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Margaret Torres.

ANARCHISM OLD AND NEW:

The Reconstruction of  
the Confederacion  
Nacional del Trabajo,  
1976-1979.

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Department of Sociology  
Warwick University,  
Coventry.

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CHAPTER 4.

Anarchist Orthodoxy Versus Neo-Anarchism: the Re-Birth of  
Anarchism in Spain, 1960-1976.

ANARCHIST ORTHODOXY VERSUS NEO-ANARCHISM : THE RE-BIRTH  
OF ANARCHISM IN SPAIN : 1960 - 1976.

There is little doubt that the force of organised anarcho-syndicalism was little in evidence during the long years of Francoist rule. As we have seen, the high level of organisation achieved in the forties was implacably crushed by state repression at the end of the decade, and while C.N.T. militants played an important part in the Barcelona transport strike in 1951, the organisation would languish throughout the fifties, with "token" committees of both factions vying with each other over the representation of the movement, and almost totally removed from the developments taking place within Spanish society.

The split within the organisation, sealed with the entry of Horacio Prieto into the Giral Republican government in exile, in September 1945, was a major cause of the increasing ineffectuality of the C.N.T., as it was of the growing ideological entrenchment of the "apolitical" faction, exiled in Toulouse. The isolation of the "apoliticals" in the international context also played its part, <sup>and</sup> as Octavio Alberola points out, contributed to a progressive doctrinal conversion, in the direction "of the reaffirmation of the most pure principles of revolutionary anarchism." (1).

This "reaffirmation of pure revolutionary anarchist principles" was not, however, matched by action, and guerrilla fighters such as Sabaté and Facerías were forced to take their groups into Spain unsupported by the exile organisation, after repeated attempts to get the exile organisation take some action ended in failure. (2). Voices were beginning to be raised against this state of affairs in the late fifties however, as this militant points out :

"It seemed ridiculous to us here in Spain. While we continued squabbling amongst ourselves, nothing could be done. We should have been there during 1956 and 1958 (3) and trying to gain some influence within the workers' movement which seemed to be gaining strength at this time. What was the use of having a duplicated organisation, when neither was doing anything?" (4).

Barcelona, 1979.

This opposition to the increasing ineffectuality and useless division of the organisation was growing amongst exiles in Mexico and France too, as "marginal" groups flourished proposing reunification of the movement. (5). Undoubtedly the liberation struggles in Asia and Latin America were important in this renewed awareness, as was the upsurge of mass struggle within Spain and the growth of other revolutionary currents. (6). Moreover, it was probably perceived that :

"The real reason for the 'confederal split' was the struggle for the representation of the organisation, and personal and clan rivalries. Beyond the ideological and tactical discrepancies, the phenomenon of division was always marked by such rivalries, inherent to the syndical and political importance which the C.N.T. had grown to acquire in Spain."

Alberola / Gransac, Paris, 1975. p. 33

As a result of this growing pressure for reunification, a less intransigent group of leaders was elected to the Intercontinental Secretariat, and at the Limoges Congress of 1960, reunification was decided, on the basis of "autonomy of procedure". (7). This measure, which allowed each locality to carry through its own reunification as it saw fit,

turned out to be a double-edged sword, as Alberola points out : "While those in favour of unity hurried to make it a reality and tried to smooth things over to facilitate 'reintegration', and 'fusion' of militants from the groups and locals of the 'divisionist' sector, those opposed to unity began a systematic boycott and policy of confrontation in order to stymie the unity agreements, in the name of the sacrosant 'principles, tactics and ends'. For their part, some conspicuous 'divisionists' did all they could to promote, by their errors and personalist intransigence, the anti-unity labour of the 'ultras' of the F.A.I." (8). As he further points out, it was those who held committee posts who put up the greatest resistance to the unification process, as this implied new committees, and an end to their "automatic" re-election. Despite this opposition, reunification was carried through in most localities, and reorganisation of the movement undertaken within Spain, with the setting-up of a national committee more representative of the rank and file of both sectors of the organisation. (9). Undoubtedly the thrust towards reunification, in both sectors, was prompted by the need to form an alliance with the other "historic" trade unions particularly the U.G.T., as this militant says :

"The days has long gone when we could 'go it alone'. We had suffered the brunt of repression, with thousands of militants dead, in exile, or 'burnt-out'. The U.G.T. was in a similar state of disarray. If either of us were to have any effect against Franco we would have to unite forces. Anyway, here in Valencia we had always had good comradely relations with the U.G.T., and had run collectives together during the Civil War. So you see, it seemed the most 'natural' thing to do." (10).

Valencia, 1978.

Certainly the "political" sector was more enthusiastic about reunification, as pacts could only be made with a united C.N.T. This could be the reason why the leadership body of the politicals, the Subcomité Nacional, so obediently "returned to the fold", and gave up its separate existence. (11). The "apoliticals" of the F.A.I., represented by the Esглеast

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clan, appear to have been propelled into such actions by the "unity" feelings expressed by a large number of their rank and file. They "went along with it", as one militant said, "but essentially they were playing for time". (12)

"Reunification" proceeded apace during 1961 however, and a trade union pact was signed with the U.G.T. and the S.T.V., in May. (13). Simultaneously, it was agreed to form part of the projected anti-Francoist Front, which, however, the C.N.T. was excluded from when it was eventually set-up. (14). It was clear though that reunification was not accepted unanimously, as the 1961 Congress demonstrated, with the withdrawal of some sectors who refused to be bound by the conciliatory measures proposed by the S.I. (15). Despite these disturbances, it was evident that the majority of the organisation, particularly the interior C.N.T., was in favour of unity, and a motion was passed which committed the organisation to "direct", i.e. armed action. (16).

This attempt to "revitalisation" of the C.N.T., especially its commitment to armed struggle, certainly reflected the dramatic changes taking place within Spanish society, and the growth of the anti-francoist opposition. As we have seen, the devastating effects of the Stabilisation Plan, decreed in 1959, upon workers' living standards, had brought forth pleas for social justice from such conservative bodies as the Spanish archbishops and sections of the Falange. The repression which had accompanied "development" had bred revolutionary groups such as the F.L.P., the DRIL and ETA, committed to armed struggle, while the "maquisards", led by "El Campesino", made a brief come-back in 1961.

The Young Libertarians, the F.I.J.L., had been particularly heartened by the unitary process, particularly the resolution on armed struggle. This had been the branch most disgusted by the inaction of the parent body, the C.N.T., and had withdrawn from the Defence Commission several years before. (17)

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Still sceptical of the application of the 1961 agreements, they declared : "to reiterate our freedom of action in case the line of joint action would be violated or sabotaged by any of the other branches", a direct warning to the bureaucrats of the F.A.I. (18).

Despite massive detentions in France and Spain, and the dismantling of the national committee at the end of 1961, sporadic bomb attacks took place during the summer of 1962, attributed to the C.N.T. (19). In protest against the massive detentions which followed and the sentencing to death of the Young Libertarian Jorge Conill, Italian anarchists kidnapped the Honorary Viceconsul of Spain in Milan, which brought Spain to the attention of the world, thus exposing the limits of "liberalisation". For the repression which followed the largest strike wave since the Civil War, which began in the Asturian mines in April 1962, was little known in the rest of Europe, outside of the usual anti-francoist circles. Tourists continued to flock to Spain, while their governments were quite happy to "assist" the Spanish "miracle".

Certainly the need to bring to world attention the hollow nature of "liberalisation" in Spain was the principal reason for the growth of armed action groups in the '60's, although undoubtedly the world-wide trend towards armed struggle, epitomised by the victorious revolution in Cuba, and the mythic figure of Ché, were important in deciding the tactic. There is little doubt that the bomb attempts on Iberian aircraft and offices during 1963, carried out by the Consejo Ibérico de Liberación, put Spain back into the headlines, although few tourists were discouraged from holidaying in Spain. (20). In 1962, an attempt on the life of Franco, in conjunction with E.T.A., was carried-out in San Sebastian, one of the many which the libertarians would launch during the life of the dictator. (21).

Not all, however, were happy about the resurgence of armed action within C.N.T. ranks. As one militant in Spain during this period pointed-out :

"Of course we admired the courage of these young people. And of course it wasn't our youth who were engaging in armed actions, there was E.T.A. and others. But we felt we should be putting our energies into the workers' movement, and trying to gain more influence within the trade unions which were beginning to emerge. I feel it was a great mistake not to have been involved in the Workers' Commissions from the start. But it would have been impossible to say this at the time - we were already being slandered as "reformists". The trouble with these spectacular acts was that - yes, it did draw attention to the barbarity of sentencing etc., - but they were soon forgotten." (22).

Barcelona, 1979.

This opposition from the "political" sector of the C.N.T. was hardly surprising, given their historical defence of syndicalism, and their battles against the "hot heads" within the organisation. (23). Less comprehensible, ideologically, was the opposition from the sector which claimed to be the bearer of "revolutionary anarchism", and erstwhile "hot heads", the F.A.I. As Alberola has shown, from the moment the "interior defence" agreement was taken in 1961, the Esqleast sector systematically boycotted it, and launched a full-scale attack on those who supported it, thus reducing the enthusiasm, and financial support, of militants to the project. (24). This process hotted-up as the 1963 Congress drew near, and internal conflicts were revived by the Esqleast leadership in order to regain positions on the Intercontinental Secretariat. (25).

The resignation of two "Esgleist" delegates on the interior defence committee, on grounds of "lack of confidence and interpretation of the agreements", an open attack on the other committee members prior to the Congress, helped to further inflame the ambience. These attacks on the interior defence committee, and its members, were justified on the grounds that the interior defence committee wished to become a superstructure within the movement. (26). Moreover, the interior Alianza Sindical Obrera, set-up by dissident C.N.T. and U.G.T. militants in 1962, was blamed on "supposed concessions of principle to groups more or less 'marginalised' by the organisation," and served to increase confusion and dispersion of militants. (27).

The 1963 Congress ended in victory for the Esgleat leadership, and the continuance of revolutionary rhetoric unmatched by any kind of effective action. Two closely related events were important in this outcome - the repression carried out by the French Interior Ministry against the FIJL, and the authorisation, by these same authorities, for the celebration of the CNT Congress in Toulouse, authorisation which had previously been denied.

Certainly the "preparation" of the Congress in the local federations by the Esgleat clan and their sympathisers, which used the supposed "reformist" of the previous S.I. leaders and their followers as deviations from the principles of the organisation, was crucial in deciding the leadership battle. (28).

Moreover, the "alliance" sector failed to present their case in terms which would have seriously threatened the position of the Esgleists, i.e. their non-application of the interior defence agreements. Instead they launched a more general attack on the responsibilities of the general council, and Germinal Esgleas in particular, which only served to "personalise" the debate, and thus keep it within the terms which the Esgleas faction had so carefully set-up. (29) Undoubtedly too, the rounding-up of the most active and influential militants, among them Cirpiano Mera and José Pascual in the largest local federation of Paris, seat of the strongest opposition to the Esgleas leadership, also played its part, as did the detention of several militants in Toulouse, known for their activist views. (30). As Alberola says, the actions of the French government, which made a clear distinction between the Young Libertarians and the C.N.T., were to have important long-term consequences for the Libertarian movement.

"It was clear that the repressive measures against the F.I.J.L. tended to exercise indirect pressure over the C.N.T., so as the latter would sacrifice the anti-francoist struggle in exchange for the continuance of exiled legality. Both measures, decreed so opportunely, favoured the ambitions of 'immobilism', and only the most naive and timid failed to make the connection. The Esgleas, on the other hand, did not lose the opportunity to take advantage of the benefits which the French authorities offered them - not one militant of the Esgleas faction had been detained - nor to lend themselves to serve, shamelessly, the political interests of the French government." (31).

Alberola Gransac, Paris, 1975. p. 116.

Despite agreements to continue the activist course decided to in 1961 (the famous D-1, interior defence agreement) the results of the 1963 Congress, with the victory of the bureaucrats of the Esgleas clan, ended the process begun in 1960, and the hopes that Spanish anarchism would again become a force within the anti-francoist struggle. (32).

All, however, did not accept this as a fait accompli, especially the Youth section, which waged a battle throughout 1964 to debate the issues unresolved by the Congress, in particular the lack of action with regard to the interior defence agreement. <sup>(33)</sup>. Pressure was also mounting from several local federations to hold an "extraordinary" meeting, in an attempt to clarify the situation of reunification, far from resolved in various locals. <sup>(34)</sup>.

As a result of this growing pressure, the S.I. leadership agreed to the holding of a Congress, but continually postponed it till August 1965. They then began a "recuperation" process, which consisted in building up their power base in the regional committees, and by creating local federations loyal to their leadership. <sup>(35)</sup>. Confrontation increased as the Congress drew near, with attacks on the youth section in the official C.N.T. press, answered by bulletins from those denied access to the newspaper of the organisation. A report was circulated by the S.I., for "study and discussion" which began thus : "All that is said and done against the Intercontinental Secretariat does not harm the S.I., but all the Confederacion Nacional del Trabajo, the whole Spanish people." <sup>(36)</sup>.

The 1965 Congress reflected the deep crisis of the movement, with two hostile factions locked in combat from the start. The advantage, however, lay with the leadership, who even paid travel expenses for those local federations sympathetic to the S.I., expelled those they saw fit, controlled examination of credentials, and held the presidency of the Congress, which, moreover, was held in one of their bastions of power, Montpellier. (37). Certainly Esgleas' notion that any attack on the S.I. was an attack on the C.N.T. itself had hit its mark ; an overwhelming vote of confidence was given to the report from the S.I. by numerous small local federations, without discussion of the impugnation presented against the Intercontinental Secretariat. The method of voting was crucial in this outcome. The twenty six local federations which had voted against had almost the same number of members as the 141 local federations which approved it. (38). Very similar tactics would be used during the reconstruction process in Spain, from 1976 to 1979.

Despite the revolutionary rhetoric of Esgleas and his followers there was little ideological difference of substance between the leadership and the so-called "reformists". Both the Syndical Alliance in the interior and the one founded in France held to a similar view of "democratic trade-unionism", and sought the support of the international trade unions, the CIOLS and the CISC, to further this aim. (39). The relationship between the Esgleas leadership and the "Cinco Puntistas" is also telling in this respect. During 1965, a group of C.N.T. militants in Madrid, including the new national secretary, Royano, began discussions with Falange chiefs on the possibility of collaboration within the vertical trade unions. One of the members of this group, known as the "Cinco Puntistas" (40), attended the 1965 Congress and was allowed to speak, on the condition that no questions would be asked from the floor.

1965 marked the definitive split between the Youth section and the C.N.T., and an end to F.I.J.L. attempts to inform the rank and file of the degeneration of the movement. The F.A.I. leadership in turn accused the F.I.J.L. of dealings with the reformists, Communists, Francoist agents, and even the C.I.A.. (41). These internal squabbles only helped to further undermine the already depleted membership within Spain, as this militant points out:

"It got to the point where we didn't know what to believe. Although we had great trust in our comrades in Toulouse, it was hard to believe that the F.I.J.L. would have anything to do with Francoists. I just gave-up having any contact with the organisation, and concentrated on actions within my own firm."

Valencia, 1978.

The profound crisis within the anarchist movement was apparent to all by 1965. Despite denunciations by the leadership in Toulouse, and other militants within Spain, the "Cinco Puntista" phenomenon had badly damaged the image of the organisation, known historically for its ethical revolutionary standards. The life of the organisation in Toulouse continued to be absorbed in "organisational matters", with the usual round of meetings, congresses, festivals, and acts of solidarity, ever fearful for its tenuous legal existence in France. The exiled leadership's belief that it should control all activities within Spain seriously disrupted the attempts by C.N.T. militants to rebuild the organisation, and exacerbated the feelings of confusion and disillusionment. (42).

Certainly the crisis of the anarchist movement has to be set within the general crisis of the exiled anti-francoist opposition, which was by now assimilated within the life of the host countries, and unable to offer any effective opposition to the dictatorship. But it would seem that the libertarian movement was more afflicted by this phenomenon than the other workers' organisations in exile, partly because of its isolation and lack of any international support, in part because it had suffered most severely the rigours of repression. This in turn produced a kind of "defensive reaction" most clearly demonstrated by the leadership and its followers in Toulouse, who clung desperately to the tenets of an anarchism redolent of the First International, with all the anti-Marxism which that implied, exacerbated by the actions of the Communist Party during the Civil War.

Increasingly however, sections of the Young Libertarians began to question these dogmas, especially as they were uttered by groups who were as "political" in their bids for control of the organisation as any political party. At the end of 1965, *Presencia*, a bi-monthly magazine, was founded with the aim of "abandoning the language of old, 'romantic anarchism' by those who still continue to believe in 1936, and also to end the prejudices of anti-Marxist sectarianism inherited from the past." (43). Although a libertarian publication, it was open to discussion with non-dogmatic Marxists, and had some circulation within Spain, especially through militants of the A.S.T., a Christian trade union which was moving towards anarcho-syndicalist positions. (44).

In April 1966, a more spectacular act was carried-out by the Young Libertarians of the Grupo Primero del Mayo, with the kidnapping of the ecclesiastical consul to the Vatican, Monsignor Marcos Ussía. Primarily to protest against the holding of political prisoners, it was also meant to highlight the opposition in libertarian circles to the actions of the *Cinco Puntistas*, and served to publicly denounce them. (45).

A well-organised operation, the consul was released after eleven days without the Italian police having located the kidnap. Indeed, Luis A. Edo, one of the leaders of the group, had managed to enter and leave Spain without being detected. (46) Although this act was well received in anarchist circles, especially the level of organisation shown, and the absence of violence, the exile organisation denounced it, and even hinted that there had been connivance between the Church and the youth group. (47)

There is little doubt that the ideology of these groups contrasted greatly with the "purism" of the exiled leadership. Certainly the C.N.T. had not always displayed such dogmatism, as we have seen during the period of the Russian revolution, and again during the Second Republic. During the latter, sectors of the organisation openly acknowledged their debt to Marxism, called for a Federal Socialist Republic with other workers' organisations and an end to sectarianism within the C.N.T. But the actions of the Communist Party during the Civil War, and the years of isolation in exile had served to re-fuel the anti-Communism which had been rampant in the 1920's with the realisation that the Russian revolution had not installed the workers' democracy they had desired. Moreover, the C.N.T., as with other workers' organisations in Spain up to the Civil War, was almost totally preoccupied with "Spanish" matters, despite the theoretical internationalism of its ideology. This was perhaps more evident within the C.N.T., which saw itself as reflecting, most clearly, the aspirations of the Spanish "pueblo". The international isolation of the movement, particularly after the II World War, had reinforced considerably the "Spanish" character of the movement, despite the dispersion of militants throughout the world, or perhaps because of it.

A great number of anarchist militants who were active in the mid-60's displayed both a non-sectarian attitude towards Marxism, and an anti-imperialist vision of the struggle,

as this text from the Grupo Primero de Mayo illustrates :

"The actual struggle for liberation amongst the peoples, and particularly the revolutionary struggles of the 'guerrillas' in Latin America and the blacks in the United States, has produced a consciousness, and has caused a reaction against reformism amongst all authentic revolutionaries from ideological currents which call for Revolution.... The serious differences and divisions which exist amongst the different revolutionary movements - in every country in the world - are the result of the absurd and negative sectarianism (ideological) which the various revolutionary ideologies have expressed and applied until now. As all the guerrilla groups in Latin America affirm, 'the revolution is not the property of any one party, but of the revolutionaries who decide to fight with arms in their hands.' Revolutionaries of the whole world, unite to put into practice international revolutionary solidarity, and impede the extermination of those, who, in any part of the world, fight for the revolution."

Alberola / Gransac, Paris, 1975. p. 220.

This anti-imperialism placed these groups within the "New Left" in Europe and the United States, for whom the major radicalising factor was the liberation struggles in Latin America and Asia. Within this international perspective it was clear that the Francoist dictatorship had survived and developed thanks to the support given by the same imperialist giant, the United States. Indeed, the most important revolutionary organisation in Spain at this time was the F.L.P., which was deeply influenced by the Latin American struggles, and called for armed struggle to end the regime whose very existence depended on the "Yanquis". (48).

As yet, these anarchist groups had an extremely limited audience in Spain, and were certainly not welcomed by the "old guard", despite the latter's opposition to the F.A.I. leadership in Toulouse. (49). Simultaneously, however, another type of anarchist practice was developing in the University of Madrid, under the influence of the libertarian lecturer, García Calvo. (50). As yet few in number (they would reach their peak in 1966 - 1967), they did, however, represent a reaction to the "grupuscules" now beginning to emerge in the

universities, after the Chinese / Soviet split in 1963, and engaged in a practice closely associated with the Situationists. (51). A libertarian student of the time gives us some idea of the "acrata" (52) movement :

"Well, we tried to destroy the University. Our strategy was to question the teachers 'knowledge' as this was a fundamental ideological weapon, and expose the contradictions of University courses. We organised meetings and tried to provoke the disruption of 'Law and order', so as the police would have to enter the University. This, we hoped, would 'wake-up' the rest of the students and unite them with the 'subversives'. We used many such tricks, and it did raise the level of consciousness among students. Of course we also poked fun at the Leninists, especially the jargon they used, which was incomprehensible to most students. It was childish stuff I suppose, but it did have some impact." (53).

Madrid, 1978.

On the worker front, some sympathy with anarcho-syndicalist practice began to be detected amongst some groups to the left of the Communist Party. Groups such as the A.S.T., the F.S.T., and the S.O.C. in Catalonia, all of Christian origin, contained some members who considered themselves anarcho-syndicalists. (54). Many of these sympathisers had been influenced by C.N.T. militants on the shop floor, or through family, friends, or contacts within the neighbourhood. For although organised anarcho-syndicalism was no longer a force to be reckoned with, the long history of libertarian culture in Spain could not be wholly extinguished by the Francoist state. An ex-F.S.T. militant explains :

"I had worked with P..... in the firm for some time. He was always active in all struggles that took place. I was a Christian at the time, but that didn't seem to bother him much. One day we got to talking about syndicalism, and he asked me if I knew about the C.N.T. He got me interested in it I'd never given it much thought before then - and we talked a great deal. Later, I began to read stuff on it, and was very impressed. (55).

Madrid, 1978.

Another organisation which would declare itself anarcho-syndicalist was the Union de Trabajadores Sindicalistas, formed in 1964 by Ceferino Maéztu, from a left-wing split in the Falange. As we have seen, dissident Falangism was an important starting point for many Left-wing militants, who often evolved towards groups to the Left of the Communist Party. (56). Undoubtedly the syndicalism of the C.N.T., and its historic battles with the Communist Party, and indeed the anti-Marxism of many of its members, made it a logical ideological choice. Indeed it is surprising how few dissident Falangists became C.N.T. sympathisers, given their similarities on these points. (57). Of much greater importance was the existence of these Falangists in firms, who were critical and engaged in political debate. Several militants I interviewed had heard their first thoroughgoing critique from these disgruntled syndicalists, who had expected much more for workers under the regime, and who had been attracted to the populist demogogy of José Antonio and his followers. (58). The existence of these dissidents, who, up to a point, were allowed to openly criticise the regime, was important in the context. Many militants I interviewed had not known of their parents' involvement in politics until the final years of Francoism. Having suffered persecution and blacklisting, they were terrified that any talk of "politics" would lose them their jobs, or worse still, lead to their detention. (59).

This growth of awareness of an anarcho-syndicalist alternative has to be placed in the context of the intense politicisation which occurred in the sixties, and the discovery of the Spanish past, particularly the period of the Republic and the Civil War. An important contribution to this process was the editorial ZYX. Founded in 1965 by Christian militants who had been deeply impressed by the history of the anarchist movement, ZYX almost exclusively published anarchist texts. The growth of "ZYX" groups, and the increase in circulation of these texts, did not however really get underway until

the later sixties, when other factors would intervene to boost the attractiveness of libertarian thought.

As yet however, anarcho-syndicalist sympathisers were extremely thin on the ground. The mid-sixties merely marked the beginnings of some notion of anarchist history, with a few committed individuals here and there, and a small university group which had little influence outside of intellectual circles. Indeed, at this time many young workers would begin their political apprenticeship in the ranks of the Christian organisations, the JOC and the HOAC. As this Barcelona worker says :

"It was around 1956 when a guy from the JOC came to the neighbourhood to evangelise the 'fallen' there. As my family were extremely anti-clerical I wasn't too keen. But this guy was a really good kind person and he took a real interest in the kids (anyway, he wasn't a priest).

This guy was a mechanic, and as I had a passion for this, I went to work in his workshop when I was thirteen.

This bloke from the JOC wasn't like the usual Catholics. Instead of praying and doing spiritual exercises he used to take us to the cinema, and afterwards we would discuss the film. This was the first time that many of us had ever been. I think the whole Catholic thing was really important. I didn't like the idea of being with priests, but I liked what they were doing.

I learnt to type writing-up the interviews in a report we did on apprentices. All this was very important for kids like us. Well, I got so involved that I dedicated all my spare time to the JOC, and wound-up being in charge for Cataluña and the Belleares." (60).

Barcelona, 1979.

Young students too would find the HOAC and the JOC an attractive option, as this former student explains :

"It was at the University in 1958 that I first had contacts with the HOAC. I considered myself an anti-Francoist so I worked as an independent with many left groups at the University. But I liked the atmosphere of the HOAC. It was very open and they were very good on political formation. We read Marx, Mao - almost everyone. It was a 'mixed bag' with no 'party line' but held to a Marxist critique of capitalism."

Barcelona, 1979.

By the early sixties however, many HOAC and JOC militants felt the need to define themselves more precisely ideologically, while simultaneously cutting the umbilical chord with the Mother Church which was none too happy about the course followed by its radical offspring. The F.L.P., which tried to fuse Christianity and Marxism, and held to the idea of a "front" of all Left forces, thus avoiding the party formula, seemed the obvious political choice. Indeed, many of the leaders of the various Trotskyist and Maoist groups which would abound in the later sixties would find their first "lay" political activities in the F.L.P. (61). As this former student leader points out :

"I was sick of being dictated to by bishops and archbishops, who could suspend our newspaper at any time. Anyway, wouldn't the Church always be an ally of conservative interests ? I was very impressed by some F.L.P. people at the University, who seemed to know what they were talking about - they were much more 'worked-out' politically than I was. But I still considered myself a Catholic, and justified my 'Castroism' and the use of armed means by the 'legitimate defence of the oppressed against the oppressors' - type argument. The F.L.P. was very Castroist - in fact that's what united the whole bunch - so you see, that's why I joined." (62).

Madrid, 1978.

But the F.L.P. was not alone in its bid for working class and student adherents, and indeed, despite the increasing competition from the F.L.P. after the 1956 events, the

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Communist Party was still the dominant force within the anti-Francoist opposition on both the workers' and student fronts. Why then did these militants not see the Communist Party as a political option ? The Barcelona worker and former JOC leader had this to say :

"I have always been against 'political' actions. I was very impressed by the description my father gave me of the C.N.T. He didn't mention anarchism, nor libertarian communism or anything of that sort. He simply said that it was a workers' organisation, where workers were free and could participate - it was also apolitical. It was the force that could have transformed Spain.

He believed that organised workers were the only ones who could change society."  
Barcelona, 1979.

For the former Barcelona student, with no C.N.T. family antecedents, his reasons for not joining the Communist Party were very different :

"Well, I didn't like the 'closed' nature of the party. When I went to University I was very politically naïve, and wanted to read everything I could lay my hands on - not just the recommended list decreed by any party. Of course I worked with the Communist Party, and many other groups - the usual University activities, demonstrations, sit-ins etc..., but I never liked the way the Communist Party tried to dominate everything, take the credit for it all. All the political parties were like that at University - with their jargon and manipulative tactics. I liked the style of the HOAC - they tried to meet people where they were at, and didn't try to use them to gain prestige." (63).

Barcelona, 1979.

The former student leader at Madrid University, who joined the F.L.P. in 1960, never really considered the Communist Party as a political option :

"I didn't believe that the 'legal, peaceful' road to socialism was going to be possible in Spain, nor anywhere for that. Besides, we weren't impressed by the Communist Party's performance during the Cuban revolution, which took place despite the Communist Party,

which only enrolled at the last minute when victory was assured. I know it might sound strange, but we Catholics were to the Left of the Communist Party, believing that armed struggle was the only means to revolution." (64).

Barcelona, 1978.

Another Barcelona worker, who would later be active in the Workers' Commissions, and greatly sought after by the Communist Party, admitted :

"Yes, I did feel a certain anti-Communism. That was primarily because my father had been in the Communist Party during the Civil War, and had been imprisoned for six years. The Party did nothing for us during the bad years, while the leadership lived well abroad. Later, when I was in Comisiones, and saw how the Communist Party carried-on -well, that reinforced my feelings. I always felt they were after me to get something out of me, use me, and then drop me when I was no longer worth anything - like they had done with my father." (65).

Barcelona, 1979.

As yet, however, there was little opposition within the workers' movement to Communist Party dominance, although, as we have seen, certain groups were forming which posed a more syndicalist alternative during the late fifties and early sixties. For it would seem that during these years, and indeed up to and during the founding of the Workers' Commissions, the Communist Party worked in a non-sectarian manner with all groups on the shop floor, gaining much respect and prestige in the process. (66). But the increasing moderation of the Communist Party, with its policy of "national reconciliation", and its appeals to the middle classes, seriously affected the student movement, with the majority of the Madrid student organisation setting-up a pro-Chinese alternative in 1963. From then onwards, the Communist Party's influence within the Universities greatly diminished, with the growth of Maoist, Trotskyist and independent Left Marxist currents. This left opposition to the Communist Party would gain ground in the escalating spiral of conflict and confrontation which turned the Universities into battlefields from 1964 to 1969.

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Soon, though, voices would be raised within the Workers' Commissions against Communist Party strategy, particularly its calls for National Pacific Strikes, which did nothing but expose the movement to repression and/or end in almost total failures. Moreover, criticism was becoming increasingly difficult to voice, as this militant of the time explains :

"It got to the point we couldn't say anything ... Two or three guys would stand up and give a rousing speech about unity in struggle and so forth, and then ask for a vote of confidence, which, of course, they'd get. This had been happening for some time, but it got worse after the 1966 elections, when many of them got elected. They had prestige amongst the workers, that's true, but they used it to get anything they wanted accepted, and stifle any kind of criticism." (67).

Madrid, 1978.

Criticism had been increasing throughout 1966, especially the Communist Party's "triumfalismo", which heralded each national strike failure as a successful vindication of their policies. Nowhere was this opposition stronger than in Catalonia, where the Workers' Commissions had suffered the rigours of repression from its inception, at the end of 1964, and was outlawed again after the referendum at the end of 1966. As Sanz Oller points out : "The impossibility of holding assemblies before an ample base had been acquired in the factories, and before the objectives had been clarified, ambiguous until then anyway, was a heavy blow to the movement, and helped bureaucratise it. In these conditions, the power struggle centred on the struggle for control of the leadership organs." (68). Certainly the mass character which the Workers' Commissions had acquired in Madrid from 1964 to 1968 was not repeated in Catalonia, which had always had to function in a semi-clandestine manner, with the exception of the period of the 1966 trade union elections when an open campaign was allowed. (69). With the onset of repression at the beginning of 1967 however, the criticisms which had been fermenting erupted more forcefully, and the Communist Party's "legal" strategy seriously contested.

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The main opposition force within the leadership organs of the Workers' Commissions in Barcelona was the FOC (the Catalan Workers' Front) , the Catalan branch of the F.L.P., which had managed to acquire some working class base in the metallurgy sector. The F.L.P. nationally had suffered severely for its role in the 1962 strikes, which led to a massive resignation of militants who abandoned political activity altogether, while others joined the Communist Party, considering it a more stable option. Another split in the exile organisation, by a group of Trotskyist intellectuals, Acci3n Comunista, further weakened the party, which had, from 1965, abandoned its armed struggle policy for one of "long-term struggle, beginning with the winning of basic freedoms", although its goal continued to be one of socialist revolution. (70). Despite this severe weakening however, the organisation could still boast of some support within Catholic circles, although this was mainly amongst students and intellectuals. Moreover, it was the only serious alternative to the policies of the Communist Party, for the Trotskyist groups which proliferated during this time had rarely succeeded in extending their influence beyond the founding members. Student-based on the whole, and with little idea of the day-to-day struggles of workers in Comisiones, which, nonetheless they wished to "take", some of these groups reached preposterous ideological conclusions vis-à-vis "the coming of the revolution". The P.O.R. for example, believed that Ch3 had been assassinated by Fidel, who was in the pay of the C.I.A. The Partido Obrero Revolucionario gave up the idea of "socialism on earth", as it believed it would be brought by an advanced culture from another planet, via flying saucers ! (71).

The Barcelona worker, and ex-JOC leader explains the process by which he eventually decided to join the FOC, despite his misgivings about political parties :

"Well, I had left the JOC in 1964, at the time when many members left to join either the F.L.P. or the Communist Party. The rest set-up U.S.O. (72). I wasn't interested in any of them, so I worked as an independent within the Workers' Commissions. We were against the manoeuvres of the Communist Party, so we set-up a

group, which came to be known as the "Wednesday Group". We soon realised that we hadn't a clue ideologically and set about doing something about it. We had two objectives : to form ourselves politically, and work-out a strategy. First we got someone to give us classes on Marxism. It shows what we knew about things - the guy we got used to write leaflets on social questions in the parish. It was a disaster. People were bored stiff.

Then we got a Christian Marxist to give us classes on Marxism, and started reading a lot. We used to go to Perpignan to buy books - Marx, Lenin, Rosa Luxembourg, 'The Spanish Labyrinth'. But we just got more and more confused. Finally some students from the F.L.P. gave us classes which clarified a lot of things. For example that Leninism meant to organise a vanguard in the firm that could organise struggles etc..., and the meaning of democratic centralism. People then used to call us Marxist-Leninists, but really most of us didn't have a clue. Anyway, the FOC convinced me that an organisation was needed to combat the manoeuvres of the Communist Party, and myself and the rest of the group joined - all fifteen of us."

Barcelona, 1979.

A concerted assault then began on the power base of the Workers' Commissions in Barcelona, the Local Coordinating body, which the Communist Party had long controlled. The attack began against what one militant has described as the "unfettered activism" which the Local was continually proposing, and which the FOC did not believe was advisable at the beginning of 1967, with the onset of repression. (73). Disagreement between the C.P. and the FOC was particularly acrimonious when the C.P. called for a demonstration on the 17th. of February, 1967, a demonstration, the FOC believed, which would be met by fierce repression.

In the event, the FOC were proved correct. Repression had been severe, with the detention of the strongest Commission in Barcelona, that of Hispano Olivetti, which never recovered from this blow, and lost its place as the most militant Commission in Barcelona. (74). Criticism against Communist Party policy was not limited however to these activities of its legal strategy, but also included its policy of election to posts within the vertical trade union. As this "jurado" ("works' council representative) points out :

"I had thought that being able to represent my section in the 'vertical' would mean something - that something could be done. But at the negotiations for the 'convenio' (yearly wage agreement) I soon realised that even though we had managed to get many 'honest' people elected, we still had a lot of the others to contend with, those from the vertical who had built-up their power base with favours and so forth. The employers made life difficult for us as well of course, and wouldn't allow workers to come and see us - so it was difficult to get much information across. The negotiations just dragged on and on, and finally a convenio would be signed which the workers knew nothing about. I just couldn't bear it, so I resigned soon after." (75)

Barcelona, 1979.

Indeed, as we have seen, recourse to the official trade unions was on the decrease, and deadlocks in bargaining becoming ever more frequent in the late sixties, as the economic recession began to bite, thus ending the attempts at "liberalisation" and the ambience of tolerance which had allowed the Workers' Commissions, and Communist Party

strategy, to enjoy unparalleled success. Certainly the problems with Communist Party policies had been attacked continuously since 1963, even within the Party itself from Claudín and Semprún, and their criticisms prefigured what many militants would discover in practice in the later sixties. But these earlier schisms had primarily affected students and intellectuals, and it wasn't until 1967 that the Communist Party's worker base was seriously weakened in Barcelona, with the founding of the Communist Party (i), which ended the Communist Party's dominance of the Local in Barcelona. (76). The CP immediately began setting-up a national coordinating body which took over the functions previously assigned to the Local. Its first act was to call for a national demonstration on the 27th of October 1967.

Sanz Oller, a FOC leader at the time, gives us an idea of the battles which were raging between the national and local coordinating organs :

"Those from the split (the CP (i) and ourselves made common cause and got a majority. (77). Our proposal was not to organise a demonstration in Barcelona, as the objective conditions didn't exist. The Communist Party said that they would go anyway as it had been called by the national coordinating body of Catalonia, which clearly showed that henceforth they would not recognise the authority of the Local. The news from the political committee of the FOC, which stated that they had changed their mind, had arrived late. They had decided that to abstain from going to the demonstration, which was going to be held anyway, would be a serious political mistake and would harm the FOC's prestige. So, after having battled all morning to convince the workers that the objective conditions did not exist to hold the demonstration, we had to try to convince them in the afternoon that they should go, without being able to tell them the real reasons, of course. Basically it was the same way of playing with the workers, also using the prestige and authority which we had acquired amongst them, without helping them reflect on the real motives of our vacillating attitude."

S. Oller, Paris, 1972 p. 165.

Although an outstanding success in Madrid, the October demonstration in Barcelona was again met by severe repression,

with the detention of the commission in Maquinista, the most militant firm in Barcelona. In Terrasa however, the demonstration had gone much further than the Communist Party had planned, with a pitched battle between workers and police, which only ended when extra forces were sent from Barcelona. (78)

The alliance between the FOC and the CP (i), did not however endure. The CP (i), very successful at first in attracting much of the radical discontent with the Communist Party, withdrew from the Workers' Commissions to set-up its own "revolutionary" commissions in May 1968, which had little success and were quietly buried in 1970. (79). Within the FOC, too, discontent was growing, as this ex-member explains :

"It was becoming increasingly apparent the total disparity between the type of talk about the organisation needed (F.L.P. leaders used to come to workers' homes to give them talks on Marx and organisation etc...), and the inability of this organisation to cope with the day-to-day tasks. This was especially the case as the struggle heated-up in the Workers' Commissions. When we asked for a leaflet, it usually arrived the day after the strike. In the end we had to do it all. The 'politicos' and 'executives' didn't even do the part that was expected of them. Anyway, the political committee and the executive committee only consisted of a few members - it was bureaucratic and had few worker members. Contrary to how democratic centralism should function, we had to set-up our own printing press, photo-copying machine - even our own library. The central direction did nothing about getting these things going. This got us thinking - what do we need the party for ? We were the only worker base they had, us fifteen. A few of us left. That's when we discovered another facet of the whole 'political' thing. There had been a huge round-up of F.L.P. militants after the death of Riano, in late 1968. As we'd left at this time, they called us Catholics, petty bourgeois and cowards. This was a great blow for us. Comrades who had worked with us, shared gaol sentences with, and we'd considered friends, now insulted us. Yes, that's when the first 'autonomous group' began."

Barcelona, 1979.

1968 was a year of great radicalisation, especially amongst students, which resulted in the emergence of numerous groups,

all competing, verbally, for first place in the revolutionary hierarchy. A "street agitation" policy, founded on "Fantasma", or lightning demonstrations, was carried out by the GOJ (the Youth Workers' Commissions, dominated at this time by the FOC), and the most radicalised group, the CP (1).

Although the radicalisation which took place in the Universities had long preceded May '68 (80), May '68 did however help to reinforce the belief that students could propel the situation to revolutionary point, as this student leader explains :

"We followed the events in Paris day by day, and just couldn't believe that it was actually happening. Students were crucial in the happenings, and seemed to have carried through a strategy which we had always proposed - solidarity with the working class. Although I see it differently now, at that time we believed that the failure was due to the actions of the Communist Party and the reformist trade unions. This meant that here in Spain, after '68, there was a forefront attack on the CP, and by implication, the strategy of the Workers' Commissions, which we felt could play a similar role here."

Barcelona, 1979.

The FOC, which had already suffered some defections to the CP (1), was soon affected by this bout of student radicalism,

with the influx of radicalised students who managed to ascend to leadership positions within both the political committee and executive committee of the party. (81). The battle between the older, more moderate militants and the student radicals raged throughout 1968, but,

"at the end of the year, the 'hardliners' had won, and a plan of action was presented for 1969 which, if it were approved, would convert us into one more group of street agitators. In the document they talked of converting Barcelona into a 'sea of guerrillas', of forming action groups by sections or geographic zones, together with students and people from the neighbourhood. In terms of the Workers' Commissions, the position continued to be ambiguous, but it was seen to be necessary to begin to distance itself from the Communist Party, so that we would eventually impose an organisation totally dominated by us. The preferential attention to work in the firms was stigmatised with the label 'syndicalist'. In essence what the document foresaw was the extension of the activity which the COJ had been engaging in until then, reinforced by the worker and student sectors, while the COJ would become the 'Revolutionary Socialist Youth'."

S. Oller, Paris, 1972. p. 182.

Certainly, FOC opposition to Communist Party dominance became more explicit during 1968, with the open denunciation of the Communist Party's actions within the Commissions, especially its 'manoeuvres' within the national coordinating body, from which it withdrew its members. (82). But the FOC seemed no longer an attractive option, as many militants felt that it merely wished to replace the CP, and impose policies which were not so dissimilar, given their emphasis on street agitation, and lack of a trade union strategy. (83). The Communist Party, which had suffered somewhat as a consequence of the May events, was badly damaged by the Czechoslovakian invasion in August, which caused a serious split when the Stalinists under Líster left after having slandered Carillo and his "democratic socialist" policies, which led to great demoralisation and disorientation amongst the party's rank and file. (84).

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Given this panorama of political parties, it is hardly surprising that an "independent" sector was gaining increasing strength. Their first publication, "Metal", a bulletin from the metallurgy sector, published in June 1968, sold around 5,000 copies. The growing crisis within the Workers' Commissions in Barcelona, which was clearly divided in three tendencies in March 1969 (the tendency dominated by the CP, that of the FOC, and the "independents"), led to the founding of the "Que Hacer", (What is to be done ?), a process described by one of its founders :

"When I began to get 'disenchanted' with the FOC, we started reading revolutionary theory in depth. Well, actually it was my partner - he began to go beyond Marx and Lenin - we read Pannokoek, Trotsky, the writings of the Maknov army, Deutcher on the Russian Revolution. Anyway, when we left the FOC three of us got together to see what we could do. We also realised that a large number of workers followed us - besides the prestige we undoubtedly had - I feel it was because we expressed, to a large extent, what many workers felt. That's when we set-up the magazine "Que Hacer" (by the way, it was not because of Lenin -we just happened to say that !). The first meeting to launch the magazine was a great success - one hundred workers from CCOO took part. From the beginning there were two tendencies present - Marxist-Leninists, and independent 'syndicalists'. The others called us 'anarchists' - but we didn't call ourselves anything. Anyway, we didn't object, as we were all workers and had the same problems and same goal - become independent of political parties,"

Barcelona, 1979.

Sanz Oller gives a more detailed account of the first meeting of "Que Hacer", where he says, many ex-members of political parties were present: ex-CP intellectuals, who still believed in the long-term goal of creating a political party, but one which would avoid the bureaucratic distortions of the present ones ; ex-POR members, who proposed the creation of "action committees" which had proliferated in France after May '68 ; quite a few FOC dissidents, "independents" from the Workers' Commissions ; a group of "syndicalists", among whom

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were a few old C.N.T. members, and the "first" faction of the CP (i), who proposed the creation of a militarist group on the lines of the "Tupamaros". (85).

The discussion soon centred on the question of organisation, and the nature of the bureaucratic / political leadership, whom all agreed was composed of members from a different class background, with little idea of working class concerns. (86) The Russian Revolution, and its "degeneration", formed the background to the debate. Some militants believed that a formula which served seventy years ago had to be seriously revalued, particularly in the light of the developments which had taken place, not just in the U.S.S.R., but in the capitalist West as well, and the contemporary heirs to this tradition who had inherited the bureaucratic tendencies inherent in the Leninist formula. Many militants believed that the Leninist notion, "means that the workers themselves cannot reach beyond an economistic level of consciousness. In order to obtain a socialist level of consciousness they need help from outside the class, which means, logically, that the working class will be dependent on this help and from whom it is offered. We have to see if this continues to be valid today, in the case that it was valid then. If we agree that it is, then we will be in agreement with Lenin, in the fundamentals. If not, then we will have to break decisively with the idea of the party, and orient ourselves towards autonomist solutions for the working class." (87). Other militants believed that if the leadership of the working class was entrusted to a group outside of itself, than at the moment of the conquest of power this group would continue to act outside of it. "If the party possesses the truth before the revolution, then it's logical that it will try to impose it afterwards, against all and everyone." (88).

But if most militants agreed on the problems with the Leninist organisational form, there was great disparity

over what could be organised in its place. Some believed that a tight group of armed activists should act as the armed wing of the class, leaving the political leadership to the class itself, forged through struggle. This proposal, from the ex-CP (i), was contested by an ex-C.N.T. member, who felt it was somewhat premature to talk of an armed wing before the mass organisation was created. Moreover, how could one assume that the armed wing would not convert itself into a political leadership - anyway, it would expose the movement to repression. (89)

Not all, however, were convinced that Leninism had outlived its usefulness, and returned to their groups or origin. (90). Others continued within "Que Hacer", but began a surreptitious recruitment policy, and succeeded in attracting some members for their party. (91). Within the remaining group, composed of independents from the Workers' Commissions and the syndicalists, there was disparity over the level of organisation needed, as this militant explains :

"I wanted the groups to be totally autonomous. If one group approved an action, or a leaflet, the others didn't have to agree with it or support it. I had disagreements with my partner over this. He believed that a certain level of organisation was necessary. But I believed that if I didn't agree with something, how could I support it wholeheartedly?" (92).

Barcelona, 1979.

This division, between those who continued to see themselves primarily as Marxists, and in favour of a tighter form or organisation, and those who were moving in practice towards more "anarchistic" organisational models, was to affect almost all the "autonomous" groups which emerged at the time.

Certainly the growth of "autonomous" groups in the late sixties reflected the deep crisis of the Marxist left, particularly the Communist Party and its main competitor, the F.L.P. The increasing dominance of the Communist Party over the Workers' Commissions, and its accompanying undemocratic practice, had been contested from 1966, but,

with the onset or repression, the CP's continual adherence to a "legalist" strategy was opposed by a growing number of workers within the Commissions, which at first was centred within the F.L.P. (the FOC in Catalonia), whose tactic consisted in taking over the leadership of the Local, power centre of the Commissions in Barcelona. While many militants were not happy about this strategy, seeing it as "playing the same game as the Communist Party, behind workers' backs" <sup>(93)</sup>, they continued in the party, on the whole, for the lack of another serious alternative. But the radicalisation which ensued after the '68 events in Paris, brought an influx of students into the leadership of the F.L.P., which resulted in a year-long power struggle, and ended by the adoption of a "street agitation" strategy and anti-syndicalist bias unacceptable to many working class leaders. The CP (i), founded in 1967 from a split in the Communist Party's worker base, seemed to many an alternative to the F.L.P., as this militant explains :

"I had formed part of an oppositional group within the F.L.P. for some time.

We had been unhappy for some time about their actions within the Workers' Commissions. They would attack the Communist Party's tactics fiercely, but they didn't really offer anything that different - they were committed to the 'legal' road too, but without the trimmings. Well, when we left the F.L.P. our whole group, and our newspaper group, joined the CP (i). We felt it was the most radical, the class party, which would really be able to unite the anti-CP forces. But I didn't stay in it long. In 1969, during the state of exception, there was a huge round-up and we had to go underground for some time. At the same time, the faction fighting within the CP (i) reached unbelievable limits. They were said to be beating each other up, and there had been a killing in Paris. I was scared stiff, so I lay low for about six months till it blew over. At first I felt sympathetic towards the group which was being attacked, but later came to the conclusion that it was deeper than that - I mean, the group that was being attacked would probably have done the same if they had been in a position of strength. In essence, it was a revulsion against Leninism. That's when the 'Grupo Autonomo' got going." (94).

Barcelona, 1979.

In Catalonia, the state of exception had been precipitated by the assault on the rectorate of Barcelona University by members of the CP (i), and it was discovered that these same members had been involved in a bank robbery the previous month. Imprisoned for terms which ranged from twelve to twenty years, this accelerated the process of disintegration of the party, resulting in the most violent factional struggle yet seen in a group of the left. (95). The FOC, almost entirely denuded of its worker base, was similarly locked in factional strife throughout 1969, which was resolved finally by a split at the end of the year. One militant believes that the "Que Hacer" group was important in this context :

"Well, our group was a great success - that's why all the groups came to recruit there. I believe that we helped to bury the FOC - and some who left the CP (i) didn't join another party but came along to our discussions. It wasn't that we made these parties collapse - we simply acted as a catalyst, as they were already in the process of disintegration. Unlike the Communist Party, they had neither much working class base, nor a sound organisational base - they were really just groups of friends."

Barcelona, 1979.

Undoubtedly the repression which began against the Workers' Commissions in 1968 (1967 in Catalonia), followed in 1969 by the state of exception, had profoundly affected the workers' movement. The downturn in struggle on the workers' front was interpreted by students, through the optic of the '68 events, as Maravall says, as proof that the workers were "lagging behind", and that students would have to continue in a situation of "proletarian retreatism." (96) Indeed, as Sanz Oller confirms, the factories were inundated in 1968, and even Moreso in 1969, by "proletarianised students", who, however, could not support the monotonous routine of factory life for long. (97). This in turn produced a strong reaction in workers' circles, as this militant explains :

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"We were sick of all the jargon used by types who hadn't a clue about the workers' movement - not surprising seeing that they hadn't worked a day in their lives. Then they decided to come here and tell us what to do. But this got us thinking in "Que Hacer". If we really wanted workers to be autonomous of political parties, and decide things for themselves, then we had to instruct them, train them to think for themselves. That's when we decided to dissolve "Que Hacer" and set-up Círculos de Formación de Cuadros (Circles for the training of militants), in November 1969."

Barcelona, 1979.

Simultaneously, "Plataformas de Comisiones Obreras" was founded, an attempt to unite all those opposed to the "interference" of outside forces within the Workers' Commissions, i.e. political parties, which published a magazine, "Nuestra Clase" (Our Class), which had a reasonable degree of success. (98). A militant in the metallurgy sector explains why he joined "Plataformas", and gives us some idea of its strength :

"Well, I was involved in a strike in February 1969, during the state of exception, which greatly politicised me. Although we partially won the strike, the loads of different groups involved, all trying to capitalise on it, sickened me. I didn't like the 'montage' that was taking place - outside of the working class. So I joined the Comision of my firm, and liked the idea of Plataformas, whose main aim was unity. They were the major force behind the meeting in June 1970, which tried to unite the Commissions, which, of course, didn't come off. (99). Although Plataformas carried-on till 1974, it was dead by the end of 1972. But it had a lot of strength in 1970 and 1971. Most of the Commissions launched then were by people from Plataformas, and followed its line. The Commission in Faessa was important in launching Plataformas. There were only five militants, but there were thirty in the Commission. Meetings were attended by sixty or seventy people (Faessa employs 1,000), while the technical team could count on a hundred and fifty helpers when needed (to distribute propaganda). We distributed five hundred bulletins from the firm. There were continuous assemblies - we kept up the struggle the whole time. It wasn't a violent struggle, but a stubborn one. We had one of the best wages in the industry. We believed that workers learn through struggle - and that it's possible to be active. It was an example which gave the workers a lot of confidence." (100)

Barcelona, 1979.

This growth of "autonomous groups" within the Workers' Commissions was matched by a similar development within the working class neighbourhoods in the Barcelona suburbs. Constructed in the sixties, with poor materials and little infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals, and lacking adequate transport facilities, these worker neighbourhoods in Madrid and Barcelona and other large Spanish cities, have been the site of a growing number of struggles from the end of the sixties. (101). A militant explains how he got involved with an autonomous group in his neighbourhood :

"When I came to Barcelona, I went to live in Santa Coloma. You couldn't help being involved there. I distinctly remember the time a family was thrown onto the street, because their flat had been sold to a speculator. The level of speculation was incredible. It was really through this that I became a 'Leftie'. I was never one to read much about politics, I was more interested in art. I started going to the meetings, getting involved. That's when the political parties tried to recruit me. But I never liked the way they worked— always criticising each other and trying to be the main protagonists in any struggle. This particularly irked me under the dictatorship, when unity was so important. I got to know S -- and his group in 1970, and liked the way they worked. They were down to earth, and didn't try to take the credit for things. I attended their seminars and started to read more."

Barcelona, 1979.

The growth of autonomous groups in the neighbourhoods was similarly a result of the existence of a large number of groups, all competing to get their "programme" accepted without much idea of local concerns, as this militant explains :

"When I came to live here (in Hospitalet), I got involved locally, because of the lack of parks, or playgrounds for my children, who were forced to stay at home all day, or travel into Barcelona. I remember at my first meeting there were several young guys ranting on about 'transitional demands' (I know what it means now, but I hadn't a clue then), and other stuff which most people present got really bored with. Then a bloke spoke who really impressed me. He tried to get us involved in the discussion - it was amazing how people came to life - and the meeting ended with us

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deciding to draw-up a plan of action, and demands which we had all agreed. I discovered that the guy lived quite near me, so I went to see him - we struck up a friendship - that was how I joined the 'Grupo Autónomo'."

Barcelona, 1979.

From 1969 onwards, there was a steady growth in autonomous groups in all the Barcelona working class neighbourhoods, formed essentially around ties of friendship. One of the founders of the "Grupo Autonomo " in Santa Coloma de Gramanet, home of the most important group, gives us some idea of their character :

"The setting-up of the 'grupos autonomos' was the most interesting and stimulating experience I ever had. It was a period of searching for something. The important thing about this process was that there were no theoretical limits or impositions. In some ways of course we weren't very efficient - there were some 'spontaneist' notions which were a bit infantile (many of the members were much younger than me). For example we distributed leaflets in Pegaso that were satirical and iconoclastic, which didn't have much resonance within the 'class'.(102) But there were a lot of positive aspects. Most of the groups had arrived at negative conclusions through their own experience. We all rejected Leninism and the revolutionary vanguard and accompanying jargon, and we were all in search of a new theory. We read avidly - mostly critical Marxism - Pannakoeck, Luxembourg. The Situationists ( a few had come to Spain in 1969) were an important influence too. Yes - it was an exciting time - reading, discussing, and building-up the neighbourhood group." (103)

Barcelona, 1979.

Interestingly, the autonomous groups which began to flourish in the neighbourhoods did so separately, without knowledge that other autonomous groups existed, either in the neighbourhoods or in the Workers' Commissions, as this militant says : "Funny enough, the group in Santa Coloma also called themselves Grupos Obreros Autonomos, but we didn't know each other. The Santa Coloma group contacted us, after having read one of our publications. They couldn't believe that our group also called themselves GOA. It was an amazing coincidence". (104)

Moreover, the groups had undergone a fairly similar ideological development, with no clear theoretical perspective, but almost all influenced by the "critical" Marxism of Luxembourg and Pannekoek, and the writings of the Situationists. As a member of one of the groups says, this was not that surprising :

"Nearly all of us had been impressed by the early experience of the Workers' Commissions - before the CP took them over - seeing in them a similar development of 'workers councilism' which Pannekoek and the Situationists proposed. I suppose we were searching for an organisational model which would come from the class itself, through struggle, and not imposed by a group of intellectuals who thought they knew better."  
Barcelona, 1979.

Indeed, one of the major concerns of the "~~grupos autónomos~~" continue to be the relationship of intellectuals to the working class, a problem which has haunted Socialist theoreticians from the inception of the movement. The GOA believed that the only way to lessen the powerful influence of intellectuals within the working class movement was by educating the workers, so that they could themselves "theorise" out of their own experience and thus forge their own organisation from the class itself. The Círculos de Formación de Cuadros, set-up in November 1969, had been an attempt to put these ideas into practice. In the summer of 1970, a proposal, from some of the founding members of "Que Hacer" to set-up a federation of groups, coordinated at a practical level, but with the view of opening-up a process of discussion vis-à-vis a programme and tactics while respecting the autonomy of the various groups, again floundered, due to the actions of the O.R.T., which succeeded in leaving Círculos with a fair number of militants. (105).

1970 marked the end of these kind of attempts, and the growth of contacts between the autonomous groups themselves. As education continued to be central, an editorial was set-up which was crucial, as this militant says :

"The editorial was very important (MIL put up the money). GOA really got going on the basis of this editorial - we started contacting groups in the whole peninsula - Pamplona, Vigo, Asturias, Andalucia and Madrid. It was the beginning of a whole new period."  
Barcelona, 1979.

Indeed, the editorial was financed through the "expropriations" carried out by the Movimiento Ibérico de Liberación, a group which had its origins in "Que Hacer", and who justified this tactic by the historical precedents in Russia, by Lenin and Stalin. (106). The first publication, at the end of 1969, was a short history of the working class movement in Barcelona, and was a frontal attack on the politics of the existing left groups in Catalonia. In September 1970, one of the most interesting publications, in which many of the groups cooperated, saw the light of day. A militant explains its genesis :

"We felt that one of the major problems - which we had found ourselves - was trying to 'decipher' political texts. We started to think of a way to get around this. A dictionary, which would explain these terms, seemed the answer. We started with the most used ones, and then the whole thing grew until we filled a small book. It was the hardest piece of work I'd ever participated in." (107).  
Barcelona, 1979.

The texts edited and financed by MIL give us some idea of the ideological bent of one of the principal tendencies within the GOA in Barcelona. (108). The first publication was a reprint of "Between the revolution and the Trenches", by the Italian libertarian, Camilo Berneri. Berneri who had fought with the C.N.T. during the Civil War, had opposed the C.N.T. policy of "collaboration" and proposed instead a "revolutionary war strategy", along the lines suggested by Felix Morrow. (109). This was followed by texts by the Hungarian ex-Trotskyist Belazs, said to have influenced Djilas and his notion of the Russian bureaucracy as a new

class, and Oscar Lange's work on socialism as an answer to the problems of rational planning. In essence, the MIL group, and the GOA, held the view that the Soviet Union was a state capitalist society, with the bureaucrats as the new ruling class. The publication of Ciliga's work, "Lenin and the Russian revolution", showed that they saw this development as a logical consequence of the Leninist organisational model. (110). The Spanish Trotskyists came in for strong criticism too, believing that they would not have acted much differently to Stalin, had they got the opportunity. (111). The name of the publication, May'37, was itself significant. The role of the C.N.T. / F.A.I. leadership in these events was severely criticised, demonstrating an attitude towards the "official" C.N.T. which was prevalent to GOA in Catalonia. (112). Like most of the GOA, the MIL saw the Workers' Commissions as the prototype of an organisation which could present an alternative to Leninism. Indeed, as Tajuelo says, Pannekoek was their preferred author. (113).

But, from the days of "Que Hacer", another tendency had co-existed within the GOA - the anarcho-syndicalists. Several C.N.T. members had participated in "Que Hacer", and later "Círculos", and had succeeded in gaining a few sympathisers. (114). Many GOA members, however, had not been too impressed by the history of the anarchist movement, as this militant points out :

"Well, after '68 there was a renewed interest in the Spanish anarchist movement, and more material was available. I remember getting hold of Gomez Casas' book on the history of the C.N.T., and we discussed it in the group. (115). We all felt a great admiration for the movement, but felt it had had its day. In a way it helped to reinforce what we thought about leadership. Anarchist ministers in the government? Then their shameful counter-revolutionary conduct during May '37, when they asked the workers to lay down their arms, and support the bourgeois republic. Anyway, I'd got hold of some C.N.T. material from an old cenetista, I think it was 'Espoir', and I had thought it was pretty bad. (116). No, I did not think that the C.N.T. could have a future in Spain." (117).

Barcelona, 1979.

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Despite their misgivings about the "official" C.N.T., and its actions during the Republic and the Civil War, there was however, a growing interest in anarchism itself among some GOA members, as this Santa Coloma militant explains :

"What attracted us to anarchism, I suppose, was our search for an answer to authoritarianism and leadership. My wife had met some anarchists in Paris, and had been very impressed by them. Through her I contacted members of 'Frente Libertario' in Paris. I too was impressed by them. Although they were quite old, they were very open-minded and non-dogmatic. (118). I also got in contact with a 'group autonomo' in Perpignan ( a group that had been expelled by the C.N.T.), who were a great help to us - they got us books, gave us money - disinterestedly. They were the nicest bunch of people I'd met in all my years of political involvement."

Barcelona, 1979.

Certainly what seemed to impress these militants was the kind of people these anarchists were, as a member of GOA says :

"Our group in Plataformas had no contacts with anarchists as such until we had contacts with the group in Santa Coloma, in 1970. There were people there who knew the Frente Libertario group in Paris, and a group in Perpignan. So we organised a trip to Paris and Perpignan to see for ourselves. When I met an anarchist family in Perpignan, it was like a light - something I'd always looked for - kind, helpful - but above all, I liked the way they treated each other, in a very egalitarian and non-authoritative way. They treated us the same - as equals. I was very impressed and began to feel that perhaps this was what I had been looking for."

Barcelona, 1979.

This open, friendly attitude experienced by militants from members of the Frente Libertario group contrasted sharply with the treatment many militants received in Toulouse, as this member of GOA points out :

"I had contacted the Young Libertarians in Paris (there were only about half a dozen of them), and they had given us some money and promised to send magazines and

documents. Then I went off to Toulouse. I couldn't believe that these people could treat us this way. You would have thought that we were police spies or something, the way they kept their distance from us. It was as if they felt threatened by us somehow. In any case, they gave us no help or encouragement, and sent us on our way as soon as they could." (119)

Madrid, 1978.

There is little doubt that the development of autonomous groups in Spain who were showing a growing interest in anarchism was viewed by the exile organisation in Toulouse with great suspicion. (120). If anything, the sectarianism and dogmatism which characterised the "official" organisation seemed to have increased since the '68 events, with a growing number of expulsions, among whom was the Civil War veteran and proven libertarian militant Cipriano Mera. (121). The Toulouse organisation had kept its distance from the happenings of '68, and had been sceptical of the presence of "neo-anarchists" at the International Anarchist Congress held at Carrara in 1968, which reflected the growing division between "institutionalised" anarchism and the young radicals. (122). Cohn-Bendit clearly summed-up this divide in his intervention :

"Why do we oppose the way this congress is going ? Because this congress turns its back on spontaneity, which is, according to us, the key to revolution. We say that you're committing an error, because it isn't by closing yourselves up, brandishing exclusivisms, continuing the eternal debate between Bakunin and Marx that you will help the cause of revolution to advance. For us the problem isn't between Marxism and anarchism. The problem lies in discovering and putting into practice more radical methods vis-à-vis the revolution."

Alberola / Gransac, Paris, 1975. p. 259.

Faced with this growing sectarianism, various C.N.T. militants had attempted to re-launch the organisation outside of the "official" channels, by creating "grupos de presencia confederal" in the late '60's.

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However, they too became enmeshed in the factional struggle, limiting their actions to the committee battles which continued to rage within the Spanish organisation, battles it should be remembered, which only concerned a handful of people and which had little or no influence outside of these circles. (123). A much more interesting attempt was undertaken by a group of militants who founded the journal, "Frente Libertario" in July, 1969, designed primarily "not so much to re-think anarchism, but to apprehend the meaning of the anti-authoritarian movement which is developing in Spain, and attacking preconceived schemas." (124). With the aim of reconciliation, which they believed possible, the journal concentrated its efforts on reporting workers' struggles, particularly those which displayed an "autonomous" tendency, and was largely written by militants from within Spain. Contrary to the "official" organisation, the "Frente Libertario" group believed that the growth of autonomous groups was the most hopeful basis for a resurgence of the libertarian movement in Spain. (125).

The years 1970 - 1971 certainly witnessed a steady growth of autonomous groups in Catalonia and throughout the peninsula. (126). These were also the years, as we have seen, of growing polarisation within Spanish society. As the level of strikes and protest actions increased, so too did the arsenal of repression : two killed at a peaceful demonstration in Erandio (Bilbao), 1969, three workers killed while peacefully demonstrating in Granada in July '70, while the Madrid Metro workers were militarised back to work during the same month. As more and more workers came into struggle, many of whom had not been previously organised, strikes were increasingly organised and agreed to in assemblies and illegal factory committees. This was the case with the Madrid Metro workers and the Bilbao metal workers, who succeeded in breaking the 6.5 % wage freeze.

This development, which showed that workers were increasingly bypassing the official trade unions, was ignored by the Communist Party, which still clung to its "legalist" strategy, advising a vote in the long-postponed trade union elections of May 1971. (127). The statistics for the five years from 1966 should have been evidence enough for the bankruptcy of this policy : many important leaders "assimilated" by the method of giving them a flat and an official trade union post (128) ; two hundred detained and five hundred sacked (enlaces and jurados) ; one hundred and sixty seven dismissed by the "vertical" itself, without explanation ; and ten thousand resignations in Catalonia alone (out of a total of 45,000), who felt that there was little they could achieve. (129).

The 1971 elections registered abstention in the most combative large firms, particularly in the Basque provinces, Navarre, and Catalonia. (130). Even in the smaller firms, where coercion was greater, over half the official posts were left vacant, proof, it would seem, that there was little enthusiasm for the "legalist" project. (131). Moreover, many workers were not just bypassing the official trade unions, but the clandestine political parties as well, as the growth in important "autonomous" strikes from the late sixties demonstrates. (132).

The autonomous groups had watched this development with interest, as this militant says :

"All these strikes, which were usually long and combative, seemed to confirm for us a level of development of the workers' movement which was beginning to rely on its own efforts and shake-off its dependence on outside forces. This gave us much more confidence - it was possible - and a degree of optimism. Of course we believed that an organisation was needed, but we felt it would develop, over time, out of these kinds of struggles, which seemed to us the only way that an authentic truly working class revolutionary organisation would emerge. In the meantime, we felt we must support these struggles as best we could."

Barcelona, 1979.

At the end of 1971, a series of "autonomous" strikes took place in Catalonia which would greatly boost the confidence and strength of the GOA, now loosely coordinated at the level of Barcelona. (133). This strike wave began in Macosa, a large metal firm which had been known for its militancy before the Civil War, and which still had a fair number of old C.N.T. / F.A.I. militants. (134). The conflict had begun in October, when workers started holding assemblies to discuss wage demands. When nineteen workers were sanctioned for these activities, protest strikes and assemblies followed, and finally a lock-up was declared. The strike became more violent as police broke-up groups of pickets and assemblies. Without much outside help, the strike petered out a few weeks later. (135).

But undoubtedly the most important "autonomous" strike took place in December 1971, in Harry Walker, a metal firm which was undergoing expansion. (136). An independent Workers' Commission had been created, which simply called itself "The Workers of Harry Walker", and had begun circulating leaflets since October, calling for action against abuses in the firms, and proposing the holding of assemblies. The tension increased in December, when a massive assembly was held in solidarity with the prisoners at Burgos, which

ended with a boycott on overtime, the first time this level of solidarity had been achieved. The action stepped-up with the occupation of the factory, which was contested by the declaration of a lock-out by the employers.

The strike at Harry Walker, which lasted two months, was undoubtedly the greatest boost for "autonomous" action the GOA had received, as this GOA member says :

"We were amazed at the developments at Harry Walker. We dropped everything and concentrated on the support committee for the strikers, which the Communist Party would have nothing to do with, as they believed it was being organised by 'anarchists'. The strike itself was organised around the assemblies, which took place continually, and were attended by more than two hundred workers. The unitary committee carried-out the orders they received from the assembly, and wrote-up reports on its actions. Soon after the lock-out, this committee had to deal with the sectarian actions of the Liga Comunista, whom it expelled from the committee. For once, the committee didn't 'go under' because of this, but managed to re-organise itself, and continue the struggle. It was incredible what they achieved - solidarity from workers in France and Italy, and over a million pesetas from workers here in Spain. It was this solidarity which enabled the workers to carry-on for this length of time, and, up to a point, win the strike. (137).

Barcelona, 1979.

The strike at Harry Walker, carried-out during the Burgos trial when Article 18 of the Fuero was suspended, (138) was followed by a two-month long strike at Maquinfsta, a firm known for its combativeness and which had been collectivised and turned into an arms factory during the Civil War. Indeed, the factory had been practically militarised in the forties, after a strike had been declared by the C.N.T. (139).

The conflict which erupted at the beginning of 1971, was over the negotiations for the collective contract, which

had been presented by the "jurados" from the "vertical" without prior consultation with the workers. With the refusal of the employers to recognise the agreement put forward by the workers, a strike was declared. Sanz Oller gives us an idea of the nature of this struggle :

"When the firm, after having declared the lock-out, opened its doors again, all the workers entered but struck again demanding the re-admission of those sacked. A new lock-out was declared, followed by the same attitude by the detained. The police and the employers were going mad, looking for leaders, detaining randomly. But the strike began again every time, with hardly any organisation or propaganda, through pure solidarity and class consciousness."

Sanz Oller, Paris, 1972. p. 267.

Unlike Harry Walker, the workers in Maquinista failed to form a strike committee, which prevented the organisation of solidarity actions or collections of funds. Moreover little written information was distributed, which meant that the strike went virtually unnoticed in the rest of Barcelona. As Sanz Oller says :

"If in these conditions the strike lasted more than two months, it is only comprehensible by reference to the high level of combativeness of all the workers, and because of the great prestige which some old anarchist militants still conserve in the firm."

Sanz Oller, Paris, 1972 p. 268.

These series of strikes, especially that in Harry Walker, gave an enormous boost to the "autonomous" project, with the influx of new members and sympathisers to the GOA. It was indeed during 1971 that the first serious attempt at coordination of groups got going in Catalonia, coinciding with the publication of a string of pamphlets financed by the MIL. (140). The efforts of the GOA to keep publishing, despite repression, is explained by a member of the GOA in Plataformas :

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"We saw our great success as our printing press. We published leaflets for any firm on strike, whatever party was involved. Any factory committee just had to ask. This had started of course during my time with the F.L.P., when we had to do these things ourselves - so it went on a long time - seven years I think. We hired a room above the police station, and had it all this time. This was the safest place, really. I knew a couple of policemen by sight, and we used to greet each other every evening. I used to go straight from work at three, and finish about nine or ten in the evening. I did this for seven years."

Barcelona, 1979.

As the groups began to expand, women members acted as "links" between the groups, and took charge of the library. Most of this work was financed by members of the groups themselves, with some additional help from MIL.

As contacts with anarchists in Perpignan and the Frente Libertario group grew, so too did the anarchist tendencies amongst some members of the GOA, as this militant says :

"From about 1970, when we started having fairly regular contact with the people in France, I went through a sort of an 'anarchist spontaneist' phase. I suppose I was really taken by the anarchists I'd met there - there was such a contrast between them and some of the types I'd known in the CP (I). I liked the vitality of anarchism, and the greater concentration on personal / psychological issues. We set-up a sort of 'urban commune' in Santa Coloma - I split with my wife and went to live with someone else (actually, it's worked out very well with my wife. We have lived together since then, off an on, but in a different way.) In some cases this went too far. Some members of GOA concentrated exclusively on personal aspects and gave-up political activity, as they saw the whole idea of being a militant as being retrogressive. But this only happened in a few cases. On the whole, I think this experience was very important for us. You see, here in Spain repression has affected us all very deeply - especially sexual repression, and that affects the way we treat other people too. So, as a group that was trying to deal with authoritarianism, we had to take it up."

Barcelona, 1979.

Certainly, some members gave-up political involvement, and gave themselves up to "living", if just for a while, as this militant explains :

"In GOA we made it a condition that all members had to work. So when I was out of work, I didn't believe it was right to be part of the group. Maybe that's a justification - I suppose I wanted a break from it all - it had been very intense for a few years. Then I'd been imprisoned, briefly, a few times - actually I'd been politically involved since 1964. I think I went 'mad' for a while - I went to live in a commune and had a relationship with an anarchist woman which was very important for me. You see, I'd never really had much sexual experience before then. But it didn't last very long. When I started working again, as usual, I got involved in organising strikes, and kept getting sacked, and changing jobs. I started to read more, and want to get back into the political world again."

Barcelona, 1979.

On the whole, apart from some "defections", temporary or otherwise, the majority of GOA members succeeded in combining many different kinds of practices, as this member points out :

"Our group of people in the commune were very committed to the neighbourhood struggle, as they had been involved in it from the beginning. Some of them who worked in firms where trade union work was possible, were active in Plataformas, especially the North section, where there was a lot of activity. We were almost obsessed with intellectual 'formation'. If anyone who joined the group couldn't read or write, we'd teach them within months. We held continuous seminars and discussions. We brought people, like architects and doctors, along to give talks, on town planning, and health issues. Once we held a seminar on sexuality in a Church in Santa Coloma - some people even fainted ! We never tried it again."

Barcelona, 1979.

The Burgos trial, in December 1970, as we have seen, was an important landmark in the history of the Francoist regime. (141). The spectacular kidnapping of the German honorary consul, Eugen Beihl, by E.T.A., had certainly

changed the whole course of the trial, and had placed the Francoist government, for the first time since 1939, at a serious disadvantage. The political nature of the trial could not be ignored, as each accused E.T.A. member denounced torture and called for a socialist transformation. The growing polarisation taking place in Spanish society reached an all-time high, as thousands of Francoist supporters demonstrated, and sections of the army called for a new "crusade". The severe repression which followed the trial and the growth of Right-wing groups, tacitly supported by the government, only served to further polarise the situation and lead to an increase in E.T.A.'s armed actions. (142).

It was during the early '70's that the notion of armed struggle gained ground amongst sections of the GOA, as this member says :

"Well, it wasn't the first time that armed action had come up. I remember when I was at college in Madrid in 1968 - there was a lot of this talk about, and I knew a few guys who were armed. (143). But it was more serious after Burgos, especially from the end of 1971, when there were a lot of violent strikes. I had had links with a group of anarchists at the time of the Metro strike (July 1970), (although I didn't become involved myself), who had arms. But I don't think they did much. I think E.T.A. was important here. I'd met some E.T.A. members while I was in prison, and we'd got along well. I only bothered with the anarchists and E.T.A. in prison - the Maoists and Trotskyists were all students, middle class - I couldn't stand them. There were lots of personal contacts between E.T.A. and members of the GOA - a kind of mutual respect - we admired them a lot." (144).

Barcelona, 1979.

Other members of GOA however, were apprehensive about the armed struggle thesis, as this member explains :

"I was worried about all the talk that was going around. I felt that having anything to do with arms would finish us - it would bring down all our infrastructure

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which we'd built over the past few years. But I could understand it in a way. I remember at the time of El Ferrol (145), I could easily have taken up a gun myself - I felt so angry. So I sort of 'accomodated' myself in the situation. I would have nothing to do with arms myself, and didn't believe it would achieve anything, but let others do as they wanted, and didn't say much about it."

Barcelona, 1979.

Despite the growing talk about armed action, the GOA did not take up arms, although contacts continued at a personal level with members of E.T.A. An armed group did however develop out of the GOA, the Movimiento Ibérico de Liberación, founded in December 1971, though it had existed and carried-out actions under different names since 1969. The development of this group, which staged spectacular bank robberies throughout 1972 and 1973, is important to chart, given that the Spanish press characterised them solely as "gangsters". As Tajeulo has shown, most of the group had begun their political involvement in the Workers' Commissions, and had been part of the "Que Hacer" and "Círculos" experiment, and, as we have seen, had greatly helped the GOA in their publishing efforts. (146). At first structured around three teams : the workers' group, the theoretical group and the exterior group (in France), disagreements between these teams had begun during the trade union elections of 1971, when the workers' group did not agree with the abstentionist campaign, a feeling echoed by other GOA members. (147). The split which ensued in 1971 showed the ascendancy of the armed wing, and its separation from its workers' base. As Tajuelo says, the MIL's tactical error had been to believe that armed groups would develop throughout the peninsula in conjunction with the network of workers' councils. (148). Although the MIL continued to help the GOA financially, the nature of armed action imposed a growing distance between the MIL and the GOA, as this militant says :

"Well, their life-style meant that they had to spend a lot of their money on renting flats, eating in the

best restaurants, which were the safest, and things like that, which was very different from ours. Also, the pace was too hectic for me - I couldn't keep up with it. So we saw less and less of them - towards the end, there was little contact at all." (149)

Barcelona, 1979.

The GOA's activities continued to be centred around Plataformas, which witnessed its greatest growth in 1971, and the neighbourhoods. A successful struggle in Santa Coloma, where the GOA were particularly strong, gave a further boost to the "autonomous" movement. Sanz Oller describes its development :

"At the beginning of January, 1971, the town-hall decided to close the old 'ambulatorio' (Health Centre), obliging people to use the one in San Andres, already insufficient for this neighbourhood. Besides the journey, an hour and a half return, you now had to add two or three hours queueing time, just to get two minutes 'visit'. There was growing indignation in the neighbourhood, and the 'natural' groups which had been forming in the neighbourhoods throughout the municipality, through the different struggles which had been fought, decided to meet in a unitary committee. The recent example of Harry Walker, which was nearby, found an immediate application in a neighbourhood."

