

SABOTAGE CAN BE USED IN ALL SITUATIONS, IN ALL TERRAINS, AND BY ANYONE WHO WISHES TO USE IT. IT REQUIRES NO SPECIALIZATION OR SKILL, JUST INITIATIVE. WHILE NEWS OF SABOTAGE IS DIFFICULT TO FIND, OBSCURED AND NEGATED AS IT IS BY THOSE IN POWER, THERE ARE SOME NOTABLE EXAMPLES OF ITS USE THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO EXAMINE. THIS LIST IS BY NO MEANS COMPREHENSIVE BUT RATHER A SAMPLING OF RELEVANT EXAMPLES.



# Fire at Midnight, Destruction at Dawn: Sabotage and Social War

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# Sabotage as Social War



**S**ABOTAGE IS BUT *ONE* TACTIC FROM AN ARRAY OF TOOLS EMPLOYED within the social war. Its use alone cannot substitute for the destruction of the very relations that define our capitalist system.

The destruction of the infrastructure of the state and the functioning of capitalism can be crippling. But it can only cripple as much as it can spread through its ease of use. A rupture with the present will be as inclusive of sabotage as it will be of creating relations beyond the narrow and numbing confines of the social order.

Sabotage will take many forms but it must always be done so with the intent of expanding our revolt globally. Solidarity with the struggles of others will then become little more than an after thought. Through the process of experimentation in strategy and the initiative of attack, the sharpening of our struggle will become realized, always moving forward and outward. Revolution will not be the certainty of a future world but the certainty of ourselves attacking the world that has been imposed upon us.

Sabotage must go *beyond* the limits of mere economic attrition. Militaristic formations, along with their style of centralized formal structure are of no use to us. Organizations for armed struggle and clandestine vanguards will not bring us closer to generalized insurrection, as examples of the past have shown. Guerrilla wars of attrition will only be a losing fight against states much better equipped technologically and numerically within the logic of standard warfare. Our warfare must be *social*.

Social war will put arms in the hands of generalized rebellion. Sabotage will be made at the points of departure towards that place.



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**T**HE WORLD IN WHICH WE FIND OURSELVES IS ENVELOPED BY capitalist social relations. Nearly everyone has been reduced to the condition of selling themselves for a wage. All space is divided and quantified into commodities that can be bought and sold. This commodification of life has made exchange the dominant feature of our relations. The implementation of these relations was achieved through a massive project of dispossession and exclusion. States manage populations and territories through a vast network of control creating a world very much resembling that of a prison. Borders are militarized, surveillance networks surround us, the police have grown in number and are better equipped, and all of this has become extremely efficient due to the advance of technology.<sup>1</sup> This is all justified under the ever-growing system of laws. These changes in no way contradict the nature of the state; they are true to its form and function. The state and capital are inextricably linked in a project of domination.

We are permitted the insignificance of voting for our rulers, signing petitions, and taking part in referendums. Yet the conditions of our lives stay essentially the same. We can hold signs on the sidewalk and shout as loud as we want, throwing ourselves into the abyss of public displays of dissatisfaction. But when all is said and done we still face the humiliation and prostitution of this reality. We are only allowed to symbolize our anger at the daily degradation that must be silently endured. Obscured within a dreamland of television, commercial consumption, and social withdrawal, the world is made slightly bearable but never one in which we can determine what we want with our lives.

For a social order so dependent on a large class of exploited and marginalized people the possibilities for revolt are many. Not only does this system require people's labor power to function, but it also requires us to produce and maintain its physical infrastructure, enforce its laws, cooperate with and consent to its plans. Ultimately *we* allow it to exist. The state needs roads, buildings, vehicles, information technology, surveillance and weaponry systems to function. Capitalism requires

Another problematic tendency includes vanguardism. A critique of vanguardism is inherent within anarchist ideas. False is the idea that some group of people are more skilled or adept at leading the rest of us towards something better or creating a revolutionary situation by themselves. A revolution can only happen with widespread participation, individually and collectively, towards a transformation of social relations. Delegation to anyone else will only lead to their ends, not ours. Revolt *must* be socially autonomous and self-organized for the process and result to manifest individual and collective desire.

