

BLACK FLAG

No.178

FOR ANARCHIST RESISTANCE

8-12-87

30p

BERLIN CALLING...

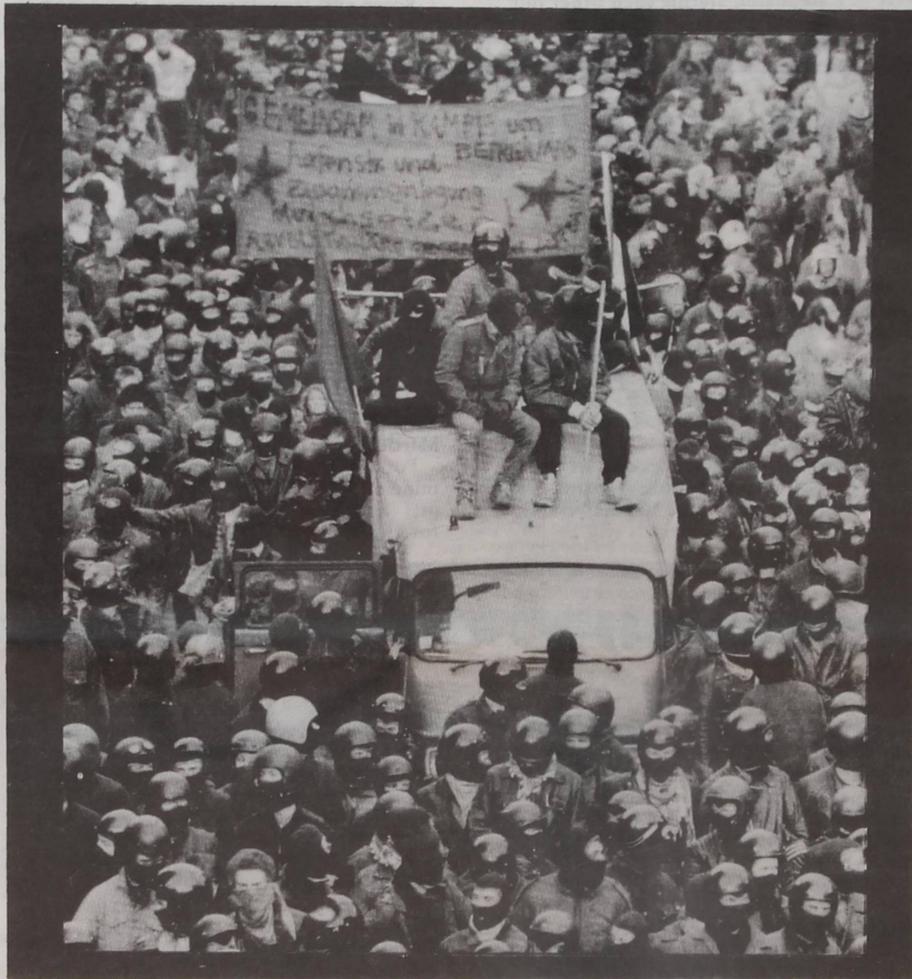
IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

The political weather seems to thicken up here in the Autumn. The Constitutional Court announced that cops can nick film/video material whenever they feel like it; before they could only nick it if they were in a bad mood. Several liberal journalists announced that they might write to their MP's about it. The decision revolved around an untransmitted bit of video from the Brokdorf anti-nuke demo and the Court said that if it might help the 'finding out of the truth' then the 'press freedom' bit of the Constitution didn't apply.

So, then reaction. Two days later there was a demo in Hamburg to threaten any politician who might be thinking of evicting the Hafenstrasse squats. A core of some 2000 with masks and helmets were escorted by 15,000 more liberal types. The cops held right back. So the demonstrators only did in the windows of one bank and the Central Court. Most restrained. But the point is they deliberately hunted out and eliminated (took film/chased off) every photographer and film crew. If their film is automatically available to the cops then they must also be removed. Very quick and logical, this place, sometimes. Groups of 10 masked people would take out every camera.

And then something that was also maybe a reaction. The whole Hafenstrasse thing is a bit of a worry for them as the area has just been hit with an embarrassing scandal in which the state president got caught ordering bugs to be put into the offices of the Greens and the SPD just before the last election (Greengate?). He denied everything for a few weeks, then went to Geneva, got into a bath in a hotel and either swallowed a million sleeping tablets or had them rammed down his throat. Doesn't matter either way I reckon.

Anyway coalitions rocked and so on,



and now they have to have another election and the last thing they need is a few thousand well organised squatters

turning the city centre into a battleground for three days or so. So, they gave the squatters an ultimatum: take down the

concrete/barbed wire defences and we'll talk, if not we'll evict. The squatters didn't like the idea of having to surrender before negotiations can start, so didn't. The ultimatum ran out the day of the demo mentioned above, and the size of the 'black block', and the fact that the cops had to hang back so much, could well have worried the Security Services

Two days later, at a very small demo of 200 people against the military airport extensions in Frankfurt, someone shouted out 'Marksmen, open fire!', and two cops were shot dead and nine others were injured. And the media opened up with a torrent about terrorism, in which the firing of guns and the wearing of masks become one and the same, and so that harder police actions against demos, where people try to hide their faces from the police video cameras, can be legitimated and prepared for.

Maybe it was done by some individual vanguardist, or just someone filled to the brim with hate after being thrown in the cop van and stomped on seven times or so, but the fact that it happened just now, when the 'black block' demos are looking so good on the telly makes me wonder in the way I wondered when KAL 007 got shot down two weeks before the parliament here voted on the Pershings.

Ah well, mustn't spend too much time on it; there is a terrific stock-market collapse to be watching at the same time these days. London down another 5% today. The International Monetary Fund meets here next year to pick up the pieces; we aim to distract and disturb them. But to participate you will have to get into Berlin a few weeks early as you can be sure that anyone looking like a *Black Flag* reader will be turned back at the borders in the fortnight prior to the party. Stay tuned for more details.

BERLIN OUT...

BRITISH JUSTICE TIMES SIX

Latest news on Martin Foran (see last *Black Flag*) is that he has received an additional 6 years for taking a prison orderly hostage while in Wandsworth prison. He is not now on hunger strike, due to the advice and concern of his wife and friends, although he is still campaigning for his release.

As reported in *Black Flag* Martin is the victim of a frame-up perpetrated by both the police and the courts. We have now received documents that establish beyond any doubt that he is innocent.

Martin was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in June 1978, following a series of burglaries in Birmingham in September 1977, committed by a group of black and white youths. The white youth involved in the robberies was described as 5 feet tall, slim built and between 18 and 20 years old. Martin Foran was 34 years old, tall and thickset. One of the witnesses failed to identify Martin as one of the people involved despite several identity parades, and another witness, on being shown pictures of Martin, stated that there was *no way* that Martin could have been one of the burglars.

Right from the moment of his arrest, Martin protested his innocence, and whilst in prison, went on hunger strike to help bring attention to his case. As a result of this, he was transferred to Leicester Prison, from which he escaped. After stating his case to the national newspapers, he gave himself up to the authorities. He was then transferred to Nottingham Prison where he conducted a 5½ week rooftop protest to highlight his unjust imprisonment. After this, Martin's case was discussed in the House of Commons but to no avail (Suprise, Suprise! Eds). He was then transferred to

Gartree and then Lincoln Prison, despite the governor's promise not to do so. He then continued his hunger strike and was eventually released in February 1984.

After his release, Martin and his family moved to Kingshurst, Birmingham where he set up a second-hand car dealer and scrap metal business. Martin continued to protest his innocence despite constant harassment from the police. He was accused of murdering a woman, even though he was in prison at the time of the murder, and was also constantly accused of stealing his own car.

On the 10th of September 1984, Martin

was arrested on two charges: one of robbery and another of conspiracy to rob. That day, 3 youths had robbed a publican at his pub in Birmingham of £1700. The publican described the 3 youths as:

- 1 - Half-caste, West Indian male, light complexion, age approx. 17, 5 feet 6 inches tall, dark wavy collar length hair, carrying a 6 inch knife.
- 2 - West Indian male, well built, taller than 1, wearing a balaclava, and carrying a stick.
- 3 - unseen, but in common with 1 and 2 had a Birmingham accent.

According to the police, Martin Foran was the second man. As well as being considerably taller, Martin is white and has a strong Irish accent. Man no. 1 was supposedly Andrew MacKenzie, who has a very dark complexion and is not half-caste. When the judge summed up the case he said, 'The light must have played some trick and he must have been very startled to describe MacKenzie like that. Obviously, people do make that sort of mistake about that sort of matter'. As far as we're concerned, it's a strange trick of the light that makes a white man black and a black man white!

Martin was arrested in the afternoon of the day of the robbery with £200 in his possession and 2 crowbars in his car. Whilst he was in custody, the police entered a sum of £131.55 in the custody book and so have stolen nearly £70 of Martin's money. This cash was part of a loan from a credit company, which Martin had secured a week before. This has been confirmed by the credit company. The 2 crowbars in his car were due to his occupation as a scrap metal dealer.

Martin has 15 witness statements confirming his alibi. The case for the prosecution is based on three witnesses. The evidence of one of the witnesses doesn't prove that Martin was involved, while the evidence of the other witnesses contain contradictions as to their knowledge of Martin. The result of the trial was a sentence totalling 8 years for Martin, 6 years for robbery and 2 years for conspiracy to rob. While he was in Winson Green Prison, Martin started to get an anal discharge of mucus and was sent for hospital treatment. When he was next visited by his wife, Valerie, and his son, Martin, the visit was restricted to his cell. The screws refused to say why, so the three of them barricaded themselves in the cell in the hope of finding out why.

Consequently, he was transferred to

Continued on page 8

BLACK FLAG - BLACK CROSS
BM HURRICANE, LONDON
WC1N 3XX

Published, typeset and layout
BLACK FLAG COLLECTIVE

Printed by Aldgate Press E1.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

12 months: £12 inland
£15 surface, £19 Air.
6 months: £6.50 inland
£8 surface, £10 Air.

PRISONERS: Free on request.

GIRO ACCOUNT No. BLACK
FLAG 58 552 4009

GIRO ACCOUNT No. ANARCHIST
BLACK CROSS 51 172 0009.

*For a social system based on mutual aid
and voluntary co-operation - against
State control and all forms of govern-
ment and economic oppression. To
establish a share in the general prosperity
for all - the breaking down of racial,
religious, national and sex barriers - and
to fight for the life of one world.*

BRITAIN'S KILLING FIELDS

The Government's policy to wind-down the Health Service, to polarise the class divisions in Education, and to eliminate low-cost rented accommodation, is a three pronged strategy that aims to eradicate the 'burden' of the poor on the Economy for the foreseeable future.

When workers can no longer work, because of the re-alignment of Capital and the advance of the third industrial revolution, then they are perceived as 'wastage' that cannot be costed for or provided for through state welfare. Those who are not self-supporting or who have not managed to swim with the tide are expected to survive on the edge. And for many there will be no hope left except for Workfare, or work-for-dole.

Cut-backs in Health are increasing to the extent that lack of treatment is bringing down Health standards dramatically. Witness the recent furore over the Birmingham hole-in-the-heart baby (and the other babies that have died because of staff shortages). Witness the proposed new charges for eye tests and dental examinations. Witness the long waiting lists in hospitals for operations, for dialysis machines, etc. Witness the shortage of nurses because of low pay. This discrimination against patients is discrimination against the poor - but more it is a deliberate policy to kill off the poor.

Since 1979 over 200 hospitals have been closed down, but private ones are on the increase. And there was that notorious statement by the head of one Health authority that in future priority should be given only to bread-winners. In other words it will depend on who you are, your earnings, etc if your life is worth saving. This is already the case, but its getting worse.

When Health is reduced to economics then only the well-paid will survive; the others will get pauper-class treatment, or none at all. Eventually the aim is to go over to the US system of health insurance.

