LEFT ON LEFT

UNCIVILISED

VOLUME I

Fragments on anonymity amongst anarchists and other unnameables

SOMMAIRE


Do not say that we are few. Just say that we are determined

extract - R.O. CCF, Theofilos Mavropoulos

[...]

Continuing our reasoning on how the existent can really be attacked, we believe that no attack speaks for itself. Today nothing is obvious or self-evident. Even the attacks on bank branches, immigration concentration camps, the street battles with cops during a demonstration may be forged and appear as something other than what they were meant to be. Not only will the representatives of Power distort these beautiful moments of war, through the spectacle and the journalists, but there are also living myths about self-evident notions from our side; the myth of the enraged society that supposedly sympathizes with us and supports our practices, the myth of mass violence, the myth of a 'just cause' in general.

But we do not need the 'sympathy' of a crowd of applauders, nor do we wait for the masses before taking

action, nor do we have requests in order to defend a just or unjust cause, to be right or wrong. We are nothing less than what we are, and we're searching for accomplices and comrades. We are anarchist deniers of the order, and we wish to self-determine our acts, because these are indeed our invitations to anyone who wants to take back his/her life. Because our acts makes us what we are. We therefore think that the informal anarchist direct action groups must not let the silence cripple their actions, abandoning them to the dictatorship of the self-evident each time, but we rather consider public communiqués of a responsibility claim to be significant.

Besides, if we abandon an action to mercy of the anonymity, it feels like we're depriving the action of its own psyche and of the meaning it carries. The communication that has both been eroded and lost its substance under the influence of modern civilization is given meaning once again and liberated anew through the discourse of comrades who carry out each attack. Thus, the act itself ceases to be an end in itself, just a news article in a daily, or simply a blow against the enemy, and becomes something much more: part of a special history, part of a special legacy that's written in the here, in the now by people who share a joint desire, that of a continuing clash and destruction of the existent; a heritage durable over time and open to criticism and evolution. Apart from committing hostilities, we believe that in this way we can achieve an everlasting insurrectional perspective, which embraces an international galaxy of informal direct action groups and sets the stage for a dialogue which in turn is crucial to the development of relationships and comradeship.

Each proclamation, each responsibility claim is an open invitation, a small contribution to a wider conversation, a way to pose questions rather than giving answers, a way to

self-determine yourself against any official truth, a method of communicating with mates that you have not even met in person or never contacted before; it is the outsourcing of war against Power that we have within us.

Besides, every communiqué is the result of the desire of a group of comrades who sat down to discuss, plan and organize their action, and attacked their target, and then talked to each other again, shared their experiences, made an account and often their self-criticism, and chose to publicize their lived experience and consciousness of their offensive. To us, every cell or informal group is a living experiment of human relationships in a liberation perspective. Especially the cells that have proved durability over time stand for laboratories of subversion, exploring the centre of human relationships. It is certain that the comrades' relations in informal groups are being tried, evolved, worn out, re-created, and each individual discovers more and more of himself/herself. A cell or an informal anarchist federation is not running behind the facts but instead makes things happen. Informal groups are shaped to overcome the randomness of historical conditions, and do not abandon their desire for attack to a circumstantial spontaneity. On the contrary, they declare their own war on the existent in the here and now without any delay.

These formations and nuclei are a way to bid farewell to the inertia of the masses. We baptize them with the names we give ourselves. The name of each group we participate in is our psyche, our soul. It's our way towards self-determination and rejection of all social identities. We are neither proletarian, nor oppressed, nor workers. We do not wish to get lost in the anonymity of mass unity that removes our uniqueness. We are the name we chose for ourselves. For this we say that the name of a cell does not stand as an advertising sign, but rather as a callout to

everyone in order to organize their praxis and create their own group, so as to pass from the point where a return to normalcy is impossible. For the constant anarchist insurrection that never ends. Because there will always be a new sunrise more beautiful than any previous one.

Comradely regards,

Conspiracy of Cells of Fire of the first phase
and anarchist comrade Theofilos Mavropoulos
Informal Anarchist Federation / International Revolutionary Front (FAI/IRF)

Anonymity

Anonymous

‘As he finished speaking I handed him the bright wine. Three times I poured and gave it to him, and three times, foolishly, he drained it. When the wine had fuddled his wits I tried him with subtle words: “Cyclops, you asked my name, and I will tell it: give me afterwards a guest gift as you promised. My name is Nobody. Nobody, my father, mother, and friends call me.” Those were my words, and this his cruel answer: “Then, my gift is this. I will eat Nobody last of all his company, and all the others before him”. As he spoke, he reeled and toppled over on his back, his thick neck twisted to one side, and all-conquering sleep overpowered him. In his drunken slumber he vomited wine and pieces of human flesh. Then I thrust the stake into the depth of the ashes to heat it, and inspired my men with encouraging words, so none would hang back from fear. When the olivewood stake was glowing hot, and ready to catch fire despite its greenness, I drew it from the coals, then my men stood round me, and a god breathed courage into us.

They held the sharpened olivewood stake, and thrust it into his eye, while I threw my weight on the end, and twisted it round and round, as a man bores the timbers of a ship with a drill that others twirl lower down with a strap held at both ends, and so keep the drill continuously moving. We took the red-hot stake and twisted it round and round like that in his eye, and the blood poured out despite the heat. His lids and brows were scorched by flame from the burning eyeball, and its roots crackled with fire. As a great axe or adze causes a vast hissing when the smith dips it in cool water to temper it, strengthening the iron, so his eye hissed against the olivewood stake. Then he screamed, terribly, and the rock echoed. Seized by terror we shrank back, as he wrenched the stake, wet with blood, from his eye. He flung it away in frenzy, and called to the Cyclopes, his neighbours who lived in caves on the windy heights. They heard his cry, and crowding in from every side they stood by the cave mouth and asked what was wrong: "Polyphemus, what terrible pain is this that makes you call through deathless night, and wake us? Is a mortal stealing your flocks, or trying to kill you by violence or treachery?" Out of the cave came mighty Polyphemus' voice: "Nobody, my friends, is trying to kill me by violence or treachery." To this they replied with winged words: "If you are alone, and nobody does you violence, it's an inescapable sickness that comes from Zeus: pray to the Lord Poseidon, our father." 'Off they went, while I laughed to myself at how the name and the clever scheme had deceived him.

