

Anarchism and the History of Social Movements in Slovenia

Daša Tepina,

School of Humanities, University of Nova Gorica

Abstract

The article is a compilation of fragments of revolutionary movements in the Slovenian region, which in one way or another were connected to or derived from the tradition of anarchist ideas and practises. It is an overview of an omnipresent phenomenon that never had or has never had a broader social visibility, but was always present in the shadows and on the margins, continuously shaping social movements and communities in revolt and offering refuge to many marginalised and oppressed people, thus amplifying their voice, which gradually changed the general social conditions. A modest overview, supplemented by archival sources from the Slovenian archives and newspaper articles from different periods. It covers a wide area of the fragmented 20th century, touching at the end on the transition to the 21st century. So even it is difficult to argue that there is a history of the anarchist movement in this region, that can be described as a rooted, consistent anarchist history, and it takes a certain spirit of enquiry to discover and bring to the surface anarchist ideas and practises, we, however, can talk about fragments of historical events and groups that were connected and intertwined with anarchist ideas in various practices connected with anarchist principles. And all of them were inherent for an organized anarchist movement, which was established in the last three decades that we can speak today of an overtly coherent set of ideas and practises.

Keywords: anarchism, Slovenia, history of social movements, anarchist ideas and practices

The article is a compilation of fragments of revolutionary movements in the Slovenian region, which in one way or another were connected to or derived from the tradition of anarchist ideas and practises. It is an overview of an omnipresent phenomenon that never had or has never had a broader social visibility, but was always present in the shadows and on the margins, continuously shaping social movements and communities in revolt and offering refuge to many marginalised and oppressed people, thus amplifying their voice, which gradually changed the general social conditions. A modest overview, supplemented by archival sources from the Slovenian archives and newspaper articles from different periods. It covers a wide area of the fragmented 20th century, touching at the end on the transition to the 21st century. As in other parts of Europe and beyond, anarchist thought and practises

were rooted in a deeper socio-political framework whose manifest beginnings can be traced back to the 19th century and run through the history of labour struggles. Their appearance in the social sphere was quite cyclical; their reverberations therefore varied, but despite many negative experiences they never completely died down. Libertarian ideas initially had a strong influence within the labour movements, where they proved pervasive and applied, but they lost force and almost dissipated during the turbulent years of the two world wars and the revolutions of the early 20th century. Despite the sharp decline and near disappearance of anarchist ideas, they did not completely disappear, but were transformed and re-emerged within the new social movements of the 1960s. The new radical left, born out of the revolutionary ferment of 1968, is a child of the tradition of workers' struggles and lived as the last gasp of the revolutionary spirit while creating a new one. The social circumstances and the development of the political and economic order of the systems of the time, permeated by the effects of the Second World War and the establishment of the bloc division, were one of the key factors in the emergence of a new social phenomenon. The post-war discontent of the general population, especially the youth, led to new struggles to achieve a freer and fairer future. This turbulent period both revived the old ideas of anarchism and transformed them in the light of the new social reality, in which many new divisions, new goals and new methods of action also began to emerge. These were modified through the period of subcultures and later the Yugoslav wars and the transition, creating the conditions for the development of a modern, also organised, anarchist movement in this area.

So even it is difficult to argue that there is a history of the anarchist movement in this region, that can be described as a rooted, consistent anarchist history, and it takes a certain spirit of enquiry to discover and bring to the surface anarchist ideas and practises, we, however, can talk about fragments of historical events and groups that were connected and intertwined with anarchist ideas in various practices connected with anarchist principles. And all of them were inherent for an organized anarchist movement, which was established in the last three decades that we can speak today of an overtly coherent set of ideas and practises.

Worker's movements at the end of the 19. century until the end of the 1. world war

The greatest impact of anarchism on the existing social reality can be seen in the heyday of anarchism, also in the global sense, i.e. in the period of development and flowering of socialist ideas in the second half of the 19th century. Anarchism then represented one of the two main revolutionary theories and practises that developed in the wake of workers' revolts and struggles against the brutal

dimensions of capitalism that surfaced at that time. The workers here were therefore not exempt from these trends. The influences of the Paris and Lyon Commune were also felt in Kranjska (Carniola), Primorje and Štajerska (Styria). At that time, the Slovenian labour movement was still in its infancy, and one cannot speak of a developed industrial proletariat.¹

