

# **A Few Words of "Freedom"**

**Interview by CCF – Imprisoned Members Cell with Alfredo Cospito**

Alfredo Cospito, Conspiracy of Cells of Fire

July 2014

## **INTERVISTA CCF/ALFREDO COSPITO**

From the Greek prisons to AS2 unit of the prison of Ferrara: a few words of “freedom”.

*Interview by CCF to myself.*

Before answering your questions, I’d like to stress that what i’m about to say is my own truth. One of the many points of view, sensitivities and individual nuances within that crucible of thought and action that goes under the name of FAI-FRI.

Informal federation that, rejecting any hegemonic temptation, represents a tool, a method of one of the components of anarchism of praxis. Anarchism of praxis that only when it is informal, without being forced into organizational structures (specific, formal, of synthesis) when it doesn’t seek the unbearable consent (therefore rejects politics) it can be recognized in a wider chaotic universe called “black international”.

To understand this better, FAI-FRI is a methodology of action that only some of the sisters and brothers of the black international practice, it’s not an organization nor a simple collective signature, but a tool that aims towards efficiency, whose objective is to reinforce cells and each comrade of praxis through a pact of mutual support based on three key points: revolutionary solidarity, revolutionary campaigns, communication between groups or individuals:

### **REVOLUTIONARY SOLIDARITY**

*Each group of action in the Anarchist Informal Organization is engaged in showing revolutionary solidarity to comrades who are arrested or are on hiding. This solidarity will show itself mainly through armed action and the attack against men and structures responsible for the imprisonment of comrades. Solidarity will always be practiced as an indispensable feature of anarchist way of life and action. Of course we do not refer to legal and technical support: bourgeois society offers a sufficient number of lawyers, social workers and priests, which means that revolutionists can be engaged in another kind of activities.*

### **REVOLUTIONARY CAMPAIGNS**

*When a group or individual starts a revolutionary campaign through the deeds and related communiqués, other groups and individuals in the Anarchist Informal Organization will follow according to their methods and time. Each group and individual can launch a struggle campaign on specific targets through one or more actions signed by the single group or individual and by the claim of the Federation. If a campaign is not agreed by the other groups, the critic will show itself through actions and communiqués that will contribute to correcting or discussing it.*

### **COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS**

*The groups of action in the Anarchist Informal Organization are not required to know one another. This will avoid repression to strike them and possible leaders or bureaucrat from emerging. Communication between groups or individuals is carried out through the actions and through the channels of the movement without them to know one another directly (drawn from the responsibility claim for the attempt on Prodi, that time president of the European Commission, 21 december 2003, taken from Il dito e la luna.page 15-16).*

This pact of mutual support in fact bypasses the assembly, its leaders, the specialists of speech and politics and the authoritarian mechanisms activated even in anarchist sphere when the assembly becomes a decision-making body. What the black international should do over the coming years is to reknit that “black thread” broken for a long time.

A thread that binds anarchism of yesterday which practiced “propaganda of the deed”, offspring of the International Congress of London in 1881, and anarchism of today, informal, anti-organizational, nihilistic, anti-civilizational, antisocial.

Nicola and i, the only members of “Olga Cell”, don’t know in person the other brothers and sisters of FAI, knowing them would mean seeing them locked up within the four walls of a prison cell. We were convinced of the utility of FAI-FRI thanks to the words (communiqués) and the actions of the brothers and sisters who preceded us. Their words always confirmed by their actions, gave us the indispensable

tenacity, without which any project is reduced, in the era of the virtual, to useless, sterile words in the wind.

We needed a compass to find our way, a tool to recognize and unmask those who have created an anarchist gym for verbalists, a filter to distinguish empty words from those that carry reality.

We found in this “new anarchy”, in its claims and the related revolutionary campaigns, the perspective of a real attack that amplifies our destructive potentialities, protects our autonomy as rebel and anarchist individuals and gives us the opportunity to collaborate, strike together, without knowing one another directly. No kind of coordination can be included in our planning.

“Coordination” necessarily requires knowledge, organization between the sisters and brothers of different cells. Such a coordination would kill the autonomy of each group or individual. The most “efficient”, prepared, courageous, charismatic group would inevitably prevail, reproducing the same deleterious mechanisms of the assembly, in the long run leaders, ideologists, charismatic “bosses” would rise again, it would be a step towards organization: the death of freedom itself.

Some might say that even in an affinity group, in a FAI cell a charismatic leader, a “boss” could hide.

In our case, however, damage would be limited as between cells there is no direct knowledge. Gagnegre could not be extended.

Our being anti-organizational preserves us from that risk. That is why we need to rely on “revolutionary campaigns” which exclude knowing groups and individuals directly, killing every glimmer of organization. Campaigns must never be confused with coordination, this is the informality, this is the essence, in my opinion, of our operating planning. It must be clear that when I speak of an affinity group or action cell, I may refer to a single individual or a numerous affinity group.

We should not make an issue of numbers.

It is clear that every single action is planned between the various members of the group, in that case one should not speak of coordination, never such a planning should be extended to the other groups of FAI-FRI. Outside each group, communication must be “limited” only through “revolutionary campaigns” and the actions related.

Our knowledge of FAI-FRI must always remain partial, limited to our affinity group. We only need to know the paw marks, the scratches, the wounds FAI-FRI causes to power. It would be mortal to create something monolithic or structured, each of us must avoid hegemonic misunderstandings or fantasizing.

Organization would restrict tremendously our perspectives, reversing the process from qualitative to quantitative. The action of one strengthens the will of others, creating inspiration. Campaigns are spread unevenly.

A thousand heads raging against power, cutting them all off is impossible. It is these very actions followed by words (communiqués) that allow us to exclude with certainty theorists, pure lovers of speech, giving us the chance to relate exclusively to those who live in the real world, getting their hands dirty, risking their own skin. These are the only words that really matter, the only words that allow us to grow, to evolve. Revolutionary campaigns are the most efficient tool to cut, harm where it hurts the most. Giving us the opportunity to spread throughout the world like a virus, carrier of revolt and anarchy.

