

# On Organization

L'Adunata dei Refrattari

1954

The Livorno conference, which took place on the first two days of May, has again shown that the comrades of Italy are still searching for the anarchist organization that will take on the task of harmonizing and strengthening their work, and, just as with their first meeting almost nine years ago, they are still far from the realization of their desire.

They organized, it's true, the Italian Anarchist Federation [FAI], but if we exclude those activities of a generic character that take place wherever there is a group animated by a common thought, namely propaganda and mutual assistance, it would be difficult to indicate the specific work of this organization.

The reasons for this organizational paralysis are obvious. The FAI — which wants to be in name and in fact federalist and anarchist, that is, respectful in name and in fact of the autonomy of individuals and associated groups — does not on the one hand appease the prejudices of those comrades who do not feel the need for nor see the usefulness of the formal organization of anarchists into a party, and on the other hand does not at all satisfy the impatience of those others who are precisely searching for a concrete organization with all the traditional devices allowing them to assert their opinions and confer a sense of responsibility on themselves.

The supporters of the FAI, in fact, have spent most of their time during this last decade defending themselves from the pitfalls and attacks of partisans, who have changed names and perhaps shades as the years have passed, but aim toward the same end, which is to perfect the organizational machine in such a way that they can put it at the service of their particular convictions, which were those of the libertarian socialists first, then those of the gaapists [Anarchist Groups of Proletarian Action], then those of other comrades who, while refusing to follow the libertarian socialists and gaapists to their extreme authoritarian involutions, still want in every way the rigid anarchist organization that they advocate.

And the FAI was left with nothing but the selfless devotion of a handful of tirelessly generous comrades, who, though they devoted all their energies to it with all their zeal to the point of exhaustion, could not do everything, nor substitute themselves for everyone.

And so?

We, here, have abstained all these years from intervening in the internal affairs of our comrades in Italy because distance doesn't allow us to know things in all their precision, because organizational matters have never interested us and do not interest us now, and because no one other than those comrades can solve the problems that confront them.

But since we have gone on repeating at every opportune moment that l'Adunata did not participate, either directly or indirectly, in the congresses and conventions of the FAI, we feel it's permissible for us to state once and for all the reasons why we take no part whatsoever in those forms of activity which we nevertheless have always seen fit to keep our readers informed of.

The main reason for our profound and sharp aversion to the organization of anarchists into a party derives first of all from the history of organization in general, and of political organization in particular, which is always a hierarchical and authoritarian complex, which careerists use to get to the apex of the hierarchy and exercise their authority over everyone. It's said that this is authoritarian organization and that an organization composed of anarchists would be quite different. It may be, but in three quarters of a century of attempts no one has so far succeeded in giving a single example of a different organization.

In practice, those anarchists follow precisely the tradition of other organizers, who first create the organization and then the functions it's to be used for. The organization created without precise and well-defined aims is an organization for its own sake, an instrument without function. Given the mindset of anarchists, thirsty for independence, intolerant of dogma, distrustful of all power, an organization that sets out to achieve all possible and imaginable goals acquires a different meaning for each of its adherents, and therefore exists as if it doesn't exist, as long as it respects everyone's interpretation, and then becomes authoritarian when it demands acceptance of someone's interpretation.

Anarchists have always maintained that the need must create the means to satisfy it, the necessity of the function, the organ. If they believed in the necessity of the organization they would never seek to create it except for a definite aim, well-defined beforehand and explicitly accepted by those who adhere to it. In Italy itself, since the war, the only initiative that has prospered and created around itself a living network of solidarity and consensus is that of assistance to political victims. And it is clear why, because this committee responds to a concrete need felt by all, the satisfaction of which everyone feels interested in. Similar things can be said of newspapers, magazines, editorial initiatives, each of which finds consensus around which relationships are hatched, ephemeral or permanent as the case may be, and which certainly constitute associations of wills and energies directed toward the achievement of a single goal.

I don't know whether all these undertakings can be called organizations; certainly they aren't the classic total paternal organization of parties, as the anarchist organizers would have it; but they are certainly associations of energies responsive to the need that generated them, to satisfy which they exist as long as the individual adherents deem it necessary or appropriate. And if they are organizations, they are organizations sui generis, as varied as the purposes they serve, fluid and open to the flow of the free wills of the conscious individuals who created them and keep them alive.

In the opinion of the writer of these notes, these seem to be the requirements of the associated activity of anarchists: forms of cooperation, satisfying needs felt by all who participate, at the same time open to the influence of their will and respectful of their freedom. And such forms can be realized only in narrow fields for varied purposes, or in vast fields for precise, well-defined and limited purposes.

To want to create among anarchists a general organization, including everyone and claiming to satisfy all needs, analogous to the organization of political parties and the organization of the state, the conquest and management of which all parties aspire to, is utopian, first of all, because

the anarchists' love of freedom is opposed to it, and then, because it is the tendency of a total organization to become totalitarian.

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