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Retrieved on September 15, 2015 from web.archive.org
Published in *New Formulation*, Vol. 2, No. 1

theanarchistlibrary.org

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A broad and popular resistance confronted the military dictatorships that strangled Latin America in the 1970s. Activists from diverse political tendencies fought back, in both organized and spontaneous ways, and their efforts doubtlessly saved many lives and hastened the collapse of these brutal regimes.

Although some of their contributions have been celebrated in books, articles, and films, important aspects of the resistance have never been studied. In particular, anarchist opposition to the dictatorships–which existed in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay–has been almost entirely omitted from the historical record.

The following interview offers a corrective to that omission. It tells the story of Resistencia Libertaria, a clandestine anarchist organization founded shortly before the Argentine military seized power in 1976.

Resistencia Libertaria (RL) was active in the student, labor, and neighborhood movements and also had a military wing with which it defended and financed its activities. At its peak, it had between 100 and 130 members and a much broader network of sympathizers. The organization was crushed in 1978 and 80 percent of its members perished in the dictatorship's concentration camps and torture chambers.

The RL sustained the long tradition of Argentine anarchism and also transformed it in the face of the new conditions confronting activists in the 1970s. The experiences of the RL—which have been essentially undocumented in Spanish or English until now—mark an important chapter in the history of resistance to the last Argentine dictatorship and post-World War II anarchism generally.

Although the *New Formulation* is normally restricted to book reviews, it is hoped that readers will welcome this small departure from our normal editorial policy.

This interview was conducted in Spanish by phone on October 13, 2002 with Fernando López, one of RL's few surviving members.

Please tell me about the origins of the RL. How was it formed?

The RL was founded by comrades from the city of La Plata at the end of the 1960s. The founding nuclei constituted a community around a cooperative carpentry shop (which still exists to this day) and developed militant projects among university students and later in the workers' movement (specifically in the shipyard workers' and judicial workers' unions).

A key event occurred when members of this group starting collaborating with the newspaper, *La Protesta*, and a very heavy, acute discussion took place between them and the old people that were

there.[1] The discussion had to do with the appearance of the first groups of armed action, such as the Tupamaros and the Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo (Revolutionary Army of the People). The young people tended to support the actions carried out by these groups and thus conflicted with the older people, who opposed these actions, because they rejected some of the Marxist positions of these groups. The younger group was expelled from La Protesta due to these differences around 1971. This cut their relationship with the older anarchist movement and rendered them independent from it.

Later, in 1973, an anarchist conference was held in the city of Cordoba, in which militants of groups from Cordoba, Buenos Aires, Mendoza, Salta, and Montevideo [Uruguay] participated. Myself and another comrade attended this conference as delegates from a group called Acción Directa. It was here that comrades from La Plata, Cordoba, and Acción Directa from Buenos Aires constituted Resistencia Anticapitalista Libertaria (Libertarian Anti-Capitalist Resistance) as a national organization.

A year or year and a half later, the name Resistencia Anticapitalista Libertaria was dropped simply for Resistencia Libertaria (this just happened naturally, there was not a discussion about changing the name). I joined the organization in 1974.

How was the RL structured?

The RL was an absolutely clandestine organization and it was organized in a cellular form by fronts of work.[2] The fronts of work were the workers' front, the student front, and the neighborhood front. The RL also had a military apparatus that was, in reality, a mechanism for financing the organization–working in a moment of almost absolute clandestinity is very onerous and costly–and for

[1] *La Protesta* is an anarchist newspaper that has published from 1897 to the present. During it heyday it was an essential part of the Argentine labor movement and an important resource for the anarchist movement in Latin America.

[2] The RL was always clandestine, although its work in mass fronts was not clandestine until the coup d'etat of 1976.

protecting militant workers, etc., because things such as kidnappings and rightist actions against left-wing workers' groups were common during this era. It was necessary to organize self-defense in some cases.

