

VALENTINE ZERO

ZERO



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**Why is this man sitting in the middle
of a lake, in the middle of Scotland,
in the middle of
summer?**



**inside:
the ARM
STATEMENT**

BRITAIN'S
BIGGEST
EVENING NEWS
SALE

Evening News

LATE
EXTRA

LONDON: TUESDAY JANUARY 10 1978 8p

WOMAN

Direct action in Fleet street

On January 6 about 50 of us invaded the offices of London's *Evening News* to protest against the appalling articles they were running about lesbians getting pregnant through Artificial Insemination by Donor (AID). The articles played on men's fears of women living without them, even daring to have children without a big butch man to be head of the household. If anti-abortion MP Leo Abse sees abortion as the penultimate step to the ultimate castration of the male himself, what would he make of lesbians using AID? The *Evening News* hysteria won't stop lesbians having children, of course. But it could make it more difficult in practice (AID, like adoption, could be restricted to respectable married couples) and their sensationalisation of simple facts has stirred up prejudice and hatred.

What was really shitty about the articles was the way they were 'researched'. For two months *Evening News* reporter Joanna Patyna

infiltrated the lesbian organisation Sappho, posing as a lesbian wanting a child. Sappho put her and her 'girl-friend' in touch with a doctor prepared to provide AID for lesbians. Undercover operation accomplished, Joanna Patyna and Kuttner, the news editor responsible for this and apparently the rest of the paper's anti-gay stories, turned up at the Sappho office. Sappho workers Jacky Forster and Nikke Henriques refused to speak without assurances that the conversation was confidential, but it was printed almost verbatim, making it look as though they'd co-operated. So Sappho and 'Dr Strangelove' were splashed across the front page, to be followed next day by the 'exclusive inside story' of the 'most remarkable family in Britain', only last minute legal threats made them black out the faces on the photographs of the two women, and stopped them publishing their full names and addresses.

Two days before the first story came out, we at *Spare Rib* were phoned by one of the donors who was being harassed by *Evening News* blood hounds. They had followed him from the clinic, photographed him and threatened to use his name if he refused to co-operate. We gave some legal advice, but should perhaps have acted then, before the paper 'sprang' the story. When they did, we were

sweet. The reply went in so easily we wished we'd asked for more - for a front page and centre spread like they gave to their garbage. Our single column looked so demure. It's impossible to assess what effect it had on readers, if it registered with some it was worth it, even though the paper managed to capitalise on it by plastering 'Lesbians reply' on their billboards, squeezing out the

News.

What we were protesting against was a series of articles in the paper last week about the birth of children to lesbian parents through the AID (Artificial Insemination Donor) method.

The *Evening News*' treatment of the subject has been extremely sensational. The paper continually suggests that lesbians are freaks with no right to bear children.

Many of us are lesbian mothers and we know we can provide our children with loving backgrounds. We had the right to choose without men.

Children are wanted which is surely the important thing.

It is not easy to lose the right to have children, which is surely the important thing.

Unless the house is continually discriminated

Assistant Editor, one woman asked if they realised what the likely effect of these articles would be.

"I don't know," Mr. Kirby replied. "I would hate to think they would lead to victimisation of lesbians."

"People outside were shouting: 'Burn them' at that very moment. We were spat at by one of the journalists. That's the kind of hatred this sort of journalism encourages."

Prejudice against homosexuals in our society is so great that many homosexuals are murdered every year just for being gay.

This kind of journalism is not justifiable. Infiltrating a perfectly legal organisation as Joanna Patyna did and

proceeding to publish articles in a way that is all of the

most reprehensible and an



Evening News newsroom at a standstill as women 'probe' Fleet Street. Outside *Evening News* workers shouted 'Scum', 'Vermin', 'Burn them' and 'Disgrace to the human race'.

furiously and felt we had to do something. People at *Gav Sweatshop*, trashed before by the *Evening News* felt the same - we rang round the feminist network (centres, groups, campaign offices, friends) arranged a time and place to meet - two hours later. Such spontaneous action inevitably means that not everyone can be consulted, and not everyone can come. It's a responsibility of everyone's support and can't discuss fully the most effective action to take. Huddled in a corner of Fleet Street, we decided to stage a sit-in. One woman stayed on the phone at *Spare Rib*, tipping off the newspapers, who came in force to an action nice and near home. We rushed to the newsroom, sang, chanted, argued with journalists and subs, sneered at the pin-ups on their walls and were jeered at ourselves. Next time we should take rattles and loud-hailers, but at least we had stink-bombs to let off as we left. One woman photographer was pushed off a chair - 'Are you a man or a woman?' - and spat at as she was leaving; a hostile crowd had gathered outside.

We made up our demands as we went along: to see the editor (we'd found out in advance both his name - Kirby - and Kuttner's) and to have the right of reply. After two hours of noise and negotiation we at last met with Kirby and Kuttner (they'd wanted to see only our 'leaders' or failing that, four 'spokesmen'). We faced them with our objections and were promised space for an unedited reply. Kirby played the liberal-who-never-meant-any-harm, so

controversy that Fleet Street feeds on.

For us it raised questions about organisation within the women's liberation movement - how to act quickly yet include as many women as possible - and about handling the press. For instance, many women were asked for an interview by 'liberal' journalists offering sympathetic coverage. It may seem worth co-operating to correct the *Evening News* distortions, but so far this has only presented a picture of lesbian 'families' as nice, 'normal' and no threat at all.

Press reports of the occupation assumed that all who took part were lesbians, not all were. This is an issue of importance to all women. We are fighting for the right to control our own bodies, to define our own sexuality and not to be forced into dependence on men.

