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Anniversary Supplement on Sacco & Vanzetti

SO, WE HAVE HAD A "RIOT" in South London, far worse, we are told, than Red Lion Square. Worse? As far as I know no-one was killed on Saturday. But first, to sum up the events. The National Front declared that they would hold a march through Deptford and Lewisham, these being chosen as classic areas of Front support. The population has a large proportion of blacks (or "immigrants" as they are often called, ignoring the fact that many were born here) and the Front and the National Party combined picked up a lot of votes here once (more than the winning Labour candidate). To offset this there has been a good tradition of community relations here. There has been tension over the heavy-handed police handling of some alleged muggers (all black of course) and the Front said it would march against black muggers and their "red" supporters. Their intention, of course, was to intimidate and to try to create racial trouble in the borough. To achieve this they pulled out all the stops nationally and predicted a turnout of 2000. Two counter marches were proposed, one by the Labour Party, the churches, the mayor of Lewisham and such like, which allowed itself to be diverted and got out of the way before there was any sign of the Front, the other, more militant, in the afternoon to actually confront the Front. Most vociferous about this was the Socialist Workers' Party. No-one concerned with this gathering had any illusions about violence. Attempts were made to get all these marches banned, but the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, David McNee, refused to do so (more of this later). So the scene was set.

For students of military history the best factual account seems to be in The Sunday Times, although it completely misrepresents events in Lewisham High Road later on. The Observer

FRONT PAGE

produced such a mishmash that I have my doubts as to whether their reporter was actually there. Predictably the popular press was merely hysterical. This tone was continued in Monday's papers with the dear old "liberal" Guardian coming close to demanding that future marches should be banned.

The basic course of events as I saw them and as I heard them from others seems to be more or less as follows. The left wingers (of whom the SWP were only a fraction, although you'd hardly believe this from the press coverage) gathered around Clifton Rise where the Front were supposed to assemble at 2.30. By 2 o'clock we were about 2000, with perhaps about 1000 more down New Cross Road. Many were in tactically poor positions, trapped along sets of metal barriers. There was some skirmishing with the police, some cans and smoke bombs were thrown and a mounted charge driven back. Later, with frustration growing, with uncertainty as to the Front's whereabouts, the police cordoned off New Cross Road and the Front, complete with Union Jacks, was brought out of a side street. In the confusion I didn't count them, but there were well under a thousand. They were subjected to a storm of abuse, bricks, cans, smoke bombs and assorted other material, some of which, in the nature of things, hit the police. But, as far as I could see little of this was deliberate at that time. At one stage the police cordon higher up the road was breached and the Front march was broken into two sections. Despite the fact that there were probably more Front members down the length of New Cross Road than there were left wingers, they were clearly very frightened. I would be; the vehemence and anger of the left was surprising even to us. After the Front had passed the police kept us bottled along New Cross Road, the majority were still behind the cordon higher up. A couple of captured banners were burnt, amidst cheers. It was at this time that the police became particularly violent, using both foot and mounted charges, and were met as might be expected.

As soon as possible a couple of us filtered along to Lewisham High Street, where it was

rumoured that the Front would reappear. There were several hundred people hanging about in the street. The police began to chivvy us, moving us from one place to another for no apparent reason. It was at this point that the famous new riot shields were produced, not as a desperate measure in the midst of a pitched battle, as the media, without exception, implied, but as a training exercise. They were handled clumsily and uncertainly. After a while a march was formed up to walk back to Ladywell (about one mile) and then disperse home. However, the police pushed things a bit too far and got stoned, a motor bike was set on fire (it turned out not to be a police machine after all, but to belong to a Sunday Times reporter), a police bus had its windows smashed, there were a few baton charges and a lot of unpleasantness. It was noticeable that the police particularly picked on black youths. For example, I just stood in the road while they charged past me and laid into the nearest blacks. As a final incident, a group of police called pitifully to an inspector, "You're the only one up here, guv'nor, tell us what to do."

Now to state some facts which have tended to get lost in the hysteria and sensationalism. McNee has been criticised for being mistaken, for allowing the marches to proceed, confident that his troops could control it. This is self-evident nonsense. McNee was well aware that there would be a riot, he was prepared for it with 4500 police, more horses than I've ever seen, new riot shields ready, etc. If McNee had banned this, there would have been mutterings about free speech and such; now he can do what he likes, with full backing from all the media. Police tactics near the beginning were provocative; thus they succeeded in trapping most of the left in skirmishes near Clifton Rise and cordoning them there to let the Front through, with only a few hundred anti-fascists down the length of New Cross Road. Later, in Lewisham, the whole thing was treated as a training exercise. The police force (as opposed to the 56 individuals who were injured) must be pleased with the outcome. Another point to be emphasised time and again, the opposition was anti-fascist, not SWP.



And to settle things before both sides claim their "victories" - the Front managed to have their march, therefore a "victory" for them; however they had derisory support, they were diverted, hit hard and frightened. So you can draw up your own balance sheet.

We come to the final arguments about the value of such circuses. Elsewhere in this issue Alan Albon sums them up. It is certainly true that the state is strengthened. Tonight's Evening News (Monday) carries the dramatic headline "Jim Puts Ban on Marches". It turns out that he has only "instructed Britain's police chiefs to ban marches and demonstrations where there is a serious risk of violence" which was the position beforehand anyway. But the implications are there. However, I don't see why as anarchists we should get so distressed. We recognise that "freedoms" (such as of speech) are a mere surface gloss, as far as the State is concerned. The media may consider that the banning of marches is a major erosion of democracy. It is certainly a backward step.

LEWISHAM PERSONAL VIEW

I WENT to the anti-fascist march taking the view that the exercise would be counter-productive, I returned with that view reinforced.

That being said, I was glad I went, for too often pronouncements are made by people who are no where near the action. It is to be noticed that those who are most violent on paper are significantly absent from the scene of violence.

