



BULLETIN of the ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS

- " I know my head will not be the last to fall. You will add other names to the list of the men you've killed. You have sent us to the gallows in Chicago, to the block in Germany, you have strangled us in Jerez, sent us before the firing squad in Barcelona, guillotined us in Montbrison and Paris, but you will never be able to destroy Anarchy.
- " Its roots are too deep; it comes out of your rotten society and destroys it, it is a violent reaction against established order. It represents the equalitarian and libertarian aspirations that are rising to crush present-day authority; it is everywhere and it cannot be suppressed. It will end by destroying you. "

The last speech of EMILE HENRY

Editorial

MAKHNO'S "BLACK CROSS"

It is fifty years since Nestor Makhno organised units of the Black Cross, originally intended as field-working units similar to those of the Red Cross (as used elsewhere in Russia, described in this issue). The Black Cross units in various cities of the Ukraine were for purposes of workers' self defence, as well as for purely "ambulance" type activity. The use of Cossacks, the prevalence of White Guards, pogromists, as well as the growing Red Army, made it necessary for city dwellers to be able to protect themselves in the streets.

They wore no particular uniform except that, to enable themselves to be recognised at times of violence in the streets, they wore denim overalls with a recognisable armband. Their job was to organise resistance to sudden pogroms, whether the conventional type Czarist pogrom, or action by the police, or the sudden onslaught of Red or White Guards.

Those who think of movements for self-defence purely in terms that we think of them in the West today (largely legalistic, like the Council for Civil Liberties, excellent though such a body is for its specific function) will find it surprising that a body organised solely for defence of prisoners, and for the protection of workers in their homes and factories, should have become one of the major adjuncts to the fighting forces of Makhno's peasant army. It was, indeed, the first urban army to be formed in the Ukraine; by 1920, when the Whites were an organised body aided by foreign intervention, the city-Makhnovistas, the Black Cross, was the only force in the towns that could organise military self-defence along with the peasants. They faced three enemies, Petliura in the West, the Bolsheviks in the North, and the monarchists in the East and South. But they were able to defend the cities though they were never a mobile force like the peasant army.

Most certainly, in a revolutionary situation such as existed in

Germany when the Nazis were rising to power, it is highly necessary to have a movement that is able to resist. The mere provocation of the State by protest, when one can only be crushed by the full powers at the disposal of the State, is not enough. It is necessary, when fighting dictatorship, to be able to oppose a monolithic force to it that can fight back when attacked.

The Ukrainian "Black Cross" arose out of purely defensive needs, in order to protect workers occupying their places of work, to defend demonstrations in the streets, and so on. Its form of organisation might have been that of the Red Cross (even that of the Salvation Army, as one observer sneered!) but it was able to adapt that form of organisation into a fighting force.

ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS

Bulletin, 6d. (Sub. 1 year 3/-)

FROM:-

7 Coptic Street
London, W.C.1.

CRUZ NEGRA INTERNACIONAL...CROIX-NOIR INTERNATIONALE

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"And Kropotkin said that in his view, the Royal Lifeboat Institution and the International Red Cross were examples of Mutual Aid, and presumably, of Anarchism!" So runs the gentle joke of many a don commenting on Kropotkin's teachings. And he omits to point out that in the very same paragraph that Kropotkin says this, he grants the fact that "princes of the blood" and others have conferred their patronage on such organisations, after they have shown that they are socially acceptable, but that the actual work done by the lifeboatmen or the Red Cross volunteers is a supreme example of the principle of Mutual Aid between mankind. The lifeboatman does not count the profit; he does not argue with the sinking captain for commercial advantage (though he could, and capitalist morality would justify his doing so?)

The RED CROSS founded by Dunant has saved innumerable lives in warfare between nations. We are far from criticising it; but depending as it does on governmental tolerance, it has its limitations. It can arbitrate as regards the sick and wounded and imprisoned of, say, Germany and England; it cannot help those of Russia and Japan because the govern-

ments of those countries do not care a damn about their subjects and (at least in the Second World War) were beyond the point where they need care for public opinion. (Even the Germans would have protested had the Nazis left German POWs to their fate; but the Samurais of Nippon and the Soviet regarded them as "traitors").

