

# BLACK FLAG

FOR ANARCHIST RESISTANCE

8/6/1988

30p

# GOTCHA!

## UGT Behind Phoney CNT

Black Flag has received incontrovertible proof that the socialist union in Spain, the UGT, is making a bid for the CNT-AIT patrimony. Furthermore it has admitted that it hopes to do this by 'amalgamating' with the phoney CNT. This begs the question whether UGT/Socialist Party were behind the Split in the first place. The UGT are trying to get TUC backing in the campaign to replenish their funds from the Patrimony. Behind all this are the reformists who wish to break anarchism.

## Spain—Forgery and Theft

Before Franco died, the Communist party was preparing to take over Spanish unionism by a simple take-over of the only permitted Fascist syndicates by their Comisiones Obreras. They fought hard and long against the workers getting back what had been 'sequestered' by Franco for the offence of losing the war, and had worked out a deal with the Christian Democrats. It didn't come off as the workers rejected it; the trots had long claimed to actually be the UGT (orthodox trade union), and collected contributions for it abroad, though it had vanished within Spain (so did the money); and there were many inside Spain who supported the CNT, as well as several Catholic and other unions.

A British trade union delegation came over with proposals for a 'non-political' union to be controlled by the Socialist Party (this met with derision from Spanish workers who had not been acclimatised to the British way). They achieved the ditching of the trots (who turned to try to penetrate elsewhere); the rebuilding of the UGT; and rejected supporting the Comisiones Obreras (CCOO), enabling the pumping in a certain amount of Anglo-American TU financial aid (though not as much as expected).

Later the government came out with a new formula, the Pact of Moncloa, turning the fascist type-unions into industrial parliamentarism. They agreed to workers' 'councils' which were to co-operate with employers' councils under State arbitration (corporatism) but allowed the workers' councils to be elected by a shop floor ballot, each party in its union hat putting up the candidates for factory committees for election, a sort of mock parliament.

It has still not worked satisfactorily, and now the membership of unions which put up candidates has dropped drastically from three to one million. In many cases the only officially 'unionised' person is the one who puts up for election.

Though the anarcho-syndicalist CNT was greatly eclipsed by the others, and because of its refusal to sign the Pact became virtually a permanent unofficial-strike body, nowadays the State-backed unions are not very much different in numerical membership, though largely inactive. In figures given by the UGT, it claims 730,000, members while the CCOO (Comisiones Obreras) 880,000 — but nobody believes them. Together their claimed membership is less than that of a single union in Britain.

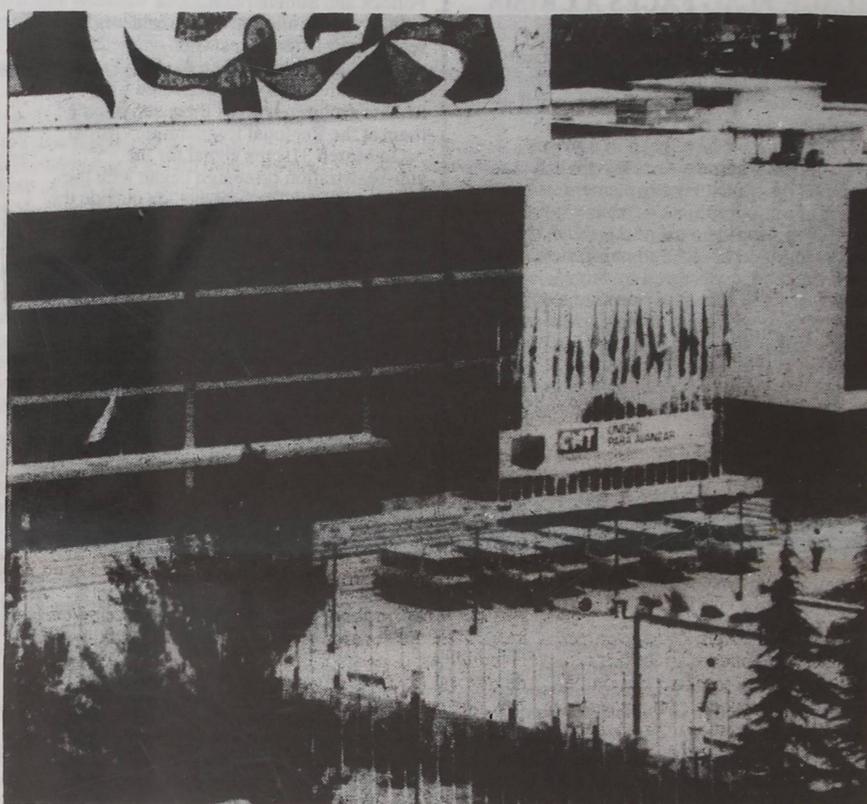
In a confidential letter to the international committee of the British trade union movement, the UGT is desperately appealing for funding. Though casual observers think the UGT is 'rolling in money', partly because of government and employer hand-outs (which in turn depend on the amount of bodies it can deliver), in fact, even after

having received a large part of its own stolen assets back, the UGT says it is living from hand to mouth and is asking creditors to delay pressing, hoping to regain the rest, which would only meet current commitments (its staff is all paid professional). 'It cannot be that democratic unionism will perish in our free society for want of cash, when we even survived Franco,' says the letter (it didn't survive, it was revived). It points out that the CCOO is already virtually bankrupt (this may be a plot for American support): 'though if foreign funding is not received we will either have to merge with them, or our only hope is that the CNT will be able to regain its patrimony and come in with us. These assets would solve all our problems but there are some difficulties'.

The slight difficulties are, of course, that the CNT can't get its sequestered assets back, and that it hasn't the least idea of going in to save the socialist sinking ship by self-immolation.

But the letter casts light on the mystery of the phoney CNT for anyone who is not yet clear, for it is to this they refer. The original founders may have been genuine schismatics, but it has long been taken over by manipulators who are using the name 'CNT' to disguise dirty tricks of the Socialist Party—first to suggest there are two CNTs, then to legalise the acceptable one, next to hand it the assets of the genuine organisation sequestered for nearly fifty years, finally to take over the the organisation with all its assets.

But whether the TUC is to be hoodwinked is another matter (it is less amenable to this sort of trick than it used to be, having crises enough of its own), and it may be that prime minister Felipe Gonzalez, who would prefer the TUC to do the saving since this would avoid the appearance of returning assets and annoy the Right Wing—will have to carry the plot through for them.



Police vans protect the phoney CNT's 'Congress of Reunification' in 1986.

# SOLIDARITY OUTLAWED

**No, this is not a reference to Poland where strike action is banned, but to Britain where strikes are made ineffective and in particular to the recent court pronouncements against the seafarers' union, the NUS, and the clumsy efforts of that union to take on the courts. The workers have lost out on all counts. Another defeat, yet there were times during the dispute—which is still soldiering on, when that situation could have been reversed. It still can.**

The dispute—now in its fourth month—took a new direction when P & O Ferries announced they were going to break the strike by sailing in a couple of ships to Dover with scab labour. They also made it clear that the recognition of the union was at stake. The media was hoping for another Orgreave and was disappointed when about 500 pickets turned up at the docks when a mass picket was called. The Dover docks are so designed that to block the entrance to the P & O berths the Sealink berths would be blocked as well—not a bad thing as Sealink were the cause of another recent dispute between the NUS and the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company (owned by Sealink), which was not resolved.

The picketing took place every day, with P & O choosing their time to bring in the ships. It was inevitable though that NUS crews would refuse to cross the picket line and so

Sealink was inconvenienced. This was despite an over-reaction by the police, who had massive reserves in case trucks were stopped.

The introduction of Sealink into the dispute turned things around slightly. Sealink hoped to sink P & O, but without committing themselves to too many promises to the NUS. At the same time they were quite prepared to allow P & O to do the dirty work. Sealink wanted it both ways and played a game where they would halt their own court actions if the NUS agreed to a deal in which half the sacked P & O workers would be temporarily employed by Sealink. Obviously this was no real solution and the NUS rejected the offer. All of this also distracted attention and morale waned.

