

**“Reproducibility, propagation of attack
against power and some related points”**

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**“The Reproducibility of Attack and
Informal Organization”**

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Published September 2016 in Negación, from Mexico

“The media image of the ‘terrorist’ works together with the police to defend social peace. The citizen applauds or gets scared, but always remains a citizen, that is to say, a spectator. The ‘armed struggle’ presents itself as the superior form of social confrontation. The one who is militarily more representative – according to the spectacular effect of the actions – therefore constitutes the authentic armed party. The State from his side has every interest to reduce the revolutionary threat to some fighting organizations as to transform subversion into a pitched battle between two armies. What domination fears is generalized and anonymous revolt [...]”

“One thing is that anarchists have weapons, a much different thing is to be an armed group. [...]”

On the 11th of March 2009, a video with the title 19 seconds of social war was anonymously uploaded to the web. Three anonymous fighters with their faces covered show the easiness and efficiency with which it is possible to attack those who destroy your life. To attack a bank in a few seconds, two hammers, a spray can and determination are enough. Maybe at the moment, the most notable aspect of the video was the acceptance it got on YouTube, it was enough to look to the

comments to have an idea of this. But actually, the most notable in our opinion, was the wave of sabotage actions that happened in the Mexican capital (and certainly also in other regions) after the spreading of this video. The propagation of sabotage had nothing accidental about it, it was due to the simplicity with which this symbol of domination was attacked and the facility by which certain means could be acquired, this means: reproducibility.

For long time, the majority of sabotage actions which flooded anonymously and informally – or some with claims – Mexico City and other regions of the country shared a characteristic that went beyond any claim. This characteristic was that the attacks were realized with easily reproducible means that are therefore accessible for any comrade, or for anybody who feels the need to attack what is oppressing and exploiting us. Also today, many attacks are realized in this way, which is strengthening their propagation.

In an insurrectional and informal struggle project that intends to propagate itself on a, let's say, social level, but also amongst comrades, an as necessary as indispensable element is reproducibility. Concretely, reproducibility means that acts of sabotage are realized with means (incendiary devices bombs, explosive weapons or other tools) that can be easily made and used, and that can be easily acquired by anyone. The intention beyond this is that sabotage might be in reach for anyone, that each person might get access to attacking what is

oppressing him or her and that one doesn't have to go looking for an already formalized (or sometimes spectacularised) group to learn how to do thing. Reproducibility is about the individual himself or herself finding the means to act, meeting up with comrades in affinity with who he or she shares knowledge, discussing things trough and stepping on to action.

When we speak about informality, we are not only speaking about it as an organizational method of the anarchist struggle, we are also speaking about it as a means by which the individual acquires absolute autonomy and therefore doesn't have to submit to the ideology of a group – groups that are often of authoritarian colors, but go well camouflaged as “libertarian” or “autonomous” and insert themselves in this necessity to pass on to the attack, taking over anarchist projects or individuals to later on submerge them in a logic of submission to a central apparatus. But it is precisely through discussion, thinking and critiques that the individual meets the need to converge with other singular individuals, or with other collectives that themselves are consisting of individuals.

Reproducibility also encourages the radicalization of the individual or collective acts of attack, extending to the maximum the autonomy amongst individuals and collectives, generating, when one desires, an informal coordination in which, outside of the logic of dependency or acceptance,

one could also come to share the knowledge of each comrade concerning sabotage.

Some particular realities

Gasoline, glass bottles, burned oil and rags are easily acquired. Also other materials with which one can attack the system and its cops can be easily found. For us, all means that are in accordance with the ends are weapons that can be directed against power. Maybe some are more destructive than others, but no any means gets ideological overrating over another. For example, guns over molotovs, or dynamite over homemade incendiary devices. Also, the reproducibility of the attack depends of the particular characteristics of each place. For example, in Bolivia, where black powder and dynamite can be found on any market, on almost any place, these materials are easily acquired and makes that their use during revolts in such places is very common.

In our context, dynamite was much used during the Magonist revolts in the north of the country, because the possibility to acquire it was very easy as the north is a mining region.

