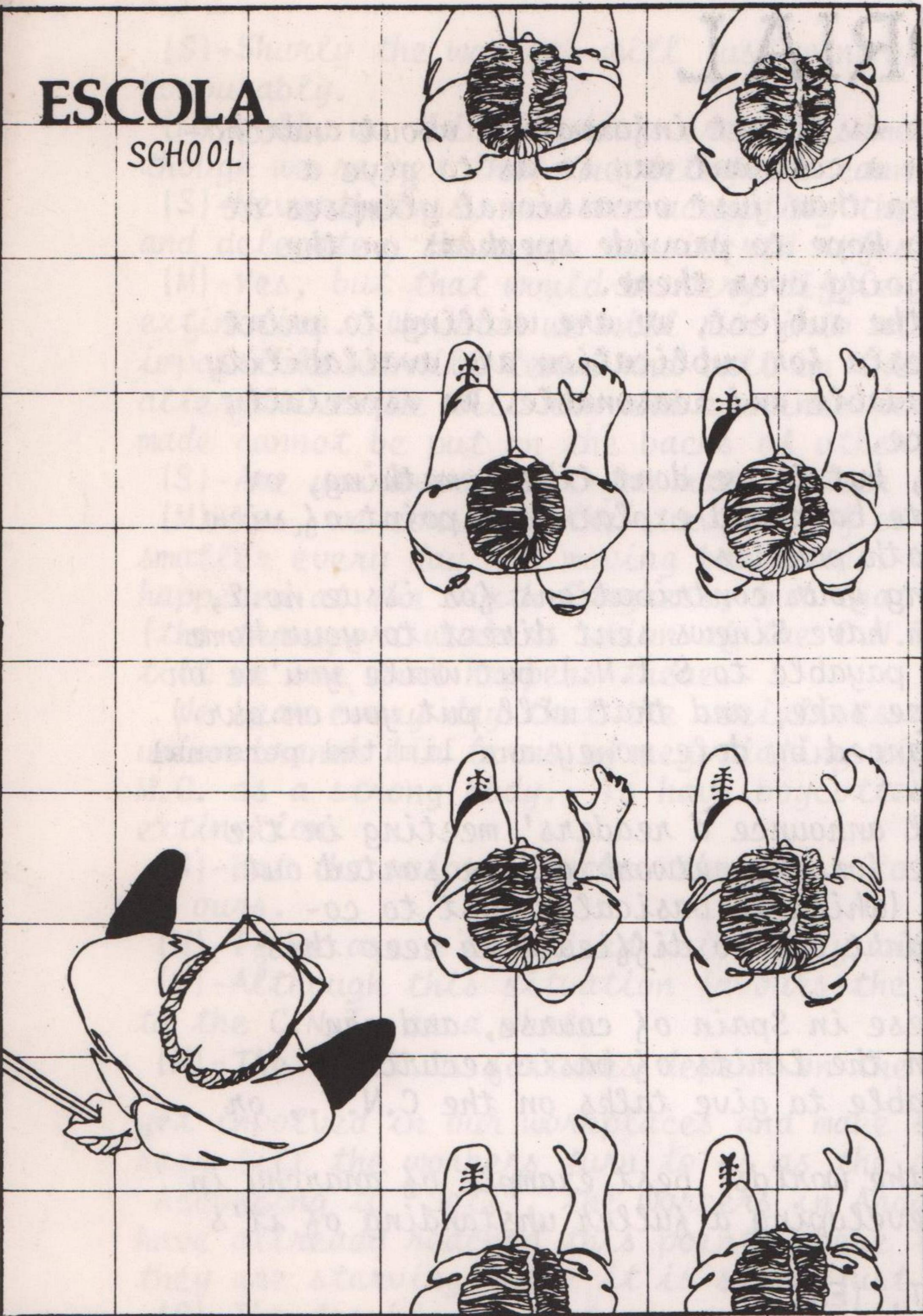


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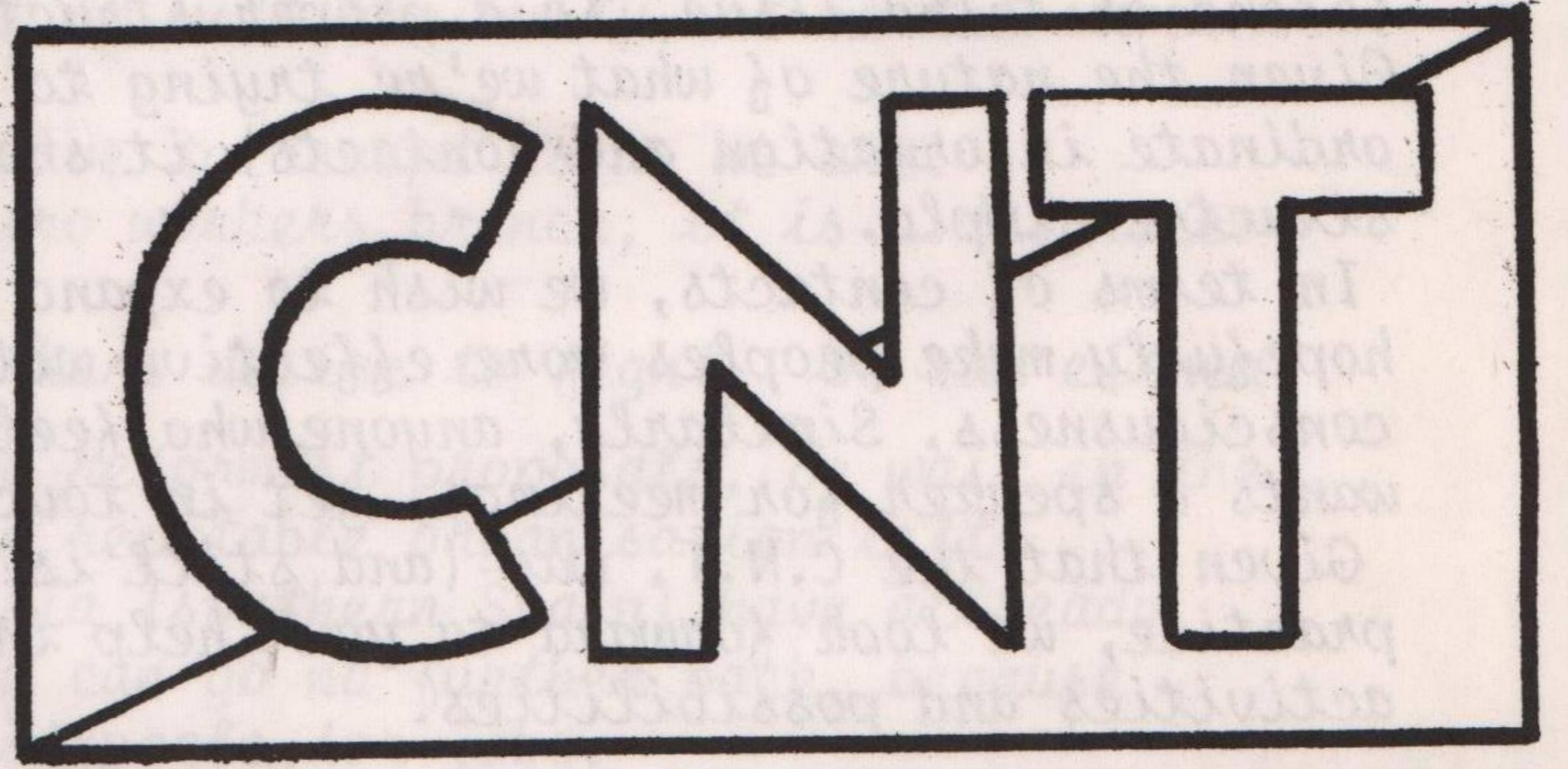
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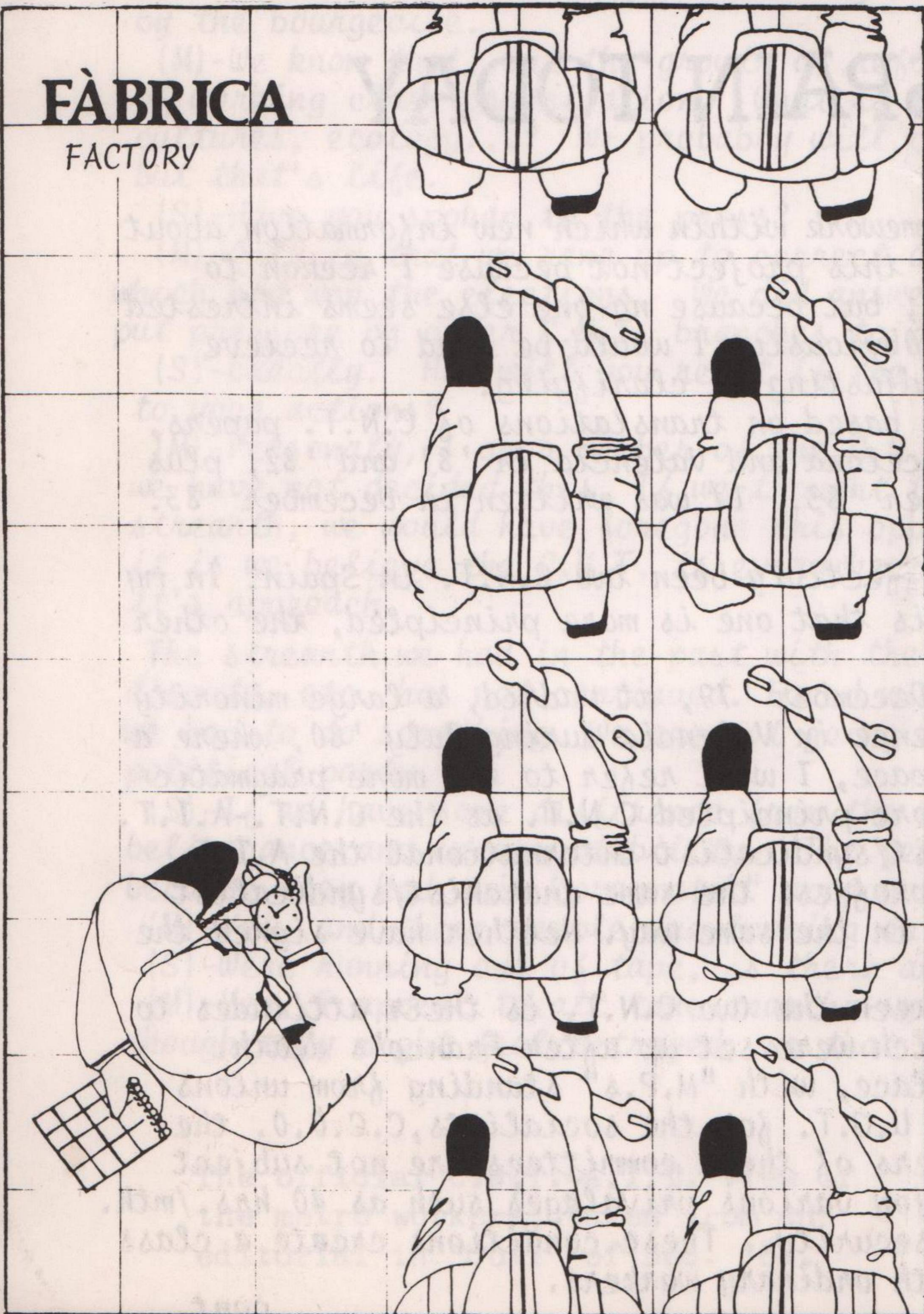
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INDEPENDENT NEWSLETTER OF  
THE SPANISH INFORMATION NETWORK  
CONTAINING NEWS AND VIEWS ABOUT  
ANARCHIST/SYNDICALIST TRADE UNIONS IN SPAIN.

