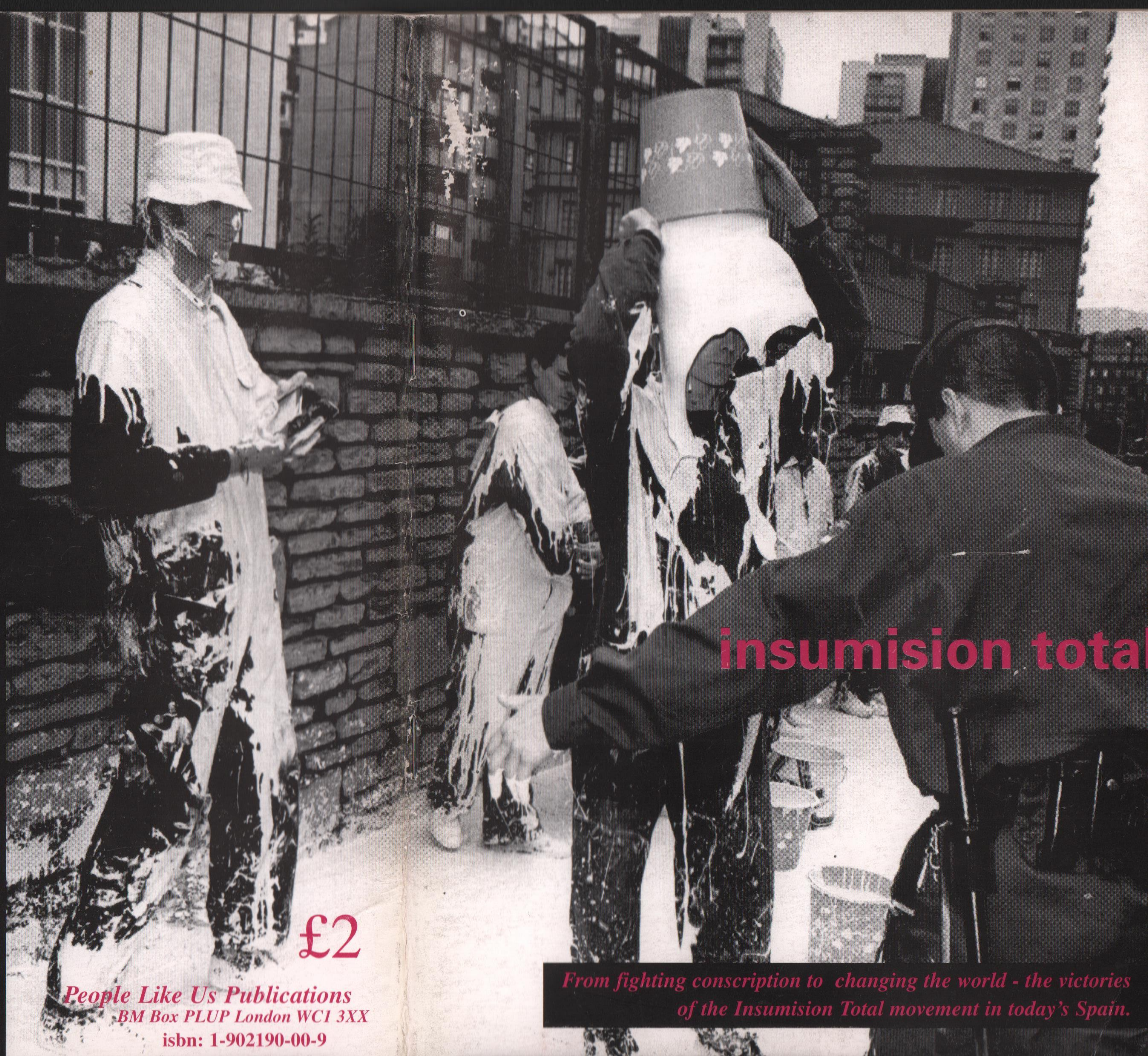


This booklet describes the Insumision movement in Spain, currently working against the military and for social change. In particular, it focuses on the growth of the Insumision Total tendency, which totally rejects the State's right to judge an individual.

The movement, which is leaderless and has no "members" and no rules, is so strong that it stopped the State's use of prison as a punishment and wrecked the Conscription system. Above all, it has helped to create and strengthen a general political culture which is working towards real, positive changes in this damaged world:

"We are not the victims but the destroyers of the system. Our position is set up to demonstrate to the State that we do not accept their hypocritical mercy, aimed at dividing us through individual escape routes. We are not martyrs, because we are not isolated individuals: we are together in struggle for freedom in its most natural sense.

Having decided to work for a free, equal society without wars, the struggle has to be coherent and mutually supportive. The best way to raise consciousness and widen commitment is not the word, but the example."



insumision total

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From fighting conscription to changing the world - the victories of the Insumision Total movement in today's Spain.



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Preface

People Like Us was set up by a group of cynics, dreamers and activists, in the hope and expectation that we could make some sense of the struggles that are going on all over the world. We want to report on, and try to analyse, some examples of campaigns which are run by free people - people like us - and which are successful in the task of changing society. "Insumision Total" is our first attempt.

This is not an academic piece of work - there are too many of those already. We think that everyone involved in their own struggles, and those who are looking for a way to get active, can get inspiration and extra energy from hearing about a really successful campaign. We hope you like it and we would very much like to hear your comments; most of all, we hope you will find it useful.

While researching this pamphlet, we came across a Business Man who said: "You have to understand that the real point about these Insumisos is not that they are against the Army, but that they are rejecting the whole authority of the State". Yes they are, sir, yes they are. Us too.



Introduction

Insumision Total was written from a combination of personal interviews with some of the people involved and detailed reading of dozens of books and articles devoted to the subject. We wanted the voices of the Insumisos themselves to be heard wherever possible: their recorded voices and writings are shown as follows:

"in quotation marks and italics, and indented with respect to the text."

Our main objective was to describe the movement: where it came from, how it works and its victories so far. This Insumision thing is really big, it's really successful, and it hasn't lost energy in internal power struggles. It must have some lessons for the rest of us!

Some notes on the language used

First of all, we believe that it is very important to write as clearly as possible, without using long words and odd concepts which are only standard on the political margins or in the academic universe. There are struggles going on all over the world which share the same basic ideas: it is stupid and damaging to block communication about these ideas by covering them up with jargon. It's easy to find books or pamphlets which deal with simple subjects like working

class revolution but which require a dictionary, a history of ancient Greek philosophy and a university course in literature. And it's a pain in the arse!

The basic analysis used in Insumision Total is pretty simple: first, that there exists on this planet a political and economic system which is based on power, on the strongest taking whatever they can get without any regard for the consequences to others or to the planet we all live on. Our rulers have the Police, the Army and the media working for them to defend their position; they offer very great rewards to anyone who is willing to support them or just to do nothing and let them continue with their destruction. But there's more of us! Insumision is part of the movement which we call The Fightback': that is to say "people trying to achieve a better world by organising themselves to struggle for change." We are not going to put our hopes in Parties and grand structures. Been there, done that. Two problems: one, it doesn't work - give away your power to someone else, however saintly they might seem, and they'll forget their principles and piss on your head sooner or later. Secondly, if we want to create a world of strong, confident, free people (and we do, we do!) then there's not much point in explaining that the world is controlled by power-seeking maniacs, only to then sign the membership papers for an organisation run by people with the same problems....

Why write in English?

The Fightback is international and whether we like it or not, it is being discussed in English. OK, it's the language of the (American) empire; OK, there are non-nationalist alternatives like Esperanto and OK, in theory we could all learn each other's languages. The fact is, though, that English has won the race and has become the only realistic tool for communication across national frontiers. This is a pity for the British, who consequently feel that they don't need to learn other languages, so adding to an already enormous problem of isolation and disinterest in the rest of the world. It is also a problem for other nationalities who are obliged to live with Anglo-Saxon egotism if they want to communicate. However, those are the facts: so here's a little book in English.

A lot of the written material used was in Street Spanish; maybe the "correct" translation would be to find the corresponding slang... People who want the flavour and energy of real Spanish can go out and learn it!

Some words just don't translate at all. ``Obligatory Military Service'' is The Mili in Spanish - it's an easy word, why complicate life? In the same way, you have Insumision, which is the campaign, and Insumisos, who are the people.

The background

We're all Europeans now - but the new world of Euro-harmony conceals very different histories. Fascism's try for world domination was already over in Spain before World War Two, the battle between Fascism and Capitalism, had even got started properly in the rest of Europe; understanding what happened to Spain in those years is essential for a full understanding of the country today.

