

# ORGANISE!

...for revolutionary anarchism

## No State Solution

- **Why anarchists oppose the State and the police**
- **An internationalist look at Brexit**
- **Looking back, Moving forward: 30 years of the Anarchist Federation**

# 87

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# Organise!

## Issue 87 – Autumn 2016

Organise! is the magazine of the Anarchist Federation (AF). As anarchist communists we fight for a world without leaders, where power is shared equally amongst communities, and people are free to reach their full potential. We do this by supporting working class resistance to exploitation and oppression, organise alongside our neighbours and workmates, host informative events, and produce publications that help make sense of the world around us.

Organise! is published twice per year with the aim to provide a clear anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues and to initiate debate on ideas not normally covered in agitational papers. To meet this target, we positively solicit contributions from our readers. We will try to print any article that furthers the objectives of anarchist communism. If you'd like to write something for us, but are unsure whether to do so, then feel free to contact us through any of the details below.

The articles in this issue do not represent the collective viewpoint of the AF unless stated as such. Revolutionary ideas develop from debate, they do not merely drop out of the air! We hope that this publication will help that debate to take place.

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Cover image modified from 'Riot Gear' by Surian Soosay.

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# ORGANISE!

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# Editorial: No State Solution

The Brexit vote has ushered in a period of increased instability and turmoil, aggravating the problems we already had: low wages, poor working conditions and job insecurity, high rents, social cleansing and homelessness, racism and xenophobia. Politicians are unable to deal with any of this, desperately trying to gain credibility as they struggle with each other for power. But most people have no real confidence in any of them, including the people's 'saviour' Jeremy Corbyn. As anarchists, we know that the problem lies beyond individual politicians and their policies; the root of the problem is based in the nature of the State itself. The State's role is to support capitalism and will never willingly do anything that goes against the interests of capital. It cannot be captured or reformed. Instead, we believe that the only hope is to build a mass working class movement of people who not only resist the attacks, but create alternative structures that are based on self-organisation and a vision of a completely different society.

This issue of *Organise!* covers a variety of different topics but underlying them all is the idea that our fightback must come from our own efforts and that the State is actually an obstacle to social change. We look at key anniversaries: the General Strike, the Spanish Revolution and the Hungarian uprising. In each the State played a negative role. In the articles on Brexit, we argue that we don't want the EU State nor the British state. We also show the alternatives to the nation state. We highlight the role of the police as an arm of the State and show how people are fighting back against police repression. The review in this issue deals with the debate between anarchists and Marxists, on whether you can capture the State or not.

In addition, we report on the 10th Congress of our international - the International of Anarchist Federations - and publish articles from our sister federation in Italy on Brexit and from Greece on the State.

Finally, we mark our own anniversary - 30 years of the Anarchist Federation.





**NEITHER  
CONFIRM  
NOR DENY** = **NEITHER  
TRUTH  
NOR JUSTICE**

# **UNDERCOVER COPS WITHIN THE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

The first indications of how deeply undercover police had infiltrated various groups in the broad movement came with the identification of Mark Kennedy as an infiltrator. Police Constable Mark Kennedy, posing as Mark Stone, infiltrated environmental and leftist networks for approximately eight years (2001-2009) in the Nottingham area, sometimes working with another undercover spy, a woman, who posed as an environmental activist. He hosted meetings with activists in up to 23 countries including the USA, and took part in blockades, site occupations and sabotage, sometimes playing key logistical roles such as transport. He worked as a provocateur, encouraging activists to engage in acts of violence. He was paid £50,000 a year, plus an additional £200,000 for bribes, drink, transport and travel abroad to meet other activists. In this period he kept up a four year relationship with a female activist. After Kennedy's real identity was revealed she stated: "If somebody was being paid to have sex with me, that gives me a sense of having been violated."

As well as that relationship, Kennedy had sex with a second female activist, and it seems that he also had sex with others as well. The second female activist revealed his true identity after she discovered his passport in July 2010. Meanwhile he maintained a parallel life with a wife and two children.

International activists have confirmed his attendance at least 68 different events, some over a number of years. After his exposure, and his leaving the police, he used his inside knowledge for personal gain, establishing a series of companies thought to be private consulting firms. *The Guardian* reported that he used the privileged access he gained in police infiltration campaigns to act as a "corporate spy" while still maintaining his Mark Stone alter ego. Not long after, Kennedy was working for a second spy firm in the US, Densus Group, targeting anti-capitalist demonstrators.



Mark Kennedy aka Mark Stone

Kennedy claimed that his police superiors gave him the greenlight to have sex with activists. The president of the shady ACPO, Sir Hugh Orde denied this. Kennedy maintains that he was one of 15 police spies who had infiltrated environmental movements; at least four of these spies remain within British protest movements. While the UK's police infiltration efforts targeting social movements date back to at least to anti-war campaigners in 1968, the strategy of undercover cops having sexual relationships with activists seems to have been a relatively new strategy.

## OTHERS UNCOVERED

In the wake of the exposure of Mark Kennedy, other police infiltrators into the various movements were uncovered. One of these was Detective Constable Jim Boyling, under the false names of Pete James Sutton or Jim Sutton, who infiltrated Reclaim the Streets for five years between 1995 and 2000. In addition he undertook surveillance of environmental and hunt saboteur groups. Like Kennedy, Boyling had sexual relations with activists. He married one activist and had two children with her before a divorce. He apparently kept this secret from his superiors, only informing one in 2005. In addition in his time undercover he had another long term relationship with an activist.

Boyling maintained his undercover identity whilst being prosecuted with other activists for the occupation of a government office. He thus perjured himself in court. In addition, he was present during meetings between defendants and their lawyers. This was in line with instructions from the controllers of the undercover cops that they maintain their secret identities during prosecutions for "offences arising out of their deployment".

Another undercover cop subsequently exposed was Mark Jacobs posing as Marco Jacobs, who "infiltrated anarchist, anti-globalization, animal rights, and other social justice networks for five years (2004-2009) in the Cardiff area", according to *The Guardian*. He volunteered for key roles within the Anarchist Network (CAN) which allowed him to infiltrate the Dissent! planning committees mobilising against the G8. During 2008, Jacobs maintained a sexual relationship with a female activist, and encouraged drinking, and personal recriminations and backstabbing within CAN. This led to the collapse of the group and Jacobs' subsequent departure.

## RELATIONSHIPS WITH ACTIVISTS

Other undercover cops who have come to light include Sergeant Jim Dines who infiltrated the environmental group London Greenpeace under the alias of John Barker between 1987 and 1992. In 1990 Dines began a relationship with the activist Helen Steel. Using the ruse of a mental breakdown he left her and disappeared in 1992. Helen Steel discovered that he had taken on the identity of Philip John Barker who had died as a child years before. As *The Guardian* noted: "The Dines/Barker case is said to be one of at least 80 similar occurrences organised by Scotland Yard over a 30 year period wherein police adopted the names of dead children in



order to produce false identities and documents with verifiable back stories". In addition, Steel discovered that he had been married since 1977.

Mark Jenner posing as Mark Cassidy infiltrated UK protest groups from 1994 to 2000 as an officer in the Metropolitan Police's Special Demonstration Squad under the direction of Bob Lambert. Like Dines, Jenner was already married but maintained a five year relationship with a female activist between 1995 and 2000, actually living with her in a flat. After his sudden disappearance from her life, she also began to investigate.

Other undercover cops included Rod Richardson and Simon Wellings, although it is unclear if they had sexual relations with activists. Wellings infiltrated the group Globalise Resistance between 2001 and 2005. Another undercover cop we are aware of was the policeman who operated under the name of Andy Bryant within first the Anarchist Communist Federation (precursor of the Anarchist Federation) and subsequently Class War in the late 1980s-early 1990s. Like other undercover cops he disappeared suddenly, citing his family who had moved to Spain. Like Jacobs, 'Bryant' encouraged recrimination and backstabbing within the ACF, and on at least 2 separate occasions encouraged militants to engage in provocative situations. In addition he served as Treasurer of both organisations, thus obtaining personal information. He did not engage in sexual relations with activists.

## LAMBERT

But perhaps the most pernicious of all these undercover cops was Bob Lambert, under the disguise of Bob Robinson, who infiltrated left and animal rights movements. He operated inside London Greenpeace before being replaced by Dines and he targeted the Animal Liberation Front. Between May 1987-November 1988, he engaged in a sexual relationship with a 24-year-old female, not a political activist, whom he met at a party. He maintained this relationship for 18 months in order to create the appearance of a personal life, and he even arranged for a raid on the flat the couple shared to indicate that he was an activist. He was operating within the Special Branch and within its specialised unit the Special Demonstration Squad for 28 years. At times he supervised the work of both Jenner and Boyling.

Lambert had a sexual relationship a year or so before with a female activist with whom he had a child. Lambert now admits to having had sexual relations with four women whilst undercover. Throughout all of his undercover work, he was already married. Lambert also acted as a provocateur. According to Green

Party MP Caroline Lucas, Lambert was responsible for an incendiary device in the Harrow branch of Debenhams department in protest at its selling of fur in 1987. As a result two people were convicted. Lambert still denies that he was the third participant in this attack though he is said to have admitted his involvement to a female activist. He also penned the anti-McDonalds leaflet, which led to the longest civil trial in British history, the McLibel case.

## PITCHFORD ENQUIRY

The revelations about the undercover cops eventually forced the authorities to initiate the Pitchford Enquiry, after the Metropolitan Police had dragged their heels and been doggedly obstructive for many months, in particular with their "Neither Confirm Nor Deny" statements.

At the preliminary hearing in March 2016 Helen Steel stated that:

*"The McLibel Support Campaign supports the core participants' call for all the cover names to be released so that the truth can be heard. We have not called for all the real names of officers to be released, although I think that there may be individual circumstances where that is appropriate, especially where those officers went on to become supervisors or line managers or are now in positions of responsibility, but I'm assuming that that would be done on a more individualised basis. However, I do believe that all of the cover names should be disclosed so that the truth can be achieved.*

*I also believe that to ensure the Inquiry is as comprehensive as possible, the police need to release a full list of all the organisations that were targeted. There is no reason for secrecy on this. Various groups were named in True Spies, so why is it that they can't be named now?*

*The reason for wanting maximum transparency and disclosure is a political one. Without the names of undercover officers who targeted each group, it is impossible to start to assess the whole impact of their surveillance or the extent of the abuses committed. Without full disclosure, we won't get to the full truth and we can't ensure that preventative measures are put in place to stop these abuses happening again.*

*These were very, very serious human rights abuses committed by this unit, including article 3 abuses: "no one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment". We want to stop them happening again. That is our purpose in taking part in this Inquiry and that is the real public interest that requires that there must be openness and transparency."*

She and the other women who have been sorely mistreated by these undercover cops want an apology but more than that they want answers. They want to know who authorised these strategies of sexual infiltration and they want to know the aliases of all those undercover cops involved so that anyone involved in a relationship with an undercover cop can finally know the truth.

Police Spies Out of Lives is a support group for women's legal action against undercover policing. You can get involved at <https://policespiesoutoflives.org.uk/>

# IT IS TIME WE DISCUSSED ABOLISHING THE POLICE

FROM THE DENVER ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS



*“If I was an anarchist or even a regular protester,” explained the president of the Seattle Police Officers’ Guild Ron Smith, “I would probably not want to be infiltrated by the police... Just like the dope dealer on Third and Pike doesn’t want to get busted. That’s the price of doing business. It’s the whole package.”<sup>[1]</sup> This startling bit of honesty from the Seattle police regarding their imperative to infiltrate and spy on social justice protests came as Ansel Herz, a reporter for the local newspaper *The Stranger*, questioned Smith regarding undercover cops at a Black Lives Matter protest last December.*

*For those involved in Left protest movements this is hardly news. I remember my early days in the anti-war movement at Texas Tech University. During the first rallies protesting the invasion of Iraq in 2003 local police with their crew-cuts, wraparound shades, and shirts tucked into Wrangler jeans would “blend effortlessly” into the crowd of college students. Campus police even intruded into a graduate student’s*

*office—much to his surprise—in order to peruse our flyers and posters that were stored there. A year later an investigation by Salon<sup>[2]</sup> revealed that police had infiltrated anti-war groups in Boulder, Fresno, Grand Rapids, and Albuquerque. A federal prosecutor even demanded Drake University turn over all of its records regarding an anti-war conference held there by the National Lawyers Guild.*

*Ahead of the Republican National Convention in 2008 Minnesota police in conjunction with the FBI raided the homes of anti-war activists “seizing computers, journals, and political pamphlets” according to reports<sup>[3]</sup>. One of the many police officers who infiltrated anti-war groups prior to the convention would later brag of how protesters “were herded like sheep at the hands of the riot cops.”<sup>[4]</sup> Ultimately he determined that the “strategy, tactic, and deployments were well planned and extremely effective in controlling [protesters].”*

- Brian Platt on the Counterpunch website<sup>[5]</sup>



Detective Wojciech Braszczok<sup>[6]</sup> was one of many undercover cops infiltrating the Occupy Wall Street movement in New York, a fact that came to light after his unrelated arrest following the release of a video of him violently assaulting a motorist<sup>[7]</sup>. Braszczok's participation in the movement went beyond monitoring protests as he insinuated himself deep into the personal lives of Occupy members even attending birthday parties—all the while collecting “intelligence” for the NYPD. Other undercover cops in the Occupy movement worked as agent provocateurs “being paid to go to these protests and put us in situations where we’d be arrested and not be able to leave”<sup>[8]</sup> as Occupy member Marshall Garrett discovered after his 2011 arrest.

During the 2010 protests against budget cuts and tuition hikes on West Coast college campuses university police sent a spy<sup>[9]</sup> into meetings of the University of Washington based UW Student Worker Coalition. At UC Davis the administration worked with faculty and police to form the Student Activism Team<sup>[10]</sup>, a taskforce charged with infiltrating and surveilling<sup>[11]</sup> Left groups on campus. Even more disturbing, a lawsuit filed last year by the Evergreen State College chapter of Students for a Democratic Society revealed further details of a surveillance ring<sup>[12]</sup> dating back to 2009 and built around John Towery a member of the Army's Force Protection Service who had infiltrated the Olympia, Washington student group. According to emails Towery was trying to “develop a leftist/anarchist mini-group for intel sharing and distro” with campus police and police departments in Everett, Spokane, Portland, Eugene, and Los Angeles as well as with various branches of the military.

Recently, documents obtained by *The Intercept* revealed that undercover officers for the NYPD regularly attended Black Lives Matter events<sup>[13]</sup>. Pictures of activists are kept on file by the department and their movements are tracked. In a statement on these revelations the Metropolitan Transit Authority which has been using its counter-terrorism task force to also spy on Black Lives Matter justified the spying by equating protesters with terrorists. And this is not just the view

of local police departments, the Department of Homeland Security<sup>[14]</sup> and the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force<sup>[15]</sup> have both been monitoring Black Lives Matter protests across the country showing the dangerous and unfounded link in the minds of police between social justice movements and terrorism.

## UNIQUE TO LEFT-WING GROUPS

It is notable that the problem of police infiltration is unique to Left-leaning political groups. Right wing organizations like the Tea Party, the Oath Keepers, and the Ku Klux Klan are more likely to have police as enthusiastic members than moles. Even the FBI's oft celebrated infiltration of the Klan during the Civil Rights Movement led to more cheerleading<sup>[16]</sup> for Klan activity than arrests of its members. While police frequently paint Left organizations as violent<sup>[17]</sup> in order to justify the violation of people's right to organize politically these right wing terrorist groups<sup>[18]</sup> are regularly left unmolested<sup>[19]</sup> by the supposed keepers of the peace.

There are many people who think the police exist to fight crime. The reality is that the police exist to maintain the status-quo with the rich on top and everyone else fighting for scraps. During the uprising in Ferguson last year comedian Chris Rock commented: “If poor people knew how rich rich people are, there would be riots in the streets.”<sup>[20]</sup> The police represent the first line of defence between the rich and the rioters. Those involved in the Black Lives Matter movement—the latest challenge to the racist status-quo—learn quickly the true function of the police as they are shouted at and insulted by police in riot gear who hem in their marches, as they have their photos taken by police surveillance teams for further investigation, as they deal with the never ending stream of plain-clothes cops intimidating, monitoring, sowing seeds of distrust. Knowing the political role of the police perhaps it is time to stop hoping for reform and start imagining a world without the police.

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# ON VIGILANTE JUSTICE AND THE NEED FOR SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

**BY TARIQ KHAN:  
BLACK ROSE ANARCHIST FEDERATION  
FEDERACION ANARQUISTA ROSA NEGRA IN THE USA**

*“Compared with the wholesale violence of capital and government, political acts of violence are but a drop in the ocean. That so few resist is the strongest proof how terrible must be the conflict between their souls and unbearable social iniquities. High strung, like a violin string, they weep and moan for life, so relentless, so cruel, so terribly inhuman. In a desperate moment the string breaks. Untuned ears hear nothing but discord. But those who feel the agonized cry understand its harmony...”*  
- Emma Goldman, excerpt from *The Psychology of Political Violence*

Alton Sterling, murdered by the Baton Rouge police at point-blank range for the crime of selling CDs to feed his family. Education worker Philando Castile, murdered by the Minnesota police in front of his girlfriend and her four-year-old daughter; targeted by the police because he had a “wide-set” nose. Michael Brown, murdered in the street by the St. Louis police for jaywalking, described by his murderer as having a face “like a demon.” Twelve-year-old Tamir Rice, murdered by the Cleveland police as he played with a toy at a playground. Sandra Bland, murdered by Texas police, died in jail where police took her for failure to signal a lane change. Freddie Gray, murdered by the Baltimore police, who brutalized him so cruelly that his spine was severed from his neck. Every day another person murdered by police and vigilantes. 17-year-old Trayvon Martin looked suspicious. 14-year-old Emmett Till wasn’t deferential enough in his demeanour. These murders stretch back through the decades, through the lynchings and pogroms of the Jim Crow era, into chattel slavery, when the predecessors of the modern police, the Slave Patrols, hunted people who escaped enslavement and violently exerted authority to control the movement of Black people.

