

Aims and 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 racism and sexism is as important as other aspects of the class struggle. Anarchist-Communism cannot be achieved while sexism and racism still exist. In order to be effective in their struggle against their oppression both within society and within the working class, women, lesbians and gays, and black people may at times need to organise independently. However, this should be as working class people as cross-class movements hide real class differences and achieve little for them. 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 the 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 oppose organised religion and beliefs.

Join the AF! Find out more!

If you agree with the aim and principles of the Anarchist Federation (see above) then why not apply to join the organisation. Maybe you want to find out more about what the AF thinks on a particular subject or the ideas we believe in. Perhaps just would just like to be put on our mailing list.

Whatever you want to find out from us, please get in touch.

Write to our national contact at:

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Alternatively you can email us at info@afed.org.uk or visit our website: www.afed.org.uk

Inside:
Reports on
struggles and
movements in
**Australia, China,
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and more**

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FOR REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHISM

**Long live the
International!**

You will notice that this issue of Organise! does not contain the usual mix of articles. We decided to produce this special international issue to coincide with the AF's period as secretariat of the International of Anarchist Federations and to highlight the importance of international solidarity and organisation, at a

special price of £1. If you are a subscriber this issue is a freebie, and your sub will continue with the next issue, which will be back to the usual format.

**For worldwide anarchist communism!
Anarchist Federation, October 2005.**

Organise!

Organise is the magazine of the Anarchist Federation (AF). It is published in order to develop anarchist communist ideas. It aims to provide a clear anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues and to initiate debate on ideas not normally covered in agitational papers.

We aim to produce Organise! twice a year. To meet this target, we positively solicit contributions from our readers. We aim 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, why not get in touch first? Even articles that are 100% in agreement with our aims and principles can leave much open to debate.

As always, the articles in this issue do not necessarily represent the collective viewpoint of the AF. We hope that their publication will produce responses from readers and spur the debate on.

The deadline for the next issue of Organise! will be 15th January 2006. Please send all contributions to the address on the left. It would help if all articles could be either typed or on disk (PC or MAC format). Alternatively, articles can be emailed to the editors directly at organise@afed.org.uk.

What goes in Organise!

Organise! hopes to open up debate in many areas of life. As we have stated before, unless signed by the Anarchist Federation as a whole or by a local AF group, articles in Organise! reflect the views of the person who has written the articles and nobody else.

If the contents of one of the articles in this issue provokes thought, makes you angry, compels a response then let us know. Revolutionary ideas develop from debate, they do not merely drop out of the air!

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*The Anarchist Federation is a member organisation of the International of Anarchist Federations – www.iaf-ifa.org



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the international of anarchist federations: striving for a global anarchist movement in thought and action

The IAF fights for:

- The abolition of all forms of authority whether economic, political, social, religious, cultural or sexual.
- The construction of a free society, without classes, States or borders, founded on anarchist federalism and mutual aid.

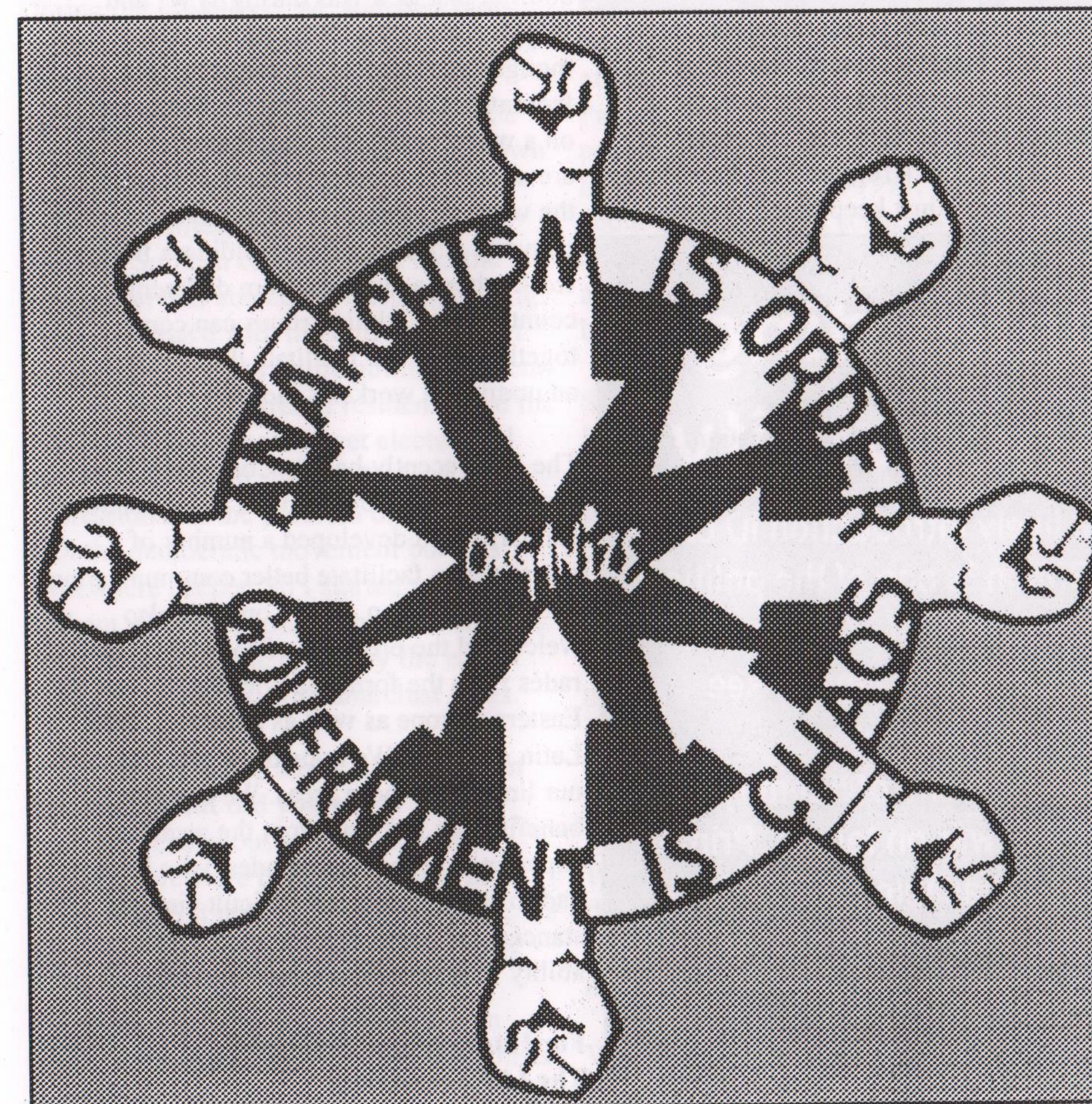
(from the Statement of Principles of the International Anarchist Federation- founded in 1968 in Cararra, Italy)

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

this tradition.

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

Today, the need for international solidarity and co-operation amongst anarchists is as vital as ever. Every aspect of our lives is woven into a global system of economic, political and cultural domination. This can lead to a feeling of helplessness as our anger cannot be vented directly against those making decisions affecting our lives. The people of Afghanistan and Iraq are thrown into turmoil as a result of the interference of both the US military intervention and Saudi Arabian- imported Islam. GM crops are imposed on reluctant farmers from Brazil to Poland. Islands in the Pacific are on the verge of disappearance because of the greed for energy elsewhere. People's jobs and security depend on fickle international money markets. And even remote tribal people are losing their very way of life as a result of world demand for the resources on their land. But we are not helpless. We need to



make international anarchism our weapon. The most obvious form internationalism takes is international solidarity, protests at global summits and conferences that bring together anarchists from many different countries. The IAF has always been dedicated to helping comrades from countries who are less well-off financially, such as raising money for the Argentines or supporting Russian and Eastern European comrades in their efforts to attend international meetings. Support can also be much more concrete like when the Italians helped to organise the first meeting of anarchists of both east and west. The IAF, through its member federations has also been involved in helping to organise international protests in Evian, Brussels, Genoa, Paris, Scotland and Prague. Comrades also have travelled to support the anarchist May Day in Poland and the meet with comrades in Russia. An international perspective, however, does not mean that we spend all of our time supporting other people's struggles or flying off to global meetings and protests. Firstly, there is a limit to how much financial support comrades from the richer countries can give. The country as a whole may be well-off, but anarchist comrades are usually not. It is a struggle to find money to produce newspapers and magazines as well as finance campaigns. Also, travelling to other countries for political purposes can be as great a burden on an unemployed British comrade as it can be on someone from Eastern Europe or Latin America. In addition, power may appear to lie in the hands of those who attend the 'global summits', but in fact, this is really only the public face of power. Organising anti-summit protests is also only the public face

of anarchism- all dependent on how the bourgeois media want to portray us. That doesn't mean that these protests aren't important; they provide anarchists with the opportunity of feeling something of our collective power on an international level. The power of the ruling class lies elsewhere- manifested in every aspect of our lives. We feel it when we keep our mouth shut rather than talking back to our boss, in the advertisements that bombard us to consume, when we can't get access to clean water because it is someone's private property and when we are forced to conform to an exam system because it is the only way we can 'get ahead'. It is the daily resistance to this power that will lead to the building of a movement that can take on the ultimate objective of overthrowing capitalism and the State. And this resistance necessarily takes place on a local level. So what is the role for anarchist internationalism?

