



The reproducibility of attack and informal organization

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The text “Reproducibility, propagation of attack against power and some related points” coming from Mexico raises, in my opinion, important issues about anarchist action. The debate is certainly not new and has always accompanied the revolutionary movements through their tumultuous history. How to propagate direct action and attack while avoiding that these practices will be locked up in the cage of an Organization, of a Group, in structures which, over time, stiffen and eventually erect, beyond the will that can animate those who are part of it, obstacles to this propagation of the attack. The Mexican comrades pointed clearly to its obstacles: fetishism of the instrument of attack, delegation, centralization, the pursuit of representativeness, the pursuit of hegemony. And indeed, it is not enough to be an anarchist to avoid falling into such traps.

I would like to take advantage of the space of discussion opened by this contribution of Mexican comrades to deepen some points. The first is, in my opinion, reproducibility, which the Mexican comrades describe as the fact that “acts of sabotage are carried out with means easy to devise, to use, to obtain and therefore within reach of and available to anyone”. I can only agree with this definition, while thinking that it also lacks something. For, in my opinion, reproducibility is not an invariable recipe for the insurrectionary anarchist struggle. Not all acts, not all attacks are reproducible, which does not negate the need to nevertheless realize them. Cer-

tain interventions of anarchists may have a specificity, whilst being totally linked to the social conflict, which does not allow us to speak of “reproducibility”. We think of certain sabotage actions, precise and not necessarily “easy” to carry out, or of attacks that target specific protagonists of power. What I mean is that the idea of reproducibility can not cover the whole range of anarchist action. Sometimes we are going to have to do things that are not reproducible, which might very well not be much appreciated or understood by “the exploited”, but which contribute just as much to the insurrectional perspective. The action of *active minorities* can aim at reproducibility, may stimulate the spread of attack, but, and this *seems* paradoxical but is not, on reflection, not at all, can also take upon itself, and only upon itself, to do certain things that must be done to prepare the ground, to remove obstacles, to spark off the rupture.

Having said that, I therefore believe that reproducibility, rather than being a principle that should guide insurrectional action, is a *method* of insurrectional struggle. And the method takes its meaning inside a project of struggle. The method also already contains the purpose of the struggle. One can not fight authority with authoritarian forms of organization. Reproducibility as a method then requires not only the identification and use of tools within reach of all, but also a whole work of identification of the enemy. Because reproducibility is only possible when we are able to identify a multiplicity

of small power structures scattered over the territory. This dissemination is also a necessary condition for reproducibility. I find it difficult to imagine how a real propagation of sabotage can be achieved if, for example, in the struggle against the construction of a high-voltage line, the comrades identify only the institution that has financed the construction as the target of the struggle. Reproducibility becomes possible when, precisely, the view shifts and identifies the hundreds of pylons, scattered along the new line, as potential targets for sabotage. I realize that this is a somewhat banal and simple example, but I think it allows us to grasp the need to consider reproducibility, and therefore diffuse attack, as an integral part of a project of struggle. And the project, in turn, is composed of many elements (methods, perspectives, organizational proposals or occasions, knowledge, analyzes,...).

This brings me to another point that I wanted to touch, and which touches on the eternal question of informal organization and of which, under no pretext, should we get tired, trying to deepen its theoretical and practical knowledge. If I share the ideas evoked in the text of the Mexican comrades in relation to the autonomy of action of the individual, the search of affinity, the notion of informality, I believe on the other hand I diverge on one point, and it is when they say “when we speak of informality, we do not only speak of it as an organizational method of the anarchist struggle, we speak of it as a way in which the individual acquires an absolute autonomy”. I do not believe that informal organization (that is, coordination between affinity groups for a specific, defined and temporary purpose, and the possibility of this coordination acting within the self-organization of the exploited in struggle and intermingling without losing oneself) necessarily implies “the absolute autonomy of the individual.” Perhaps it is a semantic question, but I think that if I engage in a project of struggle, together with my affinities, and in addition, we coordinate with other affinity groups, I can not consider myself to be “absolutely autonomous”. On the contrary, we make agreements, make commitments and I do not think that I can appreciate very much the one who makes a commitment to then, all of a sudden, withdraw this commitment. Otherwise, it’s not an informal “*organization*”, it’s just an informal *milieu*. When one forms an organization (obviously informal), it is precisely to go further than the sum of individual capacities. Such an organization must, in my view, always stimulate *maximum* autonomy of action of individuals and affinity groups, but it can not be *absolute* since it is defined by the purpose of the organization. If I speak of informal organization, it is to indicate a form of organization based on affinity, which has a specific and temporary purpose which does not represent the “anarchist movement” and does not aspire to a representativeness of anything, but which is only directed towards the insurrectional aim. In a way, it is “the organization of tasks”.

Again, we must be careful, I think. For the utterly necessary criticism of “specialization” does not mean that our

condition for giving oneself, at a certain moment and with a certain aim, an informal organization is that everybody does everything at the same time. I’m afraid it’s just unimaginable. The organization will allow us to put together, within a project, the different knowledge, capacities and desires that exist. Criticism of roles is important because it emphasizes that the journey of development, acquisition of knowledge, search for affinity, deepening of ideas is a journey “for life”, that it is a permanent challenge, that our individuality can not be enclosed in an identity with the use of this or that tool (the writer, the saboteur, the robber, the propagandist,...). And it is not that this permanent quest stops once one enters into an informal organization, but... the organization of tasks does not mean to me that we all do the same at the same time. While avoiding delegation, it is in a coordination that one group will propose to take care of this, another one of that, another will provide support, etc. And every thing requires precise knowledge, often matured through reflections, analyzes, experiments, encounters, occasions,... To put it frankly: it is not because we refuse specialization that when a group to fire is needed to cover an action that one will choose the one who never held a firearm in its hands to take the responsibility. That said, to try to counter-balance a little what I have just said and that may be taken as a reduction of the informal organization to a technical question: “*Informal organization is not simply a functional answer to a practical question. It is not the magic word able to open all doors, nor is it one of the many keys available in the toolbox. To deny its technical role would be a hypocrisy, as much so to lessen the ethical dimension. It could be defined as the organization of those who do not have and do not want an Organization – as the preparation, predisposition and coordination of those who are faced with the practical problems of action, not only in the immediate present, but also in the future, beyond and against any politics. Because being alien to calculation does not mean forgetting the perspective, just as being sensitive to intoxication does not mean indulging in bliss.*”

Finally, one last thing I wanted to say is that the propagation of attack also requires making available and sharing knowledge of the instruments of attack. And how can we do that? There are examples in the past where in the revolutionary journals recipes and techniques of sabotage were published, commented upon and discussed. There were also technical studies that detailed certain structures of the enemy, such as for example an electric transformer, railways or a gas station. Today, we still need to create these spaces for knowledge sharing, especially when we think of all these new power infrastructures such as fiber optics, data centers, antennas and so on. The spread of such knowledge can only have a beneficial influence on the spread of attack, demonstrating that if there is willpower, determination and some effort, the king is effectively naked.

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