That weekend spraypainted slogans appeared on the British Medical Association ('dubious' about lesbian mothers), the House of Commons, the law courts and on Joanna Patyna's flat ('Lesbian mums OK' on the outside walls and on her door, 'Here lives a gutter press reporter'). One woman was arrested immediately after the occupation for spraying 'Lesbians unite' on an *Evening News* delivery van. This political trial comes up at 10am on February 23 at Mansion House Court. There's been one meeting since to discuss the *Evening News* affair and what to do next time (all the time). The next meeting is on February 12 at 2pm - check with *Spare Rib* (01-253-9792/3) for place.

□ Jill Nicholls



Ban this journalism!

Photo: Mark Rusher (IFL)

Zero5 February/March '78 Page 1

Barcelona

CNT blows small but significant strike

The reformist tendencies beginning to spread within the CNT were given concrete expression during the six day petrol station strike which paralysed the city of Barcelona and its province just before Christmas. The petrol workers struck for a daily rate of 900 ptas (£5.70); the employers refused to go beyond the 700 ptas agreed the preceding June. The strike ended without a wage increase being achieved, just a one off payment of 45,000 ptas to each employee — a pitiful result for the strikers. But the Strike Committee explained to them, 'We have put through nearly all our demands, and the employers have been defeated!' The employers however showed definite satisfaction with the outcome; even if they had to make concessions, by maintaining the 700 ptas rate they gained ground for the next round of negotiations. The 45,000 ptas were doled out as a 'special payment towards the resumption of work'.

Barcelona's Civil Governor was no less triumphant. There hadn't been too many incidents, and as he said when it was over, that was that. In a few hours of discussion with the Strike Committee he dispelled the tension and was able to demonstrate that in Barcelona the dreaded CNT — or what there was of it at the time — could be just as peaceable and 'civilised' as the obliging Comisiones Obreras. The people of Barcelona for their part

celebrated the end of the strike with huge queues for petrol for a holiday weekend. Public understanding and solidarity were not overwhelming, the Guardia Civil did not even need to threaten the workers to any extent although they did anyway, from force of habit — some petrol customers were ready to do their job for them.

The Comisiones Obreras did not hesitate to denounce the strike; the main work of organisation fell to the CNT, their Transport Syndicate, at the request of a petrol worker militant, had decided on solidarity with the strike. The CNT then — as the press wrote — 'went into its baptism of fire with a strike that would not be staged in the workshop but in the open air, with just one adversary — the employers — but a wider and more contradictory one — the people in the street'. The very wide scattering of workplaces necessitated a complex organisation which gave the unpaid agitators no rest. The primary task was to spread up-to-date information to give the lie to the bosses' version. The strike was directed by a committee elected in the daily mass meeting. Additionally, solidarity throughout the province was coordinated by a 'supercommittee'. Unusually, the idea of a 'supercommittee' had come from the Liberal Professions Syndicate (LPS) and not the syndicate concerned. Even more unusual was the fact that it was

conceived of as being a closed committee (usually in anarcho-syndicalist organisation only committees elected to fulfil specific organisational tasks are closed) and that it assumed quasi-executive powers (in flat contradiction to the spirit of anarcho-syndicalist organisation)

One has to look at the composition of the LPS and the part it played in the Catalan Regional Assembly last September to understand this new tendency within the CNT. The LPS is a syndicate of architects, doctors, lawyers etc, a kind of 'status' syndicate which has theoretically no place in an anarcho-syndicalist organisation where architects are organised in the Building syndicate, doctors in the Health syndicate, and so on. Thus in some ways the composition of the LPS is bourgeois.

In the early sessions of the Regional Assembly two different approaches to the CNT's orientation, anarchist and pure syndicalist (trade unionist), began to emerge, the outcome of which was reflected in the composition of the new Regional Committee. Only one person was re-elected from the outgoing anarchist based Committee. This off-loading of militants with proven anarchist experience is discernable in other ways, along with the rise of others who a few months previously did not even belong to the organisation or were actually in political parties.

The direction of the petrol strike along purely trade-unionist lines therefore accorded exactly with the composition of the Regional Committee. True the strike showed a tendency to radicalisation, its co-ordination helped by unpaid libertarian militants, but at the very moment this radicalisation should have been extended the strike was dissolved — through the strike committee's decision to accept the outcome of negotiations without putting it to the vote of the mass meeting. Even if some success was achieved, in that the strike was total in Barcelona city and there was 80-90% participation in the province, it was still conducted by the CNT exactly in the way the Comisiones Obreras would have run it 'except that the CNT does not have the numerical strength of the COs', as a comrade in Barcelona put it.

□ *Befreiung* translated by Liz Willis

Meanwhile the CNT intends to sue Barcelona's police chief, the evening paper *El Noticiero Universal* and Spanish Radio and TV authorities for 100,000,000 pesetas (£.6 million) following their campaign to link the CNT with the petrol bomb attack which gutted Barcelona's Scala casino/dance hall complex on January 18 killing four workers. The attack on the Scala came only a few hours after the CNT had staged a massive demonstration against the *Pacte de Moncloa* (the Spanish Social Contract) and the forthcoming reformist shop steward elections, and the speed with which 80-90 anarchist militants were rounded up immediately after the attack suggested that from the outset it was going to be used (if it had not been created) to divert attention away from the CNT's opposition to the *Pacte* and if possible discredit the CNT as well. The CNT has consistently denied any connection with the Scala action, in fact 75% of the Scala workforce are CNT members, yet the police announced that the three women and six men they were charging with the attack were not only all members of the CNT but also, for good measure, members of the FAI and JL (Libertarian Youth) as well, organisations set up — according to the police — to 'destroy the Spanish state through organised terrorism'. *El Noticiero Universal's* editorial of the next day continued in the same vein. 'Moreover, we are worried by the indications we have of the revival of the anarchism of former times which can lead to such tragic demonstrations as yesterday'.

