

ORGANISE!

... for revolutionary anarchism



Jubilympics Antidote Special Issue:
Anarchism in theory and practice at Saint-Imier
Occupy at the Crossroads
and much more

79

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Organise!

The magazine of the
Anarchist Federation

Issue 78 - Summer 2012

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.

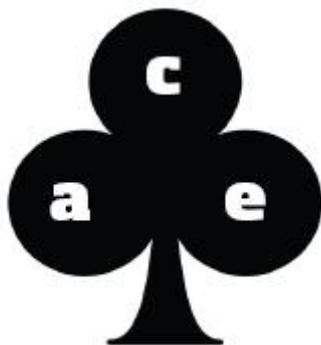
As always, the articles in this issue do not necessarily represent the collective viewpoint of the AF. We hope that their publication will produce responses from our readers and spur debate on.

For the next issue of Organise! Please send all contributions to the address on the right. It would help if all articles could be either typed or on disc. 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 article 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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This issue of Organise! focuses heavily on the international anarchist event at Saint-Imier that took place in August this Summer. It marked the 140th anniversary of the founding of the first Anti-Authoritarian International, and was therefore the birthplace of formal anarchist organisations co-ordinating internationally to bring about a free and equal society.

Around 3,000 anarchists took part. We were made very welcome by the town, which values its anarchist heritage and has put up plaques to commemorate it. As is in fact usual for anarchists, contrary to what they say about us, we left it as clean as we found it.

The event was well organised by the French Anarchist Federation (FAF) and the Swiss group Organisation Socialiste Libertaire (OSL). The AF is hugely grateful to them for their immense hard work both before the event and during it. It was all very eventful, as you will read, but mostly positive! As it was put at the event's closing meeting by a member of Anarchist Front from Macedonia, who came to Saint-Imier with us, "Anarchists, the flame in your eyes brings warmth in my heart!" Parallel with this anniversary event, the International of Anarchist Federations (IAF-IFA- ФАБ), of which the AF and the FAF are members, held its ninth Congress since its foundation in 1968 (they are held four-yearly when conditions allow, in addition to our twice-yearly delegate meetings, called CRIFAs).

The AF itself gave presentations as part of the Saint-Imier anniversary event in the opening meeting, in one 'roundtable', and three

meetings which we organised ourselves. We spoke representing IFA at two further round tables and at the closing meeting. We are reporting back on our experiences and conclusions here through various types of article. IFA at Saint-Imier reflects on IFA's involvement in and observations on the wider anniversary event as well as our Congress, and concludes with the statement made by IFA as our invited contribution

Editorial

What's in the latest Organise!

to the Saint-Imier closing meeting, and which the AF was involved in drafting.

We also publish texts of two of the four presentations that the AF gave: 'Neither Insurrectionism nor Reformism, but Anarchism' and 'Anarchism in Practice Today'. Both of these talks were based on discussions the AF had at its annual Conference earlier this Summer.

Saint-Imier Snapshots are briefer perspectives pieces by an AF anarcha-feminist and a self-identified 'younger comrade'. We also reproduce 4 of the 12 sets of Statements published by IFA, including in solidarity with our imprisoned Belarusian comrades, who remained in our minds throughout the event and for whom we are undertaking solidarity activity.

In 'Prefigurative Politics and Self-Management Practices: Saint-Imier and Beyond', we reflect on

questions of self-organisation and individual responsibility in anarchist gatherings in the context of what can happen when things go wrong. We also welcome an article contributed by Brian Morris, The Legacy of Saint-Imier. We also bring you two AF perspectives, one on Greece and an additional, extended piece on Occupy. Our 'culture' article, this issue features Jules Grandjouan, credited with being the first artist

to produce an illustrated political poster. A reader has also contributed a review of a new book by Bob Bushaway (Rite: Custom, Ceremony and Community in England, 1700-1880).

In addition, we received another very interesting and important document from René Berthier of the 'Cercle d'études libertaires—Gaston-Leval' which we don't have space to reproduce this issue. It is entitled 'About Platformism, synthesism and the "Fontenis affair"' and, like Brian Morris', anticipated the Saint-Imier event. We hope to publish an edited version in Organise! # 80 and make a response. It helps us to understand the attitudes of some members of our own International to 'Platformist' anarchism better. It also puts in context some rather unpleasant events at Saint-Imier that we experienced. Whilst we enjoyed and benefitted from almost all of our encounters with groups connected to Anarkismo.net, which co-ordinates

Platformist anarchist groups and federations, we wish to note that an overly influential member of its Swiss affiliate (the OSL), Aristides Pedraza, sought actively to undermine IFA's contribution. For example, he abused his position as a 'neutral' chair of Roundtable events in which IFA had been invited to put up speakers, by placing us last and cutting our speakers off before the allotted time of 10 minutes was up. The second time this happened, our speaker pressed on for the full 10

minutes, to great applause!

Later in this eventful meeting Pedraza was 'custard-pied' by someone we do not know. This was a shocking event to witness. We learned that it was in opposition to Pedraza's past as an advisor to Josef Zisyadis (Zisyadis held several governmental positions including head of the Department of Justice, Police and Military Affairs in 1996-8, when Pedraza worked for him) and because in 2003, as a leading light in the anti-G8

committee at Lausanne, Pedraza said he was ready to steward the forthcoming demonstration with his own people to prevent "cas-seurs" (wreckers) highjacking it.

These issues have naturally caused a lot of problems inside the OSL itself and are not at all typical of Anarkismo. The AF raises them in a positive spirit so that 'authoritarian' forms of organisation are confronted and do not go unchecked. Anarchists don't have authority figures!

The IAF-IFA- ΦΑΒ at Saint-Imier

The following article contains some reflections on the role of our kind of anarchism as represented at Saint-Imier. In the International of Anarchist Federations we call ourselves 'social anarchists', although some non-ex-communist-bloc federations within it also refer to themselves as 'anarchist communists' (as the AF does), and some do not really recognise an anarchism which is not concerned with the building of a mass movement, and so prefer simply to call themselves 'anarchist'.

The social anarchist movement also contains anarcho-syndicalism (our 'sister federation' is the anarcho-syndicalist International Workers' Association: IWA-AIT) and platformist traditions. Although we share much in common, following on from the development of organised anarchism after Saint-Imier one hundred and forty years ago, there are some different theoretical models and practices relating to how we achieve the goal of an anarchist society. Some of these differences are reflected in this article.

The IFA sees itself as an heir to

the first anti-authoritarian international. We strive to maintain the basic anarchist principles that emerged out of the conflict with the authoritarians in the workers movement in the 19th century. This is why we decided to hold our Congress concurrently with the Saint-Imier anniversary event. Within IFA we have different histories, traditions and practices yet are united around certain common anarchist principles that form our 'Associative Pact'. This coming together of a wide range of people from different countries in a process of on-going collective work is a rich source of ideas and reflections on practices.

Aside from the AF, our international is composed of nine other 'national' or language-group federations: Argentina (FLA), Belarus (FAB), Bulgaria (FAB), Czech and Slovak Federation (CSAF), French speaking (FAF), Germany and German-speaking Switzerland (FdA), Iberia (Spain and Portugal) (FAIb), Italy (FAIt), and the Slovenian Federation for Anarchist Organising (FAO), which we enthusiastically admitted to IFA at our Saint-Imier congress. We also officially recognised the 'Outside' group of the

FLA, in response to their internal crisis. All of these federations but the Bulgarians were able to attend, and all of these contributed to discussion and decisions. As well as contributing to the workshops and policy discussions held at our Congress, IFA individuals and federations contributed to the wider anniversary event and shared their thoughts and experiences on a range of different meetings and forums. These included five roundtable discussions featuring different kinds of organised social anarchism, some of which we participated in as IFA and some as our own national federations. Then there were the sessions organised by specific federations. We had members at the daily anarcho-feminist roundtable. Finally there were introductory and concluding 'common meetings' in which a wider variety of anarchist traditions were represented.

Some common themes emerged through these collaborations and interventions. They relate significantly to our adherence to the principles of the Associative Pact and the years we have spent working together, sharing ideas

and practices, and also the coming together of federations and anarchist traditions for the first time around these subject areas. This article attempts to summarise some of these common themes as well as give examples of some of our contributions to specific meetings.

Common Themes

1. Defining a specific current within the anarchist movement which is rooted firmly in the social, economic, political and cultural struggles of the working class.

This is of course an underlying theme of both our Congress and the wider anniversary event, a feature of all the presentations and contributions. As said by the IFA speaker in the Round Table on Anarchism in practice today, 'We aim to help create mass movements based on class struggle. Anarchist organisations aim to build solidarity, confidence and experience in the working class to help create mass movements'.

2. Opposition to any tendencies within the anarchist movement to act as substitutes for the action of the people themselves.

This complements the first theme. If an anarchist society is to be created by the working class itself, then we have to make sure that we do not act 'on behalf' of others but operate from 'within' struggles. This was the key message of the workshop led by the AF, 'Neither Insurrectionism nor Reformism but Anarchism', reproduced elsewhere in this edition of *Organise!* A contribution from a IFA comrade during the discussion clarified this point further. He stressed that we must make sure that we do not act as intermediar-

ies between the masses and the struggle for emancipation. It is vital that all our actions are connected to the wider movement. In a statement arising from our Congress workshop 'Anarchism Between the Collapse of Power and the Clash with the State,' amongst other things we agreed the following:

'Social anarchism is not a vanguardist movement. It does not on its own create struggles; it is the people who do that. Nonetheless, with our methods and organizational structures we need to give a libertarian dimension to all popular confrontations with authority. There is not a contradiction between the two perspectives, given that both are features of social anarchism'.

3. Stressing the importance of non-hierarchical ways of organising at all times and in all contexts; the importance of prefiguring the kind of society we want to create in the way we organise today.

The importance of sticking to anarchist principles in ways of organising and operating, was raised in a number of workshops. In the workshop on authoritarian and anti-authoritarian ways of organising presented by the Slovenian and British federations we looked at both the historic conflict within the first international, associated with authoritarian Marxism, as well as the continued fight against authoritarians even within the anarchist movement. Authoritarian ways of organising are most clearly seen in the interventions made in campaigns by Trotskyist organisations and, in many ex-communist countries, by Bolshevik organisations. They do not want to create non-hierarchical structures but instead

are keen to elect 'leaders' and committees who then end up making most of the decisions. Unlike in Britain, where the left consistently derails attempted at non-hierarchical workplace and community organising, in Slovenia, they do not have to face such organisations but they are very aware of the importance of creating structures within their own federation and the campaigns they are involved in which can ensure full participation and equality. They had the problem of the dominance of the group from the capital city, Ljubljana, and were determined to rectify this by rotating tasks and responsibilities between groups.

However, not all anarchist organisations have been able to resist the temptation of bureaucratisation and centralisation, as reflected again in the workshop 'Neither Insurrectionism nor Reformism but Anarchism'.

4. The recognition that there are other oppressions that cannot be subsumed into the wider struggle but need their own space and autonomy to organise and develop their ideas about how to emancipate themselves, as well as participating fully in the common struggle for a new society.

This was an issue at Saint-Imier in several ways, some of which are reflected in other items in this *Organise!* Members of federations affiliated to IFA participated in the anarcho-feminist round table, and we have a 'Snapshot' of some AF reflections in this issue. IFA consciously chose women and people of different ages to appear on our behalf. But as the women from the anarcho-feminist round tables pointed out at the final meeting of the Saint-Imier anniversary event pointed out, it is not just a

question of tokenism, but of fully equal participation in our movement. They asked why movement meetings are still dominated by men, some of whom clearly have more influence over elements of the movement they work within than other people, and certainly than women.

It was also noted that disabled access to the wider event was poor over all (although we had chosen an accessible space for the Congress itself). The ethnic make-up of the wider anniversary event was, predictably, predominantly white. This only partly reflects the fact that most participants were from countries that are white-dominated anyway, where we have so far failed to make our analysis relevant to people of colour. Where people from other parts of the World contributed (IFA raised money for several plane fares) they were there primarily as delegates or as serious representatives of their movements and were not therefore able to hang out with their immediate friends and comrades in the way that most people could. IFA is working on this internally and has concrete mechanisms and plans for organising even more with non-Europeans. For example, IFA will continue to support the co-ordination between Latin American anarchists that has begun at this Congress. IFA supports 'Observatorio Critico', a network of dissidents in Cuba heavily influenced by libertarian ideas, including the only anarchist group in Cuba. The FdA will fund their website and send a delegate to meet them. IFA is also involved in organising the conference of Mediterranean anarchists that will take place in Athens in the Winter. The FAF are working with Tunisians on an Alternative Social Forum in Tunisia.

5. The importance of exploring the complexity of the social reality of the working class, such that we can devise meaningful ways of transforming struggles into a movement for complete social transformation

Presentations by IFA and its affiliated federations were well received because they were based on knowledge and concrete experience of social issues. We do not deal in platitudes, abstract generalisations or unproven theoretical models. Comments on the question of appropriate way of analysing social relations were received from many people who attended, and we considered them serious and well-informed. They did reveal, however, that some anarchists consider the concept of class to be outdated. A fundamental step in demonstrating that it is still relevant, is embedding our experiences as workers and service users in our analysis and action. We are workers (and we include all oppressed and exploited people under capitalism in that class based category) before we are theoreticians. Thus, the FAIt's meeting 'The Politics of Health and the Trials of Social Inequalities' was introduced by a health worker. 'Neither Insurrectionism or Reformism' was put on by people who have seen anarchist militants abandon workers' self-organisation and take positions in trade unions. And so on.

In the presentation New territories for anarchism, the speaker from the FAF made the distinction between two kinds of new 'territories': the need for new concepts in order to deal with the realities of 21st century anarchism and the new territories in the sense of anarchism being spread beyond its traditional home.

Combined with the second aspect of new territories, we must understand that in many countries, such as Brazil, there is so much unemployment and precarious employment that we cannot think about organising in the same way as we have in the past. We cannot talk about workers taking over the process of production if in fact they are not involved in that production.