The consequences of the activities of last weekend are likely to be as follows:

- 1 - Larger membership and electoral support for the National Front, particularly in the Lewisham area..
- 2 - A few more members for the Socialist Workers Party ..
- 3 - Increased pressure for MORE police power and more and better equipment..

ishment will sacrifice the ordinary police and many of the members of all of these groups are totally unaware of the role they play in society.

The Establishment is also prepared to sacrifice a recognisable minority, to divert peoples minds from the real causes of the urban squalor that is the feature of modern industrial society. This brings us to the crocodile tears and learned conclusions of the Liberal press and the sensationalism of the popular press who happily dart from sport and sexism to violence to titilate the jaded appetites of their readers. The latter can be dismissed as irresponsible journalism that largely contributes to the reinforcement of prejudices rather than making for informed opinion. The Sunday Telegraph of the 14th August, deplores the fact that more and more people are supporting the NF on one hand and left extremist groups on the other, they are also recording the disillusion with the established political parties.

However, the journalists from their comfortable middle class world of house ownership, space and leisure, are not prepared to lay on the line the basic causes of the problem. The fact is that in the last analysis, this world of privilege and property is defended by FORCE and as the resources of the world shrink, there will have to be shared space, energy and food. This is basically what is all about at Lewisham. Liberal politics are a contradiction for laissez-faire privilege is no longer possible.

The State is prepared to spend enormous sums on repressive apparatus, the tip of which we saw at Lewisham while private privileges sees another epitaph to their folly in the shape of the new National Westminster Bank building rise above the urban decay, amongst which the under-privileged black and white are compelled to live. What should anarchist do. Not in my view become part of a SWP riot and in this we must clearly distinguish the membership from the organisation, for many SWP members are libertarian in attitude and are clearly concerned about the problems of centralisation. That being said, the fact is that the SWP, like the NF, seeks POWER and the means to power cannot be separated from the ends.

Now, the anarchists in the public eye are similar to the marxists. Our aim should be to make our unique contribution clear. For instance, instead of shouting meaningless slogans and insults, let us use our IMAGINATION and perhaps produce a group of people dressed like Nazi concentration camp victims and Russian labour camp prisoners to show that we disapprove of BOTH kinds of totalitarianism. Until we can win the hearts and minds of a vast mass of people, the State can escalate the violence far more effectively than we can. Therefore, let us relate our actions to our ideas and accompany such action by distributing carefully thought leaflets to people living in areas in which the NF has some influence.

ALAN ALBON



But this is the nature of the system, as will become steadily more obvious as its contradictions become more apparent. If we can only function with the State's permission we should call ourselves liberals. I accept most of the points made by those comrades who are opposed to these events. I agree that fascism and racism can only be removed at their causes. But how long does this take? And in the meantime should we sit back while the Front carries out intimidatory marches, mugs individual blacks, gays and left wingers (in which they include us), breaks shop windows etc? I agree with all the quietist's points. I think that it is tragic that we get drawn into these circuses, which are misrepresented right, left and centre (!) But I was there on Saturday and will be there next time (with, of course, the indulgence of commissioner McNee).

DAVID PEERS

4 - Increased white support for police action against the coloured population of the area..

5 - Escalation of the atmosphere of violence, in which totalitarians of the Left and Right flourish, and as anarchists we should be aware that Left so-called allies can be as dangerous to us and to our ideas as our well-defined enemies of the Right.

The idea that human beings are expendable in the interest of power seekers of the left and right was much in evidence at this demonstration. The National Front want to sacrifice the coloureds, the left their rank and file supporters, caught in the cross fire of flying missiles and police violence. The Estab-

STOP PRESS

FREEDOM needs someone to help with typing for a couple of hours on Sunday afternoon and/or Monday evening. Anyone interested please phone us at 247-9249.

ITALY meeting

There will be a meeting at the Freedom offices at 12.00 on Saturday, August 20, when a comrade from the Italian Anarchist Federation (FAI) will be present to discuss the movement in Italy and the international conference there in November.

A Proposal Against Thermonuclear Pollution

Concha and Jeremy are planning a dance-theatre play to alert and inform the people against the horrendous threat posed to life on this planet by large-scale nuclear technology and radioactive waste. We invite all who would be interested to join with us in the realisation of this project to come to a meeting on Friday 2 September 1977 at Centerprise, 136 Kingsland High St, E8 (by Dalston stn, 30,38, 22 bus) from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. While acquired skills in relevant disciplines are always useful, the principle criterion for participation in this work is an active desire to change the world.

THE FOLLOWING report by Emidio Santana, editor of *A Batalha*, is prompted by Phil Mailer's book "Portugal: The Impossible Revolution?" (Solidarity London, £ 2.25; see review by Alan Albon, FREEDOM, 28 May 1977).

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acity to solve problems, while at the same time a revolution was being conducted by the workers themselves, in order to obtain what the Armed Forces and the politicians were unable to deliver. So, the occupations of bankrupt factories, of empty houses, of municipal councils and of "latifundios" (large farming estates)

for an INT (National Institute for Work, the fascist Ministry of Labour) and that our paper *A Batalha*, called several times for the workers to prepare for a general strike, while the Communist Party was in favour of Workers' Assemblies, in order to urge them to vote

PORTUGAL — the Possible revolution ?

PHIL MAILER has written a report on the revolutionary events in Portugal, covering the period from April 25 1974 to November 25 1975 and correctly analysing what was happening in our country. This report was published in London by the Solidarity group in a book with the doubting title "Portugal: The Impossible Revolution?"

But was the Revolution really impossible, as the title implies, or did it become so during the period of time covered by the book? Although he analyses correctly what he has witnessed, in a Portugal in turmoil, Phil Mailer's work lacks some historical references that could have helped him to define as we (Portuguese) anarchists do, the impossibility, or otherwise of the Revolution.

