



CNT-AIT
Federación Local de Sindicatos de Madrid



Free the Belgrade Six

Interview in Madrid with a member of the anarchist federation from Slovenia

On Sunday, November 23 some comrades from the Metal union and the union for various services of the CNT-Madrid interviewed a member of the Federacija za Anarhistično Organiziranje (FAO), an anarchist federation of Slovenia. We were expectant to do this interview, as the comrade of the FAO maintains in regular contact with members of the Anarho-sindikalistička Inicijativa (ASI).

- What is your relationship with the ASI? Are you in contact?

I am a member of the anarchist federation of Slovenia ("Federation for Anarchist Organizing"). For more than eight years we maintain a close relationship with fellow anarco-syndicalists of the ASI and the two organizations have been collaborating together in activities whenever it's been possible.

We are currently in contact with some members of the ASI but the communication is more than difficult because they are being closely monitored by the Serbian state. However, neither we nor the members of the ASI have direct contact with the prisoners.

- What is the situation right now with the comrades? Are you optimistic?

On the contrary, I'm very pessimistic. As you can imagine, the situation is very frustrating for everyone, especially due to the fact that the Serbian state is absolutely determined to finish off the ASI. Obviously they are taking advantage of the situation all they can. In fact, throughout this time the time of arrest has been prolonged under the disguise of new objections.

- What are they charged with?

They are accused of international terrorism. Right now the investigation is finished and will go to trial. If convicted, they can be sentenced from three to fifteen years, all this despite the fact that the prosecutor has no legal evidence and the comrades have denied the charges from the beginning.

It should be made clear that it is common for the Serbian state to use this kind of charges on this type of anti-system organizations in order to block its activity, put pressure on its members and to finally release them without charge. But this case is different obviously.

- What is the socio-political situation in Serbia?

The social situation is really fucked. Naturally, Serbia finds itself in the current crisis, but also with the aggravation of being a state that is in a transition between so called socialism and unbridled capitalism. The unemployment rate is higher than 20% and those who have a job barely makes it. 60% have salaries below the average (about 350 euros / month). And this without counting those who are paid the minimum salary (150 euros).

Moreover, the situation in the public institutions is very chaotic. There are different centers of power and all kinds of mafias. Corruption is the order of the day. As in Spain, political parties are all the same when

it comes to economic proposals. Needless to say, despite this institutional chaos, the repressive apparatus works perfectly.

- What influence does the ASI have in Serbia?

As we all know, this is a small organization, yet it has a great influence on society. They have been gaining influence in public opinion, among workers and have been shown to be the only alternative to other unions. They were very effective and persistent with anarchist propaganda, with its principles, tactics and aims, not only among the working class, also among students, teachers, etc.. We firmly believe that this is the main reason for the arrest and we assume that the Serbian intelligence service is behind the entire process.

In addition I would add that the ASI not only has an influence in Serbia, but in many Balkan countries. As these countries do not have anarcho-syndicalist organizations (with exception in Croatia) for the moment, they are the reference. The ASI has put much effort in recent years in the need for a anarcho-syndicalist organization.

- What has been the reaction of the Serbian people?

Many kindred organizations have expressed solidarity with the comrades and also public figures (film directors, journalists, writers, etc.).. Also university professors and some leftist groups. As said, the ASI is far more influential than the rest of Europe thinks.

- What is the current status of other anti-order groups in Serbia?

As I said before, the Serbian state has very repressive policies. One of the most active struggles today is anti-fascism and one of the few where all organizations are quite united. This is so because fascism is very strong in Serbia, including in the parliament.

Notably, the fascist movement tends to focus its campaign against the anarcho-syndicalism. For example, just a couple weeks ago when they made a strong campaign against the ASI. I would dare to say that Serb fascism does not focus their struggle against liberal anti-fascism. Its real enemy is anarcho-syndicalism, demonstrating, and I never get tired of repeating it, the great work he has done by the ASI.

In fact, ASI was the catalyst in the BAFI (Belgrade Antifascist Initiative).

- Finally, do you have any proposal on how to help the imprisoned comrades?

We believe it is very important to support this campaign because it may set a precedent in the repression of the anarchist movement in the Balkans. We must relentlessly continue the solidarity campaign, informing people to increase public pressure.

Support should be given in everything they need. Right now one of the biggest problems is the lack of funds to cover legal costs, possible sanctions, fines, etc. Given the seriousness of the matter believe that we must begin to consider new ways of solidarity. We want to emphasize that we always should be using methods that do not harm or increase the charges. We stress that the comrades are being tried on charges of international terrorism.

Thank you very much for your interest. Salud!