Sanz Oller, Paris, 1972. p. 270.

The unitary committee initiated a campaign, mostly by word of mouth, throughout the neighbourhood, and succeeded in holding a demonstration of some three thousand in front of the town-hall, on the 23rd of February. (150). This was followed on the 3rd of March by a ten thousand strong demonstration which ended in a pitched battle with the police. The next day the mayor declared that medical assistance would be available by April, and announced the construction of a new 'ambulatorio'. (151).

It was in the neighbourhoods that the greatest development of "autonomous groups" took place in Madrid. Certainly some trade union militants were involved in the "autonomous"

movement in Madrid, but opposition to Communist Party dominance within the Workers' Commissions never reached the proportions it obtained in Barcelona, nor was an attempt such as "Plataformas" ever considered. (152). It would seem that the University was a more important point of reference for militants in the "autonomous" movement, which gradually won the support of some workers, as this militant explains :

"I was at Madrid University during 1968, doing an economics degree. My time there was extremely important.

I started being politically active at University - as an independent, although I was close to a Trotskyist group for a while. There was non-stop activity at the University during 1968, and I attended lots of meetings and seminars which took place most of the time. A guy spoke one day who really impressed me - he was different from the others, who were beginning to bore me with their type of rhetoric. This guy talked about the total nature of revolution - things like pollution, ecology, personal relationships. I was fascinated - I'd been thinking along similar lines for some time. So when I started working, I and some friends got together to discuss things - so as I could clarify what I thought - that's how the 'grupo autonomo' began."

Madrid, 1979.

The most important "autonomous" group in Madrid, for its ideological coherency and size, was the group "Solidaridad" (Solidarity) which published its first pamphlet in July 1968. (153). Unlike most of the groups, "Solidaridad" had clear libertarian antecedents, being animated by Felix Carraquer, one of the foremost leaders of the collectivisation experiment in Aragon during the Civil War. (154). The Aragon experience had been crucial in his decision to carry-on the struggle inside Spain, as he says :

"This experience continued to be my hope for Spain's future. It was because of the libertarians that people went out and fought on the 19th. of July, and made

the collectivisation possible. This is what made it worthwhile for me. It was an historical experience of the first degree. I had a sort of a guilty conscience when I was living in exile in France. I felt I had to work and come back to Spain to prepare future generations of libertarians. This was the only way, I felt, that a "new Spain" could be created. While I was in France I set-up a commune. Some Spaniards visited us there and were impressed. (155). But we also got a printing press together and wrote pamphlets which we distributed free in Spain. My son-in-law brought them to Spain in a lorry. We sent them to old cenetistas, who passed them on to younger people. J--- and L--- came here from Barcelona. They'd evolved quite a bit and had read a lot of libertarian stuff. They liked the things we published, so they had come here to see me. That was the beginning of Solidarity."

Barcelona, 1979.

Unlike the other "grupos autonomos", Solidarity was committed from its inception to the reconstruction of the C.N.T. (156). This would only be possible, however, if libertarian thought and anarcho-syndicalist strategy were up-dated. As Felix Cassasquer points out, the "actualisation" of libertarian thought was one of the major aims of Solidarity, and indeed many of their pamphlets are taken-up with this. (157). In one of their most ambitious projects, "A Libertarian analysis of Capitalism", their distance from orthodox anarchist notions of the state can be clearly seen. Analysing capitalism from the 1929 crisis, they note a progressive connection between capitalism and the state. This process of state monopolisation ranged from the fascist state model through to the "imperialist" democracies ; liberal capitalism was converted into a state capitalist bureaucracy. Because of this development, struggles against capitalism cannot be separated from those of the state. While orthodox anarchism had always pointed to the connection between the state and capitalism, it did in practice, through its strategy or direct action against the employers, refuse any dealings with the state ; indeed it encouraged its "non-recognition". What Solidarity was trying to point out was that any contact with capitalism

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was inevitably, because of the development between capitalism and the state, a contact with the state itself. (158). This would have important consequences later, when the "orthodox" sector refused to affiliate state employees, or called for the end of state education, measures which reflected the nineteenth century character of "orthodox" thought. (159).

The other major aim of Solidarity was to build an alternative method of analysis to Marxism. (160). While most of their writings reflect a strong Marxist influence, (161) they do however hold to the libertarian notion that "Private property emerges through the consolidation of power and authority of some over others i.e. political alienation." (162). They attempted to support this argument by recourse to anthropological studies, such as the recent work by Clastres. (163). The importance of the ideological apparatus in maintaining this political domination, as with all libertarians, was heavily stressed, as was the importance of education in weakening this stranglehold. Their arguments in favour of federalism / decentralisation were based on psychological studies of small groups and their behaviour, a theme much discussed in "Solidarity" study groups. (164).

Their political strategy reflected these ideological premises. Although denouncing the strategy of the political parties, who "mobilised" workers once a year around the collective contract, they did however believe that the struggles which had developed during the Francoist period had been greatly stimulated by the introduction of the "convenios", and those opposed to both the "vertical" and the Communist Party proposals should be there to present an alternative at the negotiations. (165). In classical anarcho-syndicalist style, they viewed the trade unions as schools for militants, and proposed the creation of federations of industry, proposals historically associated with revolutionary syndicalists such as Peiró, Quintanilla and Orobón Fernández

who were considered "reformists" by the F.A.I. (166).

Solidarity was alone in seeing that trade unionism would play an important part in Spain's future. As we have seen, the large majority of "autonomous" groups were in favour of the organisation of workers' councils, viewing trade unionism as being inevitably reformist, as the large European unions had demonstrated. All agreed however, on the importance of "self-organisation of the class", and the role of the assembly in decision making. (167). Moreover, they were united in their opposition to Soviet-style communism, seeing socialism as being essentially about control and the ending of powerlessness. One of the writers who was extremely influential within GOA circles, particularly in Madrid, was Paul Cardan, who formed a sort of "bridge" between the unorthodox Marxism which greatly extended its sphere of influence after '68, the strongest current within the GOA, and classical anarchist thought. In his critique of the Russian Revolution Cardan echoed what the anarchists had been saying since the 1920's. Attacking Trotsky's defence of Russia as socialist, although "degenerated", he says, "Trotsky's error was to confuse juridical forms of property with the actual social content of productive relations. It is in the concrete relations which are instituted between individuals and groups within and for production which give the real structure to society." (168). Like the anarchists, he did not see nationalisation and planning as equalling socialism. Indeed, he reiterated the anarchist notion that Leninism and Marxism reflected capitalist values, as they continued to keep intact the division between intellectuals and workers, leaders and followers. Socialism must be primarily about ending this division, and establishing workers' control throughout society. (169).

Another point of difference between Solidarity and "orthodox" anarchism was the importance Solidarity gave to "Third World" developments, and its emphasis on the imperialist nature of European capitalism. (170).

The consequences of this, Solidarity argued, had been an exacerbation of nationalism in detriment of an international proletarian consciousness. While the need for an international workers' organisation was pointed to, Solidarity's awareness of nationalism as a contemporary phenomenon gave them a flexibility and openness in dealing with the national problem, especially in the Basque provinces, wholly lacking in the orthodox sector. (171).

Given this level of agreement between what could be considered an "up-dated libertarianism" and dissident Marxism, contacts between these two sectors grew throughout the later sixties and early seventies, and were particularly strong around concrete campaigns, such as opposition to the trade union elections of May 1971. However, more lasting coordination continued to be a problem, as this militant explains :

"Well, we managed to coordinate the groups very easily when there was something important happening - for example during the Harry Walker strike and the trade union elections. But after these events, coordination broke down again. Lots of groups would form and then disappear. In some cases they were groups which had just formed, and were composed of people who were "flirting" with politics, and would soon go back to 'normal' living. In other cases they were people who had been active for some time, and were tired out. I myself had to have some time off - it is very exhausting working clandestinely."

Barcelona, 1979.

This failure to coordinate and give a more solid organisational basis to the GOA movement had important consequences for many GOA members, as this militant points out :

"I watched how the GOA almost disintegrated. We had created a dynamic and valid movement but were incapable of giving it a continuity. As time went on, especially as our contacts grew with cenetistas in Perpignan, I became more and more interested in the C.N.T. By 1972 there were more books available on the Spanish

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libertarian movement, and talks given on the collectivisations during the Civil War etc..., and less talk about the '68-type thing. You see, during the Francoist period most of us, libertarians and Marxists, were very anti-syndicalist, i. e. European trade unionism had been 'integrated within the system' etc... But I began to feel, through an understanding of the C.N.T., that perhaps there was a possibility of another type of syndicalism which was revolutionary - though not necessarily the C.N.T., of which I was still sceptical. That was the time when we began to have more contacts with more 'anarchist' groups, such as Solidaridad."

Barcelona, 1979.

Certainly there was a growing process of ideological clarification throughout 1972 and 1973, greatly helped by a clearer notion of C.N.T. history, especially the Civil War collectivisations, as this militant says :

"Of course, I had read quite a bit about the C.N.T., and had regarded it as the most revolutionary organisation in Spain up to the Civil War. But I felt that the collaboration in the Republican government had finished that period of C.N.T. history, and the things I had heard about the exile organisation convinced me that the C.N.T. was dead. But one day I went to a talk in a Church - the talk was given by an old cenetista.

That talk really opened my eyes to the scale of the collectivisation experiment - the greatest experience of workers' self-management in Western-Europe - and left a deep impression on me. Of course I'd known about collectivisation - it was in all the books on the C.N.T. - but had never imagined it to be so widespread or popular. In a sense it showed me the 'other side' of C.N.T. history, its deeply popular appeal, very removed from what the leadership was doing in the corridors of power. It got me thinking. Perhaps there could be an organisation that could link-up with that tradition - after all its strategy and ideals were almost identical to ours - and unite the various currents which were struggling to coordinate their efforts. My contacts with members of Solidaridad helped reinforce these feelings, as they had always been in favour of the reconstruction of the C.N.T., and always stressed this when we met."

Madrid, 1978.

By 1972, the exile organisation was having some success in recruiting members inside Spain, although the overwhelming majority of its militants continued to be older veterans on the whole removed from the struggles of the previous period. (172). The strategy of the exile organisation consisted in reconstructing the F.A.I., the members of which would be staunch syndicalists and committed to the exile leadership's role as guarantor of the movement. (173). Juan Ferrer, foremost leader of the F.A.I. during the reconstruction in the late 70's, dates the creation of the F.A.I. to 1972, although other militants admitted they had been F.A.I. members since 1970. (174). Certainly the exile organisation was becoming increasingly active from 1970, attempting to attract militants to its orbit and thus lay a basis for its continuing role as sole arbiter of the movement's future. (175). In this endeavour it was relatively successful in Madrid, where it managed to recruit a group of workers in the Construction sector, and in Valencia, where a group of older cenetistas in the metal sector succeeded in attracting some younger workers to the C.N.T. (176). On the whole though, its power base inside Spain was slim, with little influence within Catalonia or the workers' movement generally. Indeed, its limited success was almost entirely amongst younger students. (177).

Undoubtedly the growing polarisation taking place in Spanish society during the early seventies, the increasingly violent nature of strikes and the confrontations in the universities, contested by Right-wing extremism, contributed to the spread of anarchist ideas, especially amongst recently radicalised students with little knowledge of C.N.T. history or the exile organisation's role. (178). A student activist at Barcelona University explains the founding of the Catalan Libertarian Student Organisation in the early seventies :

"When I went to University I joined the course committees. That was my first involvement in politics.

They used to hold clandestine seminars, and that's where I started to read Marx and Lenin. But the course committees disintegrated because of the political parties trying to gain control. Myself and some other friends who were sick of all the bureaucratic manipulations (we had to wait till the parties decided that the 'objective conditions were ripe'), got involved in the setting-up of the E.L.C. (179). But although we took a more radical, anti-authoritarian stand, it wasn't an ideological one. What we reacted against was the practice of the course committees. Of course when we set-up the E.L.C. we considered ourselves anarchists, but really we hadn't a clue what that meant. It was a reaction against rather than a definition per se." Barcelona, 1979.

But the E.L.C. was soon ridden with strife, as this militant points out :

"Through the E.L.C. I had my first contacts with the exile organisation, and the national secretary of the 'official' organisation in Spain, and others of his group. The contrast between the lives of these people and mine was just too much. While I was working, studying and politically involved, these people evidently did nothing. That was the time when there were lots of problems in Plataformas, when repression was really hitting it. There was no question of discussing these things with the 'official' lot. There was also the question of their level of political knowledge, which was pretty low. When I got involved in the E.L.C. I began to read a lot of anarchist stuff for the first time. I was very impressed by the Italians - Malatesta, Fabbri and Berneri, and of course I continued to feel that Marxism was important. I couldn't believe how little they knew of any of these people, and the material they gave us was awful. There was no way that I could consider these people as 'leaders', or anything like that - I had little respect for them, either personally or politically. The E.L.C. eventually split into three tendencies - those who were for armed struggle, and who finally, like MIL, moved towards quasi-criminal / personalistic positions - the 'official' group, who were almost all full-time students, and our group, which was 'critical' but had strong links with MIL, who gave us money."

Barcelona, 1979.

The majority of GOA members, and those close to the autonomous movement, were aware of the nature of the exile organisation, and opposed to the idea of reconstructing

the C.N.T. if that meant the inclusion of the exiled leadership. (180). Although seeing the need for an organisation which would unite the various groups, many militants argued for the reconstruction of the C.N.T., or another organisation of a similar type, on the basis of the groups already existing in Spain, independent of the "official" organisation, either in France or Spain, as this militant says :

"Our group in Santa Coloma considered itself anarchist by 1972, and there had certainly been a of the C.N.T., which we thought more highly of now. But we didn't believe that the crowd in Toulouse could offer us anything - in fact if anything they would ruin all that was considered by us valid and revolutionary in anarchism. What did we need them for anyway ? It had been us who had built-up support for anarchism - they had done nothing. It was we who had the real strength. Most of us didn't want anything to do with Toulouse, as we thought little of them. Many of us argued that we could set-up the C.N.T. on our own, around principles agreed to by discussion amongst the groups. Why the C.N.T. anyway ? Of course it had a certain historical significance, but that wasn't always too brilliant anyway - perhaps there might even be an advantage in setting-up a totally new organisation, based on our own forces, and with an ideological orientation of a new type, devoid of the sectarianism of either anarchism or Marxism." Barcelona, 1979.

For Solidaridad, which consolidated its groups in 1972, (181) the historical significance of the C.N.T. was crucial, as this member explains :

"Well, we in Solidaridad were none too happy about including the SI and the old veterans, who would not give us anything either in ideological terms or in terms of trade union militants with experience. But we needed the initials C.N.T. - it still stood for something in Spain - its history of combativeness, the collectivisations - people immediately understood what the C.N.T. meant, its type of syndicalism. As we had the real base here in Spain we thought we would control the process, as we were in a stronger position.

Moreover we thought, naïvely as it turned out, that as anarchists, with a certain ethic, we could resolve the problems, come to some sort of modus vivendi between ourselves and the 'exilio'. In fact, we and Frente Libertario wanted everyone included - even the 'Cinco Puntistas' - to attempt to bring some kind of harmony back into the movement, which we felt was extremely important."

Madrid, 1978.

As a result of this kind of reasoning, many GOA members and their sympathisers were won over to the idea of reconstructing the C.N.T., and a dialogue with the exile organisation. Others, more reluctant, simply agreed to attend the coordination meetings taking place during 1972, which attempted to unite all the anarchist-oriented groups in Catalonia, including a representative from the "official" organisation in Toulouse. (182) <sup>At</sup> these meetings, attended by representatives from most of the libertarian groupings in Catalonia, it was decided that all would participate in the reconstruction of the C.N.T. (183). A similar process began in Madrid at the beginning of 1973, followed shortly afterwards in Valencia. (184).

Some GOA members however, would have nothing to do with an organisation which continued links with the exile organisation, as this militant explains :

"I didn't think that there was any possibility of 'dialogue' with these people, although I recognised the importance of using the initials C.N.T., as Solidaridad pointed out. I'd been to Toulouse years before, and couldn't believe the lack of interest in us here in Spain. They just sat around and chatted about stuff, and held meetings when they felt like it. Their lives were in no way exemplary - they had been totally 'assimilated' within France. If they wanted the leadership of the C.N.T. then I believed they would have to come back here to take it up. But of course they weren't prepared to do it, there was too much at stake. No I believed they would destroy what we'd created, and I was proved correct."

Barcelona, 1979.

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Others, though attending the coordination meetings, did so more out of interest in the attempt, than through genuine conviction, as this Madrid militant says :

"I was quite reluctant, and pessimistic about trying to unite all the different forces of the libertarian movement. But C--- from Solidaridad convinced me in the end that it was the only way to build-up an organisation which could present an alternative to the Workers' Commissions and Communist Party strategy. Myself and the rest of our group were in favour of uniting with Solidaridad, which we believed was the most prepared politically - and the only ones with real trade union experience. Other groups here in Madrid felt the same. But Soli continually refused this, and pushed for us to join in the process of reconstruction of the C.N.T. I must say that I did so with great reluctance, and when confrontation increased between the 'exilio' their allies here in Spain, and the autonomous groups, I gave-up on the C.N.T. and concentrated on work in my neighbourhood, and set-up an Ataneo." (185)  
Madrid, 1979.

The number of militants who withdrew from the reconstruction process is difficult to estimate, as it coincided with a decline in the 'autonomous' movement and Plataformas, due to the stepping-up of repression during 1972. (186). But it would seem that for the whole period from 1972 to 1975 the "defections" were fairly numerous, as this GOA militant says :

"Well obviously some militants weren't convinced about the C.N.T. from the start, and carried on as autonomous groups - there were quite a few of them. But I would say that most of us were prepared to give it a chance, as the lack of some sort of solid organisational basis had contributed to the decline of the 'autonomous' groups, and Plataformas had failed to present a united alternative to the Communist Party

(187). In fact the first 'coordinadora' was fairly successful, and gave us optimism about the possibility of re-launching the C.N.T. I believe that was because the representative from the S.I. was an agreeable guy, and seemed to be sincere about trying to patch-up the differences.

But some of the other types, especially the national secretary here in Spain, were almost impossible to deal with - they were dogmatic and authoritarian - they weren't prepared to concede an inch. I think many more would have given-up if it hadn't been for Solidarity, who continued to argue that we had the strength to dictate the terms, and that these types would be swamped by events once the organisation took off. Still, many members left the coordinadora - those who didn't have the patience to deal with these characters, or who lacked the 'strategic' analysis which Solidarity, and some of us, had acquired vis-à-vis the historical importance of the C.N.T.."

Barcelona, 1979.

It would seem, moreover, that the first serious attempt at coordination during 1972 was successful precisely because the "official" organisation was somewhat overtaken by events, and at a serious disadvantage in terms of members, as this militant confirms :

"I had contacted the S.I. (and Frente Libertario too) while working in France, and had gained their confidence. During 1972 I was contacted by the C.N.T. here in Spain to attend a meeting, arranged by the national secretary and the anarchist student group, Rojo y Negra. At this meeting it was proposed to set-up the local federation in Barcelona. I don't know really who proposed it - perhaps the exile organisation was trying to sound-out the possibilities. They certainly supported the meeting, as the delegate from the defence committee of the S.I. attended. But Rojo and Negra was totally opposed to the idea - they must have realised that it would have had little chance of success, given that there were only a handful of them, while the 'autonomous' groups numbered at least a few hundred. I think that the 'exilio' did its homework, and decided against the idea. After all, Rojo and Negra was the 'exilio's' firmest ally in Barcelona, so I can't see them acting independently of them."

Barcelona, 1979.

The coordination attempts gradually broke-down during 1973 in Catalonia, due, it seems, to the intransigence of the "exilio", who did not want the "Cinco Puntistas" nor Frente Libertario present in the reconstruction. (198), Solidaridad and many GOA members argued for representation of all libertarian tendencies, otherwise the organisation would be hampered by divisions from the start. (199).

On the initiative of Acción Directa, a fairly important group in Zaragoza, a conference was arranged in October, 1973, which attempted to patch-up the differences, and continue with the reconstruction effort. (190). The debate soon centred on the reconstruction process and how it should be carried through, as this militant from Solidaridad explains :

"Well, there were two theories about the reconstruction and how best to carry it out. We in Solidaridad, the rest of the groups from the Central region (Madrid), plus many GOA groups throughout Spain, wanted the 'coordinadora' to be the basis of the new organisation. We believed we should begin to be creating local federations of trade unions, then elect a regional committee and a national committee. The S.I. and some of the groups in Catalonia believed that the 'coordinadora' should work towards the holding of a Congress, where the national committee elected would undertake the reconstruction. Frente Libertario agreed with us, as did Acción Directa, who had worked hard to get the conference held. After this conference we wrote a document which outlined the anarcho-syndicalist alternative, and sent it to all the groups we knew. (191). We proposed to hold a meeting of all the groups who had read and discussed the document, which would, hopefully, serve as a point of unification. I believe this document was quite influential, and was the only thing written by libertarians on the present state of things in Spain. But some 'autonomous' groups reacted negatively to it - they felt it was an attempt on our part to monopolise them. So we asked them to send us their proposals, which only a few of them did. (192). But I believe it was important in contacting groups which had not been included until then, and who saw for the first time some concrete proposals put forward for the reconstruction. As it happened, our idea of establishing 'relation committees' in each locality was taken-up, and served as a basis for the reconstruction."

Madrid, 1978.

The "coordinadora" which emerged from this October meeting proved the most successful yet, especially in Catalonia, although greater contacts were established throughout the regions, particularly by Solidaridad. (193). Political events were important in this renewed organisational effort, as this GOA member explains :

"The whole thing about the transition from Francoism to 'democracy' was very much in the air throughout 1973. Everyone seemed to be organising themselves - Communists, Socialists, 'democrats' and God knows who else. I had been very reluctant about re-launching the C.N.T. until then, but gradually began to feel that we had to organise ourselves too, and the C.N.T. seemed the only organisation that was around for us. But it looked bad after the death of the policeman and the appointment of Carrero - we went through a difficult phase then, not knowing what to expect. (194). But the death of Carrero changed all that - there could be no turning back after that, and we redoubled our efforts at coordination for the next few months."

Madrid, 1979.

Despite this strengthened commitment to the reconstruction, coordination again proved difficult to maintain as both the autonomous groups and the "official" organisation organised meetings separately, and attempted to get increased support for their reconstruction proposal. (195). It would seem too that the exile organisation was acting independently by setting-up its own organisational structure, as this militant says :

"As I said, I had had close links with the 'exilio' for some time, so they contacted me in 1974 to be a member of the national committee which they were setting-up. I was a member of the N.C. for about six months, and it was this experience which ended our relationship. All we ever did was ring each other up and comment on things - we never had any meetings or discussions. I think their intention was to build-up a basis for support here in Spain, so that they could do without the groups, and totally control the whole thing. They did have some success, as I remember meeting more young members at this time. But they never managed to out-number the groups. I can't see how they could have given their total lack of organisation and their ineptitude. They spent a lot of money - during the short time when I was a member of the N.C. they spent about 40,000 pesetas - but they just threw it away, I don't know on what. Anyway, the last straw was during the time that Puig Antich was executed - the S.I. didn't support his defence. That was the end for me - I was disgusted with them."

Barcelona, 1979.

It would seem too that the exile organisation was divided over its approach to the reconstruction process, as this former E.L.C. member points out :

"It was around 1974 when I began to feel that greater organisation was needed, that a new period was about to begin. So I went to Toulouse to see what really went on there. At that time Federica (Montseñy) had given-up the secretariatship and had handed it over to S---- who I got on well with. He was very open and convinced that the C.N.T. must be reconstructed on the basis of the groups inside Spain - he had contacts with Frente Libertario and some workers' groups in Barcelona. He was trying to re-unify the movement, the F.L. and the S.I. groups. He offered our group the leadership of the F.I.J.L. and the C.N.T., which meant we would be responsible for 'leading' and organising the reconstruction. But Federica and her crowd didn't like these moves, and between threats and criticisms, S---- was forced to leave. I broke all my links with the 'exilio' after that, and concentrated exclusively on work within Plataformas."

Barcelona, 1979.

It is difficult to see this bid for power and control by the exile organisation as being 'ideological', as all the members I interviewed who had been offered posts openly declared their Marxist leanings. (196). However, the fact that Puig Antich was not considered an "anarchist" was the reason given by the "exilio" for not defending him. (197). But the Puig Antich execution in March 1974 had disastrous consequences for the coordination efforts, independent of the exilio's attitude to the event, as this GOA member says :

"After the Puig Antich execution there was a real growth of armed activists. Although they didn't actually do much, they saw armed struggle as the only way. This greatly hampered the work of the 'Coordinadora', which actually collapsed soon after. Most of these militants who were for armed struggle were much younger and without much experience as militants. There was a real 'libertarian boom' around 1972/73, and this has lasted till last year (1978). People from Solidaridad, our group and many others opposed this, but it was difficult to get things going. The final blow came when Suarez was kidnapped. (198). The more 'workerist' groups left the 'coordinadora' - they felt they could have nothing to do with this, it had gone too far. This kind of attitude - small groups of youngsters committed to armed struggle - has continued within the C.N.T., and has had the same disastrous effects."

Barcelona, 1979.

The "armed action" thesis was not held solely by younger, inexperienced militants, as this GOA militant, active in the first Workers' Commission in Madrid confirms :

"I considered myself 'very syndicalist', and had always kept clear of any armed talk or action. But I was totally outraged over the execution of Puig Antich, and of course we'd heard of the torture they'd used on other MIL prisoners. I felt - as did many others - that Puig was executed to avenge the assassination of Carrero, and I also heard - through friends of mine in E.T.A. - that they were really stepping-up torture in the Basque country. I just went mad. I'd always argued in favour of a 'strategy', and believed that the trade union movement gained nothing from any connection with arms. But all that went. I just wanted to 'get' some of those bastards. That's when I got involved in planting bombs."  
Barcelona, 1979.

The turn to armed struggle by some groups, although on the whole purely verbal, led to the breakdown once again of the "Coordinadora" in Catalonia. Other regions, such as Madrid and Valencia, were not so affected by this however, and coordination efforts continued. In these regions though, signs of the future confrontation which would seriously affect the consolidation of the organisation were already visible, as this Madrid militant says :

"I was a member of a group in Madrid which was basically activist. We didn't really have much idea of what we were doing, or where we were going politically. Then we began having contacts with Solidaridad around 1973. They organised several meetings, with a lot of groups around the term 'revolutionary syndicalism'. We really didn't know what it meant, but after a lot of meetings, we came to the conclusion that we were for revolutionary syndicalism. Solidaridad was the most prepared politically and indeed we wanted to join Soli, but they refused, and so many of us agreed to work towards the reconstruction. But I remember that from the start of these reconstruction meetings there were heated debates between Soli and the group in Construction, which was the 'exilio' organ here in Madrid. The Construction group was always pushing to have 'C.N.T.' put on pamphlets, which Soli felt was premature. They also accused Soli of being 'reformist' because they concentrated on building-up the trade unions, and didn't believe that the revolution was around the corner. (199). I got a bit tired of all this, and didn't attend many of the meetings after a while."

Madrid, 1978.

In Valencia similar disagreements took place between Solidaridad, the autonomous groups, and the F.A.I. leader Juan Ferrer, as this Valencian militant explains :

"Juan Ferrer and the older C.N.T. veterans, who were very numerous (200), made common cause against Solidaridad and the autonomous groups. It was a weird alliance, as many of the old veterans were incredibly reformist, while the F.A.I. of Ferrer was very 'macho', and inheritor of the F.A.I. revolutionary tradition. But I suppose that both were worried that the autonomous groups and Soli would be too powerful within the organisation, and there were real ideological differences. While Soli and the GOA were very trade union oriented, they also placed great importance on the 'integral' mission of the C.N.T. - personal politics, the neighbourhood struggle, ecology and so on, which the F.A.I. didn't agree with - at least at that time. But I thought it was a bit ironic - that Ferrer, who was first and foremost a Marxist, should ally himself with the most orthodox, and reformist sector of the C.N.T., against those who could be considered 'neo-anarchists'. (201). Perhaps it was a question of power - it certainly seems the most likely explanation." (202).

Valencia, 1978.

These types of disagreements certainly contributed to the breakdown in coordination in these regions, although the lack of concrete struggles around which to mobilise also played its part. The Puig Antich defence campaign, although not so seriously affecting coordination efforts as in Catalonia, did however give way to a more activist phase in Madrid, which led to detentions, and the enforced withdrawal of the groups from the coordination meetings. (203). Moreover, the group in Construction, heartened by the activism of the campaign, withdrew from the relations committee, which it characterised as bureaucratic and reformist. (204). The discussions which Solidarity wished to initiate around the documents therefore never took place, although the unity amongst the groups which the campaign generated proved important. (205). The abstentionist campaign during the trade union elections at the beginning of 1975 did however dramatically change the situation, as this GOA militant says :

"Here in Barcelona the 'coordinadora' which had virtually stopped functioning, got an enormous boost at the time of the trade union elections. The abstentionist campaign of 1971<sup>was</sup> remembered - we felt it had been a success - and we were the main force opposing them again. This served as a cohesive factor - there were close contacts between Soli, the ex-GOA and some GOA in Badalona. We even thought of launching the C.N.T. and bypassing the 'exilio' as we all knew the score."  
Barcelona, 1979.

Another GOA member reiterates :

"Though this 'coordinadora' almost all the groups were unified, especially the most homogenous ones, for example, our GOA group in Santa Coloma were coordinated with MCL and Unión Obrera, while the Plataformas group were practically united with Soli. I think we made out greatest mistake then. We should have continued like this, building-up confidence and working together, especially at the base by setting-up trade unions and recruiting members. We might have gradually broken down some of the problems. For there were problems - each 'leader' was somewhat unwilling to be just a 'member' of an expanded group. But that did get better as time went on, that's why I feel that if we had continued like that we would have avoided many of the problems which beset the C.N.T."  
Barcelona, 1979.

Despite this increased contact between the groups, and a growing commitment to continuous coordination, the relations committee was still beset by problems, exacerbated by the arrival of a recently-constituted group, the Movimiento Comunista Libertario. (206). One of the leading militants of this group gives us some idea of its character :

"Well I had considered myself an anarchist by 1970, and 'went through' the whole anarchist spontaneist thing then. Gradually though, through my contacts with certain types of anarchists here in Barcelona, whom I didn't agree with, I began to seriously study Marxism. I was at the University at the time too, so I worked on it there. I found a clarity of analysis in Marxism which I found totally lacking in anarchism, though anarchism still continued to have very valid things for me - its organisational structure, its ethical stand. Actually, I didn't

see a great difference between anarchism and communism. Both have the same goal, a society without classes, and freedom is only possible without the state. The way towards this is the same - the strengthening of working class organisations and consciousness. We basically agreed with the resolutions of the Zaragoza Congress, at least at that time - the goal of libertarian communism and the need for transitional phases towards it. We tried to demystify libertarian language - especially the whole thing of the transition period. They (i.e. the anarchists) would throw up their arms when we talked about the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' but the anarchist phrase 'committee for the defence of the revolution' means exactly the same thing - that the working class must defend the revolution against its enemies. We also had a very peculiar idea about the 'vanguard'. The vanguard is a vanguard because it is actually in the 'front row' of struggle. Even if one feels that one's position is theoretically correct, if it isn't supported by a large section of the class, then it can't be that theoretically correct ! Theory can only be elaborated within the mass organisation - the 'specific' organisation must be immersed within the mass organisation - that's the only place where a 'correct' strategy can be worked-out. Of course not all members of our group felt the same way about things - some were more anarchist, and accused us of being Leninist, while others were more Leninist than we were. But we all agreed on building-up the trade unions, and working within a mass organisation, in this case, a libertarian one." (207).

Barcelona, 1979.

This group, many members of which were experienced trade unionists (208), quite consciously called itself a "movement" as it believed in the convergence of all libertarian-oriented groups in Catalonia and was committed to the reconstruction of the C.N.T. (209). Indeed, the MCL had very close links with the exile organisation, as this member says :

"It was during 1975 that the 'exilio' offered me the leadership of the F.A.I. - they wanted me to set it up here in Spain. They (i.e. the 'exilio') believed that without the F.A.I. there would be no mass organisation. Although we agreed with the need for a 'specific' organisation, I didn't like the relationship F.A.I. / C.N.T. - it smelt like the relationship between the party and the trade union, which I had long rejected.

A short while later I was offered the leadership of the F.A.I. in Catalonia by Juan Ferrer. You see, we agreed with Ferrer on C.N.T. strategy - he was a syndicalist and we were both worried about 'pasotismo' which was beginning to be a problem. (210). But again I declined, because I couldn't accept the conditions, which were basically to defend traditional principles, and that the 'exilio' should continue to be the rector of the movement. I believed that if the 'exilio' wanted to continue holding the leadership it should return to Spain, or organise itself differently, for example set itself up as a support group to the C.N.T. Why did they offer the leadership of the F.A.I. to me, knowing I was basically a Marxist? Well, I think it was the same with Juan Ferrer, although for different reasons. They needed good militants with links with the working class to build-up the organisation. Myself and others in the group were well-known in working class circles in Barcelona. I suppose too we were easy prey. We had good mobilising and organising powers, but were not expert at political manoeuvres - that's why it was easy when the time came, to liquidate us."

Barcelona, 1979.

It was certainly an "open secret" that the MCL had contacts with the exile organisation, which undoubtedly contributed to the difficulties of coordination, especially with Solidaridad, whom the MCL considered "utterly reformist". (211)  
As a GOA member says, the major stumbling block to better coordination of the groups during 1975 was the continuous confrontation between the MCL and Solidaridad, as he explains :

"I couldn't comprehend why the S.I. had such a hatred for Felix Carrasquer - it didn't seem normal - it didn't seem to be based on anything in particular - especially the level of hatred. It couldn't have been ideological, as some of the old veterans who were from the 'exilio' or their allies here in Spain, were real reformists. But these people really went for Soli. At this time, and during the reconstruction and later, the MCL, in conjunction with Juan Ferrer, were the SI's favourites. It seemed that one of their main tasks at this time was to go for Soli. Many meetings broke-up because the level of discord was so great - nothing could be done."

Barcelona, 1979.

Indeed, as other militants have confirmed, the idea of setting-up the C.N.T. and bypassing the "exilio" at the time of the trade union election campaign floundered because of the problems between the MCL and Solidaridad. (212). Ideological differences certainly played a part, as this GOA militant points out :

"The MCL insisted that certain points of their programme and strategy had to be agreed to in setting-up the organisation. This, of course was opposed by most of the groups, but Soli particularly was against it, as they were very anti-'specific' organisations, in the classical revolutionary syndicalist tradition. They were 'purist' on this."

Barcelona, 1979.

However, this militant and many others believe that personal factors were far more crucial :

"You see, the delegates from Soli and the MCL hated each other's guts. Besides the fact that neither of them were very intelligent, they weren't very friendly types. These personality problems were extremely important. Often two groups with very different political perspectives would coordinate very well, because the delegates got along. This was characteristic of the whole Francoist period - basically relationships were at a personal level, mostly for security reasons. This proved to be a major problem for us when we tried to move away from the whole 'group' thing - which were mostly groups of friends who thought alike - towards a broader, less restrictive type of organisation." (213).

Barcelona, 1979.

Certainly relations between Solidaridad and the MCL improved considerably when both groups changed delegates. (214). Moreover, ideological differences were relegated to the background, as the organisational drive speeded-up, as this militant explains :

"Towards the end of the year (1975), it was evident that Franco, and his regime, would not live much longer - it was only a question of time. Everyone was obsessed

with the organisational question, all the meetings were now taken-up with it. There was a kind of feverish euphoria, which was very contagious. We were all swept along by it, and the problems that were still there - especially the relationship with the 'exilio' all seemed to have been forgotten. It was like we had stopped thinking. For example we didn't take any group decisions about joining the C.N.T., we did so as individuals, although most members of the groups joined. I think this was a serious mistake, as we didn't adopt any kind of strategy vis-à-vis our activity within the C.N.T. So, when the time came, they could eliminate us separately. When we did realise what was happening and started organising ourselves, it was too late." (215)

Barcelona, 1979.

BIBLIOGRAPHY / NOTES

1. O. Alberola/A. Gransac.  
El anarquismo español y la acción revolucionaria. 1961-1974. p.34.
2. Antonio Tellez : Sabaté, Guerrilla extraordinary.  
London, 1974.  
Antonio Tellez : Facerías, La Guerrilla Urbana.  
Paris, 1974.
3. 1956 was the year of the greatest level of strikes and student disturbances since 1947. In 1958, a large strike movement got underway in the Asturian mines, followed by solidarity strikes in Catalonia, and protest actions in the Universities.
4. Interview with Catalanian militant, active in the late 50's. Interviewed in 1979.
5. As Alberola says : "Numerous militants had begun to feel the need to create 'something' outside of the committees which would be able to unite - without distinction of tendencies and even of sectors - militants who were willing to re-activate the anti-francoist movement".  
"El Movimiento Popular de Resistencia" was founded with these aims. In Mexico, the Movimiento Español 59 and the Acción de Liberación Español had been founded to combat "official" anti-francoism, and were composed of libertarian Communists, Socialists and Republicans.  
O. Alberola / A. Gransac : El Anarquismo español y la acción revolucionaria. - 1961 - 1974.  
Paris, 1975, p. 20.
6. I refer primarily to the Frente de Liberación Popular, which at this time was proposing armed struggle. The DRIL (Directório Revolucionario Ibérico de Liberación), was another armed group which had carried-out the spectacular occupation of the Portuguese ship, the Santa María in January 1961.
7. These leaders were R. Santamaría, J. Putado and J. Olaya. Alberola. op. cit.
8. Alberola. op. cit. p. 37.
9. Alberola. op. cit.
10. Valencian Civil War veteran from the "political" sector. Interviewed in 1978.

11. C.M. Lorenzo points out the historical continuity of this phenomenon. As in the 30's the "political reformists" returned to the organisation, without conditions. He believes this has something to do with the "ideological complex" of the "politicals", who still somehow felt that the "apolitical ultras" of the F.A.I. were the authentic voice of the movement.  
C.M. Lorenzo : Los anarquistas españoles y el poder.  
Paris, 1972.
12. This information was given to me by a militant long-resident in France, who returned to Spain at the time of the reconstruction in 1976. Interviewed in 1979. The Esgleas clan, centred around Federica Montseñy, ex-Minister in the Popular Front Government, and her companion, Germinal Esgleas, had set themselves up as an "executive committee" at the end of the Civil War, and had succeeded in building-up a strong power base in France during the years 1939-1960.
13. The STV (Solidaridad de Trabajadores Vascos), was the Basque trade union which had strong links with the U.G.T. and the C.N.T. during the Civil War and the 1940's. The international trade union committee, the CIOLS-CISC, had been pressing for a democratic trade union pact between these trade unions for some time.  
Alberola. op. cit.
14. The Union de Fuerzas Democráticas, set-up in July 1961, was composed of the Izquierda Demócrata-Christiana, Agrupación Republicana Democrática Española, the PSOE and the U.G.T., the Partido Nacionalista Vasco and the STV, and the Accion Nacionalista Vasca. The C.N.T. was consulted about the creation of this anti-francoist alliance, but was later excluded from the pact.  
Alberola. op. cit.
15. The sectors in Venezuela, Marseilles, Castres and Provence were implacably opposed to reunification. The Venezuelan and Provence sectors retired from the Congress.  
Alberola. op. cit.
16. This was the famous D.1. section, which was secret.
17. Alberola. op. cit.
18. Alberola. op. cit. p. 54-55.
19. During June and July, sporadic bomb attacks took place in Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia, against official buildings and banks, believed to have been carried-out by members of the D.1 section.  
Alberola. op. cit.
20. Max Gallo : Historia de la España franquista.  
Paris, 1969.

21. In "Los Atentados Contra Franco", Eliseo Bayo estimates that there were around forty attempts on the life of the dictator, many of them prepared by libertarians.  
E. Bayo : Los Atentados contra Franco.  
Barcelona, 1976.
22. Catalanian militant.
23. During the Republic, battles were waged between the Treintistas, who were in favour of pacts with other groups on the Left, and a curbing of militant strike action, and the F.A.I., who wished to radicalise strike action and bring about the fall of the Republic.
24. Alberola. op. cit.
25. The S.I. (the Intercontinental Secretariat) had agreed to form part of the advisory committee of the international committee of the CIOLS-CISC. This had not been contested by the Esgleas sector, however, who knew and approved of these contacts, until then.  
Alberola. op. cit.
26. Alberola. op. cit.
27. Alberola. op. cit.
28. Alberola. op. cit.
29. As Alberola points out, the "alliance" sector was composed of all the currents of the libertarian movement, with the exclusion of the Esgleasts. But, as he says, they differed over the objectives of this. Some believed that the trade union alliance would solve everything, while others felt that the Alliance was simply a way of compromising the trade unions in a radicalisation of the anti-francoist struggle.  
Alberola. op. cit.
30. As Alberola says : "The reconquest of the leadership posts of the S.I. was only possible because of the abstention of the local federation in Paris, which had agreed prior to the Congress to abstain as a protest against the existence of 'candidates'. Although this was decisive, as it was the largest local federation, there were other pressures and minor manoeuvres - among which was the absence from the congress of the Provence local which was still enmeshed in the unitary conflict - which allowed the 'unconditionals' of Esgleasm to continue speculating with the divisionist threat."  
Alberola. op. cit. p. 117.
31. In a document from the Direccion de Informaciones Generales, from the French Interior Ministry, which was used to round-up FIJL members in September, the FIJL was characterised as having no legal existence in France, and

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- differed from the parent organisation, "which was an anarcho-syndicalist movement which proposed to install democracy and afterwards anarchy in Spain, through syndicalism, and does not approve of violence or terrorism".  
Alberola. op. cit. p. 116.
32. A collection of funds for the recently-executed anarchists, Granados and Delgado, was not allowed so as to avoid the suspension of the congress by the French authorities.  
Alberola. op. cit. p. 124.
33. Alberola. op. cit.
34. The groups in Provence and Venezuela. Other conflicts were aggravated by the actions of the S.I. i.e. Zona Norte and Alto Gerona.  
Alberola. op. cit.
35. The control of these regional committees was decisive for the outcome of the plenary meetings of the S.I., as only regional committee members and S.I. members could attend. They were also decisive in the plenums, which carried-out the functions of a congress, where only those delegations elected in the regional plenums could attend. As Alberola says : "This control was possible thanks to the 'voto nominal' (one vote for each local federation), for although they were, in toto, numerically inferior in militants, the small local federations had more votes in the regional plenums than the larger local federations where 'Esgleat Immobilism' could not manoeuvre with total impunity".  
Alberola. op. cit. p. 131. footnote 2.
36. Alberola. op. cit. p. 166.
37. Moreover, it was close to Provence, which was even <sup>more</sup> supportive.  
Alberola. op. cit.
38. Alberola. op. cit.
39. Alberola. op. cit.

40. These points (literally the "Five Points" group) refer to an agreement signed between the vertical syndicate and a group of cenetistas. The points were :
1. The need to maintain one trade union in which all workers would be automatically affiliated, without political or religious discrimination.
  2. Independence of the workers' trade union vis-à-vis the administration, the government, the parties and the employers.
  3. Participation of the trade unions in the decisions regarding social and economic policy, the Development Plan and control of the firms.
  4. Recognition of the right to strike.
  5. Action in favour of production and consumer cooperatives.
- This group of cenetistas, based in Madrid, were, on the whole, those who supported the monarchic option from 1945 to 1948. They were Lorenzo Iñigo, Eduardo de Guzmán, Enrique Marco Nadal and Gregorio Gallego, and supported by exiles such as Abád de Santillán, Pedro Herrera, Manuel Villar, Jaime R. Magriña and Juan López. C.M. Lorenzo. op. cit.

Lorenzo, like many libertarians, is very scathing in his criticism of this group, who carried-on conversations with the Falange without authorisation of the C.N.T. Other militants I have talked to believe that they did the best they could in very difficult circumstances, and kept some kind of anarcho-syndicalist presence in Spain, which was important at the time of the reconstruction of the organisation, from 1976 to 1979. Interview with former "Cinco Puntista", Eduardo de Guzmán. Madrid, 1978.

41. Alberola. op. cit.
42. A letter of denunciation was issued from the interior C.N.T. in February 1967, which read : "The positions adopted by certain regional groups in the interior and by the S.I. itself, has meant that in this phase it has been practically impossible to totally integrate the C.N.T. at a national level. This represents not just a transcendental historical error, but also a bad service to the C.N.T.'s cause itself, and for the immediate and real interests of the Spanish people." Alberola. op. cit. p. 212.
43. Alberola. op. cit. p. 181.
44. Interview with an AST militant who had considered himself a Christian at the time. He admits being very influenced by the magazine, and the debates which it engendered. The AST was a trade union organisation founded by the Jesuits in 1964, and which finally became the Organización Revolucionaria de Trabajadores in 1970, and evolved towards Maoism. However, during the intervening years, many of its members were very influenced by anarcho-syndicalism, and many never joined the party founded along Leninist lines.

45. Alberola. op. cit
46. Alberola. op. cit
47. This denunciation was uttered despite a report presented to the exile organisation by Edo from interior C.N.T., which showed its support for this action.  
Alberola. op. cit.
48. Max Gallo. op. cit.
49. Alberola, I believe, overestimates the importance of these groups in Spain at the time. Most militants I interviewed agreed that they were very few in number in 1965, as most of the groups were based in France.  
The "Old Guard" were those in the interior who opposed the actions of the exiled leadership, but were sceptical of the youth, especially their very heterodox ideology.
50. García Calvo was dismissed from his post in 1965, together with lecturers, Aranguren and García Vercher, for joining a peaceful demonstration.
51. The Situationist International had its origins in the Literary Movement, founded in 1947, which attempted to purge art of its commercial tendencies, and renew its subversive functions. In 1957, it suffered a split to its left, and, with other artists, founded the Situationist International, which was more concerned with social issues. It has been widely known for its critique of the "Society of Spectacle", a phrase coined by Guy Debord for alienated consumerism characteristic of advanced capitalism. Indeed, its major aim was to free alienated man for "play", and end the division between imposed work and passive leisure. Ideologically it was a "mixed bag", using Marxist analysis, particularly Marx's work on the Commune, but with frequent references to Bakunin and "Utopian" socialists such as Fourier. In favour of generalised selfmanagement, it believed the ending of alienation only possible with the founding of workers' councils, elected in assemblies and with very limited powers. Indeed, their main criticism of the workers' council experience of the past was the separation between the delegate councils and the "assemblies of electors, in such a way that the first level of a 'council' was situated at a superior level to these assemblies. Here we find a principle of separation which can only be overcome by making these general assemblies places for all revolutionary proletarians, the council itself, where any type of delegation must obtain at any moment its power (mandate)."  
Rene Reisel : I.S. no 12 September 1969 In Textos Situationalists Sobre los Consejos Obreros.  
Madrid, 1977.

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Situationist practice in the universities centred on critiques of Leninism, often highly satirical, as this sympathiser explains : "Well, we would stage a meeting along Leninist lines, and dress-up for the part - one of us would represent the 'serious' militant with the customary 'clean look' while another would be the 'Ché' type, with loads of papers ~~under~~ his arm. At the end, instead of pamphlets, we would distribute lottery tickets, and dance and sing. It was great fun".  
Interviewed in 1979.

52. "Acrata" was the name given to philosophical anarchists, historically associated with the Montseñy / Urales group. They were usually anti-syndicalist, and concerned principally with education and publishing. It gained coinage during these years to separate those who were primarily concerned with intellectual work, and often living an alternative life-style, from those involved in trade union work, or the neighbourhood struggle.
53. This militant claims that at the height of the movement, in 1967, it only had around 30 to 40 sympathisers. Freddy and Alicia, in "Apuntes sobre el anarquismo historico y el neo-anarquismo en España", (in El Movimiento Libertario Español, Paris, 1974), also agree that it was an "ultra-minoritarian" movement.
54. The Federación Sindical de Trabajadores, was founded in 1958 by militants from the HOAC. The Solidaridad Obrera Católica (later Catalans) was founded in Catalonia in 1956 by Christians from both the HOAC and the JOC.
55. The C.N.T. member in question, like many others I interviewed, had no dealings with the "official" organisation, and worked "anonymously" in the firms.
56. A. Peña has shown the development of dissident Falangism and its importance in the growth of groups to the left of the Communist Party in "Veinticinco años de luchas estudiantiles".  
Horizonte Español, Vol. 2 Paris, 1966.
57. In all my interviewing, I did not encounter one single militant who had ever considered himself a Falangist.
58. One militant in particular had been deeply impressed by a Falange supervisor at work, who treated the workers with respect, and who continually attacked the regime. Many others had similar experiences, which, they said, had allowed them some scope for political debate in their firms.
59. The overwhelming majority (85 %) of militants I interviewed from anti-francoist backgrounds had not known of their parent's' political involvement during the Civil War until they were in their teens or later.

60. Interview with former JOC leader, later one of leading militants in the autonomous movement within Plataformas. Interviewed in 1979 - Barcelona.
61. El Pais (magazine section, 21 July 1978.)
62. Former JOC student leader, later FLP leader at Madrid University, from 1958 to 1963.
63. Barcelona student who remained an "independent" until he joined an "autonomous" group at the end of the sixties.
64. Former HOAC student leader, later FLP leader, who would become an "autonomous" member in the late sixties.
65. Barcelona worker, later member of the "autonomous" movement in the early 70's. Interviewed in 1979.
66. During the late fifties and early 60's the Communist Party succeeded in attracting many good working class militants, which laid the basis for its worker organisation which would be crucial in consolidating the Workers' Commissions.  
As we have seen in the previous chapter, many groups participated in the founding of Comisiones in 1964 - members of the FLP, the FST, the UTS, Christians and independent Socialists, alongside members of the Communist Party.
- 67; Militant from the Workers' Commissions in Madrid, who become a member of an autonomous group in the late sixties.
68. Julio Sanz Oller : Entre el fraude y la esperanza. Las comisiones obreras de Barcelona. Paris, 1972. p. 125.
69. Interviews with union militants active in the Barcelona Comisiones during these years. Barcelona, 1979.
70. S. Oller. op. cit. p. 121.
71. S. Oller. op. cit.  
Interview with ex-POR member in 1979 in Barcelona.
72. Union Sindical Obrera, a trade union of Christian origin founded in 1964, would achieve considerable importance later in the 1970's.
73. S. Oller op. cit.  
Sanz Oller, whom I talked to in 1979, was the Barcelona worker's companion (interview above) within the FOC at this time.

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74. S. Oller. op. cit.
  75. Ex-jurado de empresa in a Metal firm from Comisiones, later a member of the "autonomous" movement in the 1970's.
  76. The split in 1967 in Barcelona was led by several workers' leaders and a member of the executive committee. Originally a dispute over money - the Communist Party accused two members of robbing the till - it developed into an ideological battle, as the newly-constituted party contested the CP's legalist strategy, and attracted much of the radical opposition present within the Commissions at this time.
  77. This was a counter-assembly held after the CP had held an assembly packed with their supporters and sympathisers which unanimously agreed to the holding of the demonstration.  
S. Oller. op. cit.
  78. S. Oller. op. cit.
  79. Antonio Sala / Eduardo Durán : Critica de la izquierda autoritaria en Cataluña. 1967 - 1974.  
Paris, 1975.
  80. In January 1967, the largest demonstration organised by Comisiones was held since the Civil War. Students occupied Madrid university in solidarity. On October 27th many students were detained during the demonstration. The "suicide" of Rafael Guijarro, in February 1967, helped to spread protest to universities previously unaffected.  
  
I received the impression, from several student leaders and students, that Spain had witnessed its "68" in 1967, when non-stop political discussion, occupations and sit-ins, which would characterise the Paris'68 movement, were an every day occurrence.
  81. S. Oller op. cit.
  82. S. Oller. op. cit.
  83. Interviews with former FOC militants,  
Barcelona, 1979.
  84. Guy Hermet : Los Comunistas en España.  
Paris, 1972.
  85. S. Oller. op. cit.
  86. Interview with "Que Hacer" member,  
Barcelona, 1979.

87. S. Oller. op. cit. p. 198.
88. S. Oller. op. cit.
89. S. Oller. op. cit.
90. Interview with "Que Hacer" member.  
Barcelona, 1979.
91. This was the case with the CP (I), but more successfully  
Bandera Roja, a recently-founded Marxist-Leninist group.  
Interview with "Que Hacer" member.  
Barcelona, 1979.
92. Former FOC leader, later "Que Hacer" founding member.  
Interviewed in 1979.
93. Interview with former FOC militant.  
Barcelona, 1979.
94. Interview with ex-CP (I) member, later C.N.T. leader.  
Barcelona, 1979.
95. S. Oller describes the kidnapping and torture of the  
leader of the opposing faction, whose screams led neighbour:  
to call the Civil Guard. Although armed, the kidnapers  
put up no resistance to the police.  
S. Oller. op. cit.
96. José Maravall : Dictatorship and political Dissent:  
Workers and Students in Franco's Spain.  
London, 1978.  
The mass democratic student union, the S.D.E., was  
disbanded in 1969, due to repression and internal dissent.
97. S. Oller. op. cit.
98. Some of the militants I interviewed put the circulation  
at around 600, while others said it was in the region  
of 400.
99. The meeting, which took place in June 1970, was an attempt  
to unite the existing Commissions in Barcelona. The  
three Commissions - the national / local, which was  
dominated by the CP, the FOC, and the Plataformas group  
of independents. Seven political groups were also present,  
but unity was not agreed.  
Interview with militant from Plataformas, 1979.
100. FAESSA, a metal firm in Barcelona, employed around 1,000  
workers. It abstained during the trade union elections  
in 1971.
101. Manuel Castells, in "Ciudad, Democracia y Socialismo",  
estimates that 53 % of families live in inadequate  
housing, either because the buildings have physically  
deteriorated, are too small, or lack basic services  
i.e. water, electricity, drainage or access. In 1974,  
45,000 shacks still existed in Madrid, while only 60 %

of the children attended school. In terms of medical care, 20,000 hospital beds were lacking in 1974. As Castells points out, in the southwest of Madrid, where 1,500,000 inhabitants live, workers spend two hours journeying to Madrid to work. As he says, the crisis was not inherited from the past, as 37 % of the housing in Madrid was constructed in the sixties, and has been a result of the unfettered speculation which has taken place.

Manuel Castells. op. cit.  
Madrid, 1977.

102. Pegaso is a large metallurgy firm in Barcelona, which employs some 2,500 workers.
103. Member of Santa Coloma autonomous group, formerly member of the CP (I).
104. Member of autonomous group in Plataformas. Interviewed in 1979.
105. Organización Revolucionaria de Trabajadores, formerly the A.S.T., had its main base within the Workers Commissions in Madrid. Smaller and less orthodox in Barcelona, it had collaborated within "Que Hacer" and later "Círculos". After its conversion to Maoism in 1970, the organisation entered into a prolonged crisis, with expulsions and faction fighting which finally led to a split within the organisation in 1971.  
S. Oller. op. cit.  
Interview with one of the founding members of "Que Hacer" and "Círculos".  
Barcelona, 1979.
106. The MIL had collaborated briefly with ETA, at the beginning of 1971 and the CP (I) in 1970 - 1971.  
Telesforo Tajuelo : El MIL Puig Antich y Los Gari.  
Paris, 1977.
107. This was the "Diccionario del Militante Obrero", edited by the "exterior" group of Nuestra Clase.
108. Undoubtedly some of the writers published by the MIL were not known in GOA circles, such as Belazs and Ciliga. Other writers, such as Cardan however, reached similar conclusions about the nature of the Soviet Union, and the need for a socialism which was based on self-management.
109. Felix Morrow : Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain.  
New-York, 1974.
110. Ciliga, politbureau member of the Yugoslav Communist Party, was part of the Trotskyist opposition in the twenties. Imprisoned by Stalin in 1927, he wrote his only work, "Lenin and the Russian Revolution" in gaol.  
Tajuelo. op. cit.

111. As Tajuelo points out, in Belazs' book "After Capitalism what will follow?", a quote from Trotsky, written a year after the founding of the Fourth International, in 1939, was used by MIL to demonstrate that Spanish Trotskyists have not understood their mentor. "If, despite all appearances, during the present war or immediately after, the October revolution does not find its continuation in the advanced countries, indeed, if on the contrary the proletariat sees itself rejected everywhere then we would have to undoubtedly revise our conception of the actual epoch and its motive forces. And the question would not be about what label to place on the Soviet Union or the Stalinist gang, but how to view the world historical perspective for the next decades and perhaps for the next centuries. Have we reached the epoch of world revolution, or the epoch of totalitarian bureaucracy?"  
Tajuelo. op. cit. p. 75.
112. The insurrection of May 1937 in Barcelona, was an attempt, by the C.N.T. and POUM forces, to halt the CP's rise to power. The C.N.T. / F.A.I. leadership in Valencia called on the insurgents to lay down their arms, and prevent a war within the Civil War. It was after May that the counter-revolution really got underway.
113. The MIL, like most of the GOA, were in favour of the establishment of workers' councils, along the lines suggested by Pannekoek.  
Tajuelo. op. cit.
114. In an interview with a member of "Que Hacer", he said that a few "independents" had moved closer to anarcho-syndicalist positions.  
Barcelona, 1979.
115. Gómez Casas' : "Historia del Anarcosindicalismo Español". was first published in 1969.
116. "Espoir" was a newspaper published by the exile organisation in France (Toulouse).
117. This is the attitude which S. Oller also holds in Entre el Fraude y la Esperanza.  
op. cit.
118. Frente Libertario, a group which took its name from the magazine published in July 1969, were militants who had either been expelled by the C.N.T. in Toulouse, or had distanced themselves from the "official" organisation because of the nature of this. Composed of militants from many different French localities, their centre however was based in Paris. In favour of a reconciliation between all factions of the libertarian movement, their magazine was founded with this overwhelming aim.

119. The attitude of the exile organisation towards young militants coming from Spain is confirmed in Albert Meltzer's article : C.N.T. Lo que muere contra lo que nace, in *El Movimiento Libertario Español*. Paris, 1974.
120. I have interviewed several militants who were sent on their way because they were not considered "authentic" anarchists.
121. Cipriano Mera had been the leader on the Madrid front during the Civil War, and known for his attempts to organise C.N.T. battalions along lines which would compete efficiently with the Communists. He was leader of the C.N.T. brigade who helped Casado in the coup against the Communist Party before the end of the Civil War.
122. Alberola. op. cit.
123. Alberola. op. cit.
124. Fernando Gómez Peláez : De 'Soli' a 'Frente Libertario' Publicaciones libertarias en exilio. p. 132. In *El Movimiento Libertario Español*. Paris, 1974.
125. Interview with a Frente Libertario supporter, who wrote for the journal in the early '70's. Barcelona, 1979.
126. This took place principally in Madrid, Valencia, Asturias and Seville, although there was some growth in the Basque provinces and Galicia. Zaragoza, former stronghold of the C.N.T., also witnessed the growth of autonomous groups in the early '70's. Interviews with GOA and Solidaridad members, 1978 & 1979.
127. Trade union elections were due to be held in 1969, but postponed till 1971. S. Oller. op. cit.
128. This process of "assimilation" was not an isolated problem, as the CP claimed. S. Oller, a leading militant in the Comisiones in Barcelona, says it happened in all the large metallurgy firms and in many of the textile firms in Barcelona. The Communist Party's solution to this problem was to elect the most "militant" comrades. S. Oller. op. cit.
129. S. Oller, op. cit.  
S. Ellwood : *The Working Class under the Franco Regime. in Spain in Crisis.*  
P. Preston Ed.  
London, 1976.

130. In Barreiros (Chrystler), Standard and Marconi in Madrid, there was a 60 % abstention rate. In the Basque country, Altos Hornos de Bilbao and the Astilleros de Sestao, 77,7 % abstention was registered. General Eléctrica in Galindo, 92 %, Babcock-Wilcox 98 % and Firestone 90 %. In Navarre, the general abstention rate was 70 %. In Barcelona, Phillips, Miniwatt, Harry-Walker Faessa, Maquinista, Indo-Stilock, Pirelli, Roca, Macosa and other large firms registered abstentions above 50 %. Although the official statistics showed a 84,5 % voting rate, this ignored the percentage of votes left blank. The study by the HOAC showed that amongst 250,000 workers there were 50 % blank or void votes.  
S. Oller. op. cit.
131. As José Maravall points out (and S. Oller confirms) in all the important struggles since these elections the principal demand was for the resignation of the "enlaces" and "jurados" and recognition of the commission elected by the workers.  
José Maravall. op. cit.  
S. Oller. op. cit.
132. Laminacion de Bandas, in the Basque provinces, a five month long strike occurred in 1967, which ended in victory for the employers. The strikers wrote an account of this struggle in "Nuestra Huelga". In 1968, another long strike at Blansol was similarly without political leadership, and was carried-out by a unitary commission elected in assembly.
133. The coordination at this time was mostly at a personal level, between the GOA group in Santa Coloma and the GOA group within Plataformas. Some contacts were also established with other neighbourhood groups throughout Barcelona. Interviews with GOA members.  
Barcelona, 1979.
134. Macosa was a firm known for its combativeness before the Civil War, and had always been a C.N.T. stronghold. It was one of the first firms to go on strike in 1962, and tension had been continuous since then.  
S. Oller. op. cit.
135. As S. Oller points out, the political groups has shown little interest in the strike, as they could not "claim it as their own".  
S. Oller. op. cit. p. 258.
136. Apparently this had led to the hiring of many young "proletarianised" students and some worker militants. Indeed, there were representatives from most of the political groups working in Harry Walker.  
Interview with GOA member, active during the Harry Walker strike. Interviewed in 1979.

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137. Interview with GOA member who was on the support committee for Harry-Walker. This committee contacted workers in France and Italy who were part of the motor accessory trust of Harry-Walker, and got them to agree to boycott the firm in Barcelona.
- The Harry-Walker's strikers won their case in the Labour Magistrature, and went back to work on the 5th. of February. Those sacked however were not re-admitted although they were indemnised. A wage rise and better bonuses were granted, and the workers guaranteed better treatment, while temporary contracts, one of the main demands of the strikers, were discontinued.  
S. Oller. op. cit.
138. Article 18 of the Fuero de los Españoles (the Spanish Charter), forbid the holding of meetings and was used to round-up workers' leaders and members of the political opposition. The clandestine trade unions estimated that around 5,000 were detained between December 1970 and June 1971.  
Max Gallo. op. cit.
139. This occurred in 1941, when the employers returned to take back their firm. The workers resisted, and this led to the militarisation of the firm and the execution of workers. Despite this, the strike lasted ten days.  
S. Oller. op. cit.
140. The Santa Coloma group now had some fifty to sixty members and sympathisers. Other groups, such as the GOA in Plataformas, had around sixty five. The pamphlets published by MIL just after the Harry-Walker strike were : "Europa Salvaje" (Jan 1971) - "La Lucha Contra la Repression" (Mar. 71) - "Proletariado y Organizacion" by Cardan (April 71) and "Como Luchar Contra el Cronometraje" (April 1971). A pamphlet written at the time of the trade union elections, "Boicot a las Elecciones Sindicales" was written by the MIL, without the collaboration of the workers' section.  
Interview with GOA member, later on the support committee for Puig Antich.  
Barcelona, 1979.
141. A military trial for sixteen ETA members began in Burgos in December 1970. Six death sentences and more than seven hundred years of imprisonment were called for.
142. ETA's armed actions increased dramatically from the end of 1971 and would continue at a high level during 1972 and 1973.
143. This militant had been at a workers' technical training college in Madrid in 1968, but didn't finish because of lack of money.  
Interviewed in 1979.

144. Many GOA members I talked to had lasting friendships with ETA militants, who sometimes stayed in their homes when they were in Barcelona.
145. The strike of El Ferrol began in March 1972, and led to the wounding of twenty three workers and the killing of two.
146. Tajuelo. op. cit.  
Interviews with GOA members who had known some of the MIL members through working with them in "Que Hacer" and "Círculos".  
Barcelona, 1979.
147. Some GOA members I talked to believed that a call for abstention was too much for some workers, especially those in small, less combative firms. A call for blank votes, or for fictitious characters would have been a better strategy in these cases. As S. Oller shows, workers in some firms voted for Raphael, or Cassius Clay.  
S. Oller. op. cit.
148. Tajuelo. op. cit.
149. Interview with GOA member who was part of the external support committee for the MIL in France in 1972. The MIL was dissolved in August 1973, and Puig Antich, one of its members, executed in March 1974.
150. As a Santa Coloma GOA member said, although numerous pamphlets were distributed, most of the campaign was launched by discussions in bars, cafes, markets and barber shops.  
Interviewed in 1979.
151. S. Oller. op. cit.  
Interviews with Santa Coloma militants in Barcelona, 1979.
152. Particularly trade unionists from the FST, the UTS, who now joined the autonomous movement. There were also independent socialists, Christians and older C.N.T. members involved. Interview with member of Madrid autonomous group, formerly FST member.  
Madrid, 1978.  
Opposition to Communist Party strategy within the Workers' Commissions in Madrid would grow later, after Franco's death.
153. This was a pamphlet outlining the revolutionary syndicalist alternative, "En Defensa del Sindicalismo Revolucionario". 15 July 1968.

154. Felix Carrasquer wrote a book on the Aragon experience, and the school for militants which he helped found "La Escuela de Militantes de Aragon". Barcelona, 1978.  
Although blind, Felix Carrasquer was secretary of the Catalan regional committee in 1944, at the time when the C.N.T. reached its highest organisational level of the decade.
155. One of the leading Solidaridad militants in Madrid, whom I interviewed in 1978, had stayed at this commune and had been very enthusiastic about the experience. Indeed, it had helped convince him of the importance of personal politics, and the need for a libertarian alternative in Spain.
156. Indeed, they even refused to give themselves a name. Solidarity was the name of the magazine they published.
157. Most of their publications contained historical documents which related to the revolutionary syndicalist tradition within the C.N.T., such as the experience of the constitution of Solidaridad Obrera in 1908, an example of the non-sectarian origins of the organisation, which affiliated all workers regardless of their political or religious preferences. They also concerned themselves with concrete proposals vis-à-vis trade union work in firms, security norms etc... Influenced, it would seem, by the "municipalist" movement of Rudolf Rocker, they proposed the election to local government posts when the anarcho-syndicalists were assured a majority. This indeed occurred in the local elections of post-Francoism, when some former Solidaridad members became mayors of villages.
158. "Un análisis libertario del capitalismo". Solidarity pamphlet, 1969.
159. This caused great friction during the reconstruction, in both Madrid and Barcelona. This nineteenth century flavour can be seen in a series of romantic novels written by F. Montseny.
160. Interview with Félix Carrasquer. Barcelona, 1979.
161. This can be seen quite clearly in their "Libertarian analysis of Capitalism", (1969) when they describe the development of mercantile capital, and "primitive accumulation", and their insistence that the workers' movement has to be studied within an historical perspective.
162. From their pamphlet, "Libertarian analysis of Capitalism", 1969.

163. Pierre Clastres, an anthropologist, in his study "La Sociedad contra el Estado" (Society against the State) concludes : "When in society, when economics can be considered an autonomous and defined area, when the activity of production is converted into alienated labour, counted and imposed by those who benefit from the fruits of this labour, then society is no longer primitive. It has been converted into a society divided between those who dominate and those who are dominated, into bosses and subjects, and it has stopped exercising that which it destined to kill it : Power and Respect for Power. The greatest division of society, that which is fundamental to all the rest, including the division of labour, is the new vertical arrangement between the base and the summit, it is the great political rupture between those who have the force, be it military or religious, and those who are submitted to this force. The political relationship of power proceeds and engenders the economic relationship of exploitation. Before it is economic, alienation is political, power comes before work, the economic derives from the political and the emergence of the state determines the appearance of classes."  
P. Clastres. op. cit.  
Barcelona, 1978.
164. One of the Solidaridad members in Madrid had done a psychology MA on small group behaviour, which concluded that it was only within small groups that power relationships could be broken down.  
Interviewed in 1978.
165. As we shall see, the "orthodox" sector was outraged at this alleged "reformism", as they argued that negotiations for the collective contract should be ignored.
166. The revolutionary syndicalist tendency had historically called for pacts with other working class organisations, and a dialogue with Marxism. They were opposed to what they considered to be the premature revolutionary tactics of the F.A.I., which, moreover they felt acted in a way similar to a political party. They advocated federations of industry to increase the trade union power of the C.N.T., and thus place it in a position from which to launch the revolution. Workers, they argued, had to be "prepared" for self-management, and instruction should be given in all matters concerning the firm. Indeed, Peiró set-up a school within his trade union for this purpose.
167. There were, however, some differences of opinion over the role of the assembly, both within Solidaridad and the GOA. Some militants I talked to believed that the assembly could also be "manipulated" by goodorators, as they had seen it happen. Others, such as Félix Carrasquer, were, however, extremely enthusiastic, believing it to be the most democratic form of decision making.  
Interviewed in 1978 and 1979.

168. Paul Cardan : Conceptions and Programme of Socialism or Barbarity. Cyclostated copy from an autonomous group.
169. Cardan. op. cit.
170. Solidaridad publication : "Libertarian Analysis of Capitalism", 1969.  
The orthodox sector in its publications ("Espoir, Cenit, Solidaridad Obrera etc...) would simply denounce regimes, such as those in Angola and Mozambique, because the revolutions had been "statist" and carried through by a ruling political party.
171. The "orthodox" sector in Toulouse gave little space to the nationalist problem, seeing it as being easily resolved by the federalist solution. This would cause problems, as we shall see, in Catalonia during the reconstruction. (The only work I know of which deals with nationalism is Fidel Miró's "Cataluña, los Trabajadores y el Problema de las Nacionalidades" (La Solución Federal) written by a Mexican exile. Ed. Mexicanos Unidos. 1967.
172. In interviews with those sympathetic to the exile organisation, I found, with some exceptions, that they were either older militants, many of them Civil War veterans, or very young militants with little political experience.
173. These were the conditions put to members who had been approached by the exile organisation when they attempted to set-up the F.A.I. Interviewed in 1978 and 1979.
174. Interview with Juan Ferrer, Valencia, 1978, and two F.A.I. members who said that their first visits to Toulouse, when they had joined the F.A.I., had been in 1970.
175. Many militants have testified to the fact that they met more younger "official" members in the early '70's, especially after 1972. In interviews with those approached by the exile organisation, they all agreed that the conditions put to them were to abide by traditional principles and swear loyalty to the leadership in Toulouse.  
Interviewed in 1978 and 1979.
176. Interview with F.A.I. member in the Construction trade union, Madrid, 1978.  
Interview with a metal worker in Valencia who had been impressed by older cenetistas in his firm, and joined the "official" C.N.T. in 1970.
177. This was the impression I received from interviews with GOA and other autonomous group members. An older "official" C.N.T. member admitted to me that this was indeed the case.  
Madrid, 1978.  
Barcelona, 1979.

178. An older C.N.T. veteran I interviewed in 1979 said that he couldn't believe how little these younger students knew of C.N.T. history or practice, and they were little interested in syndicalism. He saw these members as essentially "anti-authoritarian".  
Barcelona, 1979.
179. Estudiantes Libertarias de Cataluña. This organisation was launched by the anarchist student group, Rojo y Negra.
180. Most GOA and other autonomous group members had come in contact with "official" members, either in France or Spain, during their years of political involvement.
181. This consolidation effort was launched by the publication of a document, which was circulated to sympathetic groups throughout Spain. The document was agreed to by all the groups. "Bases Estructurales de Nuestro Sindicalismo", published in October 1972.
182. Interviews with several GOA members and sympathisers in Madrid and Barcelona, 1979.
183. Groups present at this meeting were : the GOA groups from Barcelona, Solidaridad, an Education group (the Catalan "Esplai"), Opción Libertaria (a group formed by David Urbano which published a magazine in 1971 of the same name), a group of workers from Vic, port workers from Barceloneta, the student group Rojo y Negra, and various individual libertarians. Interview with GOA member in Santa Coloma, 1979.
184. The coordination attempts in Madrid were more difficult and halting, due in part, to the much smaller scale of the autonomous movement here. When one or two delegates didn't attend, it almost wrecked the "coordinadora". Similarly, the confrontations between the Construction sector, supporters of the "exilio", and Solidarity had greater resonance within a smaller group. The process was somewhat similar in Valencia.
185. Interview with a member of an autonomous group in Madrid, 1979.  
An "Ataneo" is a centre which has a library and sometimes a café. The ataneos also concern themselves with neighbourhood problems, and campaigns are often launched from them. Moreover, they often publish leaflets, paint posters etc...
186. The increase in strikes, which were often violent, as in El Ferrol, and the confrontations in the universities, were contested by stepped-up repression during 1972.

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187. A series of splits took place during 1972 in Plataformas, which set-up new "grupusculos" among whom were Círculos de Obreros Comunistas, the OIC, and Círculos de Obreros Comunistas Autogestionarios.
  188. Interviews with several GOA members present at the coordination meetings, 1979.
  189. Interview with Solidaridad member, Madrid, 1978. There seemed to be some disagreement within Soli over this. Some of the younger members I interviewed felt that the older veterans should not be included. The older members of the group however, believed that the organisational divisions had to be overcome. Their criteria was finally accepted.
  190. Frente Libertario and some GOA members were also involved in proposing this meeting.
  191. Although dated January 1974, it was written in November/December 1973.
  192. Proposals were written by the autonomous groups Academia, which agreed with the anarcho-syndicalist perspective of Soli, and the group Usera, which fiercely attacked syndicalism and urged the creation of a purely anarchist organisation.
  193. Better contacts were established with Valladolid, Seville, Cadiz, Alcoy and Asturias.
  194. A policeman was killed by FRAP on May Day, 1973. Carrero was appointed head of government in June of the same year.
  195. Interviews with autonomous group members in Madrid, GOA in Barcelona, Soli in Madrid and Barcelona, F.A.I. member, Valencia, and "official" C.N.T. members in Madrid and Valencia. 1978/1979.
  196. This was the case with the former ELC member, the militant who was on the national committee in 1974, and F.A.I. leader, Juan Ferrer. Interviewed in 1978/1979.
  197. This was the explanation given to militants who contacted them during the Puig Antich defence campaign. Interviewed in 1979.
  198. On the 3rd of May 1974, Angel Baltasar Suarez, director of the Bank of Bilbao in Paris, was kidnapped by the GARI (Grupos de Acción Revolucionaria Internacionalista) a group formed in France for support of MIL prisoners. Tajuelo. op. cit.

199. Solidaridad believed that the next period of Spanish history would see the consolidation of some sort of bourgeois democracy.
200. Valencia had historically been one of the main bases of support for the Treientistas, and had a tradition of good relations with the U.G.T., with which it had often concluded pacts. These older veterans formed a group in Valencia, and their opinions on the workers' movement were published in "Conversaciones Sobre el movimiento Obrero". Entrevistas con militantes de la C.N.T. ed. Isidro Guardia Abella. Madrid, 1977.
201. In my interview with Juan Ferrer in 1978, he admitted having been a member of a number of Trotskyist groups, the last one being the Liga Comunista. His method of analysis was clearly Marxist, and it was rumoured that he was an "entrism" within the C.N.T.
202. Interview with F.A.I. member in Valencia, who admitted he was an "entrism" from a Trotskyist group. 1978.
203. Interview with Solidaridad member. Madrid, 1978.
204. Interview with a leading member of the Construction group in Madrid, 1978.
205. I refer here to the document issued by Solidarity in January 1974, which Solidarity hoped would form the basis for the reconstruction. The two proposals from two other groups were also included. As most of the groups participated in the Puig campaign, many contacts were established between them, some of them for the first time.  
Interviews with members of autonomous groups in Madrid, 1979.
206. The MCL was set-up in 1974, shortly after the execution of Puig Antich.
207. Interview with a leading member of the MCL, Barcelona, 1979.  
Interestingly, many members of this group were in their late twenties or early thirties, and had "gone through" a more "anarchist" phase earlier.
208. They were important in Textiles, Transport and Education where some of them later, on their expulsion from the C.N.T., became leaders of the Workers' Commissions in Barcelona.  
Interview with member of autonomous group. Barcelona, 1979.

209. This was the majority tendency within the MCL. Later though, many members resisted disbanding their group while within the C.N.T.  
Interview with MCL members.  
Barcelona, 1979.
210. "Pasotismo" was a term used to describe a phenomenon which coincided with the end of Franco's rule.  
"Pasotas" were characters who "didn't give a damn", usually smoked dope, dressed dirtily, and had other aspects in common with the hippy movement (which somewhat passed Spain by), in Western Europe and America in the sixties.
211. Interviews with MCL members.  
Barcelona, 1979.
212. Interview with GOA member, former ELC member, and other autonomous group members in Barcelona, 1979.
213. This was confirmed in my interviews with the groups involved in the reconstruction.
214. Interview with GOA members, former ELC member, Solidaridad and MCL members.  
Barcelona, 1979.
215. Member of GOA group in Plataformas, interviewed in 1979. Individual decisions were taken amongst the GOA groups, but Solidaridad and the MCL continued in some form of loose organisation for some time.