**CCF: To get to know you better, tell us something about your current situation.**

**Alfredo:** There is not much to say, we were arrested for the kneecapping of Adinolfi, managing director of Ansaldo Nucleare. Lack of experience led us to mistakes that cost us the arrest: we didn't cover the license plate of the motorcycle used for the action, we parked it too close to the ambush site, and most importantly we didn't notice a camera in a bar, a very serious mistake that we're paying right now. We claimed responsibility for our action as “Olga FAI-FRI cell”. I was sentenced to 10 years and 8 months, Nicola to 9 years and 4 months. Over the coming months we will have a further process for subversive association. This is more or less our current situation on the case.

**CCF: Anarchist prisoners and prison. Which are the conditions in special sections, how do jailers behave and how are your relationships with the other prisoners?**

**Alfredo:** In Italy through maximum security circuits, which involve many restrictions, the democratic state wants to isolate us, relegating us in sections completely separated from the general context

of the prison. Any contact with other prisoners is impossible, we don't have the chance to go to the open air, only for two hours in a small concrete courtyard.

Censorship for me and Nicola has always been renewed, therefore we receive mail and journals delayed and with difficulty, things of special interest to us are seized in the entrance and exit. Right now we are locked in an AS2 high surveillance unit for anarchist prisoners.

"Relationship" between us and jailers is that of mutual indifference and natural hostility. What else can I say, from my point of view "civilized" protests outside and inside prison are useless, "livability" in here is just a matter of power relations. One must leave prison, it's up to those who are inside to realize it...

**CCF: Anarchy for us is not a party, it doesn't have central committees, it is a stream of acts, ideas, positions, values. Which are the trends of the anarchist movement now in Italy, which its features, its contradictions, its activities?**

**Alfredo:** This is an important question that requires an articulated answer. I attend the anarchist movement since the late 80s.

Over the past 20 years, many things have changed, many relationships between comrades were broken, many trends –even negative ones– were set in motion, giving sometimes poor results and accentuating leadership-driven and political attitudes, but also giving new perspectives, a new generation beyond assemblies, beyond mechanisms of politics has made its voice heard.

To answer your question about the situation of the Italian anarchist movement today I need to take a step backwards.

People often think that insurrectionalism is a whole, made of concepts and theories frozen in time, in their "ideological" rigidity. An ideology with actually (something completely aberrant) its own *Lider Maximo* and its dogmas. Nothing is permanent over time.

Women and men through their actions forge ideas. It's not up to those three or four well-known comrades, with their books and articles, to show us the way, not even a matter of the long and inconclusive assemblies. It's those unknown comrades with their practice of attack that push us forward, leading us to life.

It was because of this practice that in the end of the 90s, the previous groups- Crafts and Fire Cooperative (Occasionally Spectacular), July 20 Brigade, Cells against Capital, its Prisons, its Jailers, and its Cells, International Solidarity – questioned two established dogmas of the so-called "insurrectionalism", the anonymity of actions and the predominance of the assembly which had turned into a decision-making body.

Two fixed points that were dragging us inexorably to a lethal inertia. Giving voice and continuity to the practice itself through claims, escaping from the shackles of the assembly and imposing no longer comprehensibility limits regarding "people" and the rest of the "movement" , anarchy became terrifying once again.

With ongoing bombs and responsibility claims, these groups dispelled the dogma of anonymity of action, breaking up the silence surrounding us after the wave of repression that followed the Marini case, seriously obstructing those dynamics that were dragging us to a citizenism\* that risked to erase every instance of violence.

After these groups appeared, the term insurrectionalism for many anarchists, assumed a negative connotation, especially when journalists began to use it as a synonym for "terrorism".

At that point, many took a step back claiming that certain "spectacular" attacks and the related communiqués drove people away.

To understand the divisions within the anarchism of praxis, today, in Italy, we need to go back to the early history of the struggle at Val Susa against the TAV: in 1998, after the tragic deaths of Baleno and Sole, many were the calls for a democratic legitimacy, a "right" justice, a fair trial, not only by eminent representatives of democratic "radicalism", but also by a part of the anarchist movement.

A large part of anarchists were engaged in an “innocence-proving” crusade to the limits of denigration. Sole and Baleno were represented as two innocent, poor, naive victims, caught up in a story greater than themselves.

After the arrival of about ten letter bombs addressed to some of those responsible for the death of the comrades (actions never claimed), the anarchist movement almost in its whole, fearing future waves of repression, distanced itself from such practices, considering them, at best, not “worthy” of anarchists, at worst, a true and proper police provocation.

Very few the exceptions, that naturally attracted the attention of the magistrature in the years to come. Ever since, the vast majority of the so-called “insurrectionists” was engulfed by an uncontrolled, suicidal desire for consent, setting out to a relentless pursuit towards civil society. Chasing the chimera of social/ working-class struggle, wherever it showed up, bouncing like crazy spinning tops from CIE (TN: CIE, Identification and Expulsion Centres), to Val Susa (TN: struggle against High Speed Railway Line in Susa Valley), to squatting, to the struggle of the prisoners, watering down their own planning just to appear credible, reliable, realists, approaching more and more dangerously citizenism.

A small part of them, years later, realized the gradual and political ugly turn that social struggles were taking, withdrawing themselves into their classic ivory tower, pontificating against everything and everyone, immersed up to the neck in a desperate practical nihilism. (TN: nullismo= practical nihilism meaning the inability to act, to achieve, especially in the sphere of society).

Others instead experimented, without limits, with every single vital potentiality, not caring for the great theorists or the maximum systems. The most “lucid” that were keen on society, at least in the beginning, tried to repeat at Val Susa the experience of the 80s against the stationing of missiles in Comiso. Experience still trumpeted as a real example of insurrectional intervention methodology in the area.