And the health of society is intimately linked to how we live, to housing conditions etc. Many are being priced out of housing altogether. The Victorian values of profit, not need, is leading to the spread of disease, poverty, starvation and higher fatalities.

And with communities being broked up while family members search for jobs or somewhere to live, we see once-thriving working class areas being turned into wastelands. A new class of emigrants is being created. This is the 'new realism' that the Tories are creating and the Labour Party has accepted.

And when recession, brought about by social engineering, gets worse - that is the time, as history has shown, when national dictatorships are hailed as the only solution. We are entering that phase now. It will literally become a matter of life and death.

A new Luddism will become essential, with a resurgence in mutual aid to make our communities strong again to claim what is rightfully ours.

HOME NEWS

A DAY TO REMEMBER

Last Remembrance Day, November the 8th, British patriots marched through the centre of London throughout the day.

The 2 factions of the National Front were due to march past the Cenotaph at 2:30 pm, so Anti Fascist Action organised a march, planned to miss the fascists altogether to avoid the possibility of action being taken against the scum.

However, at the end of the anti-fascist march, about 200 people marched back to Trafalgar Square to have a go at the fascists and support the 24 hour picket of South Africa House, which had been attacked by fascists last Remembrance Day. Various other anarchists and anti-fascists had been waiting around the Cenotaph for the fascists to appear, unaware of events at Victoria.

The 2 factions of the National Front were at a standstill, staring each other out, after demanding separate marches, and

being unable to decide who would go first. After some time, the police decided to ban the marches. It was the first time that they hadn't marched for 15 years.

Groups of young thugs began making their way up to Trafalgar Square - the first sign of trouble was a gang of them running at the South African picket. They soon turned away after a few of them got a good thumping.

The police, anxious to get in on the act, tried hard to herd a group of anti-fascists into Charing Cross station. They didn't seem to notice when the same crowd re-appeared from one of the underground tunnels.

During a run up to Leicester Square, numbers of fascists were given good hidings - one anti-fascist suffered an injured fist - hurt as a fascist's tooth was dislodged.

Some anti-fascists received blows from the fascists. One anti-fascist had noxious

spray squirted in their face. The worst injury happened to a comrade who was bashed on the head with a lump of wood wielded by a fascist, and received a fractured skull. He and his friends had chased a single fascist who had been taunting them, only to be ambushed by a large gang of fascists.

On the whole, the fascists had a demoralising day - first for not being allowed to march, and then being chased around the city and being beaten up. For once the token effect of a march through the semi-deserted city had been turned into a direct attack on the fascist scum.

In York, the fascist march had been banned, so many fascists did not bother going into the city centre. The few people who did found a number of fascists roaming around. When they were dealt with, the police arrested a number of anti-fascists.

PIT CLOSURES UNCHALLENGED

More pit closures have been announced. And outside the pit communities themselves they are quietly being accepted. For the present the Government can argue that 'uneconomic' pits have to go, together with the communities. The needs of ordinary people outweigh those of the wealthy industrialists. If families and communities are broken up, if people lose their homes and are forced to tramp for casual work...this is of no consequence as this is what is intended.

And with the pending break-up of the Central Electricity Generating Board, the Department of Energy has stated that the separate electricity boards will be

encouraged to buy more coal from abroad, especially as a new coal port for this purpose is planned to be built on the Humber.

The first wave of this new round of pit closures includes Wheldale (near Castleford), Linby (Notts), Wooley and Redbrook (both near Barnsley) and Cadley Hill (Derbyshire). Also in South Wales the following are to close: Lady Windsor and Blaenant (both in Merthyr Vale) and Deep Navigation.

For this first wave alone over 6000 miners will lose their jobs. Some of these pits (and there are a further 10 earmarked for closure) are UDM controlled. But the

UDM are in no position to fight back: their honeymoon period with the bosses is over and now they are on their own.

The overtime ban, meanwhile, continues - but is hardly biting thanks to a compromise decision by the NUM executive. And the sudden decision by Arthur Scargill to resign and stand for re-election might well be a clever move to provide him with a fresh mandate, but it also succeeds in distracting from the main battle, which is quietly being lost.

Only a re-united miners' movement, sustained by industrial solidarity in related industries, can hope to reverse the situation.

ACTION AGAINST SLAVERY

On the weekend of October 31st and November 1st, over 100 unemployed delegates from 35 of the strongest unemployed and unwaged local, regional and national groups from all over Britain assembled in London to forge an alliance, initiating a major step forward in the post-war unemployed movement.

Throughout the '80's we have continued fighting to maintain and improve our living standards and secure our basic needs as a right (i.e. a decent income for all, homes meaningful jobs etc.) and to demand respect for our voice and full participation in the life and decisions of the community.

The major unemployed organisations—the Federation of Claimants Unions (established 1968), the National Union of Unemployed and Workers (est. 1981), the London and South-East Federation of Unwaged Groups (est. 1981), the Midlands Unwaged Federat-

ion (est. 1986) and the Lothian and Central Scotland Federation (est. 1987)—agreed to unite to co-ordinate and further their struggles, by establishing a national Congress of Unwaged Organisations, to be held annually. The first will be in Bradford, March 1988.

A Co-ordination Network was created, based upon regional and national secretariats.

To further our opposition to government plans to force us and the millions of our fellow unemployed on to Work For Dole schemes (JTS, YTS, Community Programme etc.), a national DAY OF ACTION AGAINST SLAVERY has been called for Monday December 14th. We are calling on all Trade Unionists to boycott these schemes, for those on them to take industrial action, and for all unwaged groups to publicise and take relevant action in their own areas.

SOURCE: Congress of Unemployed Organisations

Latest news on the Day of Action is that there will be several regional rallies as well as local ones. The regional ones are as follows:

EDINBURGH. 2pm at the Job Centre, St Andrews Square.

BIRMINGHAM. 12 noon outside the MSC headquarters, Metropolitan House, Fiveways.

LONDON. 2pm outside the MSC headquarters, 236 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1. The following is also the main contact network: Scotland - Lothian CU, 2 Cranston St, Edinburgh (tel 031-557 0718); Midlands - Claimants Fight Back, 448 Stratford Rd, Birmingham 11 (tel 021-771 0871); London & South East - mail to 42 Queens Square, London WC1 (or phone Tottenham CU on 01-801 5629).

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL

PRISONERS DISEASE IDENTIFIED

The regime of prison life apart from taking away liberty also seriously contributes to a deterioration of an inmates physical health with, of course, no compensation. Now it has been recognised within certain quarters of the medical profession that prison sensory deprivation has created a new illness similar to that contracted by astronauts on long space missions. Thus the illness has been coined 'space sickness' and is mainly caused by lack of essential vitamins and deprivation of sunlight. The illness, of course, is not new, merely its discovery by a profession unwilling to have named it before.

The illness has been 'discovered' in the field by Dr Michael Rose, a former consultant haematologist at St George's Hospital Medical School, London. Rose spent a spell in custody in Brixton prison where he witnessed direct this illness, which he has since written about in the *Lancet*.

His suspicions were aroused when he noticed deposits of calcium at the bottom of slopping-out buckets - a tell-tale sign

of bone disease, which in turn can contribute to mental breakdown.

Punishment for inmates is therefore doubled: incarceration combined with a deterioration of general health, with possible long-term effects.

LITERATURE FOR PRISONER

Bruce Childs, a prisoner in Parkhurst, wants to receive literature and correspondence. Already he has gotten into trouble and had his mail censored and held up for trying to get anarchist literature from the Black Cross as well as a copy of the final chapter of *Spycatcher*.

Despite the harassment - which he partly attributes to his friendship and support to prisoner Martin Foran (see separate article) - Bruce has asked to get a plug in *Black Flag*.

Please send literature/write to: Bruce Childs, F78958, HMP Parkhurst, Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5NX.

PRISON POPULATION TO DOUBLE

It has been announced that by the year 1995, because of the current prison expansion in Britain, there will be spaces for over 80,000 prisoners in England and Wales alone. Currently the figure is 42,000.

If all the prison spaces in 1995 are filled, and with the inevitable continuation in overcrowding, the result will be that Britain will become the top of the 'league table' for prisoners per general population, exceeding countries like Turkey which has a military regime.

PRISONERS UPDATE

Ronnie Lee, no. V02682, has been transferred to HM Prison, Romsey Rd, Winchester, Hants SO22 5DF.

Paul Bowman, no. T13922, was recently jailed for 4 months as a result of anti-fascist activities. Messages of support, etc to HMP Armley, Armley, Leeds 12.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

NEWS

FROM SPAIN

On the 28th of September, six anarchists accused of belonging to armed groups were handed out heavy prison sentences in Madrid. Alejandro Mata Camacho, 13 years; Jose Perez Navarro, 21 years; Matias Ripoll, 34 years; Jose Castillo Romero, 5 years; Juan Robles Diaz, 5 years; Maria Carmen Valiente Martin, 5 months. At the time of writing, Alain Drogou Cadec and Bernardo Torrejon Recto are being sentenced, no news yet. Camacho, Ripoll, Romero, Navarro and Drogou are CNT-AIT affiliates who were arrested in 1985, after having taken part in a number of bank expropriations to help fund the organisation. These raids were carried out 'in the spirit of Durruti's expropriations' - to use Camacho's own words - and care was taken not to injure either the public or the staff. Newspapers reported that during one raid, one of the bank clerks feeling faint, Camacho laid his gun on the counter and went to get her a glass of water. It is worth comparing the length of these sentences with the sentence handed out recently to two fascists found guilty of knifing Jorge Caballero—a CNT affiliate—to death in 1980: they were given 4 months each.

Meanwhile, the organisation itself, the CNT-AIT (Spanish anarchist labour union), held a national plenum in Saragossa on the 10th, 11th and 12th of October (plenum being a meeting of all the regional committees). Here it was decided to move the National Committee to Granada, where it may now be contacted at *Calle Molinos 64, Granada, Spain*. (It hasn't moved to Barcelona, as reported in *Black Flag 175*). Jose Luis Garcia Rua was re-elected as General Secretary, and Prisoners Aid was made the exclusive responsibility of the *Catalan Prisoners Aid Committee (Comite Pro-Presos CNT-AIT, Carrer Reina Cristina 12, 2-Esq., 08003, Barcelona, Spain)*.

We have it on good authority that certain organisations have been approached by the Renovados (membership now 1000) to form a new international. Any foolish enough to respond will become sworn enemies of their respective IWA sections. At a recent Renovados congress several delegates left in disgust because of the direction of the organisation - perhaps they will return to the genuine one? As for the Renovados renouncing anarchism, the reports were based on a 'private' press statement made by general secretary Jose March (now backtracking)

The squatted anarchist centre, Ateneo Alternatiu i Llibertari de Sants, in Carrer Cros, Barcelona, is still awaiting eviction. The occupiers aren't planning a serious resistance, but are using the place to the full. They have plastered the city with 'save Cros 10' and 'squat now' posters. Inside they've done the whole place up and are holding an exhibition on squatting, plus other activities.

It all began in April when a group of youths from Sants got together to help the assemblea Llibertaria to campaign for Maria Felip and other imprisoned Italian comrades. Then they met again and decided to create a 'self-managed struggle' centre as there's nothing but a few lefty controlled places in Sants. Just before the June election during the 'Don't vote' campaign Calle Cros 10 was squatted. Since then 'we've had to repair almost everything...our first aim was to get it open and functioning as an anarchist centre'.

They hope to have more videos, workshops, debates and a childrens party and start their own magazine. It is the only public squat in Catalonia despite the housing crisis. In theory you can get 2-5 years for squatting in Spain, though in practice you usually get a fine. The anarchists are calling for 1000's of homeless to squat 1000's of abandoned buildings and have got publicity, including in the inevitable right-wing press. Any material on squatting will be welcome. Send it quickly to: Calle Cros 10, Sants, Barcelona.

N.B. The eviction now seems to have been delayed.

Source: MT Barcelona

Dear Comrades,
The situation here is getting worse.