CHAPTER 5.

The Reconstruction of the C.N.T. During the Political  
Transition to Democracy, 1976-1979.

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE C.N.T. DURING THE  
POLITICAL TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

1976 - 1979

The death of Franco, on the 20th of November 1975, and the coronation of the new monarch, Juan Carlos, did not bring about immediate or drastic changes within the institutions of the Francoist state. The Cortes and the Council of State, bastions of the extreme Right and the oligarchy, continued to function, while the Army and Civil Guard chiefs remained unchanged. <sup>(1)</sup> Indeed, the general amnesty which all believed would accompany the king's rise to Head of State did not materialise. The amnesty for political prisoners which he decreed at the end of November only benefitted fifteen percent. As Ben Ami points out, the king had chosen an "intermediate road" in order not to provoke the anger of the extreme Right. <sup>(2)</sup> The two leading figures in the king's first government, Fraga and Areilza, did however promise "adaptations" of Spain's political, administrative and syndical institutions to bring them into line with those of the European Community, and an orientation of the economy towards integration within the Common Market. <sup>(3)</sup> Arias Navarro, Prime Minister under Franco, who continued in his post, spelt-out the limitations of these reforms in January, when he promised reforms which Franco "would have wished" and underlined the concept of "Spanish democracy", one in which corporativist aspects had to be preserved. It was premature, he said, to authorise the functioning of political parties, although he proposed a new electoral law and the creation of two legislative chambers. <sup>(4)</sup>

Certainly the political crisis had preceded Franco's death by many years, and was particularly acute after the death of Carrero Blanco in December 1973. Carrero, seen as Franco's true heir and the embodiment of Francoism without Franco, had been a point of reference for both Right and Left alike. His death caused sectors of the Right to look for political options within a democratic framework, while the Left, heartened by the vacuum his death had created, searched for greater unity in an effort to strengthen its hand within the democratic changes which it believed were inevitable after the death of the dictator. (5). Undoubtedly the growth in strength and combativeness of the working class movement during these years, and the growing realisation that repression was a useless response, prompted the creation of new political groupings of the Centre and Right, and , from the most "European" industrialists, attempts to reach agreement with the most important working class organisation, the Workers' Commissions, stronghold of the Communist Party. (6). Indeed, the trade union elections of 1975 were held partly because of pressure from employers who realised that the growing politicisation of the working class movement was largely due to the unrepresentative nature of the vertical syndicates, lynchpin of Francoist labour relations. (7). The spectre of possible revolutionary change must surely have been enhanced by the notable increase in violence during the same years : the spectacular actions of ETA and FRAP, and the growth of violent confrontations between striking workers and the police, paralleled by the growing aggressiveness of the extreme Right. (8).

The political crisis of these years was accompanied by a severe economic crisis. Floods in winter 1973 devastated agriculture, while the price of oil quadrupled. (9). In the situation of political instability which ensued after the assassination of Carrero Blanco, and the belief that the oil price rise would be temporary, this rise was not passed on to the consumer. Indeed, the state poured more than 50,000 million pesetas into energy consumption.

The result was of course rampant inflation and staggering deficits in the balance of payments. By the end of 1974, some attempts were made to remedy this situation by following more restrictive policies, but these were inadequate in terms of the dependency of Spanish capitalism in the context of an international economic crisis. <sup>(10)</sup> . Political uncertainty had further fuelled the economic downturn with a sharp fall in foreign capital investment. Wages however, were frozen for two years. The negotiations for the new collective contracts, which affected a million and a half workers in the whole of Spain, were to begin in December 1975, a few weeks after the General's death. Into this already explosive situation the government announced, at the end of November, that wages were to be frozen throughout 1976. This was severe provocation to a labour movement which had based its future strategy on the lack of government interference, and which had seen wages drastically eroded by inflation. <sup>(11)</sup> .

The reaction came in mid-December, when "Days of Struggle" affected, with varying intensity, towns in Andalusia, the Basque provinces, Galicia, Catalonia but especially Madrid. These actions, called by political organisations and trade unions, demanded not just a solution to the labour problems pending, but called for an end to the wage freeze and the granting of an amnesty. <sup>(12)</sup> . Despite growing unrest throughout December, the government made no attempt to defuse it over the Christmas break. On the contrary, the Finance Minister, Villar Mir, announced an austerity policy which included a salary freeze in his end of year speech.

The political crisis, set in motion by the death of the dictator, and the severe economic crisis, combined with government economic measures directed primarily at the working class movement, produced, in January 1976, the greatest strike wave since the Civil War. While strike action had

been increasing throughout December, it was the strike by Metro workers on January 5th which propelled and galvanised other sectors of workers whose collective contracts were under discussion. The fact that the Metro workers were not immediately militarised as in 1970 gave confidence to workers who realised that the government was trying to create a more liberal "open" image to Western Europe, and, moreover, that both the employers and the government were deeply divided on how to handle the strikes. (1)

By the 14th, 300,000 workers were on strike in Madrid, affecting practically all sectors of the economy - metallurgy, construction, banking and insurance, public services (Post office, the telephone company, Renfe), and around 4,000 in other sectors. The strike wave quickly spread to outlying working class enclaves like Torrejón, San Fernando, Alcalá de Henares, Alcobendas, San Sebastián de Los Reyes, and to other provinces : Catalonia (a general strike in Bajo Llobregat lasted several days), Seville, Zaragoza, Asturias, Valencia, Vitoria and Valladolid.

One of the distinctive features of the January strikes was that many workers went on strike for the first time. (14). Moreover, there were many workers who had no specific grievances themselves but struck in solidarity. (15). Another important feature was its overwhelmingly "assemblyist" nature. In the Metro sector, for example, an assembly was attended by 3,500 workers out of a total of 4,000. (16). Assemblies were held in churches, on the streets and within occupied firms. Lock-outs normally followed, which only served to heighten the tension and forced workers to take their grievances back to their neighbourhoods, and gave a further impulse towards holding assemblies in order to keep workers united and in touch with the situation. (17).

As the situation developed and the need to coordinate the struggle became greater, each sector created its own organs : the Comisión Asesora de la Construcción, the

Comisión Gestora de la Banca, the "fifty" in Graphic Art, the "eight" in the Post Office. As one worker commented : "What occurred was that each sector used the most fitting means at its disposal to carry-on the struggle." (18). In the construction sector one of the main problems, that of coordination, was overcome by electing delegates in assemblies from the various sites, and then coordinating these at provincial level.(19)

While new organisational forms were created in the course of the strikes, there is little doubt that one of the main factors in their initiation was the official "jurados" and "enlace" structure, dominated since the 1975 trade union elections by the "democratic" candidates. (20). This fact has been reiterated again and again by workers involved in the movement. (21). They stress the importance of a strike call from "legal" trade union representatives in terms of bringing into the strike movement workers who had previously been scared to do so, and workers in small firms. They also praise highly the way the convenio negotiations were prepared, with dossiers compiled and questionnaires sent out in June of the previous year. In this way grievances had been aired and workers informed about their situation. (22)

While there is general agreement on the importance of the "democratic and unitary" candidates in preparing and initiating the strike wave (23), there have been severe criticisms of their role during the January strikes. The "democratic" candidates, overwhelmingly from the Workers' Commissions and members of the Communist Party, at first opposed the idea of a coordinated strike committee, but finally relented after pressure from workers. (24). After this committee had been detained by the police in suspicious circumstances (25), a negotiating commission was set-up, with the purpose of "maintaining the movement from a position of strength". (26). Exploratory meetings with the Minister of Labour Relations and the provincial syndical delegate showed that the government would not accept the commission and negotiations at the level of Madrid.

Manuel P. Izquierdo comments on this process : "First of all they opposed the idea of a strike committee. Then they decided to form the negotiating Committee, which didn't negotiate because the government didn't want to : this would be done by sectors, but as the employers didn't want this either, they decided to negotiate firm by firm. Nothing less than what the government and employers wanted." (27)

Leaders of the Workers' Commissions justified their actions as follows : "The matter was if we should go on. First of all, the strike wave was slowing down. At the time that metal decided to negotiate, construction was back at work because it had won, telephone too, and metro and banking were falling off. On the other hand, I believe there was hunger. I know that in Getafe they'd got to the point of stealing potatoes from a farm. In Standard there was no money, despite solidarity". (28). Certainly this is true. What has been omitted in this account however is that in Standard (which broke the strike in the sector) telephone, construction and banking, Workers' Commissions leaders had urged the workers in assemblies to go back to work. (29). Moreover, the Workers' Commissions had kept tight reins on the money, and in Standard there were continuous problems over this. (30). More importantly however, was the failure to coordinate the strikes much earlier and not wait till "hunger" would become a relevant factor. (31).

The January strikes did, of course, register some gains. The wage limits were broken (32), while the strikes had made it patently obvious that the vertical trade unions no longer had any role in Spanish labour relations. Moreover, there were no dismissals, nor were public servants considered "traitors". (33). The Decree of May 1975, regarding Collective Contracts which regulated strike procedure, could now be considered redundant, as most of the strikes had taken place "illegally".

However, many writers believe that a great deal more could have been wrested from the government and the employers had the strike movement not been subordinated to the political strategy of the Workers' Commissions, dominated by the Communist Party. <sup>(34)</sup> . Indeed, a former Workers' Commission leader in Barcelona agreed that trade union demands were considered secondary to demands of a "political" nature. As he says :

"We, in the Workers' Commission and the Communist Party felt that all the democratic forces had to unite to bring about genuine democratic changes. I suppose we were worried that there would be a polarisation between Left and Right (after all, the Bunker was a force to be reckoned with), which would destroy the process which was developing. Yes, I think we viewed the January strikes purely as a trade-union / economic issue, which could be resolved at that level, although I agree, we did use them as a strong card to play against those who opposed democratic change."

Barcelona, 1979.

In 1974, the Communist Party had set-up the Junta Democrática (Democratic Junta), a fairly broad front of opposition forces which included some erstwhile Francoists such as Calvo Serrer from Opus Dei. The rival Socialist grouping, the Plataforma de Convergencia Democrática (Platform of Democratic Convergence) contained some Christian and social Democratic members, such as Ruiz Gimenez and Ridruejo. The executions in September 1975, followed by the Prevention of Terrorism Act and Franco's illness, had forged greater unity between these two bodies, which culminated in a document, issued jointly on October 30th 1975, which called for a democratic "rupture", and the need for "organs of executive power" which would guarantee democratic freedoms during the constituent period. In fact, the Communist Party was demanding a provisional government which would include all the main democratic forces, themselves included.

whether this analysis of Spanish reality and its strategical consequences are correct or not is open to discussion. However, it cannot be denied that the Communist Party wanted to appear as a "civilised partner" within the democratic opposition. Moreover, it would appear that the intensity and extension of the January strikes went way beyond what the C.P. had envisaged. <sup>(35)</sup>. While it is doubtful that a general strike could have been called <sup>(36)</sup>, there seems good reason to believe that greater demands of a trade union character could have been achieved, as this former Workers' Commission leader says :

"I believe we made a great mistake in January. Our slogan, 'maintain our forces so as to go onwards' proved to be false. You see, January proved to be the greatest strike movement of the whole transition period, and it was then that we had our chance to win greater trade union freedoms. As it was, the government kept postponing the trade union issue, and, as you know, the trade unions were not legalised till the spring of 1977, long after the political parties were legalised. This of course was the government's plan, as they didn't have a trade union alternative to put forward. Even then, there were serious limitations to trade union freedom, and still are. <sup>(37)</sup>. The government made the running all the way, and we acquiesced - out of fear and uncertainty I think. Nevertheless, I think that January 1976 was crucial, and would determine the whole course of labour relations during the transitional period."

Barcelona, 1979.

The high level of labour militancy did continue however throughout 1976, and was particularly intense between January and March. <sup>(38)</sup>. As the authors of a cronicle on 1976 point out :

"Throughout 1976 the employers displayed an offensive attitude in order to attempt to level-out the economic gains which workers had succeeded in winning through their struggles, which led to new struggles in a worker counter-offensive. For example, in the Construction sector, which began the year with a 30 % increase over the previous year, the employers replied by reducing

their workforce by 5.5 %, which led, along with other causes, to the huge conflicts which this sector engaged in throughout the year. Moreover, the heavily repressive attitude of the employers in 1976 reached limits rarely seen in terms of sackings and sanctions." (39).

Cronicas, Madrid, 1977.

These strikes continued to be organised around the assembly and many were in solidarity, as striking still brought forth sanctions and sackings. (40). There were many strikes which bypassed the "democratic candidates", which workers believed would "not do battle", and elected their own representatives in assembly. (41). Indeed, one of the most distinctive features of these strikes, from workers on the whole with little tradition of struggle, was their criticisms of Communist Party strategy. The Communist Party often advised them to write to the bishop or go back to the negotiating table. (42). Many of these strikes took place in smaller firms, were long and militant, and, on the whole, successful. (43). There is little doubt that these sectors received the impulse from more traditional sectors of the workers' movement, such as metallurgy and the Asturian miners (out since mid-January) and the intensity and extension of the January movement, which initiated the strike wave. (44).

Another salient feature of the strikes between January and March was the refusal of strikers to remain isolated in their firms. Demonstrations, assemblies and political discussions took place in the streets, in bars. The importance of the neighbourhoods in supporting and aiding the struggle, in San Adrián de Besós, in Barcelona, but particularly Getafe in Madrid, has been pointed to by most participants. (45) Indeed, in working class neighbourhoods in Madrid, parts of Catalonia and the Basque provinces, many small shopkeepers closed in solidarity. (46).

The most impressive "assemblyist" strike of this period was the strike at Vitoria, which lasted from January through

to March. The fact that such a long, and militant strike should occur in a place where most workers were immigrants from the Spanish countryside, with little tradition of struggle, shows quite clearly the character of these first months of post-Francoism. As in most strikes of these months, the neighbourhoods had played a crucial role in sustaining and supporting the strike, as had women. But it was tragically ended in March, with the death of five workers and hundreds injured and detained, after a pitched battle with the police. (47).

Despite the limitations to full democratic freedoms (48), the death of the dictator did herald some important changes in Spanish society. Political parties and trade unions were "tolerated", while a more open press and television service began to report on issues previously ignored or circumscribed. ( There was a general feeling of euphoria and liberation after the long years of Franco's rule. All the main political parties and trade unions began a major propaganda and recruitment drive, while the Right, mainly through Fraga from his post as Interior Minister, began organising its forces, something which had been unnecessary during Francoism. (50).

It was during these first months of 1976 that the C.N.T. set-up its first regional committees and local federations throughout Spain. This process had begun somewhat earlier however, as this Solidaridad militant from Madrid explains :

"In November 1975, we got to hear about a regional plenum that was to be held in Valencia. This had been called by allies of the exile organisations in Valencia, and they had contacted others in other regions. They hadn't notified those not connected to the exile organisation in Spain, but we got to hear it anyway. So we sent one of our delegates along to the plenum, accompanied by one of the pro-exile people from Madrid. The delegates at this plenum were all old faistas, representing Catalonia, Andalusia and Madrid, with Juan Ferrer representing Valencia, (51). Our delegate was a bit taken aback to see these old guys representing the C.N.T., as she had never seen them before - especially as the one from Andalusia was now a landowner. There was a representative from

the exile organisation there too. We disputed the representativeness of the guy from Madrid, and finally our two delegates were accepted. At this plenum a manifesto was produced by Andalusia (with the help of Valencia) which was to be the basis of getting the C.N.T. off the ground. It was the same kind of stuff that the "exilio" had been putting out for years. Essentially it read 'the C.N.T. lives still and has never died, and has been actively involved in the anti-Francoist struggle' and so forth. It was very anti-statist, with frequent mentions of the military, and the struggle against it, and no mention of any strategy which the C.N.T. should adopt. As usual, it called for libertarian communism on the basis of workers' self-management, as the solution to the problems of the working class, without reference as to how this could be brought about. (52). This was approved in the plenum, but the minutes of the meeting were never sent to Madrid. People talked about the manifesto, as they'd heard about it, but didn't agree, either to its content nor to the fact that it hadn't been approved in a representative assembly."

Madrid, 1978.

The drive to re-organise the C.N.T. had of course been taking place throughout 1975, and was greatly speeded-up by the greater contact between groups during the trade union election campaign of September 1975. (53). Soon after the elections however, the confrontation which had been growing between the pro-exile group in Construction and Solidaridad and other "autonomous" groups reached a high point, as this Madrid "autonomous" group member says :

"There were conflicts during the election campaign between Construction and Solidaridad. I remember heated debates over using the initials "C.N.T." Construction put them on their leaflets, but Soli was against this, as the C.N.T. had not yet been reconstructed. After the elections Soli suggested dissolving the groups into trade unions, but Construction was totally against. You see, Soli had been the most 'prepared' of all the groups, and we in our group (and there were other groups who felt the same) wanted to join Soli, as we didn't see the C.N.T. thing too clearly. We'd had contacts with the 'exilio' as I said, and weren't impressed. I think Construction was worried about the prestige that Soli had here amongst the groups in Madrid, and, if we had dissolved into trade unions, we would have had a lot more weight than them. They only had a small group in

Construction and perhaps a couple of people in a few other sectors. So obviously they were not in favour." Madrid, 1978.

Despite these disagreements, meetings between Construction and the "autonomous" groups continued during the next month, primarily because Solidaridad believed that the reconstruction of the C.N.T. had to take place on the basis of "understanding" between all libertarian forces. (54). Indeed, great efforts were made to contact groups in other provinces, vis-à-vis the reconstruction of the C.N.T., urging them to set-up "comités de relacion", on the lines of Madrid, and to participate in the re-organising process. (55). While these efforts registered some success (56), many autonomous groups refused to join, accusing the relations' committees of being "reformist" (57). Moreover, many groups were unhappy about setting-up the C.N.T., or complained about the lack of information about what was happening. (58).

In view of this impasse, and seeing the need to speed-up the organising drive, Solidaridad took the initiative in proposing a reconstruction assembly in Madrid at the end of January. A leading member of Solidaridad explains its genesis :

"A deadlock had been reached here Madrid, between ourselves and Construction. After the trade union elections and the disagreements which that caused, we began discussing the possibility of setting-up a local federation, with representatives of all the groups. But we couldn't agree on that either. Construction decided unilaterally to hold the meeting in the mountains which we didn't agree with, given the security problems it could create, and possible detentions. For this we were accused of not being 'revolutionary' nor 'macho'. In the end, we held our meeting in town, while the Construction group held theirs in the mountains, which was supposed to have set-up the local federation in Madrid. In view of this, and after the November plenum in Valencia, which were all manoeuvres to exclude us, we went to talk to Gomez Casas, a well-respected older militant who'd recently set-up a Comisión de Veteranos (Veterans' Commission) to see what we could do. (59).

We considered him 'neutral' in the dispute between ourselves and the exilio, so we thought he could perhaps bring about some sort of compromise. We did manage to come to an agreement, and decided to hold an assembly, which would be constitutive of the reconstruction."

Madrid, 1978.

The assembly was held on the 25th of January 1976, and was attended by around a hundred members from the autonomous groups, and between a hundred and a hundred and fifty older members. There were also a few members of autonomous groups from Valladolid. (60). A member of one of the Madrid autonomous groups gives his impression of the assembly :

"We were greatly surprised by the number of older veterans who attended. We didn't know where they all had sprung from. We'd never seen any of them during the dictatorship, nor knew what they had been doing. Later we learnt that Gomez Casas had invited everyone he knew who had been members of the C.N.T. in Madrid. Fidel Gorrón, an older guy, took over the chair, and effectively the meeting. He talked of the glorious C.N.T. and that this was a pleno local (local plenum). They tried to organise an agenda. The 'oldies' did this, we didn't say a word - we were dumbfounded. Then they began to ratify the resolutions of the Zaragoza Congress. (61). We just couldn't believe it. The language was totally alien to us. Anyway, the meeting was tense because we thought the police might come at any minute. There was a great deal of mutual antagonism - the 'oldies' were very suspicious of us, and said we wouldn't be able to re-organise the C.N.T. as we didn't know enough about its organisational aspects and its principles. In the end, we reached a kind of compromise. Members of Peña Grande and Aluche (62) tried to heal the gap between the two sectors. It was decided to hold a meeting to elect the regional committee and organise tasks. The comité de relaciones and the comisión de veteranos would both send delegates to this."

Madrid, 1978.

At a meeting held shortly after, the first Madrid regional committee was elected. Because the election was carried-out on the basis of delegates from groups, the autonomous tendency gained three places on the committee, although the pro-Fai tendency gained two, and held the secretariat. (63).

Already, however, there were dissenting voices raised against the wrangling for positions on committees, as this Madrid militant says :

"I didn't like the way things were going. I'd attended the first assembly and realised that there would be a hell of a battle to gain weight within the C.N.T. One of the main reasons I'd come to anarchism was because I didn't want to become involved in all that sort of thing, which smelt of 'politics' to me. So I didn't go to any more meetings, and would have nothing to do with the whole thing. I concentrated on working within an Ataneo, and was active at a local level, but that was the end of my dealings within the C.N.T." (64)

Madrid, 1978.

In Barcelona a similar assembly took place at Sans in February, attended by around five hundred members from groups, older C.N.T. members and libertarian sympathisers, which similarly resulted in the election of a provisional regional committee. As this autonomous group member points out, he was surprised at the number of older members who attended, often representing committees of the C.N.T. :

"I couldn't figure out who all these people were. I heard there were four different committees in Catalonia who said they were the 'true' representatives of the C.N.T. There was the 'official' one, the one from Frente Libertario, one which had attempted to maintain itself independent of both sectors, and the other one - well I don't know who they were. There was no discussion about what the C.N.T. should be, its strategy or anything concrete - in fact there was little discussion at all. Although there was a brief agenda, with three points on the order paper (65) no agreements were reached, and very little discussion took place over these. Basically we just went straight ahead and organised some sort of structure to get the thing going, which took for granted that the C.N.T. already had some functioning trade unions, and that the regional committee was a reflection of these. In fact, the regional committee was composed of the different members from various tendencies - it was an attempt to reach a compromise between them, which would continue to happen here in Barcelona. We did try to bring up the whole question of what the C.N.T. should be now, in 1976 - should we continue to think that the old schema of an exclusively work-based organisation was valid,

or, as we suggested, should it be more 'integral', where neighbourhood groups and students would also have a place. But we were viewed with some suspicion when we brought this up, so we let it drop, as we didn't want to wreck the assembly. So nothing was clarified, nothing really discussed in depth. This was to be the case throughout the reconstruction - we just set-up these committees, and expected them to function, without giving them the tools they needed - apart from ideological and political clarification, which were crucial - we didn't ever specify what tasks the committees should carry-out, or what their real role should be. Therefore the problems we had during this whole period date back to these first meetings, which failed to deal with them, well, actually ignored them in order to get-on with 'organisational' matters."

Barcelona, 1979.

Despite these inherent problems, which would have resonances throughout these years, some kind of compromise was reached in these assemblies and regional committees set-up in Madrid and Barcelona. It was agreed moreover, that the Madrid regional committee would act as the national committee until it was decided, in a national plenum, which region would be empowered to elect the national committee. (66). In Valencia however, no such compromise was reached, as this militant explains :

"The problem had been brewing throughout 1975. The 'autonomos' who were more numerous than the 'officials' at least at the level of sympathisers, tried to establish contacts with Juan Ferrer, which weren't very promising. The 'autonomos' were put off by Juan Ferrer's attitude - they considered him a Puritan, while he felt that they were 'pasotas'. (67). Solidaridad, which was the main group within the 'autonomos', then set-up an 'autonomous federation', which refused to use the initials AIT. (68). So there then existed two C.N.T.'s - ours, which defended the use of the initials AIT, and had close links with the exile organisation, and the 'autonomous' one. There were several moves made to join both up during 1975, which led to a 'reunification assembly' held at Godella, which was attended by about one hundred members from both tendencies. I don't know how Solidaridad acted, but from our side we brought along people who weren't cenetistas in order to swell our numbers. There were very violent discussions at this meeting, when the C.N.T. 'autonomos' objected to the way the local federation was elected. They said they

knew how <sup>many</sup> 'officials' there were and that the numbers had been swelled artificially so that official delegates would be elected. (69). This was the beginning of the local federation problem. Before we could resolve it, the meeting broke-up because of news that the police were on their way." (70)

Valencia, 1978.

Another member of the pro-official local federation explains why he considered this organ as representating the C.N.T. :

"I don't agree that the C.N.T. ceased to exist during Francoism. It's true that it didn't have much influence within the working class movement, but older militants did help a lot in organising the trade unions - they gave great help and encouragement to us younger militants. The contacts with the exilio were established in order to get literature and financial help. They were convinced that they were the C.N.T. because they'd kept up some sort of organisational continuity.

You see, while these people from the autonomous groups and Soli weren't even sure of the C.N.T. - in fact some of them believed it was dead and shouldn't be resurrected - it was these older militants who knew the organisation well, and never had a doubt about it, who were actually constructing the C.N.T. These old cenetistas, who've spent forty years in and out of prison and who've looked forward to the reconstruction all this time - and in fact have done what they could to keep up some organisational continuity - have been looked down upon by people who've joined the C.N.T. when it was relatively easier to be cenetistas. I believe that these are the ones who should really be given credit - these older militants who've suffered repression. They were very important in helping us younger militants set-up trade unions and local federations during 1975. By the end of the year we had seven functioning local federations in the region (71), and yes, we didn't consider ourselves as just another grouping, but as the C.N.T. When we began contacts with Soli they wouldn't accept this, and set-up their own local federation." (72).

Valencia, 1978.

These kind of statements did not deter Solidaridad from trying to reach some compromise, as this Solidaridad militant explains :

"We were certainly surprised at the level of resentment towards us - we didn't believe that it would be so great, although we did anticipate problems. We were caught in a real dilemma. We believed that the C.N.T., for its history and the memory of that history within the working class, could play an important role within the trade union field, given the reformism of the other trade unions - the Worker's Commissions and the U.G.T., and the mini-syndicates which more or less followed them. (73). So you see, we needed the organisation, its past as well as its present, in order to have some weight within the working class movement. But we also felt that it had to up-date certain concepts, such as direct action, and undertake a study in depth of the present political and socio-economic situation in order to develop a strategy which would have some coherence and relevance to large sections of the working class. We also felt that we would be able to influence events within the C.N.T., as we 'autonomists' were the most numerous. But we greatly underestimated the strength of the other side - the FAI had been organising for some time, and all these old militants who suddenly sprung up were able to rally people around to the 'glorious C.N.T.', and were fairly powerful in some regions (i.e. Valencia). However, we thought that once we got the trade unions off the ground things would change. After all, one of the main reasons for the decadence of the movement was its lack of contact with a dynamic working class movement, which would surely have limited the power of manoeuvrability of the bureaucracy. So we tried to concentrate on getting the trade unions going, and do our best to ignore the tensions which existed."

Madrid, 1978.

The attempt to get the organisation going, despite everything, therefore continued. With this aim in mind, the Madrid regional committee called a national plenum of regionals in February / March 1976, which was attended by representatives from Madrid, Catalonia, Valencia and Andalusia. (74). An autonomous member present at the plenum gives us his impressions :

"At this time the regionals were not really organised, only Madrid and Catalonia had a regional committee which

had been elected in an assembly of the whole organisation -that's why they had 'comités de síntesis' in those two regions, with 'autonomous' and 'exilio' members on them. The rest of those present were clearly pro-FAI, such as those from Andalusia and Valencia, and there was a representative from the exilio too. They pulled out the manifesto from the Valencian plenum (November 1975). They'd had 50,000 printed and brought them with them. There was a hell of a row. We were outraged that they wanted this considered as the manifesto of the reconstruction as it hadn't been approved by the whole organisation. They were trying to pull off a coup, because, as the regionals weren't yet organised, the FAI was over-represented.

I don't know how Solidaridad put up with it - they even avoided mentioning the Valencia problem, so as the local federation of trade unions could get off the ground. But I couldn't stand it. I decided to work within my trade union - I still believed that the C.N.T. had possibilities - and left the meetings to others who had stronger stomachs than me. But of course you couldn't ignore these things, for a short while later the manifesto was distributed throughout the trade unions to see if they agreed with it. None of them did, except Constructor of course, and it was this trade union that sent them out. I didn't know what to do, as I was sick of the whole business. But Soli members I knew encouraged me to stay in, and build-up the trade unions, which, they said, would change the situation dramatically."

Madrid, 1979.

Not all who enrolled in the newly-emerging organisation were convinced of the C.N.T.'s role as a trade union organisation, however, as this militant explains :

"Many people, like myself, are against the idea that the C.N.T. should be an end in itself. We believe that it is more important to support the autonomous actions of the working class, whether they use C.N.T. initials or are anarchists or not. This autonomous movement could well lead to a new type of organisation - more broad-based than the C.N.T. - just as the C.N.T. grew out of the First International. These people feel that the C.N.T. should support this movement, while other sectors are more sectarian. The 'autonomous' sector feel that to act

in a sectarian way will automatically lead to bureaucratisation. Not so much in terms of leaders, but that it will withdraw within itself, which inevitably is conducive to forging 'camarillas', and working class struggles will be forgotten." (75)

Madrid, 1978.

Undoubtedly the autonomous strikes which had been taking place from the early seventies, but which had reached their peak in January 1976, were important in influencing the "autonomous" sector. A militant involved in the January movement gives us his reasons for joining the C.N.T. :

"I had participated in one of the first Workers' Commissions in Banking in 1973, although I had begun working in my neighbourhood association when I was fourteen. (76). My father was always very close to the C.P., so I worked with the Young Communist Union. I was active in the January strikes - it was the biggest strike that ever took place in Banking. I felt that there was a real revolutionary situation in January, but the C.P. cut it dead. That was the beginning of my move away from the Workers' Commissions and the C.P. I joined the C.N.T. because I considered it more than just a trade union, that it could coordinate different kinds of struggle, the only way to bring about revolutionary change. You see, the neighbourhoods had been crucial during the January strikes - in giving financial and emotional support - it wouldn't have lasted so long nor been so massive without them. This movement had been autonomous - after all, the C.P. didn't really support it - and I believe that revolutionary situations are like that. I wasn't interested in a trade union organisation which just wanted to enroll people, more or less like the others, even if its principles were revolutionary. I still believe we need a trade union like the C.N.T., but its role must be wider, less restricted, more flexible. I believe that it should support the autonomous struggles that are taking place, and not just to affiliate members, but to encourage a movement which is potentially revolutionary, as it's 'outside' of the control of the reformists."

Madrid, 1978.

Members of the autonomous sector invariably stressed the "global mission of the C.N.T., as one of its members says :

"I consider myself an anarchist, but not of the 'individual' type i.e. I see the class struggle as being

important. But neither do I see myself as the 'orthodox' kind. This orthodoxy is now out of date, as society has changed dramatically. Personal liberation problems - ecology, sex, feminism, etc..., are as important, if not more so, as strictly syndicalist ones. But these problems can't be resolved at an individual level, they need to be taken up by a libertarian organisation. Although I'm a salaried worker in a section which has many labour problems. (77), and need trade union defence, I hesitated in joining the C.N.T. as I thought it would be dominated by orthodox anarcho-syndicalists - the old militants from the 'exilio'. But when I saw many young libertarians, with fresh, critical ideas joining it, I felt there was a possibility of the C.N.T. becoming the broad libertarian organisation I envisaged, although there have been enormous attempts to keep the organisation 'orthodox'."

Madrid, 1978.

Interestingly, both these militants were active in their trade unions, which, they pointed out, were essential in dealing with day-to-day problems, defending their rights and struggling for better wages and working conditions. (78). Moreover, some militants, while ~~emphasising~~ the "global" or "integralist" nature of revolutionary change, did however feel that demands of this character were somewhat premature, as this delegate from the Teaching trade union points out :

"I'm an anarcho-syndicalist, but not the 'classical' sort. This latter type of anarcho-syndicalism was elaborated during the first quarter of the century, when labour conditions were very different. Since then, capitalism has developed enormously. Though the changed conditions of capitalism probably require a more 'integral' approach (i.e. taking-up all issues that affect people's lives, such as housing, urban planning etc...) I feel that the low level of trade union consciousness of the working class doesn't allow for this type of approach right now. If the 'integralist' line were followed, it would put the C.N.T. in a vanguard position, and it would have little influence within the working class. I believe that the C.N.T. should give priority to the 'syndicalist' line now - after forty years of repression there is very little idea of what a trade union is. This line should be followed in the short term. Especially now, as people are not fully assimilated within capitalist consumer society. Later, I think it would be much more difficult."

Madrid, 1978.

Similar feelings were expressed to me by several members of the "integralist" sector. (79). Moreover, the division between the "integralist" and "orthodox" sectors was not primarily generational, as this older militant points out :

"I've been involved in trade union struggles for many years - not as a C.N.T. member, as I'd have nothing to do with the crowd in Toulouse - but have engaged in anarcho-syndicalist practice in all the firms I've worked in. That's why I've been sacked or demoted so many times. But in the last firm I worked in, we managed to boycott all attempts to elect 'enlaces' and 'jurados' for eight years. Disputes were resolved by 'direct action'. The last 'convenio' was not signed in the usual way i.e. between the 'jurados' and the bosses, but between the whole factory in assembly and the bosses. And we won an amazing increase (from 18,000 to 45,000 pesetas). In these struggles over the convenio and strikes, workers who could hardly count managed to work out things well. This shows how the working class is capable of self-management and workers' control. But the problem is how to go beyond economic demands. That's why I agree with the 'integralists'. When the working class is better off, we have to re-think the old strategy. Anyway, once the struggle is resolved and the wage rise granted, workers get back to normal again. The C.N.T. needs to look at all this - it's still living in 1936. I think perhaps the 'global' struggle is the way to raise the level of consciousness." (80).

Madrid, 1978.

Certainly there were those within the "integralist" sector who felt that the C.N.T.'s role was not one of massively affiliating workers, as this delegate from the Madrid Graphic Art's Union says :

"I've joined an organisation which calls itself anarcho-syndicalist, so I accept its principles. But I feel that these principles are somewhat out-of-date. I'm more in tune with the 'integralists', as the problems of the working class don't end at the factory gates - the problem is a global one. That's why I feel that those who join the C.N.T. must be conscious of what it means. The C.N.T. is not just any type of trade union - it means a certain life-style and consciousness. A worker who joins the C.N.T. should know what it is. We shouldn't follow the practice of the Workers' Commissions and the U.G.T., which means simply giving out membership cards. Social revolution is only possible when there's a certain amount of consciousness, otherwise it is just defensive, reformist."

Madrid, 1978.

The issue of recruitment was rarely discussed during 1976, and was, moreover, blurred by the clandestine conditions which still prevailed. (81). Indeed, sections of the FAI were as "purist" in their attitude towards recruitment as their adversaries, the "extreme integralists". (82). But the burning issue, which underlay all others, and which would disable the C.N.T. from adopting a coherent strategy, was the relationship of the C.N.T. to the libertarian movement. A member of Solidaridad sums-up the problem :

"We in Solidaridad, and members of other autonomous groups, wanted there to be a discussion in depth about the relationship of the C.N.T. to the libertarian movement. Most of us rejected the old organisational schema - C.N.T. / FAI/ FIJL, which had previously defined it, as we didn't see the need for 'specific' organisations within the C.N.T., which were supposed to act as guardians to keep the organisation 'in line with true anarchist principles', but which often acted in a way similar to that of the 'party / trade union'. This was particularly the case during the Civil War, when the FAI became incredibly bureaucratised, and this trend has continued in exile. The FAI which operates now in the C.N.T. has been a creation of the 'exilio', and one of its main functions is to keep the C.N.T. on the right tracks i.e. to uphold the resolutions of the Zaragoza Congress and keep the leadership with the 'exilio'. In asking for a reevaluation of this relationship, we of course threaten the whole edifice. You see we feel that the groups and people who are within the libertarian orbit - the ecology groups, anti-nuclear campaigners, feminists etc..., are real living forces, and whatever our differences are with them we should establish some sort of relationship with them, as they are allies of the working class, at least potentially. Anyway, we don't see them as the terrible threat within the C.N.T. as the 'orthodox' sector does. Before the reconstruction we succeeded in convincing many people that anarcho-syndicalism was still valid, and I'm sure we could do it again. After all, revolutionary syndicalism historically did not refuse workers, whatever their ideology. It was the task of the trade union, as a school for militants, to educate workers, and that's what the C.N.T. should become again. Of course we also uphold the 'integralist' notion of revolutionary change, which the C.N.T. always did historically, although we would place more importance on the role of the trade union in this, a place where all problems affecting the worker are taken-up, not just labour ones. But that doesn't mean we can't have a dialogue with other people who don't think exactly the same, which after all has always

been the case within the libertarian movement."  
Madrid, 1978.

Indeed, Solidaridad's fairly classical, though more open anarcho-syndicalism did not differ substantially from that of the Valencian FAI leader, Juan Ferrer. As Ferrer says :

"Yes, I believe that anarcho-syndicalism is still valid today, although Spanish society has changed enormously. But it's still capitalist and can't resolve its contradictions. What is more important is to actualise C.N.T. strategy to face the changed situation. The C.N.T., unlike anarcho-syndicalism in the rest of Europe, is able to call strikes and demonstrations and achieve good levels of support. It isn't dead - it exists as an organisation. But it mustn't misuse its resources. If its strategy is brought up-to-date, then it has a revolutionary role to play. For example, the whole notion of 'direct action' must be actualised without capitulation, <sup>but</sup> we shouldn't reject talks with the government. The main struggle is the lowering of differentials between sectors of workers. Although the C.N.T. is not just a trade union, it mustn't forget that it is a trade union. It must intervene in all labour disputes and demands. It mustn't forget that its interests and goals are those of the working class.

I would adopt a 'middle position' - intervene in 'convenios' and talks with the government if necessary, but if the C.N.T. has the trade union strength then it can demand / impose its conditions (for example the lowering of differentials) without capitulating. I am certainly not a 'European' type anarchist, which sees the intervention in neighbourhood associations etc., as being equal <sup>of</sup> importance.

The main task is to intervene within the trade unions. And that's the task of the FAI today. Because of forty years of decomposition of the C.N.T., the old anarcho-syndicalist current is almost non-existent. The anarchists of the FAI must fill this vacuum. The anarchists of the FAI are the only ones capable of creating trade unions and anarcho-syndicalist militants.

Although the FAI has undergone many mutations through its history, its essential characteristics remain the same i.e. to preserve anarchist principles

within the CNT."

Valencia, 1978.

What separates these two sections clearly is the role of the FAI, in hands of the "exilio", and the emphasis which Solidaridad militants placed on "personal" transformation as an integral part of social change. (83). A member of a GOA group ideologically close to Solidaridad explains :

"I have attempted to rid myself of authoritarian forms of conduct. This was a theme much discussed - not just in our group, but within the type of 'atmosphere' of the time. Apart from the personal satisfaction which this involves - one gives more and receives more - it's also more 'natural'. We've been socialised to be authoritarian, especially under Franco - you can't propagate the 'idea' if you don't set an example. If your behaviour, at work or in the neighbourhood, is not consistent with your ideas - about a new type of society and relationships - then anarchism would be just another party. That's been one of the main points of contention between ourselves and the 'faistas'. The latter behave in an authoritarian way. While your behaviour remains the same, socio-economic changes can only be partial. For we enter into social relationships at work, the community and in the home, and if we're trying to build something new, we've got to create it together. These relationships have to be good - they're never any good when someone has more power and uses it over others. I believe it's absolutely essential to create freer, more egalitarian types of interaction, otherwise we are likely to create a 'socialism' on the lines of the Soviet Union."

Madrid, 1979.

The importance of a new "revolutionary morality" was emphasised in most of my interviews with members of GOA groups, in Barcelona, Valencia and Madrid, and was, after all, a major reason for rejecting the Marxist groupings and opting for anarchism. (84). This aspect, and their history of involvement within the neighbourhood struggle, won them the title of "integralists" by the opposing camp, despite their commitment to trade unionism. (85). However, this belief in a libertarian morality was a handicap to these groups during the reconstruction, and caused many of them to flee, as this GOA member says :

"I hadn't expected to find people here like that. They were as dogmatic and unflexible as anyone I'd known in political parties. I'd always considered libertarian philosophy to be open, flexible, without rigid laws - that to me was its attraction, its ability to analyse a situation without trying to fit it into a theory. But these people didn't even listen. I don't think it was the great ideological divide which was the problem, because they didn't ever engage in discussion. We were 'so-and-so', and that was it - nothing more to it. I suppose we were naïve - I certainly was. Although I knew what the 'exilio' was about, and thought it out-of-date, I still believed we could discuss things as fellow libertarians - yes, that there would be a certain ethic, at least at the level of the organisation. I'll never forget those awful meetings - which were always about electing some committee or other - which would go on for hours with everyone screaming at each other. Some of the more 'political' members of GOA put up with it, because of their 'strategic' analysis, but I, and several other militants I know had had enough after the first few months. I believed - and still believe - that there's no hope for an organisation which sets itself up as an alternative to the way political parties act, and then does the same - struggles for power, which centres around control of the committees. If I'd wanted to be involved in all this I could have joined the CP - at least I would have been prepared for what was to come".

Barcelona, 1979.

It is certainly true that most of the energies of C.N.T. militants were channelled into the committee struggle during 1976. The members of Solidaridad on the first regional committee in Madrid were continuously attacked by Construcción, which asked them if they were "true" anarcho-syndicalists and prepared to join the C.N.T., despite the fact that they had dissolved their group in January. (86). The secretary of the local committee of the local federation in Madrid, a pro-Solidaridad militant, was forced to resign because of "criticisms and limitations which prevented him from doing his job." (87).

Moreover, other problems which affected the organisation because enmeshed in the committee struggle, as this C.N.T. militant points out :

"The problem in Valencia was not resolved for months, and had repercussions here in Madrid. Two local federations continued to exist, and neither wanted to give way. The regional committee here in Madrid tried to patch things up, as it acted as a national committee until September. There was a 'unification' assembly held in Valencia, which was not attended by members of the regional committee as they felt this would only make things worse. (88). The initiative came primarily from Solidaridad militants - they wanted to get the organisation going, so they were extremely conciliatory. So they sent a telegram, thinking that it would be better not to appear in person, calling on both sections to unite. If this wasn't possible, then they said they would accept both sections at an informative level, until such times as one local federation existed. (89). But this enraged the 'officials' who began denouncing the intervention of the centre region, and saying that they were the only C.N.T. (90). The whole thing got out of hand when the secretary of the Madrid regional - an 'official' - wrote an article in the Construction bulletin accusing the autonomous sector of links with the Falange and the 'vertical'. (91) But that was the end of this guy's career here in Madrid - he found it difficult to get re-elected to his post. But it was a problem i.e. Valencia, which showed where members of the regional committee stood vis-à-vis the 'tendencies'. For although Soli tried to be conciliatory, the mere fact that they wouldn't recognise the 'official' sector in Valencia as the only representative of the C.N.T. meant that, in fact, they were taking sides - well, that's how the 'officials' saw it." (92).

Madrid, 1978.

Another problem which rankled throughout the year, and added tension to the committee struggle, was the question of "Cinco Puntismo". (93). Most militants agree that this was a burning issue from the beginning of the reconstruction. (94) There were genuine fears that the C.N.T. would be considered a "yellow" trade union, and an offer from an ex-cenetista in the metallurgy sector of the C.N.S. in Madrid, offering the C.N.T. 2,000 members, was turned down precisely for this reason. (95). This certainly seemed to be the image the government wanted to portray. Fraga, from the Interior Ministry, played and encouraged the anti-communist card, flirting alternatively with the PSOE (histórico) (96), and the "reformist" sector of the C.N.T. (97).

The Right-wing organs, "Ya" and "Alcazar" did their best as well to counteract the weight of the Workers' Commissions. In one of its editions "Alcazar" declared;"In the trade union field, the Falange was very much closer to the C.N.T. than any Marxist organisation". (98). Certain equivocal statements made by C.N.T. leaders, such as "The Communists are like Nazis", (headline statement by Federica Montseny in one of the dailies), gave credence to the government's moves. (99). The fact that the C.N.T. didn't join the trade union coordinator, set-up by the Workers' Commissions and the U.G.T., must have given the government heart. (100). Moreover, confrontations between C.P. members and libertarians throughout the year added to this image, and gave the impression that the divisions of the Civil War would again be played-out in post-Francoist Spain. (101).

Many members of the autonomous groups and Solidaridad were more fearful of the presence within the C.N.T. of exiled emigrés, than they were of the "Cinco Puntistas", as this GOA member says :

"We weren't happy about the articles that began appearing in the newspapers - older cenetistas such as Fidel Miró and Abád de Santillán, who'd not been involved in anything within Spain for years, and had certainly 'moderated' their views abroad - usually emphasised the 'anarchist' nature of the C.N.T., which was in keeping with the general tone of the press at this time. (102). The 'anarcho-syndicalism' of the C.N.T. was generally played down. They played-up the whole 'nostalgic' thing - returne emigrés hug each other and so on - which I think was deliberate, as it kept it safely in the past. But to a certain extent we viewed this as being inevitable. We continued to believe that once the C.N.T. took off - had real trade union strength - this kind of thing would be relegated to second place. The 'Cinco Puntista' question was a bit different. I don't agree with what they did, but I can understand it up to a point. I don't mean the ones who held paid posts within the 'vertical' and who totally sold-out, but there were some of them who worked within the C.N.S. and who didn't hold posts. Some of them had a good record for defending working class interests, and tried to keep some sort of anarcho-syndicalist presence alive during the dictatorship. It's more than the 'exilio' did during these years - after all, they didn't have to put up

with the conditions here in Spain - I don't think they have any right to criticise. Anyway, there was a sector allied to the 'exilio' in Valencia who went to talk to Fraga at the beginning of the reconstruction - so who are they to talk ? (103). The 'Cinco Puntistas' would never have had that kind of power within the organisation, because it was well-known that they wouldn't have had the weight to carry the organisation with them - so why talk to them ? I believe that the 'Cinco Puntista' problem was used in Madrid to discredit certain people and keep them off the regional committee. It's amazing how it ceased to be a problem once they got the committee they wanted elected. This wasn't the only 'problem' that surfaced at a convenient time - there was the HOAC / Christian problem, the Falange problem and so on. They used these things very skillfully - played on people's fears and prejudices - to get their committee through, and sadly, it worked."

Madrid, 1978.

This statement seems to be borne out by the minutes of the meetings held at the Madrid local federation during 1976. The first mention of the "Cinco Puntistas" in May, was greeted by varying responses, ranging from total rejection of them to one of acceptance, providing they gave-up their posts within the C.N.S. (104). Although the attitude of the membership varied quite a lot, the general feeling was one of curiosity, and it was agreed to invite them to attend the May / June plenum to give an account of themselves. (105). As they did not attend this plenum (106), it was agreed to set-up a commission to clarify the problem. (107). Despite these agreements, a Solidaridad member on the regional committee was physically attacked by a member of Construction for supposedly having talks with "Cinco Puntistas". (108). This coincided with the run-up to the regional committee election, as at the same meeting it was decided to hold the election as soon as possible. (109). It was indeed after the election of the new regional committee, when the FAI secretary was overwhelmingly rejected for re-election to his post, that a censure vote was issued, from Construction, against the Solidaridad member accused of talks with the "Cinco Puntistas". (110). A new election, which followed shortly after, gave the desired result - an almost totally dominated FAI regional committee, (111) and Construction now expressed its satisfaction with the explanation given by the Solidaridad member on the previous regional committee vis-à-vis his talks with the "Cinco Puntistas" (112).

Although the question still rankled, "Cinco Puntismo" was not a major issue after the 3rd. of July, and the election of the FAI-dominated regional committee.(113)

The national of regionals, held in Madrid on the 24th/25th of July, did little to clarify these problems, although several topics were discussed. (114). The question of the exile organisation was taken-up, and it was agreed that both branches of the "exilio" should be recognised. The plenum called on them to reconcile their differences, and both branches of the exile organisation were asked to send delegates "at a consultative level" to the national committee. The designation of the Permanent Secretariat (the national committee) was given to Madrid, which would later be ratified at the September Plenum. (115).

With the designation of Madrid as home of the national committee, another committee struggle ensued, as this member of the Madrid local federation explains :

"It was pretty hectic here in Madrid over the summer. I'd heard that the FAI were holding meetings to plan their strategy, and I suppose Soli and the others were doing the same. Anyway, the first national committee that was elected in August was primarily 'oppositionist', and was elected by eight of the trade unions, while those which the FAI controlled voted en bloc for their own candidates. (116). I, and others, didn't see anything wrong with this election, but the local committee - at that time in the hands of the FAI - said that they thought it wasn't right to elect a national committee with four trade unions against. Another election was held. This time a totally FAI national committee was elected - that was because many people were away at the time, so they tried to get the committee through. They even elected the ex-secretary of the regional committee, a FAI guy who was unbearable (117), and wasn't acceptable to any of us. After this there was a total impasse in electing the national committee. There was hell here in Madrid at the time, with some delegates and committee members resigning. (118). There was no way we were going to accept a totally FAI committee, and no way the FAI was going to accept an 'oppositionist' one. So the election was postponed till after the summer, and, as always, some kind of 'compromise' committee was elected. (119).

Even then though there were problems. One of the candidate for the national committee - a very good militant with trade union experience - was discredited by the FAI, accused of being a leader of the HOAC. (120). They wouldn't even allow people from the floor defend him - it was terrible. They really went for him. But I think they were mad because they didn't get the committee they wanted elected. So I suppose it was a kind of victory. They weren't able to totally control the situation, at least at the level of the national committee Madrid, 1978.

In Catalonia, the provisional regional committee was being beset by similar problems, as this former GOA member says :

"The two members on the regional committee who were most active, Cases and Luis Edo Martín (121), really had a hard time. Particularly Luis, who was accused of being a Christian and having links with the Falange. They also accused them of not doing their jobs - not coordinating the regional properly, which I suppose was true, although they didn't really get a chance to do anything as they were attacked almost non-stop. But things got worse during the run-up to the elections for the ordinary regional committee. For three months there were continuous plenums to elect the new committee, which were dreadful. One committee wouldn't be acceptable to one sector, then the next one elected wouldn't be acceptable to the other. The level of tension was unbearable - I stopped attending meetings around this time - I couldn't take any more, although I'm still a C.N.T. member. The committee that was finally elected in December had a FAI secretary, and both Cases and Edo Martín had more minor posts. (122). But this new 'comité de síntesis' didn't resolve the problem, as the reasons why it had taken so long to elect it - both Luis Edo Martín and Luis Andres Edo wanted the secretariat - continued to cause friction, as they had totally opposing ideas on what kind of organisation the C.N.T. should be, which of course was the problem from the beginning, and couldn't be solved by committees."

Barcelona, 1979.

This lack of any clear idea of what kind of organisation the C.N.T. should be prevented the elaboration of a coherent strategy, and often meant that each trade union acted in accordance with the strategy of the group which more or less controlled it, as this Madrid militant points out :

"It's now that the C.N.T. is really a minority trade union (1979), because then, at the time of the reconstruction, we had a future. In 1976, after the strike in Construction (in this sector affiliation to any union is minimal), the C.N.T. could win 90 % of the workers in this sector because it played a relevant role and found an echo in the workplace. But when the time came to affiliate, the 'supreme popes' who control this trade union, exclusive representatives of the 'exilio', decide to impede mass affiliation. It was then that a certain 'element' in this trade union draws-up a list of names and says who can and who cannot be members. Evidently this 'senor' is a sub-contractor, a gunman who hides behind purist anarchist postulates." (123).

La C.N.T. : Ser y no Ser.  
Paris, 1979.

This type of "purism" vis-à-vis affiliation is confirmed by an ex-GOA member in Barcelona :

"I believe that the C.N.T. had a real chance of being perhaps the largest trade union in Catalonia - at least on par with the Workers' Commissions. In Graphic Arts - my trade union - we are second to the Workers' Commissions while in Public Entertainments the C.N.T. is the largest. Workers flocked to meetings and assemblies when the C.N.T. first emerged - we got far bigger crowds than the other trade unions at first. I remember when the C.N.T. was just reconstructed, port workers from Barceloneta (which had been a C.N.T. stronghold) came to join. They had been cenetistas and considered it their trade union. But some of them were also members of the Catalan Communist Party, and all of them considered it the 'class party'. (124). Myself and others couldn't really understand this. One thing was being a sort of unorthodox Marxist, but the idea of a 'party' - well, we couldn't really fathom it. In the end we didn't allow them to join. This sort of thing happened quite a lot. I believe if the C.N.T. had had a less 'ultra anarchist' strategy we could have recruited a lot of workers in 1976. We could have built upon this - I mean CP members or whoever - and worked to change it. We should have set-up trade union courses on what the C.N.T. claimed to be etc.... and also clarified our strategy. We should have had real, open discussions on affiliation - forums where we could bring things up without worrying about how other sectors within the C.N.T. would take it. For there was no way we could have discussed the question of CP members affiliated to the C.N.T. - we would have been called 'Marxists' for even considering it. So we just improvised as we went along, which was no way to launch a trade union." (125).

Barcelona, 1979.

Undoubtedly certain aspects of this first year of post-Francoism contributed to the adoption of a "pure anarchist" strategy. For this was still a period of semi-legality, with assemblies and plenums being closed for lack of authorisation. (126). This illegal aspect was exacerbated by the prison issue and the detention and torture of C.N.T. militants for painting slogans. (127). Apart from these arbitrary detentions the amnesty was certainly less felt by libertarian prisoners. (128). One of the major campaigns launched by C.N.T. militants during this year was for the release of Fernando Caballo, an anarchist who had spent twenty-six years in Francoist gaols. (129). The various strikes and mutinies which took place in prisons were supported by the C.N.T., which called for amnesty for all prisoners. Although this may sound somewhat extreme, it must be remembered that the conditions in Spanish prisons are probably the worst in Western Europe, and the judicial apparatus extremely severe. (130). Amnesty and prisoners' rights were demands which were writ large in the programme of all political parties of the Left, and the "common criminal" organisation, COPEL, had support amongst sections of the Christian Democrats, and "liberal" prison governors. (131). Lawyers and students affiliated to the C.N.T. actively campaigned for COPEL, and indeed ~~complained~~ of the C.N.T.'s tepid attitude towards it. (132).

There were certainly those within the C.N.T. who believed that the C.N.T. should not be legalised, as this would exacerbate what they viewed as the "drift towards reformism" inherent within trade unions. (133). Indeed, this was one of the hottest polemics within the C.N.T. during this year. (134). Moreover, there were fears of a possible return to the status quo ante, fears which certainly conditioned working class response and the strategy of the Left generally. (135). All the Madrid trade unions, even those most hostile to the "purism" of FAI strategy, agreed to the setting-up of a clandestine committee in case of repression, and halt the distribution of membership cards. (136).

There is little doubt that the FAI "used" these feelings in order to build-up its power base within the C.N.T., as this

ex-GOA member says :

"I remember after the repression at Vitoria (137), we all felt that there was a possibility of a return to some kind of military dictatorship, without Franco. There was some talk of arms around, especially amongst the younger, recently-recruited C.N.T. members, who were attracted to the 'activist' talk of some sections of the FAI. (138). The FAI started to talk about 'tightening-up' security, and proposed that the pro-presos committee (the prisoners defence committee), should be under the control of the regional committee, which had a FAI secretary, and that it should also control the issuing of membership cards - the trade unions would have to ask the committee for them. (139). This wasn't approved, but these kind of moves still worried us. They would also hammer us - and get the support of quite a lot of the 'ultra-libertarians' - over our attitude towards violent demonstrations. We argued that if we wanted to build-up a trade union turning over cars and breaking shop windows wouldn't help. (140). We were also worried about the influence of 'pasotas' - mostly students - who were easy to win over to the FAI. We knew they had been doing this in Barcelona, although they were on the whole within Luis Andres Edo's orbit there. (141). There was the question of small property owners and factory owners too. (142). These people had no place here. Although they were usually older 'reformists', they were completely orthodox, and we knew that in the provinces these people often controlled the committees, and were allies of the FAI. (143). That shows you the limits of their 'purism'. But we were genuinely worried about Madrid going the way of the provinces. Some of these local federations were controlled by 'pasotas' and old veterans - mostly retired, who spent their whole day at the local - and who had put workers off from joining. (144). It was then, I feel, that the whole of the opposition to the FAI should have got organised, because the FAI were doing it, and gaining recruits too."

Madrid, 1978.

With most of the energies of C.N.T. militants being taken-up with internal organisational matters, little attention was paid to working class struggle, which, in 1976, was at an all-time high. Many militants believe that this absence from the workers' movement in 1976 would be crucial in determining the course the organisation would take during the next few years, as this Madrid militant explains :

"I don't think that the problem was the 'lack of strategy' - though this didn't help. We did have a strategy, which was to support workers' assemblies, and intervene when we could. Although this did represent the feelings of most C.N.T. members - the FAI included - this was ideological only in part. You see, the Workers' Commissions and USO controlled the committees (i.e. works' committees), so the only way we could make our presence felt was in the assemblies. Of course there were differences between the FAI and Solidaridad over the role of the assembly. Solidaridad felt that we should support them, but affiliate as well. The FAI at this time - they would change their position later - was for 'all power to the assembly', but selective affiliation, which meant that few workers were affiliated, given their 'purism' at this time. But what did any of this mean? It was all ideological stuff - where was the C.N.T. trying to put any of this into practice? Yes, we did have some good trade unionists here in Madrid, but they were very few, and were always out-numbered by the others. Not just the 'pasotas' and the FAI, but members who didn't have any trade union experience, or who couldn't carry-out trade union activities at work. (145). There were some possibilities in certain sectors - like Construction and Teaching - but we never got a chance to really get going, given the hassles which took-up all the time at the local federation. I remember Soli and others from the opposition asking repeatedly for the numbers which each trade union had, in order to see what possibilities we had, and to try to plan a strategy. (146). But this was continually sidestepped, and it wasn't done. I believed, and still do, that the C.N.T. should have been there, in all the autonomous struggles that were taking place, putting forward its alternative. For even if workers didn't immediately join, they would at least know of our presence, and some of our ideas. For once the whole 'political' thing started to get going - and more or less take over - in 1977, our possibilities weren't so good. But here we were, arguing over the role of the assembly, or jostling for positions on committees, totally turned-in upon ourselves. I think we lost our opportunity then, and unfortunately, it wouldn't be repeated."

Madrid, 1978.

The situation in Catalonia was somewhat different, as this ex-GOA member says :

"As I said, I think we had a really good chance to become an important trade union force here. We had a lot of good, experienced unionists, who had built-up a following

over the years. We just needed one or two militants like these to bring in the rest of the workers in a sector. This happened in Textiles, where there were a few old cenetistas, and an MCL member who was very active and well-respected. In Transport too. The Central Market had been a stronghold of the C.N.T. and some old guys ~~who still had some~~ influence there - loading and unloading - brought the rest of the workers with them. (although the Workers' Commissions controlled most of the larger firms in Catalonia, we had quite an influence in some of these larger firms and a lot of small ones.) Some older cenetistas - and some new ones, one of them from MCL - had worked hard in the transport sector, and membership grew. In Graphics Arts too, many ex-GOA members, like myself, had built-up quite a good section there. Cases, who had been the leader of the Public Entertainments' union within the CNS, brought the trade union with him into the C.N.T. (147). But many of us felt that the onslaught of the employers and the government during 1976 had to be counteracted by the strongest possible action of the working class movement, and that's why the Trade Union Alliance with the UGT and the SOC was set-up in summer, 1976. It didn't commit the organisation to anything - it was designed so as we could carry-out joint actions with the UGT around concrete issues, which we felt had to be done, as neither trade union had enough strength on its own. For this, of course, we were attacked for 'signing bureaucratic and reformist pacts', and due to all the trouble it caused, it never really managed to fulfill its potential." (148).

Barcelona, 1979.

A member of the Barcelona local federation during these months explains why the alliance with the UGT had to be dropped at the end of the year :

"Well, the situation here in Barcelona was dreadful during the time an ordinary regional committee was being elected. The plenums went on for three months, and still one couldn't be elected. In the end, in order to get out of the deadlock, a 'pact' was agreed to between Cases, Luis Andres Edo and others. This was the way things began to be resolved within the C.N.T. - pacts behind closed doors - one side would give a bit, and get something in return, and vice-versa. This was how the December committee was finally elected. But I think Cases gave-up too much. He had the strongest trade union base here in Barcelona, so he shouldn't have given-in to others with little weight within the organisation.

He was a key figure and could have demanded more. But he tried to keep the organisation together and avoid a split at all costs. So to get a regional committee off the ground the Trade Union Alliance with the U.G.T. had to be sacrificed, as this was one of the main bones of contention, and continuously attacked by Luís Andrés Edo and the other groups opposed to Luís Edo Martín and the MCL. (149). That's why the MCL had to dissolve their group then - that was part of the deal. The 'democracy' of the C.N.T. began to be a joke. When I stood for the secretary post of the local federation, I had to look around and sound-out the support I had within my own trade union, and was finally elected because the MCL supported me. Many of my friends didn't like all this, and I was severely criticised for taking-up the post. But it was the only way - after all if I didn't do it somebody else would - and at least I was in favour of building-up the trade unions, which a lot of the other candidates weren't." (150)

Barcelona, 1979.

Certainly the relationship of forces within Catalonia was much more complex than in Madrid, as this Barcelona militant explains :

"Here in Barcelona the 'political' FAI, whose centre was in Valencia - Ferrer - but had a strong base in Madrid, was not much in evidence. (151). There were several FAI's - I don't even know how many - and they weren't all controlled from Toulouse. Some of them were 'radicals' in favour of armed struggle, others were fairly classical - the role of the FAI should be educational, and work in the Ateneos etc..., but it couldn't be completely controlled by the 'exilio'. Of course there were 'official' faistas (152), but they didn't have the weight they had in Madrid, Valencia and the provinces. Here, the 'pasotas' of Luís Andrés Edo had far more weight, so had Cases and the ex-GOA, the MCL, and other small groups which had Marxist backgrounds, and some trade union base. That's why the 'exilio' had far more difficulty controlling the situation in Catalonia, and had to look for alliances with groups other than the 'official' FAI. Also, Solidaridad - although it had some very good trade union militants and sympathisers - was not as important here as in Madrid or Valencia. It was all pretty complicated - it took a while to figure-out who was allying with whom, and this was constantly changing. At first Luís Andrés Edo was anti-'exilio', and he had been for many years - that's why some of the GOA supported him as they had known him in France (153).

Later on of course, this would change ... Cases - well I could never totally understand the 'exilio' attitude towards him. For although he was continuously attacked, they never completely hounded him out. That surprised me at first, given the way they went on about the *Cinco Puntistas*, and those who had worked within the 'vertical'. Then there was the whole question of the Trade Union Alliances. The one set-up here in Catalonia was attacked purely because it was proposed by the opposition, for a similar sort of one in Valencia was not contested because it was a creature of Ferrer's FAI. (154). That was when I began to realise what was going on. I don't think it mattered whether some sectors were 'verticalistas', 'pasotas', trade unionists or whatever, as long as their 'language' was within the 'orthodox' domain - which meant of course that they didn't challenge the 'ideological purity' of the 'exilio' leadership. That's the main reason why the MCL were told to dissolve their group - their 'language' was too threatening." (155)

Barcelona, 1979.

The MCL, as we have seen, was a group which seriously attempted some sort of "synthesis" between Marxism and anarchism, and which saw as one of its main tasks the "demystification" of anarchist language. (156). Like many of the groups, the MCL believed that there would be possibilities within the C.N.T. of engaging in discussion, and "up-dating" anarchist concepts, as this MCL member says :

"We felt that there were many anarchist concepts which didn't differ much from Marxists ones, and it used to infuriate us that there were all these 'semantic' exercises to keep anarchism separate, or because certain words sounded 'authoritarian'. The one that particularly bothered us was the 'committee for the defence of the revolution', which in essence was nothing else but the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' - a class has to impose its power over other classes to bring about the victory of the working class. Anyway, the anarchists had done this during the Republic - but it had to be called something different because it was anarchists who were doing it. (157). But I think we made a great mistake in hammering away about the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', because we couldn't raise the level of debate, and only succeeded in bringing down the entire 'Church' on top of us. We should have been more 'political' and carried on working to build-up support for our position within the trade unions. If we'd had greater support, they wouldn't have been able to deal with us as easily

as they did. For most of us in the MCL had a fair amount of trade union experience, and had worked hard from the beginning to build-up the trade unions, and we were quite successful. (158). But I think we made a lot of mistakes. Like getting two of our members on the first regional committee - we shouldn't have organised this bureaucratic manoeuvre.

The criticisms and attacks immobilised us anyway so we couldn't really do much work. At that time we felt it was important to be on the committee, to counteract the weight of the 'pasotas' of Luís Andrés Edo, and some of the 'loonies' who were said to be from one of the FAI's. We were also close to Juan Ferrer at this time, and we were both afraid that Solidaridad would gain too much influence. We knew that Ferrer was a Trotskyist 'entrism', but we agreed with him on strategy. In fact we were asked to take-up the leadership of the FAI towards the end of 1976, and we even toyed with the idea. Some members felt that it was the best tactical move, for with the historical name you do almost anything, while without it it's impossible to do anything. But most of our members were against it, given some of the type who called themselves 'faistas'. I think it must have been after that, when the 'exilio' realised it couldn't tame us, that the onslaught began upon us, and we were asked to dissolve our group. I think they were desperate for good trade union militants here in Catalonia - practically all those with some trade union experience were 'anti-exilio', and the trade unions dominated by Edo and the FAI didn't register much growth. For instance in my trade union - Metallurgy - I had intervened in the regional convenio, and therefore had a lot of contacts. I was able to recruit quite a lot of people at the beginning of the reconstruction. But the 'purists' would have nothing to do with this trade union, as it was dominated by 'Marxists', and set-up their own. This trade union was purely 'ideological' as all they did was engage in debates and had about ten members. In the end the two trade unions were united as ours grew while the other one didn't. But we shouldn't have exposed ourselves to these kind of attacks, as they took-up too much energy and time, and finally, wore us down."

Barcelona, 1979.

In Catalonia, as in Madrid, one of the major stumbling blocks to building-up a trade union alternative was the lack of unity of the opposition, as this ex-GOA member says :

"We were badly prepared for working together and forming some sort of 'class alliance' within the C.N.T. As I said, the reconstruction took place at the time when we were just beginning to know each other, and hadn't really broken-down the 'group mentality', although it was getting better. But I think it got even worse when we joined the C.N.T. at first. For example, there had been problems between Solidaridad and the MCL within the Coordinadora, but it was getting sorted-out - they'd changed delegates and these two got on better. But when we realised that they were on 'good terms' with Juan Ferrer - whom we couldn't stand, and knew he was an 'exilio' agent - our relationships with them went through a bad phase. The way they ranted on about the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' didn't help either. Some of the most anarchist GOA groups and Solidaridad weren't too happy about this. Later, when I got to know some of the MCL people my attitude changed - they were good trade unionists and I really liked F... a lot. But things like that often meant we retreated back into our groups, and I suppose there was an element of not wanting to lose our identity as group 'leaders' too. But I think it was a real shame we weren't able to overcome this kind of thing, for we needed to be organised in some sort of 'class alliance' to really get the trade unions going. We may not have succeeded - we would probably still have been hammered and prevented from doing serious trade union work - but at least we would have stood a better chance, instead of being picked off one by one."

Barcelona, 1979.

Even with a united opposition, it would have been extremely difficult to carry-out day-to-day work given the level of non-cooperation from other sectors of the C.N.T. The secretary of the Barcelona local federation from 1976 to 1977 gives us some idea of the difficulties :

"I had a hell of a time as secretary. I stayed the course till June '77 despite everything, because I was determined to last out my term. I soon realised that the C.N.T. had little of the spirit that I thought had been 'pure' anarchism. Because I argued that the C.N.T. should have a political strategy, I was called a 'Marxist'. None of the other secretaries functioned, so I ended-up doing all the secretaries' work - and they still called me authoritarian and 'reformist'. Once, when some members were detained, a crowd came while I was in a trade union meeting of the local federation and demanded I hold a demonstration right away. I said I couldn't - the trade unions had to approve it. Anyway, I said I didn't know

what was happening and would have to contact lawyers first. For this I was called 'reformist' - for not wanting to go out and shout it. But when it was really important - a strike for example, nobody was around. Most of the time they hung around debating the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', and how 'un-anarchist' this was, even though most of them didn't know what it meant, nor had any idea of C.N.T. history - or anything else. They would criticise me for everything, yet wouldn't take on any responsibility for themselves. I couldn't get anything serious done or organised. There people wanted assemblies all the time - they complained that the trade unions weren't libertarian enough. They used to ring me up at home at two o'clock in the morning to ask me silly questions. I had to get-up for work in the morning, while they could conspire all night on the Ramblas. (159). Even though I'd be up half the night at meetings, and still had to work, I was the 'reformist'."

Barcelona, 1979.

Certainly most militants I interviewed agreed that the "pasota" element, and those who opposed a trade union strategy for the C.N.T., was fairly numerous in Barcelona. Many younger, recently-recruited members were drawn to the charismatic figure of Luis Andrés Edo, former leader of the 1st May group, who succeeded in combining an "alternative counter-culture" perspective with continued allegiance to the exiled leadership. (160). Apart from his rejection of anarcho-syndicalism, his language is undoubtedly within the "orthodox" camp :

"I see a clear distinction between syndicalism and the libertarian movement. Syndicalism doesn't exist as such i.e. it is just a load of apparatuses controlled by political parties at a political level, which at best are defensive organisations. They're completely integrated within the system, and accept the rules of the game. The C.N.T. shouldn't have tried to structure the movement into trade unions - it should have been a detonator for setting into motion different types of experiences - Ataneos, communes. But not of a vanguard orientation - it should have let the movement create through its own dynamism. The idea of the 'work ethic' of the old anarchism of the 30's is totally out-of-date. Absenteeism, bad work - this is more revolutionary, and it's what's happening anyway. This puts in question the whole idea of salaried work. But the 'reformist' current has to exist within the C.N.T., so long as it's Confederal. The radical sector must also be present, otherwise the C.N.T. would just be like any other trade union - that's what makes

the 'dialectic' work - something specific about the C.N.T. (161). I don't totally reject the working class - or rather, sectors of it - as a revolutionary protagonist. A worker is partly reformist, partly revolutionary. But the heightening of the revolutionary aspect is brought about by the actions and pressure of the radical sector. (162). You can't single-out one single class as the revolutionary protagonist - though sectors of workers will be involved necessarily - this depends on the historical conjuncture, and the type of movement which has gained strength. Therefore strategy and tactics are impossible. One must simply observe, keep the pulse on what's happening, and try to dynamise and give some form to these movements - Communes and Ataneos at present. No, I don't think I've been influenced by Marcuse or anyone else like that. Classical anarcho-syndicalism had always taken-up the problems of "marginado (marginal groups), like prisoners etc... I feel that I'm just giving more weight to these than they did historically - actualising it. I also defend the existence of the exile organisation as part of the organisation. These people live in a community and have a certain life style which is a unique phenomenon. We can't exclude them. Also, when the movement in the interior ceased to function, after 1948, most of the people who came to Spain to build-up the organisation were from the 'exilio'. About 80 % of those who gave-up their lives in this period were from the 'exilio' too. And I can understand their lack of confidence in the interior organisation - the Cinco Puntistas and those who made deals with the CNS - these people really discredited the C.N.T. It was the 'exilio' who maintained the organisation which we have today, and made it possible to re-organise again." (163).

Barcelona, 1979.

There were of course many others within the C.N.T. who opposed a trade union direction for the organisation, and pointed to the importance of "marginalised" groups within the revolutionary process. Many of these, who would later contribute to the founding of libertarian magazines such as Ajoblanco and Bicicleta, (164) did however maintain good relationships with many autonomous groups in favour of trade union action within the C.N.T.. Why, I asked, was it possible to collaborate with these "counter-culturists" and not with those from the Edc faction? A member of the C.N.T., formerly of one of the GOA groups in Madrid, explains :

"With a 'serious' counter-culturist I can maintain a dialogue. I put forward my arguments in favour of

revolutionary syndicalism, and he puts his against. In a sense we agree to differ. There is no way I can do this with those from the Edo crowd - they simply don't engage in this kind of debate. A lot of his followers haven't much idea of these debates anyway, so it's useless. More importantly though, the 'serious' counter culturists don't obstruct trade union work. They do their own thing - mostly they work on magazines and leaflets, or work in the Ataneo - and leave me to do mine in the trade union. In that way we can work parallelly, if we can't work together. Neither do they 'go' for committees within the organisation, and if they do get a member on a committee it's because they've won it honestly - some of them are very well-prepared militants and are well-respected, so they win because of this, not through 'underhand' deals, which is what the Edo crowd is famous for. (165). A lot of the types around Edo are real 'pasotas' - I don't know how they support themselves - and they do nothing else but talk and conspire. At first they were very anti-exilio, but now that's changed. The way I see it is that the 'exilio' couldn't build-up the FAI they wanted to in Barcelona - a FAI on the lines of Ferrer's in Valencia - so they had to ally with other sectors, such as the 'pasotas' of Edo, and there were others too, such as Quimet - in order to keep some control of the situation. (166). No, I don't consider these people honest counter-culturists: I believe that they wanted power within the C.N.T. - the way they 'went' for committees proves it - and one of the ways of guaranteeing this was hatching a deal with the 'exilio', which they eventually did at the beginning of 1979."

Madrid, 1979.

At the national plenum of regionals, held in September 1976, these types of problems were not of course discussed. The decision of the acting national committee, which refused talks with the Labour Minister La Mata over the summer, was agreed, although some regionals complained about the procedure. Each region, they argued, should have been consulted about this, while the acting national committee defended its action on grounds of expediency. (167). The problem of 'Cinco Puntismo' was again discussed, and it was agreed that each trade union be allowed to follow its own policy regarding this, although the "Cinco Puntistas" were again condemned. Despite some opposition from certain regions (168), it was agreed that the C.N.T. should be legalised, so long as it

did not contravene the norms of the organisation. The main strategy proposal approved was somewhat vague, and limited C.N.T. action to "a strategy of 'rupture' which would tend to dismantle the vertical trade union, and defend a pluralist and free conception of trade unionism, and by adapting the trade union structures to the "peculiarities' of each region." The classical revolutionary syndicalist position regarding affiliation, that "any worker without distinction of his creed or ideology should be admitted" was agreed, with the usual proviso that he/she was not a member or representative of any political party or sect. Given the disagreement over the question of alliances with other trade unions (169), a compromise was reached, which allowed each regional to decide, as long as these alliances were with organisations which were "in favour of working class autonomy and its organisational freedom". Trade union unity, it was agreed, could only be created from the level of the rank and file. There was some discussion on the crisis of Spanish capitalism and its effects on workers, but no detailed strategy was elaborated, either for the short or long term. Indeed, most of the debates referred to internal organisational matters, such as the launching of a national newspaper, and the approval of the national committee recently elected in Madrid. Moreover, no attempt was made to tackle the problem of the exile organisations, both of whom were represented at the plenum. (170) The tone of this plenum, and of many subsequent plenums, was one of "triumfalismo", as Freddy Gomez says : "The re-born libertarian movement - the C.N.T. above all - tended to think that it was enough to polish the icons and proclaim its ideological purity for the masses, eager for self-emancipation, to come to it." (171).

This type of "triumfalismo" which prevailed in the C.N.T. was defended on the grounds that it was perhaps the only way to launch the organisation, given the almost insuperable problems accompanying its reconstruction. A member of the Madrid local federation committee explains :

"Look here - we didn't have the kind of support that the Workers' Commissions had - from the European Communist Parties and Moscow, nor the help from the German Social Democrats which the UGT/PSOE had. We had to rely on our own efforts, which weren't exactly a lot. Also, the C.N.T. had to start from scratch - it didn't have much left of the huge trade union base it once had - Franco had seen to that. I think the strategy we adopted during the first year was the only one we had any hope of carrying through, which was basically to make sure that the Communist Party didn't monopolise the trade union field as it had done in Portugal (172), and denounce those who tried to 'use' working class struggles for their own political ends. There is only so much 'space' for a trade union like ours within the trade union scene.

