



NO FRONTIERS

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Nº 1



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E. EUROPE; ETC.

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Paris 10th February 1982.

Ref: Announcement of the setting up of the "...Solidarity Collective of Chilean Exiles with the Resistance of the Polish People."

To all libertarian groups and sympathisers!

On 6th January 1982 in Paris, a Chilean Exiles Committee of Solidarity with Poland was set up: taking part in the ~~reudation~~ were 44 exiles who, after over 5 hours of discussion, agreed to the establishment of the collective, and the public issuance of a document which accompanies this announcement.

The collective includes 4 comrades from our own "Pedro Nolasco Arratia" group who in recent months, have taken a hand in various Chilean committees in exile. The Polish situation has confirmed the maturity and assurance felt already by the exile community and evidence of this is the aforementioned collective which is there to fill a vacuum.

On 30th April 1982 our collective organised a debate on "the Role of Solidarnosc in Polish Society", held in the hall at 46, Rue Vaugirard, Paris 15eme.

As the debate progressed (40 people took part: of these some were representatives of other committees) there was debate about the failure of the unique model of social change pushed by the USSR.

There was agreement on the erroneousness of things like the "dictatorship of the proletariat", as well as on the failures of "vanguards", the "Party", etc, in the context of the Polish experience.

Utterly repudiated was the "guerrilla-ist" concept which merely leads to the exchanging of one state apparatus for another which, through the use of force will impose its model of socialism in the complete absence of any popular base.

The experience of the trade union Solidarnosc demonstrates the practicability of the liberation project for the creation of a more humane society: wherein the task of building it is handed over to civil society from the grassroots up and amid the fullest direct democracy of this new society. It should be stressed that Solidarnosc has left behind some hard and fast lessons... to the effect that only the acquisition of consciousness chiefly among the producers, but in other social strata also, could, through generalised self management, lay the elementary social foundations of the society of the future... eliminating in a de facto way the institutions of the state and replacing these with new social structures.

We append an analysis of the implications of the Solidarnosc experience for the Latin American exile community.

GRUPO "PEDRO NOLASCO ARRATIA" -- CHILEAN LIBERTARIAN WORKERS IN EXILE.....PARIS 10:2:82

POSSIBLE REPERCUSIONS OF THE SOLIDARNOSC EXPERIENCE FOR THE LATIN AMERICAN EXILE COMMUNITY.....

The expansion of the self-managerial process which produced Solidarnosc independent trade union in Polish society has afforded the militants in exile a new perspective and insight into social change.....one which breaks completely with the traditional model which Marxism has touted as the sole valid modal.

This means that the vast majority of the Latin American exile community has begun to question its ideas and its activities and, taken aback, is analysing and reflecting upon the new data thrown up by the trade union experiment..... Solidarnosc.

On the other hand, hard line Marxist groups are attempting to play down or deny this datum in order to head off the reflections of the exiled militants who, in a straight forward way, have launched the debate and are ready to search out new formulae, new ideas, and new methods.

The generalised crisis experienced by the political parties in the countries
cont,.....

of Latin America (whose has been dwindling and whose authority is being repudiated) has given rise to a phenomenon long absent, the phenomenon of direct democracy with the creation of grass roots groups and councils of delegates elected by general assembly and subject to instant recall at all times.

This phenomenon, which has fallen back on the practices and methods of revolutionary syndicalism, has surfaced in some countries such as Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile and later has cropped up among the groups engaging insolidarity work from a position of exile.

In Uruguay there is the well known "Fighting Tendency" (Tendencia Combativa) which, basing itself on these methods and practices struggles against the inhuman dictatorship which controls the country.

In Argentina, new rank and file groups are begging to gain ground by basing themselves on just these practices; among them one finds the militants of the FORA, (Federation Obrera Regional Argentina or Argentine Regional Workers Federation, an anarchist inspired labour organisation founded in 1904.), who along with younger recruits are expanding slowly in view of the difficult circumstances imposed by the dictatorship there.

The same thing began to emerge in Chile after 1978. The political parties have been swept utterly aside by the work of the group "Grupos de Bases".

Welfare committees had been set up as well as homeless residents committees, students committees, unemployed committees, etc.

All of these grass roots committees are coagulating into a social fabric the chief characteristics of which is an utter rejection of the political parties. Liaison between the grass root groups (Grupos de Bases) is being arranged.

As long as 1978 one sector of the PCR (Revolutionary Communist Party), Maoist in outlook at one point, joined with other militants of the Marxist left to set up an organisation which adopted the methods and procedures of direct democracy (which calls for the repudiation of all party control) but clings to the notion of "vanguard"; "taking power" etc. The name they gave it was ORC - the Communist Resistance Organisation (Organizacion Resistencia Comunista).

In 1979-1980 a tiny organisation, "CODESH", was set up along these lines. (it stands for the "Committee for the Defence of Trade Union and Human Rights") under the chairmanship of Clotario Blest, an old trade union leader, and president of the CUT (Central Unica de Trabajadores - United Chilean Workers Centre) along with some old trade unionist and some youth groups close to the church. CODESH has violently attacked the political parties and their lust for power, and so on. The dictatorship has turned a blind eye to CODESH's existence although CODESH has availed of every opportunity to attack the dictatorship.

In 1980, some small groups of libertarian comrades made a first attempt at co-ordination and managed to set up the "Libertarian Liaison Committee", but this was short lived. In July 1980 11 comrades were arrested; after short periods of detention they were released, but this led to the demise of the liaison committee.

New groups linked with the libertarian movement and embracing youthful elements, set up various committees which attempted to expand. Among these the following are prominent;

The FLF (Womens Liberation Front); composed of groups close to CODESH.

The "Ernesto Miranda" Cultural Circle; comprising of old comrades from the Leather and Footwear Union, an old anarchosyndicalist stronghold.

The "Committee of Support for the Polish People", set up in 1980 with the creation of the Polish Trade Union Solidarnosc. The committee includes old trade unionists, some intellectuals, and young libertarian sympathisers: Clotario Blest is also a member of the committee.

The "TAB" (Tendencia Autonoma de Bases - Grass Roots Independent Tendency); this new organisation came into formal existence in July 1981 with its founding congress which brought together various committees and grass roots groups and was held in a poor quarter of Santiago de Chile.

The TAB is boycotted by all those grass roots groups under party political domination, not that this has prevented it from growing. In it one finds old libertarian trade unionists who, as residents experienced direct democracy and neighbourhood self-organisation in the Allende era.

The circumstances of absolute poverty which afflict most of the popular strata where it has a foothold has prevented the TAB from expanding into new areas on account of the unemployment and hunger, which is the daily lot in the homes and family circles of its militants.

All of these grass roots groups are a sample of the realities of life in Chile. It should also be said that they are threatened with disappearance unless they receive some assistance from outside.

On the otherhand, though, the political parties, sensing that they are being edged out by this trend towards grass roots autonomy, are sending their members to work at grass roots level, just as they have been doing ever since 1922 (until, from 1957 up to the Allende period they managed secure complete control over the labour movement).

These tactics on the part of the political parties are designed to win back lost ground. Each party has set about forming its own rank and file committees in an attempt to infiltrate other committees and move beyond this stage in things.

This accounts for the birth and death of sham committees and certain factions of the MIR (a Marxist grouping) and the Socialist Party have managed to infiltrate CODESH. The CODESH members' lack of funds and dire economic straits have enabled this infiltration to go ahead.

So far we have been looking at one or two points which afford us an insight into the evolution of certain aspects and segments of the Latin American exile community; for these reasons, the Solidarnosc experiment has given rise to an unspoken debate among us exiles.

What this signifies for the future is hard to estimate but we know that the debate has already begun and that developments in Poland are of enormous significance.

Cognisant of the need to discuss and analyse the whole of the Polish experience, we believe that it is vitally important that there should be debate between us exiles and the French, that the situation in Nicaragua is yet another facet of the same debate and that the Solidarnosc experiment has worldwide implications.

We know too, that the situation in El Salvador may well work out the way that the Nicaraguan situation has. And other Central American countries too, in the times to come.

In the light of this fact, we believe that it is important that we initiate a debate on this subject at every level. What we mean is that each group should organise debate and reflection on Poland, with the participation of the Latin American Committees in each city.

Our group has (available on request) a list of solidarity committees existing in France.

This debate is of huge importance and only a joint effort by the libertarian movement can form an ideological evolution by broad sectors of the Latin American exile community. With regard to Nicaragua, we have available some excellent data offered us by the magazine "IRL", through the excellent articles written by our comrades Claude and Genie on the basis of their very fruitful 10 months stay in that country.

