



Many correspondents have asked about the real split in the CNT, have asked for more about what we have reported. Unlikely reports about the now-famous 5th Congress in Madrid have circulated and now nobody can believe how smoothly it went off considering everything. There was, at the last day, a division. The stories of fights and worse are exaggerated.

Those who broke away and held a rival congress in Saragossa called themselves the "impugnados" (no clearer in Spanish than English - "the impugned"; but it seems that, if anything, they did the "impugning").

There is no clear split between one tendency and another that can be clearly explained (and which would be healthy). Certainly, the whole ideological position of the CNT is a mishmash of libertarian ideas: the lack of clarification about anarcho-syndicalism, the confusion between council communism and fascist corporativism, the new libertarianism coming in from the Anglo-Saxon countries (as exotic there as here), the entrenched 'exile' faction and the various strands of anti-fascism. This mishmash has had a section ('los impugnados') cut off it; neither represents something different from the other.

Impugned! - Whatever that means.

The "impugnado" commission alleges that the FAI has been reconstituted secretly and was securing control of the CNT National Committee. The FAI is illegal and banned by the Government as dangerous; yet on the other hand, if the FAI had been reconstituted in the way they say it may have

CNT SPLIT

VERDICT: Not Cloven

consisted of the reformist bureaucracy that was centred on Toulouse.

What the "impugnados" declare is that "they have not levelled any attack on the CNT" but the CNT has expelled them because of the belief (of the FAI, presumably) that they are "entrists" or "reformists" who want to collaborate with the State in forming a new union organisation that will not be so recalcitrant as the CNT. They state that all "subscribe to the principles of anarcho-syndicalism" (but confuse it with militant or libertarian trade unionism). They "admit" that there are those "who would place more stress on the trade union side of things, which tendency has a long history of presence within the CNT".

The CNT states that there are room for differences within the organisation; that the majority of syndicates do not want a split and that, while the Madrid Congress didn't solve much or go far (beyond a demonstration of the existence of the syndicates - which is an important thing in itself) those who broke away afterwards flouting the Congress can scarcely talk of democracy. (Though I don't see why not).

Takeover Bid

There is certainly a reformist and collaborationist current that has tried to get inside the Cnt. There has also been persistent attempts by political groupings to infiltrate, especially by the Trotskyist splinter groups but also by Catalanist and Christian elements, all of whom want a "normal union." These groupings are not on one side or other of the split but are caught up in it, and one suspects, helped to cause the atmosphere in which it can take place. They have a strong distaste for the method of organising - based on the places of work and the local trade halls. Notwithstanding the ideological mishmash of the CNT it has never got away from this decentralist form of organisation which puts paid to any bureaucracy or political leadership from the word go.

One report says that "to polarise" - in view of the above - is evading the real debate which is not being faced up to - "that is, the place of anarchism in today's world, and the failure of trade unionism." But one must add that anarcho-syndicalism - a term now vaguely

used in the libertarian movement when it should be precise - can be anarchist leadership of trade unions (in itself not necessarily a bad thing, as in the Miners Federation of Bolivia, but signifying a lack of dynamic in the workers who clearly still feel the need of leadership), but ought not to be so; and the 'classic' CNT was not thus.

Within the libertarian movement in its wider sense, and (because of the ideological mishmash) within the CNT also, there exists what is grandly known as "a questioning of the work ethic" together with a demand for jobs, for the hanging on to safe jobs or for a struggle for higher wages. All this can go together (but we see that even in small groups in this country, where there has been no ban, reinforced by genocide, upon discussion, confusion exists about this; how much more so in Spain!) Have those who oppose workers' organisation, for whatever reason, a place in that organisation? Maybe so; but this helps to make confusion.

Provocation

What is more serious is that the Government has tried everything to prevent the rebuilding of the CNT - which, for all its faults, remains one labour movement that has managed to remain libertarian and revolutionary and never entirely lose its base of influence in the working class. The Franco Government tried murder and imprisonment, deportation and exile, wholesale shootings and confiscation, and added to it a policy of silence. A generation grew up without hearing of the working-class traditions. The post-Franco

POLAND

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

iations with governments officials were broadcast over loudspeakers to the striking shipyard workers there in Gdansk. One has only to compare this to the secret negotiations by the "free" trade unions of the West with management to

realize how radical a situation had been created by the Poles.

Another measure of how radical the situation had become was the extreme concern in both Russia and the West that things not go "too far". Certainly the threat of Russian tanks and troops invading Poland held out the real prospect of a repetition of the bloody suppression of the Hungarian revolution in 1956 or at best a repeat of the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The Russians consistently made it clear that there were limits which if overstepped would trigger intervention. The Western leaders' policy of restraint was supposedly aimed at calming the Russian bear. In fact it was directed at undercutting the striking workers and shoring up the shaken Gierk regime. For whatever public pronouncements about the right to free trade unions, the Western leaders were far more concerned that Poland not default on its \$10 million debt to Western banks. The possibility of a prolonged period of social upheaval or the repudiation of foreign debts by the revolutionary regime sent shivers through their pocket books. Thus the West was no more interested in unseating the Gierk regime than were the Russians. Rounding this unholy alliance, the Catholic Church made it clear early on that it had no interest in jeopardizing its institutional status by wholeheartedly supporting a popular upsurge. Once again it has far less trouble adjusting to authoritarian regimes whether fascist or communist than it does to the possibility of social revolution.

