

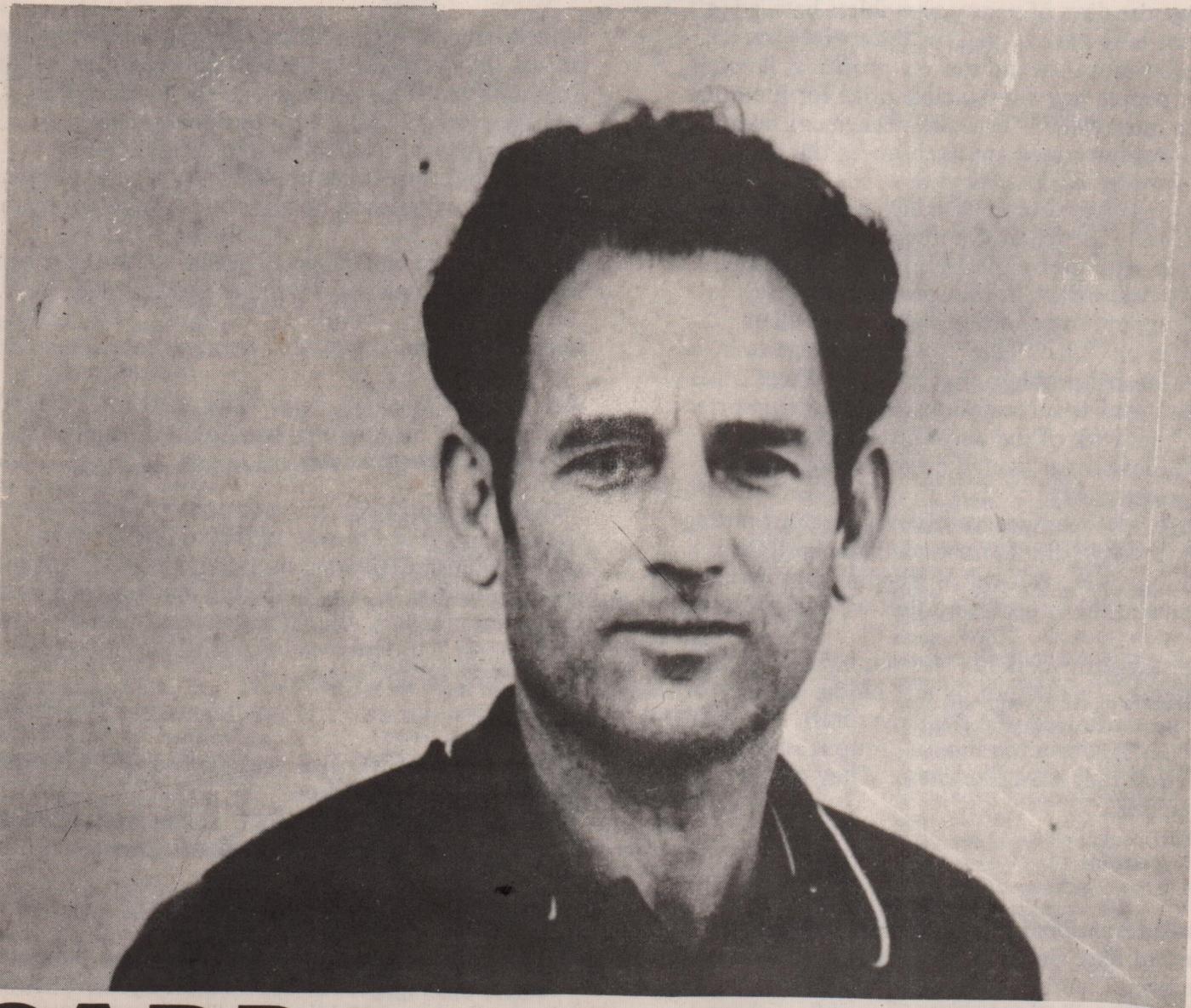
BLACK FLAG

organ of the

ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS

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FREE



CARBALLO BLANCO

Fernando Carballo Blanco (51) is the longest serving political prisoner in Spain. His case deserves the active support and solidarity of all anarchists and libertarian socialists for without question he is serving his sentence only for the crime of being a Spanish worker committed to the ideas of anarcho-syndicalism.

Carballo was sentenced to 30 years in 1964, together with myself, by a Consejo de Guerra Sumarísimo under the laws relating to banditry and terrorism. I was sentenced to 20 years but served only 3½ years before being granted a "clemency" (only after the kidnapping of a Spanish diplomat in London and the machine-gunning of the American Embassy in London in 1967), but Carballo Blanco remains in prison to this day. I was guilty of carrying explosives into

Spain, though not of the charge of banditry and terrorism of which both Carballo and myself were accused, but all Carballo Blanco was guilty of was being a member of the C.N.T. and meeting a clandestine contact from the anarchist movement in France at a pre-arranged rendezvous in Madrid. No evidence was brought forward at our Court Martial to substantiate the Brigado Politico Social allegations that Fernando had been involved in planting explosive devices or even that he had knowledge that I would be bringing explosives with me for deposit in Madrid.

The Spanish prison authorities have been making life particularly difficult for Fernando Carballo Blanco over the past year or so and there is a limit to the number of indignities

any one person can suffer, particularly within the repressive environment of Alicante Prison where he is the only political prisoner. We are launching a major campaign of international solidarity with this comrade in conjunction with the Comite Pro-Prises in France and we urge all comrades to make their feelings known to the Spanish Ambassador, The Director General de Prisiones in Madrid, the Director of the Prision Provincial de Alicante along with letters of solidarity to Fernando himself. Let us do everything to ensure that this year is the last Fernando Carballo Blanco remains behind bars.

Stuart Christie

(Contributions please to J. Marcos, c/o Amador Alvarez, 87 rue de Patay, 75013 Paris.)

Letters

Dear comrades,
I'm not disillusioned with the Anarchist Movement — although I think its only "Black Flag" which keeps my faith in anarchists. Seems to me there are too many trendy "Individualists" or ultra libertarians (so they think) wanting to criticise everything just for the sake of it or because, they aren't doing anything constructive themselves. I think R. Yves Breton's letter to Black Flag is typical of what I am trying to say as regards "20th Century Libertarians". And Black Flag's reply couldn't have been put better.

If things carry on like that, anarchism which is a straight-forward philosophy, will become like Christianity and Marxism with everybody arguing its original meaning. Sometimes I wish that resurrection was possible so we could ask these dead heroes what they really meant. Probably find out that Jesus was an Orthodox Jew and that Marx agreed with Bakunin, but didn't like to say as it would deflate his ego. When I discovered anarchism, it seemed a good enough label to adopt. Nobody I knew agreed with my opinions in that I was an individualist until I discovered there was a 100 year old philosophy which corresponded with my opinions, and so I was neither insane or an individualist. Then during my involvement with anarchists I discovered there were various suffixes and misleading titles. As I came to anarchism through the P.P.U. I'm ashamed to say that I once called myself an anarchist-pacifist — but after learning the hypocrisies of pacifists and that there was no such thing as violent-anarchists and that anarchists were also against war, it was no longer necessary to call myself an anarchist-pacifist as anarchist meant the same thing. The same with anarchist-individualist and even with syndicalist or unionist unless of course, you belong to a union which is revolutionary and anarchist but if you're a member of the T and G.W.U. there's not much point. Even if you do belong to such a union which only comprises of say 50 members there's still not much point. What would be more to the point is to say that you were a group of anarchists trying to form a union which is revolutionary and opposed to government. It's the same with the prefixes Evolutionary-anarchist and Revolutionary-anarchist. If a person believes the world and its systems to be oppressive and likened to a prison, how can they not have the desire to break free and therefore be revolutionary. If one says that he is evolutionary that is to say he is a stoic, or living in luxury so that it is not that important to have a revolution.

In the final analysis, you find the real authoritarians are the ones who accuse you of being authoritarian i.e. If you don't see things their way you must be authoritarian.

I had to laugh at Socialist Worker this week, there was for some obscure reason a photo of some blokes sticking a Catalan Flag over a Franco war memorial. The only thing that can be said in its favour is that its against the law — but other than that its purely nationalistic. On the bottom of the page is a map of Iberia with "Basque Country" written in capitals. I.S. seems to go a bundle on supporting nationalism whilst promoting Internationalism. I asked our Bolshevik paper boy why, in one issue on the Civil War, the anarchists didn't get a mention. His reply was, "we don't mention anarchists because of their inability to mobilise workers. He's trying to convert me!"

Best wishes,

Graham S.

EXCUSE ME
NOW SIR ...
WHICH ARE YOU?
AN EXTREME
MODERATE
OR A MODERATE
EXTREMIST ?



London N.4.

Dear Critics of AWA,

Keep up the good work. I'm sick and tired of sitting down listening to lectures from self-appointed know-it-alls. I always considered myself part of the silent majority until going to the recent day school which you commented on last month. I think its about time a few more anarchists started sticking up for traditional class war anarchism — "individualist, fascist, Marxist nut-case bomb-throwers ..." that we are — without AWA claiming that they are the only ones who really know what the class struggle is all about.

I'm sure AWA will condemn me for not seeing their superiority. But then, I'm only a working class anarchist.

Fraternally,

Mark H.

Dear Black Flag,

I was relieved to see the letter describing the AWA day-school fiasco in the last issue. As someone else who was there I too was amazed to hear an AWA member deliver a paper on the British anarchist movement without once mentioning the Anarchist Black Cross (even critically!). This to me is as insulting as it is pointless. Why talk about the Anarchist movement at all if you are only going to mention one part of it? AWA members tried to excuse this at the time by saying they didn't have enough time to mention all the groups about ... Personally I find this a bit much to swallow.

I was also a bit put off by the way one AWA salesman tried to show he knew more than Miguel Garcia about the anarchists participation in the Spanish Republican Government. Someone from Black Flag quoted Miguel as saying that Garcia Oliver & Co., didn't consult him or the other members of the CNT over their joining the Government. Immediately the much-read AWA comrade

said "Well Miguel is wrong ..." and cited some congress or other at which the 'anarchist ministers' were supposed to have gained mass approval of their actions from the CNT membership. Can it be that Miguel hasn't read all the right books? Or is it that participating throughout the Spanish revolution leaves one less knowledgeable than AWA about these things? I understand Miguel has never been to university, perhaps this is why AWA knows more than him what his comrades and he said and did?

Day schools like this one of AWA's make me wonder if I'm in the same movement. I'm an anarchist. Could you tell me what AWA is?

Yours in spite of AWA,
R.M.

SERIOUS CONTROVERSY OR SILLY POLEMIC?

April 1976

Letter to Black Flag.

Do you know your arse from your elbow? You appeal to all anarchists for help with the publishing programme of the Cienfuegos Press, and you deserve help with this work from all anarchists. But at the same time you fill "Black Flag" with factious and factitious attacks on other anarchists — the ORA/AWA on one side and the individualists on the other, and the Freedom Press in the middle.

