

SPY_BOOK(S)LET

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by bruna bonanno

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this booklet est une mise en notes to let spy the books let
hook look spun (again et encore une fois) le sens du m
c'est-à-dire de what IS who is ~~NOT~~ a ~~pirate~~...
à prendre the stories de résistance and struggle, de libération to remember them et les tenir ensemble
ensemble ensemble this booklet est là pour
découper pour manifester l'impossibilité d'une seule authorship autorité

automatisme autorialité author ~~propriétaire des mots des pensée histoires~~
~~engagées dans et entre les écritures.... à laisser entendre que whatever la piraterie~~
~~soit, elle se matérialise dans un travail collectif sur des actions~~
~~engagées de celles qui n'ont pas de capitaine no heroes no gods sin dieux~~
no heads no chiefs no maitres no masters MASTER mais iels sont actions
qui sont l'incarnation qui sont the embodiment d'un faire plural sans hiérarchie
ni capital letters: it is **surtout** written en français et en anglais just pour une
limite de connaissance de **qui** le rassemble et pour une **limite d'arrogance**
de qui a fait l'EUROPE et a **confié la recherche sur la piraterie au seul**
~~l'océan atlantique ou plutôt au début des bateaux qui se mettent en mer proue~~
~~prou prouesse pour se déplacer d'une terre à coloniser à une autre et puis encore~~
~~de la terre à la mer et à la terre les terres les territoires territories.~~
une invitation à lire réfléchir ouvrir désordonner
our terrestrial grounded way of thinking:
the booklet is ready **à être coupé déchiré remâché**
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encore cut torn chewed rewritten dusted abandoned taken up torn
again: **la seule règle of reading** *this* c'est D'ÊTRE AU MOINS TROIS puisque pour
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seulement deux mais au moins trois *arpenter.e.e.e.*
sans arpent sans arpenteur sans piquets on arpente pour arracher tout
sens territorial sans territoire sans terror territory terra terrius terre terreur
ce booklet n'a pas de séquence il ne va ni à droite ni à gauche il n'avance pas par
pages mais par courants and tides et il occupe par moments le mouvement de
saltwater de l'eau salée the flows les marées ça monte ça descend ça revient
jamais au même---- and donc **let spy the book(s)** épie laisse livre laisse lire
lisse lasse écrits autour de what it means être un pirate TODAY recueillir
piraterie? what is pirate? ce que ça veut dire quoi? qui? et comment? et *ce que*
ça veut dire aujourd'hui parler de piraterie encore?
et alors l'invitation c'est de le faire **à voix haute** et de nouveau ensemble pour
faire bouger remuer la pensée la faire danser la mouiller la mettre à la mer for
thinking through doing and then set sail:
on commence à trois et puis on devient sept et vingt-neuf et cent-quatre jusqu'au
99% because we are still the 99% et donc un petit booklet pour
une **joyful militancy** au milieu d'EUROPE au milieu des gens qui font
les pirates à nous passer de main en main from hand to hand ces pages pour
prendre le temps d'une réflexion collective qui passe de la

conversation

à

action

ÉCOLOGIE RADICALE

CARE

FREEDOM

~~TERRITORY~~

NOMADISM

SEA

SHARED ECONOMY

SHARED ECONOMY

CIRCURAL ECONOMY

ALTERNATIVE LAWS-MAKING

SONG

FUN

FUN

RHUM

SONG

ANARCHISM

JOLLY ROGER

ECONOMY?

SEA-LAND-SEA

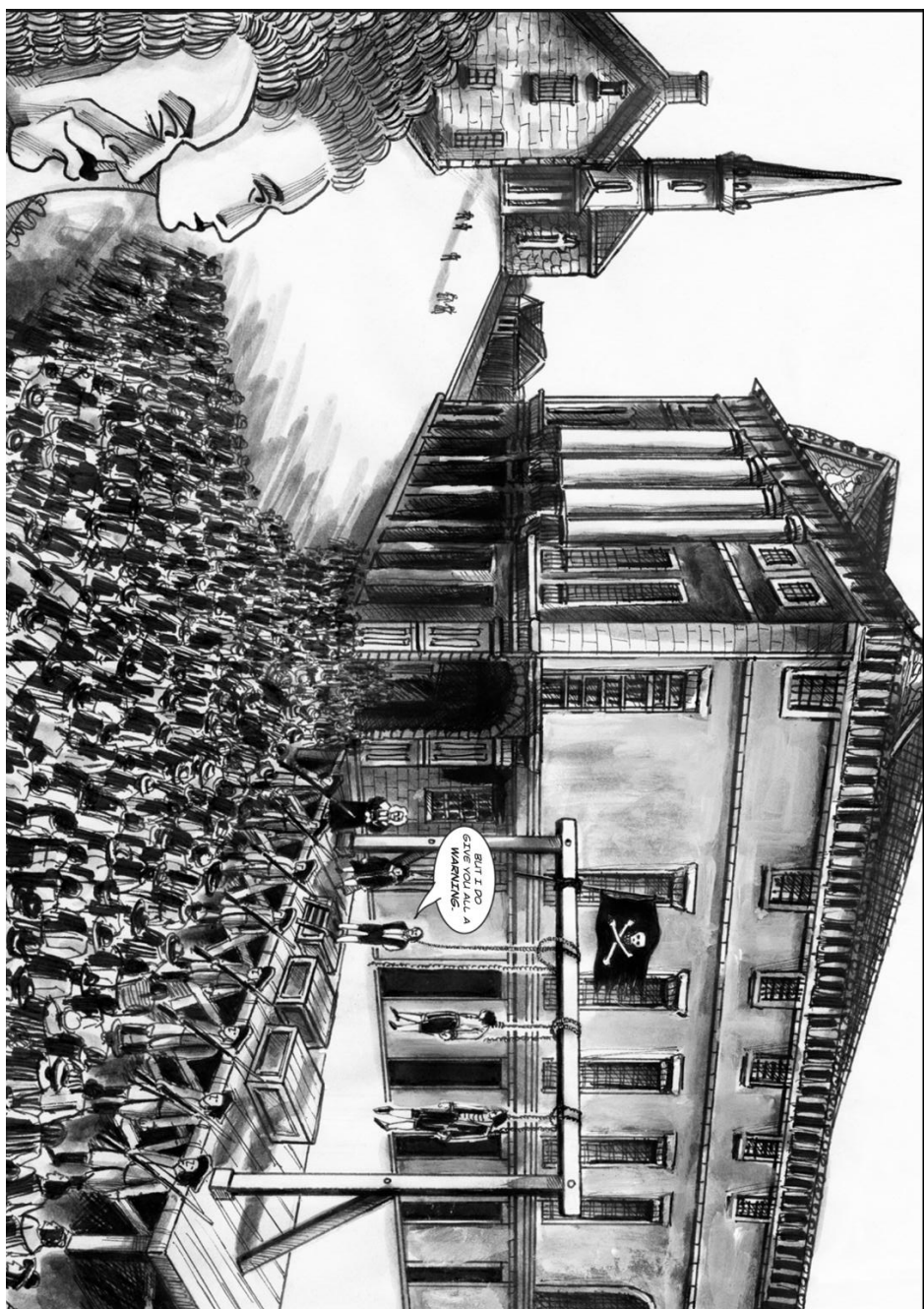
OTHER ECONOMY

~~NATION-STATE-BOAT~~

~~AUTHORITY~~

FREE CIRCULATION

INTERNATIONALISM





WE ALL TURN
PIRATE!



FOREWORD

Why We Need Pirates



Imagine a pirate. The image that comes immediately to mind is a man, disabled in various ways, with a peg leg, a hook for a hand, a patch over one eye, and a parrot on his shoulder. He is rough, coarse, sometimes humorous, sometimes terrifying. From Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* to Hollywood films such as *Pirates of the Caribbean*, this image of the pirate has for centuries now suffused an American, and increasingly global, popular culture.

The image is a myth, but it is no less powerful for that. Like all myths it contains a small but essential element of truth. Pirates of the "Golden Age," who marauded on the high seas from 1660 to 1730, were almost all common working sailors, poor men from the lowest social class who crossed the line into illegal activity, most of them bearing the scars of a dangerous line of work. Naval warfare of the era featured cannon balls blowing up wooden ships, sending an explosion of splinters and chunks of wood that blinded and severed the arms and legs of mariners. Sailors fell from the rigging, suffered hernias while lifting heavy cargo, caught malaria and other debilitating diseases, and lost fingers to rolling casks. Many died, their bodies dumped into that vast gray-green graveyard called the Atlantic Ocean. Crippled mariners made up the majority of beggars to be found in the port cities of the Atlantic world.



The ravaged body of the pirate is a key to understanding the real history of those who sailed "under the banner of King Death," the infamous black flag, the pirates' Jolly Roger. Trapped in a deadly machine called the deep-sea sailing ship, sailors who turned pirate fought a furious battle for survival. Routinely maimed in the course of their work, bilked of their wages, fed rotten provisions, and beaten around the deck by captains with tyrannical powers, these seafaring men (and a few women) built a radically different life on a pirate ship.

A favorite phrase among pirates was "A merry life and a short one," or as one man put it, "Let us live while we can," with freedom, dignity, and abundance, all of which had been denied to the common sailor. The merry life invented on the pirate ship enabled sailors to elect their captain and other officers, and this at a time when poor people had no democratic rights anywhere in the world. The merry life also involved a redistribution of resources—and life chances—that was stunningly egalitarian compared to the hierarchical practices of the merchant shipping industry or the royal navy. Pirates even created a rudimentary social welfare system by giving shares of booty to those unable to work because of poor health or injury.

The alternative social order of the pirate ship was all the more impressive because it had been created by the "villains of all nations," workers of many races and ethnicities who, according to conventional wisdom, in their own day and in ours, were not supposed to cooperate. Any given pirate ship might have English, Irish, Greek, Dutch, French, or Native American crew members. African and African American seamen played an especially prominent role as they freely and subversively sailed Caribbean and North American waters near the coastal slave plantations from which many of them had escaped. The Atlantic maritime labor market and the experience of sailors had long been transnational. The social composition of the pirate ship proved the point, as did the parrot on the pirate's shoulder. He had sailed with the motley crew to the exotic ends of the earth.

These outlaws knew that the gallows awaited them, but they were already risking their necks and dying young in their daily work. They made this clear through the Jolly Roger, which used the "death's head," a symbol of mortality, to strike fear into the

captains of prize vessels and to encourage their quick surrender. (Most captains got the message and complied.) Yet the flag also bespoke the pirates' own fear of being preyed upon in turn. They took the symbol of death from the captain, who drew it in his logbook when a sailor died. They frequently added to their flag a weapon piercing a human heart and an hourglass, emblems of violence and limited time, terrible truths about their own lives. They also sent a coded message to the rich, who knew that the verb "to roger" meant to copulate. The pirate flag said "fuck you." Rage and humor were key elements that characterized these outlaws of the seas: burning anger against the powerful, and the humor of men who chose freedom over servitude at any cost.

Some will be disappointed that the following pages contain no hunts for buried treasure, no ghost ships, no wronged aristocrats driven to sea, and no pirates in love with the governor's beautiful daughter. But as it happens, the actual history of piracy is much more profound than the Hollywood myth. This is a story about the real common sailors who raised the black flag and created a system of democracy in action on the high seas, a traveling brotherhood of men doomed to a violent end, who wouldn't have had it any other way.

In adapting my book *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age*, David Lester has depicted the pirates' "history from below" with great subtlety and visual power, illuminating in human terms the real reasons—the working conditions, the lash, the premature death—why people chose to become outlaws and what kind of society they built for themselves beyond the reach of the law. David brings these pirates to life, not only as workers who powered and then challenged global capitalism, but as thinkers and doers who saw that another world was possible. Perhaps most importantly David shows us why we will always love pirates, as long as there are powerful people to be resisted and causes of social justice to be fought for.



*AS LONG AS THERE ARE POWERFUL PEOPLE TO BE RESISTED
AND CAUSES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE TO BE THOUGHT **FOR**
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AS LONG AS THERE ARE POWERFUL PEOPLE TO BE RESISTED
AND CAUSES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE TO BE THOUGHT FOR*

They committed «a Crime so odious and horrid in all its Circumstances, that those who have treated on that Subject have been at a loss for Words and Terms to stamp a sufficient Ignominy upon it». Their contemporaries called them *Sea-monsters, Hell-Hounds and Robbers, Opposers and Violators of all Laws, Humane and Divine*.

Some believed they were *Devils*. Others suspected they were *Children of the Wicked One* himself. For decades they terrorized the briny deep, inspiring fear in the world's most powerful governments.

The law branded them *hostes humani generis* - a sort of People who may be truly called *Enemies to Mankind* - and accused them of aiming to «Subvert and Extinguish the

Natural and Civil Rights of humanity». They declared *War against all the World* and waged it in earnest. Motley, murderous, and seemingly maniacal, their mystique is matched only by our fascination with their fantastic way of life. These ~~Men~~ PEOPLE whom we term, and not without Reason, the Scandal of human Nature, who were abandoned to all Vice, and lived by Rapine left a mark on the world that remains nearly three centuries after they left it. They are the pirates history's most notorious criminals, and this is the story of the hidden force that propelled them the invisible hook.