SNATCHING DEFEAT FROM THE JAWS OF VICTORY

Shortly after the general strike got into full swing, the strike committee put forward a list of twenty-one demands. The strike was triggered by a round of price increases in June and more generally by food shortages for workers and the accompanying endless queues and a hatred for the privileged "red bourgeoisie" - the Communist Party elite. Notwithstanding this economic impetus, the twenty-one demands focused primarily on non-

"The whole picture must be seen, warts and all; we should not be blind to either its weaknesses or strengths because they are not in accord with our own theories."

economic issues: the right of workers to associate and form independent trade unions, the right to strike, increased access of the Church to mass media, amnesty for strikers and pre-strike dissidents. It was the first of these two demands (unions and the right to strike) which the Gierk regime resisted most strenuously because they were completely inconsistent with the Communist Party's pretended representation of the working class. This violation of Communist orthodoxy is doubly dangerous (and undoubtedly causes Brezhnev and Co. great concern) because of the instability it creates in Poland by establishing a power centre in the new unions beyond Communist Party control and because of the example it sets for the rest of the Eastern Bloc. But even more dangerous to the rulers of Poland and Russia was the disorder and resistance that spread each day the general strike continued. The continuing expansion of the strike must be seen as the ultimate reason why the Polish leadership capitulated to demands which would have been unthinkable six months before.

In the demands themselves we can see the very seeds of the workers' undoing. Nothing could have been worse for them than to have "won" their demands. The government's written agreement did no more than to ratify the achievements already accomplished in fact by the workers' direct action. They had already organized themselves; they had already struck; for a moment they had taken control of their own lives. By their very demands, the workers were going backwards, not forward. By seeking legitimacy from the government which had historically oppressed them, they acknowledged the right of those rulers to continue to oppress them. Thus the failure of vision exemplified by a totally reformist set of demands could not hope to result in anything other than a continuation of business as usual with new faces in high places after the dust had settled.

"Workers' councils were organized to co-ordinate activity throughout the country. Delegates were sent to Gdansk from various striking factories. Frequently they were rotated to permit new people to participate... the actual negotiations were broadcast over loudspeakers to the striking shipyard workers".

The roots of this failure had at least two prime sources in the West and the cause for it was not so much that there was no vision as it was the wrong one. For years the West has bombarded the East with propaganda concerning the "free world". This source of information attained a degree of credibility simply because it contained fewer lies than the official sources of information in the East. This together with the great wealth present in the West generated the illusion that trade unions modeled on those of Western industrial nations were somehow guarantors of both prosperity and freedom. Similarly the status of the Church as the sole legitimate power outside

(and to some extent against the state and Party made it a natural focus of any emerging public opposition movement. It would be foolish to ignore this force no matter how unpleasant or disturbing it may be. Unfortunately for the Poles, the priorities of the Church are and always will be different from and in an ultimate sense opposed to those of the workers. Thus the spectacle of workers on their knees at mass in an occupied shipyard was a grotesque foreshadowing of their ultimate defeat. What more can be expected when their nominal leader, Walesa, prominently displays a crucifix and publicly calls for the bureaucrats of the Church to draft the constitution of the new unions?

Certainly the story is far from over. In the grand tradition of management everywhere, The Polish government is seeking to take back in the courts and on the shop floor what could not be won at the negotiating table. Current reports from Poland indicate that the new unions must be "court approved" before they can be recognized and that individual workers have been harassed and threatened with loss of pension rights and other accrued benefits should they join the new unions.

However reformist the demands of the Polish workers have been and no matter how appalling and misplaced their faith in the Church and the West may be, we cannot ignore the fact that the Polish working class has had a true taste of its own power and has lived, however briefly, under its own self-management. The power of the experience of large numbers of people collectively taking matter into their own hands is not to be underestimated because that experience creates a dynamic which far surpasses any written set of demands. It is with that profound experience in mind and that hope for the future that we continue to listen closely to news from Poland.

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The debate with the minister took a long time to come to fruition for each of the protagonists. "At first they were very suspicious about me. When I had refused to be released in exchange for Lorenz, they thought that I was hiding something, that I was perhaps a supertactician, trying only to divert their attention in order to get back to the underground. They believed that we were some sort of diabolical supermen. They feared for their position, they were paralysed by a latent hysteria about anything relating to terrorism. In 1977 much of the debate was inconceivable, and

Speigel proposed it to me I had bet a case of champagne that it wouldn't happen. But they were adamant, they wanted to symbolically open the 80s with such a discussion.

It was risky. But I had had a long time to think about the consequences of terrorism. And I said to myself because I was so much identified with it, I had the opportunity to cause some stir inside the left. To break this mechanism which the left uses to discount certain positions, when confronted by them, under emotive headings - renegade reformist, opportunist, traitor etc."

For Mahler the dilemma of the German left is that it thinks

nothing in this State can be changed: "They do not understand anymore how to extricate themselves and devoid of changing perspectives, they come, despite all their reserves, to see in terrorism the expression of their own disorientation. This vicious circle must be broken. It must be got across that the State is also contradictory, that it is at one moment a mediator and the next an instrument of repression."

A curious reversal. After having denounced it as a supreme evil, Mahler is not far from declaring his loyalty to the State. He doesn't do it in the name of shabby opportunism, of which he is accused by many of his detractors but once again, by pure intellectual process.



