

Notes on New Anarchy

A talk about the New Anarchy trend by CCF, Spyros Mandylas and Cell of Chaotic Strike

Conspiracy of Cells of Fire, Spyros Mandylas, Cell of Chaotic Strike

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The following interviews were given by Spyros Mandylas and Christos Tsakalos (CCF) on events organized by anarchist collectives (mentioned above each interview) and on self-organized anarchist radio 105FM. In addition, a brochure of Cell of Chaotic Strike accompanies the collected speeches. Some parts within the text might sound repetitive, exactly because there were similar questions on different interviews. The point of this article, was to collect most of them (if not all), in order to give a clear picture of what New Anarchy is.

—Dubus Dumno

Anarchist Haunt “Nadir”. Thessaloniki 7/12/2013

Spyros Mandylas, member of the meeting of the Anarchist Haunt “Nadir”.

Q: Would you like to start by telling us which political features shape New Anarchy and how it differs from the traditional one? Also, what kind of problems do you spot within the so-called “official” anarchy?

S.M: In those last few years New Anarchy is being discussed quite a lot, this new drift, so it would be right to give a definition as well; what do we mean with this term and what is its difference with traditional anarchy and that what is called the “official anarchist movement”. The “trend of New Anarchy” is what we used to say some time ago, a new anarchy within Anarchy. I believe that’s how it all started. Its main features are **anti-societism, the anarcho-individualist perception, existential analyses, informal organization, direct action** – which is a very basic feature, **nihilist perception** and much more. We will now look into some individual points to better clarify what this trend is, what this thought is. By “anti-societism” we do not mean, obviously, a pogrom against the populations and innocent citizens. **Anti-societism speaks of a war that is waged against the state and, at the same time, harshly criticizes society. So what we are saying is this: the rulers and the administrators of power, are given their positions by certain someones; someone elects them and someone tolerates them. For this reason, the “oppressed” citizen is not without responsibilities.** This passivity and voluntary slavery is a problematic situation, which should not be left untouched and out of criticism. Now, another important structural difference, in relation to traditional anarchy, is that New Anarchy does not speak of a social catechism; it speaks of anarchist diffusion of ideas. It’s completely different. This new trend is not meant to persuade, but to communicate. New Anarchy does not talk about the revolution, placing it in an indefinite future, but it talks about the present, here and now. New Anarchy presupposes the coupling of theory and practice and does not want clappers, but accomplices. New Anarchy, as I have experienced it, is aimed for minorities. Nowadays, when various means such as strikes, funeral-like marches, symbolic building-occupation and protests are ineffective and act as decompression valves; we do not consider it just a wrong strategy, we consider it stupid to when you call yourself an anarchist, yet fight for better living standards. Anarchy cannot replace the welfare state, nor can it be a kind of union for students and workers as it has become in recent years.

Q: How would you comment on the term “vanguard” that has been attributed to New Anarchy?

S.M: This characterization of the New Anarchy trend has, in fact, been attributed to some others. This characterization is completely wrong in relation to what this new current stands for. I’ll start by saying what I read recently: **“Anyone who thinks they know everything is doomed to learn nothing.” What is true is that there is no person, no book and no trend**

that says how the revolution will take place. The constant revolt does not obey any truth and has no recipe for how this theoretical revolution will take place. This characterization of “vanguard”, I personally, return it to the official movement, which believes that its actions and interventions in various, cinematic, intermediate struggles, will act as a trigger for the social or any other revolution. Anyone who considers themselves a pioneer is arrogant and, therefore, is doomed to stand still in a situation.

Q: You are involved in the part of New Anarchy’s idea-diffusion. How important do you think it is for a bridge to exist between the trends of New Anarchy and why do you think that the state, in addition to armed action, is targeting such actions? An example of this phenomenon is translation networks and the international media. What do you think is their role?