In 1776 Scottish moral philosopher ~~Adam~~ Smith published a landmark treatise that launched the study of modern economics. ~~Smith~~ titled his book, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. In it, he described the most central idea to economics, which he called the invisible hand. The invisible hand is the hidden force that guides economic cooperation. According to Smith, people are self-interested; they're interested in doing what's best for them. However, often times, to do what's best for them, people must also do what's best for others. The reason for this is straightforward. Most of us can only serve our self-interests by cooperating with

others. We can achieve very few of our self-interested goals, from securing our next meal to acquiring our next pair of shoes, in isolation. Just think about how many skills you'd need to master and how much time you'd require if you had to produce your own milk or fashion your own coat, let alone manufacture your own car. Because of this,

themselves but also unwittingly focused on assisting others. ~~Smith's~~ invisible hand is as true for criminals as it is for anyone else. Although criminals direct their cooperation at someone else's loss, if they desire to move beyond one-man mug jobs, they must also cooperate with others to satisfy their self-interests. A member of pirate crew for example, wouldn't have gotten far. To take the massive hauls

~~Smith~~ observed, in seeking to satisfy our own interests, we're led, *as if by an invisible hand*, to serve others' interests too. Serving others' interests gets them to cooperate with us, serving our own. The milk producer, for example, must offer the best milk at the lowest price possible to serve his self-interest, which is making money. Indirectly he serves his customers' self-

they aimed at, pirates had to cooperate with many other sea dogs. The mystery is how such a shifty "parcel of rogues" managed to pull this off. And the key to un-locking this mystery is the *invisible book* -the piratical analogue to Smith's invisible hand that describes how pirate self-interest seeking led to cooperation among sea bandits, which this book explores.

interest, which is acquiring cheap, high-quality milk. And on the other side of this, the milk producers' customers, in their capacity as producers of whatever they sell, must offer the lowest price and highest quality to their customers, and so on. The result is a group of self-interest seekers, each narrowly focused on

The invisible hook differs from the invisible hand in several respects. First the invisible hook considers criminal self-interest's effect on cooperation in pirate society. It's concerned with how criminal social groups work. The invisible hand, in contrast, considers traditional consumer and producer self-interests' effects on cooperation in the marketplace.

It's concerned with how legitimate markets work. If the invisible hand examines the hidden order behind the metaphorical anarchy of the market, the invisible hook examines the hidden order behind the literal anarchy of pirates.

Second, unlike traditional economic actors guided by the invisible hand, pirates weren't primarily in the business of selling anything. They therefore didn't have customers they needed to satisfy. **Further,** piratical self-interest seeking didn't benefit wider society, as traditional economic actors' self-interest seeking does. In their pursuit of profits, businessmen, for example, improve our standards of

living - they make products that make our lives better. Pirates, in contrast, thrived parasitically off others' production.

Thus pirates didn't benefit society by creating wealth; they harmed society by siphoning existing wealth off for themselves.

Despite these differences, **pirates, like everyone else, had to cooperate to make their ventures successful.**

And it was self-interest seeking that led them to do so. This critical feature, common to pirates and the members of "legitimate" society, is what fastens the invisible hook to the invisible hand.

The Invisible Hook applies **the economic way of thinking to pirates.** This way of thinking is *grounded* in a few straight forward assumptions. First, individuals are

self-interested.

This doesn't mean they never care about anyone other than themselves. It just means most of us, most of the time, are more interested in benefiting ourselves and those closest to us than we're interested in benefiting others. Second, individuals are rational. This doesn't mean they're robots or infallible. It just means individuals try to achieve their self-interested goals in the best ways they know how. Third, individuals respond to incentives. When the cost of an activity rises, individuals do less of it. When the cost of an activity falls, they do more of it. The reverse is true for the benefit of an activity. When the benefit of an activity rises, we do more of it. When the benefit falls, we do less of it. In short, people try to avoid costs and capture benefits.

Economists call this model of individual decision-making rational choice. The rational choice framework not only applies to “normal” individuals engaged in “regular” behaviour. It also applies to abnormal individuals engaged in unusual behaviour.

In particular, it applies to pirates.

Pirates satisfied each of the assumptions of the economic way of thinking described above. Pirates, for instance, were self-interested. Material concerns gave birth to pirates and profit strongly motivated them.

Contrary to pop-culture depictions, pirates were also highly rational. Pirates devised ingenious practices -some they're infamous for - to circumvent costs that threatened to eat into their profits and increase

the revenue of their plundering expeditions. Pirates also responded to incentives.

When the law made it riskier (and thus costlier) to be a pirate, pirates devised clever ways to offset this risk.

When pirates offered crew members rewards for superlative pirating, crew members worked harder to keep a lookout for the next big prize, and so on.

It's not just that economics *can* be applied to pirates. Rational choice is the *only* way to truly understand flamboyant, bizarre, and downright shocking pirate practices.

Why, for example, did pirates fly flags with skulls and crossbones? Why did they brutally torture some captives? How were pirates successful?

And why did they create pirate codes?

The answers to these questions lie in the hidden economics of pirates, which only the rational choice framework can reveal.

History supplies the raw material that poses these questions.

Economics supplies the analytical lens for finding the answers.

When we view pirates through this lens, their seemingly unusual behaviour becomes quite usual. Strange pirate behaviour resulted from pirates rationally responding to the unusual economic context they operated in -which generated unusual costs and benefits - not from some

inherent strangeness
of pirates
themselves.

Peglegs and
parrots aside,
in the end,
piracy was a
business.

It was a criminal
business, but a
business
nonetheless, and
deserves to be
examined in this
light.

Many people
use the terms
PIRATES
buccaneers,
privateers,
corsairs

INTERCHANGEABLY.

There's a reason for
this; all were
kinds of sea
bandits. But each
variety of sea bandit
was different.

Pure pirates
were total
outlaws.

They attacked
merchant ships
indiscriminately for
their own gain.

*Pirates prey upon all
Mankind, and their
own Species and Fel-
low-Creatures, without
Distinction of Nations
or Religions.*

Privateers, in
contrast, were state-
sanctioned sea
robbers.

Governments
commissioned them
to attack and seize
enemy nations'
merchant ships
during war.
Privateers, then,
weren't pirates at
all; they had
government
backing.

Similarly,
governments
sanctioned
corsairs' plunder.
The difference is
corsairs
targeted
shipping
on the basis of
religion.

The Barbary corsairs
of the North
African coast, for
instance, attacked

ships from
Christendom.

However, there
were Christian
corsairs as well, such
as the Knights of
Malta.

Buccaneers, in
contrast, typically
were outlaws. The
original buccaneers
were French hunters
living on Hispaniola,
modern-day Haiti,
in the early
seventeenth century.
Although they
mostly hunted wild
game, they weren't
opposed to the
occasional act of
piracy either. In
1630 the buccaneers
migrated to Tortuga,
a tiny, turtle-shaped
island off
Hispaniola, which
soon attracted
English and Dutch
rabble as well. Spain
officially possessed
Hispaniola and
Tortuga and wasn't
fond of the outlaw
settlers.

In an effort to drive
them away, the
Spanish government
wiped out the wild
animals the hunters

thrived on. Instead of leaving, however, the buccaneers began hunting a different sort of game: Spanish shipping.

In 1655 England wrested Jamaica from the Spaniards and encouraged the buccaneers to settle there as a defense against the island's recapture.

Buccaneers spent much of their time preying on Spanish ships laden with gold and other cargo sailing between the mother country and Spain's possessions in the Americas. Many of these attacks were outright piracy. But many others were not.

Eager to break Spain's monopoly on the New World under the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494),

England and France

commissioned these sea rovers as privateers to harass Spain.

Buccaneering, then, was a peculiar blend of piracy and privateering in which the two elements were often indistinguishable.

However, since the aims and means of [buccaneering]

operations were clearly piratical, it's standard to treat the buccaneers as pirates, or at least *proto-pirates*,

Although buccaneers

weren't pure pirates, they anticipated and influenced pure pirates'

organization in the early eighteenth century. Because of this, it's important to draw on them at various points.

The same is true of the Indian Ocean pirates operating from about 1690 to 1700. These sea rovers represent a bridge between the more privateer like buccaneers and the total-outlaw pirates active from 1716 to 1726.

In the late seventeenth century, the Indian Ocean pirates, or "Red Sea Men" as their contemporaries sometimes called them, settled on Madagascar and its surrounding islands where they were well situated to prey on Moorish treasure fleets. For the most part, Indian Ocean pirates were pirates plain and simple. But some of them sailed under a veneer of legitimacy, which their successors abandoned completely.

Nearly all pirates had maritime backgrounds.

Most had sailed on merchant ships, many were former privateers, and some had previously served - though not always willingly - in His or Her Majesty's employ as navy seamen.

Based on a sample of 169 early-eighteenth-century pirates, the average pirate was 28.2 years old.

The youngest pirate in this sample was only 14 and the oldest 50 - ancient by eighteenth-century seafaring standards.

Most pirates, however, were in their mid-twenties; 57 percent of those were between 20 and 30.

These data suggest a youthful pirate society with a few older, hopefully wiser, members and a few barely more than children.

Pirate fiction portrays seamen as choosing piracy out of romantic, if misled, ideals about freedom, equality, and fraternity. While radical material freedom, power sharing and commons did prevail aboard pirate ships - these were piratical *means*, used to secure cooperation within pirates' criminal organization, rather than piratical *ends*, as they're often depicted.

This isn't to say idyllic notions never motivated pirates. In his book, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, ~~Marcus Rediker~~ considers pirates in the larger context of eighteenth-century life at sea. ~~Rediker~~ persuasively argues that, in part, pirates acted as social

revolutionaries in rebellion against the authoritative, exploitative and rigidly hierarchical organization of pre-Industrial Revolution state capitalism. Others have suggested pirates may have acted partially out of concerns for greater racial and sexual equality.

Despite this, most sailors who became pirates did so for a more familiar reason: money.

In this sense, though its popular treatment is riddled with myths, the traditional emphasis **on pirate treasure is appropriate.**

What was a sea dog to do?

Merchant ships engaged in long-distance trade spent months at sea. An important part of the overall “compensation package” to consider when making employment decisions was therefore what life was like aboard these vessels. Unfortunately for sailors whose timidity or scruples prevented them from entering piracy, sometimes unpleasant, even miserable, working conditions attended merchant ships’ relatively low monetary pay.

Merchant ships were organized hierarchically.

On top was the captain, below him were his officers, and far below these were ordinary seamen.

This hierarchy empowered captains with autocratic authority over their crews.

Captains’ authority extended to all aspects of life aboard their ships, including labour assignment, victual provision, wage payment and of course, crew member discipline.

The law permitted captains to dock sailors’ wages for damaging freight, insolence, or shirking in their duties.

It also supported the captain’s right to administer “reasonable” corporal punishment to “correct” his sailors. Creating significant potential for captain

abuse. The trouble was that merchant captains were tempted to turn their authority against their seamen, preying on them for personal benefit.

Predatory captains cut sailors’ victual rations to keep costs down or to leave more for them and their fellow officers to consume. They fraudulently docked sailors’ wages or paid in debased colonial currency and voyaged to locations where their crews hadn’t contracted to sail.

To keep their hungry and uncomfortable men in check, abusive captains used all manner of objects aboard their ships as weapons to punish insolent crew members.

They hit sailors in the head with tackle or other hard objects, crushing their faces. In some cases captain abuse was so

severe it killed sailors. In 1724 one merchant ship captain dealt two of his sailors “above a hundred Blows with a Cane upon & about their Heads, Necks & Shoulders with great force and violence in a very cruel and barbarous manner.”

Some captains used their authority to settle personal scores with crew members. Since Admiralty law considered interfering with punishment mutinous, captains defined when discipline was legitimate. They could therefore abuse targeted sea- men at will. Other predatory captains abused their authority in more heinous ways. Captain Samuel Norman ordered one of his ship’s boys “to fetch a Pail of Water . . . to wash his Leggs, Thighs, & privy Parts.”

The boy resisted, but Norman compelled him “& whilst he was washing the same, he the said Samuel let down the [boy’s] Trousers . . . & had the carnal use of him.”

Outrageous treatment like this led some sailors to conclude “they had better be dead than live in Misery” under a predatory merchant ship captain.

While the historical record contains plenty of charges of captain predation, it’s important to avoid overstating this abuse. Although merchant officers had ample latitude to prey on their crews, this wasn’t without limit. Economic and legal factors constrained captain predation to some extent. But none was able to prevent it entirely. English law, for example, created several legal protections

designed to insulate sailors from captain predation. To a certain extent these protections were successful.

Merchant seamen could and did take predatory captains to court for their actions, many times successfully.

However, as is often the case with the law, many other times it failed. Part of the difficulty stemmed from the uncertainties of the sea. Once afloat in the briny deep, there were rarely impartial spectators to verify a sailor’s word against a captain’s.

