Anarchist Science

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Introduction

Gathered at an international congress in London in July 1881, within the founding framework of what was to become, for the next ten years or so, the anarchist 'party', the most representative forces and activists of the movement at that time voted, as their sole political programme for many years to come, on two major motions: one, which was stillborn, calling for the creation of an 'international information bureau', the other, of a scientific nature, the essence of which we may quote:

> "Whereas the A.I.T. has recognised the need to supplement verbal and written propaganda with propaganda by deed. Whereas, furthermore, the time for a general revolution is not far off […]. The Congress expresses the hope that the member organisations […] will kindly take the following proposals into account:
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> […] to spread, through our actions, the revolutionary idea and the spirit of rebellion […]. By moving beyond the legal sphere […] to take our action into the realm of illegality—which is the only path leading to revolution—it is necessary to employ means that are consistent with this aim.[…] As technical and chemical sciences have already served the revolutionary cause and are destined to serve it even more in the future, the Congress recommends that organisations and individuals […] place great emphasis on the study and application of these sciences, as a means of defence and attack."

Propaganda by 'deed', the imminence of the 'Revolution', the study and applications of "technical and chemical sciences": it is at the moment when anarchism establishes itself as a "party", as an indisputably "political" force, alongside "socialism" from which it separates itself, that the most modern "sciences" and "technologies" make their appearance in the libertarian project. An appearance that is neither incidental nor fleeting, since it defines the essence of the anarchist programme and strategy for a long time to come. An appearance which, by articulating (or blending?) "politics" and "science", the two great pillars of Western modernity, invites us to reflect on the relationship that anarchism maintains with this modernity.

It is significant that this appeal to 'facts' as an expression of reality, and to 'science' and 'technology' as 'means' for transforming it, should come from a movement which, moreover, regards 'freedom' as its *raison d'être*. Following Bruno Latour, one can indeed consider that modern Western society has been constructed, for the most part, from Erasmus to Sartre in philosophy (via Descartes, Kant, Husserl), and from the debate between Boyle and Hobbes to the proliferation of laboratories, machines and manipulations of all kinds in science and technology, on the idea of a clear separation between human freedom and the determinism of nature. In this dualistic construction of reality, which has dominated the West for three centuries, everything that exists should be divided into two "entirely distinct ontological zones: that of humans on the one hand, and that of non-humans on the other". On the one hand, the social and political world, "the free society of speaking and thinking subjects", deliberately defined by humans who enact laws and political constitutions; on the other, the "natural" world of "things", obviously unconscious of itself, yet mechanical and entirely subject to determinism. Undoubtedly, in this conception, man originates from this 'natural' world on which he still depends, both externally and internally. But it is by freeing himself from it that he becomes fully human; by setting himself in radical opposition to the nature that surrounds him, he is supposed to bring into being another world—one

that is qualitatively different, non-natural—the world of 'freedom' . This struggle of the human against the non-human (within and without us), of freedom against necessity, of spirit against matter, would thus constitute, for modern Western thought, the essential task of humanity, its way of becoming human, by imposing its dominion over nature, through science which enables us to master the laws of its determinism, and through technology which enables us to modify it and adapt it to human freedom.

It is this interpretation of anarchism – as an extreme and utopian manifestation of modern ideas – that we wish to discuss here.

Early Worker-anarchism and the Anarchist 'Party'

To grasp the meaning of 'propaganda by deed' and the particularly violent emergence of 'technical and chemical sciences' in the history of the libertarian movement, one must carefully consider the period during which this theoretical and practical appropriation of science took place: a span of some fifteen years, from the late 1870s to the mid-1890s. A relatively short period, often perceived by the historiography of the anarchist movement as a moment of aberration, a parenthesis quickly closed; whereas, in our view, it constitutes, on the contrary, a key moment in anarchism. To understand its working-class form, from its birth within the First International to its virtual disappearance in Spain in 1939. But also to understand the originality of an unclassifiable political current, to understand the strangeness of the relationship this movement maintained with modern conceptions of politics and science.

To the credit of the historiography of the libertarian movement, it is worth noting that "propaganda by deed" and the explosive use of chemicals were not the primary factors in the emergence of anarchism. They emerged at the end of an initial phase of development or foundation (within the International Workingmen's Association) that was far more calm and reassuring; once the frenzy of attacks and propaganda by deed had passed, the movement seemed to resume its course a few years later, as if nothing had happened. It is therefore worth recalling the forms taken by this first manifestation of anarchism as a political and social movement, and recalling how this movement, whilst giving no real hint of its future uses of science, nevertheless already had every reason to unsettle or confound a modern understanding of the relationship between science and politics, between human free will and the necessities of nature.

When anarchism emerged as a political movement in the late 1860s, it tended to take shape in two main types of groups:

- First and foremost, the trade and craft guilds of the First International. A form of organisation that was both entirely new (due to its revolutionary nature) and yet strangely archaic in the light of 'modern' political conceptions: because it was closely intertwined with the distinct identities of the 'trades' and the material and productive foundations of society; because it was directly linked, through work, to nature and its relationship with humankind (wood, iron, fire, stone, ink, flour, coal mining, etc.). "Miners", "bakers", "bronze gilders", "clockmakers", "founders", "cabinetmakers", "glassmakers"..., so many strongly characterised, specific, distinctive collective identities or individualities, which stand in opposition to the "modern" and democratic, abstract and individualistic model of the political groups emerging from the French Revolution. The concrete and distinct 'producer'

versus the abstract and uniform 'citizen'; the complex material expression of the great diversity of man's ties to nature versus a democratic ideal which, for a long time, in the very name of modern political concepts, refused to grant "legal" existence to this 'corporate' reality;

- Finally, the "secret society", which is just as perplexing: it cannot be reduced to a romantic relic of the conditions of political action in the first half of the 19th century, yet it does not conform to the modern form of "political parties". 'Secret', the association that Bakunin proposed to the first 'anarchists', certainly constitutes a circle of 'ideas', but one defined by its "intimacy", where the 'ideas', shared by a handful of members, also form a "unity", through a closeness of temperament and sensibility, following the explicitly "alchemical" model of "elective affinity". A spiritual and physical 'individuation', the Bakuninist affinity group is not, however, a 'sect' separated from the rest of society by the coherence of its programmes or its symbolic and disciplinary rituals. A new 'individuality', as Bakunin writes, of soul and body—or rather, 'the devil in the flesh'—the "intimate" circle of the early anarchists sought to be a hidden 'core', lying beneath corporate or local associations, devoid of any of the symbolic trappings of power. A "core" capable of "encompassing" and "engaging", within the "intimacy" of its members' conviction and energy, the full power of action and reflection of the "people", of the practices and ideas that the trade union or local organisations of the International otherwise express in their own way. A "core" capable, when the time comes, of unleashing popular "passions", of allowing them to spread spontaneously wherever possible, of preventing them from subsiding and an external state order from being re-established.