Homer, Odyssey

Since time immemorial there have been those who have realized and praised the potentiality of the use of anonymity. Only if someone is nobody one can avoid being recognized by their enemies. It's an old greek wisdom that seems to elude the anarchists of the Conspiracy Cells of Fire, some of which – in a document written from prison, signed also by an other imprisoned comrade and sent to an international anarchist encounter held in Zurich last november – dedicate ample space to the reasons behind the use of a name, an acronym, a precise identity with which to claim their own actions of struggle.

Theirs is a particular text because, even though they are part of the most notorious anarchist armed group at the moment, in a certain sense they welcome and make their own the majority of the widespread critique towards armedstrugglism, rejecting any separation, any division of roles. They say there is no difference between comrades who are one the front line handling weapons while others are in the background handling paper, because every means is a weapon, one can grip a banner just as a torch, a stone just as dynamite. Steel is a prime resource that is used in pens just like in guns, there is no hierarchy between means, there is no technical fetishism. All comrades have to be able to use everything. End of specialization. Sure. There remains though, the insurmountable question of identity. To move in the shadows, and not under neon lights, is of no interest to these greek comrades.

Since they argued their choices, something that for many years many anarchists who shared their path did not deem necessary to undertake, making any debate on the matter therefore impossible, and having sent their text to an anarchist encounter, it is obvious that their intention is to finally open a discussion around these themes. Pleased of their decision, we intend to here bring our contribution.

Let's start from the question of means. After having pointed out that their intention is absolutely not to impose limits to the anarchist initiative and to not want to generalize every technical knowledge, these comrades write: "We believe that what is necessary to become appropriable is the will towards anarchist insurgency itself, and the means are nothing else than objects which our hands and our desires are capable of discovering. Therefore, we avoid the distinctions of low- or high-intensity violence, and we destroy the reproduction of the expertise myth. A typical example of polymorphous anarchist action is the experiment of FAI/IRF, whose members claim responsibility both for solidarity banners and blocking entrances of commercial stores with glue in Peru and Bolivia respectively, and the shooting of a chief executive of a nuclear power company in Italy as well as the execution of three municipal cops in Mexico. After all, as Conspiracy of Cells of Fire we started somewhat like this, too, and we were never tied up to an arrogance of the means and their unofficial hierarchy." Clear words, unequivocal, but... accompanied by an example to say the least absurd. Because it is pure folly that an acronym claims actions so distant – let alone the consequences – as the hanging of a banner and the murdering of cops. The first is a common act, accessible to all, as opposed to the second one. Usually the authours of the first act are easily traceable, since it is not subjected to great precautions. But in the example they bring they would risk paying the consequences also of the second, particularly where both of these action happen on the same territory. Or should the anarchists of perú and bolivia of the FAI/FRI also forever limit themselves to banners and glue? Or are they suggesting that to carry through similar simple acts there should be the same attention necessary in very different forms of actions?

These greek comrades completely neglect to take into consideration certain repressive mechanisms, such as the use of crimes of association, which paradoxically and involuntarily are favoured by this identitarian outlet. To explain what we mean, we'll make two concrete historical examples. In spain in the last decades of the 1800, there were many social agitations. Especially in the lower part of andalusia, there were a multiplication of arsons on vineyards and crops, the illegal cutting of lumber, the theft of cattle, not to mention murders. Unlike the catalan anarchism, then a lot closer to legal positions, the andalusian anarchists kept a certain propensity towards direct action. In this setting, in 1883, the "Mano Negra" made its appearance, a phantom anarchist organization to which the authorities at the time attributed a conspiracy aiming at killing all the landowners of the region. Even though it is true that these facts aroused the sympathies of many andalusian anarchist, it is also true that the existence of this organization remains in doubt. For example the authours of the Millenarian Fire, the french Cangaceiros Delhoysie and Lapierre write: "It is also probable that a group or a secret sect called Mano Negra never existed; this name was used to indicate a ensemble of actions and sects without a name. In total, the amount of court cases against andalusian anarchist in the context of Mano Negra concluded with 300 prison sentences." Aside from the doubt whether or not this "signature" was a pure police invention or an intentional choice of a few andalusian comrades, it is anyways certain that it on one had encompassed all the actions without a name carried through during those years, and on the other hand served the prosecutors to distribute high sentences to those who had participated to various social struggles of the time (beyond justifying many arbitrary executions of subversives). The

authours of countless small actions saw themselves being hunted and condemned because accused of participating to an armed group which they had never belonged to (and that perhaps never even existed).
A few decades later, in France, a similar situation occurred. The actions that were carried through by a few individualist comrades were attributed to a "Bonnot gang" that was only born from the imagination of a journalist. In reality there was no structured gang, only a milieu of active and energetic comrades. Single individuals would meet, associate for an action, would separate, without any homogeneity. But the spectrum of an "organized group" was awoken by the courts which used it to incriminate dozens of comrades for crimes of association, which would later result in heavier sentences, and which would have been impossible to impose without the creation of that collective organizational spectre.
Whether it was a social movement or an "area" of specific movement, in both cases the small actions carried through by single comrades, expression that come out of that dark forest that is anarchy, were swallowed up by an Organization, by a Group, whether it was real or virtual. And it is in the best interest of the State that this occurs. On one hand, the State can spread the idea that it is only a few hot heads that are opposing it, that any insurrectional attempt is only the plot of a few subversives against the will of the many consenting citizens, in this way denying the social and generalizable qualities of subversion. On the other hand it can deal its enemies a heavy hand, increasing the sentences by using crimes of association.
Not only do the greek comrades only minimally keep in mind these aspects, which are mere security issues, but they aggravate them. In fact they claim that there is no