Eventually the scab ships arrived. But the high profile dispute meant that it was a moral victory only. They were crewed by scabs and passengers were virtually non-existent. The only option open was for P & O to concentrate on freighting until things had died down.

While all this was going on, and at the height of the dispute, NUS members came out in solidarity at a number of ports. At different points in the dispute NUS members took strike action at Fishguard, Larne, Portsmouth, Great Yarmouth, Weymouth, Falmouth, Peterhead, Liverpool, Southampton, Felixstowe, Dundee, Hull,



Middlesbrough, Harwich, Folkestone, Aberdeen and Barrow.

The support was undeniably there, but immediately brought about court injunctions against the NUS for unlawful secondary action. These injunctions, together with the action by Sealink meant that the sequestration threat could be used to intimidate the union.

Continued on page 2...

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

Published, typeset and layout by  
BLACK FLAG COLLECTIVE

Printed by Aldgate Press E1

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

Inland: 12 issues £6, 6 issues £3.  
Europe: (except Finland - sent 1st  
Class): 12 issues £10, 6 issues £5.  
Rest of World: Surface - 12 issues  
£10, 6 issues £5; Airmail - 12 issues  
£15, 6 issues £7.50.

Prisoners free on request; non-  
earners free on receipt of sae's  
or postage.

Giro account no. Black Flag  
58 552 4009.

For a social system based on mutual  
aid and voluntary co-operation -  
against State control and all forms  
of government and economic  
repression. 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.

### BLACK FLAG FACES A CRISIS

We have been publishing the Flag for  
seventeen or eighteen years, as good an  
economic miracle as any, our support being  
a barometer of the revolutionary spirit of  
the times.

Sometimes we have been in a firm  
position, as when we were fortnightly and  
published a quarterly supplement; when we  
brought out pamphlets as well; when  
supporters could go off and publish other  
magazines and books and pamphlets and  
even the media was awed by our  
achievements. It has all been done on a  
shoe-string; we have had not a pennyworth  
of funding, except for a hat among our  
friends, and it has all been done  
voluntarily. There is nothing to come near  
it, and for a truly anarchist paper to last so  
long is rare indeed.

Now it's touch and go. We can't get any  
more out of our (involuntary) donors—the  
bank who've lent and not been repaid (we  
hardly expect it to—that's why we chose a  
pig in the first place). We appreciate our  
voluntary donors give us as much as they  
can. Now we have to depend on money for  
sales and subs coming in and maybe a  
benefit or two.

It would be a shame if this paper went  
under, with its unique international  
significance and the fact that it unites so  
many people active in various forms of  
Anarchist activity. Accept our apologies if  
we're unable to attend to correspondence  
early, or are coming out at peculiar dates.  
If the level of activity grows, we shall grow;  
if it declines, we shall sink with it.

### SQUATWATCH

Following the introduction of Crime Watch,  
Lewisham (Labour controlled) council has  
asked its 40,000 tenants to keep watch on  
squatters and advises how to keep them out. It  
does not come up with an explanation of how  
to get homeless families in, but has instructed  
staff that 'stamping out squatting is a  
priority'.

Telling tenants what to do if squatters  
occupy a place (as they can't be bothered to  
go and look round their empty properties  
themselves), Lewisham borough council  
Housing Committee claims squatters are  
'jumping the queue': it is for the council to  
decide in its wisdom how long a home shall be  
left empty.



Norwich DAM reports that on 16th April the  
British National Party held a rally at a local  
school at which John Tyndall and the local  
election BNP candidate spoke.

They bussed in thirty camp followers to  
beef up the audience of two locals, two  
veterans from outside and three or four  
others. The old hands from out of town had a  
hard time getting away in a Morris Minor  
while up the road four other BNP people in  
two cars

suffered stoned windows and slashed tyres.  
Of 250 protesters, only six got charged at  
the end of the day.

# HOME NEWS

## POLL TAX SNOOPERS BEATEN UP

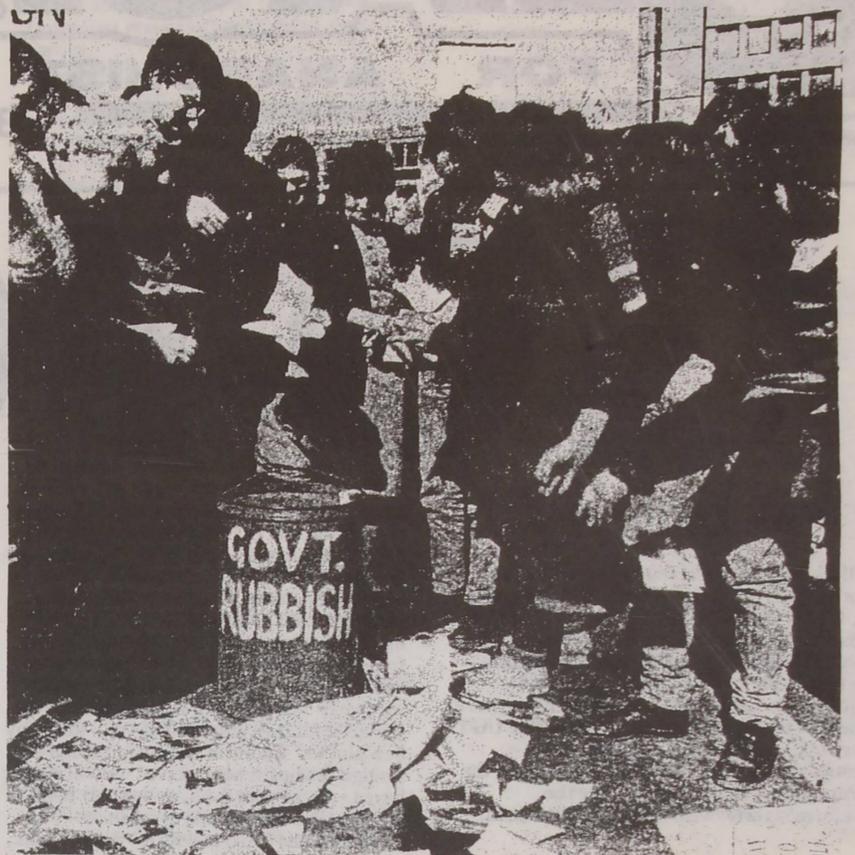
Gordon McGregor, a Poll Tax snooper, was  
attacked and beaten up by a group of 10  
youths as he was doing his rounds in the  
Pollockshields area of Glasgow. A number of  
other intimidatory attacks have been  
recorded. McGregor entered the area but was  
spotted. Immediately locals sent out people  
warning residents. He was then set upon. The  
next day the authorities admitted that there  
had been at least four other similar attacks in  
recent days.

The Poll Tax snoopers are being recruited  
from local Job Centres, with young  
unemployed workers being threatened if they  
don't take on the job they'll lose their dole.  
Many are refusing. And with the local  
publicity about the attack on the snoopers they  
will be even less who will be willing to submit  
and take on this odious task. In due course, if  
the attacks increase, the authorities may  
resort to police escorts for the snoopers, as  
happened with Census takers in W Germany  
recently. Poll Tax no-go areas are already  
being talked about. Two such areas are  
Pollock and Summerston.

In Dunterlie and Barrhead residents have  
sealed their letter boxes when warned the  
snoopers are about. When the Poll Tax  
registration forms were delivered local  
tenants groups retrieved them and dumped  
them at the Regional Registration Office.

On March 31st the signal for the  
anti-registration campaign began with the  
burning of Poll Tax propaganda outside the  
Scottish Office in Edinburgh. In Glasgow on  
the same day a Fight The Poll Tax banner was  
unfurled on the City Chambers roof.

Now the anti-Poll Tax groups are escalating  
their campaigns, leafletting homes on a large  
scale and trying to organise street  
co-ordinators. The idea is that no one fights  
alone. That when a snooper enters an area  
they are confronted. Tenants and  
neighbourhood groups have the potential to  
be transformed into mutual aid centres to take  
over the running of local services and to  
organise with local authority workers to fight  
against Poll Tax cut-backs. Non-payment,  
however, is the first priority.