Lastly, specialization and the spectacularization of struggle deserve their own critique. Much like vanguardism, specialization imposes specific roles on people. Participation in certain activities is elevated above and away from generalized use. In this way it is confined to particular individuals or groups. This exclusion is contrary to the spreading of a social rebellion. On the other hand, the spectacular nature of the actions of many armed groups can also be detrimental to the widening of social struggle. Actions that are deliberately spectacular generally aim for high-profile news coverage and attacks on purely symbolic targets with a tendency to emphasize technically complex methods.

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1 Technology is not neutral. It's a goddamn motherfucker.

# Fear at the Point of Departure: Some Points of Critique



**S**ABOTAGE IS GENERALLY CARRIED OUT WITH A CERTAIN AMOUNT of security precautions. It is often done individually or in small groups of people who share affinity or friendship and who are trusted not to discuss the action outside of the group or to confess if caught. Care is taken not to leave any evidence behind and to keep the planning of the action secret. However beyond these practical concerns some see the need for going underground and creating a specialized role for themselves.

The concept of underground living, maintaining no public ties to radical groups, changing one's identity, blending in as "normal" and living in hiding is antithetical to an *expansive* life of relations decided on one's own terms. To live life in the underground is to sacrifice potential relationships and projects under the pretext of avoiding suspicion or discovery by the State's agents. On the other hand some would argue that radical direct action is best carried out if one has no ties to any of the networks from which the state can fish for suspects. However, an ability to form relations is hindered by avoiding those relations that are deemed "unsafe." Thus, it cuts individuals off from potential comrades and leaves them only with members of their organization, imposing unhealthy social isolation. All of this poses the very real problem of a lack of networks of support needed in case of arrest.

these same things for efficient movement of commodities and labor, and for resource extraction and exploitation. While these mechanisms have strengthened control and exploitation like never before, they have also created many weaknesses. These weaknesses are an opportunity.

For us, the question of *how* to proceed is vital. We must be willing to examine and scrutinize the methods and strategies of the past so that we do not follow in the footsteps of history's failed attempts at revolution. To this end we will focus on a method that is as powerful as it is easy to put into practice: *sabotage*.

# The World As They Would Like Us to See It



**A**LL INSURRECTIONARY TOOLS MUST BE EXAMINED IN ORDER for us to place them firmly within a theoretical framework for subversive action. Theory, like all ideas, is only as good as its ability to be *applied* effectively to the conditions of our lives. Only through critical analysis can we hope to sharpen our methods of struggle and avoid the mistakes and pitfalls of the past. It is important for us not to lose sight of how we determine the results of our efforts. While achieving concrete goals is important, these do not necessarily determine success. A better indication of our accomplishments could be determined by the extent to which current social relations are subverted and the qualitative changes that are realized through revolt.

Situations of revolt are not always easy to discover. The writers of history marginalize and deliberately disconnect news of resistance from a tradition of refusal. Discontent is misrepresented, pacified and moved into channels of legality, compromise, and dialogue. The media distorts the impulse for social war, deferring it to the confines of single issues, mismanagement, and individual cases of dissatisfaction. Revolt becomes a disfigured story, obscured in the past, manipulated in the present, hidden from view.

Our actions should not appeal to these machines of “reality production.” The only thing that will affect the reality of things will be to act upon reality, not to merely *present* it as we wish it to be. The only way to change the conditions of society is to change the nature of how

## TO STRIKE WITHOUT WAITING

While the majority of the examples above are tied to larger situations of struggle, this does not mean that single actions outside of collective struggle are worthless. On the contrary, these isolated actions demonstrate not only a willingness to act, but also a willingness to attack capitalist projects *regardless* of popular support or of the presence of a larger struggle. Thus we must make a point to separate ourselves from those who counsel waiting or who claim that actions are only valid within “mass struggle.”

In many cases mass struggles do not exist against capitalist projects. This lack however does not preclude action being taken by individuals or small groups. We are not slaves to a quantitative logic. If we waited for permission to act, we would be resigning ourselves to waiting forever. Fortunately however, many individuals, those with consciously revolutionary ideas and those without, reject the assertion that actions must be justified by their inclusion in something larger. One need only open the newspaper to read reports of dispersed acts of sabotage against a wide variety of targets: suburban sprawl, luxury condominiums, banks, chain stores, fur stores, fast food restaurants, etc. Acts of hatred against the projects of domination and exploitation deserve no respite. Their execution needs no delay.

