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**BETWEEN THE PLATFORM AND THE PARTY:
Authoritarian Tendencies and
Anarchism**



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*"Between the platform and the
party: authoritarian tendencies and
anarchism."*

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INTRODUCTION

Anarchism is a movement - that is, a multiplicity of tendencies - whose general aim is to found a society without the exploited and the oppressed, abolishing all forms of government and ownership of the means of production, eliminating social classes and their privileges, racial, sexual, economic, political and social inequalities. This descriptive sketch includes most of the tendencies that are called anarchists: individualists, organizationists, communists, collectivists, platformists, anarcho-syndicalists, etc. Notwithstanding this movementist character inherent to anarchism, some tendencies have a vision that is not so inclusive, but rather aims at the conformation of an anarchist organization of a party type: an anarchist party.

These proposals generally take as their starting point the Organizational Platform that back in the 1920s was drawn up in exile by Makhno, Archinov and other prominent Russian anarchist militants, who had managed to leave Bolshevik Russia. This document proposed the reorganization of anarchism in Russia incorporating - without recognizing it - elements of a clearly Leninist nature, with the intention of overcoming the errors which had led to the anarchist defeat in the face of Bolshevik preponderance during the Russian Revolution. Within this platformist line the Workers Solidarity Movement of Ireland and the North American NEFAC stand out, with some of its best known referents in Latin America being the Alliance of Libertarian Communists of Mexico, the Libertarian Communist Organization of Chile, the Brazilian Gaucha Anarchist Federation and the Argentine OSL. But there have also been in the '60s and '70s other tendencies which, without openly recognizing themselves as platformists, have outlined a parallel path influenced by the Cuban revolution. The main reference of this line has been the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation, a paradigmatic organization and source of inspiration for anarcho-Marxist and party-style anarchist organizations, as was the case in Argentina of Resistencia Libertaria, as well as several platformist organizations.

In most of these tendencies and organizations there are certain shared presuppositions, common patterns and related elements, which allow them to be grouped together as a single current. Their most salient element is the conception that the anarchist revolution

should be promoted by partisan organizations. This conception has been justified from different angles and with different arguments, not always congruent with each other. In any case, the points in common prevail over the differences, which seem more like shades of the same color.

Provisionally, let us say that we understand a political party as a group of people forming a political organization ascribed to an ideology and with a program of action, whose purpose is the seizure of political power, it is an organization independent of the State and its claim is to represent the general will and the interests of the majority. The political party is presented to us as a vehicle for social transformation, as a means to an end (government). The conception of the anarchist party conforms to the general parameters of political parties in theory, except with regard to the seizure of political power; the means of social transformation is the party organization, which would establish the revolutionary leadership. Against this representative, directive, external and mediating conception of platformism and anarcho-partisanship, most of the anarchist movement stands in all its other aspects. We will now examine some of the basic assumptions and arguments that these tendencies use to justify the need to organize in the form of a party.

WHAT IS A POLITICAL PARTY ?

Political parties emerged as groupings or clubs of collaborating individuals who supported the parliamentary candidacy of a politician. From their origins in the early 19th century, political parties were linked to the idea of government (access to power) and to the idea of representative elections. They were factions or political groups organized around a candidate, but over time they acquired a much less provisional or circumstantial character, becoming more formal, stratified and bureaucratized organizations, no longer organized around an individual but rather around a program or an ideology. In a more modern sense, according to scholar Francisco de Andrea Sánchez, a political party has certain characteristics that differentiate it from other types of political groupings: "(a) a permanent, complete and independent organization, (b) a will to exercise power, and (c) the will to exercise power, and (d) the will to be a political party, and (e) the will to be a political party."

c) a search for popular support in order to keep it". This author argues that, just as within the category means of transportation various kinds of vehicles are included, it could be said that "every political party is a political group, but not every political group is a political party." A political group can be an NGO, a trade union group, a university group, a club, etc., not necessarily a political party.