difference between those who hang banners and those who kill cops. They should and have to be on the same level, they should belong to the same organization that needs to claim their actions, if it does not want to be drifting into inaccuracy. Music for the ears of the courts. If the umbrella-acronym works with the ALF it is because the actions made around the world by its activists are very similar, being mostly about the liberation of animals. But the examples given by the greek comrades are of a very different nature. Who is so crazy to be identified for a banner, knowing that they could be accused of murder? Should they then but up a piece of cloth with the same precautions with which they would plan the elimination of an enemy? In the long run, the hierarchy between the means that comes out of the door of good intentions of principle will come back through the window of the hard practical necessities.

Unfortunately for these greek comrades, there is only one way to avoid all these problems: anonymity. Up until now it has been proposed as a precaution, as a "strategic" choice. However this is only one additional aspect to the question, in our opinion not the most important. In fact, anonymity is also and most of all a method that corresponds to our desires. We do not consider it only useful and functional, we consider it above all right.

Anonymity eliminates the right of authourship on what has been done, it de-personalizes the action freeing it from the single human that has committed it. In this way it permits the action to become a potentially plural act (and never-mind if it excites the pettiness of some crypto-loudmouths). The anonymous action does not have owners, does not have masters, belongs to no one. Which means it belongs to everyone that shares it.

As shadows among shadows, we are all the same. No one

is in front to lead, no one is behind to follow. What we do in the darkness only we will know. And this is enough. The darkness protects us from our enemies, but above all it protects us from ourselves. No leaders, no gregariousness, no vanity, no passive admiration, no competition, nothing to prove what-so-ever. The facts, only the nitty-gritty facts, without mediation. A bank is burned, a police station explodes, a high tension line is torn down. Who was it? It does not matter. Whether it was Tom or Dick, what difference does it make? It happened, it is possible to do it, so let's do it! In the darkness the action speaks for itself. And if it is not understandable, it will certainly not be that roaring claims swallowed by the propagandist machine of the State to give them a meaning. As it was already mentioned an action followed by a claim is like a joke followed by an explanation. In doing this the effect is not at all improved, it is banalized, it is ruined. If an action does not speak for itself, it is not by piling up words that the problem can be solved when, simply put, the wrong choice is upstream, in the choice of the target.

Actions of attack do not necessitate any a-posteriori justification. On a planet torn by wars, is it necessary to make it clear why a military base was attacked? In a world in prey of speculation, is it necessary to point out why a bank was attacked? In a society corrupted by politics, is it necessary to let know why a political party was attacked? No. The reasons are already under everyone's eyes, and there where they are not, it is up to the entire movement to spread that social criticism able to make them understandable, and therefore shared, and therefore reproducible.

Just as much as the desire to attack an enemy is human, spontaneous and immediate, the impulse to make propaganda on top of it, to claim its ownership, to claim

its credit is artificial and calculated. For whose eyes? If the authours of a certain action want to come forward, it is because they want to be recognized, to stand out, because they want to be admired and followed. Here the spectacle starts, here begins the recruitment. Those who stand out end up inevitably speaking for others. It cannot be otherwise because all spotlights are turned on them, they have been passed the microphone. The others, if they do not want to feel used, will be obligated to also step forward; either to follow the footsteps of the first ones, or to take distance from them. The end of anonymity marks the end of equality, the beginning of representation. The medias are always available to amplify the words of those who knock on their doors, of those who accept the logic of the spectacle. And this amplification is gratifying, because it grants the illusion of strength. An anonymous act, as significant as it is, will be in all probability overlooked in silence, while a banal but "tagged" gesture will be trumpeted from the rooftops – see, they talk about us, look how strong we are!

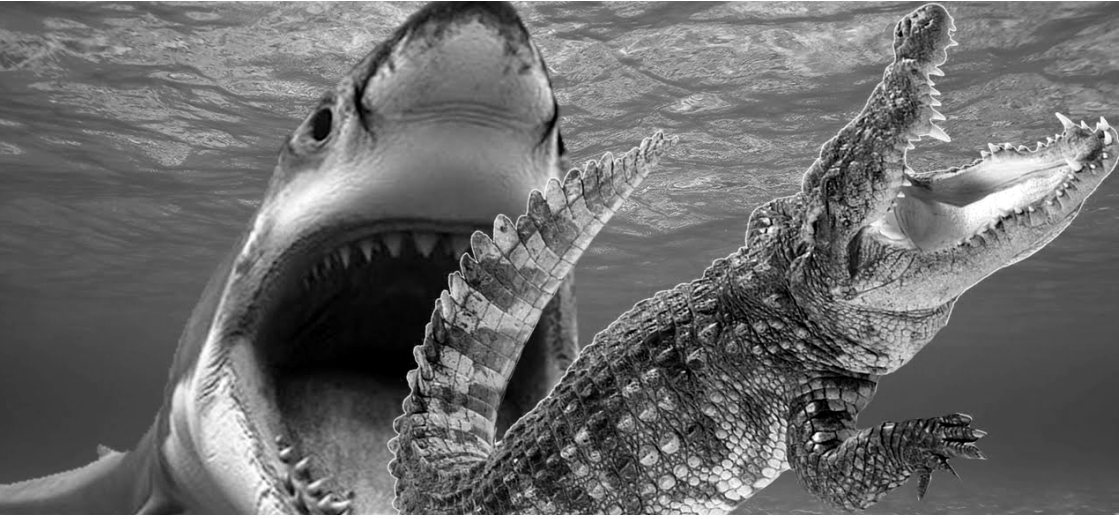
While in anonymity there are no names, there are no identities, there is a heterogeneous movement, magmatic, fragmentary, frantic. No one gives orders, no one takes orders. Acts, just like words, have value because of their meaning, for their content, for their consequences. Not for the reputation of their authours. Instead of calling upon the end of anonymity in actions, it should be introduced also in words. To give life to a movement which is anarchist, autonomous, anonymous, decisive in its attacks, without feeling the need of giving any explanation to its enemy. Able to put forward theory and practice without building any podiums for the ambitious. The reasons of the actions are expressed in books, journals, posters, flyers and by all the theories brought forward by the movement in its

