

The United Antifascist Liberation Front.

A Fictional Account

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2001

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I

Aki was hitching. We were waiting three miles down the road. There was a crack in the walkie-talkie. Aki told us a single guy in a pretty fancy Mazda hadn't picked him up. We took the log and laid it across the road. The Mazda came and stopped. For us it had become a routine. Roberto came out of the bush first, we were behind him, all in all five men carrying rifles.

„Why didn't you pick up the hitchhiker?“, Roberto asked. The guy in the car – maybe 30, in a suit, looking like he was going to a business meeting or so – muttered something about never picking up anybody, justifying this because of „all those stories you hear“, „especially now, with all those anarchists out there“, pretty much the usual.

„Get out of the car“, Roberto said.

„What!?“

„Get out of the fucking car“, Roberto repeated, being calm and quiet, yet very convincing

The guy got out.

„I know this is a bit harsh, but we're in a revolutionary situation in this country, and we need cars. In a certain way you've lost your right to own this car by not picking up our comrade down the road because it shows you're not willing to share your possessions and privileges with your fellow man. I'm sorry to say, but you lack decency. And we need decency. Maybe this makes you think about it. From now on your car serves the United Antifascist Liberation Front. Maybe one day you'll see this as an honor. I hope so. Have a good day.“

That's how we got our cars. Usually. It seemed much more appropriate to test people before claiming their property than randomly stealing vehicles. Especially since I still think we never were too strict really. First of all, nobody ever got shot, not even humiliated or anything, we wouldn't even take their money. (Well, there were cases, but they concerned really annoying rich bastards, so who'd have a problem with that?) We'd just use their vehicles for our revolutionary needs.

Plus, we'd always let single females get away with not stopping for a guy, 'cause in that case fear seemed a legitimate concern.

Otherwise there was no excuse, though. Our men always were alone, dressed and equipped like obvious travelers, not stereotypical „highway-robber-types“ at all (as if they ever really existed anyway).

We were generally happy about the way we got our cars. A selective process.

II

We were still quite strong in those days. We had been even stronger in the beginning, though. I mean, I'm talking an antifascist movement with a real anarchist dimension here. When in history, except for the glorious days of the Spanish Civil War, did you ever really have a strong movement like that, I ask? I'm talking lots of people actually involved. Thousands. And in the beginning there were even plenty more just supporting the cause. Early on, a quarter of the population maybe? It's hard to give exact numbers, but there were lots. Believe me.

Of course it all had to do with the very specific historical circumstances we found ourselves in. I mean, just picture the massive number of political radicals coming into the country, escaping the fascist regimes of Europe and the Americas. And there were also a lot of Australians themselves

who were open to radical ideas since the ever increasing capitalist arrogance had left them very disillusioned. Anyway, those were good times back then. Great times, actually.

I've never been a big shot. I mean, theoretically there weren't supposed to be any big shots anyway, since all of us anarchists were against that. But, you know how it is, there are always some who might be just a bit more passionate, or a bit more educated, or simply a bit louder than others, and even though I still wouldn't call them leaders, I guess some became figures of identification or something. Not necessarily a bad thing, actually. I knew some of them at the time. Not bad people. Decent comrades, for the most part. There was Pietro Delgado from Spain, and Costas Eilakis from Greece, or that American guy Rob Miller, or Sharon Blammi, an Australian feminist, and others. People just knew them. Probably all it was, was that they were pretty eloquent, nothing more. None was ego-trippin' or trying to be superior or something. Wouldn't have been possible anyway. Back then, I mean. I know there is a danger of romanticizing the past. But I swear, back then the movement was so true to its principles, no one would have gotten away with purely personal ambitions. We had no place for that. Really.

Like I said, though, me personally, I wouldn't have had such ambitions anyway. I wasn't really eloquent either. And definitely nobody knew me. Which was never a problem, of course. Why would people have to know me? Anyway, I was just one of thousands back then. Of thousands fighting for justice and equality, and the freedom to live your life the way you wanted to without limiting someone else's freedom. The usual, really. But nevertheless the eternally precious. Crazy that people hardly ever really lived that way 'cause it just seems so obvious that that's what any man or woman would want. And not bosses and politicians and capitalists. Whatever. I sure never wanted that. So, of course, I fought for the anarchist cause. It just seemed the most normal thing to do in life.

Even before coming to Australia, actually. I had been an anarchist since I was sixteen. True. First time I thought about politics, anarchism seemed the only reasonable answer. All that stuff about anarchists being fanatics and lunatics always seemed very strange to me. Ya, there probably were very passionate people at times in history seeing almost random anti-bourgeois violence as their only political means, and I'm not saying they weren't true anarchists, or stuff like that, 'cause I have no idea what the fuck a true anarchist is, so they might have been whatever you think they were, but all that doesn't really matter, 'cause all I'm trying to say here is that most anarchists I've known are the most normal people you can possibly imagine. And I know that „normal“ has become a bad word and all, but I don't mean normal here as in norms you have to obey to or you'll get shot, I just mean normal as in wanting nothing but living your life in peace and quiet, if you know what I mean.

So, I was one of them. Since I was sixteen. Then, only a year later, I had to leave home, because I was one of them. Suddenly there were fascists everywhere in Europe. Nowhere to hide. I had to run. Or I decided to. I could have stayed and fought. And died, quite probably. Like a lot of others. Plus, I was only seventeen at the time. Plus, it was easy for me. I had friends in the States. They had arranged everything. Going to Miami was a piece of cake. Well, relatively. Anyway, I stayed for three years.

Then the fascists took over North America as well, so I ran again. To Australia. Again, like so many others. At that point, there weren't many choices left.

Right from the start, there was something cool about that too, though. I mean, we were all refugees and all, with not many places to go, but that also meant that suddenly thousands of anarchists from everywhere were concentrated in one spot. In global dimensions our movement

was small. Tiny even. A few anarchists scattered across the planet. Collectively hardly anything had been achieved for a long time. So, suddenly we could combine all our forces in just one country. It was exciting. And promising. In a bizarre, almost tragic way, of course: Did it need the rise of fascism to force us together and become strong? I've only asked myself that afterwards. And I still don't have an answer, really. Life's just fucking weird sometimes, I guess. But back to my story...

Of course, Australia didn't know what it had coming. Somehow it had become a superliberal capitalist playground in the first decades of the 21st century, generally racist and sexist and all, but at the same time officially proud of its cosmopolitanism and antifascism. It was all economics, really: A lot of the world's biggest corporations had become based there, since all the rest of the world had become politically so unstable. But hey, whatever the reasons, we were all antifascist refugees, and all got in. That we had a slightly different understanding of antifascism than all those corporations they didn't know of course. It was rather their problem than ours.

At first there wasn't really a movement. People just arrived from everywhere. Some in groups, some by themselves, but relatively isolated from each other. I mean, the international links between antifascist activists were quite developed and all, and, of course, everyone was totally politically conscious and committed and so on, but you gotta understand that most of us had to sort out our personal lives first when we arrived. Petty or not, even anarchists have parents, husbands and wives, friends and kids, even possessions they are sort of attached to. Leave alone the need for housing and food, a sense of community, and at least relative contentment with their personal situation. All this is big on a person's mind when forced to migrate, anarchist or not.