This distinction is essential when it comes to addressing the reasons for the anarchists' refusal to form a party. All definitions of political party carry as an inescapable ingredient the will to accede to a government. Let us look at the following definitions:

1- "A political party is a group of human beings that has a stable organization with the objective of obtaining or maintaining for its leaders the control of a government and with the ulterior object of giving to the members of the party, by means of such control, ideal and material benefits and advantages" (Friedrich, Carl. J. Theory and reality of the democratic constitutional organization, Mexico, FCE: 297).

2- "the form of socialization which, resting on a free recruitment, has as its end, to provide power to its leader within an association and to grant by that means to its active members certain ideal or material probabilities" (Weber, Max.

Economía y sociedad, Mexico, FCE, 1969: 228).

3- "A party is a group whose members intend to act in concert in the competition for political power" (E. Schumpeter, quoted in Andrea Sánchez, Los partidos políticos: 61).

These are just some of the definitions that modern sociological theory admits for the category of political party. Thus, a party is an organization structured to direct, administer, represent, govern, it is an essentially mediating entity (it promotes indirect action). In view of the above, the party form is contradictory to some of the basic aims of anarchism: to do away with all types of political power, to eliminate the state and all forms of government. This is the main objection that can be made to the idea of the anarchist party.

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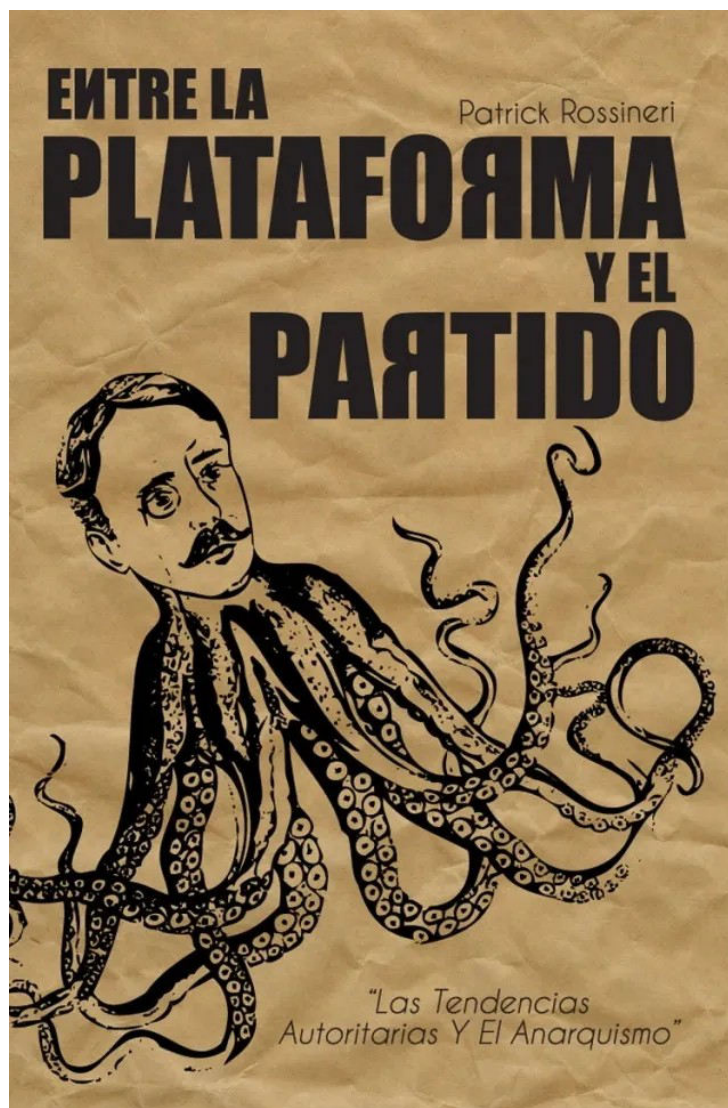
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necessary laws for the workers, etc. On the other hand, the doctrine of socialism has arisen from philosophical, historical and economic theories elaborated by intellectuals, by educated men of the possessing classes. Because of their social position, the founders of modern scientific socialism themselves, Marx and Engels, belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. In the same way, the theoretical doctrine of social democracy has arisen in Russia completely independent of the spontaneous growth of the workers' movement, it has arisen as a natural and inescapable result of the development of thought among revolutionary socialist intellectuals" (Lenin, op. cit.).

