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THE ORGANISATIONAL PLATFORM OF THE LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISTS

an Anarchist Workers Association publication

INTRODUCTION

"The Organisation Platform of the Libertarian Communists" was written by a group of Russian anarchists in exile, who had personally experienced the suppression of the libertarian current, which had prevaded the glorious early years of the 1917 revolution.

Their analysis of the failure of the Russian anarchist movement to survive the revolution led them to the conclusions drawn in this platform - the vital necessity for anarchist and libertarian communists to create an organisation, which would combine effective revolutionary activity with fundamental anarchist principles.

In facing up to the real problems of the anarchist movement in their time, and proposing a method of organisation to solve these problems, they forced a complete break with many of the traditionally disorganised anarchists.

The same desire to organise an effective libertarian communist presence in the British revolutionary movement, led to the creation of the **Anarchist Workers Association(AWA)** as a breakaway section of the British anarchist 'movement'. A break also based on the analysis of the failures of British anarchism, and a reappraisal of fundamental anarchist principles and objectives.

In France, the Organisation Revolutionnaire Anarchiste has been in existence since a break with the French Anarchist Federation in 1968. Using the Platform as a guidline for development, it has successfully organised and inspired libertarian rank and file organisations in many areas of the working class struggle. Similar developments are also taking place in Germany, and links are being forged in Holland, Denmark and Sweden. We are thus far on the road to the creation of a real 'Black International' - an International of struggle.

The sub-section on Anarchism and Syndicalism should help clear up misunderstandings on the subject. The last section, on the principles of organisation, provides a clear argument for the kind of fundamental reorganisation of anarchist forces in Britain, which is of primary importance if there is ever to be a viable libertarian alternative to the Leninist organisations, which predominate the British left at present.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE:- This translation is taken from the 2nd French translation, published in May 1972 by the French O.R.A. (whose introduction is included here as it is relevant to the British movement). The job of translating fell on three comrades, none of whom are fluent in French. However, systematic checks and re-checks have assured the meaning survives intact, even if the style has been obscured in places.

Anarchist Workers Association. January 1975

INTRODUCTION TO THE FRENCH EDITION

The success of Leninism in the Russian revolution has thrown a heavy veil over the other revolutionary groups who shook the world in 1917. Among the latter, the libertarians occupy a place of honour; their role and their influence have been misunderstood for a long time, if not concealed by the facile slanders of those established in power. It is only recently that the historical truth has begun to emerge; even now some people are discovering the things which they have wanted to ignore for a long time: previously it has been very easy to hide oneself behind the bolshevik ikons, but the errors and setbacks of marxism-leninism in tackling the problems posed by the struggle against capitalism and in the attempts to build socialist regimes, have brought back to immediate concern the movement for the emancipation of the working class, for which the whole libertarian and anti-authoritarian current flows.

The Russian libertarian movement, following the paths of Bakunin and Kropotkin, found diverse fortunes, bound by the intensity of tsarist repression. It was particularly during and after the Russian revolution of 1905 that they played an active role (prior to 1917). It is possible to criticise the first rising of the masses in Russia, but it is undeniable that the minimalism of the parties with pretensions to be revolutionary, the Social Revolutionaries and the Bolshevik Social Democrats in particular, played a determining role in the defeat of this wave of revolutionary feeling. There followed a very tough period, of acts of terrorism and expropriations, attempting to hold back the implacable advance of tsarist repression. The stories of some anarchist-communists illustrate this: in Sebastopol, the Borissov group helped the escape of 21 sailors from the battleship Potemkin, condemned to death following the mutiny; at Ekaterinoslav, Archinov, a metal worker, blew up a house in which members of a police punitive expedition were staying, on the 23rd December 1906, several officers, cossacks and gendarmes were killed; the same Archinov, on the 7th March 1907, shot the workshops manager of the Alexandrovsk railway, in the presence of a large crowd, he blamed the manager not only for the oppression of workers over the years, but also for having denounced 120 of them who had taken part in the armed insurrection of 1905, over 100 of them were condemned to death or forced labour. Nestor Makhno also distinguished himself by the systematic expropriation of the big landowners and bourgeois of Gulyai Polya, as well as by the execution of the most zealous gendarmes and spies.

Nevertheless, reaction was very strong and dealt severely: Borissov was hanged in 1909 at the age of 27; Archinov, condemned to death, escaped twice, but was reprieved in 1909 and condemned to perpetual detention. Makhno met him in prison, whilst also condemned to death, his penalty was later commuted to life imprisonment.

1917 opened the doors to the survivors of the heroic epoch of direct action, who hurried to join the struggle, playing not a negligible part in the major struggles, and participating in all the toughest fighting. However the magnificent unity of October did not last, the Bolsheviks were eager to eliminate all those who outflanked them on the left, in order to cling to power more easily and to be able to express their natural tendencies to opportunism and reformism, which were to lead to the betrayals of all the interests of the working class and its hopes of October.

In April 1918, the anarchist centres in Moscow were captured by the artillery, 600 libertarians were imprisoned and dozens killed. The official reason was to separate the "anti-social" or "uncontrollable" elements. In fact it was to counter the formation of the armed Black Guards, which found it necessary to fight the counter-revolutionary manoeuvres, and the provocations and abuses of the Cheka.

It was that which caused the rupture; the left Social Revolutionaries, who had participated in the government since October, tried to react in their turn, in attempting a coup in July 1918 in Moscow against the Cheka and its power; they failed and were totally eliminated. One section of the anarchists worked with the Bolsheviks, through concern for efficiency and anti-reactionary unity, and they did not delay, in sinking further into confusionism, in officially joining the Communist Party (which was the renamed Bolshevik Party after March 1918, when all hopes for fusion with the Mensheviks were abandoned). The traditionalist anarchists found themselves faced with the same choice later. The most consistent militants, faced by repression and the abuse of power which flagrantly revealed the true counter-revolutionary nature of the regime, were led to direct, armed, opposition to this new reaction in the mask of the revolution.

The Makhnovist movement and Kronstadt constituted the last gasp of October. The anti-authoritarian revolution in Russia was defeated. This defeat has had deep and long lasting effects on the international workers' movement. Some survivors succeeded in thwarting the chains of the Cheka and took refuge abroad, in Germany, and then particularly in France.

They thus created a very active group of Russian libertarian communists, reunited around the paper Dielo Trouda (Workers' Cause), which published excellent analyses and studies of the Russian revolution and its diversion by the Bolsheviks, and also on the evolution of the regime.