Your attack in the latter in Volume IV No. 7 (March 1976) was at least confined to the back page, but even so it was really ridiculous. What do you mean by saying in reply to P.R. that "Freedom", like Kropotkin, is guilty of "compromise on issues of the time"? What do you mean by printing without comment R.A.P.'s nonsense about "Freedom"? When was there "the story in 'Freedom' that it is the same paper that has been published since 1886"? When has there been "constant sniping in its columns at the johnny-come-lately 'Black Flag.'"? When have there been "snide attacks on Meltzer, Graham, Bonnano and others which now punctuate it from time to time"? In fact, when did "Freedom" ever print an attack on you except in self-defence, and then very seldom?

No one is asking you to stifle serious controversy, but I am asking you to think twice before spoiling your excellent work by printing silly polemic.

Nicolas Walter.

To reply in order of questions. (1) Yes. (2) Would it not be dishonest to refrain from criticisms considered merited merely to gain support? (3) In 1914, pacifism was persecuted and revolutionary: today the Establishment has, in peace time, adopted non-violent cant. For libertarians to label anarchists true to their principles "violent" or "terrorist" exceeds anything Kropotkin did at the time. (4) Comment was superfluous as we agreed with it. (5) That "Freedom" is the same, or substantially the same as the paper founded in 1886 is repeated therein many times; and always when recounting the past. (6) Not read "Through the Anarchist Press" lately? Or many other comments? (7) Not so. Most probably all "Flag" criticisms, other than letters, are in reply to "Freedom" contributors rather than initiated in these columns. (8) If we occasionally cane someone in front of the class, bear with us. Patience is at times sorely tried...it is more in healthy anger than a belief in the efficacy of the punishment.

1926

THE WATERSHED

OF CLASS HISTORY

Celebrate 1926? It was a defeat arising from a betrayal. Celebrate what? Only the parting of the ways for the labour movement. Here it was above all the General Strike that was a decisive test for the workers' movement. Before then, with all its faults, there *was* a working class movement. Afterwards it disintegrated, and the name was taken over by class enemies. It was not the General Strike which caused this to happen, but it marked the process by which it happened here. It was a watershed of our class history. There were many currents within the working class movement. Not all went into the major sea of parliamentary reformism. But those that did were channelled off into minor streams.

We neglect at our peril the old syndicalist traditions which existed within the British working class movement before 1926. This is why, in "Black Flag" we have always accentuated the need to discover our old traditions and history. To the extent socialism was a working-class movement, it was libertarian — just as in other countries. It was the canalisation of socialism by the middle-classes into planned *res* that caused libertarian socialism to become a backwater explored only by sectarians.

During the First World War the working-class had rejected the bureaucratic topheavy and reformist trade union leadership which had compromised itself with the State. The shop stewards' movement had developed as a decentralising shop-floor corrective. In effect, there was one vertical movement (controlled from above downwards) and one horizontal movement cutting across it (controlled from the shop floor). This existed formally in many other countries: to ensure the "vertical" movement was triumphant the full force of the State was used against the workers to whatever extent was necessary. Ever since the one gauge of democracy has been — not the extent to which society is managed by those who make it up — but the extent to which repression had to be used against the people to make them accept the fact of rule from above.

The difference between "vertical" and "horizontal" unionism was informal in this country; but it existed nevertheless. The TUC managed, after 1926, to break with the last vestiges of syndicalism and of independent action. More than ever they leaned to parliamentary participation in seeking to gain the struggles they could not gain by industrial action. The establishment had a bad fright in 1926 — it took them a long time to get over it — but the TUC General Council was even more frightened than they of the possibilities which the conflict had evoked. This is what made them lean more heavily on the Labour Party, which had been infiltrated and conquered by the middle class intellectual authoritarianism of the Fabians.

The influence of the Communist Party was from the first a treason to the whole conception of the working class movement. It made "revolution" synonymous with State dictatorship. It tried to impose its own authority — not

succeeding in Britain, it subordinated the struggle in 1926 to the leadership of the TUC General Council and thereafter to parliamentary socialism. It diverted all struggle into what were presumed to be "Left" causes but were all concerned with the defence of the Russian dictatorship.

When the working class movement became Statist it ceased to be working class. It was pushed into defensive positions in the thirties — the fear of fascism, the struggle against sub-standard housing, the battle against unemployment. These were the battles of the "Old Left" — succeeded by the "New Left", still with Statist ideas, always with the fallback of supporting the Labour Party, still supporting dictatorial movement abroad, still wanting to subordinate the working class to an intellectual middle-class leadership — now a student one.

It plays on the fear of fascism when only its ghost appears; it struggles to get *into* sub-standard housing, by squatting rather than get out of it; and on the subject of unemployment it is divided between those who want the "right to work" and those who want the right "never to work again"!

One looks with amazement at all that is left of the conception of the movement fifty years after 1926. What has it to do with us?, we ask. The workers ask it too. What has it to do with the class struggle or with social liberation? It deals in State reforms, in liberal measures, in State participation, in national liberation, in support for tyranny everywhere provided its labelled "Left" by Moscow. But of the elements of democracy and socialism, not even to speak of syndicalism or anarchism, not a trace — but one.

It still pays lip service to workers control from time to time, and next year it is proposed that this will become "law" . . . the Old and the New Left will be at one in the Labour Party scheme for "management participation". You want workers' control? You shall have it . . . we shall simply give the name to something utterly different. Just as in Russia where the name "soviets" implying something democratic and socialist — has been taken by the State and given to something utterly and completely in contrast! Just as in Germany where the name of socialism and of "folk" — the people — was given to something utterly different to socialism and opposed to the people!

So it will be here. The name of the cause that cannot be eradicated will be taken as a label for its opposite. That is the very stuff of State oppression.

In fifty years not only have we gained nothing, we have lost everything, so far as aspirations to freedom are concerned. The material benefits consequent upon the efforts of civilisation as a whole — lauded as being due to the State in totalitarian countries or to the Chancellor in power for the time being in parliamentary ones — mean that, inevitably, our living conditions have improved. But as for getting the whole benefits for ourselves we have taken many paces back.

We have not lost our traditions though the Statists would rewrite history. But we need beginnings too.

ROON'n'ABOUT

Allegations of maltreatment of patients at St. Augustine's mental hospital have been upheld by an official enquiry. There is nothing new or unknown about the unsatisfactory state of mental hospitals; nor in present circumstances is there any major way of preventing the bullying of the mentally ill or the aged save by constant vigilance. This case came to light only because of two male nurses at the hospital publishing their own dossier of criticisms which led to the enquiry.

Needless to say, attempts were made to prevent that dossier ever reaching the public. A curious sideline was a report that attempts had been made to "defame the character" of one of the campaigning mental nurses.

To quote the "Guardian": "Dr. Brian Ankers, a chemist, who worked as a nurse for a temporary period, said, 'It was suggested that I was an anarchist and part of an international conspiracy to cause trouble at mental hospitals. Shortly after our first criticisms were published I was moved to the heaviest geriatric ward in the hospital. Many people saw it as an attempt to get me to resign, but I would not'."

Our old friend the international conspiracy rears his hoary head whenever officialdom is in trouble. But it was appropriate that once they had decided Dr. Ankers was an anarchist they decided, as a "shifter", to put him in geriatrics! Too subtle for the minds of officialdom to know that the senior geriatric specialist in the country is an anarchist, Dr. Alex Comfort: we do not think it has yet been suggested he uses his talents at the service of an international conspiracy. "That's a Comfort."

It is now pretty obvious that a deliberate attempt was made by South African business interests to smash the Liberal Party which has been an embarrassment. They lend a respectable image to anti-apartheid activities, and prove at any rate a troublesome gadfly. That is the background to the Thorpe affair and to the Hain affair.

Whilst condemning the South African businessmen, pause to consider how many times agents of big business and of Governments too have employed the same type of trick; in the main these tactics have been used against the Anarchist movement. Can the Hain affair, troublesome as it was to Peter Hain to be accused of a bank theft, and acquitted, stand up against the Sacco-Vanzetti case? He would not say so for a moment. Can the Thorpe affair, embarrassing and difficult as it has been for him, stand up against the anti-Makhno campaign of villification? How many times have official police launched false accusations against Anarchists?

A further reflection on the Hain case is the utter and sickening hypocrisy of the press. Hain was acquitted by a majority verdict; all the press join in to say, as is true, that the case should never have been brought. But a couple of heads the other way and the headlines would all have been screaming **The Hidden Life of Peter Hain** and villifying the "bank robber who masked as a Liberal Party activist" . . .

A question to the snotty Young Liberals who told Mr. Thorpe that he ought to have ignored the statement of the unbalanced Norman Scott-Yosiffe who at every turn in his life blames Jeremy Thorpe whom he says "seduced" and (shades of 'Pegs' paper) "brutally discarded him". They said Mr. Thorpe should have met the statement with a bland statement that his sex life was nobody's business but his own. A bit much to expect from a politician, especially one with the puritanical West Country on his back! Should Mr. Hain equally have said that all capitalism is robbery while making no statement either way as to his alleged involvement?

Is there any doctrine more generally discredited than the one which says we have not only the right, but the duty, to declare war on a neighbouring nation merely because we disagree with its institutions?

What Member of Parliament will say that we ought to declare war on Russia immediately to mark our disapproval of State Communism? Only after war is declared — as in

the case of Hitler's Germany — will they declare that disapproval of its institutions is what the war is all about.

Yet the theory of a war of disapproval — condemnation if a 'regicide peace' — is Edmund Burke's no less than the theory that M.P.s are 'representatives' of their constituents and not 'delegates'. Burke took, by definition, no heed of his constituents' views when he aired his theory. He obtained no confirmation of it by law. Yet every M.P. quotes it as if it were constitutional law and one which every citizen had taken an oath to observe!

It is convenient for them, because having got themselves elected, they can then cheerfully ignore anything their constituents want; and moreover hold it undemocratic and even criminal for them to try and pressurise them.

The recent hard light thrown at the selection of Labour Party candidates as a result of Trotskyist infiltration in the ward committees shows how undemocratically they have been chosen; and how they scream when these rules are used against them! Once chosen, what is the electorate expected to do? It has the choice between a few candidates chosen by a few people. The only intelligent course would be to abstain totally; and this every propaganda medium denounces.

BEST OF TWO ALTERNATIVES

The busted marriage of Princess Margaret has brought the limelight on young Roddy Llewellyn, the very well-heeled young man with whom she has been cavorting . . . in a "commune" that he belongs to, and in a West Indian island. Moving between the Caribbean paradise and the commune, Her Gracious Highness has been dropping out amongst the weekend hippies at a farm supplying macrobiotic foods to a communal restaurant . . . as its not too far from the Duke of Beaufort's place, one can always change clothes and go over for the fox hunting.

The group of well heeled young socialites who joined together to buy a "commune" are by no means unusual. One knows from one's own experience of rich young ladies and gentlemen who live on squats. They could buy up the whole terrace if they wanted to. But they have "dropped out". Don't talk about class war its so dreary!

While one appreciates that the rich who form communes and live "free, liberated" lives are no worse than the rich who buy detached houses in leafy suburbs, they are no better either; and at least the latter are the open enemy. Our society is becoming like that in the later stages of the French Revolution . . . the *mauvais riche* still had plenty of money, but they didn't flaunt it; they were somewhat ashamed to show it, but they held on to it and flaunted their simple tastes. All of which cost just as much money . . .

