Various Authors
Willful Disobedience Volume 3, number 4
2002

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What can be said of the destruction of houses and entire villages, again something that was practiced against the Jews (specifically, by English soldiers)? What can be said about all the dead — women, children, old people — that could surely not be included in the media stereotype of the fanatical terrorist extolling holy war?

As is clear, there are not many alternatives in the face of the massacre that is going on: either the silence of consent, which is at the same time the result and the guarantee of social peace, or the questioning that springs from dissent. But, if it is carried to its conclusion, to its extreme consequences, what will this questioning leave us? Will we be able to listen to the answers?

Contents

of our own dispossession and our desire to take back our lives and of the common enemy we share with the exploited people of Mexico and of the world.

Excerpt from *Fawda*

Let's admit it. Upon hearing the news that comes out of the Palestinian territories, the word that continually comes out of our mouth is not the same one that first comes to our mind. At most, our tongues say extermination — ruthless and sometimes methodical destruction and suppression of a large number of people — while our brain thinks genocide — the methodical destruction of an ethnic, racial or religious group, carried out through the extermination of individuals and the annihilation of cultural values. Genocide is much more than extermination. But this is a term that we somehow refuse to use, because its use in such a context would undermine the foundations of many of the certainties on which we have built our world, its tranquility and its prosperity.

How can we call that which the Sharon government has undertaken genocide after being told over and over again so many times that genocide is an atrocity of the past, fruit of the worst obscurantism, that could not find legitimacy in a Western democracy (as, in conclusion, Israel is)? And then, having been victims of the genocide carried out by the Nazis, having suffered infamous persecution, how could Jews today, who recognize themselves in Israel, wear the butcher's apron and do to others what they were forced to suffer in the past? All this comes into conflict with our security, with our need for order, with our cogent bookkeeper's logic that determines our quiet bookkeeper's existence. The tranquility of our sleep and of our affairs requires it, state propaganda confirms it: there is no genocide under way in Palestinian territories, there is only a hunt without quarter in the face of cruel terrorists that, due to circumstances that are as tragic as they are fatal, is having harsh repercussions for the civilian population as well. But if this is how things are, what can be said about the numbers tattooed on Palestinian prisoners, a chilling reiteration of one of the most nauseating Nazi practices?

government release their imprisoned comrades in exchange for the hostages, threatening to kill them if the state did not do so. On July 15, the state freed the imprisoned protesters and the protesters released the hostages.

But in early August, the real victory took place, when the federal government of Mexico backed down on its plans to build the airport that would have displaced 14 peasant communities. While certain members of the local bourgeoisie, like hotel owner Antonio Nieto whose pocketbook would have been fattened by the airport, complain about the "criminal" acts of the protesting farmers, poor peasants and indigenous people all over Mexico are taking inspiration from the practice of the Atenco farmers. In addition, the farmers, used to more then ten months of autonomous self-organization plan to permanently make Atenco an autonomous town, the first outside of Chiapas, refusing to recognize state and federal government. In addition, the protesters do not see this victory as the end of the struggle, but plan to go on struggling against the Plan Pueblo-Panama that calls for massive development of new highways, airports, train lines and power plants throughout Mexico and Central America, certain to uproot he numbers of people from their traditional ways of life. Already, Atenco protesters are helping poor farmers in a land protest near Acapulco who have occupied land taken from them with only nominal compensation to build tourist facilities in the Diamond Point region. And the farmers of Atenco are encouraging other peasants to follow their example in their struggles.

The official press argues over whether this was "a victory for democracy" or "a victory for mob rule". In fact, it was neither, but rather a victory for direct action and self-organized ongoing resistance, which still continues. Where this will lead, what level of awareness will be achieved by those in struggle, whether this movement will end up being hijacked by one or another of the various "radical" left groups ready to ride to power on the back of popular resistance or will itself choose a more decentralized path that nonethe less does not question capital and the state at their core, cannot be predicted. For now, let's seek ways of expressing solidarity in our struggles against our own dispossession and exploitation, not the methods of uncritical support, but ways that express our recognition

A Few Words: *On the Aims and Methods of Critique*

The development of a coherent anarchist practice based on our desire to take back our lives requires the ongoing use of critical analysis on all levels. But, as with the totality of anarchist practice, critique is only useful when one is clear about the aims of the practice and develops methods consistent with those aims. Here as in all other areas of practice, our means need to embody our ends.

For the sake of simplicity and clarity, we can speak of three general areas in which critical analysis is necessary: 1) the critique of the present society, of the institutions, systems and relationships that produce and maintain domination and exploitation; 2) historical critique, the critical examination of struggles, insurrections and revolutionary theory and practice of the past; and 3) the critique of the ideas and practices of the contemporary anarchist movement.

The critique of the present society, of the institutions and relationships of domination, has a very simple aim, that of achieving an understanding of our enemy that is sufficient for the project of destroying it and opening the possibility for free and self-determined living. The method best suited to this aim is one of incisive, iconoclastic attack. Slogans and simplistic proclamations are not enough. It is necessary to examine the practices of the state, capital and all the other institutions of domination deeply. This examination needs to start from our desire to take back our lives as individuals and develop relationships based on free association, and the consequent necessity to reappropriate life on the social level as well. This means examining the ways in which the ruling institutions penetrate into and come to define our daily lives. In fact, the examination of daily life is of primary importance, because this is where one can develop an ongoing practice of conflict with the forces of domination, discovering the weak points that one can attack as an aspect of living one's life. This is also where one could meet those individuals who may not call themselves anarchists or revolutionaries, but who consistently live in defiance against this ruled existence and so may prove

to be the most trustworthy of accomplices in revolt. Of course, in the development of this critique, we can make use of a myriad of tools, including those which we steal from such academic and scientific pursuits as anthropology and philosophy. But these should never become models for a future society or the center of our critique. If they do, they become ideological chains rather than critical tools of our desire to reappropriate our lives and transform existence in terms of our needs desires and aspirations.

The aim of an anarchist historical critique is to reappropriate the history of the struggle against domination as an unfinished task, to examine the insurrections and revolutions of the past as part of our ongoing struggle so that what can grasp what is useful from them. The appropriate method for carrying this aim out is the demystification of history. I do not mean by this the replacement of "objectively" false visions of the past with "objectively" true ones. Rather I mean the transformation of our conception of history. The "History" that we were taught in school is a string of events (often perceived as a progression) placed on display like exhibits in a museum. Whether "accurate" or not, this represents a mystification in the fullest sense of the word, because it defines History as a thing above us that cannot be touched. The most common radical response to this view is that developed by certain Marxists and Hegelians in which the hand of History is not the dead past, but a determined and inevitable future. Since this also places history above us in a sacred, untouchable realm, it is still a mystification. The demystification of history is the recognition that it is nothing more nor less than the activity of human beings doing what is necessary to create their lives and world. Because this activity is mostly unconscious, the rulers are able to control it in their own interests and create the mystified history that supports their continued control. Insurrections are moments when the apparatus of historical mystification breaks down and people begin to see themselves as the protagonists of their own existence, raising the fundamental question of how to go about creating our lives consciously for ourselves. In this light, all past insurrections are part of an ongoing struggle. Their faults and failures are not tales of tragic heroism and defeat, but rather lessons to be drawn on in the continuing struggle for the reappropriation of our lives.

