

ANARKIISTA DEBATO

Magazine of IAF No. 0.06 £1.50



all wars are against us
we are
against
all wars

INSIDE:

**REPRESSION IN
BELARUS, BRITISH
AFED, PARIS RIOTS,
TIERRA Y LIBERTAD,
PERMANENT WAR
AND HUMANITARIAN
INTERVENTION,
AND MUCH MORE.**



PRESENTATION

You have in your hands the first number of the magazine of the International of Anarchist Federations. Lots of people around the world will be reading these same lines, in many different languages. Though each member federation translates and edits the magazine, they do so with the same content.

In the following pages you will find information on the situation of a big part of the anarchist movement. When reading these lines, bear in mind that comrades write from their own language and experiences. From the threat of repression, as in Belarus, to the unstoppable hope of starting something new, as in the german speaking group. You should also avoid assuming that federations correspond to countries. As anarchists we do not recognise borders or states. The federations group together people who share either a common language (AFed, FAF, FdA...) or a similar culture (Iberian FAI, CSAF...) and often go beyond national limitations.

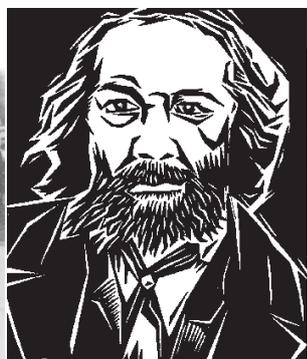
This magazine that you are reading now has been possible thanks to the effort of many around many countries. It is truly a communal effort, breaking down borders and boundaries. It fills us with hope of how much we can achieve thanks to international solidarity.

For freedom and solidarity!
Long life the International!



CONTENTS

- 03. IAF
- 06. VII CONGRESS
- 08. CONGRESS DOCUMENTS
- 15. AFED, THOUGHT & STRUGGLE
- 23. CSAF, CZECH AND SLOVAK FED.
- 26. FAB, BELARUS FED.
- 32. FdA, GERMAN SPEAKERS FED.
- 33. FLA, ARGENTINIAN FED.
- 34. ORIGINS OF FLA
- 41. FAF, FRENCH SPEAKING FED.
- 44. DECROISSANCE, SKETCH FOR A DEBATE
- 48. RIOTS IN PARIS
- 50. FAI, IBERIAN ANARCHIST FED.



International of Anarchist Federations

Striving for a global anarchist movement in thought and action.

The IAF fights for:

- The abolition of all forms of authority whether economic, political, social, religious, cultural or sexual.
- The construction of a free society, without classes, states or borders, founded on anarchist federalism and mutual aid. (from the Statement of Principles of the International Anarchist Federation founded in 1968 in Carrara, Italy).

The above statement of principles sets out clearly what the IAF hopes to achieve- an ambitious programme, but the only one that can achieve the goals of freedom, peace and justice that humans have struggled for, in different ways, since the beginning of our existence as a species. Though not calling themselves anarchists, people with anarchist aims and practices have always existed in every part of the world. However, it is only in the 19th century that organised, theoretically-explicit anarchism emerged with the founding of the first International Federation of Anarchists in St. Imier in 1871. It was founded by both workers (many from the watchmakers in St. Imier itself) and international anarchist activists such as Kropotkin who had had enough of the authoritarian nature of the Marxist international. It is significant that even though anarchists formed a relatively small movement in each country, they immediately sought to organise on an international level. The IAF considers itself the heirs of this tradition.

Early anarchism had an international aspect for many reasons. With repression in different countries at different times, anarchists often found themselves forced into exile. Though obviously not something they wanted, it did have the effect of

bringing anarchists from different countries more in contact with each other. Internationalism was also the only way to deal with the continual nationalist conflicts in Europe, culminating in the two world wars. Though a test for many anarchists, an internationalism that supported no State was a vision that they had to cling to. Anarchism also spread outside Europe as a result of the waves of immigration in the late 19th and early 20th century. In the 'New World' workers of every nationality had to band together in order to organise against horrific working and living conditions. The capitalists relied on the fact that there would be language and cultural barriers between different national groups as a way of ensuring that they wouldn't organise against their treatment. An international approach was therefore crucial to the success of any workers' organisation. The Spanish Revolution also required international support, both during the struggle itself and afterwards when many anarchists were killed, imprisoned or exiled.

Today, the need for international solidarity and co-operation amongst anarchists is as vital as ever. Every aspect of our lives is woven into a global system of economic, political and cultural domination. This can lead to a feeling of helplessness as our anger



cannot be vented directly against those making decisions affecting our lives. The people of Afghanistan and Iraq are thrown into turmoil as a result of the interference of both the US military intervention and Saudi Arabian- imported Islam. GM crops are imposed on reluctant farmers from Brazil to Poland. Islands in the Pacific are on the verge of disappearance because of the greed for energy elsewhere. People's jobs and security depend on fickle international money markets. And even remote tribal people are losing their very way of life as a result of world demand for the resources on their land. But we are not helpless. We need to make international anarchism our weapon.

The most obvious form internationalism takes is international solidarity, protests at global summits and conferences that bring together anarchists from many different countries. The IAF has always been dedicated to helping comrades from countries who are less well-off financially, such as raising money for the Argentinians or supporting Russian and Eastern European comrades in their efforts to attend international meetings. Support can also be

much more concrete like when the Italians helped to organise the first meeting of anarchists

of both east and west. The IAF, through its member federations has also been involved in helping to organise international protests in Evian, Brussels, Genoa, Paris, Scotland and Prague. Comrades also have travelled to support the anarchist May Day in Poland and the meet with comrades in Russia.

An international perspective, however, does not mean that we spend all of our time supporting other people's struggles or flying off to global meetings and protests. Firstly, there is a limit to how much financial support comrades from the richer countries can give. The country as a whole may be well-off, but anarchist comrades are usually not. It is a struggle to find money to produce

newspapers and magazines as well as finance campaigns. Also, travelling to other countries for political purposes can be as great a burden on an unemployed British comrade as it can be on someone from Eastern Europe or Latin America. In addition, power may appear to lie in the hands of those who attend the 'global summits', but in fact, this is really only the public face of power. Organising antiummit protests is also only the public face of anarchism- all dependent on how the bourgeois media want to portray us. That doesn't mean that these protests aren't important; they provide anarchists with the opportunity of feeling something of our collective power on an international level. The power of the ruling class lies elsewhere- manifested in every aspect of our lives. We feel it when we keep our mouth shut rather than talking back to our boss, in the advertisements that bombard us to consume, when we can't get access to clean water because it is someone's private property and when we are forced to conform to an exam system because it is the only way we can 'get ahead'. It is the daily resistance to this power that will lead to the building of a

movement that can take on the ultimate objective of overthrowing capitalism and the State. And

Organising international solidarity to carry forward the struggle!

this resistance necessarily takes place on a local level. So what is the role for anarchist internationalism?

The IAF provides a means for comrades from around the world to communicate. We are confronting the same enemy everywhere and learning about the struggles of others can give us ideas for our own struggles. Within Europe, the vast experience of comrades from Italy, Spain and France can help those who have a much shorter history of anarchist struggle such as those in Eastern Europe. However, the comrades in Eastern Europe, not weighed down by tradition are able to offer new perspectives and ideas for struggle. Good communication can also be

revolutionary if it inspires. Just to know that people elsewhere are fighting back is important to those who may be experiencing a downturn in struggle. This knowledge can help people just keep going or it could motivate people to launch a major fight back themselves. The most important thing is to hear of successes. Spreading these stories of successful resistance is a major role of international anarchist propaganda. The struggles of the Argentinean working class were welcomed enthusiastically by people in Europe. Hearing about workers just ignoring bosses, banks and politicians and just doing things themselves confirmed the faith anarchists have always had in the power of workers to self-organise.

It is also important to have an international forum where more theoretical discussions can take place. Learning about what is happening in a variety of countries can help



us to develop our analysis of the situation facing us. We need to have a thorough understanding of the political, economic and social realities so that we can organise more effectively and anticipate the strategies of our enemy. The experience of Venezuelans with Chavez, Brazil with Lula, Britain with Blair all help to reinforce the anarchist antagonism to reformism, a doctrine that seems to think that a government can bring about social change. The Italian experience of 'insurreccionalism', where a few self-proclaimed saviours of the working class have contributed to repression of the anarchist movement, should be useful for those who are tempted to undertake such individualist action.

Internationalism remains vital as a weapon against the rise in ethnic and national conflict just as it was during WWI and WWII. Comrades in the former Yugoslavia, though organised as separate national federations, are beginning to come together on a wider basis, showing that anarchists are above the tragic divisions of the rest of the working class that have caused so much pain and suffering. By providing a framework where anarchists from different countries and ethnic groups can come together, IAF can facilitate the building of an undivided workers' movement.

The IAF recently had its Congress where it reconfirmed its commitment to international solidarity and developed a number of initiatives to facilitate better communication and co-ordination. This Congress also welcomed the presence of so many comrades from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as well as delegates from Latin America. We hope to greatly increase our links with these areas. We can all benefit from learning from the wealth of experience of those comrades, who have had to struggle in such difficult circumstances, and would like to increase our ability to offer support and solidarity.

**For International Solidarity,
The IAF Secretariat.**

VII

The Seventh Congress of the International of Anarchist Federations

C

The strong red and black thread of the international

The Seventh Congress of the International Federation of Anarchists (IAF) was held over three days in April 2004 in Besançon, France. It gathered over a hundred comrades, representing the member organizations as well as other groups with whom IAF co-operates and collaborates.

In this way, it was possible to have delegates from the 'historical' federations (those which have been in IAF since its foundation in 1968), such as the Iberian Federation of Spain and Portugal, the Francophone Federation from France and Belgium, the Italian Federation and the Argentinean Libertarian Federation, but also of those more recently formed –such as the Forum of German speakers- and those which have joined this very year, like the Federation of Great Britain and Ireland, and the Czech and Slovak Federations. There was also a delegation from the Association of Movements (ADA) from Russia, a group, which has been active since the mid nineties in different places of this extensive country. Their membership application was accepted at this Congress.

Other groups represented include delegations from the Belarusian Federation, the Commission of Anarchist Relations of Venezuela, Anarchist Workshop from Uruguay, the historical British fortnightly, Freedom, and Swiss from Space Noir. Others had expressed an interest in attending but were regretfully unable to do so. These include the Federation of Anarchists from Serbia, the Slovenian Anarchist Federation, the Korean anarchists and Libertarian Utopia from Bolivia. There were many greetings received in support of the Congress: from the IWA secretariat to the Brazilian Libertarian Movement, from the Poznań Group of the Polish Federation to the A-Infos Collective, from the Anarchist

and Anarcho-syndicalist of Minnesota to the Anarcho-syndicalist Magazine from Philadelphia in the United States, from the Workers Solidarity Alliance of New York to the Woorder van Rebellen of Amsterdam, from the Bulgarian Youth Federation to the Community of the South of Montevideo, from the Sao Paulo Libertarian Collective to the Rio de Janeiro Federation, from the Germinal Group from Pecho in Chile to the OSL of Argentina, from the Portuguese magazine Utopia to the many, many individuals who we can't mention here. The Besançon group of the French Anarchist Federation did an outstanding job of dealing with the practicalities of the Congress, organizing food and accommodation and simultaneous translation in four languages. Member federations contributed to the costs, though the French Federation, as host federation took on a major part of the financial responsibility. The wide spread participation in this Congress is an indication of the inescapable need for internationalism in order to effectively confront the warmongering aggressiveness of capitalism and the State.

The Congress was prepared over the last three years in a series of meetings held in a variety of European cities, including Milan, Montpellier, Mannheim, Prague and London, of the Secretariat and the 'Relations Commission' of the International. The Besançon Congress took place in a particularly constructive atmosphere, enlivened by the large numbers of young

people present. The positive atmosphere enabled the delegates to clarify the issues facing the international and to develop common strategies and points of reference for our activities in the near future. A special public meeting on Proudhon, a native of Besançon, was held on the eve of the Congress, well-advertised on the streets of the town. The Congress, itself, alternated work in general assemblies and small discussion groups, enabling the biggest possible participation in the debates and common plenaries. The Congress ended at midday on Monday the twelfth, with the approval of the documents drawn up by the participants, some of which are reproduced in these pages, and the transfer of the IAF secretariat from the Italian Federation to the Anarchist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland.



Today, Besançon's anarchist scene is as good as ever, boasting a local FAF group, its own bookshop, and a larger than usual amount of brilliant comrades and great people.

However, apart from the resolutions that were approved, it is important to highlight the presence of a clear will to co-operate, to build up a dynamic, linked to political and social realities, without concessions of any kind or abandonment of anarchist principles. In the same way, exchange between the generations is a sign of the vitality of today's anarchism, which confirms itself, again, as the most stimulating thinking, in terms of defining new action parameters to bring about the society of the free and equal. We've left certain of having made the acquaintances, gathered the knowledges, shared the intentions and lived together the (few) festive moments- the joint singing of anarchist songs- all of which have characterized the congress and which will certainly bring new spirits to IAF's actions, as well as repaying us for the effort of getting to Besançon.

M.V. (outgoing Secretary- Italian Anarchist Federation)

The connexions of Besançon with anarchism are old. In fact Proudhon, one of the first libertarian thinkers, and the one to give anarchism its name, was born there in 1809. Coming from the working class, he gave economics, at the time of industrial revolution, a whole new scope. The emerging bourgeoisie of the time found his statements outrageous, particularly the most famous of them all: "La Propriété, c'est le vol". Private property is theft.



IAF AND ITS ROLE IN THE INTERNATIONAL ANARCHIST AND LIBERTARIAN MOVEMENT

The Congress of the IAF, meeting today in Besancon, confirms that anarchism is the relevant response to the problems in the global situation. Anarchism, if it wants to be involved in its environment, must not forget that it evolves constantly in relation to the social reality and it must define its practices and its strategies for action in relation to these same realities.

Oppression and exploitation knows no borders, and anarchism will not be achieved except at the world level. It is for this reason that organized anarchists have created an appropriate tool- the IAF. We are unanimous in considering that the IAF cannot be an end in itself. Rather, it is an instrument to co-ordinate international struggles and for this reason should contribute to organizing federally the international anarchist movement. The increase in membership of the IAF, as well as the emergence of new groups that look with interest towards the IAF project, are a sign of the vitality of organized social anarchism.

The IAF is a federal organization, which exists through its local sections. The autonomous development of these local federations is a guarantee of their freedom and their capacity to effectively struggle within their own territory. It is inside actual political and social situations in which they find themselves that each federation chooses its own path which it judges to be the most appropriate at any given moment of the development of anarchism.

