

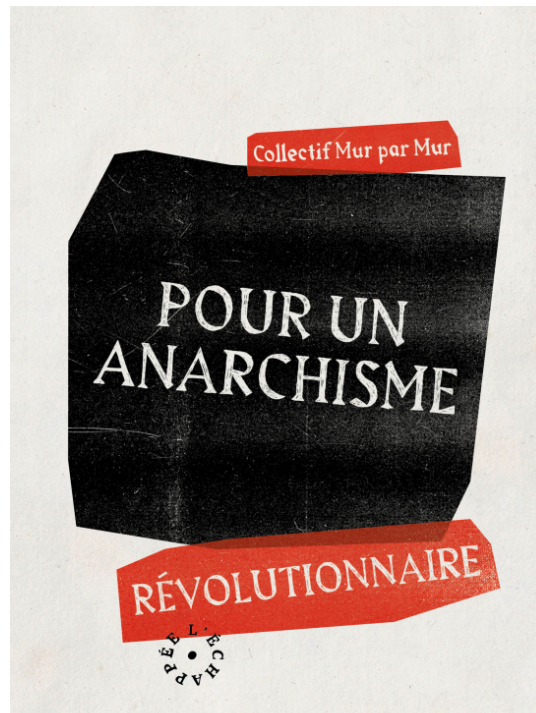
For a revolutionary anarchism

(Conversations around the book and beyond)



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The publication of the book "Pour un anarchisme révolutionnaire (For a revolutionary anarchism)" was an opportunity to meet many comrades and to have many discussions. This booklet is inspired by those conversations . It revisits the most frequently asked questions and presents the main points that came through the discussions that followed .



What follows is not a summary of the book. If most of the proposals below were already present in the book, they could only be concretely stated and clarified through the course of the discussions, remarks and critics that were addressed to the book.

Let's hope that this booklet will be the occasion to continue these exchanges and to nourish our reflections in the struggles to come...

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Why do you speak about "anarchist revolution" and what does it mean to you?

We start with a double observation: on the one hand, many anarchists have taken the path of desertion of society and social movements to focus on the building of alternative communities, thus, moving away from the discourse and search for revolutionary practices. Secondly, the question of the revolution has come back on the table in the last ten years. It is in this context that we wanted to reassert, above all, the necessity and the possibility of *revolution*. But from then on, the question is to know what we put behind this term. This is a question that many people ask themselves nowadays.

We have noticed a clear evolution in recent years: now, when we distribute leaflets or revolutionary newspapers in the street, many people take it seriously, are interested and want to know more. This was not the case even a few years ago (there is a "before" and "after" Yellow Vests - Gilets Jaunes- movement). The questions that most often come up are: *what kind of revolution is this? How to win? What does it mean? How far should we go? What should we destroy, and to build what?*

We ask ourselves the same questions. We wrote this book with the aim to explain ourselves and attempt to produce some proposals. It is in this sense that we speak of an *anarchist* revolution. Because anarchism, and more precisely anarchist-communism has confronted these questions, both in practice and in theory. It allows us to aim for a social revolution without leading to another form of authoritarianism, nor to the production of a new economic order, nor to state-capitalism as it was the case in the USSR.

For us an anarchist revolution is not a revolution made by anarchists, but a revolution that aims at the destruction of power - and not at its hi-jacking. Basically, the essential difference is there: it is about destroying in the same movement Capitalism and the State, and through them exploitation and power. The anarchist revolution does not aim to use the state to bring down capitalism. On the contrary, it aims to destroy the state, because the state is at the heart of the capitalist economy. We cannot get rid of economic exploitation without destroying the state. We develop in several places in the book this intimate and central link between the state and capitalism to show that the modern state is the instrument of economic exploitation.

This is particularly striking today, when states owe a large part of their strength and capacity for action to their position in the financial markets: to their capacity to incur debt. The confidence that allows a State to be lent money easily depends on its capacity to guarantee the conditions of circulation, accumulation and creation of future value. This guarantee is nothing else than that of the conditions required for capitalism to persist. Ultimately, this guarantee is measured by the capacity of a state to force the population to work for the capitalists. From then on, the state cannot do anything else than to maintain exploitation. This is both its aim and the source of its strength. If we want to end economic exploitation and the lot of misery, competition, permanent war, etc., the power of the state is in reality an obstacle, no matter who runs it. Indeed, the State is based on the creation of economic value by the constraint to work. There is no state without a class division of society and therefore without the exploitation of the majority of the population to support the exploiting and ruling classes.