On May 2nd there was a gathering at Calton  
Hill (Edinburgh) in a 'bring and burn' poll tax  
demonstration, to mark the introduction of  
this unfair tax on the people: citizens were

invited to bring all the poll tax literature  
they'd received to put in the bonfire. Scotland  
has already got the tax, light the warning  
beacons throughout England.

## CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

At this stage P & O seized their chance and  
weighed in with their sequestration order.  
The courts appointed the City firm of Spicer  
& Oppenheimer to carry out the sequestration  
and the union's assets were seized including  
their HQ in London. Just prior to this the  
union's bank, the Midland, grassed on them  
when they thought the union was about to  
transfer funds (the Midland did the same thing  
with the NUM during the miner's strike). The  
sequestration order was a heavy blow as the  
union is not a large one having not quite 3m in  
assets, of which nearly 1m had already gone  
towards fines and court costs.

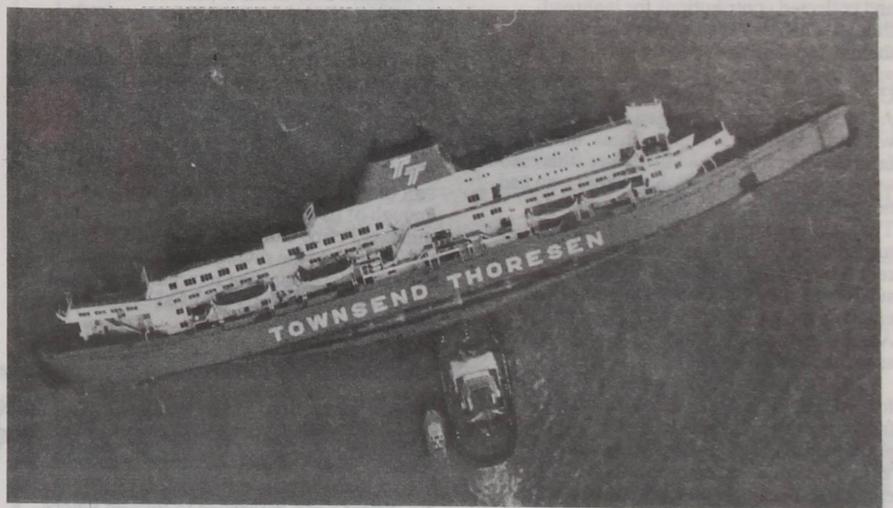
Because of its relatively small assets the  
NUS has only paid out limited strike pay,  
which meant that the morale of strikers was  
difficult to sustain. For this reason a  
Women's Support Group was set up which is  
co-ordinating fund raising. And many other  
support groups around the country are now  
linked together raising funds direct to the  
strikers. In perspective the fund raising will  
not have much effect on the final outcome of  
the dispute but strikers can only be sustained  
if they can keep their heads above water.  
Mutual aid is essential.

Meanwhile the picketing is continuing at  
Dover and there is still support action by NUS  
members in other ports, although not as  
extensive as say three weeks ago. The offer of  
support by seafarers in French ports is still  
there.

Strangely enough the dispute could have  
been ended in the seafarers' favour as a result  
of the lorry drivers blockade at the docks at  
Dover, on the M20 motorway and at Calais.  
They claimed not to be on anyone's side but  
simply wanted to use the ferries and force the  
dispute to an end. The NUS even tried to  
arrange a deal with the lorry drivers to  
boycott P & O and end the dispute that way.

But, as with all recent disputes, it was court  
action that once again set the direction of  
events. The courts are now demanding that  
the picketing ends bar a handful of pickets  
(limited to six). This will have the immediate  
effect of allowing P & O to carry on their  
normal business. The NUS knows that if it  
doesn't accede then there will be more fines  
and the sequestration order will continue.

At an earlier court hearing the NUS were  
forbidden from extending the strike, via a  
ballot, into a national dispute. Yet all the ferry  
companies are cutting back, endangering



The Herald of Free Enterprise

safety, and coming up with new working  
conditions that will increase unsocial hours  
and double the working year for the seafarers.  
P & O are merely the vanguard. The court  
decision to limit the dispute to one port and  
with one company set a precedent. The  
banning of a ballot was another. Now, in  
Britain, it is illegal for a union to call a  
national strike of its members even if all its  
members wanted to. It is illegal, too, for a  
union to encourage solidarity action by  
workers employed in the same industry by the  
same employer but in a different workplace.  
The courts are thus limiting industrial  
disputes to the smallest possible unit.

The NUS leaders, for their part, can be  
criticised for reacting to events instead of  
predicting what the courts would do and come  
up with another strategy. NUS leader Sam  
McCluskie said that a union's assets are its  
members—but he is hardly putting that  
philosophy into practice. An all-out seafarer's  
strike is possible (proof of that was shown  
with the escalation of widespread solidarity)  
but not without the union's assets being seized  
and stolen in total by the state. This same  
dilemma will come about with every strike  
unless the laws are smashed once and for all.  
Otherwise the unions might as well give in

and not bother because the same scenario will  
just be repeated.

With its assets, but without the capacity to  
fight back, then a union is only a paper  
organisation. The only solution is for an  
all-out blockade despite the consequences.  
Assets can always be redistributed by trade  
unionists and NUS supporters once the  
government's laws have been made  
unworkable. If this battle is not fought by the  
NUS then it will have to be fought by another  
union. The prospect otherwise is defeat after  
defeat and we might as well forget the last 150  
years of workers' struggles.

And if the NUS leaders haven't got in them  
to take on this challenge then it's up to the  
branches to take unofficial action, as they  
have done so already. The easy option would  
be to back down, but if workers in other  
industries pledged physical support then NUS  
members will feel less isolated.

London demonstration is support  
of sacked P&O seafarers. Wed. 29th  
June. Assembly 12 noon Hyde  
Park Corner. March to P&O HQ in  
Pall Mall and picket... call by all  
London Support Groups.

# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## FROM OUR SPANISH CORRESPONDANT

### APRIL IN SPAIN

**EUSKADI:** Steelworkers and shipbuilders in Bilbao and Biscaia have been fighting over the last 4 years against the spanish governments 'reconversion' schemes for their respective industries. (Reconversion means the forced introduction of new technology, resulting in large scale sackings and general job insecurity). A 24 hour strike called on 27th April was followed by 70% of workers in these sectors and ended with barricades, burning buses, across the Bilbao to Santander main road, running battles with the police and a mass demonstration in the centre of Bilbao. Police used tear gas grenades and rubber bullets fired at random into the crowd, injuring two people, including a young girl. They were answered with molotovs, heavy duty bolts fired by catapult and on one occasion a high pressure hose. The focus for much of the fighting was the Euskalduna factory, which has seen almost daily skirmishes between police and workers all this year, and over long periods during the preceding three years. A CNT-AIT affiliate in the Euskalduna shipyards gave a detailed account of the struggle there at the IWA congress held recently in Bordeaux.

**GALICIA:** El Ferrol, an inland county of this underindustrialised part of Spain, was brought to a standstill on 27th April during a mass protest involving all villages and towns in the county. The steel and aluminium industries, on which the county relies almost entirely for work, are also undergoing 'reconversion', pushing the number of unemployed in the area up to 1 in 3. Shops were closed, roads blocked and workers and recently 'laid off' workers marched in protest. Pickets were mounted at those few shops which didn't follow the protest and the pickets were then attacked by police, who beat them with batons and later fired salvos of rubber bullets into them. All banks, transport services and small local industries stopped work for the day.

**MADRID:** 100,000 teachers marched in protest at wages and working conditions, demanding the resignation of Jose Maria Maravall, Spanish Education Minister. The protesters included groups from all over Spain, with the teacher's syndicate of the CNT-AIT being well represented. This also took place on 27th April.

**CATALONIA:** 27th April again, 2,000 pig farmers blocked the frontier with France at La Jonquera, while 8,000 others marched in Madrid, all to protest against the Common Market import laws, which would bring the price of pig meat (one of the staples of the average spanish diet) up to european levels and out of reach of many spanish people. Banners at La Jonquera carried the slogan 'We Don't Want European Pigs'.