We wish to conclude by saying that the Nicaraguan experiment, with its lurch into Stalinism, taken together with the self-management experiment of the Solidarnosc trade union in Poland, provide us with ample basis for an excellent debate with Latin American circles, notably Chilean and Nicaraguan exiles and comrades.

Accordingly, we invite all libertarian groups to work on this task.

¡Salud y Revolucion Social!

GRUPO P. NOLASCO ARRATIA.
PARIS.

TO WORLD PUBLIC OPINION:

CHILEAN EXILES' SOLIDARITY WITH THE
POLISH PEOPLE'S RESISTANCE....

- I.) We Chilean political exiles in France, locked in battle with the huge capital and Yankee imperialism which oppress our people, unambiguously and without reservation condemn the counter revolutionary coup d'etat in Poland. December 13th 1981 will go down in the annals of peoples as the date of one of their mightiest defeats. On that day in Poland a coup d'etat put an end to a prolonged and intense period of struggle by the people for freedom, democracy and socialism. On that day the foes of renewal and the revolutionary transformation of Poland, sent the tanks on to the streets and violently repressed the trade union and popular movement, gaoling thousands of unionists and intellectuals and laying to rest, for a time at least, the hopes of an entire people.
- 2.) In response to these developments, Western imperialism and its allies or lackeys, the Pinochets and the Duartes and the rest, "condemn" the coup d'etat. They do so on the one hand, in order to score points off their rivals in the USSR and the Eastern Bloc, but basically they do it in order to combat the struggle of the people whom they themselves oppress and who struggle for the same goals, essentially, as the Polish people. What right do the Reagans and the Pinochets have to lecture anyone on democracy and freedom, when they unhesitatingly crush popular rebellions every time they erupt to threaten their privileges and their dominion?
- 3.) However, others have spoken out in justification of the coup. They describe it as a lesser evil, necessary, "...in defence of the revolution and socialism", and allege that it was aimed at defending the peoples rights, and claim that Solidarnosc has been spawned by international reaction etc. All of this is lies. Socialism does not defend itself by turning its bayonets against the people. One does not defend the interests of the proletariat and people by imprisoning them, destroying their organisation, liquidating their democratic gains and denying them participation in determining the fate of society. The 10 million workers affiliated to Solidarnosc, that is, two thirds of the country's active population, cannot be agents of the counter-revolution.
- 4.) Instead, we believe the coup d'etat to be the counter-revolutionary answer by the privileged minority responsible for the profound general crisis of Polish society, to the struggle spear-headed by the Polish people for their basic rights and for the progressive transformation of society. In fact Solidarnosc advocated people's power, the workers' rights of participation and to control and direct society. Solidarnosc fought against privilege and corruption, and for social justice. Solidarnosc fought for national independence, against war and for peace between the peoples. In short, Solidarnosc was fighting in order to move forward in the direction of true socialism.
- 5.) In the view of us Chilean militants, the developments in Poland raise certain fundamental questions relative to the aims and methods of our struggle:
- a) The self organisation of the workers, which is to say the right and duty of workers to equip themselves with their own forms of organisation which effectively serve their interests and answer the problems raised by the social struggle. In other words, the workers' right to organise themselves independantly of the tutelage of this or that Party or State, regardless of their format or character. The active role of the people is the indispensable condition of victory in the struggle for democracy, liberty and socialism.

b) There is no socialism and no struggle for socialism unless there is an assurance of unmitigated respect for democracy. We cannot acknowledge any argument or pretext aimed at exusing limitation of this, the fundamental right of all peoples. Democracy is not just a means, but is a fundamental end, an ongoing objective of the struggle of the working class and all peoples.

c) The patent bankruptcy of socialism as prevailing in the Eastern Bloc a conception hitherto presented as the valid model for all workers on this earth. Thus it is a task of fundamental and crucial significance to discover and define the context of what true socialism is or ought to be. A task which should be assumed collectively by workers and revolutionaries the world over.

6.) We Chilean exiles who struggle for the overthrow of the dictatorship of big capital and US imperialism in Chile cannot take the view that what is going on in Chile is none of our business or that the fate of all peoples of the world who struggle for freedom, democracy, national independence and socialism is none of our business.

We hold that it is our duty to back with resolution the working class and Polish people in their struggle to win back and extend the democratic liberties and assurances secured by means of the peoples struggle.

We hold that it is our duty also to support the re-constitution and reorganisation of Solidarnosc, an organisation which earned through struggle its mantle of legitimate vanguard of the Polish people.

7.) Consequently we demand the immediate release of all political prisoners in Poland, an end to the state of emergency and the restoration of all democratic freedoms and entitlements won by the people. In so doing we aim to pursue the struggle for socialism. In so doing we aim to display our internationalist mentality.

Only thus will we have dignity and strength enough to pursue the struggle for freedom in El Salvador, Guatemala, Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay and every other country in the world where the fundamental rights of peoples are transgressed.

Only in this way can we earn the right to demand of the other peoples of the world their support for our unstinting battle against Yankee imperialism, the Pinochet dictatorship and all manner of foreign oppression in our homeland.

So we call on all Chilean exiles to join with us in this fight and to join the Chilean committee of solidarity with the Polish people.

THE STRUGGLE OF THE POLISH PEOPLE AND THE STRUGGLE OF THE CHILEAN PEOPLE ARE PART OF THE SAME FIGHT FOR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY, FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND FOR TRUE SOCIALISM THE WORLD OVER.

Paris, January 1982.

Collective of Chilean Exiles in
Solidarity with the Polish Peoples
Resistance; 14, Rue de Nanteuil,
Paris, 75015 .

Barcelona Appeals

E.R.A.T. HUNGER STRIKER, MANUEL CRUZ CABALEIRO, IN SERIOUS CONDITION...

The Association of Family and Friends of Political Prisoners (AFAPP) decries the predicament of Manuel Cruz Cabaleiro, without food since Jan. 1, 1982 and now lying close to death, with no special attention, in the infirmary of the "Model Prison" in Barcelona. This comrade is protesting his indefinite consignment to the Model Prison's 5th Gallery (a punishment block), where isolation is so extreme that news of the strike became known no sooner than 25 days after it had begun. At present, hunger strikes are the only option that prisoners in struggle have available, but without solidarity on the outside their effect is undermined—witness the case of Juan José Crespo Galende, who died on June 19, 1981 in the Carabanchel Penitentiary after 98 days without eating. We must not allow the State to follow suit with Cruz Cabaleiro. The communications media, political parties, and other groups are silent about and collaborate with the current wave of repression crashing down on prisoners and outsiders alike. Faced with this situation we lance an urgent and energetic appeal to the Spanish people and to all movements in struggle against repression, to act on Manuel Cruz Cabaleiro's behalf. Letters, telegrams, and demonstrations of support at seats of Spanish officialdom in other countries, coupled with our struggle here in Spain, is the only way to save this and other prisoners' lives.

Solidarity with prison struggles! Abolish the Anti-terrorist ("Citizen Security") Law! Full and Unconditional Amnesty! —Feb. 6, 1982

A.F.A.P.P., Ronda de Sant Pere, 32, 1er. E, Barcelona - 10, Spain

Tr. note: E.R.A.T. is the Spanish acronym for Revolutionary Army in Support of the Workers, six of whose members, all employees of the company S.E.A.T., were sentenced to long jail terms in 1980.

LIBERTARIAN PRISONERS

IN SEGOVIA AND OTHER PRISONS

José Ramón Sánchez Ramos
José Hernández Tapias
Miguel Nogales Toro
Gabriel Botifoll Gómez
Agustín García Coronado
Vicente Domínguez Medina
Fernando García Morales
Eugenio Asensio Nogués
Rafael Simón García
José Cuevas Casado
Francisco Javier Cañadas Gascón
Arturo Palma Segura
José Ramón Cornejo Sánchez
José Luis Piguero Pérez
Fernando Merino del Río
Angel Vega Abraila
Angel Cueto López
Angel Antón Busnariego
Alfonso Morales Calvo
Miguel Angel Muñoz Montes
Fidel Manrique
Jesús Emilio Nieva Reparaz
José María Galdaraz Rubín
Nicolás de las Heras García
Miguel Angel Moreno Patiño
Francisco Asensio García
José Ignacio Ruiz Sánchez
Francisco Sevilla
Víctor Zayas Gómez
Máximo Casas González
Manuel Núñez Zamora
Eugenio Blázquez del Amo
Alfonso García García
Alejandro Mata Camacho
Francisco Nicolás Garrido
José Caro Escañuelas
Margarita Llabres Rossiñol
Dolores Aparicio Casals
Leandro González Redondo de Can
Ignacio Ma Francisco García Romeu
Juan Conesa Sans
Fernando Simón Fernández

hurrah! dernière minute
le libertaire José Caro Escañuelas
a réussi à s'évader après deux
tentatives. La presse l'a présenté
comme "un dangereux bandit", un
bandit dangereux Salopards!

advertis Hurrah! last minute.

