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REVOLUTIONARY
SOLIDARITY

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Recommended Further Reading

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The Carmignani and Porcu pieces were taken from the Elephant Editions (UK anarchist publisher) pamphlet, *Revolutionary Solidarity*. We chose not to include the other three essays from this previous publishing, but if the reader is interested, these texts can be found online.

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Introduction

The concept of solidarity is not only used and abused by the various reformist syndicalist and humanitarian movements and even power itself, it is also sadly emptied of any content by many anarchists. The levelling is such as to reveal a symbolic attitude worthy of the Church but which allows us to put our conscience at rest.

Counter-information and propaganda in the lead, demonstrations (true processions), then nothing, provoke a feeling of powerlessness, a pernicious frustration that sees justification open the way to resignation.

We discover that everything crumbles there where the mentality of the group and quantity thought it was strong. Nothing changes as we enter a vicious circle with mournful calls to a miserable bartering with the State one wanted to fight.

When individuals find themselves alone at night, no longer supported by "collective strength", the arms of Morpheus transform the imprisoned comrades one wanted to support, to whom one wanted to express one's solidarity, into a real nightmare with no escape.

So! Should we no longer show solidarity to imprisoned comrades given that it serves no end?

Never! A movement that is not capable of looking after its comrades in prison is destined to die, and that at a high price under atrocious torture.

The reflection must be made in other terms. What does it mean to express revolutionary solidarity? Basically the reply is not all that difficult.

Solidarity lies in action. Action that sinks its roots in one's own project that is carried on coherently and proudly too, especially in times when it might be dangerous even to express one's ideas publicly. A project that expresses solidarity with joy in the game of life that above all makes us free ourselves, destroys alienation, exploitation, mental poverty, opening up infinite spaces devoted to experimentation and the continual activity of one's mind in a project aimed at realising itself in insurrection.

A project which is not specifically linked to the repression that has struck our comrades but which continues to evolve and make social tension grow, to the point of making it explode so strongly that the prison walls fall down by themselves.

A project which is a point of reference and stimulus for the imprisoned comrades, who in turn are point of reference for it.

Revolutionary solidarity is the secret that destroys all walls, expressing love and rage at the same time as one's own insurrection in the struggle against Capital and the State.

Daniela Carmignani

REVOLUTIONARY SOLIDARITY

There are many ways to demonstrate solidarity to comrades who are being criminalised by the State, each one of which is a direct expression of the way one intervenes in the social clash in general.

There are those who see solidarity as lending a social service to this or that arrested comrade, and that is the way they carry out their activity: looking for lawyers, sending money and clothes to prison, visiting and so on. This purely humanitarian solidarity also translates itself into the constitution of defence committees and relative campaigns aimed at influencing public opinion.

Then there are those who see solidarity in a strictly political key and play at making a heap of "distinctions" aimed at not compromising the image of their own activity. So for reasons of opportunity they defend and show solidarity to those who declare themselves innocent, not to those who claim responsibility for their actions.

Others still, if they see there is something to be gained in terms of political propaganda, immediately bring out flyers and leaflets in formal solidarity with the comrade or comrades arrested, i.e. they declare solidarity in words, while in practice there is no trace of it.

Then there is solidarity in an ideological context. This is the case of the marxist-leninists in the revolutionary combatant party version. They show solidarity with those with positions similar to their own, and are in contrast with those who do not share or recognise their political line or strategy, often using censorship and ostracism against those they consider inconvenient.

What do we think we should mean by revolutionary solidarity then?

The first aspect is that of seeing solidarity as the extension of the

insurrectional social practice one is already carrying out within the class clash, i.e. as a direct demonstration of actions of attack against all the structures of power, large and small that are present in one's own territory. And that is because these should to all effects be considered responsible for *everything* that happens in social reality, including therefore the criminalisation and arrest of comrades wherever they are. It would be short-sighted to reduce the question of repression against comrades to something strictly linked to the legal and police apparatus. The criminalisation and arrest of comrades should be seen in the context of the social *struggle* as a whole, precisely because these are always the hasty material means used by the State to discourage radicalisation everywhere. No matter how great or insignificant it might be, every act of repression belongs to the relations of the social struggle in course against the structures of dominion.

