

# Directe Actie!

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SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2001. A'DAM.

VOICE OF ANARCHISTISCHE GROEP AMSTERDAM



### NEITHER EXTREMIST TERRORISM NOR CIVILIZED MILITARISM.

The attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon Tuesday the 11th September will not only change the international political situation concerning parliamentary politics and the world. It will also change the positions of the global left-wing resistance to capitalism. Therefore we as anarchists have to make our points of view clear concerning the Middle East question and the way the western world and especially the USA are intervening in this region and other regions of the world.

All over the world people have been mourning for the lives of the thousands of innocent people killed in the WTC and the Pentagon. These attacks have made such an impact, especially on the Western World, that people forget more and more the blood on the hands of the United States. Over the past decades the Western World (North America, Europe, Japan) with the USA in front has been fighting all over the world to impose their capitalist system and its symbols, like Christian religion, culture, tradition. We can choose examples from a long range of actions; from Vietnam –and even earlier- to the war on drugs in Colombia. The army of the United States together with its allies, the western countries, have been controlling the world. Due to these interventions people have been dying all over the world everyday. But this time people were dying in the heart of the capitalist system.

So now the symbols of the great capitalist system are once again, more openly than over the past few years, being used to make the American people as well as the people in the rest of the western countries ready for war. This is the new war as George W. Bush is saying. As we see on television and read in the newspapers (which get their news from an ever decreasing amount of press agencies, which are multinationals as well-so much for objectivity!) the US government is using the dead people to make everyone believe in the greatness of America. This greatness is summarised in their famous slogan: God bless America. Religion and nationalism are meeting each other here to prepare the people to bring sacrifices for the well being of the ruling class.

With the dawning of a new war, we can only wait what happens. As has been happening in the past, the democracy and opposition can easily be eliminated or tranquilized. The U.S. government is already talking about giving George W. Bush greater executive powers. Didn't the Romans have these kind of dictatorships in crisis situations as well? So for as far as they are telling us not only the United states of America have been attacked, but democracy and freedom, it's a total farce. If we ever had democracy and freedom in our countries we'll sure not have it now.

Until now it's not sure who prepared the attack on the WTC and the Pentagon. But every finger is pointing in the direction of the network of Osama bin Laden, a rich Islamic capitalist. He knows, like all others of the ruling classes in non-western countries, that in the war over the power in the world one cannot hit the USA by waging a conventional war. One can only win this by waging a 'terrorist' war. So in a way this war is not so new. In history we can find enough examples of the different ruling classes fighting each other for the economical, religious and political power and the power over natural resources. Also we can see that the people who are send to the killing fields are the workers, the peasants, the landless –the proletariat- provoked by their rulers with nationalism and religious fanaticism.

Therefore it must be clear for us as anarchists that we cannot choose sides in this war. We can not choose between 'islamic' terrorism on the one side and the western militarism on the other side. Because this war will not solve the oppression of the workers, neither in the Middle East nor in the United States. Africa, South America...

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# EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

You're now reading the first issue of *Directe Actie!*, the voice of AGA. We plan to make this magazine every two months. It's meant to spread the ideas that we have as a group and the cases we are working on. So in this issue you'll find articles about two of our cases, the case of Eduardo Garcia and of the conflict with Raffle's Grand Café. Also there are articles with opinions of the group on the squat movement, the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and its consequences. Also this issue contains more informative articles about things happening in call centres in Germany, a new bill for the Disability Insurance Act in the Netherlands and one on the history of anarchosyndicalism. Although it's the voice of AGA, the magazine is open for discussions and for other people who want to use it as a way to express their views and/or raise discussions. All articles are written in a personal capacity, except the ones which aren't signed they represent views of AGA.

As you might have noticed *Directe Actie!* is appearing in a Dutch as well as an English version. We've chosen to do so, because some people involved in AGA don't speak Dutch and our communication therefore is in English and Dutch. In this way we hope to make the information accessible to all people inside and outside of AGA (although outside may be impossible). As none of us are professional translators, some parts of articles may be written in a strange way, but we've tried to make it understandable.

Below this editorial you can read what kind of group we are and how we are working. We're not only making this magazine, but are also active in other fields. So feel free to get in contact if you want to publish something in the magazine or if you want to know something about our activities or want to take part in these.