The organization's democracy obviously did not function through assemblies, but votes and elections were carried out within the organization's cellular form. Each cell had a delegate and this delegate connected to higher levels of the organization, successively, until arriving at a relation of a national or regional character. So, decisions reached the national level in the same way as they reached the cell. That is, decisions went up and down in the same manner [within the organization]. But of course it was more awkward than this, because it was not possible to get everyone together to talk.

How many members did the RL have?

The RL had important nuclei in La Plata and the areas surrounding La Plata, such as Berisso, Ensenada, Villa Elisa, in some of the cities between Buenos Aires and La Plata, and in Buenos Aires. And also in Cordoba and some of the cities close to Cordoba, such as the city of Ferreyra, which was an industrial sector, a zone of auto factories that had Renault and Fiat plants. It is difficult to estimate the exact number of RL members, given its clandestine, cellular structure, but I estimate that in 1975, in its moment of greatest development, the RL had between 100 and 120 or 130 members.

The RL was conceived of as a cadre party, not a mass party, and thus people that had relations with the RL could have a lower level of political formation and commitment than a RL cadre, and participate in groups that the RL controlled to some degree, such as base groups in the neighborhoods, factories, and the universities. Thus, when one thinks about this question, it is necessary to imagine a larger acting group than the 120 or 130.

Explain to me what you mean by the word cadre.

A cadre is a militant that, because of his or her [political] formation is capable of generating politics by his or herself once inserted in

To study workers' resistance to the dictatorship, the fact that the majority of the disappeared were factory workers, not militants of armed organizations, would show that the resistance to the dictatorship was a popular resistance. And that what this popular resistance asked for was not the return of democracy in the style of Radicalism, but rather a socialist revolution.

Note: Despite the weakness of present works on resistance to the dictatorship, I asked López to mention some of the best books that are available. He mentioned the following titles:

- Anguita, Eduardo and Martín Caparrós. *La Voluntad: Una Historia de la Militancia Revolucionaria en la Argentina, Vol. 1–3*. Buenos Aires, Norma, 1998.
- Bousquet, Jean-Pierre. *Las Locas de la Plaza de Mayo*. Buenos Aires: El Cid Editor, 1983.
- Gillespie, Richard. *Soldiers of Peron: Argentina's Montoneros*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982
- Mattini, Luis. *Hombres y Mujeres del PRT-ERP: la Pasión Militante*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Contrapunto, 1990.

a place of determined work, without maintaining an organic, permanent link with the organization (which is not possible because of repression). That is to say, although this comrade, due to the situation of clandestinity, is isolated from the organization, he or she is capable of generating politics in the framework and necessities of the organization. He or she is capable of generating politics in any circumstance. A cadre is a political cadre, a military-political cadre. In other words, a cadre is a militant capable of working in neighborhood or a factory, that knows how to assemble a Molotov cocktail or a bomb of any type, that knows how to handle a weapon, etc.

And this is the difference with a mass party: a cadre party only incorporates militants that have agreed totally with the organization before joining. In a mass party it makes sense that it is authoritarian, because there are distinct levels of engagement inside the organization, from the lowest militants up the leaders. In the RL, the level of the militants was equal for everyone and any militant could exercise any function in any moment. Thus, for this to be possible, the militant to be incorporated into the organization has to have a level of development or formation like the others that are already in the organization. I believe that the model is taken in some way from Bakunin's Alliance of Social Democracy, the party that he constructed during the First International.[3]

Tell me about the members of the RL in 1975. What sort of economic background did they have? What were their ages? Who were some of the more significant members?

I believe that the majority of RL militants and those of the new anarchism that emerged in the 1970s–there was an enormous quantity of small groups of young anarchists–had more petty-bourgeois origins than working class origins.

While their origins may have been petty-bourgeoisie, many slowly entered the workers' movement, where they developed

[3] López here refers to Bakunin's International Alliance of Social Democracy.

their entire political and social lives. This reflects conceptions of the epoch, not only within anarchism but also in the Left generally, in which it was argued that the student movement needed to be proletarianized.

As for the age of the members, although there were comrades that exceeded forty or fifty, the majority were between nineteen and twenty-five years old, including the core that was between twenty-three and twenty-four.