The CNT, well aware that they are sustaining a carefully concerted campaign aimed at checking their re-emergence as a mass movement over the last two years, has challenged media authorities to cede equal airtime and press space to the right of reply. In a communique issued after the Scala incident the CNT described the campaign as 'an attempt by opponents of this organisation to alienate the working class from the anarcho-syndicalist movement in order to obscure the fact that the CNT is the only syndicate that refuses to sign the *Pacte de Moncloa*' □

National

Gays set precedent in enlisting non-gay support

Gay News is the only mass-circulation newspaper in this country specifically for homosexuals. Mary 'I don't hate homosexuals' Whitehouse's successful prosecution of *Gay News* means a revival of the common law of blasphemy which was last used in 1921, the statutory law of blasphemy was repealed in 1956. Judge King-Hamilton defined blasphemous libel as any published writing about christ or christianity that would 'tend to cause a breach of the peace' which he explained as: 'inclined to provoke or arouse angry feeling'. His behaviour throughout the trial was widely condemned in the days following the verdict of guilty. *Gay News'* editor was given a sentence of nine months suspended for eighteen months, and fined £500. *Gay News* was fined £1000 and costs were awarded against the defendants, who now face a legal bill for more than £10,000. They are appealing against the conviction on 28 different counts.

We hold no illusions about *Gay News*, in many ways it is a sexist newspaper. But it was attacked because it is gay, the prosecution was not just about blasphemy, but about the right of gay people to organise and communicate with each other. The attack on *Gay News* is an attack on all gay people in this country, it is part of the developing backlash against gays—increasing police prosecutions and harassment and increasing attacks in the streets. It is part of the erosion of civil liberties and the increase in physical attacks on blacks, women, and trade unionists as well as lesbians and gay men.

Because of this the gay community has chosen this issue as the point where it is going to make a stand and resist. For the first time in the history of the Gay Movement we are asking for the support of non-gay groups as well as mobilising our own community.

How you can help: take the resolution below to your trade union

branch, trades council, anti-fascist group, womens group or civil liberties group, get it passed and let us know:

This branch/group deplores the erosion of civil liberties evidenced by the recent use of the antiquated blasphemy law to convict Gay News and its editor Denis Lemon. This branch/group calls for the repeal of the blasphemy law and the quashing of the conviction of Gay News and its editor and urges its members to support the forthcoming national demonstration in London.

The demonstration will be on Saturday Feb 11., assembling at Temple Embankment at 1 pm. There is a tremendous amount of anger building up over the prosecution and we expect this to be the largest gay demonstration ever in this country.

Donations are urgently needed by the Defence Committee organising the campaign, however large or small.

Affiliate your organisation—minimum £5. If you join as an individual pay what you can afford. Over fifty organisations have now affiliated. As well as gay groups these include trades union groups, trades councils, anti-fascist and political groups. Messages of solidarity have been received from the gay movements in Norway, Australia, and even from our persecuted sisters and brothers in fascist Brazil.

The affiliation of non-gay groups has been effective in building up our morale and determination. For anarchists, the self-organisation of an oppressed community is the essence of Libertarian politics. Our community has chosen this moment to resist its oppression—give us your support.

□ Alan Bray
For further information contact: The National Gay News Defence Committee 146 Mayall Road, London SE24. 01-274 01-274-1843.

Zero is affiliated to the Gay News Defence Committee.

Colchester

Sexism sabotages Essex conference

The South East and London Anarchist/Libertarian conference, the first to be held since Warwick three year ago, took place over January 27/28/29 at Essex University. Organised on sexual politics and communication, around 150 people took part. We hope it will prove to be a watershed in the anarchist movement's history.

On the Friday night a planning meeting took place to finalise workshops and other conference details. From the hostility with which the already scheduled all women's and all men's workshops were challenged it became clear that confrontation over the issue of sexual politics was likely to dominate the entire weekend end. This was borne out as the workshops got underway, workshops not on sexual politics rarely got beyond hostile conflict over sexism, while workshops on sexual politics were of necessity taken up with discussing what was happening in the conference itself.

The women's workshop began with a coherent supportive discussion in which we tried to clarify the links

between our anarchism and our feminism. On the whole we were in agreement on the need both for an autonomous women's movement and to develop feminism within the anarchist movement. These feelings were not shared by some of the men in the conference who saw no evidence of sexism in the anarchist movement and attached little importance to patriarchal oppression. At times throughout the conference women were belittled and even insulted, and their ideas trivialised. Often by men who claimed to be 'insulted' by our allegations of sexism.

The original idea behind the gay workshop was to discuss ways anarchists in the gay movement could organise, and consider the possibility of forming anarchist gay liberation groups. But in the event discussion centred around the indifference shown to gay politics by straight men at the conference. All in all Saturday was a destructive day. Sunday was more constructive although to a large part it was devoted to re-running the previous day's workshops more

successfully. The symbolic, if not actual, turning point was seeing Chabrol's *Nada* Saturday night, 80 minutes of sexism and macho 'anarchist' posturing which bore out every argument women had made during the day.

Sunday's reconvened anti-authoritarian press workshop dealt with many of the basics of co-operating and sharing resources, including setting up a working group to outline a basis for an antisexist press network. The precedence of two thirds of the movement's 15 national publications meeting for the first time was insufficient to prevent the initial workshop degenerating into the angriest three hours of the weekend. Other workshops were held on education, philosophy, organisation and learning to use litho.

Some of us came away depressed although others of us saw what happened as more constructive. This was after all the conference at which feminist and homosexual politics raised their angry beautiful heads and

refused to go away. Essex could have been the first conference of a new, sexpol conscious, anarchist politic, but left us instead determined that it should be the last of the old. The anarchist movement will fail to accomplish anything until it has come to terms with the oppression of men over women. Towards this there seemed to be general agreement that the next conference, which anarchists from Cambridge offered to organise, should be specifically on sexual politics.

