THE OAU

Created in 1963 ostensibly to address problems of the people of the continent, the OAU ended up only serving the selfish interests of African Heads of State, their foreign ministers and the staff of the secretariat in Addis Ababa like Salim Ahmed Salim. The masses of the African people still suffer in poverty and disease, die in senseless wars whilst illiteracy and ignorance are on the increase. The toothless bulldog that was the OAU looked on helplessly.

These leaders were able to see the hopelessness of the body. What they failed to discern, however, is the reasons for its uselessness. If they did, they would not have deceived themselves in renaming it as AU. The OAU could not stand the test of time for one main reason. The reason was because it was founded on the basis of money. Member States were to contribute money to run the affairs of the organisation. The resources of every country are controlled by a few very wealthy individuals. Even military regimes are not free from the influence of the owners of capital. Thus, having been formed with the resources of the rich, what else could the OAU do if not working in the interest of the owners of capital and not the poor masses? Is it not the one who pays the piper who calls the tune?

The OAU would not, for instance, take firm measures on the numerous conflicts and wars in Africa because wars are a matter of big business. Producers and distributors of arms and weapons make super-profits in war situations. Part of the money they make is used to sponsor governments’ contributions to the OAU. So, how can the OAU bite the finger that feeds it? In other words, the OAU was a reformist organisation, seeking to work within a world system which puts profits first and people second. Nothing can ever go on for the benefit of humankind as long as money is around. Only those who own capital can be free from want for they have the purchasing power.

AND THE AU?

The AU is to be modelled on the European Union and is the brainchild of Col. Gadhafi, the life-president (or dictator?) of Libya. Reports have it that he has already given one million US dollars to now back down. And even then not surprising that at the summit he was seen by the other Heads of State as the boss. In fact he reportedly (and surelly on the basis of his cash) wanted the house to maintain Salim Ahmed Salim, the outgoing secretary-general, in the seat to effect the transformation.

Another VIP (“Very Ignorant Personality”) at the summit was the outgoing chairman General Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo. A ruthless military dictator who took power in 1967 and has since been on top there. Then there was the host, President Frederick Chiluba, who reneged on his promise to step down at the end of his second term. It was only through mass protests and resignations by his party’s bigwigs that it appears he will now back down. And even then only three days before the summit his former close ally was assassinated and it is rumoured that the government had a hand in it.

This throws some light on the nature of the people promoting and ushering in the AU. We are told that this time a central bank, a parliament and a court will be established. The idea of an African Central Bank is a novelty, even though we have seen the African Development Bank based in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire. Like any other bank, the ADB and the one to be set up by the AU have one purpose—to create profits for the shareholders who part-own the company. As regards the continental parliament, the following example will give us an insight into what it will be doing. In Gambia the average worker earns about 600 Dalasis a month. A member of parliament gets 7000 Dalasis a month though most of the decisions taken in all parliaments the world over are anti-working class. Therefore a Gambian in an all-African parliament will undoubtedly received more than what they are getting now. All at the expense of the poor masses.

Finally, who is an African court of justice going to try? Even those in The Hague and Arusha (Tanzania) have not done anything to the benefit of the people of the world. So what is the farce being staged? Where parliaments and courts are institutions of oppression under the profit system, banks are the places from where all evil transactions are carried out with the intention of defrauding the masses. No wonder that the Heads of State said they were turning the OAU into a “larger trading bloc”.

WHICH WAY FOR AFRICA?

The operations of the AU can be predict if we consider the “Millennium African Recovery Programme” (MAP) championed by Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and “Omega Plan” spearheaded by Abdoullah Wade of Senegal. The two main points of the Initiative are that democracy be consolidated and that the West should increase investment in Africa.

In our money-dominated world of today democracy can only mean the right of the rich to dictate to the poor. In the same vein increasing investment in Africa means pumping in more money to reap more profits. Investors are in search of profits, they are not humanitarians seeking to help the poor. The call for democracy and investment which the AU will implement means that governments should hold down the masses so that the rich can pillage and plunder without any hindrance.

Consciousness has many stages. The lowest stage is centred on people who think only about themselves. Selfishness. Others are a step higher. They are concerned only about their family. Then, there are those who check only their tribe mates, tribalists. Then there are the many nationalists defending their national flags no matter what. We also have the so-called Pan-Africanists, the pax romana, the white supremacists, etc. But the highest stage of consciousness has to do with those who are internationalists. These are socialists who are not limited by space. They see every issue from a global perspective. Therefore whether it is ECOWAS, OAU, AU, Commonwealth, name it; AS, OAU, AU, Commonwealth, name it, no problem can ever be solved unless the money system is rooted out and a moneyless system put in place where every one has free access to any product or service. It is only then that Africans and humankind as a whole will be free from want.

Suhuyini, Ghana.
They Murdered an Anarchist

He lay on his back in the street, eyes closed, arms at his side, legs akimbo, blue jeans but shirtless. He looked almost peaceful, except for the massive pool of blood that trickled out of two bullet holes to his head.

This young anarchist, Carlo Giuliani, 23 years old, would never again protest, dance, sing, attend meetings, or embrace friends, brush his teeth, or cook breakfast or love anyone anymore, murdered in cold blood by police on a sunny afternoon in Genoa, Italy.

Moments later, Carlo encircled the globe, entering homes thousands of kilometres away via the Internet, photographed from a dozen different angles, once passionate, alive and angry, seconds later, silenced and still felled by two gun shots then run over by a police jeep escaping the murder scene.

Millions of us never knew you, Carlo, anarchist brother, but now your name is stenciled on the tongues of the speechless, your lifeless body now fixed in the minds of the incredulous, immortalized on the front page of newspapers, you, alone, within a circle of dozens of blue-helmeted, riot cops, staring vacantly, and puzzled over your corpse.

Carlo, you died like a butchered dog in the street, so that a gang of wealthy, powerful criminals could shake hands, smile, slap each others’ backs and drink fine Italian wine safely, knowing they had a 20,000 strong body guard, prepared to tear gas, beat and even murder protesters like you, like us, to allow them to conduct their sordid business uninterrupted. We know they are not troubled by the death of one anarchist, or a handful of anarchists. They oversee the daily violence of the State, of Capitalism obliterating whole families, communities, towns, regions, tribes, the needless, preventable deaths of millions world-wide.