## **NO ACCOUNTABILITY. NO JUSTICE.**

And in spite of continuing mass protest, city and state officials find that the police “acted appropriately,” “followed procedure,” and acted with “restraint and professionalism.” No accountability. No justice. No changes deeper than the superficial level. The daily, systemic state violence against

poor and racialized communities continues unabated. So is it really “random” when Army veteran Micah Johnson, apparently acting on his own, killed five police officers (one of whom had white supremacist tattoos) in Dallas at a protest against police violence, or when even more recently a shooter killed three officers in Baton Rouge, where militarized police have been bullying people over the past week?

This suicidal anti-police violence is the tragically inevitable outcome of a violent system that is impervious to the concerns of the people it targets. Given the cruel nature of this system, and the deep alienation under which people live and work, it is remarkable that these suicidal acts of desperation do not happen more often. If things do not change significantly, we can be assured that such acts will happen more often.

We do not celebrate or encourage such acts but recognize that the anger is justified. The powerlessness and hopelessness from which these acts spring is cultivated by violent law enforcement institutions and more by the systemic political and economic injustice that such institutions function to protect. We aim our anger and condemnation up, rather than down, the social hierarchy. We condemn the businessmen, politicians, corporate media outlets, and state officials whose policies create a situation in which people feel so disempowered that they see no way out other than anti-social violence.

For those of us who want to live in a more just and less violent society, there is no magic bullet solution. No lone gunman, unaccountable to larger emancipatory mass movements, can shoot us into a free and equal society. The kind of revolutionary change we struggle for requires mass people’s movement organizing for clear demands to change the underlying unjust social relations at the root of police violence. Within the larger anti-police violence and Black Lives Matter movements, the demand to disarm, defund, and disband the police is a hopeful start which we support, however it is only a start. As anarchists, the questions we grapple with have to do with what needs to change in the structure of society – socially, economically, politically – for police to become obsolete, and how do we build a mass movement strong and aware enough to fight for those changes.



# MODERN TOTALITARIANISM

BY THE ANARCHIST POLITICAL ORGANISATION (APO)  
FEDERATION OF COLLECTIVES

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Today's attack on society is the result of the endless effort made by the state and bosses to transform it into a sweatshop and a prison. Within conditions of an overall deep systemic crisis and de-legitimation of the political system, this attack is escalating. In the process, it is revealing the incurable contradictions of the state-capitalist organisational structure, as much as the absolute weakness to produce from above any coherent social vision, perspective or hope.

The roots of this intensifying aggressiveness lie in the very nature of the oppressive and exploitative system. The need of authority to go deeper and further triggers an attempt to control every human activity, in order to have society completely subjugated to state and capitalist imperatives. The state and capitalist system is built on the irrationality of social and class oppression, using all means to perpetuate itself and therefore to perpetuate the destructive effects inflicted upon society and nature. Its decay, so evident nowadays, is not a result of the multiform crisis. On the contrary, this crisis is a result of the system's profound decay and bankruptcy, not only in social and political terms but also in terms of values.

In this context, individual state and capitalist entities in the West, regardless of the political and financial administration in charge, share a common direction: the campaign to impose modern totalitarianism; an operation to shield the regime in order to ensure its uninterrupted perpetuation and establish a new impersonal absolutism, imposing a reality where the elites enjoy a lifestyle of outrageous luxuries while billions of people are condemned to unbearable living conditions – even devastating ones for those who are excluded and treated as “dispensable” – forcing them to live as slaves.

Authority responds to the upsurge of social dissent by trying to uproot resistance and turn society into a galley. This upsurge of dissent is arising – and will continue to do so – from the system's unresolved and fundamental contradiction: the contrast between the many who are deprived of the possibility to decide on their lives and the few who appropriate it. It is a contradiction between the real potential of society for creativity through mutual aid and free coexistence, on the one hand, and the suffocating restrictions and distortions imposed on social relations by the state and the bosses, on the other.

The latest restructuring process of the state and capitalist world accelerated at the beginning of the '90s, with the “eastern bloc” collapsing and the western power bloc renewing its aggressiveness both in the capitalist periphery and within western societies. Declarations about “the End of History” and a New World Order were accompanied by the establishment and upgrading of international and transnational mechanisms of control and subjugation.

Founding the WTO, strengthening EU's and G8's role, signing agreements such as Maastricht and NAFTA, were like a bugle call to war launched by the elites against the “plebeians”. At the same time, as geopolitical balance of power shifted, new military operations began after one single major superpower had emerged, seeking to expand the limits of its global “living space”, together with its allies. “War against terror” and the “anti”-terrorist crusades became the ideological vehicle for these operations. The dominant bloc of power has been trying to spread its power by constantly setting powder-keg areas on fire; the two wars in Iraq, the war in Afghanistan and the modern apartheid state of Israel are the most characteristic examples.

## **UPROOTED AND DESPERATE PEOPLE AIM TO ESCAPE**

The devastating effect of these crusades and of the intensity of the looting of the capitalist periphery was the erosion of any concept of social life or life in general in the Middle East, where local populations have been suffering from the war. Consequently, millions of uprooted and desperate people started escaping to Europe in every possible way. In order to prevent them the apparatuses of the state and capitalism created barriers both in terms of legislation, enacting the Dublin 2 Regulation, and in terms of repression, creating the military force of FRONTEX.

After the war in Syria, a huge wave of refugees and migrants fleeing the wider warzone moved towards the west, to Fortress Europe. The response to this new situation was to revise previous agreements such as Dublin 2, to strengthen the role of FRONTEX, to create hot spots and numerous concentration camps and finally to close the borders, leading to thousands of refugees and migrants being trapped in the entry corridors of Fortress Europe.

The recent decision to deal with refugees by using the same political and military mechanisms (NATO, EU) which caused the destruction of their homes, has multiple objectives:

– It is part of the preparation for the generalisation of the war that the rulers have declared, initially in the areas where the antagonism between the strongest power blocs is primarily expressed today, namely the Middle East and South-East Mediterranean, as the bleak outlook of a world conflict returns to the fore and is back in the plans of the military-political staffs.

– It is indicative of the treatment reserved for refugees, which includes concentration camps, repression and expulsion.

– It is also a clear message that military units and brutal repression will be used for confronting populations which are considered “dispensable” by the State and Capitalism.

At the same time, within western societies, the State of Emergency becomes permanent through the militarisation of societies and fascistisation.

Within the modern ghettos, under the supervision of either militarised police forces or even proper military units, as in the recent example of France, a war against the “internal enemy” is taking place – a war against the poor and the excluded. More specifically, after the attacks in Paris last November, the French state, using security as a pretext, seized the opportunity to enforce and then to stabilise a State of Emergency, invading homes, mainly homes of people participating in the social struggles and of migrants, forbidding protests and demonstrations, and institutionally guaranteeing that this regime will be prolonged. The reinforced legislative arsenal of the state, being used already to suppress mobilisations such as the ones against the new labour law in France, increasing monitoring and control, is portraying the repressive maze of modern totalitarianism.

The world of State and Capitalism is bankrupt. It cannot provide any answers to real social needs and has nothing to promise but more misery, poverty, war and death; the absolute dominance of the law of the fittest, the power of the strongest.

That’s the condition that determines every individual policy in the field of class antagonism, and that’s why the plundering of the working class is internationally growing. The attack in a series of social and class achievements is part of an operation to establish modern totalitarianism just like spreading the war is. Military operations as much as economic measures which intensify the looting of social wealth, besides producing material benefits for local and international elites, are also sharpening the sense of weakness of the oppressed majority. This oppressed majority is being fragmented into disadvantaged units struggling for their survival, while propaganda and exemplary repression are set to deprive them even of the idea of a fair and free social coexistence.

## RESTRUCTURING POLICIES CONTINUE IN GREECE

In Greece, the current government (SYRIZA/ANEL) signed the 3rd loan agreement-memorandum last summer for the continuation of restructuring policies mainly based on cheap trade and on the attempt to misuse and assimilate the social and class struggles of the latest years. They used these struggles in order to disarm them and to maintain social peace in times of intense social de-legitimisation of the political system.

Its key ideological and political view is nothing else but the acceptance of state and capitalist brutality, as long as it wears the remnants of a democratic mask. This, together with an

underlying threat towards the oppressed that otherwise the same brutality would unfold without the democratic facade which is constantly degraded and destroyed. Nowadays it is attempting to impose the new policies (e.g. social insurance and taxation) they have signed a few months ago, when at the same time social tolerance seems to become increasingly exhausted, because not only the illusions they created for the reforming of the state and capitalism cannot survive, but the perspective of even worse conditions of survival for the working class is becoming more obvious.

In a time that state and capitalist brutality attempts to destroy the lives of workers, the unemployed, and the poor, in a time that no government, no party, no parliament and no mediation mechanism can promise anything but submission and poverty, we want and we must develop self-organised structures of struggle and solidarity in every social space, in workplaces, in neighbourhoods, schools and universities.

This is the time when partial or “intermediate” struggles – demanding permanent work, access to social goods such as housing, healthcare and education, defending social and workers’ rights, fighting to protect nature – must be connected with the overall social and political demand for subversion of the world of authority and for the libertarian transformation of society.

This is the time when we must create political connections with our comrades and all those who are fighting globally, so that we can confront the common attack that we are under. From Mexico to Turkey and from Greece to the slums of France, let’s shout to our brothers and sisters that nothing is over and that no oppressed is alone as long as there is resistance and struggle. Let’s take our lives in our own hands, let’s undertake the responsibility to determine the present and the future, creating a new emancipated society based on dignity, justice, freedom, solidarity on the ruins of the world of power, state and capital.

**LET’S STRENGTHEN THE ORGANISATION OF THE STRUGGLE  
FOR ANARCHY AND LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM  
THE ONLY TRUE DILEMMA OF OUR TIME IS  
STATE AND CAPITALIST BRUTALITY OR SOCIAL REVOLUTION**



# THE STATE AND REVOLUTION



In this issue of *Organise!* we celebrate three anniversaries: the General Strike of 1926, the Spanish Revolution of 1936 and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. This issue of *Organise!* also concentrates on different aspects of the State. What can we learn about the State from these three events?

With the British General Strike of 1926, the situation is clear. In order to combat the General Strike the State prepared in advance. It prepared for nine months before, and created strike breaking organisations like the Organization for The Maintenance of Supplies (OMS). It had already armed itself with the Emergency Powers Act passed in 1920, which allowed the Sovereign to declare a State of Emergency by proclamation. It had already been used in 1921 against the Triple Alliance when troops were brought in against strikers for Black Friday. As early as 1919 a special committee on industrial unrest had been set up to stop or disrupt strikes. After Black Friday it was allowed to die, but was brought back to life in 1923. Indeed the Labour government of 1924 sustained it and thought about using it against striking tram workers and Dockers.

After Red Friday the Home Secretary, Johnson-Hicks, overhauled the State's strike-breaking capabilities. Permanent headquarters were to be set up in each of the regions into which the country had been divided, with important key civil servants seconded to a central headquarters in London. In post and railway centres employers were recruited to work with the official apparatus. A communications network was built up between the London central headquarters and local authorities and police forces with £10,000 allocated for spending on the stockpiling of resources.

A Civil Constabulary Reserve was formed, eventually numbering 200,000, with 40,000 in London alone. The Navy was given responsibility for moving supplies and, if necessary, troops. Thus they could bypass the railways.

The Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies (OMS) was set up in September 1925, for the purpose of recruiting and training "volunteer labor" to act as strike-breakers. It claimed to be independent, yet Joynson-Hicks had clearly been involved in its setting up. Furthermore it cooperated closely with the State's strike-breaking forces in the run-up to the Strike. The State continued to prepare through 1925 and into 1926. Local food officers were appointed. Scabs were recruited from engineering colleges and electrical firms to run power stations in London. Road commissions were appointed and ordered to organise schemes to train drivers for heavy lorries.

Just before the strike Joynson-Hicks reported to the cabinet that 98 volunteer service committees and 147 haulage committees had been set up, 331 local food officers had been appointed, and arrangements for food supplies and emergency electricity generation were virtually complete.

The State would undoubtedly have used greater force by declaring any strike actions and sympathy movements illegal and it would have employed even greater violence against the strikers through its deployment of the police and armed forces. However, after nine days, the trade union leaders capitulated and called off the strike.

In Spain in 1936 the situation was somewhat different. Large numbers of workers, many of them anarchist, had an advanced consciousness and had been brought into a state of preparedness by the CNT Defence Committees against

the right-wing coup. The libertarian workers movement in those parts of Spain where the resulting revolution was triumphant could have immediately moved to destroy the State and replace it with working class power through the militia committees and defence committees, and the masses organised in the workplaces and on the land. Instead they left both the Catalan government and the national government in Madrid in place. Instead of deepening and strengthening the Revolution leading lights in both the CNT and the FAI sent representatives into these governments and cooperated with the liberal democratic wing of the ruling class. They called for the disarming of revolutionary workers during the May Days of 1937 and opened the door to the militarisation of the militias and increasing repression from the Stalinists and their allies within the 'democratic' ruling class.

In 1956 the Hungarian working class was confronted with a horrendous regime put in place by the Soviet Union. Both this regime and its masters in Russia represented a terrible travesty of what socialism and communism had originally represented. A fearsome State apparatus sustaining a ruling bureaucracy ruled in both the Soviet Union and Hungary. In response to these the Hungarian working class created workers councils to run the economy and ensure supply of food and essential services. The Revolution was only crushed by the might of the Soviet State, beneath the tank tracks of the Red Army.



All of these incidents show that the State is not neutral. It exists as the enforcer of all ruling classes, whether they be Western capitalists who support bourgeois democracy or state capitalist bureaucrats as in the Soviet Union. In addition it has its own interests and seeks to preserve its own power as represented by the civil service, the judiciary and the military and police apparatuses.

Any future revolutionary movement has to learn the lessons of the past. The State cannot be ignored or seen as an ally, as happened in Spain. It cannot be captured, as we can see from the legacy of the Soviet Union, China and their satellites. It has to be smashed as a very early act in a developing revolution. Time and again, from the Paris Commune of 1871, to the 1905 and 1917 Revolutions in Russia, the German and Hungarian Revolutions of 1918-1919, the Spanish Revolution of 1936 and the May events in France in 1968 it can be seen that the working class is capable of creating different forms of organisation that are hostile to the State, in that they involve direct control by the masses. They oppose direct decision making, mandation of delegates and counter-pose federalism to the centralisation and authoritarianism of the State. These models of anti-State organisation - neighbourhood and workers councils - are the remedy to the centuries of domination by the State and the ruling class. We hope to see their reappearance soon. Speed the day!

# 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1926 GENERAL STRIKE IN BRITAIN





In 1921, the Government announced a wage cut for miners. This attack brought a militant response from large sections of the working class and the potential for a mass strike movement in defence of wages. The 'Triple Alliance' of miners, railway workers and other transport workers' unions frightened the State. The Russian Revolution was only four years old and a revolutionary wave of working class struggle continued throughout Europe. The government sent troops into the coalfields and geared up for a confrontation. The miners were left to fight alone when the 'Triple Alliance' collapsed on what became known as 'Black Friday'. Driven back to work after three months, the miners were given wage cuts of between 10% and 40%. This defeat left the miners feeling both betrayed and isolated. The overall level of working class confidence and combativity was also affected and trade union membership fell dramatically. It was not until the latter part of 1924 that the class struggle appeared once more on the rise.

In 1925 the government threatened another vicious reduction in miners' wages, along with a lengthening of the working day. There had been a devaluation of the pound to 90% of its pre-war value and the British bosses were determined that the working class would shoulder the burden of maintaining the country's place in the world economy. Faced with this the Trades Union Congress (TUC) re-convened the 'Triple Alliance' and the Transport and Railwaymen's unions again pledged to stand with the miners if the government's threat was carried out. The government decided to back down and the decision was hailed as a victory for the workers, a 'Red Friday' to avenge the Black one four years earlier.

The government's retreat was essentially tactical. The strategists of the ruling class were not confident that the cuts could be successfully imposed at this point and wished to postpone the confrontation. In his report on the industrial situation to the King, Maurice Hankey, Permanent Secretary to the Cabinet said: "The majority of the Cabinet regard the present moment as badly chosen for the fight, though the conditions would be more favourable nine months hence."

A nine month subsidy was given to the mining industry and the Samuel Commission was set up as a smokescreen to investigate the problems of the industry. The government oversaw the stockpiling of coal and made preparations for a massive confrontation. Plans were drawn up for the temporary 'nationalisation' of the road haulage industry, for the maintenance of 'order' and recruitment of volunteer strike-breakers. This latter would be handled by the Organisation for Maintenance of Supplies, a right-wing 'private' organisation led by elements in the ruling class, established for just such an occasion.

That the ruling class really weren't sure that the 'Triple Alliance' would perform another 'Black Friday' turn for them is evident. Whilst the government didn't take the revolutionary rhetoric that emanated from the September 1925 TUC Congress at face value, they were still worried that the momentum for action might carry the trade unions further than their leadership might have wanted. They lacked confidence in the Trade Unions' ability to control their membership.

The State was also unsure about the influence of the Communist Party, both its strength amongst workers and its intention. On October 14th 1925 the Home Secretary ordered the arrest of eleven leaders of the Party who were

subsequently imprisoned for periods of between six and twelve months on charges of seditious libel and incitement to mutiny. The majority were, however, released before the General Strike in May 1926.

## SAMUEL COMMISSION

The Samuel Commission came up with its 'impartial' findings in early 1926. It found that there had indeed been mismanagement of the British coalfields but wage cuts and increased hours were still inevitable in order to make the industry competitive in the world market. So, a full year in which the government was able to prepare for confrontation was lost for the workers. Anger reached a boiling point with the results of the commission and the ending of the subsidy. The TUC was forced to call a general strike, unsure of its ability to control it but afraid that by not putting itself at its head it would be by-passed. When J.R. Clynes (of the General and Municipal workers union) said: "I am not in fear of the capitalist class. The only class I fear is our own". He was being remarkably honest for a union leader! Up to the last minute, the leadership of the TUC attempted to put together a deal with the government and made plain their hope that a general strike would be averted. Meanwhile, the British press was busy creating hysteria about the impending class warfare. When printers at the *Daily Mail*, as right-wing a rag then as now, went on unofficial strike when asked to publish another anti-union article, the TUC repudiated the action.