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Update on Atenco

The Mexican farmers who have been protesting against the construction of a major airport that would destroy their fields since last October have one a real victory through direct action and uncompromising resistance. Assisted by anarchists and by radicals from the university in Mexico City, the farmers have held the town of San Salvador Atenco since the protests began. Though it is true that the Mexican government had offered the farmers a merely nominal amount of money for the land, most of the farmers agree that it is not the amount of money that they were protesting, but the forced uprooting from the way of life they had known for hundreds of years — in other words the capitalist project of the expropriation and enclosure of resources, the dispossession of those without power and wealth.

Things came to a head in the middle of July. On July 11, hundreds of farmers blocked all the roads leading to the town. The first confrontation began shortly after noon, when dozens of farmers wielding machetes arrived in a caravan of trucks and blocked a large portion of highway near Santa Caterina, north east of Mexico City. When cops arrived in riot gear, the farmers threw rocks at them and attacked them with machetes, metal poles and sticks. Six cops were injured including one who was knifed in the thorax. At least ten protesters were injured and between fifteen and thirty were arrested.

Several hours later, after the police restored order on the highway near Santa Caterina, more protesters blocked the highways around SanSalvador Atenco with huge piles of burning tires and trailers, backing up traffic all around Mexico City. The protesters fought state forces that came to suppress their revolt and took several police officers and court officials hostage, holding them in the municipal building in the town square. They also torched six police cruisers and several commercial trucks. The farmers demanded that the

their lives in revolt could go? And who knows how widely such passionate fire could spread?

Not The State's Reason

On August 5, 2001, a man who was allegedly angry about having his car towed attacked the police headquarters in San Diego, California. He caused $15,000 in damages to the building itself when he smashed windows and glass doors with a sledgehammer and a crowbar. He also flattened the tires and broke the windshields of three patrol cars and is suspected of damaging about a hundred civilian cars in the police impound yard, causing a total of $100,000 in damages.

Brian Parks was arrested after he drove away from the police station. What happened after his arrest makes it clear that the reasons of individuals are not the reason of the state. There are always good reasons for rage against the police, and it is certainly more reasonable to take this rage out against them than to bottle it up until it explodes against some hapless victim — such as one's children or spouse. But this is not the reasoning of the state, and therefore the state assumed that Brian was bereft of reason and the judge sent him to a mental hospital where he was to stay until the doctors believed that he understood the charges he's facing. So he spent nearly a year incarcerated without trial, undergoing whatever therapies the doctors deemed necessary, simply because his reasons were his own, not those of the state.

Recently, Brian was returned to jail, and he may go to trial soon. He faces several felony and misdemeanor charges and will probably be sent to state prison. The reason of the state allows it to order its functionaries to lie, steal (someone's car, for example), hold hostage (in mental hospitals and prisons) and kill, but it does not allow individuals to rebel against this. When they do, it must be madness or crime, . . . or maybe a bit of both.

Brian can currently be reached at:

So historical critique in an anarchist and revolutionary sense is the examination of those moments when historical mystifications break down and the fundamental questions of how to create our lives for ourselves begin to be raised, with the explicit aim of reopening these questions now in our own lives in order to be better prepared when the next insurrectional rupture occurs. Of course, without any illusions that there can be any guaranteed solutions when we step into the unknown of insurrection and the creation of free existence.

Our critical interaction with each other, dealing with current ideas and practices, would ideally be aimed at sharpening our theory and practice and clarifying affinities and real differences so that each of us can advance our projects of revolt in association with others with whom we share real affinity. Thus the aim is most certainly not to achieve theoretical and tactical unity as some anarchists proclaim, but rather to maintain the vitality that comes from immersion in the struggle against this social order, a vitality capable of fierce argument and a real conflict of ideas without the necessity of rancor or defensiveness of an entrenched position. The appropriate method for this critique is deep, passionate, intelligent debate of actual ideas and practices carried out with transparency. In order to do this, we must keep our debate in the realm of actual ideas and practices. Thus, in our debates, we want to avoid stylistic judgments and characterizations — describing an idea as "academic", "arrogant", "dogmatic" or the like is not a critique of the idea, but only of its style. We want to avoid creating monoliths where they do not exist, because such constructions cause the actual question under debate to get lost behind the non-existent sect one has constructed. This also occurs when one brings an extraneous person or group into the debate and attributes their ideas to one's opponent. The original matter under debate disappears again behind a fictitious construction. I could go into more methods used to avoid real debate: personal insults and accusations, the leftist doctrine of collective guilt and responsibility, arguing against someone's form to discredit their ideas, "critique" of what someone did not do rather than of anything they did, etc., etc. All of these practices take the debate out of the realm of real ideas and practices and move them into the realm of the fictitious and often the ideological. In so doing the aims of this sort of critique

get lost. When the real ideas and practices of individuals get lost behind the battles of the ideological giants, theory and practice are blunted, worn down to fit into the various ideological constructs that represent the sides of this battle. Real affinities and differences are overshadowed by the necessity to adhere to a side in these false debates. And, indeed, we are all called upon to take sides, even when we find none of the options appealing and would rather simply go our own way creating our projects of revolt on our own terms. And, indeed, only by walking away from the false debates can we enter back into real critical interaction with those willing to consciously refuse the methods for avoiding real debate.

Of course, this division of critical activity into three areas was simply done for simplicity's sake. In fact, these aspects of critique are intimately united each flowing into the other as part of the transformative activity of the struggle against this society. To maintain the vitality of our critical activity, of our analyses, our debates and our creation of theory, we must carefully avoid every tendency toward the reification of these activities. We must avoid the idea that we have found the answer, that we need no longer explore or question, but need only convince others that we are right and that they should follow our perspective (how far off is this from being leaders and authorities?). I am not suggesting that we should lack confidence in our ideas, but rather that we should continue to explore and question everything — including our own ideas and practice — with a cruel and incisive eye. Because it is our life and our freedom that is at stake.

the crowded prisons of the homeland can do so in their own house; the citizens who no longer read about robberies carried out by prisoners released at the end of their sentence or into house arrest in the police reports in the daily papers; the state that solves the problem of prisoner control and the overcrowding of prisons. To the humanitarian sensibility of anyone who fears that this measure could pave the road toward a future in which the individual would no longer have any value except as mechanical appendages constantly monitored by power, we respond that the democratic project of ratification and control is before the eyes of all. Free citizens certainly don't escape control when they use credit cards or ATM's, when they telephone from home or a phone booth, when they travel with the cell phone, when they watch television or connect with the internet. So the prisoners have a more annoying, more distinctive piece of tinsel work, but nothing so exclusive. This is the greatness of democracy. Forming replicants from differentiated circuits. Creating the maladies of living and finding the remedies through sweet death.