Today, when political parties and elections are deserted and no one seriously believes that capitalism will lead us anywhere but into a wall, the revolutionary question resurfaces. In France, this question has arisen with the Yellow Vests movement, and it will arise again. But we observe uprisings all over the world: in Chile, Hong Kong, Colombia, Lebanon, the USA, Kazakhstan, etc. It is through these movements, in practice, that we will be able to trace the paths that will lead us to the victory of the social revolution. Thus, the general perspective can be stated as: to overcome law enforcement and power of the state while destroying the economy in order to invent a social relationship in which we will reproduce our existences through incommensurable mutual aid and sharing, and not through capitalist production.

Within these uprisings, the question is to identify their dynamics: *are there practices and discourses that carry a capacity to go beyond the mere demand for reform or negotiation?* Joining and supporting these practices is the best way to increase the revolutionary force of the movements. From then on, we think that the role of revolutionaries is to carry initiatives that go in this direction, but also to disseminate practices that have worked elsewhere, to speak about the history of class struggles and its international actuality. All this without trying to constitute another political party. The only party for anarchists is revolution. It is not because a political party or a trade union claims to be revolutionary that it is not, in the social struggles, an obstacle to overcome. The management of the struggles by

parties and unions has never produced anything else than defeat by negotiation, and the promotion of a few people who were able to join a fraction of the ruling class.

The anarchist revolution is therefore the one that destroys exploitation as well as power and its representatives, including the tendencies within the movement that would like to become the representatives of the revolution.

What would victory mean? What would an anarchist world look like? This answer cannot be given ahead of time. Anarchist-communism is also a way of conceiving life differently, but it opens us up to an unknown: a world without work, without economy, without ruling class, without states... This world will be created by those who make the revolution happen, with all that it implies of international resonance and cultural upheaval. The revolution is not the end of history. On the contrary, it is rather a beginning. The challenge is not only to transform the world as it is, but to make it possible to transform a world liberated from power and economy – and from their constraints on possible historical futures. Revolution is therefore also the destruction of what which prevents us from transforming the world and which brings back any aspiration to change, any alternative, however well-intentioned, into the fold of capitalism and the state.

In recent years, we have seen a strengthening of the state apparatus. Is the perspective of an anarchist revolution further out of reach?

The Covid-19 pandemic, or rather the state's management of the pandemic, was an opportunity for States to take a further step in the authoritarian shift that had already largely begun before. The state of emergency was transformed from "anti-terrorist" to "health-related" (without canceling the "anti-terrorist" dimension for the justification of security). It is not surprising that this repressive headlong rush is carried out through the technological arsenal developed by capitalism, which provides the states (who have the means to afford them) with an ever more sophisticated and invasive power of surveillance, control and repression. The pandemic was also the opportunity to impose a whole battery of digital technologies on a large scale in the world of (tele)work: (tele)medicine, (tele)education, (tele)administration, etc., thus raising the big digital platforms, GAFAM and others, to the rank of current world leaders in the capitalist economy. Nothing surprising in the end, everything we saw developing very quickly

during the pandemic was clearly already in motion before it. The pandemic was only a gas pedal given to the techno-security trends of contemporary capitalism.

From this point of view, it is clear that the state is preparing to repress any offensives that might be aimed at it. It is reinforcing and extending the police arsenal, tightening legislation, working conditions, etc. This massive strengthening of the repressive arsenal suggests that the state is taking note that it will be increasingly difficult to buy social peace. Especially after Macron's "whatever it takes" policy¹, which, after enriching the employers and temporarily maintaining social peace, has added the "Covid debt" to the debt crisis that has not ended since 2008.

The music of austerity is slowly coming back to the forefront, but with the billions of the "Covid debt" on top. Paying down the debt is of course an illusion. The issue is rather that the state can continue to incur debt. And for that, it must prove that it is a good manager of profit extraction. That is to say, the state must show its capacity to produce and maintain the conditions necessary for the circulation, investment and valorization of capital on the economic territory it manages. This proof is obtained by the hardening of the conditions of exploitation (which allows the increase of the rate of exploitation): austerity, attacks on direct or indirect wages (unemployment benefit, social minimums, pensions), reform of the labor code allowing a stronger extraction of surplus-value, etc., all this in order to maintain acceptable rates of profit for the capitalists. Everything seems to indicate that we are heading towards a hardening of exploitation and that the state is preparing to impose it by force. The authoritarian strengthening of states is a form of bunkerization in an attempt to quell uprisings. And this can be seen on a much larger scale than France.