On the 4th May 1926 the strength of the General Strike took everyone by surprise, not least the TUC, who had organised very little in preparation for the action. The overwhelming organisational lead was taken at a local level, particularly through Trades Union Councils, local strike committees and quickly organised 'Councils of Action' which involved strikers and their supporters. In some areas embryonic workers' militias formed and violent clashes occurred throughout the country despite the best attempts of the TUC to maintain a blissful calm. 'Unorganised' workers in some areas were amongst the first to strike and everywhere joined their unionised comrades. Despite efforts by strike-breaking students the country was coming to a standstill and in many areas little or nothing moved without the agreement of the strikers. The State geared up for an escalation, aware of the possibility that things might get 'out of hand'. Battleships were anchored in the Clyde, the Mersey and elsewhere whilst the army and navy were put on standby, with all leave cancelled.

Understandably the trade union leaderships were extremely anxious and used every opportunity to display their moderation and horror at the way they were being treated by the government. In response to the publication of the British Gazette, the anti-strike bulletin of the government, the TUC published the *British Worker*. This daily bulletin continually emphasised that the strike was an industrial dispute and nothing more, whilst encouraging local strike committees to organise sports activities and 'entertainments'. The famous football matches between strikers and the police were a product of such suggestions. Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin described the general strike as "[a] challenge to parliament and the road to anarchy and ruin".

## ROLE OF THE TUC

But whilst the TUC issued demands that the workers 'stand firm', they pointedly refused to call out power and electricity supply workers and waited until a week into the strike before calling out maritime workers. By this time the TUC had already entered into secret negotiations to end the strike. None of their demands were met. On May 12th, the General Council of the TUC called off the General Strike. The news, relayed through the *British Worker*, came as a shock to most strikers and on 13th May there were more workers out on strike than ever before. The workers, deliberately not told that the mineworkers union had opposed the ending of the strike, imagined that a victory of some description had been won. Confusion reigned, and as news of the capitulation filtered through there was a general sense of bitterness and dockworkers, engineers, railway workers and others continued the strike unofficially. Eventually though, the momentum was lost and the workers drifted back to work. The abandoned miners continued their strike officially but were isolated, slowly ground down, and defeated.

What was the role of would-be revolutionary organisations within the working class during The General Strike?

The largest organisation claiming to be revolutionary at this time was the Communist Party of Great Britain. Since 1924 the party had been attempting to build a rank and file movement in the Trade Unions. This became known as the National Minority Movement and it attracted hundreds of thousands of workers, the majority of whom were not party members. Initially this movement looked like a semi-syndicalist movement but in August 1925 its direction was adjusted by the leadership.

At this time the Communist International was pursuing a policy of fawning support for the 'left' leaders of Trade Unions. This was part of a general accommodation to international capitalism and suited Russian foreign policy. The Communist Party, rather than attempt to build up any movement independent of this left leadership emphasised the need for the bureaucrats to have ever more control, urging the workers to: "follow the TUC and insist on the formation of the Workers' Alliance under the supreme authority of the General Council". During the General Strike itself Communist Party members threw themselves into building the local Councils of Action and strike committees. The party grew rapidly during the strike. At no time, however, did the Communist Party attempt to prepare the workers for a 'sell-out' by the TUC leadership by building independent organisation or even the nucleus of autonomous struggle. Whilst the party had no confidence in the traditional right-wing leaders in the TUC they saw a genuine 'proletarian leadership' emerging amongst the newer left wing leaders (much as today's Communist Party and other leftists see such leadership in Bob Crow and Mark Serwotka et al).

## ANTI-PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNIST FEDERATION

The small revolutionary forces which rejected such a perspective included the Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation (APCF) who opposed the CPGB's slogan of 'All Power to the General Council (of the TUC)' with the slogan

'No power to the General Council - All power to labour through its strike committees and mass meetings'. But it remained just that - a slogan. Whilst some workers did try to maintain their strike committees and defend their self-organised structures, the APCF mostly remained a voice in the wilderness as the Stalinist ice age descended.

The Trade Union leaders certainly didn't betray the workers, except in the sense that they betrayed their trust. Rather, the Trade Union leaders played their role according to their class interest - which just happened to be different to that of their members. They were forced by pressure from below to call the strike and did everything in their power to make sure that it didn't go beyond 'an industrial dispute'. They left the miners to fight on their own, facing certain defeat.

But why didn't the workers take the leadership out of their hands and extend the struggle? Certainly the creativity and organisational ability of the rank and file trade union members and, indeed, many non-unionised members, saw the strike maintained. The local initiatives were the life-blood of the struggle. Given time, the local Councils of Action may have linked-up and established a counter-power to the government. But, the fact remains that the majority of workers trusted their unions to defend their interests and did not see the need to take the struggle either out of the bureaucrats' hands or on to a higher level - the fight for power. Although workers were confused and angry that the struggle was called-off, they did not have confidence or independent organisation to carry it on.

The Communist Party, which had built a considerable rank and file movement over the previous two years, decided to put their faith in the left wing trade union leaders, rather than the self-organising abilities of the working class.

As Tom Brown of the Syndicalist Workers Federation noted in an article on the General Strike:

"Why did the British General Strike of 1926 fail? Not because the workers failed to strike. The number of blacklegs was insignificant. The attempt of the middle-class to scab on the strikers was a poor effort and was rapidly breaking down the machines used. About one per cent of normal train services were running, but only nine days of that caused chaos on the railways for months afterwards. The breakdown was greater than that caused by the air raids on London in 1940-41 and took much longer to repair. The University students and other middle class scabs could not replace the transport workers and certainly did not intend to replace the miners... Nor did the strike fail because of a fall in the morale of the workers. The aggregate of strikers was much greater on the last day of the strike than on the first and the fighting spirit was much tougher... The strike failed only because it was called off by the trade union leaders and the workers had not learned to distrust those leaders sufficiently. Worse still, the most important divisions of strikers were organised in trade unions and they were used to obeying instructions from the officials of those unions. The strike was betrayed by the leadership.

But do not let us fall into the error of believing that the leaders called off the strike because of their own cowardice. The Labour leaders' economic interests are those of capitalism and in betraying the strike they were defending the economic interest. The trade union leaders never believed in the strike and only led it in order to prevent it being controlled by the workers; they led it in order to ensure its failure."

# 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1936 SPANISH REVOLUTION

The Spanish anarchist movement had put down deep roots among peasants and workers from the late 19th century onwards and was able to create a mass movement not rivalled anywhere else in Europe, let alone the world. This mass anarchist movement had existed for fifty years prior to the events of 1936.

The movement was primarily organised around the revolutionary syndicalist Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo-National Confederation of Labour-CNT. In May 1936 this movement numbered half a million. The CNT was officially committed to libertarian communism as decided at its conference in Madrid in 1919. However not all within the CNT were deeply committed anarchists. The CNT attracted a mass following because it was seen as an effective struggle organisation by many workers. Additionally, there were a number of different libertarian currents co-existing within the CNT, some of whom were anarchist communists who looked towards direct action and insurrection. There were also 'possibilist' currents who wanted to mobilise around what they saw as winnable demands like the eight hour day, gender equality, the abolition of child labour, secular education, etc. There was therefore a split between the principled ('purist/idealist') former and the pragmatic (or 'reformist') latter. Between these two positions were a number of permutations with some anarcho-syndicalists attempting to combine both pragmatism and principled positions.

In order to maintain the CNT in a principled anarchist direction, as well as to propagandise for anarchism and to act as a federation of action groups pledged to direct action, the Federacion Anarquista Iberica (FAI) Iberian Anarchist Federation, was created in 1927. The FAI was based on affinity groups and in 1936 had a membership of 30,000. The libertarian movement organised not just in the factories and fields but among tenants. It also had an important cultural and educational presence, with ateneos, clubs where all manner of courses and meetings took place in order to educate and to introduce literacy to a population with high illiteracy rates. There were also various associations that organised around different cultural aspects and the Libertarian Youth Federation (FIJL).

## FORCE IN SOCIAL LIFE

The libertarian movement was a very important force in Spanish life. It outnumbered the social-democratic Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) and the union central it controlled the Union General de Trabajadores (UGT).

In February 1936 a Popular Front government was elected after defeating a right-wing coalition. The PSOE had taken part in this front but refused to take part in the new government,

dominated by the Left Republicans, a middle class reform party. Nevertheless, the right wing, which included reactionary military leaders like Sanjurjo and Franco, the Catholic Church, the monarchist Carlists, and the fascist Falange, were horrified by this and prepared to launch a coup. On July 17th they launched what was known as the Nationalist revolt. Town after town fell to these right wing forces, and any opponents, whether anarchist, socialist or even liberal progressives, were butchered in mass executions. The Republican government vacillated and refused to arm the workers to resist the coup.

However in Barcelona, the CNT and the libertarian movement in general had been preparing for just such a coup via the Defence Committees that had been set up. The revolt was defeated and the CNT effectively took over control of the city. In Madrid the revolt was crushed by CNT and UGT militants in conjunction with police and army units that remained loyal to the Republican government.

The fightback against the coup unleashed the Spanish Revolution in Catalonia and Aragon where there were large numbers of libertarian workers and peasants. Distribution of food, maintenance of public services, requisitioning of buildings, organisation of militia columns, and the opening of collective restaurants were all undertaken by these new revolutionary bodies. The State seemed to have lost any relevance.



Land was expropriated and collectivised, in the main by CNT members and the joint CNT-FAI, and in some cases by UGT militants. In Barcelona and elsewhere factories were collectivised. As large landowners, who had supported the right, fled, their estates were taken over. Those who stayed and appeared sympathetic to the Nationalist revolt were expelled from their estates whilst some landowners were invited to join the collectives. In total around 3 million people were involved in the collectives. The collectives attempted to introduce libertarian communism but more commonly collectivism was established where a 'family wage' was paid.

## COMPROMISES

However whilst the rank and file of the libertarian organisations were attempting to develop the revolution, the 'leadership' had from early on started making compromises. The CNT-FAI leaders agreed to cooperation with the regional government of Catalonia, led by Luis Companys, rather than sweeping it aside. As a result the Central Committee of the Anti-Fascist militias was set up which coordinated with the government. Companys and co had been given breathing space. One leading anarchist militant, Garcia Oliver of the FAI stated that it was a choice between: "Libertarian Communism, which means the anarchist dictatorship, or democracy, which means collaboration." This was a false concept, as the working class could have maintained and expended its gains without an 'anarchist dictatorship' whilst destroying the State both regionally as in Catalonia and centrally in Madrid.

The compromises continued with representatives of the CNT joining the regional government in Catalonia, the Generalitat. This decision appears to have been made a week before by the National Committee of the CNT. The CNT had called for a Regional Defence Council, but when offered seats in a coalition in the Generalitat did not hesitate to participate. The supposedly hard-line FAI militant again excused this deplorable action by claiming that the Generalitat represented everyone. This opened the way for CNT-FAI representatives to enter the national government which was led by the socialist Largo Caballero two months later in 1936.

Meanwhile the Communist Party, which had been a very small grouping, profited from its backing by the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union. They opposed anyone who threatened the bourgeois republic in the name of effectiveness in the war against the Francoists. They therefore recruited heavily from those opposed to collectivisation, small businessmen, landowners etc. At the same time they infiltrated the Socialist Party, and through the use of Russian 'military advisers' and their own political commissars took a grip of the Republican military out of all proportion to their size.

It was the Communist Party that pushed the drive to militarisation, to integrate the CNT-FAI militias and those of the anti-Stalinist left socialist Workers Party of Marxist Unification (POUM) into the 'Popular Army' of the Republic. This was resisted by the grassroots of the CNT-FAI and from the anarchist militias themselves. They were against the traditional hierarchical set up as reproduced in the Popular Army which took away any popular initiative and which could be controlled by the State.

However pressure increased and militarisation began. The revolution was being transformed into a conventional war between opposing factions of the ruling class.

## CRUNCH

The crunch came in May 1937. Throughout April the Generalitat, with the complicity of the four CNT-FAI ministers, had been increasing attacks on those they referred to as 'uncontrollables' within the CNT, FAI, FIJL and POUM. This involved disarming workers patrol groups and raiding offices. On May 3rd the Stalinists and the Generalitat started a provocation. The Barcelona telephone exchange was under the control of its workers who were mostly members of the CNT. The police attempted to occupy the building but were resisted. As a result CNT, FAI and POUM members turned out in the streets and started building barricades. The CNT leadership called for calm, but fighting broke out between the forces of the State backed by the Stalinists. Instead of encouraging the rank and file members the CNT called for them to lay down their arms.

Anarchists and POUMists were executed by the Stalinists and their allies the Catalan Nationalists. Some anarchists were shot down not far from CNT headquarters on May 5th. Also murdered on that night were the Italian anarchists Camillo Berneri and Barbieri. These refugees from Italian fascism had come to Spain to support the revolution and Berneri had been an acute critic of CNT-FAI collaboration with the State.

The Friends of Durruti were a group that had developed among the CNT-FAI columns and the libertarian youth. They were opposed to militarisation and collaboration. They were heavily involved in the May Days fighting and issued a statement calling for the establishment of a Revolutionary Junta. By this they meant a council that would represent the revolutionary grassroots groups. They called for the inclusion of the POUM in this junta. However the POUM wavered and looked to the CNT-FAI leadership. That leadership called for "anti-fascist unity", for the laying down of arms, in other words capitulation to the State, to the Stalinists and the Catalan Nationalists.

Despite calls from the Friends of Durruti not to abandon the barricades, the CNT-FAI-FIJL grassroots complied. By May 7th the fighting was over. Both the Generalitat and the national governments saw this as a heavy defeat for the CNT who they saw would accept anything. The telephone exchange was occupied, and anarchist militants, including many foreign ones, were harassed and imprisoned.

In June the POUM was outlawed, and its members imprisoned and murdered. In July the State moved again and excluded the CNT-FAI representatives from the Generalitat. From August onwards the State started to attack the collectives, breaking them up with physical force. The Revolution was dead.

The leadership of the mass anarchist movement that had developed in Spain over many years was betrayed by its 'official leadership'. When it came to the crunch they entered the government in the name of unity (in other words class collaboration) and anti-fascism. Winning the war was placed above winning the revolution. Instead of sweeping the State aside and establishing libertarian communism in the part of Spain they controlled they instead accepted the dictatorship of the democratic, anti-Francoist ruling class. The grassroots of the movement failed to challenge the integration of their own mass organisation into the state apparatus. As the Friends of Durruti cogently commented: "Democracy, not fascism, defeated the Spanish people".

# 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1956 HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION



The Soviet army advanced into Eastern Europe in 1944. If certain people believed that this would lead to liberation, they were soon to be proved wrong. Not only was capitalism not abolished but the old political structures of the old fascist regimes (such as in Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria) were maintained. These had operated as willing junior partners of the Nazis. Even some of the Nazi and fascist concentration camps and prisons were retained and re-stocked with opponents of the new regimes, as in East Germany and Bulgaria. The personnel of the regimes were for the most part kept in place. The Soviet leader Molotov remarked that above all: "law and order had to be maintained to prevent the rise of anarchy"!

The new Hungarian government had at its head Bela Danolki-Miklos, a general decorated by Hitler who had acted as go-between linking the Nazi regime and the fascist government of Admiral Horthy. Horthy had launched a horrendous White Terror against the first Hungarian Revolution in 1919. Horthy, because of his Magyar nationalism, had proved to be an unsteady ally of Hitler, who had sent in a German occupying

army. Many Hungarians were stunned when a Nazi dignitary, who still recognized Horthy as the legitimate leader of the country, was put in place at the head of a government, with the window dressing of a few socialists and Communists.

The Soviet regime had an objective of controlling the country through setting up a Hungarian Communist Party divested of any elements who still dreamed of any real form of communism. The Party gained control of the Ministry of the Interior and its secret police, the AVO. In 1948 it got control of the Ministry of Defence. It chopped up the opposition by allying with one current against another. It used torture and murder and repression. The forces of repression were a curious mixture of the old scum of the Horthy regime and the new scum of the Communist Party.

Russia imposed severe reparations on Hungary which drove living standards down and led for a time to famine. Moscow demanded \$300million in equipment and agricultural products. These went to Russia for the most part, the rest being sent to Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.

## EXPLOSIVE SITUATION

Despite the repression of the AVO and the presence of the Red Army, the situation in Hungary became explosive. Moscow had to reduce its demands from 25% to 10% of national budget of Hungary spent on reparations. Massive nationalizations led to an economy co-managed by the Hungarian government and the Soviet Union. Workers in nationalized industries suffered appalling conditions, based on piecework with rewards for higher productivity (Stakhanovism) with the lowest wages for the majority!

A long struggle between the working class and the new regime began in this period. Absenteeism and doing as little as possible at work were the main weapons of the working class. The regime denounced "lazy workers" and the falls in productivity and the bad quality of goods manufactured. In 1948 the Minister of Industry said: "The workers have adopted a terrorist attitude towards the directors of nationalized industries."

A law was passed forbidding workers to leave their workplace without permission. At the same time from 1948 to 1950, the Communist Parties of Eastern Europe expelled from their ranks a large number of what they called supporters of "Titoism" - in Hungary, nearly 500,000 were expelled! Tito, Yugoslavia's Communist leader, had broken with the Soviet Union to pursue his own policies and any one daring to argue for any independence from Russia was accused of this crime.

In March 1953, Stalin died. Workers' revolts broke out in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, where a demonstration of Skoda workers and arms factory workers was savagely repressed. Two weeks later, the workers of East Berlin rose up, setting off revolts throughout East Germany which were viciously put down by Russian tanks.

The Soviet leadership had to adopt a new strategy. In Hungary this meant that the "hard" leader Rakosi was demoted and the "soft" Imre Nagy was appointed as Prime Minister. Several reforms were put through: light industries were revived, which hitherto had suffered at the expense of heavy industry which the USSR had needed, there was increased production of consumer products, individual peasants were given aid, and repression became less severe. The Kremlin hoped that this would quieten the Hungarian working class.

After Khrushchev came to power in the USSR, Nagy was dismissed and Rakosi put back in place. Most of the concessions put through in the last 20 months were taken away little by little. Pressure to increase reparations redoubled.

On 28th June 1956 the workers of Poznan demonstrated demanding the withdrawal of the Russians, the end of piecework and Bread and Freedom. Again the revolt was brutally crushed.