The paper, cloth, tailoring and mining industries were highly developed, and there were also very strong railway workers, etc. The longest and most radical history in our country was that of the craftsmen's assistants, especially the shoemakers' and tailors' assistants, who began to organise themselves into workers' education associations. The guilds had already been banned by this time, but the craftsmen remained well organised in the chambers and gained considerable rights during this period. This was not the case for their assistants, who worked under completely unprotected conditions; today one could say that they emerged from a very precarious situation. However, all these professions required training abroad, so many of them went to Klagenfurt, Graz, Salzburg, Vienna and also to Swiss cities to complete an apprenticeship, where they were often confronted with revolutionary ideas that were later implemented in local practise. The history of the Ljubljana Workers' Educational Association, in which France Železnikar, Ferdinand Tuma, Edvard Kriegl, France Šturm and France Dhü were active and which entered the public sphere in a very radical way for the time by protesting, distributing leaflets and uniting the working class in radical demands for fundamental social change, is outstanding. They were also well connected internationally, with perhaps the most notable connection being that they invited Johann Most, one of the most prominent anarchists in Austria-Hungary, to Ljubljana in April 1871. The association also received a regular newspaper, which he edited, entitled *Die Freiheit*, which was delivered to Franc Železnikar's house and distributed among the labour movement in Ljubljana. Josef Peukart and the newspaper he edited, *Zukunft*, also had a strong influence on the local labour movements.

France Železnikar had good connections to France as a kind of icon of the time and was there during the Commune of 1871, but it is not entirely clear from the sources whether he was only there at the time or whether he actually participated in the Commune and took part in the fighting on the barricades. It must have been an important revolutionary experience for him, regardless of how he

¹ The first industrial building in Ljubljana was Cukrarna (the Sugar Factory), established in 1828, which burnt down in 1859, but it was not until the turn of the century that a wider industry began to develop. For a long time, most industries continued to operate in the form of manufactories or artisanal plants.

was involved there.² His participation in the Commune remains unclear, as it mainly came to light in the records and testimonies of the trial against the Five in Klagenfurt, the so-called Klagenfurt Trials, which ended in 1884. This was the highly publicised trial against the "krvavci" (as the anarchists were called), which set a precedent for the time and was aimed at suppressing the labour movement. Five members of the Ljubljana Worker's Educational Association were charged with high treason by the public prosecutor's office, but only Franc Železnikar was sentenced to 8 years (10 years on appeal) of hard labour for demonstrably supporting the assassination attempt on Russian Tsar Alexander II and distributing banned leaflets.³

The repression that followed was also considerable and affected all prominent members of the labour agitation associations and in particular their radical sections, which were often imbued with anarchist ideas. It was mainly directed against the prominent personalities who were subject to frequent call-ups in the army, police checks and, as a result of the frequent trials, job changes etc., which escalated until the beginning of the First World War. The Slovenian press also wrote about the anarchists, although the articles mostly contained reports of bomb attacks on people and individuals (often high-ranking political representatives or businessmen) or trials. The Slovenian press also wrote about anarchists, their actions and their persecution in Europe. As elsewhere, the articles were written in a spirit of stigmatisation and demonisation of anarchism in general. Almost every issue of the *Kmetijske in rokodelske novice* (Agricultural and Handicraft News) of 1894 reports on anarchists, and several consecutive issues report on the assassination of Sadi Carnot on 24 June 1894 by the Italian anarchist Sante Geronimo Caserio. In addition, other attacks, assassination attempts, arson, uprisings, as well as punitive policies in individual countries. When the number of dynamite attacks decreases, they stop reporting on anarchists. There are also no reports of local activities connected to anarchist idea. Also other newspapers such as *Edinost*⁴, *Slovenec*⁵, all in a similar style, wrote about anarchists.⁶

² J. FISHER. France Železnikar in pariška komuna. *Kronika: Časopis za slovensko krajevno zgodovino*, Ljubljana, v. 19, n. 3., p. 158-162. 1971.

³ Ibid.

⁴ *Edinost* was the political newspaper of the Slovenes of Trieste in the period between 1876 and 1928.

⁵ *Slovenec*

⁶ *Kmetijskih in rokodelskih novic* was a Slovene-language newspaper first published in 1843 and ceased to exist in 1902. It was a conservative newspaper with a huge influence on Slovene national movement.