More recently, we have seen the return of the war on the European scene and which is an opportunity for states to strengthen their repressive apparatus, to exacerbate nationalism and to revive the armaments industry. Even more, we can consider that one of the dimensions of Russia's attack on Ukraine is that of a "police operation" aimed at suppressing uprisings in the Russian sphere of influence (Belarus in 2020, Kazakhstan in 2022)².

1 The « what ever it takes » Macron's policy consist in a massive financial aid to businesses in order to maintain employment and avoid massive dismissal.

2 See for further details: about Russia's offensive in Ukraine, Mirasol : « La malédiction de Poutine. Soulèvements et raison d'État » (<https://camaraderevolution.org/index.php/2022/04/07/la-malediction-de-poutine/>). About the uprising in Kazakhstan: « Kazakhstan. Récit d'un soulèvement de janvier 2022 » (<https://camaraderevolution.org/index.php/2022/02/03/le-kazakhstan-apres-le-soulevement/>)

This bunkerization of states also translates to a particular state of capitalism today: we are in a moment where class antagonism is hardening thus revealing itself. The class struggle is thus back in the forefront. But the integrative capacities of capitalism are limited. We are witnessing a massification of small, underpaid or precarious jobs, with the return of day labor and piecework through platform capitalism, notably with the explosion of "self-employment" in the delivery sector managed by digital platforms. Precariousness also affects people with permanent contracts, who, in debt, are no longer able to make ends meet. The idea that "work" is a vector of socialization or personal fulfillment has had its day. Because working means working for capitalism, which is increasingly recognized as a historical impasse - literally *unlivable*. *Integration to capitalism through work is in crisis.*

But also, and perhaps above all, capitalism and the state have a lot of trouble integrating the proletarians' struggles, that is to say bringing the movements, even the uprisings, back into the fold of the reproduction of capital: the unions are no longer able to act as a buffer between the struggles and the state. We are witnessing a refusal of current movements to allow themselves to be represented by political figures dictating the fields of the possible and the impossible by negotiating perpetual defeat. *Political integration is in crisis.*

It is difficult to say if the anarchist revolution is moving away or getting closer. But it is clear that the current conditions of capitalism and its crises (combining crisis of integration through work, crisis of political representation, and refusal of unions and political parties as mediators of struggles in front of the state) pose historical conditions where the proposal of an anarchist revolution is made potentially audible in an unprecedented way. Moreover, the cycle of international uprisings that we are witnessing in these last years seems to go in the direction of a deepening of the (real) revolutionary movement. We are witnessing, for example, a notable overcoming of the opposition between violence and non-violence in the uprisings throughout the world. We are also witnessing exchanges between movements internationally. We have seen, for example, uprisings in the United States and in France inspired by confrontation techniques used in Hong Kong. More recently, the last uprising in Colombia (in the spring of 2021) took up practices seen in Chile, the United States or France. On this point, one can refer to the very

good book "Soulèvement (Uprising)" by Mirasol³, which deals specifically with this question.

Of course, this revolutionary deepening of the dynamics of the current movements is not a long quiet river. Indeed, we have to admit that the movement against the sanitary pass⁴ did not carry neither the offensiveness nor the revolutionary dynamics that we witnessed in the Yellow Vests. But the conditions of the crisis of capitalism as well as those of a revolutionary uprising are, in our opinion, quite topical.

As exploited, proletarians, we are isolated, atomized. The workers' organizations are dead or very weak. So, from where can the revolutionary force come from?

For a long time, class antagonism was conceived in terms of a struggle of labor against capital. The history of the labor movement is marked by this ideology, which was largely produced and maintained by the leaders of the trade unions and "revolutionary" parties. Revolution was perceived as the rise of workers and labor against capitalists and capital. From then on, revolution consisted in the continuation of work, but (supposedly) without capitalism. Socialism, collective ownership of the means of production and work planning would replace capitalism and competition. This conception is a dead end. It can only lead "at best" to a form of self-managed capitalism, or to state-capitalism. And in either case, the conditions of competition would soon re-emerge. In fact, if we want to destroy capitalism, we must destroy what is at its heart: labor. All of Marx's work goes in this direction: the foundation of value is work. Abolishing private property without abolishing value is a dead end. Of course, capitalism must be brought down, but for that, it is not enough to bring down one of its legs: Capital (that is, the accumulated wealth, the private property of the means of production and the circulation of commodities, in short). We need to knock down the way this value is produced i.e. labor. Revolution is therefore about destroying the state that organizes the society of capital and the compulsion to work, undoing capitalist production, and finding a way of *doing things together, not to work*. As long as we keep the quantification of a specific time dedicated to production in view of a remuneration (in whatever form, work vouchers, consumption vouchers,

³ Mirasol, Soulèvement, Acratie, 2020.