## STRIKES

In Hungary workers continued their struggles with a series of strikes. This encouraged intellectuals, artists, writers and students to put forward their demands. The Petofi Circle was founded by students in the Communist Youth organisation. This became an important centre for debate and discussion. At the same time underground pamphlets began to circulate, literary reviews appeared and semi-public meetings took place. Rakosi made an attempt to forbid these meetings but failed. He wanted a massive roundup, but the Soviets were fearful of things getting out of control and intervened to have Rakosi dismissed again. He was replaced by his right hand man, Gero. This allowed the Writers Union to boot out all Rakosi supporters from its leadership, replacing them with dissidents and even non-Communists.

The regime tried to curry favour by exonerating Rajk, a Communist dissident executed earlier for Titoism. Two hundred thousand people turned up when Rajk's body was exhumed to be re-buried for an official funeral. Before his disgrace Rajk had been in charge of the AVO. Most of those who turned up that day came not to honour Rajk but to show their opposition to the regime.

Through local union branches workers called for the running of the factories by the workers. The National Committee of Unions turned these demands into "union democracy" and "worker's control".

These new demands added a revolutionary content to the agitation which up to then had been one of protest. The Petofi Circle took up the demands of the workers and turned them into a narrow demand to be made on the government. Learning that the old Polish leadership had had to resign, despite the support of Moscow, the intellectuals thought that their moment had come. The Petofi Circle called for a demonstration of solidarity with their "Polish brothers" for 23rd October. The government banned the protest but then backed down when it learnt that people were massing throughout Budapest. Fifty thousand gathered to hear a resolution from the Writers' Union. This called for national independence on socialist principles, equality of relations with the USSR and a revision of the economic agreements, direction of the factories by the workers and technicians, the departure of Rakosi and for a new government with electoral freedom.

The demonstration was due to end but many taking part decided to march on Parliament. A hundred thousand gathered. It was decided to go to the main radio station so that the demands could be broadcast. On the way there, a huge statue of Stalin was dragged off its plinth and smashed. Thousands more joined the march, including many workers. At the radio station, AVO thugs hidden in the building fired on the crowd, killing many. The crowd continued to advance, overwhelmed the police outside and took their arms to fire at the building. Workers returned to arms factories where they worked and loaded lorries with arms which were taken to the radio station.

The panicking Communist Party leaders put the 'soft' Nagy back as Premier. But it was under his leadership that the government called on the Red Army to help 'restore order'.

Andy Anderson, author of *Hungary 1956*: "It was the workers who... saved the struggle from complete collapse. They saw the Nagy issue as largely irrelevant. In the society they were glimpsing through the dust and smoke of the battle in the streets, there would be no Prime Minister, politicians, and no officials or bosses ordering them about."

21 year old worker at United Electric factory in a Budapest suburb: "The young workers led the way and everyone followed them".

## REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL

Workers and students set up a revolutionary council. The battle continued around the radio station. Nagy called for the laying down of arms and promised widespread democratisation. This failed to deter many people. The revolutionary Council of Workers and Students called for a general strike. Russian tanks moved in and many barricades were built against them. Fighting went on for three days in Budapest with workers and students using molotovs, arms they had captured and even a small field gun with which they bombarded the tanks.

Meanwhile the revolution was spreading. At Magyarovar the AVO fired on a crowd killing over a hundred people. Armed workers and students from nearby Gyor arrived. The AVO headquarters was captured, and the surviving AVO thugs were beaten to death or lynched.

The general strike spread through Budapest and out into the main industrial towns. Revolutionary committees and councils were set up all over Hungary. Councils were formed in the mines, the steel mills, the power stations. Many issued programmes. Their essential demands were revolutionary in that they shook the foundations of the bureaucracy and were almost certain to lead from there to the creation of real communism.

Peasants and farm workers organised food deliveries to the urban workers and drove out the State farm collective managers. In some areas land was redistributed, in other the collectives continued under their control. Soon Budapest prison was captured and all the political prisoners were released. When revelations came of the terrible conditions, torture and beatings, almost every AVO man captured was killed by the crowds.

Nagy now promised the disbanding of the AVO, and the Red Army withdrew from Budapest. However, this was merely to regroup. Nagy was warned by the councils that unless the Red Army withdrew completely, they would force them to. The Nagy government assured the people that the Russians would not attack again. But soon Pal Maleter and Kovacs, who had been leading lights in the Budapest fighting, were arrested during negotiations with the Red Army. The Red Army opened fire on all the major cities on November 4th.

MIG fighters strafed the population. The working class bore the brunt of the fighting that followed. Many Russian tanks were destroyed.

## THE END

The AVO came out of the holes in which they had been hiding and began to hang insurgents in groups on the bridges over the Danube in Budapest. Many of those hanged were workers. By November 14th, armed resistance on a large scale had ended. Although many began to return to work, the strike continued in most industries. The new government under Janos Kadar started to arrest members of the councils. But the councils continued to consolidate their power and Kadar was forced to hold talks with them.

He began to use other means to destroy the councils. Ration cards were issued, but only to those who returned to work, and used the Red Army to stop food deliveries to the towns by peasants. Nagy, seen as too liberal, was arrested. Later he and Maleter and others were executed in Moscow. Kadar began arresting more workers' delegates, as well as delegates of student bodies. Many came forward to take their place. When the State realised this, they went in for wholesale arrests of workers. Mass demonstrations continued, and workers fought the AVO and the army when they came to arrest their delegates. Many were gunned down by the AVO. The arrests and executions continued through 1957. It was announced that the workers councils would be replaced by works councils, controlled by trade union bureaucrats, completely subservient to the State. Finally it was announced that any remaining councils were to be abolished.

It comes as no surprise that the Hungarian working class received no support, no arms, no medical supplies from the Western powers. What they fought for was as much opposed to capitalist democracy as it was to the state capitalism of the Soviet Union. As for the Western trade unions, they did nothing. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions rejected an appeal from the workers councils for an international boycott. Contrast this with the action of Liverpool and Hull dockers who refused to touch cargoes on Soviet ships.





# Anarchists and Brexit

For anarchists, who reject both the supra-national state of the EU and the British state, it is tempting to see the Brexit vote as irrelevant. Certainly, the main thing is to continue to build an international working class anarchist movement that can transcend states. This is what we argued in a statement that was put out by the federations that make up the International of Anarchist Federations for the EU elections. We summarised and adapted this statement for the 'No Borders' issue of *Resistance* in the run-up to the referendum as the issues were exactly the same.

Much media space is devoted to speculation about what Brexit will mean.. There is even some doubt about whether despite May's strong assertions that she will make Brexit work, that it will go ahead. She certainly is taking her time about it. After all, key sections of the British ruling class did not want Britain to leave the EU. They want the cheap labour and the financial sector is concerned that it will lose its central role in international financial markets. Also, the Scottish response to the outcome which could lead to independence, would be a major blow to UK Ltd. One thing is certain: the working class will continue to suffer from low wages and high housing costs, poor working conditions and job insecurity and cuts in public services and the welfare state.

We don't think the outcome will offer opportunities for a 'socialist Britain' as some leftist supporters of exit from the EU have argued. There may be less trade with the EU but instead

it will be others, such as China and India, which will step in. We have already seen May's cosying up to the Chinese and the London Mayor Khan appointing an Indian millionaire to be his advisor on 'opening-up' London. Within days of the referendum, a Japanese company bought up a British one. So we are really just changing one set of bosses for another. What does matter is the reasons why most people voted to leave: immigration. The EU was about free movement of labour for capital, but at least there was free movement. Leaving the EU can only mean that there will be pressure to curtail immigration. The rise in attacks on migrants from Eastern Europe is a sign of the mentality of some far-right and racist elements in the working class. This xenophobia is a major obstacle to building an effective working class revolutionary movement.

The vote to leave was a surprise to many, including our anarchist comrades on the continent. It suggests that Britain wants to cut itself off from Europe and try and return to the days when it was the leader of an Empire. We publish here a response to the 'Leave' vote from our comrades in the Italian Anarchist Federation.

So the future may be uncertain but what we do know is that we will continue to be internationalists, fighting against all bosses and States, against nationalism and xenophobia, and for a new society based on solidarity and freedom.



# Brexit and the Exploitation of the Working Classes

The article published in issue 23 of Umanita Nova (the weekly paper of the Italian Anarchist Federation- Organise! editors) is entirely dedicated to the EU referendum explores the essence of the matter as it links together the institutional crisis with the victory of the 'leave' campaign. However I believe that the result of the referendum is not to be considered the cause but rather a sign of a deeper institutional crisis not only of the UK, but of the EU as a whole. The possibility of an exit from the EU of one of its biggest members means that the concept of a supranational state is no longer seductive for the masses. The leading ranks of the EU have proved inadequate because they were unable to give concessions that would have made possible a victory for 'Remain'. Afraid that such concessions would have to be given to other member states, now they have to deal with a number of countries such as Scandinavia, Baltic States, Poland and Portugal, all influenced by the UK, who are more sensitive to the possibility of leaving the EU.

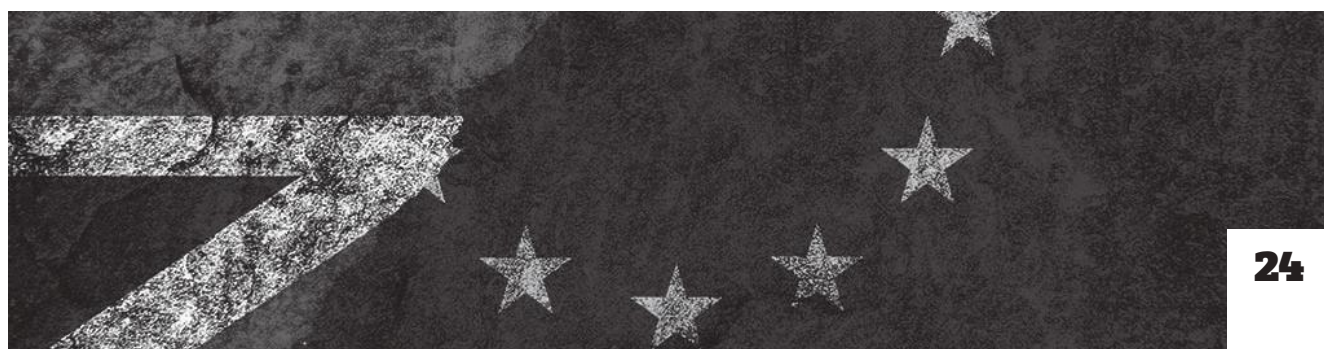
After much talking about the referendum as a place where the population would express its views on British democratic institutions, the wait of a clear sign for an exit from the EU is proving that the government is trying to bypass the result of the referendum. The UK, without the support of the EU (and the alibi it provides), will have to put up with all the internal tensions exposed by the referendum.

England has often been seen as the leading partner in relations between the UK and the EU. However, the referendum has shown some problems with this view. It is striking that 79% of those who voted 'leave' consider themselves English rather than British, while 60% of those who voted 'remain' consider themselves more British than English. Such discrepancy was similar in the result of the referendum in main cities as opposed to the countryside.

The fall in profits make it necessary for companies to cut salaries. Workers in turn need to reduce their cost of living, or

otherwise live above their means and run up debts. However to reduce the cost of living means the violent repression of one's vital needs. Such repression often takes place in accordance with union activities and policies that pretend to stand for the needs of the exploited. Democracy is unable to provide an institutional framework able to expose the violence that the ruling class exercises over the exploited. This is why in the UK we are seeing a growth in authoritarianism, social control and repression. But who will buy the products made by an even more impoverished working class? The middle class of a newly reborn Britain will, and so will landlords, the military, ecclesiastics, tax collectors, brokers, policemen, bureaucrats, and the monarchy. These are the remains of an old class that was outside capitalist production, but no less interested in its stakes in profit generated by the exploitation of the working classes. Beside the differences in percentages of 'Leave' and 'Remain' between regions and between main cities and more remote areas, another difference in votes lies in the class system; the majority of people from the lowest classes (named C2DE by the UK Office for National Statistics) have voted 'Leave'. To be more precise, the 'Leave' vote was double the vote to remain in the EU. This result is worrying because it reveals the extent to which the nationalist and colonialist ideology has seduced the working classes, nowadays embodied by Farage and its 'Make Britain Great Again'. The essence of Brexit is to be found in the neglected working class communities of England and Wales, in the abandoned industrial districts.

However the outcome of the referendum could be the starting point for a real disillusion with national and supranational institutions, and for a rebirth of revolutionary consciousness. The British ruling classes have managed to convince the exploited that leaving the EU would result in an improvement of their conditions. When unemployment, price increase and poverty rise again, the lies of the Conservative and Labour Parties will be obvious to all.



# The Congress of the International of Anarchist Federations



The tenth Congress of the International of Anarchist Federations (IAF-IFA <http://i-f-a.org>) took place in Frankfurt on 4th-7th August 2016. IFA Congress is held approximately every four years and is hosted by one of the international's member federations, this time by the German-speaking Anarchist Federation (FdA <https://fda-ifa.org>). As this is our 30th anniversary issue, we can note that the Frankfurt meeting was also the first one where the Anarchist Federation has been longer in IFA than out, since we were founded (since we joined in 2000). IFA itself was founded in Carrara, Italy in 1968.

The FdA provided an excellent welcome pack for everyone with the agenda and other information. Prior to the Congress, proposals and suggested amendments had been presented to delegate meetings (CRIFAs).

## Participation

From the existing IFA membership, all organisations were able to attend except for the Iberian FAI and the Bulgarian Federation who gave their apologies. An individual from Belarus Anarchist Black Cross was also present. The Anarchist Federation of Belarus, affiliated to IFA, was forced to disband in recent years due to intense state repression (see previous issues of Organise! about this and online about UK solidarity speaking tours in association with Belarus ABC).

An important feature of the tenth IAF-IFA Congress was the much expanded affiliation of Latin American organisations, three of which (from Chile, Mexico and Brazil). The Anarchist Federation of Mexico (FAM), Local Anarchist Federation of Valdivia (Federacion Anarquista Local de Valdivia), Southern Chile (FALV) and Anarchist Federative Initiative (Iniciativa Federalista Anarquista), Brazil (IFAb) all completed their processes of joining the international on the first day with unanimous agreement of the existing federations. More information about these federations can be found on the IFA website.

As well as the existing and prospective members, a great feature of IFA Congresses is the participation of many other anarchist organisations, groups, projects and individuals. The Frankfurt congress also attracted a good number of

our host's member groups from all over Germany. In total more than 80 anarchists were involved over the weekend. A number of professional interpreters also attended, allowing for instantaneous translations during discussions. This was in addition to talented multilingual individuals who assisted, including some from amongst our guests.

At the Congress, the Anarchist Political Organisation, based in Greece, announced their plan to join. Also, of the groups close to IFA who may join in the future, the Anarchist Federation of Central America and the Caribbean (FACC) is a newer coordination consisting of groups in Dominican Republic, Cuba, El Salvador and others. (Note: In Cuba there is an ongoing project to purchase a social centre - please donate from the link given here <https://afed.org.uk/cuban-anarchism-reborn-video/>). Groups that are coordinating themselves towards joining IFA are said to be in a 'federative process' and this is a precondition for applying to join. In addition the groups supply their constitutional and political principles (the AF did the same leading up to our membership ratification in 2000 and this helps explain the existence of our Aims and Principles translated into many languages).

## Work

IFA Congress 2016 in Frankfurt passed two major structural proposals which member federations have worked hard on over the last four years, to improve IFA's decision-making process and to develop its membership. The second of these included a mechanism for the formal association of groups that are not in a federative process. At the Congress, the Vrije Bond (in the Netherlands), a long time contact of IFA and observer at many delegate meetings, announced its intention to be the first such group. In addition to these two proposals, with the joining of the Latin American federations, the structure of delegate meetings was discussed focusing on practical issues of language, distance and how best to coordinate delegate meetings with the European federations.

To consider the future growth of IFA a series of 'perspectives' sessions were held to look at recent contacts and areas where IFA has little current contact or where there is no anarchist organisation or little appreciation of anarchism.

## Member federations

- Anarchist Federation of Britain (AF)
- Anarchist Federation Czech Republic (AF)
- Federation of Anarchist Organising (Slovenia/Croatia) (FAO)
- Federation of German-speaking anarchists (FdA)
- Federation Anarchiste (French-speaking) (FA)
- Italian Anarchist Federation (FAI)
- Libertarian Federation Argentina (FLA)
- Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI) - apologies
- Bulgarian Anarchist Federation - apologies

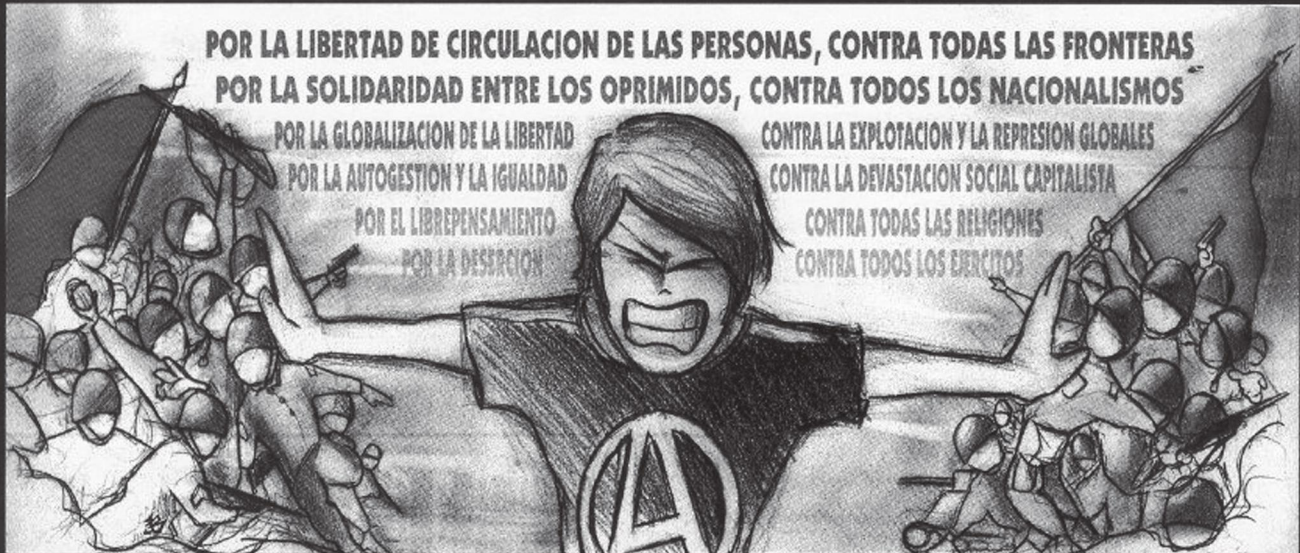
## New members ratified at Congress

- Anarchist Federation of Mexico (FAM)
- Local Anarchist Federation of Valdivia (Federacion Anarquista Local de Valdivia), Southern Chile (FALV)
- Anarchist Federative Initiative (Iniciativa Federalista Anarquista), Brazil (IFAb)

## Guests

- Vrije Bond (VB), Netherlands
- Anarchist Federation of Central America and the Caribbean (FACC)
- Taller Libertario Alfredo Lopez (TLAL) Cuba
- Kiskeya Libertaria (Kiskeya) Dominican Republic
- Agrupación Conciencia Anarquista (ACA), El Salvador
- Freie ArbeiterInnen Union (FAU) Germany
- Individual from BOESG, library project and social centre, Portugal
- Anarchist Political Organisation (APO) Greece
- Aotearoa Workers Solidarity Movement (AWSM) New Zealand
- DAF (Devrimci Anarsist Faaliyet / Revolutionary Anarchist Action), Turkey
- Individual from Azerbaijan
- Kurdish-speaking Anarchist Forum (KAF, recently renamed)
- El Libertario, anarchist newspaper, Venezuela

# TODAS LAS GUERRAS CONTRA NOSOTROS...



## ¡NOSOTROS CONTRA TODAS LAS GUERRAS!

[www.nodo50.org/tierraylibertad](http://www.nodo50.org/tierraylibertad)

*Internacional de Federaciones Anarquistas - Federación Anarquista Ibérica*

### Workshops

The main political themes on the agenda included migration, war and nationalism, 'fight for the city', against patriarchy and, separately, safer spaces, organised in workshop format. The migration workshop was productive in initiating a commitment to the collaboration of IFA member federations which has now started. The workshop was introduced by the Federation of Anarchist Organising (FAO) who operate in Slovenia and Croatia. They has previously introduced their migrant solidarity and coordinated activism along the 'Balkans route' into Europe. IFA members will first share their perspectives on migration in their own territories, something which AF will be doing over the coming months (see Resistance 160 for some recent information about No Borders and anti-detention centre activism in the UK).