The IAF provides a means for comrades from around the world to communicate. We are confronting the same enemy everywhere and learning about the struggles of others can give us ideas for our own struggles. Within Europe, the vast experience of comrades from Italy, Spain and France can help those who have a much shorter history of anarchist struggle such as those in Eastern Europe. However, the comrades in Eastern Europe, not weighed down by tradition are able to offer new perspectives and ideas for struggle. Good communication can also be revolutionary if it inspires. Just to know that people elsewhere are fighting back is important to those who may be experiencing a downturn in struggle. This knowledge can help people just keep going or it could

motivate people to launch a major fightback themselves. The most important thing is to hear of successes. Spreading these stories of successful resistance is a major role of international anarchist propaganda. The struggles of the Argentinean working class were welcomed enthusiastically by people in Europe. Hearing about workers just ignoring bosses, banks and politicians and just doing things themselves confirmed the faith anarchists have always had in the power of workers to self-organise.

It is also important to have an international forum where more theoretical discussions can take place. Learning about what is happening in a variety of countries can help us to develop our analysis of the situation facing us. We need to have a thorough understanding of the political, economic and social realities so that we can organise more effectively and anticipate the strategies of our enemy. The experience of Venezuelans with Chavez, Brazil with Lula, Britain with Blair all help to reinforce the anarchist antagonism to reformism, a doctrine that seems to think that a government can bring about social change. The Italian experience of 'insurrectionism', where a few self-proclaimed saviours of the working class have contributed to repression of the anarchist movement, should be useful for those who are tempted to undertake such individualist action. Internationalism remains vital as a weapon against the rise in ethnic and national conflict just as it was during WWI and WWII. Comrades in the former Yugoslavia, though organised as separate national federations, are beginning to come together on a wider basis, showing that anarchists are above the tragic divisions of the rest of the working class that have caused so much pain and suffering. By providing a framework where anarchists from different countries and ethnic groups can come together, IAF can facilitate the building of an undivided workers' movement.

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

**For International Solidarity,
The IAF Secretariat**

The Anarchist Federation recently hosted a meeting of the International of Anarchist Federations. Two comrades, Pauluk and Maryna, from the Belarusian Anarchist Federation, an organisation applying to join the International, attended the meeting and made a presentation on the situation in their country at the 2004 London Anarchist Bookfair.

anarchism in belarus

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

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

Pauluk: I have been in the anarchist movement since 1994. All Soviet people, sooner or later, hear about anarchism. During our childhood, we watched films about the Civil War and there were always anarchists in them. The propaganda portrayed them negatively. But it had the opposite effect. The anarchists were shown as people who, in between fighting the Reds and Whites, were drinking and dancing. So from childhood we had the impression that anarchists were fun loving! I was impressed with the critical position towards the changes in the political system. Lukashenko, the current President, used the democratic movement to get elected and then the repression started. So I got the impression that the problem didn't lie just with the democratic movement but was somewhere deeper. So I started to try and find out where the root of the problem was. I read about anarchism and by the end of 1994 I sympathised with anarchist ideas.

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

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



Victory Square in Minsk, Belarus

So there was a federation of anarchists at that time?

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

So how did things develop from there?

Pauluk: In October 1994 students organised some actions against the rise in prices on bread and milk. It was a street performance action, with the slogan 'Thank you President for bread and milk'. It was the first big action organised against the President who had been in office for two months. The organisation of this action was influenced by anarchists and so because of this I met other anarchists and by the end of the year I was a confident anarchist.

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

Pauluk: Yes, they were from the Minsk group.

What attracted you to anarchist ideas?

Pauluk: Taking into account that I was

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

Maryna, when did you start becoming an anarchist?

Maryna: It is difficult to say because I was very young when the Soviet Union crashed. I was interested in the punk movement. It seemed natural that we shouldn't have what we had in the country. Then I met Pauluk and he just gave a name to what I was thinking about. It was what I wanted, what I was thinking about. That was in 1998 when I first got involved in student demonstrations.

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

How many anarchists are there in Belarus?

It is difficult to say because we don't have

DEFENDING ANONYMITY



Thoughts for struggle against identity cards

Anarchist Federation Free

NEW FROM THE ANARCHIST FEDERATION

Defending Anonymity

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membership like you do. Participation in the federation is only possible when you act. About 200 maybe.

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

The federation consists of a number of different initiatives.

Is it like in Poland?

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

Why do you think humour is such a good weapon?

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

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

No, just from Poland. We read about what was happening in Poland in newspapers. In the 1990s, there was a drought of information, it was difficult to get. But now it is possible to get information from the internet.

So the things we did attracted many people, mostly young people. There was a lot of publicity in the press, saying how anarchists organised another funny action. So people became interested, thinking that anarchists must be very amusing people. Maryna: I remember that I was involved in the nationalist opposition movement for some months and in one of the meetings the leader told the audience about how they conducted an action and anarchists were in a separate block. They were hungry and the anarchists said we have some sandwiches and offered them around. The leader was trying to laugh at this but it showed how anarchists were being noticed by people, even inside other political movements.

After you did these initial actions, what

happened next?

One thing was a counter-cultural group that influenced the movement that organised actions against the military. They were formed in 1995 and by the end of 1995 they were already in touch with and participated in actions of the Anarchist Federation. At that time, it was the three main cities, Minsk, Hroda and Homel that were the basis of the Federation. There were many actions carried out by different initiatives in the federation so it is difficult to talk about all of them. One is the syndicalist group. They organised strikes in places like the trolley bus depot, they published a lot of propaganda and they had a day of solidarity with the unemployed. These days of action always ended with arrests of the participants. The result of this was that many activists lost their jobs. It is difficult to continue to be a syndicalist without a syndicate. They didn't work anymore and the government began to put pressure on all unions so they couldn't practice syndicalism anymore. One of the people became a local councillor!

What about your paper?

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

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

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

Where did you get the idea of this newspaper?

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

And was it mainly popular amongst young people?

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

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

What is your circulation? Do you sell it?

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

What happened to the paper?

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

What do you now?

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

How big is the movement now?

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

Have you been able to maintain an interest amongst young people as they have become older and because of the repression?

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

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

Right now the movement and the initiatives are all growing. When someone comes to anarchism we want to give him or her all opportunities to participate in the way they want. We are trying to build more of a network so we have organised social

new china, new blood

In the west we are encouraged to regard the growing Chinese economic miracle - and the challenge it is supposed to pose - with excitement and awe but not revolution, disgust or fear. But fear and contempt is what we should feel when we know what 'new prosperity' is built on.

In the 19th Century Britain's elites - in charge of the dominant world economy - feared the rapid industrialisation of its European rivals, France, Germany and Italy and, to a lesser extent, America, because it threatened their control of the sinews of empire. Powerful industries meant powerful armies and navies, forces that could seize overseas possessions or strangle sea-lanes, conferring a stronger commercial position on the victor, leading inexorably to more industry, more guns, more territory and more wealth. When empires contended, commercial rivalry usually expressed itself in war to the knife, as the Great War was tragically to prove.