One less ‘troublemaker’ won’t stop the homeless, with the blood of those forced to beg & starve everyday, with the blood of broken boned, poisoned, beaten workers, men, women & children with the blood of others who died at the hands of police, soldiers and hired assassins, your blood infused them all with a fierce rage; the rage of the forgotten, the voiceless, the expendable victims of a money-crazed world gone mad and this blood red rage, rose from the sewers, and poured out of the mouths of screeching rats and spilled into the streets of Genoa, into palaces, boardrooms, reception halls, limousines and stained them all red, a carpet of blood, it overflowed into rivers & oceans, touched continents far away and crept onto beaches at night, staining them red, it oozed its way onto signed agreements, memos and documents that seal our fate, but which we never see & stained them red, too.

To remind everyone of the rage of those like Carlo, who die so others can profit, to remind them that this blood red rage has just begun.

- Norman Nawrocki, Montreal, 21/7/01
nawrocki@istar.ca

Against the WCAR.

About 20 000 protesters took to the streets of Durban to protest the hypocrisy of the United Nation’s World Conference Against Racism, and to raise other issues associated with racism such as poverty, landlessness, religion and globalisation.

On arrival everything seemed quite disorganised and chaotic but everyone was anxious to get going. After a few groups had marched around the fields and a skirmish broke out over free T-shirts, it was time to march. It seemed clear at this point that there was no, or very little, coordination between the different groups as to what our objectives really were. Heads of the Durban Social Forum had previously agreed that a memorandum was to be taken to the International Conference Centre (ICC) and that either Thabo Mbeki or UN Secretary General Kofi Anan receive it in person. Was this made clear to everyone present? Had anyone considered what we would do in the event that Mbeki and Anan refused? Not from what I could tell.

The protesters were very lively, singing and dancing to keep themselves motivated whilst others carried colourful banners or juggled on one wheeled bikes and stilts. In all, the turnout was quite impressive and the police presence not too intimidating. Once we began the march, the police filled in just meters behind the last bloc, preventing us from being able to retreat if we had to, but there were few or no roadblocks closing off the roads intersecting our route. The walk was quite uneventful, with one or two unsuccessful attempts to stage a sit down across an intersection to block traffic.

When we arrived at the ICC there were people with loudspeakers preaching
religion from on top of their cars and groups of people sitting all over the place. Maybe they were waiting for the revolution to fall from the sky or be given to them by god! It seemed as though we had been led into a dead end. There was a barricade outside the entrance to the conference centre where Mbeki and Anan were expected to receive the memorandum of demands. Apart from the riot police and armoured vehicles there was a huge reel of barbed wire, which had not been utilised. Potentially, had we tried to storm the conference, this could have been seized and used to prevent the police from closing us in from behind. Finding an alternative means of gaining entry to the centre when Anan and Mbeki wouldn’t come out was not seriously considered.

An attempt was made to break past the barricade but was stopped when an internal struggle erupted between two members of the Anti-Privatisation Forum. One of whom, a trot, attempted to stop an autonomous comrade from pushing the barricade, but was knocked down by other militants who are understandably tired of constantly delivering memorandums and demands and then going home to wait for change which doesn’t come. It is to such militants that I appeal to act directly against the state, which is using racism in all its manifestations, sexism and xenophobia, not to forget religion of every denomination, to keep us divided and fighting amongst ourselves instead of rising up and reclaiming what rightfully belongs to everyone, equally: the collective ownership and control of the means of production and distribution, to satisfy the needs of all.

As political crooks get into bed, COSATU leaders turn a blind eye

THE ANC-NNP ALLIANCE: What Do Anarchists Say?

The recent announcement of an NNP-ANC alliance in the western Cape has shocked those naïve souls who fool themselves into believing that the ANC is somehow a party of the working class. The alliance opens up the ANC can of worms as never before. The anti-working class nature of the ANC is clearer than ever.

LUST

Those who thought that there was no way that the ANC would ally with the party that implemented apartheid between 1948-1994 have had a rude awakening. If the ANC ever had any democratic principles, it is clear that these have been sacrificed on the altar of lust for power.

COCONUTS???

Getting into bed with the NNP is described in many ways: "acceptable" to the ANC so long as it gains more power. Barely three weeks before the alliance was concluded, the ANC’s aspirant premier for the western Cape, Ebrahim Rassool, ran a racist advert in the Cape press describing Coloureds who voted for the NNP (then in the DA) as "coconuts." Today Rassool wants those "coconuts" to keep voting NNP so his party can gain control over the western Cape. As anarchists, we find this sort of race-baiting - and political gymnastics - unacceptable in every way.

COSATU

COSATU’s leaders have tried to dodge the issue of what the ANC’s treasoning with the NNP means.

In its recent bulletin, COSATU has dressed this unholy marriage up in radical clothes, calling it a “tactical bloc.” According to the leadership, anything is okay if it will give the ANC more power. This is politically confused on many levels.

First, COSATU thinks that an ANC-controlled western Cape will benefit the working class, despite the blindingly obvious fact that the ANC-run metros are just as vicious as the DA-run Cape Unicity in evicting working class people from their homes, arresting squatters and cutting off water and electricity.

Secondly, it represents an unspoken about-face. When news of the alliance first emerged, the leadership got on its high horse to denounce the NNP’s Martinus van Schalkwyk as "opportunist." This was because Kortbroek stated that there are almost no political differences whatsoever between the two parties.

THE GEAR COALITION

Yet van Schalkwyk is merely pointing out the obvious: the NNP and the ANC both accept the neo-liberal GEAR policy, and so, for that matter, do the IFP, the DA, and the PAC. In practice, these parties are ALREADY in an unofficial coalition because they ALL agree on the need to privatise, run down the schools and hospitals, and evict, cut-off and assault and arrest working and poor people.

ULTRA LEFT?

The unholy alliance of the ANC and the NNP exposes all of the dirty laundry of the ANC. We know what the NNP is about. Now it is time to wake up about the ANC as well.

The ANC is a party for the rich, a party of privatisation, a party of corruption, a party that turns off the lights and seals up the taps, a party that promotes racial divisions amongst the poor (whilst uniting black and white bosses at the top), the ANC is the enemy of the working class.

No amount of empty talk about the meaningless and discredited notion of a “national democratic revolution” by COSATU’s leaders will change this. If it is “ultra-left” to oppose the ANC, then we are proudly ultra-left. If its "workerist" to fight ANC policies and to call for the working class to isolate the ANC, we are workerists and proud. We are proudly revolutionary, proudly anarchist.

The real “counter-revolutionaries” are the ANC themselves and the counter-revolution is run from Shell House and the Union Buildings.
"War Against Terrorism" or "Killing for Oil"?

