

# Communiqués by Autonomous Groups<sup>1</sup>

## Concerning ERAT<sup>2</sup>

SEAT is a subsidiary of Fiat. Nevertheless, the comrades of ERAT believe that the Spanish State owns 51% of it, but needs to verify this information. The SEAT factories in Barcelona employ around 30,000 people: 20,000 laborers, 7,000 or 8,000 executives and 2,000 or 3,000 office workers.

And so, few research offices; the majority of the projects are completed by the parent company. Not having any documents in our hands, we cannot speak of the capital assets that these 30,000 people manage, but we can plausibly guess that they must be colossal.

Obviously, any conflict at SEAT has repercussions for hundreds of subcontractors and consequently directly touches one of the nerves of the Spanish economy.

All of the comrades in the ERAT group have worked for SEAT for many years and have often played non-negligible parts in the many conflicts that have taken place there. We have spoken with them, and we can summarize the situation thus.

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1968: the Workers' Committees exist, but there are few of them. Management wants to restructure the firm; the workers spontaneously go out on strike. The workers fight against the dislocation of the teams because they know that it would diminish their ability to resist hellish working conditions (and this was in fact the result). The Workers' Committees support the strike, but lack of preparation and repression lead to the strike's total failure. The reconstruction takes place, despite resistance in some sectors. There are many dismissals.

1971: a general strike lasting four hours takes place during the famous trial of Burgos.<sup>3</sup> The Workers' Committees are reinforced [in number], but conflicts involving different tendencies thrive.

During the renewal of the "Convenio,"<sup>4</sup> an assembly gathers to protest against unemployment. The police use violence to disperse it. The next day, there's a general strike. The workers occupy the factories for two weeks. Armed police officers (the "Grays") try to remove them, and are pushed back. During the confrontation, a worker is killed: Antonio Ruiz Villalba, struck by several bullets. There are also many people injured. During the strike, the workers organize meetings in the mountains to avoid the cops, but there's an informant among them and

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<sup>2</sup> Unsigned and undated. ERAT: *Ejército Revolucionario de Ayuda a los Trabajadores* (the Revolutionary Army for Support of the Workers).

<sup>3</sup> Trial of 16 *Euskadi ta Askatasuna* ("Basque Fatherland and Liberty") guerrillas in December 1970 in Burgos, Spain, for the 1968 murder of a San Sebastián police chief and other "terrorist" activities.

<sup>4</sup> Trade union agreement.

fight break out in the mountains. Finally, the workers learn that many subcontractors have been brought in to work at SEAT (this creates many internal divisions).

1973: management wants to increase Social Security deductions from the workers' pay. A total strike is unleashed. The assemblies take place in the mountains because the factories are closed and guarded by the cops. At the end of two weeks, the workers return to work. They have lost and, obviously, there are many dismissals.

End of 1974 – beginning of 1975:

There's a very long strike in response to the renewal of the "Convenio." The bosses immediately declare a *lockout*<sup>5</sup> that lasts ten days. The workers [then] return to work for two weeks. Then there is a general strike that lasts two weeks.

The workers assemble in the Place de Catalonia, at the center of Barcelona. There are demonstrations every day; the repression is violent. There are 500 dismissals, and Martin Villa, the Governor of Barcelona, asks that the factories let no one else go. The strike fails. But, at the level of the perception of the struggle by the workers, there are several important things to note.

Attitudes about the Workers' Committees: they are made to demobilize the workers, and they even reach an agreement with management that *their* militants will not be dismissed or will be re-hired to SEAT's Coop, and will participate in its administrative council. The Workers' Committees want to increase staff visits to demoralize the workers ("we're going to lose everything," etc). After the strike, the Workers' Committees don't hesitate to say that it is easier to get hired at SEAT if you've got your Workers' Committee card.

Sabotage: three days after the return to work, a bomb explodes in the car of a foreman. This action greatly "soothes" the executive staff.

Election of the first workers' delegates: the workers, feeling that the Workers' Committees don't really represent them, hold a general assembly and elect two permanently revocable delegates to lead the negotiations. There are 24 delegates in total, but management never accepts their legitimacy.

At the same time, the workers strongly critique the executives of the vertical unions in an attempt to get them to resign (the Workers' Committees are part of the vertical unions).

How work resumed at Workshop 5 on 15 January 1975: this workshop employs 1,600 workers in two shifts (800 per shift). Entrance at 6 o'clock in the morning: the workers must enter in single file, between two columns of cops armed with machine guns. The entire factory is encircled by cops and "the Social."<sup>6</sup>

The workers go to the locker rooms and wait until they number in the hundreds. A foreman comes to negotiate (he'd been responsible for 85 dismissals) and proposes there be a discussion with the management. A delegation of nine workers goes off to negotiate.