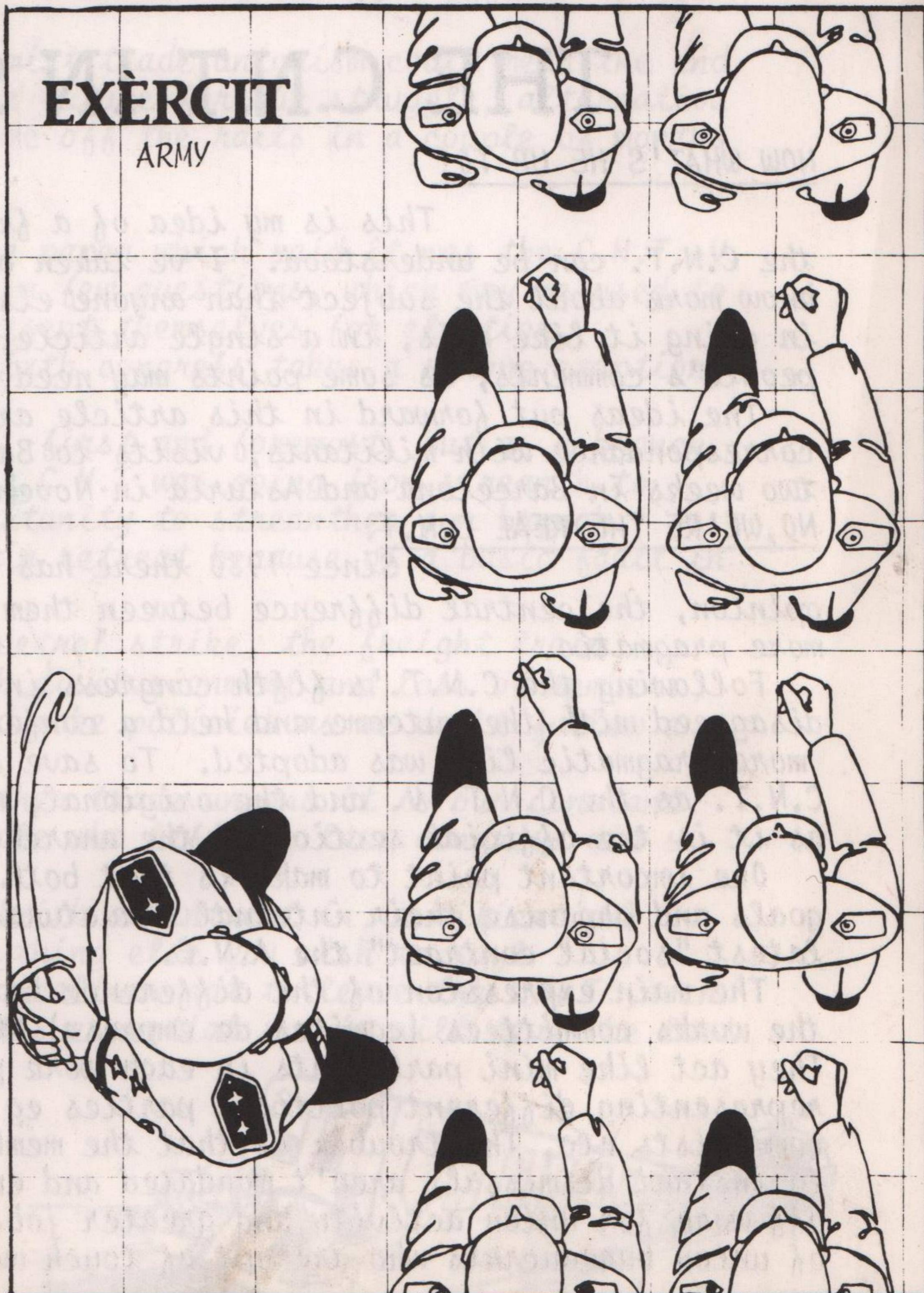
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FÀBRICA  
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# EDITORIAL

The aim of the Spanish Information Network is to get information about anarcho-syndicalism in modern Spain into English in a coherent way so as to give a detailed picture of what is going on, rather than just occasional glimpses at different aspects of the situation. We also hope to provide speakers on the subject and provide contacts for comrades going over there.