"Marx's theory made clear the true task of a revolutionary socialist party: (...) to organize the class struggle of the proletariat and to lead this struggle, which has as its final objective the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the organization of socialist society" (Our Program, Page 127).

According to Lenin, then, the self-emancipation of the working class is not possible, because it cannot have revolutionary consciousness if it is not inserted from outside. And who are those who do have socialist consciousness: the revolutionary socialist intellectuals, that is to say, an enlightened vanguard that will lead the working class to triumph. This vanguard is organized in a revolutionary party in charge of leading the workers' struggle against capitalism. The revolutionary party becomes historically necessary, the inescapable link between the working class and the achievement of socialism.

Another outstanding point of Leninist theory is the orienting role of revolutionary theory. Without a rigorous theory no revolution is possible. And it is precisely elements of bourgeois origin who will provide their intellectual capacities to forge that theory.

"There cannot be a strong socialist party without a revolutionary theory which unites all socialists, from which they draw all their convictions and apply it in their procedures of struggle and methods of action. To defend this theory, which according to their deepest conviction is the true one, against unfounded attacks and against attempts to alter it, does not mean, in any way, to be an enemy of all criticism" (ibidem, p. 128).

Although Lenin does not express it as a necessary condition, *de facto*, it is the intellectuals of the bourgeois strata who occupy the tasks of leadership of the revolutionary party, who a

in turn leads the struggle of the proletariat. In other words, the party is the vanguard of the social revolution and the intellectuals are the vanguard of the party.

Lenin also took care to detail the organizational form of the communist party. He argued that the aims of the party could only be achieved through a disciplined form of organization called democratic centralism. The party was conceived as a disciplined army of revolutionaries, the most conscious elements of the proletariat, apt to develop in any type of situation: the revolutionary vanguard.

Democratic centralism combines the centralism of a militarized apparatus with democratic functioning, exalting conscious discipline and the voluntary renunciation of freedom in order to achieve unity of action and maximum efficiency in the party's actions. In theory, the discussions would circulate from the bottom up and vice versa in the vertical structure of the party, guaranteeing that the decisions implemented by the leadership have been discussed by the entire organization. The general framework of these discussions would be that of an organization of elective and revocable authorities, with strict party discipline, freedom of internal criticism, individual responsibility of the member, collective work, sovereignty of the majority over the minority, subordination to the decisions of the leadership, which are binding for the lower bodies.

As we said, this would be the way democratic centralism would function theoretically, although it is necessary to stress that historically there has never been any Leninist organization that has been able to function within this approach, but rather they have always done so by exacerbating hierarchical centralism, the enlightened role of the leadership, annulling internal dissidence, prioritizing the "military aspect" of the organization, rigid discipline and annulling the individual initiative of the militants. Democratic centralism is a historical fiction and a euphemism that masks the concrete bureaucratism of the Leninist parties.

Another outstanding aspect of the Leninist doctrine consists precisely in its repugnance to any form of popular spontaneism or to the loss of control of the workers' struggle by the party:

"our "tactic-plan" consists in rejecting the immediate call for an assault, in demanding that the "siege of the enemy fortress" be "duly organized" or, in other words, in demanding that all efforts be directed towards gathering, organizing and mobilizing a regular army" (What to do, chapter V).

As can be seen, Lenin always highlights the military, tactical-strategic, logistical aspects, the relations of forces, the assault plans, that is to say, what in political-military jargon is called the Technique of the Coup d'Etat, which was efficiently employed by Trotsky in October 1917 and brilliantly explained by Curzio Malaparte. It should be noted that Lenin's mention of the regular army refers to the armed forces of the bourgeois state, when it is not possible for the party itself to form a revolutionary army.