Likewise, we must differentiate ourselves from those who support vanguardism and specialization in struggle. All too often radicals fall into the fetishization of armed struggle and the uncritical support of armed groups such as the Weather Underground, Red Army Faction, Black Liberation Army, Red Brigades and many others. These things are problematic from an anarchist perspective.

arrests. As a response, 60 anarchists in Greece occupied a Spanish cultural institute in Athens. Just the day before 80 anarchists held a demonstration at the Spanish embassy in solidarity with the prisoners in Spain and Italy. Yet acts of solidarity, however, went *beyond* these defiant demonstrations.

On December 16 of that same year, 15 cars were burned at three FIAT (Italian car company) dealerships in Athens and two bombs went off outside bank offices in the northern city of Salonika. On December 31, an explosive device blew up in the sales lot of a FIAT car dealership in Grenada, Spain. The attack was undertaken in solidarity with Italian comrades being prosecuted in the “Operation Cervantes” case.<sup>11</sup> The communique for the action also claimed solidarity with anarchist prisoners in Spain, Greece and Germany.

Then on January 3, 2006, three makeshift bombs went off in Athens. The first bomb had been placed under a car that had diplomatic plates. Another bomb detonated at the entrance of the ruling party’s, New Democracy, offices. In the meantime, a fire was set at the car of the mayor of Therissos, Chania, and that of his wife. The attacks were claimed by the group “Antikratiki Dikeosini” (Anti-State Justice) and made in support of anarchists held in prison.

The actions of solidarity continue in Europe as more and more anarchists are facing an increase in state repression. Solidarity of this type circulates struggles and finds meaning in common enemies. There are those of us who are confined to the logic of survival but who hate our slavery and wish to attack it. It is from the understanding of the relationship between our own struggle *and* the struggle of others that related struggles can emerge. The embrace of attack is the refusal of surrender.

we relate within them. There is no fixed or static condition that we are trapped in. The future is not only unwritten but also unpredictable and therefore capable of being affected by our willful determination.

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<sup>11</sup> For more info see “State Repression Against Anarchists in Italy.” *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* #60. Fall/Winter 2005/2006.

# The Tools That Can Destroy the Master's House



**R**EVOLT CAN BEGIN ON AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL OR THROUGH the process of larger social upheaval. One of the oldest and most destructive acts of revolt is sabotage. To be clear, we define sabotage as the deliberate act of destroying or damaging physical structures. From workplace machinery sabotage to monkey-wrenching housing and industrial developments, to smashing a window at a bank, fur store or cop station, sabotage has become a common and well-dispersed instrument of social struggle. This tactic is often used to achieve a greater goal, or employed within a larger campaign or a struggle. However, the potential of destructive direct action lies in its ability to be carried out individually or in groups without any need or desire for formal organization, hierarchy, or campaign to act in unison with. Sabotage, like all tactics, should be easily reproducible, therefore increasing the possibility of its spread. This spreading threatens the structures of power precisely because it is difficult to manage and contain.

Sabotage can be used in all situations, in all terrains, and by anyone who wishes to use it. It requires no specialization or skill, just initiative. While news of sabotage is difficult to find, obscured and negated as it is by those in power, there are some notable examples of its use that we would like to examine. This list is by no means comprehensive but rather a sampling of relevant examples.

# Setting Fire to Surrender: Anarchist Solidarity in Europe



**L**ONG ENOUGH HAS THE CHARITY OF THOSE WHO HAVE EVERYTHING TO lose destroyed our dignity and militancy. Our struggle without compromise for freedom is taking place - not only here, but in the whole of Europe and the whole world.

