

The Network of Anarcho-syndicalists (MASA), Croatia

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Mreža anarhosindikalista i anarhosindikalistkinja (eng. The Network of Anarcho-syndicalists) or in short **MASA** (“masa” is also a Croatian word for mass, mob, crowd or similar – this is a note for you to understand the symbolic of our name.) is a propaganda organization from Croatia that tends to form an anarcho-syndicalist revolutionary syndicate confederation in Croatia, and to become a part of the IWA.

As I said, the aim of our organization is to create an anarchist syndicate and to become a member of the IWA-AIT. We believe that this is the best way to form a strong anarchist movement in our country and to raise the class consciousness of the working class. We must be strong and united to be able to fight for our rights, our jobs, our neighborhoods, our communities etc. against capitalism and the State.

MASA was formed in Zadar at “the 1st national anarcho-syndicalist meeting” that took place from 16th to 17th of February 2008. But, MASA didn’t actually exist until the 1st Congress that was organized on the 12th of April 2008 in Zagreb. On that Congress MASA voted its 1st version of the Statute and MASA’s structure. Until now we have had two more Congresses, the 2nd Congress organized in Pula from 6th to 7th September 2008, and the 3rd Congress organized in Zagreb from 21st to 22nd March 2009. On our 3rd Congress we voted the new Statute.

As you can clearly see MASA is a really young organization. We have existed for one year only, but we have achieved really a lot.

Before MASA, there was only one “class anarchist” initiative in Croatia. That was ZAF (eng. Zadar’s anarchist front) from Zadar. But the group was based only in Zadar, and it didn’t last long. There was also ASK (eng. Anarcho-Syndicalist Confederation), the initiative of individuals across the country. But it also didn’t last very long. The rest were, off course, various individualist, insurrectionist, anarchofeminist etc. groups, but those people were mostly part of the underground/subculture and they never did anything for the working class. So, those groups remained in their ghetto. MASA isn’t and never will be a part of that ghetto. We are trying to achieve much more. Our “short term” goal is, as I said, to form an anarcho-syndicalist revolutionary syndicate confederation in Croatia, and to become a part of the IWA. We want to help our working class in class war, and we want to help them to organize themselves (or better to say – ourselves) in order to win this war and to create the society without classes – libertarian communism.

ORGANISATION

MASA is not a syndicate, but I think that we almost have the structure of an anarchist syndicate.

MASA consists of local groups (or in short LG’s). To form an LG you need to have 3 MASA members in one town. Until today we have formed 5 LG’s, in Zagreb, Pula, Split, Rijeka and Zadar. Unfortunately we don’t have the group in Zadar anymore. We also have local contacts that represent MASA members who live in towns where they are not able to form an LG. We have local contacts in Dubrovnik, Labin, Osijek, Karlovac and Zadar (since there’s no group anymore).

Every LG is autonomous and members of every LG have the right to do what they want, unless they don’t break MASA’s Statute. Every LG elects its Secretary and the “cashier”.

The secretary is a person who organizes and coordinates LG’s work and the “cashier” is a person who collects money from members.

On a national level we have MASA's Secretariat which consists of the National Secretary (who coordinates the work of LG's and represents MASA in Croatia), the International Secretary (who contacts other anarcho-syndicalist groups, anarchist syndicates, IWA, or other anarchist groups from abroad) and the National "cashier" (who collects money from MASA's members).

Once a year our Congress takes place and for that occasion every LG sends delegates. In our Statute we even have a mathematical formula that defines the number of delegates every LG has the right send to the Congress.

Since we have members in towns where an LG can't be formed, we call them Isolated Members. They have a "special status" in the way that they can vote on Congress through their geographically nearest LG. They can also be elected to MASA's Secretariat or on other functions.

We also have various Committees, for example the Informatical Committee whose task is to take care of our internet page, forum etc., or The Publishing Committee whose task is to translate, edit and publish anarcho-syndicalist propaganda. We have a few more, like the Graphical Committee, the Statute Committee etc.

We also have a registered NGO called Centar za anarhističke studije (Eng. Center for Anarchist Studies) or CAS in short. The main purpose of this NGO is to get the ISBN and the ISSN numbers for our books, papers and for the rest of the material, since we need all this material to be in libraries and bookstores in order to spread our propaganda as much as possible. Also, with this NGO, we can promote anarcho-syndicalist ideas in the form of various lectures etc. We are aware that NGO's are not the right way to fight the system, but we use as many options as we can in order to fight back.

ACTIONS AND PUBLISHING

Since we are a young organization, I'll mention all our actions. So, here we go:

- MASA took part in Anti-Bush demonstrations in Zagreb from 4th to 5th April 2008.
- MASA introduced itself to the people on the 4th Anarchist Bookfair in Zagreb, 11th April 2008.
- MASA made its first big public appearance on the "Great syndical demonstrations" in Zagreb on the 12th of April 2008. Croatian yellow syndicates organized demonstrations and we joined them with our "side of the story". We had banners and flyers that were telling to the workers that their syndicates don't actually care for them at all, and that the yellow syndicates only bargain with the Government. Instead of that, to represent a real threat to the government and to capitalists, we should organize ourselves and perform direct actions. I believe this was the first time to see anarcho-syndicalist flags on demonstrations in Croatia. Also, the media noticed us, and especially our transparent that says: "We want bigger cages, and longer leashes" – our critics of the yellow syndicates.
- LG from Zagreb made a symbolic Mayday action.
- LG from Zagreb took part in the students' demonstrations on the 7th of May 2008. We had our banner that said: "Free education for all – neoliberalism get out from the universities".