As we want a full and open discussion on the subject, we are willing to print opinions with which we disagree. The criteria for publication are availability of space and the need for articles to be readable and reasonable. We especially welcome articles based on personal experience.

Basically, we'll print just about anything, but if we don't like something, or think the facts may be incorrect, we'll write back and explain our point of view so as to work out something acceptable to both parties.

In this spirit, we look forward to receiving your contributions for issue no.2, which should appear in late Summer. You can have *Sinews* sent direct to your home for 35p a copy/50p overseas (cheque or P.O. payable to S.I.N.) but while you're on why not make it a quid or two for convenience sake, and that will put you on our mailing list. This publication is being financed by dole money and limited personal savings etcetera. so dig deep for donations.

Depending on the level of response, we will announce a readers' meeting in the second or third issue, so a proper structure for the network can be sorted out. Given the nature of what we're trying to do (which is basically just to co-ordinate information and contacts) it shouldn't be too difficult to keep this structure simple.

In terms of contacts, we wish to expand these in Spain of course, and can hopefully make peoples more effective within the limits of basic security consciousness. Similarly, anyone who feels able to give talks on the C.N.T., or wants a speaker for meetings, get in touch.

Given that the C.N.T. was (and still is?) the worlds' best example of anarchy in practice, we look forward to your help in developing a fuller understanding of it's activities and possibilities.

M.L. and I.T. (Eds.)

## THE C.N.T. IN SPAIN TODAY

### NOW WHAT'S HE UP TO?

This is my idea of a framework within which new information about the C.N.T. can be understood. I've taken on this project not because I reckon to know more about the subject than anyone else, but because no-one else seems interested in doing it like this, in a single article. Obviously, I would be glad to receive people's comments, as some points may need adjusting or clarifying.

The ideas put forward in this article are based on translations of C.N.T. papers, correspondance with militants, visits to Barcelona and Valencia in '81 and '82, plus two weeks in Barcelona and Asturia in November '83. It was written in December '83.

### NO, WE'RE THE REAL C.N.T.

Since 1980 there has effectively been two C.N.T. in Spain. In my opinion, the central difference between them is that one is more principled, the other more pragmatic.

Following the C.N.T.'s fifth congress in December '79, at Madrid, a large minority disagreed with the outcome and held a conference in Valencia during July '80, where a more pragmatic line was adopted. To save space, I will refer to the more pragmatic C.N.T. as the C.N.T.-V. and the original, more principled C.N.T. as the C.N.T.-A.I.T. as it is the official section of the anarchist/syndicalist international the A.I.T.

One important point to make is that both profess the same anarchist/syndicalist goals and organise their internal structures in the same way. Neither have signed the latest "social contract" the A.N.E.

The main expression of the difference between the two C.N.T. is their attitudes to the works committees (comites de empresa) which were set up after Franco's death. They act like mini parliaments in each work place, with "M.P.s" standing for unions representing different political parties eg. U.G.T. for the socialists, C.C.O.O. the communists etc. The trouble is that the members of these committees are not subject to instant dismissal, aren't mandated and enjoy various privileges such as 40 hrs./mth. off work for union activity and greater job security. These conditions create a class of union bureaucrats who are out of touch with ordinary workers.

cont.

Although it dislikes the works committees, the C.N.T.-V. is willing to use them, i.e. get members elected on to them, as this gives them access to information, negotiating rights and means they can make positive, realistic demands, rather than just reacting to what the reformist unions do. They claim these tactics enable them to develop a real presence in the work place, rather than becoming a marginalised "political party" in effect.

In contrast, the C.N.T.-A.I.T. vigorously boycotts the works committees, calling for decisions made by assemblies of all workers to be binding in negotiation, for unions which receive 10% of workers votes to be recognised without any preconditions and for the right of the C.N.T. as a militant trade union, to not give the names of its members. They see this as the only way to avoid the drift into the kind of trade union where members just pay their dues and leave it all up to the officials, thus drawing a clear line between themselves and the reformist trade unions.

There is a vague possibility that Spain's socialist government will introduce legislation in '84 which goes some way towards satisfying these demands. This seems to be the C.N.T.-A.I.T.'s main hope for a way to break out of the spiral of declining influence and they will call a conference if this legislation is ever produced. In the meantime, they are keeping up the pressure with a properganda campaign.



"THE BROTHERHOOD OF PURISTS"

Another, possibly more important, reason for the split is that the C.N.T.-V. accuse the C.N.T.-A.I.T. of being in the hands of a brotherhood of purists who refuse to allow internal dissent and personally, I believe there is some truth in this. For example, in their sixth congress held earlier this year in Barcelona, the C.N.T.-A.I.T. declared "We emphasise one thing, WE ARE ALL AGAINST THE WORKS COMMITTEES". This seems very strange given that at least a sizable minority were in favour of experimenting with the works committees. An indication of this feeling was given when the branch of the C.N.T.-A.I.T. which covers the Barcelona Metro, stood for and won a majority on their works committee in December '82. (See separate article)

One result of the tensions caused by the sixth congress is that there seems to be a movement especially amongst those members who form workable unions, to break away and join the C.N.T.-V. At the present time, this is at a very amorphous stage, and may prove no more than a rumour.

The C.N.T.-V.'s claim is backed up by several conversations I have had with militants of the C.N.T.-A.I.T., who take it for granted that some of those with positions of authority in the organisation are dogmatic and manipulative. They trace this back to the exile C.N.T. which they believe became divorced from reality during Franco's rule and had too much control over how things developed after his death.