So, at first, we all just came, one after the other, so there was already a net of comrades who helped me to settle in. I was lucky in that respect. I arrived in Sydney, and first went to stay with friends in Newtown. We were always around eight or nine in a pretty small flat (3 bedrooms or something), but that didn't matter at all. It was cool. It was all comrades. Three Australians, two Brazilians, a Greek couple, me, another Austrian, and then some different people coming and going. We had partly brought some money with us, partly got some from the government as refugees or something, and social aid organizations as well as church groups had set up free kitchens and stuff, so life was quite easy. Evidently, we talked a lot about the horrors of fascism all over, our decisions to come to Australia, our fighting prospects, and so on.

In a bizarre way, given the fucked circumstances that brought us together, the vibes were great. Especially in Newtown. Despite of recent Yuppie-invasions the neighborhood had retained some of its subcultural charm, and a fair number of political radicals and punks had survived there. Now, with the influx of all those foreign revolutionaries, it almost fully became ours again, if you know what I mean. Especially since our arrival made a lot of Australian radicals from all over the country come to be with the „overseas comrades“ in Newtown as well.

Walking down Kings Rd or Enmore Rd made you feel like you were on a big antifascist street festival, just on a daily basis: Radicals everywhere, squatting on the sidewalks, smoking, drinking, playing guitar, carrying ghetto blasters, dancing, talking, everything for everybody, which had to be that way, since there was a huge diversity of people hangin' out: old hippies, punks, straight edgers, academic Bakunin-look-a-likes, true working class unionists, black groups, feminists, the whole lot. And people were happy. Always hellos and smiles. A strong sense of unity. Maybe the rise of fascism everywhere, maybe the similarity of our individual fates, maybe just the vibes created by coming together. I don't know. But the unity was there. None of that petty fighting

over tactics and means and goals and text-interpretations and labels and what it really meant to be politically correct and who's actually bourgeois and who's not. None of that.

I had had that pretty much everywhere else. It sucked. It has always killed the radicals, and maybe always will. I can't stand it. It breeds big egos, arrogance, self-righteousness, competitiveness, rivalry, bitterness, division. As if we can afford all that. Being so small anyway. Plus, it makes us act like all those assholes we don't wanna be like.

Today it's the same again. That's why I pretty much stay away from the movement. It's sad, but, I'm afraid to say, back to normality. Good people, but...

Anyway, none of that when I was in Newtown. We were all antifascists, radical antifascists, and that was what counted. And I can truly say I loved those people for it. All of them. Walking down the neighborhood I felt these people were really my brothers and sisters. Not just words. We were one big family.

Out of this spirit the movement eventually started. In a way it was bound to happen. I mean, all of us in this one place together, anarchists and other antifascists from everywhere, what else is supposed to happen? Like I said, quite a unique situation in history, really. So, anyway, some sort of collective political activity had to happen at one point. It seemed unavoidable.

From what I remember, it all started with certain individuals spreading the idea that we are now strong enough to think about working on establishing a somewhat „organized“ political movement in order to make our collective antifascist work as effective as possible. We were lots of people, the conditions seemed good, and, in a certain way, the need for antifascist activity almost seemed even more urgent than usual, if you let me put it that way just to make a point. Generally speaking, there is never anything more urgent than antifascist activity, of course, I know, but I was just trying to say that sometimes certain political developments demand an especially immediate and strong response. Ah, you know what I mean.

So, certain people started organizing meetings around Newtown on a more regular basis. Since we were all there and didn't really have much to do anyway, lots of us went. The meetings started under very simple banners concerning the global rise of antifascism, what could be done against it, the situation of us refugees, and so forth. Nothing too far from what was discussed everywhere in Australia at the time, so at first we didn't provoke any special attention from the authorities.

A lot of the energy in the early meetings simply went into getting ourselves communally organized in Newtown, setting up urban communes, people's kitchens, community spaces, arts quarters, and getting work divided and organized. And then into how to support the remaining antifascists in Europe and North America, how to put pressure on the fascist regimes there, and how to, or, if at all, collaborate with the remaining antifascist governments of the industrialized world, namely those of Australia and New Zealand.

Our respective discussions never got very far, though. The global powers seemed to have reached a stalemate, with no immediate fascist threat to the Pacific, but no real chance of an attack against the fascists overseas either. Also, contact with the few remaining antifascists in the fascist-ruled countries came close to a complete halt, probably 'cause most of them had been eliminated by now, or were in rigorous hiding. So, things didn't look very promising in that respect. Unsurprisingly, our priorities were to change soon.

We had established ourselves fairly well by now, the living quarters were well organized, the kitchens fully functioning, the streets remained vibrant, everybody was involved in some sort of non-monetary community work, and spirits were high despite the global disaster.

But with time there came a feeling of isolation and passivity. You know how they always say radical community projects inevitably imply the danger of creating escapist micro-worlds, while losing impact on society as a whole? Well, I guess that's the feeling some of us started to have back then.

Frankly speaking, I don't think that was really a problem. I mean, what we had back then in Newtown was just great really. Maybe that's even all anarchists can ever hope for, I sometimes think today. Getting into a situation where you can build your own little anarchist community. Maybe that doesn't change society much as a whole, but that community will still be there, right? Let's say, society as a whole maybe never changes, but then maybe you can at least steal a bit of that society for yourself, you know what I mean? Just a little space with no cops and bosses and such. A space to experiment and feel free. Like I said, maybe that's all we can ever have anyway. And back then we had that.

But back then that wasn't enough for us. Maybe also just 'cause spirits were so high. We were so many. A lot of us started to think we could do anything.

So, anyway, after a few weeks you would start hearing people talk about „spreading out“, „a unique opportunity“, „a radical front“, and shortly after, certain individuals publicly – so to speak – made their opinions concerning these matters heard in the meetings, suggesting the formation of a Liberation Front starting to leave the ghetto of Newtown and bringing the struggle to all of Australia.

„If the fascists take over all those countries, we should at least be trying to get one!“ For some reason I remember that rallying cry by some German comrade. It made me and lots of others laugh at the time, and I think he wanted it to be funny in a way, but he definitely also intended to bring the message across that it was worth giving the wider struggle a go. And like many others he got that message across. I was all for it at the time, and so were most of the others in Newtown. Again, spirits were high.

There wasn't much resistance to the idea at all. Some were cautious, saying it wasn't time yet, others were afraid we'd provoke persecution by the authorities who'd ultimately destroy our Newtown haven, and, yes, these issues were taken seriously and were discussed, but in the end the vast majority of us figured we'd not only be strong enough to go and expand by now, but we had some kind of revolutionary duty to do that, given the ironically and tragically fortunate situation we found ourselves in, and, concerning the persecution, well, that might happen, but again, we were strong, and being persecuted was our fate as revolutionaries anyway, and, if we wanted to indulge in tranquility while the rest of the world got fucked over, we should call ourselves pensioners and not revolutionaries. Well, what could have been said against that? Especially, since some activists also argued convincingly that if we ever wanted to seriously threaten the fascist world order we needed a stronger base than a late-bohemian quarter in some Australian city.