The momentum given to anarchism in the new social and cultural struggles has produced a growth, not only in numbers, but also in the capacity to organize anarchist

actions. However, these do not always translate into clear objectives and libertarian practices. On the one hand, there is the persistence of nihilist groups without political and social perspectives, and on the other hand, there is the temptation to adopt reformist practices and to collaborate with ruling class institutions and organizations.

We think that anarchist organizations must pre-figure the future society. We cannot help but reject the principle that the majority can impose their policies on the entire organization as well as the logic of electoralism that comes from this. This critique constitutes the basis of anarchism as it was expressed at the St. Imier Congress of 1872.

It is in reinforcing our links, in exchanging information and co-operating with multifaceted anarchist organizations, in the framework of the associative pact of our International, that we can construct social anarchism relevant to the contemporary world. We reaffirm the importance of the development of practices, which are non-hierarchical and based on self-organization. These are far from vanguardist practices, which are foreign to organized social anarchism.

The emancipation of the workers will be the work of the workers themselves. The coherence between the means and the end is not only an ethical issue, but a distinctive feature of a libertarian social and political organization. This observation leads the IAF to adopt an open and constructive attitude with regards to the components of the anarchist movements in the world.

VII CONGRESS DOCUMENTS

ANALYSIS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

- **Permanent war as the paradigm of state and capitalist domination**

Today the logic of domination and profit has the support of all the powers behind it, united only in their will to starve, humiliate and massacre the dispossessed classes. In addition, ideological mechanisms, the very same neoliberalism prevailing every where, are relatively secondary to the staging of a vicious fight to control and dominate, where the aims are immediate survival and the destruction of the enemy at any costs, even if that implies the destruction, in the short term, of the very possibility of life on the planet.

In recent years we have seen the reaffirmation of the paradigm of 'permanent war'. Emerging after the spectacular attacks on the Pentagon and the Twin Towers, it was perfected in the following period, defining a scheme that makes war a permanent feature of the political scene. The pretext for this war on terror has become the pivot of a warmongering politics aimed at asserting the 'right' of the strongest, even if in contraction of the feeble international law, bringing into disrepute any residual media use of the UN.

The permanent, preemptive, global war is but the latest way in which the domination of the strongest is secured, asserting the goals of those using, exploiting and oppressing the biggest part of the planet's population. These objectives are defined according to positions in a very obvious game, even if they are ignored on the propaganda side. The main one is the control of the energy resources (not only oil, but also water and the necessary minerals for satellite control technology, either civil or military) and of the infrastructure of supply and communication.

The war machinery used in the most strategic areas by North American interests guarantees that the USA maintains a primary

role, on a purely economical level, in their competition with Europe, Japan, Russia, China and India, who do not have the military means or the autonomy required, to counter the hegemonic pretensions of Washington. A plausible consequence of this could be the reshaping of the ambitions of the historical allies of the USA, leading to rethinking of the relationship with the hawkish American administration.

European countries, in the past few years, have played the role, always more difficult and ambiguous, of allies-competitors of the United States and of their warmongering policies. Having neither an offensive military force, nor the capacity for effective political coordination, the European Union countries gravitate between the intention of making their own military pole and, the alliance, on a competitive ground, with the belligerent policy of the USA.

Italy has left behind the non-interventionist role typical of the Christian-Democrat period and that of supporter of Anglo-American imperialism, which was implied in its mediation between it and the Arab world. Today it has an active imperialistic role in the European and world chessboard, with interests of its own to pursue, facilitated by its Mediterranean location: from the Albanian protectorate to the reconstruction intervention on the war-devastated areas (Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan...) through the lucrative participation in the manufacture and trade of weapons. The reshaping of the Atlantic alliances by the centre-right government is, in fact, complementary to the regional imperialistic role of the Italian government, which in this way can try to be allowed a 'free hand' on its protectorates, in exchange for the active support of the United States' warmongering policies.

- **From humanitarian war to permanent war.**

The end of the Cold War represents a very important change, not only because of the change from a bipolar world to a monopolar one, but also, and mainly, because of the need to reformulate the idea of the enemy. In fact, the fall of the ‘Empire of Evil’ makes it impossible to continue thinking of the enemy as someone who threatens your existence, displaying a military power capable of destroying the planet and humanity. Of the two main features of the idea of the ‘enemy’, that it be evil and have the ability and the will to be a direct threat, it is the second one that seems to be less relevant now, as no important danger threatens the only superpower. It was therefore impossible for the United States and its allies to think of war as of some extreme measure in the face of a deadly threat. From this point of view a new war paradigm starts forming, a new conception of the role and purpose of war machinery, which otherwise risked having its purpose quite redefined, as a result of a loss of legitimacy.

In this way, the logic of ‘humanitarian’ action is outlined. Instead of conflicting with the old rule of ‘non-interference in the internal affairs’ of a country, curiously enough, it reinforces it. ‘Humanitarian’



action turns out to be the useful excuse, always ready to be formulated in a more precise way in international law terms. The humanitarian principle invoked to justify the war in Kosovo contrasts with the ‘non-interference in the internal affairs’ rule when it came to the massacre taking place in Chechnya or the war on the Kurds, not to mention the always bitter conflict between Palestine and Israel. The paradigm of humanitarian war points to the issue of the ‘just’ war, that which is fought to impose a truth, an order and a world vision. It is however, a ‘dirty’ war because its victims are the civilian refugees and inevitably leads to more deaths, tortures, rapes, more homeless people without hope, unwilling pawns in a game decided somewhere else, in the name of someone else’s ‘truth’. This propaganda tool has been only marginally useful for the emotional mobilization needed to produce consensus in western populations, particularly Americans, because the ‘humanitarian’ is clearly unable to achieve the stated aims of the conflict.

The experience of ‘humanitarian’ war has shown abundantly that it is a perverse mechanism, which increases the evils that is meant to cure, staging a drama in which blood and destruction are the obscene scenery which hide the backstage from the

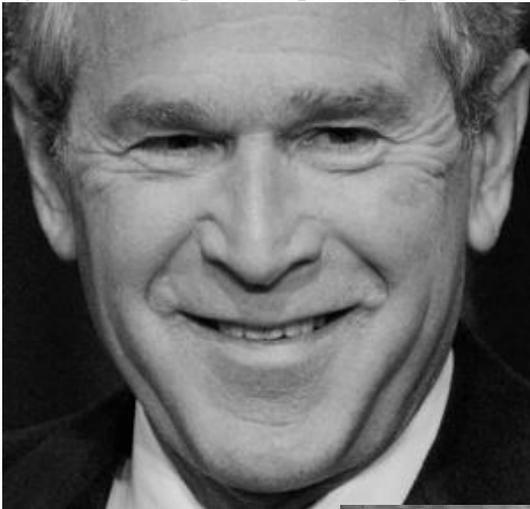
Trick or Treat. Euphemism is at the root of this society’s discourse and soldiers do not kill any more, but just save lives. Surely it is only antisocial elements who point at the big guns at their backs and remind the viewers that guns are made with just one purpose: kill....and that a soldier is a professional killer.

viewer, the empty space behind the curtains. September the eleventh provided the occasion, whether directly orchestrated or ignobly used, to make the qualitative jump needed for the development of the United

States imperialist will: its assertion of unchallenged military superiority on the board game of the international relations. The idea of the enemy is again reshaped: it is evil, in fact very evil, and in a position to directly and defiantly strike against in the Unites States territory and that of its allies. It cannot be identified with any state institution, but is able to infiltrate, direct, adapt itself and make alliances with all those states which are not ready to accept the global leadership of the United States. An enemy like this opens the path to permanent

forms of nationalism, racism, populism and democratic culture.

In this war, which in its most recent version can also be 'preemptive', the enemy does not need to prove its evil nature by any deeds, but it must be fought because it IS evil. The reasoning around which the attack on Iraq was organized is a good example of this. The presupposition of the possession of weapons of mass destruction is reason enough to declare a war. The evident dissymmetry between the attacker (who they 'know' possesses weapons of mass



war, against the 'rogue' states and against all those who, from the interior, threaten the world order. This enemy adopts the form of the Islamic extremist. Islamic extremism makes it possible to define an enemy, on the basis of the classic opposition between friend and foe in western culture. It is an empty category, which only exists in opposition, because it lacks a sense and an identity of its own. In fact, it revolves around conservative Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant, the most nihilistic liberalism and all the traditional



destruction) and the attacked, falls in the realm of 'just war' as it is carried out because the enemy is evil and, therefore, potentially dangerous. It is evil and therefore a natural ally to the terrorism which attacks women, children and defenseless men. Never mind that this same definition could be applied to the policies of the United States and its allies. Is it not, in any instance, the aim in war to terrorize the population of the enemy State in such a way that resistance is crushed? The immoral nature of war leads to the immoral nature of state and to the

Unscrupled politicians and killer armies. A deadly combination...

impossibility of making a fair world order by just reforming the structure.

- **External war and internal war.**

The paradigm of permanent war makes victims not only amongst the populations of the ‘rogue’ states of the time, but also amongst oppositionists of the existent order. Pacifists, antimilitarists, workers on strike, and antiracists are equated to terrorists in a propaganda operation that is reminiscent of the accusations of collaborationism made

peoples and immigrants, and to crush any opposition.

- **Internal war.**

The very terms of the internal war changed immediately after the collapse of Soviet ‘communism’. The fall of the ‘alternative’ to private capitalism allowed the Statist system to present capitalism as the only future. In the same way, the threat of a popular coup has been redefined. Capitalism, firmly supported by the State, has launched a staged attack against the modest workers’ victories, characteristics of the social-democrat legacy. Thatcherism and Reaganism fully speeded up this attack, which, after the fall of the Soviet régime, has been a constant feature of the political and social scene. The neoliberal offensive has been applied to many fronts. The causalisation of working relationships has ended the



Alfonso holding the black flag of FAI for peace.

To prevent the spread of capitalist misery and devastation...

Globalise the struggle through international solidarity...

during the last century to anyone not accepting the logic of war, militarism or the State. In the United States, the passing of the Patriot Act, which opened the possibility of extrajudicial detentions of mere suspects, as well as the later and substantial militarization of American social life, are the unmistakable signs of the fact that the politics of never-ending war have finally infiltrated the very core of the biggest seen a worldwide increase, demonstrated in the repressive measures on the ‘internal front’, aimed to forcibly discipline workers, indigenious



stable employment conditions, which had enabled workers to develop collective,

self-organized methods of struggle. Under the pretext of modernization and reduction of costs, many areas, traditionally left of capitalist logic, are now opportunities for exploitation. Privatizations of services, from healthcare to education, transport to communications, are examples of this process.

The answer to this war front opened by capitalism against humanity has been an increase in social confrontation on a global level with the working class fighting back with strikes and other forms of resistance. The anarchist movement has always been present in these struggles, its role strengthened by its original initiatives and its capacity to shed light on the global nature of the ongoing processes. Our resistance must be as global as capitalism is.

Both the external and internal war have the same fronts and have been fought with the same determination and ferocity. The militarization of social life has instigated legislation that goes beyond the limits of democratic normality, without facing much opposition from internal conflict. These are made possible thanks to the gigantic anesthetic operation emerging out of the terrorist 'emergency'. Fear is a powerful factor that permits the criminalization of any social resistance, however minimal. The recent security bills passed in France and Great Britain are examples of this, as they equate terrorism with any social struggles that are happening at this time in those countries.

- **Globalization of struggles.**

So-called economic globalization is but another stage in capitalist development, as it seeks to expand and spread the tentacles of exploitation more efficiently on a planetary level. For us, globalization must mean globalization of the class struggle.

Inside the antiglobalization movement, as is shown by the media, there are Christians, Marxists, Social- Democrats and other reformist groups which have too often collaborated with capitalism to make globalization stronger. These are often the

same groups which work for the development of capitalism in the Third World, interfering in communities and pushing them to destroy their own identity and self-sufficient economies.



The consequent migrations from the poorer societies turn out to be only a cheap workforce in the First World, bringing down overall costs. A world in which immigrants are defined as 'illegal, their freedom and human dignity denied, exists because of the lack of a piece of paper. Facing this, the IAF cannot help but keep its identity and objectives: generalized self-management of society, abolition of private property and the construction of an anarchist society. It is therefore very important that we back the anarchist movements in the poorer countries, opening autonomous communication and knowledge channels, beyond the system's mass media, as a first step towards a more widespread implantation of anarchism.

- **War against life.**

Capitalist production has led to the declaration of a war against life itself; a war that threatens the survival of the whole planet.

This is happening on two fronts. On the first, is the looting of resources, pollution and environmental devastation, the consequence of capitalist production. This system only considers profits, ignoring the fact that human beings are part of the ecosystem as well and that no one eats or breathes money. The other front is that of technological development following the agenda of the powers. On one side there is nuclear energy, whether civil or military, which can lead to a slow radioactive death or a devastating destruction. On the other, genetic manipulation colonizes life, looting traditional knowledges. The duty of anarchists is to side with those peoples fighting these aggressions.

- **Against moral order and religion.**

Every form of institutionalized belief is hierarchical and authoritarian, trying to impose its own moral rules on every person. Anarchists are strongly opposed to all such belief systems. Pretending to represent a non-existent monopoly on moral values, religions subtly try to interfere in individuals' private lives. Religions threaten their autonomy, denying their ability to directly solve their own problems. Those who believe in a heaven to come will not do anything to get better conditions now!!! Religion wars are still being fought in the name of a God, hiding ambitions of domination and conquest, very

evident in the close relationships between churches and States. Anarchists oppose all religions: Christian, Muslim...and any others. Our deep consideration for personal freedom does not prevent us from opposing religious beliefs and any form of hierarchy. As well as attacking individual autonomy, there is also the proliferation of rules eroding the freedom of, mainly, women and sexual minorities. These rules, that in many cases are also accepted by self-styled secular sectors of society, signal the reaffirmation of a religious and conformist ethics. They also bring about a strengthening of patriarchy, which is opposed by the anarchists as are all forms of domination.

obituary

Alfonso Nicolazzi

Some of us in the Anarchist Federation got to know Alfonso Nicolazzi over the last few years when we began attending meetings of the International of Anarchist Federations (IAF). Alfonso - Alfo to his Italian comrades - was always there with his check shirts and braces and his flat cap, and the nearly omnipresent cheroot. We first met him in Lyon, and then over the years, in other cities of France, in Germany, Britain and Italy.