The one who most theorized and promoted this militarist aspect of Marxism-Leninism was Mao Tse-tung, who dedicated endless pages to expounding the foundations and "laws" of the People's and Protracted War in a tedious military manual called Strategic Problems of the Revolutionary War in China, in 1936. The whole Leninist theoretical corpus referring to the tactics and strategies of the revolutionary war, although it has been completely outdated for historical reasons, continues to be a source of main reference and study in the Leninist parties. A whole example of a-historical and scientific dogmatism, on the part of those who consider themselves exclusive possessors of infallible methods to achieve revolutions and connoisseurs of the materialist-dialectical evolution of human history.

All the military terminology used by Lenin is not divorced from his conception of how politics works, nor from his ideas on the importance of discipline within the party. At bottom, the Leninist conception does not differ from that popularized by von Clausewitz: war is the continuation of politics by other means. For Lenin:

"The dictatorship of the proletariat is the most self-sacrificing and most implacable war of the new class against a more powerful enemy, against the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is tenfold increased by its overthrow (...) the victory over the bourgeoisie is impossible without a prolonged, tenacious, desperate struggle, to the death, a struggle that demands serenity, discipline, firmness, inflexibility and a single will. (The infantile disease of "leftism" in communism, Pages 6-7).

Faced with the reproach that was once made to him about the use of these military idioms, in particular the word agent, Lenin boasted about it with derision:

"I like this word, because it indicates in a clear and categorical way the common cause to which all agents subordinate their thoughts and actions, and if this word had to be replaced by another, I would only choose the term "collaborators", if it did not have a certain literaturism and vagueness. For what we need is a military organization of agents" (What To Do, Ch. V).

And this martial vision of politics, far from presenting scruples in its actions, uses any means within its reach to achieve its objective, that is, the seizure of State power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In his conception, the means are subordinated to the ends, a maxim of which Lenin was a master, giving lessons of opportunism and careerism without equal. One of his best known anecdotes is that he made use of the German agent, socialist theoretician and Jewish financier Helphand-Parvus -whom he deeply despised- to obtain economic and material means to clandestinely enter Russia, as is well known, with money provided by the German imperialists, who knew that a Bolshevik triumph would take Russia out of the war and would stop the contingency of a revolution led by the authentically radicalized workers' councils.

Party discipline - just as in an army - was one of the cornerstones of the Leninist revolutionary project. Without severe centralization and iron discipline, a revolution would not be possible. It is difficult to combine the blind obedience that Lenin and his followers demanded of their subordinates with the internal democracy, freedom of criticism and self-critical spirit that they recommended implementing within the party. This party discipline was not limited to conscious self-discipline and the exacerbation of the militant's responsibilities. After the revolution, Lenin asked himself how to maintain the discipline of the revolutionary party, how to control it and how to reinforce it. The answer was predictable: by the consciousness, the firmness and the spirit of sacrifice of the proletarian vanguard and "by the correctness of the political leadership carried out by this vanguard; by the correctness of its political strategy and tactics, provided that the broadest masses are convinced of this by their own experience. Without these conditions, discipline is not possible in a revolutionary party, truly apt to be the party of the

advanced class, called to overthrow the bourgeoisie and transform the whole of society" (The Infantile Disease of "Leftism" in Communism, p. 8).

The repressions that Lenin and Trotsky were in charge of leading against the revolutionaries who opposed the Bolshevik autocracy and, later, the savage genocide directed by Stalin to discipline the masses, fill the expression from their own experience, with a dismal content.