An example of understanding the complexity of social reality in countries outside Europe was the need to discuss the role of organised religion. Many western anarchists would call themselves atheists. In largely secular countries where it is not illegal to challenge religious institutions per se, we may face ruling class disapproval, as our Italian comrades do when they take action against the Catholic church. But for anarchists some countries it is a more complicated issue to address. In some Arab Spring and Caucasus countries, for large proportions of people fighting dictatorship, external and internal, the revolt has a religious dimension. In ex-soviet union countries, atheism is associated by some of the

working class with the old order, and therefore as authoritarianism, not freedom. These issues cannot be ignored if an effective anarchist movement is to be built. Like nationalism, religion is not a

first Gulf War in an effort to show that it was against US imperialism. This was in contrast to other anarchists who organised themselves around the slogan, 'No War but the Class War'.



route through which the working class can free itself. We cannot compromise our position against organised religion in either our theory or practice.

We can't tell people what to believe either. But we have to think about how best to deliver that message and make an effective intervention. In the long run, we have to make religion and the authoritarian baggage it brings redundant, and promote a class analysis.

In the meeting organised by the AF and MASA-IWA from Croatia, the speakers emphasised the complex nature of nationalist ideology. While it is clear that workers have no country and that we are against right-wing nationalism, the question of left-wing nationalism has proven historically to be more complex. The speaker from the AF gave an example from Britain in which a group calling itself the Anarchist Workers Group once used the slogan of 'Victory to Saddam' in the

However, it is not a always a straight forward question of opposition to the nationalist struggle as there are aspects of the struggle that are important to support. We do support the working class in face of foreign domination, but meaningfully and not by pandering to its leaders, 'democratically elected' or otherwise. We support working class struggles against racism, genocide, ethnocide and political and economic colonialism, but critique cross-class and populist alliances.

On a related topic, we discussed the militarisation of society as a reality that we have to respond to. The following is taken from the statement we agreed on Anti-Militarism (it appears in full on the IFA website).

'Nowadays the army operates with the same functions of social control as the police, are becoming more and more similar to the army. In this situation, cities be-

come the battleground: tanks tear down walls in order to frighten people. Drones are everywhere. Social disruption and economic crisis mean that repressive laws are not 'matters of emergency' anymore but have become 'normality'. Internal and external wars are two sides of the same coin. It's a war, or more accurately, battlegrounds, known as 'peace-keeping' or 'humanitarian' war. The keeping of social peace is the extension of capitalism's commercial activities. In the streets of the city and the working class suburbs, the police and army experiment new methods of repression on us. Repression is the other side of the coin to neo-liberal globalisation. Government dynamics force national states to use force to deal with social problems'.

6. Introduction of new ideas and ways of thinking that can stimulate thought and discussion.

The federations of IFA are continually developing ideas as a result of both thought and experience. One good example of a presentation that explored new ways of approaching subjects was the open meeting on 'Anarchism and Geography' that was the result of the collaboration of comrades from both the French-speaking (FAF) and the Italian Federation (FAIt).

There is a long tradition that comes from the First International of a link between geography and anarchism. Geography is defined as the scientific understanding of the world and how to modify this world. Some of the most important geographers of the end of the 19th century became the founders of the modern anarchist movement. These include Kropotkin, the Reclus brothers Elie and Elisée, Lev Mecnikov, and Perron.

Their focus was the critique of the colonial process of state building. They have been an influence on geography today in its efforts to construct a different representation of the world that does not rely on the concept of the State. Traditional geography is based on the division of the world into nation states. Anarchist geography challenges this and seeks to develop a way of thinking about people and their relation to place without reference to the State. Some examples of anarchist work include understanding and assisting the global protest movements, to analyse neo-liberalism and to bring together the necessities of human well-being and social justice with the respect for global resources.

The anarchist geographer is also concerned with the question of cosmopolitanism and a world without borders - social international solidarity and recognising differences between individuals. For example, both France and the US have a concept of ignoring the origins of people and stressing the fact that everyone is a citizen of the country. However, these are still nationalist ways of thinking about things. You cannot have true cosmopolitanism in the framework of borders.

Elsewhere in this issue of Organise you can see another new way of thinking about old subjects in our presentation exploring insurrectionism and reformism as actually two sides of the same coin, and an innovative methodological approach for thinking about social movements in Anarchism in practice today.

7. The recognition of the importance of learning about history as a means of both appreciating the contributions of the past and learning lessons for today.

Members of the IFA-affiliated federations made crucial contributions to the understanding of the Saint-Imier anniversary event. In its opening meeting, one of the IFA speakers presented a thorough history of what actually led up to the formation of the anti-authoritarian International and of the significance of the events to followed. This was a vital beginning to the five day gathering that followed. We needed to know and understand what we are actually commemorating in order to be able to evaluate it and build on it. Comrades in the past have made theoretical and strategical mistakes. We need to understand these in their historical context in order to be able to learn from them.

8. The importance of being engaged with and learning from current social movements and struggles as well as offering an analysis and critique of these. There needs to be an integration of theory and practice.

In our workshop 'Anarchism Between the Collapse of Power and the Cash with the State' we found it useful to identify two ways in which there exist confrontations with the existing systems of power:

'The eroding of power, understood as a form of evolution or a process of change that arise from our activities in our daily life. And direct confrontation with power, which may take the form of demonstrations, sporadic actions and other direct action.'

During the round table on 'Anarchism in Practice Today' IFA federations made a contribution, showing how we are embedded in social struggles as well as developing political analyses of

these struggles. The FAF stressed the importance of combining theory and practice. All practice must be informed by theory and vice versa. Anarchism must be something that is lived and not just theorised about. It is something that is constantly transforming itself and must not be trapped in dogmatism. The speaker gave specific practical examples from what they are engaged in, including educational activities such as popular universities, libraries including mobile libraries, the Paris radio station 'Radio Libertaire', film showings, festivals and co-operatives. In addition, they are involved in class struggle in whatever is the most radical union. In all these interventions, there is a double function- to live anarchism and show that it is possible for things to be different. The FAIb showed clearly the way that IFA federations are involved in social struggle. They presented their work around the struggle against the TGV train link which is not just an anarchist struggle but is based firmly in the local community. These comrades face state repression alongside their communities.

The speaker from the AF combined theory with practice by analysing the Occupy movement, showing how we can understand the significance of social movements by identifying the extent to which these movements are making a positive contribution to social change as well as by seeing what their weaknesses may be. He showed how our anarchist principles are relevant for evaluating what is going on today and applying successful methods.

9. International perspective.

The fact that IFA is made up of federations from different countries provides many opportuni-

ties to live our internationalism. Many of the people invited to Saint Imier from outside Europe were invited and paid for by IFA federations as the result of contacts built up over years of international work. We don't name them all here because this could endanger some of them. Many of the meetings were the result of collaboration between more than one IFA federation. A particularly important example of such collaboration is the organisation of the Balkans meeting by the Italian and Slovenian federations. What follows is a report by one of the organisers of the meeting.



'The initiative came from Italian and Slovenian federations so the fact that we have an International made it possible to have this meeting. By preparing this meeting in advance and having it on the programme of the Saint Imier meeting made it possible to bring together many people from the Balkans that had come to Saint Imier'.

The main goals of the meeting were:

- Exchange information on the political and economic situation in each country, social struggles

and our involvement as anarchists in the social movements. We wanted to find points where there was basis for co-operation.

- Search for a way for future co-operation on some concrete issues. We wanted to identify specific issues that we thought were important and that groups were already working on so that we had a basis for immediate joint activity rather than just exchanging information.
- Discussion of the actual issues. One is the rise of nationalism as an answer to the crisis. It is very dangerous development for which we need immediate action. With an international, anti-nationalism campaign, the chances of success are greater. Another is militarism. This is a common problem because NATO is building army bases in the Balkan countries. Other issues identified for potential co-operation include immigration and the economic crisis and austerity, and ecology.

There was a strong feeling in the meeting that internationalism is essential in the Balkans in order us to survive as anarchists and in general against the offensive of the State. In the past small anarchist groups survived because they built a network with other groups.

We decided on the next steps to build this co-operation. The two next points of contact will be the international meeting of Mediterranean anarchists in Athens in the Winter and the 10th Balkans Bookfair which will be held in May in Ljubljana.

In addition IFA published statements of solidarity with global struggles with which IFA and its

contacts are involved. For two of these see elsewhere in this issue of Organise! It is committed to the non-Eurocentric initiatives above.

In summary then, we engaged with defining a specific anarchist current, opposition to substitutionism, non-hierarchical organising, recognising other oppressions and inequalities than class, exploring complex social relations under capitalism, new ways of approaching old issues, the significance of history, engaging with social movements, and of course internationalism. In the final statement that IFA was invited to make at the final meeting of the anniversary event, we touched on these also:

Public statement from IFA Congress Saint-Imier 2012, 9-12th August to other exploited and oppressed people of the World. The St. Imier meeting has enabled a lot of groups and militants that are member and non-members of the International of Anarchist Federations (IAF-IFA) to meet each other. IFA would like to sum up the events of the last few days.

One hundred and forty years ago in this town an international movement of 'anti-authoritarians' was founded. It played a major part in the creation of an organised movement of anarchists. They worked then for profound social transformation, and in this manner we have participated, as IFA, in the international meeting in Saint Imier. What we have to offer is the best sort of society that humanity is capable of achieving. We want to create a world in which there is complete economic equality, by which we mean that there should be no personal property but that we

produce and own everything communally, with no need for money.

But as well as economic equality, there would be maximum personal freedom. This means that we live as we want and no one can make us do anything we don't

there is a 'crisis' of Capitalism, but Capitalism *is* crisis. It is a recent system in historical terms and has already brought humanity to its knees many times before producing the current situation. But people all over the World are seeing through this lie and are resisting states and capitalism as

practising new ways of organising which draw heavily on anarchism, for example taking action directly against obstacles to their progress and experimenting with non-hierarchical organisational forms. They include student movements, action against destruction of the natural world and common resources, anti-militarist struggles, those against G8 summits and capitalism in general, and most recently the fight against austerity which unites the international working class. Movements such as Occupy and the Indignados and similar movements of self-organisation against the banking system have shown the importance of using direct action to reclaim public space. The uprisings of oppressed indigenous peoples in recent decades, such as the Zapatistas, have inspired the new social movements and have influenced anarchism itself. Such new movements create large assemblies to make decisions together without leaders. They practice horizontal decision-making. They link-up federally, as organisations of equal status without decision-making bodies at their centre.



want to do, or prevent us from doing what we want to do unless this limits the freedom of others. So, there would be no hierarchy or oppression of any kind. There would be no need for a state or police because we would not need controlling or coercing. There would be no need for wars or global conflict because we would have no political enemies and no desire or need to seize any resources from anyone else. This is what we call Anarchism.

Anarchists reject the idea that it is human nature that one person exploits another and that we are unequal. It is the case that rulers and states throughout history have maintained this system. This lie justifies Capitalism as a 'natural' system. We hear that

never before, and seek to coordinate their efforts across national boundaries. This makes an anarchist society more possible than ever.

But Anarchism is not utopianism. Obviously, for such a society to work, many things must first change, and our task now is to help bring about these vast transformations and provide an analysis that is useful to them. The working class, by which we mean all exploited and impoverished people, ourselves amongst them, has to operate as a mass movement. Crucially, it must not entrust the struggle to new leaders with old ideas, but by determining its own path.

Today, social movements are

But these attempts often fall short of what is possible because meaningful social change requires also that we change as individuals. We seek to be free and equal as individuals, but there must also be voluntary, personal responsibility and self-organisation. The working class itself contains divisions and oppressions and hierarchies which do not disappear just because we want to have no rulers and want to be equal. As members of the working class we therefore struggle internally against our own racism, sexism and patriarchal attitudes and practices. Equally we fight the assumption that heterosexuality is the norm, or that clearly defined

categories 'male' and 'female' are 'normal'. We must identify and oppose discrimination and stereo-

violence possible. We do this through joining with other workers to win small victories. We do



typing on the basis of age or ability. Until internalised inequalities and deference towards hierarchy are identified and abolished we cannot be free, and so we identify and oppose them in social movements and workers organisations as well as in society in general.

Finally, to create this free and equal society, the working class itself must bring down rulers and capital. We call this a 'social revolution'. Anarchists try to build confidence within the working class in our ability to be successful as quickly and with the least

this best through direct action not through reforms and negotiation with bosses. Direct action means not waiting but taking what should belong to all of us. We need to support each other's struggles through Mutual Aid. This means practical solidarity in times of hardship. As well as helping us on a day-to-day basis, this demonstrates to people what we are about. So we practice anarchy now as far as we can in how we organise and how we struggle to prove that an anarchist society is possible.

Statements published by the International of Anarchist Federations at Saint-Imier.

The following extracts from statements represent some of the conclusions we drew which will inform the work of IFA federations following our Congress. They reflect our divergent experiences and the outcomes of our Congress workshops.

The statement on violence and non-violence is an international response to insurrectionist activity. It reflects the dangers faced by our Italian comrades at the moment, and denounces substitutionism. The statement on nuclear power offers an analysis of the problem that anarchists share with reformists, but then also reflects IFA's décroissance ('anti-growth') vision of how things should change, which we share with the

We salute those comrades from the past, their work and the personal sacrifices they made for human emancipation. We continue their work, and critically develop their ideas and apply them to our situation. They would in turn salute the global working class at this point in its history, as it strives for real freedom and equality.

IFA has dealt with many themes over the last 5 days and in particular:

- The economic crisis and social struggle
- International solidarity
- Anti-militarism
- Anti-nuclear and alternative energies
- Migration

On this basis, the IFA has reinvigorated its own activities and invite all exploited people to struggle for transformation of society, for anarchism.

The International of Anarchist Federations (IAF-IFA), 12th August 2012. <http://i-f-a.org>

wider anarchist movement whether or not it uses the terminology.

To federations like the Belarusian and to contacts such as the Peruvians, the more times solidarity with them is expressed in foreign media, and most importantly acted on, the more they know that they cannot be crushed or 'disappeared' with no one acting in their defence. In the Belarusian case, IFA also initiates a day of protest that will have taken place in all our countries by the time Organise! is published.

Finally, we apologise that the English isn't perfect...

Statement on violence and non-violence.

Capitalist globalization creates many distortions between and inside countries. The people and the workers fight back in different ways, sometimes new. Whether in uprisings or situations of insurrection, direct confrontation now has a relatively smaller part. Nevertheless, there is a risk of vanguardist and brigadist tendencies who will lead us into a spiral of violence and counter-violence, in the opposite direction to social emancipation and would only act to play along with both the established political power and of those who pretend to overcome it. The IFA meeting of Saint-Imier denounces this risk and calls all social forces to be inventive with their self-organisational capacity to resist and build the alternative.