If the geographical position of Portugal, and its underdevelopment in a European context, places this country at the same level as Spain in 1936, as stated by Maurice Brinton in the introduction, it is nevertheless certain that there were revolutionary possibilities in 1974, just before the course of events made it evident that the revolution would not take place. To try to make what was happening in Portugal into a duplication of revolutionary Russia in 1917, was absolutely absurd, as the last two centuries of political struggle had been around a series of domestic crises which never reached a point of social rupture, crises which were to be postponed or to culminate in conventional compromises.

Salazar's regime, from May 1926 to April 1974, was to be another conservative system that used violence and class compromises in order to preserve Portuguese institutions, and was debilitated by previous crises. With the end of the colonial empire held by Portugal in Africa and Asia, some economic structures at home did, in fact, give way, particularly the agrarian ones in the south of Portugal (Alentejo), which in the past had conditioned and retarded economic development and the Industrial Revolution.

In the last thirty years of Salazar's regime the opposition adapted itself to functioning, within limits determined by the government, as a safety valve within which the political parties got involved in inconsequential bickering and electoral duels. This helped popularise the belief in a political providence which a large middle class with no revolutionary vocation exploited in order to defuse the revolutionary potential of the disorganised workers, who expected the political parties of the left to lead the struggle against the regime.

After the 24 April Revolution we were surprised to see the Armed Forces Movement and the opposition political parties support each other, as Phil Mailer so correctly documents in his book. This was due to their joint incap-

were unstoppable revolutionary acts, that would inevitably affect the politics of the future.

The Marxist parties, exclusively obsessed with the conquest of power, short of adequate trained militant functionaries, short of original ideas, hoping only to replay in Portugal the events of October 1917 in Russia, were responsible, due to their influence among the masses, for the unviability of the popular revolution. They were more interested in political plots and coups d'etats than in revolutions.

The potential forces which could have helped to consolidate the revolutionary conquests of the workers, the *sindicatos* (syndicates or trades unions) were still organised on the lines imposed by Salazar's regime and allowed themselves to be sucked into the orbits of political parties, starting to move in an opposite direction to that of the revolution. Eventually neither a revolution nor a coup d'etat were to happen. The best example of this counter-revolutionary action by the Marxist parties happened in relation to the agrarian reform in the Alentejo, where the Portuguese Communist Party preferred to impose on the farm workers (who, of their own accord, had decided to occupy the *latifundios* and the deserted farms and who had tried to set up communes according to their own needs and initiatives) a political solution of Collective Units under its own exclusive control. Under this system there is no room for mutualist or federalist actions to transform the out of date agrarian structures.

The north of the country, predominantly made up of very small family holdings which refused the cooperative or associative structures proposed to them by the Armed Forces Movement at the beginning of 1975, is now hesitantly taking steps towards farming cooperatives. That which was possible during the Revolution and did not take place, is now being implemented without any revolutionary content by bourgeois democracy.

Phil Mailer's lack of historical reference is probably due to the impossibility of himself obtaining documents, and that is understandable. So, some minor errors in the text of his book are tolerable, but other errors relating to the anarcho-syndicalist movement (CGT) need to be corrected. Mailer states, for example, that the membership of the membership of the CGT in 1920 was 100,000 and that of the CIS (Inter-syndical Commissions of the Communist Parties) in 1930 was 25,000. These figures and dates are quite different to the reality. According to our records in 1920 the CGT had 200,000 members and the CIS, which only appeared on the scene in 1932, then had less than 10,000.

Phil Mailer also states, correctly, that the CGT reacted strongly against the structures

against fascist trade unions. After having clearly established the opposing positions of the anarchists and communists in relation to the imposition by the government of vertical trade unions, the author of "Portugal: The Impossible Revolution?" inexplicably concludes

by stating that the armed uprising of the 18th of January 1934, can be credited neither to the CGT nor to the Portuguese Communist Party. If that is the case WHO then can claim credit for the 18th of January ?

THE INITIATIVE FOR THE INSURRECTIONAL MOVEMENT BELONGS TO THE CGT. ALONE AGAINST TOTAL OPPOSITION FROM THE C.P. which was only interested in reformist action and for an opportunity to destroy our anarcho-syndicalist organisation and its members, who, as Phil Mailer writes on page 72 note 8 of his book, "played a prominent and courageous role in the rebellion."



Workers being taken to Aljube prison in Lisbon, after the collapse of the armed workers uprising on the 18th of January 1934.

In Portugal in the 1930s general assemblies of workers to protest against fascist trade unions were dangerous, if not impossible, to organise because of the rigorous police control over syndicalist demonstrations. The reformist attitude of the CP in relation to trades unions was only a political manoeuvre by the Communists to gain control over these trades unions - a tactic mentioned by Phil Mailer (p. 78) when he refers to the same opportunism just after 25 April 1974.

The Possible Revolution has made some gains, but its advance had to be postponed once more. Naturally the revolution will be put in motion in the near future, but this time synchronised with the libertarian resurgence of the whole Iberian peninsula.

SPAIN :

whither CNT ?

THE SPANISH libertarian movement has been one of the strongest in the world, now it is expanding fast after 60 years of repression and dictatorship. The ideas of proudhon were introduced in the middle of the last century. Later, this comparatively mild federalism was superseded by the influence of Bakunin and a Spanish section of the International was founded in Barcelona during June 1870. Through the last years of the century there were waves of strikes, peasant uprisings, bombings, etc., all of which were met with severe repression. With the development of syndicalism, and the success of the CGT in France, the libertarian unions of Catalonia came together in a federation known as 'Solidaridad Obrera' in 1907. In 1909 there was the "Tragic Week" uprising in Barcelona, and heavy vengeance was taken by the State, who with customary clumsiness made a martyr of Francisco Ferrer, the mildly libertarian educationalist, who hadn't even been in the country at the time. Many others, without his international reputation, were murdered with less fuss. In 1910 libertarian unions from all Spain formed the Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo and it is the revived CNT which is now attracting attention.

