

# BLACK FLAG

FOR ANARCHIST RESISTANCE



**chomsky**

democracy and neoliberal economics

**albania**

a people without government

**iwa/cnt/fai**

past/present/future



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# *editorial*

THIS ISSUE IS out a lot earlier than anyone had any right to expect. We still can't afford it but we hope that content, production, circulation etc are all getting better. We still think that there is a real need for a paper like *Black Flag*, but more importantly that there is a growing number of class struggle anarchists who want it and a growing number of people who are interested in the sort of ideas we are printing. There is no way we can claim consistency, some people may find difficulty reconciling Chomsky to militant anarchism. We'll print any article that we get if it is interesting and readable and try to write less ourselves.

We still need more people to write about actions and activities as well as politics and history. We need more people involved in the collective: in the writing, production and distribution. We are never going to be a party or an organisation. It is not just wishful thinking that more and more people are interested in class struggle anarchism, in anti authoritarian politics and activity. We think we can be useful in this, not just putting out news but as a forum for debate, a platform for ideas, and even as a way for people to get involved in different groups and action. This means trying to push both news and analysis which are accessible and interesting to people who don't give a toss about the internal wranglings of the CNT or the future of Class War while still giving space to debates and discussion that may seem introverted. We've always had a reputation for bitter sectarianism and we'll strive to maintain this but that is no reason not to send us money, articles and pictures.

Oh yes, there was an election. Happy now ?

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# solidarity needed for asylum seekers

ASYLUM SEEKERS suspended their hunger strike at Rochester prison on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1997. Many of the hunger strikers had been bailed or moved to detention centres and the action had succeeded in drawing attention to their situation and showing that they are not as passive as the authorities hoped. There were weekly demonstrations at Rochester to support the hunger strikers and all the detainees, pickets at the Home Office (which seemed largely pointless) and one action against Anne Widdecombe, coincidentally local MP and Home Office prison fetishist. Her surgery in Maidstone was disrupted by local activists and outside agitators. Legal challenges to the refusal of bail were mostly successful but little was achieved in terms of challenging the State's ability to detain any asylum seeker. Prison conditions remained as poor, individual hunger strikers were victimised by screws.

This was not the first protest and it is unlikely to be the last but the achievements of the hunger strikers could easily be lost if the issue is allowed to be just another lefty cause. SWP-style headline grabbing or making demands on the Labour party to act add nothing and push other people away. Some of the left groups seemed to be hoping for a death so they could hold a mass protest paper sale. It has to be said

that "Militant" were a real exception to this and some other individuals in left groups do have some grip on reality.

There was also a strong, and far more useful, wave of support from the churches. This was highly effective in winding up Anne Widdecombe, herself a devout skipilot and recent convert to popery. However the practical support the churches give to asylum seekers in providing bail sureties and even addresses and accommodation is not something to be snide about. Could we do the same? There was a problem when the hand of god was carrying placards with bullshit like "Trial before Prison". Rochester has a lot of inmates who have done nothing wrong, not all of them are asylum seekers. If we tolerate a prison system that puts people away because they are working class we cannot be surprised if working class people from other countries with false passports are put away too. Local support was strong and varied, from churches to local activist groups who see no distinction between their own struggles and those of refugees and asylum seekers.

Some "class struggle" groups seem to think that asylum seekers are irrelevant to our own struggles. This is just plain dumb. While the paternalist liberalism of

the church and the opportunism of the left continues to dominate refugee/asylum politics the effectiveness of action such as the Rochester Hunger strike will be limited. Asylum politics is not about "charity" but solidarity. Practical ideas such as ARCH (see BF207) and the action against Widdecombe are a start. Refugees and asylum seekers need to deal with both the conditions that bring them here and the forces that try to turn them away. We all need to go beyond protesting at the detention of asylum seekers and sloganising about "racist" immigration laws. Prison resistance must spread on both the inside and outside, and fight the ideology of borders, nations and nationalisms.

## building worker group wins victory

ON JANUARY 6<sup>th</sup> a bricklayer in Northampton UCATT told branch secretary Brian Higgins that he and 12 others had been sacked that morning on their return from the Xmas break. Eight others had started in their place!

At the invitation of the men Brian went to Milton Keynes two days later and established that the men were entitled to notice or pay in lieu of notice. As there were only a couple of weeks left on the job the men involved demanded that all wages owing and a week's wages in lieu be paid that day or they would picket the site the next morning. The bosses thought this was a bluff and didn't settle but contacted UCATT headquarters instead. UCATT "organiser" Dominic Hehir, who is threatening Brian Higgins with a libel action (see BF210) said Higgins had no authority.

At 7.15am the next day the picket was on. By 9am the site was at a standstill and by 1pm the contractor had settled in full.

Once again, direct action gets the goods.

The group is also wants information about deaths and accidents on building sites in order to take quick action. If anyone hears of any please contact the group via the Colin Roach Centre on 0181 533 7111. Speed is of the essence.

## JSA action

THE LATEST ATTACK on dole scroungers came in on the 24<sup>th</sup> February - Workfare, under the guise of Project Work. Project Work is being piloted in East and North-East London, after trials in Hull and Medway and involves forcing unemployed people to work full time to earn the dole plus a tenner. Grand Metropolitan, a huge catering conglomerate who own Burger King, Haagen Dazs and Smirnoff among others, will be the main providers and so their HQ was targeted for an anti Project Work action.

About 50 anti-JSA campaigners from groups around the country attended. An advance party, equipped with suits and sensible haircuts, went in and distracted the security guards while the rest of us ran up the stairs and barricaded ourselves in an office. We hung banners out the windows and entertained ourselves by winding up the outraged security guards until the police came. The boys and girls in blue were perplexed by our refusal to appoint a spokesman and said we would have to be told to leave the building individually because none of us was man enough to be spokesman! Our masculinity in tatters we were eventually pulled out of the building one by one.

With more people we could have caused a lot more disruption - as we couldn't put up any effective resistance to being removed. But it was inspiring to see how easy it is to enter the headquarters of a multinational, and especially satisfying for me as I used to earn £2.98 an hour working for Grand Met in a particularly loathsome uniform. Occupations seem to be a lot more effective than demos and certainly make you feel stronger, so hopefully we will see many more.



# fighting for the right to party

SATURDAY APRIL 12<sup>th</sup> saw 20,000 people on the 'March for Social Justice', led by the sacked Liverpool dockers, Women of the Waterfront, the Hillingdon cleaners, and strikers from Magnet and other disputes. It was the start of a weekend of resistance by Reclaim the Streets!, the anarchist inspired direct action group. Many of the people there were there for this alone, though RTS have actively supported the dockers in the past, and the dockers have defended them against attacks from the Labour Party and union bureaucracy.

The march was very lively and had an exceptionally good atmosphere as it snaked its way from Kennington Park into the centre of London. The cops kept a low profile and the Trots had stayed away. Anarchists, on the contrary, saw this as an important linking of struggles, and had come from all round the country.

The police radios started twitching, however, as the most visible anarchist contingent, near the back of the march, came up Whitehall. The sound system in front of it stopped outside Downing Street, as had other sections of the march, and the crowd danced and shouted their protest at the empty government buildings. The riot cops opposite were restless behind the gates to the Ministry of Defence. There was a whiff of testosterone in the air and they were clearly itching to have a go. A

smoke bomb went off and a couple of lads climbed the gates to Downing Street, nothing serious, but the gates to the MoD opened and the horses came forth.

The cops were caught between two sections of the demo and the crowd was pissed off. It had been a good day, sunny with loads of great people, and here were the party poopers to spoil the fun. Under a hail of placards, paint and bottles, they were forced back. Their pride dented, out they came again to show who was in control. There was the usual push and shove, a couple of arrests and the cops succeeded in dividing the demo. The majority were already partying in Trafalgar Square, though some came back down Whitehall to see what was happening. There were about 800 stuck on the wrong side of the police lines for a tense quarter of an hour, until the police relented and went back into the MoD.

Meanwhile the police had already started to park vans outside the main entrances of Trafalgar Square, where several thousand demonstrators were starting to have a street party. The original target had been the Department of the Environment, but the cops had found out and its offices were protected by armed police. A lorry with a sound system was driven through the police lines, into Trafalgar Square and the dancing began. The police sealed off the Square and allowed peo-



ple to leave, but attempted to stop anyone from entering.

As the afternoon went on, the numbers slowly began to drop and the tension rose. Finally, the riot cops started to move in. They were met by a spirited resistance as some people fought for others' right to party, even if many of the dancers didn't care about the struggle going on around them. The face-off lasted into the early evening, but the party continued. As the sound system left taking most of the crowds with it, the driver and passenger were arrested for the attempted murder of a cop when entering the Square. These ridiculous charges were later dropped and replaced by drugs charges, but were still reported by the press. People headed home or to one of the organised squat parties, leaving the Square, bedecked by banners, to the police. Several people had been hospitalised and there had been a number of arrests. The centre of London had been reclaimed from the car for an afternoon, the cops had flexed their muscle, the press had got its headlines, the people had made their point.

The Legal Defense and Monitoring Group are co-ordinating the legal defense for April 12<sup>th</sup>. They want to trace anyone who was arrested, injured or who could give evidence as a witness to arrests and attacks by the police. They can help provide reliable solicitors and support for people wanting to take action against the police. They can be contacted at

LDMG  
BM Haven  
London  
WCIN 3XX









## brazil

# dockers evicted from occupied ships

AS WE GO to press, Brazilian dockers have resumed negotiations after police arrested 24 workers who were peacefully occupying two ships in the Brazilian port of Santos. The dockers are resisting attempts to replace them with contract labour on a berth belonging to COSIPA, the São Paulo Steel Company.

Some time ago, COSIPA proposed contracting out of cargo handling in their own berth, which came to a head when they obtained legal authority to impose their plans. Santos portworkers then struck from the 2nd to the 5th of April, with a general stoppage of Brazilian ports on 4th April. On Saturday 5th April, 3 workers were injured in clashes with the Military Police. On 7th April COSIPA succeeded in gaining authority

to call in the Army to end the occupation of the "Marcos Dias" and the "Vancouver".

According to the Lloyds list coverage, "The crisis is being widely seen as the crunch point in the long-running drive to privatise Brazil's waterfront, with President Cardoso under heavy pressure to personally authorise the use of troops."

"Henrik Simon, a director of Hamburg Sud in São Paulo, said: "This

crisis is one of the most crucial points in the privatisation push. If the government gives in on this then the whole modernisation and privatisation law comes into question."

The action by the police, at 4am on April 15th, sparked a massive show of solidarity, the Port of Santos was shut down and the motorway was completely blocked until the following morning. A total of 33 ships were paralysed in the port.

For more info check out the Liverpool Dockers Page on Labournet, where regular updates are posted. <http://www.gn.apc.org/labournet/>

Contact the Brazilian portworkers by fax on 0055 13 232 4877 or email them at [interportus@portodesantos.com](mailto:interportus@portodesantos.com)

## belarus

# more minsk arrests

Every week or two, more and more activists are being arrested and harassed in the Belarussian capital of Minsk. The latest wave of arrests occurred on Friday and Saturday (March 14-15) in Minsk. About 100 people were arrested for peacefully demonstrating. Among these were three anarchist students. Pavluk Konovalchuk was given 10 days and has declared a hunger strike. He is asking that protests be made to the General Procuror of Belarus and at the Belarussian embassies abroad. His arrest is just part of a continuing pattern of harassment that will either lead to the destruction of all political movements via obedience or absolute repression.

The other two anarchists arrested were given five days each.

Any protests should address the issue of repression in general but should also mention Pavluk. It is important as a well known activist that the pigs understand that he has comrades in Moscow and other places; last October letters of protest and phone calls from Moscow and elsewhere were of great help to some of our comrades who were locked up.

Telegrams can be sent to the City Prosecutor's Office, 24 Internatsionalnaya Ulitsa, Minsk. Protests may also be sent via fax to Moscow at 7(095)141-3467 or via e-mail to [cube@glasnet.ru](mailto:cube@glasnet.ru).

## france

A NUMBER of posties at the Nancy sorting office in France have joined the CNT (anarcho-syndicalist union) after bureaucratic manoeuvres by the CGT (communist led union) ensuring advantages for their officials during a re-organisation there. These re-organisations have seen 20,000 jobs go since 1991 and almost one quarter of employees casualised.

## ukraine

LAST SUMMER saw a two month long miners' strike wave in the Donbass, south east Ukraine. It was about backlogs in payment of wages. Unlike a similar strike in February orchestrated by the official union PRUP, the summer strikes were spontaneously initiated by the miners themselves. The strikes were underlined by road and railway blockades.

Apart from arresting strikers, the authorities disbanded the Donetsk Workers Branch Committee (a local strike committee). Sadly the miners didn't achieve the results they wanted though there may be an amnesty for some arrested miners. The Revolutionary Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists (Ukraine) did a lot of solidarity work during the strike and sent us this report. They are also appealing for any anarchist books or pamphlets in Russian to distribute. If anyone has anything of this sort, write to us and we'll pass the details on.

**CNT**



## france

AS REPORTED in *BF210*, a prominent right wing anti-abortion politician, Christine Boutin, was suing the French CNT. We are happy to report that Mme Boutin has lost her case, after nearly a year. The court found that the CNT's polemic against her, comparing her positions with those of the wartime Vichy regime which collaborated with the nazis, while "effected in a scathing tone", was not outside the bounds of political polemic.

The CNT states that it can only feel comforted in its determination to fight for the right of women to freely control their own bodies.



# vitrolles: the logic of the urns

This article was translated and abridged from *Le Monde Libertaire*. Vitrolles is a town in France whose council was won at recent elections by the fascist Front National. It is the fourth city run by the FN - the others are Toulon, Orange and Marignane. There is a pun here that English readers won't appreciate - *urns* in French means both ballot boxes and funeral vases.

THE SOCIALISTS were too gross. They preferred to safeguard the feeble chance of taking the Mayoralty of Vitrolles by playing the republican card and trying to impose an alliance on the right. Keeping the Socialist list meant the election of the Front National mayor. The local militants who made it up, and said as much, have since been expelled from the Party. Once again politics has taken priority over the antifascist struggle and the logic of favouring the FN to divide the right can be seen.

## The rules of the Game

The failure in Vitrolles of this struggle, shows a fact many find hard to accept. It's a matter of democratic principle to delegate power. At the time of the FN successes at Toulon, Marignane and Orange, the revulsion of all those shocked or well meaning was focussed on the minority aspect of the victor. That a party could, with one third of the votes and even less of those registered to vote, win a municipal election and manage the life of all was unacceptable. But they forget that all elections function this way. And that most of those who run Town halls are a "minority". Their logic implies that all parties are equal except the FN. The latter have the right to play with the others only if they stay in the role of asserting, or being a scarecrow, for the 'democratic spectacle'. But if they participate fully and win, like the others, then "democracy is in danger". It's completely true.

It is doubly true when the later election of Vitrolles isn't the result of a minority vote but that of a majority vote without a trace of irregularity or fault of the electoral code. An anti-democratic party has the right to accede democratically to power to apply their programme. It has the right because all the parties have it and, as is thought, the FN is a party like all the others (This is not a compliment!). In the same way it can take the right to interfere in the purchases of the municipal libraries because everyone else, socialists included, have done this for a long time - but that is democracy for you.

## The democratic contradiction

Is the power of the people in danger? This depends on your definition of the people. If the citizen is spoken of, it must be admitted that they only exist as a brave few and are diminishing even now, except for the privileged citizens. If it's a matter of the nation, we are already in a totalitarian world yet risk knowing other totalitarianisms more restricting. The root of the problem is the principle of delegation of power to the dictatorship of a majority - or a minority - over all.

The principle of giving, and also of losing, one's voice in elections is the basis of the democratic illusion. Article 27 of the constitution, title IV on the Parliament, which says "all imperative mandate is null" shows well the role of politics.

If the MP cannot impose a vote by his group, it is one part to safeguard his role

as a free arbiter and the other part to divide parliament, but it is also to recall that the nomination doesn't give any control over him by his electors. He represents then those who voted (for or against) and those who didn't or couldn't vote. An elected MP represents the whole world, not the mandates of the population, nor even of his party. This infers that in Toulon, for example, the council represents all Toulonnais, the foreigners there included.

It is the system which is at fault, not the beneficiaries in the FN. To want to deny them yet appeal to the "democratic ideal" is to admit defeat. It is to continue to deny the freedom for all to take their destiny in their own hands.

We prefer the direct action and self organisation.

