Bulgaria: A New Spain

The Communist Terror in Bulgaria

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Introduction

As far as we are aware, this new edition of Bulgaria: The New Spain is the first since the original was published by the Alexander Berkman Aid Fund thirty-five years ago. The title is most apt, for just as Stalinism drowned in blood the Spanish Revolution of 1936 so it drowned in blood, the blood of many thousands of workers and peasants, the Bulgarian Revolution of 1944 when the people of Bulgaria liberated themselves from years of fascist tyranny. Like Spain, Bulgaria had a powerful libertarian movement, a movement which constituted the major obstacle to Stalinism's efforts at establishing a bureaucratic dictatorship on the Soviet model. Yet despite the hard evidence of Kronstadt, of Ukraine, of Spain, of Bulgaria, of Hungary, of Czechoslovakia, and most recently of Poland there are people, Arthur Scargill amongst them, who still imagine that the workers crushed beneath the iron heel of Stalinism are socialist, that the workers of these countries have achieved their liberation. Is it any wonder then that having heard the rantings of Scargill, Ron Brown MP et al, millions of ordinary people regard socialists of any stripe as pathological enemies of freedom!? Today, Bulgaria under Zhivkov remains the most loyal of Stalinist states, it's troops were amongst those who brought to an abrupt end the experiment at socialism with a human face in Czechoslovakia in 1968. But as in Poland, the libertarian resistance, although bloodied, has not been destroyed.

And it is fighting back. As early as 1950 peasants were resisting enforced collectivisation of the land — the replacement of the landlords by the state. In 1956, Bulgarian Anarchists expressed their solidarity with the Hungarian workers'councils, several being imprisoned including Manol Vassev, Deltcho Vassilev, Stefan Kotakov and Christo Kolev. Vassev died in 1958, poisoned by his captors two days before the date of his release. In 1969 a group of young people were put on trial in Sofia for alleged 'participation in an illegal group and spreading slanderous assertions concerning the state and social order in the People's Republic of Bulgaria'. What they had done was to duplicate a pamphlet attacking, from a libertarian viewpoint, the Communist dictatorship, the Party and the education system and distributed it to students, workers, Party members and university officials. During their trial they protested against mistreatment and torture by the authorities. They received sentences of one to five years behind bars. These imprisonments sparked off a revolt at Sofia University, angry students marching on a police station, Christo Kolev was arrested in connection with this case and tortured over a 28 day period.

He was sentenced to a year in prison. In the wake of the Polish mass strikes of 1970, strikes broke out in Bulgaria against poor working conditions and the payment of large bonuses to senior officials. The poet Valeri Petrov and the author Kristo Ganev were expelled from the Writers' Union for refusing to vote for a motion attacking the award of the 1970 Nobel Prize to Solzhenitsyn. Kolev was again arrested for making a speech attacking the bureaucracy at the funeral of fellow libertarian Penko Tiofilov and was banished to a remote village. In 1974, Kolev for having taken part in the erection of a monument to the Anarchist guerrilla Vasil Ikonomov was banished again to his equally remote home village, only rarely being allowed to visit his aged mother whose home was in Sofia. That year the libertarians Alexandre Nakov, Atanas Kucuev

and Lobomir Djermanov were sentenced to five years and Gantcho Damianov and Atanas Artukouv were interned. In 1978 dissidents were arrested for distributing a French translation of the Czechoslovak human rights document Charter 77.

That year Ljuben Sobadsciev was imprisoned for four and a half years for distributing a leaflet critical of the regime. Earlier three members of the Pomak Muslim minority had been sentenced to a total of twenty years imprisonment for having protested the policy of forced assimilation whereby Pomaks are forced to change their Muslim names to Bulgarian ones. In 1980, Sotir Iliev, an architect from Plovdiv, sought political asylum in Austria. The authorities replied by kidnapping him from Vienna and taking him back to Bulgaria where he was imprisoned for 18 months. People arrested on political charges and interrogated at the State Security Centre in Sofia have complained of being threatened, beaten up and deprived of sleep. In two cases people were taken to a psychiatric hospital and forcibly drugged. Many prisoners end up in the maximum security prison at Stara Zagora where conditions are extremely harsh. This jail houses at least 250 political detainees, some of them serving very long terms. For example Agrarian Party member Petar Paskov has spent more than 28 years in prison while his colleague Georgi Zarkin has been behind bars for more than 12 years.

Two Anarchists in Stara Zagora are Vasil Uzunov and Georgi Casabov, the former has spent more than 26 years in prison while the latter is serving 20 years. The regime has also cracked down on youth culture. The punk bank Tip Top has been denied radio time and official public concerts. The Crickets, while no longer banned as they have been in the past for playing Beatles'songs, have suffered the indignity of having the police intervene at their concert at Sofia's Universiadia Hall. Another band, Signal, suffered an 18 month ban for having caused 'excessive excitement'at their concert in Burgas. As can be seen from the above examples the methods used by Bulgarian Stalinism to suppress any and every actual or potential form of dissent differ not at all from those employed by its Soviet overlord. Ths is not socialism, but the antithesis of socialism; the dictatorship of a new class every bit as oppressive and tyrannical as that of the Bulgarian Tsars and fascists.

Sadly, there have been very few expressions of solidarity in Britain with the freedom struggle in Bulgaria. We know of only two — a picket in the '70s of the Bulgarian Embassy and Tourist Office on the anniversary of the 1944 Revolution and more recently the distribution of a leaflet drawing attention to the cases of Kolev, Uzunov and Casabov at the Wales versus Bulgaria football match in Wrexham. We hope that this pamphlet will be read not just out of historical interest — the events that it describes are happening still — but also out of a desire to learn more about workers'struggles in the East and having learnt to act. The words of Bakunin: 'Liberty without socialism is privilege, injustice; socialism without liberty is slavery and brutality'ring as true today as when first uttered. The events in Bulgaria since Stalinism seized power underline this truth. It is a truth which cannot be repeated too often!

Terry Liddle, London, Bulgaria Freedom Day, 1983

Pseudo-Liberations

The last war seems to have deadened the human sensitivity that once stirred masses of people to protest against flagrant injustices. Before spontaneous, unselfish waves of feeling, governments engaged in criminal undertakings were often compelled to give way, or were at least thoroughly discredited.

In France the Dreyfus affair; in Spain the assassination of Ferrer; in America the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti — the movements of protest aroused by these attacks on human rights gave hope for the human conscience. But the same technical and scientific progress that has made war so terribly murderous has also, thanks to the radio, enabled news to travel ever more swiftly from one end of the planet to the other. Minds accustomed to descriptions of war and the sight of war learn to regard the sufferings of others with complacency. Hearts have hardened; and overt emotion is dismissed as childish sentimentality.

During the Spanish war (1936–1939) the international working class remained disunited and passive before the "democratic" governments who supported the dictatorship against the revolution; and thus they assured the bloody (though temporary) defeat of the Spanish workers. No major international movement took effective action. Except for the sometimes superhuman efforts of unforgettable individuals and groups, "solidarity among free men" was a vain word. Today the crudest oppression holds many peoples in degrading servitude — even to the point of outright extermination of opponents of a regime. The Bulgarian people is one. The repression in this Danubian country, neighbour of Russia, traditionally devoted to liberty, is especially painful and disturbing. The dictatorial Stalinist regime, imposed thanks to the last war, tramples on the most elementary liberties, starting with freedom of expression. Against Anarchists or those considered Anarchists, the repression is exceptionally ferocious, for their movement has deep popular, peasant roots and influences every impulse toward freedom. Not merely a group of militants but the will of a whole people is under attack. But in the eyes of important, ill informed working masses throughout the world, the Stalinist so-called "communist" regime still represents progress toward true socialism. About the illegitimacy and cruelty of the regime of General Franco or any other Spanish dictator all workers and all progressive currents are agreed, for no-one, not even those who impose it, denies the existence of fascism on the Iberian peninsula. But about the victims of the Stalinist terror in Bulgaria, most of them Anarchists, there is not the same agreement. How are those won over by Communist propaganda to be brought to realize that what they think is a regime of liberty can martyr a people? To them the Bulgarian anarchists, who refuse to accept what "communist" dialectic calls a "revolution," even seem like reactionaries. Like the Anarchists and Revolutionary Socialists in Russia after the Bolshevik coup d'etat of October, 1917, militant workers and intellectuals — not merely anti-fascist but belonging to the most revolutionary tradition — see a section of the international working class ignore their sufferings, more disposed to hate them than to come to their help. Such is the darkest side of the Bulgarian drama. The daily press has made a clamour about the execution of Petkov, the

head of a bourgeois political party; but about the fate of the Anarchists, who are at the source of every progressive tendency in Bulgaria, it is silent.

This pamphlet is not propaganda. It does not seek to serve any political organisation. It is published and distributed for those who still do not completely despair of the human spirit. It is a cry of alarm, we know, that only people of heart will hear. But it is time that indifference gave way to healthy indignation. You people who have not been afflicted with the virus of dictatorship — whether the fascism is white, green or red — you who have risen up against so many attacks on free life and free expression, you will hear our appeal! You will support our action! Public opinion must be informed, and by informing it you will help us. An act of solidarity is demanded ; the fate of the Bulgarians today may be ours tomorrow. Let us use our little remaining liberty to help those who are completely deprived of it! The problem of liberty is not limited to the countries now under the heel of political dictatorship, it is universal. When liberty is threatened in any corner of the globe — regardless where — none of those who love it can remain insensitive.