In the same way, it was always impossible to ask the Red Cross to look after the sick and wounded and imprisoned of the Class War. In a Civil War (e.g. Spain 1936) they might do so; but not in cases where there was no declared civil war. This gap in the Red Cross became particularly noticeable in Czarist Russia. The rulers of that country had in effect declared a civil war against their own subjects. In particular they used the Cossacks to murder the Jews. The Jewish population was a

hostage to the revolution. If the Russian workers protested, the Czar diverted their revolutionary aims by organising a pogrom. It was at once an example to the Russian masses, and a warning as to what would happen to those who incurred official displeasure. When the "Black Hundreds" raided the Jewish districts, the police stood by. If ever the Jews resisted (and Anarchists and Bundists at times organised Self Defence Committees that fought back) the police stepped in and fought the defenders, arresting them for violent activity.

International Jewry organised its own committees for relief of the Russian Jews; but such bodies did not extend their help to the Anarchists and Bundists who had - dreadful to relate to the bourgeois sponsors of such committees - had the temerity to fight back. So a committee was formed in America, amongst Russian Jewish workers in particular, called the WORKERS RED CROSS (which changed its title after a few months to ANARCHIST RED CROSS, since the Red Cross Workers, asked them to do so to avoid confusion),

THE ANARCHIST RED CROSS, centered in Chicago, raised a large amount of aid not only for the Jewish fighters in Russia but also for the entire Russian revolutionary movement. It sent field workers to Russian prisons, aided deportees and (not being bound by any convention such as the official Red Cross) also sent in illegal propaganda. The existence of such a body meant, too, that aid could speedily be sent to victims of the class war in many countries. Perhaps one

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day the full story of the Anarchist Red Cross will be told. (Its work was carried on for a long time after its demise by the Free Society Group of Chicago; in particular, comrades Boris Yelensky and Celia Goldberg)

When the Russian Revolution came, the Anarchists needed their Red Cross units more than ever. The organisation set up, in many ways a continuation of the old A.R.C., was known as the Black Cross (partly to distinguish itself from the Bolshevik "Red" and partly again to save the Geneva organisation, doing good work in general relief, from embarrassment).

The Anarchist Black Cross was overwhelmed with work. The prisoners multiplied; there was no abatement in governmental tyranny. Alexander Berkman, expelled from Russia to Berlin, tried to cope with the fund for Russian prisoners, when a new demand came in (for the victims of the Fascists in Italy). The album of Kropotkin's funeral (the last permitted non-Bolshevik demonstration in Russia, for which Anarchists were specially released from Russian jails, which we may at some time reproduce) was sold to alleviate distress amongst prisoners in Italy and Russia. With the repression in Spain, the rise of the Nazis, and depression in the countries from which the money was coming, the Black Cross collapsed.

There were similar organisations from time to time (e.g. Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista, whose secretary in London was Ethel Mannin) which did good work in their time. When, however, our friend Stuart Christie was arrested in Spain, we found the lack of any organisation which could help in such a case. In particular, Amnesty did not want to know. They were prepared to take up the cases of political prisoners provided those prisoners were "innocent", their ideal prisoner was a University professor charged with liberal thinking, who had never lifted a finger against repression in his life and had still found himself in jail.

Many comrades from many countries sent food parcels and the like to Stuart, from Germany and elsewhere, people who had never met him. (And this gave us particular satisfaction, remembering 1945, when we had organised sending food parcels to Germany, which had come from Britain, USA and even Palestine; a factor helpful in keeping many old militants alive in the post-war period).

In prison, the Anarchists and some other political prisoners (but not the Moscow-liners, who refused to collaborate) had formed a commune in which they shared their food parcels from outside. Spanish prisons permit food and medical supplies to be sent from outside; if one relied on the prison hospital one would die neglected. But, while parsimonious, it is

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prepared (unlike British jails) to allow donations from outside. When Stuart returned, he knew who was in difficulties in Spain, he was indeed "mouthpiece" of the libertarian political prisoners in Spain.

We began to send parcels, and in doing so, revived the idea of the ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS. Some start has been made to making it a permanent organisation.

It is not intended to be a charity.

It is to organise solidarity for victims of the class war.

We are sending food parcels at present but by no means wish to limit what we send (whether to Spain or elsewhere?) merely to food or medical supplies, vital as these are to those concerned. If the governments would recognise our work, we would confine it to humanitarian purposes and relief of prisoners.

