



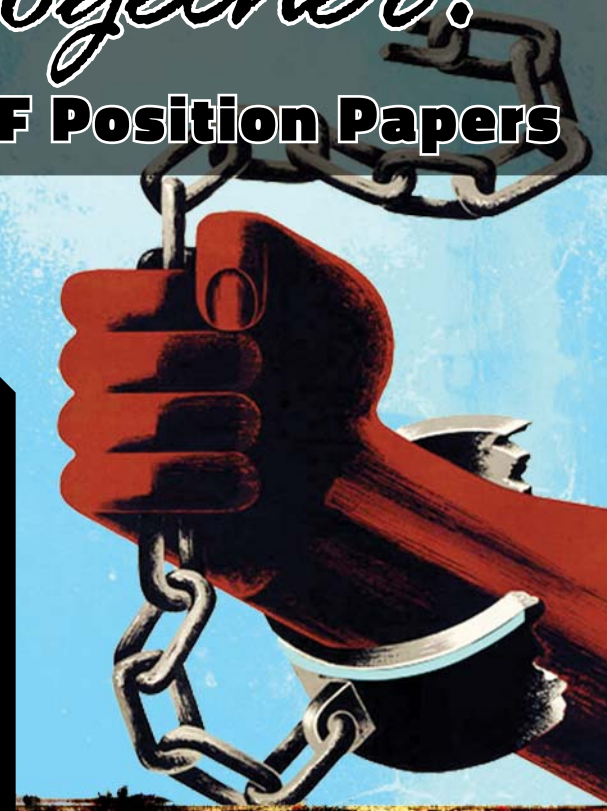
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# Stronger Together!

**Six ZACF Position Papers**

## Inside:

- ▶ Gay and Lesbian Oppression
- ▶ The Student Movement
- ▶ Seperate Organisations?
- ▶ The Violence Question
- ▶ The Nature of the Soviet Bloc
- ▶ Building an Anarchist International



6 Position Papers of the  
**Zabalaza Anarchist  
Communist Front**



*Stronger  
Together!*



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6 ZACF Position Papers





## ► General Introduction

Gays and lesbians have long been subject to discrimination and prejudice in South Africa and other countries. Personal freedom in the area of sexual preference (as in all other areas of life) is tightly controlled under capitalism and the State, with laws in almost all countries defining what forms of adult sex are and are not acceptable.

We believe that all consenting adults should have the right to engage in the sexual practices and relationships that make them happy, and we therefore oppose the oppression of gays and lesbians.

We do not accept the argument that gay and lesbian activity is unnatural, because such behaviour has always existed in all societies. This includes Africa, contrary to the claims of bourgeois nationalists.<sup>1</sup>

The gay rights clauses in the new constitution of South Africa represent an important victory for all people. They were won through struggle, and must be defended in the same way. Such legislative reforms, while important, are not enough. For example, the laws will still be applied by the same bigoted police and judges who implemented the old anti-gay laws. Moreover, there is a gap between paper rights and the reality on the ground. In general, the broad structures of gay and lesbian oppression remain in place in practice. The forces which gave rise to this oppression (see below) are very much alive and kicking.

## ► The Roots of Gay and Lesbian Oppression

The oppression of gays and lesbians, just like the oppression of women, is rooted in the nature of capitalist society and the ideas it promotes.

Capitalism relies heavily on the heterosexual family, which provides care for the workers, the sick, the elderly and the next generation of workers.

- making the politics of both the ZACF and the “Platformist” tradition more widely known with the Anarchist movement abroad.
- take part in debates within the international Anarchist movement with an aim of explaining the policies of the ZACF, and of getting the various groupings to clarify their political positions. An international discussion bulletin jointly produced by a number of organisations would be a contribution to this work, which would be immediately realisable if the idea wins agreement.
- proposing concrete international co-operation on specific issues where there is agreement between ourselves and other organisations.
- we should set up formal relations with other Anarchist and Syndicalist groups in Africa (e.g.) the Awareness League in Nigeria, and the Industrial Workers of the World in Sierra Leone. We should aim in the medium term to get contacts in nearby countries, with the aim of setting up organisations along similar lines to ourselves.
- applying for the closest possible formal relationship with the Workers Solidarity Movement in Ireland, a group whose politics are extremely close to those of our own.

stand by and allow people to take control of their own lives. They will not only object to losing profits, but will also fear the living example of Anarchism in action. Trade boycotts, embargoes on supplying raw materials, economic sabotage, sealing of borders and outright war will be their answer. The success of Anarchism is dependent on it spreading across borders.



## SEE POSITION PAPER ON FIGHTING IMPERIALISM

An international Anarchist political organisation is necessary to provide international solidarity within the movement, promote working class solidarity across borders, help provide a co-ordinated response to capitalism, facilitate the international revolution etc. Such an organisation would have agreed policies on major issues such as the role of the Anarchist political organisation, activity within the trade unions, fighting racism and fascism, the type of struggle needed to advance the movement for women's freedom, anti-imperialist conflicts, and gay and lesbian rights. It would also have an agreed international strategy, the capability of fostering international debate among Anarchist and the capability of giving aid to weaker sections or to those engaged in mass struggle.

Such an international organisation is more than a loose network of like-minded groups. It is not a paper body. It only has a purpose if it can contribute to the Anarchist movement. Therefore it only becomes real when based on a number of sizeable organisations. Anything less would need finance, administration, translation, publications, and conferences but would not be capable of making the return necessary to justify this expenditure of resources.