**ARAGON:** The CNT-AIT hit the local headlines when two affiliates were arrested during an atheist demo in Saragossa, traditional home of the Sacred Virgin of Pilar. They were nicked for shouting, 'The Virgin of Pilar should go to work!' and sentenced to 4 months for this disgraceful crime. CNT-AIT affiliates and Anarchist supporters filled the courtroom on the first day of the trial making it impossible for said trial to continue, while one of the accused, Joeba Mendizabel, pointed out (in court) that he didn't expect much justice from a courtroom which had a crucifix displayed prominently on the wall. The atheist demo had about 100 people and took place during Holy Week. A new Religious Tax, a compulsory contribution from spanish citizens to help pay for the upkeep of the Catholic Church is now being ratified by the parliament in Madrid.

**SEGOVIA:** Anarchist prisoner Juan Manuel Fernandez Asensio has been in jail for 8 years, but was refused the temporary exit permit to which he was entitled after that period. A campaign on his behalf organised by CASPA and CNT-AIT resulted in him

being granted the permit for the coming summer.

**BARCELONA:** CNT-AIT in Hospitalet (NW Barna) is working with local anti military-service groups and all Libertarian Athenaeums in Catalonia to protest against the Compulsory Social Service which the spanish government will force around 4,000 conscientious objectors to do next summer. The number of objectors over the whole of Spain is going up every year, and these 'Social Services' are simply 18 months of underpaid overwork designed to discourage objectors in the future.

**BARCELONA:** 25th April, five japanese companies had their locks glued and walls redecorated in protest against the death penalty handed out to Omori. The japanese consulate in Barcelona is being kept up to date by local anarchists about all Omori protests taking place in Catalonia.

**BARCELONA:** MAY DAY, around 1,000 people marchéd with the CNT-AIT from the Placa de l'Escorxador after a meeting at which Rafael Henares and Federica Montseny spoke. One police car got sprayed and dented on the way down, no arrests.

M.T.Barcelona.

### FREE RADIOS CLOSED IN CATALONIA

Two years after being closed down by the Generalitat de Catalunya (local government) the Anarchist free radios, Radio Pica and Radio Music Club (from Barcelona and Reus respectively) are still unable to go back on the air, though the return of their broadcasting gear (complete with a prohibition to use it!) and a series of benefit gigs around the country have made it possible, financially, for them to do so. Meanwhile, local municipal stations and commercial pirates (none of which broadcast political music or anything apart from the commercial hits of the moment), are now functioning normally, though they aren't any more legalised than PICA and RMC. In Madrid and the Basque country, free radio, political and otherwise, is allowed to function without harassment. In Madrid one station (Radio Bogchain) was taken off the air for one week for broadcasting detailed instructions on urban guerilla warfare, but is now operating again. The local catalan government, a centre right coalition with catholicism in common, has recognised that PICA is the only station in Barcelona which allows completely free expression of opinion to the community, but refuses to discuss why they won't let it broadcast! PICA, while on the air was the Barcelona equivalent of Paris' Radio Libertaire, with a large number of listeners, an Anarchist approach ( alternative news, plenty of needle time for local CRASS type bands, Anarchist interviews etc.) and increasing popularity.

Letters of support to PICA at:  
Apartat de Correu 9242

Barcelona,  
Catalonia, Spain

Letters of protest to:  
Jordi Pujol,  
President de la Generalitat de Catalunya,  
Barcelona etc.



## MAY DAY IN KREUZBERG

So, this was the first demo to go through Kreuzberg on May 1st since 1918. The day started well, with lots of sunshine and 8,000 to 10,000 people, which is good considering that only 2 million live in West Berlin. Lots of people were dubious about walking, having had lots of bad experiences from other demos, but I took the chance with my 4 year old daughter and another child. The demo was good, a nice mood amongst the people and most of the cops hidden back, but not out of sight.

The Womyns Block was great, nearly every womyn with a Palestinian scarf over her head. Womyn who will not stay in the kitchen are dangerous, meaning us! Womyn with children walked a bit on one side as the pigs in Berlin are known for using batons and tear gas where womyn and children are.

Nothing happened on the demo, with cops staying right back. The demo ended peacefully, GREAT! We were warned not to walk about the area in small groups, so most of the demo went together to Lausitzer Platz, where the traditional 1st of May party would be.

There was one incident at the end of the demo, with one van splattered with black paint and rocked from side to side; it was very quick in clearing out.

There was the usual party spirit on L.Platz with about 40 stands selling food, drink, books and political bits and bobs, 3rd world liberation groups, etc. Sunshine, good moods, live music...

The party ran out of beer at about 8 o'clock and most people drifted off. Some of the people left lit a small fire, more as a camp fire than a barricade and the officers of the law felt obliged to intervene. A column of two armoured cars with bulldozer blades on the front and 5 vans screamed down Oranienstr and through Heinrichplatz, sirens wailing, lights flashing announcing panic. They leapt out on L.Platz, lashing out at anyone with batons, and off we all went again. Bloody idiots these cops when they are nervous; amongst those beaten where three civvies, one a top civvy, ha ha. Windows started going in, things dragged onto the



MAY DAY in Kreuzberg. One hundred and thirty-four arrested; one hundred injured.

street, batons swinging so people hitting back. All a bit kind of slow motion, not a mass fury so much as a series of incidents and the cops having left themselves no options but to scream up en masse whenever some 12 year old kid put three bits of wood and a burning cardboard box on the street. They seal off a street, people mass slowly just in front of their line, they feel nervous so order the people away, then have to clear the street for 50 metres for no reason, so people feel pushed around, someone lobs a rock, cops fire off a gas grenade, off it goes again. A few barricades get built and rebuilt every 20 minutes. Cops race up, extinguish and demolish, stand around, piss off. It gets rebuilt, they race up again. No riot without cops.

Heavy heavy police presence on every corner. They clean the streets, the same as the last Notting Hill carnival. Over the loudspeakers comes 'This is the police speaking. Get off the streets.' No chance, the way home is blocked by cops. In my eyes the streets were full of stinking, brutal, sadistic, green men, hitting and beating; searching middle aged men because they couldn't catch the young ones. Scaring the nation with their guns and ammunition. Being Babylon. One guy got a light torturing in a van, hands and legs stomped on, stripped, face slapped, 'Commo swine' they shout. They attack groups on the streets, arrest at least one. One whole pub got arrested.

Scattered clashes continue from about 11pm until 5am. Hot bad tempered cops, been

in the sun in full Star Wars fighting gear all day in tin cans or trouble all night, not a pause, not a tea break. Poor guys, ha ha.

Countless cops in civilian clothes (civvies) were in the area; something to be prepared for in your next clash. A civvy points someone out, the cops run after and arrest. A civvy says, 'Come on, lets go, lets build a barricade'. So try and point out a civvy, O.K.? Some punks caught one on Kottbusser Tor. He got out but his car was well stoned.

Reports the next day spoke of 400 young rioters', the cops had 1500 on duty and watercannons rolled through the area. 140 people were arrested and 6 are still in jail a week later.

In touch..Berlin

# ANARCHIST HISTORY

(There were before the World War I two different sections, historically, of the anarchist movement in London, East and

West) This sketch is part of a continuing series relating to the history of the Anarchist movement.

Prior to WW1 the Anarchist movement in East London could be considered in three parts, not necessarily exclusive: first the carmen and draymen, the strongest anarchist contingent, especially in the Stratford and Bow areas where it pervaded all workers' clubs; at open-air meetings it was always these who acted as 'stewards'—in those days, socialist, anarchist, freethought, and suffragist meetings were regularly attacked by drunken mobs (the police only discovered the right to free assembly when fascism was invented!) and tough defence was needed.

The draymen had a long history of independence: asked by a reporter from Labouchere's Truth how many times he had used his whip to draw blood on an animal, the radical drayman Bolden answered, 'Once—on a hyena'. The Austrian general Haynau (nicknamed Hyena), notorious for flogging Italian women rebels was, visiting London, dragged from his coach by the Barclay & Perkins carters and horsewhipped.