People got ready. There were still a few who didn't like the idea much, simply 'cause they loved the way Newtown was at the time and didn't wanna give that up, but, as I said, they had no real arguments other than giving up the revolutionary cause for private pleasure, and nobody in a radical community would ever seriously voice an opinion like that, at least not in any I've ever been aware of, so they had to go with the flow anyway. Well, some managed to stay in Newtown trying to just continue the relaxed life anyway, as, of course, lots of people had to stay to keep the base alive, so they could keep on chillin' under a revolutionary pretext. But, no, I'm becoming unfair, I mean, I don't blame any of them, they were all with the cause, really, and, well, if, after all the shit they had been through, they wanted to enjoy the bit of relative peace

and fun they had finally found a bit longer, who can blame them, really? To be perfectly honest, I occasionally thought that maybe I should stay, too. But in the end I didn't. I joined one of the cells and left. And maybe that was better anyway, since it didn't take long for Newtown to change drastically. But, I'm getting ahead of things.

III

Getting the movement somewhat organized seemed like a bit of a challenge at first. Needless to say, the diversity of groups trying to work together was enormous. But that was actually part of the fun.

Of course we had lots of people who didn't consider themselves anarchists, who would have probably preferred to be called communists or socialists or something, but they were far from being strong united blocks.

The global communist movement had never quite recovered from the setbacks of the late 20th century, and because of countless reform- and alternative- and democracy- and what-not-movements their usual range of different Marxist, socialist, Leninist, Trotzkyist, etc., groups had become even wider, so that the anarchists formed the single biggest unit of revolutionaries, since they didn't seem to care that much about whether one preferred to read Kropotkin, or to read Landauer, or to read at all.

Anarchists were anarchists. No gods, no masters, no other big questions. In a certain sense it was just easiest to be an anarchist. You didn't have to know much more than the fact that you hated authority. As soon as that was clear, the other anarchists called you a comrade.

It always seemed to me that a lot of the comrades in the more rigid socialist groups had to undergo some sort of ideological training and then had to pass endless tests of proving and confirming their ideological accountability. It never sounded like fun to me, and I was very happy as an anarchist.

Anyway, as I said, we formed the strongest single unit, so we kinda suggested – really suggested, we weren't very demanding – that we should form an Anarchist Liberation Front, since we were not only the biggest faction, but we also wouldn't have any problems with comrades fighting on our sides who were something other than anarchist, as long as they were against oppression and exploitation and competition, and for equality and justice and solidarity instead. And, so we – or, well, the eloquent ones of us who spoke – suggested further, anarchism would be the widest term possible under which to launch a revolutionary movement, and while Leninists might have real problems fighting as Trotzkyists, they could maybe fight as anarchists since that didn't really mean that much anyway. Thinking of it now, it all sounds kinda funny, but at the time that's how the discussions went. It was all quite casual, really.

Still, many of the non-anarchists didn't want to fight as anarchists. As always, our casualness didn't win their hearts. We didn't care much, really. We had had our fun discussing the issue.

We then collectively looked for a common name. There were many voices for a simple „People's Movement“, but that didn't really sound like anything, most of us figured, plus, lots of „people's“ things were used by the fascists as well, and we needed a term making it clear that fascism was our ultimate enemy.

Well, unsurprisingly we founded an Antifascist Front in the end. To suggest the fact that different groups were united in this front, we added the term, well: United, and as it was all

about liberation of course – especially in respect to global fascist domination – we became: the United Antifascist Liberation Front.

In the end pretty much everybody was quite happy with that solution. The different groups sent their representatives to discuss some sort of founding document. Of course, the contents of that document became the issue in Newtown for the two weeks it took the representatives to come up with the final draft. I mean, it wasn't easy. I mean, just picture the diversity of groups and individuals we had...

First, there were the dogmatic types, mostly belonging to one of those exclusive groups, you know, Leninist, Maoist, all that. They were always asking for class analysis and class consciousness and stuff, while continuously debating what class really was, with conclusions that represented the specific groups they adhered to. Their ultimate goal was a communist society, but a revolutionary avantgarde had to be set up in order to lead the masses there or something, well, I don't really know, 'cause that stuff didn't interest me much. Anyway, they were pretty much into strict organization and discipline and so on. „Efficiency“ was one of their favorite terms, which struck me as a bit bizarre, since I thought that was a capitalist word, but whatever. They made up the first big group.

The second were the politically conscious anarchists who would debate stuff with the dogmatic types, but would disagree on certain things, such as the necessity of an avantgarde or party structures. It seemed like they wanted more faster, or believed more was possible faster or something like that, anyway, they always sounded like the masses would rise any day and everybody would live happily ever after. I liked that idea, actually. Like I said before, I always counted myself amongst the anarchists since they seemed to go directly and without any fuss to what I wanted: a world without bosses, only brothers and sisters around.

Well, and then there was the third big group, with nothing in common but being antifascist and not fitting into either of the two former groups. Hmm, let's see: There were Christians who believed Jesus was a socialist. There were individualists, mostly punks or bohemians or artists, who were fully into their individual freedom and therefore hated fascism with a passion (according to the more political types they lacked the old consciousness, but I always thought they made great comrades, especially 'cause they were mostly a lot of fun to hang out with). There were radical ecologists who wanted the revolution to be „green“, some going as far as being anti-electricity and all, which I didn't mind, especially since their numbers were way too small to have any decisive impact on the movement as a whole. We also had radical vegans who figured there couldn't be any revolution without becoming vegan first, but again, their numbers were small and their influence limited. Even though I myself was actually a vegetarian, I never really believed in their claims. And there were a few autonomous collectives who wanted to join the front, but remain independent units, such as separatist feminists, and a few ethnically defined groups, most of whom had arrived from the States. Their attitude never bothered me. I always thought they just wanted to be amongst themselves, which was fine by me, I figured they would have their reasons. They did their part for the struggle, always, and as long as you didn't challenge them, there were never any problems. I mean, I never thought we all have to totally love one another. The basic levels of mutual respect were enough for me.

Now, anyway, people from all these groups had to discuss the paper under which to fight together. I mean, you can imagine the debates: What exactly do we want, should we be very specific or very general, how will we organize, do we set ourselves explicit goals or leave things wide open, etc.?

At the same time, of course, there was a consensus: We were antifascists, and we wanted an egalitarian and just society without oppression, exploitation and war. Whether some called that socialist or communist or anarchist or whatever didn't matter much.

To cut the whole story short, the eventual outcome was pretty natural really, at least for me. The people in the committee focused on the common goals and principles and included parts proclaiming and protecting the diversity of the united groups. It was the only way to unite the diversity of all of us, so to speak. The final paper was so short and precise, it easily fit on a single sheet of paper, which from then on started circulating everywhere, and, one could say, really started the adventure of the United Antifascist Liberation Front back in 2019. I still have a flyer of that founding paper. There you go...

Newtown, Australia, 15/10/19

With the publication and distribution of this constitutional paper we declare the foundation of the United Antifascist Liberation Front (UALF) at the location and on the date given above.