SM: Speaking of New Anarchy, we are essentially talking about a dialectical relationship between theory and praxis, between the public image and the illegal. This relationship is, I believe, a very important part of New Anarchy. **This new trend is essentially made up of direct action teams, collectives, blogs, websites and radios, book/brochure publication or translation groups and much more. This tendency, organized on the characteristics of informal organization, affinity groups, internationalist solidarity and having a specific political analysis, is a very significant and difficult opponent for our enemies.** Essentially, when we talk about New Anarchy, we are talking about concepts such as “anti-societism”, “anarcho-individualism” ... We are talking about an existential analysis and view that goes beyond the stagnation of a class orientation and refers to the sabotage of social relations.

For New Anarchy, revolution is not placed at an indefinite time in the future, but it is demanded in the present, as we believe that mass preparation cannot in any case be one of the preconditions for revolution. New Anarchy speaks of war on the state and harshly criticizes society. It is clear that for the suffering of the oppressed, the oppressed themselves are not without responsibilities. For me, they are a voluntary mass that through various procedures have advocated for their tyranny.

Now, regarding why the state, in addition to armed formations of direct action, is also targeting public structures (translation and publication structures and so on), this is due in part to the fact that it fully realizes the effectiveness of these operations in ongoing anarchism; the uprising. To be more specific, **I believe that the state would prefer armed groups, without public speech and presence. As it would also prefer to see the international media become consumed by harmless, theoretical analyses.** So when the state sees that there are some bridges between the two, it makes total sense for it to do everything it can to break them down. In practice, we can see this in Italy over the last two years, where we several repressive operations had taken place; in operation “Ardire”, in operation “Shadow”, we saw exactly this thing. We have seen persecution not only against individuals for direct action but also against translation websites. As it happened, for example, with the “Culmine” website and the “Kerveros” publications. This means they’re doing a good job. If half thing is the immediate action, the other half is how it will reach the recipient.

Operation Phoenix, for example, has already counted eight strikes. The four have taken place in Greece and the other four have taken place in Indonesia, Russia and Chile. **If it weren’t for all these networks, that didn’t exist before, we wouldn’t have learned anything. So, we notice how they interact together and how much they break down borders.** In recent years, a large volume of political texts has been translated from language to language on these sites and translation networks. For example, there, today you will find the book “Armed Joy”

by Nadir Publications. At the same time, a week ago, the book “Armed Joy” was published in Indonesian. The books of the Conspiracy of Fire Cores and the Black International are constantly being translated. This is a terrific job, it is very important.

Q: Let’s get started now with the questions we’ve prepared. On a realistic basis, given the way society is structured today, both materially and spiritually, what do you think are the prospects for New Anarchy? In other words, even if the spread of this discourse succeeds and people gather around the project of rebellion in the present, will we be able to achieve the total deconstruction of the existing status quo? Can this be achieved by minorities? After all, is the issue quantitative, qualitative or both?

S.M: First of all, since we are talking about New Anarchy, I believe that we must keep in mind that all those views that speak of “plans” are abhorred, and, in fact, in detail, in relation to both the revolutionary process itself, as well as with post-revolutionary society. No, by no means I’m saying that the future’s gonna be like this, either way. New Anarchy does not give guarantees. **As far as the issue of the minority is concerned, what I have to point out is that all great actions, historically, started with minorities.** In addition, the preparation of the masses is by no means a precondition for an impending revolution. Therefore, **the question of whether the issue is quantitative or qualitative, in my view, the only thing that is of great importance is to distinguish an individual, a project or a group from clear qualitative rather than quantitative characteristics.** Besides, I believe it seemed that the tactics with a clear orientation towards the quantitative increase, which have been adopted for years from a large part of the movement, brought anything, but the desired results.

Q: Representatives of traditional anarchy tend to be fascinated by the myth of the working class, which is imagined to be a “boiling cauldron” because of its exploitation by the capitalists and, guided by its class consciousness, has a generally rebellious perspective. Do you think that, due to the above argument, New Anarchy will find suitable ground in such social groups?

S.M: No, in neither case I believe that New Anarchy will find suitable ground in the working class, just as I do not believe that it will find suitable ground anywhere else. In general, I do not think that there is a specific revolutionary subject, whether it is called an “immigrant”, or a “worker”, or a “student”, or anything else. **Now, we must not look for revolutionary consciousness in a particular group or class, and that must be the goal of our search: the revolutionary mood and consciousness.** Consciousness has absolutely nothing to do, neither with class, nor with the social group to which one belongs. What, in my opinion, we should look for, are people who have not yet been alienated. We are therefore addressing those minorities who, with rage and conscience, will join us.