Their collective thought led them to publish a draft of the Organisational Platform for a Union Generale des Anarchists (General Union of Anarchists). This draft, which became their reference book, attempted to clarify, in the light of the actual experience in Russia, the fundamentals of anarchism, in order to give to it a more coherent and constructive approach to the realisation of the revolutionary project. They clashed with the traditional negativism of the "Professional Anarchists", dedicated to impotence by their intellectualised and confused ideas (it is an all too obvious fact that the fundamental requirements of liberty in anarchist ideas allows the hatching of little 'rastignacs' - masters of confusion and equivocation, often found swarming in so-called libertarian circles and constituting an important disrupting element to the propagation of the working class and social aspects of anarchism).

Because of this, the Platform aided the demarcation between the confused elements which proclaimed themselves anarchist, and the definite partisans of the social struggle for the emancipation of the working class.

This draft of the Platform provoked a great argument, firstly in the Russian libertarian movement, then in the whole of the international anarchist movement.

Certain "owners" of "official" anarchism, corrupted by many major compromises towards bourgeois society (in particular by active participation in Freemasonry - this, in particular, is what distinguished the partisans of the famous and abominable 'Synthesis'), violently attacked the Platform, and systematically denigrated it, they presented it as an attempt to 'bolshevise' anarchism, only partly hiding their hostility to the conception of class expressed in the Platform and their denial of the class struggle.

The essential points of the discussion which followed were the following: causes of the failure of the anarchist movement; the significance and meaning of the Platform; Libertarian Communism and the 'Synthesis'*; the Soviets and production; the anarchists and their influence in the revolutionary process, the defence of the revolution; Libertarian Communist organisation. All these were tackled in a number of articles by the Authors of the Platform.

The originality of the principal thesis of the Platform consists in pointing out the necessity of solidly structuring the militant practice of the libertarian communists, in creating a broad, specific organisation which unites the healthiest and most active elements of anarchism. In this it expresses an urgent necessity, felt above all by the survivors of the Makhnovist movement, to whom the deficiency of liaisons with other libertarian organisations had been disastrous.

This problem of organisation has always been the stumbling-block of the anarchists. Many have constantly preferred to worship the beauty of anarchist principles, keeping their hands clean and refusing direct involvement in social reality, which amounts to maintaining the existing state of exploitation.

The partisans of the social revolution, regardless of labels, will rediscover in the Platform the essential preoccupations of the revolutionary struggle. In the platform of organisation, one finds a fundamental contribution to the approach to non-bureaucratic organisation.

The principal ideas of collective and permanent responsibility, and the collective method of action (or the collective approach) constitute the antidotes to bureaucracy, because they ally concern for efficiency in struggle with the direct representation of each militant. This collective approach guarantees the coherence and cohesion of the contacts between the revolutionary minority and the working masses.

It goes without saying that the ORA is moved by the same preoccupation and writes from the same perspectives, on the basis of the organisation of the most radical working class elements, unambiguous supporters of the social

*For an explanation of the meaning of "Synthesis" in this context, see original introduction.

revolution, adopting a working class approach in the class struggle, guided by the main concern to keep to a profound and direct dialectical bond between the theoretical elaboration and the militant collective action of revolutionary work. It is this motivation which leads us to make this text available.

ORGANISATION REVOLUTIONNAIRE ANARCHIST

introduction

It is very significant that, in spite of the strength and incontestably positive character of libertarian ideas, and in spite of the forthrightness and integrity of anarchist positions in the facing up to the social revolution, and finally the heroism and innumerable sacrifices borne by the anarchists in the struggle for libertarian communism, the anarchist movement remains weak despite everything, and has appeared, very often, in the history of working class struggles as a small event, an episode, and not an important factor.

This contradiction between the positive and incontestable substance of libertarian ideas, and the miserable state in which the anarchist movement vegetates, has its explanation in a number of causes, of which the most important, the principle, is the absence of organisational principles and practices in the anarchist movement.

In all countries, the anarchist movement is represented by several local organisations advocating contradictory theories and practices, having no perspectives for the future, nor of a continuity in militant work, and habitually disappearing, hardly leaving the slightest trace behind them.

Taken as a whole, such a state of revolutionary anarchism can only be described as "chronic general disorganisation".

Like yellow fever, this disease of disorganisation introduced itself into the organism of the anarchist movement and has shaken it for dozens of years.

It is nevertheless beyond doubt that this disorganisation derives from some defects of theory: notably from a false interpretation of the principle of individuality in anarchism; this theory being too often confused with the absence of all responsibility. The lovers of assertion of 'self', solely with a view to personal pleasure, obstinately cling to the chaotic state of the anarchist movement, and refer in its defence to the immutable principles of anarchism and its teachers.

But the immutable principles and the teachers have shown exactly the opposite.

Dispersion and scattering are ruinous; a close-knit union is a sign of life and development. This law of social struggle applies as much to classes as to organisations.

Anarchism is not a beautiful utopia, nor an abstract philosophical idea, it is a social movement of the labouring masses. For this reason it must gather its forces in one organisation, constantly agitating, as demanded by reality and the strategy of class struggle.

"We are persuaded", said Kropotkin, "that the formation of an anarchist organisation in Russia, far from being prejudicial to the common revolutionary task, on the contrary it is desirable and useful to the very greatest degree." (Preface to 'The Paris Commune' by Bakunin, 1892 edition.)

Nor did Bakunin ever oppose himself to the concept of a general anarchist organisation. On the contrary, his aspirations concerning organisations, as well as his activity in the 1st IWMA, give us every right to view him as an active partisan of just such an organisation.

In general, practically all active anarchist militants fought against all dispersed activity, and desired an anarchist movement welded by unity of ends and means.

It was during the Russian revolution of 1917 that the need for a general organisation was felt most deeply and most urgently. It was during this revolution that the libertarian movement showed the greatest degree of sectionalism and confusion. The absence of a general organisation led many active anarchist militants into the ranks of the bolsheviks. This absence is also the cause of many other present day militants remaining passive, impeding all use of their strength, which is often quite considerable.

We have an immense need for an organisation which, having gathered the majority of the participants of

the anarchist movement, establishes in anarchism a general and tactical and political line which would serve as a guide to the whole movement.

It is time for anarchism to leave the swamp of disorganisation, to put an end to endless vacillations on the most important tactical and theoretical questions, to resolutely move towards a clearly recognised goal, and to operate an organised collective practice.

It is not enough, however, to establish the vital need of such an organisation: it is also necessary to establish the method of its creation.

We reject as theoretically and practically inept the idea of creating an organisation after the recipe of the "synthesis", that is to say re-uniting the representatives of different tendencies of anarchism. Such an organisation, having incorporated heterogeneous theoretical and practical elements, would only be a mechanical assembly of individuals each having a different conception of all the questions of the anarchist movement, an assembly which would inevitably disintegrate on encountering reality.

The anarcho-syndicalist method does not resolve the problem of anarchist organisation, for it does not give priority to this problem, interesting itself solely in penetrating and gaining strength in the industrial proletariat.

However, a great deal cannot be achieved in this area, even in gaining a footing, unless there is a general anarchist organisation.