The libertarian José Caro Escañuelas, managed
to escape after two attempts. The press presents
him as "a dangerous bandit", a dangerous

bandit

Information on this page from
Box BM Chronos, London WCLV 6XX.
Special double-sided poster inc.
an attack on the CNT for ignoring
the situation of these prisoners.

SPAIN: CNT's historical assets.

In pursuit of its demand that its assets, presses and premises confiscated at the end of the civil war, be restored to it, the CNT in January occupied a number of the disputed premises in Andalusia, Aragon, Extramadura, Euskadi and the Valencia region. The occupations took place without incident, except in Tafalla where police resorted to their usual brutality to winkle out protestors.

On 22 February, after 5 years of fruitless negotiations, and in a possible response to the January occupations, Labour Minister, Santiago Rodriguez Miranda received a delegation from the CNT for an exchange of views on the subject. The CNT delegates complained of harassment, and made it clear that it would not tolerate any chicanery in the recovery of the union's rightful property. Unions which have signed the National Employment Agreement (ANE) undertook not to claim restoration of confiscated assets. The CNT has rejected ANE and is pursuing its claim.

ITALY: anti-militarist demonstration.

About 4,000 anarchists took part in an anarchist anti-militarist demonstration at Livorno, Italy, on March 13th. The demonstration, which had been proposed at an anarchist conference in Florence last January, was held at Livorno because of the important military bases, for the Italian armed forces and NATO, which are situated there.

FRANCE: anti-militarist demonstration.

More than two thousand people turned out for an anti-militarist demonstration organised by the French Anarchist Federation, the CNT (Spain), and l'Union anarchiste bulgare en exil (UAB) on March 27th. After the demonstration, several members of L'Union pacifiste were searched and manhandled by police.

SPAIN: Agustin Rueda's death confirmed as murder.

CNT activist Agustin Rueda died in Madrid's Carabanchel prison on 14 March 1978. Now the Madrid Provincial Prosecutor has revealed that Rueda died of internal injuries caused by a "prolonged and expert" beating administered to most of his body. He is asking for a 12 year sentence against the assistant governor of the prison and 9 warders, and compensation for Rueda's heirs to the tune of 3 million pesetas. Accusations now being made are against: 2 doctors, charged with negligence, who face possible 5 year sentences; the asst. governor, Antonio Rubio, who faces a murder charge and a possible 12 yr sentence; 10 warders are accused of administering a beating and so is the then prison governor, Eduardo Jose Cantos Rueda, who faces a possible 5 yr. term.

Agustin died when he and 6 other prisoners were taken to the death cells in Carabanchel and clubbed by the warders, following the discovery of a tunnel. He complained to doctors Jose Maria Barigou and Jose Luis Casa of feeling unwell and about to die, but wasn't taken to the infirmary until 10.30 pm. The prosecution case, however, is not being pursued as rigorously as it should.

SPAIN: Arrests

Having been tortured under cover of the anti-terrorist laws, 4 workers, Francisco Romero Garcia, Antonio Navio; Adrian Satue (all CNT members) and Jose Sanchez (who were arrested on 23 Dec. 1981 on charges of robbery and murder) are being held incommunicado in Barcelona's Modelo jail. The charges arise out of a dispute at the firm of Andres y Multo in La Llagosta



from le monde libertaire, paper of the French Anarchist Fed.

CAMPAIGN:

FOR YOUR FREEDOM AND OURS

While the involvement of some of its members in campaigns in support of Soviet workers' struggles dates back to the early 70s with groups like the Committee to Defend Dzyuba and Chornovil, the Campaign for Solidarity With the Soviet Working Class itself is only three years old. It was set up in 1979 by members of Solidarity and the Anarchist Workers' Association in response to a call from Soviet dissidents, including Leonid Plyushch and Peter Grigorenko, for a boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics.

In its very first leaflet, the Campaign made its position clear. It dissociated itself both from those on the left who, despite their criticisms of the Stalinist bureaucracy, regarded the USSR and its vassals as "workers' states" and therefore to some degree defensible and those on the right such as the Freedom Association who use opposition to Stalinism as an excuse for the support of capitalist tyranny and exploitation. For us, the struggle of workers in the Eastern bloc is inseparable from that of their brothers and sisters in the West and the aim of the struggle is the same everywhere - Socialism and Freedom.

Since then the Campaign has worked hard to publicise the plight of working class and socialist dissidents in the USSR and Eastern Europe and to win support for their cause from British workers. To this end we have produced leaflets on the struggle for free trade unions in the USSR, on the resistance to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, on Poland, on the workers' uprising in Novocherkassk in 1962 and on libertarian political prisoners in the Soviet Union. We have held our own meetings such as the one on the anniversary of the Kronstadt revolt of 1921 and pickets (in response to a call from Soviet political prisoners we picketed the Soviet embassy on the anniversary of the Novocherkassk uprising) and participated in those of other organisations including one of the NUM HQ in defence of the imprisoned free trade unionist miners Klebanov and Nikitin and one of a binge put on for a visiting Soviet delegation by the Stalinoid neanderthals of the British Soviet friendship society. We have also addressed meetings of libertarian, socialist, humanist, and student groups in places from High Wycombe to Hull and from Manchester to Canterbury. We have also contributed articles to a variety of publications in Britain and N America and material of ours has been translated into Portugese.

Recently we published the first issue of our bulletin "Volya". This contains items on the USSR, Cuba, Yugoslavia, E. Germany, Poland, Eritrea and Afghanistan including 2 statements from Soviet dissidents condemning the invasion. As far as we know we're the only English-language journal of the Left to publish these statements. Individual copies of "Volya" are 20p post free and we're looking for people to take bulk orders on a sale or return basis. We hope to improve the size and format of "Volya" and publish more frequently. There are other things we would also like to publish such as Petrichenko's pamphlet "The truth about Kronstadt". Whether or not we do so depends on the amount of financial and physical help comrades are prepared to give us.

Events such as the military coup in Poland have brought home to many in the British labour movement the necessity for on-going, organised solidarity with the struggles of Soviet and E European workers. In particular there is an urgent need for British workers to break all links with the front organisations of the Stalinist state (21 trade unions, for example, are still affiliated to the BSFS) and declare their support for organisations such as Solidarnosc. Likewise there is an urgent need for the example of the workers at Massey Ferguson in Coventry who have blacked Polish components to be emulated all over Britain and beyond. There is also a need for a no-holds barred attack on the likes of Chappel and Duffy whose concept of free trade unionism does not extend to the EEPTU or the AEUW. The CSSWC hopes to play a modest but meaningful role in this while making clear that we campaign as opponents of all tyranny and oppression and as advocates of libertarian socialism. If you'd like to join affiliation costs a modest £2. Make cheques payable to T. Liddle and send them to c/o 83 Gregory Crescent, Eltham, London SE9 5RZ. In 1863 the Poles in revolt against Tsarism appealed for help to the Russian people proclaiming the watchwords "For your Freedom and Ours". Today when tyranny in both its monopoly capitalist and state capitalist forms threatens to engulf all humanity these words must be proclaimed more loudly than ever!



IZTOK

History of the Iztok Group

The Iztok group was started in 1975 by an exiled Bulgarian anarchist who was not able to find in the existing Bulgarian groups in exile the type of group he wanted to work in. In reality these groups only occupied themselves with Bulgaria's past condition. This comrade felt that Bulgaria's position was similar to the USSR and the other Eastern European countries and it was important to bring to the attention of the world, the problems in the USSR and East Europe. It was on this premise that the publication IZTOK was started (A symbolic word which means east in Bulgarian).

The initial idea was to print an international review in a number of different languages, but because of the absence of Polish and Russian anarchists Iztok was mainly a Bulgarian review with occasional extracts of the classical Bakunin, Makhno, Kropotkin writings in Russian.