Christos Tsakalos, Cell of imprisoned members of the Conspiracy of Cells of Fire, FAI – IRF

Q: Both the beginning of the realization of the Operation “Phoenix” by the local FAI cells, as well as other initiatives show that the area of New Anarchy has begun to make its appearance again in Greece. What do you think can be done to further develop it at all levels?

C.T: Look, first of all, it is necessary, in order to answer this question, to say briefly what New Anarchy means. Why do we use this term? Because otherwise, we are speaking empty

words. To do this, however, we must first explain what does the old anarchy means to us, that is, the orthodox anarchy, as we call it. For us, then, the old anarchy is the image of anarchy that has been established. **To put it bluntly, it is a trend that aims at social revolution, speaking general, considering as a revolutionary subject, again speaking general, the oppressed ones, society, the proletariat; fetishizing social subsets and situations.** For example, we are tired of the fetishization of anarcho-Christian solidarity with immigrants, the constant opportunistic flirtation with the left, and the peculiar treatment of the old anarchy in social conflicts and conflicts in general. In other words, the old anarchy admires conflicts, based on the amount of people involved, for example at a rally, thus imagining a social uprising, but isn't fully aware of the causes that lead to social deviation. In addition, the old anarchy treats, at best, with restrained caution the acts of nocturnal minorities and individual violence. **In short, as old anarchy, to summarize it somewhat, I consider the social trend of anarchy and its reflection as a social relationship and behavior, in its microcosm called "movement".** For me, the movement, as I have already experienced it, as a social formation, has nothing to do with anarchy, as I express it at least, both in terms of its behavior and in the absence of aggressive action on its part. In this context, some people wanted us to create something new. We wanted something to separate us from these old and stale perceptions. Thus, we coined the term "New Anarchy."

New Anarchy is an anarchist trend that focuses on the individual and their uniqueness. Not, of course, as an isolated entity of Nietzschean references, but as a social being characterized by their choices. It is in this context that we are interested in provoking, creating stimuli of choice through our actions, in order to connect with other individuals. Because only in this way is the collective "we" created. However, we are not at all interested in sacking people and presenting them as we want, cut and sewn to the measures of an ideology, hiding them behind social labels. Social labels such as: the proletariat, the oppressed, the immigrant. **In short, we believe in everyone's choices and in "conditions".** At the same time, New Anarchy promotes immediate action in the present, here and now, without waiting for the magical moment of social awakening. **We treat power as a social relationship and not with the central perception of the beast's heart. In short, through our attacks and our speech, we want, together with the buildings we blow up or the human targets we hit, we want to blow up the structures of social relations as well.** Truth is, there is no magic button, which if pressed terminates the operation of the state. It is in this context that we promote anarcho-nihilism. Nihilism, but in what sense? In the sense of constant movement, of the perpetual movement of creative destruction. It is the meeting point of the builder with the destroyer. Why all this? **It is nihilism that, which eliminates all static conditions. Every static state, every crystallized state, even if it appears to be an anarchist one, as long as it is static, it will give birth to habits, roles, divisions and informal power. Nihilism acts as the trigger for anarchy, as it does not allow it to become an ideological plaster. That is, it puts it away from ready-made recipes for social salvation, as everything goes on, as anarchy is a movement.** Of course, the question of New Anarchy, of anarcho-individualism, of the nihilism we have spoken, cannot fit into one answer.

Now, beyond that, the bet for New Anarchy's idea-diffusion is not an academic issue but, in essence, a practical discussion. First of all, with our actions and words, we must withdraw all this ideological mud that the reformists have thrown at us from time to time. By playing with words, because we have read various texts and heard various pretense theories, they want to

portray the New Anarchy as a dead end proposition that promotes hatred against all. Indicatively, I remind those people's courts – meetings that took place after the events of the 5th of May. In these assemblies, all moods spotted there pointed, in particular, as a moral perpetrator, the tendency of anarcho-individualism. **Also, speaking practically about the diffusion of New Anarchy, we must promote the creation of informal cells of direct action. Informal cells of direct action with their goal to strike and sabotage the social factory of authority. That is why, earlier, I spoke of power as a social relationship and behavior and not as a one-dimensional situation. Power does not have a seat. Power operates, is produced and commanded, through diffused social relations.** The proposal of the Informal Anarchist Federation comes to the fore in this perspective, that is, in the perspective of sabotage and the attack on the structures of power and the relations that they produce.