The only method leading to the solution of the problem of general organisation is, in our view, to rally active anarchist militants to a base of precise positions: theoretical, tactical and organisational, i.e. the more or less perfect base of a homogeneous programme.

The elaboration of such a programme is one of the principle tasks imposed on anarchists by the social struggle of recent years. It is to this task that the group of Russion anarchists in exile dedicates an important part of its efforts.

The "Organisational Platform" published below represents the outlines, the skeleton of such a programme. It must serve as the first step towards rallying libertarian forces into a single, active revolutionary collective capable of struggle: the General Union of Anarchists.

We have no doubts that there are gaps in the present platform. It has such gaps, as do all new, practical steps of any importance. It is possible that certain important positions have been missed, or that others are inadequately treated, or that still others are too detailed or repetitive. All this is possible, but not of vital importance. What is important is to lay the foundations of a general organisation, and it is this end which is attained, to a necessary degree, by the present platform.

It is up to the entire collective, the General Union of Anarchists, to enlarge it, to later give it depth, to make of it a definite platform for the whole anarchist movement.

On another level also we have no doubts. We forsee that several representatives of self-styled individualism and chaotic anarchism will attack us, foaming at the mouth, and accuse us of breaking anarchist principles. However, we know that the individualist and chaotic elements understand by the title 'anarchist principles' political indifference, negligence and absence of all responsibility, which have caused in our movement almost incurable splits, and against which we are struggling with all our energy and passion. This is why we can calmly ignore the attacks from this camp.

We base our hopes on other militants: on those who remain faithful to anarchism, having experienced and suffered the tragedy of the anarchist movement, and are painfully searching for a solution.

Further, we place great hopes on the young anarchists who,born in the breath of the Russian revolution, and placed from the start in the midst of constructive problems, will certainly demand the realisation of positive and organisational principles in anarchism.

We invite all the Russian anarchist organisations dispersed in various countries of the world, and also isolated anarchist militants, to unit on the basis of a common organisational platform.

Let this platform serve as the revolutionary backbone, the rallying point of all the militants of the Russian anarchist movement ! Let it form the foundations for the General Union of Anarchists !

Long Live the Social Revolution of the Workers of the World !

The DIELO TROUDA GROUP **
Paris. 20.6.1926.

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** Dielo Trouda means Workers' Cause

general section

1. CLASS STRUGGLE, ITS ROLE AND MEANING.

There is no one single humanity
There is a humanity of classes
Slaves and Masters

Like all those which have preceeded it, the bourgeois capitalist society of our times is not 'one humanity'. It is divided into two very distinct camps, differentiated socially by their situations and their functions the proletariat (in the wider sense of the word), and the bourgeoisie.

The lot of the proleteriat is, and has been for centuries, to carry the burden of physical, painful work from which the fruits come, not to them however, but to another, privileged class which owns property, authority, and the products of culture (science, education, art): the bourgeoisie. The social enslavement and exploitation of the working masses form the base on which modern society stands, without which this society could not exist.

This generated a secular class struggle, at one point taking on an open, violent character, at others a semblance of slow and intangible progress, which reflects needs, necessities, and the concept of the justice of workers.

In the social domain all human history represents an uninterrupted chain of struggles waged by the working masses for their rights, liberty, and a better life. In the history of human society this class struggle has always been the primary factor which determined the form and structure of these societies.

The social and political regime of all states is above all the product of class struggle. The fundamental structure of any society shows us the stage at which the class struggle has gravitated and is to be found. The slightest change in the course of the battle of classes, in the relative locations of the forces of the class struggle, produces continuous modifications in the fabric and structure of society.

Such is the general, universal scope and meaning of class struggle in the life of class societies.

2. THE NECESSITY OF A VIOLENT SOCIAL REVOLUTION.

The principle of enslavement and exploitation of the masses by violence constitutes the basis of modern society. All the manifestations of its existence: the economy, politics, social relations, rest on class violence, of which the servicing organs are: authority, the police, the army, the judiciary. Everything in this society: each enterprise taken separately, likewise the whole State system, is nothing but the rampart of capitalism, from where they keep a constant eye on the workers, where they always have ready the forces intended to repress all movements by the workers which threaten the foundation or even the tranquility of that society.

At the same time the system of this society deliberately maintains the working masses in a state of ignorance and mental stagnation; it prevents by force the raising of their moral and intellectual level, in order to more easily get the better of them.

The progress of modern society: the technical evolution of capital and the perfection of its political system, fortifies the power of the ruling classes, and makes the struggle against them more and more difficult, thus postponing the decisive moment of the emancipation of labour.

Analysis of modern society leads us to the conclusion that the only way to transform capitalist society into a society of free workers is the way of violent social revolution.

3. ANARCHISM AND LIBERTARIAN COMMUNISM

The class struggle created by the enslavement of workers and their aspirations to liberty gave birth, in the oppression, to the idea of anarchism: the idea of the total negation of a social system based on the principles of classes and the State, and its replacement by a free non-statist society of workers under self-management.

So anarchism does not derive from the abstract reflections of an intellectual or a philosopher, but from the direct struggle of workers against capitalism, from the needs and necessities of the workers, from their aspirations to liberty and equality, aspirations which become particularly alive in the best heroic period of the life and struggle of the working masses.

The outstanding anarchist thinkers, Bakunin, Kropotkin and others, did not invent the idea of anarchism, but, having discovered it in the masses, simply helped by the strength of their thought and knowledge to specify and spread it.

Anarchism is not the result of personal efforts nor the object of individual reasearches.

Similarly, anarchism is not the product of humanitarian aspirations. A single humanity does not exist. Any attempt to make of anarchism an attribute of all present-day humanity, to attribute to it a general humanitarian character would be a historical and social lie which would lead inevitably to the justification of the status quo and of a new exploitation.

Anarchism is generally humanitarian only in the sense that the ideas of the masses tend to improve the lives of all men, and that the fate of today's or tomorrow's humanity is inseparable from that of exploited labour. If the working masses are victorious, all humanity will be reborn; if they are not, violence, exploitation, slavery and oppression will reign as before in the world.

The birth, the blossoming, and the realisation of anarchist ideas have their roots in the life and the struggle of the working masses and are inseparably bound to their fate.

Anarchism wants to transform the present bourgeois capitalist society to a society which assures the workers the products of their labours, their liberty, independance, and social and political equality. This other society will be libertarian communism, in which social solidarity and free individuality find their full expression, and in which these two ideas develop in perfect harmony.

Libertarian communism believes that the only creator of social value is labour, physical or intellectual, and consequently only labour has the right to manage social and economic life. Because of this, it neither defends nor allows, in any measure, the existence of non-working classes.