The Real Reasons for the Invasion of Afghanistan

The giant country of Kazakhstan, situated to the north of Pakistan, struck oil in the eastern part of the Caspian Sea a few years ago. It has been estimated by geologists that there are about 50 billion barrels worth of oil sitting beneath the wind-blown steppes of Kazakhstan. This is by far the biggest untapped reserves in the world. The world's largest oil producer today is Saudi Arabia, which is believed to have only about 30 billion barrels worth of oil left. So, as you might guess, this find has come just in time for the oil-greedy Capitalists in the USA. The capitalist economy that we live in, and that the US Capitalists benefit the most from, is heavily based on petroleum products; from the big gas-guzzling cars that pollute our air to the billions of non-renewable plastics that are presently suffocating our streets, rivers and countryside and of course, the highly profitable arms industry.

Kazakhstan was the second-biggest republic in the former Soviet Union. When the Kazakhstani soviet-subsidised economy collapsed in 1991, the country was driven into extreme poverty. In 1997 the average monthly salary was about US$20. Nursultan Nazarbayev, the former Communist Party boss, and now president of Kazakhstan, has been trying to find ways of getting the oil out of land-locked Kazakhstan and into the sea. If he can do this, Kazakhstan will become the new "land of Benzes and ugly gold jewellery" as stated by Ted Rall, a cartoonist for the Universal Press Syndicate.

OIL: A SLIPPERY BUSINESS

To get the oil to the coast it will have to be piped overland. This is expensive and leaves the oil open to theft and sabotage, and the longer the pipeline, the more expensive and dangerous. The shortest route is through Iran, but as Iran is not exactly good friends with the USA, Kazakhstan doesn't want to upset its new friend (the US). Another way to get it out is to take the offer made by Russia which will connect Kazakhstan's oil rigs to the Black Sea. This however is also not a good option because neighbouring Turkmenistan has had its oil stolen by the "helpful" Russians who tend to divert the oil for their own use. There was also a plan to build a 5300 mile long pipeline through China but this would be too long and would not therefore generate enough profit.

The most logical plan would be to extend the system that exists in Turkmenistan west to the Kazakh field on the Caspian Sea and Southeast to the port at Karachi in Pakistan. To do this, they would have to pipe it through Afghanistan. Therefore, without a stable US-friendly power in control of Afghanistan they can forget their oil. Hence the invasion. Pakistan would be happy with this arrangement as well as they would pick up massive revenues from the use of the port at Karachi.

THE US AND THE TALIBAN

In 1994, the US and Pakistan decided to install a stable US-friendly regime in Afghanistan. The Taliban, just emerging as a power at this time, was willing to cut a pipeline deal with the US in return for certain "benefits". The US State Department and Pakistan's intelligence agency, the ISI, agreed to supply the Taliban with arms and funding in their war against the Northern Alliance. Apparently, in 1999, the US taxpayers even paid the whole yearly salary of every Taliban government official. All this just to have access to the oil they need to maintain their power and wealth as a world superpower.

However, because of the Taliban's links to Osama bin Laden's al Qa'eda terror network, their invasions of their neighbours and the fact that they produced 50 percent of the world's opium before 1998, the relationship between them and the US was bound to get worse. After the September 11th attack, supposedly by an Egyptian group who had trained in Afghanistan, the US decided that the Taliban had to go. They now had the excuse they needed to install a more stable regime in Afghanistan. The US government, in their lust for power and control, cares as much about the 6000 dead as they do about the oppression of women in Afghanistan. Make no mistake, the war is about oil, power and control.

We, the workers and poor of the world are just here to be used as pawns in their game and, if we get in their way, they are fully prepared to move us out, using force if necessary.

UNITY IS STRENGTH

It is time to realise that there is no "war on terrorism", there is only a war between those at the top with the power and wealth and those of us at the bottom who need to sell ourselves to some fat boss for a small amount of the money we produce for them. Capitalism is an inhumane system that breeds war, poverty, exploitation and oppression and that, to be free, we need to organise ourselves against the bosses and their defenders, the Police, Army and Courts.

Our class is being killed left, right and centre; in New York, in Kabul, in Berlin and in Durban and it is high time we fought back. So...

NO WAR BETWEEN NATIONS! NO PEACE BETWEEN CLASSES!
FIGHT THE REAL ENEMIES: COPS; BOSSES; POLITICIANS AND RACISTS!
SOCIAL FORUMS

Since the Porto Allegre summit, both the PT and the summit have gained a great deal of credibility within the left, not least within South Africa. During the Genoa G8 meeting in Italy in July, a Genoa Social Forum was established, and, more recently a Durban Social Forum was established to co-ordinate protests against the United Nations' (UN) World Conference Against Racism (WCAR). And a follow-up to the World Social Forum is being planned for 2002.

HUMANISING CAPITALISM?

Nonetheless, we must recognise that these popular forums also provide a space for manipulation by the pro-capitalist agendas of the right-wing of the anti-globalisation movement. This right-wing includes conservative union leaders, politicians, academics, and mainstream NGOs as well as other reformists whose only aim in life is to give capitalism a "human face." For this right-wing, who want to save capitalism from itself, the problem with globalisation is that it is "unfair" and "undemocratic" and "weakens the state."

What the reformists do not understand is that capitalism is always unfair and undemocratic, depriving working and poor people of any fair reward for their labour and any democratic control over production and distribution.

And they fail to realise the basic truth that the capitalists always control the state: this means that globalisation does not "weaken" the state, but, on the contrary, capitalists use the state to implement globalisation.

For us anarchists, we are against capitalism and the state on principle: these are the centralised power systems that exploit and impoverish the working class: we aim to tear the democratic facade off these instruments of oppression, and crush them, not make them "human."

RIGHTWING HIJACKS PORTO ALLEGRE

The World Social Forum in Porto Allegre had the potential to be an important event for the emerging anti-globalisation movement. An estimated 12,000 people attended the event, representing groups ranging from anarchists to liberal Christians. It involved 16 plenary sessions and over 400 workshops.

However, the Forum was hijacked by right-wing anti-globalisation figures.

The original idea for the Forum came from Oded Grajew, a Brazilian business-man-turned-activist, and he chose Porto Allegre as the venue. The reason was simple: the PT governs Porto Allegre, and so the city provides a showcase for the reformist programme of "humane capitalism" championed by this so-called workers' party.

Further support came from ATTAC France, a moderate anti-globalisation outfit standing for "Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens." ATTAC aimed at implementing the so-called "Tobin Tax" which would penalise "bad" capitalists who move their money around the world too quickly by charging them a special tax (which would be used to "help" the poor).