Party unitarianism is another no less remarkable aspect of Leninist theory. For Lenin a single revolutionary party is in charge of carrying out the revolutionary leadership, because each party represents a different class interest. As it is logical to deduce, if two socialist parties represent the working class, at least one of the two claims a false representation and does not respond to the class interests of the workers. In Lenin's vision the newspaper will have a central and unifying role, pointing out the correct line to the rest of the party and unifying criteria inside and outside the organization:

"...the fundamental content of the activities of our party organization, the center of gravity of these activities must consist (...) in unified all-Russian political agitation work that sheds light on all aspects of life and directs the largest masses. And this work is inconceivable in today's Russia without a central all-Russian newspaper that appears very often. The organization that forms itself around this newspaper, the organization of its collaborators (in the broadest sense of the term, that is, of all those who work around it) will be precisely ready for everything, from saving the honor, prestige and continuity of the party in the moments of greatest revolutionary "depression", to preparing the armed insurrection of the whole people, setting a date for its beginning and putting it into practice" (ibidem).

Of course, such unity of criteria, theoretical-ideological unity and unity of action can only be achieved with the strictest degree of militant discipline and obedience to the line advocated by the Central Committee.

Since the partisan unitarianism of the Bolsheviks, the Russian anarchists and social-revolutionaries were perceived as a petty-bourgeois aberration, as while themselves

as the party of the proletarian vanguard. In spite of the fact that the historical conditions of Russia were unique, something that he cannot fail to recognize in many writings, Lenin without any disrespect maintained that "experience has shown that in some essential questions of the proletarian revolution all countries will inevitably go through the same thing that Russia has gone through" (The infantile disease of "leftism" in communism, Page 15). Taking into account the final destiny of the communist house of cards that Lenin inaugurated and the plethora of unique Marxist-Leninist parties (Trotskyists, Stalinists, Maoists, Guevarists, etc.) that presume to be the true proletarian vanguard, we cannot but be astonished at the pathetic degree of senility evidenced by the Leninist formulas.

some criticisms of the leninist conception of the party

Leaving aside the criticisms coming from bourgeois or authoritarian elements, the main objections to Lenin's theses were formulated by council communism and anarchism. Although council communism was ascribed within the Marxist current, it rejected Lenin's avant-garde and authoritarian conception as well as Bernstein's social-democratic collaborationism. Perhaps one of the peculiarities of the criticisms of Bolshevism from these sectors committed to an anti-authoritarian vision of the social revolution, is the prophetic character of many of its propositions with respect to the subsequent evolution of the dictatorship of the proletariat, or rather, the dictatorship of the Soviet Communist Party.

The question asked by the German and Dutch council communists was: who should exercise the dictatorship, the proletariat as a class or the Communist Party? From their point of view there were two communist parties: the party of the bosses (which organizes and directs the struggle from above, participating in power) and the party of the masses (which fights from below, rejecting parliamentarism and collaborationism). According to one of its spokesmen, the German Karl Erler, "the working class cannot destroy the bourgeois state without annihilating bourgeois democracy, and it cannot annihilate bourgeois democracy without destroying the parties" (quoted in, *ibidem*, p. 15). For Lenin this position was a clear example of "left infantilism". The Bolshevik leader responded to these criticisms with arguments that even today continue to seem familiar:

"To deny the necessity of the party and of party discipline, this is the result arrived at by the opposition. And this is tantamount to completely disarming the proletariat for the benefit of the bourgeoisie. This results in the petty bourgeois vices: dispersion, inconstancy, lack of capacity for self-control, for the union of efforts, for organized action which inevitably produce, if one is indulgent with them, the ruin of any revolutionary movement of the proletariat" (ibidem, p. 33).

According to Lenin the differences between the German council communists and the anarchist propositions were almost non-existent. But the anarchists did not deserve the honor of being the target of his attacks because their rejection of Marxism and the dictatorship of the proletariat demonstrated their petty-bourgeois ideological essence. "The anarchists' conception of the world is the bourgeois conception turned upside down. Their individualistic theories and their individualistic idea are in direct opposition to socialism" Lenin, *Socialism and Anarchism*, 1905).