Insofar as these classes exist <u>at the same time</u> as libertarian communism, the latter will recognise no duty towards them. This will cease when the non-working classes decide to become productive and want to live in a communist society under the same conditions as everyone else, then they will have the same position as anyone else, which is that of free members of the society, enjoying the same rights and duties as all other productive members.

Libertarian communism wants to end all exploitation and violence, whether it be against individuals or the masses of the people. To this end, it will establish an economic and social base which will unite all sections of the community, assuring each individual an equal place among the rest, and allowing each the maximum well-being. This base is the common ownership of all the means and instruments of production (industry, transport, land, raw materials, etc.) and the building of economic organisations on the principles of equality and self-management of the working classes.

Within the limits of this self-managing society of workers, libertarian communism establishes the principle of the equality of value and rights of each individual (not individuality "in general", nor of "mystical individuality", nor the concept of individuality, but each real, living, individual).

It is from this principle of equality, as also from the principle that the value of an individual's labour can neither be estimated nor measured, that the fundamental economic, social and juridicial principle of libertarian communism flows: "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs".

4. THE NEGATION OF DEMOCRACY

Democracy is one of the forms of bourgeois capitalist society.

The basis of democracy is the maintainance of the two antagonistic classes of modern society: the working class, and the capitalist class and <u>their collaboration on the basis of private capitalist property. The expression of this collaboration is parliament and the national representative government</u>.

Formally, democracy proclaims freedom of speech, of the press, of association, and the equality of all before the law.

In reality all these liberties are of a very relative character: they are tolerated only as long as they do not contest the interests of the dominant class, i.e. the bourgeoisie.

Democracy preserves intact the principle of private capitalist property. Thus it (democracy) gives the bourgeoisie the right to control the whole economy of the country, the entire press, education, science, art - which in fact make the bourgeoisie absolute master of the whole country. Having a monopoly in the sphere of economic life, the bourgeoisie can also establish its unlimited power in the political sphere. In effect parliament and representative government in the democracies are but the executive organs of the bourgeoisie.

Consequently democracy is but one of the aspects of bourgeois dictatorship, veiled behind deceptive formulae of political liberties and fictitious democratic guarantees.

5. THE NEGATION OF THE STATE AND AUTHORITY

The ideologies of the bourgeoisie define the State as the organ which regularises the complex political, civil and social relations between men in modern society, and protecting the order and laws of the latter. Anarchists are in perfect agreement with this definition, but they complete it by affirming that the basis of this order and these laws is the enslavement of the vast majority of the people by an insignificant minority, and that it is precisely this purpose which is served by the State.

<u>The State is simultaneously the organised violence of the bourgeoisie against the workers and the system of its executive organs</u>.

The left socialists, and in particular the bolsheviks, also consider the bourgeois State and Authority to be the servants of capital. But they hold that Authority and the State can become, in the hands of socialist parties, a powerful weapon in the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat. For this reason these parties are for a socialist Authority and a proletarian State. Some want to conquer power by peaceful, parliamentarian means (the social democratic), others by revolutionary means (the bolsheviks, the left social revolutionaries).

Anarchism considers these two to be fundamentally wrong, disastrous in the work of the emancipation of labour.

Authority is always dependent on the exploitation and enslavement of the mass of the people. It is born of this exploitation, or it is created in the interests of this exploitation. Authority without violence and without exploitation loses all raison d'etre.

The State and Authority take from the masses all initiative, kill the spirit of creation and free activity, cultivates in them the servile psychology of submission, of expectation, of the hope of climbing the social ladder, of blind confidence in their leaders, of the illusion of sharing in authority.

Thus the emancipation of labour is only possible in the direct revolutionary struggle of the vast working masses and of their class organisations against the capitalist system.

The conquest of power by the social democratic parties by peaceful means under the conditions of the present order will not advance by one single step the task of emancipation of labour, for the simple reason that real power, consequently real authority, will remain with the bourgeoisie which controls all the economy and politics of the country. The role of socialist authority is reduced in this case of reforms: <u>to the amelioration of this same regime</u>. (Examples: Ramsay MacDonald, the social democratic parties of Germany, Sweden, Belgium, which have come to power in a capitalist society.)

Further, seizing power by means of a social upheaval and organising a so-called "proleterian State" cannot serve the cause of the authentic emancipation of labour. The State, immediately and supposedly constructed for the defence of the revolution, invariably ends up distorted by needs and characteristics peculiar to itself, itself becoming the goal, produces specific, privileged castes on which it depends; it submits the masses by force to its needs and those of the privileged castes, and consequently re-establishes the basis of capitalist Authority and State; the usual enslavement and exploitation of the masses by violence. (Example: the "worker-peasant State of the bolsheviks".)

6. THE ROLE OF THE MASSES AND THE ROLE OF THE ANARCHISTS IN THE SOCIAL STRUGGLE AND THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION

The principle forces of the social revolution are the urban working class, the peasant masses and a section of the working intelligentia.

<u>Note</u>: While being an exploited and oppressed class in the same way as the urban and rural proletariats, the working intelligentia is relatively disunited compared with the workers and peasants, thanks to the economic privileges conceded by the bourgeoisie to certain of its elements. That is why, during the early days of the social revolution, only the less comfortable strata of the intelligentia take an active part in it.

The anarchist conception of the role of the masses in the social revolution and the construction of socialism differs, in a typical way, from that of the statist parties. While bolshevism and its related tendencies consider that the masses possess only destructionary revolutionary instincts, being incapable of creative and constructive activity - the principle reason why the latter activity should be concentrated in the hands of the men forming the government of the State of the Central Committee of the party - anarchists on the contrary think that the labouring masses have inherent creative and constructive possibilities which are enormous, and anarchists aspire to suppress the obstacles impeding the manifestation of these possibilities.

Anarchists consider the State to be the principle obstacle, usurping the rights of the masses and taking from them all the functions of economic and social life. The State must perish, not "one day" in the future society, but immediately. It must be destroyed by the workers on the first day of their victory, and must not be re-constituted under any guise whatsoever. It will be replaced by a federalist system of workers organisations or production and consumption, united federatively and self-administrating. This system excludes just as much authoritarian organisations as the dictatorship of a party, whichever it might be.

The Russian revolution of 1917 displays precisely this orientation of the process of social emancipation in the creation of the system of worker and peasant soviets and factory committees. Its sad error was not to have liquidated, at an opportune moment, the organisation of state power: initially of the provisional government, and subsequently of bolshevik power. The bolsheviks, profiting from the trust of the workers and peasants, reorganised the bourgeois state according to the circumstances of the moment and consequently killed the creative activity of the masses, in supporting and maintaining the state: choking the free regime or soviets and factory committees which represented the first step towards building a non-statist socialist society.

Action by anarchists can be divided into two periods, that before the revolution, and that during the revolution. In both, anarchists can only fulfill their role as an organised force if they have a clear conception of the objectives of their struggle and the roads leading to the realisation of these objectives.