## What is AGA?

The Anarchistische Groep Amsterdam is a group of people that has organized itself to fight the problems they encounter in daily life. This can be at work, at school or in the community. For this AGA is basing itself mainly on the ideas of anarchosyndicalism. These have as their basic values solidarity, mutual aid, self-management and direct action.

## The Assembly.

This is the weekly meeting in which all the members of the group can participate on the basis of equality. All the issues concerning the group are decided upon here. This can mean making plans of action in case of problems at work. But also decisions can be taken on the organizing of meetings and the making and spreading of propaganda material. Because the assembly is the first and the only place where all members of the group come together, it has the highest executive power of decision-making. This means that all the decisions taken in the assembly are binding. We always try to reach consensus when we are making decisions.

All decisions taken outside the assembly, should first be discussed and approved by the assembly. This can be the case when AGA is working with other groups in a federation. In this case there will be a federation meeting with a delegate from AGA.

## AGA as an anarchist union.

The responsibility for the union work, that needs to be done to solve the problems at work, lies in the hands of those members of the group, who work in the different industries/ branches. This means that the member or the members who are working in the hotel and catering industry (horeca in Dutch), have to collect all the information concerning this industry about CAO's (collective labour agreements), law and jurisprudence (for example that employers are obligated to pay all the tips to the workers). The same should happen for the companies where the members of the group work.

## Direct Action.

Because we put emphasis on self-organisation, our action is direct action. This means that there is no interference of committees, negotiators or other intermediary persons. All action must be taken directly by the members of the group self. Therefore direct action is based on solidarity and mutual aid. Forms of direct action are:

Information-Propaganda-Agitation: this is the most simple form of direct action, that is meant to spread our ideas and points of view about certain issues. This can be by pamphlets (like this one), publications, wall paintings, meetings with discussions, internet, stickers.

Boycott: the boycott of a certain company exists of stopping the activity of the company by not using its products or services. For this the solidarity of all people is needed (don't forget that you can also be the one who is being exploited or doesn't get paid).

Work-to-rule actions, slow-down actions or other forms of action by which the production process gets 'sabotaged' to exercise pressure to reach your goals.

Strike: meant to stop production. It should be indefinite and end only when we get what we want or when we are at the end of our strength. It can only take place between Labour and Capital (without minimum services or interference by the state).

This way we want to fight for a world without exploitation. A world in which there is going to be produced to satisfy human needs and not for profit. In this society the control over the workplace and the community should be in the hands of the people themselves. To accomplish this we have organized ourselves. If you want to know more about this or want to join us, you can contact us through:

e-mail: [agamsterdam@yahoo.com](mailto:agamsterdam@yahoo.com)

telephone: 06-52175952 (preferably in the evening)

postbus 16521 - 1001 RA A'DAM.

**ANARCHISTISCHE GROEP AMSTERDAM**



# Housing Corporation Amsterdam wants: a rent increase of more than 900% We want: social rents for social projects

Housing Corporation Amsterdam (WBA) of witch Fort van Sjakoo rents its space since 12 years wants to increase the rent starting Sept. 1 from f 580. to f 5100. per month. The Housing Corporation finds this a reasonable proposal. We, the volunteers from the Fort van Sjakoo, well know that we can't come up with that much money. If this rent increase goes into effect we're for sure threatened with losing the bookshop in the very near future. Naturally we don't agree with this proposal and we call on you to help support us in our struggle against this unsocial measure.

For 24 years now het Fort van Sjakoo has been run by an enthusiastic changing group of volunteers. The goal of the bookshop has never been to make a profit, but to supply people with all sorts of information that they can't easily find elsewhere. The collection consists of a wide range of left-wing political, social criticism, avant-garde, artistic, rebellious, odd and environmentally friendly books and magazines, and sometimes interesting publications that people search in vain for in regular bookshops. The bookshop is a distribution point for all sorts of self-made zines, music from small labels, t-shirts, patches, etc. People come here from all over the world and often find things they've uselessly searched for in their own country.

