The scale of the revolt in Chile was not related to this or that tightening of screws, to this or that group, but to something much deeper: the thirst for freedom. A shared freedom that can only pass over the corpse of domination — from churches to political parties, from the economy to politics through patriarchy — to free oneself from the chains of the existent. A contagious freedom that can only move forward by destroying everything that makes up the misery of our lives, through a negative from which may arise something completely different. And certainly, without pity and without regard for the current order that is crushing us.

Dancing with the flames
Chronicle of the revolt in Chile
October - November 2019

The scale of the revolt in Chile was not related to this or that tightening of screws, to this or that group, but to something much deeper: the thirst for freedom. A shared freedom that can only pass over the corpse of domination — from churches to political parties, from the economy to politics through patriarchy — to free oneself from the chains of the existent. A contagious freedom that can only move forward by destroying everything that makes up the misery of our lives, through a negative from which may arise something completely different. And certainly, without pity and without regard for the current order that is crushing us.
Danser avec les flammes
Une chronique de la révolte en cours au Chili
(octobre - novembre 2019)

AVIS DE TEMPETES
Bulletin anarchiste pour la guerre sociale
# 23bis – 28 novembre 2019
(...a work in progress)

Excerpts translated from:

Danser avec les flammes
Une chronique de la révolte en cours au Chili
(octobre - novembre 2019)

AVIS DE TEMPETES
Bulletin anarchiste pour la guerre sociale
# 23bis – 28 novembre 2019
(...a work in progress)

For the total spread of chaos
From the territory dominated by the State of Shile early November 2019

We recognize that current events are surprising and incalculable, but we also understand that they come from a path of resistance and antagonistic struggle in opposition to the established order that has evolved and taken on a different character over the years. Anarchist ideas and practices have constituted an important element during these last few decades of multiform confrontation with power along this long road.

We understand that the incessant sabotage and direct attacks on the organs of this devastating and murderous system have contributed to the identification of objectives and symbols of capital in the direct action which has broken loose in the streets. The clash against the repressive forces has been a part of daily life for two decades, a part of the street fighting when at certain moments groups erected barricades with determination and will to attack the police forces which had manifested itself recurrently for years at the exits of the universities, also realized in recent years around high schools by high school students. On the other hand, more planned attacks and the dispatch of explosive devices to representatives of the law and to those who enforce it to maintain the bourgeois order were part of a barrage of attacks directed against the arch enemies and persecutors of freedom. Autonomous anti-authoritarian action becomes relentless against the new wave of state repression which seeks to identify responsible “leaders” of all these supposedly directed actions, while they are only the consequence of the proliferation of chaos unleashed by the fact of taking back our lives.

Criminalizing violent actions is a tactic that the government has always used to try to pacify rage and deprive it of its dangerousness. In recent days, we have seen increased efforts to deter and isolate those who dare act in transgressing the current order. This involves repeated statements by the various authorities and the support they receive on a daily basis and which will continue to give them...
knowledge and resourcefulness of action. Their decisions will be informed by the fire of destruction, and fueled by the constant hearth of critical analysis.

Now, if you think about it for a moment, no project can stand firmly on both feet if born at the height of the fray. It would be foolish to think that everything must come from the insurgent people: such blind determinism risks delivering us gagged to the first politician that comes along, who, from the top of his chair, will trace some organizational and programmatic lines, throwing smoke in our eyes with four rhetorically aligned words. If the insurrection is in large part a revolutionary moment of immense collective creativity, during which suggestions of considerable analytical intensity can emerge (think of the July insurgents in Paris who fired on the clocks), it cannot be the only source of theoretical and projectual deepening. The strongest moments of the people in arms eliminate, of course, all prior procrastination and uncertainties. They allow to see clearly what yesterday was just a blur. But they cannot illuminate what does not exist. These moments are a powerful reflector that allows the realization of a revolutionary and anarchist project, but this project must exist already, if only in its methodological outlines. It must already have been worked out, even if not in every detail, and, as far as possible, have been tried and tested.