One of the most brilliant theorists of counseling, the Dutchman Anton Pannekoek, argued that:

"The old labor movement is organized in parties. The belief in parties is the main reason for the impotence of the working class; therefore, we avoid the creation of a new party. Not because there are too few of us - a party of any kind starts with too few people - but because a party is an organization that aims to lead and control the working class. In opposition to this, we maintain that the working class can only rise to victory when it independently confronts its problems and decides its own destiny. The workers must not blindly accept the slogans of others, nor of our own groups, but must think, act and decide for themselves" (*Party and Class*, written in 1936, Electronic Edition by CICA, 2005).

After seeing the class struggle as a struggle of parties

-Pannekoek argued, it becomes difficult to consider it as a class struggle. Moreover, the identity between a party (people who agree on their conceptions of social problems) and a class (the role of people in the process of production) proposed by the Bolsheviks is a fiction, since the contradictions do not tend to be resolved between them, as the

shows the inexcusable reality of finding workers' parties empty of workers and bourgeois parties integrated by workers. This problem is exposed by Pannekoek through the sentence: "the working class is not weak because it is divided, but it is divided because it is weak". One of the causes of this weakness is the action of party-type organizations within the working class. There is a contradiction in the term revolutionary party, since by their form, contents and objectives these parties can never be revolutionary. "We can put it another way: in the term revolutionary party, revolutionary always means a bourgeois revolution. Whenever the masses overthrow a government and then allow a new party to take power, we have a bourgeois revolution - the replacement of a ruling caste by a new ruling caste." The aim of the parties is to seize power for themselves and declaim that the revolution consists in that act, instead of helping to self-emancipate the proletarian class. With masterful clarity Pannekoek describes the revolutionary parties:

"they must be rigid structures with clear demarcation lines through membership cards, bylaws, party discipline, and admission and expulsion procedures. For they are instruments of power - they fight for power, restrain their members by force and constantly seek to extend the reach of their power. Their task is not to develop the initiative of the workers; instead, they aim to train loyal and staunch members of their faith. While the working class in its struggle for power and victory needs unlimited intellectual freedom, party domination has to suppress all opinions except its own. In "democratic" parties, the suppression is veiled; in dictatorial parties it is an open and brutal suppression" (ibidem).

So, the party is an obstacle to the revolution because it does not serve as a means of propaganda and enlightenment, but on the contrary, government is its main function. And any self-proclaimed revolutionary vanguard whose intention is to lead and dominate the masses through the revolutionary party is a reactionary element.

Parties are bourgeois forms of organization and -as Roi Ferreiro argues in *Why We Need to be Anti-Party*- these parties are nothing more than the left wing of left reformism,

the extreme left of capital. The parties exist in struggle and opposition to other parties and justify their existence precisely on that point; in this way, they pretend to become the executive subjects of a class power. The parties do not arise from the class struggle but from the belief in a theory about the class struggle, from a point of view outside of it. And Ferreiro adds: "In fighting to change the relations of power, the party implicitly fights to occupy a place in those changed relations of power -even though, in theory, it may consider renouncing power-". And he closes with the formula: the greater the power of the party, the less real power the working class has.

This last point is especially important because it includes some approaches of anarcho-partisan sectors -which we have already mentioned above- who believe that by simply removing the seizure of power from their program, they have already conjured up the ghost of Leninism and authoritarianism within their organization. It is not a question of words, or meanings of the same word. It is a question of diametrically opposed, we could say exclusive, conceptions of conceiving a revolutionary project.

