

EMILY and BILL HARRIS REFUTE HEARST DEFENCE CASE

The following is a statement released by Bill and Emily Harris in response to accusations by the Hearst Defence. Although subjected to a variety of implicative statements by the Hearst Defence, Emily and Bill Harris waited deliberately until the Hearst jury was sequestered before releasing this statement. The statement, which was prepared before Patricia Hearst herself testified, is an effort to place in perspective the charade now being played out in San Francisco. There will be a further and more detailed response to the specific tale being spun out by the Hearst Defence. Bill and Emily Harris have made it clear that they would never testify against Patricia Hearst.

The Hearst machine marches on, convinced that their money and influence is enough to pull the wool over the eyes of the American people and trick them into believing that the daughter who "disgraced" them and exposed them for what they are, was in fact brainwashed by revolutionaries. Now the Hearsts have singled out the two of us to justify their evil fabrication. We will not be characterised this way without a fight, and we believe it is only right that that fight take place in a courtroom in Los Angeles around the charges which all three of us face together as co-defendants. We do not want our trial here to begin before the end of Patricia Hearst's trial in San Francisco. We want to wait until she can be tried here with us. We are confident that people will listen to us and that this game of the Hearst family will not be allowed to continue unabated. We are not intimidated by the fact that the Hearst family has unlimited wealth plus access to a large media empire because we have faith in the ability of most people to see and understand the truth when they are allowed access to it.

We have seen this defence being set up for almost two years now — from the very moment the Hearst family heard their daughter say in a communique that she was staying with the SLA. Her family's response then was that she had been brainwashed and they severely chastised the Attorney-General of the United States for calling her a criminal. After Patricia surfaced in a bank robbery, Hearst owned and controlled media hyped the theory that pictures of her inside the bank showed that she was being held at gunpoint, that her taped words indicated duress and that she was in fact probably already dead. After reports came out that Patricia had saved our lives, the Hearst machine was silent because her courageous response there was definitely in contradiction to their "helpless victim" propaganda campaign. After Patricia's capture, Catherine Hearst started in again by admonishing reporters for saying that her daughter had been arrested — "please," she insisted, "call it a rescue."

Now, a million-dollar defence effort has unfolded a case that will never be acceptable in any courtroom, but which has inundated the public mind by utilising a billion-dollar

anarchist organisations but by regard to the proletariat."

Well, they might deny being Leninists but they don't seem to be too shy about holding hands with the old Spectre himself. (Marx, that is . . .)

P.R.

If we take "Leninism" to mean the doctrine of Lenin as laid down in "State and Revolution" (though in fact Lenin laid different doctrines down at different times), we must confess we should not have described the AWA as "libertarian Leninist" as the prefix "libertarian" was an unnecessary qualification. In "State and Revolution" Lenin claims to be for the disappearance of the State while a Marxist in the materialist sense; he denounces some Anarchists like Kropotkin solely for their compromise on the issues of the time (substitute "Freedom") while other Anarchists who go on fighting for their principles are denounced as "bandits", "criminals" and "terrorists" (the word "fascist" was unknown to him but Trotsky helpfully supplied the word "White Guardist").

media empire to run its interference even before a jury was selected. So we are bombarded with a continuous flood of such suggestive details as lie detector tests, head X-rays, psychiatric evaluations, so-called brainwash experts saying, "Yes, she was brainwashed," and F. Lee Bailey pointing the finger at the two of us and dead comrades.

Of course, the supreme irony of the brainwash theory is that now the U.S. government is in the untenable position of having to make the choice between undercutting their own propaganda, which was pushed so heavily during the Korean and Vietnamese Wars, or of acquiescing to the deceitful Hearst defence. We suggest that they will do the latter, and this acquiescence, of course, is what Bailey's defence team is counting on to convince the jury.

And who are the lawyers who have been bought by the Hearsts to prepare so incredible a defence? F. Lee Bailey is a shyster from way back, who will sing the Hearst's song for the right price, not caring in the least that it is a total perversion of the truth. He has defended the My Lai war criminal, Ernest Medina, a real terrorist. And now Bailey, along with Johnson, is peddling a totally offensive war machine helicopter at every pause in the trial proceedings. These two are assisted by Hearst corporate lawyers in what is, in fact, a corporate case.

Out of this very complicated situation, what is Patricia Hearst's role, both past and present? Well, we will tell you that she is far from the weak, hysterical, pampered little heiress that her family has tried to characterise her as. The Patricia Hearst we knew was strong and assertive, making her own independent decisions. The relative smoothness of the whole evolution of her defence from the beginning until now can only be seen as an indication of her willing compliance. People either stand fast or fall when they are called to the test and Patricia Hearst is falling — falling for a game that is based on the ruthless power and privilege of the wealthy. She has wilted like a flower out of the sunlight and, in an almost masochistic process, has lost all pride and respect for herself as a person. Her present reversion does not negate the processes of revolutionary change, as her family so desperately hopes. Instead, it shows that a person does not become a revolutionary overnight, but only out of a lifetime struggle. The possibilities of backsliding are ever present.

But we know that Patricia Hearst will never be able to erase from her mind the awareness and growth that she went through in the past few years. How can she forget our murdered sisters and brothers and the warmth of comradeship that she shared with them — feelings that she herself eloquently spoke of following their deaths? How can she forget the love and respect expressed to her by the men, women and children who helped the three of us during our escape from a similar fate? How can she respect the power of her family in getting her off when she knows that that (cont. p10)

CHANGE OF LINE

I came into the anarchist movement a couple of years ago. I accepted the story in "Freedom" that it is the same paper that has been published since 1886; and was also a bit perturbed at the constant sniping in its columns at the johnny-come-lately "Black Flag", the latter being accused of "violence", "adventurism" even "terrorism", also the snide attacks on Meltzer, Graham, Bonnano and others which now punctuate it from time to time.

Last week I came across some copies of "War Commentary" which changed its title to "Freedom" and some of the early copies of "Freedom" (1946). I thought I was reading "Black Flag", not only the same line but some of the same people! I encountered nothing at all like the so-called "non-violent" line of "Freedom" today.

Imagine the bother "Freedom" would make over Mat Kavanagh's introduction to "The Wilhelmshaven Revolt" if it were an article in "Black Flag".

R.A.P.

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ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS

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ANARCHO-QUIZ

1. British and German soldiers climbed over the trenches on
Christmas Eve 1914 in a spontaneous gesture of peace. After-
wards they sang together — but what broke up the fraternisa-
tion?
2. What equally significant event was organised by London
Anarchists that year?
3. Which revolutionary anarchist organisation adopted the
name "The Liberal Party"?

FOR THE FALLEN

In the old graveyard behind
the fortress of Montjuich
side by side are buried
the brothers Ascaso and
Buenaventura Durruti.
If you go there and stand
in the June sun or under
the scudding clouds
of November you will
hear neither the great wail
of the factories or the sea
groaning into the harbor
laden with goods and freckled
with oil. You will hear
the distant waves of traffic
in the late afternoon rush
and maybe the yellowed grass
eating, for this is that
time in Barcelona, you
will hear your own breath
slowing and time slowing
and then the death of time
because it stops here. You
can go down on your knees
and pray that the spirit
of men and women come back
and inhabit this failing flesh
but if you listen well
your heart will ask
you to stand, under
the fading sun or
the rising moon, it
doesn't matter, either
alone or breathing as you
do now the words
of the fallen and the slow
clouds of diesel exhaust.
Look at your hands. They
are not scarred by
the cigarettes of the police,
and the palms are soft,
the fingers long but
slightly kinked, the hands
once of a boy stained
with the ink of dull reports
the day they laid
Buenaventura beside Francisco
Ascaso and thousands gathered
weeping or sombre. The nails
were bitten down then.
The comrades must have known
it was over, and Joaquin
Ascaso, staring at the earth
that had opened so quickly
for his brothers, must
have whispered soon.
Soon the boy rose
from his desk and went
into the darkness
congealing in cold parlours
or in the weariness
of old pistons, in the gasps
of men and women asleep
and dreaming as the bus
stalls and starts on the way
home from work. And Joaquin,
who had never knelt, rose
and went home to prepare,
knowing he was all
of them, as you know
they are all that gathers
in your hands, all
that is left, words
spoken to no one
left, blurred in
the waves of the old sea,
garlands of red roses
that tattered, chips
of light and dark, fire
and smoke, the burning
and the cold that were
life and can still
shiver these two stiff
and darkening hands.

Philip Levine

4. What is the Woodstock Anarchist Party?
5. What is the significance of 'six fingers' in Spanish
Anarchism?
6. Which well known Anarchist historian was originally a
distinguished Celtic scholar — something which then (the
1880s) was unusual — and later said wryly he had 'always
been attracted to unpopular causes'?

(Answers p14)

Letters & postcards to: Bob Cullen, Des Keane,
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at the Military Detention Centre, Curragh Camp, Co.
Kildare, Eire, and Marie McMurray at Limerick Prison
Eire.

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ULSTER WILL FIGHT!

It is hard to find anywhere in the world where people would
be prepared to die for Protestantism and Roman Catholicism —
indeed, to know what the difference is between them. Yet
in Northern Ireland gunmen can order devotees of the rival
religion to stand aside and be shot — which they do not
trouble to conceal; almost as if they believed the hocus-pocus.

Yet do they really believe. The reason the creased and
tattered symbols of the Pope and King Billy are trotted out
is for sheer want of rhetoric; the Official Sinn Fein with its
equally antiquated Marxist slogan mongering is held in
contempt all round.

Probably a lot of people in Belfast and Derry echo the
sentiments that "it's a terrible thing to be living at logger-
heads with your neighbours" and sympathise with the victims
of "their own" side; but when it comes down to hard tacks
they have to line up with the heavy mob because, whatever
the individual thinks, once she or he is out alone, and set upon
by a gang of "the others" for what may or may not be their
beliefs, the arrival of the other heavy mob is not unnaturally
looked upon with relief. It is a perfect example of the
identity of the protection racket with the embryonic State —
for despite the inanities of the "media", Ulster has never
suffered from "anarchy" . . . what it continues to suffer
from is too much bloody government, too much bloody religion
and too much bloody national consciousness.

Yet for all the clashes there is a sign of hope that the parrot
cries of the Left would obscure, for everybody there is well
aware that troops in or out makes no difference to the
situation: there, and few conceive even in their wildest Celtic
imagination, that the substitution of a harp for the crown
would make the slightest difference to their real life. How
could they believe this when a day trip to Dublin would show
them otherwise?

The sign of hope is the closer and more intimate community
co-operation — for the wider the two major communities
clash with each other, the more they cohere within them-
selves. And both see the struggle in the same terms: of
workers control, of street community, of taking over the
factories and workshops, of building up co-operatives and
getting rid of the landed gentry who have dominated
Protestant politics and tradesman politics who have dominated
Catholic life; and of armed workers acting in defence of their
gains. If it were, as the Left fondly imagines, just a struggle
by a national minority against imperial aggression, it would
be a revolutionary situation; the problem is that it is two
national minorities against each other. The more the struggle
goes on, the more the communities yield to democratic control
and to grass roots pressure.