As you always need an initial spark, here the pretext is the double increase in the price of the metro ticket in the rush hour in the Chilean capital. First an increase of 20 pesos in January 2019, then again thirty pesos on 6th of last October (from 800 to 830 pesos, or 1.04 euro the ticket, knowing that the minimum wage is 400 euros a month and many don’t even get that), the government citing the rising costs of energy and the weakness of the peso. Facing the first mobilisations, the Minister for the Economy Juan Andrés Fontaine, with the arrogance of the powerful, even declared that the users had only to get up even earlier in the morning to benefit from lower rates (a fine example of liberalism) the most widespread slogan in Santiago for a week has been “evasión raya” (dodging now) or “Evasión=Luchar” (Dodging = Struggle). After the wild demos the whole day of Friday, October 18, the enraged kept going into the night and undertook to destroy what was hostile to them: at least 16 buses of Transantiago reduced to ashes for example, including nine in Piazza Grecia. There, the demonstrators seized them (after having got the driver and passengers to disembark) moved them to the middle of the road to serve as flaming barricades.

But it didn’t stop there, because after massive fare dodging in the metro all day, when no one agreed to pay, they forced access, clashing with the carabiniers and guards when necessary, destroying payment terminals and other turnstiles, then barricades were erected at night in the squares Plaza Italia, Los Heroes, Portugal and in several streets of Eje Alameda. Among the targeted attacks are the burning of the Monument for the Carabiniers in Alameda or the gigantic headquarters of the electricity and gas company Enel. Located right in the centre of the Chilean capital at the crossroads of avenues Santa Rosa and Alonso, the emergency stairs of the company were set on fire, which managed to spread to the 12th floor, ravaging everything from the office tower in its path. It should also be noted that a branch of Banco Chile was burned in the centre, and a supermarket looted. The police reported at least 180 arrests and 57 policemen wounded.

Meanwhile, the President of the Republic Sebastián Piñera was caught partying in a pizzeria in the centre (in Vínculo), which did not fail to raise the level of tension, being a symbol of his contempt while clashes had been going on for hours. On returning to his Palace, he decreed the state of military emergency in the provinces of Santiago, Chañaral and the towns near Puente Alto and San Bernardo just after midnight. Named Estado de Emergencia, it can be decreed by the executive without the need for the approval of the Congress for 15 renewable days, restricting...
freedom of movement and authorizing the military to take to the streets to restore order. All public gatherings are now prohibited: for example, the Asociación Nacional de Fútbol Profesional (ANFP) immediately announced the suspension of all football matches in all divisions, and the mighty Catholic church of its pilgrimages, including the famous Santuario de Teresa of Los Andes. Up to 10 years in prison is also planned for anyone who “incites to destroy, shut down, interrupt or paralyze any public or private lighting installation, electricity, drinking water, gas and other equivalent, in order to suspend, interrupt or destroy the means or elements of any public service or utility”.

In practice, it is Major General Javier Iturriaga del Campo, head of national defence, who has been appointed responsible for enforcing the state of emergency, and who specified that military patrols were going to be deployed across the capital. From Monday a special session of the Chamber of Deputies is also scheduled in the presence of the Minister of the Interior in Valparaíso, far away from the capital in the hands of the military.

We see that, when riots break out in the street, which is common in Chile, and if they are confined to confrontation or destruction of urban furniture, this is still part of the democratic valve. But when the protesters begin to attack critical infrastructure like the metro or the headquarters of an energy giant, the deal changes at once. All the 164 Santiago metro stations have already been closed for weekends until further notice. 700 additional buses have been assigned to manage travel. Last but not least, just after the clashes and the state of emergency, many groups of rioters then decided not to bend and to attack the source in order to radically solve the problem.