HISM WORK

On 30th August about 1,500 people attended a "Beyond the Fragments" conference. The conference was held at Leeds University and was organized for those sympathetic to the ideas expressed in the book by Lynn Segal, Sheila Rowbotham, and Hilary Wainright, "Beyond the Fragments". The book examines the possibilities for the "fragments" of the "libertarian" left to unite outside the major left groups, the Labour Party, the SWP, the Communist Party and so on, but extra-parliamentary rather than anti-parliamentary and complimentary to rather than the left groups rather than in any real opposition.

Also present were approximately 100 people involved in the greater glory of the impersonal State. Mrs Thatcher's return from bi-party "Keynesian thinking" (what our national saga was all about) to good old-fashioned Tory monetarism has upset a great many appellants but especially that of the trade union movement.

It had become accustomed to being courted as the intermediaries between the capitalist class and the workers, and well supported by the State - the classical model of fascism, actually. The TU movement is now reeling from the blow of finding itself ignored by the government. It is entirely geared to cooperation with the State. It loathes confrontation. It was given a foretaste of what confrontation could mean at Grunwick's, which might not have been entirely incidental. Some ambitious TU leaders see the struggle between the Government and the working class as a possible interlude to the return of the Labour Party, and their militancy now, they feel, might mean popularity and preferment then. But they shudder when the word Chile is mentioned.

Against The Cuts?

It is an opportune time for minority parties to play the populist card, for demonstrations against 'the cuts' against the policies of unemployment, against everything that typifies the drift to war and poverty.

Looming over all these 'mass demonstrations' and 'wonderful turn outs', be they on reduced hospitals or troops in Ireland, on redundancy or nuclear suicide, on whatever damn thing they may be, is the overwhelming feeling of helplessness. How has this come about? Partly because politics in Britain is now about an elected dictatorship, and everybody feels it is a "parliamentary democracy" but knows at the same time that they have absolutely no power to do anything but protest, or vote in the alternate dictatorship. Everybody feels somebody else ought to be able to do something about it. Nobody does anything effectual.

The helplessness that is sometimes an introduction to the acceptance of mass genocide, sometimes a vote of no confidence in themselves by the people, and sometimes a mere acceptance of the facts of statist life can be overcome by an application of the good old Tory method of self-

reliance, but in aid of the Socialist principle of mutual aid - in a way with which neither will agree.

There is a new acceptance of self-help in the form of the old gang system. But trade union principles are still against it. Take the instance of the dustmen down in Essex (and it could apply to almost any group of municipal workers). They offered to take the whole burden of refuse collection off the rates, and to work it on the gang system for a minimum overhead charge sharing the proceeds of disposal (eventually it would be possible, in this instance, to do it for nothing).

How quick the work would be done - how much would be saved to the ratepayers - how much the workers would benefit - was only matched by the alacrity of conventional unionism in denouncing it. It would turn "their members" into a self-employed collective. What would be wrong with that? In Israel during the heyday of the kibbutzim - basically a cooperative principle applied all round - this is precisely how a large number of the industries were managed.

To be sure, it has its inbuilt dangers. The co-ops can (as happened in some cases in Israel) themselves become tainted with the greed of the capitalist society around them and themselves begin to exploit labour (an instance was a bus cooperative formed by the drivers, who later employed supernumerary drivers to do their work not partaking of the benefits of membership).

But it is inevitable that if the capitalist system goes on, the greed of the capitalist system will go on. Self-employment, collective self-employment is a way out of economic stagnation, not an answer to the ills of society - any more than orthodox trade unionism is, but like the TUs it can play its part in raising standards of employment.

The fact that so many self-employee ventures, individual or collective, avoid paying tax is an added incentive. The worker is forced to pay tax - it is grabbed out of his pocket before it gets in. Not so the self-employed. (Perhaps a booklet on the means of tax avoidance is long overdue here? Would it receive as much denunciation in the Tory Press as one on resistance to coups d'etat?)

Back to the Artisan

The vast field of motor maintenance, electrical work, house repairs, and more exotic things that I see going on, even language schools - are all indications of fields where people have decided to "have a go and do it themselves". Strange that the printing unions, for instance faced with a whole new revolution in offset printing collectives and small workshops, set their

faces against a drive for membership there (is it that they don't want to admit too many women at one go?) - yet if more newspapers close down, the future of newspaper production lies there, where no vast oil companies are needed to pump in capital, and everything can be done on a shoestring.

There are those who think that we shall never have another form of trade unionism, that what we have is too ingrained both in its members' acceptance and in the status quo ever to be altered; and that at least in this country we are foredoomed forever, short of revolution, to a single-party orthodox social-democratic trade unionism of which only the principle of the closed shop will ever vary, according to government pressure.

A New Labour Movement

That may be so; it need not be, but in any case it will not stop the ever-growing number of those who are getting up to protest against lack of cash in the most practical way possible, not so much by protest as by challenge, by cooperative and collective effort, by setting up for themselves rather than a big boss, especially if nobody comes forward willing to offer his services to exploit them. Nothing could be more farcical than the pleas for capitalists to come and exploit the workers. Certainly the pitfalls of workers co-op ventures are many, and the possibility of turning into capitalist enterprises if successful are great. But nothing like as bad as falling into the apathy and helplessness of the hungry twenties. What is needed is for the union movement to enter and take over this new field; or alternatively for a new union movement to arise in this field and make its influence felt on the old one.