After a few issues a small group of Bulgarian anarchists formed around the review. In 1977 the Anarchist Federation came into contact with this small group and during that year material regarding oppression in Bulgaria was printed in the Libertarian and bourgeois press. In late 1978 after the departure of one of their members, the group decided to extend its activities by incorporating the whole of Eastern Europe in the review. All emigres from these countries and anyone who was interested in the subject were involved in the activity.

This co-ordination of Anarchists in exile was a success. Some of our publications were incorporated in the Libertarian press. The problem arose - what part should the Bulgarian anarchists as well as anarchists from the east and west should play in the group. By the end of 1979 this group disbanded by mutual consent. At this time the group was re-organised by a number of members.

Four people were involved in the regroupment and they decided to produce a French magazine. In autumn 1979 a magazine was produced which had Bulgarian and French sections. In January 1980 a special French edition was produced for a conference held on the East European situation. The magazine was now produced in French and Bulgarian. The French version appears every six months while the Bulgarian version appears more frequently.

A supplement on Gdansk was produced in September, 1980 - this supplement looked closely at the Polish situation. An article on Russian anarchists 1921 to 1981 also appeared in this review.

The purpose of the French section of IZTOK is to inform the general anarchist movement of what is happening in Eastern Europe from an anarchist perspective. These articles have been published in a number of countries (Italy, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Mexico, Portugal, Holland, Britain, Spain and France). The group has grown with the addition of a French comrade who speaks Russian and a Turkish comrade. In September 1981 a Polish magazine was published looking at the situation in Poland from an anarchist point of view. In December the first Polish IZTOK should appear, it will be discussing the anarchist position on syndicalism, direct democracy etc. subjects which are realities in Poland at present.*

In July 1981 IZTOK no. 2 was published. It had articles on the East, West and the anarchist alternative. This issue was published in Turkish, Serbo-Croat, Bulgarian and German. We have many other articles which we wish to publish in the future, time permitting.

The French version of IZTOK continues to change. Because of financial limitations we are not able to print all the material we would like to. Also information from the East is rare and irregular. We hope to publish one issue every 6 months but it may be that issues will be more regular depending on the amount of information we obtain. We not only publish information but we also analyse the situation in Eastern Europe. In essence this analysis depends on people's background and their understanding of the situation. We present an analysis of the Eastern European situation which is not presented in the western media, such as the information on anarchist movements. As well as these reviews we also publish small books (eg. Notes on anarchism in the USSR, 1921-1981).

We do not only publish but we also distribute IZTOK to the East as well as the West, finances permitting. In reality the Libertarian movement in Eastern Europe is practically

non-existent, and our contact with activists are very rare. We only have regular contact with two countries, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia and even in these countries exchange of information is rare or non-existent because of constant surveillance.

The main part of our activities is centred around distributing our ideas in Eastern Europe and helping to establish a libertarian movement there. So we feel that publishing our review in an Eastern European language is important. Unfortunately distribution is a major problem. Some copies have been distributed in Bulgaria under enormous difficulties, and 1,000 copies of the Polish IZTOK were distributed in Poland. They were smuggled into the country and were distributed to interested people. Although it is difficult we hope to increase the volume of literature entering the East.

We face an enormous task in attempting to build anarchism in Eastern Europe. Unfortunately a libertarian movement does not exist in Eastern Europe. At the moment we are attempting to overcome this major problem.

A comrade from IZTOK,

* This article was written before the military coup in Poland. Since it was written the second Polish-language edition of IZTOK has been published, and a Roumanian edition has also been produced.

If people want to help the work IZTOK comrades are undertaking there are a number of ways they can assist. Obviously finance is important, but IZTOK also receives requests for literature about anarchism (Yugoslavian comrades, for example, need literature about collectivization) which people could help with. Help is also needed to distribute IZTOK.

Write to IZTOK, c/o Les Amities Franco-Bulgares, 26 Rue Piat, 75020 Paris, France.

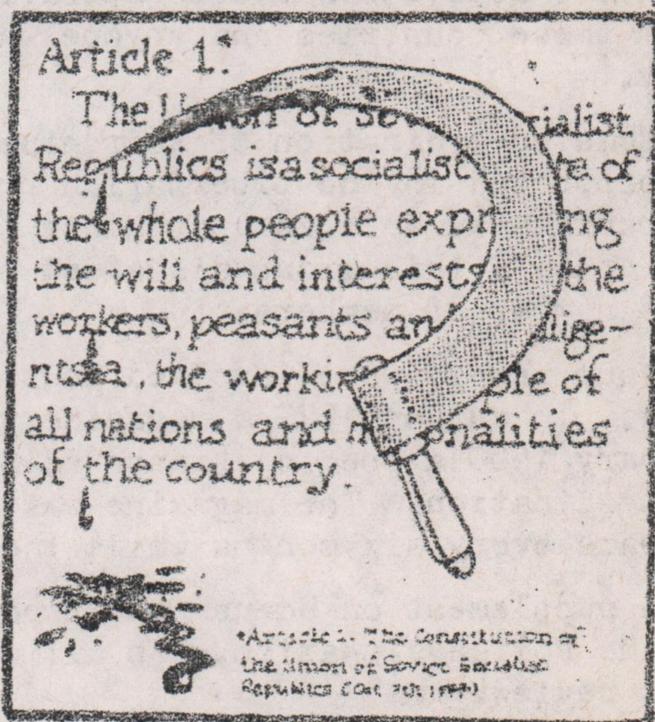
No Frontiers has been produced to fill a gap in anarchist publishing in Britain. At present there is not any kind of publication which provides consistent information about the anarchist movement in other countries, and the anti-authoritarian struggles which are taking place across the world.

By publishing No Frontiers we hope to make people aware that they are not alone: they are part of a large world-wide movement. We believe that we can and must learn from the experiences of others, but more than this, we need, as the recent events in Poland have reminded us, to be able to offer assistance to embryonic anarchist movements which are emerging elsewhere. It is important that we play an active part in supporting workers and communities in struggle against authoritarian regimes - by providing information from other countries we hope to facilitate the growth of genuine international solidarity work.

Our intention is to produce a regular quarterly paper, and supplement this with occasional action briefings when help is urgently required. If you would like to be placed on our regular mailing list, then please write to the Direct Action Movement?

International Commission,
164/166 Corn Exchange Buildings,
Manchester.

The Direct Action Movement is the British section of the IWA/AIT - the anarcho-syndicalist - International Workers Association. The IWA has affiliated organisations in many countries around the world.



SVERIGES ARBETARES CENTRALORGANISATION

INTERVIEW WITH GÖRAN WERIN

Göran Werin has been an SAC member for 8 years and the 1979 congress appointed him to its executive bureau.

G.W. - The SAC is a union that was set up after the great strike in 1909. That was in 1910. Prior to that, there was only one labour organisation known as the LO (Lands Organisation), which was a social-democratic organisation, many of whose own members had been critical of its structure and its bureaucracy. From 1905 on, the ideas of French revolutionary syndicalists like Fernand Pelloutier, Emile Pouget, Pierre Monatte, Georges Sorel, etc. got a hearing. Books by these people, in Swedish translations, led to a broad debate within the reformist organisation (the LO), whose structure, organisation, actions and aims were all called into question. After the failure of the 1909 strike, the debate focused on the plan to form a new organisation, and so, in June 1910, the SAC (Swedish Workers' Association) came into existence.

Q - At the time of its inception, the SAC embraced several tendencies within the socialist movement, did it not? Or was it, even then, a breakaway by a definite, identifiable persuasion?

GW - Up until 1917 it was a very tiny and easily identifiable breakaway, but after 1917 it expanded very quickly in the light of the developments in Russia and a huge economic crisis in Sweden.

Q - Were the SAC people anarchist militants?

GW - No, SAC was an organisation of young socialists. It was not an anarchist grouping, although anarchist thinking was very influential in it.

At the 1922 congress, the SAC issued its first statement of principles (very close to the Charter of Amiens declaration of the CGT in France); it also adopted the federalist arrangement which it has retained to this day. Antimilitarist and direct action principles were adopted.

In the 1920s ... there were many strikes and SAC gained a foothold in many sectors, the main ones being construction, mining, loggers and the quarries. At that time the membership stood at around 27,000. In the same year as the congress mentioned above, we set up our present weekly paper Arbetaren (The Worker), but in those days it was a daily, not a weekly. We also set up the federation printing works in Stockholm. There was intensive propaganda done through books, pamphlets, leaflets, posters, etc. Arbetaren was published as a daily up until 1958.