From Plaza de Maipú, they went down underground and ransacked everything they could in metro corridors transformed into shopping malls: from distributors to stores, from metro offices to their equipment (cameras or computers), everything went. In total on lines 4, 4A and 5, metro stations Trinidad, San José de la Estrella, Elisa Correa, Pedroso, Los Quillayes and Santa Julia were all entirely and mercilessly delivered to the flames. According to the management, damage amounts to 400 to 500 million pesos ($630,000 euros). They are completely unusable.

If we can only greet the revolt when it takes over the streets hoping that it will deepen and exceed the initial pretext, not all situations are comparable, as in Hong Kong for months when the protesters took care to target Chinese interests, or in Catalonia for several days when protests struggle to overcome the independence issue (without mentioning the recent social riots in Ecuador, Iraq or in Beirut...).

What has happened in Chile for the last few days, while taking place within a wider context of simmering tensions where each instance of new taxes or price increases can prove to be the straw that breaks the camel’s back, seems to us to call for the full attention of anti-authoritarians in solidarity, at a moment when the militarised state of emergency comes as an attempt to crush street protests that are extensively destructive in nature. And not only because of the many comrades who have been fighting hard for years in this corner of the world.

Are there not critical infrastructures here too of transport, energy or communication that as in Santiago are indispensable to the perpetuation of the existing order, and are within reach of all those in revolt? If solidarity is not just a vain word, it is more than time to get into it to feed and extend the major revolts taking place around us. And given that destruction, including that of public utilities, is a language that speaks directly from one corner of the planet to the other...everyone has the choice to express their rage towards freedom in action against this world of money and cops.

The insurrectional method

Alfredo M. Bonanno

The insurrection of large parts of or an entire population at some point, presupposes some existing elements, namely the decomposition of social and economic conditions, or inability of the State to maintain order and enforce the laws. But it also presupposes the existence of individuals and groups of individuals able to grasp this upheaval beyond the external signs by which it manifests itself.

It is therefore necessary, each time, to know how to look further than the often circumstantial and secondary motivations which accompany the first insurrectional centres, the first strikes, the first skirmishes to make its own contribution to the struggle, and not to curb or underestimate it as a simple confused reaction to the political domination in place.

But which individuals are prepared for such a task? It could be the anarchists, not because of their fundamental ideological choices, the denial of any authority that characterizes them, but rather taking into account the critical capacity of reflexion on methods of struggle and organizational projects that they should have.

Only the one who rebels and has already rebelled, albeit only in the microcosm of their own life, only who has already braved the consequences of this rebellion and lived them in depth, can have nerves sensitive enough and the intuition necessary to grasp the signs of an insurrectionary movement in the making. Anarchists are not all rebels, and not all rebels are anarchists. Let us add that it is not enough to be a rebel to understand the rebellion of others. One must be prepared to understand, to deepen the social and economic conditions facing us. Not get caught up in the flood of the popular movement, when the wind is in its sails and the first successes raise the flags of illusion. Criticism is always the first instrument, the starting point. It is not a crude assessment of the for and against that we need. But a participatory critique, which addresses the heart and vibrates with the emotion of the conflict that pits us against the enemies of always when they are defeated for the first time, noses in the dust.

But being a rebel is not enough, just as a hundred rebels together would not be enough. They would be like one hundred molecules crowding during the destructive moment of the first hours, when the struggle ignites ferociously and carries everything in its path. The rebels, important figures both as examples and as stimulants, end up succumbing to the requirements of the present moment. Pushed to attack by their conscience, sooner or later they find themselves with an insurmountable limit. Unable to see an organizational outcome, they await suggestions from the masses in revolt, a word here or there, in the living moments of the struggle or during the moments of truce, when everyone agrees to talk while waiting to resume again. And what they don't realise is that at all these exciting moments, there are always politicians lurking in the wings. The masses do not have the virtues that we often tend to attribute to them. The assembly is certainly not a place to put one’s life on the line, but our lives are put on the line by decisions made in assemblies. The political vultures that stick in their noses during these collective moments always have clear ideas about what they want to propose. They have a nice recuperatory program in their pockets, a plan for a return to normality, for the restoration of order. Certainly, they will not say anything too politically correct, which allows them to continue to pass off as revolutionaries. But it is still them, the same eternal scavengers who lay the foundations for the reconstruction of future power, that which recuperates the revolutionary impulse and channels it with watered-down suggestions. Please, let’s limit the destruction comrades, after all, what we are destroying belongs to us, etc.