A three-year civil war began in 1936 when General Franco rebelled against the elected Spanish Government; the forces loyal to Franco, Fascism and the Church were eventually victorious. The Government, or Republicans, included very large numbers of revolutionaries who were trying to defend the enormous gains that had been made in the previous years. (Anyone who doesn't know this history is missing an amazing story. Try one of the publications listed in the References section at the end) The victorious Fascists imposed a dictatorship in Spain which continued until Franco's death in November 1975; there followed a period of unelected government which looked quite like democracy, followed by the first free elections on 15th June 1977.

The generation who took part in the Civil War, winners and losers, is now dying, but their legacy will continue to be important for many years. When 7 considering the impact of large numbers of radical young people on this society, you have to remember that the older Police and Civil Guards are fascist-trained and so are the older civil servants, judges etc; it isn't difficult to understand that a certain clash of cultures is inevitable! A trivial May Day march in a sleepy market town, involving about 200 people and including some 25 black-clad

anarchist types, has been known to provoke the local Police so much that the plastic bullets and riot shields were brought out and used to menace the crowd.....

The Army

Spain's conscript Army has to be considered in itself. The officers and staff are professionals and have a long history of coups and ultra-right-wing beliefs; Spanish society could never trust an army which had full-time soldiers in the ranks too. As an institution, it obviously lost a lot of power when the change to democracy came; some elements, looking back to those good old days, tried one last military takeover in February 1982. The coup failed, but it frightened a lot of people very badly, and left the feeling that the Army cannot be trusted even today: a lot of people still won't openly support the Insumision movement because they are afraid of the possible results of provoking direct action by the military. The campaigners themselves are clear about this: one article in an Insumision newsletter explained that creating a professional Army wouldn't be all that easy in Spain because it would mean redundancy for tens of thousands of conscript-herding officers and NCOs, which could cause "problems". While obviously feeling very sorry for these individuals if they should lose their jobs (workers in uniform?), this doesn't strike a British eye as a major reason against a proposed change. Spanish history isn't like that: the Army is not neutral, and it certainly isn't non-political, not even now.

The nations of Spain

Another very important factor in Spain is the question of nationalities. Most people have heard of ETA and the campaign for the independence of the Basque country; Catalonia, comprising the area around Barcelona and extending into the Valencia region and the Balears, is also moving steadily away from the Madrid-controlled Spanish state towards independence or at least self-rule. There are also demands for regional independence in Galicia. All of these have added an extra edge to many campaigns, particularly among young people and above all in the Basque. (A lot of people here refer to campaigns, let's say, as local, then regional, then national, then State-wide: always making the difference clear)

Spain is halfway between a federal structure like Germany, where the local regions have most of the power, and a super-centralised State like Britain; local control means local power games and varying priorities in the different areas. As we will see, the Governors have differed in their responses when some of the Governed stop obeying.

In Spain, town and village councils are organisations with real power and responsibilities - many of them have passed motions supporting the campaign and, crucially, refusing to carry out the central authorities' requirements for

names and ages of potential recruits. This move has been particularly common in the Basque Country, where up to 30 local councils at a time have had legal action taken against them for refusing to cooperate.

The Basque situation is extremely interesting but too complicated to enter into here. People who would like to know more are invited to send us large sums of money so that we can explore the question properly!

Let the bad times roll...

Next, the economic situation. After many years of pretty well continuous good times, Spain has been falling back. Unemployment is up up up, job prospects are bad and there are no signs of improvement in the near future. (Sound familiar?) Street fascism, including racist killing, is on the rise and the usual horror stories about dead babies and drug-crazed youth appear everywhere in the media; perhaps some are even true...

There have been a number of well-supported national General Strikes recently, and there will be many more once the new right-wing government, which has been waiting many years for their slice of the action, get moving on their programme of wage and services cuts. All this will mean mounting pressure on the streets which will be reflected in the development of political campaigns like Insumision.

The Great Big Lottery of Life

Each year in November, in a tradition going back generations, the Spanish State organises a lottery and issues obligatory invitations to all the men who have their 18th birthday in that year. The participants later find their names in the local newspaper, showing which location they have "won" and off they go for 9 months of fun and frolics with the Army. The system used until 1996 was exactly the same as any other lottery, with the big silver cage with the white balls in it, which are taken out one by one; the only difference is that the usual badly dressed young women were replaced by beautifully dressed old generals. Unfortunately, this splendid piece of "Theatre of Real Life" was replaced in 1996 by a computer.

The Mili only affects men, and so, even more than in other campaigns, the possibility exists to marginalise women's participation. This appears not to be the case, at least on the surface; a group of (male) Insumisos made the following comment:

"Women are as much involved as anybody. This is a fight for everyone and everyone is in it equally. We are a collective made up of individuals - some are men, some are women. Maybe some women get into it because of knowing people already involved but anyway, there are anti-militarist people of all kinds,

whether they have to go to the Mili or not."

It does seem true that there is no difference in status between people who are Insumisos themselves - ie those who are themselves refusing to serve - and the rest, whether they are men or women. This leaves us with the usual power structure: the most confident and egotistical people, who are normally men, are at the centre of the action. There are certainly far more men than women involved generally in the campaign; again, usual across the spectrum of the Fightback. (This is not to support the fact! On the contrary - it is one of the principal weaknesses of our campaigning)

The processing of new recruits is much the same as for any Army anywhere - papers, marching about, doing pointless things because someone tells you to in a very loud voice. Suffice to say that each conscript receives a "salary" of 1000 Pts per month (put that in your own currency!) and more-or-less adequate food and accomodation. After three months of initial training, the recruits move on to their responsibilities; first, however, they have to go through the ceremony of Jura de Bandera, a properly medieval occasion involving solemn oaths and kissing the flag (presumably in different places to avoid any risk of the exchange of body fluids). This is a tremendously important moment legally speaking, and no doubt the conscripts also feel a shiver of patriotic pride at the knowledge that they are now a full member of the Armed Forces, responsible for defending the Fatherland against.... who? No-one seems to know.

In practice, there are a number of ways to get out of serving. Those with good family connections can have daddy's doctor friend certify them as unfit; students in higher education don't have to serve until their studies finish, which can take a number of years. For those who decide not to involve themselves in the military, but who don't have the necessary connections, the following other options exist:

Objector

These are people recognised as concientious objectors by a Government office called the National Board of Conscientious Objection. People who choose to follow this path are accepted into the PSS, which is the recognised alternative to serving in the Armed Forces. The PSS is much longer than the Mili - currently 14 months compared to 9 months - and usually involves some kind of community work like the Red Cross, work in orphanages or hospitals or invented make-work for the local Government. The PSS is completely swamped because there are far more objectors than places available: this is partly due to the fact that very many voluntary organisations refuse to accept the placement of objectors. About 40% of the men called to the Mili in 1995 chose the PSS instead.

*"The PSS was created to punish objectors and is not really a "social" service at all. Doing it would be the most comfortable way out for me: taking a job from someone who had invested their time and money in trying to do socially useful work. I am sure that using objectors is very profitable for the Red Cross, councils, universities, etc; practically no wages at all, no union or labour rights at all; but it would be better if they looked for people from the unemployed. I cannot silence my conscience and accept the PSS."*²

Fugitives and deserters

A fugitive is a person who doesn't take part in the mili, for whatever reason, but who doesn't expressly refuse it. Generally these people are not pursued (there are thousands of fugitives in Spain) but their case is not forgotten. A deserter is someone who, having been called to attend the barracks and start training, doesn't join the service within three days. The possibility exists to then declare yourself as a "Sobrevenido" objector. These are people who, having deserted, decide to join the collective of objectors and insumisos, and who then present the relevant documents to the military. There are no legal grounds for this position and you can be tried and sentenced by the military authorities. The Insumisos are now talking about using this method as a new way to attack the system - it has the big advantage of putting the movement right back in direct conflict with the Military once again.

Insumiso

"When I was a student in 1982, I started to worry about what I was going to do about the Military Service, because I didn't want to do it. One day, I read in the newspaper about the first Insumision demonstration in Madrid, where the demonstrators burnt their military identity cards in front of the military office. A few weeks later, the same in Barcelona, Bilbao and other major cities.

Some months later, I noticed that the Insumision movement was starting in my town too, so I went to a meeting. They had thought about some actions to do in our town: the first was to write an individual manifesto where we explained our reasons for not doing any service for the Government, either military or civil. We delivered the documents all together to the Government's Delegation in town.