## ► Immediate Steps

In order to reach a situation where an international Anarchist political organisation can be formed we must start preparing the way now. Our tasks are to:

- establish and maintain contact with other Anarchist groups, and tendencies within other organisations moving in the direction of our politics

The hostility towards gays and lesbians stems from the challenge that their sexuality poses to the idea that this is the only possible form of family. Clearly, it undermines the idea that sex is only for reproduction. Homosexuals are condemned as unnatural because their sexual activity cannot produce children.

Promoting hatred of gays and lesbians (homophobia) is also a very effective way of dividing and ruling the workers and the poor.

## ► Strategic Perspectives

This analysis of the roots of gay and lesbian oppression has a number of important implications for strategy and tactics in the fight against gay and lesbian oppression.

Some gays and lesbians see the solution to their oppression in separatism and lifestyle politics. We do not see these as real solutions as these people are trying to drop out rather than struggle to change the society in which they live. The fight for gay and lesbian liberation needs to be taken up by all progressive forces and definitely should not be seen as "their struggle" only.

Given the roots of gay and lesbian oppression in the class system, capitalism and the State we do not think that the way to defeat gay and lesbian oppression is by promoting gay "business power" or by uniting all classes of the "gay community". The presence of capitalists in the gay movement is a serious problem, not part of the solution. The gay bourgeoisie objectively defends capitalism and the State and cannot thus consistently fight lesbian and gay oppression. Instead, it tends to try to divert the struggle into safe channels like sponsoring glossy magazines, trying to make gay pride marches into harmless carnivals and advertising events etc.

Instead, we think that the fight must be linked to the class struggle against capitalism and the State, and we think that all progressive forces should support gays' and lesbians' right to equality.

United class struggle is the only way to finally defeat gay and lesbian oppression for once and for all. There is no substitute for a programme of "boring from within" and "anarchising" the trade unions.



## SEE POSITION PAPER ON SEPARATE ORGANISATIONS

Non-homosexual people do not benefit from gay and lesbian oppression, as it seriously divides and weakens the working-class in its struggles for a better, freer life, resulting in worse conditions all round.

### ► Immediate Demands

However, although we believe that true liberation for gays and lesbians will only come about with the abolition of capitalism and the State, and the creation of a society that gives everyone real control over their lives, we do not put off the fight for freedom until the future. Gays and lesbians are entitled to full support in their struggle for equality.

- In immediate terms, we must raise the issue of fighting against discrimination on the job, in our trade unions. An end to harassment must be demanded.
- Stereotyping and anti-gay attitudes must be challenged everywhere.
- We support physical self-defence by lesbians and gays against gay bashers and the police where necessary.
- We reject the right of the State to dictate the sexual choices of consenting adults.
- We support progressive initiatives of the gay movement such as Gay Pride marches, the scrapping of anti-gays laws and anti-discrimination campaigns. We also think that links must be built with other working class campaigns.
- The right of gay parents to keep their children must be supported.

### ► Introduction

Capitalism and the State dominate every part of the earth. There is nowhere on the planet that is not subject to some boss or ruler.

Capitalism cannot contain itself in national/State boundaries. Since the Second World War in particular, capitalism has organised itself on an international basis. This is seen in the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations (UN), the European Community (EC), the General Agreement on Trades and Tariffs (GATT), and many other organisations and treaties. It is seen in co-operation between governments in the interests of capitalism as a whole, or of a bloc within capitalism (e.g. the Gulf War). And it is seen in the rise of massive transnational corporations (TNCs).

To combat this international situation, workers need international solidarity and unity. The ZACF promotes international working class solidarity, challenging nationalist, imperialist, racist, protectionist and/or “labour aristocracy” arguments.



## SEE POSITION PAPERS ON ANTI-IMPERIALISM, FIGHTING RACISM, AND CLASS STRUGGLE, CAPITALISM AND THE STATE IN PARTICULAR.

### ► Anarchist International

To combat this situation, Anarchism must also be an international movement. There can be no “Anarchism in one country”. While a single country may be the first to move to Anarchism it will not be able to survive for long if it remains isolated. The ruling class, both local and foreign, are not democrats who will



# Building an Anarchist International

*“The path towards the emancipation of the workers  
can only be reached by the union of all the workers of  
the world.*

*Long live the workers international! Long live the free  
and stateless anarchist commune.”*

**Makhnovist Army and Nabat Anarchist group,**  
May 1919, “Workers, Peasants and Insurgents. For  
the Oppressed, Against the Oppressor- Always!”,  
leaflet issued in the Anarchist-led revolution in  
Ukraine, 1918-21. Reproduced in Peter Archinov,  
*History of the Makhnovist Movement, 1918-21.* 1987  
Freedom Press edition.



## Footnotes:

1. This is documented for Africa. See, for example, B.D. Adam, (1986), “Age, Structure and Sexuality: Reflections on the Anthropological Evidence on Homosexual Behaviour”, in E. Blackwood (ed.), *Anthropology and Homosexual Behaviour*. Haworth. NY. London; E. Blackwood, “Breaking the Mirror: the Construction of Lesbianism and Anthropological Evidence on Homosexuality”, in E. Blackwood (ed.), *Anthropology and Homosexual Behaviour*. Haworth. NY. London; M.J. Herskowitz, (1967), *Dahomey: an Ancient West African Kingdom*. 2 vols. Evanston. Northwestern University Press; S.F. Nadel, (1942), *Black Byzantium: the Kingdom of the Nupe in Nigeria*. Oxford. London; E. Pritchard, (1971), *The Azande*. Oxford. Clarendon; E. Pritchard, (1970), “Sexual Inversion amongst the Azande”, *American Anthropologist*, no. 72; M. Wilson, (1963), *Good Company: the Structure of Nyakusa Age Villages*. Oxford. London.