Shooting first, fastest, is a virtue of the Far West which can be useful at times, but you have use your head first and using your head means having a project. The anarchist cannot be satisfied with being a rebel, they must be a rebel with a project. They must therefore unite heart and courage with the
Block everything

When we take a metaphor of the train rushing towards the abyss often used to describe the current situation, things start to change. Because it’s only when you are about to be precipitated into the void that you will know with certainty that it really is the end. Otherwise, and up until the last moment, there is always a possibility: apply the emergency brake. The sudden braking would startle travellers by diverting them from their gossip, their noise, their post-digestive torpor? Yes, so what? Their luggage would fly into the air, getting more or less seriously damaged after falling to the ground? Yes, and so? A series of brakes would irritate all those on board who wish to arrive at their destination without shaking and as soon as possible? Yes, so what? At the crazy speed this train is running at, a too improvised braking would risk a derailment that could have terrible consequences? Yes, so what? The alternative is in any case certain and even worse: the abyss, which will swallow all and everything without distinction.

That’s why politicians of all stripes and passengers of all fears can also refrain from repeating their respective reasons so that everything continues as before. We know the indignation of the Honest People Party against those who try to slow down the speed of the train off by heart. The fury of the First Cop of Italy against the saboteurs “who ruined a day’s work for tens of thousands of Italians” [by sabotaging TGV high speed train links] recalls that of the English Lord faced with what was considered the first general strike of history, summer 1842 in England. But as some historians had to admit, “from the invention of the general strike in 1842, a blockade of the energy supply has repeatedly come to a standstill. A particularly prolonged and extensive interruption of these flows could cause a domino effect with unpredictable results, as the reports [of the bosses] say. demonstrating the objective need to reverse the direction of travel. This is an observation without any foundation. The cabin that houses the controls is shielded, it does not open «like a can of tuna», and anyway there is no time left to seize the train: We can only stop it.

Touch the sensitive points

Last summer [2014], Anthony Glees, teacher in security and intelligence at Buckingham University, said, “We have tried to make extremism something that is just not worth the risk, but despite all this we are clearly still generating jihadists. I have come to the view that we have been too susceptible to the civil liberties lobby – people who say we who are a multi-cultural society and two sets of core values can sit happily side-by-side in the UK. We have let people go around this country preaching extremism and violence under the guise of religion and free speech.”

The nasty English teacher is not all that wrong. It’s true, despite the threat of repression this miserable world continues to produce dissatisfied, enraged, rebels, ready to rise up for a great variety of reasons. That’s right, two different sets of fundamental values (such as those related to authority and those related to freedom) cannot remain happily side by side. It’s true, we can no longer allow people to go on the road to preach violence (of capitalism) with the excuse of freedom of speech. We should begin to remedy that. ...

Energy and transport: these are the key areas of domination. Because they are the technical means that allow the reproduction of what already exists, in which we can distinguish between the production, circulation and consumption of data and commodities, but also the operation of all kinds of machines. Without energy and transport, “everyday life as we know it”- that which serves the State – would grind to a halt, slow down, a particularly prolonged and extensive interruption of these flows could cause a domino effect with unpredictable results, as the reports [of the bosses] say.

