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Beyond Workerism Beyond Syndicalism

Alfredo M. Bonanno

The end of syndicalism corresponds to the end of workerism. For us it is also the end of the quantitative illusion of the party and the specific organization of synthesis. The revolt of tomorrow must look for new roads. Trade unionism is in its decline. In good as in evil with this structural form of struggle an era is disappearing, a model and a future world seen in terms of an improved and corrected reproduction of the old one. We are moving towards new and profound transformations. In the productive structure, in the social structure. Methods of struggle, perspectives, even short term projects are also transforming.

In an expanding industrial society the trade union moves from instrument of struggle to instrument supporting the productive structure itself. Revolutionary syndicalism has also played its part: pushing the most combative workers forward but, at the same time, pushing them backwards in terms of capacity to see the future society or the creative needs of the revolution. Everything remained parceled up within the factory dimension. Workerism is not just common to authoritarian communism. Singling out privileged ar-

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eas of the class clash is still today one of the most deep-rooted habits that it is difficult to lose.

The end of trade-unionism therefore. We have been saying so for fifteen years now. At one time this caused criticism and amazement, especially when we included anarcho-syndicalism in our critique. We are more easily accepted today. Basically, who does not criticize the trade unions today? No one, or almost no one. But the connection is overlooked. Our criticism of trade unionism was also criticism of the “quantitative” method that has all the characteristics of the party in embryo. It was also a critique of the specific organizations of synthesis. It was also a critique of class respectability borrowed from the bourgeoisie and filtered through the cliché of so-called proletarian morals. All that cannot be ignored. If many comrades agree with us today in our now traditional critique of trade-unionism those who share a view of all the consequences that it gives rise to are but a few.

We can only intervene in the world of production using means that do not place themselves in the quantitative perspective. They cannot therefore claim to have specific anarchist organizations behind them working on the hypothesis of revolutionary synthesis. This leads us to a different method of intervention, that of building factory “nucleii” or zonal “nucleii” which limit themselves to keeping in contact with a specific anarchist structure, and are exclusively based on affinity. It is from the relationship between the base nucleus and specific anarchist structure that a new model of revolutionary struggle emerges to attack the structures of capital and the State through recourse to insurrectional methods.

This allows for a better following of the profound transformations that are taking place in the productive structures. The factory is about to disappear, new productive organizations are taking its place, based mainly on automation. The workers of yesterday will become partially integrated into a supporting situation or simply into a situation of social security in the short-term, survival in the long one. New forms of work will appear on the horizon. Already

the classical workers’ front no longer exists. Like-wise the trade union as is obvious. At least it no longer exists in the form in which we have known until now. It has become a firm like any other.

A network of increasingly different relations, all under the banner of participation, pluralism, democracy, etc, will spread over society bridling almost all the forces of subversion. The extreme aspects of the revolutionary project will be systematically criminalized. But the struggle will take new roads, will filter towards a thousand new subterranean channels emerging in a hundred thousand explosions of rage and destruction with new and incomprehensible symbology.

As anarchists we must be careful, we are carriers of an often heavy mortgage from the past, not to remain distanced from a phenomenon that we end up not understanding and whose violence could one fine day even scare us, and in the first case we must be careful to develop our analysis in full.