An article in the *Kmetijske in rokodelske novice* of 13 July 1894 reports on the beginnings of a Europe-wide standardisation of laws against anarchists: 'In Italy a law has been passed providing severe penalties for anyone who would have explosives. They are also going to introduce a law stipulating that any suspected person can be told where to live, even though their guilt cannot be proven. There is a similar regulation in Russia. The Russians have been accused because of this regulations several times, but now Western Europe is starting to imitate Russian state regulations.'⁷

The police records from the turn of the century are also interesting, as there are numerous circulars with lists of anarchists and supporters of the anarchist movement, which were sent from Vienna to the police headquarters under the regional praesidium in Kranjska (Carniola). They also received instructions on how to deal with anarchists, in which the consequences of the Rome Conference of 1898 and the signing of the St. Petersburg Protocol of 1904 can be seen⁸: The anarchist movement and individuals associated with it were to be subject to increased surveillance and control in Austria.⁹ Archive documents state that "central police offices are to be set up for the collection of news about anarchists and the anarchist movement and that communication between the central offices is to be subject to a corresponding agreement by Austria."¹⁰

Alongside Vienna and Graz, Trieste was one of the most important centers for the emergence of the workers' movements and, within these, for the development of anarchist ideas and concepts in the anarchist movement in this area. It was also an important point of contact with Italy, where anarchism was particularly strong. The authorities' lists also include individual anarchists who emigrated from Italy to the USA, where they continue to play an active role also in the local anarchist movements.¹¹ One of the focal points of the anarchist movement in Trieste was the newsletter *Germinal*, which Rudolf Golouh cofounded and attended in his youth. Golouh was confronted with revolutionary ideas at an early age and was particularly close to the ideas of Max Stirner. He soon began to develop his idea of a latent and permanent revolution. With a few other like-minded people, he formed a political group, which also needed its own newsletter, so they founded the anarchist

⁷ ANARHISTI, *Kmetijske in rokodelske novice*, Ljubljana, v. 52, n. 28, p. 276, 13. 7. 1894.

⁸ The International Conference for Social Defence against Anarchists, held in Rome in 1899 and attended by 21 countries, launched a common international fight against anarchists and anarchism, which led to the creation of joint surveillance and data transfer between European countries. When the USA joined in 1901 after the assassination of US President McKinley, it led to the signing of a protocol on joint surveillance and prosecution of anarchists in 1904. Več v: Richard BACH JENSEN, *The International Anti-Anarchist Conference of 1898 and the Origins of Interpol*, *Journal of Contemporary History*, v. 16, n. 2, april 1981, p. 327.

⁹ In AS 16 IV, b. 111, *Deželno predsedstvo za Kranjsko, Anarhisti 1858-1918*.

¹⁰ AS 16 IV, b. 32, *Anarhisti*

¹¹ Več v Ivan Vogrič, *Anarhistični agitator Franc Vidmar*, *Kronika 2021*, Ljubljana, v. 69, n. 1, p. 131–136, 2021.

newspaper *Germinal* in 1905.¹² The newspaper was heavily censored and banned, and after some name changes, *Golouh* was even expelled from Trieste in 1909, as the authorities wanted to prevent the spread of anarchist ideas. Nevertheless, neither anarchism nor the development of *Germinal* were completely suppressed. On the contrary, with a few interruptions, it has survived to this day. Between the two wars, anarchism played an important role in the fragments of avant-garde movements in this region. In the case of the avant-garde group of Anton Podbevšek and his magazine *Red Pilot* from 1922, in which we can also read the anarchist ideas of Peter Kropotkin.¹³

Influences of spanish revolution

At this point, it is worth mentioning one of the important boiling points between the two wars, which was also a harbinger of the coming world war and the increasingly polarised world that preceded it. This was the Spanish Revolution, which many fighters from Yugoslavia also joined as part of the International Brigades (they had previously gone there as part of the then banned Communist Party of Yugoslavia and were mainly organised as part of the International Brigades: in the battalions of Djuro Djakovic, Dimitrov and Dubrowsky). About 500 fighters came there from the Slovenian area, mainly through the Communist Party and the connections made possible by the dead drops in Austria, Switzerland and France, through which they travelled individually or in small groups with many complications (larger expeditions were usually denounced and suppressed by the authorities). However, some also encountered the anarchist militias of the CNT-FAI and the socialist PUOM. Especially for those who came to Spain later and without strong connections, the anarchist militias were the most convenient link to the front, as they were quite openly accessible. Above all, they were hard to miss for anyone passing through Barcelona, as they were the strongest and therefore most present there. At least one Slovenian fighter also belonged to Durruti's column, but his memories are more ideological. However, his interpretation gives us an insight into the Yugoslav communists' general view of the anarchists, who were very critical of the anarchists' disobedience to the central authorities and their autocratic tendencies on the fronts, but above all they were criticised for the uprisings they had started against the communist authorities. So unfortunately we do not know to what extent the fighters there got to know anarchism, what it meant to them and how many ideas they took with them. We can only conclude that the communists dealt with the idea consistently and

¹² R. GOLOUH, *Pol stoletja spominov: panorama političnih bojev slovenskega naroda*, Ljubljana: Inštitut za zgodovino delavskega gibanja, 1966, str. 10.