A People's Struggle for Their Liberty

Even in our humanity, remarkable for violence and injustice, the Bulgarian people have had an exceptionally long and cruel experience of war, oppression and slavery. Only in 1878, when it was liberated from Turkish domination, did Bulgaria become an independent nation. Its history is, nevertheless, very long. The Finno Uralian warriors (Bulgars) who gave the country their name invaded the peninsula as early as the 7th century and mingled with the Slavs who had already migrated there and with the Thracians who had long been settled on the land. Hard and tenacious workers of the land, the Bulgarians could not resist the Turkish armies and were conquered by the Sultan Bajazet in 1393 and 1396. Their awakening dates only from the end of the 18th century; it began as an intellectual revival of the educated classes, and preceded by a hundred years the proclamation of independence. This independence, moreover, did not bring peace: ever since, Balkan Wars, European Wars and World Wars, fascism, and "liberation" movements have ravaged this part of the Balkan peninsula; in sixty years Bulgaria has been through six wars, two revolutions and a dozen fascist coup d'etat (including the decisive ones of June 9, 1923, and May 19, 1934). Now, despite so much blood and suffering, a regime of persecution and oppression is again strengthening its grip on unfortunate Bulgaria.

A few economic, historic and social facts will give a better understanding of the present situation and the evolution of the ideology and character of the social movement, chiefly the Anarchist and Anarcho-Syndicalist movement. A small country of five and a half million population, Bulgaria is a homogeneous nation, with a good balance between mountains, hills and watered plains, but possessing only one outlet to the sea (on the Black Sea). It is a country of small peasant proprietors, hard-working and persistent. Eighty-three per cent of the population lives by agriculture; 85 per cent of the cultivated land is farmed in units of less than 25 acres, and the most common land measure is the decare (a quarter of an acre) ; Bulgarian agriculture is really a kind of gardening. Cultivation of grain ranks first: wheat then corn; and a great variety of warm-climate crops: orchards, vineyards, tobacco, sunflowers, flax and hemp, cotton, poppies, mulberries (silk-worm culture), roses, truck-gardening; and cattle-raising. Industry has developed mostly since the first World War: textiles, tobacco manufacturing, milling, sugar-refining, distillation of attar of roses. In a normal year, agriculture not only provides Bulgaria's food requirements, but is also the basis of its industry. In addition Bulgaria gets enough lignite for its own use from the Pernik and Bobov Dol mines, and even exports some copper, lead and zinc. When tied in with certain characteristics of the history of the people, these basic economic facts take on particular significance, for every stage in the development of a people is consistent with its past. Historical and social factors dating from the Middle Ages, associated with specific economic forms, have encouraged the practice of mutual aid and the love of liberty, and have given the anarchist movement deep roots in the past and a distinctly anarchist-communist colouring. Thus the spirit of the peasant commune, the Slavish zadruga (brotherhood) that existed through the Middle Ages and for over a thousand years, still survives in the spontaneous practice, among small peasant proprietors, of communal work and cooperative association. The peasant commune once held the land collec-

tively, the zadruga comprised 50 to 100 and even 250 members. Today there are still communities of 15 to 30 persons where parents, sons and descendants live together and cultivate their lands in common. Feudalism, arising in the 9th and 10th centuries, dealt the death blow to this primitive communism. The present-day communal pasture and woods, the tradition of communal labour, are sturdy lasting traces of primitive communism in the social and economic life of the people. Each year companies of gardeners are formed and travel through the countryside; groups of harvesters descend from northern Bulgaria and the mountain villages into the plains of southern Bulgaria to gather the crops; groups of building and transport workers are formed; all this is collective labour. In many villages the threshing of wheat is still done, as from time immemorial, essentially on the work principles of the zadrugas, corn-husking is a communal, festive occasion; spinning parties, mutual aid in building homes, are every-day events in the life of the Bulgarian village. Thus it is not accidental that the co-operative movement is very powerful and that in these last years co-operatives to work the land collectively have developed rapidly and achieved great success. But the movement of particular importance and great historical consequences, not only for Bulgaria but for the cultural renaissance of Europe as well, was Bogomilism — a movement of the Middle Ages of a distinctly anarchist character. Bogomilism, a heresy of oriental origin preached by a Bulgarian priest, Jeremiah Bogomil, developed among the impoverished peasant masses at the beginning of the 10th century. It represented social revolt against feudalism, and defence of the peasant commune by passive resistance. As a religion Bogomilism was unoriginal: a mixture and recasting of dualist doctrines and heresies derived from the Orient. But socially it was entirely original: a purely Bulgarian and Yugoslav movement whose revolutionary ideology was (for that time) definitely anti-statist. Categorically and unequivocally, the Bogomiles repudiated all authority: economic (the rich and their wealth), political (the State and the Boyard government), religious (the church and its dogmas and clergies). Their clandestine writings express modern social ideas that could be inserted without change into the programs of present-day anarchist movements. The Bogomiles covered all Bulgaria with a network of communes and practiced the principles of free communism. After three centuries of war, Bogomilism was exterminated in Bulgaria by fire and sword. But it passed the frontiers and spread into Bosnia and Italy under the names of Patarins and the Cathari, and influenced the Albigenses in France. In Western Europe it prepared the ground for the Renaissance and Reformation.

Bulgaria remained under Turkish domination for five centuries (1393 to 1877). The Bulgarians' servitude was double: political toward the Turks and religious toward the Greeks. Dark ages. But, as always and everywhere, slavery gave birth to revolt and struggle. Political and social conditions unfortunately did not lend themselves to the creation of a well co-ordinated social movement. Hence the struggle took the character of individual revolt: the Haiducks, a kind of bandit comparable to the heroes of Schiller's "The Brigands." The Haiduk movement began in the 15th and 16th centuries; few at first, they became legion. They long preserved the characteristics of individual revolt, of professional semi-banditry, much like Stenka Razin in Russia. Though their revolt later acquired a clearly social character, they could never completely free themselves of the methods of individual struggle. The great influence of the Haiduk movement on the political and social life of the Bulgarian people is reflected in popular poetry. There the Haiduk is depicted as a romantic hero, combatting violence and exploitation, defending the poor, a sworn enemy of tchorbadjis (great landowners and nobles), monopolists and Turkish tyranny. He is a symbol of disinterestedness and love, of limitless self-sacrifice for the people and for liberty. The working masses and their hatred of tchorbadjis, exploiters and oppressors formed the so-

cial basis of the Haiduk movement. Its historical importance lay in preserving and safeguarding among the oppressed working people the tradition of independence, the spirit of courage, and the hope of coming liberation; and in this way it prepared the first phase of the revolutionary movement. Directly linked with the Haiduk movement was the "national-revolutionary" movement that emerged during the 19th century and laid the basis of intellectual, cultural and political revival. This movement was supported by three social forces: the artisans' and merchants' guilds that developed during the 1 7th and 18th centuries in the villages and cities of the lower Balkans; the poor and oppressed peasants of the same regions; and the progressive "intelligentsia," especially teachers, of whom the disciples of the Russian socialists of the 1860 period were the vanguard.

The rebirth passed through three principal phases:

1. An intellectual renaissance (1830–1840) whose chief accomplishment was the founding of ecclesiastical schools.

2. The struggle for independence of the Bulgarian church (1805 to 1860), culminating in the establishment of an independent church and liberation from spiritual servitude to the Greeks (constitution of the exarchate in 1870).

3. A revolutionary movement that developed around 1870 and had both a national liberation and a purely social character.

The last phase of the Bulgarian revival — the revolutionary movement — has direct influence on the present-day Anarchist movement in Bulgaria. When the national revolutionary movement arose, the national problems of Western Europe were nearly all solved and social problems already occupied a primary place.

For this reason the national-revolutionary movement was strongly influenced by the socialism of the First International and developed a strong socialist tendency. The first militants of the national-revolutionary movement had been influenced by Russian revolutionists, Bakunin first of all. Cristo Botev, Bulgaria's greatest poet, was the most remarkable revolutionist of the period. He died heroically at the head of a company of partisans in the mountains, June 2, 1876, two years before the national emancipation. He had studied in Russia, had lived in Romania with Nechaeff. A disciple of Proudhon and Bakunin, a revolutionist and journalist of great breath, he is today the national hero, the inspiration of Bulgarian youth among whom his deeply moving works have long kindled the flame of idealism and revolutionary social struggle. In addition to these traditions, the Anarchist movement was favored by the social and economic structure of the country: the proletariat is small, and small peasant proprietors comprise the largest class by far. Just because of the family character of agriculture, and the extreme dividing up of the land, the peasants constituted a working class exploited by crushing taxes and disposed to ideas of liberty, independence and mutual aid. Finally, one more important factor: the Bulgarians' extreme attachment to liberty. Nevertheless, during the first years after the liberation, until 1923, anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism had only a moderate growth: the influence of Russian terrorism and French "individualism," the Haiduk heritage of individualist action, were irresistible; the elite of Bulgaria's proletarians and intellectuals perished in the struggle. In addition, much of their energy went into the national-revolutionary movement of the Macedonians. Thus the Bulgarian revolutionary movement was deprived of a host of courageous men, a very grave loss; but for all that, this activity was a precious contribution to the Balkan struggles for liberation. The pioneers of this movement were Anarchists, and the Bulgarian public knows that the Macedonian national-revolutionary movement is principally the work of Bulgarian Anarchists whose

clear understanding of the national-revolutionary movement never allowed them to isolate the struggle for Bulgarian national liberation from the social struggle. Finally, if we can see the retarding effects of terrorism on the growth of the Anarchist movement in the first part of the 20th century, we can see too that the very participation of Anarchists in this action is the basis of the high opinion of anarchism in Bulgaria, for this action was in the spirit of the historical traditions; the unparalleled courage, idealism and self-sacrifice of these great revolutionary figures has drawn the popular masses to anarchism. During this period, the Socialist movement was equally stagnant: when the Russian Social-Democratic party split at the beginning of the century, the Bulgarian Social-Democracy also split in two. Partisans of united political action by workers and small peasant proprietors formed (in imitation of the Russians) the clearly Opportunistic "Shiroki" Social-Democratic party.

Partisans of the conception that the proletariat alone can be a revolutionary class in the Marxist sense formed the "Tensi" Social-Democratic party, verbally revolutionary, actually also opportunistic and electoralist. At this time the Agrarian Union also absorbed many militants. At first the Agrarian Union was an economic movement of peasants with very advanced cooperative and socialistic tendencies. Later the trend toward participation in political struggles took hold and transformed the Union into a political party, the strongest in the country after the first World War. Other political parties in Bulgaria at the end of the first World War were the Liberty Party and the Democratic Party — undistinguishable except for phraseology, taking power by turns as the King willed — and an insignificant Radical Party anxious to take its place among them. There was nothing very democratic, liberal or progressive about any of the three, all servants of the King who vied with each other in repressions against the people.