This applies to both Catholics and Protestants; indeed
the latter after all, pulled off for the first time in British
experience a great social general strike which toppled
the government and scared every government in Europe into
realising how basically vulnerable they are still.

Both Dublin and Westminster want the situation ended;
both are partners in the Common Market; both are under the
same capitalist control. Either community would be "sold
down the river", the problem is finding boats.

There is one difference between the type of grassroots
control that surges through the Catholic ranks and that

which surges through the Protestant ones. The Protestants
could call off the shootings tomorrow if they wanted to. The
gunmen are under tight political control. They are answer-
able to the community. The Catholic gunmen are answerable
only to the dead whose mystique commands the struggle.
The I.R.A. may want to sell out but it cannot, for there
will still be more gunmen. It fell for a Marxist line, then
to be divided between the "Stickies" on the one hand, and
the Provisionals on the other who would not accept an end
to the old warfare. Now the Provos want to sell out, but
splinter groups and breakaways come from everywhere —
from the backwoods of Ulster and from the backwoods of
the Republic . . . all determined to die for an Ireland which
they see almost as a real person rather than an abstract idea.
The U.D.A. and the other para-military bodies won't cease
the shootings until the I.R.A. do; and the I.R.A. can't do it
because somebody is sure to outbid them on the Nationalist
side by yelling Traitor if they do. This is why they extend
the shootings and bombings to England, as if the people on
the 8.15 train know, care or can do anything about the
situation with or without a bomb attack.

Yet without question if the killings ceased the two com-
munities, given their experiences of power resting in the
people after years of subservience, could put through a social
revolution in co-operation with each other that would be
a beacon to all free peoples.

How is the impasse to be solved?

The official lectures on the merits of pacifism, always
readily preached in peace-time even by Ministers of War, do
not seem to help much.

We shall see an answer to the question if we look at one
very curious fact about the killings.

In one sense they are "indiscriminate". But in another sense
they are highly discriminate. People are killed at random —
for being alone at night in a country lane, for drinking in
a pub, for shopping in a certain store, for being a member
of the wrong confession, for getting in the way of a bomb . . .
they are taken from their houses, their places of work.

But leading members of the military organisations are as
immune from these shootings as they are from military
arrest. The generals have yet to die, even in bed. Mr. Paisley,
for instance, walks from his suburban villa to his chapel,
perfectly openly, without a care in the world . . . How does
this come about? What magic talisman does he have against
the Provos that Paddy Murphy or Jock McHugh doesn't
have? "Well, if we shot Paisley, they would shoot Joe Cahill."
So they shoot twenty workers instead; and the U.D.A. shoots
twenty Catholics.

It is too much one supposes to ask the Billy Boys to give
up any shootings in retaliation against the I.R.A. But let
them confine themselves at least to those who give the com-
mands. If the I.R.A. feel "the struggle must go on", let
them confine themselves to those who give the orders, or at
least to those who carry them out, not to the unknown
passer-by. It is no more difficult than to lob a bomb in a
pub, and a lot more productive. It will, we venture to think,
lead to as dramatic and rapid a conversion to the principles
of peaceful co-operation by the bold Fenian diehard and
Orange leadership as the conversion of Paul on the road to
Damascus.



ROON'n'ABOUT

ALL OUT WHENEVER!

Periodically we get appeals to support the Troops Out Movement or the BWNIC which never fail to remind us that "anarchists should not overlook" the proximity of Belfast or the fact that Lenin (coily "if one may quote him to anarchists") said that revolutionaries might have to ally themselves with bourgeois nationalists after the war, or even that "at least we can DO something practical"

They quote Lenin out of context — not that he's that much to go on *in* context, but after all, the bourgeois nationalists he was talking about two wars ago turned fascist long since. What they never seem to realise is that Uncle TOM cobbler and all aren't GETTING the troops out, they are only organising demos about it. Not only should Western governments by now be pretty demo-immunised but quite clearly they well prefer if Irish nationalism there must be, TOM, BWNIC and other forms of agitation to the IRA's activities.

What have these demos to do with Ireland save lending a topical and trendy image, a catch-all for large minority — or even majority — of those British citizens with real, pretended or imagined Irish blood in their veins? The "new left" above all the ubiquitous trots, utilises topical matters — Ireland, Palestine, Chile, Shrewsbury, Vietnam, closures of factories, and whatever — in order to hold demos which are an end in themselves. Their aim is to establish a credible presence, to gather support, to raise funds for themselves, to "do something" about the issue at stake, maybe as a side-issue. But ask the organisers in private if they seriously believe their demonstrations will actually achieve the result aimed at: if they think you know your way around, they will tell you "No, but" talks about "raising the level of consciousness of the masses". They might try to raise their own sometime.

Meantime spare a smile at all those earnest lefties going on about the machinations of British financial imperialism which will hold on to Ulster to the bitter end unless persuaded not to do so by 5,000 chanting demonstrators. No, "the British" no not hang on because of finance capitalism, all the profits in Ireland made by them (and German and Japanese capitalists too) are in the Republic, under the harp and tricolour by eager workers who popped into Mass before the early shift. Ulster must by now be as profitable as a corner in Tsarist bonds on the Moscow Stock Exchange.

Free Ireland — or free Irish?

What constitutional shape a United Ireland should take, urges Mr. Pat Coogan, who holds that a merger of the two parts would make up quite a different entity (it could not be worse than either), should be left to a round table discussion by "every political grouping involved in the Northern dilemma." ("The Irish: a personal view").

This seemingly-sounding democratic formula is a recipe for dictatorship and of the worst kind. The most revolutionary achievement of the workers to date has been to create representative councils based on the whole community — these were "the Soviets" in Russia (the use of the term "the Soviet" to describe the State has not been equalled since the Roman State adopted the name "Christian"). But when Lenin returned to take over (thanks to Helphand Parvus who engineered the Bolshevik triumph) he proposed "as a measure of democracy" that the soviets should consist of "representatives of all parties". The others fell for it. Lenin, Trotsky and the others had no standing in the original soviets — they never did a day's work in their lives; even if one or two of them had managed to qualify as representatives of the journalists, the philosophers or the professional revolutionaries, they wouldn't have had much of a showing. As representatives of the wealthiest party (again thanks to the wily financier) they became powerful, and ultimately dominated.

All the parties involved in the Ulster dispute were self-appointed, and attract "followings" as shit attracts flies. In no way does any of them express the aspirations of the people of Northern Ireland. They represent the attempt of ambitious

men to seize the opportunity of the situation. Their round-table discussion might produce peace based on their power; or as easily produce conflict provided it is based on their power.

What is the average man or woman in Northern Ireland able to do when sorted out in the street at pistol point and challenged as to a belief into which they were entered as babies, from which, in the peculiar tradition of Northern Ireland, they have apparently no choice to opt out and for which they are no more responsible than the pigmentation of their skins.

They seek protection in a gang leader offering cover for such an identity.

Certainly, Mr. Coogan is right to suppose that if the gang leaders could get together they might find a formula for co-existence. But this is too impractical for the Anarchist, who would prefer to get rid of the gang leaders and let the people decide for themselves.

Sieghel Stevenson Again

The case of Mr. Justice Melford Stevenson (the word "Justice" is used in the narrowest possible legal sense) has come under review by the Press because three of his judgments were queried by the Lord Chief Justice in one day, including an incident where he told the defendant's lawyers that he would get a very severe sentence unless he pleaded guilty.

This variation of "we means to hang you, but we means to hang you fair" — which according to legal niceties is not quite the same as blackmail — was criticised by the Appeal judges largely because it isn't the done thing to be so frank about it.

It transpires that there have been many worries about Mr. Melford Stevenson's judicial abilities. The Bar Council expresses its concern at the threat to democracy if a judge could be moved; he would no longer be independent, no less. It never occurs to them (how should it?) that it is somewhat of concern to citizens of the democracy who happen to find themselves before Mr. Justice Melford Stevenson.

The sycophantic press has for long praised him as being a "tough" judge. What is tough about dealing out heavy sentences or unjust ones, from the coward's castle of the bench? Where is the problem of being outspoken? What consequences are incurred? "We must not hastily rush to criticise," but meanwhile, anyone unfortunate enough to appear before Melford Stevenson might get an extra five years jail while "we" hesitate to criticise.

AUTO DESTRUCTIVE ARTIST . . . EXTRAORDINAIRE

Friends of Albert Meltzer will be staggered to read David Widgery's "authoritative" new book on the British Left and find that, as well as being "an ex-boxer and printworker" (it was only amateur boxing, many years ago) he is credited with being formerly "auto-destructive artist extraordinaire". Artist? Has he been hiding his talents from us? Or is it a subtle in-joke at the friends who have crashed his car over the past few years?

There happens to be a Gustav Metzger (a gnome of a man very unlike our burly friend) who invented "auto-destructive art." One fears Widgery has confused Meltzer with Metzger. Anyone knowing the work of Metzger will be a bit startled to think Widgery is under the impression he gave up falling into collapsible boxes and ripping up the floor of Better Books in the name of art, to write the sort of articles that appear in Black Flag. When one thinks of Albert Schweitzer and the bizarre possibilities Widgery missed (the search for the historic Black Cross at Lambarene?) one cannot forgive the Lord Chief Justice (or is that another Widgery?)



ANARCHIST FILM

"QUEBRACHO" — Anarchist film from Argentina.

"La Forestal" was a large British company which exploited the "Quebracho" timber in two provinces of Argentina. Within Santa Fe mile upon mile of land and entire towns were forced into dependence on the company to such an extent that even the railways connecting towns were built and owned by it.

Even the provincial police, were paid by the company. At the beginning of this century until the early '30s most of the company's workers belonged to the anarchist movement, and one of their most popular "leaders" was an anarchist school teacher who used his talents in spreading libertarian ideas amongst the workers (most of whom were illiterate).

A new film made in the Argentine "Quebracho" tells the history of the workers' battles against "La Forestal's" terrible exploitation. They lived in absolute poverty, the company "paying" them not with money but by "bonus". This meant the workers could only shop at the company owned stores.

The police killed many of the workers during this period and virtually, literally exterminated the influential anarchist movement in the province.

Later, a political party emerged called "The Radical Party", led by a lawyer who took the side of the workers and wanted to win the struggle against the British exploitation by being elected as a Senator. But the Conservatives, supported financially by the company, organised a rigged election and the lawyer was murdered by police as he tried to denounce the fraud in a public square.

In the film many anarchist meetings appear, pictures of well known libertarian activists, and the black and red flag. The film ends in the late 1930s, when all the Quebracho wood had been liquidated. The company decided to close down its operations in Argentina and moved to virgin forests in South Africa, leaving the province of Santa Fe with thousands unemployed. The province has not recovered economically from the exploitation by La Forestal to this day.