At Comiso the planning actually had, although criticized for its political-deceptive content, an insurrectional perspective. The intermediate struggle, throwing out americans and their missiles, had to be the spark for a generalized uprising in the heart of Sicily, as in the classical case of the Matese Gang\*\*.

Fake working-class alliances formed by single comrades, populist speeches to terrorize people and drive them towards revolt, absurd long speeches on possible rapes by american soldiers, tried to leverage the italiote machismo, turning this intervention into a phenomenon all political, strongly reprehensible from my point of view, but still, we must admit, with an insurrectional perspective.

In Val Susa things turned out differently, from the very beginning the insurrectional objective was quickly replaced by the simple struggle against Tav. The intermediate struggle got the upper hand, qualitative became quantitative, with the counting of protesters at the barricades, the struggling next to Alpine citizens, policemen, mayors, political parties, losing sight of the ultimate goal: the destruction of the existent.

The insurrectional perspective was transformed into a more modest, political improvement of the existent.

Once again “realism” had canceled the vital potential of anarchism. Personally I don’t criticize a priori, “ideologically” the so-called intermediate struggles, what i do criticize is the method with which one intervenes, acting as a representative and setting limits to the action itself, inevitably running great risk of becoming vanguard.

When you start doing what could drive people on your side instead of what you think is right, you do politics. From the moment you impose limitations on yourself out of fear of not being understood, you are, de facto, already a political entity, therefore you become part of the problem, one of the many cancers that infect our existence. One should never measure his own words and actions just to become acceptable to people, to the crowd, otherwise there is great risk of being transformed by the very “intermediate” objective he wants to reach.

Reading today the old responsibility claims of the groups that after the year 2000 will give life to FAI, i realized that through their actions they often intervened in the intermediate struggles, trying

to reach partial objectives: FIES abolition, (TN: FIES, Ficheros de Internos de Especial Seguimiento, regime for political prisoners held in conditions of extreme isolation in Spain) CIE, etc. Not once seeking a general consensus, a quantitative growth. Always aiming at a qualitative growth of action, greater destructiveness, greater reproducibility.

The quality of life of an anarchist is directly proportional to the real damage he causes to the deadly system that oppresses him. The less he accepts compromise, his feelings, his passions become stronger, crystal clear, his hatred more lucid, always sharp as a razor. Unfortunately, the vast majority of anarchists act in accordance with the criminal law, many actions are not put into practice simply by fear of the consequences.

We must realize that the worst fate for an anarchist is not death or prison, but surrendering to fear, to resignation. Actions and writings of the black international emphasize on the total rejection of this resignation, the strong vitality, the energy of a movement that turns the quality of life, the sense of community and solidarity, the permanent struggle, into the center of its own existence.

Death, prison, have already made their appearance in this path without defeating us. Our strength is the full awareness of what we are, full awareness that once fear is defeated, a full life worth living, unfolds in front of us, for as long as it lasts, it's the intensity that matters.

Getting back to your initial question on the trends, the features and the contradictions of the anarchist movement in Italy today, i must say that the debate on using or not acronyms and claims is still very strong.

Even in this case, i wouldn't make an "ideological" approach of the subject, i have nothing against actions not claimed, from my point of view they simply tend to disappear, they do not stimulate debate, they have a minimum potential of reproducibility.

That's why i made the FAI-FRI methodology my own. On the other hand "insurrectionalists" here, do make an "ideological" approach of the subject.

Whoever claims responsibility with an acronym is an enemy worthy of denigration. Those who know them, are very well aware of the reasons for this intransigence, communicating through claims puts clearly in danger their "power", their theoretical hegemony. Actions claimed lay bare their practical nihilism.

Behind them, the failure of a classic insurrectional planning unable to adapt to reality; forward, profound discussions or so.

As a reaction to a reality that crashes them, panic, rage, hatred take over for anything that moves outside their rigid, disastrous plans. The main component of anarchism of praxis here in Italy, consists of those insurrectionalists who have embraced with undeniable enthusiasm and sacrifice the social trend.

They sometimes "dirty" their hands with action, always though with an eye pointing towards civil society, always measuring with an attention all political, their own steps. Departed from a "classic" insurrectional planning, they arrived today to a revolutionary "citizenism", wonders of the political realism.

A few more years and we will find it hard to distinguish them from the militants of the Italian Anarchist Federation by which more and more frequently are accompanied in demonstrations, processions and rallies. Often praising absurd free Republics, they take two steps forward, two backward, remaining actually still, yet always with a nice, pleasant company.

The odd man out, the so-called "wild card" of anarchism of praxis in Italy is the informal FAI and even before all of these groups that created it: Metropolitan Cells, Tremendous Anonymous Revolt, Revolutionary Cell Horst Fantazzini, Cells against Capital, its Prisons, its Jailers and its Cells, International Solidarity, Sisters in arms, Nucleus Mauricio Morales, July 20 Brigade, Armed Cells for International Solidarity, Animal Revolt, Revolutionary Cell Lambros Fountas, Damiano Bolano Cell, Anti-Civilization Subversive Individualities, Conspiracy of Black Fire and Nicola and me of Olga Cell.

A hundred and more actions scattered over 20 years. Those years I witnessed as a spectator the panic of anarchists of every "current". Those that were terrorized by repression and the similarity of the acronym to their federation. Those that were puzzled (and so was i) as they couldn't understand

what was happening, what was going on. As a reaction, the most ugly accusations flew thick and fast: secret services, authoritarianism. The smarter ones ignored the phenomenon hoping for its quick passing, but when the FAI-FRI virus, thanks to you CCF, began spreading all over the world, rivers of words started and are still pouring in by “anonymous” censors of orthodoxy: ”Arcipelago”, “Lettera alla galassia anarchica”, (TN: writings of italian anarchists supporters of anonymity of action ,criticizing FAI-FRI), rivers of words never followed by deeds, at least not here in Italy.