— Canariah

One of the greatest constraints of this world, of course, is money. A mediation that is not a bridge, but rather a fence between us and what we need to create our lives. It is money that compels us to work (or else to depend on the work of others) and so to sacrifice our lives for survival. The real attack on money must necessarily be an attack on work — that is on the society of work and commodity exchange. This attack starts with a decision to live on one's own terms. Now once this decision is made (and preferably with a few good friends) the first task is to gather resources, to bring together the tools that are necessary for projecting one's life as one sees fit. Here there can be no moralizing, no external rules for acceptable methods for gathering tools; there is only the principle of autonomy, of self-determination. The gathering of theoretical and material tools, along with the development of relationships of affinity, provides the basis for the creation of projected lives, and once these tools are gathered, who knows where a small group dedicated to living out

Amongst Philistines and Vile Slaves

There is no life left, no risk, no threats, no danger, and no death except the slow daily death of a million pin pricks administered by nameless, faceless petite tyrants. Dreams vanquished, a vile slave's life, not that of a man. The days of battles won and lost mere painful memories of lost freedom, more painful than lost limbs of the amputee. Lack of intensity, the cold coals of survival. The battle lost, but the war continues. Taste it again, feel it again, embrace the fury, own again!! — B.

Carlo Tesseri Sentenced

Italian anarchist Carlo Tesseri, who was arrested last December with anarchist Horst Fantazzini who died in police custody, has been sentenced to 1 year and 6 months in prison for attempted bank robbery. He has already served 6 months while waiting for trial. His current address is:

Carlo Tesseri
C.C. Dozza
Via del Gomito 2
40136 Bologna
Italy

A Democratic Remedy

Electronic bracelets have been used for several years a means for monitoring individuals placed under house arrest or granted limited parole. They are generally attached to the ankle. This monitoring device is applied to prisoners who can then complete their sentence outside the prison walls while remaining under control through the monitors of the central office of the police that are connected to the device. A democratic solution that satisfies everyone: those prisoners who were sentenced for minor crimes and instead of rotting in

Anarchism and Criticism of the Existent

In a historical context like the one in which we live (the collapse of ideological dogmas, institutional certainties, etc.) it is a matter of fact that increasing numbers of people are beginning to show an interest in anarchism and to take libertarian ideals into consideration: anarchist groups and circles and libertarian collectives are growing.

And this point, I don't think it would be untimely to talk about the difference between the individual comrade who discovers an anarchist awareness and therefore begins to spread her anarchist ideals and the classical militant of a political organization. As anarchists, we are focused on the critique of the existence that surrounds us, but we don't omit moments of individual self-criticism that serve to make us keep our feet quite firmly on the ground. The period of self-criticism is lacking however among political militants, which inevitably leads them to set themselves up on a pedestal of arrogance and presumption. By self-criticism, I mean that individual process of self-analysis that is a part of the life of every libertarian, through which they constantly bring into question their way of thinking, acting, speaking and relating with others.

It isn't a question of simplistically examining one's character or temperament, on the contrary, it's a question of driving out all the shit that Power and the Church (but also the current everyday consumer society) thrusts into us from the moment we're born. Certain internal mechanisms with which we were shaped from the most tender age are quite difficult to destroy even when one has the lucidity recognize that they are in clear conflict with libertarian principles. One always tends to think, "after all, I am made this way . . ." It is safe to say that it is a bit humiliating to discover people who speak of self-determination, anarchy and revolution who are totally incapable of carrying out an internal revolution that is necessary for destroying authoritarianism in whatever form it manifests itself.

For every future collective project of liberation, an individual voyage to grasp hold of the awareness of anarchist ideals is essential,

a project that cannot be separated from a profound critique of the pathogenic germs of Power, present in every one of us.

— Benedetto Gallucci

The judge announced that George supported an "ideology of violence", that the "crimes" he had committed were "extremely serious", and that he had no other option but to send him to jail. This is the first time an anarchist has been on trial in this island, and it is clear that this is the real reason that the judge had to keep him in prison.

We have no doubt who the real criminals are: judges like Michael Papamichael who dish out years in prison as though they were sweets; the guard dogs of capital like those on the demo who unleashed their psychotic violence on those who were present to express their indignation and disgust at this outrageous feast of death; the screws and all those involved in the construction and management of prisons; the media who distort reality, supplying prefabricated opinions to maintain passivity and resignation; the soldiers who obey orders and massacre defenseless men, women and children . . .

The list is endless.

The most beautiful moment is when the clash against all things that oppress us expresses our passion for equality and solidarity. This passion cannot be destroyed. The insurrectional flame, the will for life, will pass through the rubble of prisons and courts . . . Because they can't capture a free man because they put him in a cell. Even the most inhuman power of authority is not enough to erase what we have in us. It cannot crush what we are fighting for, what pushes us and what we are pushing for, all of us: the social revolution, when the free expression of human nature won't just be an abstract concept, but will take life from the same passion that fires us to fight.

Freedom for George Karakasian!

Solidarity with anarchist comrade Sotiris Marangos, due to go on trial for the same demo with similar charges on September 19!

Destroy all prisons!

Comrades of the anarchist group of Cyprus

George is being held in the Central Prison of Cyprus, Saint Pauls, Nicosia, Cyprus. A solidarity account for George and Sotiris has been opened at the National Bank of Greece in Cyprus, Limassol agency (540), Account number: 540547441.

case, and a preference for their own self-organized projects, evidence of the claim that insurrection makes people more aware, clearer of what their real desires are.

Our own response to these struggles and uprisings can certainly not be one of meaningless feelings of "inspiration" at revolt happening safely far away. Nor is it worthwhile to fall into that relationship of uncritical support that more often than not stems from guilt feelings about our supposed "first world privilege" — feelings that indicate that we identify more with our rulers than with the other exploited of the world. Instead we need to develop a practice of real revolutionary solidarity expressed in acts of revolt against our own exploitation here that take into conscious account what is going on there. This requires a deep and conscious recognition that we are exploited and dispossessed and have more in common with all the other dispossessed people of this planet than with the rulers of this world. Only such an awareness can free our activity of guilt and condescension and make our solidarity an act of complicity, a conspiracy of equals against the rulers of this world.

George Karakasian Sentenced

Yesterday, September 4, anarchist comrade, George Karakasian was sentenced by the main court of Nicosia, Cyprus, to 7 months in prison for "assaulting a police officer" on the demonstration outside the Israeli ambassador's home on the occasion of a party to celebrate the anniversary of the Israeli State on 18 April 2002. He was also fined 120 pounds for "possession of an explosive device" — an old bullet which was found when his house was raided following the demo. George had declared in court that he did not intend to apologize, and that he did not feel guilty for his actions because the cop is the henchman of authority and Zionism, and declared he was not asking for leniency from the court. He did not mention the fact that he had been severely beaten following his arrest and taken to the hospital to have his wounds treated, and that the next day his medical case notes "disappeared" from the hospital records.