In the offices, the bosses Romero Martin Benito and Esteban Martin Benito, plus cops from the "Social" police and the firm's own armed guards are waiting. The only thing said to the nine delegates is: "If you haven't gone back to work in 15 minutes, all nine of you will be immediately fired and thrown into the street." A worker responds: "If we see you on the street, you will be going directly to a cemetery." Four of the workers explain this to their comrades while the other five are held hostage. Because many other workshops have already gone back to work, they decide to return to work, too.

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<sup>5</sup> English in original.

<sup>6</sup> See the National Association for Social Action by the National Police and Personnel in the Ministry of the Interior.

After this strike, the combativeness of the workers is greatly weakened by the climate of fear and disappointment. It takes until 1976 – the death of Franco and the first steps toward “democratization” – for the situation to get better.

1976: the Workers’ Committees and the USO<sup>7</sup> are still in the vertical unions. The CSUT<sup>8</sup> and the CNT<sup>9</sup> thoroughly critique the positions of the Workers’ Committees.

There are many discussions, but no effective struggle. Problems with health, working conditions and security get worse. The first election of one delegate for 30 people takes place in Workshop 5.

Faced with the evolution of a situation that risks escaping their control, the Workers’ Committees and the UGT<sup>10</sup> take charge of the elections and arrange them so their own militants are elected. Workshop 5 still shows great combativeness: the workers slow production down, and sometimes stop it completely to hold assemblies. In solidarity with the situation in the Basque Country (a state of exception), a four-hour-long general strike affects the entire factory.

1977: the workers’ combativeness increases greatly.

At the beginning of the year, several general assemblies involving the entire firm are held. Rivalries amongst the unions, which are virtually permanent quarrels, are very strong; sometimes they come to blows. People begin to stop paying their union dues and often tear up their membership cards (especially those of the Workers’ Committees).

Small strikes that break out are systematically sabotaged by the Workers’ Committees and the PSUC,<sup>11</sup> which have reached an agreement with management: the re-hiring of all workers dismissed over the course of the last 20 years in exchange for “social peace” in the factory.

June 1977: First elections to the Factory Council, which covers all of SEAT, of 287 delegates (approximately one per 100), elected by workshop and revocable at any instant.

Organizational schema:

Factory Committee: 22 members elected by the rank-and-file in the workshops; revocable at any instant. The committee is tasked with negotiating with management.

Factory Council: 287 delegates elected in the same conditions as those of the Factory Committee. The Council’s function is to coordinate actions, demands, propositions and responses to problems that arise within the firm.

Workshop and Office Assembly: the number of delegates varies according to the number of workers in each sector. The Assembly deals with the sector’s internal problems. Same mode of election and revocability.

One must understand that, in this structure, the number of workers who participate is very important, because at each level there are people other than those who are named.

There are overflowing assemblies almost every day during snack time (20 minutes). All delegates are simply spokespeople.

1978: today, the structure is functioning perfectly. Only the CNT basically supports it. All the other unions try to sink it. But management finds itself obliged to speak with the Factory

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<sup>7</sup> USO: *Unión Sindical Obrera* (“Workers’ Trade Union”).

<sup>8</sup> CSUT: *Confederación de Sindicatos Unitarios de Trabajadores* (“Confederation of Workers Unitarian Trade Unions”).

<sup>9</sup> CNT: *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (“National Confederation of Labor”).

<sup>10</sup> UGT: *Unión General de Trabajadores* (“General Union of Workers”).

<sup>11</sup> PSUC: *Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya* (“Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia”).

Committee. At this moment, the union elections at SEAT are heating up and the affair of the armed group ERAT has taken on an enormous importance.

Before explaining what the ERAT group is and what it wants, we must sketch out the unions at SEAT (their official membership numbers): the Workers' Committees: 11,000; the UGT: 10,000; the CSUT: 3,000; the CNT: 2,000; and the USO: 300. The other unions include the SU,<sup>12</sup> the SOC,<sup>13</sup> and the AOA<sup>14</sup> (a few militants each).

But beware! These numbers are very deceptive. For the comrades in the ERAT, only the CNT really functions. The others launch enormous membership campaigns, people get their membership cards, but that's all. The bureaucrats are in charge of everything. Moreover, many of those who have torn up their cards are always taken into account, as are those who have changed unions or no longer pay their dues, not to mention those who practice systematic "inflation." Not everyone who works at SEAT is part of a union.

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The ERAT group: *Ejército Revolucionario de Ayuda a los Trabajadores* (the Revolutionary Army for Support of the Workers).

Between 16 and 20 April 1978, the Direction Générale de Sécurité arrested 10 people suspected of participating in different *hold-ups*.<sup>15</sup> Weapons and explosives were discovered. Six of those arrested work at SEAT. The affair begins to take on a clearly political turn and makes a lot of noise.

Today, five of these people have been released. The remaining five have admitted belonging to ERAT, an armed group intended to procure funds for the workers and, in particular, those at SEAT.