Finally, the most reactionary party, the Narodrisak, the party of the big capitalists, although not numerous, exerted great influence on political and economic life. That most of the clergy and nearly all the active and reserve officers of the army were its watchdogs was demonstrated in the coup d'etat of June 9, 1923, and the bloody repressions that followed. The first World War marked a new beginning in the development of the anarchist inspired revolutionary movement. Some groups existed before the war, but the movement had been unable to work out a general plan of propaganda and action to reach all sections of the population. The activities of groups were of an individual character: some published pamphlets and books, others were active in the Agrarian Union, others tried unsuccessfully to build a Revolutionary Syndicalist movement.

Among high school and university students, Anarchist ideas found their most favored reception; organised refusal to pay taxes, at Chabla and Duran-Kulak, developed into a peasant insurrection; a general strike in the colleges spread throughout the country; finally, in this period, the newspaper *Rabotnicheska Missal* (Workers' Thought), which became the organ of the Anarchist Federation after the war appeared as the voice of Revolutionary Syndicalism. During the first World War the Bulgarian government abandoned neutrality to ally itself with the Central Powers. Many Anarchists, judging the war imperialist, refused to fight; some were shot at the front, others in prison. When Bulgaria entered the war, Alexander Stambuliyski, leader of the Agrarian Union, was imprisoned in the Sofia central prison for denouncing King Ferdinand as a traitor. He liked to talk with the imprisoned Anarchists, enjoyed their company. After the war, as President of the Council, he declared in his famous disclosure from the balcony of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that power and the State corrupt the most moral individual, and he advised precautions. When the police arrested the audience at a meeting in the Sofia anarchist club, he went, as soon as he learned of it, to release them before the police could employ the form of assassination known

as "attempt to escape." But two years later he was himself corrupted by power and initiated a vast campaign of repression in which many anarchists were assassinated and anarchist clubs burned.

Sober and hard-working, the Bulgarian people have little love for the State or for governments. Many popular songs express their deep love of liberty and admiration of the Haiduks, those valiant guerrillas who always gave battle to oppressors and exploiters. The three years of war overflowed the cup of suffering: the people warned the government to sign a separate peace, or else the soldiers would leave the front. The warning went unheeded, and in September 1918, front-line soldiers deserted en masse and, keeping their arms, set out for the capital to punish the warmakers and especially King Ferdinand who had abdicated and fled to safety in Germany before their arrival. The subsequent debacle was not thought of as a great national misfortune, quite the opposite; politicians and speculators had enriched themselves scandalously on the war and the "national ideal." The popular masses gave free expression to their discontent and their desire to revolt against not only the profiteers and the war but the bourgeois regime as well. Stambuliyski, who now came to power, enjoyed tremendous popularity, especially among the peasants, by virtue of his gesture against the King; he believed he could dam up the threatening revolution by dividing the popular masses, country against city, and accomplish a kind of preventive counter-revolution by provoking conflicts between them. The Russian revolution, whose progress the proletariat followed with enthusiasm, further bolstered the revolutionary spirit. In this atmosphere the Bulgarian Anarchist Communist Federation was formed, and its influence never ceased to grow. In September 1919, delegates from anarchist groups met in national conference and founded the Federation of Anarchist Communists in Bulgaria. Under pressure of events all those who had hitherto preferred to devote themselves exclusively to the peasant co-operative movement, to the trade union movement, to the cultural movement and to local propaganda, or even to individual activity, came to realize the urgent need for a federalist organisation that would, by joint study of their problems, co-ordinate educational propaganda and mass organisation with a view to defense of the immediate interests of the people and the creation of a better society. This first conference unified the anarchist-inspired revolutionary movement and gave it powerful impetus. Intensive propaganda, and increasing participation by militants in social agitation and strike activity, popularized anarchist ideas and tactics. The movement lacked old militants, it lacked experience, but initiative made up for that. To spread their ideas among the people and take part in the struggle for freedom, many high school and university students left school and became workers. The number of sympathizers increased daily, apace with increasingly severe government repression, particularly at the time of the transport strike. From an insignificant movement of small groups and closed circles, the anarchist-inspired revolutionary movement was developing into a mass movement. The four Regional Unions arranged regular educational speaking-tours and propaganda meetings in all cities and villages. The Federation itself was secret and restricted to militants. Public activity took the form of social studies' groups, semi-syndicalist producers' groups, and combat groups. In January 1923, the Fifth Congress, the first and only public (but illegal) anarchist congress, was held at Jambol; the previous congresses had all been held secretly in the mountains. The congress concluded with a meeting in the town square. At Jambol the movement defined its ideology, tactics and organisation in clearly anarchist-communist terms. (Important, because the Anarchists were then almost alone in declaring publicly against power). Delegates from all over the country reported the organisational and propaganda accomplishments of their respective groups.

In Jambol itself, in Nova Zagora, Khaskovo, Kyustendil, Radomir, Kilijarevo and Delebets the majority of the workers were affiliated with the anarchist movement. Great progress was being made at Plovdiv, Sofia, Burgas, Russe, etc. The quickening of governmental repression against the workers' movement, and especially against the anarchist movement, preoccupied the congress. Once in power, Stambuliyski — president of the Agrarian Union and simultaneously President of the government — had begun to persecute the Leftists and support the Rightists. His Prefect of Police, Prudkin, of Russian origin and obscure past, manufactured attentats to justify reprisals against the workers' movement. Several Communist halls and Houses of the People were burned. To the anarchists, Prudkin applied the system of attempted escape: when he considered a militant too "bothersome", he had him arrested and shot in the back of the head; to the press it was announced that such and such a dangerous individual had been killed attempting to escape. These assassinations became repeated, frequent; a vast fascist-reactionary offensive was obviously underway. This the statements of agrarian militants confirmed. The fascists were presenting the governments with accomplished facts. From careless talk it was also known that in the Macedonian Autonomist organisation and in the Military League something ominous was going on.

Fascism in Power

It was the eve of decisive events. At the forefront of the struggle, the Anarchists were the first aware of the danger. Against 90 per cent of the population, the reactionary 10 per cent would not have been so dangerous, had the people been armed; and the Anarchists raised the slogan: "Arm the people." But they alone understood the new situation, they alone proposed arming the people, the only effective defence against the rising fascism. For all their revolutionary phraseology, the Communist leaders had been won over to electoral opportunism. Already, in 1919 — 1920, when the revolutionary pressure of the people threatened to overthrow the capitalist regime, the Communist leader and theoretician, Dmitri Blugoeff, propounded the famous thesis of the "three-fourths from abroad," that is, three-quarters of the force behind a triumphant Bulgarian revolution would have to come from abroad — so thoroughly did Blugoeff misjudge the revolutionary energy of the Bulgarian people who each day gave proof of their determination to put an end to the capitalist regime. The reactionary bourgeoisie took note, redoubled its manoeuvres designed to divide the popular masses. Similarly, instead of following the example of those who were forming combat groups and demanding that the people be armed, the Communists kept on with their noisy, short-sighted propaganda. The Agrarians, intoxicated by power, did not take the fascist danger seriously; their leaders hunted for ways to aggravate the disunity of the masses, and thought of nothing else but of crushing the Communists and Anarchists; they did organise a combat formation, the "orange guard," but it was intended as an instrument of repression against strikers and against demonstrations by workers and revolutionary peasants.

The Socialists were the most confused of all the leftist groups — so confused that when the fascist coup d'etat began some of them, under Dimo Kasassoff, participated in the fascist project, and Dimo Kasassoff joined the government of the sinister Professor Tzankoff. The revolutionary groups of the Anarchists were the most clear-sighted and aggressive. Fearing that a coup d'etat would tally all anti-fascist resistance around the anarchist movement, the fascist leaders decided to utilize their secret agents in the police, and especially their secret League of Regular Army Officers, to liquidate the anarchist movement before attempting their coup. On March 26, 1923, the anarchist organisation convoked the workers of Yamboli to a meeting in the central square of the town to protest the assassinations of militants and to demand the arming of the people. The meeting was forbidden by the military commander; at the appointed hour the square was occupied by troops and troops were posted at strategic points in the town. In small groups, the Anarchists were succeeding in reaching the square; some were already there, including the designated speaker. Judging the moment here, he climbed up on a bench and began to talk. After a single warning, the commander gave the troops the order to fire. At the first volley, the speaker and other comrades were wounded. The audience, instead of running to safety, replied so energetically with pistol and grenade that it was the troops who had to flee. A furious battle lasted two hours. The two regiments stationed in the city were insufficient, the commander had to bring up a regiment of heavy artillery from a town nearby. In spite of the Anarchists' courage and boldness, the superiority of numbers and above all of arms was crushing. They decided to cease fire

and scatter under cover of night. Nevertheless the soldiers captured 26 of them and took them to the barracks. Toward midnight, in the barracks courtyard, in a row, facing leveled machine guns, they waited, calmly, defiantly. A superior officer arrived, commanded: "Let those who are Anarchists take three steps forward." As one man the whole line advanced three steps. The officers gave the machine-gunners the order to fire. The 26 men were cut down by bullets, fell. The veil of night covered their corpses. No one would have known how they were assassinated, without trial or sentence; but, among the victims, the student Obretenoff, wounded, profiting by darkness, managed to crawl through the barbed wire that surrounded the barracks; he reached the hospital where he told what had happened. Among the frightened attendants someone denounced him, and within an hour soldiers came looking for him to finish him off. But the truth was known. The following day the military again succeeded in capturing militants, and shot them. All others hid out in the towns, neighbouring villages, arid the mountains. The same morning, before the news could arrive, troops invaded the Sofia Anarchists hall where a meeting was going on and arrested everybody. But finally the Anarchists of all Bulgaria were alerted and took their precautions. How did public opinion react to this massacre and these fascist proceedings? The assassins of Yamboli were protected by the government, and, to divert attention from himself, Stambuliyski went in person to Sofia to liberate prisoners.