⁴ A movement opposed to restrictions of individual freedoms imposed by the french government during the second year of COVID pandemic in 2021.

time bank, barter, alternative currencies, etc.), we will keep the seeds of competition and exchange. We must destroy work as a *specific temporal sphere dedicated to production*.

But it will be the proletariat that will make the revolution, despite not being *destined* to do so. Revolution is not a matter of destiny, but of *rupture*. In the book, we put back at the heart of the revolutionary question the importance, already raised by Bakunin, of *the act and of the revolutionary aim*. We do not believe that capitalism produces the conditions for its own overcoming. The revolutionary dynamic is to be sought outside of what constitutes the dynamic of capitalism. However, "the proletariat" as it is generally understood, synonym of "the working class" is a product of capitalism. It is the condition of those who have only their labor force to sell in order to survive. They are the proletarians as exploited.

Therefore, when we say that it is the proletariat that will make the revolution, it is not simply this exploited proletariat that we are talking about. We are not talking about a proletariat that would be a sociological fact, or an identity within the reproduction of the society of Capital. We are talking about the proletariat that constitutes itself as a revolutionary class, in a movement of offensive against its condition of existence within capitalism. The revolutionary proletariat is thus constituted through a particular dynamic that is contradictory to the conditions of existence of the social classes. This constitution is not made from a sociological condition or from a previous identity, it is made on the basis of the identification to a movement that materially attacks the interests of the capitalists and the state. Obviously, such a movement can only come from the exploited class, from the "proletarians" in the classical sense of the term. Because only the exploited are in that position where, in order to free themselves from their chains (those of exploitation by labor), they must destroy the whole capitalist society. And of course, it is not the bourgeoisie that will dismantle capitalism.

In the revolutionary perspective, the dynamics of the uprisings of the class of exploited-proletarians is the focal point. Once a movement is underway, what can allow the constitution of a *revolutionary force* is a dynamic that unfolds within the movement, and that moves towards the radical questioning of exploitation, that is to say of the conditions of existence of social classes. Then, a *revolutionary force* can take shape and gain strength.

Regarding how the revolution can be realized, it is obviously impossible to answer before it has taken place. Indeed, the form of the revolution will depend on the movement and practices that have historically enabled the emergence and extension of *its force*. However, we can venture to state a few *logical points*:

- The dynamics of a revolutionary overcoming emerge from practices within a movement - not from ideologies or claims.
- The constitution of a revolutionary aim within a movement is a fundamental tipping point. As soon as a revolutionary aim is concretely enunciated (that is to say, when the movement recognizes, and assumes as its own, practices that allow it to become conscious of its revolutionary force), then a struggle begins, within the movement itself, between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary dynamics (e.g. calls for calm, for negotiation, for integration into the state or for the seizure of state power by representatives, for a new constitution or for a new democratic pact, etc.). The struggle for revolutionary force is thus made both against the state and the capitalist class, but also within the movement. This struggle, on both sides, is not won by taking over the leadership of the movement, but by the hegemonic propagation of practices and initiatives that extend and increase the revolutionary force.
- The birth and the recognition of this revolutionary potentiality is built while the first offensives are taking place. This should lead to the defeat of law enforcement, putting the State "out of service", and the shutdown of capitalist production: it is the time of insurrection.
- The insurrection can only be victorious if it finds the means to reproduce the revolutionary force and to extend its dynamics from practices that allow the reproduction of existence that do not have exploitation and power as a base. In this sense, the content of the revolution is indeed the abolition of value and of the social relations that are linked to it.
- Revolution is the transformation of the world through the extension, generalization, and creative pursuit of mutual-aid practices based on the abolition of value born through insurrection. The libertarian-communism revolution aims to undo the quantified link between work and access to subsistence. It aims at a society where there is not a

sphere of labor that determines (according to a certain amount of work, a certain work-time or its quantifiable equivalent) the quantity of what one is entitled to receive. Libertarian-communism is a society where one does not produce to obtain a living, but a world where one lives by helping each other in the existence. "Work" is destroyed to make room for an immeasurable interweaving of "doings" through mutual aid and sharing. There is no longer a mode of production as such, because producing is no longer an activity separated from what constitutes the whole of existence and its meaning. In fact, this is what *abolishing value means*.