Statement on the anti-nuclear struggle and alternative energy

We agree the following:

- The necessity to provide alternatives to the use of nuclear power, using renewable sources of energy that are de-centralised
- The necessity to stop nuclear power plants now (danger, no solution for waste, contamination and pollution of huge areas)
- The necessity to change research about nuclear energy to research focused on a solution for the waste produced for sustaining nuclear power plants in the interest of all people and in the interest of the planet for now and the future. This is only possible if we can overcome profit-orientated companies and national interests.
- The necessity to decentralize energy production and to produce and consume locally. This means to be free of the control of the state and without any hierarchical structure.
- The necessity to share theoretical and practical information about alternatives (renewable energies, energy saving)
- The necessity to reduce consuming energy (for rich and developed countries in order to rebalance the differences with poor and exploited countries) -> this is possible only leaving capitalist model.

Statement of Solidarity with imprisoned Belarusian anarchists

IAF-IFA calls for solidarity with the political prisoners in Belarus, including our anarchist comrades. The first calls for solidarity with Belarusian anarchists appeared some time ago. Today we must all recognise that a new wave of solidarity is urgently needed to help get them out of prison. That's why we call on you to participate in days of action in solidarity with Belarusian political prisoners on 22nd-23rd September 2012 (Belarus parliament election day).

Activists Ihar Alinevich, Mikalai Dziadok, Artsiom Prakapenka, Pavel Syramolatau, Aliaksandr Frantskievich, Jauhen Vas'kovich were detained in autumn 2010 and winter 2011. Then in May 2011 they were sentenced to 3 to 8 years in prison for a series of attacks on state and capital symbols, and are finishing their second year in jail. During this time their comrades and relatives are doing their best to help them feel comfortable in custody and to set them free. In October 2011 they were acknowledged as political prisoners by rights-watch organisations. This improved their chances to be freed as soon as possible, because at the moment the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, faces pressure from the European Union to set

free all of the political prisoners and to decriminalise them. From August 2011 he has already pardoned more than 30 of them, but none of our comrades was granted freedom. Lukashenko said publicly that he will pardon only those who write a petition for pardon, thus admitting their guilt and asking him personally for mercy. All the rest will remain in prison, he stated. In fact all imprisoned anarchists asked many times if they wanted to sign such a petition. Five of them refused to do it.

Artsiom Prakapenka signed it under pressure but he is still in prison. Now there are 15 political prisoners left in Belarus, and among them are 5 of our comrades and 1 more who was imprisoned for taking solidarity action for them.



All these political prisoners are experiencing different kinds of pressure from the administration of the prisons they are held in, because Lukashenko wants to win in this situation and make out it is not the EU that forced him to set free the political prisoners in fear of more political and economic sanctions. Examples of pressure put on the prisoners include: transfers to other penal institutions, preventing food supplies coming from outside, preventing and limiting visits from relatives, denying them phone calls, delays and gaps in the receipt of letters, solitary confinement, transfer to a penal facility with a special regime, etc.

The anarchists federations that met together at the IAF Congress in Saint-Imier, Switzerland strongly oppose the fact that our comrades are now being traded for benefits from the EU and condemn the pressure that they have been experiencing. We call on everybody to protest on the 22nd and the 23rd of September against these tortures and demand the immediate liberation of the political prisoners of Belarus, including anarchists.

Statement of solidarity with Peruvian anarchists

IFA expresses its solidarity with the social movement in Peru that opposes the mining projects and especially the CONGA project. Little by little, the government is wasting the natural resources of the country for the profit of the multinational companies. By selling its land, Peru not only deprives its people of the benefits of mining operations but also permanently destroys the eco-systems and the local economy by polluting water and soil, ruining the agricultural base of those regions.

In Cajamarca, the struggle to guarantee the access to water and the right of the people to make use of the land they live in is a legitimate one.

The IFA is also horrified by the repression which has already left five dead in Cajamarca during the State of Emergency. Demonstrations have been brutally put down and there have been several disappearances. Furthermore, IFA offers all of its support to the comrades of the USL who are engaged in the struggle and the activities of their organisation, and who are suffering from police pressure and harassment. In the press they are treated as terrorists.

IFA will do anything possible to create practical solidarity with its Peruvian comrades.

CONGA no va!

Viva los que luchan!

Prefigurative Politics and Self-Management Practices: Saint-Imier and Beyond

We arrived at Saint Imier and followed the crafty 'circle A' signs to one of two main fields for camping. Port-a-loos were already set up and were nearly immaculate and seemed to be cleaned every day. Jugs of water appeared the morning following our arrival and were promptly refilled whenever they ran dry. One comrade remarked that the entire accommodation scenario reminded her of a big festival without any stewards. When events began the next day, translations were provided on a volunteer basis – instantaneously via headphones at the huge roundtable discussions and in ad hoc groups at smaller panels. Three meals a day were provided by a visiting activist kitchen and only a few volunteers seemed to be needed each afternoon to keep the food flowing.

Perhaps the above description makes Saint-Imier seem like a fantasy holiday. We certainly thought so for the first half of our stay in the campground. I can't remember the last time I went that long without brewing my own cup of tea! But maybe we should have been worried that the hardest thing we had to do all day was climb two hills while this fantastic beast of a conference functioned for and around us.

One night, about two thirds of the way through the conference, a drunk and aggressive comrade

arrived after being ejected from another campsite and fell into a fire, badly burning his left leg. In the intervention that ensued, multiple comrades, including his girlfriend, were attacked by him. Few comrades felt capable of intervening, and most expressed a general unwillingness to act. A general assembly was called, but most passers-by would stay to hear a translation of what had occurred and leave before any decisions were made. Eventually guard shifts were established until we could escort him off the mountain and onto a train in the morning.

Once we made it to town, the interventions of many comrades expressed a very different understanding of the proper response to domestic violence and aggression than many of us could even imagine, much less believe was happening in front of us. Eventually he was put on a train by a group of organisers convened to act as safe space enforcers.

After one of the most exasperating fourteen hours of my life, I sat down with other comrades involved in the intervention and a member of the safe spaces committee sent to help facilitate a debriefing in order to reflect on how the situation had come about, what we would have done differently in hindsight, and ways in which the conference organisers

and community as a whole could have done more to help. It didn't take long to begin to ask questions about some of the structural changes that could have helped prevent the situation in the first place or at least have mediated it as it was occurring.

Why hadn't our campsite started every morning with a general assembly? Why didn't we all feel more invested in maintaining our space? Why was it that white people so severely outnumbered people of colour, leaving few options of engagement that did not involve several white men restraining a black man? Why were so few women available to help comfort the woman who had been attacked? Why were so few of us well versed in domestic violence intervention tactics, or even general feminist principles? Would the community have responded so nonchalantly if we were threatened as a whole by fascists? (To this last question, the answer came the following night amidst rumours of a fascist attack: no). Of the people who helped complete the intervention at the end of the process in an official organising capacity, why were most of them the same overworked volunteers we'd seen helping with most other aspects of the conference?

We do far more work to keep ourselves fed, clean, and happy

on a daily basis than we had to do in order to attend a successful, week-long international conference. All of us know that planning and executing such a major event was a constant logistical nightmare, and all things considered, Saint-Imier ran like clockwork (Swiss clockwork, of course). But maybe something that obviously took a huge amount of effort should have required a little bit of effort from us. And the significant gaps that existed seemed to fall into patterns that might have been avoided if a wider group was involved in the process every step of the way. From limited translations and high prices to major issues with a lack of awareness of an appreciation for ability and gender, the aspects of the conference that seemed most overlooked were usually those that involved subordinated groups.

In this way, increased participation would be more likely to have led to a situation in which persons with experience running things like safe spaces or conferences with wheelchair access, or hopefully people looking to benefit directly from changes like these, prices that reflected the strength of the Swiss Franc, or people who would need translations to languages other than French or English would have been present in the decision-making process long before the first day of the conference, when panic ensued over the lack of a safe space policy, a safe space tent, accessible meeting rooms, the ability to camp or purchase food, or a lack of translators, with very little time to craft solutions, especially to all these issues at once. Making comrades feel like afterthoughts should be something we try to

avoid at all costs, and including as many people as possible in the planning process for events would have the benefit of helping to prevent many of those incidents from occurring.

But practical benefits like these are only part of the reason anarchists engage with the politics of prefiguration. Self-management practices make us work to eliminate many of the aspects of capitalist society we see as structurally integral to it, independently damaging to us, and inconsistent with anarchist communist principles. Our general alienation from the labour processes involved in the production of the conference caused many of us to see it as something of a commodity simply handed to us on a platter, with no engagement with work we should have done to produce it together instead of leaving it on the backs of a few conference organisers. And while it was obviously easier to have two organisations – The French FAF and Swiss OSL – plan and run the conference for purposes of expedience, we have different methods of organising as anarchists that should probably have taken precedence over perceived ease in certain decisions.

General assemblies and large group decisions make deliberation a long and often frustrating process. But we keep trying to perfect them because we see the reasons behind the anarchist desire to move away from speedy, individualized decision-making and the value in practicing alternative methods of organising. Things as benign and useless as universal suffrage were seen not only as dangerous but also as damaging to efficiency before

they were institutionalised and transformed what we see as a necessary baseline for participation. But this institutionalised memory took time and practice to craft, and so too will the transition to self-managed events and group decision-making be arduous. But every time we decide to forgo it we lose an opportunity to make it easier the next time.

Upon returning from Saint-Imier, we decided to examine self-management in more depth and look for ways that we successfully or unsuccessfully prefigure anarchist communist society in the shell of the old, why we sometimes choose to avoid self-management in anarchist gatherings, and ways in which others have taken on the task of transitioning from small committee-led organisation to more participatory means of organising large-scale events. For example, doing one's own washing up after a communal meal is commonly understood as a necessary step in prefiguring a society without servants. But having 300 hands in the same bucket of water is significantly less sanitary than splitting the duties between five people. Are these people our servants? It's doubtful. Still, such choices should probably give us more pause than we sometimes allow. Any move that strays from self-management and prefigurative practices ought to be scrutinized for its harms instead of accepted purely for its benefits.

We hope to solicit more discussion about examples of times at which comrades have noticed a lack of self-management at anarchist events and solutions we've seen and hope to see in the future.

Anarcha-feminism at Saint Imier

The Saint Imier gathering had an exciting 5 daily anarcha-feminist roundtable sessions timetabled in, to be held in the largest and best equipped space, which had simultaneous translation equipment. The first two sessions were mixed and the remaining three were women only including those socialised as women and self identifying.

The organisation was difficult with a lack of structure which was to be blamed mainly on the participants but also, to a degree, the organisers. It is not enough to provide a space when people are coming from far and wide. An agenda, a starting point, would have made a difference. These meetings suffered from the tyranny of structurelessness. It is to the credit of the anarcha-feminists that no-one took advantage of the situation.

Having said that, there was great discussion about how the movement suffers from sexism. We debated childcare as a shared responsibility (and the fear of paedophilia stopping us from minding our own children). We discussed shared roles at events, meetings

taken over by men, the shortage of women in the movement, sexual assault, separate organising, caucuses, violence and other issues which unfortunately are clouded in my memory from late nights and sleeping in a tent!

Two significant incidents were discussed regarding safer spaces. The organisers had not set up a safer space or a policy. This was done by some awesome comrades based in Germany but because it was done "on the spot" was not perfect. An AF member found themselves having to deal with a violent male who had assaulted others and there really was not enough support available.

Another incident occurred at the economics debate which had male presenters and facilitators. A woman got up to speak from the floor and was stopped after a minute or so, being told that what she had said had already been said and thanks, but no thanks. We discussed adopting a new hand signal for meeting, a G shape for Gender, to mean that what was happening was a gendered issue and needed dealing

with. I didn't see this adopted at Saint-Imier but it is something to consider here in the UK.

An AF member wrote a discussion document and had it translated summarising some of the problems faced by female anarchists in the movement. Due to the disorganisation, this was never really discussed. This was frustrating in the extreme. It is reproduced in this issue though and we welcome comments on it.

At the final general meeting, the anarcha-feminists made an ironic intervention, taking space at the front of the room in preparation for any attempt to put us down. We particularly highlighted the lack of time given to female speakers: "...and if we had been allowed to speak, who knows what we might have said!" We also announced the agreement that there will be an international non-mixed anarcha-feminist gathering in 2 years time.

Despite the problems, it was a huge privilege to spend so much time in the company of hundreds of great, strong women of all ages and many experiences.

Saint-Imier Snapshots: Thoughts from a Younger Comrade

Though I've been involved with my local AF group for the past four years, I suppose at 22 I'm on the young-ish side of the age spectrum. For me, going to the Saint-Imier gathering was an exciting opportunity to connect with comrades from all over the world and to situate what we're doing now in a global and historical context.

Sometimes it can be difficult to step outside of everyday life, to connect your individual problems

and struggles to those of others. Sometimes it's hard to not become consumed by the drudgery of work or the anxiety and frustration of sitting in the Jobcentre. For me, one of the things that keeps me going is the strength and support of friends and comrades. When we organise together on a local, national, or international level, it feels powerful.

The thing that defined Saint-Imier most for me was possibility. The possibility of getting organised

in increasingly effective ways, of simultaneously developing our theory and our practice, of taking what we're already doing and making it better. There were of course a number of problems with the event, some serious and endemic, but I hope those are things that we can learn from.

We've come a long way in 140 years and the thing that excites me most is how much further we're going to go.

The Legacy of Saint-Imier

The following article contributed by Brian Morris is the text of a talk to the Anarchist Federation's London Group on May 19th 2012.

In the opening pages of my book on Bakunin (1993) I offered a quote from the Ghanaian poet Ayi Kwei Armah. It reads "The present is where we get lost, if we forget our past and have no vision of the future." This phrase comes to mind when we come to celebrate the iconic founding of the anarchist movement at Saint Imier in Switzerland in September 1872.

Engaging with the past does not involve some kind of ancestor worship, any more than envisaging a better future for humankind entails us becoming lost in utopian dreams. Anarchists should certainly not feel embarrassed in celebrating the achievements of an earlier generation of libertarian socialists - not as historical curiosities but as a source of inspiration and ideas. Here I wish simply to offer some reflections on the kind of anarchism, or revolutionary socialism, that emerged from the political struggles of members of the First International, around 1870.