Before the Anarchists' magnificent example of courage and self-sacrifice, the Communist press did not modify its customary hostility — the young Communist militant, G. Stoinoff of Yamboli, could no longer stomach the attitude of his party, and committed suicide. The Communists, whose influence on the masses was greater, did not think this struggle important. The bourgeois parties were silent, they understood that the first phase of their fascist offensive had begun. From then on, events hurry forward: three months later, on June 9, comes the coup d'etat against the Stambuliyski Agrarian government, but mainly against the working class and the revolutionary movement. Embracing representatives of all the bourgeois parties and the Socialist Party, controlling the Military League and the Macedonian Autonomist organisation and organisations of reserve officers and noncommissioned officers, the Zveno circle — the same that since the "liberation" has shared power with the Communists — successfully executed the coup d'etat. In Sofia the Agrarian ministers were arrested; Stambuliyski, in the country, was captured, murdered. The Orange Guard resisted only a very short time, only at Plevna. The Communist Party preserved its usual passivity, its calm; the Central Committee of the Party declared: "Let the two bourgeoisies (of country and city) kill each other." The Anarchists, hunted down and shot by the Stambuliyski government and still bearing the scars of Yamboli, tried to resist the coup d'etat: at Kilifarevo they rose, carried the local Communists and Agrarians along with them, and stood off the assaults of the army for several days. They even occupied the city of Drenovo and several villages at the foot of the mountains. Had the Communist Party joined in these actions, had the Agrarians been better prepared, the uprising bursting out in many places could have put down the fascist coup d'etat. These events are reminiscent of the fascist insurrection in Spain in 1936: a preconceived plan, a massive fascist assault. In Bulgaria, though unprepared for united mass action, the Anarchists put up stubborn resistance: not for direct realization of their ideal of Libertarian Communism, less still to rescue the Stambuliyski government, but simply to prevent the imposition of fascism. Later the Bulgarian Communists, spurred by Moscow's reproaches, "took cognizance of their mistakes" and organised an uprising (in September). But the Bulgarian Communists had no experience in revolutionary action and the plans were discovered beforehand by the authorities. The uprising failed. The Anarchists took an active part, contributed important successes

and many victims. The savagery of the terrified fascist bourgeoisie was unrestrained: barracks, schools and prisons were full of anti-fascists. Each night the torturers came looking for victims; black wagons came looking for bodies to throw over a cliff or into a ravine. Each night, for days, weeks and months, prison boats on the Danube threw mutilated corpses into the waters. Among the combatants, as among the dead, Agrarians, Communists and Anarchists had their heroes and their martyrs. The number of assassinated anti-fascists — peasants, workers, intellectuals — reached 35,000 The number condemned to death, to life imprisonment, long terms, was very high. In answer to this butchery, the attentat of the Sofia Cathedral was carried out; 220 persons died, among them 13 generals and ministers.

We are here in the darkest years of fascist reaction. There were guerrillas all through the regime. The first Bulgarian partisan units were Anarchists. The Communists, declared enemies of this tactic, busied themselves with electoral battles and again lost interest in the revolutionary struggle. From 1923 — 1924 onward, the anarchists Vassil Ikonomov, Vassil St. Popov (Geroi), Tinko Simov, Georgi Popov, the brothers Tumangelov, and many others formed partisan groups that went into the mountains and kept the revolutionary ardor of the Bulgarian people alive. The bloodiest repression could not stamp out what refused to die: love of liberty and the will to struggle to regain it. Under the fascist regime the first large-scale labour action was the successful general strike of tobacco manufacturing workers. Its principal leader was the Anarchist Ivan Konstanioff, militant of Plovdiv. The student youth, also, particularly the Federation of Anarchist Students (B.O.N.S.F.), distinguished itself by stubborn activity despite beatings, persecution, assassinations. Finally we must give credit to the passive resistance of the peasants. For six or seven years they did everything they could to avoid paying taxes, in spite of seizures and public sales. Rarely did anyone dare buy such goods. Tax receipts did not come to even half the budget estimates. In these bloody struggles the Anarchist movement lost many militants. But there were other losses, too, losses resulting from collaboration with politicians, above all with the Communists. The "United Front" tactic is in fact a Communist idea, basically a manoeuvre to swallow up "sister" organisations. Some let circumstances get the better of them, and a "revisionist" tendency developed within the movement; those who practiced close, continual collaboration with the anti-fascist political parties sought self-justification in revision of fundamental Anarchist ideas. Others, hoping to build up an exclusively syndicalist movement, went so far as to assert that the proletariat, through its unions, had the right to organise and direct the life of the whole society — though in Bulgaria the proletariat is only 10 per cent of the population. This period of confusion did, however, give the Federation an experience from which it learned to reject all collaboration with political parties except on the plane of revolutionary action. In 1931 elections were held. Despite elaborate precautions favorable to fascists and pro-fascists, they were defeated. Bulgaria now had a kind of democratic government; but the omnipotence of army and police was not disturbed. Freedom of speech and association was so circumscribed that this regime was hardly distinguishable from dictatorship. Nevertheless, it did represent a slight improvement over the nine years of avowedly fascist rule. The anti-fascist groups began to resume activity. In point of members the two strongest were the Agrarian Union and the Communist Party, closely followed by the Anarchist Federation. Anarchist periodicals and publications, though severely censored and often confiscated, appeared anew: papers, theoretical magazines, pamphlets, books. The movement rebuilt rapidly, but it still had to remain underground, in utmost secrecy. Overly Anarchist labour, peasant or cultural organisations were forbidden.

But skillful subterfuges enabled the movement to make substantial progress; the Anarchist peasant organisation, the *Union Vlassovden*, counted 130 groups; and there were 40 syndicalist groups. In the cultural field, under fascism, the Anarchists had created the movement of "abstinent youth" who developed an extensive activity under this modest name. They had branches in towns and villages and all the bigger schools. The militants of the Federation had also organised an association of Anarchist and Anarchist-sympathetic writers, painters, sculptors, theater artists, doctors, engineers, scientists and intellectuals. This activity was broadened and intensified after the mountain congress of September, 1933, that reaffirmed the Anarchist-Communist basis of the Federation[1]. But in May, 1934, the Military League staged a new coup d'etat. Hoping to stifle the love of liberty forever, the reactionary bourgeoisie turned to the corporative method of fascism. The military, regimenting every phase of social, economic and cultural life, established the "new order." This "new order" was really very old, the Bulgarian people were not deceived. The totalitarian state strove to bring all social, economic and cultural organisations under its direct control; but when active struggle is no longer possible, passive resistance finds manifold expression. If one could no longer publish a newspaper to one's liking, one did not therefore have to read those of the corporative lie–and-obscurantism factories. If one could not organise an association in harmony with one's ideas and aspirations, one did not belong to an organisation whose aim was directly contrary. Dues, of course, were collected by the tax-collector like taxes. Still, if one could not always get out of attending meetings, one dispensed with taking part in the discussion. And as to work, one did not strain oneself. Naturally, all that does not solve the problem, it is not enough to end an oppressive regime. There comes a time when one's indignation can no longer be contained; revolt, first individual, then collective; then, also, bullets, prison, the concentration camp. During the last war, during the German occupation, passive resistance grew tremendously, and at one time the armed resistance very much resembled the 1923 insurrection; when new groups of partisans appeared and the Communists sought to monopolize this form of struggle, the Anarchists joined in this movement. Acting independently or in co-operation with the Communists, they came immediately after the Communists in number of victims. And they took part in the liberation movement of September 9, 1944. Bulgaria, under occupation till that date, fought the Gestapo and German Nazism. It was an arsenal. The most stringent measures were used to throttle every attempt at protest, but the Bulgarian people gave proof of extraordinary moral force, the thousands of peasants and workers were shot, and their houses burned by the fascists. Often, to revenge themselves on a single man of resistance, the fascists killed wife, children, parents, brothers and sisters. In this struggle, the Bulgarian Syndicalists and Anarchists were in the vanguard, as much in resistance groups as in sabotage groups within the factories.

[1] some Syndicalist nuclei were formed: though underground, they guided the workers towards methods of direct action and encouraged them to revolt against exploitation and oppression. The illegal organ of the Federation advocated this activity)

The "New Era"

Fascism of the Hitlerian type was liquidated in Bulgaria on September 9, 1944. The Bulgarian people thought they were in a situation full of excellent possibilities. Factory and workshop committees, composed of workers, were created spontaneously. New local committees took responsibility for administration. In the streets and public squares the victorious people openly displayed its revolutionary will. The union movement reorganised. But Soviet Russia was near, the Russian army occupied the country. And as is their habit whenever the people revolt, the leaders of the political parties succeeded in retaking power. They did not shrink from heavy measures against revolutionists. Slowly but systematically they liquidated all the gains of a people who had hoped to go beyond a simple political turnover. At the instigation of the Communists, a number of political groups collaborated to form the Fatherland Front. This group took power and became dictators of the new Bulgaria. The character of the groups behind it was often dubious, their past often reactionary. Some of their outstanding members had played a crucial role in the 1934 fascist coup d'etat. The Zveno clique of reserve and non-commissioned officers had taken part in the 1923 and 1934 coups d'etat. One of their men, Kimo Georgieff, the new President of the Council had also been President of the Council after the 1934 coup d'etat and had tried to introduce a Mussolini-type corporation into Bulgaria. Afterwards, for personal motives, he had joined some other army men in opposition to the King. With reactionaries of this type the Communists collaborated and shared power. They were creating a transitional situation to clear the way for exclusive appropriation of power by the Communist Party — a process made easier by the proximity of Russia, the presence of Russian troops in Bulgaria, and the oppressive regime that they gradually but pitilessly imposed on the whole country. The facade was patriotic propaganda: Fatherland Front, "National Renaissance." The program of the Fatherland Front deliberately masked the reality: it pretended to restore the rights of the people, freedom of press, of meeting, of association; political, cultural and juridicial legality. But from the outset there were certain very significant restrictions: only the parties in power or groups supporting them could publish newspapers, magazines and books, or organise meetings, conferences and congresses, or carry on public activity. The other groups had only to work and keep quiet; and if they dared express by word or writing their opinion of social, economic and cultural conditions, or their nonconformist ideas on social change, they could count on being sent to the concentration camp as in the days of fascist rule. Obviously these measures were not aimed at the fascists, for one of their parties, the military clique, was in power; while the Anarchists, though represented on local committees in some places, did not take part in the Fatherland Front.