Did a captain dock a sailor’s pay because the sailor damaged freight, as he was entitled to under the

law? Or was the captain simply self-dealing? Had a captain exceeded the powers of corporal punishment afforded him under the law? Or was his discipline justified? In many cases it was difficult to say.

Suffice it to say, pirates organized their ships, so they largely overcame this threat.

In doing so, pirates created an improved work atmosphere on their vessels. Combined with the potential for substantially higher monetary rewards, for many sailors this created a more attractive total compensation package compared to what they could expect on merchant ships. Of course, unlike in merchant shipping, in piracy

you could have a leg blown off by a canon ball or meet an untimely state-sanctioned death. But the lure of more money and better treatment was hard to resist. These SEA DOGS entered their trade out of material concerns and adopted their trademark practices to maximize the material rewards of life under the black flag.

OUTLAW OF WHICH LAW?

If pirates' system of democratic checks and balances isn't strange enough, the source of pirates' ability to use this

system is: their criminality.

CRIMINAL? REALLY?

Understanding the reason for this isn't difficult. But it requires us to explore the world of merchant shipping instead.

Merchant ships were owned by groups of typically a dozen or more landed merchants who purchased shares in various trading vessels and financed their voyages. Merchant ship-owners were absentee owners of their vessels; they rarely sailed on their ships. They were landlubbers.

Most merchant shipowners had no desire to take their chances with brutal life at sea, and in any event could earn more by specializing in

their area of expertise - investment and commercial organization - hiring seamen to sail their ships instead. Because they were absentee owners, merchant shipowners confronted what economists call a “principal-agent problem” with respect to the crews they hired. You’re undoubtedly familiar with this problem, though you may call it something different. When you’re at work and instead of working on the report you’ve been assigned you spend an hour browsing the Internet for a gift for your mother, you’re a principal-agent problem. The idea is that there are principals, people with something at stake, who hire agents to help them in their duties when it’s not possible or profitable for them to do so themselves. Your employer, for

example, is a principal. You’re her agent. The difficulty lies in the fact that your interests and her interests aren’t always perfectly aligned. She wants you to finish the report because this is what she needs for her business to make money. You would rather troll around on the Internet because working on the report isn’t as fun and your income doesn’t depend significantly on how much money her business makes. Since she can’t monitor you all the time, you spend some of your time surfing the Web instead of working on the report.

Merchant shipowners confronted a similar problem, albeit in a different context. Once a ship left port it could be gone for months. At sea, the owners’ ship was

beyond their watchful eyes or reach.

Thus, shipowners couldn’t directly monitor their sailors.

This situation invited various kinds of sailor opportunism.

Opportunism included negligence in caring for the ship, carelessness that damaged cargo, liberality with provisions, embezzlement of freight or advances required to finance the vessel’s voyage, and outright theft of the vessel itself.

To prevent this, shipowners appointed captains to their vessels to monitor crews in their stead.

Centralizing power in a captain’s hands to direct sailors’ tasks, control the distribution of victuals and payment, and

discipline and punish crew members allowed merchant shipowners to minimize sailor opportunism.

The law empowered captains to beat crew members with the infamous cat-o'-nine tails, imprison them, and administer other forms of physical "correction" to sailors who disobeyed orders, shirked in their duties, and so on. It also permitted captains to dock sailors' wages for damaging or stealing cargo and insubordination.

To align their interests with their captain's interests, owners used two devices. First, they hired captains who held small shares in the vessels they were

commanding, or barring this, gave small shares to their captains who didn't. Merchant ship captains continued to draw regular fixed wages like the other sailors on their vessels. But unlike regular sailors, captains became partial stakeholders of the ships they controlled, aligning their interests with those of the absentee owners. Second, whenever possible, absentee owners appointed captains with familial connections to one of the members of their group. This ensured captains didn't behave opportunistically at the absentee owners' expense since, if they did, they were more likely to face punishment.

The reason merchant shipowners required *autocratic* captains to effectively serve their interests is

straightforward. A captain who didn't have total authority over his crew couldn't successfully monitor and control sailors' behaviour. Reducing the captain's power over victuals, payments, labour assignment, or discipline, and vesting it in some other sailor's hands instead, would reduce the captain's power to make sailors behave in the absentee owners' interest. Similarly, if merchant shipowners didn't appoint their captains as the permanent commanders of their voyages, but instead permitted a ship's sailors to popularly depose the captain and elect another crew member to this office at their will, the captain's capacity as acting manager of the ship's absentee owners would cease to exist.

To see this, simply imagine what kind of captain merchant sailors would elect if given the power to democratically select him.

Sailors' interests were best served by a lax, liberal captain who let them do as they pleased -exactly the opposite sort of captain that best served the owners' interests.

Merchant ship autocracy was therefore essential to overcoming the owner-crew principal-agent problem, and thus to merchant ship profitability.

Merchant ship autocracy worked well in this respect. Although some sailors still managed to steal from the ships they sailed on, disobey command, and in several cases

mutiny and abscond with the owners' ship, these were relatively unimportant exceptions to the general rule whereby merchant sailors, under the authority of autocratic captains, served their absentee owners' interests.

AND SO

With that under our belts, let's return to pirates.

Similar to merchant ships, the particular, but very different, economic situation pirate ships confronted crucially shaped their organization.

Most notably, pirates didn't confront the owner-crew, principal-agent problem merchant ships did. The reason for this is simple enough: pirates didn't acquire their ships legitimately. They stole them. Pirate ships therefore had no absentee owners.

Instead, pirates jointly owned and operated their ship them-selves.

On a pirate ship, pirates still required captains. But they **didn't require autocratic captains** because there were no absentee owners

to align the crew's interests with.

Since the pirates sailing a particular ship were both the principals and the agents, democracy didn't threaten to lead to captains who served the agents at the principals' expense. Given the opportunity to elect their captains, pirates had no incentive to "vote themselves a vacation" or, more accurately, to vote themselves a captain who would give them a vacation, as merchant sailors would've if given the same opportunity.

On the contrary, pirate democracy ensured pirates got precisely the kind of captain they desired.

Because they could popularly depose any captain who didn't suit them and elect another in his place, pirate captains' ability to prey on crew members was greatly constrained compared to merchant captains. Similarly, because pirates were both principals and agents of their ships, they could divide authority on their vessels to further check captains' ability to abuse crew members without loss.

Unlike merchant ships, which couldn't afford a separation of power since this would have diminished the ability of the absentee owners' acting agent (the captain) to make the crew act in the owners' interests,

pirate ships could and did adopt a system of democratically divided power.

In short, because pirates stole their ships they could organize their polity democratically.

Merchant sailors, could at least appeal to government to prevent captain predation. As we already saw, in some cases such appeal was useless. But many other times it was effective. Pirates, in contrast, couldn't appeal to government to protect them from tyrannical captains any more than crack dealers can appeal to police to protect them from their distributors. In turning to sea banditry, pirates, "renounced the benefit of all lawful

society.”

So, it was doubly important and difficult for pirates to overcome the threat of captain predation, which makes the fact they did so doubly impressive.

Pirate democracy didn't emerge out of pirates' adherence to romantic democratic ideals about the right to have a say in who governs. It emerged out of pirate profit seeking à la the “invisible hook.”

Pirates were interested in preventing captain predation, which threatened to undermine their ability to cooperate for coordinated plunder.

In response, they developed democratic checks and balances.

No outside authority centrally designed, directed, or imposed democracy on pirate society. Pirates' criminal self-interest led them to adopt this system without external prodding.

Similarly, pirate captains didn't display goodwill and faithful devotion to their crews' interests because they were nicer than merchant captains or cared more about fairness.

Their better behaviour resulted from a different institutional organization - democratically divided power - aboard pirate ships. The democratic institutions pirate captains operated under created incentives for them to behave differently than merchant ship captains who operated under an autocratic institutional regime.

Pirate organization rewarded captains for being good stewards of the power they possessed and punished them for preying on their crews.

Merchant ship organization often did very much the opposite.

Merchant and pirate ships' different institutional organizations resulted from the different economic situations each confronted.

On merchant ships a principal-agent problem between shipowners and crew members necessitated an irrevocable autocratic captain to generate profits for their owners. Democracy would have destroyed this.

On pirate ships the illicit nature of the enterprise prevented this principal-agent problem from coming into existence, making an autocratic captain unnecessary.

Pirate ships were stolen and so had no remotely located owners.

Consequently, pirates could elect their captains and divide power within their crews, which constrained pirate captains' ability to take

advantage of their men.

Strangely, then, pirates' self-interested *criminality* facilitated democratic checks and balances on their ships.

The very outlawry pirates' contemporaries despised them for is responsible for pirates' reliance on the democratic mode of governance the modern world embraces as one of its highest and most-cherished values.

Joshua Clover, *Riot. Strike. Riot: The New Era of Uprisings* (London: Verso, 2016), 173.

The strike emerges into the new world of capitalist production, as it must, from the space of circulation.

It strides from the sea trailing foam, if not yet quite fully formed. British, American and French sailors were consistently among the most militant workers in the eighteenth century.

The English word *strike* itself seems to date from 1768, when sailors joined "city artisans and tradesmen -weavers, hatters, sawyers, glass-grinders, and coal heavers - in the fight for better wages, [and] struck their sails and paralyzed the city's commerce. They 'unmanned or otherwise prevented from sailing every ship in the Thames.

The derivation of the French term for strike, *grève*, is even more suggestive - an etymology with the reach of an epic, beginning on a riverbank and ending at the Hôtel de Ville a few centuries later and eighty paces away. It is an old word. Originally it meant a flat area of sand and gravel next to the water, a strand, and so

a place where boats unloaded cargo.

The most workable *grève* on the Seine became therefore the main port of Paris.

La menace anarchique inévitablement logée au cœur de l'arkhè est liée à l'impossibilité de maintenir la réversibilité et la circularité du commandement et de l'obéissance.

Tout se passe comme si l'arkhè politikè avait toujours en fin de compte à faire retour à ce qu'elle congédie, l'**oikonomia**, la loi de la maison ou économie domestique, pour établir la fatalité de cette impossibilité.

En effet, la dissymétrie et l'irréversibilité du commandement et de l'obéissance trouvent dans la domesticité leur structure première. C'est elle en fin de compte qui impose sa forme au concept de gouvernement - un commandement qu'il devient alors difficile de séparer rigoureusement de la domination « naturelle ».

Dans l'économie domestique, la « subordination » de ceux qui obéissent est constante parce que précisément irréversible.

Le maître donne des ordres auxquels lui-même ne sait pas nécessairement obéir. « En effet, il y a un pouvoir propre au maître: nous appelons ainsi le pouvoir qui concerne les tâches indispensables, que celui qui commande n'est pas obligé de savoir accomplir, mais dont il doit savoir plutôt tirer profit. »

Nul besoin pour le maître de savoir comment exécuter les basses besognes qu'il ordonne à son esclave d'accomplir pour lui. La domination domestique est absolue: qui commande n'a pas à obéir, qui obéit ne peut commander. Le citoyen-gouvernant, à la différence du maître, ne commande pas pour commander, et doit aussi savoir obéir.

Il n'obéit pas pour obéir puisqu'il peut apprendre à commander. La cité, ainsi, n'est en rien une famille mais une communauté d'hommes gens libres.

La dissymétrie entre gouvernants et gouvernés est donc rapportée en fin de compte à une série d'assujettissements, dont le dernier (subordination de l'esclave au maître) est particulièrement significatif.

L'arkhè domestikè, qui avait été d'abord exclue de la scène politique, sert maintenant d'outil à la compréhension d'une inégalité d'aptitude. Inégalité qui devient l'instrument de légitimation de l'ordre et la transition directe entre hiérarchie factuelle et hiérarchie politique. La dissymétrie entre gouvernants et gouvernés se justifie par une théorie implicite de la gouvernabilité: être gouvernable, c'est être naturellement destiné à obéir, c'est être l'instance somatique de la psyché politique, le personnel de service de la cité.

L'**oikonomia**, loi de la maison, intervient donc ici, après avoir été exclue, pour naturaliser l'arkhè politikè.

L'hétéro-normativité de l'arkhè - politique et domestique à la fois - décide simultanément "de sa solidité et de sa vulnérabilité - de son anarchie. La prise en compte de cet élément an-archique est le fil conducteur de certaines des plus grandes interprétations philosophiques contemporaines de l'arkhè politique occidentale. Ce sont elles qu'il faut développer maintenant.

Cet évitement mutuel est d'autant plus paradoxal qu'anarchi(sm)e philosophique et anarchisme politique partagent un même engagement:

la critique sans appel des phénomènes de domination.

La domination n'est pas, du moins pas simplement, la maîtrise, l'autorité ou le pouvoir.

Ces trois derniers termes sont ambivalents, qui possèdent une valeur négative et positive à la fois. Le pouvoir de faire quelque chose, l'autorité pédagogique, la maîtrise d'un instrument ou d'une discipline ne sont pas nécessairement coercitifs.