Continue To Speak To Me *by Alfredo M. Bonanno*

Facing the understanding of oneself and others, unsuspected aspects of awareness are frequently discovered. When we approach a problem about which we know little or a person whom we have never met before, we feel a sense of panic (or of pleasure, a subtle difference that is never completely clear). Will we manage to get to the bottom of it? We ask ourselves. And the answer is not always positive.

Most of the time we look at the "stranger" with suspicion, the suspicion that always exists of the difference that is not yet codified. Where will this "stranger" take us? Certainly toward new things, and what will these be like? They might be good or bad, but they upset our balance, the sleep (and dreams) that we often create between one harsh awakening and the next.

From this, it is all the more necessary not to reveal ourselves. Since our personal world, our own world, is what is at stake when we risk venturing into the unknown, we are disposed to defend it to the death; its boundaries harden and propose an interpretive scheme. The "stranger", whether person or problem, is thus catalogued in the sphere of our schemes; we dilute the form in the structure, suppress it by force, expecting the other to conform itself to our needs. Thus, after having killed it in the ritual manner that we can and within the limits of our capacity as killers, we reproduce it, adapted to our aims, even continuing to feed our inclusive desires, dreams and sleep.

In this way, some of us, and certainly not the worst, wrap ourselves up in the cocoon of codification, judging or suspending judgment without being aware of it. But in daily practice, this suspension is always expressed in trusting the other to remain in the sphere of our perspective by itself, without our needing to do it violence. In these cases, the common sense of ridicule helps in finding tunings that would otherwise be revealed as nonexistent.

Please, no shouting your contempt for order; it is sufficient that you show me that your way of living follows a lively, dancing qualitative logic and not the obligation of the routine of quiet and the code. But show me this with logical, accurate connections. Please, tell me that you are crazy, just like me, but say it with clarity. Please, speak to me of the terrible shudder of darkness, but tell me about it in the light of the sun, so that I can see it, here and now, represented in the distinct speech in which I was educated.

Encourage me with your chants about destruction — they are sweet lullabies for my heart's needs — but speak of them in an orderly manner so that I can understand them and thanks to them understand what destruction is. In short, I want the words to reach me in a well-organized form. Alas, if you start to shout, I will no longer listen. It is good to destroy, but with the order that logic imposes. Otherwise we go into the chaos of the unrepeatable, where everything fades into the incomprehensible. Yes, granted, something could reach me even through the perplexing shouts of an Algerian marketplace on a feast day, but I am not used to that life, to that unpredictable and fleeting dance, to the unforeseen appearance of the "stranger". It is necessary that you put the code of habit before me, that the language be made full of immediateness. Speak to me, I beg you, so that the word becomes the umbilical cord between me and the world of what has already happened, so that nothing presents itself as being thrown suddenly into the dark dimension of chaos.

Speak to me of love, of your love, for me, of every possible love, even of the most remote and difficult to understand, of the violence that goes at it from the hip, of violence and death, but, in order to let me see it with the eyes of the mind, speak to me about it imprisoned, captured in the slimy and corruptible web of words. Speak to me about it carefully, I beg you, so that my heart can bear its repercussions. Then I will make a habit of it. And really, since you have spoken to me about it, the love will become familiar to me and I will carry it with me everywhere, like one carries a knife in one's pocket, a heavy object that furnishes security. As to that other possibility, as to the "stranger" that presented herself suddenly before my eyes, like a thief in the night, no longer beckoning to me

off the air. They raided one station, "El Quijote", but their attempt to raid another was stopped by the presence of a large number of supportive people. A total of six stations are targeted for investigation. The struggle is recognized as part of the large struggle going on through out South America and seems for now to be going down the path of self-organization and direct action.

The continuing spirit of revolt in Argentine manifested itself in the response to the discovery, in mid-August, of the corpse of Diego Peralta who was kidnapped and murdered by police. His family, friends and relatives initiated a march from the Siglo Veinte district to the police station of El Jaguel. The entire district came out to join the march as it went by. When the first group of police came to block the way to the police station, it was met with a hail of stones making three patrol cars unusable. When demonstrators who had stayed on side streets saw smoke coming from the block where the police station wa they joined the rest. Cops took a beating and began to fire rubber bullets, injuring some people. Fire trucks arrived followed by the infantry. The infuriated demonstration demanded the head of the official of Gimenez street, known for his harshness, his expensive gold jewelry and watches. They didn't burn his house down only because his friends were guarding it. The crowd did not let the ambulances that were going to help the cops get through, but people living in the area did open their doors to care for wounded demonstrators and give shelter to those being pursued. At one point some kids spread out and looted businesses along the way. Their mothers urged them on to take everything so that they could guarantee having enough to eat. In the ongoing uprising in Argentina, the rage of the exploited continues to find its methods.

Anarchists have been active in the struggles in Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay (possibly in other countries as well). From what I've read, they have not attempted to lead the struggles or use them as a means for winning people to their side, but have rather participated as equals, encouraging direct action and self-organization and exposing the manipulative scams of "oppositional" politicians and union leaders. The insurgent people, particularly in Bolivia and Argentina, and, as far as I can tell, in Uruguay as well have shown a great deal of suspicion toward the manipulators in any

Thousands of rifle-toting cops patrolled Ascuncion to keep the streets clear.

There has been a movement of landless people in Brazil for some time and both symbolic and permanent squats have been among its tactics. So the squatting of a 600 square meter plot of land by 400 families in the area of Sao Paolo called Osasco on July 27 can be seen as part of an ongoing struggle. Within a week, the number of families on the squatted land had risen to 4000 and at last report there were 6000 families living there. The land, owned by Count Rafael Leonartti of the Matarazzo family, has been abandoned for fifty years. Since the squat began a variety of self-organized ways of dealing with daily needs, such as a communal kitchen, have developed (along with a few more institutionalized and bureaucratic sounding projects). There have been two attempts by cops to evict the squatters. Both have been successfully defeated. The second involved about a thousand cops. The squat is supported by other homeless groups, by striking university students and by anarchists all of whom participated in a large supportive demonstration.

Uruguay has quickly rising unemployment that is heading toward the figures of Argentina, and many who work are in precarious and low-paying jobs with no guarantees. The rumblings of rebellion broke out on July 31 as poor people, literally suffering from hunger, looted a store near the congress in Montevideo. A four-hour general strike took place the next day and almost everyone stopped work as a huge demo marched between the congress and the presidential palace. In a poor district north of the city, three stores were looted. On August 2, hundreds of people took to the streets of Montevideo, successfully looting sixteen supermarkets and attempting to loot fourteen others without success. Police were sent out shooting and brandishing their clubs. Along with the prisoners taken, there were several wounded including one 15-year-old who was in serious condition from the injuries. The authorities saw the lootings as coordinated efforts, and not wanting to accept the idea that people may be capable of organizing their own activities, looked for a scapegoat. They laid the blame on anarchists and started investigations against neighborhood community radio stations in El Cerro and La Teja two poor, working class neighborhoods, attempting to force the stations

there, it abandons the high howl that could still speak to me in the night.

