

To Start Over

“The possibility to act as anarchists, on our own. But in order to go much further than ourselves.”

Avis de Tempêtes

Summer 2018

To start over, always. That is the prospect, which can seem kind of tragic, of all those who are at war against this world of infinite horrors. Along the way some fall under the blows, others don't resist the siren-song that calls to resign oneself and get back in line, some even make an outright U-turn. The others, that persist in fighting – with ups and downs – have to find strength and determination to start over again each time. However, on second thought, the tragedy is not to start over, to start from scratch, but to abandon and to betray oneself. Conscience, always individual, can be a heavy burden to carry and becomes cruel when one betrays it without having enough anaesthetics at one's disposal. This world doesn't lack anaesthetics, and even distils them at will. A little alternative career for your own good, Sundays to marvel at a natural park, a humanitarian or cultural project. Even harder drugs; screens of all varieties, virtual reality and relationships, a total stupor. No, such a prospect frightens us more than all the distress, than all the difficulties connected to the failure to destroy authority.

So, to start over. To sharpen conscience in a world that has taken aim at it by launching its deadly poisons at it. Because what is accommodation, resignation and submission other than the quenching of one's conscience, justified – or not – by the conditions we're all mired in? “They are too strong”, “people are too stupid”, “surviving is already too hard”, “it's too far from my nest” are some of the classics. So, to sharpen conscience, means also to redevelop a taste for ideas that allow us to see, to distinguish more clearly the contours of those that pour cement on freedom. And, at the same time, to open up horizons so as to be able to look – even if only a peak – beyond the walls and the antennas, beyond the prisons and the laboratories, beyond the massacres and the soldiers. Ideas are not bought in supermarkets and are not deepened on the internet. It is each individual that appropriates them step by step till cherishing them, and that defends them also through thick and thin. Above all so in our times when democratic, mercantile and technological totalitarianism aspires to eliminate each fervour, to install slaveries and dependencies even more deceptive. Somehow it is the most important treasure of the anarchist; the conviction that there is no compromise possible between freedom and authority, that they exclude each other, always and everywhere. Thousands of institutions, organizations, ideologies try to destroy this treasure. As well a state that drowns in blood the – at last roused – cries of yesterdays oppressed, as the technocrat who talks about freedom to design a technological system that expands every day its

hold to the four corners of the earth. As well the next leaders who seek to call the shots of a movement of anger, as the clever acrobat of rhetoric who tries hard to remove all significance of the attacks carried out against this world. If we talk about starting over, it is to express our will to take up – once more – the deepening of our ideas, to make them toxic for all the authoritarians who try to approach them, and stimulating for all the lovers of freedom who embrace them. It is to start over again – inside contexts which are born to us and which have changed a lot over the last years – to elaborate our lifelong anarchist project; to destroy oppression and exploitation. Over time, as we plunge into it, other experiences will arise, other attempts, other defeats. All of them are part of our baggage, our heritage if you will, that – instead of making us sink into a dark melancholy – can reinforce us to rebuild an individual and collective project of freedom, a revolutionary perspective. Certainly, it is impossible to avoid errors, to not find oneself at times in a dead-end, to not be shipwrecked in the stormy seas, but these failures are an integral part of our journeys. Like that anarchist from the beginning of the 20th century said: *“We move with ardour, with strength, with pleasure in such a determined way because we’re conscious of having done everything and being prepared to do everything for it to be the right direction. We give study the biggest care, the biggest attention and we give to action the biggest energy. (...) To precipitate our course, we don’t need mirages of an imminent goal within reach. It suffices us to know that we’re moving... and that, if sometimes we reach a stalemate, we don’t get lost.”*

But ideas alone are not enough for us. To know that authority is our enemy, and that all who embody it is a target, from politicians to cops, from technocrats to officers, from capitalists to supervisors, from priests to snitches, is one thing. To project oneself into the necessary destruction of the social relations, the structures and the networks that allow them to exist, is something else. The communicating vessels of idea and action are at the heart of anarchism. So that ideas don’t wither, you need actions to invigorate them. So that actions don’t go round in circles, you need ideas to animate them. Ideas to corrode the mind-sets of obedience, the ideologies and submission. Actions to destroy the structures and persons of domination. And if it is always the time to act, to strike what exploits and oppresses, acting cannot be a simple conditioned reflex. It cannot be content with responding (re-acting) on a case by case basis with rage and vigour. So that acting really becomes to act – in a revolutionary and anarchist perspective – the initiative has to be ours, in an offensive that starts from our individualities, our imaginations, our analyses and our determination. Because to act is not a given and it doesn’t fall out of the sky, reflecting on how to act is indispensable. It is for this reason we have to bring again to the table the question of projectuality, our autonomous capacity to project ideas and actions directly into the field of the enemy. Waiting for “the people” - that hollow abstraction, here to substitute the deceased proletariat – to become conscious and to desire freedom, endeavouring to “educate”, doesn’t befit us. Not only because it wouldn’t work, but also because such a perspective is now totally obsolete (if it hasn’t already been always) in the face of a constant bombardment of minds and senses by domination. To advance gradually, struggle by struggle, social movement by social movement, towards the big moment where everything finally converges to announce the total upheaval, doesn’t suit us neither. If in every revolt against what is imposed upon us, is always dormant the potential of a challenge to everything beyond its starting point, too many checks, repetitions, channelling are at work inside this kind of social movements to prevent the dykes bursting and the unknown of subversion opening up.