Born in the countryside outside Stresa in the province of Verbania, Alfonso was very active in the *Collectivo dei lavoratori Alitalia*, one of the base unions of the airline Alitalia, in the 1960s. Thanks to his job as steward, he was able to master several languages, including English, French and Spanish. He developed many contacts with the Spanish anarchist movement in exile. He gave up a reasonably well-paid job to devote himself full time to the anarchist cause and to the *Federazione Anarchica Italiana (FAI)*. He moved in 1974 to that stronghold of Italian anarchism, Carrara, set among the marble quarries of the Apuan Alps. For the last thirty years he was closely associated with the editing and production of the FAI weekly paper, *Umanita Nova* (founded in 1920 by Errico Malatesta), running its printshop.

But Alfonso was not just a print worker. He was extremely active in the Carrara region in many struggles, including around the environment. He was extremely involved with international anarchist activity from the 80s. In April 1990 at Trieste, I remember him translating in several languages during a conference where anarchists from Western Europe met those from the emerging East European movements. He was a key member of the Commission of International Relations of the FAI and he had an important role in developing the work of the IAF. He loved to sing the old anarchist songs in his powerful voice. Equally, he loved the white wine of the Apuan region and was a *bon viveur*!

Just a few months ago, we attended a meeting of the IAF which coincided with the 50th anniversary celebrations of the FAI, in Carrara. One of the highlights was a visit to the graves of many Italian anarchists in the local graveyard. There Alfonso pointed out the graves of Gino Lucetti, who had attempted to assassinate Mussolini, Gogliardo Fiaschi, who had fought with the Spanish resistance and who had been imprisoned for many years and Giuseppe Pinelli, the anarchist railwayman who had been thrown out a window at Milan police HQ (he is the subject of Fo's *Accidental Death of An Anarchist*).

Now Alfonso lies alongside his comrades. A heart attack struck him down as he was preparing to send out *Umanita Nova* in the post on September 14th this year. He was 63. A thousand anarchists flying red and black flags paraded through the streets of Carrara in his funeral cortege the following day. His favourite song *Vieni o Maggio*, written by the outstanding anarchist Pietro Gori, was sung over his grave.

We'll miss you at those international meetings, Alfonso, we'll miss you very much.

The Anarchist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland

Afed

THOUGHT AND STRUGGLE

• History

The AF has its roots in a number of small anarchist groupings active in the 1970s. In addition, the founding members were inspired by the rich anarchist tradition on the Continent, especially in France. Taking what we thought was best from the past and from abroad, the goal was to create an anarchist communist organisation, firmly based on the class struggle or social anarchist tradition.

The project received crucial impetus with the bringing on board of the innovative magazine *Virus*. The Anarchist Communist Discussion was then launched at the Anarchist Bookfair in October 1985. We received remarkable interest in our project and by April 1986, there was enough stability to formalise the organisation into the Anarchist Communist Federation. Though there is some historic continuity with earlier anarchist groups in Britain, the new federation is mainly a new phenomenon, drawing on people new to anarchism in the 1980s. We started out with a set of aims and principles, which remain largely in tact, but there have still been considerable development in our politics, as new people join and offer new perspectives, and as we develop our ideas in the course of what is going on in the class struggle itself. In the late 90s we changed our name to the Anarchist Federation, not because we had changed our politics, but for pragmatic reasons.

• Aims and Principles

The central plank of our principles, like all anarchist organisations, is the recognition of the need to bring an end to capitalism (in all its varieties) as well as the State, which can never be used as a vehicle to transform society. In addition, we believe that these objectives can only come about through a social revolution, where the working class organises itself to both ideologically and physically overthrow the system. Our definition of the working class is broad, reflecting the fact that capitalism has undergone significant changes. A social revolution can only come about as a result of the will of the vast majority of the population, including office and shop workers, public sector employees, the unwaged, women working in the home, children and retired people, as well as the traditional industrial workers. Anarchism is about individuals changing as part of a general social struggle. It is not about individuals changing their lifestyle and hoping capitalism will go away. Neither do we fetishise violence, recognising that the use of violence can produce new hierarchies. The revolution will primarily come about through non-military means, as we develop our power through a variety of social, economic, political and cultural forms of resistance. It is to this end that we work. Nevertheless, we realise that it is unavoidable and therefore do not hold pacifism to be a point of principle.

Another important principle of the AF is that it is not just class exploitation and oppression that needs to be abolished. Though we do not necessarily use the concept of patriarchy, we believe that the oppression of women predates capitalism and will not automatically disappear with its end. Sexism permeates the working class as well as the anarchist scene and will require particular



have largely meant that women have equal opportunities to become bosses and managers, politicians or media personalities. We have a similar analysis of anti-racist struggles. The social revolution must bring an end to all forms of prejudice and therefore racism needs to be combated within the working class itself. However, as with anti-sexist struggles, we recognise that there can be a

ANARCHIST FEDERATION

www.afed.org.uk

ORGANISING FOR RESISTANCE

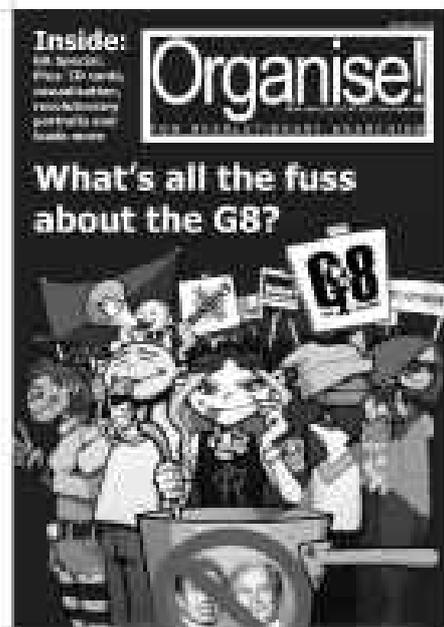
info@afed.org.uk

struggles to rid ourselves of this legacy. At the same time, we do not see struggles against sexism as totally separate from those against the overall system of hierarchy and oppression. Recently, the women's movement has been in decline and this is reflected in the lack of focus on specifically anti-sexist struggles in our propaganda and our activities. This is something we are trying to deal with- how not to be gender-blind in our analysis of the working class and the class struggle. We also recognise that there may be instances where women will need to organise as independently in order to develop ideas and confidence and applaud those initiatives aimed at developing anarchofeminism. However, we do not support 'cross-class' alliances, which end up benefiting mainly middle class women. For example, 'equal opportunities' policies

potential for reactionary politics. We have seen a growth in racism for a variety of reasons, not just to do with September 11th, and much of our propaganda and activity has been directed at building anarchist resistance to racism and fascism without forming 'unholy' alliances with reactionary religious groups. Nevertheless, we have had limited success in attracting people from a broad spectrum of ethnic backgrounds and understand the suspicion many people might have towards 'white' organisations. We hope that through our practice, in the workplace and community, these divisions will be overcome, without pandering to reactionary ideologies.

We also recognise many other forms of oppression, such as sexuality, disability and age. Anarchists must never turn a blind eye to any kind of domination and should be prepared to combat any signs

of discrimination at all levels of society. However, we do not believe that we should be calling on the State for help. Prejudice and reactionary practices will only disappear through activity and struggle, enabling people to change in their core, not just on the surface. The nature of Trade Unionism in Britain has



Organise! is one of the publications of the Anarchist Federation. Others include Resistance, for monthly free distribution, and leaflets, many of which have been translated to different languages.

Check them at www.afed.org.uk

posed many problems for us when trying to decide on a workplace strategy. The unions are not only reformist but are often totally implicated in the exploitation of the working class. Our experience led us to adopt what some may call an ‘anti-union’ position. We argue that people should not take up positions in the union and that in many cases there is no point in even being a member of the union if its role is particularly counter revolutionary. There is no point in trying to ‘democratise’ the unions or try and make them more combative. It is in their nature to negotiate with capitalism, not to seriously undermine it. They cannot be reformed. This position has caused some difficulties because as most workplace activity takes place within the context of the official union, what do we actually do? We have argued that we should be trying to organise informal groups of militant workers, whether they be union

members or not. The aim is not to establish an alternative union structure,

which would only end up becoming another reformist union, but to be a source of revolutionary propaganda and a

catalyst for action.

In practice, our members take a very pragmatic approach to organising in the workplace. Members adopt whatever strategy seems most effective for furthering struggle and resisting exploitation. Though we do not advocate anarcho-syndicalism as an overall strategy, we do not dismiss efforts to form structures, which group anarchists as workers or across industries, in order to further anarchist influence in economic struggles. Several of our comrades are members of the Industrial Workers of the World. The main principle of all our workplace activity is to build up revolutionary, non-hierarchical forms of organisation, whatever name is given to them.

Economic struggle in the workplace is only one aspect of building a new society. Exploitation and oppression take many forms and extends into all parts of our lives. Though we are a ‘class struggle’ organisation, this

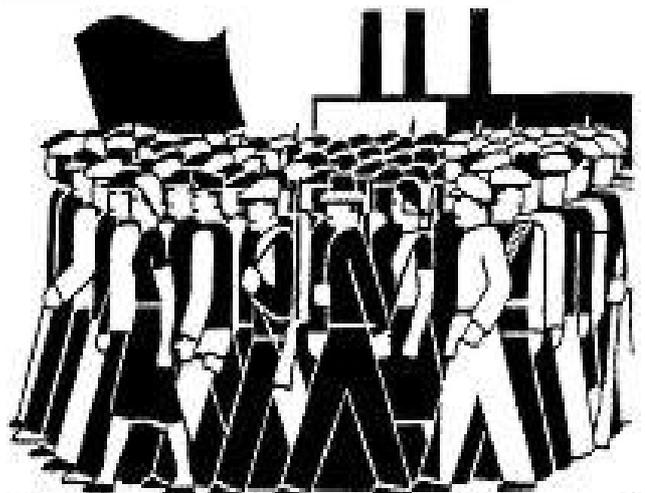
struggle is social and personal, as well as economic. Therefore, we argue that anarchists must fight on a number of 'fronts'. One such 'front' is the community. We are aware that community in the traditional sense does not really exist, but there are issues that affect localities where people live. These issues include transport, provision of public services and the effect of the environment on health. Though these issues can be raised in a workplace context, effective action requires a broader organisational base, incorporating people as both producers and consumers.

The locality is also the context in which we engage in anti-fascist, environmental, anti-war and anti-religion campaigns. Though members will raise these issues at work, we stress the importance of organising local actions and distributing propaganda at the community level- on the streets, in public meetings and through direct action. Members work with other anarchists to set up local groups with the aim of raising awareness of anarchist ideas amongst the wider working class and initiating action.

We have a strong internationalist perspective and are particularly critical of national liberation movements and ideologies. There can be no 'better' government. The only way we can achieve true liberation is through internationalism, which refuses to choose between oppressors. History has shown that the 'lesser of the two evils' soon turns out to be just as 'evil'. Meanwhile, you have abandoned your own principles and weakened your own movement. Our members in Ireland have pioneered, in very difficult conditions, an anarchism that refuses to take sides with either nationalism. It is only by building up the international anarchist movement that we can effectively challenge all oppressors and

therefore we are active members of the International of Anarchist Federations.

All our activities are directed to the development of a 'culture of resistance'. Whatever the arena of struggle, it is essential that we build up the confidence and willingness of the working class to fight back against all aspects of capitalism and the State. This culture of resistance will build on



Direct Action!



localised actions and single issue campaigns, but go beyond this isolated resistance in order to construct a generalised revolutionary movement that seeks to create a completely new society.

- **Organisation**

The AF has evolved firmly within the tradition of organised anarchism. In other words, we believe, that an effective revolutionary strategy needs anarchists to group together in such a way that they can spread anarchist ideas and practices, co-ordinate and generalise struggles and debate and

clarify ideas. This must be done on a local, national and international level. However, this organisation does not substitute itself for working class activity, but rather acts as a 'leadership of ideas', which themselves are worked out through the participation of anarchists in struggle. The organisation, existing as it does over time, is in a position to gather together a wealth of experiences, acting as a memory of the movement as well as a forum for formulating new ideas and strategies.

We are organised on federalist lines, which means we are a federation of individuals and groups with no central political or administrative apparatus. This does not mean that we have no decision-making structure, something that only leads to informal leadership cliques rather than formal ones. We have one national conference and three national delegate meetings a year, which take decisions on our general orientation, strategy and action. However, these decisions are reached through extended discussion in the Internal Bulletin and on an internet discussion list. It is very rare that we have anything that is not generally agreed after discussion. If we do vote on anything, the vote is first open to any member to register a negative vote. If the decision is still made, then groups and/or individuals are still free to not implement the decision as long as they do not seek to undermine the organisation. One of our central concerns is, therefore, how to ensure maximum participation of all members and how to avoid formal and informal hierarchies. After all, it is our experiences that will provide the basis for alternative ways of organising society. We do not always succeed in achieving the standards of participation that we aspire to; however, we are continually reviewing our practice. Though the structures and mechanisms for participation may be in place, we

recognise that there are many individual reasons why some are more dominant than others, related to issues of confidence, age, experience, gender and educational background. Therefore it is not enough just to say that the organisation is non-hierarchical. It is necessary to actively encourage participation, through rotation of tasks, involving individuals in small group and commission work and helping to build confidence through workshops and educationals.

We are an organisation of activists. We publish and distribute a bi-annual magazine, *Organise!* (800 copies) and a monthly free bulletin, *Resistance* (3000-5000 copies). We also produce a range of pamphlets, posters and stickers. The aim of our propaganda is primarily to spread anarchist ideas throughout all sections of the working class. However, *Organise!* is aimed more at those who are already politicised to a greater extent and therefore focuses on debates and theory that will provoke discussion in the anarchist and wider political movement. In addition to distributing propaganda, individual members are engaged in a wide variety of activities, in the workplace, in local anarchist or anti-authoritarian groups, in universities and colleges and in campaigns and actions against the war, around environmental issues, supporting asylum seekers, and challenging reactionary ideas of religious fanatics and fascists.

- **How do we differ from other anarchists**

The anarchist movement has grown in numbers and in influence over the past decade. People have been attracted to anarchism for a variety of reasons and therefore it is a diverse movement, both in terms of ideas and practices. This diversity can be a positive feature of the movement, and the AF recognises that

we do not have a monopoly of ‘truth’ on what anarchism should be. However, there are several principles that we take to be vital, and feel that it is only our organisation that groups all of these principles together. We have outlined these principles in this text, but we will now discuss briefly why exist as a distinctive organisation.