One of the most striking things shown by the film, is the coercive role of the police who do not hesitate at the murder of hundreds of workers.

The film was apparently allowed to appear because the capitalists were British, exploiting Argentinians, but later the censors saw the somewhat wider implications.

Patagonia Rebelde a previous film which was written by an anarchist journalist, Osualdo Bayer, portrayed the struggle of the anarcho-sindicalist workers' movement in the cold and inhospitable south of Argentina. It is considered by many Argentinian comrades as a fantastic contribution to the work of the anarchist movement today. The film was shown for weeks in many commercial cinemas before the Peronist government changed its mind and decided to ban it. Osualdo Bayer was threatened by the "Triple-A" murder squads (fascist para-police) and is now believed to be living somewhere in Europe to escape being murdered.

These are two films to add to a growing list of must films which have never been shown here. Is there anyone who has connections with the film racket who can 'work the miracle'? — or is the National Film Theatre content to go on showing Charlie Chaplin and Rene Clair under the heading "Anarchist Cinema."



ANTI—FASCISM

Six years ago the security forces wanted to build up a massive challenge to the establishment but to keep it under control. They wanted to present a threat of (contained) insurgency, but to keep it within bounds. They wanted, in short, a repetition of what was happening in Paris, but within the degree in which they could control it, and test how they could keep it in bounds. Accordingly, throughout the summer of 1968 a hysterical press campaign was mounted claiming that an “armed revolution” was being planned for October, and the nation was thus subject to a sort of dress rehearsal for revolution and counter-revolution in the capital. The press campaign could hardly be bettered for sheer lies, with detailed plans coming out daily — in which the Times and the Mirror worked hand in hand, the former proving the more sensational.

The demonstration around which it centred was run by the International Marxist Group, then controlling the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign. It managed to manoeuvre the other Trotskyist groups within the committee to provide the “hare” for the State’s “hounds”. Now, once again, the IMG is obligingly letting itself be used all over the country in staging an entirely phoney confrontation with the National Front. When it calls for demonstrations against “racialism” and fascism, the other trot groups can scarce be outdone, so they all have to join in. IMG didn’t invent racist issues, but it has exploited them; as fully as has the National Front. One has only to compare the purely racial issue made of the Leicester dispute by the IMG with the way the IWW once handled similar situations in the USA.

The situation that the IMG enjoys is the reverse of the medal of the fascist “Victory March” technique. This technique is to hold victory-type parades through districts known to be hostile to them, or to places which it appears as if they are “capturing”, though it is all planned beforehand. Sir Oswald Mosley used this trick in the thirties by staging marches through proletarian Jewish quarters; it is now done by present day fascists through places inhabited by coloured immigrants. If there is no opposition, the fascists appear to be winning — victorious everywhere. If there is opposition, they are being “coerced” by the “old parties” and — more importantly — appeal for police protection. This gives them added power — to march provocatively, but be protected from the consequences by the police (who take all the knocks and get all the blame but who feel identification with those who politically exploit them).

The opposite to this was the old CP technique whereby the demos become an attack on the police. If successful, they have won a great victory: “control of the streets” which vanishes when everyone goes home to bed. If they lose, or a few people get beaten up, this is a sign of the brutality of the police. (. . . “the swines of social democratic police . . . the bloodhounds of Noske . . .” *great applause* . . . all good old Weimar Republic stuff). Need one recapitulate the events of Red Lion Square?

This role has been taken over by the IMG which, because of its student following, is able to bring out huge amounts on demos. Just as the CP have, on certain issues, still a limited working class though ageing following, on other issues the trot groups have a recognisable student fallback. There is not much to learn from them on organising demonstrations (for this anyone can do, given the people); but what they have done is to fall back on the student ‘heavies’ who in a previous day and age would have been heaving coppers’ helmets at the Boat Race.

What is pointless about this type of confrontation is that it attacks the National Front precisely on the issue on which the latter is most likely to gain support; gives publicity to them on which they thrive, and (worst of all) challenges those workers attracted by the racist theory, causing a confrontation dividing the class.

The racist line must be attractive to some workers in certain circumstances, which need to be analysed and thrashed out. We do not need to emulate those half-and-half libertarians always timid of any confrontation and falling back on a pacifist line at the first opportunity: obviously the fascists must be fought, but it does not have to be on grounds of their own choosing.

The fascists are weakest on class issues. They are only strong on racist ones. Mosley was defeated in the thirties not as a result of confrontation by “anti-fascists” demos but by the building in the first place, by Anarchists and ILP of housing strikes in the East End which totally isolated the fascists, who were unable to support the strikes, and obliged to go clear against the interests of (and to attack) the workers on whom they called for solidarity on racial grounds. It particularly hurt them that they were not allowed by fascist HQ to support rent strikes where there were Jewish landlords; though Jewish tenants were active in the strikes irrespective of the race or religion of the landlord. The point could scarcely have been made more clear.

There is too much “in no circumstances allow the fascists to speak” nonsense today, trying to evoke memories of the 30s (“they shall not pass”) in totally different circumstances — to show the trots are the true heirs of all that is stalinist! (They stood aside with sneers at the time!) But there is not enough of *real* anti-fascism. Stop their “victory marches”; but let them dissipate their energies in small meetings talking to the faithful but bored few — alas, do we not know how deadly enervating this is? Real anti-fascism does not consist in tackling those few, unconvertible fascists who have turned their creed into a way of life, who still treasure Hitler photos and cracked Nazi records and collect swastika medals alongside torn Union Jacks . . . let the *closet fascists* enjoy what gives them their kicks. The tougher, rewarding job is to put over a true libertarian case to those whom their propaganda is directed to reach — the people at the lower rungs of the social ladder, to whom it sounds logical to attribute all the problems of society to an identifiable race — which ever it happens to be at the moment — since the hopes once presented by socialism, and even libertarian socialism, have been lost with the triumph of State socialism and parliamentarism.

AFRICA

RHODESIA/ZIMBABWE

The closing of the border between Mozambique and Rhodesia was part of the programme of the Frelimo Government of Mozambique when it took power about a year ago. The implementation of this policy has been delayed because Mozambique felt that to take such a step shortly after independence could jeopardise the stability of the country.

Coupled with the victory of the MPLA in Angola the border closure is another move in Southern Africa towards a real confrontation. Inexorably the pressures of African nationalism move towards Namibia and South Africa itself. But it looks as if Rhodesia is next on the agenda.

The financial and economic interests of capitalism are at stake, which helps to explain why both Russia and Cuba are showing great interest in the region. Whether those with vested interests in Southern Africa opt for the increasing instability of white rule or the uncertain future of installing black (or multi-racial) elites in power is an open question. Rhodesia or Zimbabwe, Nkomo or Smith — who cares as long as labour is cheap and profits high.

THE U.G.T. A WARNING

We have warned repeatedly about the con trick on British trade unionists respecting the Union General de Trabajadores (UGT) the former official socialist trade union movement of Spain.

In its best days, this was a union similar to the TUC — but with a minority representation, since the majority of workers belonged to the anarcho-syndicalist CNT. During the dictatorship under the Monarchy, and later under the republic, it sought to increase its membership by parliamentary representation and illegalisation of its opponent — at the cost of workers unity.

During the civil war, under the overwhelming pressure of its members, it joined in the collectivisation. But afterwards it collapsed. It played no part in the Resistance because by **virtue of its principles** it could not do so. As a “vertical syndicate” like the TUC, controlled by the top, it had no function when the leadership were arrested, shot or imprisoned. It could not operate in illegality because by its every principle

it was constituted to operate in legality. Furthermore, the Falangist syndicate **took over its role** since it was organised in **precisely the same way**.

What is the point of reconstructing it now, since it is constructed in the same way not only as the TUC — but also as the “vertical syndicate” of the Falangists? The Communists now advocate “a single unitary trade union.” Franco has always granted this. The Falangist union is subservient to the State, but not more so than the trade unions in Russia; only to a degree less so than the trade unions in Britain.

The Trotskyists are rushing to grab the TUC money for themselves, claiming to be the UGT — though the Trotskyist students from Spain who claim this are unknown to veterans of the UGT in exile. The “Militant” group and the “Young Socialists” are the main racketeers in this deliberate fraud — taking the money contributed by British workers to the TUC under false pretences.

THE SPECIAL BRANCH

The Special Branch continue to harass Stuart Christie. Through Interpol, the retaliation by the Spanish secret police against our comrade for his abortive attempt at the assassination of Gen. Franco eleven years ago continues. He was released after serving 3½ years of a 20 year sentence; as a result of a widespread campaign on his behalf. When it was seen that not only did he not recant his views — as was expected — but went on to collaborate with the Spanish Resistance and to co-operate in the setting up of the Anarchist Black Cross, as well as with the editorship of this paper, a counter-campaign of police action began which has not finished.

There was the trial at the Old Bailey — when obvious propaganda leaflets, reproducing a dollar in offset and labelled “One life” (Una Vida) were said to be “forgeries” of real dollars (it is something done as an election or advertising campaign, weekly). It ended in a suspended sentence. Then there was the notorious “Stoke Newington — Angry Brigade” trial when he was kept in custody for eighteen months before being acquitted because (as Commander Bond said) “you have publicly admitted being involved in the anarchist movement”.

One cannot count the police raids on his homes but the one by the French police, acting for the Spanish police, surely stands out as a milestone; this in London, when he and the others were selected in this way.

Now we find him banned first from Western Germany on his way to an anti-Franco meeting at Offenbach — when the border police turned him back as being on a secret international “forbidden” list. At first the pretence was that he had insufficient funds with him; when he returned with sufficient funds, in a friend’s car, they were surrounded by armed police and ordered out at rifle point. The Dutch police — co-operating with the German police as they did before the war — also forbade him to stay in Holland. But the latest event is surely the limit.

He has been forbidden entry to Canada for a three week stay. On protest being made about the refusal to admit him the Government has decided at *Cabinet level*, that while he cannot be admitted (as if they owned the earth above the

Footnote: The latest in the “Christie Saga” is that the London publishers Michael Joseph had commissioned his book “The Christie File” on his experiences with the police under two flags, a libertarian autobiography. A great deal of work had gone into the book, an advance paid, the manuscript copy-edited, catalogues and advertising material printed, and the book itself was scheduled to appear in the Spring of this year. Now Michael Joseph write to say that their lawyers advise against publication and they hope another “more courageous” publisher can be found.

49th parallel and below Alaska) they will graciously reconsider the matter *after the Olympic Games!*

Is it that they want to keep all the gold medals for Canadian athletes? — or are they concerned not to allow the passage of libertarian thought? Perhaps they should remember Goethe’s dictum that thought must be allowed to travel toll-free . . . something I had to remind the Special Branch at Swansea when they questioned my having a few copies of this paper on boarding the ferry for the Irish Republic.

This is not a personal matter which concerns Christie alone. It is obvious he would not have been subject to this persecution had he even after his imprisonment in Spain, or even after his acquittal in the Angry Brigade case — retired to private life, cease militancy, play no more part in the international struggle. These continued restrictions and harassments are because of his association with the rest of us in **Black Flag**.