When one sees TV writers, doctors, producers, journalists, all living in squats — and usually picking the best — one tends to smile at the blow on the shins for the wealthy developers. But there is another side to it. One appreciates hippies have every right to take over a house and smoke the day away peacefully. But are they entitled to prevent working families getting into the only homes they can get, for which they are — maybe stupidly, but patiently — waiting, while they hold up housing projects and call plaintively on the "vanguard" to come and protect them, Big Brothers to replace the State from which they have dropped out?

ROME RECALLED

According to Le Monde (March 6th) "the CNT, the old anarchist trade union confederation, all-powerful at the beginning of the Civil War, and which was thought to be dead is returning from the Catacombs." Not, however, from the grave (as a mistranslation from Le Monde has it). There is a big difference: in the catacombs the Resistance went on to the bloodthirsty Caesars.

Declares a advert for a lecture on 'sexism' — "We are not born men and women. This happens later because of the attitudes of society." Is it sexist to say that (with a few dubious exceptions) this is untrue?

Workers audit

“Open the books” is a demand that is increasingly being heard from what passes as the revolutionary left in Britain. Such a ‘demand’ reveals a rather touching display of faith in the bosses : hoping that they’ll comply with the request, and can be trusted not to cook the books before they’re opened. It also exposes a complete lack of genuine revolutionary thought.

Anybody who reads Lloyds Bank Review (and naturally anyone who is anybody at all reads Lloyds Bank Review) will know that there is more than one way to measure profit (i.e. Historic cost or Replacement Cost) and each method can be used to demonstrate an opposite principle from the same figures. Using ‘Replacement Cost’ methods it is possible to prove that the final crisis of capitalism so often predicted by the Trots is well and truly here – now. Yet it is theersatz revolutionaries, the Trotskyites themselves who seem to be at the point of disintegration, with declining membership, collapsing papers and splits which make nuclear fission look like child’s play.

Demands to open the books are not subversive – stealing the books and publishing the contents is: and it is on an issue such as this that the differences between anarchists and the authoritarian left are most obvious. Revolutionaries who ask to be allowed to make the revolution reveal nothing but their own weaknesses.

Anarchism has always been a movement which has drawn its theory from the practice of the working class: sabotage; the good work strike; the general strike and above all direct action

– but then anarchism is working class socialism, not the statist variety propounded by middle class intellectuals. Working people have never needed to have the books opened before they knew they were exploited. In Russia, China, South Africa, USA and in Britain we know we are oppressed (although in different ways) because we feel it every day of our lives.

It is true that there is a crisis developing, but “opening the books” won’t make it more apparent, because its not an economic crisis, but a crisis of authority. Britain’s economic problems are just one result of this crisis of authority which manifests itself in absenteeism, squatting, ‘crime’, and a general decline in social institutions such as the church, political parties and the family. The decline of the ‘revolutionary’ left is part of this overall tendency, as people refuse to accept any authority, even revolutionary authority.

“Why don’t they fight?” bemoans a headline in Workers Action: referring to the Yes-man attitude of the trade union leaders not realising that there is more revolutionary content in being deliberately and consistently five minutes late for work every day than in all the resolutions passed by the TUC in the past 20 years. Direct Action by working men and women has changed the face of history and is every day determining the nature and course of the class struggle, and there are the roots of revolution, and as the struggle increases in intensity we won’t be asking anyone to lead it, we won’t be asking anyone to “open the books” – we will take them and burn them – without permission.

M.E.

OPPORTUNISTS KNOCK

Europe never regarded its citizens residing abroad as criminals or anyone emigrating to America as a traitor.

Not so in our country. (Russia). The individual at home ever oppressed and neglected has never made as much as an attempt to get a hearing. Free expression of opinion at home was always regarded as an insolence; independence as sedition. The individual was absorbed in the state, was dissolved in the commune. The revolution effected by Peter I replaced the antiquated landlord rule of Russia by the European bureaucratic system.

The European forms of administration and of the judiciary, military and civil organisation have developed into a monstrous, hopeless despotism . . .

Corrupted by the complete absence of resistance, power went on occasions to outrageous lengths, unparalleled in the history of any other country.

Every act of power, every relation of a superior to a subordinate is a flagrant exhibition of gross insolence, of the humiliating certainty that the individual will stand for anything . . . the government at home is more self-assured and unrestrained that it is in Turkey or in Persia. There is nothing to restrict it, no traditions of the past, for it has disowned its own past, and has no concern for that of Europe. It has no respect for its people, knows nothing of the general culture of mankind, and battles against the present. Hitherto, at least, the government was ashamed of its neighbours. Now it sets itself up as an example to all oppressors and aspires to be their mentor . . .

We grew up under terror, under the black wings of the secret police, and were mutilated by hopeless oppression. We have barely survived. But is that not too little? Has the time not come to loosen our hands and tongue for activity which would serve as an example. Has the time not come to awaken the slumbering consciousness of the peoples? And surely it is impossible to awaken it by whispering, or remote allusions, when shouting and blunt words are barely audible? Open frank acts are required

This forthright statement about oppression in Russia, though apposite and highly relevant to the present situation, was made in 1850, by Alexander Herzen (“From Other Shores”). It shows how Russian despotism flows in unbroken sequence from the Tsars. Marxism, by its belief in conquering the State, allowed itself to become intertwined with it.

The remarks of Alexander Herzen may be compared with those of Solzhenitsyn. The latter is having a ball running down tyranny in Russia, but to what purpose? He is implacably opposed to revolution, but what other hope is there in Russia? The people with whom he is mingling do not want revolution in Russia either; all they want is a ‘go’ at socialism in the West, and Solzhenitsyn, like a good showbizman, gives his public what they want. He not only attacks the tyranny of his native State but suggests that this is what comes of departing from the established order everywhere. He does not suggest how it can be altered. He leaves the possibility that maybe it can be done by war. But they have no intention of going to war to add another capitalist competitor, if victorious, to lay the world in ruins, if not.

ULSTER

A chara,

This letter is written in response to a mis-informed journalistic article called "Ulster will Fight" (Black Flag, Vol. IV, No. 7), by a few people of differing "leftist" views (incl. Anarchist) who have found enough in common to reply.

You seem to be sadly mis-informed on the true nature of the struggle in Ireland. The decisive division in the Irish working-class is not due to the rantings or ravings of official Sinn Fein (or any other anti-imperialist and hence anti-British source), but due to the native bourgeoisie (Unionists) who successfully implement the orders of the capitalist game — divide and conquer. Aided by British finance and encouragement, sectarianism flourishes, making the pleas for solidarity by all and any of the forces on the left an uphill struggle. (Incidentally the power of propagandised sectarianism appears to permeate not only the Irish, and those British who can find it in their hearts to differentiate between a Pro and a Taig, but even, it would appear — Black Flag! You claim that the fascist para-militaries of the Protestants act merely as a response to the IRA., when in fact many of the leading initiatives are taken by them e.g. UVF can claim a "first" with anti-personnel bombings. Also, you attribute to the IRA the ability to shoot "20 workers" whilst UDA shoot "20 Catholics" — presumably the Catholics don't work!!)

Your ray of hope "is the closer and more intimate community co-operation" . . . Perhaps in future issues of Black Flag you could explain this to us, as the physical and mental structures of capitalism appear remarkably resilient — the foreign army, native co-ercive agents, courts, media etc, all work under the protection of an imposed institutional framework effectively designed to thwart this intimate community co-operation. The polarisation of the working-class has been the desired result, aided, of course, by the grass-roots structures of the workers themselves, though Black Flag seems to see this as a sign of "experiences of power", e.g. the "great social general strike", was more of a lock-out than a strike, the strategy of an intimidating few who had vested interests to protect though needed social forces i.e. workers, to do all the dirt for them. Far from scaring the Governments of Europe, it demonstrated to them a working strategy paralleled on Germany 1933, though with the necessary amendments!

Black Flag's solutions to our problems wavers between idealism and a call for ideological purity : idealist because the answer seems to be — if the killings stop, then the two communities given their experiences of power, can come together. However the killings are a product of a lack of co-operation, not its cause. Ideological purity calls for a

GARY TYLER

Even in New Orleans, it would be difficult today to frame a black kid just because he was black, in the manner of the Old South.

But just thirty miles upriver, it is a different story. They are not living in this generation. They are in some ways in the wrong century. In St. Charles Parish, Gary Tyler faces death.

It began on October 7th 1974. There was a racial disturbance at the High School in Destrehan and a white student was shot and killed. There were hundreds around; the majority of the white students were engaged in mob violence and chasing black kids out of the school, when the fatal shot was fired.

The police had to find a black suspect quickly. The next day they picked up 17 year old Gary Tyler, who happened to be on a bus leaving the school with a crowd of others.

shooting of the generals — in fact leading members of protestant para-militaries, forces of the left, and politicians are periodically shot at or shot dead : T. Herron, S. Smyth, Joe McCann, J. Bryson, B. McMillan, J. Taylor, I. Cooper, G. Fitt to name but a few.

Try to look beyond the Daily Express for your facts, and perhaps your analysis might differ.

Is mise le meas,

M., R., L., G., M.

Belfast

Our anonymous correspondents ask us to "look beyond the Daily Express" but utter its platitudes — there is no real hope for Northern Ireland while 'the troubles' persist and it is due to 'sectarianism' — not by any chance religion or patriotism. They add to these platitudes the usual leftist ones — blaming the 'Brits' (no class divisions here) and the 'native bourgeoisie' (Unionists) — a political division of the good from the bad capitalists. What these have to conquer after dividing, that can't be obtained under the harp and tricolour, remains unstated.

The two communities CAN come together — nowhere else in the world do such anachronisms continue to have power as they do in Ulster, or to a lesser degree, the ghettos created in its shadow in some British cities.

The use of violence 'paramilitary' or police repression do not in themselves, except rhetorically, constitute fascism. They can coexist with protest. What constitutes fascism is the use of such, or other, methods to smash the workers' organisations. If the workers' organisations exist, fascism, as generally understood, has not conquered. Those who justify such attacks are fascists however they call themselves. Failure to understand this leads to frustration.

Many Irish comrades have expressed strong sympathy with the article in question precisely because of the insistence that there IS a change of attitudes, a silent revolution, going on, in community co-operation (within the separate communities, not between them). Where else in the United Kingdom, or the world for that matter, could a working-class community get its own way, right or wrong? Where else could it reject the Establishment plans so decisively?

If we define democracy as the determination by the people to get what they currently want — as distinct from the rule-by-persuasion which means they want what they get — Ulster is the only democratic part of the offshore islands of Europe and perhaps of all Europe. That is the cause of unrest as distinct from civil obedience. Clearly it highlights the faults of democracy and democracy in this sense is just not enough. But that is why every step in the direction of local co-operation at street level is more significant than anywhere else.

The police had to find a black suspect quickly. The next day the Ku Klux Klan hold a rally and demand reprisal. The police then picked up Gary Tyler who happened to be on a bus leaving the school with a crowd of others.