The Housing Corporation says they need to cash the market value of their commercial spaces to pay for their social housing projects. We understand this but believe that they should get the money were it is available. Everywhere in Amsterdam non-commercial and social organizations are under pressure because they are being faced with enormously inflated rents. This tendency can only be changed when social and non-commercial initiatives have a non-profit rent category.

We want the Housing Corporation Amsterdam to withdraw their rent increase. Support from the people who believe in what we do is warmly welcome!!

## STOP DE TREND!



**Sociale huren  
voor sociale projecten!**

**International Bookshop Het Fort van Sjakoo**  
Jodenbreestraat 24, Amsterdam  
Telefoon: 020-6258979  
Fax: 020-6203570  
e-mail: [sjakoo@xs4all.nl](mailto:sjakoo@xs4all.nl)

[www.xs4all.nl/~sjakoo](http://www.xs4all.nl/~sjakoo)

GEEN HUURVERHOOGING VAN



MEER DAN 900% VOOR HET  
FORT VAN SJAKOO EN ASCII

## **ABOUT THE SQUAT MOVEMENT**

We think as free thinkers that we must talk about the main social movement in Nederland. We are talking about Amsterdam specifically.

To be sincere is important. This group is not working directly in this movement, but some members are. For these reasons we raise a discussion about this subject.

A lot of people are getting an idea further than houses are very expensive here. One comes to squatters. This one tries to know what is going on. The impression given in the "kraakspreekuur" is not so good. It is usually a little bit darkness. You talk about legal things: How to squat, what you need, and when you can squat. The conversation is not social, we mean, it is not getting in social theme. The story finishes and you leave that place without knowing little idea about which is the squatters alternative to this crazy society. Yes, it's good to be able to squat and to stop the prices of houses going up. You also think it can not be the only squatters' reality. There is something behind to it. It should be some kind of organisation, but you only find out, after some months, there are several groups taking up all kinds of political decision. We think it is normal you can not show up everything to first one who is coming asking, because it's a revolutionary movement (we suppose it, we maybe are naive), but it is necessary to find out a way where the communication is next to the people in the street. The infrastructure is great, and there are a lot of self-taught squatters, ready to do anything. So, to make activities open to different kind of persons should not be difficult. You could get it if the communication is fluid among the squat movement and this with the society.

The participation in an assembly between houses could be a solution. A free meeting where everyone (squatters) may give their opinion, may know the reasons for doing things. The different houses could be organised as a federation. In this way, one could not feel one is not the owner of one's own life. One has the freedom to say one's point of view and to be respected. One has to break down any kind of authority. Just for a while this assembly gives you the opportunity to drive your own life. What you wish to do, what you think about. Nobody decides for you. It is a shared decision, so you are also responsible of it.

In this way the social participation should grow up. The movement should be a sign in the single daily reality. Being ourselves, one must be near to the normal troubles of this society and give available solutions so as information is not coming out in the mass media. To use the squat movement example like prove that other realities, stories are possible. Because on the other hand the squat movement looks like a big family (with parents as well) where you have got your play. Family has to accept

you but under the family's rules, and the family organises all for its members. It is a closed social group, different to other ones.

A main issue is the ideology. The family keeps for unity to squat and not much more. We could understand many things. You have to keep people around, and a lot of them only are looking for a house just for living and to save money or effort not working a lot. These people only claim activities to enjoy. But to stop on this point is not going further (you can by discussion and direct-action), mixing several ideologies, however it does not give unity in actions and ideas. It makes different ways of fighting. Without a squat movement sign in the society. Different ideologies take the political way as the only one. In fact, they try to have an impact on the different political powers. They accept the system, recognise them as authority to change things. It is like they do not believe in a real alternative. These groups give too much importance to mass media as a real opinion of society.

We do not think this is a good way. To forget them (political system, bureaucracy, and state's dogs) also is not possible but we do not accept them. To work with the people, we have to learn from them and they learn from us, exchange. We have to take back the control of our lives and to break down their power, their authority. We have to make our own way but not forget we live in society, we must work and fight together, and the main work is a social work, directly and not by politicians or mass media.