It is remarkable under their own terms of reference that a British subject can be refused permission to enter Canada; that French police can enter British homes against the wishes of the residents, that Spanish fascist police can work in this way even though the Cabinet expressed its disapproval of Franco . . . because of his police state!

We can only take consolation in the fact that, on the lines of the man who could prove he was sane because he had been certified discharged from a mental hospital, the governments have disproved their usual allegation that anarchism is due to “alien agitators” . . . the deportations and exclusions of Christie always land him back on these shores! But in these days to be confined to one country is to be in a prison. Is this treatment considered good enough . . . even for someone collaborating in **Black Flag** — whose words cause so much consternation in so many Governments? There are for sure worse prisons . . . but it has come to this, in 1976, that “this precious jewel set in a silver sea” is to be regarded as a prison island?

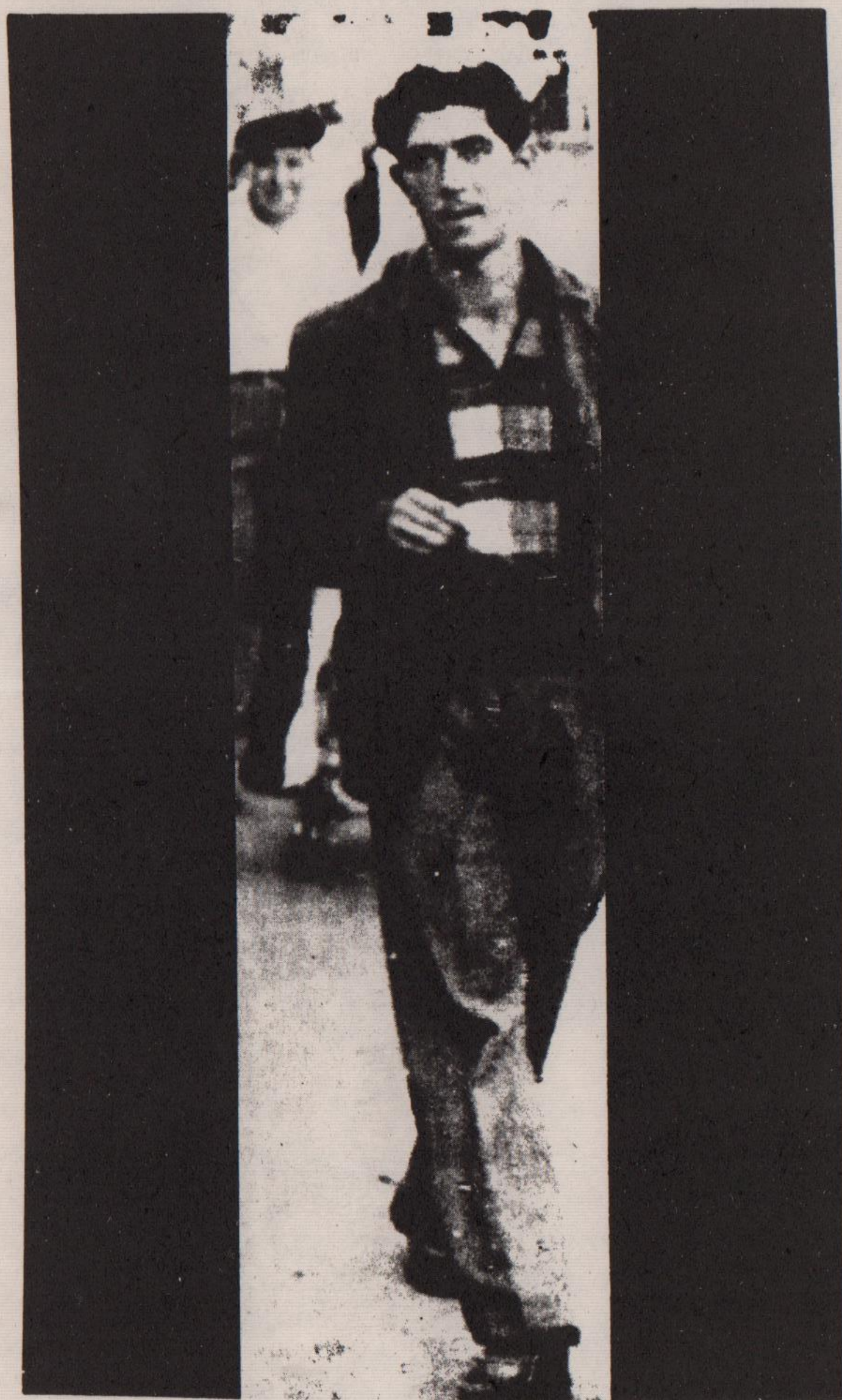
A.M.

UNKNOWN HEROES

Jose Perez Pedrero was in his early twenties when he faced the firing squad, as the result of the round-up of our section of the Resistance, one of the five whose death sentence was carried out — others had it commuted to various terms, 30 years in my case. At the last moment the lieutenant in charge of the executions asked if there were any last messages. Nobody answered, but Jose took the silk handkerchief off his neck and asked the officer to give it to his mother.

The Falangist secret policeman who was present wanted to snatch it away. “None of that, don’t play the martyr!” But the lieutenant, to his credit, told him to shut up. “You have to say here.”

Like many others, his mother received it as one of the last relics of her son snatched by the dictatorship. Had it



Jose Perez Pedrero

happened a few years earlier, she might have received a pension from France; for Jose had been one of the first to enter the Resistance during the war. He survived the war to take the Resistance to Spain — and who would give a pension for a son executed as a “criminal”?

When he took up arms in the Resistance, he was about 14 years old. His parents had escaped the triumph of the Spanish Army to take refuge in France, which isolated them in concentration camps as if they were wild animals. He gravitated naturally into the anarchist Resistance which refused to accept Franco’s victory, and was in the wave of anarchist resistance that came after the World War and in many ways was equal in intensity, suffering, drama and historic importance to the events of the civil war.

All the guerrillas had the habit of calling each other by

affectionate sarcasms. Jose had a terrific appetite and when on the trek over the mountains, at the regulation ten minutes halt in every hour, he could — as the Spanish say — “even eat stones”. The first thing they did on the stops was to take off their loads, and usually eat. He was called El Tragapanes because in a few moments he would “swallow” one of those huge Spanish loaves which were cheap and still the basic food of the friendly farms. With his happy-go-lucky temperament, he would greet the name of “the Bread Swallower” with great bursts of laughter.

Like many others, even “el Quico” himself, he started his “career” with Massana who trained them all in the art of crossing the border and passing over the mountains. But Massana, like many others, was only in his element in the mountains; he would not go in the towns. This is where he had to part from people like Sabate who were attracted to the towns where they organised groups of workers as well as fighting in their element. Jose too was irresistibly drawn to Barcelona where his ties were and the sight of the enemy was a constant provocation to action.

On one occasion coming over the Pyrennes a group with which “el Tragapanes” was working spotted a patrol of three Guardia Civil. They hid in the bushes to let them go past. Suddenly Jose stood up, with utter daring, and told them they were covered, and to throw down their arms. They did so. The rest of the group then told them to take off their clothes. The Guardia Civil were convinced their last hour had come, were weeping and saying how many children they had dependent on them . . . But whatever the regime propagandists say, the Resistance weren’t bloodthirsty. They just hid the clothes in one spot and the arms in another — which gave them a good two hours start before they were recovered — and went off saying, “You don’t report us, and we won’t report you.” For the Guardia Civil would not report such an incident (which would have meant court martial after suspension without pay).

Such is the Guardia Civil, so arrogant and bullying when dealing with disarmed opponents, who swagger around like conquerors. But they are as cowardly as rabbits when faced with such a situation, possibly knowing they are hated by the conquered people.

Once coming across the Pyrennes the group went into one of the numerous friendly farms where they could be assured of protection. All these people were supporters of the CNT and the Guardia Civil knew it, so they were regularly checked by patrols. On this occasion their look-out spotted three Guardia Civil approaching the farm, and the farmer hid them in the hayloft. When the patrol came in, the acting corporal asked the question, “Anyone here?” “Nobody”. It was only a routine visit, but he decided, “Well, let’s have a look.” The group had no interest in provoking a fight and involving the farmer and his family. But the acting corporal was anxious for promotion and insisted on looking in the hayloft. As they went up the winding stair, the group were waiting breathlessly. One of them (still living) was crouched at the ready like an athlete. The Guardia drew his automatic. But too late. The other shot first. The other two Guardia Civil streaked off like lightning, one disappearing through a tiny window overlooking a precipice, from which he picked himself up agile as a cat and rushed off. Those who were there still wonder as to how so large a man got through so small a window!

The farmer and his 18 year old son escaped with the guerrillas into France to avoid persecution for their giving hospitality to the enemies of Franco. “El Tragapanes” was not responsible for the shooting; he just happened to be there. But this was what he was ultimately executed for — at least the pretext, for his real crime was his undying enthusiasm for the libertarian cause.

Miguel Garcia.

BUILT IN OBSOLESCENCE

“WORKERS’ PRESS” (daily paper of the Trotskyist “Workers Revolutionary Party”) is no more! The Party still exists — though members are dropping out, forming new groups, or being expelled left, right and centre(ist) [. . . the entire Nottingham branch left en block!] — but no more shall we be invited to scan its unyielding pages (sic). This incident underlines two curious things . . . a separation, not only from the working class (discussed in “Bridge of Asses”) but also from participation in revolutionary struggle; and shows that such groups can only advance so far and no more.

To better understand this built-in obsolescence which diverts activity away into sterile commentary — spectators of the actions of others — we should go back for a moment to the man who began the syndrome: Leon Trotsky.

It is not incidental that Trotsky was at his best when engaged in polemic or historical commentary. In terms of original ideas he could only boast a part share, with the dubious Helphand Parvus, in creating the concept of “Permanent Revolution” (an attempt to justify Marx’s “proletarian” revolution, that should have happened in industrial Germany, happening in peasant Russia). As critic Trotsky kept his head above water. But as the man in control (expected to provide new initiatives) he could only clutch Lenin’s coat-tails (who in turn clutched those of Marx) lest he drown. He had no experience of leading the party machine (only the military one: the Red Army) and owed his prominence in the Bolshevik party to Lenin who protected his “young eagle” from nasty men like Joe Stalin. He had even been a critic of the Bolsheviks before they came to power in 1917 but the opportunity to grab a seat on the dialectical bandwagon proved too good to miss. In power it was as henchman of Lenin that Trotsky wielded his famous “Iron Broom”. With the death of his protector Trotsky was easy meat for Stalin. The much boasted “Left Opposition” was too little, too late. Trotsky, then as now, was never able to inspire any real mass following.