Bolden's son Jack was in the anarchist group. Generally anarchist workers preferred working in the open air with horses to working in factories. As late as the 20s Emma Goldman's meetings on Russia (which provoked attack from a different quarter) were guarded by 'Anarchist roughs' (as pre-war journalists always described them). Ted Leggatt was an early anarchist trade union organiser of the transport workers who came from this background.

With the disappearance of the horse from London's transport the workers movement around it dispersed, and with other factors (especially the effects of WW1) disappeared but the anarchist veterans of the horse industry were still around, ageing, in the 30s. Only a few deserted to socialist and communist parties though their children seem to have rejected anarchism.

The other ingredient in the anarchist movement of East London was, paradoxically, in the suffragist movement. There was a sharp division in the movement for women's votes between those who were for direct action and those who were not; most of those against it were middle—sometimes upper—class do-gooders, while those for it were divided between those for action only to gain the vote and those who saw it as part of a wider movement, seen in the contrasted Mrs Pankhurst and her daughter Sylvia.

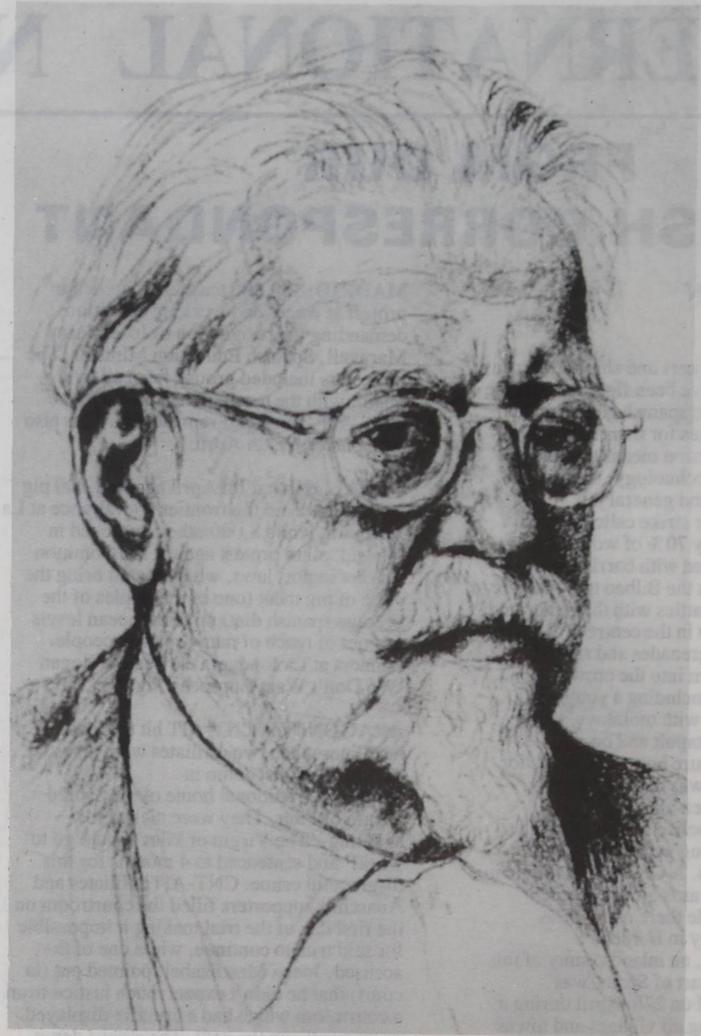
Those direct actionists who supported Sylvia included middle class professional women but also many working class women

whose main objective was not the vote itself, and among these were many anarchists. Sylvia's concentration on Stratford with her earlier attempts (the first) to form a non-Moscow-orientated Communist Party, were because she hoped to gain the support of the anarchist women who had supported direct actionism, and their male relatives, mostly in the declining horse transport trade—though they thought of it as a declining workers' movement. It is amongst many of these, who went much farther than Sylvia, that the WW1 shop movement first arose in Woolwich (preceding the Clydeside shipworkers) among 'dilutees' from South East London and Bow (like Kate Sharpley): they were, anomalously, working on munitions in WW1 (for many the first time in reasonably paid jobs, and able to work on equal terms with men) and were less respectful of orthodox trade unionism and government appeals.

The third strength of the East London anarchist movement lay in the East End proper, amongst the immigrant workers in the tailoring industry, the majority being Russian Jews. This movement represented a mass force because largely it was a trade union movement, organised by anarchists, at a time when orthodox trade unionism excluded them. Rudolf Rocker, a German anarcho-syndicalist who learned their language to carry on propaganda, is best known (even commemorated locally); their great moment came during the great strike of sweated tailors and tailors assistants, which they won. This nevertheless caused considerable anti-semitism (similar to anti-black feeling today) because the marches alerted the public to the presence of so many 'pauper aliens' who were 'taking the bread out of the mouths of British workers', blamed for all crime and even (the final insult) identified with the sweatshop owners they were fighting.

Rocker—who enjoyed enormous personal prestige as editor of a workers' newspaper and through the cultural activities of the Jubilee Street Anarchist Club—suggested both as a reply and as an act of solidarity in itself, that during the ensuing great strike of the dockers, the Jewish families should take in dockers children (otherwise starving) and care for them until the end of the strike, again a successful one.

With WW1 many foreign-born anarchists were interned or deported. Russian Jews had the option, during conscription, of joining the Russian or British armies. None would join



the Russian army (rather like joining Hitler's), most non-anarchists opted for the British, but with the supposed revolution in Russia, most anarchist males opted for the Russian. The women were to follow to Russia after, but rarely if ever did: forlorn wives enquiring at the Russian consulate for their husbands was long a scene in the early 20s. Most of the Russian anarchists who went home disappeared into prison or exile, or were killed.

There are even now some traces of the former 'Arbeitsfreund' movement left; after 1918 it was predominantly a woman's movement, but eventually an older women's movement. The younger generation became communists, or rose in the social scale (or both).

However, it gave rise to an unregarded social phenomenon: most of these women, still young, looked around for other companions. They were outsiders to the ethnic religious community. The boys they had known in their youth were in the docker evacuee families: this led to intermarriage, and the next generation though never anarchistic (with exceptions of course) of

dockers were the most militantly anti-fascist of all Londoners. There was clear evidence of their mixed racial origins: it is ironical that after the dispersal of the community by WW2 a different generation arose, hostile to Commonwealth immigrants and receptive to racism.

It is worth rescuing past East London anarchism from oblivion (despite some paradoxes) since it is totally ignored by the professors who write history—it fails on two counts: workers are ignored and women are invisible, as witness the exception—though several have written on (and exaggerated) the East End Jewish anarchist movement pre-WW1 (Jews in any form make good copy!), not one line has been written on post-WWI (with the exception of a misleading paragraph by Woodcock in one book). Women have to be Goldmans to be noticed, even as tokens.

It was not a 'golden age'—they thought that would be this!—but the anarchist traditions were working class, and its history not that of the occasional 'intellectual' who deigned to notice it.

Albert Meltzer

## ANARCHISM AND YOUTH CULTURE IN POLAND

Ask about anarchism in Poland and you might get a non-committal shrug or a lecture about the pre-WW2 co-operative movement and the libertarian philosophy of Edward Abramowski.

Or perhaps you'll be told about 'those crazies' in Gdansk, the RSA. The Movement for an Alternative Society (RSA) gained national notoriety by leading a youth contingent which fought the police in the May Day demonstration in 1983. Fleeing cops were pelted with rocks, and local residents found themselves sheltering policemen in their homes to protect them from demonstrators.

Street militancy, especially in the period after martial law, is not in itself unusual. What makes RSA unique is its explicit anarchism, its newspaper *Homek*, which published 228 issues from 1928 to 1986, has carried articles condemning the authorities of the State, the army and even of the Church and the more traditional Solidarity-identified opposition groups. 'Our philosophy,' said one *Homek* contributor, 'is that it is forbidden to forbid.'