On the other hand, some of the old guard of the C.N.T.-V. are accused of taking pragmatism to the point of unscrupulousness when they worked within the vertical unions which existed under Franco.

Having said all this, the average militant in both C.N.T. is very similar and the split is giving the government an excuse to not return the union's property seized by Franco after the Civil War (patrimonio sindical) on the basis that they do not know who to give it to.

Ultimately, I believe the blame for the split must lie with the lack of space given by the resolutions of the fifth congress for experiments such as those of the Metro workers. It is interesting that by actually being in the works committee the metro workers have apparently gained first hand experience of the apathy they induce in the ordinary workers. This may make the demand of the sixth congress that they leave it by June '84 unnecessary. On the other hand, they sent an observer to the C.N.T.'s eighth congress in Madrid this November and may be moving towards their position.

## "TO THE SHORES OF SUNNY, SUNNY SPAIN"

Against this general background, I would like to give some idea of what I saw this November in Barcelona and Gijon (which is on the coast of Asturia in Northern Spain). Ironically, Barcelona has always been associated with the C.N.T.'s radical tendency, giving rise to attempted insurrectionary general strikes in the 30's, while at this same time the C.N.T. in Asturia took the pragmatic step of forming an alliance with the socialist trade union, the U.G.T.

During my enquiries, I didn't place too much importance on figures, as without a great deal of investigation they are impossible to confirm. For example, the regional secretary of the C.N.T.-A.I.T. in Catalonia told me that the figure of 40,000 given for membership at their sixth congress should be half that in reality. The C.N.T.-V. is about 10,000 strong. One thing which does seem significant though is that the C.N.T.-A.I.T. claims to be stable, while the C.N.T.-V. claims to be the only union in Spain whose membership is growing. These new members may to some extent just be transfers from the other C.N.T. rather than ordinary workers.

The C.N.T.-V. has little presence in Barcelona city, being strongest in Andalusia the Basque country, Valencia and Asturia. (For example, in Jan. '83 they were the biggest union in a Michelin factory in Vitoria employing about 2000 people. At the same time they had 40% of the works committee at Seville's biggest employer C.A.S.A. which makes aeroplanes.)

The exception to this is in Barcelona's entertainments industry where it claims 80% of all organised workers as a result of working within the vertical unions which were permitted to exist under Franco. It recently won a strike over conditions on temporary contracts at the Montjuich pleasure park\* and has recently won two strikes at dance halls over this same issue. They also have a presence in Barcelona's Banking, Metallic and Commercial unions.

Within Catalonia, which is the region around Barcelona, there are several industrial co-ops whose members are in the C.N.T.-V., such as a glassware factory near Matero which employs about 400 people, or a factory just south of Barcelona where 204 workers make slaughterhouse machinery. As I've already written about these for Direct Action and I.C.O.M. I won't repeat myself here, drop us a line if you want more information.

The C.N.T.-A.I.T. won a nationally significant strike for reinstatement of workers victimised by Carrefour supermarkets earlier in '83. The court decision giving the workers their jobs back with full compensation gave them a recognition usually reserved for members of the works committees.

The C.N.T.-A.I.T.'s main strength in Barcelona lies in the metal workers union, but they are organised in many other types of work such as teaching, joinery, transport, etc. They also have groups for specific neighbourhoods and are connected with six small co-ops in the textile industry.

The cultural week connected with the C.N.T.-A.I.T.'s sixth congress was a great success in drawing in ordinary people and catching the attention of the national media. Solidaridad Obrera is published in Barcelona every two weeks by the C.N.T.-A.I.T. and their Madrid based paper "C.N.T." will soon begin publication again.

There are also several excellent libertarian neighbourhood libraries which provide space for meetings and organise cultural events. These seem to relate equally to both branches of the C.N.T.

### TOWER BLOCK FOR SALE: ONE PREVIOUS OWNER

Just before I arrived in Gijon, both C.N.T. had moved into a building erected on a site which belonged to them before the civil war.

The C.N.T.-V. occupied the fifth and third storeys, giving them about sixty square meters of space. There is a large pensioners union (with 150 paid up members, mainly old militants, who are decorating their own room), a cafe, a large meeting room and a room for slides, as well as offices for unions representing most of the major types of industry in the area, except mining. They claim to have about 800 members in Asturia about 30 of which are on the works committees. Their strongest presence seems to be in the metal workers union, including one small firm where all ten workers and even one of the bosses are in the C.N.T. Their local paper "Accion Libertaeria" comes out every two months and has a print run of about 1,000.

The C.N.T.-A.I.T. was still decorating their offices on the first floor when I visited them, they told me they have about 300 members in Asturia basically in the same range of industries.

\*Albert Meltzer has good reason to believe this strike was actually organised by the C.N.T.-A.I.T., my reasons for saying it was the C.N.T.-V. are just as convincing. I suppose it will just have to remain one of life's mysteries.

The relationship between the two wings is a bit obscure. Both claim the other was aggressive towards them when they first moved in, but they seem to visit each others offices in a friendly enough manner, though rumours I heard in Barcelona that they were virtually reunified were obviously exaggerated.