The SAC was one of the organisations which founded the IWMA (International Working Men's Organisation which, in the 1920s picked up the torch of the 1st International. Among others the German revolutionary syndicates and the Spanish CNT affiliated to the IWMA.) By 1937 we in the SAC had 39,000 members. We mounted a massive campaign of solidarity with the CNT. At the time we collected 500,000 crowns, the largest sum raised in Sweden. Between 1922 and 1936, there were many strikes in which the anarcho-syndicalists and the revolutionary syndicalists wielded great influence.

Q - Could you tell us something about how the SAC is organised and its structural format?

GW - On the one hand, there is the vertical organisation: in a given town, one factory group joins with



others to form a syndicate: that syndicate in turn is part of an industrial federation embracing that particular trade. This, then, is the corporatist or vertical side of the SAC. Now for the horizontal side: the syndicate forms part of a local federation and, together, all these local federations make up the confederation, ie. the SAC.

Thus, on the one hand, there are 13 local federations, covering the 13 regions of Sweden, plus, on the other hand the industrial federations covering mining, construction, metallurgy, logging, the tertiary sector, transport, education etc (the ones so far built up by the relevant local syndicates).

As regards the administration of the SAC, there is, to begin with a 16 member central committee. Of the 16, 11 are permanent appointees from each Regional federation and so are elected at local level by the syndicates (local unions); the 5 others are unpaid voluntary workers elected by congress and these make up the SACs executive committee.

Then there is an administrative bureau in charge of liaison and secretarial tasks and it is made up of 3 staff members paid by SAC and appointed by the central committee. There are also some people who work for the industrial federations, as well as for our newspapers etc., but this is not quite the same thing as it is not, strictly speaking to do with the running of the SAC and these people are not paid by the SAC.

The SACs internal bulletin is SAC-kontakt and it is issued 8 times a year (19,000 copies each time). Our weekly Arbetaren is the organ for the projection of ideas and information to an outside audience. At present it prints 8,000 copies. The federative printing works employs 30 people. It is both a committed and a commercial enterprise. Thus it pays for itself. In the works there is one person who works exclusively on behalf of the SAC. She translates books, sees to distribution and liaison, and so on.

Q - Whenever central committee decisions are challenged by the grassroots what is the procedure?

GW - In the event of that happening, the decision is referred back if challenged by 3 local federations who can request a referendum of all SAC members.

Q - When are broad guidelines established?

GW - Basically these are laid down by congress and, between congresses, established by means of referenda. Congress meets, roughly, at 3 year intervals. Congress then lays down the new guidelines as well as appointing the new executive bureau.

Q - And are those who are appointed subject to recall during the period intervening between congresses?

GW - Of course; this is quite feasible. One has merely to ask for a referendum on the matter. But so far this has never happened.

But to continue my history of the SAC. After the war all of the anarcho-syndicalist organisations faded away. The workers of the SAC, having for so long stood by the CNT in Spain, were quite dispirited by its failure and by Franco's victory. Around this point, the reformist organisations signed a social contract with the employers in Sweden, leaving the SAC not knowing where to turn. In addition, the SAC was at odds with most of the IWMA (now IWA) member organisations like the Bulgarian CNT in exile, the Spanish CNT in exile, the USI in Italy, because these were smaller groups without any real roots in the proletariat. In 1956, the SAC pulled out of the IWMA. In Sweden the economic prospects looked good and it was around this time that the Swedish social model began to emerge and to be strengthened. There was talk of a welfare society in Sweden. On the whole, workers were passive and it was in the 1950s and 1960s that the bureaucracy grew in the reformist unions, for while passive, people still wanted unions and their unions began to pay more and more staff to cater for the workers' problems, and so bureaucracy expanded.

From 1955 to 1968, SACs membership fell to only 16,000 and pessimism about revolution was the order of the day. During these years the SAC took much the same line as other unions and signed collective agreements and so on.

Q - After 1968 what trade union strategy did the SAC espouse and why the turn around?

GW - 1968 saw lots of strikes in Sweden as well as student demonstrations, as in France. But, more importantly, there were illegal strikes in the mines up north with anarcho-syndicalists playing a leading role. And, from 1968 to 1972, there were many other illegal strikes in every sector.

Q - What do you mean "illegal" strikes?

GW - The union had signed an agreement, the collective contract. If they adhere to that agreement, they abdicate the right to strike. The right to strike is there only to guarantee the workers' rights as defined by the collective agreement, ie by the contract arranged between employer and union.

Q - And is union membership obligatory?

GW - Not at all! But 95% of workers are unionised. Quite often it is the practice of employers to reject anarcho-syndicalists - especially in the building trade where firms sign an agreement with the reformists to the effect that only LO workers will be hired. There is one firm, though, where anarcho-syndicalists are black-listed. This is the BTA firm, owned by the LO's construction union.

Q - And have the anarcho-syndicalists tried to reaffiliate to the LO?

GW - No. Well, there have been some, of course, but they do not amount to an opposition current.

Prior to '68 there were lots of elderly workers in the SAC, and since 1968 a huge number of younger workers has flooded in. There was a confrontation up to 1972. Since then, the older ones have acquired respect for their juniors who took part in demonstrations and are active in the syndicates.

Q - What was the substance of the clashes between them?

GW - They clashed over anarcho-syndicalist principles, and over the issue of the state. The old ones are more reformist, more pessimistic. The younger ones have introduced new themes such as ecology, the women's question, the anti-nuclear movement, the prisoners struggle: they want to cut the number of paid officials and organise classes and courses for debating and propagating the idea, analysis of revolutionary syndicalist structures and development of revolutionary syndicalist consciousness.

In 1975 there was a loggers' strike involving 15,000 workers; of these, 6,000 - 7,000 were SAC members. (The SAC is very strong in the industry) Funds were raised for the loggers as a whole. All of this campaigning led the 1979 congress to espouse new attitudes committing the confederation, say, to the anti-nuclear lobby, support for which had been there in the union for several years but which had hitherto not been official policy. After the 1975 congress, prisoners began to be organised by the SAC and we do have branches in the prisons.

Q - What percentage of the workforce in each trade would belong to SAC?

GW - I couldn't say. We have most members in the building trade and the bulk of loggers are SAC members. To give an idea of how things stand with regard to the Swedish workforce overall, here is how the unions break down:

LO (social-democratic) 2 million members

TCO (staff confederation) 1 million

SACO (Liberal professions) 300,000

SAC 19,000

Havnarbetrarforbundet (communist dockers union) 4,000

The latter union is very important because it embraces all dockers. If it so wished it could place a blockade on Sweden. In Sweden the CP is divided into 2 factions: the largest, with 18,000 members, is Eurocommunist; the other one, 3,000 strong, is wholeheartedly pro-Soviet. Each one is absolutely separate.

Here is a break-down of the Swedish parliamentary scene:

SAP (social-democratic) 40 - 45%

MSP (the rightwing Moderata Samlings Partiet) 20%

Centre 15%

FP (Liberal Party) 8%

VPK (Eurocommunists) 5%

There are other leftist parties but they are of little significance

Q - Is there debate within the SAC with regard to collective agreements or other matters, or agitation for a different trade-union practice than the traditional contractual style? And are there conflicting schools of thought?

GW - There are no tendencies in the proper sense of the word.

Q - But how do you feel about this inheritance from the 1950s with the paralysis of union activity, which also spelled paralysis of people's minds?

GW - I do not accept it, but there's no denying that is a fact. I can understand it but it was a very difficult time for the SAC. We were wholly isolated from other anarcho-syndicalist groups. This is because there were no other groups of that sort. What we were, were propaganda organisations, or never got beyond the embryonic stage. Today there are lots of youngsters coming along and wanting to know all about anarcho-syndicalism. They are interested in the history of the SAC. Every year we run week-long courses 6 o'clock to 8 o'clock each night. Courses on, say, self-management, the women's struggle, ideology, the 1st International etc.

Q - What is your analysis of the present economic scene in Sweden?

GW - The sectors where the recession is worst are logging, metalworking and in the naval shipyards. These are 3 very sizeable areas of the economy and there is a lively consciousness. In May, there was a general strike, led by the reformist unions, and 100,000 took part. The SAC took part too, for tactical reasons, but without real enthusiasm. It was a strike run by the reformists for political ends and mounted against the government coalition elected in 1979.

Q - We have long been hearing about the Swedish "paradise". What is your view of it?