Structure

The UALF consists of a variety of groups committed to the uncompromising fight against fascism in all its forms. Representatives of all groups (42 in total – see list below) participated in the debates leading to the present document, which was finally agreed upon in full consensus.

Goals

The UALF's ultimate goal is the creation of an antifascist society, guided by the principles of equality, justice, solidarity, and individual as well as collective self-determination. The organization of daily life is up to the individuals and collectives themselves, and all options remain open, as long as the principles above remain respected, and no structural coercion, oppression, exploitation, or competition will be established. There is also a commitment to extending the application of the principles above to the living environment as a whole, including all species and ecosystems. The immediate goal lies in creating a movement leading to such a society by dismantling the political and economic structures not allowing its realization. In this process elements of the antifascist society should be, at least partially, realized within the movement itself.

Means

The UALF will make use of a variety of means on all levels of our lives in its attempt to realize an antifascist society. Given the diversity of revolutionaries involved, the complexity of the social field, and the dynamics of history, the tactics of the UALF will permanently be created and recreated by the locally and concretely involved activists according to the specific situations they are facing. There are no general guidelines other than the principles mentioned above which won't ever be allowed to undergo compromise and have to be expressed in every action taken. The UALF does not separate means from ends.

Organization

Each of the groups listed below sends two representatives to the general UALF-conferences which will be held four times a year, plus, if more than 50% of the groups involved deem an extra conference necessary because of special political developments, extraordinary events, or other reasons. The nomination-process of the representatives is entirely up to the individual groups, and the nominations are valid for one conference only, hence they are subject to change or reconfirmation. For the organization of the conferences and communication in-between the groups, a UALF-office in Newtown will be established which has an exclusively administrative function and absolutely no decision-making power. The office will also be responsible for UALF-contact with the wider community and the media, again without representative power of its own, only as the official medium for the UALF-conference.

Finally, the office will administrate the UALF's collective financial affaires (the individual groups keep a high degree of autonomy in this matter), whereby decisions of provision, use, and distribution, will, again, exclusively remain with the UALF-conference.

Groups constituting the UALF and ratifying this paper after having been fully involved in the process of debates leading up to its present and final form are the following:

Anarchism For The Masses
Anarchist League
Anarcho-Syndicalist Front
Animal Liberation Offensive
Ass-Kicking Dykes
Autonomy Now And Forever
Bakunin Rules
Black Panther Party 2000
Castrate Patriarchy!
Che Forever
Christians Against Fascism
Communists United
Communist Workers Party
Ecorevolution
Friends Of George Sorel
Fuck Fascism!
Global Network For Liberty
Hippie Revolution
International Anarchist Federation
International Brotherhood
International Socialists
International Trotskyist Federation
International Workers Alliance
Jah Revolution
Jesus Was A Communist
Love, Fight, Play Football
Maoist Revolutionaries
Marihuana For President
Marxist-Leninist International Party
Marxist-Leninist Revolutionaries
Nubian Liberation Front
Peace On Earth
Punks Against Fascism
Sisters Of Emma Goldman
Socialist Alliance
Squatters International
The Amazonas Strike Back
The Radical International Gay- and Lesbian-Network
Thoreau Never Died
Utopian Mothafuckas
Vegan Revolution (Hardline)
Vegan Revolution (Pacifist)

Well, the thing with the groups was kinda difficult, of course. On the one hand, most of us figured it would make sense to give each group representing certain interests within the antifascist frame equal influence on decision-making, regardless of their numbers, because of minority

and diversity rights and all that. On the other hand, we had, for example, Marxist-Leninist parties from over 70 countries present, and counting all of them individually would have somewhat distorted that picture. So, finally, it was decided that groups could not be included on a national basis. Especially, since that seemed to go against both the general idea of the United Front and the specific circumstances of its foundation. Also, we couldn't include groups with very narrowly defined agendas, you know, like: Save The Sea Turtle, Free Rodrigo Gonzales, Boycott Nike, the like. So, the different groups were urged to merge into bigger, more general, units. There was a bit of resistance at first from some groups, but in the end the whole thing really made sense, and within just a few days wider alliances were formed.

It then was also decided that, for the sake of communication, all groups should bear English names. Again, some groups, mainly consisting of non-native-English-speakers, complained a little, but also this decision made sense, since the forces of reality, so to speak, had already dictated that English would be the official UALF-language, and there was not much we could do about that, whether we liked it or not; there was simply no feasible alternative. And, furthermore, we were in an anglophone country, so... - you get the picture.

IV

I remember the 10th of October well. At noon the conference presented the final draft of the paper, and there was excitement all over Newtown. It was as if the revolution had already happened, and the world entirely and eternally freed from fascism. Well, naïve of course, in a way, but then again, it wasn't like we seriously thought that, or were completely deluded or something, but we just gave in to the feelings of euphoria, that, I still believe, were understandable. I mean, I ask you again: When in history did you have that big and wide a revolutionary antifascist front concentrated in one place?

Anyway, there was music everywhere, people were laughing and dancing, throughout the whole day and the following night. It was fantastic, and regardless of all which might have happened afterwards, in my opinion even just those hours of collective joy and happiness made the foundation of the UALF worthwhile a hundred times. I'll always be thankful I was allowed to be part of that.

All was pretty funny, of course. I mean, you just saw the founding paper. There was no plan at all about what to do and where to start really. It was like, well, we all do whatever we want for antifascism, and then we call it a united struggle. In a sense that was cool too, though. You know, the openness and freedom in it. Plus, there was some sort of general understanding that, of course, we had to get started by getting the message out that we are here and that we want antifascism.

The very day after the celebrations the first revolutionary „cells“, as they generally became to be known, left Newtown. Regardless of ideological orientation, most groups operated that way: Sending out small units of about four to ten people to do subtle and easily disguised, but committed and effective work.

I left the day after. I belonged to the Anarchist League, an alliance of 34 anarchist groups with the common nominator of liking Bakunin and Malatesta. We figured we'd be pretty authentic descendants of the two. Well, I already told you that, personally, I didn't care much about these things. I would have as happily fought for the International Anarchist Federation or Anarchism

For The Masses, and I didn't really understand the differences anyway, but people from our little Austrian anarchist group knew some people from like-minded anarchist groups, mainly in Italy and Greece, and they knew some from Spain and Argentina, and, well, eventually we ended up as the Anarchist League, divided from the others mainly by the slightly higher status we granted Malatesta, from what I understood.

But, coming back to the story, as I said, I left two days after the UALF's foundation, pretty early you could say, but once the paper was out and all, I didn't think about staying in Newtown anymore, I was all keen on going out doing revolutionary stuff.

We took off in two pretty shabby vehicles. An old Fiat and an old something else. I never knew much about cars. We were eight - four in each vehicle. It was, well, me, then three guys from Argentina, Federico, Santiago, and Roberto, Costas and Ilias from Greece, Sven, from Sweden, and Aki, a Finnish guy. We had all known each other from Newtown for quite a while, I had even lived with Sven and Aki for a few months, so, anyway, somehow we ended up with each other.