The second aspect is that each revolutionary comrade should be defended on principle, irrespective of the accusations made against them by the State's legal and police apparatus, in the first place because it is a question of snatching them from its clutches i.e. from the conditions of "hostage" they have been reduced to. Moreover, it is also a question of not losing the occasion to intensify the attack against the "law" intended as the regulating expression of all the relationships of power present in constituted society.

The third aspect concerns the refusal to accept the logic of defence that is inherent in constitutional law, such as for example the problem of the "innocence" or "guilt" of the comrades involved, and that is because we have many good reasons for defending them and no one can justify the political opportunism of not doing so. We cannot and must not consider ourselves lawyers, but revolutionary anarchists at war against constituted social order on all fronts. We aim at radically destroying the latter from top to bottom, we are not interested in judging it as it does us. For this reason we consider any sentence made by the State vultures against proletarians in revolt, and all the more so if they are comrades, to be a sentence against ourselves and as such to be avenged with all the means we consider opportune, according to our disposition and personal inclinations.

The fourth and final aspect concerns our attitude towards the arrested comrades, whom we continue to behave towards in the same

way as those not in prison. That means that to revolutionary solidarity we always and in any case unite a radical critique. We can and do show solidarity with imprisoned comrades without for this espousing their ideas. Those who show solidarity to imprisoned comrades are not necessarily involved in their opinions and points of view, and the same thing goes for us as far as they are concerned. We actively support all imprisoned comrades in all and for all, but only up to the point where what we do for them does not come into contrast with or contradict our revolutionary insurrectionalist way of being. Ours is exclusively a relationship between social revolutionaries in revolt, not that of bartering positions. We do not sacrifice any part of ourselves, just as we do not expect others to do the same.

We think of solidarity as a way of being accomplices, of taking reciprocal pleasure and in no way consider it a duty, a sacrifice for the "good and sacred cause", because it is our own cause, i.e. ourselves.

Starting from these premises, of primary importance in the development of one's anarchist insurrectionalist action, revolutionary solidarity takes on meaning as such, because we would show simple material support to any friend who ends up in prison.

Revolutionary solidarity is an integral part of our very being as insurrectional anarchists. It is in this dimension that it should be demonstrated incessantly, precisely because it contributes to widening what we are already doing.

Pierleone Porcu

REVOLUTIONARY SOLIDARITY: A Challenge

The tendency to fall into a defensive attitude in the face of repression is best counteracted by developing an understanding and practice of revolutionary solidarity.

Revolutionary solidarity is, above all, a *revolutionary practice*. What this means is that it carries within itself the aims of revolution. For this reason, as anarchists, we cannot base solidarity on any authoritarian or economic foundations. It is not a matter of obligation, duty or debt. No one owes anyone solidarity, regardless of what they have done or what they are going through. Rather the basis of solidarity is the recognition of one's own struggle in that of others – in other words, complicity. This is of major importance. If solidarity is the recognition of my own struggle in the struggle of others, it is carried out in practice precisely through continuing that struggle, continuing to attack this social order, and doing so with a focus on what unites my struggle with that of others.

In this light, it should be clear that revolutionary solidarity is not merely support. On the practical level, it is obviously necessary to correspond and visit our imprisoned comrades, and to find ways to help them take care of various needs. But if this becomes the focus of what we call "solidarity", then we have reduced solidarity to mere charitable social work. The maintenance of connections, of friendships and comradeship in the midst of repression is one important factor for maintaining support. But what is most significant is active solidarity with the *active revolt* of our comrades who are locked up or otherwise suffering focused repression. It is within this context that the specific activity of support (letters, visits, financial support, etc) can become a part of the practice of solidarity as the help to maintain communication between all of us fighting against this system.

So revolutionary solidarity is the complicity in revolutionary struggle between individuals in different specific situations who can