On 21 April 1978, workers at SEAT demonstrated their solidarity with those detained in front of the Model Prison. Back at SEAT, things were hot. The reformist unions tried to pass the comrades from ERAT off as "terrorists" and implied that the Factory Council was, too. The Workers' Committees and the UGT demanded the dissolution of the Council and the "workers' assemblies." They went as far as getting the signatures of 3,000 unemployed workers who declared that *they* had never received any money from the ERAT! (And what does it matter, given the large numbers of unemployed workers?)

The Factory Council has maintained its unconditional support for those detained; so has the CNT. All this calls for debates on our conception of revolutionary struggle. Armed struggle or unarmed struggle? It seems that the workers at SEAT are going in the right direction.

The structure of the Factory Council is actually representative of the workers at SEAT. We posed many questions to the comrades in the ERAT concerning the main motivations for their passage to armed struggle. Though our hunger remains somewhat unsatisfied, we reproduce here (as faithfully as possible) what they explained in response.

All of us have passed through Leftist groups (the FAC, the FRAP, the PCI, etc.) and have returned because their avant-garde conceptions do not correspond

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<sup>12</sup> SU: *Sindicato Unitario* ("Unitary Trade Union").

<sup>13</sup> SOC: *Sindicato Obrero Canario* ("Canarian Workers Trade Union").

<sup>14</sup> AOA: *Asociación Obrera Asambleista* ("Assemblyist Workers Association").

<sup>15</sup> English in original.

to the reality of the struggle here. The workers have shown that they are capable of organizing themselves, outside of all the political and union cliques. We have had enough of sterile debates between different organizations while the necessities of the struggle have been obvious.

Every day, but particularly payday, the wives of unemployed men or strikers at other firms seek our solidarity. Of course, we do what we can, but we, as workers, have just enough to live and we often have debts to pay at the SEAT's Coop.

Therefore we have decided that this will be enough; it is necessary to do something. We have created our group with two criteria in mind: the rejection of political quarrels and the necessity of having money.

The first thing that we decided, seven or eight months ago, was that no one in the group should make an abstraction of his own personal tendencies and that the group would act in accordance with the needs of the struggle, with the needs of the workers. Attacks on banks have taken place; we do not say that we (those who have been arrested) have carried them out; but they have been carried out. And the total of the sums taken back have been placed at the disposition of workers and unemployed people in accordance with needs and possibilities. We believe that such expropriations are a necessity. But we also believe that the armed struggle mustn't stop there. Expropriation is only one of the struggle's aspects.

The workers must take charge of themselves totally and must prepare for the struggles to come. That is to say, they must prepare to commit sabotage that "helps" the bosses negotiate and they must anticipate the need for self-defense groups in case militants are personally threatened (this happens more and more often). Consequently, we are not the only ones who can take action. We have tried to explain our conception of the struggle to the workers. And we have done this in the assemblies. If the workers haven't agreed, they were able to explain why and contradict us.

One can say that a series of sabotages have taken place, and they have demonstrated that we are not alone in what we think and do. What follows are examples of sabotage realized by the workers:

Intermediary water valves were closed, causing the electrodes of the electrical welding machines to roast, thus paralyzing all of the assembly crews.

Electric wires in subterranean installations were cut, closing down the workshop for several hours.

Screwdrivers were used to interfere with the assembly crews.

Computers were short-circuited, thus disorganizing work for the entire day. (This type of action is utilized when the workers have truly had enough of the work rate or want to hold an assembly tranquilly.)

Paint the cigarette lighters of cars intended for export in the colors of revolutionary banners.

Paint on the walls or the cars, or place stickers in their interiors. (These are the means by which it is made known that there are people who do not accept exploitation.)

Direct attacks against the bosses and the particularly repressive foremen (hurling objects or thrashing them good).

Bomb threats to the management's offices.

Sugar in the gas tanks.

The expropriation and destruction of plans.

These actions are most often taken during or after periods of struggle to express rage or revolt against our conditions. But collectively we also have learned to make Molotov cocktails, and self-defense groups have been organized to protect our demonstrations against attacks by the police.

But we have also sought to gain solidarity from comrades in other firms. We have explained our struggles to them and have supported theirs. Once we went as far as pulling down an electrical power pylon, thus depriving a factory (in the Vallès region) of electricity for two days; another time we sabotaged the water lines in a capitalist's house.

Despite capitalist propaganda, these actions are, in general, well understood by the workers, because they are directly tied to the workers' struggles.

What we and many workers reject is the diversion of our demands towards political objectives, as in the Moncloa pacts.<sup>16</sup> Each time, we have been told that we must be responsible, we must take the general interests of society into account, and we must thus put a brake on our struggles and tighten our belts.

Each time, we have been presented with a platform of demands that has been elaborated by the unions and [supposedly] intended to take care of everyone. But in fact they only suit the bosses.

Each time, these very unions and political parties have pretended to know what we must do better than we ourselves know, and of course they alone are capable of leading the negotiations!