- Insurrectional and revolutionary contagion must necessarily take an international dimension, in order to bring down all states and not just one, in order to destroy the bourgeoisie's capacity for reorganization and counteroffensive far from the revolutionary hotbed, and in order to avoid the intervention of other states to extinguish the revolution (as the U.S. has regularly done in Latin America, France in Africa, and more recently Russia in Eastern Europe).

With parties and unions increasingly discredited, does the "libertarian municipalism" theorized by Murray Bookchin appear as a possibility?

Nowadays, the so-called libertarian municipalism (or communalism) is nothing more than vaguely participatory social-democracy. We see in the trend of "taking over town halls", which is very much in vogue among some anarchists at the moment, an integration of the latter with the local state. Although Bookchin never really gave up the revolutionary question, those affiliated with libertarian municipalism are in fact just simply municipalists. This tendency is linked to movements of desertion, where a few neo-ruralists, often overeducated, take on the municipal affairs where they live. Getting involved in the political life of one's town hall, constituting "citizen" municipal lists or advocating direct democracy has nothing to do with the revolutionary anarchism that we defend. For a simple reason: municipalism does not attack the capitalist social relation and its base: value. It poses itself as an alternative to the political management of capitalism. In the struggles, we must be vigilant not to fall into the attempts of seduction of this political current, and even fight against it. It is a theory of defeat: when it expresses itself, it is to bring

practices back into the fold of the state and of the "democratic" management of work.

Anarchism has often fetishized the "democratic" form, whether in the form of decision-making procedures or federative conceptions of territorial entities to be "governed". The fundamental problem with all democratic proposals is that they seek to create a time-space that is separated from the rest of life, where decisions are sovereign. A parallel can be drawn here with work: if the abolition of value requires the disappearance of a sphere separated from the rest of life dedicated to measurement and quantification of production, then the abolition of politics as we know it, is the disappearance of a political sphere separated from the rest of the daily practices that enable the reproduction of existence. This does not mean that there will not be interpersonal conflicts, but they will not be resolved either by the division of labor or by democratic engineering. All democratic proposals end up falling back on a form of sovereignty, whether it is justified by "traditional" forms of life of a few in a particular space, working soil or territorial roots in general. Democracy is in reality always about justifying the constitution of a power and the borders of its hold. It is a question of defining a legitimate and sovereign political community on its territory. In this sense, democracy, including in its radical and direct form, defines a form of property (it defines *its* territory) on which its decision-making legitimacy is exercised. One still can say that this is a "collective" property, but that doesn't change much: it is a matter of giving this property a base. And for that, what better way than through work? "The land belongs to those who work it and live on it", we hear even in certain libertarian circles. Against this, let's affirm with force that *the land belongs to no one*. This does not mean that one cannot feel attached to, or even belong to, the land. But it does not have to become the foundation of any form of property on which a political ascendancy would be based on. This is in any case the revolutionary perspective: to destroy the whole capitalist mode of production based on labor and property, and to destroy the power that is based on it.

Should the revolution destroy industry and technology? And if so, would it be a form of primitivism?

The capitalist means of production are entirely oriented towards the production of value through exploitation. They are the very materialization of the capitalist social relation, and the means of its expansion. However, anarchist and communist revolutionary theories have questioned very little, if at all, the belief in industry. They saw it as a *neutral technique* which should be seized to produce the material base of the communist society (libertarian or not). Regarding the existing anti-industrial or anti-technological critiques, if they had the merit to put forward the technological fetishism and the absurdity of the "neutrality" of industry, the revolutionary perspective is often discrete, even absent. What was missing was a radical critique of industry and technology from a revolutionary perspective and not from a moral, reformist or alternative perspective.

Industry does not enter history as a simple "neutral" technique of production, but as a technique of capitalist exploitation and law enforcement. The confinement in the factories has been an absolutely brutal historical violence, where the capitalists and the state machine hold both ends of the industrial prison that is being built, and that must be filled with docile arms. The industry imposes itself by blood and misery.