nonetheless see that their revolutionary projects coincide. Let's consider the project of revolutionary struggle against the prison system. Comrades inside prison will inevitably involve themselves in struggles against the specific conditions of their imprisonment – for example, the ongoing struggle against the FIES (special isolation units) in Spanish prisons. There are various tactics used in these struggles. Underlying all of them is a refusal to cooperate with the prison regime. Thus, various sorts of strikes, collective revolts, riots and the destruction of prison property have all been used. But one of the most common tactics is the hunger strike. The reasons this tactic is so common among prisoners is that it can be used collectively or individually, it is completely in the hands of those using it and it puts a great deal of pressure on the prison authorities. At the same time, the effectiveness of the hunger strike – especially when used by one or only a few individuals – depends on a situation of permanent conflict on the outside, ongoing battle against the structures and individuals responsible for repression. In practice this can include flyers, demonstration and graffiti campaigns expressing solidarity with the comrades inside, but also in sabotage and other forms of attack against the police, judiciary and prison systems. *Os Cangaceiros*, a group of rebels in France, provide a fine example. From 1984 into the 1990's, they were involved in active sabotage of the prison system in solidarity with a number of prison revolts that were occurring in France. Along with a variety of acts of vandalism and sabotage and the theft and distribution of the plans for a major prison building project in France, they published significant analyses of the prison and justice system and their relationship to society as a whole. And many others chose to imitate their activity of sabotage against the prison system.

The sort of activity described above shows a principled approach to the struggle against the prison system and the practice of solidarity. They share a few things in common: they can be used autonomously outside the framework either of the institutions of the state or the institutions of the left (parties, unions and the like); they involve no delegation or mediation to be carried out; they do not involve negotiation or any sort of compromise with those in power. Of course, they do require a movement committed to an ongoing battle against the entire society of prisons, a movement in permanent conflict with the present

social order. The lack of such a movement makes it easy to compromise one's stance whether because one is in prison oneself or because those one cares for are. But anarchist principles are not essentially *moral*, but have their basis in a logic of practice. When we put our time and energy into petitioning, negotiating, litigating and so on, this is time and energy taken away from the project of destroying the society of imprisonment and law. Furthermore, these practices are based in the institutions of the state, in the legal and judiciary system. Thus, they make us dependent upon the goodwill of the state and its institutions. This can only end up strengthening the very institutions that we claim we want to put an end to. In addition, this dependence on the state as the very precise effect of undermining any trace of self-determination in our activity, thus undermining our capacity for direct action as well. How far this goes in deteriorating one's perspective and critical capacities becomes evident when the concessions granted by the state in these contexts – minor reforms or simple applications of existing laws – are proclaimed to be victories. Here the reformist mentality has come to dominate one's practice – the idea that one can use the most compromised means as long as they are "effective" in the most immediate sense. But for those who seek the destruction of the entire system of domination, these are not victories, but defeats, because they point to resignation in the face of a system that seems unassailable, moving one to use its means to achieve what, in the long run, can only be its ends.

So the practice of revolutionary solidarity presents us with a challenge. Repression is growing as is specific focus by the authorities on anarchists. We will likely see more and more of us under investigation, facing trial and spending time in prison. It is very easy in such situations to simply retreat, to let things blow over or, worse, to distance ourselves from comrades facing prison or from actions that frighten us. This response would be a major victory for the state. So the challenge we face is that of developing the strength within ourselves to act on our own terms against the state and against its systems of repression while also learning to coordinate these actions without compromising ourselves. Since revolutionary solidarity, at least from an anarchist perspective, is the practical recognition of one's project of struggle within the struggle of another, it requires that we each act as we see fit against this order, as we are moved to act by our own confrontation with its oppres-

sive power in our daily lives. But it also requires that we learn to weave these actions together in a way that strengthens them and makes their meaning clearer. There is no panacea, no organization or program, that can provide this, because all such panaceas require that we adjust ourselves to their requirements. Rather it is necessary to develop the clarity and candor from which relations of affinity can develop, spreading their complicity in revolt further and further and maybe even flowering into insurrection. This is the challenge we confront in the face of an increasingly repressive system of domination.

Wolf Landstreicher

NEVER CRY WOLF

The nature of revolutionary solidarity lies in recognizing one's own struggle in the struggle of others, in the actions they choose to take, the risks they confront in their battle against the social order. Thus, it does not mean uncritical support, but rather includes an intelligent analysis of each action in terms of aims, tactics and repercussions. Every act of revolt, every attack against the rule of the state and capital is part of the struggle for freedom and life, and every response that condemns these acts is a rejection of the solidarity that is a necessary part of our struggle. The practice of solidarity must necessarily reject the binary logic in which one must either uncritically embrace an action or else condemn it.

On March 31, 2001, unknown people set fire to 36 SUVs at the Romania car dealership in Eugene, Oregon. A few days later a communiqué was published explaining the action. The communiqué referred to two people accused by the authorities with doing similar actions: "...Romania Chevrolet is the same location that was targeted last June, for which two earth warriors, Free and Critter, are being persecuted. The techno-industrial state thinks it can stop the growing resistance by jailing some of us, but they cannot jail the spirit of those who know another world is possible. The fire that burns in Free and Critter burns within all of us and cannot be extinguished by locking them up..."