There was still no law on the subject, so the Government didn't know what to do with us. Every week, more and more people all over Spain were delivering manifestos to different Government Delegations; we were euphoric, and we hoped that we were going to achieve our main objective, the abolition of Military Service. At the same time, the Government was saying stupid things in the media like "We can't allow Insumision because it's a crime against our country" or "Insumisos should think their objectives over, or we will imprison

them." It was really funny - at that time, there weren't enough prisons for all of us, so we knew that they were lying and that what they really wanted was to stop the increase in new Insumisos.

A year after, in 1983, I received a letter from the Ministry of Defence in which they explained to me that the Justice Ministry was going to send me orders to go to the Social Service. I never received them! A few years after that, the Government created a law about Insumision; after that, every Insumiso who didn't want to do any kind of Service went to court and then to prison, but the Government had a problem with the first Insumisos - so they decided to give us all an amnesty.¹³

From the total number of Objectors since the 1988 amnesty, around 10,800 people took the further step of declaring themselves as an Insumiso. This is not an easy thing to do, either philosophically or practically. Once someone has made the Insumiso choice, they have to prepare a whole series of documents and deliver them in the correct order and with the correct number of copies to the various State and Military Governors. The anti-militarists have prepared several excellent guides available on what to do and how to do it.

"Presentation of the written refusal is very important, to differentiate yourself from a simple avoider, who has no cause. We have to bear in mind that our position is of vindication and collective political action, and not just a way to avoid the mili."¹⁴

Some of those who make the Declaration leave it at that and get on with their lives. Others get stuck in (or continue) with their political activities. Either way, the people who have become Insumisos start living with a certain expectation... because sooner or later, the letter will come calling them to a tribunal to face judgement.

Up before the Judge

Those who declare themselves to be an Insumiso usually find that a legal process is started against them. This develops very slowly, as is normal across Spain's extremely relaxed judicial system. (The words "barely functioning" are often used to describe it - ordinary criminal cases routinely take three years to come to trial) The trials which actually take place are heard in the civil courts. Insumisos were previously tried by the Military, bringing the two sides into direct confrontation. This point of conflict disappeared when cases were moved to the civil courts; the Insumisos are very clear that this was a deliberate strategy by the authorities to reduce or remove this confrontation.

"Three possibilities are open at this stage:

Go along to your court case when summoned and try to explain your reasons. The Judge might listen, and may even be impressed. Whether it will affect your sentence is another matter....

Make a speech explaining that you don't recognise the Court's right to decide your case. You'll get sentenced anyway.

Completely ignore the summons. After all, if you have committed no

crime, the Court has no right to try you: why should you offer it the recognition of replying to it's meaningless letters? This is Insumision Total - a refusal to recognise the State's authority over the individual.

First of all, let's consider what happens if you decide to go to your trial. Sentences vary from a few months to two years, four months and a day, which is the longest penalty applied to any insumiso; there have also been cases of absolution. Despite the fact that the Law of Military Service says that the minimum sentence should be 28 months, in the majority of cases the judges find mitigating circumstances to reduce it to a year or less. If this is the case, and if the insumiso doesn't have a previous record, they get the benefit of a Conditional Discharge: that is to say, they don't have to go to prison at all. What they do have to do, however, is sign the Conditional Discharge papers, which means accepting the Court's authority.¹⁵

Letter from an Insumiso to the judge of his court case

"To Mr Judge or Judgess and the other people who, having never seen me nor having directed any word to me, believe that they have sufficient power to judge my actions and my ideas.

Although it may seem strange to you, I am A PERSON (I think a normal and average person) and not just another number on a file. I am writing this to re-affirm what I said in my previous declarations: that armies still seem to me to be brainless murderers (especially professional armies) or groups of big children, frightened and confused (the forced conscripts).

Against the building of hierarchies and macho culture, I am for social equality and against violence; I believe in solidarity, and against your bullets, I prefer good friendship and a smile. I won't accept your judicial botch either, the so-called Substitute Social Service, which has always been a punishment for people who reject the mili and not an alternative to it.

As for my own case, I should tell you that I am not going to accept any remitted sentence, in solidarity with my imprisoned comrades and above all to say "Enough!" to the disparity of sentences which we are seeing at the moment. Since I can't see Insumision as a crime (in any of its forms), I will not accept the decision of the tribunal which judges me, which I won't even be present at; I won't respect your decision or your punishment. I can't have any confidence in a justice which prefers to condemn Insumisos rather than corrupt politicians, and which can only follow the instructions of a few people with greater influence.

Last but not least, your punishment directs us to prison, I expect not with the aim of making us worse. Everyone knows that this prison system doesn't change or rehabilitate anyone, but instead sinks them psychologically and destroys them physically. As long as the current system prefers to squeeze, silence and punish in place of reasoning, thinking and dialogue, I will not accept your armies, your justice, your capitalist politics of destruction or your

extermination prisons. I will continue following my ideals and my fight, but from now on I will do it from Clandestinity."⁶

Graded prison - the facts

Spain has a complicated prison system involving different Grades; its workings are best explained by experts, in this case some prisoners held at the Pamplona jail:

"The classification period is when they decide the grade of "treatment" that's right for you. The prison geniuses carry out their roles as little Gods, deciding which part of the purgatory you are going to rot in; in other words, the Grade that they will apply so that you can be absolved of your sins. This period takes two months plus another two months of the Telecommunications Age while the decision comes back from Big God, the Penitentiary Institution, about your grade. You could pass this period in solitary if they apply article 10 to you.

First Grade: Treatment to convert you into a person capable of a normal life in society. You get the hardest conditions, but above all everything is more humiliating. They play with you as if you're a very bad person, they lock you in for up to 22 hours a day with no more company than your shadow, sometimes without TV or radio and only three books.... and that's how you learn to live in society.

Second Grade: You're in luck! You can go outside, you don't have to do anything, and you can have things in your cell. You can take part in activities, depending on what the prison has organised. You can demonstrate how well you've reintegrated yourself into society, you can go to the gym, you can redeem yourself...

Third grade: You leave the prison in the daytime and return at night to sleep. You have the possibility of getting permission from the wonderful generosity of the management (previously the mayor) to not return to sleep at the weekend, and maybe also some other day in the week. One note of advice: Don't even think about arriving late to sleep.

In theory, your process of beautification and re-integration into society depends on your behaviour as you pass through easier stages towards your freedom. Above all, you have to remember the basic rules: in the same way that you can progress up the grades, you can return down them too. Depending on your docility and your submission, you can "earn" permission for visits, conditional discharge..... progress through the grades to "a better life": 1st grade, 2nd grade, third, conditional discharge, work, TV, house, car, debts, mortgage, bills, police and a dead weight which you never ever lose."⁷

On the run

If you ignore the court's summons, the trial will continue without you and the Judge will probably issue an order for Search and Capture against you:

"Also known as clandestinity, this state of affairs is effectively life on the

run. The Police are in theory searching for you although in practice they don't seem to try especially hard: some people have passed three or four years in S&C without being picked up. We have to demystify the idea of an insumiso under Search and Capture who spends 10 years hidden away without having any relations with the outside world. The reality is very different. If you are in that situation, you can live a normal life, provided you take a few sensible precautions."⁸

There had been people On the Run from the authorities since the first months of the Insumision Total campaign. As the campaign got stronger, many more Insumisos "disappeared" from their normal lives into what the movement called "Clandestinity". This became a new and powerful, even romantic, image for the Insumision movement; as we shall see below, the risk that this would create hero figures was understood and fought against from the beginning.

Invisible, but not hiding

"Our move into clandestinity, does not mean hiding our heads and forgetting the subject. Even if the repression has got stronger, we are trying to remain as active as possible, trying to make sure that the State limits our freedom of action as little as possible, so that the street doesn't become another prison. We have our own experience, the help of the Support Groups which cover our activities and the solidarity of various groups. It is this support that means that becoming Invisible doesn't mean being marginalised or isolated. We are following our militant beliefs by working in other places, other cities; we're not on holiday. We want to make it clear that we believe that it is worth more to run risks and give our support to the movement than to hide and avoid the fight.

We feel very positive about the support from people in the street and in the Press about us not going to the trials. This support has been the same or stronger than when people do attend. Our activity hasn't been reduced because of Hiding. Letters to the bourgeois media, articles in the alternative press, interviews on free radio stations, participation in meetings and assemblies of the fight against the system..... The Insumision Total position does allow us to carry on with support for the movement, including even such things as concerts and street demonstrations. The families of the Insumisos, above all the mothers, are carrying out an important support role at all times, through meetings, publicity, demonstrations, etc. They are an essential element in the Insumisos fight and play a very big part in affecting public opinion.