Claude Delattre - group *Humeurs noires*, Lille



3000 marched through Lyon behind the banner of the anarchist federation (FA), on the 22nd Feb, to show their contempt for fascist violence. The anarchist bookshop 'La Plume Noire' had been burnt out in the early hours of Feb 16th by fascists. Among those showing solidarity with the FA were the CNT, rank and file unionists and 3 leftist mayors! La Plume Noire 2 is now open.



poland

## anti fascists on trial

THE POLISH ACK (Anarchistyczny Czarny Krzyz)/ABC has now been going for over a year. It now has 9 groups around the country and has been successful in its campaigns to free Artur Ates (accused of beating up a skinhead and initially sentenced to 3 years in prison) and Marek Milewski (accused of setting fire to a cop on a demo). The ACK/ABC have created a nation-wide fund to fund defences and help the families of class struggle and anti-fascist prisoners. They have also printed self-help leaflets about what to do when arrested and a brochure entitled *We are all imprisoned until all are free*.

Its latest campaign concerns the arrest of 17 young anti-fascists during a fight with local skinheads. The fight followed a long campaign of terror and beatings from the skinheads, the police turning a blind eye until the anti-fascists fought back. A skinhead involved in the fight subsequently died of his injuries.

13 of the 17 are still in prison and on trial for the murder of the fascist – the remaining four are juveniles and their cases are being heard separately. The families and friends of those on trial cannot

afford to pay for legal representation and desperately need help.

It was the donations and support of international and nation-wide sympathisers that ensured that Ates and Milewski were freed. Support is needed again and this time there are 17 defendants to help.

Send messages of support to  
Krzysztof Biedolak, Stanisław  
Szczesniowski, Grzegorz Pasak,  
Zbigniew Sikorski and Adam Włoka at  
ARESzt SLED CZY, LODZ,  
ul. SMUTNA 21, POLAND.

Mariusz Orzinski, Marcin Baranski  
and Zbigniew Gorzelak at ZAKŁAD  
KARNY, SIERADZ, POLAND.

Mariusz zych, Tomasz  
Wilkoszewski, Rafał Sacha, Grzegorz  
Niedbala and Andrzej Szczesniowski at  
ARESzt SLED CZY, PIOTRKOW  
TRYBUNALSKI, POLAND.

Letters of protest should be sent to  
Saol Wojewodzki, ul. STOWACKIEGO  
5, 97-300, PIOTRKOW  
TRYBUNALSKI, POLAND, and dona-  
tions to the defence fund at MICHA  
SWIDAERSKI, PO BOX 8, 21-400  
LUKOW, POLAND.

u.s.a.

## anarchist denied t-shirts

Ali Khalid Abdullah, a New Afrikan anarchist prisoner, was sent some Anarchist Black Cross T-shirts by Huddersfield ABC. The Michigan Dept of Corrections withheld the t-shirts because they were a "threat to the safety of the facility. Anarchist means/theory say that all forms of government are oppressive/undesirable" and "rejecting all forms of coercive control and authority" is a "threat to the facility". Anyone out there astounded by the in-depth reasoning of the Michigan DOC might want to protest to:

Warden Joe Abramajtyś  
E.C. Brooks Correctional Facility  
2500 S Sheridan  
Muskegon Heights MI 49444  
USA

Director Kenneth L. McHinnis  
Michigan Dept of Corrections  
Grandview Plaza Building  
PO Box 30003  
Lansing MI 48909, USA

Ali Khalid Abdullah welcomes correspondence and asks anyone who wants more info on the oppression and repression in the "death camps in Michigan". He can be reached at:

Ali Khalid Abdullah #148130  
E.C. Brooks Correctional Facility  
2500 S Sheridan  
Muskegon Heights MI 49444, USA

u.s.a.

## anarchist back in the dock again

The State of Georgia has decided to indict Jason Moreland again (see *BF210*). In January the DA changed the charge against Jason to the "unlawful training in the use or making of dangerous weapons." A month later the DA dropped the indictment. However, we were informed that the charges had not been dropped and that the DA could attempt to indict him two more times and almost a month later they decided to do so. Jason received a phone call from a friend exclaiming that he was a "celebrity" again. However Jason hadn't seen the *Clayton Daily News* that day and after a short conversation with his friend he was informed that he was to be re-indicted. After a few phone calls to his lawyers and to the newspaper, we found out that DA Robert Keller decided to try to re-indict Jason after increased pressure from the Clayton County Police Depart-

ment to do so.

April 16<sup>th</sup> is the date set for Jason's arraignment, and he has been informed that the police may want to take him back into custody then. He's already \$3000 in debt from the first time. This is completely ridiculous. If they do take him into custody there's a good chance that he may lose his job cleaning rooms at a motel near where he lives.

We're sick of the harassment of Jason by the State. We're asking that you write letters to the Clayton County Police Department, District Attorney Robert Keller and the Clayton Daily News demanding that the charges against Jason be dropped. Please send your letters to us at:

Circle A Magazine c/o Ignatz, PO Box  
80967, Chamblee, GA 30366

All letters will be forwarded to the appropriate destination. So be nice.

slovenia

## elves ask for help

Škrati, which means Elves, are a social ecology group in Slovenia, formerly part of Yugoslavia, who are working with other people to develop the social centre of Metelkova, in Ljubljana. Part of this work is developing an infoshop and library, and they ask for anything and everything that might be of interest, including books, journals, zines, CDs tapes, etc.

Their proposed range is so wide that if you've been wondering what to do with all that stuff from a misspent youth animal libbing, or that vegan cookbook you never look at anymore, or all those back copies of *Class War* under your bed, look no further. The address to send stuff to is:

Škrati, Retina, Metelkova ulica 6  
1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
e-mail [skrati@kud-fp.si](mailto:skrati@kud-fp.si)



sweden

# taking on police violence

ON INTERNATIONAL Women's Day there has for the last 7 years been a "Take Back the Night!" demonstration organised by the anarcha-feminists in Stockholm in the evening. Women protest against the fact that they do not feel safe to be able to walk their own streets at night.

This year, on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 70 mainly young women gathered at 9pm on the square Medborgarplatsen on the island of

Södermalm which is the traditional workers quarter of the city. As in past years the demonstration went through the city streets stopping at porn shops along the way. Near one porn shop, Golden Rose, the police planned an ambush.

The police closed off both ends of the street using 27 police cars (including 4 anti-terrorist vans) and mounted police.

Without warning the two ends converged upon the demo. Horses from one end and batong wielding anti-terrorist police from the other.

Three young women; 18, 16 and one under the age of 16 were hospitalised. Many others were beaten but out of fear have not sought medical care. In addition, many women were "frisked" by male policemen (unlawful according to Swedish law) and violated in the process.

A number of women have brought charges against the police for assault. There are even rumours that certain policemen have brought charges against their own because of the excessive use of force.

The issue was covered in the national press and in Parliament. The police have begun an internal inquiry.

On Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup> of March a demonstration against police violence was held. Approximately 500 anarcha-feminists, anarchists and libertarian sympathisers participated in the march to the newly opened police station on the island of Södermalm. This is a very good turn-out for a Swedish anarchist demonstration - especially with the short notice. This demonstration has been a sort of unified rallying point for us.

Speeches were held at both the beginning and end of the demo and police presence was minimal. No permission had been applied for but the police granted it anyway! It is worth noting that the majority of the police escort were women. The resignation of the commander in charge of the attack on the anarcha-feminist demonstration was demanded.

The international protest day against police violence was mentioned in both the demo flyer and a speech. It also ap-



peared in full in Sweden's largest daily newspaper's Sunday edition, *Dagens Nyheter*. Support from anarchists in Geneva, Switzerland was especially mentioned!

More demos are planned.

## Answers to quiz

1. Jack White - an Officer during the Boer war, and organiser of the Citizen Army in Dublin in 1913-14. He was attempting to prevent the execution of James Connolly, also of the Citizen Army following the failure of the nationalist Easter Rising in Dublin.

2. The Francoist "revolt" in Spain, by providing military training to the Anarchist Militias.

3. No. The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution reads, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude except as punishment for a crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall ex-

ist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." This Amendment did not abolish slavery, but limited it to those who had been convicted of crimes, what Jack Straw might call the undeserving poor. Many newly freed blacks were then "convicted" and forced to work without pay in state prisons, thus transferring the ownership of slaves from private parties to the state.

Today, with the advent of private, for-profit prisons and joint-venture prison factories, this ownership is shifting back to the private sector. Slavery has come full circle.

4. In 1891 in Briceville, Tennessee, mine owners attempted to break the min-

er's union by using prison labourers. Union members took over the mine and freed all of the prisoners, incidentally temporarily ending prison labour in Tennessee.

5. Both were religious cults, but with fundamentally different meanings. The Peyote drug cult, based on a hallucinogen made from the cactus, drew from both native and European sources and preached accommodation to the realities of the conquest. The Ghost Dance started as a non-violent religion of resistance, developed by the Paiute prophet Wovoke. The Sioux made it a warrior's creed, which led to the Battle of Wounded Knee.



spain

# barcelona social centre evicted

LA PRINCESA is an old cinema situated in the centre of Barcelona. The Spanish state inherited the cinema from the Sindicato Vertical (the Francoist official union). A former under secretary of the Employment Office (Ministerio de Trabajo) sold the cinema, which now belongs to Carmen Companies, owned by the widow of the businessman Salvador Forcadell. Armed with this knowledge, and convinced that the sale had been illegal, some squatters established their squat in the building. La Princesa was a forgotten place, ridden by rats and dirt; its only use being property speculation for the series of owners. The squatters worked fast to clean the place and in few weeks had their neighbours' sympathy and had started transforming an abandoned empty space into a local centre where a number of cultural activities were going to take place. In fact, Jordi Llovet, the president of the residents association of Ciutat Vella, where La Princesa cinema is, said that he supported the squatters because it was the first time in twenty years that this abandoned space had been put to any use. It didn't make any difference.

The new Código Penal (the equivalent of the Criminal Justice Bill) makes squatting illegal, even if entry is secured without damage to the property and it has been abandoned. Tension was building, and, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 1996, during a music concert organised in support of the squatters, the cops stormed the building, beating up squatters and other members of the general public attending the festival.

Then, in the early hours of Monday 28<sup>th</sup> of October, came the big battle. 200 coppers, 20 police vans and 1 helicopter arrived at the old cinema. The squatters, behind the barricades built with old furniture on the terraces of the building, tried to defend themselves throwing objects at the police. But the coppers retaliated with rubber bullets and water cannons before entering the building (they were equipped with ladders for this purpose). Finally, the squatters were defeated and 48 people (squatters and sympathisers) were arrested – 20 people had been injured. All political parties (except the right wing ones, surprise, surprise!) criticised the police's brutality.

The situation now is that 15 people remain arrested and 6 of them have already been tried, receiving sentences of between 1 and 2 years imprisonment. In one case the squatter got 2 years and 2 months plus 1 year for "Insumisión" (i.e. for refusing to do the military service or any other social service as compensation), plus another year for anti-fascist stuff. Altogether 4 years and 2 months. Since that initial court case 9 other squatters have been summonsed to court, with expected sentences of 1-2 years. Two of them who are under eighteen have denied the allegations. The other seven have refused to testify. They are: Jorge Alberto Fernandez, Paul Vilaseca, Juan José Pareja, Gabriel Javier Vigaté, David Póce, Luis Vicente Gil and Basilio Oko Ejaka. Another case is that of Todd Benson, an English teacher who has been sentenced for 2 years for rioting against the police... at a time when he was teaching miles away! Despite

being able to produce proof of his alibi, he has still been sentenced! He, like many of those arrested, was guilty of being young and trying to cross the street. The state are using scapegoats to set an example; they need sacrificial lambs for their "new" regime of so called law and order. And they don't care.

Finally, it should be pointed out that there were irregularities in the legal process. The judge taking the case did not send Mr. Arnau (the squatters' lawyer) the eviction order until three hours AFTER the police had evicted the squatters, so Mr Arnau didn't have a chance to appeal against that decision. On top of that, at the time of the eviction, the squatters were still negotiating with the owners. The judge refused to take the squatters' statements into account, saying that the evidence of the police would be more reliable than the word of a bunch of youngsters.

At the moment, some solidarity groups are carrying out a number of actions, like picketing Tourist Agencies in Catalonia. Any ideas, letters of support, etc. will be warmly welcomed. For more information and letters, you can write to:

Assemblea d'Okupes Bara (Ateneo Llibertari@Gracia) C/ Perill 52 baix, Barcelona 08012, Spain

Tel: 00 34 3 458 46 37 Fax: 00 34 3 474 46 15

Internet: <http://www.pangea.org/atcorne>

Email: [atcorne@pangea.org](mailto:atcorne@pangea.org)





## spain and madrid also...

ON MONDAY, March 10<sup>th</sup> several hundred anti-riot cops from the National Police Force evicted the premises of, what until then, was the okupied social center "La Guindalera" at Marqués de Ahumada #7, Madrid. Over 150 people were arrested and several were injured during the brutal and indiscriminate police operation, where all available means (clubs, rubber bullets, tear gas) were used against those demonstrating their support for the social center. The police action caused serious incidents in the area.

The social center had warned in a press release that this would be a difficult eviction. A challenge to the "okupa" (squatters) movement, who have recently seen attacks upon the majority of spaces rescued from the speculators to be used as social centers. This repressive process is taking place simultaneously in different parts of the Spanish State: the cases of Lavapiés #15 and Social Center David Castilla in Madrid, la Casa de los Baños in Cordoba, Cine Princesa and

L'Economat in Barcelona etc.. Social Center "La Guindalera" had already announced that it would take no responsibility for what might happen during the eviction.

During these evictions, those ultimately responsible were busy making plans to redevelop (read destroy) the neighbourhoods, repeatedly making false promises of housing for young people, peddling more lies and dirty tricks and, of course, more evictions.

Faced with this, the Spanish squatters have stated that "our only option is to bare our teeth, to prove that this is a political conflict whose only solution is a political and not a repressive one. No eviction, no acts of police brutality are going to intimidate us nor make us stop liberating spaces to create in them real alternatives to this unjust economic social and political disorder which not only do we not share in, but which we're also ready to topple."

One Eviction, 10, 100, 1000 Social Centers!!

## czech republic

SQUATTERS FROM the last remaining anarchist squat in Prague – Sochora Street broke up a police attack on 15<sup>th</sup> February this year. Police officers stated that they had an official order to evict this "house of junkies and dangerous anarchists". The local police commander was so depressed by defeat of his policemen, that he declared to use special anti-terrorist assault troops in few more days to evict the squat. Sochora was squatted in 1992 and hosts Prague meetings of the Czech Anarchist Federation and other groups. You can help the squatters by sending protests to your Czech embassy: (Subject: Eviction of Squat in pplk. Sochora 28 in Prague 7)

Four days later 70 anarchists demonstrated in support of Sochora 28 squat. Displaying one large slogan banner "Flats instead of banks"

(the Sochora street is endangered by the project of one bank) and the black/red anarchist syndicalist flag.



## serbia anarchists & protest

LAST YEAR THE opposition coalition ZAJEDNO (Together) won 34 major cities in the local elections – only to see the results annulled by the regime controlled courts. The huge waves of demonstrations and civil disobedience that followed were unprecedented – army and police reserves throughout Serbia were mobilised to attempt to quell the rebellion. The demonstrations caught the attention of the western media (wetting themselves over the non – violent nature of the protest), but western democratic governments remained silent.

Western government representatives had been open in their support for Milosevic, during the election campaign there had been official visits to the ruling party, to factories run by the regimes war mafia and to the official state run media. Stable confident dictatorships are easier to do business with.....

So are anarchists involved in this uprising? And if so what are they doing calling for the results of an election to be honoured? Especially one where the winning coalition is openly nationalistic and pro the market economy?

Zaginflatch (newsletter of the Zagreb

anarchist movement) published the thoughts and impressions of one such participant in the demonstrations:

"1) The protests started when the freely expressed will of citizens of Serbia was cancelled. So people are on the streets because their votes were brutally stolen and not because state television propaganda drove them out and manipulated them. They didn't come out on to the streets to demonstrate against any other people or call for war. For people in Europe or America where elections and their procedures are well established, this might sound strange, but people in Serbia should have the right to vote and elect their representatives.

2) Any demonstration of 200,000 people is a potential danger and can very soon turn to herd mentality but so far the facts speak differently. The marchers have remained disciplined and non-violent and the only damage provoked were broken windows on the buildings of the State television and newspaper – most of the people marching are literally hungry and victims of the rule of Milosevic...- hundreds of thousands of people have been marching all over Serbia for 13 days al-

ready. The temperature is around 0 and it is raining almost all the time...