Lp's of their choice should be speeding to Essex Libsoc for loving organisation of conference and food (Quiche Louise Michel . . . Muesli Malatesta. . .), Swansea anarchists for running the creche and Rising Free for its bookbus. Finally, for the future, we learnt that the organising group should be given the responsibility of scheduling agendas and workshops in advance, and that future conferences should be advertised as antisexist, unless of course they are not.

□ Patsie, Sharon, Pete, Richard

London

Christmas on the dole for Other Cinema

The sudden folding of the Other Cinema on Dec 16 just a few hours before it was due to premiere the major new feminist film *Shirin's Wedding* was not just a bitter Christmas present for the staff of London's only collectively run cinema, but also raised a question mark over the future of radical independent cinema in this country. The decision to close came just three days after the British Film Institute, at an emergency meeting of its governing board, redeclared its refusal to provide the Other Cinema with a cash transfusion. The BFI's decision was relayed to the 200 strong picket of Other Cinema supporters waiting outside the BFI's Dean Street headquarters in the following statement: "Over the past six months the BFI have been examining the situation and will continue to examine the situation to see if it can be of any possible assistance. However, it is clear that the BFI is unable to make any financial contribution on a scale to satisfy the cinema's current needs"

One does not have to look far to find the reasons for the BFI's complacency and cynicism. It is no secret that ever since the setting up of the Other Cinema to 'distribute and exhibit independent cinema' the official state funding agency for independent cinema has been severely embarrassed by the somewhat parallel, and overtly radical, activities of the Other Cinema. The more so since the Other Cinema scored direct successes with films (*Winstanley*, *Riddles of the Sphinx*, *Before Hindsight*) that the BFI had itself produced.

Started by Pete Sainsbury and Nick Hart Williams in 1970 with just a handful of films given free by Jean-Luc Godard and sympathetic Latin American directors, the Other Cinema (TOC) slowly established a strong catalogue of Left, feminist and experimental films which included *Battle of Algiers* and *Ireland Behind the Wire*. Zero readers will, additionally, remember TOC as the distributors of *Winstanley* and *La Cecilia*. Over the next five years it collectivised itself, began regular Sunday film-nights at the Collegiate, leased the empty Kings Cross Odeon to premiere *Battle of Algiers*, and in the process set its sights on establishing its own cinema. After months of looking around TOC took an option on the lease of the new basement cinema in Tottenham Street, the site of the old Scala, and launched a massive fund raising appeal to find the £40,000 required to turn it from a concrete shell into a fully equipped cinema. In June '76, under increasing pressure from the cinema's owners (National Car Parks) to take up or relinquish the lease, TOC

went ahead, with the appeal fund standing at an apparent £37,000. The cinema opened on Dec 16 '76 with a stunning programme of films of which the centrepiece was the new BFI feature *Winstanley*. With the telegrams and the optimism, and steady box-office receipts, it seemed no mistake at the time that the fundraising should lapse. Later TOC was to find out that not only had the final cost of fitting and equipping the cinema risen to some £62,000, but that the appeal fund showed an unexpected shortfall. The cinema itself broke almost even from the start, but the severe cash flow problem presented by this initial capital deficit was to dog it relentlessly month after month, and finally force it into liquidation.

In Dec '76 TOC approached the BFI to see it clear of its difficulties. The BFI responded by setting up a working party to "examine management of the Other Cinema in relationship to the financial situation and programming policy" The working party took till May to report, by which time the TOC collective had all taken a voluntary 20% wage cut. The report was wholly unacceptable. Reading between the lines the message was clear. If the BFI gave any support at all it would be limited, and then only in exchange for some sort of control. The conditions seemed to be the abandonment of collective management and not 'going public' on its financial affairs. In short the BFI saw the responsibility for TOC's future firmly in terms of individual private support (without explaining how it could be enlisted without publicising the situation).

The cinema had other problems too. The attendance slump which all cinemas face over the summer was under way; there were frictions between the distribution and cinema sides of the collective, but more acute was the programming situation. The lull in independent film making over the last two years was causing the supply of suitable features to dry up. This problem was made worse by the fact that TOC had little or no money with which to secure the new films that were available.

September saw the launch of an abortive 'Save The Other Cinema' campaign. Its posters, supplying no other information than the campaign slogan, must have gone a long way to reassuring people that the TOC crisis was not a serious one. Unsurprisingly the campaign netted just £1000. Most people still did not know London was about to lose its only Left and feminist film venue. For a dispirited collective, split over the need to jeopardise both

their credit and all chance of BFI subsidy by 'going public' on the situation, and at the same time so immersed in the crisis themselves that it was difficult to evaluate the priority of getting information out, it was an easy but fatal mistake. *Time Out* itself, even though it thought the situation serious enough to refuse all TOC advertising artwork not accompanied by cheque, repeatedly held back on the opportunity of reporting on it.

When the builders, Brent Walker, TOC's largest creditor took out a high court writ to secure their outstanding debt, the end followed swiftly. TOC demanded that the BFI decide immediately on its pending application for a £35,000 cash injection with a £20,000 yearly subsidy for two years. As we know the BFI did not provide that support and just 14 months after opening the cinema closed its doors.

How is it that in its screening of Left and feminist films (often films that would find general release elsewhere in Europe), its attempts to bring film makers and film audiences together directly, and its aspirations towards a truly popular cinema the Other Cinema generated so little support? The answer lies in the Left in this country's total diffidence to what it mistakenly calls 'culture'. The Left's continued failure to see in cinema anything other than what is bourgeois, unless a film has overt agitprop content, left TOC in a limbo. Too radical for the BFI and seen as too bourgeois for the Left, support never came from anywhere other than independent film makers themselves. Even Left groups for whom TOC staged benefits did not reciprocate solidarity when it was needed.