Upon hearing of this action, my immediate response was that of solidarity—this was an expression of my struggle as well. At the same time, I

recognized the untimeliness of the action, particularly in the light of the wording of the communiqué. Jeffrey "Free" Luers' trial was to begin in less than a week and the wording of the communiqué could easily be taken as implying that he had been involved in the arson of the previous June even though he hadn't yet claimed responsibility for this act. (Craig "Critter" Marshall had already begun to serve a five and a half year sentence for the first Romania arson.) Certainly, this action was likely to have an effect on the trial. Nonetheless, it is essential to remember that, however important strategic considerations may be, they can never be the first considerations in acts of revolt. The need to rebel and attack the order that dominates and oppresses us is always the primary consideration.

Unfortunately, the moment Free's lawyer had his trial postponed, the wails of condemnation against this more recent attack began. While some merely condemned the attack as stupid and blamed those who did it for increasing state repression, others went as far as to claim that this action was carried out by police or the FBI. Those who made these latter allegations had no evidence whatsoever; they were simply unhappy about the timing of the action and its possible consequence.

Those who carry out attacks

against the present social order are never to blame for the repressive acts of state. The state, of course, will use such attacks to justify its repressive activity, but when anarchists begin to use a mirror image of this state logic to condemn those acts of revolt that don't fit their ideal, it is a nauseating case of cowardice. The state, and only the state, is ever to blame for state repression. It has the power of monopolized violence and can use it whenever it sees fit—as quickly, at times, in the face of a word as in the face of a deed. The act of rebellion is always a gamble. Of course, one can examine the situation, estimate the odds and then decide to take the risk or not. But one can never know the outcome with certainty, particularly since the circumstances in which one acts are largely in the hands of one's enemy. In this light, every condemnation of an act of revolt based upon real or potential repressive responses of the state is absurd from the standpoint of the enemies of the state.

The attribution of acts of revolt to police agencies—particularly without proof—is potentially quite harmful. Those who set the fire on March 31 may one day face trial for this action—this is one of the many possible consequences of their gamble. The chattering spreading these groundless rumors are creating an atmosphere that works against crit-

ical solidarity in a situation where this might be prove essential. It is an all too common story, reminding one of those anarchists who parroted the media's claim that the Unabomber was a madman and thus pushed the discussion of his actions and ideas into the binary logic of condemnation and disassociation on the one hand and uncritical praise (at times verging on a disturbing near-canonicalization as portrayed in the "He tried to save us" fliers). One is also reminded of the case of Marinus Van der Lubbe who was transformed from a council communist insurgent into a dupe or an agent of the nazis by a stroke of the stalinist and social-democratic pen in spite of the fact that even in the face of nazi torture and his impending execution, he refused to lie and say that his attack was a communist conspiracy. Anarchists would do well to avoid rumors regardless of the circumstance, but rumors that could undermine the foundations of revolutionary solidarity are truly dangerous. In a situation where the odds are already against us, those who spread such rumors are creating yet another circumstance that favors the state.

On June 11, 2001, Free was sentenced to 23 years in prison for his alleged participation in the first attack against the Romania car dealership and an attempted arson at Tyree Oil Inc. During the course of his trial, he claimed responsibility for burning the three cars at Romania Chevrolet but denied having anything to do with the attempt against Tyree Oil. Of course, the judge, worthy servant of the state that he is, found Free guilty on all counts. To our knowledge neither Free nor Critter have commented on the most recent attack at the Romania car lot. But as we see it, Free, Critter and the night-adventurers of March 31 are all our comrades in struggle. The actions claimed by Free and by these more recent illuminators of the night reflect our own hatred for this society and its poisonous effects. We do not know who started the fire on March 31, but we do know that in the face of acts of revolt we who are enemies of the state would do well to remember this advice: never cry wolf.



Recommended Further Reading

Attacking Prisons at the Point of Production

compiled by Green Anarchy - available from the GA distro.

The Marini Trial - Italian State Repression of Anarchist Revolt and Anarchist Responses

Venomous Butterfly Publications pamphlet, 2003. Provides an overview of the events surrounding the Marini investigation and trial as well as extensive documentation (flyers, articles from anarchist papers, public letters/ communiques, etc.) relating to it. Highly recommended.

