

Activities of the Anarchist Federation in 2022

Traditional summary of the previous year from the perspective of organized anarchists

Anarchistická federace

13 January 2023

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The Anarchist Federation (AF) has been operating continuously since 1995, previously attributed by Czech or Czechoslovak in its name. Many people have passed through its ranks since then, but its membership has always been made up of only a few dozen people. The same is true today. There has been no quantitative progression, yet this has never been and still is not a reason for us to abandon our work or even to give up the anarchist vision of a free and self-governing society or the idea of the need for federative organization. On the contrary, as the climate and social crisis deepens, we are all the more convinced that self-organization of the unprivileged on the principles of equality, horizontality, mutual aid and solidarity is needed more than ever.

From the life of the Federation

In 2022, exceptionally, there was only one regular congress of members of the Federation, in mid-October in Hradec Králové.

The AF has so far been a bit characteristic in that it hasn't really been trying to squeeze its name anywhere, as we have always been more concerned with content and principles than under what banner something is organized. We recognized though that it would be good to introduce ourselves and more actively offer our own ranks as a platform for anarchist organizing. So we published a short leaflet "Who are anarchists?" and the Prague AF group organized informal meetings with sympathizers in June and August, with a barbecue or other events.

Depending on their personal focus, the activities of AF members are usually linked to other groups — some of us are active in collectives such as Food not Bombs, Limity jsme my, Really Good Squats (ODS), NoLog, Sdílené domy (Shared Houses), MSDN, Zdena, Cocina Perdida, Committee for the Defence of the Revolution in Rojava and others.

Internationally, the AF is a member section of the International Federation of Anarchist Federations (IFA) and our delegate attended the regular meeting of the IFA Relations Committee in March. Within the IFA we are trying to make the voice of anarchists from Central and Eastern Europe heard.

If the pandemic was a key issue in the previous year (the AF joined the international anarchist declaration on the COVID-19 pandemic in February), 2022 was undoubtedly affected by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The war in Ukraine

Russia's aggressive moves were up in the air. Just days before the invasion of Ukraine, we published articles on the anti-authoritarian movement and tendencies in Ukraine. Like others, we did not believe it would come. It did. Just after the invasion began, we issued a statement "Against the invasion, but without hypocrisy", in which we wrote, among other things, about the task of "supporting anti-authoritarians in Ukraine and Russia, listening to them, sharing news about their positions and fates, permanently showing our solidarity with them". The next steps came soon after. At the beginning we organized a successful action against the Putinist demonstration in Prague, "decorated" the windows of the Russian Sberbank, joined in the collection of food and clothes and their transportation to Ukraine. We made a collection among ourselves — about 80 000 CZK went to Operation Solidarity (now Solidarity Collectives), to support specific people, to the Anarchist Black Cross in Moscow, Irkutsk and Belarus, and some other projects. We helped

people who were stranded at the border when they fled, as well as with accommodation here or with the organization of volunteer medical aid in Ukraine. A couple of issues of our *A3* wall newspaper to the topic — one warned against russophobia, another criticized the racism of the state that openly discriminated Roma refugees from Ukraine. On that occasion, we took part in a demonstration for the dignified treatment of these refugees, which took place on 19 May in front of the Ministry of the Interior.

In terms of information, we focused mainly on the perspective of anarchists in Eastern and, by extension, Central Europe — we published texts by the collectives Autonomous Action, KRAS, Militant Anarchist, Pramen, Antijob, Anti-authoritarian Unit, Operation Solidarity, ABC Dresden, Resistance Committee, ABC Belarus, Antifascist Action, Belarusian Anarchist Group in Warsaw, Solidarity Collectives, ABC Galicia and Solidarity Zone. We translated interviews with an anarchist from Luhansk, a member of the Resistance Committee, an anarchist from Donbas, one of the founders of Operation Solidarity, an anarchist from Kiev, and a Belarusian anarchist in the Ukrainian militia, a Finnish anarchist with strong ties in Russia, a member of the Assamblea group, the Anarcho-communist Combat Organization, anarcho-syndicalists from Eastern Ukraine and the Ecological Platform. We share about the positions of individual anti-authoritarians from Russia, a Belarusian anarchist fighting in Ukraine, a fighter of the Anti-Authoritarian Unit, and activists of the Dresden Anarchist Black Cross. We have also published statements from some other movements and groups outside the area, such as the Zapatista rebels of the EZLN, Syrian rebels in exile, the RiseUp4Rojava support network, and the anarchist portal Freedom. We are aware that the Ukrainian state is a bourgeois democracy similar to the Western ones, so we do not close our eyes to the social status of the workers there and how the economic elite is trying to use the war to undermine labor legislation.

