

The Anarchist Federation of Rio de Janeiro (Federação Anarquista do Rio de Janeiro - FARJ) is a specific anarchist organisation from the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Founded on the 30th of August 2003, the FARJ identifies its origins in the work of militants such as Ideal Peres (1925-1995), his father Juan Perez Bouzas (or João Peres) (1899-1958) and José Oiticica (1882-1957), amongst others. It also references political organisations like the Anarchist Alliance (Aliança Anarquista), founded in 1918, and the libertarian Communist Party (Partido Comunista), founded in 1919 (not to be confused with the reformist and electoralist Communist Party founded in 1922). It also finds historical reference in the trade unions influenced by the anarchists at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, such as the Labour Federation of Rio de Janeiro (Federação Operária do Rio de Janeiro - FORJ), founded in 1906, in all the search for the 'social vector of anarchism' in the 1940s and 1950s, and in the activities post-military dictatorship ★



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# Especificismo in Brazil

An Interview with the  
Anarchist Federation of  
Rio de Janeiro [FARJ]



by **Jonathan Payn**  
Zabalaza Anarchist Communist Front



# Especificismo in Brazil:



*Translation by Jonathan (ZACF)*

Taken from:

[www.anarkismo.net/article/19343](http://www.anarkismo.net/article/19343) & [www.anarkismo.net/article/14199](http://www.anarkismo.net/article/14199)

***Anarkismo.net is an international anarchist-  
communist news service***

For more information about the FARJ, see:

- ★ *Interview with the Rio de Janeiro Anarchist Federation*, realised between December 2007 and February 2008 by the journal *Divergences*: [www.anarkismo.net/newswire.php?story\\_id=9207](http://www.anarkismo.net/newswire.php?story_id=9207)
- ★ The FARJ's programme *Anarquismo Social e Organização* (Social Anarchism and Organisation - currently being translated into English): [www.anarkismo.net/article/10861](http://www.anarkismo.net/article/10861)

\* See [www.anarkismo.net/article/14067](http://www.anarkismo.net/article/14067)

**www.farj.org**

## An Interview with the Anarchist Federation of Rio de Janeiro (FARJ)

by **Jonathan Payn**  
**Zabalaza Anarchist  
Communist Front [ZACF]**

**August to October 2010**



by other supporters or militants of the organisation. Advise us if you know anyone in these conditions. We will initiate a process of correspondence and work until there can be possible meetings or sufficient exchanges of information to allow entry as a supporter. Also the criteria for acceptance of entry will be based on the work that will be done over a long period.

**Is there something more to say for those who want to be a supporter?**

It is important that persons who approach us and want to be with us should know our political line, which is explained in our program “Social Anarchism and Organisation”, which can be read here on our website or at [www.anarkismo.net/article/10861](http://www.anarkismo.net/article/10861). Basically, the person has to consider themselves to be an anarchist and advocate class-struggle social anarchism, directed towards popular struggles with the objective of revolutionary social transformation. Besides this, it is very important to have ethics, responsibility, commitment, and self-discipline.

**Is there opportunity for other exact contributions?**

Yes and they are always very welcome. If you want to contribute in any way, please write to us at [farj@riseup.net](mailto:farj@riseup.net).

**How does a supporter become a member of the organisation?**

This happens in the process of work and struggle. With permanent contact in the activities (of the organisation), the supporter can express their desire to join the organisation or vice versa. The process of entry is discussed collectively, and of course, as this is another level of militancy with greater responsibilities and duties in the organisation, there is more need for more commitment and levying.

**How to participate sporadically in the activities that we do and get inside of what is going on in organised anarchism in Rio?**

Send an email to [farj@riseup.net](mailto:farj@riseup.net) with the subject “Register” so that we can put you in our direct mail. Periodically you will receive news related to the social movements and activities of the FARJ, as well as our newsletter and our organ *Libera* in digital format.

**If you feel affinity with our proposal, do not hesitate to contact us!**

## 22 ..... Especificismo in Brazil

tions and meetings of various types. This front is also responsible for the Fábio Luz Social Library (Biblioteca Social Fábio Luz-BSFL) which has existed since 2001 and under which functions the Marques da Costa Research Nucleus (Núcleo de Pesquisa Marques da Costa-NPMC) that, founded in 2004, has the goal of producing theory for the organisation, in addition to historical research about anarchism in Rio de Janeiro. Besides this, the community front is responsible for the Ideal Peres Libertarian Study Circle (Círculo de Estudos Libertários Ideal Peres - CELIP), a public space of the FARJ that has the goal of organising talks, debates and video screenings in order to draw in those newly interested in anarchism.

**Anarchism and Nature Front:** Works in rural social movements and groups that work with agriculture and social ecology. It has contact with and works with the MST, the Via Campesina and spaces like the Floreal Cooperative and the Germinal Center for Food and Health. It performs teaching courses and workshops in occupations, favelas, settlements, schools and poor communities. All this with the objective of rescuing agriculture, agro-ecology, social ecology, eco-literacy and economic solidarity. In addition to articulating the creation of networks between workers of the countryside and city, it seeks to involve workers, social movements militants and students in its activities.

In order to meet an important demand we lead a “transversal’ project, in which all our fronts are inserted, which is called the Popular University (Universidade Popular - RJ). This proposal was deployed, in fact, as an anti-capitalist popular education initiative, aimed at the transformation of society using the tactic of political training within social movements.