We've seen it all before

But in the 21st Century we have less to fear from China's growth and the sheer size of its economy, not because the world has become more civilised or because the age of empires is over. Rather it is because, as we said in *Organise!* #59 ".....the most advanced sections of capital have sought to integrate China into the world market. The first steps appear to have finally been taken with China's [] entry into the World Trade Organisation". It is not we, after all, who are suffering the pains of rapid industrialisation, we - or rather the huge corporations bestriding the earth and who

are profiting handsomely from it - are cast by the world's media as its ultimate beneficiaries. Cheap goods are beginning to flow from its factories and conveyor belts in ever-more sophisticated quantities, promising a new, golden age of consumption (for the masses) and financial returns of dazzling size to banks, investment houses, corporations, manager and shareholders. It's a cornucopia flowing with tears, it's money covered in blood. Just as in 18th and 19th Century England, and later in the rest of Europe, a ruling class holding a monopoly of government, military force and the law has started to use that monopoly to enrich itself and build ever more impressive monuments to greed and imperial might. Commodities that had - for centuries - been owned by and supported a vast rural community are being ruthlessly expropriated: land, mineral wealth, water, labour. And in the same way that the pain, blood and misery experienced by our ancestors during the period of rapid European industrialisation - a process that produced more than a hundred and fifty years of protest, riot, rebellion and revolution - is now covered in a single classroom chapter or the subject of 'heritage trails', so the hidden story of China's working class and unemployed is hidden behind images of soaring skyscrapers, dazzling neon and hey,

Belarus continued

forums that can involve everyone. We want people to see that they are not alone and that the movement is very wide, one united front of struggle against the system. And, a person can find his or her place in this. It is difficult to find ways of doing something because the State tries to monopolise all possible activities. They try to get people to communicate only through state organisations.

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

Our first contacts were with Russian Anarchists. It is a funny fact that anarchists from

Minsk and from Hroda were put in contact with each other by Russian anarchists. From our western contacts we got a lot of information about anarchism in the modern world. Our anarchism was based on historical anarchism, Kropotkin, Bakunin, and no one really knew what was going on in the west. We knew about the Spanish Revolution but not about what happened after the war, like 1968. And when the Iron Curtain fell, it was a discovery to know what was really happening, your ideas and what discussions were going on. But the western countries didn't seem to be familiar at all with what was happening in the

post-Soviet countries. We also noticed that there are long theoretical discussions, often about small points, while we discuss more concrete issues. We want to discuss issues that we could talk about to 'the man in the pub'. In Russia we find that they are often having debates about who is the better anarchist.

To conclude, this interview shows how anarchist ideas and action emerge in a variety of contexts. For Maryna anarchism is the name given to what she was thinking anyway. Disillusions with the so-called new democracy propelled Pauluk into the library, where he found the ideas that helped him make sense of what was going on. Though they had no initial contact with anarchists

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

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

Chinese guys with mobile phones and shades: images that show us the reality only the capitalist media want us to see.

Reckless development

As we reported in Organise! #59, the initial phase of mass class struggle against profiteering development was in the old state industries, especially in the 'rust-belt' regions of the north-east and in state-owned enterprises where at least 21m people lost their jobs, 5m in 2001 alone. 75% unemployment is common in many towns and across China a staggering 10 million jobs a year are being lost. Is the Chinese economy in meltdown, then? Far from it, because there are massive profits to be made from workers desperate for work and denied state benefits; China's 7% annual growth rate is being built on the sweat, misery and blood of a new breed of virtual serfs, working long hours in heavily-monitored factories to meet imposed quotas before returning home to 'new' villages run by corrupt Party officials and their thuggish accomplices, the police and private security firms. It's a massive problem: by the end of 1997, there were 960,000 registered private firms in China employing 14m workers and the share of the non-state sector in the GDP was 24.2 percent compared to just 0.9 percent in 1978. Are the working class accepting their lot? Far from it! Flexibility, casualisation, new forms of work under constant supervision so every second of the day is spent working are all already being introduced against fierce resistance. Official strike statistics - which do not count undeclared or wildcat strikes and other actions such as road blockades - report that strikes rose from 8,150 in 1992 to 120,000 in 1999, all illegal.

Blood trickles down, wealth never

Is the Chinese worker and peasant benefiting from these 'reforms' which are so good for the commodity-guzzling and gadget-fixated West? Hardly at all. In China, the top 20% of households earn 42% of total urban incomes while the poorest 20% receive just 6%. Rural are only 40% of urban incomes and in the poorest provinces the gap is much wider. Redundancy pay and pensions never get paid (they've often been stripped to the bone by corrupt officials and employers), subsidised state housing goes with the job and newly-poor workers have to find accommodation in the private sector where slum and Rachman landlords charge exorbitant rents. Local townships, now without state subsidies, are having to charge high fees for housing, medical care and schooling, all previously free. As part of the privatisation process, the wages,

benefits and pensions that the state-owned companies have been unable - or unwilling to pay - are simply voided, leaving older workers with no pensions, families with no homes, those whose health has been damaged without care. In privately owned factories overtime, often unpaid, is frequently compulsory. Some factories impose fines on those who refuse to work overtime or are late at work. Shifts can be at least 10 or 12 hours a day with money debited directly from wages for accommodation and food charged at exorbitant rates. In some cases, companies withhold wages for up to two months and keep identity cards so they can't leave. Workers often have to live on site in overcrowded dormitories with poor or non-existent facilities and complaints bring fines, beatings and sackings.

A global workhouse of the poor

Peasants are dispossessed of their land - during 2003 there were 168,000 (!) officially recognized illegal land seizures - and workers made redundant as factories are closed. With nothing to live on they are forced to move illegally to the newly-established economic zones, which are allowed officially to operate without regard to labour laws or human rights and get preferential tax regimes. The owners pay very low wages, often require people to work twelve hours a day, seven days a week and refuse them to leave their employment for a better job. They are beaten up or reported to the police if they try. But not without a fight: Huaxi is a village in mutiny. Instead of going to work or school, thousands of people milled around its broad, paved streets and - despite the steady rain - the atmosphere was upbeat, even jubilant. Huaxi has the government on the run. More than 3,000 police and officials, who arrived before dawn on Sunday to tear down road blocks erected by villagers instead found themselves involved in a pitched battle with 30,000 protesters. The police fled. Inside the school compound, 14 cars lie upside down, windows smashed, interiors ripped up, number plates bent. The trouble in this part of Zhejiang province started when local officials handed land to 13 private and state-owned chemical plants. The local peasants didn't know what was happening until suddenly discovered the land they farmed belonged to someone else. The chemical plants polluted the village water supply. "It had become the colour of soy sauce," said one. "They came unannounced and uninvited, they stole the villager's land, poisoned their water supply, and when villagers tried to resist, they sent in men with machetes and army boots in the dead of night to 'once and for all' put down

all local resistance to their rule.

The plants were built in 2002 and then the sicknesses started. "Lots of people started falling ill. Some days our eyes would sting ... from the gas from the plants. Babies were born dead or malformed. Nine in the past year alone." Huaxi's river runs a strange caramel colour, though the main eyesore are the heaps of plastic bags that cling to its edges. "We want our land back. We don't want compensation. We want vegetables to grow again and the water to run clean," say the villagers and they are prepared to fight for it. More than that: for a few weeks at least, Huaxi was a village entirely free of the state, where democratic self-administration flourished. The revolutionary village committee may have gone underground as the state moved back in but freedom is not dead or even sleeping; it is spreading from below.