As it is, we deem it part of our task to help with other facets of the struggle; in places where we can provide effective solidarity.

In some parts of the world Anarchists are able to work without undue interruption by authoritarian forces; and they can also be isolated geographically from participating in the more active struggle such as exists in Spain.

Their aid is needed. We hope to bridge the gap.

-----A. Meltzer-----

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THE DOLLAR CASE Stuart Christie was charged (on May the First) with possessing "forgeries". The date and the charge were intended by the Home Office to intimidate workers and students militant against the Wilson Government. It was admitted in court that similar bills have been used for commercial purposes; this was political propaganda to be used in Spain. Previous cases of this sort were given conditional discharges (Terry Chandler, Chas. Radcliffe and Melvyn Estrin). Stuart Christie has been committed to the Old Bailey and comes up on the present sessions.

THE ALBEROLA CASE As will be seen from the columns of FREEDOM, we have been active in organising a defence of Octavio Alberola, who was detained in Belgium. Some considerable publicity has, as a result, been given to the case in Belgium. He is now at Ostend, having been confined to Western Flanders. He is in good spirits, and at liberty, but the authorities have not allowed him to have papers to work. He does therefore need our financial support, and contributions will be welcomed.

EDO and CANETE and ALICIA MUR SIN With luck, Canete and Alicia should be free some time this year. Edo's case is far more grave. We shall continue to give press publicity to this case.

FUNCTIONS so far held by the Anarchist Black Cross include a social evening in the Arts Laboratory (given to us free by the principals) and a Folksong Evening at the Horseshoe Public House. We hope to hold a large concert when the summer season ends, as a number of well known showbiz personalities have offered us their services.

We hope that the proceeds of this social will be sufficient for us to help EDO and also our old comrade MIGUEL GARCIA GARCIA who has spent eighteen years in prison in Burgos, and is now in Soria Prison with Edo.

Amongst other contributions we are pleased to say we received, unsolicited, \$100.00 from an Italian comrade in the States.

IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH PRISONS

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In 1883, twenty-two Anarchists had been sentenced to imprisonment for the sole crime of professing their opinions. Those serving more than a year were taken from Lyons to Clairvaux. "So long as we were at Lyons we were treated as prisoners under preliminary arrest are treated in France," wrote Kropotkin (Memoirs of a Revolutionist). "That is, we had our own clothes, we could get our own food from a restaurant, and for a few francs a month one could hire a larger cell...I took advantage of this for working hard upon my articles for the Encyclopaedia Britannica and the Nineteenth Century. Now the treatment we should have at Clairvaux was an open question. However, in France it is generally understood that, for political prisoners, the loss of activity and the forced inactivity are in themselves so hard that there is no need to inflict additional hardships. Consequently we were told that we should have the same regime as at Lyons. We should have separate quarters, retain our own clothes, be free of compulsory work, and be allowed to smoke. ... Like the other prisoners, we were allowed to buy from the prison canteen some additional food and a pint of claret every day, both being supplied at a very low price and of good quality..... The governor and all the wardens were very polite to us." When the governor showed the prisoners to their rooms, Kropotkin said that "they were all right, only a little too small for such a number, and that overcrowding might result in illness". As a result "he gave us another set of rooms...our windows looked upon a little garden and off upon beautiful views of the surrounding countryside". They had obtained "three spacious rooms, and a smaller room for Gautier and myself so that we could pursue our literary work... we had a garden where we could play ninepins...we grew flowers...we organised classes, and during the three years we remained at Clairvaux I gave my comrades lessons...nearly every one learned at least one language while some learned two. We also managed to do bookbinding..."

THAT WAS 85 YEARS AGO IN FRANCE.

WHAT WOULD SUCH HACKS AS PETER SIMPLE OR TIMOTHY SHY SAY IF SUCH "UTOPIAN" CONDITIONS WERE SUGGESTED FOR ENGLISH PRISONERS, LEAST OF ALL POLITICALS?

The English ruling class is the meanest and most vindictive in Europe. With all those conditions at Clairvaux, 85 years ago, Kropotkin still said "the results are as bad as

IN ANY OF THE PRISONS OF THE OLD TYPE".