### **Choosing where to act, how to get closer?**

Send an email to farj@riseup.net with a brief presentation of yourself and saying in which front you would like to work. Our secretary will put you in contact with a person responsible for that front and from there contacts will be established. It is also possible to enter directly into contact with someone from our organisation. From the contact you will be directed to the work and getting closer to FARJ militants should happen in the day-to-day struggle. Getting close to you is to show your willingness to become a supporter and to give our militants the necessary orientation.

### **Is it possible to have supporters in other locations, outside of Rio de Janeiro?**

Yes. For this you have to write to farj@riseup.net expressing your wish to be a supporter, also with a brief presentation, and informing us that you are outside of Rio de Janeiro. Generally supporters from other locations are known to us or indicated

*In this interview, realised between August and October 2010, the Anarchist Federation of Rio de Janeiro (Federação Anarquista do Rio de Janeiro - FARJ) talks about its understanding of concepts such as especificismo, organisational dualism, social insertion and the role of the anarchist political organisation in relation to social movements and the class struggle.*

*It also deals with the recent entry of the FARJ into the Forum of Organised Anarchism (Fórum do Anarquismo Organizado - FAO) and the social effects of Rio de Janeiro being selected as a FIFA 2014 Host City, as well as sometimes difficult questions, such as finding a balance between necessary levels of theoretical and strategic unity, and the need to grow as an organisation.*

in the divulging of propaganda material; in the support of the work of theoretical production or of analysis of current contexts; translations of texts and books; in the organisation of practical activities for social work: community activities, volunteers, support in our formation work, logistical activities, support in the organisation of work etc.

This instance of support is where people that have affinity with the FARJ and its work have contact with other militants, can improve their understanding of our political line, better get to know our current activities, improve their view of anarchism etc.

### **How can you become a supporter militant?**

The process of approximation that we give preference to is always with practical work in any of our fronts. The idea is that the interested person verifies with which work they have the most affinity and, by entering into contact with the organisation, may then take part in our work and from that seek admission to the level of a supporter. That is, getting close to the organisation should occur, preferably, in the social work that is performed in our three fronts.

### **What are our three fronts and their work?**

**Urban Social Movements Front:** Has been performing permanent work with the urban occupations of Rio de Janeiro since 2003, and giving continuity to the experiences we already had with the homeless movement since the 1990s. At the moment this front also encompasses the reconstruction of the Rio de Janeiro Unemployed Workers' Movement (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Desempregados - MTD), which has existed in Rio de Janeiro since 2001 and fights for employment across the country. The MTD is regaining its strength now, re-connecting itself and forming a nucleus of people from communities and favelas for the struggle. Besides this, this front has relations with the Landless Rural Workers Movement (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra - MST), for which it is offering political training courses in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. The front is also close to and organises activities with other entities and social movements like the Popular Assembly (Assembléia Popular - Rio de Janeiro) and the International Homeless Front (Frente Internacionalista dos Sem-Teto - FIST).

**Community Front:** It is responsible for the Social Cultural Centre of Rio de Janeiro (Centro Cultura Social do Rio de Janeiro - CCS-RJ), an open social space which we maintain in the northern zone of the city and that puts together a series of community activities from garbage recycling, courses to reinforce school teachings to poor children from the community of Morro dos Macacos and courses helping to prepare them to enter university, to theatre workshops, cultural events, and commemora-

# How to Participate in the FARJ?

by **Anarchist Federation of  
Rio de Janeiro [FARJ]**

*A translation of a FARJ document explaining the process by which people seeking to get involved in the activities of the Federação Anarquista do Rio de Janeiro can do so.*

*It has been translated into English as a matter of interest for groups which operate with different levels of involvement, such as that of supporters and members. Readers may also find the FARJ document on the Concentric Circles \* of the specific anarchist organisation relevant.*

## **How does the structure of FARJ militants function?**

The FARJ has two instances of distinct militants, defined by the logic of the concentric circles with which we work. There are the supporters and the militants of the organisation. The best way to start participating in the FARJ is by being a supporter. [To know more about the concentric circles, see our document *Anarquismo Social e Organização*].

## **What is a supporter and what do they do?**

The supporter does not take part in the organisation, but has a fundamental importance. The instance in which the supporter takes part seeks to group together all of the people that have ideological affinity with the FARJ and that want to contribute in some way. The supporters are responsible for supporting the organisation in its practical work, like for example; in the editing of pamphlets, periodicals or books;

**For those readers not familiar with the concept of organisational dualism, could you please explain why the need to build an anarchist political organisation in Rio de Janeiro? What kind of process did you have to go through to arrive at this conclusion and to form the FARJ?**

**Anarchist Federation of Rio de Janeiro (FARJ):** The term 'organisational dualism', as it is used in English, serves to explain the conception of organisation that we promote, or what has classically been called the discussion between 'party and mass movement'. In short, our *especifista* tradition has its roots in Bakunin, Malatesta, Dielo Truda, Federación Anarquista Uruguaya (FAU) and other militants/organisations that have defended this differentiation between levels of organisation. That is, a broad level that we call the 'social level', and is composed of popular movements, and that which we call the 'political level', composed of anarchist militants that are grouped around a defined political and ideological basis.

This model is based on a few positions: that popular movements cannot be confined to a defined ideological camp - and, in this respect, we differentiate ourselves from the anarcho-syndicalists, for example - because they should organise themselves around needs (land, shelter, jobs, etc.), grouping together large sectors of the people. This is the social level or the mass movement, as it has been called historically. The model also contends that, to work in movements, it is not enough to be dissolved - or inserted - in them, even while recognising us as anarchists. It is necessary that we be organised, constituting a significant social force that will facilitate in the promotion of our programme and also in defence against attacks from adversaries that have other programmes. However, one must bear in mind that we do not promote that you participate in one or other level; anarchists are also workers and are part of this broad group that we call the exploited classes and, therefore, they organise themselves, as a class, in the social movements. Even so, as this level of organisation has its limitations, the anarchists also organise themselves on the political level, as anarchists, as a way to articulate their work and ideas.