This initial phase of anarchism was short-lived. The Anti-Authoritarian International ceased to be a significant force by the mid-1870s. Left to their own devices by the decline of the labour movement and Bakunin's withdrawal and subsequent death, libertarian circles found themselves temporarily deprived of the revolutionary energy and purpose that had been their strength. It was then that anarchism, effectively reduced to the status of a 'party', of mere circles of political opinion, should (or could) have taken stock of this new situation: renouncing the intensity of clandestine action which no longer found around it the impetus and reasons to continue; to renounce the hopes it had placed in the forms of expression of the labour movement; to attempt to transform itself into a political organisation, to equip itself with a new material raison d'être. This is the path taken by most "socialist" currents at that time. It is the one that anarchism rejects, by embarking on a completely different path.

In fact, contrary to the label imposed by the circumstances, the anarchist 'party' that emerged briefly in Europe in the late 1870s did not adopt the forms of political organisation and action that were becoming the norm in most industrialised or industrialising countries at the time. Far from constituting a partisan and ideological crystallisation, a stable and self-contained focal point biding its time until better days, or a defined representative cog in the machinery of democratic opinion, the libertarian "party" is, in a completely different sense, nothing more than the provisional and unstable meeting point of two processes of "differentiation" which, through their direction and intensity, both serve to divert anarchism from modern models of political action and organisation.

A distinction that might initially be described as negative (or repulsive) on the 'socialist' side, through the rejection of electoralism and the transformation of the socialist workers' project

into national political organisations, conceived within the representative framework of nascent democracies. Across Europe, from 1880 onwards, significant factions of activists or local groups—previously members of socialist currents, either outside or subsequent to the first libertarian networks—tended to define themselves as anarchists: in Germany, from 1880, with the conversion to anarchism of social-democratic activists (J. Most, H. Stenzleit, J. Neve, J. Peukert…) and later by young autonomous socialists who would gather around the newspaper *Der Sozialist* (G. Landauer, P. Kampffmeyer…) ; in France, at the same time, on an even larger scale, where numerous local sections or groups provided a large part of the anarchist forces of the following years; but also in England with activists such as Frank Kitz or J. Lane, the "Socialist League" and, a little later, in London's Jewish "East End" district, around the newspaper Arbeter Fraint; in Italy, in 1891, with the creation of the "Partito socialista anarchico rivoluzionario"; in the Netherlands, at the same time, with the defection of one of the leading figures of the nascent social democracy, F.D. Nieuwenhuis. As Y. Lequin points out with regard to France: 'In practical terms, the anarchist movement emerged between 1880 and 1882 from the debate raging within the fledgling [Labour Party] over the issue of electoral participation'. For us, this debate is nothing particularly original and may seem of secondary importance, whereas in the 1880s it was absolutely essential. The significance of the anarchist refusal to vote is generally rather poorly understood; this stance is most often reduced to an abstract and timeless individual position, ultimately comparable to many other religious-style 'prohibitions'. But when, from 1880 onwards, within the social and political context of the time, many "socialists" rejected electoralism and declared themselves "anarchists", they effected a practical, theoretical and political break that took on an entirely different significance. Refusing to vote and, above all, to stand for election, led them to break radically with the entire democratic and legalist tradition derived from the English and French models and, even more fundamentally, to reject any separation between thought and action, the social and the political, reality and the idea, nature and culture, material necessities and human freedoms, things and signs; to break with 'representation', one of the foundations of modern Western thought:

- Political 'representation', and its natural tendency to assert itself as a stable, unitary power in its own right (particularly in the form of the state), and to transform itself, in defiance of the concrete diversity of human realities, into an authority of power and transcendent free will (Rousseau's 'general will');
- But also scientific and social 'representation' in all its forms, as was already being advocated (in a positive sense) by the trade unions and 'affinity' groups of the First International, or indeed as one of the key aspects of Proudhon's thought.

Hence the importance of the congress held in London in July 1881, which finally brought together the many revolutionary groups and organisations that were in the process of abandoning 'socialism' to become something else, and the first anarchist circles to emerge from the International. Initially reluctant, the Bakuninists turned out in large numbers (Kropotkin, Malatesta, Merlino, etc.). It was they who dominated the debates and secured the adoption of the extreme conclusions of their own transformation: the resolution on "propaganda by deed" and the "study of technical and chemical sciences". Thus, a socialist differentiation—rejecting and critical (rejection of electoralism, 'representation' and 'legality')—is countered by another, paradoxically far

more positive differentiation, specific to the Bakuninist networks, in the way they transformed themselves against the backdrop of the collapse of the First International.

Linked to the individual attacks of the early 1890s, "propaganda by deed" and "chemistry" have a bad reputation. And their disastrous effects on anarchism are now well established: for the anarchist "party", of course, which—coincidence or not—did not survive their implementation; for anarchism itself, which has long been identified, in the public eye, with violence, assassination, bombs and the "illegalism" of individual action. A bad reputation that ought, however, to be corrected, for it obscures the meaning of this second affirmation of anarchism, both before and after its long history.

Propaganda by the Deed

As its name suggests, 'propaganda by deed' represents, first and foremost, a radical transformation of the conventional understanding of 'propaganda' and, contrary to appearances, a particularly apt theoretical articulation of the approach taken by the early anarchist networks. The circumstances of its emergence are well known. It was Bakunin who first formulated the idea, without using the term, in 1873, in the Bulletin of the Jura Federation:

> "I am convinced that the time for grand theoretical speeches, whether written or spoken, is over. Over the last nine years, we have developed within the International more ideas than would be needed to save the world, if ideas alone could save it, and I challenge anyone to come up with a new one. The time for ideas is over; now is the time for facts and action."

Three years later, Malatesta and Cafiero, on the verge of launching an armed uprising in the Italian province of Benevento, returned to the fray – not with the word 'always' this time, but, as H. Becker points out, in a form that would become a 'classic formula' of 'propaganda by deed':

> 'The Italian Federation believes that insurrectionary action, intended to affirm socialist principles through deeds, is the most effective means of propaganda and the only one which, without deceiving or corrupting the masses, can penetrate even the deepest strata of society and draw the living forces of humanity into the struggle waged by the International.'