War and nationalism explored the 'war in terror' theme since 9-11 and post-Iraq War, and considered militarisation of everyday life, including Brazil around the Olympics, and state responses to terrorism in European cities.

'Fight for the city' examined increased control of urban spaces by government and local authorities and commercial interest. Themes included local corruption, gentrification, threats to autonomous and radical spaces.

Against Patriarchy examined cultural pressures, sexuality and reproduction of patriarchal relations in daily life, struggles around abortion rights e.g. in Ireland and El Salvador and the effects of casualisation in the workplace, creating spaces in anarchist organisation for gender oppressed groups. Reflecting on the AFEM conference that took place in London after the St. Imier IFA congress, there was interest in organising another international feminist conference.

The Safer Spaces workshop introduced the developments in the AF in order to consider the possibility of IFA adopting a policy for 'deconstructing power relationships in anarchist spaces' which would be relevant to delegate meetings and congresses. Some progress was made on this which will

be continued at forthcoming meetings. Any policy is not intended to be a substitute for awareness of consent issues and structural oppressions but a practical tool to organise our response to oppressive behaviours in our own spaces.

### Presentations

Earlier on in the Congress, invited guests had a chance to introduce their group or project. We will mention just three of these. One of was a social centre and library project in Portugal. BOESG, Biblioteca e Observatório dos Estragos da Sociedade Globalizada translates to 'library and observatory of the damages of global society' and we heard the amazing story of its history as a workers' library and discovery by anarchists in the 1980s (see <http://thesparrowsnest.org.uk> article for all the details). We also heard about the severe ongoing repression in Azerbaijan where anarchist activists graffitising anti-state messages have been fitted up (drugs planted) and detained – drugs charges carry up to 12 years compared to 1 year for 'hooliganism' (see <http://www.brightonabc.org.uk/campaigns.html#14> for details). A comrade from Aotearoa Workers Solidarity Movement gave a talk about indigenous community struggles and life in general. Housing is a major issue with people paying vast amount to live in garages or sleep in their cars. Emergency B&B housing is now provided as a loan. The comrade also highlighted climate as a growing issue in the Pacific islands.

It is usual for Congress to agree some joint statements. One of these was to support the difficult work of DAF which IFA has supported in their work in Rojava (across the Turkish border into Kurdish Syria) but is now facing hardship following the attempted military coup in Turkey and latest state of emergency. Another was a statement on war and terrorism affirming IFA anti-terrorism stance. Finally, in solidarity with comrades in Japan (some of which had attended the previous IFA Congress in France), a new anti-nuclear statement was agreed, at the time of the annual remembrance of the WWII atom bombings.

## Play

Congress is a working conference but is also a social occasion. All of the food for congress was provided by a supporting group, which meant that attendees were mostly together during mealtimes to plan for forthcoming sessions, continue informal discussions and get to know each other better. Some discussions ensued over washing up as well. The cafe bar at the venue was a place of merriment in the evenings and upstairs on one evening, delegates were treated to the Punk Choir from Leipzig (this inspired in an impromptu on-stage rendition of political songs by AF members!). In fact,

most evenings included song-singing and drinking, although not necessarily in that order. Another social aspect of IFA Congress is in the exchange of publications, and this was facilitated by having lunchtime and evening stalls.

At the end of the Congress the French-speaking Anarchist Federation (FA) had completed their period as Secretariat and handed over to ... us. So AF is the new Secretariat and we look forward to facilitating the next stage in IFA's development along with our expanded membership. We also look forwards to the next Congress which the FAO agreed to plan for to take place in Slovenia in 3-4 years time.

## Congress joint statements

### **IFA call for solidarity with DAF in Turkey & Kurdistan**

Since the coup in Turkey and the imposition of the state of emergency, we have seen increased repression of many groups and movements operating there. This is not only aimed at the organisers of the coup, but a wide repression of democratic, socialist, Kurdish groups and including our anarchist comrades of the DAF (Devrimci Anarhist Faaliyet / Revolutionary Anarchist Action).

On two occasions, in 2010 and 2012, DAF has already been investigated by the state as a terror organisation but these cases were dropped. Now, because of the state of emergency, the ability of DAF to organise is even more difficult. Their newspaper Meydan has been closed down and three new investigations have been started. This has also had serious economic impact for DAF.

In recent years DAF has been involved in many struggles including Gezi Park and supporting the Kurdish revolutionary process in Rojava and Bakur including refugee support. They are involved in workers' and youth movement activities, ecological actions and anti-militarism, opposing patriarchy and supporting the LGBTI movement, and have been developing practices of collective living and economy and self-organisation.

IFA has already been involved in the solidarity movement with Rojava in many respects and in close cooperation with DAF. Now, due to the changed situation in Turkey, we must expand our support to DAF in more concrete ways. We also have to be vigilant of the real possibility of increased repression of DAF and the wider anarchist movement in the region and to be able to respond rapidly with strong solidarity actions. IFA is committed to this and we call on all friendly organisations to join us and also provide financial solidarity to DAF.

To support the call for solidarity & concrete support, you can contact the IFA secretariat [secretariat@i-f-a.org](mailto:secretariat@i-f-a.org)  
DAF website: [anarhistfaaliyet.org](http://anarhistfaaliyet.org)

### **Their wars, our dead! Against terrorism and for freedom of all people!**

The federations of the International of Anarchist Federations (IAF) and the organisations participating in the Tenth Congress of the IAF, Frankfurt (Germany), 4-7 August 2016, stand against war. We stand against the terrorism which is used by states, with the help of the police and the army. We stand against the violence applied by nationalist and/or religious groups or by isolated acts from racist, homophobic, and/or fundamentalist individuals.

We oppose the murderous activities of these governments, groups, or individuals.

The media and states may use the word terrorism to condemn social movements, but this is not how we understand it. What we oppose is the use of violence and terror against civilians to create fear in the population and impose authority. This terrorism goes hand in hand with the strengthening of state security and authoritarian state policies.

In many countries a state of emergency has been declared, reinforcing the powers of the police and army, which serves mostly to repress social opposition. Walls are built to prevent the movement of people, detention camps are built, and governments, capitalists and smugglers take the opportunity to get rich at the expense of migrants.

Terrorism by religious and/or nationalist groups and state terrorism feed each other. For example, the arms deals by regional and world powers have skyrocketed since their involvement in foreign wars. These interventionist policies help to maintain the terrorism of religious and/or nationalist groups.

Meanwhile, capitalism continues its devastating work and those affected are always the same: the people.

We live in an era of global terrorist threat, of generalised war, and reactionary politics in which race, religion and terrorism are conflated. We fight to keep racism from spreading. We support the migrants who seek the freedom to move and to settle down. We stand in solidarity with those targeted on the ground of their ethnicity and beliefs.

That said, we stand by all those around the world who seek to shake off the influence of religion in their lives, actions, and thoughts.

Our struggle for freedom is directed against state, capitalism, and religion.

### **Against the nuclear power industry and everything that it entails.**

#### **Against state imperialism and against war**

6th August 2016

The federations making up the International of Anarchist Federations (IFA) and the organisations present in the 10th congress of the IFA, in Frankfurt (Germany) on the 4th-7th of August 2016, salute the initiative of the Anarchist Gathering at Hiroshima (Japan).

This event marks the anniversary of the nuclear bomb attack in Hiroshima on August 6th, 1945, and in Nagasaki on August 9th. It helps us remember the double threat that lingers on to affect human populations: war and nuclear power.

Nuclear power is dangerous. It contaminates natural resources, and is the cause of all kinds of conflicts. Japan's population is particularly knowledgeable about its potential risks, due to the recent nuclear disaster in Fukushima.

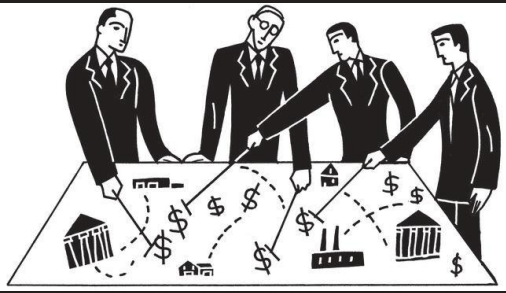
Nuclear power is an integral part of the war industry.

During these times of global terrorist threats and continuous war, it is important to reaffirm our position against the military industrial complex.

The murderous and imperialist policies of states are to the detriment of populations who are the first victims of war. They suffer directly in these conflicts, and are often forced to migrate.

Imperialist countries take advantage of these conflicts by selling arms and waging war in different parts of the world, such as the military interventions in Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere for resources. This situation cannot be tolerated.

It is up to us to initiate, pursue and intensify actions against militarism and its related industries, but also against nuclear power that entails. In the spirit of international solidarity, we send revolutionary anarchist greetings to our friends and comrades gathered in Hiroshima. We look forward to working together to fight for a future society of mutual aid and solidarity, without war.



# Globalisation and Exploitation

## Thoughts in the aftermath of the IFA Congress

*This article appeared in Umanita Nova, weekly paper of the Italian Anarchist Federation*

We were right. But it was not enough. We predicted what would create globalisation and our prediction was correct.

We fought globalisation at the very moment it was trying to take roots, at the beginning of this century, in Seattle and Genoa and elsewhere. We have paid a high price with deaths, wounded, detentions, torture and repression, but we have not managed to block it. Today we live in a world that is paying for the consequences.

In a world based on global trade what counts is selling the most. The quality of the products and the conditions of people who make them have worsened. In order to keep costs low, the environment, health and safety in the workplace, workers' rights, fair wages and health and education are considered worthless topics. This has happened both in the north and in the south of the world generating everywhere devastation and desperation. Three and a half billion people in the world live with less than 2.5 dollars a day.

The economy is a 'zero-sum game' just like poker: if someone wins someone else has got to lose. While the majority of the world population has been impoverished, some have made a lot of money instead. The number of billionaires, those who have more than a billion dollars, has increased by 81% in the years 2004-2014. Those who have more than one million have now increased by 55%. Under the effect of globalisation those with money have become richer, those without have become poorer.

The 62 richest people in the world earn as much as half of the global population put together and since the beginning of time there has never been such a gap between the richest and the poorest. Globalisation has transformed society into an hourglass: the majority of the population flows towards the bottom, while a small part pushes upwards. While globalisation's gospel is the free movement of goods, on the other hand the free movement of people is prevented in every

possible way. In the globalised world only goods can travel, not the people!

We all know that migration is a phenomenon that cannot be stopped. Until a few years ago in the EU, within the Common Agricultural Policy, farmers used to receive 600 euros per cow. This is now 340 Euros. Within the EU in those days cows used to 'earn' more than those three and a half billion people that were surviving on less than 2.5 dollars a day. With this sort of inequality, how can someone even imagine building a wall to block the movement of people from the poorest to the richest countries?

Migration flows are often treated like emergencies. However this is not done to stop migration, rather it is done to push migrants towards exclusion, struggle for survival, to force them towards illegal and low paid jobs. In so doing the establishment reaches two objectives: to start with it obtains low cost labour that can easily be blackmailed, and on the other hand divides the exploited between immigrants and natives blaming the first for the bad living conditions of the latter.

### Changes in the mode of production

This pattern has gone hand in hand with a change in the modes of production. Originally manufacturing used to take place in big factories where workers were all considered at the same level. This created room for solidarity and stronger collectivism. Nowadays instead production is completely mechanised and where manufacturing is needed, companies have moved it to factories in the Far East. The provision of services has changed as well, and the mode of production tends to be more focused on the individual and less on collectivism.

There is a tendency to divide workers, not only the migrants from the natives, but also between contract and permanent workers, young and old workers. Everywhere we see the creation of new laws that, used as a pretext to fight

unemployment, instead create more precarious, low paid labour. At the same time there are few who can still enjoy the rights inherited from old struggles, which are now under threat.

In the EU between 2005 and 2015 employment has risen by 1.4%. However, while full time work has decreased by 1%, part time work has increased by 13%. This has been even worse in those countries more effected by the economic crisis. In Greece employment (both full and part time), has decreased by 20% (from 4.4 to 3.5 million), however part time work alone has increased by 37% (from 245.000 to 332.000). The same has been happening in Italy, Portugal, and Spain. Job conditions have worsened not only in terms of duration (part time/full time), but also in terms of the job market being more unstable. The Italian 'Job Act', the French 'Loi Travail', the German 'Hartz IV' and other laws in several European countries have all served the purpose of recruiting more 'slaves', often young low paid workers without rights.

This process is also the result of changes that have occurred in the way authorities exercise their power. For years, as a consequence of the Cold War, we have experienced a form of domination based on acceptance by the dominated. In those days public debt was commonly applied to prevent the aggravation of conflicts, and in the eventuality of social unrest, states were quick to intervene to prevent things developing any further. Nowadays we see power being imposed by oppression. If you are unable to promise someone that things will be better, you will have to put them next to someone in worse conditions and tell them that they run the risk of ending up the same way.

In the second half of the last century the authorities did not look for a politics of consensus. As a result all social democratic and reformist possibilities, which had prevented the movement of society towards revolutionary transformation, were removed. Back in those days the authorities used to promise changes through reforms, but in so doing they only distributed a few crumbs. Political parties which were saying "we want to change society through reforms" and distributing crumbs falling from the table of the exploiters, have become entities seeking to survive and maintain their structures by swapping that for a politics of social massacre.

## Warfare States

Looking at the public budget we can see that states have become 'warfare states' from being 'welfare states'. We are seeing cuts to social expenditures (services are either privatised or their cost is higher), while we have seen an increase in military expenditure directly connected to the arms industry (or they have stayed the same while everything else has been cut).

If one buys arms he will then have to use them: in the last few years maintaining 'peace' globally has generated a lot of deaths. War in fact needs enemies: extremist factions of the Muslim world have been subsidized, and we have seen the creation of new enemies abroad that are now being attacked with bombs and religious repression.

Naturally there is a need for 'internal' enemies in order to be able to justify repression and control over the population:

besides those who engage in social struggles, now migrants, especially 'illegal' migrants have become a new enemy.

In some countries the Euro has aggravated an already dramatic situation. The Euro works just like a foreign currency: those states that use it need to have an active balance of international payments, or have financial flows able to compensate for possible losses. Those countries that were already suffering from a high deficit and high interest rates, had no other choice than lowering the cost of labour to be competitive in the market: therefore we saw the implementation of low wage policies, the extension of retirement age, and cuts to healthcare, education and welfare. The 'Fiscal Compact' have now been made mandatory for states to balance their budget (making Keynes' theory unconstitutional). The Euro has given a huge power to banks. The European Central Bank lends money to the banks that will then buy state bonds.

Outside Europe it is finance that dictates the rules for the new global economy. In addition globalisation has also caused the homogenisation of consumerism so that people wear the same things in Tokyo and London, and eat the same food in Beijing and Rome.

In the world there are 5,000 varieties of wine grape that, once processed and combined could create thousands of different types of wine, each with its own characteristics, taste and colour. However, as a consequence of globalisation only ten types, all processed with the same method (mainly in barrels) are actually grown and sold. Out of several thousand possibilities wine only manages to have one taste: the taste of Capital. This sort of homogenisation originates from the need to conform in order to feel safe within society. As a consequence people fight against 'the other' with a different skin colour, clothes, accent, sexual orientation, diets.

Cultural discrimination has grown alongside the social. The real victory of the global economy is not so much the mode of production and trading, rather the perception that the exploited have of themselves. The State's propaganda, now commonly accepted, blames migrants (as they 'apply for benefit', 'commit crime', 'refuse to integrate', and even 'complain'), young people (who 'do not want to work' or 'are not prepared to work hard'), the elderly (as they 'want to maintain their privileges'), women (with all 'those privileges that come from maternity'), to various types of workers ('civil servants who do not do enough', teachers that have 'too many holidays', factory workers 'taking advantage of sick leave'), and the retired (still young to the point that 'they could still work'). In order to attack 'the other' they invoke ill-founded cultural roots.

However, this happens to be the weakest link of the global economy. Globalisation has made the world a smaller place. If we manage to invert this process on a small scale and prove that the suppressed, united, can struggle and emancipate from exploitation, that struggle could become the first stone of the avalanche which will bury global capitalism.