Speak to me of the future society, of anarchy, that in which you and I believe, describe its conditions of uncertainty to me, the unpredictability of relations between human beings finally freed of every constraint; with your calm, persuasive words, tell me of the ferment of the passions that break loose, the hatred and the desire for destruction that don't disappear from one day to the next, the fear and the blood that don't stop spreading and flowing in the veins of a society that is finally different from every nightmare of the past. Tell me, I beg you, but do it in a way that does not frighten me, Speak to me about it in an orderly manner, speak to me about what we do, you and I, and the others, and the comrades, and those who were never comrades, but who come to understand from one moment to the next, all together, building, a little here, a little there, bit by bit, while everything within life, I mean true life, begins to flourish again. But speak to me about it with intelligible logic. Don't shout into my ear that which shouts within you, frightening me. Keep it to yourself. Keep the difficulty of coordinating your needs and ideas with mine to yourself. Keep the indomitable strength to yourself that leads you far from any acceptance of my will, your own being irrepressibly hostile to all codification just like mine, after all. Not telling me all these things, you would stop frightening me.

I beg you, don't give me anything more to worry about.

Shorts and News

Revolt Spreads in South America

The latest capitalist strategies for intensifying exploitation and solidifying its world-wide domination — those policies commonly referred to as "neo-liberalism" and "globalization" — have had devastating effects through out the world. By pulling the safety nets out from under the poorest and most exploited, and increasing the precariousness of existence on all levels for every one of the exploited, it has created a situation that becomes increasingly unbearably, where every crisis is a catastrophe . . . or an opportunity for revolt.

The exploited people of Bolivia — from the cocaleros to poor urban workers to the unemployed and so on — have been in active revolt, often as much against the official opposition as against the ruling class, for a few years now. In Peru, poor and indigenous groups (often independent of the various armed leftist parties) have taken direct action against various projects of capital. In Argentina, when the economy collapsed last December, people rose up in what proved to be not just a riot, but a true insurrection in which the exploration of new ways of relating and creating life were, and apparently still are being, tentatively experimented with.

The revolt is spreading, as the exploited of other nations in this region find the will not to put up with the increasing misery that is being imposed upon them. On July 15, the president of Paraguay declared a state of emergency when large numbers of people blockaded roads and bridges throughout the country and hundreds demonstrated in Ascuncion, the country's capital. A massive police and military force was sent to protect the legislature, and police went to violently break up the blockade. At Puente de la Amistad bridge which connects Paraguay and Brazil, cops shot four protesters. Two were killed during the protests and 239 were arrested. The next day people went out again to block the highways. Police used rubber bullets and teargas to disperse the blockaders, causing four injuries.

have no choice but to keep following their path to its end, toward isolation and idiocy.

— Canenero

The Enemy is Quite Visible

(from *Terra Selvaggia*)

For several years now, even on the level of the mass media, there has been talk about risks connected with the over-abundance of electro-magnetic waves in the environment. Though the most frequently mentioned and feared sources are the transmitters for cellular phones, these are certainly not alone, but are merely the latest on the scene. In fact, radio and TV antennae, radar platforms, high tension wires, military stations and dozens of different electrical high tension wires, military stations and dozens of different electrical household appliances have already been disseminating waves for decades that, even if trifling taken singly, together and with continuous exposure could have effects on the health of living beings.

And if these effects are still largely unknown, or absolutely denied with firmness by a few the usual experts, this is no reason for putting one's mind at ease. After all, the greatest fear is that of the unknown. And in this case, the unknown is not just that of the future reversals in our bodies or those of others), of new incurable disease or of the expansion of cancer-caused slaughter, but also in the invisible nature of the poison in question. If the pure and solid dust of DDT was handled without care or apprehension, as, not surprisingly, other substances still are, perhaps because we don't believe that it's possible for something that we can calmly hold in our hands to kill us, the fear of what we don't know and can't see or touch is another thing altogether. Viruses, bacteria and radiation have killed quite enough, at bottom, and none of us could see or feel them, necessarily delegating the knowledge of and defense against them to science and its people. Their lordships love to describe a fear of this kind as irrational in their greed to control it in order to reduce everything to the vision of their rationality; through measurement, screening, legal limits, appeals to an unstoppable progress, the attempt to make every danger scientific in order to render it palatable, rational to be precise, cannot hide the roots planted so thoroughly into this reality: the cases of leukemia, tumors and dozens of other maladies

are increasing and more and more people die without being able to clearly link it to a precise cause. Because there are thousands of causes. The invisible but omnipresent harmfulness strikes everyone, and no one escapes from it.

But in this climate, some manifest certainties also emerge, as always. First of all, that neither the reassurances of the experts nor the legal limits placed on the potency of the transmitters will protect us from electro-smog. The latter and the technical organizations appointed to their measurement are solely price-fixing decrees useful for giving the appearance of a situation under control and pacifying the most enflamed minds. We will never grow tired of confirming that we can never expect the protection of our health from that which poisons us: the state and capital in their technologically advanced form. And it is with this conviction, combined with the desire not to see the antennae altered but to make them disappear completely, that we must animate the struggle against the antennae. Then the struggle would have to have different contents and methods.

Also the antennae do not just represent an assault on our health, but are also realizations of a development of technological society toward new forms of economic expansion in alienating communications and control. We must not, in fact, forget that it is not just our phone calls that travel through these waves, but also data and information that in their totality form a huge cage in which to enclose us, signals that keep track of us hour after hour, making it indispensable to behave when near an optimum signaling device like the cellular phone.

In a land already polluted by thousands of antennae, they will not hesitate to bring in just as may more for the third generation of cellular phones, capable of transmitting and receiving not just voices and words, but images as well. But among the 45 million Italians who own cell phones, and among the remaining few who still lack one, fear and discontent increases as well about these sources of waves placed in the neighborhood of schools and housing. Of course, a bit of hypocrisy can be seen here in those who don't want electro-smog but at the same time demand optimum reception with their little phones, but it is necessary not to fall into the trap of considering those who manufacture and disseminate what is harmful and those

The Gaudy Nonentity

Who are political leaders? Almost always imbeciles, but gifted with some abilities that quickly distinguish them from the masses. Manfred Kets DeVries enumerated these in good order: transforming the smile into a mask and optimism into a rule of conduct; giving their words the tone of fashionable certainty to hide the fear of the unknown and of the future; not exhibiting nuances or gradations in their choices; simplifying every difficulty in question until concluding that the choice is clear because there is no alternative; persuading the others that the flock needs a leader and that these animal comparisons standup perfectly with regards to human beings as well; always looking to the heights with the lost and entranced look that makes it clear that if there are any problems, they are in the future, because the present is completely under control; seeing in others only the reflection of their shadow, nothing personal or different, nothing to persuade or to fear.