THE PT: A CAPITALIST PARTY

The PT itself was founded in Brazil in the 1980s. A conservative party, the PT does not oppose capitalism, but aims to use the Brazilian state to improve workers' conditions. In the era of globalisation, this sort of programme is a pipedream. Under globalisation, capital is on the offensive against workers' living and working conditions, and has no interest in the PT's programme and lacks the very ability - given the global economic crisis - to make significant reforms for workers.

The other component of the PT's programme is its Brazilian nationalism: for the PT, all Brazilians - regardless of class - should unite against "imperialism." In practice, this means that the PT aims to win support from "patriotic" capitalists in Brazil (despite the fact that capitalists are always anti-worker).

So while the PT was opposed to big business adverts at the Forum, it was happy to make space for the national bank of Brazil, which claims "It's better because it's ours." This was despite the fact that this bank is controlled by the rich and exploits workers and small farmers. So long as it was "Brazilian" the PT was happy.

The PT's nationalism also makes it almost impossible for the party to link to the struggle of workers outside Brazil, as these are outside of the "Brazilian nation."
But even within Brazil, the PT is happy to crack the whip against the poor in the areas where it is represented in the State. It helped suppress the academics' strike at Rio Grande do Sul, the occupation of a federal building in Porto Allegre, and drove hawkers and homeless people from squat-land.

THE "PEOPLES' BUDGET"

One innovation introduced by the PT-controlled Porto Allegre municipality is the so-called "people's budget" process, according to which the working class is invited to help shape local government spending. However, the municipal budget is set within the parameters of the overall neo-liberal budget of the national level government, and so, is anti-worker from the start because the municipality simply lacks the money to redress workers' needs.

So the effect of the "peoples' budget" is to get workers to buy-in to cuts in social spending: when workers complain that there is insufficient housing, schooling etc, the PT municipality can turn around and say "you workers designed the budget. So why are you complaining?" Workers do participate, but only have an opportunity to divide up a few crumbs.

CUBA?

In addition to the PT, a host of similar parties claiming to "represent the working class" were present. The Forum assumed the character of an attempt by mainstream parties to regain the credibility they have lost by lagging behind (and repressing) the anti-globalisation movement.

A delegation from the Cuban government also came. Yet Cuba does not allow free speech or free trade unionism or even free elections within its own borders (Castro has been in power without an open election for more than 40 years). This invitation reflects a double-standard on the right-wing of the anti-globalisation movement: happy to protest against similar abuses of freedom in other poor countries, the right-wing lets Cuba off the hook just because the regime claims to be "socialist."

SPLITS

Yet many who attended the conference were not fooled by the aims of the organisers, whose attempt to seize control of the international anti-globalisation movement by using the Forum to catapult their programme of "capitalism with a human face" to centre-stage failed. The Forum broke down when it became clear that delegates could not agree on a common statement of aims. Many people were also disgruntled by the presence of politicians from the Brazilian and French governments - both anti-worker and neo-liberal in character - and by the fact that "VIPs" got a special invitation-only room, an enclave of invitation-only calm and luxury, made of glass.

The third day the conference broke down, and the "Anti-Capitalist Youth," made up of anarchists and radical socialists, walked out, arguing, "Another World is Possible... Only By Destroying Capitalism!"

Further, they pointed out the politicians were using the occasion to win votes, and argued that the "World Social Forum is a ruse of those who wish to detour the anti-capitalist fight towards the policy of collaboration of classes and elections, continuing to apply the misery of capitalism. Thus we continue our efforts in the construction of an international anti-capitalist network... Capitalism kills, we will kill capitalism. It is up to the youth, the workers, and the poor anti-capitalists, loyal to the spirit of Seattle, Nice, Prague and Davos to impede the distortion of the anti-capitalist intervention and its use by its enemies."

We could not agree more.

The Black Bloc: A Disposable Tactic

EVER since the 1999 "Battle of Seattle" which stunned the ruling elites as they watched tens of thousands of militant workers, activists, mothers and others shut down their secretive World Trade Organisation summit, anarchists have been in the headlines: at the barricades facing down riot police in cities across the world.

Usually masked - to prevent identification and as protection against the teargas used by the repressive forces - and dressed distinctively in the traditional anarchist colour of black, the so-called "black bloc" has provided anarchism with its greatest public profile since the mass protest movements of the late 1960s.

Willing to take on riot police, to un-arrest demonstrators, to attack symbols of corporate and state power, and to help disrupt the summits of the rich, the black bloc, as anarchist street fighters, has become a favourite icon both of the left, which has to a greater or lesser degree celebrated its militancy. As for the right, it has used it as an example of the "violence" inherent in anarchism - neglecting to mention of course that states and corporations are founded on violence.

The fact remains that it is via the black blocs that many militants are being introduced to anarchism for the first time. That is a base we must build on.

Following the success of Seattle, militant black blocs - usually working within broader "revolutionary anti-capitalist blocs" - took the message of an outraged working class to the parasitic elites every time they met: at the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and G8 summit in Washington (April 2000); at the World Economic Forum in Melbourne and at the IMF, WB and G8 summit in Prague (September 2000); at the European Union summit in Nice (December 2000); at the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas summit in Quebec City (April 2001); at the EU summit in Gothenburg (June 2001); and at the G8 summit in Genoa (July 2001) - to mention only the "violent" ones.

Taken together, the protests since Seattle (and including Seoul and Barcelona) have cost the bosses more than $250-million in security precautions, damage to their precious property and lost profit squeezed from workers. On our side of the bar-

ricades, hundreds have been injured, scores jailed, tortured, criminalised and deported, several shot and, in a shocking murder that echoed around the world, a young anarchist, Carlo Giuliani, was shot dead by police in Genoa.

It is the anarchist message of working class direct action, spurning the professional activist groups and politicians of all shades, that has forced the world's wealthiest parasites to run away into the Canadian Rockies and the desert of Qatar to plot and scheme against us. The anarchist principles of mass, global, multifaceted grassroots power and direct democracy are on the agenda like never before in recent history. But our "Prague Spring" is over. The police murder of Giuliani at the Genoa demonstration and the reconsolidation of right-wing forces have seen to that. Following Genoa, many anarchists have been calling into question the
tactic of the black bloc.

Contrary to the attempts by the Italian and German states to pretend that the black bloc is some sort of “terrorist organisation”, it is neither terrorist nor an organisation. It is simply a tactic that has the following aims: to provide anarchism with a visible presence (for reasons of public propaganda as well as safety and easy coordination during chaotic protests); to maintain the militant momentum of protests and prevent them being channelled into useless talk-shops and petitions; to directly attack our class enemies and their institutions; and finally to defend ordinary protesters from police actions.