The IFA Congress in Frankfurt worked towards this purpose: to make connections, have meetings of ideas, build paths to create common struggles and achieve social emancipation without borders or authorities.

# The Anarchist Federation

# 30

# years

# on

The AF is celebrating its 30th anniversary. We haven't managed to achieve anarchist-communism, which is of course is a big disappointment! But then it is not just up to us. We have always seen ourselves as part of a much bigger working class movement composed of those who want to see a revolution that gets rid of capitalism, the State and all hierarchies and oppressions.

Unfortunately that movement is still small. But instead of giving up as many have done, retreating into private life, joining the reformist parties, focusing only on local struggles, we continue to believe that a Britain-wide and international anarchist organisation has a vital role to play in helping to build a revolutionary movement for a new society. We may not be a mass organisation but we can be proud that we have continued the struggle for 30 years, developing our ideas in line with changing circumstances and new perspectives from members. This article seeks to tell the story of the AF through the memories of individual members. Though we are united around a common set of aims and principles as well as organisational practices, we are also a group of individuals who has their own history and perspective on what the AF story is.



## In the beginning there was...

The political situation in the early 80s was ripe for a revival of anarchism. Years of Thatcherism and attacks on the working class, with no effective response from mainstream politics, created a need for something different. This revival did not take place in a vacuum. There had been other anarchist organisations in Britain before the 80s and the AF in many ways is a continuation of that tradition to build an anarchist communist organisation in this country. Anarchist (or libertarian) communism is a specific current within anarchism that believes in the need for a specific anarchist political organisation that fights on all fronts. We didn't see the anarcho-syndicalist union as the only vehicle for revolution but instead sought to unite the working class in the commune, with workplace organisations being just one of the elements of the new society.

One of our founding members was part of this tradition.

**N** : I was one of the founders of the Anarchist Communist Federation. I had become an anarchist in 1966 and in the early 1970s joined the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists, which morphed into the Anarchist Workers Association and then the Libertarian Communist Group. I then spent some time in the libertarian Marxist organisation Big Flame. I returned to Britain towards the end of the miners' strike from France where I had been living and working for three years and where I was involved in the libertarian communist movement there.

I learnt a lot from my time in the ORA, AWA, etc. You learn from your mistakes and try to make sure they don't happen again. You try to draw lessons from these mistakes and these achievements and try to communicate them to others

The other two founding members came from a Leninist background. They were both disgusted by their experience of being in parties like the Socialist Workers Party and were on the look-out for something different.

**B** : I joined the International Socialism, which soon became the Socialist Workers Party, in 1976. I liked their analysis of Russia being state capitalist and the focus on working class struggle. However, during the three years I was a member, I learned from bitter experience the authoritarian and manipulative nature of Leninist parties. I spend several years supporting a catering workers strike as I was working in that industry. The SWP organisers were only interested in whether I could recruit and whether the strike was exposing the union bureaucracy - not in the actual outcome or the suffering the strikers were going through being out on strike for so long. The issue that prompted me to actually leave was the debate around the magazine *Women's Voice*. One of the main strategies of the SWP was to set up 'front' organisations through which they can recruit. I remember one of the first meetings in London where the male SWP organiser was sitting in the back of the room, clearly there to make sure the

women didn't stray from the party line! It wasn't long before the Central Committee decided to shut *Women's Voice* down. There was no real explanation or certainly none that I could accept. The women's group must have got too independent and this was not allowed. I began to look around for alternative groups and political perspectives.

I read the paper of the Libertarian Communist Group and liked it but I ended up joining Big Flame, which was a sort of half-way house between Leninism and anarchism. Then the Libertarian Communist Group merged with Big Flame. As a result of that contact I started reading books about the Russian Revolution. The historical practice of the Bolsheviks married with the current authoritarian practices. A three year stay in France, meeting more anarchists, I was keen to set up an organisation in Britain. However, I had several criticisms of the organisation in France that I had been a member of and wanted to do things differently. I found that there was a tendency to get involved in the union bureaucracy and they weren't critical enough of electoralism.

I also found that they did not take the rise of the National Front and racism in general seriously enough.

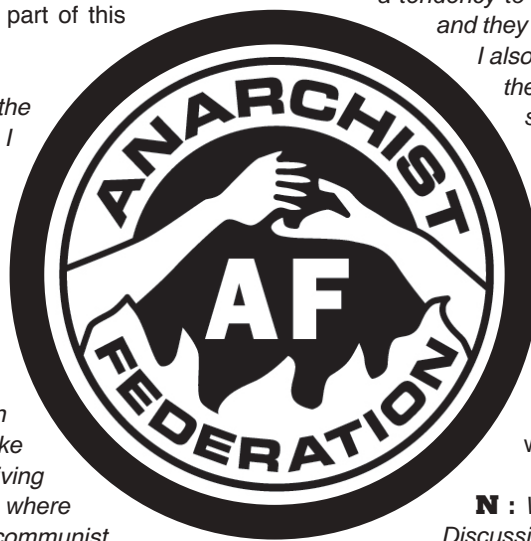
## From a discussion group to a national federation

We were now two, which certainly wasn't enough to get a new organisation of the ground. But that was the aim.

**N** : We set up the Libertarian Communist Discussion Group (LCDG) and distributed copies of the Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists, left over from the AWA/LCG days in bookshops. Progress was slow, until we met the late Colin Parker who was producing *Virus*, a duplicated magazine that defined itself as "anarcho-socialist". Colin had been through the Communist Party and various Trotskyist groups, and had developed anarchist politics along with a deep-seated hatred for Leninism. From issue 5 *Virus* became the mouthpiece of the LCDG.

It was surprising for us how the project took off and we didn't really expect to form a national organisation so quickly. We had a stall at the Anarchist Bookfair in 1985 and there was some very keen interest. We ended up going back to Colin's place and had our first meeting. Other people started joining the group and with their input we transformed ourselves into the Anarchist Communist Discussion Group and then the Anarchist Communist Federation. It was an exciting time as we worked together to develop our aims and principles and our organisational structure as well as being involved in the struggles of the time. A split from the anarcho-syndicalist group, Direct Action Movement, called Syndicalist Fight joined us and in March 1986 the Anarchist Communist Federation was founded.

Attracting people to the project was crucial in the process of forming a new organisation. Here is the story of one of the first members.



**D** : I was 19 when I first made contact with the comrades who became the founders of the ACF. I had considered myself an anarchist for a few years, following a trajectory that had its origins in anarcho-punk and establishing a local, broad based local anarchist group in my home town of Coventry.

I had been a Class War paper seller and was part of the early Class War Federation, although I was simultaneously influenced by Manchester's Wildcat council communist group. Feeling that Class War, though energetic and capable of taking initiatives, lacked any consistent, coherent politics whilst Wildcat seemed happy with being a politically tight but essentially local formation, I was excited when I first read about the Libertarian Communist Discussion Group in Freedom. I wrote to them and they replied with a fairly friendly letter and a copy of the Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists. I had met 'Platformists' in the Workers Solidarity Movement in Ireland and was impressed with their seriousness and commitment, although not entirely with their political positions. I felt almost instinctively that anarchism had to be organised, formally and with a national and international presence. Having been involved in a local group I had come to realise that just linking up local initiatives without political agreement on the basics was really building upon weak foundations. Upon reading the Platform I became a Platformist and I still am, although I appear to be at odds with much of what constitutes Platformism.

I attended a meeting of what had by then become the Anarchist Communist Discussion Group in London and what struck me was how old everybody seemed to be. They were easily in their 30s! I almost didn't attend as I had a touch of the flu and felt pretty rough. But I liked what I heard and I felt that if I were to commit to any group, it would be this one.

Next thing I knew I was at the founding meeting of the Anarchist Communist Federation. In the same small central London flat! I had issues with the name as I thought it narrowed us down (I was, after all, influenced by council communist ideas and I was certainly more small 'm' Marxist than a lot of other early ACF comrades) but I probably didn't articulate that at the time. Too shy!

I threw myself into the ACF and became National Secretary before I was 21.



## Why do people join?

Throughout the years we have attracted people from a variety of political backgrounds. From the beginning, people joined who were not prepared to be passive members. They were experienced comrades who wanted to be part of shaping the organisation. That is what an anarchist organisation is about after all. In addition, people saw that we were doing things and had an anarchist presence on demos and protests.

**R** : I joined the ACF back in 1986, a few weeks after it was formed, and to be honest, I wasn't totally enamoured with some of the politics of the new federation and thought the original Aims & Principles was a bit of a leftoid hotch-potch. Previously, I'd been involved with groups like "Careless Talk" in North Staffordshire, which subscribed to an anarchist communism that was probably closer to council communism. They merged with Wildcat, which later became the Subversion group.

So why did I join the ACF then? I suppose I was reacting to the high degree of localism in the anarchist scene at the time. Aside from the forerunner of SolFed, the Direct Action Movement (DAM), pretty much everyone else in the tiny, early 80s anarchist "movement" operated through disparate local groups in the various towns. Occasionally we linked up via initiatives like the North West Anarchist Federation (actually a very loose network) and the various anarchist conferences that took place from time to time, but that was about the limit of our going beyond localism. So, I liked the fact that the ACF made no bones about wanting to operate on the national (and international) level and felt that this type of organisation was something the movement really needed if it was to ever get anywhere.

Why didn't I join the DAM then if I was for a national/international organisation? Well, although I liked their paper and got on with the DAM members I knew, they were anarcho-syndicalist and I have personally never been convinced of this strategy. On the other hand, though I saw flaws in the ACF, I thought it had the potential to develop into an effective anarcho-communist organisation. As I said, I believed this was something we needed, especially as the biggest and most visible groups at the time were those of the state-capitalist, Leninist and Trotskyist left whose alphabet soup of SWPs, RCPs and others collectively numbered many thousands of members. Anarchists meanwhile, weren't even a blip on the Trots' radar, never mind being noticed by the wider working class or even making the bloodsucking capitalists sit up and raise an eyebrow.

Another reason I joined the ACF was because there were some great, really committed people involved, some of these became lifelong comrades and friends. I'm thinking of some of the founder members down in London and the South East and up in Stirling, as well as those who joined later in Nottingham, Manchester, and other towns and cities around the country. I'm also thinking of comrades who are sadly no longer with us like the late Colin Parker and Bob Miller.

**A1** : Before developing an interest in anarchism I had been involved in the Green Party, actually standing for them on a few occasions, but I came to realise that however genuine and altruistic some of the members were, that even if some

were elected they wouldn't be able to carry out their policies due to the way the system is run under capitalism.

After reading several books I began to lean towards anarchism as a way of making any real positive change in the world.

I first became aware of the Anarchist Federation at the 1st Norwich Anarchist Bookfair around 2004 but didn't actually join until I moved back down to South London in 2006.

One of my first activities was going to a demo against government plans to introduce I.D. cards and I remember an AF member doing his impersonation of an old style newspaper seller when giving out copies of Defy ID pamphlets. Since then I've been on numerous demos, attended anarchist book-fairs, and helped out at events.

So, after my first ten years as a member I've come to the conclusion that any chance we have of overthrowing capitalism is by educating people to what anarchism is and that there is an alternative way of life to the current system. I hope to be part of that.

## Developing Ideas

Over the course of the 80s we refined and developed our politics through discussions on the Aims and Principles. This process was facilitated by comrades from Nottingham who continue to play a vital role in developing our politics as well as preserving anarchist history with the Sparrow's Nest, a national archive of anarchist material and publications.

**D :** But I sensed we needed to tighten up on some of our politics, particularly with regard the Trade Union and National questions. So, when a group of us were mandated to re-write the Aims and Principles in 1989 I felt we were definitely making progress.

These aims and principles are still with us and have helped us to develop an effective critique of trade unions and national liberation struggles. The process of re-writing these was a difficult process but the new members brought fresh ideas and soon the 'older' members were completely one board.

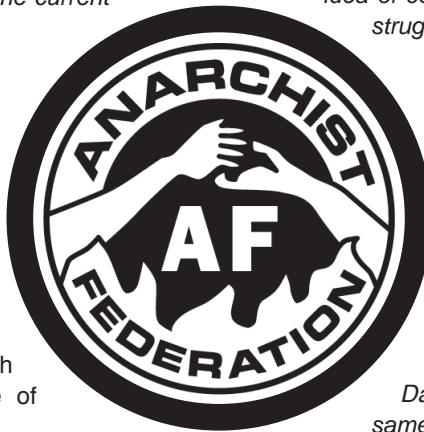
## Active in Struggles

It wasn't just a question of theorising or discussing anarchist ideas. We needed both theory and direct engagement in the struggles of the working class.

**J :** I joined the AF in 1992 in Liverpool. I'd joined the Labour Party at 16 in 1974 and stayed in it until expelled in 1990. I needed something more meaningful and direct and browsing the library shelves rediscovered Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, Kropotkin's Mutual Aid and Fields, Factories & Workshops and later Bakunin, Malatesta and the Spanish Revolution.

What drew me to the AF was the enthusiasm, clear-sightedness and determination of its members, who realised that unity and particularly unity around the class struggle, was nothing of youth or of books or of theory only but something acquired through experience and often hard lessons. I liked too its combativeness, its willingness to challenge wrong ideas on the Left as well as reactionary dogmas of the Right. And I found the four principles of organisational anarchism - equality, free association, free expression and or mutual aid - hugely meaningful, providing the basis - the only necessary basis - for a functioning and fair human society. Everything we said and did - the struggle - all was tested against and filtered through the effect it would have on class consciousness and the willingness and ability of the working class to confront capitalism.

**A2 :** I joined the ACF in 1987, the same year as the printers' strike in Wapping. I had been one of the organisers of Stop the City and was involved in the Claimants Union. I first met up with people at one of the Wapping demos. I liked the idea of combining a national organisation with local struggle.



**R :** The ACF was set up just after the 1984-5 miners' strike and one of the first things I remember us being immediately involved in was the big News International lock-out at Rupert Murdoch's Wapping plant. It was a time of mass pickets, pitched battles with the police and workers' hit-squads attacking scab lorries with bricks and lumps of concrete. As I recall, we were also involved in pro-choice activities against David Alton's anti-abortion bill round about the same time. Members were also involved in various rank and file initiatives such as the postal workers' Communication Worker group. We also did a fair bit around strike support in the later seafarers' dispute at P&O, and other members were active in Claimants' Unions and the squatting scene.

## The Poll Tax

The anti-poll tax movement was a defining moment for many anarchists. The militancy of the movement, the grass roots element, and the fact that it ended in victory was a great boost. The ACF played a role in this, with members attending the first demos in Scotland and organising on their estates.

**R :** ACFers were heavily involved in the anti-poll tax struggle, too. In fact, London ACF organised the first ever anti-poll tax meeting in England and our Beating the Poll Tax pamphlet, produced by the Notts group, if I remember correctly, was very popular and was re-printed and distributed far and wide by all sorts of groups around the country.

## Publications

We produced two pamphlets in the course of the Poll Tax struggle and these were just some of many publications produced by the ACF/AF over the years. Like with the Poll Tax our pamphlets often were directly related to a struggle we

were involved in, like Defy ID. We changed the name of Virus to Organise!, started producing a newsheet Resistance, and produced a range of pamphlets. We have a culture where anyone can write things and we work collectively on our publications.

**J**: *I think that what made Beyond Resistance: A Manifesto for the Millennium such an influential work is the way it was inclusive. Every line was crafted, shaped, changed as new thoughts and ideas from different people and perspectives were moulded into a coherent and powerful critique of capitalism and road map for the future. A lot of it was written in the house I lived in, in real time during a national delegate meeting that turned into a crucible of ideas and words. It inspired me later to write the AF's pamphlet Work and later to rewrite The Role of the Revolutionary Organisation and to urge and then organise a reissue of The Tyranny of Structurelessness/Structure. But nothing compared to that moment of collective creativity, that shared consciousness and sense of purpose, directed at a single audience - the working class - and with a single goal, revolution.*

All our publications are about developing our ideas and building an effective anarchist presence in Britain. Many members have contributed to our publications over the years. The late Bob Miller, joining us from Subversion in the late 90s, contributed to the development of our publications as well as to other aspects of the AF. He was not only provided the logistics for lay-out and printing but was a major contributor to all our publications. The pamphlet Against Nationalism is largely due to his work with one other comrade.

## Fighting oppression

One of the most significant developments in the recent history of the AF, changed from ACF in 1999, was the influence of anarcha-feminism, queer and transgender politics. The AF had been a largely male-dominated organisation and work on gender issues was neglected. The stress was on the unity of the working class. This was despite one of our aims and principles clearly stating that we didn't see fights against oppressions as secondary to class struggle.

**B**: *I am not sure when I first noticed the changes. I had been very busy with work and other commitments that I hadn't been that involved nationally. I was used to being one of the few women and used to the fact that gender issues were not of interest to most members. It is not that people were against doing anything, struggles around reproductive rights were always supported, but it just wasn't part of most people's focus. But at some point, I noticed that I was not alone!*



*With new members joining, expressing explicitly anarcha-feminist politics, things changed. We had more discussions on gender, we formed the women's caucus (now the gender-oppressed caucus) and the queer caucus and we helped organise the Anarcha-feminist conference.*

*Members who rejected the binary categories of male and female, members who refused to accept biological designations of gender, challenged the views of people who were ignorant of these issues. Some members pioneered a Safer Spaces policy. Our publications better reflect the issues and struggles against gender oppression. One issue of Resistance was devoted to gender struggles and we have published a pamphlet called Revolutionary Women.*

*Members have stimulated debate through introducing people to the concepts of privilege and intersectionality. Some of these analyses are not fully supported by all members and the process of making sure that struggles against oppressions are taken seriously, as well as keeping the dialogue open with all members, is one we need to continue to work on. However, I do feel that we have made great progress in putting into practice what was one of our key principles - that women and other oppressed groups can organise autonomously and that we cannot have anarchist communism until all oppressions are eliminated.*

## Joining the International of Anarchist Federations (IFA): 1994

This was a major step for us and has been one of the most positive aspects of our political activity. We have met some fantastic people as well as extended our knowledge of what is going on internationally. We always had an international focus in the AF but by joining the IFA we were able to put this into practice. We were the Secretariat from 1994-1998 and have recently joined it for the next four years after the IFA Congress this summer (see article in this issue about the Congress).