The Tellos, who were three brothers (now disappeared) from La Plata, were important comrades. They were labor leaders at the ship factory in Berisso and Ensenada. Also, later, there was Rafael (I can't remember his full name–of course we all had pseudonyms) who was the Secretary General of a rubber union in Cordoba. He was a very important personality in the organization in the sense that he was a leader of the masses, not only an important RL militant. (This comrade also did not have working class origins. He had been formed as an anarchist in the Architecture Department in the National University of Cordoba. I believe he survived and is exiled in Spain.) But, in general, the RL didn't have very important pubic leaders, as it was absolutely clandestine.

In what fronts did you work in 1976?

I worked in the workers movement specifically. In 1974 I began to work in the Plumber's Union, which had an anarchist tradition and also older anarchist members. We developed some projects there. Later, in 1975, I began to work in a very large textile factory, the Alpargatas, when the RL began to prioritize political work in the biggest factories and strongest industrial unions.

What exactly did you do there?

Our participation was focused on rank and file workers, on the formation of classist groups. We participated in the national labor movement, organizing unions, internal commissions of classists and revolutionaries in distinct factories in the whole country,

This has to do with the regime's need to legitimize its actions since the rise of Alfonsin in 1983.[13] That is to say, to legitimize the government that returned to the liberal forms of democracy of forty or fifty years ago, they tried to assert that Argentina had experienced a war between crazies of the Left and crazies of the Right and that the majority of the people were accidental victims, merely in the middle.

In this sense those who manage the agenda of historical studies in the university disregard the study of workers' resistance. For example, although it is unknown by the majority of the people, 60 percent of the disappeared were factory workers. And, likewise, the Radicals insisted strongly in their attempt to demonstrate that there were not thirty thousand disappeared but ten or twelve thousand.[14]

And no one has done a study of how many people were disappeared and later reappeared. In other words, how many people passed through the dictatorship's concentration camps. What we can find there is that probably a good bit more than one hundred thousand people must have passed through these concentration camps.

That is to say, studies of working class resistance to the dictatorship, which was important, studies of the quantity of people that passed through the dictatorship's concentration camps, would break this scheme and the legitimacy of these liberal governments in Argentina. Because this government proposes that they came to recuperate a democracy in Argentina killed by the conflict between some extremists of the Left and some extremists of the Right. This is what gives legitimacy to the Radical government.

[13] Raúl Alfonsín was elected in October 1983, during the first presidential election held since the military coup.

[14] López refers here to the Radical Civic Union Party. This is the party of Raúl Alfonsín as well as that of Argentina's disgraced former president, Fernando de la Ruá.

All these groups emerged as a reaction against the isolation that anarchism had at the beginning of the 1960s. This isolation had to do with the phenomena of Peronism in Argentina. After the repression of the 1930s and the 1940s, anarchism was withdrawing and enclosing itself and it had this posture when the 1960s arrived. And all these [new] groups, which were constituted primarily by youths, were a reaction against this withdrawn, enclosed anarchism. So, I believe that the most redeemable of the RL is precisely its negation of sectarianism, its attempt to engage the people, their discussions, and contribute to their struggles.

What are the best books about resistance to the dictatorship in Argentina?

There really are not good books about resistance to the dictatorship, and this is an interesting issue. One sees that the Spanish have spent thirty years writing about Franco's dictatorship, and the distinct forms of resistance [against it] and the whole struggle of the Civil War before the rise of Franco. Why is it that here, in Argentina, where the dictatorship was such a great trauma, that coherent books have not been written about the resistance to the dictatorship?

The explanation has a lot to do with the influence of the dominant culture and how the agenda of the historical studies in Argentina have been formulated. This agenda has been governed by reformist sectors that insisted upon the theory of the two devils, in which the dictatorship was described as a fight between a devil of the Right and a devil of the Left, with the people as spectators.