The fundamental task of the General Union of Anarchists in the pre-revolutionary period must be the preparation of the workers and peasants for the social revolution.

In denying formal (bourgeois) democracy, authority and State, in proclaiming the complete emancipation of labour, anarchism emphasises to the full the rigourous principles of class struggle. It alerts and develops in the masses' class consciousness and the revolutionary intransigence of the class.

It is precisely towards the class intransigence, anti-democratism, anti-statism of the ideas of anarcho-communism, that the libertarian education of the masses must be directed, but education alone is not sufficient. What is also necessary is a certain mass anarchist organisation. To realise this, it is necessary to work in two directions: on the one hand towards the selection and grouping of revolutionary worker and peasant forces on a libertarian communist theoretical basis (a specifically libertarian communist organisation): on the other, towards regrouping revolutionary workers and peasants on an economic base of production and consumption (revolutionary workers and peasants organised around production; workers and free peasants co-operatives) The worker and peasant class, organised on the basis of production and consumption, penetrated by revolutionary anarchist positions, will be the first strong point of the social revolution.

The more these organisations are conscious and organised in an anarchist way, as from the present, the more they will manifest an intransigent and creative libertarian will at the moment of the revolution.

As for the working class in Russia: it is clear that after eight years of bolshevik dictatorship, which enchains the natural needs of the masses for free activity, the true nature of all power is demonstrated better than ever; this class conceals within itself enormous possibilities for the formation of a mass anarchist movement. Organised anarchist militants should go immediately with all the force at their disposal to meet these needs and possibilities, in order that they do not degenerate into reformism (menshevism).

With the same urgency, anarchists should apply themselves to the organisation of the poor peasantry, who are crushed by state power, seeking a way out and concealing enormous revolutionary potential.

The role of anarchists in the revolutionary period cannot be restricted solely to the propagation of the keynotes of libertarian ideas.

Life is not only an arena for the propagation of this or that conception, but also, to the same degree, as the arena of the struggle, the strategy, and the aspirations of these conceptions in the management of economic and social life.

More than any other concept, anarchism should become the leading concept of revolution, for it is only on the theoretical base of anarchism that the social revolution can succeed in the complete emancipation of labour.

The leading position of anarchist ideas in the revolution suggests an orientation of events after

anarchist theory. However, this theoretical driving force should not be confused with the political leadership of the statist parties which leads finally to State Power.

Anarchism aspires neither to political power nor to dictatorship. Its principal aspiration is to help the masses to take the authentic road to the social revolution and the construction of socialism. But it is not sufficient that the masses take up the way of the social revolution. It is also necessary to maintain this orientation of the revolution and its objectives: the suppression of capitalist society in the name of that of free workers. As the experience of the Russian revolution in 1917 has shown us, this last task is far from being easy, above all because of the numerous parties which try to orientate the movement in a direction opposed to the social revolution.

Although the masses express themselves profoundly in social movement in terms of anarchist tendencies and tenets, these tendencies and tenets do however remain dispersed, being unco-ordinated, and consequentlly do not lead to the organisation of the driving power of libertarian ideas which is necessary for preserving the anarchist orientation and objectives in the social revolution. This theoretical driving force can only be expressed by a collective especially created by the masses for this purpose. The organised anarchist elements constitute exactly this collective.

The theoretical and practical duties of this collective are considerable at the time of the revolution.

It must manifest its initiative and display total participation in all the domains of the social revolution: in the orientation and general character of the revolution; in civil war and the defence of the revolution; in the positive tasks of the revolution, in new production, consumption, the agrarian question etc.

On all these questions, and on numbers of others, the masses demand a clear and precise response from the anarchists. And from the moment when anarchists declare a conception of the revolution and the structure of society, they are obliged to give all these questions a clear response, to relate the solution of these problems to the general conception of libertarian communism, and to devote all their forces to the realisation of these.

Only in this way do the General Union of Anarchists and the anarchist movement completely assure their function as a theoretical driving force in the social revolution.

7. THE TRANSITION PERIOD

By the expression 'transition period' the socialist parties understand a definite phase in the life of a people, of which the characteristic traits are: a rupture with the old order of things and the installation of a new economic and social system - a system which however does not yet represent the complete emancipation of workers.

In this sense, all the minimum programmes* of the socialist political parties, for example, the democratic programme of the socialist opportunists or the communists' programme for the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', are programmes of the transition period.

The essential trait of all these is that they regard as impossible, for the moment, the complete realisation of the workers' ideals: their independence, their liberty and equality - and consequently preserve a whole series of the institutions of the capitalist system: the principle of statist compulsion, private ownership of the means and instruments of production, the bureaucracy, and several others, according to the goals of the particular party programme.

On principle anarchists have always been the enemies of such programme, considering that the construction of transitional systems which maintain the principles of exploitation and compulsion of the masses leads inevitably to a new growth of slavery.

Instead of establishing political minimum programmes*, anarchists have always defended the idea of an immediate social revolution, which deprives the capitalist class of its economic and social privileges, and place the means and instruments of production and all the functions of economic and social life in the hands of the workers.

Up to now, it has been the anarchists who have preserved this position.

The idea of the transition period, according to which the social revolution should lead not to a communist society, but to a system X retaining elements of the old system, is anti-social in essence. It threatens to result in the reinforcement and development of these elements to their previous dimensions, and to run events backwards.

A flagrant example of this is the regime of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' established by the bolsheviks in Russia.

* A minimum programme is one whose objective is not the complete transformation of capitalism, but the solution of certain of the immediate problems facing the working class under capitalism.

According to them, the regime should be but a transitory step towards total communism. In reality, this step has resulted in the restoration of class society, at the bottom of which are, as before, the workers and peasants.

The centre of gravity of the construction of a communist society does not consist in the possibility of assuring each individual unlimited liberty to satisfy his needs from the first day of the revolution; but consists in the conquest of the social base of this society, and establishes the principles of egalitarian relationships between individuals. As for the question of the abundance, greater or lesser, of assets, this is not posed at the level of principle, but is a technical problem.

The fundamental principal upon which the new society will be erected and rest, and which must in no way be restricted, is that of the equality of relationships, of the liberty and independence of the workers. This principle represents the first fundamental demand of the masses, for which they rise up in social revolution.

Either the social revolution will terminate in the defeat of the workers, in which case we must start again to prepare the struggle, a new offensive against the capitalist system; or it will lead to the victory of the workers, and in this case, having seized the means which permit self-administration - the land, production, and social functions, the workers will commence the construction of a free society.

This is what characterises the beginning of the building of a communist society which, once begun, then follows the course of its development without interruption, strengthening itself and perfecting itself continuously.

In this way the take-over of the productive and social functions by the workers will trace an exact demarcation line between the statist and non-statist eras.

