

How does it change?

Anonymous

July 17, 2023

Within the Italian anarchist movement, is the need and importance of a printed newspaper still felt? In a world dominated by digital and immediacy, is it still subversive and revolutionary to print and disseminate a material tool of anarchist propaganda?

These are two questions that we have been asking ourselves over the two and a half years that the fortnightly “Bezmotivny” has been out, and which become all the more urgent now, at a time when the paper has been going through, unfortunately for several months already, a deep crisis that seriously threatens its existence.

Yes, comrades, “Bezmotivny” is in danger of never coming out again, seriously beset by two fundamental problems.

The first is financial: there is no more money to be able to pay for the printing and mailing of the newspaper. The fact is that nearly 50 percent of subscribers have not yet renewed their subscriptions for the current year, although they continue to receive the periodical. In addition, some places that receive 5 or 10 copies to disseminate it have long since stopped sending us money from newspapers sold. Add to this the increases in paper and shipping costs, and that’s it.

The second problem involves both the editorial staff and, in our opinion, the anarchist movement itself. The editorial staff, inasmuch as only 3 or 4 comrades are now left to work constantly for the release of each issue of the journal, while the others make minimal material contributions. The movement, in that the initial project of “Bezmotivny” to enlarge the editorial area to include other and different comrades outside the Carrara area (from which the idea of the fortnightly came and which saw comrades give heads and arms to the paper) has essentially failed. Failed both in the enlargement of the editorial staff itself and as contributions on certain issues or debates. Because, if there were contributions at certain times, these were unfortunately occasional and did not lead to more constant collaboration on the part of the comrades involved, as was the initial intention of the paper. Collaboration that, beyond the articles or interventions sent, also concerned the diffusion of the periodical within the area of anarchism to which it, for good or ill, referred, and that if on the part of some realities was constant and passionate, on the part of many others unfortunately did not develop.

Of why this did not happen, there would need to be a more in-depth analysis. Here we will merely mention a few points that may have contributed to this failure. “Bezmotivny” may have been perceived as yet another tool for the dissemination of a certain type of anarchism that was

closed in on itself, and in its iron convictions, which wanted to represent the voice of certain comrades intent on expressing and spreading their beliefs without any kind of contradiction or debate. It must also be said that paper-based discussions and debates have, for some decades now, lost the value and importance they had in past times mainly due to the now disproportionate use, even among comrades, of the Internet and so-called social and chat rooms (Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, etc.). In these virtual places, communiqués, interventions and responses on “movement” issues abound, favored by the immediacy and rapidity of their dissemination among “hundreds” or “thousands” of (virtual) contacts. And it does not matter if such interventions are then lost in the magnum sea of digital, swamped by hundreds of other posts, articles, comments, which inevitably take away weight and value from those that would have reason to be more analyzed and discussed. It is like when one enters a supermarket and is overwhelmed by the abundance and indifference of the products and goods contained therein. It is the debasement of the individual contribution, drowned in the ocean of the immediate and utterly indistinct, which leads to, among other things, the ridicule of offering books and magazines in a context as other and degrading as precisely that of a supermarket.

In a printed newspaper, on the other hand, the limitation of space (and time) calls for more reflection and analysis should therefore be the ideal place for subversive discussion, which does not become overwhelmed by urgency and quantity, but instead gives itself time and space for insights that can then flow into everyday (and nightly) action. All this currently seems to be stifled by an anxiety to intervene and appear that cuts the legs off any reflection and project tending toward a real subversion of this society. It is as if we are saying to ourselves: this world is now no longer revolutionizable, the only possibility we have is testimony. And that this “testimony” drowned in digital indifference is the necessary and obvious counterpoint to the victory and domination of the “best – if not the only – of all possible worlds.”

Is it therefore still necessary and useful to return to one of the initial questions—an anarchist printed journal for the anarchist movement (as well as for propagating anarchist ideas)? We believe so, but perhaps for the current conditions of the movement it is probably arduous and exceedingly challenging because it is contrary and dissimilar to the concept of witnessing.

In 1913, in a letter addressed to a comrade, Malatesta, referring to the periodical “Volontà” said that he attached “the greatest importance to the success of the newspaper, not only because of the propaganda it will be able to accomplish, but also because it will be useful as a means, and as a cover, for work of a more practical nature.” It will be objected that these were other times, these were other men, this was another anarchist movement. And therein lies the point of the question. What is our purpose today as anarchists? If back then it was to provoke and actively take part in an insurrection that would bring down the monarchical regime, what is the goal of today’s anarchist movement (getting the question of testimony out of the way)? And so, closing the circle, what are our aspirations, the practical goals of us editors of “Bezmotivny,” or any other printed newspaper? If putatively someone not close to the movement approached us because of the elegant persuasiveness of our articles, what would we have to offer him? The abstract beauty of an ideal made of freedom, equality and social justice, combined, however, with the vagueness and inability of its eventual and possible practical realization? But then it would be better to leave it where it was, at least we will not risk being accused of irresponsibly deluding another poor wretch, dazzled by the syntactical correctness of our denunciations and accusations.

A newspaper, of course, cannot be made only by its contents and stylistic format, but it is the material representation of those who compose, edit, disseminate and use it. It is a relation-

ship, made of flesh and blood, ideals and hopes, actions and illusions. It is the tool and means for comrades to feel kinship in a project or campaign, even a temporary one, of political and social subversion. And it is a tool and means of reflection and propaganda for those who are not anarchists but are fed up with this world of oppressed and oppressors.

If this relationship is lacking, and is not felt to be necessary and useful, then it is good for the printed newspaper to die, before it is reduced to mere testimony, yet another material appendage of an increasingly virtual digital world.

And it is precisely to test whether there is still room for such a relationship that we would like to call a two-day discussion and debate with the aim of broadening and ultimately refounding an editorial group that pushes its horizons beyond the battered Apuan Alps.

On Sept. 9-10 we will meet at the Circolo Culturale Anarchico “G. Fiaschi” in Carrara to discuss and relate with those who would like to relaunch and engage in a printed newspaper that would be a real and active expression and instrument of a wide and varied group of comrades yearning for a radical project of social overthrow.

Thus, what you have in your hands is the last issue of “Bezmotivny” before that meeting, from which may result the final end of the project or its immediate revival.

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Senzamotivo

PDF: “Come si cambia?” (in Italian) <https://lanemesi.noblogs.org/files/2023/07/come-si-cambia-bezmotivny-anno-iii-n-12-17-luglio-2023.pdf>

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[Published in “Bezmotivny,” *Internationalist Anarchist Fortnightly*, Year III, No. 12, July 17, 2023, pp. 1-2] | Translated by Dark Nights. *Dark Nights Note: On 8th August a repressive operation has been inflicted upon 10 comrades, resulting in four house arrests with all restrictions, five residence obligations with overnight return, and one comrade in prison due to not having proof of residence. All are accused of the charge of subversive association for the purpose of terrorism (art. 270 bis c. p.) and incitement to commit crimes (art. 424 c. p.) aggravated by the purpose of terrorism, in connection with the publication, as of 2020, of the fortnightly internationalist anarchist “Bezmotivny,” as well as offense to the honor and prestige of the president of the republic and clandestine printing.*

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