# The Student Movement

*"It rests with you [the youth of the well-to-do classes] either to palter continually with your conscience, and in the end to say, one fine day: "Perish humanity, provided I can have plenty of pleasures and enjoy them to the full, so long as the people are foolish enough to let me.*

*Or, once more the inevitable alternative, to take part with the [Anarchist-] Socialists and work with them for the complete transformation of society... come and place your services at the disposal of those who most need them. And remember, if you do come, that you come not as masters, but as comrades in the struggle...*

*The never-ceasing struggle for truth, justice and equality among the [working and poor] people, whose gratitude you will earn - what nobler career can the youth of all nations desire than this?"*

**Peter Kropotkin,**  
*An Appeal to the Young,*  
1880, various editions



## Footnotes:

1. A useful discussion of the theory of State-Capitalism is J. Crump and A. Buick, (1986), *State Capitalism: the Wages System under New Management*. Macmillan.
2. See, for example, E.O. Wright (1978), *Class, Crisis, and the State*, New Left Books. London. Although Marxist, this book develops a model of the class system which is fairly similar to the Anarchist model outlined in an earlier section (except it fails to deal with the position of those who occupy military and bureaucratic positions separate to production, strictly defined).



**SEE POSITION PAPER ON CLASS STRUGGLE,  
CAPITALISM AND THE STATE**

On the degeneration of the Russian revolution, the classic studies are still Voline, *The Unknown Revolution*. Black Rose; A. Berkman, *The Russian Tragedy*; P. Archinov, (1987), *The History of the Makhnovist Movement*; G.P. Maximoff, *Bolshevism: Promises and Reality*; E. Goldman, *My Disillusionment in Russia*. More contemporary accounts can be found in WSM, *Stalin Did Not Fall From the Moon!*; Ireland; ZACF, 1997, *What is Anarchism?*; Johannesburg. On the history of the Russian Anarchist movement, it is also outlined in P. Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*. P. Avrich (ed.), *The Anarchists in the Russian Revolution* is very useful as it brings together an uneven collection of Russian Anarchist literature from the time of the Revolution. Also useful is J. Westergaard-Thorp, *"The Workers Themselves": Revolutionary Syndicalism and International Labour*, which looks at the conflicts between the international Anarchist movement and the new Russian Marxist State in the 1920s.

Romania mass demonstrations and (in the Romanian case) armed insurrection swept the ideology of Marxism-Leninism into the dustbin of history, and led to the establishment of parliamentary regimes. In Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Hungary the change over to a multi-party system was brought about gradually by reform Communists thus avoiding mass demonstrations.

In all of these countries there has been a rapid shift towards more market-based forms of capitalism. This was often far from the intentions of the masses who were demanding more political rights and economic well-being.

While many of the enterprises in the formerly State-capitalist countries have been closed or privatised to foreign investors, others are now “owned” rather than merely “managed” by their former directors.

Neither of the two ridiculous orthodox Trotskyite notions that (1) the reforms were the vital injection of workers democracy that would transform these countries into socialist paradises or (2) that workers would actively defend the so-called “post-capitalist” property forms has been borne out in fact.

However, there have been strikes and other working class actions in defence of some of the welfare and employment measures of particular State-capitalist countries, such as greater access to abortion (East Germany), cheaper transport etc. We absolutely support workers in defence of jobs and better facilities if these exist. This in no way commits us to the defence of State-capitalism any more than, for instance, a defence of greater freedom of speech and freedom of movement in the West commits us to defending market-capitalism. Our criteria and concern here is whether these facilities and rights are in the interests of the working class. If they are, we are for their defence and enhancement through mass struggle; the niceties of different forms of regulating the capitalist economy are not our concern. We are here to fight capitalism and the State, not to give them tips on how to run things better.

## ► Introduction

We support the progressive student movement in higher education because it is progressive, because it is fighting racism, because we oppose racism wherever it exists, because we stand in solidarity with the struggles of working class students, and because we believe we can recruit serious Anarchist activists from it.

## ► Workers and Students

We recognise that the problems students face - low bursaries, bad conditions, racism etc. - are the product of capitalism and the State, and that this has concrete implications for how we approach the student struggle.

This means that the student movement can only succeed if it is anti-capitalist. In turn, this means that links have to be built with other anti-capitalist struggles like rent boycotts etc. In concrete terms, the university is not an island; it is vital to build alliances.

Given students distance from the production process, varied origins and general numbers in the overall population, the student movement is unable to make a revolution. That is to say, it cannot solve its problems by itself. Only the working class can make the revolution because it is a productive class with no vested interest in capitalism united in the workplace and powerful because of its ability to disrupt production. Therefore a student-worker alliance is necessary for students.

However, such an alliance should be on workers terms - if students do not defend workers, they should not be supported by workers. In other words, there must be a principled alliance that emphasises the needs of the working class. Moreover, our general principles of class struggle lead us to argue that workers should play the leading role in this alliance. The students should not come as experts and leaders but as comrades coming to aid the struggle of the workers. Overall, these students would fall into the category of the middle class

that splits to join the workers in the struggle and the revolution. They should renounce the privileges of the middle class and ambitions for power in the State and capitalism.

## ► Towards the Workers University

The universities and technikons need to be fundamentally restructured in two ways:

- democratised and placed under worker-student-staff control (as should all education)
- reoriented - at present they train experts and managers whose function is to work for the bosses to provide knowledge, control etc. Instead of this situation, the intellectual resources of the tertiary education sector must be made to serve the needs of the working and poor people, who, after all, sustain the universities and technikons through their labour. At present the professions are distorted by capitalism: the doctor cannot practice properly, for the people are ill due to the conditions of capitalism; the teacher is regulated to teach obedience and bourgeois history, not independent inquiry and the struggles of the working class etc.