The CNT has always had strong anarchist currents and these helped it to avoid the traps of syndicalism better than its equivalents in other countries, e.g. the CGT in France or SAC in Sweden. The problem is that as the syndicate gets closely involved in 'traditional' trade union activities it develops bureaucratic and reformist tendencies. To help keep the larger movement on specifically libertarian lines the conscious anarchists involved formed the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI) which acted as the ideological core of the CNT; However, during the Civil War these organisations collaborated closely with the Republican Governments, at first in Catalonia (which had its own parliament, the Generalitat) and later nationally. Amazingly, it was not just the reformists of the CNT who did this. Garcia Oliver, who had been one of the FAI's leading militants became Minister of Justice. It is debatable whether the anarchists in isolation could have withstood the Fascists, who were backed by Germany and Italy, but by compromising they ensured their own defeat. Their strength was drained off into the war and their social achievements were crushed by the state and the communists even before the arrival of the Fascists.* Later, in the years of exile, the 'official' CNT became even more bureaucratic, as it attempted to

dissociate itself from the guerilla campaigns still being fought. (The story of these times is perhaps best presented in Antonio Tellez' biography of Sabate (Cienfuegos £2.35—unless you can get the commercial edition currently available cheaply in W.H. Smith) and by the many militants whose stories have been brought forward by Black Cross.) Now that the CNT is once again openly functioning in Spain many of these old tensions have reappeared.

The old Spanish anarchist movement is conventionally said to have ended with the death of Sabate in 1960. In fact it kept simmering underground, and guerilla campaigns built up again towards the end of the decade. Captured comrades were dealt with in traditional ways, for example Salvador Puig Antich

as a suitably rigged system could be implemented. Eventually legalisation was extended to political groups. The CNT, which had built up to about 20000 members by last winter, ignored the farce. Recognition, under the government terms, in fact allows considerable meddling by the state. The Communists, eager for respectability, have joined in this charade and hence could take part in the elections, where, of course, they obtained minimal support, due to the nature of the system. The CNT did not actively campaign against the elections (although some other anarchist groups did), preferring to sit back and allow the most overtly repressive structures to be dismantled.

Early this year the CNT (still illegally) held a news conference attended by more than 50 reporters, in Madrid. Spokespersons denounced class collaboration and social pacts and insisted that free unions can never be the instruments of political parties. The general secretary, Juan Gomez Casas, who has spent many years in prison, said that in the CNT there are no leaders, "only comrades who exercise the function of representation". On March 27th they held their first open rally, in a bull ring near Madrid, and were themselves worried by its scale, about 40,000 mili-



Meeting in Parc Guell (Note: Catalan + Basque Separist flags in background)

and others were garotted, despite international protests. By the 1970s everybody was waiting for Franco to die, the people for obvious reasons, the capitalists so that they could do a bit of whitewashing and get the new "reformed" Spain into the EEC. When he finally went, after being officially at least kept in suspended animation for several weeks (comrades in Barcelona told us that the story was that, in fact, he died several years ago and the body was stuffed, to be brought out on official occasions with the arms worked by strings), the new monarchy began with almost indecent haste to liberalise itself. The underground groups emerged, with the Communists having the greatest number (will people never learn?) while the right wing (comparatively) hovered in the background gnashing their teeth. Elections were announced, for as soon

*See V. Richards' Lessons of the Spanish Revolution (Freedom Press, £1.50) (of which the current Spanish edition has just gone into its second printing.)

tants and sympathisers attending. This rally was widely reported abroad (for example, see FREEDOM vol. 38 nos. 6 & 9).

Faced with this strength, the state finally extended legal recognition on May 7th, with the CNT still uncompromised by cooperation. Throughout the year CNT has held massive rallies, for example on July 12th in Montjuich Park, Barcelona, where an estimated 150,000 attended, and veteran Federica Montseny was paraded. (However, there is understandably some suspicion of her; after all, she was a Minister in the republican government during the civil war). The organisation has also, of course, carried out its syndical functions during this time, most notably during the three months' strike at the La Roca electronics factory (see report in Open Road no. 3) where predictably the CC.00 (the Communist workers' commissions) played their usual games, criticised the strike, abandoned it at critical moments and collaborated with the company. The CNT, backed by a Trot-

skyst-dominated UGT local, championed the strikers nationally and broad and supported every decision of the workers' strike assembly. Most recently the CNT held the massive Jornados Libertarias in Barcelona, always one of their strongest areas, attracting an estimated 400,000 for the four days' festivities. National membership is now estimated at 50,000 (more than doubled in six months) with about 5000 members in Barcelona.

So what is the state of Spanish anarchism? A damn sight healthier than British, certainly. As well as the CNT there are many other groups more consciously anarchist and a large number of libertarian sympathisers. And now is the time to look at the situation more critically, having enjoyed the euphoria of the packed photos in the libertarian papers and, in our case, the actual attendance among the hundreds of thousands in Park Güell, Barcelona a couple of weeks ago. To start with, the present state of affairs. As mentioned above national membership is around 50,000. In small towns there will be one organisation, in larger centres there will be a number of syndicates. For example, in Barcelona there is a Regional Coordinating Committee for Catalonia and 17 syndicates, e.g. for textiles, metallurgical workers, construction and power workers, etc., and including "Oficios Varios" for workers not covered by the other sectors and "Espectáculos Públicos" who organised the recent festival.

There are also the allied autonomous groups "Mujeres Libres" ("Free Women", see FREEDOM vol. 38 no. 5) and FIJL (the Iberian Federation of Young Libertarians). Both these organisations, as with the CNT itself, are revived versions of those dating from before the dictatorship. The FAI is also beginning to re-form. Ninety per cent of CNT membership is under the age of 30, the others (who occupy many of the organising posts) are veterans of the civil war and prison. Membership costs 100 pesetas a month (about 65 pence), in contrast to the socialist UGT which only costs 50 pesetas. Unemployment in Spain is rising, accommodation is difficult to find and expensive; in con-

trast food is cheaper than in Britain, (and alcohol is much cheaper) and the Barcelona metro costs only 9 pesetas. However, public utility costs will rise soon and EEC membership will push up food prices. Other left groups could be described as "competitive", as someone commented; the accumulated layers of posters will soon block the streets and no space is free of graffiti.