The black bloc tactic has been remarkably successful if measured against these aims, and among protesters, anarchists have gained a lot of respect, especially for our non-sectarian defence of pacifists and others targeted by police.

While most anarchist protesters were not involved in the black blocs at Genoa, preferring to march, as they should, with the tens of thousands of striking workers, the blocs themselves have increasingly become used as a tactic by other para-anarchist groups such as the autonomists, or non-anarchist groups, such as rank-and-file communists.

Genoa showed that the practice of masking up and dressing in black was provocateurs and undercover cops who then tarnished the blocs' reputation by attacking illegitimate targets (non-state, non-police and non-corporate) and brawling with ordinary marchers.

The enemy strategy is clear:

1) criminalise the anarchists and other militant revolutionary protesters as “terrorists”.
2) destroy the lies of goodwill which they have built with the mass anti-globalisation movement in order to prevent the radicalisation of the movement by criminalising the black bloc
3) stage-managing “non-governmental” social forums parallel to the main capitalist summits so as to bog activists down in useless lobbying and create an impression of consultation
4) crack down on independent media outfits to ensure corporate media versions of events remain unchallenged, and
5) use the cover of the September 11 terror attacks on the United States to introduce sweeping new police and intelligence powers to be used against all radical activists, whether anarchist or not.

The photographs of Mussolini shown to tortured activists in Genoa police detention show that the iron fist of fascism lies just beneath the velvet glove of the Western bourgeois “democracies”. In the last century, the elites plunged the world into a 70-year nightmare of fascism, bolshevism and genocidal war - all to prevent a true global workers’ revolution that between 1916 and 1923 nearly cost them all their stolen assets. This time we know what they are capable of and we must be on a war footing.

So, do we carry on protesting, agitating, educating, organising? Should we still participate in these mass protests? Hell yes! Anarchist ideas have taken centre stage in the new anti-capitalist movement and there is no way we should surrender that hard-won ground.

But this is a class war and we need to be flexible in our tactics and change swiftly where needed in order to keep the enemy off balance. For now, it is time to drop the black bloc tactic, go unmasked in daylight, and blend in with the workers. Since they are prepared for the black bloc, we need new approaches that will catch them off-guard.

In any case, in Southern Africa, despite our visible presence at marches against privatisation, war and racism, there are simply too few anarchist militants on the ground to constitute a tactically significant black bloc at protests. This stands in good contrast to the strength of our ideas, which are winning an increasing audience among workers and the poor.

We must still wage a public information war against the elites through the revolutionary independent media; we must also build our own counter-intelligence networks and weed out infiltrators.

Far more importantly, we must build closer personal ties within the communities, unions and groups that we fight alongside so that trust is established, we build an indivisible web of support and we watch each other's backs. Black blocs are not the best way to do this for now.

That is class solidarity and that - rather than gasmasks and molotovs - is, after all, what anarchism is all about.

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DUAL POWER

The motives, in other words are clear: the official “NGO Summits” are used to legitimise the capitalists’ meetings, whilst also removing the teeth from the anti-globalisation movement. This is exactly why we should not participate in the government - and corporate-run and funded “NGO summits.” They hide the undemocratic nature of the gatherings of the capitalist class by posing as democratic spaces. Yet these “NGO Summits” are themselves undemocratic. In return for capitalist blood money, progressives get drawn into stage-managed gatherings in which small groups of delegates draft up documents that are, at best, totally ignored by the official summits, and, at worst, used to legitimise neo-liberal policies.

This type of “participation” also runs totally counter to the spirit of the anti-globalisation movement. The movement has based itself on mass direct action, and on a democratic model of struggle organising. Yet participation in the “NGO Summits” is limited to a few delegates who spend their time fighting with other delegates for money and over the wording of the declaration of the NGO Summits. What we want instead are tens of thousands on the streets, based not on participation within the NGO Summits or official summits, but on direct action against the capitalist class and its agents, a mass struggle against capitalism, for libertarian communism, for anarchism. We must organise outside and against the capitalist class and the governments, creating a new world that can crush the world of wage-slavery, unemployment and racial oppression.
RELIGIOUS fundamentalism, whether Christian, Muslim, Hindu or other deserves to be closely examined by anarchists because it has increasingly become a player on the world stage in recent years. On the one hand, many media commentators and pro-war agitators were not slow to characterise the wars in the former Yugoslavia, Sudan, Chechnya, Palestine/Israel and Afghanistan as "crusades" against the Muslim populations or "jihads" against Christian or Jewish people. On the other hand, many religious working class peoples who have borne the brunt of these wars - especially when driven by US imperialism as in Afghanistan - have succumbed to the false belief that they are being protected by their domestic theocratic (religious state) regimes. The debate around the supposed "revolutionary" nature of some religious fundamentalist regimes is similar in many ways to the debate on the "liberatory" nature of national liberation movements.

As anarchists, we know that national bourgeois elites, whether atheist communist, secular capitalist or religious fundamentalist all have one thing in common: their elite class interest as rulers over, and exploiters of, the working class, peasantry and poor. The false premise confusing many workers here is: "The enemy of my enemy is my friend". As anarchists we know this is rubbish. Many reactionary, bourgeois and even fascist forces side with, and even emerge from, the working class in times of crisis - but they all have their own right-wing agendas and are only interested in "using" the power of the working class to achieve a position of rulership over it. It is obvious, for instance, that the PLO only wants to establish a capitalist Palestinian state, with ordinary Palestinians slaving away for the enrichment of Yassir Arafat and his associates.

We are so accustomed to seeing on TV images of religious "radicals" committing acts of defiance against capitalist and sometimes even capitalist and state targets, that it is easy to confuse radicalism with revolutionism. The mere acts of throwing stones at Israeli soldiers (no matter how brave or how necessary) and burning US flags do not in themselves provide. As far as religion itself is concerned, anarchism is a rationalist materialist philosophy. It is essentially atheist, although many individual anarchists hold personal spiritual beliefs and are free to do so. The easiest way to state it is to say that anarchism stands against organised religion (those politico-business organisations called churches, mosques and temples), hierarchical religious elites (priests, imams, rabbis and pundits) and against superstitious mysticism - but is not against "spirituality" in its broader sense: humanity's search for meaning. So although the relationship between anarchist revolutionary workers and religious workers fighting for a better life is complex, given the current war on the Afghan people, an examination of a genuine workers' revolution in a major Muslim country is probably the most effective way to clarify our position.

