

Stockholm syndrome

On May 13, somewhere in Europe, a man is murdered by the police in a poor neighbourhood. He's not a boy and the incident doesn't take place in an area known for its level of conflict. Yet another man has fallen under the bullets of the State. This time it happens in Husby, in the northern suburbs of Stockholm, the paradise of social-democratic management of dominion. We are not in Paris, London, Brussels or Berlin. But what's the difference? The rich and their watchdogs are everywhere and everywhere there exist also individuals ready to arm themselves with courage in order to express their revolt with determination. Even in Sweden.

Less than a week later, in the night of May 19, some cars start burning in the same neighbourhood of Stockholm. Police and fire brigade are welcomed with stones throwing. The following day anger turns into riots, shop windows, public buildings' windows and schools' windows begin cracking under the blows of projectiles.

In spite of calls for calm, appeals to 'civic responsibility' and politicians' promises, years of humiliation and the blood of the old man executed by the police cannot be bought so easily. For the third night in a row, almost 30 vehicles are set on fire, but not only. Two schools and a cultural centre are also set on fire in an arson that becomes contagious. In Jakobsberg, a suburbs located north-west of the capital, actions begin to talk directly with one another: a police station is attacked. Words are not necessary as targeted destruction speaks for itself.

On the fourth night, about 90 fires are set everywhere in different spots of the city. The fire brigade run everywhere protected by the police and hampered by small groups. In Husby, 300 collaborationists carry out raids in order to contain the clashes. But what are a few hundred cops and citizens trying to sedate a riot in the face of the determination of dozens of insurgents? In the absence of oxygen in the neighbourhood where everything started, joy spreads a little bit further: another three police stations are attacked, one in Kista, north of Stockholm, and the other two in the south of the city. Police lose their first patrol car, which get burned down, and stumble into blinding lasers besides banging against stones and molotov. 700 kilometres away, in the third largest city in Sweden (Malmö), more arsonists join the dance of revolt.

On Thursday May 23 riots continue. The Stockholm police start being tired and wait impatiently for announced reinforcement. In more and more areas of the capital fires do not only strike cars (hop, 70 more!), but also the interests of the State and the bosses: in Rinkeby, Södertälje, Norsborg, Tensta (a school), Kista (a school), Älvsjö (a police station), Jordbro (a shopping mall).

Outside Stockholm the cops are attacked in the cities of Borås, Larskrona and Malmö. Insurance companies begin raising the alarm and assess the damages caused by less than a week of revolt to 'several hundred thousand euro'.

Shall we stop here or shall we continue to count the nights? Well then, a last one in the streets, the sixth one. Stockholm is full of cops and many are crying out to victory. But it is not that simple and other cities of Sweden awaken with the taste of ashes in their mouths: in Orebro, for example, a school is burned down and a police station too, while in Kista another school goes up in smoke.

So do these not too distant riots that tell us something more here? Few mass clashes with the cops and many mobile groups. Dozen vehicles burnt in order to attract different uniforms, then agile ambushes. And above all the ability to get a chance, that of destroying what oppresses us every day: a school here, a police station there, a shopping mall elsewhere. In Sweden some individuals relatively isolated but armed with determination and a bit of imagination managed to spread their anger for long nights. They used the inflamed language that spoke directly to the hearts and minds of other rebels for hundreds of kilometres. And if in a few days all this managed to provoke some cracks in the ice of apparent pacification in a big Nordic country, perhaps other unknown people can also feel attracted by its destructive beauty? A sort of new Stockholm syndrome which could contaminate the whole Europe...

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