It was fun. We regularly changed in-between cars and driving-seats, and driving seriously never got boring. I mean, first of all there was a lot to be discussed anyway, but then the guys were funny too, and we had lots of good music, especially the guys from Argentina had lots of Latin American acoustic stuff and Salsa and the like, and everything went just fine.

We were heading north, a lot of copies of UALF-papers in the trunk, but nothing else at the time. In the beginning, education and information was our only agenda, really. We'd leave the flyers, put some up as posters, talked to people about what we had heard about this new group, some „United Front Against Fascism“, in short, we spread the word, without ever arousing anybody's suspicions. After all, we were poor, dispossessed refugees.

We kept going like this for a few weeks. We had stopped in a lot of places along the East Coast, and finally got up to Cairns.

We kept regular contact with Newtown via phone, and also had mail for us sent regularly to post offices. Also, the media started picking up on the UALF-activities nationwide, and we got more and more – mostly of course grossly distorted – information about other cells' activities.

In general, the picture after a month was about this: Lots of cells were active in the „information-campaign“ all over the country. UALF-flyers and –posters appeared everywhere, the public became used to name and logo. Also, lots of people seemed receptive to the idea, at least that's how it appeared. I thought so too, actually. Might have also been a bit of wishful thinking, but, no, I really had that impression. Like I told you earlier, it could have been up to a quarter of the population having at least certain sympathies with our goals and ambitions.

V

A few weeks later that picture seemed confirmed. The Australian government obviously became more and more curious about us and our activities, but, having said that, not even Newtown had reported any forms of increased hassles, surveillance, or control yet.

Having our name out alone could, of course, only be a start. It became pretty clear that we had to leap forward into a new phase of the struggle, mainly consisting of extending our infrastructure by establishing permanent cells in other towns and some depots out in the bush, and of acquiring money, cars, computers, and weapons. Nobody wanted to start an armed conflict immediately, but if we wanted to be serious about all this, we had to arm ourselves, so much was

clear. At this point, none of the more pacifist groups objected. They were in the minority, and no one forced them to use arms, so at the time it was still all just about respecting each other's differences. A few months later these differences proved too strong, though, and led to the first UALF-breakaways. But I'm jumping ahead again.

The following three to four months later became known as „phase two“ of our struggle. Whatever. Fact is, things went quite well, and we achieved a lot quickly. Especially the comrades out in the bush were really successful in finding sympathetic farmers who were helpful in setting up isolated and well-hidden depots for arms and such. Many people out in the bush had suffered a lot under the full-on Australian capitalism of the past years and were very receptive to anything anti-government. I don't think a lot of them had very much of that advanced socialist consciousness, it was probably more what some might call an individualistic, or survivalist, mentality that led them to support an anti-authoritarian movement, but, regardless, they connected well with a lot of our comrades and became allies in a common struggle.

The depots were not only essential to our ambitions, they were generally a great thing. I mean, even before we relied on them as hiding places, they were just cool places to hang out.

One time, some comrades needed assistance to set up some underground shelters at a place not far south of Normanton, and since we were still working in the Cairns-area, we headed over for a few days to help out. It was excellent. The guys were Americans from Punks Against Fascism, and another cell consisting of Germans and Dutchmen had come down from Darwin – also punk-kinda guys, belonging to Fuck Fascism!, if I remember correctly -, and we had the greatest time, working for the revolution out there in the middle of nowhere, cooking over fire, watching the stars of the incredible desert night sky, and listening to the silence (as they say). We stayed for a week. Being there, all that shit that was going down all over the planet just seemed so fucking far away, it was almost hard to believe it was there at all. Unfortunately, we knew that it was, though. So, after the shelters were finished we headed back to the coast where all that shit was already unavoidable on a daily basis. It was great, though, in the desert. One of the best weeks I had as an UALF-activist, really. I envied the comrades working out there permanently.

We had other work to do, though. First, we helped establish the UALF in Cairns, kinda building a North-Queensland-Centre. We got a lot of help from local hippie-types, set up a little office disguised as an artist's workshop, organized regularly available accommodation for passing comrades, and continued the information-campaign.

After a while we also got involved in the „redistribution-program“. We needed money, we needed cars, we needed arms. I remember the day the redistribution started well: the 31st of January 2020. It was a crucial day for the whole movement. We knew that a lot of things would be different after that. By starting to do things considered simple crimes by the Australian authorities, we entered the stage of direct confrontation and persecution. So much was clear. It was because of this that the 2nd UALF-conference held in Newtown in mid-January had unanimously decided to let the actions begin on one and the same day throughout the country. First of all, that meant we could prepare for the repercussions collectively, but it also meant that we were simply trying to get as much as possible before things would become much more difficult due to increased security measures and such.

Banks were robbed everywhere on the 31st. We got over \$80.000 from the ANZ bank in Cairns. Not bad. We heard of comrades getting over \$200.000 in Perth. Anyway, all in all 117 banks were robbed in one day. Suddenly we had money. It was cool.

The conference had decided that generally financial affairs remained with the individual groups, but a common „arms-pool“ was set up in Newtown, handled by an elected committee well experienced in the international trade of weaponry.

Within the Anarchist League it had been decided that the money would stay with the cells, with the natural obligation to support each other if needed. Whatever we wanted to contribute to the arms-pool in Newtown was up to us. We gave about \$10.000, and kept the rest for ourselves. All we asked from the pool were two dozens of decent semi-automatic handguns. We had robbed the bank with two pretty shitty rifles and knew we wouldn't get much further with that.

As expected, that last day of January brought panic to the Australian government. Of course we let everybody know that it had been us robbing the banks, leaving statements everywhere declaring and justifying our actions, and proclaiming our ideas and goals. Our struggle with the State had begun.

VI

The State's response was harsh. As much as nobody had really bothered us prior to „bank day“, security forces now seemed to appear everywhere. Raids, random ID-checks, and an omnipresent police force were reported from Newtown. Various „alternative“ or „leftist“ groups and organizations had cop visits and searches all over the country. And each political refugee suddenly seemed to be a suspect and hence an object of observation and harassment.

Soon, several clashes followed. Car chases, the first arrests, minor shoot-outs.

Only three days after the robberies, on the 3rd of February, the first comrades died. Two women from Colombia were shot dead by cops when their hide-out in Richmond, Melbourne, was discovered. There were all sorts of stories about how it had happened, and who had shot first, and I don't know. It didn't interest me much, I just thought it was awful they were dead. It was weird, I didn't feel much hatred against the cops, it was more like I went numb or something, but at the same time, it became clear to me that things were really serious now.

Everything had happened real fast. I mean, just a week earlier we were still cruisin' around Cairns, laughing and joking, mingling with the crowds, even greeting passing cops, it was all fun, really, and now we knew we could get into a life-or-death situation any moment. The changes were obvious, and it sure wasn't only me who sensed them.

All the comrades around me, who had been nothing but high-spirited, loose, relaxed, cheeky, jovial for three months, now were tense, bad-tempered, anxious, at times paranoid. Basically, the fun was gone. Not that I didn't know before that it probably come to this at one stage, but rationally comprehending something in advance is still a long way from actually experiencing it afterwards. There was even a feeling of: Why did we get away from fascist repression to put ourselves into a situation like this?