**CCF: In your writings when you talk about power, are you referring exclusively to the power of the state or even to the one spread in society and its structures?**

**Alfredo:** When i talk about power, I’m referring to all of its aspects, the most obvious and the most subtle, hidden ones. Power penetrates everywhere, in the relationships between comrades, in our love affairs, in our emotional relationships and friendships. That is why i consider it vital to search for a new way to make plans, to live our own passions, to interact, so that we can improve the quality of our action, of our life, of our being rebels above all.

I still believe that society exists only under the sign of dominants and dominated. Better still, between dominants and those who allow themselves to be dominated. It is certain that responsibility lies on each side, both social subjects contribute to the limitation of my freedom, of my happiness.

The democratic citizen, as a good servant, fears and respects authority, begs for its attention, strengthens the chains that bind his wrists. Fact remains that responsibilities are not the same, a gradation exists. Between a man or woman of authority, a rich man, a manager, an industrialist, a politician, a scientist, a technocrat, and a “simple” citizen, an employee, a worker, who supports with his very own quiet living, his own consent, his own vote the status quo, i strike without any hesitation the first.

This does not detract from the disgust that i feel for “voluntary servitude”, for the resigned, if the “good” citizen stood between me and my freedom, I wouldn’t hesitate to act accordingly. For that little experience i have, I can tell that people, the crowd, the excluded, the oppressed, are much better than what our “ideological” glasses show us. I don’t struggle for the resigned but for my own freedom, my own happiness. The only possible point of reference is my “community”.

My idea of “community” is antithetical to the all-inclusive, authoritarian, abstract concept of “society”. My being part of a nihilistic, anarchist, anti-civilizational, completely different, in permanent struggle against the existent “community”, forces me to declare war on society ever single day.

I do not want to garner support, but to reinforce through violent action the bonds of true solidarity with my brothers and sisters.

Black international is my “community” spread throughout the world, fellow travelers who share my need to attack without hesitation, without knowing each other, in our differences we are one, a clenched fist, a hook in the stomach of “society”: *A plan that combines the mind with the feeling, the ice of strategy with the fire of praxis, here with now, the tension with the duration, with the direct aim of destroying the social apparatus and the liberation of our lives.* (CCF- Let’s become dangerous).

During struggle, new ideas have blossomed like seeds in the wind, carried away by the fire of praxis, inspirations, strategies previously inconceivable were born. In a modernity where terms such as society and authority reveal their full synonymy, i feel the need for new meanings, new words that can transmit my constant tendency towards new anarchy.

To use new words because the old ones are holding me tight. New meanings for a completely different planning. The same words at different latitudes may represent very different concepts. The so-called “informal organization”, at least as it was theorised between the late 70’s and the early 80’s in Italy, is way far from the informality of FAI-FRI.

According to italian insurrectionalists, informal organization should mainly be based in the tool of the assembly and the creation of base committees and self-managed federations. Where anarchists as a true minority that acts, after having contributed to their creation through networks, contacts, affinity groups, should have to try and guide the “real movement” towards insurrectional solutions. The battlefield of this insurrectional strategy: the “intermediate struggle”.

The “concrete” examples are always the same: the previously mentioned Comiso and the wildcat strike of the railway workers in Turin in 1978. With a certain embarrassment, I remember, as a witness before the judges in the Marini case, overelaborating next to a comrade, the difference between insurrectionalist methodology and the concept of the armed band of Revolutionary Action (armed anarcho-communist organization of the 70’s) all this to emphasize on the distances with “lottarmatismo” (TN: lottarmatismo, strategy of armed attack of the organizations of the 70’s, that began to lean towards militarism), subtleties of a certain “noble” insurrectionalism, which doesn’t feel familiar at all.

Today, certain strategies reappear among anarchists here in Italy in the noTav cases, with the addition of a dangerous corollary of sympathy by democratic magistrates and left-wing intellectuals. A civil society welcomed with open arms, to counter the fear that follows repression.

Nothing could be further from the antisocial, anti-organizational, nihilistic, purely anarchist concept of FAI-FRI. So, when I speak of FAI, i’m not referring to the informal organization, but to a different methodology of praxis. Certain words are outdated, words like “organization” i prefer not to use, as they do not represent us, they are different from us. As different as authority and society, with all the corollary of abominations and monstrosity.

**CCF: A large part of the anarchist movement, both in practice and theory, contrast the state and its institutions, but don’t act likewise when it comes to civilization and technology. On the contrary, many are those who imagine self-organised factories and an “anarchist government” of our lives. What is your opinion on technology and civilization?**

**Alfredo:** Still today, the vision of the nineteenth-century, scientific, positivist anarchism is the dominant one.

There are still those, in 2014, who raise absurd “questions” about the day after the revolution.

How to manage production, deal with the inevitable shortages, self-manage factories, regulate future social relationships. If i put in the center of my action, the contrast to civilization and technology, the concept of revolution as it was intended a century ago will be, in fact, put aside. Questioning civilization in its whole, implies a total, apocalyptic, utopic, unachievable destruction.

Revolution, with its “simple” possible overturning of social relations is very little, a useless palliative as it creates new civilization. When declaring war on civilization, we satisfy our need to live not outside (that’s impossible, civilization never abandons us, we always carry it inside) but against it.

By creating communities at permanent war with society, we build moments of happiness, we live flashes of intense joy in our lives. Revolution is an insufficient tool, with its political, concrete “realism”, even in its libertarian variant, with its self-managed communes, its administration-ruling of the world, its inevitable creating of status-quo: breaks wings, shatters hopes, creates new chains.

Revolt, with its endless charge of breaking, with its lack of future prospects, with its absolute negation of politics: creates hopes, breaks chains. A woman and a man in revolt, destroy chains without wanting to build other, this is enough to fill up with adventure and happiness any existence.

**CCF: What do you think of the international network of ALF and ELF? Are there any prospects of connection with FAI?**

**Alfredo:** To comrades like me, formed during the struggles of the 90’s in Italy, the contribution of the groups of action ALF and ELF, with their international network, concerning the revolutionary anarchist imaginary and how to organize into affinity groups, was very important. Their environmentalist, animalist perspective has changed the view of many anarchists.