The Fourth International (bolting after the horse had shut the door) could only criticise the Stalinist bureaucracy, it could not aspire beyond it (or even understand its real causes). The Trotskyists started from a questioning of Soviet bureaucracy which might have led them to a critique of Leninism itself. They were never able to make that vital step . . . Trotsky always remained in awe before the altar of Lenin: seeing only the leadership of the machine as being at fault. He would not or could not admit that it was the machinery itself (because it was he who had helped create it) that was at fault. Throughout his life Trotsky refused to recognise the existence of a separate class within the bureaucracy because of his unconditional surrender to the Leninist form of organisation. With the Fourth International, the Trotskyists only reproduced the same Leninist model (on a smaller scale) and thereby constructed a barrier which precluded any further development.

The Trotskyists themselves completely fossilised the “old man’s” ideas (or lack of them) into an inaccessible dogma after 1940 in which the magic date 1923 marked the turning point before which everything in Russia was rosy and after which everything was not. Since then, just as the Bolshevik Party purged itself of dissent, the Trotskyist movement has split, reformed, allied, and split again more times than Trotsky had hot samovars . . . growing more dogmatic over

smaller and smaller points of “principle” with every split. I am reminded of the old saying “a chip off the old block” . . . but how many chips can come off the same block before only a few dregs of sawdust remain (unnoticed) underfoot? Poor Trots, that the only task they see after each fresh disintegration is the rebuilding of the same pre-doomed structure!

This harping back to the organisation form of Leninism reveals the complete impotence of such grouplets when it comes to furthering today’s class struggle. All of them are incapable of achieving what they set out to do, (build the party); each prefers to be a big fish in a small pool but all end up by eating one another. Their entire energies are devoted to recruiting members. Activity for them consists of newspaper selling geared to building up organisations which contain within them the seeds of their own destruction. If they were ever to reach a situation of having sufficient members to warrant the label ‘party’ they would not know what to do with them. But none of them will ever get that far.

Activism for the Trotskyists is translated into commentary on a spectacle which they are outside and powerless to direct or influence (a curious dilemma for the “vanguard of the revolution”)! Appeals to join the party, ‘solidarity’ campaigns (solidarity with the actions of others) which involve no real commitment, and the sticking up of a few posters here and there are passed off as the levers of social change. If anyone outside their control does anything (and no-one inside their control does anything!) that takes the fight into the enemies’ camp (the Angry Brigade, 2nd June Group, etc) they are immediately disowned (or in the case of Spanish resistance, ignored) for being ‘adventurist’ or ‘individualist’.

Even within (or properly speaking, in the name of) the anarchist movement we can see this spectacle manifesting itself in the emergence of ORA/AWA (whose students label themselves “anarchist workers” instead of “socialist workers”).

Faced with an inactive and unevenly organised anarchist movement, and challenged by the superficial influence (sic) of the Trotskyist spectre, they retreat in like fashion to the dusty ‘platform’ of Makhno and Arshinov in the same manner as the WRP approaches Trotsky’s “transitional platform”. Lenin’s party model and Arshinov’s platform were both aimed at specific historical situations in which the people they were to organise actually existed. They cannot be applied to every period of class struggle in every country regardless of local economy/historical/social characteristics and regardless of the existence of those they seek to organise. That is like trying to fit square pegs into round holes when you don’t even have the pegs!

ORA/AWA hasn’t organised the anarchist movement, it has separated itself from it. It has gone from a situation of not enough activity into one of no activity. Like the Trots, they can only watch (and repudiate) the activity of others. We are still waiting to see what (if anything) they can do. The logical consequence of this situation is dissolution and further retreats: for the ORA/AWA, the Trotskyists sects offer a not too hectic rest-home: for the Trots, the even more comfortable repose of becoming bigger fish in smaller pools.

P.A.R.

MARTIN SOSTRE

WE HAVE HAD ENOUGH RHETORIC
WHAT WE NEED NOW IS HARD WORK

Sostre.

24 January

Dear Comrades,
Heartfelt thanks for your support all these years which contributed to the victory which will soon — hopefully the 2nd or 3rd of next month — free me. Enclosed are some accounts of the victory and some of my thoughts. Please publish whatever you deem appropriate to further the cause of Anarchism and inform comrades all over the world of an Anarchist victory.

With love and revolutionary anarchist greetings of solidarity I remain, your comrade in struggle till victory,

MARTIN SOSTRE.

AN ANARCHIST VICTORY

Martin Sostre has been released at last — as reported in our last issue. The "Village Voice" declares he "remains as intransigent as ever despite 23 years in prison, eight in solitary." While serving a 30-41 year prison sentence imposed in 1967 allegedly for serving heroin — on testimony since proved to be framed, and as a result of his activities as a black activist — he has resisted tyranny to the utmost. Above all he has made a stand for human dignity in refusing — despite beatings up and coercion — the humiliating

rectal examination which is in effect a covert sexual assault with intent to degrade.

Perhaps it was the voice of Andrei Sakharov pleading on Sostre's behalf that finally shamed the Governor. It is hailed as a "victory for justice" by the "New York Post" — some victory for justice, when you've spent eight years for nothing in prison. Sostre himself hails it a victory for revolutionary anarchism; every one of our prisoners who goes free is cause for congratulations. And more especially when it is a man like Sostre who challenged the validity of all-white parole boards, sued for damages when confined illegally, won the right to read for himself (including the "Man" anthology). Every day has been a hard struggle.

He is going to work as a legislative assistant to Marie Runyon, Democratic Assembly woman. This is to give him the credentials needed to go back inside the prisons and work with the inmates. At 52, he needs courage to go back in the jails where his life was constantly in danger. Courage he has. "Oppressors count on terror to make people submit. They have no defence against non-submission. It louses up their machine," he said.

"If the battlefield changes, my struggle never changes," he is reported as saying in the New York Times.

He goes back into grassroots propaganda, fighting for prisoners' rights "but human rights are human rights."

THE HARRIS'S STATEMENT (cont. from back page)

power was and is built on the blood and sweat of millions of poor and working people? How can she forget that in order to free herself they want her to sell out two of her friends and the most precious memories she has? When we are not enraged, we really feel pity for her.

The SLA never had any interest in converting Patricia Hearst. In fact, they wanted her to return to her family, knowing that if she stayed, their own survival would be greatly complicated. The group took the position that if she wanted to stay, she must show that she understood the implications, was ready to deal with all the hardships that the life entailed, and was ready to struggle to become a revolutionary person. But she had seen a viable alternative to her previous life and she had already gained a sense of the warmth and humanity of the people she was with who were struggling to achieve that alternative. Eventually, she wanted to be a part of it. The SLA understood that she would be a liability in the sense that she was easily recognised, that she had many needs that would be a drain on the group at that stage, and that the heat would intensify rather than gradually diminish. It was clear to the SLA that if she was not released, that heat would be augmented by the relentless efforts of the Hearst family to get back their "prized possession." Yet in spite of all these very real problems, Patricia's desire was based on a serious analysis of what was happening and the SLA felt that to release her would be to turn her out to the wolves. So she stayed with them, based on her own initiative and free choice.

It is only now that her free choice has been taken away and that she has been convinced to save her own skin by negating these past choices and thereby evading the consequences. Of course, to do this, she must be willing to serve as a co-operative pawn of her family and to compromise everything that she believed in and lived for the last year and a half.

The Hearst family has given the American people quite an education in the callous power and influence that the rich can buy. But no matter what the outcome of Patricia Hearst's present court battle, we know that no one has been fooled and many are enraged along with us that the Hearsts would fabricate such lies and expect all of us to fall for them.

Emily & William Harris, February 1976.

ITALIAN PRISONERS

The solidarity of the revolutionary movement is of paramount importance to all victims of State repression. While we may not agree with the strategies and methods employed by some of the comrades, we must support in whatever way we can those who suffer the consequences of the struggle. The struggle to save the lives (and this is no exaggeration, there have been murders, such as that of Annamaria Mantini, and the order to shoot on sight Giovanni Schiavone, suspected founder of the Armed Proletarian Cells, N.A.P.), and the freedom of arrested comrades must continue and develop. Solidarity is not discussed, it is given.

Those who boast of being class conscious and whose journals not only do not inform, but dedicate themselves to a conscious and continuous deformation of every radical development, whether it takes place within an armed action group or within a social movement.

Attacks on prisons, revolts of the "criminals" inside prisons, factory confrontations (three wildcat strikes in one day at Alfa-Sud), the violent struggles of the unemployed, plundering supermarkets, all this for the petite-bourgeois revolutionary professionals exists only in that they are concerned to distort, slander and suffocate them. Consumed by politics they lie down on the ground like dogs and wag their tails to demonstrate to the bosses they can bark; otherwise they are faithful.

In such a situation we must gather our strength. We cannot let comrades, deliberately ignored by revisionist communists, be cast into the sea by the hangers-on of the extra-parliamentary left, and be massacred, murdered, alienated, and raped in their humanity by Christian Democrats when and where it becomes necessary. This power must not remain in the hands of their executioners. We have seen to our cost the effect of the repression of the so-called "criminal provocateurs" legislation on the whole revolutionary movement, and it is our silence which permits it! If Annamaria Mantini was brutally murdered — if Alfredo Papale has been tortured in prison — if others being held without evidence against them find themselves kidnapped and held in various Italian prisons — it is partly due to the silence, apathy and deformation of information in an area which by its very nature should be self-reliant in terms of solidarity.

We cannot do much, but what we can do we shall, without hesitation.

WE MUST DEFEND COMRADES EVERYWHERE!

P. ABATANGELO was arrested in Florence during an expropriation in which LUCA MANTINI and GUISEPPE ROMEO were killed. He escaped from the Murate (Prison) on February 9, 1975 together with DANTE SACCARI, and was later re-arrested with another comrade in the house of an anarchist in Rome, GUISEPPE BOZZOLI, who was sentenced to six months imprisonment as a result. ABATANGELO has been held in Parma, transferred to the Murate then, before being transferred to the Volterra, was subjected to a "farewell celebration" by the prison guards. Sub-official Eleviso Paggi and warders Dino Luccherini and Salvatore Usai insulted and physically attacked our comrade in his cell. Defending himself from his attackers he tore a knife from one of them and managed to wound him.

(cont. p12)

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

GERMANY

On February 3rd 1976 Comrade Jurgen H. Backer will have been held on remand for five years!!

Remand imprisonment in Germany invariably means solitary confinement and Jurgen has been held in solitary for 1,800 days — 23½ hours every day in a room measuring 8 square metres. There can be no doubt that this degrading treatment is mental torture on someone who, under German law, is presumed innocent!



Jurgen Backer

"Imprisonment on remand shall not, in principle, continue for longer than six months, and only extended in exceptional cases." (German Criminal Proceedings, para 121).

"Until guilt is proven it must be presumed that the defendant is innocent." (Human Rights, Art. 6,2).