## ► Anarchist Activity in the Students Movement

We argue as follows:

- for a breaking off of alliances between student groups and political parties in parliament.
- for the unification of student groups into broad transformation fronts with the end goal of forming Black-centred progressive student unions.
- for solidarity from students for workers struggles against repressive labour relations, casualisation of jobs, retrenchments etc. with an immediate focus on the thousands of workers who already work in the tertiary education sector as cleaners etc. Solidarity with teaching and office staff.

In Poland there were riots in 1970 and 1976 and in 1980 a mass strike movement spread out of the Gdansk shipyard. The Solidarnosc movement that developed was a mass trade union that included many left currents advocating workers self-management. However, the leadership was made up of reformists like Kurion and Walesa. These made common ground with the Catholic Church and reform-minded Communists. Demands for workers' self-management were channelled into power-sharing in a liberal capitalist economy. Reformist and conservative currents dominated the union from the start, despite notable rank and file action such as the take-over and management of the entire city of Lodz by the local Solidarnosc in 1981. The imposition of martial law in 1981 was aimed almost exclusively at destroying rank and file opposition: while the leaders served brief terms under house arrest or in prison, the base resistance in the factories and mines was crushed. The union leaders were then released to help supervise the rush from State-capitalism to market-capitalism alongside the reform-minded Communists.

These years of struggle in Poland found an echo in other parts of the Eastern bloc. In Romania an embryonic free trade union, the SLMOR, took government officials hostage and in Russia the Free Workers Inter-Professional Association (SMOT) was formed. In China, autonomous unions played an important role in the Tiananmen Square movement that was crushed by the Communist Party.

Gorbachev inherited (sic!) a Russian economy in severe crisis. For the Communist Party to survive and maintain control, he realised that some economic liberalisation, a move towards a more market-driven form of capitalism, was needed, the threat of mass revolt and economic bankruptcy was hanging over the CP's head.

In terms of economic restructuring ("Perestroika"), his initial aim was probably to bring about some form of limited internal market in consumer goods while maintaining bureaucratic planning and power and arms in heavy industry. However, this form of hybrid capitalism proved impossible to maintain and there was a rapid move towards a market form of capitalism. At first, these reforms had substantial mass support.

In order to achieve support for Perestroika, Gorbachev had to allow a large amount of political liberalisation ("Glasnost"). This opened space for the expression of popular dissent and thus increased the opportunities for popular resistance to attempts to re-impose a one-party State.

The reforms in the Soviet Union prompted a massive popular response in Eastern Europe; with Gorbachev unwilling or even unable to intervene to crush dissent as had happened previously. In Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Poland and

as a process in which an enlightened vanguard party would assume State power to impose “socialism” (in the sense of State ownership) on the “backward” masses. As we have discussed elsewhere, \* nationalisation is not real socialism, it is a policy that places the means of production under the control of a State managerial elite.



### SEE POSITION PAPER, FIGHTING RACISM

By 1921, the emerging ruling class had wrested power from the workers and peasants. This process was completed in essence in 1918, and accelerated by the “war communism” of the civil war period and Trotsky’s “militarisation of labour” proposals. The civil war contributed to this degeneration of the revolution insofar as it provided an excuse to impose repressive anti-worker measures, and insofar as it weakened the working class’s ability to resist the Communist-led counter-revolution.

The process of State-capitalism was finalised by Stalin in the 1920s and 1930s, but the actual transfer of power had already been completed by the old Bolsheviks (Lenin, Trotsky and co.). The only small difference was that the “New Bolsheviks” recruited after 1917 were subjectively as well as objectively State-capitalists.

## ► Recent Developments in Russia and Eastern Europe

Russia and Eastern Europe have never been without workers opposition to the one-party State-capitalist regime. These reflected workers grievances with the political and economic hardships under which they lived. They were not “imperialist plots” which had to be crushed but progressive popular struggles.

Examples include Kronstadt 1921 in Russia. Also the revolts in East Germany and Hungary in 1953 and 1956. In Czechoslovakia in 1968 regime attempts to liberalise the economy snowballed into a popular revolt that had to be put down with Soviet tanks.

- for a class struggle approach to the student struggle, not a black nationalist approach that denies the importance of class.
- for opposition to all funding cuts, discrimination and bad conditions. For increased funding to historically Black tertiary education, and for increased bursaries to prevent the exclusion of the Black working class youth from higher education. Unconditional opposition to racism.
- for mass action, not reliance on politicians, as a way to win gains.
- affirmative action to make the university populations of the historically white universities and technikons representative of the country as a whole.
- defence of all student activists victimised for fighting for transformation.
- opposition to all reactionary uses of science. For example, military research, work on surveillance, vivisection. Defend the rights of students to refuse to perform vivisection. Fight for a people-centred form of science, not a bosses technology tool to increase exploitation.

# Separate Organisations?

*“The revolution and the honour of the workers oblige us to declare... that we make war on the same enemies: on capital and authority, which oppresses all workers... The bourgeoisie of all countries and nationalities is united in a bitter struggle against the revolution, against the labouring masses of the whole world and all nationalities...”*

*The path toward the emancipation of the workers can only be reached by the union of all the workers of the world. Long live the workers international! Long live the free and stateless anarchist commune.”*

**Makhnovist Army and Nabat Anarchist group**, May 1919,

“Workers, Peasants and Insurgents. For the Oppressed, Against the Oppressor- Always!”  
Leaflet issued in the Anarchist-led revolution in Ukraine, 1918-21. Reproduced in Peter Archinov, *History of the Makhnovist Movement, 1918-21*. 1987 Freedom Press edition.

labour process, whilst the “working class” has no legal rights over the means of production (and must thus sell its labour power), and is excluded from control over authority relations, the physical means of production, and the investment process. That is one reason why top corporate executives and managers of parastatal enterprises can be classified as bosses.<sup>2</sup>

In the East, the ruling class had economic ownership and possession. It also had collective legal ownership in the sense that it was legally entitled to run the economy on behalf of the working class and peasantry, both as the ruling vanguard party and as the “legitimate” occupants of the appropriate posts in the State apparatus.