*NO BORDERS, NO NATIONS; STOP DEPORTATIONS  
LOVE AND STRENGTH FOR ALL PERSECUTED PEOPLE,  
FUGITIVES AND REBELS*

– from a leaflet distributed in Belgium<sup>9</sup>

Acts of sabotage as revolutionary solidarity have had extensive usage over the course of the past few years in Europe. Following police raids carried out across Italy in May 2005 dozens of anarchists were imprisoned and accused of “subversive association.”<sup>10</sup> Anarchists in Barcelona, Spain, demonstrated in solidarity with their Italian comrades in June. They were attacked by riot police who then made seven

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<sup>9</sup> From a leaflet made in solidarity with prisoners in Lecce, Italy.

<sup>10</sup> Arrests were made throughout Italy beginning in Lecce on May 12, in Sardinia on May 19, and in Bologna and Rome on May 26.



launchers, helicopters, and three tanks. Over the course of the month there was a tense standoff between Mohawks and the repressive forces of the government.

The repression set into motion a wave of solidarity actions cross Canada. Demonstrations of support occurred on Native lands and in every major city. Occupations took place in government offices. Sabotage was made at various points of the capitalist infrastructure. On August 18, a Canadian National (CN) rail-bridge was set on fire. Then on September 4th, five hydroelectric towers were toppled and a CN railway-bridge was destroyed by fire, near London, Ontario. The vulnerability of these structures was made readily apparent through these actions. The repression of the Mohawk blockades had brought costly acts of solidarity among many people in many places *removed* from the actual point of focused struggle.

Though the discernable point of contention was the expansion of one development, the police operation was targeting a much greater threat. Mohawk communities were known by the Canadian government for their defiant autonomy and self-management. Their struggle spread outward as others recognized themselves in it. Acts of sabotage provided a damaging and essential tactic in this larger struggle of solidarity, proving to the state that its actions would not go unchallenged.

## A GLOBAL ATTACK: SHELL AND THE ANTI-APARTHEID STRUGGLE

*If you understand how the structures of capitalists are built up and how the big companies are weaving their nets closer and closer around the world, then you realize that the fight against the system has to be carried out globally.*

– Brand magazine

In Europe during the late 1980s, a wave of sabotage hit the Shell Oil Company because of their economic involvement with the then South African government and their policy of apartheid. Many acts of sabotage occurred in Denmark, Holland, and Sweden during the years 1986-1988. Shell stations were attacked with firebombs and paint in addition to the cutting of gasoline hoses and damage to gas tanks and cash machines. These actions were claimed by anonymous groups of people acting in solidarity with the social struggle in South Africa. While at the time an international boycott of Shell was in affect across the world, it is interesting to note that in 1986 a spokesman for Danish Shell admitted that the boycott had not affected them much economically but that sabotage was costing them vastly larger amounts of money.<sup>2</sup>

It was clear that a global attack was taking place against one focal point of capitalist exploitation. These attacks were easy to undertake, requiring only simple tools and a will to act. This fact facilitated their spread across a wide area and far from the center of the anti-apartheid struggle. The acts of sabotage drew a clear parallel between the business done in one place and its direct connection to the administrative and operative functions of the project of capital in *another*.

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2 “Sabotage Against Shell,” *Insurrection* #5, Autumn 1988.

## THE BOLT WEEVILS ATTACK!: POWER AND ITS OPPONENTS IN MINNESOTA

A very interesting example of dispersed sabotage occurred in western Minnesota in the late 1970s. During this time the electric industry was seeking to exploit coal reserves in the West to feed the energy demands of urban centers. One of these projects consisted of building a coal strip mine and generating plant in North Dakota, then constructing a 435 mile power line to transport the energy produced to the suburban areas around Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota.

What the energy industry and the state's regulatory agencies did not expect was the opposition that followed. Farmers along the proposed route of the power line viewed the project as sacrificing their land to feed energy-hungry urban centers. The state was planning to expropriate 160-foot-wide swaths through their fields and erect 180-foot pylons to support the wires. These concerns were augmented by the fear of health problems associated with electromagnetic pollution from the currents running through these power lines. It was clear the state had no regard for these concerns when throughout the years of 1974 to 1977 farmers tried lengthy and ultimately ineffectual legal channels to block the construction of the line. The result, not surprisingly, was that they were merely permitted to request that the construction happen on someone else's land.