La domination, en revanche, est dépourvue de toute ressource constructive.

Elle renvoie de manière univoque à l'assujettissement et l'aliénation, brouillant ainsi la frontière entre pouvoir et abus de pouvoir.

Anarchi(sme) philosophique et anarchisme politique considèrent tous deux, à égalité, que la domination est le problème du pouvoir.

Faut-il rappeler la proximité étymologique des mots « domination » et « danger » ?

« Danger » dérive du bas latin *dominarium*, employé en Gaule du nord pour *dominium* et signifiant « propriété, droit de propriété », d'où « domination, puissance, droit ».

Plus tard, en droit féodal, le « danger » devient un droit du seigneur sur ses forêts, consistant en ce que les propriétaires ne puissent les vendre payer le dixième, sous peine de confiscation. Par extension, « estre en dangier d'aucun » a fini par signifier « être à la merci de quelqu'un », puis « être en péril » (*estre en dangier*). L'anarchisme ne s'en prend pas et ne s'en est jamais pris simplement, comme on le croit trop souvent, à l'État.

La destruction de l'État n'est peut-être même pas, ou même plus, son horizon directeur. L'anarchisme est avant tout un combat contre les mécanismes de domination, lesquels débordent la sphère étatique

stricto sensu pour concerner tous les domaines de la vie : publics, privés, collectifs, individuels.

~~Emma Goldman~~ regrettait par exemple que les féministes de son époque n'aient dénoncé que les « tyrannies extérieures », alors que les « tyrans intérieurs », régnant dans des cercles plus restreints, les entreprises, les foyers, les lits conjugaux, continuaient leurs abus sans être inquiétés.

Dans *La tragédie de l'émancipation féminine*, elle affirme : « L'explication de pareille inconséquence de la part de maintes femmes avancées provient du fait qu'elles n'ont jamais compris véritablement ce que signifie l'émancipation. Elles se sont imaginé qu'elles avaient tout accompli en se rendant indépendantes des tyrannies extérieures. Les conventions éthiques et sociales, les tyrans intérieurs bien plus dangereux pour la vie et la croissance individuelles, on les laissa se soigner tout seuls. »
~~Emma Goldman~~ nous rappelle ainsi à l'évidence: il n'y a pas de petites dominations. Beaucoup de marxistes ont reproché aux anarchistes de séparer domination et

exploitation.
L'objection n'est pas pertinente.

Sans abandonner un instant la critique du capitalisme, les anarchistes reconnaissent en même temps que le problème du pouvoir infiltre tous les domaines de la vie, domestique, institutionnel, académique, psychique, et que ce phénomène doit faire l'objet d'une attention et d'une étude spécifiques.

« Domination » se dit de toutes les formes d'emprise qui contraignent un individu ou un groupe, souvent par la terreur, à la subordination continue. Or cette subordination, même la plus apparemment éloignée de la sphère politique, trouve son origine tout à la fois psychologique et politique dans **ce que Proudhon appelle le « préjugé gouvernemental ».**

La critique de l'État est d'abord critique du fait que l'État n'est que le prétexte du gouvernement, à savoir l'établissement du partage et de la dissymétrie entre gouvernés et gouvernants.

Que certains commandent et d'autres obéissent : telle est la

logique de gouvernement, son
« préjugé ».

Pas de souveraineté étatique
sans logique de gouvernement
et pas de logique de
gouvernement sans
domination.

Quiconque est mandaté pour
représenter quelqu'un d'autre
est inévitablement conduit à
vouloir à sa place.

Proudhon:

*La constitution externe de la
puissance collective, à laquelle
les Grecs, donnèrent le nom
d'arkhè, principauté, autorité,
gouvernement, repose donc sur
cette hypothèse, qu'un peuple,
que l'être collectif qu'on nomme
une société, ne peut se
gouverner, penser, agir,
s'exprimer, par lui-même, d'une
manière analogue à celle des
êtres doués de personnalité
individuelle ; qu'il a besoin, pour
cela, de se faire représenter par
un ou plusieurs individus, qui, à
un titre quelconque, sont censés
être les dépositaires de la volonté
du peuple, et ses agents. LA
CONCLUSION EST SANS APPEL:*

*Être gouverné, c'est être gardée à vue, inspectée, espionnée, dirigée,
légiféré, réglementée, parquée, endoctriné.e, prêché.e., contrôlée, estimée,
appréciée.eie, censuré.ei, commandée, par des êtres qui n'ont ni titre, ni la
science, ni la vertu... Être gouverné.ei, c'est être à chaque transaction, à
chaque mouvement, notée, enregistré.e, recensé.e, tarifée, timbré.e,
toisé.e, coté.e, cotisée, patentée, licencié, autorisé, admonesté, empêché,
réformé, redressée, corrigé. C'est sous prétexte d'utilité publique et au nom
de l'intérêt général être mis à contribution, exercé.e, rançonnée, exploitée,
monopolisé, concussionné, pressuré, mystifié, volé ; puis, à la moindre
réclamation, au premier mot de plainte, réprimé.e, amendée, vilipendé.e.,
vexée, traquée, houspillé, assommé, désarmé, garrotté, emprisonné.e,
fusillé, mitraillé, jugé, condamné, déportée, sacrifié.e, vendu, trahi, et pour
comble, joué, berné.e, outragée, déshonoré.ei. Voilà le gouvernement, voilà
sa justice, voilà sa morale ! Et qu'il y a parmi nous des démocrates qui
prétendent que le gouvernement a du bon; des socialistes qui soutiennent,
au nom de la liberté, de l'égalité et de la fraternité, cette ignominie; des
prolétaires qui posent leur candidature à la présidence de la République!"*

Malabou, Catherine (2022).

***Au voleur ! Anarchisme et philosophie.* Presses Universitaires de France.**

A SIMPLE ETYMOLOGICAL CURIOSITY
 INDISSOLUBLY TIES TOGETHER
 PIRATES AND EMPIRE, OPENING UP A
 SPACE OF INTERROGATION REGARDING THE
 CONSTITUTIVE RELATIONSHIP THEY
 SECRETLY ENTERTAIN WITH
 EACH OTHER.

AMEDEO POLICANTE
 THE PIRATE MYTH: GENEALOGIES OF AN IMPERIAL CONCEPT

ACCORDING TO THE
 AMERICAN HERITAGE
 DICTIONARY OF ENGLISH
 LANGUAGE, THE WORD
 PIRATE HAS ITS ORIGINS IN
 'MIDDLE ENGLISH FROM
 LATIN *PIRATA*, FROM GREEK
PEIRATES, MEANING
 "ATTACKER" OR
 "ADVENTURER", FROM
PEIRAN, TO ATTEMPT,
 TO RISK, TO TRY. [...] FROM
 INDO-EUROPEAN ROOT PER-
 FROM WHICH DERIVE THE
 MODERN ENGLISH WORDS:
FEAR, *PERIL*, *EMPIRE* AND
PIRATE.

EMPIRE AND PIRATES
 APPEAR THEN
 INTIMATELY HELD
 TOGETHER IN AN
 EMBRACE, WHICH IS
 FILLED WITH FEAR, PERIL
 AND TERROR.
 WE HAVE THUS A TRIPARTITE
 RELATIONSHIP IN WHICH
 TERROR IS THE STIGMATA
 THAT LEAVES A TRACE BOTH
 ON THE PIRATE AND ON
 EMPIRE. THE
 UNPREDICTABILITY OF
 PIRATES, AND THE MIGHT OF
 EMPIRES, CERTAINLY
 TERRORIZE; BUT AT THE
 SAME TIME BOTH EMPIRES

AND PIRATES ARE THEMSELVES
 TERRORIZED, SO THAT THEY DEFINE
 THEMSELVES BY THE FACT OF PUTTING
 THEMSELVES AT RISK IN ORDER FINALLY
 TO OVERCOME TERROR. BUT WHAT IS THIS
 TERROR THAT PIRATES AND EMPIRES
 OVERCOME IN ORDER TO QUALIFY AS WHAT
 THEY ARE? WE MAY HYPOTHESIZE THAT
 PIRATES AS OUTLAWS BECOME WHAT THEY
 ARE IN THE MOMENT IN WHICH THEY
 STEP OUTSIDE THE BOUNDARY
 OF THE LAW SO TO CONSTITUTE
 AN EXTERIOR TO IT.

AND YET, AS ~~GIORGIO AGAM BEN~~ HAS
 CONVINCINGLY SHOWN, TO STEP OR TO BE
 PUSHED OUTSIDE THE LAW IS NOT TO BE
 THOROUGHLY ALIEN TO IT. RATHER, AS ANY
 CHILD KNOWS, OUTLAWS ARE EASY PREY OF
 EMPERORS AND THEIR LIVES HAVE NO
 FURTHER VALUE THAN THAT OF BEING
 THOROUGHLY DISPOSABLE: THEY MAY BE
 KILLED WITH IMPUNITY.

UNDENIABLY, PIRATES ARE FIGURES OF
 TERROR: NARRATIVES ON
 PIRACY OVERFLOW WITH
 MONSTROSITY, VIOLENCE
 AND DEATH; NARRATIVES ON
 PIRACY ALSO OFTEN END
 WITH HANGINGS. THE DEFEATED
 PIRATE, CHAINED, POWERLESS,
 UNARMED AND WAITING TO BE
 EXECUTED, COMES TO SYMBOLIZE
 THE OVERCOMING OF FEAR, WHICH
 IS NOTHING BUT THE DEFINITION OF
 EMPIRE. **EMPIRE IN FACT IS
 ORIGINALLY, AND MOST
 FUNDAMENTALLY, THE NAME FOR
 WHOEVER PROTECTS US AGAINST
 THE PIRATE.** UPON THE
 NAMING OF THE PIRATE, IN
 FIGHTING IT AND FINALLY IN
 CELEBRATING ITS TRIUMPH
 OVER IT, EMPIRE ERECTS ITSELF.
 THERE IS NO EMPIRE WITHOUT
 A PIRATE, A TERRORIZING
 COMMON ENEMY, AN ENEMY OF
 ALL.

AT THE SAME TIME, THERE IS NO PIRATE
 WITHOUT EMPIRE. IN FACT, PIRATES AS
 OUTLAWS CANNOT BE UNDERSTOOD IN ANY
 OTHER WAY BUT AS LEGAL CREATURES. IN
 OTHER WORDS, THEY EXIST ONLY IN A
 CERTAIN EXTREME, LIMINAL
 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LAW. IN A
 SIMILAR WAY IN WHICH WE CANNOT
 THINK OF CRIMINALS WITHOUT POSING
 IMMEDIATELY THE PROBLEM OF A
 BROKEN LAW AND A POLICE STATE, TO
 REFLECT ON PIRATES INEVITABLY LEADS
 TO THE QUESTION OF EMPIRE. IT
 SEEMS, THEREFORE – AND THIS IS OUR
 INITIAL HYPOTHESIS – THAT THE VERY
 ESSENCE OF EMPIRE CALLS THE PIRATE INTO
 BEING, AND THAT THE PIRATE CAN EXIST
 ONLY IN A STRICT RELATIONSHIP WITH
 IMPERIAL FORMATIONS.

ABINGDON: ROUTLEDGE, 2015

~~Augustine~~ (1998). *The city of God against the pagans* (R. W. Dyson, Ed. & Trans.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work published ca. 426)

The etymological source of the word piracy, the Greek verb *peiran* (to attempt, attack, from the root *per-*, which literally means "to attempt something"), refers to ventures into risky business or the unknown, activities which characterized Mediterranean marauders in classical antiquity who became known as pirates. Historians often characterize pirates by their shifting, and hence unreliable, national, racial/ethnic, and at times even gender affiliations - the main reason why they have vexed political theorists and legal scholars for centuries in their attempts to define the pirate's legal status and their illegitimacy. Disputes about who was to be called pirate have always articulated power relationships and struggles **over authority and legitimate violence**

as the famous anecdote of the pirate and the emperor:

FOR ELEGANT AND EXCELLENT WAS THE PIRATE'S ANSWER TO THE GREAT MACEDONIAN ALEXANDER, WHO HAD TAKEN HIM: THE KING ASKING HIM HOW HE DURST MOLEST THE SEA SO, HE REPLIED WITH A FREE SPIRIT, 'HOW DAREST THOU MOLEST THE WHOLE WORLD? BUT BECAUSE I DO WITH A LITTLE SHIP ONLY, I AM CALLED A THIEF: THOU DOING IT WITH A GREAT NAVY, ART CALLED AN EMPEROR'

~~Heller Roazen, D.~~ (2009). *The enemy of all: Piracy and the law of nations*. Zone Books.

~~Ganser, A.~~ (2020). *Crisis and legitimacy in Atlantic American narratives of piracy, 1678 1865*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Kuhn, Gabriel (2010). *Life under the Jolly Roger: Reflections on golden age piracy*. PM Press.