Those who manage the agenda of historical studies in Argentina have tried to silence the subject of workers' resistance to the dictatorship, because, in the framework of the theory of the devils, the people that disappeared were disappeared by chance or accident, not because they were inserted in a struggle against the dictatorship.

and the Coordinators of Unions in Struggle.[4] We did a lot of work in this between 1974 and 1976. And in 1976, under full military repression, we even went so far as to occupy the Alpargatas factory in Florencio Varela for two weeks, during which we were surrounded by the army.

Tell me about this occupation.

It wasn't an occupation in the sense that we were going to construct a workers' council that would run the factory. In principle, the occupation involved closing the factory and obliging the management to negotiate with the workers over labor conditions, salaries, etc. The conflict was over a series of demands of an economic character.

Cadres of the RL in these factories focused on the organization of these rank and file groups: the education of comrades, the incorporation of militants of these groups into the RL, the coordination of activities with groups in other factories, and the attempt to construct links between unions.

Was it known that you were anarchists?

No. As a party of cadres, the RL almost never produced party or ideological propaganda. The political propaganda was union propaganda or classist propaganda.

What happened is that particular members of these rank and file groups that the RL controlled were being formed politically and, in the long run, were incorporated in the RL as cadres. It was there where they began to have access to specifically anarchist texts.

In addition to the workers' front, did you also work in the other fronts?

I didn't work in the neighborhood front. I integrated myself into

[4] Coordinators of Unions in Struggle was an organization formed when public labor activity became impossible due to the repression. It was made up of independent labor activists and revolutionary left organizations, including the RL. It coordinated the activities of militants in the factories and other areas.

the student front, but I began to work into the workers' front almost immediately after joining the RL.

And of course militants of all the fronts participated at times in operations that were not specific to their front: in operations of armed propaganda; in lightning or blitzkrieg acts where streets were barricaded, automobiles overturned; actions with flyers; small explosives, and miguelitos, etc.[5] Cadres and militants of distinct fronts participated at times in these operations.

Tell me what happened in 1976.

Although the strong repression had begun earlier, in 1976 it was more indiscriminate and genocidal in character. We had the first important loss in 1976, in which five or six comrades were disappeared in Cordoba. They had the Rubber Union there, which was lost due to their disappearance. It was necessary to reconstruct the work fronts, move comrades to other places, etc. This was a permanent problem, and one that demanded a great quantity of money.

But it was in 1978 when they almost annihilated us as an organization. During three nights, in a systematic, linked way, they disappeared our comrades in La Plata, Buenos Aires, and in cities between La Plata and Buenos Aires. And there the organization stayed absolutely ruptured. Many of us reappeared, but more than half of the [members of the] organization never appeared again. We lost the greater part of the organization.

What happened to the disappeared comrades?

We assume that they were executed. This was the usual practice in this epoch. Of those of us that were disappeared, the military decided, I don't know for what reason, that some would survive and they were abandoned in various places. The others, with diverse grades of organizational responsibility, were executed. And all the disappeared were tortured, whether or not they were ultimately executed.

[5] Miguelitos are four-pronged spikes used to disrupt traffic.

places in order to maintain and protect its inserted militants, in the worker's front, in the student's front, in the neighborhood front. I think that was an error, a grave error.

But all this has to do with the sensation of expectation experienced by all the Left organizations in Argentina. Of course the massacre was shared, it wasn't for us alone.

Why was it an error that the military front had such weight within the organization?

In a situation of total clandestinity an organization is obliged to have a very large level of finance to survive and continue acting and protecting its militants. The militants are not able to finance themselves, so you need to have an apparatus that is permanently occupied with generating these resources. Thus, the apparatus begins to have a preponderance, a greater level of significance, than it was originally supposed to have.

For us, the military front was not like it was for other Left parties in Argentina, as the embryo of an army or anything along these lines. In our strategy of prolonged, popular war, we foresaw the creation of a popular army, but we understood that this army would be constructed in the factories and neighborhoods, which of course we would support, but it wouldn't be a party organism. We had a different conception in this respect [than other Left groups].

In your opinion, what are the RL's most important lessons for anarchists today?