In Italy, their propensity to affinity groups was greeted with enthusiasm as a concrete example of informal organization. The first actions of ALF in Italy were strictly related to an anarchist vision. Over time, anarchist perspective went fading away.

Today, my only objection regards their opposition on striking people. Although I know that there have been great debates, this position of theirs i honestly can not understand. I understand and agree more with the violence of the mexican ITS (TN: ITS, Individuals Tending Toward Savagery), with their anti-civilizational, wild, anti-ideological concept.



As for the “connections” between FAI-FRI and ELF, ALF they are beyond doubt a fact, which one could easily acknowledge simply by reading the responsibility claims of the russian ELF-FAI-FRI and the mexican ALF-FAI. At the risk of becoming repetitive, I must reiterate that FAI-FRI is a methodology, a method, to sign as such, you invite other groups of FAI-FRI around the world to enter into a real campaign of struggle, you increase your own strength, you spread actions from one part of the world to another. You make action more efficient and destructive.

Nothing more, nothing less. The sisters and brothers of ALF and ELF that signed as FAI-FRI, joined this methodology without renouncing their own history in any way. We are not playing at Risk, FAI-FRI is not an organization that incorporates acronyms spread around the world. One becomes part of FAI-FRI only at the very moment he/she acts and strikes claiming as FAI, then everyone returns to their own projects, their own individual perspective, within a black international that includes a variety of practices, all aggressive and violent.

After all, i was convinced (maybe I’m wrong) that the brothers and sisters of ALF and ELF that signed FAI, did so to emphasize on their being anarchists, on their adherence to an anarchist planning, to what I call “new anarchy”, to distance themselves from that ecologism based on empathy and pietism.

**CCF: Right now FAI is an international network of anarchists of praxis, with dozens of cells in many countries around the world. This adventure began in Italy in 2003, with an open letter to the anti-authoritarian movement. If you want, tell us briefly how you see the evolution of FAI and which are now your points of reference.**

**Alfredo:** When i read back in 2003 the “open letter to the anarchist and anti-authoritarian movement” signed by Crafts and Fire Cooperative (Occasionally Spectacular), July 20 Brigade, Cells against Capital, its Prisons, its Jailers, and its Cells, International Solidarity, I was very impressed.

Several saw in this writing only a goliardic provocation to the old dogmatic anarchism of the Italian Anarchist Federation. Still today, most worthy comrades, such as Gustavo Rodriguez, support this view in their writings, misinformed by italian anarchists who know nothing and have done much since the very beginning to obstruct this new trend of anarchy.

I open a small parenthesis: I believe that the writings of Rodriguez concerning the international black are remarkable, some of the ideas developed truly open new perspectives.

That said, i since the very beginning have taken very seriously the choice of the acronym FAI, seeing not only an attack to the old formal federation, but also a new planning. Despite being, at that time, very far from that perspective, I started off with that long process that brought me, in 2012, to act as Olga cell of FAI-FRI.

Rereading today the “open letter to the anarchist and anti-authoritarian movement” i realize how much has been done, how much this concept of anarchy has evolved, and how greatly it keeps evolving:

**FEDERATION** *because of its wide-spread horizontal structure, that is to say federation of groups or individuals, free and equal men and women bond together by common practices of attack against dominion and aware that mutual support and revolutionary solidarity are instruments of freedom. Relationships inside the federation are stable and flexible at the same time; they evolve continuously thanks to the ideas and practices brought in by new individuals and groups that will join. We do not want any democratic federation, as this would involve representatives, delegates, official meetings, committees, and organs implying the election of leaders, charismatic figures and the imposition of specialists of speech. In the informal federation, communication must be based on a horizontal and anonymous debate, which will come out of the practice (claims of actions) and of the widespread of theories through the means of communication of the movement. In other words, the meeting will be substituted by an anonymous and horizontal debate between groups or individuals who communicate through practice. The federation is our strength, that is to say the strength of groups or individuals that help one another through a well-defined pact of mutual support.*

**ANARCHIST** *because we want the destruction of capital and the State. We want a world where only freedom and self-organisation “dominate”, and a society where exploitation of men over men and of men over nature does not exist. We strongly oppose any Marrist cancer, which is nothing more than a*

*fascinating and dangerous siren that claims freedom for the oppressed but actually denies the possibility of a free society and just substitutes one dominion with another.*

**INFORMAL** *because we do not believe in vanguards nor do we think that we are an enlightened active minority. We just want to live as anarchists here and now and this is why we consider the informal organisation as the only kind of organisation capable of preventing the creation of any authoritarian and bureaucratic mechanism. It allows us to keep our independence as individuals and/or groups and to resist power with continuity. The Informal Anarchist Organisation practises the armed struggle but it refuses classic monolithic organisations implying a base, regular and irregular members, columns, executive cadres, huge amounts of money and living on hiding. We think that this kind of structures is an easy target for power. In fact, an infiltrated cop or an informer is sufficient to have the whole organisation or a good part of it collapsed like a house of cards. On the contrary, as the informal organisation is formed by 1000 individuals or groups that do not know one another (as they recognise one another through the actions they carry out and the mutual support bonding them), if by some unfortunate chance infiltrators or informers should come out, this would affect a single group without spreading to the others. Furthermore, whoever takes part into the Informal organisation is a militant only when preparing and carrying out an action. The organisation, therefore, does not affect the entire life and projects of the comrades so that all kind of armed-struggle sectarianism are avoided. Once we are well rooted, power will find it very difficult to destroy us.* (drawn from the responsibility claim for the attempt on Prodi, that time president of the European Commission, 21 December 2003, taken from *Il dito e la luna*.page 14-15)

The vital force of FAI-FRI is its constant renewal, its stimulating evolution. Today the need to overcome old concepts such as “organization”, “liberated society”, “revolution” is more urgent than ever before.