Many people in Poland from all aspects of the political spectrum would condemn RSA as a fringe element, describing the RSA philosophy as a 'naive and anachronistic



from issue 7 A Cappella. 'Most people think that if the school stopped indoctrinating the pupil politically everything would be OK. They don't notice the heart of the matter—the idiotism of over-burdened programmes, the absolute rule of the teachers, falseness and hypocrisy. People perceive school as the means of packing tons of useless and boring information into pupils' heads, which are soon forgotten.'

re-hash of leftism...based on an impetuous attack on the State and the law from a position of the state of nature' (hence the name *Homek*) which provoke 'laughter, pity and

outrage, at the trampling of Church and the insults to Walesa' (Interview with activists: Przejaci Polityczni, Gdansk). But the same commentator went on to say that even RSA's critics have a certain respect for RSA's practical good sense in concrete actions such as the campaign against military service and the May Day demos.

The influence of explicit anarchist philosophy along with the less tangible anarchistic attitude toward society has made itself felt in the new forms of political activism of which WiP (Freedom and Peace) is the most visible example.

RSA has taken an active part in the anti-militarism campaign led by WiP but the two groups are different from each other. WiP is national, RSA primarily a Gdansk group. WiP maintains close contacts with the Solidarity opposition and has a public profile in which people act in their own names. *Homek*'s contributors all use pseudonyms. WiP has had a greater impact on the community generally but both groups share a 'libertarian youth culture' élan. This is especially true of the WiP group in Gdansk, which publishes a journal called *A Cappella*, with the A always circled.

*A Cappella* says it is 'different kinds of people: and church activists, politicals and moralists, hippies and punks. We don't have a unifying ideology.'

Anarchism, youth culture, a 'green' sensibility, ecology, anti-militarism and direct action politics intermingle and reinforce each other in Poland, despite or because of the fact that groups take pride in their autonomy.

Significantly, there has been a discussion of the youth culture itself. One article notes with alarm the self-destructive aspects of the varied cultures in Poland. A punk is as likely to be attacked on the streets by another young person as by police.

Even though this can be attributed to the general repressive atmosphere, says the author, this does not make it easier to accept the fact that 'the streets today are ruled by satanists and skinheads, whose Soviet version are the Lubercy' (Andrzej Balewski in *Szczeccin*, WiP mag).

Source: Franwek Michalski in *On the Gogol Boulevard*, a bulletin for 'activists East and West).

# COMMENT

## PRIMARY ACTION?

It is sometimes necessary to plumb the depths for scabs: to break the strike at TV/AM they have brought in crews from blue movies and porno merchants. Derek Ridler, the new Head of Cameras, runs a porno movie business at 41 Paddington Street, London, with fellow-director Adam Cole; they have another sex shop, Electric Blue, in the red-light area of Kings Cross.

Would even the government or its tame courts have the audacity to claim that picketing porn is 'secondary action' for supporting the electricians' strike?

## NOTHING SACRED

No sacred cow of the Establishment is safe. Government police even raided the BBC and it has now set its sights on the IBA—both notwithstanding political interference in the direction of it. One might as well expect the monarchy to be attacked—and now Norman Tebbit has weighed in against the Prince of Wales—saying his sympathy with the unemployed stems from the fact that he's unemployed (and by implication unnecessary) himself. What other Tory bastion is safe? The boy scouts and girl guides? Even they, and the brownies, are (it was revealed by the Observer) being spied on by the Ministry of Defence and lists computed down to cub and brownie level.

The result will be an Economic League type blacklist monitoring youthful dissent from nursery school to university level. Even militarism incalculable is not enough to guarantee immunity. It was held against Nazis that they encouraged children to spy on parents but even they didn't encourage parents to spy on children, and (as Crimewatch appeals show) this is coming.

## DO IT YOURSELF DOOMSDAY

TV producer James Cutler and Bob Edwards have produced a book *Britain's Nuclear Nightmare*, which (says the *Daily Mirror*) shows how to make a bomb similar to that which wiped out Nagasaki and Hiroshima, in your own garage. Horrors, says the *Mirror* and they quote the usual kneejerk reaction from the current Winston Churchill: 'terrorists' could so easily do it. Horrible, indeed, but is one supposed to suppose that if it is in the hands of the governments, the secret is safe? Haven't they any garages in Libya? The truth is there are no atomic secrets, all that is needed is the hard stuff and it's time society got down to considering this.

The *Daily Telegraph* inadvertently points out a way of avoiding the courts' decision to sequester union funds and impose harsh penalty on strikers for secondary action. There was a blockade by lorry drivers both at Dover and Calais, effectively sealing off the loading ramps and preventing P & O from unloading the ships manned by scab crews. Nothing could be better calculated to thwart P & O and encourage the strikers: but the DT said it was an anti-strike protest: Channel ports were blockaded by 'angry drivers' who were protesting at the strike, demanding that the company negotiate! Not a 'secondary' intervention at all! Presumably protests directly at Sir Jeffrey Sterling, chairman of P & O, if they take the form of complaints of his massive bribe to Tory Party funds, would be quite legal; and as ill-wishers marched over his family home lawns in West Sussex, or shouted insults outside his extramarital love nest in Fulham, he could console himself it wasn't secondary action.

## ANARCHO-QUIZ

1. 'In the Russian Revolution 1917 the workers obtained political power'—say some but how many of those who obtained political power—Lenin Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, etc. - had ever done a day's real work?
2. Which key figure in modern British trade unionism—whose background originates from the Spanish CNT in exile—says he is an anarcho-syndicalist?
3. What building, in London's Sydenham, connects two important figures in Anarchism and Marxism with Arctic exploration?
4. Which trade union was set up to protect exploited men who as employers exploited women?
5. Which government, after World War I, switched its secret agents from spying on Anarchism to spying on fascism—and with what minor consequence?
6. Many governments ban immigrants with records of crime or political dissent: in which country were they once necessary for entry?

## The Rise & Fall Of Solidarnosc

In recent weeks Solidarnosc raised its head again with the emergence of militant unionism. Severe repression of the strikes, coupled with poor organisation, led to questions being asked whether the resurfacing of Solidarnosc was premature or whether we are only just seeing the beginning of a revival of a new wave of resistance.

There were a number of disputes that came together. Workers at the Stalowa Wola mill, near Warsaw, settled a long dispute with a 25 a month pay increase. Then 10,000 workers at Nowa Huta came out. Their action was followed by an occupation by workers at the Lenin shipyard—the birthplace of Solidarnosc—in Gdansk. On May Day over 30,000 took part in illegal demonstrations in 15 cities. In Gdansk street battles ensued between riot police and demonstrators. In Nowa Huta 3000 workers attempted to march on the steel works to take occupation but were met by hordes of riot police. In the wake of all this Solidarnosc leaders around the country were rounded up, but some went underground.

The main demands are higher pay but also recognition of Solidarnosc and the right to



form a free workers' union. Some Solidarnosc leaders, however,

## GUILDFORD FOUR

Thirteen years ago Paul Hill, Paddy Armstrong and Gerry Conlon, of Belfast, and Carole Richardson, of London, went to prison accused of the Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings of 1974. Had capital punishment been in effect, they would have been dead and forgotten long since, though the evidence against them was tainted and someone else has confessed anyway.

As it is they have rotted away in jail and been forgotten long since.

So fervent is sympathy for them among fellow Irish people that at a protest meeting held in London, thirty people turned up, when a thousand times that number turned out for a sports event. Commented Paul's uncle bitterly, 'They'll rot in jail and that'll be the end of that'.

## FROM WHITE POWER TO WHITEWASH

The National Front claims now it is not a Nazi Party (just a Strasserite one! They've forgotten which party their hero belonged to). It complained to the Broadcasting Complaints Commission (which reeled disbelievingly). They stated they believe in a Bill of Rights to protect the individual and minorities; are against anti-Semitism ('there are Jewish party members'); are against the 'leader' principle and especially deplore 'race attacks', inviting the press to help them combat same. Believe it if you like (the commission didn't): but all this if true would yield up only the sideshow 'attraction' of fascism whose main aim is anti-worker, and which started as a scab force, though it needs to appeal to populism. Now incessant physical attacks have made them try another would-be 'attraction':

## Twenty Years After

1968 wasn't the year of the revolution, nor did we ever think it was; it was not even the year of a failed revolution though it may have been the first time the gilded young could play at it.

