

Rules & Regulations...Who needs them?

Fifth Estate Collective

1978

Nov. 7, 1976

On Sunday, November 7, 3,000 people had descended on the Piazza Vetra, Milan, taking the police, who were prepared for a routine operation, completely by surprise. Bursting into four cinemas, they soon mounted a demonstration some 4,000 strong. Following this, a price reduction was proposed for (movie) matinee performances. The response was a new demonstration, this time involving 52 of Milan's "youth circles," with their banners decorated with garish colors and drawings. The Apache emblem (a hatchet) in the forefront, flags, guitars, the pink and flowered flags of the feminist and gay groups.

The autonomous elements fought back in the assemblies asserting their real needs, their desire for a better life, the importance of occupying houses, and the refusal to sign away their whole lives for a wage. "We are coming out of the ghetto. We shall reconquer the city... Enough of patience; from now on we shall be violent."

The assembly turned into a festival, the festival turned into an itinerant assembly. Murals began to appear, theater in the streets, actions of all types.

Milan, Dec. 7, 1976

The city center was a fortress defended by 5,000 policemen, plus the special anti-terrorist brigades; an unprecedented show of force. The object was to defend the opening night of "Othello" at La Scala (In 1968 a thousand students outside La Scala bombarded the elegantly dressed patrons with rotten eggs). This time the protestors were the "Proletarian Youth Circles" who were provoked by the fact that the same people who were calling for sacrifice upon sacrifice to save the Italian economy, had paid astronomical sums (100,000 lire per ticket) to attend the opera.

Feb. 17, 1977

50,000 young people come out on the streets to demonstrate their refusal to accept any "historic compromise," any bureaucratic mediation as a solution to their problems: unemployment, the yearning for a free life, the rejection of all forms of authority, etc... Here then, is a difference between the young people of May '68 and the Metropolitan Indians, the feminists and the ex-militants of the leftist groups. The former were the beginning of a quantitative and qualitative renewal of the revolutionary movement; they took the first steps, and they saw in Cohn-Bendit and others the spokesmen of the revolution. Today, the fringe groups of 1977... have no representatives.

The movement must find its expression only in the assemblies and in the streets, through the different and equally important voices of all who have something to say. No bureaucracy, not even symbolic. No vanguard, just autonomous action.

These groups are impregnated with the practice of direct action and libertarian ideas, but this does not define them exactly. Nor do the groups find the need for a precise definition beyond the expression of originality in word and action.

MANIFESTO OF THE METROPOLITAN INDIANS

We demand:

The abolition of borstals (as a step on the way to the abolition of all prisons).

The requisition of all empty buildings for the establishment of youth centers and communal alternatives to family life.

The total decriminalisation, irrespective of misuse, of marijuana, mescaline and LSD, including their distribution and development by the movement.

Wages for laziness.

1 Km² (square kilometre) land for every person and animal.

The abolition of the age of majority so that all children that want to leave home are free to do so, even if they can only crawl.

The immediate release of all animals from flats and cages.

The destruction of zoos and the right of captive animals to return to their homelands:

The destruction of the Altar of the Fatherland (a monument in Rome) and its replacement with every kind of vegetation with space for animals and a lake for swans, ducks, frogs and fish.

The peoples assemblies propose to organise, starting in the community, anti-family militias to free young people, especially girls, from patriarchal tyranny.

This article was excerpted from the Spanish magazine AJOBLANCO and was translated by Barry Smerin/ZERO.



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