NI DIEU, NI MAITRE

Flying the Black Flag: The Jolly Roger

The golden age pirate brotherhood, commonwealth, or confederacy was most tangibly expressed by its menacing flag, the Jolly Roger. No other pirate symbol and not many symbols overall - have had such a lasting impact on the Western mind and its popular culture.

The origins of the Jolly Roger are not entirely

clear. It was first reported by navy officers chasing French pirate captain in the Cape Verde Islands in 1700. Wynn's flag was described as **a sable ensign with crossbones, a Death's head and an hourglass against a black background.** This design -

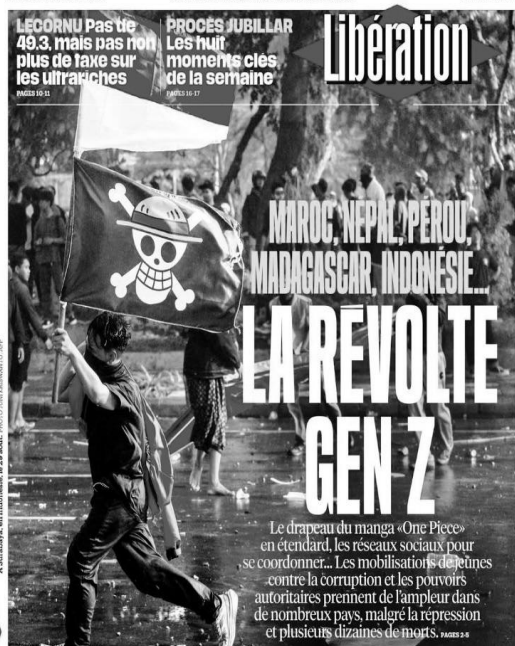
albeit with variations- soon became a standard signifier for pirate ships. Although the Jolly Roger did come in different varieties, all of them shared the same basic themes, in essence **symbols associated with death: skull and crossbones, skeletons, hour glasses, cutlasses, bleeding hearts.** The primary symbolism of the flag was straightforward. Pirates intended its symbols- *death, violence, and limited time-to terrify their prey, to say, unequivocally, to merchantmen that their time was short, they must surrender immediately, or they would die a bloody death.* There are different theories about the origin of the name. The two most common and convincing are:

1. Jolly Roger is an English corruption of the French la jolie rouge which referred to the red flags hoisted by maritime crews to announce battle. 2. Jolly Roger is a variation of Old Roger which was a common moniker for the devil. Whatever the origin of its name, the Jolly Roger confirms the sense of unity that must have existed among its pirate crews. When pirates created a flag of their own, as they did for the first time, they made a new declaration: they would use colours to

symbolize the solidarity of a gang of outlaws, thousands strong and self-organized in daring ways, in violent opposition to the all-powerful nation-states of the day. By flying the skull and the

crossbones, they announced themselves as *'the Villains of all*

Nations.' The pirates' choice of flag made explicit their rejection of the nation-state as a foundation for community and their challenge to its monopoly on violence. Once the Jolly Roger was raised the pirates broadcast their rejection of the very foundation of the contemporary geopolitical order, placing themselves outside its sphere of government and justice. At a Paris rally in 1880 someone carried - in protest against the hypocrisy of the official socialist movement a black flag instead of a red one and created one of the most characteristic and renowned anarchist symbols. They might not have thought of the golden age pirates. Nonetheless, it is hard to believe that her choice of color was purely coincidental. The associations of golden age piracy with anarchy are legion. In fact, **it seems impossible to read a book about piracy without at least one reference to anarchy, no matter the author's political persuasion.** We can read about *anarchic behaviour, anarchic crews, anarchic strains, sexual and cultural anarchy, anarchy with no form of self-discipline, ordered anarchy, a cacophonous floating anarchy, the very picture of anarchy, mini- anarchies*, or the life of a buccaneer [which] could in some ways be seen as anarchistic. **AN-arrgh-chy. If being anarchistic means to live outside the control of the nation-state**, or any form of institutionalized authority, then the golden age pirates were surely anarchistic. **If being anarchistic means to consciously attempt to realize social ideals of universal equality and justice**, If there was an anarchism of golden age pirates, it hence lay in their rejection of institutionalized authority and in attempts at egalitarian community building. By signing up to these articles a **sailor joined the pirate community and agreed to the practices that enabled it to be sustained despite the absence of a transcendent law - such as national law or religion - that might impose order from without.** In this sense the organization of the pirate ship in the early 18th century was an experiment in radical, anarchistic forms of democratic organizing which were explicitly opposed to the systems of authority on conventional sailing vessels. **Their uncompromising anti-authoritarianism and their truly utopian micro-democratic experiment are of tremendous importance and lie at the heart of radical adaptations of piracy to this day.**



Supian, S., Ladinata, L., Daillyono, R., & Noerjuman, L. A. (2026). Symbols of Defiance: A Semiotic and Ethnolinguistic Analysis of the Jolly Roger in One Piece. *Changing Societies & Personalities*, 10(2), 333-351.



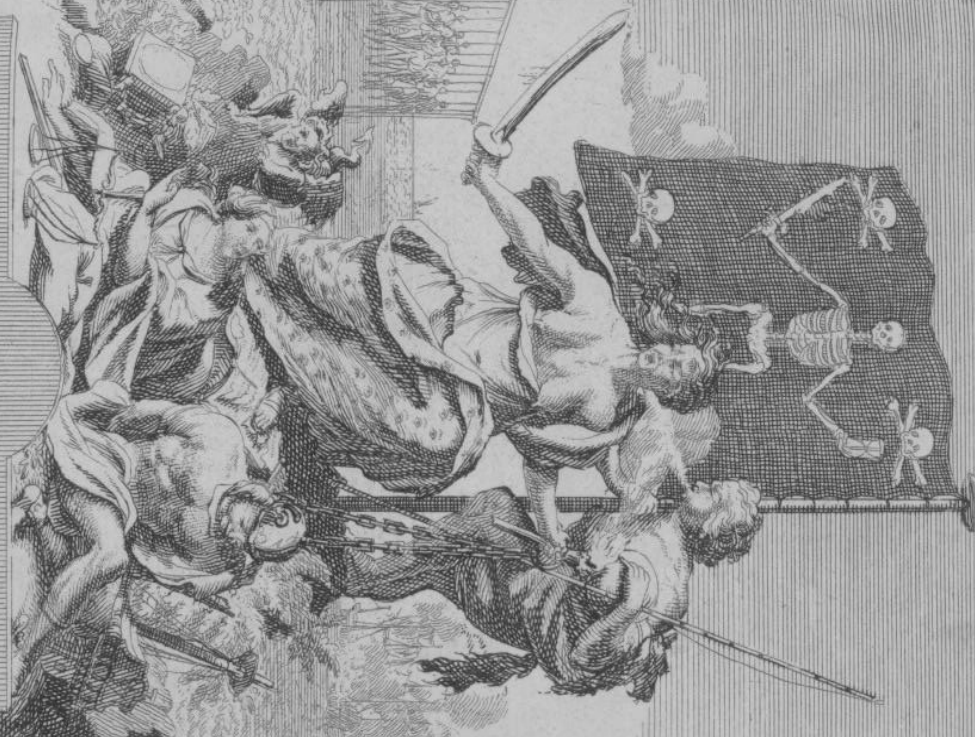
Among all the different anime out there, One Piece is a particularly rich example of a work with symbolism. One Piece is an enormously popular manga and anime series that was created in 1997 by Eiichiro Oda. It has grown into one of the world's most successful cultural franchises. The series is still going strong as both a long-running manga and TV series. Thus, it is not only a cultural export from Japan, but also a global phenomenon. According to Tempo, One Piece was ranked the top "5 Most-Watched Anime of All Time" by an organization that compiles viewer polls (Cahyani, 2025). Since its debut in 1999, it has amassed over a billion views and over 1,100 episodes. **The story at the narrative level follows the Crazy D. Luffy and the Straw Hat Pirates, who stand against injustice and tyranny with powerful imagery and symbolism, most famously the Jolly Roger flag. The flag depicts a skull with a straw hat and represents the crew's identity while symbolizing freedom, solidarity, and resistance to oppression and domination** (Kopper, 2020). The series deals with justice, global order, and collective struggle, with Luffy's leadership traits -unity, independence, and self-satisfaction - functioning as role models for young viewers and prompting thoughts of loyalty, community, and identity (Iqbal et al., 2025; Kharismawati & Wahidati, 2023). In addition, One Piece deals with difficult social issues such as racism and discrimination through its characterization, dialogue, and allegorical plotlines. One Piece exemplifies how anime can go beyond entertainment to become a vehicle for cultural influence, political symbolism, and global identity issues. **The raising of the Jolly Roger flag in Indonesia and in particular in anticipation of the celebration of Independence Day on August 17, 2025, serves as an example of how pirate symbols are not exclusive to local or global contexts.** The action has ignited public discussions and debate about the meaning of symbolism, cultural values as well as how popular media reflects the community that expresses identity and aspirations. According to Muzaffar (2025), the skull-and-cross bones flag of the popular Japanese anime One Piece has been increasingly seen in protests, in graffiti art, and indeed in private vehicles as an act of rebellion against state authority. Al Jazeera noted how the flag had been capitalized on as a principle icon in the "Dark Indonesia" citizen-led student demonstrations where citizens repurposed the Jolly Roger as a visual metaphor of unflinching resistance that could be staged against the gradual military incursion on civilian matters. Visual symbols like the Jolly Roger are markers of aesthetic experience and a way to communicate norms, values, and identities

where verbal language falls short.

Dès la première page du manga, on évoque à la mort de Gol D. Roger le fait qu'il s'était procuré « richesse, renommée et pouvoir » en ayant obtenu le titre de roi de pirates. Bien que pirate, on insiste dès les premières lignes sur le fait qu'il possède du pouvoir. Ce pouvoir n'est pas détaillé en précision mais le titre de « roi » indique bel et bien une dimension politique à un tel statut. Des formulations similaires se retrouvent *pour d'autres pirates notamment chez les empereurs*. Ces quatre pirates ayant le titre d'empereur dominent le « nouveau monde », la partie de Grand Line qui se situe derrière Marie Joie et où le contrôle du gouvernement est plus limité. Comme l'énonce le vice-amiral Garp lors de la première évocation dans l'œuvre de ces pirates : « Ensemble, ils règnent sur la seconde moitié de Grand Line de façon impériale ». Le terme « régner » indique donc une forme de contrôle politique du territoire ainsi qu'une temporalité dans ce contrôle. Il peut paraître paradoxal d'invoquer cette image de gouvernant chez le pirate car, le pirate se définit par une forme de négation du territoire, le pirate ne se considère pas comme un vulgaire voleur mais comme un « *personne sans patrie* ». La patrie se définissant avant tout par le sol, le pirate n'est chez lui nulle part et aucun territoire ne le reconnaît comme membre. Le symbole du drapeau pirate est d'ailleurs le pavillon noir, utilisé par tous les pirates dans One Piece. Ce symbole, si l'on reprend les termes de l'anarchiste américain Howard Ehrlich, signifie la **négation de toute nationalité et présente le drapeau noir comme la négation de tous les drapeaux**.

Derycke, P. (2023). *One Piece: leçons de pouvoir*. Les Editions de l'Opportun.

HISTORIE DER ZEE-ROOVERS



LAURA SOOK DUNCOMBE

PIRATE WOMEN

— THE PRINCESSES, —
PROSTITUTES, AND PRIVATEERS WHO
RULED THE SEVEN SEAS

INTRODUCTION

FOR AS LONG AS there has been a sea to sail upon, there have been pirates. Modern scholarship claims they have played an enormously important role in shaping world history. They have been called raiders, sea dogs, buccaneers, freebooters, corsairs, bandits, and many other names in many languages. They have sailed throughout every millennium. They hail from every inhabited continent, in every age, colour, and creed imaginable. What unites these vastly diverse people across time and space? Is it the peg legs and eye patches? The rum and the parrots?

These common tropes pervade modern depictions of piracy, but true piracy is so much more than these cartoonish trappings.

The heart of piracy is freedom—freedom from society, freedom from law, and freedom from conscience. Pirates capture people's hearts as easily as they capture their prey because they actually do what many people only dream of doing—they cast off home and comfort for a chance at life outside society's confines. A person who does not condone a pirate's criminal actions can still be inspired by her courageous and adventurous spirit. No, that was not a typo: pirates have always answered to "she" as well as "he." (During the periods covered in this book, the gender binary was still firmly in place. As far as I am aware, all the pirates in this book identified as female. My use of "she" reflects the available research on these pirates and is in no way meant to invalidate other expressions of gender.) Female pirates have fought alongside and, in some cases, in command of their male counterparts since ancient times, despite the widespread belief that women at sea were bad luck. For a woman to cast off her petticoats—and often her identity— and take up arms seems impossible, but many persevered. Yet history largely ignores them, and most people are ignorant of their existence.

So who were these women pirates?