What is called the specific anarchist organisation is nothing new in the anarchist movement. Its origins are in the militancy of Bakunin himself, within the First International, with the formation of the Alliance of Socialist Democracy in 1868. Malatesta, developing Bakunin's thesis of active minority, also thought of something similar. As, in the same way, did the exiled Russians of Dielo Truda and the FAU, amongst so many others. This specific grouping of anti-authoritarian revolutionaries is based on common positions on the horizon (objectives), strategies and tactics. That is, the specific anarchist organisation is not a recent 'invention', but has its tra-

jectory in the consolidation of anarchism itself as a revolutionary tool, tracing itself to the actions of Bakunin.

In the historical development of the anarchist movement, this position was neglected in diverse countries in detriment to a position that said that 'syndicalism' (that accumulated the set of social movements) was enough. Not for us. We believe that the duty of the specific anarchist organisation, what Malatesta called the anarchist 'party', is to articulate the force of the anarchists around a common proposal and to stimulate the social movements that they advance more and more beyond their demands, being able to forge the basis of a revolutionary transformation.

It is important to emphasise that organisational dualism does not presuppose a relation of subordination or hierarchy between the two instances mentioned. In the understanding of anarchism the specific anarchist organisation and the social movements are complimentary. The relation of the specific anarchist organisation presupposes ethical and horizontal relations, that imply not to have relations of hierarchy or domination over the instances that participate.

In Rio de Janeiro, the organised anarchists tried to found specific anarchist organisations twice; but repression postponed their project. These comrades felt intuitively that the reflux of revolutionary syndicalism could also condemn anarchism itself. And this was exactly what happened. Syndicalism was not 'enough' and with the emptying of revolutionary syndicalism anarchism entered into crisis, already in the 1930s. In the decades of 1940 and 1950, the comrades from Rio de Janeiro (and also from Sao Paulo) founded their specific organisations, but were completely isolated from the social movements and organised themselves to reverse this picture.

In the decade of 1960, the military coup and the conditions of the anarchist movement had delayed the project of a specific anarchist organisation in Rio de Janeiro. With the movement completely smashed by the years of the dictatorship, the decades of 1980 and 90 were decades of agglutination of old and new militants, done mainly by the tireless work and patience of Ideal Peres. It was the time not only to resume old debates, but also the important experiences of struggle that the anarchists had undertaken, even if they were not necessarily grouped around a common strategy (occupations, popular education groups, presence in trade unions, etc).

At the beginning of 2001 we comprehended that it was the moment to take a qualitative jump, to leave the model of 'cultural centres', around which we had been organising since the 1980s, and to form a political organisation more adequate for working with social movements. This was becoming more and more evident; it was the path that we would have to follow. We had some experience with social work and, with the decision that anarchism must function to impel popular struggles, it became evident that we would have to search for something more organised, with more cohesion, at least, an instrument that would allow us to deepen our work in the way that was shown necessary.

It was then that diverse militants from the anarchist movement in Rio de Janeiro came together with the intention of discussing the proposal to found an organisation. They already had a certain experience in social militancy, but lacked having dis-

We completely defend theoretical and tactical unity, but if we are creating an organisation, for example, we can not 'tighten' the demand for unity too much without extensive discussion, as this would greatly limit the number of the organisation's militants (as in many Trotskyist groups).

Thus, it is necessary to be patient: unity is achieved through processes of training, discussion and, fundamentally, of the organisation's political practice in struggles. So, you have to give 'time to time', i.e. to forge the minimum basis of unity to unite a group of comrades in order to initiate discussions and work and, in this context, 'tighten' the unity, organisation etc. Militancy is also a culture and people do not change that fast. They are going to agree with the documents or with the work of the organisation, and will gradually see the need for discipline, regularity in their work, theoretical deepening etc. There is no use for a new militant to arrive and for you to 'throw' a mountain of demands on top of them because they will very probably leave the organisation.

It has to be a permanent exercise to know how much 'to tighten the bolt', because, if it is true that when it is not very tight there may be problems, if you squeeze it too much it breaks. That is, the organisation should bear a permanent increase in unity in mind, but always 'tightening the bolt' to the correct measure, neither exaggerating nor failing to tighten it.

Sometimes it can be better to start with more basic lines and continue developing the discussion on the way, than trying to close all the points too much in the beginning.

Finally, we must say that the organisation and unity of the anarchist organisation must accompany work in the popular movements. There is no use wanting to have an anarchist organisation with a maximum level of organisation and unity if there are few struggles, if they are very disorganised etc. As a complement to the struggles of the movements, the anarchist organisation must accompany its level of development, without ever forgetting the conjuncture; with an upsurge of social struggles, it is natural that the anarchist organisation has to adapt itself to this.

### Would you like to say anything more?

**FARJ:** Only to wish strength to the anarchist comrades, especially those from Zabalaza. We hope that the autonomous social movements advance and that the anarchist groups and organisations can humbly contribute with a horizon of struggle that has revolutionary intentions and that this is the task of the oppressed. There is still room for dreams in the world.

We resolve the asymmetries collectively by having internal seminars and constructing collective texts from common readings or group discussions.