And it seemed to many of us that the most radical sectors of the working class were not looking for another trade union, as the enormous amount of autonomous strikes - particularly Vitoria - throughout 1976 seemed to point to. I think that was one of the reasons for the confusion within the C.N.T. I for one didn't think we could regain the strength we once had in the trade union field - we couldn't really compete with the big trade unions with international backing. Anyway, did we want to? We knew eventually they'd strike a deal with the government, and offer up the working class movement in exchange for political reforms, which is what happened. That's why the syndicalists argued that the C.N.T. could fill a 'space' within the trade union field - it would attract workers who opposed these manoeuvres. But I have never been too sure about this. You see, outside of Catalonia, we didn't have real trade union strength. Here in Madrid, and elsewhere, most of us had been active within the neighbourhoods, and realised the importance of community support. Madrid in January, and Vitoria, proved that without the 'extension' of the struggle outside of the factory gates no real sustained struggle could be maintained. I believe that we should have built on what we actually had achieved, where we had real strength, and not get too ambitious about what else we could do. For we were at a serious disadvantage vis-à-vis the other trade unions, and by trying to compete with them we lost some of the opportunities we could have had. For example, we insisted in setting-up local federations throughout the country, and wasted a lot of resources on this. These trade unions were farcical, and only meant that the 'group' which controlled them got their own local. It was the same with some of the trade unions set-up here and in Catalonia - they were just small groups of people who had little strength in the sector, and helped the 'tendencies' add another vote to their side. These things were seen as being proof that the C.N.T. was building-up its trade union base. This was nonsense - we should have concentrated on sectors which had a good chance of taking off, and forget about the rest.

But that's part of the 'triumfalismo' you mentioned. I think we all 'sinned' on that score. For even though I myself didn't see the trade union thing too clearly, I was heartened to see local federations being set-up in other parts of Spain, and began to feel - well maybe the syndicalists are right, we have a chance of taking off as a trade union. For when I look back on it, it was just our 'spirit' which enabled us to go on, given the lack of support, and the confusion within the C.N.T. But it did cause us problems. It stopped us facing-up to the problems which prevented us growing any further. But at the end of 1976, when we seemed to be really getting going, we choose to forget about all this - we were so thrilled at seeing a libertarian presence at work in Spain again - and carried-on building the organisation."

Madrid, 1978.

The C.N.T. certainly experienced real growth towards the end of 1976 and the beginning of 1977. By February 1977, it had a membership of 20,000, roughly the same membership as the UGT. (173). Undoubtedly the consolidation of the organisation owed much to the stability of the C.N.T. at a national level, under the secretariatship of Gómez Casas, a well-respected militant believed to be independent of all tendencies. (174). The national committee contained members of experience and commitment to hard work, which gave an air of 'seriousness' to the organisation. (175). The efforts of Chema Elizalde, on the international relations committee, brought enough financial support from European and American anarchist organisations to set the confederal press in motion. (176). Moreover, the C.N.T. seemed to be emerging from its preoccupation with internal organisational matters, by its support of "autonomous" struggles in Bilbao, Madrid and Barcelona. (177). The long and violent strike at Roca in Barcelona was actively supported by the C.N.T., which launched one of its greatest efforts, in terms of militants and financial help. (178). During the massive strike wave of January, 1977, which affected most industrial regions of Spain (179), the C.N.T. certainly played a more active role than in the previous year, particularly in Valencia and Catalonia. (180). It seemed indeed that the syndicalists were being proved correct, and that the C.N.T. was beginning to find its "space" within the trade union map. (181).

It was within this context that a bombshell hit the C.N.T. on January 30th. About fifty suspected FAI members were detained in a bar in Barcelona, accused of having arms and explosives. Many C.N.T. members would not believe that the FAI would have exposed the organisation to such a risk, and felt that it must have been a government-inspired plot to undermine the organisation. (182). Much of the centre-Left press agreed with this verdict, and openly spoke of the government's attempts to discredit the C.N.T. (183). Having at first tried to use it as an anti-communist alternative, they argued, it was now doing its best to give it an image of "anarcho-terrorism". (184). As many militants pointed out, the C.N.T.'s defence of violent strikes, outside the control of the trade unions now in dialogue with the government (185) had shown that the C.N.T. had not taken the advice of right-wing emigrés, and perhaps could be a force to be reckoned with, particularly in Catalonia. (186).

Certainly the political strategy of the government had changed quite dramatically by the end of 1976. As José Maravall points out, the high level of working class struggle throughout 1976 had made it impossible for the government of Arias to succeed in its plan for a limited and imposed reform "from above". (187). The tragedy at Vitoria, with five deaths and hundreds injured and detained, clearly showed the limits of Arias' plan for an "opening" of the system, and brought about the creation of "Coordinación Democrática", a unitary opposition grouping which represented most Christian Democratic and Left-wing forces which called for more extensive democratic freedoms. (188). There is little doubt as to the importance of pressure from the European community in urging a solution to the political crisis. As Ben Ami says :

"The organisation of European Unity, during the summer of 1976, proposed a political solution for the economic crisis. It suggested a social pact analogous to that signed by the British labour government with the trade unions, a pact which would limit salary and price rises,

would halt inflation and create a propitious climate for investments and a reactivation of the economy. A social pact would only be possible however, if there was political understanding between the trade unions and the government, if the latter were the elected representatives of the people and if the trade unions had the freedom to act in name of its members. What prevailed however was uncertainty and political vacillation, not 'understanding'. Moreover, the uncertainty in the political field exacerbated the apprehension of the investors and reduced the possibilities of dealing with unemployment. Official data published in February 1976, showed that in the three months after the death of the dictator, four hundred million dollars were surreptitiously taken out of Spain. The economics professor, Ramon Tamames, member of the central committee of the Communist Party, put the real figure at six hundred million dollars. Be that as it may, the flight of capital expressed the fear of democracy (a fear which exacerbated the hesitation of the government) and the loss of privileges when the old structures of the regime would be changed to others."

Ben Ami, Barcelona, 1981 p. 286.

This certainly seems to be the strategy followed by the government of Adolfo Suarez, directly named by the King to replace Arias in June 1976. As Maravall says, Suarez followed a policy of pacts with the Right and the Left from the autumn to Christmas 1976, and succeeded in getting the approval of the Army and the Francoist Cortes for his political reform project. <sup>(189)</sup>. This victory was crowned by the referendum of 15th. December, which overwhelmingly approved the reform package. The more "implicit" pact with the Left and Christian Democrats was based on the acceptance of various demands of the opposition : freedom of political parties, political amnesties, the dissolution of the "Movement" and the vertical trade unions, and the calling of free elections to a Constituent Cortes. <sup>(190)</sup>. The economic measures issued in October must surely have been "implicitly" agreed to in exchange : a salary freeze, the enlarging of temporary facilities for reducing staff levels etc..., measures which would be more explicitly agreed to in the "social pact" signed between the political parties and the government in October 1977. <sup>(191)</sup>.

From the announcement of the political reform programme in September 1976, the political process dominated the life of Spanish society. Coordinación Democrática began to crumble as a viable opposition to the government, as each group within it began to consolidate its own identity vis-à-vis the coming elections. The large injections of state finance into the economy meant a slight increase in economic activity and a slower growth of unemployment, thus "postponing" the full brunt of the crisis until after the elections of June 1977. (192). Strike activity remained high however, as did nationalist feeling in the Basque provinces. The killing of the president of the Deputación in Guipuzcoa in September was followed by a 50,000 strong demonstration and a general strike throughout the Basque provinces. During the same month, in remembrance of the executions of ETA and FRAP members in 1975, a general strike in the Basque provinces was supported by 600,000, the largest strike in the provinces since 1939. (193) Solidarity strikes followed in the Canary Islands and Sabadell, which called for the end of repression and the granting of democratic freedoms. As Maravall points out, this image of combative popular mobilisation is crucial in understanding the dynamic of pressure / negotiation which continued to characterise the phase between autumn '76 and July 1977. (194).

There was, of course, a reaction from the workers' movement to the economic measures decreed by Suarez, particularly the wage and the suspension of article 35 (i.e. the authorisation of dismissals). It seemed indeed that there was a possibility of a re-enactment of January, as workers throughout Spain struck in industries as far apart as Construction (Burgos, Leon, Vigo) garbage collectors (Seville) agriculturalists (Valencia), textile workers, civil servants and Asturian miners. (195). But, as in January, the Workers' Commissions, the only organisation capable of coordinating the struggle and demanding full trade union rights, was concentrating its efforts within Coordinación Democrática, which, it believed, would add strength to the struggle.

The limitations of this strategy were shown on the 27th. of September, when the Basque provinces and Tenerife, the places where the struggle reached its greatest height, struck to commemorate the executions of September 1975. The attempt in Madrid to follow suit was thwarted owing to Ruiz Giménez' explicit threat that he would leave Coordinación Democrática if these "street actions" continued. (196). It would certainly seem that certain strikes, such as those by the Post Office workers and the bus employees, which could have played a galvanising role like the Metro had done in January, were not supported at first by the Workers' Commissions. When they finally did support them, no attempt was made to bring out other sectors, and the movement fell back. (197). The only concerted response to the economic measures was a "peaceful and responsible" day of action, called by the COS (the trade union coordinating body) on the 12th November, which could be seen to be part of the pressure / negotiation strategy outlined above.

Within this context of government and opposition strategy strikes which refused both the arbitration of the vertical trade unions and that of the opposition could be seen as threatening the reform process. This was especially true of "autonomous" and "assemblyist" strikes in the Basque provinces and Catalonia. A "Unitary Coordinator of Factory Assemblies" constituted in Vizcaya (the Basque provinces), had the support of 120,000 workers in the region, and prolonged the general strike of September 13th. for some time. (198). The metal strike in Sabadell (Catalonia), although initiated by the larger firms with a tradition of struggle, had succeeded, for the first time, in bringing out the smaller firm in the area, and indeed was beginning to get support from other sectors, such as textiles. (199). It must have been worrying to the government, on the point of issuing its economic decrees, to have the possibility of a general metal strike in Catalonia. The heavy repression of this strike, and the one at Rocca some time later, has been interpreted by

some writers as proof of a new offensive by the government, intent on gaining the confidence of the business community in this phase of the political reform. (200). As they further point out, this offensive initiated a new period, one in which large-scale "autonomous" strikes would be isolated and ignored, by the government, the press and the opposition, and ultimately doomed to failure. (201).

Many C.N.T. militants believed that the government offensive must include the C.N.T., given its declared support of "autonomous" strikes, and its intervention within Roca. Certainly there was increasing police vigilance vis-à-vis the C.N.T. at the beginning of 1977, and "curious" bomb attacks attributed to the organisation. (202). However, the detention of the FAI members in January 1977 is difficult to see as being purely a "put-up" job by the government. Firstly, those detained were either Spaniards resident in France or foreigners identified as anarchists in their respective countries. (203). Secondly, the C.N.T. was forced to publicly deny the existence of the FAI, but it was well known, and acknowledged by the FAI leader, Juan Ferrer, that its existence dates to 1972, or earlier. And, as this militant points out, there is little doubt that the strategy of the FAI was to "take" as many committee posts as possible, in order to keep the organisation "on the right tracks" :

"I just couldn't believe it at first - most of us thought that it must have been a government provocation - even the FAI wouldn't want to discredit us like that. But then, when I realised that yes, it was the FAI that was involved - it did make some sense. I think they felt that they weren't gaining control quickly enough - for although they controlled a lot of regional committees, they couldn't get all their 'boys' elected on the national committee and the Catalan regional committee. Also, maybe they thought that the organisation was becoming too 'syndicalist', which meant that the 'autonomos' were getting on with the trade unions, and they were being left behind. But I also think that there could have been a government / 'exilio' pact involved. It's funny, each time it seemed like the organisation was 'taking off', something like this happened. I know it can't be proved, but that's how a lot of us felt about it. (204).

If that wasn't the case, then it's amazing the lengths they'd to to to keep the organisation under their control. For one thing was sure - the havoc it caused within the organisation lasted for months." (205).

Barcelona, 1979.

Whatever the truth of the matter proves to be, it certainly had a de-stabilising effect within the organisation. While denying the existence of the FAI, the C.N.T. did however offer solidarity to those detained and organised their legal defence. Many C.N.T. members were outraged by this, as this militant explains :

"What had this to do with the C.N.T., which hadn't even been informed of this meeting, and had nothing to do with the whole arms thing. Why should the C.N.T. pay the costs Just when we were beginning to rid ourselves of the 'pasota' image, and recruit ordinary workers, we have to run around to sort-out something which will definitely put workers off. It was a real disgrace." (206).

Barcelona, 1979.

On the other hand, those from the pro-FAI faction were unhappy about what they considered to be the "lukewarm" attitude of the C.N.T. in defending the accused FAI members. (207). It seemed like whatever the organisation did would not be wholly approved of by the mass of its members. As a writer of the period says :

"In general, the rank and file received the blow badly. By giving solidarity to the detained, it fell into the 'faista' manipulation. But how could it adopt any other attitude ? Once more, the old reflex of libertarian solidarity was activated in the face of police harassment. But the criticisms were not less fiery for that. Why hadn't the clandestine faïstas taken advantage of the situation to openly declare their existence ? Perhaps they preferred to present themselves before a stupified and manipulated rank and file as the worst enemies of the state and therefore gain themselves the title of new martyrs so as to be better able to gain their objectives. Questions without answers, but, since then, questions which are still on the agenda."

F. Gomez, Paris, 1979 p. 15.

The most immediate effects of the FAI detentions were felt within the regional committee in Catalonia. As this Barcelona C.N.T. member says, all trade union work was halted due to the continual polemics, and committee struggles raged almost non-stop until September :

"From February onwards the atmosphere here in Barcelona was terrible. Everything revolved around the elections for the regional committee, which had been severely criticised for its lack of commitment to the detained FAI members. The Secretary, an 'exilio' guy, resigned in May, followed by Luis Andres Edo, who had been one of the main critics of the regional committee's actions, and who made great capital out of the 'lack of libertarian solidarity' shown by the regional committee. I remember the meeting where the new regional committee was elected in May - it was incredible - everyone shouted and screamed - there was no way that proper discussion could take place. Cases and Luis Edo Martin were almost 'hounded out' of the regional committee, and of course Luis Andrés Edo was re-elected. (208). But this committee didn't last long either - there was too much opposition to it - and the new committee elected in September was overwhelmingly anti-FAI. (209). You see, try as they could they never managed to control Barcelona like they did Madrid and Valencia. I believe that was mostly to do with the strength of the GOA here, who had some excellent and well-prepared militants with trade union experience and who had a lot of support. But it made our life very difficult, and I know quite a few ex-GOA people left at this time. I carried-on because I don't scare easily - anyway, I still thought we would win the day".

Barcelona, 1979.

The repercussions of the FAI detentions was also felt in Madrid, and would determine the course the opposition to the FAI would take over the next period, as this ex-Solidaridad militant explains :

"The detentions were the last straw for us here in Madrid. A member of the national committee had been detained with the others - a FAI guy who we knew had been organising the FAI from the national committee. We believe that that was when the 'exilio' changed their alliances - I think the detentions were too much for them too - and brought about the 'rising star' of Juan Ferrer. His was a more 'political' FAI - less 'mad' than the one being organised from the national committee,

and on no account in favour of the 'arms carry-on'. Of course we knew the FAI had been organising, but I suppose the detentions shook us up, and forced us to do something concrete about it. For these detentions were followed by others - in Murcia and Malaga - and we could see the prospect of the C.N.T. becoming totally 'marginal', with just armed loonies and 'pasotas' as members. That's when we were started organising ourselves and tried to get positions on the committees. For, despite all the rhetoric about the committees within the C.N.T. having no power, we had learnt that this wasn't the case. This was brought home to us at the time of the detentions when Gómez Casas refused any discussion over the detention of a member of the national committee, and we'd seen how information wasn't passed on to us. This happened all the time. (210). So we set-up 'Los Buitres' (The Vultures) - there were two ex-Soli members, three from another autonomous group (Eleuterio Quintanilla) and some new people. There were only eight of us, but all of us held posts on committees later on. It was basically an information group, with some contacts in Valencia. We looked at the correlation of forces between the FAI and the non-FAI trade unions - things like that. But we all felt that the most important work was within the trade unions, so that's what we concentrated our energies on."

Madrid, 1978.

It was certainly true that committee posts within the C.N.T. did confer power. Militants complained that committee members took unilateral decisions, (such as talks with the Labour Minister, La Mata, or the calling of the demonstration on November 12th. 1976, organised by COS), without consultation with the trade unions. (211). The most frequent complaint however was that relevant information was withheld by the local committee or regional committee, which often prevented the trade unions voting on certain proposals, as they did not have the full agenda. (212).

Reports issued from committees invariably dealt with ideological questions, or major topics. (213). Very little if any information was given about the activities of committee members while in their posts, or outlined conflicts in which the C.N.T. was involved. Despite repeated requests for information about finances, or the number of paid-up members, this information was never given. (214).

Undoubtedly the non-FAI trade unions were more likely to suffer from these effects, as this militant says :

"We just gave-up asking for information from the local committee or the regional committee. We wouldn't receive minutes of certain meetings for months - if we received them at all. (215). If we organised a meeting or talk, and asked one of the committees to circulate the info' they just wouldn't do it. And if the treasurer was a FAI sympathiser, he wouldn't pay the costs to cover our activities. They deliberately tried to sabotage anything we did, which of course they could easily do from the committee. So we just went ahead and organised things ourselves - it was the only way to get anything done."

Madrid, 1979.

By the end of 1976 it was becoming increasingly clear that the organisation was functioning at "two levels", that of the committees and that of the trade unions. The latter would establish contacts with other regions, organise meetings etc..., and indeed function independently of the rest of the organisation. (216). Undoubtedly this exacerbated the centrifugal tendencies which had accompanied the reconstruction, and encouraged the trend towards factional organising. Moreover the lack of information received through organisational channels was replaced by a system of rumours and counter-rumours, as this C.N.T. member points out :

"The only way you could find out what was happening was by contracting someone you knew - usually someone who was better-informed, naturally - and who knew other people in other trade unions and other regions. They would tell you that the FAI was doing this or that, then later somebody else would tell you no, they weren't doing that, they were doing something else. But it was the only way you got to know anything, for of course, these kind of things were never discussed at the local federation."

Madrid, 1978.

The most powerful position within the C.N.T. was of course, the secretary of the national committee, a post held since September 1976, by Gómez Casas. Most members had been happy

about this election, seeing him as being independent of all tendencies within the organisation. Soon, however, doubts were being expressed about his "neutrality" when he refused to discuss the detention of the FAI member on the national committee. (217). These doubts were compounded by his handling of the "exilio" problem, as this ex-GOA member says :

"The 'exilio' question had come to the fore again at the time of the FAI detentions in January. When the detentions occurred two members of the Catalan regional committee were at a meeting with Frente Libertario at Narbonne, to try to sort something out. Frente Libertario suggested that the exile organisations should dissolve themselves into the Spanish organisation, as one more regional, and pay their dues accordingly. As far as I know, the national committee had sent these members on its behalf. (218). I believe this would have been the best solution, and would have ended all the confusion over the status of the 'exilio', and let us get on with our own thing. But shortly after, at the plenaria of the national committee (219), it was not agreed to, and the issue was postponed again. I don't know what happened in the meantime - I'm sure that Gomez must have been under a lot of pressure (it happened again with the next national secretary - he seemed to change course) to keep things as they were. But it's a shame - this was a great opportunity to clear the matter up. Instead, the 'exilio' question came up again and again, and it was always the same - it was dodged and postponed - and the exilio continued as before, with its status intact."

Barcelona, 1979.

For the public at large, however, 1977 proved to be the year of the great "libertarian boom". A press conference in February was followed by a massive "festival" at San Sebastián de Los Reyes, attended by some 25,000. (220). Similar meetings took place in Montjuich in Barcelona and in Valencia, which culminated in the "Jornadas Libertarias" (Libertarian Days) in Barcelona at the end of July. (221). Libertarians from throughout Europe came to Barcelona for five days of films, concerts, theatre and discussions. The "anarchist boom" was born.

But these meetings were not greeted with wholehearted approval by all members of the C.N.T. The "tone" of the Montjuich meeting in Barcelona was particularly offensive to many trade union militants, as this ex-GOA member says :

"Well, as I said, the C.N.T. was really beginning to 'take-off' around this time - by June 1977, we had distributed around 160,000 membership cards, and had a high level of paid-up members. (222). But after the meeting at Montjuich, there was a considerable drop in membership. I relate this directly to the speech made by José Peirats, when he made a frontal attack on the autonomy statutes, particularly the Catalan demand for regional autonomy. I just couldn't believe it - what the hell was he up to ? In our first public meeting - in Catalonia, where the C.N.T. had its greatest support, and could really have been a force to be reckoned with - he had to come out with something that was totally out of line. That was the beginning of the exodus by Catalan workers to the UGT and USO - up till then we were getting UGT and USO members coming to us. But that was just part of the whole 'libertarian fiesta' atmosphere of the meeting - trade unionism was not really considered - it was all to do with 'personal' liberation and having a good time. Not that I'm against this, in its place at C.N.T. leaders, like Peirats, should have been aware of what he was saying, and the dire consequences it had for trade union organising here in Catalonia."

Barcelona, 1979.

However, the C.N.T. was not only a "pole of attraction" for those in search of individual liberation after the long years of repression, it was also seen as the only revolutionary alternative within the politics of the "reform pact" to which the other working class organisations had adhered. An ex-Trotskyist militant explains why he joined the C.N.T. in 1977 :

"It was clear what was going on. The elections had been planned with agreement of the Workers' Commissions and the UGT - USO more or less agreed as well, although it didn't have the strength the other two did, so it wasn't that important. Where was there for us to go ? We'd always had a certain respect for the C.N.T. - its revolutionary tradition etc... but felt that its actions

during the Civil War had tarnished its reputation forever. But it seemed that it was beginning to 'take-off' during 1977, and so we began to look at it more seriously. You see, it was the only trade union which openly criticised the 'reform pact', supported assembly struggles and didn't 'use' the working class for its own political prestige. Of course we realised that we would have to struggle against the anarchists within the C.N.T., as they had traditionally held the working class back from taking power and consolidating the revolution. But we felt that once we built-up the organisation i.e. the trade unions, this would create its own revolutionary dynamic, and workers would respond to our position. You see, we really believed that a revolutionary situation existed in Spain at that time, so that determined our strategy." (223).

Valencia, 1978.

For Workers' Autonomy, another group who joined the C.N.T. during 1977, its reasons for joining were very different, as one of its leaders says :

"Our group had its origins in Liberación, which was a split from XYZ in 1975. (224). From the beginning we were clear that we didn't want anything to do with 'fictitious politics', so we didn't sign anything we wrote or distributed.

(225). We never saw ourselves as a end in ourselves, but the beginning of a move towards a 're-think' amongst certain sections unhappy with the way the traditional left - the Leninist left - thought and acted. (226). That's why we dissolved ourselves at the time of Vitoria, and set-up collectives at a local level. This decision had to be seen within the autonomous struggles of post-Francoism, of which Vitoria was a primary example.

But the internal 'vanguard' we believed would develop never did. We failed totally. But it had seemed possible, at the time. At the time of Vitoria, we had 2,500 sympathisers, and GOA had quite a number too.

We had a lot of contact with the GOA, but the Italian influences were more important in our analysis of the Spanish working class movement.

Tronti was particularly important in developing our analysis. (227). The whole notion that workers' struggle conditioned capitalist development - pushed capitalist development ahead - was crucial in our theoretical development.

This may seem abstract, but it had practical implications. Vitoria and other autonomous strikes were 'outside of the plan'.

We felt that we had several 'areas of intervention' because of the nature of capitalist development, which uses the whole of society - the school, neighbourhood etc..., to reproduce the production cycle. (228). This also referred to different sections of society, not just the working class. We believed that 'marginalised' groups, such as homosexuals, feminists, ecologists etc..., would play an increasingly important role, given the fact that large sections of workers - even their struggle were part of the capitalist plan of development. It was funny how many points we discovered we had in common with the C.N.T. when we started thinking of joining it. We hadn't realised the strong libertarian strain within Workers' Autonomy until we discussed entering it. We'd always given strong emphasis to 'counter-power' i.e. the working class against that of the state, and new types of relationship within the 'class' - communist relationships within the class. But this had taken second place because of the struggle against the dictatorship. This began to have more relevance when we started thinking of joining the C.N.T. Why did we think of joining the C.N.T? Well, primarily because the self-organisation which we thought would develop didn't. The working class went on the defensive - what had formally been a struggle for higher wages was now one for jobs. The bourgeois solution to the crisis radically changed - there was a stronger anti-working class offensive, which 'decomposed' the class. Workers' Autonomy had suffered a reverse, so we took a step backwards, as it were, and joined the C.N.T., because workers were now joining trade unions. We thought the C.N.T. could offer something new, given its history of

anti-statism, its combativeness, its comittment to self-organisation. We believed that the C.N.T. could overcome the limits of trade unionism and that Workers' Autonomy could play an important role.

The organisation of 'class autonomy' was itself a form of counter-power - it could at certain times accumulate workers' counter-power. This is how we saw the C.N.T. and why we joined it. It was the only mass organisation in Western Europe which had a history of favouring working class autonomy, and held a vision fairly close to our own."

Barcelona, 1979.

Another group, which had been active within the C.N.T. from its inception, held a fairly similar view vis-à-vis the "total" nature of revolutionary change and the growing importance of "marginalised" groups, although they supported their analysis by recourse to more "classical" anarchist thinkers. One of the leading members of the anarcho-communists in Madrid explains :

"Well, I refuse to define myself precisely. I've abandoned many 'Churches' so I don't want to be identified with any other. But I'm closer to anarcho-communism than anything else. You see, I reject Marxist-Leninism and anarcho-syndicalism as revolutionary strategies.

There is historical evidence to prove that neither of these ideologies / strategies are valid. I feel perhaps that anarcho-communism ( a la Archinov, Makhnov) (229) is more interesting precisely because it's not so developed - it gives more room for manoeuvre. We should be ready to criticise everything and be ready to adopt new strategies and ideologies which respond more accurately to a given situation. I believe that the anarcho-communist idea of 'grupos de afinidad' - which are now called 'grupos autonomos' - is still valid, and has been proved recently. These autonomous groups - freely developing and working in their own way - in firms, neighbourhoods amongst women, 'marginados', have great prestige within their own vicinity, and can make things move. I wouldn't even suggest that these groups should be coordinated - organisation will emerge from struggle, and can't be forced. (230). Each group should also engage in theoretical discussion, and publish their own magazine, like Palante and Askatasuna. (231).

What I'm trying to say that the real strength of a movement is not necessarily that of an organisation - in fact I would argue that it is better off without one. (232). For if we look at the history of working class organisations - both Marxist and anarchist - I think it's clear that the 'myths' they create, and the 'saints' they worship hold back their development, and keep them 'stuck' in a certain groove. For example the old debate between Marx and Bakunin. They were both very complex thinkers and changed positions in the course of their lives.

There should therefore be a more profound study of these thinkers. I'm against the anti-Marxism of the anarchists, and I can't understand why they rely on Proudhon instead of Marx - there's no comparison - Marx was one of the

greatest writers on political economy. I think the only way to get out of this deadlock is to be open to study every revolutionary, from whatever 'ism' and try to learn something from him. If these autonomous groups act in this way - and many of them do - then they could be detonators of mass action - mass autonomous action, which isn't limited by strategies / ideologies inherited from the past. Call this anarcho-communism or workers' autonomy, or what you will. What's important is that there are no 'purist' revolutionary principles - 'praxis' / theory should dictate the strategy which should be followed."

Madrid, 1978.

The anarcho-communists, who were particularly strong in the Basque provinces <sup>(233)</sup>, had joined the C.N.T., as one of their militants says :

"because we felt it could occupy a particular political space, for its history of struggle and the fact that many 'autonomous' practices were associated with it. Because of its organisational structure, it did allow for some local initiatives to be taken. But we also felt that we could change it, for we believed - and still do - that trade unionism is limited and has to be transcended in order for a revolutionary change to be possible. I think January 1976 was important in strengthening our feelings about this, and Vitoria of course. These massive struggles couldn't have been sustained for so long without community support - after all, capitalist exploitation doesn't stop at the factory gates - it invades everything, and has to be combatted in a 'total' way. Also, I think it's been proved historically - Western Europe is the prime example - that the old anarcho-communists were right. Trade unionism does create its own hierarchies - certain groups of workers almost control some of the trade unions in Europe, and other sections of workers are ignored - like the low-paid, and women. It can't be an organisational form which has relevance today, when other crucial issues are coming more to the fore, and demanding an urgent solution - like ecology - a 'life and death' issue which can't be postponed - and feminism - women have never been considered much within the syndicalist schema - and 'marginalised' groups - gays, the youth. No one can deny that their exploitation is any less than that of a factory worker, and may even be greater in some respects. I still believe that the 'working class' is the force for change. But what do we mean by 'working class' in the 1970's, and how can we best organise it for revolutionary change? I don't think

these are simple questions - they have to be looked at more closely - elaborated upon - and thought through without any previous 'ideological prejudices'. Although I was sceptical about being able to do this within the C.N.T. - I thought its historical inertia would prevent us from doing it - I didn't think that the 'witch-hunt' against us would be as virulent as it was. You see I joined after the meeting at San Sebastián de Los Reyes. I was very impressed by the libertarian feeling of the fiesta, and thought that there would be space for us within a broad-based libertarian organisation, which it seemed to me that the C.N.T. was beginning to be. Even though I knew at the time that people were already leaving it - they'd given-up fighting against the current I still believed that there would be some possibility of working within it. Now that I think about it it was probably an 'emotional' decision, for all the doubts I had about it were proved right."

Madrid, 1979.

Certainly the "libertarian" meetings of 1977 had shown that the C.N.T. was "different, heterogenous, as contradictory as you like, but it began to exist again. Not now with respect to its past, but as an alternative social movement of the present." (234). However, these meetings had also highlighted the unresolved problem of the relationship of the libertarian movement to the C.N.T., as this ex-GOA member says :

"I was never in favour of the Jornadas Libertarias in Barcelona. (235). I believed that we hadn't really got the organisation functioning well enough, and that this kind of thing would just 'swamp' us with all kinds of people before we were prepared for it. The question of 'pasotismo' was not new - we'd had to deal with it all along - but I knew that this would increase if the organisation itself gave off that image. And this happened during the Jornadas in the Parque Guell - there was a real 'pasada' (236), with dope-smoking, people stripping naked and so on, which was linked in the public's mind with the C.N.T. It was from then onwards that you could say the 'syndicalist' offensive began. It was curious, because I'd never considered myself a 'syndicalist' before then. Yes I was in favour of building-up the trade unions, but I'd always considered the revolutionary process as being more 'global' i.e. that the C.N.T. should take-up all issues affecting the working class, and not necessarily within the trade unions, as the

'orthodox' syndicalists would have it, but in the neighborhoods, and in autonomous collectives and so forth. But after the 'Jornadas' I began to realise that if we who were in favour of the trade unions didn't work really hard to keep them going, then the C.N.T. would become like all the rest of the European anarchist movements, without any popular base, and after the 'fashion' changed, would again disappear and become just one more 'grupuscule'. For, after all, that was what was so unique about the C.N.T. and why we had wanted to reconstruct it - its peculiar type of syndicalism. For although it doesn't confine itself to trade unionism, it must have its base - and its strength - in the labour movement. Also, anyone who was involved in day-to-day problems in his firm - as I was - couldn't ignore what was happening. For the crisis was being paid for by the working class - they laid off workers when they felt like it, and they were cutting out overtime and bonuses, things which had allowed workers some standard of living. No, the C.N.T. would have to build-up its trade union in order to address some of the injustices which were taking place. We were determined that we had to get the trade unions going, and rid the organisation of the types that roamed around the Ramblas."

Barcelona, 1979.

There is little doubt that the economic crisis, which had been somewhat "cushioned" until then was making itself felt more acutely after the general elections of July 1977. (237). Although strike action remained at a high level, the number of strikes dropped to half that of 1976. (238). Moreover, as Maravall points out, many strikes were now ending in defeat for the workers. (239). Certainly the image of "combative popular mobilisation" was now changing to one of "desencanto", a specifically Spanish phenomenon which would characterise the next few years of the political transition to democracy. (240). This "apathy", interpreted as being due to the "demobilisation" policies of the CP and the PSOE, or the result of the cultural / ideological inheritance of Francoism (241) would grow considerably during 1978 and 1979, and is reflected in the very low level of trade unionism in Spain, below the level of the majority of Western European countries. (242)

Certainly the "boom" which the C.N.T. experienced during 1977 and early 1978 did not mean much increase in the strength of its trade unions, which, after their growth up to mid-1977, tended to remain static. (243). Indeed, many militants testify to the very different kind of recruit who joined the C.N.T. at the end of 1977 and the beginning of 1978. As they said, those who joined in 1976 and early 1977, were, on the whole, well-known militants and politically "well-prepared", while those who joined in the later period were more of an "acrata / radical / libertarian" type, many of whom were more disposed towards the positions of the FAI, or the "counter-cultural" views of Luis Andrés Edo. (244).

Moreover, despite a membership of some 120,000 and a spectacular growth in Andalusia, (245), the C.N.T. was still not functioning as a national entity. (246). At the local level too, the C.N.T. was having difficulties of coordination between the local federation and the regional committee, a criticism aired at the national plenum of regionals, held in September 1977. (247). In Catalonia, the largest region, the coordination between the local federation and the regional committee was almost non-existent from June 1977, as this C.N.T. member explains :

"Apart from Luis Andrés Edo, the regional committee at this time was anti-FAI, which meant that the local federation - dominated by the FAI since June 1977 - rarely coordinated its efforts with it. They functioned quite separately, and often carried-out actions which you could say were entirely opposite. It was an absolute mess, and it seemed like, no matter how we tried, there was no way we could build-up the infrastructure of the organisation. The problem with the secretaries continued - nobody knew quite what was expected of them - what their functions were - and they changed continually. Everybody was talking about the crisis of the C.N.T., and how we could get out of it. The FAI on the other hand, kept going on about how the C.N.T. had always been conflictive - that was how the organisation worked. (248). But more and more people

were talking about the need for a congress, where all the problems could be talked about, and certain points clarified. Clarification - that's what we thought we needed at the time - it shows you how naive we were." (249).  
Barcelona, 1979.

This feeling is reflected at the national plenum of regionals of September 1977, where the majority of regionals agreed to the holding of a Congress. (250). The problem however was when to hold it, and how it would be organised. A few of the regionals urged that it should be held as soon as possible, while others, Valencia particularly, felt that the organisation was not yet prepared for it. A process of discussion and gathering of information should begin, Valencia argued, in order that all shades of opinion could be registered. (251). It was finally agreed that the date, locality and contents be studied by the regionals and included in the next plenum of regionals. The national committee should immediately present a report to the regionals on the technical preparation of Congress, and coordinate the campaign to launch it. (252).

Other topics discussed at the plenum included C.N.T. strategy, which continued to be "assembleist", and the question of the status of the exile organisation. Again, Valencia defended a motion which sought to leave things as they were i.e. while agreeing that members of the C.N.T. should reside in Spain, it proposed that those in exile should contribute to setting-up sections of the AIT wherever they were. The Frente Libertario group could not accept this, given the actual situation of the AIT. (253). Moreover, Frente Libertario complained of the ignorance shown vis-à-vis their proposals of Narbonne i.e. that both exile organisations should dissolve themselves into the Spanish organisation. Indeed, many regionals had not received a copy of the proposal, which the national committee said it had sent in February. In essence, the Narbonne proposal was presented as "interference in the affairs of the interior C.N.T.", with

complaints from the Toulouse group that "those who aren't integrated within the 'exilio' are not entitled to an opinion over whether the exilio should dissolve itself." The motion was carried on the basis of continuing "unconditional support" from the "exilio", while "avoiding any interference in the interior". (254).

The Toulouse exile group were fully aware of the implications of the Narbonne proposal, which was discussed in their meeting of groups from throughout France in August 1977. (255). Many of the delegates at this meeting were outraged that they should be viewed as just one more "marginal" group, and placed in the same bag as the Frente Libertario group, who weren't even anarcho-syndicalists. It was clear that they wished to continue having an "integral part of the responsibility, otherwise we would be reduced to simple collaborators without initiatives." (256). It was also clear that the exilio, (which saw itself as the only C.N.T. in the exterior) was not happy with having a representative on the national committee, which could be a two-edged weapon. They would then have to abide by the decisions of the majority, while now the relationship was a direct one with the national committee. It was agreed that the Narbonne proposal must be given priority at the time, with the veiled threat that if the national plenum of regionals "recognise a 'supposed' regional in the exterior which confronts the S.I., then it would cause a serious problem, of incalculable consequences, of which only the interior / 'marginals' would be to blame." (257)

Undoubtedly the C.N.T. was still financially very dependent on the exile organisation. As the treasurer pointed out, the national newspaper, the "C.N.T. was having serious difficulties and had to cut down its circulation, (258) and it was agreed at the plenaria of October 1977 that the Toulouse exile organisation should now finance the paper. (259). Although some financial support was continuing from the Swedish SAC, and other anarchist organisations, this was not nearly enough to cover the expenses of the paper. (260).

There is little doubt that the lack of functioning of the C.N.T., at both a national and local level, was a major factor in the financial crisis, as was the content and format of the paper, which many militants viewed as being totally "out of date". (261).

The results of the September plenum would exacerbate the crisis, at all levels of the organisation, by the resignation of the national committee. (262). Madrid was again designated to elect, which began an eight-month-long committee struggle, unparalleled in its violence and breach of organisational norms, as this Madrid militant explains :

"Well it was perfectly obvious that the FAI and their sympathisers here in Madrid tried every way they could to stall the election of the national committee. Although it had been decided in September to elect the SP here in Madrid, it wasn't till November that the meeting was held to elect it. This was because the FAI objected to every method of election proposed, and it wasn't till then that we came to some agreement over this. It was finally decided to elect the new SP in a plenum of militants, and a national committee was elected in this way. But that meeting - held in 'La Paloma' - was just unbelievable. I suppose that it was because three non-FAI people were elected, and as the national committee was extremely important in terms of the relationship with the 'exilio' - and of course had been given the task of organising the Congress - they wanted a totally FAI-dominated committee. Anyway, lots of militants were unhappy with the election of Jaime Pozas, and called for him to step down, which he refused to do. (263). He and other FAI supporters went wild over this, and refused to listen to any argument against his election. After this it was just madness - shouts and screams - we nearly came to blows. I know many people left the C.N.T. after this, it was just too much. Because the FAI dominated the local federation, it decided, (because of the 'discontent' at 'La Paloma'), to annul all the agreements of the meeting, even though the only problem had been with Pozas - everyone else had been happy with the rest of the members elected. Again, the whole problem of how the next election was to take place came up again, and we didn't have an election till the middle of January. This time it was conducted by the method of a trade union plenary, with open lists sent in from the trade unions. This time they

tried to discredit one of the principal leaders of the opposition, and ex-Soli militant, and Pozas said he wouldn't be on the same committee as C..... (an ex-Soli militant) But C..... still got elected, despite an attempt by the Transport trade union to present a unitary candidacy, supposed to be agreed to by over 400 members of the union, which was hard to believe. (264). When they did not know what else to do, they suddenly pulled the 'Valencian problem' out of the bag - something which had been resolved two years ago! But still, three non-FAI members were elected. Finally, the new national committee was presented by the out-going committee in a plenaria, where the rest of the regionals have to ratify the election. This time they won the day by trying to show that the Madrid local federation was in a state of chaos, and actually presented false data - such as the Teaching trade union didn't support the election, which was untrue - and continuing to discredit C..... To top it all, some of the regionals asked to be sent reports from all the parties implicated in the election. The minutes of this were never recorded, and only the reports from the FAI were ever sent. They even presented reports from Transport and Commerce, which nobody had ever seen - they had never been approved at the local federation - which were totally 'inorganic'. It was obvious that all this had been prepared beforehand - I for one had surprised a group - all of whom had been involved in these manoeuvres - in a meeting behind closed doors, where they asked me if I had been 'invited' or not. (265). Given this state of chaos they presented, the national committee was not ratified, and it was agreed that the question would have to be taken-up at the plenum of regionals, due to be held in April. I suppose in a way it was a kind of victory for us. For although we hadn't got our committee through, the FAI hadn't managed to get theirs through either, in spite of all their manoeuvres." (266).

Madrid, 1979.

It was quite clear that the FAI was well and truly on the offensive from the end of 1977, when all pretences of obtaining power through normal organisational channels were dropped, and norms were openly breached. By using the newly-instituted "majority law", the metal trade union in Quart de Poblet (in Valencia), was expelled by its own local federation, reducing the trade union to 37 members. (267) As the regional committee pointed out: "The 'assemblism' of the organisation does not seem to work here', it would be silly to believe that the majority of the trade union would

vote against itself." (268). The expulsions in Valencia continued however, with the entire Teaching trade union expelled, the trade union section of AESA (Elcano), and the Metal trade union which had taken a position in favour of the AESA committee. (269).

The reasons given for this total breach of C.N.T. norms bordered on the "paranoic", as this FAI member confirms :

"There's been a kind of conspiracy going on within the C.N.T. People from other groups have been practising 'entrism', while the ordinary worker has been turned down. The selection criterion has led to a small C.N.T. full of undesirable elements. The Church has been behind this - their agents are working within the C.N.T. - and the 'verticalists' too. But now a solid group of anarcho-syndicalists are making great strides, making the trade union a school which can attract and educate workers. But a hard battle has to be fought within the C.N.T. against its enemies - the Church and police agents - to get the C.N.T. back to its true path, and uphold the principles of the Zaragoza Congress." (270).

What is probably more likely is that the "syndicalist offensive" begun in reaction to the Jornadas in July, was now gaining momentum, as this ex-GOA member says :

"When I joined the Teaching trade union it was totally dominated by internal ideological debates, and wasn't oriented towards work in the sector. Myself and T..... an independent, contacted the most radical teachers - those from "Escuelas en Lucha" and the P.N.N.'s. (271). We created the trade union from these. These people had formally been in favour of the assembly, and were very anti-organisational, but we succeeded in recruiting many of them. We were for state-financed education, but the running of the schools would be in the hands of the different sectors - in fact it was a generalisation of the "Escuelas en Lucha" experience. We held debates and meetings on this, and the C.N.T. began to have a presence in the sector. When we arrived we formed the minority, but by the time we were expelled (272), we formed the majority within the trade union.(273)

But we spent too much time trying to combat Boldieu, who was against state education ! His proposal was for private libertarian schools, which shows you how elitist he was. (274). At times we were attacked physically, which meant that we grew so far, but couldn't really go any further, as we had to continually fight for our position at home, as it were. There were really two Teaching trade unions operating here in Barcelona, which hindered further development. But there were some interesting experiences,

and we got our motion passed in favour of participation in 'convenios'. We organised sections which would have complete autonomy within the trade union, which allowed for greater flexibility. But they had asked for my expulsion several times and created a terrible state of tension, as each time it came up I had to make sure that I brought along enough people to vote against it. This was relatively easy because we were in the majority, but it was a real hassle, and impeded moving on."

Barcelona, 1979.

The syndicalist offensive, on the whole, was not an organised affair as yet (275), and interestingly, had gained adherents from some unlikely quarters, as this member of Workers' Autonomy says :

"Well, there was a really curious development of Workers' Autonomy within the C.N.T. Four or five decadent bourgeois had distorted the political 'space' so much, that it converted us into syndicalists. This didn't only happen to us - I've known the most radical / integralist types who became syndicalists. We gave-up all our own political development within Workers' Autonomy and concentrated on building-up the trade unions. That's how things developed - you were either within the syndicalist camp, which had some decent people and some good ideas, or you were with the 'pasotas', who, apart from anything else, I couldn't stand. We in W.A. had not seen the creation of trade unions as the way forward, but we didn't want to be outside of the process - that was the only 'space' for us."

Barcelona, 1979.

This "syndicalist" reaction affected most groups, and produced a sort of "workerism" within groups already committed to building-up the trade unions, as this MCL member says:

"We underwent a complete metamorphoses on entering the C.N.T. All our energies and analyses were now geared to our intervention within it. We became incredibly "workerist" - drink and ~~doe~~ were banned - anything that workers on the shop floor didn't do we weren't expected to do either.

The trend within the MCL was towards greater centralisation, and the committee of the organisation - which had simply been a coordinating body - now had executive functions. I saw this as a 'Leninist' danger, and set-up a parallel committee, and actually defended this on Leninist grounds, i.e. that all parties have parallel committees to keep an eye on the executive and vice-versa. Also, some of our members had contacts with 'yellow' trade unions (the C.N.S.), and we even got a whole section of textile workers - on the instructions of a 'verticalista' - to pass over 'en toto' to the C.N.T. Once we'd recruited the workers, we ignored the 'verticalist'. Although this kind of thing was practiced by all the trade unions, we wouldn't have dreamt of this before. It shows you how syndicalist we'd become. And, of course, the 'purists' attacked us for it."

Barcelona, 1979.

This syndicalism was moreover allied to a strategy of intervention within the collective contract negotiations, which more and more militants believed necessary if the C.N.T. wished to have some relevance within the workers' movement. This ex-MCL member explains :

"Anyone involved within the labour movement was aware of the importance of the 'convenios'. This is when workers defend their salary, their conditions of work, and their jobs. Okay - it's a social pact - the Moncloa Pact is also a social pact. It isn't the political system that we wanted, but it's what is, and we don't have the power to change it dramatically.

You have to be flexible politically, and the downturn in the workers' movement - which

everybody within it could see - could not be met by cries of 'building barricades', which some of these idiots were coming out with. But this was totally opposed by the 'political' movement within the C.N.T. - those who consider themselves most 'anarchist'. It was through this process, and these years, that I began to move away from those who called themselves anarchists. I'd considered myself one for years - and other people certainly did even before I myself did - but the types within the C.N.T. who were 'pure' were either ignorant or opportunists. It was the same kind of thing I'd seen within some of the Left groups - the student / intellectual / leader domination over working class members. In essence, the whole thing was about 'political alliances' - always in function of keeping the leadership in power. It was the same thing, with a different name."

Barcelona, 1979.

This syndicalism often meant an attempt to make the C.N.T. more efficient, by changing the mechanisms of the trade unions, as this MCL member says :

"Well, the way we worked within the trade unions was primarily designed to avoid people getting fed-up, and opting out, which many workers had already done. I set-up the Hotel and Tourist trade union, and if everyone had worked that way there wouldn't have been all the problems there were. The weekly assembly of the trade union - which was usually dominated by ideological debates and didn't deal with real, concrete problems - we only held every three months, and tried to keep to concrete issues. If there was a strike or something else important that came up, we would call an assembly of course - otherwise there was no need for so many. The delegates from the trade unions went to the firm assembly, and informed on the state of other firms. The role of the comité de empresa (the works' committee) was to discuss and work-out proposals etc..., related to the firm. The trade union committee coordinated these. Trade union members were not disconnected, because the delegates of the trade union went to the firm. We eliminated the whole boring business of almost daily assemblies between the trade union and the committees. You see, there wasn't much activity within the trade unions, it was within the firm that there was. That's why the comité de empresa had the greatest role. (276). This was the way to keep workers, for they didn't have the time the 'acratas' had to attend all the assemblies of the trade unions. We kept the ideological stuff to a minimum, and concentrated on problems affecting the sector."

Barcelona, 1979.

The "syndicalist offensive" appeared to have some success, with C.N.T. involvement in a series of strikes from October 1977 (277). The Public Entertainment Union of the C.N.T. was able to paralyse Barcelona for two days in December, in support of Albert Boadella and Els Joglars and the freedom of expression, and its involvement in the gas station strike at the end of 1977 won it many recruits in the sector. (278). Indeed, as Tele-Express reported, a section of employers in Baix Llobregat (Catalonia), were trying to negotiate with the Workers' Commissions in an attempt to halt the growth of the C.N.T. According to employer sources in Baix Llobregat, they were interested in encouraging the Commissions because the C.N.T., "with its radical positions creates serious problems inside firms." (279). In an effort to maintain this dynamic, the Catalan C.N.T. launched its first legalised demonstration against the Moncloa Pact on January 15th 1978, which was attended by some 10,000. Despite the image the press would later try to give of this demonstration, it passed off peacefully. (280). A few minutes later, a fire began in the La Scala theatre, which would cost 1,000 million pesetas in damages, and the lives of four workers. Those accused of this assault were C.N.T., FAI and FIJL members, and the general impression given was that the C.N.T. itself was directly involved.

The "Scala affaire" has been interpreted in various ways, from it being the work of police / government agents, to that of "uncontrollable" groups within the orbit of the C.N.T. The most plausible explanation is that put forward by the GAA. (281) :

"For many it is clear that the C.N.T. has been the victim of a double attack. On the one hand, it was an attack on its autonomy by the Catalan FAI, which, in meetings held since the middle of December, had decided to carry-out a series of 'exemplary' acts destined to return the 'revolutionary' image back to the C.N.T., which, according to them, had been embarking on a 'reformist' course. On the other hand, it was an attack by the Interior Minister, who took advantage of the work of Joaquín Gambí infiltrated within a FAI group, and responsible for the detentions of January 30th 1977, when the FAI had tried to reconstruct itself." (282).

G.A.A.  
Barcelona, 1979.

The truth behind the "Scala affaire" may never be fully known, and later dossiers have tended to lay the blame squarely at the feet of the Interior Minister, Martín Villa. (283). The GAA account above, however, was the one generally accepted within the C.N.T. Gambín had arrived five days previously in Barcelona and had contacted José Cuevas, one of those later detained for the "Scala affaire". As many C.N.T. militants point-out, there is no shortage of young "hotheads" from the various FAI who are ready to launch attacks of this type, so it would have been relatively easy to carry through such an action, unwittingly supplied by arms and explosives from the government and police. (284).

The "Scala affaire", whatever the truth turns out to be, caused an uproar within the Catalan C.N.T., despite the prompt action by the regional committee and the local federation which forced the Civil Governor to retract the original accusation. As this ex-GOA member says, the "Scala affaire" highlighted "in extremis" the growing polarisation taking place within the organisation :

"You see, parallel to the strengthening of the clear syndicalist current within the C.N.T., there had been a steady growth of what we termed the 'apaches' - these were people who centred their action around anti-state activities and defence of libertarian prisoners. These were also the people who always tried to 'hot-up' the atmosphere at demonstrations etc..., and on the whole were students, or people who never seemed to do anything - I mean work. As I said, there had been a stream of these types into the organisation since the Jornadas, and these were the ones who wanted 'unconditional' support of those detained in the Scala. The others, myself included, wanted the support to be conditional on an investigation into the affair, and called for a total separation of the C.N.T. from the whole thing. At the regional plenum in February, both sides confronted each other. It was an unbelievably violent plenum - some trade unions who had brought agreements asking for clarification of the event were afraid to present them - the FAI really let loose, and they were scared. In the end we reached a compromise which suited nobody. You see, even the FAI knew that if we had agreed to 'unconditional support' it would place the C.N.T. in the position of a terrorist organisation, so that was even too much for them !

The final agreement was 'unconditional support' and 'organisational separation', which was totally contradictory, and only meant that the two sides continued as before - there was no way they could reach a compromise."

Barcelona, 1979.

As a result of the repercussions of the "Scala affaire", and the growing aggressiveness of the FAI, which prevented democratic decision-making, a more coordinated opposition began to form, as this militant explains :

"Before the 'Scala' I thought we were getting somewhere - building-up some sort of trade union presence, though I can tell you, it was no easy task.

As a result of the 'Scala' we really suffered a blow in the trade unions. For even though the C.N.T.'s involvement had been retracted, it still left an image that was hard to combat. We couldn't put-up much of a fight against the Moncloa Pact and the trade union election (beginning of 1978). But I think the regional plenum in February was the last straw - when trade unions were afraid to say what they felt because they feared what the FAI might do - it just couldn't go on. So some of us got together to discuss the crisis within the C.N.T., and see what we could do about it. This was how the Grupos de Afinidad Anarcho-Sindicalista were born, and we believed we had the right to organise in this way - this was how groups within the C.N.T. had always organised themselves - and we felt that it was much more urgent now given the total absence of democracy within the organisation - it was the only way we could combat it. Our main objective continued to be the strengthening of the trade unions, but we also had to try to get on some committees, as these were important power centres within the C.N.T., and could impede or develop - depending on their composition - the anarcho-syndicalist orientation of the C.N.T. Essentially though, we believed that the growth and development of the organisation was only possible if internal democracy was regained, so one of our main tasks was the 'dissemination' of information, and a great deal of our work was centred on that."

Barcelona, 1979.

Despite the growing aggressiveness of the FAI, and its open contravention of organisational norms, the national committee elected by Barcelona in April was totally anti-FAI. An ex-Solidaridad militant explains its genesis :

"After the deadlock in electing the national committee in Madrid, it was decided in the national plenum of regionals in April that Barcelona should elect. This was the most logical place for the <sup>national committee</sup> to reside anyway, as it had the bulk of the membership. But, as far as I know, the only way a national committee could be elected was by 'pacting' with Juan Ferrer and Cases. You see they could easily gain the young radical students coming into the organisation, but they didn't have enough capable leaders to cover posts - especially the national committee - so they had to come to some agreement with 'independents' and those of the opposition. So, ironically, after all their manoeuvres to get a totally FAI committee elected in Madrid, when it was given to Barcelona the committee elected was very anti FAI. Maybe that was why they were getting worse during 1978 - the national committee represented a certain current within Barcelona, those which they most opposed. In fact, two of the members were part of the grupos de afinidad anarcho-sindicalista." Barcelona, 1979.

In a press conference in April 1978, the new national committee outlined the new stage which its election represented. Although the development of direct action in social conflicts was reiterated, it strongly distanced itself from minority and elitist violence. Trade union sections in firms should be strengthened, and working class unity amongst the rank and file defended. While active solidarity with "marginalised" groups should continue, the essentially worker and revolutionary syndicalist character of the C.N.T. was affirmed. Its independence from the exilio and the FAI was stressed, while a new internal structure of the organisation was suggested, which would have to wait till the next Congress to be ratified. (285). As Solidaridad Obrera pointed-out, the national committee of Enrique Marcos signified a major break with the previous strategy of the C.N.T., as this text on syndicalism / assemblism demonstrates: "The C.N.T. is not an integral organisation ( unless Congress decides it), but a trade union for workers ... thus the assembly covers the space of unity in action, but the structure of the trade union must be defended as the organisation for struggle." (286) Moreover, it was clear that Marcos wanted a more efficient C.N.T., with his suggestion that "technical experts" should help the secretaries when possible, and perhaps should be remunerated. (287).

There is little doubt that the FAI was extremely unhappy about the direction the organisation was taking, which seemed to be a replay of the "Treintista" phenomenon, with an added dose of Marxism to boot, which pamphlets of the time attributed to the "conspiracy to take over the organisation by certain groups". (288). Certain developments during 1978 seemed to prove, for the FAI, that the C.N.T. was moving in a "reformist" direction, such as the participation in the trade union elections by some trade unions and militants. Although not massive, the participation in these elections, particularly in Catalonia, was much greater than publicly acknowledged, as this C.N.T. member says :

"The whole question of participation in the elections was greatly played down in the C.N.T. press. (289). I would say that the great majority in Catalonia presented themselves in the elections. But to get around it - the C.N.T. was mounting a campaign against them - they would present themselves as Independents, or on Mixed Lists - these were groups of Left-wing candidates who opposed the Moncloa Pact. In Graphic Arts - particularly the editorial Bruguera - and Transport, they presented themselves as C.N.T. There was a great deal of confusion about these elections. You see, most of us who worked within the trade unions realised the importance of the works' committees, which were crucial in drawing-up proposals, and giving a certain kind of impetus to this or that action. Yes, of course the assembly continued to be important, but workers didn't attend the assemblies like they had done a few years previously - that was certainly the case in my firm. So when it came to the elections for the works' committees we didn't quite know what to do. In the end we came-up with this formula : where there was a possibility of being elected as C.N.T. - like in Bruguera and Transport - then we did. Those who didn't have much of a chance either presented themselves as Independents or on Mixed Lists. I know some didn't stand because of the pressure of the C.N.T. 'line'. Some who weren't too sure what to do, or didn't think they had much of a chance, were swayed by the 'official' abstentionist position. But I think most C.N.T. members in firms were in favour of participation - here in Catalonia at any rate." (290)

Barcelona, 1979.

Another expression of this growing "reformism", according to the FAI (291), was the series of joint actions with other trade unions during 1978. In Metallurgy, in Barcelona, a very successful one-day strike was carried-out with the rest of the trade unions. More than 250,000 workers took part, and even firms with their own negotiated convenio joined in. (292). A second one-day strike, on May 18th, affected textiles, construction and hotel / catering, and was supported by 600,000 workers. The convenio, signed at the end of the month, was called a "treachery" by the C.N.T. and the CSUT. (293). The convenio was certainly a bad one. Apart from a minimal wage rise, it did not even include a labour amnesty, nor the right to practice full trade union freedom. This was undoubtedly interpreted by the FAI as proof that participating in such "manoeuvres" was a waste of time. (294).

The FAI reaction to these trends reached unparalleled limits during 1978. Madrid continued its deadlock, now in the election of the regional committee. Again, agreement could not be reached on the method of election, which prevented the election taking place till July. (295). However, the provocations and violent threats of the FAI meant that the regional committee could not be elected at this meeting either. (296). Having thus prevented the election-taking place in a plenum of militants, the regional committee, in hands of the FAI, called a regional trade union plenum, which it had "organised" previously, and easily elected their own candidates. (297). One of the members of the newly-elected regional committee was not even a C.N.T. member at the time, while two of the other members were revoked instantly by the Madrid local federation, but both refused to resign. (298). By the end of September the crisis in Madrid, which had virtually halted all trade union work, reached an all-time high, with death threats being issued from the FAI if the local committee dared to write a report on the happenings. (299). A few days later at a meeting where a member of the national committee was present, (who had tried to "mediate" in the disagreements), knives were used and a

militant wounded in a skirmish outside the C.N.T. local. (300)

This was the beginning of a massive drift out of the C.N.T. in Madrid, as this militant says :

"Well, the C.N.T. in Madrid was already in a weak state - the whole business of the election of the national committee, which went on for months - then the way the regional committee was elected had meant that fewer and fewer people turned up for meetings. But after the knife incident in September the C.N.T. in Madrid virtually collapsed. As far as trade union work was concerned, or anything else outside of the organisational stuff that never ended, we hadn't been able to put-up much of a struggle against the trade union elections or the Moncloa Pact. There were only a handful of us left - those of us who had refused to be beaten by these gangsters, and who felt that a split was inevitable after the Congress. I think most of us who were left were simply waiting to see what would happen at the Congress, and trying to organise some kind of opposition that perhaps could salvage something of what was left. But it was pretty depressing, considering the hopes we'd had a few years before. It was my anger that kept me going, I think, because the general situation in Spain at the time was also fairly depressing - 'desencanto', the social pact which was not being contested much, and the growth of the Right. At times I just wanted to go off and forget about the C.N.T. But I was determined not to let these people get away with what they'd done here in Madrid, which was to totally destroy any possibility we had of organising a force to combat the 'reforma pactada' and defend working class living standards. What saddened me more than anything was that many good people had been 'burnt-out' through their experience in the C.N.T. - that was something that couldn't be replaced, and had caused a great deal of human suffering, something which the C.N.T. of course said it wanted to end."

Madrid, 1979.

Certainly there was a considerable growth in Right-wing violence and police harassment during 1978. Thirty cases of dynamite were placed in the C.N.T. local in Madrid in March, luckily seen, and disposed of, by a passer-by. (301). In October, the C.N.T. local in Bilbao was robbed and money and membership lists were stolen. (302). There was a news piece, put out by the New York Times, which implicated the C.N.T. in an

attempt to kidnap the Minister of Justice, flatly denied of course by the organisation. (303). Moreover, there was a heavier crackdown by the police on "pasotas" in Madrid especially (in the neighbourhood where the C.N.T. had its local in search of drugs and arms. These types of action were totally gratuitous, and even the "democratic" press condemned them. (304).

It was in Barcelona however, that violence reached its highest level. After an enormous pre-autonomy demonstration (a million and a half took part) on September 11th 1977, rumours that the autonomy statute was on its way brought forth a wave of Right-wing reaction, which began with an assault on the satirical magazine "El Popus", an action claimed by the extreme Right-wing "Triple A". (305). After the re-establishment of the autonomous Catalan Generalitat on September 29th, the Ramblas of Barcelona became the scene of tension and violence by uncontrollable provocateurs, (which would continue throughout the next year), increasingly contested by groups of Left-wing youth, many of whom were libertarians. The death, in police custody, of the anarchist Augustín Rueda, in March 1978, and the development of COPEL and AFAPE (306), undoubtedly contributed to the radicalisation of the C.N.T. youth, with the founding of the Comité Libertario Antirepresivo (CLA) and the growth of armed groups within the orbit of the C.N.T. (307).

The attack launched on the supposedly "reformist" line of the Catalan regional certainly came from the "uncontrollables" in 1978, led by Quimet, FAI leader and secretary of the local federation from April 1978, and Luís Andrés Edo, from his stronghold in the Construction trade union. (308). Indeed, it was from the latter trade union that a severe attack was begun against the participation in the collective contract negotiations, at any level, arguing that this was a renunciation of the notion of direct action, and moreover only helped to stimulate an "economistic" consciousness in workers. (309).

This was the beginning of a debate which continued through 1978 in the pages of "Solidaridad Obrera", the Catalan regional's newspaper, with those in favour arguing that this was a favourable time for workers' struggle, the best time for waging the struggle against capital. (310). The issue of collective contract negotiation was the major debate at the Catalan regional plenum of December 1978, but was not resolved due to the "great discrepancies over the outcome". (311) Due to the level of tension at this plenum, the regional committee denounced the existence of pressure groups who opposed the working class orientation of the C.N.T., and pleaded for responsibility within the organisation. (312). A month earlier, at the national plenum of regionals, held to debate the trade union strategy of the C.N.T., it was agreed however to initiate "days of struggle" with other trade unions, described as an "indispensable step to establish the basis for a large movement, to confront the consequences of the social pact." (313).

Indeed, the national committee of Enrique Marcos and the anarcho-syndicalist affinity groups were creating a different climate in Barcelona, as this GAA militant explains :

"This national committee really worked hard. (314) The agreement on joint actions with other trade unions was essentially a product of the work the national committee had done, as it was their proposal - it shows you the power the national committee has within the C.N.T. ! But we'd discovered that that was the only way you got things done - you had to use the same method as the others. But I think they were much more representative of feeling within the Catalan regional - I mean those who wanted to build the C.N.T. on a different basis. And we had some successes during 1978 - ironically - because, although we didn't realise it, this would be the last year for the C.N.T. We had worked hard to set-up a Coordinator of port workers, throughout the Mediterranean coast, and this was taking off by the beginning of 1979. Then there was the Dustman's strike in 1978, and the ~~second~~ gas station strike at the end of the year. (315). This wasn't the level of activity we wanted - it was still not great - but it was a good start given the fact that we had to fight the various 'mafia' at every turn. I think the most important thing

about what was happening was that we were beginning to analyse things, and develop strategies - this hadn't been done at this level before within the C.N.T., but of course, as it turned out, we'd left it too late."

Barcelona, 1979.

One of the most interesting efforts of Catalan militants during this time was the attempt to revitalise "Solidaridad Obrera". The new editor, Ramon Barnils, proposed a more professional newspaper, with paid staff, which would "not try to address itself solely to C.N.T. members, but to all the working class. It is not a publication directed from the inside for the outside, nor an internal bulletin only for unconditional supporters". (316). From its inception, the new format "Soli" came under severe attack, both for its professionalism and its attempt to discuss the crisis within the C.N.T., as this writer points out :

"Soon it began to be criticised for its attempt to bring to public notice the internal intrigues taking place within the organisation. The expulsion of the group 'Askatasuna' in the Basque provinces and the crisis of the C.N.T. in the Valencian region were treated in 'Soli' in an informative way ; but this was not to the liking of many people, who believed that the dirty linen of the confederation should be washed at home."

Berges y García, Barcelona, 1979 p. 227.

There is little doubt that the dynamic within the Catalan regional contrasted sharply with that of Valencia and Madrid during 1978. By September, the Valencian organisation was split "de facto" in two, with the opposition to the "majority law" and heavy-handed tactics of Ferrer's FAI united in a bid to "hold on" until congress. Otherwise they argued, "the Congress would be a walkover for them." (317). Similarly in Madrid, after the knife incident in September, the remaining opposition was preparing itself for the Congress, and initiating a national coordination of non-FAI cenetistas. (318). In the Basque provinces little was left of C.N.T. membership after the expulsion of the "Askatasuna" group, a group which had had the greatest support in the provinces. (319).

However, despite the new dynamic which the Catalan regional had begun at the end of 1977, the membership had fallen by half between 1978 and 1979. <sup>(320)</sup>. Expulsions also took place in Catalonia, with the MCL group being forced out of the trade unions in the summer of 1978. But the real offensive did not take place until February 1979, when the regional plenum decided, by an ample majority, in favour of the "dissolution of the "exilio", and proposed the holding of a Congress before the end of the year. <sup>(321)</sup>. The question of collective contract negotiation was also discussed, but ended in a draw. In view of this, each trade union was permitted to intervene or not in collective contract negotiations, depending on their own specific agreements. <sup>(322)</sup>.

At the national plenum of regionals held shortly after, it was decided to hold the first Congress of the C.N.T. since 1936. The date fixed was October 11th, 1979. <sup>(323)</sup>. At the same plenum however, the agreement on joint action with other trade unions was overturned, which caused the resignation of the secretary of organisation, and began the crisis within the national committee itself. <sup>(324)</sup>. The "offensive" began just after this Pyrrhic victory, as this report from the anarcho-syndicalist groups points out :

"The calling of the Congress brought forth an angry reaction from the 'apaches' which they attributed to the 'Marxists'. In a statement to Viejo Topo (N° 31) L.A. Edo declared that 'they have manipulated the date of the Congress, we are not prepared etc...'. In the same article he denounced the existence of a 'parallel vertebration', inside the C.N.T., of a Marxist character, against which they would initiate a 'rapid reaction'. These statements announced the impending expulsions, and demonstrate clearly their origin and their relation with the calling of Congress. The same terminology, which was quite unusual, of 'parallel vertebration' was that which would be used later to designate the anarcho-syndicalist affinity groups."

GAA report, Barcelona, 1979.

Soon after, the Construction trade union called on all trade unions which had voted against participation in the collective contract negotiations to meet, an action denounced by the regional committee, which, it pointed out, was an attempt to use powers which only the regional committee had at its disposal. (325). As this militant says, this was the beginning of a "total assault" on the opposition in Catalonia, and the end of any pretense of settling issues through normal organisational channels :

"The attack was launched from Construction through these months, who refused to retract their call to the trade unions who were against collective contracts. They beat-up a member of the regional committee who had tried to intervene, and weren't even censored for this, as people abstained at the plenum which tried to deal with it - they were scared. The regional committee resigned over this. Things were happening which were incredible. They were just plain 'putsches'. Berro - a member of the national committee, was expelled from his trade union - Construction as it happens - by 23 votes, when the trade union had around 300 members. Around the same time, the Graphic Art trade union 'discovered' a document which proved the existence of a 'policical organisation' within the C.N.T., which was attempting to take it over. This of course gave them the excuse (which they used to convince ordinary trade union members), to carry on any way they wanted in order 'to save the C.N.T.' It also coincided with the run-up to the regional committee and local committee elections. They wanted to get rid of us before these elections, and try to control Catalonia in time for the Congress. You see, they'd done everything to stall the holding of the Congress, but now that it had been approved in a national plenum, there was nothing more they could do except get hold of the committees as these would be important in organising it. The dissolution of the 'exilio' was also on the cards. Here in Catalonia we had decided in two regional plenums that it should be dissolved, and this had been agreed at the national plenum in April. I think they were going mad - things were really hotting-up for them, especially in Catalonia, which they'd never managed to control like they did the other regions, and had to use madmen, like Quimet and Edo, to eliminate us. Even after the expulsions which took place from March (326), the new regional committee still had six GAA sympathisers. (327). But it didn't last long, as you know, for the GAA were not allowed to hold posts - and the plenum where this was decided was a total farce. There wasn't much more we could do now, except prepare ourselves for the Congress, which was what we did for the rest of the year."

Barcelona, 1979.

Indeed, the regional plenum of 5th and 6th of May, which I attended, agreed that members of the GAA could no longer hold posts within the C.N.T. When a delegate from the Insurance trade union proposed, in view of this decision, that the expelled GAA members should be re-admitted, he was shouted down and a vote was not allowed to be taken on the matter. The violence at the plenum was unbelievable, and even Enrique Marcos, secretary of the national committee, was threatened and prevented from speaking. Under "Other business" the question of "Solidaridad Obrera" was raised. As delegates had not brought agreements from their trade unions on this, as it was not on the order paper, the editor and staff of the newspaper were dismissed. This vote was taken by 30 out of the 93 delegations present. The administrator of Solidaridad Obrera, and half the regional committee resigned over this, which meant that the functions of the regional committee were now taken<sup>over</sup> by the local federation committee. (328).

The crisis, begun in Catalonia in February, soon extended to other regions, with the discovery of "parallel groups" in Malaga, and a severe crisis in Aragon, where members of the regional committee denounced the interference of the "exilio" and accused them of trying to control the regional committee. (329). Indeed, the problem of the exile organisation became public knowledge, when the crisis within the C.N.T. hit the headlines in most of the national press, where members of the national committee predicted that the impending Congress would put an end to the "long years of sectarianism and bureaucracy of the 'exilio'" and, "when the exile organisation will be obliged to give an account of their management and utilisation of the enormous economic means which belonged to the C.N.T. in 1939." (330). Increasingly, the question of "exilio" control began to be linked to the trade union assets which the C.N.T. was now demanding, and the trade union dues which had been collected throughout the Francoist period. (331). Other information was also coming to light, such as the large investments made by the C.N.T. in the Banco Español de Credito, included in the inventory of trade union

assets which the C.N.T. claimed had been confiscated in 1939. (332). Certainly the economic question dominated the relationship between the "exilio" and the national committee throughout 1979, and was included as one of the major topics of debate in the opposition's proposals for Congress. (333).

The Fifth Congress of the C.N.T., the first for forty three years, began on Friday the seventh of December 1979, and ended eight days later with a massive walk-out of delegations who denounced the nature of the Congress in the following terms : "The profound debate that was necessary did not happen. This was the debate over the solutions which anarcho-syndicalism should contribute today to the problems which affect the working class and society in general. A clear statement was not issued, and discussion and a search for solutions over the internal problems which the organisation has suffered since its reconstruction, which has contributed to its progressive deterioration, has not been undertaken. This was due to : the lack of an efficient method of working which would have helped facilitate the resolutions over questions of order, and clarified the various proposals brought by the delegates. From the beginning of the Congress there has been a progressive deterioration in the freedom of expression, with constant threats, acts of violence, the use of microphones out of turn, etc..., which finally led to a situation in which, contrary to the norms followed in all confederal meetings, the debate, voting and expression of positions supposedly of the minority has been impeded, especially when major debates took place, on trade union strategy etc..., which has been a clear sign that there has been an attempt to impose certain positions. This, to a lesser or greater extent, has been happening since the beginning of Congress. But we felt that this would be solved when the Congress got underway. But the lack of a sincere will to find solutions, and the lack of a real libertarian spirit, has impeded it. Before the compromise which the C.N.T. has with the working class and society, we cannot close this Congress without the necessary solutions which we had all hoped for, therefore the delegates who have

signed this document have left the hall, considering that this Congress has not taken place, and call for its celebration in March-April, so that the intervening period will serve to clarify that expressed above. We invite the rest of the delegations to accept this proposal." (334).

By the beginning of 1980, two C.N.T.'s battled for the legitimacy of the initials, neither with much weight within the working class movement. An ex-GOA member, who had witnessed the C.N.T.'s re-birth and subsequent division has this to say of these three crucial years :

"It's easy to say now - considering how things turned out- that we should have forgotten about trying to re-build the C.N.T., and reach some compromise with the 'orthodoxy'. I had been one of the most sceptical about the C.N.T.'s chances, yet I was swept along with the enthusiasm of the time. It was like that in Spain just after Franco's death - everything seemed possible. In many ways I don't regret this experience - being in the C.N.T. opened me up - extended my horizons - and I learnt a lot about C.N.T. history and the history of the Spanish working class movement. And I don't feel too 'burnt-out' - I've been lucky. I think the most tragic thing about what happened within the C.N.T. was that it 'burnt-out' a lot of people. These were 'good' people who would have been excellent fighters, and important within a new type of workers' movement - they really did try to get away from 'leaderism'. These people 'have gone to their homes', as we say in Spain, they now feel that all politics - even 'anarchist' politics is a complete waste of time. That's the saddest thing about it all - that the C.N.T., and anarchism, has also contributed to 'desencanto'. You know - I don't think we were 'up to it' - I mean we weren't prepared to act in a libertarian way - Francoism has crippled us all. I also wonder - and so do many of us who have 'stuck it out' till the end - if there were 'interests' who purposely went out to destroy the C.N.T. There were a lot of weird types around who nobody really knew about, or what they did. Too many 'strange' things happened when it seemed like we were getting the organisation moving a bit. There must have been lots of 'interests' who weren't happy with an organisation that opposed the direction decreed for the transition. And we certainly weren't 'prepared' to take all that on - we can't be blamed for that. And the 'exilio' worked in a most clever 'political' way that would have been the envy of Machiavelli, had he survived to see it. But that

hasn't changed my political ideals. I still believe that we have to re-think the old classifications and dogmas, and work for a revolutionary movement which takes theory - and practice - from whatever source it comes from - like we tried to do in the GOA. But that will have to come from another generation of militants, which I'm sure it will. Right now I'm 'going home' too - I think I've earned the rest !"

Barcelona, 1981.

BIBLIOGRAPHY / NOTES

1. As Ben Ami points out, the Bunker (Extreme Right) had a quarter of their deputies in the Cortes, and half the posts in the Council of State, headed by Luis Taberner of the Banco Popular. As he says, members of the Cortes group had been presidents, vice-presidents, or members of the administration councils of the fifteen biggest companies in Spain, including the Telephone Company Campsa (national oil company) the airlines Iberia and central banks such as the Bank of Spain, and the Industrial Credit Bank.

S. Ben Ami : La Revolucion desde arriba: Espana, 1936-1979  
Barcelona, 1981.

2. Ben Ami. op. cit.
3. Fraga headed the Interior Ministry, and held the vice-presidency of the government. Areilza, the most liberal, was Minister of Foreign Affairs. As Ben Ami says, Fraga reorganised the Right from his post in the Interior Ministry to prevent the transition from moving towards more genuine democratic forms.

Ben Ami. op. cit.

4. The Legislative Chambers he proposed were :
  - 1) One where "organic" representatives of the corporations would reside
  - 2) one which would be elected in general elections.

Ben Ami. op. cit.

5. As Paul Preston has pointed out, the death of Carrero coincided with other optimistic events in Europe, such as the Italian divorce referendum, the French presidential elections and the Portuguese revolution, which forged a new pragmatism on the Left.

In Spain in Crisis.

P. Preston : The Anti-Francoist Opposition  
The Long March to Unity

London, 1976.

The Centre Right began organising in the form of the Federacion de Investigacion Independiente, which was composed almost exclusively by ex-Francoists, and has been termed a "pseudo-opposition" force. Another similar association, the <sup>Reforma</sup> Social Española, was created in 1975.

Ben Ami. op. cit.

6. As Maravall points out, the growing realisation that repression (severe between 1968 and 1973), was useless, provoked a feeling that the political crisis of the dictatorship could lead to a socio-economic crisis for the economic and administrative elite, not to mention the middle classes. This was primarily due to the fact that the Workers Commissions had succeeded in recovering from the downturn of the years of repression and was flexing its muscle.

J. Maravall : La Politica de la transicion. 1975 - 1980. Madrid, 1981.

As Preston says, since September 1973 the executive committee of the C.P. had been seeking authorisation from the central committee to establish contacts with representatives of neo-capitalist groups anxious for dialogue with the party. These contacts were intensified after the death of Carrero. According to Carrillo, secretary of the C.P., "these groups were convinced that the official vertical syndicates were incapable of preventing strikes. Moreover, they were unhappy with a political situation which forced workers to attack the regime by the only method open to them - more strikes." One of the most famous contacts was that established by Joaquin Garrigues Walker, representing the Catalan bourgeoisie, and, as legal adviser to many important corporations, was an "accurate barometer of 'liberal capitalist' opinion".

P. Preston. op. cit.

7. According to Maravall, the period between 1963 and 1967 showed that acts of solidarity or of a political nature only represented 4 %, while during the period 1967 - 1974, these demands increased to 45 % of the total.

Maravall. op. cit.

Ben Ami points to the referendum carried-out amongst businessmen at this time which showed they favoured a new type of labour relations for fear that the present state of things would lead to political instability and would endanger the security of their firms.

Ben Ami. op. cit.

8. From the end of 1971 ETA increased its activity with hold-ups, bombings and kidnappings. In January 1972, the managing director of the Precicontrol Company, Zabala, was kidnapped and only released after he had reinstated the 183 workers sacked for striking in the firm.