Diseased lungs, broken limbs

Inevitably, health and safety is the last thing on the bosses' minds as they try to squeeze every yuan possible from their workers. Take the mining industry: last year, more than 6,000 people died in explosions, flooding and mine collapses in China. When in Britain's own bloody history of reckless industrialisation did 6,000 people die in a single industry in a single year? The Beijing Government may claim to be tackling the problem but in the world of big profits and corrupted officials, closed mines re-open illegally and others are cutting all the corners and sweating labour to drive up production. 2,800 have already died this year with big accidents doubling in frequency; the latest disasters in August cost 117 miners their lives at the Daxing and Liupanshui collieries. In the first six months of 2001 an estimated 1,200 people died in 64 industrial accidents. In one zone alone, Shenzhen, an average of 13 factory workers a day lose a finger or an arm and one dies every four and a half days. It's not just 'hazardous' industries where bodies and spirits are broken. Most notorious and sickening of all are the thousands of people affected by serious lung diseases from polishing semi-precious stones for the luxury markets of the west. Dust fills the air as thousands of workers, most of them from poverty-stricken provinces, hunch over their workbenches in foreign-owned factories in southern China. In contrast, a jewellery shop has just opened in Shenyang with a glass walkway in which 90 gold bars are displayed. The government admitted that 440,000 people were suffering from pneumoconiosis and that since the 1950s 140,000 people had died; they also admitted the real figure could be "much higher". 440,000! And 10,000 new cases every year

in a country with primitive or unaffordable health care, pitiful social welfare and a robust attitude towards protest. Factory owners are turning a blind eye to occupational health and safety laws in China and their workers' health is being sacrificed on the altar of quick profits. According to workers they have to work more than 10 hours a day in a workplace filled with dust and get only one day off work every two months. The owners - many well-connected Party members - sack workers who ask for safety equipment or compensation, buy the law to prevent being prosecuted or forced to pay benefits or, if their backs are to the wall, simply close the factory and re-establish it elsewhere under a different name and without paying any redundancy pay. Further information on the issue of silicosis-stricken jewellery workers in China can be found on <http://www.luckygerms.info/index.htm>. Might unions be the answer? The Communist Party only recognises on union, the ACFTU, and all other autonomous workers groups such as the Workers Autonomous Federations, the Free Labour Union of China, the League for the Protection of the Rights of Working People, the Shu Pu Association for the Protection of the Rights of Laid-Off Workers, even the China Workers Monitor established to expose corruption have been suppressed and their leaders imprisoned for 'counter-revolutionary activities', 'subversion' or revealing 'state secrets', simply reporting labour unrest. The problem is that these are localised and isolated initiatives, easily-crushed. Though involving many thousands of workers, the state's control of movement, infiltration by informers and spies and ready use of police, private armies and compliant judges has so far kept the people down. It will not last forever.

Child labour

Migrant workers are generally considered to be second class citizens in the cities and are often treated harshly by local police and other authorities as well as denied access to education and health care. There is also an increase in the number and range of child labourers, often working to pay for their school fees or to provide an extra income for a poor family. Despite laws banning the employment of under-sixteens, child labour is rife in the toy, textile, construction, food and light engineering industries of the southern economic zones. Child labour is particularly in demand because children have smaller hands and eyesight undamaged by years of labour, making them more desirable than adults for certain kinds of work. The income earned by children is often vital to a family, especially rural

families. Jobs and education are rapidly disappearing in the rural areas, creating a vast, displaced, ignorant and easily-exploited workforce. In one case, five children were found asphyxiated by the fumes from a coal brazier in their cramped factory accommodation. The owner panicked and in his haste to dispose of the bodies failed to realise two were still

Xinchang protesters force government out

In Xinchang, 180 miles south of Shanghai, local residents vow to continue demonstrating until they have forced a 10-year-old pharmaceutical plant to relocate. "They are making poisonous chemicals for foreigners that the foreigners don't dare produce in their own countries," one man said. Explaining why he ignored warning signs, he said, "It is better to die now, forcing them out, than to die of a slow suicide." 15,000 people waged a pitched battle with the authorities, overturning police cars and throwing stones for hours, undeterred by thick clouds of tear gas. "This is the only way to solve problems like ours," said a 22-year-old villager whose house is 100 yards from the smashed gates of the factory, where the police were massed. "If you go to see the mayor or some city official, they just take your money and do nothing." The riots are part of a rising tide of discontent, with the number of mass protests skyrocketing to 74,000 incidents last year from about 10,000 ten years ago. breathing: they were buried alive. A survey of textile factories in Guangzhou found children under twelve working sixteen hours a day, forced to sleep in the factory under their worktables. A headmaster in Guandong opened his own toy factory and employed students as young as eight in an illegal venture he thought was giving them valuable "work experience". Was he corrupt? Or was he trying to help students earn the money to pay the fees for education that used to be free? Whatever, there has been a spate of boss-killings, particularly in one of the 'rust-belt' provinces, Hubei. Children are now said to play a game called 'Kill the Boss' in which they re-enact managers deaths, pretending to stab and throttle each other. This is the 'New China'.

Rural unrest

As farmers' cash income dwindles, rural governments lose tax revenues and approach collapse. One approach is to privatise or seize land and sell it to unscrupulous developers, often the municipal authorities themselves! About 26,000 square kilometres was lost to illegal land-grabs in 2003, the main reasons being the

construction of industrial facilities, the construction of expensive apartment blocks in desirable areas, new roads to them and dams to supply water to the factories and gardens. So when you see glossy pictures of soaring skyscrapers or smiling Chinese suburbanites, ask yourself who paid for their prosperity and what role did our consumer culture play in someone else's misery? Local officials don't get paid and often extort money from impoverished farmers. Hostility between rural Party bosses and farmers is at boiling point. Is it any wonder? There are about 200 million unemployed landless peasants and current estimates put rural income at half that of the urban coastal areas. Three million people took part in 58,000 demonstrations in 2003, a 15 per cent increase on the previous year. In July 1,000 villagers in Qianjin drove off hundreds of armed police - agents of the developers and corrupt Party officials - and blocked construction of a motorway being driven through their fields and homes without adequate compensation, seizing vehicles, the local Party chief and occupying both the building site and Party offices. "The entire village is in a state of anarchy", wailed one official. This was preceded by similar rebellions and the temporary expulsion of state forces at Shengyou - where six villagers were killed by thugs hired by the local power company trying to force them off their land. One estimate suggests that almost 4 million people took part in 74,000 similar protests last year in China - almost certainly an underestimate. In Yuntang villagers blocked the road to prevent government officials collecting illegal taxes. Six hundred paramilitary police stormed the village and shot to kill; two died, scores were injured and hundreds were arrested. Its not all bad news: fortunately the weapon of choice of the Chinese police is not the assault rifle but the electric cattle prod (which they favour) and machetes; much less lethal. And in case you think the government just doesn't know such things are happening, the Communist Party ordered the detention of 36,000 people who had petitioned it for redress over land seizures, evictions and wages not being paid in advance of their 16th Congress.

Corruption

The twin processes of illegal land-grabs for residential, industrial and infrastructure development on the one hand, and privatisation of the huge state-owned enterprise sector have led to a massive increase in fraud, corruption and extortion, often backed up by private armies, corrupt police and puppet courts. Even by government estimates, which are often regarded as

being conservative, the problem of illegal land seizures is vast and fuelled by corruption. Selling land for industrial and residential purposes is a good source of revenue and city and village officials often receive large sums of money in return for land deals. It is also common for officials to take a cut of compensation offered to farmers. The profits to be made from breakneck development breeds fraud on a truly Worldcom or Enron scale: two officials at a government development agency were tried for stealing 420 million yuan, a minister for land took 5 million yuan in bribes, two bank officials embezzled \$15 million. They were executed but in many cases expulsion from the Communist Party is the most severe punishment handed out. What do they care? They just corrupt some Party front man and carry on their frauds and businesses anyway.

The Workers keep fighting...

