

ARCHIVES OF THE FUTURE : THE DEAD RISE UP !



Our passion is memory, fundamental in our lives and an integral part of our struggles. What would we be without landmarks, without elders to pass on knowledge and experience to us? We exist because we belong to a continuum: we build the present and trace out the contours of the future, even as we inherit that invaluable past.

Specifically, our prime concern is knowledge about resistance, about the struggle against exploitation and its corollaries, dispossession, which deprives us of our ability to ensure our own existence, and domination (like that of men over women). All those past struggles leave traces: oral (word-of-mouth, discussions, etc.), written (e.g., newspapers, brochures, leaflets), video (militant films and clips) or audio (radio programs or news reports, for example).

We are looking for such fragments from the past, that immense, far-flung patchwork in which each piece has its importance and specific place. In this undertaking, we do not favor any particular magazine, newspaper, group or tendency. We compile and disseminate documents produced not only by groups upholding anarchy (of different shades), autonomy/ies, left communism, situationism, factions in the left-libertarian and anarcho-communist movements, etc., but also by various organizations converging around specific struggles—workers, employees, unemployed, prisoners, patients fighting the healthcare system, women, and others.

Despite some differing sympathies, the collective's members share a common passion—seeking out **undiscovered** written traces of previous revolutionary experiences, many of which we still need to track down—and the desire to make them widely accessible.

The reasons for the undiscovered material are varied, e.g. newspapers with a small circulation, brochures that target a narrow audience, poor quality paper, and it often ends up forgotten at the back of a basement, where moisture and mold take their toll, or even, sadly, at the bottom of a trash bin.

Material may likewise remain undiscovered when buried in university or other institutes' collections, which restrict access to a handful of people.

Another far more disturbing reason for undiscovered material can be the failure to grasp the importance of memory, thereby sharpening the break with the past. The latter is drained of its substance and, at best, considered a museum piece. As if the present, triumphant in perpetual immediacy, somehow liquidates all our ties with previous generations. Indeed, this society's peculiarity is to cultivate rootless, timeless generations, where everything connected to the past becomes outmoded, obsolete. We reject this negation of our roots, of the continuum reaching across generations.

True, the struggle against exploitation and domination in a given period generates particular forms which are determined by the various components set in motion and which, today, cannot be reproduced in their formal expressions. However, it is vital to understand that the struggle in its essence remains unchanged. Hence, rediscovering the past, even very recent, can teach us much of value and arm us more effectively for our present and future combats.

Transmitting and effectively reclaiming the past

From the start, even before our collective was created, documents were collected so that they could be circulated and appropriated by all. Several avenues were explored, which ultimately led to the creation of Archives Autonomies and the group which continues to run the website today.

We may in the future decide to disseminate certain texts and documents through other vehicles than our website. However, given our limited material capabilities, our approach has thus far been mainly "virtual," complicating contacts and discussions alike. This limitation is imposed by the form we chose for making the archives accessible and by the small size of our group.

Today, we would like to invite anyone who might be interested in our project to join us. We suggest you visit our website to get a more precise idea of its content. It is constantly evolving and grows almost weekly, as we discover old material and make new contacts. Although digitizing all this material takes time, lots of time, what slows us down most is the extremely laborious and sometimes burdensome proofreading process. Were more people involved, we could get more documents online and more readers could appropriate the memory of our struggles, which are owned by no one, not even our collective. We address our appeal to anyone who has piles of newspaper or brochures tucked away in an attic or basement and doesn't know what to do with them. We address it to anyone willing to devote time to transcribing and formatting the writings of those who preceded us down the winding path towards the destruction of the old world in which we live. We hope to hear from you!

If you're interested in finding out more about us, we encourage you to visit our website at www.archivesautonomies.org or to send us an email at collectifaut@archivesautonomies.org.