From our point of view as prisoners or runaways, it is very important to maintain close links with our families and friends. We are not heroes or Hard Men; not having sufficient contact with others gets us into a series of doubts, insecurities and lack of confidence in ourselves and our fight. This is a very important point for us as Invisibles, because it is obviously much more difficult to maintain normal relations from clandestinity. Up until the arrest of Marshall (28/1/94) we were living our lives within certain security measures - not going to the usual bars, always being accompanied - but the arrest showed up some

deficiencies in our actions and also demonstrated the Police interest in us. They had been trying hard to find him, including the preparation of a trap: they pretended to be the cleaning company where he had worked previously, offering him a new contract. He was finally caught after three months; they got him when he was coming out of his parent's house after having eaten there. Three plain-clothes policemen arrested him, one of them wearing a Palestinian scarf and a very nice earring.... That same day, he started a prison sentence of two years, 4 months and a day.

Another invisible, Raul, was also searched for: the Police visited his parent's flat several times, asked the building's porter about him, went to the local bar, went to his workplace, went to the workplace local bar.... but nobody knew anything about him anywhere. It's this kind of support from people outside the movement that has let us see that we are not alone and that we can count on a certain general sympathy against the repression."⁹

Infrastructure for clandestinity

The development of "Clandestinity" as a weapon made new demands on the internal organisation of the movement. Here are some notes on the subject:

"A person "of maximum security and trustworthiness" for each collective or area should be in charge of establishing Invisibles in that area. It was felt that just one person would be the best. If an Insumiso moved over to clandestinity and went to a different town for safety, they would contact the relevant collective, who would put him in touch with the Security person.

The Insumisos in Hiding should work for themselves. The Security person and the support group would help them, but not do everything for them. This would avoid getting the Insumiso into a standstill, comfortable condition.

It is essential to communicate to the public about the subject and eliminate the taboo about it. Clandestinity is not the end, but a means to force the State into action and to take the initiative from it. All the Invisibles should be in touch with each other, to exchange political and personal opinions and ideas. ("By using the Security people... by using other intermediaries.... meetings of all the Invisibles in the State")

Resistance funds: The ideal would be that each collective runs a Fund, controlled by that group. It would be good if other groups from outside this issue were invited to participate with money, to make their attitude towards the IT more concrete. The money can be used to support the Insumiso or help on special things; they should support themselves [for basic living] wherever possible. If the Invisible is in an area without adequate legal cover because there are no lawyers fully involved with the campaign, money may have to be spent on legal cover."¹⁰

The early years

The Spanish people have a long and honourable history of rebellion against their rulers, both internal and external: ordinary folk in this country have been ignoring, rejecting or assassinating their rulers for many hundreds of years. This long history is beyond the scope of a pamphlet like this; we can offer only a quick pass over the development of the earlier anti-conscription movement before getting on to our main subject.

After their victory in the Civil War, Franco's fascists got into full swing. People trying to set up independent trade unions, for example, were sent to forced labour camps; those who had fought for the wrong side were denied any State assistance at all when they finished their working lives. Any active rejection of the fascist ideal was stamped on, hard. There is a famous example from 3rd March 1974, when a group of workers demonstrating in Vitoria took refuge from a police charge in a church. The police fired smoke grenades right through the stained glass windows and then machine-gunned the demonstrators when they tried to escape: 5 people died.

When the first Jehovah's Witnesses started to refuse conscription in the 1950's, Conscientious Objection was not specified in the Military Justice Code of the time: there was simply no recognition that anyone could even think of not serving the country. As a result, those who did take a stand were often subjected

to the so-called "chain sentences". The individual was called up and sentenced when they refused to serve. After completing a prison term varying from six months to six years, they were released from prison and taken straight to the barracks again to start their conscription period.... having refused again, they went back to prison for a further spell. This process continued until the authorities got bored and gave up, or until the age limit for the Mili was reached, which was 38 years of age in those days. Various objectors were tortured: cases are known from the Lerida barracks, near Barcelona, where one objector was tied naked to the floor of the stables while frightened mules were stampeded over him.

Twenty-odd years of locking up Jehovah's Witnesses went by, but the whole question of objection didn't really break into the public's mind until 1971 when an objector appeared who was not part of the sect. This was Pepe Beunza Vazquez, who professed himself to be a Catholic, a pacifist and non-violent: the first objector to enjoy the support of a public campaign both inside and outside Spain. As one observer said, "What had been an attitude of humility in the Jehovah's Witnesses became subversion when a Catholic did it."

Beunza was soon joined by three other objectors. International support for the four grew and Beunza was eventually freed; he hadn't completed his obligation to the Mili, however, so he was arrested again, tried and sentenced to a year in a punishment battalion in the Spanish Sahara.

The summer of 1975. The anti-militarist movement was growing, with new groups setting up around the country. These were founded on principles of non-violence and were often religious or philosophical in origin, and their first aim was to replace the Mili with a socially useful alternative.

On 23rd December 1976, the post-Franco government of Adolfo Suarez, still not elected by popular vote, approved a new law which allowed for religious objection to conscription and established a three-year civil service alternative, much longer than the existing Mili period. However, this was an individual permission granted by the authorities; the Recruits Panel were to investigate each claim at the end of each successive year, and return the objector to the Mili if they were not satisfied, without even taking the time already served into account. This half-measure was completely unacceptable to the growing movement, and 75 new objectors immediately declared themselves, of whom 23 were deserters. These 75 created the MOC, the Movimiento de Objeción de Conciencia, or Conscientious Objection Movement.

On the 17th October 1977, the Amnesty Law was finally approved and 220 objectors were freed from prison: 200 of these were Jehovah's Witness, and the others were members of the MOC. The problem wasn't resolved however: previous laws were still in force, and new prison sentences were handed down.

The history of this period is fully described in a book called "La Objeción de Conciencia". Reading through its account of the period, you find hints and notes about the differences within the movement - people leaving "for various reasons", young people reported as "lacking in experience" taking over control... and it is from this time that the two main elements of the campaign start to move apart: non-violent, pro-peace on the one side, not-necessarily-non-

violent and pro-social change on the other.

August 1979 saw a new all-Spain MOC meeting, with about 100 participants. It is evident that the agenda was dominated by theoretical issues: *"after intense and exhausting debates, votes and consensus, the MOC was defined as an 'Anti-militarist movement with a non-violent strategy'. This meant that the methods to be used were fixed although the members involved were not necessarily non-violent themselves."*¹¹

On the 28th October 1982, the Socialist Workers Party of Spain won a landslide general election victory. It is difficult to believe it now in the cynical Spain of the mid-nineties, but this election victory was seen as a new start and was greeted with enormous optimism across the country. Among other things, the Socialists promised to remove Spain from NATO and regulate conscientious objection. (They didn't manage either, somehow...)

After the MOC conference in February 1984, a peaceful demonstration was attacked by Police using tear gas and baton charges - the Police Union demanded that the officers responsible be sacked! Elements in the campaign, principally from Catalonia and the Basque, suggested around this time that the MOC should drop its insistence on non-violence, throw out those in favour of the PSS and adopt a policy of supporting deserters.

*"Although the proposal was finally rejected, it caused serious damage, above all in Catalonia".*¹²

At the end of 1986 and into 1987, increasingly violent confrontations with the police were pulling the movement apart. New Mili-KK groups were set up, called "Kakitzat" in the Basque region (something like "Up your bum") and other anti-mili groups began to form outside the MOC structure. The total number of objectors had now risen to 16,000, with an increasing percentage coming from non-religious backgrounds. The campaign was growing in all directions. Two Associations for Conscientious Objection announced a legal action at the European Court of Human Rights; the Young Socialists decided on a campaign to raise signatures on a petition! The MOC decided on a three-part strategy: calling on objectors not to start the PSS if called, asking the existing objectors to re-reject their call-up, and starting to contact organisations - Red Cross, Youth Councils, charities - to persuade them not to take PSS objectors.

November 1987 saw the "First all-State anti-mili conference", made up of non-MOC groups, mostly Mili-KK and Kakitzat. The split was now complete, and many areas had both groups operating at the same time.

In March 1988, the authorities decided that they had far too many refusers to cope with. They simply forgave 22,500 people and found PSS places only for the youngest 2,500 objectors.

