

# THE LOGIC OF NOT DEMANDING *by a.g. schwartz*

an essay from "The Delirious Momentum of The Revolt"

December was not the first time we have burned them, and it was not the first time they have used these same lies. "Senseless violence!" the politician cries out, dabbing at the tears with a Hag that on one side shows the national colours and on the other the standard of all humanity. "These protesters have no demands, they are only acting out of anger," assures the Two Face, who holds a club in one hand and an olive branch in the other. The media runs up with a podium named The Middle Ground and, placing it directly between these two characters, concludes neutrally even sympathetically: "They must not know what they want. We'll have to tell them." And a curtain flies up revealing a panel of experts, economists, sociologists, humanitarian activists, and don't forget the fascists, and they begin to develop the lie and weave it into the most captivating shapes, but it all starts with this one premise.

The police know that we propose solutions to their violence because they use the literature seized from our homes as evidence in the trials against us. The politicians know we envision a world without their authority because we talk about it in the communiqués that accompany the bombs placed outside their houses. The journalists know we criticise their control of culture and information because they fancy themselves investigators and we put these texts for free on the Internet. And what they all know is precisely what they refuse to say in those embarrassing moments when they must admit that we exist: they have no place in our future. We are going to destroy them.

So they talk about us like a rabble of confused children, hoping to deafen the people to our words. And they also hope to fool the foolish among us into translating our words into a language they can understand. The language of demands. The revolutionary dream, reduced to a few pragmatic points that might ostensibly serve as the first steps in the long march through the institutions. Snap! The trap springs shut.

Carl Schmitt, the influential German political theorist, jurist, and unrepentant Nazi, whose work was later taken up by the neoliberals at the University of Chicago, said that government was not a monopoly on violence, but a monopoly on decision. This seems true. In fact, the State permits and depends on private violence in the form of patriarchy racism, employment conditions, fascist street gangs, and so on, in order to maintain itself. What the State requires, in order to maintain power, is the prerog-

ative to decide, in increasingly, minuscule spheres of life, what is allowed and what isn't; to decide the course of the country and post facto legitimate and regulate the initiatives taken by the capitalists. And when some social power contests the reigning order, the State must be involved in the resolution. The pacifists are wrong when they say that violence is the government's strong suit. If they ruled through violence they would never have legitimacy. In fact, the government's strong suit is communication. It is to occupy the central position, the role of mediator and protagonist, in any decision. It will make itself feared if it has to, but above all it survives by making itself heard and making itself necessary to the point where people cannot imagine a solution to a social problem that is not tailored first and foremost to the needs of State.

This is exactly why anarchists, in December and at other times, refuse to make demands. We will not dialogue with the State, we will not sit down to chat with Capital. We will not tell them what we want because they already know: we want them to die. But not only this; we want to be the ones to destroy these institutions, with the help of as great a part of society as possible, in order to win the ability to create the world anew in the interests of all its inhabitants.

It is oxymoronic to make demands of something you wish to destroy completely, because the request for change transfers agency from you to that thing that receives your demands, and the very act of communication grants it continued life. Our attacks aim to destroy authority, to open up spaces in order to recreate life, and to communicate with society. We do not wish to communicate with the State.

If a rebellion does not communicate demands, it is not because it is senseless, but on the contrary because it is intelligent. And if the people think that it is senseless, this is only because we have not succeeded in challenging the media's role as narrator, we have not distributed enough counter-information to contradict their lies.

But one day, if we do our work well, the people watching the TV will hear the commentator say: "They have no demands, they do not know what they want," and they will only smile and think how stupid these charlatans are, playing the same old tricks year after year.

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