entirety. The passions for these ideas are expressed in demonstrations, in sabotages, in fires, in attacks and by all the practices carried forward by the movement in its entirety.
The greek comrades write that "The name of each group we participate in is our psyche, our soul". What a weird statement! What is there of more secret, of more intimate, of more unspeakable, than one's psyche, one's soul? Who would want one's psyche thrown on the front page, or their soul regurgitated by a cathode ray tube? A name is only an identity. It is only used to make oneself known and be recognized. It is nothing more than the launch a new logo. In front of the mediatic gossip, just as in front of the enemy, there are no doubts: silence is golden. Will medias attribute to anonymous actions the more congenial meaning to serve their own purpose, distorting them to suit their needs? Of course, it's their job. But the use of an acronym does not change this fact. It rather only participates this confusionism. It is quite naïve to think that it is possible to speak clearly within the media. It is after all the medias that use others to put forward their agenda.
And then, what to say about this idea that informal groups need to and have to discuss among themselves through communiquès! But, are we asking ourselves, to whom should we address ourselves to? To people on the street, to the exploited, and therefore potential accomplices, that do not understand the meaning of the action? Or to comrades elsewhere with whom to discuss? In the first case, beyond the illusion of being able to use the media, all those references to what is going on in the movement are not understandable: distorted messages, quotes, references, all things that make these claims un-understandable in the eyes of common people. Their reaction cannot be other than indifference towards the struggle of these strange anarchists

who in the moment of action express an extremely limited mental universe, incapable of going beyond their own doorstep. Anarchists against the State, the State against anarchists: is that what social war is all about? In the second case it is unclear why it is necessary to make recourse to such a tool. Because why should a dialogue, a discussion, a debate among comrades, happen though a mass media instead of through the channels of the movement? Why should newspapers, zines, magazines or even blogs not be enough to engage in certain discussions? And in what are these discussions more interesting and valid if not carried forward by all comrades, perhaps even daily, rather than "the militants of combative organizations" in the occasion of their actions? In the meanwhile, while this game of pure self-reppresentation is in full force, the cops and the journalists that read our words, learn linguistic codes, take down notes on similarities, decipher references, hypothesize relationships, deduct responsibility... and prepare.

As it was pointed out by a comrade during the encounter of Zurich, during the '70s in Italy various armed organizations claimed hundreds of actions against the State. But outside of this political spectacle, which has much contributed to the creation of an insane revolutionary mythology which continues to this day to claim victims, there were thousands of actions. The media gave great silence to the first, but did everything possible to silence the second. Is it really necessary to explain again the reason? This is why we have carefully read the text of these greek anarchists, and we are more than happy that they have clearly expressed themselves on this topic. However between the hypothesis that the radical anarchist action is to be paired up with a Unified Front and Anarchist Federations (perhaps with their associative pacts

to subscribe to), or one that propagates in small affinity groups, we continue to have no doubts. And to prefer a revolt that is anarchist, autonomous, anonymous...



Let's become dangerous… for the diffusion of the Black International

extract - CCF: Imprisoned Members Cell (Greece)

[...]

We are aware of the flattening polemic, which has been unleashed against FAI by comrades and "comrades". We deliver those to the theoretical misery of their nonexistence. But there are also those, who wish to open a dialog on the issue of "acronyms", used by the direct action cells and the informal federation.

Let's take things in order.

Some months ago, we came across a text entitled «Anonimato» («Anonymity» in English translation), written by an anarchist from the tension of political anonymity. This text was a critique, without any comradely mood, towards CCF and FAI. The text had a very distinctive beginning, a quote from the myth of cyclops Polyphemus from"Odyssey." In short, according to the myth, when Odysseus was asked by the cyclopes to tell him his name, he answered "nobody". So when Odysseus blinded the

cyclops, he shouted at his brothers that he was blinded by nobody, creating confusion, as his brothers did not understand what has happened. This myth is the kernel of thought of the unknown author of the text, to attack against us, talking about the advantages of anonymity instead of the use of acronyms. He specifically mentions that "When an action is followed by a communique, it is like a joke accompanied by an explanation." The difference, we say, is that we are not fools to tell jokes. Instead, we chose the barricades of war as our home and fire as our comrade. Moreover, because the superficial knowledge is worse than ignorance, the myth of Polyphemus does not stop there. Odysseus, leaving from the island of Polyphemus, shouted from his ship "I, Odysseus, blinded you … "

So, far from the myths, the Returning Actuality, we want to talk about what the FAI is.