That leaves us with – forgive us for going a bit fast – the possibility to act as anarchists, on our own. But in order to go much further than ourselves. Striking back is a basis, to elaborate a projec-

tuality to not only strike, but also to destroy the dykes of domination is an extension more than desirable. It is here that we enter again the spheres of insurrection; the perspective of making the dykes burst, of unleashing the evil passions as another said, of opening a rupture in time to strike more crushingly against the state and capital. Evidently there are no recipes for insurrection, in spite of the veiled calls of modern Leninists – recycling under less patched-up costumes the old recipe of the seizure of power (this time from the bottom-up). But having no recipes doesn't prevent us from reflecting on, putting to the test and exploring anti-authoritarian hypotheses; from a struggle against a specific project of authority to an autonomous intervention during a bout of social fever, from the paralyses of infrastructures that allow the daily reproduction of wage slavery to the bold and sudden upheaval against an enemy in the midst of a restructuring with an uncertain outcome. To experiment in one's own life these insurrectionary hypotheses on anarchist bases, even on a small scale (our own), takes us in any case far away from the tedious barracks of militancy, the same old guesswork about what "the people" think or not, about what "the milieu" does or doesn't do, far from the expectation of the next social movement, and so on and so forth. That means taking yourself the initiative of attack following your own approach and itinerary.

Conceiving of an insurrectionary and anarchist perspective leads us necessarily to the question of how to organize ourselves to advance on such a path. That labour unions, also the more or less libertarian, will not be appropriate instruments is rather obvious. Certainly so in the current times where old "communities" based on work have been neatly severed and dissolved by the advances of capital. The same goes for the formal anarchist organizations; with their branches, congresses, resolutions and initials. Maybe less evident is the fact that big assemblies (that are adorned with the adjective "horizontal") are also inappropriate. We're not denying the importance of open and contrary discussions inside struggles and revolts, and so the eventual interest to take part in them, but anarchists shouldn't confine themselves to participating in these moments of exchange, but also organize themselves outside of them. The best element to ensure the communicating vessels between ideas and actions, to formulate a real autonomy of action, is the affinity between individuals; mutual understanding, shared perspectives, willingness to act. Next, to develop more incisiveness, to expand possibilities, to elaborate a vaster projectuality, to coordinate efforts, to lend support to potentially crucial moments; there can grow between the affinity constellations – always depending on the necessities of a project – an informal organization. Meaning self-organized, without name, without delegation, without representation... And to be clear: informal organizations are also multiple, according to objectives. The informal method doesn't aspire to bring all anarchists together in a single constellation, but makes it possible to multiply coordinations, informal organizations, affinity groups. Their encounter can happen on the terrain of a concrete proposal, hypothesis or a precise projectuality. That makes all the difference between an informal organization with necessarily "vague and subterranean" outlines (so without being in search of the spotlights), and other types of fighting organizations for whom the most important is almost always the affirmation of their existence in the hope of influencing the events, giving indications on the path to take, being a force that is part of the power equilibrium. Informal organization projects oneself elsewhere: avoiding the attention of the guard dogs of domination, it exists only in the facts it fosters. In short, it doesn't have a name to defend or assert, only a project to bring about. An insurrectionary project.

So that is where we start over from. In this day and age where revolts hardly erupt and are more on the defensive than on the offensive, where war moves in parallel with the technological

caging of the world, where the control grid closes in on everyone and so also on anarchists, where the adherence of a lot of oppressed to the system is – as always – the best defence domination can arm itself with, we persist in wanting to propagate our ideas of freedom through a struggle without compromise with authority. Outside the well-trodden paths, by affinity and informal organization, conscious of the necessity of social revolution regardless if it seems close-by or far-away, to transform fundamentally the social relations on which this authoritarian society relies. To propagate ideas and echoes of destructive attacks against the structures and persons that embody oppression and exploitation, so as to open up insurrectionary horizons.

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