The Communists aimed at destroying all freedom and taking full power. Later they gained control of a parliamentary majority and are now at work making the Fatherland over into a Single Party; and then the other parties will no longer be tolerated. Bulgaria will have a Single Party regime analogous to the absolute power of the Communists in the Soviet Union. One of the chief measures taken by the Communist-directed government has been absolute control of the trade union movement. In the union statutes their democratic basis is of course affirmed. But the Com-

munists quickly converted the unions into an instrument of government policy. By threat or by violence the members were made to attend meetings and demonstrations and listen to Communist orators. Instead of defending the working class, these faithful servants of the Party repeat the official slogans of their Party. By purely fascist methods, all workers were herded into a single union organisation. Membership is now compulsory. All criticism, even the very mildest, of the Party or any of its members is very risky; it leads to the concentration camp. Methods of violence impose silence on the workers. Organised spying and informing among the workers and liberal bourgeoisie perfect these methods. Any resistance to this policy, so dangerous to the working classes, is called a "fascist plot". The union must unreservedly accept a government policy that cuts wages, introduces piecework, develops the spirit of competition among workers, and aggravates the hierarchical wage system. Thus labour organisation has become a docile tool in the hands of the State, of the government. This is red fascism, pure and simple. The Anarchists became the target of persecution by this totalitarianism very early, shortly after the Russians arrived. At first the government could not refuse a semblance of liberty; halls were reopened and the newspaper Rabotnicheska Missal reappeared; but not for long, the halls were closed everywhere, the one in Sofia lasted just a little longer than the rest; the newspaper was able to publish only eight issues, after the confiscation of the eighth number it definitely ceased to appear, it was banned. All propaganda, oral or written, all free organisational activity, is forbidden. Books and propaganda pamphlets are regularly confiscated and burned. The whole movement has been driven underground again. This was a prepared plan: at the beginning, when the memory of the exploits of the Anarchists were still alive in the hearts of the whole population, the government and police felt the need for pretexts for their arbitrary measures; they sometimes even released prisoners. But they were not very dependable. For example, to give itself a "democratic" appearance the new government of the Fatherland Front had proclaimed freedom of press and abolition of censorship. But since importation of newsprint had become a State monopoly, the Minister of Information determined allocations. After numerous applications, the organ of the Anarchist Federation was authorized; but very soon its allotment was cut off because of an article asserting that the strongest arm of the working class in the defense of its interests is the strike.

Then the Communists took a series of measures against the militants of the Federation: all locals were closed, and in many towns and villages, as in Plovdic and Pavel Bagna, all those found in the offices of the Federation were arrested. When explanations were demanded for these brutal measures, so openly contradictory to the Fatherland Front's September 9 proclamation of free press, meeting, organisation and thought, they replied invariably: "Address yourselves to the Central Committee of the Communist Party," and despite all protests the persecutions continued, in accordance with the orders of the Central Committee of the Party.

To formulate a position in this new situation, the Anarchist Federation convoked a special conference. On the first day of the conference, March 10, 1945, all the delegates present, to the number of 90, were arrested by the Communist militia, sent to concentration camps and put at forced labour in an atmosphere of moral and physical slavery, they were subjected to tortures and deprived of covering and clothing. Those still at liberty sent delegations to ministers and leaders of government parties to demand the release of the prisoners. But always the same answer: "Address yourselves to the Central Committee of the Communist Party." On August 26, under pressure from the United States and England, the government was forced to permit elections, and the police regime was moderated slightly. The prisoners were released, some of them, after having been terribly beaten. For a few days the libertarian press was permitted, and the great interest

of the people in this movement was demonstrated by the fact that Workers' Thought expanded immediately to 30,000 copies, considerable for so small a country. But this was all the more reason for the Communists to suppress it immediately and resume still more severe repression designed to wipe out the movement for they rightly feared the growth and competition of a true popular movement whose strength and very roots lay in the spirit of liberty and truth. Since that time, persecutions have only increased, systematically, mercilessly. Arrests, threats, manhunts, tortures, now without respite, mount from day to day.

Among the interned militants, we should note, are many who dedicated their lives to the anti-fascist struggle, who were condemned to death by the fascist regime and spent much of their life in prison (sometimes in company with the Communist leaders who now govern the country), who were the first organisers of the partisans, the finest heroes of the resistance and of the September 1944 uprising of liberation, and the volunteers in Spain in 1936. Almost all those arrested have been through fascist prisons and concentration camps. Some of them have spent 23 years in illegality because of their opposition to fascism. But history repeats itself in different totalitarian regimes: it is precisely the pioneers of liberty and human freedom that the self-styled "democratic" "popular" government of Bulgaria chooses to intern in concentration camps, subjects to exhausting labour, systematic starvation and torture in order to extinguish in the Bulgarian people any spark of independence, all feeling of human dignity. Instances are more and more numerous, the list of anti-fascist prisoners is becoming interminable. If the death penalty is still exceptional, the concentration camps are calculated to make opponents disappear. The totalitarian regime intervenes everywhere, against all those who balk at its orders.

All syndicalist activity is forbidden. Only one union is authorized, the General Professional Union of Workers, the official federation. Those who engage in the least non-conformist activity, even inside the union, are expelled and blacklisted or, especially if they are Anarchists and Syndicalists, sent to concentration camps. Disillusionment about the Communist Party is great, but the relationship of forces outweighs it: how is little Bulgaria to resist the nearby giant and a perfected police apparatus? The Communists feel secure. Many organisations are persecuted, especially Agrarian, Socialist and Anarchist organisations: the Agrarian Union, the Union of Agrarian Students, and the Union of Agrarian Youth; the Union of Jean-Jaures Socialist Students and the Union of Socialist Youth, the Federation of Anarchist Students and the Federation of Anarchist Youth; the Anarcho-Syndicalist National Confederation of Labour. Poor Bulgaria, whose climate, hilly country, agricultural character, popular aspirations to liberty and very lively sentiment of human solidarity present such a great resemblance to Spain, is still experiencing the same vicissitudes, the same hopes, the same cruel disilluionments: fascism after 1923, a short period of calm in 1931, then once again, more and more inexorable, totalitarian regimes supported by military occupation, first by the German army, then by the Red Army, with all the police apparatus and repression that occupation implies. We are now witnessing a new expansion of terrorism, as the rare news that leaks out of the red hell attests, as other examples and abundant testimony from other sources could confirm. A people is crushed, its fine and human characteristics are crushed. The conscience of the world must rouse itself — as it should have roused itself when fascism spread over Central Europe, when it spread into Spain. In no other way could it then, or can it now, save the world from terrible evils. It is also the only possible position for people who cannot concern themselves with utilitarian considerations or with fear, but must act by the spirit of justice and of truth alone.

March, 1948

Appendix 1: Communist Concentration Camps in Bulgaria: Forced Labour, Starvation and Torture for Opponents of Red Fascism

In spite of the ferocious communist repression in Bulgaria — to which we referred in our last issue — the voice of our Anarchist comrades in that country has not been silenced. The report from the Secretary of the Bulgarian Anarchist-Communist Federation, which we print below, was smuggled past the iron curtain, and has been sent to us by the Sub-Secretariat of the International Workers Association for Western Europe.

"All the letters of our alphabet would not be enough to present the true character of the concentration camps in our country, which are intended to exterminate man and his freedom. Alongside our comrades in these camps are thousands of other Bulgarians. "We shall give some facts and examples that you may judge the reality. "The camps are composed of barracks made of wood or earthen bricks, and are in two wings. The beds — one above another — are two metres long and 40 cm. wide. On the bed the prisoner must place, at one and the same time, himself and his baggage, and from the first night onward he is able to understand perfectly the nature of the camps.

"One cannot speak of hygiene, because, in the main, there is insufficient water. In most of the camps, water has to be fetched from far off, and there is not enough for everyone to drink. It's a big event when one is able to wash one's clothes — a thing that isn't possible for everyone. Only the strongest are able to wash their linen once a month, or once in two months. Medical aid is given by decree. Doctors are forbidden to prescribe rest in more than the agreed percentage of cases; in the Cuciyan Camp, for example, this is 1 per cent.

"The quality of the food is beyond description. For example, in the Cuciyan Camp, near the town of Pernik, where the work of mining is very hard and painful, the ration is 600 gr. of bread a day and a soup called 'chorba,'which do not give the necessary calories. For several months nothing but cabbage — of the worst quality in Bulgaria — has been cooked in the Camp, a witness from the camp tells us. 'Most of our fat and sugar ration is kept by the camp guards,' a cook, recently released from this camp, states. The food for nearly 1,000 men is cooked in boilers meant to supply 200 — 250. It is the same in the camp called Bogdanovdol. In boilers for 70 — 80 men is cooked the food for 150 — 200. The prisoners work 15 hours a day making bricks. The situation in these camps is particularly bad, as food and clothing parcels have been forbidden since January 1st. "The bad conditions of the dwelling quarters and the food are not the sole causes of the discomfort which the internees are made to suffer. The amount of work required from each one is hard, and is, moreover, accompanied by an inhuman system of punishments. In this matter the two camps cited are the worst. The Cuciyan Camp is known as "The Caresses of Death" and Bogdanovdol "The Camp of Shadows." "The treatment inflicted on the anarchists is particularly

bad. They are often forced to do 36 hours' work without halting. Twelve to 16 hours work is the normal thing.

