed only in part), but an exchange of experiences, the socialization of ongoing struggles and projectuality, the possibility of widening one's knowledge and forging new relationships, of a possible extension of affinities, support and integration of struggles, without anyone renouncing his or her particularities but rather that these find occasions for enrichment and expansion. I believe this is also a necessity today, perhaps even more so than it was then, something predominant that can no longer be avoided by those anarchists who are not just waiting for the maturation of spontaneous insurrectional moments but intend to act in order to provoke them themselves or at any rate to be involved in them directly whenever they emerge from the dynamics of social reality.

Following an initial proficuous period where there was a wide interest in it, it later became clear that the creation of an Insurrectionalist Anti-authoritarian International was impracticable. The development of this proposal was undermined, I believe, by dynamics inherent in the larger and more active movements, and, I believe, in part by a series of prejudices that have gradually been emerging and due to a mistaken understanding of operating modes, namely informality. Let us take a quick look at some of the relevant aspects.

1) The movements initially most interested in the creation of the I.A.I. (the Italian, Greek and - in part - the Spanish ones) were obviously affected by their internal dynamics and specific trajectories, which didn't lack friction, discord, opposition and also strange competition among different groups. The ongoing repressive operations, which were of no small importance due to the seriousness