From anarchism the criticisms of Bolshevism have been prodigal, but here we will only mention some of those referring to the revolutionary party. Perhaps the best formulated critique of the whole Leninist conception has been that of Luigi Fabbri in his indispensable work *Dictatorship and Revolution*; although it was focused more than anything else on refuting the Marxist-Leninist theses on the dictatorship of the proletariat, rather than criticizing the partisan character of Bolshevism. Nevertheless, Fabbri flatly denies the claims of the anarcho-partisans referred to above, on the viability of forming anarchist party organizations:

"The anarchists have little party spirit; they propose no immediate end other than the extension of their propaganda. They are neither a party of government nor a party of interests - unless by interest is meant that of bread and liberty for all men - but only a party of ideas. This is their weakness, inasmuch as they are forbidden any material success, and the others, more astute or stronger, exploit and use the partial results of their work. But this is also the strength of the anarchists, for it is only by facing defeats that they - the eternal vanquished - prepare the final victory, the true victory. Having no interests of their own,

They do not give orders that they must obey, they do not ask anything of the multitudes in whose midst they live and with whom they share their anguish and hopes, but they tell them: Your fate will be as you forge it; salvation is in yourselves; conquer it with your spiritual improvement, with your sacrifice and your risk. If you want, you will win. We do not want to be, in the struggle, more than a part of you".

After quoting Fabbri so extensively, it would hardly be necessary to add that when the Italians Malatesta, Fabbri or Berneri use the term party, they do not refer to party political organizations but to the aforementioned party of ideas. Nothing could be further from the Leninist conception of the role of the vanguard, the revolutionary organizations and the action of the masses. The reading of Fabbri's work, besides enlightening on the reactionary quality of Bolshevism, is surprisingly current, due to the almost premonitory character of many of his propositions on how the Russian revolution was going to develop, and which even today find extraordinary validity when applied to supposed "revolutionary processes" such as the Cuban case or the Bolivarian one in Chavez's Venezuela.

During the Russian revolution the anarchists maintained a critical attitude towards the Communist Party and its governmental actions. One of the most radicalized spokesmen of Russian anarchism was Golos Truda, a newspaper directed by Volin. The anarchists rabidly published the arbitrariness of the Bolsheviks, intervening in the autonomy of the factory and workshop committees, preventing workers' control of production. The Moscow anarcho-syndicalists denounced Bolshevik partisanship, proclaiming: down with the partisan struggle; down with the Constituent Assembly, where the parties will return again and again to "criteria", "programs", "slogans", "slogans"... and so on.

Long live the local soviets, reorganized, once again, on a truly revolutionary, working-class and non-partisan line! (In Paul Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, p. 165).

During the October revolution, parties could be represented in soviets and workers' councils by individual delegates, in effect replacing soviets of peasants, workers and soldiers with soviets of political parties (ultimately leaving only the Bolshevik party). "Speakers like Lenin and Trotsky were certainly not workers or soldiers, let alone peasants. They became leaders of their councils by virtue of the fact that they were leaders of their party. Their rise to power was

accomplished through years of partisan intrigue. As journalists (if that was their profession) they stood little chance of representing the typographers' soviets. As leaders of their party they were prominent figures" (A. Meltzer-S. Christie, *Anarchism and Class Struggle*, p. 141). More than journalists, professional revolutionaries, we may add.

In reality some kind of organization outside of factory committees, unions, councils, communes, resistance societies, soviets, or whatever you call the grassroots popular organizational unit is inevitable. One cannot close one's eyes and simply assert that political propaganda does not exist. For anarchists an outside support organization becomes important, but that does not imply the need to form parties. That is to say, the members of a factory committee who are anarchists act within it as workers, with anarchist ideological adscription; but they do not speak or act in the name of an organization, nor should they consult that body on the policy to be adopted. An organization -even if it lacks leaders or bosses- that acts as a revolutionary political party within the workers' and communal organizations, will inevitably become a ghost leader, a puppeteer hidden behind the set, an invisible leader fed by the cult of the organization as an end in itself.

As British anarchists Meltzer and Christie say, a certain degree of sectarianism is not only necessary but also positive. The pretense of unity with other left organizations with larger membership tends to dilute the revolution, not intensify it. "The struggle that counts is the one that helps to build a new society, and this can only be done through individual or group revolutionary action that persistently propagates its propaganda through word and action. Because of our sectarianism we may be at present separated from the rest of the world. But otherwise we would be part of that world. We do not accept the absurd assertion of Trotskyism that it is necessary to join the Labor party in order to be in touch with the working class" (*ibidem*, p. 144).