I believe that the fundamental lesson has to do with the negation of the isolation and sectarianism [within anarchism]. I think that if there was something absolutely coherent about the RL during all its years of existence, it has to do with this, the negation of sectarianism, isolation from the masses, from the workers, from the discussions of the common people. I think this is the most redeemable feature of the RL. The RL broke with this, along with other anarchist groups that were close to the RL (there were many other anarchist groups in the period, many of which ended up being incorporated into the RL).

tutions. They developed outside, not inside the anarchist tradition. They were coming to anarchism from other political currents.

Did the older anarchists help you?

I believe that there was a very sharp generational break in the 1970s among those of us who were twenty then and those who were sixty and seventy years old. The generational split was very sharp, much sharper than today, where there are shared cultural references among distinct generations. There really wasn't any type of cultural reference between the generations then and thus it was very difficult to establish more or less normal relations.

In retrospect, what do you think were the RL's most notable errors and successes?

It's so difficult. We never managed to make a self-critique. We have never gotten together after the debacle, after such a blow, after so much catastrophe.

But, seen from a distance, I believe that the successes have to do with all of our experiences in attempting to elaborate an efficient anarchist organization in conditions of total clandestinity. I think these are valid organizational successes and they are worth considering. How to conserve internal democracy, the internal political discussion, in an organization of some importance (in terms of the number of members) in the context of violent repression: I believe that our struggles with these questions, as a specifically anarchist organization, were successes. Referring to theoretical successes or political successes, I believe the organization was just able to recuperate a classist tradition of Argentine anarchism that had been lost.

[As for errors], after the repression really began, I believe that the military front started to have a weight inside the organization that it would not have had in other circumstances. This is perhaps one of the most terrible errors.

I also believe, seen from a distance, that the organization should have [better] guarded its militant workers and those inserted in mass struggles. It should have reduced their activity in some

In what year were you disappeared?

In June 1978, in the middle of the World Cup that happened in Argentina. I was kidnapped during the night from an apartment I was living in with my compañera and three year-old son in La Boca.[6] They came around three in the morning, beating on the door. I got up to open the door, thinking that it could be my brother, who sometimes arrived at my house late.

It was a "*patota*"–this was the name for this type of paramilitary group.[7] There was six or seven individuals with many arms, machine guns, rifles, etc. I was subdued, tied up, and blindfolded. They brought me down from the apartment and put me into a van, in which I noted that there were others in the same condition.

They took us to what we later learned was a police barracks in the province of Buenos Aires and immediately brought us into a torture chamber to obtain information. The torture was the usual: electric shocks, blows, sticks, cudgels, chains. The usual. I prefer not to speak of the subject.

How long were you in the police station?

I was there for two months. Other comrades were there for six months and nevertheless reappeared. This is the case of one of the comrades, but the majority that did not reappear after two months never appeared again.

What happened to you after these two months?

They abandoned me in a neighborhood in the outskirts of Buenos Aires, together with ten other people. They put our backs against a wall, as if they were going to execute us, and then left.

Where did you go?

I went to Uruguay, because I had a lot family there, with the idea, more than anything, of leaving my compañera and son in Montevideo and returning to Buenos Aires. However, as it turns out, I

[6] La Boca is a neighborhood in Buenos Aires known for its artistic and cultural qualities.

[7] The word Patota is typically used in Argentina and Paraguay to describe a gang of youths that bother people on street.

stayed in Uruguay until I returned to Argentina in 1984. There was still government surveillance in Uruguay, but it was low-key. They did not bother me directly.

Tell me about the RL's activities between 1976 and 1978, the final two years of the organization.

Of course the activity had a much less public character. We had more activity focused on meetings, discussion, the elaboration of documents and materials, discussions and the creation of relations with other groups.

Relations were so confused, so difficult and complicated by the repression. For example, if you lost contact with a comrade it could take months before you regained this contact. And imagine the enormous quantity of security: measures were being implemented one upon the other.

But, in any case, we worked fundamentally to conserve the groups that we had in the workers' front as well as in neighborhood and student fronts.

What did you do in the neighborhood and student fronts?