3) The reason we participate and support these demonstrations is not our support of the opposition leaders. It is not only that they are nationalists but that they are also ignorant, without experience, greedy, authoritarian and craving for power. We support each other, all our friends who are on the streets. We support the people who are liberating themselves from fear. (They have lived in a militaristic, totalitarian society for previous half a century and not to mention what was before.) We support their right to protest. We support the demand for change as we hold those in power now guilty for the war.

4) The people of Serbia are still very nationalistic, racist, sexist, homophobic, anti-Semitic. I was a victim of these attitudes all these years and have no illusions they will be swept away quickly if ever. But I also know people of Germany, France, Britain or the US share the same attitudes and are not deprived of the right to vote, protest or have independent medias. The decontamination of war and nationalistic attitudes is a long-term process possible only in the society where basic human rights are respected. That is why as an antimilitarist and anti-authoritarian I support the protests without much illusions but with sincere, honest and well-intentioned thoughts in my mind."



# revolution in albania at last... everybody wins<sup>1</sup>

**The following is by definition a subjective report from cyberspace and possibly wrong – but look at the reality: No government, no political party, the people armed. I can't believe it's not anarchy!**

THE ALBANIAN REVOLUTION is the Hungary 1956 of our generation, it is even beyond that point by now. The rapidly imposed worldwide news blackout is the surest indication yet that the Albanian state has been totally overthrown by worker's councils. Since the brief television footage of council meetings was quickly substituted for that of Albanian secret police firing automatic weapons into the air for the benefit of the cameras the most reliable source of information on the situation has become, incredibly enough, the former dictator Sali Berisha. This buffoon has been reduced to a babbling wreck ever since his regime evaporated and he is now incapable of keeping his mouth shut. So when asked if fresh elections were to be held in June he failed to remember his lines. The Austrian and Italian governments have been carefully coaching him to parrot that his country is "in the grip of widespread anarchy" and that foreign in-

tervention is required. But before anyone could stop him Berisha blurted out the truth instead, that there could be little progress on elections because most of the country was in the hands of revolutionary committees<sup>2</sup>. At least this comment had the merit of chiming with his Party's alarmed statement condemning the spread of worker's councils issued late in March<sup>3</sup>. From the moment it became apparent that the entire Albanian army had abolished itself the rival Western powers behind Berisha's balsa-wood throne have been burying their illusory differences at the speed of lightning. Like snapping guard dogs suddenly brought together by the presence of an intruder they have all instantly recognised their only true enemy, a genuine proletarian revolution. Dismayed at scenes of professional soldiers shedding their uniforms and embracing rebels they convened a frantic round of talks in Vienna, Rome, Berlin and London to assemble a military force to crush the Albanian workers. Hand-wringing parliamentary deliberations which had dragged on throughout the 1990s about whether Germany should use her army overseas or Britain get too involved in the Balkans suddenly became mere cobwebs to be brushed aside as a united West rushed in special forces "to rescue foreign nationals and embassy staff". Of course these lovable 'St Bernards in uniform', drawn

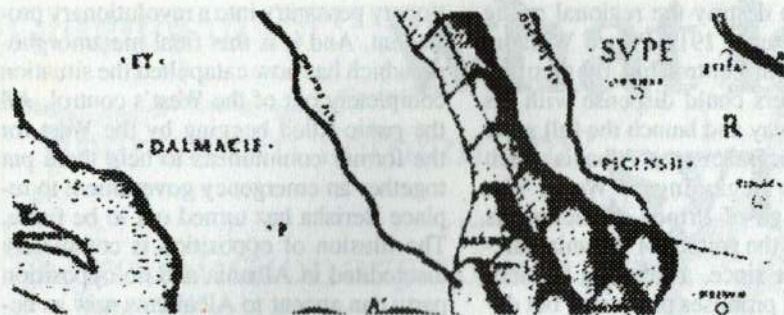
from the British SAS, American marines and German army, were actually sent to rescue Berisha from being lynched (by his employees rather than by his

employers), the Shik secret police from being annihilated and the Coca Cola plant from being looted. Berisha himself, in a particularly lucid moment, was found by diplomats burbling incoherently in his office that his only priority was to save Coca-Cola's factory<sup>4</sup>. Whilst the West's state terrorists have been fanning out in the capital, Tirana, Western governments have been all too aware that this stop-gap measure must be followed up quickly with something more decisive if Albania is not to inspire workers the world over. And the example of Albania is truly awe-inspiring.

Within a month of the banking system collapsing the Albanian people had permanently extinguished the Financial Times Investment Supplement imagery forcibly projected by Berisha onto the misery of their lives. Within two months they had progressed to switching off the entire capitalist lie itself to reveal a revolutionary superpower underneath. The Albanian revolution has entered virtually uncharted territory. Worker's councils have not just seized factories, public buildings and telephone exchanges this time but whole military bases, strategic ports, broadcasting systems and the palaces of the international ruling class itself. Undoubtedly the most terrifying aspect of the revolution so far revealed to Western bosses has been the united action to remove Albania's oilfields from government control. In the words of an Albanian government press report in March, "the southern rebels (sic) have President Berisha's tanks and guns - soon they might have his oil"<sup>5</sup>. Worker's councils have seized the means of production and distribution across whole swathes of Albania, the armed forces, conscript and professional, have mutinied on a scale not seen in Europe since the late 1910s, and, in February, dumb-struck television journalists had to stand in front of abandoned border posts and mouth the incredible words that the







Christian fronts for the CIA), have been grizzling crocodile tears on television about the need for a "humanitarian invasion".

But what of the first humanitarian aid given by Europe to Albania, the setting up of Berisha's Democratic Party in 1991?

### The Democratic Party

As if on a mission to endorse the 1960s situationist theses about them Stalinists across the former Eastern bloc have been bursting forth from their constricting socialist chrysalids to take their places amongst the world's bourgeois bosses during the 1990s. No longer needing to hide their mafia connections behind Robert Maxwellesque socialist platitudes these new bosses have had the full support of the West in preparing their populations for the world market as neatly packaged, slave-waged workforces. Never before in peace time has the West witnessed such a

discount warehouse of cut-price industrial labour opening up on its eastern doorstep. And never before have Western governments vied with each other to construct their own total critique as they have done in building fake democracies to man the checkout tills. One such construction being the Democratic Party of Albania. Precisely as their media taunted the workers about their supposed defeat at losing Stalinism in Eastern Europe, the West was repackaging the former Stalinist deputy, Sali Berisha, to be their new crusader for democracy in Albania. The Foreign Office in Britain printed his election leaflets and posters whilst the American CIA instructed him on how to set up a household product based pyramid sales company on the model of their organisation Amway

International. Germany and Italy poured money into Berisha's new money laundering privatisation firm Vefa Holdings to keep it afloat whilst military advisers, mainly from America, helped to organise Berisha's means of armed repression. The Albanian people, threatened with violence and imprisonment if they chose any other course, were encouraged to invest their savings and wages in the new banking system which they were tacitly informed was financially sound because it was backed by the vast proceeds from the manufacturing and exportation of heroin to the West. Faced with little choice "one million people sank hard-won foreign currency into the pyramid schemes on a calculated assumption that the government was underwriting the operations with dirty money". Albanians quickly sought to claim their share of the interest rates being paid by the gangrenous arms of teenagers across the European Union. The loyalty to this regime scripted by the writers of Arthur Daley, Delboy and all the other backstreet criminal heroes of Thatcherism was revealed when a minor pyramid scheme not even governed by the Democratic Party was late in paying out. Three weeks after this event Albania was burning from one end to the other as the Albanians purged themselves of the shame of involvement with mafia capitalism.



### Albania Today

Albania has become a state with all the capital removed, in other words it has been abolished. The rising of the Albanian workers has exposed the state as consisting, in the last instance, of nothing more than a handful of fanatical secret police firing for their lives from the rooftops of their barracks. Except in rare cases, property owners, the tyrants who govern work, home and play, and the bureaucrats and politicians who serve them



all run in terror at the sight of a real revolution. All they leave behind are their fascists to keep the pale ideological flame of state power flickering in case the workers are somehow defeated. And defeating the Albanian workers behind closed lenses is a task which has now fallen to the former official receiver of the Italian state and its foreign minister Lamberto Dini. On 2nd April he performed Italy's traditional ceremony of moving the writ for a World War by declaring that, just as in both 1914 and 1939, thousands of Italian troops would soon be invading Albania. At first Mr Dini appeared unable to count how many troops he would require for the job his line managers in Vienna had set him. Initial estimates of under 2000 were quickly revised upwards to 6000 once the media had accepted that these storm troopers were on an "humanitarian mission". Warming to his theme, Dini has claimed that on their arrival in Albania his 'armed Bob Geldofs' will be "welcomed in the South". Needless to say no army could be less welcome in any part of Albania than the Italian army but then no statement by Dini could make it clearer that the initial mission of the Italian Army is once again to crush an Albanian revolution.

### The Cycle of Albanian Revolutions reaches its Climax

Albania is not an economically viable nation and all those who have attempted to govern it as such have presided over its prolonged economic collapse. Albania has been permanently bankrupt since its inception and this was the very intention of those who set it up. The Western Powers, anxious to rein in Serbian expansionism whilst capturing the newly liberated Balkans as their sphere of influence, gerrymandered Albania into existence at a special London conference in 1913 (and again in Paris in 1920) to provide a compliant landing base for European military intervention. The bulk of the nominally "Albanian" population were deliberately left beyond its borders as was most productive land. To crown Albania's status as a pseudostate the West nominated a German prince, Prince Wilhelm zu Wied, as its temporary ruler for as long as it would take for the Western powers to assemble a Balkan invasion force and the pretexts to land it. Prince Wilhelm's new principality turned out to be a seething cauldron of anti-feudal revolution. Peasants, long oppressed by landowners and their bandit allies, were inspired by the notion of a western state that had been superimposed upon them from abroad and reacted by launching a revolutionary

movement to destroy the regional ruling class. By Autumn 1914 Prince Wilhelm had totally lost control but by then the western powers could dispense with his services anyway and launch the full scale invasion of the Balkans via Albania which signalled the beginning of World War One. The saga of Prince Wilhelm has characterised the pattern of Albanian dictatorship ever since, a tottering western backed tyrant promises prosperity but delivers oppression, corruption and mass emigration until a revolution forces his western backers to invade. Loyally repeating this formula next was President Zog who faithfully re-enacted every element of it only distinguishing his term in office by preposterously declaring himself to be a king in 1928. But the invented nationalism necessary to create Albania in the first place also created a revolutionary nationalist concept for landless peasants to rally to. It was that most extreme expression of this landless peasant nationalism known as Stalinism which, under Enver Hoxha and his Communist Party, finally moved Albanian dictatorship into its industrialised phase. From 1944 to 1991 the tyrannical pyramid of the Communist Party forged the primitive beginnings from which the pyramids of fully fledged capitalism would later be derived. It did this primarily by realising the dialectic of peasant based revolutionary nationalism which is the abolition of the peasantry itself. Only Stalinism could oversee the industrialisation of Albania and crush its revolution at the same time and even then it could only do it by welding the borders of the country shut, for as Albania is not an economically viable nation state the revolutionary nationalism of its government could only be expressed as an increasingly insane form of state paranoia. This bitter contradiction between industrialising the country and sealing it off from a world economy which would dissolve it immediately on contact resulted, by 1991, in Albania spectacularly collapsing and mass emigration instantly resuming once the Communist Party fell. Since then the pattern of western backed dictators and a revolutionary population has resumed but at a level on both sides beyond anything experienced before. The landowner class of the 1900s which evolved first into Communist Party bosses is now part of the international class of large scale property owners. Likewise their bandit allies, who mutated first into their regional Party figures and secret police, are today part of an internationally organised mafia linked to the government. But the dialectical answer to these changes has been the brutal evolution of the revolu-

tionary peasantry into a revolutionary proletariat. And it is this final metamorphosis which has now catapulted the situation completely out of the West's control. All the panic filled begging by the West for the former communists to help them put together an emergency government to replace Berisha has turned out to be futile. The illusion of opposition is completely discredited in Albania and no opposition party can appear to Albanians now as being anything other than another Berisha or another Hoxha.

### Conclusion

The new post-Soviet capitalism of the New World Order which the world's bosses and their media had assured us was beyond critique is falling apart in Albania. The West has clutched at every straw imaginable from inviting communists back into power to calling for a new monarchy only to see each one turn to splinters. In one bright moment it even appeared that Western governments had nothing left to offer other than asking Norman Wisdom to form a government in the hope that Albanians would accept him as they had enjoyed his films on state television. The Albanians' rejection of communists as the last line of defence for a capitalist system in crisis is a dire development for the world's bosses and a joyous moment for us all.

Written on the eve of the Italian invasion for the purposes of clarification, all errors attributable to the author.

#### Notes:

- 1) Democratic Party slogan *Independent* 11.4.97
- 2) Democratic Party statement against certain committees replacing local government throughout Albania.
- 3) 'Overview of last weeks events' Democratic Party Website 15.3.97
- 4) 'Rebels threaten Berisha's hold on oilfields' Crisis '97 News Centre, Democratic Party website.
- 5) 'Albanian army fades away in the face of rebellion' 13.3.97 Crisis '97 News Centre, Democratic Party website.
- 6) 'About 3000 people in Saranda demand creation of an 'Autonomous Municipal Commission'' Crisis '97 News Centre, Democratic Party website.
- 7) The gangster regime we fund *Independent* 14.2.97
- 8) Albania: Dini, Italian troops could go south 2.4.97 Democratic party website



vanguardism?

libertarian reformism?

revolutionary unionism?

# what is anarcho-syndicalism?

The following article is quite long and at first glance seems to be quite internal to the International Workers Association, the anarcho-syndicalist international. However, we believe it addresses certain crucial issues facing the development of a libertarian labour movement, both in Britain and internationally. *Black Flag* supports the IWA, which is part of the broad libertarian movement. However, we do not think it is above criticism and at this point in time it needs criticism and debate more than anything else. In many countries where there are strong anarchist movements, they are built on the bedrock of a working class imbued with libertarian values. Some anarchists may feel that such struggles do not advance our cause but how else will masses of people experience libertarian organisation and learn from it?

This debate should not, as the article says, be internal to the IWA. It concerns all of us who want to build a free society and try to put that into practice.

ABOUT A DOZEN years ago a pamphlet published by the Direct Action Movement asserted that the (anarcho-syndicalist) International Workers' Association (IWA) contained three main currents – Anarcho-Syndicalists, Revolutionary Syndicalists and Syndicalists. In reality there is no such thing as just “syndicalism”, and anarcho-syndicalism and revolutionary syndicalism are one and the same thing.

However, the pamphlet's author, Col Longmore, was describing debates within the International between poles described in these terms. The debate is really between a kind of anarchist vanguardism (styling itself anarcho-syndicalism) and a libertarian reformism (styling itself revolutionary syndicalism). Both poles of the debate contain elements of anarcho-syndicalism, but each is being selective in its interpretation.

The vanguardists emphasise the anarchist principles, particularly opposition to class collaboration exemplified by the longstanding IWA hostility to participation in Works Councils<sup>1</sup> and collaboration with the state, and are keen that all actions of affiliated unions pass stringent standards of political soundness. The libertarian reformists are just as disingenuous in their emphasis on other principles, particularly apolitical membership, mass recruitment and union autonomy. For the principled anarcho-syndicalist there are merits to both viewpoints, but we fall between self-righteous stagnation on the one hand, and a drift towards class collaboration on the other.

This debate remains stillborn within the IWA today. The existence of libertarian reformist organisations is not seen as evidence of a problem facing anarcho-syndicalism as it breaks out of its sects and ghettos, to be analysed and avoided as we seek to establish a revolutionary practice

in the here and now. The discourse is one of contagious treachery, exposure to which must be avoided in order to remain revolutionary. The penalty for exposure is demonisation and expulsion, and deep suspicion of any comrades with whom there is contact.

To do this debate justice it needs to take place both among and beyond the (disputed) membership of the International, because the majority of those who need to speak and to hear are those whose participation is currently taboo. For many of us revolutionary organisation poses a challenge. To meet it we need to recognise, understand and overcome the flaws in our theories, organisations and strategies that can lead to libertarian reformism. We find it bizarre that we can work with authoritarian reformists, whose organisations can teach us little about our own, but must shun libertarians from whose reformism we can learn and strengthen our own revolutionary organisation and resolve.

## Revolutionary Unionism

Syndicalisme Révolutionnaire is the French term coined to describe the theory and practice of the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT), set up by anarchists such as Emile Pouget in post-Commune France in response to the party-affiliated fragmentation and impotence of the labour movement. It stressed workers' unity and militancy and an anti-parliamentary practice based on direct action and revolution precipitated by the Social General Strike. Apoliticism, as an antidote to party-affiliation, and union autonomy, a result of the anarchists' federalism, were always part of its make-up.