E. de Blaye : Franco and the Politics of Spain. London, 1974.

In October 1971, in Barcelona, a pitched battle took place between striking workers and police which lasted an entire day, while in El Ferrol in March 1972, the police had to retreat before enormous demonstrations of workers. On May 1973, a policeman was killed by FRAP, which produced a strong reaction by the Right, and the growth of extreme Right-wing groups such as the Children of Christ the King, and the Grupo de Actividades Sindicalistas who attacked progressive bookshops, bars, social centres and 'liberal' newspapers and magazines. The growth of violence between Left and Right-wing groups during the last months of Franco's life reminded one of the Spring of 1936, just before the start of the Civil War.

Ben Ami. op. cit.

9. The floods of 1973 and the droughts of 1974 caused thousands to flock to the towns which exacerbated the unemployment problem. Moreover, Spain is heavily dependent on imported oil. While oil constitutes 62.6 % of her total energy consumption, Spain only produces 2 % of this.

Teresa Lawlor : Five Years After Franco: An Economic Assessment. Unpublished article given to me by the author.

10. Spain's economic "miracle" was based above all on tourism and foreign remittances. Both of these were severely affected by the European economic crisis. Tourism dropped by 17 % in 1974, while in France alone there were more than 9,000 unemployed Spanish workers. The balance of payments deficit soared, while the gross national product grew by a mere 4.6 % compared to 8 % during the previous fourteen years.

Ben Ami. op. cit.

11. Since the signing of the last "convenio", two years previously, the cost of living had risen by 34 %.

12. This movement was led by the Workers Commissions and the UGT, but supported by most of the other smaller trade union groups active in firms. Interview with workers involved during December, Madrid 1978. Trabajadores en Huelga. Madrid, January 1976. Madrid, 1976.

13. In interviews with workers' representatives involved in the Madrid strikes it would seem that some employers were willing to accede to many of the demands, while others weren't. The fact that the strike wave was not immediately repressed gave workers heart. After the international condemnation of the executions of September 1975, the government feared any recurrence of such protests, at a time when Spain was embarking on a concerted drive to join the European Community.

Interviews with workers in Trabajadores en Huelga. op. cit.

14. Ensidesa in Aviles, for instance, had never witnessed a strike in its 25 years of existence. In Madrid many small firms and shopkeepers in working class enclaves, particularly Getafe (where many of the metal firms were located), came out in sympathy.  
Trabajadores en Huelga. op. cit.  
Madrid en Huelga. Enero 1976. Madrid, 1976.  
(V. Díaz Cardiel, J. Francisco Plá, Alfredo Tejero, Eurenio Triana).
15. In Electro Mecanica in Getafe, workers' demands were met almost immediately, but the workers remained on strike until the rest of the firms in the neighbourhood solved theirs. John Derre had no demands at that particular time, but seeing the level of strike action, joined in. Both these firms were located in Getafe, the most militant focus during 1976.  
Trabajadores en Huelga. op. cit.
16. Crónicas de la Transición Democrática Española.  
Study collective, Madrid, 1977.
17. At first attempts were made to hold assemblies in CNS offices, but these were short-lived. The police flushed them out with tear gas.  
Trabajadores en Huelga. op. cit.
18. Crónicas de la Transición. op. cit. p. 11.
19. Crónicas de la Transición. op. cit.
20. Some of these representatives had even been elected at provincial level.  
Madrid en Huelga. op. cit.
21. Interviews with workers in Trabajadores en Huelga. op. cit.  
Madrid en Huelga. op. cit.  
Cronicas. op. cit.
22. Interviews in Crónicas. op. cit.  
Trabajadores en Huelga. op. cit.  
Madrid en Huelga. op. cit.  
This was the impression I also received from talks to some workers I knew involved in the January movement.
23. This requires some qualification. The Metro strike, which galvanised the movement, was spontaneous and "assemblyist" in character.
24. Cronicas. op. cit.  
Huelgas Manipuladas in Ruedo Ibérico nos. 51/53  
Paris, 1977.

25. A worker in Standard, accounting the details of this meeting, finds it rather odd that the meeting should have been held in the HOAC local, in the Galle Silva, a place well-known to the police. Meanwhile, the Carrillistas met in another building. Only one C.P. member was detained. Huelgas Manipuladas. op. cit.
26. Crónicas. op. cit. p. 24.
27. M.P. Izquierdo : de la Huelga general a las elecciones generales in Crónicas. op. cit.
28. Interviews with Workers' Commissions leaders in Standard in Trabajadores en Huelga. op. cit.
29. Huelgas Manipuladas. op. cit.
30. Huelgas Manipuladas. op. cit.
31. In interviews with workers in Huelgas Manipuladas. op. cit. and Crónicas. op. cit., they testify to the lack of enthusiasm of the Workers' Commissions in coordinating the strike.
32. This is particularly true of Construction. Although the full wage demand was not granted, a 30 % increment was obtained. Crónicas. op. cit.
33. Article 222 of the Penal Code forbade public servants striking, under threat of being accused of treason.
34. This is the view expressed in Trabajadores en Huelga. op. c Crónicas. op. cit. and Huelgas Manipuladas. op. cit.
35. Interviews with Workers' Commission representatives in Trabajadores en Huelga. op. cit. p. 110.  
In an interview with a former W.C. leader in Barcelona in 1979, he agreed that many comrades in Madrid were "scared of what might happen if the strike wave wasn't brought to an end."
36. The Metro workers were threatened with militarisation on the 19th. The authors of Trabajadores en Huelga believe that if this hadn't occurred Madrid would have witnessed a general strike on Monday, the 12th.  
Trabajadores en Huelga. op. cit. p. 32.
37. As Manuel Ludevit points out, the government was hesitant about legalising the trade unions before it had created its own "trade union arm". Various minority unions, with the common dominator of "political independents" were encouraged by prime minister Suarez untill their complete ~~failure~~ failure is the 1978 elections, when the government turned its attention to USO, which it believed might perform a similar role.

As Ludevit further points out , trade union recognition "when it came was incomplete, and was limited to the legalising of the labour organisations without giving them any practical power in such decisive areas as collective bargaining, representation in the agencies which manage the Social Security system, and the right to create their own agencies within the company. Furthermore, the government continued to refuse to transfer CNS assets to the new unions at a time when return of these funds was of greatest importance to their continued existence."

M. Ludevit. Spanish Trade Unionism. Esade Institute. Barcelona, 1979.

As García Nietosays, in regard to the right to strike, "The above-mentioned Decree of 9 March 1977 amended the provisions in force since 1975, but did not provide for a real right to strike comparable to that existing in the countries of the European Community. While there are certain positive features and changes as compared with the 1975 legislation, in reality the chances of a strike being considered legal are so limited that in practice there are very few lawful strikes, and many which can be declared to be 'wildcat stikes', especially bearing in mind the fact that the trade union confederations do not have any properly operative machinery in the undertakings"

G. Nieto : The Current Evolution of Trade Unionism in Spain, in Labour and Society. Vol. 4 N° 1 Jan. 1979.

38. To give some idea of the level of labour militancy during 1976, Maravall has shown that during 1976 the number of hours lost in strikes reached 150 millions, compared to 14.5 during 1975, the year of greatest worker pressure under Francoism. During January to March 1976, the number of strikes was 17.731, compared to 3.156 in the same months of 1975.  
Maravall. op. cit. p. 27.
39. Crónicas. op. cit.  
During the months of September, October and November, 1,180 workers were sacked, 2,354 were suspended without pay, 559 were sacked because of firm bankruptcy, and 73 were detained.
40. In Terpel, Vallecas, Madrid, 453 workers were threatened with dismissal, which brought the rest of the workers out on strike. In Bultaco, San Adrián de Besós, Barcelona, the strike was exclusively in solidarity with other workers and in support of the provincial convenio. As can be seen from an analysis of conflicts in Crónicas and Trabajadores en Huelga, Solidarity motives were almost always present.  
Crónicas. op. cit.  
Trabajadores en Huelga. op. cit.

41. This was the case of Intelsa in Getafe. Although a "democratic" candidate was elected, they didn't believe that he would support their struggle enthusiastically, so they elected their own representative in an assembly. Many similar cases are cited in Luchas Autonomas en la Transicion Democratica. Colectivo de Estudios por la Autonomia Obrera. Vol. 1 and 2. Madrid, 1977.
42. Luchas Autonomas en la Transicion Democratica. op. cit.
43. Terpel, situated in Vallecas where many metal firms are located, is an example of this type of strike. With a total workforce of 650, they had never struck before, but were impressed by the January strikes in Madrid. After the threat to sack 453 workers, the strike began which would last two months. They had not elected representatives in the 1975 trade union elections and were very critical of the Workers' Commissions which didn't support the strike. The strike, "assembleist" in character was won around the demands for no dismissals or detentions. All workers were re-admitted, a wage rise was granted, and fines were paid by the employers.  
Luchas Antonomas. op. cit.  
Not all these strikes were in small firms however. The strike at Michelin, in its three factories in Valladolid, Lasarte and Aranda de Duero (with some strike action in Vitoria), was successful in obtaining solidarity from workers in other countries, and succeeded in winning some of their demands. The strike which took place in Motor Iberica began over the sacking of workers involved in previous action. The strike, which lasted 96 days, ended in victory for the workers, with the re-admission of those sacked.  
Crónicas. op. cit.  
Luchas Autonomas. op. cit.
44. Sectors which had previously never struck, or who were not known for their militancy, such as Teaching in Madrid and Catalonia, and insurance and banking, were undoubtedly galvanised by the January movement.  
Trabajadores en Huelga. op. cit.
45. San Adrián de Besós, Barcelona, has a long tradition of militant neighbourhood struggle. Many firms are located there, which makes coordination and contacts easier. Similarly in Getafe, Madrid, where many metal firms are located, neighbourhood activity was crucial in supporting the January movement.  
Trabajadores en Huelga. op. cit.
46. Crónicas. op. cit.

47. Gasteiz : Vitoria, de la Huelga a la Matanza. Paris, 1976.  
This book is written by the people of Vitoria.
48. Political parties and trade unions were not legalised until early 1977.
49. The liberal daily "El Pais" started publishing in 1976. This newspaper was of a standard previously unknown in Spain. Many opposition leaders and activists of political parties and trade unions were given space in interviews, while strikes and demonstrations were recorded.
50. As Ben Ami says : "The reorganisation of the right was now an urgent task, because the principal concern of the Spanish bourgeoisie under Franco had been circumscribed to making money and had not intervened within the political process, because the regime after all, defended their interests. The opposition, on the other hand, was better organised. The political process initiated therefor despite its tenuous nature, contained within it a serious threat i.e. that the economic and political interests of the right would be unprotected and undefended. The right continued in the government only through the continuity of the appointments, not through the will of the electors. From the Ministry of the Interior, Fraga was in an excellent position to gain time and create an infrastructure which would allow him to aspire to an electoral majority in the future. Even more importantly, the distribution of the economic posts in the new government indicated that the capitalists and their representatives - not the technocrats as in the past - held the key positions. As they had not yet created their own political parties, the financiers would have to run the government personally and in a direct way. Fraga named himself their leader."  
Ben Ami. op. cit. p. 277.
51. Juan Ferrer was the FAI leader from Valencia who began re-organising the FAI in 1972, or earlier.
52. A document in my possession, issued by the exile organisation during 1976, is in exactly the same vein.
53. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, there had been difficulties in coordination of groups before the trade union elections. The abstention campaign of 1975, brought about greater contacts and coordination however, even with groups in other provinces.
54. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Solidaridad had seen its principal raison d'être as being the reconstruction of the C.N.T., and to this end had attempted to

unite the various tendencies of the libertarian movement. Moreover, as I pointed out, this group had been important in convincing many of the autonomous groups to join in the reconstruction process.

55. The Comité de Relaciones had been meeting weekly or fortnightly after the trade union elections' campaign. Solidaridad and other autonomous groups in Madrid established regular contact with groups in Alicante, Zaragoza, Valladolid and Asturias, and called on them to unite the various forces through the Comité de Relaciones' structure.
56. Most of the groups contacted in Alicante, Zaragoza, Valladolid and Asturias joined the C.N.T.
57. There were many autonomous groups who believed that collectives or groups were a more effective way of working, and who would have nothing to do with large trade union confederations, which they believed were inevitably "reformist". This occurred in Madrid - the Federacion Coordinadora de Grupos Libertarios - and certain autonomous groups in Barcelona (some ex-MIL militants)<sup>and</sup> Valencia, who did not consider themselves anarcho-syndicalists.

Interviews with autonomous groups in Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona who contacted these groups, in a bid to get their support for the reconstruction of the C.N.T. 1978 / 1979.

58. In interviews with autonomous groups involved in the reconstruction process, they testified to the fact that many autonomous groups would have nothing to do with the C.N.T. because of their dealings with the exile organisation in the past, whom they considered totally unethical and ideologically bankrupt. Others complained that they had little detailed knowledge of what was taking place, so they could not really decide one way or the other.

Interviews with autonomous group members, Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona, 1978 / 1979.

59. Gómez Casas, well known for his histories of the Spanish anarchist movement, had set-up, along with other older militants, the Comision de Veteranos shortly before. He was part of the affinity group "Anselmo Lorenzo" which had been functioning for some time. Their manifesto "Problemas presentes y futuros del Sindicalismo Revolucionario en España" (1969), is a fairly open, though classical anarcho-syndicalist text. This group called for the reconstruction of the C.N.T. on a basis which would include younger militants, and tried to bring about reconciliation amongst the various libertarian forces.

60. These are groups which Solidaridad had contacted.
61. This was the last Congress of the C.N.T., a few months prior to the Civil War. It has been criticised for its total lack of realism and "utopian" character. Nothing, for example, was discussed about the impending civil conflict nor the growth of fascist groups, while various proposals, on "love", and the nature of relationships in future anarchist society, were approved. The Congreso de Zaragoza would be a symbol throughout the reconstruction process of the ossification of the Spanish anarchist movement, whose "orthodoxy" would merely wish to ratify the proposals approved at the Congress, and deny any need to "up-date" them.
62. These were autonomous groups which took their names from their neighbourhoods.
63. The election of these delegates was fairly informal, as none had much knowledge of the electoral processes of the C.N.T. But the election of three autonomous members - all ex-Solidaridad militants - reflected the overwhelming importance of autonomous group members at this meeting.
64. This was a member of a Madrid autonomous group who had been politically active from the end of the 60's. According to him many others felt the same. As an ex-Solidaridad member testified, many groups didn't even send delegates to the meeting which elected the first regional committee. Interviewed in 1978.
65. The three main points on the order paper were :  
a) organisational criteria vis-à-vis the reconstruction of the C.N.T. in the present context.  
b) trade union tactics in the present socio-economic situation. Demands.  
c) trade unions, unity / plurality : our alternative.  
Interview with GOA member, Barcelona, 1979.
66. The actions which this regional committee would undertake, as the acting provisional national committee, will be taken up subsequently.
67. "Pasota" is a term coined in Spain to denote a person who, literally, "is outside of everything", and has been associated with those who reject all norms of society. There are however, various levels of "pasotismo", depending on who uses the label. There are many types who are fairly similar to European "hippies", who live in communes smoke dope and engage in promiscuous sexual behaviour. Others simply dress differently, or reject certain norms, such as "bourgeois eating or sexual habits", and attempt to create an alternative life-style.

68. The Asociacion Internacional de Trabajadores (AIT) was founded in 1922 after the perceived failure of the Russian Revolution, and attempted to unite, internationally the forces of the anarcho-syndicalist movement. The decline of the anarchist movement internationally has meant this organisation contains few organisations, and its strength is extremely minimal. Indeed, the Spanish exile organisation is the main force behind its continuing existence.
69. A document written by Solidaridad complains of this procedure. February 1976.
70. Interview with Valencian FAI member, who admitted he was an "entrism" from a Trotskyist organisation. He did however maintain good relationships with autonomous group members, which was evident when I met him at the local federation.
71. He named these as Villa Real, Alicante, Orihuela, Cheste, Castellon, Villena. He also contacted veterans in the Puerto de Segunto, and Macosa. There were around 300 members by 1976.
72. This militant was a member of the Valencian regional committee.
73. Two Maoist groups worked within the Workers' Commissions, the O.R.T. and the P.T. Until September 1976, the Workers Commissions did not call itself a trade union but a socio-political movement. From September, with the declarations of Carrillo which showed that the W.C. would now become a trade union and adhere to the "reform pact", the crisis within the W.C. began, which led to the exodus of the O.R.T. and the P.T., who set-up their own trade unions. In practice however, they often zig-zagged the C.P.
74. Aragon, not yet organised, was represented by the Organizacion Revolucionaria Anarquista. This group was well-known to autonomous militants in Madrid, and had come along at their invitation.

75. This was a member of a university-based autonomous group, which had been active in publishing libertarian educational alternatives. He would later be on the editorial staff of the libertarian magazine, "Bicicleta" which did much to inform militants of C.N.T. matters and other libertarian news. Many C.N.T. members agreed that, due to the "information gap" within the C.N.T., they often heard about what was happening from "Bicicleta". This militant was also on the first national committee of the C.N.T., but was forced to resign because of his "Marxist" past.
76. When I interviewed him in 1978, he was 19 years old.
77. He was a university lecturer on a temporary contract. These lecturers, known as PNN's, became very active from 1976 onwards, and launched many strikes in support of more permanent positions.
78. Both worked in highly conflictive sectors - PNN's and banking. These sectors, traditionally not known for their militancy, would be frequently involved in strike action from 1976 onwards.
79. Interviews with C.N.T. members at the local federations of Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia, 1978 / 1979.
80. This was a militant in his late forties, who had been a member of the Young Libertarians during the Civil War, and was from a staunch anarchist background.
81. There is only one mention of recruitment in the minutes of the local plenum held in May / June 1976 in Madrid. It was suggested that any worker who wished to join should be presented by one or two known militants. This was because of clandestinity, as the minutes point out.
82. FAI militants interviewed in 1978 / 1979, still held to this view i.e. that the C.N.T. should be an organisation of "conscious militants". But it should be remembered that there were various FAI operating, so there was no homogenous "FAI line". Ferrer and the Valencian FAI were in favour of mass affiliation, as were other FAI groups in Barcelona. Moreover, their position on affiliation would change over time. The Madrid FAI, "purist" in 1976, would favour affiliation later on, in 1977 and 1978, and indeed would accuse the autonomous sector of being "purist". In practice though, the various different FAI usually displayed a "purist" attitude towards affiliation, as many FAI members agreed when I interviewed them in 1978 and 1979. The "extreme integralists", though few in number, were not in favour of the C.N.T. being a trade union, but the coordinating body of the libertarian movement. They were against statutes of any kind, and argued for an organisation of conscious anarchist members.

83. Of course underlying this rejection of the traditional organisation of the libertarian movement (i.e. C.N.T. / FAI / FIJL) as we have seen, was the commitment of Soli and other autonomous groups to new social groups who were now engaging in struggle, i.e. ecologists, feminists, anti-nuclear campaigners etc...
84. As we have seen in the previous chapter, many militants had been disillusioned with the Marxist groups they had encountered primarily of because of the type of people who were members. There was no attempt to struggle against authoritarian forms of behaviour, which, the GOA argued, often meant amongst other things that these "grupuscules" were condemned to oblivion. Many older militants active in the early 60's had been impressed by Ché Guevara and his writings on the "new man".
85. By 1976, many of the GOA members in Madrid and Barcelona were now convinced of the need for a trade union. These were members who, on the whole, had been active from the late 60's, and had often been "through" an "integralist anarchist" phase much earlier. They did however argue for an active neighbourhood struggle, which they believed was a crucial issue, given the poor standard of housing in working class neighbourhoods, and the high level of speculation. Moreover, it was of crucial support in strikes, and many of them had experienced this in January 1976.
86. Minutes from the Madrid local federation, 28th of March 1976. Solidaridad produced a dissolution document, written in January / March 1976, and distributed it.
87. Minutes from the Madrid local federation, 16th of June 1976. The local secretary was a pro-Solidaridad militant, although he considered himself an "independent".  
Interviewed in Madrid, 1979.
88. This is confirmed in the report from the delegate of coordination on the regional committee, 29-03-1976.
89. Report from the delegate of coordination on the regional cte. 29-03-1976.
90. In a report from the Valencian regional cte., whose secretary was Juan Ferrer, the interference is denounced and asks : "If we are the Valencian C.N.T. / FAI, who is the other representative ?"  
29-03-1976.
91. The article to which he refers accuses the autonomous sector of trying to "cease links with the AIT, maximum expression of revolutionary syndicalism at an international level". The other sector did not see the need for the AIT, which, they argued, was purely a "paper"

organisation controlled by the "exilio". The autonomous sector were further worried about the "reformism" of the Valencian C.N.T. / AIT, which issued a document in favour of the Republic early in 1976. Certainly the main allies of Ferrer's FAI were the older reformists around "Libre Estudio", one of whom had had talks with Fraga at the beginning of 1976.

92. Interview with member of the local committee of the local federation.
93. The "Cinco Puntistas" were a group of Madrid cenetistas who put forward proposals to the government on trade union reform, and some later held posts within the vertical trade unions. The extent of C.N.T. infiltration within the CNS is not known precisely. In an interview with one of the "Cinco Puntistas" in Madrid, Eduardo del Guzman, he insisted that after the government turned down their proposals, there was nothing they could do, so they withdrew from the project. This contrasts with interviews with older militants, more active at the shop floor level. According to some of them, the vertical trade union was kept going by C.N.T. members, who often held posts in the CNS.
94. Interviews with militants at the Madrid local federation. 1978 / 1979.
95. Interview with member of Madrid local committee 1978. There seemed to be a general agreement over this decision, Solidaridad included. This union, from the CNS, was said to be vehemently anti-communist. In Barcelona however, this practice did occur.
96. The PSOE "historico" was the sector which remained after the party had been renewed at Suresnes in 1972. The exiled bureaucracy, which had been losing touch with events inside Spain, was overthrown by interior militants led by Felipe Gonzalez, and a renewal of the party took place throughout the seventies. Rudolfo Llopis headed the "historic" PSOE, which displayed the anti-communism of the Civil War period. On his return he said : "The communists have killed a lot of people".  
El Pais. 03-01-1976.
97. Fraga had had talks with the PSOE "historico" leaders on their return, and welcomed the ex-FAIsta, Abad de Santillan back from exile. The government envoy, Manuel Fanjul, on his trip to explain the referendum to Europe, declared : "I feel a great sympathy for the anarchists",  
Triunfo. Otra Manipulacion de la FAI.  
Fernando Gonzalez, March 4th 1977.
98. Alcazar. 24-06-1976.
99. Correo de Andalucía. 02-02-1977.

100. The Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Sindicales (COS) was set-up in June 1976, and had been preceded by regional coordinating bodies of the clandestine trade unions, in Vizcaya in March, and Barcelona in May.  
Ben Ami. op. cit.
101. Many militants I spoke to talked of the difficulties of being in demonstrations with CP members, who didn't allow them to carry their flag, and often violently attacked them. In the ABC (29-06-1976) the C.N.T. denounced an attack on one of their militants by Workers' Commission militants in Villadecans, Bajo Llobregat.
102. This was the general drift of such articles in "Interview" 11-11-1976, which emphasised the "anarchist" nature of the C.N.T. Others, with emigrés such as Abad de Santillan, spoke of the need for a "new morality" and the importance of anarchist philosophy, Cuadernos para el Dialogo. 20-03-1976.  
"Nostalgia" was very much in evidence in the interview with José Peirats in "Posible", June 1976.
103. This indeed was the case. A member of Libre Estudio, (a group of older militants in Valencia), allies of Ferrer's FAI, admitted to me that he had talks with Fraga, in January 1976. He defended this thus: "I proposed that we go to see Fraga about the legality of the C.N.T. I was afraid that, because of ETA and other terrorist groups, that we would be detained under some pretext. Fraga said we could act openly and celebrate a Congress. Many younger militants reacted badly to this. But I feel that whoever asks us to go and talk to them we should go, without committing ourselves or the organisation."  
Interviewed in Valencia, 1978.  
This was a sixty-six-year-old militant who had been active under the Primo dictatorship and during the Civil War. He returned from Venezuela in 1972, but was not active until 1975 when the reconstruction process began. He was retired, and a member of the Valencian regional ~~Committee~~ <sup>Commission</sup> when I interviewed him in 1978.
104. Minutes of meeting at Madrid local federation.  
10-05-1976.
105. Minutes of meeting at Madrid local federation.  
10-05-1976.
106. Unfortunately I am missing the intervening minutes. I can only suggest that they either declined, or were never invited. The latter is the most likely.

107. As this commission was headed by the secretary of the regional <sup>Committee</sup> a FAI militant and author of the scurrilous article in the Construction bulletin in May, little work was undertaken to clarify the question.  
Minutes of the Madrid local federation.  
28-05-1976.
108. Minutes of 16th June 1976. Madrid local federation. Also a letter from the regional <sup>Committee</sup> to the local federation. 16-06-1976.
109. Minutes of 16th June 1976.
110. Minutes of the meeting of regional cte. elections, 26-06-1976.  
The trade unions overwhelmingly rejected the candidature of the FAI militant who had written the article in the Construction bulletin, and had intervened in the Valencian dispute. These acts were censurable, members argued, and complicated the problems.  
Minutes of 26-06-1976.
111. Minutes of 30th June 1976.
112. With the exception of Gómez Casas, the rest of the regional <sup>Committee</sup> members were from the FAI.  
Minutes of 3rd July 1976.
113. There were occasional references to Miguel Inestal, an older militant who openly told me he had good relationships with some of the "Cinco Puntistas", who, he said, at least tried to keep some anarcho-syndicalist practice alive under Franco, and not all had "sold-out".  
Interviewed in Madrid, 1979.  
Although he was attacked from time to time, he was not forced out of the C.N.T., expelled or sanctioned in any way.
114. The main topics were : organisational problems, newspapers and publications, confederal defence, prisoners, solidarity and international relations. As autonomous members present at this plenum said, there was little chance given to the non-FAI section to talk on "organisational problems", which they tried to do. Most of the delegates to the plenum were faistas, or sympathisers.  
Interviewed in 1978/1979.
115. This was traditionally the method of election of the national <sup>Committee</sup>. The local federation of trade unions in a locality proposed at a national plenum would be entrusted to elect the national <sup>Committee</sup>.

116. The FAI-controlled trade unions at the time were :  
Chemical Industries , Leather, Construction, and  
Transport. All had voted for the same candidates.  
Minutes of 4th August 1976.
117. This was the FAI militant who had written the article  
in the Construction bulletin in May.  
Minutes of 6th August 1976.
118. In the minutes of August 11th., the delegate from the  
Health trade union resigns because of the way some trade  
unions and the exile organisation act. Also, the treasurer  
of the local committee resigns, until a plenum decides  
what the attributes of the cte. are.  
Minutes of August 11th 1976.
119. This national committee was elected on 14th September '76.  
The secretary was Gómez Casas, deemed "neutral", Pedro  
Barrio, an older militant, also considered "neutral"  
José Bondía, FAI, and Chema Elizalde, autonomous.
120. This was Louis Altable. A letter from Altable to the  
local federation on 22nd September explains that he is  
a member of the HOAC, but not a leader. He had been a  
leader, but gave it up several years before. An "open  
letter" from a member of the Metal trade union, replying  
to the above, points out that these sort of people,  
Christians, cannot be anarcho-syndicalists. Moreover, the  
C.N.T. has always been "revolutionary, apolitical, anarcho-  
syndicalist and acatholic".  
25th September 1976.
121. Cases had been active within the CNS, and brought the entire  
Public Entertainments Union with him into the C.N.T.  
Despite this, he was generally well-respected by the  
autonomous groups, as he was a fairly agreeable type, and  
in favour of a reconstruction process which included  
younger militants. Luís Edo Martín, ex-Solidaridad  
militant and former HOAC militant, had built-up a good  
section within Banking, which joined the C.N.T. at the  
time of the reconstruction.
122. Luís Edo Martín was treasurer, and Cases was in charge  
of the Legal-Pro-prisoners secretariat. The secretary  
Padilla, was an exilio supporter, while Luis Andrés Edo  
was secretary of coordination. One member was an ex-GOA  
militant, Sebastian Puigcerver.
123. Interview with member of the Teaching trade union in  
Madrid,  
La C.N.T. : in SER Y NO SER. La crisis de 1976-1979.  
Paris, 1979.
124. This is interesting, as historically C.N.T. members  
had voted for Esquerra Republicana, the Left Republican  
party of Catalonia.

125. Interview with ex-GOA member, later member of the Catalan regional cte. from December 1976.
126. An assembly was closed in Albacete because it was not authorised.  
Informaciones. 25-09-1976.  
Plenum closed in Madrid - Informaciones. 25-09-1976.
127. Faustino Crespo was shot by police for painting slogans.  
El Pais. 01-10-1976.  
Diego Ortega was seriously tortured by the police for painting slogans.  
El Pais. 08-09-1976.
128. Most newspapers agreed that the amnesty did not benefit libertarian prisoners as much as militants from other opposition forces.  
March : Diaro 16, Informaciones, Ya, El Pais (1976).
129. He had been sentenced in 1964 for having explosive material.
130. Some of the older C.N.T. militants I interviewed had spent between 16 and 20 years in prison simply because they were C.N.T. members, or had tried to re-organise the movement. This was a customary sentence for those accused of trying to re-organise political parties or trade unions.
131. COPEL, the organisation founded in 1976 which campaigned for prisoners' rights, held its first "Week in Solidarity with common criminals" and was supported, apart from the C.N.T., by the PCE, ORT, PTE, AC and LCR.  
An article in Interview, in April, showed that many within the prison service were pushing for reforms, and saw the development of COPEL favourably.
132. In an interview with a young lawyer, who defined herself as an "anarchist/nihilist", and hostile to anarcho-syndicalism, she complained of the problems she had getting the C.N.T., as an organisation, to commit itself to the activities of COPEL. Many C.N.T. members however, were extremely active within it.  
Interviewed in Madrid, 1978.
133. For a sophisticated defense of this position, see Carlos Semprún : "Ni Dios Ni Amo, Ni C.N.T.". Barcelona, 1976.
134. Minutes of the local federation, Madrid, 1976.  
It was suggested in the minutes that permanent delegates should not be elected, in case of repression. There were those, however, who believed that acquiring legal status

would endanger the revolutionary ethos of the organisation The C.N.T., they believed, should not allow bourgeois democracy to stabilise itself.

135. These fears were well-founded. As Paul Preston has shown, sections of the army were plotting to install a military dictatorship from the beginning of the transition period, which finally led to the famous "February 23", take-over of parliament by the Civil Guard chief, Tejero, in 1981.  
Paul Preston : The Triumph of Democracy in Spain.  
London, 1986.
136. Minutes of the local federation, Madrid, 1976.  
The "various" trade union, stronghold of ex-Soli militants, agreed on this too. Agreed on 16th June, but by 14th July, it was deemed unnecessary.
137. This strike at Vitoria, which last from January through till March, was heavily repressed. Five workers were killed, and hundreds injured and detained.
138. As I pointed out previously, there were various different FAI's some of whom called for armed struggle. This was particularly the case in Barcelona, where the FAI of Ballester was composed principally of armed activists.
139. This is confirmed in the minutes of the local federation in Madrid, 23-06-1976.
140. These criticisms come-up fairly regularly in the minutes of the local federation. Madrid, 1976.
141. Luís Andrés Edo led the "counter-culturalists" in Barcelona. I shall deal with this group later on in the chapter.
142. This was more of a problem in the provinces. A local provincial secretary employed 40 people in his firm, and was well-known in the area for the poor wages he paid. Interviews with C.N.T. militants from the province of Ciudad Real, at the Young Libertarian's National Plenum, July 1978.
143. This was the case in many small villages and towns, according to members of the Madrid regional committee who visited the provinces in 1976 / 1977.
144. This was very much the case in Valencia, where I found a strange alliance of "pasotas" and old Veterans. The latter were retired, and could therefore spend their entire day at the C.N.T. local. Each time I visited the local I found them there. The "pasotas" I encountered one evening in the centre of the town, drunk and stripped naked. On top of it all, they cried : "Long live anarchy and the C.N.T."

145. This was the case with some GOA members I interviewed in Madrid. These militants worked in small firms, with no history of struggle or trade union organising. It was almost impossible to build-up a C.N.T. section in these firms. The Madrid autonomous groups had developed out of contact with the University, and had been involved much more within the neighbourhoods.
146. This comes up several times in the minutes of the Madrid local federation during 1976.
147. This was the case with the banking trade union, where Luis Edo Martín had built-up a strong section. As Manuel Ludevit points out in his study of Spanish trade unionism, one of the characteristics of Spanish unionism is that it is linked to the firm and the mechanism of direct representation. The immense majority of workers prefer someone they have confidence in than the particular trade union they represent.
- M. Ludevit : Spanish Trade Unionism.  
ESADE Institute, Madrid, 1979.
148. Interview with ex-GOA member, later member of the regional committee elected in December 1976. There were some joint actions carried-out with the UGT during the summer of 1976.
149. L. Edo Martín and the MCL did not however form a bloc. The MCL and Solidaridad were fairly hostile to one another. They did both believe however that the most important task was the strengthening of the trade unions.
150. Interview with the secretary of the Barcelona local federation from June 1976 to June 1977.
151. The opposition invariably referred to the FAI of Ferrer as "political". This was primarily because of his "moderate" position compared to the armed FAI's or the "pasota" FAI's which existed. Moreover, they believed, and there seems to be considerable evidence to prove it, that Ferrer was an "entrism" from the Lambertist faction of the Fourth International.
152. I certainly encountered several at the Barcelona local federation in 1979.
153. Luís Andrés Edo, leader of the 1 May group during the '60's, had been fairly critical of the exile organisation's role at this time, and was part of the group around Alberola and Gransac, who also were in favour of armed struggle. Indeed, it was at the home of the latter couple that GOA members first befriended Edo. Interviews with ex-GOA members, Barcelona, 1979.

154. In an interview with a member of the regional committee, in Valencia, he defended the alliance they had proposed in 1976, on the grounds that the members they had dealings with in the UGT were radical militants. They had worked very closely with the UGT from the beginning of 1976, so it was not a real strategic break to propose an alliance. This alliance, an attempt to revive the "Allianza Obrera" in Asturias, demonstrates that there was not a fundamental difference over strategy between Ferrer's FAI and the autonomous groups in Catalonia. (The fact that the most radical militants within the UGT had been ostracised by the Social Democrats was the reason given for discontinuing the contacts).  
Valencia, 1976.
155. Interview with a Barcelona militant who considered himself "independent".
156. This did not prevent the "exilio" offering them the leadership of the FAI in 1975.
157. This group, as with many others, had been influenced by C.M. Lorenzo's book, "The Spanish Anarchists and Power", which pointed precisely to these contradictions. First published in French in 1969, it was then published in Spanish in 1972 by Ruedo Iberico. (Paris).
158. This has been confirmed in interviews with other C.N.T. members. The MCL had particular strength in Metallurgy, Textiles, Chemical industries, Construction and later Teaching.
159. This is a central promenade in Barcelona.
160. I was invited to a lunch interview with Luís Andrés Edo, and was surprised how young his supporters were, from seventeen to twenty-one years old. He took part, and helped organise theatre shows on the Ramblas, and had helped set-up several free radio stations.
161. This is fairly close to Meaker's assessment of the dynamics at work within the C.N.T.  
Gerald Meaker : The Revolutionary Left in Spain. 1914-23. Stanford, 1974.
162. This is a fairly "orthodox" position of sections of the historical FAI.
163. Interview with Luís Andrés Edo in Barcelona, 1979. This was obviously after the "deal" was hatched with the "exilio" which many militants referred to.
164. Ajoblanco and Bicicleta were two libertarian magazines founded between 1976 and 1978. They had a fairly

wide distribution, primarily amongst the youth, and contained articles of a fairly high standard.

165. Even before Edo's rapprochement with the "exilio" he had sought to gain positions on C.N.T. committees, and had caused a great deal of havoc in pursuit of this. Moreover, he continually attacked the first provisional regional committee in Catalonia, and prevented Edo Martin (considered a Christian and a Falangist who could not possibly be an anarchist), from doing his job.
166. Quimét, FAI leader and student, would be the most vociferous of the "uncontrollables" during the crisis in Catalonia in 1979, when he was secretary of the local federation.
167. Minutes of the national plenum of regionals (PNR) 25/26 September 1976. Asturias, Euzkadi and Valencia criticised this procedure.
168. Opposition to legalisation only came from the Central region and Murcia. PNR, September 1976.
169. There was a long debate over this, with Galicia and the Central region against, and the Basque provinces and Valencia for. (Catalonia did not comment). Both based their arguments for or against on historical precedent. PNR, September 1976.
170. Minutes of the PNR, September 1976.
171. Freddy Gómez : Grandezas y miserias del Movimiento Libertario hoy. p. 10  
in La C.N.T. : Ser y no Ser. Paris, 1979.
172. The Communists had certainly succeeded in monopolising the trade union movement in Portugal after 1974, through their federation "Inter".  
Ben Ami. op. cit.
173. The Workers' Commissions outstripped both with a membership of 60,000.
174. Later however, this was believed not to be the case.
175. In an interview with Chema Elizalde, secretary of International Relations on the first national committee, he said that he had to drop almost everything to deal with the work load. Only the secretary of the national committee receives a small salary, the rest of the posts are non-remunerative.
176. There were quite substantial financial contributions from the Sweden SAC, the Italian "Comitato Spagna Libertar. and U.S. and French comrades.  
Interview with Chema Elizalde. Madrid, 1978.  
The C.N.T. newspapers were : the C.N.T. (responsible to the national committee, the national organ),  
Castilla Libre (Central region),

Fragua Libre (Valencia), and the Catalan regional's Solidaridad Obrera.

177. The strike in Bilbao was in Tarabusi, a Metal firm employing some 1,300 workers, with one of the lowest wages in the area. Some workers were dismissed after the COS strike of 12th November, which brought forth strike action and occupation of the factory. The workers criticised the lack of solidarity shown by the Workers' Commissions and the UGT. This was a violent strike, with various confrontations between strikers and the police, particularly after the latter had ousted the workers from the firm. Two strikes took place in Madrid, at Osram (Phillips), and Induyco, of an assembleist nature, which were actively supported by the C.N.T. Both these strikes, which were long and militant, ended in victory for the workers, who condemned the actions of the "democratic" candidatures, and praised the role of the assembly in their struggle. Both firms had a certain number of C.N.T. militants or sympathisers.

Luchas Autónomas en la Transición Democrática.  
Tomo 2 op. cit.

Interviews with C.N.T. militants involved in the Osram and Induyco strikes. Madrid, 1978.

178. The conflict at Roca Radiadores, which employs 4,800 workers, was over the election of workers' representatives and the sacking of 42 workers. The strike, which lasted two months (from November 1976 to January 1977) was particularly violent, with both the Civil Guard and the extreme right-wing Triple A attacking workers. As more workers were sanctioned, confrontations between the Civil Guard and strikers increased, with pitched battles taking place almost daily. Although the strikers succeeded in getting their leaders released, they went back to work under police guard, and threatened with dismissals if they didn't return to work within 24 hours.

Luchas Autonomas en la Transición Democrática.  
Tomo 2 op. cit.

Cronicas. op. cit.

Interviews with C.N.T. militants involved in the ROCA strike.

There were however certain disagreements over the handling of this strike. Some C.N.T. members felt that the C.N.T. should try to affiliate workers, as they had played an important role. Others felt that this would be exactly the same kind of behaviour which the C.N.T. criticised in the other trade unions. Certainly there was some criticism of the C.N.T.'s action at Roca. Roca workers criticised the behaviour of some C.N.T. members on the support committees who, they said, tried to dominate them in a bid to take them over.

Luchas Autonomas. Tomo 2 op. cit.

179. The strike wave of January 1977, affected most regions of Spain, and brought into the strike movement new sectors, such as fishermen (Almeria) and hospital workers in Seville, apart from the more traditional sectors, such as Metallurgy, Mining, Construction, Ports, Electricity and public services, such as the Post Office and the Telephone Exchange. As J. Maravall points out, 1977 registered a high level of labour militancy, 110 million hours lost in strikes, compared to 150 millions lost in 1976.

Maravall. op. cit.

One of the most important strike movements of January 1977 took place in Valencia, where 100,000 workers struck, mostly in Metallurgy and Construction.

180. The strikes of January proved the importance of COA, the left-wing "autonomous" commissions, which were important in some of the Valencian firms. This was also a violent and confrontative movement, in which 50 workers were detained and many wounded. The C.N.T. had a certain strength in some of the firms, whose militants often worked within COA, especially in Macosa (a large metal firm which had a tradition of militancy and where older workers were C.N.T. members.

Luchas Autonomas. Tomo 2 op. cit.

Interviews with Valencian cenetistas involved in the January movement, Valencia, 1978.

The C.N.T. also had some strength in Ford in Valencia. In Barcelona there was a certain C.N.T. tradition in Metallurgy firms, such as Macosa (Barcelona), Harry Walker, and Maquinista, and amongst port workers in Barceloneta. Roca, previously mentioned, had some C.N.T. members and sympathisers. This support grew, despite some criticism, after the support from the C.N.T. in the November strike.

181. Many militants I interviewed agreed that the C.N.T. was being viewed sympathetically from sections of workers who opposed the "moderate" actions of the Workers' Commissions during this period, when the Commissions, trade union force of the Communist Party, was beginning to be seriously "compromised" in the reform process. They agreed too that there was a steady influx into the organisation around this time, mostly of workers who believed that the C.N.T. would support actions which threatened the wage freeze imposed by the government.

Interviews with secretary of the local federation, Barcelona from June 1976 to June 1977, and member of the regional committee elected in December 1976. Barcelona 1979.

182. This was the immediate impression which C.N.T. militants said they had of the January detentions. Interviewed in 1979 in Barcelona, Madrid and Valencia.
183. Interview, March 2nd 1977 - and Triumfo, March 4th 1977.
184. "Otra Manipulacion de la FAI : Fernando Gonzalez. Triumfo, March 4th 1977.
185. The Communist Party (Workers' Commissions) and the PSOE (UGT) were "consulting" with the government from Autumn 1976.
186. Interviews with C.N.T. members at the local federations of Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona. Member of the Catalan regional committee elected in December 1976, and secretary of the local federation in Barcelona, June 1976 to June 1977. Barcelona 1979.
187. Jose Maravall. op. cit.
188. The repression at Vitoria, with five deaths, certainly showed that Arias was continuing the type of reaction associated with the dictatorship. Areilza, the Foreign Minister, had to cancel his European tour, while Fraga was refused a visit to the secretary general of the German Social Democratic party. The crisis within the government undoubtedly propelled the opposition, which set-up Coordinación Democrática at the end of March, which immediately attacked the limitations of Arias' reform, and called for general elections to a new legislative chamber, and again stressed the need for amnesty.
189. J. Maravall. op. cit.
190. Between February and April 1977, the principal political parties were legalised. Three political amnesties were granted, in July 1976 and March and October 1977, while the Movement was disbanded as was the vertical trade union structure in the Spring of 1977. Free elections to a Constituent Cortes was also agreed, due to take place in the summer of 1977. Maravall. op. cit. p. 25.
191. The Moncloa Pact, signed in October 1977, was a pact between the government and the political parties, including the Socialists and Communists. The trade unions, although not included officially in the pact, also supported it i.e. the Workers' Commissions and the UGT, although the latter was more critical of it. This was primarily a stabilisation plan, which included cuts in public spending, monetary policies and wage limits. The reforms

promised to compensate for this essentially anti-working class pact were :  
trade union sections in firms, the return of expropriated trade union assets, democratic control of the Social Security system, expansion of public investment, a statute for public enterprises, fiscal reform and control of urban speculation. The peculiarity of this plan was that while the stabilisation measures were clearly defined in time and space, and were applied immediately, the reform measures were non-specific and ambiguous. Even now, none of these have been fully implemented. As the authors of Crónicas point out, the major points which this plan contained were :

- a) a drop in workers' living standards ;
- b) the greater ease with which dismissal was granted i.e. if workers' struggle broke the wage limits, then employers were allowed to sack 5 % of the workforce. This allowed employers to sack those they considered "militant" or troublesome;
- c) unemployment would increase dramatically due to the crisis of the small and medium firm, who were denied official credit. This was crucial in a country where the small and medium firm equalled 95 % of the total, and employed more than 80 % of the total workforce. 2,000 firms had to close by the end of the year.

Cronicas. op. cit.

La Hueva Contra el Pacto de la Moncloa. op. cit.

The pact did however give the desired results : inflation fell from 29 % to 16 % in 1978, the balance of payments rapidly improved, and exports grew by 29 %. Unemployment grew steadily however, and reached 7,4 % in 1978. This was mostly among the youth. By the end of 1977, 400,000 young people were unemployed. Moreover, for the first time in years, consumption did not increase in real terms, and for three consecutive years investment registered negative levels. The slight growth was only achieved by exports and the fall of imports.

La Transicion Politica y los Trabajadores.  
Anuario de las relaciones laborales en España, 1977.  
Universidad Autonoma de Madrid, 1977.

192. As an author of this period says : "A transition such as this, from an economic and political dictatorship to one of democracy, is only possible in an optimistic economic climate. Therefore, we begin what we could call by the popular expression 'economic gaity'. This is an old game of the Right. To achieve power in any country during the run-up to an election a favourable climate has to be created to obtain votes. If afterwards they win the elections they have greater majority backing for imposing restrictive measures ; if they lose them, it leaves the Left in a very difficult economic situation without much hope of remedying it. Consequently, throughout the rest

of 1976, and the beginning of 1977, important amounts of money were injected into the economy. This logically, meant an increase in economic activity and a slower growth in unemployment. All this would lead to a very serious economic crisis, of which the government was well aware. By mid-1977, both the balance of payments and the price index offered an alarming image".

La Transicion Politica y los Trabajadores. op. cit.

193. This strike was particularly violent, with confrontations with the police and hundreds of detentions.
194. Maravall. op. cit.  
Other important strikes during this period were the strike in Vizcaya, by the "Coordinadora Unitaria de Asambleas de Fabrica", which represented some 120,000 workers (which prolonged the strike of September in solidarity with the executions), and the strike in the Post Office in Madrid, which soon extended to the whole country.  
Crónicas. op. cit.  
Luchas Autonomas. op. cit. Tomo 2.
195. There were also strikes by Metal workers in Galicia, hotel workers in Madrid, Telephone employees in Barcelona (for a creche) and massive demonstrations against the increase in the cost of living.  
Luchas Autonomas. op. cit. Tomo 2.
196. Crónicas. op. cit. p. 241.
197. The "Hot Autumn" of 1977, began with a large strike movement in Galicia followed shortly after by the Madrid Post Office workers. Although this strike had not been well-prepared, the Post Office workers hung on for two weeks. At first the Workers' Commissions would not support the strike, but later did. But Workers' Commission strategy was most clearly revealed on October 1st, when the killing of a student by Right-wing extremists forced the Workers' Commission and Coordinacion Democratica to call a general strike, feeling that if they didn't the workers would come out anyway. This followed the failure of a response from Madrid on 27th. September, in solidarity with the executions. The figures for the October strike, some 300,000, equalled that of January in Madrid. Assemblies and mass meetings followed throughout the day, which culminated in a massive demonstration in the evening. This was savagely repressed by the police. Without any alternatives, the movement fell back. It was at this point that Suarez announced his economic package, undoubtedly feeling that the opposition was safe. The only concerted response was a peaceful day of action, called by COS on November 12th, while a few weeks earlier a much more important event occurred which was unsupported by the Workers' Commissions.

As M.P. Izquierdo says : "During the first days of November, another conflict appeared, which, because of its characteristics, could have played the role that the Metro had played in January, i.e. one which was central and could act as a uniting factor for the rest of the strikes which were happening at the time. The possibility of a well-prepared strike was perceived by Sartorius himself (Workers' Commission leader), when, threatening the government he declared : 'At the same time - and this should not be forgotten by our authorities - the labour atmosphere in Madrid is getting worse. The EMT (National Bus Company), strike happened 12 days before the 24 hour strike called by COS. Important sectors of Metallurgy and others could come out in solidarity with the EMT and thus put into motion a strike of enormous proportions.' The EMT began its strike well, and even gained the sympathy of Madrid passengers during its week-long strike. Although in itself not unsuccessful (a 6,000 pts. wage rise was won), there were dismissals and detentions. Despite the words of Sartorius and the rest of the executive of the Workers' Commissions, no attempt was made to bring out other sectors. In the face of police repression, the EMT workers returned to work and the general strike of November 12th. was decided."

M.P. Izquierdo : De la Huelga General a las Elecciones Generales, in Crónicas. op. cit. p. 30.

198. Crónicas. op. cit.
199. Sabadell and its region had also responded to the general strike in the Basque provinces in solidarity with the 1975 executions.  
Crónicas. op. cit.
200. Diego Fabregas and Dionisio Gemenez : La Huelga y la Reforma (Sabadell, Metallurgy Autumn, 1976)  
in Crónicas. op. cit.
201. Dioniso Gemenez Plaza : Roca : organizacion Obrera y Disinformacion in Crónicas. op. cit.
202. Certainly the C.N.T. was receiving much more attention from the police at this time. Shortly after the FAI detentions in January, four anarchists were detained in Murcia, accused of being suspected terrorists and carrying out robberies. Nothing was ever proved against them, and attempts by the C.N.T. to be allowed television time were denied. (As is customary, the television never rectified its original accusation, so the public was left with the image of "anarcho-terrorism".) The local secretary of the Murcia local federation, Antonio Marfil, tried to protest, but he himself was detained.

In March, a molotov cocktail was thrown at the Palacio de Justicia in Madrid (at the same time as a Eurocommunist meeting was in session) and reputedly leaflets from the C.N.T. distributed. The Madrid organisation called-up Radio Nacional and was told that this information had come from Cifra. When they contacted the latter, they denied giving the news.

Diario 16 - 20 March 1977.

203. Umberto Marzocchi, for example, was an old militant from the Italian anarchist federation, CRIFA.  
F. Gomez : Grandezas Y Miserias del Movimiento Libertario Espanol hoy. in C.N.T. : Ser y no Ser, la crisis de 1976 - 1979.  
Paris, 1979.

It was later discovered, however, that Joaquim Gambin, police spy "extraordinaire", had been involved in this operation. He would later come to public attention after the Scala bombing, a year later.

204. Many C.N.T. members I interviewed expressed a similar view.

205. Member of Barcelona C.N.T., who considered himself an "independent".

206. Member of the Barcelona C.N.T., who considered himself an "independent".

207. FAI militants whom I knew and interviewed in Barcelona felt that more could have been done for the detained. This was also the view expressed by those involved in prisoners' rights defence, and attracted to the C.N.T. because of its history of anti-statism, who were, on the whole, hostile to anarcho-syndicalism.

Interviews and meetings with FAI and C.N.T. members at the Barcelona local federation, 1979.

208. It was the prolonged crisis of these months which brought about the split between Sebastián Puigerver, ex-GOA member, and Luís Andrés Edo. The polarisation between these two groups, the ex-GOA and the "counter-culturists" of Edo, dates from this time.

Interview with Sebastián Puigerver. Barcelona, 1979.

In interviews with Luís Edo Martín and Cases, both expressed the impossibility of continuing in their posts. The FAI et.al.; kept up a continuous attack, and "made life hell for us". Moreover, in the plenum where the new regional committee was elected, delegates who had not brought mandates looked on in astonishment at the manoeuvres of the plenum.

Interviewed in Barcelona, 1979.

209. The leading members of this committee were Sebastian Puigerver, Fernando Ramos and Paco Lopez, who were extremely hard-working and efficient.
- Interview with the author, Alberto Hernando : Nuevas Crisis / viejas causas : La reconstrucción de la C.N.T. en Cataluna, in C.N.T. : Ser y no Ser. op. cit.
210. There are continual complaints in the minutes of the Madrid local federation about lack of information and minutes not reaching the trade unions. The greater number of complaints come from Varios (later Public Administration) trade union, stronghold of ex-Solidaridad and autonomous group members.
- Minutes of the Madrid local federation, 1976.
211. This was denounced at the national plenum of regionals by one or two regionals who felt that this should have been discussed and decided by the trade unions.
- National plenum of regionals, minutes - 25/26 September 76.
- This was also a complaint from the Madrid local.
- Minutes of 1976.
212. This was a complaint aired frequently in the Madrid local throughout 1976. One of the most flagrant contravention of norms occurred on July 28th in a report from the national plenum. The agenda of the plenum differed from that which the regional committee had on certain points - and these were the only points debated at the plenum ! Asked by the delegate from the Health trade union about this, it was argued that the previous regional committee did have them. Why were they not disclosed ? This was particularly strange as the previous secretary of the regional committee had been present at the plenum.
- Minutes of the Madrid local; 28-07-1976.
213. Indeed all the reports from the regional committees, or local committees deal with either internal problems, or ideological questions, for example an exposition of the "assembleist" line of the organisation, or major topics, such as the talks with La Mata.
- Reports from the regional committees/ local committees, during 1976. Madrid local federation.
214. These requests were issued repeatedly during 1976, but the relevant information was never given. In the minutes of 6th December, Varios asks for information about the teachers dispute - it didn't know if the C.N.T. had been involved or not. On 1st December the Telephone trade union says it heard that a daily newspaper was being set-up and financed by the exilio. This shows the lack of information given to trade union members about concrete issues, and issues of some importance to a trade union organisation, throughout 1976 in Madrid.
- Minutes of the Madrid local federation, 1976.

215. Public Administration (opposition trade union) repeatedly requested the minutes of the second part of the national plenum in September. By 24th December it still hadn't received them.  
Minutes of the Madrid local federation, 1976.
216. Proof that the local federation wasn't in control seems to be confirmed by the report from the local committee of the local federation on 1st December. It asks members to inform the local federation or the regional committee about contacts members establish, or meetings they organise. Do not carry-out personal actions, it asks, but inform the local federation. It also reports that militants do not talk about problems in meetings, but discuss them outside. In interviews with members of the opposition trade unions in Madrid, they justified their lack of contact with the local federation on the grounds that the latter never resolved a problem, or got things done. For example, the physical attack on the ex-Soli leader was not censured by the local federation, primarily because it was FAI controlled. Similarly, bloc voting was never censured, for the same reason. There were several plans drawn-up by ex-Soli (Varios / Public Administration and ex-GOA members for a restructuring of the local federation which were not taken-up, and their discussion was continuously postponed.  
Minutes of the Madrid local federation, 1976.
217. Members of GOA and Solidaridad (ex) approached Gómez Casas and asked for a clarification of the detention of a member of the national committee, well-known in Madrid as a leading fafsta. He outrightly refused to discuss it, and more or less told them it was none of their business.  
Interviewed in 1978 / 1979, Madrid.
218. This decision was taken at the national plenum of September 1977.  
Minutes of plenum.
219. A plenaria is a meeting of the national committee plus the secretaries of the regional committees. A plenaria was held in February 1977, when it is supposed that the decision on the exile organisation was postponed until the next plenum of regionals.  
Felipe Orero : Exilio - Interior. La C.N.T. que no lo fue, in C.N.T. : Ser y no Ser. op. cit.
220. The press conference called on 28th February was primarily held to counteract the terrorist image of the organisation. While reiterating the C.N.T.'s position on trade union plurality, it did however denounce "the violence of minorities which would only be advantageous

to the Right, anxious to re-install the dictatorship." Gomez Casas, El Pais, 29-02-1977.

The meeting at San Sebastián de Los Reyes at the end of March was greeted by the press as a libertarian "festival". As one publication pointed out, the composition of the meeting was old cenitistas from the Civil War, young "acratas", and the counter-cultural "progressive" types from Madrid. El Pais, 29-03-1977.

Certainly the speeches by Luis Andres Edo on prisoners, and the burning of effigies of Fraga, Carrillo and even Federica Montseny reflected the "anarchist" tone of the meeting. There was some mention of joint actions with the UGT during April, primarily to dismantle the vertical trade unions, but this was overshadowed by the spectacular acts mentioned above.

Abajodcon Los Líderes. in Interview 07-04-1977.

221. The meeting at Montjuich on July 2nd 1977, Barcelona attracted some 150,000 and was similarly, like San Sebastián de Los Reyes, considered a libertarian "fiesta" Tele-Express. 4-05-1977.

Interviews with C.N.T. members who considered these meetings of the C.N.T. as a "projection of the whole libertarian movement" added weight to the notion that the C.N.T. and the libertarian movement were synonymous.

Hoja del Lunes. 28-03-1977.

The organisation had legalised itself in May, before the Jornadas Libertarias in Barcelona. Despite this, many regionals and trade unions remained functioning "illegally", an action criticised in the national secretary's report at the end of 1979.

222. It is estimated that around 60 % were paid-up members. Interview with member of the Catalan regional committee, elected in December 1976. Barcelona, 1979.

223. Interview with a member of the Fourth International, Mandel faction, Valencia, 1978. I don't know if this organisation took the decision at the level of the organisation to "enter" the C.N.T. This militant was a member of a group which joined after a decision was taken at group level. Other "entrists" within the C.N.T. included the Partido Republicano Federalista y Socialista, which spoke of the need to work in the C.N.T. in their magazine "Republica", summer 1977. The PORE (Partido Obrero Revolucionario Español) also mentions the need to struggle against the anarchists within the C.N.T., in "A Sus Compañeros de la C.N.T." during summer of 1977.

224. ZYX, as I have pointed out previously, was an important editorial which published histories of the Spanish working class movement, particularly the anarchist movement, and had many supporters who would later join the C.N.T. or be sympathetic to it. Set-up originally by Christian militants, the split in 1975 was by those who wished to end the links with any type of group which had dealings with the Church, although the ZYX groups had by now broken most of their links with their Christian background. "Liberacion", first published in May / June 1975, was a magazine of a fairly high standard, which gradually moved away from a quasi-Maoist / Third Worldist perspective to one which emphasised the importance of "self-organisation of the class". Even in its first issue however, the notion of "living another way" was emphasised, and the organisational question was always at the forefront of the debate. (May / June 1975). Ho Chi Min was praised for having created a "morality of struggle and life", which is lacking in the West - combativeness, violence and discipline are not enough, "without a love for a truly fraternal and communitarian way of life (what we define as communism), we can never reach an authentic socialism / communism." The critique of Marxism (in the 3rd issue January 1976) centres on its limited notion of "materialism". Other needs - which should be included in the term "material" such as the need for relationships (love), freedom, consciousness, the need to feel dignified - these are not separate from "material" needs - they are all aspirations of "being". History itself has proved this, as there have been many struggles to be "free" and to know, exemplified in the spirit of sacrifice till death of many revolutionaries. While agreeing with the importance of historical materialism, it is argued that its laws are not definitive - one must continue studying / working on them - the historical process will give corrections and amplify them. The "integral" needs of Man are also motors of history. In terms of organisation, the first issues are not particularly anti-syndicalist nor anti-Leninist. Indeed, it is admitted that perhaps revolutionary change, under the conditions which prevailed in Russia in 1917 may have necessitated a party of the Leninist type. Gradually however, the criticisms of Leninism become more strident, when it is suggested that the nature of the party-class relationship inevitably leads to reformism. Workers' councils are the organisational forms which are proposed. The workers' council organisational schema is also proposed in the first issues of "Lucha y Teoría", from November / December 1974, when it is again suggested that this was the organisational form adopted by the revolutionary working class throughout its history.

By July 1976, Liberación is now seeking to create a new revolutionary theory for today, and Liberación wants to initiate the debate over this - it itself has not explicitly formulated it but given certain pointers which it must include : a notion of the working class as "revolutionary subject", which is not developed in Marxism, and a development of a theory somewhere between the "spontaneist" notions of Luxembourg and Pannekoek, and the Leninist model. The notion of the "militant" organisations is first brought up when it is proposed that the relationship (between class / militant should reach a dialectical synthesis, and must be seen in the context of a new revolutionary theory, one in which revolution is seen not just as a question of political line, strategy and tactics, but also includes "the question of organisational form, culture and consciousness". The "idealist" nature of Leninist thought is criticised i.e. that something is needed from outside of the class to "wake it up", and where the central Marxist tenet is ignored i.e. that it is the class struggle itself which generates organisation - although it is agreed that the need for a militant organisation still exists, for the class left to itself would be dominated by bourgeois ideology and consciousness, and is only sporadically revolutionary. The militant organisations have to work within the class in a different way from the Leninist organisations - it must not direct the class, but work within it to constitute it as a real revolutionary subject. This idea - of a "different kind of revolutionary" who doesn't impose his criterion nor direct the class, but simply acts as a revolutionary focus, and residue of values - is an old Bakuninist notion which other groups, such as the MCL, developed, although more consciously, as they saw their task as a "fusion" or Marxism and anarchism. The Liberación group, as far as I know, had never read Bakunin, nor had they been much influenced by anarchist thought, but developed this notion independently. By May 1977, Liberación now calls for complete "class autonomy", centred around the assembly, and independent of the political parties on the European model, although it reiterates the need for conscious revolutionaries, who "work for the self-organisation of the class, will not go for power, but will help and discuss, contrary to 'vanguard' positions."

225. The strength of Liberación varied from region to region. In Catalonia they had some working class militants, in construction and Metallurgy, while in Granada their supporters were mostly teachers. They had some working class support in Galicia and Madrid, while in Salamanca its support came from the student movement at a certain point. They held an assembly once a year in Madrid, where delegates from throughout the country

attended. They had between 400 and 500 members.  
Interviews with militants of Workers' Autonomy,  
Barcelona and Madrid, 1979.

226. This militant is one of the authors of "La Izquierda Autoritaria", an interesting critique of the Leninist Left in Catalonia from 1967 to 1974. Paris, 1975. (Antonio Sala and Eduardo Duran).
227. The Italian Autonomist movement, of which Mario Tronti is one of the leading intellectuals "was born in the large factories of Northern Italy in the early 50's. 'Autonomy at the base' was originally devised by emigrant workers from the South in defiance of the union bosses - backed by the Communist Party - who pretended to represent them. Autonomy soon moved beyond claims for higher wages and questioned not only labour relationships, but labour itself. It devised original forms of collective action (auto-production, sabotage of production etc...) which entailed numerous confrontations with the state. The whole theme crystallised in 1965 with the refusal of wage labour, which still remains directly tied to the struggles of the Italian Autonomy. Autonomy is a way of acting collectively. It is made up of a number of organs and fluid organisations characterised by the refusal to separate economics from politics, and politics from existence. Autonomy never unified. Diverse organisations assembled at the national level. They formed 'Potere Operaio' (Workers' Power) both a group and a magazine gathering together a number of theoreticians such as Mario Tronti, Toni Negri, Sergio Bologna, Franco Piperso and Oreste Scalzone. Their reformulation of Marxism became seminal for the whole of the autonomous movement. In 1973 the militarisation of the movement raised a deep controversy between various currents within 'Potere Operaio'. The confrontation eventually led to its self-dissolution. (The State today refuses to recognise this dissolution). Formed in 1970, the Red Brigades were already organising clandestine actions in order to carry the confrontation 'to the heart of the State'. On the other hand, various fragments from 'Potere Operaio' extended the struggle from the factory to the city (occupation of houses etc...) to ground it to the daily life of the 'socialised worker'. This majority constitutes the Italian Autonomy."

The Return of Politics. Sylvere Lotringer / Christian Marazzi, in Italy : Autonomia, Post-Political Politics Vol. 3 N° 3 - 1980 - Semiotext, Columbia University

In an article in the same volume, Mario Tronti explains how workers' struggle, in forcing capitalists to look for ways of meeting workers' wage rises, in the form

of more advanced mechanisation, actually proves to be a dynamic force for capitalist development.

Mario Tronti : The Strategy of Refusal in Italy :  
Autonomia. op. cit.

228. Santiago López Petit explains this process in an article in *Viejo Topo* in June, 1979, where, describing the development of capital, and its continuing need to deal with the fall in profit levels, says : "Here, what interests us is how to understand how the continuing de-valuing of labour power on the one hand, and on the other the constant increase in the productive forces through technological leaps, has very wide effects on the productive and social system. At the level of the firm, the productive cycle becomes much more rigid. Gaps cannot exist in time nor space. Assembly line production forces out more 'extra-labour', but is much more vulnerable. If only a few stop work it is sufficient to stop the whole line. Massive production closes the cycle of all merchandise production-distribution-exchange- consumption ever more rapidly. Market planning will end by being tied to the productive cycle. As capitalist development advances, the whole of society increasingly lives in function of the factory, and increasingly the social relations of production extends to the whole of society. Our way of life, the school as a reproducer of ideology, the neighbourhood as a consumption space and of rest-reproduction of labour power, without distinction, all, absolutely all is in function of the factory. It is the society-factory."

S. Lopez Petit : *Autonomia de la Clase o Antonomia de lo Politico*, in *Viejo Topo*, June 1979.

229. Arshinov was one of the exiled Russians in France after the Russian revolution. He formed part of a group which called for an organisation of "revolutionary anarchists" against what was termed the decadent "bourgeois" type of anarchists which abounded in Europe, and those who had "sold-out" to the Bolsheviks. His "Plataforma", though vague, recognised the need for an organisation, around a programme of working class demands, which would unite revolutionary anarchist elements in Europe and Russia. This figure, and the type of anarchism he represented, was an important influence within France, and was taken as the basis for the creation of the ORA (*Organizacion Revolucionaria Anarquista*) after May 1968.

Maknov was the leader in the Ukraine during the early days of the Russian revolution. He fought the "Whites" very successfully, and indeed, Lenin and Trotsky guaranteed his regime in the Ukraine until 1921, when

it was heavily repressed. (Arshinov was with Maknov until 1921, and wrote a history of the movement). Primarily a peasant movement, it was characterised by its extreme democracy, and lack of a full-blown ideological theory. This was partly due to the fact that it was a militarist movement which as one of its protagonists said "could never be considered anarchist, as anarchism is above all about peace and harmony". Its call for workers' councils, of peasants and workers, has however been important in influencing younger anarchist militants.

Daniel Guerin : Ni Dios Ni Amo. Vol. 2  
Nestor Maknov. Madrid, 1970.  
History of the Maknovist Movement. 1918-1921.  
Arshinov, Detroit, 1974.

230. This is the personal opinion of this militant. In "Una propuesta Anarcho-comunista" the anarcho-communist alternative issued by the Madrid group, coordination was deemed essential. Coordination was also seen to crucial in "For una Alternativa Libertaria y Global" written by Mikel Orrantia, leader of the Basque anarcho-communists.  
San Sebastian, 1979.
231. These were two anarcho-communist magazines, Askatasuna, in the Basque provinces, and P'alante in Madrid.
232. Again this is the personal view of this militant, although there were others who felt the same.  
Interviews with anarcho-communist militants, Madrid, 1978.  
An organisational alternative is however put forward in "Una propuesta anarco-comunista", where it is suggested that coordination of all the various groups should take place, in a sort of classical anarcho-communist commune organisation, with the maximum autonomy of each group.  
Madrid, 1978.
233. This was the movement around Mikel Orrantia, which had considerable strength in the Basque provinces, and would later be connected with Herri Batasuna, an assembleist movement which supported (and still supports) the military wing of ETA. They gained some seats in the 1979 elections, although they declined to enter parliament. This movement reached its zenith around 1979, when each village, factory and neighbourhood sent their representatives to the assemblies, which took place frequently.

234. F. Gómez : Grandezas y Miserias del Movimiento Libertario Español. op. cit.
235. Indeed, the Barcelona trade unions did not support it. The initiative came from members of the regional committee.
236. "Pasada", from the word "pasota" denotes something, particularly an event, which is completely overdone, or to use an English piece of jargon, 'over the top'.
237. Having won the elections, the Suarez government presented the Spanish economic situation as dramatic, which of course it was. The government presented the facts, a balance of payments deficit of some 3,200 million dollars (1,500 more than 1976), and consumer prices growing at around 30 %. The government immediately initiated severe restrictive policies which would be of great importance when the Moncloa Pact had to be negotiated in October 1977. The agreement would always be easier if the situation showed dramatic characteristics.  
La Transición Política y los Trabajadores. op. cit.
238. Maravall. op. cit. p. 27.
239. Maravall. op. cit.
240. "Desencanto" or apathy, is a specifically Spanish term used to describe the lack of interest Spaniards increasingly displayed vis-à-vis the political process. The 1979 elections registered a high level of abstention (some 40 %) as have subsequent ones. This could be said to be a continuing trend in Spanish history, and indeed "interrupted" only during certain periods, such as the Second Republic of 1931-1936 and the end of Francoism, when great hopes were placed in the change of regime.
241. As Maravall says : "This process of de-mobilisation - which is linked generally with the phenomenon of apathy or political "desencanto" vis-à-vis the 'promise of democracy', without dealing with the same phenomenon as their areas are different - has given rise to two interpretations. The first offered by Paramio and Martínez Reverte, and also by Rodríguez Aramberri, accuses the Left parties - and the PSOE and the C.P. in particular, of having produced this de-mobilisation.  
L. Paramio y L. Martínez Reverte : Sin imaginación y sin principios. Zona Abierta 18, 1979.  
J. Rodríguez Aramberri : Origen y Evolución del Sistema de Partidos en la España Democrática : Un Ensayo de Interpretación. en op.col. La Crisis de los Partidos Políticos, Madrid, Dédalo, 1980.

The second points to the fact that the mobilisation was limited and had little chance within an apathetic society, with a notable dose of 'political cynicism' with a weak associative dynamic, and in the context of a severe economic crisis. This interpretation emphasises the legacy of the cultural / ideological Francoist past, a demobilising dictatorship which differed from the other fascisms on this, just as the Spain after 1975 could not be compared with the rich associative life in Italy after 1945."

J. Maravall. op. cit. p. 30.

As he continues to point out, these two points are not necessarily incompatible. As he says "the Left in Spain were aware that Francoism didn't end with Franco, and that the social forces of Francoism were intact. Therefore they felt they had to proceed cautiously in the political process. The second interpretation can be supported by the fact that in view of constituent elections and a representative democracy, the Left had to attend not only the potential pressure of some thousands of citizens who could be politically mobilised, but to the political inclination of a citizenship unknown and silent."

J. Maravall. op. cit. p. 30

241. Victor Pérez Díaz, in his study of Spanish trade unionism in 1980, calculates that only 33.8 % of Spanish workers belong to trade unions. He quotes a study by Alvira and Garcia Lopez which puts this figure at only 24 %.

Clase Obrera Partidos Y Sindicatos. V. Pérez Díaz. Madrid, 1980.

M. Ludivit believes that it is not much more than 20 %.

M. Ludevit. op. cit.

243. In an interview with the secretary of the local federation, and a member of the regional committee, they agreed that trade unions such as Transport, Graphic Art, Textiles and Metallurgy, grew in 1976-77, and then maintained their membership. The rest of the trade unions remained more or less the same, with the exception of Teaching, which was somewhat revitalised by the work of a member close to the MCL and "independent" at the end of 1977 the beginning of 1978, and Hotels / Catering, a new trade union set-up and maintained by MCL members around the same time.

244. Interview with secretary of the local federation and a member of the Catalan regional committee, at this time. Barcelona, 1979.

As this regional committee member pointed out in an article in Viejo Topo (N° 32, May 1979), many of the younger members coming into the C.N.T. were generally "lumpen". Many of these presented a very "radical" image, with a strong "cult of violence" which often led to join organisations of the extreme right, like Fuerza Nueva, after their militancy within the C.N.T.. As he says ; "And there are people who make a cult out of violence itself, and they have joined C.N.T. unions but could form the basis of a fascist derivation. These things are happening and we have facts to support it. For example, in Santa Coloma de Gramanet, the people at Construction took it upon themselves to 'get' the teachers' trade union, a union which I believe was magnificent. Construction tried to expell everyone, on the basis of this easy, cheap radicalism, accusing them of being petit bourgeois. Well, the person behind all this is now a militant of Fuerza Nueva. There exists within the C.N.T. sectors which uphold a cult of mediocracy, of the most vulgar 'workerism', and the cult of violence. These sectors are those which refuse to analyse, and generate a type of militancy which is 'viscerally' acrata".

Sebastian Puigcerver. op. cit.

As he points out, the large cities, and their neighbourhoods on the periphery, are the home of many of these unemployed youth, who have probably never been in full-time work.

Interview with S. Puigcerver. Barcelona, 1979.

245. The figures issued at the national plenum of regionals showed that Andalusia now had 20,000 members, a regional which had only several hundred at the beginning of the reconstruction. Aragon, on the other hand, had only 2,000 members, a region which had been a C.N.T. stronghold up to 1939. Catalonia, with 60,000 contained half the membership of the C.N.T..

F. Gomez : Grandezas y Miserias del Movimiento Libertario Espanol hoy.

I should mention that I found it impossible to get information on the level of membership.

246. This can be seen in the reports from the national secretaries, who continually complain about problems with the regions. At the time the national newspaper was set-up, C.N.T., it was decided that each region should have its own correspondent and be in direct contact with the editor. Apart from Extremadura, Valencia and Cantabria (occasionally) the rest of the regions did not do this. The secretary of organisation complained that he had problems getting data from

the regions. Moreover, the regional delegates to the plenarias kept changing, which meant there was no continuity, as new people would be uninformed. Documents and various types of material sent were never replied to. Regionals changed addresses without letting the national committee know about it. The Treasurer was forced to reduce the number of copies of the newspaper, C.N.T., because money had ~~not~~ been sent, although it had been agreed to send 20 pts, to the national committee for this. They had also had to cut some trips for lack of money, and could ~~not~~ send help to regions which desperately needed it. The legal secretary also complains about the lack of information on C.N.T. prisoners - the regionals did not send it. Sometimes, he says, he gets this information through the newspapers. The "exilio" would now pay for the propaganda apparatus. In the report from the national committee it was pointed out that it had repeatedly asked the regionals to send money and get the organisation moving. They had had to stop sending papers to regionals who had ~~not~~ paid up.

Secretary reports to the national plenum of regionals; 25/26 September 1977.

This situation did not improve, as the reports from the second national committee (of Enrique Marcos) to Congress in December 1979, complain of similar problems.

247. Galicia and Andalusia had not received mandates from various locals. 5 out of 13 regionals did not have mandates for the whole agenda.

Minutes from the national plenum, September 1977.

248. This attitude can be seen in a pamphlet written by the FAI at the beginning of 1977. Here, attacking what they claimed were the "Trientistas" within the organisation, they say: "All the talk about the fact that the C.N.T. doesn't yet function - have we been fooled into feeling this? Is it true? Having heard it from one section of militants, over and over again, are we beginning to believe it? The functioning of the organisation, as it's confederal, will always be full of conflict (i.e. the assemblies). Do we want it to be the Cortes where everyone applauds? "Más Treintistas"? beginning of 1977.

249. Secretary of the Barcelona local federation.

250. The holding of a Congress was unanimously approved by all delegates.  
Minutes of the national plenum. September 1977.

251. Minutes of the national plenum, September 1977.
252. The AIT, as I pointed out previously, has little relevance internationally, and is essentially a sister organisation of the Toulouse "exilio", which controls and administers it.
253. Minutes of the national plenum, September 1977.
254. Minutes of the national plenum, September 1977.
255. Minutes of the Pleno Intercontinental de Nucleos, August 1977.
256. Minutes of the Pleno Intercontinental de Nucleos, August 1977.
257. Pleno Intercontinental de Nucleos (minutes) August' 77.
258. Report from the Treasurer to the national plenum, September 1977.
259. Minutes of the plenaria, October 1977.
260. Treasurer's report to the national plenum, September 1977.
261. This was a complaint I heard fairly frequently from C.N.T. members. Of course there were other expenses which the C.N.T. was unable to cover, such as trips and help to other regions, which was pointed out at the national plenum, September 1977.
262. After a year in the post, the members of the national committee felt that this was enough, given the enormous work load. Chema Elizalde, International Secretary, had resigned earlier in the year. In an interview with Chema in May 1978, he agreed that the harassment he had received in the post, particularly because of his "Marxist" past (he had been a member of the Communist Party), had forced him to take this step. Jesus García, who took over this secretariat in May 1978, told me of the enormous difficulties he encountered trying to deal with the backlog which Chema's resignation had created.
- Interviewed in Barcelona, 1979.
263. Pozas was accused of being a police informer while in Carabanchel prison, although, as far as I know, there was no concrete evidence to prove this. He had also physically attacked an opposition militant.
- Report on the election of the national committee from the Teaching trade union, May 1978.
264. Report from the teaching trade union, May 1978, agrees that this trade union did not have as many as 400 members, and even if they had, it was hard to believe that all of them had turned up for the meeting.
- Report, May 1978.