**Do you think that these processes of approximation and construction of theoretical and tactical unity, beyond the criteria for entrance into the organisation, can vary according to the social and political conditions of a determined place and its libertarian tradition? How?**

**FARJ:** Yes. We find that reality does not answer only to our wills, and the organisation must be ready to act in different conjunctures and contexts, without bureaucratising or crystallising models that do not address the diverse realities faced by anarchist militancy. Be it in Brazil or any other part of the world.

Brazil recently emerged from a dictatorial period and entered into a supposedly democratic regime. And the history of Latin American countries is replete with periods of dictatorship. Right here we've had two such moments, from 1930 until 1945 and from 1964 until 1985, and we have to work conscious that history could 'repeat' itself. We are also conscious that the reality of militancy in our country - even within a small state in terms of Brazil, like Rio de Janeiro - presents differences and peculiarities that can not be neglected. Doing politics in the interior of the state of RJ, or even in Baixada Fluminense, a metropolitan area of the city, is to work in a more hostile environment than that encountered in the state capital.

But, your question is how to adapt the criteria for approximation and entrance to the need for us to maintain theoretical and strategic unity? Whether in times of greater or lesser repression or in light of different libertarian traditions. We think that this can be considered under the light of practical experiences, such as that of the FAU (Federación Anarquista Uruguaya), which has already gone through times of both dictatorship and democracy, and had to adapt in order not to stop building its militancy.

And our organisation is very young, with just seven years; and in fact by initiating our militancy in a period of 're-democratisation' we are acting in this reality, which allows us to edit anarchist journals, realise activities in universities and trade unions, etc. - things that are not viable under a dictatorial regime. Certainly, if repression increases we will have to do all this work of approximation and entrance into the organisation in other, less public and less open ways, to ensure the work of the organisation and the lives of its militants.

We say this to support a position that it does not help to pick up a recipe book and try to apply it in full to our reality. One of the basic criteria of an organisation that wants to persist in time to be able to influence reality is that it has to know how to observe the conjuncture, and from there adapt its actions.

For example, in the FARJ, we took some time to reach the level of unity that we have today but we do not think that the lesser unity that existed at the beginning was a reason to 'split'. An organisation that is taking shape, especially in locations that do not have a long tradition of militancy, needs to be patient.

cussed what our organisational model would be. One of the groups withdrew from the process and resolved to have their own discussions separately. Later they founded the Insurrectionist Anarchist Federation, which they later called UNIPA (Anarchist Popular Union - União Popular Anarquista). The group that remained, and continued with the discussions, constituted the FARJ in 2003. It is important to highlight that the FARJ was consequence of an accumulation of at least one decade before, with the presence of anarchists in diverse social movements in the state of Rio de Janeiro.

**How do you see your role - the role of the specific anarchist organisation in relation to social movements?**

**FARJ:** The role of the specific anarchist organisation is to act as a catalyst of social struggles. We don't believe that political organisations must guide or direct the struggles, as the Marxist-Leninist primer says. Bakunin's conception of active minority is very useful for us in this regard. The active minority does not impose, dominate, establish hierarchical relations or control within the social movements.

The role of the specific anarchist organisation in the social movements is also not to group everybody to the positions of the movements that it joins, but to spread out and to influence the movements with libertarian practices (direct action, autonomy, self-management, etc), without 'doctrinisms'.

This implies enormous responsibility and presupposes an ethical relationship with these movements. This also leads us to the inevitable role of contributing to the struggle against any type of harnessing of the social movements, combating bureaucracy, stimulating the internal organisation of the movement, and working to ensure that these movements always stand on their own feet.

**The FARJ makes a distinction between social work and social insertion. Could you define the two?**

**FARJ:** Yes, we make this distinction. As we put it in our programme: 'social work is the activity that the anarchist organisation realises amidst the class struggle, making anarchism interact with the exploited classes'; social insertion is 'the process of influencing social movements by anarchist practice. Thus, the anarchist organisation does social work when it creates or develops work with social movements and has social insertion when it manages to influence these social movements with anarchist practices'.

Let's see how we can better explain this in practical terms. For us, the most important work of the anarchist organisation is to function as a motor/ tool of the struggles of the social movements, trade unions etc. and, in this sense, we always have as an objective to create movements or to participate in movements that already exist.

Well then, we say that we do social work when we participate in or create movements and when they do not work with the strategy that we defend. When we enter into a movement like that of the homeless, for example, and we develop work without managing to conclude a proper project that is a practical application of our programme, we are doing social work. Social work is, therefore, to participate in a movement, but without managing to implement our programme, this proper project of which we speak. Generally, the first steps of an anarchist organisation are always of social work, but it is indispensable to seek social insertion, according to the moment.

In agreement with the definition made above, social insertion occurs when, starting with its social work, the anarchist organisation manages to make its strategy function in practical terms in the popular movements. In reality, for us it is not enough to simply be in the social movements and to kowtow them; it is necessary to be there with a programme and struggling so that it is implemented as much as possible in practice.

In our programme we propose a determined strategy for the movements: in sum, broad movements without religious or ideological criteria as a basis for association; a class characteristic in this association, that is, movements forged by sectors of the exploited classes; combativeness aiming at conquests by means of struggles and not by cross-class collaborationism or cabinet agreements; autonomy in relation to individuals, organisations and institutions such as authoritarian parties, the State etc.; direct action as a form of guaranteeing class conquests in the struggles of the class itself, without participating in instances of bourgeois democracy; decision making by means of direct democracy, that is, movements that are organised horizontally, with decisions being made by all those involved in the process of struggle without leaderships detached from the base and in favour of self-management and federalism; finally, a long term perspective that can impel day-to-day conquests and also impel struggles with a socialist and revolutionary objective.