¹³ *Rdeči pilot* : mesečnik prevratne mladine za duhovno revolucijo, n. 1 in 2, 1922.

strategically, because in the fighters' memoirs they all treat it very disparagingly, and not a single one mentions the massacres that the communists carried out against anarchists in several Spanish provinces, which also suggests that their memoirs are characterised more by ideological judgments.¹⁴

... after the wars

One might assume that this is a consequence of the circumstances to which they returned. Most of the surviving fighters returned to Yugoslavia after the international brigades left the war, joined the partisans at the outbreak of the war and took on leadership roles within the partisan resistance. So we see that the impartiality of personal memories is most likely related to the influence of communist ideas and the Communist Party, which took the lead in the partisan struggle. After both wars, anarchism was everywhere only a fleeting shadow of what it had been decades earlier. Its presence can hardly be traced, with the rare exception of the 1955 translation of Malatesta's work *Towards Anarchy*, published by the Trieste anarchist group *Germinal* with the aim, emphasised by Malatesta, of spreading knowledge and realisation of anarchist ideas among the local population. The translation did not have a wide reach, nor was it distributed en masse, as there were no networks through which it could be disseminated, as evidenced by the fact that in 2002 *Germinal* donated around 100 copies of the work to the Ljubljana Anarchist Library, which until then had been kept in its warehouse.

1968 and student movements

Immediately after the Second World War, it is difficult to speak of the resonance and presence of anarchist ideas. The first significant breakthroughs did not occur until the end of the 1960s. During this period, anarchist ideas played a greater role and influence among people involved in the student movements between 1968 and 1972 (Darko Štrajn, Jaša Zlobec, Frane Adam, etc.). The student magazine *Tribuna* also played an important role during this period. Anarchist ideas were reflected in spontaneous collective practices in the form of direct actions, protests and squatting. In the 1970s, the first squatting action influenced by the Dutch movement took place with the occupation of a villa at 29 Erjavčeva Street in Ljubljana, which lasted from October 28, 1977 to November 9, 1977. The

¹⁴ *Bili smo v Španiji* (ur. Stanko Semič-Daki, Albin Marvin, Ivan Kreft), Ljubljana: Sekcija bivših španskih borcev LRS, 1960.

occupation was primarily a spotlight on student and general housing problems, but also had a symbolic purpose - it was intended to demonstrate the possibility of functional use of unused spaces in general. The authorities evicted the squatters in a relatively short time under threat of coercive measures, and soon afterwards a kindergarten moved into the building.

At the same time, communes were founded all over the world to put libertarian ideas and theories into practise. In Slovenia, the G7 commune in Tacen was founded under the influence of hippie (sub)culture and the student movement. Komuna was initially a small project, but over time it attracted more and more public and international attention. The main ideas were self-organisation, solidarity and equality, in short, principles and methods derived from anarchism. They also learnt about the anarchism advocated by one of the commune's most prominent figures, Frane Adam.

The 1970s and especially the 1980s were also strongly influenced by punk in this country. This subculture often overlapped in its practises with anarchist practises, ranging from self-organisation (which was also systematically promoted as self-management) to more autonomous practises such as anti-authoritarianism, critique of institutionalisation, assembly-based decision-making, etc. According to a 1982 report by the Analytical Committee, "It is no coincidence that in this world of thought full of naivety and speculation, punk is used as a synonym for true progressive youth, which rejects all organised political action because it excludes human freedom, rejects authority and accepts an anarchism that has never compromised itself in social practise. Punk is currently the most vital part of youth subculture, representing a resistance to real socialism and young Stalinism."¹⁵

Subcultures and anarchist influences

At the beginning of the 1980s, this subculture was very pronounced and was further strengthened by the new punk wave in the Ljubljana hardcore scene. One of the main venues of the alternative and subcultural scene was FV 112/15, also known as Disco FV. Since 1981, a group of students, together with the new wave of the punk scene, created a plural and autonomous scene that included theatre activities, dances, concerts, music videos, the formation of their bands, and multimedia art events. In addition to the scene in Ljubljana, the alternative scene also developed in Maribor, where it formed