It is worth remembering that it was French anarchists who first coined the

term “libertarian” to describe themselves as a means of avoiding the post-Commune censorship, and who found that the content of their ideas and activities was more important than a label that carried the certainty of repression. (It would be many years before “anarchist” became a term safe for bourgeois liberals and individualists to cloak themselves in spurious radicalism with.)

The history of revolutionary labour movements is dominated by Spain, however. The lack of scope for reformist trades unionism meant that, aside from the Asturian mineworkers, the Socialist Party-affiliated Union General de Trabajo (UGT) was composed predominantly of craft unions before the industrial boom provided by Spanish neutrality in the 1914-18 War.

This left the organisation of semi-skilled and often internal migrant workers to the anarchists. Cycles of organisation and repression linked to political upheavals eventually gave birth to the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) in 1910-11. The close identity of anarchism and mass labour organisation in Spain and its former colonies meant that in the Spanish-speaking world the same phenomenon as the practice of the French CGT was termed more explicitly *anarcosindicalismo*.

The two terms describe the same phenomenon, although in the English-speaking world Syndicalisme Révolutionnaire became “syndicalism”. This is also the direct political descendent of the federalist workers' organisations affiliated to the original International Working Men's Association, for whom Michael Bakunin served as a spokesman. Indeed, the modern IWA was formed in 1922 as a reformation of that organisation. Federalist and economic, not centralist and political.

We also got the Industrial Workers of



the World (IWW), whose English language publications are more readily available than translations of our French and Spanish antecedents' propaganda and ideas. Technically-speaking the IWW espouse a theory called Industrial Unionism (the One Big Union), derived from the ideas of American marxist and Socialist Labour Party leader Daniel De Leon.

This is also the form of socialism espoused by Irish Republican hero James Connolly, incidentally, although you'd be hard pressed to get any "socialist republicans" to admit he was a syndicalist, and you won't find Socialism made easy, his fullest exposition of his syndicalist ideas, in the most recent edition of his complete works, either.

Partly as a result of the spurious anarcho/revolutionary syndicalism split, partly to give our ideas a label in plain English and complete the translation of Syndicalisme Révolutionnaire, I prefer to use the term "revolutionary unionism". What I mean by this is anarcho-syndicalism, undiluted and without distortions.

### Vanguard, what vanguard?

One problem with the use of the term anarcho-syndicalism in Britain is the fact that in the early 1980's genuine anarchists adopted the term in order to distinguish ourselves from the pacifists, hippies, liberals, individualists and eco-fascists who were able to call themselves anarchists without either understanding the term or having its meaning rammed down their throats after their teeth by aggrieved proles. Unfortunately, many of the anarchists (real ones) had as sketchy an idea of anarcho-syndicalism as the unwashed had of anarchism.

While this is partly due to the lack of concrete anarcho-syndicalist organisation and practice and of English language propaganda, the existence of both in Spain, for example, has not prevented similar problems from arising there. The real problem has to do with the legacy of (fascist) repression in the 1930's and post-war labour policies in Western Europe. The living culture of anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism has been interrupted by these events, and it has been possible to dress cobblers up as anarchism without being shown up by the real thing.

A widely-held view of anarcho-syndicalism involves a misreading of history and of the role of anarchist organisations. This view can be summed up as "if you have your CNT, you need your FAI". The FAI was the Federación Anarquista Ibérica, in reality a loose federation of diverse anarchist groups embracing everyone from those who would today be termed

lifestylists to those active in CNT Defence Committees.

Many anarchists misread the FAI as a vanguard organisation essential to keeping the CNT on its revolutionary course, without which it would have succumbed to the reformist tendencies fools believe to be inherent in the working class and our organisations (some "anarchists" show a remarkable consistency with leninism at times).

While the above characterisation may be over-simplified it accurately sums up the basis on which some comrades, who currently dominate the IWA, act. The role of the contemporary FAI in both the Spanish CNT and the IWA is questionable, but it continues to haunt us. Historically, it would have been both impossible and unprincipled for the FAI, or any faction, to control the CNT, or any mass anarcho-syndicalist organisation.

Although anarchists did fight reformists within the CNT in the 1930's, notably the bureaucrat Angel Pestaña, they did so as anarcho-syndicalist workers preserving federalist, autonomist and democratic principles which were basic to the union's principles and culture, not as a rival leadership. There was no role for a vanguard to play because a healthy anarcho-syndicalist organisation established through class struggles dating back to the 1860's embodied a tradition and culture of libertarian organisation which belonged to the working class as a whole, not to some "revolutionary" priesthood.

The destruction of such mass organisations by fascism and the Allied victory in the 1940's has robbed us of our culture and left us nursing a shadow of it. It is unfortunate that the guardians of the shadow seem to prefer it, which they own, to the real thing, which belongs to the working class as a whole.

### Post-War stagnation

The IWA suffered post-war stagnation – the CNT was in exile; the Swedish SAC was sucked into collaboration with the state in order to survive in a society dominated by social democracy, robbing the international of its last mass organisation; prominent anarcho-syndicalists like Rudolf Rocker and Augustin Souchy came out in favour of bourgeois democracy. Resistance continued in Spain, however, and provided a focus for networks of anarchists in Western Europe.

When younger revolutionaries attracted to resistance became active in the late '60's and the '70's as part of the re-emergence of revolutionary activity characterised by workers' militancy in Britain and the "events" of 1968, a link with our

history was there. Our comrade Albert Meltzer played a key role in this process, and *Black Flag* is part of its legacy.

With the death of Franco in 1975, underground networks who had maintained the traditions of anarcho-syndicalism, as well as participating in armed resistance actions (both branded "terrorism" by the state), re-formed the CNT. The reaction of the exiled organisation is instructive – they denounced the militants for using the name CNT, as it was the property of the exile organisation!

Reality won through eventually, and led to a revival of the IWA in the late '70's, among the other sections were the French CNT and the revived Unione Sindicale Italiano (USI). The Syndicalist Workers' Federation in Britain formed the Direct Action Movement in 1979 with a disparate membership of anarcho-punks, squatters, ex-Wobblies, stray Australians, etc. Since the reformation of the Spanish CNT was the catalyst for this revival, it took some years for the British Section – DAM – to get over a hero-worship phase towards the Spanish Section.

A long-running controversy in the IWA was the participation of the French CNT in elections for Works Councils, for



propaganda purposes on an abstentionist basis (or so we have always been told). This section was also traditionally the "revolutionary syndicalist" source of opposition to the affiliation of anarchist dominated anarcho-syndicalist "propaganda groups", as opposed to revolutionary/anarcho-syndicalist unions only. The former issue was a matter of debate within the French CNT, but the majority position remained that unions might participate in elections on an abstentionist basis, and that this fell into the sphere of union autonomy.

Another was relations with the ex-Section in Sweden, SAC, now firmly established as a reformist union dispensing welfare to workers on behalf of the state in the Swedish mould, but with a strong pride in its libertarian traditions and a degree of militancy at odds with social democracy. SAC's pluralist political cul-



ture leads it to seek international relations with any union or political group who will deal with it, and to plead innocence when it causes offence.

## Patrimony

Ultimately, the most damaging process has been the dispute over the Spanish CNT's "historic patrimony". In 1939 the victorious nationalists seized the assets of both the CNT and the UGT. Part of the process of "restoring democracy" was the return of these assets to those unions, the greater share of which belonged to the majority union in Spain at the time - the CNT. The attraction of the money caused two splits from the CNT to unite and claim that they were the real, "Renovated" CNT, and that the anarcho-syndicalist organisation recognised by the IWA was merely a rump living in the past.

Since the patrimony was held by the state, the CNT went to court to settle the dispute, causing varying degrees of disquiet among anarcho-syndicalists worldwide. While officially maintaining loyalty to the CNT-AIT and denying the lie that there were two CNT's in Spain, other IWA Sections sought clarification of the CNT-E's position and to express concern over an anarcho-syndicalist union asking the state to establish its credentials.

Muddying the waters was the SAC, who offered assistance (financial) to "both CNT's", which the phoney, reformist organisation accepted, and the CNT-AIT refused - partly due to SAC's dealings with the rival claimants, and partly due to official IWA hostility to SAC dating back to the dispute over which SAC disaffiliated in the '50's.

SAC has always claimed innocent neutrality in its defence, but this is the neutrality of the arms dealer, prolonging the dispute and increasing the bitterness both in Spain and towards itself. I strongly suspect that had SAC offered assistance only to the CNT-AIT the original dispute would have been regarded as an irrelevance.

Bizarrely, among those championing the "two CNT's" theory were the anti-syndicalist anarchists who endorse the Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists, among them the newly-formed Anarchist-Communist Federation in Britain. Strangely, those who are convinced that anarcho-syndicalism is reformist, and who have adopted a neo-council communist line on unions<sup>2</sup>, are the first to endorse libertarian reformists who claim to be anarcho-syndicalist (particularly in France where there is a proliferation of both groups) even as they make denunciation of the real thing their

distinguishing characteristic in the "revolutionary" marketplace.

The root cause of the splits in Spain had been participation in Works Councils, which although associated with the European Union and the Maastricht Treaty's Social Chapter are the direct descendants of the fascist corporatism of the Franco regime in Spain. The CNT-AIT promoted the idea of the Union Section - shopfloor organisation represented by directly-elected, recallable delegates - in opposition to the Works Councils, which are a form of industrial parliamentarism.



Eventually, the courts ruled in favour of the CNT-AIT, and the "CNT-R" was forced to change its name to CGT. At the XVIII Congress of the IWA held in Bordeaux at Easter 1988 the dispute was still in the hands of the judges, and a source of friction between the Spanish CNT and other sections. The attitude of some Spanish delegates, and of their General Secretary, Garcia Rua, to any query about the Spanish CNT's attitude towards other sections and the use of courts (i.e. collaboration with the state) was openly hostile. It was also obvious that some of our "comrades" in Spain regard the IWA as their overseas auxiliaries, not fellow anarcho-syndicalists working under different conditions.

The problems this caused led the members of the Spanish CNT National Committee present to soften the organisation's attitude, and to decide that the IWA Secretariat should not be drawn from members of the Spanish Section. It was eventually forced on a member of the German Section, the Freie Arbeiterinnen und Arbeiter Union (FAU).

While the move of the Secretariat led to greater openness in the International, and vastly improved communication, particularly for non-Spanish speaking sections, the personality of the General Secretary and his relationship with the Section from which he had been chosen<sup>3</sup>

caused a lot of problems. This led to the Secretariat returning to Spain in 1992 - two steps forward, one step back as it turned out.

## The French dispute

Having settled the patrimony dispute to the satisfaction of the Spanish CNT, the attention of the IWA turned to expansion; in Eastern Europe in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet system, and also in Asia, Africa and Latin America. This is still a source of strength and hope for the international, but sectarianism<sup>4</sup> continues to dominate.

Among those lending support to the Spanish CNT in the patrimony dispute was a Swiss groupuscule calling itself Les Amis de l'AIT (Friends of the IWA), which specialised in exposing the dubious associations of those supporting the future CGT in Spain. As a reward for this they were awarded the status of "Friends of the IWA", which is neither a Section nor a Candidate seeking affiliation, but even so has a de facto privileged status.

Having reached an impasse through the proper channels, the minority within the French CNT who were implacably opposed to any involvement with Works Councils or elections to them decided to internationalise the dispute. This they did by engineering a split (although outwardly conciliatory, the majority appeared quite happy to let this happen), and demanding the IWA Secretariat recognise them, not the majority, as the true IWA Section in France.

Quite rightly the General Secretary declined to interfere in the internal business of a Section, and for this he was vilified by the Swiss, who then offered themselves as "impartial mediator" in the dispute! Matters spilled over at a Plenary of the IWA held in

London in 1994, which involved provocative dossier flicking by the minority faction, known as "Bordeaux" who claimed that some of the unions in France had only one member, and were a paper majority. It culminated in a walkout by the minority faction from the next Plenary in Cologne when they weren't endorsed as the sole representatives of the French Section.

This coincided with the build-up of an increasingly poisonous atmosphere in Spain, sparked by the receipt of the patrimony from the state, and disputes about its distribution. Certainly the then General Secretary of the IWA was under pressure from his Section, in breach of the rules, to take sides in the French dispute. Eventually he resigned under the pressure.

The legacy of the patrimony dispute,



and the corrupting influence of the money, has had an impact on the nature of the Spanish CNT. Small, unpopular unions run by those whose families have traditionally been associated with the CNT have received money, and are now no longer dependent on the support of the larger unions.

Those who see the CNT and anarcho-syndicalism as their property, forced to compromise in 1975, have taken revenge on the modern CNT. The majority of the CNT in Catalunya has been expelled. In international terms the clock has turned back to 1988, and the Spanish Section is now dominated by those who see the IWA as merely its auxiliary.

This process has been confirmed at the XX Congress of the IWA, held at Madrid in December 1996. The Spanish CNT tried to exclude one of the parties to each dispute – in France and Italy at the stage of confirmation of credentials, before any debate had taken place. Attempts to investigate the disputes fully, in order to have sufficient information to make the right decision, were rejected. This led to only two Sections voting to expel the majority in France and the Rome-based split of USI – CNT-Spain and Norway's NSF.

The rest abstained due to insufficient information, and the British Section were told by the hosts that they were not following their mandate in an attempt to get another vote for expulsion. In fact the Solidarity Federation's mandate was based on full investigation and reconciliation where possible, and it is a measure of the proprietorial attitude of the host Section that they should regard another Section's delegates as accountable to them.

The decision to expel the majority in France was greeted by cheering from many Spanish observers and the bus-load of "Bordeaux" French CNT who had turned up. An atmosphere of intimidation and confusion was encouraged by the hosts, and exploited to slip through changes to the Principles of Revolutionary Unionism and the Statutes of the IWA without proper discussion or consideration of their implications. A comrade from the British Section was abused by another from Spain when trying to establish some order and clarity from the chair.

Principled anarcho-syndicalists now face the prospect of spending the next four years trying to repair the damage, and in all likelihood such a course will attract the attentions of the smear-machine which runs the Swiss franchise – sold to Les Amis de L'AIT in return for political support for the sectarians.

## Laying down the line

The majority French CNT has retained its name – it was affiliated to the IWA, but existed in its own right – and is consistent with its own traditions, warts and all. By not investigating the French and Italian disputes thoroughly, the IWA has wasted an opportunity to get at the truth (we think we've been misled or lied to by both sides), and to examine the relevance of anarcho-syndicalism in the real world. It has also missed an opportunity to identify how an anarcho-syndicalist union can drift towards libertarian reformism.

Worse, the Statutes of the International have been amended to create "conditions for disaffiliation" (expulsion), which include:

"A: Failure to comply with the Principles, Tactics and Aims of the IWA" (my italics.)



The word "Tactics" also now appears in the Conditions of Affiliation. There are no "IWA Tactics". This is saying that no section has the right to tactical freedom, or to allow union autonomy. We await the party line, based on the assumption that Spanish conditions are universal. Opposition to Works Councils, in the guise of opposition to class collaboration, has now been elevated to a universal principle, rather than being a matter for sections. We were supposed to be becoming less eurocentric.

Similarly, an attempt to update the Principles of Revolutionary Unionism by adding two points, on Environmentalism and on forms of oppression not economic in origin (race, gender, sexuality, etc), has had a negative outcome. Both points were proposed by the Solidarity Federation. The point about environmentalism was accepted. On the other point, the Solidarity Federation proposed:

*"Revolutionary unionism is opposed to all hierarchies, privileges and oppressions, not simply those which are economic in origin. It recognises that oppression can be based on race, gender, sexuality or any other perceived or actual difference, and that these oppressions both must be fought for their own sake, and because they are fundamental to the maintenance of capitalism. However, all*

*oppression, whatever its origin, has an economic aspect and is based on a power relationship. Concepts of "equality" which fail to recognise this fact, and any attempt to fight discrimination without also attacking hierarchy and privilege based on class will chiefly benefit hitherto excluded sections of privileged classes, and will not end discrimination against those without class privileges, even where they achieve some short term gains."*

What was drawn up by a Congress Commission and passed without proper discussion was (amendment in italics):

"6: Revolutionary unionism rejects all parliamentary activity and all collaboration with legislative bodies. It holds that even the freest voting system cannot bring about the disappearance of the clear contradictions at the centre of present day society. The parliamentary system has only one goal: to lend a pretence of legitimacy

*to the reign of falsehood and social injustice. Revolutionary unionism does not recognise differences other than those of the economic order, national or regional, the result of these being the emergence of hierarchies, privileges and oppressions of every type (for race, sex, sexuality, or whatever difference, perceived or real)."*

Try arguing with black workers that racism merely divides the working class, and is a diversion from the real struggle, rather than it is oppressive and must be fought in its own right, but is not independent of capitalism and class. I know what they think of that position, because I've seen the left, with their commitment to a 19th century universalism derived from the pseudo-science of marxism, try it. It's patronising. This is nearly the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the IWA has responded to the lessons of black, women's and gay liberation by diving back into the 19<sup>th</sup>.