Despite the claims of Stalinists and Trostkyists of various hues, there has always been unemployment in the Soviet Union, especially high in oppressed outlying regions such as Armenia and Azerbaijan. This unemployment was concealed as unpaid slave labour (labour camps), low paid work, and seasonal and migratory work in the outlying areas. There was also homelessness, poverty and all the other common features of capitalism.

## ► How did Russia become State-Capitalist?

Basically, after October 1917, the organised working class had expropriated most of the means of production, and most land was seized by the peasants. But before the masses could consolidate and expand these gains, they lost power to a rising bureaucratic class comprised of the remnants of the Tsarist bureaucracy and also the Bolshevik (“Communist”) Party. The new ruling class placed the means of production under the control of a one-party State run by the Communist Party.<sup>3</sup>

This was not an inevitable or an accidental development. This transfer of class power was partly rooted in Marxism. Marx had proposed the centralisation of all finance, land and means of production in the hands of the State as an essential step towards socialism. The Bolsheviks developed these views into a rigorous attack on workers self-management. Workers control was seen simply as a step on the road towards nationalisation, with socialism placed very far down the road. Such a philosophy led directly to State-Capitalism (as predicted by Bakunin in the First International). The transition from capitalism was seen



In any capitalist system profit is extracted at the point of production by undervaluing labour power (remunerating the producers with less than the full value of their production). Whether or not this profit is realised as cash money on the market is not of primary importance. Much of this surplus can be fed directly into the system as means of production. A system in which all value is fed back as means of production is possible in theory. All capitalist systems tend towards this with more and more profit going into plant and machinery and less and less labour from which to extract a profit being used over time (this has been called “the tendency for the rate of profit to fall”).

The Soviet Union exemplified this, it was a nightmare form of capitalism where weapons systems and heavy machinery proliferated but basic consumer needs were not met.

The absence of private property rights (e.g. individual legal ownership) is often put forward as evidence that the Marxist-Leninist countries were not capitalist but some sort of new “post-capitalist” system.

Property forms (in the sense of who owns what in law) can be a convenient legal fiction concealing the essential relations of production. For example, in the lineage mode of production, property was supposedly collective but in practice it was held “for the people” by an oligarchy of patriarchal leaders and their direct descendants. So all tributes and profits passed to them



**SEE POSITION PAPER ON CLASS STRUGGLE REGARDING THE LINEAGE MODE**

State Capitalism in Russia employs a similar ruse to conceal its exploitative nature.

Ownership of the means of production cannot be reduced to individual legal title to stocks. Ownership can be disaggregated into 3 components: legal ownership (title to property, and legal status as an employer); economic ownership (control over investments and resources); and possession (control over the physical means of production, and over the labour power of others).

In the West, the ruling class are juridical owners of the means of production, and also control the accumulation process, decide how the physical means of production are to be used, and control the authority structure within the

## ► Introduction



**PLEASE EXAMINE OTHER POSITION PAPERS FOR FULLER ANALYSIS OF CLASS STRUGGLE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE FIGHT AGAINST ALL OPPRESSION.**

As Anarchists, we stand for class struggle between the bosses and rulers, on the one hand, and the workers, peasants and the poor, on the other hand. We therefore call on working and poor people to organise separately from the class enemy, the rich and powerful. All working and poor people have essentially the same interests, and can only defeat capitalism, the State and all forms of oppression by organising separately on the basis of CLASS, and only class. We stand for maximum unity amongst the oppressed classes. We oppose any alliances between the oppressed classes and the oppressing classes.

## ► ZACF Commissions

Having said this, we do recognise that there may be a need to organise special commissions (committees) of the Anarchist political organisation, the ZACF, to concentrate on all the various issues relevant to the working class and poor: for example, racism, sexism. Also, in the long run it may be possible to set up ZACF youth and other sections e.g. a “Syndicalist Youth” wing.

The point of ZACF commissions is to make sure that all issues relevant to the working and poor people are dealt with in a comprehensive and effective fashion. Examples: commissions on women’s freedom, trade union democracy etc. Such groups would be set up by ZACF National Conference.



## SEE ZACF CONSTITUTION.

Neither commissions nor sections should be go-it-alone isolated bodies with no aid from other structures, or as “ghettos” to which controversial issues can be assigned and forgotten. Instead, they should be seen as integral parts of the ZACF.

The ZACF is a class-struggle based organisation- we promote organisation and struggle on the basis of class as the means to change society. We oppose divisions between working and poor people. Given that the working-class/ peasantry are multi-national and multi-racial, this clearly means that the ZACF must be an integrated non-racial, non-sexist organisation. It also implies that the working class struggle must be fought on non-racial, international lines.

## ► Why we oppose non-class Separate Organisations

As noted above, we call for the working and poor people to organise separately from their class enemy: the ruling class. However, we do not support the tactic (advocated by some political currents) of forming non-class based separate organisations. For example, women-only movements (advocated by radical feminism), Black-only movements (advocated by Black Consciousness), gay-only movements etc. Although we recognise that such approaches are capable of gaining fair amounts of support and publicity, we nonetheless argue that they are weak and flawed approaches unable to deliver liberation to the groups whose interests they profess. At the same time, we unconditionally defend people’s basic democratic right to associate with whomever they wish.