Practically we could say that it is implicit in the definition of the term anarchist, the impossibility of forming party organizations. It is worth clarifying that this does not mean rejecting all forms of organization, as outdated individualism maintains. Rather, we would say that the organization is a means that must be assumed by the

character of the ends for which it has been erected: an anarchist organization is a means that must promote anarchist ends, that is to say, it must prefigure the new revolutionary society. "The libertarian revolutionary can have nothing to do with the party political organization. This can only be a strategic place to achieve power or a memorial of past battles or a spiritual ghetto. It is subject to the implicit dangers of bureaucracy or capture. Democratic control is no safeguard, for even if the majority decision is accepted as a proper way of doing things, in practice what goes in is controlled, so that the majority can agree with the decisions to be made" (ibidem, p. 145). When we examine more closely the actual practice of certain anarcho-partisan and neo-plataformist nuclei, we will see how in the name of ideological unity and mechanisms of self-control, any kind of dissidence within these organizations is made practically impossible.

IN THE BEGINNING, THE PLATFORM.

It can be said that practically all variants of anarcho-Leninism, anarcho-Bolshevism and anarcho-partisanship have their origin in the Organizational Platform of the Libertarian Communists published in 1926 by Ukrainian and Russian anarchists exiled in Paris, and grouped around the bimonthly newspaper *Dielo Truda* (The Workers' Cause). The two most notorious members of the group were Pyotr Archinov and Nestor Machno, the famous Ukrainian guerrilla commander.

Although the document was signed by the editorial collective of *Dielo Truda*, it was drafted practically in its entirety by Pyotr Archinov, which can be deduced by comparing the wording of the text of The Platform with other of his articles. Likewise, the program written by Archinov sincerely reflected the position of the entire editorial collective of *Dielo Truda*, which also used to sign itself as the Group of Russian Anarchists Abroad. In truth, the publication of the pamphlet was the official presentation of a series of articles and previous discussions in which the causes of the defeat of the Russian anarchist movement by the Bolsheviks were analyzed and the proposal to form mixed and synthesis organizations, that is to say, which would group within it the three main currents of anarchist thought, and which had been sponsored by Volin, Sebastian Faure and other anarchists, was rudely criticized.

of renown. This situation led to a bitter dispute between Volin, Fleshin and other Russian anarchists with Archinov, Machno and the Dielo Truda group, which would not be free of defamations and insults among its protagonists. The criticisms of the Platform were forceful and involved the most prominent figures of international anarchism, suffice it to mention Errico Malatesta, Luigi Fabbri, Camilo Berneri, Sebastian Faure, Max Nettlau, Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman. Let us see then what it was that the Organizational Platform proposed that provoked such a heated reaction.

The proposals of the organization of the Platform

The document published by Dielo Truda began by stating that the weakness of the international anarchist movement was due to a number of causes, of which the most important, the main one, is the absence of organizational principles and practices in the anarchist movement. In all countries, anarchism is represented by a series of local organizations advocating contradictory theories and practices, having no future prospects, no constancy in militant work, and usually disappearing, leaving hardly the slightest trace behind them. Taken as a whole, such a state of revolutionary anarchism can only be described as "chronic disorganization". Like yellow fever, this disease of disorganization entered the organism of the anarchist movement and has shaken it for dozens of years. (...)

It was during the Russian Revolution of 1917 that the need for a general organization was felt most deeply and most urgently. It was during this revolution that the libertarian movement showed the highest degree of sectionalism and confusion. They argued that this chaotic state was due to a false interpretation of the principle of individuality, confusing it with egoism, political indifference and the absence of responsibility. All of these assertions, while they had some truth to them, were generalizations that the authors of The Platform were rabidly exaggerating in order to bolster their position. On the other hand, in making these kinds of generalizations they relied on their own experience of the organizational failure of the Russian anarchist movement. It could not really be called a state of "chronic disorganization."