As a political philosophy, anarchism has had perhaps the worst press. It has been ignored, maligned, ridiculed, abused, misunderstood and misinterpreted by writers from all sides of the political spectrum: Marxists, democrats, conservatives and liberals. Theodore Roosevelt, the American president, famously described anarchism as a "crime against the

whole human race" and in common parlance anarchy is invariably linked with disorder, violence and nihilism. A clear understanding of anarchism is further inhibited by the fact that the term "anarchist" has been applied to a wide variety of philosophies and individuals. Thus Gandhi, Spencer, Tolstoy, Berdyaev, Stirner, Ayn Rand, Nietzsche, along with more familiar? figures such as Proudhon, Bakunin and Goldman, have all been described as anarchists. This has led Marxist critics, such as John Molyneux, to dismiss "anarchism" as a completely incoherent political philosophy, both in its theories and in the strategy for social change.

But it isn't? for what has to be recognized is that anarchism is fundamentally a historical movement and political tradition that emerged around 1870, mainly among working class members of the International Working Mens Association, widely known as the First International. It involved a split, or "great schism" (as James Toll called it) within the Association. It is usually described as if it focused around a personal dispute between Karl Marx and Michael Bakunin. But, as Cole and others have suggested, this schism was not simply a clash of personalities; it involved two factions within the socialist movement, and two quite different conceptions of socialism, of the

processes of revolutionary change and the conditions of human liberation. The anarchist faction did not originally describe themselves as anarchists but rather as "federalists" or as "anti-authoritarian socialists", but they came to adopt the label of their Marxist opponents, and describe themselves as "anarchist communists". As a political movement and tradition anarchism thus emerged among workers of Spain, France, Italy and Switzerland in the aftermath of the Paris Commune.

Among its more well-known proponents were Elisee Reclus, Francois Dumertheray, James Guillaume, Errico Malatesta, Carlo Cafiaro, Jean Grave and Peter Kropotkin. (Louise Michel was also closely associated with the movement, but she was deported to New Caledonia after the defeat of the Paris Commune, along with many thousand communards. She spent six years in exile). Between 1870 and 1930 anarchism or revolutionary/ libertarian socialism, spread throughout the world, and was thus by no means restricted to Europe. By the end of the nineteenth century there was, of course, other strands of anarchism, but anarchist-communism was certainly the dominant tendency. It is important to note that class struggle anarchism was not the creation of academic scholars, but emerged within working class activism, and expressed a revolt

against the social and working conditions of industrial capitalism. Kropotkin's earliest writings were entitled "Words of a Rebel" (1885) adopted from the Swiss anarchist periodical "Le Revolt". Kropotkin, who joined the General Section of the First International in February 1872, described anarchism as a kind of synthesis between radical liberalism, with its emphasis on the liberty of the individual, and socialism or

demic philosophers and Stirnerite individualists (or egoists) to make a radical dichotomy between anarchism and socialism is therefore, in both conceptual and historical grounds, quite misleading and distorts our understanding of socialism.

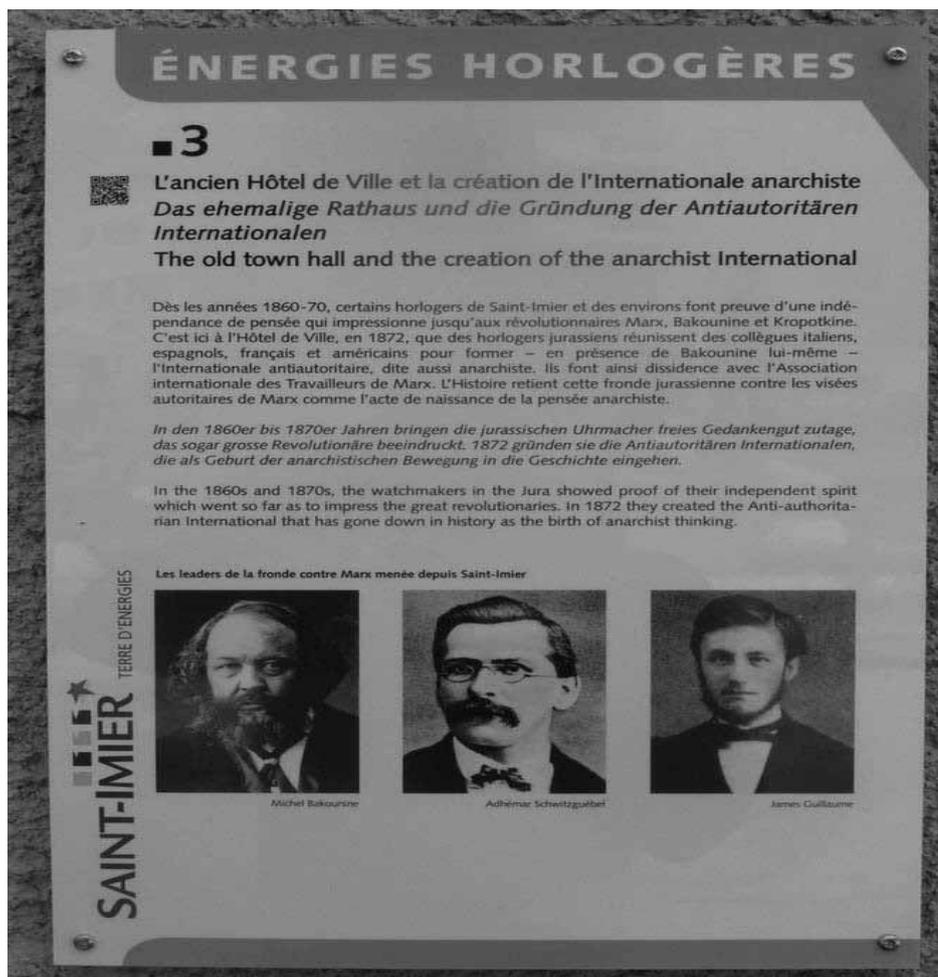
Anarchism, or at least the kind of class struggle anarchism that was advocated by the social revolutionaries of the First International, can be defined in terms of four

duty of the proletariat is the "destruction of all political power". Secondly, the complete repudiation of the capitalist market economy, along with its wage system, private property, its competitive ethos, and the ideology of possessive individualism. In fact, the early class struggle anarchists were fervently anti-capitalist, referring to the wage system as "wage slavery."

Thirdly, it expressed a vision of a society based solely on mutual aid and voluntary co-operation, a form of social organization that would provide the fullest expression of human liberty and all forms of social life that were independent of both the state and capitalism. Class struggle anarchists thus believed in voluntary organizations, not in chaos, ephemerality or "anything goes", and they viewed both tribal and kin-based societies and everyday social life in more complex societies as exhibiting some of the principles of anarchy. Both Elise Reclus and Kropotkin were deeply interested in the social life of tribal peoples, or "societies without government".

Fourthly, the early anarchists, like the Marxists, embraced the radical aspects of the Enlightenment - a stress on the importance of critical reason and empirical science; a rejection of all knowledge claims based on traditional authority, mystical institution and divine revelation; and an affirmation of such universal human values as liberty, solidarity and equality. Anarchism was thus a form of ethical socialism.

As revolutionary socialism or anarchism developed in the twenty years after the Paris Commune of 1871, it tended to critique, and to



communism, which implied a repudiation of capitalism and an emphasis on communal life and voluntary associations. This synthesis is well illustrated in Bakunin's famous adage: 'That liberty, without socialism is privilege and injustice, and that socialism without liberty is slavery and brutality'.

The tendency of Marxists aca-

essential tenets or principles. Firstly, a rejection of state power and all forms of hierarchy and oppression; a critique of all forms of power and authority that inhibit the liberty of the individual, viewed, of course, as a social being, not as a disembodied ego, or some abstract possessive individual, still less as a fixed benign essence. As a resolution of the St. Imier congress put it: the first

define itself in relation to three other forms of radical politics. All are still around and have their contemporary advocates. These are mutualism, radical individualism or egoism, and Marxism.



Élisée Reclus

Although Kropotkin and the class struggle anarchists always acknowledged that Proudhon expressed libertarian sentiments, and was a pioneer and an inspiration in the development of anarchism, they were always critical of the radical tradition that became known as Mutualism. Embraced by many American individualist anarchists, such as Warren, Spooner and Tucker, this tradition affirmed the market economy, private property and petty-commodity production - all of which were rejected by the anarchist communists.

They were equally critical of the kind of radical individualism (egoism) expressed by Max Stirner, suggesting it was a metaphysical doctrine remote from real social life and bordered on nihilism. Kropotkin stressed that it was meaningless to emphasize the supremacy of the "unique one"

in conditions of oppression and economic exploitation, and felt that Stirner's strident egoism ran counter to the feelings of mutual solidarity and equality that most people acknowledged.

Finally, of course, from its inception, the anarchists were highly critical of the kind of politics expressed by Marx and Engels, which later became known as social democracy, or simply Marxism. In their famous "Communist Manifesto" (1846) Marx and Engels emphasized that the communist party was to organize the working class, in order to achieve "the conquest of political power".

This would entail the establishment of a "workers state" or "the dictatorship of the proletariat" in which all forms of production (including agriculture), as well as transport, communication and banking, would be "owned" and administered through the Nation State. It would involve, as Marx and Engels put it, "the most decisive centralizations of power in the hands of the state authority" Bakunin and the anarchist communists of course, always stressed that the parliamentary road to socialism would lead to reformism, and the "seizure of state power" by the communist party on behalf of the working people, would lead to tyranny and state capitalism. And history seems to have proved them right on both counts.

In contrast to "political action" - involvement with state power - which anarchists always felt formed a symbiotic relationship with capitalism - the early anarchists advocated "direct action". This was expressed through insurrectionism, anarcho-syndicalism

or community-based politics. In recent years class struggle anarchism, as advocated and practised by an earlier generation of communist anarchists, has been declared "obsolete", or "outmoded", or dismissed as "leftism" by contemporary anarchists, mostly by those ensconced in the academy. At the end of the twentieth century, we are informed, a "new" anarchism has emerged, a "post-left anarchy". It seems to consist of a rather esoteric pastiche of several political tendencies; namely, anarcho-primitivism, the anarcho-capitalism of Rothbard and Ayn Rand, the "poetic terrorism" that derives from Nietzsche and the avant-garde, embraced with fervour by Hakim Bey, the radical individualism (egoism) of the contemporary devotees of Max Stirner, and so-called "post anarchism" which derives from the writings of such academic mandarins as Derrida, Lyotard, Foucault and Deleuze. There is nothing new or original in these various currents of thought, and the idea that an earlier generation of anarchists supported modernity or modernism is quite perverse. For the "old" anarchists, the libertarian socialists, completely repudiated three of the key components of so-called "modernity" - the democratic state, the capitalist market economy, and the "abstract" individual of bourgeois philosophy.

We need therefore to continue to re-affirm the legacy of anarchist communism, as it was first formulated at the congress of St. Imier long ago, as well as making it relevant to contemporary social and political struggles.

Neither insurrectionism nor Reformism but Anarchism!

In this presentation at Saint-Imier we suggested that both of these political currents – reformism and insurrectionism - come from the same source: frustration with the slow and difficult process of building a mass revolutionary movement.

Our main point is to argue that there are, unfortunately, no short cuts to creating a new society. The only way we will overthrow capitalism and the state is through a revolutionary process that is carried out by the large majority of the working class. We are not against 'insurrection'. Insurrection is essential as an element of Revolution. It is insurrectionism as an ideology, not insurrection as a facet of the revolutionary process that we take issue with. In other words, we critique insurrection as a short-cut to revolution.

Nor are we against 'reforms'. Reforms make our lives a little better as working class people and build our confidence in our power. What we are against is when these processes are the only or major tactic that anarchists engage in and as such become a strategy in themselves that is to say, an actual strategy that frustrated revolutionaries resort to. They replace the strategy of the actual transformation of social relations and become the basis for ideologies that undermine social-revolutionary ideology.

Insurrectionism

What do we mean by insurrectionism as an ideology or political current? On its own terms it, according to the insurrectionist Joe Black:

'Revolution is a concrete event, it must be built daily through more modest attempts which do not have all the liberating characteristics of social revolution in the true sense. These more modest attempts are insurrections. In them the uprisings of the most exploited and excluded of society and the most politically sensitized minority opens the way to the possible involvement of an increasingly wider strata of the exploited on a flux of rebellion which could lead to revolution'.

These 'modest attempts' sound as though they occur spontaneously as an expression of this alliance between the most politicised and the most marginalised. There are some examples, but this is romanticism. In reality, most insurrectionary activity is too clandestine on the part of the 'politicised' for marginalised people to participate in. Activity is undertaken by affinity groups or 'cells' and are largely independent of the rest of the movement, let alone equating to an underclass.

This is because the kinds of activities that they are engaged in are necessarily illegal, and therefore must be kept secret from others. So insurrectionism is essentially a political current that uses violence, whether against people or property, to attack specific targets associated with capitalism or the state. The effect is to shock rather than mobilise exploited people.

The actions could take the form of smashing an ATM or a window of MacDonald's, or kneecapping a politician or capitalist. It is not the actions themselves that make the current insurrectionists but that fact that these actions are elevated to being more than a tactic. Communiques are issued using very vivid and passionate language that expresses struggle as something personally liberating, but there is little thought as to how the action fits in with an overall collective strategy, because there is no other strategy.

Why are some anarchists attracted to insurrectionism?

It offers not just action against the state and capital but retribution. In the book *Black Flame* the authors cite Galleani as one of the first to articulate these ideas in

c.1920. Galleani opposed 'partial victories' by the class or 'immediate and partial improvements, that consent to the existing economic system'. We consider that this misunderstands the value of 'partial improvements/victory' in class struggle.

Insurrectionists will accuse other anarchists of being dull and bureaucratic. The Informal Anarchist Federation of Italy's Giuseppe Dondoglio Antolini says that the informal cells do not 'seek to establish (nor much less strengthen) any centralised and bureaucratic 'federation'.

'They will also accuse us of being cowardly- of not being willing to engage in direct violent confrontation with the state and capitalism now. They say you need to be willing to sacrifice yourself. The informals' Olga Cell say in their communiqué on the shooting of Adolfini, 'If we were realists we would not take on such risks', and on organised anarchists, 'the only compass guiding your action is the penal code. (You are) willing to risk only up to a point... This is the only way we can get anywhere now - not having to wait for the slow build up of a mass movement - not wasting time in what are seen as reformist struggles or seeking 'social consensus' (Olga cell comminqué).