In short, the more we manage to promote this strategy within movements, and the more they function in this way, the more social insertion we have.

Therefore, an easy distinction is: social work is to participate and social insertion is to manage to implement a programme. Work must always be the beginning and social insertion the desired objective in the movements.

We emphasise social movements, thus social work is not made at random and even less can we consider any act of rebellion, however admirable when directed against the oppressors, as social work. First there is the question of terrain; what is the terrain of the class struggle and of the possibilities offered for popular organisation? If we understand the group of exploited classes as the protagonists of the revolution, there is nothing more obvious than to work with movements constituted by those oppressed by capitalism.

These movements either already exist, or they need to be created - this last task can come from the specific anarchist organisation or not. Social work necessitates a certain systematicness. That is, it needs to be regular and be developed on more or less solid bases and have, or intend to have, the aforementioned class character.

There is also the case of comrades that, despite the distance - be it outside the state or even other regions of the country - want to support and participate in the FARJ, are therefore recognised in our documents (especially *Anarquismo Social e Organização*) and consider integrating into the FARJ's circle of supporter-militants.

To join the supporter level the comrade generally manifests interest in supporting the organisation. This conversation is taken for collective discussion, where we speak, above all, about the militancy of the candidate. Whenever a new comrade asks to enter as a supporter one of our militants has the responsibility of passing on to them documents and texts that seek to situate and remove the doubts of the new militant, that speak in respect both to our formulation as well as to our political practice. It is important not to lose our accumulation and to socialise our reflections.

Entrance into the circle of *militants* includes greater responsibilities and commitment, and is a consequence of the first work.

This only happens when the comrade has already been working together in one of the fronts as a supporter, and is already aware of the relevant discussions on the social movement in which they participate and of the organisation's materials. This is important because it avoids 'alienated' militancy, which we are accustomed to seeing in the hierarchical organisations of electoral and 'revolutionary' political parties. It is important that every anarchist militant can apply the political line of the organisation, and is minimally prepared for the political work that the organisation intends to accomplish.

This comrade also joins the FARJ in the measure that declares their interests. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a degree of confidence, because anarchist work can not be constructed only with an abstract theoretical affinity. This tie of solidarity, respect and confidence in the comrade is formed in struggle as, if not, the unity is purely artificial, or worse, based only on ineffective ties that we know exist in the whole organisation, but which can not be the objective criteria of a political practice.

The dynamics are simple. After a time inside the supporter circle, these comrades can join the circle of the organisation's militants if they want to, with this assuming their new responsibilities. It is important that the initiative to enter the circle of militants comes from the person interested themselves and is ratified by the collective.

It is important to emphasise: the new comrades (that live in Rio de Janeiro) will be integrated according to the measure in which *they participate in social work and agree with the FARJ's proposals*, but never only from ideological agreements that do not result in agreement with the political practice of the federation. Already, those that are at a distance can support starting from ideological agreement and from the social practice that they develop in the cities where they live.

We know that you will always have an asymmetry of theoretical and practical knowledge and different aptitudes between old and new comrades. But the organisation, which is always a collective construction and not an aggregate of individuals, must create forms to try and level the minimum knowledge needed for political and social work. The members of the organisation must also prepare themselves individually for theoretical and practical work, at both levels, as much at the social as at the political.

the quota of the Municipal Guard (military guard of the city government of Rio de Janeiro) proves that the social upsurge is terrible. Real estate speculation goes on unchecked. The consequences are the gentrification and marginalisation of the poor; the exclusion of those that can not afford to pay high rents or buy houses in expensive areas. We can openly say that the valuation of land in the city of Rio de Janeiro comes from the elite's project for an 'ideal city': this project fights poverty by fighting the poor.

For social movements the situation is very difficult. The repression, criminalisation and political persecution during the World Cup, and why not say it, the physical extermination of the discontent is a possibility that must be addressed with seriousness and concern. At the World Cup and the Olympics it is likely that this will grow, with support from the media and a large part of the middle class. The situation in our state today, retained due to historic proportions, is very similar to the period of military dictatorship. There is an ongoing institutional fascism.

**At least in my organisation, and possibly in other groups of the Platformist or *especificista* tradition, we try hard to find an equilibrium between the need to approximate and admit new militants to the organisation, increasing its capacity and activities; and maintaining a certain level of theoretical and tactical unity. Could you talk a little about the process which the FARJ uses to approximate new members and what the requirements to join the organisation are, both as 'militant' and as 'supporter'?**

**FARJ:** Well, it is important to understand the arrival of new comrades and the need to integrate them into the dynamics of the organisation as a 'good problem' for an anarchist political organisation, a public federation, but one that is not totally 'open', because it has defined criteria, but not completely rigid for those that wish to join it. There are two important criteria, to *develop social work*, and to *agree with the organisation's proposal*.

Approximation happens in different ways. Comrades might know us and work with us in social movements, and from this work might end up demonstrating interest in joining our organisation. We find that this is one of the best ways of approximating new members, because it is about the possibility of acting together in the social work developed in movements, giving to them the possibility of getting to know our political work in practice.

But there are distinct cases, as with other comrades who came to know us through our materials, like the journal *Libera*, or through anarchist spaces where we act directly, like CELIP, and from these were interested in the organisation through a strictly ideological bond.