When, after a year, Gary came to trial there were three witnesses against him. All contradicted each other. One had been under psychiatric care, the other was vulnerable to police pressure from previous brushes with the law. Ultimately a third witness, Natalie Blanks, said she actually saw Gary Tyler fire the gun.

The police women officers made her undress and searched her; before she could get dressed again, the male officers were in, forcing her to make a statement, which she later retracted, saying it was given under intimidation.

But on that evidence, Gary Tyler faces the electric chair. Only worldwide publicity can save him, as it did Joanne Little.

WRITE NOW COMRADES TO THE U.S. EMBASSY BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

If the terrorists want war, they will have it, with all the consequences that follow.

Manuel Fraga Iribarne.

But they apparently did want it; they declared war on the 18th July 1936. The consequences follow today; it has not ended.

UNKNOWN HEROES: CARBALLO BLANCO

Mr. Heath says that the Civil War must now be forgotten and we must go on from here. How reasonable he sounds compared with those who think it has not even ended! But let us consider just one case, that of Fernando Carballo Blanco. His is one case in thousands. He typifies the whole libertarian movement in Spain. And (see front page) he is still living. In misery. But still alive.

Carballo was born in the plateau of Valladolid — a Falange stronghold. But his father was a railwayman, member of the CNT (as a point of interest, in the same regional union as Buenaventura Durruti). One day — when he was twelve years old — his mother went to Madrid for a family visit. The Army Rising meant she could not return. Carballo, senior, was left with two sons and a daughter to look after, when one day five Falangists came to the railway workshops as he was leaving work. The “took him for a ride”. Why? Because he was a member of the CNT. No more was alleged, nor was necessary, than his union affiliation. The body was found riddled with bullets outside the town.

The children were sent to an orphanage. There they had to wear uniform, sing “Cara al Sol” (the Falangist hymn), give the Nazi salute and listen to interminable lectures on Jose Antonio’s theories and the more improbable miracles of the Catholic saints. That was their education and Fernando was a bad pupil.

After the war was over their mother was able to take them out of the orphanage to live with her in Valencia. Carballo collected paper and rags to get food for the families. One day he took a handful of peanuts from a shed and was taken before the Police Commissioner. “Have you a father? How did he die?” “He was murdered,” answered Fernando. The Commissioner punched him, breaking his jaw. “He was shot!” he snapped, “Learn respect.” But he never did.

As Fernando Carballo grew up he went to work as a sawyer, but also tried to contact the anarchist resistance. It was a passport to death in those days, and it was not easy to join the Libertarian Youth, but he succeeded. Despite prison sentences and persecution he went on; when he was out of prison in 1947 he tried to help the prisoners who had been his comrades. In 1948 he was arrested and charged with being a member of International Red Aid. What could he reply to this? That it was not true, that he was an anarchist?

29 PEOPLE escaped from the Segovia Prison in a mass break out. Many of them were labelled as ETA prisoners though this may be a misnomer — many people are fighting with ETA because it gives a chance to fight the regime, who have no sympathy with the idea of a Basque National Government. Amongst the prisoners who escaped were two members of the CNT — Juan Pons Llobet, who was among the twenty four captured trying to cross the border — and Oriol Sole i Sugranes, murdered by the “security” forces in the course of flight.

Oriol was one of those who were arrested along with Puig Antich. He was serving 40 years for a bank robbery aimed at providing funds for the anarchist resistance.

His funeral (Guardian 10th April) was attended by more than 2,000 in his native city of Barcelona. “After the service the congregation took to the streets for a demonstration that lasted for an hour . . . police fired rubber bullets to disperse demonstrators after the funeral.” Like the death of Puig Antich, Sole’s death has aroused “strong feelings”. Unusually, in the “In memoriam” notices in ‘La Vanguardia Espanola’ appears one, in Catalan, from the “relatives of Oriol Sole i Sugranes” which asks his friends to remember him. The cross which normally accompanies such insertions is missing.

But as it could not be proved, a charge of robbery was preferred instead and he was sent to the Puerto de Santa Maria prison where everyone contracts tuberculosis, which will one day be pulled down stone

In 1950 he was transferred to Ocana (Toledo) and then freed for good conduct in 1955. But he was kept under police surveillance in 1956. Meantime he married, worked as a carpenter during the day and a tailor at night to make a bare living for his wife and son in hard conditions. There was, he knew, one way out for the workers to better themselves; to reconstitute the union, so he joined the clandestine CNT. It was suggested to him by a friend in the Resistance that he would be doing good service if he met a foreign comrade who was smuggling explosives from abroad for an attack on Franco. He was willing to act as a guide but was in no other way concerned with the plot. Unfortunately, both he and his contact were arrested.

Consider their cases from the light of the court. One was a foreigner, impelled by sheer hatred of the fascist regime. He was proved, and subsequently admitted, to be implicated in the plot against the head of State. He got 20 years and was released after 3½ years. The other, who had deep personal motivation in the killing of his father apart from his libertarian views, who had been involved as a victim in the military conquest, but who was not involved directly in the plot — at most it could be said he was an accomplice — got 30 years. He is still in prison after 12 years. Where is the justice even by their standards? His life since the age of 12 has been one long Calvary.

What does it mean when they say we should forget the Civil War? That we should give up resisting provided they do not oppress us as much as they did? Will people like Carballo ever be able to forgive? Will they ever — voluntarily — accept dictatorship? They did not succeed in learning any of the lessons the Franco regime had to teach them.

World labour should not trouble itself to try to work out for the Spanish workers a vertical trade union which they have decisively rejected. It would do better to demand in loud and unmistakable terms that prisoners such as and beginning with Fernando Carballo should be released and indemnified immediately.

At the moment Carballo has been sent to Alicante — solely to try to break his morale. I too was in Alicante; but in my time it was a mixed prison. Before the civil war, and now, it was intended only for sexual offenders — regarded by the conquerors as the “lowest strata” but in reality a test of the failure of their society. There, Carballo, is the only political prisoner. They are determined to isolate and break him. For it does not escape the notice of the rulers of Spain that failure to break the spirit of our anarchist comrades, will ensure certain death to the regime.

Miguel Garcia

£800 FINE FOR OBITUARY LIBEL

A Barcelona newspaper *Diario de Barcelona*, has been fined about £800 for libelling the police in an obituary of a Catalan nationalist Oriol Sole Sugranes. Police said the obituary gave the “impression of the intention to bring into disrepute the public force.” — Press

Note the carefully planned lie. Sugranes was not a Catalan nationalist, though he was a Catalan. He was a member of the CNT. But class war must be played down in Spain and activists attributed to “nationalists”. Had he been a German or Italian Marxist of course he would have been as “anarchist”! This is the rule by which journalists must disguise anarchists as Marxists or nationalists, and vice versa.

THE
MYTH
OF THE

National Liberation Struggles

The following article is abridged and re-published from Fifth Estate. It originally appeared in a longer version in "Internationalism" (no. 7) under the title "Nation or Class": Communists and the National Question," by C.D. Ward. We re-publish it here with the intention of widening the discussion on the myth of "National Liberation struggles". ("Internationalism", P.O. Box 961, Manhattanville Station, NY, NY10027. "Fifth Estate", 4403 Second Avenue, Detroit, MI 48201).

The bourgeoisie has maintained its class rule this century by engaging in a permanent counter-revolution, an unending attack on the working class. All the mass organisations of the class in the ascendant epoch — unions, parties etc. — have been integrated into capitalism and serve as obstacles to the proletarian struggle.

The bourgeoisie has engaged in grandiose projects of mystification to hold back the development of class consciousness, from television and the tabloid press in the West to mass rallies and propaganda campaigns in the East. When the working class has resisted these attacks, the bourgeoisie has flung at the class all the forms and forces of repression in its arsenal: riot police, bomber squads, specialists in torture, forced labour camps. And whenever the permanent crisis of capital has appeared like an open wound at the heart of the system, the bourgeoisie has sacrificed millions of proletarians in imperialist wars.

The bourgeoisie's attacks on the working class become more and more vicious wherever and whenever the crisis is at its most intense. Then the capitalists have no choice except to increase exploitation at the point of production, physically repress the resistance of the class, and if they can, march off to war.

In the backward regions of capitalism the permanent crisis has, throughout this epoch, been less amenable to the palliatives which have allowed the bourgeoisie in the advanced capitals to moderate its attack on the working class. In these regions the proletariat has suffered almost without any let-up the kind of exploitation and brutalisation which capital in the more industrialised countries dares to resort to only in moments of profound crisis.

The reality of working class existence in the Third World has refuted Lenin's idea that the national liberation movements would provide a framework for the establishment of "bourgeois democratic" regimes which would allow the working class to organise its own independent movement. Nowhere in this epoch can capital permit the working class to organise an independent movement, and least of all in the countries of the so-called "national democratic revolutions."

The economic weakness of the backward countries gives the bourgeoisie there no choice but to attempt to extract the maximum of surplus value from the working class (and with the low organic composition of capital in such regions this usually takes its "absolute" form). As soon as the "national liberation" forces come to power, their energies are transferred from the battlefield to the "battle for production". Almost invariably, the national liberation front extend the tendencies towards state capitalism which are already deeply entrenched in their economies.

Piece Work

The instigation of wide scale nationalisations has the dual purpose of shoring up a shaky national capital on the world market, and of serving as a basis for populist and "socialist" rhetoric with which the new regime may hope to persuade the workers to work themselves into the ground for "their" national economy. In fact, these regimes can offer the working class little more than ideological consolations of this kind. As the leader of FRELIMO cautioned the Mozambique working class shortly after FRELIMO came to power: "freedom means work and an end to laziness." From the factories of North Korea to the sugar plantations of Cuba the message is the same. The ideology of "building socialism" is used to mask the most ferocious, primitive forms of capitalist exploitation, forms pioneered decades ago in Stalinist Russia: piece work, obligatory overtime, militarisation of production, the complete integration of the "workers" organisations into the state.

As long as there are Third Worldists, liberals and leftists, there will be those who enthuse about the "heroic spirit of self-sacrifice" in the "socialist" countries of the Third World.

The admiration many bourgeois scribblers and politicians have for these regimes is essentially a class admiration for the ability for mystifications such as Maoism, Castroism, or Nyerere's "African Socialism" to help convince workers to identify with their exploiters. The bourgeoisie of the advanced countries is in a desperate need of some equivalent ideology today.

But bourgeois admirers of these regimes are never able to see that, despite these mystifications, the working class is not integrated anywhere, and that the class struggle continues unabated in the most "progressive" of Third World regimes; the recent rail strike in China, which had to be broken by special CCP scabs, is eloquent testimony to this. Always behind the socialist verbiage of "voluntary" sacrifice there lurks the ever-present threat of military-police repression: thus to his definition of freedom the FRELIMO boss added that there will be no room for strikes in the new social order in Mozambique.

Party Police

In the 19th century the bourgeois revolution almost invariably gave the workers the right to organise themselves. There is no more decisive proof of the impossibility of bourgeois revolution today than the political character of "national liberation" regimes. They are inevitably organised with the explicit purpose of preventing, and if necessary smashing by brute force, any signs of autonomous working class struggle. Most of them are single party police states which prescribe the right to strike. Their prisons are full of dissenters.

