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Informal organisation

Alfredo M. Bonanno

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First let us distinguish the informal anarchist organisation from the anarchist organisation of synthesis. Considerable clarification will emerge from this distinction.

What is an anarchist organisation of synthesis? It is an organisation based on groups or individuals that are more or less in constant relation with each other, that culminates in periodical congresses. During these open meetings basic theoretical analyses are discussed, a program is prepared and tasks are shared out covering a whole range of interventions in the social field. The organisation thus sets itself up as a point of reference, like an entity that is capable of synthesizing the struggles that are going on in reality of the class clash. The various commissions of this organisational model intervene in different struggles (as single comrades or groups) and, by intervening, give their contribution in first person without however losing site of the theoretical and practical orientation of the organisation as a whole, as decided at the most recent congress.

When this kind of organisation develops itself fully (as happened in Spain in '36) it begins to dangerously resemble a party. Synthesis becomes control. Of course, in moments of slack, this involution is

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less visible and might even seem an insult, but at other times it turns out to be more evident.

In substance, in the organisation of synthesis (always specific and anarchist), a nucleus of specialists works out proposals at both the theoretical and ideological level, adapting them as far as possible to the program that is roughly decided upon at the periodic congresses. The shift away from this program can also be considerable (after all, anarchists would never admit to too slavish an adherence to anything), but when this occurs care is taken to return within the shortest possible time to the line previously decided upon.

This organisation's project is therefore that of being present in various situations: antimilitarism, nuclear power, unions, prisons, ecology, interventions in living areas, unemployment, schools, etc. This presence is either by direct intervention or through participation in interventions managed by other comrades or organisations (anarchist or not).

It becomes clear that participation aimed at bringing the struggle to within the project of synthesis cannot be autonomous. It cannot really adapt to the conditions of the struggle or collaborate effectively in a clear plan with the other revolutionary forces. Everything must either go through the ideological filter of synthesis or comply with the conditions approved earlier during the congress. This situation, which is not always as rigid as it might seem here, carries the ineliminable tendency of organisations of synthesis to drag struggles to the level of the base, proposing caution and using contrivances aimed at redimensioning any flight forward, any objective that is too open or means that might be dangerous.

For example, if a group belonging to this kind of organisation (of synthesis, but always anarchist and specific) were to adhere to a structure that is struggling, let us say, against repression, it would be forced to consider the actions proposed by this structure in the light of the analyses that had roughly been approved at the congress. The structure would either have to accept these analy-

ses, or the group belonging to the organisation of synthesis would stop its collaboration (if it is in a minority) or impose the expulsion (in fact, even if not with a precise motion) of those proposing different methods of struggle. Some people might not like it, but that is exactly how things work. One might ask oneself why on earth the proposal of the group belonging to the organisation of synthesis must by definition always be more backward, i.e. in the rear-guard, or more cautious than others concerning possible actions of attack against the structures of repression and social consensus. Why is that? The answer is simple. The specific anarchist organisation of synthesis, which, as we have seen, culminates in periodic congresses has growth in numbers as its basic aim. It needs an operative force that must grow. Not to infinity exactly, but almost. In the case of the contrary it would not have the capacity to intervene in the various struggles, nor even be able to carry out its own principle task: proceeding to synthesis in one single point of reference. Now, an organisation that has growth in members as its main aim must use instruments that guarantee proselytism and pluralism. It cannot take a clear position concerning any specific problem, but must always find a middle way, a political road that upsets the smallest number and turns out to be acceptable to most.

The correct position concerning some problems, particularly repression and prisons, is often the most dangerous, and no group can put the organisation they belong to at risk without first agreeing with the other member groups. But that can only happen in congress, or at least at an extraordinary meeting, and we all know that on such occasions it is always the most moderate opinion that prevails, certainly not the most advanced.

So, ineluctably, the presence of the organisation of synthesis in actual struggles, struggles that reach the essence of the class struggle, turns into a brake and control (often involuntarily, but it is still a question of control).

The informal organisation does not present such problems. Affinity groups and comrades that see themselves in an informal kind of

projectuality come together in action, certainly not by adhering to a program that has been fixed at a congress. They realise the project themselves, in their analyses and actions. It can occasionally have a point of reference in a paper or a series of meetings, but only in order to facilitate things, whereas it has nothing to do with congresses and such like. The comrades who recognise themselves in an informal organisation are automatically a part of it. They keep in contact with the other comrades through a paper or by other means, but, more important, they do so by participating in the various actions, demonstrations, encounters, etc., that take place from time to time. The main verification and analysis therefore comes about during moments of struggle. To begin with these might simply be moments of theoretical verification, turning into something more later on.

In an informal organisation there is no question of synthesis. There is no desire to be present in all the different situations and even less to formulate a project that takes the struggles into the depths of a programme that has been approved in advance.

The only constant points of reference are insurrectional methods: in other words self-organisation of struggles, permanent conflictuality and attack.