It is important that the comrade that is interested in joining the organisation is developing work together with social movements: student, community, trade union, the landless and homeless, unemployed, small farmers etc. We consider the places where we are active to be some of the best places for approximation.

It is necessary to reflect on your objectives, under threat of falling into activism for activism's sake or of wasting energies necessary for the advancing of struggles.

We must stress that social work requires a lot of patience and perseverance. Therefore a certain posture is needed. Something that the FAU calls *militant style*, a term which is completely adequate for us and is something on which we have started to reflect more recently. There is no militancy which gives results when there is significant discordance between the postures of militants. Nor do we want that everyone act and behave in a homogeneous way or they are annulled in detriment to the collective. There are various personalities and temperaments within the organisation.

What we think is that you must have certain parameters of social work that must be stimulated within the specific anarchist organisation. Our statement of principles already defines the back bone of our organisation, but the daily experience of social work presupposes problems that will not be resolved by abstractions only. For this it is indispensable that the militant is not an exotic or exogenous 'foreign body' to the movements in which they intend to (or do) participate. It is necessary to know how to listen, to know how to hear. It is necessary to be patient, and above all, to be very authentic and sincere in the work realised. To give body to the values that we defend not by verbosity or pure indoctrination, but by walking together shoulder-to-shoulder, by the fraternity and solidarity of struggle that unfolds in the daily experience of social work. It is not possible to develop social work, if I only manage to interact, converse and socialise with my 'revolutionary' equals.

Obviously, no militant combines all the qualities that we expect, but it is from collective considerations that we sharpen the tone.

The more this militant style exists, the greater the possibility of having social insertion. It is not about ideologising the movements, nor about transforming them into anarchist social movements, but about doing such that they manage to go as far as possible en route to revolutionary horizons.

**Since I first visited the FARJ in 2005 you have opened a new front, which you call Anarchism and Nature, in the organisation. Briefly, could you describe the activities, focus and structure of each of these three fronts, beyond the social movements with which they work?**

**FARJ:** We act in the social movements through our fronts. The Urban Social Movements Front acts principally in the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Desempregados - Pela Base (Unemployed Workers Movement - from the Grassroots), which is a movement composed of the unemployed, under-employed and all those that suffer the consequences of the capitalist mode of organisation in some way. The MTD-RJ Pela Base organises around the needs of the communities and neighbourhoods in which it is inserted. Actually we can count some nuclei, in their majority inserted in *favelas* (townships/ shanty towns) and periphery communities in Rio de Janeiro. In the nucleus of Monkey's Complex (Complexo dos Macacos - a *favela* in Rio de Janeiro) we

work, essentially, with popular education; we are involved in the organisation of a *pre-vestibular*, which is a course made for students who cannot pay the high costs of private courses to enable them to prepare for the entrance exams for state universities. This nucleus, which is located inside the Centre of Social Culture (Centro de Cultura Social), also does the work of reusing clothes and scraps, which is organised by a comrade that used to live in an occupation that was an MTD-RJ nucleus and was evicted about one and a half years ago. The nucleus from the Penha complex works primarily with the cultural question, specifically hip-hop. There are other *pre-vestibulars* located in the Maré complex, in which members of the MTD-RJ Pela Base are involved working as teachers. And, outside of the city of Rio de Janeiro, we have a nucleus in the city of Petrópolis, a highlands region of the state of Rio de Janeiro; this nucleus is working with the question of transport and with that of informal work. There are many things to be done, the nuclei are being consolidated. The most important is that the MTD-RJ Pela Base manages to group together diverse comrades, whose principal horizon is anti-capitalism and the organisation of movements always from the grassroots, searching for complete autonomy from governments, parties and companies.

To a lesser degree, the Urban Social Movements Front also acts in the Academic Centre of History (Centro Acadêmico de História) at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, by means of a student comrade. To create a relationship between the student movement and the popular movements seems indispensable to any project of social transformation, although we know that it is not easy work.

Our Community Front is responsible for the organisation of the Centro de Cultura Social (CCS-RJ), which is located in the neighbourhood of Vila Isabel and primarily takes care of the community of Morro dos Macacos. Inside the CCS there are various groups and projects. Literature and cinema workshops with the children and adolescents from Morro dos Macacos, a *pre-vestibular* as mentioned above, which is the joint work of three groups (MTD-RJ Pela Base, CCS and Luz do Sol), environmental education and material recycling/reuse workshops, sale of used clothes at popular prices for the community, computer science courses and, at last, the Fabio Luz Social Library (Biblioteca Social Fábio Luz).

Actually we are working as teachers and supporters in the space's *pre-vestibular*, which serves primarily the surrounding community, in the organisation of the Fabio Luz Social Library (that has an archive that goes from anarchism to literature, philosophy and scholarly books) and in the literature and cinema workshops with the youth of the community. The Marques da Costa Research Nucleus (Núcleo de Pesquisas Marques da Costa) also works in the CCS, and is responsible for producing articles and research about the history of the labour and anarchist movements in Rio de Janeiro, where we also edit a newsletter called 'Emecé', uniting similar researchers. The primary function of the CCS is not just to become a reference for the social movements of Rio de Janeiro, but to open the doors to autonomous initiatives and contribute to the political and social training of the community around it. The CCS is modestly fulfilling these objectives.

**FARJ:** In 2007, in the realisation of the Pan-American games (PAN), social movements already denounced the process of 'urban cleansing' undertaken to receive the foreign delegations and tourists. PAN was a small exercise of the elite in the state of Rio de Janeiro and Brazil for the realisation of a much more ambitious plan, which is that of transforming Rio de Janeiro into an essentially touristic city open to big international capital.