If it wishes to become the mouthpiece of the struggling masses, the banner of a whole era of social revolution, anarchism must not assimilate in its programme traces of the old order, the opportunist tendancies of transitional systems and periods, nor hide its fundamental principles, but on the contrary develop and apply them to the utmost.

8. ANARCHISM AND SYNDICALISM

We consider the tendancy to oppose libertarian communism to syndicalism and vice versa to be artificial, and devoid of all foundation and meaning.

The ideas of anarchism and syndicalism belong on two different planes. Whereas, communism, that is to say a society of free workers, is the goal of the anarchist struggle - syndicalism, that is the movement of revolutionary workers in their occupations, is only one of the forms of revolutionary class struggle. In uniting workers on a basis of production, revolutionary syndicalism, like all groups based on professions, has no determining theory, it does not have a conception of the world which answers all the complicated social and political questions of contemporary reality. It always reflects the idealogies of diverse political groupings, notably of those who work most intensely in its ranks.

Our attitude to revolutionary syndicalism derives from what is about to be said. Without trying here to resolve in advance the question of the role of revolutionary syndicates after the revolution, whether they will be the organisers of all new production, or whether they will leave this role to workers' soviets or factory committees - we judge that anarchists must take part in revolutionary syndicalism as one of the forms of the revolutionary workers' movement.

However, the question which is posed today is not whether anarchists should or should not participate in revolutionary syndicalism, but rather how and to what end they must take part.

We consider the period up to the present day, when anarchists entered the syndicalist movement as individuals and propagandists, as a period of artisan relationships towards the professional workers movement.

Anarcho-syndicalism, trying to forcefully introduce libertarian ideas into the left wing of revolutionary syndicalism as a means of creating anarchist-type unions, represents a step forward, but it does not, as yet, go beyond the empirical method, for anarcho-syndicalism does not necessarily interweave the 'anarchisation' of the trade union movement with that of the anarchists organised outside the movement. For it is only on this basis, of such a liaison, that revolutionary trade unionism could be 'anarchised' and prevented from moving towards opportunism and reformism.

In regarding syndicalism only as a professional body of workers without a coherent social and political theory, and consequently, being powerless to resolve the social question on its own, we consider that the tasks of anarchists in the ranks of the movement consist of developing libertarian theory, and point it in a libertarian direction, in order to transform it into an active arm of the social revolution. It is necessary to never forget that if trade unionism does not find in anarchist theory a support in opportune times it will turn, whether we like it or not, to the ideology of a political statist party*.

The task of anarchists in the ranks of the revolutionary workers' movement could only be fulfilled on condition that their work was closely interwoven and linked with the activity of the anarchist organisation outside the union. In other words, we must enter into revolutionary trade unions as an organised force, responsible to accomplish work in the union before the general anarchist organisation, and orientated by the latter.

Without restricting ourselves to the creation of anarchist unions, we must seek to exercise our theoretical influence on all trade unions, and in all its forms (the IWW, Russian TU's). We can only achieve this end by working in rigourously organised anarchist collectives; but never in small empirical groups, having between them neither organisational liaison nor theoretical agreement.

Groups of anarchists in companies, factories and workshops, preoccupied in creating anarchist unions, leading the struggle in revolutionary unions for the domination of libertarian ideas in unionism, groups organised in their action by a general anarchist organisation: these are the ways and means of anarchists' attitudes vis a vis trade unionism.

* Probably a reference to the French CGT in particular. The syndicalist T.U. federation which, as predicted, split between the social democrats and communists.

constructive section

The Problem of the First Day of the Social Revolution

The fundamental aim of the world of labour in struggle is the foundation, by means of revolution, of a free and equal communist society founded on the principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs".

However, this society will not come about of its own, only by the power of social upheaval. Its realisation will come about by a social revolutionary process, more or less drawn out, orientated by the organised forces of victorious labour in a determined path.

It is our task to indicate this path from this moment on, and to formulate positive, concrete problems that will occur to workers from the first day of the social revolution, the outcome of which depends upon their correct solution.

It is self evident that the building of the new society will only be possible after the victory of the workers over the bourgeois-capitalist system and over its representatives. It is impossible to begin the building of a new economy and new social relations while the power of the state defending the regime of enslavement has not been smashed, while workers and peasants have not ceased, as the object of the revolution, the industrial and agricultural economy.

Consequently, the very first social revolutionary task is to smash the statist edifice of the capitalist system, to expropriate the bourgeoisie and in general all privileged elements of the means of power, and establish overall the will of the workers in revolt, as expressed by fundamental principles of the social revolution. This agressive and destructive aspect of the revolution can only serve to clear the road for the positive tasks which form the meaning and essence of the social revolution.

These tasks are as follows:

1. The solution, in the libertarian communist sense, of the problem of industrial production of the country.
2. The solution similarly of the agrarian problem.
3. The solution of the problem of consumption.

PRODUCTION:

Taking note of the fact that the country's industry is the result of the efforts of several generations of workers, and that the diverse branches of industry are tightly bound together, we consider all actual production as a single workshop of producers, belonging totally to all workers together, and to no one in particular.

The productive mechanism of the country is global and belongs to the whole working class. This thesis determines the character and the forms of the new production. It will also be global, common in the sense that the products produced by

the workers will belong to all. These products, of whatever category, the general fund of provisions for the workers, where each who participates in production will receive that which he needs, on an equal basis for everybody.

The new system of production will totally supplant the bureaucracy and exploitation in all their forms and establish in their place the principle of brotherly co-operation and workers' solidarity.

The middle class which in a modern capitalist society exercises intermediary functions - commerce etc., as well as the bourgeoisie, must take part in the new mode of production on the same conditions as all other workers. If not, these classes place themselves outside the society of labour.

There will be no bosses, neither entrepreneur, owner or state-appointed owner (as is the case today in the bolshevik state). Management will pass on this new production to the administration especially created by the workers: workers' soviets, factory committess or workers' management of works and factories. These organs, interlinked at the level of commune, district and finally general and federal management of production. Built by the masses and always under their control and influence, all these organs constantly renewed and realise the idea of self-management, real self-management, by the masses of the people.

Unified production, in which the means and products belong to all, having replaced bureaucracy by the principle of brotherly co-operation and having established equal rights for all work, production managed by the organs of workers' control, elected by the masses, that is the first practical step in the road to the realisation of libertarian communism.

Consumption:

This problem will appear during the revolution in two ways:

1. The principle of the search for products for consumption.
2. The principle of their distribution.

In that which concerns the distribution of consumer goods, the solution depends over all on the quantity of products available and on the principle of the agreement of targets.*

* It is interesting to note that these sections were written before the '5 year plans', at a point when socialist planning (even in its Leninist form) was all but unheard of.