Vigilante death squads, that were once isolated in the countryside, have been formed in the city by respectable businessmen with the help of the military and Police and with the approval of the Government. This, they say, is to maintain peace and to uphold democracy (!).

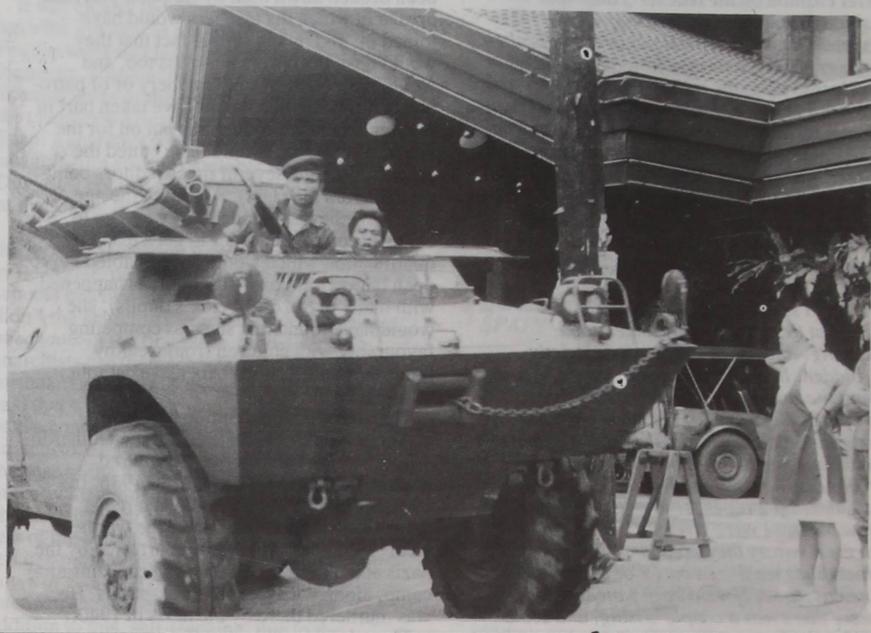
Two weeks ago, following the expose on US military attache Major Victor Raphael and his cohorts' direct involvement in the August 28th coup attempt, three US Airforce servicemen were gunned down outside Clark Air Base. They were scapegoats designed to divert our attention to make the people believe that the NPA (Communist guerrillas) did it, and to justify the possibility of direct US military involvement in the country.

Witch-hunts have also been, and are still being, carried out by the military and the Police. Last week a university housing refugees (who had fled from the countryside due to military and vigilante atrocities) was raided and the refugees tagged as Communist hitmen and sympathisers. So what if these people sympathise with the NPA? That is no ground for them to be arrested and subjected to torture.

Best wishes,
D (Philippines).

THE PHILIPPINES

TERROR REIGNS



GREEK FARCE ENDS IN TRAGEDY

One militant shot dead in Police siege... others raided... the press make wild allegations about 'terrorism'. The unreported facts are given below.

On the morning of 1st October, after a telephone call from an unknown person, two police cars arrived at a place where, according to a tip-off, some men tried to steal a Peugeot car.

The cops opened fire and gunfire was returned. A chase began while other police cars were directed to the area.

The Peugeot had been expropriated from the Chalandri area; it belonged to the Attica governor, Mr. Tsimboukis, and its driver Isidoros Vlaikidis (a security service officer) had parked it in front of his house.

The car driver had reported its theft and police cars were searching for the stolen car. When the mark tipped off the police about the car, the police were sure that this car was the right one and that is why they moved so fast.

Clearchos Smirnaios was then arrested in the area by a mark and beaten badly by both cops and 'indignant citizens'. He denied any connection with the incident and the police found no traces of the other two men.

Meanwhile, the other two men entered a flat and found three women and a man. The two hunted men calmed down the landlord and his family, telling them that they had nothing to be afraid of. The two anarchists simply wanted to hide. Prekas even said to Carnis that he could take his gun which had only one bullet for him - Prekas - to commit suicide if he failed to escape. Prekas urged Carnis to kill him if he thought that Prekas and his comrade would harm him or his family. The two anarchists told him that they would send some flowers if they managed to get away.

They then let the women go down to the ground floor where Mrs. Carnis discussed the situation with her father, who phoned the police. Mr. Carnis promised that he would get the men away in his car, but the moment he switched on the ignition, he pressed the alarm system button.

EKAM forces (special suppressive anti-terrorist armed forces), police officers and cops of every kind surrounded Carnis's house. Some cops made an effort to enter the house with the key that had been given to them by some marks but they got shot at from inside. One cop was slightly wounded and so the others hid immediately.

After a while, one of the two anarchists shouted to the police that he wanted to give himself up and he came out of the house with his hands up. He was Christophoros Marinos, 21 years old. He was then beaten up by the cops who then passed themselves off as 'indignant citizens'.

Inside the flat, Prekas was all by himself. Vlahakis, the police commissioner, phoned Prekas from a neighbours house and asked him to give himself up. Prekas' answer was 'Fuck off. Either you or I will die'.

The cop ordered his men to 'shoot him down in cold blood' in front of the tenants of the block of flats.

One young girl from another flat called up Prekas and tried to convince him to surrender. He explained to her that he was determined to fight until death rather than give himself up.

After that, he phoned up various people in order to say his last goodbyes. To his best friend he said that he had few bullets left and that he would keep the last one for himself. When the cops tried to convince him to surrender, he replied that he did not want to hear any defeatist talk, and that he did not want to be in the hands of the police again and be humiliated. His only request was: 'Fetch the reporters to see how the cops murder and how we die'.

After about an hour, Prekas came out of the flat with two guns in his hands and shouted to the cops: 'Come on you bastards, shoot me now'. The police fired on him with machine-guns, Prekas replied with one shot and ran out onto the balcony where he was shot down in a hail of bullets.

The police thugs rushed at Prekas and dragged him away. The cops and 'indignant citizens' cried out 'carry him slowly to the hospital so that he bleeds to death'. Prekas died on the way to the hospital.

From that moment, a pogrom of arrests was started against all the anarchists and anyone who was considered to be a friend of Prekas. First of all were Evaggelia Voyiatzi and Evaggelia Galani who were arrested in Saint Olga Hospital, where they had gone to see if Prekas was still alive. They were arrested as witnesses without any legal procedure and then beaten up when they refused to follow the police.

The police then made raids upon the comrades' houses or arrested them outside. The cops entered the anti-authoritarian club in A. Patisia and arrested everyone in the building without arrest warrants or courts summonses. About 100 people were arrested altogether. They were refused access to their lawyers and the police denied that they had anyone in custody despite the fact that they had said in a tv programme in the afternoon that they had made 17 arrests.

Finally, Nick Baroutas and his son, Costas, were arrested for possession of weapons because 39 cartridges from the father's legally possessed rifle, and one souvenir stiletto knife bought from a kiosk in Rhodes some years ago by Costas

were found in their possession.

On October 2 at midday, police arrested Gerasimos Boukouvalas, a well known anarchist. Also, with guns in their hands, four police officers immobilised tens of people in cafe Tsaf in the Exarchia area - among them a five year old boy who, terrified, saw a gun pointed in his face - while special police armed forces (MAT & EKAM) surrounded the whole area. Nobody moved and the 'terrorist' was arrested.

Although Boukouvalas was arrested in connection with the hide-out of 'Antikratiki Pali' (an armed group appearing once in 1985), which was discovered months ago, he was referred to the Public Prosecutor as a member of Michalis Prekas' group without any substantive report from the Security Service Office.

It seems that the police were preparing a plot against some people for some time. They wanted to 'weave' the story in detail so as to avoid another fiasco. In the aftermath of the killing of Prekas the police distorted the facts.

The police arrested E Voyiatzi and M Boukouvalas and alleged that they are members of 'Antikratiki Pali' or of the revolutionary group 'Christos Tsoutsoulis; Michalis Prekas and the unarrested and persecuted Balafas and Lesperoglou were similarly accused. The police leaked information - for instance that finger prints had been found in the house with the weapons in Sepolia.

The lawyers' protested that there was no documentation for Boukouvalas from the Security Service; these protests were ignored.

The accused were kept in the Security Service Offices until they came up before the Examiner on October 5. (Now our comrades are in Korydalos prison.)

Clearchos Smirnaios was charged with severe offences and in his statements to the police he declared that he belonged to the Union of Anarchists.

Christophoros Marinos was beaten up and tortured. He had also witnessed his comrade's execution.

A million people watched on TV Michalis' murder. Thousands of angry telephone calls were made to the newspapers.

The Police follow-up stories: to stress hide-outs, weapons, 'new evidence' and new arrests. The police also leaked information to the press, which ended up in headlines talking about 'break-downs', 'betrayals' and 'suspicious' connections of those arrested. The stories hinted at either Clearchos or Christophoros. The reports tried, in their confusion, to create the impression of suspects inclined to treachery, which contrasts sharply with the support for Clearchos and Christophoros, who are highly spoken of by those who know them well.

(The above report has been edited.)

Neus M., now in her early thirties, explains what it was like to go to a free school under Franco:

'We all had to wear a uniform, a sort of brown sack, and had to arrive on time; if we were as much as two minutes late we'd be locked out for the morning and reported to our parents. Before the morning prayer session there was an inspection of our hands and shoes, and our socks, which also had to be brown. The lessons were all indoors and discipline was strict: a girl would be hit for so much as looking up from her school book. If you were caught speaking out of turn they gave you a pin and you had to stick it into a velvet cushion on the teacher's desk (the cushion represented the heart of Baby Jesus)—that was a typical punishment for the younger girls. It was also forbidden to leave the class to go to the toilet.

When I was five, I wet myself in class. When the nun taking the class found out she made all the other girls stand round me and shout 'piss, piss' until I burst out crying... all the teachers were nuns, of course, and all the teaching was simply memorising facts and figures and words, except for science and maths, where we sometimes had to do experiments or calculations.

I didn't speak Spanish when I went to school at first, and hardly understood anything—the use of Catalan was strictly forbidden. In the middle of the day we had to count the Rosary, and there was an end-of-day prayer session too. We never went on excursions and never did any exercise: that would have involved either wearing trousers or showing our legs, both of which were considered improper for little girls. As we grew older we were given no sex education. On the contrary they used to quiz us about which films we'd seen on TV or in the local cinemas, to see if we'd been watching films where there was a couple kissing, and scold us if we had.

At the end of every term rewards were handed out to the 'best' girls, who usually turned out to be the handful of girls in the school with rich parents. The prizes were dolls for the older girls, and crayon sets for the younger... we used to weep with frustration if we didn't get one of those beautiful dolls...

Discipline? Well I mentioned a couple of examples. Blows were the most frequent, really hard blows to the head or thighs. The older girls were more self-conscious and the nuns knew it, taking this as a sign of vanity. Once when I was caught looking out of the window the nun in charge got the others to taunt me about my fatness (I was putting on weight at the time), once again, until I started crying. I remember one day when I was upset about something, I can't remember what, and anyway I sat down at my desk and wept and wept all the way through the lesson, and the nuns never paying a blind bit of attention... They hadn't a clue, the nuns: one day a girl went all hysterical, running around saying she'd seen God in her cup of breakfast coffee, and the nuns held her up as a good example for the others.

My mother finally took me away from the school when they forced me after I refused to drink some soup that was off... I was sick for two days... After leaving—I was nearly fourteen—I was terrified of boys for years. And I'm sure those early punishments, where they humiliated me in front of the others, have something to do with the fact that I feel nervous and unsure of myself in company, even today, as that I have hardly any confidence when the time comes for me to give my opinion... I don't remember a single thing they taught me, it's as if my brain wiped it all off when I left. I don't even remember the Lord's Prayer, which we had to recite every day off by heart for years... that's something, I suppose, not remembering the Lord's Prayer...

Neus went to school from 1965 to 1974, in the Horta district of Barcelona. Had she gone to school thirty years earlier, she would in all likelihood have attended the rationalist school at Horta, known as the Guinardo school, founded by the anarchist teacher Sol de la Vida (real name Josep Torres Tribo).