We know our speech is not easy. Being coherent always is difficult. Sometime we will feel solitary, we have to be carefully because we are dangerous for those who want to keep in this state of things (also inside the squat movement). Squat action is to get back houses no used. It means not accept private property, it goes against one of the main rules of this system. If this world is not solidarity, friendly, clever, etc., our actions have to go on the opposite way. If we wish to transform this society we start with ourselves, propaganda of the deed. Our end line is freedom. Not accept authority, power, and states. We have to find out a self-organisation, to do the things directly. For that this discussion is only to start to look deeply into the concept,

**"SQUAT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?"**

## **"AMSTERDAM WANTS FREEDOM FOR EDUARDO GARCIA"**

Eduardo García (INNOCENT) is in prison from the 14th November of 2000. He was arrested in Madrid and was accused of sending parcel bombs to politicians, journalists... but curiously some weeks after the detention of the innocent the real author were sending other parcel bombs.

Life in prison is not life. It is death and is so hard if you are an innocent person and locked in a room without sun, wind... But Eduardo is strong and at the end of April and the beginning of May for example he was on hunger strike commemorating the murders the 1st of May of 1886 in Chicago (United States). We know like the police and the judges that Eduardo Garcia is innocent. And we help him to get out from the prison because he needs life like you and me, in this way we made a special meeting in the squat canteen Vrankrijk (Amsterdam) the 12th of May. In the meeting we had information about Eduardo's case and were also showing videos about the problems of other prisoners in the world (the situation in the prisons of Turkey and an interview with Mumia Abu Jamal). Afterwards the people were talking about this. There were also music groups playing for Eduardo: ILL11, The Last Mile and Skatonomen.

Eduardo is still inside the prison because the police made a frame up. When the police was in the house of Eduardo nothing was found. But in the police station a small bag with gunpowder was appearing. Also Eduardo has different hair, saliva and other physical proofs in comparison to those which were found in other sendings of parcel bombs by the real terrorists.

Now he's still in prison waiting (after 10 months) for a legal process. His case is in the hands of 4 judges (three judges declared freedom till legal process because they have no proofs). One of the judges, called Maria Teresa Palacios, didn't declare freedom for Eduardo. In the words of himself, he's inside "... por no callar ante la injusticia y la desigualdad" (for not keeping quiet about the injustice and inequality).

He's not a terrorist. He's only in prison for his ideas. He just wants to help people with social problems caused by the capitalist society (he was helping prisoners and poor people), he was fighting only with his heart, ideas and mouth.

• From Amsterdam we claim the FREEDOM FOR EDUARDO GARCIA because he's innocent. 14th november is the international solidarity day with Edu.

If you want to help him you can get in contact through: "Campaña Internacional por la libertad de Eduardo Garcia" Apdo. 30100 CP 28080 Madrid (Spain)

**BASTA DE MONTAJES-BASTA DE MONTAJES**

**libertad**



**Eduardo Garcia**

**FREE EDUARDO GARCIA**

# **LINGERING DISPUTE IN RAFFLE'S Grand Cafe.**

Raffle's Grand Café is part of the chain of restaurants owned by Hugo Alberto Fernandez. The restaurants Alberto's restaurant in Spui 8 and Korte Leidsedwardsstraat 26 are the other restaurants of the chain. Raffle's Grand Café is situated on Kleine Gartmanplantsoen 5. It is directly connected to Alberto's restaurant in Korte Leidsedwardsstraat. The owner, H.A. Fernandez, is only shareholder and director. Different managers are managing the three businesses of the chain. Our experience in the Raffle's case shows that the manager is doing all the work for Alberto, especially dealing with workers who know how to stand up for their rights.

One of the members of AGA was working in the kitchen of Raffle's from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January until the 30<sup>th</sup> of January and from the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February until the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2000. During his first week at work he had to work without a contract. After this week he was offered a contract which was talking about a gross salary of f20,55 per hour.

The working conditions were terrible at that moment. He wasn't the only one who had to work without a contract to prove his being suitable for the job. He heard from his colleagues that it often happened they had to wait for their wages until three months after the week or month they had worked. Besides that, illegal people were exploited fiercely. One of them, a middle aged man was working seven days a week for a wage of f12,- per hour. These circumstances made the member of AGA decide not to sign the contract and to quit the job after having worked there for a total of thirteen days. These were days of an average of 7,5 hours. This means that he should get a gross salary of f20,55 per hour for 97,5 hours, which totals f2003,63 gross salary.