The social revolution concerning itself with the reconstruction of the whole social order, takes on itself as well, the obligation to satisfy everyone's necessitites of life. The sole exception is the group of non-workers - those who refuse to take part in the new production for counter-revolutionary reasons. But in general, excepting the last category of people, the satisfaction of the needs of everyone in the area of the revolution is assured by the general reserve of consumer products. In the case of insufficient goods, they are divided according to the principle of the greatest urgency, that is to say in the first case to children, invalids, and working families.

A far more difficult problem is that of organising the basis of consumption itself.

Without doubt, from the first day of the revolution, the farms will not provide all the products vital to the life of the population. At the same time, peasants have an abundance which the towns lack.

The libertarian communists have no doubt about the mutualist relationship which exists between the workers of the town and countryside. They judge that the social revolution can only be realised by the common efforts of workers and peasants. In consequence, the solution to the problem of consumption in the revolution can only be possible by means of close revolutionary collaboration between these two categories of workers.

To establish this collaboration, the urban working class having seized production, must immediately supply the living needs of the country and strive to furnish the everyday products, the means and implements for collective agriculture. The measures of solidarity manifested by the workers as regards the needs of the peasants, will provoke from them in return the same gesture, to provide the produce of their collective labour for the towns.

Worker and peasant co-operatives will be the primary organs assuring the towns and countryside their requirements in food and economic materials. Later, responsible for more important and permanent functions, notably for supplying everything necessary for guaranteeing and developing the economic and social life of the workers and peasants, these co-operatives will be transformed into permanent organs for provisioning towns and countryside.

This solution to the problem of provisioning permits the proletariat to create a permanent stock of provision, which will have a favourable and decisive effect on the outcome of all new production.

The Land:

In the solution of the agrarian question, we regard the principle revolutionary and creative forces to be the working peasants who do not exploit the labour of others - and the wage earning proletariat of the countryside. Their task will be to accomplish the redistribution of land in order to establish the use and exploitation of the land on communist principles.

Like industry, the land, exploited and cultivated by successive generations of labourers, is the product of their common effort. It also belongs to all working people and to none in particular. Inasmuch as it is the inalienable and common property of the labourers, the land can never again be bought, nor sold, nor rented; it can therefore not serve as a means of the exploitation of others' labour,

The land is also a sort or popular and communal workshop, where the common people produce the means by which they live. But it is the kind of workshop where each labourer (peasant) has, thanks to certain historical conditions, become accustomed to carrying out his work alone, independent of other producers. Whereas, in industry the collective method of work is essential and the only possible way in our times. The majority of peasants cultivate the land on their own account.

Consequently, when the land and the means of its exploitation are taken over by the peasants, with no possibility of selling or renting, the question of the forms of the utilisation of it and the methods of its exploitation (communal or by family) will not immediately find a complete and definite solution, as it will in the industrial sector. Initially both of these methods will probably be used.

It will be the revolutionary peasants who themselves will establish the definitive term of exploitation and utilisation of the land. No outside pressure is possible in this question.

However, since we consider that only a communist society, in whose name after all the social revolution will be made, delivers labourers from their position of slavery and exploitation and gives them complete liberty and equality; since the peasants constitute the vast majority of the population (almost 85% in Russia in the period under discussion) and consequently the agrarian regime which they establish will be the decisive factor in the destiny of the revolution; and since, lastly, a private economy in agriculture leads, as in private industry, to commerce, accumulation, private property and the restoration of capital - our duty will be to do everything necessary, as from now, to facilitate the solution of the agrarian question in a collective way.

To this end we must, as from now, engage in strenuous propaganda among the peasants in favour of collective agrarian economy.

The founding of a specifically libertarian peasant union will considerably facilitate this task.

In this respect, technical progress will be of enormous importance, facilitating the evolution of agriculture and also the realisation of communism in the towns, above all in industry. If, in their relations with the peasants, the industrial workers act, not individually or in separate groups, but as an immense communist collective embracing all the branches of industry; if, in addition, they bear in mind the vital needs of the countryside and if at the same time they supply each village with things for everyday use, tools and machines for the collective exploitations of the lands, this will impel the peasants towards communism in agriculture.

The Defence of the Revolution:

The question of the defence of the revolution is also linked to the problem of 'the first day'. Basically, the most powerful means for the defence of the revolution is the happy solution of its positive problems: production, consumption, and the land. Once these problems are correctly solved, no counter-revolutionary will be able to alter or unbalance the free society of workers. Nevertheless the workers will have to sustain a severe struggle against the enemies of the revolution, in order to maintain its concrete existence.

The social revolution, which threatens the privileges and the very existence of the non-working classes of society, will inevitably provoke a desperate resistance on behalf of these classes, which will take the form of a fierce civil war.

As the Russian experience showed, such a civil war will not be a matter of a few months, but of several years.

However joyful the first steps of the labourers at the beginning of the revolution, the ruling-classes will retain an enormous capacity to resist for a long time. For several years they will launch offensives against the revolution, trying to reconquer the power and privileges of which they were deprived.

A large army, military techniques and strategy, capital - will all be thrown against the victorious labourers.

fourteen

In order to preserve the conquests of the revolution, the labourers should create organs for the defence of the revolution, so as to oppose the reactionary offensive with a fighting force corresponding to the magnitude of the task. In the first days of the revolution, this fighting force will be formed by all armed workers and peasants. But this spontaneous armed force will only be valuable during the first days, before the civil war reaches its highest point and the two parties in struggle have created regularly constituted military organisations.

In the social revolution the most critical moment is not during the suppression of Authority, but following, that is , when the forces of the defeated regime launch a general offensive against the labourers, and when its a question of safeguarding the conquests under attack.

The very character of this offensive, just as the technique and development of the civil war, will oblige the labourers to create determined revolutionary military contingents. The essence and fundamental principles of these formations must be decided in advance. Denying the statist and authoritarian methods of government, we also deny the statist method of organising the military forces of the labourers, in other words the principles of a statist army based on obligatory military service. Consistent with the fundamental positions of libertarian communism, the principle of voluntary service must be the basis of the military formations of labourers. The detachments of insurgent partisans, workers and peasants, which led the military action in the Russian revolution, can be cited as examples of such formations.

However, "voluntary service" and the action of partisans should not be understood in the narrow sense of the word, that is as a struggle of worker and peasant detachments against the local enemy, unco-ordinated by a general plan of operation and each acting on its own responsibility, at its own risk. The action and tactics of the partisans in the period of their complete development should be guided by a common revolutionary strategy.

As in all wars, the civil war cannot be waged by the labourers with success unless they apply the two fundamental principles of all military action: unity in the plan of operations and unity of common command. The most critical moment of the revolution will come when the bourgeoisie march against the revolution in organised force. This critical moment obliges the labourers to adopt these principles of military strategy.