With Malatesta and Cafiero in prison, it was Costa, another Italian leader, who drew conclusions from the attempted insurrection in Benevento during a lecture given in Geneva in June 1877, where he used the expression 'propaganda by deed' for the first time; a phrase immediately adopted, in August, by P. Brousse for the French Federation of the Anti-Authoritarian International:

> 'The Idea will not be committed to paper, nor to a newspaper, nor to a painting; it will not be carved in marble, nor hewn in stone, nor cast in bronze: it will walk in the flesh, alive, before the people.'

Having thus found its way into the official positions of the Italian and French federations, the principle of "propaganda by deed" – together with its complementary focus on "technical

and chemical sciences" – was unofficially adopted at a private international meeting in Vevey in October 1880, eight months before being formally adopted, this time in the same terms, by the London Congress.

We have emphasised this lengthy genesis because it is significant. Whilst the idea of "propaganda by deed" met with immediate success amongst the most radical sections of the working classes in industrialised countries, it was not some haphazard, circumstantial invention that the anarchist "party"—somewhat demagogic and disorganised—simply adopted as its own. Largely spontaneous, against the backdrop of the great economic crisis of the late 1870s, it was also the product of intense reflection by the movement's leading theorists of the time—those who had been trained in the close-knit circles created by Bakunin, from Bakunin himself to Kropotkin, via E. Reclus, Malatesta, Cafiero, Costa… This development took time, and it was only once it had clearly matured and gained acceptance that it was finally put forward to all those who identified, albeit still vaguely, with the anarchist movement at that time.

Whilst identifying with an initial concept – the "insurrectionary act" of Cafiero and Malatesta, the "technical and chemical sciences" discussed at the Vevey and London meetings – "propaganda by deed" must not obscure the original impulse that gave it substance, nor the transformation that nascent anarchism thus wrought upon the word "propaganda". Isolated and weakened by the collapse of the workers' and revolutionary movement of previous years, reduced to a few circles with tiny membership, the anarchists refused to limit their "propaganda" to mere discursive content, to "ideas" that would then need to be "spread" through newspapers, speech, pamphlets, books, education and reasoning. They refused to separate and hierarchise the 'idea' as a logical and scholarly prerequisite, timeless, and its militant dissemination as a secondary and instrumentalised consequence. From 'propaganda'—that which must be propagated—the anarchist idea moves directly to 'propagare', 'to propagate through action', to the desire to foster a revolutionary and transformative force of which anarchism is, so to speak, merely the echo, the amplifier and the catalyst. Instead of being a mere ideological "message" emanating from the narrow circles of anarchism, it claims to find the bulk of its energy and its channels of transmission outside these circles, in the multitude of "facts" and "events" capable of expressing it. Instead of being trapped by the expressive and semantic poverty of political and utopian discourse, it suddenly acquires, by moving to the side of things, an infinite dimension: the repeated infinity of events capable, in their singularity, of expressing the "Idea"; the infinity of transformations of which this propaganda seeks to be the immediate vehicle. Commenting on P. Brousse's article, J. Maitron speaks of the "materialisation of the idea". Although ambiguous, the phrase is apt, however, as it captures well this programmatic and theoretical shift in anarchism, where the 'idea' ceases to express the truth of things (and thus to claim to act upon them), where it is the 'things', the 'situations', "events", but also the "action" and personal "energy" of anarchists, which are charged, by their very movement, with articulating the "Idea", with revealing to all how another world is possible, or rather, but it amounts to the same thing, how this "other" world revealed by "propaganda of the deed" is the only true world worth having, in contrast to the illusions and injustice of the one currently before our eyes. The truth and justice of life and reality, as opposed to the lies, illusions, death and injustice of words, signs and symbols. The negative critique of 'representative' socialism, which can only 'deceive' and 'corrupt the masses' through the artifice of its discursive and imaginary stagings, thus finds its affirmative counterpart in the 'insurrectionary fact', in the "acts" alone capable of "penetrating", beyond appearances and the deceptive

confusion of discourse and words, "into the deepest social strata", of "drawing" to themselves, beyond the deadly weakness of signs, "the living forces of humanity".

It is no accident that anarchism chooses to speak of "facts" when defining the mode of expression of its "propaganda". In the radical reversal that this word imposes on what had hitherto depended on reasoning and discourse, anarchism clearly seeks to draw on the science that provides it with this term. If, for anarchists, only "facts speak", as E. Coeurderoy wrote a few years earlier, it is because they are part of a "scientific" and materialist conception of reality, the most systematic exposition of which is found in the writings of Bakunin:

> 'What is the scientific method? It is the quintessential realistic method. It proceeds [...] from the observation [...] of facts [...] to ideas'. '[...] for man, there is no other way to ascertain the certain reality of a thing, a phenomenon or a fact, than to have actually encountered, observed and recognised them in their own integrity, without any admixture of fantasies, suppositions or additions from the human mind.'

And when Bakunin criticises the science of his time, it is, among other things, because it is not sufficiently 'materialist', because it still leaves too much room for 'metaphysics', for 'fantasy [...] rather than facts'.

But as demonstrated by the nature of the 'facts' selected or produced by anarchism, and by the involvement of those who identify with them or produce them, this libertarian, 'realist' and 'materialist' 'science' has little in common with the positivism of modern science. Anarchists and scientists do not perceive the same things and, above all, do not have the same relationship with what they perceive.

'The facts speak for themselves [...] Is it my fault if the facts do not work in favour of the legal establishment?' writes Cœurderoy. "Riots", 'insurrections', 'revolutions', but also much more modest and limited transgressions; anarchist 'facts' need not be spectacular to reveal the 'nothingness' of 'order', 'legality' and 'laws', whether 'social', "political" or 'scientific'. They derive their meaning and power from a completely different reality—banal and ordinary, fleeting and frequent, yet too ephemeral, immediate and apparent to be of interest to science. A reality that Bakunin calls the "inner being of things", in a striking reversal where the superficial becomes the most intimate, the exterior the interior, the "fleeting" and the "transient" the sole and enduring reality:

> "There truly exists in all things a side, or if you will, a kind of inner essence which is not inaccessible, but which is beyond the grasp of science. This is by no means the inner essence of which M. Littré speaks, along with all the metaphysicians, and which, according to them, constitutes the 'in-itself' of things and the 'why' of phenomena; on the contrary, it is the least essential, the least inner, the most outer, and at the same time the most real and the most fleeting, the most ephemeral aspect of things and beings: it is their immediate materiality, their real individuality, as it presents itself solely to our senses, and which no reflection of the mind can retain, nor any words can express".