"The will of the prisoner must be killed and it is. There is no room for exercising one's will; to possess one's own will means to get into trouble. physically and mentally he is rendered less and less capable of sustained effort, and if he has already a dislike for regular work, the dislike is only the more increased during his prison years. If before he was wearied by monotonous work, his dislike now becomes hatred."

In Russia Kropotkin had believed that the dirty, overcrowded "unreformed" Russian prisons were capable of improvement. With less overcrowding and less dirt, he (at nineteen) had thought they might be tolerable. At Clairvaux he parted with these old illusions. The prisons did not reform. In Russian and French Prisons, he wrote that they were THE UNIVERSITIES OF CRIME.

Why are British prisons lagging so far behind? Not that the Home Office lacks progressive penologists and liberal sociologists; psychologists have quoted Freud at it and essays are written by pedants and reformers which pass by way of Royal Commissions into acceptance. But we lag even behind countries where the ruling class has at least the excuse that it is terrified of doing otherwise.

WHEN IN PRISON DEMAND TO BE TREATED LIKE A "POLITICAL". IF THERE ARE POLITICAL CRIMES WHY ARE THERE (AS GOVERNORS PRETEND) NO POLITICAL PRISONERS? Not that the political wants to be privileged. But let him be the thin end of the wedge to changing the system.

SPAIN In the case of comrades under sentence of death we must make it clear that the world should not remain silent. Parcells nor sympathy are useless. Death sentences in Spain are not irrevocable. The regime is sensitive to protest.

THIS IS EVEN MORE SO IN THE CASE OF CUBA, which tries to gain left wing sympathy and is sensitive to protests. We call to mind the case of Jorge Cunil - sentenced to death in Madrid in 1961. The Spanish Vice Consul at Turin was kidnapped as a result; the suggestion was more or less that he was held as hostage. The death sentence was revoked.

Protests need not however be confined to death sentences. Many are serving sentences in Spain which in this country would be regarded as the equivalent. Ten and twenty years are common; indeed the former is regarded as a light sentence.

THE SPANISH ECONOMY IS VULNERABLE IN MANY PLACES. The regime is sensitive to public opinion. Moreover the upper bourgeoisie may well now want to dissociate themselves from the worst of Franco's excesses.

in English and Spanish
READ: MUJERES LIBRES. Organ of Spanish Womens Resistance.

NINETEEN YEARS IN PRISON

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----- One of Franco's longest-serving prisoners is Juan Bosquet, FIJL militant, who was 17 years of age when sentenced to death after having fallen with other comrades belonging to Sabater's group (the first "maquis" to invade Spain) by the Sabater brothers) into the hands of the fascists.

This is another case in which "Amnesty" is not interested for Bosquet is "GUILTY" of fighting fascism.

He is at present in Prision Provincial de Burgos.

Parcels and postcards will be well received.

THE RISE OF THE WORKERS IN CANTON. Heartening news comes from the Chinese comrades in their struggle against State Control of industry. The workers in Canton, flying the black flag, have for THREE YEARS been engaged in a struggle to seize their factories. The Maoists wish to dilute the demand for "workers' control" by talking of "workers' & students' control" which will be under party discipline. In the latest fighting in Canton between Communist police and the workers, five policemen were killed. There is no way in which we can help victims of the police, but we would make an appeal for Chinese scholars, able to translate from and into the language, or Esperanto-speakers, so that news items from abroad (particularly relating to the students' struggles elsewhere, since the Chinese students are pro-authority) can be transmitted to China.

CALENDAR: Comrade Desmond Jeffery has kindly offered to produce a calendar for the Anarchist Black Cross. More details will be published in our next issue. Thanks too for a Black Cross banner to Desmond Jeffery. We also hope eventually to publish a series of posters of Emile Henry, the Bonnot Gang, Ravachol, Nestor Makhnow, etc. and others from the romantic heyday of the anarchist movement. (Other suggestions will be welcomed).

Cheques, POs etc. for the Anarchist Black Cross should be made payable to Mary Stevenson. Our thanks to Mary for acting as Treasurer. She has done a great deal in the background for the international anarchist movement, and her services have gone unnoticed. Especially in the sending of parcels to Spain we would like to take the opportunity of thanking her.

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