Federalism, which includes such principles as regional and union autonomy, encourages diversity. At its XX Congress the IWA has subtly, possibly unintentionally, moved away from federalism and betrayed its anarcho-syndicalist heritage because of a preoccupation with sectarian disputes and the proprietorial attitude of the CNT-E towards both the IWA and anarcho-syndicalism. The challenge facing revolutionary unionists is to be true to our heritage, and to apply our principles to the world we live in, rather than re-treating into what is familiar.

## Principles in practice

Article 4, Part D of the Statutes of the



International Workers' Association now reads:

"Revolutionary unionism rejects class collaboration, which is characterised by the participation in committees organised under corporate state schemes, (for example in union elections for company committees) and the acceptance of state subsidies which maintain union officials and other practices that can distort anarcho-syndicalism."

This is all very well but it assumes the Spanish model of industrial relations is universal, which it clearly isn't. Any potential anarcho-syndicalist union in Britain seeking recognition under Labour's proposed law to grant it to any union gaining a vote of 50% of the workforce in a (state sponsored) ballot would find itself in a tricky situation. If you can't deliver to your members, and you can't strike over everything, they will go elsewhere. OK, you strike for recognition, but your members will be lured to a reformist outfit who will use the law.

This new Article also puts question marks over such things as facility time for union representatives, and any participation in collective bargaining machinery. While ideally anyone would rather all management initiatives were rejected out of hand, sometimes they can be neutralised, or problems avoided through talking.

We can play a double game in reformist unions, but impossible conditions are expected of a revolutionary union. There has to be room for union autonomy, and for people to make mistakes so that they can learn. As one French comrade once put it: "anarcho-syndicalism is like free speech, useless if you don't practise it."

This is the kind of dilemma that has faced anarcho-syndicalists on the continent. You recruit workers to your union on the basis of direct democracy, recallable delegates, control by the rank and file and direct action. Inevitably, they are not all anarchists, and are not committed to every dot and comma of the IWA Statutes, but there's nothing wrong with that because it's an anarcho-syndicalist union, not a disciplined party. You make some progress in getting revolutionary ideas across, and build up a libertarian culture of self-organisation.

Then you run up against a conflict between your apolitical membership (described above) and federalist union autonomy on the one hand, and too rigid an interpretation of anarchist principles, on the other. Now, it's a mistake to base commitment to a union on a ballot, rather than on solidarity built up through a strike, but recognition on more than paper is going to lead to the latter after you've won the

former. You learn (collectively) from the mistake. However, you are not allowed to make mistakes, and you've all been disaffiliated for breaching IWA Statutes.

In an anarchist journal like this it is easy to understand the thinking behind the IWA Statutes, but in the real world choices are harder. In France, in the private sector, CNT claims that Works Councils are the only means of gaining recognition. CNT unions have sought election to them, a grave error, but one you don't get to make twice. The natural consequence of union autonomy, an anarcho-syndicalist principle, is tactical flexibility. In Spain too, anarchists whose ex-CNT unions were expelled have ended up in the CGT.

To demonise these unions and their members is wrong, because there are anarcho-syndicalists in them too. What is needed is communication, honesty and full information. The reason anarcho-syndicalism is advocated by this journal instead of disciplined political groups is because it establishes a libertarian, revolutionary culture within the wider working class. Without such a culture there cannot be a successful social revolution, because that can only be made by the working class as a whole.

To put on a tactical straitjacket will prevent us gaining a mass audience for anarcho-syndicalism, without which it is pointless. We need to accept this, and to strike a working balance. Reformism is a real danger, we need to learn from others' mistakes, but we will learn nothing from retreating into sectarianism.

Where the Solidarity Federation stands at present we have an opportunity to avoid both errors, which are the product of a split, which has been manipulated by libertarian reformists and opportunists on the one hand, and vanguardists on the other. We must stick to our principles, but appreciate that the relevance of a hardline stance is going to be directly proportional to the level of hostility of the boss. Most fruitful will be areas where there is discontent and potential militancy, but no established union and negotiating structures.

If workers learn to organise the anarcho-syndicalist way, they will be sceptical of the reformist way. The top-down approach of the TUC affiliates scared of their members opens the way for us. Revolutionary unionists need to fill the vacuum they leave, by organising to win small victories around health and safety and other basic conditions, to organise education and briefing sessions on real issues, and to promote libertarian organisation, direct action methods and revolutionary goals as a practical package for establishing rights for workers.

Notes:

[1] Works Councils are advocated by the European Union as part of its Social dimension. They are consultative bodies composed of annually-elected representatives. They have no power to negotiate and are a means of bypassing unions, and introducing individualised relationships between the workers and the company. They are consistent with the fascist idea of corporatism, denying differences of class interest and promoting social harmony. The Solidarity Federation is opposed to them, the TUC is sceptical, being in favour of collective bargaining. Labour....

[2] Many left or council communists believe that all unions are inherently reformist, and are barriers to workers' militancy, let alone revolution. Workers' experience of unions as their own organisations, and shopfloor organisations self-organised character are dismissed out of hand. The contradiction between the shopfloor union which belongs to the workers and the corporate body which has a stake in capitalism, hence the behaviour of its bureaucracy, is not recognised, and cannot, therefore, be exploited. But if you are against workers' organisation except under revolutionary conditions you can slag off everyone under the guise of being more revolutionary than they are.

[3] While in office, the General Secretary and the other members of the IWA Secretariat cease to be members of their Section. This is intended to remove them from any pressure, and to ensure their neutrality. Unfortunately, it has not worked like that when the General Secretary has come from either Germany or Spain in recent years. In the case of the 1988-1992 period of office, a dispute between the General Secretary and FAU over its direction overshadowed the work of the Secretariat. When the Secretariat has been in Spain it has not always looked beyond the Spanish-speaking world.

[4] By sectarian I mean requiring the working class to share your own political perspective, rather than applying revolutionary principles to the reality experienced by the working class. Revolutionary ideas come from the working class and its traditions of self-organisation. As well as federalism, anarchism and by extension anarcho-syndicalism draw on the practice of the sans culottes in the French Revolution of 1789-1792. Kropotkin's history of those events is a good grounding in anarchist theory. The left often use sectarianism to mean attacking other political groups, but it is the sense of insularity which is damaging, and which I refer to here.

Peter Principle



# democracy in a neoliberal order: doctrines\$ & reality

by Noam Chomsky

THE COMMON understanding concerning democracy and the neoliberal order has been articulated with great clarity. The basic theme is that "America's victory in the Cold War was a victory for a set of political and economic principles: democracy and the free market." These principles are "the wave of the future - a future for which America is both the gatekeeper and the model." I am quoting a respected US political commentator, but the picture is conventional, widely repeated throughout much of the world, and accepted as generally accurate even by critics. It was also initiated as the "Clinton Doctrine," which declared that our new mission is to "consolidate the victory of democracy and open market quote" that has just been one.

Those who want to understand what the victorious political and economic principles really are will not just listen to the rhetoric, but also investigate actual practice. It is particularly instructive to ask how the principles have been applied where US influence has been greatest and interference least, so that we see them in their purest form. Latin America is the obvious testing ground, particularly the Central America Caribbean region, where the US has faced few challengers for almost a century. It is one of the world's worst horror chambers, with a shocking record of terror, misery, and destruction. That record teaches valuable lessons about the political and economic principles that are to be "the wave the future".

Washington's "crusade for democracy", as it is called, was waged with particular fervour during the Reagan years. The most highly regarded studies of these programmes are by Thomas Carothers, who reviews them with an "insiders perspective", having worked on them in Reagan's State Department. Carothers regards Washington's "impulse to promote democracy" as sincere, but largely a failure. Furthermore, the failure was systematic: where Washington's influence was

least, in South America, there was real progress towards democracy, which the Reagan administration generally opposed, later taking credit for it when the process proved irresistible. Where Washington's influence was greatest, progress was least. Carothers concludes that the US sought to maintain "the basic order of... quite undemocratic societies" and to avoid "populist-based change". As in earlier years, Washington adopted "prodemocracy policies as a means of relieving pressure for more radical change, but inevitably sought only limited, top-down forms of democratic change that did not risk upsetting the traditional structures of power with which the United States has long been allied."

The conclusion is accurate, and tells us something important about the principles that won a victory. But Carothers does not ask how Washington maintained the

**The threat is democracy,  
which is permissible only  
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outcomes.**

traditional power structure of highly undemocratic societies. His topic is not the brutal terrorist wars that left hundreds of thousands of tortured and mutilated corpses, millions of refugees and devastation perhaps beyond recovery - in large measure wars against the Church, which became an enemy when it adopted "the preferential option for the poor" and tried to help poor and suffering people play some role in running their affairs. It is more than symbolic that the terrible decade of the 1980s opened with the murder of an Archbishop and closed with the assassination of six leading Jesuit intellectuals, in each case by state terrorist forces armed and trained by the victors in the crusade for democracy. But such matters do not enter history as it is recounted by the victors.

During the Cold War, such actions were justified by the alleged threat to US security posed by the Soviet Union. Before the Cold War, policies were much the same, the pretexts were different, after the Cold War, policies continue with little change, but different pretexts. The Cuban case is typical. It is hard to disagree with the reaction of a Mexican diplomat when Kennedy tried to organise collective action against Cuba after the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion. Mexico would not be able to join, he said, because "if we publicly declare that Cuba is a threat to our security, 14 million Mexicans will die laughing." Respectable opinion took a more sober view. It is also untroubled by the fact that the official decision to overthrow the Castro government was in March 1960, when there was no Russian connection; and that with the Russians gone, efforts to overthrow the government have increased. The official story remains unchallenged, however: for 30 years we were defending ourselves from this tentacle of Soviet power, seeking to strangle us. The record is an impressive example of the loyalty of the intellectual culture to the doctrines of the faith.

The announcement of the Clinton Doctrine was accompanied by a dramatic example to illustrate the wave of the future: What the administration has achieved in Haiti. Since this is offered as the strongest case, it would only be fair to look at it. True, Haiti's elected President was allowed to return. But only after the popular organisation had been subjected to three years of terror by forces that retained close connections to Washington throughout, and still do. And after President Aristide had been given "a crash course in democracy and capitalism," as his leading supporter in Washington described the process of civilising the troublesome priest. As a condition on his return, President Aristide was compelled to accept an economic program that directs the policies of the Haitian government to the needs of "Civil Society, especially the private sector, both national and foreign." US investors are the core of Haiti Civil Society, along with wealthy Haitians who backed the military coup, but not the Haitian peasants and lump-dwellers who organised a civil society so lively and vibrant that they were even able to elect their own president, against overwhelming odds. These unacceptable acts were reversed by violence, with direct US complicity. For example, the Bush and Clinton administrations secretly authorised the Texaco Oil Company to supply the coup leaders and their wealthy supporters in violation of the official sanctions, a crucial fact that was prominently



revealed the day before US troops landed in September 1994.

All of this, however, was kept from the public eye by the vigilant guardians of proper thinking.

Now order has been restored. The new government has abandoned the democratic and reformist programs that scandalised Washington, and is compelled to follow the policies of Washington's candidate in the 1990 election, in which he received 14% of the vote. The prize example tells us more about the meaning of the victory for "democracy and open markets."

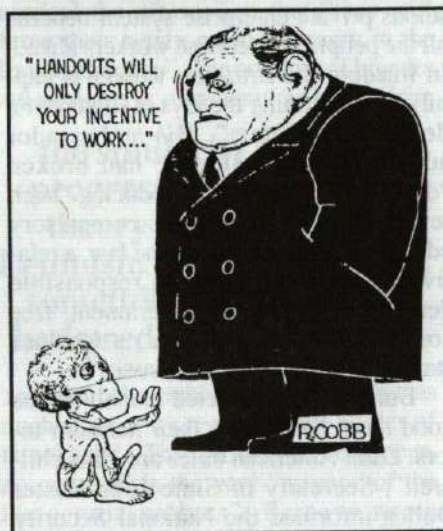
Elsewhere in the region, Colombia is regularly described as a real success story: "its democratic structures, notwithstanding inevitable flaws, are among the most solid on the Continent," a model of "well-established political stability," a prominent scholar comments. The Clinton Administration was particularly impressed by President César Gaviria, whom it successfully promoted as secretary-general of the Organisation of American States. "He has been very forward looking in building democratic institutions in a country where it was sometimes dangerous to do so," the administration explained, adding that he also had a fine record "on economic reform in Colombia and on economic integration in the hemisphere," the criterion of a true democrat.

It has indeed been dangerous to build democratic institutions in Colombia, thanks in no small measure to the actions of "democraticatorship," as Eduardo Galeano termed this amalgam of democratic forms and totalitarian terror, and its supporters in Washington. The "inevitable flaws" were particularly gruesome during Gaviria's regime. They have been reviewed in great detail by the major human rights organisations, the Church, and others, who report "appalling levels of violence," mostly by the Colombian military and police and the paramilitary forces closely linked to them. Jorge Castaneda writes that "the repression of Colombians left and the magnitude of its losses are unparalleled in modern Latin America's history," which is saying quite a lot. To that we may add the slaughter of peasants, union leaders, and countless others. In 1985, an independent political party was permitted, but state terror has virtually destroyed it by assassination of thousands of leading activists, including presidential candidates, mayors, and others. Just a few days ago I received a message from a North American lawyer who works with the Church-based human rights group Justicia y Paz, informing me that he would have to flee the country because he had witnessed the assassination of a human

rights activist by a paramilitary killer, and his own life was therefore in danger, the normal course of events in the hemisphere's champion human rights violator.

Colombia has also led the hemisphere in US military aid and training. The pretext in this case is the "drug war," but that is "a myth," as regularly reported by the human rights organisations and other investigators who have reviewed the close ties among the narcotraffickers, landowners, military, and paramilitary forces who are responsible for most of the terror. The record teaches further lessons about the real meaning of the term "democracy."

We learn still more from events of earlier years, for which the secret record is partially available, so that we know a good deal about the thinking that guided policy. The US reaction to Guatemala's first experiment with democracy is a revealing example. In 1952, the CIA warned that the "radical and nationalist policies" of the government had gained "the support or acquiescence of almost all Guatemalans." The government was "mobilising the hitherto politically inert peasantry"



and creating "mass support for the present regime" by means of labour organisation, agrarian reform, and other policies "identified with the revolution of 1944," which had aroused "a strong national movement to free Guatemala from the military dictatorship, social backwardness, and 'economic colonialism' which had been the pattern of the past." The policies of the democratic government "inspired the loyalty and conformed to the self-interest of most politically conscious Guatemalans." State Department intelligence reported that the democratic leadership "insisted upon the maintenance of an open political system," thus allowing Communists to "expand their operations and appeal objectively to various sectors of the population." These deficiencies of democracy were cured by the military coup of 1954

and the reign of terror since, always with large-scale US support.

The threat to order in Guatemala went beyond the establishment of an open political system. A State Department official warned that Guatemala "has become an increasing threat to the stability of Honduras and El Salvador. It's agrarian reform is a powerful propaganda weapon; its broad social programme of aiding the workers and peasants in a victorious struggle against the upper classes and large foreign enterprises has a strong appeal to the populations of Central American neighbours where similar conditions prevail". "Stability" means security for "the upper classes and large foreign enterprises", whose welfare must be preserved.

In the terminology of high-level planners, Guatemala had become a "virus" that might "to get" others by sending the wrong messages about possibility for democratic social change. There have been many others. Henry Kissinger warned that the Allende government had a virus that might spread infection as far as Italy, still not "stable" even after 25 years of major CIA programmes to subvert Italian democracy. Viruses have to be destroyed and others protected from infection: for both tasks, violence is often the most efficient means, leaving a gruesome trail of slaughter, terror, torture and devastation.

Further insight into reality is provided by the recent NAFTA agreement. It is no longer possible to offer happy predictions about its benefits, so advocates now concede quietly that the "underlying purpose of NAFTA was not to promote trade but to cement Mexico's economic reforms". Its goal was to "lock Mexico in" to the "reforms" that had made it an "economic miracle" - for US investors and the Mexican rich, while the population sank into misery. "Locking Mexico in" to these reforms, it is hoped, will deflect the danger detected by a Latin American Strategy Development Workshop in Washington in September 1990: that "a democracy opening in Mexico could test the special relationship by bringing into office a government more interested in challenging the US on economic and nationalist grounds".