It was the year the working class was finally, decisively, wiped out of its own movement. It had been coming for a long time—first by the middle class assuming control of the working class movement, by virtue of the Fabian-Marxist principle of getting the 'educated' from a higher class to come and lead us poor proles; secondly, by the Fabian/Socialist well-meaning attempt to cream off the intelligent workers into middle class academic values and sneering at any other method as 'self education'.

By 1968 those who had come from a working class background and had been educated to academic values felt they were doubly the vanguard, but like the deaf drum-major, they hadn't noticed nobody was following.

Those who came from a comfortable background suddenly looked round, too, and saw that there wasn't that going for privilege in the age of the atomic bomb and the more directly personal in the USA of the Vietnam War.

It was said that the 'Irish community in Britain was frightened to campaign for the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six because of the Terrorism Act and the fear of being dubbed IRA supporters'. Equally, the Establishment cannot bring itself to admit the falsity of its justice. People are afraid to come forward with evidence, too, not just because of the PTA and of organisations like the Economic League with its blackmail list, but (as is seen in the case of the Gibraltar shootings of the IRA) if any witness comes forward they can be the subject of gross abuse from the government-inspired tabloid press.

Those who suffer are inside jail and cannot be more vilified than they have been already; Paul has been waiting for ten years for an operation and is now 'skin and bone'.

There are allegations that a different sort of

whingeing moderation. But where would the punters come from? Too much competition in this.

The dilemma has been directly triggered off by the Ray Hill defection (his book was reviewed in our last issue). We are told by one contact who encountered Ray Hill several times when he and his BNP cronies tried to break up meetings of the Leicester Secular Society as late as 1983 when he did not seem at all the 'infiltrator' he now claims to have then been. There are several others who give information to possibly *Searchlight* but also to other professional anti-fascist bodies as well (there are even three secret paid press correspondents). Yet they are all active in the National Front, BNP or similar groupings: it is too facile to believe that they are moles, more likely they make their hobby pay by doing a bit of trading on the side while being committed to whichever side of the British fascist scene appeals to them: organisational

The new generation of students were in turmoil. Some of it spread over; but the taste for publicity caught some and they went into publicity; others settled down to reassume their careers perhaps less formally than they have done since, becoming minor union officials rather than personnel managers. The working class felt that the left had become an exclusive club, from which they were banned and nothing is resented more worse than snobbery based, not on class, but on supposed intellect.

## That was a revolution?

One thing that emerged from 1968 was the rise of situationism and the New Left, and the student domination of politics to the exclusion of the working class from their own movement. It became a game and people became cynical. The situationists attacked anarcho-syndicalism because it was a means of struggle and action for the workers, in which they could not participate and were not needed: instead they used the slogan 'workers councils' against them, chanting it like Hare Krishna but relegating them to future spontaneous combustion when the students had had their fun and games—but long before then they'd become media managers with careers.

including Walesa, talked about the need for Glasnost. The strikes escalated with half the workers at the giant Ursus tractor plant near Warsaw taking 24 hour strike action. 3000 workers also came out at a copper mine in W Poland. Overall the strikes had the potential to grow into a general strike.

The main turning point, however, was the brutal smashing of the Nowa Huta action. The action lasted 10 days but was brought to a sudden halt when in the early hour of the morning armed paramilitary police burst into the plant and launched percussion and flash grenades. They then attacked the strikers, beating them severely and detaining many.

This was to have its effect on the occupation in Gdansk. After nine days the occupation ended. But the 700 remaining strikers left the yard together. Later they issued a statement: 'Poland is deep in crisis and the authorities treat the country as their own property. We leave not in triumph but with raised heads. Our strike should make everybody aware that we have to fight to win.'

The Gdansk strikers were under siege and chose a tactical retreat.

Where this now leaves Solidarnosc is anyone's guess. Many of its militants are underground. The water was tested and there is still a significant strength behind the resistance. Solidarnosc has made it clear that the world hasn't heard the last of it.

'Anglo-Irish agreement' is behind this case: that the IRA, believing Paul Hill previously collaborated with the police, set him up and thus the others got dragged in; and the police found this convenient as the Press was crying for arrests. So confessions were made under torture or by dishonoured deals. But whatever the background, they have suffered enough. Of the others charged in this case, Conlon's father has died in prison; Mrs Maguire and her two young sons have served their sentence; do the four have to stay in prison for the sake of vindicating fake evidence? Two former Home Secretaries agree on their innocence; no serving one has found the courage to act.

The disputed vital forensic evidence of Dr Frank Skuse (under tight security at the Old Bailey) have gone missing. Police are said to be 'investigating' what happened to it.

power, football match aggro, commerce in Nazi memorabilia, hustling up the rough trade, racial attacks, populism, (appeal to mass emotions against mass interests), upsetting liberal sensitivities, fund raising from rich punters, or whatever else of many-headed British fascism appeals to their particular minds. None seem particularly to mind grassing up the others.

'Moderation' might seem a more politic role, but it would lose most of the activists. Retarded skinheads aren't going to go round scrawling NF on Asian shop windows in defence of a Bill of Rights nor are football aggro types going to scream insults at South African teams instead, and without them, the other types would soon lose interest: no-one to manipulate, to sell to, to opportune, to bait the liberal bourgeoisie with, or whatever.



"HELLO MOM? GUY IM IN WASHINGTON I GOT BUSTED AT THE SMOKE IN. NO... NO, NOT FOR DOPE... YEH... WELL... JAH WALKIN, MOM... I WAS WALKIN' BAK TA MY CAR AN' I GOT BUSTED FOR JAH WALKIN... YEH... OK... YOU'LL BE HERE IN AN HOUR... NO MOM, I WONT GO ANYWHERE... BAE..."

# LETTERS

Dear Black Flag,

Watch out, your irrational prejudices are showing. I'm writing this as a 'member' (?) of the Black Cross, attending the Leeds conference, and publishing 'Resistance News' as well as writing to and raising money for prisoners. When in Flag 181 Karsten of Germany says she sees no reason for your fighting Marxism, you reply condemning Marxist-Leninism. Great, surely all libertarians, anarchists, anarcho-syndicalists, situationists and council communists oppose Leninism, but Leninism is only one strand of Marxism, and to condemn Leninism is not to condemn Marxism as a whole.

This is an old and pretty stupid mistake. You would presumably describe yourself as 'class struggle' anarchists—well, then, why not try to remember whose definition of class you are using—Karl Marx's! This makes it doubly silly to condemn all Marxism as Leninism.

I have my criticisms of Marx and of aspects of councilism/libertarian Marxism. But I won't condemn it out of hand.

I have also my criticisms of a lot of anarcho-syndicalist practice—the laying down of arms in Barcelona 1937 at the request of CNT 'leaders' who had entered the government was a mistake. It's certainly possible that the mistakes that the CNT did make are mistakes I'd make in that situation too but we should accept that they were mistakes. We mustn't build churches but destroy them. Council communist critiques of syndicalism can be useful just as syndicalist critiques of councilism can be. We must end these divisions between groups who are basically the same thing. Councilist condemnations of anarcho-syndicalists are stupidly arrogant—likewise anarchist/anarcho-syndicalist condemnations of all council communists/libertarian marxists are equally stupid and arrogant. Nobody is perfect and everyone has made and will make mistakes.

Jan Oxford

Comment: Surprisingly, we do know the difference between Marxism and Marxist-Leninism, and have explained it on many occasions. For one thing, Marx didn't support urban armed struggle on the lines of the Red Brigades or similar—these are avowedly Leninist or sometimes Maoist (revolutionary Stalinist). Council communism originally implied workers councils, generally as practised in Germany. It differed from anarcho-syndicalism only in the fact that it didn't accept permanence or encourage resistance (one exception was the individual

van der Lubbe); thus enabling it (since 1968) to be taken up by situationist sloganeers (neither Marxist nor Leninist) who are into student demos but leave workers councils to 'spontaneity' enabling them to distance themselves from reality. Marx didn't claim to invent the class struggle; he interpreted it in terms of evolutionary (inevitable) process, which everyone now knows is false and Marxists gloss over. Yes, the CNT did (we have gone into this so many times it becomes a bit weary) abandon anarcho-syndicalist practice when entering government, with subsequent consequences. For years we were accused of being over-critical of the CNT, but since the phoney shadow was built our critics have accused us of worshipping the genuine one (like being called Scargillite for opposing the UDM). By all means learn from our past mistakes; first find out what they were.