The cinema itself is in the process of being sold by the liquidator. Although one bid is likely to come from one of the Other Cinema's cofounders, now backed by a consortium, it is unlikely that the venue will ever see programmes of the kind TOC ran again. But however much the Left deserves it, revolutionary cinema will not just go away. It seems fairly certain now that the distribution side of TOC will survive the liquidation. Struggling under its own £18,000 deficit (incurred through being overstretched in its efforts to sustain the film programmes of the last year) and trying to steer clear of BFI control, they are organising a string of benefits throughout February and March. And who can be sure that somewhere in the back of their minds there isn't the dark ambition to sometime, somewhere, show *those* kind of films again? Next time let's be ready.

□ Martin Gingell

Copenhagen

Christiania faces fresh eviction moves

On April Fool's Day 1976 the 'Free Town' of Christiania, Denmark's 700 strong, six year long squat, faced eviction from the government. 30,000 people came to Copenhagen and formed a human chain—hand in hand—around Christiania in a mass symbolic gesture.

The "Rainbow Army" was formed. Christiania-ites stayed put.

Now the squatters of Copenhagen's "fools paradise" are under threat again. The supreme court was scheduled to arrive at a decision in 19th January 1978 on whether to evict. The decision has still not been made, but nobody is in any doubt that it will go against Christiania.

Christiania is run on a decentralized basis creating between 9 and 11 areas out of the land. Each area has its own meetings and there is interaction between area meetings and larger Common Meetings. Common Meetings usually occur when there is some particularly critical situation. There are no leaders, and a lack of committees, but meetings are badly attended. Separate Working Groups deal with economics, information, negotiations, community action, and so on. Word-of-mouth is the main and best means of communication, although there are 3 newspapers—both 'internal' and 'external'—plus a radio station.

People live from crafts, student grants, or outside part-time jobs. Very few are on the dole. Inside, short hours and low pay ensures more "employment". Christiania houses enterprises as diverse as a bakery (bread and rolls from 5 am.) a cobbler; a "permanent jumble-sale" to a sauna/bath-house; a creche, kindergarten and embryonic 'school' to municipal services—rubbish collection, shit-bin emptying and street cleaning.

On the outside, the Support Christiania Group has some tactics planned should an eviction attempt be made. The main aim seems to be to stretch police resources to the full. A situation is envisaged where the ratio of police to protesters is 1:10; to this aim a 'telephone tree' exists which would call up thousands of people (including abroad) should any mass-mobilisation suddenly seem necessary. The 'tree' would also organize food, blankets, and other essentials. Certain people are already on 'stand-by' expecting calls to go to decentralized depots and collect already printed posters and handbills—ready for posting onto lorries, buses, trains, policecars . . . There are radio transmitters ready to break into normal radio channels. It is assumed the police will try to surround the area and cut it off from the arriving support: plans exist to distract forces away from Christiania and thereby ease access. To add to this, some reports state that the Police Union is against involvement in mass eviction at Christiania. Other trade unions with members who would be involved in demolition, have also expressed support for Christiania.

Nevertheless the future of Christiania remains in jeopardy—as much from within as from without. Much of the information coming out of the 'Free Town' has stressed the need for 'non-violent resistance'. If, as seems likely, this stress derives more from 60s style optimism rather than a 70s non-violent anarchism, the end of Christiania may come about more from tactical ineffectiveness than the combined force of army and police, who are in the last resort unlikely to disobey orders and side with Christiania against the state

□ Pete Brawne



Streetlife Christiania style. Waiting for the rain?