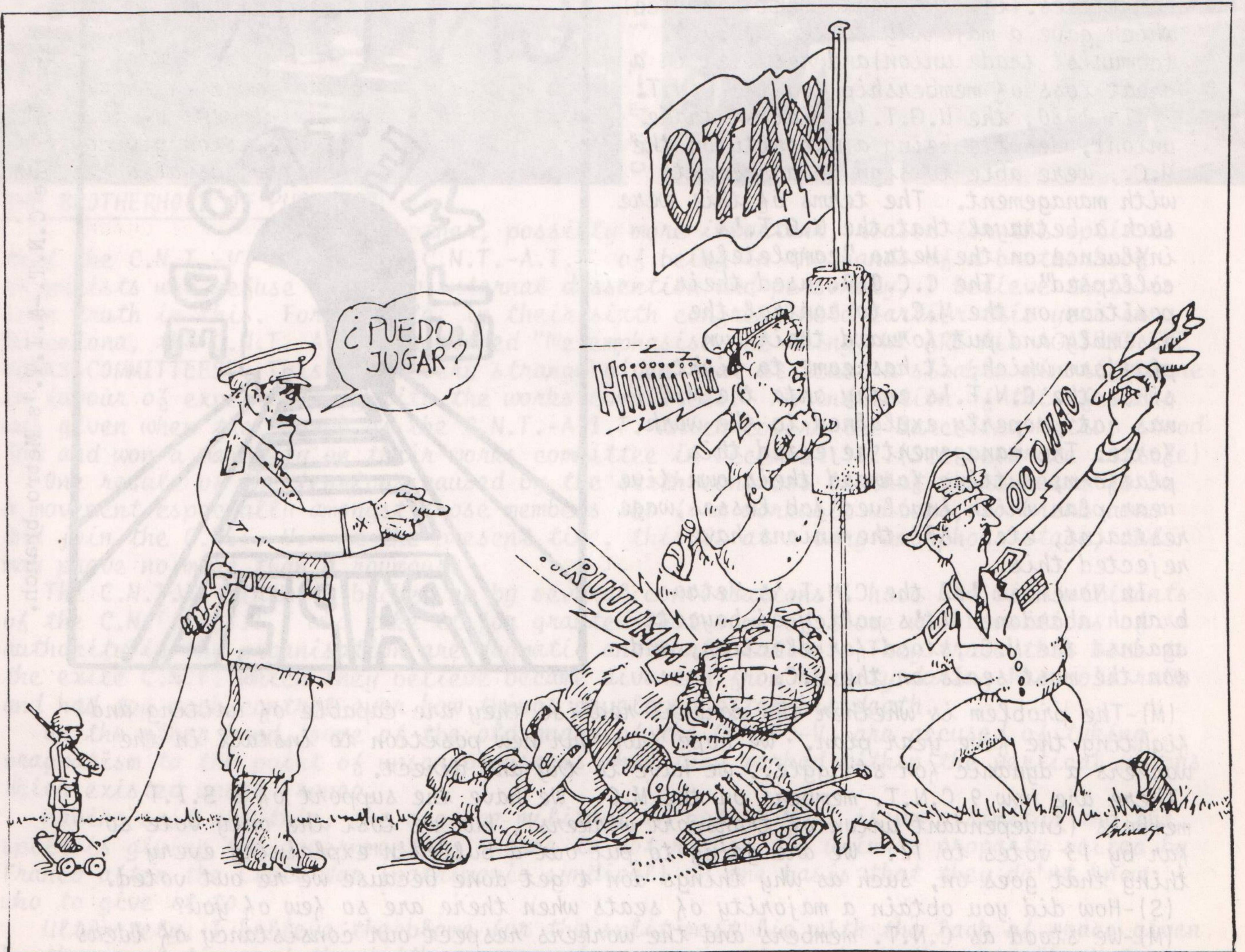
The area is suffering from reorganisation of it's heavy industry which causes alot of disruption (including a general strike on Feb. 4th) with the smaller unions such as the C.N.T.s being very active at street level. Both have a resident lawyer who gives free legal, both are very busy.

"LEADING MILITANTS" RULE O.K.

Both C.N.T. have close relations with the broader anarchist movement, which has lead some people to criticise the C.N.T.-A.I.T. for being dominated by the F.A.I., which is an organisation of the concious anarchists in the union. The C.N.T.-V.'s latest confrence decided to try and aviod the tensions caused by integrating the various pressure groups such as ecology, feminist, anti-military etc. into the trade union and instead decided to form a network of distinct groups which would include the C.N.T. Apparantly the delegates from Zaragoza were not at all pleased with this descision.

My hope for the C.N.T.'s future is that it can be reunited as an open minded organisation, willing to experiment with it's tactics and permit a variety of opinions about the path to it's anarchist/syndicalist goals. Even more important is a total rejection of "liderismo" even when it hides under the euphermism of "leading militants" For an anarchist/syndicalist organisation to be under the control of anyone apart from it's ordinary members is completely unacceptable.

Mick Larkin.



CAN I PLAY? The socialist government has yet to hold the promised referendum on O.T.A.N. ie. N.A.T.O. It is hoping entry into the E.E.C. will sway public opinion in favour

# DEFIANCE ON THE METRO

This article is condensed from an interview in *Solidaridad Obrera* (paper of the C.N.T. from Barcelona) published in December 82, between the paper and the C.N.T.-A.I.T.'s union branch on the Barcelona Metro.

A literal translation is available on request.