GW - It is a paradise, for the capitalists and for leaders of the political parties. They have devised norms and working regulations. There has also been talk of self-managing groups in the Volvo assembly plants, but there have also been investigations into productivity. Furthermore, work is no longer run along the lines of an assembly-line, but is compartmentalised. Each workshop represents a tiny factory cut off from each other, except for the conveyor-belt bringing in the components. It is virtually impossible to establish contact or to mount a co-ordinated strike. Workers are also watched over by workers. When one person reduces productivity the other workers winkle him out. They call that taking an interest. There are lots of similar practices which are coming in for more and more criticism.

Other steps are taken to boost productivity. One of the ways is to pay all workers the same basic wage but to give them a little extra on the basis of productivity. This is precisely what the loggers were striking about in 1975: they were also demanding that their pay be paid to them on a monthly basis. Since 1979, the Swedish employers have fallen back into their old habits, and the productivity factor in wages has increased considerably.

Q - Do you foresee an escalation in strikes in the years to come? In the event of a break-down of the social contract how do you view the future of the Swedish working class?

GW - It spells the end of the Swedish model and the social consciousness of the workers is growing. This is an opportunity for anarcho-syndicalism to gain some ground. But I do not know whether the SAC will be up to the struggle: it will just have to develop its fighting abilities! At present, a campaign to force Swedish society down a different road is possible, but the fact is that most workers are still affiliated to the LO. Even so one finds a lot of young people and women and seamen joining the SAC and there is a real potential for growth there.

Q - Are there anarchist organisations or groups?

GW - There are no specific groups: most anarchists work within the SAC.

Q - And is there a cooperative movement?

GW - Sure. There are lots of producer and consumer co-ops and communes for working and living together. The ecology movement, the anti-nuclear movement, the commune movement - all of these are working towards a common goal - direct responsibility. There is no dividing line between those movements and the workers' struggles. The two are closely bound up because it all fits together.

SAC - 5

Q - We have the British example of Lucas, a high-level technology plant manufacturing weapons. The firm collapsed and its workforce have taken it over on self-management lines like the Lip workers in France, but adapted for the production of alternative products like wind generators, solar energy etc. What is your opinion of this?

GW - Well, the fact remains that struggles led by the traditional, reformist unions are defensive struggles. The Lucas struggle has been offensive, but it has succeeded to the extent that the workers, all of them highly skilled technicians, have managed to reorganise the firm themselves for a different market where they will be in a position to dictate the relations of exchange. In SAC's history one finds different sorts of offensive struggles. Thus the loggers, working as a team managed to impose a price on their labour and to have that price increased: a gang of loggers would approach a boss and suggest such and such a price for this or that job. If the boss turned it down another gang would step in, asking an even higher price and with every suggestion the price would go up. Workers who had secured a contract would hand over a portion of their wage to those who had been dismissed or were unemployed. This is something to build on. It asks great coordination of the workers and a determination to keep on the offensive. In areas where these tactics have been applied wages were clearly higher than those where workers had been bound by a collective agreement negotiated by the reformist unions. After the war, these tactics, however, faded away in the face of the social contract and the general acceptance of collective agreements.

Q - How do you view the anarchist movement in France?

GW - There seem to be lots of groups and tendencies and I find it hard to get my bearings.

Q - What is your view of the split in the Spanish CNT and what stand has the SAC adopted with regard to it?

GW - We in the SAC have always stood by the CNT. In the current context, the political parties and unions want no anarcho-syndicalist organisation in Spain and have done their utmost to mould the situation. The Scala arson attack for instance: the police picked up CNT militants just when the CNT was once again on the rise. That affair and lots of others have swayed the situation. But even then there were disagreements in CNT ranks over collective agreements or over participation in the shop-steward elections. After the 5th Congress, the CNT has had two wings, and two secretaries - Jose Bondia (elected by the Madrid congress) and Carlos Martinez (elected by the extra-ordinary congress in Valencia in July). There are 2 CNT newspapers with the same titles. The SAC is in touch with both factions.

(Interview translated from IRL, 40, Summer, 1981)

(NO FRONTIERS Footnote: The misconceptions about Lucas Areospace point to a need to improve the exchange of information. As far as we are aware there do exist a number of anarchist groups in Sweden that maintain a separate identity from the SAC. For example, the group around the paper Brand.

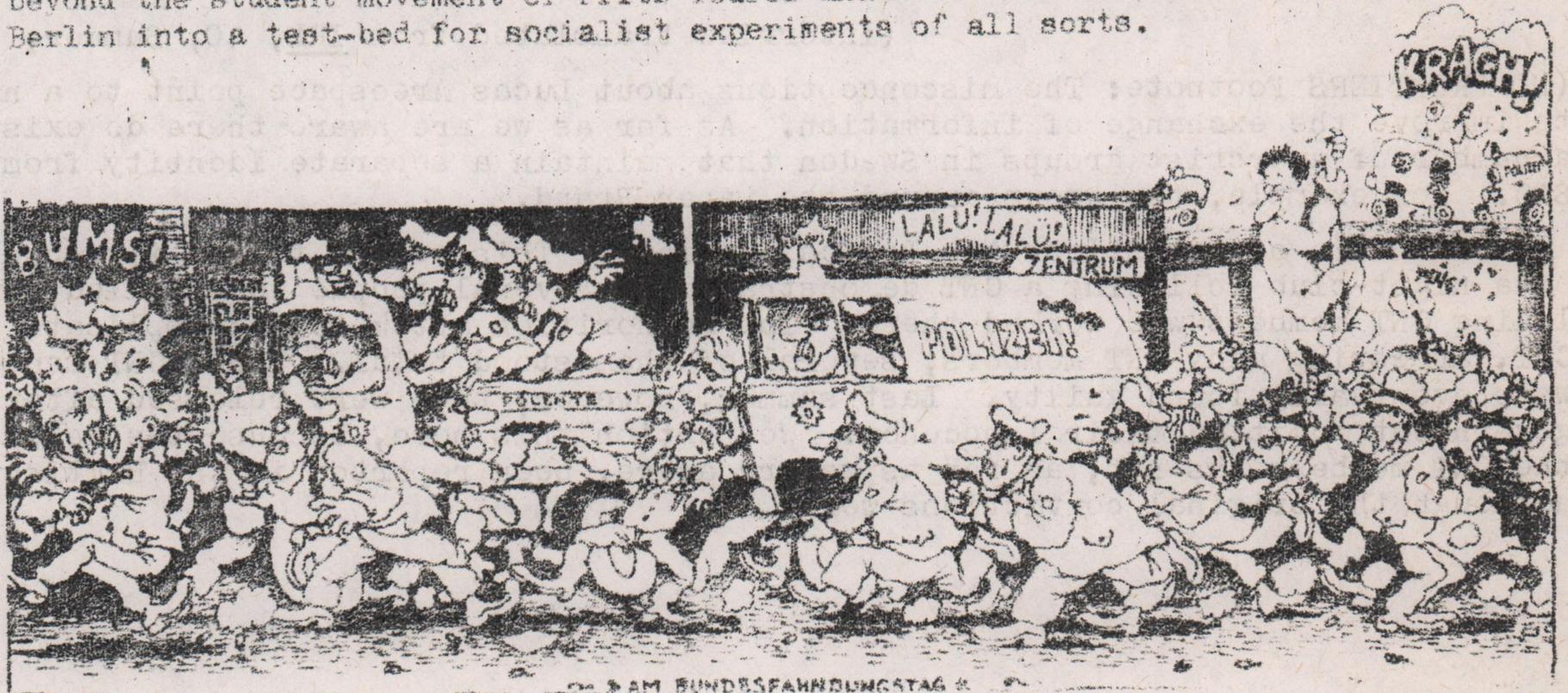
Goran Werin also mentions the La Scala affair. This refers to the fire-bombing of a night-club following a CNT demonstration. Several people were killed, including CNT members who worked there. The authorities attempted to implicate the CNT, arresting many CNT members, several of whom stood trial. Three CNT members were eventually found guilty. Last summer, however, they were released after the government admitted their innocence. We mention this here, because the release of the CNT members has not, as far as we are aware, been reported in the British press, although the original convictions were)

ALTERNATIVE BERLIN - IN STRUGGLE

During the last war Berlin was almost completely devastated. And while still Germany's largest city, she is no longer a capital and no longer Germany's industrial centre. Since 1945 and, more especially since the erection of the wall in 1961, she is also a divided city: even today the eastern sector is subject to the laws of the Soviet occupiers and the western to those of the Americans, British and French. Marooned within the territory of East Germany and cut off from Western Europe, West Berlin is a metropolis of some 2 million inhabitants, a city without a hinterland, something like an over-populated island encompassed by hostile territory and artificially sustained by the Bonn government. So Berlin's social, economic and political problems should be seen in this very specific context.