When she arrived at the school no one would have commented on her being late, on the contrary, if she was found hurrying to a lesson, she would have been told to relax, to take it easy. She would have worn her normal day clothes, would have been able to speak in the language of her choice, and wouldn't have been punished for anything. No rewards would have been handed out—thus avoiding envy and possessiveness—and the drawer on her desk would have been without a cover, to emphasise that everything in the school was held in common.

Instead of parrot-learning in stuffy classrooms she would have spent many of her lessons in the nearby allotment, in the open air, and would have gone on a school excursion once a week. She wouldn't have been taught anything religious, but could have been encouraged to question and to argue, both with the teachers and with her fellow-pupils. In the science and social science classes, she would have been encouraged to make her own

observations on what she saw, and experienced. 'Subjects like maths and languages would have been taught with her practical needs in mind. She would have got used to sexual company from an early age, and any sexual discrimination would have been discouraged. She would also have received some sex education.

In general she would have been allowed to make as much noise as she saw fit, especially when working on group projects with her friends (which would have been often). She would have had a say both in the running of classroom and school affairs, and distance between her and her teachers would have been broken down both by frequent playtime breaks in which the teachers would have joined in, and by the simple fact that they would have been working-class too, and would have been free of snobbery or of patronising attitudes. She would have taken part in regular dramatic productions put on for the whole district, and would have edited the school magazine several times (editors being elected from the class). And if, at the age of fourteen, she had decided to try and go to college (possibly in order to get a teaching qualification which would have enabled her to open her own rationalist school, as happened with many of Sol de la Vida's pupils), she would have found that she was competing favourably with children from wealthy families who'd gone to expensive catholic schools...

The above is a description based on accounts by ex-pupils of life at the Guinardo school, which had just over a hundred students and lasted from 1932 to 1936. In 1936 Sol de la Vida joined the anarchist collectives in Catalonia. After the war he went to France, where he was arrested by the nazis and placed in Mauthausen concentration camp, along with four of his ex-pupils. He was murdered there by the nazis in 1940.

The school would not differ in many respects from that of most of the other rationalist schools that emerged between 1901 and 1939, mainly in Catalonia, but also in the Valencian area, the Asturias, Menorca and parts of Andalusia. By 1936 there were over 300 such schools in Spain and during the revolution an attempt was made (largely successful) to extend anarchist teaching throughout all schools in the 'Republican' area. In 1939, of course, Franco's troops entered Barcelona and the story of libertarian education on a large scale in Spain came to an end.

Today, despite various private, co-operative and some state schools in the area having pinched some of the libertarian methods (possibly without realising it), the vast majority of people here remain unaware that this phenomenon ever existed. When people are told of it, their eyes widen in disbelief at the thought of something evidently more progressive than most modern European schools having existed only fifty years ago in their own country, under their very noses as it were...

The history of the rationalist schools—the name they were given partly in order to avoid the polemic word 'anarchist'—can be divided into three periods: (i) 1901-1919, the 'ad-hoc' stage; (ii) 1919-1936, which saw the growth of the anarcho-syndicalist union, the CNT, which supported and encouraged the new schools, tripling their numbers; (iii) 1936-39, the years of the Spanish revolution, when the United New Schools Council (CENU) was formed in order to consolidate anarchist education on a really large scale.

On September 9 1901, Francesc Ferrer i Guardia opened his *Escuela Moderna* in Bailen Street, Barcelona, with five teachers and just 58 pupils. Ferrer was an anarchist who maintained close personal contact with the Spanish workers' movement, and who reserved a special hatred for priests and religions of any and all denominations. He gave advice and support to other teachers who wished to set up similar schools, and commissioned Anselmo Lorenzo to translate progressive school-books from the French (including the Anarchist fable *The Adventures of Nono* by Jean Grave, which became the favourite story book of three generations of Spanish working-class children), while publishing the first Spanish-language rationalist text books—mostly written by Cels Gomis—and a school bulletin which included articles from teachers and pupils alike on everything from first aid for school children, the absurdity of the money system through to the way in which religion had hidden the scientific reality of life for the people (one of Ferrer's pet themes).

Like all pioneers, Ferrer has been criticised—not without reason—for various faults: his implicit acceptance of the school-as-institution, his equally implicit faith in the scientific and rational (which meant—in his case—a corresponding lack of interest in the imaginary and fantastic), his dogmatic attitude to some social issues (eg alcohol and make-up)—which was reflected in the writings of many of his students—and his clinging to certain reactionary teaching concepts, like the keeping of notes on children's academic performance.

Many of his successors in the Spanish movement tried to avoid what they considered to be the negative aspects of his work, as we'll see below, but none of them could ignore the positive side of his *Escuela Moderna*: he set the pace for a whole revolution in teaching, introducing co-education, sex education, child-centred teaching, collectivist organisation in the classroom, the 'socratic method' (teaching through asking questions rather than answering them) and the frequent use of outdoor teaching and weekly excursions to factories, research centres, the mountains, France...

His ideas—aired regularly in the bulletin—were to have an enormous influence. He believed in the natural capacity of children to educate themselves, but stressed that once they had done that, and had become what he called 'authentic individuals' they should emerge from school into the world with a combative attitude, desirous to spread this sense of autonomy to other people, to encourage a more rational, more egalitarian organisation of society into a collective of free individuals... In practical terms this meant working with the growing anarchist workers' movement: exactly what all the later rationalist teachers—and many of their pupils—did...

It is no surprise then, that by as early as 1904, despite—and partly because of perhaps—constant attacks on him and his school in the bourgeois press, his pupils were cheered by workers in the street when they were seen riding off on one of their frequent excursions (in this particular case, to a flour factory). He allowed his pupils to cheer back, just as in general he allowed them to play, to enjoy themselves as much as possible. That was another of his innovations: he believed that children must never get bored, that boredom was one of the worst obstacles to real learning...

The authorities tried to get Ferrer in 1906, arresting him when his friend Mateu Morral tried to shoot the King of Spain, but he—Ferrer—was released two years later. When he had reopened his school in 1908, it wasn't long until the week-long series of riots (known as the 'Tragic Week') broke out in Barcelona, a popular display of discontent which frightened the Spanish authorities, who—in their hysteria—put the blame on Ferrer and his 'atheistic' teaching. He was mocked-tried and then executed, on Montjuich, despite local and international protest at the sentencing.

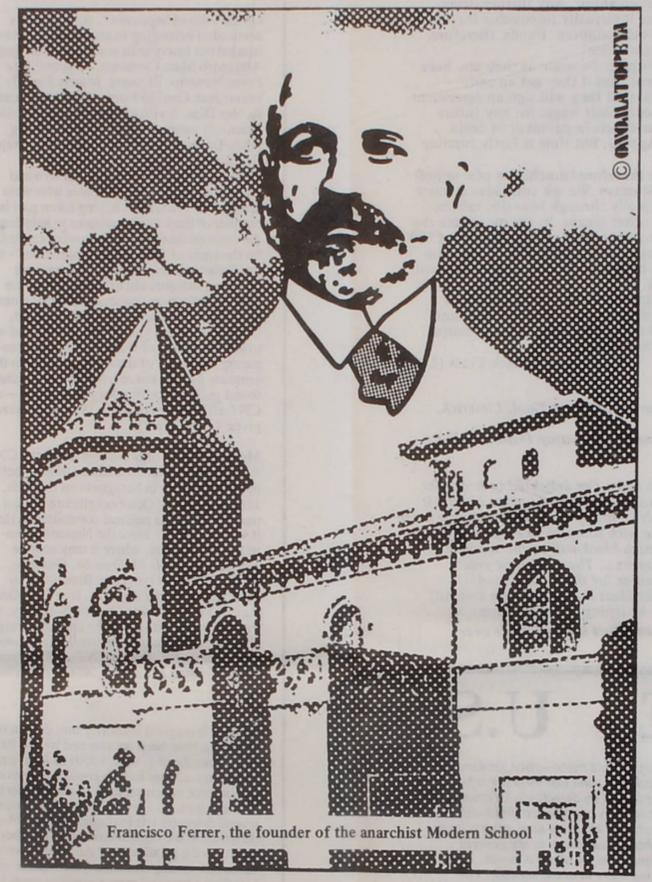
Meanwhile, Ferrer's Modern School had inspired other teachers in Catalonia to start similar ventures. Unlike Ferrer, most of these teachers were working-class (many of them coming out of textile factories where they had been working an eleven hour day since the age of 12 or 13) and had little or no funds at their disposal. They opened schools in the industrial suburbs, and paid for them by charging the lowest possible fees to parents (though in practice just under 50% of pupils at these schools were admitted free). Many of these teachers were self-taught and had no bits of paper to indicate they were qualified.

At this time, anarchist culture was spreading among a working-class that set great store by education, the acquirement of knowledge, and the exchange of informed opinion. Magazines like *Tramontana* and *La Revista Blanca* brought many working-class people into contact with libertarian ideas, and acted as forums for discussion and debate. It is against this background that people like Alban Rossell, a machine thresher from Montgat who started up schools in Montgat, Sabadell, Valencia, Menorca and Montevideo (Uruguay), who worked as a correspondent for the anarchist newspaper *La Protesta* in Sabadell, and who pioneered the use of theatre in teaching, came on the scene... He first heard of Ferrer's ideas through *Tramontana* magazine when he was fifteen (he was becoming involved in the growing anarcho-syndicalist movement at the same time) and was just 24 when he opened the Modern School of Montgat, with advice from Ferrer himself in 1904.

As there isn't enough space to give an exhaustive list of the other rationalist teachers from this period, Rossell can serve as a typical example: working-class, largely self-taught, modelled much of his teaching on Ferrer's methods, maintaining close—'organic' contact with the syndicalist movement, introducing original ideas (in Rossell's case, the use of theatre) and contributing regularly to the anarchist press of the time (a press which often out-sold the equivalent bourgeois publications), and often improvising when faced with the inevitable problems of lack of funds, hostile official reaction, hostile local reaction etc. (For example, when Rossell's first school was closed down for not meeting the local hygiene regulations, he moved the whole lot, three teachers and sixty pupils, straight into the village dance hall and gave the classes there...)

In 1919, the CNT held its Madrid Congress, and from this year on the rationalist school movement received support from the organisation on a national level,

THE LEARNING OF FREEDOM EDUCATION IN SPAIN



Francisco Ferrer, the founder of the anarchist Modern School

(although the autonomy of a school was respected and regional differences—affecting the curriculums of the schools—were allowed for). The minutes of the 1919 debate on rationalist schools show tremendous importance attached to education by the anarcho-syndicalists. A motion was passed recommending a yearly donation of one peseta per affiliate to his or her local federation school committee, though in practice many syndicates later paid more. It was agreed that the minimum wage for a rationalist teacher should be equivalent to that of a skilled worker, and that financing should be as decentralised as possible; the Catalan rationalist teachers stressed at this conference that if they were expected to open new schools they would have to more than meet the legal norms for hygiene and ventilation, and gave as the minimum figure for opening a new school 15,000 pesetas plus another 15,000 for a year's maintenance (an average factory wage in Catalonia at the time was around 4 pesetas a day).

The rationalist teachers did not, in the words on one of them, Rafel Casola, 'want to be laughed at by the reactionaries'; they were, of course, constantly under attack from the bourgeois press and the conventional educationalists, and they answered back with results not propagandist: higher teacher standards, better equipment, and dozens of progressive innovations.

A typical example of the CNT-financed rationalist school in this period was the Textile Syndicate School, opened by Joan Puig i Elias in Barcelona in the early thirties. Clean, cheerful, with white washed walls, an allotment and a small farmyard attached, the

school had two hundred pupils aged between 4 and 14, divided into six 'sections'. Abel Paz went to this school, and recalls that the quality of the teaching materials was higher than average when compared to the state schools of the time.