FAI, the Black International, the CCF, the affinity groups of anarcho-individualists and nihilists is the community we want to live in. This has nothing to do with the cumulative perception of power. FAI is not the model of a centralized organization. On the contrary, it promotes informal organization, affinity between cells and the uniqueness of each individual. We are against the dictatorship of numbers and central committees. Neither do we follow the logic of two fighting armies but instead we promote the diffusion of hundreds of points of rapture and action, which sometimes cooperate in an international coordination and sometimes express themselves as unique cells or individuals. FAI is simply the invisible community where the desires of attack against our era, meet. In this way, we promote New Anarchy and the Black International.

Someone might say, "So far so good … but why are you obsessed with acronyms and naming cells ? … " We answer, that we have no obsession, we just feel the strong desire to define ourselves.

Especially today, we believe that by simply stating that we are

“anarchists”, in order to speak through a communique or an action, is inadequate and problematic. We choose to separate our positions from the ” anarchists ” who cooperate with the leftist grassroot labor unions, use Marxist analyzes , unionize their misery, slander direct actions, fantasize workers’ communes, participate in residents’ local committees and transform anarchy into a social therapy.

Also, actions speak for themselves through communiques, because they keep their distances from the ‘ anarchist ‘ opposition , which may sometimes burn down a bank in the name of ” poor people and against plutocracy’s capital”, in order to prove it does at least something.

No, our burned banks is not a way of protest or a token of friendship and solidarity with the ” poor people” who does nothing and sits on his couch. It is a way to express our “I”. An ” I “, that wants to stand out from the herd of slaves, an ‘I’ that does not bow the head down, an ‘I’ not waiting for the crowd to revolt, an “I”, which claims his own name, his own ” acronym ” and does not hide behind anonymity. The meeting time of the revolted ‘Egos’ takes up the name, that we give to it. Its name is FAI and it is our “we”. A collective “we”, armed with razors against our enemies.

So, we choose to identify ourselves and not to be lost in the anonymity of an imaginary anarchist movement.

The exponents of political anonymity often say… “With communiques and acronyms, the actions get owners. ” Defining who you are, is not a contract of property, it is our own way of being aggressive against the social apparatus of the anonymous crowd. We abandon and burn our police identities and we become what we want to be by defining our name ourselves.

This is how a dialogue between comrades and cells begins. We leave marks carved on authority’s face and share experiences, propositions, agreements, disagreements, plans.

Naturally, FAI has no exclusivity. This why our proposal is not

the quantitative increase of FAI. One may disagree with FAI even in terms of aesthetics. Our proposal is to organize armed cells and affinity groups, forming an international network of anarchists of praxis. Direct action and diffuse anarchist guerrilla warfare, this is our proposal.

We want to promote the Black International, abolishing the stale ideas of social anarchism. We must overcome the ghosts of the past and the idea of the center of authority and the heart of the beast.

Authority is not just buildings or offices or individuals. It's a social relationship. It starts from its official temples (parliaments, multinationals, banks, courts, ministries, police stations) and reaches the most simple gestures of everyday life (family, sexual and friend relationships).

Authority cannot be found on a single point. That's why we want FAI and affinity groups to meet also on new grounds. To combine blown up banks with the debris of an advertising company. To spread our hostility towards the techno-industrial section, corporate exploitation of nature and animals, pharmaceutical industry, civilization and every compromise, that enslaves us. We promote the anti-civilization anarchist tension and invent a new way of life. Away from the fantasies of an idealized primitivism, we want to attack each structure, that exploits and murders nature, animals and humans. Away from the fetishisms of the value of human life, we clarify that our goal is not only the building facilities, but also the individuals who manage them, so we promote and practice the executions of human targets.

Towards this direction, we leave the theorists of the "anarchist" galaxy, who preach political anonymity without doing nothing, behind us. Because, we want to speak the truth, a part of the tension of political anonymity essentially hides its fear of repression, behind its theories. But let's face it, prison and death are part of the continuous anarchist insurrection. Whoever does

not accept this, does not accept the insurrection itself. On the contrary, for those, who even aesthetically defend political anonymity through their actions, and not only in words, we believe that our difference does not move us apart. Anarchy does not mean to agree, but to know to ask questions and put doubts. As the comrade Nicola Gai from Olga cell/FAI wrote: "Love and complicity with the comrades, who, anonymously or not, continue to attack in the name of the possibility of a life free from authority."

International "Phoenix project" proved, that there is no copyright and exclusive collaborations under the same name – umbrella. Out of the eight acts, made so far in Greece, Indonesia, Russia and Chile, the Chilean comrades were not explicitly part of FAI, but named themselves Long live Ilya Romanov cell, in affinity with the Black International. So, there are unlimited opportunities for cooperation and creation of new international projects of action, either against some targets or as a form of practical solidarity with the ones missing within the walls of captivity. The issue is to create these chances…

"Freedom does not exist. Not in this world. In this world there is only the struggle for freedom. And what does it mean to be free? Free is the one who is not afraid to kill or die in this fight for freedom"

Conspiracy of Cells of Fire FAI-IRF

Imprisoned Members Cell

Greece – Korydallos prisons (December 2013)

Appendix to an aborted debate on anonymity and attack

anonymous

A debate is the in-depth exploration of a certain question through the confrontation between two or more sides, each one with their own position. Unlike those who think that debates are to be avoided as to not provoke divisions, we think that they have to be nourished. Because the goal of a debate is not to declare a winner before whom all have to bend the knee, but to enrich the conscience of each one. Debates clarify the ideas. The enunciation of and the confrontation between different ideas – a debate is exactly this! – elucidates the dusky parts and indicates the weak points of these ideas. This helps everybody, nobody excluded. It helps all of the sides who are participating in the ideas to refine, correct or reinforce their own ideas. And it helps everyone who assists to the debate, who will make a choice on which side to be (be it the one side, the other side, or neither of the sides discussing).