*"This was a very clear manoeuvre to destroy the fast-growing movement in opposition to the Army. In this same year, the first meetings were held where the Insumision Total strategy of resistance was defined. From then until now, it has been a long road...."*¹³

The Insumision Total movement

The start of the Insumision Total campaign can be dated to 20th February 1989, when 57 objectors, from all parts of the State, presented themselves as a collective to refuse the Mili and the PSS, and to publicly adopt a position of disinterest in the workings of the legal system against them. This is Insumision Total - the refusal to recognise the authority of the State against the individual. The development of this tendency is the reason why this pamphlet was written; from here on, the story is devoted to this tendency and its methods of operating. That is not to say that the other elements within the overall anti-militarist struggle suddenly disappeared in 1989. The two other main strands continued to function:

*Peace campaigners: Let us say more "mainstream", more concerned with organisation, politics in the sense of interacting with Political Parties (representations to the Government and so on), very involved with the ideas of non-violence and the philosophy that has grown up around it.

*Mili-KK: To be understood as a radical rejection of the Mili but limiting itself to that particular struggle.

It is important to understand that there has been no full-scale split between the three elements. The MOC has a state-wide structure which corresponds to the general idea of any campaign. There is an address list, a national newsletter, conferences and so on; policies are discussed, press releases are made; in general, the campaign has an air of organisation.

The Insumision Total, by contrast, is about as unorganised as it's possible to imagine. There is no state-wide organisation, no central address and no one publication which even claims to speak for the movement. There are occasional all-Spain or regional meetings, but these are set up by the local groups: there is no national contact address that you could write to.

The Insumision Total groups themselves are fluid and uncontrolled. There is no membership and no central committee; decisions are typically taken at mass meetings involving up to 50 people which can go on for hours. No constitutions, no voting:

*"The practice of organising Assemblies.... implies an arduous but enriching process. Within this process, the information circulates in a clear and equal way between all the people present (there are no special jobs or any hierarchies at all) and the last point is the taking of consensus decisions in a way that agrees with the real practice of participation democracy. People don't delegate their power to decide and participate to a representative. The collective, subjected to this transformation, is not made up only of the Insumisos themselves. The fact of being personally an Insumiso does not give someone a greater decision-making power."*¹⁴

In private, both sides will confess that they don't really like the other. This has not stopped the two tendencies from using each other's services, attending the same demonstrations, remaining in contact. The MOC's organisational strength has been essential to the success of Insumision Total, using "essential" in its full sense, that is "absolutely necessary as a basic point". Insumision Total provided the energy and the street presence which won the war.

Within and outside the Insumision Total tendency, there are an amazing number of publications appearing regularly in Spain; at first, it may seem that these are a waste of energy. It is true that these publications often overlap in content; however, they are used as a very important local campaigning tool. Spain seems to be mercifully free of the tendency towards setting up more and more "national" groups, or federations, or debating societies, each of which is only really based around a few people in one place. Cheap printing and the creative use of computers means that the publications are often excellent quality; print runs are very large and distribution seems to be effective. A very important point is that most of them are free, meaning that a far wider distribution is possible by simply leaving bulk copies in likely places: bars, clubs, etc. There is a constant interchange of printed material between the different towns which helps the decentralised communication process.

By the end of 1992, Insumision Total was well under way. A state-wide conference in December looked back over the year; some of the conference's discussions and conclusions are quoted below. There were ITs in all parts, with the highest number by a large margin around Pamplona, the Navarre region. (The Insumisos believe that the area was/is a test zone to investigate the application of severe, continuous repression on the campaign)

"It should be said that the IT strategy should not be looked at too much on the basis of numbers. IT is a new direction, one alternative within the

general Insumision theme and is only consolidating itself now.

Our apparent weakness and insignificance is destabilising the Government. We are a movement that has not been absorbed or domesticated; the blow that broke the anti-NATO movement or the collective objection movement [the amnesty] could come to us through the trials. The reason is that the varying attitudes of the judges means that a lot of people get a sentence of less than one year: if they don't have a criminal record, they go free. On the other hand, people with a record or those sentenced by a more fascist judge will be condemned. It is the judges who are offering deals and pacts with the Insumiso lawyers: these will end up by dividing the movement completely.

*The direction now is to force a real confrontation on the streets, by means of taking the initiative which is implied when we refuse to go to our trials. This attitude has to be general: it makes us all equal against judicial repression because if we don't go to the trial, we are all criminalised in the same way. It avoids dividing the movement and obliges the government to take decisions (repression or giving in to us)"*¹⁵

The Mutiny of 1993

By the time 1993 began, there were 3500 Insumisos, but there had only been 100 trials. Why so few?

*"Simple - it would be very difficult for a "democratic" state to have so many prisoners of conscience. Their tactic has been selective repression, to try and dissuade the largest possible number from getting involved."*¹⁶

In a new twist by the Government in the summer of 1993, Third Grade prison was made standard for all Insumisos who were sentenced. This meant that, in theory at least, all Insumiso prisoners would be allowed out of prison during the day. To understand the movement's feelings on this new move, we can turn to an analysis article written at the time:

"On the 10th of August this year, 21 Pamplona prisoners were put automatically into Third Grade; all Insumisos are now in it. Far from being pleased by this, the various collectives involved are in a state of commotion. After the first few days, the prisoners learned that this "controlled liberty" isn't so great. The hours that you are outside become very difficult as the time to return to the prison approaches. People get very nervous about being there right on time. In addition, some prisoners have to travel up to 200 Km to work and back every day.

Apart from the personal inconvenience, the Insumisos think that although getting Third Grade could be seen as a victory for the movement thanks to the pressure in society, there are big doubts about its benefits. The analysis is that this is a manoeuvre by the Government to get rid of the prisoners and appease the pressure against prison. The State has discovered that the repression strategy only reinforces the movement while destroying its own prestige. They have therefore decided to adopt a line of conceding benefits, so that people can see

the Insumisos on the street but that the crime doesn't disappear. **Third grade could be converted into a third way for the government and could destroy all our political message.**

After numerous meetings and many hours of debate, the Insumisos have decided that accepting this decision would mean accepting the depolitisation of Insumision and abandoning the strategy of civil disobedience and revolutionary struggle. The coherent response is to extend the fight: **Insumision in the Prisons.**"¹⁷

On 13th December 1993, 45 insumisos from all over Spain, already sentenced to Third Grade prison, decided to disobey and not return to sleep there. All 45 (34 in Navarre, 4 in Biscay, 3 in Asturias, 1 each in Tenerife, Burgos, Valladolid, Albacete) were arrested from the public places that they had occupied and were all put in 2nd Grade. The support campaign started up immediately and a further Mutiny was planned for the end of February. This new move was a slap in the face for the Government's attempts to wash its hands of the problem by putting all Insumisos on automatic Third Grade.

Here is the manifesto produced by the 45:

"Since the time in 1989 when we started the Campaign against the Mili and the PSS, we have not been aiming only at rejecting the unjust laws which conscription brings with it. The Insumision campaign denounces the entire legal framework which controls objection: it is only a mechanism to reinforce the military service and at the same time a way to channel and punish antimilitarist dissidence. Insumision is therefore a direct testament for our objective of a peaceful society, which will promote positive solutions and contribute to the disappearance of all social injustice.

Since 1989, Insumision has generated a general discussion in society about the military and the Army and has become a pole of reference, including outside Spain, which generates solidarity with civilian disobedience and accentuates the general rejection of the mili and the PSS. There has been so much support for us, and so many different responses by the judges on the question, that the government has been forced to modify its repression and its channelling of the conflict. At the moment, the direct repression can be seen as isolated, arbitrary and reduced (except in Navarre). The number of Insumisos has been growing while the Government has got itself caught up in contradictions; all this even though the new laws have made the penalties for disobedience heavier. They have finished up by trying to "sweeten" their prison policy by classifying us immediately into 3rd Grade.

This reply has tried to avoid the basic debate between disobedience and the mili: the fact is that it was the prison question which really uncovered the irrational behaviour of the military. The Government wants to stop the continuing growth in the number of Insumisos and, frightened by the growing number of objectors, wants also to neutralise the social disaffection towards militarised society, also to ensure that the Insumiso's boycott of the PSS ends, releasing the support of the thousands of associations which are currently refusing to accept objectors.

The State has failed to understand that our struggle is not against the mili

on a personal level, but against the whole question; Insumision is not about a judicial solution, but is a collective act of disobedience against an unjust law and a way of showing our non-cooperation with a militarised society.

We feel that it would be a mistake to accept the normalization of repression against us. We are therefore taking this new step. We will not accept the prison system's conditions; instead, we are going to again ask for a positive solution to the Insumision question. Once again, we are taking the initiative so that our disobedience shows up the root of the problem: we do not want a judicial reply which progressively softens the repression. We want a political solution which recognises the collective nature of the movement and which includes our demands for demilitarisation, demanded by the majority of society.