Although in current times, the acquiring of explosive materials is usually a bit complicated, we could mention that in the case of the Oaxaca insurrection, homemade explosives were widely used in the form of “coyotas”, which are basically party firecrackers with nails attached to it as shrapnel. They were extremely harmful for the cops who were repressing the revolt on the barricades.

Nevertheless, this reality of daily war, of drugs and arms trafficking, this need of the State to keep the country in a permanent war zone, makes the acquiring of short and long guns, grenades or whatever you want possible. In addition, society is used to its use and familiar with its use: in many cases, you learn it from when you are a youngster, be it for defense or for other reasons. So the use of guns to hit power, or their use during a generalized revolt or a conscious insurrection, is very likely. And again, the example of Oaxaca (as well as other revolts that are less known) illustrates clearly what we are saying.

For the moment, we do not want to enter into the discussion on ethics and morals concerning the use of guns or the disarmament of society. We are no pacifists, but neither are we warmongers. Nevertheless we can affirm that reality has shown us that the society in arms in this last years has only massacred itself, something that is obviously in the interest of the State. But as anarchists

we go in another direction: we go towards the need to attack power with all means that are in accordance with the ends. The use of guns is in accordance with anarchist ethics. Here we are speaking of revolutionary action, of conscious acts of sabotage and their easy and efficient propagation to destroy power.

For the destruction of the myth of specialization and professionalism: neither spectators nor actors.

With all the rubbish that the system spreads through television, cinema, theatre and fiction books, an image has been created of the saboteur as a professional of violence. An image of a professional saboteur that, maybe unwillingly, is complemented by the visual propaganda of some guerilla armies or radical urban guerilla groups (leftist, marxist-leninist or also anarchist) in which their members appear with machine guns and other heavy weaponry in an attempt to have an impact in the eyes of the State and of society; or, with their own words, to propagandistic ends. But we can also add to this the image of the “reckless hero” that some comrades create around the figure of comrades who in the past (and the present) took action.

Taking out of the debate the fact that in certain moments anarchists – and any person who is rebelling – need to learn the use of guns (something that in Mexico, as we said in the previous paragraph, is more common than learning how to read) and learn fighting strategies on the countryside or in an urban setting, this type of armed visual propaganda is nothing more than a hindrance to the propagation of attack and sabotage on wide levels, in the social context, outside of our circles and before all, autonomously, for the following two reasons:

Firstly, because the image of the professional of violence leaves aside all those who want to attack, but are not finding the so-called adequate means to attack the system (whatever the case might be, because the majority of it has to do with

spectacularity), and this makes that these individuals desiring to attack stay immobile and spectators.

Secondly, because the visual propaganda of the professional saboteur generates an abyss between the individual, the organization and the organizations. The individual feels the need to attack, but believes that in order to do so, he needs to belong to a professional urban guerilla group, to a systematic organism, or that he has to create an organization that specializes itself in this and leaves aside other aspects of life where intervention is also necessary. When he doesn't find the organization to back him up, or when he finds himself in the impossibility to use certain means, again there is immobility and spectators, because the individual stay immobile facing the impotence of not being "on the level" of attacking the State. It is clear that everybody is capable of looking for the means he or she wants, there is no doubt about that, but my comment, apart from being based on experience and of knowledge about other experiences, projects itself specifically in when this type of visual propaganda leaves on the side not only the comrades who in one way or another have access to manuals and other things that older comrades have left them; I am speaking concretely about a comrade that is isolated (whatever that might mean) from the movement, or about a person who is an "ordinary" citizen" but has decided to stop being it and attack, who then find themselves many times in an impossible situation.

But the myth of the specialist or the professional of violence has other bad breaths

Many times, together with the propagation of this type of visual propaganda (more concretely by comrades, leaving aside the image that the State creates of terrorists), you have also the fact that one believes that the more specialization the attack requires, and the more the means of attack are specialized, more damage is done to the infrastructures of power (meaning by this persons and things). The practice itself showed that this is not true and that this is many times a projection.