The history of the anarchist movement is full of debates. All

were useful, even if sometimes they were painful. But its history is also full of lacking debates, different ideas which were never confronted, leaving everybody to their own initial certainties (or doubts). Was this for the better, since in this way sterile polemics have been avoided? According to us, no, it was for the worse, because in this way fertile discussions were prevented.

One of this lacking debates is about the use or not of acronyms, representing real organizations, claiming the direct actions against dominion. It seems to us that this debate, although important, was aborted on the moment it was born.

On an international level, one of the openings towards such a debate was proposed by the Letter to the anarchist galaxy which appeared at the end of 2011. This letter was a presentation of the ideas in favor of anonymity and against the use of organizational and claiming acronyms. It also spoke about the insurrectional perspectives, the notion of informality and the multiplicity of attack.

Exactly a year later, in November 2012, at the occasion of the international anarchist gathering in Zurich, the anarchists of the Conspiracy of Cells of Fire spread a text in which they presented the reasons in favor of using organizational acronyms and the reasons against anonymity. This text also presented some more general ideas about the anarchist intervention, like the relation towards "intermediary struggles" or the formation of urban guerilla groups. Good. Starting from different ideas, each of the sides made their own presentation. To launch the debate, the only thing still lacking was to confront these different ideas. And this is what for example the anarchists who in August 2013 spread a text called Anonymity in which they take explicitly as a starting point the writings of the CCF to criticize and to reply.

On the occasion of the International Anarchist Symposium held in Mexico in December 2013, the CCF spread a text (Let's become dangerous… for the spreading of the Black International) of which the chapter "FAI, acronyms and the anonymity of the 'anarchist galaxy'" opens with the following intimation: "We are aware of the flattening polemic, which has been unleashed against FAI by comrades and "comrades"". An evincive premise, because it reduces that what should have been a debate in favor of all to a polemic against somebody. Moreover, it operates a distinction between those who tried to launch such a debate, differentiating between comrades and "comrades" (?). This contribution refers explicitly to some texts like the Letter to the anarchist galaxy and Anonymity, dispatching this last contribution as "written by an anarchist from the tension of political anonymity […] without any comradely mood." A debate would have been possible and desirable as to deepen ideas, precisely avoiding blocking and locking all space with easy "pro" and "contra", but it seems to us that blames of the style "theorists who don't do anything" rather put an end to the discussion. So we could have shut up or let it drop. And indeed, we would have gladly saved ourselves from trying to nourish a debate which – contrary to what the authors of Anonymity were thinking – apparently isn't desired.

So if we are yet to speak up, it is only because we would not want that an eventual silence would be seen as a suggestion, an error which in these dark and sad days could happen. This is why, in spite of the clear uselessness, we thought it still important to write an appendix to a debate which has now been aborted. It will be a final appendix, which will have a hard time getting any follow-up, an appendix written with rived reluctance, just to avoid being taken for obsequious.

What said the text Anonymity? Basically, two things. First of all, and this in order of speech but not of importance, the text said that anonymity is to be preferred from a so-called "tactical" point of view. The identity persistence gives more space to the judiciary to rain down associative accusations on comrades, because rather than leaving to the police and the judges the task of inventing some "organization" (like repression often did in the history of anarchism) in the distorting mirror of their repressive spectacle, the anarchists fascinated by the organization identity offer it directly to them. Repression will always try to reduce the subversion to one single organization (existing or invented), one single group or even just a few individuals as to try to dig a gap between alleged "actors" and "spectators" and to paste on the swamp of the anarchist and revolutionary subversion, on the singular tensions and individuals acts, on the affinities and regroupings, on the informality and the multiplicity of attack and methods, a diagram reflecting its own authoritarian structure (because judges do not know anything else and cannot conceive the existence of a diffuse and incontrollable subversion), with a juridical translation of roles (leaders, treasurers, strategists, bomb experts, gunmen, sympathizers, saboteurs,…) in total contradiction with the anarchist and antiauthoritarian ideas. Because these ideas start from the individual – from the individual capacity to think, act and associate with others in the struggle against power – rejecting the adhesion or absorption of the individual by structures who mutilate its will and ideas. We are of course well aware of the fact that repression will also strike anarchists also if they do not use acronyms, and the question is not at all about being ashamed of one's own actions or ideas. In this sense, the question is simply how to complicate the task of the judges

as to prolong the hostilities, to make them last and open up always more space for other anarchists and rebels to throw themselves into battle. Anonymous actions – and by anonymous we mean actions accompanied by the most absolute silence, actions followed by minimal claims, without acronyms, or at least, without recurring acronyms – do not make the repressive task of the enemy more easy, because except of the act itself, the enemy has to invent everything by themselves, nobody is saying to them "it was me who did it", nobody is giving any additional clues (like for example linguistic codes used in the responsibility claims, an organizational acronym,…) to locate the perpetrators.

To this remarks, suggested in Anonymity through a quote of the Odyssey, the anarchists of the CCF do not answer, do not reply. They limit themselves to state that "superficial knowledge is worse than ignorance" and to recall that "Odysseus, leaving from the island of Polyphemus, shouted from his ship "I, Odysseus, blinded you…"." It is terribly to see someone crawling clutching at straws. Odysseus claimed his act only after he left the island of the enemy, when he thought to be safe on his boat (and by the way, against the warnings of his own comrades). In other words, he claimed his action only when he thought that the war with the Cyclopes was over. While the war was still raging, he remained silent.

But let's leave the literary myths for now. The second point of Anonymity was to say that only the absence of identities emerging above others, also through the exploitations of the mass media, equality is possible. Where there are no leaders, there are no followers. Where there are no celebrities, there are no admirers. Where there is no one to emerge, there is nobody put behind. In the darkness of anonymity, all are equals. What sense does it make to take

this one step further than the other dark insurgents who are attacking power?