So we will look at what happened during the Iranian Revolution of 1978-1979. Iran is an important test case firstly because until the revolution, Iran was one of three key pro-Western strongholds in the Middle East necessary for suppressing local workers demands and keeping oil production cheap (the others being Israel and Saudi Arabia; having lost Iran and later Iraq, the US clearly now wants Afghanistan as its third satellite). Secondly because the revolution - or more correctly, the Muslim clerical counter-revolution that destroyed it - was to the Arab, Kurdish and Persian world what the Russian Revolution was to the European world and has provided the "model revolution" debated amongst anti-imperialist and revolutionary Muslim workers ever since. Iran developed great strategic importance for the imperialist powers (especially Britain and Russia, then later the USA) following the discovery of massive reserves of oil there in 1908.

The Iranian oil industry concentrated more workers together than any other industry in the Middle East, with 31 500 working in oil production by 1940 - but most of the profits went to Britain. The following year, Russia and Britain invaded Iran and installed a puppet shah (ruler), but worker militancy was on the rise. The Communist Party of Iran had collapsed in the 1920s, but new leftist and nationalist forces came into being and organised industrially: the communist-inspired Masses organization and the National Front. A crackdown by the British-backed shah's forces in the late 1940s drove the movement underground.

But despite the intensive activities of the secret police, militant cells of workers - and, operating in parallel, religious fundamentalist scholars allied to the exiled Ayatollah Khomeini - re-emerged to agitate for change, especially during the 1963 revolt, and starting again in the early 1970s. Increasingly, the extravagance of the shah, the Pahlavi dynasty provoked resentment in all parts of Iranian society, even among the middle classes which were traditionally strong supporters of the regime. In August 1977, 50 000 poor slum dwellers successfully resisted their forced removal by police, then in December, police massacred 40 religious protestors and the resentment boiled over into open anger. Strikes and sabotage were on the rise while wages dropped due to an economic downturn. The shah imposed martial law and on "Black Friday", September 8, 1978, troops gunned down thousands of protestors. In response, infuriated workers launched a strike-wave that spread across the country like wildfire. Oil workers struck for 33 days straight, bringing the economy to a dead halt, despite futile attempts to send troops into the oilfields. On December 11, 2-million protestors marched in the capital, Tehran, demanding the ousting of the shah, an end to American imperialism and the arming of the people. Soldiers began to desert. On January 16, 1979, the shah fled to Egypt.

In mid-February, there was an insurrection, with air force cadets joining with guerrilla forces - the leftist Organisation of Iranian Peoples' Fedai Guerrillas, or Fedayeen, and the nationalist Mujahedeen in- over-running the military academy, army bases, the parliament, factories, armories and the TV station. The Pahlavi regime collapsed and Khomeini, who had returned from exile, cobbled together a multi-party provisional government, but the people wanted more.

Women's organisations flourished, peasants started seizing the land and in some places, established communal cultivation councils, strikes were rampant and workers seized control of their workplaces, arranging raw materials, sourcing and
sales themselves, even setting prices in the oil industry. A system of grassroots soviet - called "shoras" in Iranian and based on the old factory council idea - sprung up in fields, factories, neighbourhoods, educational institutions and the armed forces. Armed neighbourhood committees - called "komitehs" - based on the old Muslim scholar networks - patrolled residential areas, arrested collaborators, ran people's courts and prisons, and organized demonstrations. It was a true workers' revolution with secular revolutionaries and Muslim workers overthrowing the capitalist state side by side. A May Day march in Tehran drew 1.5 million demonstrators.

The former headquarters of the secret police-controlled official trade union federation was occupied by the unemployed and renamed the Workers' House. The new workerist federation, that replaced the old state one, the All-Iran Workers' Union, declared that its aim was an Iran "free of capitalist rulers" and called for shoras to be "formed by the workers of each factory for their own political and economic needs". But the religious fundamentalist clerics lead by Khomeini were terrified of this and both the leftist and Muslim wings of the workers declared the shoras to be "counter-revolutionary". And it was better than the imperialist-backed Pahlavi dynasty.

Khomeni founded the fundamentalist Iranian Republican Party (IRP) to squeeze opposition parties out of the provisional government and at the same time established the Revolutionary Guards (Pasdaran), a political police force to marginalise the secular left within the komitehs which it wanted to mobilise as a supporter bloc. The Pasdaran were soon forcibly liquidating shoras, purging komitehs and repressing ethnic Kurdish separatists and women's organisations, while the Party of God (Hezbollah) was created as a strike-breaking force of thugs. The IRP also created a public works project to divert the energies of the most militant shoras - replacing them with fundamentalist shoras and Islamic Societies - and to rebuild the exploitative capitalist economy (all the while spouting populist and anti-capitalist slogans in the manner of all fascist dictatorships). The true workers' revolution was destroyed and for the Iranian working class, whether secular or Muslim, a long night of living under a new autocratic regime had begun. The fundamentalist clerical regime had not set them free: it had only produced new forms of capitalist exploitation and police state repression. The lesson of Iran is a basic anarchist one: workers can never trust groups, religious or not, who chant the right revolutionary slogans but whose real aim is class rule.

The Anarchist Economic Alternative to Globalisation

Is There An Economic Alternative?

An immediate question springs to mind: has an alternative society existed, and has such a society existed for long enough to be useful to us as an alternative model to the economic model of capitalism. The answer to both these questions; and this may surprise you - is YES. The most elaborate and extensive alternative economy ever created in human history existed in Spain between the years 1936-38. Estimates of the number of people involved range between 5 and 7 million; the industries that took part were both urban and rural.

What was it about this society that made it alternative? I would say that there were two principle features that made the Spanish Revolution Model an "alternative to capitalism". In the first place, production and distribution of goods and services was to serve human needs and not profits. In some sections of the alternative economy created in Spain during the revolution, money was abolished. As long as people made a reasonable contribution to the work of the community or collective they were free to partake of the goods and services that community was able to produce. In sense the economy operated in the direction of the philosophy, "From Each According To Their Ability, To Each According To Their Needs".

The second feature of this alternative economic model in Spain was what we might call "the democratic element." And perhaps it is this as much as anything that marks this Spanish example out as one of the most unique and far reaching in the annals of human history.