Labour unrest in China continues to be widespread. There has been a massive increase in labour disputes: 200,000 in 1999, reaching 270,000 the following year, for instance. In 2003 10,000 workers from the Xiangyang Automobile Bearing Company blocked roads and railway lines across the city in a large-scale protest to force the government to guarantee the interests of workers during privatization of a former state-owned company. The two-day protest action paralyzed traffic throughout the city and led to a violent confrontation between the workers and the police. One of the reasons for the protests was the introduction of new laws requiring workers to buy homes previously rented from the state-owned company at prices far exceeding the minimal redundancy pay they were being offered. What the state gives with one hand it takes back with the other, minus the bit that stays stuck to the grease-covered hands of China's new middlemen-entrepreneurs. The police meet many protests with excessive force and protesters are detained. Although - in theory - striking is not illegal, the right to strike was removed from the constitution in 1982 because "eradicated problems between the proletariat and enterprise owners!" But strikers are subjected to violent attack, arrest and imprisonment in gaols or mental institutions, are exiled and executed in extreme cases. Simply publicising strikes and disputes can bring beating and long prison sentences. In many cases even peaceful protests over pay and benefits have turned into pitched battles with armed police called to quell the protests, resulting in many casualties and arrests. In February 2004 an

estimated 2,000 workers from the Tieshu Textile Factory in Suizhou staged further public protests in their ongoing struggle to recover unpaid benefits and against corruption at the factory. 1200 workers blocked the railway line but were confronted by 800 armed police from neighbouring towns who mounted a violent assault on the protesters, injuring scores of people. Over the next few days the leaders were arrested and 'disappeared'. This was not their first resort. The Tieshu dispute had been festering since 2003 and workers had responded to withdrawn pensions, benefits, redundancies and factory corruption with meetings, petitions, public appeals, court actions, peaceful protest and delegations to economic and municipal bodies. They were met with indifference and lies at the meetings and police round-ups of the organisers at every turn.

...The state answers back

Many labour activists and supporters have been detained during or immediately after demonstrations or strikes, then released after a short period in detention. "Work is the glorious duty of every able-bodied citizen."

"Workers want to eat! Workers want a job!"

Others, usually the organisers, have been formally charged or detained for longer periods. Some are imprisoned on criminal charges brought in an attempt to discredit activists such as Li Bi Feng who publicized the violent dispersal by police of massive worker protests in Sichuan over alleged misappropriation of funds in 1997. He was sentenced to seven years imprisonment for alleged fraud, a wholly-unfounded charge. How often in our own history have labour activists been accused in the same way, dismissed their jobs, blacklisted or imprisoned? In 2001 5000 taxi-drivers petitioned the Lanzhou town hall against changes to regulations and were attacked by 300 armed police. 50,000 workers in the Da Qing oilfields demonstrated against redundancies and cuts to benefits but the protests were suppressed by paramilitary police. The Da Qing Laid-Off Workers Trade Union Committee set up during the protests is now operating underground and continuing its fight.

If life isn't worth living, for some death is the answer

Hopelessness and poverty drove Zhang Yan Chang to take rat poison, after local officials took his grain stores when he could not pay local taxes. Between October 2000 and August 2001, authorities in Beijing

received at least 26 reports of suicides in connection with tax disputes, with many other cases hushed up by local government. Suicide is the main cause of death among young adults in China due to the growing pressures to succeed in love, work and education in a fast-changing society. Stress, loneliness and a lack of medical support for depression lead 250,000 people to kill themselves each year, with up to 3.5m people attempting unsuccessfully

to kill themselves. This is what free trade and globalisation actually mean. It's not just goods that are cheaper, it's lives as well. Suicide is the fifth most common form of death after lung cancer, traffic accidents, heart disease and other illnesses. Its most common among young urban intellectuals and rural women. Exam stress, career worries and relationship problems are the main reasons for a suicide rate 50% higher than the world average. The rate amongst women in rural areas is even higher as the men leave to find work and they are left without support; fortunately China's chemical industry has promoted the use of powerful pesticides: suicide just couldn't be easier! And the state has responded by establishing a suicide helpline which was flooded with 220,000 calls when it opened. A pity only one in ten of the people seeking help managed to get through first time.

Their fight is our fight

As we said in our original article, "the answer is not to oppose Chinese workers and accuse them of stealing our jobs but to recognise we are part of a global working class and that our needs are one and the same". The most important thing is to educate ourselves about the struggles that are going on, the corruption and bloody repression and argue everywhere we can that the rules of world trade cannot be used to force us to accept products from Chinese factories that are covered in blood. Terrible things are happening in our name and with the complicity and active connivance of western companies and investors, people who can be reached here in this country. The workers and peasants of China need the active solidarity, protest, demonstrations and campaigns of everyone committed to anti-globalisation and a fairer world. Pass resolutions at your union, take direct action against high street profiteers, organise boycotts and protests, raise awareness, pressurise businesses and chambers of commerce, academics and local politicians. Stand up, sit down, shout and rage, go to those places you shouldn't and expose the hypocrisy of people who do business with China and pretend their hands are clean.

A brief look at the state of anarchism in 21st century Croatia.

'bez boga, bez gospodara!'



On the 18th March 2005 in its capital city of Zagreb, Croatia held its first anarchist bookfair as part of a series of travelling anarchist bookfairs across the Balkans that started back in 2003 in Slovenia. Zagreb's bookfair went off well, lasting several days with lots of groups from the region and all over Europe attending and it's now set to become an annual event, happening every spring. The anarchist movement in Croatia is small, amassing only a handful of groups across the 57,000km² of its political area and all of which seem to be acting independently of each other; the forms of organisation are often very diverse. There are groups 'without adjectives' such as in Rijeka (Rijeka Anarchist Initiative, which has in its ranks many different strains of thought ranging from primitivism to forms of social anarchism); other individual groups like in Umag; an infoshop in Cakovec; there is an informal grouping centred around the anarcho-marxist magazine, 'Thesis Eleven' and Food Not Bombs projects in several cities. Affinity groups, such as Anarcho-Feminist Action and Anti-Fascist Action, are also active in Zagreb. Not surprisingly, there exists a situation similar to that of many countries whereby anarchists in Croatia have very little social influence outside their own circles. There is, for example, less input from anarchists into workers' struggles than in the UK, but this can be mainly put down to the seemingly dominant lifestyle element in Croatian anarchism. There are occasional attempts to co-ordinate activities on a national level but these usually end in failure. The basic problem of the anarchist movement in Croatia is that it has its roots in punk culture; there are individualist, anti-organisational views among many of these groups and they are not influenced by, or even introduced to,

classical anarchist thought (from theorists like Kropotkin, Bakunin, Malatesta et al) simply because there is very little translated literature available; the importance of a permanent libertarian organisation is not fully understood or appreciated.

Mid-way along the countries Adriatic coast lies the port city of Zadar and home of the Anarho Sindikalisticka Konfederacija (or Anarcho-Syndicalist Confederation - the ASK), an organisation that aims to build itself along the lines of the 'traditional' social anarchist movement, inspired in part by the ideas of libertarian marxism (council communism, humanist-marxism etc.). It is possibly the only class-oriented organisation in the country and the only one that aims to found itself on a national level. It is at the moment a very young propaganda group seeking to provide people with libertarian literature and establish contacts to build the national organisation.

The movement in Croatia is currently at a low point, indeed it could never really claim to be at a high, although until very recently slogans like 'No Gods, No masters' could be seen graffitied over the main squares in Zagreb and a movement did start to develop after the fall of the old Yugoslavia.

In the Dalmatia region, the anarchist movement was heavily influenced by Italian anarchism (not surprising as some of the Dalmatian cities were a part of the Italian state). Around the beginning of the 20th Century the movement here came under the influence of the Germinal anarchist communist group in Trieste, Italy. The centres of activity were Zadar and Split with some numbers of militants who were distributing Germinal newspapers among working class

circles and also trying to organise workers there. They supported the Germinal tactic of direct action on a local level. At this point, Germinal was distributing its papers in a large number in these areas, bigger than some social-democratic parties. Unfortunately, the movement didn't last long.

There were also those people who were influenced by the Propaganda by the Deed idea. In Istria, anarchists were involved in a failed assassination attempt on Mussolini, who was giving a speech in Pula in September 1920. The anarchists and their socialist comrades planned to smuggle a bomb wrapped in newspapers into the theatre where the Italian fascist leader was speaking. However, the plan was never pulled off as a few of the older socialists who were known to the local police decided they would be caught before they could make an attempt on Mussolini's life. Two days after the speech, Pula was overwhelmed with terror between right-wing and left-wing groups. After an investigation into the group of anarchists and socialists, the police discovered the bomb and other weapons. They were arrested.

There has even been talk of an anarchist partisan militia in Istria during World War Two, but at the time of writing no other information is available.