The neighborhood front attended, above all, to the poorest neighborhoods. The activities of the neighborhood groups had to do with demands for water, sewage, the construction of housing, parks, etc., (the various distinct demands of poor neighborhoods). In the student front we worked on the traditional student demands around study programs, classroom materials, and grades: the usual issues of the time.

Tell me about the military front.

Of course it was the smallest nucleus of the organization. It was not necessarily made up of the oldest, most proven comrades of the organization–there wasn't a rule in this respect–but naturally the most proven and oldest comrades ended up in this front because these comrades had been exposed to the police and were going to be stopped. In other words, their names had fallen into the hands

organization concerning whether this was coherent, if the correct thing was not to strengthen the labor federation that existed and which the workers recognized as theirs. That is to say, the workers continued seeing the CGT as their organization, so constructing a parallel organization could be useless or even dangerous. This discussion continued until 1978.

Debates within the RL took place through minutas, which were written resumes of a discussion. They were passed to a cell, to a sphere of coordination, from this sphere of coordination to another sphere of coordination. This is how the minutas circulated (and what permitted the discussions to take place in a framework of total clandestinity).

What publications did the RL produce?

The RL did not produce a party publication or party propaganda. The RL published periodicals in each work front, in each place of concrete insertion. For example, the RL participated in Coordinadoras de Gremios en Lucha (Coordinators of Unions in Struggle) in the southern zone of the province of Buenos Aires, and produced a periodical called *Organización Obrera* (Workers' Organization). When the members of the RL were inserted in the construction union they produced a publication called *Resistencia Obrera* (Workers' Resistance). The comrades in the graphic workers' union also had a publication (although I don't remember its name). A publication was produced in each place of work where we had an important development and where there was some possibility of an internal press, but the publications were of the fronts of work, not the organization. This has to do with the RL's character as a cadre party, not a mass party.

What was the relationship between the RL and the older anarchists?

The relation was very weak. The older anarchists continued to be centered in two or three groups that, while existing, had very little political relevance and were very isolated. And, curiously, these young anarchist groups weren't born inside the old anarchist insti-

In Argentina there are internal divisions or different currents of anarchism. There is a more communalist anarchism and a more syndicalist, classist anarchism (which was very important here in the 1920s). In a way, the RL rescued this classist tradition of Argentine anarchism.

What did you read?

Apart from the classics of anarchism, which we logically read as an anarchist organization, we also habitually read books by Franz Fanon, such as *The Wretched of the Earth, The Sociology of Revolution*, Mao's texts about the prolonged war, Marcuse, and others.

Was there an influence of Spaniard Abraham Guillein?[10]

No, and there was not an influence of the Spanish [anarchist] guerrillas either. Yes, we had news or someone knew something, but everything that had to do with the Spanish Civil War and Spanish resistance after the establishment of Franco was very distant for us.

What debates and conflicts did you have in the RL?

In general, the discussions revolved around works of concrete insertion, around the politics of alliances, that is, with whom we should have an alliance and what character this alliance should have.

For example, there was an internal discussion about the alliance with the Organización Comunista Poder Obrero. Or also, in 1976, during the military dictatorship, the Monteneros[11] launched the CGT[12] in Resistance. That is to say, they tried to link the unions to a non-official, parallel CGT, and this produced a discussion in our

[10] Abraham Guillen (1913–1993) was a prolific anarchist activist and theoretician, veteran of the Spanish Civil War (1936–39), and a lifelong member of the Spanish CNT who went into exile in South America in the late 1940s. His most well-known and influential work is *Strategy of the Urban Guerrilla*. See Donald C. Hodges, *Philosophy of the Urban Guerrilla* (New York: William Morrow, 1973).

[11] See review by Ramor Ryan in this issue for a fuller discussion of the Montoneros.

[12] The Confederación General del Trabajo was the national labor federation.

of repression and thus they could not work in more conspicuous projects.

How did you know that these comrades were exposed?

For example, the comrades that came from the ship factory were denounced and persecuted because they were notorious militants in the unions. When the repression really began in 1976, it was necessary to transfer these comrades from Berisso and Ensenada and insert them in less conspicuous projects, with greater coverage, in the northern zone of Buenos Aires, in San Fernando, in Tigre, etc.