- On the 23rd of June 2008, MASA was introduced to Slovenian comrades in their Infoshop in Ljubljana.
- LG from Zagreb took part in the Gay Pride 2008. We supported the protest of sexual minorities in our society, which are really discriminated in ex-Yugoslav countries.
- LG from Split made action against the ship “Esmeralda” that wanted to sail into the port of our coast town Split. “Esmeralda” was the ship where August Pinochet used to torture his political enemies.
- Then we had our first “syndical action”. Our ex-comrade used to work in a Broadway cinema and since he and his fellow workers didn’t get their paychecks, we forced the owner of Broadway cinemas to give them their paychecks.
- On the 5th of November 2008, LG from Zagreb took part in organizing the students’ demonstrations for free education.
- On the 15th of November 2008, LG from Zagreb took part in the “1st Solidarity March”. This was an anti-fascist march in Zagreb, organized by a group called the “Young Antifascists”, and by some Bolshevik (Maoists, Leninists and Trotskysts) groups.
- On the 17th of November 2008, MASA was introduced to the people from Pula in their infoshop Mica-Maca (eng. Pussy Cat – anarchist cat was the symbol).
- On the 5th of September 2008 huge demonstrations occurred in Croatia. These demonstrations were titled “Tight your belt, gang of thieves” organized by the so called, “Facebook initiative”. These demonstrations were against Croatian government and they were organized in the biggest towns in Croatia. LG’s from Zagreb, Rijeka, Pula, Split and also a group from Zadar took part in those demonstrations and also in organizing them.
- Since an insurrection in Greece broke out, we made a few support actions with other anarchists that are not a part of MASA. In Zagreb there was a group of anarchists in the front of Greek embassy, in Rijeka there was a march of solidarity etc.
- MASA also runs campaign against the privatization of shipyards in Pula, Split and Rijeka.
- On the 10th of January 2009, MASA organized a syndicalist action against GETRO, Croatian trade center that fired 200 workers (of 1000 employees), because of the “crisis”. The ex GETRO worker from Zadar sent us a letter asking for support and we answered him organizing our support campaign. We had actions in Zagreb, Zadar, Rijeka, Pula, Split and Dubrovnik. We made flyers (for cars in trade center parking spots and also for customers), posters and, the most important, support letters for workers which still have a luck to work in GETRO. Unfortunately we didn’t get any response from the workers so we stopped our actions. This action got a lot of attention from the media, but without the workers’ response continuing with actions didn’t have any sense.
- On the 3rd of April 2009, MASA had a presentation on the “5th Anarchist Bookfair” in Zagreb.

- On the 4th of April 2009, MASA took part in protest against Croatia entering NATO. We were one of the organizers of this protest. The protest happened in Zagreb.
- LG from Pula fought, along with fired workers, against Oriana d.o.o.
- MASA members were a part of the “Free education” insurrection in Croatia. Students blocked their universities and demanded free education for every student. MASA members organized the occupation of The Faculty of Philosophy in Rijeka, University of Zadar, Faculty of Political Sciences in Zagreb, Faculty of Philosophy in Split and they are involved in occupation of the rest.

So far, we have published 3 books:

- Émile Pouget: Basics of syndicalism / Direct action / Sabotage
- Rudolf Rocker: Methods of anarcho-syndicalism / C.N.T.: Anarcho-syndicalism in Puerto Real
- Arthur J. Miller: Making anarchist revolution possible.

Right now we are preparing:

- Anarcho-syndicalism vol. 1
- P. A. Kropotkin: Syndicalism and anarchism
- É. Pouget: What is the trade union?
- F. Pelloutier: Anarchism and the workers’ union
- E. Collon: Spanish civil war – Anarchism in action
- Brighton SolFed: Anarcho-syndicalism in 21st century
- A. Bonanno: Armed joy
- Comic: Business, work, community
- Anarchist FAQ: Section A + Appendix about anarchist symbols

Right now we are working on our propaganda newspapers.

WHAT’S PURPOSE OF THIS TEXT

The main purpose of this is not just bragging. Yes, we are proud of what we have achieved so far, but we don’t think that this is much when we see all the exploitation of the workers around us. This is just a beginning.

The main purpose of this text is to establish international contacts with our comrades from which we are divided by geographical and political borders. We are all members of the working

class and we are all members of an anarchist international movement, so we want to keep close to our comrades from the whole World.

We think that communication is very important, especially to us – the beginners.

We would like to establish communication with as many organizations possible, especially with anarcho-syndicalist and anarcho-communist ones.

We, as beginners, think that we can learn a lot from each and every one of you.

So, thank you for your time and I, personally, hope, in the name of the Organization, that we will keep in touch, or that we will establish communication.

If you need any more information just write.

Salud!

Juraj Katalenac,
International Secretary of MASA

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