Yet the failed dialogue with the state did enable networks to be made among those who were affected by the plans. In 1977, after the state had finalized and approved of these plans, surveyors and construction crews attempted to start work on the power line, but hundreds of farmers blocked their way. In the winter of 1978, confrontations in the fields spanned weeks, prompting the Governor to send almost half of Minnesota's highway patrol officers to protect the electric company crews.

Even more impressive was the wave of sabotage that hit the infrastructure of the project. In the space of two years, fourteen towers were toppled and nearly 10,000 insulators shot out. The actions were

## THEY CANNOT TAKE WHAT IS NOT GIVEN: OKA AND THE SPREADING OF DEFIANCE

*If there is an attack against the Mohawks, it would be considered an attack on all of us... There's hydro-electric lines crossing most of our communities... There are major highway arteries... major water supplies...*

— Peguis chief Louis Stevenson<sup>8</sup>

**I**N MARCH OF 1990 IN OKA, CANADA, KANEHSATAKE MOHAWKS began a blockade of a road leading to a pine forest scheduled for clear-cutting. This piece of land, considered to be Mohawk land by treaty, was planned for use as an expansion of a bordering golf course. Four months later, in July, over 100 of Quebec's provincial police attacked the blockade with tear gas, concussion grenades and thousands of rounds of live ammunition. An officer was killed during the confrontation. The attack was considered a failure when the police were forced to retreat as tear gas blew back at them with the wind, causing them to leave several vehicles behind. These were later smashed up and used to reinforce the blockade. Then the area was sealed off with hundreds of policemen.

Still, news of the raid at Oka reached the Kahnawake, a Mohawk tribe located south of Montreal, who then proceeded to block the Mercier Bridge that served as a main artery from Montreal to the south shore. Armed Mohawks threatened to blow up the bridge if a second attack occurred, and they also blocked two other highways that ran through their territory. The occupation of the bridge continued throughout the summer and received demonstrations of solidarity in Montreal.

After careful planning by the Canadian government, a massive military operation was deployed against the Kanehsatake and Kahnawake blockades in August. It involved the use of 4,400 soldiers, mortars, several hundred armored personnel carriers, armored cars, missile

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<sup>8</sup> "Oka, 1990." Only a Beginning, An Anarchist Anthology. Ed. Alan Antliff

## REVOLUTIONARY SOLIDARITY

*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. Revolutionary solidarity...should be demonstrated incessantly, precisely because it contributes to widening what we are already doing.*

– Pierleone Porcu

With the constant changes and maneuvers of the capitalist system also arise the dispersion of social struggle worldwide. The same system that has forced us to sell ourselves to survive also bars those who are deemed unnecessary from looking for an exit from the warfare of states and the starvation of the capitalist periphery.

We all want the same thing: to decide for ourselves how we will *live*. Autonomous struggle for this very thing has presented itself wherever people refuse to succumb to the inertness of passivity. This is the struggle we share.

But how can we make the similarities between our struggles spread? By recognizing our struggle in the struggle of others and *acting* upon it through revolutionary solidarity. The same companies that are exploiting the forests of West Papua or the Pampas of Chile have their homes in the dominant capitalist countries of the North. The wars fought in Iraq and Afghanistan are fought with the weapons and personnel of the U.S., Europe and collaborating nation-states. The prisons and detention centers that lock away those who refuse the system of exclusion and exploitation are the same that function safely in our backyards. There are some notable examples of this practice of solidarity that deserve a closer look.

being attributed to the “Bolt Weevils,” a name used by the anonymous individuals carrying out the attacks. Electric industry officials termed it “vandalism;” the farmers called it “sabotage,” a tactic that received a great deal of support from local communities.

During these years no arrests were made despite the electricity company employing private security. The police used helicopters to patrol rural areas but were unable to stop the spread of sabotage. By the summer of 1980, the energy company was forced to turn over ownership of the power line to the U.S. government in order to avoid further economic losses directly attributed to sabotage and the costs of security. While this maneuver gave jurisdiction to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, it did not deter attacks from continuing. A fifteenth tower came down on New Year’s Eve of the same year.<sup>3</sup>

Despite all of their attempts, the line was finally constructed, but only with the intervention of the federal government. Yet, what can be taken from this struggle is that the people who attacked this project had learned from their experience of trying to dialogue with the state over its plans. Industrial development had taken priority over those who stood to suffer from its completion. But without retiring in defeat, a social struggle sprang forth, one that did not waste time in the channels of legality but rather *directly* attacked the source of their problem. While the fact that no arrests were ever made may be incidental, it is clear that the state was ineffectual in containing the use or spread of sabotage due to its ability to be used by anyone, anywhere, even in the fields of Minnesota.