(M)- Metro worker

(S)- "Soli"

C.C.T.- The section of the C.N.T.-V. which covers Catalonia

The Metro workers branch of the C.N.T.-A.I.T.'s transport union was formed in 1975. In 1977, it agreed to work with the centralised trade unions (C.C.O.O. U.G.T., etc.) given certain minimal conditions, which were basically:

- 1) The works assembly will be the decision making body.
- 2) There will be a council of delegates, one from each section.
- 3) A management committee will be formed to act as an executive body for decisions taken by the assembly or council of delegates.

It was put down in writing at the time that the C.N.T. opposed this committee (because its members were not subject to instant dismissal by the assembly etc.)

From 1975-1978, the C.N.T. were involved in achieving three agreements which were favourable to the workers, which was made possible by the high level of workers morale at the time.

In 1978 the Metro branch boycotted the state organised elections for works committees (i.e. the management committee) which gave a majority to the C.C.O.O. (communist trade union) and resulted in a great loss of membership for the C.N.T.

In 1980, the U.G.T. (socialist trade union), despite being a minority on the M.C., were able to sign an agreement with management. The terms of this were such a betrayal that the U.G.T.'s influence on the Metro "completely collapsed". The C.C.O.O. used their position on the M.C. to control the assembly and put forward their own platform which, it has come to light since the C.N.T.'s entry onto the M.C., was not properly explained to the work force. The management rejected this platform, putting forward their own five year plan which involved job losses, wage restraint, etc. All the unions have rejected this.

In November '82 the C.N.T.'s Metro branch abandoned its policy of boycott against the M.C., stood for election, and won the most seats on the M.C.

(M)-The problem is whether the workers realise they are capable of uniting and fighting the five year plan. We hope from our new position to install in the workers a dynamic for struggle...we have to try and direct.

There are now 9 C.N.T. members on the M.C. We have the support of 3 S.I.T. members (independent union of transport workers), but we lost the only vote so far by 13 votes to 12. We are going to put out a bulletin explaining every thing that goes on, such as why things don't get done because we're out voted.

(S)-How did you obtain a majority of seats when there are so few of you?

(M)-We stood as C.N.T. members and the workers respect our consistency of ideas we only expected to get one or two members when we use this presence to assist our branch, because up to now we have had guarantees which allowed us to meet (during work time?) but now they are going to take these away we will not be allowed to participate in anything.

cont.



Paper of the C.N.T.-A.I.T.'s Metro branch.

(S)-Shurly the workers will just want you to do what the C.C.O.O. did but more honourably.

(M)-Well, we think we have created some good publicity for anarcho-syndicalism, though we regret that the delegates cannot be recalled by general assembly.

(S)-Nevertheless, you are accepting the existence of inequality between worker and delegate. Have you considered refusing to take up your seats on the M.C.?

(M)-Yes, but that would be very difficult because our branch is on the edge of extinction. We know we will run into a lot of bureaucracy, but if this makes it impossible we will leave and call on the workers to leave and fight for an alternative. We will try and convince people that the effort which needs to be made cannot be put on the backs of other people.

(S)-Are you aware that you have broken an agreement of the fifth congress?

(M)-Yes, we consider the survival of our union more important. We are growing smaller every day and moving backwards. We thought of waiting to see what happened at the Sixth Congress, but that was not possible, so we asked our union (the transport workers union of the C.N.T.) to back us with a vote of confidence till we see what happens there.

We hear every day that the socialists are about to recognise all types of union branch (in terms of negotiating rights). If so, we will withdraw from the M.C. as a strong body. To have boycotted the elections would have caused our extinction.

(S)-But the union branches they wish to set up will obviously not be the same as ours.

(M)-If we are a legalised union they will have to accept us as we are.

(S)-Although this situation favours the Metro workers branch, it is a disgrace to the C.N.T. as a whole.

(M)-The C.N.T.'s fortunes depend on the workers desire to fight. We can either get involved in our workplaces and make some reformist proposals, or wait in the rear till the workers turn to us as the only reputable organisation left.

According to "Soli", the workers in Andalusia (southern Spain) have already have already reached this point, where they can go no further back, because they are starving. Here it is still just a struggle for jobs.

(S)-The trouble is that you are using an instrument of struggle offered to you by the bourgeoisie.

(M)-We know that, but the growth of reformist trade unionism could mean the end of working class organisation. What is the future for our struggle, alternative cultures, ecology...? We probably will come off the rails in a couple of months but that's life.

(S)-Have you spoken to the press?

(M)-Only in that we rang up to correct one paper which said it was the C.N.T.-V. which had won the elections. We did answer a few questions, which may be used to put pressure on other C.N.T. branches to present themselves for election.

(S)-Exactly. How will you react if the sixth congress takes a strong exception to your actions?

(M)-Personally, I am a member of the C.N.T. first and foremost, but as a branch we have not decided this. If we thought the C.N.T. was going from strength to strength, we would have foregone this opportunity to strengthen our branch. As it is we believe the C.N.T. is everywhere in retreat because of a basic fault in its approach.

The strength we had in the past with the petrol strike, the freight train dispute, etc. has not continued. Faced with disillusionment and loss of members we had to do something. We are not going to make policies as we don't follow a political party.