You could also say, the happy days of „free Newtown“ were suddenly badly missed. Unsurprisingly, others felt the same, and these matters were discussed, always ending in mutual reaffirmations that the joy we had taken in the radical ghetto of Newtown had been somewhat bourgeois anyway, and that revolutionaries had to suffer as a matter of history. Today, I don't really believe that, and I don't think I did even then, but then again, there was no way out anyway, we had to go through with what we had started, and at least trying to convince yourself that you did the right thing made it a bit easier.

The persecution remained heavy. Lots of crackdowns on comrades, confiscation of real estate, computer hard- and software, paper stuff, more and more arrests, and, above all, more shoot-outs.

Six weeks after bank day 29 comrades were dead, a similar number wounded, and about 300 people imprisoned. Our infrastructure was badly damaged, many cells, especially out in the bush, completely isolated. It was hard to get reliable numbers from the other side, but I don't think more than eight or ten cops or soldiers had been killed by comrades. We still didn't have proper weapons, and large-scale bomb attacks hadn't been carried out so far.

They were eventually, though. Contact in-between the different cells had become extremely erratic, and hardly any of the headquarter facilities in Newtown had survived, so we knew very little about what was going on with other fighters. This also meant, we didn't know how those guys in Darwin managed to set the thing off, where they had gotten their explosives from, or even exactly who they were, but anyway, on March 2nd three bombs went off at the Australian Army Barracks in Darwin, killing 52 soldiers.

The cell, apparently from the Marxist Revolutionaries, sent out a statement mainly talking of a response to the fascist oppression of the UALF-forces, and of bringing the struggle to a new level. I instantly thought that the whole thing was shit. It didn't bring us any further militaristically or strategically, it was a simple act of retaliation on dubious moral grounds, and it definitely didn't help us win the public's sympathy that had been dwindling down ever since bank day anyway. Our whole cell felt that way.

At the same time, we were simply facing the problems a wide open United Front has to face at one point, I guess, namely, that some of your comrades do something you don't fully support.

Some groups drew consequences right away. Three days after the bombs, we received the information that six groups with strong pacifist inclinations had left the UALF: Christians Against Fascism, Hippie Revolution, Marihuana For President, Peace On Earth, Thoreau Never Died, Vegan Revolution (Pacifist).

Neither for the Anarchist League as a group, nor for the guys in our cell personally, including me, that was an issue. Even though we didn't think the attack had been a good idea, we remained dedicated to the UALF's cause. We never questioned that.

The fight became harder and harder, though. Some comrades had by now required a pretty decent arsenal of weapons. Late March our cell received a whole bunch of rather old, but well-maintained, Kalashnikovs.

A lot of weapons came through trade from overseas, but there was also a fair number of armed robberies of gun stores, police stations, even army barracks. The heavier the persecution by the State, the more reckless some comrades became.

We were still up in the Cairns-area. Two bigger cells, 12 people each, of the International Brotherhood, an ideologically not quite definable group mainly consisting of antiimperialist and anticapitalist Arabs and Africans, dominated the militant struggle in the area. They did a lot of robberies and needed vehicles. Vehicles were actually generally in demand, also for supply runs to and from the bush. Somehow our cell ended up becoming mainly involved in vehicle organization.

One of the things the Anarchist League always tried to stand for was moral integrity, even in times of crisis. We knew there were comrades out there who thought of that as awfully silly and just went ahead with their actions Netschajew-style - even though I always thought that spoke against the UALF's founding principles, but never mind. Nonetheless, we made a point of at least trying to live up to certain principles. That meant, for example, that we wouldn't just take from

any individual for the revolution, but only from the bad ones, so to speak. Or that we would use only absolutely necessary violence, without ever putting civilians in danger. Or that we'd never misuse money for the revolution for personal pleasure. Or that we'd never start relating to people as a superior revolutionary avantgarde. And actually, I think we were, all in all, pretty good at that. Yes, I do really think our group always kept a certain moral integrity. There's really not much we did that, in this sense, I'd feel sorry for today. Like with the cars. We wouldn't just go steal any, no, we tried to develop an acquiring system allowing us to harm the bad ones only. That's how Sven came up with the hitchhiking idea I told you about before. Everyone in the cell thought it was great. And we really felt good about the way we got the cars.

VII

Unfortunately, revolutionary life apart from being content with the way we got us and our comrades the cars, became worse and worse for us. It was, like, instead of going anywhere, the UALF was completely stuck in violent clashes with the State's authorities. By the end of April way over 100 comrades were dead, way beyond 500 in jail. Daily life mainly consisted of hiding and being anxious. There was little fun, and not much hope either, really. The cells were still dispersed with little contact, Newtown apparently under full authority control, the militaristic advantage of the State obvious, the general public not on our side. It was a violent deadlock we were in, with hardly any realistic ways to get out. Frankly speaking, frustration kept creeping up on us.

By mid-May things had become even worse. Some cells had apparently gotten out of control, planting bombs in malls, doing hazardous robberies in shopping centers, etc. We also started hearing about conflicts in-between cells in certain towns, mainly Melbourne, with apparently sometimes even violent clashes. Even in Cairns we had a case of a Dutch comrade refusing to work with another cell, 'cause it had „German Nazis“ amongst its members. I mean, this might sound funny today, but at the time little things like that were just extremely painful blasts against everything we had tried to stand for originally.

Also, the whole social climate in Australia took on really weird forms. The more reckless and unforgiving and bitter the struggle got, the more polarized the whole nation became, and that sure wasn't good. We still had some support, especially out in the bush, but, to be perfectly honest, if we had said there's a 10% support left for us that would have been a very optimistic estimate.

A problem, of course, was that most of us were refugees, recent immigrants, you might say, and we didn't have a strong community foundation. Yes, Australian society was cosmopolitan and all, and a lot of our Greek or Turkish comrades, for example, had personal relations to local communities, but generally, in the Australians' eyes we were a bunch of ungrateful troublemakers bringing havoc to about the last non-fascist nation and peaceful haven in the industrialized world. And our only argument against that, which basically was: Don't you want to turn this haven into a true antifascist paradise?, simply didn't strike a chord with a population that never had a big revolutionary history.

We also made the experience that (generally speaking – as always, there were individual exceptions) most non-Western communities, mainly the Australian Natives, the Pacific Islander

communities of Mela- and Polynesians, or the big Asian communities, still perceived our movement as a very Western thing they didn't feel like getting involved with much.

Bottom line: For most Australians all we had done was bring extra violence and fear and confusion into their lives, and they hated us for it. And, don't get me wrong, I still believe in everything I fought for at the time, but in a certain way I understand those people. Or, at least, I don't blame them for their sentiments. I guess what I wanna say is, we just knew too little about what we were getting into when we did. The refugees' ghetto of Newtown was not Australia. Again, rationally we had known that, I guess, but euphoria had carried us away or something.

Anyway, the population was deeply divided. The few supporters we had, stood against the rest, becoming more and more impatient and resentful. All in all, a social situation had been created that was all but revolutionary. Rather a state of mistrust, anger and paranoia, ironically pushing fascist forces if any.