The political leader is thus a being without identity, capable of appearing superficial and flexible to whatever extent is necessary. Now more than ever these qualities are important, in a period in which the market and its flexibility are at the center of every political choice. The greater one's capacity for depersonalization, the more he advances his career and rises through the ranks of her organization. Besides, her is the function of her willingness to sacrifice the few vestiges of personality that remain to him. Thus in the total organization of institutional structures (parties, unions, political movements, but also the business or the great industrial enterprise) all personal identity disappears.

If subjects of a personal nature are proposed to the political leader, his great ability with words miserably flounders: the repetitive model on the basis of which she elaborates the current ideas is a great cage where imagination and feeling are sterilized until they disappear. Her dried up personality ultimately only transmits the decisive model and this is what interests those who take advantage of the organization. Thus, the shabbiness of leaders grows, since, left to themselves, they

who are induced to use it in the same light. It would be like seeing everyone that uses electricity as complicit in the nuclear industry, an idea that in the end becomes an easy excuse for the holders of power who want to make us feel like their accomplices, with the logic that for one's personal good a collective harm is unavoidable. A logic of the same sort that claims that for the collective good of society — in this case the progress, security and convenience brought by the telephones — it is necessary to sacrifice with an individual harm, the antenna over one's head. In this way, it becomes difficult to rebel any more, feeling on the one hand complicit and on the other, egoistic in one's demands.

So it becomes necessary to understand the snares of psychological terror, because new passages are revealing themselves in which new channels of resistance have opened. Resistance that is, furthermore, quite widespread with innumerable committees and individual actions against the antennae throughout the territory. A struggle that, if it usually has partial objectives, is, nonetheless, frequently carried forward with a deep personal involvement, setting aside sterile and useless institutional methods like the collection of signatures and the appeal to politicians. In reality, one sees road blockades, climbing on roofs or scaffolding with fastenings and lowering placards as well as the blockage of work at the installations. Moreover, some have acted under the cover of night with the heat of fire to destroy these hateful antennae. These last actions are not distinct or separate from the struggle in which they arise. Indeed, let's leave the distinction between "ecoterrorist" and "honest citizen" — useful for dividing a movement of opposition and justifying acts of repression against those who do not disassociate themselves from a practice of sabotage, but rather recognize its importance to the struggle — to the infamous journalists, politicians and armchair environmentalists.

We are interested in a struggle from the base, without hierarchy, specialization or compromise. We think that this is an area in which a partial struggle could become a point of departure for a generalized critique of power, and a consequent practice in which each one chooses the method and moment that he or she prefers.

The pot boils and the giant is never too big for us; it cannot even sleep peacefully. Its arteries — that are roads, electric wires and computer networks — are exposed and can be cut, generating an infinite and unpredictable series of possibilities.

— Il Panda

use determined channels, determined paths. And these paths could, indeed, be blocked, priming, in time, unpredictable mechanisms.

Such an eventuality has been bringing difficult moments to life for the French for several weeks. Truck drivers — those wage-laborers who drive back and forth across France and Europe, transporting commodities for the profit of capital — are on strike. Not only are all these goods not being bought and sold, with all the consequent problems for French cities and the economy; in fact, by strike, the French truck drivers did not just mean a mere abstention from work. No, they park their semis at the entrances of cities, on the expressways and block traffic; or they surround refineries in order to prevent the resupplying of fuel.

Bordeaux is already completely blocked, like a consistent number of the cities of the west and the southeast, and in Paris, the siege is starting. Think, what can a blockade of this sort arouse: already, just a few short days after the start of the protest, a few factories are noticeably slowing down production. Without raw materials, industry can't work since its products are not transported and sold. And along with the factories, offices and ministries are shaken.

What can happen in a blockaded city? Everything and nothing, it's a question of time. Cities are built around work and its time. The time of the city is scanned from the hands of a clock, the ticking of which rules our lives branding our days with fire. The office, the family, Sundays, evenings, survival doesn't survive without the ticking of the clocks.

However, in a blockaded city, time might not have any more need for clock faces and hands. It is released from work; it can expand and contract improbably even to the point of vanishing.

This might be dangerous for the giant. You will see that, without time, strange ideas enter people's minds, strange vices are born that unleash unpredictable mechanisms — to such an extent that the they displace the narrow limits of demands, beyond which it no longer matters what the truck drivers wanted to negotiate, whether wages, pensions or work hours, because what is at stake is something else entirely, something for everyone.

Or else nothing could happen in a blockaded city. It could be a huge, very sad Sunday.

Consuming Fire

Are there those who are truly content with their lives? Show them to me. Let me drink in their foolishness. Certainly, they must be mad. If life has a purpose (and, yes, I know it does not!), it must be to burn — to consume itself in the passions and adventures offered by the world. For whether you consume yourself or not, in the end you are consumed by life — you die to feed further life. What good then to conserve your life, your energy, your natural wealth? Such conservation merely guarantees you never truly live. Like the misers in the stories, you survive like a pauper with a mattress full of riches. Fortunately, very few people are this pathetic. Most enjoy a little, dare a little — but with care. They gamble , but they hedge their bets — after all, what about tomorrow? Tomorrow when we may be dead . . . Moderation — this is the key in most people's minds — but the key to what? To mediocrity, of course — that middle course that takes us nowhere that isn't colorless . . . Grey, drab lives in ticky-tacky suburbs with even lawns. What fire is left merely smolders, but never flairs. Nonetheless, it consumes, and those who lived such careful lives are gone just like the carefree daredevil who risked all. But such smoldering fires consume without beauty, without poetry and with very little light or heat.

No one denies the difficulty of a life of risk. But isn't such difficulty precisely what gives life its spark, its joy? But we have been taught so well to fear. Who has no fear? Those who claim they have no fear are liars, fearing in particular that they will be exposed as cowards.

The things that keep us from what we desire: fear of love and of its lack, fear of cops and prison, fear of poverty, fear of loss of reputation, fear of solitude, fear of the unknown . . . On and on, the abstract, and sometimes concrete, fears get in our way. Yet for those of courage, fear can be a spice — a sabor picante adding to the wonder of an adventure. Doesn't it tone the wits to have to get what one desires at a risk, to have to evade the upholders of the present mediocrity? This is why the hero and the outlaw are so often the same: those who will not let the rules apply to them. And, yes, the poets as well,

those whose burning passions explode out in words of flame hurled defiantly at the world of mediocrity.