And these comrades ultimately joined the military front?

Yes, more than anything they worked in the military front and, at times, carried out actions with other organizations, to acquire money or other things that were needed, such as arms, printing machinery, and autos.

Tell me about some of your actions.

As is typical of these types of groups worldwide, they had to do with kidnappings in order to charge ransoms from businessmen. At times there were actions against the police, where a police vehicle was burned or a police station was shot at. That is, actions of diverse types.

What was the relationship between the RL and other Left groups?

There was only one anarchist group of the level or importance of the RL, which was the LAC, the Línea Anarco-Comunista (Anarchist-Communist Line), from here in Buenos Aires. But it began to lose momentum as an organization before 1976 and a great part of the LAC joined the RL around the middle of 1976.

We also got along particularly well with groups of classist character. There was the Organización Comunista Poder Obrero (Communist Workers' Power Organization), which was a New Left organization and a classist group. Although they were Leninists, even classical Leninists, we had an important enough level of agreement with them.

Tell me about the agreements.
The agreements were functional: the coordination of efforts in the labor movement, the organization of Coordinators (fundamentally in the workers' front).[8] At times relations were also established on the level of military defense, in operations we conducted with them. They had a military apparatus called the Brigadas Rojas (Red Brigades), which was much more developed than ours.

In what sense were your activities different than those of other revolutionary Left groups during the dictatorship?
I do not know if they were that different. They were distinguished by our political attitudes. We were inclined to workers' self-organization, towards generating autonomous structures of the workers' movement and less towards capturing activities in the work fronts as a party. In other words, we tried to organize groups in the mass fronts, not groups of our organization. Of course our militants were inserted in these groups, but not with a party-like character.

The organization had this Bakuninist conception of revolutionary militants that had shaped Bakunin's Alliance of Social Democracy. That is, they are militants that act and coordinate in order to organize the popular masses, but they do not have a directive plan for the popular masses. To say it another way, our work is the construction of power, not seizing power.

Were there conflicts between the RL and other groups of the revolutionary Left?
In a situation of absolute clandestinity, it reaches to a point at which it is very difficult to establish relations of any type with other organizations and thus you do not see the obligation to fight with them. In this sense we did not have big conflicts with other political organizations.

Perhaps we had them at the student level, when the militancy was less clandestine, but during the period of total clandestinity

[8] See footnote 3 for an explanation of Coordinators of Unions in Struggle.

we not did feel compelled to conflict with militants of other organizations because we did not have shared efforts.

What were your relations with the international Left?
We had relations with the people from Uruguay, particularly the Organización Popular Revolucionaria 33 (Popular Revolutionary Organization 33). This group had anarchist origins and a form of organization very similar to ours. It was an older organization, with greater insertion in popular struggles and also more powerful. It still exists these days but has changed significantly. It emerged from the **FAU** (Uruguayan Anarchist Federation) and, in the 1970s, was evolving into a libertarian Marxist organization. We had lots of connections with these people in the 1970s, when they were much closer to the FAU.

And there is one other relation, about which I am the least appropriate to comment–I don't know if there are still comrades alive who know about this relation–but around 1976 I heard talk about a relation with a Palestinian group. This contact is almost mythic and I knew very little about this, but I know that some comrades had been trained in the Middle East with Palestinian anarchists. I don't know how important this relationship was or if it was sporadic and disappeared immediately. In my epoch of militancy in the organization I don't remember talk of this relationship as something habitual, but I know that something had existed. In any case, those who participated in this relation are now dead, disappeared.

Did you have other relationships with the international anarchist community?
No.

Tell me about the RL's ideas.
The RL ideas were a conglomeration. Originally they were fundamentally Bakuninist but later we incorporated the classical ideas of Spanish anarcho-syndicalism, of Cornelissen[9] and also the anarcho-syndicalism of Rudolf Rocker.

[9] Cornelissen was an important Dutch anarcho-syndicalist.