That'd be a lot more popular than a new Labour Party led by Mr. Jenkins!

Grab Work

The anarchist attitude to capitalist or statist employment is caricatured by someone hanging around saying "Fuck work". That is a fair reaction to useless toil but it is not what is being said by the disillusioned in the new generation who see in the "Big A" an answer to their problems. It is a fair representation of their that we should take the lot - as much as we can now. It is in line with Mrs Thatcher's policy of do it yourself? Maybe, but she will be the first to denounce it. It is no more than the social justice of the Labour Party? They will never support it. A new labour movement based on militant action coming from the 'moon-lighting zone' which withdrawing its labour, tax and the unemployed margin succeeds in dispelling the feeling that one can do nothing against the State but shout rude words at its representatives, might be just the shot in the arm everybody needs.

Albert Meltzer.



SIGNS OF CRIME?

David Powis is Deputy Assistant Commissioner at New Scotland Yard. He has been in the police force for more than thirty-two years. In his career he has been: a Superintendent in charge of the Special Patrol Group, Clubs Inspector in London's West End and Commander of two inner London Police Divisions.

Powis recently felt that his experience as a policeman over thirty-two years put him in a position to give others the benefit of that experience. Accordingly he wrote "Signs of Crime; a Field Manual for Police" (published by McGraw-Hill).

It is an illuminating work, giving us an insight into the workings of the policeman's mind. Instead of a long review we decided that the book could best be judged from the following direct quotations from it. Although entitled "Signs of Crime", we feel that it would be more appropriately called: "Signs of Rampant Paranoia"!

Judge for yourselves.

The smell of semen is very distinctive. If you are trying to make up your mind whether or not the persons you are interrogating are motor-wandering thieves, fugitive escapees living and sleeping in their clothes or merely honest travellers, this smell in the vehicle, especially if stale, can be a pointer to a depraved life style consistent with a life of thieving, prostitution or political drop-out activity. I am not presuming to judge these types of people, but merely indicating useful, detectable and objective factors which a worldly policeman should consider when deciding on action that needs to be taken at the scene of a traffic 'stop'. It goes without saying that no females need be present for such an odour to be detected about the clothing, sleeping gear or general belongings of such unfortunate people. Prostitutes can be male or female, remember.

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BLACKWINGS

A REPLY

In criticising the letter from "Blackwings" in the last issue one has to bear in mind that it was written by a long-term prisoner; not necessarily labelled "political". Its deficiencies are understandable. In making a rebuttal of much of it, one hopes to make our position clearer for many - not necessarily to the writer, who probably will be unable to receive the reply.

He makes many criticisms which are based on ignorance, understandable in a prisoner but equally prevalent in libertarian circles generally. It can scarcely be a "popular fallacy" that prisoners "represent the vanguard of the revolution"! (Others talk of "fallacies" about the working class) It is like saying one's crack troops are the POW's. In reality, most people know that most crime is an extension of business by other means, that some crime is anti-social, and that therefore prisoners are bound to contain as many capitalist and anti-social elements as otherwise. The libertarian and revolutionary is just as much in a minority as elsewhere. In some countries, of course, even among political prisoners the reactionary or fascist element may dominate.

The importance of struggle in prisons is that prison is the last refuge of the State system, that without prisons it cannot maintain its hold and force over the people, and that stripping away the fears of prison/exposing the brutalities practised is a means of self-defence for those outside as much

as for those within. In the same way one does not "glorify" the workers. But it is by changing the economy that one makes a revolution: without that all social change must fail, and it is only the people who are working the economy who can take it over. "BLACKWINGS" castigates anarchist papers for preaching the abolition of prisons without dropping everything and liberating prisoners. It is far fetched to assume that generally prisoners in bulk can be liberated while the State exists. One or two, certainly, and that's been done - though hardly written about in advance. That is one thing and many who have escaped prison do not believe in the abolition of prisons, merely their own deliverance. (Winston Churchill once was glad to escape from prison). Abolition of prisons must be stated over and over again, for all reforms lead to the continuance of the system and a successful revolution that does not abolish prisons leads to a new tyranny.

That "The theme of revolution" is "mercilessly exploited by opportunist prisoners for material gain" sounds strange in England, though it does happen elsewhere, particularly in the totalitarian countries; but perhaps too by "Maoists" in the USA. But when "BLACKWINGS" denounces our "fine anarchist papers" for "virtually never mentioning extra judicial release from captivity" he is talking the language of desperation, of a provocateur or of lunacy. (It is desperation).

It must seem to a prisoner isolated from the world that every paper he receives has thousands or perhaps millions of supporters - "why don't they act?" - and alas, life isn't like that. Even if this were the case, one would hardly write about it. "Our fine papers" have to confine themselves to "prisoner support work" but do not necessarily have illusions. That is a caricature of prisoner support work. On practice, because of lack of sufficient support, one can only help libertarian prisoners, regardless of their "crimes" were political or whether only subsequent to their captivity did they come to libertarianism.

In totalitarian countries, mass escapes are necessary and often possible. (The U.S., it is true, is moving to totalitarianism in this respect, certainly as regards its treatment of Black prisoners). But practical considerations will always dictate that these can only be of people who know each other over a long period from working together outside (as in Spain during Franco, as in Uruguay).