During the summer the pupils went to a farmhouse in central Catalonia, also belonging to the CNT textile syndicate (70,000 members of which made regular contributions to the school). In the evenings there were adult education classes (French, accountancy, drawing...). And of course, all the typical Ferrerist 'touches' were there: co-education, no punishments or rewards, pupils' assembly, frequent excursions, alternative of physical with intellectual work, textbooks by Cels Gomis, weekly discussions on a wide range of political and social issues, school theatre etc. A commission of the older pupils did the accounting for the school and met with the textile syndicate's school committee to discuss details of financing...

Over this same period (1919-1936) a more informal type of anarchist school appeared all over Spain: the Athenium Schools. Their declared aim was to help people 'to live and to develop themselves and individuals', and they consciously rejected any concept of academic 'levels', concentrating instead on free discussion, group work and scientific investigation. Pupils were encouraged to go out and find for themselves the books or material they needed (in libraries and natural history museums), to analyse social problems, and—a radical idea for the time—to learn about their own sexuality on a basis of mutual respect between the sexes.

As their name suggests, these schools were

attached to the numerous Libertarian Atheniums (workers' meeting-places paid for out of subscriptions). Administration of each school was the work of a 'surplus' teacher and was rotated every six months (e.g. elected from among the other teachers) and who had to abide by the decisions of the other teachers, as determined at weekly meetings. In addition monthly meetings were held with both pupils and parents, to decide on the running of the school. Costs were shared between the Libertarian Atheniums and the parents (who paid 4 and 5 pesetas a month per child).

In July 1936, with the advent of the (anarchist) revolution in Catalonia, Valencia, Aragon and parts of Andalusia, libertarian education entered a new phase. Later that month an organisation called the CENU (Council of the Unified New Schools) was set up jointly by the CNT and UGT (the UGT was the socialist union, a minority in Catalonia and Valencia), and the slogan launched: 'Not a child without schooling by October the 1st!' (Worth remembering that despite the efforts of the anarchists before the revolution, between thirty to forty per cent of children in Catalonia still weren't able to attend a school).

The CENU was not a coalition of the previously existing rationalist schools, which continued independently (many of them with improved, expropriated premises), but an attempt in introducing progressive and atheist teaching into all existing state schools in the area. This meant a difference of opinion on the CENU committee between the anarchists and the socialists: the former wished, in the main, to make the state schools fully autonomous, with funding from decentralised municipal councils, while the socialists wished them to be kept as state schools, with a national curriculum, centralised funding, and so on. The influence of the anarcho-syndicalists on the CENU committee waxed and waned according to the political circumstances (so that by the end of 1937, when the communists were gaining the upper-hand—through force and diplomatic subterfuge—in Catalonia, libertarian influence in the schools gradually decreased).

But at the beginning an impressive number of anarchist measures were introduced: no punishment or reward systems, co-education, sex education, free group formation, special small-scale schools for mentally handicapped and backward children run by trained personnel, high standards in teaching materials (ink, paper equipment etc: the standards set were in fact higher than those required by the Spanish state for schools today, no 'parrot learning', no limit set to length—or shortness!—of lessons, full autonomy of the teachers to decide what to teach and when in order to stimulate interest, open air classes, a five hour day with plenty of provision made for game sessions, no imposition of ideas or ideology on the part of the teachers, no militaristic, religious, or state propaganda to be used in the classroom (this last measure despite the fact that there was a war raging only a few hundred kilometres away), and bilingual teaching.

To get an idea of a typical CENU school, the *Grupa Escolar* in the (working-class) district of Santa Coloma de Gramenet can serve as an example. With 100 pupils divided into nursery school, infant school, primary school and 'preparatory classes', each housed in separate buildings with enough classrooms to allow maximum of 230 pupils per class. There were workshops for metalwork, carpentry, modelling, electrics, sewing and clothes design, a school canteen, a cinema, a music room/library, and a small dispensary. Outside there were play-gardens for small children, and a garden with dovecoats which the children were 'in charge of'. Manual work was alternated with intellectual work, and much of the teaching was in the form of autonomous projects carried on by the children as they saw fit (the only obligation being they had to show the teachers the results of their investigations/projects each week and discuss them with them). When food rationing came along, the students had to learn how to distribute the food equitably amongst themselves...

It goes without saying that each and every one of the rationalist and CENU schools was closed down by Franco in 1939, many of the records destroyed, and the teachers shot or forced into exile.

Today, as mentioned before, only a minority in Spain are aware that the rationalist schools ever existed. Occasionally reminders pop up in the press, or in films like 'The Year Of The Lights' (*El Año de Las Luces*) made in 1986. In this film a fourteen year old boy whose parents were killed in the Civil War is sent to a Francoist school out in the country. The year is 1940, and he finds that all the teachers and the school itself are full of ignorance, superstition, repression and sloganeering: nothing, in short, to satisfy his curiosity, to interest him.

Eventually he makes friends with the caretaker, an oldish man who the teachers regard as a stupid servant, but who turns out to know

more than all of them put together, and is soon recommending all kinds of books to the boy, including Montaigne ('you may find this a little difficult, it's in the old French...') and Rousseau. The old man chats and discusses with the boy, stimulates his imagination, starts him thinking... Then one day, the boy finds a box-shrine in the caretaker's shed. 'That's funny,' he says, '(I wouldn't have thought you were very religious somehow.' The old man smiles and opens the box-shrine to reveal a photograph of Durruti: 'Saint Buenaventura, lad,' he says, 'a relic of the old days, when we knew a thing or two.'

It was clearly the film-maker's intention to have the old man as a symbol of the pre-Franco working class: informed, full of life, inquiring, stimulating, cultured (in the broad Spanish sense of the word)... such has been the clampdown over forty years regarding Spain's anarchist past however, that when I saw this film and the caretaker mentioned Durruti, I could hear the people on either side of me asking their friends: 'Who's that?'

To get back to the rationalist schools... at the recent Libertarian Education Conference in Leicester, people at the workshop on these schools had two main objections to them: didn't the anarchists ever question the concept of schools in the first place. And didn't the anarchists use their schools as propaganda forums? In answer to the first, it should be said that while Ferrer wouldn't have questioned the concept of schools as such, later anarchists certainly did. This can be seen in the case of the widespread Athenium Centres (already mentioned) in which the inevitable characteristics of schools (exclusion from the rest of the community, fixed timetables, teacher-pupil distance etc) were either toned down or removed completely, turning these into instructive meeting-places... In addition to this, self-teaching, due to the circumstances most working-class people found themselves in, was always an important element in anarchist education: most of the rationalist teachers were themselves autodidacts. When the CENU was formed, it made provision for parents who wished to teach their children at home or who wished to form co-operative groups of their own.

In answer to the second objection, it should be pointed out that within libertarian teaching circles there was a considerable debate as to whether or not children's thinking should be influenced in an anarchist direction. Ferrer believed that it should be, at least to the extent that children did not overlook important social issues (in the famous *Boletín de la Escuela Moderna*, his pupils wrote—in a markedly anarchist style—about make-up, free love, the police, politicians—'who the people in their ignorance vote for', according to one nine year old girl—the workers, the state, the potentials of revolutionary syndicalism, and so on).

This gave a definite 'anarchist base' to Ferrer's classes, which, in addition, were run on collectivist lines, but it is hard to see how other educationalists could object to this, as they themselves would have had a 'religious base'... However, some other anarchist teachers—notably the ones in Galicia and Asturias who worked with Ricardo Mella and Eleuterio Quintanilla—wished to removed even this anarchist base, and have absolutely no ideological influence over their pupils whatsoever. Known as the 'neutralists', these teachers wanted their students to feel free to 'choose their religion, or ir-religion or social doctrine, freely, as they saw fit' in Mella's own words.

THE SITUATION TODAY

By 1977—a year after Franco's death—the CNT had over a quarter of a million affiliates, most of them organised into an education syndicate, open to teachers and school students alike. In that year they set up a chain of infant schools around Catalonia, as a first step in re-creating a libertarian alternative to State education. Over the next two years, however the CNT saw a dramatic decrease of membership, due to various factors (Scala frame-up, police harassment, the 'split', a growing disillusion with radical politics around Spain in certain sectors etc.) and this chain of schools became impossible to maintain.

Later, in 1980, the education syndicate collaborated with the graphic arts syndicate in setting up a centre for adult evening classes (basic mechanics, drawing, photography, etc) but this project faded out after a few months. Pedro Sanchez, of the education syndicate, explains how he sees the situation today, 1987:

The situation today is very different from the pre-war situation. To begin with, nearly all working-class children go to state schools now, and all the CNT teachers work in state schools. Another problem is that there are now very strict legal standards to meet, in terms of specific exams that have to be passed, and so on. Parents are less likely to take a risk with a school or an educational approach that they know nothing about, sticking with what's 'safe'. This wasn't the case in the past, when such standards didn't

exist, and parents were more concerned about the type of education... And the biggest problem of all is of course the simple fact that there aren't enough of us, numerically, to exercise any real influence, be it in the state schools we work in, or when planning some kind of independent school. We do organise strikes for better pay and conditions (and he shows a call to strike action protesting against working on public holidays which met with success in Barcelona schools in December 1976), and we still make sure that our ideas on assemblyism, on respect for the child's autonomy etc, are heard.

The CNT—AIT teachers represent the largest organised group of libertarian teachers in the country, and keep in touch with other like-minded groups. As well as the two (private) schools in Spain run on libertarian lines, one in Extremadura and the other in Barcelona, they are interested in setting up an international federation of libertarian teachers, both to exchange ideas and give mutual support.

Their address is: *Federació d'Ensenyament CNT-AIT c/Unio 16, 1-1, Barcelona 08001, Catalonia SPAIN*

CONCLUSIONS

As Pedro Sanchez has pointed out, the new curriculum of today make the idea of re-starting a rationalist school chain very difficult for practical reasons: universal state education, artificial but legally imposed 'standards', the lack of a strong, large anarcho-syndicalist union, and so forth...

But the question remains: even if the means were available to start up such a project today, would it be relevant, or desirable? The obvious answer might be that yes, of course it is, and the proof is that over the years progressive education systems around Europe and America have ended up filching 'rationalist' methods: child-centred teaching, group work, environmental studies, open-air rationalist teaching, the recreational use of theatre, 'school projects', and a reluctance to use punishment and reward are all becoming increasingly common features in schools today, albeit in watered-down versions, doubtless because the teaching establishment has finally twigged that kids study better under these conditions. Some schools are just beginning to introduce wholistic teaching (e.g. linking up the individual sciences, teaching them as one coherent whole) although in general most are still far behind Ferrer's 1901 project in this respect. No schools within state systems anywhere seem to have introduced any of these measures properly, but the fact they are toying with them shows just how far ahead of their time the pre-war rationalist centres were.

That's the obvious answer. But it leaves out one vital detail: all these humane innovations, all these ways of taking learning back to the child and away from the 'expert', all these attempts to apply common-sense to the child's view of the world, all were developed as natural consequences of the basic premise behind all anarchist teachers: the autonomous individual, the open mind, the independent thinker, the insatiably curious, the desire for all humankind to be these very things...

The role of the rationalist schools in all this was to allow the process to begin in childhood, to create pockets of freedom in the middle of injustice and control, small centres from which the future generations would emerge wishing all to share in what they'd learned, wishing to see no more ignorance, no more inequality, no more lives passed in poverty and silence...

The problem is that today both the concept of the free individual and that of the free collective have all but faded from memory, not only in Spain but all over Western Europe. The consumer economy—in which 90% of the population now participate, voluntarily by the looks of it—has given an illusion of prosperity or possible prosperity. Virtually universal literacy combined with half a dozen new means of communication (TV, video, satellite etc) have given an illusion of knowledge. And the consumer society—with its aggressive emphasis on variety in food, clothing, 'lifestyle' etc—has given most people the idea that a 'real individual' is either a self-seeking bastard or someone who wears strange clothes. These illusions and misunderstandings prevent people from seeing how manipulated, sheep-like and pig-ignorant they—we—really are, as well as preventing them from wanting the real thing: real freedom, real knowledge, real personal autonomy (not Coca-Cola).