Finally, combined to the above said, it is important to create encounter times. Encounter times, both among the comrades who share the same anguish, that is, the tendency of the New Anarchy, but also of comrades who are interested in searching their beliefs and denying the images of the past, the doctrines of the old anarchy. **Such moments of encounter are also created through the publication of some books, some brochures, by the operation of counter-information, but also by the organization of events,** such as the one we are talking about now, which removes the walls of captivity and, in fact, creates in its own way; the possibilities for the diffusion of New Anarchy.

Since we're done, comrades, and there are no more questions, thank you for giving us the opportunity to remove this wall of isolation, even in this form of an interactive relationship. I believe that what has been said, regardless of whether one agrees or disagrees, can create a stimulus for thought, search, doubt, discussion. **After all, to say one last thing, anarchy means asking questions; power means believing you have all the answers. In this regard, the discussion of New Anarchy, nihilism and anarcho-individualism is a discussion that does not worship sacred truths. It is a debate that is constantly evolving and wants even conflict, it even wants friction. Because that's the only way we live, through constant evolution.**

28/02/2014. Christos Tsakalos's interview on 105FM radio.

105fm: There has been talk in your own texts, but also in texts from other comrades in Greece and internationally, about the trend of "New Anarchy". How do you understand, on one hand, the existence of a new trend with clearly more aggressive characteristics, within – or at the same time – the existing anarchist movement and, consequently, heretical concepts such as nihilism, anarcho-individualism, anti-societism, etc.?

C.T: It is true that quite a few times we use this term and meaning of New Anarchy in our texts, and so many other times we have encountered the same question. "What is New Anarchy after all?" Even this time we will not give an exact definition because New Anarchy is not a prescription drug to give exactly the indications and contraindications, and what it offers and what it does not offer. It is, moreover, an open bet offered for an ongoing discussion. **So for us, anarchy is a journey. It is an adventure of values, perceptions, emotions that, for sure,**

has no terminal. It is a living state, in constant motion. In this journey we encounter our own weaknesses, our own contradictions, and our own mistakes. The point is to set a goal to overcome them. This constant transcendence, the constant transcendence of ourselves, against decay and habit, is anarchy.

Unfortunately, both in Greece and internationally, some narrow-minded people are trying to squeeze anarchy into miserable bureaucratic processes. That is to say, they have an anxiety to turn it into a proper ideology that offers, especially now in times of crisis, the recipe for social harmony and salvation. In this way, what they are actually doing is stripping it off its existential identity and its unruly and chaotic aesthetics. That is to say, in their attempt to seek social acceptance in any way, they serve re-established Marxist theories and are consumed with fantasies about the mass awakening and construction of a future post-revolutionary society. In short, for us, they lose its essence. Because the thought and action of some of those people is more appropriate, after all, for a revolutionary opposition fighting against the government, and not for an anarchist force to destroy all power. You know what they say ... “To become a populist, you don’t have to be on a ballot.” The point, then, is that some people dream of a revolutionary tomorrow in which, for example, the means of production, technology, and civilization will have simply changed managers, and will have passed – some say – to popular power, but they fail to understand that anarchy, at least for us, does not mean a change of management. **Anarchy means the destruction of the social structures that give birth to power as a social relationship, regardless of how it is baptized, popular, social, or even self-governing power.** After all, if one observes the microcosm of the anarchist movement, one will notice the preservation and reproduction of all the social structures and the dominant behaviors that we are supposed to deny. What to say ... Lifestyle, informal hierarchy, roles, patriarchy, sexism... **That is, we see a reproduction of the system of power that, simply in this case, has an anarchist sign. That is why we felt the need to separate from yesterday, so we wanted to re-equip words and concepts that for many years were buried in books and adventures of people of the last century, that is, we restored the heresy of nihilism and anarcho-individualism, against the -therefore revolutionary normality of the movement.** This, of course, does not mean that we ourselves are sometimes confronted with our own contradictions. By no means do we believe that there are pure anarchists. But there are anarchists who, every day, want to be more and more anarchist. This desire is, for us, anarchy.