Finimondo

Snapshots of the first day under the state of emergency

Non-exhaustive list of sackaging and looting of shops carried out yesterday 18 October in Santiago during the demonstrations, which also gives an idea of the atmosphere:
- a Lider supermarket, located at the intersection Tarapacá and Santa Rosa streets
- the first floor of the Faculty of Dentistry Universidad Mayor, located at the intersection Brasil and Alameda streets. All its furniture was taken out to serve as an urban barricade
- a Cruz Verde pharmacy, located opposite the Plaza Brasil
- an Alvi supermarket in the Pajaritos, with high-tech looting (trolleys full of appliances or plasma screen TV, etc.)
- a Santa Isabel supermarket, located in Quilicura
- an Abcdin store, located at the intersection Pajaritos and Chacabuco streets, where after having taken off the gate, the rioters looted all the technological equipment
- three shops place Baquedano: one pharmacy Salcobrand, a McDonald’s and an OXXO store (the last two were also burned)
- several fast food restaurants located in Alameda, the main avenue in the centre of Santiago, as well as the Banco de Chile branch (ransacked and burned)
- four banks in Plaza de Maipú: Banco Itaú, Condell, de Chile and Scotiabank and an Enel branch (ransacked)

Around the fire of the Enel headquarters.

As the institutions targeted and set on fire on the afternoon it started with people in the street to protest and insulting them. There were also occupations of squares (Plaza Italia, Plaza Brasil and Plaza Nueva), leading to the intervention of soldiers to chase them away. From 2pm, the tension was rising, objects thrown against tear gas, etc. in many neighbourhoods.

At 3pm, the large hypermarket Mall Plaza, which remained open this Saturday, decided to close its doors for fear of looting.

In the afternoon, the fires of revolt are rekindled

20 October

Saturday it starts again! On this first day under the state of emergency, Saturday 19 October, in the afternoon it started with people in the street with pots and pans, breaking the ears of the soldiers and insulting them. There were also occupations of squares (Plaza Italia, Plaza Brasil and Plaza Nueva), leading to the intervention of soldiers to chase them away. From 2pm, the tension was rising, objects thrown against tear gas, etc. in many neighbourhoods.

At 3pm, the large hypermarket Mall Plaza, which remained open this Saturday, decided to close its doors for fear of looting.

In the afternoon, the fires of revolt are rekindled

8

5
in several parts of the capital: six buses are set on fire in Víncula Mackenna and metro trains are burnt at Elisa Correa station. One hour later, those of two other stations are set on fire by rioters, in San Pablo (lines 1 and 5) and in Macul.

Before the fires this Saturday, the general manager of the transport company, Rubén Alvarado, assessed: “according to a preliminary estimate the damage well exceeds $200 million. Of the 136 metro stations of the network, 77 were damaged and 20 burned. Among these, 9 are completely destroyed (Los Quilayes, San José de la Estrella, Trinidad, Macul, Protectora de la Infancia, Elisa Correa, La Granja, San Ramón and Santa Julia) and 11 partly (Gruta from Lourdes, Barrancas, Las Parcelas, Pedrero, Cumming, San Joaquín, Pudahuel, Laguna Azul, República, San Pablo and Vespucio Norte)”. At 7 p.m., President Piñera announces at a press conference that he will suspend the increase in the fares of the metro, which will be voted these next days at the meeting during an emergency law… while maintaining the state of military emergency and the possibility of a curfew. At the time of the speech of the Head of State, a fire is lit in subway stations San José de la Estrella (line 4) and Laguna Sur (line 5, in Pudahuel) in Santiago… In Pudahuel, the firefighters are being targeted by the rioters.