## New groups

The local group is the basis of the federation. Though we have many individual members scattered about, the health of the organisation is based on having good local groups. In the past decade we have spread to all parts of the country, from Scotland to Cornwall.

### 1. Scotland and Wales

One of the other major developments has been the setting up of AF Alba and more recently AF Wales. We are not nationalists but the federal structure is suited to groups in different territories having their own autonomy. However, though there are some issues that are more relevant to different territories, such as nationalism in Scotland, we still find that mostly the issues are the same, eg austerity, attacks on workers and migrant solidarity.

## 2. Bristol

Since joining the AF in 2010, the Bristol group has been an inspiration to us all. Formed of younger members, it has gone from strength to strength. It is an example of how an effective group needs to be based on a strong collective identity as well as having a non-sectarian attitude towards others who are active in the area. We include here a lengthy contribution from the group as it expresses the very best of what the AF is today.

**Bristol group :** *The Bristol AFed group was formed by individuals who felt there was a gap for an organised, general anarchist group in the city. At the time the other groups in existence in Bristol focused on certain areas such as No Borders, Animal rights, Climate change etc.*

*Our group was small, relatively young and inexperienced, but we were enthusiastic and quickly made ourselves known around the city. For some of us, we formed as a reaction to the activist status quo; we chose not to take what we were told by longer term activists as gospel but to learn by trying things out. We made mistakes, had successes, learnt our lessons, and spent quite a bit of time in or waiting for our comrades to be released from police cells.*

*The timing of our formation could not have been better for such a group. The Con/Dem coalition coming to power, Student Fees protests, Stokes croft riots, anti-cuts actions and an activist community in full swing in Bristol all played their part in our formative years. It was a hell of a lot of fun, and hard work, but our early model was not sustainable. We had regular run-ins with the police but failed to make any lasting impact and lacked much in the way of political analysis or even direction. However in the heady days of 2011 we really felt a part of a larger youth & working class uprising, and there is a lot to be said for releasing your anger on the streets. It's something I'm seeing less of these days.*

*Though some of the problems that most local activist groups face may still be an issue today, the group has come a long way. Our increasing involvement with the wider federation helped with this, as we learnt from sharing ideas and experiences with AFed groups in other cities. The group is more sustainable, more mature, involves itself in a wider range of activities, and is more productive. Yet still, at its core it maintains the philosophy we started with: working with other groups, providing solidarity and assistance, facilitating constructive debate, being willing to take a chance and being willing to learn.*

### **Statement on the launch of Bristol AF, originally published on Indymedia**

*In January this year a group of individuals living in Bristol formed the newest branch of the Anarchist Federation. The AFed is the largest, national, anarchist group in the UK. It is a network of class struggle anarchists who aim to abolish Capitalism and all forms of oppression to create a free and equal society. A society without leaders and bosses, and without wars or environmental destruction.*

*As a new group Bristol AF are seeking to assist grass-roots anti-capitalist struggle in Bristol and the surrounding area. We wish to express solidarity with workers and those partaking in working-class struggle and direct action to prevent the encroachment of exploitative multinational corporations into every aspect of our lives. We also seek to lend direct support to single issue campaign groups in the region who share our aims, politics and who promote anarchism as a viable alternative to the state system based on capital and power.*

*Whilst we wish to be a useful part of, and have a great deal of respect for, the local anarchist movement we formed because we are fed up with the narrow minded arrogance, lack of real equality and hidden hierarchies that exist in that same community.*

*Some people can feel looked down upon by those who have more experience and more knowledge of the anarchist movement, rather than being supported by them; out articulated by those who have been arranging anarchist events and actions for longer than they have rather than being given guidance; out quoted by those who have studied more anarchist literature rather than being taught by them.*

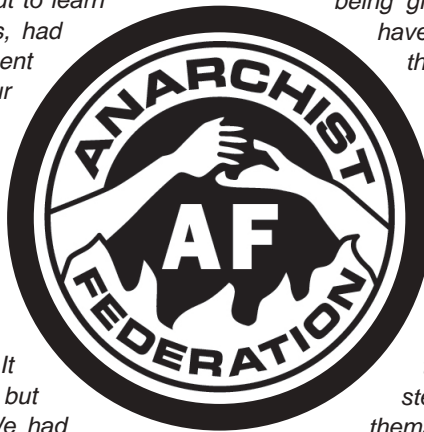
*We are fed up that class warfare, to many people, no longer means the empowerment of the working class and the fight for a better quality of life but is instead reflected as the actions and sentiments of some elitist individuals in the past and (unfortunately) present who think being working class means living up to the beer swilling, uneducated, uncaring stereotype created by the ruling classes themselves. We hope the formation of the Bristol AFed this year, Bristol IWW and the re-formation of Bristol Class War last year will go some way to altering these perceptions, we can only wait and see.*

*We are fed up that environmental destruction is being used by green capitalists to further their greed for ever greater profits, rather than being portrayed as one of the many failings of that same system.*

*We are fed up with those libertarians who have hijacked the anti-capitalist movement for their own power grabbing ends who would inevitably maintain the very hierarchies we should aim to abolish.*

*We are fed up of the lack of communication and organisation between anarchist groups at times, due to petty nuances in politics, tactics and organisation or even pettier personal grievances. We seek to work through any differences to form a more effective and coherent movement in Bristol, however we remain faithful to the way anarchist communities function "An injury to one is an injury to all" after all.*

*We are fed up that "Anarchism" is seen by many within the clique as an excuse to spend their benefits on Ketamine and a new string for their dog, paint circled "As" on billboards and think capitalism will just spontaneously collapse. We do not however seek to put ourselves on any form of pedestal of righteousness but seek to engage people in our work.*



*Bristol AF hopes that through hard work, mutual aid, communication and collaboration with other Anarchist organisations and grass-roots campaign groups that we can overcome these problems and that the foundations for social change can be constructed.*

*We support anarchist campaigns and groups both local, national and international. We hope to erode barriers and borders in all their forms in order to build a cohesive anarchist community working toward social change.*

## Looking back, looking forward

We conclude this article with some general reflections from older comrades who are still committed and active as well as comments from newer members about why they joined. This is what is best about the AF, the experience and long-term commitment of the older members together with newer members who bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm.

**N** : *I've been with the organisation through its highs and its lows. The AF attendance on the Wapping strike mass pickets, the frantic activity of the Poll Tax revolt, the campaign against Section 28 (a law to forbid the promoting of homosexuality), the fight against the Criminal Justice Bill, Millbank and the student agitation, strike support and just plain old standing on a street corner handing out leaflets and news sheets, putting up posters and stickers. I remain committed to strengthening and building an effective anarchist presence in Britain. I remember and rejoice at the many wonderful people I've met in the AF, and remember and mourn dead comrades like Colin Parker and Bob Miller who did so much for the AF.*

*I think the AF has punched above its weight over the years and I think history will show that it has had an important influence on anarchism both here and in the rest of the world.*

**D** : *What has been different about the ACF and the AF has been the way that it hasn't allowed itself to become either too narrow or too broad in its politics. Despite our size, I like to think we have never become a cult or excessively self-regarding and insular.*

*What hasn't happened is the emergence of an unofficial leadership. People like me, who have been around since the beginning are always having their ideas challenged by younger comrades and there's not much elder-worship!*

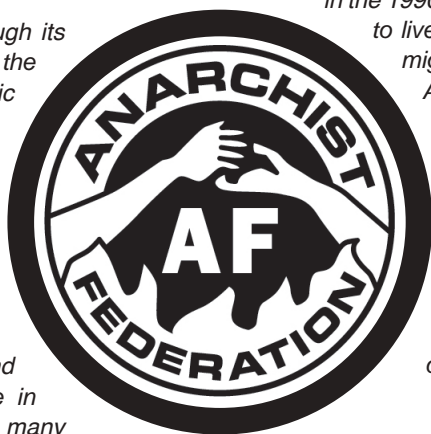
*I think, without the ACF and AF – consistent, class based anarchist politics in an organised form, the anarchist 'scene' in the UK would be in a far more parlous state than it is now.*

**R** : *For all I said earlier about us becoming an effective anarcho-communist organisation, ironically for many of those early years, membership continually hovered around a tiny 30-35 members. Mind you, we punched well above our weight with those 30-odd members, managing to run a regular magazine and a newspaper as well as numerous*

*other publications, pamphlets and leaflets. We were also incredibly active in a wide range of issues, campaigns and activities and there were never enough hours in the day to do everything. Our perennially small size wasn't to change much until after the collapse of state capitalism and the Soviet Union. Now, the remaining Leninist and Trotskyist organisations are pale shadows of their former selves but more people started to get involved in anarchist politics and groups like the ACF/AF and SolFed grew in size despite the wider depoliticisation that has taken place within the working class.*

*When I joined, there were one or two things I didn't agree with in the ACF. Thirty years on and we have a much better set of Aims & Principles and we have a national and internationally based anarcho-communist organisation that continues to punch well above its weight. That'll do me.*

**J** : *Finally, this might sound grandiose but I truly believe that the social and organisational anarchism I found within the AF in the 1990s still offers the best way for human beings to live and perhaps the only way that humanity might not end up destroying itself. But the AF needs to get back to proposing practical ways of living - of organising work, education, life itself - that can be taken up by the rest of humanity. Struggles today are increasingly led by shouters and ranters - and too often within the Left that is at each other - instead of thinkers and teachers and leaders - of ideas, not people; campaigners, yes, but we are often not free of the need to campaign.*



## And from a new member

**P** : *I recently joined AFed after identifying as an Anarchist for a very long time and being on the periphery of everything for as long as I can remember. I was raised a Socialist, singing the Red Flag and being reminded of Labour's Marxist roots. I was raised to protest and think politically with a strong sense of social justice. The one day I realised I wasn't a Socialist. My decision to join AFed was a very considered one, I've never been much of a joiner of things and have always preferred to be a bit anonymous but I have felt recently that it is time to nail my colours up so to speak and makes things official.*

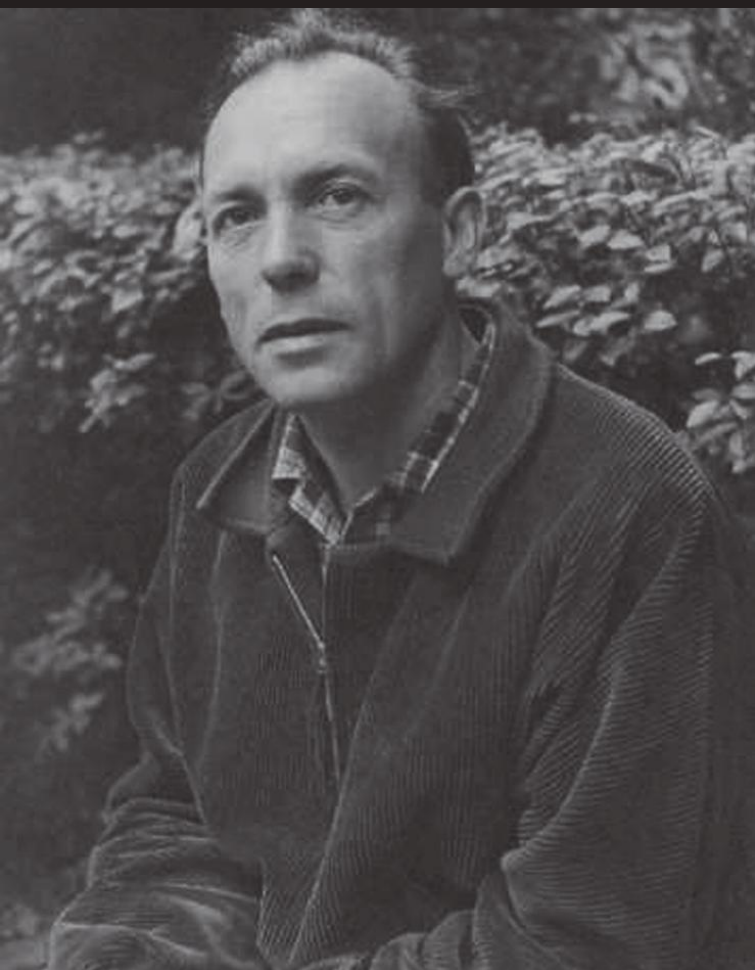
*Over the past year I have spent time with other groups in the 'radical left', I wanted to see how they were as people as well as organisations; were they welcoming? Did they just want to recruit me? How were their politics? Were they consistent? Organised? Were they really just a cliquy social club? I also looked at myself a lot, at how I have conducted myself in life, have I lived according to the politics I claim to have? All of these things helped me make my decision to join AFed and I'm happy with that decision.*

*I have friends that have moved away from Anarchism as they felt it is too 'idealist' but with increasing nationalism in Scotland, a right wing UK government and increasingly openly racist right wing UK (let's not even talk about the US) I felt that plenty of people are getting pretty idealistic themselves in ways that are pretty horrifying to me. So now is the time to be idealistic and I'm fine with that.*

## Culture FEATURE

# Georges Navel

## Proletarian Writer



“There is a working class sadness that can only be cured by political participation. Morally, I was in agreement with my class.”

From *Travaux*, Georges Navel

Undeservedly almost unknown in the English-speaking world, the French writer Georges Navel was an outstanding example of the “proletarian writer” and his books, especially his *Travaux* (Works) rank alongside those of the Russian Victor Serge, the American Jack London, the Russian Maxim Gorki, and the Romanian Panait Istrati.

Georges Navel, whose real name was Charles François Victor Navel, was born at Pont à Mousson on October 30th 1904 in the Lorraine region of France, not far from the German border. He was the last of thirteen children to a peasant family. His father moved from working on the land to labouring in blast furnaces. His mother continued to work in the fields and woods.

At the start of the First World War, the family was exposed to bombardment from German artillery and the young Navel was evacuated to Algeria for several months by the Red Cross. He was then re-united with his parents in Lyon.

Navel had to go to work at the age of twelve. His brothers, in particular Lucien, ten years his senior, who was interested in anarcho-syndicalism, took him to meetings in 1918, and it was here that he came across anarchist ideas and deepened his knowledge by attending evening courses from 1920 at the “Union University” created by the union central the CGT, and began to see libertarian communism as a goal for humanity. Navel was to later write about the meeting that he attended with Lucien that “I learnt the meaning of the strikes of 1917, the mutinies... and the struggle in Russia. The foremen and the boss lost their prestige.” He commented that up till then, his traditional worker’s outfit during the week - peaked cap, smock, grey jacket and moleskin trousers - was his identity. “Now class ceased to appear a limit within which one was enclosed.” Lucien introduced his young brother to the ideas of the anarchist communist writers Kropotkin and Jean Grave, and also persuaded another brother, Rene, to attend meetings with the result that all three brothers were strongly attracted to anarchism. He came in contact with the psychiatric doctor Emile Malespine, who edited a Dadaist magazine that was contributed to by leading Dadaists like Hans Arp and Tristan Tzara. Much of Navel’s time when not working was spent in reading avidly. Malespine introduced Navel to the world of literature and painting, to schools of art like Dadaism, Surrealism, Cubism and Futurism.

In 1921 he realised that the libertarian communist society was still a long way away. He therefore tried to drown himself in the river Saone but the current washed him up again on the river bank!

He worked as an itinerant labourer, moving from Northern France to the South depending on the work. Over the course of years he worked on building sites, as a ditch-digger, as a fitter in the Renault, Berliet and Citroen factories, and as a

seasonal worker gathering fruit, cutting lavender, collecting sea salt. A draft dodger from 1927 to 1933 he escaped capture by living under false papers.

On the 29th July 1936 he took the decision to cross the border to aid the Spanish revolution. He joined the anarchist militia column the Ascaso Column, named after Francisco Ascaso, a heroic anarchist who had died in the first day of the fighting in Barcelona. Suffering from sunstroke and chronic gastritis, he was invalided out a month and a half later.

He began to write, and one of his texts was published in a special edition of *Nouvelle Revue Française* (New French Review) on poetry. Another of his texts on ditch digging appeared in NRF in 1937. An account of his time in Spain appeared in the syndicalist magazine *La Révolution Prolétarienne*.

Following his return from Spain he attended meetings at the Musée du Soir (Evening Museum) set up by the anarchist Henry Poulaille, defender and supporter of proletarian literature, where he read out some of his writings.

In 1940 he was called up into an artillery division, and then was assigned to work in a Hispano factory. With the French defeat, he moved back to Southern France, where he worked first as a gardener then as a beekeeper. He corresponded with the French writer and philosopher Bernard Groethuysen who encouraged him to write. In 1945 he published his most important book – *Travaux* - on the experiences of working and the following year he received the prestigious Prix Sainte-Beuve in recognition. The first run of the book was sold out, but paper restrictions meant a serious delay with a loss of momentum.

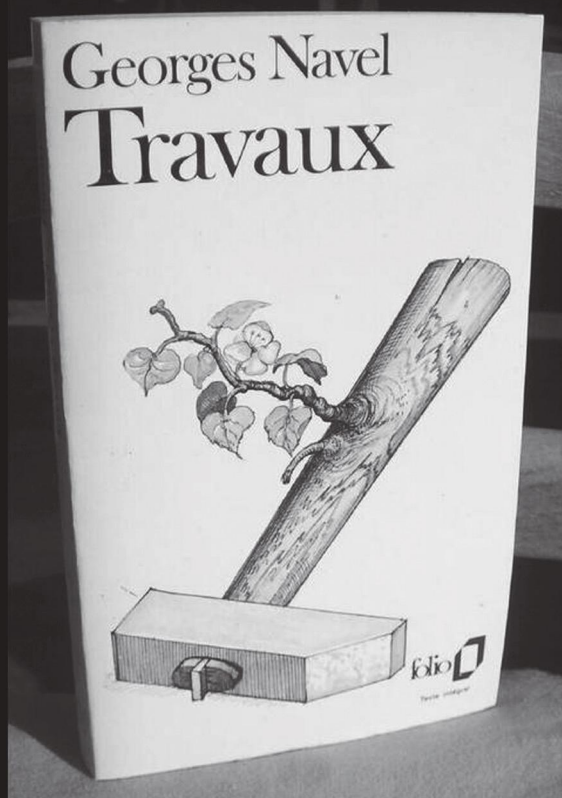
Navel followed *Travaux* with *Parcours* in 1950, *Sable et Limon* (Sand and Silt) in 1952, *Chacun son Royaume* in 1960 and *Passages* in 1982. In 1954 he moved to the Paris region and worked as a proof-reader until retirement in 1970. He died on 1st November 1993.