Other concepts such as “federalism”, “informality”, “mutual support”, “horizontal-anonymous debate between groups/individuals through praxis”, “rejection of plenary assemblies” retain their full strength as the main pillars of our planning.

Since 2003, anarchists of praxis of FAI have set themselves on new perspectives, have developed new connections. Ignoring the nihilistic delusions of pure theorists of insurrection, against every political “realism”, they have ensured that concepts such as nihilism, antisocial struggle have made their reappearance more vital than ever.

The brain of FAI-FRI is this constant chaotic debating of women and men through praxis. Words and new perspectives will be describing new paths hard to imagine today, words that in turn will be overcome by even more effective and disruptive concepts, as they will be already tested in action.

An ongoing experimentation of revolt, nothing established, nothing permanent over time, only fixed point the insatiable desire for freedom and the constant striving for anarchy.

Nicola and i, by the action against Adinolfi (even though delayed), have joined this planning, making our own anti-civilizational and anti-technological contribution to FAI-FRI. Very interesting the contributions on the same line of the english FAI, the mexican and the chilean. Keep in mind though that the news we receive in prison are few and censored, therefore knowing what happens out there is extremely difficult.

It was your contribution, CCF, concerning the internationalization of FAI that sped up the creation, in parallel, of the concept of the “black international”. The point of reference of the methodology of FAI-FRI can only be this “international”, with all its universe of actions claimed or not, conflicts, barricades and violent assaults.

The “new” nihilistic perspective with all of its anti-organizational potential is the greatest result of this dialogue through praxis. A very important, vital role have those who through actions, not just small talk, criticize our methodology by pointing out the risk we run that all boils down to an acronym.

To avoid that risk, we need to develop further the “revolutionary campaigns”, which are too often ignored by the other groups of FAI-FRI. sometimes instead (hopefully more often) they take us by

surprise, one of the first examples the “Phoenix Project”, started in Greece and spread throughout the world.

**CCF: Anarcho-nihilism is probably the most calumniated trend of anarchy, both by “official” anarchists and by state propaganda. What are your thoughts on anarcho-nihilism and the criticism it receives?**

**Alfredo:** By nihilism, i mean the will to live anarchy now, right away, leaving aside expectations of a future revolution.

To live as an anarchist means to struggle, to arm yourself, to conflict with the existent without waiting. Only in this conflict, one can savour full happiness with its ever-present accompaniment of relationships, complicities, loves, friendships, hatred.

For me, there is no other way to live with satisfaction and fullness the present, life. It is in this nihilism that my anarchy is being fulfilled, true, real, today, now. A nihilist destroys, he doesn't build anything because there is nothing he wants to build.

A revolution would inevitably create more chains, new authority, new technology, new civilization. An anti-civ anarchist can only be a nihilist, for it is in the destruction of society that this new anarchy is being fulfilled.

To destroy not because the desire for destruction is also a creative desire, but because there is nothing that we want to build anymore. To destroy because there is no future in civilization. I'm not surprised at all that nihilism is the most calumniated trend of anarchy by the very same anarchists.

Its ruthless concreteness, removes the happy ending of the good-night story (the future revolution), forcing us to action, here and now, scaring away all those quitters always ready to postpone conflict.

My nihilism goes hand in hand with life, with action, rejects overhumanism, it has nothing to do with the verbalistic individualism of the passed century or of our time. Much in common with the individualistic, anti-organizational anarchy of men of praxis like Novatore, Di Giovanni, Galleani.

**CCF: As an anarchist nihilist do you accept the idea that “mass society will make its revolution when conditions are ripe” ?**

**Alfredo:** as an anarchist nihilist i stand clearly against any deterministic vision of anarchism, against any “scientific” anarchism.

I do not think that history will lead us by the hand towards anarchy, on the contrary I think our “destiny” is always to go against the tide. Society will always be based on some type or form of slavery.

The very thought that someday we will achieve the “perfect society” terrifies me, anarchy would be transformed into a regime. Utopia would become dystopia. I prefer to strive for anarchy and through this continuing tendency of mine, achieve happiness.

Conditions are ripe when desire overcomes fear, conditions are always ripe for an act of revolt. The more so, when revolt creates communities through complicity with other individualities, in that case our strength increases a hundredfold and proportionally our pleasure grows. Only the women and men of praxis can understand the true potential of the will: what seems impossible is carried out, desperate actions become an example reinforcing other desires.

An anarchist without courage is an anarchist with no will, he knows what is right yet doesn't have the strength to confirm it with deeds, he stands still watching, at most he speaks, he writes. The saddest existence of all.

**CCF : What is your opinion on the formal anarchist structures (for example federations) which mutilate their practice and theory in the name of massivity and social acceptance?**

**Alfredo:** formal structures have a head -leaders-, arms -the militants-, legs – the committees related. In the informality of FAI-FRI, each individual is the head, affinity groups are the arms and violent action the legs.

However, affinity group is not an exclusive feature of the informal structures, many the examples of the formal anarchist organizations which base their action on affinity groups: the spanish FAI pre 1936, Fijl, with their groups of action after Franco's victory and so on.

In all these cases though, there was a coordination, a political direction, the freedom of each individual was limited. The distinctive feature of the informality of FAI-FRI is the complete absence of organization, direction, coordination. The full autonomy of each group or individual. Organization is being replaced by dialogue through actions, the engine is no longer society but each community in struggle.

The so-called informal “organization” as was theorized in Italy includes, willingly or not, a direction, experts of informality who lead the assemblies, directing indirectly the affinity groups. The most clever, the most good at talking, the most charismatic one has the possibility to impose himself on others.

The “hierarchy” formed through this “informality” is the most subtle and difficult to eradicate as it is invisible. The “classic” informal insurrectional strategy involves relating to specific organizations, associations, people’s committees, as they have a perspective which includes revolution, quantitative growth. A perspective that is absent from FAI-FRI, from its anti-social, anti-civilizational tendency, for us politics, compromise, settlement do not exist, in that way we do not run the risk of becoming leading class.

