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Defence of the IWA and anarchosyndicalism

Report From the Secretariat to the 23rd IWA
Congress in Manchester the 8-9-10th of December
2006

IWA Secretariat

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The Secretariat has in the period requested the Sections and Friends of sending us information “about parallel organizations using the initials IWA-AIT”, documenting the confusion they are making. The SP of the Regional Committee of the CNT-AIT of Catalunya- Balears sent in 2005 an information against the “Joaquin Costa CNT”.and the USI-AIT has in the past forwarded information about the “USI- Rome”. Besides this, e-mails have been sent to the “AIT-Minnesota” of not using the “AIT” and they changed their name to “Syndicalist Action Network”.

The Plenary in Prague decided that the Secretariat shall coordinate with the USI-AIT against the “USI-Rome”, and with the CNTE against the ”Joaquin Costa CNT”. And with reference to the 22nd Congress decision about this issue “Against any unlawful use of the name and acronyms IWA/AIT”, the Plenary has mandated the Secretariat to continue to ask for advice of

how (and if) the decision for example to register the IWA-AIT logo can be put into practice.

The report of the Secretariat to the 22nd Congress and the Congress decision “Globalisation and parallel International” shows the intensity of the work made by those that have chosen “libertarian” reformism. Of various initiatives, the SIL (Solidaridad Internacional Libertaria) was founded in Madrid the 30th to 1st of April 2001 during the CGTE initiated conference “Anarchism in the 21st Century”. The goal was, and is, to unite all libertarian forces in this International Libertarian Solidarity Network (Spanish initials are SIL)

The CGT, SAC, Vignoles, SUD and various Italian unions have also the “Encounters of Alternative Syndicalism”. The Spanish CGT, the French and Swiss SUD and the Italian union UNICOBAS have argued for permanent structures, as the FESAL which is a European federation of alternative unionism. The organization in the education sector, the FESAL-E was founded the 3rd of May 2002. We have enclosed the statutes of the FESAL in the Circular 9/10/11-2005, and they show clearly that FESAL is not a revolutionary project.

The same Circular shows that the CGT Congress in June 2005 in Valencia made the decision to strengthen relations to existing anarchosyndicalist and revolutionary syndicalist organisations etc. The International Secretary of the CGT, Angel Bosqued, says in an interview with a Greek paper that they won't officially (?) question the IWA, but that “the decision certainly will put the question of the preparation for a new International at the agenda”!

It is very important to notice that today it is not only the SAC that is the engine for “libertarian” reformist policies internationally, it is also the CGT and the Vignoles. They initiated the network International Anarchosyndicalist Network (IAN) in December 2001. The article “Towards an International Anarchosyndicalist Network” of January 2002, which previously was at the web-site of the Vignoles, said the following:

“In parallel to the results of the Brussels summit, on the Friday 14h of December, an international meeting of revolutionary anarchosyndicalist and unionist confederations took place. This meeting continued the ones held in Paris (May 2000), Göteborg (June 2001) and San Francisco (June 1999). This meeting in Brussels highlights, however, an important stage. At the request of the CNT (Vignoles) International Secretariat, an International Anarchosyndicalist Network (IAN) was created.”

According to the article, the network would expand and it consisted in the start of the organizations present in Brussels in December 2001: The IWW (USA), the SAC (Sweden), the CGT (Spain) and the CNT-Vignoles (France). The organizations criticized the IWA and proposed projects and campaigns, summer camps and a common web-site.

The views of the participating members of the CGT, Vignoles and SAC were for example in the 2002 summer camp in Masseube (France) that a new international was a good idea in sight, but that the majority meant the time was not mature. The translation of parts of an article from “Arbetaren”, which has been on the IWA-web since 2002, is also showing SAC’s cooperation with the police in Gothenburg 2001.

The views of the Vignoles are clearly expressed on their web-site in the article “IV- CNT from 1995 to today”. They say that they support the Principles of the IWA, but stopped to use the initials “AIT” in 2001, as the IWA only consists of dogmatic and dying Sections. Except the Italians (USI) and some unions in the CNTE and the CNT-AIT in France, the IWA has no reality on the international scene. On the other hand they have founded a dynamic international network with the renaissance of Red-Black internationalism.

This network has, according to the article, international union fights and the organizations CNT-Vignoles, SAC, CGTE and the FAU organized large sections in the demonstrations in Amsterdam (1998), Cologne (1999), Paris in May 2000, Gothenburg (2001) and Seville (2002). Besides this, it is mentioned that

the Conferences in San Francisco (1999), Gothenburg (2001) and Essen (2002) attached themselves to organizations of all continents of the world that are practising the revolutionary syndicalism.

The network obviously considers the I-99 Conference in San Francisco and the I-02 in Essen as parts of their process, and now another Conference is planned. The Vignoles promised to take the following up of the I-02, and earlier this year we read it was scheduled for November 2006, some weeks before the 23rd IWA Congress in December. The latest information we have from the internal bulletin of the FAU is that the Vignoles say it will be a conference coordinating industrial branches in November, and that the Conference I-07 will either be the First of May 2007 in Paris or the 1st of November 2007.

It is important to recapitulate the events to see the “timing”: The I-99 Conference in San Francisco was organized after the 20th Congress of the IWA which accepted the CNT-AIT and not the “CNT –Vignoles” as the Section in France, and the USI-AIT, and not the “USI-Rome” as the Section in Italy. It was hard debates, and the WSA and the FAU tried to mobilize for a referendum in the IWA to change decisions of the 20th Congress. Today, we know that they did not manage to have the 3 required Sections.