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3 “The Rural Energy War—Report from The Front Lines.” The Nation. December 26, 1981.

# Destroying What Seeks to Destroy You: Anti-Nuclear Action in Italy



*Let us spread sabotage over the whole social territory, striking the structures that are bringing about such projects of death.*

– Antinuclear revolutionaries<sup>4</sup>

**A**LSO IN THE LATE 1980S THERE WERE A NUMBER OF EXPLICITLY autonomous acts of sabotage taking place against the nuclear industry in Italy. These actions occurred within a larger social movement against the project of nuclear power that was proceeding forth and accelerating on the European continent. The nature of these actions rejected the reformist strategies and tactics of the peace, environmental and religious movements who opposed nuclear power as an issue of protest. Unlike these groups, a critique of nuclear power and its relation to centralized political and economic power, as well as environmental destruction, was made clear and visible in actions that did not seek to merely replace one type of destructive process for another. Rather these autonomous actions were undertaken with the clear understanding that nuclear power is part of the larger project of capitalist domination.

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4 “Anti-Nuclear Sabotage in Italy,” *Insurrection* # 4, May 1988

later, the police chief told a newspaper, “you can double the amount of officers on the street and it would still be pretty hard to catch them.” Efforts to stem the force of the workers’ struggle were to *no avail*, and they won after two-years of striking and sabotage. While we are quite conscious of the limits of workplace victories, and *ultimately* seek the destruction of work itself, it is important to see that autonomous direct action can develop outside of the control of unions and extend beyond the confines of the workplace.<sup>6</sup>

More recently, in the summer of 2005, negotiations broke down between the Canadian telecommunication giant, Telus, and the Telecommunication Workers Union (TWU). The dispute affected the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, but the most radical activity was centered in B.C. Within days of the strike being called, multiple acts of sabotage occurred and a representative for the company stated in an August 2005 interview that the company had suffered 42 attacks in the three previous months. In many cases phone lines were either damaged or pulled down and fiber-optic cables were repeatedly cut, shutting down phone and internet service to thousands. These acts were a compliment to flying pickets and clashes with scabs. It is also interesting to note that anarchists in Vancouver were involved in solidarity pickets, attempting to halt public transportation from city bus depots in hopes of disrupting the economic functioning of the city.<sup>7</sup>

These examples are but a small sampling of the use of workplace sabotage. Yet they point to the widespread use of direct action outside of legal channels. Their effects cannot be understated. Capitalists would prefer dialogue and compromise but autonomous action makes these forms of cooptation ineffectual.

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6 “From Vandalism to Firebombing at Basic Vegetable.” *Union Violence Look-out*. Vol.I, Issue 10. November 1999.

7 “Cut Phone Lines ‘Obvious Vandalism,’ Telus Says.” *Vancouver Sun*. August 16, 2005.

Throughout the course of the strike over a hundred bomb threats were called into bus terminals, causing large disruptions. Dozens of shooting attacks were made against buses and their terminals. One striking driver was killed by a scab driver and one replacement was seriously injured. In April, 60 workers were fired by the company for sabotage and violence. This came a day after a bus terminal in Boston was set on fire. Unfortunately after three years of conflict, the strike was lost. This however does not invalidate the struggle that took place, and it still serves as an important example of the use of sabotage within a large-scale labor struggle.<sup>5</sup>

Towards the end of the 1990s another violent workplace conflict was underway. In July of 1999, the largely immigrant Latino workforce at Basic Vegetable Products in King City, California went on a Teamster-led strike. The strike was in response to the company imposing a wage freeze, a two-tier wage system, changes in pension plans and the slashing of health benefits. Almost immediately the strike was followed by a rash of small-scale sabotage, harassment, threats and even fire bombings that spread *beyond* the ability of the local police to contain. In early August, a supervisor's house was firebombed, leading to the arrest of one worker who was later sentenced to three years. Later in the month a scab's car was set on fire, nearly engulfing her home in flames. Acts of sabotage included tampering with the vehicles of replacement workers in order to cause malfunctions. By year's end some 270 acts of sabotage had been officially reported, against such targets as company buses, scab vehicles, scab homes, and the company's factory.