I couldn’t stand to be part of an organization as my individual freedom would be limited. Then, there is the matter of repression, it is lot easier to rip apart an organization than 10-100-1000 single individuals and affinity groups that don’t know one another, but this is secondary.

**CCF: Today in Greece several anarchist squats instead of creating meeting points for new comrades with the aim of acting, appear as an alternative to cultural centers. What is the situation in Italy and your opinion on squats?**

**Alfredo:** i never had a great sympathy for those called in Italy social centers. In the 90s, the places occupied by us were defined “nor centers nor social”, we acted in a playful, existential, individualistic way, we didn’t have a social, communicative perspective with the district around us, we mainly aimed at the quality of our life, our relationships, we strongly criticized “militancy”.

Perhaps that is why some of us, not caring about communication, expressed great violence against the system. I believe that occupation, squatting, if it creates conflictuality, complicity and actions, it can become a wonderful place where one can experience conflictuality with the rest of the world. In the end, I must tell the truth, in the past few years I have attended squats very little and have searched for my complicities elsewhere.

**CCF: Every anarchist of praxis struggles with the dilemma between public activity or illegal. What is your opinion?**

**Alfredo:** I am convinced that the only actions that really count are those illegal. It is only through illegalism that one can live anarchy. This does not detract from the importance of newspapers, books, brochures, demonstrations, occupations, but the priority, the irreplaceable, indispensable activity for an anarchist can not be other than the direct conflict with the system, the violent action.

The system is well aware of it, in democracy they let you say whatever you want, the true problems begin when you put what you say into practice. I don’t agree with the comrades who think that every action has equal dignity, violent action has more than the others.

To hell with the risks of specialism, especially when the only specialism left is that of the pen.

**CCF: In certain European countries there is a trend known as political anonymity. Ideological supporters of political anonymity claim that “responsibility claims and acronyms such as FAI, create an ownership of action”. We CCF think that our actions define who we are and claims are not a property title but an act of war. What do you think about that?**

**Alfredo:** The lack of acronyms and responsibility claims can’t protect us from the risk of authoritarianism and vanguard.

The comrades of the “letter to the anarchist galaxy” accuse us of having a desire for hegemony, of being an organization, one of the many anarchist federations.

Like the magistrates who have condemned us, they see in us an organization, a pseudo armed party. Convinced that our objective is the recognition by the state, they present us as a caricature of the armed struggle.

This “witty” and “granitic” belief, follow other more active and optimistic: the belief that, as if by magic, by not claiming responsibility, an action can become reproducible, a heritage of “all”; that by not having a name and an acronym, automatically one avoids the perspective of doing politics; that those who communicate through the tools that the “movement” offers -assemblies, conferences, newspapers, magazines, websites- do not succumb to authoritarian leadership-driven mechanisms and similar specialisms and -icing on the cake- that when not claiming responsibility, courts find it hard to repress us.

Let’s say that these firm points are the backbone of the classic social “insurrectionalism”, the way it was spread in Italy, France, Belgium... with its ups and downs, successes and failures.

Let’s leave aside all the silly accusations that this “current” of informal anarchism, in its italian component, addressed to FAI-FRI: accusation of considering the practice of parcel bombs mediocre; accusations of us wanting the hegemony of the movement and to overshadow anonymous actions, the accusation of being an organization, a political party and, finally, the accusation of being vanguard.

The same bullshit that the formal FAI foist on us, 12 years now. Insults that certainly do not facilitate a balanced debate and that do not surprise me that much, given the previous.

The same comrades claimed a few years ago that whoever practiced the abduction of a person wasn’t worthy of being called an anarchist , while later they resented the fact that some anarchists, in an excess of panic, distanced themselves clearly from our (mine and Nicola’s) shooting in Genoa. I find it difficult to relate to these comrades, not so much for the insults, but because such declarations of intent here in Italy, i stress it in Italy, are followed by more than 15 years of a great deal of theory and very little practice -not to say of nothing at all- and it would be hypocritical of them to pretend otherwise.

In Belgium, where this vision of informality is actually moving forward, the facts are clear as well as, unfortunately, the repressive responses of power. For as much as the supporters of anonymity say, no theory can give us the certainty of impunity, especially when action turns from symbolic to destructive.

The rejection of an acronym, the anonymity of an action can not certainly make us impervious to repression and sometimes even the so-called “innocence” is not enough.

Besides, i’m telling the truth, those who act according to the penal code always caused me a certain disgust. My approach on the actions claimed or not is pragmatic, it is not a matter of principles, ideological but a matter of efficiency and concreteness. I myself in certain occasions may decide not to claim responsibility, FAI-FRI is a very efficient tool from my point of view, only a tool, one of the many tools that my community, the black international, adopts in its war on society, on civilization.

That said, i have adopted the method of FAI-FRI because i oppose any organization, to avoid being subject to any kind of leadership, to bypass, with communication through claims, all those potentially authoritarian mechanisms, like assemblies, associations, base-cells, committees, movements, to protect my anonymity and mainly to reinforce my destructive potential through revolutionary campaigns, without setting limits to my individual freedom.

Not knowing directly the other brothers and sisters of FAI-FRI, charisma, prestige find it very hard to penetrate, limiting greatly the risks concerning our freedom. Only facts speak, only praxis, creation of the will, counts.

In the “classic” insurrectionalism, despite anonymity, everyone knows everyone, concepts, ideas develop within the assemblies, giving harmful space to the unavoidable specialists of theory, of ideology. When bypassing the plenary assemblies and communicating only through the actions of FAI-FRI, we can avoid spending valuable time arguing for hours about maximum systems with people who have never dirtied their hands with action and never will. Allowing us eventually to cut out of our lives those who do not put their words into practice.

Today i feel the need to see the energy that i put into action bloom, reproduce, to see new paths built, through bouncing from one part of the world to another. Through responsibility claims, actions speak, spread, increase their virulence.