"Nobody may be subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment." (Human Rights, Art. 3)

In 1971 Jurgen H. Backer was sentenced to nine years imprisonment on charges of bank robbery and "membership of a criminal organisation" (meaning the R.A.F.). Jurgen decided to appeal against this sentence which was based on weak evidence and many formal mistakes in the proceedings of the trial, and until this appeal is decided Jurgen's sentence is not confirmed and he cannot be transferred to Tegel prison. It must be pointed out here that there is a fixed time in which prisoners must appeal against sentence, but no limit to when the appeal may be heard. Because of this practise all prisoners who appeal against sentence voluntarily abdicate all rights, even those of a convicted prisoner. Jurgen wrote to us from Moabit Prison (a remand prison): "My cell mate has now withdrawn his appeal against conviction because he doesn't want to spend another day in this remand prison. He has decided this after one year in Moabit. Can you imagine how much it is costing me to insist on my appeal?"

Bourgeois justice manages to keep comrades in prison in solitary confinement for years and — as in the above case — then lets them spend more than half of their sentence without legal sentence!

After five years solitary confinement no-one can continue indefinitely without the danger of total psychological collapse, suicide or loss of the will or incapacity to live. Already the effects of this solitary confinement on Jurgen are becoming apparent: disturbances of the vegetative nervous system (according to a medical certificate), heart attacks, weakness of vision, fits of dizziness, inability to concentrate, etc.

However it is not simply the pain and anguish imposed by "justice" on the individual prisoner which we are concerned about, but the political tactics behind such actions: to destroy the spirit and will if imprisoned comrades by means of everything at the disposal of the State and its repressive apparatus.

For instance, it would have been perfectly feasible for the judge responsible, Judge Kubsch (remember that name!), and the prison authorities to transfer Jurgen — legally — to Tegel prison in Berlin. Instead of making life easier for him they proceeded to give him a special Christmas present of special treatment: special observation, cell to be unlocked by two wardens (meaning that he is always last to get food and mail and he has to wait for the second warden to arrive). This is a tremendous psychological burden to him, because he has no idea when to stand by the door waiting for food and mail!

So far "Justice" has not managed to destroy Jurgen's spirit. After fighting with the prison authorities he was granted the "special" facility of weekly visits (in Britain remand prisoners have visits every day), and every month he writes between 10 and 20 complaints and applications of which nearly all will be rejected.

It is painfully obvious that Jurgen needs out total solidarity to protect him against the State's attempts to destroy him. We have one demand: Jurgen must be released from Moabit prison immediately! We ask all comrades to make their protests as strongly and as persistently as is possible!

Letters of protest to:	or write directly to:
An den Vorsitzenden der	Jurgen H. Backer,
2 Gr. Strafkammer	Untersuchungshafanstalt —
— Herrn VorsRiLG KUBSCH	Moabit,
—persönlich—	Alt Moabit 12a
Turmstrasse 01	1000 Berlin 21.
1000 Berlin - 21.	

Rote Hilfe Westberlin.

URUGUAY

From Argentina comrades have been sending us reports concerning resistance actions undertaken in Uruguay, especially in the area Punta del Esta, known widely as a centre of vice and corruption. On January 11 last, one group carried out an action entitled "Operation Aurora" in which they attacked the Zorba restaurant, La Terraza (a private club), the Hotel Casino San Rafael and a number of other establishments frequented by the Uruguayan ruling class, the bourgeoisie, and international businessmen. Our informants explain "... no longer will the exploiters of our country be able to retreat to their oasis of tranquility, nor will they be able to enjoy it with the magnates of Brazil and Argentina nor any of the other carrion who come here to enjoy the fruits of what they have plundered from the Latin American people."

ARGENTINA

The tension which is felt throughout the country at the moment not only makes everyday life uncertain for the people of the Argentine, but also extends as far as the prison system where no one can consider themselves protected from arbitrary violence and eventual murder. In this respect a number of penal establishments have been denounced for the viciousness with which prisoners are treated, in particular unit 42 of the Villa Devoto prison where the minimum guarantee of humanity is being entirely ignored.

Since last October the lives of the political prisoners occupying Planta 5 and Planta 6 (Women's Pavillion) have been made impossible: visits have been prohibited, no recreation, no newspapers or magazines, correspondence heavily censored etc. To these restrictions must also be added the deplorable conditions of hygiene and the physical and moral ill-treatment meted out to the prisoners by a group of warders known as "la patota".

What do they hope to achieve by these methods — ask the families of the prisoners? Possibly they hope to intimi-

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

date and silence all the political prisoners by making them irrational and force them to desperate action such as, possibly mutiny, giving the Administration the opportunity to liquidate them.

Remember comrades, they are in there for us — we must be out here for them.

SPAIN

We have had heartening news from the interior of Spain concerning the release from prison of a number of comrades. Apart from Julio Millan, recently released after completing his prison sentence, the following comrades have also been released: Eloy Martin Nieto (Segovia); Antonio Ruiz Grima (Jaen); Maldonado Rodriguez (Almeria); Antonio Perez and Juan Salcedo Martin (a young sculptor sentenced to 20 years imprisonment in 1964 and who should have been released on conditional liberty over two years ago had not the prison administration bitterly opposed this benefit) (Palencia); Maria Augustias Mateo Fernandez and Georgina Nicolau Milla (Barcelona).

However, we must emphasise that the following comrades remain behind bars: Fernando Carballo Blanco (Alicante); Francisco Javier Garriga Paituvi (Zaragoza); Nuria Ballart Capdevila (Barcelona - Trinitat (Womens Prison)); Enrique Conde Martinez, Jose Oriol and Raimundo Sole Sugranyes, Pedro Bartres Ameteller, Jose Ventura Romero, Luis Andres Edo, Luis Burro Molina (Barcelona-Modelo); David Urbano Bermudez, Floreal Rodriguez de la Paz and Jose Luis Pons Llobet (Segovia); Salvador Sorriano Martinez and Miguel de la Cueva (Jaen); Jose Luis Alonso Perez, Angel Munoz Lopez, Jose Parisi Sanz and Pedro Gallego Sanz (Palencia).

PORTUGAL

Vicente Martinez Garcia, is a Spanish anarchist in exile in Portugal. He has been imprisoned in that country for the past eight months awaiting trial for activities in support of the Spanish libertarian movement. Vicente was arrested with a Portuguese comrade while transporting arms in a stolen car.

He was transferred to the Volterra at 11 p.m. covered in bruises and with a broken rib. C. BOCCARDO is a 45 year old anarchist who had already been imprisoned for incidents during the trial of comrades of the "22nd October Group." As a result of having been present in Aversa on the day of an explosion there he was picked up on suspicion and held for 15 days. A. BONAVITA has been transferred to Porto Azzurro and forced to wear prison clothing. He has been deprived of work and placed in an isolation cell.

A. BONOMI has been transferred to Trento to stand trial there. His escort was worthy of a President, including a helicopter. In spite of specific requests by the judge for his handcuffs to be removed during the trial the carabinieri refused on the grounds of security. BONOMI has recently been transferred from the "New" Turin prison to the punishment block of the Ucciardona in Palermo, where PIETRO BERTOLAZZI is also being held prisoner.

R. CANDITA is segregated from other prisoners and beaten-up regularly. He was transferred to the Montelupo Fiorentino Asylum as a result of having written a letter of protest about a beating, and held in a straight-jacket in this asylum for six months!

R. CARNELUTTI is held in Brescia Prison where they are attempting to pass him off as a lunatic. Following the CURCIO escape all his visitors are searched and his visits are held in a special room in the presence of a prison guard.

M.L. CARUSO was arrested in Aversa with BOCCARDO and is in a similar situation. A. CAVALLINA was arrested on March 20, 1975 and charged with subversive association simply because of possession of an N.A.P. leaflet.

G. CHIANCO is the victim of an attempt by the authorities to implicate him in the kidnapping of De Gennaro — in spite of the fact that at the time of the kidnapping he was in enforced residence in Poggia Reale prison.

A. DENIS is a French citizen, translator of numerous revolutionary texts and the author of *The German Left*. He was arrested at the home of Immacolata Accordo on March 28 1975 and expelled from Italy on the orders of police headquarters at Caserta.

A. FRANCESCHINI is being held in Saluzzo prison. When he was transferred to Reggio Emilia for trial he was accompanied by a strong police escort and trained marksmen placed at strategic points around the court. He is subject to strict surveillance and supervision.

L. FURFANO is regularly transferred from one repressive prison to another, always in solitary confinement, and beaten-up regularly by prison guards. In Sulmona Prison he was confined in a straight-jacket and at his present prison, Ucciardone, he is kept in total isolation.

B. GALLINARI is now imprisoned in La Spezia. In Belluno prison, where he was held before, he was kept in total isolation for two months. When questioned about this the authorities replied that it was "due to lack of space in the cells".

lorry and at the moment his plight is desperate — he is totally isolated, has no money, no visits and time hangs heavily on his hands. We urge all comrades to demonstrate their solidarity by sending some money, letters and cards to him at the following address: — Vicente Martinez Garcia, No. 4532, Sector "C", Forte de Monsanto, Lisboa, Portugal.

GERMANY

Ralf Stein, the Cologne anarcho-syndicalist arrested in June 1975 under West Germany's Emergency Powers Act, (similar to the British Prevention of Terrorism Act) has now been in jail for 9 months. Almost certainly he won't be brought to trial for a further three months as the prosecution require more time to strengthen their case against him. Ralf now faces eight charges, the most serious being "supporting a criminal association", offences against the Firearms Act and "aiding an escaped prisoner."

Ralf does not belong to an officially prescribed political group himself. *Befreiung*, the group to which he belongs has condemned the tactics of the Red Army Fraction and the Second of June Group, but along with a number of respectable liberal elements (who have not been arrested) he was concerned with the defence of the R.A.F. prisoners.

Please continue to protest against Ralf's continued detention. Apart from the fact that he is being deprived of his liberty, it is frustrating the preparation of his defence case.

Judge: Amtsgericht Koln, ABT 203 7 47

Richter Tiepel, 5 Koln 1, Appellohofplatz 1.

Prosecutor: Bundesanwaltschaft Karlsruhe 2 M.D. Herrn Biegger, Koln

Trade Union: I.G. Metall, Ortleitung Koln, Hans Blocker Platz, Koln.

Don't forget to send postcards of solidarity to Ralf himself as well! (See p.2 for address).

G.B. LAZAGNA was released after spending a year in prison and immediately re-arrested in Rocchetta Ligure as a result of an uncorroborated statement by Silvano Girotto, an agent provocateur employed by the Italian Security Service (S.I.D.).

P. KRAUSE was arrested in Zurich and accused of having participated in the bombing of Face Standard. The Italian authorities have requested his extradition. Petra has been on hunger-strike now for some considerable time and is in a serious condition.

E. LEVATI is out on bail of 4,000,000 Lira, and is confined to the island of Giglio.

C. MAINO was held in Lecce Prison where he contracted infective hepatitis. In spite of his condition he was treated in his cell and it was only after clamorous demonstrations by his fellow prisoners that the authorities were forced to move him to hospital for treatment. His protests have met only with blows, solitary confinement and a transfer to the punishment block of Alghero Prison. He obtained a transfer only after swallowing a key and at the moment is imprisoned in Aversa Penal Asylum.