The primacy of 'senses', the 'reality' of the 'fleeting', the 'external' and the 'immediate'—all of which lie radically beyond the scope of official 'science': Bakunin's formulations foreshadow, give or take a few years, Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols*:

> "The [apparent] world is the only one. The [true] world is merely a lie superimposed upon it. […] At present, we possess science only to the exact extent that we are prepared to accept the testimony of our senses […] Everything else is abortive, or pre-scientific: by which I mean metaphysics, theology, psychology, epistemology – or else a purely formal science, a theory of signs: such as logic, and that applied logic which is mathematics. In these, reality is never present […]."

Beyond his references to Hegel, and like Nietzsche, claiming to represent a new, authentic 'science' that foreshadows contemporary critiques of physics and mathematics, Bakunin returns to the Schelling of his youth. Inaccessible to the "mind", the "inner being of things", like Schelling's "subjectivity inherent in nature", irrevocably affirms the "excess of Being over the consciousness of Being". 'The fundamental substance of all life and all that exists', this 'over-being (übersein)', in the sense of 'surrealism', may well, for Schelling, be "frightening" and obey a 'barbaric principle'. There is nothing in it that can frighten or discourage the anarchist's fearlessness, for it belongs to another order and another perception. That aspect of "life" which, beyond the illusions of consciousness and modern science, permeates and constitutes us all, as it does all things:

> 'Life' alone 'relates to the living, sensitive, yet elusive and inexpressible aspect of things'.
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> "La science n'a affaire qu'avec des ombres […]. La réalité vivante lui échappe, et ne se donne qu'à la vie, qui, étant elle-même fugitive et passagère, peut saisir et saisit en effet toujours tout ce qui vit, c'est à dire tout ce qui passe ou ce qui fuit." .

The concept of 'life' is by no means mysterious here. Linked to the 'senses', it refers first and foremost, for both Bakunin and Nietzsche, to the 'movement', the 'action' and the 'becoming' of things and beings. Thus, in Bakunin's view:

> 'Such, then, is the nature of this inner being, which truly remains forever beyond the reach of science. It is the immediate and real being of both individuals and things: it is the eternally fleeting, the transient realities of eternal and universal transformation.'

For Nietzsche:

> '(The senses) do not lie at all. […] It is what we do with their testimony that introduces the falsehood of objectivity, substance and permanence. […] As long as the senses reveal becoming, impermanence and change, they do not lie.'

For Bakunin, as for Schelling or Nietzsche, the words 'life' and 'nature' have no vitalistic connotations. If, for Schelling, "there is no […] essential difference between organic Nature and inorganic Nature", and if, for Nietzsche, the "will to power" is inherent in every "force", be it "organic", "psychological", "moral" or "inorganic", the "life" of which Bakunin speaks—because it is synonymous with "movement", "action" and "ceaseless change"—applies equally to everything without exception:

> "In nature, everything is movement and action: to be means nothing other than to act. Everything we call the properties of things—mechanical, physical, chemical, organic, animal, and human properties—are nothing but different modes of action. […]

> It follows that every thing is real only insofar as it […] acts. […] This is a universal truth that admits of no exception and applies equally to the seemingly most inert inorganic things, to the simplest bodies, as well as to the most complex organisations: to the stone, to the simple chemical compound, as well as to the man of genius and to all intellectual and social things."

Anarchists and scholars do not perceive the same things. But this difference does not stem primarily from the 'object' perceived, or from the selection that each group is supposed to make from the world around them. More "intimately" or "truly", as Bakunin tells us, it lies in the nature of the relationship each person has with the world. Indeed, contrary to its claims of "objectivity", science too is caught up in the reality it elevates to the status of "fact"—a fixed, abstract and dead reality that so effectively justifies the "cruelty", "inhumanity", "oppression", "exploitation", "malfeasance", and the lack of "meaning" and "heart" in the laws and institutions that claim to account for it:

> "The rule of science and of men of science […] can only be powerless, ridiculous, inhuman, cruel, oppressive, exploitative and harmful. One might say of men of science, as such, what I have said of theologians and metaphysicians; they have neither sense nor heart for individual, living beings. One cannot even reproach them for this, for it is the natural consequence of their profession. As men of science, they have no business with, nor can they take an interest in, anything but generalities; anything but laws…"

And just like the individuality of the 'rabbit sacrificed to science':

> "Human individuality, just like that of the most inert objects, is equally elusive and, so to speak, non-existent to science. Therefore, individuals must guard themselves and protect themselves against it, lest they be sacrificed by it, like the rabbit, for the sake of some abstraction; just as they must guard themselves at the same time against theology, politics and jurisprudence, all of which share equally in this abstract nature of science."

A diagnosis that once again echoes Nietzsche:

> 'All that philosophers have been dealing with for millennia are nothing but mummified ideas; nothing real has come alive from their hands. These gentlemen, these idolaters of abstract notions, kill; they stuff their objects of worship; they put everything at mortal risk when they worship.'

To this false separation between the scholar and his object – a sign of the relationship of oppression and death that binds them – anarchism sets forth a wholly different relationship. Bakunin's "intimacy" or, for Schelling, the "subjectivity" of things (where "everything is I"), is everywhere, both within us and outside us. It constitutes a "medium of experience where there is no projection of consciousness onto everything, but rather the participation of my own life in everything and vice versa". Thus, for Bakunin, as for Schelling and, before them, Leibniz, one might say that the reality of the world lies entirely in man's gaze and power of perception, not

in what he sees and perceives, but in what enables him to see and perceive. If I can grasp the "intimacy of things" that eludes scientists and the "consciousness" of philosophers, it is because "nature perceives within me" . Yet this "nature" which enables me to perceive the "intimacy" of external realities is itself a matter of "intimacy", as "life" that grasps "life", as "movement" that grasps "movement", as "novelty" that grasps "novelty", through multiple forms of "subjectivities" or "individualities":

- The intensity of Bakuninist secret societies, and later affinity groups, with their tension and breakneck pace;
- The much slower intensity, of varying degrees, found in trade associations and guilds;
- The intensity of 'strikes', riots and insurrectionary movements;
- But also the instantaneous intimacy of 'individual' perception and reflection, where, being sufficiently 'sensitive' to one's 'immediate materiality' and 'real individuality', one can, as Schelling believed, access "pre-reflective Being", and then express it in the form of actions, but also of poems, speeches and writings which are then transformed into actions and cries, into material forces.