In the contribution to the Symposium in Mexico we read that the FAI is "FAI is simply the invisible community (sic!) where the desires of attack against our era meet". But why should the desires to attack against our era meet each other only in the limited space of three letters, and not in the subversion of the whole alphabet? An argument put forward by the anarchists of the CCF, is that they want to differentiate themselves from the anarchists who are running behind the left. But why would a name differentiate us from the inept syndicalists and the sly citizenship militants rather than the use itself of direct action as an expression of a permanent conflictuality, and not just a foxily alternating one? We also read that "Actions speak for themselves through communiques, because they keep their distances from the 'anarchist' opposition, which may sometimes burn down a bank in the name of 'poor people and against plutocracy's capital', in order to prove it does at least something.". No, quick-tempered cells. You will not manage to sell us such confusion. Or actions are speaking for themselves, or they are speaking through claims. This is not the same thing; it has never been the same thing. According to you, actions speak through claims. According to us, they speak for themselves. And this is the core of the whole issue.

You don't have to look far to find some suggestive examples. On this last 1st of November, in Athens, somebody opened fire on some members of Golden Dawn. Two fascists are dead. An action speaking for itself. With fascists, one should not discuss, one should not negotiate, one should not ask the democratic State to withdraw its shock troops. No, we fight them directly, without mediations, with all attacking methods one thinks

appropriate. That day, when this action was anonymous, anarchists of the whole world saluted it. Subversives of the whole world saluted it. A lot of ordinary people, in Greece and in the rest of the world, saluted it. What else was there still needed? In what way did the claim of the 16th of November by the Fighting Popular Revolutionary Forces enrich the action? In no way. No, the claim has rather weakened the action, linking it to the identity and the ideology of one of the so many splinter groups of the revolutionary movement. Would it have been different if rather than by the FPRF, the action would have been claimed by the GRA, or the FLG, or the BPC, or the BRKJ, or the XJT, or the ZZPPHQWX? Of course not. Last year, some comrades showed by a precise attack that the nuclear establishment is vulnerable. The action made clear that there exist men who are responsible and that is possible to attack them. In what sense did the claim which came afterwards enrich the action? Was this action not clear, precise and appropriate?
Yes, actions speak for themselves. They do not need bombastic claims. It is the fighting organizations who need claims to impose their hegemony on the movement, to make their own light shine brighter than the rest of the revolutionary galaxy, to become stars of reference surrounded by satellites.

One could reply that if actions remain anonymous, they could also be done for reasons which one does not share, or with motivations one does not appreciate. Or they could even be the work of sinister forces, of mafia and racket, of fascists or even of the State itself. And therefore, to avoid all confusion, and because violence is surely not the privilege of anarchists or antiauthoritarians, one should claim his actions. But in the mirror of the democratic

management of the social peace, in the corpse spectacle, words always lose their meaning; the anarchist ideas cannot be spread other than on an anarchist way, in the struggle itself, far away from the claws of the State; if not, they are being mutilated depending on the necessities of control and production of consensus by power. The organized confusion is a basic aspect of repression, a pillar even, but one cannot break it with claims, one can only break it in the spaces of struggle where the words and the meanings are forged by the rebels themselves to dialogue between each other, without mediations, without representations.

If the attacks anarchists are proposing and realizing aim to destroy the persons and structures of domination, the important aspect is the destruction itself. We want freedom, and for this, what is suffocating us has to be destroyed. Good. From freedom, or from chaos if you prefer, even if it is only temporary or brief, many tendencies towards anarchy can grow, but also tendencies to much less beautiful things. One cannot delude oneself that this depends on responsibility claims: this will depend on the ideas we are capable to develop and spread, the comprehension and assessment anarchists succeed in making of the reality which is changing or being overthrown by the attacks and the revolts. And there we come yet again to the same fundamental problem: thought and dynamite, as an anarchist of the end of the nineteenth century stated. Dynamite cannot replace ideas; ideas cannot replace dynamite. They are two intimately linked aspects of anarchism, aspects which are corroding the authoritarian society: in its ideologies as in its structures, in its men as in its values, in its social relations as in its cops. The relation between these two aspects is the perspective, and in fact the debate should be about this. The problem of the perspective cannot be solved by sending a pompous claim

or by reinforcing an identity-organization-logo, neither by repeating all the time the ten same base banalities of anarchism or of what resembles to a credo of individualism. The CCF does not like “those who hide behind anonymity”. They chose a name and “its name is FAI and it is our “we”. A collective “we”.” This makes us think of those dulled anarchist militants of the past who blame an Emile Henry for not letting himself be arrested like an August Vaillant did, for not having wanted to claim his action on the place itself (because he wanted to continue to attack!). The CCF suggests to “leave the theorists of the “anarchist” galaxy, who preach political anonymity without doing nothing, behind us. Because, if we want to speak the truth, a part of the tension of political anonymity essentially hides its fear of repression, behind its theories.”. That the anonymous comrades stay “behind” the CCF is for sure. If you consider the frenzy of the CCF to run forward, to make themselves be seen, to speak up… But that the comrades who decided to not just put their actions at the mercy of the mass media, who want to continue to remain “dark individuals between other dark individuals” would only be doing this to hide their own inactivity or their fear of repression, this is really the demonstration of a vicious circle. A perfect argument to cancel all debate: those who criticize do it only because they don’t do anything and are afraid.