The comrades who in 2011 attacked the Wal-Mart of Buenavista in the central zone of the Federal District, give during an interview for the book "Que se ilumine la noche" a clear account on how just some easily acquirable elements and determination were needed to cause mayor damage to the infrastructures of power. A glass bottle, gasoline, condoms as a time delay and pills of ammonia sulphate were enough to cause the total destruction of the Wal-Mart. Another example could be mentioned of the comrades who in Tijuana burned 31 new patrol cars of the municipal police. Some short guns to cover the retreat, a car, some liters of gasoline and determination where enough. We are just mentioning these two examples because of their supposed "spectacularity" and huge damage, leaving aside the hundreds of sabotage actions

that are being realized with molotovs or homemade devices consisting of plastic bottles, matches, cigarillos and gasoline.

Also, the myth of the professional of violence or of specialization is often supported by another factor: to be or to want to be always at the height of the system.

By always wanting to be at the height of the system and to wage competition with its armies, besides falling in the trap of measuring ourselves with the same stick as the system is measuring us, the attacking group ends up being a mirror image of the armies of the system, even ending up considering the armed act or the guerilla group an end in itself and not a means to attack – giving often more valour to guns and its iconography than to other means of intervention.

When sometimes it has been said that groups end up begin a deformed mirror image of the State itself, one is also speaking about the vainglory and the overestimation given to guns, to rifles, to explosives. These elements, that should just be tools of the revolutionary, end up becoming his identity, losing his particularity as an individual, delegating his own identity to a false identity supported by a commercial instrument-icon of the system like weapons – instruments that one uses out of necessity, far away from all fetishism towards them. Weapons are a commodity and the best we can do with them is to render them... usefully useless. As anarchists, I believe this strongly, we are against the fetishism of arms and against any organization (or acronym) that converts itself into

something identitarian and that ends up with denying the individual or the individuals. Our only identity is our own individuality, our only identity are we ourselves and this can be seen reflected in more words, thoughts and acts, that flow together as one.

So then, what do we want and what are we proposing?

Concerning the attack against the structures of the State and Capitalism, but above all against Power, we desire a propagation of attack, of sabotage and of the insurrectional perspective. What we are looking for, is the intensification of the social war day after day. That every person who feels the need to attack the State, Capitalism and Power does so, getting, above everything else, out of the idle position of spectator or of the immobility due to a lack of means.

Concerning anarchist organization, we propose an informal organizational method, that is therefore in constant development and self-criticism, a method based on affinity and not on delegation or systematic agreement. An organizational method built starting from the needs that we experience in our immediate surroundings. An informal method that doesn't place any organization or acronym above the individual, but where the organization stays subjected and submitted to constant practice and constant thinking, just as action is. An organization based on the informal method of struggle that can be capable to propagate itself and be reproduced in qualitative terms.

Concerning the use of guns and explosives (easily acquired in this territory), a struggle consistent with the anarchic principles and with informality. An acting that cuts in a slash with the vainglory of guns, that breaks with the fetishism created around the armed sabotage; a consistent struggle that by attacking power destroys the discourse that places the armed act above other acts of sabotage, and a critique on the fetishism of illegality. Through acting, break with the commercial discourse on guns, mirrored by the big vanguards and militant armed organizations who are placing their militants in a game of power, mirrored in every aspect of their organization. This is what we want to say by seeing oneself through the deforming mirror of power. We are not proposing a structured armedist struggle, but a direct struggle against power in its totality, a struggle that is capable to propagate and to reproduce itself. And if guns are easily acquired, may their use then be consequent and always as means, never as a goal.

The social war is a constant reality, the individual or collective attack is also so, better when this reality propagates even more, disperses, spreads out through the whole territory. And to contribute to this, the means of attack easily reproducible and easily acquired should be the perspective of concrete attack that accompanies our struggles for anarchy.

For an informal, anonymous and autonomous practice of attack against power

The Reproducibility of Attack and Informal Organization

Published October 2016 in *Avalanche*, from Belgium

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. Certain 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 cannot 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 cannot 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 cannot 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 everything 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.

An anarchist from Brussels