The reports of the Granada IWA-Secretariat to IWA- Plenaries and the 21st Congress of IWA in Granada in December 2000, tells a lot of the multiple initiatives and conferences of the CGT, SAC and Vignoles from 1997 to 2000. And the strong critics against the FAU at the 21st IWA Congress shows that the situation was not less infected by FAU’s parallel activities and contacts.

Despite this 21st Congress decision and that the IWA-Plenary in Manchester in January 2002 made a decision against IWA participation in Essen, the FAU continued with the preparations of the Conference and sent letters directly to the local unions of the Sections of the IWA. The FAU initiated

**With anarchosyndicalist greetings
from the IWA-Secretariat**

Conference I-02 was organized after the mentioned Brussel Conference which formed the Network IAN, and a couple of months before the 9th Congress of the CNTE in November 2002.

Additionally to show the “timing”, the SAC sent a letter to the IWA in December 2001, mentioning their 1998 Congress decision saying that “their International Committee should investigate the various circumstances around a possible re-entrance of the SAC into the IWA before SAC’s next Congress” (in 2002). We knew it would come an initiative from the SAC to the IWA as an “unofficial” request from the SAC came towards us in January 2001. It was after the 21st Congress which elected the NSF, and just a couple of days before we were elected as members of the IWA-Secretariat by the NSF.

To the “unofficial” one it was answered that the IWA-Secretariat would not break the IWA-decision of no contact to the SAC, but if they had something new to say, they could send it to us, and the information could be passed to the Sections. And to the SAC letter, the reply decided by the Plenary in Manchester in January 2002, was to send SAC the IWA-Principles and the last part of the report of the Secretariat to the Manchester Plenary called “Defence of the IWA and anarchosyndicalism”.

This report, which is on the IWA web-site, describes the parallel activities and initiatives, and also with reference to a NSF report, the SAC’s “Giant Slalom”: While they during the years built stronger parallel structures to the IWA, they tried at the same time to establish axis’s with Sections of the IWA and/or parts of Sections when they were considered to be “non-orthodox” and “realistic” and developing in their direction.

This last part of the Secretariat’s report to the 23rd IWA-Congress describes these parallel structures and confirms that this “double” tactics is going on today. This time it is not only the SAC that is the main engine internationally, but also the

CGT and Vignoles- and a new International Conference called the I-07 is on the agenda!

We will finally show a couple of more quotes to illustrate this further, and the first is from the International Secretary of the CGT, Angel Bosqued, in an interview in February 2006 concerning “Comisión CGT Chiapas”:

“Internationalist marks a vocation for universal fraternity, not for belonging to a larger or smaller territorial organisation. On the other hand, nowadays, only the IWA could have a meaning as agglutinative for world anarchosyndicalism and its annexes, but the regrettable performance of those who control it prevents this to be this way”.

And on the “Foudation Pierre Besnard” web-page, the Vignoles member Sébastien Baroux of the CNT-PTT says in a comment to the USI 13th Congress decision in 2005 about the IWA:

“Sections of IWA begin to react against the anarchist sectarianism dominating within this International. After the bureaucratic exclusion of the CNT-F in 1996, one of the most dynamic and most promising sections, the various harassments against the FAU, the USI-AIT has the merit to approach the real problem. Let us get rid of the intellectual bureaucrats who manage IWA, the sections which militate on the ground of the class struggle, far from the intellectual swamp, have to resume the control of Revolutionary Syndicalist International.”

These words show very clearly their own concept about “anarchosyndicalism”. Move the “leadership” and control the organization. It would naturally be the best for them to capture the IWA through a new “leadership” and a new “Secretariat” that manipulated the IWA towards their direction, but this is not how an anarchosyndicalist organization acts.

The failure of the traditional reformist unions leaves an “open space”, which “libertarian” reformist unions try to fill by “militant unionism”, and by using the legal framework, structures and subsidies. Integrating means to “be a part of a whole”, and if unions integrate and are “pragmatic” with the

reason that otherwise it is not possible to have force, they say to the state and the capitalists that they are dependent upon for example, union elections, subsidies etc. to have functioning unions. It is like eating cheese in a mouse trap, you get immediate “advantages”, but in practice you are caught!

The capitalists and the state need predictable opponents being dependent on the legal framework, structures, and subsidies. All in order to direct, control, reduce, split and eventually crush the organisations. The IWA refuses to integrate its free associations into the capitalist system. The direct actions, propaganda and solidarity of the IWA are based on our own strength, not on class collaboration, as e.g. union elections to enterprise committees. Economic independence is secured by members fees, not on subsidies from the state. Federalism means that we do not build centralist structures and funds managed by paid union professionals.

The capitalist attacks come on many fields, and the International Workers Association is fighting on an economical, social, cultural, and anti-militarist level. The best way to defend the IWA and anarchosyndicalism is to keep on and speed up our mobilizations for conflicts and Urgent Actions, antimilitarist work, for our propaganda, to strengthen the Sections and Friends, to have Congresses, referendums and Plenaries with clear decisions and to expand the IWA to new countries and new parts of the world!

The anarchosyndicalist coherence of the International is essential as the struggle also is a fight for a new system. The IWA’s goal is to replace the capitalism and the state by the free federation of workers free associations – the libertarian communism!

This report is from our second and last period, and we wish you good luck in the preparations for the 23rd IWA-Congress!

LONG LIVE THE IWA!

Oslo, the 11th of September 2006