¹⁵ AS 1931 Republiški sekretariat za notranje zadeve Socialistične republike Slovenije (RSNZ SRS), Uprava za analitiko 1982, MA-701_108, Aktivnost notranjih oponentskih in oporečnih struktur, str. 9.

in circles around the Radio Marš initiative, the newspaper Katedra, MKC, AGD Gustaf, Front Rock, etc.¹⁶

In the 1980s, partly intertwined with the subcultural scene, partly separately, artistic groups marked by a new style developed and came together under the name Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK) (the name unites the multimedia group Laibach (1980), the visual arts collective IRWIN (1983) and the theatre group Scipion Nasice Sisters Theatre (SNST) (1983-1987) and the design department New Collectivism). They developed the concept of 'retro' and called themselves retroavant-garde, and often referred to anarchism in their content. We can also see the interest of the academic world in anarchism in the 1980s. This is evidenced by the translations of Johann Most's works from 1982, the Anthology of Anarchism in two parts, and the block in the Journal for the Critique of Science which touched on the history of anarchism and the labor movement. The historian Jasna Fischer has devoted a wide body of her work to the influence of anarchism on workers' struggles in the 19th century. In the late 1980s, the provocative Anti-federate Academic Anarchist Alliance (AAAA) was also formed, under the tact of Iztok Saksida-Sax, who later stood in the first multiparty elections on a pacifist programme.¹⁷

¹⁶ Adin CRNKIĆ in Daša TEPINA, Misliti anarhizem v slovenskem prostoru: kronologija in zgodovinski razvoj. *Časopis za kritiko znanosti*. 2014, v. 42, n. 257, p. 23–25 .

¹⁷ Ibid, str. 24.

IN THE 1990S, ANARCHIST IDEAS PLAYED AN SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AUTONOMOUS SPACES AS LABORATORIES FOR EXPERIMENTING WITH DIFFERENT SOCIAL RELATIONS AND AS A STARTING POINT FOR REVOLTS AGAINST AUTHORITY. ONE OF THE MOST PROMINENT WAS THE 1993 OCCUPATION OF LJUBLJANA'S METELKOVA, A FORMER MILITARY BARRACKS THAT, AFTER INDEPENDENCE, REMAINED AN EMPTY REMINDER OF THE MILITARISATION AND TRAGEDY OF THE BALKAN WARS IN THE CENTER OF LJUBLJANA. A DIVERSE MULTITUDE OF ASSOCIATIONS, GROUPS, AND INDIVIDUALS, UNITED IN A COMMON NETWORK, THE NETWORK FOR METELKOVA, DECIDED TO USE THE OCCUPATION TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE STRONG ANTI-MILITARIST AGENDA OF THE TIME, WHICH DEMANDED THAT THE MILITARY FACILITIES BE TURNED INTO SPACES FOR CULTURE AND THE ARTS.¹⁸

At the same time, various collectives were being formed, imbued with anarchist ideas. These were mainly concerned with antimilitarism and ecology, also because of the war in the former Yugoslavia (e.g. the Collective of Anarchist Pacifist Action (K.A.P.A.), the punk collective T.O.T.A.L.I.T.A.R., the collective The Elves and the eco-anarchist initiative).¹⁹

The occupation of the former military bakery in Maribor is also worth mentioning here. Similarly to the Metelkova occupation, the protagonists of the occupation set up an informal organisation, the Magdalene Network, which attempted to acquire premises and organise the individual actors into a whole. Later, in 1996, the organisation was formalised as the Pekarna institute of the Magdalene network.²⁰ In the 1990s, anarchism emerged mainly within the anarcho-punk subculture, which was based on DIY culture²¹. This had a significant impact not only on the aesthetics of the subculture, but also on self-publishing, where a strong culture of fanzine publishing developed alongside the proliferation of music production.²² The late 1990s are particularly important for the

¹⁸ More B. BIBIČ, Hrup z Metelkove in tematski blok Časopisa za kritiko znanosti ob 20. obletnici AKC Metelkova mesta iz leta 2013.

¹⁹ Their actions have included critical masses, demonstrations against greed of corporations as for example McDonald's, nuclear weapons and GMO products. The opening of the first anarchist infopoint, the Dwarf Reading Room, was a co-production between K.A.P.O. and Škrati (the Dwarves), which in 1999 formed the KUD Anarchiv, which organised discussions, meetings and presentations, while the Škratova čitalnica (Dwarf Reading Room) was responsible for the distribution of radical, libertarian and anarchist literature. More Metelkovnik 1988, p. 9.