And let’s be more specific ... What is nihilism? It is a rather heretical concept that many people interpret it as they like. Not that we have the right interpretation or the right recipe for this word, just that we, too, will speak and share our subjective view of what we consider nihilism to be. **For us, then, nihilism is the notion of the negative, the notion of the negative as Hegel has defined it, that is, the notion of the constantly unsatisfied, which denies the existing. Through this constant conflict of the old and the new, evolution is born.** Every young person who is born and transformed into a given age must give birth to their new denial. This constant rebirth creates movement. That is, new situations, new thoughts, new emotions, new tensions, which leave no room and no space for the power of stagnation and habit. What is anarcho-individualism? This one too, is a nice word we use and, very often, it has received tons of criticism. **For us, anarcho-individualism is the starting point for an existential rebellion that is born within each individual, and tries to collectivize itself by looking for companions and friends against a world of individual loneliness.** That is, it starts with the individual and is grouped with other people, who feel the same desire and need. At the same

time, we stay away from the prayers of the eternal awakening of the masses. We do not want our own uprising to wait for the favorable objective material conditions; it starts here and now; it's that simple.

Perhaps, for some people, all this sounds very poetic and very abstract. They may not fit into the serious costume of today's popular address at all – and they don't fit in at all. But let everyone remember, and this is really valuable, how they “entered” anarchy, when they became anarchists, what attracted them. Personally, I don't know anyone who became an anarchist because they first swallowed a whole library of Marx and Bakunin. Moreover, anarchy, as we have experienced it, is an experiential aesthetic rebellion in the denial of every establishment, and then it finds the words to express itself; not the opposite. New Anarchy, then, is precisely this desire. It is the desire to maintain anarchy as a constant rebellion, not as a refined ideology. That's the bet for New Anarchy.

Cell of Chaotic Strike

New Anarchy (Anarchy within Anarchy)

Speaking of New Anarchy, essentially, we are talking about the anarcho-individualist-nihilist trend. This trend has been appearing in Greece for the last five years or so. Its main structural features are anti-societism, direct action, international solidarity, informal organization based on affinity groups, the existence of a network of translation and publishing ventures, the shift to total deconstruction of production and labor relations, anti-civilization and much more, with the main goal of perpetual rebellion in the present, until the total liberation of humans and animals.

In particular, with regard to anti-societism, essentially, it is a battle being fought, not only against the “tyranny” of the “above”, but also harshly criticizing the compromises and subjugation of the “below“. **After all, power is based not only on state violence, but also on the obedience, compromise, acceptance, misery and voluntary-slavery of mass society.** Proponents of this trend oppose the state, capital, society, techno-industrial complex, their various kinds of morals and ideologies, while at the same time, completely rejecting humanity as the ideological basis of the universe. For them, the power structures are the same, whether we are talking about a bourgeois or a workers' state, society remains an authoritarian institution, whether it is communist or capitalist, since it has similar structural features. Under any condition, civilization continues to serve man, destroying nature and enslaving individuality.

In addition, New Anarchy offers no post-revolutionary manual with a specific and well-organized social program. This is not a premeditated plan of social, economic and productive organization that will prevail after the revolution. New Anarchy is, above all, a method of personalizing everyone's consciousness, it is a liberating experience in the present, it is the space where strong individuality sprouts and grows. It has nothing to do with utopias and future Christian paradises. Revolution guarantees nothing. Anarchist nihilism counts its life in intensity and not in years. Falls in love with the unknown, the unruly and abhors the political promises that pleasantly lullaby the crowd. **The timeless fantasy of preparing the masses, as a necessary condition for the war against power, only brings postponements, creating, for the anarchist circles, a “safe routine”.** As comrade Christos Tsakalos characteristically states, “The connection with the” struggling “social sections, as a necessary condition for promoting diversion and insurrection, is not much different from the logic of the communist

parties, which want to guide the masses for the popular revolution. We do not believe in vanguards, nor do we wait for the slow mass to learn to breathe freely”