Many of them have a distinguished record of putting down working class uprisings in blood; we have mentioned Ho's valuable contribution to the smashing of the Saigon workers Commune; we should also recall Mao's dispatching of the Peoples Liberation Army to "restore order" after workers' strikes, semi-insurrections, and similar "ultra-left adventures" provoked by the so-called Cultural Revolution. Then we should remember the striking miners shot by Allende in Chile, or by the "progressive" military junta in Peru. The list is practically inexhaustible.

Peasants have also fared poorly under the tender auspices of these regimes. Even before the cities have fallen to them, the "national liberation armies" impose their rule on the peasants of the rural districts, terrorise them, tax them, mobilise them as cannon fodder. The panic-stricken flight of peasants in the face of the Vietcong advances in March 1975 long after the Americans had stopped bombing Vietcong controlled regions, shows how empty is the promise of the Third Worldists that "national liberation" brings true happiness to the peasants.

After the seizure of the government by the national liberation forces, peasants have continued to suffer. The peasants who revolted against Ho Chi Minh's collectivisations in 1956 were crushed by the regime; while in China, peasants who are mobilised for the construction of dams, bridges etc., are subjected to the most acute intensification of exploitation by the state. (The enforced destruction of the peasantry in the Third World recapitulates in a particularly violent fashion what has taken place more gradually in the metropolises).

Oppressed Minorities

Most of these national liberation regimes also continue to perpetrate oppression against national minorities. In independent black African regimes Asian minorities are oppressed. In Sudan, a leftist Arab regime oppresses the blacks. The Social Democratic Stalinist-Trotskyist government of Ceylon deprives the Tamils of all civil rights while ruthlessly exploiting them on the tea estates. And the Polish bourgeoisie — despite Lenin's prescriptions — continues to persecute those Jews whom the regime has not already kicked out.

Indeed, the programme of most national liberation fronts often carry the intention of replacing one form of national oppression with another. The Zionist programme implicitly or explicitly provided for the expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs, while the programme of the Palestinian national movement, by demanding a State where Muslims, Jews and Christians can live in harmony as 'religious' groups, indirectly announced its intention to suppress Israeli-Jewish nationality and replace it with a Palestinian Arab state. Similarly in Ireland, the programme of the IRA can only transform the Protestants into an oppressed national-religious minority.

It could not be otherwise. Since all national liberation programmes are capitalist, they cannot serve to eliminate the basis of national oppression, which is none other than capitalism itself.

But to return to the specific position of the workers under such regimes, we may say that the greatest assault that the national liberation fronts can mount on the working class is precisely the national liberation war itself. Because of global imperialist rivalries and the chronic nature of the historic crisis in the Third World, the bourgeoisie of these regions is continually pushed into imperialist squabbles with and adventures against their local rivals. Since 1914 there has hardly been one moment into which at least one part of the underdeveloped world has not been plunged into war.

The Building of National Capitalism

"National Liberation" wars are a necessity for the minor imperialisms of the Third World if they are to survive on the world market; competition is especially fierce in these areas because global domination by the advanced capitals forces the weaker capitals to try to scramble ahead of each other to carve out a niche in the world market. But for the working class, these wars bring even greater rates of exploitation, more explicit militarisation, and above all, slaughter and destruction on a huge scale.

Millions of workers have been killed in these wars this century, gained nothing except an exchange of one exploiter for another. As will all national wars, national liberation struggles have served to muzzle the class struggle, divide the ranks of the proletariat, and to impede the saturation of communist consciousness. And since the only overall movement of

capitalism in decay is towards world imperialist conflagrations on a bigger and bigger scale, local national struggles serve as testing grounds for future world conflicts which could put an end to all possibilities of socialism.

In the decadent epoch of capitalism, communists must assert unambiguously that *all* forms of nationalism are reactionary to the core. While few would deny the reactionary nature of the traditional nationalism of the big imperialism — Ku Klux Klan patriotism, Jingoism, Nazism, Great Russian chauvinism etc., — the so-called "nationalism of the oppressed" is no less pernicious for the working class.

It is with this "progressive" nationalism that the bourgeoisie of the former colonies attempts to integrate the working class and to persuade it to produce more and more surplus value for the fatherland; it is to the tune of national liberation and anti-imperialist rallying cries that the workers of these countries are mobilised for inter-imperialist wars.

The working class has one interest today: to unify itself on a world scale for the communist revolution. Any ideology that attempts to divide the working class along racial, sexual or national lines is counter-revolutionary, no matter how much its talks of socialism, liberation or revolution.

If capitalism in crisis succeeds in imposing its solution of world war on the working class it will undoubtedly march the working class off to a final round of barbarism under the banners of nationalism in one form or another. Nationalism thus appears today as the potential ideological vehicle for its obliteration.

The Construction of the World Human Community

There can be no more talk in the workers' movement of any right to national self-determination either before, during or after the victory of the proletarian revolution. The extension of the revolution means the speediest possible destruction of national frontiers, the establishment of the power of the workers' councils over wider and wider areas of the globe. The real creation of communist social relations can only take place on a world scale.

In the old workers' movement it was possible to have the confused idea that socialism was to some extent realisable behind national frontiers, that the world community could be created by a process of gradual fusion of socialist economies. But the experience of Russia has shown that not only is the construction of socialism difficult in one country, it is actually impossible.

As long as global capital exists, it will continue to dominate all the rhythms of production and consumption everywhere. No matter how far the workers in one country go toward the elimination of the forms of capitalist exploitation in one area, they continue to be exploited by world capital. Before communism can be definitely created, capitalism must be definitely destroyed everywhere; communism cannot be built 'within' capitalism.

Today, those who use the terms [national self-determination under socialism] are advocates of the capitalist counter-revolution. This applies to the Stalinists with their socialism in one country, to the Trotskyists with their fantasy of 'workers' states' happily co-existing on a near-eternal world market.

It also applies to libertarians and anarchists who favour "self-management in one country." The retention of the nation state means national frontiers, international exchange, international competition — in short, capital.

The construction of socialism/communism is nothing less than the construction of the *world human community*. It is the liberation of the productive forces from the fetters imposed by national divisions and commodity exchange; it is the world-wide socialisation of production and consumption; it is the proletariat's abolition of itself as an exploited class and the integration of all classes into a real social humanity that will appear for the first time.

COUNCILISM

Letter to Comrades.

Councilism is currently an organisational form much in vogue. Unfortunately – especially in light of the truly glorious pages it once wrote in working class history – it is (with exceptions like Portugal) a resurgence almost wholly confined to petite bourgeois intellectuals.

This is unfortunate for a number of reasons. Firstly, because there are still many veterans of the old councilist movement still alive, and active. Likewise there are some localised working class councils in a nascent state. Yet they are obscured by the clamour of the intellectuals. Secondly, because we are forced to conclude that these non-worker councilists – ranging from left-Bolsheviks to anarcho-communists – are liars: total falsifiers of history. Thirdly, because these petite bourgeoisie (who often style themselves “THE proletariat”) bear a vindictive hatred to not only revolutionary (and anarcho-) syndicalism – the other great working class movement – but also, if the fact can be squarely faced, to the working class itself. Who the first despise.

It is a basic tenet of this new councilism that syndicalism is reactionary in all its manifestations. They attempt to relegate syndicalism to the level of the AFL-CIO and TU. And where they are confronted by the record of the IWW and CNT, they falsify history. Either writing it out (like Jeremy Brecher in *Strike!*), or smearing the plate with innuendo and exaggerated side issues (like the International Communist Current).

The councilists contend that all working class risings in the modern era have been councilist in nature. This is true of a great many – perhaps even a slight majority – from Petrograd 1905 to Hungary 1956. Yet, what of the rising against Fascism by the Catalonia workers in 1936 . . . ? Which was a syndicalist rising and mass-collectivisation carried out by CNT unionised workers. What of the IWW-led 1919 General Strikes in Bute Montana and Toledo Ohio, and the underground IWW role in the 1919 Seattle General Strike (in all three the IWW helped form worker-soldier-sailor councils). . . ? Or of the earlier CNT risings, the 1932 CGT General Strike in Portugal, the 1922 IWW strike of 11,000 miners, in the Rand Goldfield, South Africa, and the 1917 wartime strike of 40,000 copper miners and 100,000 lumber workers led by the IWW. . . ? All these were smashed only by government troops. As was FORA in Argentina, the IWW in Chile, the NSF in Norway (which seized contro, of the city of Hammerfest in 1921), and many others.

Moreover there were the long years of resistance waged by the CNT which laid the ground-work for July 1936. There were the bitter IWW years which led to the 1919 upsurge, and to the 1933-34 mass strike-wave.

But what the non-worker councilists delight in is to pick out certain failures or failings and to then blow them all out of proportion, concluding: “this is syndicalism: counter-revolution!” Perhaps the best one example is their neurotic fixation on those few CNTers, including intellectual workers like Montseny, who – not representing the CNT and without any CNT union vote on the matter – entered the Popular Front war-government for a brief period. Or they complain that there were too many “bureaucrats” working at CNT HQ in Barcelona (the vast majority unionised young women working 18 hours a day doing the clearing-house clerical work for a 1,000,000-plus member union, including not only the collectivised industry and agriculture of Catalonia and elsewhere, but also a worker army in the field and an international news centre).

They obscure too, the fact that the IWW formed industrial and joint councils at regional levels, neighbourhood committees in towns they controlled, and the previously mentioned worker-soldier-sailor councils in 1919. Likewise the council-style collaboration of CNT and left-UGT unions in areas like the Asturias Mts.

Most of all, however, the non-worker councilists downgrade the working class (although often affecting a great love and care). Like the Bolsheviks, they see them capable of no more than crass “trade unionism”. They scream for the destruction of ALL unions . . . And is this to include the United Farm-workers in the USA, the Quebec CNTU, the Swedish SAC, the CNT underground in Spain, etc?

What these petit-bourgeoisie seek is BARBARISM. For the World to reduce to Ground Zero (so beloved of the Bolshevik Bukharin). They seek the destruction of all existing weapons of working class defence. Not only the reactionaries, but the independents as well. Only then will *their* councils prosper, feeding off the increased misery of the working class. Like Stalin, they feel: ‘First the Fascists, the US.’

Or as Murray Bookchin says: “I’d be delighted if all the unions died overnight. Then tomorrow morning maybe I could talk to workers again.”

Fellow workers – both councilists and syndicalists – the tasks ahead of us must, of course, be viewed in the light of very serious differences among us on matters of organisational method. But let us remember a few things, even so: Number 1 : we are both organising out of the rubble of a totally defeated Libertarian movement. There is hardly a fact so plain but that the libertarian working class movement was destroyed, utterly. Communists and Socialists have been defeated, but not destroyed. Yet our predecessors were, and in the worst way.

The weight of our task – that is, to rebuild the working class liberation movement (and in the teeth of Capitalist, Communist Party, and Fascist reaction) – is so heavy and so frightening that the great majority of our contacts and recruits flee from it as a plague, once they even glimpse the true Reality of our situation.