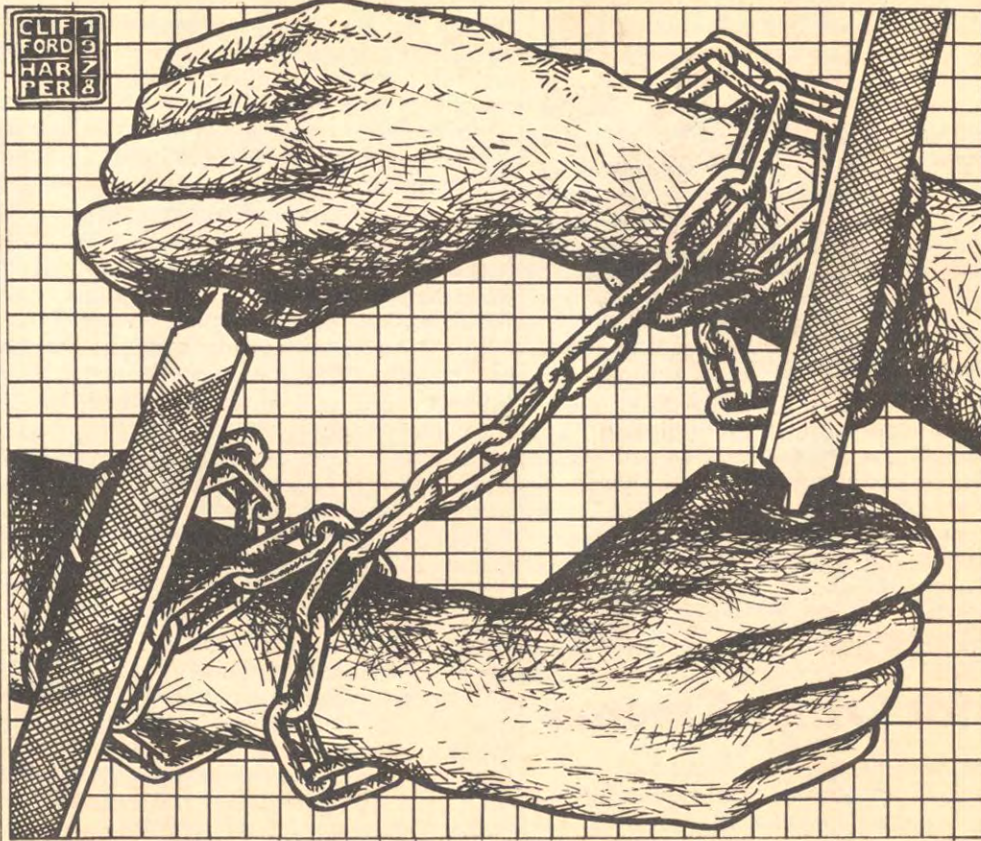
Spain

'Common' prisoners organise for total amnesty

Riots have been a persistent feature of prison life in Spain for the last ten years. During this time seven people have been killed and many seriously injured. The most recent wave of rioting originated the summer before last when, on July 28, the government declared an amnesty for political prisoners which totally ignored 'common' prisoners. As news of their exclusion from the amnesty spread prisoners reacted by going onto the roofs to demonstrate their anger. They also began to talk about organising. As a result of the disturbances thirty four prisoners were transferred to other prisons, mainly to the central prison at Ocana, thirty miles south of Madrid, where the organisation began on the roofs acquired strength, and COPEL (Coordinadora de Presos Espanoles en Lucha—Coordination of the Prison Struggle) was formed to unite prisoners across Spain in revolt against their subhuman living conditions. And when these prisoners were moved again the movement spread with them. In January this year COPEL issued its first manifesto, *The Demands of COPEL*, calling for the abolition of Franco's laws and prisons in favour of a popular justice.

COPEL demands: 1. A major reform of the Penal Code and the Law of Judicial Procedure, to bring justice to the people. At present justice is a thing exclusively for the use of the ruling class. 2. The abolition of military tribunals, the Law of Social Danger and the Law of Public Health. The sole purpose of these laws is to legitimise dictatorship and repression. 3. The abolition of Franco's prison codes. The legalisation of prisoners associations to

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watch over our rights and to bring their infringement to public attention. Democratic rights in all prisons. 4. The removal of all magistrates, public prosecutors, judges, police and prison officers appointed by Franco, regardless of rank. The creation of juries chosen from the people. The creation of popular commissions directly in charge of prisons. 5. While a new prison code is being prepared, major improvements

should be made in sanitation, hygiene and prison food, and in prisoners' contact with the outside. The inhuman punishment cells should be closed. The exploitation in the workshops should be ended. The prisoners transferred as a result of the events at Carabanchel last February should be immediately returned. 6. COPEL does not regard prison reform as its ultimate objective, although it does see it as a necessary stage. Its ultimate objective is to open prisons up. They should cease to be places of punishment. They should be places where someone who has committed a crime would be treated as a human being with physical and emotional needs, and with rights which must be respected in all circumstances. 7. We are outcasts. We have been judged and condemned with impunity by openly fascist tribunals and under unjust laws. We have a right to amnesty, to give us an equal part in the building of a more just social system. Finally our principal aims are: to establish a basis of organisation for all the prisoners of the state, to struggle within the prisons for our demands, and to be part of the struggle of all people against 'reformed dictatorship' and towards democracy and socialism.

At the beginning of June 77 COPEL called a strike. Immediately a thousand prisoners struck in the workshops and some fifteen hundred prisoners commenced hunger-strike. Prisoners' families began, for the first time, to take part in COPEL organisation (12 were subsequently imprisoned for their part). To draw attention to the strike demands COPEL members repeatedly cut their wrists in court rooms whenever called to appear. The strike was called off during the election campaign and all political parties involved were called on to recognise the demands of the prisoner prisoners. 'But it got us nowhere. They have done nothing for us, only Accion Comunista and the CNT have helped us. The rest—nothing. But why should we expect them to help, or even understand us, as they never helped us when they were prisoners themselves? . . . People like Camacho, Sartorius, Sanchez Montero, Lobarto (all trade union leaders or Communists) who have spent so many years behind bars, ignore us as if we were filth without even the right to live . . . yet, they have been criminals just like us, for having broken unjust laws . . . or is it that they were convicted by fascist tribunals and we were not?'

Since the major riot at Carabanchel

that occurred last February, serious rioting has spread to prisons throughout Spain from Basauri to Cordoba, Barcelona to El Puerto each supported by growing popular feeling outside. An anarchist prisoners support group, formed within the CNT, questioning the existence of prisons at all in a recent explanation of what they were doing, said 'It can only be hypocrisy to suggest that prisoners in them. If one thing is clear it must be that prisons do neither—rather, as has often been said, they corrupt those inside them. Prison is society's ultimate and most brutal defence against those who undermine its norms. Prisons, like other institutions of society, are closely bound up with 'normality'—in this case the norm of law. 'Normality' and 'legality' are defined by the powerful, in their own interests. The 'legality' of the powerful inevitably creates its opposition, 'crime'. Normality, law and crime are only concepts defined by those in power for their own purpose. If you reject the society they presuppose, they become meaningless. Support for the prisoners struggle is a great deal more than an act of charity, it is an indispensable part of the struggle against power and exploitation.'

Edited and translated from *Bicicleta* by Alan Bray.

COPEL staged a further demonstration in their campaign for complete amnesty on Jan 17, when 200 prisoners at Barcelona's Modelo prison cut their wrists or swallowed dangerous objects. The remaining 800 prisoners began a simultaneous hunger strike.

International

Heseltine and Bryant get just desserts

Ever felt like squelching a gooey, sticky, cream topped pie right in the face of one—or more—of the bosses and media stars who manage modern life? Affirmative? Then read with caution. Pieing leading public shitheads has been a regular recourse of America's dispossessed ever since the emergence of the Yippie movement, but until the Anarchist Party of Canada (Groucho-Marxist) called for an International Pie Week for November 4-11, no attempt had been made to unleash an offensive nationwide.