On request of the manager, who would like a replacement for him, he showed his good will by sending two friends to Raffle's for a job application. One of them got the job. This person never appeared at work. This is not a strange choice considering the working conditions in the beginning of 2000. However the member of AGA can not be held responsible for the choice of this person.

Because he knew it was quite normal to wait for one's wages for a long time, he decided to be patient. Some months later he started travelling through Europe/the world for some months. When he came back to Amsterdam in the autumn of 2000, he still hadn't received any money. He decided to go to the administration of the café with a Dutch speaking person. At first they weren't able to find any information about him during the visit. Two persons of the administration were talking to each other saying that in that case he hadn't worked for the restaurant legally. Eventually they found 53 of the hours he had been working there in the working schedules. This still wasn't the complete 97,5 hours he actually had been working. But he and his friend went home after the people of

the administration had told them they would talk to Alberto and phone him later. The same day he received a call from them. He was told he could come and get the money. When he did so, they paid him f10,- per hour for 53 hours. This amount of f530,- was paid to him cash, only accompanied by a simple receipt. Although he accepted the money at first, he didn't feel quite satisfied and decided to go on to get all of the money. Which is f1473,63 gross salary (f2003,63 - f530).

From this moment it was decided to take further action with AGA. The first step was to go to the restaurant with a small group to demand the rest of his money. During this visit he was told the old owner had gone broke and that he had sold the business to a new owner. Therefore a third account had been opened and a judicial institute was now taking care of back payments. But according to the Chamber of Commerce there is no new owner. After we had found out that there was no new owner, friends of the worker visited the café. They told that f10,- per hour is illegal, because it's under the legal minimum wage of people over 23 years of age. The person they were talking to could only respond by saying they had paid f12,50 per hour for only 40 hours. While another woman from the office of the café still said he had received f10,- for washing the dishes. Then the person said the worker could call him to explain the situation and then get the money. When he called, he was told they would pay him f12,50 per hour for 53 hours, so not for the 97,5 hours he had been working.

It was then decided in the assembly of AGA not to accept the money. Unsatisfied about the way we were talked to and treated, we decided to take on a form of direct action. We decided to make a pamphlet in which we explained the conflict and called for a boycott of the three restaurants of H.A. Fernandez. This pamphlet has been given to the customers in Raffle's Grand Café three times. The first time was April 1, the second was after the First of May demonstration, which AGA organised, and the third time was on June 30. At first the third action appeared to turn out just the way the first two had done, an unfriendly verbal confrontation with the manager (who was the same as during the first of May, but a different one than on April 1). Eventually the talk got a little friendlier and the manager 'promised' he would talk to Alberto. We could call him later to make an appointment.

It appeared to be quite hard to get to speak to the manager by telephone. In one of the calls a worker told that the manager would be there on a certain day from five o'clock. So the person directly involved in this conflict and another member of AGA went to see the manager that day. The manager was present and willing to talk to the both of them. The history and the reason of the conflict were explained to him. Again he made a 'promise', telling he would talk to Alberto and he would look in the books to see if he could find anything more. He could be called a few days later to know what the result would be. When the directly involved person called a few days later, he was told that they would pay him f200,-. He could call back later to let them know whether or not he would accept the money.

He discussed this with the other members of AGA in the assembly. We all decided not to accept this hush money and to send a registered letter with a short history and the exact amount of money we demanded from Raffle's Grand Café. A few days after sending this letter, the former worker called the manager. He told the former worker he had seen the letter, but that he could not do anything more than offer the f200,-. The most remarkable thing he told was that the day after would be his last day working for Raffle's.

With this events the opening that was created June 30, has been closed again. At this moment all possibilities for action are open again.