From royalty such as Queen Teuta to the penniless orphan Gunpowder Gertie, they ran the gamut from princess to pauper. Some were barely out of their teens, such as Sadie the Goat, while others such as Sister Ping were older when they started their careers. ~~Grace O'Malley~~ pirated for many years, and ~~Margaret Jordan~~ participated in only a single piratical venture. ~~Sayyida al-Hurra~~ took to the sea to revitalize her community, while ~~Jacquette Delahaye~~ sought revenge for her parents' deaths. Pirate women existed essentially everywhere male pirates did, in nearly every major period of pirate history. They had little in common with each other, except for their gender and their desire to escape the traditional role that their gender dictated. If pirate women are so prevalent in history, why are they so seldom known? They had to fight at least twice as hard as male

pirates to make it to sea and prove their worth, so surely they are doubly worthy of study. Yet all too often, they are left out of the piratical discussion. With the exception of Anne Bonny and Mary Read, and more recently ~~Grace O'Malley~~, they are given short shrift by history, identified only by nicknames or titles if they are mentioned at all. Of the numerous pirate books on the market, precious few discuss women, and almost none hold women pirates as their focus. ~~David Cordingley~~, a leading pirate scholar, devoted an entire book to women (originally titled *Women Sailors and Sailor's Women* before being renamed the less- patronizing *Seafaring Women*). He expressed disbelief that Mary Read and Anne Bonny actually lived aboard a pirate ship and questioned how a woman could tolerate the rough working conditions at sea. When even a historian covering women sailors refuses to acknowledge that women pirates existed, there is a problem in the field. Women pirates are often absent in historical discussion because their very existence is threatening to traditional male and female gender roles. Pirates live outside the laws of man, but women pirates live outside the laws of nature. Women pirates are left out because they don't fit nicely into the categories of "normal" women or traditional women's virtues. As historian ~~Jo Stanley~~ puts it, female pirates "like to be on top . . . and maraud fiercely where maidens should step sweetly." They are "social outrages—and the embodiment of women's terrifying power." **They upset the balance of power in a patriarchal society and for that reason are not to be discussed, let alone celebrated, by traditional historians.**

Pirate women also interfere with man's storied and complex relationship with the sea itself. Water is primal; life cannot exist without it. Many creation myths feature water, and it's no wonder—humans are surrounded in water-like amniotic fluid in the womb before birth. The sea, which was here before man and cradles man, is like a mother to sailors—a woman. It is connected to the moon and tides, which have also been associated with women all the way back to the Greek goddess Artemis. ~~Ernest Hemingway~~ opines in his famous novel *The Old Man and the Sea* that "[the main character] always thought of the sea as 'la mar' which is what people call her in Spanish when they love her.

Sometimes those who love her say bad things of her but they are always said as though she were a woman. The old man always thought of her as feminine and as something that gave or withheld great favors, and if she did wild or wicked things it was because she could not help them." Mermaids and sirens, legendary creatures who lure men to their deaths on the sea, are traditionally female as well. Ships are often named for women, and women are frequently featured on the bows of boats as buxom figureheads. Undiscovered islands on the sea are "virgin" and are "conquered" by colonizing men. For man, the sea and things associated with it are feminine, ripe for male subjugation or, at the very least, male adventure. The feminine sea is an exclusively male domain, where men can prove their bravery or seek their fortune. Adding women to this equation dilutes the established gender binary and threatens the near-sacred relationship between sailor and the sea. For these and countless other reasons both conscious and unconscious, male historians often exclude women pirates from their work. Unfortunately for women pirates, the vast majority of history has been recorded by—and from the perspective of—men. Scholar Dale Spender explains that "women have been kept 'off the record' in most, if not all, branches of knowledge by the simple process of men naming the world as it appears to them. They have assumed their experience is universal, that it is representative of humanity

Whenever the experience of women is different from men, therefore, it stays 'off the record,' for there is no way of entering it into the record when the experience is not shared by men, and men are the ones who write the record." Deidre Beddoe echoes that sentiment, saying that recorded history "is the history of the men and male affairs . . . wars, diplomacy, politics, and commerce." Indeed, without the efforts of women historians such as Anne Chambers, Dian Murray, and Joan Druett,

much of the existing knowledge of women pirates would not have come to light. As long as men control the narrative, women pirates will be mostly left out. Even if male historians today were inclined to write about pirate women, they would have a difficult time doing so because of the dearth of primary sources about them. Since women have been considered unworthy subjects of historical documentation in the past, it is now difficult to study them—a vicious cycle that persists in keeping women "off the record." To date, no one has discovered a journal or first-person account of pirating written by a female pirate. Newspaper articles are few, court documents are even rarer, and books written around the time the pirate was active are virtually non-existent. It is not particularly surprising, given all this, that pirate women have not achieved the celebrity status of their male peers. But despite all the challenges, these stories deserve to be told. The tendency to exclude women from the narrative ignores a vital part of the history of the sea. As mythologist Suzanne Cloutier explains, "Women's souls cannot be known without stories—their stories must be told." This book is an attempt to collect in one volume the stories of female pirates through the ages. Feminist theologian Carol P. Christ claims that *"without stories a woman is lost when she comes to make the important decisions in her life. She does not learn to value her struggles, to celebrate her strength, to comprehend her pain. Without stories, she cannot understand herself."* The existing mere paragraphs and footnotes scattered across the vast expanse of pirate lore do not do justice to the breadth and depth of pirate women's involvement in the trade. Presenting these women together demonstrates how long women have been part of piracy and how much they have achieved. Telling their stories adds them back into the historical record and gives a clearer picture of what life at sea was actually like. After reading the accounts of their lives, it will be impossible to dismiss lone pirate women as anomalous phenomena. **Each pirate woman is part of a grand tradition that has been around since the dawn of piracy itself.**

Beyond simply retelling these women's stories, this book examines the storytellers and their motives—the "why" as well as the "who." Since so many of these stories, particularly the earliest ones, were recorded by men, taking a look at the man's reason for writing the story is informative in understanding why the events and portrayals in the story are shaped as they are. A medieval monk, for example, would describe a woman differently than a nineteenth-century penny-dreadful author. Questioning who is responsible for spreading these legends and what agenda might have prompted him or her to do it will help to extricate the stories from the grasp of authorial intent and allow them to unfold more organically as they might have actually happened.

A very important caveat: most if not all of these stories are a combination of myth and fact. The nature of piracy is such that it is difficult to separate fact and fiction because pirates were, by necessity, not frequently a part of historical record. ~~Robert~~ explains that "parish registers, censuses, and tax lists are of no use in studying a population that existed in the fringes of, or even beyond, settled societies." Even Capt. Johnson's *Pirates*, which is called by Jo Stanley "as central an early [pirate] text as the Bible is to Christians," is known to be both embellished and frequently anecdotal. *The gold standard of historical fact might be said to be multiple high- quality primary sources-documents written at the time, speaking directly about the subject.* Many pirate stories, especially female pirate stories, fail to meet this standard. However, since many of these stories come from the time of the pirates, these mytho-historical (and sometimes just mythic) pirates are still vital to the larger tapestry of piracy. Author ~~Gabriel Kuhn~~ claims when it comes to pirates, "The legend and the reality [of pirate life] are woven into a fabric impossible to unravel. However, the way this fabric is woven can be examined. We are exploring the pirate myth rather than trying to expose a pirate truth." Wherever possible, the historical backing of the stories here is explained. Thus, this book is not a pure history book. I am not a historian. Although many historical events are described to give context to these women's stories, nothing should be taken as comprehensive on those subjects. Those seeking to learn about, say, the American Civil War or the Great Leap Forward should seek other works on the subject. Resources are listed in the back of the book to aid readers in their quest. I am a

storyteller and a lover of pirates, and so while every effort has been made to present a clear and accurate historical account, this is a book primarily about pirate stories. And besides, as historiographer Keith Jenkin says, "The past and history are two separate things." Though fashions, weapons, and even treasure changed over time, all pirate women have at least one thing in common: the desire to be masters of their own fates, whatever the cost. Perhaps an exploration of what that desire meant to these women and how much they endured for it will inspire the next great adventurer—or the next great storyteller. In any case, Audre Lorde reminds us that, in terms of writing by and about women, "we must each of us recognize our responsibility to seek those words out, to read them and share them and examine them in their pertinence to our lives." May this book be a worthy addition to the ever-growing pantheon of women's words about women.

Laura Sook Duncombe Alexandria, Virginia May 17, 2016



PIRATE GIRL

Genève. En occasion de **la Création du Comité international contre la piraterie**, en juin 1981 et publié une première fois dans Libération en 1984 (n°967)

Michel Foucault, «Face aux gouvernements, les droits de l'homme, Libération, n° 967, 30 juin-1er juillet 1984, p. 22

Nous ne sommes ici que des ~~hommes~~ privés qui n'ont d'autre titre à parler, et à parler ensemble, qu'une certaine difficulté commune à supporter ce qui se passe. Je sais bien, et il faut se rendre à l'évidence: les raisons qui font que ~~des hommes et des femmes~~ aiment mieux quitter leur pays que d'y vivre, nous n'y pouvons pas grand-chose. Le fait est hors de notre portée. Qui donc nous a commis ? Personne. Et c'est cela justement qui fait notre droit. Il me semble qu'il faut avoir à l'esprit trois principes qui, je crois, guident cette initiative, comme bien d'autres qui l'ont précédée: l'Île-de-Lumière, le cap Anamour, l'Avion pour le Salvador, mais aussi Terre des ~~hommes~~, Amnesty International.

1) IL EXISTE UNE CITOYENNETE INTERNATIONALE QUI A SES DROITS, QUI A SES DEVOIRS ET QUI ENGAGE A S'ELEVER CONTRE TOUT ABUS DE POUVOIR, QUEL QU'EN SOIT L'AUTEUR, QUELLES QU'EN SOIENT LES VICTIMES. APRES TOUT, NOUS SOMMES TOUS DES GOUVERNES ET, A CE TITRE, SOLIDAIRES.

2) Parce qu'ils prétendent s'occuper du bonheur des sociétés, les gouvernements s'arrogent le droit de passer au compte du profit et des pertes le malheur ~~des hommes~~ que leurs décisions provoquent ou que leurs négligences permettent. **C'est un devoir de cette citoyenneté internationale de toujours faire valoir aux yeux et aux oreilles des gouvernements les malheurs dont il n'est pas vrai qu'ils ne sont pas responsables.** Le malheureux doit jamais être un reste muet de la politique. Il fonde un droit absolu à se lever et à s'adresser à ceux qui détiennent le pouvoir.

3) IL FAUT REFUSER LE PARTAGE DES TACHES QUE, TRES SOUVENT, ON NOUS PROPOSE: AUX INDIVIDUS DE S'INDIGNER ET DE PARLER; AUX GOUVERNEMENTS DE REFLECHIR ET D'AGIR. C'est vrai : les bons gouvernements aiment la sainte indignation des gouvernés, pourvu qu'elle reste lyrique. **JE CROIS QU'IL FAUT SE RENDRE COMPTE QUE TRES SOUVENT CE SONT LES GOUVERNANTS QUI PARLENT, NE PEUVENT ET NE VEULENT QUE PARLER. L'EXPERIENCE MONTRE QU'ON PEUT ET QU'ON DOIT REFUSER LE ROLE THEATRAL DE LA PURE ET SIMPLE INDIGNATION QU'ON NOUS PROPOSE.** Amnesty International, Terre des hommes, Médecins du monde sont des initiatives qui ont créé ce droit nouveau : **CELUI DES INDIVIDUS PRIVES A INTERVENIR EFFECTIVEMENT DANS L'ORDRE DES POLITIQUES ET DES STRATEGIES INTERNATIONALES. LA VOLONTE DES INDIVIDUS DOIT S'INSCRIRE DANS UNE REALITE DONT LES GOUVERNEMENTS ONT VU WU SE RESERVER LE MONOPOLE, CE MONOPOLE QU'IL FAUT ARRACHER PEU A PEU ET CHAQUE JOUR.**

canzoni italiane di protesta

1794/1974

dalla Rivoluzione Francese alla repressione cilena

a cura di Giuseppe Vettori



paperbacks poeti 26

NEWTON COMPTON EDITORI

Stornelli d'Esilio

Pietro Gori

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7
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No - stra pa - tria è il mon - do in - te - ro

13
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no - stra leg - ge è la li - ber - tà ed un pen - sie - - ro

20
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ed un pen - sie - ro No - stra ri - bel - le in cor ci sta.

Dei miseri le turbe sollevando
ummo d'ogni nazione messi al bando.

Dovunque uno sfruttato si ribelli
noi troveremo schiere di fratelli.

Raminghi per le terre e per i mari
per un'idea lasciamo i nostri cari.

Passiam di plebi varie tra i dolori
de la nazione umana precursori.