This may sound depressing to a long term prisoner...especially one who is suffering like long-terms in the U.S.A. and who have no knowledge of the strength of movements outside. Yet it would be a pity if people were put off helping prisoners or advocating the abolition of prison solely because of adopting "Blackwings" view that it would be hypocritical to do so if one isn't at the same time smuggling files in cakes to people they don't know.

Black Cross work is (contrary to "Blackwings") a two-way matter between those inside and those outside. It has achieved the renaissance of Anarchist revolutionary struggle whenever it has been well supported, as well as providing solidarity with prisoners.

The Supergrass Strategy" is the first in a two part review of the way in which police informers and "grasses" have been used in recent years. The review comes from The Criminal Research and Action Group (CRAG). Crag is now mainly involved in investigating alleged verbal confessions ("verbals"). The group was formerly called Justice Against Identification and was prominent in the campaign to clear George Davis.

Charlie Lowe: In the same mould as Smalls. After being freed from his five year sentence in return for grassing,

The October issue of Orkney's alternative paper the "Free Winged Eagle" is now available. Articles include news of Uranium mining in Orkney, similar news about the effects of mining in Donegal, as well as a report on the effects of toxic chemicals which are on sale in this country.

The paper is not only of interest to those who live in the Orkney Islands. It is a valuable example to the rest of us in how to produce a well written and interesting paper for the community, combining news of the developments within that community with political comments.

It is well produced, readable and informative.

"The Free Winged Eagle" is available from:

"Over-the-Water", Sanday Orkney, Scotland.

Vol. 2 No. 1 Price 25p.



In September two well-known Belfast republicans were murdered in West Belfast. Gunmen burst into the home of Ronnie Bunting and shot him and a friend who was staying overnight, Noel Little to death. Ronnie's wife was also shot in the face and is critically ill in hospital.

Noel Little had been held for questioning by the police shortly before his death.

Ronnie Bunting was a republican of long standing. From a protestant background (his father was at one time a close colleague of Ian Paisley's) he became involved in the Civil Rights campaign in the late '60's. It was this involvement which brought him to the attention of the police and he was subsequently interned without trial in Long Kesh in 1971.

Ronnie Bunting

Upon his release, Ronnie became involved with the Official Republican movement. A committed socialist he was attracted to the Official's Marxist programme but became disillusioned with their increasingly obvious reformism.

The split in the Official's ranks came in 1974 with the breakaway group, The Irish Republican Socialist Party. The IRSP was formed from former members of both the Official and Provisional wings of the Republican movement.

A feud between the newly formed IRSP and the Official IRA ensued which claimed several lives on both sides. During this

feud Ronnie Bunting was shot by the Official IRA and was badly injured, sustaining a severe wound in the neck.

Upon his recovery, he became reinvolved with the IRSP and became prominent member of its Belfast organization. He was the victim of the kind of police harassment normal in the Six Counties.

No-one has been charged with Ronnie's murder, but some light has been thrown on the circumstances surrounding it was a recent incident in the Twinbrook estate in West Belfast.

Two houses were broken into by men in civilian dress, wearing balaclava helmets and carrying Armalite rifles (not army issue, but a weapon used

by the IRA). They smashed the lock on the doors and tied up the occupants of one house, a woman and her young child.

It was later admitted by the Army that the men were in fact members of the SAS. No explanation was offered as to why they were not in uniform, why they were carrying armalite rifles, and why they tied up the woman and young child.

The police claimed that it was part of an anti-terrorist operation but refused to be more specific.

People in Belfast are claiming that the similarities between this incident and the deaths of Ronnie Bunting and Noel Little is evidence of army and police responsibility for their murders.

LETTERS

centre

Dear Friends,

Re: The Anarchist Centre.

The comments I would like to make include the hope that if accommodation is forthcoming, a Library/Reading room could be established. I know that a large amount of Anarchist and Alternative literature is in store, could be collected and otherwise be made more accessible to students and researchers I know that some literature is rare and may very well be of considerable historical interest. But I would still like to see at least some of it displayed as perhaps photocopies, (some of us may be able to help in that connection in a limited way).

Certainly a 'social area' would be welcome, where the usual conviviality might be found for people visiting and in order to meet like-spirits. Local groups, individuals and sympathisers might be able to donate small amounts of resources, (furniture and fittings...) if and when a room is earmarked as suitable.

Part of the study accommodation could form a meeting/conference area. This is a fairly obvious comment I know, but I envisage a largish area where Anarchist groups and societies could hold talks, exhibitions and other meetings. I have in mind the kind of thing the Scientific Societies Lecture Theatre enables, in another connection. In this hall at the Centre, we might well build up Film Projecting facilities later.

How far could we progress towards a practical room, (the mind boggles!?), but seriously, I have always thought Anarchism had a large component of rather pragmatic direct action (in Wm James's sense). Hence a small workshop/craft/printing/yes even elementary 'research' area would be an asset. This would be especially true if the occasional youth or girl came along with an Anarchist friend, in order to do something practical...? (Armchair Anarchy would, of course, still be discussed at great length in the Social area....) Such a place might well double as a maintenance workshop for equipment in the whole Centre. I know that a number of other groups which are Anarchist-like, are in existence (wholefood shops, communities with a practical base, quite successful publishing groups in the Alternatives, such as 'Undercurrents' and 'Resurgence' magazine etc.) They are not directly Anarchist, but there is a great deal that Constructive Anarchism shares with these colleagues. There must be experience to draw on there, as well as points of closer cooperation that we are not accustomed to perhaps...?