Naturally, given the circumstances, most industries have pulled out of W. Berlin for the richer pickings of the Federal Republic. It is in the hope of retaining industry and attracting new industry that the economy of Berlin is subsidised to the tune of 7000 million marks per annum. The total amount of subsidy poured into the city is nearer 13,000 million marks. The rapid decline in population experienced by the city has been partly cancelled out by this policy of subsidisation and tax concessions. In this respect, Berlin has taken a gamble on the tertiary sector: thus, it has become a city of international congresses, an artistic, cultural, university and administrative centre. Similarly, the system of subsidies has proved particularly encouraging to property speculation; the projects arising out of this speculative activity, as gigantic as they are pointless, have ruined the corporation and have cost Berlin a little bit more of its identity and its autonomy with every passing day. A great metropolis is a complicated whole which one does not divide with impunity: 36 years after the war Berlin has yet to recover its equilibrium.

The surrender of Berlin to the tertiary sector has had another consequence too. The first wave of immigration (by Turkish and Yugoslav workers, since the beginning of the 1960's and still continuing to this day) has given way to the recent influx of young people from the Federal Republic. Weary of provincialism, they are drawn to Berlin by its progressive university, its art schools, theatre schools and cinema academies, and also by the fact that the occupation regulations make W. Berlin off limits for the Federal German Army: thus Berliners are excused the compulsory military service. All of these factors, plus the sturdy socialist tradition (going well beyond the student movement of Fritz Teufel and Rudi Dutschke) have turned West Berlin into a test-bed for socialist experiments of all sorts.



The student movement which reached its peak in the days of demonstrations over Vietnam in 1968, receded in the early 70's into the political and trade union organisations, the schools and the factories. At the time much was said about a "Long March through the institutions". There was a plethora of groups, ranging from Maoists to Trotskyists, through to the more orthodox Marxists. After 1975, the popularity of these organisations began to wane and, indeed, their dogmatic calcification had become quite absurd.

The "TUNIX" congress in 1978 signalled the return of the non-dogmatics to the Berlin political scene; their slogan "Do nothing" (Nix tun, in German), deliberately flew in the face of the moralising pretensions of "organisations" forever keen to "do something" (Was tun, in German). The critique of militancy and the idea of pleasure were taken up again, along with the experiences of the earliest Berlin communes, (encouraged by Reich and Marcuse) and their quest for harmony between the personal and the political. Through the Tunix festival, the new left rediscovered itself through joy, dancing and music, and signalled the end and failure of their "Long March". It was accepted that this "Long March" had not led to the overthrow of capitalism but, instead, had used up the marchers, leaving them exhausted or corrupted or casualties of the "Berufsverbot" (the law proscribing from public office anyone deemed a subversive.) On every side groups set to work to "...place utopia on the agenda" and to give form, alongside existing bourgeois institutions, to new and "alternative" projects.

Nowadays, in Berlin the word "alternative" is a term so loaded that no one who has not been there can comprehend it; in fact Berlin's alternative movement comprises several hundred self-managing collectives. Their presence within the capitalist system is a source of constant irritation. Given the conditions, what independence may one or should one seize in order to retain one's identity? This is the crucial question to which the alternatives of Berlin attempt to discover an answer each day.

THE ALTERNATIVE MOVEMENT

One of the longest-running alternative projects in W. Berlin is the "Fabrik für Kultur und Handwerk"; a culture and craft centre based in what were once the premises of the Third Reich's Ministry of Propaganda. There, one may find bicycle repair machine-shops and soft technology and purchase macrobiotic food products or attend all manner of courses; from ceramics to karate, from mime to guitar. Also to be found there are a circus and the Berlin rock musicians commune. The Fabrik was set up 5 years ago on one floor of an old factory which had been leased out, 2 years after that the premises of the old cinema society were taken over and a provisional contract agreed. In the summer of 1978, the Fabrik organised a huge "Festival of the Environment", and spawned ecological working parties to look into technology, energy, medicine, food and transport. These various groups working along the lines of a more humane environment settled on a large meadow and built their houses and cabins and pitched their tents there, usually making use of what was tossed away by the consumer society. They even put together a huge electric generator which is worked by wind and which was adopted as the symbol of the festival.

After the Tunix congress and the Festival of the Environment it became obvious that the non-dogmatics were no longer just a minority but were a strong group resolved to build a genuine "counter-society". 1978 even saw the emergence of a need for back-up structures for the alternative community in Berlin in the areas of finance, information and policy.

Netzwerk Selbsthilfe (The Self-Help Network) came into existence as a legal and financial programme for alternative and political ventures, it represents a veritable solidarity fund. The underlying idea is that it should help co-operatives that are under self-management, with advice and finance, given that ignorance and lack of funds are the main problems facing anyone attempting to step outside the accepted culture into those areas left free by the prevailing system.

Netzwerk today has almost 6000 members in W. Berlin and the Federal Republic. For the most part they are not people who live and work in the context of the counter-culture but who do sympathise with the movement. Among their number one even finds celebrities like the poet Hans Magnus Enzensberger, the writer Peter Paul Zahl, artist Joseph Beuys, the architect Julius Pasener, the journalist Gunther Wallraff and Daniel Cohn-Bendit.

Netzwerk is run along democratic lines: a general assembly elects its delegates to the committee which is in charge of the allocation of funds and the general administration of the organisation. The committee is drawn from three sectors: there are representatives of alternative projects, some Netzwerk members who have offered themselves for election and other Netzwerk members selected at random: anyone may attend the sittings of the committee. After 3 years in existence Netzwerk has allocated in excess of 1,000,000 marks among co-operatives attached politically to the alternative culture movement. Among these

have beenyoung peoples co-ops,womens co-ops,unemployed co-ops,schools,book-shops,self-managed cafes and political newspapers.It is true that there is a certain amount of bureaucracy and arbitrariness in the Netzwerk and it has already come under violent criticism.Even so it has provided support for projects which would otherwise never have seen the light of day.Recently,in Federal Germany,some regional Netzwerk organisations have been set up,quite independent of the one in Berlin; they collect and allocate their own funds.

A LIST,A DAILY,A WEEKLY,A MONTHLY.

Around the same time the Alternative Liste(Alternative List,German elections are run on a list system where parties present a list of candidates,a proportion of whom are elected according to the overall percentage of the vote which that party received.)was set up in W.Berlin.as a sort of counter party to the existing political parties-the Social Democrats(SPD),the Christian Democrats(CDU),and the Liberals,or Free Democrats(FDP).Generated in the womb of the Berlin alternative movement,this Alternative Lists (AL),has nothing to do with the "Greens" in the Federal Republic, whose ambiguous ecological sensibilities attract votes from the far-left,but also from the most conservative of the right-wingers.Although the AL decided from its inception,to take part in the electoral contest in the city wards and parliament of W.Berlin,the party is insistent that it is equally at home in extra-parliamentary activities.This is why there are within the AL numerous working groups organised on a district basis or by subject(health,women,transport,ventures,housing etc;) and membership of these is open to all.These open assemblies operate as pressure groups and take an active part in extra-parliamentary political events.AL is not an homogeneous movement;on the contrary,it has room for varying political loyalties from anarchist to Trotskyist,not forgetting the ecological tradition.At the parliamentary level it apparently commands the support of a new brand of voter who rejects the corruption and the place-men of the traditional parties(@).

It was also in 1978 that another project of consummate significance for the movement appeared;the launching of a national daily the "Tageszeitung"(the Daily or TAZ for short),modelled on the French daily"Liberation".This was of especial relevance in Berlin where the Axel Springer newspaper chain,from a position of near monopoly,is forever slandering the whole of the left and is a formidably misinformative factor in the life of the average Berliner.The TAZ has become the clearing house for the alternative news in Berlin.Today it sells around 33,000 copies and the signs are that sales are going up.The news and features content is improving although the quality of the graphics is still quite primitive.