It is impossible to discuss anarchism in Spain without mentioning the CNT. In fact, to anyone abroad the two appear synonymous. Yet there are different currents within the organisation, and there are many groups who remain outside. As Spain quickly runs through the last 40 years' "developments" there is

cont over →



DEBATE
in SALO
DIANA

Barcelona Days '77 festival report & impression

FOR THE ANARCHIST of my generation Spain is something of a Mecca. It provided the not so gentle nudge to move some of us from the libertarian socialism of the ILP to acceptance of the full anarchist position that a free society has to be stateless.

After three years of struggle the following comments were made by the Spanish revolutionary unions and published by Freedom Press during the war: "The greatest revolutionary event of recent times" they said "has come to an end, and it is right that the workers of the world should now be told the truth about it." (A visit to Barcelona makes one hope that this was not an end but a pause). On page 3 of the pamphlet they go on to say:

"The German-Italian intervention extended the scope of the war to the point of swamping the revolution. During the first months we fought against long-established privilege and corruption; and at the same time set up the proletarian elements of a new social life, political and economic; the war was then in fact of a civil and revolutionary nature. Foreign intervention compelled us to turn the popular revolutionary militias into a regular army; to muster, hurriedly and as fast as we could, the State, which had not then been superseded by a better political and social organization; to open our zone to the international brigades, whose control was not in our hands; and most of all, to ask the international proletariat for the help which they did not give us, which the bourgeois democratic states refused us and which finally Russia sold to us, not only at the price of gold; but also at the cost of our political independence. To get the arms of which we were in need we both gave away our national wealth, and had to tolerate the control of our political and military activities by the foreign and Spanish agents of the USSR. This nobody wanted, but in view of the indifference of the world to our wretched situation, all anti-fascist parties acquiesced in it, in order that the people should not be crushed."

The pacifist position was shaken by the impact of the civil war, for logically, the peaceful society can only be an anarchist one. Many pacifists happily supported the property basis of society, defended by the violence of the State. Many of us in consequence of the civil war concluded regrettably that there could be circumstances where we would have to defend our liberty with violence. This does not mean that one falls into the trap of the glorification of it, for in an atmosphere of irrational violence authoritarianism flourishes. I digress because the Spanish Civil War was such a forceful event on every level that it is worthwhile recalling what went on in one's heart and mind.

In the welter of emotion and propaganda at the time, mostly from Communist Party sources, the real significance of the Spanish collectives was lost to the working class movement in Britain. For over ten years anarchist publication in Britain had virtually ceased, The Spanish revolution revived it and a regular paper, called significantly *Spain and the World*, was published and recorded the real revolution that was taking place - a revolution that the capitalist and communist establishment did not want to succeed. Friends returning from Spain at that time gave alarming reports on the activities of the Communist Party - now significantly an accepted and respectable party in what they hope will be a modern industrialised EEC state. This would be an apt reward for the counter-revolutionary role they played in the Civil War, in which they attacked the personnel of the mild libertarian socialist ILP and POUM and murdered many of their opponents. Looking through old papers of the time one realises how much the propaganda in Britain was dominated by the CP and its fellow travellers, with the publishing houses of Lawrence & Wishart and the Gollancz Left Book Club, and it is much to the credit of those comrades in Freedom Press who were able, to some extent, to correct the distortions and lies. In *Spain Illustrated*, published by Lawrence & Wishart, there is no mention of the CNT (and its associated an-

C.N.T.

also a large number whose attitudes are similar to those of young people in the late sixties here. At times the park in Barcelona was like a pop festival from that time with underground comics being translated and dope given an exaggerated importance. (I was interviewed by a Frankfurt radio reporter and I'm sure she is going to present the whole thing entirely in these terms, despite my protestations. It's ludicrous enough that the opinions of an outsider like me should be included when she was surrounded by Spaniards who are actually involved). These people have the same mistiness we had 10 years ago. It will be "interesting" to see if they go through the same disillusionment.

However, back to the CNT itself. These comments were gleaned from talks with its Catalonian secretaries (general, coordinating and cultural), with individual members and with non-affiliated comrades in Barcelona. Substantially simi-

lar criticisms have been made by David Urbano who left the CNT and now runs "Cosa Nostra" bookshop in Barcelona. (An interview with David appeared in February's *A - rivista anarchica* and a translation appears in *Solidarity* vol. 8 no. 7. However, I believe there are strong differences between him and the comrades with whom we were closest). The main problem is the old division between syndicalists and anarchists. The secretaries told me that the first priority is to get the CNT going ("instrumentalise") and many of the new young militants "lack experience" in union organisation. Some, indeed, are "anti-organisation." The terms "hippies and drug addicts" are not just used by Carillo. The coordinating secretary, Luis Andres, said that he could not estimate the relative proportions in the CNT, as there were, as yet, no affinity groups. However, at a recent regional meeting there was a slight anarchist majority, but he could not say how valid this was overall. We were also given an estimate of 60 per cent syndicalist and 40 per

cent anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist. The syndicalists say that the organisation must reflect the workers' movement while the others feel that if the drive is not anarchist, then the CNT will become integrated, like CC.OO. When asked about his own sympathies, Luis said that they did not matter, as he was merely an organiser. When pressed he said he was an anarchist. Comrades outside the CNT met this information with what might be called "polite interest." Luis denied that immigration (eg. from Andalusia) was a problem within the CNT. He felt that it is good for the immigrants to meet a sympathetic organisation. It is merely an "intellectual conceit that anarchism originated in local patriotism", although Catalonian patriotism did exist and was a positive trend. Meetings with immigrants do not cause a break but strengthen the movement by "dynamic confrontation," (literal translation from Spanish often produces nicely melodramatic phrases; I love "convocate a manifestation" better than "call a demo"). (cont p.7.)

