



Jouissance
 An Except from *Blessed is the Flame* by Serafinzki
 (a text on anarcho-nihilism and resistance inside nazi concentration camps)

Despite its gloomy connotations, the commitment to pure negation finds its most interesting manifestations as a joyful, creative, and limitless project. Most notably, *Baëden* utilizes the French word *jouissance*, which directly translates to “enjoyment,” but takes on a variety of connotations related to those “uncivilized desire,” those

again, the CCF insist that “what really counts is the strength we feel every time we don’t bow our heads, every time we destroy the false idols of civilization, every time our eyes meet those of our comrades along illegal paths, every time that our hands set fire to the symbols of Power. In those moments we don’t ask ourselves: ‘Will we win? Will we lose?’ In those moments we just fight.”

Jouissance is that which animates resistance for its own sake so that even if we have no future, we can still find life today.

aspects of our existence which “escape representation,” a “shattering of identity and law,” and that which “shatters our subjective enslavement to capitalist civilization. *Jouissance* is an ecstatic energy, felt but never captured, that pushes us away from any form of domination, representation, or restraint, and compels us towards fierce wildness and unmitigated recalcitrance. It is “the process that momentarily sets us free from our fear of death” and which manifests as a “blissful enjoyment of the present,” or a “joy which we cannot name.”

chose to do with it, however strategic, ambitious, or optimistic we may feel, our understanding of why we resist can still be solidly rooted in a place of *jouissance*. I think the nihilist position leaves space for victories, while still recognizing that our capacity to win is quite different from our commitment to liberatory action. Even when we run out of optimistic rhetoric and inspiring stories, our lives can still be oriented against the grain of society. Even from a place of utter hopelessness, we can still find the *jouissance* in our bodies to attack. Once

Jouissance is the richness of life evoked by resistance, the spirit that allowed Mária Jakobovics to continue her acts of sabotage despite the sting of the club or the threat of the noose, and the spirit that perhaps allows many of us to lead lives of resistance in absolutely overwhelming circumstances. It is the visceral experience of negation as ecstatic liberation. Although the spirit of *Jouissance* animates many anarchist texts, nihilism seems to approach it with the most naked embrace; for many nihilists, *Jouissance* is *the* core

our eyes in combat.” This emphasis on the act, without attachment to its outcomes, is one of the aspects of nihilism that has made it such a puzzling force for other anarchists. Critics of nihilism see this sort of emphasis on *jouissance* and negation as simply a form of indulgent retreat into the realm of personal experience, “because it hurts too much to hope for the improbable, to imagine a future we can’t believe in.” While this critique has some merit, I think it largely misses the strength of the nihilist position and the beauty of *jouissance*. Whatever we may

of anarchism. Without expectations of the world to come, without deference to moral code, and without adherence to a right way to do things, nihilism embraces the act of resistance as a goal in itself. Through this lens, the joy of pissing in a Nazi rocket cannot easily be measured against its risks or results — in *Jouissance*, we find a richness of life unattainable under the status quo. Without using the word explicitly, some imprisoned members of the CCF describe *Jouissance* perfectly: “Neither victory nor defeat is important, but only the beautiful shining of