265. Letter from this militant from the teaching trade union, "A todos los compañeros de la F.L. de Madrid". 22-02-1978.
266. Interview with a member of the teaching trade union who wrote the report on this election. 22-02-1978.
267. This trade union had 230 members. There were continuous problems over voting methods during the reconstruction of the C.N.T. As we have seen in Madrid, various types of voting methods were used, primarily because the trade unions did not have the strength they had in the 1930's, and the C.N.T. was now mostly composed of militants. This was used over and over again by the FAI to ensure victory over their opponents, as we have seen in the minutes of the local federation in Madrid. Historically though, the proportional method was used (agreed at the 1931 Congress, and used at the Zaragoza Congress in 1936), which gave 1 to 500 - one vote, from 1 to 1,000 - 2 votes, from 1 to 3,000 - 3 votes, from 1 to 6,000 - 4 votes, from 1 to 10,000 - five votes, from 1 to 15,000 - 6 votes, from 1 to 25,000 - 7 votes, and above 25,000 would have 8 votes, no matter how many adherents there were. Obviously, given the very reduced numbers within the trade unions during the reconstruction, the whole question of proportional voting methods would have to be reviewed, an item proposed for the 1979 Congress. (Proposals for Congress : opposition proposals, 1979). The "majority law", put into practice in Valencia from the summer of 1977, is denounced thus : "In Valencia, to discuss the 13 points on the order paper, the regional plenum called on the section, 'Small Metal firm', in the Metallurgy trade union. Of its 900 members, only 26 attended the meeting, and before the meeting had finished, this had been reduced to 11 who took agreements for the plenum with 8 votes in favour and 3 against. By the system of "majority law", to these 8 votes they added the 874 members who had not attended, the 15 who had left, and the three votes against, to come up with the total of 900 members of 'Small Metal'. As the rest of metallurgy have less members than 'Small Metal' (some 400 members) the 900 votes become 1,300, because of the same 'law', and they are taken as the agreement of the metallurgy trade union of the other trade unions in the local, with less nominal members, some hadn't brought agreements, while others didn't attend. In any case all are overwhelmed by the 'majority' vote of Metallurgy, and by these methods Valencia goes to the plenums with 2,600 votes, and stifles the voice of the 30 local federations, who, without having 1,300 members, had more members attending the meetings than in Valencia where the agreements were taken for the plenum".

Alerta Compañeros, Dictaduras Camufladas, Nº 3.  
Torrente, 4 July 1978. (Saturnino Lozano).

268. Minutes of the report from the Valencia regional committee. December 1977.
269. In the report from the expelled Teaching trade union in Valencia, the reason for its expulsion was purely and simply because, as they said, referring to Juan Ferrer, "the Secretary General felt like it, as he said textually in the local federation (10-11-1978) supporting his decision with threats. On the next occasion he said these matters would be resolved 'with an arm on the table.'  
Sindicato de Enseñanza. C. Blanqueras.  
25-11-1978.  
The C.N.T. section at AESA (Elcano) and FORD, were expelled because of proposing to stand for the works' committee elections, although by the time they had been expelled they had already stood down, and some had stood as independents. This is all the more surprising as I knew a FAI member who had stood for the elections at the University Hospital Clinic in Valencia, and there were, according to him, other FAI members who stood in the elections.  
Report from FORD and ELCANO, February 1978.
270. Member of the Madrid regional committee, interviewed in 1978.  
This was the member who had been asked to resign from his post (and this was supported by the majority of the Madrid trade unions), but had refused and continued in his post for several months. Similar kinds of feelings were expressed to me, vis-à-vis the "conspiracy" to dismantle the C.N.T., by a member of the Valencia regional committee and members of the FIJL at their national plenum in Madrid, July 1978. A FAI document, which talks of the "clerical and vertical conspiracy at work within the C.N.T.", was issued in January 1978. "Marxists" were the other category frequently blamed for the ills of the organisation, as a letter, "Carta Abierta a los Marxistas en la C.N.T.", issued in January 1978, affirms.
271. "Escuelas en Lucha" (Schools in Struggle) was a movement which gained a great deal of momentum at this time in Catalonia. It called for the running of the schools to be in the hands of teachers / parents / pupils, who would decide on curricula, and other issues normally decided by school administrators.  
Escuelas en Lucha : (pamphlet) issued in December 1978. The PNNs were university lecturers on temporary contracts who were increasingly militant from 1976.
272. This militant was expelled for belonging to the Grupos de Afinidad Anarco-Sindicalista, in May 1979. Interviewed in 1979.

273. This was confirmed to me in interviews with the secretary of the local federation, Barcelona, and a member of the Catalan regional committee at the time. Other Catalan militants I interviewed also testified to this growth within the Teaching trade union.  
Interviewed in Barcelona, 1979.
274. Boldieu was an intellectual of some standing in Catalonia. He would later hold a post on the national committee of Enrique Marcos, and seemed to have changed his "position" by then, as he was repeatedly attacked by the "exilio" while in his post.
275. Although not organised, there was of course contact between members of the opposition. But it would seem that it was fairly sporadic.  
Interviews with ex-Solidaridad and ex-GOA members, Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia, 1978-1979.
276. This is confirmed in Perez Diaz' findings. Spanish trade unionism, he points out, is essentially linked to the firm and the mechanisms of direct representation, where a majority of workers prefer works committees, assemblies or mixed representations, (trade unions / representatives) to negotiate convenios.  
Perez Diaz : Clase Obrera, orden social y conciencia de clase. Clase Obrera partidos y sindicatos. Madrid, 1980.
277. These were at Roca, Numax, Eurostil, Carbones de Berga, Bimbo, Montessa, Ossa, Bertram and Serra, all of an "autonomous" nature. Support committees were also created, for workers on strike in firms in Catalonia.
278. Albert Boadella, one of the leading actors of the "Els Joglars" theatre group, was detained because of his "violent satire", and became a "cause célèbre" both in Spain and abroad. The C.N.T. dominated the Public Entertainment sector, and closed all cinemas and theatres in Barcelona on 22/23 December.
279. Tele-Express, Barcelona 20-02-1978.
280. The PC (i) tried to get people to go to the Modelo prison after the demonstration had ended, where they were dispersed by the police. At the time this incident seemed of little consequence, but was to be used later to give an image of the initiation of a terrorist campaign. This was insinuated in Noticiero Universal, 16-01-1978.  
As many communiques issued from the C.N.T. at the time point out, the press either ignored C.N.T. actions, or, when reported, attempted to give the organisation an "uncontrollable" image.

281. Grupos de Afinidad Amarco-sindicalista, in their report on the Crisis of the C.N.T. in Catalonia, January 1978 - May 1979. Barcelona 1979.
282. GAA report. op. cit.
283. There were many articles and dossiers written on the Scala affaire. The one which points directly at Martin Villa, was written by an anarco-sindicalist research group in Madrid.  
El Caso Scala, 1980.
284. Indeed, many C.N.T. members believed that a great number of armed attacks were set-up in this way, as these groups were often supplied with expensive explosives and guns.  
Interviews with C.N.T. members in Madrid and Catalonia, 1978-1979.
285. In the press conference which Marcos gave on 23-24 April 1978, which I attended, he denounced "technocrats" and paid posts, but did however stress the need for "work groups" on the lines of Solidaridad Obrera, which may have to be paid. He also mentioned the need for a new internal structure, which would speed-up the work within the organisation. This would take the form of more plenarias, and fewer national plenums. The latter were too long and nothing was decided, while in the plenarias greater coordination could be achieved. FAI members present at his press conference did not seem too happy about some of this, particularly his suggestion that "work groups" should be set-up for greater efficiency.  
Press conference in the C.N.T. local in Calle Libertad, Madrid, 23-24 April 1978.
286. Solidaridad Obrera, 20th July 1978.
287. Press conference at Calle Libertad. 23/24 April 1978.
288. The "Treintistas" who were active in the 1930's, called for defence of the Republic, and were hostile to the FAI's notion of destabilisation of the Republic and their call to revolution. The pamphlet, "Más Treintistas" views certain groups within the C.N.T. as representing a similar trend, while "A los Marxistas Infiltrados" accuses Marxists within the organisation of trying to take it over. These views were also expressed to me in interviews with FAI militants.  
Interviewed in Barcelona, Valencia and Madrid, 1978/1979
289. In C.N.T. Ser y no Ser, La Crises de la C.N.T. 1976-1979, Freddy Gómez estimates that 339 delegates were elected, but fails to mention how many participated.  
Grandezas y Miserias. op. cit.

290. Interview with former secretary of the local federation, June 1976 - June 1977.  
The Metallurgy and Construction trade unions in Valencia also participated. The C.N.T. took part in the electoral campaign in FORD, Valencia, in September 1978.  
Juan Ferrer, Secretary General, was the spokesman. El Pais. 28 September 1978.  
The trade union elections were won overwhelmingly by the Workers' Commissions and the UGT. The W.C. gained 47,000 votes, while the UGT gained 33,000.
291. This was the general impression I received when talking and interviewing FAI militants during 1978. The C.N.T. has its own unique character, they pointed out, and should distance itself from Marxist trade unions. The Valencian FAI of Ferrer was, however, in favour of joint actions with the UGT and took part in the trade union elections, in some sectors during 1978.
292. The convenio affected 234,000 workers. A demonstration of some 80,000 workers took place in front of the AISS offices. (The AISS was the name given to the vertical trade union at the end of 1976).  
El Pais, May 10, 1978.
293. The C.N.T. formed part of the negotiating commission. El Pais, June 1st 1978.
294. This convenio was cited as an example of the uselessness of taking part in convenio negotiations in interviews with FAI militants in 1978.
295. Each method of election by the trade unions was rejected by the FAI-controlled trade unions.  
Minutes of the Madrid local federation, 1978.
296. The report from the local committee of the local federation talks of the announcement of the meeting being torn down from the walls, and the violence which prevented the election.  
Included in the minutes of 21 June 1978.
297. The precedent for this was taken from the method of election of the national committee in Barcelona. As members pointed out, the method of election of the national committee followed a quite different procedure from the method of electing the regional committee. As a member of the Telephone trade union said, most of the trade unions outside Madrid were in the hands of the FAI, so the election on this basis was a forgone conclusion.
298. Minutes of the Madrid local federation throughout September 1978.
299. Report from the secretary of the local federation, 26 September 1978.
300. Report from the secretary of the local federation, 26 September 1978.

Shortly after, the member of the regional committee who had refused to resign from his post, took the goods away from the Telephone trade union, because one of their militants had been involved in the knife incident. He said he didn't like the attitude of the secretary of the trade union, and that he had every right to do so as a member of the regional committee, as the local committee, had not taken disciplinary measures. The secretary of the Telephone trade union had not brandished the knife, and it was he who was attacked. The FAI members involved had not of course been disciplined.

Report from the secretary of the local federation, 26 September 1978.

301. Voz de Asturias, 24-03-1978.
302. Egin. 08-10-1978.
303. New-York Times. 07-08-1978.
304. Diario 16. 16-02-1978.
305. The autonomous statutes had been included in the reform pact. A certain amount of regional / national control was beginning to be devolved, and the autonomous Catalan government, the Generalitat, was re-established on September 29th 1977, shortly after the Catalan national day, the 'Diada'. However, the manner in which the autonomous question was resolved, which allowed every region a similar type of local control has meant, in essence, that the particular problems of the Basques and the Catalans have been again subsumed within the national context.
306. COPEL continued to grow and find increasing support, especially from the AFAPE, (Asociacion de Familias y Amigos de Presos y ex-Presos) created around this time. 22 members of the AFAPE were detained for illegal propaganda, an act denounced by the Director General of Penitentiary Institutions, who considered their organisation legal. This gives some idea of the arbitrariness of the Spanish police at the time.
307. Many militants testified to the growth of armed groups in 1978 and 1979, or those who felt that the only response to the situation was a military struggle. Some of these were not C.N.T. members, while others, the FIGA for example, considered themselves the "true" FAI. The Federacion Iberica de Grupos Anarquistas (FIGA) formed about this time, was composed principally of young militants outraged by the actions of the FAI. They considered themselves anarcho-syndicalists, but some of them were in favour of armed actions, and indeed I was told that towards the end of 1978 and during 1979, they carried-out many robberies which helped

support some of the C.N.T. local federations.  
Interviews with FIGA member, Madrid, 1979.

The GLA (Comite Libertario Antirepressivo) also dates from this period, and was composed of young militants, mostly students, whose main aim was the release of libertarian prisoners, generally the most neglected in the various amnesties decreed. According to C.N.T. militants, the GLA was the most radical of all the groups, and also carried-out armed actions from time to time.

308. Quimet, an architectural student, was well-known as a member of Peninsular Commission Relations of the FAI. He was elected secretary of the Barcelona local federation by only 3 votes, after other candidates withdrew, believing that their work within the trade unions was more important.
- Report from the GAA : The Crisis of the C.N.T. in Catalonia, January 1978 - May 1979.
309. Solidaridad Obrera 29 April 1978.
310. This debate continued sporadically throughout the year in Solidaridad Obrera.
311. Minutes of the Catalan regional plenum, 2 December 1978.
312. Minutes of the Catalan regional plenum, 2 December 1978.
313. Minutes of the national plenum, 18-19 November 1978. The trade unions mentioned were the C.S.U.T. and the SU (these were called the "Sindicatos Unicos", and were more or less controlled by the PT and the ORT, two quasi-maoist groups who had left the Workers' Commissions and were now contesting the social pact). USO, and the independent unions SLM and the UCSTE.
314. In interviews with two members of the national committee, Sebastian Puigcerver and Jesus Garcia, they told me of the many trips they had made throughout Spain, and the long hours they spent at their trade union or at the C.N.T. local. Indeed, the interview with Jesus Garcia took place in the C.N.T. local in Barcelona, where I had to wait for some time while he sorted out a problem. Interviewed in 1979.
315. The Dustmen's strike had paralysed Barcelona for two days in March. Although only a few workers were C.N.T. members, they succeeded in getting quite a lot of support for their position within the sector. The strike in the gas stations at the end of the year was not supported by the Workers' Commissions nor the UGT. The C.N.T. was the only trade union which supported these workers in their demands that the national convenio did not cover Catalonia. This was an extremely violent strike, with several strikers injured and 71 detentions, among whom,

was Enrique Marcos, secretary of the national committee. The police succeeded in taking over the stations however, and supplied customers with petrol. Despite the militancy of the strikers, the strike ended in total failure for the workers.

316. Pedro Berges y José García : Una Experiencia frustrada de prensa confederal : Solidaridad Obrera, 1978-1979. in C.N.T. Ser y No Ser. op. cit. p. 227.
- As the authors of this article point out, the level of information given during the period of Barnils' editorship was extremely high : opinion was kept at a low level, from between 42 % and 35 %, while informative pieces comprised between 56 % and 63 %, which contrasts greatly with the proportions under the editorship of Severino Campos, who replaced Barnils in May 1979. Opinion now comprised from between 42 % and 46 % with an increase in "communiques" (mostly pamphlets), and a notable decrease in informative pieces, from between 33 % and 39 %. As the authors say : "With its new editor, Severino Campos, Solidaridad Obrera now seems destined for a very closed public, supposedly anarcho-syndicalist, and plays the role of reinforcing the ideology of this public, while choosing not to inform other sectors of the working class who acquired the newspaper before." op. cit. p.230.
317. Minutes of assembly of those trade unions opposed to Ferrer's tactics. September 9th, 1978.
- The expulsions in Valencia had continued. The Various trades' union had been expelled because it had sympathised with the expelled teaching trade union, and the post office trade union<sup>^</sup> threatened. A member had been physically attacked in April, and had spent a month recovering.
318. As an ex-Solidaridad militant said, the beginning of a national coordination of forces opposed to the FAI can be traced to the election of the national committee of Enrique Marcos. It was obvious, given the alliances involved in this election, that local organisation was inadequate. But the contacts were accelerated during the lead-up to Congress, with opposition members drawing-up proposals, meeting more regularly, and generally preparing themselves for the coming contest.
- Interviewed in 1979 and 1981.
319. Interviews with members who had visited the Basque provinces after the expulsions, and several Basque militants in Madrid. According to them, the Askatasuna group, which would later become part of Herri Batasuna, had the real strength in the Basque country. What was left after their expulsion was similar to many other regions in Spain i.e. older retired members and young pro-FAI youth, mostly unemployed.

320. These are the figures from the GAA report on the crisis within the C.N.T. in Catalonia. At the beginning of 1978, the C.N.T. had some 25,000 members in Catalonia. By the beginning of 1979, this had dropped to 13,000.
321. Minutes of the Catalan regional plenum.  
03-04 February 1979.
322. Minutes of the Catalan regional plenum.  
03-04 February 1979.
323. El Pais, 11-02-1979.
324. This was Sebastian Puigcerver, who was badly beaten-up shortly after he left his home one day. Boldieu took over this post soon after. It should be mentioned that the FAI could "organise" to get their proposals through at a national plenum, as the opposition had been virtually liquidated outside Catalonia.
325. GAA report. op. cit.
326. After the expulsion of the national committee member, Berro, on 23rd March (which incidently was upheld by the local federation secretary, Quimet, in a communique to the press without the approval of the trade unions), 12 were expelled from the Graphic art trade union on 22 April, accused of belonging to the GAA. Among them were Sebastian Puigcerver, ex-member of the national committee, and Antonio Díaz, a leading worker intellectual, and author of Entre el Fraude y la Esperanza (Paris, 1972). 6 were expelled from the Metallurgy trade union on 3 May, and many others left with them in solidarity. 200 workers from the editorial Bruguera left the C.N.T. on the same day, in protest at these happenings.  
  
GAA report, and interviews with GAA members, Sebastian Puigcerver and Antonio Díaz, Barcelona, 1979.
327. This was the regional committee elected on 28-29 April 1979. Benjamin, member of the FIGA, defeated Quimet by a large majority. The motion that Construction should be expelled was defeated by one vote. The commission which counted the votes was composed of "apaches", the reason why the result was impugned by various trade unions.  
  
GAA report. op. cit.  
Interviews with C.N.T. members in Barcelona, 1979 and 1981.
328. Regional plenum of 5-6 May, 1979.
329. El Pais. 15-09-1979.

330. Mundo Diario, 15 September 1979. in El Pais, a series of articles by Alfonso Quinta on the crisis of the C.N.T. began in April 1979. The second quote is taken from his article of 29 April 1979.
331. The question of "patrimonio sindical" (trade union assets) was an issue much discussed within all the trade unions. The dismantling of the vertical trade union brought forth demands from the historical trade unions, the UGT, the C.N.T. and the STV, for the return of those assets seized in 1939. Many militants I interviewed told me of C.N.T. workers having paid dues for many years during Francoism and having union cards, for example the port workers in Barceloneta, Barcelona.
332. Cinco Días, 30 May 1979.
333. This was the tone of the article by Alfonso Quintá in El Pais on 15 September 1979. Many militants I interviewe agreed that there was considerable pressure by the rank and file to bring-up the economic question at Congress, and the opposition proposal asks the "exilio to give an account of itself, economically and ideologically, during the period from 1939 to the present". Opposition proposals to Congress, 1979.
334. As most militants I have talked to about the Congress have said (and which the report of the 5th Congress by Cooperativa Queimada, supports) the Congress was divided from the start between the FAI and their allies who wished the Congress merely to ratify the proposals of the Zaragoza Congress, and those, the majority, who sincerely wanted a debate which would "up-date" certain concepts, and attempt to deal with the crisis within the C.N.T. As Jesus García (member of the national committee) says in the report on the Congress, the problem began when the Madrid local federation was elected to organise it, "they used this position, before and during the Congress as a political position". There were continual tensions between the national committee and the organising body in Madrid, the latter accusing the national committee of overstepping their limits, while at the Congress itself the national committee was criticised for not doing enough.
- Jesus García : Ante la Imposibilidad de tomar la palabra, in 5°. Congress report, Cooperativa Queimada.
- The organising body attempted to exclude certain trade unions on the grounds that they were not paid-up or that they had not sent in their proposals on time. This was contested, and a long list drawn-up of the trade unions which had been excluded, and finally this was resolved after much tension. At the Congress itself,

there were manoeuvres to keep out particular trade unions, which caused great tension on the first day, when militants I spoke to told me of the threats they were subject to from the "defence" forces of the Congress, which, they insisted, were armed. The national committee was the primary target, and indeed, the reports from the national committee, on their year in office, took up much of the time, as they were continually interrupted and heckled. As Jesus Garcia says ; "there were political interests which didn't want major themes discussed."  
op. cit.

Certainly, a week later, only three minor points had been approved, and fundamental questions, such as the principles, tactics and ends of anarcho-syndicalism could not be agreed on. The same thing happened with the debate on trade union strategy, which was unable to be discussed. For most of the time the FAistas controlled the chair, and there were endless interruptions, FAistas taking the microphone out of turn, which created a climat where debate was impossible. In view of this, there were continuous withdrawals of delegations. The region of Cadiz left on Friday, leaving a note to the effect that "the agreements were manipulated, this was not the Congress we had hoped for". (5°Congress report op. cit.)

Indeed, a large number had left before the massive walk-out of delegations on the 16th. Interestingly, the Social History Museum in Amsterdam was occupied during the same time by FAistas who demanded the return of C.N.T. documents left there in 1939. As many militants pointed out, this could hardly have been a coincidence; for if the Congress had agreed that the exilio should in fact be dissolved, then the C.N.T. inside Spain could then claim the right to these documents and the trade union assets seized in 1939. This was certainly a possibility, as, since April 1979, there had been no direct relations with the exile organisation, as it had been approved at a national plenum to dissolve it. From then on the attacks on the national committee had increased, from the pages of "Combat Syndicaliste" and "Espoir", which as J. Garcia says, did not occupy themselves with any other topic throughout the year. The "total assault" tactics by the FAI during the Congress has to be understood in this context. After the massive walk-out of delegations, the rest of the points on the order paper were approved unanimously by the minority who remained. This was an almost total ratification of the resolutions of the Zaragoza Congress, with some compromise on the convenio motion (it left a margin for trade unions who felt they could intervene without sacrificing principles) and a call to "boycott production", totally unrealistic given the actual strength the C.N.T. had to carry this through. Indeed, it was totally in keeping with the spirit of Zaragoza, as one FAI militant pointed out, to me "is utopian, but that has been the strength of Spanish anarchism and the C.N.T. We've got to maintain

our principles, otherwise we should just be like any other trade union, and end-up at the negotiating table with Suarez. That's what these other sectors within the C.N.T. wanted - and I don't know what, or who was behind it. We in the FAI see our task as preventing this development, which we did at the 5th Congress."

Interviewed in 1981, in Valencia.

TRADE UNIONS WHICH WALKED OUT OF CONGRESS  
ON 15TH DECEMBER 1981

Water, Gas and Electricity - Barcelona  
Hotels - Palma  
Amer - region  
Gerona - region  
Oficios Varios Las Palmas  
Enseñanza Tenerife  
Construcción Tenerife  
Campo Cabo Blanco  
Construcción Cabo Blanco  
Hostelería Cabo Blanco  
Transportes Tenerife  
Enseñanza Las Palmas  
Oficios Varios Tenerife  
Comercio Santander  
Metal Santander  
Construcción Santander  
Of. Varios Vitoria (1 delegado)  
Admins. Pública - Madrid (2 delegados)  
Banca Barcelona (2 delegados)  
Seguros Valencia  
Of. Varios Leganés  
Of. Varios Cambados  
Construcción Pontevedra  
Artes Gráficas Valencia  
Of. Varios Salamanca  
Of. Varios Pamplona  
Serv. Públicos y Urbanos Valencia  
Of. Varios Torrente  
Piel-Calzado Elche

Limpieza Pontevedra  
Of. Varios Lugo  
Sanidad Zaragoza  
Of. Varios Zaragoza  
Madera Zaragoza  
Enseñanza Zaragoza  
Of. Varios Renteria  
Of. Varios Hernani  
Banca Margen Isgda. Baracaldo  
Seguros Madrid  
Seguros Barcelona  
Of. y Despachos Madrid (1 delegado)  
Admon. Publica Barcelona  
Of. Varios Santander  
Of. Varios Vigo  
Of. Varios Burgos  
Of. Varios Elche  
Of. Varios Manresa  
Químicas Vitoria  
Banca Madrid (4 delegados)  
Of. Varios Peniscola  
Of. Varios Vifaro  
Alimentación Valencia  
Construcción Zaragoza  
Enseñanza Santander  
Metal Pontevedra  
Of. Varios Cullera  
Campo Cullera

CONCLUSIONS.

## CONCLUSIONS.

Undoubtedly the trends which developed within the C.N.T. during the Civil War - bureaucratisation and centralisation - were exacerbated by the fierce repression unleashed against the organisation from 1939, with the victory of the Nationalist forces. It is also true that these trends affected all the forces of the anti-Francoist opposition, and added to the divisions which beset the Left after its defeat. The major division was of course between militants within Spain, who, having to suffer the repression and hardship of these years, were willing to contemplate even the "monarchist" option, if it meant an end to repression, and those in exile, who clung stubbornly to the Republican option, long after that formula had any real meaning or hope of success.

The lack of unity and strategy of the Spanish Left was a major factor which inhibited its ability to take advantage of favourable conditions for the overthrow of the Francoist regime in the 1940's. For, from 1944, when an Allied victory seemed assured, the level of resistance inside Spain reached enormous levels, reflecting the strength of popular forces in Spanish society, and the importance of political crises in propelling them into action. But the possibility of re-installing the Republic

overthrown in 1939 produced a greater division within the Left, as each sought to claim a place within the new regime.

It was within this climate of impending Republican success that the division within the C.N.T. took place. It should be remembered that this division took place within the exile organisation, for the internal Spanish C.N.T. was still committed to an alliance of all Left forces, and was a powerful presence within the National Alliance of Democratic Forces (ANFD). But feelings against any repeat of the "political" strategy of the Civil War period was strong within the C.N.T., and the idea of a Republican restoration again brought to the surface the bitterness many C.N.T. militants felt at the treatment meted-out to them by the other political forces. (1). However, the ambiguous outcome of the Congress of local federations of May 1945, where the split between the "apolitical" and "politicals" was revealed, reflected the severe crises of the anarchist movement begun in 1936, and which would accelerate during the long years of exile in France. (2).

The crises and division of the C.N.T. would inhibit the organisation from developing a coherent strategy, and lead to many tactical errors during the 1940's. The minimal assistance given to the internal organisation meant that robberies continued to be the main source of income, long after this tactic was *advisable*. Certainly the anarchist action groups inside Spain were careless and unprepared for the growing efficiency of the Spanish police, which led to many round-ups and detentions. But the increasing fear for the C.N.T.'s legality in France prevented the exile organisation from seriously re-thinking the relationship between the armed groups and the trade union organisation, and ultimately doomed the C.N.T. to extinction.

For there seems little doubt that the exile organisation was riddled with informers and in no position to dictate a strategy on the internal C.N.T. But the Toulouse exile organisation refused to contemplate any lessening of its control over the C.N.T., an attitude which would characterise all its actions during its lifetime in France.

The entrance of the "political" faction of the C.N.T. into the Giral government in September 1945, and the isolation of the "apolitical" C.N.T. in Toulouse within the international context served to reinforce its "pure revolutionary" anarchist perspective. Essentially however, there was little ideological difference between these two factions, and the "ideological" question simply masked the personal and clan rivalries which had developed within the C.N.T., and the struggle for leadership and control of the organisation. For the struggle for reunification of the movement begun in 1960 revealed the resistance of an entrenched bureaucracy, which skilfully used its leadership position and its "revolutionary" principles to ward-off any threat to its position of power. Indeed, it was its ability to equate the C.N.T. with "revolutionary anarchism", embodied in the Espleat leadership, against "reformist deviation" from principle, which assured the success of the Toulouse faction. This was possible of course, because of the intense feelings of bitterness and disillusionment amongst many exiled militants vis-à-vis their "political" experience during the Civil War, and led to the belief that "if we had to do it again, we would do it very differently". (3).

This contrasted sharply with the thought of Horacio Prieto and García Oliver, who believed that the experience of Civil War had proved that a political instrument, i.e. a political party, was necessary alongside the

traditional trade union organisation of the C.N.T. The "political" faction of the C.N.T. also believed that the Civil War had shown that "politics" was a sphere where the C.N.T. must enter, or perish. They did not, however, call for the creation of a political party, but argued instead for the "politicisation" of the C.N.T. This is redolent of Segui's call in the 1920's for a "responsible political movement", and was primarily an attack on the "hot-heads" within the organisation.

The internal Spanish C.N.T. was not much concerned with these ideological questions. The majority of militants inside Spain continued to argue for Left unity to bring about the downfall of Franco and install a regime where democratic freedoms would allow them to re-organise their forces. But the divisions within the exiled organisation would seriously impede their attempts at re-organisation, and the slander campaigns only served to deplete C.N.T. forces further. The attempts by the Young Libertarians in France (FIJL) to rejuvenate and reunify the movement, from 1960 to 1965, ended when the exile organisation accused them of "collaboration with the enemy". By 1965, the exile organisation was well and truly assimilated within French society, and totally unable, or unwilling, to develop any kind of strategy against the Francoist regime. It is within this context of "total crisis" of the C.N.T., and its absence from the trade union struggle, that the "Cinco Puntista" phenomenon must be placed. There is little doubt that large numbers of C.N.T. militants helped run the large trade union apparatus of Francoism, the C.N.S. While this is understandable in the context, it further undermined the C.N.T.'s appeal as an oppositional force, and contributed to the belief that anarchism, as a revolutionary force, had "died in 1939". (4). As a response to these developments, and the "political" nature of the anarchist bureaucracy in Toulouse, a re-appraisal of Marxism took place within sectors of the Young Libertarians in France.

It is from the mid-sixties that we begin to detect the growth of a "new type" of anarchism, which wished to dissociate itself from the experience of Civil War, and called for the unity of all revolutionary forces, a strategy heavily influenced by the anti-imperialist struggles in Latin America and Asia. While this current as yet had limited impact within Spain, it would be this kind of anarchism, which called for a serious dialogue with Marxism, and recognised the imperialist nature of Western capitalism, which would form a major tendency within the "new" anarchism of the late 1960's.

Despite the organisational inertia of the C.N.T., the strength of anarchist culture through its long history in Spain continued to exert some influence. This libertarian cultural heritage manifested itself primarily in two important spheres : on the shop-floor, where older C.N.T. militants continued to engage in a militant practice and shunned both the "entrism" tactic of some of their comrades within the C.N.S. and the "orthodoxy" in Toulouse, and within the Universities, where the intellectual standing of the Language professor, García Calvo, endowed libertarian thought with some academic credentials.

The political projects proposed by these two movements were however very different, and foreshadowed the later division within the "new" anarchist groups which made their appearance from 1968. For the "syndicalists" on the shop-floor argued in favour of a syndicalism which was close to the revolutionary syndicalist tradition of the C.N.T., and believed that trade unionism would continue to an important revolutionary force in future Spanish society. For those, workers and students alike, who were influenced by the satirical iconoclasm of Situationist thought, emanating from the University, the workers' council organisational formula was seen to be the answer to the organisational dilemma. In the mid-sixties though, the

impact of Situationism was minimal within the worker's movement, but would become important from 1968, when repression produced a crisis within the Workers' Commissions and again put on the political agenda the organisational question and its strategical consequences.

The beginning of a renewed interest in anarchist thought and practice in the mid-sixties has to be placed in the context of the politicisation which occurred in Spain at the time, consequence of the industrial development which Spain had undergone from 1951, and the contradictory political framework for this. For, by launching Spain on the course of economic development along "liberal" lines in 1951, the Francoist regime was placed in a real dilemma. By "opening-up" Spain to Europe and the United States, the authoritarian principles and out-dated philosophy which sustained Francoism were more clearly perceived, especially as economic development had been accompanied by rampant inflation and balance of payments deficits, and a severe crisis within agriculture. There is little doubt that the mass movements which developed in response to the rise of the cost of living were crucial in propelling the Francoist government towards greater "liberalisation" in the economic sphere, which in turn necessitated some degree of workers' representation if productivity targets were to be met. The Opus "technocrats", committed to economic development and a "controlled opening of the system", seemed best equipped to direct the economic "miracle" along authoritarian lines. However, their ascendancy, both in the government and within the Universities, seriously disrupted the clan alliance of the Francoist regime, and exacerbated the political crisis which began in 1951, with the change in economic direction.

Political crisis was felt first within the Universities. The "liberalisation" in the Universities under Ruíz Giménez undoubtedly encouraged the intellectual renaissance of the 50's, and fuelled the resentment of the Falange within

the students' union, the S.E.U. But it was the rise in power of Opus, and the ideological dominance of Catholicism within the Universities, which produced a "curious" oppositional movement. Indeed, opposition to the regime developed within two important sectors of the ruling alliance : Catholicism and Falangism. Both these ideologies, which could support their "radicalism" by reference to particular aspects of their doctrines, would be the "stepping stones" of many militants in their political life, many of whom would later develop towards positions to the Left of the Communist Party.

It was the intellectual renewal within the Universities which gave the Communist Party's strategy of "reconciliation of all Spaniards" its chance of success. Undoubtedly the Communist Party had benefitted from its isolation from the rest of the Spanish exiled opposition. Its "renewal" in 1951 occurred much earlier than with the other forces of the Civil War period, and was related to the adoption of "pluralism" by the Soviet Union, and not dictated primarily by developments within Spain. However, the "openness" of Spanish Communist thought and practice in the 1950's certainly contributed to its success, particularly amongst students and intellectuals, and laid the basis for its development as a mass movement in the 1960's.

But this period of "cultural" politicisation came abruptly to an end in 1956. Again, the mass movement in the Universities in 1956 had been greatly encouraged by the climate of political crisis which reigned, manifested in the growth of hostility between the different clans of Francoism, and the "liberalising" role of the Education Minister, Ruiz Giménez. Repression after 1956 dramatically changed the nature of the student movement, and brought about an attempt at ideological clarification amongst the most active students. The radicalisation which ensued

was not lost on the government, and thus some degree of student representation was decreed in order to channel discontent within the bounds of the regime. Simultaneously, and with the mass workers' struggles of 1957 in mind, a system of collective bargaining was introduced in 1958, which was closely linked to the "jurados de empresa" (shop stewards' committee) decree issued in 1953. The development of a system of collective bargaining whose success depended on a degree of genuine workers' representation, would fulfill both the need for greater productivity and keep workers' dissent within limits acceptable to the regime.

However, by setting-up a representational system, in both the Universities and in the work-places, the government had in fact dictated that a similar political strategy would be followed by students and workers, and encouraged links between these movements. For the student movement, suffering the effects of the development of the "mass" university, the lack of practical training and research facilities, and high levels of unemployment of graduates, was also, like the workers' movement, questioning the economic priorities of the Francoist government, and sought to establish a representative trade union to contest them. Certainly, the "syndicalist" nature of the student movement in Spain set it apart from other student movements in Europe, which would mean a greater degree of contact with the workers' movement and a much stronger influence of students and intellectuals within workers' circles.

The period from 1958 showed a growing relationship between the student and workers' movement, which would reach its peak in 1967, when massive demonstrations called by the Workers' Commissions were actively supported by students. This coincided, of course, from 1964, with the granting of some limited reform on the labour front,

and the "toleration" of the Workers' Commissions, in an attempt to "integrate" workers within the development framework. The "mass movement" character of workers' protest, particularly in Madrid, came to an end, however, in 1968, when the growing politicisation of the workers' movement, supported by the student movement, coincided with the onset of economic recession, and thus heralded the end of "liberalisation" attempts. Severe repression from 1968 was not sufficient to stifle the movement of protest, which was only brought to an end by the state of exception in January 1969.

The development of the mass movement of the '60's, and the election of Workers' Commission delegates in the 1966 trade union elections, seemed to support the Communist Party strategy of "the legalist peaceful road", combined with extra-legal methods of struggle. Criticism of this policy was first voiced within the student movement, which was forced to abandon the "legalist" road in 1961, when the dean was given the right to veto delegates, while repression suffered by students during solidarity acts with workers in 1962 led to a great radicalisation. These developments gave force to arguments which questioned the contradictory theoretical framework of the Communist Party's "legalist" strategy, and brought crises within the Central Committee itself, with the expulsion of two leading Communist Party intellectuals, Claudín and Semprún, in 1964. For the Communist Party held two incompatible notions on the nature of the Francoist regime. On the one hand, the policy of "national reconciliation of all Spaniards" was based on the belief that the unity of all the democratic forces was necessary to overthrow the small clique of monopoly capitalists, represented by Francoism, which was taking Spain to ruin. On the other, the Communist Party held to the view that a massive political strike by

workers, by itself, could topple the regime. Despite the patent failure of the repeated "National Pacific Strikes" from the late '50's, the Communist Party persisted in its defence of this strategy, one of the major causes for the growing opposition to the C. P. within workers' circles from 1967.

However, despite the theoretical problems with its analysis of Spanish capitalism, the Communist Party's "mass movement" strategy in the '60's was an important factor in the growth and extension of the working class movement, and contributed to the increasing politicisation of the movement in the late '60's. But the politicisation which this movement engendered could not be contained within the legal framework of the regime, again reflecting the contradictory aims of the Francoist government - its bid to integrate Spain into Europe, while continuing to maintain the judicial and police apparatuses of a military dictatorship. For the use of repression continued to radicalise workers and students, and bred groups committed to "revolutionary violence" from 1960. These groups usually emerged at times when inflationary tendencies had reached a high-point, and necessitated a "clean-up" of the economy, which meant that workers' protest was silenced due to massive emigration, unemployment and the use of repression. The Stabilisation Plan of 1959 was one such time, when the hardship which workers were suffering produced a tremendous radicalisation, particularly within the organisations of the Church, the HOAC and the JOC. Political crisis formed <sup>the</sup> background to this radicalisation, as the bid for Common Market entry from 1962 came increasingly in conflict with the nature of the agrarian structure of latifundio, and the official Falange syndical organisation, both of which were crucial social bases for the Francoist regime. But clan rivalry also allowed some political space for workers' organisation,

as the important role certain Falange syndical chiefs played in the development of the Worker's Commissions demonstrates.

The organisational question, and the strategical consequences it raised, was therefore the great dilemma for the Left under Franco. The open, legal type of organisation of the 1960's had succeeded in bringing into struggle large numbers of workers, but had left it open to repression, with the round-up of leaders and militants of the Worker's Commissions from 1968. But to organise along the lines of a closed political party could mean isolation and irrelevance, a fact supported by the lack of resonance the numerous Maoist and Trotskyist groups had within the working class from the late 1960's. The organisational dilemma was posed more forcefully from 1967 - 1968, when repression ended the brief period of a "mass movement", and a more serious criticism of the Communist Party's "legalist" strategy was undertaken within the Workers' Commissions, which coincided with the radicalisation which took place in Spain after the May events in Paris, 1968. There is little doubt that the Paris'68 events produced a great radicalisation, particularly amongst students, in Spain. However, Spain was not entirely "radicalised by proxy". The high-point of student radicalism in Spain had occurred in 1967, and the growth in deadlocks in bargaining reflected the onset of economic recession in Spain, and the strength and development of the Spanish workers' movement, and its increasing rejection of the official syndicate structure. Moreover, the political crises which had characterised the regime from its "opening" to Europe in 1951, now became more acute. As the Dictator aged, so too did his regime. Great efforts were made during the late '60's to "bring Spain into line" with the rest of Europe, while maintaining the essential structures of Francoism. But measures such as the referendum of December 1966, and the official handling of it only served to highlight the great gap which

separated Spain from other European countries, as did the "imposed" monarchial solution in 1969. This bid for a "political solution" served to radicalise the worker and student movement, especially as this thrust to consolidate the regime was accompanied by severe repression from 1968.

The principal centres of opposition to the Francoist regime were those regions with a history of working class radicalism and a strong organisational past, wuch as Asturias, the Basque provinces, Catalonia and Madrid. These were also the most industrialised and wealthiest parts of Spain, where the gap which separated Spain from Europe was most clearly perceived. This was especially the case in the Basque country and Catalonia, which received the greatest onslaught of state repression, a state, it should be remembered, which saw as one of its main aims the ending of the "regional" chaos which had characterised the Republican years. This repression against the traditional "nationalities" within Spain produced a militant nationalist movement in the Basque provinces, ETA, influenced by the struggles in the developing countries, particularly Cuba, which, it believed, more closely resembled the repressive military dictatorship in Spain, also buttressed by U.S. imperialism. ETA's influence within the workers' movement in the Basque country grew from 1968, and undoubtedly ETA's daring and carefully-chosen assassinations gave it prestige within the workers' and student movement throughout Spain. From the early 70's, ETA carried out dramatic "Robin Hood"-style kidnappings, redolent of the "gun-to-the-head"-type trade union bargaining practised by the anarchist action groups in Barcelona much earlier in the century.

Thus, political crises and state repression continued to radicalise the workers' movement in Spain, particularly in the most industrialised regions which were also those

with a strong history of radical working class opposition. This repression was felt most severely in the Basque country and Catalonia, and produced militant groups committed to armed struggle who held to an anti-imperialist notion of their struggle. Moreover, even during the thrust towards "integration" of the working class in the '60's, not all employers had believed that the "European" style of labour relations was beneficial, and their refusal to allow labour organisation in their firms severely limited the extension of the Workers' Commissions, thus robbing the "mass movement" thesis of more general applicability. This intransigent attitude of employers in certain sectors of industry would increase during the '70's, when the economic and political crises of the Francoist regime led to increasing state repression, which in turn greatly radicalised and politicised the workers' movement, now increasingly organised in illegal factory committees and assemblies, and showing its muscle in long and violent strikes against the employers.

#### The Workers' Commissions in Catalonia

In Catalonia, repression against the Workers' Commissions from its inception prevented the development of a mass democratic movement, and led rapidly to a bureaucratisation of the Commissions, and meant that they would be dominated by the political parties, and struggles for "control" through the leadership positions. The Marxist Left opposition to the Communist Party and its "legalist" strategy was unable to develop a coherent trade union strategy, nor efficient organisational bases. Enveloped by factional strife, both the FLP and the Communist Party (i) were no longer serious political alternatives by the end of 1969.

It is within this context of crisis of the Marxist Left opposition to the Communist Party that the development of an "independent" tendency within the Workers' Commissions in Catalonia must be seen. But it was the nature of the Marxist Left in Catalonia which would determine the types of concerns which the "independents" would address. For the state of exception of 1969 ended the previous period of worker / student solidarity, and concluded the process begun in May, '68, when the crucial role which students had played in these events led to a growing "vanguardism" by the student movement, and their massive infiltration within firms and factories. The state of exception of 1969 accelerated this process, as the downturn in the workers' movement which it engendered was viewed by the student movement as proof of the limited revolutionary nature of "syndicalism", and reinforced their notions of students as the "revolutionary vanguard".

Thus, one of the major issues which the "independents" wished to address was the question of organisation, and the nature of the political / bureaucratic leadership. All agreed that the leadership of the existing political parties was dominated by people from a different class background, and therefore unable to reflect working class concerns. This development was seen by many to be inherent to the Leninist organisational schema, and the "degeneration" of the Russian revolution was viewed as the prototype of later bureaucratic developments. Many also expressed the feeling that an organisational model which had served in 1917 must surely need to be reassessed in the light of historical developments some seventy years later. The problem was however, what type of organisational schema to replace it with. It was this search, for an organisational model and a theory on which to underpin it, which would characterise the "autonomous workers' groups" from the late '60's and would lead them inexorably towards anarchistic organisational models in the mid-'70's.

The development and extension of the Grupos Obreros Autonomos (GOA) from 1968, is I believe, of considerable historical importance for a number of reasons. Firstly, this search for an alternative to Leninism was not, as in most European countries, undertaken by intellectuals, but developed within sectors of the working class, both within the Workers' Commissions and the working class neighbourhoods, and was the result of the direct experience of workers through their dealings with the Leninist Left. Secondly, the development of the autonomous movement in Catalonia was not directly related to the important historical libertarian tradition in Catalonia, but was more inspired by the dissident Marxism which flourished after '68, which gave to the GOA the arsenal of tools it needed to put its experiences within some kind of theoretical framework. But undoubtedly the most interesting aspect of the GOA experience was the development, de facto, of an "anarchist practice", which was only slowly recognised as such through its contacts with anarchists in France. Through these contacts, and those with more "anarchist" groups within Spain, the GOA began to realise the similarities between its own "dissident Marxist" vision and libertarian thought. The importance of the GOA historically was to touch on some of the principal problems of Marxism, and to show how, in addressing these problems, a certain Marxist tradition came to conclusions very similar to those of the anarchists.

Leninism : a Marxist critique.

While Luxembourg was important for the GOA in terms of reinforcing their belief that Leninism was inherently undemocratic (5), it was Pannekeek who was the most

important single influence within the GOA. For the experience of the early Workers' Commissions, particularly in Asturias and Madrid, left a lasting impression on GOA members. These organisations, created primarily by the workers themselves, and governed by strict democratic procedure, were seen by the GOA to resemble closely the workers' council model proposed by Pannekoek. Although Pannekoek had been impressed by the 1919 - 1920 workers' council experience in many countries of Europe, his adoption of this model was primarily the result of his philosophical criticism of Leninism, which led him to conclusions strikingly similar to the anarchists. Believing that Leninism represented an "Asiatic" model of development, which reflected the concerns of a "bourgeois intelligensia", Pannekoek's criticism was directed against Lenin's theory of knowledge outlined in his "Materialism and Empiriocriticism". In this work Lenin holds the view that matter is ontologically primary, existing independently of consciousness, just as space and time are not subjective modes of ordering experience but objective forms of the existence of matter. On the question of knowledge Lenin affirmed a "copy theory" of perception which contended that sensations depict or mirror the real world. It was on this basis that Lenin defended the possibility of objective truth "emphasising practice as its criterion". (6). Against the idea that matter was exclusively a physical concept based on atoms and molecules, Pannekoek tried to show that this physical matter was in reality nothing but an abstraction. "Atoms, of course" Pannekoek pointed out, "are not observed phenomena themselves, they are inferences of our thinking. If matter is taken as the name for the philosophical concept denoting objective reality, it embraces far more than physical matter. Then we come to the view .... where the material world was spoken of as the name of the entire observed reality. This is the meaning of the word 'materia' - matter in Historical Materialism, the designation of all that is

really existing in the world, 'including mind and fancies', as Dietzgen said. (7).

Pannekoek, dissatisfied by the determinism which he felt was inherent in Marxist economics, sought to develop a scientific framework for analysing the relationship of human consciousness and action to the material world. Strongly influenced by Dietzgen, he believed that "proletarian philosophy", though a successor to previous bourgeois thought, differed fundamentally from the latter in that it sought to achieve much less. "Whereas earlier philosophical systems pretended to give absolute truth, Dietzgen offered only a 'finite and temporary realisation' of truth which could be further perfected only through the course of social development. (8). Although he ruled out any connection between Marxism and physical theory, Pannekoek did however believe that the central methodological questions for both forms of science concerned the nature of their laws<sup>and</sup> predictions. Just as the history of science is full of predictions that did not come true, which then had to reassess its original premises, so too is the new "class science of Marxism". (9). "The dialectic" Pannekoek says, "rather than a special scientific theory, represents simply a 'doctrine of historical development', which seeks to clarify and distinguish the special properties in a particular object considering it as an interconnected totality. From such a perspective no statement about Marxism can ever be considered final. Marx's teaching does not stand outside the course of social evolution, but undergoes a constant process of transformation, development and regression." (10).

Pannekoek's conception of the relation of philosophy to economic reality led him, as early as 1901, to hold the view that the material world and the world of consciousness constitute an inseparable entity in which each reciprocally conditions the other.

As he says : "Technology does not merely involve material factors such as machines, factories, coal mines and railroads, but also the ability to make them and the science which creates this ability. Natural science, our knowledge of nature, our ability to reason and cooperate are all important factors of production. Technology rests not only on material elements alone, but also on strong spiritual elements." (11).

It was the growing recognition of the "spiritual" elements in social life which led Pannekoek to see the problem of working class consciousness as the fundamental political question, a notion historically associated with anarchism. As the process of socialist transformation would be the most fundamental since the first advent of the production of commodities, Pannekoek argues, the economic revolution must be accompanied by an equally fundamental spiritual revolution. Men must think change before they can accomplish change. The failed German revolution of 1918 reinforced these ideas. In November 1918, Pannekoek says, state power in Germany and Austria did fall into the hands of the working class. The state's repressive machinery was absolutely in abeyance, and the masses were reigning as masters. But the bourgeoisie succeeded in reconstructing state power, because of the spiritual power of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat. "It explains why the masses still remain totally subject to bourgeois ideas, to the extent that, when bourgeois domination collapses, the masses rebuild it with their own hands." (12).

It was indeed his analysis of the differences between Western Europe and Russia which led him to reject the policies emanating from the Third International. In Western Europe, Pannekoek argues, the bourgeois mode of production and the advanced culture linked to it for centuries have deeply impregnated the way of the masses feel and think.

In contrast, in Russia, Poland, Hungary and the Eastern Germany, there was no powerful bourgeoisie with a long established spiritual domination. Therefore, communism found a more receptive people in these countries, where bourgeois culture had not placed such an insuperable obstacle to socialist change. (This, incidentally, was something which Bakunin had perceived, and indeed it was on the question of revolutionary possibilities in these countries that he disagreed fundamentally with Marx).

Therefore, Pannekoek argued, there could be no question of a seizure of power in Western Europe, as in Russia. "The tactical problem is not one of establishing the feasibility of a quick conquest of power, since in this case there would be an illusion of power. But rather, this problem is one of developing the preconditions within the proletariat for a permanent class power. No minority agitators can solve this problem, since its realisation can come only through the action of the revolutionary class as a whole." (13).

At this time - 1920 - Pannekoek still held to the notion of a vanguard, the Communist Party, although he believed that its mission was to combat the weaknesses of the working class and to strengthen its power. Soon, however, he moved away from the classical party form altogether and proposed instead a federation of "work-groups", very similar to the anarchists' affinity groups. The importance of parties or groups resides in the fact that they help to secure a mental clarity through mutual conflicts, discussions and propaganda. It is by means of these organs of self clarification that the working class can succeed in tracing for itself the road to freedom. "That is why parties in this sense (and also their ideas), do not need firm and fixed structures. Faced with any change of situation, with new

tasks, people become divided in their views, but only to reunite in new agreement, while others come up with other programmes. Given their fluctuating quality, they are always ready to adapt themselves to the new. The present workers' parties are of an absolutely different character. They do not see their task as that of educating the workers to think for themselves, on the contrary, they aim at drilling them, at turning them into faithful and devoted adherents of their doctrines. While the working class needs unlimited freedom of spiritual development to increase its strength and to conquer, the basis of party power is the repression of all opinions that do not conform to the party line." (14).

Leninism : a bourgeois mode of thought.

Pannekoek was of crucial importance in supporting, philosophically, what GOA members had experienced through their contacts with the Leninist Left. Essentially the GOA believed that these groups continued to function along "bourgeois lines", with their hierarchical structures, their rigid doctrines and the dominance of an "intellectual leadership" over the worker rank and file. Pannekoek's notion that Leninism provided not just the organisational form - a vanguard party of professional revolutionaries for carrying-out an essentially bourgeois revolution - but also a philosophy suitable for its practical activity, was taken-up by the GOA, and was crucial in developing their analysis on the nature of the Soviet Union. The bureaucratic ruling class, although its growth was helped enormously by the isolation of the Soviet Union, was primarily the outcome of the socio-economic conditions in pre-revolutionary Russia, with a weak bourgeoisie unable to develop modern industry. This task therefore fell to the intelligensia, aided by a rather limited and backward proletariat.

The idea that Leninism represented a "state" solution to the problems of Russian society, is one that has been taken-up by contemporary Marxists. As Corrigan, Ramsay and Sayer have pointed-out, the Marxism of the period offered certain conceptual tools which could make sense of the Russian situation - the perceived need for state control particularly vis-à-vis the massive gap between the 100 million peasants and the 4 million town proletariat. (15) . As they further point out, "the theorists of the Second International, in part in competition with contemporary bourgeois ideologies like Social Darwinism, sought to make Marxism a comprehensive system of thought embracing nature, history and society. They stressed the scientificity of their doctrine, seeing it as expressing necessary and universal social and historical laws, as distinct from the pious hopes and moral injunctions of utopian socialism. Amongst such laws was a two-fold serialisation of development. First, there were necessary, consecutive stages through which all societies had to pass, impelled by the forward march of the productive forces. And second, of discrete areas of social relations. Within each stage the economy was basic and determining, albeit 'in the last instance' while political and cultural relations were superstructural and determined. As Colletti has argued, this meant that production was itself understood in an extremely impoverished way, as technical processes plus invariant laws of economics. This two-fold serialisation dictated the possibilities of socialism. No social 'revolution could overcome (even if it could 'anticipate'), the technical and economic prerequisites : the population in towns, a certain percentage in factories, and so on - that alone could culturally mature a proletariat competent to build socialism." (16) .

Corrigan Ramsey and Sayer also point to the Bolshevik notion of production which "necessarily involves at each

stage of social development a definite and socially neutral set of technique which can be understood and controlled through the "laws of economics". The idea that certain 'neutral technique' (such as Taylorism or one-man management) are useful for advancing production and thus "objectively progressive", derives from the view that production relations only comprises relations of ownership. "The central distinction between capitalism and socialism becomes one of who controls such techniques, and more broadly, to what social and moral purpose the results are applied. Control, moreover, not in the sense of those who make things controlling their own lives, in and out of the workplace, but control through national agencies such as party and state." (17).

The idea that Leninism defined socialism purely in terms of ownership was taken-up by Paul Gardan, a writer who was to have considerable influence within GOA circles, particularly in Madrid. (18). For the GOA this impoverished definition of socialism was a direct consequence of Lenin's theory of the revolutionary vanguard, and its role within the dictatorship of the proletariat. GOA members argued that the Leninist conception of the "transitional phase of proletarian dictatorship", as it was defined only in terms of ownership, could not lead to a future communist society, as it did not create the conditions - participation of the working class in all areas of social life - for the construction of a new egalitarian order.

Certainly, the picture of the transitional process which Lenin outlines in "State and Revolution" is extremely contradictory, and does not seriously address the problem of working class control of society, which, the GOA argued, must be the fundamental aim of socialism. As Colletti correctly points out, Lenin in "State and Revolution" saw the extension of democracy as being the essence of socialist society. (19). However, his notion of this democracy and

control is an extremely limited one, and raises as many questions as it answers. Denying that bureaucracy can be abolished overnight, Lenin proposes that : "capitalism simplifies the functions of 'state administration' ; it makes it possible to cast 'bossing' aside and to confine the whole matter to the organisation of the proletarians (as the ruling class), which hire 'workers, foremen, and accountants' in the name of the whole of society". (20). This subordination must be to the armed vanguard of all the exploited and working people, i.e. to the proletariat. This seems to create problems for the ultimate aim, which Lenin specifies as : "such a beginning, on the basis of large-scale production, will of itself lead to the gradual 'withering away' of all bureaucracy, to the gradual creation of an order - an order without inverted commas, an order bearing no similarity to wage slavery - an order under which the functions of control and accounting, becoming more and more simple, will be performed by each in turn, will then become a habit and will finally die out as the special functions of special section of the population." (21).

Essentially Lenin's argument in "State and Revolution" vis-à-vis proletarian democracy rests on the notion that a new bureaucracy will have to be set-up, one however of foremen and accountants, hired by the proletariat, and kept in their place by the armed workers. Control of production and distribution seems to be reduced to "keeping accounts" and non-proletarians in their place. Indeed, Lenin's vision of the whole transitional period exudes a military ethos, while his formula for moving from the first phase of communist society to a higher one sounds distinctively bourgeois : "The development of capitalism, in turn, creates the preconditions that enable really 'all' to take part in the administration of the state. Some of these preconditions are : universal literacy, which has already been achieved in a number of the most

advanced capitalist countries, the 'training and disciplining' of millions of workers by the huge, complex, socialised apparatus of the postal service, railways, big factories, large-scale commerce, banking etc.." (22). The extension of democracy, (a more democratic state machine) is seen solely in terms of "a militia involving the entire population". The first objection to this schema is that it would be impossible to keep the whole of the working class armed, as presumably they will have to produce. Therefore one of the basic conditions for the "extension of democracy" cannot realistically be fulfilled. Secondly, that the workers administ the state machine, but at the same time are "trained and disciplined" within a "country-wide syndicate", plus literacy should be the way to end the division between mental and physical labour sounds equally as "utopian" as Kropotkin's notion that class antagonisms would be immediately abolished once the state is destroyed. (23). For underlying Lenin's vision of the transition to a higher phase of communism is the notion that the development of the productive forces will somehow lead inexorably to the breaking down of the antithesis between mental and physical labour, which Lenin agrees with Marx, is one of the principal sources of modern social inequality. "This expropriation (of the capitalists) will make it possible for the productive forces to develop to a tremendous extent. And when we see how incredible capitalism is already retarding this development, when we see how much progress could be achieved on the basis of the level of technique already attained, we are entitled to say with the fullest confidence that the expropriation of the capitalist will inevitably result in an enormous development of the productive forces of human society. But how rapidly this development will proceed, how soon it will reach the point of breaking away from the division of labour, of doing away with the antithesis between mental and physical labour, of

transforming labour into 'life's prime want' - we do not and cannot know ." (24) .

Marx : a reappraisal by the GOA.

The GOA believed that the inability of Lenin to develop a strategy which could promote the extension of workers' democracy was a result of a one-sided "economistic" model of development, and thus retained essentially "bourgeois" developmental aims. Paul Gardan was important in showing to the GOA that Marxism itself reflected capitalist values, as the fundamental distinction between intellectuals and workers, leaders and followers remained intact. (25) .

Although it is true to say that Lenin "developed" Marxism, (particularly the theory of the revolutionary vanguard), there are however utterances in Marx and Engels vis-à-vis the dictatorship of the proletariat and the transition to communism which Lenin could clearly use to support his position.

Marx concedes that in the lower phase of communism, socialism, bourgeois right, and hence the state, will continue to function, necessarily. (26) . This state ( if it is a reflection of relationships in civil society) must therefore be something of a bourgeois state. Having admitted then that in this period bourgeois right and the bourgeois state continue in being, Marx answers Bakunin's objections in "Statism and Anarchy" thus : "The character of the election does not depend on this name, but on the economic foundation, the economic situation of the voters, and as soon as the functions have ceased to be political, there exists 1) no government function, 2) the distribution of the general functions has become a business matter, that gives no one domination 3) election has nothing of its present political character." (2

It sounds extremely doubtful that "the distribution of the general functions become a business matter", somehow unrelated to the actual productive relations in society - here Marx seems to forget his "dialectic". More importantly however, Marx seems to assume that as soon as there is redistribution, the "political" disappears. Marx is arguing that somehow, through the development of the economy, as something quite independent of man's relationship to it, the state will inevitably "wither away". This implies that the economic and the "political" are totally separate spheres, with little relationship to one another. This exclusively "economic" view of revolutionary change led Engels to claim that : "Do away with capital, the concentration of all means of production in the hands of the few, and the state will fall of itself." (28). This line of thinking seems to be at variance with Marx's own dictum that "the new society comes out of the womb of the old", which must necessarily include political habits and attitudes, and would be especially true during a period when "bourgeois right" and the bourgeois state continue in existence.

Contemporary Marxists, such as Perry Anderson, agree that Marx did not develop a political analysis of capitalism primarily because of the conclusions he drew from his economic analysis of capitalist society. (29). As Anderson points out : "The hazardous conclusions that the system of 'capital' yielded were the general theorem of the falling rate of profit, and the tenet of an ever-increasing class polarisation between bourgeoisie and proletariat. Neither has yet been adequately substantiated. The first implied an economic breakdown of capitalism by its inner mechanism, the second a social breakdown by way - if not of an immiseration of the proletariat - of an ultimate absolute preponderance of a vast industrial working class of productive labourers over a tiny bourgeoisie, with few or no intermediary groups.

The very absence of any political theory proper in the late Marx may thus be logically related to a latent catastrophism in his economic theory, which rendered the development of the former redundant." (30).

This "economic catastrophism" in the late Marx is clearly evident in his most influential successors, Lenin and Trotsky. Marx's view of the development of the economy, an "independent" sphere which would bring about, necessarily, the downfall of capitalism and the construction of socialism, was to form the basis of Leninist political practice and the philosophical thought of "Materialism and Empirocriticism". In the latter, Lenin developed the Marxist theory of knowledge, which was essentially that matter was primary, and existed independently of consciousness, i.e. that man's relationship to the external world did not substantially change or alter that world. This view of man's relationship to nature reflected the importance placed on the role of science in the nineteenth century, which, it was generally believed, would, by itself, liberate man and usher in a new world governed by rational thought and scientific procedure. The "inevitability" in Marx's predictions for the downfall of capitalism, and his search for a "scientific" theory for the socialist movement, can be clearly traced to the scientific world-view of his time, which believed that "absolute truth" could be attained through scientific investigation, unhindered by the "subjectivism" of any individual observer. (31).

Marx's particular view of science would colour his whole attitude to capitalist development, a mode of production which differed fundamentally from all previous modes of production. Resting as it did on scientific principles it would develop the forces of production to unparalleled heights, and lay the necessary bases for socialist transformation. As capitalism creates the conditions

(through the decline in specialisation) where man as proletarian becomes labour in general (socialisation of production, collectivisation of labour, a development of greater capacities of man), it also creates a degree of political emancipation at the level of the state's relation to civil society. Both these developments mean oppression, but also the basis of liberation, or possible liberation.

These notions are directly related to Marx's vision of the civilising mission of capitalism, both economically and politically. Indeed, his emphasis on the "destructive creativity" of capitalism has been commented on in a recent work by Marshall Berman. <sup>(32)</sup> As Marx says in the Grundrisse : "The extreme form of alienation in which the worker is opposed to his own conditions and his own product is a necessary transitional stage. Any organic bonds between the worker and his own conditions and his own product are broken, rent asunder. The complete elaboration of what lies within man appears as his total alienation, and the destruction of all fixed, one-sided purposes as the sacrifice of the end in itself to a wholly external compulsion." <sup>(33)</sup> It is out of this "total alienation" that man would see the need to organise society along socialist lines. This "total alienation" also applied to the state in capitalist society ; while increasingly powerful and repressive, it also allowed for a degree of political involvement which was unprecedented. In fact, human emancipation is impossible without it.

From this analysis of the relationship of the state to civil society, Marx proposed that the working class should be organised as a political force to intervene in the parliamentary process. As Anderson points out, this analysis was at a very abstract and theoretical level, and Marx never directly analysed the English parliamentary state under which he lived for most of his life. <sup>(34)</sup>

Yet Marx, who never produced any coherent account of the political structures of bourgeois class power, advocated participation within the political process, and made it binding on all sections of the International in 1871. (35) .

The GOA : Moving towards an "anarchist" theory of the state.

The GOA's notion that Leninism and Marxism were severely limited theories of revolutionary change because of their "economic determinism", therefore appears to be justified. Although the GOA, on the whole, continued to believe that Marxism was an important theory in many respects (36), their own lived experiences under the Francoist state led them to reject the essential features of the Marxist notion of the state. For Marx's insistence that the process of political emancipation "directly parallels" capitalist development could certainly not be applicable to Spain, where the greatest industrial "miracle" in the world in the 1960's had taken place under the auspices of a repressive military dictatorship. But the GOA did not immediately embrace anarchist notions of the state, primarily because of their estimation of the historical anarchist movement in Spain, which, they argued, was now a "dead movement" given the C.N.T.'s collaboration with the "bourgeois republic" during the Civil War. Again, the climate which prevailed within Marxism after May'68 was a much more important influence on GOA thinking. The greater opposition to Communist Party "reformism", especially the Situationist current, which, like Pannekoek, called for the creation of workers' councils, was important within sectors of the GOA, and undoubtedly encouraged the satirical bent of the early GOA's attack on Leninism. But more importantly, the failure of May'68 had brought about a re-think on the nature of bourgeois class power,

which was increasingly seen to rest on its ideological control, buttressed of course, by the repressive state apparatus. The central idea of structural Marxism (which had great impact in Spain), that the capitalist state is the organised expression of the ruling class solely, and from where it reproduces its rule through its control of the repressive and ideological institutions, was taken-up by the GOA. Although the GOA did not develop a full-blown theory of the capitalist state, the structural Marxist analysis of the state held by the GOA did not differ substantially from the anarchist notion of the state, and the importance it placed on ideological enslavement. However, the GOA's re-evaluation of anarchism did not come through a theoretical study of libertarian thought, but, as with its critique of Leninism, was developed through experience. It was indeed their contacts with individual anarchists which set in motion the process of reassessment of anarchist thought. Again, this was directly related to their experience of the Leninist Left, whose personal politics, the GOA argued, was also governed by "bourgeois" authoritarian behaviour. The egalitarianism practiced by anarchists in their personal relationships was the most crucial factor in stimulating an interest in anarchism amongst the GOA, which led them to believe that perhaps anarchism could provide the answers to the most important questions for the GOA - authoritarianism and leadership.

#### The "personal politics" debate.

The growing importance given to "personal" politics in the late '60's was directly related to the development of the feminist movement, and in part was the result of woman's experiences within parties of the Leninist Left. (37). The GOA was not influenced directly by this movement, but its critique of the lack of democracy within

the Leninist groups is almost identical to that put forward by one of the leading contemporary feminists, Sheila Rowbotham. (38).

Rowbotham centres her criticism on the Leninist idea of consciousness. Lenin, Rowbotham argues, radically changed Marx's notion of how we come to consciousness i.e. "we make our consciousness in the process of making ourselves and changing the world, within the limits of the particular historical circumstances in which we find ourselves." (39). For Lenin, the party was seen as the principal organ for the gaining of consciousness, as Rowbotham points out : "A vital feature of Lenin's concept of the Party is based on its supposed capacity to bring together, spread and transcend the limited, uneven notions and experiences of an alternative to capitalism which are present in the various sections of the working class and among the groups of people who support them. Now this is obviously a real and enormous problem. We are limited and cut off by our specific experiences of oppression and by the conflict of interests between us. The disagreement is about how this can best be overcome. Let's pretend for a moment there was a revolutionary party in real life which did bring together all the elements most 'advanced' or developed in their opposition to capitalist society. Why does it follow from their bringing together in this pretend ideal party that their limitations are transcended rather than partially reflected and reproduced ? If there is no conscious acknowledgement of the need to create and develop political forms which seek to overcome inequalities, and release the full potentialities of all socialists, what is there to prevent power consolidating with the powerful but moral structures ? How can the real antagonisms which are the source of division between oppressed people disappear within the Party ? Isn't this assuming that the Party is an island ?" (40).

Again, in appraising Lenin's vanguard of bourgeois intellectuals, she says : "But where then does this consciousness of the bourgeois intelligensia who come to the party come from ? Their consciousness comes from knowledge. So the consciousness of the intellectuals comes not from their lives and relationships like other people but from the pure development of Thought." (41).

Opposing this narrow definition of consciousness which Leninism implies, Rowbotham takes up E.P. Thomson's notion - "People also experience their own experience as feeling, and they handle their feelings within their culture, as norms, familial and kinship obligations and reciprocity, as values or (through more elaborated forms) within art or religious beliefs. This half of culture (and it is a full one-half) may be described as affective and moral consciousness." (42). This much broader definition of what constitutes consciousness has led Rowbotham, and other feminists, to call for "pre-figurative" socialist practice, one in which a protective culture would support, through feelings and relationships, not only the difficult and uneven "gaining of consciousness", but the sustaining of it. As she says : "The recognition which was present within pre-Leninist radical movements of the importance of making values and culture which could sustain the spirit and help to move our feelings towards the future, has been reasserted by the women's movement. This means that we can begin to think again about the problems of how we move towards socialism. Leninism has been particularly weak in relation to the actual transition to socialism. The experience of sexual political movements suggests that not only can gains we make shift the balance of power relationships significantly but that the existence of radical movements concerned to make a new culture and to release and develop the potential of subordinated groups, can also touch and begin to transform not only

the ideas and feeling of people within them but also of those outside. They bring with them different ways of interpreting the world." (43).

The importance of "pre-figurative" socialist forms, and the notion that personal change must accompany the development of a socialist consciousness, are ideas associated with the historical Spanish anarchist movement, and its organisational structure and its espousal of "affinity groups" were designed primarily to promote this type of consciousness. What is often overlooked however, is that Marx, in his earlier politico-philosophical works, holds very similar views on the importance of a "socialist culture" in the development of the alternative society of the future. (44). As he says in the "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts" : "When communist artisans form associations, teaching and propaganda are their first aims. But their associations itself creates a new need - the need for society - and what appeared to be a means has become an end. The most striking results of this practical development are to be seen when French socialist workers meet together. Smoking, eating and drinking are no longer simply means of bringing people together. Society, association, entertainment which also has society as its aim, is sufficient for man ; the brotherhood of man is no empty phrase but a reality." (45) This kind of organisation that was emerging, Marx thought, "creates other-directedness and mutuality, it enables the workers to become again a communal being." (46).

This notion, that the worker would "become again" i.e. that while capitalism provides the basis which makes socialism an historical possibility, it has also meant a loss, is outlined by Marx in "Wages Price and Profit" thus, "A series of historical processes, resulting in a decomposition of the original union existing between labouring man and his instruments of labour.... The separation between the man of labour and instruments of labour once established, such a state of things will

maintain itself and reproduce itself on a constantly increasing scale, until a new and fundamental revolution in the mode of production would again overturn it, and restore the original union in a new historical form." (47)

The "restoration of the original union in a new historical form" is traced by Paul Thomas : "The process starts with a simple undifferentiated unity of producer with <sup>the</sup> instruments of production, develops into a relationship involving differentiation without unity, and eventuates as a differentiated unity corresponding to the development of manifold human talents and attributes. Undifferentiated unity refers to feudal society and artisan production ; differentiation without unity to the division of labour under capitalism ; and differentiated unity to future communist society. Each stage denotes an advance in freedom." (48) .

Thus Marx proposes a particular "destiny" for man, posited on his conception of what, for Marx, constitutes "human essence". Indeed the main task of socialism is the overcoming of alienation, which will allow man to realise his "species-being" by engaging in "free conscious activity". "Production for its own sake means nothing but the development of human productive forces, in other words the production of the richness of the capacities of the human species takes place at the cost of the majority of human individuals and even classes, at the end it breaks through this contradiction and coincides with the development of the individual ; the higher development of individuality is thus only achieved by an historical process." (49) .

### The Marxism of the early 1970's.

The greater attractiveness of the thought of the "early Marx" was a direct consequence of the growing unease felt with the Leninist organisational formula, and its "economic determinist" assumptions. For the Western European democracies had succeeded in sustaining their systems of bourgeois democracy, despite serious cyclical recessions, from the 1920's and had withstood the major state crises in France in 1968. This forced Marxists to look at other sources of bourgeois power which could explain the continuing stability of bourgeois democracy, and brought the "economic catastrophic" analysis of the earlier Marxists into serious disrepute.

The debate on the strength and complexity of bourgeois power in the West had of course been taking place within intellectual Marxist circles since the 1920's. Gramsci's notion of bourgeois "hegemony" is almost identical to Pannekoek's analysis of Western bourgeois rule. Both these writers emphasised the degree of consent which this hegemonic system of power was able to obtain, through a whole series of cultural institutions - schools, newspapers, churches, parties and associations - which reduced the level of coercion needed to contain dissent. For Gramsci, intellectuals were crucial in transmitting past historical ideologies, and thus buttressing bourgeois dominance. Middle layers were also a vital source of support for bourgeois power, and were welded within the system under the political leadership of the haute bourgeoisie. This "stratified consensual structure" meant that capitalism could withstand economic crises in the West, and placed much greater obstacles in the way of socialist change than in Russia. Gramsci concluded therefore, as did Pannekoek, that a seizure of state power was not possible in the West, and argued for a long "war of position" against the class enemy to bring about changes of a socialist nature. (50).

The growing recognition of the ideological power of the bourgeoisie led certain Marxists to look more seriously at psychological factors, and to what constituted the "human psyche". Against traditional assumptions on the progressive emancipation of human society from the forces of nature, through the development of the forces of production, Adorno and Horkheimer of the Frankfurt School argued that man's increasing domination of nature had brought about "a social and psychic division of labour that inflicted ever greater oppression on men, even as it created ever greater potential for their liberation. Subordination of nature proceeded "pari passu" with consolidation of classes, and hence subordination of the majority of men to a social order imposed as an implacable second nature above them. The advance of technology only perfected the machinery of tyranny." (51). Believing that civilisation was created on the repression of nature in man himself, Adorno and Horkheimer believed that only through a reconciliation with nature would the psychological split between ego and id be reconciled. For the development of industrial technology had created the possibility of planetary self-destruction, consequence of a line of thinking present from the Enlightenment, "when Nature itself became inversely identified with Reason". (52). Future liberated society would have to abandon its notion of the domination of nature, and its reconciliation with nature would bring in its train a new relationship between the two halves of man's nature, a reconciliation which was imperative for freedom. (53).

One of the most famous philosophers of the Frankfurt School, Marcuse, had been convinced from early on in his career that there was a basic human essence, which, "although not ahistorical, endures through all historicity". (54). As Chomsky had discovered through his work in linguistics, Marcuse felt that "the struggle for freedom is, in fact, rooted in deep structures of the psyche". (55).

Following from Freud, Marcuse believed that the instinctual nature in man was essentially sexual libido, whose satisfaction has been shaped by the socio-historical world. One of the environmental influences which has conditioned the repressive organisation of the instincts has been material need - scarcity. But over and above the original repression needed in man's struggle against scarcity and to achieve civilisation, formulated by Freud, the structure of class society generated successive historical forms of "surplus repression", a result of social domination and inequality. But the unprecedented productivity of industrial society now allowed for the possibility of a socialism of abundance, and the ending of surplus repression. Thus the pleasure principle could at last concord with the reality principle of the external world, once the restrictions of alienated labour were abolished. (56).

For Marcuse however, the forces which would bring about this state of erotic liberation would not be Marx's historical subject, the working class. For the wealth created in Western societies had enabled capital to "assimilate" the working class within the system of oppression, and thus it no longer had a consciousness of its existence as an exploited class. The points of negation (the impulse) would have to be developed outside of the administered system of needs, as a catalyst to the long-term formation of a socialist working class. The "New Left" of the late '60's seemed to offer the greatest possibilities. In the May events, Marcuse felt he perceived a "new sensibility" that must be the goal and condition of a genuinely transformative "Praxis". (57). The insurgents' "faith in the rationality of the imagination" now seemed to Marcuse to symbolise the vital rupture with the repressive continuum of needs which had become the central obstacle to radical change in the era of one-dimensional affluence. (58). In his definition of the kind of "needs" which propel the revolution forward, Marcuse broke decisively with classical Marxist thought. "Moral and aesthetic needs become basic, vital needs, and drive toward

new relationships between the sexes, between the generations, between men and women and nature. Freedom is understood as rooted in these needs, which are sensuous, ethical and rational in one." (59). As Barry Katz points out "He often stresses the 'total' character that revolution must assume at the stage at which capitalism is integrated and stabilised on a global scale, but he did not mean this as a merely geographical extension of the socialist vision. Rather, he sought to generalise the latent tendency of the radical opposition to draw its force 'from its roots in the individual and his need for a way of life in association with other free individuals, and in a new relation with nature - his own as well as external nature." (60).

Thus, in the early 70's the Marxism which was being re-evaluated - the "early" Marx and Gramsci - and much of the Marxism which was being written - Althusser and Marcuse - dealt with themes which had historically separated anarchism from Marxism. For the anarchists had never shared the optimism of the post-1848 Marx on the "destructive creativity" of capitalism, and feared that a government by the "will of the people" could become the greatest tyranny of all. (61). While the anarchists did not disagree with Marx on the importance of the "economic question" - the basis for all other freedoms - their notion of the state led them to place more importance on ideology and thus consciousness in the process of revolutionary change. Their notion of the state centred on the belief that brute force and the lack of knowledge of the benefits of cooperation led to the first division between the "haves" and the "havenots" (some anarchists, such as Malatesta and Berneri, also recognised that this development was closely related to scarce economic resources). (62). Having thus conquered the masses to realise their ambitions of power, the ruling classes then installed an ideological system to legitimate their rule. For the anarchists, this system of ideological control was of incredible importance, and coloured their whole vision of historical development. For example Bakunin,

in giving the reasons why socialism is now an historical possibility, cites the secularisation of society since the Great Revolution of 1789. The ideas of equality, fraternity and solidarity ended the rule of religion which had hitherto shackled the masses. They too are beginning to wonder "whether they are not entitled to equality, liberty and to their humanity." (63). Their humanisation entails above all a radical reform of their economic situation. Thus, propelled towards realising their humanity, the popular masses have to destroy the exploitative economic system under which they are kept unfree.

The anarchists therefore believe that the strive towards freedom is deeply rooted in the human psyche. Indeed, their notion of the state and their reading of history rests primarily on their view of human nature. For the anarchists there are two closely related "sides" to human nature - the struggle to be free and the thirst for power. These concepts - freedom and power - are also, for the anarchists, historical concepts. The kind of naked force which led to the first class divisions in society the anarchists associate with a lower stage of historical development, just as the greater struggle towards freedom can be traced to the secularisation of society from the French revolution of 1789. But both the struggle towards freedom and the thirst for power have to be recognised as parts of human nature, and the society of the future must rest on a recognition of this. The thirst for power has to be combatted in certain ways in socialist society. Firstly, by an organisation of society which will, through time, gradually erode these power "impluses" by channelling them into truly "human" activities. To be human means to engage in unalienated labour (64), and to have loving relationships, which are only possible in a society of free individuals where the exploitation of man by man is eliminated.