At local level one should mention 2 other important newspapers,one"Radikal", is a monthly and the mouth-piece of the anti-authoritarian movement in Berlin; it is a joint publication by 26 autonomist and libertarian collectives--among them the local editors of TAZ,the AL assemblies,anarchist publishing houses,anti-nuclear and anti-prison groups,and book-shop and cafe collectives.The paper's subtitle changes from issue to issue ...it might be "West Berlin's socialist newspaper", or "the Movements Newspaper",or"the Paper for an Exiting Rally", (that one on the occasion of the recent Berlin visit of the US Secretary of State,Alexander Haig), and latterly "the Newspaper for Anarchy and Well-Being".More recently,the weekly "Instandbesetzer Post"(Squatter's Post)has emerged as the spokesman for the squatter's movement.

THE SEARCH FOR SOME LIVING SPACE.

Another pressing problem to which the alternative movement has had to find a solution is the problem of over-crowding.And,indeed,how many are the projects that have petered-out for lack of space in which to be pursued!As tenants,the alternatives are dependant upon the whims and greed of landlords,and might find their leases cancelled at a moments notice.Squatting in vacant apartments and buildings is certainly a legitimate solution to the problem but it is not always a viable solution for projects requiring a certain stability.Out of the need for this living space wherein the "counter-society "might expand in peace,has emerged the Mehringhof;these are old factory premises no longer in use and offering some 5000 square metres of useful space.Seven alternative projects,finding themselves without accommodation,came together at the end of 1979 and this made it possible to purchase the Mehringhof for the sum of 1,800,000 marks.The finding and organisation of the premises are a show-case for the utilisation of the financial and legal openings

available within the capitalist system. In this instance, those openings have been used in order to acquire the premises and then to turn them over to self-management for the benefit of the users. Today there are about 30 collectives installed there; among these are offices belonging to the Netzwerk, the local editors of the TAZ, the district assembly of the AL, a cafe, craft collectives, some Turkish immigrant groups, some alternative schools, publishing houses, a printing shop, a workshop for the disabled, etc. It also provides a base for the Stattbuch collective, a group which has set itself the task of conducting a survey of alternative activities in Berlin and which is on the verge of publishing its findings—a 960 page address book!

The setting up of the Mehringhof in spring 1980 has enabled people to establish liaison between various projects and it has also provided a great boost to the alternative movement. Out of that movement, during the winter of 1980-81, there also emerged the squatters movement (or in German, the Hausinstandbesetzer).

The housing shortage is not a problem for the alternative movement alone, it confronts all Berliners and especially the least well-off... the pensioners, unemployed, students and immigrants too. It is true to say that rents, where older buildings are concerned at least, are noticeably lower than in the Federal Republic proper. But the fact is that there are too few old apartments to go around. For a very long time the government has been trying to abolish the rent-controls on these apartment blocks, the policy on housing of the SPD, and, currently, of the CDU, has always favoured the apartment owners and land owners. The Senate (ie; the government in W. Berlin) is favourably displaced towards the conversion of old apartments to luxury flats. Subsidies for 70% of the costs of this conversion are available. Although there are thousands in Berlin looking for a cheap old apartment, these have been systematically emptied of tenants. Empty apartments are made uninhabitable by ripping off the roof or by deliberately burning them out. Thus are the properties made eligible for renovation! In short, one has the all too familiar set up encountered in most of Europe's cities.

At present Berlin has at least 10,000 old apartments left empty and awaiting imminent renovation work, while there are 80,000 Berliners looking for a roof over their heads. Yet every year, allegedly for purposes of renovation or rebuilding, almost 40,000 apartments are taken off the market. Most of these are sited in Kreuzberg, the working-class and Turkish quarter alongside the Wall; it is here that the squatters movement has surfaced. Squats have been going on sporadically for the past decade or so, but it is only since 1980 that there has been a squatters movement in the strict sense, occupying factories and apartments left empty, doing so in a systematic way and making them fit for human habitation again. Apparently the campaigns in Amsterdam and Zurich have acted as an encouragement to the movement in Berlin. In Berlin the squatters describe themselves as "instandbesetzer", a pun linking the words "besetzen" ("to occupy") and "instandsetzen" ("to reinstall"). When the squats began people showed themselves sympathetic, hardly surprising in that every Berliner has a first-hand knowledge of the problem!

Whereas in the Netherlands and in Britain, the occupation of empty property is legal, in Berlin and in the Federal Republic it is tantamount to an outrage against the rights of property. During the winter of '80-81 there were occupations and violent evictions, leading to a radicalisation of the movement. After each eviction processions of squatters would form up in the city centre and the plate-glass windows of banks and luxury stores would be smashed.

Parallel with this, the Springer newspaper chain was whipping up public opinion against the squatters. At this point there came what was to be a crucial event; in the wake of a huge property scandal which had done much to weaken it, the SPD controlled Senate fell apart. Fresh elections were held in May 1981. Meanwhile the SPD, very keen to regain lost confidence, adopted a very outstanding approach and tried to reach some agreement with the squatters. The Netzwerk, the AL and the tenants associations acted as go-betweens. A legal framework was proposed, within which all housing owned by the Senate (around 20 out of 160 odd squatted premises) would be surrendered to the squatters on condition that they rehabilitate them with only a fraction of the money needed for a normal rehabilitation scheme. The squatters assemblies rejected the offer, being unwilling to engage in talks with the senate while some of their colleagues were still imprisoned. Unfortunately for them, victory in the elections went to the CDU and, naturally enough, the right took a tough line. Indeed the new Senate insisted upon the evacuation of 8 occupied

premises owned by the "Neue Heimat" ("New Home") property company....a company owned by the DGB (German TUC)! Which was keen to get on with rehabilitating them.

AFTER "TUWAT"--WHAT NEXT?

In response to this ultimatum, the Berlin squatters' movement issued an appeal to, ".....all our friends and colleagues all over Europe". This then, was what lay behind the "Tuwat" ("Do summit").

"Tuwat is a spectacle. A congress, a festival, an expression of converging struggles, every one. All of this is to take place in Berlin, that symbol of the divisions between nations. Berlin, scene of the nakedest displays of the cold war of governments, a war that will rebound directly on us. The government of Berlin has issued its ultimatum, it wants to evacuate 8 squatted premises whose meaning in our eyes is well in excess of mere occupied apartments. They want to destroy our living space and our unity, we shall show the representatives of all governments who still imagine they can treat us how they will, just what we think of them(..)

We shall hold celebrations fit to set the city a-trembling!"

"Tuwat" proposed that the period from 25th; August to 25th; September be set aside for conferences on autonomy, gaiety in the public squares and anti-war demonstrations. By way of solidarity many sympathisers squatted in occupied buildings. Among these were some "house fathers", i.e. well known public figures like Pastor Heinrich Albert or the writer Ingeborg Drewitz. In every house with the threat of eviction hanging over it, there were 'round the clock cultural programmes embracing theatrical performances, concerts, variety bills and circus performances. At KuKuCK, the autonomy centre in Kreuzberg, a huge fresco was done on one of the outside walls. It shows wizards gathered about a cauldron from which there flashes a broken arrow inscribed within a circle....this being the movements symbol.

What followed, we all know; the semi-defeat of Tuwat, the evacuation of the 8 disputed premises, the death of Hans-Jurgen Rattay. Afterwards, the atmosphere remained tense, some tiny right-wing groups have taken up the cudgels and threatened attacks on the Netzwerk, the AL and the Mehringhof. The SPD have stood back and let the alternatives be attacked directly by the CDU controlled Senate, but have not ruled out the possibility of their stepping in at the opportune moment to assume the mantle of the party of order and moderation. At the same time various organisations have been trying to negotiate with the Senate on behalf of the squatters, but the position has deteriorated considerably since May '81.

The movement itself is split between a hard-line tendency and another more moderate faction spear headed by the AL (which is now represented on the Berlin Senate with 7.5% of the vote and 9 seats). The AL, which at no time accepted the verbal violence of the Tuwat, is presently urging the parliament to accept its draft law for an amnesty of those gaoled and for the legalisation of squatting. This then is the position in W. Berlin today. The already divided city is today split into 2 antagonistic camps committed to periodic confrontation. It might as easily result in the fall of the CDU Senate, or, instead, in fresh elections and the end of the housing movement. For the moment the situation remains uncertain. And Berlin waits.

(@) With particular regard to the anarchists, it should be said that there was controversy over the AL, and that many anarchists while participating in the extra-parliamentary activities of the neighbourhood groups, opposed participation in the elections and abstained from voting. Such was the impact of this abstentionism that had ALL of the alternatives turned out to vote, the AL would have taken 14% of the poll, instead of the 7.5% it did take.

Pierre Lipschutz.

Ina L'Orange.

(AGORA Feb-Mar 1982)