Democracy is a much abused word, but in the Spanish revolution, for one of the very first times in human history, workers replaced the "authoritarian" running of the economy with a democratic alternative. What do I mean by this, "democratic alternative"? Basically what I am saying is that in any workplace - from a factory to an office, from a farm to a hospital, the administration or management of the enterprise was on the basis of an elected and recallable management. In other words instead of having the management of a company imposed by the "owners" or the shareholders of a company, the workers, on the basis that they were the ones who did the work and made the wealth, decided that they should select the management. This idea is more generally called "workers self-management" and I would argue that it has to be in place if we are ever to talk meaningfully about a real alternative economy.

In the Spanish revolution a huge number of industries were collectivised and run democratically. In the Catalonia area, the industrial heartland of Spain, for example, over 3,000 enterprises came under workers self-management. This included all public transportation services, shipping, electric and power companies, gas and water works, engineering and automobile assembly plants, mines, cement works, textile mills and paper factories, electrical and chemical concerns, glass bottle factories, perfumeries, food processing plants and breweries.

On the land, the scale of the revolutionary transformation was equally dramatic. The major areas being Aragon
where there were 450 collectives, the Levant (the area around Valencia) with 900 collectives and Castille (the area surrounding Madrid) with 300 collectives. Not only was the land collectivised but also in the villages, workshops were set up where the local trades-people could produce tools, furniture, etc. Bakers, butchers, barbers and so on also decided to collectivise.

Spain is an important and valid example of how a democratic economy geared towards people's needs, can actually work. The economy lasted for nearly two years and survived in a climate that was less than hospitable. Remember that Spain in that time was immersed in the Civil War and just as importantly there was bitter political struggle to be contended with - with anarchists on one side defending workers self-management, with liberals and the Spanish Communist party opposed to the idea. These aspects placed enormous pressures on the alternative model of economic organisation. Nevertheless, that model survived and even thrived until its eventual military suppression towards the end of the Civil War.

In the context of the discussion here today then, the example of the democratic economic model that emerged in Spain emphasises some key points that are pertinent to our discussion here today:

Firstly it refutes the argument of the bosses and those capitalist economist who say we can only run a modern economy with a heavy dollop of authoritarianism; what they're often talking about here is of course slave labour conditions and wages.

Secondly we can see in the Spanish example that a democratic economy has significant advantages to the "authoritarian" economy of today.

What are these advantages:

1. It destroys the profit motive in the sense of bosses and owners taking their cut of the wealth that the workers actually make.
2. It destroys the alienation from work that is so much part of working life nowadays.
3. It makes workplaces, factories and farms more accountable to the communities and area they are part of - since workplaces in general draw their workforce from local communities and now that these workers are participating in a meaningful way in the running of their workplaces, factories and offices, they are far more likely to operate in a more environmentally friendly and accommodating manner to their nearby communities.

So to sum up on the question we have in front of us today, the Spanish worker collectives formed at the height of the revolution are one of the best examples of how an alternative to capitalism can actually function and thrive.

The collectives were large-scale and involved a wide range of communities, geographical areas and industries. From a practical, economic point of view they worked. And to this day they remain the most extensive democratisation of a large-scale economy ever achieved on this planet.

There is I think one final point that needs emphasis if we are to appreciate fully the achievement and potential of the Spanish Revolution model. In part this has to do with the politics of means and ends, in parts this has to do with the aspirations of the Spanish anarchist movement. They wanted to created democratic self-management by the workers. And this is why during the decades prior to the Revolution they emphasised and re-emphasised the need for democratic accountability and methods in the anti-capitalist movement in Spain.

This is something we can learn from today. If we want our struggle to take us in the direction of a self-managed, participatory democracy then we have to put those features high on our agenda and we have to make them also part of our practice. We have to understand that means and ends are connected.

Kevin Doyle
Workers Solidarity Movement

Who needs the WSSD?

Lucien van der Walt / Bikisha Media Collective

Within the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) in Gauteng, a debate is raging about whether or not the left should participate in the United Nations'-sponsored "NGO Summit" that is being planned for the UN's "Rio +10" conference, which will be held in Johannesburg in 2002.

The Rio + 10 summit by the UN is a follow-up to the UN conference on the environment that was held in 1992 in Rio, Brazil. The UN is inviting non-governmental structures to participate in a parallel "NGO Summit" and is willing to foot the bill.

ANARCHIST ROLE

Now, there is nothing wrong in principle with anti-globalisation activists coming forward to discuss campaigns against - and alternatives to - capitalist globalisation. As anarchists we are ready to use any popular forums as an opportunity to win people to our programme. And where possible we play a leading role in developing and defending such forums as a space for radically democratic grassroots decision-making, and as a platform for direct action against capitalism.

This was, for example, the case for the anti-Free Trade Area of the Americas summit in Quebec in April 2001, where anarchists were key actors in the Anti-Capitalist Convergence (CLAC) and helped establish anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist struggle as the central themes of the anti-FTAA protests. And this is precisely why anarchists support structures such as the APF.

CO-OPTATION

However, the proposed UN-sponsored "NGO Summit" is a different matter entirely. Before we decide to try and "use" this Summit, it is vital to understand the agenda of the UN and other capitalist bodies in organising and funding such Summits in the first place. Since the momentous events in Seattle in 1999 - when protesters disrupted the globalisation summit of the World Trade Organisation - the capitalist class has been under siege at most of its international policy/planning meetings, whether by the IMF, UN or WEF.

In this climate, capital has begun to fund (official) summits for civil society organisations, "NGO Summits" running parallel to the official globalisation summits of the capitalist class. Capital claims that these forums will allow ordinary voices to be heard, and provide a channel for popular concerns to be integrated into the decisions of the official meetings. This is why, for example, the UN poured millions into an "NGO Summit" designed to run parallel to the official World Conference Against Racism summit in Durban.

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Teachings of the State

War. The annihilation of man by his brother. The most unnatural of acts, has been inflicted upon its innocent and unconsenting victims once again.

This time the men, women and children of Afghanistan. Why? Because the most powerful state in the world, America, is settling its scores with the Afghan elite. The ruling classes of primarily the United States and Afghanistan have a conflict of interests, money and power. Power to inflict their will on the ignorant masses, coercion. And money to maintain that power, manifested in the state. The state being government, military and police forces, judicial system etc.

And so, thousands of American and Afghan citizens march off to war to defend their state. Possibly to expose themselves and their enemies to chemical and even nuclear warfare.

Again why? From our tender childhood years the government has been telling us, on behalf of the capitalists, how to run our lives. We are taught (if you like, brainwashed whether you like it or not) nationalism so that when the time inevitably comes we will kill our brothers and sisters for the colour of their flag, a flag inflicted upon them by their government. We are taught this by the state. We are taught religion so that we follow our ‘leaders’ with blind obedience, for fear of eternal suffering. This is the fear to question or resist.