Typically, approaches that call for non-class based separate organisation fail to correctly identify the source of the oppression of the group in question. They typically fail to even provide critiques of capitalism and the State; even where they do, they fail to provide workable strategies for liberation. For example, radical feminism argues that all men benefit from women’s oppression, and that, as a result, women must organise separately from

## ► Introduction

While there have been many changes in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and parts of Asia since 1988, it is important to state that these countries were not in any way socialist and to explain why.<sup>1</sup>

Since at least 1918, Anarchists have recognised that the Russian command economy was State capitalist because:

- it maintained the separation of the producers from their means of production and undervalued their labour power in order to extract surplus value for a ruling class which owned and controlled the means of production. This is the case in all capitalist countries.
- it was also subject to the same law of constant accumulation.
- in the case of the Soviet Union, all property/means of production belonged to the Soviet state so all surplus value accrued to it, and, more specifically, to the bureaucratic elite which controlled that State.

The absence of internal markets in the USSR and other Marxist-Leninist countries did not mean that the capitalist mode of production was not in operation.

Surplus value is incorporated into goods at the point of production under capitalism. Value is not created in the process of distribution (e.g. the market), but by labour-power in the process of production.

In the West, this surplus value is realised as money profits by selling these goods on the market. But the surplus value is incorporated into goods whether or not they are sold. This can be used directly for providing use values for the capitalists such as weapons or extra plant or machinery.

This is the way that State-capitalism worked. Internally, surplus value was realised directly as use-values (e.g. weapons, plant) which (i) kept the system ticking over (ii) maintained the bureaucracy in its privileged class position. It is also important to note that many goods were sold on the international market (particularly raw materials and arms) and the money shared out amongst the bureaucratic elite in the form of bribes, wages and awards.



# The Nature of the Soviet Bloc

*"We learn in Russia how Communism cannot be introduced".*

**Peter Kropotkin**, June 1920,  
"Message to the Workers of the West",  
in P. Avrich (ed), *The Anarchists in  
the Russian Revolution*,  
(Thames and Hudson), p. 151.  
*Documents of Revolution Series.*

men (the enemy). Such an argument fails to identify the real roots of special oppressions (primarily in capitalism and the State), or to recognise that no workers actually benefit from such oppression. It thus fails to realise that only class struggle can end special oppressions, and that the real allies of specially oppressed groups are other working and poor people (in this case, men). It thus fails to see the need for united organisation, and thus for class-consciousness, and class power.

Another questionable claim that is sometimes used to promote these non-class based separate organisations is that "they are necessary to make sure that the group in question is not marginalised by other forces". For example, some Black nationalists argue that Blacks must organise separately so that they are not bossed around or ignored by whites in progressive struggles. This is a legitimate concern, but it does not follow that separate organisation is the best way to deal with it. On the contrary, separate organisation is a particularly weak approach to the problem.

Firstly, separate organisation often tends to reinforce and deepen the marginalisation of the voice of a given group. (a) The existence of a separate organisation often allows the "ghettoisation" of that group's concerns. For example, men can say that issues of women's oppression should be dealt with by the women, and are thus able to avoid changing backward ways of behaving (e.g. sexism) that are, ultimately, against the interests of all working and poor people. Instead, all sections of the working class and poor need to be won to a programme of opposing (rather than ignoring) all forms of oppression. (b) Even if these other sections do not themselves have first hand experience of a given form of oppression, it does not follow that they cannot be won to a position of opposition to that oppression. Such a position is in their own interests because no workers really benefit from oppression. In addition, all workers share a common form of oppression as workers which provides a basis for unity. We reject the notion that "the facts" can only be understood by members of a given group - social-scientific analysis can produce reasonably objective, context-free knowledge. (c) Third, separate organisations can lay the basis for the isolation and defeat of a specially oppressed group. For example, the Black minority in the USA is too small and weak to overthrow the US ruling class on its own. It needs allies. Yet the logic of separate organisation advocated by US Black nationalists is to oppose all such alliances, because it effectively claims strength flows from isolation, and denies the very real common interests of all workers.

Secondly, this view expresses a lack of confidence in the abilities of Blacks, women etc. to function in integrated organisations. But it is folly and patronising to assume that, for example, Black people in such organisations

will always be passive followers of “White leaders”. Exactly the opposite is true. Even within Europe and the USA, Black workers will be in the forefront of the struggle, a crucial part of the layer of activists whose role is so vital to the revolution. In South Africa, the Black working class will be the agent of revolutionary change. To claim that Black people will “always” be reduced to passive followers in integrated leftist movements is to be blind to the capacities of the Black working class.

Taken to its logical conclusion, separate organisation divides the working class into competing and even hostile sections to the detriment of all. Why stop at Black-only or women-only movements? The basic idea of separate organisation readily leads to an emphasise on difference, and a process of continual fragmentation: blacks versus whites versus Asians versus blacks of one sort of origin (e.g. America) versus those of another (e.g. African) versus blacks of one sex (e.g. men) versus those of another (e.g. women) versus blacks of one sexual preference (e.g. straight) versus those of another (e.g. gay) versus blacks of one religion (e.g. Christian) versus those of another (e.g. Islamic) etc. etc. Such fragmentation of political struggle is common in many countries. Instead of emphasising difference, and using it to justify separatism, we need to find points of agreement and common interest; divided we are weak, united we can win. Class provides the basis for uniting the vast majority of the world against the key source of poverty, oppression, and domination: capitalism, the State and their ruling classes.

The claim that only separate organisation can prevent the marginalisation of a group’s concerns is false. On the contrary: the most effective way to, for example, commit the working class to the struggle for women’s freedoms is not to confine the issue of women’s rights to small women-only groups, but to win all working-class people to a position opposed to sexism. This increases the support for such demands, and strengthens the struggle for such demands. Moreover, since it is in the interest of all working and poor people to support the struggle against all oppression, the task of winning all workers to this position is quite practical/possible.