The ASK in Zadar are asking for international anarchist organisations to spread their influence over the Croatian area of the world. They would particularly appreciate Croatian translations of anarchist communist literature and support for the publishing of anarchist material in the Croatian language generally. **Contact: Anarho Sindikalisticka Konfederacija, Croatia via www.solidarnost.mahost.org**



The anarcho-syndicalist union the Freie Arbeiter Union (FAUD) had a strong presence in Duisberg in the Rhineland, with a membership in 1921 of around 5,000 members. Then this membership fell away and by the time Hitler rose to power there were just a few little groups. For example, the number of active militants in Duisberg-South was 25, and the Regional Labour Exchange for Rhineland counted 180 to 200 members. At its last national congress in Erfurt in March 1932, the FAUD decided that if the Nazis came to power its federal bureau in Berlin would be dissolved, that an underground bureau would be put in place in Erfurt, and that there should be an immediate general strike. This last decision was never put into practice, as the FAUD was decimated by massive arrests.

In April or May 1933, doctor Gerhard Wartenburg, before being forced to leave Germany, had the locksmith Emil Zehner put in place as his replacement as FAUD secretary. He fled to Amsterdam, where he was welcomed, with other German refugees, by Albert de Jong, the Dutch anarcho-syndicalist. At the same time the secretariat of the International Workers Association (the anarcho-syndicalist international) was transferred to Holland in 1933, though the Nazis seized its archives and correspondence.

In autumn 1933, Zehner was replaced by Ferdinand Goetze of Saxony, then by Richard Thiede of Leipzig. Goetze reappeared in western Germany in autumn 1934, already on the run from the Gestapo. In the meantime, a secret group of the FAUD was set up, with the support of the Dutch section of the IWA, the NSV. A secretariat of the FAUD in exile was set up in Holland.

The FAUD Underground in the Rhineland

anarchist resistance to nazism

Up to the rise to power of the Nazis, the worker Franz Bungert was a leading member of the Duisberg FAUD. Without even the pretence of a trial, he was interned in the concentration camp of Boegermoor in 1933. After a year he was freed but was put under permanent surveillance. His successor was Julius Nolden, a metalworker then unemployed and treasurer of the Labour Exchange for the Rhineland. He was also arrested by the Gestapo, who suspected that his activity in a Society for the Right to Cremation(!) hid illegal relations with other members of the FAUD.

In June 1933, a little after he was released, he met Karolus Heber, who was part of the secret FAUD organisation in Erfurt. He had been part of the General Secretariat in Berlin, but after many arrests there had to move to Erfurt. They arranged a plan for the flight of endangered comrades to Holland and the setting up of a resistance organisation in the Rhineland and the Ruhr. Nolden and his comrades set up a secret escape route to Amsterdam and distributed propaganda against the Nazi regime. Albert de Jong visited Germany and via the FAUD member Fritz Schroeder, met Nolden. De Jong arranged for the sending of propaganda over the border via the anarchist Hillebrandt. One pamphlet was disguised with the title Eat German Fruit

And You Will Be In Good Health. It became so popular among the miners that they used to greet each other with: "Have you eaten German fruit as well?" As for the escape route, the German-Dutch anarchist Derksen, who had a very good knowledge of the border zone, was able to get many refugees to safety. Many of those joined the anarchist columns in Spain. After 1935, with the improvement of the economic situation in Germany, it was more and more difficult to maintain a secret organisation. Many members of the FAUD found jobs again after a long period of unemployment and were reluctant to engage in active resistance. The terror of the Gestapo did the rest. On top of this, no more propaganda was sent from Amsterdam.

The outbreak of the Spanish Revolution in 1936 breathed new life into German anarchism. Nolden multiplied his contacts in Duisberg, Düsseldorf and Cologne, organising meetings and launching appeals for financial aid to the Spanish anarchists. As a result of Nolden's tireless activities, several large groups were set up. Nolden went everywhere by bike! At the same time Simon Wehren of Aachen used the network of FAUD labour exchanges to find volunteer technicians to go to Spain. In December 1936, the Gestapo, thanks to an informer they had infiltrated, uncovered

on the waterfront

This article is based on a talk given by Greg of the Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group - a long-time anarchist and supporter of Jura Books - during a recent tour of Britain sponsored by the Anarchist Federation and the following discussion.

The struggle of the workers is the number one issue in Australia at the moment. But it is crucially defined by and at the moment contained within the framework of parliamentary politics. Australia has a written constitution, a federal government and bicameral parliament with the lower house (like the House of Commons) having the primary responsibility for holding the cabinet and government responsible. Politics is a two-horse race with the Liberal (i.e. Tory) Party and its ally the rural National Party versus the Australian Labour Party, with each alternating in government. Things are complicated by a declining Democratic Party and a rising Green Party, filling the political vacuum on the Left with other leftist groups in a 'socialist alliance'.

The Liberals took control of both houses in the recent elections and now finds it much easier to drive forward a reactionary agenda, primarily the breaking of the social contract which has governed post-war political, social and industrial relations. This agenda has been greatly facilitated by the collapse of the Australian Communist Party, politically and organisationally. The working class has been effectively disarmed by this collapse, rates of union membership and recognition have fallen dramatically and rank-and-file activism has declined.

The Liberal government is reactionary but also has been tactically astute by following the 'zeitgeist' and only pushing for 'reforms' that are popular or it can win. These 'reforms' enable them to create a rightwing atmosphere that is increasingly sexist, militarist and racist. Any unified response has been patchy: there has been some co-operation between women's groups, asylum-seekers, aboriginal rights groups and so on, and the unions have played a limited role in facilitating and linking resistances. There are lots of slogans but only limited action.

ID Cards are a big issue in Britain at the moment: what's the situation in Australia?

This is a relatively new issue that the

government has floated but which they may not go ahead with. The MACG's response has been limited due to a lack of resources but it would certainly advocate and get involved in resistance to ID cards and identity registers.

Rank-and-file leadership

Traditionally there has always been a strong syndicalist current within working class struggles during the last 100 years and this has meant union bureaucrats have had to be far more receptive to the views of rank-and-file members, despite conflicts within the unions. But more recently the bureaucrats have strengthened their grip on the members through the formation of 'super unions' and by tightening membership rules and procedures. The Liberals introduced 'enterprise bargaining' in 1996, which outlawed industry-wide collective bargaining and agreements and pitted company against company, worker against worker. This weakening of bargaining power caused a massive decline in union membership, from 50% of the national workforce to only 25%, to which the traditional unions and bureaucracies had no answer. In contrast, Left-led unions have won successes through 'pattern-bargaining', running industry-wide campaigns which can then be applied to individual companies.

What are the concrete reasons for the decline in unionisation?

Firstly, a decline in class-consciousness. Secondly, unions have been ineffective in defending wages and other terms and conditions. Thirdly, traditionally industries where unions were strong have suffered from massive restructuring; newer industries has lower levels of unionisation. Fourthly, restructuring has led to down-sizing of big companies (where unions were more tolerated) in favour of smaller companies and casualised working. Finally the 1983 accord between the ACTU and the Australian Labour Party created a framework for restructuring while at the same time the Communist Party of Australia abandoned the working class,

leaving it largely defenceless.

The globalisation of poverty wages

The Liberal government is pushing for further industrial law reform, intent on ham-stringing the unions: abolishing unfair dismissal protection in small companies, getting rid of collective agreements and terms in favour of individual contracts and bargaining, appointing new pay tribunals with a neo-capitalist remit to drive down minimum pay levels and making legal strikes virtually impossible through restrictions and levying penalties on individual strikers as well as unions. This last policy is aimed particularly at stamping out unofficial strikes and industrial action that has been the most effective tactic due to the weakness of the official unions. In Australia legislation would make wildcat action illegal and would punish workers directly - unlike Britain - so the only response is mass defiance. The reality is that no boss would sue their workers, they would use the laws as an excuse to sack workers. Just the threat of action will severely impact on the likelihood of strikes and this in turn will let union bureaucrats (who previously had no choice but to endorse and support strike action) of the hook. Finally, special laws are to be introduced in the construction industry establishing special commissions to investigate and break strikes and the unions, including abolishing the right to silence: if you don't inform on fellow strikers and organisers you could face heavy penalties.