In fact, the unions and political parties are only intermediaries that try to regulate the conflict between bosses and workers. We do not agree. Parties and unions (except the CNT, which supports us) have tried to profit from the opportunity that has opened up for them (we wonder if it is completely by chance that the police have discovered us at such a crucial moment) so as to discredit our methods of struggle and the Factory Council in particular.

The union elections will take place next June, and many bureaucrats hope that these official elections will put an end to the self-organizations of the workers. But it won't be as easy as that.

Today, we are in prison, but our struggle isn't over. And, after all, there are thousands of comrades at SEAT who continue.

But, at this moment, we are asking ourselves if the ERAT group should continue in its current form. It is possible that we should change the name and that we should become an autonomous group. We are almost in complete agreement where this is concerned. Likewise, many of us define ourselves as libertarians, but this is only recently and the product of a steady evolution. At the beginning, when

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<sup>16</sup> The Moncloa Pacts were economic and political agreements between the new Spanish government, the UGT and the CNT. (1977).

the group was formed, there was only a single militant from the CNT among us. The others weren't union members and had already left behind the formations of the extreme Left.

We are sure that many workers at SEAT truly do not want to be recuperated by anyone. And they recently demonstrated it when, to counter the dirty work of the reformists, they went out on strike to get two of us released and so that [people from] the Factory Council can visit us regularly. These two comrades, who weren't involved in the ERAT group, have in fact been freed, and we see three delegates from the Factory Council every two weeks. The strike had lasted [only] a hour.

### **Communiqué<sup>17</sup>**

The day after the arrests of various members of the Autonomous Groups in France and Spain, several good "revolutionary" souls have seen fit to judge us, even before the State has done so.

We have nothing but scorn for the useless theoreticians who criticize our practice without having one of their own, and who are incapable of conducting anything to a good end, of making compromises, etc., that is to say, all the people who think we are crazy, irresponsible activists, so that they can better justify their own passivity.

If we are "crazy," our madness isn't mild: it is the madness of wanting to live; the madness of refusing to subject ourselves to salaried work; the madness that seeks to break the encirclement of basic banalities and to utilize all the possibilities available to us to find ourselves, by uniting and remaining free and available so as to better affirm the autonomy of our desires, which are not satisfied by capital.

If we are "activists," our activism exists in the pleasure of the subversive game, of liberating our hearts, of dominating institutionalized fear, of expanding the limits of our possibilities. In the final analysis, we seek to seize the necessary means for our struggle: we use expropriations (either armed or not), falsified checks, etc.; we equip ourselves with the necessary infrastructure (liberated houses, refuges, weapons, false papers, etc); and, to satisfy our desires, we liberate ourselves as much as possible from the constraints of salaried work and generalized misery.

If we are "irresponsible," our irresponsibility disturbs the established order and those who claim they are negotiating for its replacement. A bomb, a well-placed "Molotov" cocktail, and the détournement of the means of information at the right moment have more practical and positive results than any pamphlet or radical speech.

We are acquainted with the objections to our actions: they are spectacular, terroristic, and recuperable; they hide the struggle of the workers, allowing the State to violate its own laws, to reinforce its power and to intensify the repression. But we have nothing to do with the spectacle! We do not want to pass for an organization of specialists, complete with hierarchy, spokespeople and an acronym. We know quite well that the State does not succeed in fixing the attention of the proletariat on the fictional opposition between Right and Left; and that it must have an organization labeled "terrorist" to fulfill this "role." The State has no need of us, as a pretext, to

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<sup>17</sup> Signed Autonomous Groups and dated January 1979.

exercise its daily terrorism: police terrorism against demonstrations and strikers; the terrorism of the employers' militias; the terrorism of generalized exploitation.

Our actions do not seek to lead the proletariat, which is self-defined by combating its alienation outside of the politico-unionist terrain (wildcat strikes, sovereign general assemblies). The proletariat has no need of revolutionaries: when it intervenes, the proletariat must do so on the terrain that it has chosen. Placed upon this terrain, the several comrades who work (most often temporarily), or who tactically justify taking a salary because it allows them to benefit from the allocation of unemployment, must effectively intervene in these struggles. The others – we who categorically refuse all salaried work – must provide support, but no more than that. There is no submission of us to them, because the cult of the worker is as harmful as that of the anti-worker who escapes from all constraints. Our actions aren't the only real and total opposition to Power. They are often limited, specific and subjective (ripostes to the assassination of comrades in the prisons, the streets or the workplaces). They are sometimes coordinated around certain points of precise and concrete intervention: nuclear power, the prisoners' movement, and the struggle against salaried work. We claim them (or not) according to our own convenience. It so happens that, not claiming some of them (attacks, expropriations), some other organization or groupuscule appropriates them to give the illusion of a force that their members do not possess, and thus they allow themselves to pass as the most efficacious in their competition with the State. This is a strategy of a purely propagandistic pseudo-abundance that leads its detained and martyred militants to claim any action that makes them appear to be the best defenders of the working class. Such are the spectacular consequences of the avant-gardes: the pretense of believing oneself the bearer of revolutionary consciousness due to one's acts. We will no longer accept the amalgamation of these organizations and us, just as – as internationalists – we do not accept the amalgamation of us and the organizations that bear either nationalist ideologies (the IRA, the ETA)<sup>18</sup> or third-world ones (the RAF).<sup>19</sup>