Number 2 : despite many organisational differences, we have nonetheless many areas of almost identical method. This is especially true at the grass-roots level of job locals, caucuses, cell units, affinity groups and block councils. Which is the level we are presently at. Differences arise in the precise method of federating these, but this is at the secondary level. And few of us are there.

That being the case, it is absolutely absurd for us to engage in fratricidal polemics and raiding forays. If we ever reach the federative level, we can then – if necessary – split all along the seams. But for the moment, not only fraternisation, but an actual Fighting Front of syndicalists and councilists must be forged. Based upon the primary tenet of working class Mutual Aid.

A combat team of revolutionary syndicalists and worker councilists. Of revolutionary anarchists and free socialists.

We stand together in the dirt of history. We can only climb out together.

Fraternally,

G. Jewell
(Secretary IWW Defence Local 2)
Toronto.

International Notes

GERMANY

“So long as her present social structure remains intact, Germany will seek the economic and political advantages which she believes to be her right and destiny. There is only one way to prevent a third resurgence of German power, and that is the way of anarchism. It is necessary to destroy the German State as such. The German people are made up of as many diverse elements as any other people, but the great majority of them (workers included) are sustained in their fanatical beliefs by the most centralised State in Europe; and the most fanatical of all their beliefs is their belief in the sovereignty of this State. It is difficult for anyone unfamiliar with German thought, or even with the ordinary run of German people, to realise the force and philosophic strength of this belief — a belief common to all parties, from the militarists on the right to the communists on the left. Germany, in all her menace and neurotic frenzy, is obsessed by this uncritical worship of the State, and she can only be immunised and rendered harmless by the systematic destruction of that concept. This can be done in stages, first by the restoration of independence to the provinces whose union made the German State possible, and then by the devolution with these separate provinces of all economic power to trade unions and other voluntary organisations. Other measures, such as the abolition of national banks and national currency, would follow as a matter of course. The principles of anarchism would be introduced into one country in Europe and the demonstration of their pacific and civilising influence would be so effective that other countries would quickly and voluntarily hasten to follow the same path.”

Herbert Read, *Anarchy & Order*.

The fanatical belief in the State that runs throughout German thought, not only from Right to Left but most virulent in the Centre, is the background to events in Germany. One should not make any mistake about the *gemutlich* German bourgeois with his stolid image; it is not considered good manners to talk about his Nazi past but the nostalgia for the days when “young people could not behave like this” is bound up with the Nazi era when State worship fulfilled its fantasies.

The young people of Germany are making a profound break with their past; all the more profound because the immediate past was the apotheosis of State worship. Naturally they are making mistakes and learning their way. Marxist ideology has brought State worship into even revolutionary thinking, and the student youth goes through a phase of Marxist phraseology even when breaking with every tenet of Marxist thought. One sees this in the use of the very term “Red Army Fraction” — which is a bow at the State principle though nothing could be less like an “Army” and a “Red” one at that, than undisciplined guerrillas. (It was the role of the Red Army — both in the Ukraine and in Spain — to break and fight self-disciplined guerrillas, never mind undisciplined ones).

The personality “un-cult” of Baader and Meinhof — whereby one man and one woman held in conditions of degrading torture and cut off from the world, are held to be responsible for the acts of rebellion of a whole generation — is part of the “neurotic frenzy” of the German bourgeoisie, and an indissoluble part of the “fanatical beliefs in the sovereignty of the State” — which is the other side of the “democratic economic miracle” whereby workers are driven hard by the supreme needs of the State to establish itself; and their work is supplemented by bringing in inferior races — sorry, “guest workers” now!

The all-persuasive nature of the totalitarian State leaves only two holes of escape — emigration or death. It was so under the Kaiser, under Hitler and now. In protest against

the inhuman and degrading conditions in German prisons, where the State is trying to turn rebels into vegetables before any form of trial, and into corpses afterwards, two of the young revolutionaries have hanged themselves in Fuhlsbittel Prison (Hamburg). In February of this year, in protest against the isolation of political activists, **Hans Rohmoser** and **Heinz-Detlef Krieger**, vindicated the dignity of human life by quitting it. They did not commit suicide because they were afraid of life. They committed suicide because they would not suffer the inhuman and degrading experiments of the prison authorities.

It is as certain as can be that their deaths will be avenged, and that those who do so will be called “terrorists” precisely by the people whose “uncritical worship of the State” makes them think that driving people to death in this way must be moral because it is legal and if the law says that a man or a woman must be turned into a vegetable, then this is natural. The press which is “obsessed” on the matter whips up hysteria about the “Baader-Meinhof gang” and says it is *they* who must be “immunised and rendered harmless . . . systematically destroyed” — but it is the State concept that needs to be immunised and destroyed.

PROTEST SUICIDES

On Monday 16th February 1976 Hans Rohmoser and Heinz-Detlef Krieger committed suicide in the Fuhlsbittel prison (Hamburg) in protest against the intolerable conditions in prison.

The reactionary press of Germany described the two comrades as “crazy drug addicts” and defined suicides by political prisoners as “blackmail” and “aggression” while the representatives of justice expressed deep regret and liberals plead for the humanisation of the prison system, forgetting that liberal politicians supported the SPD Schmidt’s hard policy against terrorists and the new repressive laws.

The following statement is the suicide note left by Krieger and Rohmoser before they took their lives:

With our protest action (self-chosen death by hanging) we wish to draw attention to the bad conditions in the Fuhlsbittel prison Block II. We protest against:

- 1) *The steps taken by the punishment executive administration to apply new punishment regulation retrospectively.*
- 2) *Against the conduct of some prison staff, who, unauthorised, inflict upon us inmates bullying and provocations, especially the following staff members: Petzolt, Van Raden, Neiss, Ordning, Borgemche, Dameran, Piel, Kramer, Rettinger, Ludecke as well as the entire Security groups.*
- 3) *Favouritism of prison directors and Security groups for informers.*
- 4) *Food rations below normal standards, hardly enough to nourish a dog.*
- 5) *The arbitrary sentencing inmates to house-punishment, esp. leave reductions.*
- 6) *The discarding of the equality principle in regard to the handling of applications.*

We demand:

- 1) *A say in the choice of prisoners’ representatives.*
- 2) *The dismissal of department leaders Ludecke and Rettinger.*
- 3) *The removal of above mentioned staff members.*
- 4) *Re-establishment of the former competence of the prison direction taken away after the Ackermann case.*
- 5) *Improved medical care.*
- 6) *Benefits for the unemployed.*
- 7) *Abolishment of letter censoring.*
- 8) *Improved care by psychologists and social workers.*
- 9) *T.V. sets for prisoners kept in isolation.*

We wish to bring to an end the manipulations of the reactionary powers in this house. Also: it is about time the inmates of this house awake from this apathy and don’t tolerate further deprivation of the rights granted to them in 1972.

*Heinz-Detlef Krieger
Hans Rohmoser.*

A group of West Berlin doctors made the following press statement:

“We have dealt for the past two years with conditions in prison and especially with the medical treatment for prisoners.

In accordance with our experiences as medical advisers for many prisoners we are able to confirm in many cases inefficiency of medical care. For example: a prisoner with two heart attacks in Tegel did not receive the necessary medical treatment required for such cases, although he suffered from severe angina. J. Backer who has been kept in solitary for the past five years suffers from a kidney complaint and bad circulation of the blood which is causing him to have hallucinations and difficulty in concentrating. Suicide attempts by these prisoners is also very likely. From a medical point of view, prolonged imprisonment is irresponsible." (3/2/76).

"Backer was examined by a specialist in April 1975 on account of increasing fits of depression and cramp. The specialist was of the opinion that he could not receive the proper medical treatment while in prison. The authorities refused to allow treatment to take place outside the prison. Backer's urgent appeal to the prisoners-petition-committee (14/11/75) was unsuccessful. Any patient inside prison feels threatened by:

- eye diagnosis replacing proper treatment
 - being treated as a malingerer,
 - lack of equipment for proper diagnosis,
 - temporary unobtainability of the prison doctor on duty,
- We therefore support the criticism and the demands made by Krieger and Rohrmoser."

RALF STEIN

Ralf Stein received a court notice as to final charges against him. Two of them, namely receiving and promoting theft, have been dropped but a new charge brought against him, is that of organising a plot against a police station. The trial date has been set for March 30th, April 4th, 5th, 7th and 9th in Cologne at the "Langdericht Appellhofplatz, 2nd Floor, Room 234."

The latest attacks on him by the prison authorities mean that he is permitted to write and receive only four letters per week, and the number of newspapers allowed to him have been reduced to three.

Prisoners on remand are generally entitled to write and receive any amount of mail. During the past two weeks eight incoming letters have been confiscated and withheld from him and four written to his friends have been returned to him, with the explanation that he had over-stepped the limit 14 days before the limitation had been ordered and made known to him.

Eleven witnesses are to appear at the trial, seven of them are police officers with three additional experts.



STOP PRESS: Ralf Stein sentenced to 18 months imprisonment, but as he had already served that sentence on remand he was released from custody. Jurgen Backer, however, remains "on remand" in Moabit Prison, West Berlin, after five years!

The following statement made by lawyers was published in "Tagesspiegel" and "Spandauer Volksblatt".

Jurgen H. Backer has today (4/2/76) spent five years in prison at Alt-Moabit in the remand section. The under-signed wish to draw attention to the following:

"That five years in prison on remand is unique in the Bundes Republic. The law givers had in mind that, as a rule, nobody should be kept on remand any longer than six months. Also imprisonment on remand is supposed to be easier than convicted imprisonment, since the man/woman awaiting trial must be regarded innocent until he/she is proven guilty. In the remand prison Moabit confinement is heavier than regular punishment on account of the amount of isolation involved, which for Jurgen H. Backer means twenty-four hours daily in solitary for five years. A psychic torture that violates the rules concerning imprisonment on remand as well as the fundamental constitutional rights and the human rights convention. A proposed transfer of comrade Backer to the regular prison of Tegel was refused. We appeal to the public to intervene."

Signed by a well-known number of psychologists, professors, writers, lawyers, film-makers, publishers and priests.

But what have prisoners to say in connection with the suicides of comrades Krieger and Rohrmoser?

"Anyone who believes that reforms will create "humane" conditions in jail will get nowhere. There is no such thing as a "humane jail." And those who believe a treatment, "defined as humane", as envisaged by the constitution can be brought about, will only help to occasion more suicides because that is precisely the purpose of jailing people, namely, to break them. We do not demand reforms (which only disguise the prison system), we demand their complete abolishment.

We want to be men and are going to be men or else the world will be destroyed in our endeavour to be men.

FREEDOM FOR ALL PRISONERS!!
PRISONERS COLLECTIVE - WEST BERLIN.

German Consulate Attacked

The West German Consulate in Edinburgh was badly damaged on the night of April 19th in solidarity with comrades Ralf Stein and Jurgen Backer. The cost of the damage done to the building was estimated at about £700.

