The social situation in the country differs just little from the situation of the working class in countries like Russia or Ukraine. The rate of unemployment is around 18% (but it should grow soon as this is just a result of government plan requiring everyone who is more than two years on the dole to find work for at least 3 months; most of the work authorities provide to these people is a communal work). In the first half of 2000 11.5% of Slovak population (600,000) lived in poverty on less than US$3 per person daily. According to the official bureaucratic trade unions, more than 60% of the working population lives under or near the poverty line.

The trade unions are collaborating with the power elite, thus strengthening the feeling of powerlessness, erasing working class consciousness and fostering fatalism among workers. This results in an atmosphere where working-class people distrust their abilities and power. Other negative aspects of this situation is reinforced individualism and in many places also alcoholism. However, there are still some militant workers trying to radicalize the trade unions although this tactic seems to be not very successful.

The anarchist movement in Slovakia is fairly new. The Slovak section of Czechoslovak Anarchist Federation was formed in the summer of 1999. They publish the information bulletin, From the Bottom. The Slovak and Czech parts of CSAF cooperate, but are fully autonomous. They are trying to target issues connected with capitalist globalization, to initiate a campaign against NATO and the EU and against entry of Slovakia into these two institutions (in the case of EU this also concerns Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, and cooperation with anarchist groups from these countries is necessary), and to support squatting activities. They also distribute anarchist magazines, books, pamphlets, flyers and other propaganda in order to build an effective communication and activists network all around Slovakia. The CSAF offers a lot of space for discussion and is not as strict ideologically as, for example, Priama Akcia-AKOP; there are various views and opinions on green anarchism, class war or syndicalism among them.

Priama Akcia - Anarchokomunisticka Organizacia Prace (Direct Action - Anarcho-Communist Organization of Labor, PA-AKOP) was formed on April 1, 2000. They are a small group who edit the magazine Priama Akcia (Direct Action), founded in July 1999. They claim to be the only openly class-struggle anarchist organization in Slovakia at the moment (except for Solidarita - Organization of Revolutionary Anarchists, which has one member in Slovakia).

PA-AKOP has comradely relationships with the Slovak section of Czechoslovak Anarchist Federation (CSAF), the Federation of Social Anarchists (FSA-IWA) and Solidarita - ORA (both Czech) with which they exchange publications and cooperate in organizational meetings and actions.

PA-AKOP recently became a member section of International Workers Association at the AIT Congress held in Granada, Spain, in mid-December 2000. Their future plan (if there are enough dedicated people) is to form a union.

The Slovak section of the Organization of Revolutionary Anarchists - Solidarity was formed this past summer.

Some Recent Activities
September 1999: members of future PA-AKOP spread over 800 pieces of first issue of Direct Action newspaper at a bureaucratic union demonstration of 20,000.

November-December 1999: members of CSAF helped start a Food Not Bombs chapter in Bratislava. In the following months they spread food and anti-capitalist leaflets to the poor. In the spring political disputes within the Bratislava group escalated and anarchists gave it up, as there was no chance to come to agreement with others that didn't practice direct democracy. The group still functions, but without anarchists.

May Day 2000: CSAF set up an information booth on Blava Square with an exhibition focused on globalization, as part of the Global Day of Action against capitalism.

June 12: 800-strong street party in Bratislava organized by some members of CSAF, NGO members and others. Streets are blocked for over two hours. The police were unprepared. The street party was organized as a solidarity action with INPEG and against automobilism. It was the biggest action against capitalist globalization ever held in Slovakia. Some Bolsheviks from the Czech Socialist Organization of Laborers (SOP) and Slovak Communist Youth Association (SZM) had literature tables there too. Members of PA-AKOP tried to force them out, but in a chaotic situation they were allowed to stay. PA-AKOP and CSAF agreed after the street party that this was the first and the last time they will tolerate them at their actions. Physical violence will be used next time if necessary.

September 26: CSAF sets up an S26 information booth in Blava Square. Members of PA-AKOP, CSAF and ORA take part in red and black bloc in Prague. A CSAF member is arrested before S26 for illegally crossing borders (he had a ban to visit Czech for taking part in last year's May Day riots in Prague; released after 40 days in prison). On S27 another CSAF member is detained, beaten and tortured for alleged participation in battles with police on S26. Set free after 8 hours.

October 2: PA-AKOP and CSAF organized a solidarity demo with S26 activists in front of Czech embassy and demanded their release and dropping of all charges.

Future Plans

Members of PA-AKOP, CSAF, ORA and a few unorganized anarchists and sympathizers are trying to build several campaigns at the moment. They hold regular meetings and these are the most important actions they hope to put into reality:

1. Campaign for 30-hour working week. This is going to be a long-term activity. Basically the idea is to take part in social struggles, try to "anarchize" them and after they are finished (won or lost) to keep the militancy in workers/students permanently alive. It is considered that it would be inefficient for struggling workers to end up their activities after they finish a particular struggle at their own workplace. So they are urged to take part in this campaign.

2. The first social struggle they want to take part in is in support of railway workers. Slovak Railways (ZSR) received a bank loan from European Investment Bank last year. This means, among other obligations, that ZSR have to fire 16,000 workers (30% of their workforce), reduce
the length of railways by simply cutting them off and privatize parts of them by 2007. The anarchists want encourage the rail workers to organize an occupation strike (on the basis of maximal possible direct democracy from the bottom up, delegation system, federalism and solidarity) to stop this plan. The anarchists are going to publish an "anarchist newspaper of workers mutual aid" Workers Solidarity, which will be a platform for anarchists and militant workers to share experiences and views.

3. Actively working in Anarchist Black Cross - there is an ABC at the moment but not working as effectively as it could. Theoretical issues and organizational structure are being discussed at the moment.

4. Anti-fee university campaign - the Slovak government plans to pass a new law that would charge fees for university study. This is a plain and simple attack on the poor. Support from the international anarchist community is desperately needed. Tell all your comrades who might know any university students to contact them!


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