The primary requirement - on which the whole edifice rests - is, in Bakunin's words, "to create an alert society, jealous of its privileges", where there is a balance of authority. Power has to be kept in check by other powers. Given that power has been buttressed primarily by a legitimating ideology, a healthy, human society has to be composed of knowledgeable human beings. This knowledge is not a contemplative one, but one which comes of the conditions of practical life, both in the production process and the community. This kind of knowledge also brings freedom and is directly related to the anarchists' insistence on control over production. While recognising the importance of abundance in the creation of socialist society, nevertheless the anarchists feel that "productivity" and "efficiency" are just abstract terms - and in this sense "bourgeois" notions - which cannot be primary considerations within future socialist society. If socialism is about the realisation of man's humanity, then production must be organised along new lines, which allows the individual, through the engagement of hand and mind, to exercise control over the work process. Hence the importance the anarchists place on rotation of tasks, and perhaps the radical reorganisation of production, if economically possible. Production has to be related to real human needs, which cannot be realised within an authoritarian framework. Creating "counter-power" must come out of the real conditions of existence i.e. control over one's life gives confidence, a feeling of self-respect and independence which allows one to assert one's power. It is only on this basis that truly "human" relationships can exist.

Believing that a truly "human" society was one composed of knowledgeable human beings, the anarchists rejected the idea that a sudden seizure of power could bring this about. The anarchists believed that it would be through the

development of workers' associations that the masses would acquire the consciousness imperative for revolutionary change. Fearing that workers could be integrated within capitalist society, they placed great importance on the need for a separation from dominant bourgeois culture - a protective "counter culture" might arrest the integration which they felt was a possibility. This fear of integration led the anarchists to reject participation within the bourgeois parliamentary arena, believing that this would confer a greater degree of legitimacy to the bourgeois state, and perhaps delay indefinitely the march towards freedom. The pull of bourgeois culture must be consciously and actively resisted by anarchists, who should try to show - in the work-place and in their personal relationships in the community - the benefits to be gained from non-hierarchical types of human relationships. Bourgeois culture, as it extends to every aspect of human experience, has to be contested by an equally "total" revolutionary challenge. Changing oneself is an integral part of this "total" revolutionary onslaught, as it is through the real conditions of existence, and our relationships with our fellow men - praxis - that a revolutionary consciousness is gained.

The notions of power and freedom underscore the anarchists' relationship to nature. Domination is inherently damaging to those who exercise it, and upon those who feel its effects. This extends to man's relationship to nature, which the anarchists argue should be one of "respect" and harmony. Balance and reciprocity, fundamental tenets of libertarian philosophy, which govern their view of man's relationship to nature, could be said to belong to a pre-Newtonian notion of science, and sets the anarchist vision apart from most of the "progressive" thought of the late 19th century. (65). Indeed, the whole anarchist vision of future socialist society is greatly at odds with the prevailing thought of its time - Social Darwinism and Positivism - which believed that science and technology by itself, could liberate man,

and usher in a world governed by scientific reasoning and method. (66). Given the importance the anarchists placed on "human nature" in historical development, the anarchists feared that a world founded on scientific thought would place power in the hands of a small erudite elite, which would see "productivity" and "efficiency" as the foremost goals of society, and bring about an ideological enslavement much greater than religion, as its legitimacy would rest on a supposed "scientific rationality".

This more "pessimistic" utopia of the anarchists, which feared many of the developments, which have taken place, more closely resembles the type of Marxist thought which has flourished particularly from 1968, than the "economic catastrophism" of the late Marx, and his successors, Lenin and Trotsky. For, as Perry Anderson points out, despite the divergent nature of their themes and concerns, Western Marxism from the 1920's shares "one fundamental emblem : a common and latent "pessimism". (67). The most interesting aspect of this finding, I believe, is that while Marxist thinkers analysed the developments within the capitalist West from a very different theoretical perspective, using primarily the tools of analysis developed by Marx and Freud, many of their conclusions were identical to those of the 19th century anarchists, whose approach to history was more "instinctive", governed primarily by "feelings", and based on a more traditional, even "mystical" view of science, and man's relationship to it. This is no mere coincidence. For the advance of technological capitalism has led to two World Wars, and spawned Fascism and nuclear destruction, tragically demonstrated at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The destructive capability of human kind demonstrated by these developments has led to a greater interest in psychology, and an attempt by many Marxists to integrate Freudian psychoanalysis within the Marxist framework. This scepticism of the benefits of a particular scientific world-view has been greatly reinforced by the developments within science itself

and its exploration of the atomic and subatomic world. As Fritjof Capra points out, the contacts with atomic and subatomic reality have given rise to new concepts in physics and "brought about a profound change in our world view : from the mechanistic conception of Descartes and Newton to a holistic and ecological view, a view which I have found to be similar to the views of mystics of all ages and traditions." (68).

Thus, the 19th. century anarchists, by remaining outside of the dominant mode of thinking of their century - indeed they retained a more mystical view of the interconnectedness of reality, which led them to see the revolutionary process as "total" and personal change as vital - actually held a more "advanced" notion of science and political action, one which would increasingly be seen as more valid in the late 1960's. The anarchists of the 19th. century rejected the Positivist world-view because they felt it was mistaken and have thus shown that "instinct" and "emotion" are also valid ways of analysing the world, and are aspects of considerable importance when proposing particular political solutions, or engaging in political action. This was, of course, what the GOA discovered through its own political experience, and its search for an alternative to Leninism was in part an "emotional" reaction to the inadequacies of the "personal politics" of the Leninist Left. That this realisation of the limitations of Leninist politics, and its underlying world-view, was more widespread in Spain than elsewhere, and took place within sectors of the working class, was precisely because of the "advanced" nature of the working class movement in Spain, and its revolutionary tradition. For the severe contradictions of capitalist development in Spain, and its traditions of military rule, had led to a three-year-long Civil War in the 1930's, reflecting a level of class conflict and confrontation unparalleled in the rest of Europe.

It was indeed in the centres of working class radicalism in the 1930's that opposition to Francoism was greatest, and helped to rekindle the struggle in the 1960's. In turn, the strength of the working class movement forced the Francoist regime to "liberalise" the economy more completely, thus heightening the contradictions of its political framework. For the fundamental contradiction of the Francoist regime lay in its commitment to economic development along European lines, while maintaining the political structures of a military dictatorship. Thus, the traditional position of Spain - with one foot in Europe and the other in the developing world - continued to be a reality.

The divisions within the Spanish left from the late '50's reflect in large measure the ambivalent position of Spain within Western Europe. For the use of repression and political crises continued to radicalise workers and students, and led them to believe that Spain's political system more closely resembled parts of the underdeveloped world, where repressive military dictatorships were also "protected" by American imperialism. However, the massive industrialisation and urbanisation which Spain underwent from the 1960's placed Spain firmly apart from developments in the "Third World", and led many to believe that political democracy would eventually follow. But Spain's industrial miracle had taken place at the cost of great hardship to Spanish workers, and the lack of trade union rights and the use of repression against the workers' movement continued to radicalise and politicise the movement, particularly in areas with a strong working class tradition, like Asturias, and the "regions" which suffered the greatest brunt of state repression, the Basque provinces and Catalonia. It was indeed in these regions, where the "militaristic" nature of the Spanish state was most acutely felt, that revolutionary alternatives

had greatest strength, and where Spain's identification with the "Third World" was more widespread. (69). In the context of the most repressive dictatorship in Spanish history, and growing contacts with Western Europe, radicalisation and politicisation also included greater demands for democracy. The realisation of the importance of democratic demands for the Spanish masses again divided the left. Many argued that Spanish capital, in its quest for integration within Europe and under the pressure of the mass working class movement, would be forced to change its form of political domination, and install some sort of bourgeois democracy. Others argued, however, that democracy was not possible in Spain without a radical reorganisation of the economy, along socialist lines, and a total dismantling of the Francoist state and its repressive apparatuses. This latter perspective gained ground from 1970, when the crisis suffered by the Francoist state at Burgos led to a sharp turn to the Right and the increase in the use of repression by the Francoist government. The growing incidence of violent strikes, and the turn to armed struggle by sections of the left and right, reflected the polarisation taking place within Spanish society in the early '70's. It was within this context of high levels of class struggle that the GOA developed its theory and extended its influence. Thus, political crisis and the use of repression continued to keep alive democratic revolutionary aspirations amongst sections of the working class, especially within that most "European" of Spanish provinces, Catalonia.

Political organising under dictatorship : the development of "autonomy", 1970 - 1971.

There were certain aspects of political organising under the Francoist dictatorship which contributed greatly to the political vision held by the GOA in Barcelona, a political vision which would form the basis of the GOA's

identification with anarchism in the mid-1970's.

Repression had prevented the development of the Workers' Commissions as a mass movement in Catalonia, and led to the bureaucratisation of the movement and enhanced the position of leaders within it. The continuing call for open, mass action by the Communist Party was therefore more seriously contested in Catalonia, and produced a proliferation of groups who argued for more cautious political action, and organisation along the lines of a closed political party. The serious problems with this form of organising under the conditions of clandestinity, primarily the growing "gap" between leaders and followers, and their inability to reach large numbers of workers, prompted the GOA to find an organisational solution which would avoid these dangers.

One of the most important lessons the GOA learned through its political action under clandestine conditions, was how crucial it was for people "to get along", and trust each other. While they took good security precautions - new people were vetted on joining the groups - the GOA felt that a loose type of group structure around friendships was most effective. <sup>(70)</sup> The GOA argued that, however good a security system is, it cannot possibly cover everything, and therefore the "feeling" or instinct one gets about someone - and this "feel" gets better over the years - is undoubtedly more reliable. There were other advantages of a structure based primarily on friendship and trust. Things get done better and quicker if people do not squabble amongst themselves, and allows the groups to explore other "dimensions" of politics, particularly the effects of repression upon the "psyche", and the way it affects our relationships with other people. This kind of interaction amongst group members not only helps the way we "present"

our politics, but also leads to greater group cohesion. This aspect was of considerable importance to the GOA, as they believed that one of the major problems of the left was the inability of its members to relate "emotionally" to workers, and its belief that by simply presenting the "correct programme" the masses would come running. The GOA believed that this "psychological problem" was at the root of Leninism and leadership. For the authoritarianism which pervaded Spanish society was internalised by all, the left included, and it was only by a conscious and sustained process of struggle and "re-education" that this type of behaviour could be overcome. (71). The "personal struggle" which the structure of loose groups of friends could undertake was therefore a crucial political task, a task which was imperative if the left was to break out of its "ghetto" by allowing it to "listen" to the feelings of workers and their aspirations. Perhaps, the GOA argued, through this process a "new type" of organisation would be forged, one which would develop out of the working class itself, helped of course by this "new type" of leadership, whose role would be simply consultative and supporting. (72).

There is little doubt that the GOA's "style of politics" was one of the major reasons for its success in the early '70's, whose influence and membership far outstripped that of the Leninist left. (73). This "style" was characterised by the lack of any full-blown programme - the GOA simply had a "general orientation" - and a commitment to less "jargonistic" language, which, the GOA believed, reflected most clearly the arrogance of a "middle class leadership", and which only served to alienate ordinary workers from politics. The GOA combined different sorts of practices : work within the trade unions, the neighbourhoods and within the communes where a certain percentage of the GOA lived. (74).

Within all these areas of struggle, education was seen as being crucial, reflecting the GOA's primary objective - to end the dominance of a "middle class intelligensia" over the workers' movement.

The development of this particular kind of political action cannot be understood without reference to developments taking place within the workers' movement at this time. For certain trends within the Spanish working class movement from the late '60's greatly contributed to the GOA's belief that sections of workers were engaging in a "new type" of practice, out of which an authentic working class revolutionary organisation might emerge. For the economic and political crises of the Francoist regime was producing a militant and increasingly politicised working class movement, which was bypassing both the official trade union structure and the political parties, and organising strike action around assemblies and illegal factory committees. This development, which would increase in scope throughout the '70's, seemed to testify to a high level of working class consciousness, no longer under the influence of an "external" leadership, and putting into practice more democratic forms of organising, which reflected the growing desire for unity amongst workers. The high levels of abstention registered at the trade union elections of May 1971, the series of "autonomous" strikes during the same year, particularly the strike at Harry Walker, and the success of the Plataformas initiative, seemed to confirm the GOA's analysis. These events, and the increasing influence of the GOA within the neighbourhoods, led to the first serious coordination of groups in 1971.

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Thus, the severe contradictions of capitalist development, under the political conditions of a military dictatorship, led to high and violent levels of class conflict, and the development of a particular kind of political practice,

especially in Catalonia, identical to that pursued by the historical Spanish anarchist movement. This political practice emerged "spontaneously", without direct reference to the strong libertarian tradition in Catalonia, and was primarily in response to the crisis of the Marxist left - both its "reformist" and "revolutionary" wings. For the "autonomous" movement contested both the reformist "legalist" road of the Spanish Communist Party, and the "authoritarian elitism" of the Leninist left, both of which, the GOA felt, were unable to capture the aspirations of the Spanish workers' movement, which was increasingly revealing its desire for a revolutionary working class democracy. The GOA believed that the type of aspirations displayed by workers in Spain - manifested in their organisational forms - set the Spanish workers' movement clearly apart from their fellow workers in Europe, now "assimilated" within bourgeois "consumerism". The importance of large trade union organisations within the process of "integration" of the European working class led the GOA to reject this type of organisational formula, and call instead for a workers' councilist alternative, which, the GOA argued, was the type of organisation which Spanish workers had been creating, in the Workers' Commissions, since the mid-sixties.

While the development of autonomist theory and practice was without reference to the historical Spanish anarchist movement, the traditions of militant direct-action syndicalism in Catalonia interacted with the movement of autonomy, and were important in the GOA's assessment of the nature of the Catalan workers' movement. For two of the most important autonomous strikes of 1971 had taken place in firms with a militant syndicalist tradition, and contained older anarchist militants who continued to have prestige within the workplace. Undoubtedly the contacts established

through these struggles led to a more positive evaluation of the C.N.T., and its historic revolutionary tradition. However, its belief that all large trade union organisations inevitably engender bureaucracy and reformism was reinforced by the GOA's dealings with the "official" C.N.T. exile organisation in Toulouse, which, the GOA argued, was both ethically and ideologically bankrupt. Indeed, the growing interest in anarchism amongst the GOA from 1970 had come about largely as a result of its contacts with the Frente Libertario group and the group in Perpignan, anarchists who were at loggerheads with the official C.N.T. For the "heterodox" anarchism which the GOA displayed - a "new revolutionary theory" must take theory and practice from whatever source it comes from - echoed sentiments expressed by groups of Young Libertarians in France from the mid-sixties, an orientation which was viewed by the C.N.T. "orthodoxy" with great alarm. Perhaps the growth of a "new type" of anarchism, expressed by the young radicals at the International Anarchist Congress in 1968, was the major reason for the increasing dogmatism and sectarianism shown by the official C.N.T., fearful that these ideological developments might erode the bases for its leadership role. Certainly the official C.N.T. organisation was increasingly active from 1970 within Spain. Unlike the Frente Libertario group - which believed that the autonomist movement was the most hopeful <sup>basis</sup> for a regeneration of the libertarian movement in Spain - the Toulouse organisation sought to re-launch the C.N.T. through an "organised vanguard", the FAI, which would maintain the ideological "purity" of anarchist thought, and thus the justification for its leadership within Spain itself. While the official C.N.T.'s initiative within Spain was not met with much success, it was able however to attract to its orbit small groups of workers in firms with a C.N.T. tradition, and numbers of recently-radicalised students. The essentially "anti-statist" drift of its thought, and the "extreme radicalism" of its message encouraged the libertarian /"pasota" boom which got underway from the 1970's,

and the identification of this movement with the C.N.T. Certainly the official C.N.T.'s success was almost entirely amongst younger students, with little political experience, who were unaware that underneath the "verbal radicalism" of the Toulouse C.N.T. lay a reformist-bureaucratic organisation struggling to maintain control.

#### The GOA : towards anarcho-syndicalism.

It may seem surprising that the GOA - sceptical of both trade unionism and the historical C.N.T., - should, on the whole, agree to take part in the reconstruction of the C.N.T. in 1976. Certain historical developments within Spain from around 1972 were crucial in changing the perspective of the GOA, and led it to believe that a "new type" revolutionary C.N.T. was possible to construct, a notion which gained ground after Carrero's execution in 1973, when "organisational mania" swept through Spain, and carried the GOA with it towards the C.N.T.

One of the major factors which contributed to the GOA's evolution towards a revolutionary syndicalist perspective was its inability to obtain continuity of the movement. For while the conditions of clandestinity imposed by the military dictatorship had led to the adoption of a structure of loose groupings, it also bred feelings of anger and revenge, especially from 1972, when increased repression against strikers gave rise to armed struggle notions gaining ground amongst sectors of the GOA. Indeed from the early days of "Que Hacer" the "armed struggle" thesis had been sustained by certain groups, a trend which was greatly encouraged by the spectacular success of ETA during the Burgos crisis. On the whole the GOA's admiration for the ETA did not lead them to espouse armed action, as they believed that this would inevitably lead to greater vigilance by the police, and the possibility that their organisational infrastructure would be decimated.

While the GOA's editorial and educational work was sustained by the "expropriation" carried-out by the MIL - an armed group which had developed from the GOA - the greater separation imposed by their different life-styles led de facto to a separation between armed struggle and trade union / neighbourhood work, an important reason for the continuing success of the GOA's clandestine network. The GOA's experience of the developments which armed struggle engenders, through its contacts with the MIL, led the GOA to oppose armed action, as they believed that the Basque situation differed fundamentally from the Catalan. (75). However, although theoretically against armed action, certain GOA members were so outraged by the savage repression carried-out by the Francoist regime, that they became involved in sporadic armed actions. This tendency towards armed struggle, especially amongst younger GOA members, was a major source of instability for the movement, as it was for the C.N.T. during its attempt at reconstruction, from 1976 to 1979. While repression bred groups committed to armed struggle, it also "wore people down", and led to the abandonment of political action by many who had been politically active for some time. This was particularly the case from 1972, when increased repression almost decimated entirely the Plataforma initiative, and demoralised many militants. Indeed it would seem that 1972 marked the end of a whole period for the GOA movement, which had seen its heyday in 1970 and 1971. Moreover its decline coincided with a renewed interest in the "historic" organisations of the Spanish working class movement, the U.G.T. and the C.N.T. This greater interest in the Spanish past has to be seen in the context of the acute political crisis of the Francoist regime, and the spectacular growth of the opposition. As economic and political crisis began to seriously erode

the image of "development and stability" which had sustained Francoism, the hopes of the opposition to Franco grew, and the belief that a new political solution was now desperately needed.

It was from this point in time - 1972 - 1973 - that the important anarchist tradition in Spain began to be felt and have greater influence within the GOA. Certainly the existence of anarchist emigrés in France had been crucial in the GOA's identification with anarchism from 1970, and if these individual exponents of anarchism had not existed it is doubtful if the GOA would have displayed such interest in libertarian thought. But this growing affinity with anarchism did not lead to any desire to reconstruct the historic C.N.T., which, the GOA argued, had developed a bureaucratic leadership and shown its reformism by collaborating in the Popular Front government during the Civil War. However, the GOA's view of "what the C.N.T. had meant historically" slowly changed, primarily through a greater knowledge of the collectivisation experiment and its growing contacts with the "more anarchist" group, Solidaridad. The GOA's discovery of the deeply popular appeal of the C.N.T. was reinforced by Solidaridad's belief that the GOA - and the "new libertarian movement" - could create a powerful revolutionary syndicalist organisation of a "new type", but using the initials of the historic C.N.T. For Solidaridad claimed a particular heritage from the C.N.T.'s past - revolutionary syndicalism - which had called for unity of all working class tendencies, and had shunned the "anarchist exclusivism" historically associated with the FAI. Solidaridad's insistence that a heterodox movement, where, from Stirnian individualists to Marxists could coexist, but which must rest on an "up-dating" of libertarian thought, began to be taken more

seriously by the GOA from 1972, when its own organisational alternative suffered a serious decline. It was this dogged determination of Solidaridad, which believed in the possibility of a "new C.N.T.", and its particular libertarian vision, which gradually convinced many GOA members too that this might indeed be possible.

Solidaridad : a libertarian critique of historical anarchism.

The development of an "actualised" libertarian perspective could be said to be in response to the two major legacies of the C.N.T. from the Civil War : the collectivisations, and the development of a bureaucratic leadership whose power rested on the "ossification" of anarchist thought. The collectivist experience had certainly kept hope and optimism alive in the founder of Solidaridad, Félix Carrasquer, and convinced him that libertarian thought still had an important part to play in Spain's future. But to do so, anarchism would have to break decisively with the "revolutionary posturing" of the exile leadership, and develop a perspective which would have relevance in contemporary Spain.

The principal disagreement between Solidaridad and historical anarchist thought was over the relationship of capitalism to the state, and the meaning of the "political". Given the growing relationship between the state and capital since 1929, Solidarity argued, any struggle against the employers is also a struggle against the state. Solidarity also believed that economic and political action were intimately related. A trade union organisation like the C.N.T. - which had over a million members in the 1930's - was a political force in Spanish society, and should be

recognised as such. While this definition of the "political" did not lead Solidarity to call for parliamentary action necessarily, Solidarity's recognition of the political nature of trade union action meant that it did not view the C.N.T.'s collaboration in the Civil War government as treachery, but the result of the political strength of the C.N.T. In the context, it was perhaps the only course open to it, and may again in the future be repeated.

Solidarity's attempt to redefine the relationship of capital to the state and its emphasis on the political nature of trade action was primarily in response to what Solidarity viewed as the crude "gut reaction" of anarchists to anything which "smelt" of the state and politics. It was also, as with Seguí in the 1920's, related to Solidarity's belief that a political strategy had to be developed within the anarchist movement, a strategy based on a thorough assessment of the economic and political situation in contemporary Spain, and the trends and developments within the workers' movement. This type of strategic analysis was imperative if the C.N.T. wished to re-launch itself within the workers' movement in Spain.

Solidarity's highly "political" approach placed it within the revolutionary syndicalist current within the C.N.T., associated with figures such as Orobón Fernández and Juan Peiró. Indeed, Solidarity held many classical revolutionary syndicalist notions, such as the importance of educational work within the trade unions, and the need for national federations of industry. This pedigree, which they openly acknowledged, placed them firmly against the FAI, which they considered "vanguardist, and infected with revolutionary infantilism". For Solidarity believed - on the basis of an analysis of contemporary Spain - that the next historical

stage would be one of bourgeois democracy. The important task during the next period was the strengthening of workers' organisation and consciousness, and the creation of a broad libertarian movement to lay the basis for future revolutionary change. This process may include participation within local politics, as a means of extending libertarian ideas and strategy. Solidarity's conception of the "libertarian movement" differed fundamentally from the classical Spanish anarchist division of C.N.T. / FAI / FIJL. Solidarity believed that these were totally out-dated, and were artificially imposed by the exile organisation. The C.N.T., Solidarity argued, had to capture the new "social movements" which had developed - ecology, feminism and the anti-nuclear movement - and forge links between these movements and the trade unions. Within this new libertarian movement the FAI's role as "rector" of the anarchist movement would be totally obsolete. To maintain this historical "ghost", Solidarity argued, would only cause friction and discord within the C.N.T.

Solidarity's rejection of the FAI was related to two important aspects of its thought. Solidarity laid great emphasis on the need for personal change, which would bring about more egalitarian types of relationships, a crucial ingredient in the process of revolutionary change. Indeed, Solidarity believed that revolutionary change which was not accompanied by this "personal transformation" process would not ultimately solve the major source of inequality - power. For Solidarity held to an anarchist notion of the state, viewing political power and ideological control as the crucial factors in the origins of class society. Its espousal of federalism and small groups was a direct consequence of its notion that the will to dominate, rooted in the human psyche, must be struggled against on the personal terrain - a prerequisite for the "integral" revolutionary process which Solidarity called for.

The FAI, Solidarity argued, had no place within an organisation committed to this goal. For the FAI, structured along the lines of a political party, saw its main aim as "leading and dominating" the C.N.T. masses, and therefore differed little from the strategy pursued by the Socialist Party in relationship to its trade union, the U.G.T.

This critique of the FAI's relationship to the C.N.T. is identical to that put forward by the revolutionary syndicalists historically within the C.N.T. Like the latter, Solidarity believed that all workers, whatever their ideology, had a place within the C.N.T. If the C.N.T. attempted to reconstruct its organisation on the basis of an "anarchist workers' movement", then it would have little success in contemporary Spain. The broad libertarian movement which Solidarity felt was developing in Spain had no need for an "ideological bodyguard" to ensure its doctrinal purity. Unity within the movement would be achieved by struggle around concrete issues, and agreement on basic strategy.

One of the major aims of Solidarity was to develop an alternative method of analysis to Marxism. In this it was not wholly successful, as its analysis of capitalist development used Marxist categories and method, reflecting the importance of Marxism within socialist economics and historical research. In other respects too Solidarity was more influenced by Marxism than it cared to admit. (76). Solidarity's emphasis on the imperialist nature of Western European capitalism, and its treatment of the nationalist problem placed it closer to the more hybrid anarchism of Cohn-Bendit or Chomsky, both of whom believe that a new "synthesis" of Marxism and anarchism is now an historical imperative. (77).

The great similarities between Solidarity's up-dated libertarian theory and practice and the "dissident Marxism" of the GOA led to growing contacts between these two currents from the late '60's, and was especially strong during the abstentionist campaign against the trade union election in May 1971. From then onwards, Solidarity's appeal for the reconstruction of the C.N.T. gained increasing momentum. Solidarity succeeded in uniting many of the less-ideologically-defined groups in Madrid, and convinced them of the revolutionary syndicalist alternative. There was however, considerable opposition to the reconstruction of the C.N.T., many groups refusing from the start to have any dealings with the exile organisation. Others, curious about the coordination process, rapidly withdrew after the first meetings, where their misgivings about the nature of the exile organisation were confirmed. Thus from the beginning, the "new type" C.N.T. was robbed of many of its members and potential sympathisers. Unfortunately for the balance of autonomous forces within the future C.N.T., the decline in the autonomous movement in 1972 coincided with the onset of the "libertarian boom". For increased repression from 1972 greatly radicalised the student movement, which now, given the greater "publicity" accorded to the historical anarchist movement, was increasingly drawn to the anti-statist aspects of anarchist thought. It was in this context that the exile organisation was able to gain some support. While its supporters in Spain were never very numerous, they did however succeed in preventing the development of a more solid organisational framework, and continually destabilised the coordination efforts. This was particularly the case after March 1974, when the execution of Puig Antich led to a more "activist" phase amongst the groups, and a breakdown in the coordination attempts. This "activism" was supported and encouraged by the exilio's allies in Spain, and prevented the discussion

of a strategic option, an option which Solidarity believed was crucial if the C.N.T. wished to become a force within the trade union field.

In view of the exile leadership's role in the coordination efforts of these years, many groups argued for the reconstruction of "an alternative C.N.T.", at the time of renewed contacts during the abstentionist campaign against the trade union elections at the beginning of 1975. For many group members were aware of the difficulties of uniting the diverse groups which constituted the libertarian movement, and believed that the process of consolidation, already underway, should continue until a greater degree of "homogenisation" was achieved. But coordination was again disrupted by the confrontations between Solidaridad and the exilio's ally at the time, the MCL. The political differences between these two groups were greatly exacerbated by the personality clash between their representatives in the coordination body. Thus, the "exilio's" disruptive tactics<sup>were</sup> aided enormously by the extremely "personal" nature of politics under the Franco dictatorship, a factor of considerable importance in preventing the development of a united opposition to the exile leadership during the first years of reconstruction of the C.N.T.

The failure to achieve greater coordination of the groups during 1975 coincided with the "organisational euphoria" which characterised the final year of Francoism, a process which speeded-up considerably after the dictator's death in November 1975. Despite their knowledge and experience of the nature of the exile organisation, many groups were swept along by this process, and the hopes for a "new Spain" which it seemed to indicate. There were of course few other organisational options open to these groups, especially as Solidarity had refused to lead the "alternative C.N.T." which many had proposed. But it was primarily the feeling of optimism which this period exuded which blinded them to the inherent problems of reconstructing the C.N.T., and predisposed them to believe Solidarity's view that the "new libertarian" movement had the strength and the

political "preparation" required to dictate terms within the reconstructed C.N.T. This "euphoria", and the belief that some kind of libertarian "ethic" would finally prevail within the C.N.T., prevented a serious appraisal of the strategy and role of the groups within the C.N.T., and led them to severely underestimate the power and "political" ability of the exiled bureaucracy. These feelings would be crucial in allowing the exile organisation to "divide and rule", and build-up its power base within Spain.

#### The reconstruction of the C.N.T. : 1976 - 1979.

From the outset the forces involved in the reconstruction of the C.N.T. were divided into two camps : those who still clung to the C.N.T. resolutions of the Zaragoza Congress, and those who believed that these were now redundant, and that a serious "up-dating" of C.N.T. strategy was desperately needed. Within the latter camp however, there were many different visions of what the "C.N.T. should be", based primarily on interpretations of the role of the European trade unions, the changing nature of protest, and intimately related to the high level of "autonomous" strike action in Spain.

The first year of the reconstruction of the C.N.T., 1976, was almost entirely dominated by the events of January 1976, which seemed to prove that trade union struggle had to extend beyond the factory gates, while the Communist Party's role in these events confirmed many in their belief that large trade union organisations inevitably impede the revolutionary struggle. Despite the many other disagreements between the various groups within the autonomous sector, all agreed that the C.N.T. "should be more than just a trade union", i.e. that workers' struggle had to embrace more than wages, indeed it should address all aspects of capitalist exploitation, including the personal.

The differences were however over the role of the trade union within this process. Groups such as Solidaridad and sectors of the Barcelona GOA argued that the struggle over wages and working conditions was the starting point - it was through this struggle that workers enrolled in trade unions - and the consciousness acquired through this struggle would lead, gradually, to a more "global" vision of revolutionary change. For Solidaridad especially, the trade union was ideally placed to inculcate this "global" vision. This view was based on the belief that trade unionism, unlike its counterpart in Western Europe, still had a revolutionary role to play in Spain, given the high level of strike action which occurred "outside the control of the reformist trade unions". The workers involved in these "autonomous" struggles were the potential recruits for a trade union which opposed the "reformist" practices of the Workers' Commissions, the UGT or USO. The C.N.T. could, and indeed must, occupy this trade union "space", from which it could launch wider and more diverse types of struggle, and in so doing forge links with the burgeoning social movements of ecology, feminism and the anti-nuclear struggle.

This view of trade unionism was not however shared by many of the autonomous groups which joined in the reconstruction of the C.N.T. in 1976. Although many agreed that the trade union was necessary under capitalism, to protect workers' living standards, they did not believe that the trade union could any longer be viewed as a potentially revolutionary form of organisation, primarily because the development of capitalism had placed new needs and aspirations on the political agenda, needs which could not be contained within the wage struggle model of the trade union. For these militants the autonomous struggles taking place during 1976 seemed to prove that the most militant workers were not interested in the "trade union model", and indeed were organising themselves along very different lines.

Thus, the C.N.T. should not try to contain this movement within the old trade union schema, but simply be the launching pad for a wider and broader movement of protest, a movement which could address the many and diverse aspects of contemporary capitalist exploitation.

From the beginning therefore, the reconstruction of the C.N.T. was dogged by the question - trade union or libertarian movement ? Undoubtedly the libertarian movement thesis was greatly helped by the onset of the "libertarian boom", which increased dramatically in the euphoric atmosphere of post-Francoist "liberation". This seemed to many a more hopeful basis from which to re-launch the C.N.T. than attempting to compete with the already-consolidated trade union network of the other major trade unions with international backing. The perceived difficulties of creating a trade union from scratch certainly reinforced the scepticism of many, and contributed to the belief that the only possible "space" for the C.N.T. lay in its appeal to a broader libertarian vision. The crucial debate on the relationship of the C.N.T. to the libertarian movement did not take place openly within the C.N.T. during 1976, and indeed the role of the C.N.T. or its strategy was continually blocked by the exile leadership and its allies in Spain. The declared strategy of the "exilio" did not differ substantially from Solidaridad or sections of the GOA, i.e. that the C.N.T. was essentially a trade union, where all workers, whatever their ideology, had a place. In practice however, the exilio FAI acted in accordance with the "strictly anarchist workers' movement" thesis, and outlawed all those with a "Christian" or Marxist past. Undoubtedly this compounded the confusion vis-à-vis the nature of the C.N.T., and allowed the FAI some support from the "extreme integralists", whose attitude towards affiliation was essentially the same. Given its later espousal of "mass affiliation", and its links with the counter-culturists, it would seem that the declared

strategy of the exile organisation had little real meaning, as its practice was geared primarily towards building-up a power base to counteract the strength of the autonomous sector within the organisation. This was essentially a transference to Spain of the type of "exile politics" which characterised the C.N.T. in France, where revolutionary slogans juxtaposed with committee struggles and personal vendettas, occasionally interspersed with a libertarian "fiesta".

The differences within the autonomous sector over the role the C.N.T. should play in contemporary Spanish society gave the exile organisation its chance during 1976. It succeeded in mobilising older veterans around the defence of "the resolutions of Zaragoza", and an emotive appeal to the CNT's "glorious past". Undoubtedly certain aspects of this first year of post-Francoism helped the exile organisation build-up some support within the organisation. The continuing situation of illegality and clandestinity, the repression of C.N.T. militants, and the importance of the prison issue, contributed to "anti-statist" feelings within the C.N.T., which the exile organisation actively encouraged. These feelings, especially amongst the youth, allowed the FAI to appear as the "radicals", and the emphasis on peaceful trade union action proposed by Solidarity and others as "reformist".

Government strategy also helped to reinforce these divisions. The general image the government wished to give of the C.N.T. during 1976 was one of an "historic relic" - a "yellow" trade union whose members had manned the Francoist trade union, the CNS. This attempt by the government to counteract the weight of the Workers' Commissions was clearly perceived by C.N.T. members, many of whom were worried that the influx of exiled emigrés and others would indeed generate a nostalgic "yellow" union image of the C.N.T.

These fears were skillfully used by the FAI to discredit potential committee members, whose more reasonable attitude towards the Cinco Puntistas added further to their image as "moderates". In this way, the FAI was able to gain positions on key committees, from which it initiated a systematic boycott of those trade unions dominated by the opposition.

Despite some growth of support for the FAI, particularly in the regions where old veterans and "pasotas" formed a curious alliance, the autonomous sector continued to outnumber them, particularly in Catalonia. Here, where there were a fair number of experienced trade unionists, and where the C.N.T. had good possibilities for launching itself as a trade union, the FAI was at a serious disadvantage. Undoubtedly the sympathy with which the C.N.T. was viewed by many workers in Catalonia meant that many of the autonomous sector here were not so preoccupied by the question, trade union or libertarian movement. Moreover, many had a long history of trade union activities, dating from the days of "Que Hacer" in 1968. Neither were they bothered by the image of a "yellow union", as in Madrid, and did not hesitate to enroll the entire Public Entertainment union of Cases, straight from the "vertical" CNS. The exilio FAI in Catalonia was therefore up against a much more formidable oppositional force here, exacerbated by its inability to unite the various FAI under a single leadership. However, the "pasota" element in Catalonia was also particularly strong, and greatly impeded trade union work from the beginning of the reconstruction. Increasingly, the exile organisation was forced to ally with "pasotas" and counter-culturists to maintain some control in the province.

Here too however, factors which prevented the consolidation of the organisation in Madrid and Valencia are also in evidence. Confusion over affiliation criterion, exacerbated by the inability to openly discuss the issue, lost the C.N.T.

many potential members and support. The exilio was also able to exploit to the full the "group mentality" still heavily present, and thus divide the groups committed to trade union work. Certainly the confusion over affiliation and the "closing-in" of the groups was directly related to the fears of a return to military dictatorship, after the severe repression at Vitoria. Again, this repression bred anti-statist feelings, and added to the divisions already present between those committed to peaceful trade union organising and the "pasota"/ radical sector. This polarisation is reflected in the election of "compromise committees", which, however, never succeeded in coming to any form of compromise, and simply meant that committee battles consumed the energies of most militants. Indeed, the committee struggle in Catalonia, as in Madrid and Valencia, dominated over all other considerations, and prevented the organisation from intervening in the workers' front during 1976, the year of greatest strike action of the whole transition period. The only attempt to remedy this situation - the joint trade union alliance with the UGT, undertaken by the Catalan C.N.T. in the summer of 1976 - was stymied precisely by the need to get a regional committee off the ground in December.

Certainly it was the continual wrangling for positions on committees which was the major factor in the loss of members and potential sympathisers, a problem totally ignored at the national plenum during 1976. Indeed the resolutions approved at the September national plenum reveal the distance which separated these national meetings with the real internal workings of the organisation. The approval of a revolutionary syndicalist criterion on affiliation meant little, as each group which controlled a trade union practiced the type of affiliation which it saw fit. The motion on strategy - to defend pluralism, and bring about

a rupture in the vertical - was almost totally meaningless, as the vertical was breathing its last breath anyway. In essence, the motion was designed to prevent the Workers' Commissions, and the Communist Party, from totally monopolising the trade union field. Given the actual weakness of the C.N.T. on the trade union front, the only way this could have been achieved was by an alliance with the UGT, and indeed it was agreed that alliances could be struck with other trade unions, and gave each region the autonomy to decide on this. Yet just three months after this national meeting, the Catalan regional had to abandon its alliance with the UGT, because, primarily, it had been issued by the opposition in Catalonia. By the end of 1976, the "fictional" democracy of the C.N.T. was clearly visible. National plenums which did not broach the real problems affecting the organisation, committee posts which conferred real power, trade unions which were nothing more than locals for the faction which controlled them, and committees elected on the basis of pacts or compromises. Underlying this total distortion of democracy lay the exilio's determination to maintain control of the C.N.T., greatly aided by the divisions within the opposition, and the continual influx of "pasotas" into the C.N.T. The opposition, still believing that once the trade unions got off the ground the exilio would be undermined, was increasingly forced to use the same tactics as its adversary, and thus "exile style" politics was reproduced within the Spanish C.N.T.

The opposition's dogged determination to get the trade unions off the ground, despite everything, began to give some results at the end of 1976. This was helped enormously by the election of a good national committee in September, which gave a note of seriousness to the organisation. There were signs too that the C.N.T. was beginning to emerge from its internal organisational obsession, particularly

in Catalonia, by its support of autonomous strikes, and its more active role during the large strikes of January 1977. This kind of action was undertaken primarily by the oppositional groupings within the C.N.T., supported by certain GOA on the Catalan regional committee. Perhaps this renewed dynamic by the opposition was the reason for the FAI offensive in January 1977, when a group of FAI members were detained on arms charges. Undoubtedly too, there was government involvement in this action, as one of the FAI members was a government agent. The repercussions of the detentions -trade union work was halted for some time - certainly worked in the government's favour, while the FAI's "revolutionary martyr" image brought forth an outburst of "ultra-libertarian" reaction. It is doubtful however that an exilio / government pact was behind this, as the exilio also seemed somewhat taken aback by the audacity of the forces which it had helped to unleash. From then onwards, the "political" FAI of the Valencia leader, Juan Ferrer, was heavily promoted by the exilio, deemed to be more suitable for the type of organisational battles ahead.

There is little doubt that the C.N.T. was seen as a "disruptive" force within the political reform process which got underway in autumn, 1976. For the Suarez' government's strategy, prompted by the European community, was designed to involve both left and right in a democratic reform which would culminate in general elections in June 1977.

The high level of working class struggle during 1976 had made it impossible for the Arias' government to bring about "change from above", and thus a more thorough democratic reform was initiated by Suarez from the summer of 1976. But this would only be possible if the business community were given some guarantee under the new democratic regime, and if the massive flight of capital were halted. The adherence to this "implicit social pact" by the largest working class parties, the Communist Party and the PSOE

in the autumn, merely formalised the type of policies they had been carrying-out since January 1976. For while the January '76 strikes had registered some gains for the workers' movement, demands of a trade union character had been subordinated to those of a political nature, and indeed there is little doubt that these mass actions were "used" as a means of putting pressure on the government. This had serious consequences for trade union organising during the transition period, and limited the ability to organise trade union sections within firms, and, by refusing to transfer assets from the vertical, robbed them of much financial stability. These limitations to full trade union freedom reinforced certain characteristics of Spanish trade unionism. For trade unionism in Spain was a highly "personal" matter - workers were more impressed by a particular trade union leader than the trade union he represented. This can be seen at work within the C.N.T., where one or two well-respected militants could bring in an entire sector of workers. The lack of a clear guideline for trade union organising also boosted the tendency towards "assemblyism", and also meant that many such strikes were considered "wild-cat", which, in other countries of Europe would not.

In this context, the C.N.T.'s defence of assembleist struggles seemed a reasonable strategy to pursue during the period up to the June 1977 election. For many of these strikes were launched by new, previously unorganised sectors of workers, with no prior political allegiances, who were, on the whole, hostile to the "moderation" of Workers' Commissions" strategy. Indeed, the C.N.T.'s strategy seemed to be having some success. By the beginning of 1977, the C.N.T.'s membership was some 20,000, which put it on par with that of the other "historic" trade union, the UGT.

There was of course, considerable reaction from the workers' movement to the salary freeze announced by Suarez in October. But there is little doubt that the Workers' Commissions, led by the Communist Party, was concentrating its efforts on the "political" reform, and succeeded in channelling discontent into a "peaceful and reasonable" day of action in November, launched by the trade union coordinator, COS, which included the other major trade unions, the UGT and USO. These kind of "responsible" actions contrasted sharply with the type of strike action supported by the C.N.T. For the autonomous strikes of autumn 1976, such as Roca, taking place as they did within an "illegal" framework, were usually extremely violent, and often ended with pitched battles with the police. Indeed, labour struggle was at a particularly high level in Catalonia in the autumn of 1976, as was nationalist feeling in the Basque provinces. It was from these two historic centres of opposition that the greatest threat came to the nature of the reform process during 1976, and on both fronts the government did not hesitate to act.

Certainly the repression of the large-scale autonomous strikes at the end of 1976 coincided with a change of government strategy towards the C.N.T. Increased police vigilance, "curious" bomb attempts and other types of provocations encouraged the image of a "terrorist C.N.T." Unfortunately for the C.N.T. it was fairly easy for the government to infiltrate the various armed groups within its orbit, and supply them with the equipment they needed. Simultaneously, autonomous strike action was ignored and / or repressed, thus robbing the C.N.T. of its most hopeful source of recruits, while state injections of finance "softened the blow" of the economic crisis, and further militated against massive strike action.

These measures accelerated the advance of the "political reform process", which would dominate the life of Spanish society for the six months prior to the general elections of June 1977. While strike action still remained at a fairly high level, this continued within the framework of pressure / negotiation, and undoubtedly strengthened the forces for a more thoroughgoing democratic change. While the C.N.T. trade unions continued to grow up to June 1977, they undertook little action, as the repercussions of the FAI detentions prevented serious trade union work. This was particularly the case in Catalonia, where the internal struggles which ensued after January led to the exodus of many good, experienced trade union militants, who were replaced increasingly by the "pasota" element.

If the government's change of strategy towards the C.N.T. was an important factor in the changing composition of the organisation, then the strategy of "libertarian fiestas", undertaken by the exilio and the national committee in Spain further added to the "pasota" image of the C.N.T. The unresolved question - trade union or libertarian movement - was highlighted in extremis during 1977, when the "libertarian boom" really got underway in earnest. The emphasis on "personal liberation" displayed at these meetings certainly had its attractions for many, and was undoubtedly related to the euphoria which accompanied the first democratic elections since 1936. But the almost total neglect of the trade union issue, and indeed the negative effects for trade union organising in Catalonia which followed from Peirats' anti-Catalan speech, led to a greater polarisation within the C.N.T., and heralded the beginnings of a concerted trade union offensive by the opposition within the C.N.T. For the onset of the "libertarian boom" during 1977 coincided with a downturn in the workers' movement, as the economic crisis really began to bite.

The beginning of a more "defensive" trade union strategy, which would develop considerably during 1978, exposed more clearly the divisions between the syndicalists and "pasota"/acratas within the C.N.T., reflected in the intensity of the internal organisational battles throughout these two years.

The decline in the C.N.T. trade unions after June 1977, and the development of the "libertarian movement" image, brought many different types of groups into the C.N.T. As the only organisation which opposed the reform pact - formalised at Moncloa in October 1977, - the C.N.T. became the focus of many groupings, all of whom wished to guide the C.N.T. along their chosen paths. While these groups never really presented a serious threat to the "nature of the C.N.T.", it was easy for the exilio FAI to give an image of "conspiracies to take over the organisation", and themselves as the only safeguard against the "Marxist horde" . But opposition to the FAI's heavy-handed tactics was growing, reflected in its inability to get its own national committee elected in Madrid, after the resignation of the first national committee in September 1977. By this time it was clearly evident that the C.N.T. was not functioning either at a national or local level, and increasingly this was seen to relate to the role of the exile organisation within Spain, which the national committee of Gómez Casas had done nothing to remedy. Indeed, the most serious proposal put forward, by Frente Libertario - that both exile organisations should merely act as regions, and pay dues accordingly - was stymied by the national and regional leadership, without consultation with the rank and file. It was clear that the exile organisation wished to maintain this type of direct relationship with the national leadership, through which it could use financial pressure to ensure that it towed the line, while simultaneously preventing organisational consolidation which may have allowed the C.N.T.

some financial independence. The growing awareness within the C.N.T. of the role of the exile organisation, and its ability to distort Frente Libertario's proposal at the September 1977 national plenum, increased the pressure towards the holding of a congress, which many believed would clarify the organisational chaos within the C.N.T. It was from the agreement to hold a congress, approved at the September national plenum, in 1977, that the FAI offensive really hotted-up and all pretenses of gaining control through organisational channels dropped. The adoption of the "majority law" in Valencia, and the nature of the national committee election attempts in Madrid, seriously depleted C.N.T. membership in these provinces, a process which would reach its peak after a knife attack on an opposition member in Madrid, in September 1978.

The decline in large-scale autonomous strikes during 1977, and the general downturn in the workers' movement, produced some curious developments during 1977. The development which took place within Workers' Autonomy, a group who, like the anarcho-communists, questioned the central role of the working class within the revolutionary process, and placed more importance on "marginalised groups", reflects clearly the process taking place within many former proponents of an integral "libertarian movement". Workers' Autonomy, who had joined the C.N.T. because it believed that the C.N.T.'s particular brand of syndicalism had historically allowed for "autonomous class self-development", was increasingly drawn to the syndicalist camp, because this was the only place where "serious" work was being undertaken. Indeed, the type of "pure anarchists" within the C.N.T. - who obviously did not work, and spent their time conspiring - led to a distancing from "anarchism" by many militants, and increased their identification with the syndicalist opposition. And the nature of this syndicalism - exemplified by the Barcelona GOA, and the revolutionary syndicalist approach of Solidaridad - contributed to a re-appraisal

of Marxism, and even a strengthening of Leninism amongst the more Marxist groups, such as the MCL. The "political" nature of the exiled leadership brought about a realisation that anarchism too dealt in "politics", and reinforced this trend. Increasingly, the opposition within the C.N.T. was united around one single practical task - the building-up of the trade unions - which relegated ideological questions and allegiances to a poor second.

This more "practical" bent of the opposition within the C.N.T. by the end of 1977 contrasted sharply with their hopes and aspirations at the beginning of the reconstruction of the C.N.T. in 1976. Their belief that a process of discussion would get underway had been shattered from the beginning, and the witch-hunt against "Marxists", Christians and Falangists had proved that the open "libertarian" ethos of the organisation was a pure fiction. The exiled leadership's control was seen increasingly to lie in its appeal to tradition - "orthodox" anarchist language and organisational procedure - and control of information within the C.N.T. That this was not primarily an "ideological" question has been confirmed by the leading role which Trotskyist "entrists" played within the FAI, and the offers of FAI leadership positions to well-known "Marxists" within the C.N.T. It would appear that even "tradition" could be sacrificed on occasions, if it meant a furtherance of the exilio's aims within the Spanish C.N.T.

With the exception of the MCL - who still continued to battle against anarchist "semantics" - the opposition within the C.N.T. had given up any hope of dialogue with the exilio's allies in Spain, and concentrated its efforts almost exclusively on trade union work. This more united front in favour of trade union organising, and the decline

in the "libertarian movement" perspective, has to be seen in the context of changes operating within the workers' movement. The assembly form of organisation was now giving way to organisation around the work's committee, within which the Workers' Commissions, the UGT and USO had a strong presence. If the C.N.T. wished to take its place within the trade union field, then it would have to direct its efforts towards these committees and wind-up its continuous boring "ideological" assembly procedure, which only served to distance workers from the organisation. Indeed, the main aim of the syndicalists within the C.N.T. was to avoid the exodus out of the C.N.T. of many workers who had neither the time, or inclination, to engage in the gratuitous ideological battles taking place. This more practical, and flexible approach to trade union organising, allied to the need to contest the other trade unions within the works' committees, led the syndicalist opposition to call for participation within the collective contract negotiations, the time of greatest struggle on the workers' front, and crucial as a means to defend workers' wages and living standards.

The syndicalist drive, initiated after the Jornadas in July, was having some impact by the end of 1977, with greater involvement in strikes, and the creation of some new, and more dynamic trade unions in Catalonia. Undoubtedly this apparent success by the opposition was the reason for the growing aggressiveness of the FAI, who had succeeded in causing havoc within the trade unions in Madrid and Valencia, by breaching fundamental C.N.T. norms, and by actual physical violence. In Catalonia however, the situation was not so easy to control, and indeed it was here that the greatest trade union dynamic was taking place, which, given its nature, was viewed as being totally "reformist" by the FAI.

It is interesting that the Scala fire, which cost the lives of four workers, took place at precisely the time that the Catalan C.N.T. had organised the first legalised demonstration against the Moncloa Pact, on January 15th. Therepercussions of this act, attributed to the C.N.T., led to a total paralysis of trade union work in Catalonia, and highlighted the polarisation within the organisation, between the "uncontrollables" and the syndicalist opposition. The C.N.T. was thus prevented from seriously contesting the Moncloa Pact, and suffered another set-back for its trade union drive. But the drift out of the C.N.T. of many workers, who were unwilling to be involved in a "terrorist" organisation, and the inability of trade unions to express their views for fear of violence from the FAI, brought about a greater sense of determination within the opposition, and heralded the beginnings of the Grupos de Afinidad Anarco-Sindicalista. These groups, which would have their greatest strength in Catalonia, were committed to restoring some kind of democracy to the C.N.T., and determined that the anarcho-syndicalist direction of the organisation should prevail. To put this strategy into practice however, they would have to gain positions on committees, centres of power and decision-making within the C.N.T.

The strategy of the GAA was greatly strengthened by the election of the national committee of Enrique Marcos, in April 1978, on which two members of the GAA held posts. Marcos, a seasoned trade unionist, confirmed the type of trade union practice already being implemented by the opposition in Catalonia, with his emphasis on trade union sections within firms, and his reference to the limitations of "assembleist" action. Marcos' belief that the C.N.T. needed to become "professional" and efficient was certainly in line with GAA thinking, as their successful experiment on the Catalan regional newspaper, Solidaridad Obrera, certainly proved. This new thrust by Marcos and the Catalan

GAA, was for the first time since the reconstruction of the C.N.T. in 1976, part of an overall strategy, developed from an analysis of the workers' movement, and the role of the C.N.T. within it. For the deepening of the economic crisis during 1978 was seriously eroding workers' living standards, and threatening jobs. The employers' offensive, which these developments represented, could not be combatted by the C.N.T. on its own, the GAA argued, but only by a concerted action of all the trade unions in Catalonia, a strategy which was <sup>put</sup> into practice by the Catalan C.N.T. during 1978.

The election of the national committee of Enrique Marcos reflected the weakness of the trade union base of the FAI within the C.N.T., and its lack of capable leaders. Where trade union action by the opposition was limited, as in Madrid and Valencia, the FAI was able to gain virtual control in these provinces, and by the end of 1978 the C.N.T. was de facto split in two. In Catalonia, where the renewal undertaken by the trade union opposition was gaining momentum during 1978, the exilio FAI was increasingly forced to ally with the "uncrowdables", represented by Quimét on the local federation of Barcelona, and Luís Andrés Edo from the construction trade union. Undoubtedly the increase in police harassment and the growth of right-wing violence in response to the Autonomy Statute re-established in September in Catalonia, radicalised sectors of the youth, primarily students, within the orbit of the C.N.T. Agustín Rueda's death in police custody, and the growth of the prisoners' defence organisations, COPEL and AFAPE, also contributed to the growth of anti-state feelings and the creation of groups committed to armed struggle. To these sectors the call by the opposition for participation within the collective contract negotiations i.e. for a dialogue with the state, was viewed as outright treachery, and proof of the "reformist" direction being pursued by the Catalan C.N.T.

It was indeed the debate over participation or not within the collective contract negotiations which reflected the divisions within the Catalan C.N.T. during 1978. The recognition of the state which this strategy implied had however been preceded by participation within the trade union elections at the beginning of 1978, a tactic which even less "intransigent" members of the FAI had carried-out, with the approval of the foremost FAI leader in Valencia, Juan Ferrer. Indeed, after the massive walk-out of delegations at the 1979 Congress, the FAI proceeded to approve participation in collective contracts, proof that this issue was used as a stalking-horse in the FAI's battle against the opposition in 1978.

It was however, relatively easy for the FAI to present a "reformist" image of the opposition to the "uncontrollables" within the Catalan C.N.T., an element which had been flooding into the C.N.T. since the beginning of 1978. The nature of this new C.N.T. membership was deeply disturbing to many C.N.T. militants. As many militants pointed-out, the violent radicalism encouraged by the FAI was bringing some very curious recruits into the C.N.T., some of whom would later find a home in groups of the extreme right, such as Fuerza Nueva. The increasing reliance on these sectors by the exilio FAI to counter opposition strength, brought forth strong accusations against the exile organisation by the opposition, some of whom believed that the only possible explanation for such an alliance was that the exilio had struck a pact with the government and sectors of the right.

Certainly the exile organisation was determined to maintain control of the C.N.T., even if that meant a total isolation of the C.N.T. from the trade union field. The joint actions with other trade unions during 1978 were easily characterised

as "reformist", given the poor convenios achieved. But the real offensive against the Catalan opposition really got underway after February 1979, when a Catalan regional plenum approved the "dissolution" of the exile organisation, and shortly after a national plenum fixed a date for the forthcoming Congress of the C.N.T., the first since 1936. Almost immediately after these decisions were taken, the GAA "parallel organisation", of a Marxist nature was discovered, and thus the justification was found for the series of expulsions and physical attacks on members of the opposition.

The exilio FAI and its allies fought the battle against the opposition on the basis of "the defence of anarchist principles within the C.N.T.", which were being jettisoned by the "Marxist reformists", who were overturning anarchist notions of direct action by their call for participation within the collective contract negotiations. This ideological appeal found some resonance, especially amongst older veterans whose anti-Marxist prejudices dated from the policies of the Communist Party during the Civil War. It was these older members, and the "uncontrollables", who succeeded in displacing the editorial staff of Solidaridad Obrera, and expelling the remaining members of the GAA in Barcelona and other provinces. For, if the exile organisation was to avoid giving an account of its actions during the long years of exile in France, then it would have to control the committees which were given the task of organising the pending congress.

The opposition's proposals for Congress could have seriously threatened the role of the exile leadership, for not only did they accuse it of "sectarianism and bureaucracy" but also asked them to account for the huge trade union assets of the C.N.T., much of which had been invested in a Spanish bank. Moreover, many C.N.T. members had continued paying dues

during the Francoist period, and little of this had found its way back to the interior C.N.T. Indeed, the opposition was calling for a serious appraisal of the exile leadership's role from the 1940's, when its almost total neglect of the internal C.N.T. had led guerrilla fighters such as Sabate and Facerias to stage risky actions inside Spain, and force C.N.T. militants to recur to robberies and other acts in an attempt to maintain some organisational infrastructure. The Toulouse leadership, the opposition argued, was directly responsible for the decline in the C.N.T.'s strength, and its sectarianism and lack of strategy had prevented participation by C.N.T. members within the most hopeful, and important workers' organisation of the '60's, the Workers' Commissions.

It is not surprising then, given this outright condemnation of the exile organisation, and calls for its dissolution, that the Congress of the C.N.T. in December 1979, was stage-managed to prevent the opposition presenting its case. The C.N.T., in the internal battle to prepare for the Congress, was almost totally absent from the workers' front during 1979, a year when the downturn in the workers' movement reached an all-time low, and when the process of "desencanto" was manifested in the disintegration of many left groups, and a sharp decline in trade union membership. It is surprising, given this panorama, that so many trade unionists attended the C.N.T. Congress of 1979, and that the opposition still held out hopes of some renewal within the C.N.T.. As one member of the opposition said, it wasn't that they held out much hope of renewal within the C.N.T. by now, it was simply a question of "where else was there for us to go ?"

#### The Reconstruction of the C.N.T. : An historical anachronism ?

For many critics of anarchism, the failure to reconstruct

the anarcho-syndicalist movement in Spain during 1976-1979 was a foregone conclusion, given the pre-industrial / agrarian nature of its philosophy, which rendered it unable to implant itself in the highly industrialised society which Spain had become by the 1970's. But as we have seen, one of the fundamental problems confronting those who took part in the reconstruction of the C.N.T. was not related to "agrarian / pre-industrial" issues, but a problem which was increasingly being seen as central to many on the Left in Europe by the 1970's - what was the contemporary role of the trade union within the revolutionary process, and what revolutionary potential did the new social movements of protest offer ? - Indeed, we can trace the beginnings of a renewed interest in anarchism to the mid-sixties, when the impact of the revolutionary struggles in the underdeveloped world was felt more fully, and when capitalism in Western Europe experienced an unprecedented "boom". The crisis which this brought about in the thinking and strategy of the Left in the rest of Europe was more profoundly felt in Spain. For Spain's rapid industrialisation process in the '60's had taken place under the political restrictions of a military dictatorship which prevented the development of trade unions along Western European lines, and gave birth to a highly original form of workers' organisation; the Workers' Commissions, within which the assembly played a crucial role. But the growth of undemocratic practices by the Communist Party, the leading force within the Commissions, and the problems of maintaining a "peaceful / legalist" strategy in the context of a repressive military regime, brought to the Commissions in 1967 / 1968, when increased repression coincided with the upsurge of revolutionary euphoria which characterised the May'68 events. It was from then onwards that the crisis of the Left deepened, and in Spain, as in the rest of Europe, this was manifested by the proliferation of "revolutionary parties" of a Trotskyist or Maoist type.

But it also heralded the beginnings of a new and uncertain Left, who were now seriously questioning the "conquest of state power" assumptions of the Leninist left, and attempting to grapple with the implications of Western European capitalist development, the nature of trade unions, and the possibilities of new organisational forms which could give fuller expression to the broader political movement of protest which many believed had come into being.

The nature of the May '68 events in Paris certainly placed the Left in a real dilemma. For the student movement had been crucial in radicalising the situation and maintaining the "revolutionary tempo", but it did not possess the social weight to bring production to a standstill and thus set in motion a severe state crisis, a role which the trade unions had played during the summer of '68. The part which the "reformist" leaderships of both the Socialist Party and the Communist Party played in stemming the revolutionary tide has been the subject of intense debate on the Left since then, and in large part reflects the divide between the Leninist and non-Leninist Left. For the Leninists the revolutionary fervour displayed by the rank and file of the workers' movement was not matched by the "reformist" leadership of this movement, now hopelessly "assimilated within bourgeois capitalism". "Sell-out" and "treachery" were the most common slogans of the Leninist Left, who believed that the only way out of this impasse was the creation of a new "revolutionary" and uncorrupted leadership, prepared to put socialist ideas and policies into action.

The non-Leninist Left viewed the role of the trade union leadership during the May events in quite a different light. The trade union leadership, they argued, could not have been able to move its troops willy-nilly towards "sell-out", if

"reformist" ideas had not been present within the rank and file of the movement. This type of analysis posed a relationship between leadership and membership, and broke decisively with Leninist thinking, particularly evident in Trotskyist groups, whose emphasis on "leadership" often blinds them to any other consideration. But the realisation that "reformism" was rampant within the Western European trade union movement only served to fuel the crisis - it was difficult to break the links with "the historic organisations of the working class", which had fought for, and won, many of the democratic rights now enjoyed in Western European societies. The attitude towards the traditional organisations of the labour movement varied a great deal. Some found it easier to sever their connections with the trade union movement, and placed their hopes firmly in the revolutionary developments in the "Third World", where capitalist "consumerism" had not succeeded as yet in "assimilating" the masses. Others made a distinction between different sectors of the trade union movement, some of which could be won to a socialist perspective. Many in the latter camp believed that it was important to maintain links with this "militant" labour tradition, and looked hopefully towards the growth of new, often white-collared trade unions, who seemed to be showing a sense of militancy lacking in more "traditional" sectors of the trade union movement. It was this sector of the Left which seriously questioned the classical notion of what constituted "the working class", arguing that class is an historical, and historically changing category.

The debate on "what constitutes the working class" from the late '60's is not unrelated to the growth of other movements of protest, such as ecology, and the anti-nuclear movement, but especially feminism. Feminism was crucial in pointing to the relationship between women's oppression

in the "personal" terrain of the home, and women's second-rate status in production and society in general, and thus broadened the whole notion of what constitutes "politics". This more "integral" definition of the political had important implications for "how consciousness is formed", and placed "feeling" and culture - our lived experience, especially our relationships with other people - firmly within the political map. The other movements of protest, ecology and the anti-nuclear movement, also pointed away from the "productivist" emphasis within the traditional labour movement. The movement of ecology argued for an overall view of the earth's vital resources in producing production quotas, based on a new, harmonious relationship to nature, imperative of planet Earth was to survive. For the unprecedented industrial expansion of the '60's has seriously upset the earth's ecological balance, and led to a dramatic increase in the nuclear arms industry, increasing fears of a global nuclear confrontation between East and West. Calls from these two movements for a "reconciliation with Nature" would be increasingly voiced in the 1970's, and given greater legitimacy by the developments within science itself, which called for a more holistic and ecological view, and pointed to the limitations of the mechanistic paradigm of Newton and Descartes. (78).

These political developments were reflected within sectors of academic Marxism from the late '60's, primarily in the work of Althusser and Marcuse. While their work differed in many respects, both had begun at a similar starting-point - Freud and psychoanalysis - and both had arrived at a similar conclusion - the strength of bourgeois ideology, and its ability to "assimilate" large sectors of the working class. Althusser broke decisively with Marx's notion of the state, viewing it as reflecting solely the interests of the ruling class, through which its ideological control was maintained. Marcuse, strongly influenced by the type of movement which had come into being during May '68, argued

against the classical Marxist idea of "needs", seeing moral and aesthetic needs as being the force which would now propel the revolutionary process forward. The work of Althusser and Marcuse, the reappraisal of the "young" Marx, and the "political" Marxists Gramsci and Pannekoek, all pointed in one direction : towards a recognition of the strength of bourgeois ideology in supporting bourgeois domination, which led to greater interest in "psychological" factors and a reappraisal of the role of a "counter-culture" in the gaining and sustaining of consciousness.

Thus, political developments from 1968, reflected in the concerns of sectors of Marxism, and developments within science, seriously challenged the assumptions of the "economic catastrophism" associated primarily with Lenin, and his theory of knowledge, i.e. that sensations simply depict or mirror the real world. Echoing thoughts expressed by Pannekoek and Dietzgen much earlier in the century, developments within politics and science point to the interconnectedness of reality, and the importance of the "subjectivity" of the observer, or subject, within the process of scientific investigation, which condition both the approach and the results achieved. (79)

The severe limitations of the "economic determinism" of the late Marx and Lenin are located precisely here, in the relationship between material reality and consciousness, where the Marxian "dialectic" does not seem to work. For Marx and Lenin were so enthused and optimistic about the benefits to society of large-scale industry and technology - reflecting exactly the dominant mode of thinking of their age - that it prevented them from "qualifying" this process of economic development by positing a relationship to human consciousness, thus confirming the crucial role which the "subjectivity" of the scientific observer plays in the process of investigation. And it was this subjective belief in the benefits of industry and technology which prevented Marx from analysing the important political developments

taking place during his lifetime, particularly the growth of the national capitalist state, and led him to believe that a change in ownership of the means of production, by itself, would eliminate the "political" sphere, and eventually *lead* to the "withering away of the state".

These "economic determinist" assumptions of the Leninist Left had important consequences in the field of political practice. For if the "objective economic conditions" were seen as the major factors in the development of the revolutionary process, and what was seen as needed was a bold leadership to bring about a change in ownership, little consideration was given to any other dimension of political action. Indeed, these premises encouraged the growth of "intellectual jargonising", mostly on Marxist theory, and led to competition amongst potential "revolutionary leaders". It was in response primarily to this type of political practice that the Grupos Obreros Autonomos developed in Spain, particularly in Catalonia, in the late '60's. The most interesting aspect of this movement is that while "de facto" the GOA engaged in an "anarchist" practice, this was supported theoretically by a recourse to the type of "dissident Marxism" which flourished after '68, showing clearly how little separated these two currents by then. Beginning by a rejection of a type of politics which the GOA considered "authoritarian elitist", unmatched by organisational efficiency, the GOA undertook a sustained theoretical exploration which led them to embrace a more "integral" view of politics, and hold a structural Marxist notion of the state. Like Workers' Autonomy somewhat later, the GOA were surprised how close their political perspective was to historical anarchism, and how similar their political practice had become. For anarchism historically had argued persistently against the "economic determinism" of Marxist thought, and had placed great importance on the role of ideology in sustaining the power of the

ruling elites. Viewing the state as reflecting solely the interests of the ruling classes, the anarchists had called for "separation" from the political arena, and the creation of a "counter-culture" to arrest the power of bourgeois ideology and culture, which had the potential power of "assimilating" the popular masses. Placing great emphasis on "psychological factors" within the process of revolutionary transformation, reflecting their belief in the interconnectedness of reality, the anarchists believed that the "counter-culture" had to be based on a new morality, which would attempt to create new, egalitarian relationships, thus "pre-figuring" future socialist society. It was essentially this vision - which recognised the "personal" and "subjective" dimension of consciousness - which became to be seen as the most developed, and relevant political perspective by the "new Left" in Europe by the 1970's. And there were specific characteristics of Spanish historical development which contributed to highlighting the limitations of the "economic determinist" model, and gave the more "integral" perspective greater explanatory power. For throughout Francoism, and indeed throughout Spanish history, it was clear that the "political" sphere, although intimately related to the economy, had its own particular dynamic, its own laws and traditions, which often determined the type of economic direction chosen, and the kind of strategy adopted towards the workers' movement. And the continuous political crises of the Spanish state, particularly acute during the last years of Francoism, were crucial in radicalising the workers' movement and Spanish society in general, especially as this took place during a time of hopeful political developments in Europe, particularly the Portuguese revolution in 1974. These developments reflected of course, the development of the class struggle in Spain. But the nature of the class struggle, the type of demands it contained, and its resolution, were conditioned considerably by the political

context within which it was inserted. This can be seen clearly after the death of Carrero Blanco in December 1973, when the feelings of hope which it gave was a crucial factor in the growth of the opposition, and the start of the "organisational mania" which would speed-up considerably after the death of the dictator in 1975. It could be said, of course, that these developments simply reflected the massive industrialisation which Spain had undergone from the 1960's which had its counterpart in the development of the forces for political bourgeois democracy. But even in the late '70's there was still great opposition to political change, even amongst sectors of industrialists, a factor which was crucial in conditioning the strategy of the workers' movement throughout the whole period of the transition. The traditions of a militaristic ruling class, sectors of whom plotted continuously from 1976 to 1979, could only be said to relate very indirectly to economic developments, and indeed often came into open conflict with economic priorities. The importance of political tradition can also be seen in the activities of the exiled opposition, where pre and Civil War experiences continued to keep it divided, despite numerous appeals from Spain for unity. But political tradition also had its more positive aspects, and was important for re-launching the workers' movement in the '50's and '60's. Political traditions and loyalties could be severed of course, under the conditions of repression, and give rise to new ideologies and movements, such as Catholic Action, "dissident" Falangism and the Communist Party. But in many respects these movements were successful because they linked-up with a potent tradition in Spanish working class politics - broad-based trade unionism, and were often animated by seasoned trade unionists seeking "legal" cover. The continuing importance of this democratic trade unionist tradition, exemplified most notably by the growth and strength of the Workers' Commissions, has to be seen in the context of the political restrictions imposed by a military dictatorship, and the authoritarian nature of the ruling elites, which, as throughout Spanish history, meant

that democratic demands were an integral part of the class struggle in Spain. The recognition of this important tradition in Spanish working class politics, while encouraging many to look towards the historical embodiment of this practice in the C.N.T., did mean however, that the ambivalence towards trade unionism now felt in the rest of Europe, was felt more acutely, and profoundly in Spain, and gave the "trade union or libertarian movement" question an urgency and relevance unparalleled in Western Europe.

If the importance of "subjective" factors - political tradition and loyalties - and their ability to condition the nature of the class struggle, were more clearly perceived in Spain, because of the nature of the Spanish state and its ruling classes and the strength of its revolutionary past, then the clandestine conditions of political organising under a military dictatorship also highlighted the importance of "personal" politics. And the "personal" politics issue in Spain was integrally linked to the democratic nature of the class struggle, and the growing realisation that repression, particularly sexual repression, breeds authoritarian types of behaviour, and prevents the development of more worthwhile, more truly "human" relationships. It was indeed the democratic tradition associated with the C.N.T. - the egalitarianism practiced by older anarchists, and the experience of workers' control during the collectivisations of the Civil War - which led to a growing identification with anarchism by the autonomous groups which had found the "authoritarianism" of the Leninist groups deeply disturbing.

Thus, the transparent nature of capitalist domination in Spain, under the form of military dictatorship, had highlighted much more clearly than elsewhere in Europe, the limitations of "economic determinism" and its particular

practice. Indeed, the greater interest in anarchism from the mid-sixties in Spain was directly related to the crisis within Marxism, first felt within the student movement. From 1967 - 1968, when the impact of the crisis was felt more profoundly within the workers' movement, the beginnings of a "new style" of politics, very similar to that proposed by many of the "new Left" in Europe, emphasising democracy and its relationship to personal change, began to be developed, which would have considerable success during the period of intense class struggle from 1969 to 1972. Far from being "anachronistic", the "integral" politics of these groups reflected the "advanced" nature of sectors of the workers' movement, radicalised and politicised by the severe contradictions of advanced capitalist development, including cultural and intellectual development, under the political conditions of military dictatorship. For this "style of politics" rested on the belief, supported by its success in practice, that the left had to address the democratic aspirations of workers and other groups, in order that it should break out of its ghetto, and be a serious force in society. And it was the democratic tradition of the C.N.T., and the more "integral" political philosophy of anarchism, which led these groups to take part in the reconstruction of the organisation in 1976.

But the growing interest in reconstructing the C.N.T. was also related to resolve one of the major problem of the left under Francoism - the problem of organisation. For the autonomous groups, although achieving considerable success, particularly in the neighbourhoods, had been unable to achieve continuity, or coordination of the movement. Repression had been the major source of this lack of stability, encouraging both armed action groups, and disillusionment and exhaustion. This exacerbated the divisions within the groups, between young and older members, and interacted with the "phase"

anarchist members were going through. For it would seem that, on first contact with anarchist thought and practice, members went through a sort of "spontaneist anarchist" phase, of "euphoria" and feelings of liberation, which often translated itself into sexual experimentation, and a withdrawal from political action. This too was directly related to the effects of repression, and particularly affected militants who had been politically active for years, many of whom had suffered imprisonment. But it also affected younger militants, who suddenly "discovered" the liberating power of anarchism, and were determined to put it into practice. On the whole though, this "phase" would later give way to a more "sober", "political" approach, attitudes which characterised the older GOA members who took part in the reconstruction in 1976.

But the major problem which prevented the consolidation of the autonomous groups was the "group mentality" which prevailed, again and inheritance of the clandestine conditions imposed by the dictatorship. Thus, while the political restrictions of organising under dictatorship had exposed the limitations of an "authoritarian elitist" approach, it had also placed great obstacles in the way of more "democratic" behaviour, and encouraged feelings of distrust and fear. These feelings would be crucial in explaining the lack of a united opposition to the exiled leadership during 1976 and 1977, and was an important factor in accounting for the inability of the C.N.T. to consolidate its organisational bases during the reconstruction of 1976 to 1979.

Thus, the C.N.T. was burdened from the beginning of its reconstruction efforts by attitudes and behaviour which had been moulded by the long years of clandestinity and repression, despite the great efforts of many of its members to deal with this problem. It was also, of course, burdened by its own history and tradition, particularly the period

of the Republic and Civil War, when the fundamental tenets of its philosophy - anti-politicism and anti-authoritarianism - had been overturned. Moreover, the same leadership who had been important in bringing about this change in thinking and strategy - Montseñy and Esglesas - were still at the helm of the C.N.T., and had built-up a powerful bureaucratic organisation in exile, and determined to direct the course of reconstruction of the C.N.T. The great tragedy of the Spanish anarchist movement was that it was unable to "renew" itself during the Francoist period, as the Communists and Socialists had done, a crucial factor in accounting for their success in Spain. The failure to renew itself i.e. allow Spanish militants greater power within the organisation, can in part be explained by the great respect older anarchist militants had for their leadership - especially as it was now "revolutionary and anti-political" - and the decline of anarchism as a philosophy within the workers' movement. For, just as the Leninists still clung to the myth of 1917, and "the conquest of state power", anarchists were still calling for the "building of barricades and the destruction of the state", showing that they had stopped the clock somewhere around the same time. There had, of course, been good possibilities for a come-back of anarchism in the mid-sixties, with the revolutionary struggles in the underdeveloped world, and the broad-based / movement nature of these. But the attempt at rejuvenation of the anarchist movement by sections of the Young Libertarians came up against an extremely able and "political" bureaucracy, who would have nothing to do with movements which included "parties", or aimed at control of the state, and had little interest in international politics or the important nationalist struggles now enveloping large parts of the underdeveloped world. But the great "missed opportunity" of the Spanish anarchist movement in France had occurred in 1968, when its suspiciousness of the "anarchism" expressed by the new movement of protest revealed more clearly than ever the total irrelevance of its "purist" approach.

It was in response to the history of the C.N.T. from the 1930's that many of the groups which took part in the reconstruction based their political analysis. From the mid-seventies there was a great deal more literature available on the history of the C.N.T., which generated discussions on "the nature of the historic C.N.T." and the reasons for its successes and failures. In many respects the entire process of reconstruction was conducted with reference to this past, and was used to support the strategies proposed by the various groups. For the MCL and others, the history of the C.N.T. had shown that the C.N.T. had always possessed a leadership, which had been able to exert more power precisely because this was not recognised "theoretically" to exist. This was the major criticism launched by the MCL on traditional anarchism - the enormous gap which separated its "practice" from its "theoretical language" - what the MCL called "anarchist semantics", a point persuasively argued by the writer C.M. Lorenzo. (80). This was particularly evident during the Republic, when the FAI's mini "dictatorship of the proletariat" attempts were semantically named "committees for the defence of the revolution". Arguing that one section of the C.N.T. had taken-up the question of power, the anarcho-Bolsheviks, they believed that the C.N.T. / FAI should have seized power in Catalonia in 1936, and carried through a revolutionary war strategy, along the lines suggested by Berneri. (81). Their notion of leadership - that the "vanguard" should be immersed within the mass organisation - was also redolent of the anarcho-Bolsheviks within the C.N.T., a group whose Bakuninism was greatly reinforced after the "failure" of the Russian revolution.