In a society like this, it's difficult to see how libertarian education could appeal to people on a large scale. If a rationalist school was set up today, what would it produce? Cynical consumers? Bitter auto-didacts? Successful go-getters? What other role is there for people who have been brought up—or have taught themselves—to think and act autonomously?

Hands up if you know the answer...

MT Barcelona 1987

ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS

SENSORY DEPRIVATION - U.S. STYLE

A new sensory deprivation control unit for women prisoners at the Federal prison, Lexington, Kentucky, was opened at the end of last year. It was stated that the control unit was designed for those women prisoners with 'political associations' and who might be aided by 'external sources'.

In fact the only prisoners to be held there so far are two Puerto Rican political prisoners, Alejandrina Torres and Susan Rosenberg.

The control unit is similar in many ways to the notorious Marion Control Unit for men in Illinois. That unit, and now the Lexington one, were designed specifically to break political prisoners. The Lexington unit is the Stammheim or H Block of the United States. They represent the ultimate in what is known as 'white' or 'silent' torture.

The conditions which the inmates of the Lexington unit face include:

- complete isolation
- only visits from immediate family
- strip searches every time they leave their cells for recreation in the yard
- denial of access to any of the educational and recreational programs available to other prisoners
- all family visitors and attorneys to be photographed before visiting
- constant video surveillance and surveillance by guards who have been instructed not to converse with inmates
- correspondence limited to 15 people only who must be investigated and approved
- constant changes in the rules - which do not appear in print anywhere - in order to disorientate the inmates even further.

And all this in spite of denials by the US government that there are political prisoners in the USA!

And with women prisoners the repression is increased with sexual abuse inside the prison. For example, before Alejandrina and Susan were transferred to the control unit from their prison at Tuscon, Arizona, they were subjected to forcible rectal and vaginal searches by a male medical technician while being held down by male guards. This is nothing short of rape, with the same violent and degrading purpose as rape of any other kind.

Reports about the nature of the control unit led to a demonstration by 250 in March of this year. Pictures of women political prisoners inside US jails were held up, as were also banners. The demonstrators marched to the prison fence, lined with prison guards and FBI agents, and shouted 'The human rights problem in the world today is right here in the USA!'

And when further sensory deprivation measures were announced, hundreds of protest letters ended up forcing a concession, namely the lifting of the 15 person approved correspondence list.

Write to: Warden RL Mathews, FCI Lexington, PO Box 2000, Lexington, Kentucky 40512, USA; and send copies to Norman Carlson, Director of the Bureau of Prisons, 320 First St NW, Washington, DC, USA.

SOURCE: Reality Now

LETTER FROM THE BEEB

Thank you for your letter of 2 November 1987. We have in fact received a letter direct from Martin Foran concerning his conviction and have already replied to him.

Thank you again for taking the trouble to write to us.

Yours sincerely,
John Smithson, Producer of Rough Justice

A copy of the above letter was sent to us by the Martin Foran Support Group, to which the letter was addressed.

WE MUST SEE TO OUR OWN

Prior to their arrest, conviction (for armed robbery and shooting a 'have-a-go' reckless cop) and sentencing to life imprisonment in 1974, Noel and Marie Murray were active Black Cross militants who helped comrades and organised fund-raising for prisoners. Thirteen years later they are still in prison but have determinely kept in touch with Black Cross activities. They would have been released some years ago if it had not been for the political climate peculiar to Ireland. Their imprisonment continues without reason except to prevent Marie from having a child. We owe it to them to see that all efforts are made to fight for early release. Inaction is the same as complicity.

In a recent letter to a member of the Black Flag collective Noel Murray pointed out that the average period served by a lifer in Ireland is eight years and eight months. As anarchists Noel and Marie do not support republicanism, yet it is republican violence that has contributed to the decision to keep them inside this long.

Noel is currently trying to get a transfer to a training unit, next to Mountjoy prison in Dublin where he can brush up on a trade in preparation to leaving prison. Marie is currently at Mountjoy where she is studying for an English M.A. They are both trying for a release date but are getting nowhere.

Their other major campaign battle has been for conjugal rights. Marie is now 39 years old and wants desperately to have a child. Unfortunately their long campaign has been marred by the inaction of greedy lawyers who have done little but overcharge them for their 'services'. It was ten years ago since Noel and Marie first consulted a solicitor about getting conjugal rights. For some years little was done. The solicitor, Stanley Sieve, demanded huge sums of money before he would

even proceed. In 1983 Sieve sold his business to Malacco and Kileen, who promptly demanded £30,000 before they would proceed further. The Murrays therefore engaged the services of another solicitor, Padraic Ferry of Leonard Silke and Co, but Malacco and Kileen refused to hand over the relevant paperwork until they had been paid £7000 in arrears. Their new solicitor then got the previous work independently audited and got it re-costed at £1500, which was paid out of support funds.



Several legal experts agreed to offer their services for free or on receipt of any court costs awarded to the Murrays. Among them was the distinguished Nobel Peace Prize winner Sean McBride. The case finally went ahead in May 1985 and it was lost on the grounds that if conjugal rights were to be granted then a precedent would be set and other prisoners would have to be granted them too.

An appeal is now being sought, but is being blocked by bureaucratic inefficiency.

The Murray's solicitor has gained little, financially, from his representations, hardly covering costs, but if the Appeal is to proceed then costs will have to be found for Counsel. If no funds can be found then it is possible that the Appeal might not go ahead. Any further delay may make it virtually impossible for Marie to bear children. Funds, therefore, are of the essence.

The Murrays, deperate as they are, have even agreed that if they get an early release date set they will sign an agreement to hand over their wages for any future job to the courts in payment of costs for the Appeal. But time is fastly running out.

We are therefore launching a new appeal for the Murrays. We ask comrades to raise money locally through benefits, raffles, and any other means. In the meantime the Black Cross (London) is sending over £100 to the main fund. Any further contributions can be sent to us and we will forward those on.

It is vital that funds are raised. Noel and Marie are comrades second to none. We must see to our own. Without mutual aid we are nothing.

Anarchist Black Cross (London)

Noel Murray, Limerick Gaol, Limerick, Ireland.

Marie Murray, Mountjoy Prison, Dublin, Ireland.

Noel also adds: *I'm delighted to hear that DAM is to become a real union. I know it will involve a lot of hard work but now is the ideal time with so much unemployment and so much blackmail of the workers by employers... There must be great opportunities for the propagation of syndicalist ideas but nobody (in Ireland) seems to be trying. I'm very happy to see that an effort is being made over there.*

LETTER FROM THE U.S.

Greetings, comrades and friends,

I've been meaning to write to you but what with legal twists and turns, and letters to reply to, well—it just got put off too long. Besides, I owe you a 'thank-you' for the support you've already given me.



To bring you up to date on my situation: At long last the trial date for the attempted escape charge is set for the 4th of November of this year. At first I had not wanted to go to trial, my abhorrence of the state's judiciary apparatus is great. Going to trial in a way gives them justification for being. However, many letters told me to fight, regardless of the method—and since the only avenue I have at

the moment is the courts... I changed my mind. In addition, I began to see a way to thwart the system. Here in the US there is a rarely used law, allowing a jury to negate a statute in any individual case should they decide that that statute should not apply (in that individual case). Thus, if presented properly, my defence would not be one of supplication, but rather that I have done no wrong. That trying to escape the duress and horror of a prison existence is not only right, but is a natural instinct for which any human or any other lifeform should not be held accountable for the act by itself. The trial also presents itself in a public setting whereby I can incorporate the philosophy of Anarchy and Liberty into my defence, thus having an opportunity to spread the word and give a reply to what is normally accepted as anarchy (which always seems to have 'and chaos' following). Well, I make no predictions. I do promise to give a good showing of myself and what I stand for, and the jury will ultimately do what they feel they have to do. I make no complaints; I know the risks of flaunting the state's laws and regulations.

I am very grateful for Black Flag's interest. I should be returning to Florence prison in mid December if convicted, and earlier if not. As soon as I return there I will renew my efforts to obtain a transfer to England. So far, the British Consul in Los Angeles has written to me twice, the letters have been friendly and helpful. (Makes a change! Eds.) They are at this time verifying my birth credentials and claim to British citizenship. When that investigation is completed the Vice-Consul will see about visiting me in Florence. Then we'll discuss what the British government is willing to do to help with the transfer. I can tell in advance that Arizona will not accept my pleas for a transfer in good faith. They will fight tooth and nail to keep me here in the state prison. This state is governed by petty and vindictive individuals who are jealous of their power and won't give up anything to a convict, who they see as a nothing, not

deserving of consideration in any manner. So, on my return to the prison, I will again put out a call for letter support and hope that we can at least bury officials in paperwork sufficient to want them to just throw me out of the country to stop the waves of public ire.

As for myself, here at the jail, I've been

attacked by guards twice—once for demanding medical care, and last week for refusing to be interviewed by detectives. Of course, the attendant solitary confinement followed, which is where I'm sitting now, after a brief respite when I was placed in the general prison population for about a month. I should be returning there in about six days. Hohum... Otherwise, no serious problems—just the usual asinine idiocy of coppers being their own proven selves.

I want to say a few words concerning Martin Foran (C-51796, HM Prison, Parkurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX), an Irish anarchist prisoner who you are probably aware of. In recent correspondence with Martin, he told me of his medical situation, surgery, colostomy, beating and corrective surgery. Ten years ago I went through similar surgery, though a bit more drastic, but essentially similar to Martin's as we both have to wear ostomy appliances for defecation. I guarantee you that the surgery is very painful; that a beating which required corrective surgery must have been pure torture out of a horror chamber. Since I've experienced my share of outrage from mistreatment in prison, especially with an ostomy, I know how much Martin is suffering. This is wrong, unnecessary and should not be allowed to go on. I'm taking a personal stake in this matter and ask you to give this man full support. He should not be made to suffer over and above the usual treatment just because he's had a medical problem (which wouldn't be a problem if he were treated humanely).

A warning: Anyone corresponding with E.X. Boozhie (The author of The Outlaw's Bible—the best damn book on US judicial proceedings!), at the mobile, Alabama address, should stop writing to that address immediately as US federal agents have seized the PO box and Boozhie is currently being held on (as yet) unknown charges at a federal holding jail. More info forthcoming as I receive it.

I bid you good tidings and trust you will find good news soon. We all need it. If there is any manner in which I may contribute to the cause of true freedom, I am available in whatever way I can manage. Best wishes and solidarity.

Avi Naftel (938926), 225 W. Madison St., Phoenix, Arizona 85003, USA.

THE PEOPLES MOVEMENT IN GUATEMALA

In spite of manipulation and murder, the Guatemalan labour movement seems to be striding towards class autonomy. In recent months, worker's pugnacity has shown itself mainly in a series of struggles waged by landless peasants, state employees and teachers. In April, the capital's central park was the scene of several protest demonstrations. On April 22nd, the peasants from the south coast were on the march; on April 23rd it was the turn of the San Marcos peasants, the Santa Rosa peasants and street traders on the 27th; and the INDE (National Electrification Institute) on the 30th. Similarly, on April 27th came the strike by workers at the Finance Ministry: these were joined by the primary and middle school teachers, employees of the National Institute of Anthropology and History; postal, telegraph and hospital workers. Then again, the INACOP (National Institute of Cooperatives) were then already on strike, demanding, among other things the dismissal of their respective managers, both of whom were accused of corruption and overbearing attitudes. In April too, there was a seizure of installations at the PINDU plant (clothing plant) where the employees refused to negotiate a collective agreement with the union. According to the worker's complaints, the bosses of the firm allegedly include the dictator Mejia Victores and a South American transnational company.