**A lot of workers from HORECA SECTOR could see themselves in this picture. "MEET YOUR BOSS SURVIVAL GUIDE", it maybe could help you. You have to know your minimal rights in this country.**

**NO ABUSE WITHOUT ANSWER**



# NEW BILL DISABILITY INSURANCE ACT IS

## MANIPULATION OF STATISTICS.

Affairs and Employment (SAE) told the Lower House agreed with the new way of dealing with ill workers in the first year of their illness. The amount of people in DIA is increasing with an alarming rate according to the government and businesses. The prognosis is that the increase will go on over the next couple of years, because of this the government decided to make a new law. This way at least the figures can go down without actually changing the amount of ill workers, the causes and seriousness of their illnesses.

Now the employer can't fire the worker during the first two years of his illness. In these two years the employer is obligated to do all which is possible to get the worker back to work again. This can either be by giving him adjusted work or by finding appropriate work elsewhere. I believe that in this situation there's already some things wrong. For example it doesn't take into account that in some cases it's better to recuperate in all rest. Also one's enjoyment of the work can be influenced negatively by doing adjusted or different work, which is less attracting. According to me this is an infringement of one's dignity.

The possible new situation will change nothing for the better. The government has decided to make the 'rights and duties' of employer and worker more coercive. Workers who refuse to work along with their reintegration can be sanctioned with a stoppage of their wages or by being sacked. For employers who don't do enough it can maximally lead to paying an extra year of wages. The Lower House approved this bill and the included draft regulation of the State Secretary Hoogervorst.

By forcing employers and workers in this way to act faster in the first year of the illness, the amount of people in DIA has to lessen, because the DIA examination takes place after the first year of illness. The executive institution will decide whether or not sanctions should be given and to whom, by judging the reintegration report made by employer and worker. Also the executive institution is allowed to see if there's adjusted work in a company or not, when an employer or worker asks for a 'second opinion'.

The term within which the employer has to report the worker is ill remains 13 weeks. In the included minimal regulation it will be drawn up which steps have to be taken during the first year of illness to be able to speak of sufficient 'reintegration efforts'. Using this regulation employers and workers can determine what they have to do. The executive institution can determine by using it whether or not they 'have done utmost and if there's been offered adjusted work or not'.

But it's very hard to determine which work one can or

cannot do. This will differ with each person. Anyway we can ask ourselves the question why a person or institution has the right to decide for and over someone what that person can or can not do. Besides it's strange that in a period in which the amount of people in DIA is increasing, there's not being looked at the causes. Instead the government prefers to look for a way to make these rules more coercive to make it harder to get into DIA and with this make the figures drop or at least stay lower than expected. This new bill is the conclusion of this. But the people who are ill, will stay ill and those who'll fall ill, will do so because of the same reasons as before.

Also with this new bill there's not being looked at the fact that the Netherlands, except for Sweden, has the highest work pressure of Europe since years. In addition to this it appeared in May from a research done by FNV Bondgenoten that between 1996 and 1999 the amount of serious labour accidents has increased with 40%. The main cause is the increase of temporary workers. But also companies appear to pay less attention to safety and the safety policy is often only on paper. Especially workers send on secondment get insufficient explanation about safety hazards because of this, although this applies to regular workers more often as well. Also the increasing work pressure would cause people to work less carefully. And a lot of companies would still have unsafe situations and machines. The reason FNV Bondgenoten made the research itself was because the labour inspectorate couldn't give an explanation for the increase and the ministry of SAE didn't want to let it be inspected. It would take too much possession of the labour inspectorate.

The sanctions which employers and workers can receive are in no relation to each other. Workers, who refuse adjusted work or prevent their reintegration in a different way can either lose their income or their job. Both more or less mean the same. The employer on the other hand can be sanctioned maximally paying an extra year of income, when he hasn't offered adjusted work, although according to the executive institution this would have been possible. For most employers, for sure for those of the larger companies this is not much money and they get rid of the worker as well. But when the employer can make it appear it's not possible to offer adjusted work in the company, he doesn't get any sanctions. In most companies, especially in those with more than 40 to 50 workers, it's more or less always possible to find adjusted work. The worker however can lose his job, when he himself is refusing to cooperate as well as when his boss does so. This new bill, when it becomes law, will hit us as workers harder than the employers. So besides an increasing risk of labour accidents, it's also getting easier for employers to take us on during our illness. Therefore now it's even more important than before to know our rights and to observe them and not let them get at us with

## CALL CENTRES IN GERMANY

In Germany there's a struggle going on at this moment between workers and employers in the call centre ISI Marketing. A fight that can also spread to the Netherlands. It's not enough to think that labour conflicts in the other countries have nothing to do with for instance working conditions here in the Netherlands in the concerning branch of industry. According to a pamphlet which was spread through internetprovider FREE! there are a lot of things happening in the call centres and especially ISI Marketing.