Anyway I hope the Centre will form a model for other regions and towns - then all the 'centres' that local groups might establish would begin to show the federated pattern we talk about, actually working in practice.

Please keep me informed, if it is not too much of a chore. If there is anything I can do then please keep in touch - Mutual Aid and all that. So from an individual worker some little distance away, best wishes to everyone.

Ken Smith
Canterbury.

Dear Editor,
In my opinion the new layout of Black Flag is a big improvement, however I wish the same could be said for some of the articles!

The "Pygmies" article in the last issue (no. 4) was typical of what I feel to be a waste of time and space. Is it really all that important that some Trots use the word "pygmy" as an insult? Surely the more obvious criticism would be of the content of the article in question. This kind of pettiness gets us nowhere!

SW
Kent.

We don't like having to edit letters down, so please keep them as short as possible.

Letters should be sent to: The Editors, Black Flag, "Over-the-Water", Sanday, Orkney, Scotland.



"SIGNS OF CRIME"

Those pressurised cans that spray deodorant or 'air freshener' have themselves a slight but distinctive odour slightly differing from brand to brand. Over-use of these pressure-can sprays in a vehicle that is otherwise dirty and untidy, can be very suspicious. Are the occupants trying to mask the smell of cannibis or other pungent chemical odour? Bear this in mind on those motorway stops.

Criminals using vehicles who, although not dishonest in the ordinary sense, may, owing to extreme political views, intend to harm the community you have sworn to protect. While there are subtle differences between these types of extremists and thieves, it is difficult to put one's finger on material distinctions. However, they seem to have a motivation or dedication, whatever their appearance (they are usually scruffy and, occasionally, personally dirty), markedly dissimilar to the cynicism of the greedy and dissatisfied thief. Most thieves are reasonably conservative in their style of dress. Their unusual appearance would be towards flashiness rather than a 'don't care' casual look. You see, political immoderates consider themselves soldiers, rather than 'smart operators' who think the world owes them a living. This will show in thier ordinary conversation, where almost unconsciously they will use the jargon and phrases of thier beliefs. This intense and extremist gabble, if spoken with a cultured voice, particularly if the speaker is a woman, should make you pause and think through the likelihood that you may have stumbled over an important matter. Is there anything else in the car to confirm a suspicion?

To express a couple of personal prejudices. First, I have never seen street or motor thieves, no matter how financially successful they might be, wearing well-polished and well-repaired shoes. They may be 'snappy' or 'flash' dressers, their shoes may be of good quality, even new, but almost certainly they will be scuffed, dirty in the welts and down at heel. You can be certain they will not have been cleaned underneath between sole and heel. Second, I have never known such characters to smoke pipes in that slow reflective way that real smokers do. Some flash confidence thieves may have a pipe in thier mouths for effect, but they still will not look like pipe smokers.

Answers To Quiz

1. Though the Vizeerees were said to live solely by robbing other tribes and the government, they themselves had 'no general government; but are divided into societies, some under powerful khans, but others under a simple democracy; they are all most remarkable for their peaceful conduct among themselves; they have no wars between clans, and private dissension is hardly ever heard of.. notorious plunderers as they are, the smallest escort granted by them secures a traveller a hospitable reception throughout the whole tribe' (a report of 1833).

2. The Peasants Revolt of 1381. It was on Blackheath that John Ball preached his famous sermon - 'When Adam delved and Eve span'.

3. Having been reduced to a miserable way of life in the mountains by invading tribes, the Bheels (like the Gaels!) took to the hills and, finally, in desperation, to robbery - like the MacGregors under Rob Roy retreating before the Sassenach. They were 'reformed' in the same way as the Highlanders, by being recruited into native corps, and honours being given to the chiefs, legitimate vistas of plunder thus being opened up to them.

4. Most of them were Pacifists, or at the very least enthusiasts for the League of Nations (or, like Einstein, both); all considered war as it had been known in 1914-18 should be abolished, and thought the bomb made it impossible. Many therefore believed no government would use it, and one or two had no idea it could be used in war at all.

5. Matthew Hopkins, the Witchfinder General (who died in 1646, 300 years before the Witchcraft Act was repealed).

6. They changed the names of the streets.

We are pleased to hear of the death of Anastasio Somoza Debayle, 54, the exiled former dictator of Ni aragua in Asuncion in September.

Somoza was killed as he was being driven in his white Mercedes-Benz from his luxurious home in the suburbs of the Paraguagan capital of Asuncion. A truck pulled up alongside his car and opened fire with automatic weapons. A bazooka rocket delivered the coup de grace.

The news of Somoza's death sparked off singing and dancing in the streets of Managua, Nicaragua. One journalist, commenting on the news, said: "At last he has made his people happy."

The guerrillas who carried out the assassination made a clean getaway, although the authorities claimed that one of them was wounded.

The Sandinista regime in Nicaragua claimed that Somoza had caused the deaths of over 100,000 people.

Somoza's personal fortune (estimated at \$100 million) was not invested in Nicaragua at the time of his overthrow, so he still had access to it.