But the desire to remain anonymous expresses at the same time the refusal of all vanguardism and an attempt to stay out of the claws of repression to prolong the hostilities, and not the shame about your own actions. And by the way, the frenzy to claim actions didn’t always exist. Or were Ravachol, Henry, Novatore, Di Giovanni… perhaps “hiding” behind anonymity? No, they just acted. Without any need to admire oneself in the mirror of the media

which continues to reflect one's own identity logo. And if the actions of these anarchists were not clear or comprehensible, then the anarchist movement as a whole tried, through debates, newspapers, posters, pamphlets,… to render them understandable, because in the end, these actions belonged to everyone who recognizes oneself in the anarchist struggle. In this way, thought and dynamite tried to go hand in hand, both aspects of anarchism, in the space of the perspective of the struggle. But yes, this was the Old Anarchy.

Today, we hear more and more speaking about the "New Anarchy". How ridiculous this pretention is, is already shown by the name itself. Already since the last millennium anarchists from Spain and Italy, from France and Argentina, from here and there… grew up with in their ears all the time the same refrain of the old anarcho-syndicalist militants pretending that the only true anarchists are those who are part of the FAI (Federación Anarquista Ibérica, Federazione Anarchica Italiana, Fédération Anarchiste Française, FORA in Argentina,…). Outside of the FAI, there is no salvation, only ambiguity. Outside of the representative organizations of anarchism, there is nothing. Well, and nowadays, here come anarchists from all around the world to recall that the true anarchists, the anarchists of praxis, are only those who belong to the… FAI (Informal Anarchist Federation). At the limit, they can tolerate those who accept to adhere to the Black International or those who "for an esthetic reason" as the CCF puts it, act in an anonymous way. The New Anarchy doesn't seem to us such a new thing, it only reproduces the Old one: federations, programs, pacts, claims, acronyms and swollen slogans.

Several texts and contributions tried and are still trying to open up the debate on the matter of informality, and also the Letter to the anarchist galaxy was focusing on this. We

are bewildered on how one can seriously think to sell us a stable revolutionary organization, a permanent and formal acronym, a method of acting which is rigid, always the same and defined in advance (do an action, write a claim and send it around), as informality. Even in the simplest of meanings of the word "informal", which points nevertheless to the absence of all formalization, it seems difficult to deny that an acronym is formalization. So the Informal Anarchist Federation, the International Revolutionary Front or whatever else are no informal organizations. The problem is not to fight over the paternity of the word "informal" (we aren't interested in building a party with its dogmas, its a priori definitions, always detached from the struggle itself, and thus merely parasitic) – the problem is the confusion which is obstructing a true debate. If one is in favor of the construction of a permanent anarchist fighting organization, one should just say it and then he can be understood by all anarchists. If one is in favor of a syndicalist approach of the struggle, accepting to logic of "step by step" and the revendicative struggles to improve the existent and in this way make the famous "proletarian conscience" grow, it doesn't help anything (apart from spreading confusion) to present this approach as an insurrectional one. Informality, at least how we have always understood it, is the refusal of all fixed structures, all programs, all pre-established methods, all stamps, all representation. Informality and informal organization therefore only exist in the continuous experimentations between comrades who deepen their affinities and mutually propose projects of attack and struggle. Informality does not have a founding text, nor has it representatives. It only exists as a support for the anarchist struggle, for the anarchists in struggle, to enable us to do what we want to accomplish. In their contributions, the anarchists of the CCF

say that “Naturally, FAI has no exclusivity. This why our proposal is not the quantitative increase of FAI. […] Our proposal is to organize armed cells and affinity groups, forming an international network of anarchists of praxis.” We then ask ourselves, if the proposal is the multiplication of affinity groups (we will not enter into detail about the use of a word like “cells”, recalling – at least historically, but yet again, maybe this was the Old Anarchy – hierarchy and party organization), why the FAI? As a support for this proposal? But an affinity group is exactly the encounter between individuals and the true autonomy to act, it is not the basic element of a big superstructure, and even less of a superstructure established years ago. The link between affinity groups could be the informality, it is to say, the exchange of ideas and perspectives, the development of common projects, a development which is never finished, always in evolution, always without any formalization. The proposal of the FAI only puts fences on the vast terrain of informality.

The State, the parties, the assemblies, the organizations… all this entities are founded on a “collective we”: citizens, or militants, or activists. The individual, they do not even know what it is. We on the contrary, we love the individual, with his thoughts and his unique and singular acts. Also when they are solitary, also when they are plural because their paths crossed those of other individuals. For this reason, we hate the State and the parties (which are always authoritarian) and we distrust the assemblies and the organizations (which can sometimes be libertarian). Unlike the CCF, we do not think that the “Rebel I” can find a home in the “collective we”. Unlike several claims of the FAI, we are not interested in handing out certificates of good or bad behavior to anarchists who try to fight, defining the one as “an anarchist of praxis” and the other

as “a theorist who doesn’t do anything”. It is a blatant lie which closes all space for debate and deepening to pretend that the only anarchists attacking power would be those who are supporting the proposal of the FAI and those who shut their mouths, even if they are not agreeing with the ideological hegemony the FAI is trying to impose (by force of things or otherwise) on informal anarchism and on the practice of attack and sabotage. Debates and discussions are cruelly lacking today in the international anarchist movement and the ready-to-wear proposals are closing more doors and spaces for subversion than they are opening. This concern made us participate in this aborted debate, and this same concern will continue to animate us.

"The greek comrades write that “The name of each group we participate in is our psyche, our soul”. What a weird statement! What is there of more secret, of more intimate, of more unspeakable, than one's psyche, one's soul? Who would want one's psyche thrown on the front page, or their soul regurgitated by a cathode ray tube? A name is only an identity."



"[...]He specifically mentions that “When an action is followed by a communique, it is like a joke accompanied by an explanation.” The difference, we say, is that we are not fools to tell jokes. Instead, we chose the barricades of war as our home and fire as our comrade."