We are taught this by the state’s right hand man, the church. We are taught to be prejudiced to our neighbours of different race, gender or sexual preference. We are taught this by yet another of the state’s oppressive tools, the education system.

By governing our lives, the state seeks only to serve the ruling class by dividing the common people of the world. So that we exhaust our energies fighting amongst ourselves instead of uniting world-wide in solidarity and resistance and reclaiming what rightfully belongs to all who inhabit the earth.

Alas, the tiny minority who control the world’s economy, the state and the earth’s resources control our lives. And when a crisis occurs in order to keep their profits up, and if possibly expand them, the powerful elite call upon the workers of the world, the nationalists, and those who join the army out of poverty to fulfil their duty and kill their neighbour under the illusion of defending their freedom.

The only freedom worth fighting for is to be found through the class struggle. The state will never deliver freedom as it is there only to serve capital, and the state’s structures are only necessary when a minority seeks to rule over the majority. The structures of the state are only necessary when a minority seeks to rule over the majority. The structures of the state are only necessary when a minority seeks to rule over the majority. Therefore they are only necessary when a minority seeks to rule over the majority.

We, the working class, produce the world’s wealth. We ought to enjoy the benefits.

We want to abolish the system of capitalism that places wealth and power in the hands of a few, and replace it with workers self-management and socialism. We do not mean the lie called ‘socialism’ practised in Russia, China, and other police states - the system in those countries was/is no more than another form of capitalism.

We stand for a new society where there will be no bosses or bureaucrats. A society that will be run in a truly democratic way by working people, through councils in the workplaces and communities. We want to abolish authoritarian relationships and replace them with control from the bottom up - not the top down.

All the industries, all the means of production and distribution will be commonly owned, and placed under the management of those working in them. Production will be co-ordinated, organised and planned by the federation of elected and recallable workplace committees, not for profit but to meet our needs. The guiding principle will be “from each according to ability, to each according to need”.

We are opposed to all coercive authority, we believe that the only limit on the freedom of the individual is that their freedom does not encroach on the freedom of others.

We do not ask to be made rulers nor do we intend to seize power “on behalf of the working class”. Instead, we hold that socialism can only be created by the mass of ordinary people. Anything less is bound to lead to no more than replacing one set of bosses with another.

We are opposed to the state because it is not neutral, it cannot be made to serve our interests. The state is the enemy of the working class, the enemy of the majority.

We are proud to be part of the tradition of libertarian socialism, of anarchism. The anarchist movement has taken root in the working class of many countries because it serves our interests - not the interests of the power seekers and professional politicians.

In short we fight for the immediate needs and interests of our class under the existing set up, while seeking to encourage the necessary understanding and activity to overthrow capitalism and its state, and lead to the birth of a free and equal (anarchist) society.

For the abolition of state and capital.
For peace and anarchy.
Organise for social revolution.

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The WSSD

The APF was for some time heavily involved in the 'Civil Society Indaba' where a wide range of South African organisations were preparing for the summit. But it was not to have the opportunity to continue in its participation. As usual with such processes, the decisions were made elsewhere.

The bureaucratic sell-outs of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, terrified by the prospect of a mass movement outside the high walls of the pro-capitalist alliance led by the ANC, have been constantly trying to prevent the APF from playing any role in the organisation and refusal to support its campaigns. The 'Civil Society Indaba', in which COSATU and the APF were both invited to participate, was no exception.

COSATU condemned the APF and other organisations that it could not control as 'unrepresentative', provoking a crisis in the Indaba that was then 'mediated' by the South African Council of Churches, which, as befits a religious institution, is known for its readiness to uphold the existing order and keep the masses in their place. The 'mediation' ended with the Indaba restructured on a far more openly authoritarian basis, with COSATU in the driving seat and the APF left by the wayside: a decision further assured by the influence of the ruling coalition on the South African NGO Coalition, always a key player in such processes. It seems that the self-proclaimed leaders of the working class were more ready to give a voice to the representatives of capital than to keep the APF on board.

But, while this development does illustrate the class loyalties of the union bureaucracy, it is not a defeat for the working class. Staying in the WSSD processes would merely have given them legitimacy while accomplishing nothing. The APF’s exclusion is a sign of a contradiction in the position of the ruling class: while they want ‘civil society’ to give legitimacy to their power. In 1996/97, he was the mainstay of support for a group of students who had been kicked out of UNZA for daring to call a non-party-sectarian meeting.

I first met Wilstar Choongo when he invited me to Zambia in August 1998 as a WSF delegate to give a public talk on the common enemy facing South African and Zambian workers. He was a friendly, shambling man with a ready grin. I well recall sitting on the bed in his cramped apartment eating a meal of eggs, bread and oranges and engaging in fervent discussions on anarchist strategies.

Shortly after my visit, he and most of the youths of the Socialist Caucus’ UNZA-Cuba Friendship Association, who had converted to anarchism, set up the AWSM (sometimes referred to as the Anarchist Workers’ Group - Zambia), the first known anarchist organisation in Central Africa, and one which linked students, staff and workers.

Wilstar decided against the AWSM becoming a WSF section because of the great distances involved, but hoped to maintain regular contact and material and ideological support. In early 1999, WSF proposed that the AWSM become a WSF section, the South African and Zambian sections to be federated horizontally. As things turned out, the WSF dissolved in September 1999 because of the ineffective form of its organisation-al method, and the far more productive Bikisha Media Collective, Zabalaza Books and Anarchist Union sprang up in its stead.

But last had contact with Wilstar on July 15, 1999. Unknown to us, he died shortly afterwards, aged 35, following a bout with malaria that brought on meningitis. Uncomplaining to the end, he had not even mentioned his illness to his comrades.

He left a wife and three young children. This obituary was delayed due to the critical problems of communication among workers in Africa. The AWSM is believed to have collapsed as a result of his death.

But although death cut short efforts to build a Central African anarchist movement, Wilstar’s direct-actionist example of anarchism in practice is still remembered as a great contribution to the ethics of the emergent Left in the region.

A Socialist Caucus activist described him so: “He wasn’t prepared to make things convenient for himself. His death is an extremely big loss to the whole fragile Left and UNZA is still reeling from it.” As we say in South Africa when a militant dies: “Hamba kahle (go well) Comrade Wilstar!”

Michael Schmidt

Bikisha Media Collective

South Africa