1. Organisation

Not all anarchists put the same stress as we do on formal organisation, at both the national and international organisation. Though strong local groups and initiatives are the basis of an effective national organisation, co-ordination and sharing of ideas must happen on the widest level if we are ever to organise a revolution. In addition, this organisation must be permanent, in the sense that it continues to exist and be active regardless of what big events may be taking place or how active particular individuals are. We need an organisation that can continue to exist, regardless of whether some individuals drop out or become less active. For similar reasons we need to be sceptical of ‘networks’, which come and go, as well as having a tendency to operate with informal hierarchies.

2. Anarchist Communism We are part of the anarchist tradition, sometimes referred to as anarchist communism, which believes in the importance of building a political organisation that is based on the working class (in the broadest sense), and which is active on a number of fronts. This is what distinguishes us from anarcho-syndicalism. Though we are part of the

same social anarchist tradition (anarchist communists and anarcho-syndicalists are likely to be in the same organisation in countries like Spain, France and Italy), we emphasise different tactics and strategies. For us, building an anarcho-syndicalist union can only ever form one prong of an overall strategy and even then has to be adapted to the context in line with revolutionary anarchist principles. Anarchist communism also rejects other



“No one can envisage exactly how Revolution will come and exactly what form it will take, but we are sure that if there is to be freedom and equality for all, come it must.”
From Beyond Resistance, AF pamphlet.

forms of anarchism such as green, ‘lifestylism’, and insurrectionalism. Though concern for the environment is a key part of our politics, it does not take priority over any other issue. We welcome the fact that people refuse to conform to bourgeois codes but a revolution will not come about by dressing differently or living in squats.



our oppressors, but unfortunately there are no shortcuts. Films like 'Lord of the Rings' and 'The Matrix' make it seem that heroic individual action is the key to fighting our enemy, but this is an illusion. It is the everyday organising and struggle that forms the basis for all the more obvious revolutionary moments. Individual 'heroics' can never be a substitute for mass action. In addition, individual acts of violence are usually counterproductive, bringing down repression on a movement not yet

Subvert your every day.

In any case, experience has shown that these alternative lifestyles are short-lived, with many soon becoming key members of the establishment. Anarchism is something to be maintained in all stages of life, even if the anarchist holds down a job, has children, or takes out a mortgage. Anarchists, after all, should be part of the working class, not in their own ghetto of alternative 'activists'. That doesn't mean, however, that anarchists should seek to adopt some stereotyped working class image. The anarchist movement should contain a diverse range of people, not conforming to any stereotype. What matters are one's ideas, practice and commitment. Similarly, we reject insurrectionism as a strategy to achieve anarchism. Individuals may become frustrated at our inability to strike effectively against

strong enough to defend itself. As the Italian Anarchist Federation declared after being mistakenly associated with a recent letter bomb- 'Anarchism cannot be delivered through a letter box'. However, there may be circumstances where such actions are justified, but only when the actions are directly linked and supported by a wider movement.

3. Practice

AF members are involved in a diverse range of struggles. We support initiatives such as the anti-G8 preparations because they are part of the general struggle to build a culture of resistance. However, we do not prioritise organising for such big events as we also have our day-to day work to spread anarchist ideas and action in the working class movement. As we are not a large organisation, we cannot do everything. Some of our members will be involved in these initiatives, but we

do not believe that it is worth abandoning our normal activity in order to make the enormous financial and time commitment that such events require. We strongly believe that our main focus must be to develop an anarchist presence within the working class both in the workplace and the locality. The future for anarchism and for the planet lies in anarchism being taken up by a wide variety of working class people in their everyday struggles.

- **Building the Movement**

The AF will support and work with any individual or group who shares the general aim of creating an anarchist society. We have our distinctive perspective on how to bring this aim

about, a perspective that is part of a long tradition, and will continue to argue for this perspective to be the basis for the building of a strong and effective anarchist movement. However, we also recognise that if this tradition is not to become a historical relic, it must be continually enriched by new ideas and practices. We hope that British anarchism will grow into an effective and influential movement within the working class, bringing together a wide variety of occupations, social groups and generations. This will require long-term commitment and perseverance, through both the 'highs' and 'lows' of political activity. We will do whatever is necessary to contribute to the building of such a movement, as the future of us all depends on it.



WAR **REPRESSION**
EXPLOITATION



Czech and Slovak Anarchist Federation

CSAF

The Czechoslovak Anarchist Federation (CSAF) was founded in the summer of 1995. It was the first anarchist organization to actively try to organize the Czechoslovak anarchists after a spontaneous uprising in the number of young people interested in the anarchist movement.

Currently there are other anarchist organizations besides CSAF that have distinctive orientations. Thus the role of CSAF has changed since its establishment. As an organization of people with differing views on various aspects of anarchism we have become a forum for a variety of opinions within the anarchist movement. We also strive to function as a mirror of possible authoritarian tendencies within anarchist organizations.

CSAF does not limit its activities on specific social groups; instead, we try to influence all members of society. We aim to support newly arising anti-authoritarian groups of activists by sharing experiences and skills and advising them of what we have learned. It is also our goal to help existing anarchist organizations with the development of their materials and outreach, as well as various other activities.

We would like to cooperate with organisations outside the anarchist movement on particular issues on the condition that our partners do not promote the existence of an authoritarian society in any way. The cooperation with revolutionary antifascist, anarchosyndicalist and anarchofeminist groups is usual.

Activities of CSAF.

The goals of the Czechoslovak Anarchist Federation (CSAF) are education, enlightenment and outreach.

In striving towards these goals, CSAF publishes anarchist magazines: "A-Kontra" and "Zdola" (geared specially at slovakian readers). Additionally, CSAF produces different kinds of propaganda- posters, leaflets, stickers and booklets.

CSAF organizes demonstrations and sets up information stalls about our campaigns and other topics of interest. Information about CSAF campaigns is always available either in our magazines, "A-Kontra" (a-kontra.net) or "Zdola", or on our daily updated website www.csaf.cz.

Last current activities to be mentioned are lectures and discussions about the zapatista uprising, International Women's Day, demonstrations against the war in Iraq, analysis and criticism of extreme neo-liberal forms.

Organizational structure of CSAF

The Czechoslovak Anarchist Federation works on a voluntary basis. Decision making and activities come from the CSAF members themselves. There is no central committee or any similar body. Each regional group within CSAF plans its own activities. The work of CSAF is therefore compatible with the principles it proclaims. The environment of CSAF fosters each member to develop her or his own independent views.

The political development of CSAF and changes regarding the work of the organization are only discussed at

meetings that include all CSAF members. Such meetings are usually held twice a year.

The Czech and Slovak sections of the federation work independently; however, they are united by a joint memorandum, this manifesto and mutual solidarity.

CSAF-Slovakia

We would like to say something about our organization this way, to introduce ourselves, as we are new members of IFA-IAF.

9 out of 10 railway drivers read anarchist publications in secret, but they will deny doing so!



CSAF-Slovakia arose in November 1998 as the backwash of the need for creating an anarchist organization in Slovakia. Because of coincidence of our solutions with the manifesto of the Czech part of CSAF, we found as the most effective possibility to join already existing CSAF, and create a new region. Nowadays we are operating independently, joined by the manifesto and the common principles.

About the consciousness of anarchism in our country: we don't know about

any roots or traditions of anarchism in Slovakia. There were a few individuals, influenced by anarchism, living at the beginning of the nineteenth century, connected to the czech anarchist movement, and individuals influenced by L. N. Tolstoy. There was no anarchist organization at that time at all. Later, after the year of 1948, all potential applications for expression of



anarchist solutions were repressed and eventually disappeared in a wide anti-regime movement. After 1989, amplification of anarchist literature and arising support of anarchist solutions, especially among young people, led to the creation of the anarchist organization.

CSAF Slovakia has about 10 members and around 15 people have the status of sympathizer. We co-operate actively and regularly with about 50 people. This number increases every year. We realize that our role is primarily to acquaint people with the meaning of anarchism, including the criticism of political-economical-social system, because this is absenting in the mainstream media. After the fall of the Berlin wall, official policy took one-sided direction towards west countries characterized by EU and NATO. We

are now witnesses of a giant propaganda hitting the sphere of education. Therefore, any interest in anarchism we do find as a success.

At this moment, our main goal is to spread information about NATO. We brewed (in the co-operation with the

with anarchist groups in Poland, Austria and elsewhere.

The existence of an international organization could make the activeness of particular organizations more effective, and should prevent an isolation of anarchist solutions inside



Street Party Collective) the third street party. The main topics were NATO and parliamentary democracy. The action took place one week before the elections). We took part in an international campaign against NATO during the summit in Prague.

We are also publishing the newsletter Zdola! (From below!). For the shake of our financial situation very irregularly, we print out bills, pamphlets and stickers. Our other activities are: distribution of anarchist propaganda, organising of lectures, video-projections, Anarchist Maydays, etc. Two times a year we organize the Slovak congress, where people from the whole country meet together. We work as part of the Czechoslovak anarchist movement, have also good relations

the borders of one state region. Although we think that main part of activities has to be done on local level, we find the existence of an international organization as the instrument for exchanging of experiences, or certainty of support and solidarity in the case of need.

For anarchism without borders!

If you are interested you can visit our web site (www.csaf.cz), though right now it is not ready for multilanguage information. Or contact us directly.

Address: CSAF Slovensko, Poste Restante, 850 07, Bratislava 57, Slovakia.

Or csaf_sk@hotmail.com

With anarchist greetings

The collective of CSAF Slovakia.

Belarussian Anarchist Federation

FAB

Two comrades, Pauluk and Maryna, from the Belarussian Anarchist Federation, an organisation then applying to join the International, attended the meeting and made a presentation on the situation in their country at the London Anarchist Bookfair.

The collapse of the Soviet Union has resulted in yet another repressive regime taking power, making it extremely difficult for anarchists and others to operate politically. This interview focuses on the history of anarchism in Belarus, as seen through the personal experiences of these two comrades. It provides insights into the situation for anarchists in the ex-Soviet influenced countries and shows how anarchist ideas and practices emerge in places where there has not been a strong anarchist tradition in recent years. The works of our comrades also illustrates how people in different situations take the ideas and make them their own, through creative and imaginative initiatives.

How did you get involved in anarchism? How did you first hear about it?

Pauluk: I have been in the anarchist movement since 1994. All Soviet people, sooner or later, hear about anarchism. During our childhood, we watched films about the Civil War and there were always anarchists in them. The propaganda portrayed them negatively. But it had the opposite effect. The anarchists were shown as people who, in between fighting the Reds and Whites, were drinking and dancing. So from childhood we had the impression that anarchists were fun loving! I was impressed with the critical position towards the changes in the

political system. Lukashenko, the current President, used the democratic movement to get elected and then the repression started. So I got the impression that the problem didn't lie just with the democratic movement but was somewhere deeper. So I started to try and find out where the root of the problem was. I read about anarchism and by the end of 1994 I sympathised with anarchist ideas.

How did you learn about anarchism in Belarus? What did you read?

Pauluk: I read about anarchism in the library; there were books by people like Kropotkin. But not much was available. We didn't have contact with other anarchists either in the west or in other eastern European countries. There wasn't even much communication with other anarchists in Belarus.

So there was a federation of anarchists at that time?

Pauluk: Yes, already in 1992, founded by 8 people. There are still 6 of the original members involved. In 1994, there were about 20 people, but scattered around the country in just two cities so I didn't hear about anarchism from them, but from books.

So how did things develop from there?

Pauluk: In October 1994 students organised some actions against the rise in prices on bread and milk. It was a

street performance action, with the slogan 'Thank you President for bread and milk'. It was the first big action organised against the President who had been in office for two months. The organisation of this action was influenced by anarchists and so because of this I met other anarchists and by the end of the year I was a confident anarchist.

Who were these other anarchists? Were they from the federation?

Pauluk: Yes, they were from the Minsk group.

What attracted you to anarchist ideas?

Pauluk: Taking into account that I was coming to the anarchist movement from the democratic side, I was attracted by the idea that anarchism seemed the only real democracy. Democracy that the democrats were talking about was just a lie, an illusion of democracy. I was reading about other left ideas in general, including Trotskyism, Maoism, everything possible. Amongst these ideas, anarchism was the only thing I could imagine.

Maryna, when did you start becoming an anarchist?

Maryna: It is difficult to say because I was very young when the Soviet Union crashed. I was interested in the punk movement. It seemed natural that we shouldn't have what we had in the country. Then I met Pauluk and he just gave a name to what I was thinking about. It was what I wanted, what I was

thinking about. That was in 1998 when I first got involved in student demonstrations.

[The following questions are mostly answered by both Maryna and Pauluk after discussion between them.]

How many anarchists are there in Belarus?

It is difficult to say because we don't have membership like you do. Participation in the federation is only possible when you act. About 200 maybe.

After you had the student actions, what did you do? Were you more involved in the federation?

The federation consists of a number of different initiatives.

Is it like in Poland?

Yes, it is like that but in Poland they have more local groups. This is because of the history of Poland- there is anarchist intercity relations. The Belarusian federation also has local sections, but the work is done around initiatives. One initiative was the anti-Party initiative. The purpose was of this initiative was to stop young people get entangled with the work of political parties because they use the youth as a cheap workforce. So we organised different humorous actions, 'happenings' on the street, which made fun of all political parties, both the government and the opposition.

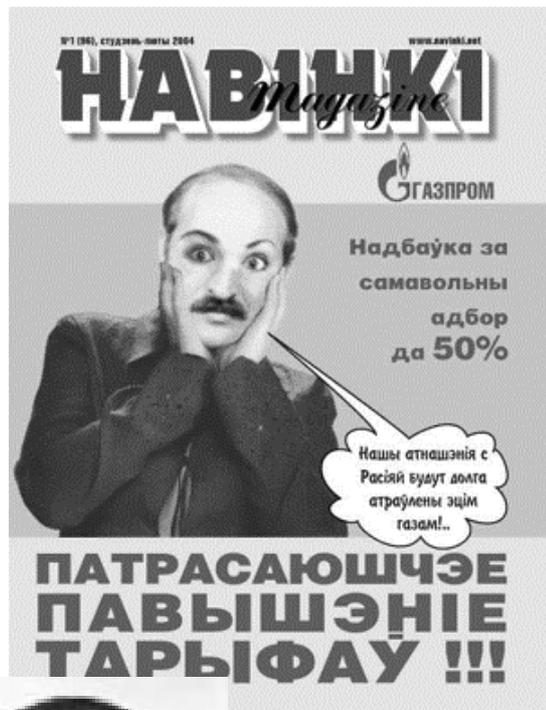


Anarchy is order

Why do you think humour is such a good weapon?

We took a risk because had never done it before, we didn't know where it would lead us, but it led to the fact that the movement began to grow. But of course we didn't invent it ourselves; we were attracted by a Polish initiative that was used under the dictatorship where they organised many street parties and happenings.