When questioned by journalists as to the cause of the "outrage" the vice-consul Mr. Heinz-Wilhelm Grimsmann, said that Stein was under arrest in Cologne in connection with "alleged anarchist activities". He went on to say that a slogan "Free Ralf Stein" had been painted on the front of the consulate last November. He added: "We have been in co-operation with police about such activities." Asked if he had any idea

of who might be responsible, Herr Grimsmann said, "There are a few possibilities," In addition to the slogan referring to the two German comrades a further slogan - the latter "A" - could not be explained by consular officials but may have something to do with the group involved in the incident (newspaper report). Note the unconscious Nazi sympathies of the vice-consul. In theory, the people were not under arrest for "alleged anarchist activities". They were anarchists. No democratic country would hold people for alleged anarchist, socialist, democratic or other sympathies. They were (ostensibly) held for alleged criminal activities. But of course as the vice-consul knew, this was just an excuse for the real reason. Black Flag received a statement from the "Easter Enraged Faction 19th April Movement" claiming responsibility for the above action.

(Photo : German Vice-consulate, Edinburgh)

REVIEWS

Glencoe (75p); Culloden (55p); The Highland Clearances (75p); John Prebble (Penguin p/b); Mutiny (£6.90p), Secker & Warburg

The hills and glens of the Highlands that now hold only sheep and deer and the detritus of tourists, once provided for the bulk of Scotland's people. This feudal, fiercely militaristic tribal society gave Scotland a monarchy, threw back repeated invaders, from the Romans to the English, and in the end was destroyed by the greed of its leaders, the clan chiefs, for money and power. The hills are empty now, providing perhaps the last solitude in our industrial society, but if their story is known there can be no peace in the experience.

The crime of the Highlanders was to be independent and self-sufficient, to spurn imposed authority, and to rely on their skills against a hostile environment, to provide for their children (or *clann*, in the Gaelic). Those qualities around which an alternative establishment has now formed, were to be extirpated and the people who embodied them driven out or cut down. Over a hundred and fifty years the mountains witnessed a concerted attempt at genocide, what the Gaels called *Mi-run mor nan Gall*, the Lowlanders great hatred. The chiefs remain, in London and Edinburgh, but the people are gone. Their history stands and, despite the everyday super-barbarities of our age, there are lessons still for us.

One of the earliest attempts at genocide in modern history took place, by will of the Crown, in 1603. The Clan McGregor was ordered to be hunted down, destroyed like vermin without trial, their lands and possession forfeit to their killers. For two hundred years the clan was hounded on the face of the earth and, in the adult lifetime of Tom Paine, Edmund Burke and William Wilberforce, the penal acts against the clan were still on the statute book.

In February 1692 there took place a barbarous and treacherous murder which marked the beginning of the destruction of the Highlanders, the Massacre of Glencoe, when the Campbells slaughtered their hosts of 12 days, the MacDonalds. This infamous episode has often been portrayed as the culmination of a tribal feud, whereas the slaughter was ordered by the new king, William of Orange, on a clan who were politically and religiously opposed to the new order. A longstanding quarrel between the Campbells and the MacDonalds provided the vehicle for murder and in the snowy pre-dawn hours of February 13th the Campbells rose from their MacDonald beds in Glencoe to cut down their hosts. There had been killing between the two clans before, but never behind the cloak of friendship. If there is awe and melancholy in the glen today it is only what people have brought to it, knowing its history.

The '45 Rebellion has provided more romantic and inaccurate legend in Highland history than any other. In truth, with their bellies empty, their leaders at odds, their ground ill-chosen, the Highlanders allegiance to their Jacobite Prince, Charlie, was exploded on the moors of Culloden by the canons of the Royal Artillery. There followed months of savage and indiscriminate butchery on the Prince's supporters in the Highlands, the pacification of the hills by Butcher Cumberland, and the flight of the Prince to Skye and then France, from whence he came. The people suffered and were slaughtered in the Rebellion for a cause that was never theirs.

And 'once the chiefs lost their powers many of them lost any parental interest in their clansmen. During the next hundred years they continued the work of Cumberland's battalions.' John Prebble, a contemporary novelist and historian has documented the destruction of the Highlands in three books, *Glencoe*, *Culloden* and *The Highland Clearances*, the latter an account of how the people were driven from their land by fire and bayonet to make way for a new breed of sheep, the cheviot, which could live as basically as the Highlanders but which provided the chief with a greater profit. And while the chiefs became rich from meat and wool their people died of cholera and starvation or were forced to populate unknown lands. 'And when Gael left, wanting

clothes, money and food, the English were poorly protected though their bellies were full of meat.' The anonymous bard who wrote these bitter lines was responding to the economic logic that cleared the braes. And when the Duke of Sutherland summoned the male population of Golspie to volunteer to fight under his colours in the Crimean War a reply was eloquently provided: 'Since you have preferred sheep to men, let sheep defend you.'

In his latest book *Mutiny*, Prebble concludes his saga of the destruction of the Highland clans, examining the part played by the men of the glens in the 18th century British army. The Highlander, contrary to romantic legend, was not a willing conscript. He was often recruited by threat, sold by his chiefs, his pride lashed by the whip and by the lowlanders contempt of his dress and language. Prebble documents the revolt of the Highlanders in uniform, from the Black Watch mutiny at Finchley in 1743 to the revolt of starving Fencibles on Glasgow Green in 1804.

This is a subject which has been ignored by the historians who have preferred to see the Highland soldier as a fierce and romantic savage, assiduously pursuing the cause of Empire. In fact, the Gaelic people who, from three percent of the population, provided the Crown with 65 regiments, lamented, in song and poem, their forced role: "If I were as I used to be, amongst the hills, I would not mount guard as long as I lived, nor would I stand on parade nor for the rest of my life would I ever put on a red coat."

Prebble's books, tell the vivid history of the ordinary people, the Highlanders, who at the time, were the wretched of the earth. His writing brings fire to the belly and tears to the eyes. He is objective but never impartial and, like all fine journalists and historians, his radical statements are the facts.

Ron McKay.

THE VIOLENT BRINK, Antony Beevor, John Murray £3.50.

What would have happened if the Angry Brigade or First of May Group had been more effective? Taking his starting point from there, and treating the Angry Brigade with its built-in mistakes of procedure but a greater degree of organisational ability (pre-supposing a great deal of support and luck) Antony Beevor's novel takes us to the "brink" of revolution — transferring events of Paris 1968 to present-day London — but in fact leaves us there, just as Paris did, with a television broadcast to the nation by the Prime Minister. As a story it is gripping, and the treatment of the revolutionaries — most of them anarchist and closely allied with the International Revolutionary Solidarity Movement: First of May Group — is sympathetic, which is the most we can ask of a novelist, but it is doubtful that things could happen the way they do here; or at least if they did escalate in the manner described in the book. This in Antony Beevor's first novel, however, and if he continues along the lines he seems to be travelling we may well have a wrothy successor to the late Edward Hyams.

S.C.

The International Revolutionary Solidarity Movement : First of May Group, edited by Albert Meltzer, (88pp, documents, photographs and chronology) is now available from Cienfuegos Press at our new address "Over the Water", Sanday, Orkney, Scotland, (£1.35p + 15p p+p).

The Cienfuegos Press Review of Anarchist Literature, 30p + 10p p&p.

Peter Kropotkin : His Federalist Ideas, Camillo Berneri, 30p + 10p p&p.

The Wilhelmshaven Revolt, Icarus 45p post free.

New Publication

Ruedo Iberico have just brought out the first volume of the memoirs of our recently deceased comrade Cipriano Mera Sanz. The book, *Guerra, Exilio Y Carcel de un Anarcho-sindicalista*, is an absorbing story of militancy and will no doubt take its place alongside Peirats' C.N.T., Mintz's *Autogestion* . . . and Leval's *Collectives* . . . as vital sources of material for the period.

Cipriano Mera was born in Madrid on November 4, 1897. His father was a bricklayers' labourer and after five years picking and selling fruit in the market, he too went into the building trade where he became active in the Bricklayers Society of the UGT.

Mera's first contact with the anarchist movement came in 1920 and although he was active in an anarchist group within the Bricklayers Society and took part in various conspiracies against the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (the Sanjuanada attentat in particular) he didn't join the CNT until much later on. With Primo de Rivera gone Mera helped found the Madrid Construction section of the CNT, and later became the president. Not only did he play a prominent part in the organisation of the Confederal Defence Groups and, with Durruti, was one of the 1933 Revolutionary Committee (for which he was imprisoned), but he was also very active at rank and file level where he was elected to the Strike Committee in 1936 for which he was imprisoned (again) and where the Military rising of July 18 found him.

Cipriano Mera Sanz dedicated his life to the ideas of anarchism to the end of his days. By the early 60s he was one of the originators of the secret Confederal Defence Group, *Defence d'Interieur* (D.I.) and later helped found *Frente Libertario*. From the time of his release by the Francoist authorities after the war he went into exile in France where he continued to work at his trade of bricklayer until he was forced to retire due to ill health at the age of seventy-two. He died on October 24th last year.

Mera's death was a great loss to the international anarchist movement, but something remains behind to spur us on — the memory of his inspiring example and total commitment to anarchist activism.

S.C.

MORE IN SORROW by Arthur Moyses (Kropotkin Lighthouse, 60p).

Some "Freedom" readers, dissatisfied at the endless West End chit chat of "round the London galleries" by Arthur Moyses, and the bovine patronising of them as "little comrades", have been somewhat inadequately and inappropriately reassured that (as he perhaps over-emphasises) he is a "lumpen" proletarian. But inside the stolid earnestness of the sexogenarian a winsome hippy is crying to be let out.

These short stories were originally contributed to the school magazine of Winchester College and are somewhat cruelly reproduced by "Kropotkin Lighthouse", pacifist off-shoot of Freedom Press. Cruelly, because people should be allowed to grow old in dignity and not encouraged to parade their subconscious fantasies which reveal with unsuspected meanness their dream self.

Moyses possesses the Midas touch in reverse, and the gold turns into metal as he transmutes the London anarchist scene — such as he saw it — with the "round London" scene of art galleries and Better Books — into a world of small-time crooks. None of this happened outside his subconscious, though the casual Winchester College reader might be excused from not realising that. He drops name after name of the London Anarchist scene or thereabouts, of about ten years ago or so; people approaching his own age become his "uncles" and are credited kittenishly, with incredible absurdity or crookedness, while the narrator is portrayed as a wide-eyed Alice in Wonderland.

The oppression by aunts is not the only trace of "Saki" camp malice — but it is not in the lumpenproletariat that aunts possess such draconic powers as those of Bertie Wooster's.

D.W.

ITALIAN PRISONERS (cont. from last issue).

R. OGNIBENE is imprisoned at Volterra. He was sentenced to 28 years for killing a marshal. A prisoner has informed us, "Roberto Ognibene has had three consecutive attacks on his person. They have shot at him in the back, between the shoulders, hitting him four times before he could defend himself. They aimed at his temple, but the gun did not go off and people arrived. When he was taken to hospital a box of tools was placed under his back in the ambulance. When he arrived at San Vettore (prison) he was taken to No. 7 wing and left naked on his bed for four days before a doctor arrived and gave him ten pills."