In October the company held a press conference requesting strike intervention by the governor and the state attorney general. At the press conference a spokesman for the company displayed photographs of smashed windows, slashed car tires and homemade spike strips used against scab workers. King City Police Chief Richard Metcalf conceded there had been "a huge increase in reported vandalism... This is not uncommon during labor disputes, in my experience." Two months

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5 "Business Brief -- GLI Holding Co.: Sixty Fired by Greyhound for Strike-Related Violence." Wall Street Journal. April 6, 1990.

In October of 1986 machinery used to construct a nuclear plant in Trino Vercellese was destroyed by demonstrators. In addition to this, acts of sabotage were occurring in various parts of the country. High-tension pylons, the metal frames that support power lines, were sawn and downed in the Cosenza province in July 1987. Then in September a pylon in the area of Pec del Brasimone was downed as well. This one had supported power lines that supplied electricity to a nuclear reactor. Then in December of 1987 a nuclear power station was blockaded in Montalto di Castro and a research center had its gates locked shut. A leaflet was found at the site stating, "sabotage the research centres, universities, death production." Anarchists and autonomists organized anti-nuclear meetings and demonstrations in Rome, Venice, Milan and Bologna, among other cities.

Another high-tension power line was downed in Sicily that same year. A communiqué claiming responsibility for this action had this to say: "...the final course in this mad race towards perpetual enrichment and global domination, shamelessly passed off as progress, civil society, etc., is the total destruction of our planet which is now taking place. To speak, write, dance, sing, march is not enough to stop this madness and free ourselves from its ferocious oppression... We maintain: we can and we must take our fate into our own hands and organize ourselves. Sabotage. Attack. Insurge."

Attacks against power lines continued throughout the year. Many of the attacks were not only directed towards nuclear energy projects but also against energy supplied to factories. By the end of the 1980's an estimated 400 attacks against the infrastructure of the energy system had occurred throughout Italy. These made clear the connection between nuclear energy and energy produced through other means such as coal, which also creates its own set of toxins and destructive extraction processes.

At the time it was unclear how much damage was done by some of these actions. In some cases the pylons were sawn but did not fall. Yet anarchists were clear to point out the importance not only of some

certifiable amount of financial damages but additionally the *uncontrollability* of this method of autonomous action. The now-defunct Italian anarchist magazine *ProvocAzione* explained this point clearly: “The method of direct attack against small objectives spread over the social territory is far more effective than the great spectacular actions and demonstrations that are as spectacular as they are innocuous. The State knows very well how to manage and exploit these grand actions... What it does not know...is how to control and prevent simple direct attacks against the distribution...of structures that are responsible for projects of repression and death.”

# Every Worker, A Monkeywrench: The Destruction of the Machines of Production



SABOTAGE HAS A LONG HISTORY OF USE IN THE WORKPLACE. Workplace sabotage still certainly exists today though the actual frequency of these acts is suppressed to avoid encouragement on a wider scale. Still, it has had many applications within workers’ struggle when the realization of union-capitalist collaboration and the ineffectuality of official strikes have been made. Its ease of use has made it a popular form of response to the degradation of bosses, unions, wages, and routines.

In March of 1990, 6,300 bus drivers and an estimated 3,000 other Greyhound workers went on strike in what would become the second largest and most violent strike in the company’s history. The dispute took place between Greyhound Lines Inc., the largest North American privately-run bus line, and the Amalgamated Council of Greyhound Local Unions, over wages, job security and grievance procedures. Fewer than 100 of its drivers crossed the picket lines, requiring the company to rely on scabs. Violence and sabotage erupted *immediately* despite negotiations between union representatives and Greyhound officials.