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From *Insurrection: Anarchist Magazine* Issue Four, May 1988,
published by Elephant Editions (London, UK), p. 28. Article
uncredited in *Insurrection*, but credited to a.m.b. in
Anarchismo, n. 52, Maggio 1986.

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National Liberation Struggle

Alfredo M. Bonanno

May 1986

We must get out of the contradictions and ambiguities that anarchists find themselves in when considering the problem of the national liberation struggle. A proposal for an international anarchist confederation for national liberation.

One of the most disputed principles of the anarchist struggle is that of seeing the possibility for developing a revolutionary dimension within the national one

This problem gives rise to much fear and incomprehension.

It is said that anarchism, being internationalist, should not concern itself with events related to situations within single nations. The clash between classes puts all proletarians on the same level against the exploiters, so one part cannot be extracted from the social war and restricted to within a single territory or nation.

Other dangers are listed with reference to specific historical situations: dangers of involution, of transforming the national liberation struggle into a fligid new nationalism or of giving the local bourgeoisie preference over the foreign one.

And many other arguments which to tell the truth are not always serene or well thought out.

Many comrades have not thought sufficiently about this thorny problem. They express judgements based on preconceived ideas, not on an evaluation of the limits or possibilities of a struggle for national liberation carried out by anarchists and laid out on anarchist principles.

As the idea of revolution breaking out all over the planet at the same time is unthinkable, it should not be impossible to envisage a breakout of revolutionary events in one specific place at a time. Now if this is reasonable enough one must admit then that a correct anarchist analysis applied to the main areas of tension would lead to the possibility of intervening in an organised and strategically clear way.

Certain situations exist in the world today that present contradictions of a predominantly national kind. Why is it that anarchists must stay outside them? Perhaps because recent experience has shown that these situations often have reactionary outcomes? Or because nearly all of them are dominated by marxist positions? These are not good enough reasons. One could reply to the first that there is no such situation as one that can guarantee a revolutionary or progressive outcome in advance, but rather that such an outcome would be more probable in the presence of anarchists and their struggle. To the second one could say that the relationship between marxism and the national liberation struggle is purely instrumental. That is, the people in struggle have adopted — especially in Africa and South America — certain marxist elements as they have nothing else at their disposition. And is this not perhaps the fault of the anarchists?

We are therefore for intervention in the various national liberation struggles. Not just a general one of solidarity or, worse still, that of systematically drawing political distinctions. We are for an active intervention.

By active intervention we mean not only “real” international solidarity consisting of attacking the common enemy; but also an intervention based on analysis and organisational proposals.

One of the proposals that seems right at the present time and which could become a point of reference in the future, is that of forming an International Confederation for National Liberation, accepting the distinguishing factor of the insurrectional method and the refusal of interclassism.