The Mayday Demonstration

All of these struggles, hatching since last year, were echoed and taken up at a combative May Day demonstration and at the workers' rallies in the departments of Izabal, Jutiapa and Quetzaltenango. In the capital the march called by the CUSG (Guatemalan Trade Union Unity Confederation), the CGTG (Guatemalan General Workers' Co-ordination), the FESEBS (Banking and Insurance Staff Union Federation) and the UNSITRAGUA (Guatemalan Workers' Union) set off from District 5 and arrived in the main square at 10 am., parading along seventh avenue without mishap. Although the local press spoke of 'a dismal failure by the labour organisations', the event is noteworthy for it was the first independent legal demonstration on May Day since May 1st 1980 when leaders of the CUC (Peasant Unity Committee) and the CNUS (National Trade Union Unity Committee)—both of which all but evaporated in the years thereafter—were abducted while the march was in progress.

The demonstration, which drew about 10,000 people was marked by combative slogans like: 'the massacre victims will be avenged', 'People, listen to us, join the struggle' and radical ones such as 'we don't want rallies, we want revolution'. Mingling with the union delegations there was a delegation from the GAM (Mutual Aid Group) made up primarily of Indians from the western Altiplano carrying pictures of disappeared relatives around their necks.

Despite moderate but continuous supervision, the army was not to be seen, other than the brand new Mercedes and BMW jeeps and motor-cycles of the National Police, recent gifts to the Guatemalan government from West Germany. For fear of reprisals, some people wore masks but few self defence measures were taken. There was only a cord between the public and the demonstrators to prevent provocateurs infiltrating. The parade was followed by an allegorical float showing a huge black boot with the initials IMF on it, crushing underfoot a map of Latin America, while town-criers in black garb satirized the powerful employers' organisation, the CACIF (Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial and Financial Institutions Co-ordinating Committee).

In the square, the speakers stressed the justice of the state employee's strike, denounced the rising cost of living and attacked the economic packaging of the Vinicio Cerezo government. All were agreed in emphasising that so far only the bosses had derived any benefit from the opening up of democracy, and not the workers; yet democracy means not electing a government but the people having the right to decide how the country should be run. Otherwise, one has only another government to serve the same old, exploiting minority. Another point stressed by all was that there was a need to press on with the process of uniting the unions begun in February this year when the CUSG, UNSITRAGUA, FESEBS and STINDE

entered into an alliance agreement to work towards a single confederation. There were lots of references to the previous attempt at unity (the CNUS), brutally repressed by a whole generation of union leaders being exiled or 'disappearing'.

The last speaker was Nineth Garcia, leader of the GAM. In a moving address, she warned that a just society cannot be built upon the blood of so many victims: the disappeared must reappear. 'We are here', she said, 'because we are the very people who have been massacred. Each of us has lost a loved one. Where are they? Where are they?'

Urban Struggles

At present, state employees seem to be the vanguard of a new wave of labour struggles. In mid May only the INDE dispute had been settled while the postal strike continued as did



the finance strike and the teachers' dispute. Apparently, the main demand is for a 100 Quetzal increase that the Vinicio Cerezo government says it cannot pay. The finance workers' (who earn 275 Quetzals, or about 105 dollars) answer to that is that MP's pay can be cut accordingly (MPs get 5350 Quetzals) as well as the 600,000 Quetzals set aside by Congress, according to press reports, for 'ceremonial' expenses. Strikers are also calling for better pay for other workers in the state and private sector, an overhaul of minimum wage levels, a price-control decree with penalties for usury and an end to plans to privatise the INDE and no rise in electricity charges. The movement also demands lawful recognition for incipient unions (whose dealings are deliberately hampered so as to prevent union organising) and that state bodies should be obliged to recognise and negotiate with labour organisations.

In the face of these demands, the government has threatened to militarise the public services and go in for mass sackings, has held back wages and alleged that the strike is illegal and claims that state employees are a privileged and greedy clique. It sounds a bit ironic for a president who has already made a name for himself as one of the most grasping in the country's history and who has wasted a million dollars on foreign travel and who won't budge without his personal hairdresser, to see privilege in pay levels of \$3 a day. In any event in demanding reviews and raising of minimum wage levels, the state employees have moved beyond merely selfish demands. For that very reason, these strikes may be the embryo of a new labour and popular movement which will be able to make the most of the scope presently available to it.

Since the trade unions are in the forefront of the struggle, some information is necessary. Since the dismantling of the movement in the 1970s, the policy of the military governments has consisted not only of terrorising and

eliminating pugnacious elements but also of setting up yellow unions loyal to the regime—this as part of a counter-insurgency policy where the military is but one facet of a counteroffensive embracing the political, social and cultural climate in all-out warfare against the slightest change.

At present, whereas it is a fact that the organisations leading the movement—the UAGA and the FESEBS—belong to an independent, militant trade union sector, the CUSG and the CGTG were set up and promoted during the rule of General Rios Montt as complementary to his strategy of 'scorched earth'. Their national leaders, Juan Francisco Alfaro and Julio Celso de Leon Flores, respectively, are a social democrat and the other a christian democrat, are by no means radicals. In fact the opposite is true. Both have had dealings with unionism financed by organisations like the mafia-funded AFL (American Federation of Labour) and the CLAT (Latin American Workers' Central).

However, in Guatemala—where raised heads have been cut off for 30 years—one has to learn to read between the lines of social developments. It is a tradition of the Guatemalan labour movement to overrun organisations set up for the purpose of disorganising it. The old CNT for instance—whose national directory virtually 'disappeared' in June 1980—had begun as a CLAT affiliated union. However, following the popular upheavals of the 1970s, the CNT was being weaned away from its original aims until it broke away from the CLAT and adopted a revolutionary line.

In short, even today with its show of democracy, the terror conditions that still exist make it possible to voice political opinions based on declared ideologies on public platforms.

Peasant Mobilisations

Independent of and parallel with this wave of urban struggles, there is a significant peasant movement with hitherto unknown features. As we know, in Guatemala the working conditions in rural areas are among the harshest in Latin America and almost beyond human capacity to bear. According to recent figures, the average rural wage is 2.35 Quetzals a day, far below estimated basic requirements, but anybody who knows the country knows also that in some places the daily pay is still only 1.50 Quetzals.

At the start of 1986 in Neuva Concepcion—a department of Escuintla, in the heart of the southern coast farming/industrial area, dominated by the big ranchers of the UNAGRO (National Farms and Fisheries)—an interesting movement got under way. On 22nd February 1986, Father Andres Giron, the town priest, called together 5,000 peasants and in a strongly populist, messianic speech denounced the prevailing bad conditions of unemployment, inequality of land tenure and exploitation of workers by the wealthy plantation owners. He also announced his intention of seeking the president's support for the purchase of the uncultivated land abandoned on the big ranches in the area.

Buy land? With what? According to Giron's scheme, with long term loans from the government. Straight away, between 28th April and 2nd May, the priest organised a 150 kilometre march to the capital to pressurise the authorities and publicise the campaign. The march was led by an enormous reproduction of the Black Christ of Esquipulas—a Central American version of the virgin of Guadalupe—loaded onto a pick up. Then followed Giron and 16,000 peasants armed with machetes and, in some cases, wearing traditional native dress. During a stop-over in Escuintla city, government delegates—including the first lady Raquel Blandon and the mayor of the capital, Alvaro Arzu—attempted to talk the marchers into abandoning their march. On 2nd May, president Vinicio Cerezo stepped out onto the balcony of government house and, much against his will, had to promise to look at the petition and attend to it within a reasonable amount of time. In the ensuing months, Giron set up the National Pro-Land Peasants Association and duly registered it with the Interior Ministry. Quickly the news of a new organisation spread to the Altiplano and the East from the coastal region, thanks to the works of catechists from Neuva Concepcion—the movement's base—and of the migrant workers returning to their villages. In a short time the Association had over 100,000 members.

The novelty of this movement lies in the fact that, to achieve its aim—surrender of the land to the poor—it seeks to involve the president himself, asking him to honour his pre-election promises of social justice and taking the Christian ideology of his party seriously. In this way and shielding behind professed support for the present governor of the country the aim is to afford legitimacy to an explosive issue—agrarian reform—a national taboo since the Arbenz venture and also the main cause behind the coup d'etat of 1954.

Father Giron and his team openly reject any ideologisation and confess only to being

Christians and to seeking to act out their religious principles. Yet the demand for land, even in this context of complete legality and with a backdrop of piety, is as explosive an issue as ever it was and cannot be met in the short term by government funded purchases. In the first place, because the estate-owners would never willingly give up their land except as a speculative venture, since they aim not only to keep their land monopoly but also to have at their disposal a huge pool of cheap labour—the only thing that guarantees profits. Also the government does not have the resources to advance the peasants the money needed to buy the farms, and the banks are controlled by the bosses' organisations. The latter have not missed a chance to mount a campaign to discredit Giron, accusing him of being a provocateur and irresponsible in 'encouraging hopes without any solid and legal basis'. Others have even insinuated that his ties to the president are unclean and have more to do with propaganda ploys by the president. Be that as it may, the pro-land movement, quite apart from the trajectory of its top leader, appears to express the unbearable plight of the peasant in a sufficiently genuine way for it to arouse the interest of the rural masses in Guatemala.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

What is the government's strategy vis a vis this wave of social upheavals? We do not share the views of those who see simple continuation between past military governments and the present Christian-democrat administration. Cerezo has his own goals which do not necessarily coincide with those of the employer's association (the CACIF) nor those of the army, the two main powers in Guatemala. Apparently—and repression as a solution is not excluded, as the still numerous and increasingly common kidnappings show—Cerezo's plan involves some formal concessions such as the right to demonstrate and a measure of control over the forces of repression, within the overall context of support for private enterprise, with retention of the present starvation wage levels and it is the workers who are marked down to bear the brunt of the crisis. Seemingly, the formulae of this strategy suggests the 'Mexicanisation' of society. Social movements will be afforded the right to express themselves in return for absorption into a complex network of relationships rooted in mediation and corruption which absorb and paralyse movement for change—without the need for an ongoing state terror, although this cannot be ruled out either. This would, for instance, explain the growing relations between Mexican and Guatemalan institutions like the CONASUPO or the SEP etc.

One example of what the new labour policy may imply we can see in the way that the present spate of union struggles has been tackled.

Some peasants from San Marcos, led by one Carlos Dubon (who has no organisational links with Giron), having obtained—following a march on the capital—a presidential promise that an estate would be turned over to them, 'volunteered' their help against the strike by state employees and threatened to root them out forcibly'. After a few days, the newspapers reported that the workforce on the 'Arabia' estate had mobilised to resist tooth and nail any surrender of the estate to Dubon for sharing out among any peasants other than locals. The ploy is obvious: play on the contradictions between the various exploited groups, arming peasants against workers while playing on ethnic and cultural differences. In this way the government can set itself up as an arbiter in social disputes and manipulate everybody in accordance with its own needs.

Undoubtedly, from the viewpoint of reorganising the country, this is an astute policy, but the viability of it is highly debatable since the Guatemalan bourgeoisie with its long colonial tradition does not think in terms of long-range nationalisations but only of certain and immediate profits. From their viewpoint—and not without reason—any labour concession might unleash an uncontrollable appetite and spell the beginning of the end for their privileges. Hence many wealthy military people, estate-owners and entrepreneurs are lukewarm or openly hostile towards this daring president.

What the outcome of such a complicated situation maybe is difficult to predict. It is too early to say if these early struggles can unite all exploited groups and culminate in a powerful new popular movement. The manifest pugnacity, the political situation and the opening up of some scope for struggle—however precarious it may be—give grounds for conjecture on this.

Many years ago the disappeared Otto Rene Castillo, a poet, stated, 'In Guatemala, hunger is like the flowers: it lasts all year round'. After so much hunger perhaps a new bloom of struggle may blossom.

SOURCE: (Translated by Paul Sharkey).
Written by Antonio Passanante
(From *Comunidad* No. 60, Aug-Sept 1987, Stockholm)

LETTERS

Dear Black Flag,

In reference to another flag, The People's Flag, I phoned Channel Four and made a complaint about the programme's ignorance.