Black Flag Editors,
It is all too easy to criticise, especially especially from a safe distance. However No.4 (Sept.) was peppered with irrelevant cartoons and drawings and also some really ridiculous articles.

As an example of the former the drawing which appeared on page seven above the report on Azione Rivoluzionaria! Just what is it supposed to represent? Also the juvenile drawing on the Court Circular page.

As an example of the latter I would pick the article which it was suggested was "exclusive to Black Flag" and which claimed that there were moves afoot to exchange Komboa Ervin for the British mercenaries held in Angola. It seemed like pure fantasy to me. The issue was more like a punk Fanzine than an anarchist paper.

Nick,
Wales.

Chartist Martyr

Every town has its unsung heroes, its rebels against the oppression of their times, its martyrs in the cause of freedom. The name of one such has been rescued from oblivion in recent years by the formation of a society named after him in Sheffield, the scene of his political activity.

Samuel Holberry was born in 1814, the youngest of nine children of a farm labourer, in the village of Gamston, near Retford, Notts. In 1832 he joined the army, but became disgusted with the life and bought himself out three years later. He then settled in Sheffield, and later joined the Sheffield Chartists, becoming one of their leaders. The Chartist movement is considered to be the first national working class movement in this country. Their aims were reformist, their object an electoral and parliamentary system which we take for granted today. Yet they were put down with all the savagery and brutality of a ruling class afraid for its privileges. Public meetings were harassed and broken up by the authorities, resulting in street fighting and the

arrest of leaders, even the more moderate ones.

Reformists were transformed into revolutionaries by this oppressive reaction, and attempts to co-ordinate a general uprising were supported by the Sheffield group. Action was planned for the nights of 11/12 January 1840, when Holberry and his comrades were to take over the Town Hall. The plan was betrayed by an informer, and Holberry and some of his group were arrested almost at the moment of setting out.

Holberry was sentenced to four years' imprisonment for 'seditious conspiracy', but in the atrocious conditions in Northallerton House of Correction he became ill with consumption and died in York Castle on House of Correction he became ill with consumption and died in York Castle on June 21st 1842, just as his conditional release had been granted as a consequence of widespread public agitation and support.

Holberry was hailed as a martyr and became something of a legend, before being almost forgotten. Then in 1978 the Holberry Society was formed, dedicat-

ed to preserving his name, and to promoting the study and understanding of Sheffield working class history. With a mixture of Trade Union backing and academic respectability, and a strong working-class commitment, it seems to be achieving quite a success, with over a hundred individual members and some union affiliations. Holberry's bust has been placed in the Town Hall, and on June 28th Joan Maynard M.P. gave the annual oration by the Holberry Fountain.

So what, you may say, has all this to do with us? Holberry wasn't an anarchist, and we have our own heroes.

AN ACTIVIST

No, Holberry wasn't an anarchist, but he wasn't a marxist or a socialist or a Labour Party member either. He was simply an activist in resisting oppression and fighting for freedom, according to the understanding of his times. His heritage is non-sectarian and belongs to all of us.

Another point is that he was a local hero. His story and those of others like him up and down the country, could inspire and encourage people who wouldn't be interested in Zapata or Makhno. This could develop into an attitude towards libertarian ideas and actions far transcending the merely parochial interest which started it.

A booklet about Samuel Holberry, and more information about the society, and (on request) advice about forming similar societies may be obtained from the Secretary of the Holberry Society, 74 Emerson Crescent, Sheffield 5.

SHEILA BLANCHARD



MASS MURDERER AND POLICE
MAKE DEAL

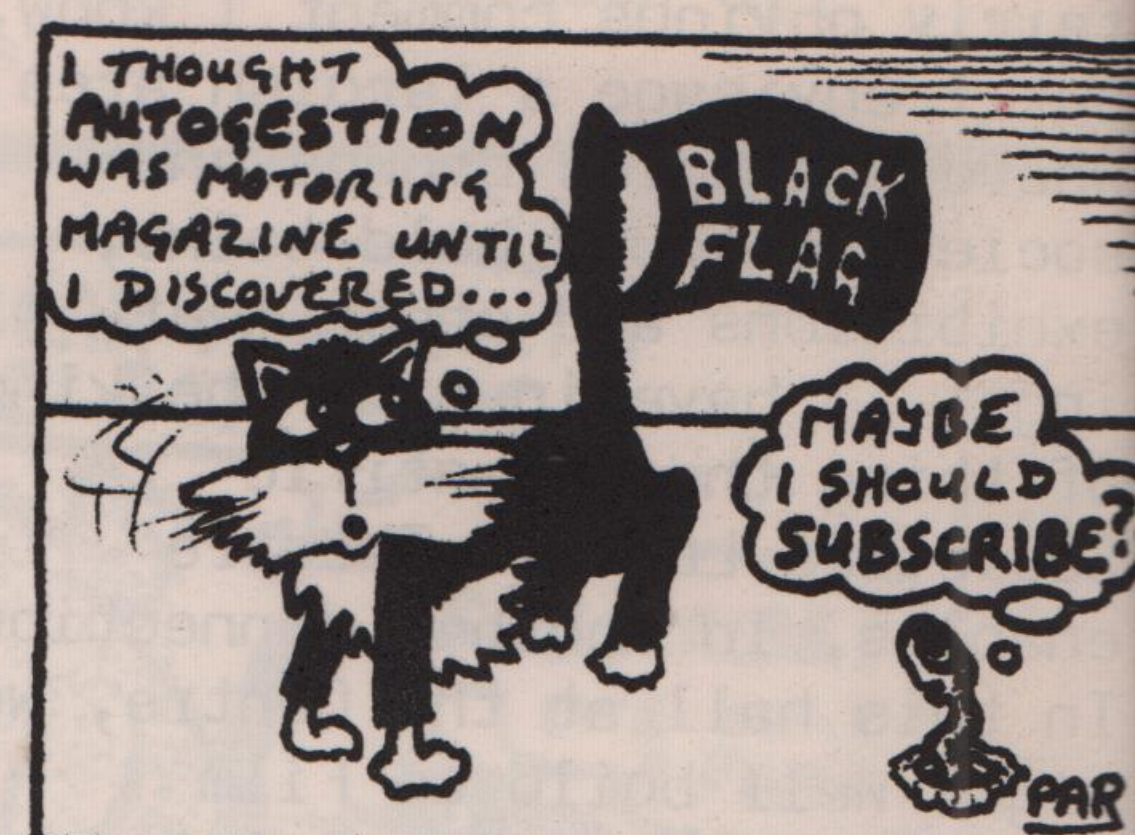
In September the trial of four men charged with a total of six murders opened at the Old Bailey.