We know that this new boycott against the judicial penalisation of Insumision will leave the Government up against a problem which they thought they had solved; it will force them to take decisions they wanted to delay. The most important thing, however, is that we are once again able to open new possibilities of mobilisation."¹⁸

The Mutiny involved people who had already been sentenced, in two groups: some were caught, or gave themselves up in collective actions, and then went into prison full-time at the Second Grade. Others remained free and under Search and Capture orders, where they joined the people who had been in hiding since their (non-attended) trials.

1993: Some notes on a winter's campaigning

Here are some edited highlights from a summary of activity in the campaign in one city, Zaragoza, put together in the winter of 1993; that is, leading up to and immediately after the Mutiny.

"..... The Citizen's Meeting for Support of Insumision is working with both postures: that of attendance at the trials and that of rejection, via the active participation of CAMPI [the local campaign group] and of the Support Groups formed around the rebels. A certain reticence has been noticed from the local MOC, who see their line as the only correct and valid one. They are trying to ignore our posture and situation as sufferers of repression because they don't consider us to be efficient for the whole of the movement. The relation with the Association of Mothers and Fathers of Insumisos and the Antimilitarist Assembly has been more positive and receptive to our confrontational approach."¹⁹

2 Dec 93 - Occupation of the regional Red Cross headquarters (who accept PSS objectors) by 50 people, in support of Marshall, a captured Insumiso. Banners, spraypainting and so on: evicted by the Police.

7 Dec 93 - The Town Council of Exea, 15,000 inhabitants, passed a motion supporting the two Insumisos of the village, asking for a pardon for one, already on the run, and offering solidarity with the other. 25

16 Dec 93 - Over the night of 16/17, there was an almost 100% boycott of the Social Service alternatives in support of the Insumisos in Search and Capture, organised by the MIC (Movement of Pissed-off Insumisos)

21 Dec 93 - Demonstration in support of the people breaking Third Grade.

29/1/94 - Street action by the local Insumisos meant that what should have been a traditional procession through the streets for the town's patron saint had to be abandoned and the Mayor had to be hustled away through a side door. The presence of the Mothers of Insumisos stopped a Police charge against the demonstrators.

27/2/94 Human chain from the Capitan General's office to the Torrero prison, where 6 Insumisos were locked up. 3000 people involved.

Martyrs? No, thanks

A statement by the mutineers in Navarre, written in 1993:

"There are those who are not prepared to take on any more of a fight than the one conducted with words. They are not capable of assuming personal risks and prefer to remove any content from their own actions. There are some who only go halfway, who confuse a Look with a revolutionary attitude; there are others who discount the "black-clads" because they cannot use them for their own political ends. They do not understand about the struggle unless it has some [party] political compensation for themselves. They cannot see further than their noses.

All of these call us martyrs. An easy way to belittle us, without having to think about tactics or strategy. Solidarity means taking the blows between all of us and not abandoning anyone to their luck. It does not allow for privileges and it means mutual support. This Solidarity is the only way to penetrate the State's armour and galvanise society; it is the only instrument capable of creating conscience.

We are not victims but the destroyers of the system. Our position is set up to demonstrate to the State that we do not accept their hypocritical mercy, aimed at dividing us through individual escape routes. We are not martyrs, because we are not isolated individuals: we are together in struggle for freedom in its most natural sense. Having decided to work for a free, equal society without wars, the struggle has to be coherent and mutually supportive. The best way to raise consciousness and widen commitment is not the word, but the example.

We are accused of being Gandhis, submitting ourselves to punishment (the opposite of Insumision, non-submission) by renouncing freedom, of adopting a passive attitude to demonstrate that we are real pacifists. Absolutely untrue. We have renounced conditional, controlled "liberty", to accept the limitation on our physical space for a few months, as a self-defence mechanism to make it more difficult to divide us into prisoners and "conditionally free". We have reacted by launching a hard, committed counterattack which will increase the Government's wear and tear and its repression, and will further destroy the Army's prestige. We are proving that the State has difficulty in beating a civil disobedience movement which believes in what it says and does."²⁰

Making a joke of it

Dawn over the Military Governor's building.... The light of day shines out on that mighty portal, on those inscribed doors, on that enormous steaming pile of dung covering the whole of the front steps. There is a sign stuck into the heap: "If shit could think, it would be a military type". A hidden camera waits for the moment... a finely dressed officer has to pick his way through the crap to remove the signs before the mainstream Press arrive. Click! Too late, and the photo is seen all over the country.

The Insumisos have become experts in unlikely campaigning methods. Another famous occasion was the time when four Insumisos gave themselves up to the Military Police: they went to the Military Governor's residence, covered themselves in a vast mess of paint, then and meekly waited for the Soldiers to slip their way through the chaos and arrest them (the action is shown on the cover and inside the pamphlet).

If we are defenceless in the face of Military violence, then let's really be defenceless, said another group, and off they went to their trials, dressed only in rather fetching boxer shorts. There has been a certain amount of small-minded complaining about the trend to Humour by the more serious elements in the Peace Movement - people who perhaps suffer from the same excess of dignity as the Officers of State? In any case, ridiculing the authority of the Powerful can be done in such a way as to highlight their pompous nature, get a laugh and also assure an excellent spread of media coverage.

Dispersion and fightback 94

The breaking of Third Grade caused a big leap in activity. In response, the authorities got tougher, particularly at the Pamplona prison, from which seven Insumisos were dispersed on September 8th 1994 to various separate prisons around the country.

*"Pamplona MOC interpretes the dispersion as an attempt by the warders to put a brake on the power that the Insumisos have built up in the prison there, which sometimes reaches out to the other inmates. The situation had become too uncomfortable and dangerous for the governors. Our seven comrades from Pamplona have been dispersed, completely against the constitution, because they were maintaining their attitude in the prison and were denouncing all the injustices there. This example punishment is designed only to weaken the blows that our movement is making to the system, both inside and outside prison."*²¹

50 Insumisos at various prisons started a 15 day hunger strike on 28th October 1994 to demand an end to the separation strategy. Within a few days, sympathy hunger strikes, demonstrations, occupations, blockades and more started up all over the country, creating another huge surge in activity. There were daily demonstrations in Pamplona, with an average attendance of 300, and three big demonstrations in the city, of successively 1500, 6,000 and 10,000 people. There were no attempts at state-wide demonstrations - instead, city and town demonstrations were called in a total of 16 different locations. As well as

the Pamplona activities, the following actions took place:

Zaragoza - demo of 2500 people, blockade of the prison gates, sympathy hunger strikes. Vitoria-Gasteiz - human chain of 1,500 people, demo of 1,000. Asturias - a march on the Villabona prison. Oviedo - Occupation of a barracks and the attempt to steal an artillery piece! Cantabria - Demonstrations in Santander and Torrelavega, anti-militarist fair in front of the Military Governor's building, Madrid - demo at the Carabanchel prison, sympathy hunger strike by 2nd Grade prisoners, camping occupation in front of the prison. Demonstrations and/or hunger strikes also in Logroño, Murcia, Salamanca, Reus, Valencia, Bilbao and Palma de Mallorca.

There was another collective Mutiny on 9th May 1996, involving 16 more Third Grade prisoners, bringing the total to 144. Support actions were carried out all over Spain, particularly in the local areas of the mutineers.

The number of Objectors had risen so high by this time that the very existence of a conscript army was under threat. 124,000 new bodies were needed in 1994 to replace the conscripts who had finished their time: there were, in fact, a total of 138,000 young men available to cover these places. EXCEPT that the anti-mili campaign, maintained as a burning issue by the actions of the Insumisos, had persuaded 40% of the eligible people against doing it. There was thus a shortfall of 41,200. Things looked increasingly bleak as the Authorities gazed into the immediate future - the number of eligible recruits would fall as the population of young people decreased and the level of objection rose:

"Objection is going to keep rising. It has become a central point among young people towards all things military and even towards the system in general. This is the result of a process which has taken many years and which would need many more to reverse it. What's more, it is a genuine cultural thing which has jumped over the influence of the media. The immediate future couldn't be better for the people who are currently thinking of becoming objectors. All they have to do is exercise their right to conscientious objection and they will see the system falling in front of their eyes".²²

Campaigns are led from their most committed points. The Insumisos set the agenda, showed up the Government's violence and its lies, built a cultural rejection of the State's authority. The ideas were diluted and confused as they passed out to the rest of society, but the refusal message was there - and it worked.