We also turned our attention to Russia, to anti-war protests, arsons at the recruitment centers and the property of repressive organs, and sabotage on the railways. We focused on anti-authoritarian and “inter-brigadist” prisoners of war, mobilization (including the homeless) and resistance to it.

In their statements, the anarchists from Eastern Europe are very disappointed with the attitude of a significant part of the left, and also anarchist movement in the West, which does not want to hear or understand their positions, and they point to the pathology of Western pacifism. Differences in attitude to the war have also been found within the IFA, where we have made it clear that we are on the side of the struggle against Z-fascism. While a joint compromise statement was issued, we added our own critical commentary to it, in which we consider the joint statement to be insufficient. However, there was no further discussion. So we had no choice but to react critically again when the Italian Anarchist Federation issued the text “For a new anarchist manifesto against war” ignoring the reality in Ukraine and our friends from Eastern Europe. We also addressed attitudes within the anarchist movement in the main theme (“Resistance against the Invasion”) of the spring issue of *Existence*, where we also discussed where the anarchists in Czech Republic position themselves about the war in Ukraine. Little did we know then how, within the Czech movement, the fringe opponents of Ukrainian resistance to Z-fascism would often make vulgar and dogmatic attacks on our position. For this reason, we published a study on Malatesta’s (whom the aforementioned like to quote) position on the struggle for national self-determination, presented a modern history of Ukrainian anarchism, and also prepared a talk “Anarchists and the War in Ukraine”, which we presented at the Fluff and Riot over River festivals. The autumn congress confirmed our continued support for the defense of

Ukrainian workers against the bloody imperialist appetites of Putin and his minions, particularly through practical support for anarchist initiatives, projects and militants directly in Ukraine, but also through support for anarchists in Russia and Belarus.

In this regard, during the year we also tried to present the anti-authoritarian platforms that help in Ukraine, their concrete activities (e.g. Solidarity Collectives, Cars of Hope, ABC Dresden, Medical Self-Defense Network) and the possibilities to support them directly or indirectly, including very concrete collections (e.g. for field medics or for a car for a combat unit). Similarly, we called for support for (not only) anarchists in Russia and Belarus. We were also happy to participate in fundraising gigs.

May Day and anarchist strategy

We also touched on the topic of the war in Ukraine at the Anarchist May Day, which we organized together with FNB Žižkov and Křisa in the form of a picnic with speeches and laying flowers at the memorial plaque of the first May Day workers' rally, traditionally held in Prague on Střelecký island, with the participation of about a hundred people. We focused on the workers' roots of May Day and the topic of labor from an anarchist perspective, i.e. the struggle for free labor in opposition to the existing system of wage labor. In one of the AF's speeches we stressed the federation's relationship to tradition and warned against ideologized slogans that move away from reality. This is because it is not guided by our wishes and we must take it into account and rethink our positions.

We then discussed this in greater depth in the autumn issue of *Existence* magazine on the topic of "Anarchist Strategy", which is dedicated to rethinking anarchist politics and conceives of anarchism as a dynamic school of thought and a compass in our decision-making, daily actions and planning for longer-term activities.

For climate justice and against the energy crisis

Also in 2022, we were involved in the struggle for climate justice, especially by supporting the activities of the *Limity jsme my!* initiative, which, among other things, organized Klimakemp 2022 in Ostrava, connected with the blockade of the local coke plant. We also joined a parody party that took aim at fossil fuel billionaire Křetínský. In addition, we dusted off our anarcho-trolley and formed a humble anarchist bloc at the high school climate strike, and in November we supported the university climate strike and participated in the associated demonstration on November 17. We commented on the climate battlefield from an anti-capitalist perspective in the November issue of the *A3* wall newspaper.