What is striking about ISI Marketing is that you have to do "voluntary work" if you want to get a job. This work consists of an unpaid training of 12 hours which has to be taken. After this one has to do 28 hours of sales work. Also these hours are unpaid. All this time one still hasn't got a contract. How do you get a contract? By living up to two thirds of the intended sales results in these 28 hours, otherwise you're "fired". Besides this, absence due to illness is being sanctioned with a shortage of one's wage or one has to make up for lost hours. But there is more "voluntary work". Any preparations, which need to be done for the work, one has to do before the official start of one's work. In case of overtime during the break one simply loses this time. The wages are 12 DM (german mark) and the bonuses which one can possibly get in addition to this are very unstable. Of course ISI Marketing is not the only one with these kind of practices (for example workers at Hewlett Packard in Amsterdam have to work for a temporary employment agency for two years before getting a permanent, steady job). In most cases the working conditions are as described below.

A general characteristic of the German call centres is the "pressure to achieve" they use. The employers will see to it that the time which one has actually been working, fits the obligatory amount of hours that have to be made. This is done by taking the time and observing the workers. The purpose of this is to make the work measurable and therefore comparable. For instance, workers have to make 20 calls per hour.. Also the employer uses so called team leaders. They control whether the workers make enough phone calls and their break doesn't overrun it's time. For this the workers are divided into teams. Those teams are subdivided into smaller units. In this way it's easy to control everyone and to keep conflicts on a small scale. Another disadvantage of this "team spirit" is that bonuses at for example TAS (also a call centre) aren't being paid to the worker in question, but to the group.

There are also call centres (like Citibank) who want to use speech computers to take over a part of the work. This is a bad development. It means people are going to be fired and the other workers will get busier (because like all new to use computers and programs, a lot of times they contain some teething trouble).

The people that spread the pamphlet earlier mentioned through FREE! were rightly indignant about ISI Marketing (and other call centres). The provider it found out to their cost. ISI Marketing summoned the provider to court and, for the time being, won. A blow to freedom of the press. All those measures internal as well as external, show that employers aren't the "social partners" as we are made to believe here in the Netherlands. Unfortunately a lot of employers are looking more at the costs than at the workforce. It's good that in Germany the workers of call centres are starting to resist the earlier mentioned working conditions. Should you work for a call centre in the Netherlands, let us know your experiences.

For more information

[www.free.de](http://www.free.de)

[www.ainfos.ca/01/may/ainfos00353.html](http://www.ainfos.ca/01/may/ainfos00353.html)

[www.ainfos.ca/01/may/ainfos00569.html](http://www.ainfos.ca/01/may/ainfos00569.html)

About the struggle in the call centres::

[www.motkraft.net/prol-position](http://www.motkraft.net/prol-position)

[www.motkraft.net/prol-position](http://www.motkraft.net/prol-position)

[www.labournet.de/branchen/dienstleistung/cc/](http://www.labournet.de/branchen/dienstleistung/cc/)

[www.hackword.org](http://www.hackword.org)

The information in this article has among others been taken from "Direkte Aktion" from the FAU. [www.fau.org](http://www.fau.org)

# A SHORT HISTORY OF SYNDICALISM AND THE IWAS

## **The First International.**

The International Workers Association was founded in Berlin in 1922, but its origins trace back to the 1860's and the International Working Men's Association, better known as the First International. Most people associate the First International only with Karl Marx and the emerging Social Democratic movement, but the Anarchists and Marxists had actually about the same influence among the workers and in the International. The Marxists had their base in Germany and England, while the Anarchists stood strong in the Latin countries (France, Spain and Italy.) The cooperation between Marxists and Anarchists was however to be short-lived. Marx and his fraction was in control of the secretariat of the International, and wanted to turn the International into a tool to support Social Democratic parties in Parliamentary elections. (Sounds familiar, doesn't it?)