Separate organisation on a non-class basis is NOT always progressive. Whilst we defend the right of free association, and defend and support progressive organisations that fight oppression, we also recognise that in some cases separate organisations are clearly a reactionary and a backward step.

Separate organisation in the workplace (e.g. women-only trade unions) is not acceptable in any case where industrial unions of all workers exist. The logic



## Footnotes:

1. Some of these issues are dealt with in greater depth in the pamphlet *You Can't Blow Up a Social relationship: the Anarchist Case Against Terrorism*. Anonymous Australian comrades. Available from Zabalaza books.

## ► Our Position: Self-Defensive Violence

Our position is to accept the need for self-defensive violence.

Short of revolution, there are many occasions on which the State uses violence to break the collective power of the working class and poor. For example, attacking picket lines and demonstrations, victimising, arresting and even murdering activists. We always support those who are victimised and defend them against State repression.

On occasions, demonstrations or strikes can turn to violence. We recognise that this is an inevitable feature of large-scale resistance to the bosses and rulers. In such cases where violence is inevitable, we argue for the creation of self-managed defence squads under democratic mass control.

Violence sometimes also takes place in smaller situations due to the necessity of intimidating scabs or due to frustration. In such cases, we defend those involved from State repression. Where such manifestations can only damage the struggle, we argue against the use of violent tactics. In cases where their use is correct we argue for the greatest possible democratic control of their use and implementation.

We do not glorify or encourage random attacks on members of the ruling class. Attacks on individuals and their property may well demonstrate an ineffective expression of legitimate anger but the function of Anarchists is to argue for collective action by the working class. These tactics may make individuals in the ruling class uncomfortable but they do not undermine the ability of this class to rule. Obviously we defend those who show their anger in this way, but we also argue that such energy is better directed at mobilising and politicising the working class.

Revolution should be as bloodless as possible. As we mentioned above, violence becomes inevitable as the ruling class will not give up its power and wealth without a bloody struggle. Our violence will be in defence of the gains of the revolution. We will work to minimise the violence by winning the State armed forces to the side of the workers and the peasants. The defence of the revolution will be organised through an internally democratic workers militia under the control of the trade unions and other working class and working peasant structures of self-management. The need for such violence will be almost universally understood.

of trade union organisation is to unify different categories of workers, who can only find strength in their unity. Where the unions exclude categories of workers, these workers should be organised to separate unions as a transitional step, but in all cases United Front action between the different unions should be promoted because it strengthens struggle, and because it helps lay the basis for future unification. Maximum unity on a principled basis (i.e. anti-racist etc.) must be promoted.

Separate organisation is only admissible as a tactic for liberation in cases where workers face a special oppression. We do not, for example, support tribalist movements such as the Inkatha “Freedom” Party because Zulus do not face a special oppression as Zulus.

Separate organisation that is not on a class struggle basis is dangerous because it almost always lays the basis for multi-class alliances as it is based on non-class identities and (supposed) non-class common interests. As argued in POSITION PAPERS on **FIGHTING RACISM, WOMEN’S LIBERATION** etc., only class struggle (not cross-class unity) can end racism, imperialism, sexism etc.

## ► Relating to already Existing Movements

In practice, as we have noted elsewhere, working and poor people have responded to the repression, exploitation and injustices of capitalism in a variety of ways. For example, at the ideological level, people have supported various political ideologies. Some of these ideologies share much ground with anarchism (e.g. other types of socialism) and others with which we have relatively little in common and/or reject (e.g. nationalism).

In addition, people have organised themselves to fight against capitalism in a variety of ways and areas of social life.

Two key forms of response are:

- **“Political” responses.** For example, some people work to build parliamentary parties (e.g. the ANC), or build wings of political parties (e.g. SASCO or PASO). What these approaches have in common is that they recruit people on the basis of a specific set of political beliefs (e.g. the Congress tradition).
- **“Economic” responses.** For example, civic associations, rent-strike

committees, youth structures, self-defence units, and, of course, trade unions. What these organisations have in common is that they are broad-based grassroots structures that organise people (regardless of their political beliefs) to fight for their daily needs against the powers-that-be i.e. on the basis of their economic and social interests (for example, more rights, better schools, lower rent, better working conditions). Such organisations typically have a class dimension in that they are based largely amongst working-class people and address issues relevant to the workers and poor. Class struggle is not just about wages - it is about every action by working and poor people to resist the bosses and rulers. The economic and class aspects of these structures remain true, no matter which political ideologies influence their membership (a variety of political currents are commonly present within these structures).

Organisations with homogenous memberships (for example, only Black members) may exist within both types of response. Some of these organisations have such a composition because it reflects members' political beliefs. For example, AZAPO. Therefore it is a "political response" (belief in non-class based separate organisation). The composition of other structures reflects their grassroots base. For example, a township-based civic is almost certain to be entirely Black in membership. Nonetheless, such a structure is an "economic response" in the sense outlined above and should be treated as such.

The following "rule of thumb" should be applied by the ZACF when relating to these two types of body:

- **Political groups.** In other parts of these Position Papers we have criticised both the strategy of using parliament for social change, and the strategy of using non-class based separate organisations.



**SEE OTHER POSITION PAPERS AND THE SECTION 'WHY WE OPPOSE NON-CLASS SEPARATE ORGANISATIONS' ABOVE.**

This means that we do not do political work within such organisations. However, we are more than ready to work alongside/in co-operation with such organisations through the tactic of United Front action

of power as the armed vanguard is not accountable to the working people and is instead controlled by a typically unelected central circle of leaders. In this model the masses are reduced to a passive role, acting at most as the providers of logistical support to the guerrillas. Even if sizeable popular support can be won for the armed struggle, this fact remains. Such a tactic is clearly at odds with Anarchism, which involves the masses in self-managed action to establish an anti-authoritarian socialist society.