The drive to stretch out the fossil fuel business as long as possible at the expense of life on the planet has been behind, among other things, the energy crisis, which, combined with rising inflation, often means the utter shattering of family budgets. In the *A3* newspaper we responded to this with "Let's not pay for the rich!", "Expropriate the oligarchs!" and "Luxury for all". The latter text explained why anarchists were joining the trade union demonstration against poverty on 8th of October. Several dozen people supported the anarchist bloc under the same slogan and there was even a conflict with one of the nationalists present. It was this variety of people who

took part in other demonstrations, but they responded only marginally to the crisis, in fact it was still a similar angry coalition as we know it from previous years.

More and more people are finding themselves at the bottom of the social ladder, which is why we actively and passively support the Food not Bombs collectives, which provide food for those who need it and organize fundraising events. We were able to personally wish the Pilsen collective a happy 10th birthday. At the same time, we provide similar inspirations from abroad, such as solidarity breakfasts.

Another unsolved problem is the housing crisis, where many people cannot afford their own housing due to high prices and often have to work to pay high rents. At the same time, there are still many empty flats and entire buildings in cities. The ODS collective has occupied one of these and we have been helping them to do so. It happened at the end of November in Strašnice district of Prague. This demonstrative action succeeded in getting the management of the district to negotiate the allocation of the building for the autonomous social center project. We supported a solidarity protest in front of the Greek embassy against the eviction of the squatter neighborhood Prosfygika in Athens. We also followed closely the developments around squats in Europe and subsequently reported on the accused in connection with the raid in Berlin's Rigaer94, the threat to Poznan's Rozbrat, the prosecution of the residents of the Spanish squatter village Fraguas, and the occupation of a new space in Ljubljana.

For women's, LGBT+ and migrants' rights

The struggle for women's rights is a constant presence on the AF agenda. International Women's Day is a traditional commemoration of this struggle. In 2022, I participated in the feminist festival in Žižkov and the subsequent demonstration "Shout NO to violence on all fronts!", which thematized antimilitarism in feminism in light of the events. We were pleased to initiate the celebration of the International Women's Day in Pilsen, which was organized by local activists. In the A3 wall newspaper, we condemned the religious fascist "March for Life" with the text "Parade of Backwardness" and subsequently participated in various forms of protest against it. In June, we participated in a demonstration in Prague protesting the US Supreme Court decision on the legality of abortion. Separately, although with minimal response, we then launched a campaign against restricting the right to abortion, which included the display of several banners in Prague. As an inspiration for the women's struggle, we carried extensive coverage of the feminist movement in Chile in our media.

We also addressed the status of LGBT+ people. And so we joined the black & pink bloc at the Prague Pride parade to speak out against the presence of corporations (including fossil fuel ones) at this Pride celebration. We reported on the death sentences for two lesbians in Iran and the terrorist attack on the Tepláreň club in Bratislava. We published a thematic issue of the A3 newspaper with the text "We are all Tepláreň!", initiated the announcement of a decentralized march against violence against LGBTIQAI+ people, which eventually took place in six cities. We contributed organizationally to the largest one in Prague, which was attended by more than a thousand people. In Pilsen, we joined in honoring the victims of the attack with a music party.

Regarding migrants' rights, in addition to the protest against discrimination against Ukrainian Roma, we also reported on Greek border guards torturing migrants and deporting them to Turkey, or on protests against the criminalization of migration in Poland.

We have not stopped drawing attention to the racism of the Czech police and have commemorated the Roma person whose life was ended by a police intervention in 2021, which was followed by racist speeches by police and political leaders. We also provided media support to the anti-fascists who repeatedly draw attention to the presence of the Nazi monument on Hvězda Hill near Tanvald by direct action. Last but not least, we mobilized for the August anti-fascist festival in Bratislava.

Resistance and solidarity in the world

We have been providing information and anarchist perspectives on the various uprisings and protests taking place across the planet during 2022.