> 'Look! How nervous and pale they are, these seekers of ideas, these men gnawed by ambition, consumed by pride and petty jealousies.' 'Do not expect from them any genuine feeling, any original style, or any independent judgement.'

To the false, disinterested neutrality of scholars, consumed from within by the 'void' of ambition and rivalry; to the forced 'modesty' of their demeanour; to the apparent simplicity imposed upon them by their claims to objectivity, E. Coeurderoy can set against another way of being, in which words and writings express directly, without shame or hypocrisy, the power and affirmation of anarchist subjectivity:

> 'This book is me […] I don't believe in modesty […] to write, I need to feel things deeply.' "Why do I have only one head and ten fingers that tire so quickly? I'd like to say everything at once, but there's so much to say;… I don't have time to be thorough. […] An irresistible force compels me to say quickly and confusedly what must happen quickly and confusedly."

An overflowing 'subjective' power that depends just as much on the 'outside' as on the unstable and temporary space in which it asserts itself:

> "As long as there is a brain beneath the bones of the skull, and ore in the bowels of the earth, man will overcome the fear that public opinion instils in him, and will write. […] There are times when, more than ever, man needs to shed light on his surroundings through his voice, his thoughts, and the brilliance of his deeds; this is when societies, seized by convulsions, rush from riot to riot towards a profound revolution. Then the rostrums tremble beneath the words of Mirabeau and Danton; the paper glows beneath the pens of Camille and Marat; secret societies criss-cross the land, and thought circulates through the air with the speed of lightning."

In the reversal of meaning that "propaganda by deed" imposes on the word "propaganda" – on what it used to denote in terms of practices and one's relationship to the world – words, speeches, writings and symbolic forms do not disappear. They, too, change in nature. From being "representative", they become "expressive". And if "facts" begin to speak, words themselves become "acts". As J. Déjacque wrote as early as 1857:

> "This book is not written with ink; its pages are not sheets of paper. This book is steel forged in octavo and charged with the fulminate of ideas. It is a self-destructing projectile that I hurl a thousand times upon the pavement of civilized society. May its shards fly far and wide and mortally pierce the ranks of prejudice. May the old society crack to its very foundations! This book is not a writing, it is an act. [...] it is forged with heart and logic, with blood and fever. It is a cry of insurrection, a tocsin struck with the hammer of the idea in the ear of popular passions. [...] This book is hatred, it is love."

When Peter Kropotkin, in 1880, called for "permanent revolt through speech, through writing, through the dagger, the rifle, dynamite [...] everything is good for us that is not legality," "speech" and "writing" held no special status compared to the "dagger," the "rifle," or "dynamite." They too were weapons—ballistic or explosive instruments, acts carrying all the movements they sought to instill in bodies and minds.

Yves Lequin perceptively captures the originality of anarchist discourse and its means of expression when he shows how "anarchists are also—and perhaps above all—men of the word," a word that mobilizes "the language of emotion," of indignation and anger.

Louise Michel, on each of her tours, drew considerable crowds who marched through the streets to welcome her at the station, as in Lyon in 1897; crowds that vibrated, were moved, and grew exalted by her speeches—when they did not set off again to turn meetings into riots, as in Vienne in 1890.

When the press, commenting on Jean Grave's intervention at the congress of the "Parti Ouvrier" held in Paris in 1880, spoke of "dynamite speeches," it quite aptly defined the meaning of anarchist writings and speeches of that period: incendiary texts in which, to barely parody the most modern linguistics, "to speak is to act," as underscored in 1888 by the reproduction in the Le Havre newspaper aptly named L'Idée Ouvrière of a poster displayed on all the city's walls:

> "You who are exploited and robbed daily; you who produce all the wealth of society; you who are weary of this life of misery and brutalization, REVOLT! Laborer, burn down the industrial prison! Strangle the guard! Beat down the sergeant who arrests you! Spit in the face of the magistrate who condemns you! Hang the landlord who throws you out onto the street during your lunch break! Barracks prisoner, run your bayonet through your superior! Butcher of the people! Future master murderer!
>
> Convicts of all kinds, slit your bosses' throats! Take the liberating knife from your pockets! Plunder! Burn! Destroy! Annihilate! Purify!
>
> "LONG LIVE THE REVOLT! Long live the fire, death to the exploiters!
>
> [The Executive Committee]"

Anarchist Chemistry

From the "point of view" of the new forms of libertarian "intimacy" or "subjectivity" that took shape at the end of the 1870s, and with the notable exception of the intense but brief insurrectionary episode of Benevento insurrection, "propaganda by the deed" remained above all a largely literary experience in which, as with Joseph Déjacque and Ernest Cœurderoy, only words and cries of anger were "acts" and "authoricidal projectiles"; an act of "vision" and an "alchemy of the word," all the more brief and unstable because it had nothing but words, ink, and paper with which to convey the intensity that ran through it.

Hence the importance of the sudden discovery of the virtues of "chemistry" as a new expressive register, pending the moment when riots, insurrections, strikes, direct action, and the renewal of the workers' movement would allow anarchism to unfold in other ways and on an entirely different scale. "Chemistry" did not merely, as if by miracle, give propaganda by the deed a material and symbolic expression capable, for some fifteen years, of responding to the isolation and extreme concentration of libertarian spaces. By blending "science" and "politics," "nature" and "culture"—realities that modern thought had taken such care to separate—it managed to connect and express the whole of the libertarian experience and history: that of the past, of the International Workingmen's Association, as well as that of what was to come, namely anarcho-syndicalism.

Paradox of anarchist chemistry: the London resolution, by privileging the "explosive" virtues of the most modern science—far from affirming any "scientistic" naïveté about humanity's power over nature, distance, control, and the responsibility afforded by science and its technical applications—on the contrary exploits the properties of this rapidly developing science to produce a new mixture, exorbitant and monstrous.

"Illegal," both in its use and in its destructive powers, disrespectful of order, classifications, and divisions, anarchist chemistry—by invading the political sphere—paradoxically seeks, through the most recent scientific advances, to "naturalize" the socialist project. In this inflection of the libertarian program, the Mikhail Bakunin-inspired "Revolution," excessive and violent, most often conceived along the millenarian model of old peasant uprisings—of "instinct," "passion," and "life," of the sudden and savage destruction of the existing order—does not lose its natural character.