The government was pretty helpless. The state of emergency that had been declared after the bombs in March was just an expression of desperation, and military rule actually became a serious threat, especially since people expected someone in power to wipe us out.

As a sort of last resort to maintain civil rule the Prime Minister called for elections in July. That was the beginning of the end for the UALF.

VIII

At the time Australia was governed by the Conservatives, Labor was in opposition, and there were some minor parties with not much influence.

As I've just said, the Conservative government was about to crumble over its apparent inability to halt our uprising, and it was trying to win time by calling elections in order to present some new program to be then confirmed and strengthened by the voters' will. It was a risky gamble, but it was their only chance, law-and-order generals were already waiting to take over, and a not insignificant part of the population would have probably welcomed that.

Labor, of course, was trying to use the golden opportunity to oust the Conservatives by blaming them for the mess and offering a solution. They were in the tricky situation to have been the party strongly supporting opening Australia's borders to us refugees, securing our rights and all that. But, they came up with a pretty neat idea:

Generally, so they stated, we remained good people, but watching the government not doing anything actively to oppose the global rise of fascism, we had been bound to be disappointed and become desperate. At the same time, of course, the use of violence was completely unacceptable, and they fully supported all means necessary to completely crush our movement, nevertheless promising also to engage in talks about unconditional surrender.

It was a way more sophisticated proposal to the Australian public than the whining of the Conservatives over the opposition's resistance against stricter immigration policies and law enforcement. The Conservative's plea came across as a cheap excuse without any real idea for the future. Labor, on the other hand, allowed the Australians to keep on thinking of themselves as the world's true antifascists, while at the same time promising to put an end to the UALF by all means possible. They won the elections by a fair margin.

I was happy, actually. Really. There were comrades who still thought a further aggravated rift within the population would have led the „revolutionary situation“ to a head, but I thought that

was all crap, and I still think so. All a conservative rather-dead-than-red crusade, and the most probable UALF reaction to it, would have meant, had been more and longer violence leading to nothing. Labor was at least open to talk. And, honestly, I was ready to talk, so to speak, because I was definitely tired of running away, being in danger, and putting others in danger as well. Plus, it seemed like we had gotten into a situation where we were wasting time and energy fighting our last potentially sympathetic allies, while real fascist assholes were taking over the planet. And, I mean, by July, nine months after the glorious foundation of the UALF we simply had nothing. No liberated zones, no wide support net, no international solidarity, simply nothing.

To tell you the truth, our cell had already retreated before the elections. In mid-June we had had enough of the stagnation in Cairns and went bush to hide out at the depot we had helped build. We actually met some of the American punks from Punks Against Fascism there again. They had also had enough – especially since two of them got shot at a police roadblock outside Katherine.

We also managed to meet up with some of the Anarchist League comrades. That was really good ‘cause our contact with the other AL-cells had only been sporadic over the past few months due to the fucked up situation of the struggle. A lot of their experiences had been similar to ours, and, just like us, basically all of them felt that the struggle of the UALF was going nowhere. It sorta became clear that, if it came to an acceptable solution, the Anarchist League was ready to compromise, but of course nobody wanted to stab still actively fighting comrades in the back, and the outcome of the elections had to be awaited, anyway.

The rough month we waited was tedious, but also fairly relaxed compared to the tension on the east coast. We were about 20 comrades just hanging out at the station. The atmosphere was definitely not very enchanting, it was rather one of fatigue, disappointment and uncertainty, but there was solidarity and at least a sense of peace.

Meanwhile, the state of the struggle spiraled further down. Evidently, the retreat of various cells like ours contributed to the process of dissolution, but we figured that was just the way it was, and, actually, we weren’t even too unhappy about that. Being „traitors“ in the eyes of the self-declared die-hards becoming ever more desperate and reckless in their actions also seemed unavoidable, but their hostile reactions definitely didn’t make me, and I think most of us, feel worse, rather the opposite, it was more like a confirmation to gradually detach oneself from their understanding of „making revolution“.

In other words, once Labor came to power, the UALF was already a beaten enemy, as an active force merely consisting of about two dozen „commandos“, as they liked to call themselves now, who came disturbingly close to that bourgeois stereotype of violent lunatics gone wild.

A week after having been voted in, the government proposed a truce.

Most of the groups still constituting the UALF, including the Anarchist League, immediately agreed to the proposal. Luckily, the democratic forces within the movement were still strong enough to convince the minority of comrades who wanted to go through with what they understood as „no compromise“ to give in, and sign the truce as well.

A conference was held under difficult circumstances in Alice Springs, and a group of eight comrades was elected to engage in direct negotiations with the Australian government.

The government wanted unconditional surrender, and the immediate hand-over of our arms. In exchange they offered an amnesty for all our activists except those charged with murder, assault, and armed robbery. Also, further prosecution would remain restricted to these offences,

while no cases would be sought for conspiracy, treason, forming a criminal organization, and all those sorts of things.

Of course, we couldn't readily accept that. It would have meant to sell out a lot of our comrades who had risked their lives in the struggle. And, I mean, yes, even if I often disagreed with some comrades' actions, of course they remained comrades, fighting for what we believed in, and never would I have wanted to see them sacrificed for some condescending peace proposal by some government.

Also, if we really got into some kind of a deal with the government we had to remind them of their promise to commit themselves stronger to fight global fascism, to at least get some advantage out of it for us as well.

The UALF's conditions were: Surrender and hand-over of arms for a total amnesty of UALF-activists, and the formation of a „Committee Against Global Fascism“ consisting of government leaders and representatives of the refugee community to tackle the global fascist enemy together.

Interestingly enough, the government very quickly agreed to form the committee. The UALF-negotiators did a pretty good job, I think, in keeping the idea vague enough, so it wouldn't worry the government, while still committing the politicians to provide a basis on which we could, possibly effectively, work against fascism afterwards.

The problem were the prisoners and further prosecution. As had to be expected, the government flatly refused to even negotiate the release of activists „with blood on their hands“. We wouldn't agree to anything without getting them free.

Negotiations seemed to fail after about 10 days, the truce became shaky, some comrades impatient. Not doing anything, but sitting and waiting, those were the worst days of our struggle in terms of pure anxiety. Hardly anyone at this point wanted to go back to fighting, especially after being so close to a somewhat acceptable solution, but selling out any comrades was simply no option. By doing that we would have betrayed ourselves.

It was the 2nd of July 2020, and everything seemed up in the air. Then a lot of things happened real fast.

IX

In the early morning hours of the 3rd we got the at the time almost unbelievable news that a massive uprising of the people, including many army brigades, had ousted the fascist government in Greece. Later that day these news were confirmed, and uprisings were reported from Portugal and Italy as well.

On the 5th further mass protests were reported from several South American countries, especially Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay.

The representatives of all resistance movements called on the „non-fascist world“ for support.

The Australian government was the single strongest non-fascist power left, after China had fallen into pieces a few years earlier. They had to do something.

Our people jumped on the opportunity: If there was no agreement soon, it'd be hard for them to control the radical commandos any longer, and how could the Australian nation live up to its international responsibility then, if their security forces had to focus on heavy internal problems? Plus, getting us involved in their international support for antifascist uprisings now would guarantee a strong and committed force.