²⁰ More on KC Pekarna, about their work, organization and principles etc, webpage: <http://www.pekarna.org/web/index.php?page=kontekst&id=62>.

²¹ Do It Yourself - DIY is based on ethics of self-sufficiency, self-organization and anti-consumerism.

²² During this time, numerous magazines and fanzines were published, such as Svojtok and 13. brat. We can also mention the propaganda Kolektiv nenasilnega delovanja (Collective of Nonviolent Action) (K.N.D.), which was active in 1989-1998 and during this time disseminated anarchist ideas and participated in the publication of the newsletter

emergence of a new wave of squatting or occupation, which was also linked to the emergence of new social movements. Thus, in Ljubljana in 1999, the old abandoned sugar factory Cukrarna occupation took place, where the Anarchist Collective Cukrarna was founded, which moved from squatting to developing anarchist thought and practice. Their most high-profile actions were protests against Bill Clinton's visit and opposition to Jörg Heider's extreme nationalist politics. Within the collective, they founded the affinity group Anti-Fascist Front.²³ Cukrarna was evicted after a period of repression, and was followed by a period of new squatting. The social, political and cultural centers of Vila Mara, AC Molotov and AC Galicia were created. Similar autonomous spaces began to emerge elsewhere in Slovenia.²⁴ Parallel to these was the story of organised anarchism and entry into political struggles, from the No-NATO campaign, to anti-war demonstrations for Iraq, to participation in international alter-globalist protests in Prague, Genoa, Munich, Thessaloniki, etc. In 2006, the TEMP project was also the basis for the occupation of the old abandoned Rog bicycle factory in Ljubljana, which was also the starting point for the anarchist ideas of Hakim Bey and the concept of the Temporary Autonomous Zone. This resulted in the creation of a temporary occupied area of free creation and action, which was used for various projects, concerts, artistic activities and a social centre under the common name of the Rog Autonomous Factory. The Rog also became an important meeting point for political struggles, from the IWW (Invisible Workers of the World) to the Wiped Out, who finally found a space for both community building and resistance in the Rog Social Centre. In 2016, there was an attempt to evacuate the whole area, but the evacuation was stopped and legal proceedings between the Municipality and the AT Rog community started. This was also a difficult period in a broader sense, following one of the major social crises in our country due to the large-scale migration to Europe, mainly from the war zones of Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. At that time, one of the central spaces for the struggle against often racist migration policies was AT Rog, where many assemblies of the broader coalition of social movements and initiatives gathered in the Anti-Racist Front, which was active in 2015-2016, were also held. This front brought together various anti-authoritarian collectives and individuals who at the time were working on migration and refugee issues through

Preporod – Časopis slovenskih anarhistov za svobodno družbo (the Slovene Anarchists' Newspaper for a Free Society), and numerous leaflets and other propaganda material dealing with themes such as antimilitarism, ecology, anti-fascism, critiques of parliamentary democracy, sexism, etc. More Federacija za anarhistično organiziranje, *Avtonomija*, n. 1, 2009, p. 8.

²³ SOCIAL ANARHISTIČNA FEDERACIJA, *Od lokalne organizacije do mednarodne borbe – Social anarhistična federacija – SAF*, Ljubljana: self-published, 2003.

²⁴ Izbruhov kulturni bazen v Kranju iand later TrainStation Squat, Mostovna and Ideal bar in Nova Gorica, Ambasada Štefana Kovača Marka in Beltinci, Sokolski dom in Novo Mesto and many other smaller attempts of squatting and building of autonomous practices.

information, fieldwork, community events, etc. The autonomous Rog factory, with its numerous collectives, activities and political-social action, represented the struggle against gentrification until 19 January 2021, when the Ljubljana authorities forcibly evacuated the area after fifteen years of squatting. Despite strong resistance, the autonomous factory was not able to survive.