On the contrary, with dynamite, the terrifying powers of nitroglycerin, and the contemporary fascination with a wide range of explosive techniques, the anarchist Revolution finally finds its most fitting and suggestive expression, the one most capable of conveying—almost without words—its dimension as a cosmic cataclysm.

Thanks to the symbolic and physical properties of chemistry, and to the striking nature of its applications, "propaganda by the deed" can at last give concrete form, in a concentrated and immediate way, to the "materialization of the idea" of which Jean Maitron spoke in relation to the text by Paul Brousse—no longer merely as a consequence (the "idea" that "materializes"), but as the immediate and effective revelation of the "material" and "explosive" nature of the anarchist "Idea."

Indeed, the strength and self-evidence of "chemistry" as a theoretical and programmatic expression of the international anarchist movement do not rest solely on the powerful symbolic charge carried by this science. They are also tied to its practical and concrete dimensions: to the implementation of the attacks to come, of course; to the speed and simplicity of a gesture that derives all its meaning from the magnitude of its effects and from the extreme concentration of

physical and individual "energy" it requires; but also, in a much more widespread and diffuse way, to the ever-renewed "dream" of "explosions" that its very possibility allows, to the "chemical" preparations that give reality to this dream, to the manipulations and experiments that, for several years, mobilize a large number of anarchists, transforming them into "chemists," or rather into "alchemists" of the social Revolution.

Let us listen to Jean Grave:

> "At the group of the 5th and 13th [arrondissements], there came a comrade named Bayout, who was a laboratory assistant at the School of Agriculture on Rue de l'Arbalète. Making dynamite was one of the fads of the moment. I had always been drawn to chemistry. Bayout became my supplier of chemical products, test tubes, and everything needed to compete with Alfred Nobel, for I had set my mind on manufacturing nitroglycerin [...] the headaches I got! for the operation always ended with the release of thick, yellowish fumes that caught in your throat. [...]
> At last, through patience and persistence, instead of giving off its usual share of fumes, my mixture remained clear, and I saw, settling at the bottom of the vessel, a liquid of a fine golden yellow [...] it was nitroglycerin! I was on the right track. I moved on to another task. I needed to produce mercury fulminate. The same difficulties arose, the same setbacks. [...] It was only after hundreds of experiments that I saw the crystals of fulminate deposit at the bottom of the jar. But I was eager to test it. I dried the product in a dish on the stove lid [...] and, going into the corridor, I let the whole thing fall. [...] It was like a cannon shot—a small cannon—that went off [...].
> Proud of my results, I shared them with two comrades, Rozier and Seigné, and I passed on my equipment to them when I left for Switzerland."

Repeated "more than a hundred times," the chemical "experiments" of a militant as "serious" and representative of anarchism in the 1880s–1890s do more than merely absorb, for a time, most of his energy and activist efforts. Strictly speaking "in the laboratory," they stand in, if not for the "Revolution" itself, then at least—on a reduced scale, amid smoke and headaches—as an initiation into the Revolution and its explosive character.

After having concentrated nitroglycerin at the bottom of a flask, in the form of "a liquid of a fine golden yellow," Jean Grave can be content, in order to express the symbolic and real power with which it is charged, to fire a "small" "cannon shot" in the attic corridor of the servants' quarters where he lives, before leaving for Switzerland to take on other militant tasks.

Instantaneous in its effects, charged with expressing all the hopes of an irrevocable and definitive act, all the fears and all the hopes of an individual will confronted with life and death, bearing in its very materiality the idea of an "explosion" of the world order, of a radical restructuring of the particles that compose it, the anarchist "bomb" and its development cease to be purely technical operations. Indifferent to modern conceptions of science and politics, anarchist "chemistry" takes on meaning on the dual register of metaphor and practical action. Symbolic and real, it is imbued with an infinite meaning where the local, the individual, and the directly manipulable provide the visible counterpart to the idea and the desire for revolution, where Science and Society, Technology and Social Transformation, Explosion and Revolution, like the Taoist liujia, take up temporary residence in the "test tube" of each dynamiter. Like the "trade guilds" of the First

International and the future "direct action" syndicalism, anarchist "science" ceases to adhere to the division between culture and nature, between ideal freedom and material necessity. Alchemical in nature, it seeks to reunite what had been separated: humanity and nature, idea and matter, purely technical, utilitarian operations and the mystical yearning for a radical transformation of the world. Like alchemy, it seeks to compress space and time into a single, immediate act: space, in the minute operation of a mixture of nitroglycerin and mercury fulminate capable, through "propagation," of utterly transforming the order of the world and society; time, in the messianic certainty that the moment of this act corresponds to that of history, that the Revolution is near, that the hour of the "Great Night" has arrived.

In this alchemical reduction of "propaganda by the deed" and "Revolution," the strange form that anarchism takes does not break with the movement of previous years. It is its extension, particular but direct, as a new "expression" of the idea and powers of revolution, but also, more surprisingly and paradoxically, in the realm of libertarian identity and its link with the working-class and popular forces that had asserted themselves at the time of the First International. The symbolic and physical powers of chemistry not only allow the new anarchist wave of the 1880s to accept the collapse of the International without discouragement, to remain indifferent to the minority and often misunderstood nature of its actions, but also to give substance to the imminence of the Revolution, to the possibility of "provoking" and "precipitating" it, in the double chemical and temporal sense of the word. They also allow it, through the destructive and, strictly speaking, demiurgic or "diabolical" role it assigns itself, to forge a social and working-class identity in continuity with previous forms of grouping. Indeed, if this new identity of solitary "dynamiters" of the old world is not contested by anyone, it naturally finds its place in the working-class and popular context of the time. As Yves Lequin points out:

> "Anarchy becomes the mysterious force of social vengeance, carrying with it all the irrational element inherent in the endeavor. In fact, in its own way it is prophetic and tinged with messianic overtones, where the announcement of the Times is dressed in the scientific guise of a cyclical philosophy of History. […] This community of the heart partly explains why encounters occur more often than one might think—except when the dynamite speaks too loudly."

Even the most moderate labor leaders are forced, publicly, to acknowledge the legitimacy of a violent, minority anarchist practice. As in 1886, the "independent socialist" deputy Camélinat, when he formulated how the general public, likely to elect him, might perceive anarchist action:

> "Anarchists have their reason for being, because in today's society there are also demolition crews, to make way for new constructions. If they are sincere, they may well be the demolition crews of today's society […]".