The MCL, and other sectors of the Barcelona GOA, reflect the profound influence which Marxism had within the workers' movement during Francoism. Even those who "embraced" anarchism wholeheartedly in the mid-seventies retained strong traces

of Marxist influence, particularly evident in their approach to historical development, which emphasised the importance of class struggle and economics. The differences between the "more Marxist" groups and those considered "more anarchist" lay invariably in their approach to organisation. The "more anarchist inclined" members argued for complete autonomy of the individual within the group, while those with a stronger Marxist bent called for tighter organisation for reasons of efficiency. The differences between the Marxist and anarchist notions on the origins of the state was not the source of great division between "anarchist" and "Marxist" groups, as they all had come to recognise the importance of political power and its relationship to economic development, and many of those who considered themselves "libertarian Marxists" had, by the late '70's been won over to the anarchist notion of political power as the origin of the state, primarily through a greater dissemination of the work of Clastres. (82). Indeed, for many of those who took part in the reconstruction of the C.N.T. in 1976, the former differences in doctrine which had historically separated anarchism from Marxism were no longer relevant. And, they argued, the C.N.T. had contained within it from the 1930's, a sector who had called consistently for a dialogue with Marxism, and an end for sectarianism within the organisation. This was certainly Solidaridad's thinking, despite its staunch defence of the "superiority" of libertarian philosophy. (83). For Solidaridad, and other groups, did not believe they were breaking decisively with C.N.T. tradition, as the revolutionary syndicalist current within the C.N.T. had historically called for a dialogue with Marxism, had recognised the existence of the state, and the "political" nature of trade union action. It was revolutionary syndicalists, such as Orobón Fernández, one of the strongest influences on Solidaridad's thinking, who had called for a "revolutionary working class democracy" in the 1930's, and

the creation of a united workers' front along the lines of the Bavarian Republic of workers' councils of 1919, a strategy put into action during Asturias in 1934. And it was Solidaridad's belief in the contemporary relevance of this strategy - their identification with a particular tendency which historically had fought against the sectarian immobilism of the FAI - which was important in convincing many groups that a "new type" C.N.T. was possible, for its "legitimacy" to the initials of the C.N.T. was supported historically, and indeed argued that the strength of the C.N.T. had laid in its defence of workers' unity within the trade unions.

Solidaridad's call for an "up-dating" of libertarian thought was primarily in response to the type of "anarchism" expounded by the exile leadership, which, they argued, had been seriously questioned within the C.N.T. since the 1930's. Certainly revolutionary syndicalists, such as Orobón Fernández and Peiró, reflected changes taking place within international anarchism since the 1920's, which had been taking greater interest in economic questions, and had approved the creation of national federations of industry at its congress in 1928. Many within this camp, such as Besnard and Cornelisson, had been attempting to grapple with the problems and complexity of the "transition towards socialism", and deeply affected the thinking of Spanish anarchists such as Peiró, Orobón Fernández and Gaston Leval. In an attempt to avoid the pitfalls of the Russian revolutionary experience, these anarchists had developed many original schemas of organisation, which, they believed, would avoid the "party / trade union" dictatorship which had developed in the Soviet state. While there were differences within this group over what the basic organising cell would be - municipality, trade union or factory committee - all agreed that the organisation of future society would be federalist, and that trade union power

- "syndicalisation" - had to be arrested, or balanced by parallel organisations, such as the municipality or the cooperative. Moreover, they were all united on the question of delegation believing that this was necessary to carry through economic reform, although its power and mandate would be controlled by the rank and file. Members of this group, such as Cornelisson and Peiró, recognised the existence of the state after the proletarian conquest of power, and Besnard believed that the transitional phase of libertarian communism - directed by workers within their trade union and municipal organisations - would prepare the way for a later stage of "free communism", anarchism. Calling for at least an "hypothesis" programme, Leval urged the C.N.T. to develop a strategy based on a thorough study of the political and economic situation in Spain, which would allow the organisation take its rightful place within the revolutionary process then in motion.

The similarities between the approach of these anarchists and that of the "dissident" Marxist, Pannekoek, is no mere coincidence. For the revolutionary syndicalists within the C.N.T. and Pannekoek had been trying to address the problems of "party dictatorship" in the Soviet Union, and both currents had been deeply impressed by the experience of the workers' councils of the 1920's. Underlying these concerns was the recognition of the strength of bourgeois ideology and culture, and thus the enormous difficulties attendant on the great leap towards a transition towards socialism. Suspicious of the "purely economic" ethos of trade unionism, and its tendency to create a political leadership, these revolutionary syndicalists showed the strength of the anarcho-communist component within the C.N.T., a component which was strengthened considerably after the "failure" of the Russian revolution. And it was this hybrid revolutionary syndicalist schema, which, Solidaridad believed, gave C.N.T. syndicalism its "unique" character and endowed it with such contemporary relevance.

It was this vision of the "nature of the C.N.T." - which corresponded closely to the Pannekoekian notions held by the Barcelona GOA - which succeeded in convincing many who had been active in both the trade unions and neighbourhoods, that the C.N.T. could be an important force in Spanish society.

But by seeing themselves as inheritors of the revolutionary syndicalist tradition within the C.N.T., Solidaridad and sectors of the GOA threw down the gauntlet to the FAI leadership, and its historical embodiment in the resolutions of the Zaragoza Congress of 1936. These sectors believed that the resolutions of the Zaragoza Congress represented an earlier stage of historical development, and obviously had little meaning or relevance in contemporary Spain. This was the feeling expressed by the overwhelming majority of new C.N.T. members, and was the issue which united all the tendencies: - from counter-culturists to trade unionists - who called for a "new type" C.N.T. But Solidaridad, the MCL and the GOA generally, took this criticism one step further, and argued that even when they were approved in 1936, these resolutions were historically irrelevant. For the MCL, the failure to deal with the fascist threat, and develop a strategy towards the revolution, now in process, reflected the limitations of a particular brand of anarchism, and was used by the MCL to support their call for a fusion of Marxism and anarchism within the C.N.T. Solidaridad and the GOA believed that the approval of these motions was directly related to the denial of the right of expression by the FAI leadership, increasingly centralising its power within the C.N.T. The development of the thought of certain sectors of the C.N.T. - primarily the revolutionary syndicalists - was seen as threatening the "anarchist content" of the organisation, and therefore was not allowed to present its case. In its bid to maintain the anarchist nature of the C.N.T., the FAI was forced to use the methods of its principal adversary - Leninism - a process which speeded-up considerably under the conditions

of the Civil War. It was this leadership, which showed the greatest tendency towards the creation of "executive" power, that has maintained the most sectarian attitude towards Marxism, and all other tendencies not considered truly "anarchist", and thus was the major factor in the decline of anarchism in Spain and Europe. For Solidaridad and certain GOA groups, the growing isolation of this bureaucratic leadership is reflected in its inability to come to terms with the developments which have taken place within capitalism, and the greater role of the state in labour relations. While this had been recognised by revolutionary syndicalist leaders from the late 1920's, Solidaridad's analysis was based on a history of the working class under Franco, which showed the importance of the collective contract negotiations in stimulating and developing workers' struggle. The high points of workers' struggle during Francoism had taken place around the negotiations for collective contracts, which were moreover, the time when workers were best able to defend their wages and working conditions. If the C.N.T. wished to implant itself within the workers' movement, then it would necessarily have to break with its notion of direct action on the labour front, a notion associated with an earlier phase of capitalist development in Spain, when the state's intrusion within labour relations was minimal.

A recognition of the importance of the collective contract negotiations was shared by the majority of those committed to a trade union strategy for the C.N.T., even those who opposed the "reformism" of Solidaridad, believing that a revolutionary situation was developing in Spain. (84). But the conclusions drawn by Solidaridad and the GOA from the history of the C.N.T. from the 1930's was not shared by all those who wished to revitalise the image of the historic C.N.T. For the anarcho-communists, the bureaucratic reformist deformations which had occurred within the C.N.T.,

which found a parallel in Marxist organisations, were a direct consequence of the C.N.T.'s organising principle - mass trade unionism. The old anarcho-communists, they argued, had been proved correct, large trade union organisations inevitably lead to reformism and bureaucracy, whatever ideologies guide them. Indeed, they argued, anarcho-communist notions now had more contemporary relevance, given the "total" nature of capitalist exploitation, which cannot be contained within the trade unionist schema. Given the history of Western European trade unionism, it was clear that these organisations had developed strong hierarchies, which relegated women and the low-paid to an inferior status. The oppression of other groups in society - gays, the youth, women - who were beginning to have consciousness of their exploitation, cannot be addressed by the traditional organisations of the labour movement, while the increasing importance of ecology - a "life or death" issue - often came in conflict with the "job-oriented" consciousness of trade unionism. The "open-endedness" of anarcho-communism was better equipped to address these new movements and the "total" nature of capitalist exploitation, while its organising principle, the community, was a much more relevant organisational form for contemporary society. Calling for an end to the historical divisions between Marxism and anarchism, the anarcho-communists urged the creation of "affinity groups" who would engage in both practical and theoretical work, which would lay the basis for the broad libertarian movement which they wished the C.N.T. to be.

This emphasis on the "total" nature of capitalist exploitation and the increasing importance of "marginalised" groups within the process of socialist transformation, was the view held by the "counter-culturists" and Workers' Autonomy. For the counter-culturists, the principal error the C.N.T. had committed was its participation within the "political"

arena during the Civil War. Arguing along similar lines as Peirats and Vernon Richards, <sup>(85)</sup>, the counter-culturists believed that libertarian "politics" differed fundamentally from that of other political currents, and had been the principal reason for the historical success of the C.N.T. For by rejecting the "political" power mongering associated with bourgeois society, the C.N.T. had been able to direct its energies towards the building of an alternative politics by deepening the social revolutionary aspects of Spanish society, in the factories and the community. Its abandonment of these principles had been the main reason for the decline of Spanish anarchism and the growth of political bureaucracy. Given the nature of the new social movements of protest, which showed they were not interested in organising for "political power", the C.N.T.'s traditional anti-political perspective had greater contemporary relevance, and had the power to forge these disparate movements into a broad libertarian movement committed to bringing about profound social change.

Workers' Autonomy's rejection of "fictional politics" did not differ substantially from the counter-culturist perspective, or the "total exploitation" orientation of the anarcho-communists. But Workers' Autonomy had arrived at this perspective through a very different route, via the type of Marxism associated with Italian Autonomy, which gave the classical Marxist notion of "class struggle" a new function within contemporary capitalist societies. Arguing that class struggle has to be seen as an integral part of capitalist development, and indeed of capitalist expansion - forcing capital to introduce new technology and "rationalise" - Workers' Autonomy saw no revolutionary potential in traditional trade union struggle as the "reformist" character of Western European trade unionism had demonstrated. It was only those struggles which took place "outside the capitalist plan" - could not be contained

within the "pact" between the reformist trade unions and the state - which had any contemporary revolutionary potential. The example of the "autonomous" labour struggles in Italy from the mid-fifties, and the new needs which were thrown-up by advanced capitalism, were seen by Workers' Autonomy as the most hopeful bases for the creation of a movement with various areas of intervention. The nature of advanced capitalism, which uses the whole of society to reproduce the production cycle - the home, the neighbourhood, the school - required a new type of political project, which must include other oppressed groups, not just the working class.

Thus, the C.N.T.'s past, and the heterogenous nature of its ideology, was a crucial reference point for the various projects put forward by the groups which took part in the reconstruction of the organisation in 1976. But the point which united these diverse perspectives, and why they believed that the C.N.T. had such contemporary possibilities, was their belief that the C.N.T. was not "just a trade union", reflecting the practical political experience of these groups within the neighbourhood struggle. Even those groups most committed to a trade union strategy for the C.N.T. such as Solidaridad and the MCL, had had a long history of struggle within the neighbourhood. Indeed it was within the neighbourhoods that these groups had their greatest strength, and from which they had launched their plans and strategy for trade union intervention. This analysis of the contemporary potential of the C.N.T., precisely because it was not "just a trade union", was also held by those whose reference point was not primarily the "historic nature of the C.N.T.", such as sectors of the Barcelona GOA and Workers' Autonomy, but the changing nature of protest under the conditions of advanced capitalism. Thus, the C.N.T.'s appeal lay primarily in its "integral" view of

the revolutionary process, an approach which was gaining much ground within sectors of the non-Leninist left in Western Europe from the late '60's.

But the major problem confronting the "integralists" (86) within the C.N.T., one which was also being voiced by the left in other countries of Europe, was the role of the trade union within the "integral" process of socialist transformation. The Western European experience of trade unionism was the reference point par excellence in deciding the strategy of many within the reconstructed C.N.T. Some argued that the developments which had taken place in Western Europe would soon be felt in Spain. Indeed, the massive industrialisation which Spain had undergone since the '60's had already produced a "consumerist" consciousness, reflected in the support which the "reformist" leadership of the Communist Party had achieved. This perspective was held primarily by the "counter-culturists" and the anarcho-communists, and was used to support their defence of "marginalised" groups. But the experience of Western European trade unionism was felt profoundly within all the groups, reflecting the greater integration of Spain within Western Europe by the 1970's, and the massive industrialisation and urbanisation which had taken place under Franco.

For others however, the Spanish working class experience was inherently different to its counterparts in other countries of Europe. The military dictatorship of Franco had been unable to "assimilate" the working class along Western European lines, a working class moreover, which had a strong and important revolutionary tradition. This can be seen, they argued, in the types of organisation that workers had created - primarily the Workers' Commissions - which showed that their historic preference for assembleist and council organisation had not diminished. Believing that

these extreme democratic organisations, the Workers' Commissions, had been "usurped" by the Communist Party, which now exercised an implacable control over them, these groups viewed the development of "autonomous" strike action from the late '60's as the most hopeful signs of a loosening of Communist Party influence, and the basis from which the reconstructed C.N.T. could relaunch itself.

The increase in autonomous strike action, the proliferation of assemblies and illegal factory committees from the early '70's was the most important single influence on the thinking of many of the groups who joined the C.N.T. in 1976. This perspective was given added weight by the autonomous nature of the massive movement of January 1976, and the crucial role which the community played in these events served to reinforce their own experience within the neighbourhoods from the late 1960's. There were, of course great differences over what the C.N.T.'s attitude towards this movement should be. Many, sickened by what they saw as "show actions" by the Communist Party, in its policy of pressure / negotiation, were strongly opposed to an affiliation drive by the C.N.T., and argued that this movement should be allowed to develop its own momentum. Perhaps, they argued, this movement would develop into something quite different from the C.N.T. - the C.N.T. should simply be a "transition belt" for this organisational endeavour. But those who believed that the C.N.T. should, and in fact must, give continuity to this movement were fairly numerous, especially in Catalonia, whose own experience in the autonomous movement had convinced them of the need for greater coordination and continuity, imperative if Communist Party influence wished to be seriously contested.

The experience of Western European trade unionism, and its equivalent in Spain, the Workers' Commissions and the UGT, hung heavily over the process of reconstruction of

the C.N.T., especially during its first year, 1976. Other factors militated against a trade union direction for the organisation - the limitations to full trade union freedom, the lack of strong financial backing, and the experience of many of the groups in the neighbourhoods. But the single most important factor which greatly impeded trade union consolidation was the "libertarian boom" which really got underway after the death of Franco, and reached enormous proportions in 1977 and 1978. This was used by both the government and the exile organisation to "destabilise" the C.N.T., and rob it of an important workers' following. For the feelings of euphoria and liberation, which were the most decisive factors in convincing many of the possibilities contained within the C.N.T., ran concurrently with the process of transition to political democracy, while the continuing presence of the Francoist repressive apparatuses continued to breed armed activists, and those who believed that an "illegal" C.N.T. had more power of manoeuvrability. But these currents were greatly strengthened within the C.N.T. by the "libertarian fiesta" strategy pursued by the exile organisation during 1977, and by its encouragement of a "revolutionary macho" image of the FAI. The government was then able to seize its chance, particularly after the autumn of 1976, when the "reform pact" with the other major trade unions got going to earnest. Its image of "anarcho-terrorism" certainly paid off, with a mass exodus of workers out of the organisation and a severe crisis within the C.N.T. which prevented it from seriously contesting the social pact.

The experience of the first two years of the reconstructed C.N.T. produced some interesting developments within sectors of its membership. As a result of their experience with what they termed the "decadent bourgeois nature of the pure anarchists" within the C.N.T., many erstwhile "integralists" who had opposed a purely trade union

direction for the organisation, were now firmly within the syndicalist camp. This growth in adherents to a trade union strategy for the C.N.T. coincided with the onset of economic recession, and the beginnings of the "desencanto" phenomenon, after the general election of June 1977. The decline in autonomous strike action, and indeed the growing number of defeated strikes, dictated a more defensive trade union strategy for the C.N.T., and a greater emphasis on the collective contract negotiations as a time of struggle and defence. This exposed more clearly the ideologically immobile nature of "pure anarchism", and its embodiment in what were considered "lumpen" types. The obvious lack of a "libertarian ethic", and the "political" nature of the exile leadership, whose struggle for control of the C.N.T. did not differ substantially from their Marxist adversaries, all combined to produce a reappraisal of Marxism, and the growth of "workerism" within the syndicalist camp.

These developments within the C.N.T. cannot be understood without taking into account the nature of the exile organisation, and its determination to continue at the helm of the C.N.T. But its ability to "destabilise" the organisation, and prevent trade union consolidation, was possible because of certain aspects of anarchist philosophy, the connotations which anarchism has in capitalist society, and the significance these aspects acquired during the political transition to democracy. For the individual liberatory aspects of anarchism, which many of the GOA experienced on first contact with anarchism, had considerable appeal in a society which was emerging from almost forty years of a repressive dictatorship. The problems with purely personal change, if not conceived within a political project and directed towards social change, were not ones which historically had affected the C.N.T. Undoubtedly there had always existed within the C.N.T. "individualist" anarchists, and those most interested in its personal

liberatory side. But the overwhelmingly proletarian nature of Spanish anarchism meant that one of the major problems anarchist militants encountered was the difficulty of extending its "integral" view of politics to the mass of its trade union membership, a problem which the "integralists" within the C.N.T. had had to confront, especially at the onset of economic recession and "desencanto" after June 1977. (87). This more "personal" anarchism - which pitches the "individual" against authority and the state - has been one which has had more resonance in other countries of Europe, where "libertarianism" has been attached to many diverse ideological and political projects, and is undoubtedly why anarchism has been considered "bourgeois". It was this more "Western European" anarchism which was felt increasingly within the C.N.T., demonstrated clearly during the "Jornadas Libertarias" in Barcelona in 1977, and the opposition to any form of organisational continuity, or sustained work within the C.N.T.

And it was its defence of the Spanish anarchist tradition, embodied in the Zaragoza Congress, believed to be threatened by this "Western European" type of anarchism, which was used to rally round older veterans particularly to the exilio's side. The older veterans were an important element in the reconstruction of the "official" C.N.T., and their "organisational know-how" endowed them with status and power within the organisation. Their anti-Marxist prejudices, inherited from the Civil War, could also be used against the opposition, whose call for a dialogue with the state was seen as "Marxist deviation from principle". But in many important respects, the anarchism of the exile organisation was now, after almost forty years in exile, much closer to the "Western European" type, spouting an anti-statist "verbal radicalism" which rarely went beyond, in practice, the printed word. This type of anarchism had of course been felt

within a sector of the C.N.T. leadership after the perceived "failure" of the Russian revolution, which gave rise to an anarchist "orthodoxy" determined to maintain the "essence" of anarchist thought. But this "purist" tendency had been greatly tempered by the immense social and political weight the C.N.T had in Spanish society, which forced Spanish anarchism to confront the question of state power, and participate politically during the "exceptional" circumstances of Civil War. These breaches in anarchist doctrine had never affected anarchist movements in the rest of Europe, whose "purism" and sectarianism were directly related to their limited appeal on the workers' front. The exacerbation of these trends within the C.N.T. exile organisation was likewise of a result of the C.N.T.'s isolation from the Spanish workers' movement. Its social base, in France as in Spain, was primarily amongst older veterans, some of whom were now professionals, small-businessmen, or even factory owners, whose attachment to the C.N.T. was purely emotional. In contrast to the historical anti-statism and violence of the Spanish anarchist movement, which was, despite its problems for organisational continuity, a product of the struggle between capital and labour, the anti-statism and violence encouraged by the exile organisation appealed to students, the unemployed youth, and others disconnected to the labour movement, whose reading of "anarchism" was based primarily on the image given by the bourgeois press. This particular image of anarchism - detected by Luigi Fabbri from the turn of the century - rested on the vision of the "bomb-throwing anarchist", and defined anarchism primarily by its rejection of all moral codes and values, an "anarchism" which could appeal to the youth "brutalised" by the violent nature of Spanish society, and quasi-criminal elements who now found a philosophical justification for their actions. (88).

It was the recognition of these major problems of anarchism - its ability to appeal to purely "personal" change, the cult of violence, and its possibilities as an "amoral" or "libertine" philosophy - that led many erstwhile anarchists to reject the tag "anarchist", as they believed that the connotations which anarchism had acquired in bourgeois society were too powerful to sever. This "nihilist" brand of anarchism had of course been accepted as a current within the anarchist movement, primarily amongst intellectuals, from the turn of the century. But this type of anarchism had never enjoyed much status within Spain until the intellectual "acrata" movement in the universities from the mid-sixties, which, in a sense, laid the basis for the "libertarian boom" within the student movement in the '70's. The extremely radical nature of the student movement had caused problems on the labour front in the late sixties, when the downturn on the workers' front was interpreted as "proletarian retreatism" and placed the vanguard role with students. The rift between the workers' and student movement was somewhat healed during the earlier part of the seventies, when the high level of strike action, and its violent nature, placed workers again to the forefront of political change. But the nature of the transition to political democracy in Spain, which was carried through on the basis of "pacts" with the workers' movement, again seemed to attest to the lack of combativity of workers, who followed faithfully the orders of their leaders in the trade unions and political parties. The radicalism of sectors of the student movement grew apace, particularly in reaction to the growth of the extreme right during 1977 and 1978. An "anti-statist", "anti-political" organisation, such as the C.N.T., had a strong appeal amongst these students, particularly those drawn to the image of "street warfare" practised by the anarchist action groups in Barcelona during the 1920's.

This particular vision of the C.N.T., based on the "armed activism" of the FAI, also had a strong resonance amongst the young unemployed. For youth unemployment soared during these years, and, given the lack of welfare support, very often led to criminal activities. This "illegal", "criminal" element also has a long history within the C.N.T., and robberies and "expropriations" had often sustained the organisation during times of harsh repression. But much of the criminal activity carried-out by the youth within the C.N.T. during the transition was of an "individual" kind, while their espousal of violence often had a "gangland" feel, and indeed could, and did, veer towards the extreme right. (89).

The recognition of the problems with certain aspects of anarchist thought, and its relationship to a tradition within the C.N.T., which took on a particular meaning during the period of transition, led many former exponents of the "marginalised" thesis, such as Workers' Autonomy, to opt decisively for the "workers' camp". There were other conclusions drawn from the experience of the reconstructed C.N.T. during 1976 to 1979. The importance, for example, of the "image" which a good national committee gave to the organisation, proved by the growth in prestige of the C.N.T. during the national committees of Gómez Casas and Enrique Marcos. Moreover, these national committees had tremendous standing within the organisation, and could decide, and put into the practice, the course the organisation should take. A reappraisal of the role of leadership was also directly related to the experience of the exile organisation, whose lack of any coherent strategy for the organisation was a crucial factor in the demise of the C.N.T. The "non-recognition" that leadership existed within the C.N.T. actually allowed this leadership greater freedom of movement,

and meant that no organisational mechanisms were available to counter its power. This growing recognition of the role of leadership, particularly the "image" it gave to the organisation, was allied to the belief that the C.N.T. had to become "professional" in order to compete in the advanced capitalist world of "images" and "representations", showing the distance many militants had travelled from their Situationist past. But in some important respects the experience of the C.N.T.'s reconstruction had confirmed many in their belief that a contemporary social movement had to be based on a "fusion" of Marxism and anarchism, as their experience of both had shown. But who would be the "historical subject" of this movement, in the context of high levels of unemployment and low trade unionisation, still, in 1981, remained an open question.

#### Marxism and anarchism in historical perspective.

In an attempt to understand the reason why certain sectors within the reconstructed C.N.T. were grappling with problems identical to those of the Marxist left in Europe, I undertook an historical study of the Spanish anarchist movement, embodied historically in the C.N.T., which led me to reject decisively the Marxist and messianic ideas of the "backward" and pre-industrial nature of anarchism, and argue instead that the Spanish anarchist movement reflected the "advanced" nature of working class culture and consciousness in certain regions of Spain. This "advanced" consciousness resulted from a "productive clash" between a country which in many respects resembled Western Europe, but whose economic underdevelopment, and the militaristic traditions of its ruling class, resembled more closely countries of the underdeveloped world. This gave the class struggle in

Spain an extremely radical and violent character, but also ensured that democratic demands were an integral part of the struggle between capital and labour. Anarchism's defence of workers' control, individual freedom and its militant direct-action syndicalism, reflected its roots in the European tradition of the Enlightenment, and its belief in revolutionary change in the less developed world. And it was this particular amalgam which captured more closely the position of Spain in Western Europe, and ensured anarchism its success in that most "European" of Spanish provinces, Catalonia, and the heartland of latifundist power and privilege, Andalusia.

The anarchist success in Spain has to be seen in relationship to its principal socialist competitor, Marxism. Marx, strongly believing that revolution was imminent in Western Europe, where the "destructive creativity" of capitalism would quickly lead to socialism and an elimination of "bourgeois politics", called for participation within the political arena, and shunned violent tactics. This strategy rested on Marx' notion of the state, "which reflected relationships in civil society", a notion which had little meaning in Spain, where "patronage politics" alternated with long periods of direct military rule. Undoubtedly it was the nature of the Spanish central state, which maintained itself primarily by coercion, particularly of the regions, which exposed more clearly than elsewhere in Europe, the problems with the Marxist theory of the state, and its centralised notion of organisation. If the "autonomy" of the state was more clearly perceived in Spain, so too was the importance of "politics" and its interconnectedness to the economy, where decisions on the economy were often dictated by whoever delivered the "best favour", or could "place" a relative in industry. The dangers,

and problems of "party control" of the state were clearly evident in Spain, where unproductive industry and agriculture were a direct result of the lack of democracy and local control.

There were other aspects of the Marxist theory of revolution which evidently were not applicable to Spain, right up to the 1930's. The importance of the "land problem", which produced a revolutionary rural movement of landworkers and peasants, was easier to contain within anarchism, which did not believe that the industrial proletariat, solely, was the force for revolutionary change. This more "open-endedness" of anarchist notions of class again reflects its commitment to the less developed areas of the world, where social class categories are more fluid, where for example, the distinctions between sharecroppers and small peasants are extremely difficult to make. But perhaps more importantly, the anarchists' commitment to "putting into practice" egalitarian relationships within its trade unions, and in the community, was a crucial factor for its success in certain regions of Spain, which was allied to its federalist notions of organisation. Undoubtedly this new "morality", which emphasised the "way things were done" as much as their content, had great appeal in a country run by corrupt politicians, and suffering the rigours of a centralised authoritarian state, and an intransigent employer class. This revolutionary "ethic", practiced by anarchist militants and leaders, and its notions of a particular kind of leadership, which would "neither lead or direct", was related directly to the importance anarchists placed on "psychological" factors within the revolutionary process, and the need for a "total" revolutionary transformation, including the personal. And it was this "psychological" approach to revolutionary change which led anarchists to reject the "productivist" ethos associated with Marxism, believing that the foremost goal of socialism was to create "free and knowledgeable"

human beings. Production had to serve these ends, they argued, and could not be a goal in itself.

This particular socialist vision captured very closely the aspirations of the Spanish popular masses. For the repressive nature of the Spanish centralised state, buttressed by the corrupt party system, and the ideological weight of the Church, showed the limitations of "state centralised socialism" and its pernicious consequences for both production and personal freedom. State repression and the unstable nature of Spain's political system bred a revolutionary movement unparalleled in Western Europe, demonstrated by the Civil War and the collectivisation experiments, but it also meant that bourgeois democratic demands still remained unfulfilled. The importance of bourgeois democratic demands, such as freedom of expression and association, and their fuller realisation under workers' control, reflected the high level of development of the workers' movement, particularly in Catalonia. For the repression suffered under the form of capitalist domination in Spain, felt especially in the regions, embraced the whole individual, and severely limited his / her freedom of personal choice and development. Moreover, Spain, unlike Russia, was not an autocracy, and the Spanish masses had tasted, however briefly, the greater personal happiness to be gained from a system of pluralist democracy. This also meant that production would be seen as a means of bringing about a system of justice and greater personal freedom, but could not, by itself, guarantee the fulfilment of these demands.

The problems with Marxist revolutionary theory, detected by the anarchists over a century ago, have been confirmed by subsequent historical development. Marx's emphasis on economic development and the crisis of capitalist production

as the principal "trigger" for revolutionary change in the advanced capitalist world has proved to have been illusory, as capitalism in the West has succeeded in sustaining severe and cyclical crises from the 1920's. Major revolutionary change has occurred in less developed areas of the world, where the contradictions of capitalism have been most strongly felt, and where landworkers and peasants have overwhelmingly formed the majority. These developments have brought into question the Marxist theory of the state, and Marx's revolutionary subject, the industrial working class. If capitalist domination in Western Europe has not been overthrown, then that is because capitalism has, to a large extent, been able to "deliver the goods" in the West, at the expense of the underdeveloped world, but also because it could appear as the "defender of individual rights", against the repressive authoritarian regimes in Russia and Eastern Europe. Bourgeois "ideological control" in Western Europe has to be recognised as resting on real concrete gains in the field of individual freedom achieved through the course of the class struggle in the last century or more. Though limited, never fully realised and at times severely curtailed, this degree of individual freedom in Western Europe is the bourgeoisie's strongest ideological weapon. The maintenance and full use of this weapon, however, depends on the existence of an undemocratic "socialism" in Eastern Europe and Russia, which has become almost synonymous with socialism itself. The absence of a "subjective" or "psychological" theory seems to be the major problem with classical Marxism. While recognising in his early work that humankind did have an essentially "human essence" - the realisation of his / her individuality - Marx's later immersion in capitalist economics overshadowed these earlier concerns, and stamped a strong mark on Marxist theory. Taken-up by a leadership educated in

Positivism, it acquired the hallmark of its scientific age, the "objectivity of science", and was given philosophical foundations by Lenin. Undoubtedly reacting against the hypocrisy of "bourgeois individualism" and the philosophical tradition of Locke and Hume, the Marxism of the early twentieth century did however retain strong influences of "progressive bourgeois thought", revealed clearly in its attitude to science and production. The Bolshevik belief in the inherently progressive character of capitalist industrial techniques, which embodied the most advanced technological methods available, is confirmed by Corrigan, Ramsey and Sayer : "It was out of the specific and novel circumstances of Tsarism analysed in terms of the available, but ill-adapted Marxism that the Bolshevik acceptance of the necessity of promoting and expanding certain capitalist productive forms was first formed. Lenin's support for the Stolypin reforms - which he saw as inducing a progressive peasant differentiation on the American small farmer rather than the Prussian junker model - fits easily within such a perspective. So does his later espousal (backed by the majority of Bolsheviks, including both Stalin and Trotsky) of the 'necessity' to learn from Taylorism, or to control the economy through fiscal manipulation, or to employ highly paid and privileged specialists. To argue here that such measures were adopted with reluctance and under dire material conditions is partially true, but misses the point. It is still the underlying assumption that capitalist paradigms provide the natural, necessary or, indeed, only remedies which permit the link between the problems and these solutions". (90).

The adoption of the capitalist industrial model by the Bolsheviks has meant that the divisions between town and country and alienation in the workplace has continued in existence. (91). The political consequences of maintaining

an essentially capitalist division of labour in the Soviet Union are precisely those which the anarchists feared - the growth of a powerful entrenched bureaucracy under the control of the party, wide-scale corruption, and the development of a "formidable machine of repression" by the state. <sup>(92)</sup> . Certainly this is not the type of "socialism" which Marx ever envisaged, occurring in a semi-Asiatic country where the full realisation of bourgeois democratic freedoms were not seen as a major priority. This "non-capitalist" route to industrialisation, within which the state plays a central role, has been the model of "modernisation" for other developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, in their attempts to join the industrialised world. <sup>(93)</sup> . But this specific "socialist" project, <sup>(94)</sup> , developed by the Bolsheviks in the context of Russian society in 1917, has been seen by successive Internationals, and their Leninist successors, as the proven, and unquestionable model of socialist revolution for the entire world, Western Europe included. This has been possible because of the absence of a developed political theory in Marx himself, and his "utopian" belief that a change in the ownership of the means of production, and the development of the forces of production, would render both the state and politics redundant. This type of "single theory", (seen to be applicable to the entire world) emanating from the Internationals after the Russian revolution, continued the practice established by Marx in the First International, which made political participation binding on all its sections in 1871. Although the analysis had been modified - the "conquest of state power" was now the strategy for socialist revolution - the Third International acted in accordance with the theoretical guide-lines developed by Marx - the belief that all countries would undergo a similar process of industrialisation, which would be paralleled in their "political" developments, reflected at the level of the state.

This inability to analyse the specific nature of capitalist development in Spain, and the absence of a political analysis, rendered Marx unable to comprehend the nature of the state, and the determining role which "politics" often play in economic policies, which produced a deep-seated anti-statism and anti-politicism in the Spanish popular masses, particularly in Catalonia and Andalusia. This lack of knowledge of Spain and its political traditions continued to be an important factor for the lack of Communist Party success in Spain in the 1920's, when the strategy of the "conquest of state power" was allied to the tactic of political participation, despite strong criticism of this tactic from within the Spanish Communist Party itself. Moreover, the strategy of the Spanish Communist Party was increasingly dictated by Soviet foreign policy interests, demonstrated most clearly, and tragically during the Spanish Civil War, when the Spanish Communist Party actively created the forces for "counter-revolution", fearing the reaction of the Western bourgeois democracies to revolutionary developments in Spain.

The nature of the Spanish anarchist movement cannot be understood without reference to the developments which took place within its Marxist opponents, the Spanish Socialist Party and the International Communist movement. For from the founding of the Marxist section in Spain, the anarchists "reacted" to the economism of Marxism by "moving away" from a class analysis to one which stressed the importance of consciousness and ideology. The "parliamentarism" of the Spanish Socialists and the bureaucratic nature of this party contributed greatly in reinforcing the anti-statist aspects of anarchist thought, and accentuating its ideas of extreme democracy. The reaction was greatest however, after the perceived failure of the Russian revolution, when anarchism was now seen to address "more general human

interests", not the "narrow, economistic" ones of class. The idea that "anarchism is a way of life", which gained ground during the 1920's, was directly related to the image of the Russian revolutionary experience, seen by the anarchists as a limited, "materialist" change, and not one which embraced the "whole" life of the individual.

Thus, certain aspects of anarchist thought were given greater importance, particularly in Western Europe, after the Russian revolution. Isolated and defensive, the anarchists "reacted" to the "deformations" of Marxism in an ahistorical fashion, thus revealing one of the major problems with anarchist philosophy. While the anarchists' emphasis on the perpetual nature of the human psyche, which informs their analysis of the state - the original and continuing structure of oppression through ideological control - is an important contribution to political thought, its failure to view history as process robs it of greater concrete explanatory power, and can lead anarchists to withdraw to a negative and "purist" opposition, which sees any attempt which does not totally dismantle the system of state oppression as futile and irrelevant. The overwhelming importance which anarchists give to ideological enslavement prevents them from seeing the dynamic of class struggle, fought on both the "material" and ideological terrain, and comes into contradiction with the anarchists' belief in the power of human "will" and its tendency towards rebellion. This ahistoricity of anarchist thought, which seemed to be confirmed by the "statist" nature of the Soviet revolution, is directly related to the importance it places on the individual in history. Although most anarchists define the individual as "social", the possibilities of a purely individualistic interpretation of anarchism exist, evident in the work of Max Stirner, a type of anarchism which can have a strong appeal in "mass society", built upon the promise of unrestricted personal freedom. (95)

This type of individualistic anarchism, which put down stronger roots in Western Europe after the Russian revolution, had a limited appeal in Spain. For Spanish anarchists, as workers, were involved in the day-to-day class struggle within their trade unions, and whose comittment to personal change was developed in response to the authoritarian nature of the Spanish state and society in general, and was thus an integral part of the democratic character of the class struggle in certain regions of Spain. But this democratic character of the workers' movement often came in conflict with the types of struggle imposed by a repressive state and an intransigent employer class, and led to "militaristic" tactics being employed, resulting in tit-for-tat killings and the development of a certain "gangsterism" within the C.N.T. during the early 1920's in Barcelona. This "militarism" was however, a product of the "gun-to-the-head"-type trade union bargaining, and was always related to the pressing need for far-reaching economic change and redistribution, in a country where the conspicuous consumption and idleness of its ruling elite was buttressed by the forces of a militaristic state. The dilemma posed to the Spanish anarchist movement - between its comittment to the greatest democracy possible, and the urgent need for revolutionary change - was one which was never posed to any other anarchist movement in Europe, because, alone amongst the anarchist movements in Europe, anarchism remained a potent force in working class politics and culture, and was thus a political force in Spanish society. This imposed on the Spanish anarchist movement the need to address political questions in practice, although, in theory, these were more than often denied or ignored. The politics of the Spanish anarchist movement, embodied in the C.N.T., was dictated primarily by its role as a trade union. The flexibility of the C.N.T.'s relationship to politics was a direct result of the nature of trade unionism in Catalonia particularly , where workers did vote on numerous occasions, on the whole for the Left Republicans, from whom it obtained

certain services, especially in the legal field, not available within its own ranks. This did create a certain network between the Left Republicans and the C.N.T., most clearly evident amongst the "syndicalists", and was in part a product of the effects of repression on the organisation. For while the C.N.T. contained quite large numbers of "conscious" militants, the mass of its trade union membership could not be considered "anarchist", but workers who were drawn to the C.N.T. because of its militant syndicalist tactics against the employers, and the democratic nature of its trade unionism. Indeed, one of the major reasons the C.N.T. did not enter the "political" arena - it feared that "politics" would divide workers - was undoubtedly based on a realistic appraisal of the heterogeneous "politics" of its membership. The aim of the C.N.T. - animated by anarchist philosophy - was to "overcome", or render irrelevant this type of "bourgeois politics", and create an "alternative" socialist culture which, by uniting workers at the point of production and in the community, would counteract these "false" divisions amongst the working class,. But this trade unionist strategy of the C.N.T., overwhelmingly championed by the revolutionary syndicalists, existed in a sort of "tension" with anarchism, and the nature of Spanish political life, which imposed long periods of clandestinity and illegality on the C.N.T. The need for clandestine groups, which would maintain some organisational continuity during periods of repression, was recognised from the inception of the anarchist trade union movement in Spain, and gave Bakuninist principles a "lived reality" within the C.N.T. This separate "organisation of anarchists" was given organisational status by the creation of the FAI in 1927, in an attempt to maintain the "anarchist" content of the C.N.T., threatened by Communism and the changing nature of the state's relationship to labour, manifested in the labour arbitration boards set-up by Primo in 1926. For unlike

other anarchist movements in Europe, where the more "individualistic" aspects of anarchism were heightened after the Russian revolution, the "failure" of the Russian revolution produced a strengthening of Bakuninism and Kropotkinism within the C.N.T., both of which coalesced in the FAI, reflecting the essentially proletarian nature of Spanish anarchism. Although both these tendencies agreed on the "limitations of pure syndicalism", they differed fundamentally on how best they could be overcome. Though maintaining an essentially syndicalist vision of revolutionary change, the Bakuninists, represented by "Los Solidarios", (96) argued for a "conquest of state power", and held a peculiarly libertarian notion of the "dictatorship of the proletariat", reflecting the enormous impact the Russian revolution had upon sectors of the youth within the C.N.T. Recognising the role which leadership plays in the revolutionary process, they believed however that the "nature" of this leadership has a ~~determining~~ <sup>determining</sup> influence on the course of the revolution, and needs to be kept in check by the participation and activity of the masses. The FAI of Oliver and Durruti was, in many ways, an attempt to put this notion of leadership into practice. But when the class struggle hotted-up in the 1930's, and was felt within the C.N.T. itself, the FAI centralised its organisation, and did not hesitate from using "Leninist-style" tactics to oust its opponents, the "reformists" from centres of power.

The Kropotkinist FAI, whilst agreeing with the Bakuninists on <sup>the</sup> trade union strategy of "revolutionary gymnastics", were opposed to their idea of the "conquest of state power", believing that the state would collapse through the "spontaneous action of the masses", therefore no programme or strategy was needed. This sector of the C.N.T. leadership was the one which most closely resembled the critical "oppositional" anarchism of Western Europe, though more radical and still

connected to a trade union base. It was this leadership, whose intellectual standing within the C.N.T. was great and which represented a long anarchist tradition, (97), which most clearly reflected the age-old anarchist "reaction" to the undemocratic "deformations" of Marxism, a reaction which was greatest after the Russian revolution. Undoubtedly developments within the international anarchist movement, which were felt within the C.N.T., contributed to the strength of this reaction. For by the late 1920's sectors of the international anarchist movement were attempting to move away from this purely "reactive" approach to Marxism, and, greatly impressed by the workers' council alternative to Leninism, called for the establishment of the national federations of industry, under workers' control, and "balanced" by the community organisations. Believing that the extreme democratic formula of Kropotkin was unworkable in practice, they argued for a democratic federalist structure of delegateship; but controlled and accountable to the rank and file. This revolutionary schema, which recognised the state after the proletarian revolution, and a "transitional" period of socialist construction, had a strong influence upon the revolutionary syndicalist current within the C.N.T., which was also deeply impressed by the workers' council experience of the 1920's. This formula seemed a suitable tactic for Spain in the mid-1930's, when the growth of the right was being increasingly contested by the notion of working class unity, demonstrated most notably during Asturias in 1934.

The resolutions of the Zaragoza Congress in 1936, a few months before the start of the Civil War, reflect these divisions within the C.N.T. leadership, and within its rank and file. The approval of working class unity and the acceptance of a federalist socialist republic - unprecedented in C.N.T. history - were approved alongside the Kropotkinist free

commune revolutionary schema. Undoubtedly the prestige which this traditional leadership enjoyed within the C.N.T., a prestige which grew during its battle with the "reformists", was important in getting the motion approved. But this leadership also represented general feelings amongst large numbers of C.N.T. workers, and their long tradition of anti-statist / anti-political trade union action. It was indeed these feelings amongst the C.N.T. rank and file which prevented the "reformists" from moving in a more "political" direction during the Republican years. These sentiments, developed through its struggle with a powerful military state, where political participation had limited effect, which prevented the C.N.T. from seriously considering the "anarche-Bolshevik" "seizure of power" plan during the first days of the war, were also based on a fairly reasonable assessment of the possibilities of "seizing state power". The difficulties of setting-up a revolutionary dictatorship solely in Catalonia, in the context of fascism in Germany and Italy - whose support for the Nationalists was crucial in deciding the fate of the Civil War - and the hostility of both the Soviet Union and the Western European democracies, were clearly evident. The strength of the military right, who could command support from large sections of the peasantry and the middle classes, brought forth a "traditional" response from the C.N.T. - an alliance with other forces of the Left. For while the militaristic nature of the Spanish ruling classes created the conditions for its revolutionary overthrow, it also prevented their fulfilment, and continuously replenished the working class / petit bourgeois "defensive" alliance, reflected, though in different ways, within the two leading workers' organisations, the UGT and the C.N.T. The centralised nature of the Spanish state, and its repressive character, also ensured that local politics acquired a greater meaning. Despite its attempt to remain outside of "politics" the C.N.T., as a mass trade union, was linked in innumerable ways, primarily because of the "personal" character of politics under the conditions of repression, to the world of politics in Catalonia, the most "Europeanised" province, and the one moreover, where the forces for bourgeois

revolution had the greatest strength.

The participation of the C.N.T. in the Popular Front government during the Civil War, was not, as Horacio Prieto pointed out, an abdication of its principles, but the result of the political power of the C.N.T.'s mass movement status in Spanish society. The inability of maintaining workers outside "bourgeois ideology", by refraining from political action, was clearly shown during the Civil War. The collectivisation experiment demonstrated how deeply bourgeois property notions and its competitive norms had penetrated large masses of workers, despite their adherence to an "anarchist" trade union. But undoubtedly, this tendency towards self-activity shown by Spanish workers, which made the collectivisations possible, was stimulated and encouraged by the long history of libertarian culture in Spain, and its attempt to create an "alternative" politics.

Marxism and anarchism - a "productive fusion" ?

It would seem that, despite their many theoretical differences, both Marxism and anarchism underestimated the strength of political traditions, and the ability of the state, both its capitalist and non-capitalist forms, to sustain itself. Marx believed that bourgeois politics and the state would disappear when the ownership of the means of production passed to the workers, while the anarchists believed that the creation of a counter-culture and an abstention from the bourgeois political arena would inoculate workers from bourgeois norms and ideology, and create a movement of conscious workers who would "spontaneously" crush the state. Both therefore display a "utopianism" characteristic of their age, the 19th century, when the appearance of the working class on the

historical stage seduced both branches of the socialist movement to believe that the socialist millenia was imminent. Both also demonstrate the "theorising" trend of their time, when the "specific" capitalist development and political traditions of their strongholds were "generalised" into a revolutionary theory of all time and place. Moreover, Marxism and anarchism retain strong "bourgeois influences", clearly seen in the "economism" of Marxism, and the "individualism" of anarchism. As the Spanish anarchist movement has shown, its movement away from a more "material" class analysis was directly related to the narrow "economism" of Marxism, and perhaps a more detailed study of Marxism would reveal a reinforcement of its economism in reaction to the "individualism" of anarchism. In this way, the more "bourgeois" aspects of both movements are heightened, and the way blocked to develop a socialist theory which attempts to "fuse" the more positive, and socialist aspects of their thought.

But the gap which has separated Marxism from anarchism has closed considerably from the mid-'60's, reflecting the crises of Marxist revolutionary predictions, seemed to be disproved by the increasing stability of the Western bourgeois democracies, and the revolutionary struggles in the underdeveloped world. The experience of the Russian revolution was the reference point for this growing criticism of classical Marxism, revealed clearly in the nature of the '68 events in Paris, and confirmed by the Soviet invasion of Csechoslovakia later in the year. The old certainties and tenets, increasingly assailed from within sectors of Marxism from the 1920's, could no longer be seriously held. In the productive crisis which ensued, the break was made with the "economism" which had nurtered the Russian revolution, and in the search for an understanding of the specific nature of Western European capitalism and its mechanisms for survival, Marxists were taken into the anarchist realm of "ideology and consciousness"

and its belief in the importance of personal change.

There were two major influences which were decisive in this changing Marxist perspective - feminism and the recognition of the limitations to growth. If feminism argued for more emphasis on reproduction and personal politics, and its inclusion in any "materialist" analysis, the crisis in primary resources which followed the revolutionary upheavals in the underdeveloped world called into question the "productivist" ethos of classical Marxism, and its scientific underpinings. The developments within science too pointed towards the anarchist conception - the interconnectedness of reality, the tentative nature of scientific findings, and the importance of "subjectivity" in the scientific process of investigation.

The re-emergence of anarchism in Spain can only be understood with reference to the crisis of the Marxist left, particularly the political practice of its Leninist wing. But these "new anarchists" accepted, without question, the most important legacy Marx left to socialist understanding - historical materialism - which recognises the determining role which the class struggle plays in historical development. Although they argued that "material" had to include culture and consciousness, showing their Pannekoekian background, this was one of the major differences between the "new anarchism" and the "old" within the C.N.T. And it was this difference in their historical approach which exposed the limitations of historical anarchism. For the ahistoricity of anarchism was greatly accentuated after the Russian revolution, which reduced anarchist forces internationally to one major enclave, Spain. The Spanish anarchist movement then became the "prototype" of political action and strategy for the entire world, thus showing the same "generalising" tendency we found in Marxism, and the same lack of knowledge or recognition of different traditions and culture.

Unlike Marxism however - whose historical method had greater possibilities of expansion - the isolation of the Spanish anarchist movement internationally reinforced both its ahistoricism and its provincialism. Political developments throughout the world were now interpreted through the prism of the "Spanish experience", and its internationalism reduced to crude, and simplistic denunciations of all developments along state and party lines. Lacking a grasp of the dynamics of the international class struggle, regimes such as Cuba, Angola and Mozambique were simply condemned out of hand for maintaining the state, and for their dependence on the Soviet Union. The absence of an international perspective, and the inability to see capitalism as an international phenomenon, prevented "orthodox" anarchism from understanding the importance of nationalism, both in the ex-colonial world, and within Spain itself, and caused great problems in Catalonia during the reconstruction of the C.N.T. in 1976-1979.

The ahistoricity of "orthodox" anarchism also extended to the history of the C.N.T. itself. The experience of the Republic - when small-scale "dictatorships of the proletariat" were set-up by the FAI - political participation during the Civil War, and the experience of the collectivisations - these were all crucial historical issues which the exiled "orthodoxy" refused to discuss, and thus anarchist theory remained "time-bound" within parameters developed in the late 19th century. A serious theoretical appraisal of the highly political nature of the C.N.T.'s past would not, as the "orthodoxy" claimed, have led to political participation, but to a less sectarian attitude towards other "political" groups on the left, and a more flexible approach which recognised the complexities of socialist change, and the difficulties of immediate "libertarian communist" success. A recognition of the political role which the C.N.T. has played historically

would also have forced on the C.N.T. the need to develop some type of consistent political strategy, a strategy developed with reference to the historical developments which had taken place within Spanish society during the last forty years.

The reconstruction of the C.N.T. during 1976-1979 is of considerable historical importance, for, as the European anarchist movement with most possibilities of mass appeal, it shows the strengths and weaknesses of anarchism in practice, and the ability of the state to "destabilise" threatening social movements of protest. The experience of these years worked towards a growing identification with the revolutionary syndicalist current within the C.N.T., with a slight "tinge" of "up-dated" Bakuninism. For these years had shown that the strategy of the C.N.T. had to be based on a recognition of the relationship of the state to capitalism, and that the strategy of the state towards the C.N.T. had to be taken into account when proposing a particular form of action. The ability of the state to "destabilise" the C.N.T. rested essentially on its antithesis - anti-statism - an anti-statism which was no longer a direct product of the struggle between capital and labour. The two variants of anti-statism - "pasotismo" and armed action by minorities - were both a youth phenomenon, and resulted from the "opening-up" of Spanish society, while maintaining the repressive apparatuses of Francoism during the political transition to democracy. While the continuing use of repression during this period continued to radicalise workers, evident in the scale of strikes, and the violent nature of many, the "armed warfare" which took place on the streets of Barcelona in the 1920's would certainly not be repeated in the Catalonia of the 1970's.

The dismantling of the repressive apparatuses, and the resolution of the "prison" issue, would only come about by the pressure of a mass movement. "Minority violence" would only prevent this movement from developing, as the state could, and did, present an image of "anarcho-terrorism" which severely limited the C.N.T.'s possibilities of appeal. This "cult of violence" though interacting with a tradition within the C.N.T., was, like "pasotismo" very much a Western European "individualistic" response, specific to the period of transition. But the dangers which this type of anarchism held for the development of a mass movement - along either trade union and / or counter-cultural lines - led to a growing isolation of these currents by the opposition within the C.N.T., and a growing identification with a certain brand of anarchism and Marxism.

The other major problems with "orthodox" anarchism which were increasingly being discovered through the experience of the C.N.T. were the important role which leadership plays, and the need for a degree of delegatship for any work to be possible within the trade unions. The question of leadership had of course been the most important issue for the GOA, Workers' Autonomy and the MCL, and all had come to accept a Bakuninist notion of this - that the nature of leadership is crucial in deciding the course the revolutionary process will take. A leadership should be the repository of socialist culture and consciousness, comitted to keeping the masses' active participation, and thus flexible and aware of its leadership role. This view of leadership was reinforced considerably during the period of reconstruction of the C.N.T., when the non-recognition of leadership was directly related to the power of the bureaucracy, and the inability to put into practice its principles of extreme democracy. As fewer and fewer

workers attended the continuous "ideological" assemblies, so was the bureaucracy and its allies better able to control the workings of the C.N.T.

The reconstruction of the C.N.T. during 1976-1979, when the C.N.T. was a mere "caricature" of its former self, cannot be taken as an example of the workings of the historic C.N.T., whose appeal lay primarily in its democratic functioning, and its militant brand of syndicalism. But it showed the possibilities "in extremis" of a particular type of anarchist practice, and that "ideology" cannot be a safeguard against the development of bureaucracy. Yet it was this type of argument - that "anarchists" cannot possibly be leaders, and that "extreme democracy" is the "essence" of anarchism - which was used by the bureaucracy to blur its leadership role, and thus its power within the C.N.T. Similar arguments have been used by "Leninists", using Marxist categories, to dispel doubts as to the "democratic" functioning of "democratic centralism".

These criticisms of "orthodox" anarchism were identical to those voiced by the revolutionary syndicalists within the C.N.T. Calling for a Marxist historical approach, a recognition of the "political" nature of the C.N.T., and a structure of delegatship within a federalist structure of trade unions and community organisations, their perspective was assured a greater hearing by the end of the experience of reconstruction of the C.N.T. Based on an advanced industrial model of socialist change, their ideas were bound to have greater appeal in the highly industrial and urbanised society which Spain had become by the late 1970's. Believing that a "conquest of state power" was not applicable to the advanced capitalist societies of Western Europe, they placed their

emphasis firmly in the "self-activity" gained through the class struggle, and through sustained cultural and educational endeavour. This perspective - allied to a Bakuninist notion of leadership - was the one held by the overwhelming majority of the "advanced" more "political" groups which had taken part in the reconstruction of the C.N.T., reflecting the greater integration of Spain within Western Europe, despite its inferior status within it. The dilemma posed to the historic anarchist movement in Spain - between its commitment to the greatest possible democracy, and the urgent need for revolutionary change - reflected in the dichotomy between the mass movement and the FAI, was no longer seriously posed, which the political transition to democracy in Spain had proved without doubt. The need for change of a socialist democratic character was still pressing in Spain in the 1970's, but, as in Western Europe, the possibilities of realising this in the conditions of the international nature of advanced capitalism, and the structure of the power-blocks' "spheres of influence" were minimal. It is not surprising therefore, that the mass movement perspective held by sectors of the Left in Spain should be similar to sectors of the "new Left" <sup>in Europe.</sup> But this strategy had been proposed by a sector of the Spanish anarchist movement since the late 1920's, reflecting the "advanced" nature of sectors of the workers' movement in Spain. For while the conditions for revolutionary change were created by the nature of the Spanish militaristic state, the strength of the military right continuously prevented their realisation. Thus the impossibility of realising a quick "conquest of state power" was highlighted much more clearly, and earlier, than elsewhere in Europe, in a country where the ideological control exercised by the Church, especially

upon the peasantry, was crucial, and formed one of the major social bases for the Right. Therefore a strategy was developed within the C.N.T. which attempted to create the basis for a "permanent class power", avoid the pitfalls of European "parliamentarism", while maintaining the most "progressive" gains of European democracy.

This project developed by the revolutionary syndicalists within the C.N.T. - who recognised the state, and the need for transitional stages towards socialism - is identical to the perspective of Pannekoek, who, as Chomsky correctly points out, forms a "sort of bridge" between Marxism and anarchism. (98). Underlying this similarity of strategy, is a common recognition of the limitations of Leninist philosophy, and consequently the importance of consciousness and ideology. The contemporary relevance of this perspective, under the conditions of capitalist restructuring on the bases of computer and information technology, and the decline in traditional manufacturing industry, was perceived on a much wider scale, and indeed earlier than elsewhere in Europe, and was one of the major problems many found with the traditional trade-union schema of the C.N.T. For the political conditions created by a military dictatorship which politicised and radicalised workers, came increasingly in contradiction with its economic and cultural integration within Western Europe, producing an advanced consciousness amongst sectors of workers and intellectuals.

Within the advanced industrial capitalist countries of Western Europe, where structural unemployment exists alongside "booming" hi-tech industries, and where the real material limits to growth are evident, anarchism's open-endedness vis-a-vis the "revolutionary subject" its "psychological" approach and its more balanced view of the relationship to nature is bound to have much greater relevance.

The "advanced" nature of anarchist federalism, and its relationship to production, seems to be borne-out by an East European "dissident", with first-hand knowledge of the problems with a "state plan" orientated production model. <sup>(99)</sup>. Arguing the need for a "New League of Communists" along lines redolent of Bakunin and Pannekoek, Bahro shows the contemporary need for a "fusion" between Marxism and anarchism : "the new political and social revolution now necessarily affects the deepest layers of our civilisation. What I have in mind is a cultural revolution in the broadest sense of the term, a revolution - if essentially non-violent - in the entire subjective form of mass life. This must, of course, come about as much by the conscious will of individuals as by their unconscious feelings. Its aim is really to create the social framework for the free development of each person, which according to the "Communist Manifesto" is the precondition for the free development of all. Communism cannot advance in any other way than by proving itself in relation to man, to his visible and perceptible climb towards freedom, and this means, above everything external, also inward freedom. Here history faces us with an inescapable demand. Our civilisation has reached a limit of extension at which the inner freedom of the individual appears as the very condition for survival. This inner freedom is the precondition for a collective renunciation, based on understanding, of a continued material expansion which is both disastrous and subjectively purposeless. General emancipation is becoming an absolute historical necessity." <sup>(100)</sup> .

BIBLIOGRAPHY / NOTES

1. As Lorenzo points out, it is not surprising in the atmosphere of optimism which reigned that many anarchists called for the total recuperation of the social conquests of 19th. July 1936, and reject the debilitating influence of a few moderate "politicians", who, according to them, were most responsible for the military uprising and even the defeat of the anti-fascist forces.  
C.M. Lorenzo : "Los Anarquistas Españoles y el Poder" Paris, 1969.
2. Lorenzo points out to the contradictory nature of the resolutions approved at this Congress. The "revolutionary anarchists" succeeded in winning 20,000 votes, while those of the "political syndicalists" numbered some 6,000. The leadership of the C.N.T. in exile thus went to Germinal Esgleas. But the anti-political faction was robbed of a total success, as Lorenzo explains : "In fact, if the Congress approved the collectivisations realised during the Civil War, it agreed to so many future transitory measures, so many limitations to the ideals of liberty and absolute equality, that, in a word, it ratified the agreements of the amplified Economic plenum of January 1938". As he further points out, it was agreed to support a republican regime respectful of the interests of the proletariat, and committed to a betterment of the situation of the Spanish masses.  
C.M. Lorenzo. op. cit.
3. Interview with exiled C.N.T. militant in France, who returned to Spain in 1976.
4. This was the feeling expressed by many of the autonomous groups in Spain in the late '60's.
5. This was primarily because of Luxembourg's defence of the "masses' spontaneity", and the importance of this in preventing the development of a bureaucratic reformist leadership and movement. Luxembourg's critique of Leninism and the undemocratic nature of the Soviet regime is most clearly expressed in "The Russian Revolution / Leninism and Marxism".  
Michigan, 1972.

6. Gerber's Preface (P. 26) in "Pannekoek and the Workers' Councils".  
Serge Bricianer. Saint Louis, Mo., 1978.
7. Serge Bricianer. op. cit. (Preface by John Gerber p. 28).
8. Serge Bricianer. (Preface by John Gerber p. 28)  
This is taken from Pannekoek's "De Filosofie van Kant en het Marxism", De Nieuwe Tijd, 1901.  
As Gerber points out, there is a profound coincidence between Pannekoek's understanding of the relationship between Marxism and philosophy, and his conceptions of socialism and science, and the ideas of the Italian Marxist, Antonio Labriola, though their emphasis and starting points differ.  
See A. Labriola : "Socialism and Philosophy".  
Chicago, 1917.  
A. Labriola : "Essays on the Materialist Conception of History".  
New York, 1966.
9. Serge Bricianer. op. cit. p. 41.
10. Serge Bricianer. op. cit. p. 53.
11. Serge Bricianer. op. cit. p. 58.
12. Serge Bricianer. op. cit. p. 62.
13. Serge Bricianer. op. cit. p. 66.
14. Serge Bricianer. op. cit. p. 70.
15. P. Corrigan / H. Ramsay / D. Sayer : "The Bolshevik Legacy".  
New York Review N° 125. London, 1981.
16. P. Corrigan / H. Ramsay / D. Sayer. op. cit. p. 50.
17. P. Corrigan / H. Ramsay / D. Sayer. op. cit. p. 57.
18. Paul Cardan : "Concepciones y Programa de Socialismo o Barbarie."  
Reprint by one of the Madrid GOA groups.
19. Lucio Colletti : "From Rousseau to Lenin, Studies in Ideology and Society."  
New York / London, 1972. p. 87.
20. V. I. Lenin = "The State and Revolution."  
V.I. Lenin : "Selected Works"  
London, 1969. p. 331.

21. V.I. Lenin. op. cit. p. 334.
22. V.I. Lenin. op. cit. p. 328.
23. Kropotkin's idea that the state's disappearance would immediately lead to a libertarian communist society without classes was contested by Malatesta, and sectors of the Spanish C.N.T.  
P. Kropotkin : "Kropotkin's Revolutionary Writings."  
Roger N. Baldwin ed. New York, 1970. Enrico Malatesta : His Life and Ideas, Vernon Richards, ed. London, 1977.
24. V.I. Lenin. op. cit. p. 337.
25. This is the main drift of "Concepciones y Programa del Socialismo o Barbarie" and "Proletariat y Organizacion" by Paul Gardan, re-printed by the Madrid GOA and the Barcelona GOA respectively. This is similar to the approach of another member of the "Socialismo o Barbarie" group, Cornelius Castoriadis, in his two volumes work, "La Experiencia del Movimiento Obrero".  
Barcelona, 1979.  
Castoriadis did not become popular in Spain until later in the '70's, and was, even then, read by very few.
26. Karl Marx : "Conspectus of Bakunin's 'statism and Anarchy'" (extract).  
Karl Marx : "The First International and After"  
Political writings. Vol. 3.  
London, 1981. p. 333.
27. Karl Marx. op. cit. p. 334.
28. Frederick Engels : "Anti-Dubring."  
Moscow, 1969.
29. Perry Anderson : "Considerations on Western European Marxism".  
London, 1976.
30. Perry Anderson. op. cit. p. 116.
31. This is the image Fritjof Capra gives of late 19th. century, in "The Turning Point - Science, Society and the Rising Culture." (Chapters on "The Newtonism World-Machine" and "The Mechanistic View of Life").  
London, 1982.  
This view, unfortunately, remains dominant in our culture.

32. Marshall Berman : "All that is Solid Melts Into Air"  
London, 1984.
33. Karl Marx : "Grundrisse. Foundations of the Critique of  
olitical Economy". (rough draft).  
London, 1977. p. 409-410.
34. Perry Anderson. op. cit.
35. Paul Thomas : "Karl Marx and the Anarchists". London, 1980.
36. The GOA, on the whole, believed that Marx was undoubtedly  
the most important writer on economics, and held to his  
view of the "class struggle as motor of historical  
development".
37. Of course, the development of the feminist movement was  
a direct result of women's greater role within the work-  
force, particularly from the Second World War. I refer  
here primarily to women "political militants", who  
abandoned parties of the Left both in Britain and the  
United States, because of their inferior status within  
these organisations. For a full debate on the different  
ideological currents within the feminist movement, and  
their historical genesis, see Hester Eisenstein :  
"Contemporary Feminist Thought".  
London / Sydney, 1984.
38. S. Rowbotham / L. Segal / H. Wainwright : "Beyond the  
Fragments. Feminism and the making of Socialism"  
London, 1979.
- These writers belong to the socialist-feminist wing of  
the feminist movement. Many of their criticism on the  
nature of the Leninist party are similar to those  
expressed in "Critica de la Izquierda Autoritaria en  
Cataluña" by A. Sala and E. Duran, one of whom was a  
GOA member, the other one of the future leaders of  
Workers' Autonomy in Barcelona.  
Paris, 1975.
39. S. Rowbotham : "The Women's Movement and Organizing for  
Socialism".  
p. 93 op. cit.
40. S. Rowbotham. op. cit. p. 102.
41. S. Rowbotham. op. cit. p. 110.
42. S. Rowbotham. op. cit. p. 122.  
This quote is taken from E.P. Thompson : "Outside the  
Whale". The Poverty of Theory.  
London, 1978.

43. S. Rowbotham. op. cit. p. 140.
44. It is difficult to place a date on what separates the "young" from the older Marx, or why there should be such a difference in the types of concerns he addressed. It would seem that the most likely explanation is Marx's experience of the 1848 revolutions, which, he believed, were the last "bourgeois" revolutions, as the development of the working class within production, its organisation and consciousness, placed the socialist revolution within its grasp.  
P. Anderson. op. cit.
45. Karl Marx : "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844."  
London, 1973. p. 97.
46. Karl Marx. op. cit. p. 125.
47. Karl Marx : "Wages, Price and Profit".  
Karl Marx and Frederick Engels : "Selected Works".  
London, 1968. p. 210.  
This is precisely what the anarchists perceived when they pointed to certain aspects of pre-capitalist societies which would have to be taken into account in establishing a new historical form.
48. Paul Thomas : "Karl Marx and the Anarchists". op. cit.
49. Karl Marx : "Theories of Surplus Value".  
Grundrisse, London, 1977. p. 763.
50. Antonio Gramsci : "Selections from Prison Notebooks".  
London, 1971.  
Perry Anderson. op. cit.
51. Perry Anderson. op. cit. p. 120.
52. Perry Anderson. op. cit. p. 121.
53. Perry Anderson. op. cit. p. 122.
54. Barry Katz : "Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation".  
London, 1982. p. 148.
55. Noam Chomsky : "Problems of Knowledge and Freedom".  
London, 1972.  
Barry Katz. op. cit. p. 151.
56. Barry Katz. op. cit.

57. Barry Katz. op. cit. p. 178.
58. Barry Katz. op. cit.  
Herbert Marcuse : "One-Dimensional Man".  
London, 1964.
59. Barry Katz. op. cit. p. 192.
60. Barry Katz. op. cit. p. 197.
61. This is Bakunin's thought in his "Critique of the Marxist Theory of the State" in Bakunin on Anarchy.  
San Dolgoff ed. London, 1973.
62. Enrico Malatesta : "His Life and Ideas" op. cit.  
Camilo Berneri : "La Guerra de Clases en España". 1936-37.  
Barcelona, 1977.
63. Michael Bakunin : "Bakunin on Anarchy".  
San Dolgoff ed. p. 125.
64. For the anarchists work is a physiological need,  
apart from anything else,
65. This is F. Capra's view of the type of science which  
reigned supreme before the Newtonian revolution.  
F. Capra. op. cit.
66. As Lucio Colletti points out in his introduction to  
Marx's "Early Writings", the foremost leaders of the  
Social Democratic movement in Germany and Russia  
had been formed in a culture dominated by Darwinism and  
Positivism. As he says, this generation of Marxists  
were drawn to Marxism primarily through the work of  
Engels, and in particular his "Monistic" conception of  
history outlined in "Anti-Duhring".  
Lucio Colletti : "Introduction".  
Karl Marx : "Early Writings".  
London, 1974. p. 8.
67. P. Anderson; op. cit. p. 121..
68. F. Capra. op. cit. p. 34.
69. This identification with the "Third World" can be seen  
within ETA, the revolutionary nationalist movement in  
the Basque country, and the nature of the groups which  
developed out of the autonomous movement, such as  
"Liberacion" in Catalonia.

70. Security precautions were the first priority amongst all the autonomous groups, primarily as a reaction to the lack of precautions taken by the Communist Party under clandestine conditions. The C.N.T.'s lax attitude during the '40's was another example which made for greater emphasis on security. Many pamphlets and articles are taken up with this, and certain security rules and precautions laid down.
71. This affected some group members more than others. Certain groups, such as the GOA of Santa Coloma, spent a lot of time on this "psychological" work, while others, the groups within the Workers' Commissions, did not give this aspect such attention, although they too argued for a "new morality" amongst the Left.
72. This is very similar to Bakunin's ideas on leadership, although at this time the GOA had not read, or been much influenced by Bakunin's work.
73. The PTE (Partido de Trabajo de España) did have a larger party network by 1975, and was the biggest force to the left of the Communist Party by this time. But the numerous small Leninist groups, on the whole, had few members, and were often simply groups of friends who thought similarly.
74. The main centre of communal living, was again, in Santa Coloma. Other, more sporadic communal experiments were undertaken in other neighbourhoods, but did not last very long. Indeed, the majority of GOA members either continued living with their families, primarily for financial reasons, or in flats with a few friends.
75. The GOA did not believe that armed struggle could achieve the mass, popular support in Catalonia which it did in the Basque country. The level of nationalist repression was much greater in the Basque provinces, which moreover, still remembered the savage Nationalist revenge, exemplified most notoriously at Guernica, during the Civil War.
76. Solidarity's history of the working class under Franco shows that they analysed developments within the workers' movement against the background of historical developments, particularly economic developments, in Spain. Indeed, this work does not differ in any important respect from a "Marxist" interpretation. Apuntes Para una Historia. 1969.
77. For the type of anarchism expounded by Cohn-Bendit, see Alberola / Gramscac : "El Anarquismo español y la Accion Revolucionaria. Paris, 1975.

Charles Posner Ed.  
Reflections on the Revolution in France : 1968.  
London, 1970.

For a good sum-up of Chomsky's views on the need for a synthesis of anarcho-syndicalism and Marxism (and his concern for "imperialist" issues), See :  
: Noam Chomsky : "Radical Priorities".  
Montreal, 1981.

78. F. Capra. op. cit.
79. F. Capra. op. cit.
80. Lorenzo's work had considerable influence amongst younger militants with a strong Marxist background, particularly in Catalonia.  
C.M. Lorenzo : "Los Anarquistas Españoles y el Poder".  
Paris, 1972.
81. Camilo Berneri : "La Guerra de Clases en España. 1936-37".  
Barcelona, 1977.  
Berneri was another strong influence within the younger group of militants, who were very drawn to the work of the "Italians"- Malatesta, Fabbri and Berneri.
82. I was surprised to find, when I returned to Spain in 1981, that many "very Marxist" C.N.T. militants were now very enthusiastic about the work of Clastres, whom, they believed, had made a major contribution to the debate on the state.  
P. Clastres : "La Sociedad Contra el Estado."  
Barcelona, 1978.
83. Solidaridad militants on the whole believed that libertaria: philosophy was more "advanced" than Marxism, as it addressed the problem of the "whole individual". The limitations of the Marxist approach, they argued, can be seen at work in the Soviet Union, which cannot be considered "socialist" because it had failed to extend personal freedom, and was constructed along "bourgeois" lines, maintaining the distinctions between different work categories, and alienated labour.
84. On the whole, the GOA in Barcelona and Madrid no longer believed that a revolutionary situation was developing in Spain, and called instead for a movement which would defend workers' standards, and be the starting-point for a "new-type" workers' movement. Others, however, believed that the fragility of democracy in Spain showed the difficulties of implanting bourgeois democracy in Spain, where the workers' movement was conscious and organised. It was this force which would undertake future socio-economic changes, and establish its own regime of workers' self-management.

85. J. Peirats : "La C.N.T. en la Revolucion Española".  
Paris, 1971.  
V. Richards : "Enseñanzas de la Revolucion Española"  
Madrid, 1977.
86. "Integralists" was the term used indiscriminately by the  
FAI to categorise the GOA and other groups who called  
for an "integral" definition of the C.N.T., and whose  
background had been principally within the neighbourhoods.
87. These seem to be the conclusions of two works which  
deal with "extra-trade union" activities of the C.N.T.  
Mary Nash, in "Mujeres Libres"  
Barcelona, 1976  
shows that the idea of sexual equality had a limited  
impact within the mass of C.N.T. members, while Pere Sola,  
in "Las Escuelas Racionalistas En Cataluña"  
Barcelona, 1976,  
argues against the widely-held notion that the Rational  
School movement enrolled the mass of workers and their  
children in Catalonia. Despite the enormous importance  
which the Rational School movement and libertarian  
thought had within education in Catalonia, it was unable  
to extend its influence to the extent it wished within  
the working class, primarily because of its limited  
financial resources. For a good sum-up of the Rational  
School movement and its founder, Ferrer, from the turn  
of the century, see : J.C. Connolly Ullman : "The Tragic  
Week in Barcelona. A Study of Anticlericalism in Spain.  
1875-1912".  
Harvard, 1968.
88. Luigi Fabbri : "Influencias Burgesas sobre el Anarquismo".  
Barcelona, 1977.
89. This was much the impression I received from these  
younger unemployed members of the C.N.T., who boasted  
of the things they had managed to steal, and seemed  
to be intoxicated by the "macho" armed image of the  
historic FAI. This FAI "machismo" was also strongly in  
evidence at the Young Libertarian Congress in the summer  
of 1978, which I attended. (The growth of gangs, often  
related to drug abuse and violence, has become a serious  
problem in the working class neighbourhoods in Spain,  
particularly Madrid and Barcelona, since the late '70's).  
In an interview with Sebastian Puigcerver, he told me  
that many of these types held the most "radical"  
positions within the trade unions, and often elbowed-out  
other good trade unionists, because they were considered  
"too soft". Many of these youngsters, he pointed-out,  
later became members of Fuerza Nueva, or other extreme  
right-wing groups.  
Interviewed in 1979 and 1981.

For a fictional, but fairly good account of the "gangland phenomenon" in Barcelona, see : Manuel Vasquez Montalbán : "Southern Seas". London, 1979.

90. Corrigan/ Ramsay / Sayer. op. cit. p. 60.
91. Corrigan / Ramsay / Sayer. op. cit. p. 61.
92. Corrigan / Ramsay / Sayer point to the "intimacy of the connection between the replication of core features of capitalist social relationships through Bolshevik economism and the prevalent forms of Soviet politics. "In particular we believe the statism which is the most manifest deformation of Soviet socialism owes much to Bolshevism's approach to production. Economism and statism connect directly via the huge fiscal and planning apparatuses need to administer programmes of socialist construction which can only rely on the kind of passive, controlled (and typically Bolshevik) mobilization from below typified by Stakhanovism, because any fuller emancipation of direct producers would require (or threaten) a challenge to relations held indispensable to modernization. The problem is a general one. If socialist control is denied to producers at the point of production, it can only be re-established through external - national and state - agencies of regulation and coercion. Moreover, because such programmes both defer immediate expectations and give the promised eventual socialist transformation the external and imposed quality of a paternalistic donation, we are thinking here particularly of what 'socialism' must have come cumulatively to mean in the experience of Soviet Peasants - a formidable machinery of repression also becomes necessary if Soviet power is to be maintained".  
op. cit. p. 59.
93. The state has also been used as the main lever of development in capitalist countries of the underdeveloped world, in their attempts to "catch-up" with the advanced industrial world. The notable exception to the "state-centralised" development model has taken place under the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. The fate of this "new road to socialist development" however, still hangs in the historical balance.
94. It could be argued that the Bolshevik revolution was a particular type of "modernisation" project applicable to the underdeveloped world, and was not in any important respect a "socialist" one. I believe that this approach lacks an historical dimension, and ignores the historical

circumstances within which it occurred, and the enormous repercussions which the first "socialist" venture upon both the working classes of Western Europe, and the fierce reaction it produced within their ruling classes. I would therefore agree with Corrigan, Ramsay and Sayer, that the "crippling contradiction at the heart of Bolshevism lies between its central defining images of modernity and its socialist politics and culture". op. cit. p. 52.

95. Max Stirmer argued against any limitation to the individual "ego" be it the state or other individuals. This "nieztchean" type anarchism had considerable appeal, particularly amongst intellectuals, at the turn of the century in Europe, reflecting the growth of "mass society" and the increasing anonymity it produced.
96. "Los Solidarios", who were branded "anarcho-Bolsheviks" later became the "Nosotros" group.
97. Federica Montsefiy was the daughter of Urales, a leading anarchist intellectual, and the most important influence within the circle "Tierra y Libertad", and published a magazine of the same name. This anarchist family has been active within the Spanish anarchist movement from the late 1880's.
98. Noam Chomsky. op. cit.
99. Calling for a new "system of needs", and an end to the inefficiency and corruption associated with the "statist" direction of the Soviet and Eastern European economies, Bahro believes that a new division of labour is imperative in these societies. The solutions to the problems of the Soviet economy, and the ending of the divisions between "objectified" labour and "living labour", lie in putting into practice "the federative" principle, which is inherent in the well-known idea of free association, and which also characterised for example Marx's option for the commune system of organization. The fundamental units of associated labour and social life must be relatively autonomous sovereign combinations on a territorial basis, which will form microcosms of society. A communal organisation of this type could also be the framework within which the isolating separation of the spheres of education, living and work might be dismantled, without allowing the reincarnation of old limitations, restrictions of locality and exclusiveness."

Rudolf Bahro : "The Alternative in Eastern Europe."  
New Left Review, N° 106 Nov-Dec, 1977. p. 30.

This type of organisational structure is the one put forward by anarchists a century ago.

100. This is clear when Bahro refers to the new party as the "collective intellectual", a term used by Gramsci who believed that "the ideological authority of the party depends on the quality of its intellectual production, on the power of comprehension and mobilisation possessed by the model in which it reflects social reality and prescribes the direction of change. Accordingly the league of communists must be organised differently from the way the party has so far been organised. The organisational structure must fit in with the character of the league's chief activity. Successful work in the field of knowledge requires that all participants have access to the totality of significant information, it requires a 'horizontal', non-hierarchical co-ordination of investigations on the basis of self-activity of the interested persons, it requires the admission of hypothesis which burst through the customary conceptual framework, and finally, it requires the free discussion of different interpretations, without evaluation by any official authorities empowered to confirm or invalidate them."

Bahro. op. cit. p. 24.



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