He defined himself as a revolutionary before being an anarchist and at one stage approached Marxism. He was rather put off by the anarchists he met in southern France, who were vegans, vegetarians, naturists, Buddhists, individualists, Esperantists, etc., above all rather than being involved in revolutionary activity. He correctly saw individualist anarchism as a movement of revolt rather than revolution. As a result he joined the Communist Party in an experimental fashion for a while around 1940, although he was neither a Stalinist or a Trotskyist and without losing his libertarian ideas. In later life he admitted that he was a “libertarian by nature” in an interview that he gave for the anarchist magazine *A Contretemps* in 1984.

*Les Travaux* documents his life of work from beginning to end. He describes the life of his father in the blast furnaces, working 6 days a week and tending his vegetable patch on Sundays, and still retaining peasant concerns about the health and progress of his crops. He describes the life in the factories where Taylorism is beginning to be introduced, with all the miseries of strictly controlled and increasingly alienated labour that come with it. Yet Navel’s lyrical but straightforwardly honest style comes through, and he even makes the handling of a shovel sound poetic! He renders the smell of different types of plums he experienced in childhood and remembers learning less in school than in the fields, where he learnt how to make potatoes sprout, and through the novels of Jules Verne.

About factory life he remarks that somehow the foremen seemed to feel they had been rendered a personal service if you worked faster. His horror of enclosed and regimented work returned him to working outdoors, doing seasonal work and still being in contact with nature, working in rain or under a blue sky. He abandons relative security in the factory for his work as a jack of all trades, whether house painting, ditch digging, or cutting lavender. Whilst he recognises the alienation of work, he takes pride in a task well done, in craft and skill, in contact with nature and the material worked upon. He describes the whole of the working class in France in transition during 1920s and 1930s from work on the land to life in regimented factories.

He refuses resignation and submission and shows how to live in a calm and dignified way. *Les Travaux* is one of the best books on work, coming from the direct experience of a worker. It is a great loss that it has never been translated into English.





## Book REVIEWS

# Social-Democracy and Anarchism in the International Workers' Association, 1864-1877

Rene Berthier

Merlin Press  
2015  
223 pages  
£16.95

# We Do Not Fear Anarchy, We Invoke It The First International and the Origins of the Anarchist Movement Robert Graham

AK Press  
2015  
319 pages  
£17.00

Just like buses, these books came along at the same time. In fact, if you include another new book on the topic, which we were not able to review, *The First Socialist Schism: Bakunin vs. Marx in the International Working Men's Association* (Wolfgang Eckhardt: PM Press), that's a virtual bus convoy!

Graham's book looks at the precursors of anarchism within the First International, the Diggers during the English Civil War and Jean Meslier and Sylvain Maréchal in France. He describes the events of the French Revolution and the centralising tendencies of the Jacobins. In the 'big tent' tradition he brings in the English philosopher William Godwin, with little or no connection to the anarchist current that emerged within the First International. Then Saint-Simon and his followers are given a full page when Graham admits that "neither...can be described as anarchists". We also have far too much on Max Stirner who Graham correctly describes as more of a nihilistic egoist than an anarchist.

We then arrive at the French socialist Proudhon who Graham describes as an advocate of direct action, federalism and rejection of the State. He recognises that in contrast to Mikhail Bakunin, Proudhon was opposed to insurrection and expropriation and favoured a gradualist approach. Proudhon cannot be left out of any book dealing with the First International as many of its founders were influenced by him and Graham deals with his ideas in a clear and balanced way. Another important but unjustly forgotten French thinker and activist, Joseph Déjacque, quite rightly gets some coverage as he was a pioneer of developing anarchist communist ideas and was also involved in a precursor to the First International, the International Association (IA).

### The International Association

The IA was set up in the mid-1850s by Proudhonists in touch with English workers and exiled French, German, Polish, Italian and Spanish workers united in the International Committee. After a meeting with the French in April 1856 the International Association was set up with Déjacque joining a section in the United States. The Association quickly adopted an anarchist position, but disagreements arose between those who supported centralisation and those who supported a federalist, anarchist position. Both sections unfortunately fizzled out in 1859. Some former members were to join the First International later.

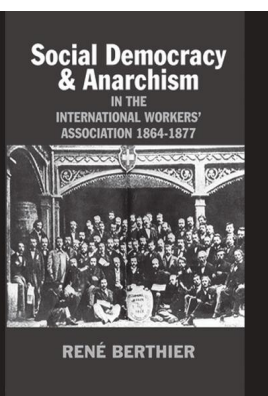
As a result of further contact between French and English workers in 1862, a congress was finally held in London in September 1864. This was the first time that Karl Marx appeared at meetings of this newly constituted organisation, the International Workers Association (IWA) later to be known as the First International. Marx was already arguing that "co-operative labour" could not be achieved without the conquest of political power and without the assistance of the State. As Berthier remarks, "Contrary to the discourse of Marxist historians, the International was in no way Marx's creature. He had remained a stranger to the preparatory work which took place between 1862 and 1864."

Berthier, unlike Graham, abandons any description of various schools of thought before the founding of the International. What both authors have in common is their detailed descriptions of Marx's activities within the International. By the time of the third congress of the International in Lausanne, Marx was already adopting proprietorial language towards

the First International, talking about “our International” on several occasions in a letter to his associate Engels.

## Bakunin

The entry of the Russian Mikhail Bakunin into the International in July 1868 was to be an important feature in the life of the International. Meanwhile Marx had been “in continual and private communication with his allies throughout the course of the International for the purpose of outmanoeuvring whomever he saw as an ideological opponent” (Graham p76-77). Indeed, “far from putting forward ecumenical proposals acceptable to the various political tendencies within the International...he was again trying to establish as official policies of the International positions that mandated not only political participation but also the achievement of state power by the workers, thereby excluding any contrary anarchist approaches” (Graham p.76).



Bakunin had begun to develop libertarian ideas before his entry into the International. He was to meet there advanced French workers who had gone beyond Proudhon's influence to develop similar ideas, workers like Varlin, Lemel, Malon, etc.

The ideas of Marx, who advocated the capture of State power and the establishment of political parties, were in contrast to those of Bakunin and other members of the International. According to Graham: “...Bakunin set forth six primary grounds for distinguishing his anarchism from the views of his opponents: first, his rejection of any kind of institutional, coercive authority (antiauthoritarianism); second, his opposition to the modern state, even as a “transitional” power to abolish capitalism (antistatism); third, his opposition to any participation in existing systems of government or “bourgeois politics” (antiparlamentarianism); fourth and fifth, his advocacy of voluntary federation during the struggle against capitalism and the state and in a postrevolutionary society (federalism), so that the revolutionary means were consistent

with the revolutionary ends (libertarianism); and sixth, his call for immediate abolition of the state and capitalism through direct action, including insurrection and the expropriation of the means of production by the workers themselves (social revolution) (p.4).

There was an inevitable clash between the ‘Marxists’ and the ‘Bakuninists’ with Marx and his followers using devious means to expel

Bakunin at unrepresentative meetings of the International. All of this is expounded in great detail in both the books, with much documentary evidence. This led to the break-up of the International, and the establishment of the Anti-Authoritarian

International, which included many who were opposed to Marx's high handed and manipulative actions, but were not wholeheartedly in agreement with Bakunin.

## Anti-authoritarian IWA

Berthier believes that: “...the creation of the Anti-Authoritarian IWA has been termed a ‘secession’. This concept of supposed ‘secession’ has often been repeated by anarchists themselves. I wished to show that it was the Marxists who were the splitters; that Marx and Engels - who were rejected by every Federation of the International - expelled the totality of the organised labour movement of these times from the IWA. Such an affirmation will no doubt provoke the indignation of Marxist readers, but here too I draw support from the correspondence of Marx and Engels themselves, which leaves no doubt in the matter” (p.ix).

Berthier is not afraid to criticise the anti-authoritarians within the IWA either. He believes that Bakunin, based on his observations of the labour movement at the time, developed a certain number of principles that might have saved the International. The first and most important was that the International should not adopt a single programme, and should prioritise the organising of solidarity between all workers. He feels that there was a break with Bakuninism when some militants claiming Bakunin for themselves tried to make the International adopt an anarchist programme. He feels that this was one, but not the only, cause for the collapse of the International in the long run.

Graham for his part declares that the struggles within the First International led to the eventual births of the two main currents of anarchism, anarcho-syndicalism and anarchist communism. He is not afraid to criticise the development of disastrous tactics evolved from the original idea of Propaganda by The Deed. This was originally meant to mean the action of a small advanced group of revolutionaries who would take advantage of a potentially revolutionary situation to launch an action which would act as a catalyst, and at the very least would act as an example of libertarian ideas and direct action. This tactic, straight from the Bakunin textbook, became reduced to individual attempts at assassinations and had long term consequences for the anarchist movement.

Graham notes that another legacy of the International was: “the influence of Marxism, albeit Marxism as a critique of capitalism and a theory of class struggle. Bakunin thought Marx's Capital a much more incisive critique of capitalism than anything Proudhon ever wrote. Reclus (a leading French militant-reviewer) was at one time in discussions with Marx about translating Capital into French. Johann Most (an important German anarchist-reviewer) produced a popular summary of Capital when he was still a Social Democrat, but Marx's economic analysis continued to have an influence on him after he became an anarchist. Carlo Cafiero (important Italian anarchist-reviewer) prepared his own summary of Capital for Italian readers and often referred to it in his anarchist writings” (p. 260).

These are important books that should be read by all those interested in the history of the working class movement and in those events that still resonate down through the years and that have still left their marks on the revolutionary movements.

# AF PUBLICATIONS

## OUT NOW

### BASIC BAKUNIN

"We are convinced that freedom without Socialism is privilege and injustice, and that Socialism without freedom is slavery and brutality." This pamphlet will examine the anarchist ideas of Mikhail Bakunin. These ideas were a huge influence upon the 19th century socialist movement. We hope that it will become apparent that Bakunin has a lot to offer us today, that his ideas make up a coherent and well-argued body of thought, and show that there is good reason for him to be described as the grandfather of modern anarchism.

A5 - £2 (+p&p)

### REVOLUTIONARY WOMEN

The compatibility of anarchism and women's liberation is clear: opposition to all hierarchy is a requirement of any movement demanding emancipation and equality. Despite this, everywhere that women joined the early anarchist movement they were forced to fight against the prejudices of their male comrades. Not only did they fight, they prevailed, becoming the spearhead of many revolutionary situations. This pamphlet provides a biographical account of some lesser-known revolutionary women of the past.

A5 - £2 (+p&p)

### A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO ANARCHIST COMMUNISM

The Anarchist Federation is an organisation of revolutionary class struggle anarchists. We aim for the abolition of all hierarchy, and work for the creation of a world-wide classless society: anarchist communism. This abridged version of our key pamphlet sets out to introduce what all this means and how we think we can do it.

A6 - Free / Donation (+p&p)

### THE ROLE OF REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

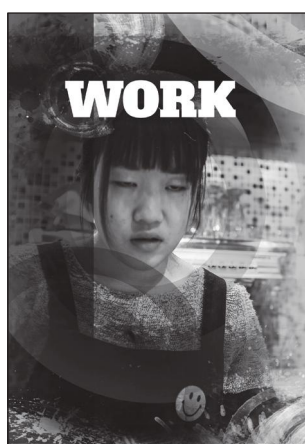
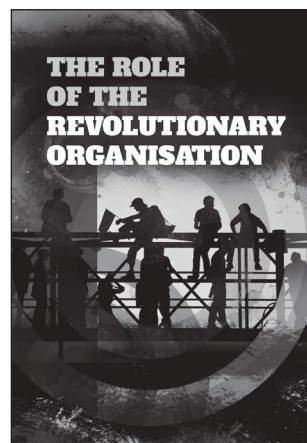
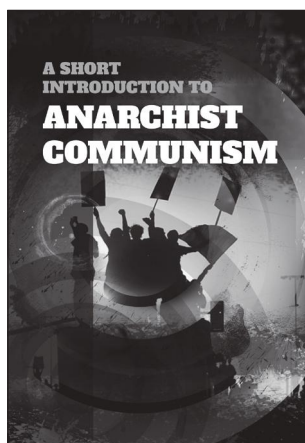
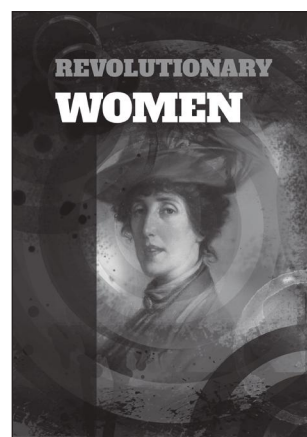
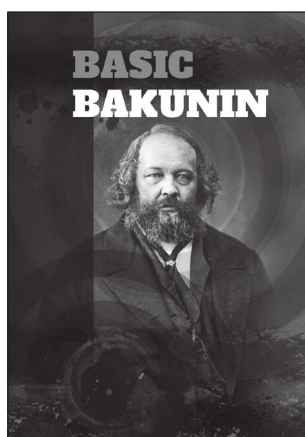
We in the Anarchist Federation seek the abolition of capitalism and state in favour of bringing about a society based on the guiding principle 'From each according to their ability, to each according to their need.' This is anarchist communism. In order to achieve this we need a revolutionary organisation to undertake a certain role as part of the working class. This pamphlet will explain why.

A6 - £1 (+p&p)

### WORK

We live in a society where the activities we engage in for most of our life are not based on being useful to society or fulfilling to ourselves, but are based upon getting money to have our needs met. Our work is the driving force behind capitalism. The activities we're required to perform are either detrimental to society or have their full worth undermined by the drive for profits. This pamphlet will explain why we must abolish work.

A6 - £1 (+p&p)



## FORTHCOMING

RESISTANCE TO NAZISM

INTRODUCTION TO ANARCHIST COMMUNISM

AGAINST NATIONALISM

ECOLOGY & CLASS

We also publish **Resistance**, our agitational news sheet. It can be viewed on our website or you can order individual copies or bundles for distribution from [publications@afed.org.uk](mailto:publications@afed.org.uk).

## Anarchist Federation pamphlets and other publications available from:

WEB <https://afed.org.uk/publications/>  
please contact us for p+p costs

POST AF c/o  
Freedom Bookshop,  
84b Whitechapel High St.  
London E1 7QX

All publications can also be purchased from AFed stalls / events as well as direct from Active Distribution and AK Press & Distribution.

# THE AIMS & PRINCIPLES

## of the ANARCHIST FEDERATION

**1** The Anarchist Federation is an organisation of revolutionary class struggle anarchists. We aim for the abolition of all hierarchy, and work for the creation of a world-wide classless society: anarchist communism.

**2** Capitalism is based on the exploitation of the working class by the ruling class. But inequality and exploitation are also expressed in terms of race, gender, sexuality, health, ability and age, and in these ways one section of the working class oppresses another. This divides us, causing a lack of class unity in struggle that benefits the ruling class. Oppressed groups are strengthened by autonomous action which challenges social and economic power relationships. To achieve our goal we must relinquish power over each other on a personal as well as a political level.

**3** We believe that fighting systems of oppression that divide the working class, such as racism and sexism, is essential to class struggle. Anarchist communism cannot be achieved while these inequalities still exist. In order to be effective in our various struggles against oppression, both within society and within the working class, we at times need to organise independently as people who are oppressed according to gender, sexuality, ethnicity or ability. We do this as working class people, as cross-class movements hide real class differences and achieve little for us. Full emancipation cannot be achieved without the abolition of capitalism.

**4** We are opposed to the ideology of national liberation movements which claims that there is some common interest between native bosses and the working class in face of foreign domination. We do support working class struggles against racism, genocide, ethnocide and political and economic colonialism. We oppose the creation of any new ruling class. We reject all forms of nationalism, as this only serves to redefine divisions in the international working class. The working class has no country and national boundaries must be eliminated. We seek to build an anarchist international to work with other libertarian revolutionaries throughout the world.

**5** As well as exploiting and oppressing the majority of people, Capitalism threatens the world through war and the destruction of the environment.

**6** It is not possible to abolish Capitalism without a revolution, which will arise out of class conflict. The ruling class must be completely overthrown to achieve anarchist communism. Because the ruling class will not relinquish power without their use of armed force, this revolution will be a time of violence as well as liberation.

**7** Unions by their very nature cannot become vehicles for the revolutionary transformation of society. They have to be accepted by capitalism in order to function and so cannot play a part in its overthrow. Trades unions divide the working class (between employed and unemployed, trade and craft, skilled and unskilled, etc). Even syndicalist unions are constrained by the fundamental nature of unionism. The union has to be able to control its membership in order to make deals with management. Their aim, through negotiation, is to achieve a fairer form of exploitation of the workforce. The interests of leaders and representatives will always be different from ours. The boss class is our enemy, and while we must fight for better conditions from it, we have to realise that reforms we may achieve today may be taken away tomorrow. Our ultimate aim must be the complete abolition of wage slavery. Working within the unions can never achieve this. However, we do not argue for people to leave unions until they are made irrelevant by the revolutionary event. The union is a common point of departure for many workers. Rank and file initiatives may strengthen us in the battle for anarchist communism. What's important is that we organise ourselves collectively, arguing for workers to control struggles themselves.

**8** Genuine liberation can only come about through the revolutionary self activity of the working class on a mass scale. An anarchist communist society means not only co-operation between equals, but active involvement in the shaping and creating of that society during and after the revolution. In times of upheaval and struggle, people will need to create their own revolutionary organisations controlled by everyone in them. These autonomous organisations will be outside the control of political parties, and within them we will learn many important lessons of self-activity.

**9** As anarchists we organise in all areas of life to try to advance the revolutionary process. We believe a strong anarchist organisation is necessary to help us to this end. Unlike other so-called socialists or communists we do not want power or control for our organisation. We recognise that the revolution can only be carried out directly by the working class. However, the revolution must be preceded by organisations able to convince people of the anarchist communist alternative and method. We participate in struggle as anarchist communists, and organise on a federative basis. We reject sectarianism and work for a united revolutionary anarchist movement.

**10** We have a materialist analysis of capitalist society. The working class can only change society through our own efforts. We reject arguments for either a unity between classes or for liberation that is based upon religious or spiritual beliefs or a supernatural or divine force. We work towards a world where religion holds no attraction.