By temporarily ceasing to be "watchmakers," "shoemakers," or "masons," anarchists do not erase themselves behind a purely ideological, abstract, and timeless identity. They do not in any way abandon the material or natural, "productive" reference that had until then served as the foundation for the development of the revolutionary workers' movement. For a few years, they acquire only a new professional identity, widely recognized by the broader working-class opinion: that of the "demolishers" mentioned by Louis Camélinat, that of the alchemist "blacksmiths,"

celebrated by Eugène Pottier in *The Internationale*, and for a time embodied in the modern and mysterious condition of the "chemist."

It is significant that at the congress of the French Federation of the Anti-Authoritarian International, held in Bern in 1876, two of the five members of the Administrative Commission, Ch. Alerini and Paul Brousse (who was also a physician by profession), identified themselves as "chemists" (alongside a "plumber," a "painter," and a "founder").

"Study chemistry!" wrote the mechanic Henri Tricot during a meeting in Roanne in 1883. Like Jean Grave, most anarchist militants of the time discovered a vocation as "chemists," and almost all libertarian newspapers of the 1880s featured a regular column devoted to this science.

The bombs and dynamite, moreover, represented only the most spectacular (and dangerous) aspect of a wide array of chemical means intended to manifest Revolutionary Justice. In September 1883, Le Drapeau Noir published the "Manifesto of the French Nihilists," which shared all the recipes it had developed to "poison the bosses"—from "patches of corrupted meat" and "hemlock" to the "extract" of "saturn," the old alchemical name for lead, said to "devour" "gold" and "silver." This call was by no means merely circumstantial, since three years earlier a first manifesto had already proposed its poisons (notably a maceration of lead in vinegar) to achieve the "gradual and successive weakening of all the representatives of that accursed brood" (the bourgeoisie).

Poisons, dynamite, phosphorus, "mineral spirits," and petroleum for setting fire to warehouses, barracks, homes, haystacks, churches, factories, or even simply ballot boxes on election days—alongside the more traditional daggers and pistols—thus form a vast array of technical means which, by their particular nature in each case, are both in a relation of specific and mysterious affinity with the temperament of each anarchist and, taken together, with the totality of a renewal of nature.

As the newspaper L'En-Dehors wrote in the early 1890s:

> "We want to give free rein to our pity, our outbursts, our tenderness, our rages, our instincts."

Each person must therefore find their own path, in a relationship where, as another text from 1887 explains, freedom and the necessity of "temperament" form a single reality:

> "Let us boldly set to work [underlined in the text], let each of us act freely according to our temperament and our way of seeing, by fire, dagger, poison, let each blow struck in the bourgeois social body make a deep wound!"

Pending the general conflagration of the Revolution and the general recomposition of reality:

> "One day, the horizon—darkening more and more under the opaque and heavy clouds of hatred, one day across all points of the globe—will ignite with the great red glow of the Insurrection. And all the sufferings endured, all the humiliations and servitudes borne, all the restrained rages, all the accumulated anger—all of this will finally burst forth in a colossal explosion […]. A complete and sublime revenge where, upon the ruins of the past, at last will shine, majestic and clear, the radiant star of Liberty."

"Chemist", "doctor of civilization" or, more modestly, "pharmacist of humanity", the working-class anarchist of the 1880s-1890s could thus identify with "Père La Purge", the character of a song famous in French working-class and libertarian circles of that period:

> "I am the old Father Purge
> Pharmacist of humanity. […]
> I have what's needed in my shop,
> I have thunder and lightning,
> To wash away the whole gang,
> The starvers of the universe."

General Strike and Direct Action

In its systematic and dominant form, anarchist interest in chemistry was short-lived, lasting only about a decade; in France, this period extended and came to an end amid the upheaval of the bombings of 1892–1910. As early as 1888, the libertarian press ceased to promote it, before some of its publications began to multiply calls for collective action and joining trade unions. Generally interpreted by the historiography of the anarchist movement in modern terms of political-strategic choice and free, voluntary action—in terms of "effectiveness" and "correction"—the apparent abruptness of this shift tends to obscure the broad continuity within which it occurred. A continuity reaching far back, of course, to the trade union and workers' forms of the First International; but also an immediate continuity with propaganda by deed and its most explosive manifestations.

J. Maitron is wrong to be surprised that a revolutionary syndicalist journal as moderate as *La Révolution Prolétarienne* could, many years later, celebrate the decisive role that anarchist attacks allegedly played in the rebirth and development of the labor movement in France. As early as 1907, P. Monatte identified revolutionary syndicalism as the direct heir to propaganda by deed, "since anarchist dynamite has […] silenced its grandiose voice." If "direct action" succeeds "propaganda by deed" in the thought and discourse of the labor movement, and if the call for a "general and insurrectionary strike" takes over from the explosive power of chemistry, this is merely a new metamorphosis of the libertarian project, in which the elements shift in place and meaning but continue to form a (truly astonishing) blend of signs and reality, "force" and "idea," science and politics.

First, the general strike. When, in August 1888, Joseph Tortelier, at a Paris rally, first emerged as the "propagandist" of the "general strike" alongside Louise Michel and Malato, he did not break with either the intensity or the spirit of the movement that had driven him up to that point:

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Within the Parisian carpenters' union of the Seine, the organizer of the 1883 unemployed workers' demonstration that was to loot several bakeries, whose newspaper, *La Varlope*, offered its readers a scientific column on chemistry and "anti-bourgeois" substances;

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Within the anarchist group "La Panthère des Batignolles," which had placed "the manufacture of hand grenades" on the agenda of its first meeting, and to which the famous "illegalist" and burglar Clément Duval belonged.

In the context of the workers' resurgence at the end of the 1880s, the General Strike, as a call for revolt and an aspiration for an immediate and radical transformation of the world order, constitutes nothing more than a recomposition of the anarchist approach of the preceding years. It is a "reversal," no longer just of the explosive "cauldron" of the dynamiters, but of the site and the nature of the metaphorical and real ingredients that composed it.

With the "Revolutionary General Strike" (the "great evening" of popular imagination), the reality and political and social meaning of anarchist chemistry are inverted. The revolutionary meaning of the anarchist bomb becomes a reality in the intense mobilization and concentration of working-class forces preparing for the general strike. Its chemical and explosive reality, on the other hand, takes on the political meaning of a strategy and project conceived as a form of social "explosion," of "a revolution from everywhere and nowhere," "suddenly bursting forth" like "lightning."