At times, the intrusions of this world into one's life seems overwhelming . . . The cloak of Hercules soaked in burning, sticking poison smothering vitality with an agonizing pain. The hours tick away, the days pass emptily, one's memory is a desolate wasteland reflecting the sameness of each day . . . Dreams fade; desires lose their fire and flow without life through the narrow channels defined by fifteen seconds of flashing light and noisy jingles from the television or the parade of billboards passed along the highway. This is the existence offered to us by the present society, by the community of capital in which all are one because each is nothing, where passionate love and hatred are smothered by the resentful and disrespectful tolerance required to maintain social peace, a tolerance that brings with it the continual daily round of humiliations that guarantee the enduring insignificance of each individual even to herself.

The clear-headed individual who wants the fullness of life that he knows must be possible recognizes the need for total and destructive transformation of the present world and so of herself (in whom so much of this world exists). She furthermore realizes that this revolution is not something that will drop from the sky into his lap. In fact, to sit around and wait for history to grant one "the revolution" is to continue to act, think and speak within the logic of the present mediocrity, the logic of capital which reduces each of us to a cipher. Such a revolution, should it ever come, could only reproduce the present world; perhaps in a more egalitarian form, but who wants to be equal to zero?

The recognition that one cannot continue as a cipher and the consequent decision to act destructively against the present social order, to attack it with all of one's being, begins the process of the total transformation of the individual, for, as it is put into practice, this decision draws out what is unique in each of us, our singularity, and thus draws us out from the herd of ciphers and into the world of self-creation.

A Little, Little Giant

[There are moments when it seems that anything could open up, that all possibilities are in play. These are the moments we need to cease in order to realize our rebellious dreams. There are no guarantees in these moments, only possibilities. The following article was written in the midst of one such moment that occurred several years ago in France, when striking truck-drivers blockaded several major cities. If the events, in fact, did not succeed in moving toward generalized revolt, the possibility, nonetheless, was there, and this article expresses a useful way for examining such events. — editor]

It is not just a matter of proportions. We always appear so very little in the face of this world that overwhelms us and that not only seems incomprehensible — with its endless and intricate network of relationships and dependencies between endless causes and effects — but also unassailable.

Yes, of course, we'd like to turn this world upside down, we'd like to destroy these relationships, but we don't know where to begin; everything seems useless to us, all our destructive fury seems to be reduced to an almost inoffensive tickle against an impassive giant. Our hearts are stirred to revolt, but how many times have we run up against the supposed immutability of the giant that oppresses us? The pot is boiling, we think; but we don't know how to lift its lid, this blessed pot, we don't understand is rhyme or reason. And even if the urgency of things always goads us into action, it doesn't seem to us that this manages to prime the mechanism that could put the existent into a hard spot. Our continue clashes with the world don't succeed in reproducing themselves, rousing the passions, the wild and collective feasts, the revolutions that we desire. And yet, as we know, the giant is neither so big nor so passive as we imagine it to be. The feast is always right around the corner, because if the paths of domination are infinite, so are the paths of revolt: the giant that we have in our heads is really a network of relations, enormous indeed, but quite concrete, and these relations

It does not pleas the good souls of charitable, religious and democratic pacifism to recognize that the man in uniform is a pure creation of the oppression of the state, an indispensable tool of the blind and violent imposition that is made to intervene when the little lies about rights and duties are no longer adequate, when individuals head straight for their own path, toward freedom, cutting down the obstacles that get in their way. Of course, dialogue interests the state, but only in the shadow of a large amount of uniforms, now present everywhere in a suffocating manner (the suffocating presence of which is everywhere). Again the cadets: "There must be unity between the military world and the civilian world. The army is not outside society. When we take its oath, we do it for civil society, for all."

The general and his clones have spoken clearly, still displaying the customary ridiculous apparatus of every good military man: they are obedient robots and nothing else. This is their function. If we don't like it, let's throw them all into the sea without discussion.

Religion: When the Sacred Imprisons the Marvelous

It is likely that human beings have always had encounters with the world around them and flights of their own imaginations that have evoked an expansive sense of wonder, an experience of the marvelous. Making love to the ocean, devouring the icy, spearmint moon, leaping toward the stars in a mad, delightful dance — such are the wicked imaginings that make the mechanistic conceptions of the world appear so dreary. But sadly in this age the blight of industrialism with its shallow mechanistic logic that springs from the bookkeepers' worldview of capital has damaged many minds, draining reason of passion and passion of the capacity to create its own reasons and find its own meanings in the experience and creation of the marvelous. So many turn to the sacred in search of the sense of joy and wonder, forgetting that the sacred itself is the prison of the marvelous.

The history of religion is really the history of property and of the state. These institutions are all founded on expropriations that together make up social alienation, the alienation of individuals from their capacity for creating their lives on their own terms. Property expropriates access to the material abundance of the world from individuals, placing it into the hands of a few who fence it in and place a price upon it. The state expropriates capacity of individuals to create their lives and relationships on their own terms, placing it into the hands of a few in the form of power to control the lives of others, transforming their activity into the labor power necessary to reproduce the social order. In the same way, religion (and its current parallels, ideology and psychiatry) is the institution that expropriates the capacity of individuals to interpret their interactions with the worlds around and within them, placing into the hands of a few specialists who create interpretations that serve the interests of power. The processes through which these expropriations are carried out are not really separated, but are rather thoroughly interconnected, forming an integrated network of domination, but I think, in this

age when many anarchists seem to take interest in the sacred, it is useful to examine religion as a specific institution of domination.

If currently, at least in the Western-style democracies, the connection between religion and the state seems relatively tenuous, residing in the dogmatic outbursts of an Ashcroft or the occasional blessing from the pope, originally the state and religion were two faces of a single entity. When the rulers were not gods or high priests themselves, they were still ordained by a god through the high priest, specially consecrated to represent god on earth as ruling in his or her name. Thus, the laws of the rulers were the laws of god; their words were god's words. It is true that eventually religions developed that distinguished the laws of god from those of the state. Generally these religions developed among people undergoing persecution and, thus, feeling the need to appeal to a higher power than that of the state. Thus, these religions supported the concept of rulership, of a law that ruled over individuals as well as over earthly states. So if the ancient Hebrews could distinguish "godly" from "ungodly" rulers, and if the early Christians could say, "We should obey god rather than men", such statements were not calls for rebellion, but for obedience to a higher authority. The Christian bible makes this explicit when it says, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" and "Submit yourselves to the powers that be, for they are ordained of god." If selective readings of parts of the Judeo-Christian scriptures could inspire revolt, it is unlikely to be the revolt of individuals against all that steals their lives away. Rather it would be a revolt against a particular state with the aim of replacing it with a state based on the "laws of god."

But religion is far more than just the Judeo-Christian tradition. It is therefore necessary to examine the concept of the sacred itself, the idea that seems to be at the heart of religion. Frequently, these days I hear people lamenting the loss of the sacred. I can't help but laugh. In this world where borders, boundaries, fences, razor-wire, laws and restrictions of all kinds abound, what is there that is not sacred; what is there that we can touch, interact with and enjoy freely? But, of course, I misunderstand. People are actually lamenting the loss of wonder, of joy, of that expansive feeling of consuming and being consumed by a vibrant living universe. But if this is what they

The Judgments of a Soldier

"Those who are struggling with themselves aren't useful to us; there is no place for them in the army . . . Young people are incapable of confronting existence with sacrifices, expectations, disappointments and they collapse before the first obstacle. What are our young people made of?"