"Insumision has spurred on the growth in objection in two ways, firstly by the constant, daily publicity on the subject and secondly by causing a crisis in the PSS due to the lack of cooperation necessary. Many objectors are looking for any way to evade all types of conscription".²³

An article titled "Keep calm - but keep up the tension" which appeared in Oct 1994 explained the developing atmosphere very well:

"We find ourselves in a situation without parallel in the history of Conscientious Objection in Spain and maybe in any other part of the world. There are nearly 200 prisoners of conscience in Spanish jails and many more

will probably enter. The situation of heavy repression, sought by the movement against the "light" repression which the government would have preferred, is a risky challenge for us.

The most dangerous effect of the repression isn't the fear that this could generate in those who are thinking of joining the committed disobedient, inescapably personal and necessarily collective. The most dangerous effect is the psychological pressure which it exercises on those of us who are involved in one way or another with the antimilitarist movement. The pressure is transformed, more or less consciously, into: "Our friends and comrades are in prison, we have to do something". This internal pressure is probably our most dangerous enemy. Things are happening without any pause: trials, meetings at the local, regional, national and State levels, debates, interviews, training, etc.

The Army-Government is hemmed in by the accumulated effects of the growing number of declarations of objection which are starting to put the recruitment model in danger, also by the serious de-legitimisation of the Army and especially of the Mili itself. The current situation, with people in prison, is going to continue for a long time; if this doesn't make us lose our nerve, we will be able to cause irreversible damage to the Army..... The mutiny at this time supposes either forcing the Government to carry out an accelerated reform of the Army (and its surroundings) which they are not ready for, or taking on the heavy cost of the repression exercised on the Insumisos...."²⁴

This article was wrong in its estimation that the campaign would continue for a very long time. It now seems that the commitment shown by the Insumisos and their willingness to take the fight all the way into long-term prison sentences was recognised by the State. Any move towards further repression that the authorities attempted was met immediately by a fierce reaction from the movement. In the end, the Government surrendered, and new rules were published in November 1996 which made it clear that no more Insumisos would be going to prison. The battle against the prison system was won. This victory was followed by the news that the Professional Army was on the way - the last forced recruits will now be called up around the turn of the century. Insumision Total had destroyed the conscription system too.



Some conclusions

The successes and failures of the "modern" Insumision movement were summed up during a three-day conference held in Barcelona in April 1996. It isn't difficult to detect an air of tiredness from the conference papers, although at the same time there is a clear recognition that the campaign has scored notable successes. Here are the main points, negative and positive:

Negative points

We are tired after 7 years of fighting; many groups have disappeared. The IT is not very visible in the streets. Among young people, Insumision has taken second place to other struggles, like anti-fascist or squatting.

The weight of the fight has fallen too much onto the most involved people and coordination has been poor; when we meet at conferences, we exaggerate our capabilities and later we don't comply with half of what we promise.

We have had difficulty in communicating with people in the rest of society about what the New Penal Code and other new laws will mean.

Positive points:

We have destroyed three Government laws aimed at finishing the campaign and are currently on the fourth one; we have damaged the State very much. Although the amount of confrontation has fallen, the number of Insumisos is still rising.

We have become a reference point for many people. We have matured as a movement: at the beginning we were very anti-Mili, later more like anti-militarist and now we are against any kind of imposition of control. We have generalised the disobedience attitude. Insumision has become a way of life for many and the word "Insumiso" has come to mean "revolutionary".

We have re-worked the idea of amusing campaigning, making fools of the authorities and using smiles as a weapon.

We have grown and developed into other fights which have seen a greater

street presence. We have spread the fight into other sectors, like the Independence groups.

We have collectively overcome our fear and demonstrated that it is not so difficult to disobey. "²⁵

The New Penal Code referred to in the Negatives list (which is also the "fourth law" in the Positives part) is a rewriting by the State of many laws, including a re-definition of the way that Insumision is to be punished, involving a complete ban on any State funding for the individual. It remains to be seen whether, or how, the Insumisos will respond to this new attack. They are certainly taking it very seriously:

*"This is a very serious blow to the Insumision (the last?) because of the existing labour situation and the question of being refused grants for studying. The fact is that the IT people have been in "Social Death" for years and we haven't stopped attacking them. The way to fight this attack is to make it unworkable, by demonstrating that the State is not interested in reinsertion or resocialisation, but only in vengeance. The difficulty is that if the idea develops that we are not being punished collectively, the fight will disperse into thousands of individual situations. "*²⁶

The Negatives and Positives list which came out of the Barcelona conference is a curious mixture of the particular and the general. It is certainly true that there is now a feeling of exhaustion, that the campaign may have run its course, among many of the activists. The new "Civil Death" attack is a very potent one, particularly against the young people who form the great majority of the Insumision Total tendency. However, it has to be said that the "negatives" are mostly personal and/or internal, while the "positives" are the opposite - external, or public questions. At the same time that this pamphlet went to the printers, the Movement's response to the new situation was becoming clear - don't miss Volume 2!

As outside observers, we feel that there is a certain confusion inside the Insumision Total about winning and losing. For whatever reason, the campaign has chosen not to celebrate its partial victories, perhaps because of being too focused on the final objective of complete revolutionary change. These victories are extremely important in themselves.

Victory 1: Smashing the Prison system

The fact is that a small number of committed people took one of society's main weapons of repression - the fear of prison - and made it into a weapon. And they won! Locking up Insumisos is not on the agenda now; it is not an option. Sure, the Government didn't roll over and die, but then they don't, do they? They found someone capable of rational thought, who suggested a new tactic; it remains to be seen whether the Movement will find a new way to defeat this new attack.

A lot of people remain in prison, who need our support and our love to help them get through their sentences. They can be proud of the immense part that they played in defeating the repression and in forcing a major State to change its ways. The writers of this pamphlet urge all its readers to support Insumision prisoners by requesting a copy of the current prisoners list and writing to them. (See final pages for details)

Victory 2: Stopping Conscription

Many Insumisos are very unhappy about the abolition of conscription and its replacement with a professional army. They see this as a defeat for anti-militarism:

*"The professional Army means an advantage for the State because it will be a more effective weapon of repression and it will allow for more technical armaments (higher annihilation capacity). It will become a caste even further removed from the rest of society and a nest of fascist coup-organisers. In addition, it will help to enlarge the new EuroArmy. It is to be expected that there will be less antimili movement but it is sure that the antimiliatrist sentiment will grow. "*²⁷

There is no doubt that a professional Army will be more dangerous than a conscripted one: while the World Expo was being set up in Seville in 1992, the existing Army offered to help the Police with security measures and personnel. The offer was politely declined on the grounds that the soldiers would not be useful! Against this point and in favour of the change, tens of thousands of young men will not now have 9 months stolen from their lives; the Insumisos beat the Government, and forced it to act in a way that it didn't want to.

Victory 3: Changing the world

The Insumision campaign has changed the lives of thousands of people. Whatever happens next, win or lose, this campaign has already created a solid core of people who understand about this society and who have successfully worked together to change it. Many of these people will now disappear back into non-action, but very many more will take their knowledge and use it in other struggles. In turn, those new campaigns offer the chance to wake up more people; this is how we will build a structure for total change.

"The message of the Insumision campaign is constantly distorted by the disinformation media, the political parties, the church and so on. Insumision is not just a NO to the mili. It is a radical rejection of all forms of authority, wherever they come from. The "democratic" Army that we are fighting against, which supports such fascist values as blind obedience, is not something isolated and without links to this society: it is a direct consequence of the system that we

are living in. Capitalist society is what really proclaims these values. Insumision, therefore, is not just a fight against the army, but also an attack on everything that Capitalism stands for: inequality, slavery, war, oppression, racism. Insumision is the fight for total freedom for people and society. We are the real insumisios.....fighting all authority. "28

Some campaigns make improvements to the world even though their political ideas may be very poor or non-existent. Greenpeace is the classic example here - a whale saved is A Good Thing, whoever saved it. Greenpeace isn't going to change the world though - as an organisation, it doesn't have anything to say about WHY the whales are being killed now or how to change that. Sure, some of the individuals involved will develop a set of ideas about the WHY? question: any campaign at all will educate some of its people about the way the world is really.

Other tendencies have well-developed political analysis but don't make the tiniest bit of difference to anything. Hundreds (thousands?) of people spend years explaining to each other about what is wrong but never actually do anything real about it. You can only attend a certain number of dull activities - demonstrations in your capital city, leafletting uninterested people in the street and so on - before you get chronically bored. Sooner or later, all of us need to feel that what we are doing has some point to it RIGHT NOW: some immediate results which are good in themselves.