Thus, in view of the necessities imposed by military strategy and also the strategy of the counter-revolution, the armed forces of the revolution should inevitably be based on a general revolutionary army with a common command and plan of operations.

The following principles form the basis of this army:

(a) the class character of the army;
(b) voluntary service (all coercion will be completely excluded from the work of defending the revolution);
(c) free revolutionary discipline (self-discipline) (voluntary service and revolutionary self-discipline are perfectly compatible, and give the revolutionary army greater morale than any army of the state);
(d) the total submission of the revolutionary army to the masses of the workers and peasants as represented by the worker and peasant organisations common throughout the country, established by the masses in the controlling sectors of economic and social life.

In other words, the organ of the defence of the revolution, responsible for combatting the counter-revolution, on major military fronts as well as on an internal front (bourgeois plots, preparations for counter-revolutionary action), will be entirely under the jurisdiction of the productive organisations of workers and peasants, to which it will submit, and by which it will receive its political direction.

Note: while it should be conducted in conformity with definite libertarian communist principles, the army itself should not be considered a point of principle. It is but the consequence of military strategy in the revolution, a strategic measure to which labourers are fatally forced by the very process of the civil war. But this measure must attract attention as from now. It must be carefully studied in order to avoid any irreparable set-backs in the work of protecting and defending the revolution, for set-backs in the civil war could prove disastrous to the outcome of the whole social revolution.

organisational section

THE PRINCIPLES OF ANARCHIST ORGANISATION

The general, constructive positions expressed above constitute the organisational platform of the revolutionary forces of anarchism.

This platform, containing a definite tactical and theoretical orientation, appears to be the minimum to which it is necessary and urgent to rally all the militants of the organised anarchist movement.

Its task is to group around itself all the healthy elements of the anarchist movement into one general organisation, active, and agitating on a permanent basis: the General Union of Anarchists. The forces of all anarchist militants should be orientated towards the creation of this organisation.

The fundamental principles of organisation of a General Union of Anarchists should be as follows:

1. Theoretical Unity:

Theory represents the force which directs the activity of persons and organisations along a defined path towards a determined goal. Naturally it should be common to all the persons and organisations adhering to the General Union. All activity by the General Union, both overall and in its details, should be in perfect concord with the theoretical principles professed by the Union.

2. Tactical Unity or the Collective Method of Action:

In the same way the tactical methods employed by separate members and groups within the Union should be unitary, that is, be in rigourous concord both with each other and with the general theory and tactic of the Union.
A common tactical line in the movement is of decisive importance for the existence of the organisation and the whole movement: it removes the disastrous effect of several tactics in opposition to one another, it concentrates all the forces of the movement, gives them a common direction leading to a fixed objective.

3. Collective Responsibility:

The practice of acting on one's personal responsibility should be decisively condemned and rejected in the ranks of the anarchist movement.
The areas of revolutionary life, social and political, are above all profoundly collective by nature. Social revolutionary activity in these areas cannot be based on the personal responsibility of individual militants.
The executive organ of the general anarchist movement, the Anarchist Union, taking a firm line against the tactic of irresponsible individualism, introduces in its ranks the principle of collective responsibility: the entire Union will be responsible for the political and revolutionary activity of each member; in the same way, each member will be responsible for the political and revolutionary activity of the Union as a whole.

4. Federalism:

Anarchism has always denied centralised organisation, both in the area of the social life of the masses and in its political action. The centralised system relies on the diminution of the critical spirit, initiative and independence of each individual and on the blind submission of the masses to the 'centre'. The natural and inevitable consequences of this system are the enslavement and mechanisation of social life and the life of the organisation.

Against centralism, anarchism has always professed and defended the principle of federalism, which reconciles the independence and initiative of individuals and the organisation with service to the common cause.
In reconciling the idea of the independence and high degree of rights of each individual with the service of social needs and necessities, federalism opens the doors to every healthy manifestation of the faculties of every individual.
But quite often, the federalist principle has been deformed in anarchist ranks: it has too often been understood as the right, above all, to manifest ones 'ego', without obligation to account for duties as regards the organisation.

This false interpretation disorganised our movement in the past. It is time to put an end to it in a firm and irreversible manner.
Federation signifies the free agreement of individuals and organisations to work collectively towards a common objective.

However, such an agreement and the federal union based on it, will only become reality, rather than fiction or illusion, only on the condition sine qua non that all the participants in the agreement and the Union fulfill most completely the duties undertaken, and conform to communal decisions.
In a social project, however vast the federalist basis on which it is built, there can be no decisions without their execution. It is even less admissable in an anarchist organisation, which exclusively takes on obligations with regard to

the workers and their social revolution. Consequently, the federalist type of anarchist organisation, while recognising each member's rights to independence, free opinion, individual liberty and initiative, requires each member to undertake fixed organisation duties, and demands execution of communal decisions.

On this condition alone will the federalist principle find life, and the anarchist organisation function correctly, and steer itself towards the defined objective.

The idea of the General Union of Anarchists poses the problem of the co-ordination and concurrence of the activities of all the forces of the anarchist movement.

Every organisation adhering to the Union represents a vital cell of the common organism. Every cell should have its secretariat, executing and guiding theoretically the political and technical work of the organisation.

With a view to the co-ordination of the activity of all the Union's adherent organisation, a special organ will be created: the executive committee of the Union. The committee will be in charge of the following functions: the executive of decisions taken by the Union with which it is entrusted; the theoretical and organisational orientation of the activity of isolated organisations consistent with the theoretical positions and the general tactical line of the Union; the monitoring of the general state of the movement; the maintainance of working and organisational links between all the organisations in the Union; and with other organisations.

The rights, responsibilities and practical tasks of the executive committee are fixed by the congress of the Union.

The General Union of Anarchists has a concrete and determined goal. In the name of the success of the social revolution it must above all attract and absorb the most revolutionary and strongly critical elements among the workers and peasants.

Extoling the social revolution, and further, being an anti-authoritarian organisation which aspires to the abolition of class society, the General Union of Anarchists depends equally on the two fundamental classes of society: the workers and the peasants. It lays equal stress on the work of emancipating these two classes.

As regards the workers' trade unions and revolutionary organisations in the towns, the General Union of Anarchists will have to devote all its efforts to becoming their pioneer and their theoretical guide.

It adopts the same tasks with regard to the exploited peasant masses. As bases playing the same role as the revolutionary workers' trade unions, the Union strives to realise a network of revolutionary peasant economic organisations, furthermore, a specific peasants' union, founded on anti-authoritarian principles.

Born out of the heart of the mass of the labour people, the General Union must take part in all the manifestations of their life, bringing to them on every occasion the spirit of organisation, perseverance, action and offensive.

Only in this way can it fulfill its task, its theoretical and historical mission in the social revolution of labour, and become the organised vanguard of their emancipating process.