Another key feature is its internationalist character. We notice dialogues being developing between groups of direct action that international solidarity campaigns are being called for, that dozens of texts and proclamations are being translated daily, and that Black International’s books have already been published in several languages. Dozens of translation networks from every corner of the globe (Greece, Chile, Spain, England, Indonesia, Italy and elsewhere) produce the maximum for the diffusion of the perpetual anarchist uprising. In fact, in Italy, in the context of the repressive operation “Eutolmia”, the state attacked with persecution such operations, fx the website “Culmine” and the Cerberus publications. Also, as part of Operation Shadow, there was prosecution against KN03.

It is, therefore, a radical, multi-trend pole. At the core of this pole formation is the interaction between individual trends, which becomes apparent, both at the level of direct action, involving anarchists of praxis from different starting points, and in other activities, where comrades of related ideologies are located, discuss, co-publish material, collaborate in actions and events, etc. This interaction is of paramount importance and has to do with how we view the issue of theory in general. This interaction can offer the anti-civ view promoted by many eco-anarchists, it can motivate someone to work on the issue of constant rebellion and aformalism projected by insurrectionary comrades, and in turn anarcho-nihilist-individualism offers its methodology of negation with its adjustments and highlights the importance of individual consciousness, will and power. This process is extremely important, both individually and collectively.

The main purpose of New Anarchy is, as mentioned above, the creation of a radical anarchist pole of attack, with material substance. Therefore, informal networks of cooperation and communication are needed in order to organize the struggle for autonomous, distinct, aggressive presence on the streets and everything else that can be born out of will, imagination and ingenuity of each and every one of us. **War is fought by all means. Posters, books, publications, trinkets, graffiti, translations, discussions, etc. are not the “poor relative” of direct action. No one was born holding a Molotov cocktail and no one with a preconceived notion.** Our difference lies in the choice itself. There, after all, lies the difference between anarchist diffusion and propaganda and social address. We do not preach the gospel, nor do we try to convince anyone. **We want to communicate and conspire with those who want to fight.** Therefore, the dialectic of the struggle must not be lost, because in this way its essence is also lost. We are neither soldiers nor philosophers, we are anarchist insurgents! The complete revolutionary subject is exactly where this coupling takes place.

The Question of Organization

It is a fact that the attack on the state, society, culture and its structures, although a personal matter, is most effective when the subjects act collectively. So we need a basic organization. It should be noted, however, that collectivization differs in diameter from massification. New Anarchy denies the organization in its formal and binding form. It is opposed to strict political structures as, within them, alienation is a one way road. The proposed organization, therefore, consists of four main points:

1. Affinity groups
2. Informal organization

3. Ground cells

4. Security

Informal organization has nothing to do with conferences, personality-cult structures, and hierarchical remnants and, of course, neither aims at quantitative expansion, nor being the leader in a future social revolution. Instead, it advocates the creation of a global network that will include anarchist groups and individuals, in order to coordinate with each other, aiming to spread New Anarchy. The small nuclei, always structured on the basis of egoist participation, are able to either exploit a generalized turmoil, causing multiple and successive blows to the enemy's structures, or temporarily coordinating their forces, hitting the state in disarray. They can also produce speech and action in the context of meaningful companionship, which is not tainted by "obligations" and "responsibilities", as participating partners, share their common desires and their relationships are inspired by their conscious relation of each other and the joint participation in the group's activities. Cells are not necessarily stable, nor is it the opposite, they are what the people involved in each of them want them to be. **This "flexible" form of organization, on one hand, ensures personal freedom of movement and voluntary action, and on the other hand is effective and suitable for any path people choose.** Their closed and small structure, on one hand, shields these groups from snitches, and on the other hand favors the constant tightening of the structures between the members. The organization, or at least the rudimentary organization, is necessary for the spread of fire and chaos, for the complete destruction of power and all its structures.

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