We can assess campaigns according to these two criteria. First, their usefulness in making some real change, right now, which is good for the Planet and great for the campaigner's morale. Second, their value in creating people who understand the real existing world and have the confidence and the energy to change it. Then we can ask ourselves this question: which activities are the ones that will help create a structure of organised, experienced people, ready to put their abilities to real use, making genuine improvements now and working towards full social change?

Step forward the Insumisos of Spain!

Appendix - Organisation questions

This appendix offers some notes about the basic organisation of the Insumision Total campaign: not about WHAT is done but about HOW to do it. We hope that some notes about methods - good and bad - will be useful to other organisers and potential organisers in other places. This part, more than all the others, is a summary of the ideas and methods used by a small number of the people involved in this huge campaign. It is a mixture of opinions and attitudes from various different groups around Spain, although the basics are thanks to Colectivo Zizaña in Logroño.

The interesting point about the two tendencies involved in the anti-military thing in Spain, who are certainly a long way apart on various basic points, is the extent to which they manage not to hate each other. This isn't going to be a "Hey everyone, let's be groovy all together" message: on the contrary, it should be obvious that no Grand Union can work. Having said that, there is no doubt that the Spanish manage to cooperate with each other across the frontiers of principle in a way that the British at least can't seem to.

Money

Money is never that easy to come by for groups of people who are involved in something which the People With The Cash don't want to support. (The strategy of setting up imaginary organisations with pleasant names and safe-sounding ideas, which then apply for government money, doesn't seem to be as well developed in Spain as it is in Britain).

Spain has one huge advantage over Britain regarding the raising of

finances for running a group: no functioning licensing laws. That is to say, any body of people can set up a centre and open a bar; profits go to the group and the Police do not usually get interested. (The approach seems to be that an illegal bar is used as an excuse for police action if one is needed, rather than a definite reason all by itself) The scope of this point can be seen from the example of a squat in the city of Burgos which was set up in 1993: the occupiers opened a bar and centre and within 8 months were making enough money not only to support their political activities but also to pay the people working in it - not much, but sufficient to allow them to leave their other jobs and live outside the State system.

The big Spanish festivals, which can last up to a week, provide a major money-making opportunity:

*"You can go into a park, say, during some town's fiestas, and you'll find a whole set of bars and stalls, each supporting one particular group: women's groups, Insumisos, greens... you can make enough in a week to pay your basic running costs all year."*²⁹

The idea of taking money from the people involved - the "members" - has been tried:

*"It didn't really work. Most people are living very cheaply as it is...."*²⁹

Benefit concerts are a very important source of income. There is a flourishing alternative music scene in Spain with a large number of bands who are very happy to play free; a number of cassettes have been produced to help subsidise the campaign.

On the spending side, rents are often low or non-existent in Spain: the CNT, the old anarchist trade union from the 30s, is still operating and has buildings in many towns. This does not necessarily mean that the Insumisos are welcomed - the situation varies from town to town, depending more on personality questions than on questions of political position. Printing is very cheap by comparison to British standards (about 50% cheaper!). Having said all of that, most groups seem to be running the traditional Financial Crisis management: that is, always having their spending a good long way in front of their income.

Recruiting

One of the biggest problems with loose structures is that it is often extremely difficult for new people to join:

"We tried to set up an information/contact point in the local Fair Trade shop, which attracted a few people during its short period of existence: the problem was that there was no great interest in running it among the people already in the group. It's very common to set up phone contact points for

*information too. In Pamplona, they had a very successful information point, with a continual flow of people, lawyers."*²⁹

The activists are aware of the problem, but unable to find a satisfactory solution. So how do new would-be Insumisos get in touch with their local group?

*"Really, it's the people with a lot of confidence who find us. The MOC group had advertised meetings but we don't really. New people would have to seek us out... We meet people at demos and they approach us. How do they know who is in the group? It's always obvious if you look at any march/demo, who the organisers are. Also, we have a lot of stuff in bars - stickers etc - and people can meet us that way."*²⁹

Running a centre

Spain has a lot of centres run by groups outside of any State control (ie not "Council Youth Centres" or whatever). Many of the larger towns have "Ateneos Libertarios" -libertarian centres - which function as meeting places, cheap restaurants, contact points, bars and live music venues, sometimes all of these at once. These centres are used as bases by a huge number of groups.

*"Always a hassle to keep them running, but it's certain that a centre raises the general activity level."*²⁹



Bibliography and contact addresses

There is very little material directly available in English about Insumision Total itself. The wider Insumision campaign is covered regularly by a magazine called Peace News, published in Britain, but the philosophy behind their work is very much about Non-Violence and Peace and rather less about resistance and/or Fightback. The list of Spanish publications shown below is not complete, but it's a start:

Books

-Abajo las Quintas! By Jos, Mari Esparza Zabalegi, published by Txalaparta, 1994. ISBN 84-8136-919-5. A history of the Navarran people's resistance to the Spanish army and to conscription.

Rompan Filas, by Julia Martinez Sanchez, published by Virus Editorial, ISBN 84-88455-21-6. In the form of a novel, but really a polemic against conscription and in favour of anti-militarism, with a lot of information and history included.

La Objeción de Conciencia, by Xavier Ruis, published by Integral, 1988. ISBN 84-85351-83-5. Full details on the practicalities of becoming an Insumiso, together with a history of the movement up to 1988 and detailed guides to the law.

La Insumision Encarcelada, by Carlos M. Beristain. published by Virus, 1992. ISBN 84-88455-00-3. 7 Insumisos and their families and friends writing about life as a political prisoner.

Giltzapeko Paranoiak is a long-ish pamphlet, produced anonymously by a group of serving Basque prisoners and printed in defiance of the Prison rules. No publisher, no ISBN, but available via Colectivo Ziza or La Lletra A (see below).

The Spanish Civil War, by Hugh Thomas. Penguin, ISBN 014 013 5936. The best general history of those times, even if it is expensive and long.- but don't expect to find in-depth coverage on the libertarian/anarchist stuff.

To Remember Spain, by Murray Bookchin. Published by AK Press, ISBN 1 873 176872. This pamphlet will tell you a lot more about the revolution, but you may need to read the general history to be able to understand it.

Spain - Dictatorship to Democracy, R. Carr and J. P. Fusi, pub Allen & Unwin. ISBN 0 04 946014-5. An excellent history of Francoism and the changeover to democracy; doesn't mention the Insumisos, but well worth a read to understand the background.

Homage to Catalonia, by George Orwell. Published in many different formats - try the Penguin paperback, ISBN 0 14 018231-4. A wonderful personal history of Orwell's involvement in the Spanish Civil War, with a lot of general information about it all sewn in.

Magazines

La Lletra A is a wonderful, huge, bimonthly magazine, produced in a mixture of Spanish and Catalan with really good coverage of the actions of People Like Us in modern Spain.

Well worth learning Spanish for! La Lletra A, El Lokal, C/ La Cera 1 bis, 08001 Barcelona, Spain.

Ediciones EZ is a glossy, detailed journal of actions and arguments, mostly concerning the Basque country. They also give away cassettes featuring Basque radical electric accordion playing, among other things. Ediciones EZ, Apdo. 235, 48080 Bilbo, Bizkaia, Spain.

Resiste is a very tasty quarterly with long, detailed articles for background and analysis. Resiste, Apdo. 1673, 01080 GASTEIZ, Spain.

Zizaña is produced by the Logroño collective of the same name, who helped very much in the production of this pamphlet. Their journal, roughly bimonthly, is a fine example of local publications for wide distribution. The Zizaña also have a distribution centre and a list of prisoners in English. Colectivo Zizaña, Apdo 400, 26080 Logroño, Spain.

Mambru is the newsletter of the Spain-wide MOC organisation. Like the British Peace News, the focus is much more on Pacifist-type activities (not paying war taxes, things like that). However, it does have a regularly updated list of Insumision prisoners and other essential information. Mambru, Apdo 1286, 50080 Zaragoza, Spain.

Molotov is a fortnightly newsheet, cramming in as much information on recent and forthcoming actions as possible on to a double-sided sheet of DIN A3 paper, like the better known Counter Information from Edinburgh, but tightly focussed on Spain. Molotov, Apdo 14409, 28080 Madrid, Spain. You can get Counter Information free (in English!) from CI, c/o Transmission, 28 King St, Glasgow G1 5QP, UK.

GRATUITOUS ADVERT - for a massive free catalogue of thousands of interesting political/radical publications, send a large stamped addressed envelope to AK Press, 22 Lutton Place, Edinburgh, Scotland.

PRISONER SUPPORT

For a list of prisoners currently serving time in Spanish jails, either write to Mambru as above, or ask the Colectivo Zizaña for their list and information sheet (in English!) on ways to help.



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