We identify two currents amongst modern insurrectionists, in Britain at least. Some feel they are inspiring people- taking action against capitalism and the state that may galvanise others to take action. This was most prevalent in the 1970s and 80s amongst 'illegalists', with inspirations from Bonanno etc. Such insurrectionism may be the result of failures of working class movements to succeed. They are an attempt to

'kick-start' a more generalised uprising.

Other insurrectionists seem more concerned about the effect of the action on themselves - the fact that it makes them feel empowered. This feeling of empowerment seems self-indulgent to us, as more important than the actual outcome. This part of the current is not so interested in inspiring a mass movement. They are 'anti-mass' or even 'anti-civ(ilisation)' (an American Individualist concept) in fact they have no faith in the willingness/



ability of the working class to ever organise effective action.

Insurrection as advocated by 'Feral Faun' and 'Michele Fabiani' is explicitly individualistic. It harks back to the days when anarchists had no choice but to expropriate – to steal – from the middle class and ruling class in order to survive, like the Bonnot gang and others. But in itself this will almost certainly not resonate with working class people.

Other reasons why we aren't insurrectionists?

There are some other key prob-

lems with insurrectionism. Setting aside the question of violence against people, even attacks on objects or property are only worth doing if they are meaningful to the working class and if we can show them to be effective. Action has to fit into a wider, experience-based strategy for social change. Working class people need to feel involved in that process of change and not feel that they are the targets of it. Empowerment of the individual is important but we have to change ourselves and our social relationships as well. Our activity has to

prefigure a better world – we have to express the values and practice of that anarchist society through our action now.

In more detail then...

- **About effective targets.** Many of the targets are meaningless to ordinary workers. Why attack a railway network or an ATM, in some examples from Britain? Even with a communiqué this does not resonate with what is wrong in people's lives. Certainly there is no consensus in the European working class at least (we can't speak outside of the societies we know) for violence against

people (unless perhaps this is against fascists, cops or scabs). There is certainly no consensus for violence against bosses or politicians at present. This may not worry insurrectionists but it worries us, even though it is the case that the working class takes on moral values about violence against people from the state and the church. This does not mean that we shouldn't have ethics ourselves about violence. We want to use as little of it as possible. But targeting key public figures for violence is to find a symbolic target. The balance of forces does not change if a cop or industrialist is killed. In the 1990 preface to the Australian text 'You Can't Blow up a Social Relationship' (of 1979), Chaz Bufe says 'The total collapse of this society would give no guarantees about what replaced it'. Even if it did not lead to repression, we cannot achieve a social revolution by frightening people and endangering workers like firemen and cleaners who might get hurt if some symbolic target is firebombed. This risk makes it unacceptable to us in the current political climate.

- **About learning lessons.** Many insurrectionists don't understand the complex nature of the events leading up to a revolutionary moment. History is not linear. There are all sorts of events/actions/ideas, some apparently mundane, that lead up to the more visible events and help things come to a head, even where they are about reformist issues.

- **About strategy** - Insurrectionists have no overall strategy that can adapt through consideration of the current political climate. It is not one embedded in the wider working class movement. There is no strategy for creating a new

society which must be built from the base up and involve a mass movement. This points to weak ideology. Insurrectionism places the activist and affinity group above the class. As such it is substitutionist.

- **About communicating with the working class.** Many insurrectionists are dismissive of ordinary people and call them 'sheeple'. 'Joe Black' goes on to say that insurrectionists are part of this group of most exploited and marginalised. To us this is a joke. Useful ideas that might emerge out of these moments are not spread because there is usually no link to the wider class and no real link with the most marginalised, just an ideological identification with them. Insurrectionists are reliant on the bourgeois mass media. Without the media they would be nothing because no one would know about them. Actions that are based on real struggles of the working class have meaning and significance to those who are involved, and do not need the bourgeois media to spread them.

- **About the individual.** Having the subjective feeling of being empowered is not the same as actually being empowered. Even if there are moments of actual empowerment, they are meaningless if they are not part of an overall strategy that links up with others. It is more important that the working class feels empowered. As individuals we have to change in order for an anarchist society to be possible. We can only build slowly the idea that a self-managed society is the most beneficial society for us as individuals as well as a class.

- **About the future society.** We are prefiguring the future society

- this takes time e.g. connecting directly and openly with people in all sorts of contexts, not secretly. Chaz Bufe also notes that 'Means determine ends. The use of horrifying means guarantees horrifying ends'. As he says

'The job for revolutionaries is not to take up the gun but to engage in the long, hard work of publicising an understanding of this society. We must build a movement which links the many problems and issues people face with the need for revolutionary change, which attacks all pseudo-solutions – both individual and social – offered within this society which seeks to demystify those solutions offered by the authoritarian left and instead to place the total emphasis on the need for self-activity and self-organisation on the part of those people willing to take up issues.'

When and why do we support insurrection as a tactic? Direct action is an important tactic for social anarchists. This has been the case since the formation of our movement. Kropotkin said that 'It is the risen people who are the real agent and not the working class organised in (Capitalist production) and seeking to assert itself as labour power, as a more rational industrial body or social brain than the employers). Malatesta said, 'The insurrectional fact, destined to affirm socialist principles by deed, is the most efficacious means of propaganda'. But both were advocating insurrectionary uprisings as opposed to reformism. They were not thinking of a small highly politicised minority as either starting or central to this process. Their view was that anarchists should be involved when insurrections do take place and supportive of

these, not least in terms of solidarity if repression follows. But they should do this as part of the working class. It will be the majority that rises up in an ultimately effective insurrection.

These actions must, however, be thoroughly thought through and not carried out just to make the individuals carrying them out to feel better. The action must be part of an overall strategy and linked to a wider working class movement. The consequences of carrying out the actions must also be considered as it is not just about a few individuals willing to sacrifice themselves - there may be wider consequences. Timing is vital. The working class will need to defend itself against the violence of the state both when and before the revolutionary event happens, and anarchist propaganda cannot shy away from this. Anarchists have to win this argument in their propaganda and involvement in the class struggle – the hard way, in other words. Social anarchists believe that a new society will be created by the mass of the working class. The struggles in which we are engaged now are part of the process of preparing us both for the moment of revolution and, equally importantly, the difficult task of constructing an anarchist communist society. Within this overall strategy there will be moments of insurrection, but these are part of an altogether more complex process of social transformation.

Reformism

Not the opposite of insurrectionism but another manifestation of the impatience and frustration of wanting change now!

Reformism

• What do we mean by reformism?

There are a number of elements to the ideology of reformism. Full-blown reformism is a feature of organisations like trade unions and political parties. However, elements of reformism exist within currents that see themselves as revolutionary anarchists.

Engaging in the struggle for reform and believing that this is the end in itself.

A belief that we can achieve a new society through the gradual winning of reforms.

Taking positions in political, economic and social structures and believing that you are creating a space for revolutionary activity. Substituting yourself for the masses.

• How is reformism manifested in the anarchist movement itself?

This could include organisational structure, role in trade unions, single issue campaigns, support for national liberation etc.

Anarchist organisations are often subjected to the pull of reformism. This is because of the difficulty of being part of wider working class struggles and also because of the difficulties inherent in anarchist methods of organising and decision-making. Quite rightly, social anarchists do not want to be isolated from the wider working class movement and this necessitates being involved in reformist organisations and campaigns such as trade unions and support for the struggles against oppression around the world. However, once involved, the new role often takes over and instead of the individual being kept from 'corruption' by being part of a solidly revolutionary anarchist movement, the

individuals begin to change their views on what anarchism is and affect the politics of the organisation that they are in or else become dissatisfied and want to create a new organisation that can accommodate their new views.

The end result is an anarchist political organisation in which the members are heavily implicated in union structures and/or support for national liberation struggles.

The other aspect of reformism comes with views on the organisational structures. Trying to create revolutionary anarchist structures is both time-consuming and painful. As we are trying to prefigure the new society we want to maximise participation and not have a system where decision-making responsibility is handed over to a small group of people in the name of being more effective. This can be seen in support for simple majority voting. Though we in the AF do not reject the principle of voting, the aim of decision-making should be consensus, in which the group or organisation. This can be very time-consuming as it involves a lot of discussion. Understandably, some anarchists become frustrated and want to be more efficient. Simple majority voting with limited discussion, committees of 'leaders' who make decisions about policies and actions, are all aspects of this frustration. Unfortunately such structures lead to a reformist outlook- a belief in representative democracy and the abandonment of any attempt to actually revolutionise common decision-making processes.

• How is reformism a pull for individuals? What causes people

to leave the anarchist movement and move towards reformist options?

Over the years countless numbers of revolutionary anarchists have left the movement and expressly adopted reformism. Part of the reason for this might be the reformist nature of some anarchist politics as well as other factors. One of the main reasons for this (like with the insurrectionists) is losing patience with the slow

as anarchists and increasingly get entangled by these campaigns/organisations and lose contact with the anarchist movement. This is understandable considering the lack of seriousness amongst many anarchists- posing about (like the insurrectionists) and not involved in serious struggle. Those attracted to reformism often mention the fact that they are at long last engaging with 'real' working class people.

• Why we reject reformism?



progress made towards building a mass working class movement. In addition, people have been involved in the struggle for reforms as anarchist, and in the process become overly focused on winning the reforms and losing sight of the actual end of these struggles. Living under capitalism, it is understandable that people want to win some concessions and make life better in the here and now. They get involved in single issue campaigns or trade unions

We reject both kinds of reformism for a number of reasons:

- It's not about building a culture of resistance, not about empowering people but only of being efficient or winning some demand.
- The process of what takes place- the empowering of working class people, the building up of skills and confidence- is as important as winning some reform.

This is especially true as capitalism and the state are very capable of incorporating any reform or taking back any concessions made. Therefore, it is vital that the power of the working class has developed so it can continue to fight. If you give up your power to representatives or leaders of any kind, then the movement as a whole is weakened.

- The non-anarchist reformists have no perception that the winning of the reform is only one small step and not the end in itself. The focus is on fixing a few things- of getting £9.00 an hour rather than £6.00- rather than seeing this as the end in itself.

- There are no short-cuts. We are about building a culture of resistance and preparing for a complete transformation of society. The ends do not justify the means.

• Why do we support campaigns for reforms as a tactic?

The struggle for individual reforms- higher wages, against cuts etc- is an important part of building a mass revolutionary movement. In addition, it is important in itself to improve people's conditions in the here and now. However, this can only be done within a context of a long-term revolutionary vision of a new society. Otherwise, individuals get tangled up in the actual reformist struggle- never to escape. Or, individuals think that by them taking positions or by having more 'efficient' organisational structures they will be better placed to win reforms, forgetting that they are losing the basic anarchist principles in the process.

Anarchism in Practice Today

The following article was presented as the IFA contribution to one of the Round Tables at the Saint-Imier gathering on 10th September entitled 'Faire l'anarchisme aujourd'hui', translated as 'Anarchism in practice today'. It starts by expressing some of the common principles of anarchist communism and then proceeds to look at its relationship to recent social movements, using Occupy as the main example. It then asks some questions about how we can benefit from understanding across borders, reflecting the implicit internationalism of much of the Occupy ethos. There have been various other texts coming out analysing Occupy. We hope this will be a useful contribution.

Principles

Social anarchism or anarchist communism as practiced by member organisations of the International of Anarchist Federations (IAF-IFA- ФАБ) is based on some key principles:

We are revolutionaries. Our activity and propaganda is rooted in the today, but always looks ahead to revolution. **Revolution** involves a total change in the way society is organised and how individuals relate to each other. In particular, capitalism and authoritarian relationships must be replaced with a society of free association and an economics without ownership or money where the world's resources are shared according to need (communism). We are not in favour of reforms as an end point of our activity.

We aim to help create mass movements based on class struggle. Anarchist organisations as they exist in IFA aim to ferment class struggle. While class relationships exist there should be no peace between the bosses (ruling

class) and the majority working class. Anarchist organisations aim to build solidarity, confidence and experience in the working class to help create mass movements across the world that are aiming to make change happen. This also means we do not want to create relationships only between activists. Even when anarchist activists aim to influence others by creating examples of meaningful activity, we are always seeking to organise actively and directly with more people outside of our organisations to widen the struggle.

Non-hierarchical organisation.

Today, we aim to sustain organisations where individuals work collectively. The anarchist organisation aims to work internally in a non-hierarchical manner across a wide geographical area. Commonly this means a federation of local groups where the members of each group operate as equals without leaders, and the relationship between groups is also one of equals without leadership. To make this happen we use the structure of delegation of individ-

uals from groups so that decisions can be made involving more than one group, regionally, nationally, and internationally. The national group is partly one of convenience and is often based on language. For this reason we have in IFA, for example, the French-speaking anarchist federation (La Fédération Anarchiste Francophone, France and French-speaking Belgium) and the german-speaking anarchist federation (Föderation Deutschsprachiger AnarchistInnen, Germany and German-speaking Switzerland).

We aim to be transnational.

Direct Action. Our activity is aimed at making a change directly and taking full responsibility for our participation as individuals and groups. We do not aim to influence authorities to change laws or to ask for reforms of the current system. At the same time, we want to build a mass movement, so anarchist organisations cannot do things on behalf of other people. For example a movement of the unemployed must be led by the unemployed themselves. Action by groups needs to be mindful of the mass of the work-

ing class. Actions that are not understood outside of a small activist group may have little wider effect and they can more easily be misinterpreted by the media or police, especially if they can be labelled as criminal actions.

Some recent history



This section looks at historically recent social movements that have been influenced by anarchist practice. Following Stop the City actions (London, 1980s), the Carnival Against Capitalism (J18, London, 1999) against the Cologne G8 summit and the anti-WTO protests (N30, Seattle, 1999) were organised by people seeking to highlight and oppose the effects of neoliberal trade policies. Both these events involved anarchists and direct action orientated movements such as Reclaim the Streets, and environmental groups, all having experience with direct action on the streets. They also attracted labour organisations, religious groups and artists. During N30 direct action was taken by workers such as the

International Longshore Workers Union who closed ports. These kinds of protests have continued over many years since 1999. These events of the late 1990s were significant because they contested the right of richer nation states and corporations to decide how to run an economic

system. Some of these were focussed on reforms such as reduction of debt and poverty in the 'South' (developing world) or to reduce carbon emissions. Since 2008, responses to the global economic crisis and local austerity have included widely copied movements such as those making up the 'Arab Spring', the Indignados of Spain and the Occupy movement, as well as groups focussed on banking and tax such as UK UnCut. Between these periods we can also examine the response to austerity in Argentina in 2001 following an IMF loan with emergence of 'horizontalism'. As before, some anarchistic elements can be identified, or at least elements that can also be identified with anarchism exist in these movements. As anarchists

in IFA we have been directly involved in some of these movements.