The threat is democracy, which is permissible only if it yields the right outcomes.

Right and wrong outcomes are easily determined from the record of history, and are outlined clearly in secret planning documents. These describe the primary threat to US interests as "radical and nationalistic regimes" that are responsive to popular pressures for "immediate improvement in the low living standards of the masses" and development for domes-



tic needs. Such tendencies conflict with the need for "a political and economic climate conducive to private investment", with adequate repatriation of profits and "protection of our raw materials"-ours, even if located somewhere else. For such reasons, the influential planner George Kennan advised in 1948 that "we should cease to talk about vague and unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of the living standards, the democratisation," and must "deal in straight power concepts", not "hampered by idealistic slogans" about "altruism and world benefaction" - though such slogans are fine, in fact obligatory, in public discourse.

For Latin America, the issues were clarified at a hemispheric conference in February 1945, where Washington proposed an "economic charter for the Americas" that would eliminate economic nationalism "in all its forms". Planners expected to meet resistance. Internal documents warn that Latin Americans prefer "policies designed to bring about a broader distribution of wealth and to raise the standard of living of the masses", and are "convinced that the first beneficiaries of the development of a country's resources should be the people of that country". These are vulgar errors: the "first beneficiaries" of a country's resources are US investors, while Latin America fulfils its service option, without unreasonable concerns for the general welfare or "excessive industrial developments" that might infringe on US interests.

The US position prevailed, though problems continued to arise, dealt with by means that I need not review. The consistency is remarkable, as is the inability to perceive.

Consider the important example of Brazil, the "colossus of the South". US-Brazilian relations are reviewed in a highly praised book on "the Americanisation of Brazil" by diplomatic historian Gerald Haines, who is also the senior historian of the CIA. The process of "americanising Brazil" began in 1945. Haines writes, when "the United States assumed, out of self-interest, responsibility for the welfare of the world capitalist system". Brazil is only a special case.

Haines describes how Washington used Brazil as a "testing area for modern scientific methods of industrial development". The experiment was carried out with "the best of intentions". US investors benefited, but planners "sincerely believed" that the people of Brazil would benefit as well. "America's Brazilian policies" were "enormously successful", Haines wrote in 1989, "a real American success story". Under military rule, Brazil had become "the Latin American dar-

ling of the international business community", in the words of the business press, while the World Bank reported that two-thirds of the population did not have enough food for normal physical activity. 1989 was "the golden year" in the eyes of the business world, with profits tripling over 1988 while industrial wages, already among the lowest in the world, declined by 20%; the UN Report on Human Development ranked Brazil next to Albania. These are no small achievements in a country long recognised to be potentially one of the richest of the world, with enormous advantages, including years of US tutelage with benign intent, which just happened to serve self-interest while leaving most of the population in misery.

A closer look is again instructive. On a visit in 1960, President Eisenhower as-

### **This process of engineering consent is the very essence of the democratic process**

sured Brazilians that "our socially conscious private enterprise system benefits all the people, owners and workers alike... In freedom the Brazilian worker is happily demonstrating the joys of life under a democratic system". His ambassador added that US influence had broken "down the old order", introducing "such revolutionary ideas as free compulsory education, equality before the law, a relatively classless society, a responsible democratic system of government, free competitive enterprise, (and) a fabulous standard of living for the masses".

But Brazilians reacted harshly to the good news brought by their northern tutors. Latin American elites are "like children", Secretary of State John Foster Dulles informed the National Security Council, "with practically no capacity for self-government". Worse still, the US is "hopelessly far behind the Soviets in developing controls over the minds and emotions of unsophisticated peoples". Dulles and Eisenhower expressed their concern over the Communist "ability to get control of mass movements", something "we have no capacity to duplicate. 'The poor people are the ones they appeal to and they have always wanted to plunder the rich'. We find it hard to induce people to accept our doctrine, that the rich should plunder the poor."

The Kennedy administration faced the problem by shifting the mission of the Latin American military from "hemispheric defence" to "internal security", a decision with fateful consequences, beginning with the military coup in Brazil in 1964. The military has been seen in Wash-

ington as an "island of sanity" in Brazil. The coup was welcomed by Kennedy's ambassador, Lincoln Gordon, as a "democratic rebellion", "the single most decisive victory freedom in the mid-20th century", and one of the major turning points in world history". A former Harvard University economist, Gordon added that the victory should "create a greatly improved climate for private investments", giving some further insight into the meaning of the terms "freedom" and "democracy".

Two years later, defence secretary Robert McNamara informed his colleagues "US policies towards the Latin American military have been effective in attaining (their) goals". "Internal security capabilities" had improved, and "predominant US military influence" established. The Latin American military understand their tasks and are equipped to pursue them, thanks to Kennedy's programmes of military aid and training. These tasks include the overthrow of civilian government "whenever, in the judgment of the military, the conduct of these leaders is injurious to the welfare of the nation". Such actions by the military are necessary in "the Latin American cultural environment", the Kennedy intellectuals explained. And we can be confident that they will be carried out properly, now the military have gained an "understanding of, and orientation toward, US objectives". That assures a proper outcome to the "revolutionary struggle for power among major groups which constitute the present class structure" in Latin America, an outcome that will protect "private US interest" and trade, the "economic root" that is the strongest of the roots of "US political interest Latin America".

Again, I am quoting secret documents, in this case, of Kennedy liberalism. Public discourse is different. If we keep to it, we will understand little about the history of democracy and freedom that gains such applause.

Let us turn to the home country itself: the United States. It is surely the most important case to study if we hope to understand the world of today and tomorrow. One reason is its incomparable power. Another is its stable democratic institutions. Furthermore, the United States was about as close to a tabula rasa as one can find. America can be "as happy as she pleases", Thomas Paine remarked in 1776: "she has a blank sheet to write on". The indigenous societies were largely eliminated. There is little residue of earlier European structures, one reason for the relative weakness of the social contract and of support systems, which often had their roots in pre-capitalist institu-



tions. And to an unusual extent, the socio-political order was consciously designed. In studying history one cannot construct experiments, but the US is as close to the "ideal case" of State capitalist democracy as can be found.

Furthermore, the main designer, James Madison, was an astute political thinker. In the debate on the constitution, Madison pointed out that if elections in England "were open to all classes of people, the property of landed proprietors would be insecure. An agrarian law would soon take place, "giving land to the landless. The constitutional system must be inclined to prevent such injustice and "secure the permanent interests of the country," which are property rights. The primary responsibility of government, Madison declared, is "to protect the minority of the opulent against the majority" – to prevent the poor from plundering the rich, in modern terminology.

To ensure that government would meet its primary responsibility, Madison devised a variety of constraints on democratic rule. He foresaw that the threat of democracy would become more severe over time because of the increase in "the proportion of those who will labour under all the hardships of life, and secretly sigh for a more equal distribution of its blessings" in a democratic society, they might gain too much of a voice, Madison beard. The right to vote might place "power over property in hands without a share in". Those "without property, or the hope of acquiring it, cannot be expected to sympathise sufficiently with rights", Madison explained. To overcome the "future danger" of "a levelling spirit", Madison designed a system in which the political arena would be effectively in the hands of those who "come from and represent the wealth of the nation", the "more capable set of men", in his words, with the general public fragmented and disorganised. The guiding principle was stated simply by Madison's colleague John Jay, President of the Continental Congress and first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court: "the people who own the country ought to govern it".

One crucial question remains: who owns the country? In Madison's pre-capitalist thinking, the rightful owners were landowners. The rise of private corporations in the nineteenth century, and the legal structures devised to protect and support them, answered the question differently, bringing to power the "banking institutions and moneyed incorporations" that would destroy democracy, Thomas Jefferson warned, if they were allowed to flourish.

Another problem, never fully resolved,

is to compel the public to accept its subordinate role. In foreign domains, the task can be performed by violence and terror, if necessary, but that is not so easy at home, as popular forces have won significant rights. It has therefore been necessary to turn to other means to protect the minority of the opulent against the majority: what is called "the manufacture of consent" or "the engineering of consent" by in parental twentieth century political thinkers.

The leading figure of the modern public relations industry, Edward Bernays, provided a clear account in his book "Propaganda". He explains that "the conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organised habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society". To carry out this essential task, "the intelligent minorities must make use of propaganda continuously and systematically" because only they "understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses" and can "pull the wires which control the public mind". Propaganda enables leaders "to mould the mind of the masses" so that "they will throw their newly gained strength in the desired direction". The problem of broader voting rights is overcome, as leaders can

### **the similarity between progressive democratic theory and Marxism- Leninism is rather striking, something that Bakunin had predicted long before**

"regiment the public mind every bit as much as an army regiments the bodies of its soldiers". This process of "engineering consent" is the very "essence of the democratic process", Bernays wrote shortly before he was honoured for his contributions by the American Psychological Association in 1949.

A good New Deal liberal, Bernays had developed his skills in Woodrow Wilson's Committee on Public Information, the first US state propaganda agency. "It was the astounding success of propaganda during the war that opened the eyes of the intelligent few to the possibilities of regimenting the public mind", Bernays explained. The intelligent few were perhaps unaware that their "astounding success" relied on propaganda fabrications about Hun atrocities provided to them by the British Ministry of Information, which secretly defined its task as "to direct the thought of most of the world".

All of this is good Wilsonian doctrine, known as "Wilsonian idealism" in political theory, Wilson's own view was that

an elite of gentlemen with "elevated ideals" is needed to preserve "stability and righteousness". It is the intelligent minority of "responsible men" who must control decision-making, Walter Lippman explained. He too was a veteran of Wilson's propaganda committee, also a prominent progressive intellectual and an influential commentator on public affairs for half a century. The intelligent minority are responsible for setting policy, Lippman continued, and for "the formation of a sound public opinion" through "the manufacture of consent". This "specialised class" must be free from interference by the general public, who are "ignorant and meddlesome outsiders". The public must "be put in its place", Lippman added: their "function" is to be "spectators of action", not participants, apart from periodic choices among the specialised class, called elections. Leadership must be free to operate in "technocratic insulation" to borrow current World Bank terminology.

In the "Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences" Harold Lasswell, one of the founders of modern political science, warned that the intelligent few must recognise that "ignorance and stupidity of the masses" and not succumb to "democratic dogmatism about men being the best judges of their own interests". They are not; we are the best judges. The masses must be controlled for their own good, and in more democratic societies, where force is unavailable, social managers must turn to "a whole new technique of control, largely through propaganda".

Note that all of this is good Leninist doctrine; the similarity between progressive democratic theory and Marxism-Leninism is rather striking, something that Bakunin had predicted long before.

The themes resonate to the current period; for example, when the Professor of the Science of Government at Harvard explained early in the Reagan years that "you may have to sell intervention or other military action in such a way has to create the misimpression that it is the Soviet Union that you are fighting. That is what the United States has been doing ever since the Truman doctrine". Another lesson of the science of government, the same scholar continues, is that "the architects of power must create a force that can be felt but not seen. Power remains strong when it remains in the dark; exposed to the sunlight it begins to evaporate". The public must not only be deluded about policy, but also not see who is designing it. It is the responsibility of the intellectuals to carry out these demanding tasks.

**continued next issue**



# Lies & anarchyism

IT'S FAIR TO SAY that most marxists in Britain base their criticisms, of the Spanish Anarchist Revolution of 1936, on the work of Trotskyist Felix Morrow. Morrow's book *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain*, first published in 1938, actually isn't that bad – for some kinds of information. However, it's basically written as Trotskyist propaganda. All too often Morrow is inaccurate, and over-eager to bend reality to fit the party line.

The Bolshevik-Leninists, for example, an obscure sect who perhaps numbered 20 members, are, according to Morrow, transformed into the only ones who could save the Spanish Revolution – because they alone were members of the Fourth International, Morrow's own organisation. 'Only the small forces of the Bolshevik-Leninists...clearly pointed the road for the workers'; 'Could that party [the party needed to lead the revolution] be any but a party standing on the platform of the Fourth International?'; etc. The POUM – a more significant marxist party in Spain, though still tiny compared to the anarchists – is also written up as far more important than it was, and slagged off for failing to lead the masses to victory (or listening to the Bolshevik-Leninists). The Fourth Internationalists 'offered the POUM the rarest and most precious form of aid: a consistent Marxist analysis' (never mind Spanish workers needing guns and solidarity!). But when such a programme – prepared in advance – was offered the POUM by the Fourth International representative – only two hours after arriving in Spain, and quarter of an hour after meeting the POUM – the POUM weren't interested. The POUM have been both attacked (and claimed as their own) by Trotskyists ever since.

It is Morrow's attacks on anarchism, though, that have most readily entered leftist folklore – even among Marxists who reject Leninism. Some of Morrow's criticisms are fair enough – but these were voiced by anarchists long before Morrow

put pen to paper. Morrow, in fact, quotes and accepts the analyses of anarchists like Camillo Berneri ('Berneri had been right' etc.), and praises anarchists like Durruti ('the greatest military figure produced by the war') – then sticks the boot into anarchism. Morrow obviously wanted to have his cake and eat it.

Typically for today's left, perhaps, the most quoted sections of Morrow's book are the most inaccurate. Here's a detailed look at three of them:

According to Morrow, 'Spanish Anarchism had in the FAI a highly centralised party apparatus through which it maintained control of the CNT'.

In reality, the FAI – the Iberian Anarchist Federation – was founded, in 1927, as a confederation of regional federations (including the Portuguese Anarchist Union). These regional federations, in turn, coordinated local and district federations of highly autonomous anarchist affinity groups. So, while the FAI may have had centralising tendencies, a 'highly centralised' political party it was not.

Further, many anarcho-syndicalists and affinity groups were not in the FAI (though most seem to have supported it), and many FAI members put loyalty to the CNT (the anarcho-syndicalist union confederation) first. For instance, according to the minutes of the FAI national plenum of Jan-Feb 1936: 'The Regional Committee [of Aragon, Rioja, and Navarra] is completely neglected by the majority of the militants because they are absorbed in the larger activities of the CNT'. And 'One of the reasons for the poor condition of the FAI was the fact that almost all the comrades were active in the defence groups of the CNT' (report from the Regional Federation of the North). As internal documents they are unlikely to be lies.

Anarchists were obviously the main influence in the CNT (which was anarcho-syndicalist long before the FAI was founded). But 'FAI control' was an invention of a reformist minority within the organisation – people like Angel Pestana,

ex-CNT National Secretary, who wanted to turn the CNT into a politically 'neutral' union movement. Pestana later showed what he meant by forming the Syndicalist Party and standing for the Cortes. Obviously, in the struggle against the reformists, anarcho-syndicalists – inside the FAI or not – voted for people they trusted to run CNT committees. The reformists lost, split from the CNT, and 'FAI dictatorship' was born.

Again, following Morrow, marxists have often alleged that the Socialist and Workers Alliance strike wave, of October 1934, was sabotaged by the CNT.

To understand this allegation, you have to understand the background to October '34, and the split in the workers' movement between the CNT and the UGT (unions controlled by the reformist Socialist Party, the PSOE).

From 1931 (the birth of the Second Spanish Republic) to 1933 the Socialists, in coalition with Republicans, had attacked the CNT (a repeat, in many ways, of the UGT's collaboration with the Primo de Rivera dictatorship of 1923-30). Laws were passed, with Socialist help, making lightening strikes illegal and state arbitration compulsory. Anarchist organised strikes were violently repressed, and the UGT provided scabs – as against the CNT Telephone Company strike of 1931. During and after CNT insurrections in Catalonia (north eastern Spain) in 1932, and the much wider insurrections of January 1933 (9,000 CNT members jailed) and December 1933 (16,000 jailed) Socialist solidarity was nil.

Socialist conversion to 'revolution' occurred only after the elections of November 1933 – when they lost, and all the laws they'd passed against the CNT were used against themselves. When cabinet seats were offered to the non-republican right, in October 1934, the PSOE/UGT called for a general strike.

If the CNT, nationally, failed to take part in this – a mistake recognised by many anarchist writers – this was not (as reading Morrow suggests) because the CNT thought 'all governments were equally bad', but because of well-founded, as it turned out, mistrust of Socialist aims.

A CNT call, in February 1934, for the UGT to clearly and publicly state its revolutionary objectives, had met with no reply. Rhetoric aside, the PSOE's main aim in October seems to have been to force new elections, so they could again form a (mildly reformist) coalition with the Republicans. The CNT were to be used as cannon-fodder to help produce another government that would attack the CNT.