The dream of the elite has created the nightmare of the exploited when the coalition of the three spheres of government, Lula, Sérgio Cabral (governor of Rio de Janeiro) and Eduardo Paes (mayor of Rio de Janeiro), in association with major national and international businessmen, started the 'adaptation' of the city for the World Cup and the Olympics.

The plan that was initiated with the Pan-American Cup has developed with more force in these recent administrations, with little accumulation of social movement's strength to manage to stop these projects. As we (and other social movements and autonomous political groups) warned, many social movements that had chosen the illusionary path of legal mechanisms were confronted with an increasingly "hardened" state, fruit of the political agreement of the elite, who strategically removed slightly more progressive sectors from their ranks and institutional channels in order to accomplish their project with the most reactionary cast they could count on.

The social and political implications are terrible.

In adapting the city to the requirements of FIFA and other international capitalist bodies, a policy of 'zero tolerance' very similar to the U.S. model of repression has developed. We have as examples of this policy of extermination, the increase of salaries and bonuses of Rio de Janeiro's military police (while teachers in public schools in Rio de Janeiro have one of the lowest wage rates in the country), the construction of police units in the slums and peripheries ('Pacifier' Police Units or PPP's - Unidades de Polícia "Pacificadora") to control poverty and for the extermination of discontent and the policy of evictions and removals of occupations and poor communities. The Rio de Janeiro police are the biggest killers in Brazil!

To have an idea, an institutional arrangement called the 'Shock Order', a kind of municipalised AI-5 [legal provision from the state of exception of the civil-military dictatorship of 1964 that annulled mandates, suspended habeas-corpus and other 'legal' constitutional guarantees], was implemented by city government. The results were evictions, removals, repression and attacks against workers.

What we are seeing is an increasing process of militarisation of the city at the service of the elite's national project that will probably be exported to other Brazilian states when necessary. By the history of the city we can say that Rio de Janeiro is a kind of social laboratory for the political and economic elite that dominates Brazil. The promise of several presidential candidates to establish a Ministry of Security already reveals the dimension in the scope of the federal government as to how the social question will be dealt with going forward.

On the economic question we have big gains for the businessmen and capitalists, while for informal workers (street vendors) repression and precarity. The increase in

ing together the anarchists at national level is vital in order that we might manage to recapture the strength of the libertarian proposal.

**What are the practical implications of the FARJ's entry into the FAO? And why did it delay so long for the FARJ to join?**

**FARJ:** For now, to share and at least articulate general proposals. To discuss and debate not only our political practices, but theoretical questions that appear to us important to undertake common actions, treating the different local realities in which the groups operate.

When the process of the FAO was initiated, we chose to build our organisation internally and to consolidate our work, which we have evaluated today as a very wise choice, since we were already better defining strategic questions and developing our militant practice. This occurred, in large part, because there were disagreements around practical questions that concern the activity of another anarchist organisation in Rio de Janeiro, which besides unfortunately obstructing our entry into the Forum, broke with it soon afterwards, and, after its exit, accused all the other anarchist groups and organisations of being 'revisionists' and 'eclectics' (a term curiously adopted by Lenin in many of his texts). Thus, they approached a theoretical position claimed to be 'Bakuninist', accusing Malatesta and Kropotkin of being 'revisionist' thinkers.

In parallel, we returned to re-establish contact with various anarchist groups and organisations. This came naturally from the meeting of our militants in the forums of the class formations and social movements in which they participate. The prospects of entry into the FAO became concrete.

It is important to emphasise that there was much political maturity of all those involved in order to overcome old questions. This was critical for us to resolve specific problems and to advance around a common proposal. There is no way to build a national forum or organisation, without being able to fraternally discuss all the problems that arise in the face of this immense task.

We think that the FAO was very happy with the chosen path, managing to bring together the groups and organisations that now comprise it. There is also the possibility of other organisations joining the FAO very soon. Just knowing that there are other comrades working in their respective localities with a perspective of organised anarchism gives us great hope in the path to social transformation.

**South Africa has recently hosted the Football World Cup, and Rio de Janeiro will be a 'FIFA Host City' for the 2014 Cup. What impacts or effects do you think this will have on the city, politically and economically, as well as on the popular social movements with which you work? Are some things already happening?**

Our last and most recent front, called Anarchism and Nature, or agro-ecology, was created from specific work developed primarily in Seropédica (a rural city of Rio de Janeiro) and in Baixada Fluminense, and from the work of those militants in the Germinal Health and Food Nucleus (Núcleo de Saúde e Alimentação Germinal), which for a few years organised activities in the Social Culture Centre (CCS-RJ), also supporting community activities linked to the homeless and urban farmers movement.

What started with the involvement of our militants in agro-ecological groups from the region (Ecological Agriculture Group - GAE and Association of Autonomous Producers from the City and the Fields - APAC), resulted in the involvement of the front in encampments of the MST (Landless Peoples Movement - Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra) and with small farmers from the region. The front also integrates, by means of the movements in which it is inserted, the Articulation of Rio de Janeiro Agroecology (Articulação de Agroecologia do Rio de Janeiro - AARJ), which is a network of diverse rural social groups and movements from the state of Rio de Janeiro that struggle primarily against the expansion of agribusiness, of transgenetics and for the strengthening of agro-ecological initiatives. We understand that agro-ecology can only become an alternative to break with capitalism, when connected to movements that struggle for land and for the control of production in the fields from the perspective of direct action.