S. MALAGOLI was carried to the brink of suicide as a result of mental and physical torture inflicted on him in Lecce Prison. He has since managed to get a transfer to Perugia prison.

L. MANTINI participated in an expropriation at the Florence Savings Bank on October 20 1974. They walked into a trap set for them by the police and when the group left the bank Luca Mantini was shot dead in cold blood as was SERGIO e FORCELLA (GIUSEPPE ROMEO) known and loved by the people of Forcello, the famous Naples slum. Another two comrades were wounded, ABATANGELO NICOLA and his brother PASQUA, and arrested.

A.M. MANTINI, the sister of Luca, was shot dead at point-blank range by murderers of the "Anti-terrorist Squad" who ambushed her at the entrance to her apartment block.

R. MANDER was accused of assisting in the escape of SACCANI and ABATANGELO from the Murate Prison. He has been sentenced to two years imprisonment with no proof of any connection being adduced at the trial.

G. MARINI, an anarchist, has been sentenced to nine years imprisonment for defending himself against an attack by fascists. He has been transferred to at least 19 different prisons, and has accumulated 13 trials while in prison.

S. NOTARNICOLA has been attacked by fascists in Favignana Prison and subjected to numerous provocations in Lecce Prison. In all the prisons he has been held there have been one or more attempts to eliminate him physically. G. BATTAGLIA is also in Favignana with him. To prevent his having contact with other prisoners he is paid wages (127,000) every month without having to do any work.

Translated by JW from "Anarchismo" no.6 To be continued next issue (For further information about these comrades contact Alfredo Bonanno, Casella Postale 61, Catania, Sicily)

SNIPE and WOODCOCK

In our last issue we asked for oft-repeated 'atrocities' stories about Anarchists — on the lines of the 'shot for wearing a collar and tie' or having clean hands. The entries are staggering. Our readers have resisted the temptation to select the bomb throwing nut-case image, beloved of the popular press and given some choice 'snipe and woodcock' to hunt.

The first comes from Anna May, who mentions, "I read a recent article in an anarchist paper (!) by a so-called feminist describing the traditional movement as 'male dominated' and saying something to the effect that no woman should support anarchism because Makhno raped women — the same accusation has been made against Zapata. I could understand about Pancho Villa but he was not a libertarian. It is significant that no reference is made to the Spanish Revolution. Is it because the 'raped nuns' became such a feature of fascist propaganda?"

The raped nuns were certainly a feature of fascist propaganda but — unlike the nuns raped in the Congo — the Spanish nuns were remarkably sterile.

The raped nuns stories were certainly a feature of fascist propaganda. The Spanish Church incidentally has since apologised for its role in the Civil War — which included the manufacture of these stories.

In fairness to Pancho Villa, he was an authoritarian but a revolutionary nevertheless and the accusation of being a rapist particularly distressed him. "Name me the father, the brother, the husband of a woman I have raped and let him accuse me," he said. It is not customary in bringing an accusation to rely on hearsay and the total absence of an actual victim. Who for instance is Makhno supposed to have raped? Emma Goldman? Natalia Trotsky? Krupskaya? The lady only says "women" — without names.

Why was Makhno never charged for such a crime? He spent only a few years of independence in the Ukraine war. Before he was living in Tsarist Russia, afterwards in Paris — where he led, truth to tell, a conventional married life . . . as did Zapata, even during the years of revolution. This may, by some modern women's standards be regarded as a lack of libertarianism but it was certainly not so regarded then. A libertarian was expected to lead a monogamous life — uninformed by Church or State.

Another comrade in the US, had brought our attention to the article in question — so we asked her to check up where the

ON THE DEATH OF WORKERS PRESS

We still say an anarchist daily newspaper is possible — if only there were the will by professed anarchists. The delusion, perhaps, is the numerous of committed anarchists there are proportionate to the number of professed ones.

Does the collapse of the trot daily "Workers Press" invalidate this? In no way: it tried to tackle national distribution without a firm local base, under the delusion that it had a national party. (In any case it was surely worth the effort, from their point of view? Must a newspaper last 150 years like the Observer? Was it not a more valid effort than, say, a series of by-elections?)

Party members were loaded with their quota of copies to sell. Many gave them away or lost them, and paid up themselves. Nice work; but a terrific cost in paper at inflated paper rates . . . they could just as well have paid up without all those surplus copies. The first requisite for a daily newspaper is a firm local base. As a secondary consideration it can go to other parts of the country — indeed, the world. It does not follow that every daily newspaper must follow the example of Fleet Street and be received and read on the very day it appears; if news won't wait a day or two, it probably

writer got her facts . . . she got some evasive replies, more or less to the effect that Makhno was a peasant and all peasants raped women, it was part of their backwardness. Touch of the old Prussian Marxism, but even so, a bit exaggerated, one would think! Did he "reform" when he became a car worker?

In making this sweeping accusation, the lady had in mind she was being a great feminist in sweeping aside all males as rapists. It is to do a great disservice to women because such an attitude is implying that all males are rapists no matter how libertarian in outlook. She is doing her two cents' worth to build up womens' fears by excusing male crimes as no more than normal in all men, and so advocating what she deplores.

In 1955 the well known travel writer S. Mais wrote in "Spanish Holiday"

The Spaniards all are instinctively individualists and anarchists with a fanaticism that led them centuries ago to cling to their Christian faith in spite of their Moslem churches, and in the late Civil War, led them to destroy the very churches in which they had worshipped.

I liked enormously the story quoted by Cedric Salter, a great authority on Spain, of the Anarchist leader in the Civil War who said to his followers, "I swear to you that I will never rest until every church in Spain has been burnt to the ground and the power of the churches finally and completely broken. This I solemnly swear in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Very funny, (much the same genre of story is now going the rounds of the pubs about the Irish). But unfortunately for Mr. Salter (whoever he is) precisely the same story was told about Pancho Villa who remarked (much more wittily) about the looting of the churches, "If the revolution is successful we shall soon find priests to give us absolution." So great an authority is Cedric Salter that he quotes an "Anarchist leader". One must marvel at the naive belief of S.P.B. Mais that it was anarchism that made the Spaniards Christians — and he thinks himself superior to these poor peasants!

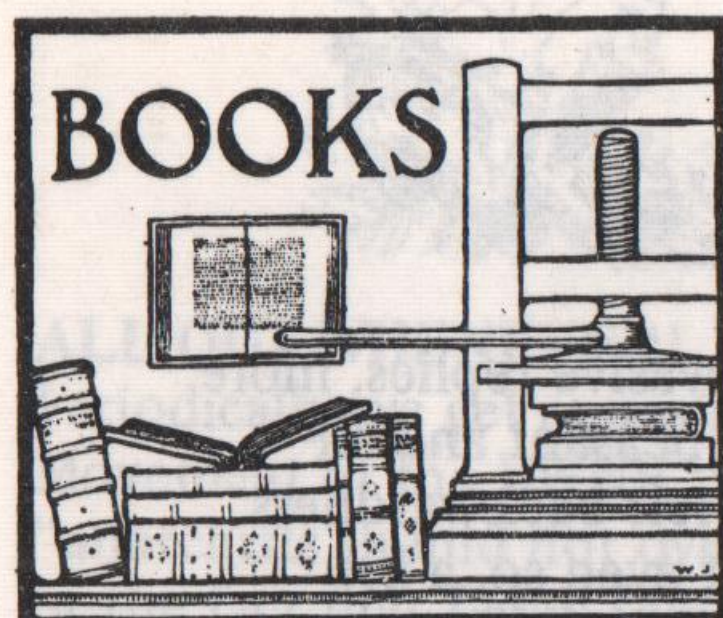
More gems in our next issue

Footnote * The type of sniping at Anarchist activism exemplified by George Woodcock's brand of atrocity mongering.

isn't worth it.

Every bookshop doesn't have to be Foyle's. It doesn't follow automatically that if one can't have a department store in books, one can't have any anarchist bookshop. Nor does it follow that because one can't follow the Daily Express in speed and distribution, one can't have an anarchist daily at all.

A word on the demise of Workers' Press, and indeed on the WRP. The other trot groups hate it like mad. Perhaps it is the kiss of death, but we can only say that within its limitations Workers' Press was a reasoned contribution to the struggle as it saw it. The trots in general hate Gerry Healey; but he is the only one with ability and honesty. Authoritarian certainly; but one has said all that when one says Trotskyist. When one considers the filthy, dishonest financial trickery IMG and the 'Militant' Group cottoned on to when they sniffed money in T.U. aid to "Spain" — which will make the name Trotskyist stink when it's discovered — one can better appreciate Gerry Healey, which is why, perhaps, he is disowned by so many splinters from the coffin of Trotskyism.



MORROW FROM YESTERDAY

There has been a revival of interest in Felix Morrow whose book on Spain has been resurrected. Long the Spanish 'Bible' of the trotskysts, Morrow has appealed also to certain pacific 'anarchists' — the reason is not far to seek since the trotskyst line on Spain was largely identical with — at any rate not contradictory to — the pacifist. It may seem ironic that libertarians who reject the conception of armed struggle find themselves in the Marxist-Leninist camp. But so it is.

The Trotskyists (1936-9) carried on a campaign *against* arms for Spain. 'Arms for Spain' was a delusion, they said. Arms were not necessary. (This same line was scoffed at by Trotsky during the imperialist World War, when he called for 'the defence of the USSR' and the rejection of "social pacifism". The social-democratic government of Denmark wanted to be 'neutral in its own war' — but Trotsky was — in effect — neutral in a workers' struggle.)

Morrow underlines and emphasises the crude history that arms were not necessary, and that all that was necessary was a 'correct Marxist policy'. The POUM (though Marxist-Leninist) were criticised because they were offered that precious 'pearl' — a 'clearcut Marxist analysis' — something not to be picked up in Woolworth's — and kept on about arms. As if, scoffed Morrow, quoting Lenin, a small party needed weapons once it had the right ideas! A trotskyst cartoon of the time showed the Spanish workers bound with chains all marked 'arms for Spain'. The supplying of this analysis was the 'one task' of international trotskysm, the logic of which is that the 'intellectuals' who provided the analysis (with the Old Man himself in the background) could have saved the workers, who, misled by the anarchists, wanted to fight.

How could unarmed workers defeat the forces raged against them? The Republic should have 'liberated' Morocco and then 'the Moors' would not have helped Franco. True, but it didn't, and then what? In a recent version of the Morrow analysis given by AWA (see letters page) it was the anarchist workers who had no 'foreign policy,' though they had been holding strikes and revolts to the death against sending troops to Morocco for three quarters of a century. The republic should have declared Morocco independent, but did not do so because the Socialist-Communist alliance did not want to antagonise the French Popular Front which would have been faced with the Revolt spreading.