Earlier in the year, we reported on the uprising in Kazakhstan. In Prague, we attended a solidarity rally with the anti-authoritarian protests there, and after the suppression of the uprising with the help of military intervention from Russia, we published the January issue of *A3* on the subject.

We have been following events in Rojava for a long time. We carried an interview calling for support for the completion of a documentary film about everyday life in revolutionary Rojava. We prepared a review of a book by a Czech fighter in Rojava about his time in a Turkish prison. We were involved in a protest against Turkish military interference in the affairs of North East Syria, which took place in front of the Czech Foreign Ministry on the occasion of the visit of the Turkish Foreign Minister. We published an issue of the *A3* newspaper about the fascist nature of the Turkish state with the text “What is NATO silent about?” and recalled the Turkish invasion of Afrin or the suppression of the anti-authoritarian uprising in Turkey in June 2013.

We are also looking at the situation in Myanmar, where there was a military coup in 2021 and subsequent protests. These continue to this day, involving anarchists and, amazingly, several FNB groups. We commemorated the first anniversary of the coup and provided extensive material for the anarcho-punk zine *Postaztaa*.

We focused on the uprising in Sri Lanka, about which we didn’t have much information at first, but fortunately after some time we found detailed interviews with anarchists in Colombo and Kandy to translate, and a reflection on the occupation movement during the unrest by another anarchist there.

Large areas of Pakistan were under water in the devastating floods, with the state unable to respond effectively. People were often left with nothing but the principle of mutual aid. The anarchists there organized aid and we joined their appeal for financial support.

In September, the morality police in Iran killed a young Kurdish woman, sparking an uprising across the country. On that occasion we published a commentary by a friendly KPK collective, an interview with an anarchist from Iran, and information about the protest “decoration” of the Iranian embassy in Prague. We also reflected on the uprising against the military junta in Sudan through an interview with an anarchist there.

We also reported, for example, on the strike in the contract sector in Britain, the eviction of the Nora forest occupation in Poland, the fight against limestone mining in Sweden, and the fight against the Mountain Valey pipeline in the USA.

Against the repressive machine

A movement that does not care about its prosecuted comrades is not worth much. This is not the case of the anarchist one, which – and we with it – commemorates its prisoners, for example during the International Week of Solidarity with Anarchist Prisoners in August. On that occasion, we published a text about the effort to publicly commemorate Sacco and Vanzetti in Boston (a week of action was declared on the anniversary of their judicial murder), and sent a joint birthday card to our friend Mikola Dziadok, who is being held in a Belarusian prison, reminded of at least some of the imprisoned anarchists and anti-fascists or the names of prisoners of conscience in Putin's and Lukashenko's empires, shared links to Anarchist Black Cross (ABC) groups that care for the prosecuted and imprisoned, from around the world, and specifically featured the ABC Galicia, which has been involved in helping anarchists fighting the Russian invasion.

We have a long-standing interest in the repression of our comrades in Eastern Europe, especially in Belarus, many of whom have received long sentences and were often tortured by the police. Because of the repression some activities have been stopped, e.g. FNB Minsk. Igor Olinevich, who was sentenced to 20 years and went on hunger strike, wrote the book *I'm Going to Magadan* during his earlier imprisonment. Its first Czech edition is hopelessly out of print; moreover, 3+KK Theatre staged a play based on it, and so AF Publishing has begun preparing a second edition. In 2022, we shared appeals to help those prosecuted in several trials, such as the Pramen and Revolutionary Action cases (from which we published several closing speeches). We also covered the trials of Krystyna (Kita) Cherenkova, Dmitry Dubovsky and Nastya Kuchta. We should also mention that we have interviewed a Belarusian activist Piotr Markielau, who protested in November at IKEA's Prague office against the corporation's use of prisoner slave labor.

Similarly, repression against anarchists (and more recently anti-war activists) in Russia continues. That's why we sent a collective photo with a flag and banner to our friends in Irkutsk, Siberia, as a gesture of support.

We have also given media coverage to some repressive causes in Western Europe – the attempt to manufacture terrorists in France, the conviction of anarcho-syndicalists in Spain, and the anarchist hunger strike in Italy.