Unions in retreat, workers press forward

During its nine year life the unions have been resisting the government's plans. The Maritime Strike of 1998 was able to establish strong picket lines with support from the local community and other workers (especially in Melbourne) that finally defeated the bosses. Australia's TUC, the ACTU, has played a negative role, regularly conceding whatever government and the bosses want; despite it, some defensive struggles have been won but only at the cost of unions being exhausted and weakened by the struggle. ACTU is waging a *political* campaign, hoping for the return of a Labour government, but in Victoria unions have begun a different kind of campaign, involving a wide range of often illegal tactics. This change has been led by the rank-and-file and union delegates (shop stewards) not the bureaucrats and

the seventh congress of the international of anarchist federations

The strong red and black thread of the international

(translated from the Italian)

The Seventh Congress of the International Federation of Anarchists (IAF) was held over three days in April 2004 in Besançon, France. It gathered over a hundred comrades, representing the member organizations as well as other groups with whom IAF co-operates and collaborates. In this way, it was possible to have delegates from the 'historical' federations (those which have been in IAF since its foundation in 1968), such as the Iberian Federation of Spain and Portugal, the Francophone Federation from France and Belgium, the Italian Federation and the Argentinean Libertarian Federation, but also of those more recently formed - such as the Forum of German speakers - and those which have joined this very year, like the Federation of Great Britain and Ireland, and the Czech and Slovak Federations. There was also a delegation from the Association of Movements (ADA) from Russia, a group, which has been active since the mid nineties in different places of this extensive country. Their membership application was accepted at this Congress.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Continued from previous page

opposition to the Liberal government is deepening and strengthening as a result. In March 2005 a mass meeting of union delegates adopted a policy of defiance and mass action against the government's proposals. ACTU was forced to endorse the call for a national day of action in June but was unable to contain and channel

popular anger and the development of more industrial action. 100,000 marched and took action in Melbourne, 200,000 in Sydney. A follow-up delegate's meeting in September proposed a further day of action this November and is struggling to prevent the campaign being taken over by the ACTU. Additionally, many

union bureaucrats have been forced to go along but there is a fear they are merely paying lip-service to rank-and-file demands and preparing to sell out the campaign. This is because the rank-and-file movement is not fully independent but still being largely organised and channelled at the local level.

Action is carried out by the local officials, a change from the historical pattern of such events where protests and action were *self-organised*.

Leftism vs anarchism

Left groups have tried to launch rank-and-file groups but sectarian competition and infighting have destroyed any hope of a unified independent movement. Sadly the anarchist movement has not been able to intervene decisively because it,

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congress document the international situation

Permanent war as the paradigm of state and capitalist domination

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

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

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

either civil or military) and of the infrastructure of supply and communication. The war machinery used in the most strategic areas by North American interests guarantees that the USA maintains a primary role, on a purely economical level, in their competition with Europe, Japan, Russia, China and India, who do not have the military means or the autonomy required, to counter the hegemonic pretensions of Washington. A plausible consequence of this could be the reshaping of the ambitions of the historical allies of the USA, leading to rethinking of the relationship with the hawkish American administration.

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

Italy has left behind the non-interventionist role typical of the Christian-Democrat period and that of supporter of Anglo-American imperialism, which was implied in its mediation between it and the Arab world. Today it has an active imperialistic role in the European and world chessboard, with interests of its own to pursue, facilitated by its Mediterranean location: from the Albanian protectorate to the reconstruction intervention on the war-devastated areas (Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan...) through the lucrative participation in the

manufacture and trade of weapons. The reshaping of the Atlantic alliances by the centre-right government is, in fact, complementary to the regional imperialistic role of the Italian government, which in this way can try to be allowed a 'free hand' on its protectorates, in exchange for the active support of the United States' warmongering policies.

From humanitarian war to permanent war.

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

In this way, the logic of 'humanitarian' action is outlined. Instead of conflicting

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too, is divided. There are three anarcho-syndicalist groups in Australia: the Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation, aligned to the IWA but largely inactive; the IWW, which was wholly anarchist in membership and orientation but which has collapsed organisationally; and the Anarcho-Syndicalist Network, largely Sydney- and transport industry-based and which has been quite effective, mounting unofficial actions though generally small-scale. It has not progressed because it

has failed to take on social struggles, which has limited its appeal and reach.

Are you a 'platformist' organisation, believing in a single, unified organisation and strategy?

The MACG opposes the formation of an 'anarchist party' as suggested in the Organisational Platform of The Libertarian Communists. We are also opposed to any 'confederation' of anarchists and anarchist groups on the

basis of a unified political platform. We are pro-syndicalist while remaining staunchly in favour of revolutionary anarchism and an anarcho-communist society. The working class *needs* anarcho-syndicalism to liberate itself. We believe that if resistance deepens and spreads, it will give rise to anarcho-syndicalist unions. There are also, of course, many non-aligned anarchist bookshops, zines and groups such as the Libertarian Workers

for a Self-Managed Society and the Melbourne Anarcho-Communist Group itself. Unlike most other groups, the MACG has a strong class struggle analysis and orientation and has thrown itself into the various struggles, talking to working class militants in their own language, demanding that the rank-and-file take control of the campaigns as part of developing their understanding and experience of direct action and democracy.

with the old rule of 'non-interference in the internal affairs' of a country, curiously enough, it reinforces it. 'Humanitarian' action turns out to be the useful excuse, always ready to be formulated in a more precise way in international law terms. The humanitarian principle invoked to justify the war in Kosovo contrasts with the 'non-interference in the internal affairs' rule when it came to the massacre taking place in Chechnya or the war on the Kurds, not to mention the always bitter conflict between Palestine and Israel. The paradigm of humanitarian war points to the issue of the 'just' war, that which is fought to impose a truth, an order and a world vision. It is however, a 'dirty' war because its victims are the civilian refugees and inevitably leads to more deaths, tortures, rapes, more homeless people without hope, unwilling pawns in a game decided somewhere else, in the name of someone else's 'truth'. This propaganda tool has been only marginally useful for the emotional mobilization needed to produce consensus in western populations, particularly Americans, because the 'humanitarian' is clearly unable to achieve the stated aims of the conflict. The experience of 'humanitarian' war has shown abundantly that it is a perverse mechanism, which increases the evils that is meant to cure, staging a drama in which blood and destruction are the obscene scenery which hide the backstage from the viewer, the empty space behind the curtains. September the eleventh provided the occasion, whether directly orchestrated or ignobly used, to make the qualitative jump needed for the development of the United States imperialism will: its assertion of unchallenged military superiority on the board game of the international relations. The idea of the enemy is again reshaped: it is evil, in fact very evil, and in a position to directly and defiantly strike against in the United States territory and that of its allies. It cannot be identified with any state institution, but is able to infiltrate, direct, adapt itself and make alliances with all those states which are not ready to accept the global leadership of the United States. An enemy like this opens the path to permanent war, against the 'rogue' states and against all those who, from the interior, threaten the world order. This enemy adopts the form of the Islamic extremist. Islamic extremism makes it possible to define an enemy, on the basis of the classic opposition between friend and foe in western culture. It is an empty category, which only exists in opposition, because it lacks a sense and an identity of its own. In fact, it revolves around conservative Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant, the most nihilistic liberalism and all the traditional

forms of nationalism, racism, populism and democratic culture. In this war, which in its most recent version can also be 'preemptive', the enemy does not need to prove its evil nature by any deeds, but it must be fought because it IS evil. The reasoning around which the attack on Iraq was organised is a good example of this. The presupposition of the possession of weapons of mass destruction is reason enough to declare a war. The evident dissymmetry between the attacker (who they 'know' possesses weapons of mass destruction) and the attacked, falls in the realm of 'just war' as it is carried out because the enemy is evil and, therefore, potentially dangerous. It is evil and therefore a natural ally to the terrorism which attacks women, children and defenseless men. Never mind that this same definition could be applied to the policies of the United States and its allies. Is it not, in any instance, the aim in war to terrorise the population of the enemy State in such a way that resistance is crushed? The immoral nature of war leads to the immoral nature of state and to the impossibility of making a fair world order by just reforming the structure.

External war and internal war.