Men often fall down of hunger and fatigue, and there have been some deaths in spite of the practice of releasing dying prisoners, so that their deaths take place at their homes and not at the camp. "Punishments are so bad, that they are beyond conception. In addition to beatings, supplementary work and imprisonment for several months, the infamous punishment of "counting the stars" is practiced. The internees are forced to remain standing motionless in front of the guards in the open air, during the night, in rain, frost or snow. This punishment lasts one, two, three, four, five or ten consecutive nights and those who are undergoing this punishment have to work during the day. These punishments are applied on the slightest pretext.

"For example, one of our comrades was ordered to 'count the stars' because he took an invalid from work and put him to bed. Another elderly comrade received three nights of it for the crime of not rising when one of the camp officers passed through the hall while he was eating at midday. "Collective punishments' are often applied. For an error by one detainee, a group, a barracks or the whole camp may be punished. These collective punishments are used often against the Anarchists. There are other special punishments. For example, by an order from above, the Anarchist collective has been destroyed and all the means of subsistence confiscated. In September alone more than 100 kilos were confiscated from them. "What we have already said about the Bulgarian extermination camps would be incomplete without some supplementary details. In the Cuciyan Camp, for example, a few months ago, two children of 14 spent nearly two months. In Bogdanovdol and Cuciyan ten Turkish children of 15 — 17 years of age are still detained today. With these children are old people of 60 — 70. "As in Francoist Spain and monarcho-fascist Greece, a regime of terror and intolerable violence reigns throughout Bulgaria today. The detention of our comrades continues, and this is now without even a charge being brought: 'He who is not with us is an enemy of the people,' declared a Bulgarian Minister recently, 'and against him we must fight pitilessly.' "It is enough now to be an Anarchist, or simply an honest man, to refuse to call black white, or to recognize the new masters, to be labelled 'Enemy of the people,' 'saboteur' or 'agitator,' and to be taken from your home and separated from your family. "All free-thinking people throughout the world must raise their voices and protest against these crimes. We ask them to make these facts known so that they can rise with us against the Bolshevik butchery. "Down with the masquerade of the false communism and the false communist!

Bulgaria, January, 1948"

Transmitted by the Sub-Secretariat of the I.W.A. for W. EUROPE, Provisional Secretary, Bernardo Pou.

Appendix 2: Partial list of Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists in Bolshevik Concentration Camps in Bulgaria

1. ALEXANDER DIMITROFF ALEXIEFF — Engineering student, age 28, of Isvor-Radomirsko. Put on trial by the fascists, he spent one and a half years prior to September 9th, 1945 in the black labour companies of fascist Bulgaria. History repeats itself today under the bolshevik regime. In 1945 this comrade passed nearly six months in "Doupnitza" Camp, and he has now again been interned, for the past nine months in the camp at Pernik for being a member of an anarchist students organisation, and for having taken part, in March 1947 in a movement organised by anarchist students against a decree levelled against the students.

2. ATANASS DIMITROFF MECHCAROFF — Age 28, of Potravo Sveti-Vrachco. Teacher and modest anarchist militant. He had the sympathy of his pupils. Judging him to be "dangerous," the Bolshevik authorities interned him, a year and a half ago in "Bogdanovdol" camp.

3. ANDON DOMOUSCHIEFF — Turner. Interned a month ago in Cuciyan camp because he made propaganda in Jambol, his native town, for a free union organisation of the workers.

4. VASSILTODOROFF JARDANOFF — Age 44. Printer and anarchist militant. Underwent long years of illegality and exile during the fascist regime. Twice on trial before the fascists. Left prison on September 9th, 1945. He has been in "CuciyanPernik" camp for last 9 months, for having advocated anarcho-syndicalism to the workers of Sofia.

5. VENCESLAV IVANOFF BRANDOFF — Agricultural student, age 25, of VisocaMaguila-Doupnichco. Interned for past seven months at Cuciyan because, with some other comrades, he distributed tracts for the anniversary of the great poet and anarchist, Cristo Boteff.

6. VASSILIANCOFF IVANOFF — Baker, organiser of the co-operative producing the bread for the town of Jambol (26,000 inhabitants) after September 9th, 1945. For many years a fighter for freedom and social justice. Detained many times by the fascists and Bolsheviks. In "Cuciyan" for past month, because he criticised some Bolshevik bakers, and because he is an anarchist.

7. GUEORGUIE DIMITROFF KURTOFF (KARAMICAYLOFF) — journalist, formerly editor of "Rabotnicheska Missal." Many years in fascist prisons. Interned (for 2nd time) in "Cuciyan" for past six months, for having written articles for the foreign anarchist press.

8. DONCHO CRISTOFF KARAIVANOFF — Age 26. Medical student. Brutally tortured and condemned to death by fascists. Brave fighter of the libertarian youth. In "Cuciyan" and "Tordoravo" (province of Silistrie) for past 9 months, for having taken part in student movements against the higher education decree, which is now law.

9. DONCHO MANDOFF — Age 26. Excluded from attending school on many occasions by the fascists. In Bolshevik camps for 2nd time. In Cuciyan for past month, simply for propagating anarchist ideas.

10. DOLCHO VASILEFF — Age 42, of Haskobo. Journalist and critic. Vegetarian for 20 years. The fascist killed his brother, and the Bolsheviks decided to kill him. In "Cuciyan" for past month because he spoke on behalf of anarchism at a public meeting.

11. GELLASKO MILANOFF RUSSEFF — Medical student. Detained many times and tortured by the fascists. In the "death camp" — "Cuciyan" for past 9 months, solely for taking part in a student movement in March, 1947.

12. ILIADIMITROFF MECHCAROFF — Age 21. Young anarchist — took part in the anti-fascist struggle as a guerilla. Like his brother, he has spent the past two years in the "camp of shadows" — "Bogdanovdol." Was accused of having killed a Bolshevik. Although Bolshevik judges acquitted him, he has been held for past two years.

13. COSTADIN DIMITROFF COCHINOFF — Age 27, of Jambol. Architectural engineering student. Spent two and a half years in fascist prisons for taking part in a military conspiracy against fascism in 1942. In "Cuciyan" for past nine months for having dared to protest, by telegraph, to members of the government, at the time of the detention of the anarchist students.

14. KOSTAATANASOFF — Age 46. Tobacco worker at Philipoli. Became tubercular following persecution and exile under fascist regime. Won the sympathy of the tobacco monopoly workers for anarchism by his conduct and speeches. For that he has been interned 6 months in "Cuciyan."

15. COSTODIN ILIEFF ZAJARINOFF — Age 28, of Padomir. Electrical engineering student; over a year in "black" labour division under fascism. Again in camps for past 7 months. Bolsheviks sent him to "Cuciyan" because he distributed tracts for the anniversary of Boteff.

16. KOLIO STOYANOFF KARDJALIYSKI — Age 25, of the village of MilhaltziKarlovsko, chemistry student. Also interned 7 months for trying to throw pamphlets on the tomb of his teacher, the anarchist revolutionary and poet, Cristo Boteff.

17. MANOLVASSEFF NICOLOFF — Age 49, of Haskovo. Worker in the tobacco monopoly. Ardent orator and propagandist for anarchism. Underwent 23 years of illegality, chased and judged by the fascists. This persecution only served to make his fight more heroic, his speeches more ardent. The fascists have interned him for the third time, a month ago, in "Cuciyan."

18. MICAILSTOYANOFF MINDOFF — Age 29, of Nava Zagora. Printing worker. Interned nine months ago, for the second time, for publishing bulletins and other leaflets of the Anarchist Communist Federation.

19. NICOLINAEFTIMOVAGUEIRGUIEVA- Age 23, of Haskovo. Printing worker. Interned 3 months ago in "Najarevo"-Tutracansko, after having been horribly tortured by the Bolsheviks. His crime was that of helping his interned comrades and working for anarchism.

20. SLAVEYKO IVANOFF STOYANOFF — Chemistry student. Guerilla fighter prior to September 9th, 1945. Last 9 months in "Cuciyan" for having spoken against the higher education decree in March, 1947.

21. STEFAN ZLATEFF KRESTEFF — Librarian. Imprisoned for eleven and a half years under fascist regime, three years under the death penalty. Health broken through persecution. Has been arrested and interned several times by Bolsheviks. Has been in "Cuciyan" for past month, simply for being an anarchist.

22. TASE ANDONOFF DOYCHINOFF — Medical student. Brother of Zinovi, a comrade killed by the Hitlerites. In "Cuciyan" on forced mining labour for past seven months for having thrown leaflets on Boteff's tomb.

23. CRISTO KOLEFF IORDANOFF — Age 37, of Sofia. Technician and true anarchist. Sentenced by fascists three times prior to September 9th, 1945. Twice interned since Bolshevik seizure of power. Now in "Cuciyan."

24. CRISTO MINKOFF — Farmer of Bani, Karlovsko. Anarchist. In "Cuciyan" for past month.

25. CRISTO KOLEFF — Age 21. Young anarchist, arrested and ill-treated by Bolsheviks several times. In "Cuciyan" for past month.

26. STEFAN KOTACOFF — of Plovdiv.

27. STANAS DIMITROFF — of Stara-Zagora.

28. IVAN KOLEFF — of Karlovsco.

29. KOEZAKARACOSTAFF — of Nova Zagora.

30. TEODOR ARNAUDOFF — School inspector of Nevrocop. Interned for past two year.

31. STANCO ZASAROFF FILCOFF — Teacher of Radomirsco.

32. GEORGU SIRAKOV — Arrested December 6th, 1947, now in the camp "Cuciyan."

33. IVAN NEDIALKOV — Arrested December 7th, 1947, now in camp "Cuciyan."

There are innumerable other comrades interned in the concentration camps of Cuciyan (near Pernick), Bogdanovdol, Nojarevo, Tadorovo, Bosna, and other camps in the Dobroudja and other parts of Bulgaria.