Black Flag,

Re your article 'The right to a general strike' (issue 180 21/3/88)—since when has calling for the 'right' to a general strike been a revolutionary demand? In fact, when has calling for the 'right' to anything been revolutionary? What are we demanding next... the 'right' to abolish capitalism, the 'right' to a classless society etc. Surely we would be very surprised and suspicious if the ruling class granted the right to a general strike!

At least trot groups (SWP, Militant etc.) when they call for the right to something (i.e. right to work, right for wages for housework) don't actually mean it, because it's a transitional demand and therefore impossible under capitalism. you must realise this.

Fighting on the terrain of bourgeois rights at best confuses and at worst diverts the working-class into reformism, legislation and complete passivity.

Yours,

RB 'the bastard council communist'  
Bristol

EDS: We don't see the need to strain at the meaning of words perfectly clear to all workers. Rights doesn't have to imply only legally determined rights—which are usually granted after they have been won elsewhere. Anyone knows what is meant by 'you have no right to expect us to work under these conditions' is 'we won't put up with them' and not just 'the Factory Act says...'

factory—and they employed their own machinists. The Master Ladies Tailors Organisation was set up to help these employers who were working for the fashion houses under sometimes appalling conditions—but they in turn imposed sweatshop conditions on their staff or family hands. 5. The Austrian Government, which had political police agents spying on socialists and anarchists before WW1, decided afterwards (with reduced funds) that anarchists were no longer a threat to 'security' but Italian irredentists (Tyroleans who felt they were Austrian) should be supported; while in the Austrian service (as elsewhere) military espionage went with political, and Italy was a potential threat; result, a few prominent (infiltrated) 'anarchists' had overnight conversions to Italian fascism! 6. Australia!

## ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. The only one who ever did a day's real work (we didn't say an honest one) for himself or the Party was Joseph Stalin, trained for the priesthood, who became a burglar.
2. Jose Netto, secretary of the transport workers in Gibraltar, who ran the dockyards.
3. Ernest Shackleton, the explorer, came of a socialist family who lived in what is now Westwood Hill, Sydenham—his father, a doctor, attended Eleanor Marx after she took her life—his sisters were local suffragists who worked with Louise Michel on some issues. Both Eleanor Marx and Louise Michel lived nearby.
4. The once chronic fragmentation of the garment industry meant outworkers (clothing contractors) started on their own rather than work as cutters in a

## News In Brief



### AVI NAFTEL UPDATE

The judge in Avi's recent trial for attempted escape received many cards and letters from Avi's friends and supporters. She gave Avi the lightest sentence possible under Arizona law and cited the letters she received as a major factor in her decision. Avi's transfer application is now on the desk of Arizona DOC Director Sam Lewis. Your cards and letters have had a powerful impact in the past and they can do so again. Right now letters in support of Avi's transfer are needed and should be sent to:

Sam Lewis,  
Director Az. Dept. of Corrections,  
1601 West Jefferson,  
Phoenix,  
AZ. 85007,  
U.S.A.

### ANARCHIST CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN

On July 23rd between 1 and 6pm there will be an Anarchist Conference for Women at: West Indian Centre, 10 Laycock Place, Chapletown, LEEDS 7

Workshops include: The Mujeres Libres video, Women and Trade Unions, Thatcher's Britain and women, How to improve our Direct Action and there will be space to devise workshops on the day. Creche, accommodation and food are provided. Access is poor but help is available. For further information contact:

Resister,  
c/o Box DAM,  
52 Call Lane,  
LEEDS.

Iron Column Press (5 Hollin Hill, Burnley, Lancs) have produced two postcards—which can be sent to the Japanese Embassy or firms—at a cost of 2.50 for fifty (20p incl postage for individual cards)

# FEEDBACK

## BOOK REVIEW

**Cook: Lives of the Left** (Manchester University Press 1987 4.95 pb) by Paul Davies.

Those who defend ruling class interests are especially given pride of place in our history books, while those who remained loyal to, and fought for, the working class are vilified or ignored. Generally, the greater the degree of vilification, the greater the service that person performed for the working classes.

A good example is the case of A.J. Cook. Described as 'an agitator of the worst type' and 'an emotional firebrand' by contemporary enemies in the bourgeois governments and press and in the labour movement, we have received a distorted view of Cook from the history that takes *The Times* as the authoritative voice of 'neutrality'.

Paul Davies's book shatters this view of Cook, tracing his development from lay preacher to syndicalist collier-activist to Secretary of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain. He was involved in the process that turned the South Wales coalfield from late 19th century conciliation to early 20th century confrontation, playing role a in the Unofficial Reform Committee (which in 1912 published the syndicalist pamphlet *The Miners' Next Step* which argued against conciliation and for workers' control and became the 'bible' for a generation of activists), the Rhondda Socialist Society, the early CPGB and the Miners Minority Movement which played important roles in this transformation. The decision to run for trade union posts was taken by the Welsh syndicalists after they failed to get conferences to back policies to turn the South Wales Miners' Federation into a fighting

instrument: thus in 1924 Cook was elected to become the MFGB secretary. That this didn't become a case of 'poacher turned gamekeeper' was due to Cook's close contact with the rank and file (via MMM), his over-riding concern for the miners' welfare, and his basic syndicalism, to which Davies believes he remained committed to deep down.

The reasons why Cook was so berated in the press and elsewhere was because he was the voice of the miners (their injustices and desires): he spoke not to them but they through him, and what they said was considered to be a threat to society (i.e. the established society); hence Cook, who couldn't be bought off, was attacked.

His commitment was total (it cost him his health and his life) which the miners recognised, and who would turn up in their tens of thousands to hear him, especially during his gruelling speaking tours of the 1926 lock-out.

Through Cook we can see the important role syndicalism played in giving the increasingly combative miners of the early 20 a tool of analysis, a strategy of action and a source of inspiration as laid down in *The Miners Next Step*. This pamphlet, with its argument that the workers could only get and keep what they were strong enough to take, remained a guiding lesson. Cook realised that the miners couldn't win alone and he therefore played an important role in forging the Triple Alliance.

This important book will lead to a re-evaluation of Cook as person, and of his actions, placing him in his rightful place as one of the most committed defenders of the working classes and the miners in particular. This of course was already known to the miners, even after the 1926 defeat.

A.J. Cook was the only leader who seemed to have kept the respect of the men after 1926 (B.L. Coombes, *These Poor Hands* 1939.)

Eddie May

# Anarchy ...

A society which is self-governed; people organizing themselves on an equal basis without leaders or bosses; direct democratic control of our workplaces, neighbourhoods and schools, associated with other communities and exchanging goods and services freely. People give what they can to the community and take what they need. Above all, anarchy is a society where control is decentralized so that all of us have power over our own lives and communities and work cooperatively instead of competitively.

## Curious?

Then come to the Anarchist Survival Gathering in Toronto, July 1-4, 1988. People from all over the continent and around the world are coming to this anarchist 'unconvention' for four days of workshops, theatre, music, theory, action, organizing and fun. The Gathering will feature workshops relating to feminism, anarchism, labour, ecology, modern survival skills (dumpster-diving, health skills etc.), solidarity, prison abolition and a lot more; we'll also be featuring various cultural events such as a concert of anarchist bands and a festival in the park. This is the third of a series of North American anarchist gatherings designed to get activists together to organize and broaden resistance, share ideas and experiences, increase our understanding of this world we live in and strengthen our vision of a peaceful and cooperative world for the future. So if you're already an activist or anarchist/anti-authoritarian, or are just interested in finding out more about non-authoritarian ways of living and working, phone us for more information, or listen to *Ecomedia Radio* on CKLN 88.1 FM, every Tuesday between 7 and 8PM on the "Word of Mouth" show for regular updates on the events planned.



# A Survival Gathering

AN ANARCHIST UNCONVENTION

Toronto, July 1-4 1988

tel:(416) 536-2514