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Towards the Creation of an Anarchist International

First of May Group

March 10 1968

On the basis of our recent experiences, and an analysis derived from our particular situation as anarchists (organised or not) within the International politico-social context, we have arrived at the following conclusions which we consider both useful and necessary to be put before all militants who believe it still possible to adopt an efficient revolutionary position.

1. The modern states (totalitarian or democratic), private and state capitalism, all variations of political and religious ideology, trade-unionism (whether reformist or state-run), in general, all social groups which are part of the present productive society, have established as a fact, a co-existence that tends, at any cost, to ensure the present status quo for all forms of privilege, exploitation and authority.

More and more the fundamental contradictions of the System (or the different systems and societies, as well as those between the different races and nationalities) tend to intensify (but not resolve) themselves through

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negotiations and compromises which do not imperil the survival of the system (or systems) as such, nor of the groups, castes or classes that at present enjoy privileged positions. From this stems the prevailing political confusion and moral degradation, the repugnant dealing between regimes pretending to irreconcilable enmity (Russia and the USA, Cuba and Spain, China and Portugal) the 'peoples' democracies and the capitalist democracies, etc.

The old ruling castes and the new bureaucratic castes, whatever their colour, race or religion, have lost their former prejudices and hidden scruples. Today within international organisations and through official exchanges they hobnob and entertain one another on the backs of the common people who sustain them, and are subjected to them. And within this mesh of agreements and interests we must also place the well-integrated 'leadership' and trade-union bureaucratic caste.

2. From this it follows that, today, doctrinal declarations and re-affirmations of ideological principles have no meaning beyond demagoguery—a habit that clings. One no longer fights for democracy, socialism, communism, or revolution, but merely for the recognition of the defeat of power, by this or that group, in a particular place, and for 'national independence' (the certificate of guarantee which covers and justifies all types of despotism) and in order to forget the debts owing to international revolutionary solidarity. So, in Vietnam, Korea, Hungary and Cuba, after the triumph of one or another gang, one no longer fights for or against 'communism' but simply in order to guarantee 'national independence', the Geneva agreements, the UNO agreements, territorial integrity and the survival of the government of Saigon or Hanoi, Tel Aviv or Cairo.

THIRDLY: Complete respect for opinions and discussions as far as the activity of each group, individual or movement is concerned;

FOURTHLY: To be totally prepared to collaborate with groups, individuals or movements with whom one has affinity and similarly with all those who claim to follow a revolutionary ideology and who would be prepared to fight sectarianism and elitism as well as the injustices imposed by any species of ideology;

FIFTHLY: complete identification with the essentials of the manifesto, 'TO ALL REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS IN THE WORLD' (distributed by the 1st of May Group after the attack on the American Embassy in London) as a general strategic line as long as the present politico-social conditions persist throughout the world.

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consistent with the revolutionary ethic and realisable in practice; such as form of organisation that, avoiding the ominous consequences of bureaucracy, takes into account our numbers and real possibilities while being capable of projecting the anarchist presence effectively, if modestly, in the international politico-social context. We must take advantage of all the opportunities of the historic moment, and in particular of the crisis in Marxism in whose heart has arisen the inescapable problem of direct action and revolutionary solidarity. We do not believe in miraculous solutions, nor in the mere educative value of example—we believe in the effectiveness of action when it responds to certain conditions which give it meaning, and a consistent ideological and tactical line.

We have arrived at these conclusions after a number of experiences which have demonstrated to us that, in spite of the fact that we are a minority practically without means, we can make our presence felt, gain sympathy, and be taken into consideration by international public opinion.

So, our objective is not only to present conclusions drawn from our own experience, but rather to offer our solidarity and collaboration to all those who believe in the possibility of working effectively towards rebellion and international solidarity.

Consequently we sum up our position in the following way:

FIRSTLY: Complete identification with the anti-authoritarian concept of anarchism and its classic revolutionary line;

SECONDLY: Complete rejection of ideological dogmatism and sectarianism, as we consider these phenomena incompatible with anarchist ethics;

In the meantime, Barrientos and the Latin American oligarchies, assisted by American ‘Green Berets’, smash revolutionary guerrillas and assassinate Che Guevara, and the USSR and the ‘Peoples’ Democracies’ continue to do business, maintain diplomatic relations and extend credit to these same governments that the Marxist revolutionaries of Latin America are fighting against.