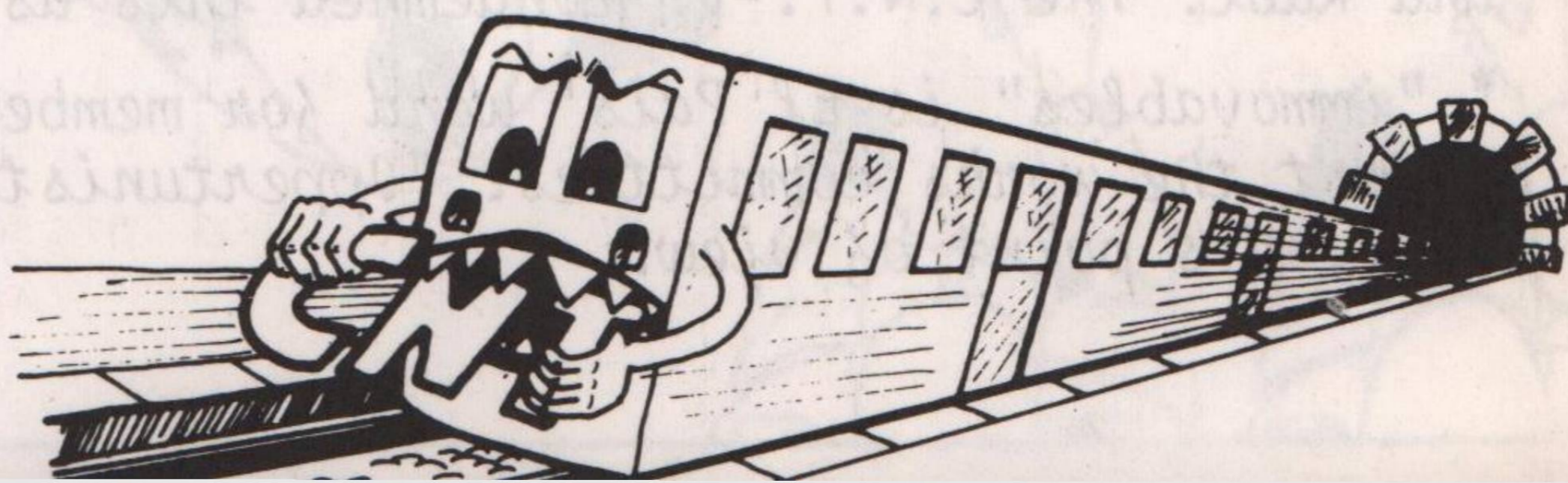
(S)-If we have some difference from the other trade unions it is our constant belligerence and incorruptibility. The people who left the last congress did so because they had this "pragmatic" approach.

(M)-Yes, and these people are looking on (with an interest in reunification).

(S)-Were running out of tape, is there anything else you wish to say?

(M)-Yes, I appeal to all true anarcho-syndicalists not to leave the C.N.T., even though they might feel betrayed, so that its essential spirit will never be lost.

The official C.N.T.-A.I.T. view of the metro workers, taken from an editorial in "Soli" of Dec. '82.



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FRONT COVER: "SMASH THE GRID"

The cover was adapted from a Catalan poster against military service, from about 1979.

To this day, the many people who were granted immunity from military service on political grounds, have not had this made official, so they still face the threat of imprisonment and have not had their passports returned etc.

"Organising an Anarchist/Syndicalist trade union". A 16p pamphlet about how the C.N.T. is structured. @ 40p from S.I.N.

Meanwhile, back in Britain..."We are asking you to strike to defend these people's right to give up the right to strike"

(Len Murray explaining the  $\frac{1}{2}$

day of action over G.C.H.Q.)

## CONDENSATIONS

### ONE C.N.T. FOR US ALL. (Source: Accion Libertaria no.47)

Extracts from an article published in a recent bulletin of the C.N.T.-A.I.T.'s Metro workers in Barcelona.

If the C.N.T. is not willing to come down off its pedestal and find out what is happening in the workplace, then those who joined us during the boom of 75/76 will just be squandered in internal squabbles. No doubt the chosen few who remained would simply dust themselves down and say "Oh well, they obviously didn't realise what the C.N.T. is all about". In this sterile debate over union elections we are acting like Catholics who face eternal damnation if they once slip from the path.

If we reject your rigid tactics, or even go a bit astray in our search for truth, don't think "These traitors are trying to smash the C.N.T."; realise that we are sick of pocketbook revolutionaries, internal conflict and worse things that go on behind the scenes. The struggle is on the street and in the factories, against the state and capital. They are our enemies, let's get on with fighting them.

### REUNIFICATION IN VALENCIA, OR IS IT? (Source: El Pais 4th Feb & Black Flag no.107)

According to El Pais, the metal workers unions belonging to both C.N.T. in this area signed a pact of reunification on the 3rd. However "Soli" for this month (quoted in B/F) denies this. It says that the agreement was signed by Juan Bueno, who is not even a member of the C.N.T.-A.I.T., but then goes on to talk about the union being involved, which is at least confusing.

Further comments about this being an attempt by the state to infiltrate the C.N.T. and even trying to liken it to the "Scala" provocation can, in my opinion, only be described as substituting rhetoric and slander for rational debate.-M.L.

### CIVIL WAR IN BARCELONA. (Source: Accion Libertaria no.47)

El Pais Feb. 4th (B. ed.), carried information from "immovables"\* that four centres run by "opportunist" had been occupied, including Manresa, Santa Columbia and Rubi. The C.N.T.-V. condemned this use of violent intimidation.

\* "immovables" is El Pais' word for members of the C.N.T.-A.I.T. who are totally against the works committees. "Opportunists" are those who have sympathy with the C.N.T.-V's point of view.