To encourage some discussion, let us ask, to what extent can we find the following attributes in recent social movements and/or other contemporary anarchist activities?

- Revolutionary (versus reformist) agenda?
- Emphasis on class struggle?
- Prefiguration? Acting now in a similar manner that we want post-revolutionary society to be like.
- Encouraging formation of mass movements?
- Non-hierarchical/horizontal organisational forms?
- Explicit decision-making processes?
- Replicating (copying) examples of good practice?
- Anti-political/popularist?
- Use of Direct Action?

We can use these attributes as a way of describing and evaluating the anarchistic nature of contemporary social movements.

We now try to explain 'See table below' some of the reasoning for the scores. The lower score for revolutionary is due to the kinds of political demands implied, which were mostly reformist, although unfairness and corruption of the capitalist system was generally highlighted by the camps. Class struggle is also scored low because the idea of the 99% versus 1% was not really

expressed in class terms, although it does grasp the idea of 'us and them'. The camps were seen as moderately prefigurative because they aimed to operate in a collective manner with a sharing of resources. Occupy did encourage the formation of a mass movement and this was evident in the number of camps and level of support. Also some camps did outreach to the wider community by organising public meetings. Camps aimed to be non-hierarchical although hierarchies were evident in the relationship between adults and younger participants in the camp, and some individuals did dominate.

Decision-making was explicit through regular camp meetings and public assemblies where campers and supporters were able to be involved in the aims

of the camps. But important camp decisions could be made by smaller groups or even individuals. Little attempt was made to create decision-making structures between camps. The camps did rely on replicating good practice between camps, shared through the internet and social media. On the other hand, there was some repetition and reinvention of practice. The camps were explicitly anti-political which was often positive but sometimes included negative ideas such as conspiracy theories. Finally the use of direct action was evident in the formation of the camps, but mostly the camps did not aim to extend direct action outside of the camps, and some resorted to legal means to stop the camps being evicted. Direct action was often used to support the needs of the camps such as obtaining fuel and food.

But some participants became disillusioned when camps were 'not doing anything' except occupying the space.

We can also note that the above scoring may be seen as too positive. Some bad things did happen. But we are concentrating on the intention rather than the results. We can use our experiences of Occupy to refine our tactics in other struggles.

The above is a picture of Occupy in Britain. We can note that Occupy is not necessarily the more anarchistic or important struggle in Britain during 2012 but it serves as a good example of a recent social movement. Other examples include the students' movement, the anti-cuts movement and the anti-workfare movement.

An example: The Occupy movement in Britain, 2011-12

As a starting point for a group discussion of social movements we used a scoring system for the different attributes. The following scores were agreed collectively by a small number of members of the Anarchist Federation discussing each attribute at their annual conference in July 2012, based on their experience of Occupy camps in 2011-2012.

Attribute	Score (1-7)						
	1 Least	2	3	4	5	6	7 Most
Revolutionary?		■	■	■			
Class struggle?		■	■				
Prefigurative?					■		
Encouraging formation of a mass movement?					■	■	
Non-hierarchical organising?					■	■	
Explicit decision-making?				■			
Replicating good practice?						■	■
Anti-political?						■	■
Use of direct action?				■			

This raises further questions for IFA.

- Does this picture differ from other similar movements e.g. the Indignados movement in Spain?
- How much are political organisations involved (parties, unions) in addition to more anarchistic organisations? Has the collapse of traditional forms of leftist struggle given rise to these new movements? What is the level of influence of a working class base? For example, the miners in Asturias and Leon.
- What difference does police repression make? The level of police repression in Britain was low relative to Portugal, for example. Also the recent political history of the country makes a difference e.g. fascist or social democratic?
- How much widening of struggle has occurred? We know that in France and Greece movements held assemblies in working class neighbourhoods.
- How sustainable are the different movements across Europe and the world? How long did they/will they last?
- Could anarchist ideas have been more effective in Occupy and elsewhere?

Postscript – September 2012

The Round Table at which the above presentation was made did not achieve as much as was hoped by IFA in terms of developing these ideas further because the discussions tended to restate principles and stop there. But some of the more casual conversations we had with non-British anarchists were enlightening. One thing that is evident is that

Occupy Wall Street was a very different beast to those Occupy Camps in Europe and even to other Occupy camps in the USA such as the ones in Atlanta or Oakland. A couple of books have come out in 2012 including 'Occupy', a edited set of speeches and texts by Noam Chomsky, and 'The Occupy Handbook' which compiles the views of activists, academics and the (especially Democrat) establishment. Some of the demands from US-based activists are quite specific in terms of calling for limiting corporate sponsorship of political candidates and even a demand to abolish 'corporate personhood' which is enshrined in the US constitution. A diverse set of 'Hubs' has been created as part of an Inter-Occupy initiative, which is aimed at networking after the main camps. At the time of writing, this is being used to promote a global pot-banging protest GlobalNoise on 13th October towards social and economic justice. But looking down the list of links, the website also includes 'identity hubs' including OccupyPolice for 'people with police issues and police with government issues'. This is hardly a revolutionary approach! On the other hand, in Atlanta, the local movement has been successful in preventing evictions due to foreclosure (repossession of houses due to mortgage arrears). So reformist demands are not dominating everywhere.

In Spain, the engagement of the 15-M movement with workers is clear, some of this action taking the form of direct confrontation with the police, such as in Asturias in the North of the country. The idea of mass assemblies has really taken hold in working class communities. And in some regions, like Andalucia in the south, entire unfinished apart-

ment blocks are being occupied. Families who have lost work and had benefits denied or cut are receiving food from looted supermarkets. Also it is 15-M that initiated the GlobalNoise call out in an attempt to strengthen local resistance with a internationalist emphasis, saying, "Strengthening the local networks is very important. But at the same time, we need strong global actions to reinforce our local work. Often the problems generated by our governments and false democracies do not let us look beyond our local presidents and politicians, to see the full global context of the issue we face. The problems are global because the scam is global, and to combat these problems we need global action."

In Britain there has been little in the way of political demands (generally a good thing) but neither has Occupy sparked a mass movement of direct action against evictions or utility prices. The labour movement in Britain mostly ignored Occupy, preferring to concentrate on traditional union demands using tactics of negotiation with minimal threat of industrial action. In 2012 it is clear that potential for grassroots action through broader based anti-cuts or 'save our services' campaigns has dwindled and much of the left have resorted to ballot box politics by backing Labour candidates and/or opposing Coalition candidates through a 'Target Seat Campaign'. In contrast to the leftist approach we can certainly take away some good points from Occupy in Britain. While the Occupy camps are mostly gone, the idea of reclaiming public space and contesting inequality is still very much alive.

Culture Article

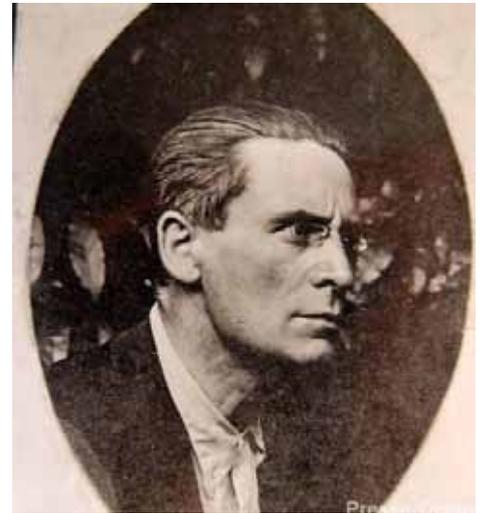
Grandjouan: Creator of the First Illustrated Political Poster

Jules Félix Grandjouan was born on 22nd December 1875 in Nantes, France, into a well-off family. His father died when he was seven and he was then raised by his mother and her parents. It was probably his grandmother, who was a talented embroiderer and who also designed models, who first interested him in the arts. Jules was able to observe all the bustling activity of the busy port town from his window as a child, which had an influence on his forthcoming artistic work. He was raised with a traditional religious education. He followed the usual educational course for young men of his rank, including a law course at Paris. It is probable that it was during this period that he first came in contact with the radical movements of the time. He began work as a lawyer's clerk, and in 1897 married Bettina Simon, a militant school teacher, who like him supported

the developing workers' movements. His artistic sensibilities began to develop at this point and he contributed drawings to two magazines. Bettina and Jules' four children were to attend free schools including that of La Ruche set up by the anarchist Sebastien Faure.

In 1899 he published his first set of lithographs dedicated to his home town, entitled Nantes La Grise (Nantes the Grey)-Nantes was often shrouded in mist hence the name. At the same time he became involved in drawing political cartoons for the magazine *Le Petit Phare* at the time of the review of the sentence on Dreyfus (the Jewish officer falsely accused of spying and treason, whose cause was taken up by many intellectuals and artists, not least Emile Zola).

In 1901 Jules joined the editorial team of the hard-hitting satirical weekly with an anarchist leaning *L'Assiette au Beurre*. He probably had few misgivings about giving up his job as a lawyer's clerk. Over the course of his involvement with this paper he contributed more than a thousand designs. He also began to contribute to a whole range of other libertarian papers: *La Guerre Sociale*, *Le Conscrit*, *La Voix du Peuple*, *La Vie Ouvrière*, *Le Libertaire*, *Les Temps Nouveaux*, etc. He effectively attacked religion, patriotism, militarism,



colonialism and the capitalists as well as the so-called progressive Radicals and parliamentary socialists. He was sympathetic towards the rapidly expanding anarcho-syndicalist movement and was a good friend of one of its pioneers Emile Pouget. He illustrated the pamphlet *The Syndicalist ABC*, written by Georges Yvetot. In a special "Strike" issue of *L'Assiette au Beurre* in 1905 Grandjouan depicted the military facing up to strikers on the cover and inside contributed two further cartoons one of which depicts a soldier recognising himself among the strikers: "What an exploited face... Oh my God, it's mine!" He underlined the common interests of workers and rank and file soldiers in this issue. When Emma Goldman was in France in 1907 she met with Grandjouan who told her: "There is not an artist of consequence who is not an anarchist", referring here to French artists only. A cover of Goldman's paper



Mother Earth featured a cover by Grandjouan in the November issue of that year.

In 1908 he designed a poster for the affair at Villeneuve Saint Georges (an outlying suburb of Paris where several strikers were shot down and many leading militants of the syndicalist union the Confédération Générale du Travail including Pouget were arrested) This poster is considered as the first illustrated political poster. Around this time he also produced the painting "Shame On Those Who Don't Revolt Against Social Injustice". Grandjouan became the only poster designer used by the CGT.

In 1909 he was arrested for incitement to violence during demonstrations in Nantes against the execution by the Spanish government of his friend Francisco Ferrer.

In 1910 during the national rail strike Grandjouan produced no less than three posters in solidarity with the strikers. That same year he produced two powerful anti-parliamentary posters during the legislative elections for the Comité Révolutionnaire Antiparlementaire (Revolutionary Antiparliamentary Committee). He had a key role in setting up this committee, carrying out many tasks for it and addressing many meetings on its behalf.

Thirteen of Grandjouan's colleagues on *L'Assiette Au Beurre* were sentenced over this period to prison terms and he did as much as possible to help them. He himself was charged in 1909 for his drawings and designs, but was acquitted. Tried again on the



same charges in 1911 he received a prison sentence of eighteen months. The same year his friend and comrade Aristide Delannoy (see article on him in *Organise!* 78) also an illustrator for the anarchist press, died as a result of the prison conditions he had experienced. In consequence Grandjouan decided to flee to Germany where he sought sanctuary at the dance school of Isadora Duncan, his lover. He then voyaged to Venice and Egypt. Returning to France in 1912 he was pardoned the following year by the incoming Poincaré government which had replaced the Clemenceau regime. Sickened by the general

lack of response to the persecution of himself and his colleagues he absorbed himself in his artistic activities with a consequent withdrawal from his political work. He avoided a call up during the First World War because of his short sightedness and was assigned to the auxiliary service. In my article in *Organise!* 78 on Steinlen and Delannoy I referred to Grandjouan as being infected by the patriotic frenzy, a view held by several commentators. A recent study by Joëlle Beurrier disputes this, pointing out that Grandjouan adopted more or less the same position as his friend Steinlen, with very little contri-

bution to the current illustrated press which had turned rabidly pro-war.

Whilst Steinlen became depressed and withdrawn in the aftermath of the war, it affected Grandjouan in a different way. This ferocious anarchist and anti-parliamentarian now thought that the way forward was with the newly formed Communist Party. He stood for the party in the elections in 1924 against Aristide Briand, the right wing socialist whom he had often attacked in his cartoons, securing only 2,832 votes against Briand's 32,551.

This from the man who had coined the slogan "Don't Vote Any More, Prepare to Revolt"! He visited Russia in 1926 and reported on it with a series of illustrations. In November 1930 he was elected as the French delegate of the Communist front, the International Bureau of Revolutionary Painters. However his old combative spirit seemed to return to him a few months later. His friend the old libertarian Romanian writer Panait Istrati, famous for writing in French, had returned from Russia and provided a critical report of conditions there. Grandjouan supported him and as a result was

expelled from the Bureau and the Party as he refused to "correct his error".

Grandjouan now withdrew completely from political life. During the Second World War he raised cows and goats. Returning to his home town of Nantes he died there in 1968, just after the May events. Perhaps he took comfort from that, who knows? Whatever the vicissitudes of his later life, his vast output of anti-capitalist art in the early decades of the twentieth century remains his greatest achievement.

Review

By Rite: Custom, Ceremony and Community in England, 1700-1880 by Bob Bushaway (Breviary Stuff Publications, 2011).