archist group the FAI) whose large membership made it one of the most significant forces. These organisations were largely responsible for the initial defeat of the fascist rebellion and the subsequent reorganisation of the economic base of large parts of the country, without which the social revolution could not have survived for so long. *Spain Illustrated* refers to farming collectives, and it was such collectives that the Communist armed forces attacked. The probability was that at the time there were more people in concentration camps in Stalin's Russia than in Hitler's Germany. Both forms of totalitarianism spread their evil tentacles over Spain and they cured me, for one, of any illusions about revolutionary government or the dictatorship of the proletariat. The period of the civil war clarified my thought and made for the steady growth of anarchist concepts which events have, and are continuing to, confirm. Revolutionary violence may have some part in defending anarchists but it cannot create anarchy, for when anarchism is enforced it ceases to be, and this is what distinguishes it from the so-called revolutionary left. It is the apolitical form for those who grow the food, build the houses, weave the clothes and produce the other necessities of life. It is on these essential matters that the revolutions of the left founder and where the CNT had its strength.

These cliché-ridden groups with their political intrigues are concerned with power, and the anarchist movement is not free of them. The representative of one such small group from Britain read a speech at the Barcelona festival, indistinguishable from a Trotskyist tract.

You arrive in Spain to be greeted by posters and slogans everywhere proclaiming the anarchist presence. You walk up the Ramblas in Barcelona and in all the bookstalls, together with the soft porn, you see rows of books by A.S. Neill, Kropotkin, Bakunin, Vernon Richards' *The Lessons of the Spanish Revolution* in Spanish, women's lib material, etc. It is all there and not confined to a few bookstalls as in Britain. There are groups of people up and down the street engaged in earnest debate. You hope that this is a sign of the enthusiasm that was part of the revolution of '36.

The CNT headquarters in Barcelona was a hive of activity reminiscent of pre-war political activity, or the peak days of the CND and Committee of 100 in Britain. The vast and beautiful Park Guel standing on a hillside on the edge of Barcelona where the four days of festival were held, was also full of activity as a vast stage and loud speaker system were set up. Here also was the architecture of Gaudi, which seems to have sprouted out of the ground. We slept well the first night among Gaudi's pillars.

A large part of the festival was directed to raising funds for the CNT and the various syndicates that are allied it and they provided food, drink, posters, badges, literature, craft items etc. There was a stall for *Mujeres Libres*, a creche for children, video and tape recordings of the meetings at the old cinema Salo Diana in the town. We felt that perhaps if the meetings had been held in the park they would have been more integrated with the festival. But perhaps we found this owing to the smallness of our numbers and the difficulties in manning our stall and covering all that was going on. Many English-speaking people had drifted in from outside and we were able to tell them what it was about, and talk about the history of the Spanish movement and about anarchist ideas in general.

There was an American girl from Boston who made it plain that she was from Spain not America, who lived in a province adjacent to Portugal. She played the guitar and sang. She said she had been to a similar festival in the province and had been invited to play. She said she was unable to play the traditional music. They said they did not want it, they wanted the American and English protest songs. The reception moved her very much, she said, and felt that anarchism was very much in the Spanish character. In this respect I hope in England that we haven't gone too far from the country of the Levellers, that of Blake and Shelley, to re-discover the necessity for the more organic life style that anarchism presupposes. But also the rich diversity, for in all the world the music has become the same, and the same plastic food and same carbon dioxide froth, the fruits of the earth conforming to the needs of mechanised agriculture, the same buildings, and transport and clothing, the same governments, the same every damn thing. The rich patchwork of human existence covered by the same grey blanket of industrial technocratic sameness.

Can Spain, the nursery of anarchism, start a reversal of this process and crystallise the unease that is universal, that is expressed in the demands (where Britain is concerned) of the Welsh and the Scots and (where Spain) of the Catalans and the Basques, who were in evidence at the festival? Unlike any other workers' movement, the breadth of interests displayed here was surprising and interesting. The concern for education is in the Spanish tradition. Spanish anarchists today are also concerned about the devastating consequences to the earth of industrial capitalism. An Argentinian comrade pointed out that what is being done to one of the last great lungs of the earth in Brazil may have devastating consequences that will dwarf all other ecological problems. A large area of the park was devoted to alternative technology.

The traditional music of Spain was received with great enthusiasm, and you can still get a variety of traditional foods and fruits in the shops. But comrades of Spain beware - the supermarket is moving in.

So many Spaniards in or near the CNT are concerned about environmental aspects of the modern industrial society. After all, they live next to the most polluted sea in the world, on a coast line eroded by "development." Spaniards in many cases have to pay to sit by the pleasant walk up the Ramblas which is being spoiled by the noise and smell of traffic. Many are concerned lest the explosive growth of the CNT means that its revolutionary base becomes diluted and it ends by being just another part of modern capitalism, devoted to increasing wages and a tool of manoeuvring politicians of left, far left and ultra left.

The repression is still near the surface. The real enemy of privilege, the *Federacion Anarquista Iberica* is still a banned organisation. They can ban the form but not the feeling, which is bursting out through the CNT. We made many contacts and new friends and hope once more that we can make use of the enthusiasm of our Spanish comrades to revitalise our own movement. They certainly put the joy into revolution, and as D.H. Lawrence once said in a poem, revolution without it is useless.

ALAN ALBON

* *Three Years of Struggle in Spain*, 1944.

GAY NEWS

B. J. CLIFTON says (August 6) that my description of the judge in the *Gay News* trial as "an elderly Jew" is in terms which "disgrace an anarchist journal." May I explain?