Bulgaria, January, 1948

Appendix 3: Committee for Aid to Bulgarian Anti-Fascists: Report on Activity

When the Committee for Aid to Bulgarian Anti-Fascists was formed in January, 1948, the situation of our comrades of the Bulgarian Anarchist-Communist Federation has been growing steadily worse for more than a year. All activities had been outlawed, and since February, 1947, all communication with the outside world had been cut off. From the summer of 1947 onward, many comrades began to do what they could, as individuals, to help these comrades fighting to uphold our ideal and defending the freedom of a whole people against the most ruthless oppression ever known, the oppression of a totalitarian state. In November the need for help became more urgent. Comrades were reporting that they had reached Greece and were being interned in concentration camps there. News from Bulgaria indicated that more and more militants of the B.A.C.F. were being sent to concentration camps, with no hope of ever getting out, condemned to slow death by maltreatment and torture. Help had to be organized. The I.W.A. (International Workers Association) has always considered international solidarity one of its primary responsibilities, and it offered the solid moral guarantee of its past accomplishments. Too, as a labour organisation with sections in many countries, it was in a position to bring pressure on governments. The Sub-Secretariat of the I.W.A. in Western Europe had already asked some of us to try to obtain visas for comrades interned in the camps. And then the B.A.C.F. wrote from Bulgaria; "Soon many comrades will be obliged to cross the frontier. You must form a permanent committee to receive them." Those of us who had independently put ourselves at the service of the B.A.C.F. met to form a committee, working under the instructions of the Bulgarian Federation, that would give all possible aid to anarchists within Bulgaria and to those who had to escape from the Stalinist terror. The members of the committee act as individuals and represent no particular organisations. But, as mentioned, the committee arranges its work according to the wishes of the B.A.C.F. and under the direction of the I.W.A.

The name of the committee indicates its character. Help is given only to anti-fascists, mostly to anarchists (since they are more numerous), but also to other anti-fascists who were active opponents of the fascist regime during the German occupation as well as of the Stalinist neo-fascism. Since it must intervene with governments and politicians to secure the release of prisoners, it is to the advantage of the committee to remain unaffiliated with any anarchist or political organisation and preserve its freedom of action; its only purpose . is to help persecuted comrades. The committee, set up in January, 1948, includes French, Spanish, Russian and Bulgarian comrades. The work is apportioned according to what each is in a position to do. Important decisions are made in committee meetings.

The activity of the committee has been along the following lines:

1. It has appealed for international solidarity on behalf of the Bulgarian comrades. Because of our comrades' situation, the committee's principal function is to transmit help. Its appeals to responsible organisations and, through the press, has received a warm reception; the Spanish,

Swedish, Argentine and Italian movements, the S.I.A. (International Anti-Fascist Solidarity), and several anti-fascist relief committees (notably in America) have responded generously. Help is sent in a number of ways: money (the most practical and most reliable), clothing, medicine, food. This help is sent into Bulgaria for concentration camp prisoners and their families, and to prisoners in concentration camps of neighboring countries. Comrades interned for many months are suffering from under-nourishment and unhealthy conditions, and are in danger of tuberculosis — especially those deported to the "disciplinary camps" on the Greek islands. The need is enormous — not only for food, but for transportation to Western European countries. Large sums are required.

2. The committee has made representations to government authorities, and has tried to find lodging and jobs for new arrivals.

3. The committee has given all possible publicity to news received from Bulgaria. To acquaint the public with the meaning of our comrades' struggle, it has published a French pamphlet, La Bulgarie, nouvelle Espagna, all proceeds from which go to the aid funds.

This is no more than a bare outline of our work.

Finally, we must mention the formation of similar committees in other countries in Sweden (Committee for Propaganda Against the Terrorist Governments in the Totalitarian States of the East), in Italy, and in Argentina (International Anarchist Solidarity). We are in contact with these committees in order to co-ordinate our efforts.

Ours is a work of revolutionary solidarity — all the more important because it is undertaken on behalf of those who are struggling against the most powerful tyranny in the world today, who have succeeded despite all in keeping their organisation alive, and who by their courage and their faith in our ideal of justice and liberty are now the sole hope of an oppressed people.

Appendix 4: To Anarchists of All Countries: Excerpts From The Appeal of the B.A.C.F.

Dear Comrades: After five centuries of slavery under Turkish rule, the freedom-loving people liberated themselves seventy years ago. And for some sixty years since the founding of our movement, the Bulgarian anarchists have known nothing but persecution, prisons, concentration camps and executions. Today they are living the most terrible tragedy in their history. The Russians, once again our "liberators", have insured the conquest of the red dictatorship and the terrible enslavement of the peasants and workers of Bulgaria. Though they have withdrawn their troops to the other bank of the Danube as the peace treaty provides, the Russians are still near at hand and comprise the solid mainstay and rearguard of Dimitroff's fifth column. Surrounded to the north and west by Romanian and Yugoslav fifth columns, the Bulgarian people realise they are not strong enough to overthrow their oppressors. Disheartened they have withdrawn into their traditional passive resistance. Few peoples are their equal in clear understanding of the world political situation, and (especially since Tito's opening of the "iron curtain") they are waiting patiently to see what the future will bring. Our people know that in their struggle for freedom they are faced with not only the Bulgarian Communists (of whom they are not afraid) armed to the teeth by Russia, but also with the whole Russian empire. Being realists, they are perfectly aware that their strength is unequal and that the time for decisive action has not yet come. This is the logic behind their tactic of waiting and readiness. Persecutions are growing steadily, and, in truth, it requires a great deal of courage for the masses to express their opposition and resistance openly. Not only are elementary liberties non-existent but (what is much more serious) the possibility of survival is threatened. The first mortal blow fell on the Argentian Union. They and the Socialists are targets of persecution. Against us, the anarchists, persecution has never relented, and we are now the worst off. They are letting us die of hunger, slowly but surely. Comrades not yet in concentration camps find themselves out of a job and unable to get work anywhere. Independent small trading, the crafts and agriculture that still make survival possible, are being liquidated and will disappear completely; soon it will be impossible to eat. Only one possibility remains: to bow one's head and hold out one's hand to the Stalinist state and its businesses and jobs. But the state gives work only to its lackeys, to those who can sell themselves. In spite of our restraint, expressed even in our illegal press, the Bolshevik's hatred and jealousy has no limits. They see that to us, firm and unyielding, the eyes of desperate men and women are turned while all their militarist and fascist opponents have given in and joined them. And they know that at the critical moment in their rule all brave and valiant men, regardless of political ideas, will come with us. The truth is, the anarchists are the only group in Bulgaria who have not bowed down. In the concentration camps they alone have refused steadfastly to sign the oath of loyalty to the Fatherland Front. Among the blacklisted workers and the many expelled university students, the anarchists are the only ones who do not beg for mercy. Of all the opposition groups,

the anarchists alone still refuse to join the government's single party. Their brave clear-cut stand gives the people courage and compels respect even from opponents.

The anarchists are a centre of attention everywhere. The masses believe solely, unhesitatingly, in them; sometimes even unwillingly, they express admiration for the anarchists' heroic stand. In this tragic moment this is the only strength, the only resource, of the Bulgarian anarchists. What does the future hold for us? It is difficult to judge. While fools put hope for salvation in a war, and wait impatiently and eagerly for it, we have not allowed ourselves to lose our ideological equilibrium or our clear perspective that war will be avoided. At the crucial moment in the conflict between the Anglo-American bloc and Russia, the latter will back down. and its political surrenders will cause the downfall of Stalinism in Russia and in our own country. We are more convinced of this than many Western European and American comrades because we see at first hand the incomparable weakness of Russia against the monstrous material power, and even moral advantages, of Anglo-Yankee imperialism. It not, then death. And if war is the outcome, world disaster. Whatever comes, the comrades of other countries who are extending a fraternal hand to us can be sure that Bulgarian anarchists know how to die for their ideal and for the freedom of the people — with pride and dignity, with their eyes fixed on a more just future for humanity — that they will not disgrace their name, the name and pride of their people, the name and aspirations of world anarchism.

For the B.A.C.F.

Appendix 5: Platform of the Federation of Anarchist Communists of Bulgaria, 1945

Federatsia Na Anarkho Komunistite Ot Balgaria – F Fakb

Basic Positions

We reject the present social system of State and capitalist centralisation, as it is founded on the principle of the State which is contrary to the initiative and freedom of the people. Every form of power involves economic, political or spiritual privilege. Its application on an economic level is represented by private property, on a political level by the State and on a spiritual level by religion. These three forms of power are linked. If you touch one, the others are changed and, inversely, if you keep one form of power, it will inevitably lead to the re-establishment of the other two. This is why we repudiate the very principle of power. We are supporters of the abolition of private property, of the State and of religion, and of the total suppression of every form and institution of constraint and violence. We reject every teaching and every social, political and economic-political movement aimed at maintaining the State, private property, the church, and constraint and violence in social relations. We repudiate fascism, which is a historic attempt to restore absolutism, autocracy and the strength of the political form of power with the aim of defending the economic and spiritual dominance of the privileged classes. We reject political democracy, as it does not foresee the disappearance of the principle of power, and drives the masses to bewilderment by leading them, through lies and illusions, into fights which are against their interests, and corrupts them through the exercise of power and the maintaining of the appetite for domination.

Political democracy, furthermore, shows that it is totally incapable of solving the great social problems and that it fosters chaos, contradictions and crime as a result of its social foundations based on the centralised State and capitalism. We repudiate State socialism as it leads to State capitalism — the most monstrous form of economic exploitation and oppression, and of total domination of social and individual freedom. We are for anarchist communism or free communism, which will replace private property with the complete socialisation of lands, factories and mines, and of all goods and instruments of production. The State will be replaced by a federation of free communes regionally, provincially, nationally and internationally united. The church and religion will be replaced by a free individual moral and a scientific vision. Unlike all other socio-economic and political concepts and organisations, Anarchist Communism is federalist. The new social organisation that will replace the State will be built and run from the bottom upwards. All the inhabitants of any given village will form the local free commune, and all the local free communes will unite regionally, provincially, nationally and internationally in unions and federations and in a universal general social confederation. The new organisation of society's production will be formed by a tight network of countless local agricultural enterprises, artisans,

mines, industry, transport, etc., united on a regional, provincial, national and international level in production unions and federations as part of a general confederation of production. Society's new organisation of exchange, consumption and supply will likewise be represented by a dense and complex network of regional, provincial and national organisations, unions and federations, grouped in a general confederation of exchange and consumption for satisfying the needs of all inhabitants. All human social activity and all transport, communications, education, healthcare, and so on, will be organised in a similar fashion. With this organisational system of all the functions of the various aspects of social life, there will be no place in society for the power of one individual over another or for the exploitation of one by another. The basic principle of production and distribution for the building of the new social system will be: everyone will produce according to their possibilities and everyone will receive according to their needs.