Friday November 4 saw the first action as Watergate conspirator Frank Sturgis gets a pie as he leaves a New York courthouse. Unlucky pieperson Aron Kay is caught while making his escape. (Two days later Kay urged 'Let a thousand pies fly' during a San Francisco smoke in and was immediately pied himself). On the Monday Canadian Groucho-Marxists of the APC(G-M) dramatically splat federal cabinet minister Marc Lalonde with a Bug Cream pie. In Vancouver three days later cabinet minister Ron Basford is next victim of a pie in the face. Basford had recently signed extradition papers on American Indian Movement militant Leonard Peltier, sending him back to face two life sentences. Responsibility for the action was claimed by the New Questioning Coyote Brigade. The same day yet another cell of the APC(G-M) strikes in Regina, close to the American border.

A meeting is taking place called by the President of Robinhood Multifoods to defend the shooting of seven strikers at his Montreal flour mills. During the meeting a Groucho-Marxist walks onto

continued next page

Leeds

First Northern anarchist-feminist conference

November 19/20 saw the first Northern anarchist-feminist conference, in Leeds' Swarthmore Centre. Although not widely publicised 40 women attended from all over the North of England, a good size for a conference—not big enough to be fraught and impersonal. Rather than having workshops on specific subjects the conference was organised in small groups which stayed together throughout the weekend. This seemed to work very well, working through the agenda together rather than having to choose between different workshops. You felt part of a group, talk flowed very easily from issue to issue, always returning to our own experience, and we were all sorry to split up at the end.

Discussion centred on two broad areas. The first around questions of lifestyle—problems of working with/living with men, with women; issues around sexuality, monogamy and jealousy, many of us were trying or had tried to live in non-exclusive relationships, and though our responses varied widely, could sympathise with one another's struggles, child-care, especially the problems of mothers and children living collectively. We talked alot about children—the difficulty of getting people to take real collective responsibility for them, our own feelings of possessiveness.

The second major area of concern was the complex of issues around rape, violence and the struggle against fascism. We discussed our experiences of violence, sexual and other assaults, together with our own fears. Some of us tended to look for non-violent responses while others were willing in theory to hurt men badly, although our experience was that we were in general incapable of violent self-defence, our

deep conditioning overriding our feminist decisions. Many of us had been been critical of *Zero* printing the London Anti-Rape group's statement uncritically. Although we agree that rape must be recognised as a crime we felt it wrong for feminists and anarchists not to admit to any doubts about using the police, courts and prison to deal with rape.

The final plenary session consisted of (hard to summarize) general discussion of the direction of the anarcha-feminist movement (or whatever). Although very positive, the issues got really tangled and women obviously did have quite deep disagreements. Some women felt we should be getting into more action, others wanted to see the development of clearer revolutionary theory. There was some debate around the idea of working out theory—some sisters seeing in theory the beginning of a monolithic anarcha-feminist 'line' and others seeing descent into vagueness and confusion in its absence. Again, to what extent does our use of the word 'anarchism' tie us to the male anarchist tradition? There was a general feeling that 'old anarchists' should be read with a feminist consciousness for what is useful in them, but most women who attended would see patriarchy as the most fundamental form of oppression, and authoritarian behaviour as having its roots in the patriarchal family, a perspective which clearly necessitates considerable revision of traditional anarchism. I think everyone found the conference, and its social (with Clapperclaw) constructive and enjoyable.

We decided to convene another conference for early this year. (Other regions organise them for yourselves!)

Sophie Laws



Photo: Open Road



Des Moines, Iowa. Before and after as Anita Bryant gets hers yet

the stage and scores a direct hit. Next to taste the wrath of pie throwers is provincial welfare minister Bill Vander Zalm. By the end of pie week, the North American press were getting very flustered over this new and sinister form of guerrilla warfare. Headlines read 'Harmless pie throwers possible assassins' and calls were made for pie control laws.

Finale of the week came as the national conservative party leader Joe Clark arrived for an official visit to Vancouver. At an airport press conference, while confidently surrounded by bodyguards, he scoffed at the idea of falling victim to an apple and cream surprise. A short while later a member of the New Questioning Coyote Brigade pushed through Clarke's bodyguard and bounced a coconut cream off him.

The Pieing of the Year had, however, already taken place a few weeks before International Pie Week. Anita Bryant,

american anti-gay crusader and generally one of the most unpleasant people in the universe, was attending a press conference in Des Moines, Iowa. While talking about the ideas behind her proposed "homosexual rehabilitation centers", pieperson Tom Higgins stepped up and . . . nice photo ain't it? A sobbing Bryant made an undignified exit, praying.

Action wasn't all overseas; shadow secretary for the environment, our very own Michael Heseltine, connected with an apple pie covered in cream just as he finished a lunchtime speech at Leeds University on November 4. As he sat down anarchist student Herbert Dixon stepped forward and aimed his pie. Heseltine managed to deflect some pie onto the floor by shielding his face but sustained dollops of cream on his suit and hair. Incensed students of the University's Conservative Association, who had organised the meeting, chased after Dixon as he raced through the rear exit but failed to catch him up. Pete Webb

London

Photo: Claude Moreira



Eight arrests as police disperse Stammheim demonstration

Eight people are to appear in court from March 21-23, after being arrested on a demonstration in London on December 10, held to protest against the murders of the RAF prisoners in Stammheim and Stadelheim prisons.

About 200 people took part in the march, which had been organised by the Black Aid group as part of an international day of action. There were a large number of police present throughout.

After a few comrades had been allowed to hand in a list of demands to the German Embassy, including the immediate release of Irmgard Moeller who survived the Stammheim killings, and of Klaus Croissant, one time lawyer of some of the RAF prisoners, now himself facing a life (or death) sentence in Stammheim; the police informed us 'you've had your little march so now you can all go home'. The march was then split in two by the police, with a

group of around 40 of us being told to continue marching, while the rest were told to disperse.