The "class background" of Alan King-Hamilton, which Mr Clifton emphasises, is the upper-class milieu shared by all judges, so I didn't bother to mention it. Instead I tried to describe in two words the generation and religion of this particular judge, which seemed relevant; the phrase wasn't meant to be either agist or racist, and I am sorry if it seemed to be either. My points were:

1. He is 73 years old; so if he had an ordinary job he would have retired eight years ago, and he had great difficulty in understanding the social issues in this case.
2. He is a leading member of the Jewish community, being president of the West London Synagogue, the centre of Reform Judaism in this country; so he is committed to a religious view of the world, and he had great difficulty in understanding the intellectual issues in this case. (It is also ironic for a poem about Jesus to be condemned for blasphemy, and under a law which protects only Christianity from attack!)

N.W.

STH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY

Dear FREEDOM,

The article on South Place Ethical Society your August 6) assumes that statements made by its general secretary (Peter Cadogan) "can be taken as an expression of current thinking within the Society". But, unless this phrase

CNT.

The CNT is very conscious of its history and consciously uses its myths. It has re-ratified the decisions of the congresses of the 1930s and hopes to re-create a duplicate of its former self. The reconstitution of the FAI is said to be similar. We were told that FAI has 500 members and is also expanding. Others told us that some comrades have a romantic idea that FAI should exist, and therefore it does without any real base (rather like British grand sounding illusions such as the Confederation of British Anarchists). What is certainly true is that the FAI is still illegal, and its members are harassed by the police at every opportunity. However, the trends towards "building the organisation" are already there. The organising posts are largely filled with veterans who, perhaps, do not realise the extent to which Spain has altered. For the situation today is very different to that of the 1930s. Capitalism itself has altered, tourism has appeared and Spain will soon be applying for EEC entry.

As an illustration which you can interpret as you see fit: on the last day of the festival in Barcelona there was talk



means no more than the thinking of some members, albeit a minority, this is not so.

As a South Place member of 27 years' standing (in comparison with which Peter Cadogan is a newcomer), I can assure you that most members do not agree with his desire for more churches (however undenominational) and a religious revival. On the contrary, many members have expressed disquiet at such statements made by the secretary of their Society, as putting the clock back a hundred years or more. (For the Society is nearly two hundred years old, and had evolved to a humanist position by the time I joined it in 1950).

Your article mentions tax-free covenanted donations as the main fiscal benefit of charity status, which humanist organisations no longer enjoy. But that is only one of the minor benefits. Legal charities are exempt from all direct taxation except local rates, while the churches of the Church of England are exempt even from those. Churches are also exempt from the provisions of many of the planning laws.

Since religious bodies automatically enjoy charity status in law, the Lord's Day Observance Society, for instance, is able to conduct its sabbatarian campaigns out of untaxed income, while its opponents, notably the National Secular Society (of which I am President) have to campaign on the opposite side of the very same issues out of fully taxed income.

of a demonstration. We were told in the presence of the three above-mentioned secretaries. Later, back in the park, I was stopped and asked to translate a message into English and read it over the PA system. It said that the CNT had heard of the demo and did not know who had made the call, that they would take no responsibility and that the park was surrounded by police, i.e. they washed their hands of it, and if you stepped outside the park, on your own head be it. While I was reading this I was stopped and asked to read another message that all comrades should gather in 10 minutes for the official closing of the festival. This "ceremony", mostly speeches of fraternal greetings from everybody who could be got onto the stage, was interrupted when a mike was seized and an argument started over the demo. With all the confusion the march, when it finally got under way, was only a few hundred strong. (There were tens of thousands in the park). There was some stone throwing and a few rubber bullets. Throughout this the CNT itself (as opposed to its members) remained aloof and would not commit itself for or against. And a minor point: entry to the park for the festival was by ticket, 300

You suggest that your readers would be inclined to "counsel against seeking favours from the state". Is equality before the law a "favour"? Anyhow, since when have anarchists counselled the paying of taxes in a spirit of meekness? What FREEDOM should support, if true to its libertarian ethos, is the proposal of the Charity Law Reform Committee to replace the privileges of charity status by exemption from taxation for all non-profit-distributing organisations, so as to eliminate value judgments from tax liability.

Yours truly,

BARBARA SMOKER.

MAMA

In his letter (6 August) Nigel Pennick accuses me of introducing the theme of collective guilt into my article on *Mama!*, a theme which "condemned millions of Jews to the ovens for their ancestors' supposed killing of Christ." His argument is perfectly fair in itself, but it was not the meaning I meant to convey, and had it been, no anarchist paper would have printed it. My reference to the possibility that somewhere in the remote past men might have been an oppressed sex was certainly not introduced in the intention of trying to make women today blush with shame! I nevertheless believe it is a point worth thinking about for the simple reason that many militant women today, including some anarchists, are in danger of falling into a reverse sexism. After all, it was not the writer but the people she was writing about who seemed to be looking back to a remote and matriarchal past. I do not blame them for searching for evidence of societies where women were seen differently and thought of themselves in a different and more natural way, but the dangers of mystification must be avoided. *Mama!* has not done so and the result is female chauvinism.

Giulia

pesetas. The politically minded were asked to make a donation by paying 500 pesetas. And you got a different coloured ticket.

None of these points alter the fact that the CNT is the world's most important libertarian organisation. The Catalonian regional committee is certainly aware of this and of their own special place in Spanish anarchism. The revival of anarchism in Spain provides hope for us all (see also the comments of Emidio Santana in this issue. He looks to an example from Spain to revive the Portuguese revolution). The CNT is an important part of this. Yet we must remember that the romance of history also included a steady integration of the CNT into the system. And, most important, we must remember that Spanish anarchism is far, far wider than the CNT.

DAVID PEERS

We should like to thank all comrades in Barcelona and in particular Suzanna and Christine, who have the misfortune to speak English and so came in for the brunt of our awkwardness, and very particularly Catti, Alicia and Miguel.

DP & AA

FREEDOMS CONTACTS PAGE

WE WELCOME news, reviews, articles, letters. Latest date for receipt of copy for next issue (No. 17) is SATURDAY 27 AUGUST (and it is helpful to have it on Thursday 25th August).