The period of organised anarchism

Today, the Federation for Anarchist Organising (FAO) in Slovenia is a considerably young federation, which is a consequence of the lack of a broader tradition of organised anarchism in Slovenia. It was formed in 2009 out of the Initiative for Anarchist Organising, which was created out of the need for a stronger and more cohesive anarchist movement in Slovenia. Its creation is partly related to the continuation of the anarchist organising project, which was established in 2003 with the creation of the Social Anarchist Federation (SAF). After independence, the anarchist movement was mainly linked to the squatting movement, first within the AKC Metelkova, and then to the new wave of squatting represented by the occupations of Cukrarna, Villa Mare, AC Molotova and Galicia, where the idea of organising and linking dispersed anarchist collectives and individuals began to take shape. With the alterglobalisation movement, which, based on the experience of the international movement, also expressed itself locally with protests against Bush and Putin, the G8 meeting in Qatar and a strong anti-NATO campaign, the anarchist movement began to intervene more visibly in the broader socio-political situation, and with it the need for its own definition. This was followed by the emergence of the SAF, but after losing space following the squatter evictions after 2003, it gradually began to disintegrate. Already at that time, a number of international links were formed, initially mainly in the Balkans, which led to one of SAF's most prominent projects, the joint international project of the Balkan Anarchist Book Fair (BASK), the first of which took place in Ljubljana in 2003, and then spread to the rest of the Balkan countries²⁵ and returned to Ljubljana again after a decade in 2013, where BASK proved itself with a varied and numerous international participation.²⁶ The need for space led the collective to AKC Metelkova mesto, where A-Infoshop was formed in 2006. It became a space for discussions, lectures, film screenings with activist themes, activist group

²⁵ In 2005 was in Zagreb (Croatia), 2008 in Sofia (Bulgaria), 2009 in Thessaloniki and Athens (Greece), 2010 Zrenjanin (Serbia), 2011 in Skopje (North Macedonia), 2013 in Ljubljana (Slovenia), 2014 in Mostar (Bosnia and Hercegovina), 2015 in Zadar (Croatia), 2016 in Ioannina (Greece), 2017 in Zagreb (Croatia), 2018 in Novi Sad (Serbia), 2019 in Sofiji (Bulgaria), 2022 in Cluj (Romania) and 2023 in Ljubljana (Slovenia).

²⁶ Social anarhistična federacija, *Od lokalne organizacije do mednarodne borbe – Social anarhistična federacija – SAF*, 2003.

meetings, vegan dinners and an anarchist library. Through these activities and working within the wider student movement Autonomous Tribune, of which anarchists were also a part, the collective gradually transformed and began to recognise the need for a more stable anarchist movement that provided structure and networking beyond activism. In 2008, the Initiative for Anarchist Organising was formed, which led to the 2009 Congress, which established the FAO Federation. During its activity, it brought together eight autonomous groups (APL Ljubljana, OSA Zasavje, Koprive Celje, Alternativa obstaja Koper, AFP Zasavje, TAM Maribor, the Cerklje group, and MASA Istria and Kvarner). They meet at regular delegate meetings and at the Congress. The Federation publishes a joint bulletin *Anarchistka*, and three issues of the *Autonomy* newspaper have been published, but it is currently defunct (after the third issue in 2010 there were no more issues). In addition to the printed press, an important role in the propaganda of the anarchist movement is also played by the programme on Radio Študent, Črna Luknja, which is also part of the international network of anarchist radios.²⁷

FAO officially joined the International Federation of Anarchist Federations in 2012 at the IFA/IAF Congress held in conjunction with the 140th Anniversary Conference of the Anarchist International in St. Imier. The uprisings that took place in all major Slovenian cities in 2012 and early 2013 were an important experience for the FAO. Within the uprisings, anarchists worked in a cohesive manner within the Anti-Capitalist Bloc, together with other radical and libertarian groups and individuals. The FAO's presence was expressed mainly in assemblies, both insurrectionary and later quarterly, most successfully in Maribor, where the IMZ (Initiative for a City Assembly) quarterly assembly projects took place, and slightly less prominently in Ljubljana. After this period, a new wave of uprisings was brought about by the issue of migration and the struggles that took place in connection with the Anti-Racist Front. This was followed by the struggle against gentrification, which since the attempted eviction of the Rog Autonomous Factory in 2016 has begun to establish itself as a central theme. In 2019, Ljubljana hosted the Congress of the International of Anarchist Federations at the Tabor Sports Hall and, in collaboration with other anti-authoritarian initiatives within the regional coordination, hosted the Zapatistas, who organised activist meetings across Europe in the autumn of 2021.²⁸ The latest bigger international gathering was also 20. years of BAB (Balkan

²⁷ More <<https://www.a-radio-network.org/>>.

²⁸ More on Zapatista gathering in this region <<https://zapatista.kompot.si/>>.