Tactics

The realisation of this social ideal of equality, solidarity and freedom can only be brought about by the united workers and peasant masses, inspired by anarchist communism and organised into ideological, professional, exchange and consumption, cultural and educational groups. Anarchist communism, while repudiating the State, rejects the involvement of the workers in the administration bodies and institutions of the State, in the parliament and in any vote for the official management of the State. As the sole means of efficient struggle, as a defence of the immediate interests of the working masses, and for the realisation of the full ideal of humanity's freedom, anarchism recognises only the direct action of the workers themselves, initiated by their economic organisations and expressed through strikes, sabotage, boycotts, general strikes, insurrections and the social revolution. In consequence, anarchism rejects all forms of organisation and struggle by political parties, considering them sterile and ineffective, unable to respond to the goals and the immediate tasks and to the interests of the workers in the towns and villages. The true strength of the workers is in the economy and their economic organisations. Only there lies the terrain where capitalism can be undermined. Only there lies the true class struggle.

Organisation

The radical social re-organisation demanded by anarchist communism requires the organisational action of all the forces on whom this historical task is incumbent. It is above all necessary for the partisans of anarchist communism to be organised in an anarchist communist ideological organisation.

The tasks of these organisations are:

- to develop, realise and spread anarchist communist ideas;
- to study all the vital present-day questions affecting the daily lives of the working masses and the problems of the social reconstruction;
- the multi-faceted struggle for the defence of our social ideal and the cause of working people;

- to participate in the creation of groups of workers on the level of production, profession, exchange and consumption, culture and education, and all other organisations that can be useful in the preparation for the social reconstruction;
- armed participation in every revolutionary insurrection;
- the preparation for and organisation of these events; M the use of every means which can bring on the social revolution.

Anarchist communist ideological organisations are absolutely indispensable in the full realisation of anarchist communism both before the revolution and after. These organisations are formed on a local level. Every local organisation chooses a secretary, whose task is to keep in contact with other similar organisations. The secretaries of all the organisations of one locality with a certain number of inhabitants constitute the general organisation of the locality. All the local organisations unite, by region and province, in regional and provincial unions. Contact between the unions is assured by the respective secretaries. All the provincial unions of the country are united in the Federation of Anarchist Communists of Bulgaria. Activities are co-ordinated by the federal secretariat. The members of each secretariat form part of the local organisation in their area of residence, and it is obligatory for every initiative of theirs to pass through the local organisation, and therefore be considered an initiative of the latter. The secretariats are merely liaison and executive bodies with no power. Only anarchist communists can be members of the anarchist communist ideological organisations. A second type of organisation is the workers' syndicate, also based on the federative principle, organised by workplace or by trade, and united into production or trade unions in a general federation of workers' syndicates. These organisations, created with the participation of anarchist communists, adopt the tactic of direct action and reject the struggles of political parties and all interference by political parties in the workers' organisations.

Their tasks are:

- the defence of the immediate interests of the working class;
- the struggle to improve the work conditions of the workers;
- the study of the problems of production;
- the control of production, and the ideological, technical and organisational preparation of a radical social reconstruction in which they will have to ensure the continuation of industrial output.

All workers who accept their structure, tactics and tasks may be members of these organisations. When conditions do not permit the existence of such organisations, anarchist communist workers join other independent syndicalist workers' organisations, while defending their concept of direct action and their anti-party position. The ORPS 1 would appear to be such an organisation today. A third type of organisation must group the peasantry. This is the locally-created agricultural labour organisation, united on a regional, provincial and national level in a general federation which, together with the federation of workers' syndicates, make up the national confederation of labour.

The tasks of these agricultural labour organisations are:

- to defend the interests of the landless peasants, those with little land and those with small parcels of land;
- to organise agricultural production groups, to study the problems of agricultural production;
- to prepare for the future social reconstruction, in which they will be the pioneers of the re-organisation and the agricultural production, with the aim of ensuring the subsistence of the entire population.

The agricultural labour organisations are built on the basis of sector and reject all struggles by political parties and their interference in the organisations. They apply the tactic of direct action, whenever possible, in their specific conditions, including refusing to pay taxes, boycotting the State, production strikes, etc. The members of these organisations can be landless peasants, those with little land and those with small parcels of land, who work the land themselves without the use of wage labour. When the conditions to create such organisations do not exist, anarchist communist peasants join other similar labour organisations, with the aim of promoting within them their vision of direct action and struggle against political parties and the tactic of peasant direct action. The OZPS 2 could be considered such an organisation. A fourth type of organisation is the co-operative. Anarchist communists participate in all types of co-operatives, bringing to them the spirit of solidarity and of mutual aid against the spirit of the party and bureaucracy. Agricultural production co-operatives today merit special attention, as they will become more important and will play a decisive educational role in the future construction of an anarchist communist social system. Another type of organisation are those of young people, women, temperance groups, Esperantists and other cultural organisations whose members support the ideas and the struggles of the anarchist communist ideological and economic organisations of the working people. Relations between the aforementioned organisations are on a functional basis, that recognises the full freedom and independence of the members and the organisations, and excludes all external interference and all subordination of one organisation to another. The reciprocal dependence between the various types of organisation can only be based on their ideological commonality and unity, the common goal to which they all aspire. Organisational decisions within anarchist communists organisations are made unanimously, and not by majority. The decision of the majority is not binding on the minority; persuasion should always be sought. In practice, the minority generally rallies to the decision of the majority, which reserves the right to express the correctness of its position, once it has been demonstrated in fact. Thanks to this principle, which is widely applied within the anarchist movement, splits, enmities and arguments are rare. However, within the mass economic organisations and the other organisations, decision are taken by majority vote and are binding, as only in this way can unity be achieved, unity that is absolutely indispensable in mass organisations. But in certain cases where there is profound disagreement, the minority may be freed from the obligation to apply a general decision, on condition that it does not prevent the execution of such a decision. All the aforementioned organisations share the common task of preparing the radical social reconstruction throughout the country. During the social revolution, they will each carry out (within their own domain) the expropriation and socialisation of the means of production and of all goods.

Immediate Tasks

At present, the Federation of Anarchist Communists of Bulgaria has adopted the following slogans:

- The creation of free worker and peasant local councils and committees elected directly and not as representative of political parties, organised and controlled by the people. These councils and committees must take completely in hand, or control, the political direction of the country.
- The role of these councils and committees is to express the wishes of the working masses and of co-ordinating the efforts of all in order to construct a complete social system and ensure its functioning. They are united on local, regional and national levels and represent the whole people's political force, thought and will.
- The adoption by Bulgarian workers and peasants of the International Workers' Association, to defend the worldwide interests of all working people and impede any forthcoming war.
- The clear and categorical rejection of all forms of class collaboration.
- Recognition of the right of workers to struggle freely to defend their material interests, to improve their conditions and to strike.
- Workers' control of production and a share of the benefits.
- The reduction of wage differences between the various categories of civil servants, State workers and private sector workers, tending towards the introduction of a family wage.
- Exemption from all taxes for workers, low-level employees, small peasants and all low-paid levels of society. M Free and voluntary agricultural co-operative associations.
- Free and voluntary co-operation between small artisan enterprises.
- Progression towards a complete co-operative system of exchange, food supply and consumption, and towards co-operative development to include domestic and foreign trade and social security.
- Increases in the prices of agricultural production up to an average level and a reduction to the same level of the prices of industrial products, based on real retail prices and a just and egalitarian remuneration for labour in the towns and countryside.
- Organisation of the struggle against speculation and the black market by the labour associations, producers' associations, exchange and consumption associations and by the public naming of all speculators and traffickers.
- The creation and development of regular, high-quality commercial relations throughout the country, with the rapid satisfaction of needs with regard to basic essentials, such as clothing and footwear, through foreign imports.

- The financial stabilisation of the country with a streamlining of the bureaucratic apparatus, with a real (not provisional) State budget and economy, with the complete elimination of all unnecessary spending (such as the costs of war), and with a real increase (not just a demagogic one) in the national production.
- Complete freedom of speech, of the press and of organisation and assembly for all non-fascists. The suppression of all State and police control — left over from the fascist period — of co-operatives, trade unions and other organisations. The government must fulfil its promises in this regard.
- Opposition to all dictatorships of whatever name or colour.
- Suppression of the death penalty and of all special laws.
- The disappearance of all concentration and labour camps or workhouses with the aim of punishing; dissolution of the forced labour system, applied as a police method.
- Struggle against the remnants of fascism and vigilance against all activity against the people, under the aegis of the various labour, production and ideological organisations of the workers and peasants.
- The grouping of all worker and democratic elements into egalitarian military unions in order to resist strongly and effectively the growing reaction.
- War reparations to be made by war criminals.
- The dissolving of the army, the suppression of obligatory military service and the militaristic education of young people both inside and outside schools.
- The creation of a voluntary popular militia (not controlled by any party), recruitment to which will be solely effected from among the workers and peasants, and controlled by the worker-peasant organisations.
- Fully scientific teaching and education, free of all political party and class influence, widely available to the new generations.
- Free, widely available healthcare for everyone.
- The total exclusion of all religious interference from teaching and the family.
- Aid to the population under the control of the labour, production and ideological organisations of the workers and peasants.
- Bread, freedom, peace and jobs for all workers and the progressive layers of the Bulgarian people.

Long Live the International Solidarity Of the Workers! Long Live Anarchist Communism!

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