NEXT DESPATCHING date is THURSDAY 1st SEPTEMBER. Come and help from 4 pm onwards. You are welcome each Thursday 4-8 pm for informal get together while folding FREEDOM

Groups

ABERYSTWYTH. Mike Sheehan, Neuadd Caerleon, Victoria Tce. Aberystwyth.
BOLTON. Contact 6 Stockley Ave. Harwood, Bolton (tel. 387516)

CANTERBURY. Dave Norman, 12 Claremont Place, Wincheap. Individuals/groups wishing to form Kent Libertarian Fed. please also contact.

CORBYP anarchists write 7 Cresswell Walk, Corby, Northants.

COVENTRY. Write John England, 48 Spencer Ave., Earlsdon, Coventry.

EAST ANGLIAN Libertarians, Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gdns, Saffron Walden

EXETER Anarchist Society, Devonshire House, Stocker Rd. Univ. of Exeter

LEAMINGTON & Warwick, c/o 42 Bath St., Leamington Spa.

LEEDS, Tony Kearney, 4 Ingle Row, Leeds 7

LEICESTER c/o Blackthorn Books, 74 Highcross Street, Leicester

MANCHESTER contact Al 061 224 3028

NEWCASTLE anarchist group, 91 Beaconsfield St. Arthur's Hill, Newcastle NE4 5JN

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PORTSMOUTH, Carolyne Cahm, 2 Chadderton Gardens, Pembroke Park, Old Portsmouth

ST. ALBANS, John Morton, 21 St. Peters Road, St. Albans, Herts.

SHEFFIELD (1) Tikka, 4 Havelock Square. (2) Anarchists, Libertarians, Situationists &c. Flat 1, 1 Victoria Rd. Sheffield S10

STOKE anarchists, 52 Campbell Road, Stoke-on-Trent

THAMES VALLEY, Adele Dawson, Ma Maymeade, 6 Congress Rd., Maidenhead (tel. 062 2974)

LONDON FEDERATION of Anarchist Groups (FLAG):

Anarchist Black Cross, 123 Upper Tooting Park, N. 4. (tel. 691 6533)

Anarchy Collective, 29 Grosvenor Ave., N. 5. (tel. 359 5795—before 8 pm)

Brixton Anarcho-Situationists, 8 Heywood House, Tulse Hill SW2 (674 6402)

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Zero tel. 555 6287

MIDLANDS Anarchist Federation: Sec. Louise Crane, 13 Arden Terrace, Bravingstone, Leicester (tel. 82345)

NORTH WEST Anarchist Federation. 6 Stockley Ave., Harwood, Bolton (tel. 387516 (mthly newsletter, meetings))

ANARCHIST STUDENTS NETWORK for contacts list & information on next Conference (5/6 November) write Exeter University Anarchists, Devonshire House, Stocker Rd., Exeter, Devon.

SCOTTISH Libertarian Federation: Aberdeen: Blake c/o APP, 163 King St. Dundee: Mike Malet, 1 Lynnewood Place Edinburgh: Gibson, 7 Union St. (557 1532) Glasgow: C. Baird, 122 Benneray St., Glasgow G22 (336 7895) Stirling: D. Tymes, 99 Rosebank, Sauchie, Clacks.

International

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Canberra: Alternative Canberra Group, 10 Beltana Rd. Piailigo, ACT 2809

Victoria: La Trobe Libertarian Socialists, c/o SRC, La Trobe Univ. Bundooora, Vic. 3083

Libertarian Soc. Fed. of Aust. c/o 4 Roosevelt St., Reservoir, Vic. 3073.

New South Wales P. Stones, P.O. Box 26, Warrawaong, N.S.W.

Sydney Fed. of Aust. Anarchists, Box 92, Broadway, 2007 Australia.

Sydney Libertarians, P.O. Box 54, Darlinghurst 2010

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P.O. Box 22-607 Christchurch

International Books, 123 Willis St., Wellington

Daybreak Bookshop, P.O. Box 5424, Dunedin.

U. S. A.

NEW YORK: Libertarian Book Club, Box 842 G.P.O., New York 10012

S.R.A.F. Freespace Alternate U, 339 Lafayette St. New York City, NY 10012

MISSOURI: Columbia Anarchist League, P.O. Box 370, Columbia, MO 65201

SAN FRANCISCO: Free Socialist, P.O.

GERMANY

Anarchist Federation of Baden: ABF Info-Büro, Postfach 161, 717 Schwabisch Hall, Germany.

Meetings

LONDON Tuesday AUGUST 30. A meeting to discuss how anarchist and independent militants can organise to get the ideas of self-management & anarcho-syndicalism across to our fellow-workers. All working comrades are urged to come along. 8 pm at Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, N.1.

LEICESTER 17 SEPTEMBER. Third Midlands An. Fed. Conference 1pm at Blackthorn Books. Inquiries to Louise

Crane, 13 Arden Tce, Bravingstone, Leicester (tel. 82345)

Murrays Benefit Concert in the eveng. **LONDON** SEPTEMBER. Central London WEA autumn programme: Problems of Modern Africa; Music, right & left; Political Economy of Women, a historical perspective; Social Psychology ... Full programme from Sidney Billson, 33 Compton Rd. N.1. (SAE please) **LAND** for the PEOPLE every Tues. at 8A Leighton Cres., London NW5 (Kensington), upstairs No. 8 (tel. 267 1184 or 485 3572)

BIRMINGHAM Lib. Socs. meet Suns. 8pm at 'Fox & Grapes' Freeman St. (Moor St. station)

LEFT WITHOUT MARX? Part of the reason why libertarians have failed to create a coherent alternative to Marxism is that they have failed to understand it. Libertarians interested in a study group on Marx contact Left Without Marx, 15 Matcham Rd., London E11 3LE.

Desires

French girl comrade would like to meet other anarchists in Bloomsbury area. Telephone Patricia Lemaire at 636 7972 (evenings) or write to her at Raglan Hotel, 33-34 Bedford Way, W.C.1.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES liberation group, enquiries c/o Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Rd., London N1

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