Suddenly it was like we were able to dictate the rules, thanks to the people's uprisings overseas.

The government was under pressure, and it had to act quickly. Demands for support from southern Europe and South America became stronger by the minute, and could hardly be ignored any longer.

Still not willing to just let all of our prisoners go, they proposed to classify them as Prisoners of War, which they could under the State of Emergency laws that the former government had brought into effect. That meant a special POW-camp, in which the comrades would be held till Australia was officially in a state of peace again.

As we later heard the government practically pleaded with our representatives to accept the proposal as a face-saving solution in front of the UALF-hostile Australian public. It was also made very clear that – even though not officially – one would abstain from prosecuting any further comrades.

In a certain way the proposal was understandable. Giving full amnesty to all of us would probably have irritated the Australian public, maybe even diminished their enthusiasm for the international antifascist solidarity they were asked for now.

Still, we couldn't just sell out the comrades.

We might have even brought the government down to its knees finally, even though there would have been risks of army reprisals, and violent fascist protests, which might have made it impossible for Australia to be internationally of any support to anyone, but in the end it was the prisoners themselves who gave the answer.

According to the government's plan, 128 comrades would have to go to a POW-camp. On July the 8th, their elected representatives contacted our negotiators in Alice Springs, saying they were willing to go to the camp for social stability within the country and strong international antifascist brigades sent from Australia to support the clandestine resistance movements overseas.

I still love all of them for what they did. Really. It was a big sacrifice, but it was needed at the time, and in a certain way, you can say these 128 saved maybe millions.

On July the 9th, the UALF signed its official surrender under the negotiated conditions, and what happened afterwards you find in all the history books: Without officially declaring war to any other nation, the government set up a „Special Committee Against Fascism“, including several former UALF-conference-members. Well equipped brigades were sent to both Europe and Latin America to support, and sometimes even organize and guide, the militant resistance, together with forces sent by the United African Congress Against Fascism, made up by the few African governments not serving as neocolonial puppets for the fascists, and mainly run by Libya, the Congo, and the Republic of South Africa.

Practically all of the former UALF-activists went to fight. I went with a brigade to Italy. I joined with some other AL-comrades. It could have been any place and any brigade really, I think, but Italy was just close to home. I guess that's why I went there.

Two years later all of southern Europe and South America was liberated, and further two years later Europe's north and Central America as well.

Only the United States of North America remained under fascist rule, and, as we all know, they still are today. Fortunately, they're internationally quite isolated now and too weak to risk expansionist aggression, but defensively they are still an immense power, and attacking them would be pretty hopeless, probably only causing a lot of bloodshed without the hope for a long-

term solution. It's up to the people there to rise. It's tough, as anywhere, but it's the only realistic option for real change. Sad but true, I guess.

After the liberation of Norway, Sweden, and Finland on July 12th, 2024, the Australian brigades were dissolved.

We got medals and stuff, and were offered full citizenship and all, but I never went back. Not because I didn't like it there, but I had fought in Europe for four years, and it was my home. Maybe even more so now than before.

I knew of Europeans who went back to Australia, though. I think the memories of the time leading up to the UALF and all drew them back. For a lot of us that had simply been the happiest time of our lives. At least in a certain sense.

I mean, it had been great to be involved in liberating Europe step by step and all, but being in war is no fun, and now, well, capitalist liberalism ruled again, which is better than fascism, but far from any anarchist or communist dream. Not that Australia was any closer, but at least Newtown 2019 provided a myth. In any case, I understood the comrades who went back there. And still, I personally never felt like going at all. People are just different, I guess.

Our 128 comrades had been released by some special decree in July 2022. Without much fuss the Australian government just dissolved the POW-camp, and free they went. Most of them immediately joined brigades overseas.

X

I still have contact with a lot of comrades. Especially from the Anarchist League, of course. But, well, we are old now, and we don't do much other than dwell in memories. Kinda silly maybe, but well. We wouldn't do it if we didn't feel some need for it, I suppose.

So, now you pretty much know the whole story. At least the essential parts.

It's funny how people would later mostly refer to the UALF as a failure. Well, in a certain sense, I guess, it was, because, true, we didn't bring about an antifascist society or anything even closely resembling it. The plain truth is, we were fucking far away from that. And, yes, then most of us helped liberate the masses of Europe and Latin America from fascist rule, but that kind of antifascism was purely defensive, just a process of fighting against the worst possible form of State power, without ever really actively encouraging, leave alone really creating, antifascist ways of life themselves.

Well, some brigades, ours included, were very egalitarian in their organization, but, I mean, we still were in a situation of war, and you can't really say we ever came close to being a mini-model of a potential future antifascist society, or even community. That'd just be a lie.

So, no, we didn't create a world of equality, justice, solidarity, and peace. But, in my opinion, that doesn't make what we did a failure. I mean, technically the movement might have failed in relation to its goals, but none of us failed in what we were doing. I mean, we were fighting for this – in our eyes – „better“ world, and we were always true to that, and always tried our best. In that sense we sure never failed.

And there were so many elements of that better world we made real, if only for moments - when we lived together in Newtown, when the UALF was founded, when our cell went around, when we built those shelters out in the bush, when we engaged in discussions about our dreams. You can't fail doing that. Maybe we don't win much, maybe we never will, but we'll never fail.

I mean, the world's in a pretty shitty state, but imagine the state it'd be in if we weren't even there. Especially for ourselves. Know what I mean?

I mean, you come to Paris or London or Berlin, and you walk into an anarchist bookstore, and how does that make you feel? Happy, I'd say, most of the time. And a lot of these projects are „failures“, in the sense that they don't threaten the fucked up status quo much, but hey, I've been told both to be an old cynic and an old bourgeois, and maybe it's even fair enough for the young radicals to say that, but all I'm really trying to say is: Living up to your principles, or following your dreams, can never be a failure. That means the UALF wasn't one, and no attempts to do the right antifascist thing will ever be. Isn't thinking exclusively in terms of winning and losing just a competitive capitalist thing anyway? Just being an antifascist, and always standing up for it, always seemed most important to me, regardless of how much social impact my comrades and I had or didn't have. And often, I think, we actually had more than we thought at the time anyway, but that's even besides the point.

I'm pretty old now, but I never thought I've „wasted“ anything on the revolution, just 'cause it never came. Working for it is your own micro-revolution, and a value in itself.

That the young radicals today don't seem to stand much chance against the global capitalist machine doesn't worry me that much. Only if they stopped being radicals I might get worried.

As long as there is another spirit alive, there is another life within the insanity, even if minor, weak, and suppressed. But it's there. The time for justified lament would only come if that spirit's dead. But that will never happen. So there is no reason for lament. Just a reason for getting involved in the antifascist world. As small as it might be.

Well, whatever, it's just me talking. But, don't worry, after a while I'm getting tired of listening to myself anyway, and then I'm off.

Take good care of yourself, kid. And, of course: Fight the Power!

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Gabriel Kuhn
The United Antifascist Liberation Front.
A Fictional Account
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