The Anarchists opposed this, and they also opposed giving more power to the secretariat; they wanted each section to have full autonomy. As we have come to expect from his more contemporary disciples, Marx turned to dirty tricks to win this fight. At a congress packed with Marx' supporters, two of the leading anarchists, Bakunin and James Gullliame were expelled from the International on false accusations, and the secretariat was given wide powers.

## **Propaganda of the Deed.**

The Anarchists withdraw from Marx' International, and tried to set up their own. But this was in the years after the Paris Commune and a reign of counterrevolutionary terror against the Left swept Europe. Both the Marxist and Anarchist Internationals, weakened by the split, died a silent death within a few years. The anarchists were driven underground in country after country. In response to the terror of the bosses, a minority in the anarchist movement launched an armed campaign and killed several kings, queens, aristocrats and senior politicians. This strategy was coined "propaganda of the deed" and was supposed to ignite the silent masses. But the result was the opposite. People got alienated by the violence, and the press got ammunition for their attack against the revolutionists: The image of the madman with a bomb under his arm was born. By the turn of the century most anarchists were convinced that a new approach was needed. They called for a return to open and public militant activity among workers. The strategy they developed was syndicalism.

## **The Founding of the IWA**

In 1913 there was an international syndicalist congress held in London which aimed at building stronger ties between the existing syndicalist unions and propaganda groups. Present at the congress were delegates from the FVdG (Germany), the NAS (Holland), the SAC (Sweden), the USI (Italy) and the ISEL (Britain) Observers attended from the IWW, the CNT (Spain), the FORA (Argentina) and the CGT (France). Unfortunately the Congress' outcome was inconclusive, beyond drawing up a declaration of principles and setting up a short-lived

information bureau. Within a year Europe was plunged into the First World War and communications between the syndicalists became impossible.

When the war ended conditions were different. Russia had been taken out of the war by a social revolution, but the usurpation of the revolution by the Communists was not well known outside of Russia. When the Communists set up the Third International, the syndicalists were invited to join their new Red International of Trade Unions. The aura and prestige of the first "successful" workers revolution caused many syndicalists to abandon their skepticism towards "proletarian dictatorship." At the RITU's first congress in Moscow, however, the syndicalist found their Russian comrades being imprisoned and shot by the new "workers" government and its secret police. Disillusioned with the Bolsheviks, they decided to form their own international organization.

The founding conference of the IWA were held in Berlin in 1922. Present were the Argentine Workers Regional Organization FORA representing 200,000 members, the Industrial Workers of the World in Chile representing 20,000, the Union for Syndicalist Propaganda in Denmark with 600, the Free Workers Union of Germany FAU with 120,000, National Workers Secretariat of the Netherlands representing 22,500, the Italian Syndicalist Union with 500,000, the General Confederation of Workers in Portugal with 150,000, the Swedish Workers Central Organization SAC with 32,000, the Committee for the Defense of Revolutionary Syndicalism in France [a breakaway from the CGT] with 100,000, the Federation du Combattant from Paris representing 32,000. The Spanish CNT was unable to send delegates due to the fierce class struggle being waged in their country under the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. They did, however, join the following year. During the 1920s the IWA expanded. More unions and propaganda groups entered into dialogue with the IWA secretariat. They were from Mexico, Uruguay, Bulgaria, Poland, Japan, Australia, South Africa, Paraguay and North Africa. Syndicalist unions outside the IWA also existed in many countries such as the Brazilian Workers Regional Organization and the Industrial Workers of the World in the USA (which soon spread to Canada, Sweden, Australia, South Africa, and Britain).

## **The Revolution in Spain**

In 1936 the Popular Front, a coalition of communists, social democrats and liberals, won the general elections in Spain. The new government that followed only introduced minor reforms, but this was still too much for the Spanish ruling class. In July 1936 the fascists, led by general Franco, attempted a coup. The government in Madrid was paralyzed, and the fascist would have won an easy victory had it not been for the anarcho-syndicalists workers of the CNT. In Barcelona and other cities, the workers took to the streets, surrounded the army barracks and took on the army with the few and outdated weapons they could get hold of. Thus, the fascists coup was halted in its start.