The Prison Within the Prison - Resistance to the F.I.E.S . Isolation Units In Spain

compiled by Brighton ABC, North American Edition published by Tarantula Distribution (socialwar.net)

Towards An Alliance of Flame In Each Indignant Heart

by the Claustrophobia Collective. Included with the ABC Info & Resources pamphlet and also published by Venomous Butterfly.

The Defiant: Prisoners in the Global Resistance

Inspiring prisoners' writings put together by the now defunct Anarchist Prisoners Legal Aid Network (APLAN).

Strangers Everywhere - About Some Anarchists Arrested in Lecce...

Venomous Butterfly Publications pamphlet.

Green Anarchy magazine

GA is an excellent source for action reports worldwide as well as updates on direct action prisoners.

Prisoner Support Resources:

contacts:

Anarchist Black Cross Network

www.anarchistblackcross.org

Break The Chains

PO Box 12122, Eugene OR 97440

breakthechains.net

breakthechains0@yahoo.com

California Anarchist Prisoner Solidarity

PO Box 22449, Oakland CA 94609

capsriseup.net / caps.anarhija.org

Prison Activist Resource Center

PO Box 339, Berkeley CA 94701

www.prisonactivist.org

Anarchist Black Cross Federation

www.abcf.net

Earth Liberation Prisoners Support Network

BM Box 2407, London, WC1N 3AX, England.

elp4321@hotmail.com

www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk

North American ELPSN

nelpsna@mutualaid.org

support websites:

(you may need to add a www to these addresses)

shac7.com

fbiwitchhunt.com

freefreedom.org

supportpeter.com

supportchris.org

trearrow.org

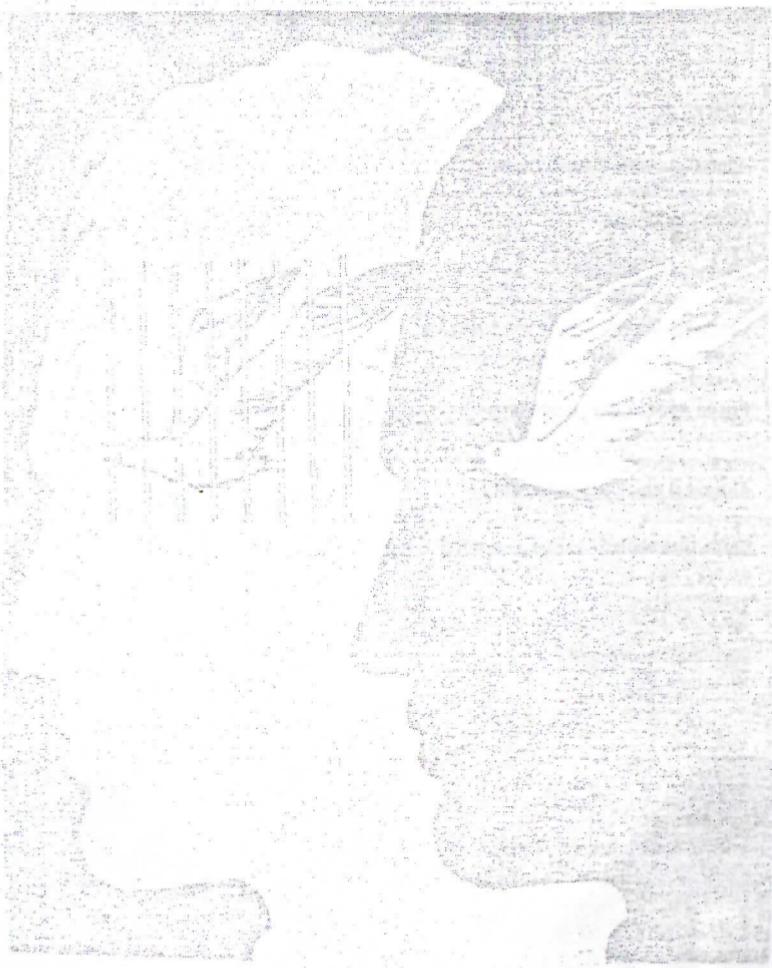
freecamerisch.net

frameup.tk

escapeintorebellion.info

defenestrator.org/roblosricos/





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