D. PAGLIUSO is a spokesman for prisoners' claims and has made dozens of protests to the judiciary. He has paid for his outspokenness with transfers, solitary confinement, straight-jackets and beatings.

M. PANCIROLI was held in the isolation cell at Lecce Prison for 18 days completely naked, apart from underpants, without a mattress, chair, no fresh air, one meal per day, no cigarettes, mail, newspapers or visits.

G. PANIZZARI, sentenced to Penal Servitude, rebelled against his incarceration in the punishment block in Aversa Prison in November 1974 and managed to get a transfer to Viterbo where he took part in a prison revolt with a group of N.A.P. prisoners and Pietro, Sofia and Martino Zichitella.

R. PANIZZARI visited her husband on the eve of the revolt and for this alone she has been arrested and charged with offences ranging from attempted escape to three attempted murders, to intimidation of the public.

A. PAPALE On March 11 1975, for reasons which are as yet still unknown, there was an explosion in a flat in Via Consalvo in Naples. GIUSEPPE VITALIANO PRINCIPE died as a result of the explosion, and ALFREDO PAPALE was seriously injured. In spite of his grave condition PAPALE was interrogated for 14 hours before receiving medical treatment. As a result of this negligence he lost an eye. He has always declared that he was in the flat by chance and had nothing to do with the N.A.P. In spite of his poor state of health he has been kept under close arrest and held in strict isolation.

G. PIANTAMORE has been transferred from one prison to another in the South of Italy. He should be in Ucciardone, but even his lawyer cannot discover where he is being held!

C. PICCHIURA was arrested with PIETRO DESPOLI on September 4 1975 following an exchange of gunfire in which a policeman was killed. The authorities are trying to frame PICCHIURA for the death of the policeman NIEDDA, but the comrade has affirmed that Niedda was killed by Vice-Brigadier Dalla Pozza who panicked and fired wildly, mortally wounding his colleague.

F. PANZIERI of Avanguardia Comunista has been in prison for eight months accused of complicity in the murder of a fascist by the name of Mantekas. There is no evidence to support this charge, and it is known that the death of Mantekas was caused by another fascist.

G. PICCARDO, M. ROSSI, A. VIEL have been arrested and held in total isolation as a result of the escape from CURCIO. They are not allowed any contact with the outside world, including letters in and out, and newspapers.

D. PIFANO, a member of the *via dei Volsci* collective, has been imprisoned for nine months for his part in the occupation of a hospital reception room.

M.R. SANSICA is charged with organising the bombing of FACE STANDARD. He was arrested in Rome on October 10 and placed in solitary confinement at Ribibbia Prison. The authorities are attempting to pass him off as a lunatic and have shut him up in the asylum. He is refusing food and is dying of malnutrition.

Answers to Quiz

1. Taking a bath.
2. To the agricultural labourers on strike at the time.
3. The Workers League, founded in 1945 originally as an Oehlerite grouping, became council communist and its Workers News (1954/64) advocated workers' councils.
4. The Japanese Earthquake of 1st September 1923. It was alleged, unconvincingly but successfully, that the Anarchists had caused the earthquake by their blasphemy against the God Emperor, personification of the Divine State. 67,100 were killed in Tokyo and 24,000 in Yokohama in this anarchist outrage!
5. "The Ballad of Sacco and Vanzetti". It was the theme song of UCM Pictures film "Sacco & Vanzetti" based on the Italo-American anarchists; ostensibly at least, the reason it has not been heard here is because the film has not yet been released.
6. The alliance of reactionary powers — Austria, Prussia and Russia particularly — formed by Austrian Chancellor Count von Metternich after the defeat of Napoleon, to crush revolution and liberalism. It was opposed diplomatically by English statesmen (always concerned to preserve something they called "the balance of power" in Europe) — and they derisively dubbed it the "Unholy Alliance", which name has since been given to any combination of two parties or interests by a third party or interest which dislikes both.

Letters

Dear comrades,
I'm not disillusioned with the Anarchist Movement – although I think its only "Black Flag" which keeps my faith in anarchists. Seems to me there are too many trendy "Individualists" or ultra libertarians (so they think) wanting to criticise everything just for the sake of it or because, they aren't doing anything constructive themselves. I think R. Yves Breton's letter to Black Flag is typical of what I am trying to say as regards "20th Century Libertarians". And Black Flag's reply couldn't have been put better.

If things carry on like that, anarchism which is a straight-forward philosophy, will become like Christianity and Marxism with everybody arguing its original meaning. Sometimes I wish that resurrection was possible so we could ask these dead heroes what they really meant. Probably find out that Jesus was an Orthodox Jew and that Marx agreed with Bakunin, but didn't like to say as it would deflate his ego. When I discovered anarchism, it seemed a good enough label to adopt. Nobody I knew agreed with my opinions in that I was an individualist until I discovered there was a 100 year old philosophy which corresponded with my opinions, and so I was neither insane or an individualist. Then during my involvement with anarchists I discovered there were various suffixes and misleading titles. As I came to anarchism through the P.P.U. I'm ashamed to say that I once called myself an anarchist-pacifist – but after learning the hypocrisies of pacifists and that there was no such thing as violent-anarchists and that anarchists were also against war, it was no longer necessary to call myself an anarchist-pacifist as anarchist meant the same thing. The same with anarchist-individualist and even with syndicalist or unionist unless of course, you belong to a union which is revolutionary and anarchist but if you're a member of the T and G.W.U. there's not much point. Even if you do belong to such a union which only comprises of say 50 members there's still not much point. What would be more to the point is to say that you were a group of anarchists trying to form a union which is revolutionary and opposed to government. It's the same with the prefixes Evolutionary-anarchist and Revolutionary-anarchist. If a person believes the world and its systems to be oppressive and likened to a prison, how can they not have the desire to break free and therefore be revolutionary. If one says that he is evolutionary that is to say he is a stoic, or living in luxury so that it is not that important to have a revolution.

In the final analysis, you find the real authoritarians are the ones who accuse you of being authoritarian i.e. If you don't see things their way you must be authoritarian.

I had to laugh at Socialist Worker this week, there was for some obscure reason a photo of some blokes sticking a Catalan Flag over a Franco war memorial. The only thing that can be said in its favour is that its against the law – but other than that its purely nationalistic. On the bottom of the page is a map of Iberia with "Basque Country" written in capitals. I.S. seems to go a bundle on supporting nationalism whilst promoting Internationalism. I asked our Bolshevik paper boy why, in one issue on the Civil War, the anarchists didn't get a mention. His reply was, "we don't mention anarchists because of their inability to mobilise workers. He's trying to convert me!"

Best wishes,

Graham S.

EXCUSE ME
NOW SIR ...
WHICH ARE YOU?
AN EXTREME
MODERATE
OR A MODERATE
EXTREMIST ?



London N.4.

Dear Critics of AWA,

Keep up the good work. I'm sick and tired of sitting down listening to lectures from self-appointed know-it-alls. I always considered myself part of the silent majority until going to the recent day school which you commented on last month. I think its about time a few more anarchists started sticking up for traditional class war anarchism – "individualist, fascist, Marxist nut-case bomb-throwers..." that we are – without AWA claiming that they are the only ones who really know what the class struggle is all about.

I'm sure AWA will condemn me for not seeing their superiority. But then, I'm only a working class anarchist.

Fraternally,

Mark H.

Dear Black Flag,

I was relieved to see the letter describing the AWA day-school fiasco in the last issue. As someone else who was there I too was amazed to hear an AWA member deliver a paper on the British anarchist movement without once mentioning the Anarchist Black Cross (even critically!). This to me is as insulting as it is pointless. Why talk about the Anarchist movement at all if you are only going to mention one part of it? AWA members tried to excuse this at the time by saying they didn't have enough time to mention all the groups about... Personally I find this a bit much to swallow.

I was also a bit put off by the way one AWA salesman tried to show he knew more than Miguel Garcia about the anarchists participation in the Spanish Republican Government. Someone from Black Flag quoted Miguel as saying that Garcia Oliver & Co., didn't consult him or the other members of the CNT over their joining the Government. Immediately the much-read AWA comrade

said "Well Miguel is wrong..." and cited some congress or other at which the 'anarchist ministers' were supposed to have gained mass approval of their actions from the CNT membership. Can it be that Miguel hasn't read all the right books? Or is it that participating throughout the Spanish revolution leaves one less knowledgeable than AWA about these things? I understand Miguel has never been to university, perhaps this is why AWA knows more than him what his comrades and he said and did?

Day schools like this one of AWA's make me wonder if I'm in the same movement. I'm an anarchist. Could you tell me what AWA is?

Yours in spite of AWA,
R.M.

SERIOUS CONTROVERSY OR SILLY POLEMIC?

April 1976

Letter to Black Flag.

Do you know your arse from your elbow? You appeal to all anarchists for help with the publishing programme of the Cienfuegos Press, and you deserve help with this work from all anarchists. But at the same time you fill "Black Flag" with factious and factitious attacks on other anarchists – the ORA/AWA on one side and the individualists on the other, and the Freedom Press in the middle.

Your attack in the latter in Volume IV No. 7 (March 1976) was at least confined to the back page, but even so it was really ridiculous. What do you mean by saying in reply to P.R. that "Freedom", like Kropotkin, is guilty of "compromise on issues of the time"? What do you mean by printing without comment R.A.P.'s nonsense about "Freedom"? When was there "the story in 'Freedom' that it is the same paper that has been published since 1886"? When has there been "constant sniping in its columns at the johnny-come-lately 'Black Flag.'"? When have there been "snide attacks on Meltzer, Graham, Bonnano and others which now punctuate it from time to time"? In fact, when did "Freedom" ever print an attack on you except in self-defence, and then very seldom?

No one is asking you to stifle serious controversy, but I am asking you to think twice before spoiling your excellent work by printing silly polemic.

Nicolas Walter.

To reply in order of questions. (1) Yes. (2) Would it not be dishonest to refrain from criticisms considered merited merely to gain support? (3) In 1914, pacifism was persecuted and revolutionary: today the Establishment has, in peace time, adopted non-violent cant. For libertarians to label anarchists true to their principles "violent" or "terrorist" exceeds anything Kropotkin did at the time. (4) Comment was superfluous as we agreed with it. (5) That "Freedom" is the same, or substantially the same as the paper founded in 1886 is repeated therein many times; and always when recounting the past. (6) Not read "Through the Anarchist Press" lately? Or many other comments? (7) Not so. Most probably all "Flag" criticisms, other than letters, are in reply to "Freedom" contributors rather than initiated in these columns. (8) If we occasionally cane someone in front of the class, bear with us. Patience is at times sorely tried...it is more in healthy anger than a belief in the efficacy of the punishment.



Fresno (California) 1910 Frank Little soapboxing

"At the corner of Mariposa and 1st Street, from October 1910 to March 1911, the Industrial Workers of the World fought for the right of free speech in their efforts to organise Fresno's unskilled labour force. This was the first free speech fight in California and the first attempt to organise the valley's unskilled workers."
(From a plaque placed by the State Department of Parks & Recreation).