The paradigm of permanent war makes victims not only amongst the populations of the 'rogue' states of the time, but also amongst oppositionists of the existent order. Pacifists, antimilitarists, workers on strike, and antiracists are equated to terrorists in a propaganda operation that is reminiscent of the accusations of collaborationism made during the last century to anyone not accepting the logic of war, militarism or the State. In the United States, the passing of the Patriot Act, which opened the possibility of extrajudicial detentions of mere suspects, as well as the later and substantial militarisation of American social life, are the unmistakable signs of the fact that the politics of never-ending war have finally infiltrated the very core of the biggest power. Security policies in recent years have seen a worldwide increase, demonstrated in the repressive measures on the 'internal front', aimed to forcibly discipline workers, indigenous peoples and immigrants, and to crush any opposition.

Internal war.

The very terms of the internal war changed immediately after the collapse of Soviet 'communism'. The fall of the 'alternative' to private capitalism allowed the Statist system to present capitalism as the only future. In the same way, the threat of a popular coup has been redefined. Capitalism, firmly supported by the State, has launched a staged attack against the modest

workers' victories, characteristics of the social-democrat legacy. Thatcherism and Reaganism fully speeded up this attack, which, after the fall of the Soviet régime, has been a constant feature of the political and social scene. The neoliberal offensive has been applied to many fronts. The casualisation of working relationships has ended the stable employment conditions, which had enabled workers to develop collective, self-organised methods of struggle. Under the pretext of modernization and reduction of costs, many areas, traditionally left of capitalist logic, are now opportunities for exploitation. Privatisations of services, from healthcare to education, transport to communications, are examples of this process.

The answer to this war front opened by capitalism against humanity has been an increase in social confrontation on a global level with the working class fighting back with strikes and other forms of resistance. The anarchist movement has always been present in these struggles, its role strengthened by its original initiatives and its capacity to shed light on the global nature of the ongoing processes. Our resistance must be as global as capitalism is. Both the external and internal war have the same fronts and have been fought with the same determination and ferocity. The militarisation of social life has instigated legislation that goes beyond the limits of democratic normality, without facing much opposition from internal conflict. These are made possible thanks to the gigantic anesthetic operation emerging out of the terrorist 'emergency'. Fear is a powerful factor that permits the criminalisation of any social resistance, however minimal. The recent security bills passed in France and Great Britain are examples of this, as they equate terrorism with any social struggles that are happening at this time in those countries.

Globalisation of struggles.

So-called economic globalisation is but another stage in capitalist development, as it seeks to expand and spread the tentacles of exploitation more efficiently on a planetary level. For us, globalisation must mean globalisation of the class struggle. Inside the antiglobalisation movement, as is shown by the media, there are Christians, Marxists, Social- Democrats and other reformist groups which have too often collaborated with capitalism to make globalisation stronger. These are often the same groups which work for the development of capitalism in the Third World, interfering in communities and pushing them to destroy their own identity and self-sufficient economies. The consequent

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Congress document

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

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

The IAF is a federal organization, which exists through its local sections. The autonomous development of these local federations is a guarantee of their freedom and their capacity to effectively struggle within their own territory. It is inside actual political and social situations in which they

IAF and its role in the international anarchist and libertarian movement

find themselves that each federation chooses its own path which it judges to be the most appropriate at any given moment of the development of anarchism. The momentum given to anarchism in the new social and cultural struggles has produced a growth, not only in numbers, but also in the capacity to organise anarchist actions. However, these do not always translate into clear objectives and libertarian practices. On the one hand, there is the persistence of nihilist groups without political and social perspectives, and on the other hand, there is the temptation to adopt reformist practices and to collaborate with ruling class institutions and organisations. We think that anarchist organisations must pre-figure the future society. We cannot help but reject the principle that the majority can impose their policies on the entire organisation as well as the logic of electoralism that comes from this. This critique constitutes the basis of anarchism

as it was expressed at the St. Imier Congress of 1872.

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

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

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

widespread implantation of anarchism.

War against life.

Capitalist production has led to the declaration of a war against life itself; a war that threatens the survival of the whole planet. This is happening on two fronts. On the first, is the looting of resources, pollution and environmental devastation, the consequence of capitalist production. This system only considers profits, ignoring the fact that human beings are part of the ecosystem as well and that no one eats or breathes money. The other front is that of technological development following the agenda of the powers. On one side there is nuclear energy, whether civil or military, which can lead to a slow radioactive death or a devastating destruction. On the

other, genetic manipulation colonises life, looting traditional knowledges. The duty of anarchists is to side with those peoples fighting these aggressions.

Against moral order and religion.

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

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

obituary



Alfonso Nicolazzi

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

Born in the countryside outside Stresa in the province of Verbania, Alfonso was very active in the *Collectivo dei lavoratori Alitalia*, one of the base unions of the airline Alitalia, in the 1960s.

Thanks to his job as steward, he was able to master several languages, including English, French and Spanish. He developed many contacts with the Spanish anarchist movement

in exile. He gave up a reasonably well-paid job to devote himself full time to the anarchist cause and to the *Federazione Anarchica Italiana* (FAI). He moved in 1974 to that stronghold of Italian anarchism, Carrara, set among the marble quarries of the Apuan Alps. For the last thirty years he was closely associated with the editing and production of the FAI weekly paper, *Umanita Nova* (founded in 1920 by Errico Malatesta), running its printshop.

But Alfonso was not just a printworker. He was extremely active in the Carrara region in many struggles, including around the environment. He was extremely involved with international anarchist activity from the 80s. In April 1990 at Trieste, I remember him translating in several languages during a conference where anarchists from Western Europe

met those from the emerging East European movements. He was a key member of the Commission of International Relations of the FAI and he had an important role in developing the work of the IAF.

As he grew to know members of the British Anarchist Federation, he realised that we were serious militants and we gained his trust and friendship. He loved to sing the old anarchist songs in his powerful voice. Equally, he loved the white wine of the Apuan region and was a bon viveur like many anarchists on the Continent!

Just a few months ago, we attended a meeting of the IAF which coincided with the 50th anniversary celebrations of the FAI, in Carrara. One of the highlights was a visit to the graves of many Italian anarchists in the local graveyard. There Alfonso pointed out the graves of Gino Lucetti, who had

attempted to assassinate Mussolini, Gogliardo Fiaschi, who had fought with the Spanish resistance and who had been imprisoned for many years and Giuseppe Pinelli, the anarchist railwayman who had been thrown out a window at Milan police HQ (he is the subject of Fo's *Accidental Death of An Anarchist*).

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

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

Back issues

Back issues of *Organise!* are still available from the London address. They cost 20p each + SAE. Alternatively, send us a fiver and we'll send you one of everything plus whatever else we can find lying around.

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Articles from *Organise!* can be found on the internet at www.afed.org.uk. You can also e-mail us at organise@afed.org.uk

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Issue 63: Anarchist movement in Argentina - part two; Nanotechnology; Resistance in Iraq; School strikes.

Issue 64: G8 special; Casualisation; ID cards; Women's struggles in Iraq

Stormy Petrel pamphlets

Towards a Fresh Revolution by The Friends of Durruti, writings from the much misunderstood group who attempted to defend and extend the Spanish Revolution of 1936. 75p plus postage.

Malatesta's Anarchism and Violence, an important document in the history of anarchist theory refutes the common misrepresentation of anarchism as mindless

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A Brief Flowering of Freedom: The Hungarian Revolution 1956. An exciting account of one of the first post-war uprisings against the Stalinist monolith. Also includes a history of the Hungarian anarchist movement. 60p plus postage.

Anarchist Federation pamphlets in languages other than English

As We See It: Available in Welsh, Serbo-Croat, Greek, German and now, thanks to our Spanish comrades, in Spanish and Portuguese. They are each available for 70p including postage and packaging from our London address.

The Role of the Revolutionary Organisation: Available in Serbo-Croat for 70p including p&p.

If anybody you know who speaks Serbo-Croat in Britain or you have contacts in the

countries of former Yugoslavia where Serbo-Croat is understood then why not send them copies?

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Write to the London address for orders and bulk orders.

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NEW: Defending Anonymity - Free - The likely introduction ID cards in Britain is one of the political hot potatoes of the moment. This pamphlet aims to see through Labour's smokescreens of 'identity theft' and the 'war on terror'. Printed copies available FREE + SAE from our national address. Also downloadable from www.afed.org.uk

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