The practice of the so-called anonymity of action doesn't satisfy me at all, no matter how respectable and pleasant it is, it does not reinforce our action, it does not favour debates, in the long run it grows weak, limiting, dissolving, isolating us. It reduces greatly the reproducibility of the deed which when not followed by words, fades out.

Anonymity of action in a social perspective has a sense of camouflage. They want to convince people, they seek consensus to start a revolution, they pretend to be "people" so that they can turn their action into heritage of "all", for an action not claimed could have been carried out by "anyone".

In that case, the action not claimed has a strong meaning, a meaning all political, social, a meaning that is likely to turn us into one of the many vanguards of the square.

Naturally, this could never be my own meaning, for i reject in its whole any social perspective regarding my action. Anonymity of action in an antisocial perspective finds its meaning in the recreational pleasure of trying to make whatever destroys us bleed, in that immense satisfaction of doing what needs to be done, simply because it's right.

It's not a small thing, this egoistic perspective is fully included in the antisocial paraphernalia of the practices of the black international. It has been my practice in the past, it could become my practice again in the future, today, however, FAI-FRI is my perspective on the world.

Today, the debate is not between claiming responsibility or not, using an acronym or not, but between a social-political conception of anarchism and an antisocial-nihilistic conception of anarchy. A crucial choice, the one between anarchism and anarchy, revolution and revolt, old and new anarchy, a crucial and inevitable choice.

The anti-civilizational subject can not exist in a social perspective, just as much as there can be no anti-technological subject in a social perspective. Society, culture, technology, civilization: one can not exist without the other. Historically, only political parties with their authoritarian, hierarchical paraphernalia made a revolution. There is nothing more authoritarian than a revolution, nothing more anarchic than revolt.

Revolution structures, organizes, creates civilization and progress. Revolt deconstructs, has no future, leaves in the present, suspends our lives in an eternal "here and now", never satiates our desires pushing us forward to a continuous search of the impossible.

A constant trend that feeds on the destruction of the existent. When I speak of "new anarchy" i refer to that anarchy that can easily exist without the concept of revolution, realism, politics.

The restless spirit of Bakunin, the visionary madness of Cafiero, the thirst for justice of Ravachol and Henry, the hatred and vengeance of Di Gioavanni, the poems and the lead of Novatore, the bloodthirsty despair of Bertoli are all part of this "new anarchy". The black international, my brothers and sisters of FAI-FRI are today the incarnation of this "new anarchy".

The time has arrived to acknowledge that we are different, that an abyss divides us from the old anarchism. We have no space for the great illusions: revolution, progress, civilization.

Our path is different from that of social, realist, rational, positivist, proactive, creator of new order and civilization anarchism. A different path that finds within anti-civilization the closing of a circle.

A circle that leads us to nowhere else than living life to the full. Defining ourselves carriers of "new anarchy", naive as it may sound, serves as a distinction from the political anarchism as well as from a certain social insurrectionalism that oozes ideology.

**CCF: "Solidarity between anarchists of praxis is not just a word". How have italian anarchists dealt with your case and how have they expressed their solidarity?**

**Alfredo:** There are two types of solidarity. A passive one that all too often serves only to wash away conscience for someone's own inactivity and that does not bridge the gaps between words and deeds.

And then the active, concrete, real solidarity that some call revolutionary, created in silence and anonymity, where only destructive actions speak even through the words that follow. Needless to say which one I prefer.

In final analysis, the best solidarity that i could receive is to see the planning of this new anarchy, in all of its forms, continue to move forward, insensible to the strokes of repression. I will not deny it, in every action that someone salutes us as anarchist prisoners, both in Italy and the rest of the world, my heart fills with joy.

This is my life today. The war continues, never give up, never give in.

*Long live FAI-FRI*

*Long live CCF*

*Long live the black international*

**Alfredo Cospito**

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\*TN. *Cittadinismo*: Ideology based on the belief that citizens should be able to govern themselves. Distinctly rejects the concept of representation, preferring other patterns of direct or participatory democracy. In the absence of alternatives, the so-called representatives of the citizens commit to the order they received and the decision-making power remains intimately related to the citizen. Officially rejects leaders and every mediation, as it is based on the moral superiority of the citizens. Rejects organization, as the citizen must be free to express his opinion without ideological or “political” limitations.

According to this ideology, organizations that could survive in the new society are not based on any ideology or a worldwide vision. Only post-ideological organizations with an objective, such as citizens for the water, citizens against the Tav, citizens against taxes and so on, can survive.

\*\*TN. *Banda del Matese*: Cafiero and Malatesta conceptualized the idea of the Matese Gang, based on propaganda of the deed. According to Ceccarelli, a small armed group is able to “move in the country, as much as possible, proclaiming social war, urging people on acts of social banditry, occupying small communities and after having accomplished as many revolutionary actions as possible, heading to those places where our presence will show itself in the most efficient way”. The gang decides to act in San Lupo (Benevento). Unfortunately, one of Malatesta’s associates gives away their plans to the police and San Lupo is placed under surveillance. Many anarchists are being arrested while an exchange of gunfire between anarchists and the police takes place inside the village. A cop dies of his wounds.

Cafiero, Malatesta and Ceccarelli along with 25 comrades decide to climb up the mountains and try to trigger revolt in the isolated villages. Revolution at Letino is greeted with enthusiasm by the villagers who aid the rebels. In the next village Gallo things proceed similarly, although this time villagers are less excited as they hear about the arriving of government troops heading to encircle the rebels. For two days Malatesta and his comrades wander around in the mountains, searching in vain for food and shelter. Hungry and shivering from cold, they are surrounded by the army and driven to prison, where they are held for sixteen months without a trial. They are accused of the death of a police officer but on the trial held on August 1878, they are released without charges.

## The Ted K Archive

A critique of his ideas & actions



Alfredo Cospito, Conspiracy of Cells of Fire

A Few Words of "Freedom"

Interview by CCF – Imprisoned Members Cell with Alfredo Cospito

July 2014

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Source: *RadioAzione*. Translated for *Inter Arma* by Nihil Admirari

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