We do not admit [into our ranks] admirers or “professionals in solidarity” who systematically approve all our actions, agree to affirm their radicalism in demonstrations, meetings and councils, but who do not dare to risk themselves in the struggles and their consequences. Comfortable positions that allow them to compensate for their alienation with a militant activism, without having to act, take initiatives or prove their determination. We do not admit those who want to make autonomy into the new fashionable ideology, because they are incapable of producing an active outcome to their verbal radicalism, of comprehending what is new about our praxis, of concretizing and utilizing their [own] critiques of Leftism and reformism, and thus who do not leave their alienation. We prefer not to compromise ourselves with them, or let them speak in our name. This position isn't elitist. What we do, anyone can do. And if some of them, pushed by social constraints, decide to begin their own struggle, we will encounter them and communicate our experiences to them; we will explain our failures and our successes; and we will not refuse them any of our means. Their practice must be anti-hierarchical and egalitarian, which is a rule that currently limits our numbers and sometimes leads to splits, but which also prohibits the delegation of power and gives a certain coherence to our revolutionary project by rendering infiltrations more difficult. We guarantee a dynamism that some numerically superior organizations might envy.

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<sup>18</sup> The Irish Republican Army (IRA); *Euskadi ta Askatasuna* (ETA).

<sup>19</sup> RAF: *Rote Armee Fraktion* (“Red Army Faction”).



The proletariat subjected to salaried labor must now pose to itself, with urgency, the question of armed struggle, and cannot leave this task to specialized groups (ours included); the current social situation in Spain demands it. What the proletarians at SEAT (formerly in ERAT) have done must be reversed, that is to say, instead of sharing the money, a product of expropriation, to help unemployed workers, they should have created the necessary conditions so that expropriation is undertaken in rotating fashion by other proletarians. Each time more extensive, these expropriations would thus favor the creation of new cores of armed struggle in the very heart of the factories. Because of their isolation, they [the proletarians at SEAT] haven't been able to spread their manner of struggle. Despite this, they have demonstrated that they possess a great revolutionary consciousness, indicating the true tasks that the proletariat must undertake.

We, Autonomous Groups, armed factions of the radicalized proletariat, who reject salaried work – we can only provide initial aid for the creation of armed groups in the workplaces and beyond. These would be groups that must thenceforth prove, on their own, their capacity to assume their own autonomy. This is the unique path by which armed wings for the defense of the proletariat are not created. The strategy of the FAI during the Spanish Revolution is no longer valuable. Today, the proletariat must assume the realization of its desires, when the situation demands revolution, the proletariat is or is not armed, but is always on its own.

Our current tasks are to respond to repression and to intervene concretely at precise moments. Alone, we cannot confront the State. These tasks must be taken up by the proletariat as a whole.

For the abolition of salaried work and the commodity!

For a classless society!

## Communiqué<sup>20</sup>

For the Autonomous Groups, who are partisans of agitation by arms and theory, and who have acted and who will act within the heart of Spain, there is at this moment a real necessity to provide clarifications concerning certain information that has appeared in both the bourgeois press and the so-called “workers” press (determined sectors). Confusion with respect to the struggle of the revolutionary proletariat for its autonomy is a tradition to which all sectors of the press have been subservient. This confusion is absolutely necessary to capital and its recuperative instruments (the political parties and the unions) if they are to avoid the situation in which the proletariat understands that it is only by assuming its revolutionary responsibilities at all levels (organization, analysis, action) that it will be able – by negating itself as a class – to abolish all power and salaried work, that is to say, [to instaurate] communist society. Any delegation of responsibility engenders power and (so that power is profitable) exploitation.

People have accused us of being anarchists, the armed wing of the CNT, *gangsters*,<sup>21</sup> drug addicts, etc., whereas we are nothing other than the armed wing of our desires that are unsatisfied by the existence of salaried poverty.

In the current moment, we believe that the surpassing of ideologies as an element of the “separation” of the working class is necessary. The Marxist-anarchist schema is an obstacle to

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<sup>20</sup> Signed Autonomous Groups and dated September 1979.

<sup>21</sup> English in original.

the revolutionary path. The Autonomous Groups agree with us on the plane of action, on a minimal basis: the destruction of the prisons, the abolition of all power as well as salaried labor. The fact there is among us, on the personal level, a member of the CNT has meant that the police have accused us of being “the armed wing of the CNT.” In all our declarations, face-to-face with torturers and judges, we have always denied it. But the professional opportunists have exploited and increased the confusion created by the police, with the goal of profiting from our actions and from us ourselves.