It is alleged that they carried out a series of murders for payment, that they were "underworld hit-men".

Harry McKinney is charged with all six murders. Terence Pinfold is charged with two, and the two other defendants with one each. All have pleaded 'not guilty'.

The main prosecution witness is John Childs who had previously pleaded guilty to all six murders and was sentenced to life imprisonment last year. In return for a life sentence without a minimum recommendation from the judge, which could mean his release within a few years, Childs agreed to give evidence for the prosecution.

In the next issue of Black Flag we will examine the nature of the deal struck by Childs and the results of his co-operation with the police in the Court Circular.



BEYOND THE FRAGMENTS
ORBEYOND THE LEFT?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3.

CNT

Continued from Page 7.

to bury the fundamental tension between reform (the self-revolutionizing tendency of Capitalism) and revolution (the abolition of Capitalism). This tension is lost in a debate on the tangential aspects of leftism - that is not to deny their importance but to assert that they result from the function of leftism. Like Capitalism the left is in crisis. Its pleas for people to mobilise behind it fall on deaf ears (for example, the 'Day of Action' fiasco of May 14th.) Those people involved in the left who have a greater sensitivity to the movement of the class and to their own frustration are well represented at this conference. There are also those here who are essentially engaged in a flight from reality - horrified by the social decay they see around them, they retreat into even more vacuous phraseology. Disenchanted with the left, they entertain liberal illusions that are ridiculous even by the standards of the old 19th Century utopians..." (From "Beyond the Fragments or Beyond the Left?" a leaflet some comrades prepared for the conference - copies available from Rising Free, Box 666, 182 Upper Street, London N.1. We also welcome contacts with groups or individuals.

Government has tried provocations, armed fascist attacks, frame-ups, a continued policy of silence; it has held on to what was confiscated, it has legalised the opponents of the CNT and given huge funds to other unions to get started first, plus recognition. It is too much to think that the split does not owe something to Government or at least political machination. Every time a movement reaches a point where it looks like going ahead and becoming effective, a split occurs. (A parallel, though lesser situation existed in this country in 1944, when the movement at last reached a high peak; and immediately split over trivial personalities at a time when repression was also being used and all was lost). It is not to say one side or another are 'the provocateurs' - it may be, but not necessarily so, and was in neither of the instances quoted. But note that when repression hit the IWW in America, there was equally a split. This is a universal factor that must always be taken into account.

Has "the damage been done and the death throes are irreversible", as one militant writes, prophesying that "within a very short space of time the whole thing will be reduced, as in France, Italy, Britain, etc to a handful of tiny

minority grouplets, clinging to empty structures with no social relevance"? That may be and only time will tell, but I do not think it will happen so long as there are decentralised syndicates on the present lines.

If the workers have a structure that is based on their independent control horizontally and not vertically - they have something that political infiltration cannot destroy. The structure of the CNT is something that has survived the worst crises including genocide itself. It will be harmful if there arises (from one side or the other) a "reformist CNT" collaborating with the Government and engaging in "normal" trade union (i.e. vertical union) activity; but that won't prevent a traditionally revolutionary and decentralist one also existing, it will merely cause it embarrassment. Ultimately, what purpose could the hypothetical "reformist" body serve anyone that isn't equally and better served by the socialist UGT?

For this reason I express cautious optimism. There are some actions within the CNT that give cause for alarm and criticism - e.g. the business of expelling members (not so serious as it would be in British trade unionism, where with a closed shop policy, they would be deprived of their livelihood, but hardly libertarian all the same).

The fossilised AIT liked the fossilised French Anarchist Federation is taking a 100 per cent pro-"official" stand thinking the (fossilised) ready-made leadership from Toulouse is under attack. It is, but not from the split. The fossilised would-be leadership (which may calling itself, in secret, the FAI, or not) has to be eliminated from congresses as it is by virtue of their independence from the syndicates. But beyond that, no grounds for a genuine split exists. Those who would polarise are those who want "normality" - which is to say, Statist trade unionism, not anarcho-syndicalism.

Albert Meltzer.