It must be confessed, however, that it is the height of naive pacifism to imagine that armed Moroccan mercenaries trained to legal banditry in a foreign army, given licence to enter Spanish towns with intent to murder, rape and plunder, would be deterred by the political vision of a 'free Morocco' as if they were nationalist students at the Sorbonne. Only a monkish academic who had never heard a shot fired in anger or did a day's work, could think so.

In 'Freedom' Vernon Richards adds some criticisms to Morrow, in answer to Sam Dolgoff. Dolgoff is somewhat under-critical, but does know what makes society tick. Dolgoff points out that one paid secretary could not overnight turn into a bureaucracy. Richards denies this, with the usual quotations which include Morrow.

In ascribing 'bureaucracy' to the CNT Morrow transfers Russian experience to Spain. There is a vast civil service in Russia which has superseded the capitalist class which failed to arise. Unwilling to admit the defects of Marxism, all the ills that have befallen Russia are ascribed to this bureaucracy. Unwilling to blame the Party, Trotskyists blame the bureaucracy. But can this situation be transferred to Spain?

VR points out that the CNT took a vast building (No.32/34 via Layetana, rechristened via Buenaventura Durruti) which had hundreds of clerks inside. A bureaucracy! There

were shorthand-typists — were *they* not bureaucrats?

The CNT took over the Banco de Cambo whose building it was (and to who it has reverted). Ought they to have left the bankers there while they continued with one paid secretary with a typist on a second floor office *when the whole of Catalan industry had been taken over*? All the clerical work of collectivisation in Catalonia was centred in this building. The workers, mainly women, received the current unitary wage. The typists (few took shorthand) worked up to 18 hours a day. The translation service and radio services were there. But an office worker is not a bureaucracy. A bureaucrat is a person who **rules** only by virtue of his position in an office, as distinct from someone who rules by virtue of his post in the Army, Party, Church, Government or because of wealth. The women workers of the Casa CNT-FAI were not bureaucrats, and in fact no bureaucracy existed in the union before or during the civil war. Had there been, there would have been no collectivisation.

Some militants did enter the Government bureaucracy, which is quite another matter. To do so, no consent was necessary.

On the Trotsky theory, all collectivisation and resistance by the anarchist workers is by 'the workers'; all compromises during the war are by 'anarchists'.

What accounts for this revival of Morrow? He is an excuse for the trots, but also an excuse for the 'libertarian' who sees no alternative to marxist-leninism on the one hand or pacifism on the other. Leave everything to 'spontaneity' and then, whoever wins, all credit and no blame to 'us'!

This is a recipe for structurelessness, in which the dominating personality or the organised party must come on top. The workers have to guard against these false friends. The necessity for a syndicalist union is as much to keep them out as it is to overthrow capitalism.

CENTRO IBERICO - mail.

Meetings at Havi stock Hill as usual,

but due to difficulties with the mail,

all letters to 123 Upper Tollington Parkk

London N.4.

Answers to Anarcho-Quiz.

1. The German soldiers sang the Christmas hymn 'O Tannenbaum' and the British officers panicked, it being the same tune as 'The Red Flag'. They thought the revolution was on them and ordered the men back to war quickly.
2. There was widespread unemployment after the declaration of war amongst the immigrant workers in what was then the German quarter, centred on London's Charlotte Street in Soho. The German and French anarchists combined to form a 'communist kitchen' to help their unemployed; those who were working supported it by buying their meals there. It was broken up by internment following the press campaign against German workers — when the police arrested people for 'Germanism' whom they had previously persecuted for their opposition to the Kaiser.
3. The Mexican anarchist junta during the Revolution adopted that name, possibly unaware of its associations elsewhere.
4. A current federation of anarchists centred on Stockton, California.
5. On January 11th 1932 the people of Casas Viejas in the province of Cadiz rebelled and called for the confiscation of the Duke's estates. There was terrible (Republican!) repression by the Guardia Civil who decimated the village. One rebel, however, called Seisdedos (Six Fingers) stood out to the last with the aid of his daughter Libertad who acted as gunloader. The Guardia Civil had to burn the house down to kill them.
6. Max Nettlau, biographer of Michael Bakunin.

letters

BLACK FLAG — AN ANARCHIST PUBLICATION?

I am sorry to say but upon reading the last 3 issues of Black Flag, (Vol IV Nos. 3,4,5 Aug-Dec'75) more anarchist materials are taking precedence over anti-authoritarian stuff. I cannot understand how the defence of SLA bogey-men and their cohorts can advance the comprehension of anarchism. It seems to me that the so-called libertarian marxists (a la Daniel Guerin) have made new victims, mainly you. Praising the actions of unfit revolutionaries by improper articles glorifying so-called saviour of the people groups is too much for me. Even though I am anarcho-individualist. The least I can expect from other anarchists is our common anti-authority base.

It is getting ridiculous. I would make no qualms about it except that it has become tragic. The ORA/AWA attempts to take (or be at) the vanguard of anarchist groups is pure Leninist elitism from the usual dialectical trash served by the so-called left and Mao mags. To devote full pages of praise to the SLA and their minions, that I will not accept. True there may be disagreements — but then there is a way of doing it. Writing to Black Flag must be different to writing to the Sunday Times (London). If you fail to see the difference then stop calling yourselves anarchists. If you want to be "Le Fou du Roi", it's your decision. I am fed up with Marxico-garbage theory. Marx was a power (lust) seeker. He hated independence, novelties, freedom, liberty etc. . . Yes as those unimportant things were despised by him and his mongrels. All had to be planned according to his ideals. His views of the world, under his control. He succeeded well — his successors are well entrenched in many parts of the world — Russia, China, Cuba etc. This new religion wants to be the faith of all mankind. Will it succeed? I guess so, judging by your sympathy for Marxian thought.

Bakunin did recognise the validity of Marxist analyses of the economic system. Hence he retracted himself when he saw the seeds of destruction that were in Marxism. But he never repudiated it completely (economic analyses not the conclusions). Bakunin was aware of the works of Stirner and Proudhon; even exchanged thoughts with them (Stirner — cannot say — but was aware of his work). How come so little of their theory is seen in his writing? Lack of need? Did not want to repeat? Ignorance? Certainly not. More than misinterpretation I am afraid. Bakunin was a dissident Marxist. All his actions (even violent ones) were impregnated with Marxico-ideology. He placed more emphasis on the role of violence as per se than in the necessity of violence. For if you employ violence it is the sign of your weakness — re Francoist Juan Carlos against his strikers (Jan. 76). Get rid of the police in Spain and the regime would collapse overnight. So for Bakunin — get rid of the violence in his writings and we have a hollow theory.

It is not to me, Anarcho-individualist, to prove that Bakunin was an anarchist, but to you who hold him in high esteem. Keep up the good work, you are doing well with your support of the SLA and their sorts. Martin Sostre's Marxian analysis, your one sided view of things regarding your letters column. Yes. Have no fear Maoists. Black Flag is ready to pick up the waning flame.

R. Yves Breton.

Like many people calling themselves "anarcho-individualists" our correspondent's concern is solely with semantics. Do people 'call' themselves anarchists? Do they call themselves individualists? "There is no other test that that they call themselves such!" Point out to them for instance, that the most rugged of all American individualists were the anarcho-syndicalist IWW workers, while nobody could be more conformist that (say) Benjamin Tucker — and they complain of your "giving a definition never heard before", an individualistic one, in fact!

The criticism about "Maoists" follows naturally. Do people call themselves Marxist-Leninists, or Maoists? They must be if they call themselves so, even if all their actions deny it! Those pretending to be an "anarcho-individualist"

finding themselves to be outflanked by actual anarchist individual 'action', look to find the fault — "these people call themselves Maoists" or "they use Marxist, therefore authoritarian socialist, terms, therefore they must be authoritarians". No authoritarian action is necessary: they may go against all the tenets of Marx, Lenin and Mao. Their words have condemned them . . . that is all that counts!

We must confess to being anti-semantic.

Unfortunately, many comrades call themselves Maoists or something, not because they support Mao but because they reject "Anarchism" expounded by people who reject revolutionary action of any sort. It is noticeable that many in the "Red Army Fraction" called themselves "Maoists" when they were struggling against oppression — later, in prison, called themselves "Anarchists" — for the simple reason that they came into contact with revolutionary anarchists (who helped them): and perhaps they noticed that Mao remained as silent and impassive to their struggle as if he too were buried in Highgate Cemetery.

But not so impassive as the flippant semanticist who (using the word 'anarchist' because it doesn't commit him to anything) loosely tosses words around such as 'individualist' or 'Marxist' or 'fascist' without any meaning — as if using armed struggle against the State as such had any connection with fascist putsches! Or the great discovery that one need not use struggle against the Francoist State — 'only abolish the police' then the State will go! Failing a magic wand, one requires armed struggle. If Yves Breton can do it individually by individual persuasion (?) fine!

Dear Comrades,
I turned up at the AWA "day school" on Saturday . . . what a comedy!! There were twats raving on about how we couldn't support anything looking like syndicalism, party-liners denouncing any support from the CNT, quoting Felix Morrow and Hugh Thomas left, right and centre, and discourses on rank 'n' filism, the follies of "individualism" and syndicalism . . . there was the shortest and most distorted "history of anarchism since the war" that it's ever been my misfortune to witness. A brief mention of War Commentary, Freedom and the youth movements of the 60's and then it was on to the degeneration of the AFB and the birth of ORA, marking the sudden discovery of a thing called The Anarchist Movement (anarchism was referred to as "libertarian Communism" nine times out of every ten, by all the speakers. . .). Not a single reference was given to ABC/Black Flag (surprise) until I launched myself skyward brandishing a quivering copy of the Flag . . . Even a few AWA members had to remark that it was all a bit too much, though mostly I drew forth a hail of fire and brimstone and half-hearted attempts from the more embarrassed AWA's to smooth over the oversight. This was all punctuated by periodic outbursts of fury and abuse from a foaming Scotsman at the back of the hall calling Black Flag fascists, terrorists and all the usual garbage about us supporting Marxist nut cases and bomb throwers . . .

Of more revealing interest is a "supplement to internal bulletin of the AWA, November 1975" that appeared on the bookstall. It is the translation of a French pamphlet "Questions a l'ORA". "Are you anarchists?" it asks. (Answer evasive as ever): "We are anarchists IF by anarchists you mean the destruction and disappearance of the state and the construction of a classless society.

We have nothing in common with a certain sense of the word anarchist which is a vehicle of individualist and fairytale ideas. Having completely broken with the idealist current, ORA is connected with the Libertarian Communist Movement, whose theoretical analysis is based on dialectical materialism."

After a long spiel evading commitment to saying "YES" to being anarchists the next question really spells it out . . . "ARE YOU MARXISTS?" "just as with anarchism, Marxism offers many interpretations Marx . . . set up a method of historical materialism. In this sense WE ARE MARXISTS, as we have an understanding of history based on class struggle."

"How do you regard yourself with relationship to other Anarchist organisations?" (answer) "We do not define ourselves with regard to other