As Fernand Pelloutier wrote, the "dynamite" of collective action comes to replace the "individual dynamite" of attacks. The anarchist bomb ceases to represent social revolution, and it is social revolution itself that takes the floor to express the physical and chemical discourse of nitroglycerin and fulminate.

Later, the idea of "direct action" undoubtedly represents a relative relaxation in relation to the extreme tension and explosive imminence of the general strike—a consideration of time and the establishment of a period of waiting and preparation for the revolution. However, it is also a way to reconnect with the original inspiration of *propaganda by the deed* and preserve the dual nature, both physical and alchemical, that it had assumed during the 1880s. The definition by Émile Pouget is significant:

> "Direct action, a manifestation of working-class strength and will, materializes—depending on the circumstances and the environment—through acts that can be very trivial, just as they can be very violent. It is simply a question of necessity. There is, therefore, no specific form of Direct Action." [Emphasis added by us].

It is not without reason that common perception has associated "direct action" with violence, as a continuation of the "propaganda by the deed" of previous years. As a "manifestation of working-class strength and will," direct action has no "specific form." From the most "trivial" to the most "violent," anything can give it substance, can "materialize" it. And it is in this sense—"informal," without limits, without an assignable political or meaningful content—that it acquires precisely a political significance, becoming "the symbolic expression of workers' revolt," the "flag" and principal "slogan" of the Confédération Générale du Travail (C.G.T.).

But this emptiness and apparent vagueness should not be misleading. Open to the infinite range of possibilities, direct action may well move beyond the confined and focused realm of explosive preparations and individual attacks, extending to a multitude of "acts," "deeds," and "events." It does not break with the alchemical tightness of "propaganda by deed." It remains bound to a specific "intimacy" or "subjectivity": the syndicate, the object of all suspicion under the law, a "focal point" capable of perceiving, concentrating, and amplifying to the nth degree the meaning and energy necessary for the expansive nature of direct action.

Although written quickly and in response to specific circumstances, the texts by the leading figures of revolutionary syndicalism nevertheless allow us to grasp the sequence (which can be simultaneous and reversible) of transformations in which the union acts as the "agent"; in a process of exchange and transformation, of internalization and externalization, very similar to that which had guided the development of "propaganda by deed."

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A foundational operation first of all: the union must imperatively free itself—through "conflict" and rupture—from the symbolic traps of law and representation, from the dilution and flattening (discursive, legal, and rational) of negotiations with the state and employers. It must refuse to be the "intermediary," the "business agent" of workers' interests, or the "interposed person" who, by virtue of being a "neutral and objective" representative—instrumental and transparent—separates what it claims to unite, indefinitely defers and multiplies every relation, transforms the "bond" it proposes into "chains" and constraints, and forbids any direct "association" or effective "combination of physical, intellectual, and natural forces." Refusing to unfold on the falsely rational and transparent stage of law and representation, the union must not only retreat into the "irregularity," the "diversity," and the apparent "incoherence" of "working-class life," but, fold within fold, include and involve itself in its sole intimacy as an "autonomous group."

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The paradox and power of this double retreat lie in the fact that it enables the union to accomplish a first "task": to "express" "working-class life," to become the "platform" and "echo" of the "worker's intimate concerns." The word "echo" is important because it conveys the "expressive" role of the union. If, separated from a symbolic order that seeks to capture and distort it, the union can "express" the "working-class life" that surrounds it, it is primarily because, thanks to the autonomy of its preserved "intimacy" and the focus this entails, it becomes capable of perceiving this "life," of concentrating it, of being sufficiently "sensitive," as Bakunin wished, to the "worker's intimate concerns," so as to reflect their meaning and reality.

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As an "echo" and "platform" of "working-class life," because it is a "living and vibrant agglomerate" endowed with the "vitality" and "influence" corresponding to its "organism," the union can then accomplish a second, almost alchemical task: to unite and confront others; to extend its singular intimacy to those other singularities represented by industrial unions and unions of unions (chambers and federations); to enrich its own power through this union and confrontation; and thereby to produce a "higher social life," "a social life that [...] generates action," enabling the multiplication of the effects of a final metamorphosis.

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To "bring to light" the life-force thus created and accumulated, to "develop" it outwardly, "in manifestations of struggle" where, in forms that are always new, singular, and repeated, this "life" "takes shape and materializes," "hardening" the proletariat as a whole "in view of a supreme struggle that will be the revolutionary general strike [...] the formidable movement that will bring the conscious proletariat face to face with exploitation."

A "laboratory of economic struggles," in the words of F. Pelloutier, the union thus becomes the new alchemical crucible of social revolution where, like the "quarryman" shaping his stone, the "miner" seeking metals, the "proletarian," through his "manipulations" and "preparations," "uses the forms of action carried by the movement, [...] extracts them, externalizes them." Or, in a more impersonal way, using the modern scientific vocabulary of "information" and "electro-

magnetism" employed by G. Simondon, one could say that the libertarian union—like the trade chambers of the First International, secret societies, affinity groups, chemical preparations, and acts of sabotage—is designed in the form of an "information tension," an "arrangement capable of modulating much greater energies." In a "pre-revolutionary" context, "a state of oversaturation," "where an event is ready to occur, where a structure is ready to emerge," it becomes capable "of traversing, animating, and structuring a varied domain, increasingly varied and heterogeneous domains," "of propagating" through them; or, in a manner recalling Proudhon's analyses, of "ordering them."

"Sabotage," "boycott," and the proliferation of "partial strikes" as "stimulation," as "healthy exercise" , or any other form of "struggle" and "action," can then, from within their very essence, open up to the infinity of time and space of the revolution, "rehearsing" the final explosion with increasing intensity. Conscious minorities and enslaved masses, the narrow localism of organizations and the vast expanse of society, immediate action and final transformation cease to be unrelated, incommensurable. As Émile Pouget writes, "daily struggle" and "preparatory work for the future" are no longer "contradictory." Thanks to the "incomparable plasticity" of "direct action," "the organizations enlivened by its practice" can finally "live the passing hour with all possible combativeness, sacrificing neither the present to the future, nor the future to the present":

> "Until the general uprising! Until the day when the working class, having prepared the final break within its ranks, having been hardened by constant and increasingly frequent skirmishes against its class enemy, is powerful enough to launch the decisive assault […] Direct Action taken to its extreme: the General Strike!"

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