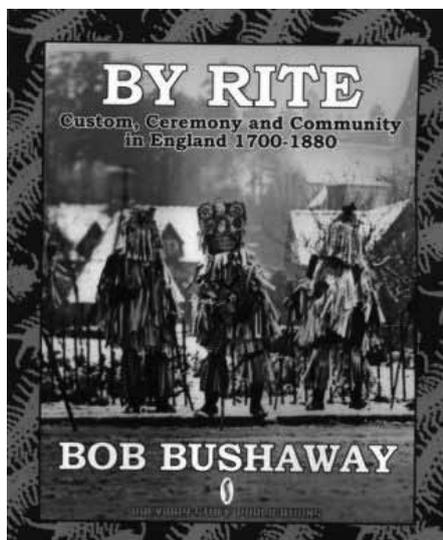
www.breviarystuff.org.uk ISBN 978-0-9564827-6-1

Most studies of rural, pre-industrial, "folk" culture in England focus on an imagined, pastoral, conflict-free idyll in harmony with nature, very unlike the way we live today. Ceremonies and festivals are portrayed as religious affairs and their pagan roots emphasised over their social role. Breviary Stuff's welcome reprint of Bob Bushaway's early-80s study, "By Rite: Custom, Ceremony and Community in England 1700—1880," redresses some of that imbalance.

Bushaway's focus is on the social meaning and function of rural rites and celebrations. He looks at how they seem to both represent and reframe symbolic community bonds, e.g. between

farmer and labourer, the way that these customs changed (or were changed) over time and what that in turn says about changes in social relationships and property rights.

While slightly dry in tone, the



book is full of unexpected but illuminating connections. For example, the famous May Pole was linked with community rights to gather ("glean") wood from royal forests. The festival acted as a community affirmation of the right to take the means for their survival from the land. No landlord (at one time) dared complain that their timber was being robbed for the festival.

Some of the stories go from comical to political. "Perambulation" of a parish's boundaries was a ceremony where, without recourse to State apparatus, a community would agree on field boundaries and police the use of common land, noting where encroachments had taken place

since the last Rogation Week parade. How was this different from a normal stroll? "In order that these memories should be the sharper, at points in the perambulation, boys would be bumped, or stood on their heads in holes, or thrown into streams or beds of nettles." This took on a political purpose as Enclosure of common lands progressed, for example on Otmoor in 1830. After several acts of night-time sabotage against enclosure fences, up to 1000 locals declared "they would in open daylight go possessing and demolishing every fence which obstructed their course" on such a perambulation, leaving law enforcement powerless against their cries of "Otmoor for ever!"

Themes of the book include tradition as something in flux, a contested area: is the landowner laying on the harvest feast as charity, as wages, or under duress? We also see peoples' creativity in causing trouble for those in power, twisting church or state-approved celebrations for their own purposes. Bonfire Night in Castle Carey in 1768: "The effigy of Justice Creed was led through the streets this evening ... and burnt immediately before the Justice's house." This was normal, other celebrations were put down by reading the Riot Act.

Other subversive acts are sanctioned by tradition and provide its protagonists with cover. Even more open acts of rebellion, such as the "Captain Swing" riots are described by some participants as being part of a historical continuity, "business as usual". Some burning of hay ricks and much travel from house to house, collectively begging for higher wages

or food in a same way as winter "wassailing". Despite this, and "rioters" dressed in Sunday best as if on an outing, repression was fierce in an atmosphere of Charist and Luddite-inspired panic.

With its rural focus, much of the book deals with harvest-time customs, including the labourers' election of a delegate to negotiate wages and conditions with the landowner. Autonomy on the job seems to have been a strong motivator here, with the teams of men (with women gleaning from the cut fields) setting their own powers to discipline colleagues for shoddy work. As power shifted, with mechanisation and land enclosure, from workers to landowners, this autonomy fell away and families had to rely more on charity during the harsh winter months.

The book does cover a specialist niche, but it fills it very well and anyone remotely interested in the shift to industrial society, pre-union forms of worker organisation, land ownership and related fields

will find pieces of interest, many unexpected. I got my moneys' worth from this particular tale of revenge meted out on a Poor Law administrator.

"Some 150 persons, including many women & children assembled [...] they brought with them the handcart used by the unemployed on parish relief. [...] After some initial resistance, Abel surrendered himself to the crowd and ... took his place in the cart. At his request he was conveyed some six miles from the parish. The cart was pulled by women & children and a group of labourers marched alongside in mock imitation of a military bodyguard ... many of the persons wore ribands in their hats".

A fun family day out, fighting back against offensive and invasive state powers. You may never look at a Morris Dancer in the same way again.

(Contributed by an Organise! reader).

Organise! Press Fund

We at Organise! are grateful for any donations to keep us going. We will soon be reaching issue 80 and this is a notable achievement for a publication that has appeared regularly since its first appearance in the 1980s. We have consistently offered analysis of events as they develop, often with great lucidity and foresight. From the Poll Tax struggles up to the present fight against austerity drives and cuts we have never failed to offer a revolutionary anarchist communist commentary and analysis. On top of this we regularly include important and in-depth articles from anarchist history, and we never neglect the important contribution that anarchists have made to the world of art and culture, be it in the field of novels, painting, illustration, sculpture or music.

We want to continue bringing out Organise! and help spread and enrich anarchist communist thought. If you agree with our project, if you sympathise with our ideas then please make a donation, just do it by post with a cheque, postal order or international money order payable to 'AFED' to BM ANARFED, London, WC1N 3XX, England, UK. Any donations will be gratefully acknowledged.

Occupy! At the Crossroads

A look at the Occupy! Phenomenon

The Occupy movement was a phenomenon that spread rapidly throughout the United States and was echoed on a much smaller scale in Great Britain. It was inspired by events around the Arab Spring, in particular the occupation of Tahrir Square in Cairo and by the movement in Spain, the Indignados (Indignants).

In the United States it was initiated by the group around Ad-busters who engaged in a critique of and action against advertising who issued a call to Occupy Wall Street and was quickly taken up by many others. The Occupy phenomenon in the United States which touched many towns and cities was echoed throughout the world, and appeared on every continent apart from Antarctica! From Armenia to Colombia, from Holland to Nigeria, from Hong Kong to Australia, a movement developed in the months after the first appearance in the United States. As in the USA it was often met with by police violence, har-

assment and repression. Outside of the USA the Occupy! Movement was a disparate thing and in many cases was only fleeting. In Nigeria it was used as a means to mobilise against a cut in fuel subsidies, forcing President Jonathan to announce a return to a partial subsidy.

It is quite clear that the movement in the United States represents something different from the other Occupy! movements throughout the world, whilst sharing some of their characteristics. Let's look at what these movements all seem to have in common.

They all involved the occupation of public space, be that town squares or parks, implicitly questioning the nature and use of this public space. People once met in public spaces where they could discuss ideas. This use of public space has been under consistent attack with greater and greater policing, the use of CCTV, piped



muzak and colonisation by advertising. More and more activities have been made illegal in public spaces by the authorities, and the Occupy actions were a challenge to this attack on public space. *"It makes no sense to overly fetishize the tactic of occupations, no more than it does to limiting resistance exclusively to blockades or clandestine attacks. Yet the widespread emergence of public occupations qualitatively changed what it means to resist. For contemporary American social movements, it is something new to liberate space that is normally policed to keep the city functioning smoothly as a wealth generating machine and transform it into a node of struggle and rebellion. To do this day after day, rooted in the the city where you live and strengthening connections with neighbors and comrades, is a first taste of what it truly means to have a life worth living. For those few months in the fall, American cities took on new geographies of the movement's making and rebels began to sketch out maps of coming insurrections and revolts."* From <http://www.bayofrage.com/featured-articles/occupy-oakland-is-dead/>



They involved the applying of direct action, rather than indirect action through parliament and legislature.

They all involved the development of systems of horizontal organisation, with mass decision making, direct democracy and meetings taking place at the Occupy camps on a daily and indeed twice-daily basis.

They all to a lesser or greater extent (greater perhaps in the USA) involved a break with complacency, and the idea of the status quo, and of Things As They Are and of There Is No Alternative. As such they interplayed with other movements in conflict with austerity packages and cuts programmes.

They all involved a critique of some aspects of capitalism, above all an attack on corporations and banks. Whilst some in these movements, above all in the USA, had a critique of capitalism as a whole for others this anti-corporatism was not about capitalism on a general level, but important features of it in this particular period. This overriding anti-corporate drive meant that some had not thought through to an overall rejection of capitalism as a whole, whilst others did and do believe that capitalism can be reformed, if what they perceive as its most malicious and harmful aspects can be reformed or restrained. They argue against the dominance of corporations and against it pose the development of cooperatives and small business against big business. They contrast what they see as the decentralisation of this system of operating against the centralisa-



tion of big business. Intertwined with this is the group that talks about the 1%, an oligarchy of the super-rich and super-powerful. This does not mean the end of capitalism but some sort of reform taking power and riches away from this 1% and supplying justice to the “99%”. Other currents involved are those of radical religious groups, Christian and Buddhist, which talk about social justice with no clear critique of capitalism as well as conspiracy theorists who believe in a plot by a small secret and occult group to control the world’s power structures and finance institutions. All of these tendencies together have drawn notice to the whole system of exploitation that capitalism represents and have thus raised the issue of class society. Which of these tendencies will win a battle of ideas within the Occupy movement is still up for grabs and will be determined over the next year.

One problem related to this conflict of ideas within the Occupy movement was the attempt by some within it to label it as “non-violent” and in so doing raise the old chestnut of the

division between “non-violent” and “violent” actions. In Boston, for example, a diversity of tactics statement was agreed upon, supporting different forms of resistance. However the subject was raised again at a general assembly weeks later with a call for a banning of all violent acts against “all beings”.

Other problems were the question of safer spaces (echoed at the Saint Imier gathering where the same problem arose). Because of sexual harassment, homophobia and transphobia, and many felt unable to participate or to continue to in the Occupy camps (this situation was reflected in the Occupy camps in Britain). Similarly many black, Native American and Latino people sensed supremacist attitudes among white activists and began to stay away. There were some honourable attempts to openly deal with the problems in the camps but this is an ongoing problem that has to be drastically dealt with if we are attempting to construct a mass movement that is inclusive for the future.

Other interesting aspects of the

Occupy movement involved the setting up of free libraries, in some instances with a dominance of anarchist literature, the provision of free or cheap meals, free clothes and healthcare, and free crèches.

In the Occupy Oakland movement in northern California, links were built with workers with a call for a General Strike on November 2nd 2012 which resulted in a shut-down of the port. There was a call out for a shutdown of all the ports on the West Coast on December 12th and whilst this was

the police there. There had been a series of student occupations against austerity measures, the protest camp by Native Americans at Glen Cove in 2011, and a number of other actions. As an article at <http://www.bayofrage.com/featured-articles/occupy-oakland-is-dead/> noted :

“If we had chosen to follow the specific trajectory prescribed by Adbusters and the Zucotti-based organizers of Occupy Wall Street, we would have staked out our local Occupy camp somewhere in the heart of the capitol of West

We intentionally chose a different path based on a longer trajectory and rooted in a set of shared experiences that emerged directly from recent struggles. Vague populist slogans about the 99%, savvy use of social networking, shady figures running around in Guy Fawkes masks, none of this played any kind of significant role in bringing us to the forefront of the Occupy movement. In the rebel town of Oakland, we built a camp that was not so much the emergence of a new social movement, but the unprecedented convergence of preexisting local movements and antagonistic tendencies all looking for a fight with capital and the state while learning to take care of each other and our city in the most radical ways possible.

This is what we began to call The Oakland Commune; that dense network of new found affinity and rebelliousness that sliced through seemingly impenetrable social barriers like never before. Our “war machine and our care machine” as one comrade put it. No cops, no politicians, plenty of “autonomous actions”; the Commune materialized for one month in liberated Oscar Grant Plaza at the corner of 14th & Broadway. Here we fed each other, lived together and began to learn how to actually care for one another while launching unmediated assaults on our enemies: local government, the downtown business elite and transnational capital. These attacks culminated with the General Strike of November 2 and subsequent West Coast Port Blockade.”

In addition, there was a strong



not successful, the call out itself was a positive move. Similarly the call by Occupy Wall Street to delay the opening of the stock exchange on November 17th was also a positive move, even if foiled by aggressive police action. Occupy Oakland was probably the most radical of the Occupy actions in the USA. This was down to a number of factors. Following the shooting to death by the police of Oscar Grant in 2009, there had been a series of riots against

Coast capital, as a beachhead in the enemy territory of San Francisco’s financial district. Some did this early on, following in the footsteps of the growing list of other encampments scattered across the country like a colorful but confused archipelago of anti-financial indignation. According to this logic, it would make no sense for the epicenter of the movement to emerge in a medium sized, proletarian city on the other side of the bay.

anarchist presence in both the actions mentioned above and the Oakland occupation, which led on to the insistence, not taken up in



other Occupy actions, that there be no police presence within the Oakland camp.

The cold winter and generalised police violence against the Occupy camps have been a factor in stalling the movement, both in the USA and elsewhere. Occupy hoped to relaunch with this year's May Day mobilisations, following the wave of police violence and extreme weather that had had a demobilising effect. Many camps, including the initial one of Zuccotti Park in New York, had been violently cleared by the police. Certainly thousands turned out for the event. The media had initially covered the Occupy actions and they chose to operate a more or less complete blackout. Where it did report the media declared that the movement was over. If the re-occupation of public space was looked for, it was foiled by the massive show of police strength, large numbers of riot police, armoured personnel carriers and SWAT teams armed with assault rifles showed that the American State was taking the Occupy movement as a serious threat. However what was

interesting about these May Day mobilisations was that the Occupy movement was looking for links with other groups and demonstrated with industrial workers and immigrant rights groups on the day. Of course, there was the customary police violence, as well as fifty arrests across the USA. There was fierce resistance on the day too, with street fighting in Oakland that lasted all day, a shield bloc in Los Angeles, an attempt at a wildcat march in New York, an anti-capitalist march in New Orleans and trashing of banks in Seattle.

Is it true as the mainstream media claims that the Occupy movement is over in the USA? Certainly the winter and police violence had put an end to the occupation of public spaces. However there now seem to be moves to occupy buildings and to resist evictions by banks. Whether this remains the Occupy movement or is a morphing into other movement can be seen as a question of semantics. The reclamation of buildings was initiated in the most radical of the camps, Oakland, and has spread to San Francisco, Chapel Hill, Washing-

ton DC and Seattle. Other initiatives have been the occupation of farmland. One instance was Occupy The Farm on land owned by the University of California, which was later cleared by the police.