Generally speaking, the tactic of armed struggle is a relatively ineffective one. This is particularly true where the armed struggle is urban based (and thus almost never unable to consolidate "liberated" territories), but it also holds in the case of rurally-focussed struggles. The murder of individuals in no way weakens the system. Bosses, police and so on are all easily replaceable. So are powerlines and other facilities. The military power which clandestine guerrilla forces can mobilise is typically minimal compared to the full power of the State. As Anarchists we realise that under capitalism and the State the strength of the masses lies primarily in our economic power - our ability to struggle at the point of production - yet the tactic of armed struggle relegates the workplace struggle to a secondary role (if any at all). Even in conditions of harsh political repression, underground activity should prioritise workplace organising over the formation of a guerrilla army.

Although the intention of those engaging in armed struggle is often to secure freedom for the oppressed, the actual effect may be quite different. Typically, armed struggle puts the lives of working people at risk, which provides the State with an excuse (and, often, the popular support) needed to introduce more repressive measures. We also do not support the tactic of small groups provoking a violent response from the State in order to "radicalise" the majority. In fact, this is often used by the State to victimise activists and intimidate those involved.

This is not to say that we deny the sincerity of those who take up the gun in an attempt to change society, merely that their method is a wrong one. However, while we do not advocate armed struggle, we defend those who participate in it from repression, reactionary attacks and criticism. We never side with the State against such groups. The real problem is not the gunmen; the primary responsibility lies with the system which leads people to resist in such a manner.

## ► Introduction

There are three basic positions that can be adopted on the “violence question” - pacifism, terrorism or defensive violence.<sup>1</sup>

## ► Pacifism

With regret we have to dismiss pacifism as being hopelessly unrealistic.

Restricting a struggle to pacifism or non-violent direct action in a campaign or strike can in some circumstances seriously undermine that struggle. We are against the adoption of such tactics as an absolute principle, although obviously it may be tactically wise to rely on peaceful methods of protest in certain situations.

Violence will also be an inevitable part of a revolution as the ruling class will not give up its power or wealth without a bloody struggle. To refuse to prepare to meet this contingency with counter-violence, or to rely on pricking the conscience of the oppressor to prevent bloodshed in such a situation, is a recipe for the massacre of the working-class and poor.

## ► Armed Struggle and “Terrorism”

We reject the tactics of armed struggle and “terrorism”.

This approach relies on the military actions of an armed vanguard to free the working class and poor (or other oppressed groups, e.g. national minorities). It is thus substitutionist to the core in that it substitutes the activity of a small group for the actions of the toiling masses as a whole. It is clearly therefore elitist and sows the seeds for a new elite to take power over the heads of the workers and the poor in the event of the armed struggle succeeding. In fact, this tactic readily degenerates into authoritarianism even prior to the actual seizure

- **Economic groups.** We would generally work within such organisations (including through ZACF commissions) to win them to our programme.

Our aim:

- promote class-consciousness, an explicitly working-class programme, an end to class collaboration (as opposed to nationalism, support for politicians etc.).
- put control into the hands of the working-class grassroots, not middle- and upper-class politicians and “radicals”.
- promote unity with other mass economic structures because of the common interests of the workers and poor, and because of the need to prevent isolation leading to defeat. Promote principled and progressive co-operation with unions.
- also, we take up arguments about the need to support the struggles of specific parts of the working class (e.g. women) with other sections of the working class (e.g. men).



**SEE PAPER ON CLASS STRUGGLE,  
CAPITALISM AND THE STATE.**

As indicated in the **UNIONS** Position Paper, our aim is to unite and merge all of these “economic”/class struggle bodies: those at the workplace should unite into “One Big (Trade) Union”; those in residential areas should unite into “One Big (Community) Union”- into integrated fighting structures that rally all working class people against capitalism, the State and all oppression. The actual process of unification would not exclude tactics like united fronts, ZACF commissions, work with caucuses (e.g. women’s caucuses) .These workplace and community “unions” will lay the basis for self-governing worker and community councils in the Anarchist future.



**SEE ‘BUILDING TOMORROW TODAY’ IN THE  
POSITION PAPER ON THE ROLE OF THE  
REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION**

# The Violence Question

*“Anarchism is opposed to any interference with your liberty, be it by force and violence or by any other means... But if someone attacks you, then it is he who is invading you, he who is employing violence against you. You have a right [and a duty] to defend yourself...*

*To achieve its purpose, the revolution must be imbued with and directed by the anarchist spirit and ideas. The end shapes the means; just as the tool you use must be fit to do the work you want to accomplish... Revolutionary defence excludes all acts of coercion, of persecution and revenge. It is concerned only with repelling attack and depriving the enemy of the opportunity to invade you...*

*[The strength of the revolution] consists in the support of the people, in the devotion of the agricultural and rural masses... Let them believe in the revolution and they will defend it to the death... The armed workers and peasants are the only effective defence of the revolution. By means of their unions and syndicates they must always be on guard against counter-revolutionary attack... the active interest of the*

*masses, their autonomy and self-determination are the best guarantee of success...*

*Let them [counter-revolutionaries] talk as they like... To suppress speech and press is... a theoretic blow offence against liberty [and] a direct blow at the very foundations of the revolution... [While forcible attack will be actively resisted] the revolution must be big enough to welcome even the severest criticism, and profit by it if it is justified...”*

**Alexander Berkman,**  
“Defence of the Revolution”,  
in *The ABC of Anarchism*, various editions.