I was invited by Right To Reply to come in to do a video-box. I spent 2 hours with a member of staff writing down and editing what I was going to say. I did the video-box and was told that I may even be invited to a debate with the producer.

Thursday came and I found a message on my answering machine telling me that 'sorry', my video-box was not to be used because there would not be room for me in light of more relevant things.

In my video-box I spoke about Kronsadt and the programme's ignorant picture of the Soviet Union, the opinion

of the producers being that Lenin was a lovely man of the people whom we should all love. I also complained about the view that the programme spoke of the Spanish Civil War and not a word about revolution or the CNT, just a shallow mention of the POUM and the typical idea that Anglo-marxist international brigadiers were the heroes.

Well, I must admit that such subjects are not worthy of Right To Reply when they are busy with comments on Brookside, a rock video that bothered someone and another jerk who wanted more censorship on graphic news footage. And of course, the discussion on The People's Flag was turned into a left versus right argument, resulting in a naive young producer who loves commies and has never heard of an anarchist seeming the radical one.

Bloody typical of institutionalised media that loves to wear its 'minority' conscience on its sleeve.

HSM.

Dear Black Flag,

Am somewhat confused by your lead article 'Identity Card Imminent' which states that 'every individual... will be given a unique identity number and a personal algorithm (computer bar-code).'

Methinks that someone has their jargon in a twist! A computer bar-code is usually just an encoding of an alpha-numeric sequence. This may have been embedded within it certain specific details (eg certain driving licence numbers have the date of birth encoded within them). However it is very unlikely that a bar-code would have an algorithm encoded in it as an algorithm is 'a prescribed set of well-defined rules or instructions for the solution of a problem'. (From the Oxford Dictionary of Computing) To give every individual a unique algorithm is patently absurd.

Later on the article speculates about being able to prove, by presenting a Poll Tax/NI card to libraries or leisure centres, that we have paid our Poll Tax before being allowed to use the services. As far as I'm aware there are currently no requirements to prove one has paid rates before using 'free' public services - usually all that is required is proof of residence, if that. And I'm sure that, speaking as a 'professional librarian' of 16 years experience of working in public libraries, any attempt to impose these sort of restrictions would be met with considerable opposition and would be unworkable in practice. It would also mean changing existing legislation on Public Libraries

(not that that would disturb the present or any future government) which would mobilise the profession against it.

However I agree with the general drift of the argument of the article, its just a couple of details that I object to. Certainly the NI is the most likely point of convergence for state I/D checks, etc and is currently used by the Police, etc when searching for people's details (all illegal but who cares!!!).

Richard (Black Chip).

REPLY: The quote about the algorithm was taken from a Scottish Office internal report - that bit is correct. Our error was, as you say, to confuse it with a bar-code. Several organisations, including the NCCL, as well as individuals involved in the implementation of the Poll Tax (eg the head of Strathclyde Council), have admitted that once the Poll Tax system is in full swing that users of local services will have to prove they are contributing to them by paying the tax. As you say, this is not required under present rules, but the signs are that all this will change. Existing legislation may well enshrine the right of citizens to access to public libraries, but who would have thought, until recently, that 'free' education is to be eradicated too? As for opposition, hopefully any industrial action taken by municipal workers will dovetail with a mass community boycott of the tax, and in that way the Poll Tax and the emerging I/D system will be made unworkable, or at least difficult to implement.

News In Brief

Some East London comrades have taken us to task over what they thought was an 'attack' on Ronan Bennett in the last issue but one, at a time when he has been under attack by the gutter press and the Tories. We certainly failed to perceive it as such nor do we think anyone else drew such an inference; where we disagree is that we think he is veering to reformism by working with the Labour Party, albeit the so-called left wing, whereas they would prefer to say he is working alongside the left of the Labour Party on particular issues. We don't doubt his sincerity but disassociate from the notion that this can be effective or can be done by anarchists.

Those who think 'the National Front should be banned' by legal action should look at East Germany, where Nazi activities are automatically illegal. 'Gangs of youths in black para-military dress, with parachute boots and closely-shaven heads, rove the streets of East Berlin at night, armed with chains and knuckledusters, they raid youth clubs and beat up punks, pacifists and environmentalists, and even state youth groups', a report in the Independent states (Nov 18).

In a scene not unknown to the 'decadent West', a gang of some thirty neo-Nazis swarmed a rock concert and beat up some 400 young people with broken bottles, shouting 'Sieg Heil' and even 'Communist swine'. Why don't the Communist police do anything? Not surprisingly, it is suspected that they sympathise more with the tidy-looking 'skins' than with the 'dirty, anarchic punks'.

The moral, we regret to say, is that non-violence is not enough and it is an illusion that you can defy the establishment and be 'anarchic' without being prepared to tackle its backlash—and that goes for the 'socialist' states too.

Reports that Michael Ryan served in the Parachute Regiment were suppressed. Only one mainstream newspaper commented on this (Guardian 20:8:87) and that was on the day after the Hungerford shootings when he shot down 16 people.

This would certainly explain how he managed to do what he did, equipped with the weapons he used, and the training he must have had. Obviously, this would have been bad publicity for the Paras—not forgetting Bloody Sunday in 1972.

Ken Livingstone breezily told Dublin TV that he pinched the title of his latest book from the anarchists. They always go round at election times saying 'If voting changed anything they'd abolish it', he said—and that's what he called his book when he came to the conclusion after the abolition of the Greater London Council that they were right. What the GLC ever changed apart from Ken Livingstone's view that it ought to be abolished, some years before he fought the battle with ratepayers money that its abolition was a wicked Tory plot, is another matter. However it's proved one thing: how easy it would be to abolish Parliament too without necessarily any of the dire consequences always predicted.

Mind you, since being elected for Brent East, Ken doesn't think too much of Parliament. Not enough women, not enough Blacks. There could have been one more if he hadn't fought her with no pulls stopped for the candidature at Brent East.

November 11th was Anarchist Day for years until the militarists seized it for Armistice Day—now they seem to have given it up. Anarchists seem reluctant to take it back. On TV there was a confrontation between red poppy and white poppy wearers—militarists v pacifists. The poppy is supposed to have soporific qualities—so had the debate.

HEALTH

AIDS—'A COMPLETE MYSTERY'

Dr. Luc Montagnier of the Pasteur Institute in Paris, (the first scientist to isolate the virus that causes AIDS) has concluded the origin of AIDS is still 'a complete mystery' and has cast doubt on the theory the virus originated in the Green Monkey in Central Africa, which is still the medical world's favourite idea on its origins. (See also Black Flag no. 174).

He claims that the theory is contradicted by the lack of a similar virus yet to be found in the Green Monkey. Scientists assumed that the virus must have existed in an 'isolated population' for some time, (i.e. Pygmies living in dense jungle in Central Africa), but Dr. Montagnier states that if this was so, then they probably would have found it by now. He also states that the Institute's information on AIDS suggests that the chances of the virus originating in Africa are 'very weak'. But a leading member of the World Health Organisation in Africa claims that there is not enough information to say where the virus came from—let alone Africa.

Dr. Montagnier is also now speculating that AIDS 'might' have been present in Africa in

1970 and has even suggested that the United Nations troops sent to suppress the uprising in the Congo (now Zaire) may have introduced the virus into Africa in the 1960's. (New Scientist 15/10/87)

And to contradict the 'official' history of AIDS more, doctors in America claim that a 15 year old boy who died of mysterious causes in 1969 did in fact die of AIDS according to samples of his body fluids and tissues kept in the hope of finding as to why he died. The boy had never been to Africa and despite media claims it is doubted that he was a homosexual. (Guardian 26/10/87)

But, ironically, earlier this year, both the Pasteur Institute and the US department of health signed an agreement, which they have now agreed, on a 'definite official history of the virus', and 'agree to be bound by such scientific history, and further agree that they shall not make or publish any statement which would or could be construed as contradicting the integrity of the said history'. (New Scientist 9/7/87)

It seems privately, that the medical world is saying one thing, and officially, along with the media, saying another.

Source: Democracy

CANCER DRUG FORCED ON POOR

According to a report published in the Review of African Political Economy, a virulent campaign of population control is being carried out in Namibia by the South African government.

The controversial injectable drugs Depo-provera and Northisterone are being widely administered, often to women who have just given birth and whose consent has not been sought. Even girls as young as 13 and 14 are given these drugs at schools without their parents' consent. Sterilisation without consent is also widely practised on women who are in hospital for other forms of surgery. In other cases IUD's are fitted without the knowledge of patients undergoing surgery. There are also cases where it is a condition of employment that women workers have to take contraception drugs of the injectable variety.

In Australia, too, where strict control

of the movements of Aborigines became the model for the South African pass laws, a report has surfaced showing that depo-provera is being forced on to Aboriginal women too. Again girls of 13 years old are being given the drug. Already one nurse has confirmed from her own investigations that some Aboriginal women have had to have tubular litigations performed as a result. The drug is now widely used against the indigenous population in Queensland as well as inmates in mental institutions and homes for the physically handicapped.

As well as cancer the drug has been linked to diabetes and sterility (in other words permanent population control, or socially engineered genocide, involving numbers smaller to the Holocaust but similar in proportion). The side-effects of the drug are more prevalent in communities suffer from poor nutrition, such as Aboriginal communities who often subsist on junk-food hand-outs.

A GUIDE TO MEDIA JARGON ON ANARCHISM

anarchist—anyone, anarchist or not, who espouses illegal violence; anyone, anarchist or not, who doesn't agree with what someone in power has said; anyone, never an anarchist, in power, who approaches something slightly differently; an original theatrical performer; an extreme left-winger; an extreme right-winger; (obs) an anarchist. *mysterious, conspiratorial anarchist group*—signifies the journalist hasn't bothered to find anything out, and is sitting in

the pub wondering what to write. *self-confessed anarchist*—an admission that the journalist feels the word is so abused by the media that it is necessary to distinguish between the media jargon anarchist and the real thing; often used when the journalist has bothered to do some homework to find out some dirt but realises there is nothing but the person's anarchism—so hopes to call shock horror into play (occasionally used by shady lawyers or corrupt police). *notorious anarchist group*—one that can't be called mysterious because it's been written about so much.

British Justice Times 6

Continued from page 1

Wandsworth Prison where his health deteriorated even further. There he was forced to take one of the screws hostage so as to obtain hospital treatment. It is because of this that Martin has been sentenced to another 6 years in jail. When his wife next visited him, Martin was kept behind a screen, was refused water, despite his sore, cracked lips and was not allowed to receive any wedding anniversary cards.

Shortly after, he was transferred to Wilton Prison where he had a colostomy operation. 3 weeks after the operation he was badly beaten up by the screws, making his medical condition even worse.

Martin was then transferred to Parkhurst for 1½ months and was then sent on to Long Lartin Prison. There his medical condition worsened with the advent of running sores in his groin and an infection of his colostomy.

In August 1987, he was transferred back to

by the state. It is now more important than ever to step up the pressure to obtain Martin's release from prison.

Parkhurst. His condition has improved but the sores and infection are still causing him great difficulties.

Martin was due for release in August 1989 but this has been put back until 1995, due to the outcome of his latest trial. Martin is at the moment suing Walton Prison for mistreatment, and also the 6 police officers involved with his arrest and conviction for perjury. One of the officers, DC Matthews has since been sacked. No-one knows why.

The severity of the additional sentence of 6 years can only be regarded as sheer revenge.

Please write to the Governor, HMP Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX.

Despite the ban on communications to Martin, please also attempt to send letters to him: Martin Foran, C51796, HMP Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5NX, Britain.

Late News

Radio PICA—the popular anarchist pirate closed down by the Catalan government several months ago—has gone to the courts (October 24th), accusing the police of using

deception to gain entry, of illegally 'impounding' hundreds of pounds worth of equipment, and of vandalising property owned by the

PICA collective. They are underlining their case by appealing to the right of freedom of expression, supposedly 'guaranteed' under the Spanish constitution.