Throughout the world one finds the same ugly wheeling and dealing. Soviet commercial, cultural, and sports missions confer with their counterparts in Franco’s Spain; and throughout the Vietnamese tragedy American and Maoist diplomats in Warsaw maintain relations. The decolonisation of the Asiatic and black peoples proceeds, but only to allow the indigenous bourgeoisie to take power extensively assisted by Russia and/or the USA.

In practice ideology is shelved, becoming no more than a function of patriotism, ‘national independence’, ‘legality’, ‘public order’, ‘peace’, and ‘development’—and as it is in the East, so it is in the West.

All over the world parties and organisations witness their own sacrifice of ideology to the simple struggle for power.

3. Unfortunately this phenomenon of the abandonment of ideological coherence has also invaded international anarchist circles, which did not know how to resist or fight against the process of revolutionary demobilisation.

For anarchism, organisational or not, revolutionary demobilisation, this rupture between ideological conception and its practical outcome is of great importance, considering that anarchism does not aspire to the conquest of political or economic power. If it abandons its only possible vocation: its combativeness in the struggle for revolution, if it is content to reminisce about the past or

to vegetate into bureaucracy, it will lack a final objective and, as it lacks mystical roots, it could not survive as a sect—it would be of no practical use to any social grouping be their needs material or spiritual.

If anarchism is to exist in reality, it is to draw the people and justify itself as a practical revolutionary ideology without being demagogic, it must not only re-affirm its antistatism as a determining condition for the triumph of freedom, but must accompany this criticism of authoritarianism with the practice of permanent rebellion; without this it is useless except as a means of ridiculing and contributing a little more to the extension of the present confusion, pointing out the dangers, contradictions and damaging results of authoritarian society. But it is all useless if we content ourselves with vegetating as others do. It is obvious that the persecution of dissidents, the fighting of real or imaginary deviations, will not save us from a collective decadence if we do not react beforehand against the reigning apathy, stagnation, routine, and revolutionary demobilisation of the whole, whether as individuals, groups, or movements.

4. However, as we have said before—the fundamental contradictions of capitalist and ‘socialist’ society continue to flourish and in many cases their consequences are even more serious than before; the integration of workers into capitalist society, and the growth of ‘consumer’ society have lulled the proletariat. However, the class struggle has not disappeared, nor the inevitable confrontations through which each class defends its sectional interests. Neither has ‘peaceful co-existence’ stopped armed conflicts, it has only limited them geographically—Vietnam, the Middle East, Africa

Racial discrimination, the exploitation of the working masses, the abuses of the ruling classes, the absence of essential freedoms (of thought, expression and assembly), political crimes and resulting repression and terror are common currency in our civilised world. In Franco’s Spain, Salazar’s Portugal, the Greece of the ‘Colonels’, as in the Soviet Union and the ‘Peoples’ Democracies’, workers and even liberal academics are condemned when they protest or attempt to exercise their freedom of assembly. And in the United States the blacks rebel against racial discrimination, while in China there is a brutal confounding of the will of the masses with the deification of Maoism.

So, for anarchists throughout the world there is no lack of motives for action, nor of practical possibilities to declare their presence and to show the way.

In Europe, either hypocritically indifferent or accessory to crimes committed within its borders (Spain, Greece, Portugal), and in other continents dominated by economic and political imperialism, there exist many possibilities of demonstrating through these obvious examples where reason, justice and freedom lie without having to play at suicide, gratuitous heroism or compulsive activism. But simply and modestly, aware of the risks that go with such an attitude it is possible to keep the rebel conscience alive and to mobilise, by means of concrete action, all revolutionary agitations that manifest themselves throughout the world, transcending the absurd dogmatisms and tracing a way of effective rebellion before the collective submission of the supposedly revolutionary parties and organisations.

5. To summarise: we think that the time has come to define and set in motion a line of action that will be