Anarchist Bookfair) which was happening in Ljubljana at the Tabor Sports Hall from 4.-6. of July 2023 and brought together more than 500 people from around the world.²⁹

Concluding thoughts

Revolutionary anarchist utopias thus give us insights into a set of diverse practices and ideas about freedom in the many lives of individuals and collectives who have rebelled and attempted to break the shackles of power relations that pervade the existing social order. Beyond systems of coercion and domination, multiple practices of free relations are thus formed in islands of freedom, where competition, resentment, envy, greed and hatred give way to friendship, love, pleasure, happiness and imagination, which, with all the various attempts at recuperation in the world of consumption, cannot fail to appear on the menu of unique choices. In this way, we can observe thoughts and practices of resistance that, by constantly questioning and redefining themselves through different approaches, open up areas of autonomies paved by solidarity, mutual aid, horizontality and self-organisation. By examining the fragments of revolt on the periphery in this way, we can see that there are revolts everywhere and alternatives to capitalism based on capital accumulation and the permissions of constant expansion. Revolutionary movements hold up a mirror to and reflect the current conditions of global exploitation and evasion of responsibility that allow capitalism to sustain itself despite the many criticisms. As such, capitalism has the code of crisis inscribed in it, which it urgently needs to adapt to circumstances in order to survive, as manifested today by more and more frequent and brutal crises of global dimensions - from migration, pandemics, climate change to a state of permanent war. The responses that anti-authoritarian social movements are seeking and testing in practice are increasingly important, and yet, despite the fact that these movements face severe repression, are often marginalised and ignored in the mass media, such models of social action are increasingly necessary. At the same time, they are also a ground from which the world can learn new lessons about interconnection and cooperation based not on competition and greed, but on reflection and solidarity. These are necessary to tackle the new crises brought about by scarcity and unequal access to resources and the resulting conflicts, ecological devastation and other social challenges posed by 21st century capitalism.

²⁹ More on Balkan Anarchist Bookfair <<http://bab2023.avtonomija.org/>>.

References:

ANARCHIST & ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN RADIO NETWORK, A-radio Network. Available at <https://www.a-radio-network.org/>. Accessed: 13 feb. 2024.

ANARHISTI, Kmetijske in rokodelske novice, Ljubljana, v. 52, n. 28, p. 276, 13. 7. 1894.

BACH JENSEN, R. The International Anti-Anarchist Conference of 1898 and the Origins of Interpol, Journal of Contemporary History, London. v. 16, n. 2, p. 323–347, april 1981.

BALKAN ANARCHIST BOOKFAIR 2023, Bab2023. Available at: <http://bab2023.avtonomija.org/>. Accessed: 1 jan. 2024.

BIBIČ, B. Hrup z Metelkove: tranzicije prostorov in kulture v Ljubljani. Ljubljana: Mirovni inštitut, Inštitut za sodobne družbene in politične študije, 2003.

BILI smo v Španiji (ur. Stanko SEMIČ-DAKI, Albin MARVIN, Ivan KREFT), Ljubljana: Sekcija bivših španskih borcev LRS, 1960.

CRNKIČ, A. in D. TEPINA, Misliti anarhizem v slovenskem prostoru: kronologija in zgodovinski razvoj. Časopis za kritiko znanosti. Ljubljana, v. 42, n. 257, p. 13–29, 2014.

FISHER, J.. France Železnikar in pariška komuna. Kronika: Časopis za slovensko krajevno zgodovino, Ljubljana, v. 19, n. 3, p. 158–162. 1971.

FEDERACIJA za anarhistično organiziranje, Avtonomija, Ljubljana, n. 1, p. 8, 2009.

GOLOUH, R. Pol stoletja spominov: panorama političnih bojov slovenskega naroda, Ljubljana: Inštitut za zgodovino delavskega gibanja, 1966.

RDEČI PILOT: mesečnik prevratne mladine za duhovno revolucijo, n. 1 in 2, 1922.

VOGRIČ, I. Anarhistični agitator Franc Vidmar, Kronika 2021, Ljubljana, v. 69, n. 1, p. 131–136, 2021.

ZAPATISTIČNO SREČANJE, Zapatista. Available at: <https://zapatista.kompot.si/>. Accessed: 13 feb. 2024.

Archival sources:

AS 16 IV, b. 111, Deželno predsedstvo za Kranjsko, Anarhisti 1858-1918.

AS 16 IV, b. 32, Deželno predsedstvo za Kranjsko, Anarhisti.

AS 1931 Republiški sekretariat za notranje zadeve Socialistične republike Slovenije (RSNZ SRS), Uprava za analitiko 1982.