**What are the functions of the fronts with regards to the specific organisation and popular movements?**

**FARJ:** In relation to the specific organisation, the fronts are not groups within the organisation, but integral parts of the FARJ. The division in fronts is more about a question of better organising militant work. The autonomy of the fronts is operative, that is, it is subordinate to the strategic line defined collectively in our federal council and connected to the principles and programme of the organisation. This is fundamental so that we have the same visions of struggle. Without this, the work would be impossible to do and would quickly slide into 'activism for activism's sake', which would be a terrible waste of energy.

It happens, for example, although not very routinely, that militants migrate from one front to another; be it for the collective demands of the organisation or for temporary incapacity (or easiness) of these to act in certain spaces.

The fronts have arisen from the practical needs of the movements in which we operate and from the conditions of the organisation to operate and coordinate the anarchist activities in these spaces.

With regard to the popular movements, we basically intend to strengthen them; spreading by example, by political practice and by ethics the principles of autonomy, direct action and horizontalism. As we have already said, we do not believe in 'anarchist' social movements, this would remove the great majority of militants from the movements and, because of this, condemn anarchism to the ghettos or to limited circles. However, to disseminate libertarian values is to ensure that movements

are neither harnessed by parties and governments, nor do they take reformist directions. The activities of the fronts are understood in this sense. In working in order that the autonomy and combativeness of the movements are guaranteed; and to act so that movements become more and more organised and reach revolutionary horizons.

Obviously, the diffusion of anarchism in movements occurs naturally in the course of our practice as militants, even if not an end, if this makes sense, always respecting the choices and personal positions of the militants that comprise it.

### **Do you work outside of these three fronts? If yes, what type of work?**

**FARJ:** There are some transversal works in which we are inserted, like the Popular University, where various comrades from the fronts are involved. The Popular University is a popular education project that basically functions with social and political education workshops and courses in communities, unemployed centres, townships, occupations, encampments, etc. There are also those that were not necessarily formalised in a specific front. Some comrades are involved in their respective unions or in their student entities, but always prioritise the work that was entrusted to them in their respective fronts. We have not formalised a syndicalist front, because of the conditions previously described, but it is an open possibility.

To avoid an overload of work it is essential not to burn militants out. Obviously, all militancy requires a certain amount of sacrifice; but to consume our militants with work that is not grouped around a common objective is a complete waste of time. Therefore we always think collectively about the initiation of new works. Dispersed we are less and less effective; hence, the great importance for the activities to be operated in the scope of the fronts. There is work outside of the fronts that occurs within the secretariats of the organisation. We do not consider this to be real work of social militancy; but we opt to define that each militant must do **external** work (in the fronts, that is, the work of these in their respective social movements) and **internal** work (in the organisation's secretariats). This prevents, within the group, that there are people that only focus on internal 'ideological' work, work in large part comfortable and free from the contradictions and strains of the social movements. It also prevents that the militant only acts socially and does not worry with the internal tasks of the organisation, which are very important. It is imperative for us that all militants have direct contact with and permanent work in the social movements in which they are inserted, and that they do some internal work for the organisation.

**In August 2008 you adopted the document *Anarquismo Social e Organização (Social Anarchism and Organisation)* as your programme. Could you explain how this document was conceived and the process which culminated in its adoption?**

**FARJ:** For some time we had already made attempts to systematise some debates that emerged within the organisation. These reflections were made starting from our experience of social militancy operated by the fronts. The programme was constituted as a formalisation of some ideas, which concern not only our conception of anarchism, but also the recovery, both historical and ideological, of conceptions of organisation that make up the trajectory of the anarchist movement. We also needed to better define our horizons and formalise a few methods, resolving differences in conception and systematising collective reflections.

The process of formalising the programme was done not only from the accumulation of collective reading that we had; that is, of theoretical accumulation, but also emerged from the reflections of the fronts in their difficulties, successes and failures in social militancy. The programme grew out of our *political practice*, which is modest, by the way, but intensely rich in contributions.

So we initiated an internal discussion, where we shared responsibilities to contribute to the 'final' text. The reading of all the materials, the individual and collective contributions were somewhat long and tiring, but important for us to have some strategic horizon. The work was great, since in addition to this, our militancy could not be interrupted. After much effort and intense collective discussion we managed to systematise this material. The fundamental point of this process was that we managed to group together the organisation's militants, which resolved the ideological asymmetries and contributed enormously to our self-education.

Obviously, we see that the programme is not a clause written in stone, nor a sacred bible. We have assessed that some adjustments, fruits of inaccuracies, can (and must) be made later; it is normal that this happens. But the most important thing was to make a contribution not just to our practice, but to the whole of the anarchist movement.

Without any doubt, we can say that the repercussions of the programme were much bigger than we expected! Which gave us much satisfaction, but on the other hand, imposed more responsibilities on us and also made us more conscious of our tasks.

### **The FARJ recently joined the Forum of Organised Anarchism (FAO) in Brazil. What is the FAO and what are its objectives?**

**FARJ:** The Forum of Organised Anarchism is a forum that brings together a series of specific organisations and anarchist groups around a common vision of organised anarchist activity in social and popular movements. It is a space for debate and networking between anarchist organisations, groups and individuals that work or intend to work using the principles and strategy of *especificista* anarchism as a basis.

The main goal of the FAO is to create the conditions for the construction of a national anarchist organisation in Brazil. A task that we know will not be of the short term, but that needs to be initiated right now. The need for a project at least group-