But beyond that, industry is nothing else than the very materiality of the capitalist mode of production. On this point, we draw heavily on Marx, who did a remarkable job on the question, despite the clearly industrialist positions of Marxism (but this is also true for a large part of anarchism, as we have said). Destroying capitalism therefore implies destroying industry. A factory is a place of work, dedicated to production, where the technological planning of production regulates time, gestures, and more generally what is possible and impossible. A factory will never be anything else than a place of work. And industry is an organization of productivity and standardization within a massified production. Industry is based on extraction, exchange, instrumental alienation, the division of labor, and more fundamentally, *value*. There is no room for a different use of its production system. Indeed, industry is precisely the scientific rationalization of exploitation in the service of production, it (and its experts) dictates the way *work* is organized.

A revolution that tries to be based on industry, we have already seen that: in the cities of revolutionary Spain in 1936, especially Barcelona (the situation was different in rural Aragon). This led to revolutions that resulted in the return of workers to the factories, to resume work! This is why part of the CNT (Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo) in Catalonia found itself with workers' revolts against it at that time. If we make the revolution, it is to get out of the factory, not to return into it in its name. And this is true more fundamentally for labor itself. Industry cannot exist without labor - and the ruling class (the state) that provides it with necessary conditions. Abolishing value will mean inventing techniques that do not rely on labor and its rationalization in production.

We must therefore make one important point clear: we are criticizing industry and technology, not technique in general. We have nothing against technique. But we have to differentiate between "technique" and "technology". Technology is the instrumental rationalization of exploitation. It is the rationalist system of exploitation based on the scientification of the mode of production in order to perpetually perfect it. In this sense, industry is a technological technique. But all techniques are not necessarily technological, all machines are not necessarily technological either. And there can be technology without the use of machines.

The revolution will therefore not destroy technique in order to return to some form of primitivism. On the contrary, it will liberate technique from its technological and industrial enclave. Industry is a technology that aims at increasing productivity in order to reduce the share of wage costs and increase profits. This is done by a standardization and a massification of the production, and thus a technological standardization of the technique. However, the technique in a communist-libertarian world is a technique that opens fields to the variety of ideas and practices, a creative technique, oriented by and towards a multitude of flourishing imaginaries. A technique that does not aim at reducing the number of arms, but at welcoming everyone. In short, the revolution liberates the *creative forces* of society, by destroying the *productive forces* of Capital.

“Revolution is not mechanical. It depends on us.

This "us" is not that of a Party or a small group. But one that will be built through the struggles that await us. Basically, it is this "us" that has been searching and reinventing itself for many years, for centuries even: that of the exploited class that goes on the offensive.

Coming from these movements and speaking from what they have forged in us, we defend the aim of an anarchist revolution: a social revolution made of multiple insurrections that federate themselves in opposition to the seizure of state power, as well as to any form of managerial alternative, even when it presents itself as libertarian. The point is to destroy work and political power, not to transform them. The ways to achieve this are to be invented in the heart of the uprisings of our class. They are to be created through the struggles that build this "us", going beyond the categories of power that divide us, the exploited. With, for objective, the destruction of all the classes and of the power that structures their relations.

For this reason, let's not fall into the trap of identity-politics and identity-based divisions, let's resist reformist illusions and let's meet all together in the uprisings that are coming. Let's strengthen the offensiveness of our movements and their capacity to spread, let's organize against all the defenders of order and the counter-revolutionary forces that want to represent us to the state and lead us to negotiation. Let's work to the international diffusion of the practices so that they can be reached and reproduced. Let's identify all the material world that has been erected between us and the possibility of collective reappropriation of our means of existence: the constraint to work, the industrial organization of production, the technological transformation of space into the metropolis, the maintenance of the economic order by the State. And let's destroy it, wall by wall.

Only a great revolutionary movement made up of multiple uprisings can allow us to thwart the law enforcement while attacking the heart of the problem: destroying the capitalist social relation, dismantling its infrastructures, and bringing down the state. The revolution will inevitably involve moments of violent confrontation. Those who maintain the capitalist order won't let us destroy it. But it is about much more than that: it is about creating ways of life in which immeasurable mutual aid between people will have replaced exploitation and power; a life without private property and without the state, without work and without money i.e. libertarian communism. The revolution does not stop at insurrection, that's where it begins. The challenge that awaits us is to succeed, during the offensive, in transforming the world.”

(Extract of the book “For a revolutionary anarchism” of which this booklet is an extension)