With these words general Loi (former commander of Folgore from '92 to '93 and of the "Sicilian Vespers" operation in 1992) remarked on the suicide of a cadet at the prestigious Military Academy of Modena, of which he is the director, receiving a series of more or less self-interested indignant criticisms for it.

But what the hell do they expect of a military man, a man paid to kill, willing to satisfy the demands of whoever happens to be in power? What else could a person trained to obey every order, rejecting any personal critical faculty unless it helps to fulfill his duty more efficiently.

Granted, the general did not cut a fine figure speaking of military preparation: while he was on a mission in Somalia, two of his men were killed, one by a young boy while he was jogging the way he would in the courtyard of his own house, the other after having played a joke on his corporal by peeking in the window of the house where his superior was — who shot him in the head.

The hypocritical façade of the leftist politicians and of the pathetic exponents of our gallant youth is made clear with arguments that call to mind the slogans and watch-words of the advertisements for enlistment into the armed forces: a social career (above all, secure), professionalism, civil obligation and prostitution of a sort. We are accustomed to viewing the army as a mixture of pious souls that are used for thousands of humanitarian causes around the world. Perhaps the problem is that in this buffoonish state, one is accustomed to hearing military personnel spoken of as social assistants, sisters of charity, peaceful educators, sportsmen.

The words of the other cadets about the one who killed himself are much clearer: "We must be sure of ourselves. We will become officers, and we cannot be indecisive in front of our troops."

are lamenting, then why speak of the loss of the sacred, when the concept of the sacred is itself the thing that separated wonder and joy from the world and placed in a separate realm?

The sacred has never actually meant that which is wonderful, awe-inspiring or joyful. It has meant that which is consecrated. Consecration is precisely the process of separating something from normal life, from free and equal availability to everyone to use as they see fit, in order to set it aside for a specialized task. This process begins with the rise of specialists in interpreting the meaning of reality. These specialists are themselves consecrated, separated from the tasks of normal life and fed by the sacrifices and offerings of those for whom they interpret reality. Of course, the concept that there can be those with a special connection to the meaning of reality implies that there is only one meaning that is universal and that thus requires special attention and capacities to be understood. So, first as shamans and later as priests, these sacred persons expropriate the individual's capacity to create their own meaning. One's poetic encounters with the world become insignificant, and the places, things and beings that are special to an individual are reduced to mere whims with no social significance. They are replaced by the sacred places, things and institutions determined by the priest, which are then kept away from profane laymen and women, presented only through the proper mediation of ritual to guarantee that the minds of the flock remain clouded so that don't see the actual banality of the sacred.

It is precisely the nature of the sacred as separation that gives birth to the gods. On close examination, what is a god if not the symbol of the misplaced human capacity to will, to act for oneself, to create life and meaning on one's own terms? And religion, in creating gods, in fact serves the ruling class in a most essential way. It blinds the exploited to the real reason why they are separated from their capacity to determine their own existence. It is not a question of expropriation and social alienation, but of a separation that is inherent in the nature of things. All power resides in the gods, and we can only accept their will, striving to please them as best we can. Anything else is hubris. Thus, the actual expropriation of people's capacities to create their own lives disappears behind a divinely determined fate that cannot be fought. And since the state

represents the will of god on earth, it too cannot be fought, but must merely be endured. The only link that can be made with this sacred power is that offered by the mediation of religious ritual, a "link" that, in fact, guarantees the continuation of the separation on any practical level. The end of this separation would be the end of the sacred and of religion.

Once we recognize that it is consecration — that is to say, separation — that defines the sacred, it becomes clear why authority, property and all of the institutions of domination are sacred. They are all the social form of separation, the consecration of capacities and wealth that were once accessible to all of us to a specialized use so that now we cannot access except through the proper rituals which maintain the separation. So there it is completely accurate in the literal sense to speak of property as sacred and of commodities as fetishes. Capitalism is profoundly religious.

The history of Western religion has not been one of simple acceptance of the sacred and of god (I don't have enough knowledge to speak of non-Western religions in this regard). Through out the Middle Ages and beyond there were heretical movements that went so far as to question the very existence of god and of the sacred. Expressed in the language of their time, these movements — the Free Spirits, the Adamites, the Ranters and many others — denied the separation that defined sacredness, claimed divinity as their own and thus reappropriated their will and capacity to act on their own terms, to create their own lives. This, of course placed them at odds with the society around them, the society of the state, economy and religion.

As capitalism began to arise in the Western world and to spread itself through colonial imperialism, a movement of revolt against this process also arose. Far from being a movement for a return to an imagined idyllic past, it carried within itself the seeds of anarchy and true communism. This revolutionary seed was most likely sparked by the interactions of people from several different cultural backgrounds who were being dispossessed in different ways — the poor of Europe whose lands were "enclosed" (shall we say consecrated, which seems strangely synonymous with stolen?), forcing

them onto the roads and the seas, African stolen from their homelands, separated from their families and cultures and forced into slavery and indigenous people already in the lands being colonized, finding themselves dispossessed and often slaughtered. Uprisings along the Atlantic seaboard (in Europe, Africa and America) were not infrequent in the 1600's and early 1700's, and usually involved egalitarian cooperation between the all of these groups of the dispossessed and exploited.

But to my mind, one of the main weaknesses of this movement of revolt is that it never seemed to completely free itself from the religious perception of the world. While the capitalist class expropriated more and more aspects of the world and of life from the hands of individuals, setting them aside for its in uses and making them accessible only through the appropriate mediation of the rituals of wage labor and commodity exchange, the rebels, for the most part, could not make the final step of rebelling absolutely against the sacred. So they merely opposed one conception of the sacred against another, one morality against another, thus leaving in place social alienation. This is what made it possible to recuperate this revolt for democracy and humanitarian capitalism or socialism, in which "the people", "society" or "the human race" play the role of god.

Religion, property, the state and all the other institutions of dominations are based on the fundamental separations that cause social alienation. As such, they constitute the sacred. If we are to again be able to grasp the marvelous as our own, to experience wonder and joy directly on our own terms, to make love with oceans or dance with stars with no gods or priests intervening to tell us what it must mean, or, to put it more simply, if we are to grasp our lives as our own, creating them as we will, then we must attack the sacred in all its forms. We must desecrate the sacredness of property and authority, of ideologies and institutions, of all the gods, temples and fetishes whatever their basis. Only in this way can we experience all of the inner and outer worlds as our own, on the basis of the only equality that can interest us, our equal recognition of what is wonderful in the singularity of each one of us. Only in this way can we experience and create the marvelous in all of its beauty and wonder.