Were you at all influenced by the street parties in the west, like Reclaim the Streets?



10 out of 10 doctors say laughing is good for your health.

Politicians disagree...

...because politicians are bad for your health.

No, just from Poland. We read about what was happening in Poland in newspapers. In the 1990s, there was a drought of information, it was difficult to get. But now it is possible to get information from the internet. So the things we did attracted many people, mostly young people. There was a lot of publicity in the press, saying how anarchists organised another funny action. So people became interested, thinking that anarchists must be very amusing people.

Maryna: I remember that I was involved in the nationalist opposition movement for some months and in one of the meetings the leader told the audience

about how they conducted an action and anarchists were in a separate block. They were hungry and the anarchists said we have some sandwiches and offered them around. The leader was trying to laugh at this but it showed how anarchists were being noticed by people, even inside other political movements.

After you did these initial actions, what happened next?

One thing was a counter-cultural group that influenced the movement that organised actions against the military. They were formed in 1995 and by the end of 1995 they were already in touch

with and participated in actions of the Anarchist Federation. At that time, it was the three main cities, Minsk, Hroda and Homel that were the basis of the Federation. There were many actions carried out by different initiatives in the federation so it is difficult to talk about all of them.

One is the syndicalist group. They organised strikes in places like the trolley bus depot, they published a lot of propaganda and they had a day of solidarity with the unemployed. These days of action always ended with arrests of the participants. The result of this was that many activists lost their jobs. It is difficult to continue to be a syndicalist without a syndicate. They didn't work anymore and the government began to put pressure on all unions so they couldn't practice syndicalism anymore. One of the people became a local councillor!

What about your paper?

There were several papers before our paper. We got the idea of doing a newspaper from our anti-Party actions. It is a continuation of our work to make fun of all authority- the government etc.

Did you do this along with the street parties and 'happenings'?

By the end of 1998 it became more difficult to do actions because the President issued a decree, which made it likely that you could be arrested for participating in these actions. We continued to organise them but not as frequently as before. So we had to replace them with something.

Where did you get the idea of this newspaper?

It was always in our heads because we had published some newspapers, so the idea was born quite naturally. And when the first issue was published we realised we had done the right thing because it was extremely popular.

FAB CONGRESS 2005

On the 2nd of October while at the Congress of Democratic Forces the Belarusian opposition was arguing, electing its united candidate for the forthcoming presidential election campaign of 2006, Belarusian anarchists held their Congress to discuss questions which are really important for the Belarusian society as a whole.

More than 50 delegates from Minsk, Homel, Lida, Vitebsk, Ivatsevitchi and other Belarusian regions took part in the 12th Congress of FAB (Belarusian Anarchist Federation). The Congress discussed pressing issues of Belarusian society, determined tasks of Belarusian anarchists in the current social and political situation in the country, as well as planned some concrete steps for development of the anarchist movement in Belarus. One of the most important results of the Congress was the decision about FAB's joining IAF (the International of Anarchist Federations) approved by consensus of all participants. Representation of Belarusian anarchists in the International will attract more attention to Belarusian problems. Moreover it will strengthen international solidarity and support from foreign comrades that is very important for Belarusian anarchists, especially after recent repressions against activists of the antifascist movement.

The Belarusian Anarchist Federation can be contacted via email at anarchy@tut.by

And was it mainly popular amongst young people?

No it was popular amongst everyone who was interested in politics. With the newspaper, all politicians knew about us. First it was a little newspaper, but after a year we registered it officially. We celebrated our first year with an action under the slogan ‘Legalise It’. The name of the newspaper, Navinki, is the name of a mental hospital and it also



International solidarity in action.

means ‘small news’. The main newspaper is called just ‘news’ so we are making fun in two ways. Our request to register the newspaper officially was refused because the authorities said that it had the name of the mental hospital. We made a scandal in the newspaper, so they became afraid and accepted our registration.

What is your circulation? Do you sell it?

It is difficult to say, about 10,000 copies. First it was a monthly and then a weekly. But the circulation reduced because some outlets for circulation were closed. Also, we had a problem that the official distributors only took our newspaper in small quantities. The private distribution networks were often afraid to take the paper because of repression.

What happened to the paper?

Maryna: We were closed by the authorities. We wrote about the President and ‘insulted people’s morality’. Pauluk was called to court and fined 700 Euros. This was impossible to pay. They came to his parents’ house and confiscated things from his parents.

What do you now?

We publish an illegal magazine, because illegally you can publish what you want.

How big is the movement now?

The thing is, we don’t have membership, so it is difficult to say. When people aren’t satisfied with the work of one group they may join another group or start their own initiative and work independently.

Have you been able to maintain an

interest amongst young people as they have become older and because of the repression ?



Everyone who comes to the movement understands that there can be repression. So they don’t discover that; they know it already. There is one main way that we lose comrades: they emigrate for different reasons such as problems with the authorities. But they keep in contact. Maryna: My personal opinion is that they do not do much anymore. They are too busy with making ends meet. We are at the stage where we only have young people and they are still active,



but there are some people who are just at home, raising children.

What do you think is the most important activity to do now?

Right now the movement and the initiatives are all growing. When someone comes to anarchism we want to give him or her all opportunities to participate in the way they want. We are trying to build more of a network so we have organised social forums that can involve everyone. We want people to see that they are not alone and that the movement is very wide, one united front of struggle against the system. And, a person can find his or her place in this. It is difficult to find ways of doing something because the State tries to monopolise all possible activities. They try to get people to communicate only through state organisations.

What do you think about the other organisations that you have come in contact with when you have been abroad?

Our first contacts were with Russian Anarchists. It is a funny fact that anarchists from Minsk and from Hroda were put in contact with each other by Russian anarchists. From our western contacts we got a lot of information about anarchism in the modern world. Our anarchism was based on historical anarchism, Kropotkin, Bakunin, and no

one really knew what was going on in the west. We knew about the Spanish Revolution but not about what happened after the war, like 1968. And when the Iron Curtain fell, it was a discovery to know what was really happening, your ideas and what discussions were going on.

But the western countries didn't seem to be familiar at all with what was happening in the post-Soviet countries. We also noticed that there are long theoretical discussions, often about small points, while we discuss more concrete issues. We want to discuss issues that we could talk about to 'the man in the pub'.

In Russia we find that they are often having debates about who is the better anarchist. To conclude, this interview shows how anarchist ideas and action emerge in a variety of contexts. For Maryna anarchism is the name given to what she was thinking anyway. Disillusions with the so-called new democracy propelled Pauluk into the library, where he found the ideas that helped him make sense of what was going on. Though they had no initial contact with anarchists outside their country, their movement benefited from hearing about what was going on in other countries.

Similarly, the comrades in the International have been inspired by the courage, imagination and commitment of the Belarusian Federation. Their experiences show how important it is to spread anarchist ideas as widely as possible. There are millions of people who are looking for alternative perspectives, fed up with the current political and religious ideologies. We need to make sure that they come into contact with both anarchist ideas and anarchism in action in order to strengthen and enrich the global struggle for a new society.

Forum of German Speaking

Anarchists

FdA

DAS FORUM DEUTSCHSPRACHIGER ANARCHISTINNEN UND ANARCHISTEN (FdA)

At the moment there is not an anarchist federation in the german speaking countries. It's just a forum, or meeting space of german speaking anarchists (FdA) which is composed of some groups and individuals. The FdA was born out of the Initiative for an Anarchist Federation in Germany (I-AFD), created in 1989 and which joined IFA. In order to keep its international contacts the I-AFD became FdA in 2000, following the important crisis which its joining IFA had brought about. But inspired by an IFA meeting held at Manheim in 2003 the comrades of the Rhin-Neckar region and from the Palatinate went on to create the Anarchist Federation of the Rhin-Neckar-Palatinat (AFRNP) which did then join the FdA

The FdA, as well as focusing on the international contacts struggles for the building of a german speaking federation. In the meanwhile, an active network of local anarchist groups, organised in regional federations as building blocks of such an anarchist

federation, is still lacking. Regretfully, there are not that many groups defining themselves as anarchists, and there is only a regional federation in the german speaking areas. It is therefore necessary that the german speaking anarchists start forming these structures. Until now, they have been involved in movements confronting a single enemy at a time: fascism, racism, patriarchy, atomic energy, war, repression, etc.

In July 2005, the FdA met at Cologne, and some new members were accepted in its ranks. In august 2005 the FdA members took part in different activities in anarchist camps in Germany and Switzerland, and have presented the FdA to those taking part in this camps. In these occasions we have got in touch with other anarchists from germany, Austria and Switzerland, who are interested in joining the FdA.

We are confident on being able to progress towards the organization of the anarchist movement in the german speaking areas in the following years.

FdA, Forum of German Speaking Anarchists.

You can contact FdA at afd@list.free.de

Argentinian Libertarian Federation FLA

The anarchists do not wait for a theoretical maturity of the times or for a certain evolution before acting, because they know that action is in itself what better ripens both evolution and times.

From the newspaper La Pampa Libre, 1930.

FLA has member groups in Rosario, Trenque Lauquen, La Pampa, San Pedro, Chaco y Corrientes. In the federal capital (Buenos Aires) it has a local of its own where there are foundational and member groups. This is also open for other groups which might request it for talks, lectures, different activities and meetings.

There is a bookshop that makes donations of materials for libraries and different anarchist groups, as well as selling it at a low price to spread our ideas and help cover the costs of running the local.

There is a library which is open three times a week for consultations and with comrades available to help the researchers.

In the archive and in the magazines library we don't only keep and classify the materials, but we also guide the comrades and the researchers (anarchologists) in their work. The magazine "El libertario" [The libertarian] is published every three months and is open to contributions from the comrades who want to take part in it.

We also publish books (money allowing) through the Reconstruir [Re-build] editorial. The last book such published was the "Catálogo de

publicaciones españolas 1890 - 1939" [Catalogue of spanish publications 1890-1939]. We also take part in "Utopia Libertaria" [Libertarian Utopia], a publishing house which brings together comrades from different groups.

We also do work with the kids in our neighbourhood: after school club, help with their studies, playground and dinner-tea club.

There's recently been a comrade in the UK, as a delegate, taking part in the activities of the British Anarchist Federation. Out of this a successful Argentina Solidarity Night resulted, as well as other speaks and lectures. From the 9th of July onwards we will hold, every saturday, at the FLA local the First Encounter of Theatre for Freedom

On the 23rd of July a group of comrades took part in the Homage to the Spanish Revolution in Rosario.

Also the FLA took part in the Anarchist Meeting of Rosario with about 20 to 30 comrades, which represented IFA as well.

Brotherly greetings.

Salud y anarquía.

**Federación Libertaria
Argentina**

You can contact FLA at the following addresses:

Brasil 1551, Buenos Aires

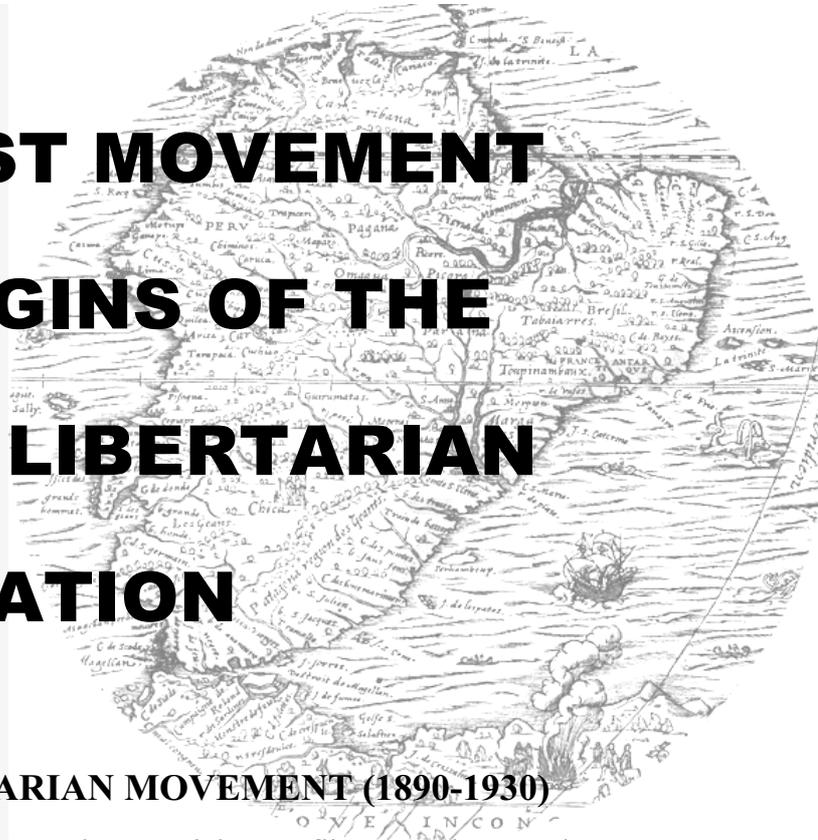
+54-11-4305-0307

fla2@radar.com.ar

or check www.libertario.org.ar

THE ANARCHIST MOVEMENT AND THE ORIGINS OF THE ARGENTINIAN LIBERTARIAN FEDERATION

history



FIRST STAGE OF THE LIBERTARIAN MOVEMENT (1890-1930)

The anarchist Argentinean movement, born in the second half of the nineteenth century, grew steadily for many decades. The creation of “cultural groups”, “libraries”, “philodramatic companies”, “schools” and the Worker’s Federation, made of it the expression of wide sections of the working people. Thousands of immigrants and american natives found in this movement a space of vindication. They evolved creating their own answers, developing an alternative cultural movement, winning victories in the work place. We can but remember Enrico Malatesta’s visit in the 1880’s or that of Pietro Gori, in 1900, with his conferences all over the country and his lectures at the Faculty of Law.

A But it is in April of 1902 when the socialist delegates leave the FOA. This sets the stage for the creation of the Argentinean Regional Worker’s Federation (FORA), which grows very quickly to become the strongest group among the working class. At the same time the Argentinean state passes its Bill of Residence, a law specially designed against the anarchists. This subjects them to hundreds of arrests and deportations. But anarchism didn’t stop growing and it had a prime role in all

the social conflicts and popular struggles of that first decade of the century. The reports of the huge street rallies show a real mass movement. The leading classes could not ignore the constant pressure and in 1904, the home secretary raised a bill to congress to limit the working hours to eight a day and to sanction some other worker’s demands; but faced with the opposition of the businessmen it didn’t pass. In 1907 the congress creates the Labour department, a new attempt to control a working class movement which is questioning the status quo.

