

# Love & Rage Implodes

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Talk about going out, not with a bang, but a whimper. Love & Rage, the failed attempt at a continental anarchist federation, formally imploded earlier this year. So insignificant was their demise that we were unable to find out any of the sordid details surrounding the final collapse.

We do know that a faction led by L&R chief bureaucrat, Chris Day, has ditched anarchism for a more general leftist approach and has begun a new organization. Why is it that he and his cohorts only picked up the worst ideas about splits and factions from their original partners in L&R, the Revolutionary Socialist League? To be fair, it is ironic that ex-RSL members are the ones keeping true to anarchism, while the former anarchists have turned to organizational leftism. Now, they can have all the alliances they choose with authoritarians like the RCP without having to suffer the barbs of their libertarian critics.

## Drawn to Leftist Sects

L&R undoubtedly turned some people on to anarchy and mobilized them around issues they otherwise might not have participated in, but the experience of party/organizational life is usually more than the anarchistically minded can bear. The edifice always seems attractive—a newspaper, platforms, statements, campaigns, conferences—and initially these recruit people in the manner they are drawn to leftist sects.

But a bureaucracy, even an ostensibly anarchist one, made up of an alphabet soup of initials known only to the insiders—ECs, EGs, CCs, DBs, ad nauseam—with very little to show for it in the real world, usually makes membership a revolving door no less so than in leftist groups. Most people outside the L&R mechanism saw it as little else than a neo-leftist grouplet, moving, as many in it now have, toward leninism.

But even some of the ex-RSL anarchists haven't learned their lesson through the dismal L&R experience. A group in Detroit is calling for a new federation, which, to paraphrase Marx, will be a case of first time tragedy, second time tragedy. The finale of this federation is no different than those that have preceded it; the ones after it will meet the same fate.

## Empty federations squabbling

An empty federation squabbling about resolutions and statements of principles before finally collapsing, does little to advance construction of a coherent anarchist movement and probably much to harm it. Numerous national campaigns are run effectively without a national federation and don't function in the manner of L&R which often made people feel you were either in the gang or an outsider. Most of us were not, as evidenced by the consistently tiny turnout at L&R national conferences contrasted to the massive international gathering which took place in Toronto in August and in other North American cities during the 1980s.

As incoherent as these large gatherings may seem to the organization-minded, they serve to inform people about other projects and ideas, linking them together, and maybe most importantly, giving the thousands in attendance the distinct sense that there is a significant movement in North America. These events are essentially a federation with no office, no bureaucracy, no factions, no meetings—anarchy is what I think it's called.

Detroit has its Trumbull Theatre, *Fifth Estate*, Anti-Racist Action, Food Not Bombs, Zapatista support and numerous other projects and responses to crises that we activate without centralized national coordination. Usually, if we need anything, it's local coordination.

## **Not With Leninist Schemes**

It is instructive that since the demise of L&R nothing much has changed either in the movement and certainly not in the real world. People continue a variety of projects unique to their locale. This is the way our movement will be built. Not with leninist schemes that have always failed the authoritarian left, and are even less appropriate for those who believe in freedom as a means as much as a goal.

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