Ma torneranno Italia i tuoi proscritti
ad agitar la face dei diritti.

révolutions de notre temps

MANIFESTE INTERNATIONALISTE



internationalisme par le bas

Bien que tout ait été fait pour en minimiser l'importance, pour lui couper les lignes de communication, pour en brouiller le sens, le pouvoir des peuples en révolte a été contagieux. L'espoir, le courage et l'insurrection ont traversé les corps, les territoires et toutes les frontières. La mort, en décembre 2010, d'un vendeur ambulant tunisien a déclenché l'une des plus grandes vagues de révolution de l'histoire. Kilon yani kilon*, scandé dans les rues du Liban, était un écho tardif du Que se vayan todos* * Tous, nous avons dit tous ! ** Qu'ils s'en aillent tous ! argentin qui avait ouvert le siècle et du Dégage tunisien qui l'avait ponctué. Les féministes du monde entier ont clamé Jin, Jiyan, Azadi*. À Bruxelles et à Lausanne comme à Paris, des manifestant·es se sont soulevé·es contre l'assassinat de Nahel par la police française. Les lignes de front de camarades colombien·nes ont emprunté les boucliers et les chants des premières lignes chiliennes. En brisant, pour un temps, le mirage des États-nation, les rebelles de notre siècle ont parfois eu le sentiment de combattre un même ennemi aux multiples visages. Les mêmes flics devant, les mêmes banques derrière, les mêmes salauds au-dessus. Mais un sentiment ne suffit pas pour former un front. L'Égypte en révolte n'a pas pu envoyer ses cordons d'« ultras » pour

soutenir le soulèvement en Libye. Les communalistes du monde entier n'ont pas apporté le moindre soutien aux conseils locaux en Syrie. Les zapatistes n'ont pas eu les moyens d'envoyer des cadres expérimenté·es aux assemblées du Chili ou de Colombie. Les hackers d'Anonymous ont été seul·es à colmater les brèches et à attaquer les bastions numériques, partout dans le monde, pour soutenir les révolté·es. Le manque de soutien du côté des forces révolutionnaires a conduit les rebelles syrien·nes à accepter des armes et de l'argent de l'Arabie saoudite et de la Turquie. La résistance palestinienne est contrainte de prendre l'argent de l'Iran et du Qatar. Les Kurdes du PYD dépendent du régime syrien et ont cherché de l'aide tantôt chez son allié Russe, tantôt chez les États-Unis pour tenir. Des révolté·es en Afrique de l'Ouest * Femmes, Vie, Liberté s'appuient sur le soutien de la Russie et de la Chine pour se débarrasser de la France. La résistance populaire en Ukraine a dû mettre sa survie entre les mains de l'Occident. Dépendre des grandes puissances reste une question de survie pour nombre de révolutionnaires ces dernières années, comment les condamner? En leur demandant de continuer à vivre écrasé·es, de capituler ou d'attendre les bombardements passivement?

Le manque de réelle solidarité populaire internationale condamne les révolutionnaires à l'isolement ou au détournement des revendications populaires par des acteurs étrangers, bien plus concernés par leurs intérêts que par celles et ceux qu'ils prétendent aider. Les révolutionnaires syrien·es abandonné·es par le monde entier demandaient : « Les gouvernements nous ont trahis. Où sont les peuples ? » le problème de la « solidarité ». En Irak, après que l'invasion par les États-Unis ait détruit le pays, que les banques de semences locales aient été bombardées, des organisations internationales ont inondé les zones de production agricole de semences OGM distribuées gratuitement aux agriculteurs pour leur permettre de reprendre leurs activités. Or pouvoir utiliser ces semences nécessitait d'acheter les engrais et les pesticides chimiques dédiés auprès d'entreprises étrangères, conduisant la plupart à s'endetter, puis à devoir abandonner leurs terres. Voilà comment l'aide humanitaire prolonge la domination coloniale et mène l'un des berceaux de l'agriculture à la ruine. Depuis une quarantaine d'années, « l'aide internationale » est venue peu à peu remplacer l'internationalisme qui, jugé trop partisan, fut sacrifié sur l'autel du « développement ». La critique de cette conception a été faite depuis longtemps déjà dans ce qu'elle produit de hiérarchie et de dépendances aux ONG du Nord dans les pays du Sud. Si l'aide humanitaire peut sauver des vies dans de nombreuses situations, elle s'attaque rarement aux causes de problèmes. Elle est un pansement nécessaire mais qui ne permet jamais de stopper l'hémorragie. Même quand l'aide internationale est moins cynique, se nomme « solidarité internationale », et tente d'apporter une aide concrète aux populations, elle produit des effets pervers. En Palestine, après les accords d'Oslo, les habitant·es ont assisté à l'arrivée massive des ONG,

fondations et autres organisations internationales. Les formes d'auto-organisation populaire nées des différentes *intifadas* se sont vu diluées dans la « société civile », où les efforts de résistance ont été encouragés à se formaliser, à devenir des « projets », avec des logos, des notes d'intention et des budgets. En conditionnant les financements à la réalisation d'actions « apolitiques », les initiatives de base ont été défigurées affaiblissant en conséquence la contestation populaire. Si on ajoute à cela le contrôle absolu de toute forme de groupement civil en Cisjordanie et à Jérusalem, par les autorités d'occupation israéliennes, on ne peut guère plus s'étonner que le Hamas, organisation réactionnaire, bénéficie d'un tel soutien tant qu'il incarne, pour le moment, la seule chance de libération nationale. Ces formes de solidarité sont essentiellement descendantes et conditionnent l'aide à des règles et des temps déconnectés des luttes des territoires. Sans compter les allégeances, les codes, les éléments de langage et la bureaucratie qu'elles exigent. Pour qui prétend à du soutien venant de l'extérieur, il faut rendre sa cause acceptable, voir attractive. La relation de dépendance à des financeurs extérieurs subordonne la cause au soutien qu'elle est susceptible de recevoir. La cause est façonnée de manière à obtenir le plus grand rendement possible, de manière à garantir son entrée et sa compétitivité sur le marché de la solidarité. Cette solidarité-là altère l'esprit des luttes et soumet les marges aux contrôles et à la validation des centres, qu'ils soient occidentaux, russes, turcs, chinois ou des pays du Golfe. Les brigades de

révolutionnaires syriens devaient soit se couper la barbe pour que les Occidentaux les soutiennent, soit la laisser pousser pour obtenir l'argent du Qatar et de l'Arabie saoudite. Même quand la « solidarité internationale » provient d'organisations et de collectifs qui laissent une grande autonomie à la lutte, en faisant confiance aux personnes directement concernées et présentes sur le terrain, elle produit souvent des relations à sens unique. Les changements de mots et les analyses de pratiques mis en œuvre par une partie des acteurs·rices de la solidarité internationale, s'ils témoignent d'une prise en compte des questions épineuses soulevées par la relation de soutien, ne répondent qu'à une partie du problème. Il s'agit de définir ensemble, entre les premier·ères concerné·es et les personnes et organisations solidaires, des lignes politiques et éthiques communes et une pratique stratégique seules à même de compenser les inégalités structurelles et les relations de domination qu'elles engendrent. Et de réunir ainsi les conditions d'une véritable entraide, fondée sur la construction de relations d'égalité et de réciprocité entre luttes et territoires. L'entraide commence par la reconnaissance de notre besoin d'être et de travailler ensemble. C'est un processus qui implique d'entrer en relation les un·es avec les autres et de tisser des liens de confiance. Elle implique de savoir être là les un·es pour les autres et ne fait pas de distinction entre les paroles et les actes. Elle n'est pas fondée sur le souci de faire une « bonne action », mais implique la prise en compte du combat

de l'autre comme faisant partie du notre et inversement. Dans un monde où la concurrence est reine, aussi entre luttes, c'est le retournement d'un paradigme. L'entraide n'a pas de centre car elle fonctionne dans de multiples directions sans pour autant gommer les différences et les rapports de pouvoir qui nous traversent. Quand les premières caisses de solidarité ouvrières, au XIX^e siècle, envoyaient de l'argent pour soutenir une grève, elles insistaient sur le fait qu'il s'agissait de prêts plutôt que de dons. L'idée n'était pas d'en attendre des intérêts ou même le remboursement effectif ; il s'agissait plutôt d'affirmer que ce n'était ni par bonté ni par charité, mais un geste qui en appelait d'autres en retour, à d'autres moments, ou sous d'autres formes. Il est clair que depuis le « Nord Global » il est plus facile d'envoyer du soutien financier vers les pays du Sud que l'inverse, et cette possibilité doit être exploitée pleinement. Mais cela n'est en rien la seule forme que l'entraide puisse prendre. Elle peut se jouer à plusieurs niveaux. La première forme d'entraide est matérielle. Elle nous ramène à la minga. En Abya Yala, ce principe s'incarne dans différents modes de mutualisation des tâches, ressources et biens nécessaires aux travaux et constructions collectives : déménager une maison, cultiver un champ, construire un bâtiment. La minga c'est quand des personnes, voisin·es et communautés travaillent ensemble en même temps qu'ils et elles partagent la joie, la convivialité, la rencontre, et l'expérience de la force collective. Les soulèvements et leurs suites nous ont montré la nécessité du soutien matériel, des médicaments aux semences, impliquant une longue chaîne de personnes et de lieux. Pour cela, nous avons besoin d'allié·es qui puissent ouvrir des chemins et traverser les frontières. Les expériences de convois de solidarité qu'on a pu connaître vers les collectifs de base en Grèce après 2008 ou

vers les initiatives d'entraide populaire en Ukraine depuis 2022, sont des pratiques qui pourraient être généralisées et dont les méthodes pourraient s'étoffer et se partager. La marge de progression en cette matière est considérable. Mais même pour cela nous avons besoin d'argent.

Comment imaginer une entraide financière efficace?

Ou dit autrement :est-il possible de financer une révolution ou une résistance populaire sans l'aide des puissants?

De nombreuses diasporas, kurde, palestinienne ou birmane, très récemment ou depuis longtemps, ont permis aux luttes de leurs pays d'origines de tenir. C'est une des formes de financement par et pour les peuples. Pour ne parler que d'un exemple récent, la résistance birmane a popularisé le crowdfunding révolutionnaire, levant des centaines de millions de dollars qui ont permis d'alimenter directement les groupes de résistance. Que ce soit par des formes de micro-contributions de masse ou par la mise en place de mutuelles transnationales, nous pouvons limiter notre dépendance envers le bon vouloir des mécènes, des États et des ONG. Au-delà de la question directement matérielle, l'entraide peut se concrétiser dans le relais des voix des personnes et des groupes aux prises avec la réalité du terrain révolutionnaire.

La tâche qui incombe à un réseau d'entraide international est alors de les faire passer à travers les mailles des filets médiatiques et du bruit de fond des canaux de communication réactionnaires. Aucune révolution ne devrait plus se sentir orpheline ou trahie par l'indifférence du monde. Cela suppose, dans un premier temps, de pouvoir communiquer avec les gens sur place dans les moments cruciaux, pour faire sortir l'information du terrain et la traduire pour d'autres contextes. Et

dans un second temps, de permettre la coordination d'actions de soutien, et d'établir des canaux de liaisons dans le temps long, pour partager nos perceptions et analyses de la situation. La constitution d'une histoire commune, tissée de toutes nos expériences accumulées, est d'une importance vitale. Cela passe par la mise en circulation des récits et des analyses issues des luttes et des expériences précédentes. Faire une campagne antifasciste, écrire une constitution féministe, développer des techniques agroécologiques, vaincre une armée de trolls, se défendre contre la police, mettre en place des réseaux de financement ou organiser la réponse aux besoins quotidiens d'une zone libérée sont des apprentissages et des savoir-faire que nous pouvons mettre en partage et en circulation. Les forces conservatrices et contre-révolutionnaires font tout ce qu'elles peuvent pour dépeindre nos insurrections comme des chaos criminels, nos camarades comme des terroristes, nos acquis comme des échecs. La bataille des récits et des images est plus que jamais centrale, tant dans l'immédiateté de la lutte que pour nourrir une mémoire du futur comme le disent des camarades chiliennes. L'entraide, enfin, s'incarne dans l'action. C'est bloquer ici une usine d'armement pour réduire là-bas l'intensité des bombardements, c'est harceler ici une multinationale pour compromettre là-bas ses projets extractivistes. C'est encore peser sur ce qu'on appelle « l'opinion ». Intervenir dans les différents lieux de vie, de travail, de formation, de loisirs et de lutte pour rendre justice et apporter un soutien moral à celles et ceux qui luttent au loin. L'entraide est le moteur de l'internationalisme. Les luttes

locales en s'ouvrant à l'international peuvent développer des capacités d'action planétaires contre les réseaux de pouvoir et d'argent qui eux ne connaissent pas les frontières. Les cibles communes et pertinentes ne manquent pas. On nous demandera surement: « Il y a déjà tellement de choses pour et contre quoi lutter ici, pourquoi se rajouter des fronts à l'international ? N'est-ce pas une nouvelle manière de céder à la dispersion et l'épuisement ? » La priorité et l'urgence apparaissent toujours plus évidentes du côté des situations locales. Il pourrait même sembler illusoire de prétendre changer la donne ailleurs alors que nous avons du mal à le faire là où nous sommes. L'internationalisme apparaît parfois comme un rêve romantique, beau mais au fond naïf, comme une relique du passé, une boîte poussiéreuse pleine de souvenirs et de cartes postales : Vietnam, Cuba, Algérie, Espagne... **Mais construire l'internationalisme n'a jamais été un luxe, c'est une stratégie de survie.** Ceux et celles qui en ont fait un pilier de leur combat (les mouvements zapatiste, kurde ou palestinien) sont presque les seuls mouvements révolutionnaires qui ont tenu jusqu'à aujourd'hui malgré les attaques incessantes de tous bords. Pour ces mouvements, il a été à la fois un moyen de compenser la disproportion des forces entre les mouvements de base et les forces militaires adverses, de déplacer le terrain des hostilités sur un plan diplomatique et de créer des réseaux de soutien sur toute la planète. En leur temps, les victoires historiques contre le colonialisme en