Meanwhile, in 1905, FORA has had its fifth Congress, in which it adopts “Libertarian Communism” as its aim. It is not only the worker’s movement which is strengthened in FORA, but many other diverse experiences are carried out on cultural issues, such as the creation of rationalist schools, fostered by Julio Barcos. In 1910, “La Protesta”, Argentina’s biggest anarchist publication, is reaching its peak, becoming the only anarchist diary in the world to have also an evening edition: The Battle. But this will prove short lived. The Congress passes a new repressive bill, in just under 48 hours: the Law of Social Defence. This leads to the closure of the libertarian dailies

and the persecution, arrest and deportation of many militants.

All the 1900 decade is one of growth, struggles, birth of new projects and internal debate for the anarchist movement. Under its principles of freedom, opposition to authority and hierarchy in any form, and the promotion of equality between men, many different ways and expressions are sheltered. This adds up to a big libertarian span which does not divide forces but, on the contrary, widens the offer and allows the movement to reach to broader parts of society.

If in the beginning the debate was focused around the adoption of individualism, collectivism or libertarian communism, historical developments will bring to the fore new lines of discussion. The political scene was changing and many thought that their strategies should do it as well. The worker's movement, as well, felt the new political reality with a president now chosen by universal, secret and compulsory suffrage. Direct action, as the tactic for the struggle, might not have lacked a point, but it did lack



The red army deals with the Kronstadt uprising. Trotsky said: "I'll smash disidence with a brush made of bayonets and steel" It wasn't just Stalin....

representation in many popular sectors, as new mechanisms for negotiation spread from the state.

This is how the split in FORA happens, when it removes the definition of "libertarian communism" as its finality and declares itself against the adoption of any particular philosophical system or ideology. The smaller faction will name itself FORA V Congress, and will assert the same principles as it had before. Regardless of the relevance of a unionist point of view in the new FORA IX, we can find in it many members who adhere to and have been formed in anarchism. Its slogans still call for "revolutionary class struggle" and the "revolutionary general strike" even when its successor, the Argentinean Sindicalist Union, USA, came to life in 1922.

The origins of ALA can be traced to the first regional anarchist congress of Buenos Aires in October 1922. It brought together 84 national groups, 2 foreign ones and 40 individuals, with the anarcho-bolshevist being excluded. These held their own congress with 60 delegates from 8 groups from the capital and 9 from the interior of the country.

The debates were both bitter and intense between the two currents, as can be seen from the mutual accusations in "La Protesta" and "El Trabajo", later on "Union Sindical" and even later on "Bandera Proletaria". But from 1917, the russian revolution became yet another issue to divide the anarchist movement. The original support and expectation produced by the rising of the russian people against the tyrannical oppression will develop into groups critical of the revolution, mainly by the murder of anarchists in Kronstadt at the hands of the red army led by Trotsky, while others will support the construction of the USSR at any cost. With the years this divide will heal, but by the time the soviet state is recognized to have lost all its

revolutionary spirit and the anarchists are united against it there will be a new actor in the Argentinean political scene: the Argentinean communist party.

Apart from these debates that we have mentioned there are others caused by the actions of other smaller groups, but with a big repercussion: "expropriating anarchism".

The decade of 1920, with a new state, universal suffrage and a new relationship between the working class and the government, was not an easy or quiet time. The massive shooting of rural workers in Patagonia, the massacre of Jacinto Arauz in the pampa¹, the regular killings by nationalist groups...faced on the other side fighters ready to take the arms, defend themselves, put to death their enemies, expropriate resources to finance their publications and to support those in jail. Under this light we can understand the growing opposition of "La Protesta", which made public their condemnation, accusing them of using fascist violence and denying their anarchist spirit. But opposed to this attitude were groups which had a more sympathetic position. The decade of 1920 was one of a bitter and bloody strife between anarchists², in accordance to the general social climate

¹ Osvaldo Bayer. "Los anarquistas expropiadores, Simón Radowitzky y otros ensayos". [The expropriating anarchists, Simon Radowitzky and other essays], Editorial Galerna, Buenos Aires., 1975. In the decade of 1920 the killings of workers follow each other as in the big strike at La Forestal, in the Chaco; in Gualeguaychu, by the Liga Patriótica during a demonstration and the attack to the driver's union in Buenos Aires.

²Let's just remember the attack on the offices of the "Pampa Libre" magazine in Gral. Pico, in august 1924 by people from "La Protesta" or the killing of Lopez Arango in 1929, probably by someone sent by Severino DiGiovanni. For more information see Jorge Technique, "Pampa Libre.....", Buenos Aires., Amerindian, 2000. Page 105

of violence and state repression. We can not understand the violence between anarchist factions without taking into account its social context.

Second stage of the libertarian movement.

On 6th september 1930 the general Uriburu inaugurates the history of the coup d'état in twentieth century argentina. Immediately, all the anarchist publications were banned and their locals raided. One of the times of strongest repression against the movement will follow. Taken by surprise dealing with its internal divisions, unorganized and without any chance of fighting back, the anarchists will suffer thousands of arrests, transportations to Ushuaia, deportations, executions³ and tortures. Confronting the dictatorship all the differences are blurred. For the authoritarians there are no grey areas, just an enemy. Theoretical subtleties are not its cup of tea, and torture will emerge as the summary of its discourse.

Paradoxically, it was the repression which made the anarchists think about the bitter fight that developed in the twenties. Dictatorship provided the scenario for the birth of unity: the third bis block of the Villa Devoto prison, were many militants of different tendencies were grouped together. Now the space was ripe for the start of discussions. They focused on autocriticism and this brought about something that would have been unthinkable only some time before: 300 militants, of all the tendencies, on september 1931 organized a congress while in jail. This was the beginning of unity and reconstruction, and also the start of a new topic of discussion: a

³ The first of february 1931 Di Giovanni is shoot death, and Paulino Scarfo the following day.

specific organization of anarchists, which would co-ordinate and unify their forces. The FORA had every time less relevance in the worker's movement. And on the other hand, how would it be possible to incorporate other growing sectors to the struggle, like the students⁴ or the cultural groups? These questions were paramount at the time of shaping the new organization. It seemed that the Argentinean anarchism had started changing its composition.

With these main discussion issues: to

The representatives from La Antorcha were together with the FORA ones when voting for the losing proposition in the congress. While on the other hand the rest of delegates supported the creation of a specific libertarian organization. The main resolutions adopted in the meeting called for the creation of a federal organization of groups, including all the tendencies, with wide freedom, while at the same time giving FORA the recognition of a finalist organization of anarchism. This



**Rosario 1932
Congress of the CRRA, forerunner of FLA, held in
clandestinity.**

overcome the deadly differences of the previous decade, to build up an specific anarchist organization and to revive FORA without ceasing to take into account other ways of union participation, a big meeting was hold in September 1932 in Rosario: the second regional anarchist congress⁵.

⁴ José María Lunazzi, reknown for his militancy, became president of the Federation of Universities at La Plata.

⁵ Jacobo Maguid states that the previous Congress of 1922 was taken into account at the time of naming this one. Op.Cit. pag.29

second meeting in Rosario, while failing to achieve its revolutionary objectives, originated the Comité Regional de Relaciones Anarquistas [Regional Committee of Anarchist Relations], which would breathe new life into the movement in the country and renewed the strength of the libertarian idea. This CRRA played an important role in the organization of militancy, being able to make the six area committees created in the congress increase to 16 in September 1933. They will later grow to be 30.

Meanwhile, FORA will have part in two main events at the beginning of the decade: the dockyard workers strike in January 1931, and in July, at the arrival of a Nazi warship, the agitation and strike called from the Local Worker's Federation of Buenos Aires. Meanwhile the CRRA activities continued to grow, putting in touch different areas and getting the militants ready for a following congress, which would bring about the creation of the specific organization. Now the results from the FORA general assembly were eagerly awaited. This was to be held in October 1934 and if it is true that the opposition of most of the FORA members to the specific organization was well known, it was hoped that the unanimity of the voting for the resolution in the congress of Rosario would have an effect on them. But the decisions taken by the FORA were not at all encouraging: the opposition to specific groups was asserted, adopting a hardcore stance against the emergence of the new organization. At this, the CRRA opted openly for the strengthening of the work inside the unions by industry. The rift was again open.

However, this didn't spoil its efforts and the work done by the CRRA for three years gave fruit, on October 1935, in the foundational congress of the Anarco-comunist federation of Argentina (FACA).

FACA, the first specific organization of Argentina had its offices in Buenos Aires, and started developing many different activities all over the country. We can highlight the campaign for the release of the prisoners of Bragado: Pascual Vuotto, Reclus de Diago y Santiago Mainini, tortured and imprisoned for a crime they didn't commit in 1931. Meetings were done all over the country, under persecution

and even murder⁶, until a pardon was given in 1942.

In 1936 happens one of the most important things for anarchism in the world. The rebellion of General Franco against the Spanish Republic started the civil war, but also the revolutionary process which had been brewing, and which main actor was the big Spanish anarchist movement. The libertarian movement had a fundamental role in smashing the rebellion in many places and gained control of extensive areas, where it could develop its revolutionary project. In this way were created the anarchist collectivities of Aragon, and the collectivization of industry and services in most of Catalonia. In Argentina, FACA carried out a successful campaign in support of the Spanish movement. It took part in the organization of many popular committees of Aid to Spain. It founded the Service of Propaganda for Spain and pushed for the creation of the Antifascist International Solidarity (SIA). Three militants were proposed as delegates in Spain: Jacobo Prince, Jacobo Maguid and Jose Grunfeld. They went on to hold positions of the maximum responsibility in the confederal publication "Solidaridad Obrera", in that of the FAI, "Tierra y Libertad", and in the Peninsular secretariat of the FAI, respectively.

The decade of the 1930 was one of development and growth for FACA, under the harsh conditions of repression which had decimated the movement at the start of the dictatorship.

The defeat of the Spanish revolution and the start of the second world war gave new relevance to antimilitarist campaigns, as well as to helping the refugees. To this aim a campaign was started to help the comrades who

⁶ In a meeting in Santa Fe a militant, Salvatierra, was killed by a fascist gang. Jacobo Maguid, op.cit, pag. 37.

survived the nazi terror, by sending food and clothes to germany.

1945 was another year of change for Argentinean history. Juan Domingo Peron takes office as prime minister and brings about one of the most important changes in the century. National industry and, above all, state control of economy would be the mantras of peronism. At the same time there was a need to create an internal market which would allow for national production. The social and political changes derived from these tenets were so huge that they generated a mass movement of world relevance. Union membership rose from 500.000 workers to 2.500.000, and the benefits that the workers received, under conditions of full employment produced a quick support for peronism. This attitude of the biggest part of the working class, which lasts up to now, relegated the richness of its previous experiences, bringing about a disappearance, mainly of the anarchist movement.



However, the peronist discourse took on board many already existing workers demands, made a call to the dignity of the oppressed and used it to exaltate the homeland. But, if in the previous decades the homeland was used by the power against the workers with

“foreign” ideas, now it would be used as a name for those who dwelled in the underground of the nation. The real creator of the homeland was now the working people, those who created the national riches with their effort. The working class, which for decades had built its struggle in direct opposition to the idea of homeland, understanding it as the root of militarism, war and a benefit to the bourgeoisie, could see now how its demands were articulated through that very idea. The worker was now covered by a legislation, completely lacking some time before, the redistribution of the national income was biased to benefit the poorest, wages increased, many socialist and anarchist demands were met and millions had access to benefits which had been denied before.

But if the social and economical benefits were real, and the ruthless exploitation of the powerful was somehow mitigated, the dignity attained was very far from the revolutionary postulates of the first half of the century.

The struggle was no longer directed to the emancipation of mankind, to bring down the borders that keep the men apart or to destroy capitalism.

Evita, Peron´s wife, was instrumental at turning peronism into a mass movement, with a wide popular support

If it is true that at this time the anarchist ideas were no longer a mass movement and didn´t represent the working class any more, it is remarkable the continuity and consolidation achieved

by the specific organization. While anarchism was relegated on its workers side to an ever reducing space, a new way to foster the libertarian ideals took form, which, without escaping the general shrinking of the movement, aimed at proving the relevance of the anarchist ideas. This new historical stage, lived through by its main actors with the sense of a need for a change of tactics, which would include the militancy not belonging to FORA, brought new blood to the movement and gave birth to the Libertarian Argentina Federation (FLA). Regardless of the FORA, which had articulated thousands of workers in the previous decades, a new stage had begun and it required a new kind of militancy.

But even if this is true, we can not say that the anarchist ideas have disappeared. Neither can we say that when they were accepted by big numbers of people they were any truer. This can only reflect the special atmosphere of the time, when a majority was ready to break away with the values that upheld the whole system. This is a possibility which is always open, in this short stage of history that is capitalism and in which anarchist ideas, through its questions about freedom and equality, continue to assert their relevance and, mainly, their firm shout against every form of oppression.

Epilogue

We said before that anarchism had, spanning through a big arch of clear principles, different sections, where their meetings and discussions showed dialogue and growth through stern debate. Some historical contexts allowed convergence, the recognition of the other and the offer to society of a wide span of anarchist options. Others only allowed violent strife. Ones

allowed the coincidence of a mass movement and the anarchist ideas while others brought about the division between the masses and the libertarian ideal. If it was the special revolutionary atmosphere of the times which allowed this wonderful mix, if we can not be sure of how or when a similar situation will happen, there is something we can be sure of. The capitalist system has its essence in the permanent and endless production of goods, in the constant conquest of technological frontiers, in the destruction of its own making to raise above it with still more complex creations. As much as in the transformation of the cultural and symbolical worlds with the pervasive invention of new subjectivities. But also in its inability to solve basic problems, with an oversupply of goods as the same time as there is death by starvation, with space tourist travels as much as shocking misery, with fancy ads and the deprivation of millions of people. To confront this the struggle continues in the streets and the revolutionary and “impossible” dreams are the products of the known reality, its external borders. We dream with the sweetness of the biggest expression of what we know, we have imagined its flavour and we have sometimes been able to taste it in live. Because of this we fight. Above everything the struggle goes on, firm, indomitable, renewed with the pass of time, confronting the contrasts which happen in most of historical times, between the dreams arising from reality and the miserable deaths of millions who are destroyed to keep the limited pleasure of those who don't dream.

The aim is then to uncover and recover dreams and make of them a new reality.