Magón 2022 and other memories

We have decided to dedicate each year to a personality associated with the anarchist movement. This time we focused on the Mexican revolutionary Ricardo Flores Magón, to whom we dedicated a year-long series on our website, *Magón 2022*, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his death. In it, we also presented his closest comrades-in-arms, the context of the Mexican Revolution, the manifesto of the Mexican Liberal Party, the importance for the contemporary Zapatista movement, as well as some of his texts on women, war, government and industrialization. All this has culminated in the publication of a book with these and other texts.

In 2022, we bid farewell to our friend and historian of anarchism, Václav Tomek, dedicating a personal remembrance to him and presenting his extensive publishing activities. After 10 years since the death of our friend Jakub Polák, we had the honor to actively participate in the scattering of his ashes and the subsequent discussion dedicated to his memory. As every year,

we commemorated the death of the anti-fascist skinhead Jan Kučera and spoke about him at a musical memorial service.

We also remembered others: 17 years since the brutal police murder of Oury Jalloh in Dessau, Germany, 13 years since the murder of Stanislav Markelov and Anastasia Baburova, 53 years since the self-immolation of Jan Zajíc, 101 years since the death of P. A. Kropotkin, 60 years since the death of E. Armand, 135 years since the execution of the Chicago anarchists, 140 years since the birth of Franta Sauer. Other anniversaries we have not forgotten: 150 years since the St-Imier Anarchist Congress, 100 years since the founding of the International Workers Association, and 33 years since the founding of the first contemporary anarchist organization in our country.

In addition, we have brought obituaries of anarchists such as Sergio Castilla, Claudio Venza, José Morato, Serge Livrozet, Pepe Cuevas (famous for the Scala case) and Filip Rusina. In the context of the war in Ukraine, we wrote about the deaths of Igor Volokhov, Sergei Petrovich, Yuri Samoylenko, Olga Volkova and five social activists. We also reported on the murder of June Knightly and the suicide of Pavel Korshunov.

Anarchist media

As a main media outlet, AF runs its daily updated website *afed.cz*. In addition, we maintain the AF Publishing website and, ahead of the January 2023 presidential elections, we have begun work on a special website that would clearly express our position on the presidency itself, as we described in the December issue of *A3* newspaper, among other things. In addition, we maintain the Federation's profiles on social media such as Mastodon, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

During 2022 we published two issues of the anarchist magazine *Existence* and one issue of the *A3* wall newspaper each month. These are intended to be put up — the AF-Olomouc group was undoubtedly the most active in this regard, including putting up May Day posters and stickers with anarchist and anti-fascist messages. As part of the AF Publishing House, in 2022 we published the comic book *Farewell, Batman*.

With this and other publications we then participated in the Anarchist Book Festival 2022, which we helped to organize. With the distribution of our prints, we presented at Fluff Fest, the LITR 2022 Book Festival, the Riot over River music festival, and various benefit concerts.

In addition to our own publications, we have also tried to promote books from friendly publishers or those that we found interesting. Such publishers include Neklid Publishing House (we reviewed the books *Communal Luxury*, *Mutual Aid: the Factor of Evolution*, *Women Who Did Not Want To Be Silent*, *Anarchy Here and Now*, and *Believing in Beasts*), UTOPIA LIBRI, Salé distribution and Nevim. When we didn't like something, we didn't spare criticism, as with the book on Louise Land-Stych.

At the end of the year, we published a series of texts on our website called "Punk Christmas" about the relationship between the punk subculture and anarchism.

The next year

In 2023 we want to continue to focus on supporting our comrades in Eastern Europe and trying to make their voices heard within the global anarchist movement. We have a rich editorial plan in place for the next two years, so it's all about recouping the costs invested in earlier

publications. We have been working on expanding the “Anarchism for Beginners” project, so we can expect to publish more of its outputs. We are dedicating 2023 to the centenary of Jaroslav Hasek’s death. We would like to make the traditional May Day gathering a bit richer, and we intend to continue to engage — both under the AF banner and outside it — in activities against various forms of discrimination, for autonomous spaces, climate justice, the right to housing, and other topics that correspond to our agenda.

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