In 1936, the CNT knew how to lead the Spanish proletariat to a revolutionary situation. But it has shown itself incapable of defending and spreading revolutionary conquest; its leaders have naturally ended up ministers-hostages of a democratic-bourgeois government of capital. This shows where the ideology and the organizational structure of anarcho-syndicalism (and its “natural leaders”) can lead. And this ideology hasn’t been modernized to give it a revolutionary character. May 1937 proved on what side of the class barricade the CNT finds itself: on the side of capital against the proletariat.

In the current phase of the development of capital, the unions are merely the integrating agents of capital. They are its intermediaries on the labor market; they avoid direct confrontation between capital and the proletariat, diverting the latter from its real goals. The Left and extreme-Left political parties do the same job. They are merely the left of capital; their programs have the amelioration of the management of capital as their single goal; they are the programs of capital.

We grant the existence of revolutionaries in the CNT (also in other organizations), but their activity within them is condemned to failure, due to its syndicalist character, which is reduced to the struggle for power against the diverse reformist tendencies within the organization. This condemns these revolutionaries to not taking a single step in the direction of revolutionary struggle. They are condemned to failure and defeat even before they enter the struggle.

The democratic dictatorship of capital needs to “criminalize” subversive struggle by making revolutionaries appear to be *gangsters*,<sup>22</sup> drug addicts, criminals, etc. In the alleged “process of democratization,” Spanish capitalism cannot accept the fact that its prisons are occupied by more than 400 sequestered political prisoners.

Thus, it is clear that we have nothing to do with the ideology of what is called the “libertarian movement” and that we aren’t “Marxists.” Our practice of class autonomy keeps us apart from such structures, which are only an obstacle to the abolition of the proletariat itself.

For the destruction of the prisons!

For the abolition of all power and salaried work!

## Communiqué<sup>23</sup>

The composition of the current Autonomous Groups is based upon an old relationship in revolutionary activity, born from a practical intervention that was begun at the beginning of the 1970s, and that consists in aiding and participating in the social struggles that strive for class autonomy and the self-suppression of the proletariat, that is to say, the realization of an authentically communist society.

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<sup>22</sup> English in original.

<sup>23</sup> Signed Autonomous Groups and dated October 1979.

This relationship became intensified after the legalized assassination of Salvador Puig Antich by the Spanish State in March 1974.<sup>24</sup> The armed interventions in solidarity that took place before and after the assassination – as much in Spain as abroad – served as a unifying platform among the different autonomous groups and individuals. This platform then rose to a superior level of coordination that allowed us to respond to capital with greater efficiency and scope.

For us, it is obvious that fascism as well as democracy are two forms of dictatorship and exploitation of the proletariat by capital. As for the so-called “socialist” countries, they are nothing other than another variants (the bureaucratic type).

The practical interventions of the Autonomous Groups have been motivated by the existence of radical struggles in the modern social war between the proletariat and the entirety of capitalism’s defenders. They have not been limited to a partial and limited attack that aims to denounce some of the most flagrant aspects of the contradictions of the capitalist system; they attempt to be an everyday and global response to the totality of that system. These interventions have been concretized in the following deeds, among others: a series of bomb and Molotov cocktail attacks upon German firms between 1976 and 1977, in response to the State-inflicted “suicides” of several militants in the RAF, and against French firms, in Barcelona as well as in Madrid, following the extradition of Klaus Croissant.<sup>25</sup> The actions of 1977 were executed in coordination with autonomous French groups that intervened in France for the same reasons. Towards the middle of 1978, motivated by Giscard d’Estaing’s visit to Spain, a new series of attacks were executed in coordination with the French groups: in France, against Spanish firms, and in Barcelona and Valencia, against French firms. All these interventions were international revolutionary responses to capital’s borderless repression.

Support for autonomous workers’ struggles: in Barcelona, in 1977, for the strikers at “Roca” and “Mateu-Mateu”; in Madrid, during the building strike of 1976; in the subways and at “Roca,” in 1976 and 1977, respectively; at the beginning of 1978, there was a new intervention in the subways against tariff increases. All this by means of attacks directed against the offices of the aforementioned firms, in response to the military intervention of the police against the assemblies and the subsequent dissolution of the workers’ organizations. In Barcelona, Valencia and Madrid, on the anniversaries of the assassination of Salvador Puig in 1975, 1976 and 1977: there were attacks and Molotov cocktails against banks and courthouses. In Madrid, in the spring of 1976, Molotov cocktails were directed against the banks, in response to the massacre at Vitoria. In response to the assassinations of Euskadi in the street, in the beginning of 1977, there were Molotov cocktails and massive commando attacks against the barracks of the Civilian Guard and the police stations.