Pablo M. Pérez

This article has been heavily edited for the magazine. You can find the original unabridged version in our web site.

belg

French Speaking Anarchist Federation

FAF

F

In 1953, the anarchist federation was born, out of a combination between the followers of Sebastián Faure's synthesis and working class militants, supporters of a federal organization. Its action develops around the possibility, and the need, of gathering all existing libertarian tendencies in the organization, around the autonomy of each and every group, personal responsibility, and a common publication called "*Le Monde Libertaire*".

iu

In the seventies these principles evolved towards a compromise between Voline's synthesis and some platformists ideas, which took on board, mainly, class struggle.

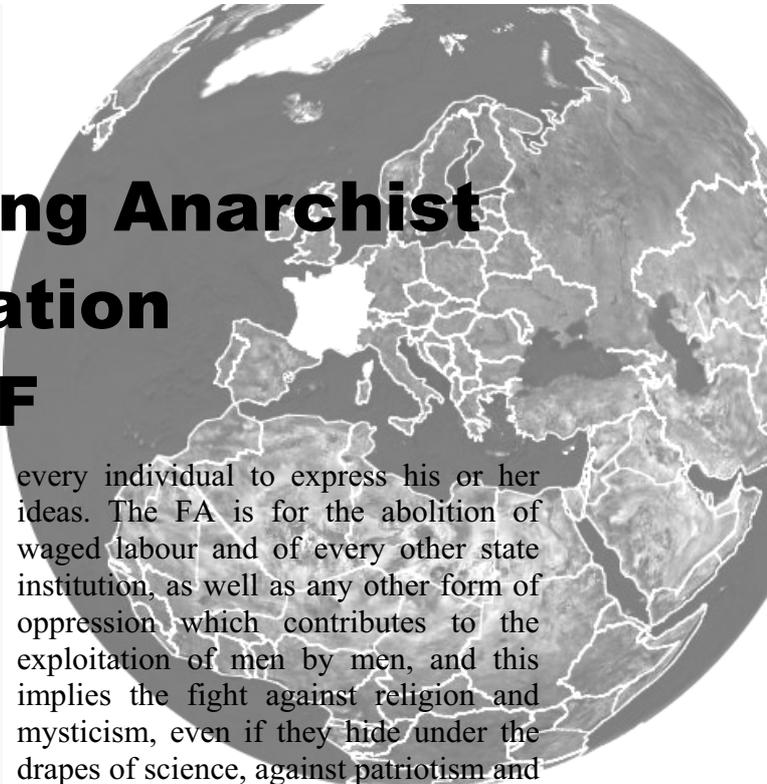
f

Today, the FA defends a plural anarchism in which contemporary anarchisms can have a voice while sharing the organizational and ethic principles of federalism and mutual aid. In this way the different tendencies are clearly less differentiated and the main part of the members do call themselves simply anarchists- without branding.

tz

The FA fights for a free society, without classes or state, and based on social equality, where the collective or individual possession of the means of production and distribution does not allow for any exploitation of the work of others. In this society the same means for development and education are given from the moment of birth on every respect. The social organisation is arranged around the free federation of producers and consumers, made and modified according to the will of its members, around the free union of individuals and the absolute right of

a swi



every individual to express his or her ideas. The FA is for the abolition of waged labour and of every other state institution, as well as any other form of oppression which contributes to the exploitation of men by men, and this implies the fight against religion and mysticism, even if they hide under the drapes of science, against patriotism and for the fraternity between all human groups and the abolition of borders.

It is the whole of society that the anarchists in the FA want to build up again, on a base of respect and solidarity, not for an individual, a class or a party, but for every individual. This social question can not be really and definitively solved unless done so on a planetary level. Following the principle of the autonomy of groups and individuals, the FA do not intervene in the strategies that are followed by each one, whether it be on a syndical-unionist area or in any other aspect of local militant intervention: feminism, against patriarchy, antifascist, against nuclear power, for the environment, antimilitarist, pacifist, against religion, etc.

These actions should not be in contradiction with the aims pursued by the FA, and they can be criticised. But mainly the anarchists in FA strive to fight altogether with the dispossessed of the world against every government, in this way acknowledging the class war, the aim of which has to be the birth of an anarchist society.

It is a question of just allowing the exploited social classes to gain their emancipation, as it will be them who will bring into being the anarchist

society. With this in mind, it is necessary to take part in reivindicative and emancipatory struggles, so to allow individuals to reach a breaking point situation against the system. Through this a call can be made towards the workers, the exploited ones, the casualised, to fight against mendicating negotiations, to opt for direct autonomous action and to get coordinated on federal lines. Enemies of every dictatorship, the anarchist reject all the authoritarian theories whether they are inspired on Marx, on the church, on monarchy, fascism, liberalism, islamism or any other. Revolution will necessarily be made of stages in which oppressive institutions are destroyed and of more constructive times, in which a new society is built, managed by every one from the start, on anarchist lines. It is because of this that the FA has to be a useful revolutionary tool, until its aims are fulfilled.

How it works

A congress, the only instance in which decisions can be made is held every year and takes decisions by unanimity of all the groups taking part. Here the general orientation of the organisation is decided, as well as the propaganda campaigns to be carried out in the year, and it gives a mandate to the different secretaries and coordinators.

From a few years up to now, every three months there is a meeting of the Enlarged Committee of Relations (CRE), organised so that the social

situati
on can
be
analys
ed and



it is possible to react quickly on the level of the federal campaigns.

A Relations Committee (CR) brings together, every month, the secretaries and coordinators to make sure that there is a coordination of the campaigns and to check on the work done. Every one accepts personal responsibility.

Finally there are some specific commissions made by the different groups on particular discussion and work issues (campaigns, internal work, etc.)

Right now

Right now, the French Speaking anarchist federation brings together about sixty groups, in France as well as in Belgium. Also in Morocco there are quite a few individuals and people who keep in touch. This allows the federation to cover a quite dense and regular network over this territory and makes of the specific anarchist french speaking organisation the best established and developed of them all. The anarchist federation publishes a weekly journal, *Le Monde Libertaire*, which sells about ten thousand issues, distributed through the traditional militant circles, through subscriptions, but also in news agents. Also, more than twenty years ago the federation did set up a local radio station, *Radio Libertaire*, which covers most of the Paris area, and scores quite sizeable audiences. This radio is a mean of expression for the whole of the federation, directly run by the congress, and with a similar name to the other publications. It is a similar case to the Editions du Monde Libertaire, which every year publish leaflets and books. The different groups in the federation manage their own locals, as is the case

Radio Libertaire:

The voice without master.

Listent to it @ www.federation-anarchiste.org/rl

of the Monde Libertaire bookshop, at 145 rue Amelot in Paris, the bookshop La Plume Noire in Lyon, L'autodidacte in Besançon, L'insoumise in Rouen, La Commune in Rennes, the Athénée Libertaire in Bordeaux...

At the 2002 congress the FA approved a motion to open up, to relate to and to support other libertarian organisations. This unity of action of the libertarians allowed for the mobilisations which brought about the anti G8 activities at Annemasse, with the establishment of a libertarian village and a red and black block during the demonstrations. Taking part in this were the Federation Anarchiste (FA), Alternative Libertaire (AL), the Organisation Communiste Libertaire (OCL), the Organisation Socialiste Libertaire (OSL) - Switzerland, No Pasaran (an antifascist network) and the Confédération Nationale du Travail (CNT).

This initiative was really successful. After it, it was decided by the FA congress to make a proposal of unity towards the FSE, and set up a Libertarian Social Forum and an Anarchist Bookfair. This time as well, the libertarian organisations answered the call, and a week of debates and demonstrations was organised. Later, during a demonstration against nuclear power, libertarian unity took shape again (FA - AL - OCL - OLS, Offensive Libertaire et Sociale, a split up from the No Pasaran network). This

kind of initiative had been preceded by the cooperation during the No Borders camp at Strasbourg.

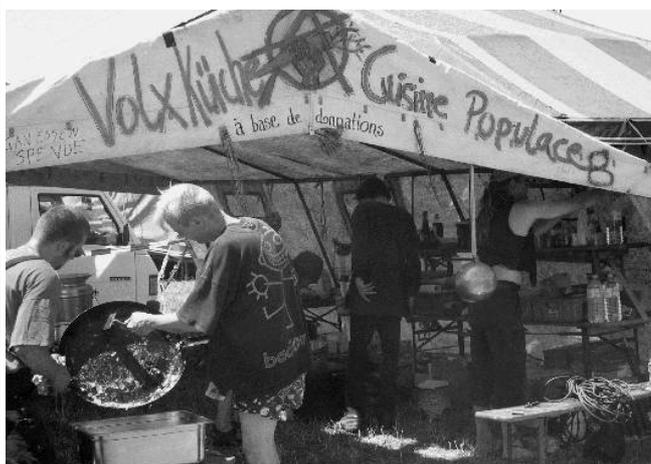
This activities proof that the organised action of the anarchists is possible and that it allows for a better presentation of our ability and our ideas.

In these last times, the activities of the federation have been mainly related to :

- Anticapitalism (with the CLAAAAC G8 campaign and the FSL ...) ;
- The feminist struggle and against patriarchy.
- The struggle against nuclear power and for the environment (campaign for capitalist decrease, décroissance, campaign for free public transport...)
- Struggles against religion and for laity.
- And of course on the fight to defend the public sector, of pensioners, of social security and on the rest of social struggles.

On an international point of view, the Federation anarchiste adheres to the International of Anarchist federations (IFA), since its creation in 1968. It organised the international's seventh congress in Besancon, on the 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th of april, 2004.

Vaaag: anti-authoritarian and anticapitalist village in Annemasse, against the G8. The proof of the organisational ability of (french speaking) anarchists.



D From Development to “Décroissance”

61st congress of FAF (Rennes)

Motion of support to the employees of
STMicroelectronics.

The development of ‘productive forces’, conceived by capitalism as the purpose of History, generated a new religion, that of economic growth. According to the promises of the liberal ideology, happiness was to be measured depending on the GNP.

After half a century of ‘improvement’, ‘modernists’ vast works look like ruins. Man is affected in his flesh and dignity: alienation through work, unemployment, lack of job security, stress, loneliness, spleen, and so on. Social disparities, both between rich and poor countries and within each nation, have never been striking. Armed conflicts, ignited and maintained mainly for strategic reasons, germinate on all continents.

But above all, because it puts the future generations in danger, results concerning the environment turn out to be an absolute disaster. Mankind’s impact on global ecology, (that is to say the level of depletion of resources and the disturbance of regulating mechanisms) already exceeds by 20% the Earth’s biological capacities. Sooner or later, if we maintained current tendencies, we should need resources amounting to several planets. Growth is no longer possible.

To remedy this situation, the ‘sustainable development’ is appointed by the people in charge (political, economic, media, etc), as well as by the

anti-globalisation minority which dreams of ‘humanising’ capitalism, as a panacea. But the trickery does not resist to any serious thinking.

The ambiguity of the expression itself is a warrant of success: it conceals the problem while giving the impression of resolving it. Worse, it shifts a problem to create another, more acute. For the beneficiaries of ‘globalisation’, it is by no means a way of questioning the principle of free-market economy, but of getting the rules of the World Trade Organisation to be accepted, with the prospect, for hundreds of multinationals, to privatise vital fields a little more, such as water, food, health. The market is in charge of remedying the destruction of the planet by... the market, the only concession consisting in easing its most visible damages, as long as profits remain.

Since the ecological impact puts in evidence an ‘overheating’ regarding the resources of the planet, it is necessary to turn towards a physical ‘décroissance’, that is to say gradually reduce the quantity of raw materials and involved energy. ‘Décroissance’ is not an ideological choice, it is an absolute necessity.

If no society is ecologically innocent, that is if the development of Humanity always comes along with a transformation of the environment, it is indeed the run for profit, for accumulation, together with the

continuous creation of artificial needs that produces a striking acceleration of the degradation of the ecosystem. The preliminary to the implementation of this 'décroissance' is therefore the disappearance of capitalism. Because the system needs growth to survive, because its own logic is a suicidal dynamic, it cannot carry out this 'décroissance'... except by massively eliminating poor populations, that is to say to perpetrate genocides.

lead to barbarity within conflicts for the appropriation of resources or to the drastic measures of totalitarianism, the problem must imperatively be put into an economic and social equity perspective, the wantonness of public services being able to constitute an essential lever in this construction.

If individual initiative of voluntary simplicity, that is the undertaking of a different lifestyle may represent the foundation of a 'philosophical' society



**Is getting
drown in
things your
idea of a happy
life?
The way in
which we
produce and
consume needs
to be radically
changed.**

concerned about future generations, it is self-evident that

The second condition is the suppression of the State, in that this capitalist dynamic only accelerates with the cooperation of various governments: multiple subsidies, implementation of infrastructures taken care of by the public power of training, research, environmental costs, financial losses, customized legal frame... To not get down the State's disappearance would imply sparing a fundamental pillar and a formidable opponent, this rendering society's deep-rooted conversion impossible.

the addition of 'responsible' individual behaviours would not be sufficient –far from it- to build a society based on 'décroissance'. If only because the greediest fields of energy and raw materials (military-industrial complex, transportation, agriculture, etc) fall within global politics, and thus collective decisions. It would be deceptive to think we could do without a revolution.

Any solution which would avoid disbanding wealth would inevitably be doomed to failure. In order for 'décroissance' to be mastered by the various populations, so that it does not

Because of one's control of one's own existence, because the meaning of one's own needs cannot by any means justify a bulimic production, generator of alienating work, only a self-managing federalist society can guarantee jointly economic equity, social justice and preservation of natural resources.

D “Décroissance” and Anarchy

The concept of «décroissance» has lately become fashionable, even among anarchists, with the recent publication of a brochure in the FA on the topic. It is being discussed at length by many. What I want to emphasize today, is not the necessity to practice «décroissance», but how to effectively put it into practice, in our everyday lives. Too often I heard people say that the answer is easy: we should consume less. Some even go as far as praising poverty and self-restraint. But that is not all, and if we linger on this idea, we won't understand the whole notion of «décroissance».

As a matter of fact, is it really necessary to go back to the days when human beings lived in caves? Is that what «décroissance» is all about? On the contrary, most people wish to lead a relatively comfortable life, and who can blame them? Consuming less will not solve anything: what is the use of buying just one pair of shoes, if the pair of shoes was made by children at the other end of the world, and if we buy it in a supermarket? That surely is no «décroissance»... There is, behind the concept, an economic and political system. The real problem is capitalism ! Thus, questioning consumption without questioning production: where are things produced? by whom? how? in what conditions?- means we do not question the capitalist operating mode (production-distribution-consumption). Even more so, we accept the necessity – or fatality – behind it...