The 'workers alliances' were little better. These were first put forward by the



marxist-leninists of the BOC (Workers and Peasants Bloc – later to form the POUM) after their attempts to turn the CNT into a bolshevik vanguard failed<sup>10</sup>. PSOE interest began only after their election defeat – when the alliances were seen as a means of dominating the workers movement in areas the UGT was weak. The Socialist 'Liaison Committee', for instance, set up to prepare for insurrection, only allowed regional branches to take part in the alliances if they could guarantee Party control<sup>11</sup>. And only one month after the first alliance was set up, one of its founder members – the Socialist Union of Catalonia – left in protest over PSOE domination.

During October, apart from Catalonia (where the Catalan government arrested CNT militants the night before, then tried to declare Catalan autonomy), and Madrid (where a general strike was supported by the CNT), the only real centre of resistance was in Asturias (on the Spanish north coast).

Here, the CNT had joined the Socialists and Communists in a 'workers alliance'. But, against the alliance's terms, the Socialists alone gave the order for the uprising – and the Socialist controlled Provincial Committee starved the CNT of arms. This despite the CNT having over 22,000 affiliates in the area (to the UGT's 40,000).

Morrow states that 'The backbone of the struggle was broken...when the refusal of the CNT railroad workers to strike enabled the government to transport goods and troops'<sup>12</sup>. Yet in Asturias (the only area where major troop transportation was needed) the main government attack was from a seaborne landing of Foreign Legion and Moroccan troops – against the port and CNT stronghold (15,000 affiliates) of Gijón. Despite CNT pleas the Socialists refused arms. Gijón fell after a bloody struggle, and became the main base for the crushing of the entire region.

This Socialist and Communist sabotage of Anarchist resistance was repeated in the Civil War, less than two years later.

Finally, Morrow claims that the Friends of Durruti 'represented a conscious break with the anti-statism of traditional anarchism. They explicitly declared the need for democratic organs of power, juntas or soviets, in the overthrow of capitalism.'<sup>13</sup>

Typically, in Morrow's topsy-turvy world, all anarchists like the Friends of Durruti (Morrow also includes the Libertarian Youth, the 'politically awakened' CNT rank and file, local FAI groups, etc.)

who remained true to anarchism and stuck to their guns (often literally) – represented a break with anarchism and a move towards marxism, the revolutionary vanguard party (no doubt part of the 4<sup>th</sup> International), and a fight for the 'workers state'...

Those anarchists, on the other hand, who compromised for 'anti-fascist unity' (but mainly to try and get weapons to fight



Franco) are the real anarchists because 'class collaboration...lies concealed in the heart of anarchist philosophy'<sup>14</sup>.

The Friends of Durruti were formed, in March 1937, by anarchist militants who'd refused to submit to Communist controlled 'militarisation' of the workers' militias. During the Maydays – the government attack against the revolution two months later – the Friends of Durruti were notable for their calls to stand firm and crush the counter-revolution. They did not 'break with' anarchism – they refused to compromise their anarchism in the face of 'comrades' who thought winning the war meant entering the government. Their leaflets, in April '37, called for the unions and municipalities to 'replace the state' and for no retreat<sup>15</sup>. Their manifesto, in 1938, repeated this call ('the state cannot be retained in the face of the unions'), and made three demands: For a National Defence Council, elected and accountable to the union rank and file (including those at the front), with all posts up for regular

recall; for 'all economic power to the unions'; and for the 'free municipality' to cover those areas outside the unions' mandate<sup>16</sup>. More recently, Jaime Balius, one of the FoD's main activists, has stated: 'We did not support the formation of Soviets; there were no grounds in Spain for calling for such. We stood for "all power to the trade unions". In no way were we politically orientated'<sup>17</sup>. ('Political' here meaning 'state-political' – a common anarchist use of the word).

Morrow's book may bring comfort to those marxists who look for ready-made answers and are prepared to accept the works of hacks at face-value. Those who want to learn from the past – instead of re-writing it – will have to look elsewhere.

#### Notes & References

- 1) Felix Morrow, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain*, 2nd Edition 1974, p191.
- 2) Morrow p248.
- 3) Morrow p105.
- 4) Morrow p139.
- 5) Morrow p153.
- 6) Morrow p224.
- 7) Morrow p100.
- 8) Juan Gomez Casas, *Anarchist Organisation – the history of the FAI*, p165 and p168. Most of the information on the FAI comes from this. Also see Murray Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists, The Heroic Years, 1868-1936*.
- 9) See for instance Adrian Schubert *The Asturian Revolution of October 1934*, in *Revolution and War in Spain* ed. Paul Preston.
- 10) Paul Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War* p117.
- 11) See Schubert (above). Most of the rest of this section comes from Preston *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War*, Bookchin (above), and Abel Paz *Durruti, the People Armed*.
- 12) Morrow p30.
- 13) Morrow p247
- 14) Morrow p101
- 15) Quoted in Paul Sharkey, *The Friends of Durruti – a Chronology*.
- 16) *Towards a Fresh Revolution*. The idea of a National Defence Council wasn't the radical break with the CNT that some claim. Before the civil war the CNT had long has its defence groups, federated at regional and national level, and the CNT insurrection – of December 1933 – had been coordinated by a National Revolutionary Committee. During the war a national plenum of regions, in September 1936, called for a National Defence Council, with majority union representation and based on Regional Defence Councils. The Defence Council of Aragon, set up soon after, was based on these ideas. The need for coordinated revolutionary defence and attack is just common sense.
- 17) Letter to Ronald Frazer 1976 – in Frazer's book *Blood of Spain* p381.



# *we the anar*

## A Study of the Iberian Anarchist federation (FAI) 1927-1937

by Stuart Christie

Published by The Meltzer press; £12.50 spiral bound

**T**HIS BOOK CONTAINS some very important lessons for anarchists that deserve a wider circulation. The Spanish revolution and the events leading up to it are the most important events this century from an anarchist perspective. (So far at least!) This issue of *Black Flag* marks 60 years since the May Day events in Barcelona marked the triumph of the Stalinist reaction and the defeat of the revolution.

The role of militants of the FAI and the CNT (Spain's anarcho-syndicalist union) in the revolution has been subject to much interpretation, particularly by those hostile to anarcho-syndicalism. Christie's book deals with most of what bourgeois commentators have said about Spain. But the real value in this work is that it places the betrayal of anarchist principles by the FAI and CNT in the context of the evolution of those organisations, and addresses the question of leadership, but more importantly, the question of "followership".

Christie starts by explaining how three factors need to be considered to understand recent Spanish history. Firstly, that anarchism was embedded deeply in the working class, at least partly because it reflected their relationships and values. Secondly, that anarchism was the predominant ideological influence within the labour movement. And thirdly, that the anarchist militants who defended and built up their organisations through decades of repression were motivated by a desire to bring about a libertarian communist society, objectives which brought them into conflict both with the state and the bosses, and the leaders of their own union confederation.

The book outlines the historical development of anarchism in Spain, and how it developed and influenced the labour

movement, particularly in Catalonia, the industrial heartland. It also takes an analytical view and tries to address, in the author's words, "how can ideals survive the process of institutionalisation? If this is not feasible, at least to be able to identify the turning points so that we can counter the process".

From about 1927 onward, a struggle broke out within the CNT between the leadership of the CNT and conscious anarchist militants of the rank and file over the heart and soul of the union. This struggle was to culminate in the split of the CNT in 1931 when the *treintistas*, leadership figures who had signed the "manifesto of the Thirty", left the Confederation taking a small number of unions with them. Outside commentators have claimed the reformists were pushed out by a rigidly disciplined party-type organisation – the FAI. The truth is somewhat different.

Christie takes us through how the reformists, many of whom were national or regional secretaries, believed that they had to concentrate on trade union type issues and compete for members with the socialist UGT. However, the UGT's co-operation with the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, which passed labour laws favouring them and attacking the CNT, had lost them credibility and the CNT was growing with its message of open class warfare and direct action. The CNT leadership, though popular as individuals, were out of touch. One of the reasons that individuals like Angel Pestafia were in these positions was that anarchist militants refused to take them because of their corrupting nature.

The reformists tried to change the CNT's constitution, moving it away from federalism and anti-capitalism to being a mere mediator between workers and capital. At the same time the UGT was working with the structures of the dictatorship

of Primo de Rivera, and using this position to attack the CNT. The reformists wanted the CNT "in from the cold", so to speak, and able to operate free from the socialists' attacks. Against this background, a small number of militants met in Valencia in 1927, founding the Federacion Anarquista Iberica, the FAI, which also included Portuguese militants. The FAI addressed how it would relate to the CNT, a relationship described as the *trabazon*, an organic bond at local level between the CNT and FAI through Defence Committees and Pro-Prisoner Committees.

At this time the FAI was an ad hoc association of affinity groups. It never even grouped a majority of anarchists in the CNT into its ranks, despite the allegations of bourgeois and Marxist historians like Woodcock, Carr and Morrow that it was a centralised party-like apparatus. It consisted of anarchists who refused to go along with their union's leadership and asserted the historic anarchist role of fighting authoritarian ideas and defending the libertarian spirit of the CNT. Indeed, many of the more famous names associated with it were not even members, and there seems to be doubt whether Durruti was ever a fully fledged member.

The roots of the collaboration proposed by the reformists were in the tactical co-operation they had had with military and political oppositionists of all shades under the dictatorship. Though the anarchists were a minority, they did exercise a powerful moral authority within the membership of the union. Many FAIstas had graduated from the open class war of *pistolismo*, where employers hired gunmen to murder CNT members. When the dictatorship collapsed, there was a surge in strike activity and the FAI were blamed, even though in this period their very ex-



# archists!

istence was nominal.

By now, Pestaña and his allies held the upper hand. They published a paper, *Acción* and controlled the National Committee. They were pressing for closer contacts with the republicans as a strategy, not just as a tactic. One of them, Juan Peiró, had to resign after signing a particularly dubious manifesto, *Inteligencia Republicana*. That April, after the CNT National Plenum advised a tactical vote for the left, a Socialist- Republican coalition won the elections overwhelmingly.

The Second Republic enacted a number of measures against the CNT, some deliberate to favour the UGT, others, such as the mixed juries, as a by product. On May Day civil guards fired on the CNT demonstration, killing one and wounding 15. The FAI now began to emerge as a pole of dissent within CNT against the reformists. The arguments came out at the III Congress in June, but were not resolved.

During the summer, heightened social conflict with the government polarised these differences. The reformists gambled with the "manifesto of the 30" to isolate the revolutionaries. They failed. The rank and file, subject daily to the brutality of open class war from the bosses and the state, sided with the FAI. The Treintistas left the CNT and Pestaña went on to form the Syndicalist party.

Christie now argues that the FAI had done its job but was taken over by "rootless intellectuals" like Diego Abad de Santillan. It is certain that most of its militants went back to their day to day activity as members of the CNT. Many others were taken out of activity after the abortive uprising which led to the massacre at Casas Viejas and a wave of arrests and repression. De Santillan had joined the FAI in 1933. He had an obsession with

economic planning and saw the FAI as providing anarchism with the discipline and organisation to fulfil its historic mission. Groups around De Santillan argued for "greater democracy" within the FAI and moves were made to expel the *Nosotros* group (which included Durruti, Ascaso etc) though nothing came of the latter. Quite definitely the culture changed and many of the working class militants no longer felt at home in the FAI. To quote Progreso Fernández, "Lots of people dropped out then, but we remained anarchists, because anarchism is an attitude to life".

Christie's analysis points out one of the failings of the most common criticism made of the Spanish anarchists by English speaking anarchists: that they did not take organisation seriously enough. If only, bemoaned the Platformist (later Leninist) Anarchist Workers Group, if only the Spanish translation of the "Platform" had reached them, they might have been equipped with better ideas to win. The fallacy of this argument is obvious – it was not a correct political line which could win the revolution, but the deeds and actions of the militants involved. Those who advocated greater organisation within the FAI were not those who were the first to rise and defeat the fascists in Barcelona and elsewhere.

The success of the revolution on July 19<sup>th</sup> 1936 is well documented. There is no need to go over it again here. But what is interesting is the way the FAI and CNT ended up collaborating with the State and even joining the government. Christie's view is that this happened because these organisations substituted themselves for the organs of the revolution – the factory and neighbourhood committees. It was in this way that Federica Montseny became co-opted into the government. Her neigh-

bourhood committee sent her along to the CNT-FAI headquarters to find out what was going on. Instead she got co-opted onto the committee. Christie's account of the defeat of the revolution does not make light reading. His conclusions are that we must not and cannot separate ends from means. By adapting to circumstances the FAI found itself on the wrong side of the struggle for social justice and equality. It would be purely speculative to suggest other things that could have been done at the time. The anarchists of Spain faced a difficult dilemma and we should not judge their failings too harshly, rather we should learn from them and try not to make the same mistakes ourselves. And he poses the question of why the anarchist rank and file went along with a lot of the actions of the CNT-FAI at the time which betrayed anarchist principles by ignoring the relationship between ends and means.

On a final note: this book is way too expensive for what it is. I contacted The Meltzer press about this, and they are prepared to give a discount: Groups buying more than one copy will get 50% off subsequent copies. I think this should be more widely available and in a cheaper format. All you book publishers out there should contact TMP.

MH





# Human Rights or Control Units

## Maroon Russell Shoats

Published by Lancaster ABC-SG, PO Box 891, Lancaster PA 17608 USA (hopefully available from AK, Edinburgh and Active Dist, BM Active, London WCIN 3XX)

MAROON RUSSELL SHOATS is a black New Afrikan political prisoner. He was jailed for actions in support of the Black Panther Party in 1972, serving multiple life sentences.

This pamphlet contains two essays by Maroon on control units. A control unit is a special section within a prison designed to hold prisoners that the administration has decided must be locked up for 23 hours a day. It is different from normal solitary because it is indefinite. The essays aim to show how such regimes do nothing to reform and only produce even more embittered individuals who return to the poor communities they are from and wreak more havoc. Control units try to destroy the prisoner as functional individuals, the reasoning being that they would then no longer be a threat.

The origin of these ideas are traced to the behaviourism of people like B.F Skinner and the experience of prisoners of war subdued by Chinese communist and North Korean mind control methods. That these practices are dehumanising doesn't bother the authorities. As Maroon states, "Our collective welfare demands that we do everything within our power to bring about an end to this form of imprisonment."

The crucial thing to remember is that the US wants to imprison more people so that it's economy can compete with low wage Asian economies, and this is done by the growing amount of prison labour, used by companies such as Microsoft and TWA.

Prisons in America are big business (coming here soon) and rehabilitation programmes, whether run by liberal organisations, churches, or the Nation of Islam are a threat to the system. If prisoners come out and fit back into society, the State will find it hard to send them back to prison. Bear in mind that someone was given life under California's reactionary 3 strikes system for stealing a slice of pizza. This system has no interest in rehabilitation, only in perpetuating itself as a multi-billion dollar business. Therefore, such units are not just an issue for those inside and their families and friends, but indirectly affect the ability of workers outside to defend their pay and conditions.

## More of the Same

### by the 1926 Committee

Available for £5 (payable to S.Cope) from Box 26, 56a Infoshop, 56a Crampton St London SE17

THE 1926 COMMITTEE (or their earlier incarnation The Proles) have played at some of the best benefits I've been at in the last 6 years or so. Whether anti-poll tax, Liverpool dockers, Albert Meltzer's Birthday and funeral - whatever cause the movement has supported they've been there, in dusty halls or on picket lines. Here's your chance to repay that hard work and get yourself some right good anarcho-folk-pop at the same time.

Unlike so many worthy but dull anarcho bands, the 1926 Committee treat songwriting and musicianship as crafts. This tape contains ten tracks, played in a variety of styles. My favourite, just for its sass and humour, is "Attitude Problem", a chirpy little number about having pride in your class and not falling for all this classless society bullshit. I defy anyone working class not to find themselves somewhere in this song!

Some songs are explicitly political, like "Wandsworth Prison" and "Viva Zapata!". Others explore the everyday resistance inherent in even small acts, like finding your voice and having the confidence to sing, such as "Shattering Silence". Either way, the politics run right through, and the politics are good.

My biggest surprise came with the bluesy piano arrangement on "On The Blade", a song I didn't really like the first times I heard it. This works really well and Steve gets to show off his voice, which is strong and human.

I'm writing this review while listening to that great Wobbly singer Utah Philips. That the 1926 Committee can stand alongside him on a tape recorded in a living room is testament to their ability. If you like our music real and rootsy, buy this one.