As support for the struggle of the prisoners in Barcelona, Valencia and Madrid, all through 1977 and at the beginning of 1978, there were numerous attacks against courthouses, the Model Prison in Barcelona and diverse official buildings of the Ministry of Justice. To have access to the finances that are necessary for our type of struggle, we have had recourse to expropriations from banks and private companies, and counterfeiting, [thereby] attacking capital

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<sup>24</sup> Salvador Puig Antich, a member of the *Movimiento Ibérico de liberación* (“Iberian Liberation Movement”) was accused of killing a police officer in 1972 and was garroted while in Barcelona’s “Model Prison” on 2 March 1974.

<sup>25</sup> Klaus Croissant (1931-2002) was a German attorney who represented the RAF. He was arrested in June or July 1977.

and directly reappropriating for ourselves, without intermediaries, a part of what we need. Some of us, currently in prison, claim responsibility for certain attacks and expropriations. The others identify themselves and are in solidarity with the aforementioned actions and claims, although they have not participated in any of them, given the facts that the police and the judges accuse us without any proof, and that we have only admitted to them after having been savagely tortured.

Our actions don't have the goal of imposing ourselves, like managers, upon the proletarians who defend themselves on their own by combating their alienation outside of the politico-unionist terrain (wildcat strikes, sovereign general assemblies). Around the middle of 1975, the autonomous movement of firms, neighborhoods and students posed the question of reconstructing the CNT and participating in it, thereby considering the anarcho-syndicalist structure and its capacity to unite revolutionary elements at the national level (all of Spain) to be valuable. With the death of Franco, the possibility of publicly uniting and associating together in political and syndicalist organizations – after 40 years of “Francoist” capitalist dictatorship – was opened up for the revolutionary workers' movement. All the strength and unity that was achieved by the assemblyist process of the modern proletariat in the workplaces and beyond was dispersed when the majority of its members enrolled in the political parties and the unions, thereby abandoning the class terrain so as to be integrated into the diverse formal options of democratic capitalism.

The CNT was the only classic workers' organization that enjoyed some sympathy among some segments of the proletariat; it profited from a real revolutionary past that the bureaucracy in exile administered and controlled jealously by hiding the fact that the revolutionary past had been possible thanks to the struggles of its rank-and-file militants up until May 1937 and then the actions of the urban or mountain-based guerillas from the end of World War II to the 1960s. Often these actions were conducted against and despite this bureaucracy, which had always tried to control, and politically combat, the true “uncontrollables” who created this revolutionary past. And it was this past and the relative autonomy that permitted the CNT's internal functioning at the beginning of its creation, when there wasn't any clear definition of what the CNT should be (a union or an organization of autonomous groups?), which facilitated the entrance into the CNT of scattered elements, including syndicalists, *Faïstes*,<sup>26</sup> the bureaucracy in exile, Leninists and *autonomes*.

The coordination of Autonomous Groups that are partisans of armed and theoretical agitation (tied to social agitation) posed an alternative to the pursuit and reaffirmation of the assemblyist autonomous structures that already existed at the time in the firms, neighborhoods and student movements – which managed to bring to a good conclusion, at the local and regional level, the unified struggle with no acronyms (opposed to the political parties and the unions) that was inherited from the clandestinity that was necessary under the Francoist dictatorship. Our attempt was to bring this alternative to a superior level of organization in all of Spain, by surpassing its principal weaknesses of isolation and division.

Starting from the new situation created by the death of Franco and his replacement by a democratic dictatorship that was less corrupt than its predecessor (but which had already not fooled anyone), there existed and there still exists the possibility of publicly uniting in a tolerated and then legalized manner. And instead of profiting from the existing “legality” to reinforce and extend this autonomy by improving and extending the organization that was already in place – an incomprehensible thing – the majority of the autonomous movements of the firms,

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<sup>26</sup> Members of the FAI: *Federación Anarquista Ibérica* (“Iberian Anarchist Federation”).

neighborhoods and students abandoned their structures to join the CNT en masse, first at the moment of its “re-creation” and then by participating in it. The Autonomous Groups, devoted to armed and theoretical agitation, along with several other rank-and-file groups that were totally isolated from the autonomous coordination, remained the only ones to support a class offensive within the autonomous movement.

In the coordination of the Autonomous Groups, which are partisans of armed and theoretical agitation tied to social agitation, some members chose to join the CNT at the individual level so as to try to reinforce it as a possible revolutionary organization, without (for all that) abandoning the pursuit of autonomous activities that were coordinated with the members of other Autonomous Groups that refused to join the CNT because they considered it to be a union that was within the range of capitalist options to get out of the current economic crisis, which did not permit an autonomous movement of the proletariat to develop, and which ended up by holding it back and diverting it from its revolutionary objectives towards purely syndicalist objectives and, consequently, was reformist. This apparent contradiction was surpassed by our collective practice, which has been totally adoptable by what we consider autonomy to be, since we are not a permanent organization, with specialists, a hierarchy, and rigid ideological schemas of the party type. This diversity has, on the contrary, permitted a better enrichment of our revolutionary practice.