The noxious perversity of this system is that it has established constraints that ensure its own survival: the idea is to create acts of mass consumption, as well as the apparent need to satisfy

them in order to live decently. And consumption itself, even if it is very little, is the best guarantee that the system will survive. Indeed, although we curse and plague the Medef (the bosses' union in France) and those in power, nothing will change if we do not get involved in the effective alteration of this system. Not only do we not question it, but we allow it to regenerate itself by supporting it ! Shall we find the strength to stop buying from Auchan or Carrefour supermarkets, McDonald's, Elf, Total, Nike, Microsoft etc.? So, what shall we do? The idea is that people themselves should decide on what they want to produce, how they want to produce it, and also why, and for whom, where, etc. Locally, they decide on what lifestyle they want: they are open-eyed and active actors of their own lives. This mode of organization is much less energy wasting; an end to super production. There would be less transportation of goods, more collective discussions on the production modes – which would pollute less.

We must therefore go further: we should think of the anarchist organization mode as the only way to “décroître” harmoniously, once we are rid of the capitalist monster! We should also defend the idea that the libertarian society is healthy ecologically, realistic economically, fair and equal socially, and is inscribed within the humanist frame of “décroissance”.

So the point is not to stop consuming, but rather to produce and consume better. In order to frighten the capitalist system, we should be able to give ourselves the means – in spite of the

obstacles– to get a libertarian society working; let's take our responsibilities! Let me insist: the anarchist society project is coherent and attainable! Let's create, invent and get involved in local alternative networks of production and distribution, which smack of "décroissance". We want to define together what we want to consume and how to produce this according to our principles and ecological constraints. Let's use the tools and production means to make them fit people's needs wherever they live. And let's not take "But there is no such thing in my town as an autonomous and self-catering network now" for an answer. For giving 1€ to alternative systems and giving 1€ to the capitalists do not have the same political value: we vote everyday by consuming!

In France, for example, there are associations of small farmers and nearby consumers, like AMAP (Association for the maintenance of peasant agriculture). Together they decide beforehand on what and how they will produce and distribute; meanwhile the consumers make a promise to buy the production, thus enabling the farmers to free themselves from the policies that ensnare and stifle them. The benefits are twofold: first, it enables the small farmers to survive, even though the capital has programmed to destroy them; secondly, it greatly reduces the waste of energy and food which is the usual side-effect of industrial –and chemical– production, of transport and storage. So the system is directly attacked where it hurts most! No more intermediaries, just people self-organizing... And this type of initiatives can be conceived and created for all sorts of productions. These examples of alternatives can become a real answer, completely anti-capitalist, ecological and realistic. Yet if we do not get involved in such

initiatives, there is a risk they will be absorbed by the system. Indeed, these AMAP are based on nearly libertarian principles, but are in the hand of the association Alliance PEC – which does not particularly like libertarians. If we are not careful, these initiatives could very well become the new fashion for bourgeois to feel 'closer to the people'... It is the same with SEL (System of local exchange) and any other sort of local alternative. So the thing is, to not only stop buying stuff from chain stores and big producers, but also to put into practice, as soon as possible and as much as possible, a positive and efficient organization of society. Let's help to the implement of an anarchist organization of society by creating and supporting local alternative networks of production and distribution, of recycling and exchange, as well as friendly meeting places, like libraries, squats, self-managed kitchens, free services, lessons etc.

What is very interesting is that these networks attract a lot of people who are not militants: anarchy is too beautiful for people not to be seduced! It is our role as anarchists to show that, through practice, a libertarian society is attainable and sustainable (!!!). This libertarian society is the only means to achieve both individual and collective comfort, and "décroissance". The more we act, the more coherent we get!

Clément

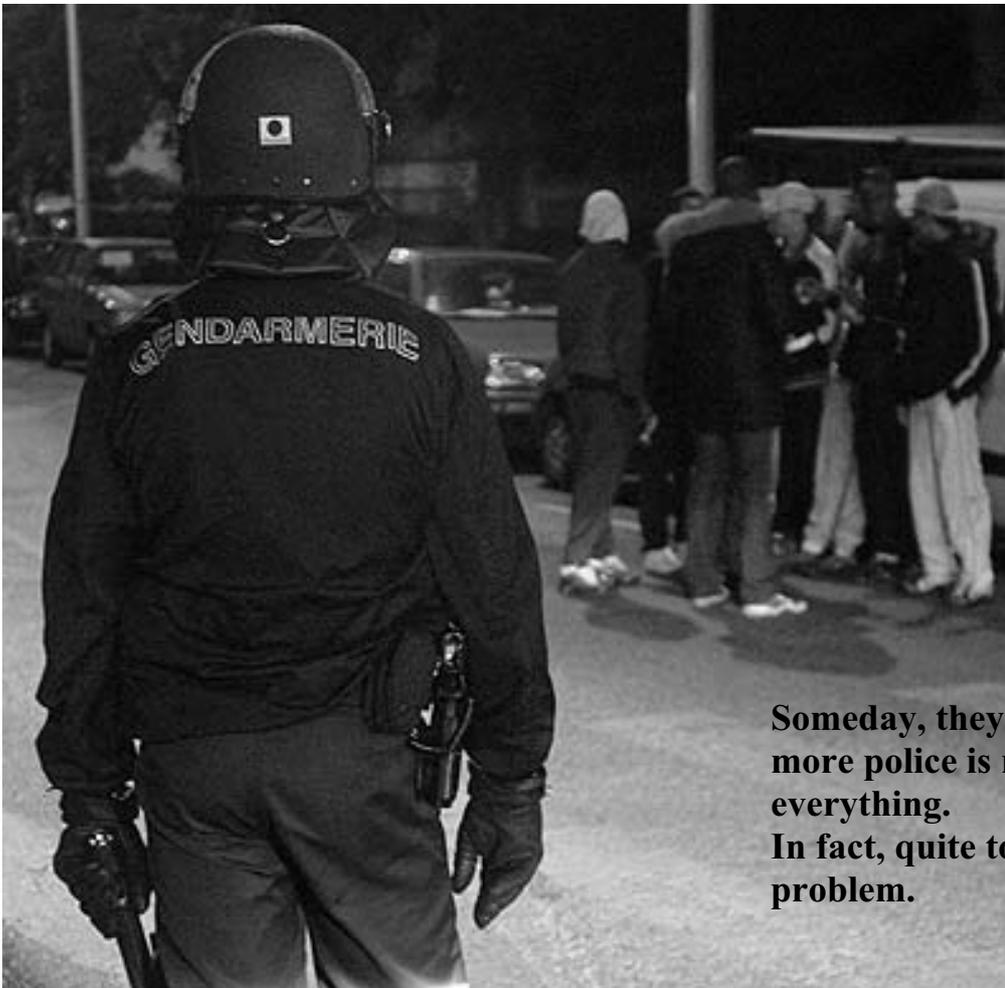
These two textes on décroissance are part of the debate that the different federations are having. Other contributions can be found at the website, and in the web pages of the federations.

On the Paris riots, October 2005

Document by a member of FAF on the events in the Paris banlieu.

On October 25th, The Minister of the Interior, Nicolas Sarkozy, presented a new series of measures on the television which gave more powers to the police and reinforced controls and surveillance (Internet, cameras) in the name of the struggle against terrorism. The same day, Sarkozy declares (to get attention?) that he wants to take on the 'rabble', how he describes the youth of the outlying neighbourhoods of Paris. On Thursday, October 27th, two young people, met accidental deaths at Clichy sous Bois in the Paris region, while they were trying to escape a police control. The following night, the young people of the neighbourhood where Ziad and Berbou lived, confronted the police. Ministers absolved the police who had chased the two young people, even though witnesses contradicted the official versions. This so angered people that more nights of violence followed. In the next few nights, the revolt spread to many French towns. Hundreds of cars, schools, police stations, businesses and public transport vehicles were destroyed by fire. Confrontations took place with the police and many hundreds of arrests were made. The revolt was to last several nights and reached all French regions. After the 11th night of riots on November, the French government decided that a curfew could be declared throughout the French departments: enacting a law of 1955. This law was created by the State to deal with troubles linked to the Algerian war. And had not been used even for the

May 1968 revolts; Despite that, troubles continue, but less frequently; These events, unique in French history, originated in the poverty in the outlying neighbourhoods of the big towns. Built at the beginning to welcome the French who left independent Algeria (1963) but also the rural populations which wanted to work in the towns, these estates became places abandoned by the State; The buildings became rundown because they were not maintained, the population changed: the poorest were sent there, notably immigrants and their families. Very quickly, these neighbourhoods, all built far from town centres, concentrated the most precarious people, foreign incomers (in majority African) unemployed, poor labourers... Other difficulties added to this, progressive withdrawal of public services from these neighbourhoods, appalling housing, lack of socio-cultural structures, social, racial and spatial discriminations... In the place of workers' organisations leading the working class, religious networks attempted to structure social relations. During this time, State police repressed and watched the young people of these neighbourhoods, to dissuade them from coming out of there; progressively the identifications of these young people with their neighbourhoods evolved into a sort of communitarianism, mixture of urban ghetto culture and often of religion, but also of competition with other neighbourhoods. Institutional violence, the escalation of politicians' speeches, social violence, murders by the



Someday, they have to realise that more police is not the answer for everything. In fact, quite too often it IS the problem.

police, hostility and suspicion towards them, are the roots of the anger of all these young people for whom the future is desperate in the neighbourhoods where unemployment can reach 40% among under 25s. It is still too soon to know if this spontaneous movement will have effects on French society; today, the government takes decisions which don't have direct effects on the problems experienced: the curfew is a weapon of war, not of dialogue; tax remittals to bosses of businesses who would set up there are no answer to massive unemployment; proposals to work in apprenticeships from 14 years old, is the setting up of child labour.

The other question tragically put by these events, is the legitimacy of the Republican model: «Liberty, Equality, Fraternity». Whilst the capitalist economic system keeps children of immigrants in poverty, the

State reinforces surveillance and repression; This situation legitimises the racist speeches of Le Pen and a fringe of the French population. The great difficulty now is to anticipate a situation which is getting no better. How to formulate collective projects of social and political emancipation where youth of these abandoned neighbourhoods could create the instruments of their own autonomy and freedom?

How, concretely, to put forward an anticapitalist and libertarian method of analysis which could be taken into account and perhaps let these spontaneous revolts give birth one day to a revolution? Finally, how to integrate from now the demands of these young people into those of the social and libertarian movement, so that the convergences of struggles are no longer overlooked?

Daniel

Iberian Anarchist Federation

FAI

The Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI) is a federal group. That is, it is free, based on equality and solidarity between the affinity groups of which it is made. Its purpose is to provide an effective coordination between the different anarchist groups of Spain and Portugal, so that it is possible to organise a social revolution which, abolishing private property and waged labour, can establish a new society based on anarchist communism. It strives for an order without imposition, without government, without authority of any kind and without exploitation. An order based upon the freedom of every human being, based on social equality, on free agreement, on mutual aid and on solidarity.

It is a coherent organisation, and therefore it is internationalist. FAI understands that a social revolution in Spain and Portugal must be part of an anarchist global revolution. Opposing every kind of nationalism, colonialism or imperialism, FAI, which is a member of IFA since its foundation supports a practical solidarity between the exploited classes, the poor and governed of the whole world, as part of a revolutionary struggle striving for the destruction of capitalism and the abolition of national borders. Its broader aim is a free federation of the different communities, peoples and regions of the world.

FAI fights the state in all its shapes (monarchy, republic, representative or popular democracy, dictatorships of any kinds..). For the federation only the disappearance of the oppressors by the action of the oppressed, and of the state by those governed, will bring about the liberation of the human kind

It fights for an anarchist society to be brought about only through anarchist means, through direct action and not by any political mean, reformist or through laws.

The federation can not be legalised and can not be part of an institution. Its action is only based upon the capacity of its members, on international anarchist solidarity and the freedoms conquered. FAI won't dwell on the grounds of given « freedoms », regulated by the state, and it does not enter into any kind of agreement with institutions, whether of a political or religious nature.

In agreement with this practice, which questions the metaphysical or religious principle of authority upon which the slavery of the individuals is based, the federation states to be rationalist and atheist : it will oppose religion in all its forms.

Accordingly to these rationalist ideas and against religion, the federation fights for a new social environment based on individual freedom and aiming at the total development of every human being. It also considers, on the other hand, that this individual development is not a separate issue from the social question, and that therefore it is only possible in the free society which is sought.

The Fai opposes the official and bureaucratic unions, as they thwart the development of the worker's direct action and try to contain the social struggle inside democratic legality, while aiming at making of the proletariat a piece or tamed component of democratic capitalism.

FAI refuses any cooperation with individuals, groups or associations, which call themselves libertarians, but which take part in institutions of the status quo, which try to transform the libertarian movement in just another part of the democratic society, as it understands that their attitude goes against anarchism. It only supports those who actively and consequently refuse power under any guise.

Through a work of specifically anarchist propaganda, of the peaceful constructive example and the intervention in different social movements against the many realities of state and capitalist usurpation, the FAI fights for the creation of an insurgent movement, which questions the whole of the authoritarian society. Its way is direct action, considered in its widest and most dynamical, constructive and revolutionary shape.



Tierra y Libertad

It was in 1888 when an anarchist newspaper with the name Tierra y libertad was first published. The name was taken from a popular russian movement of the same name, as it was thought to condense the hopes of the dispossessed of this world. Published every fortnight, it lasted for about one year. It reappeared ten years later as a supplement to La Revista Blanca, becoming a separate weekly a couple of years later. It was a daily for the second half of 1903. The dictatorship of Primo de Rivera banned it in 1923, altogether with all the libertarian press. It reappeared in 1930 as a weekly, now published by the Federación Anarquista Ibérica (FAI), becoming again a daily in the years of the spanish revolution (1936-39).

After the fascist victory it was published underground, without any fixed periodicity, acting as a vehicle of the hopes of the libertarian movement. At the same time, in Mexico, the spanish anarchist in exile had a monthly newspaper with the same name, calling out to all those deceived by the that mexican revolution, which after the Land and Freedom! rallying cry had risen against opression, only to be later betrayed by a small group of demagogues who took over the country.

In Spain, in 1977, with the libertarian reorganization that followed Franco's death, the groups in FAI decide to retake Tierra y Libertad, monthly. This newspaper is the most veteran of the libertarian publications in spanish language, and one of the oldest in the world.

Tierra y Libertad does obviously not receive any grants from any institution and survives only on contributions and subscriptions. You can help by subscribing to it. It costs 12 euros (15 outside Spain). Check on <http://www.nodo50.org/tierraylibertad/suscripciones.html> for the details.



RESISTANCE