In Minneapolis, an Occupy the Homes campaign was set up. *"What is unusual, in fact utterly unprecedented, is the level of aggression and defiance of the law by these activists. Over the past week ... the city has tossed out protesters and boarded up the house, only to see the demonstrators peel back the boards and use chains, concrete-filled barrels and other obstacles to make it more difficult to carry them away,"* a spokesperson for Freddie Mac, a company that trades in mortgages told a local paper. Occupy Our Homes has issued demands that banks adjust or write off loans so that people can stay in their own houses.

A similar campaign has emerged with Occupy Our Colleges with the demands that university administrations stop their axing of budgets to protect education. Other initiatives have been a flowering of attempts to apply



the horizontal structures of the Occupy camps with their general assemblies to the neighbourhood. Occupy the Hood movements have emerged in many US cities with Occupy El Barrio specifically looking at Latino/Latina communities. Similarly there appear to be moves towards rural occupations. Whether these initiatives will bear fruit remains to be seen. The radicalisation of this movement or its continuity is not a given. Nevertheless the atmosphere of apathy has been

shattered, with many new people drawn into activity, and many experiencing horizontal organisation and decision making for the first time.

Postscript: Britain

The eviction of the St Paul's Occupy camp, and the clearing of the School of Ideas building and its subsequent demolition and of the nearby camp at Finsbury Square dealt a severe blow to Occupy London. As a writer in Oc-

cupied Times, a paper linked with Occupy London noted:

“When Occupy London first began, we all fell in love at the steps of St Pauls. We felt it was something that had never happened before. Something new, buzzing, and real. For the younger generation, it was our 1968, our delayed Spring of Hope that finally addressed the discontent brewing amid global recession and recurrent collapses. Spring was coming. A spring that would address the hike in student fees, the massive unemployment, and the reasons underlying the august riots. A spring that would create a radical alternative. For those slightly older, it seemed a chance to redeem a slumbering generation whose material safety had lulled them into the belief that economic growth, combined with “development of third world countries” was the best way to secure a good future for us in Western Europe, and – hopefully – for those not quite as fortunate as us.... But perhaps the comfort of our legal status steered us onto the wrong track. Over winter, many remained indifferent, or became disenchanted, and the constant bickering over petty issues drained the remaining few of the energy they had mustered. Resuscitating the camp until the end of February left plans for May unclear, and plans beyond in an uncertain state. International bonds receded as other camps seemed to disappear off the grid. People remained active, but they no longer took the name in their mouth. The mainstream media systematically under-reported, or misreported, any activity. The police were no less systematic in their power policing. Some ac-



tions were in the pipeline, but in the eyes of the public, Finsbury Square clung onto a brown patch of what was once a lawn whilst the rest of the movement had vapourised. May came and went, but neither Mayday flowers nor the May12 rent-a-crowd gave the necessary lift. Occupy London, it

port for the massive and growing numbers of homeless people in London and in Britain as a whole.

Having a home is a fundamental human need and right. Only with adequate housing can people successfully contribute to their community in a meaningful way.

ing tented accommodation for between 30 and 70 homeless people staying at the St Paul's Occupy site. These people will be affected by eviction of OLSX. We believe that the City of London has a duty of care towards them and that they should be offered accommodation that ensures their safety, dignity and freedom – that is, in homes, not hostels.”



seemed, was going into a lull.” Other Occupy sites also disappeared, with the Occupy Edinburgh camp ending at the end of this January. Similarly, the largest camp outside London in Bristol was similarly cleared at the end of January.

The British Occupy camps had many of the same features and pluses and minuses as the movement in the USA. However, they failed to draw the support that the American camps had gleaned and were unable to break from the dominance of liberal and reformist elements within it.

One problem was over the question of homelessness. Occupy London issued a statement on homelessness where they said : “Occupy London expresses its sup-

Many homeless people have become part of Occupy London and through this have found a sense of community and increased optimism. Many occupiers have unintentionally become homeless during their involvement in Occupy London. In essence, a part of the homeless has become Occupy London, and a part of Occupy London has become the homeless. Together we call for social and economic justice.

Occupy London intends to highlight the issue of homelessness and of eviction of homeless persons from refuges such as St. Paul's Churchyard. We abhor the violence and intimidation that occupiers and homeless people, around the world, have been subjected to.

Occupy London has been provid-

However this was not without its problems. As one activist noted (Occupied Times, July 2012) : “If the government or police wanted to know how to derail activists combating their agenda, they need look no further than Finsbury Square. David Cameron's crackpot ‘Big Society’ idea was designed to relieve the state of its responsibility towards vulnerable people, tasking the people with providing welfare instead. This alone should be opposed, but at Finsbury Square we saw another side-effect of such a plan which further enables the status-quo.

Activists tend to be compassionate people. For most of us, our motivation to organise or agitate comes from wanting more for those worst off in society. When FS started to become more of a refugee camp than a political occupation, some of us were made to feel that we should drop all political activism to care for the homeless. I was told I had no compassion, despite the fact that I already volunteer in a recognised homeless centre, where they have the expertise and resources to genuinely help. By falling into the trap of providing quasi-help for people at FS, rather than highlighting and combating the source of problems like homelessness (which Occupy

started off doing), people played right into the government's hands. On one hand the protest was quelled, and on the other, people did the state's work for it." This view was echoed by other activists in the same article.

Some activists within Occupy in London attempted to forge an alliance with the Sparks electricians who were putting on mass pickets at building sites nearby and the Sparks and their supporters marched up to St Paul's and addressed the camp from the



stairs of St Paul's. However, these activists were a minority within the camp and there was little enthusiasm for such an alliance in other quarters.

The liberal element now seems to have control of the brand name of Occupy London. Occupied Times continues to appear on a regular basis and contains some interesting articles. It attempts to reflect the broad range of opinions inside or close to the Occupy movement. So, it can contain articles reflecting revolutionary points of view, as for example, the views of an activist in the London anarchist group Alarm.

However on the other hand they print the thoughts of right-wing "libertarian" and advocate of the free market Tibor Machan (Occupied Times, July 2012) apparently just because he was "staunchly opposed to government subsidies for banks and corporations. It similarly gives space in the September issue to Jeremy Rifkin an advocate of reformist and cosmetic measures for the economy and government, whilst in the same issue we are treated to a plea for Occupy in Britain to become the catalyst for a Real

Democracy movement with a range of Real Democracy institutions, parties and think-tanks" .

The Occupy movement in Britain shows few signs of being able to develop as it is too much a victim of the contradictions between the various currents. Perhaps certain useful initiatives may emerge and we should continue to hope for any such developments. What we should do as revolutionary anarchists is attempt to establish debate and dialogue with the radical elements within it looking for a way forward.

Pedlars of Reformism and the Occupy Movement

Among the ideologists peddling the idea that capitalism can be reformed into a nice kind capitalism (rather like trying to persuade piranhas to be vegetarian) both inside and outside the Occupy movement perhaps three names stand out.

David Korten.

Korten is the author of *Agenda for a New Economy, The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community, and When Corporations Rule the World*. He is co-chair of the New Economy Working Group, and a founding board member of the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies. He adopts a fierce rhetoric against large corporations, talking about : *"the quiet—but powerful—protest of the millions of Americans who are putting their shoulders to the wheel of change by building the new community-rooted, market-based, life-serving Main Street economies we need for a 21st century America that provides secure, adequate dignified, and meaningful livelihoods for all in a balanced relationship to nature.*

The corporate media are obsessed with the question: "What do the Occupy Wall Street protesters want? What is their demand?" It should be obvious. They want their economy, their government, and their country back from the alien occupiers.

As our forebears liberated America from rule by a distant king and the British East India Company, the time has come to liberate America from Wall Street and reclaim the power Wall Street has

usurped. It is time to establish democracy in America and build a national system of Main Street economies owned and accountable to people who have an inherent interest in building healthy communities with thriving local economies and healthy natural environments for themselves and their children. By the calendar it's autumn, but for many it is the beginning of the American Spring".

Chuck Collins

Chuck Collins is co-founder of Wealth for the Common Good, "a network of business and civic leaders, wealth individuals and partners promoting fair and adequate taxation to support public investment in a healthy economy" (Huffington Post). He is author of 99 to 1: How Wealth Inequality is Wrecking the World and What We Can Do About It. He is co-author, with Bill Gates Sr., of Wealth and Our Commonwealth: Why America Should Tax Accumulated Fortunes and has co-authored several other books including: Economic Apartheid in America: A Primer on Economic Inequality and Insecurity and The Moral Measure of the Economy where he advocates a "Christian ethical" perspective on the economy.

He advocates a higher minimum wage, limiting of CEO pay, fair trade policies, the end to corporate tax dodging, a higher minimum wage, universal healthcare and fair trade policies, etc.

He calls for an end to "excessive concentrations of wealth and corporate power" (the key word being excessive and not the abolition of wealth and power themselves). He still believes that CEOs

should be allowed to make 20 times more than ordinary workers.

Jeremy Rifkin

The most "left" sounding and acting, Rifkin became active in the anti-war movement in 1966. He organised a mass rally against petrol increases in 1973. As the Wikipedia entry on Rifkin notes:

"In 1977, with Ted Howard, he founded the Foundation on Economic Trends which is active in both national and international public policy issues related to the environment, the economy, and climate change. ...Rifkin is the principal architect of the Third Industrial Revolution long-term economic sustainability plan to address the triple challenge of the global economic crisis, energy security, and climate change.

The Third Industrial Revolution was formally endorsed by the European Parliament in 2007 and is now being implemented by various agencies within the European Commission. Rifkin has lectured before many Fortune 500 companies, and hundreds of governments, civil society organizations, and universities over the past thirty five years. Rifkin is the founder and chairperson of the Third Industrial Revolution Global CEO Business Roundtable, comprising more than 100 of the world's leading renewable energy companies, construction companies, architectural firms, real estate companies, IT companies, power and utility companies, and transport and logistics companies. Rifkin's global economic development team is working with cities, regions, and national gov-

ernments to develop master plans to transition their economies into post-carbon Third Industrial Revolution infrastructures."



Rifkin believes that technological advances have brought about a widespread democratisation both in the economy and in governance. He writes "The youth have shown that they know how to use lateral power via Facebook, Twitter, Google, and other social networks to bring millions of people to the streets to protest the inequities and abuses of the current economic and political system. Now, the looming question is whether they can harness the same lateral power to create a sustainable economy, generate millions of new jobs, transform the political process and restore the earth for future generations." Nothing here about the fundamental nature of capitalism itself leading to ecological crisis and exploitation.

All three of these ideologues somehow believe that capitalism can be transformed into something kind and caring. Whilst the police are used to tame the developing social movements, Korten, Rifkin and Collins represent another wing of this attack, seeking to create a diversion towards a vanilla reformism.

The Crisis in Greece: Unspoken Consequences

If anyone were interested in researching about the mechanisms of the state, Greece would have been a primary candidate for a case study. The public domain for the last forty years had been the largest in Europe, with politics being rendered sterile by a two-party system imitating the American political scene. It is thus no coincidence that the crisis and its consequences were first felt in a nation so extensively influenced by the state domain. With the public sector accounting largely for health, employment, education and many other aspects of everyday life, the hybrid state-capitalist system has been rendered vulnerable to neoliberalism's destructive competitiveness.

Greece's unemployment, social unrest and economic disintegration have been the most frequently discussed topic in connection with the Eurozone, but it is now that the most severe symptoms of the crisis are being revealed. The 2012 elections dramatically polarized Greek society, bringing down an established oligopolistic structure of political governance. SYRIZA, the Coalition of the Radical Left, has surged in popularity, whilst the right has taken a step towards the realm of neo-Nazism currently represented by Golden Dawn. Caught between SYRIZA's radical elements and a potential forced default by the European Union, the prime minister has adopted policies con-

stantly approaching those of the extreme right.



A common defence mechanism against the left, the government has employed divisive policies to dilute the fronts of class warfare and draw support from the far right with the illusion of national identity. Systematic xenophobia is currently conducted through the 'Xenios Zefs' project which rounds up immigrants lacking paperwork and detains them in police training centres in the north of Greece. Doctrines preaching 'the nation-state, religion and patriarchal family' are now propagated and enforced with the aim of restoring traditional values of national pride and unity.

The result has begun to force political consciousness to choose between a conforming social democracy or revolutionary insurrectionist approach, the latter being compartmentalised under Greece's increasingly police-state

character. Concerning the politically independent, state-terror consisting of warnings that the left embraces bankruptcy and the destruction of society, has been increasingly present in the media. The Golden Dawn, which has benefited from this environment, now threatens to physically implement its policies. Paying tribute to elements of fascism, it is setting up branches all over Greece, taking policing into its own hands, attacking immigrants and escorting citizens to shop and collect pensions.

As it has been demonstrated, an economic crisis firstly dismantles the industrial sector to bring the nation down to its knees. It then wipes out the workforce that generates production and consumes, consequently shattering the middle class. Finally, it offers high interest loans to shackle the economy to its current state and drain it of capital. Greece is now left between binding itself to a destructive contract or default and suffer tremendous socio-economic consequences and an unpredictable future. If it chooses to follow the second, it will need a new system and new allies. The following months will tell the tale.

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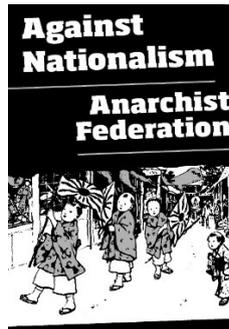
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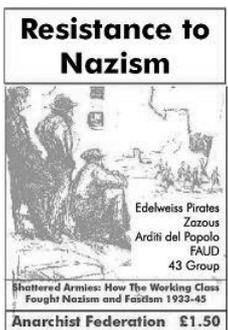
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Aims & Principles

of the Anarchist Federation

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

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

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

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

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

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

7 Unions by their very nature cannot become vehicles for the revolutionary transformation of society. They have to be accepted by capitalism in order to function and so cannot

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

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

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

10 We oppose organised religion and cults and hold to a materialist analysis of capitalist society. We, the working class, can change society through our own efforts. Worshipping an unprovable spiritual realm, or believing in a religious unity between classes, mystifies or suppresses such self-emancipation / liberation. We reject any notion that people can be liberated through some kind of supernatural force. We work towards a society where religion is no longer relevant.