Irlande, au Vietnam ou en Algérie ont été obtenues par les insurgés sur leurs terres mais aussi

en gagnant les cœurs dans les centres des empires, jusqu'à ce que les populations de ces pays, elles-mêmes, exigent la fin des guerres et de l'occupation. Les actions depuis le ventre de la bête sont nécessaires pour élargir le front et délocaliser les lieux d'affrontement, et ainsi épauler celles et ceux qui font vivre la lutte sur le terrain. Encore faut-il les écouter, comprendre leurs mots d'ordre, plutôt qu'une nouvelle fois se remettre au centre, en faisant primer ses propres positions politiques, en plaquant sur leurs situations ses propres grilles d'analyse. Si nous nous nourrissons de précédents historiques, nous ne sommes pas nostalgiques d'un quelconque « âge d'or » de l'internationalisme. Au ^{xxe} siècle, l'internationalisme s'est largement aligné sur les intérêts des États et des superpuissances, et s'en est trouvé fracturé. Ainsi au lieu de combattre le nationalisme, il l'a parfois renforcé. Si l'attachement à sa terre et à sa culture comme terrain de nos combats a pour nous toute sa place, il ne se confond jamais avec son instrumentalisation par des appareils d'État au service des classes dominantes nationales. Aujourd'hui, pour nous,

l'internationalisme commence chez soi, dans nos territoires quotidiens. Les lieux où les populations sont diverses, mélangées, hétérogènes, internationales à proprement parler, en sont des terrains

particulièrement fertiles et évidents.

Ainsi des métropoles du monde entier, des zones frontalières ou des grandes zones de production agricole qui reposent sur l'exploitation de la main-d'œuvre immigrée. Mais c'est aussi la création de liens multiples entre les périphéries en lutte, entre nos différents coins de monde, qui pourra diminuer l'attraction des centres de pouvoir régionaux et mondiaux. Nos territoires sont imbriqués dans des logiques de production transnationales. Toute la puissance d'une proposition politique locale repose aujourd'hui sur sa capacité à se penser comme faisant partie d'un maillage planétaire de résistances et de soulèvements. Sans cela, elle risque de se réduire bien vite à une dimension « alternative », culturelle, économique, ou sociale en faisant abstraction de ce qui la lie, la permet ou la conditionne dans le reste du monde. À l'inverse, sans un ancrage local, l'internationalisme risque de n'être qu'une belle chanson nostalgique, ou de sympathiques occasions de rencontres pour une élite militante cosmopolite.

Le défi qui s'impose à nous est d'étendre la minga à l'échelle du monde, entre territoires de lutte, entre pouvoirs populaires, par-delà les obstacles. C'est cela que nous entendons par internationalisme par le bas. Regarder ce qui se passe ailleurs est une vraie bouffée d'air et nous rend force et courage quand « chez soi » devient sombre et irrespirable. Car quelque part sur cette terre, il y aura toujours des personnes qui s'organisent et ne se résignent pas. Depuis 2011, si les peuples se sont fait écho, ont résonné et si les circulations se sont intensifiées, il n'existe toujours aucune prémice d'un espace de liaison révolutionnaire transnational capable de rompre l'isolement des révoltes et des mouvements de résistance sans en détourner les

revendications et les aspirations. Il n'y a rien à attendre pour commencer à le construire si nous voulons être capables un jour d'intervenir dans les moments critiques, et d'y peser de manière décisive. Il ne sera pas simple de trouver des lignes communes de défense et d'attaques, même si nous pouvons partager les mêmes désirs, les mêmes espoirs. Les difficultés sont nombreuses : nous ne parlons pas les mêmes langues, nous habitons parfois dans des géographies très lointaines, nous ne nous connaissons pas, nous avons besoin de temps pour bien comprendre ce qui se joue pour chacun·e et pouvoir prendre position. S'ajoutent à ces difficultés pratiques les positions de celles et ceux qui tentent d'opposer activement nos combats par « pragmatisme » ou au nom de supercheries contre-révolutionnaires. Ainsi de ces approches géopolitiques et surplombantes, tout droit sorties d'un mauvais remake de la guerre froide, le socialisme en moins. Dans cette perspective, en dernière instance, le monde se résume à un affrontement de blocs où les États et leurs coalitions sont les seuls agents capables de faire bouger les lignes. À travers ce prisme-là, tout ce qui sort des allées de la realpolitik, et donc potentiellement révolutionnaire, est condamné à l'échec. Ce type de logique binaire a amené une partie de la « gauche anti-impérialiste » à soutenir implicitement ou explicitement les régimes iranien, russe et syrien considérés comme des « remparts » contre l'impérialisme-sioniste-colonialiste-occidental-capitaliste. Les révolutions syrienne ou iranienne ne pouvaient dès lors qu'être considérées comme « libérales » ou « pro-occidentales » et donc « manipulées ». Quand elles ne sont pas tout simplement pointées comme des complots ourdis par des pays étrangers, évidemment occidentaux, pour compromettre la « souveraineté nationale

» des régimes en place. Dans ces récits, le peuple, ses formes d'organisation, ses actions autonomes, ses voix multiples, ses luttes internes, même de classe, comme les massacres commis contre lui par ces régimes et leurs alliés, disparaissent derrière de mauvaises abstractions. Ces « anti-impérialistes » sont parfois tellement à contre-courant du mouvement réel qu'au moment où des mouvements populaires prennent les choses en main, ils s'empressent de plaquer leurs discours et leurs analyses déconnectées du terrain, dépossédant les premières concernées de leur pouvoir de dire et d'agir. À leurs yeux, la résistance populaire en Ukraine tout comme les féministes en Iran ou les révolutionnaires en Syrie sont soit des « agents de l'impérialisme », soit incapables de comprendre leurs propres situations. Ces idéologues savent toujours mieux que les gens sur place, depuis leur « distance critique », ce qu'il faudrait faire. Quand les révoltés émettent des analyses et des revendications qui ne correspondent pas à leur doxa, les résistants deviennent des « nazis » en Ukraine, les rebelles des « jihadistes » en Syrie, les féministes des « traîtres » en Iran. Ainsi font ces « anti-impérialistes » en se faisant les relais des régimes meurtriers qu'ils et elles cautionnent et défendent. Considérer les pays occidentaux comme les seules puissances impérialistes, et les États-Unis comme LA source de tous les maux, biais caractéristique de ces positions « campistes », les amène à relativiser les crimes des régimes syrien, russe, chinois ou iranien. Le maintien de ces régimes, voir leur montée en puissance, serait opportun, dans cette logique, pour équilibrer l'ordre du monde et défaire

l'hégémonie occidentale. Cela les conduit à voir dans des puissances impériales comme la Chine ou la Russie, des alliés théoriques. Ces deux régimes qui soutiennent rhétoriquement la cause de la Palestine, sont ainsi perçus comme un moindre mal vis-à-vis de l'hypocrisie des pays occidentaux, tous alignés derrière l'occupation israélienne. Mais plus « opportun » ou « moindre mal » pour qui ? Il est si difficile de choisir son génocide ou son occupation préférée. Pourquoi devrait-on tolérer le génocide des Ouïgours en Chine pour mettre fin au génocide à Gaza ? Pourquoi faudrait-il dénoncer l'occupation israélienne en Palestine d'un côté, et fermer les yeux sur la guerre contre insurrectionnelle en Tchétchénie, l'invasion de la Géorgie ou de l'Ukraine par la Russie, et inversement ? En 2019, les révoltés d'Irak, qui ont une certaine expérience de l'impérialisme, ont énoncé clairement, lors de manifestations de masse, qu'ils ne voulaient « ni USA, ni Iran » dans leur pays. On peut toujours élaborer des catégories subtiles et des appellations théoriques plus ou moins complexes pour qualifier les différents types d'impérialismes qui existent aujourd'hui ; il n'empêche qu'un « sous-impérialisme » c'est toujours de la merde et du sang. Le problème avec ces positions c'est qu'elles ne font que créer des barrières et des divisions entre les luttes et les causes populaires. Concrètement, cela empêche des alliances pourtant nécessaires et précieuses entre les marges. Au lieu de trouver ce qui pourrait nous unir dans un front commun, ces « pragmatiques » nous disent qu'il faudrait, pour être efficaces, considérer que les ennemis de nos ennemis sont nos amis. La solidarité pour elles et eux se fonde moins sur ce qui se passe sur le terrain que sur les prises de position des

États-Unis. Si les États-Unis soutiennent une cause, comme la rébellion à Hong Kong, en tout opportunisme, alors ce soulèvement ne mériterait pas notre soutien, peu importe que la Chine veuille y étendre son emprise autoritaire. En lieu et place de cette approche « Kissinger » plutôt que « Che Guevara », éthiquement déplorable et stratégiquement contre-productive, nous avons besoin d'une tendresse révolutionnaire capable avant tout d'écouter pour essayer de comprendre. Puis, naviguer dans les contradictions du réel pour se porter aux cotés de celles et ceux qui luttent. Nous préférons parier sur celles et ceux qui veulent changer les règles du jeu et donner naissance à de nouvelles réalités, plutôt que sur celles et ceux qui veulent l'emporter dans le jeu tel qu'il est. Contrairement à ce qu'essayent de nous faire croire les tenants d'une gauche autoritaire et étatiste, à qui la tendance réactionnaire de l'époque offre une planche de survie, lier les combats au lieu de les opposer, ne nous affaiblit pas mais augmente notre puissance. C'est bien ce que sont parvenus à réaliser les mouvements féministes dans la partie sud d'Abya Yala ces dernières années, en prenant en compte la diversité des violences, contre les dissidences sexuelles, les personnes afro-descendantes, les femmes et les indigènes, contre les migrant·es, les enfants ou les personnes âgées, qu'elles soient au travail, dans la rue, domestiques ou policières. En les incluant par les grèves générales féministes plutôt qu'en les considérant comme opposées, ils et elles sont parvenu·es à tisser un mouvement populaire immense. Unis mais pas uniforme. **Massif mais radical.** Il nous faut lutter contre notre propre faiblesse et

notamment contre la croyance que nous ne pouvons rien sans participer aux jeux des puissants. Certes nous avons le sentiment de n'être pas assez nombreux·ses et de manquer cruellement de ressources. Mais reconnaître cela et partir de ce constat pour construire notre force est certainement plus « réaliste » que de faire des raccourcis, de se raccrocher à des pis-aller, et ainsi reproduire les conditions de notre impuissance.

Seuls les peuples sauvent les

peuples, il s'agit pour nous de donner corps à ce slogan en commençant à construire, aux quatre coins de la planète, une force capable de s'opposer aux monstres froids qui dévorent nos présents et nos avenir. Construire une force d'intervention et d'entraide consistante et pérenne prendra du temps et nécessitera des moyens qu'il nous faut préparer patiemment, mais nous pensons que c'est le seul chemin qu'il nous reste. Dans le temps long, il n'y a pas de réelle victoire possible en un seul endroit du monde.

L'Empire s'étant établi sur toute la planète, ce n'est qu'en l'affrontant simultanément partout, que nous pourrons imaginer un jour participer à sa chute.



MY LIFE IN THE NEW MILLENIUM

IT WAS TRUE THAT THE MORE I HATED PEOPLE
THE MORE I LOVED CATS.
THEN PEOPLE STARTED TO SURPRISE ME.
OFTEN THIS INVOLVED FIRE OR COCA-COLA BOTTLES
WITH PRETOL WHICH AMOUNTS TO THE SAME THING.
ONCE FIRE IS THE FORM OF THE SPECTACLE THE PROBLEM
BECOMES HOW TO SET FIRE TO FIRE.
SOME FRIENDS WERE PREPARED TO HELP WITH THIS WHICH
MICHAEL JACKSON HAVING DIED AND THEN WHITNEY HOUSTON
WAS THE NEW POP MUSIC.
WITHOUT AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD SYSTEM AND THE
UNDERLYING TRUTH OF LAND AS THE PLACE OF POLITICS AND THE
SEA AS THE SPACE OF COMMERCE IT IS HARD TO INTEGRATE THAT
OTHER MOST IMPORTANT FACT OF OUR ERA. PIRATES. MY FRIENDS
AND PIRATES AND CATS - IT COMES DOWN
TO COMRADES KNOWN AND ELSEWHERE

RED EPIC
2015





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