MH

## anarchist library and archive

OPENED IN January 1996 By Albert Meltzer, the 1 in 12 Club Library exists to reflect and promote the anarchist principles of mutual-aid, self-management and co-operation. The library contains hundreds of books and periodicals reflecting various strands of anarchist thought, its history and the movements it has and continues to inspire and influence.

The selection of material is made with an emphasis on the participative rather than the academic, for books that actively encourage, as well as inform on the struggle for a free and more egalitarian world.

Housed on the second floor of the 1 in 12 Club the library offers both a reference and a lending service to its members. More information and any donations of books and periodicals can be made to:

1 in 12 Club Library Collective  
21-23 Albion Street,  
Bradford  
West Yorkshire, BD1 2LY  
Tel. 01274 734160



## new from the Meltzer Press

*Francisco Ponzán: His Struggle and Death (1936-44) Volume 1 - Revolution and Defeat 1936 to 1939*  
By Antonio Téllez Solá

*The CNT in the Spanish Revolution Volume 1 (Chapters 1-15)*  
By José Peirats

This is the book which loads of academic historians have ripped off about the Spanish revolution. Now The Meltzer press are making this available for the first time in full in English.

Both price £12.50 spiral bound from  
TMP, PO Box 35 HASTINGS TN34



# happiness in balance

REALITY, I SUPPOSE, is the relationship between all the individual universes. In order to change the hearts and minds of people, anarchist theory and practice has to tackle the grey zone where fact meets fiction in all the communities that surround us. Recognising that what is true in one place may not necessarily be true elsewhere. That grey zone must be approached with the understanding that individual good and the common good never need be mutually exclusive.

We are also acting in the belief that to change the structure of society our ways of working together are going to be inherently different from the hierarchical economic power-based relationships of most prevailing culture. It's important too, to realise that we ourselves are infected with those dominant values. It is vital to be objective when analysing any given situation. The ground on which we learn and develop these new ways of relating is in our everyday life.

A specific example to consider is where the community of drug users intersects with the anarchist/libertarian community.

Here are some points to consider:

- Is the drug use experimental, recreational or dependant?
- If it is experimental, is it safe?
- Does recreational drug use indeed give the anticipated pleasurable effects?
- Does recreational drug use interfere with other activities?

• Does dependant drug use, physical or psychological, displace or complement other social activities?

Answers will vary according to the problems and issues surrounding you, ie. Health and safety, lifestyle and management. Health and safety means having available the correct information and non-judgmental advice about the various drugs in order to reduce potential or actual harm.

Lifestyle is specific to the individual and is affected by micro situations (eg. personal relationships) and by macro situations (eg. housing availability, jobs etc) and, sometimes, the legality or illegality of the drugs being used. Management is what mostly concerns us here since that is the point of interface between "drugs" and "the group".

Some more points to consider:

Anarchism is rooted in mutual aid and co-operation. It is about reorganising society so that every individual has equal access to health, wealth and freedom of choice. Each individual has responsibility for themselves and the community around them as far as their ability allows.

So philosophically an anarchist group has no remit to condemn anyone for using the drug(s) of choice or necessity. Where personal problems do intrude on the group's effective functioning, then institutional, methodological, emotional and informational means can be used to sort things out.

- Institutional: procedures, regula-

tions and policies.

- Methodological: what to do and how and when.
- Emotional: people's feelings and prejudices.

• Informational: addressing the lack of knowledge relevant to the issues being raised.

Participation and communication are key factors in the dynamics of group practice.

O.K. So your group has a project. Your philosophy provides the basic guidelines. Surely you have made a list of what needs doing? Yeah, we live in dysfunctional communities. Sort out your feelings. Distinguish them from the job in hand. Build friendships based on trust. Build networks based on honesty. Does your attitude get in the way of getting the job done? Does your attitude sit well with your philosophy? Who are you scapegoating because there just isn't enough people? Spend some time sorting out the personal issues and then get on with the bloody job.

All the variables mentioned here need to be considered as a related whole that changes constantly through the interaction of each part. That is the mechanics of the revolutionary process we are involved in. Drug use has always been an intrinsic part of society. When will you see past the divisions and into the total picture. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to seize what "the state" (of existence) throws at you and wrestle with it, re-work it, until the end product is beneficial to all.

Bibliography: 'A Framework for Understanding Drug Use' Andy Malinowski.

Next Issue: 'Specifically Heroin'.

## searchlight: you've got to know who the enemy is

THE JANUARY edition of *Searchlight*, for any of you who still read it, may have given the impression that *Black Flag* is somehow supporting them in their campaign against Larry O'Hara, self confessed journalist and anti-fascist researcher etc. They go so far as to say that 'Much of the condemnation of O'Hara has come from individuals and organisations who have significant political differences with *Searchlight*...'. Yes we do have significant political differences. *Searchlight* have consistently stirred up shit against anarchists for many years, from smears against squatters on the Stamford Hill estate in Hackney (conveniently timed as the squatters

were preparing to resist eviction), to getting Class War suspended from AFA. We have always been clear that *Searchlight* have a pro-state pro-cop agenda, that their anti-fascist information is suspect and that their politicking in the anti-fascist movement has always been to the detriment of anti-fascist activists. In short, they are dodgy. Political 'differences'! *Searchlight* quote a review in *Black Flag* 206 of *Turning Up the Heat*. To make it clear, we may not agree with everything that Larry O'Hara says but we do agree with him that *Searchlight* are dodgy.

The two page attack on O'Hara was prompted by the publication of *Searchlight for Beginners*, his most straightforward work to date. Following the *Searchlight* piece he has published a detailed rebuttal of the smears against him called *Searchlight Fiction Pulped*. He points out that *Searchlight* never defend themselves from his, or other, allegations

as they don't want to mention what these allegations are. They had hoped that the issue would just go away, leaving them to restore their credibility. O'Hara has shown that he won't go away. The rest of this pamphlet deserves to be read a lot more widely than the *Searchlight* article! One key part is the section 'To Interview Or Not': on his direct contacts with various Nazis. It is honest (I hope) and points out *Searchlight's* hypocrisy on the issue (they do it too). But it is no excuse. This is probably the criticism most active anti-fascists have of O'Hara: is there really any justification for this sort of 'research'? But this isn't supposed to be a review, any offers?

It has to be possible to criticise Larry's methods/conclusions without being labelled a Friend of *Searchlight*. *Green Anarchist's* dubious editorials (all water under the bridge now) were plain silly. Being used to endorse *Searchlight's* smear campaign is downright sinister.



# letters...

Dear Black Flag,

Maybe I've been conned by middle class propaganda but I seem to have missed the proof of the Advance Party/Freedom Network/Reclaim the Streets policing activity (Mat's letter in the last issue). Sure, there was a suggestion at a meeting of spraying trouble makers with green paint, and a stupid leaflet was put out at one demo, but the response from within the movement and the battle of Hyde Park cleared much of that crap away. In our struggles we change ourselves as we confront reality and other people - that is apart from those who already know it all, who are blinded by ideology. Anyway the three groups can't just be lumped together and both RTS and the Freedom Network exist to develop struggles beyond single issues.

So what about class? Circled @ is a fine critique of the anarcho scene, its posturing and self-perpetuation instead of confronting reality. But blaming the middle class (like blaming the SWP, unions, labour party..... for our defeats) is not a class analysis. Its a cop-out, a conspiracy theory instead of confronting our failures, our strengths, our history. Why has class become marginalised? Why can Green Anarchist (for example) get away with writing off the working class as losers who read the Sun and do the Lottery? Why do both sides portray the sociologists' Andy Capp parody as the working class, to be admired or derided? Why does class matter? It's not that the middle class can supposedly fulfil themselves within society as it is - we all have immediate interests to defend against our need to break through beyond this world. And it's not that the working class is some oppressed minority.

The working class is global - we produce the world and it is stolen from us, turned against us to make us work ever more in exchange for mere survival (yes it is possible to steal from us despite us owning nothing - it happens every second of our lives). Our history has shown our power to refuse this theft, to develop struggles to retake our power, our world, our social knowledge, to build a world for us all. But for 20 years we have lived through the panic of the enemy - disinvestment and the flight of capital, state terror and new technology, that have disrupted and fragmented our powerbases and our struggles. For those brought up in these days, in this corner of the world, the system appears purely as destruction, of the world, of communities, rather than as a contradiction that shows our power. The working class appears as just another victim rather than the power whose insubordination has forced capital into desperate terrorism. But once more links and ideas are being built, locally, globally, hesitantly, questioningly. Yes, we need to find ways to rebuild our power where we work and where we live, learning and taking strength from other struggles instead of just waiting for the next big event. We have to make our struggles give others strength. And yes we need autonomy, to talk and fight for our needs, because nobody can talk for the real working class - we are what we are. Because our class is divided and stratified, some parts given power and privilege over others. Autonomy to develop our real links so that together we can blow away the misery and greed that dominate our lives and our world.

FROM CHIAPAS TO CHAPELTOWN

RECLAIM THE WORLD! - RECLAIM THE IMAGINATION!

Myk

## Black Flag maillist

THERE IS now an e-mail list for anarchists in the UK - the Black Flag Maillist. We hope it will become a dynamic forum for discussion among those anarchists with access to e-mail and also act as a rapid news service within the UK. To subscribe send a note to [listserv@qnet.org.uk](mailto:listserv@qnet.org.uk) with 'subscribe blackflag-l' in the body of the message.

We look forward to meeting you online.

## Pamphlets by Larry O'Hara:

A Lie Too Far	£1.00
At War with the Truth	£2.00
Searchlight for Beginners	£2.50

There are only a few remaining of A Lie Too Far. If the other two are bought together the price is discounted to £4.00.

All prices include postage, available from: BM 4769, London WC1N 3XX. Make cheques payable to L. O'Hara

Dear Black Flag,

Reclaiming May Day - about time! A book fair as part of a whole week of activity - great idea! But I won't be there. What dwellers in their own small cocoon picked the day of the rugby league cup final to hold it? IN BRADFORD OF ALL PLACES! The class struggle anarchists responsible for this one obviously have about as much contact with working class life in West Yorkshire as I have with dengue fever.

No, it doesn't make much difference that Bradford are in the final, though that is hardly a turn-up for the book. The cup final is everyone's day, no matter who you support (and that includes almost as many women as men, by the way). It just means about 15,000 extra Bradford people will be travelling to London, instead of watching the game, in pubs or at home.

Rugby league began because working class people weren't taking shit from toffs any more, and relied instead on their own strength and organisation. The monied classes fought back and one of the turning points of the struggle became known as the 'Bradford Betrayal' (they lost and ended up introducing the round-ball 'Sheffield code' to the city instead!). We might be tainted by Murdoch these days, but thousands of supporters defeated his merger plans a couple of years back and gave him a rare bloody nose. As one of the game's agitators said at the time 'rugby league began as, and still is, a political movement'. Is it still enough of a political movement? Will the game eventually be Murdochised out of recognition? Once again, the struggle seems at its sharpest in Bradford.

But this important part of local working class culture, its history and present contradictions, doesn't seem to impinge on the May Day reclaimers. Not their world, is it? They just go and organise a book fair on cup final day! For all this event has to do with Bradford, it might as well be the Henley regatta.

R.L. George - Leeds

## Huddersfield ABC

Huddersfield ABC have changed their address to:  
PO Box 381  
Huddersfield  
HD1 3XX





# *judi bari*

November 7, 1949 - March 2, 1997

JUDI BARI, born in Baltimore, Maryland, on November 7, 1949, was a firebrand orator widely regarded as the principal leader of the Earth First! movement in Northern California. She guided regional Earth First! to adopt a policy of non-violent direct action, and to renounce the use of tree-spiking.

The common denominator in the causes she fought for was her indignation over injustice and her determination to fight it. When she was a student at the University of Maryland she majored in "anti-Vietnam War rioting." While working at a post office bulk mail facility near Washington, D.C., Bari helped organize a strike for better working conditions.

It was after moving to the West Coast, while working as a construction carpenter, she began to wonder about the beautiful tight-grained redwood boards she was hammering. She resolved to work to preserve the remaining old-growth redwood forests. She became the contact person for Earth First! in Ukiah in 1988, working out of the Mendocino Environmental Center there.

Bari was one of the early organizers of efforts to preserve Headwaters Forest in Humboldt County. She continued her union activism when she helped workers who were doused with toxic fluid in an accident in the Georgia-Pacific sawmill at Fort Bragg, California. The company told the workers the spill was just mineral oil, but testing showed it was laden with PCBs. Bari organized the affected workers into Local #1 of the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) and argued their case successfully in the U.S. Labour Court, despite her lack of legal training.

Betty Ball credited her with the "feminization" of Earth First! "It had been incredibly male-dominated prior to Judi's entrance. There were women involved but none were as successful as Judi in putting the feminine spin into it, and getting rid of some of the macho chest-beating that had been prevalent in Earth First! prior to that. Judi also innately understood the importance of community-based organizing, as opposed to the nomadic style that Earth First! had before that."

Many believe it was because she was able to begin building alliances between timber workers and environmentalists that she was targeted by the timber companies. In 1989 her car was rammed from behind by a log truck sending her, another adult and three children to a hospital with

minor to moderate injuries. In the spring of 1990 Bari and other Earth First! activists began receiving anonymous death threats. When she reported the threats, she was told "When you turn up dead, then we'll investigate."

It was then the eve of Redwood Summer when Bari, Cherney, and others were working to bring thousands to the redwood region, inspired by the Mississippi Summer civil rights campaign of the '60s. On May 24, 1990, as Bari and Cherney were driving in Oakland, California, a powerful explosion under Bari's driver's seat nearly killed her and injured Cherney as well. The Police and FBI were quickly on the scene, and arrested Bari and Cherney, telling the press that they were the only suspects in what police said was a case of terrorists injured by an accidental explosion of their own bomb which they were transporting somewhere.

Bari barely survived the bomb blast, which fractured her pelvis in several places, pulverized her tailbone and caused extensive tissue and nerve damage, crippling her and leaving her with constant pain. Two months after the bombing the District Attorney declined to press any charges, citing lack of evidence. No other suspects have ever been identified by police or FBI, and both have continued, to the present day, to say that Bari and Cherney were their only suspects.

In May, 1991, a year after the bomb, Bari and Cherney filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the FBI, several agents and against the Oakland Police and individual officers. The suit alleges that they were falsely arrested by the Police at the illegal, politically-motivated instigation of the FBI. Their attorney wrote: "Actually the bombing was a clear, carefully designed, criminal attempt to stop and silence Judi Bari, a leader of activist protest by Earth First! against destruction of the forest environment and local human communities by corporate logging powers in northern California; and to intimidate and weaken the movement she and Darryl Cherney were part of. The reality of this criminal-terrorist-attack was ignored ... by the ... authorities, and they have continued to do so up to the present." Darryl Cherney has vowed that the suit will go on.

In a December '96 interview with the San Francisco Examiner, Bari said that timber workers no longer agree with the argument that environmentalism is the main threat to their jobs. "They're not stupid," she said. "In Mendocino County since 1990, Louisiana Pacific laid off more than two-thirds of its workers and closed five of its seven mills. What we've been saying is true: It's corporations versus the

rural community. We've never said no to logging. We just want sustainable logging."

Judi Bari died peacefully at home from the effects of breast cancer.

Adapted from Nicholas Wilson (nwilson@mcn.org) for the Albion Monitor (<http://www.monitor.net/monitor>)

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## *dave jarret (30)*

ON FEBRUARY 16<sup>th</sup> 1997 a great friend and committed anarchist died of a brain haemorrhage. In his 15 years as an anarchist, Dave was a member of Class War, an important member of Reading ABC and ended up working with the IWW.

Dave had a no-nonsense class-struggle outlook. He was primarily an activist, taking part in the miners strike, Poll Tax rebellion, Anti Fascism (confronting fascists physically, not just writing to the Guardian) and the fight against the CJA.

Dave was a great innovator and an influence to many. He had no time for single issue politics or non revolutionary green politics; he scorned the criticism of cynics or bitter and narrow minded lifestylists. Dave put his theory into practice and did not confine himself to an arm-chair mumbling about how shit the world is. Dave will not be forgotten, and his enemies are our enemies and our day will come! He will be with us always! See you on the front-line Dave...

### **anarchist faq**

A SET OF frequently asked questions regarding anarchism and their answers have been posted on the internet. They are extremely extensive ranging from simple questions such as *What is anarchism?* and *What will an anarchist society look like?* to giving arguments against 'anarcho-capitalists' with much history and content in between. The site has been visited over 11,000 times so far and can be found at:

<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/1931/>  
and  
<http://www.cat.org.au/afaq/>



**As long as Workers are  
exploited and oppressed  
there will be...**



**WORKING CLASS  
RESISTANCE!**