A motorway toll on Ruta 78 is delivered to the flames southwest of the capital, in Talagante as well as the army. 500 soldiers leave their barracks to regain control of Valparaíso. Santiago international airport announces that all the flights of businesses Condell Street (including a bank branch) are violent clashes in the Plaza de Armas and a bank branch BPI ransacked. At 9.15, a man is arrested and the town hall of San Bernardo in the suburbs Camino a Melipilla, is looted. The supermarket Líder on Avenue Isabel Riquelme Sur is looted. In Chacabuco, an annex of the prefecture (Gobernación) is delivered to the flames. San Miguel Police Stations 12 and 1 de Santiago are attacked and suffer damage. After the announcement of the curfew, a supermarket OK Market and a pharmacy Cruz Verde, near the metro station Santa Isabel, are looted. Vehicles of a car dealership place Núñoa are reduced to ashes. At the crossing of Santa Isabel and Portugal streets, a pharmacy Ahumada is looted.

At 19:40, General Iturriaga makes his announcement: “I have ordered the suspension of freedoms of personal movement through a total curfew today in the provinces of Santiago and Chacabuco, and in the towns of Puente Alto and San Bernardo. You have two hours to get home”. The curfew is 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. until further notice.

The disorders have begun to spread. The disorders started to spread in the evening in several cities such as Valparaíso, Antofagasta, La Serena, Ovalle, Talca, Rancagua, Puerto Montt and Punta Arenas. In Valparaíso, the first clashes took place at Plaza Victoria. In the afternoon a massive number of high school students forced entry into the underground without paying so it decided to prematurely interrupt its service and stopped all trains at 6pm. In Victoria Square, in the afternoon, demonstrators entered a Ripley store in order to remove the furniture and burn it in a great barricade. At 22:20, the state of emergency (Estado de Excepción Constitucional de Emergencia) is extended to the province of Concepción, where riots have raged during the day till night fell. It is Rear Admiral Carlos Huber who is in charge of its management for the army.

At 22:30, the state of emergency is extended to the province of Valparaíso (except Easter Island and the municipality of Juan Fernández) with curfew at midnight. It is Rear Admiral Juan Andrés Maza who is responsible for its management of the army. 500 soldiers leave their barracks to regain control of Valparaíso. Santiago international airport announces that passengers have two hours to get there before it closes and the bus companies within the country suspend their domestic connections to and from the capital «because of riots».

Here is a non-exhaustive overview drawn up at midnight this Sunday, October 20 (local time) concerning ransacking, looting and fires in Santiago and other regions: for example, the Walmart chain (brand of super and hypermarkets aCuenta and Lider) reported more than 80 lootings and five fires of their shops.

**Biobío region.** In Concepción, the supermarket Santa Isabel, the Petrobras gas station and the delivery Telepizza are the target of looting on the diagonal Pedro Aguirre Cerda. Later, Mall del Centro is burned down. The court on Tucapel Street is ransacked. The supermarket next to the sports club Bellavista, is looted. The offices of the mega project property in Añul (La Ciudad del Parque, 7 towers of 21 floors) are destroyed by the flames.

**Santiago de Chile region.** In San Bernardo, Llano Blanco’s Lider hypermarket is set on fire. Two women died, burned accidentally during the incendiary looting. A third person, a man, is seriously injured (hospitalized with body burned at 75%). In El Bosque, the hypermarket Lider de la Gran Avenida is looted. In La Florida, the hypermarket Santa Isabel Avenue Trinidad East is completely burned. At 21:30, a supermarket is set on fire in Calle Walker Martínez. The shopping centre Vespucio Mall on Víncula Mackenna Avenue is burned. In Maipú, a petrol station Copec and the Mid Mall, located Camino a Melipilla, are burned.

The supermarket Lider on Avenue Isabel Riquelme Sur is looted. In Chacabuco, an annex of the prefecture (Gobernación) is delivered to the flames. San Miguel Police Stations 12 and 1 de Santiago are attacked and suffer damage. After the announcement of the curfew, a supermarket OK Market and a pharmacy Cruz Verde, near the metro station Santa Isabel, are looted. Vehicles of a car dealership place Núñoa are reduced to ashes. At the crossing of Santa Isabel and Portugal streets, a pharmacy Ahumada is looted.