Those told to continue decided to head for the nearest tube station. About 100 yards from the station the police again stopped us and told everyone to split up into groups of 2 or 3 before we could go any further. A scuffle started as they began to forcibly take down the few flags and banners people were still holding. Then the pigs let fly, arresting or beating up anyone they felt like doing.

The 8 arrested were taken to Gerald Road station, while other people were pushed down into the tube and onto the nearest train. Of those arrested 7 have been charged with obstruction and one with assault. Two German comrades have had their passports taken by the police. All have pleaded not guilty and been remanded on bail after two court appearances

News shorts

Longstanding militant, writer and founder of the international anarchist review *Interrogations*, Louis Mercier Vega, suicided on November 26, at the age of 63, in France. Founding *Interrogations* in 1974, he ran the review for its first two years before passing control over to the 'Italian management' of the Turin collective. Determined that he himself would decide the conclusion of his activism rather than physical or mental deterioration, he had announced to close friends shortly before his death that in 1973 he had taken a decision to live four years. An anarchist militant from youth, he was a founding member of the International Group of the Durrutti column, fighting in Saragosa, Sietamo, Farlete and Peroliguera. With the crushing of Republican Spain he worked tirelessly in support of Spanish comrades, eventually taking refuge in South America at the start of the second world war. On returning to France, Mercier Vega concentrated his work for twenty years on observation and analysis of Latin American society. Apart from these writings (he also wrote under the names Santiago Parane and Charles Ridel—names reflecting his Chilean/French origins) he is best known for his book *L'incroyable anarchisme* (Resurgent Anarchism), published in 1970. He died at a point when, although tired, friends knew him to be happy, strong and confident in *Interrogations'* new collective. The forthcoming *Interrogations* 13 contains, in tribute, an interview with Mercier Vega, together with his essay 'Affinity Groups', one of the first studies of the organisational problem within the specific anarchist movement.

Three days before Christmas at the Old Bailey Anarchist Black Cross members Phil Ruff, Dave Campbell and Brian Gibbens were each given a harsh seven years on counts of armed robbery and possession of firearms following the hold up of a Lewisham betting shop last October at which all three were arrested. Currently in Wormwood Scrubs the three face serving, with remission, at least three years, unless their appeal is successful. Phil Ruff is a writer on the Anarchist Black Cross paper *Black Flag* and Dave Campbell is a member of the *Cockayne* folk group.

Milanese author and friend of Duchamp, Arturo Schwartz, the only person ever to have slapped Tristan Tzara's face and shout 'Stalinist bastard' simultaneously, stopped off in London recently on his way to Canada and the United States to finalise details for the launching of a new anarchist cultural magazine *Anarchos*. Schwartz said the magazine would come out four times a year, a single theme to each issue, and should include writing by Bookchin, Marcuse and Chomsky. Plans already exist for an English language edition if *Anarchos* meets with Italian success.

The anniversary of the charges against Crispin Aubrey, John Berry and Duncan Campbell, who are thought to have originally incurred the wrath of the British Defence establishment by their suggestion that Britain's own Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) was largely under the thumb of the American National Security Agency, occurs on February 19. A glance at Agitprop shows that the ABC Defence Campaign plans to celebrate the anniversary in its own special way. So too the Special Branch. They spent the end of the month visiting a large number of people connected with *The Leveller* and *Peace News* informing them that both magazines were to be charged with contempt of court for publishing the name of the mysterious Colonel 'B', prosecution witness at Aubrey, Berry and Campbell's

committal hearing last November. Colonel 'B' is of course, as readers of the Dec '74 issue of the Royal Signals magazine *Wire* will know, Colonel H.A. Johnstone ex-Royal Signals now with Army General Staff DI24 (ie SIGINT). *Peace News* and *The Leveller* need our support, initially by all anti-authoritarian papers reprinting in solidarity. It is no coincidence that the threatened magazines have the largest circulation of all the anti-authoritarian press.

Currently sustaining the fullest force of racism in this country, the Asian community has the least developed political consciousness of its own experience and identity of all black groups. Until recently the choice facing Asian militants has been to work either with the South Asian left or with the left here, both inadequate in terms of dealing with racism in Britain (eighteen months ago IS [SWP now] lost three quarters of its black caucus following the relegation of its campaign against racism in favour of the Right To Work). However the setting up of Asian women's centres in Manchester and Battersea, and, more recently, the launching of *Mukti*, an English language Asian militant paper for Southall youth, are signs that this is now changing. Produced by a group of Indian, Pakistani and Singhalese militants meeting since last June, the pilot issue of *Mukti* (Liberation) sold out soon after it appeared in December. Despite the favourable response to the pilot issue the collective was left critical of its own political position, which it saw as having too many residues of white analysis, rather than black experience, of racism. Having taken the interim months to develop in a more black nationalist direction, *Mukti* will appear regularly from March, and can be contacted c/o Hortus Road, Southall, Middlesex (01-328 5338)

Zeros

Zero is an anarchist/anarcha-feminist newsmagazine produced by a mixed collective, mainly from East London (see Anarchism/Feminism in *Zero* 1 for a statement of our ideas). *Zero* is looking for streetsellers (pick up *Zeros* from Rising Free—cash returned against unsold copies) and distributors abroad. Contact us through address below.

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* Sorry for this issue's lateness. In one or two issues time *Zero* will be printing an Anti-authoritarian Yellow Pages as a special supplement. All activities/campaigns/magazines/press/organisations/groups who see themselves as anti-authoritarian should send us the following information on a filing card, regardless of whether they have been listed in agitprop, as soon as possible: 1) Name of group; 2) Brief description of activities and/or other necessary information; 3) Updated contact address/phone no.