The critique of the CNT by members of the groups that are autonomously coordinated and that rejected the CNT’s creation and refused to participate in it – because they judged it to be, along with all the other parties and unions, one of the structures that are favorable to the integration of workers into the existence of salaried work, and thus capital, and thus are totally inadequate to the abolition of capital – was fully confirmed four years later by the individual experiences of those of us who decided to attempt to radicalize the CNT and who rediscovered the old inherent weaknesses of all the parties and unions: bureaucracy, the struggle for power, and control exercised over the rank-and-file (which did not have direct access to the means of information to express their ideas). And it is the syndicalist structure of the CNT that engendered all that. Those among us who made this attempt had to publicly recognize that they had wanted to make use of the image of a revolutionary past and that, today, it is the dead past that wants to make use of them.

The struggle for power between diverse tendencies, and the absence of true class choices, have provoked and facilitated the abandonment of the CNT by many revolutionary elements who participated in its reconstruction: coming from the autonomous movement of the firms, neighborhoods and students, they have completely abandoned – right from their entry into the CNT – their previous autonomous practice so as to integrate themselves into syndicalist structures. All this was favored by the fact that they joined the CNT en masse in the hope of finding there the solutions to their personal and organizational problems, which they had not wanted to pose at the level of autonomy. And it is the bureaucracy that, alone, has solved its problems: the possession of several more acronyms and militants.

The autonomous workers’ movement does not possess a clear vision of what class autonomy means in practice – otherwise its entrance into the CNT would be incomprehensible – and this because of its manifest theoretical poverty: because one must not forget that the major part of the workers’ movement still scorns theory, which it considers to be the work of intellectuals. On the contrary, we scorn the “intellectuals” who do not have the passion to put the instructions of revolutionary theory into practice, especially ours, which we use even against them. This is what we call the expropriation of theory.

Autonomy isn't only a collective practice founded on a minimum accord that is designed to be put into action. Autonomous theory also corresponds to our way of living, struggling, and satisfying our concrete needs. If certain aspects of such a theory appear to be in need of being surpassed, we see no inconvenience in being its first pitiless critics, so as to avoid a situation in which our theory is transformed into permanent ideology and dogma, which would prevent us from approaching the realization of communism.

Today, one can find in the CNT several potentially revolutionary groups whose members sympathize with the armed struggle and the theoretical positions of the Coordination of Autonomous Groups. We are addressing ourselves to these people, as well as to those who, disgusted, have quit the CNT and now find themselves dispersed and isolated, without any other concrete perspective on struggle. Thus, we address ourselves to the most radical elements that have been excluded from the organization because they have proposed (we have proposed) the creation of a new non-permanent organization that is based upon autonomous class positions and that possesses structures that facilitate the maximum autonomy of groups and individuals by favoring coordination and struggle, not their blockage. Because the CNT is completely ill suited for these kinds of tasks, we start from the simple observation that organization only and simply means the organization of concrete tasks, and we have begun to organize ourselves, for ourselves, in all the places in which our social activity takes place.

We believe that class autonomy is also represented by those who dare to reappropriate what capital has rendered joyless. It isn't in the form of a salary that we must take it, but without intermediary and directly where we find it. Reappropriation is a communist practice in the present that ranges from economic expropriations from the banks to occupations of the buildings; from non-payment of public transportation fares to theft from the supermarkets; from pirate radio stations to the refusal of nuclear power plants and salaried work, etc. Without privileging one activity over another, but by doing things that refuse and attack capital. These actions complement each other, and one doesn't exclude any of the others.

The organization of tasks, that is to say, our coordination of autonomous groups and individuals must above all be the pleasure of meeting together and cultivating relations of total communication. As autonomous individuals, we prefer to live in communist relations, immediately, in the present, without waiting for the Revolutionary Day that will perhaps allow us to live.

Our theory and our practice are imposed by our collective needs, which deny the existence of a salaried impoverishment that doesn't know how to satisfy them. When we carry out an attack or the expropriation of a bank, we seek above all the subversive pleasure of attacking the capital system that oppresses and exploits us. Not in answer to the "duty" of the militant, which requires actions to "liberate" the working class (in its name as a separated avant-garde that could possibly become a permanent and thus counter-revolutionary avant-garde), but for the pleasure of the subversive game in which everything that prevents us from satisfying our desires and passions to live (and to rediscover ourselves) in anti-commodity and non-alienated human relations is destroyed.

We must make clear that our preceding appeal to struggle towards the liberation of all revolutionary prisoners in Spain who are accused of either leading or sympathizing with armed actions was not intended to signify the creation of a collective front of armed struggle. We are only in solidarity in response to repression. We do not support – indeed, we criticize – the political methods of the Red Army Faction and the Red Brigades, as well as the nationalist ideologies of the ETA and the IRA.

For us, revolutionary solidarity is expressed through action in the factories and on the streets, and not through a passive militancy. That is to say, it is an everyday and global struggle against the Old World of capital in its entirety.